

January 2009

Staffordshire Hoard Goes On Show **In Stoke-on-Trent**

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery
February 13 to March 7, 2010.

One of the most anticipated FREE exhibitions of the winter will open its doors to the public on Saturday, February 13.

Featuring never-seen-before artefacts from the largest and most valuable ever find of Anglo-Saxon gold treasure, it is set to go on show in The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery in Stoke-on-Trent through to Sunday, March 7.

The £3.285m artefacts, known as 'The Staffordshire Hoard', comprise in excess of 1,500 individual items, mostly gold, with some silver. Many are decorated with precious stones.

Most of the treasure appears to date from the seventh century, and the supreme quality of the craftsmanship on many items indicates royal ownership.

The vast majority of the items are martial – war materials from the battlefield. The artefacts were discovered in what had been the heartland of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia, which was militarily aggressive and expansionist during the 7th century under kings Penda, Wulfhere and Aethelred. Some items are decorated in what is known as 'Anglo-Saxon Style II', which consists of strange animals, interlaced around each other, with intertwined jaws. Many are inlaid with garnets.

The hoard contains approximately 5kgs of gold and 2.5kg of silver. Sutton Hoo, the world-famous Anglo-Saxon burial ground in South East Suffolk, had 1.66kg of gold.

The hoard was first discovered in July 2009 by metal detectorist Terry Herbert on private farmland in Staffordshire, with the written consent of the landowner. The hoard has been valued by the Treasure Valuation Committee at the British Museum, and around 80 of the most significant artefacts, including items that have never been seen before, are set to be displayed at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery from 13 February to 7 March.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council is now working to jointly acquire the hoard with Birmingham City Council. The authorities are working in partnership with Lichfield District Council, Staffordshire County Council and Tamworth Borough Council to ensure the treasure remains in the region in which it was found. The Art Fund has launched a campaign to raise money for the treasure, and donations can be made via: www.artfund.org/hoard.

Entry to the exhibition is free of charge. Opening hours are 10.00 to 17.00 Monday to Saturday, and 14.00 to 17.00 on Sundays.

Further information about Stoke-on-Trent, which is also celebrating the centenary of its Federation in 2010, can be seen at www.visitstoke.co.uk.

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