



# Y Mag



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Hello and welcome!

In this May edition of YMag we look at the recent fascinating treasure acquisitions at Denbighshire Museums, Carmarthenshire Museums, and Flintshire Museum. These projects have been supported through the Acquisition Grant, provided by the Welsh Government and administered by the Welsh Museum Federation to support organisations to meet the Priorities for Culture.

You can also find out what the Egypt Centre volunteers got up to on their trip to Carmarthenshire County Museum.

There is lots to offer in Wales and even more to be learned from one another!

# Acquiring Post-Medieval Coins: The Llangynhafal Treasure

In 2021–2023, a group of eleven post-medieval silver coins was discovered in Llangynhafal, Denbighshire, and reported under the Treasure Act 1996. The coins, dating from 1553–1636 and including groats of Mary I, Philip and Mary, Elizabeth I, and a Scottish twenty-pence of Charles I, were found by metal detectorist Robert Barratt and were identified through the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Denbighshire Museums Service expressed an interest in acquiring the hoard to enrich its collection and interpret historic monetary use in the region. Thanks to the Welsh Museums Federation we have been able to apply for funding in order to purchase this group of coins.

Following acquisition, Denbighshire Museums Service plans to integrate the Llangynhafal coin hoard into its permanent collection, ensuring the coins are properly conserved, catalogued, and displayed with interpretive materials. This will provide educational opportunities for visitors to explore post-medieval monetary history, social practices, and regional connections to national and Scottish coinage. The project has influenced curatorial practice by emphasising meticulous documentation, close engagement with finders, and the importance of following the Treasure Act framework. Future plans include comparative research with other regional hoards, developing case studies for schools, and potential temporary loans to partner institutions. Further learning may focus on digital recording of finds and interactive exhibition methods, as well as enhanced public engagement strategies to highlight the significance of everyday historical objects.

This acquisition has highlighted how small hoards of worn coins can reveal aspects of daily life, circulation patterns, and monetary practices in the post-medieval period. The discovery of pierced coins prompted discussion about their dual use as currency and personal adornment, revealing the multifunctional nature of everyday objects. Overall, the acquisition reinforced best practice in object handling, ethical collecting, and interpretive planning, contributing to both personal and institutional professional development.

The Acquisition Grant scheme is made possible with funding from the Welsh Government through the Culture Division, and with support from the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales.

Image: Post-medieval coins from Llangynhafal



# Late Bronze Age to Earliest Iron Age hoard from Llandegla Community, Denbighshire 23.43

In August 2023, a hoard comprising two bronze tanged chisels and a ring-headed pin was discovered by a metal detectorist in Llandegla, Denbighshire. The chisels, one complete and one with a broken tang, and the bronze ring-headed pin date to the Late Bronze Age to Earliest Iron Age (c. 900–600 BC). Found in a rocky elevated area and nearby arable land, the objects were reported under the Treasure Act 1996 and processed via PAS Cymru and Wrexham County Borough Museum & Archives. Denbighshire Museums Service expressed an interest in acquiring the hoard to enhance its collection of prehistoric artefacts and provide interpretive opportunities for the region's early history. Thanks to the Welsh Federation of Museums funding was successfully applied for in order to purchase and retain this hoard.

Following acquisition, Denbighshire Museums Service plans to conserve, catalogue, and make accessible the Llandegla hoard to facilitate public engagement and research. The objects will be interpreted to explore prehistoric craftsmanship, tool use, and ritual practices in Bronze and Iron Age Wales. The acquisition has strengthened curatorial practice by highlighting careful contextual assessment, documentation, and collaboration with specialists in prehistoric artefacts. Future steps include comparative research with similar hoards, development of educational materials for schools, and enhanced digital recording to support accessibility. The acquisition has also encouraged further exploration of landscape context, including the role of rivers, elevated sites, and potential prehistoric monuments in artefact deposition. This approach ensures best practice in acquisition, interpretation, and dissemination of early prehistoric finds.

