

The UKDN Word



Issue 5 January 2008

The World Of Responsible Detecting

Grass Roots
with
IronRon



Spotlight on StuE



Inside:~

UKDN News
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PAS News

HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL UKDN
MEMBERS

Welcome...

To the 5th edition of UK DETECTOR NET's very own newsletter.

First of all – Happy New Year! The team on UKDN would like to thank you all for your continued support and hope you all have a most prosperous 2008!

This is the perfect opportunity to thank those of you who have contributed to this fifth edition and helped make this another informative and interesting issue. There are some excellent articles as per usual from our members and guest contributors – Thank you!

The newsletter is now a regular monthly feature of UKDN and we need input from as many people as wish to give it - then some more. To create and sustain a monthly newsletter we need regular and varied contributors so we ask you to post to your newsletter in much the same way that you post to your forum. Please contact Phil D or Corinne who will be happy to help!

We hope that you enjoy the newsletter and will welcome your feedback on the forum.

Brian, Mo' and The Team



Tell us what you think!

Send a PM to Corinne or PhilD

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UKDN Rallies wanted in 2008

Hiya everyone,

It is hoped that, with the help of the membership, we can have three or four UKDN only rallies in 2008. It would be nice to have them, if only to enable most of us to put faces to forum names !! and the chance for us all to detect together.

Finding land on which to have rallies is not always easy, especially, if like myself, Mo' and other admin people, a lot of our spare time is spent helping run UKDN. What we need is some help from you, the membership.

Ideally, we need four rallies, two in the Spring, say March/April and then two more anytime between August and October. And..this is where you can help.

We don't want to hold BIG rallies, we want small get-togethers of no more than 100 members. So we need just 100 acres of good detecting land i.e. either stubble, flat ploughed or decent detecting land. No rough plough please !!

"How will it work?", you ask. OK, let's picture the scenario. You have a farm and have permission to detect say, 700 acres of arable land. You've done 200 acres but haven't a clue about what might be on the other 500 acres and probably haven't got enough hours in your life-time to survey those acres with an 8" search-head.

You decide to offer UKDN a 100 acre block to set aside for a UKDN rally. We don't like to charge more than £10 per head and so need to talk to you about monies. If your farmer wants the dosh, that's fine, if you want the dosh that's fine as long as its OK with the farmer. If you or the farmer wants the money to go to charity then that's fine also. All we ask is that UKDN gets £1 of the entrance fee so that we can put it towards the upkeep of the forum. So if the rally costs £10, you/the farmer/or the charity will get £9 per person, UKDN will get £1 per person.

UKDN will provide event insurance, marshals, radios, road signs and event literature. We will also take monies from members saving you the hassle of having to deal with this sort of stuff. We will also liaise with you in the event planning.

"What's the advantage to me?" I hear you asking. Simple, you/the farmer or your charity gets to earn some easy dosh and you, the detector user, get's to know what's on those 100 acres. You can't do it properly but invite some people on it for one day and you get to know straight away where the hammered or Roman are coming from!! Great news for next time it's ploughed.

Interested? Then pm any one of the Admin team with your phone number and we'll call you back straight away and discuss the possibilities with you.

UKDN LOTTERY to go monthly

Following on from the huge success of the previous months' UKDN Lottery's, the UKDN Team have decided that for the foreseeable future we will hold the event on a monthly basis with a prize of a book/books to the value of approx. £20.

The lottery will take place about one week later than the UKDN newsletter launch so will happen about one week into each month. It will run from Thursday evening until 7pm on the Saturday evening when the topic thread will be locked. The 6 numbers will be taken from the Lotto draw that evening about 8pm.

Any joint winners will need to submit further numbers, the winning number chosen from the following Wednesday draw.

All UKDN members will be emailed a few days prior to the lottery so that all can take part.

Don't forget it is free !!!

Karv

Forum Technician

By day a B2B Systems Integration Engineer, 40 years old and married for 13 years to a wife who never seems to tire of saying "did you find anything?". I also have 3 daughters, none of whom seem even remotely interested in detecting at present.

I long to retire, so that I can get out and detect for more than a couple of hours one day a week, on some of the land acquired during a very prosperous 2007.

Although its been a very busy year with the UKDN forum moves and rebuild, now that everything is settling down, I did manage to get out and after one particularly good day, have provided the PAS with my first verifiable treasure.

I hope to make many more such finds, (don't we all) just so that I can add my bit to the record of local history.

I have to say I love detecting, but for me, when something I find is displayed, that makes me really happy.



Corinne Mills

News Team Member



In my real life, I'm the wrong side of 50, an army brat, bit of a geek, nuts about Roman Britain, an avid reference book freak and I trade old postcards on Ebay. I have two sons - Ben aged 25 who lives in New Zealand and Ross aged 22 who is in his final year at John Moore Uni in Liverpool studying Computer Games Technology. I now live on the east coast of North Essex in a wee old Victorian type seaside town called Brightlingsea - I moved here 6 years ago after living in leafy Surrey for most of my adult life. I work as a project executive for a business travel management company to pay the mortgage - and the nature of the beast means I am often working away from home in more northern counties.

I've only been detecting for about 4 years or so, but before that, when I was looking into the pro's and con's of taking up this hobby, I found it very hard to find any comprehensive information online on detecting in the UK - especially for beginners like me!

I had joined various detecting forums but the advice given then to beginners was diverse and confusing - things are much better today! I also spent a bit of time going to various detecting rallies around the south-east to really see if this was really what I wanted to do and what type of people these detectorists really were. It was at two of these rallies that I bumped into staff of the Portable Antiquities Scheme - who were there recording finds made on the day. I decided to build a website for people like myself who wanted to detect, but wanted to have the knowledge to be able to do it in

a responsible way by recording finds with the Portable Antiquities Scheme, detecting in a way that did not cause any damage to underlying archaeology below the plough soil and recording an accurate findspot using GPS.

Once I had taken the plunge and bought a detector, I joined a couple of local detecting clubs but very quickly realized they were not for me. One of the major benefits was meeting a gentle giant of a man by the name of Terry (you'll know him as wildmantel) who was a massive help to me as a beginner. Terry and I have detected together lots - normally on one farm in Essex where we have thoroughly enjoyed discovering more about the history of the area and sharing this information with the landowner - and the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The majority of our finds are returned to the landowner after recording, as he is very interested in the history of his land.

