The Jersey Hoard
<https://youtu.be/A2n2lvd94fA>

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The main thing about the hoard is it’s size, it sounds weird but there were more coins in this hoard than all of the ones found in France from this period. So that’s one of the huge things about it, I mean it’s not just an extraordinary number in itself but that will lead to us changing our Ideas about a lot of things about the significance of Jersey.
And the fact that a hoard of this size has actually been recovered from the ground in one piece is a first.

Usually hoards are recovered using spades from their hole in the ground, but we managed to get this one out intact and we have all these new ways to record it that have never been done before.
So now when the hoard is actually taken apart and it no longer exists as an object, we will have it recorded in 3D, mapping the position of each coin and object…This has never been done before, so people will be able to do research for years to come in a way that’s completely new.

1.39
Apart from the shear number of coins there we have an amazing number of Gold Torcs and pieces of jewellery, the most that has ever been found in one hoard like this in Europe.
These are very interesting because they give us an idea of how these different tribes would trade.
We know that the Torcs come from the north of France near to Belgium. So we don’t know whether that was a tribe that specialised in making them or how the people in Britany came to have them.

Also, they appear to be 75 years older than the coins, they also appear to be damaged, not just by being buried but clear signs of a long life of use, so it looks like this was your torc, and before your fathers Torc, and so on.
There’s lots of research to be done on that, we hope to soon find out where the Gold came from, and we are just finding objects that have never been seen before. We are constantly referring to experts and often they reply saying “we just don’t know what going on with this “

Just for me working on this has been amazing, I trained as an archaeological conservator for many years and in my career I never expected to come across something like this.
So when we began the work we expected it to be something like a pot, that would take 1 day to recover and it was 5 days before we could appreciate the full size of it. So this is really one time in ones career, and just to be working on something like this for 2 years when every day you don’t know what’s going to appear. We literally remove coins and someone says GOLD ! and we all come around for a look and over the next day or so that object will be uncovered.

3.30
One of the really great things about the way this has all worked is the cooperation we have had with the finders and the land owners from the beginning. The moment they knew they had found something they got in touch with us, so we were able to do a proper excavation, and we could correctly record things.
And the way they both got involved in the project so they help hear with coin cleaning and all sorts of work has been great, and I think it’s a really good example of how metal detectorists and professionals can work together.

4.04
The story leading up to this hoard began 30 years ago when we went out for a meal with friends and the lady said to me “your one of these guys who go into the field with metal detectors” I said yes I do.
She said my uncle was ploughing a field in Grouville they pulled a tree trunk out and shattered a pot there were Silver coins spread all over this muddy field on January.
immediately you think Treasure !...you hear so many stories you have to wonder how many are true.
When I asked her to describe the coins, she described them in exact detail, right down to the Indian head on one side and the strange looking horse on the other. It was a Coriosolitae coin. And we knew straight away this lady had handled one of these coins.

So we started searching, the club members came with us, we found the group of fields but we didn’t know exactly what one, so we searched for many years, the club members all dropped off and said it was a waist of time the story is not true., forget it. But Richard stuck with me and it was one time in January – February 2012 when we were doing the last part of a field when I looked up and Richard shouted down and said Got one !! and held something up in his hand, and that was when the story began.

5.31
When I found the first coin I held it in my hand and very quickly realised the condition of it and knew I was probably looking at a hoard coin, it was to good for Jersey soil.
I could see Reg way off in the distance so I thought OK lets get him going a little bit so I shouted for him to come over and showed him something in my left hand, it was an abrading stone.
Reg looked at it and said nice find, why have you called me here for that, then I showed him the coin in my other hand and his face lit up and he said…. Its true !!! the story’s true !! and that was a very special moment it was wonderful.

6.20
It was at this point we began to search this area very thoroughly and it wasn’t long before we found another 130 of these Coriosolitae coins and we carried on for a couple of days and collected as many as we could. Richard mentioned we had not yet found a pot…You hear all these stories about a pot breaking, you expect the best coins to be in the base of the pot.

At home I had a very old twin box deep seeker and I decided to give it a try, so I got it from under the bed and dusted it off as it hadn’t been used since 1996 when we recovered the remains of a shipwreck at St Aubin’s Bay.

Well we finally got the thing working and within 20 minutes I got a very deep positive signal, I shouted to Richard I have got something, but it’s not what we are looking for but lets have a look.

7.16
It took 10 – 15 minutes of digging and we stopped at that point just to have a drink…It was that hot.
We looked into the hole and I tried my machine, there was no signal at all.
So we sat down and thought is there anything down there, could this just be a false signal ?

So we looked at each other and decided if we don’t dig it we will never going to find out, you just cant walk away from something like that…It could have been a rubbish pit, an old bicycle, some German ordinance from the second world war…We had no idea but we needed to find out what was down there….So we carried on.

