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The Discovery

“On the afternoon that I first went out with my metal-detector I unearthed about ten silver coins. Unusually, for coins, they were dish-shaped and decorated with images of strange, disjointed horses. As I moved over the field with the detector I picked up the signals of many more coins.”



Ken Wallace, Amateur archaeologist and metal detectorist



© Chris Royal

Ken Wallace metal-detecting with help from Carol Kirby.

The discovery of these coins was the first indication of the importance of this site and I knew that, if news of the coins was made public, the site would be threatened by thieves. It all had to be kept completely secret.

But thieves were not our only problem. I had already found over two hundred coins when, in early 2001, the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease restricted access to the countryside. The crops grew taller and I was able to return to the detecting only after the harvest had been completed.

In the end, digging up the coins and recording where they were found became hard work. For me, though, the discovery has been an amazing experience and has enabled me to meet so many interesting people. As the first person in two thousand years to touch these coins, I feel a special connection with the Iron Age people who buried them all those years ago.



Hazel Wallace, Amateur archaeologist

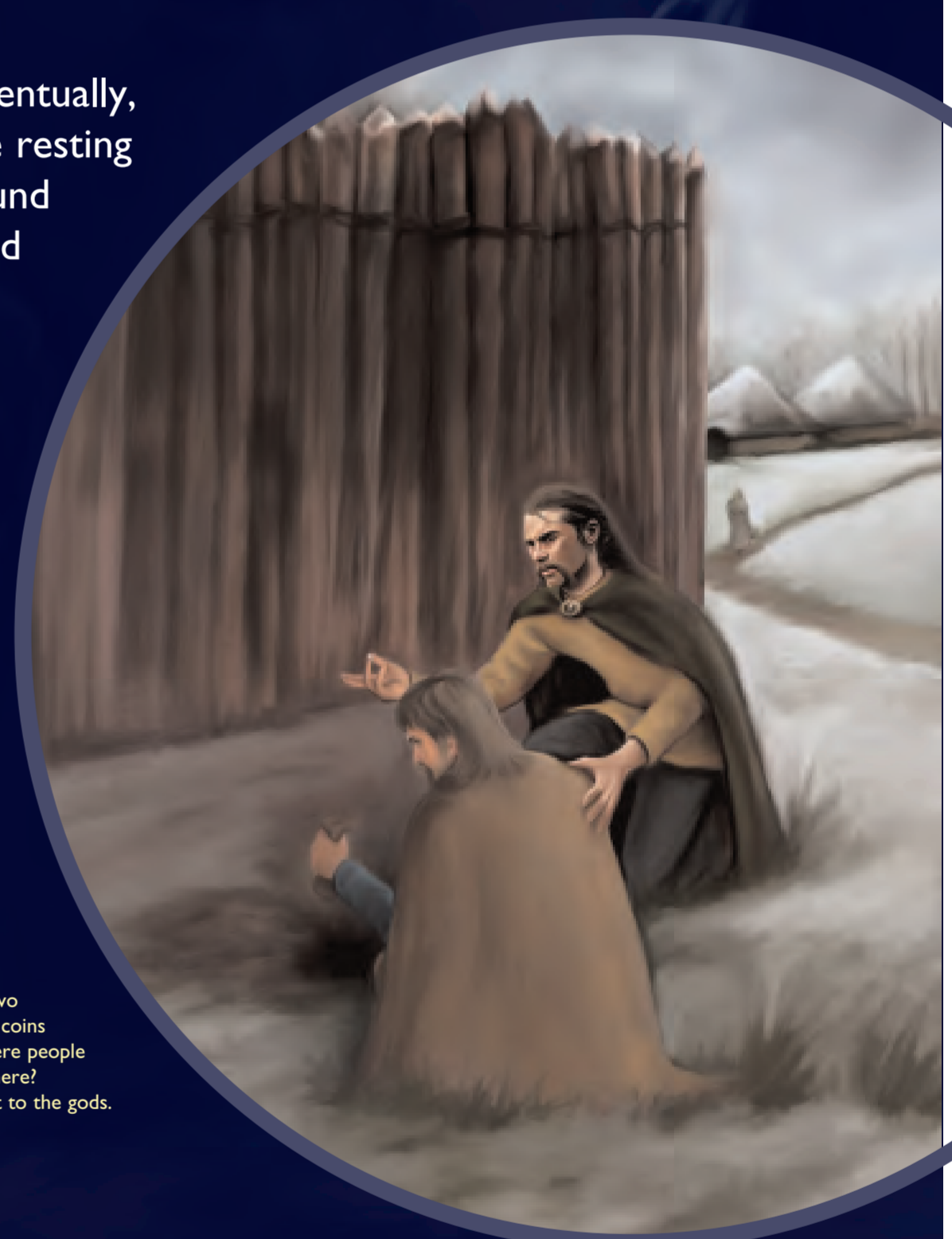
I found so many coins that, eventually, I could tell whether they were resting upright or lying flat in the ground simply by listening to the sound I heard in the headphones of Ken's metal-detector. I miss seeing these remarkable coins and imagining the Iron Age people who made them. In this exhibition we will look at all of the incredible finds from the site. Each of the people involved in this discovery will tell their own story.



