

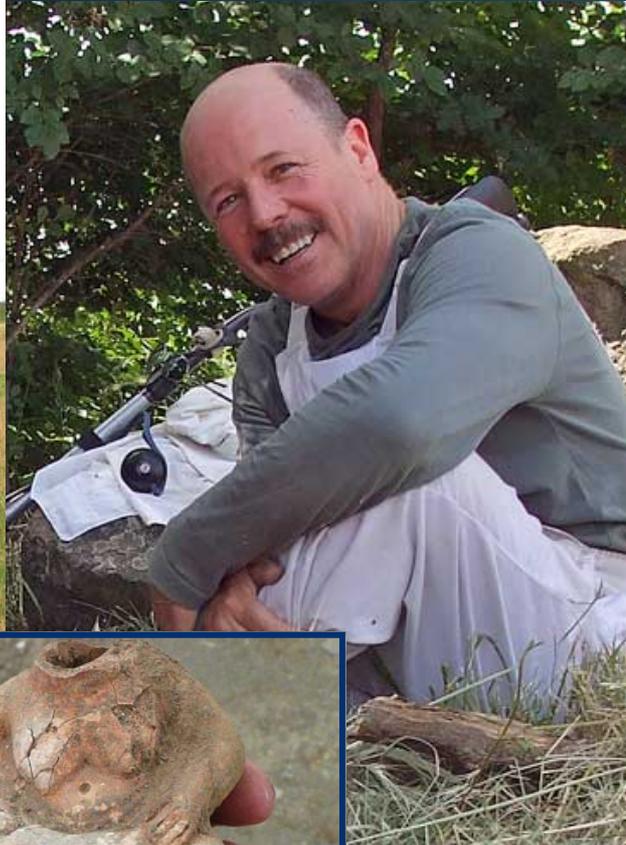
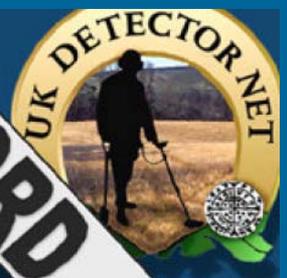
The UKDN

Issue 24

August 2009

World Of Responsible Detecting

WORD



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Message from UKDN Admin

Welcome

Hi Everyone

Welcome again to another issue of the UK DETECTOR NET magazine and again we hope you agree it makes for good reading. By the way, this is the 24th issue of The Word, a great achievement for the whole team. Well done everyone, especially those with the task of putting it together each month.

The crops are just about to come off, most should come out with the next good dry spell. We are positive that then UKDN will, once again, be chock-a-bloc full of your photo's of your newest finds.

Whilst writing this the Admin Team would like to take this opportunity to thank both our Moderator Team and the Finds Advisors, who do such a great job for UKDN. Both teams help make UKDN what it is and help to keep the forum on an even keel. Thanks a lot guys !!

During the past month or so we have noticed several members who left us for one reason or another some time back slowly returning to the site. Maybe this is a sign that UKDN will always be one thing.... consistent. We always try our best to make the site what it has always tried to be i.e. a great metal detecting forum where all members will be treated fairly and properly.

Within the next three weeks we will be holding another UKDN Auction, the first for quite some time. UKDN survives on donations and the likes of these auctions and we trust that you will all willingly take part in the fun of the on-line auction when it appears.

Next week we will be holding another Free UKDN Lottery. We will email you with the details. In the meantime, pop in to your profile and check you have your email address entered in correctly.

On a final note can we ask that if you have any material which you feel may be of use to the newsletter team, however small it may be, then please contact a member of the team. The newsletter would not exist but for the contributors.

Best Wishes from Brian, Mo' and The Team.

FOM Artefact - 1st/2nd century Roman enamelled trumpet brooch

Winner — donnydave

Dazz and I were visiting our farmer friend to deliver a bottle of whiskey and a box of chocolates, we were just leaving when he shouted me back, "Dave my brother-in-law has a farm up the road at the next village do you think you could try and find a penknife he has lost?" "I do not mind trying I will try and get back down in the week sometime" I replied.

We decided to drive back to East Yorkshire the following Wednesday "in there he said" pointing to the crowded pen knee deep in manure. "You will be ok I will keep them off you" just at that moment his dad turned up. "What's going off" the older farmer said, "these lads have come to find your knife" "they'll have a job I mucked that place out its in a pile over the fields".

So I decided to ask permission I broke the ice by mentioning a hoard of silver Denarii we had recently found, they both seemed genuinely interested and asked questions about our other finds, "Since we have come all this way I was wondering if there was any land you could let us detect on"? "No problem" he said "the stubble field over the road is available and there is two pasture fields, and when the crops are in later next year all the fields down to the roman road".



This was the start of another good relationship with these farmers, we went back the following Sunday morning, it was the middle of June and the pasture was rock hard, we were making the usual mundane finds bullets and buttons an unusual lead button and a religious medal.

I got a real good two way signal on my T2 and on removing the turf there was no sign of anything in the soil, and using my Garrett pinpoint probe no signal from the turf clod, I got a good signal in the hole with the probe and for some reason I decided to dig with my lock knife it was easier to cut through the hard baked and flinty clay, I was glad I did because I managed to retrieve the brooch with no damage at all.

The farmer came out to us at dinner time and asked if we had found anything, he was amazed when he saw the enamelled brooch. I have reported it to my local FLO and it is with her at the moment being recorded. We can not wait for the harvest to come around to see what else is waiting for us on this previously undetected farmland.

Donnydave



Roman Brooches



Portable
Antiquities
Scheme
www.finds.org.uk



Useful Websites

TRUMPET BROOCH



FOM Artefact
Donny Dave
UKDN

Roman Brooches (Britarch) - [Click Here](#)

Roman Brooches (Hull CC) - [Click Here](#)

Roman Brooches (Detego) - [Click Here](#)

Roman Brooches (Darwin Country) - [Click Here](#)

Roman Brooches (Roman Era by John Ward) - [Click Here](#)

Trumpet Brooches (Portable Antiquities Scheme) - [Click here](#)

Trumpet Brooches (Darwin Country) - [Click Here](#)

Dating Roman Brooches (Portable Antiquities Scheme) - [Click here](#)

Dating Roman Brooches (Wikipedia) - [Click here](#)

How brooches were worn (Chorley History Society) - [Click here](#)

How brooches were worn (Roman Finds Group) - [Click here](#)

Roman Clothing & Jewellery - [Click here](#)

Roman Brooch Moulds - [Click here](#)

Bibliography: I would like to thank the following for producing such informative web pages; Britarch, Detego, Hull CC, Darwin Country, Roman Era by John Ward, The Portable Antiquities Scheme, Wikipedia, The Chorley Historical Society, The Roman Finds Group & Roman – Colosseum.info.

Please support UK Detector Net & record your finds with The Portable Antiquities Scheme for the benefit of future generations & the hobby

FOM Coin—Cantii Quarter Stater Winner—Whoobub - (Martin Reed)

Sites to detect had become fewer and I was struggling for anywhere to go at all. One of my detecting buddies had a farm near Whitchurch in NW Hampshire that had been sown late and was still detectable. We started out in a field that had previously yielded a good few Roman coins and artefacts and were quite hopeful of some decent finds but 3 hours later we had returned to car for a drink and neither of us had found anything of note besides the usual selection of cartridges and lead.

We agreed to give up in the 'Brooch Field' and head over to the 'Medieval Field' and give that a try. It was quite hot and after another hour or so of fruitless swinging I decided to head back to the car for a drink and a read of the paper whilst my mate continued. A few yards further on I got a signal from the XP GMP that was quite clunky but nicely rounded. A single spadeful of earth contained the target and the first halving of the soil revealed the glint of gold. Some quick cleaning and a splash of water from my drinks bottle and I knew that I had found a Celtic Quarter Stater, my first gold coin.



I quite literally fell on my back (apologies to the farmer for squashing his crop) and called out to my buddy.

He thought I was having a heart attack and rushed over, all I could do was hold my hand out to show him the coin! That was the end of my detecting for the day and what a great way to finish the 'season'. I can't wait to get back out to that field again and give it a thorough going over.

Martin.



Celtic Coins



Portable
Antiquities
Scheme
www.finds.org.uk



[Useful Websites](#)

CANTII GOLD QUARTER STATER - FOM Coin - Whoobub - UKDN



Chris Rudd - Why I love Celtic Coins - [Click here](#)

Portable Antiquities Scheme (Database) - [Click Here](#)

Celtic Coin Index (Database) - [Click Here](#)

Coinarchives (Database) - [Click Here](#)

Tribal Divisions of Pre Roman Britain - [Click here](#)

Celtic Tribes of Britain - [Click Here](#)

Celtic Coin Legends - [Click here](#)

How Celtic coins were made - [Click here](#)

Celtic Potins - [Click Here](#)

Bibliography: I would like to thank the following for producing such informative web pages;

Chris Rudd - Celticcoins.com, The Portable Antiquities Scheme, The Celtic Coin Index, Coinarchives, Herefordshire SMR, Roman-Britain.org & Ancientimports.

Please support UK Detector Net & record your finds with The Portable Antiquities Scheme for the benefit of future generations & the hobby

Photo of the Month Competition Winner

Tom Redmayne with this shot of a young kestrel.

Tom Redmayne



The camera was a Panasonic DMCTZ3 set to automatic with image stabilisation on, using optical and digital telephoto.

The shot was taken as the kestrel sat on top of a WW2 concrete "pill box" in amongst sea buckthorn plants on sand dunes about a mile from my house on the North Lincolnshire coast.

Tom

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Hedge fodder! If this is your view then please call me Mr Hedge and throw them my way. I wasn't ever particularly interested in bag seals, putting them in the same class as buttons and musket balls, i.e. slightly above shotty caps and ointment tubes but like buttons and lead shot these seals can provide a lot of history and interest if a little bit of time is invested in studying them.

Detectorist's are pretty spoiled these days when it comes to find identification but there are always gaps or at least areas where the information is scattered and hard to find. Bag seals occupy one of these areas and I thought it would be fun to make a start on trying to fill this particular gap. Corinne Mills kindly gave me space on her picture gallery connected to the 'Our Past History' site <http://www.ourpasthistory.com/> and we set up the bag seal album which, after a recent move forced by an upgrade! I have decided call 'The Bag Seal Gallery'. You can find it here:

http://ourpasthistory.com/Gallerya/main.php?g2_itemId=15431

Aylesbury Dairy Co. Seal

Aylesbury Dairy Co. Seal, Image & Found by Adri@n.

