

SA529583

Post Medieval "Billy and Charley" Shadwell Dock lead figure

Price

Sold**Item Reference: SA529583****Date of manufacture: 19th Century**

Dimensions

Height = 15 cm (5.9")

Width = 5 cm (2.0")

Depth = 5 cm (2.0")

Description

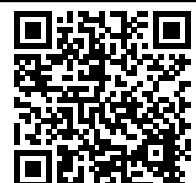
Billy and Charlie's, otherwise known as the Shadwell Dock forgeries were produced in a variety of forms, often as badges but also figures, vases, vessels ect. The majority made by the labourers or navigators (navies) Billy Smith and Charley Eaton. In the 1840s and 50's there were large excavations and dredging operations which threw up a number of medieval artefacts. Billy and Charley whilst mudlarking in the Thames had found a medieval medallion which they sold for a handsome sum. By 1857 lacking further such finds the enterprising pair decided to manufacture these objects instead, casting them in a lead and copper alloy. The number, letters or marks found on the bases or edges of these pieces made no sense, presumably since the forgers were illiterate. Billy and Charley worked on the construction site of the new Shadwell docks to continue with their work, but in 1858 a lecture at the British Archaeological Association claimed them as forgeries, although in a consequent court case, it was said even the most badly educated forger would not produce such blatantly ridiculous items and therefore they must be genuine. There continued to be a strong market for the pieces until ...

Internal Ref: 120

Seller Details

Robert Belcher Antiques

Worcestershire United Kingdom By appointment only.



Tel: 07929 011224 or 01905 622468

International Tel: +44 7929 011224 or +44 1905 622468