

# DIGGING

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR METAL DETECTING

# DEEP

ISSUE 28

## OBITUARY



## John Fargher 1936 – 2020

It is with deep regret that we have to report that John Fargher passed away on Monday 12th October 2020 after a very long illness. This is such sad, sad news.

John was a great ambassador for the hobby and his history in the hobby goes way back to 1979 when he joined our club, the South-Lancs & Cheshire Metal Detecting Club in Runcorn. In 1980 he was at the helm of the newly formed NW Federation of Metal Detecting Clubs and later assisted in forming the NCMD.

In the mid-1990's he was part of the negotiating team that sat with several government bodies to thrash out the framework for the upcoming Treasure Act. We should

***He was also a great President for our club, a brilliant speaker, a fantastic debater and let's not forget, a really funny Scouser.***

never forget that without his determination to get the best deal that could be gained for the hobby the talks with the government that took place during the forming of the Treasure Act 1996 could have gone a totally different way. Many will reflect on his numerous articles in the hobby magazines which were always humorous but also very informative.

What a good friend John was to myself and Mo' and we are so grateful that we shared so many happy & memorable times together from club nights in Runcorn & Widnes to spending time in Majorca metal detecting in the surf and many treasure hunting trips as well as our own wedding day when John was our best man.

We ask that you remember John for the great man that he was.

Brian Cross



*John being presented with the Presidents Cup by Cliff Passey*

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**ARE YOU ONE OF THE LUCKY 50 MEMBERS WHO HAVE WON A £200 VOUCHER?**

*Lookout for the winners panels throughout this issue*

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### GET IN TOUCH

For membership enquiries contact the Membership Secretary:

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# NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR METAL DETECTING

COMMUNICATIONS / INFORMATION UPDATE



## Lobbying Round up

**Covid-19** This has given us the opportunity to widen and build our relationship with the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). As a result, we were provided with specific guidance for our hobby to cut through the confusion on the ever-changing legislation.

We successfully lobbied for larger groups to be allowed to detect as restrictions were lifted in early summer. As rules around commercial and charity digs were decided by other Government departments, our role was to make sure clubs and other hobby events were not forgotten.

As infection rates started to rise, we have continued to offer guidance and advise on the changing legislation. Please remember to regularly check our website and Facebook page for the latest advice.

### TREASURE ACT REVIEW

A consultation on Treasure Act was launched at the beginning of the year. We are in regular contact with the DCMS on this review and have offered to publicise and seek feedback from our members when the results are published. As we go to press the report on the consultation has not yet been published but we expect it to be released very soon.

The next stage, once this feedback is shared back to us, is to make sure your voices are heard so that any proposed changes to the Treasure Act are sensible. We recognise that the process can be overly long, treats silly fragments of items the same as historically significant finds and the process of valuations can be very emotive.

We want your voices to be heard at the highest levels so please do get involved in the debate. It is worth following our Facebook page for the latest news on this or checking out the news section of our website.

### HERITAGE CRIME

A separate article is included in this issue of Digging Deep on the great work we are doing to help train the heritage crime units in some of our police forces. We work closely with the Heritage Crime unit of Historic England to share information to tackle criminal activity today and build ways in which we can do more to tackle all types of rural crime in the future. We will bring you more news on this as things develop.



### PROMOTING OUR HOBBY

We are increasingly being asked to respond to news articles and get involved in TV programmes about our hobby. In the last few months, you may have seen articles in The Guardian newspaper, interviews with the BBC and Sky News. Further TV interviews have been recorded too, and we hope they will be broadcast before Christmas.

### PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME (PAS) AND TREASURE TROVE SCOTLAND (TTS)

We cannot thank you enough for the great feedback we received from the survey we sent to our members in March and April this year. Nearly three thousand of you responded giving us some powerful information to use to direct our efforts to improve the process of recording finds.

We had a great video meeting with DCMS, PAS and TTS to share some of the research findings on why you do or don't record and what could be done to increase recording rates. The discussions were welcomed, and we were invited to present the research to the Finds Liaison Officers in a separate meeting later in the summer. We believe a working group is being set up by PAS to consider and progress the suggestions we made.

Increasingly we recognise that we need to improve our communications with you, our members. We will be putting out regular news articles in the hobby press and social media to update you on what we are doing, as well as sharing hobby news.

We have decided to spend our time more on channels where we can talk to you directly and give you the opportunity to feed back to us directly. This has meant we have moved away from some communication channels, but these are being replaced by others which give all our members a better chance to contribute, if they want to, of course.

