

AMPULLA

Unique ID: WMID-8F9A75

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Awaiting validation

A cast lead ampulla of medieval date. The ampulla is hollow and was designed to contain a dose of the thaumaturgic water dispensed to pilgrims at many shrines and holy wells. The ampulla is damaged and the neck and suspension lugs are missing and only the circular chamber survives. This is decorated on one side with a six petalled flower and on the other with a crowned letter W. Ampullae with the crowned letter 'W' are thought to be associated with the cult of Our Lady of Walsingham (Spencer, 1990. 60-61), and the W may perhaps have had a more general meaning as a double-V for the virgin Queen of Heaven (Virgo Virginium) as also signified by the crown (Spencer, 1990: 61). The shrine to a statue of the Virgin at Walsingham was one of the most significant sanctuaries in Europe in the Late Medieval Period, eclipsing Canterbury as the principal English pilgrim resort in the 15th and 16th century (Spencer, 1990, 30-31). The incomplete ampulla measures 34.08 mm high, 31.43 mm wide, 4.13 mm wide and weighs 21.7 grams. It has a pale grey patina.

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: MEDIEVAL

Period from: MEDIEVAL

Date from: Circa AD 1100

Date to: Circa AD 1500

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Height: 34.08 mm

Width: 31.43 mm

Thickness: 4.13 mm

Weight: 21.7 g

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Saturday 1st January 2011 - Thursday 11th August 2011

Personal details

Found by: This information is restricted for your login.

Recorded by: Dr Tom Brindle

Identified by: Dr Tom Brindle

Materials and construction

Primary material: Lead

Manufacture method: Cast

Completeness: Incomplete

Spatial metadata

Region: [West Midlands](#) (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: [Solihull](#) (Metropolitan District)

District: [Solihull](#) (Metropolitan District)

Parish or ward: [Balsall](#) (Civil Parish)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: SP2176

Four figure Latitude: 52.381636

Four figure longitude: -1.692906

1:25K map: SP2176

1:10K map: SP27NW

Grid reference source: From finder

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 100 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector

General landuse: Cultivated land

Specific landuse: Character undetermined

Spencer, B., 1990 [Salisbury Museum Medieval Catalogue: Part 2, Pilgrim souvenirs and secular badges](#) Salisbury: Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum 30-31, 60-61