

TRIANGULAR SHAPED LEAD WEIGHTS

STORIES FROM THE TOILET

Although a small number of the triangular-shaped lead weights bear initials, the majority do not, and following close examination, they don't appear to be of a standard size or weight. What they do have in common with each other though, is their triangular shape, a central hole running from top to bottom, and in some of the specimens we have in our collection, there are the remains of iron in the holes. However, it is worth noting that the majority of our weights are iron free.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, The Grantham Canal barges delivered an enormous amount of steaming Nottingham night soil that was liberally spread across the fields as fertilizer, and in amongst those valuable heaps of human refuse were hidden thousands of objects that people had either lost or deliberately thrown away. The lead weights in question could arguably have arrived on the field alongside those night soil related objects and yet, there is a nagging uncertainty that they could have nothing to do with night soil at all.

The problem we currently face is to determine whether or not, the triangular-shaped lead weights were a product of the night soil field deliveries or, that they were made and used locally for some purpose we have yet to determine.

To date, we have been unable to locate any comparable artefacts or related studies to help create the foundation for a cross-reference analysis of the lead weights in question. In short, it would be extremely useful to build a body of learning from the find details relating to other similar shaped lead objects that people are finding. Their weights, sizes, markings and find locations (landscape association) would help this artefact investigation immensely.

Not knowing much at all, leaves so many unanswered questions. Are they just a local or regional phenomenon, or are we looking at an artefact that was used extensively for some currently unknown purpose on a national scale?

The search for the truth behind the mystery of the triangular-shaped lead weights has just begun. It is going to take some, 'fishing about' which means, we will have to cast our collaboration net far and wide. Once the investigation into these triangular mysteries has been completed, our findings will be published as part of The Field Detectives portfolio of historic landscape assemblage studies.

They are not gold, silver or even what many people might describe as of significant historical importance, and yet, they remain inspirationally bewitching.

Wouldn't you like to know what they are?