We have exciting plans to do more to educate about responsible detecting, primarily for newcomers to the hobby but also for anyone who is confused about the laws on treasure or what to do if you come across anything significant (or dangerous!) whilst out detecting. Watch out for more news coming very soon.

Catherine Lange,  
Communications officer.

*We have decided to spend our time more on channels where we can talk to you directly and give you the opportunity to feed back to us directly.*



N.C.M.D.

## MEMBERS FESTIVE FREE DRAW



50 members have each won a £200 voucher to be used at selected detector accessory outlets.

Winning members names and membership numbers are listed inside,

here are your first five winners.

**Sharon Holt 10067**  
**Wayne Smith 17011**  
**Michael Varley-Griffin 21272**  
**Johnathan Strickland 11623**  
**Andrew Mein 08696**



Search for another 45 winners inside

## GOOD LUCK EVERYONE

To collect your winning voucher contact Kev Gorman giving your name and contact telephone number.

[gorman.kevin71@gmail.com](mailto:gorman.kevin71@gmail.com)

*Designed by Louis Ashby-Gorman (aged 12yrs)*

# OFFICER Profiles

Hi. I'm Alastair Hackett and I'm currently President of the NCMD. I live in Scotland where I do most of my metal detecting and I've been heavily involved with this fascinating hobby for almost 30 years.

Although metal detecting is my main hobby, I have a number of other leisure pursuits including hillwalking, skiing, astronomy, painting and keeping fit, all of which compete for whatever leisure time I have left! As you will already know, treasure law in Scotland is very different from that in England and Wales and you may therefore be asking:

*'Why would a Scotsman be interested in getting involved in anything to do with detecting in England and Wales and the workings of the Treasure Act which only applies to England and Wales?'*

The short answer is that I have always had a serious interest in the politics of the hobby which undoubtedly stems from my long career at senior level in local government where political issues were an everyday part of my workload.

I care deeply about the future of our hobby and I see it as my role to work closely with my Officer colleagues to continue to represent the interests of our membership at the highest levels. This is especially important at this time when the NCMD is facing increasing challenges from the archaeological and heritage communities which might restrict the freedoms that we currently enjoy.

Like my fellow Officers, I am a volunteer and I do whatever I can to assist the NCMD in maintaining good relationships with various bodies including the PAS, DCMS and DEFRA. I make it my personal business to try and influence their perceptions of the hobby.

I continue to enjoy the challenges, and there are some frustrations as well as you might expect...

I hope that you will also continue to enjoy the hobby and continue to act responsibly. Good hunting!



Alastair Hackett

## Catherine Lang

**I'm a relative newcomer to our hobby, having only been detecting for just over 4 years, but I was completely hooked from day one. I love this hobby and wanted to make sure that we could all continue to enjoy it for years to come.**

I joined the NCMD as an independent member as soon as I got a detector and was interested in what the council was doing to represent our interests. Over time I got to know a couple of officers and began to ask questions and I was amazed at how much time and effort was being invested to represent our interests across a range of areas. Knowing this I felt the NCMD needed to communicate much better with its members as most of us, unsurprisingly, just thought the Council provided insurance and nothing more. So, I volunteered.

Why did I think I could help? I feel passionately that we need a representative body looking after our interests, and I think the NCMD are the only ones who are set up to do it. My professional background is in marketing, communications and stakeholder management so I offer the knowledge and experience to add to the existing NCMD team. My role is to improve the communications with you, our members. That means research to get to know you better, where you detect, how you feel about a range of topics and how you want to get information and have conversations with the NCMD. Together we are using this research to increase our social media presence and we will be emailing more newsletters and re-invigorating Digging Deep.

I will also be responsible for planning how we better promote the hobby and the role NCMD plays to do that. More information will be shared with you soon on that. Finally I, along with some of my fellow officers, work closely with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), English Heritage, the Portable Antiquities Scheme and others to represent the NCMD on any changes that might affect our hobby.

Whilst originally from Lancashire I now live in Oxfordshire with my husband and two teenage daughters. I'm not in a club but can be found on an occasional charity dig and am usually the one who doesn't stop talking! Please come and say hello.



*My role is to improve the communications with you, our members. That means research to get to know you better, where you detect, how you feel about a range of topics and how you want to get information*



John Rigby

Hi My name is John Rigby I have been membership secretary of the NCMD for the last 19 years and a detector user for 28 years, I was chairman of the Blackpool & Fylde

MDC which was previously known as West Lancs MDC, I was asked by the NCMD if I could do the memberships for them at an event that was filmed by the BBC for the series Hidden Treasures at Charlecote Park Warwickshire because our General Secretary (The late Trevor Austin) was spending too much time having to do them and all the other business that the NCMD needed to deal with at the time, I immediately volunteered and the rest is history, since then I have seen the NCMD grow from 4,500 members to today over 20,000, I also tried to streamline the way the memberships are done for Individual members, and myself and the late Trevor Austin oversaw the start of our online payments, I now oversee the running of our website and share the task of updating our Facebook page.

