Some recent finds from Wales: an early medieval brooch from Powys and three medieval artefacts from south Wales

By Mark Redknap

Amongst the wide range of artefacts found in Wales during 2006, and reported under the Portable Antiquities Reporting Scheme, some stand out as providing most interesting additions to our knowledge of early medieval and medieval metalwork. This note highlights four such objects. Reports on items of treasure found in 2006 will appear in the *Treasure Annual Report* for the year.

Penannular brooch from Llanfihangel Cwmdu, Powys (Fig. 1a)
A small early medieval copper-alloy penannular brooch, commonly known as type 'G1' was found by Dr Mike Williams while out walking in August 2006 in the vicinity of Llanfihangel Cwmdu, Powys (Portable Antiquities database no. NMGWPA 2006.187).

The brooch belongs to subgroup G1.8, having plain hoop and terminals. The hoop, of circular cross-section, is slightly oval (external diameter 20.7mm) and missing one terminal and the pin. The surviving terminal is faceted on both faces, and one face displays a lightly incised mark, in the form of a small cross. This is a secondary addition to the brooch, and may not be accidental.

The terminal form and hoop size of the Llanfihangel Cwmdu brooch matches that of a plain silver example from St Kew's Steps near Worlebury, Avon, and one with ribbed hoops and plain terminals from Caerwent Eastgate cemetery (type G1.6; Dickinson 1982, fig. 5, no. 31, fig. 4, no. 7).

Small native penannular brooches of this type are found in Wales around the Bristol Channel, with a significant concentration in Somerset (Fowler 1963; Dickinson 1982). Those from the south coast of Wales share attributes indicative of a regional style of brooch characteristic of western Britain, derived ultimately from small Romano-British antecedents: continuity with late Roman regional workshop traditions.

This discovery is notable on at least two counts. Firstly, it is a rare instance these days of metalwork being discovered by chance without the aid of a metal-detector. Secondly, it was found in a freshwater spring pool. Abrasion in such a context would account for the rounding of the terminal facets. The findspot and significance of this sixth-century brooch, found on high ground to the east of Llan-gors Lake, will be the subject of future study.

Annular brooch from Llancarfan, Vale of Glamorgan (Fig. 1b)
A decorated copper-alloy annular brooch with multiple collets was found by Mr Tom Kelly (Portable Antiquities database no. NMGW-D8FB76). The frame, which has a restriction for the pin (now missing), has an external diameter of 47.3mm. It is decorated with eight integral (cast-in-one) raised collets, each slightly irregular. Their circular recesses contain a white calcite deposit, probably calcium carbonate, which when mixed with an organic binder would have formed a putty to hold glass beads in place (as in the case of the beads on some cased mirrors). The sections of frame between the collets bear rows of fine punched dots, and the inner edge of the frame is decorated with a single row of larger punched dots. The outer edge is bevelled.

Copper-alloy annular brooches with integral raised collets are known from Wales from Caerleon (missing its six glass settings: Redknap 1994, fig. 8), Llantrithyd (settings missing; NMW acc. no.
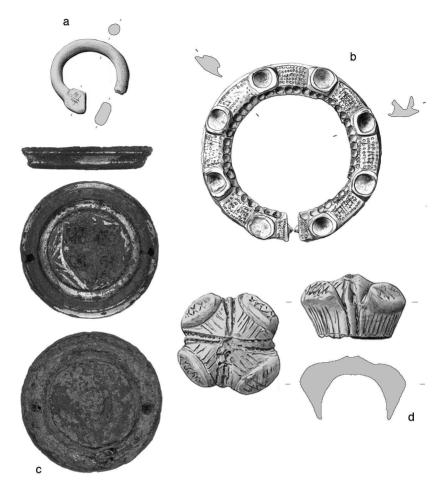
Fig. 1. **a**, Penannular brooch from near Llanfihangel Cwmdu, Powys; **b**, annular brooch from Llancarfan, Vale of Glamorgan; **c**, armorial mount from Runston, Monmouthshire; **d**, pommel cap from Cynffig, Bridgend. Scale 1:1. *Drawings by T. Daly (a, b, d); photographs by M. Lodwick.*