We both record all of our finds with the Portable Antiquities Scheme - even the grotty bits - as they all help us to understand and build a picture of the history of the area we detect in. This includes finds made by eye only too - such as pieces of worked flint, pottery etc.

PhilD - Phil Dunning

News Team Member

Hi, PhilD aka Phil Dunning, I worked with National Grid (formerly CEGB) as Electrical Draughtsman (10yrs), Protection and Control Engineer (10yrs) & Project Engineer (5yrs).

Been detecting about 6 years, started with a Bounty Hunter and found a modern gold ring in the first week, talk about beginners luck! Had no one to detect with and decided to buy an Explorer II and join a Club as a means to get onto land, gave the Tracker 4 to my mate, so now have a detecting partner too.

Took me 6 years to find my first hammy, then found 2 in a fortnight, one with the Explorer on the surface then one with a T2 which I find 1 simple to use and light enough to swing all day.

Best find is a Pseudo Imperial Merovingian Tremissis (gold plated Justinian fake) which I gave to the York Museum PAS ref YORYM-B4CA93.

I'm Secretary at York and District MDC, the Club gets involved in Community activities and has a full membership at present.

I love Club outings, the crack at rallies and on the UKDN Forum and am keen on supporting the PAS and promoting recording as I see recording with PAS as being vital to future of the hobby.



Ashmantle

News Team Member

I live in Sunny Manchester with my Fiancée and 2 children, Courtney(7) and Harrison(2), where I work as a College Manager and Freelance Illustrator.

I've always been hugely interested in History, especially with Ancient Rome. This and the fact that I'm a natural Hoarder (much to the despair of my better half) led me into Metal detecting with the purchase of a Viking 30 (don't laugh... I found my first hammy in a local park with the beast)

I've been detecting for just over 5 years, I currently use a battered Explorer II which is held together with gaffer tape. I've been pretty successful with my finds rate, especially with items from the Roman period, for some bizarre reason I tend to find lots of Roman Silver but very few hammies!.

I don't get out as much as I used to due to work and family commitments but I still manage a day out once a month, I consider myself a 'Lucky' detectorist as its very rare that I return home without a nice coin or artefact in my finds pouch.

My best find to date was a hoard containing 58 Roman Denarii and a solid silver Trumpet Brooch, these items are currently on display in the Nantwich Museum in Cheshire.



IronRon - Carrier Bags

I had started off badly that morning. The weather couldn't make it mind up whether to rain or not, and after deciding to take a chance, and go for it, I drove to one of my favourite sites. Parking up I decided to have a quick coffee before i started, the weather still looked miserable and overcast. Opening the boot to grab my flask, something seemed amiss! Not too worried at the time, I poured myself a coffee. Then it slowly dawned on me, as my eyes looked around the boot. No bloody Wellingtons! I had forgot to pack them. Now what! I thought, looking at the field which was by now quickly resembling a swamp. Slamming the boot, i decided to give it a rest and retire for the day. Driving back, I couldn't relax. I had driven to the site which is a good 18 miles away and kept thinking to myself "Why should I let the lack of a pair of Wellingtons stop me."

Pulling into the first place I could to turn around, I headed back to the site. Now when i go detecting , I only wear a pair of blue deck shoes and then change into Wellies. Although the rain had eased off and it looked a little brighter, I didn't fancy going into the field with just slippers on - so I decided to try to tie a couple of carrier bags on my feet.

Disaster! Have you ever tried walking in a muddy field with carrier bags tied to your feet? Not recommended I can tell you .Unless!..... you were as lucky as I was.

I definitely think it was down to me going so slow and trying to keep my balance, that my second signal was this lovely hammered crown. I couldn't believe my eyes, when the handful of mud with only my second signal contained this lovely hammie!

That was it for me for the day, I often think to myself, if i hadn't gone back that day ,it could still be there, Waiting!

This next item was found on one of my favourite Romano British fields, one day last year. All of my fields that i detect on, have been searched for the last 25 years, by the world & his mother!. So! never think, that a field is devoid of coins or artefacts.



Britain crown.

Second coinage, mm, escallop. 1606-7

I was having a bad morning, when this lovely crown, popped its head out of the carrot field - James 1.



Roman Hippocampus brooch 2nd century 34mm.

The brooch depicts a hippocampus ! A mythical animal ,a head or forepart a horse ,& a body resembling a fish or a dolphin!.

It has a large central body recess, now empty! Two triangular cells defining the lower fins, a light blue enamelled dorsal fin and four more smaller cells for the tail.

This was from another worked out field. It was one of them depressing fields, where you can wander around for hours and not get a peep, I expect we have all been in this situation at some time or other, when you wonder if the machine is still working.

Coreiltauvi gold stater 18mm, 5g.

Obverse, head of Apollo! Reverse disjointed horse , facing left. Reverse is struck off centre. Revealing a full circle, with seven pellets, with no dividing line between the pellets.

This is one of several ,i have had over the years, but not from this particular field.

I found this very early one winters morning.. got there first light, farmer had rung me and informed me that the field had been ploughed. I knew that two friends of mine also knew this and would also be there, although they are not early risers.

So early bird catches the worm as the saying goes - Picked this up and a couple of hammered before they arrived !



Dragonisque Brooch 50AD-250AD.

These are usually affixed by a pin on the back, like any conventional brooch but this one, only has a ring or loop! I have been informed that these were sometimes worn in pairs, so this one could have affixed to another, via the ring or loop.

Found mainly in northern Britain. Especially in the region of the Brigantes and in Southern Scotland. Occasionally found in the south of Britain and in mainland Europe and as far away as Hungary. They appear shortly after the roman conquest AD 43 and so are essentially a Romano British product. They do however embody native artistic taste, in both form and decoration, with cells of contrasting coloured enamels. This one has concentric ribs around a central boss, & could be from the lowland Scottish school. A common practice, replacing coloured enamel

November Coin of the Month

Nellythefish (Steve Nelson) - Cunobelin Quarter Stater, Circa AD 20 - 43



What a day, I found 3 Roman brooches, 7 Roman bronzes, 1 Roman silver. I thought it couldn't get any better and then this little fella popped up. A small, beautiful and golden disc sparkled through the grunge.