John Rigby (membership Secretary)



Clive Coleman

Hi, I am Clive Coleman from Suffolk, currently Chair of the NCMD a position I have held for the last 5 years. Attending PAS meetings on behalf of the members gives one a unique view of how we

are seen in the political forum. and of course, leads to many hours talking to members by phone, mail or text.

My background is in I.T. mainly networks, servers and laptop repairs Working for large corporates at all sorts of hours. I belong to my local club and help out there where I can. I have a keen interest in all things metal detecting and archaeological.

I have been detecting for 25 years and found nothing of any archaeological significance as I seem to spend more time on the ground talking than detecting! If you see me about Stop and say hello.

It's difficult to envisage a time when detecting has not been a part of my life. Since joining the local Blackpool Club thirty years ago it has always been in my thoughts and even in my dreams – where I always find hammered coins. Obviously, a lot of time was spent on the beach finding coins and when lucky a bit of jewelry, however not quite the place to discover items of age which I find the most interesting.

Detecting on farmland and at rallies was a revelation. The bon-homie of everyone on the field is great and as enjoyable as the finds we make. I feel that is a huge benefit of the hobby and have hugely missed that social side during lockdown.

You can see from my photograph that I have my usual 'wild woman of the hills' windswept look You can also see how happy I am to just be out there surrounded by friendly, like-minded people.

Bliss.

This need for older coins and artefacts has been with me since I was a young child under eight. I remember buying Victorian pennies from elderly neighbors who then gave my pennies back to my parents to save for me. I still have those old pennies.

Beginning with selling raffle tickets in the club I progressed to P.R.O. Secretary and became Chair / Secretary twice. I began going to our monthly regional meetings where I found we had a very strong region with a good attendance at the monthly meetings.

That led to the National Council meetings where I broadened my horizons by meeting other regional delegates. Learning what goes on behind the scenes was fascinating and I began to understand how hard the officers worked on behalf of our members.

One fateful day years ago we needed a new manager for the Hatt Competition. I tentatively asked what that involved – big mistake as I instantly found myself in charge of it. I was scared stiff at the first ever competition I organised, but it went well.

**WHEN I AM DEALING WITH THE WONDERFUL ENTRIES SENT TO ME, I MARVEL AT THE HUGE VARIETY OF HISTORICAL OBJECTS WE FIND, AND HOW WE THUS ENHANCE THE HISTORY OF OUR NATION**

My role gives me the opportunity to chat to so many interesting people who have the good luck to discover these amazing finds, and always feel very lucky to do so. I am so glad my idea of showcasing those of us who attend the National Council meetings has borne fruit.

We are all committed detectorists who are fully committed to looking after the hobby whilst enjoying it ourselves, and it is good to have the opportunity to introduce ourselves to you all.

Not just an insurance company.

Most asked question – what is your favourite find? Mine was my first and only bronze-age axe head. I say was because now my favourite is a piece of stone, in other words an ancient hand-worked scraper made from chert, similar to flint..My big moment was when I learnt it was around 180.000 years old – straight from the hand of ancient man.

That is why for me it's top of my list, It's all about age!



Hilary

# OFFICER *Profiles Continued*



Kev Gorman

Hi everyone.

My name is Kev Gorman.

I joined the team back in July this year in the position of General Secretary. Along with my fellow officers we offer our services voluntarily through our passion for the hobby.

My work history is virtually all in the production side of a manufacturing environment, through all stages of management to Manufacturing director level in medium sized companies with circa 300/400 associates. I was fortunate that my work took me to many places around the world which I may never have seen otherwise.

I'm a family man with 2 children and five grandchildren, all boys, and all Man United fans just like I was at their age and throughout my life.

**I WAS AN ANGLER ALL MY LIFE UNTIL I PURCHASED MY FIRST DETECTOR, AND THAT WAS THAT. MY PASSION FOR THE HOBBY TOOK OVER AND I AM LUCKY ENOUGH TO BELONG TO A SMALL CLUB THAT WAS FORMED 25 YEARS AGO.**

We attend a club dig every Sunday of the year. This is something that our club founders put in place all those years ago, and incredibly is still maintained.

I took on the club secretary position one year after I joined and held that position for many years. At the same time I became the club delegate at the North West region and subsequently took on the regional secretary duties which I still fulfil.