THE AYLESBURY DAIRY CO. around the outer edge in a circle followed by a star and LIMITED LONDON across the middle. No. 57 in a circle on the other side



"To commence with a few general notes, the rise and progress of the Aylesbury Dairy Company may not be without interest.

When in the year 1865 the cattle plague invaded this country, and also visited the cow-sheds of London, necessitating the slaughter of a great number of milch cows, Mr. G. Mander Allender, who for some time had paid great attention to practical dairyfarming, formed the idea of supplying London with really good milk, direct from the country. In order to carry this scheme into effect, he, in 1865, founded this Company, of which, since that time, he always has been, and still is, the most active and energetic managing-director. The business was increasing so rapidly that it was soon found to outgrow its first abode, and in 1870 it was removed to the specially built and extensive premises at St. Petersburg Place, Bayswater.

From the very commencement of the business, the supply of pure milk of high quality was made the leading principle. To completely secure the purity of the milk, it was necessary to have a certain control over it from the time it leaves the cow-nay, even more, over the conditions under which the cows are kept, and by which they are surrounded. The Aylesbury Dairy Company, therefore, only enters into a contract for the supply of milk, after the farm in question has been inspected and satisfactorily reported upon by the Company's sanitary engineer" (PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY OF PUBLIC ANALYSTS. THE VISIT OF THE SOCIETY OF PUBLIC ANALYSTS TO THE FARMS OF THE AYLESBURY DAIRY COMPANY ON THE ~ 9th JUNE, 1887.)

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The idea is simple. You lot send in photos and scans of the seals you find and I upload them onto the gallery with an ID if I can, but more often with just as much detail as I can get from the image. Over time when more of the unidentified seals come in a picture of the full wording and image on that type of seal can be established. Even then a full ID is not certain. If we have a company name then it is great to track these down from historical directories or other web sources and I usually include a history of the firm with the picture. If it is foreign and many are, then I rely on friends like folkert to peruse the gallery from time to time and leave comments or even full ID's. In fact much of the best information is supplied by people who are just browsing – come and have look and make your suggestions.

Vilbel Salt Bag Seal (Weitenauer Plomben Seal)

Vilbel Salt Bag Seal Image and found by folkert

A lead seal which can be dated to the 1830s/ 1840s (Vilbel is a town north of Frankfurt)

Comments

From: agersoe (Wed 11 Oct 14:17:37 2006)

Most likely a salt bag seal.

From the town today called Bad Vilbel.

From: agersoe = GreatDane (Wed 11 Oct 14:22:11 2006)

The townname in this kind of frame is typical for the german salt bag seals, first half 19th century.

From: Folkert (Mon 2 Jul 13:07:20 2007) These seals are also called "Weitenauer Plomben (seals)", named after the manufacturer of the pliers for these sea.s. Seals of this type were also used by South German states (members of the Süddeutsche Zoll-verein) who wanted to regulate and control the customs of each member country.



While I try to be as accurate as possible this is still very much a hobby and I look on it as cross between a giant codeword puzzle and mystery object. The lettering on the seals is rarely complete and the pictures and symbols they display can be baffling. Unlike a completed codeword that ends up in the bin the reward for deciphering a seal is another, hopefully full, ID that is kept for all to see and use in the identification of their finds.

Bag seals are the focal point of this undertaking but you will see that their more venerable and often more illustrious cousins, cloth seals, are also included. This is because they are usually lumped together and frequently confused with bag seals by the detectorist. Strangely, although they are generally several hundred years older than bag seals, much more has been written about them and hence information is more readily available. Having said that there still appears to be only one publication that covers, in depth, a worthwhile selection of the cloth seals found in Britain and that has been out of print for many years, Geoff Egan, 'Lead cloth seals and related items in the British Museum (B.M.occ.papers 93). I am very pleased to have had some exquisite examples of cloth seals sent in and included.

Cloth Seal, Kent, Stuart Britian Arms

Cloth Seal, Kent, Stuart Britian Arms, Image & Found by Eagle Found on the London Thames foreshore. Kent cloth seal same type as No.51 Fig.18 in Geoff Egan, 'Lead cloth seals and related items in the B.M. (B.M. Occasional Paper 93)'



While on the subject of artifacts that are confused with bag seals there is a small 'not a seal' section in the gallery including things like pot mends and squashed ointment tube tops!

*Not a Seal - Squashed tube top, Image by StuE, Found by PWS
Found in the Colchester region.*

An example of another object that can be mistaken for a bag seal. It is the top of an ointment tube - the screw thread can be seen bent towards the bottom.



So why not give us a hand to create this bag seal ID database? Simply photograph or scan (make sure it's a CCD type scanner to avoid blurring with depth of field) both sides, even if one is blank, and post it on a forum or better still email it to me in large format at stuartelton@hotmail.com with any info you have on it. If you have not included a ruler in the picture then diameter is useful and the County it was found in can also be of interest. If you have a bag or jar full and don't want the hassle then give them to me at a rally and I will scan them and return them next time we meet.

Finally for those compulsive hedgers amongst you I have one final enticement. Every one who has contributed to the Gallery is fully acknowledged and so immortality on the internet could be yours! Just pocket that seal and send it to me.

http://ourpasthistory.com/Gallerya/main.php?g2_itemId=15431

Stuart Elton

stuartelton@hotmail.com



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Linking with Latium

Tom Redmayne

On Saturday 9th May 2009 I received a telephone call from Sally Worrell of the PAS asking if I would be interested in working on an archaeological dig for a week. The dig was scheduled for 4 weeks and would have only one detectorist present each week.

"OK" I said, "where is it?" "Italy, about 10 miles outside Rome on the ancient city of Gabii." She replied. **Wow!**

The Italians do not use detectorist's on their sites and this would be a first, a very important chance to show them how useful they can be and a chance to interact with some very senior archaeologists.

This was too good to be true. I was to fly out on 28th June and start on site on the 29th for 6 days.

Now I was not alone in this, and each week was to have its own detectorist on site. This was really for practical reasons as we are all hobbyists and most have a day job too. To take out all four weeks would be difficult for most detectorists.

UKDN were to be well represented with our own StuE (Stuart Elton) going out on the weekend of 17th May to do a pre-dig survey and munkiezuncal (Ed Lea) going out for the final week of the dig on 19th July.

There were also two others going that are not UKDN members, Phil Harding and Tony Brown.

To give an idea of the scale of the project, the overview below is taken from the official Gabii Project website:

The Gabii Project was launched in 2007 with the objective of studying and excavating the ancient Latin city of Gabii, a city-state that was both a neighbour of, and a rival to, Rome in the first millennium BC. Located in the region of Italy once known as Latium, the site of Gabii was occupied since at least the 10th century BC until its decline in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Amazingly, in subsequent centuries the site of Gabii was never developed or even substantially occupied, nor has the urban area ever been excavated to any significant degree. As such, the site provides a unique opportunity to study the development and structure of archaic urban planning in Central Italy

The Gabii Project is an international, multi-institution archaeological initiative under the direction of Nicola Terrenato of the University of Michigan. Field research at the site of Gabii commenced in 2007 with a campaign of magnetometric geophysical survey, undertaken in order to begin to establish an archaeological plan of the site - something that had never been done before - and to assess the nature of archaeological deposits and determine whether or not urban excavation at the site would be a workable research approach. Encouraged by the 2007 results, the project returned in 2008 to complete the magnetometry survey of the site - undertaken together with Stephen Kay and the survey unit attached to the British School at Rome - and to carry out various other geophysical prospections in order to construct stratigraphic site profiles for Gabii. With the data in hand from 2007 and 2008, a fairly complete plan for a substantial part of the urban area is now in hand and will serve as a useful guide for excavations that will commence in 2009.

The ancient city perches on the slope of the Lago di Castiglione, an extinct volcanic crater that was a lake in ancient times, but was filled with earth during the time of Benito Mussolini in the twentieth century. Gabii was a renowned city in Roman times, particularly during the Republican period, and is, in legendary terms, said to be the place where Rome's mythical founder, Romulus, and his brother, Remus, were educated. During the Archaic period Rome and Gabii were at war with one another, a dispute in which Rome ultimately prevailed. A treaty was struck between the two cities and this treaty, consisting of a text written on the skin of a bullock stretched over a wooden shield, was displayed in a temple in Rome known as the Semo Sancus. In fact the relationship between Rome and Gabii was very important and there are various Sabine influences that can be identified in Roman culture. One of the aims of the Gabii Project is to better contextualize our understanding of this important ancient city and thus explore its relationships not just with Rome, but also with the archaeology of Central Italy.

Well, Stuart went out and did a great job of surveying the site in May and we have all read his wonderful, daily blog here in a previous newsletter.

I finally flew out on the 28th June and became a member of the Gabii staff along with the seventy students and others in this huge team. It was a testing week in more ways than one, but the experience was something I would not have missed for the world.

I, too, produced a daily blog of my time in Italy and it is reproduced here with a few extra pictures of the site, the sights and the people involved in this important archaeological project.

The dig is currently in its final week as I type, and Ed Lea is out there in sweltering heat flying the flag for us. I look forward to hearing about his time in Gabii and the developments and discoveries made.

It is hoped that the project will continue at the site for the next five years and the comments being made about the input from the detectorist's already this year are very positive. I already feel very much a part of the Gabii team and it would be wonderful to be invited back. The whole experience has been a real education and I have learnt a lot in such a short time as well as, I hope, making my own small contribution.



Tuesday, 2 June 2009

Countdown

In four weeks time I will be on site as part of the archaeological excavation in Italy ten miles east of Rome known as the Gabii Project

This project aims to study and excavate the ancient Latin city of Gabii, a city-state that was both a neighbour of, and a rival to, Rome in the first millennium BC.

I will be assisting with searching the trenches and spoil heaps using a metal detector as part of a team of five detectorist's from the UK, each one on site for a different week of the dig.

The initial survey has already been done with the help of detectorist Stuart Elton who has done a great job in blazing a trail for the rest of us who follow on.

<http://windymillerandthetempleofjuno.blogspot.com/>

Anyway, plane tickets bought, spare detector sorted and lots of sun cream packed.

Can't wait to get there now.

Sunday, 28 June 2009

Here at last

I finally arrived here in Frascati at about 5.00pm today after a flight and two train journeys. The skies were a little cloudy and it is very humid with temperatures around 26 degrees. The forecast isn't that good for the week with thunderstorms imminent!

