

My 9th/10th C. Hoard
2 copper rings – 2 silver rings – 3 silver bracelets
Fall Mists Investiture – Fine Arts Competition – Wear it on a Hand or Arm

Anglo - Saxon and Viking treasure hoards dating to the 9th-10 C. have been found in England, Scotland, Ireland, Sweden, and other places in between. The hoards have included coins, jewelry, and metalwork. In addition, there have been additional metalwork finds in graves and shipwrecks. ¹

Hacksilver is a common item in the Viking finds. This was silver taken as loot or trade and functioned as money. Sometimes this was fragments of silver cut or broken off of other items and sometimes they were complete pieces of coin or jewelry.



Fine silver wire was made historically using a drawn wire technique. Square silver wire and heavier wire was cut and hammered. For these pieces I purchased wire.

The Silverdale Hoard includes a variety of silver items including 27 coins, 10 arm rings, 2 finger rings, 14 ingots, 6 broach fragments, a fine wire braid bracelet, 141 fragments of arm rings and hacksilver. Dated to having been buried around 900 AD.²

Braided Bracelet – the Silverdale bracelet is made of round silver wire and the ends of the braid are wrapped around the bracelet. I can see 3 ends so made my braid with 3 round silver wires – 16 gauge. Placing the ends of the bracelet in a vise, I twisted and braided the wires; ending with melding the ends into the bracelet rather than reverse wrap which was used in the original. The melding makes for a smoother finish. Wire ends were filed.

Square Silver Arm Ring – the Silverdale square silver arm ring is a simple circle with the ends over lapped and then twisted. It is unclear without detailed accounts to know if their bracelet was punched for decorative purposes or just showing wear. Some silver and gold bracelets have punch decoration and some do not. 16 gauge square silver wire was used in my piece. The wire was bent into shape by hand and flat clamp. Wired ends were filed.

¹ Silverdale Hoard – picture of finds as displayed at the British Museum. Housed at Lancaster City Museum and Museum of Lancashire in Preston. <https://blog.britishmuseum.org/2011/12/14/two-hoards-and-one-unknown-viking-ruler/>

² <https://www.facebook.com/notes/shipwreckhunter/silverdale-hoard/946344712047710/> & <http://collections.lancsmuseums.gov.uk/> -- detailed descriptions

Fine square silver wire was also used to make rings. The UK Database of Finds #35119 Finger Ring, Anglo Saxon – 550-800AD. 20mm x 22mm. Yorkshire. “Description: An Anglo-Saxon period silver finger ring made from a single strand of square-section silver wire. The wire is coiled twice to form the hoop, and the remaining length is used to produce a double-start spiral bezel. The two ends of the wire are wound round the hoop to form shoulders.”³



Using fingers and flat clamp 24 gauge square silver wire was bent into the shape of the double – start spiral bezel ring. Ends of wire were filed.



Square silver wire rings were also found in Gloucestershire. UKDFD # 11526 Finger Ring, Anglo-Saxon, 9-10th C. AD. 19 mm dia. “ Description: A silver finger ring of the late Anglo-Saxon period. It consists of a single strand of square-section wire, coiled twice, with overlapping ends, which are wrapped around the hoop to bind the two coils together.”⁴



Using fingers and a flat clamp, 24 gauge square silver wire was bent into the double ring with crossover and wrapped ends. Ends of wire were filed.

Another variation of the double spiral ring was also found in Yorkshire in round copper wire with a single wrap around the finger and the ends wrapped 4-5 times around to create the shoulders. 21 x 17.1 mm – distorted measurements.⁵ Using 20 gauge copper round copper wire, I made the ring in the same method as above.

A variation of the cross over ring was also found in Lincolnshire in round copper wire. There is a twist in the center and the ends then wrap around to form the shoulders. Dated to 9th- 11th C. Anglo – Saxon. 15mm diameter.⁶ Using 20 gauge copper round copper wire, I made the ring in the same method as above.

Double spiral bracelets have also been found in Sweden. This simple one, asset 1318 item 862737 was found in Undrom as part of a hoard. Silver bracelet – “oval

³ <http://www.ukdfd.co.uk/ukdfddata/showrecords.php?product=35119&title=finger-ring&cat=205>
See also UKDFD # 29806 – size 14 mm

⁴ <http://www.ukdfd.co.uk/ukdfddata/showrecords.php?product=11526&title=finger-ring&cat=205>

⁵ UKDFD # 27643
<http://www.ukdfd.co.uk/ukdfddata/showrecords.php?product=27643&title=finger-ring&cat=205>

⁶ UKDFD# 23068
<http://www.ukdfd.co.uk/ukdfddata/showrecords.php?product=23068&title=finger-ring&cat=205>

and with the ends joined together in a knot”.⁷ 69.5 mm. Using fingers and a flat clamp, 16 gauge silver round wire was bent into an oval with a double spiral ring and ends wrapped. Ends of wire were filed.



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Museum and Other Websites:

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Museum of Liverpool <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/>

Swedish Historical Museum <http://mis.historiska.se/>

UK Detector Finds Database <http://www.ukdfd.co.uk/>

⁷ <http://mis.historiska.se/mis/sok/fid.asp?fid=862737&page=2&in=1>