

Minutes for TVC Meeting – 2nd November 2020
1300-1600

The meeting was held at 1300 over web conferencing software. British Museum staff were on site in the museum to display objects to the camera.

Attendees

Committee Members: Roger Bland (Chair), Harry Bain, Gail Boyle, Marian Campbell, Hetty Gleave, Megan Gooch, Chris Martin, Lucinda Orr

DCMS: Penny Rafter, Paul Maley

British Museum: Ayla Karaman, Meghan King, Amy Marsh, Ian Richardson

Item 1: Welcome new member – Lucinda Orr

The Chair welcomed the latest member of the Committee, Lucinda Orr, who had just been appointed by the Secretary of State for a term of five years. Existing members introduced themselves and provided a summary of their background and experience.

Item 2: Minutes of the meeting of 2nd September 2020 (for approval)

The minutes were passed as a true record of the meeting.

Item 3: Object valuations

Bronze Age

1. NI 19.03 Bronze Age Hoard (2) from Aghadrumglasney, Co. Antrim

The provisional valuer suggested £400. The Committee viewed the two axes in light of this. It noted that the market for Bronze Age axes from Ireland was stronger than that for similar axes from England with examples tending to be quite substantial. The Committee observed that one of the subject axes was slightly more appealing than the other and that both were likely to fetch more on the market than the valuer had estimated. The Committee recommended £500 for the case. Ulster Museum hopes to acquire.

2. 2018 T341 Bronze Age Hoard (4) from Shropshire Marches IV (HESH-420022)

The provisional valuer suggested £355. The finder had submitted comments on the provisional valuation, which he felt was too low, and supplied examples to support his claim. The Committee took this into account as it viewed the hoard. It agreed that most of the value in the hoard was to be found in the two axes, and it had some sympathy for the finder's observation that the parallel cited by the valuer (Lot 880 of TimeLine Auction of 21/22 November 2017 – an axe in much worse condition) was not useful in illustrating the value of the subject axes. The Committee felt there were other axes that had been

sold by TimeLine which were in a more similar condition and which would have provided a better guide price.

Of the evidence provided by the finder, the example sold by Whyte's was felt to be in much better condition than the subject axes, and those drawn from the website antiquitiesonline.co.uk were noted to be retail prices, which are over and above the theoretical auction hammer price which the Committee equates to the market value.

The Committee agreed that the provisional valuation was too low, and recommended £460 for the hoard. Shropshire Museums Service hopes to acquire.

3. 2018 T342 Bronze Age hoard (8) from Shropshire Marches III (HESH-42F213)

The provisional valuer suggested £755. The finder had submitted comments on the provisional valuation, which he felt was too low, and supplied examples to support his claim. The Committee took this into account as it viewed the hoard. It remarked that most of the value of the hoard was to be found in the axes and spearhead for which, as with the other Bronze Age material from the Shropshire Marches (2018 T341) seen at this meeting, the valuer had been too conservative in his estimation.

The finder's evidence was the same as that for the previous hoard (2018 T341) and the Committee had addressed it under that case number.

For the group under this case number (2018 T342) the Committee recommended £1,040. Shropshire Museums Service hopes to acquire.

Iron Age

4. 2018 T864 Iron Age copper-alloy brooches (2) from East Coast Pipeline, East Riding (YORYM-9560D6) – 2nd viewing

The provisional valuer suggested £420-450. The Committee saw the brooches at its meeting of 18th March 2020 and deferred a recommendation. The Committee viewed the brooches again. It commented on the quality of the items and their attractive patina, and noted that the comparanda provided by the valuer were inferior to these. For this reason the Committee agreed with the upper end of the valuer's suggested range, and recommended £450. East Riding of Yorkshire Museums Service hopes to acquire.

Early Medieval

5. 2018 T252 Early medieval gold setting from Wingerworth, Derbyshire (BM-D2F8C4) – 2nd viewing

The provisional valuer suggested £350-450. The Committee had seen the setting at its meeting of 18th March 2020, where it felt that a value of £400 was appropriate for this piece. However it deferred making a recommendation for the reward as it wished to

further consider the circumstances of the finder's failure to hand over the item in good time. Subsequently the finder responded to notification of the deferment with a short expletive and a message threatening never to report any further discoveries which might fall under the Treasure Act.

