

Beads

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Eleven beads were recovered from the excavations, of which six were modern losses and will not be further considered here. Of the remaining beads, four can be associated with the early Saxon occupation in the vicinity, and only one is likely to be contemporary with the medieval church.

The early Saxon beads correspond well to those found in the sixth- to seventh-century cemetery at Castledyke South. Nearly 700 beads were recovered from the burials there, providing an overview of the favoured bead types in the vicinity. Drinkall has discussed the cemetery beads with full comparanda (in Drinkall and Foreman 1998, 259–66).

The only polychrome glass bead from St Peter's (no. 1) is now damaged and decomposed, but it could well have been similar to that from Grave 115 which was dark green, decorated by yellow and red trails and dots (*ibid.*, 263, table 16, fig. 49). Traces of yellow trails remain on no. 1, but are worn off over the greatest girth of the bead. Ghosts of their paths survive in places suggestive of a cross-wave pattern, and at one point there is a void where a central dot might have been. Cross-waved beads were relatively common in the Castledyke cemetery, generally being found in graves assigned to the sixth century (*ibid.*, 262). Bead no. 1 was recovered from a Period 1C surface.

When complete, the amber bead no. 2 may well have resembled the Castledyke wedge-shaped type (*ibid.*, fig. 51). This bead was found stratified in a middle Saxon layer (Phase 1C) but may have been residual in it. Almost two-thirds of the beads from the Castledyke cemetery were made of amber, and they occurred principally in the graves of the sixth century. They are thought to have been imported from the Baltic (*ibid.*, 262). Another common form in the cemetery was the annular bead made in various shades of green glass. These were found in both sixth- and seventh-century

graves (*ibid.*, 261, table 15). The yellow/green annular example no. 3 from St Peter's belongs to this class and was clearly residual in the fill of a Phase D grave.

The long cylindrical opaque green bead, no. 4, was also found in a Phase D grave fill. It may be of early Saxon date, but it should be noted that the form was probably commonest in the late Roman period (Guido 1978, 95) with a continued existence into the early Saxon period. There was, for example, a single example at Castledyke from Grave 128 (Drinkall and Foreman 1998, 260). The St Peter's bead could easily have been residual from the Roman period.

A single jet bead (no. 5) was found associated with a fourteenth-century hearth. Beads made of various black shiny materials were relatively common in the late Roman period and are known, but scarce, in early Saxon contexts. No. 5 could be residual from the much earlier occupation in the vicinity of St Peter's, but it seems more likely that it was broadly contemporary with the date of the context. Certainly the hand carving of no. 5 is not a technique generally found on Roman beads, as the blanks for these were lathe-turned (Allason-Jones 1996, 12). If this bead is of thirteenth- or fourteenth-century date, then it will have come from a rosary. Decorative bead necklaces were not worn by medieval women whereas rosaries made of jet and many other materials were common (see Biddle and Creasey 1990, 660). Indeed, during the medieval period, jet appears to have been used mainly for devotional material (Muller 1987, 27). Without any of the other beads in the rosary, it is impossible to say whether it was one of the ten that were used to count off the decades of the *Ave*, or whether it was one of the larger Gaude beads that was fingered as the *Paternoster* and the *Gloria* were recited (Mead 1977, 212). What does seem likely, though, is that this bead is a tangible instance of the many times the Sorrowful, Joyful and Glorious Mysteries of the Virgin must have been recited at St Peter's.

⁶ Report written in 1999 and checked in 2010.

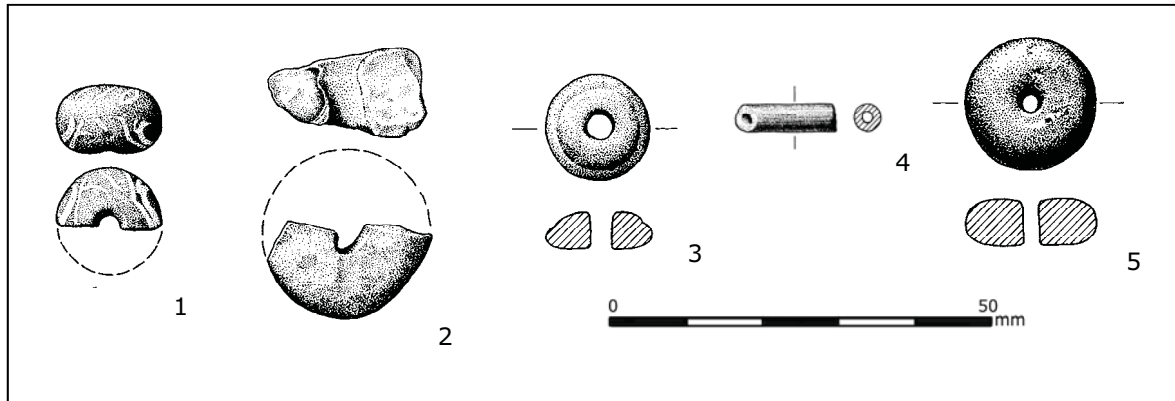


Fig. 841: Beads (1, 3-5—glass, 2—amber). Drawing : Simon Hayfield.

Fig. 841

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| 1 | Annular; decomposed glass now appearing opaque brown with remains of opaque yellow marvered trails, possibly originally in a cross-waved pattern with central dots, a small circular void is present likely central area; conical perforation; half extant. D 14 mm; thickness 8 mm; perforation D 4 mm. F1633; Period 1C. | 3 | Annular, slightly biconical; translucent yellow/green glass; wound; complete. D 13 mm; thickness 6 mm, perforation D 5 mm. F3526; Phase D. |
| 2 | Irregular annular; amber, tawny orange with heavily weathered surfaces; sub-circular, thicker on one side than the other, irregular perforation; half extant. D 21 mm; maximum thickness 23 mm; perforation D 5 mm. F3909; Period 1C. | 4 | Long cylindrical; opaque green glass; drawn; one end chipped. D 5 mm; L 13 mm; perforation D 1.5 mm. F7600; Phase D. |
| | | 5 | Disc cylindrical; jet; rounded outer edge and cutting facets on flat face; chipped in places. D 17 mm; thickness 6 mm; perforation D 3 mm. F451; Period 6. |