

# News & Views

## Iron Age Money Pot



A hoard of almost 1,000 base silver coins was found by detectorists on the Isle of Wight, the largest to be found on the island. The coins were originally contained in a clay pot and then scattered over the field by many years of ploughing. A quarter of the coins were found over a big area, away from the initial hoard. The first of the coins

was found by Albert Snell a member of IW Metal Detecting Club, with 16 other members following suit.

"It was a wonderful occasion seeing these coins popping up everywhere," said Mr Clarke. All the 16 members were given a chance to dig for the coins. "We are not in this for the money. Our club motto is 'pleasure not profit'.



We just get a thrill from playing our part in helping discover the IW heritage".

Unfortunately, the Iron Age coins, thought possibly to be some kind of community savings, are unlikely to be

bought by the IW Museums Service, due to a lack of modern day coins in the coffers of the museum. The exact location of this wonderful hoard is a well-kept secret, at the request of the landowner.

## Silver Viking Ingot Found

After a 1,200 year old Viking silver ingot was found on the banks of the River Bann, Moneygran, Co. Derry, Ireland, a ruling was made by the local coroner validating the ingot, found on land owned by a Mr. Rea, as treasure. The ingot, along with parts of a Roman brooch dug up nearby, was then sent on to the Treasure Valuation Committee in London. "They will determine the market value of the items. Then if the Ulster Museum wishes to purchase them they will raise the funds and the payments will then be distributed between the finder and the landowner" stated Declan Hurl of the Environment and Heritage Service.

The finds were made by metal detectorist, Eugene Burns who said, "I hadn't a clue what it was when I found it. I knew it was something of significance because it was silver. But it had no real shape of anything I had ever seen before. I have found plenty of old coins and the like but



never anything as significant as that. I hope I find more".

The Curator of the Ulster Museum, Cormac Burke, intimated that he would be interested in the articles. "It's from these small building blocks that the total story is put together. The ingot is exactly three-quarters of a Viking ounce, which shows how carefully they were weighed. They knew exactly what they were doing and it was, more or less, a form of coinage at the time. The Bann is chock full of antiquities and this is another example".

(Extract from the *Belfast Telegraph*)

## Metal Detecting Entry Level Scheme

I am writing to clarify the position regarding Metal Detecting under Defra's Entry Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ELS) for your readers. A number of concerns have been raised concerning metal detecting on land under the new scheme which this letter addresses.

ELS is a voluntary and non-competitive scheme, which aims for a high level of uptake across the country. Farmers and other land managers receive payment for simple yet effective environmental management. The scheme aims to have a major impact on countryside environmental problems and will help to reduce diffuse pollution, increase biodiversity, maintain landscape character and enhance the historic environment. The scheme was launched in March this year and the Rural Development Service, which administers the scheme, has, to date, had applications covering over 1 million hectares of farmland.

There are no limitations on metal detecting on land under ELS, whether on the holding with an ELS agreement, or on land where ELS measures have been applied. The exceptions to this are Scheduled Monuments and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) which have existing legal constraints on detecting or other potentially damaging operations. On all holdings with ELS agreements, farmers and landowners with agreements have a duty of care to archaeological sites on their holdings and so detecting should not cause damage to historic features. Damage is taken to mean disturbance of previously undisturbed deposits in and on archaeological sites and monuments, and any removal, loss and/or disruption of standing masonry or other upstanding structural material. I hope this has clarified the situation regarding this Scheme.

**Robert Middleton**

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