

FINDS REPORTED TO THE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME IN 2009

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INTRODUCTION

In 2009 a total of 1207 finds from Somerset were recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme in 811 records. The vast majority of these finds were made by members of the public, many metal detecting, but some whilst gardening or out walking. Those described below are a selection that are felt to be of particular significance, either nationally or for the county. The complete records, along with colour photographs, are available to view on the PAS online database; www.finds.org.uk/database. Simply visit the website and type the code prefixed with 'SOM-' into the search facility.

PREHISTORIC

Three arrowheads from St Cuthbert's Out (SOM-5F1F08, SOM-5F71E3 & SOM-5FA8A3)

Although arrowheads of Neolithic date are not uncommon finds, this group of three flint arrowheads is particularly interesting as they come from the same site, are in fine condition and represent the variety in use throughout this period.

The first (Fig. 1) is a leaf-shaped flint arrowhead, typical of the earlier Neolithic. It is 34.78mm in length, 15.56mm in width, 3.59mm thick and weighs 1.83g. This is a highly worked object with low-angle, scaled, covering retouch on both faces. The second (Fig. 2) is a sub-triangular arrowhead, dating to the later Neolithic. It is 33.36mm in length, 17.75mm wide, 5.51mm thick and weighs 2.97g. And finally,

the third (Fig. 3) is an oblique arrowhead, also dating to the later Neolithic. It is 47.62mm in length, 24.79mm wide, 4.27mm thick and weighs 3.65g. This arrowhead is sub-triangular in form, but curves inwards at the proximal end creating a slightly longer, off-centre spur to one side.

Spearhead from Stocklinch (SOM-649A51)

This incomplete cast copper-alloy, Middle Bronze Age, basal loop spearhead is in two parts – the stem has broken away from the blade (Fig. 4). The blade is 150.82mm long, 45.48mm wide, 17.66mm thick and weighs 145.34g. The stem is 83.09mm long,

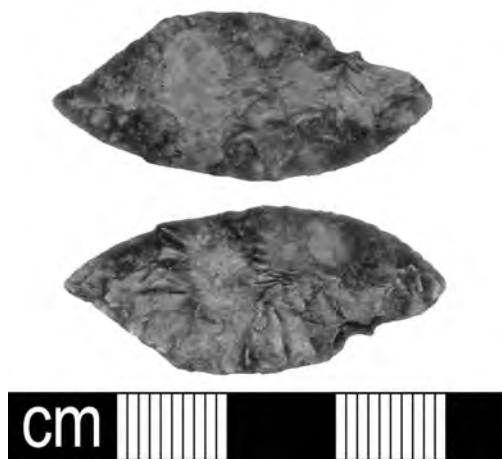


Fig. 1. Neolithic arrowhead from St Cuthbert Out



Fig. 2 Neolithic arrowhead from St Cuthbert Out

22.68mm wide and weighs 79.34g. The blade is ‘flame’ shaped with low blade ribs. The loops are incorporated into the curved base and the loop plates are squeezed inwards slightly. The midrib section is lozenge shaped in section, whilst the stem is circular, splaying slightly towards the end.

The point of maximum width is *c.* 27% up the blade, making this a Davis type 2, which was the largest group in his corpus (Davis 2006, 33). There is a lot of variation within this group, but this particular example appears to fit best into Davis’ variant C, which is characterised by ‘loop plates squeezed inwards, causing an indentation in the arc of the blade edge from socket to tip’ (*ibid.*, 34). The development of these he traces back to the group 2 British side-looped series, whose blade shapes are



Fig. 3 Neolithic arrowhead from St Cuthbert Out

often paralleled amongst the type 3 spearheads (*ibid.*, 49). Another source may also be the Irish class III kite-shaped spearheads and the similar basal-looped type 1 variant B (*ibid.*). Through his review of the dating evidence Davis concludes that, like type 3, it can be suggested that type 2 spearheads are primarily in use during the Taunton phase, but with earlier origins in the Acton Park phase (*ibid.*, 50), so around *c.* 1500–1250BC. However, there is also a limited amount of evidence to suggest that a few spearheads were in use into the late Bronze Age, perhaps passed down from generation to generation as heirlooms (*ibid.*).

