

# Basic Detail Report

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**00051316**

**Title**

E. De Carle & Co. Auctioneers & Land Agents, Queen's  
Royal Arcade Office

**Date**

1855

**Medium**

Copper alloy

**Dimensions**

Overall: 1 x 34 mm

**Name**

Merchant token

**History**

The first copper tokens were introduced in Melbourne in 1849 and tokens circulated freely in colonial Australia until 1868 (when they became illegal in New South Wales) and reflect pressures on coinage in the period following the Australian gold rush when tokens filled the role of an unofficial coinage. An advertisement in the Melbourne Argus (20 October 1849) cited the reason for introducing copper tokens: "To obviate the extreme inconvenience occasioned by the scarcity of coppers, particularly by grocers, who have not unfrequently to pay a premium of from sixpence to a shilling a pound for their Saturday night's supply [of coins], Mr. Councillor Annand has had coined at Birmingham, a large supply of penny pieces, having on one side the figure of Britannia, and one the obverse the inscription, ANNAND, SMITH & Co family grocers Melbourne". They were manufactured both locally and overseas and served both as low denomination coins (typically pennies and halfpennies), and advertising for merchants in the various colonies of Australia. As the shortage of official copper coins diminished in the second half of the nineteenth century, tokens became a nuisance and they were collected and sold for their scrap metal value. Birmingham makers of tokens were Allen and Moore; Heaton and Sons; Pope & Co; and Smith and Kemp. London token makers were WJTaylor; and Coard. In Sydney tokens were made by JC Thornthwaite; Hogarth and Erichsen; and Whitty and Brown. In Melbourne - Thomas Stokes; Stokes and Martin; and WJ Taylor.