

# Around Dover Museum

## The Ringlemere Cup

Veronica Ward

For thousands of years gold has been desired, worshipped, fought over and possessed. Gold is thought to have been produced from the collision of neutron stars and to have been present in the dust from which the Solar System was formed. The oldest gold artefacts in the world are from Bulgaria and date back to around 4,600 BC.

The Ringlemere Cup is of international significance and was cast in the Bronze Age (3,300-1200BC). It was found at the site of an ancient mound or barrow enclosed by an earlier 'henge' (similar to Stonehenge but made of wood rather than stone). It was a highly valued object and would have been used for ceremonial purposes. It was made in Southern England, but the gold would have come from continental Europe, western Britain

or Ireland and brought here by a boat like our famous Bronze Age Boat here at the museum. It is made from a sheet of gold alloyed with 20% silver. The handle was made separately and fixed with four beautiful rivets. The cup, alongside an amber pendent and some flints, were found at Ringlemere Farm near Sandwich by a local metal detectorist in 2001. It was declared as treasure in 2002 and bought by the British Museum for £270,000.

The cup was number 10 in the list of British archaeological finds selected by experts at the British Museum for the 2003 BBC Television documentary "Our Top Ten Treasures".

From 2004-6 the cup appeared in the Museum's "Buried Treasure" exhibition on treasure trove, both at the Museum itself and touring Cardiff, Manchester, Newcastle, and the Norwich Castle museums. In 2007, it was on temporary display in Dover Museum and it is now back in the Prehistory galleries at the British Museum.

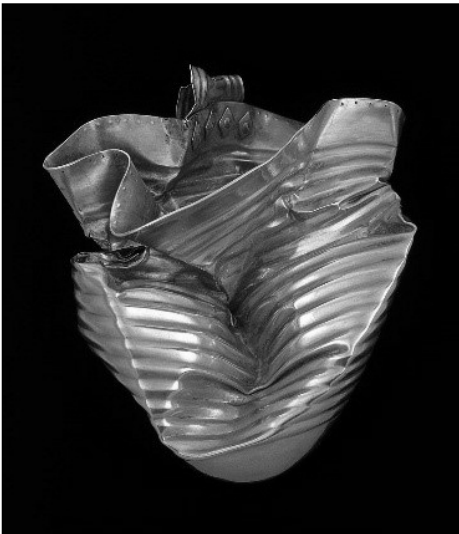
In that wonderful rendition of 'Gold' Spandau Ballet sang in 1983: 'Gold... always believe in your soul, you've got the power to know, you're indestructible! The Ringlemere Cup has certainly been indestructible.

Come and see the replica on the top floor at the museum.

We open: Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 5.00pm. Open Sundays in the summer 10.00am to 3.00pm. Admission is FREE.

Tel: 01304 201066

[www.dover.gov.uk/museum](http://www.dover.gov.uk/museum)



*The Ringlemere Cup*