Innlandet
County Council

PRESS RELEASE

Exceptional Viking Age hoard discovered in Norway

The largest coin hoard from the Viking Age ever found in Norway has been discovered in a field near Rena in Østerdalen. More than 3,150 silver coins have been recovered so far, and the search is still ongoing.

It is now clear that this is a coin hoard without parallel in a Norwegian context. Archaeologists from Innlandet County Council are working alongside metal detectorists to investigate the site, in close collaboration with the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo and the Directorate for Cultural Heritage.

- This is a historic discovery. The fact that it dates to the Viking Age makes it even more spectacular. This would not have been possible without the excellent work of Innlandet County Council, and particularly the private metal detectorists. This is a find that the whole of Norway deserves to experience, says Minister of Climate and Environment Andreas Bjelland Eriksen.

The discovery offers a rare insight into the economy, the long-distance connections, and the flow of silver in Norway during a period marked by major political change.

- It is truly remarkable that the largest Viking Age coin hoard in Norwegian history has been found here in Innlandet, says Tom Svellet, Chair of the Committee for Culture in Innlandet County Council, who also commends the finders.

“I could hardly believe it”

- I could hardly believe what I was hearing when I was told about the find. This is both a national and an international event, and few things capture the imagination like the Viking Age, says Director General for Cultural Heritage, Hanna Geiran.

Site under protection

Investigations are ongoing, and archaeologists are working to establish the full extent and context of the find. For security reasons, the site is under guard and there is no public access.

- It is crucial that specialists are allowed to investigate the find properly and gain as much knowledge as possible. We therefore ask the public not to visit the site. Finds of this kind are automatically protected under the Cultural Heritage Act, Geiran emphasises.

English and German coins dominate

Experts at the Coin Cabinet at the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo have examined the coins and report that most are English and German, with smaller numbers of Danish and

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Norwegian issues. The hoard includes coins minted under Cnut the Great, Æthelred II, Otto III and Harald Hardrada.

- The hoard contains coins dating from the late 10th century through to the 1040s. Foreign coinage dominated circulation in Norway until Harald Hardrada (1046–1066) established a national coinage," explains Professor Svein Gullbekk of the Coin Cabinet at the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo.
- During Harald's reign, royal coinage gradually replaced most of the foreign currency in circulation. This hoard appears to have been deposited at the very beginning of that transition."

A once-in-a-lifetime discovery

The find has generated enormous excitement among archaeologists.

- This is an extraordinary discovery of a kind one might experience only once in a career. To be present when something like this comes to light is a truly remarkable experience, both professionally and personally, says archaeologist and senior adviser May-Tove Smiseth of Innlandet County Council.

Discovered by detectorists

The discovery began when two metal detectorists, Rune Sætre and Vegard Sørlie, found 19 silver coins on Friday 10 April. Suspecting a larger hoard, they stopped searching and immediately contacted the county archaeologists.

- What makes this even more gratifying is how the find was handled. Sætre and Sørli contacted us straight away and did everything correctly. They have been highly cooperative and have played an active role in ensuring that the find has been secured and documented in the best possible way, says Smiseth.

Both have completed training courses organised by the county council for detectorists, and such collaboration is crucial for safeguarding cultural heritage.

- This is a model example of how such discoveries should be handled, Smiseth concludes.

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Facts: Viking Age coin hoards in Norway

- The largest Viking Age coin hoard ever found in Norway has been discovered at Rena in Åmot municipality, Innlandet.
- As of 30. April 2026, the find consists of more than 3000 silver coins. A small number of cut pieces of silver, known as “hack-silver”, have also been found.
- The hoard dates to the mid-11th century and was likely deposited around 1047.
- The coins were discovered by detectorists Vegard Sørlie and Rune Sætre, who promptly notified archaeologists at Innlandet County Council.
- The coins are being systematically recorded and recovered by archaeologists before being transferred to the Coin Cabinet for cataloguing and research. The hoard will be studied for many years to come.
- All coins were found in the ploughsoil of cultivated land. This likely reflects disturbance of the original deposit—perhaps once contained in a buried vessel—through long-term agricultural activity.
- Hoarding valuables by burying them was common in many situations, for example in times of conflict or when people were forced to abandon their farms. Hoards may also represent savings in a period without banks, or in some cases ritual deposits.
- The find dates from a turbulent period in Norwegian history, marked by shifting alliances, competing rulers, Viking expeditions, and the inflow of wealth from abroad. Resources from outlying areas, such as iron production and hunting, may also have played a role.

- Large Viking Age coin hoards are extremely rare in Norway, and the Rena find represents a new high point in Norwegian archaeology. The last major hoard of this kind was discovered in 1950.

Top five Viking Age coin hoards in Norway

1. Mørstad, Åmot (2026): more than 3000 coins, deposited c. 1047
2. Årstad, Egersund (1836–1843): after c. 1029, 1,849 coins
3. Dronningens gate, Trondheim (1950): after c. 1035, c. 964 coins
4. Foldøy, Jelsa, Rogaland (1907): after c. 1051, 776 coins
5. Slethei, Sola, Rogaland (1866): after c. 1018, 578 coins