8.00
Finally we dug down as far as we could, I kept saying to Richard “This is a bit much mate I’m to old for this, lets give up, let’s go away”.
He said if we do we will regret it, so what I did was to push my spade in to the ground as far as I could, right down to the top of the handle. And at that point it was like taking a knife and scraping it on a dinner plate…it was that noise, and as we heard that metal – on – metal, I twisted the spade and pulled it out, threw it to one side and Richard noticed there was 5 Iron Age coins on the end of it.
And that was the first sign, he shouted out Hoard !...But I think I had realised it by then.

8.40
So we sat there and thought, what are we going to do? do we dig this up ? do we leave it do we walk away ?.
The obvious thing was to phone the experts and take advice from them and that’s what we did…We knew there was something significant down there, it was in tact and it was in its context.
So we phoned the museum services and advised them and then waited to see what they wanted to do.

9.00
Immediately we thought they would drop everything and come rushing around and dig it up there and then, but we were informed because of school holidays and other commitments they could not make it.
So we had to sit on that information for nearly 3 weeks.

Keeping it as quiet and as simple as we could…But even in that time when it was only Richard and myself who really knew, a story had broken in the island to say that someone had found treasure.
We are not sure how that slipped out, but it was that difficult to keep it quiet until dig day.
But after a couple of weeks they appeared and put a team together, at the same time we invited the radio, media and TV to film this right from the beginning, we wanted it to be done right and get the first hoard to be recovered right from the beginning and it worked out very well.

10.00
So we all arrived on site on that Tuesday in June to dig up what we all thought was a pot or container. One day was scheduled to do the dig….Well after the first day we had not even found the edge to the hoard, it was getting bigger and bigger it was a mass of green coins.
We realised we would have to do a second day, when we found the edge of this thing, no pot, no container, just a rounded edge, which we followed…It eventually took 4 days of digging to reveal the full scale of this hoard. Then we had to under cut it and prepare it so it could be lifted.
So 5 days including the lift day…When we lifted it out of the ground Wow !..It weighed about 750 Kilo’s…It was immense.

10.48
It was amazing when this huge great lump of coins weighing ¾ of a Ton came out of the ground, it was put onto the back of a lorry and taken away to the museum secure room, and during the process only 5 coins fell of that hoard.
And we thought that Neil Mahrer who was in charge of the whole project did an amazing job, because what he didn’t realise that when the hoard was coming out…and it’s the first large hoard to b e lifted in tact…All the media were filming him so it was quite nerve racking. But it was perfectly done, then it went on show a little while later, and the public were able to view this hoard as it was gradually dismantled.

11.34
When we first started removing the earth from the hoard, we could see tiny pieced of jewellery, we hoped there would be more inside. When the excavation of the hoard began we were really surprised because there was lots of other objects inside besides coins.
We found Gold neck torcs, we found ingots, remains of textiles, even tiny little insects over 2000 years old.
So the whole thing had been a time capsule of that moment in time 2000 years ago when it was put into the ground.

We were very lucky as well because the Celtic / Iron age coin expert Dr Philip De Jersey lives in our neighbouring island of Guernsey, he has been very closely involved with the whole project, he decides what everything is. We assist in that process and do the classification for the coins and work out what they are, he confirms them. He will interpret exactly what this hoard is doing here in Jersey.

We like to think it is a lot to do with the Romans at the time 58 – 56 bc, when they were coming through Gaul.
That’s perhaps a good reason to bring this treasure to jersey to hide it away from the Romans. There are some later coins in the hoard which could potentially mean the hoard was finally deposited here in Jersey some years after the conquest so we really don’t know, were only half way through now. But as time moves on we will have a better understanding of the picture.
Perhaps what is significant is we have not found any Roman coins, that could indicate that the Romans had not arrived at this time.

13.17
The most amazing mixture of coinage has come out, we think we have got maybe 15 different tribes including British tribes from Hampshire.
There’s lots of other things including small beads, the last big surprise we had now we are 2 thirds down is a leather pouch, good quality leather and held together with a draw string and appears to be full of coins and personal effects , this will be sent away, possibly for freeze drying so we can safely remove the personal objects.
This will give us more information from a personal aspect.

14.07
We will never really fully understand why the coins were buried in Jersey, but unusually this is the 9th coin hoard to be found on the island. Yet in our neighbouring island of Guernsey they have had some warrior burials, some Roman wrecks in the harbour, things we have not found. So perhaps 2000 years ago Jersey was so inaccessible for boat traffic. perhaps it was considered a safe place to hide your treasure.
So that could be an explanation…Guernsey has had no coin hoards of this period, only 5 single coins have ever been found but no hoards…Is that significant ? we think it could be.

