

The UKDN

WORD



Issue 1 September 2007

World Of Responsible Detecting

UKDN's 5th BIRTHDAY EDITION

Plus

Finds of the Month

UKDN Member Spotlight

Grass Roots

PAS News



The Harrogate Hoard: Exclusive report

HELPING IN THE COMMUNITY



Welcome...

To celebrate UK DETECTOR NET's fifth birthday we needed an event, a big event, and it doesn't come much bigger than launching our very own newsletter. As we head towards our 3000th member we have come up with what might be described as another "First" i.e. a metal detecting forum newsletter.

We have brought on to the team three members who are very supportive of UK DETECTOR NET i.e. PhilD, Ashmantle and Corinne Mills. These three people have worked very hard behind the scenes to bring you this very professional product. We thank them very highly for the expertise and commitment they have brought to the UKDN Newsletter.

An on-line newsletter is an exciting prospect. We can use it to inform you all of our plans and expectations for the near future, we can tell you of the future plans for the software, we can tell you of the stories you may have missed on the forum and tell you of developments within this fascinating hobby of ours.

The newsletter will be a regular monthly feature of UKDN and so we will 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.

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

Contents...

- 3 Birthday Feature**
Brian & Mo reflect on the UKDN's 5th Birthday
- 4 Grass Roots**
Georgian Tim on why you should never give up on a field.
- 5 Finds Of The Month**
Results for June and July's F.O.M competition.
- 7 North Of The Border**
Lesley Sleith talks about detecting in Scotland.
- 8 PAS News**
Cei Paynton talks about the PAS scheme and the Harrogate Hoard.
- 10 Helping In The Community**
UKDN members out and about in the community.
- 11 Features Page**
David Connolly aka badger talks about the relationship between Detectorists and Archaeologists.
- 12 Spotlight**
C-scope Skid on how and why he became hooked on metal Detecting
- 14 Club Scene**
Kev Woodward on forming a new detecting club.
- 15 Code of practice**



UKDN 5 YEARS OLD !!!

Over five years ago myself and Mo' decided to make UK DETECTOR NET interactive. Believe it or not, the web site at www.ukdetectornet.co.uk had been running and alive for about eight years before that. But it was very static and the only way of changing the content was for one of us, (we were both working then) to physically change some web pages. In those days it was usually the classified adverts and detector user database pages that changed almost on a daily basis.

Then we found out that for a couple of years a web site called Community Zero had an interactive type interface that was free to use and that it was fairly easy to set up. We jumped at this chance to make our web site a bit more interactive. Some of the very long established members on here may remember those first few months of UK DETECTOR NET being on Community Zero. It was a brilliant new concept i.e. we could almost talk to each other in real time.

Then, CZ dropped a bombshell - they were going to charge each group that had set up there and we thought the fees too high.. We couldn't ignore this new idea and so looked for an alternative and found it with php forum software.

We opened UKDN on September 28th 2002 and, in fact, if you click on Members on the forum Index Page you'll see those first 30 people who joined us, many of whom are still with us today including Kevmar and Petethedig, both administrators.

Now, five years later we are heading towards our 3000th member and this, the first edition of the UKDN newsletter. A lot of water has flown beneath the bridge since that September evening and, we'll be the first to admit it that, at times, we've wondered what on earth we had created. We have weathered concerted efforts to blacken both the name of UKDN and those that have given up their time both freely and in large amounts.

Some of the people who have helped pave the way to today's milestone are no longer with us. Some have left after becoming disillusioned, others have left of their own accord and others have left for their very own personal reasons. After five years people's lives change and many cannot give up their time for ever and a day.

Thankfully there are always others ready to help guide UKDN forward and it is with a proud heart that we state that today we have an excellent team of administrators, moderators and technicians to help see us go forward for the following five years.

Myself and Mo' have always promised that UKDN will remain free to the end user and so it remains today. Yes, we have a donate button and will try to raise money in a variety of other ways because we have to. We have to find server costs, bandwidth fees and support fees which can be very high in this industry. We will continue to innovate to make sure that UKDN remains at the forefront of forum technology while at the same time ensuring that it doesn't cost you, our end user, a single penny.

We hope you enjoy this latest addition to UK DETECTOR NET.





