

As you've heard from David Starkey and Stephen Deuchar– the discovery of the Staffordshire Hoard is of huge significance – in regional, national and indeed international terms.

Experts and specialists will want to pore over these finds for many years to come – of that I'm sure. And - there has been huge public interest in the treasure. After the initial discovery of the Hoard - with the kind permission of the British Museum – we hosted a short term display of some of the finds here at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. Many of you will know – that what followed was pretty phenomenal. Over a 19 day period - some 40,000 members of the public queued up (with great patience) to see the display we hastily put on show. Many of them contributed very generously to our appeal raising nearly £40,000. This clearly demonstrates the local passion to bring this treasure back to the West Midlands.

Our task now – is to raise all of the money needed to acquire these items and ensure they can be conserved, researched and put on permanent display to the public here in Mercia.

I would like to thank the ministers, Margaret Hodge and Ian Austin, for their support. I am sure that they will have been disappointed not to have been able to get here today. Particular thanks of course to David Starkey, Stephen Deuchar and everyone at the Art Fund for stepping in to help Birmingham and Stoke acquire the Staffordshire Hoard. I

must also acknowledge and thank our colleagues from Staffordshire County Council, Lichfield District Council, Tamworth Borough Council as well as the many other regional and national institutions (& many are represented here today). They have been giving us strong support and are working alongside us to ensure the Hoard returns to Mercia.

Finally - I am delighted to announce that Birmingham City Council will be contributing £100,000 towards the acquisition of this magnificent treasure.