

## **Vast West Norfolk Hoard of Early Medieval gold coins saved for the public**

20 May 2025

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery has acquired the largest collection of seventh-century gold coins ever found in the UK thanks to Memorial Fund support.

Image



The West Norfolk Hoard will help transform our understanding of the early English economy and European trade and exchange networks. Norfolk Museums Service. Image: David Kirkham.

The internationally significant hoard contains 129 gold coins, most of which are Frankish tremisses – solid gold coins minted in the Merovingian Frankish Kingdoms that occupied much of modern-day France, Germany, Switzerland and the Low Countries.

The West Norfolk hoard is one of only eight hoards of this coin type known from Europe and only the third from the UK. The hoard is remarkable due to its size and the variety of the coins it contains. Of the 129 coins, there are 118 different

coin designs and 51 different European mints represented.

In addition to the tremisses, the hoard also contains nine gold solidi (a larger coin from the Byzantine empire), a gold bracteate (a Scandinavian type of pendant), a small gold ingot, and two pieces of scrap gold.

The reason for the burial of the coins remains shrouded in mystery. Tremisses are very rare coins, only a few of which are found by metal-detectorists in the UK every year. Their collection in a group like this is therefore highly unusual and points to the wealth of the owner and the exceptional circumstances that must have led to its burial and loss.

Image



Close up of the West Norfolk Hoard showing detail of a Byzantine gold solidus.

## **Intact and accessible**

Declared Treasure by the Coroner's court in November 2021, acquisition of the hoard was made possible by a £217,200 grant from the National Memorial Heritage Fund alongside support from Art Fund and The Wolfson Foundation, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and Friends of the Norwich Museums.

Acquisition of this extraordinary find for a public museum means it will remain intact and accessible to researchers and visitors to Norwich Castle where the

hoard has just gone on display in the newly reopened Anglo-Saxon and Viking Gallery.

Simon Thurley, Chair of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: "Buried for over 1,400 years, the West Norfolk Hoard and the fascinating insights it offers into seventh century England's place in the world, can finally be revealed. We are delighted to support this acquisition which will keep the hoard intact, in the county in which it was buried and publicly accessible for everyone to enjoy.

"The Memorial Fund exists to save the UK's most outstanding heritage and make it publicly accessible, in memory of those who have given their lives for the UK. We are pleased to count the West Norfolk Hoard as part of the growing and timeless collection of UK heritage that belongs to all of us forever."

## **Explore the Memorial Fund collection**

Discover some of the other heritage treasures we've helped preserve in our [project archive](#).

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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.

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National Museums Scotland has today announced that it has achieved its fundraising target of £1.98million in order to acquire the Galloway Hoard on behalf of the nation