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to serve this amazing Hobby.

Hello to all NCMD members.

My name is Siobhan Lihne and it is my role to take care of the organisation's funds, pay the bills and expenses and ensure the end of year accounts are accurate and easy to understand. I also do this for the Scottish Regional NCMD and the Scottish Detector Club.



Siobhan Lihne

I live in Scotland, in a fairly remote and under populated area, so we have had a relatively free run throughout the Covid 19 problem with it having very little impact on our area. We are not getting complacent though, we are still extremely strict in the Lihne household, visitors not allowed!

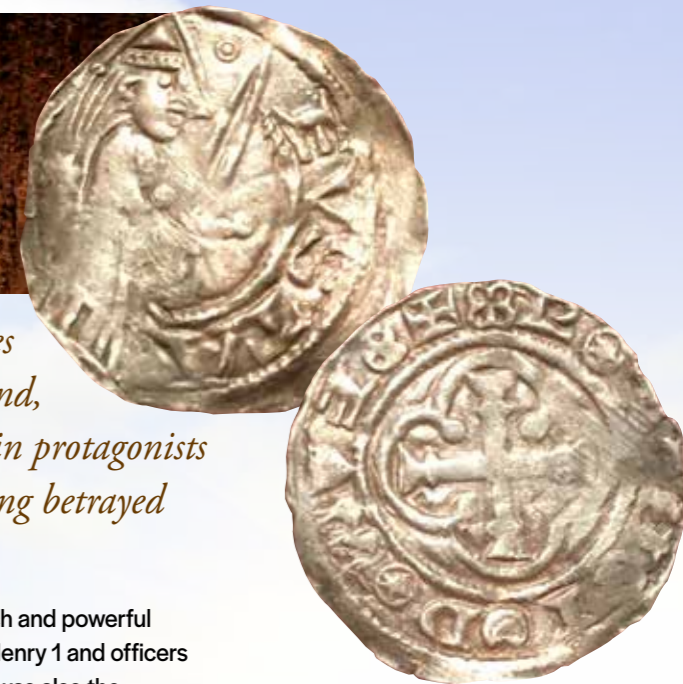
I have a lot of hobbies and it can be frustrating to find time for them all. My ability to get around has been severely curtailed by my disabilities and so metal detecting itself is off the menu, sadly, but I fill my days anyhow. A typical day will see me at my PC, undertaking all my secretarial roles (I am also Treasurer for a charity that my husband and I are on the committee for) until early afternoon. After that, I escape to the spare room, fondly referred to as the landfill room, and do some sewing. I make most of my own clothes and t-shirts for my husband. If you ever see a metal detectorist wearing a t-shirt with brightly coloured dinosaurs on it, or slices of lemons or generally just outrageous, the chances are it will be him! I also make bead jewellery, the most intricate of which is a Torc made from Swarovski crystals. Each unit spins and it took over 100 hours to make. I am wearing it, plus a me-made top, in my mugshot. It accompanies this article.

I also love travel and disabled or not, I undertake to do it as much as I can. I have been to most continents except Australia and South America, my favourites being France, Italy, China, the Caribbean, Egypt, or just about anywhere really! This year we were planning to go to France for a four-week in-depth look at Brittany and Charente but that's on hold for obvious reasons. We are now laying plans to do it next year instead, if possible, but we are not holding our breath. Hubby and I are hoping for the best, preparing for the worst. I will still have all my hobbies, and about 600 books on my Kindle I still need to work my way through. There are simply not enough hours in a day.

Happy and safe hunting to you all.

Shevie

## A COIN FROM THE ANARCHY (1135 – 1153)



*The years of the Anarchy are littered with tales of claims and counterclaims to the throne of England, mercenary Barons and magnates betraying the main protagonists Stephen and Matilda and in return themselves being betrayed by their paymasters.*

This rare silver penny was struck in York and depicts Eustace Fitzjohn, a rich and powerful Baron with huge swathes of land granted to him for services rendered by Henry 1 and officers of his court. During his life he was Lord of Alnwick, Malton and Watton. He was also the Constable of Knaresborough and Bamburgh castles. A profoundly religious man he founded Alnwick Abbey along with the Malton and Watton priories.

The obverse of the coin shows Eustace wielding a two-handed sword with his name clearly visible in the legend. The reverse legend however is a mish mash of random letter's and symbols, leaving us guessing the name(s) of the moneyers. Other coins from this period which were struck for non-royals also have similar reverse legends. In fact the reverse of the coin shown here was struck from the exact same die as a silver penny of William of Aumale, Earl of York. This wonderful snippet of information came courtesy of Dr Martin Allen of the Fitzwilliam Museum.