Bracelet or arm ring from Westbury-sub-Mendip (SOM-FADB13)

This fragment of a copper alloy circular bracelet or arm ring is probably of mid to late Iron Age date



Fig. 4. Spearhead from Stocklinch

(Fig. 5). The internal edge is c. 68mm in length, whilst the external edge is c. 88mm in length, the object is 7.02mm thick and weighs 46.36g. The fragment comprises around one third of a sectional circular bracelet. At one end is a deep circular recess and at the other end a similarly shaped projection, which presumably would have allowed the section to be attached to the rest of the bracelet; the projection fitting into the recess and vice versa at the other end. The exterior face of the bracelet is decorated with a crude and uneven central groove, flanked on either side by short parallel scratches. The bracelet bears similarities to several illustrated by Jope (2000, pl. 32, 33). Although these are frequently very different in decoration, most have a similar mortice and tenon attachment. A very similar example can also be seen on the PAS database from Dorset, under reference DOR-6C0200.



Fig. 5. Bracelet or arm ring from Westbury-sub-Mendip

ROMAN

Radiate from Butleigh (SOM-3A4DE2)

Although Roman coins made up the largest percentage of finds reported to the PAS in 2009 and several rarities were recorded amongst these, this coin is particularly interesting as it is currently the only known example of its type (Fig. 6). It is a copper alloy radiate of Carausius, issued by C Mint (the location of which is currently unclear) in AD 286–93. The coin is 22mm in diameter and weighs 4.26g. On the obverse we can see a radiate, draped and cuirassed bust of Carausius facing right surrounded by the inscription IMP C M AVR CARAVSIVS P AVG, whilst on the reverse stands Providentia facing left, holding a globe and cornucopiae. Sam Moorhead (pers. comm.) comments that the reverse

inscription, PROVID AVGGG, has never been recorded previously as usually there would only be two Gs at the end. The coin has now been acquired by the Museum of Somerset.



Fig. 6. Radiate from Butleigh

MEDIEVAL

Enamelled heraldic mount from Martock (SOM-FE76F6)

This complete cast copper alloy shield-shaped enamelled mount is 64.64mm in length, 52.17mm wide, 1.98mm thick and weighs 29.41g (Fig. 7). The shield is square with a rounded base and has an enamelled outer face displaying heraldic arms. Griffiths (1999, 2) suggest that mounts like this one, with no obvious means of support, may have been attached to tombs and that those less than 100mm in height 'may have been glued on to a flat surface or set behind a metal frame; a square plate with a shield-shaped flanged cut-out might well have served as a frame for a small shield'.

The enamelled arms appear to most likely be those of the de Bohun family, which according to Burke



Fig. 7. Mount from Martock

(1989) are 'azure a bend argent cotted between six lions rampant or'. Griffiths (*ibid.*, 1) suggests that shield-shaped mounts were popular throughout the 13th and 14th centuries. In 1199 Henry de Bohun was made Earl of Hereford, his descendants continued to hold this title until the death of the 7th Earl in 1373 (Burke 1883, 57–8), fitting in well with this date range. However, how the mount reached Somerset, if it was associated with this family in some way, remains unclear.

Barrel lock or padlock from Stringston (SOM-ABF421)

A cast copper-alloy barrel lock or padlock is in the shape of a horse (Fig. 8). The lock is 41.45mm in length, 34.20mm wide, 15.20mm thick and weighs 30.9g. The horse's head is featureless, but decorated with crossed double grooves mimicking a bridle. There are two raised lines across its back and one across its neck, forming the harness and saddle. The sides and neck are decorated with thin parallel lines filled with smaller lines, perhaps to suggest armour, and one side of the neck has grooves forming a mane. The two forelegs remain, but the hind legs are missing. There are circular openings at the horse's muzzle and rump, both filled with iron erosion and a small strip of copper alloy protrudes from the horse's chest. The object appears to have been hollow and this erosion and the copper-alloy strip are presumably the remains of the locking mechanism. A similar lock, dating from the 12th to mid 13th century, was found during excavations at Winchester (Biddle 1990, 1011, fig. 313, no. 3665) suggesting a similar date for this example. This find has now been acquired by the Museum of Somerset.



