

# DAY OF ARCHAEOLOGY – LAARC LOTTERY PART 4 (METAL FINDS)

June 29, 2012 Andrew Fetherston Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2012, Finds, Museum Archaeology Abbott, Archaeology, Artifact, Becket, Canterbury, Canterbury Cathedral, Cathedral Crypt, Clocks, Counties of England, Horology, http, Kent, London, London Archaeology Service, Measurement, metal artefacts, metal detecting, metal objects, Metal store, mitred head, Museum of London Archaeology Service, Sundials, Surrey, Thomas Becket, Timekeeping, waterfront site

Now onto our Metal store – this entire store holds a host of treasures, and more coffin nails than you'd care to imagine!

Our first lucky object from shelf 496 comes from site [ABO92 – Abbott's Lane](#), excavated in 1992 by the then Museum of London Archaeology Service (MOLAS). Being a waterfront site this excavation produced a wealth of metal objects – all surviving due to the aerobic conditions of burial.

Our object is a medieval pilgrim badge that depicts the mitred head of Thomas Becket dating to c.1530 – 1570. An additional badge of better condition was also excavated from the site. The cult of Thomas Becket was one of the most popular in London during the medieval period – not surprising as he was also considered the city's unofficial patron saint. These badges would have been collected at the site of pilgrimage – this one may have therefore travelled all the way from Canterbury in Kent, before being lost or perhaps purposefully discarded. The badge is a miniature imitation of the reliquary of a life-sized mitred bust of Becket that was held in Canterbury Cathedral.



*Lead pilgrim badge, depicting the mitred head of Thomas Becket dating to c.1530 – 1570, and from shelf 496 of our metal store*



*Publication photograph of a similar pilgrim badge to the one found on our shelf (MOLAS Monograph 19)*

Our second object, stored on shelf 593, is from the more recent excavation SAT00. Found in the upper stratigraphy this is a beautifully preserved pocket sundial.



*Copper pocket sundial, from shelf 593*

A great source for comparison with these metal artefacts is the *Portable Antiquities Scheme* which holds the records of thousands of objects discovered, mainly through metal detecting, from across the country. Our sundial, excavated from the site of *St. Paul's Cathedral Crypt (SAT00)*, has a direct parallel with one found in Surrey.

Quoting from PAS object entry SUR-7790B4:

“These sundials are known as simple ring dials or poke dials (‘poke’ being an archaic word for pocket). The sliding collar would be set into position for the month of the year and, when the dial was suspended vertically, the sun would shine through the hole in the lozenge-shaped piece, through the slot, and onto the interior of the ring. The hour could then be read by looking at the closest gradation mark to the spot of light on the interior of the ring.”

<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/492755>

Next it's our Textile artefacts. Again, segregated and stored in a controlled environment, this store is humidified to preserve these important materials. Tweet using **#dayofarch** or **#LAARC**, or message us below, a number between 784 and 910 to discover, completely at random, what that shelf holds...