NEVER GIVE UP ON A FIELD by Georgian Tim

I have a field that is a matter of a few minutes walk from my house but has rarely produced anything older than Georgian. The geology is "cornbrash", so named because the early geologists thought it looked like the mass of broken corn fragments after threshing. Basically this is 6" – 8" of soil then a thick layer of small pieces of flat Cotswold stone which is death to fragile objects such as hammered coins. The lack of finds was somewhat surprising as it backs onto one of the oldest parts of the village. The village is recorded in Saxon documents and is in the middle of the Roman province centred on Cirencester.

I occasionally gave it a few hours but nearly always came back with an empty pouch. I tried a variety of detectors and had guest detectorists give it a going over so there was no lack of trying to prise some finds from it.

Research did little to aid any enthusiasm I had. The field names were none committal and although the aerial photos do show some black patches, the farmer assured me that these were from some chicken sheds that were removed in



about 1940. All in all, a field with all the potential but none of the results and therefore typical of all my fields.

However, all this changed last summer when the farmer decided to go into partnership with another farmer in order to cut the workload (he is in his 70s). The partner decided to take over the ploughing and not realising the geology, ploughed deeper disrupting the old plough pan and bringing a lot of cornbrash to the surface (not a good thing for the crops). On seeing this I decided to give the field another going over and put aside a day the following week. I managed an hour field walking that day and picked up a selection of flints including an arrow head, Roman pottery and early medieval pottery. Most of this came from the black patches near one edge but I still considered this soil colour to be from the chicken houses. The following week came around and I started the session by running a "Union Jack" search pattern. The first few hours produced a few grotty coppers and the usual ointment tubes but on the edge of one of the black patches I had multiple signals in a single sweep. The first shovel full exposed a dupondius and two radiates. The next two signals were also radiates which set my pulse racing a bit but the much hoped for Roman silver never appeared. After a chat with the farmer I decided to mark out a grid 20 metre x 20 metres and search this at a slow shuffle overlapping my swings. The iron infestation and mineralization were horrendous with each swing giving multiple iron signals. I slowed my swing down even more which allowed the detector to



pick up some good signals in the middle of it all and I recovered several more grots and 3 Roman brooches. I then switched to the 9" coil and lowered the sensitivity and went over the area again. Another brooch popped out along with a few Georgian coppers but little else. The last session was done with the farmer getting ever closer with his harrow and seeder so I had to give up for the year.

It looks like I have located a ploughed out Romano-British habitation site, possibly dated back to the early Bronze Age. This is a great leap forward for finding the village history and I now await this years harvest. To increase my chances of finding more evidence I have purchased a 10" x 5" elliptical coil to help get in between those pesky iron bits and the farmer has also given me permission to dig a small test pit. Who knows what this year will bring, possibly that elusive gold stator or a bronze axe?



One of last year's brooches has now been returned from the FLO and is of an unrecorded variety of Hod Hill type. The condition it came up in gives me hope for some good condition finds this year and more additions to the village history.

June Coin of the Month

My Perfect Day

It was just like any other Saturday morning, but today I had a new field to detect on. Having done some research on the area the evidence pointed to a Manor dating back to the Domes day book. Today, all that is left are some earthworks. The field is down to pasture and never gets ploughed because the ground is too stony.

I arrived at the field and set up my Fisher 75, put on my headphones and set off heading straight for the earthworks at the top end.

My first signal was, wait for it, one of those ring pulls which always gives such a good response, but a few minutes later I had my second signal and out of the ground came a beautiful Ring Buckle, complete with pin and lovely green patina. What a great find, it doesn't get much better than that. I was beginning to wonder what I might find next..

After another 20 minutes of detecting without anything, finally a signal. I began digging the turf carefully and saw one of those gold milk bottle tops that always get your heartracing, but as I went to remove it for the ground I could see the galleon and once again my heart started to race.

This was no milk bottle top it was a Gold Noble!

I sat down before I fell down and just stayed there for about 10

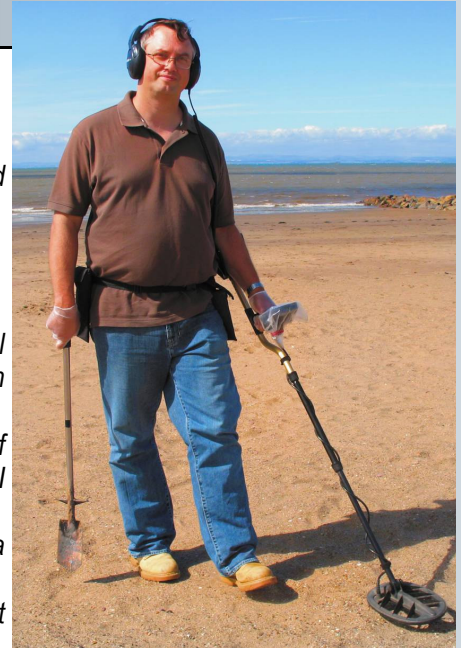
minutes holding the coin in my hand. What do I do next? I picked up my mobile and phoned the wife sharing my great news.

