

April 2010

## **Ideal birthday gift for Stoke-on-Trent**

The City of Stoke-on-Trent received the best news possible in this, its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, with the announcement that enough funds have now been secured to keep The Staffordshire Hoard in The Midlands.

Already proving to be one of the most popular FREE exhibitions of the winter months, the temporary display at the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery in the city centre has been extended through to Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup>.

But the success of the fund-raising exercise now means that more artefacts from the largest and most valuable ever find of Anglo-Saxon gold treasure will go on permanent display in the same year that Stoke-on-Trent is celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its Federation as a city.

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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 was then valued by the Treasure Valuation Committee at the British Museum.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has worked hard to jointly acquire the hoard with Birmingham City Council. And those authorities in turn worked in partnership with Lichfield District Council, Staffordshire County Council and Tamworth Borough Council to ensure the treasure remained in the region in which it was found.

The permanent exhibition at the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery will now comprise 59 pieces, and entry 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](http://www.visitstoke.co.uk).

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