When I found this coin in 2019 it was on an arable field our club has searched once or twice a year for around 18 years. The ground had had several days of rain prior to our visit and the signal from the Deus was no more than a faint scratch. I chose to dig it probably due to the lack of signals I'd had that day. It was deep and came out in a handful of soft soil I had scooped up. I knew it was an important coin but not who was depicted on the obverse. It was my clubmate and 'go to' guy Glenn Lister who identified the coin for me.

Following the death of Henry 1 in 1135, Stephen de Blois seized the throne of England despite previously having sworn an oath to support Henry's daughter and chosen heir, the Empress Matilda to become Queen of England. Both Stephen and Matilda were in France at the time of Henry's death but it was Stephen who swiftly crossed the channel to secure the throne with the help of the church. Stephen then sought to rally the support of the barons by allowing them to keep all the land and castles gifted to them by Henry 1. Eustace Fitzjohn pledged his allegiance to the new King.

Eustace was with Stephen when in 1138 he advanced on and drove the Scottish King David's army back over the border. King David was Matilda's uncle and supported her claim to the English throne. In the same year Stephen arrested Eustace and stripped him of his titles and castles amid rumours of traitors within the Baron's circle. Later the same year incensed by Stephen's actions and no doubt looking to take back what he perceived to be his, Eustace joined forces with David of Scotland in support of Matilda.

Eustace fought alongside David until the 22nd August 1138 when the Scots were defeated by the English at the Battle of the Standard at Cowton Moor, Yorkshire. Eustace was seriously injured during the battle but survived and was later rewarded, on the death of Stephen, Henry 11 who was Matilda's son became king and returned all the land titles and castles back to him.

Eustace was killed by the Welsh in November 1157 during an ambush at the pass of Consyllt in Basingwerk North Wales whilst supporting Henry 11.

Kev Gorman  
NCMD

*There are various theories as to why the moneyers of the day did not wish to associate themselves with these coins. Some say it opened the door to fraud by allowing the moneyers to strike underweight coins without fear of retribution. Others say it was because of the tendencies for the feudal Barons to switch their allegiances in times of war and therefore the possibility of retribution by the supporters of the victorious army if the Baron was defeated.*

### WINNING NUMBERS

Phillip White	10763	Simon Hedger	14924	Iain Gunn	00680
Craig Field	11085	Darryl Collins	18011	Dilys Peak	01086
Mike Bunyard	12009	May George	18396	Kevin Gaskell	01125
Adrian Savage	12594	Jamie Chittle	18772	Keith Latham	12564
Jay Radosavljevic	13537	Ben Willars	20117	Ben Mobberley	00490
Brian Fenton	13752	Steve Mayall	21153		

### WINNING NUMBERS

Tim Pickard	06357
Sean Price	07608
Ken Wilkinson	08629
Paul Kipling	08968
Shaun Clark	09855
David Metson	10628
Brian Dyoss	10830
John Storr	12204
Tony Hollis	12730
Colin Binns	13719

# The Robin & Karolyn Hatt Competition 2019

*This year we had to make a decision whether or not to put the Competition on hold, as due to Covid-19 restrictions all meetings were cancelled which made judging entries at clubs and regional meetings impossible, although entry forms were available on our website for non-club members.*

After much discussion we decided to break with tradition and organise things online. We value our members and felt we had to make an effort to once again showcase the wonderful finds you discover. All entries were found in 2019, coming from Regional clubs, Individual members, and Clubs on the Central Register. Judging is now over, and I am happy to present the final results.

## WINNING NUMBERS

Amanda Linaker	14090
Paul Morgan	16755
Wojciech Baranski	17367
Mark Sweet	18071
Martin Greer	18498
George Forrest	19459
Johnathan Schofield	21090
Paul Pelham	06703
Ken Withington	04836
David Anderton	01053
John Brewer	01120
Lynne Ross	03397
Rob Ryan	02130
Paul Willoughby	00563

### HOARD CATEGORY

## WINNERS

**GAVIN HUGHES AND DEAN WILLIAMS, NORTH-WEST MDC, NORTH WEST REGION.**



Anglo-Saxon burial items consisting of a part gold filigree disc brooch, a complete gold pendant and a silver ring brooch.

Dean and Gavin are both members of the North West MDC. In 2019 they were on a club outing on a new permission, which is adjacent to fields the club have detected successfully in the past, so everyone was excited at what the day may hold, and they weren't to be disappointed.

They were about thirty minutes into the dig when the signals began, within twenty minutes they had unearthed three amazing Anglo Saxon items.