At first I thought I must be seeing things, but after a bit of a wipe on the back of my jacket sleeve a fabulous Celtic quarter stater made it's presence known. I was so excited I could have done back flips the whole length of the field, however I thought better of this idea and instead let all them within earshot know of this great find.

We covered every inch of that strip of land for the next 2 hours and whereas more Roman came off there was no more staters. The coin has been identified as a CUNOBELIN STATER AD 20 - 43, and appears to be a long way from home.

It's my first Celtic gold and I am over the moon with this. I've recorded it with the CCI and the FLO.



November Artefact of the Month

Karv - Viking Finger Ring

The tractor rumbled past, finally they'd ploughed the field I'd just got and were in the process of rolling it. A dog ran up, then another, then another. At least 4 black Labrador's accompanied by the land owner in his land rover. We had the usual "found anything" conversation, I replied I hadn't and enquired as to when I'd have to stop detecting this newfound paradise of ploughed land, so different from my hundreds of acres of pasture. He replied "you won't hurt this!".

Great, I have a field to detect all winter, the land owner bid me farewell, and as he went to pull away, he pointed over the hedge and said "you can do that one too!". It was another 2 weeks before I got back to the "other" field, the sun low in the sky, the threat of rain and outbreaks of drizzle. I started across the new field, apparently undetected. Heading straight for the centre of the field, towards the higher ground, I'd made my way about half way across the field when I got a lovely low signal, I'd had enough pie trays and shottie caps but this was different, low, steady, a rock solid two-way signal.

I can't say how surprised I was when I gradually separated the soil and found a small silver ring. I wasn't sure quite what to make of it at first, while it was still covered in dirt it had the appearance of a hose clip. It was definitely too delicate for that, and just large enough to fit on the end of my little finger. Not wanting to speculate, I bagged and tagged it, and headed back to the car and to my surprise I found my first hammy on the way! (a cut half of King John 1199-1216 by all accounts). This was turning into a really good day.

Later that day, I spoke to petethedig and headed over to his place, where he showed me a picture of a ring just like the one I'd found, I couldn't believe it. Not only silver, but Viking too! A very rare find for our part of the country, and one I shan't forget for a Long time to come.

The land owner was very interested and was very pleased to have seen the ring before it was handed over to Kurt Adams, the local FLO to be recorded as a Treasure Item.



At this moment in time, the 50 dedicated staff of the Portable Antiquities Scheme do not know whether they will still have a job after next March. This is due to the recent announcement by Roy Clare, the chief executive of MLA, that funding for PAS for the year 2008/9 will be frozen at this years figures, meaning a loss of 5 out of 50 jobs.

PAS *focus*

UKDN members and a vast number of people from the archaeological field have thrown their weight behind the recent campaign to support the PAS

UKDN—Giving our support to PAS

Mr Clare wants to get rid of the pro-active central unit of PAS, based at the British Museum, and farm the 39 Finds Liaison Officers out to the “Renaissance Museum hubs” around the country. This will potentially mean these vital staff could be swallowed up into the “Renaissance in the Regions” programme with its own various regional priorities and the PAS will undoubtedly lose its national focus.

Ten years or so ago the Government's initiative on the voluntary recording of archaeological finds for members of the public was one of the most important pioneering developments in recent archaeology – Prior to the creation of the PAS probably only a very small percentage of finds made by members of the public were recorded by museums.

In the 10 years since, over 300,000 items have been recorded – a figure not to be sneezed at!

Are the PAS purely a recording facility which can be passed on and absorbed into any hub museum?

Hardly.....one of the main points of the scheme, is not so much to see and record individual objects brought forward by members of the public, but rather to help build up an overall pattern of past activity, history and archaeology across the country.

They are the friendly face who deals on a day to day basis with the general public, either by recording finds in a variety of locations, giving educational talks to schools, colleges and universities, providing outreach at events and open days. Their presence has certainly strengthened the expertise available to the general public as far as small finds identification is concerned – most museums nowadays do not have sufficient specialist staff to carry out this requirement



FLO Dot Bruns with a bronze socketed axe

What does the PAS have to offer Joe Public?.....



PAS *focus*

What does PAS have to offer the Public?

Recording finds

The FLO's are interested in recording all objects found by anyone that are over 300 years old in the main. They will identify your find, record it on the database, give you a copy of the report, provide you with conservation advice where needed, help you with any Treasure Finds you may have and give you information on the importance of your material for the understanding of our history

Research

The information which comes from your finds is used by researchers from all over the UK and abroad. They could be authors of books researching the significance of artefacts, university students interrogating the data for distribution patterns etc. Some of these people who use or have used the database for research have contributed to our monthly newsletter, such as Suzie Thomas, who wrote about the relationships between metal detectorists and archaeologists. PAS is also revealing many new archaeological sites, as detector users go where archaeologists don't go. A recent study by a PhD student showed that the PAS data has revealed 24 new Roman settlements in Wiltshire alone.

Talks

Everyone in the PAS gives talks on a regular basis. Roger Bland was even asked to talk about PAS in US Congress this year!

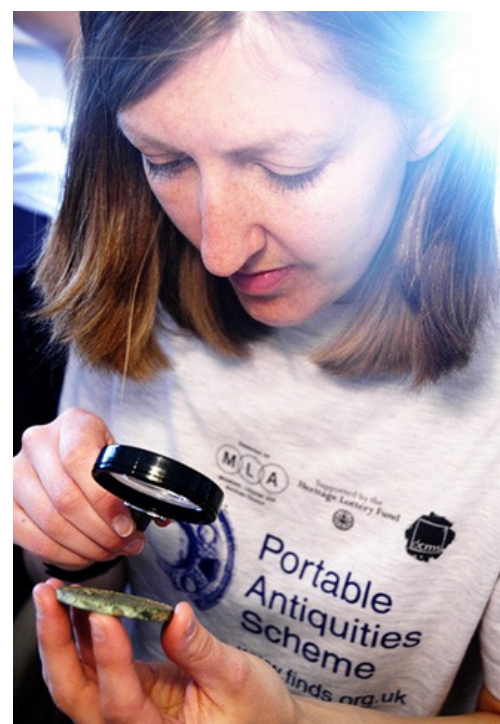
The FLOs organise activities in their local community including Finds Days where members of the public can come along—they also give talks to a diverse audience—some of the talks are to the unemployed, amateur history and archaeological societies, metal detecting clubs, radio and television programmes and delivering papers at conferences

Open access

All the finds recorded are available online for anyone to access—as well as that there are other resources available on their website including a Roman coin Guide. Its popular too—there were over 82 million user hits in the last year.