What a perfect day.

Paul



Edward III gold Noble
1351-1361 pre-treaty period



June Artefact of the Month



13-14th Century
Vesica Seal
of Isabelle Daubeni

This seal was found at a Central Searches rally at Harrold Bedfordshire in June.

From the very same small area that had been hammered two weeks previous on another CS dig, when lots of Roman items were found. I found the Seal in between two filled in dig holes about 18"/24" apart, and, about 3ft from the Farmer's 3 section harrow plough maybe 3ton of metal work.

Malc



And the other entries that didn't quite make it.....

Saxon chip carved mount
Found by Panner



13th Century
Figure of a Saint
Found by Paulspx

Bronze Age palstave axe head
Found by Nealblath



Elizabeth I groat
1560-1561
Found by Panner

July Coin of the Month



Edward the Confessor
1047-1050
Northampton Mint



The Confessor coin was found in one of my least productive fields near Banbury Oxfordshire. It was a lovely sunny day and I was going to test the Xterra 70 and Medium frequency coil, not expecting much as the field has always been quiet and only given up a few buckles and a spur and the usual rubbish. 10 mins into the session and I got a very lovely soft signal from an area that I have been over many times before over the last 5 years. I dug the target and started to break the clump of soil and the coin was there at the bottom the soil. My heart was racing as it was my first Saxon coin and what great condition.

Rich

July Artefact of the Month



6th Century
Saxon Cruciform
Brooch

It was just a normal Sunday morning going out with the club for a days detecting in North Yorkshire. The site we were going on was a first for us and I was not expecting much due to the industrial past of the field we were heading for. There was a lot of excitement on the morning and detecting had to stop for several hours. As I do not want to ruin the whole story of this memorable day I will say no more about that. It will be covered at a later date when all the info is collated. The afternoon gave me a very iffy iron signal which I dug. The hole was getting bigger and deeper with a small audience around me. At over 2 foot I finally saw rust showing through the soil and got down flat to scrape away with my hands at the target. I was a bit disappointed when I uncovered a lump of iron and felt that it had been a waste of effort digging for 15 minutes for some rubbish. As all old hands at this game know always check your hole again. I was rewarded with a nice clear signal from my Explorer. I tentatively got back down and dug away at the hole again and it was not long before I saw that nice green colour of copper alloy. As I scraped away the dirt I started to make out the target and realized

that it was a Saxon Cruciform brooch. I was shaking with excitement as this was definitely on my wish list and a find of a lifetime. It took me another five minutes digging with my fingers to recover it. After checking the hole again I was still getting a signal this turned out to be 2 ring brooches. The finds I made that day are presently with the FLO getting recorded. My lump of iron?? A Saxon knife blade so not the rubbish that I first thought it was. It is a day in my life which I will never forget and treasure the memory of.

Craig



And the other entries that didn't quite make it.....



Hawking Whistle



Elizabeth I sixpence 1592

I have been asked if I could help and give a wee update on detecting in Scotland.

The hobby of Metal detecting is certainly on the increase in Scotland and this is apparent by the numbers of new detectorists taking up the hobby and wishing to join detecting clubs to gain knowledge from experienced detectorists and to receive the benefits offered by these clubs. This gives new people to the hobby a chance to learn from club members on responsible detecting in Scotland.

The geographical layout of Scotland means that detectorists are widely spread throughout, with very few clubs on offer for people in outlying areas to join. The established clubs that are available in Scotland will no doubt confirm the distances that their members will travel to attend club meeting and outings, this could be anything up to 3-4 hours drive to meet fellow detectorists, for as well as the detecting part it's a great social get together.