At this point Glenn Lister the clubs finds officer called a halt to the dig, recognizing this as a potential Saxon Burial site, the holes were marked, the club members were moved away, the landowner was summoned and the local PAS officers informed. Nothing more was found.



## WINNING NUMBERS

Brendan McCann	06357
Dawid Palacz	08592
Andrew Busby	08655
Graham Hamilton	09467



## SECOND

**DARREN BOOTH, NORTH-WEST REGION. MOLD CLUB.**

An unknown number of silver denarii dating back to 132 BC. Unfortunately, due to the current situation the hoard has not yet been counted. A few scattered coins were found and the photo shows Darren with them before the archaeologists were able to come to excavate the main body of the hoard.

### COIN CATEGORY



## WINNER

**ANTHONY E. MIMS. CHIPPENHAM & DISTRICT M.D.C. WESTERN REGION**

With Hercules standing in front of an alter holding a club and lion's skin.

Known as Mimzy with a Z, Anthony has detected since he was 17 but only seriously from 2003 onwards. He retired from working in 2012 and found the "Malmesbury hoard" the same year. He joined his first detecting club, the CDMDC in 2018, no not the Congleton one.

He now spends his time detecting, and on other days photographing the coins he found in 2012 as a volunteer with the Athelstan Museum in Malmesbury. With the Covid issue, it may be some time before the hoard will eventually go on display for the public to see.



## SECOND HIL MOY. WEST KIRBY CLUB. NORTH-WEST REGION.

**PA gold Tremissis of Maurice Tiberius. 582- 602 AD. Mint mark – Constantinople.**

Phil started detecting in the late 60's and was a member of the Parkgate Detector Club. He had a break for a number of years and went sea fishing.

Metal Detecting started again a few years later. The Parkgate Club then finished, and the West Kirby MDC was formed. He has been Chairman of the club for a number of years and is also Vice chairman of the North-West Region.

### ARTEFACT CATEGORY

## WINNER

**DAVID DICKENSON. CLUB - H.S.S. MOLD. NORTH-WEST REGION.**

13th/14th century gold finger ring with zoomorphic fittings, engraved "Ave Maria Plenta ". Translated "Hail Mary Full of Grace".



David is a well-known and much respected figure, in and around the North West detecting fraternity.

He is a founding member of H.S.S. Mold (1976) a club he still represents as Treasurer and has been active within the North West Region since its inception in 1979, a true pioneer of the hobby.

David explained the circumstances of the find. "I was detecting alone on an arable permission I have had for 30 years, over that period I have detected most years 2 or 3 times, I found the ring at a spot I have walked over dozens of times before"

The ring has been acquired by the Grosvenor Museum in Chester, which is very apt as the Museum is no more than 4 miles from the finds spot.



## SECOND

**GORDON HOPE. EAST YORKSHIRE M.D.C. YORKSHIRE REGION.**

Celtic Iron Age bronze terret ring.



A complete copper-alloy probable strap fitting of late Iron Age date, c.100 BC - 0 BC/AD. The object comprises a circular sectioned ring with five integral decorative knobs projecting to the outer edge. Three of the knobs are in the form of birds, possibly ducks, spaced evenly at three of the quarter points.

This attractive artefact came a close second.

Many thanks to those who took the trouble to send entries into me and I hope you will all enjoy looking at their beautiful finds. As I say every year judging is made very difficult for us, but there are always the stand-out items that helps us choose the winners. This year has been a difficult one with the restrictions placed on us but there has been detecting, so with that in mind I look forward to next year's competition with optimism.

Hilary Fagen. Competition Manager.

# WELCOME TO THE CENTRAL REGISTER CLUBS

## Featuring a day out with the Ashfield Metal Detecting Club

# Dig On

Metal detecting has become a popular pastime for many, but does it really yield treasure?

Made sent one of its reporters, Gemma Kennison-King, to dig the dirt...

**F**or a lot of folks, they hear the term 'metal detecting' and automatically imagine a, shall we say... eccentric character walking along the beach during their holiday, waving a metal contraption in front of them.

I quite possibly (okay was) sat on the sceptical side of the fence. It was therefore with certain trepidation that I found myself driving out into the Nottinghamshire countryside in search of a farm where I would soon meet members of The Ashfield Metal Detecting Club, at the kind invitation of Chairman, David.

What soon became very apparent, once socially distanced greetings had been exchanged, was that this was a group of people from varying wakes of life, professions and ages who meet convivially with the purpose of not only unearthing 'finds' but collaboratively researching, discovering and appreciating the history of the location and the artefacts found. Not a bounty hunter or any eccentricity in sight.