Like others before me, the priority on arrival was seeking the shower and the blessed cool of the air-conditioned room. Feeling much fresher now I am looking forward to joining the rest of the project members for dinner at 8.00 this evening.

It looks as though we may not get onto the site tomorrow now at all as it is a public holiday in Rome and the local staff may not be available.

I must say hello to a lovely couple from Rome in Georgia in the US who made my rail trip from the airport to Rome Termini station very informative and enjoyable. I hope they are now following this blog and relating my experiences here to the people in their own home town of Rome.

I do hope we can get onto the Gabii site tomorrow as I cannot wait to see the progress so far.

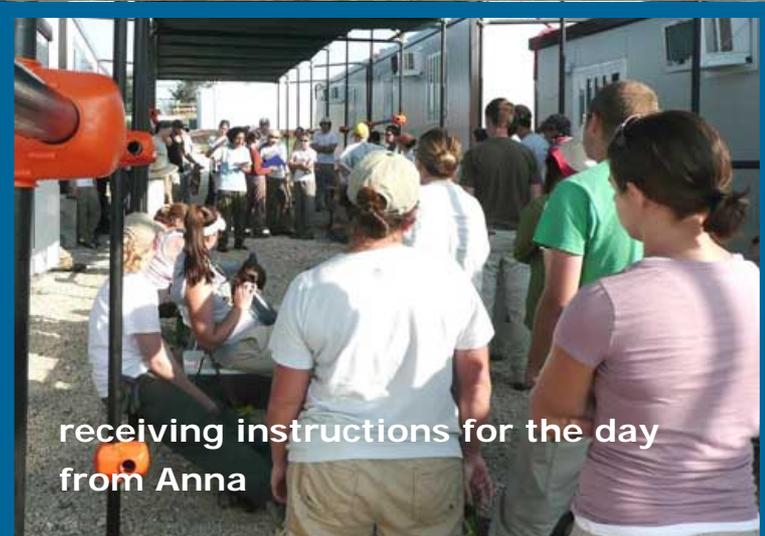
Watch this space!



Area A diggers



view from the spoilheaps



receiving instructions for the day from Anna



Small but welcome fibula

Monday, 29 June 2009

A day of rest and thunderstorms

Well we didn't get on site today after all and we all had the day off to do our own thing. I walked up the hills into Frascati and went on the hunt for a pharmacy. I arrived here with the beginnings of a toothache which is now a full-blown abscess with my face very swollen and sore. Fortunately, the local pharmacies can dispense antibiotics and I hope these will calm it down!

Great start!

I just got back to the hotel and the sky blackened again with tremendous rumblings of thunder; then the rain came. It was short-lived, as usual, though and half an hour after it stopped everything was bone dry again with the heat. Humid now though.

Work does start tomorrow though and we are all on site at 7.00 am. Speaking to Jeffrey Becker, the project Managing Director, last night, it seems the work has now reached the stratified layers and any objects found now should provide good dating evidence as they should be in-situ.

I will be checking the spoil as it comes off these layers and this soil will be marked so that any finds can be related back to the place it came from rather than them just being found out of context on the main topsoil spoil heap.

There are also a couple of evening lectures planned for this week on archaeological techniques, which I have been invited to attend, and am looking forward to learning whilst I am here.

I can't better Stu's pictures of Frascati so I will wait until I have some on-site shots tomorrow, hopefully.

The missed day has slowed things down a bit as it was unexpected. I will find out more tomorrow and also get to see some of the other finds including some Iron Age pottery which will be interesting to compare to that I have found in the UK.

Tuesday, 30 June 2009

On site at last!

Breakfast at 6.30, in the minibus by 7.00 and on site at 7.30; well nearly. There was a problem opening the gates to the site and we had a bit of a wait on the track outside before we finally drove in past the, now familiar, and iconic Temple of Juno and down to the double row of porta-cabins that are the project HQ.



Base of operations for the project

The day was fine and sunny with just a few light clouds and the heat wasn't too bad this early. It didn't last, and the heat kicked in as the day progressed. The first task for the team was to inspect the site and see what damage the previous night's rain had done. It was a mess! Much of the previous week's work had been covered again in a new layer of silt and the soil was still wet and sticky. Impossible to work on.

The decision was made to put most of the team up at the finds cleaning area and they spent the morning washing and brushing pottery and the like. Many glum faces.



The portaloo's and the field laboratory.

Once this was done, Jeff Becker took me for a detailed and informative tour of the whole site before pointing me in the direction of the topsoil spoil heap, more commonly known as "The Hill" as described by Stu.

This huge pile of soil has now had the attentions of Stu and of Phil who was here last week and has produced a lot of coins; 36 to Phill alone last week! As this was to be my area for the day, I set off trying to cover it in an organised pattern so as not to miss anything. The soil is very mineralised and sensitivity had to be turned right down so losing some depth. I wasn't hopeful, thinking that most objects would have been found already.



The Hill. Like walking on the moon!

As it turned out, I had a lot of signals, mostly scrap lead and iron but also my first 9 coins. They were all copper alloy and late-ish Roman but difficult to tell for sure until they are cleaned.



A pot of mixed dross and a pot of 9 lovely Roman coins

Now for the good bit! And I didn't even need the detector for this one. I made an eyes-only find that had washed out of the spoil heap after the rain. I was so amazed by this object that I took it straight down to the HQ. It has been called the find of the project so far and Jeff Becker even, jokingly, suggested it becomes the new logo for the Gabii project!

It is a beautiful object and, tomorrow, I will tell you what it is and show some pictures!

All I will say is that it is made from terracotta and still has some painted colours on it.

The team did get back onto the dig site this afternoon and made good progress so I may be allowed onto the spoil heaps from the stratified layers tomorrow. Unfortunately it is raining heavily again here so we wait to see what Wednesday brings.



Diggers at work creating new spoil heaps for me

Wednesday, 1 July 2009

Heat and rain

This will be a short one as we were late back today and time is short before dinner.

The morning was great with people working the site again as it had dried out enough after another evening of thunderstorms to dig on all but one area. The humidity was something else though and even our Italian friends commented on it. I was on the spoil heaps from the stratified layers today and had to set up my own little protocol for where the barrows of soil were to be put so that I could spread each one out thinly and not miss any objects.

This worked well and I ended up with four distinct areas of spoil from four different sites all at once that I could detect as the barrows came up the hill to me. No coins at all from these layers, and nearly all iron nails with some small lead pieces until, just after lunch I had a tiny Roman fibula brooch, Aucissa type, very bent but a lovely find from a stratified context.

Ten minutes later the thunder arrived again and we all ran for the portacabins. It was spectacular, the lightening, thunder and rain were non-stop and we stayed in the huts for an hour and a half before we could even make it out to the coach and minibus!

One lightning strike actually hit one of our scaffolding poles right by the portacabin I was in and the noise was deafening. A very lucky escape. Unfortunately, the whole site is now a lake, literally, and work may not commence again tomorrow at all unless a miracle happens. I hear it's nice in the UK!

Ok finally to my find yesterday.

It is a Roman oil lamp in the shape of a well-endowed lady sitting on a stool with one leg up and crossed. It is a common representation, with the woman having large swollen breasts and stomach. The detail is superb, only her head is missing; an old break. How it survived the mechanical digger is amazing. Anyway, here she is as found. Cleaning will take place sometime in the future and I will not see her in all her glory whilst I am here.





Thursday, 2 July 2009

Thursday

Today was spent at the hotel with no-one going down to the site except Anna who went to see what the damage was after the torrent. Amazingly, most of the water has drained away again through the sandy soil and the tufa bedrock so it remains for the team to get back on site tomorrow when the soil has dried a lot more and clear away all the silt again before resuming the real task in hand!

We had a very informative talk this morning, explaining the requirement for, and the benefit of, accurate topography and GIS mapping. The talk also introduced photo mapping and the techniques used to give accurate 3-D representations of objects and features. A glimpse into the high-tech world of modern archaeology and into what the future may hold. It was a fascinating and enjoyable couple of hours for which I thank everyone for allowing me to attend.

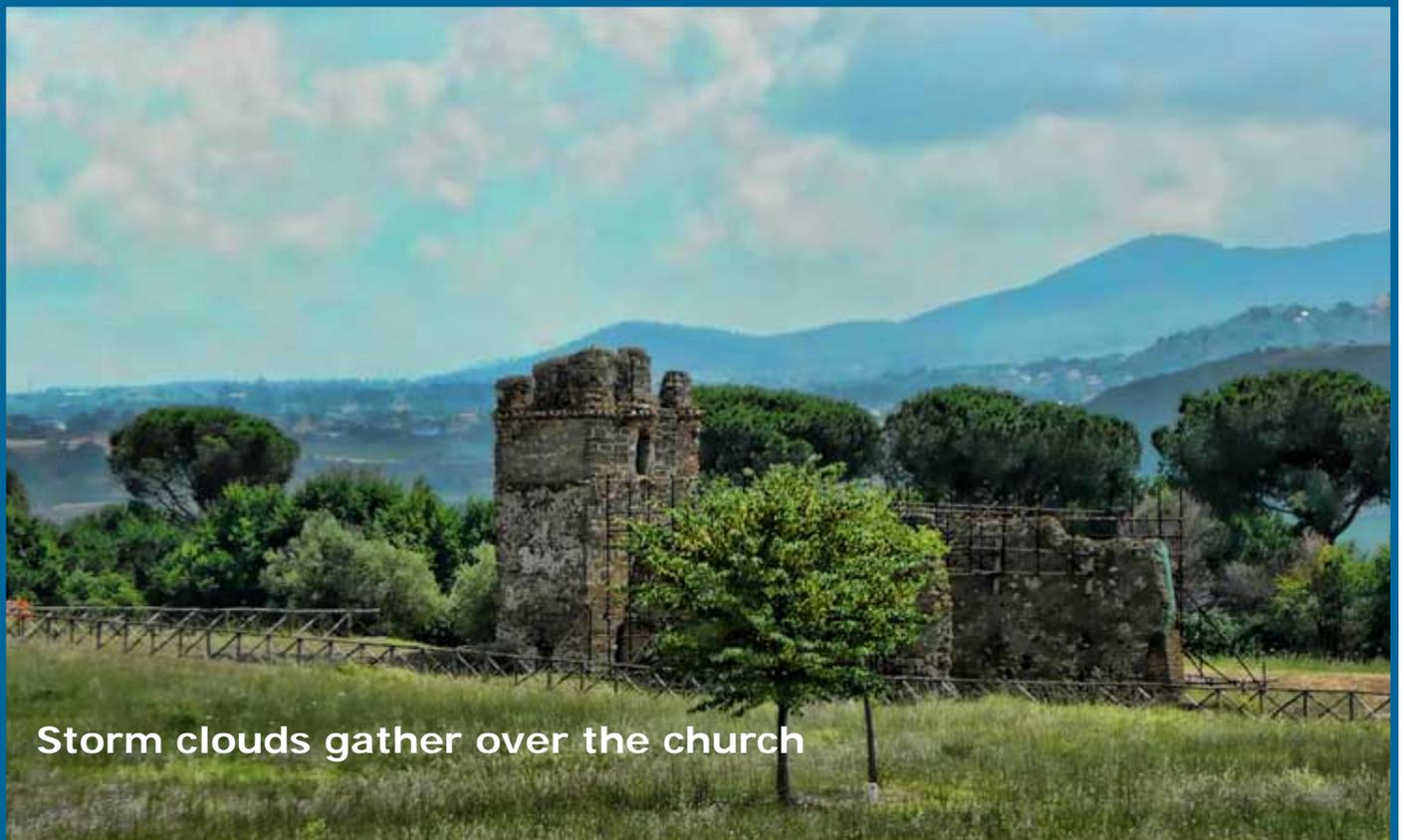
These pictures will give an idea of the rain we had yesterday. It went from dry and workable to this in an hour and a half!