The Committee discussed the case again in light of this. It felt there was no reason to depart from its earlier view that the value of the piece was £400. It also reviewed the evidence in the form of emails between the British Museum Treasure Team, the Finds Liaison Officer and the finder regarding the finder's failure to report and hand over the object when directed. The Committee pointed to Paragraph 79 of the Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice, which lists a number of circumstances under which the finder may expect to receive no reward at all or an abated reward, including clause (v) '*where a finder has failed to deposit a find promptly as directed by the coroner and/or where there is evidence that only part of a find has been handed in*' and clause (ix) '*where there are other factors that the Secretary of State thinks it appropriate to take into account in individual cases*'. The evidence before the Committee showed the finder's actions were consistent with 'failing to deposit a find promptly' and his latest communication to the Treasure Secretariat, with the threat of never reporting a find of Treasure again, did not display any remorse for his actions but rather reinforced his earlier poor behaviour.

In normal circumstances the Committee would have recommended that the £400 reward for the setting be split 50:50 between the finder and landowner, with each receiving £200. However in this case the finder's actions were felt to warrant abatement of his reward. He had displayed one element of good will, which was to eventually hand over the find. For this reason the Committee felt it appropriate to recommend a 10% portion (£20) of the share of the reward normally allocated to the finder, with the remainder to be transferred to the landowner. The Committee therefore recommended an allocation of £20 to the finder and £380 to the landowner. Weston Park Museum hopes to acquire.

6. 2019 T359 Early Medieval silver strap end from Grafton, Wiltshire (DEV-CAA412)

The provisional valuer suggested £30-40. The Committee viewed the strap end in light of this, noting that the finder had already kindly waived his portion of the reward. The Committee felt that the upper end of the valuer's suggested range was appropriate and recommended £40. Wiltshire Museum hopes to acquire.

7. MANX 18.70 Early Medieval grave assemblage from Isle of Man

The provisional valuer suggested £5,280 – 6,400. The objects are currently with York Archaeological Trust (YAT) where they will be conserved. The Committee viewed the images and x-rays provided, which showed them covered in dirt. It understood that the valuer had visited YAT and seen the objects in person, and that the Manx Heritage Service wished for the items to be valued in the state in which they were found but the

Committee was uncomfortable recommending a figure without being able to see more of the items. It felt it needed to better appreciate the extent and quality of any surface decoration (of the tortoise brooches in particular) if it were to offer an accurate value, and it therefore requested that the items undergo a limited amount of cleaning. The Committee agreed to consider the case again after this is done and updated images are provided. The Manx Museum will acquire.

8. MANX 20.01 Early Medieval silver ingot from Isle of Man

The provisional valuer suggested £100. The Committee viewed the ingot in light of this. It noted that it had previously valued a number of Early Medieval ingots and felt that the suggested figure was consistent with earlier recommendations. In agreement with the provisional valuer, the Committee recommended £100. The Manx Museum will acquire.

9. NI 19.02 Early Medieval silver arm ring from Ballinderry, County Antrim

The provisional valuer suggested £300-400. The Committee viewed the arm ring in light of this. It emphasised that although the artefact may have served as 'hack' silver for its original owners, it was a recognisable item of personal adornment and would be valued as such. The surface decoration contributed to its attraction, but its folded state and small size meant that the valuer's suggested range provided an accurate estimate of the bracelet's worth. In agreement with the provisional valuer, the Committee recommended £400. Ulster Museum hopes to acquire.

Medieval

10. 2017 T793 Medieval silver finger-ring from Stanton St John, Oxfordshire (BERK-8F46BD)

The provisional valuer suggested £20-30. The Committee viewed the finger-ring in light of this, noting that the landowner had kindly agreed to waive his share of the reward. The suggested range was felt to be accurate given the current state of the finger-ring, and in agreement with the valuer, the Committee recommended £25. Oxfordshire Museums Service hopes to acquire.

11. 2018 T203 Medieval silver seal-matrix from Wilden, Bedfordshire (HESH-3826BE)

The provisional valuer suggested £1,000. The finder submitted comments on the provisional valuation, which he felt was too low, and provided a comparison from the market.

The Committee took account of this as it viewed the seal matrix. It firstly observed that the example provided by the finder (Lot 794 from Timeline Auctions sale of March 2011) was for a seal matrix with a carved intaglio which made it different than the Wilden seal matrix. It further noted that the Wilden matrix was in a good state of preservation and featured an attractively carved central scene but that the inscription was a generic one; a personal seal would have commanded greater interest. In agreement with the provisional valuer, the Committee recommended £1,000. The Higgins, Bedford, had

hoped to acquire but is no longer in a position to do so; other relevant museums are being approached for possible acquisition.

12. 2018 T599 Medieval gold finger-ring from Haversham, Milton Keynes (BUC-50E13C)

The provisional valuer suggested £100-150. The Committee viewed the finger-ring in light of this. It noted the extensive damage to the ring but noted that it had a substantial amount of precious metal content, which meant that even in its current state it would likely fetch a figure at the top end of the valuer's suggested range. In agreement with the provisional valuer, the Committee recommended £150. Milton Keynes Museum hopes to acquire.

