

## Norman Conquest coin hoard acquired for the nation

Press images: <https://bit.ly/4h2ZwoC>

---

- Coin hoard of 2,584 silver pennies dates from the turmoil of the Norman Conquest of England
- Its acquisition by the South West Heritage Trust is the highest value treasure on record
- The hoard will be displayed at the British Museum from November before returning to the South West
- Funding for the acquisition, engagement programme and permanent display includes £4.4m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund

**LONDON, 22 October:** An unprecedented hoard of coins, from the time of the Norman Conquest of England, has been acquired for the nation by the South West Heritage Trust thanks to major funding including from the National Lottery and Art Fund. It consists of 2,584 silver pennies from the period c. 1066–68, likely buried for safekeeping in the turmoil of the Conquest. The hoard has been valued at £4.3 million making it the highest value treasure find ever.

The acquisition and associated engagement project are made possible thanks to the generous support of a £4,420,527 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and £150,000 from Art Fund, alongside smaller but vital grants from the Friends of the Museum of Somerset and the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

From 26 November 2024 coins from the hoard will go on display at the British Museum. They will later be displayed at museums across the UK, including in Bath, before finding a permanent home at the Museum of Somerset.

The hoard is one of the most remarkable finds reported under the Treasure Act 1996, administered by the Treasure Registry at the British Museum on behalf of the Department for Culture Media and Sport. It was discovered on 26 January 2019 by seven finders while metal detecting in the Chew Valley area of Bath and North East Somerset. They reported the find via the British Museum's Portable Antiquities Scheme, which records archaeological finds made by the public and also handles the local reporting of Treasure finds.

The hoard comes from a turning point in English history. It covers the transition from Saxon to Norman rule marked by 1066 and was probably deposited for safekeeping during rebellions in the southwest against the new Norman king, William I ('the Conqueror'). It is famously recorded that 'Exeter was the first town to fight for its liberty' against Norman rule. Represented on just under half the coins is Harold II (1066) the last crowned Saxon king of England. Just over half feature William I (r. 1066–87).

**Sam Astill, Chief Executive of the South West Heritage Trust said:** *"The hoard symbolises a pivotal moment in English history and we are delighted to have made this acquisition so that it may be enjoyed by generations to come. It highlights the power of museums, collections and stories to inspire people and communities and has been made possible thanks to a wide range of partners working together to ensure our heritage is protected and accessible for everyone."*

The South West Heritage Trust has been awarded £4,420,527 by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to acquire the hoard and will be able to apply for a further grant at a later date for an engagement programme and the permanent display of the hoard at the Museum of Somerset.

**Michael Lewis, Head of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, said:** *“We are delighted the Chew Valley Hoard has been acquired by the South West Heritage Trust and that our visitors have the chance see it here in London first before it returns home to the Museum of Somerset.”*

*“This incredible acquisition again underlines the importance of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in preserving our nation’s heritage. I want to extend thanks to the British Museum conservators and curators who worked on this project - we are proud of our role in its journey from discovery to display.”*

**Sir Chris Bryant, Heritage Minister, said:** *“This remarkable hoard gives us unique insight into our country’s rich history and one of the most important moments in our history, when these islands were thrown into turmoil by the Norman Conquest.”*

*“The Treasure Act 1996 ensures that these coins, dating back to 1066, will be displayed in museums across the UK before residing in Somerset, giving people from different regions the opportunity to see this extraordinary treasure, learn more about our past and protect this part of our heritage for future generations.”*

**Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:** *“We are delighted to support the acquisition of the Chew Valley Hoard, and the plans to share its fascinating heritage with audiences across the UK before it returns to the South West where we are funding a permanent home at the Museum of Somerset. The National Lottery Heritage Fund celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary next month so it is incredibly exciting that this treasure will be part of the story of three decades of National Lottery funding for heritage.”*

*“Thanks to funding from National Lottery players this incredible hoard will be valued, cared for, and sustained, for everyone, now and in the future.”*

**Jenny Waldman, Director, Art Fund, said:** *“The Chew Valley Hoard is one of the most significant finds from the Norman Conquest, shedding new light on a fascinating period in English history. We’re thrilled to have supported the Museum of Somerset to acquire this remarkable addition to their collection, for local people and visitors to enjoy now and in the future.”*

Collections cared for by the South West Heritage Trust are permanently owned by Somerset Council.

**Cllr Bill Revans, Leader of Somerset Council said:** *“We are absolutely delighted to bring the Chew Valley Hoard to the people of Somerset. The county has a rich heritage and this acquisition will help bring history to life; residents and visitors will be able to engage with the hoard through learning activities and workshops. As a former history teacher, I am excited by the educational benefits that seeing the hoard in the Museum of Somerset will bring to generations of school children. We look forward to seeing this remarkable collection of coins inspire programming and participation in a variety of community spaces and welcoming the permanent display at the Museum of Somerset in Taunton.”*

The project to save the hoard for the nation would not have been possible without the collaboration of the following partners: The South West Heritage Trust, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Art Fund, Somerset Council, The British Museum, The Department for Culture Media and Sport, Bath and North East Somerset Council, Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society and the Friends of The Museum of Somerset.

