The Broighter Gold Collar
Broighter, near Limavady, Co. Derry
Early Iron Age, 1st century BC.

- The Broighter Hoard was discovered in 1896 by a farmer ploughing on the shores of Lough Foyle and consists of the collar or ‘buffer torc’, a small boat, a bowl and neck ornaments.

- It is possible that the hoard was a votive offering to the Celtic sea god Manannán Mac Lir who is associated with Lough Foyle.

Materials – gold

Form / Structure
- The form of the collar is a thin hollow gold tube curved into a collar shape.
- A sophisticated t-shaped tenon and mortice locking device can be rotated to close the collar.

Decoration
- Insular La Tène in style.
- The high relief decoration has its origins in the Celtic La Tène design of stylized organic plant motifs, trumpet motifs, lentoid bosses and semi-abstract and curvilinear foliage patterns of the Mediterranean.
- Raised lotus bud flowers, reveal a classical influence and are surrounded with chunky broad curvilinear leaves.
- The background is engraved with overlapping arcs which create texture through cross-hatching.
- The internal area of the locking device is decorated with raised radiating lines described as a sunburst.

Technique
- The collar was constructed by beating the gold into a thin rectangular sheet.
- Repoussé decoration was formed by hammering from the reverse side.
- Lotus buds were created and attached by hammering into place.
- Incised arcs were drawn with a pointed compass-like instrument.
- Gold was rolled and soldered into a tube.
- To form the tube into a collar craftsmen may have filled the tube with hot wax to soften the gold to a malleable material – to bend into a collar shape.

Function
- It was possibly produced to adorn a person with high status within the community.
- It may have been made for a Celtic statue or idol.