Bleeding dish

Place of origin: England (made)
Date: 18th century (made)
Artist/Maker: Unknown
Materials and Techniques: Pewter
Credit Line: Lt. Col. G. B. Croft-Lyons Bequest
Museum number: M.1067-1926
Gallery location: British Galleries, Room 52a, case 3

Public access description
Object Type
When blood was taken from patients in the 18th century, it was usually drained into small bowls with a single handle, known as porringers. These bowls were chiefly used for soft foods like soup and porridge, but those made specifically for use as bleeding bowls have a series of graduated rings cut into the interior to indicate the quantity of blood to be taken. Use
In the past blood-letting was widely used as a universal cure for most illnesses, and even today it can prove beneficial for certain types of heart disease. The blood was taken from a vein in the arm. The recommended quantity to be taken varied from two or three fluid ounces up to twenty fluid ounces in extreme cases (57 or 87 millilitres up to 114 millilitres).
History
Most of the pewter bleeding bowls which survive date from the 18th century. However, they were shown in pewter manufacturers’ catalogues until comparatively late. One authority writing in the 1920s noted that 'blood porringers, cupping dishes and bleeding dishes are still made in pewter'.

Dimensions
Height: 4.4 cm, Diameter: 19.1 cm

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Object history note
Made in England

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78421/bleeding-dish-unknown/