

MYSTERY

of the BURIED TREASURE



AN ANCIENT STASH OF GOLD AND SILVER WORTH MILLIONS OF POUNDS IS REVEALING SECRETS ABOUT THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

BEEEEEP! Terry Herbert stops suddenly as his metal detector starts buzzing. Something is buried under the Staffordshire field he's exploring. Is it a worthless piece of junk—or something far more valuable?

It was precious, all right. Terry's discovery, back in 2009, turned out to be more than 3,500 pieces of gold and silver treasure buried by ancient warriors at least 1,300 years ago! Archaeologists uncovered sword handles, helmet pieces, and shield decorations. Some were studded with jewels or engraved with animals.

The treasure is worth about £3.5 million. But archaeologists are more excited about what the discovery is telling us about these ancient warriors...

DID YOU KNOW...?

Archaeologists don't know what this gold horse was used for. But the craftsmanship shows how artistic the Anglo-Saxons were.

TUNE IN! Find out more about the exciting Anglo-Saxon hoard in *Saxon Gold: New Secrets Revealed* on the National Geographic Channel on 16 December at 6pm

MYSTERIOUS PEOPLE

The treasure was buried by the Anglo-Saxons, who settled in England after arriving from Germany, starting around A.D. 410. The Anglo-Saxons were constantly at war, both with each other and with neighbouring lands. They ruled until about 1066, when they were conquered by the Normans from France.

In the seventh century, the most powerful Anglo-Saxon ruler was King Penda of Mercia. Archaeologists like Kevin Leahy, who studied the buried



POMMEL
This knob formed the very top of a hilt, or handle, of a knife.

CHEEK PIECE
This helmet fragment protected a warrior during battle.

COLLAR, RING, AND CAP
Made of gold, these were attached to the knife's pommel.

HILT FITTING
Decorated with red gemstones called garnets, this piece was the bottom part of the handle.

PIECES FROM THE PAST

Scientists have tried to identify the real-life uses of the mysterious treasure. Here's how they match up in this artist's drawing of an Anglo-Saxon warrior.

gold and silver, think the treasure may have belonged to the king. It could have been plunder won in battle, or it might have been part of the king's treasury. No one knows for sure.

The Anglo-Saxons were believed to have lived in a time when little was happening in art or culture. But the treasure helps confirm what experts now know: the Anglo-Saxon period was a time of great change and amazing artistry.

SECRETS OF THE TREASURE

Anglo-Saxons were fierce warriors who cared about their weapons. But the quality of the metalwork shows they were also artists. Craftsmen created tiny, detailed engravings *without* magnifying lenses. And some of the materials came from faraway lands. Garnets (a type of precious stone) were from India, and gold may have come from what is now Turkey.

The treasure may also shed new light on where the Anglo-Saxons lived. The loot was found in the West Midlands, rather than the south or east of England, where archaeologists believed early Anglo-Saxons settled. That may mean they had travelled much farther than once thought.

Still, archaeologists have more questions than answers: why were only parts of weapons found? Why weren't there any items belonging to women? Was the treasure buried for safekeeping, or to mark a victory? Why didn't they come back for it?

The answers to these mysteries may come with further study, but more than anything, this discovery has brought the people of the Anglo-Saxon era to life. "It's like travelling through time to realize that someone had touched these things centuries before," Kevin says. "One thing's for sure: these people wanted to be remembered." Now it's up to archaeologists to figure out their secrets.

TOP TREASURE-HUNTING TOOLS

Scientists used modern technology to examine the ancient treasure.

COMPUTERS The gold and silver pieces were scanned into a computer so scientists could analyse them.

X-RAY FLUORESCENCE X-rays produced energy waves that scientists could measure to instantly know what the ancient treasures were made of.

ELECTRON MICROSCOPES These zoom in on the finest details. When the treasure was being cleaned, the microscopes were hooked up to video cameras so scientists could watch the etchings emerge. Brilliant!

WORDS: MOLLY LYONS. PICTURES: ROBERT CLARK (TREASURE PIECES, ALL); DANIEL DOUÛ / SOURCE: KEVIN LEAHY / PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME (ART)