

15th Century style Pewter Button



Jack of Banyard
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Design:

The design of this button is a flatten disk. In the center are a trefoil with a stem, and a raised border with dots, and a plain back. Shank has a loop on the stem. This button is based on button found in The Museum of London's Dress Accessories book.

In looking though buttons the closest I found was a button dated in the range of 1400-1450's. This button is similar except it has a wavy star (see Fig 1). There are no other buttons shown with designs in the center except the wavy star

The same wavy star pattern (Fig 2) is found in a mount setting. This mount also dates to the 1400-1450's and made from out of tin. There are mount also from the 1400-1450's that are trefoils (Fig 3). With these mounts and button, I decided to make my Button bases on the Fig 1 but with a trefoil styled off of Fig 3 instead of the wavy star.

Process:

I decided to make the button out of lead free pewter. The mold is a three part soap stone mold. Which is the style mold would have been used in the 1400's.

The soap stone started with 3 equal thicknesses of soap stone (cut from the same slab) the surface that would be touching another surface, was sanded smooth. Once smoothed the piece had to be able to be routinely matched together to get constant castings. To do this channels were drilled into the soap stone in each piece. Once done pewter was poured into the holes. This is to create guide pins; this is shown in Fig 4.

After the guide pins are in, a center line is drawn on the bottom stone. This is done by putting in just on of the top stone to use as a guide. After the line is drawn the stone, the top stone is removed and the other stone is placed in and line is drawn again. This is done incase there is any difference in the two stone. These two lines well are used to center the button one.

After the face of the button was craved into the stone. The next part is to make the back and stem. I did this one side at a time, Making just half the back and stem at a time. This is so the pewter test piece can be used to match up the uncraved side. This allows the back, stem and loop be traced to the other stone. I did this to keep the seams close as possible and limit sharp edges.

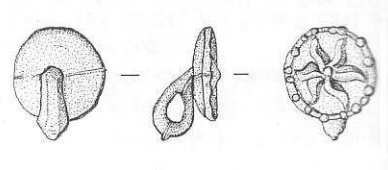
Results:

With this mold I created 30 buttons to use on a cotehardie. The buttons turned out a little larger then I wanted, this was do to the fact that I made my circle template on the computer and when printed I didn't verify the size was correct. Also the back centerline is off center. Though I took steps to make sure that the center line was marked and that the face of the button was based off this line. While doing a test cast of the half stem and sprew. The mold was dropped breaking the one top piece into three pieces. To fix this I replaced the top piece with new soap stone and carved the stem and sprew again. The new stone thickness was less the original stone, which through the back off center.

Bibliography:

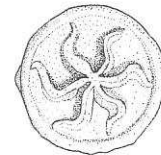
The Museum of London: Dress accessories ~ ISBN 0 11 290444 0

Fig 1



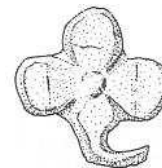
Dress Accessories – pg. 275 Fig 178 1381

Fig 2



Dress Accessories – pg. 173 Fig 111 855

Fig 3



Dress Accessories – pg 202 Fig 127 1090

Fig 4

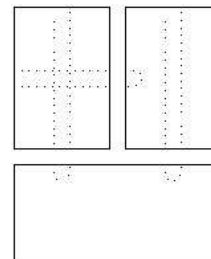


Diagram of a three piece mold