Working in the sunshine



Jeff and Nic looking tentatively happy.





Storm clouds gather over the church



The rain starts.



prisoners
of the
portacabins!



Area C – before



And after!

I hope I can get back onto "my" spoil heaps tomorrow and carry on where I was cut short yesterday. There is still so much to do and a lot of catching up too.

As a little aside, everyone on site has to contend with our new friends; the six-legged, big-jawed variety. The site is covered in them and there is nowhere that you can get away from them. They are especially bad on the older, topsoil spoil heap where they have built hundreds of new nests and swarm over the ground in great, long lines collecting food. For detectorists following on, bring insect bite ointment. You will need it!



Friday, 3 July 2009

Final day on site

Well that's it folks. We finally got a (nearly) full day of digging in on my last day. The sun was shining and the soil was drying out nicely again. We arrived on site at the usual 7.25 am and the team was divided up into digging teams and field lab teams who would do pottery washing, labelling, recording and some of the ecosystem analysis.

I was back on my spoil heaps at area B digging up countless nails and small ironwork again. A lot of these small iron studs are hobnails from Roman footwear. Maybe it was a cobbler's shop?

Two coins also surfaced today along with a little more bronze in the form of a couple of small studs and some irregular pieces that may have been casting residue. The coins were both large bronzes and were As sized. They should clean up well but no detail was visible with the residue built up on them.

My job was to be a last line of defence for objects missed by the diggers,

and they seem to have done a pretty good job, leaving very little for me.

On a couple of occasions I was asked to go into the actual trenches today and detect over some features that needed delicate work on them and knowing if metal objects were to be expected was going to be a great help.

One of these areas has a series of circular pits cut into the bedrock which are full of soil and rock and can be 2 feet deep in some cases. What they are remains to be seen. I was detecting the top layers of fill and then the surrounding area. As they were then emptied, the fill was brought up to me at the spoil heap site and I would go over them again. Nothing metallic except the ubiquitous iron nails in a couple of them.

I got chance to take a couple of pictures today, but the work is pretty much non-stop and the barrows of spoil just keep coming!

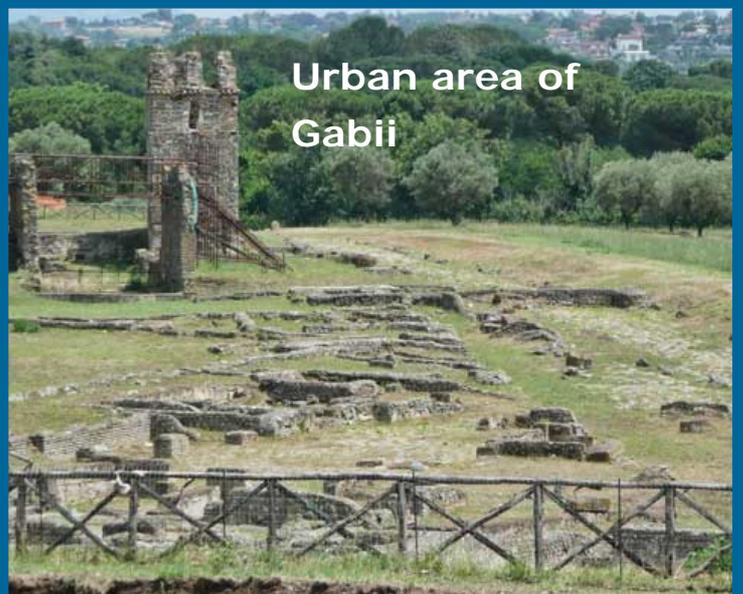
Here are a few of those I managed to take, and the one above of yours truly taken by the lovely Alice, area B trenchmaster.



Me!



GIS station



Urban area of Gabii

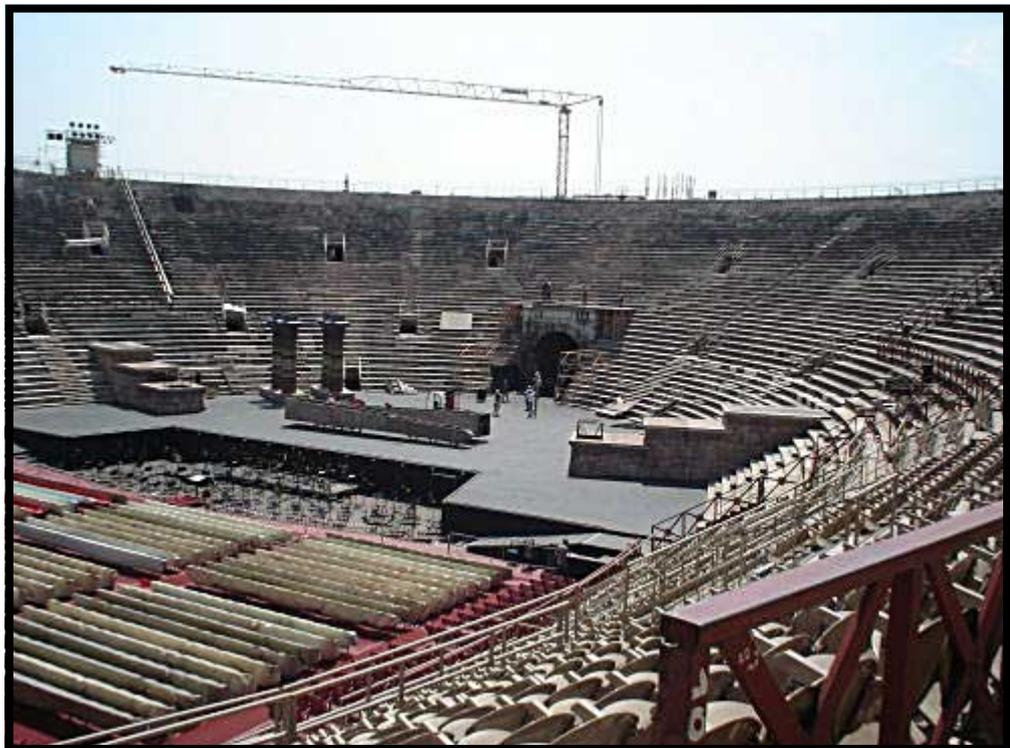
A Cultural Visit to Italy

In June we drove our motorhome through France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and finally into Italy. Our plan was to visit Verona to see the amphitheatre, Venice just to see the place, Ravenna to see the mosaics and finally Pisa to see the tower.

For the purpose of the UK DETECTOR NET newsletter we will not bore you with the statistics and minor details of the trip. Here we will tell you about the amazing things we saw from ages gone by i.e. the amphitheatre of Verona and the numerous mosaics we saw in Venice, Ravenna and finally the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

The Roman Amphitheater (Arena) in Verona, one of the largest of its kind, was built in the reign of Diocletian (about A.D. 290). It is very impressive even though most of its outer wall no longer exists, only four arches on the north side still exist. However, the interior is probably the best surviving in the world. It has 44 rows of seats and can accommodate some 22,000 spectators.

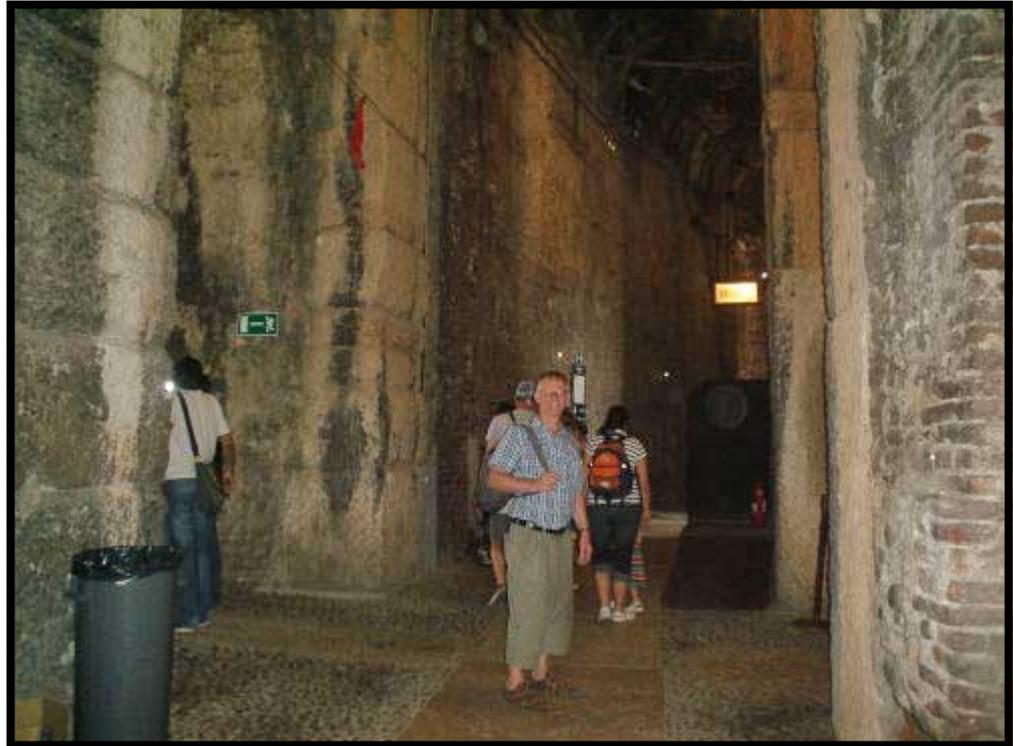
Famous operas are held in this arena and must be a fabulous event. In fact when we were there crewmen were busy building the stage-set for the opera Aida which was due to take place the following week.