97.15H), and Rest Bay, Porthcawl (six collets set with blue and white glass beads; Redknap 2003). The Rest Bay brooch is similar to one set with blue glass pellets from Alms Lane, Norwich (dated AD 1275–1400; Margeson 1993, fig. 7, no. 58). A variation of this type has occurred in a fourteenth-century context in Winchester (Biddle and Hinton 1990, no. 2027). Diameters of similar examples from Ireland range from 26.5mm to 47.5mm (Deevy 1998, 119). Other examples are illustrated by Hattatt (1989, fig. 112, nos 1716, 1718).

Armorial mount from Runston, Monmouthshire (Fig. 1c)
A decorative gilt copper-alloy armorial mount was recovered by Mr Tony Blackley from the vicinity of Runston. The mount comprises a frame (external diameter 37mm), around a flat enamelled roundel or circular plaque (diameter 24mm), which is held in place by hammering the back edge of the frame over the roundel edge. Two roughly symmetrical holes pierce the frame for stud or rivet attachments (now

missing). The roundel is largely filled by a shield with cross. This is surrounded by a wreath of three pairs of long leaves filling the space between the shield and inner frame, in thin bands of white enamel, against a reserved, gilded background. Each leaf is long and narrow, with indented edges. There appears to be a trefoil at the junction of each pair of leaves. The champlevé enamel is in poor condition, and it is difficult to establish detail and colour, particularly on the shield, which may have animals in the upper quarters.

The general form and decorative style of the Runston mount relate this object to larger armorial mounts. Best known, with an external diameter of 74mm, is the mount found in 1923 during clearing of the Middle Ward at Harlech Castle, Gwynedd. Associated with Glyn Dŵr's occupation of castle *c*. AD 1404–08, it may form a strap junction on a horse harness (Peers 1921–22, 70). Three mounts with external diameters of 60mm came from a Thames foreshore deposit at Swan Lane, London (from a phase dated AD 1400–50; Egan and Pritchard 1991, 181–2). A mount with an external diameter of 60mm, from Rievaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire, has a similar background to the Runston mount and bears the arms of Abbot John III, who held office in 1449 (Dunning 1965, 53–5). A slightly smaller gilded armorial mount found at the Ashwell site, Ely, has a diameter of 45mm (Mortimer, Regan and Lucy 2005, fig. 4.16, no. 281). The Runston mount is therefore likely to be of fifteenth-century date, but its comparatively small size suggests that it probably served a different function—on a small chest, sword belt or box (for a mount of similar size, bearing the badge of Richard II see Campbell 1987, 524, no. 725). Circular mounts are also found attached to mazers (drinking bowls) but can have different profiles and methods of fastening. This is evident on a fifteenth-century burr maple mazer which may have belonged to the Collegiate foundation at Clynnog Fawr, Gwynedd (NMW acc. no. A(L) 466). This has a silver gilt mount engraved with a floral motif in the centre of the base. The mount has a diameter of 43mm, a raised profile, and was fastened to the base by a single, central spike or rivet which passed through the wood to the external base surface (Anon 1895, 144).

The fine workmanship and heraldry place the Runston mount in an 'elite' context. The object has been acquired by Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (NMW acc. no. 2007. 29H).

Dagger pommel cap from Cynffig, Bridgend (Fig. 1d)
A copper-alloy dagger pommel cap was found by Mr Phil George (Portable Antiquities database no. NMGW-D61CA0). The pommel cap, which once fitted the rounded end of the dagger handle, has four lobes, each separated by two deep grooves with incised zigzags, conjoined at the top to form a cross. The lobes are finely engraved with cross hatching, and vertical lines rung around the collar. The groove around the lower edge of the cap retains traces of an incised zigzag. The form of the cap, which has a height of 19.8mm and basal internal diameter of 17.8mm, suggests a fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century date. A similarly lobed pommel cap, though without the finely engraved decoration, was reported from Pembrokeshire in 1998 (Department of Archaeology & Numismatics archive, National Museum Wales).

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