Education

Lots of activity here! This ranges from education for children by working with schools, helping with Young Archaeologists Clubs to the online virtual West Mucking Saxon village website. For those of us who are a tad older in the tooth, PAS have held conservation workshops for finders, and even held training sessions for both amateur and professional archaeologists.





PAS *focus*

Many thanks to everyone that has so far emailed their MP's, and those that haven't, then please do so now!

What can we do collectively to support PAS?

1. Write to MPs

We are encouraging everyone to write to their MPs asking him/her to raise their concerns about PAS **with the Minister**—This is because when the MP writes to the Minister, the Minister has to reply, whereas if an ordinary person writes to the Minister, then they just get a reply from a lowly official at the DCMS. So Ministers take much more notice of letters that come from MPs because they have to sign all the replies.

2. Also ask the MP

to sign up to the Early Day Motion which supports the funding of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, as laid down on 12 December by Tim Loughton of the All Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group (APPAG) :

Early Day Motion 566: PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME

That this House recognises the great contribution of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) to transforming the archaeological map of Britain by proactively recording archaeological finds made by the public; celebrates the fact that in 10 years the scheme has recorded on its public database more than 300,000 archaeological finds, which would not have otherwise been reported, for the benefit of all; expresses concern at the likely impact of funding cuts proposed for the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), following the recent Comprehensive Spending Review, on the PAS; and urges the Government to ensure that the scheme is at least able to maintain its current levels of activity and to consider urgently whether MLA offers the best home for the PAS or whether another body, such as the British Museum, would not be better placed to provide PAS with a long-term sustainable future

2. Sign the E-Petition

There is now an e-petition at 10 Downing St which we encourage all to sign please!

View it here:

<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/PAS-Funding/>

UKDN supporting the Portable Antiquities Scheme
USE IT OR LOSE IT

Spotlight on StuE (Stuart Elton)

Hi, I'm known as StuE on the forums. Many years ago I called myself 'Headinthecloids' but got fed up typing that lot and imaginatively stuck the initial of my surname onto my abbreviated first name. Here is me with my F75 and floppy white hat.

I live in Colchester – just got back from watching the reserves lose 3 – 1 to Southend L. I'm retired early after 30 years with the MOD where I used to be a scientist. Now I scan women in their underwear while traveling round the world. It's hard but someone has to do it. – see <http://www.shapeanalysis.com/Photo%20Gallery.htm>

I bought a small C-Scope in the late 70's but soon got fed up finding rubbish and put it in the loft. I didn't take it up again until 2002 when I borrowed a Viking 20 from a relative who had it in his attic! I had bought a Treasure Hunter magazine and then found Colchester metal detecting club and finally UKDN and the other forums. Once you have got over the initial awkwardness handling the machine, spade and the rest of the gear in public you are hooked for life. If you find something good you can't wait to get back out there and find something else. If you don't find anything good (the usual scenario) you can't wait to get back out there and find something good. It's the perfect excuse to be outdoors.

I'm a definite ploughed land man as that is where you are more likely to come across the historic artefacts that fascinate me the most. I have only tried beaches on very few occasions when farmland was unavailable but I'm sure if I gave it a bit more time and effort it could grow on me.

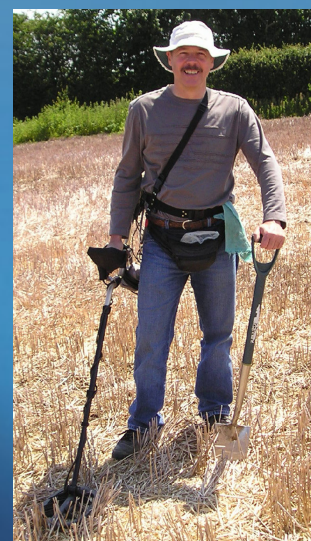
I'm a Colchester club member and I also detect most of the time with Bungee Roy who is shameless in badgering landowners until they allow him and his driver (me) on their land. Here he is being used as a hat stand by me.

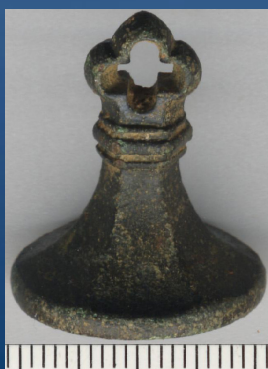
The first detector I bought was a Tesoro Cortes. I found my first hammy with this, a Charles I half groat (you always remember it), and was generally pleased but found it lacking on difficult ground. Then I discovered the Whites MXT and Roger. Sheddly was to blame for putting one in my hands for the first time at the second Thornham Rally – funnily enough Dobby, the organiser, also had a Cortes and was thinking of changing his for something else too. This was the first time I had met the exuberant Sheddly and he let me take his machine home from the rally to try out for a couple of weeks and he wasn't even trying to sell it to me! With Roger's writings to guide me I soon loved this noisy machine and still have it. However I couldn't resist flirting with other machines and tried my best with an Explorer II for about nine months (sold to me by Dobby when he decided to take a break from the hobby). It is an excellent detector and again I still have it but I found myself returning to the MXT where the admitted loss of depth but increased finds rate seemed to suit my attitude better. When Roger finally hung up his MXT for an F75 I knew I had to get one and ever since the other two detectors have stayed in the boot unless someone was borrowing them.

I'm a rally groupie!! I love them especially the weekend ones. It gives you a chance on land you wouldn't otherwise be able to try and even when finds are sparse you still have all the people to chat to. Thornham was great but my favourite has to be Firle although anywhere that's not raining and the gang is there is fine for me. I also remember weekend ones in Norfolk that were run by Cheryl and her husband which were really good.

I'll always choose a charity rally over a commercial one if there's a choice and buy the raffle tickets and I have helped out at a couple of rallies showing kids how to detect and thereby re-roofed a few churches and re-toggled a few Cubs. Roy and I once spent most of our detecting morning looking for a dog walker's car keys. He found them and got the cuddle – luckily it was a woman.