*Interior View of
the Verona
Amphitheatre –
workmen building
Aida set*

A Cultural Visit to Italy

Walking in the bowels of the structure (see below) one realizes the pure extent of the engineering required to build such a structure. One can only marvel at how the Romans managed to handle such huge blocks of granite and stone and build such a spectacular monument. Amazing !!



Brian in the depths of the amphitheatre at Verona – much cooler here than outside !!

After Verona we took in some of the Italian Lakes and then made our way to Venice. This city surprises you even though you are primed about what to expect, your first thought on seeing the place is "Wow !!"

After taking in the first couple of hundred yards you come across St Mark's Square, said to be one of the most beautiful squares in the world. Not so sure about it being one of the most beautiful because when we were there it was incredibly busy and incredibly hot. What was amazing was the Basilica of San Marco, its architecture a mixture of Byzantine, Roman and Venetian influences.

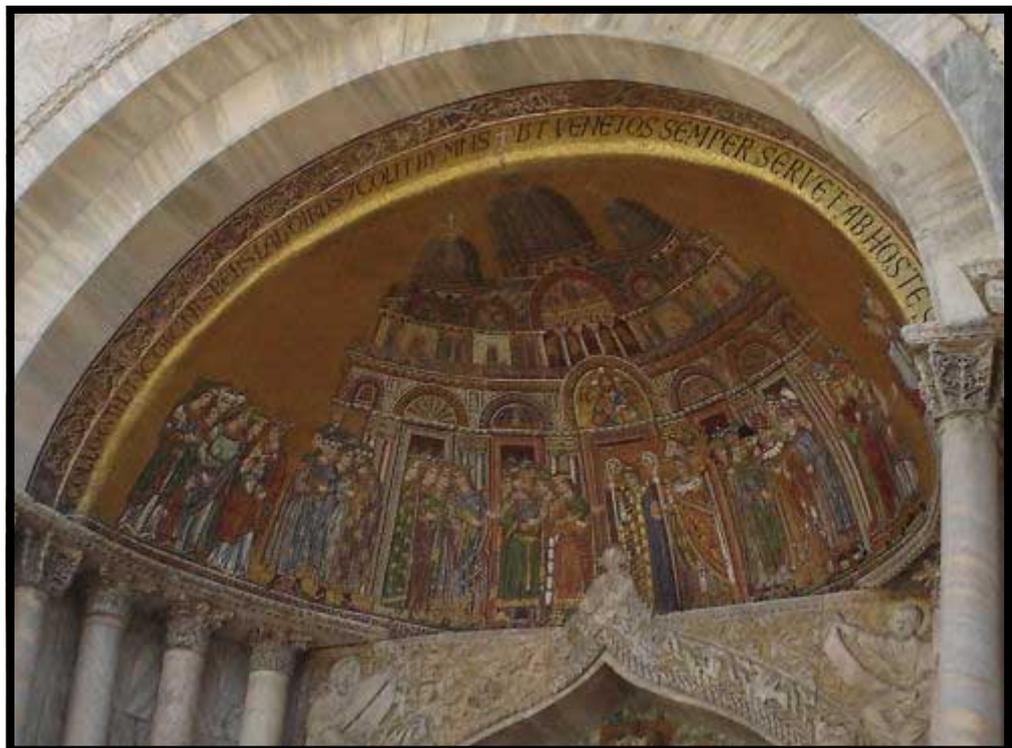
The story goes that Mark, one the four Evangelists together with Luke, Mathew and John, was given the task of writing his Gospel by Peter himself and did so in Rome. The Venetians chose him as their patron saint because of his ties with Rome thus declaring their independence of the Byzantine Church.

A Cultural Visit to Italy

Venetian merchants often stopped at Alexandria to pray on the saint's tomb. And it was in 828 A.D. that two Venetian merchants stole his remains and brought them back to Venice by ship, after hiding them in a chest full of vegetables and pork to avoid strict Muslim control. When the saint's body reached Venice it was welcomed in triumph and the Doge had a new church built as his tomb.

We were amazed at the front façade of the church and were gob-smacked at the quality of the mosaics. Before this visit we had always imagined mosaics to be those things that Romans put on the floors of their posh villas but these were in the arches above the doors of the church and were of amazing quality. Outside they were amazing but we had been warned that the mosaics inside had to be seen to be believed.

This photograph shows just one of the wonderful mosaics above one of the church doors. This mosaic shows the transfer of St Mark's body.



Above the main doorway are four horses, replaced by replicas in the 1990's. The originals are in the Basilica's Museum but the originals are said to be Roman in date and are rumoured to have once stood on the Arch of Trajan in Rome. They can be seen in the next photograph – such fantastic history

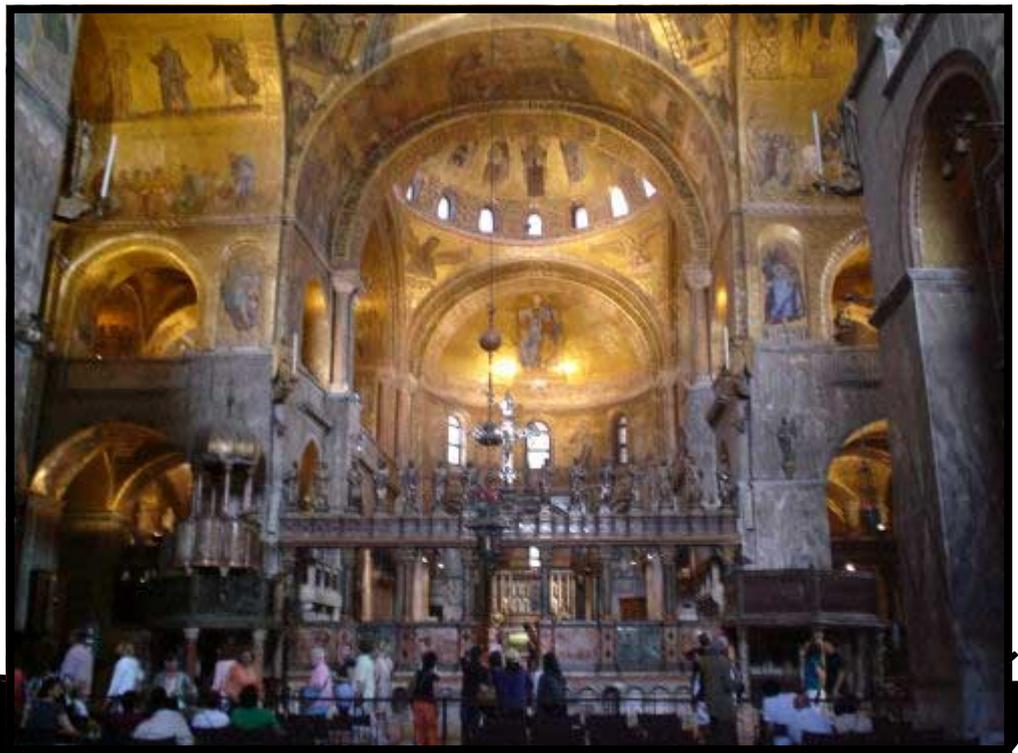
A Cultural Visit to Italy

The main doorway of St Mark's with the four horses above



The Basilica is free to enter so we joined the throngs queuing and very quickly got in. As soon as you step in you are blown away by the sheer scale of everything and the amount of mosaic on the walls and ceilings. Much of it had gold backdrops, made from tiny gold tesserae sandwiched between tiny pieces of glass. Apparently the more gold in the background on a mosaic meant the person being depicted was either very important in society or closer to God than anyone else.

General view as you walk into St Mark's Basilica – note all the gold mosaics



A Cultural Visit to Italy

*A closer view –
amazing
architecture.*



*The mosaics that
cover the dome
area.*



A Cultural Visit to Italy

The quality of the workmanship of the mosaics is what really blows you away. We were told that they are not only very tiny thereby giving a high quality to the pictures but that they are all angled differently to reflect light in different ways so much so that the mosaics will look different at various times of the day depending on where the light was coming from.

Being detectorists there was one treasure we had to see within the Basilica and that was the Pala D'Oro or the Golden Panel. A large panel of gold embedded with gems and tiny world class enamels. It was commissioned from Byzantine goldsmiths in 976 and added to over the following centuries. The tiny enamels are amazing and when Napoleon's troops came here in 1797 they stole many of the large gems but dismissed the enamels as not worth anything. In fact if they had been damaged the world would have lost a irreplaceable treasure.

In our photo below you can see some of the tiny enamelled figures within their own panels. We heard a guide telling a group that we probably don't have the craftsmen on earth today who could re-create those enamels. You can also see some of the almost 2000 precious stones.



*Our photo of the
Pala D'Oro*

A Cultural Visit to Italy

Detail view of one of the gold panels of the Pala d'Oro seen at the very top of our photo



Whilst at Venice we also saw the Rialto Bridge and rode up and down the Grand Canal. We also visited the islands of Murano, famous as a glass making centre and Burano, an island renowned for lace-making.

From Venice we moved on about 120 miles down the Adriatic coast to Ravenna, known as The City of the Mosaics. At the beginning of the 5th century the capital of the Western Roman Empire was transferred from Milan to Ravenna primarily because of its defences being surrounded by swamps and marshes. In the 540's Ravenna became the seat of Byzantine government in Italy and it is in the churches of this period that we found the mosaics that make Ravenna a 'must-see' place today.

We started this part of the trip visiting the Basilica of Sant' Apollinare in Classe which, conveniently had a motor-home parking area very close by. Classe is only a few kilometres from Ravenna but it was here that the Roman military harbour was situated.

Sant'Apollinare in Classe was consecrated on May 8, 549 by Bishop Maximian and dedicated to the first bishop of Ravenna and Classe. The Basilica is thus contemporary to the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna. In 856, the relics of Saint Apollinare were transferred from the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe to the Basilica of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna.

