

# Bronze Age Discovery

## Factsheet 2012

### Background



A Late Bronze Age hoard was uncovered in a field in the Parish of Trinity, Jersey in October 2012. The discovery was made by metal detectorist Ken Rive, who had not expected to find anything in the field but had “some time to spare” one Sunday afternoon.

The top part of the hoard has been damaged by a plough but it is not yet understood the extent of this damage.

### What is in the find?



It is thought that the find is a Late Bronze Age pottery vessel (around 1000 BC) containing what appear to be weapons and tools. At present, two socketed axe heads have been identified but it is not yet confirmed what else is contained within the vessel.

There has been a number of Late Bronze Age hoards found in Jersey already, some of which have been founder’s hoards\* which would have been recovered and melted down into metal.

### Why was the hoard buried?



The practice of burying hoards of metal objects became common in the Late Bronze Age over the whole of Western Europe. These hoards vary greatly in their composition and context. Some hoards consist of bronze tools and weapons, others of gold torques and jewellery. Some have only a few objects while others contain many hundreds.

Hoard were often buried in pottery or metal vessels, in a variety of locations. It is likely that they were buried simply for safekeeping, as it would have been difficult to safeguard one’s property from thieves.

Hoard can be divided into three different types:

- **A Founder’s hoard** – these are usually made up of broken weapons and tools. It is thought that they might represent the stock of a craftsman, ready to melt down.

- **A Merchant's hoard** – these are made up of unused or new weapons and tools. These can be interpreted as the stock in trade of a pedlar.
- **A Votive or Ritual hoard** – these have been deliberately buried in conditions which would make recovery impossible, such as in a bog or river.

### Is this hoard unique?



No. But it is still rare. There have been five major hoards found in Jersey. They show strong connections with mainland France, as well as wider geographical contacts as far away as Scandinavia, Central Europe and the Iberian Peninsula. They reveal that Jersey was heavily involved in a wide network of trade and exchange that operated throughout Late Bronze Age Europe.

The contents of some of the hoards suggest they were intended for redistribution as part of an Atlantic trading system. Breakage patterns and weight analysis have revealed the possible employment of a standardised weight system based on a unit of 31-37 grams.

It is possible that Jersey was a staging post for traders travelling the Atlantic zone. The number of hoards found here and the Island's position along the Atlantic seaboard also makes it entirely possible that Jersey was a redistribution centre exporting scrap metal to the demanding economic market of southeast England.

### Who owns the hoard?



This is the subject of some discussion at the moment but, if the hoard contains items of jewellery or precious metals it is likely to be declared treasure trove, in which case it is owned by the Crown. The likelihood is it will be rested with Jersey Heritage to conserve and exhibit and the finders and landowners will be recompensed. There is no trove Law in Jersey and as such we cannot discuss how much compensation would be paid.

### What is happening to the hoard at present?



The hoard has now been carefully removed from the pottery vessel that it came out of the ground with. There were 25 axe heads in total.

It is stored in a protective environment and the British Museum is being consulted about how best to undertake further conservation work.

## Media Coverage

Bronze Age axe heads discovered



A 3,000 year old pottery vessel has been found in a field in Tilly in Jersey.  
The pot contains two axe heads thought to be from the late Bronze Age.  
The vessel contains both weapons and tools and is thought to belong to a Bronze Age merchant.



It is rare that these weapons have been found intact after 3,000 years.

Following so soon after the discovery of the world's largest ever Iron Age hoard of coins and precious metals in Jersey, there has been, understandably, considerable interest in this find as well.

Media coverage has been extensive both locally and internationally and together with the Iron Age find, has established Jersey as a 'Treasure island' because of its concentration of historically valuable items.

## What plans are there for exhibiting the hoard?

The hoard will go on display at Jersey Museum in December 2012 and will eventually form part of a wider exhibition of ancient discoveries in the island.