In fact, and with a complete flip of the coin (no pun intended here) I soon realised that this is surprisingly addictive hobby with a host of social, health and learning benefits, and I certainly enjoyed the adrenaline rush every time the detectors indicated there could be something - potentially significant - right under our feet.

Hours walking outside in the beautiful countryside - followed by a picnic lunch - chatting with an incredibly interesting bunch of highly knowledgeable and historically driven individuals, who not only made me feel incredibly welcome but spent a great deal of time explaining all the do's and don'ts of detecting. I was clear they each relished their time outside with their detectors, and had amassed some fascinating finds and historical references between them.

Of course you mention treasure, and what is treasure for one person is perhaps not for another. It really come down to what drives you to go out detecting. You may well have something specific you are trying to find - in which case I am reliably told you need to invest time in research (historical charts, maps, etc.) to pinpoint locations that could be worth a search, or that may have had settlements or been used as roadways at some point in time. There is no guarantee you will find anything of interest, and in all honesty I just expected bits of scrap to crop up. I was interested though to see what it was all about, and if anything did crop up, would it give me a bigger picture as to life in the location many moons ago.

So imagine my glee when Mick's metal detector signalled there may be something! At this stage I must say that Mick very kindly allowed me to shadow him for some of the morning, for which I was very grateful. He kindly taught me how to use the detector, and understand the various signals on the screen and levels of alert, so that I soon got to grips with what could be worth unearthing and what might be just scrap.

I was soon digging near the land surface as Mick used the pointer to find the precise spot once the detector sounded. A coin appeared! Followed

by another in a location not far along the field. Both clearly very old and requiring identification. I couldn't believe our luck!

Over the course of the day it became clear that quite a few of the group were unearthing a varied array of finds, including coins of different periods, a Roman brooch, pieces of spindle, and various other pieces of metal - all to be cleaned and identified. As I walked around the field, stopping to chat to some of them, and look at their finds, it really was fascinating to see that the field was showing in particular a host of Roman references. Of course they had researched carefully, and the field's proximity to the old Roman road known as Fosse Way had provided a fair assumption that finds were quite possible.

It was also interesting to understand the members' individual experiences of searches, not just regionally, but across the country, and their finds, which did include not just historical enrichment but also in cases high monetary value. I must mention here that there are of course opportunities to earn some serious money from detecting, and once a find has been identified, gone through the correct guidelines and procedures in terms of declaring, indexing and so forth, items can sell by auction or private sale, or through museums at some incredibly high figures. But of course there does need to be some rarity, or particular significance to an artefact, and coins can be... to an extent... two a penny (sorry, couldn't resist!).

For the club members it was clear that they love the thrill of patiently scouring acres of land in the hope that something will turn up, and then taking finds home, cleaning them, researching and conferring with others. The knowledge you gain over time really is impressive, and 'Encyclopedia John' as he is known, was very helpful in explaining certain finds to me, and showing catalogues of the society's (and his own) finds over the years. Really quite extraordinary.

I asked David - somewhat hesitantly as I know this has been a subject of dispute for some time - if detectorists were now receiving recognition from other historical entities, or still met with scepticism. It would seem that contrary to popular belief finds are usually in the topsoil. As the club predominantly search cultivated land where ploughing has ensured that it has become impossible to have finds in context they have normally not been excavated. To you and I this means that these are places not normally on archaeological search lists and so, as David explained to me, any finds really are significant as they could be lost forever in the soil otherwise.

The more I dug for information (a pun too far?) it became clear that there really is so much common ground and respect for our history and heritage that it would make perfect sense for archaeological and detectorist groups to work alongside one another, which is now thankfully starting to occur across the country. Indeed there have been instances where detectorists have found individual pieces that have allowed for a bigger picture to be understood of an area, and then significant archaeological discoveries to be ensued.

For anyone starting out, you can of course just follow your own pursuits - although it is important to follow the rules and laws/code of conduct for detecting in the UK - and be mindful of landowner permission and

so forth. But I would certainly recommend joining a group because you benefit from so much collective knowledge and the convivial network around you, whilst still enjoying your own space and excitement at your own finds. Ashfield are members of The National Council for Metal Detecting; a body that consults at department level for the advancement of their hobby and do adhere strictly to their guidelines and conduct recommendations.

As 'Encyclopaedia John' explained, any finds over 300 years old have to be recorded by a local Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) and recorded on The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) database, which is available for study by academics, researchers, and the public. For the public, find locations are shown to parish areas. It's important to follow guidelines and be respectful.