14.50
As Richard mentioned, we don’t know exactly why this hoard was buried, but one idea comes to mind….There was a guy called Vercingetorix, he was the last person to gather the tribes together to fight Julius Caesar at a place called Alesia in Northern France.
It was a battle he finally lost, he was taken to Rome and executed, in Caesars writings he claimed to have killed 300,000 Celtic soldiers in that one battle, and this gives you a good idea of why they never returned to collect this treasure. Perhaps that’s why everything in the Celtic world changed after that one large incident.

15.34
We have been asked many times how do we feel about finding this hoard, and also now it has been recognised as the largest Iron Age coin hoard in the world….Yes we are very proud and rather numbed that we have achieved such a thing.
But what I would like to see most of all out of this hoard if at all possible is to say to other detectorists…If only you stay by the rules and declare what you find and work with people that are friendly within the archaeological area’s (There are plenty there) you will find it opens so many doors and you will achieve so much more knowledge from it.
Once you build up that relationship with your local museum, it really is an extension to the hobby and makes it that much more worthwhile.

16.17
I think one of the most positive thing to happen is the whole collaborative venture, we have worked with the professionals…they have allowed us to work with them over the whole project. It’s been a wonderful, wonderful experience and has now led us on to writing a book about the experience. Which the professionals have joined in. We have done it in such a way that it does not offer to much technicality or interpretation, we simply present the find and the excavation on a daily basis.
So to be involved in this whole thing proves that collaboration can work and both sets of people can come together and work well.

16.56
Finally when everything was removed from the ground and the crane put it on the lorry. I went back into the hole with the archaeological team and everyone placed a personal item in a tin where the hoard was, only a small object like a coin or a badge. Because I had heard about this Tutankhamun curse and I didn’t want to get involved with that !
So having removed such a vast hoard from the ground we made our own offerings to the Celtic gods to say thank you very much for what we believe is a hoard of 70.000+ coins….The hole was filled and so far everything has been good…so maybe it does work !

17.48
It would be lovely to get back detecting, but the last few years we have been so actively involved with working at the museum, there hasn’t been a lot of time.
I’m itching to get back out there, we have another year left on the project before we finish. It’s going to be great to get back out…And who knows what else is out there, may be there is another large hoard like this to be found. Will we be lucky enough to find another like this ? I don’t know, we will just have to wait and see.

18.11
If I was asked to give my advice to other detectorists…well before we went in search of this hoard
 I had already said I wanted an agreement with the land owner and the farmer if there are 2 different people, this must be in writing.
Then you have everything arranged ahead of time…It’s OK saying I will never find a hoard so it doesn’t matter …We knew there was a possibility that one day we would find this hoard, so everything was signed and sealed before.
And because of that Richard and myself and the land owner have got on marvellous, you hear all these stories about people falling out over money, the reward and sharing, but we have had a marvellous smooth ride because we considered that initial agreement and made sure everyone was happy before we started our search.

**The XP on the hoard site**

19.09
It was interesting because I contacted Gary from XP to ask him if this new machine was had heard about was as sensitive as we were told because we had a problem, we were not finding the smaller coins in the area.
It has now become hard to find any other stator.
We wanted to know if it would give us the extra edge.
Right away Gary said I will come over and give you a demonstration on the finds spot.
It was quite amazing.. within minutes of being on this site we realised that this machine was finding pieces we had not even been near before.

19.49
And even with our training, we had some training there with Gary it was great we instantly found some more coins. We found another 8 coins which we had missed. So it just shows how versatile and how brilliant the machine is, its been a really good day today.

20.03
I was very confident we had not missed much, but one of the other things that impressed me was, during my working life I have fell off so many roofs and now have bad shoulders. Normally when using a machine I have to keep changing hands every 2 or 3 minutes …This was another thing that impressed me with this machine, it there was no aches or pains, it was so light and balanced…it was perfect for the job we were doing.

20.2
There we are…another one

21.01
Another Stator it looks like a class 2 of Coriosolitae

21.18
Another one !

21.43
Another beauty !

21.50
So when we get to the lab on Sunday, we will give them a wash and there will be so much detail on them it will be unbelievable.

22.25
I have a funny feeling you are making us look like two amateurs here because how can we miss so many coins with other machines we have tried.

22.35
“Because you are amateurs Reg” ☺

22.57
Reg and Richard are great ambassadors for the hobby, they did everything right…they played it by the book.
They signed a contract with the land owner…They called the professionals in to excavate the find.
BUT I cant help thinking it was just meant to be !
Even as a young lad Richard had a passion for Iron Age Coins.
He met Reg 30 years ago and they started their quest, looking for this hoard.
And they finally found it !
Why did they go out into the field that day with a broken machine Reg has not used for 15 years ?
They played around with it and tried to get it working in the field, and on the last attempt it sprung into life.
Then Reg got the deep signal.
They dug down and were just about to give up when they heard the sound of metal against the spade.
The rest is history…BUT it was meant to be !
The guys have even got the same initials.
So ! I don’t think Reg and Richard found Le Catillon …. I think it found them !

END