13. 2018 T716 Medieval gold finger ring from Laneham, Nottinghamshire (LVPL-4CF277) – 2nd viewing

The provisional valuer suggested £7,000-8,000. The case was seen at the meeting of 29th January 2020, where the Committee recommended a value of £7,500. The finder challenged the valuation, and the Museum submitted comments in response to this. The Committee took account of this as it viewed the finger-ring again.

It thanked the finder for his extensive comments and assured him that the design and artistic merit of the ring were taken into consideration when arriving at a valuation. The Committee also explained that it used the auction hammer price as its equivalent to market value (the figure it is tasked with recommending to the Secretary of State) and that retail prices, such as those put on rings by Berganza, were over and above this.

The Committee found nothing in the finder's submission to cause it to depart from its original recommendation, and it confirmed a figure of £7,500. Bassetlaw Museum hopes to acquire.

14. 2019 T139 Medieval silver finger-ring from Loggerheads, Staffordshire (LVPL-1740A7)

The provisional valuer suggested £50-60. The Committee viewed the finger-ring in light of this and commented that the presence of the legend contributed to its appeal and justified a figure at the high end of the suggested range. In agreement with the provisional valuer, the Committee recommended £60. The Brampton Museum and Art Gallery hopes to acquire.

15. 2019 T299 Medieval silver-gilt brooch from Tixall, Staffordshire (WMID-DEA09C)

The provisional valuer suggested £180-200. The Committee viewed the brooch in light of this. It was felt to be a small but attractive piece with plenty of remaining gilding. In agreement with the upper end of the valuer's suggested range, the Committee recommended £200. The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery hopes to acquire.

Post-Medieval

16. 2018 T150 Post-Medieval gold mourning ring from Shilton, Oxfordshire (BERK-7B2937)

The provisional valuer suggested £1,500-1,700. The Committee viewed the mourning ring in light of this. It noted that mourning rings had become more popular among collectors but felt the suggested range here was a little high, given the distorted shape of the ring which the Committee felt would be difficult to rectify without affecting the inscription. It compared this ring to one from Caersws, Powys (18.20) which the Committee had seen at its meeting of 29th January 2020 and valued at £900. The Caersws ring was less damaged and aside from the skull motif, the exterior of the band was plain. The Shilton ring was felt to be more desirable than this, and the Committee recommended £1,300. Oxfordshire Museums Service hopes to acquire.

17. 2019 T279 Post medieval silver seal matrix from Woolhampton, Berkshire (BERK-FA5F35)

Provisional valuer suggested £75. The Committee viewed the seal matrix in light of this, noting that the landowner had kindly agreed to waive his share of the reward. In agreement with the provisional valuer, the Committee recommended £75. West Berkshire Museum hopes to acquire.

18. 2019 T524 Post-Medieval silver seal matrix from Thirkleby High & Low with Osgodby, North Yorkshire (DUR-C11504) – 2nd viewing

The provisional valuer suggested £400. The Committee saw the seal matrix at its meeting of 18th March 2020 and recommended £400. The finder challenged the valuation, which he thought was low given the historical significance of the original owner.

The Committee took account of this as it viewed the matrix again. It noted the identification of matrix with the Bethell family and acknowledged that this contributed to its interest, but felt that the valuer's suggestion adequately accounted for this, given that it could not be definitively linked with a specific individual. The unusual style of the matrix, being a double-sided swivel, was also noted and the Committee felt that this warranted an uplift on the valuer's suggestion. The Committee recommended £450. York Museums Trust had hoped to acquire but withdrew from acquisition; enquiries are being made with other appropriate museums about acquisition.

19. 2019 T565 Post-Medieval gold posy ring from Penkrige, Staffordshire (WMID-75C66F)

The provisional valuer suggested £1,000-1,100. The Committee viewed the posy ring in light of this. It felt this was a standard example of the type and that the valuer made a convincing argument for her suggested range. It noted that many rings of this type are seen in auctions and they tend to reach a hammer price of just over £1,000. In agreement with the provisional valuer, the Committee recommended £1,100. Potteries Museum and Art Gallery hopes to acquire.

Item 3: Coin valuations

Iron Age

20. 2019 T143 Iron Age coin hoard (17) from near Blythburgh, Suffolk (SF-2C733B)

The provisional valuer suggested £10,100-11,800. The finder supplied comments on the provisional valuation, in which he expressed concern that the rarity of several of the coins had not properly been appreciated. The Committee took account of this as it viewed the coins. It felt that overall the valuation was reasonable and supported by examples from other sales, and that it correctly factored in the condition of the coins. It was noted that the most desirable coin in the group was #8, which the valuer had estimated at £3,000-3,500. The Committee pointed to a parallel sold by Noble Numismatics, Australia in 2017 for c.£3,000 and felt this reinforced the valuer's suggestion. In agreement with the higher end of the valuer's suggested range, the Committee recommended £11,500. Halesworth Museum hopes to acquire.