A Cultural Visit to Italy

*The amazing
mosaics in the
Apse in the
Basilica at Classe*



*Wow, and to
think – this
church dates to
AD 549*



A Cultural Visit to Italy

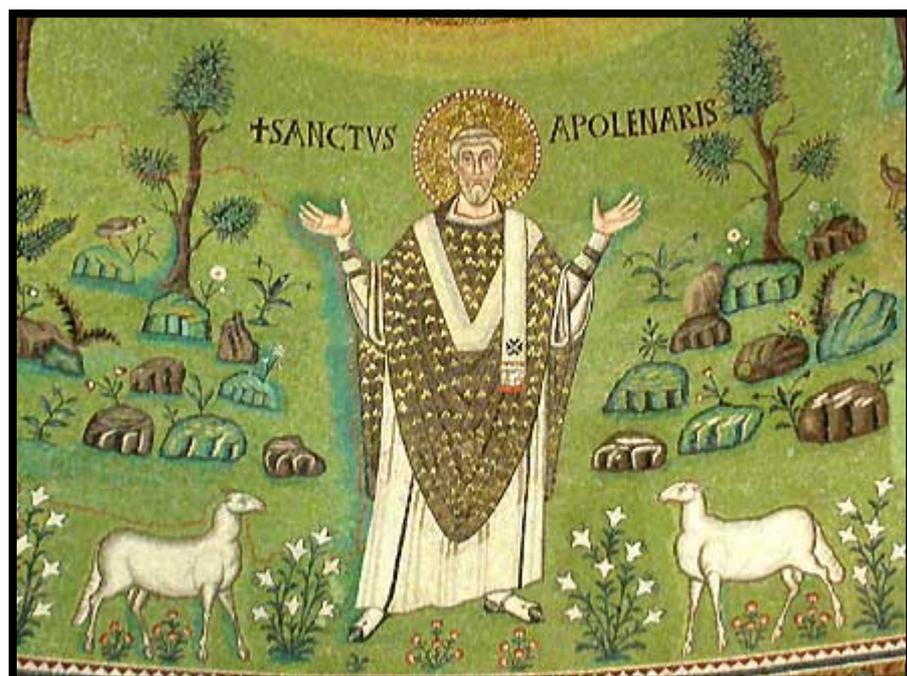
The mosaics in this church were amazing as seen by the above two photographs and the close-up photograph below. The detail in this mosaic in the apse is truly wonderful, with animals, birds, meadows, trees and sheep. The mosaics even have shading as can be seen in the various shades of green.

From here we cycled into Ravenna and saw many more mosaics including those in the Arian Baptistry (below) which was erected by King Theodoric the Great between the end of the 5th century and the beginning of the sixth century

The Baptistry is octagonal in shape; inside are four niches and a dome with mosaics, depicting the baptism of Jesus by Saint John the Baptist. Jesus is shown beardless and naked, half-submerged in the Jordan. John the Baptist is wearing a leopard skin. On the left stands a pagan god in the guise of a white-haired, old man in a green cloak, holding a leather bag. He is the personalisation of the river Jordan. Above, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove sprays lustral water from its beak.

Below, a procession of the Apostles, led in separate directions by Saint Peter and Saint Paul circle the dome, meeting at a throne with a jeweled crucifix resting on a purple cushion.

It took the artists several years to complete these mosaics, as can be clearly seen from the different colors of the stones used to depict the grass at the feet of the apostles.



Close up photograph of the mosaic showing meadows

A Cultural Visit to Italy

We also took in The Basilica of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna. It was erected by the Arian King Theodoric as his palace chapel, during the first quarter of the 6th century. The lateral walls of this church are full of mosaic art, all done to the usual extremely high standard and some done as early as the 6th century. There are too many to feature or describe in this small article but the photograph below gives you an insight into their size and intricacy.

On the right - the Arian Baptistry



Below the dome mosaic of same building.



A Cultural Visit to Italy

Photo of the nave at San Vitale



We toured several more buildings in Ravenna, all very impressive and all featuring Byzantine mosaics. Below are a few photographs from the Church or Basilica of San Vitale. The church was begun by Bishop Ecclesius in 527, when Ravenna was under the rule of the Ostrogoths, and completed by the 27th Bishop of Ravenna, Maximian in 548 during the Byzantine Exarchate of Ravenna. The architect of this church is unknown, but he was certainly among the best architects of his time.

The church is of extreme importance in Byzantine art, as it is the only major church from the period of Emperor Justinian to survive virtually intact to the present day; furthermore, it is thought to reflect the design of the Byzantine Imperial Palace Audience Chamber, of which nothing at all survives.

This place was gob-smackingly wonderful with its mixture of Roman and Byzantine elements.

A Cultural Visit to Italy

Close up detail of one of the San Vitale mosaics executed in 548.



This mosaic depicts the Emperor Justinian, clad in purple with a golden halo, standing next to court officials, Bishop Maximian, praetorian guards and deacons. The halo around his head gives him the same aspect as Christ in the dome of the apse. Justinian himself stands in the middle, with soldiers on his left and clergy on this right, emphasizing that Justinian is the leader of both church and state of his empire. He also holds a paten and is shown with a 3 day beard to show that he is too busy to shave since he is performing his duties as emperor. The gold background of the mosaic shows that Justinian and his entourage are inside the church and gives off an otherworldly, spiritual vibe. The figures are placed in a V shape; Justinian is placed in the front and in the middle to show his importance with Bishop Maximian on his left and lesser individuals being placed behind them. This placement can be seen through the overlapping feet of the individuals present in the mosaic.

Note: This mosaic was executed in 548 AD.

A Cultural Visit to Italy

*Looking at the
apse of the
Basilica of San
Vitale*



*Close up of the
Apse at San
Vitale, Ravenna*



A Cultural Visit to Italy

From Ravenna we traveled to Lucca and then to Pisa where we cycled into the town to see the Leaning Tower of Pisa which stands just inside the northern city wall on a lawned area popularly called the Field of Miracles.

Mo' at one of the entrances with our first view of the Leaning Tower behind



There are four buildings on the Field of Miracles, one of the most famous places in the world. They are the Duomo, the Baptistry, the Leaning Tower and the Monumental Cemetery and Museum.

The Leaning Tower was actually the bell tower for the Duomo or Cathedral which was founded in 1063 on the remains of the old Etruscan and Roman temples. The Leaning Tower is not the only building to lean on this field of miracles because both the Duomo and the Baptistry lean, the Baptistry especially so and the other way from the tower. This is because of the unsteady, waterlogged ground the buildings are built upon.

All these buildings are amazing both in their architecture and in their design. They are built from white marble alternated with other shades of stone and contain a vast amount of exquisite workmanship. The doors on the Duomo are fantastic. In summer, entrance is sometimes via the main door, which is one of three cast by students of Giambologna after the 1595 fire destroyed the originals.

A Cultural Visit to Italy

The usual entrance to the Duomo is in the south transept near the Leaning Tower, which is home to the original bronze Door of San Ranieri, cast by Bonnano Pisano in 1180 while he was working on the tower.

The Field of Miracles showing the four buildings



Wow, what a great shot, really looks like it should have fallen over

Pisa was our last stop on this grand tour. We had to pick up the Channel Tunnel six days later and were 1350 miles from home. We started back from Pisa and made such good progress that we stopped of at Strasbourg for an afternoon and evening and took in the highlights of the city.

Our journey home was uneventful after that. We trust that you have enjoyed our tale.

Brian and Mo'



A Saxon Cemetery—part 2

By coldstream-02

At this point in time I suddenly realised that we were not that far away from a road and anyone passing would probably be wondering what was going on. Then it dawned on me - what if some undesirables saw what was going on and decided to come and have a look during darkness!

Well that was it; I suggested to Stanleyman that if it was ok with him and the farmer that we should camp on the site for as long as it took. Stanleyman was in agreement with this, as were the Archaeologists and the farmer. So we set off for home to get our tents and sleeping bags etc.

Its really amazing that when something like this happens, you lose track of all time. It seemed like a few hours ago when all of this had started but it was now actually 3.30pm. As we set off heading back home, I couldn't help feeling a bit down as my burial was unconfirmed as anything - but Stanleymans had definition to it. Well eventually we got back to our respective homes and I arranged to pick him back up again in an hour's time. So I got home and gathered everything I would need into a rucksack and jumped into the shower - I also took some wood with me to cover over the respective holes as they were going to be left as they were overnight and I didn't want any animals falling in and injuring themselves. I then set back off to pick Stanleyman up and we both treated ourselves to some beer as we knew that with all the excitement going on we would have trouble sleeping.

On our return Gregg was waiting to go home himself but wanted to give us his phone number as he knew we were worried that someone would try and sneak in under the cover of darkness to rob the site. But both Stanleyman and myself are fairly big blokes and can handle ourselves so we weren't too concerned. We were also given a police reference number should anything occur which was a very welcome addition.

Now some of you will know Bean Counter from Firle, she had helped us during the day with a few bits and said she would turn up that evening with some dinner for us and sure enough she did. Spag Bol - and it was lovely. She also gave us some porridge for the morning and a flask of coffee. She sat down with us and we talked about the possibilities of what would be in the respective graves, and about how important it was to the archaeological world. After an hour or so she decided to go home leaving us to ponder ourselves as to what lay ahead and to finally crack open a few beers.



Another saucer Disc
brooch from the female
grave with the bowl

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A Saxon Cemetery—part 2

It was at this point I went to put the wood I had bought with me over the respective holes and realised that I did not have enough so we covered Stanleyman's Warrior over and I manoeuvred my car over my burial so as to protect it.

It was the early hours of the morning when we eventually retired to our tents and I must have eventually dozed off. I woke up before the sun had really started to rise and had a look around. There was a mist hanging eerily to the far end of the field and I wondered if this was how the Saxons would have been greeted all those years ago. It was around 5.30am and absolutely freezing so I crawled into my car and started the engine and gradually warmed up as I sat there I watched a fox go by our tents and I realised I had done the right thing by covering the holes.

As it was starting to get light I heard Stanleyman's tent unzipping and he popped his head out and it looked just like a tortoise emerging from its shell so I was giggling to myself at this. We had breakfast and the time reached 8.45am and then Gregg showed up with another flask of tea and said that he had a small army of volunteers that were on route as we spoke.

Whilst we waited for the volunteers, we set up a gridded area which Gregg got us to cover with our detectors in all metal mode. Before very long I had a signal quite close to Stanleyman's grave so I dug down only to reveal a rusty old nail, so I placed this into a container for later recording and waved the detector in the hole and blow me there was another signal and it wasn't iron either.