How could you not love them with scenes like these:-





My best artefact is a recent find, I love the personal nature of seals and all the information they supply – even if it's not always decipherable.

It's a 14th century Medieval Seal Matrix

found on one of Ken's East Coast Searcher rallies at Marlesford Suffolk. PAS ESS-30ACC3 and UKDFD6717.

My best coin is a **silver penny from the reign of Hathacnut** found on the 'Saxon field' at Marks Tey owned by our favourite farmer who lets us detect until the crop is too high to swing the detector. PAS ESS-0703A1 and UKDFD 2004



I found this Treasure find, a **silver gilt FEDE ring** which was disclaimed and returned to me. Unfortunately it was broken but I got the interesting bit. I thought it was modern until Rufus put me straight. See PAS ESS-0DFA24.

Very recently Colchester Castle asked for one of my finds for the first time from me as they wished to start a collection of artefacts depicting religious iconography – see PAS ESS-302D31 and UKDFD 7567. I have also lent items for temporary exhibitions at Braintree and Colchester.



I record my finds with the PAS, I'm proud to have received the only official PAS finders certificate that I know of. I hand over my finds each in a poly sample bag with a 10fig NGR

ref. (GPS is a must for me) so there is no faffing about with maps at the club meeting and the FLO returns them at the next meeting with a copy of the data sheet for each one recorded. I then put the sheet in an A4 poly pocket with the find and put it in the appropriate folder. You can see them open on the desk and stored in the bookcase in the pictures of my study. I also record with and support UKDFD.



What I enjoy most about detecting is the very real possibility that the next swing could signal something from hundreds to thousands of years past and I'll be the one to bring it to light again. Luckily I also like collecting scrap lead and bullets.

The advice I would give to anyone new to the hobby is to just be friendly, helpful and considerate – the more friends, help and consideration you get in return the easier things become. Read everything, listen a lot, borrow your first detector and look on decent finds as a bonus. Just make sure you enjoy being out there – there is no secret – just practice and the time and effort you put into it. The only guarantee is that you won't find anything if you don't get out there and dig.

StuE.



C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre: Battlefield Archaeology and Metal Detecting

Natasha N. Ferguson, Centre for Battlefield Archaeology, University of Glasgow

Recently, I overheard battlefield archaeology referred to as 'the sexiest discipline in archaeology'. Although perhaps not quite as 'sexy' as some would like to imagine, battlefield archaeology has certainly established itself as an innovative field, with an inclusive multi-disciplinary approach to investigating past conflict. A significant element of this pioneering approach has been the involvement of amateur metal detectorists in battlefield projects, which we hope has helped to promote good working relationships and standards in both professional and amateur circles.

Unlike other archaeological sites that may form over decades or even centuries, sites of conflict such as battlefields, skirmishes and temporary encampments have, in archaeological terms, an incredibly short life span, leaving behind a unique signature in the archaeological record. Battlefield archaeologists draw their data from a number of sources including historical documents; analysis of the landscape and excavation of standing remains. But perhaps the most tangible evidence of conflict comes in the form of artefacts such as musket balls and other projectiles; weapon fragments and personal items like buttons which have been torn off and dropped in the heat of battle. Over time, these artefacts make their way into the topsoil creating artefact distributions which, if surveyed and recorded correctly, may provide valuable information about the nature and extent of the engagement. Further detailed analysis of the artefacts is a fascinating process, as even the humble musket ball contains a wealth of data relating to its size, weight and morphology.

As a considerable proportion of our data is in the topsoil, and is potentially spread across a wide area, the usual methods of excavation are not suitable. Therefore, battlefield archaeology has developed a distinct methodology which recognises that the most effective way to locate and recover this predominately metallic material is with a metal detector. Systematic survey techniques using grids and high quality survey equipment, like the total station, ensure that each find can be recorded and plotted to sub-centimetre accuracy, producing a detailed artefact distribution map of the battlefield.

Whilst battlefield archaeology does not advocate metal detecting on known sites of conflict out with an archaeological project, there is an appreciation of the skill required to operate a metal detector effectively and efficiently. The experience and knowledge brought by many amateur metal detectorists to archaeological projects on battlefields has proven to be extremely beneficial. Across the UK, there are a number of metal detecting clubs who have worked closely with archaeologists, particularly with the Centre for Battlefield Archaeology, on a number of battlefields and with great success.

Over the last year, as part of my doctoral research based at the Centre for Battlefield Archaeology, University of Glasgow, I have been assessing the extent of metal detecting on 17th -19th century sites of conflict in the UK and evaluating the potential volume of artefact material removed from these sites. An element of this research also aims to gauge whether the activities of amateur metal detectorists can help determine the location of unknown sites of conflict.

So what contribution can you or your club make to battlefield archaeology? Artefacts like musket balls or military buttons may appear at first to be random, ubiquitous objects. However, their presence may indicate some kind of military activity such as a small scale skirmish or temporary encampment. Be aware of any unusual scatters or concentrations, and even if it is just a lone musket ball, record and plot it as accurately as possible, remembering to bag it with an individual finds number.

Clearly PAS and Treasure Trove should be your first port-of-call, but please contact me if you have any information about metal detecting and sites of conflict. I would be interested to hear from you.

n.ferguson.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Group of metal detectorists who volunteered to take part in a survey of the Battle of Inverlochy, Fort William



Selection of artefacts found on some English Civil War battlefields



January 2008

Tim Grubb, SMR Officer

Gloucestershire Sites & Monuments Record

Many detectorists will have heard of their local SMR, but I imagine very few will know what they have to offer and even fewer will have contacted it for information before or after they go detecting. Opening hours, facilities and names will vary but, contrary to popular belief SMRs are a public resource accessible to all those interested in archaeology – including detectorists.



The SMR

In Gloucestershire, the SMR is the most comprehensive source of information on archaeological sites in the county. We have around 25,000 individual computerised records including earthworks, buildings, cropmarks/soilmarks and finds dating from the Palaeolithic to the Second World War. The entries are mapped on a geographical information system (GIS) and many will be linked to a variety of supporting paper records, maps, aerial photographs, slides and books.

The GIS also stores digital mapping of all of the legally protected sites (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields) as well as access to all of the historic Ordnance Survey mapping and, coming soon, the enclosure awards. All of this information is available to responsible detectorists, in our case free of charge, and offers a great opportunity to research a site, check the distribution of a type of find or see if we have information on those

intriguing cropmarks seen on Google Earth.

