

Artefact

Description

Who owned it?



Great seal of Elizabeth I

Wealthy man



Riding spur

Wealthy man



Clay pipe

All



Window glass

Wealthy man/woman



Nail

Ordinary man



Animal bone ice skate

Ordinary man/woman/child



Toynton pottery

Ordinary woman



Bourne pottery

Ordinary woman



Gold ring

Wealthy woman



Animal bone and shell

All



Bronze mortar

Wealthy man/woman



Hooked tag

Ordinary woman



Dress fastener

Wealthy woman

Further information about the artefacts

Great Seal of Elizabeth I (wealthy man)

Seals were used on most documents in the past, to close them and to prove that the document really was from the person who sent it. The seal was made by pressing a seal matrix into melted wax to leave an impression. Most seals had a picture of the owner and a motto or legend around the edge to identify them. Outside of London few people would have known what the Queen looked like so the Great Seal allowed Elizabeth's image to travel throughout her kingdom. Only a wealthy man would be close enough to the Queen to be allowed to use this seal.

Riding spur (wealthy man)

Metal spurs were worn on the heels of riding boots. The prong part stuck out at the back of the boot and was pressed against the horse's sides to urge it to go faster. This type of spur is called a rowel spur. The forked end of the neck of the

spur (the rowel box) would have held a small spiked wheel (a rowel). The spur would have been attached to the wearer's boot by leather straps. As well as being functional spurs were often of fashionable importance for wealthy men and some were very decorative. This particular spur is quite a good quality one. Although horses were commonly kept as work animals, you would have needed to be reasonably comfortably off to be able to afford to keep a riding horse.

Clay pipe (all)

Sir Walter Raleigh is credited with making tobacco smoking popular in the late 1500s. Tobacco was smoked by men, women and children in clay pipes. The pipes were cheap to buy and usually thrown away after a few smokes, which is why they are often found by archaeologists today.

Window glass (wealthy people and priest)

Window glass was very expensive in the Tudor period. It was found in high status buildings such as churches and in wealthy people's homes, but poorer people had wooden shutters at their windows instead of glass.

Iron nail (ordinary man)

This nail would have been used by a carpenter. Carpenters' nails were hand-made in a blacksmith's forge. Unlike modern nails which are usually round or oval in section, Tudor nails had four sharp edges on the flank.

Animal bone ice skate (all)

This ice skate is made out of an animal leg bone. The skate was securely tied onto the bottom of the shoe with leather laces. One end of it has been broken but the drilled lace hole in the other end can clearly be seen. The skate would have been cheap and easy to make so could have been used by ordinary people. The skater propelled himself/herself along using a stick with an iron point.

Toynton pottery (ordinary woman)

This is part of a Toynton pottery pancheon. Toynton was an important centre for pottery production in Lincolnshire. A pancheon was a wide earthenware bowl with shallow sloping sides that was used in a kitchen or dairy for storing milk. It was glazed on the inside so that liquid could be kept in it. Dairying work would have been done by ordinary women.

Bourne pottery (ordinary woman)

This jug was made in Bourne which was an important Lincolnshire pottery making centre, concentrating mainly on jugs, large bowls and cisterns, for brewing beer. This jug would mostly have been used in ordinary homes.

Gold ring (wealthy woman)

This ring is made of gold and has an inscription around its inner face. It was most probably a love token and would have been an expensive item so would have belonged to a wealthy woman.

Animal bone and shell (all)

Animal bones and oyster shells are often found by archaeologists excavating old rubbish pits. They can tell a lot about the sorts of foods people ate. Unlike today, oysters were an inexpensive food available to everyone.

Bronze mortar (wealthy people)

This mortar is made of bronze and is decorated with two Tudor roses. It dates from the reign of Henry VIII. A mortar was used with a pestle for grinding grains, spices etc. This mortar would have belonged to a wealthy household.

Hooked tag (ordinary woman)

Hooked tags like this one were very popular in Tudor times. They were used as clothes fasteners. They worked rather like a 'hook and eye' fastening with the tag being sewn to the garment by the rectangular loop on one side of an opening and the hook being pushed through a cord or straight into the fabric itself on the other side.

Dress fastener (wealthy woman)

This decorative hooked dress fastener could have been used with a chain. It is a good quality item and would most probably have belonged to quite a wealthy woman.