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Adam Lusher Tuesday 15 July 2014

Nanteos Cup: 'Holy Grail' stolen from sick woman's home



Medieval chroniclers claimed Joseph of Arimathea took it to Britain

In what some might call a real-life quest for the Holy Grail, police were last night hunting burglars who stole a religious relic said to be the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper.

West Mercia Police confirmed that the Nanteos Cup, a wooden bowl which may or may not have links to the Holy Land and the power to bestow eternal life, had been stolen in a burglary in Weston Under Penyard, a small village in Herefordshire.

A police spokeswoman said: "I don't want to say we are hunting the Holy Grail, but police are investigating the burglary."

"The item stolen is known as the Nanteos Cup. If you do a bit of Googling, you will see some people think it is the Holy Grail."

According to legend – and Google - the cup was used by Joseph of Arimathea to catch Christ's blood while interring Him in his tomb.

Medieval chroniclers claimed Joseph took the cup to Britain and founded a line of guardians to keep it safe. It ended up in Nanteos Mansion near Aberystwyth, Wales, attracting visitors who drank from it, believing it had healing powers.

It now measures 10cm by 8.5cm – after bits were nibbled off by the sick in the hope of a miracle cure.

Belief in the cup's holy powers appears to have persisted despite a 2004 television documentary in which experts found it dated from the 14th Century, some 1,400 years after the Crucifixion.

Descendants of the Nanteos' original occupants are reported to have recently kept it in a bank vault, but loaned it to a seriously ill woman with connections to the family.

The burglars are believed to have raided her house while she was in hospital.

Appealing for help recovering the cup (or grail), West Mercia Police said: "It is a dark wood cup and was kept in a blue velvet bag. Anyone with any information is asked to call West Mercia Police."