

BODKIN

Unique ID: HESH-10B8F4

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Published

Treasure Case 2015 - T763: Specialist Report for HM Coroner

Kington, Herefordshire : Silver bodkin / head dress pin

Date: Post Medieval (1500-1650)

Date of discovery: Prior to October 2015

Circumstances of discovery: Searching with a metal detector

Description

An incomplete cast silver bodkin fragment; the extant element comprises the middle and lower section of the pin. It is broken across a central aperture located at the mid-point on the shaft. The remainder of the middle and the upper part of the bodkin are lost. The extant bodkin was originally rectangular in plan and profile, however it is now curved due to movement within the burial environment. In cross section the bodkin is an irregular hexagon, the upper and lower faces are relatively wide whilst the sides have a distinct bevel. The bodkin tapers regularly from the break terminating in a blunt point at its lower tip. The upper edge of the bodkin is broken across a central rectangular aperture or slot; the break is unabraded and relatively recent with no surface patina present. A decorative design is preserved on the upper and lower faces of the bodkin; this consists of shallow incised lines forming two repeating patterns of a V shaped converging triangles. These lines start from a point just below the broken edge and extend a third of the way along the shaft, the metal below this point is undecorated and polished. Incised over this hatching are two Roman letters / initials punctuated by small circular dots. The letters are formed from a series of punched dots (pointille), being positioned at roughly the centre and comprising the letters . A . L . or possibly A I. The letters are well formed and spaced; each has distinct serifs. The decorative areas of the bodkin are darker than the polished surrounding metalwork - this darkening may be deliberate. The design on the inner / underside of the bodkin is less well preserved. Positioned beneath the decoration on the reverse is an indistinct mark - possibly the letter I with unusual serifs flanked by pellets. This simple design is possibly a maker's mark. This bodkin is matt grey / silver colour with areas of dark grey / black tarnish. The fragment is bent in two places. Much of the surface is covered in shallow scratches - possibly decorative filing due to the regularity of the marks.

Dimensions and weight:

Quantity: 1;

Present length: 50.7mm; maximum width at break 4.2mm and thickness at the same point 2.1mm. The pointed tip measures 1.5mm width and 1.1mm thick. The bodkin fragment weighs 4.90 grams.

Discussion and dating

This form of decorative hair / clothes pin is known as a bodkin which are traditionally dated to the

period Tudor and early Stuart eras within the post medieval period (c. AD 1500 - 1650). These bodkins are relatively common finds reported through under the Treasure Act 1996: close parallels in form and date can be seen from North Leigh, Oxfordshire (James 2016) and Gosberton, Lincolnshire (Scott 2015). There is some debate over function with some being suggested as head dress pins or dress-pins whilst others associated with needlework and lace making. The examples of bodkins with ear-scoops are one of the most common sub-types.

This example was recovered from the same field by the same finder as another bodkin fragment reported as Treasure Case 2011-T393 (Reavill; 2011). Images of that find have been examined and the authors are 99% certain that this fragment belongs with the other and the two parts would conjoin along the modern break. The previous find was disclaimed by the DCMS / crown, as the local museum did not want to acquire. The find was duly returned to the finder and landowner.

Statement

In terms of age and as the object contains a minimum of 10% precious metal the authors believe that this find qualifies as Treasure under the stipulations of the Treasure Act 1996.

References:

James, A (2016) *BUC-816668: A silver Post Medieval Bodkin from Leigh, Oxfordshire.*

Web page available at: <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/789029>

Reavill, P (2011) *HESH-C59173: A silver Post Medieval Bodkin from Kington, Herefordshire*

Web page available at: <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/451358>

Scott, W (2015) *LEIC-6A9087: A silver Post Medieval Bodkin from Gosberton, Lincolnshire,*

Web page available at: <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/756581>

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Ludlow Museum

May 2017

Inscription: A I or A L

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Submitted for consideration as Treasure

Treasure details

Treasure case tracking number: 2015T763

Chronology

Broad period: POST MEDIEVAL

Period from: POST MEDIEVAL

Period to: POST MEDIEVAL

Date from: Circa AD 1550

Date to: Circa AD 1700

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Length: 50.7 mm

Width: 4.2 mm

Thickness: 2.1 mm

Weight: 4.9 g

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

Other reference: Hereford Museum Object Entry Form: HFDMG: 3223

Treasure case number: 2015T763

Materials and construction

Primary material: Silver

Manufacture method: Cast

Decoration style: Geometric

Completeness: Incomplete

Spatial metadata

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

County or Unitary authority: [County of Herefordshire](#) (Unitary Authority)

District: [County of Herefordshire](#) (Unitary Authority)

To be known as: Kington

Spatial coordinates

Grid reference source: From finder

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 0.01 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector

General landuse: Cultivated land

Specific landuse: Operations to a depth greater than 0.25m