



## Uncovering New Finds

While many finds are discovered by archaeologists, metal detectorists have also contributed to uncovering our past. They use machines called metal detectors to locate metal artefacts buried in the ground. Often they will find unexciting items, such as modern scrap metal. However sometimes they make important discoveries. Two of the Bronze Age hoards featured in this exhibition were discovered by local metal detectorists Kevin and David Hopper.

Metal detectorists must follow a number of laws. They need to obtain permission from the landowners before they start a search and inform the landowners if they find anything. Some finds have legal protection under the Treasure Act (1996) and must be reported to the local Coroner. Portable Antiquities Scheme staff are often able to provide advice and support in these cases. If you are interested in learning more about metal detecting, you can visit the Portable Antiquities Scheme website: [www.finds.org.uk/getinvolved](http://www.finds.org.uk/getinvolved).



David and Kevin Hopper, father and son metal detectorists  
Image courtesy of Kathryn Goulding

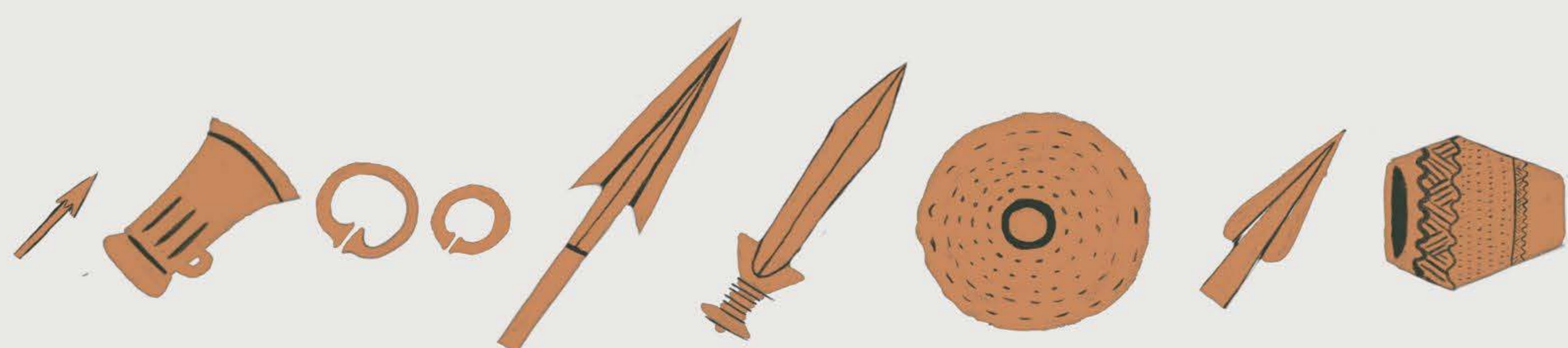


Finding a Bronze Age spearhead  
Image courtesy of Kevin Hopper

## Conserving New Finds

Buried artefacts can be subject to damaging conditions. The artefacts from these Bronze Age hoards show signs of corrosion caused by moisture in the ground as well as breaks that may have been caused by agricultural activity such as ploughing.

After excavation, it is important that artefacts receive a conservation assessment. Different objects and materials need to be cared for in different ways. The goal of conservation is to ensure artefacts are stable and can be studied and appreciated today and in the future. Bronze objects will often be cleaned by a conservator to remove dirt and corrosion. After cleaning, they may be coated in a special lacquer, which protects the metal from moisture and oxygen.



## Weaponry, Warriors, Warfare

The sword, an innovation of the Bronze Age, was the first tool developed for the purpose of direct combat with other people.



Image courtesy of Kathryn Goulding

All swords had a pointed blade with at least one sharp edge and a hilt (handle) for holding the weapon. Other elements of the design could vary greatly. Swords could be used both to attack and to defend but always needed skilful handling. A well-made sword required the skill of a master

craftsperson. In addition to being used in combat, swords served symbolic purposes, signifying status and being used in rituals.

Most Bronze Age conflicts probably only involved small numbers of people. Nevertheless, warriors played an important role in society and being highly trained in combat was likely a celebrated skill. Learning to wield a sword expertly required special training that would have taken a lot of time, but as warfare was relatively rare, warriors likely also filled other roles within their community. Most warriors were male, but there is evidence to suggest that there were also some female warriors.

Weapons have changed since the Bronze Age, but the essential idea of combat with swords, once a matter of life and death for the Bronze Age warrior, remains almost unchanged and survives in the modern sport of fencing.



Modern fencing, Newcastle Fencing Centre  
Image courtesy of Mollie Brown