As most of you will be aware, in Scotland the law is different from the rest of the UK regarding detecting finds. The Crown's right to treasure trove, /bona vacantia/ (ownerless goods) means that all finds in Scotland, be it made of metal, stone, wood or any other material belongs to the crown. Under the ancient Scots common law /quod nullius est fit domini regis/ (that which belongs to nobody becomes our Lord the king's [or Queen's]). Though in many cases these items are disclaimed and returned to the finder, the policy of the Crown has continued to follow this approach that has been in operation for nearly two hundred years. In using the Treasure Trove system this is safe guarding Scotland's heritage of portable antiquities and archaeological objects, these objects are being placed in the museums or suitable institutions, for the future benefit of the nation. Please check out the below link for Treasure Trove Scotland web site, which shows some wonderful finds being claimed.

<http://www.treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/index.asp>

As the increased demand for houses and retail spots in Scotland continues, these new development sites are often on land that has in the past had some historic event attached to it. When this is the case, and speaking for our club, our archaeological survey service that we offer will have by the end of this year, trebled our survey rate compared with last year.

I know that the other clubs have seen an increase in this sort of work also, with some fascinating finds being unearthed at these surveys throughout Scotland. The surveys have led to a strong and trusting relationship being built between the archaeologists and the detectorist and the Clubs involved in the projects. The knowledge shared and co-operation between both can only help to highlight how useful detecting and archaeology can be in working together.

We hope to update you more on the Scottish Scene on later editions, with input from other Scottish Detectorists who share a passion for the history of Scotland.

Lesley Sleith is the chairperson of the Scottish Artefact Recovery Group



members club dig



Club member detecting survey
Peebles, Scottish Borders



Same survey more landscape trenching

Did you see the press coverage of the Viking Hoard from near Harrogate, North Yorkshire, over the last week or so? What would you have given to find that? Can you imagine how the finders, David and Andrew Whelan felt? They recovered the "most important find of its type in Britain since the Cuerdale Hoard was discovered in Lancashire in 1840".

The find contains a mixture of different precious metal objects, including coins, complete ornaments, ingots and chopped-up fragments of hack-silver in gilt silver vessel, made in what is now France in the first half of the ninth century. It was apparently intended for use in church services, and was probably either looted from a monastery by Vikings, or given to them in tribute.

Most of the smaller objects, 617 silver coins and 65 other objects, were hidden inside this vessel, which was itself protected by some form of lead container. As a result, the hoard was extremely well-preserved.

Star objects include a rare gold arm-ring and whilst many of the coins are new or rare types that will provide invaluable information about the history of England in the early tenth century, as well as Yorkshire's wider cultural contacts in the period.

The hoard contains coins that relate to Islam and to the pagan pre-Christian religion of the Vikings, as well as to Christianity. It is thought that the hoard was probably buried for safety by a wealthy Viking leader during the unrest that followed the conquest of the Viking kingdom of Northumbria in AD 927 by the Anglo-Saxon king Athelstan (924-39). Pretty amazing stuff!

David and Andrew Whelan reported their find straight away to Amy Cooper, the Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) for South and West Yorkshire (the Whelans live in Leeds, which is in West Yorkshire, although they found the find in North Yorkshire).

As a possible Treasure find, it was then transferred to the British Museum where conservators have been carefully excavating each individual object to avoid damaging them or losing important contextual information.

One of the most exciting things about the find is that it sheds light on international and cultural contacts in the medieval world, with objects coming from as far apart as Afghanistan in the East and Ireland in the West, as well as Russia, Scandinavia and continental Europe.