There would of been no way I would of gotten the second signal had I of not got the first. So that nail was an important little discovery.

Another of our friends that some of you will know from Firlie turned up and that was Magic Man and he brought with him a load of sandwiches and crisps and drinks for us for which we were grateful. The volunteers had been arriving during the morning and Gregg had briefed them and now they were starting to take off the topsoil so Stanleyman, Magic Man and myself wandered away and did some detecting. We couldn't really get into it though and remained near the graves so as to detect the topsoil which was coming off. The weather had been glorious again and was set to remain so for the next three days, by which time they were hoping to have completed the excavations.

One of the silver discs in situ



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This one is a saucer disc brooch from the central grave



A Saxon Cemetery—part 2

So Thursday came and went with not much happening apart from the shield boss was lifted and taken away for conservation and each grave was opened into a six foot by six foot trench. We had seen the start of the bones appearing and we had shown the archaeologists where there were metal artefacts. So Thursday was over and it was a blur as so much was happening I asked Gregg how important on a scale of 1 to 10 was this discovery and he said 11 so I was well chuffed, even though it still wasn't confirmed that my burial was Saxon. The dark came quickly and with it the cold and I wasn't going to get cold again, so I decided that I was going to sleep in the car. I positioned my car alongside my grave with the headlights aiming at the other two which were about 30 foot away from me, so if we did get any unwelcome visitors I could flood the area with the headlights. Well obviously news travels, because at around 2.00am both Bob and myself were woken by something and then we heard voices, so Bob quietly made his way into the car, and as soon as he was in I immediately turned the lights on and started the engine. Well we didn't see anyone but there was definitely someone there and we had obviously scared them off. It could well of been some local lads coming to pull our tents down around our ears for a laugh, but somehow I don't think so. Gregg showed up as did the volunteer archaeologists and everyone set about working and recording, and slowly the Warrior and my skeletons were starting to be revealed. So Bob and I set off to do what were our original intentions 2 days before and we went detecting whilst the excavations continued. The team said they would shout for us if any artefacts were going to be lifted, so we trotted off safe in this knowledge. Well we had a good few hours 'tecting and got a few hammies and tokens and a couple of buckles.

We went back to the graves every so often to check for signals for the archaeologists and to check the spoil heaps. At one point one of the archaeologists asked me to verify a signal, so as I approached the area I got another signal on the edge of the grave cut. The archaeologist said she couldn't understand that as it was undisturbed bedrock - so she scraped at it and up popped a strapend which must have been lost during internment. In my other grave, the archaeologists were just starting to reveal the edges of what they thought was going to be saucer disc brooches, so although it was almost beyond doubt anyway - here was the proof I desperately wanted to hear that it was a definite Saxon Burial. I was elated! I know for a fact now that none of the volunteer archaeologists had worked on a Saxon burial before, so it must of been so exciting for them to actually watch as the artefacts gradually appeared.

An annular or penannular brooch from the 2nd females grave

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The silver belt mounts!

A Saxon Cemetery—part 2

I bet they knew just how Howard Carter felt when he unearthed Tutankhamun's Tomb.

Well Gregg came over to me and said a colleague of his who was an expert on Saxon metalwork had placed the bowl within the Saxon period but it was of an unknown design, which was going to be really exciting as they could possibly learn so much from it.

It was becoming obvious that the dig was going to move into a third day as there was lots of excavating left to do and the clock was ticking. It looked like it would be touch and go as to whether it was going to be finished by Saturday evening. Much had happened in the two days of excavating and yet in a strange way it looked like nothing much had been achieved. So here we were with three graves open and although the skeletons were beginning to reveal themselves, it felt like everything was happening in slow motion. It's quite an eye opener when you realise that every tiny piece of soil that is dug is actually taken away for examination and analysis. One of the volunteers informed me that they can glean vast amounts of information from the soil, in the sense that they can see what kinds of insect life would have been around and sometimes they find seeds etc. Even to the point that they knew what the village occupants would have been eating.

Its only when you get involved in a dig like this that you realise how important every last grain of earth becomes into building up a picture of the daily lives of these people. Bob and I were now resigned to the fact that we were going to have to face another night out in the cold. This meant going home again and getting sorted and returning to face the elements for one more night. This time Gregg was going to stay though as he didn't like the idea that someone potentially paid us a visit, and thought it would be better if there was at least another one on camp, should a situation arise. Well we were both grateful for that sentiment as it meant we could relax a bit more. Safety in numbers, and all that. So we made our way home once again but this time we spent a bit more time there as we had literally only seen our homes for a few hours in the past few days.

Neither Bob or myself had to worry about upsetting "her indoors" as I was single at the time and Bob was separated.

It was approaching 6.30pm when we finally arrived back and the volunteers had already left and Greg was waiting to go home to get his stuff and get ready for the long cold night ahead. So he shot off.

A Saxon Cemetery—part 2

Whilst he was gone Bob and I arranged the tools and wheelbarrows and corrugated iron sheets into such a fashion that should anyone touch them during the night they would collapse and alert us. I had done this the night before, but tonight I was going to add a little extra. I had intended to do it the night before but had forgot to bring the necessary equipment - but I had it tonight . Basically I intended to set up a series of trip wires around the graves, so anyone approaching them would trip and fall into the area where the tools etc had been precariously placed and without a doubt, the buckets and spades etc would all go flying and wake us up.

I didn't want to hurt anyone, I just wanted to stop anyone who wasn't supposed to be there from helping themselves to the now almost fully exposed skeletons and artefacts that were obvious to the naked eye.

So my cunning little plan consisted of fishing line and tent pegs. So simple, yet so effective. I did ponder with the idea of placing some wires further out from the graves, but then if someone had tripped on one and not made a noise they would obviously expect to find more ! There were some other ideas I had as well but this one was simple and easy and easy to implement.

When Greg returned he said he was going to sleep in his car, which I thought was a very wise move given how cold it was going to be during the night. We all sat in my car and I think Bob and I drove poor old Greg mad with our relentless questions about what was going to happen etc. Time went by and Bob retired to his tent and Greg to his car and I snuggled down with my sleeping bag around me with the knowledge that I could relax a bit more, given someone else was on site. As it turned out I relaxed a bit more than I expected, as I pretty much slept the whole night. I was awoken by a short sharp noise just as it was getting light, which turned out to be Gregs car horn going off. I must of dozed back off as I when I awoke it was just getting light and I realised that Greg was gone so he must off accidentally knocked his horn when setting off.

So this was it - Saturday morning and hopefully this was going to be the last day? Though I could not see it happening as so far the only object to have been removed was Bobs warriors shield boss. The majority of the skeletons in both of my graves were now visible and it now looked as if the artefacts were going to finally be removed. I had been on a knife edge for the last two days as we knew from using a Garrets ProPointer that there were quite a few artefacts in the grave of the first female who had the bowl with her. So I for one would be pleased once the temptation was removed.

A Saxon Cemetery—part 2

As Saturday morning progressed certain items were nearing the point of removal, then it all seemed to happen in a flash. Firstly the Archaeologists removed the bones and artefacts from the warriors grave and then they block lifted the skull from the second grave as it was in a fragile condition, due to having been disturbed at some stage by either a badger or some other animal. Plus there was a metallic signal coming from beneath her skull and they didn't want to risk damaging whatever it may be. I never actually got to see the lifting which I was a bit upset about, as I will probably never witness that kind of event again.

Then all of a sudden, the warriors grave was empty and although we got to hold the spear briefly, we never got the chance to witness or participate in the final excavation of this either. So again, great disappointment for us both. The next thing was that the central grave, although in total disarray, was emptied and we never got to see this final completion either though when one of the archaeologists did remove the two brooches, I was called over to witness that and had the pleasure of being the second person in all those years to actually handle them.

Over in the first grave, they had removed the females dagger and again we had missed this. I don't think the archaeologists really understood the fact that what was probably something quite normal to them is a rarity to people like Bob and I. The relevance of it all was that these three graves were never going to be excavated again, at least not for removal of artefacts and this was our one and only chance to witness this event and maybe even participate and that was fast slipping away from us.

Over knew it was silver.

This totally changed the focus on what I will continue to call "the purse". It was decided that the purse was fused to the pelvis of the female and would therefore have to be block lifted. Meanwhile all attention was focusing on the silver disc, which quickly became two silver discs, which we now know are belt mounts. So this female was of quite high standing within her community.

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A Saxon Cemetery—part 2

I wandered off for a bit and when I returned they had removed the silver belt mounts and were getting ready to lift the saucer disc brooches. I was gutted that someone else was asked if they would like to actually lift one of the brooches. It was actually Bean Counter who was asked if she would like to lift it and she did actually say "I think Cliff should have the honour" but I never heard her properly as I was talking and so bless her she carried on and proceeded to lift it. At least she deserved to do it as she had not only helped on the dig but also supplied Bob and I with plenty of food and liquids.

So we were most of the way through removing the artefacts and at this stage we thought "great there is only the purse to be block lifted now and the rest of the bones and then its just recording and measuring the grave cut".

Not on your life - this girl had been a mystery right from the start and she was going to continue with that theme.

By coldstream-02

Read the final part of this exciting article in next months newsletter!

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Xray of the buckle fused to the females pelvis

Spotlight on: The machines behind the magnificent men

Activ8 - Me and My V3 - DFX on Steroids !!!

Well as you all know, the V3 is a pretty new machine over here so we are all still waiting for a UK field report. I haven't had the machine long (DFX pre to this one) but decided on it as I like Sky TV!! No to be honest, 3 of us were out on pasture up here in Stockport. Myself with the DFX and a lad with his XLT and a chap with a V3. Now both I and the lad with the XLT were running our machines as "hot" as we could finding plenty of modern day coins £1 coins included. Fred with his V3 was behind us going over the same patch as we had and pulling Victorian coins which must have been a good lot deeper ! This was one of the reasons as I know that the V3 is deeper and will in time find things on fields that have been "cleared" if you know what I mean.

Having done a deal with Regtons I picked up my V3 and started to play. I returned to the same pasture in Stockport and I have been getting "9 on our decimal halfpennies, and you know how small they are ! It's going to be a while getting used to it, but having the DFX previously has helped, well it should its Whites !! There are a few of us now with these machines, and in time people will start to share programs and tips, but I believe that this is not happening at the moment as to be honest, we still are learning this great machine.