21. 2019 T428 Iron Age coin hoard (2) from Blythburgh, Suffolk (SF-C1639A)

The provisional valuer suggested £4,500-5,200. The Committee viewed the coins in light of this. It noted that the larger of the two coins (the 'SS' gold stater) was also the most valuable, and pointed to a sale in Australia in 2017 where a similar coin achieved a price of c.£3,000, suggesting that the lower-end of the valuer's estimate for that coin (£3,500-4,500) was accurate. The quarter-stater however was felt to be slightly undervalued, and therefore the Committee's overall valuation for the group was £4,650. Halesworth Museum hopes to acquire.

22. 2019 T462 Iron Age gold cut stater from Hayling East, Hampshire (HAMP-BB9BFC)

The provisional valuer suggested £50-80. The Committee viewed the stater in light of this and noted that it was more valuable for its archaeological interest than as a collector's piece. However it noted that the provisional valuation was slightly low, given the intrinsic metallic content of the piece, and it recommended £90. The British Museum hopes to acquire.

Roman

23. 2017 T302 Roman silver coins (17) from Albrighton, Shropshire (WMID-CF685D)

Provisional valuer suggested £100-132. The Committee viewed the coins in light of this. It felt that the valuer had significantly underestimated the worth of the coins. One similar example (in better condition) seen in a recent American auction, had sold for more than £100. On balance the Committee felt that the overall valuation could be increased, and it recommended £300. Shropshire Museums hopes to acquire.

24. 2019 T672 Roman silver defaced coin from Norton, Northamptonshire (NARC-061AD1)

The provisional valuer suggested £5-10. The Committee viewed the coin in light of this and commented that the defacement made for an interesting piece. In agreement with

the provisional valuer, the Committee recommended £10. Northampton Museum hopes to acquire.

25. 2019 T754 Roman coin hoard (15) from Cawthorne, Barnsley (SWYOR-E7B534)

The provisional valuer suggested £165-220. The Committee viewed the coins in light of this. It noted that the suggested values for most of the coins were reasonable, but that the two coins of Galba and the coin of Otho had been significantly undervalued. The Committee recommended £300 for the group. Barnsley Museums hopes to acquire.

Medieval

26. 2017 T360 Medieval silver jetton from Rylstone, North Yorkshire (YORYM-155DCB) – 2nd viewing

The provisional valuer suggested £180-220. The finder had supplied comments on this valuation, which he felt was too low, along with a valuation from [REDACTED] at Timeline Auction. The Committee saw the jetton at its meeting of 18th March 2020 and recommended £250. The finder submitted a challenge to the recommended value.

The Committee took account of this as it viewed the jetton again. It thanked the finder for his submission, noting firstly that the objects offered for comparison by the finder were piedforts, not jettons, and so did not provide a clear guide to the value of the piece that he found. They were also observed to be in much better condition than the Rylstone jetton, which the Committee felt did not display a clear, crisp strike. The Committee also noted that the valuation by [REDACTED] was very speculative and itself admitted that continental jettons are not heavily collected nor do they have a high commercial value.

The Committee therefore found nothing in the finder's submission to cause it to depart from its original recommendation, and confirmed a figure of £250. The British Museum hopes to acquire.

27. 2018 T1017 Medieval silver coin hoard (18) from Oakley, Buckinghamshire (BUC-24D21E)

The provisional valuer suggested £202. The Committee viewed the hoard in light of this and felt that the suggested total was conservative and that each whole penny might achieve between £20-30 on the market. The Committee therefore recommended £250. Bucks County Museum hopes to acquire.

Item 4: Future meetings

This meeting occurred just before the commencement, on 4th November 2020, of a national 'lockdown' period in England to combat the coronavirus pandemic. It is predicted that this lockdown will end on the 2nd of December 2020 but seems clear that restrictions on travel, access and meeting in groups will continue through at least Easter 2021. Further, it seems highly likely that some members of the Secretariat will be furloughed again, so this will impact on capacity to carry out all of the necessary administration to move cases in a timely manner.

Appointments have been facilitated at the British Museum for several valuers who will be providing reports on, hopefully, c.50 cases in the next month or so. Additionally, it is hoped that the Secretariat will soon be in a position to commission a further c.60 'remote' provisional valuations for a number of straightforward and relatively low-value items. Provided interested parties are willing to proceed, it was suggested that the Committee hold another 'remote' meeting in mid-January 2021, following the same format as this meeting.