---

## Notes to Editors

**Image/s: Photographs are granted for use in conjunction with this press release only and copyright must be acknowledged.**

- Chew Valley Hoard Conserved © British Museum: The Chew Valley Hoard of 2,584 silver pennies dates from the turmoil of the Norman Conquest of England and has been acquired by the South West Heritage Trust.
- Chew Valley Hoard Small Group © British Museum: The Chew Valley Hoard was probably deposited for safekeeping during rebellions in the South West against the new Norman king, William 'the Conqueror'.
- Chew Valley Hoard Issuers Edward, Harold II and William I © British Museum: Represented on just under half the coins is Harold II, the last crowned Saxon king of England (bottom right). Just over half, feature William I 'The Conqueror', the first Norman king (bottom left). There is one coin that features Edward 'The Confessor' (top).
- SWHT Curator of Archaeology, Amal Khreisheh © South West Heritage Trust: Curator of Archaeology at the South West Heritage Trust, Amal Khreisheh. The Trust has acquired the hoard on behalf of the nation.

### **South West Heritage Trust**

The [South West Heritage Trust](#) is an independent charity committed to protecting and celebrating Somerset and Devon's rich heritage. As well as the Museum of Somerset and Somerset Rural Life Museum the Trust manages state-of-the-art facilities in Taunton, Exeter and Barnstaple to care for the extraordinary archive collections of the two counties. The Trust also provides essential advice about the historic environment and manages historic sites.

### **The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

Grant applications over £250,000 are assessed in two rounds. The South West Heritage Trust has initially been granted round one development funding of £4,420,527 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, allowing it to acquire the hoard and to progress with its plans for an engagement programme and permanent home for the hoard at the Museum of Somerset. Detailed proposals are then considered by the Heritage Fund at second round, where a final decision is made on the full funding award of £807,513.

As the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, The National Lottery Heritage Fund's vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future as set out in our strategic plan, [Heritage 2023](#).

Over the next ten years, we aim to invest £3.6 billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to bring about benefits for people, places and the natural environment.

We help protect, transform and share the things from the past that people care about, from popular museums and historic places, our natural environment and fragile species, to the languages and cultural traditions that celebrate who we are.

We are passionate about heritage and committed to driving innovation and collaboration to make a positive difference to people's lives today, while leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.

Follow @HeritageFundUK on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLottery #HeritageFund [heritagefund.org.uk](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk)

## **Art Fund**

Art Fund is the independent UK charity for art, helping museums and people to share in great art and culture for 120 years. Art Fund raises millions of pounds every year to help the UK's museums, galleries and historic houses. The charity funds art, enabling the UK's museums to buy and share exciting works, connect with their communities, and inspire the next generation. It builds audiences with its National Art Pass opening doors to great culture; and it amplifies the museum sector through the world's largest museum prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year, and creative events that bring the UK's museums together. Art Fund is people-powered by 135,000 members who buy a National Art Pass, and the donors, trusts and foundations who support the charity.

The National Art Pass provides free or discounted entry to over 400 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and Art Quarterly magazine.

[artfund.org](http://artfund.org)

## **The Portable Antiquities Scheme**

Managed by the British Museum in England, and by Amgueddfa Cymru in Wales, the PAS is a partnership project, working with almost 100 national and local partners to deliver the Scheme's aims. It is funded (in England) through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's grant-in-aid to the British Museum with local partner contributions. All the Finds Liaison Officers (in England) working for the PAS are employed locally but work as a national team directed by the British Museum.

Thousands of archaeological objects are discovered every year, many by members of the public, most by people while metal-detecting. If recorded, these finds have great potential to transform archaeological knowledge, helping archaeologists understand when, where and how people lived in the past. The PAS ([www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)) offers the only proactive mechanism for recording such finds, which are made publicly available on its online database.

The PAS has also benefited from internships funded by the Headley Trust, providing opportunities for people to develop a career in archaeology. Also, the Graham and Joanna Barker Fund, which has enabled extra support for the PAS in areas where resources are low. The PAS welcomes anyone interested in supporting its work locally to contact the British Museum.

Many organisations have also supported the acquisition of Treasure finds, including Art Fund, the Headley Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund. Without these, as well as public donations, many important archaeological finds would not be in public collections.

## **The Treasure Act 1996**

Under the Treasure Act 1996 (which applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) finds that may meet the definition of Treasure must be reported to the local coroner within 14 days. If the coroner declares a find as Treasure then it is offered to a national or local museum.

The finder and the landowner are eligible for a reward, funded by a museum which wishes to acquire a find. The Secretary of State decides on the payment of the reward based on the recommendations of an independent committee of experts, the Treasure Valuation Committee.

The reward is generally divided equally between the finder(s) and the landowner. However, the Treasure Valuation Committee will, as in this case, take account of agreements made between the finder(s) and the landowners.

The Treasure process is regulated by the Treasure Act 1996 and the Treasure Act 1996: Code of Practice (3rd Revision) and is administered on behalf of DCMS by the Treasure Registry at the British Museum.



**Further information**

Contact the British Museum Press Office: [communications@britishmuseum.org](mailto:communications@britishmuseum.org)