

TREASURE ACT 1996
GOLD BROOCH FROM MATHRY COMMUNITY, PEMBROKESHIRE
[Treasure Case 21.13]

Introduction

A gold brooch was found in Mathry Community, Pembrokeshire, by Mr O. E. Thomas, while metal detecting on 11th April 2021. The object was first handed in to Jenna Smith, PAS Cymru Finds Reporting Officer at Dyfed Archaeological Trust and reported to H.M. Coroner for Pembrokeshire & Carmarthenshire by the finder on 26th April 2021.

A treasure receipt was completed and sent to H. M. Coroner for Pembrokeshire & Carmarthenshire on 29th April 2021. The artefact was subsequently couriered and handed-over to the Department of History & Archaeology on 17th June 2021, for safe-keeping and reporting.

Circumstances and context of discovery

The brooch was found with the aid of a metal detector in a field of grazed pasture, at a depth of about 15cm (6"). A grid reference for the findspot, together with details of the finder and landowner, are provided on the Treasure Receipt form.



Description

Gold annular brooch within thin sheet metal ring, set obliquely, supporting six tubular collets for settings (some now misshapen), of which only a small fragment of light purple survives within one collet. There may therefore have been at least three *en cabochon* sapphire settings, perhaps alternating with another semi-precious stone of another colour (e.g. blue or green glass, green emeralds). The spaces between collets are decorated with raised pellets, and there is hole through the frame for the pin head. The pin has a wrap-around head and raised transverse bar at the junction with the shaft, which is of flattened D cross-section.

Dimensions

External frame diameter is 15.8mm; internal frame diameter 10mm; collet heights 3mm, 5mm, 3mm, 6mm, 6mm, 4mm; frame thickness about 0.5mm; pin length 14.4mm; weight 1.45g.

The brooch has not undergone any cleaning or conservation.

Metal Content

To judge from its colour and weight, and visual comparison with other gold rings and brooches in the collections of the Department of History & Archaeology, the item is gold (well over 10%).

Conclusions

Similar examples are known from Ireland (two unprovenanced, one from Co. Westmeath; Deevy 1998, RB 111, RB112, RB113). It conforms to Deevy's 'Class 6: ring brooches with multiple collets (ibid, 19). A parallel from Dumfries, Scotland, set with red stones possibly alternating with blue stones, was found in a hoard dated by its coins to about AD 1310 (Callender 1024, 160-62). The composition of collets echoes that of the much larger gold Oxwich brooch from Gower, whose goldwork has been dated to the early fourteenth century. Similar brooches were also made in copper alloy (for example, one from Caerleon (Redknap 1994, cat. No. 19, fig. 8). The form of the Mathry Community brooch suggests a late thirteenth - or fourteenth-century date.

It is my opinion that the brooch is an object which has at least 10 per cent by weight precious metal, and that it is over 300 years old, and consequently it is treasure under Section 1 (1) (a) of the Treasure Act 1996.

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales has expressed an interest in acquiring this item.

References

- Deevy, M. B. 1998, *Medieval Ring brooches in Ireland. A Study of jewellery, Dress and Society* (Wordwell Monograph series 1 (Bray).
- Lewis, J. 1985, 'The Oxwich brooch', *Jewellery Studies* 2, 23-28.
- Redknap, M. 1994, 'Some medieval brooches, pendants and moulds from Wales: a short survey', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 143, 93-138.

Dr M Redknap
Deputy Head of Archaeology Collections & Research,
Department of History & Archaeology,
National Museum Cardiff,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff CF10 3NP
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