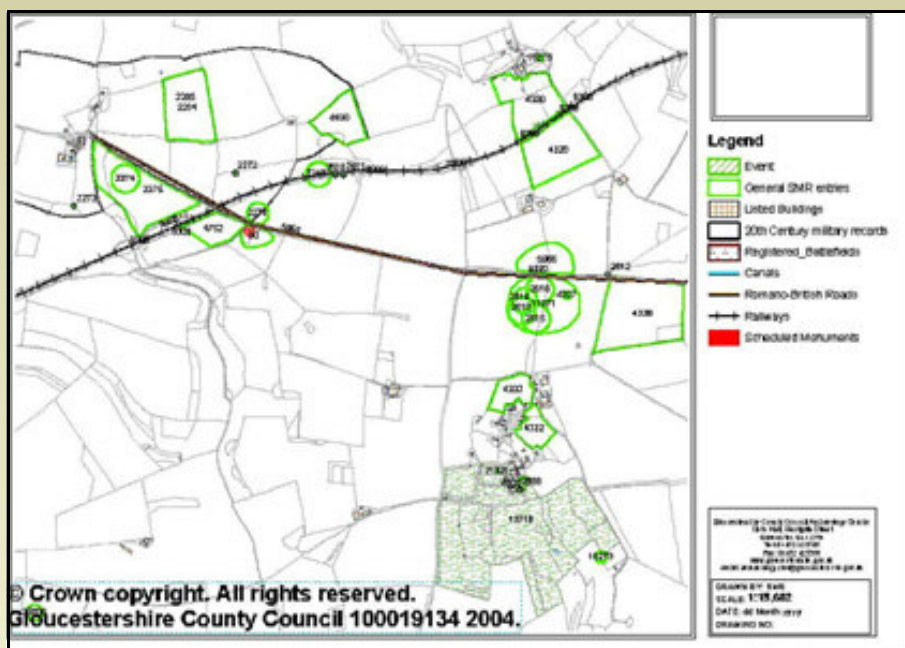
Liaison

Before the area had a FLO we worked closely with a number of detectorists and clubs in the county recording their finds and supplying information. Our ability to work with detectorists was greatly improved when the PAS funded a FLO for Gloucestershire and Avon and Kurt Adams is now based in our offices for 3 days per week. With Kurt in post we are now able to co-operate with many more clubs and individuals and get involved at a more local level.

Access

We have the SMR on a laptop and we are able to visit clubs, demonstrate the SMR and encourage members to contact us for information. Many people (not just detectorists) are unaware how easy it is to get information from an SMR. Turn around times and charges vary from SMR to SMR, but in Gloucestershire I will supply information to any enquirer unless I have a good reason not to! All we ask is that every enquirer sign an access document that sets out our terms and conditions (mostly aimed at our commercial clients) and that any information discovered subsequently is fed back to the SMR for the benefit of other researchers.

This all sounds wonderfully easy yet I know that many detectorists will be wary of approaching the 'archies' for information in case they lose their land or a site gets scheduled. Badger, Petethedig and UKDN generally have done a lot to dispel some of the myths surrounding the work of the County Archaeologists, but they still keep cropping up.



One misconception published in a letter in *Treasure Hunting* recently is the belief that if you record your finds with the SMR the landowner will be presented with a huge bill for archaeological excavation. About 3 years ago during a site visit with a detectorist I was told that the last time he had recorded a find with the SMR (a single ring or brooch) the farmer had to pay tens of thousands of pounds for an archaeological excavation and the detectorist was thrown off the land. While it is not impossible for a metal detecting find to lead to some kind of archaeological work it is extremely rare – in 15 years our development control officer has never added a planning condition because of a metal detecting find alone. If it were to happen, the find would have to be extraordinary and, importantly, indicative of something other than a stray loss. With this in mind I went back to the office and checked the file. It turned out that the farmer had submitted a planning application to build a large grain silo within a medieval village and 10m from a medieval church and churchyard. The planning condition and subsequent costs to the farmer had absolutely nothing to do with the find, but everything to do with the location and size of the development. However, both the farmer and the detectorist believed and probably still believe otherwise.

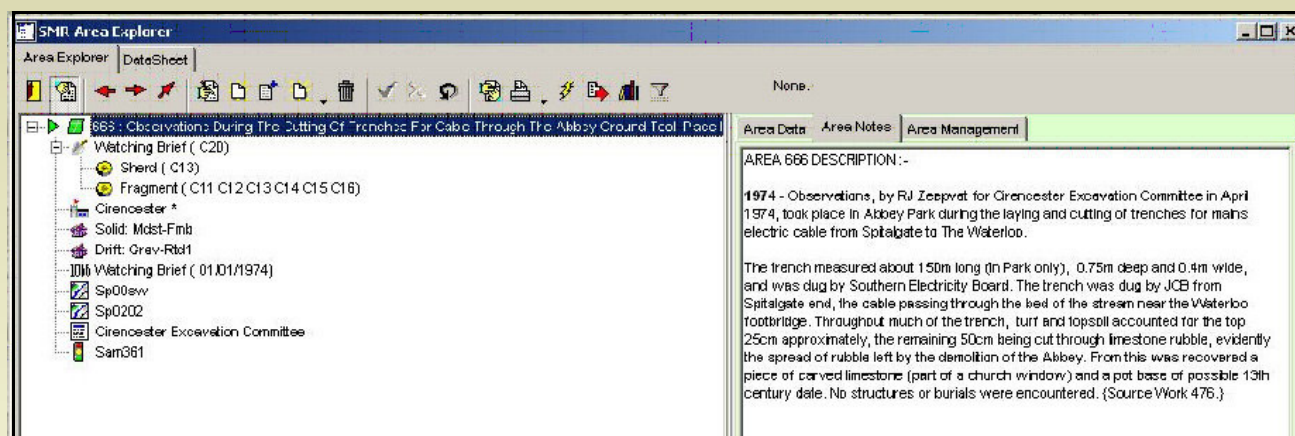
In fact, 99% of modern archaeology is undertaken in advance of development and paid for by the developer under the 'polluter pays' principle. Unfortunately, the domination of developer-funded archaeology means that as a department we have no budget for excavations. As you would expect, most archaeologists would love to dig a hoard site or a Roman lead coffin (two recent metal detecting finds), but the funds are just not there. While we apply for English Heritage funding the farmer is inconvenienced by a piece of land they cannot manage and detectorists grow more frustrated by the delay excavating their find. Thus an opportunity for co-operation and mutual education becomes a headache and for all concerned.