The Llandegla hoard acquisition emphasized the importance of detailed recording, contextual analysis, and specialist input when managing prehistoric finds. The association of tanged chisels with a ring-headed pin provided insights into tool and personal artefact deposition during the Late Bronze Age to Earliest Iron Age, reflecting both practical and possibly ritual functions. The hoard illustrates the chronological overlap between artefacts, the variation in object form, and the importance of site topography in deposition. Collaboration with PAS Cymru and reference to other hoards across Britain and Ireland reinforced the value of comparative research in understanding prehistoric assemblages. The acquisition also highlighted opportunities to improve interpretive planning, conservation strategies, and educational outreach, demonstrating the potential for small hoards to contribute significantly to understanding prehistoric societies.

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## Post-medieval Gold Posy Ring: Ruthin Treasure 22.08

In January 2022, a post-medieval gold and enamel posy ring was discovered by a metal detectorist in a pasture field in Ruthin, Denbighshire. The ring features a flattened-D hoop decorated with repeating floral quatrefoil motifs inlaid with black enamel and inscribed internally with the motto "If worthy none So happy". Dating from the late sixteenth or seventeenth century, the object provides valuable insight into personal adornment, craftsmanship, and social expression during the post-medieval period. Denbighshire Museums Service expressed interest in acquiring the ring, which was reported and processed under the Treasure Act 1996, with support from PAS Cymru and the National Museum Cardiff. Funding support was applied for through the Welsh Federation of Museums and was successfully awarded.

Following acquisition, Denbighshire Museums Service plans to conserve, catalogue, and display the Ruthin posy ring, making it accessible to the public and researchers. The object will be incorporated into interpretive materials exploring post-medieval personal jewellery, social customs, and regional craftsmanship. The project has influenced curatorial practice by emphasising careful provenance research, condition assessment, and adherence to legal and ethical frameworks. Moving forward, we will explore similar objects in regional collections, develop educational case studies for schools, and enhance digital records to support research and engagement. Further learning could focus on enamel techniques, inscriptional analysis, and comparative studies of posy rings nationally.

The ring helps reinforce the significance of seemingly small objects in illustrating historical practices, personal expression, and post medieval craftsmanship. Working closely with PAS Cymru and the National Museum Cardiff emphasized the importance of clear communication, proper reporting, and following the Treasure Act 1996. The experience also highlighted new approaches to curatorial practice, including balancing conservation needs with public engagement and interpretation, and the value of creating digital records to support accessibility and research.

Overall, the project strengthened understanding of post-medieval material culture, provided professional development in acquisition procedures, and offered opportunities to enhance interpretation for both the public and educational audiences.

The Acquisition Grant scheme is made possible with funding from the Welsh Government through the Culture Division, and with support from the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales.



Image: Post-medieval Gold finger ring.

# Acquisition of the Llanddeusant Middle Bronze Age Palstave Hoard (Treasure Case 23.35)

Carmarthenshire Museum successfully acquired a Middle Bronze Age hoard of five bronze palstaves discovered in the Llanddeusant community in July 2023 and subsequently reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The hoard, comprising varied examples of Group III Low-Flanged palstaves dating to the Taunton/Cemmaes metalworking period (1400–1275 BC). The hoard enhances the museum's archaeology collection and contributes to regional understanding of prehistoric activity. This acquisition aligns with the museum's collecting policy relating to Treasure and portable antiquities found within Carmarthenshire.

The acquisition process highlighted the strong partnership between Carmarthenshire Museum, the Portable Antiquities Scheme, and Amgueddfa Cymru. Conservation work by Senior Archaeological Conservator Louise Mumford ensured the stabilisation of fragile surfaces using Inralac resin. The hoard's composition—representing multiple palstave types including Sleaford, Carleton, and Harlech—demonstrates a rare and academically significant range for south-west Wales. Secure storage and appropriate environmental controls (maintaining relative humidity below 40%) were central to ensuring long-term care. The process reaffirmed the importance of Treasure reporting pathways in supporting responsible collecting.