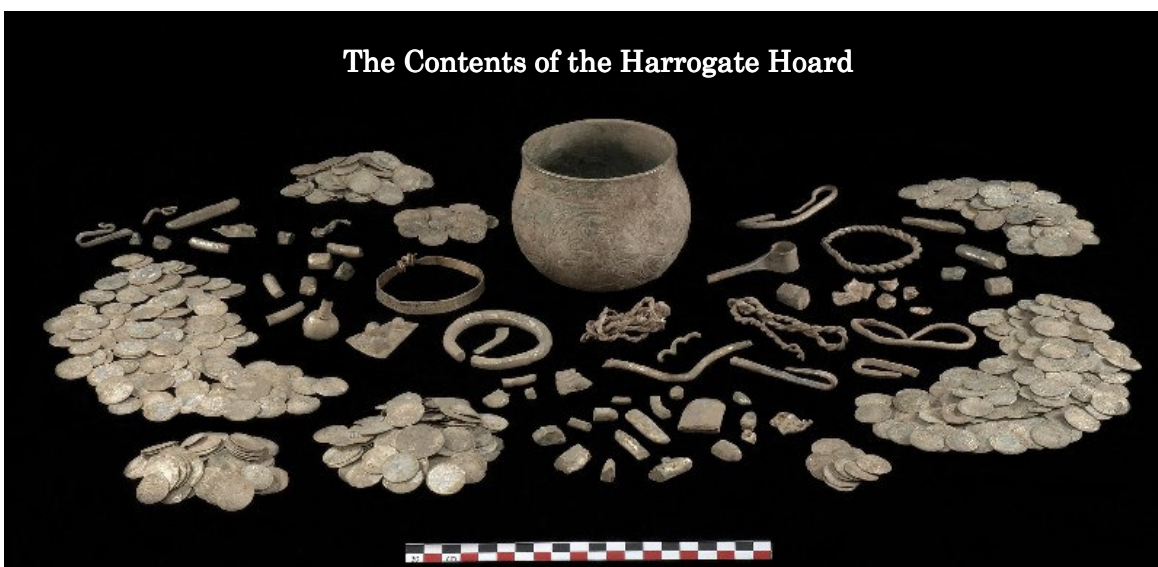
Margaret Hodge, Culture Minister said "Finds such as this are invaluable in teaching us about our history". "This remarkable discovery highlights the contribution both the Treasure Act and the Portable Antiquities Scheme continue to make towards our knowledge of the past."

The recent media frenzy has shown us what we already know: Objects from the past have a power that nothing else does; they allow us to physically touch the lives of the people that made, used and lost them.



Ceinwen Paynton

The Contents of the Harrogate Hoard



We all know this because our interests and hobbies give us a chance to become involved with history in a hands-on way and from that first glimpse of something that no-one has touched for hundreds of years, we've been hooked.

Some of you reading this will be old hands, not only detecting but also recording your finds for years but I know that others might be newer to the hobby or even finds recording virgins that haven't taken the plunge and gone to see their Finds Liaison Officer yet!

If you haven't, take a look at what detectorists and other finders (nearly 6000 of them) recording their finds through the PAS have achieved in the last year!

57,556 archaeological objects have been recorded on the PAS finds database in the year 2005-6 (figures for 2006-7 will be released soon). This is double the total for the year before and a massive 68 per cent have been discovered whilst out using a metal detector and there has been an average 154 per cent increase in the reporting of potential Treasure finds too.



The Vessel before being unpacked

Since the 1st January of this year, the PAS network of 36 FLOs, 42 part-time Finds Liaison Assistants (FLAs) and 83 volunteers have recorded another 50 449 objects on the PAS database, (which holds records for 282 863 objects and 142158 images in total). So that is nearly 300 000 finds recovered by people who are searching as a hobby in their spare time that are all, in their own way adding to what we all know about the past. When you consider that more than 90 per cent of them have been recovered from cultivated land, where they are susceptible to plough damage, artificial and natural corrosion processes, the fact that metal detectorists and other finders are recovering them means that they are being saved and recorded before they get destroyed and are lost forever, pretty amazing really! Nearly 86 per cent of finds are now being recorded to the nearest 100m2 (a six-figure National Grid Reference) or better, and almost 40 per cent of all finds are being recorded to the nearest 10m2 (an eight-figure National Grid Reference).

This has resulted in many new sites being found; sites like an unknown

Roman kiln site in Leicestershire, a previously undiscovered Anglo-Saxon cemetery in Norfolk and a nineteenth-century gunflint production site in Suffolk.

But I often wonder how many coins and artefacts go unrecorded, maybe holding information that is as just as vital in its own way as that held by the more headline-grabbing finds like the Harrogate Hoard? Every last coin, every last strap fitting, every last musket ball or buckle or grot is a tiny piece of the archaeological jigsaw and only the PAS pass on details of finds made by members of the public on to the Historic Environment Record (HER). In other words, unless a find is recorded through the PAS, the pieces of the jigsaw don't get put together with all of the other pieces of the jigsaw that we already have, like previous excavations, evidence from aerial photographs, antiquarian reports, tithe maps and so on.