Other concerns such as accuracy of findspot information and the scheduling of sites all warrant further discussion and, maybe, another article!



I believe that closer co-operation between archaeologists and detectorists could benefit both groups and Kurt and I will be arranging a joint PAS /SMR event in 2008. In the meantime I would be happy to answer any queries about what we do and how we do it.

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York & District MDC, PAS FLO Presentation

By PhilD

Hi, I'm Secretary at York & District MDC, which has a full membership of 55 members. It's Honorary members, I'm proud to say, include Jim Halliday who has been an icon in the metal detecting community for many years supporting and working alongside the PAS FLO's at the York Museum, his wealth of knowledge and contribution to metal detecting and recording finds is unparalleled.

North Yorkshire now has a new FLO, Liz Andrews - Wilson (previously FLO for East and West Sussex). Liz has been a FLO for over four years and contacted the Club soon after taking up her new post to arrange a visit and to give a presentation at the Holgate Working Mens Club

The presentation was very informative, there was an introduction to PAS and tips on searching the PAS Database. The talk was mainly around the importance of recording finds and the advantages of recording to a high level of accuracy as opposed to just Parish level.

Starting with how short term the life of a find can be when faced with the plough and chemicals and even a grotty coin could turn out to be unique and fill a gap in our history.

Plotting the GPS positions of finds can highlight track ways long since disappeared and the PAS map of all Roman finds showed us where all the populated areas were.

Particularly interesting I thought was the importance of recording battlefield finds such as the lowly musket ball, where these show up in numbers they enable the academics to draw up the battle line formations and where they are absent show where the safe areas were like where the baggage was.

A question and answer session followed to address some of the issues concerning the members present, this soon got down to the nitty gritty issues which Liz didn't duck and told members that she wanted to build their trust and confidence.

Liz also handed out Treasure Reports, PAS Newsletters, Advice for Finders and Conservation booklets.

She identified finds before they went onto the FOM tray and after the competition had finished she collected finds and grid references to take back to the Museum for photographing and recording, saving us the time and expense and reducing the carbon footprint too.

Liz was invited and agreed to attend the Club on a regular basis on the first meeting of the month so that she can collect, record and return finds, give talks of interest, help with the Treasure process, PAS Database, give advice on conserving our finds (although this might incur a cost) and just generally help the club by giving up to date information and help to deal with any issues that might occur.

Liz even agreed to give us her mobile phone number so she may be of help should we find ourselves in need of her assistance on site out of hours.

I was well impressed, what more could you ask for!



What are you throwing away?

a cautionary tale from a detectorist

Its easy to just chuck away what you might think of as junk - but many detectorist's also keep all their finds - including items they haven't got a clue what they are and are unaware of what the object represents. The following article written by "Sukisal" brings home an important message.....

Sukisal

Sukisal's Story.....

Linda and I had recently been given permission to search a known Roman Villa site. I will just add that permission had been given to a couple, and they had been very regular visitors to this site for a few weeks previous to our first foray. This site has also been regularly detected in the past when it was in different ownership.

We were going to spend all day on this site, which was large, had quite a steep slope to it, and had two woods either side of it.

We spied many holes from the 'other ones'. and did not find much really at all. Loads of lead, a lot of it just

dropped back onto the field as junk by them. We went back to my car for a cuppa and a bite to eat, as we were chatting we were comparing finds, a few grots, and with a sigh we both cursed all the lead we were digging up.

I was just showing Linda a folded flat piece, when something stopped me chucking it in our waste bin, I could see an 'X' scratched into it. I said to Linda "is it me or has this got some sort of writing on it?" We both looked closer and could make out a few more scratched marks. I said "ooh, I think I will keep that and have a closer look at home". Well I later showed it to

someone else who said that it could be important, and could have more writing inside the fold. He took it away and very carefully opened it for me. He rung me up later very excited and said there indeed was more writing and clearer as it had been protected from the elements on the inside.

I handed it over to my Finds Liaison Officer and the rest is in the Portable Antiquities database report on the link [here](#).

Pas ref (SF-8D9D62)

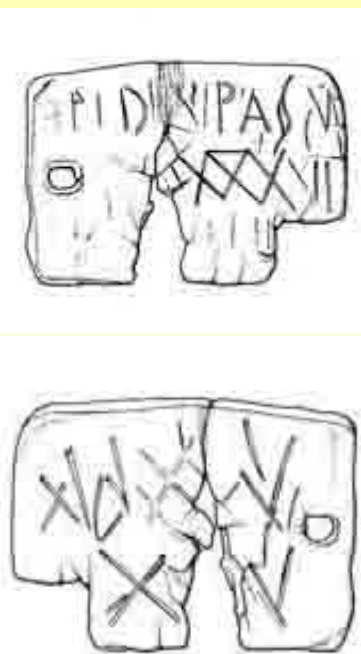
(This link tells you what the object is - and its rarity and importance)

The Find

I will just add again, please look at your lead very carefully, I could so easily have chucked this tatty bit of important history. I do think that the detectorists on there had, in all probability chucked this piece back onto the field, if not I know they would have done so if they had dug it

up. I think by the very nature of what these are made of, that this is the reason they are so rare, I bet you many have been discarded as rubbish. This find has been recorded with the Portable Antiquities Scheme and was subsequently submitted to Mark Hassell who is a Reader in the

Archaeology of the Roman Provinces at University College London. Finds of this nature are submitted by Sally Worrell, Finds Adviser: Prehistoric & Roman Artefacts to Britannia and produced by The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies.



Cursing the emperor

By Sam Moorhead

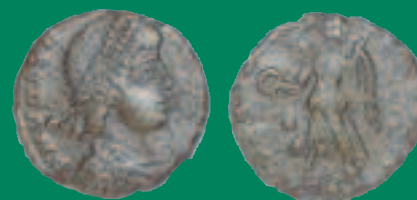
Early this year, a metal detectorist called Tom Redmayne was searching in a muddy field in the parish of Fulstow in Lincolnshire. He had already found Roman pottery (Samian ware from Gaul), some late Roman coins and several lead weights. Then he found several pieces of lead, two of which were folded over. When he carefully unfolded them, he saw that they had holes drilled in them. Furthermore, in the centre of each was an impression. He took them to Adam Daubney, the Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer for Lincolnshire, who realised that they were coin impressions.

