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Relic thought to be 'Holy Grail', stolen in burglary



Ancient relic, Nanteos Cup, once thought to be the legendary Holy Grail, stolen in burglary at Weston under Penyard, near Ross

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AN ancient relic that was once thought to be the Holy Grail has been stolen from a house in Herefordshire.

In the last few minutes, [West Mercia Police](#) has issued a statement saying that a wooden chalice, known as the Nanteos Cup, has been stolen in a burglary at Weston under Penyard, near Ross.

The property was broken into between 9.30am on Monday, July 7, and 9.30am yesterday (Monday, July 14). The police name the Nanteos Cup as reported stolen, describing it as a dark wood cup kept in a blue velvet bag.

According to Wikipedia, the Nanteos Cup is a medieval bowl, held for many years at Nanteos Mansion, near Aberystwyth, which legend claimed to be the Holy Grail.

According to tradition, the Holy Grail was brought to Britain from the Holy Land by Joseph of Arimathea, who is said to have founded a religious settlement at Glastonbury. During the Dissolution of the Monasteries, some of the monks fled to Strata Florida Abbey in mid-Wales, bringing the relic with them.

After that abbey closed, the cup ended up in the hands of the Powell family of Nanteos through marriage.

The cup had a reputation for healing and people would drink water from it in the hope of curing their ailments. The Nanteos cup deteriorated greatly over the years and is no longer at the mansion, as it went with the last member of the Powell family when they moved out of Nanteos in the 1950s.

One source says German composer Richard Wagner stayed at Nanteos and was said to have been intrigued by the legend, which eventually inspired him to compose the opera Parsifal. However, although the artistic dilettante George Powell probably met Wagner, there is no record of him visiting Nanteos.

In a 1998 BBC2 documentary, Dr Juliette Wood of the Folklore Society confirmed that the cup was a wych elm mazer or food bowl, probably of mediaeval origin.

Anyone with any information about the burglary is asked to call West Mercia Police on 101, quoting incident number 146s of July 14.

You can also give information, without giving your name, by calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or by visiting crimestoppers-uk.org.