Have you found objects but not recorded them, maybe because you're not sure where to go, or you don't have a museum in your area, or you a bit worried that you might lose your finds or your sites or annoy the farmer? Don't be- when you record what you've found with your local FLO, they borrow the finds for a few weeks while they identify them (which often takes a lot of research for each find), and then they make a full record of them. You then get your find back, complete with a full report for your files and to show the landowner, and the knowledge that all of your hard work in the field is going to make a real difference. Its definitely worth doing. If you are unsure, take a look at <http://www.findsdatabase.org.uk> and search for finds like yours, or see what has been recorded from your area. You will see that none of your personal information appears on the record, neither does detailed find spot information, so there is no way



X-ray of the Hoard Vessel

that anyone browsing the data can pinpoint your sites or use your name to get permission to search!

The PAS website also has a series of advice leaflets for finders that range from useful information on finds of potential Treasure (<http://www.finds.org.uk/treasure/>), through to conservation advice for each different type of metal (<http://www.finds.org.uk/conservation>) and annual reports with all of the stories about not only the finds but the outreach work of the PAS- talks, finds days, special events and work with schools (<http://www.finds.org.uk/news/reports.php>).

But don't take my word for it, go and have a look and if you've not heard about, or met your local FLO, drop them an e mail or give them a call, they are a pretty friendly bunch who are just as mad about finds as you are!

Ceinwen Paynton is the Education Co-ordinator for the PAS and is based at the British Museum in London



Portable
Antiquities
Scheme

www.finds.org.uk

Helping in the Community



UKDN member Flinty was invited to help "man" the tables at a history fayre in Essex by the museum in Braintree - he was displaying his own finds made in the local area. The Portable Antiquities Scheme were also on hand and provided information boards as well as a special sand pit where the youngsters could have a go at detecting for badges or rummaging for Roman Pottery.



UKDN member Wildmantel at a Young Archaeologists Club activity where the youngsters were doing a mixture of metal detecting, recording using GPS and fieldwalking



PhilD recently helped with a different kind of task! The annual mission was firstly to locate a huge grid marked out by iron pegs and then to locate 1 metre squares each marked out with 4 nails within the grid. Of course the pegs and nails are buried and overgrown with vegetation so a detector is needed.

Have you been involved? Have you helped in the community? assisting on an archaeological dig, doing talks, history fairs etc? We would love to hear your story and see your photos – please email them to either Corinne or Phil D

Which way for Archaeologists and Detectorists?

A question I have often been asked, and is difficult to answer in a short article.. There are two main ways it can go: Separation and a return to mistrust, or what my vision is - sharing and cooperation.

We stand at a point where we all stand to lose unless we come together and talk as equals. Representatives of both detecting and archaeological groups should realize that mistrust has to end, and from each of these groups should come olive branches that show trust. Each misconception is vocalized and can then be understood, digested and dealt with, as over the past few years I have come to the conclusion that what is the real problem is - misunderstandings from all of us.

Neither did we help by not talking, not learning from each other.

This must change, and right now!

Detectorists must decide what they want and represent this, and provide a serious option for self determination - while archaeologists must acknowledge publicly the benefits, passion and knowledge that detectorists can offer.

We don't have to work together every day, we don't have to watch over each others shoulders, we just have to be able to talk when we need to. Archaeology should not be an elitist subject, and neither should the artefacts recovered by detectorists be hidden from research. I feel that there is enough legislation in place to protect Sites - and as I recently said, there is a law against robbing banks, but some people still do it - how would further imposition of legislation on detecting help to curb Nighthawking?

So no more legislation, just trust and self regulation - No more mistrust, just cooperation and sharing knowledge.

Its not much of a vision, but boy we do seem to need to be dragged to it kicking and screaming.. we all have stories of the past. but maybe its time to look to the future, detectorists like real archaeologists all have one thing in common. a love of our past and a desire to find it and share it.. Is that too much to ask?



David Connolly (AKA Badger)
British Archaeological Jobs Resource

.....



Now for a bit of fun at the back.....

Many of you will have already played this on UKDN.

Here is an object, not detecting related and the idea is to guess the purpose.

To take part: PM me your guess on our website:

<http://www.forumukdetectornet.co.uk/phpBB2/bb3portal.php>

I will let you know if you are close and if you request, I will give you a clue. Guess as many times as you like. The first one to guess correctly will have their name in lights in next month's edition.

Good luck and good guessing.

Kate



Spotlight on C Scope Skid.

I'll start this tale by telling you how I got interested in hunting for items from our pasts. My Ma was the instigator regarding my searching for artefacts lost in the mists of time.. these took the form of fossils and many hours were spent hunting beaches and disused sand and gravel pits.

