

Silverdale Hoard to be unveiled at Lancaster City Museum

15 October 2013

A major collection of Viking silver that was buried for over 1,000 years is to go on display at Lancaster City Museum.

Image



Trustees of the British Museum
Silverdale Hoard

Known as the Silverdale Hoard, the collection is made up of more than 200 items believed to date from around 900 AD. The pieces include beautifully crafted jewellery together with coins from several Viking kingdoms of Britain, from Europe and even Arabia.

Also included are 141 fragments of arm-rings and ingots which had been chopped into smaller pieces. These are known as hacksilver, which the Vikings used as money.

The hoard had been buried in a lead pouch under a field in Silverdale, where it was discovered by a local metal detectorist in September 2011.

The following December it was declared Treasure in line with the Treasure Act 1996. It was later valued at nearly £110,000.

Following the valuation, staff from Lancashire County Council's museum service, supported by colleagues at Lancaster City Council, made successful bids for funds from national arts and heritage organisations to buy the hoard and make sure it stays in the county.

The hoard has been acquired by Lancashire County Council's museums service thanks to a grant of £45,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which aims to save the most significant and outstanding parts of our heritage for the nation, along with £33,000 from the Art Fund and £18,000 from the Victoria and Albert Purchase Grant Fund.

County Councillor Marcus Johnstone, Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services, said: "This superb exhibition in Lancaster will be the first chance for everyone to see one of the largest collections of Viking silver ever found in Britain.

"I should like to thank our museum staff, together with our colleagues at the city council, for their hard work and their commitment to keeping this historically important collection here in Lancashire.

"We are especially grateful to the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund and the Victoria and Albert Purchase Grant Fund without whose generous support, none of this would have been possible. Our exhibition has also received support from the Art Fund and The Headley Trust."

Councillor Ron Sands, Lancaster City Council's cabinet member with responsibility for leisure, culture and tourism, added: "The Silverdale Hoard is a unique reminder of our rich heritage. It gives us a fascinating glimpse into the history of the district.

"I'm delighted that this exhibition is taking place at Lancaster City Museum. I would urge everyone to take up this fabulous opportunity to visit this wonderful local find while it is available to view right here on our doorstep."

The exhibition, called 'The Silverdale Hoard – the story so far', runs from Friday 25 October until Saturday 21 December. The exhibition showcases the remarkable hoard in the condition in which it was discovered. It includes a full programme of family-friendly events starting on Saturday 26 October.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of NHMF, said: "This is wonderful news for Lancashire and the nation. The Silverdale Hoard offers a unique window into the lives and craftsmanship of the Vikings who inhabited Lancashire over 1,000 years

ago. The National Heritage Memorial Fund exists to make sure historic gems such as this are not lost from this country and so our trustees felt it was vital it should be saved for future generations to learn from and enjoy."

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund, said: "As one of the largest Viking hoards to be discovered in Britain, this collection comprising 200 items of silver coins, jewellery and ingots is not only important for Lancashire, but for the nation as a whole.

"Now part of the museum's collection, we are pleased to have supported the acquisition and an imaginative engagement programme that will enable the local community as well as the region's many visitors to celebrate and learn about Viking culture in the north west."

Julia Brettell, V&A National and Grants Officer, said: "The V&A Purchase Grant Fund is pleased to support the acquisition of the Silverdale Hoard, as it will enable Lancashire County Council's museum service to tell the story of the people of north Lancashire and Cumbria during the pivotal Viking period."

After previewing in Lancaster, the hoard will move to its permanent home at the Museum of Lancashire in Preston. It will then be on show from 15 February to 7 December 2014, before further research and conservation work takes place.

Lancaster City Museum is managed by Lancashire County Council on behalf of the city council. Opening times are 10am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday. Admission is free.

For more information about events and activities visit [Lancashire Museums website](#) or phone the museum on 01524 64637.

Notes for editors

Photo shows the Silverdale Hoard, group object and coin shot. Copyright The Trustees of the British Museum.

Reporters and photographers are invited to the official launch of the exhibition, 7pm- 8.30pm on Thursday 24 October at Lancaster City Museum. Attendees will include county and city councillors, staff from the county council's museum service, representatives from the three main funding organisations, and Dr Gareth Williams from the British Museum.

Dr Williams will be available for interview, together with senior museum staff, and we are happy to arrange interviews, filming and photo opportunities earlier in the day if needed.

Funding the purchase of the Silverdale Hoard: The acquisition of the Silverdale Hoard was generously supported by three major funding bodies and with a contribution from Lancaster City Council – through the Museum Acquisition budget – and a number of unsolicited donations by individuals and groups. In addition, the temporary exhibition launched in October 2013, was supported by the Art Fund and the Headley Trust.

Further information

For more information please contact James Steward / Natasha Hughes on 020 7591 6056 / 6143 or email james.steward@hlf.org.uk.