CANNON

Unique ID: MAS-D100180

Object type certainty: Probably
Workflow status: Published

This item appears to be a small calibre black powder weapon, such as a swivel gun, commonly mounted on vessels throughout the age of sail as well as being used in terrestrial settings. The weapon is approximately 750 mm in overall length, with external muzzle diameter of approximately 110 mm flaring to an external diameter of 180 mm at the breech end. The condition of the artefact is poor due to heave concretion, though visual analysis suggests it is a muzzle loading gun. No Trunnions for mounting the weapon are immediately apparent despite the concretion.

As their name suggests, swivel guns were small cannons mounted on iron staves or sticks so that the point of aim could be quickly and easily changed. They are essentially close in defence weapons, designed to be fired over short distances to deter attempts to board the vessel which they are defending. Commonly the ammunition used would be cannister, a small case packed with musket balls or the like, which upon firing would spread out in a cone potentially hitting multiple targets. Such a weapon would be particularly effective against small boats or boarding parties where large numbers of enemies would be packed together.

Notes:

This find comes from an unidentified wreck known as the Brandy Wreck, situated east of Portland Harbour in Weymouth Bay, Dorset. An investigation of the newly discovered wreck was carried out by Wessex Archaeology (2016) in conjunction with The Shipwreck Project, a local organisation who discovered the site, and at the behest of Historic England. The lack of datable evidence from secure contexts, structural elements of a vessel and other factors meant that a precise date or name of the vessel could not be determined. Broadly, the vessel is thought to date between 1600 and 1825 AD and may relate to a naval or merchant vessel, or potentially be a chance accumulation of artefacts. Vessel currently has no NRHE or HER designation numbers.

This item was found with a ships timber (MAS-D100177), length of braided copper (MAS-D100183) and a flat strip of copper (MAS-D100184).

Class: ARMOUR AND WEAPONS **Sub class:** firearm

Subsequent actions

Current location of find: With Finder

Wreck details

Droit number: 091/18

Chronology

Broad period: POST MEDIEVAL

Period from: POST MEDIEVAL
Period to: NINETEENTH CENTURY

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1
Length: 750 mm
Diameter: 180 mm

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Tuesday 22nd May 2018

Personal details

Found by: This information is restricted for your login.

Other reference numbers

NRHE monument number: N/A
Droit ID: 091/18

Materials and construction

Primary material: Iron
Completeness: Uncertain

Spatial metadata

County or Unitary authority: Dorset (County)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: SY7375
Four figure Latitude: 50.57411317
Four figure longitude: -2.38265074
1:25K map: SY7375
1:10K map: SY75SW
Display four figure position on What3Words
Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Diving
Discovery circumstances: Brandy Wreck
Current location: With Finder

Wessex Archaeology, 2016. *Brandy Wreck Weymouth Archaeological Services in Relation to Marine Protection Undesignated Site Assessment*. Salisbury : Wessex Archaeology, ,

finefinds.org.uk