The museum will now catalogue, photograph, and accession each palstave into its archaeology collection. These objects will be prepared for display within the new Discovery Gallery, where recent Treasure acquisitions will help contextualise prehistoric activity in Carmarthenshire. Their varied forms provide excellent interpretive potential for discussing Bronze Age metalworking traditions, regional manufacturing differences, and ritual deposition practices. Further research will be undertaken to compare the hoard with a second Late Bronze Age hoard from Llanddeusant already within the collection, exploring possible continuity of depositional practice.

This acquisition reinforced the importance of strong working relationships with the Portable Antiquities Scheme and Amgueddfa Cymru. Early liaison ensured that the hoard was reported, conserved, and securely stored pending valuation. Monitoring the conservation requirements and storage conditions provided valuable insight into the environmental risks associated with Bronze Age copper-alloy objects, including surface flaking and active corrosion.

The process also illuminated the complexity of typological variation within Middle Bronze Age palstaves. Having three distinct types represented—Sleaford, Carleton, and Harlech—offered an opportunity to explore broader distribution patterns and manufacturing regions. This, in turn, deepened understanding of the significance of Carmarthenshire finds within the wider Welsh archaeological record.

Administratively, the acquisition reaffirmed the importance of maintaining up-to-date Collection Development Policies and clear documentation to ensure eligibility for grant support. The experience has strengthened internal processes relating to Treasure acquisition, valuation, and grant application.

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Image: The five Bronze Age Axe Heads found near Llanddeusant.

# Acquisition of the Llanddeusant Late Bronze Age Hoard (Treasure Case 23.36)

Carmarthenshire Museum has acquired a late Bronze Age hoard from the Llanddeusant community, comprising a complete ribbed socketed axe and a fragment of a second socketed axe wedged into its socket. Discovered during a metal-detecting rally in July 2023 and reported through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, the hoard was purchased through the Welsh Museums Federation Acquisition Grant. Its distinctive deposition method makes it significant for both academic study and future display, enhancing the museum's archaeology collection and contributing to understanding of local Late Bronze Age activity.

The hoard consists of a Breiddin Type/Class B4 ribbed socketed axe and a fragment of a Plain Slender socketed axe. The forceful ramming of fragments into the sockets of complete objects is a known Late Bronze Age practice seen across Wales. This hoard aligns with other finds from Llanddeusant, suggesting long-term ritual deposition in the area. The acquisition supports museum collecting priorities, fulfils the Treasure Act remit, and enriches the archaeological record. Its condition and diagnostic features make it suitable for both exhibition and research.

The museum will accession, document, and safely store the hoard within the archaeology collections, ensuring appropriate long-term care. Plans include incorporating the items into upcoming displays within the new Discovery Gallery, particularly within sections exploring recent Treasure finds and Bronze Age material culture. Further research will be undertaken to contextualise the hoard alongside two other Late Bronze Age hoards previously discovered in the Llanddeusant area. Findings will be shared with academic partners and through public engagement initiatives, including digital storytelling and community-focused interpretation.

The acquisition process highlighted the value of close partnership with the Portable Antiquities Scheme and the importance of timely documentation when Treasure cases are reported. Reviewing the hoard reinforced understanding of Late Bronze Age depositional behaviours, particularly the practice of forcefully inserting fragments into the sockets of complete axes. This phenomenon, seen at other Welsh sites including Portskewett and Cowbridge, provides insights into ritual or symbolic behaviours in prehistoric communities.

The case also demonstrated the relevance of the museum's Acquisition Policy, confirming that the institution is well positioned to preserve and interpret finds of this nature. Practical lessons included the benefit of having established procedures for evaluating condition, storage requirements, and display potential before acquisition. This case emphasised the importance of place-based archaeological interpretation and reinforced the museum's commitment to collecting items that contribute to the wider narrative of Carmarthenshire's prehistoric past.

