

**The Cuddesdon bowl**

Anglo-Saxon, probably made in Kent, early 7th century AD

Found at Cuddesdon, Oxfordshire

This dark blue squat jar or bowl is a remarkable survival from the Dark Ages, when glass vessels were much rarer and more crudely formed than during Roman times. Around the upper part is a thin applied trail arranged in ten tight spirals while the lower part of the body is adorned with thirteen vertical loops. The bowl was discovered in 1847 in an Anglo-Saxon grave of noble rank during alterations in front of the gateway of the Bishop of Oxford's palace at Cuddesdon. It was found together with another blue glass bowl with thicker zigzag trailing (see figure below), a bronze bucket, and an inlaid bronze plaque. They may well have formed part of a princely burial. The bowl went missing after the effects of Bishop Wilberforce were sold, but was rediscovered in 1971 in a house in Leicestershire where it was being used as a flower vase.

Height 9.1 cm; greatest diameter 11.5 cm

AN 1980.269. Purchased with the aid of grants from the National Art Collections Fund, the MGC/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, and the Friends of the Ashmolean

**Bibliography:**

Anon., *Archaeological Journal* 4 (1847), pp. 157-9; J.Y. Akerman, *Remains of Pagan Saxondom* (London 1855), pp. 11-12, pl. VI, 1; D.B. Harden, 'Glass vessels in Britain and Ireland, AD 400-1000', in D.B. Harden (ed.), *Dark Age Britain. Studies Presented to E. T. Leeds* (London 1956), pp. 141-2, no. 13, type VIII.a,iii; T.M. Dickinson, *Cuddesdon and Dorchester-on-Thames: Two Early Saxon 'Princely' Sites in Wessex*, *British Archaeological Reports* 1 (Oxford 1974), pp. 12-15, pls 1-2

