

Shropshire's prehistoric treasures saved for all to enjoy

25 November 2021

Thanks to a £11,100 National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) grant announced today, seven separate prehistoric hoards discovered in north Shropshire will join the permanent collection of Shropshire Museums.

Nationally important treasures

The prehistoric hoards range in type and design and include jewellery, daggers, chariot fittings, spearheads and razors.

One of the highlights – believed to be a devotional offering – is a unique package consisting of a lead sheet wrapped around two gold pieces of jewellery, known as lock rings.

Another is an extremely rare iron axe head, one of the first to have been made in Britain from this “new” metal at the dawn of the Iron Age.

Shropshire marks the spot

The hoards were discovered in the wetland landscape of North Shropshire over the past three years. They point to the possibility of a series of deposits and rituals that were repeated for more than a thousand years.

Clare Featherstone, Shropshire Council's head of culture, leisure and tourism, said: “[the hoards] suggest that around 3,000 years ago north Shropshire was a place of great importance. Hopefully further study of these finds by our museums team will help to explain why.”

Staying in Shropshire and open to the public

Dr Simon Thurley CBE, Chair of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: “We are very pleased to have supported Shropshire Museums with £11,100 to help acquire these rare and nationally important Bronze Age hoards. It is entirely

fitting that these items will be permanently displayed at Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, close to where they were discovered.”

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The Shropshire Council service raised a total of £24,600 to purchase the hoards. Alongside their NHMF grant, funding has come from the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society (Pagett and Betton Fund), The Friends of Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery and a crowdfunding campaign.

How to see the hoards

The finds are on display at [Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery](#) until 12 December 2021. They appear alongside the Shropshire Sun Pendant, or bulla, which was discovered in September 2018 and acquired by the British Museum in 2020.

The bulla has been described as ‘one of the most significant pieces of Bronze Age gold metalwork’ ever discovered in Britain.

Fay Bailey, museum and archives manager for Shropshire Council, said: “We are currently working in partnership with the British Museum to create an exciting new Prehistory Gallery for Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery. Here we will be able to display these objects and share their stories with our visitors.”

Shropshire Museums are also planning to develop a touring exhibition in 2022 to take the hoards out to venues across Shropshire.

NHMF funding available

For over 40 years, NHMF has provided financial assistance towards the acquisition, preservation and maintenance of some of the UK’s finest heritage at risk of loss.

Alongside our [standard funding stream](#), our [£40m COVID-19 Response Fund](#) is currently available and providing a lifeline for nationally important heritage assets affected by the pandemic.