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A 'hoard' of coins, just as they were discovered, still in the shape of the bag they were buried in, which has since rotted away.

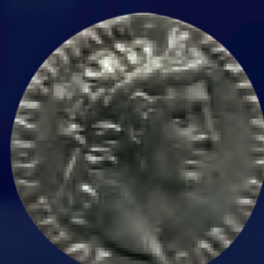
Artist's impression of two men burying a hoard of coins around AD 40. Why were people burying so many coins here? Perhaps they were a gift to the gods.



This gold coin was made by the Corieltavi tribe, the local inhabitants of the Hallaton area during the Iron Age. It has the inscription VEP CORF – could this be the name of a local ruler?



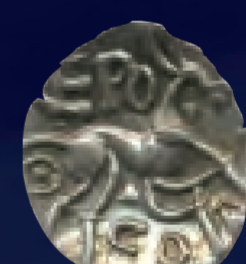
Coins made by tribes living all over Britain were found at Hallaton. This gold coin was issued by Cunobelin, ruler of the Trinovantes and Catuvellauni tribes who lived to the south of the Corieltavi.



Many Roman coins were unearthed at the Hallaton shrine. This coin was issued by the emperor Augustus. These coins suggest the Corieltavi had links with the Romans prior to the invasion of Britain in AD 43.



5294 gold and silver coins were found at the site. Most of the coins are silver units made by the Corieltavi tribe. They have a wreath on the front and a horse on the back.



To find out more about these discoveries why not visit **Harborough museum** where all of the exciting finds are on display?

The Hallaton Treasure



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“We originally thought that Ken had found just one hoard of coins which had been scattered during ploughing. Imagine our shock when, on the first day of digging, we started to find thousands of gold and silver coins which were still undisturbed in their original hoards on the hilltop.”



Vicki Score, Site Director

When we found a ditch and evidence of pig burials, it became obvious that this was not a settlement where people had lived, but a ritual site which had been used by native Britons just before the Roman invasion.



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It is difficult to know for certain what had been happening here or which gods they had been worshipping, but perhaps communities of Iron Age people travelled here once or twice a year to attend ritual festivals. Unlike celebrations in the south, which took place in temples, these events were held in the open-air, although it is possible that they may have incorporated natural objects such as trees or stones, of which no evidence now remains.

The coins and other objects were probably buried on the site by just one or two people while the rest of the community remained at a distance. The feasting and the sacrificing of the pigs, however, happened outside the main area and this may have been something in which the whole community was involved.

Vicki Score



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The people of Iron Age Britain lived in a busy rural environment of farms and small towns.



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A computer generated image of how the Hallaton shrine may have looked around AD 30. Mystery surrounds the site and this image is just one of many possible interpretations.

