

## **TREASURE ACT 1996**

### **SILVER ARM RING FROM JEFFREYSTON COMMUNITY, PEMBROKESHIRE (Treasure Case 16.34)**

#### *Introduction*

On 23 November 2016 Mr Kenneth Lunn of Pembroke found a fragmentary silver arm ring in a field in Jeffreyston Community, Pembrokeshire. The object was delivered to Department of History & Archaeology, National Museum Cardiff, on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016, who retained the item for reporting on behalf of H. M. Coroner for Pembrokeshire.

#### *Circumstances and context of discovery*

The arm-ring fragment was found by Mr Lunn with the aid of a metal detector on a ploughed field, at a depth of about 10cm. The land is occupied by Mr A. Morgan and owned by Mr H. Harrison-Allen (full details of their addresses and full national grid co-ordinates for the find-spot are provided on the Treasure Receipt Form).

#### **Description**

The silver object is a flattened fragment of penannular arm-ring of Hiberno-Viking type, now in two conjoining pieces. It has the form of a broad flat band of silver of rectangular cross-section, and in plan. The expanded mid-portion of the arm-ring is near the mid-point of the original arm-ring, and tapers to a narrow, fractured end. The production and flattening process has left multiple transverse stress fractures on the outer face of the arm-ring.



The arm-ring now measures 71.4mm in length, with a minimum width of 7.9mm and maximum central width of 16.4mm. The arm-ring ends do not appear to have been cut as hack-silver (no evident shear-marks), and the fractured ends appear fairly fresh, possibly the result of ploughing. Weight 14.56g.

The object has not undergone any cleaning or conservation, and further information may result from its eventual treatment.

#### *Metal Content*

Comparison of the metal with items of known fairly pure silver (at least 85-90%) in the Archaeology & Numismatics Collections indicates that the ring is composed of a similar silver content.

#### *Summary and conclusions*

The form of the arm-ring, having been hammered (forged) from a silver ingot into a flat expanded band tapering either side of a central expansion, establishes that this is a rare example of Viking-age silver jewellery and portable wealth found in south Wales.

The arm-ring belongs to a style dated by analogy with other plain examples to the late ninth/early tenth century: similar undecorated examples occur in the silver arm-ring Huxley hoard, Cheshire, the majority of which are thought to have been made between about AD 880 and AD 930 (Graham-Campbell and Sheehan 2009, fig. 6.3, nos. 17-20). These complete arm-rings range in weight from 51.4g to 53.8g (corresponding approximately with the so-called 'Dublin' oz) and 83.1g. Their lengths are around 190+mm, suggesting that the Jeffreyston arm-ring is missing at least 120mm on its original length, or at least 2/3 of its original weight, which would then have been over 44+g. As much weight depended on the form and thickness of the missing central expansion, this suggests that, like the Huxley examples, it may have been targeting a weight in the vicinity of the 'Dublin' oz.

Arm-rings of broad-band type occur as parts of coin-dated hoards, six from Britain, their chronological focus lying in the 870s, and in coin-dated deposits from the first decade of the tenth century. Plain silver broad-band arm-rings and fragments have been catalogued from the Cuerdale hoard, deposited c. 905-10 (Graham-Campbell 2011, plates 28, 29).

It has been suggested that the Hiberno-Scandinavian broad-band arm-rings which largely constitute the Huxley hoard were still flat (unfinished) when they were hammered into half for storage or concealment. Similarly there is no evidence for curvature on the Jeffreyston arm-ring, which is now flat, and it remains unclear whether the band ever had the penannular form of a completed arm-ring.

The circumstance of loss and context for this item deserves further consideration. In March 2013 Mr Trevor Davies found a decorated arm-ring fragment (Treasure Case 13.07) about one metre away from the 2016 find-spot. This earlier find had initially been reported from the centre of the field, but it has been established that it originally came from the same find-spot as Treasure Case 16.34. Both arm-rings have identical forms, are of the same date and there is a high probability that they originally formed

part of a Viking-age hoard which has been disturbed. A further arm-ring fragment found in 2017 (Treasure Case 17.21) confirms the presence of a scattered hoard (a report on this new find is in preparation).

Other Viking-age finds are known from Pembrokeshire, and include a ringed pin from a site near St Davids, decorated lead merchant's weights from Freshwater West and a site between Robeston West and Walwyn's Castle and a sword pommel from a site near Pembroke (for weights see Redknap 2009, 38-39). Given these finds and the Scandinavian place-name evidence from Pembrokeshire, his new find amplifies this activity and the importance of Milford Haven (from ON *melr*, *fjörðr*) in the Scandinavian world view.

It is my opinion that as the object has at least 10 per cent by weight precious metal, and is at least 300 years old, it is treasure under Section 1 (1) (a) of the *Treasure Act* 1996.

Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales wishes to acquire this item for the national collections, as part of the hoard represented also by the 2013 find, acquired previously.

#### *References*

Graham-Campbell, J. 2011, *The Cuerdale Hoard and related Viking-Age silver and gold from Britain and Ireland in the British Museum*, British Museum Research Publication no. 185.

Redknap, M. 2009, 'Silver and Commerce in Viking-age North Wales', in J. Graham-Campbell and R. Philpott (eds), *The Huxley Hoard. Scandinavian Settlement in the North West*, National Museums Liverpool, 29-41.

Sheehan, J. 2009, 'The Huxley Hoard and Hiberno-Scandinavian Arm-rings', in J. Graham-Campbell and R. Philpott (eds), *The Huxley Viking hoard. Scandinavian Settlement in the North West* (National Museums Liverpool), 58-69.

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