Adam brought the pieces down to the

British Museum where he and I established that the impressions were caused by bronze coins of the Emperor Valens that had been hammered into the lead. The pieces were then folded over and the edges of the sheets pierced. This was probably so they could be hung up. So how do we interpret this?

In the reigns of the joint-emperors Valentinian I (364–75 AD) and Valens (364–78 AD), the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus tells us that a certain Valentinus 'who was a native of Valeria in Pannonia [Hungary], a proud man, had been exiled to Britain for a serious offence. Like some dangerous animal he could not stay quiet; he pushed ahead with

his destructive, revolutionary plans nourishing an especial loathing for Theodosius [a general of Valentinian and Valens sent to Britain].' The same scholar reports that this troublemaker Valentinus started a rebellion which was quashed. He then describes the catastrophic events in Britain, commonly called the 'Great Barbarian Conspiracy', when Saxons, Picts and Scots (from Ireland) all ravaged the Roman province. Britannia was saved only by the swift actions of General Theodosius.



Modern historians have tended to overlook the revolt of Valentinus. But it has been suggested that this was the catalyst for subsequent invasions, as the barbarians sensed that Britain was in turmoil and therefore particularly vulnerable to attack. It might be that during the revolt of Valentinus, one of his followers decided to curse the emperors. It was traditional to write curse messages on tablets which were rolled up or nailed to a temple wall (you can see Roman curse tablets from Uley in the Roman Britain Gallery; Room 49).

In the case of the find, it seems that instead of writing the emperors' names, a coin with a picture of the emperor was used instead. Then the lead was folded over and the pieces possibly nailed to, or hung from, a wall. At a later date, the two pieces might have been ritually deposited, possibly in the ground.

This is only my personal interpretation – we will never know for certain why they were made, but perhaps they were created by a follower of the rebellious Valentinus. Whatever the truth, we have not found other objects like these in Britain.

To find out more about recent finds or report your own metal detector find, see www.finds.org.uk



ABOVE: Front and back of the bronze coin of Emperor Valens, also found in Lincolnshire

LEFT: One of the two lead sheets showing the impression of the coin of Valens and the hole drilled after the piece was folded.

RIGHT: Detectorist Tom Redmayne looking for treasure

Being responsible means:

Before you go metal-detecting

1. Not trespassing; before you start detecting obtain permission to search from the landowner/occupier, regardless of the status, or perceived status, of the land. Remember that all land has an owner. To avoid subsequent disputes it is always advisable to get permission and agreement in writing first regarding the ownership of any finds subsequently discovered (see www.cla.org.uk / www.nfuonline.com).
2. Adhering to the laws concerning protected sites (e.g. those defined as Scheduled Monuments or Sites of Special Scientific Interest: you can obtain details of these from the landowner/occupier, Finds Liaison Officer, Historic Environment Record or at www.magic.gov.uk). Take extra care when detecting near protected sites: for example, it is not always clear where the boundaries lie on the ground.
3. You are strongly recommended to join a metal detecting club or association that encourages co-operation and responsive exchanges with other responsible heritage groups. Details of metal detecting organisations can be found at: www.ncmd.co.uk / www.fid.newbury.net.
4. Familiarising yourself with and following current conservation advice on the handling, care and storage of archaeological objects (see www.finds.org.uk).

While you are metal-detecting

5. Wherever possible working on ground that has already been disturbed (such as ploughed land or that which has formerly been ploughed), and only within the depth of ploughing. If detecting takes place on undisturbed pasture, be careful to ensure that no damage is done to the archaeological value of the land, including earthworks.
6. Minimising any ground disturbance through the use of suitable tools and by reinstating any excavated material as neatly as possible. Endeavour not to damage stratified archaeological deposits.
7. Recording findspots as accurately as possible for all finds (i.e. to at least a one hundred metre square, using an Ordnance Survey map or hand-held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) device) whilst in the field. Bag finds individually and record the National Grid Reference (NGR) on the bag. Findspot information should not be passed on to other parties without the agreement of the landowner/occupier (see also clause 9).
8. Respecting the Country Code (leave gates and property as you find them and do not damage crops, frighten animals, or disturb ground nesting birds, and dispose properly of litter: see www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk).

After you have been metal-detecting

9. Reporting any finds to the relevant landowner/occupier; and (with the agreement of the landowner/occupier) to the Portable Antiquities Scheme, so the information can pass into the local Historic Environment Record. Both the Country Land and Business Association (www.cla.org.uk) and the National Farmers Union (www.nfuonline.com) support the reporting of finds. Details of your local Finds Liaison Officer can be found at www.finds.org.uk, e-mail info@finds.org.uk or phone 020 7323 8611.
10. Abiding by the provisions of the Treasure Act and Treasure Act Code of Practice (www.finds.org.uk), wreck law (www.mcga.gov.uk) and export licensing (www.mla.gov.uk). If you need advice your local Finds Liaison Officer will be able to help you.
11. Seeking expert help if you discover something large below the plough soil, or a concentration of finds or unusual material, or wreck remains, and ensuring that the landowner/occupier's permission is obtained to do so. Your local Finds Liaison Officer may be able to help or will be able to advise of an appropriate person. Reporting the find does not change your rights of discovery, but will result in far more archaeological evidence being discovered.
12. Calling the Police, and notifying the landowner/occupier, if you find any traces of human remains.
13. Calling the Police or HM Coastguard, and notifying the landowner/occupier, if you find anything that may be a live explosive: do not use a metal-detector or mobile phone nearby as this might trigger an explosion. Do not attempt to move or interfere with any such explosives.

WHAT IS THE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME?

The Portable Antiquities Scheme is a voluntary scheme to record archaeological objects found by the public in England and Wales.

If recorded, these finds have the potential to tell us much about the past, such as how and where people lived and about the types of objects they made and used.

This guide gives information on advice for finders

http://www.finds.org.uk/documents/advice_for_finders06.pdf