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Images: The two Bronze Age Axe heads one forced into the opening of the other.

# Acquisition of Medieval and Post-Medieval Llanddeusant Coins

Carmarthenshire Museum acquired three medieval to post-medieval silver coins from Llanddeusant (Treasure Case 22.34). The coins—an Edward IV groat, a Henry VII half-groat, and a Burgundian double patard—were discovered during a metal-detecting rally in April 2022 and reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Their good condition and relevance to regional history make them significant additions to the collection.

The acquisition concerns medieval and post-medieval numismatics, highlighting trade, monetary alliance, and cross-Channel political links during the reigns of Edward IV, Henry VII, and Charles the Bold. Key concepts include the circulation of Burgundian coinage in Wales, Treasure Act processes, and significance assessment using Welsh museum standards.

The coins will be accessioned, photographed, and entered into the museum's collections database. They will be stored appropriately in the archaeology store and considered for display in the Discovery Gallery or a future Treasure exhibition. This acquisition reinforces our commitment to collecting locally discovered portable antiquities. Further learning includes reviewing local PAS data and integrating this acquisition into community engagement planning.

This acquisition revealed gaps in the museum's medieval collections, particularly regarding Burgundian coinage, which demonstrates international political and trade links. It highlighted the ongoing importance of the Portable Antiquities Scheme for expanding regional archaeological knowledge. The find enhances understanding of Llanddeusant's long-term significance, complementing a Late Bronze Age hoard also held by the museum. The process reaffirmed effective Treasure workflows, including valuation, significance assessment, and the role of condition in acquisition decision-making.

The Acquisition Grant scheme is made possible with funding from the Welsh Government through the Culture Division, and with support from the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales.



Image: Three silver coins Llanddeusant.

## Acquisition of Roman Coins, Gwella (Flintshire Libraries and Leisure Service)

Purchase of a hoard of 13 silver denarii discovered by a metal detectorist in Halkyn, Flintshire in June 2020. Case Wales 20:08. Declared as Treasure by the Assistant Coroner for North Wales 28th June 2022.

We are planning a new temporary exhibition on the theme of Mining at Halkyn. We have been recently working with the Grosvenor Caving Club on objects rescued from the Milwr Tunnel. We have two engines within the FCC collection which were used in the mine. The exhibition will look at the area around Halkyn from prehistory through to the 20th Century. The coin hoard will be central to the display. The exhibition will tour across the museums in Flintshire starting in April 2026 at Greenfield Valley before moving to Mold, Buckley and Connah's Quay. Our historic railway volunteers at Greenfield will be developing the exhibition with assistance from the curatorial team. The display panels will be funded via Shared Prosperity Funding.

The continuation of the Acquisition Fund is vital to enable museums to purchase "treasure items". Without external funding we would be unable to purchase even the most smallest items. Our budgets simply have no capacity for purchases. It is unfortunate that Treasure Finds can take 2 years to work their way through the system – it would be wonderful to ring-fence funds at the EOI stage.

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Images: Roman coins – 13 silver denarii.



# Destination Abergwili: An Egypt Centre Trip to Carmarthenshire County Museum

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2025 saw the Egypt Centre Volunteers (and students) go on a trip to Carmarthenshire County Museum\* at Abergwili, just outside Carmarthen. The motivation for this was the opportunity to visit their current exhibition on Harold Jones, Egyptologist and Archaeological Illustrator, who hailed from Carmarthen.