Holidays were taken to places where these prehistoric goodies could be found. Walton on the naze for sharks teeth and fossilized wood, the Dorset coast for ammonites and belemnites and east Yorkshires beaches for the same ilk.

There was always hope that we might find the odd dinosaur bone, T rex tooth or some other fame laden find but this was not to be - and all this at a very inquisitive and tender age of 7 or 8.

Mother wasn't the only encouraging member of my family when it came to historic artefacts hunting - Granddad had a hand in it too; it was him that got me into bottle collecting ,and i'd venture with him to local Victorian & Edwardian rubbish tips to dig for said items.

It was fascinating to see not just the different shapes and sizes of the things dug from the soil, but the colours of some of them, cobalt blue of the poison bottle also in brown and dark emerald green, the olive and dark brown "almost black" of the beer bottles, and the aqua glass of the coddys, you know the ones with the marble in the neck.



In the beginnings of this back breaking, muscle forming hobby, the holes I dug were small in comparison to those being dug by the older guys and for the most part I just watched for what was being flung out of the hole, in the hope that the digger might just have missed something small – and all the while gaining knowledge of what was and what wasn't worth keeping.

At first I collected anything that I thought to be of interest and items that

I knew were of collectible status, but as the years past I had to narrow the field to just collecting printed ginger beers. These stoneware vessels were transfer printed with the manufactures name and place of Origin, and often have a pictorial design. Even this collection I have had to trim, to just East Anglian companies because, I hear you ask, - well if I had collected all printed ginger beers over the years i'd need a bigger house now.

The best bottle I ever dug up in the 20 odd years of participating in the hobby was a stoneware whisky jug of James Buchanon with a pictorial transfer of the House of Commons and written up as being Royally Appointed to Her Majesty the Queen - Victoria that is.

So what has all this to do with detecting? Well, I have mentioned earlier my Granddad; it was he who was to purchase the first detector I ever used. It wasn't lights flashing, all singing. all dancing machine - not in them days.

It was right at the beginning of the technology now being used to manufacture these wonderful tools.

The machine in question was if I recall an old C scope B F O with a shepherds crook handle, a very heavy and cumbersome beast to use, but I did find on an outing to some local footpaths my very first coin.

It was announced one morning that we should walk to my Grandparents to see them - so off we trotted, my Mum, Dad and sister, down to Nan and Granddads taking with us the old C Scope. Neither mum or dad drove back then, so it was shank's pony or the bus to get anywhere. With the pleasantries done on arrival, and a cup of tea under Granddads belt it was said that we should all go for a stroll along the nearby paths with the detector.

Off we went and it wasn't long before getting to said paths that we heard the first noise from this funny old machine. On digging out a nice shiny new two shilling piece my sister and I were keen as mustard to get to the nearest shop to purchase a multitude of sweets, but we were encouraged to continue swinging the magic stick.

A little further along the path and another bleep, after a very quick dig there in my hot little hand was another two shillings ten pence - number two .

Oh the joy my sister and I had in that sweet shop later!

The detecting bug didn't truly bite until I was in my late twenties and the old C scope machine didn't get many more outings after the finding of the 2 ten p and was finally left to die in the shed.

Lets now come a little more up to date and the first detector I bought for myself; again this took the form of a C scope - this though was a little more capable of doing the job of finding the goodies than the old B F O. The C660 was to me a good machine and I still have fond memories of using it and up to about 3 years ago I still was.

Some of the find I made with it are among the best I've ever made - these include a 2 century roman Colchester brooch, a roman finger ring complete with intaglio and a Vespasian sestertius in very good order.





FORMING A NEW CLUB

So you want to join a metal detecting club but after finding out which ones are in your area you find out that they are all full and have waiting lists. Even if you are fortunate to find one with places you may conclude after a few meetings that they do not offer what you were hoping.

So what if you find yourself without a club place or the local clubs are not for you, what do you do? The solution may be to consider starting a new club that will provide what you desire. Now many people will immediately think of the negatives; I don't know where to start or what to do, I don't have the time, is there anyone else interested in the local area? Hopefully the first two negatives can be pacified by this article and the latter is fairly straightforward to find out. It is no good attempting to start a club without knowing how much potential interest there is otherwise you may find you are very lonely on club nights! So how do you gauge the local interest level, ask any other detectorists you may know? Put an advert in the detecting magazines? There are probably many more ways you could find to drum up support but by far the easiest and most productive is to post a message on the UKDN and other detecting forums. But be warned, if you post such a message those replying (assuming they do!) will automatically assume you will do all the organising! People will say "you say where and when and I'll be there" but they don't say where they live and complain that it's too far when you set up an informal first meeting at your local.