Fig. 8. Barrel lock or padlock from Stringston

POST-MEDIEVAL

Inscribed mount from Holford (SOM-4B5883)

This cast copper-alloy object from the parish of Holford is thought to be a mount of some kind (Fig. 9). It is 44.03mm in length, 9.34mm wide, 2.05mm thick and weighs 3.52g. It is roughly rectangular in shape, but there appears to be a break at one end. The outer face has a ridge around the outside edge with raised lettering within this. This is difficult to decipher and the first part of the inscription is missing due to the break. It appears to say ... MAKE YOUR P?N, the central letter of the final word being either O, E or maybe U. The surviving end is pierced with a small hole, presumably to allow attachment. This end is also slightly raised when the object lies flat, but this could be due to later damage, as it would have made the object difficult to attach.

The original function of the object is difficult to determine. However, the style of lettering suggests a post-medieval date, possibly of 16th to mid 18th-century date. It must be noted that the object does have a resemblance to the handles of several skillets of around this date and the lettering is very similar. However, its shape, size and delicate construction suggests that it unlikely to be related to such vessels.



Fig. 9. Mount from Holford

Spanish *cuartillo* from Otterhampton (SOM-CB3454)

A base-silver Spanish *cuartillo* coin (81/2 maravedis) of Philip II, minted at Burgos, measures 24.93mm in diameter and 1.35mm thick and weighs 2.07g (Fig. 10). It appears to be the only example of a *cuartillo* recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database so far.

On the obverse can be seen a crowned coat of arms, with the letter B to right surrounded by the inscription PHILIPPVS DEI GRATIA. On the reverse is a further crowned coat of arms surrounded by the inscription REX HISPANIARVM. Barry Cook (pers. comm.) notes that this coin was only in fact issued from a group of mints in 1566, so it can be dated precisely.



Fig. 10. Spanish cuartillo from Otterhampton

Bottle seal from Merriott (SOM-7F3A65)

An incomplete round green glass bottle seal is 44.58mm in diameter, 8.65mm thick and weighs 20.33g (Fig. 11). The seal has a raised design on the outer surface, comprising arms within a circle, surrounded by a garter, with an Earl's crown above. The garter contains the inscription 'Honi soit qui mal y pense', the motto of the chivalric Order of the Garter. A survey of past Knights of the Garter (Velde 2007) for an 18th-century earl with links to Somerset, suggests John Poulett, the 4th Baron of Hinton St George, who was made 1st Earl Poulett in 1706 and installed as a Knight of the Garter in 1713. Interestingly the town of Hinton St George is in a neighbouring parish to Merriott where the object was found.

The arms in the centre of the garter also confirm the links to Poulett. When arms are quartered it is common for those in the first and third quarters to belong to the owner (Brooke-Little 1970, 139) and here these contain three swords pointing downwards. *The General Armoury* (Burke 1989), confirms that these are the Poulett family arms; 'sable three swords in a pile, their points in base, argent pommels and hilts or'. In the centre (as she was a co-heiress) are the arms of Poulett's wife, Bridget Bertie (Burke 1980, 2164), which are 'three battering rams, barways in pale' (Burke 1989). The final two quarters appear to contain the de Vere arms 'quarterly gules and or, in the first quarter a mullet' (Burke 1989).

This is presumably due to the 2nd Baron Poulett's marriage to Catharine Vere, daughter of Horatio de Vere (Burke 1980, 2163), although, as she was not an heiress, her arms would not usually be included.

With so much evidence it is therefore certain that the seal, and likewise the bottle to which it was attached, belonged to Poulett. And furthermore we can reliably date it to between 1713, when he was installed as a Knight of the Garter, and his death in 1743. This find has now been acquired by the Museum of Somerset.



Fig. 11. Bottle seal from Merriott

Acknowledgements

Thanks to those individuals who have recorded their finds with the Portable Antiquities Scheme during 2009 and also to those who have offered advice about the objects featured above: Sam Moorhead, Sally Worrell, Ciorstaidh Hayward-Trevarthen, Geoff Egan and Barry Cook.

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