

STEELYARD WEIGHT

Unique ID: SF6287

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Published

Globular steelyard weight made from lead sheathed in a thick cast copper alloy case. It is flattened at the top to accommodate a triangular lug with circular perforation. Just below the flattened top is a band of engraved ornament, consisting of an upper and lower border around nine triangles or shield-shapes, each decorated with two (or in one case three) horizontal lines. Below this, the body of the weight is decorated with three relief-cast shields each with three chevrons. Between the chevrons the background is keyed as if for enamel. These arms are those of Clare (three red chevrons on a yellow ground) and so they were almost certainly never enamelled. Between two of the shields is a hole which has been plugged with a piece of copper-alloy plate. At various points around the case are the remains of at least five iron pins. It is thought that these held the inner and outer moulds together while casting the copper-alloy case. After casting, the inner clay mould would have been scraped out through the hole, and lead would have been poured in. The hole would then have been plugged, although it must have remained a source of weakness as there is a crack running from it. The iron pins were then filed down. Biddle 1990 (Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester) suggests that the use of iron pins went out in the course of the 13th century. The date of this weight, however, may be fixed more securely by the arms, as the holder of the monopoly on steelyard weights, Edmund Earl of Cornwall, married Margaret de Clare in 1272 and died in 1300. However we have no documentary evidence for this monopoly, the only evidence being that all the weights with cast heraldry have the arms of the Earl of Cornwall in some form. It weighs 945g, which is 2 lb. 1.35 oz. It is unusual for weights to be slightly over-weight.

Notes:

This record was created before the Portable Antiquities Scheme began using the Central Database. We are aware that this record may fall below our usual standards of recording, and we are working to rectify this.

Chronology

Broad period: MEDIEVAL

Period from: MEDIEVAL

Date from: AD 1272

Date to: AD 1300

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Length: 64 mm

Weight: 945 g

Diameter: 58 mm

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Friday 1st June 2001

Personal details

Found by: This information is restricted for your login.

Recorded by: Dr Helen Geake

Identified by: Dr Helen Geake

Materials and construction

Primary material: Copper alloy

Secondary material: Lead

Spatial metadata

Region: [Eastern](#) (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: [Cambridgeshire](#) (County)

District: [East Cambridgeshire](#) (District)

To be known as: CAMBRIDGESHIRE FORDHAM

Spatial coordinates

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 10 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Building work

Discovery circumstances: While digging foundations for garage in garden of 157 Carter Street

General landuse: Other

Specific landuse: Built over