

BROOCH

Unique ID: WREX-D5FC73

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Published

Fragment of a silver artefact, probably an early medieval penannular brooch, with gilding and gold filigree inlay. The fragment comprises part of the hoop and one terminal. The hoop is sub-oval in cross-section and is decorated on the upper surface with a gilded incised design. This begins at the terminal end with two opposing scrolls, behind which (after a small gap) is a slightly recessed, ribbed band running down the centre of the hoop, terminating in a single scroll. At the broken end of the hoop is an elongated semi-circular cell containing a gold sheet inlay, the edge of which slightly protrudes beyond the broken edge. The inlay is decorated with a filigree design comprising a pair of annulets with two parallel lines linking them in centre, and an additional parallel line connecting them to each outer corner. A slight serration to the edge of the filigree wire, visible under magnification, suggests that the wire may have been beaded originally but has worn smooth, giving the appearance of plain wire.

The surviving part of the terminal is trapezoidal in plan. The section adjoining the terminal is decorated with a narrow ribbed band, beneath which is a central raised circle. On one side is a rectangular projection with a scroll motif; the other side has broken off.

The back of the hoop and terminal are plain and non-gilded. The end of the hoop extends onto the back of the terminal, where it bifurcates into a V-shape with a pellet between the fork.

Dimensions: Length: 77.9mm, width of terminal: 18.4mm, height of terminal: 11.6mm, thickness of terminal: 2.5mm, width of hoop: 5.6mm, thickness of hoop: 4.6mm, weight: 17.4g

Discussion: This fragment appears to derive from an early medieval penannular brooch, although the type is difficult to identify due to its unusual features and decoration. The sub-oval hoop section, gilded ribbed band and gold filigree inlays can be paralleled on penannular and pseudo-penannular silver brooches made in northern and western Britain and Ireland (Youngs 1989, figs 70, 73-4, 78-80; Small, Thomas and Wilson 1973, plate XXXV.a and c) but the style of ornament and the shape of the terminals differs from these. The squared-off shape of the terminal, its 'shoulders' perpendicular to the hoop, more closely resembles Johansen's Type 2 'sub-rhombic' terminals on bossed penannular brooches (Johansen 1973, p. 67, fig. 5), demonstrated by a brooch in the Flusco Pike Hoard (British Museum, accession no. 1991,0109.2; Graham-Campbell 2011, no. 2:4, p. 231); but again the decoration is quite different. Another brooch of similar form, albeit decorated differently and made from copper-alloy, was discovered at Tenby, Pembrokeshire in Wales and recorded on the PAS Database (NMGW-DA579E). This could hint that the unusual features of the Western Rhyn brooch fragment are a consequence of its Welsh/Welsh borderlands provenance. Given that its nearest parallels date to the eighth to early tenth centuries, a similar broad date is tentatively proposed here.

With thanks to Richard Hobbs and Nina Crummy for their comments on this piece.

Date: Eighth to early tenth century.

References:

Johansen, O. S., 1973. Bossed Penannular Brooches: A Systematization and Study of their Cultural Affinities. *Acta Archaeologica* 44, pp. 63-124

Youngs, S., 1989. *The Work of Angels: Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork, 6th to 9th Centuries*. London: British Museum Press

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Notes:

The object fulfils the *Treasure Act 1996* in that it is likely to be more than 300 years old and has a precious metal content exceeding 10%.

Class: penannular

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Submitted for consideration as Treasure

Treasure details

Treasure case tracking number: 2017T729

Chronology

Broad period: EARLY MEDIEVAL

Subperiod from: Middle

Period from: EARLY MEDIEVAL

Subperiod to: Late

Period to: EARLY MEDIEVAL

Date from: Exactly AD 750

Date to: Circa AD 925

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Length: 77.9 mm

Width: 18.4 mm

Thickness: 4.6 mm

Weight: 17.4 g

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Thursday 1st September 2016 - Wednesday 12th July 2017

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

Other reference: 1144

Treasure case number: 2017T729

Materials and construction

Primary material: Silver

Secondary material: Gold

Decoration style: Curvilinear

Completeness: Fragment

Surface Treatment: Gilded

Spatial metadata

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

County or Unitary authority: [Shropshire](#) (Unitary Authority)

District: [Shropshire](#) (Unitary Authority)

To be known as: Weston Rhyn

Spatial coordinates

Grid reference source: From finder

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 100 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector

Discovery circumstances: Found while metal detecting