

Style Icon - 200 years B.C.

29 December 2006

A rare and exquisite 2,000-year-old gold choker known as the Newark Torc has been acquired for £350,000 by Newark & Sherwood District Council's Museum Service, made possible by a £285,000 grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF). Dating back to between 200 and 50 BC, it is one of the finest examples of Celtic jewellery ever recovered in the UK.

Image



The Newark Torc

The Torc is an exceptional piece of craftsmanship, even by today's standards and two thousand years ago it would have been even more so. It is believed to have been a highly treasured symbol of power and influence and would only have been worn by men or women of exceptionally high status.

The addition of silver and copper to the gold created a deep yellow gold alloy which was then used to make an astonishing 50 metres of hand-rolled wires. These have been expertly formed into eight ropes and shaped into a collar. The two cast hollow rings at each end are decorated with intricate spiral patterns and stylised animal and plant forms - a design that flourished all over Europe from 5th century BC to 1st century AD.

Stephen Johnson, Head of the NHMF, said: "This piece of jewellery is an outstanding example of Iron Age craftsmanship. It's remarkable to think that a style so old can still be fashionable more than two millennia later. This National

Heritage Memorial Fund grant will ensure that this very special part of our heritage is put on display where people can enjoy it for many years to come."

Councillor Tony Roberts, Leader of Newark & Sherwood District Council said: "The discovery of the Newark Torc is not only one of the most exquisite examples of British craftsmanship from the pre Roman era but also one which challenges our understanding of Iron Age communities. Newark and Sherwood is home to much of the nation's history, from Robin Hood to the Civil War and we are delighted that the District Council has been able to secure this exceptional and rare item for the future."

The Torc received a ceremonial burial, probably as part of a religious ceremony, with its final resting place in a pit near Newark, Nottinghamshire, but the exact location is still a closely guarded secret.

Torcs are only found in Northern Europe and the majority have been found in England, the Newark Torc is one of the finest examples ever found. Torcs and chokers have been a popular style of jewellery from earliest times and examples can be found throughout British design history right up to the modern day.

Notes to editors

The remaining funding has been reached through the support of £20,000 from the Art Treasures Fund and a grant of £5,000 from the Headley Foundation and numerous private and charitable donations. Anyone wishing to contribute to the purchase and interpretation fundraising should contact Newark & Sherwood District Council directly.

High resolution images of the Newark Torc are available on request.

Further information

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