As in all things in life there are doers and watchers; all will assume you are the doer, after all you took that first step. You will find that most who turn up will be watchers, content to have their say (if you're lucky) but always look at the floor when volunteers are requested. Having said this hopefully you will get a couple more doers to help smooth the way to forming a new club. Once you have some interested people organise an informal meeting at a suitable tavern; this needn't be difficult, just ask each person the best day of the week for them to attend is and pick the most popular. You are bound to disappoint someone but you can not please everyone all of the time. This first meeting is where the bare bones of the club can be formed. This will happen without much effort as the 'natural' level of the group will surface as people get to know each other. Discuss what everyone there wants from the club but don't get carried away, keep it simple at this stage. Don't let one or two people monopolise the conversation otherwise it may scare some away or worse you'll never stop them trying to brow beat the rest in the future. If you find that the people who turned up are not compatible with each other think very carefully about abandoning the idea at this early stage. If most are a friendly and socialable bunch then you are past the hardest part and well on the road to having a local club.

My advice at this time is to do nothing for a month, then hold another informal meeting with a view to getting to know each other and not discussing too much detail. This may surprise some of you but it has a sound basis. It's like a second viewing of a prospective house purchase; you get to see all the nasty bits you missed the first time around due to the excitement of it all. You will also find out who the dreamers were and those that found they didn't like what they saw and were not brave enough to say anything at the time. Those that come to this second meeting will be your regulars and backbone of the new club, treat them well and success will be assured.

The next meeting should ideally be at the regular meeting place for the club as it is crucial to have a 'base'. During the first couple of meetings this can be discussed and locations considered. Try and find one with a back room or function room so that the meetings are not fighting against background conversation and music. Lighting is also something to consider as a dimly lit room is difficult to inspect finds in.

This third meeting should be the AGM. Now most AGMs, as you are probably aware, usually take place around March or April but they can be carried out at any time. The agenda should have as a minimum the election of a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Consideration for other positions such as Field Officers, PRO etc should be discussed but this depends on membership numbers and which direction the club is to take. A club bank account should be set up once the club officials are elected. The Treasurer will need to visit banks and building societies to see what accounts are on offer and to complete the paperwork required. At least two signatories will be required and experience has shown that the three main committee members is best for flexibility. It should be remembered at this point that the committee members are elected to run the business affairs of the club and not to dictate to it. Bitter experience has shown to me that some do not see the difference!

High on the agenda should be the drafting and ratification of a club constitution. Some clubs manage without one but it is on dodgy ground. The constitution should set out the basic rules of the club and responsibilities of each elected official. This can be drafted before the meeting and sent out to prospective members for their consideration before the AGM. It can then be discussed and amendments agreed before formal ratification. If the thought of drawing up a constitution from scratch is a bit scary then the NCMD have copies for guidance and the author can also supply a copy of a constitution that can form the basis for yours.

If the club wishes to join the NCMD a copy of the club's ratified constitution will be required to be sent for their records. Insurance cards can also be obtained from the NCMD if required although some members may already have them or belong to FID.

Other topics to discuss could be; finding club land, having speakers attend meetings, membership fees, membership limit, does the club recommend or not the reporting of finds, design of a club logo and the old favourite of Find of the Month competition. This list is not exhaustive and is only limited by members' imagination.

The golden rule for setting up a club is to make it fun and enjoyable for as many members as possible. You will never please everyone all the time and you will upset someone at sometime. Good people skills will be required and if you are unfortunate enough to have to deal with complaints against fellow members diplomatic skills worthy of the United Nations may be required!

All this may seem like a lot of work but in reality it takes surprisingly little time to set up a club. The rewards of seeing your efforts grow into an established club are high and make the time and worry put in worth it. If you have ever considered forming a club or have been inspired by this article then my advice is to go for it. Post that message on the forums and things will move on from there. Good luck and if you need any more advice just contact the author through the UKDN PM system.

Kev Woodward

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.

This code of practice is voluntary, but the following organisations have endorsed it:

