

Pilgrims Badge Award token for the Baronial Bits box.

An Entry in the Politarchopolis Baronial Championship A&S Competition.

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Documentation: Many Pilgrims badges have been discovered along the Thames river in London since medieval times, frequently being dug up by kids and adults alike looking for something of value. Over the years these treasure hunters became known as Mudlarks and have been frequently seen trolling through the mud on the banks of the Thames and between the grounded barges at low tide. The Thames Mudlarks have uncovered many thousands of pilgrims badges over the years, showing us a huge variety of designs and styles.



Outstretched wing from *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges* by Brian Spencer.

For this competition I wanted to create something that would be useful to the Barony of Politarchopolis as an award token, as well as utilize my pewter crafting skills. A Gryphon's wing token seemed to me to be the ideal token, and after a little research I discovered that there were indeed outstretched wing tokens made.

Though these tokens were suspected to be part of a larger multi-part token for the Blessed Virgin, the individual parts were discovered separately and it's not inconceivable that they were possibly used individually.

Materials & Methods: The period technique for creating pewter tokens was to carve a mould from a small grained stone of some sort such as mudstone, slate or soapstone. Having access to soapstone I opted for this medium. Using tools that I



Handmade Tools

created from small bits of steel wire shaped into various small carving tools I slowly and delicately carved out the shape of the wing. During the carving process the artist needs to be constantly aware that the shape of their finished product will be the shape of the missing bits in the mould material. The mould is also a mirror image of the finished product, and if left to right direction is important, then this needs to be right to left on the face of the mould. Whilst this example contains no text, if text were needed it would

have to be carved as if mirrored so that when cast the text is readable.



Soapstone mould carved with two designs.



Preheating mould

After carving out most of the mould, I took the opportunity to cast a sample piece, however it is possible to view a representation of the finished product by pushing some blutack or play-dough into the soapstone. The process of sample casting allowed me to test how easily the mould accepts the molten metal, as sometimes the flow of the metal into the mould is impeded by air trying to escape. During carving it is often a good idea to consider how the flow of the molten metal will navigate the intricacies of the mould details. A smooth



Melting the pewter.

flow of metal is desired as this will prevent the metal setting and preventing further metal from getting into the mould. Tweaking the details of the mould, and adding more detail such as feathering help to produce a cleaner and more detailed pour. When the casting process was consistently producing the required results, a casting run of 23 castings was produced.



Mould after pour, with back removed.

Period castings show little signs of being post-worked, ie; filing, and removal of flashing. The competition entry piece, and the 20 pieces provided as a gift to the Baron and Baroness have had minimal flashing removed to maintain a period look, however 2 samples of what can be achieved with post filing and polishing have been provided purely as a sample of the difference of a basic casting, and a post-worked piece.

All post-working was done by hand with a file and sandpaper, though to speed up the process one could use a mechanical means of abrasion.



Mould with poured pewter.

Source: *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges* by Brian Spencer. Page 7 - Information about moulds and metals. Pages 159 to 161- Information on the Winged Piece [Item 177].