I will let you know about finds that happen as I go along, but still no gold nails !!!!

Dave - Activ8.....



Deepingdigger

I started detecting just over a year ago now, having owned a detector as a kid and keen to re-kindle my childhood enthusiasm. Having only around £200 of spare cash I called into Joan Allen's with the intention of buying a Fisher F2 but came out with an ex demo X Terra 30.

To be honest I was really happy with this machine, it was a true switch on and go model and given my complete lack of knowledge of discrimination, threshold, ground balance etc it was a perfect starting out machine. It also managed to turn up some good finds - it wasn't long before I was finding Georgian coppers, roman bronzes, copper alloy artefacts and my first ever hammered coin.

After joining a club, I was soon aware of the limitations of this machine compared with others and decided that if I wanted to increase my find rate and take this hobby seriously I needed to upgrade. I looked at several models and in the end it came down to a choice between the Goldmax Power or the Explorer. It was actually one of the club members that convinced me that the Explorer was the way to go and recommended I get a second hand Explorer II. I actually managed to locate an unused model complete with all the trimmings for a good price!

So off I went with expectations of a constant flow of fantastic coins and artefacts - I was in for a shock! The Explorer was a huge jump up from the X Terra in terms of usability. To begin with the constant multi tones made it so difficult to distinguish between junk and digger signals. It was like listening to the Clangers singing in my headphones. The machine was also a lot heavier than my X Terra which took some getting used to. However I had to persevere and more importantly listen to what the machine was telling me. I've been using the machine now for around 9 months and certainly wouldn't claim to have completely mastered it however I am certainly much more confident now. Since the addition of the Pro Coil which I added a couple of months ago the machine is now better balanced and I'm really happy with its performance.

I've now had several hammered coins, load of romans, plenty of interesting artefacts and bucketfuls of lead, shotties and buttons.....but haven't we all!

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Beachcombermike

I've been detecting for 29 years and owned something like 15 different detectors (still got most of them), my first was a "Bounty Hunter Raider" i now have 3 original Bounty Hunters + 2 of the later ones, I also own a Tesoro Gold Sabre Plus, a Savo 5000d (inherited from my late brother) 3 Fishers cz6 (converted to a 6a) a cz 20, and a cz 7a, all of them brilliant machines, a Minelab sd 2100 (only used once), a Minelab 15000 (garbage) that I gave away, but my last detector, a Troy Shadow x5, bought 6 years ago is the detector of choice to search the Sydney beaches, it's light weight (it needs to be at my age) and coupled with a 10x5 double d. coil it is great at covering the beach and at some depth. It's brilliant at picking up small items like the heads off "pop rivets" or very small charms off of charm bracelets. In the 6 years since I bought it I estimate it has produced over \$10,000 Australian plus about 400 rings but only about 50 are gold the rest are silver , stainless steel (quite popular out here) and a number of enamelled rings. It's pretty good in the parks here, although the best stuff is mostly gone now as the parks are getting hunted out. I have found pre-decimal coins at fair depths with it but I still long to get back to the UK to try my luck on farm land. in the last 6 months I have calculated that it has found me \$2,000 worth of gold ie. rings and chains and it no longer owes me anything.

Mike.

OddJob

At the moment I drive a Minelab Sovereign Elite, yes I know its old, I know it has a slow recovery time after hitting Iron and I know a lot of you are thinking why the hell is he using that old thing...well let me tell you why....it produces the goods and that's why I haven't changed for a while....I have tried using the machines with all the knobs N programs and depths and metal type indicators....more often than not the depth is a complete waste of time in my opinion...if you are going to dig it then you are going to dig it aren't you?

Any detectorist worth their salt will know an Iron signal when they hear one and yes if it's a big bit of Iron the machine give a damn big signal and to be honest on my farms I dig these big lumps up and dispose of them so that I don't come across them next time. The last coins I had were a Henry 6th and a Henry 7th, the 6th was Tiny around the size of my little finger nail...the Sov also picks up the caps out of the shotgun shells and therefore is damn good on the small stuff...any smaller and you just wouldn't find it!

It performs well on the beach too and has covered cream tea and parking money in a couple of hours use many a time. The control box detaches and I have it on my hip on my finds pouch belt, this means that I have very little arm strain and can swing for hours without any problems, also I don't get my headphone wires in a tangle when I dig as they are nicely out of the way. All in all the Minelab sovereign elite is a workhorse of a detector, a good all rounder and has given me hours of fun. Cheers,

My name is Christopher Phillips (**Tinner**). I have been asked to write a short piece on my chosen metal detector which is a Minelab ETRAC. I am fortunate to live near to a good metal detecting shop (Leisure Promotions) who have given me excellent advice with regards to machinery from day 1. My first machine was with a Minelab Sovereign which I bought about 8 years ago. This machine gave me consistently excellent results and was easy to use as a beginner, although I found it quite heavy.

After a few years I decided to upgrade to the then new Explorer II which was much lighter and provided a greater range of capabilities including the digital read-out which made things much easier. I found the pinpoint facility to be a bit hit and miss – however, other than this one very small gripe the machine was superb. Therefore, when the new ETRAC came out it was logical for me to upgrade to this model. I have had this machine for just over 1 year now and have had no problems with it whatsoever. It can be relied on to provide excellent depth and consistency. And is also very user friendly. If you want you can just switch it on and go with the pre-set programs and this works a treat. Alternatively, you can spend as much time as you like refining your own programs and set ups, as the options are limitless.

The ETRAC also comes with a USB connector and you can download and save programs onto your pc, which I am sure will come in very handy once I have got round to working out how to use it! I am very lucky to live in a small village with lots of land on my doorstep, and as you can imagine I have been using this excellent resource constantly for the last eight years. With the ETRAC, I am now finding good finds in fields that I had detected on heavily with little or no results, (including my first gold coin and my first Saxon sceattas). It is also excellent for small bronze items such as buckles and roman coins. Although this year my time has been limited due to a health problem, I have still found a significant number of hammered coins despite the lack of field time. One last thing to add, I am in the process of doing a village green survey, and I have had over 200 coins and artefacts in approximately four hours of detecting time.



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dazzbarwise

Having got back into the hobby after a couple of brief attempts at it back in the late 70's and early 90's I didn't want to be really spending much money on a detector. Prices seemed to be a lot higher than I remembered when I bought my last machine (Whites classic II), So I just bought a Garrett ace 250 which I then used for about six months.

At this point I hooked up with Donnydave, who it seemed kept switching from various brands trying to find a machine that suited him. I had since decided to buy a used Minelab Sovereign XS-2, which did improve my finds rate a bit though I still didn't seem to find much at depth, probably due to the sovereign's slow recovery speed with iron and the need to swing very slow when using it.

Dave in the meantime had bought a Teknetics T2 after reading such good reports about them and (at the time) they seemed good value for money, only costing £499 compared to what a Minelab explorer cost. With us being out several times a week we were getting plenty of searching in and I soon realized that his T2 seemed to be far more sensitive than my Sovereign. Dave seemed to be consistently digging targets at 8-12 inches and some of the bits he got were so small they were almost impossible to see!

So when my Sovereign finally died at the start of one session I decided to buy a T2 as well. This was back in April 2008 so I've been using mine for just over 15 months now. The T2 didn't take much getting used to as its almost a turn-on-and-go machine, though the various settings can be customized depending on the ground conditions if necessary.

After only about only three hours use I soon got to grips with it, initially using the all-metal mode on the pasture fields we were searching at the time. The trouble is with it being such a sensitive machine it does tend to give you an ear bashing if the field is too busy. Discrimination mode can give what seems to be a choppy sounding signal till you get used to the sounds produced, though it's easy to tell iron from a good signal with a little practice. It also tends to give a more punchy signal if sensitivity is kept as high as possible.

We're constantly amazed how, when we've been on pasture fields that seem to be searched out it still keeps on turning up new items, despite us seemingly covering every inch from numerous directions. This is especially apparent when ground conditions change, as we've been out in anything from minus five degrees to the recent rock hard ground. If sensitivity can be pushed even higher for the conditions it'll go deep, a recent example being a Elizabeth I sixpence at found at 12 inches depth.

What I like about the T2 is the simple turn on and go use and not having to worry if I'm using the correct "program" settings all the time. The balance of the machine is good and the battery life isn't bad and as they give four or five decent sessions. Also it only uses four AA batteries so running costs aren't high. Finally despite various opinions about them being flimsy and not being able to handle stubble I've not had any trouble with mine, it still looks in almost new condition despite hundreds of hours of use.

The couple of things I don't like about it are its a bit too sensitive for using down the beach and also it seems to pick up electric fence pulses from about 20/30 yards away which makes signals hard to hear.

We've both managed to increase our hammered coin count over the last 18 months than what we'd found on previous years, this being despite us detecting mainly over old ground. Also we've had two small hoard finds between us within a couple of months period.

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About us

UK DETECTOR NET was created on September 28th 2002 to bring together responsible metal detectorists everywhere to discuss the hobby, their finds, the machines they use and a million and one other detecting related subjects.

Visit the forum

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If you would like to **contribute to the newsletter** please contact either UKDN as above, Phil D via PM, or Corinne Mills at Corinne.mills@ourpasthistory.com

UKDN AIMS

UKDN is a forum for people who are interested in the hobby of metal detecting. UKDN is an online community where members can exchange and share knowledge, their views, discuss the hobby, their finds, the machines they use and a million and one other detecting related subjects.

UKDN actively works towards the following aims:

1. Develop a greater understanding of the hobby and some of the wider issues through healthy pro-active debate within the forum and through the monthly newsletter, which is distributed to, and read by, our membership and beyond. The newsletter includes UKDN based news and articles, as well as wider news, debate, and issues of heritage interest.
2. Provide a platform to inform beginners in the hobby of the basic principles in the use of a metal detector, gaining permission, site research, basic heritage law, farming scheme rules and in the 'best practise' for conservation, recording and co-operation.
3. Actively promotes the 'Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting' to all members of the UKDN online forum and beyond.
4. Encourage all UKDN detectorist's to record their finds with the appropriate bodies (depending where they detect); In England and Wales, this is with the Portable Antiquities Scheme, in Scotland this is the Treasure Trove Unit.
5. UKDN will actively work towards ensuring the future security of the hobby. We will liaise and co-operate with heritage professionals in a way which is mutually beneficial to all parties whilst maintaining our independence, and we encourage their active participation, either in the UKDN online community or through our on-line newsletter.