**Public access description**

**Object Type**
The Order of the Garter was founded by Edward III in 1348 and is the oldest order of chivalry in Europe. The collar, introduced by Henry VIII, consists of 26 Tudor roses within blue garters, with an image of St George killing the dragon hanging by a gold tassel. The image is known as the 'Greater George', while the badge shown here is called the 'Lesser George'. It would be worn for less formal occasions and shows St George and the dragon surrounded by a garter with the motto of the Order. People There are only 26 members of the order at any time. This badge was owned by Thomas Wentworth, who was knighted by James I and made Earl of Strafford by Charles I in 1640. He represented Yorkshire in Parliament and pressed for greater honesty and efficiency in government. His occasional ruthlessness and greed made him many enemies and in 1641, after a set-back in the war with Scotland, he was tried by Parliament and executed.

**Design & Designing**
The collar could not be set with precious stones, but the other insignia could be decorated according to taste and income. This badge is made of coloured enamels and gold, while Charles I's insignia, which he wore to his execution, was set with over 400 diamonds. Condition The weapon carried by St George is missing. It would have been a sword or a spear.

**Descriptive line**
Badge of the Order of the Garter

**Dimensions**
Height: 9.3 cm maximum, estimated, Width: 4.5 cm estimated

**Museum number**
273-1869

**Object history note**
Said to have belonged to Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford (born London, 1593, died there 1641), who was elected a Knight of the Garter in 1640, but never installed. Made in London

**URL**
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O10972/order-of-the-garter-badge-unknown/