The Harold Jones exhibition contains artefacts donated by Harold, and later his family, to several Welsh museums, including the Egypt Centre and Swansea Museum. These were accumulated during his fieldwork with such Egyptological luminaries as John Garstang and Theodore Davis. The quality of the objects including shabtis and a spectacular bronze mirror was exceptional. The exhibition also features Harold's paintings of scenes from tombs he worked on, as well as inclusive activities such as mummification, similar to those we provide at the Egypt Centre. Some volunteers asked which objects within the collection were on loan from the Egypt Centre and mostly failed to find them! (To be fair they are not usually on display at the Egypt Centre). The items in question are P1, which is a watercolour of Beni Hasan in Egypt by Harold, and P2 a watercolour entitled 'Cloudy Sunset' also by Harold.

Besides the exhibition, those present enjoyed the opportunity to explore the museum's other collections and displays and engage in the public activities such as trails, dressing up, etc.

The other big draw for the day was the opportunity to hear the Egypt Centre's Curator, Dr Ken Griffin, speak about Welsh Egyptological collections. Titled *From the Tŷwy to the Tawe: Welsh Egyptological Collections* the talk brought alive his research into where Egyptian artefacts can be seen within Welsh museums and their stores and proved a fascinating look into the journeys of these artefacts and how they ended up in Wales.

For a small donation at the museum shop we were able to obtain *A Son to Luxor's Sand*, the exhibition catalogue of the 1986 Harold Jones exhibition at the Carmarthenshire County Museum. A worthy addition to any Egyptological book collection, and an opportunity eagerly accepted by the volunteers and students on the trip.

Following an excellent and knowledgeable morning at the museum, the afternoon involved free time in Carmarthen town centre.

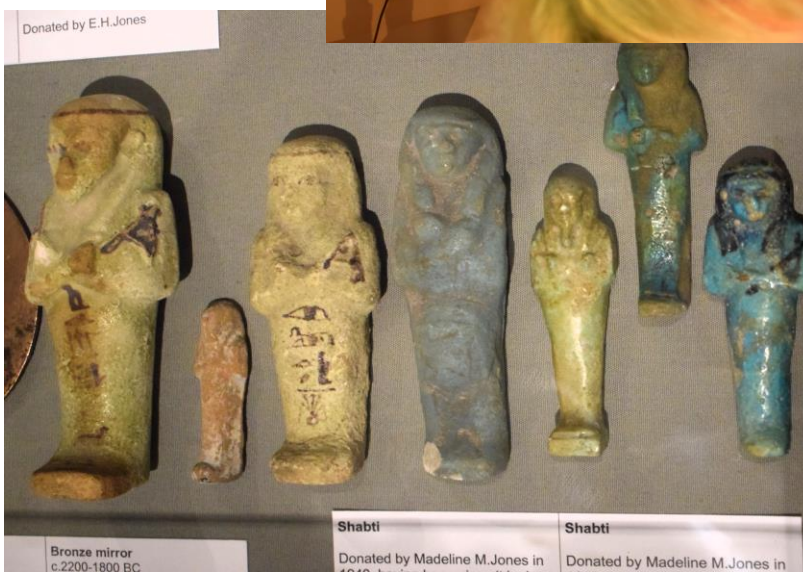
Many visited Harold Jones's house on Quay Street, the building marked by a blue plaque from Carmarthen Museum. A large home, it was captivating to imagine how it would have looked during Harold's time. Several others also visited Carmarthen Castle and other heritage sites (and shops!).

It was interesting while exploring Carmarthen to see the considerable number of blue plaques in the town, highlighting its history and the outstanding individuals who have called it home over the centuries. Overall, it was an excellent and informative day and a great opportunity to forge closer links between the Egypt Centre and the Carmarthenshire County Museum, as well as to enable those who had not previously had the opportunity to visit the museum and learn more about the legacy of Harold Jones.

Thank you to the Welsh Museums Federation for providing the funding for the trip and to Carmarthenshire County Museum for accommodating us.

Syd Howells, Museum Volunteer Manager

Images of volunteers at Carmarthenshire County Museum.



Images: Egypt Centre volunteers at Carmarthenshire County Museum.