I'd say if you love history and the thrill of being able to hold something in your hands that hasn't seen the light of day in hundreds of years, or you love collecting, or just being active and exploring the great outdoors, then metal detecting is ticking all the boxes.

You're going to need a few things to get you started, such as a metal detector, headphones, clothes, boots, something to dig with and an optional pin pointer. There seems to be plenty of information online for beginners and local clubs will point you in the right direction. Of course if you join a club you also have many social events to enjoy and challenges and fun, such as at Ashfield who have a 'Find of the Year' Award, 'Detectorist of the Year' Award, and other monthly competitions.

They also donate to charity, give talks to local groups and schools, and are bursting with knowledge and an excellent reference point for anyone locally who would like to start out. After 26 years and countless experiences and finds they really are a treasure in themselves.

I say, give it a go. Don't expect quick rewards though. I am told that you can often go out for days and find nothing at all so you need a pot of patience if you are to find any pots of gold! In fact as the Ashfield members put it "There are three Ds in detecting...Dirt, Digging and Disappointment." Fair enough. No disappointment from me though - I really had a wonderful time and am looking forward to hearing back from David as to the overall finds from the day.

The Ashfield Metal Detecting Club usually meet at 7.30pm on the first Monday in each month at The Staff Of Life, West End, Sutton In Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, (Please check before arriving due to COVID restrictions). The aims of the club are to promote, protect and encourage the hobby of metal detecting and historical research. For further details contact: [webmaster@ashfield-mdclub.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@ashfield-mdclub.co.uk)

The club organises regular mid week and occasional Sunday searches which are well attended. There is a 'Find of the Month' (each month surprisingly), raffles, social events, guest speakers and a club library.

# METAL DETECTING = GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

NCMD – NORTH WEST REGION

What absolute disruption was just around the corner?

For the majority of us it has been a time of shifting priorities, making the most of a torrid experience, and then moving on.

But for some people, who, through no fault of their own have suffered stress, anxiety or worse, it's a totally different picture, it's a picture

where 'norms' have been removed, and for some, the very recreation that they rely on (metal detecting) to relieve their day to day anxiety, has been disrupted.

Here, in their own words, are the thoughts of three hobbyists from our region who have agreed to share their thoughts with us. Thank you guys.

## METAL DETECTING – MY RESET BUTTON

Firstly, let me say it, I suffer with mental health problems, specifically, depression and anxiety.

I am in my middle 50s, but I was medically retired about 6 years ago. Some would say that I could be enjoying everything that life can throw at me, but my depression and anxiety conspire to make this difficult.

My retirement and the lead up to it wasn't great. I worked for a local authority from leaving school and the last 2 years of my 30-year career was the worst part of it. When I retired, I was left with nothing to occupy myself, coupled with depression and anxiety.

I had thought about metal detecting on and off for a number of years. The thought that stopped me was, what would other people think. I have low self-esteem and I always think about the way in which other people see me and the impression that I give. Will I be called sad, get a life, all the usual things came into my mind and stopped me picking up the hobby earlier on in life.

After about 12 months of not doing very much, I decided to get a cheap detector, just to see if I liked it and what it was all about. I went out a few times and was amazed at the pre-decimal coins that I found. (I know, not great, but at the time was amazing for me).

I put my name down on the waiting list for the North West Metal Detecting club, I did not have to wait too long as a space became available and I went on my first club outing. The people I met were terrific. They showed me the ropes and had plenty of time to talk to me and give me pointers. These people have become really good friends over the following years. The main point of this piece is to explain how detecting affects my life.

I have trouble getting out of the house during the week and look for excuses to stay in, but, since that first day out detecting with the club, I try to get out every single week. I treat detecting as I would a doctor's or hospital appointment.

During the week, my anxiety and depression stops me doing things and I get stressed about anything and everything. Any little thing can get to me and this builds up over the week and I can feel myself getting worse every day, come Sunday, our club dig day, I am up at 5:00am and looking forward to getting out.

**WALKING AROUND A FIELD ALL DAY IN THE FRESH AIR, BEAUTIFUL COUNTRYSIDE, WILDLIFE, AND NOT FOCUSING ON ANYTHING, IS SO THERAPEUTIC FOR ME. ALL MY STRESSES AND ANXIETIES SEEM TO MELT AWAY AND I FINISH THE DAY REFRESHED AND READY TO START THE NEXT WEEK.**

To me, detecting is like hitting a reset button every Sunday, removing the stress, anxiety, depression, and general worries.

It isn't a fix for my personal issues, I still go through the same process each week, but I feel that this is stopping the problems getting worse, it builds up during the week and then gets reset, rather than continuing to build up.

I see detecting as a 'mindful' hobby. It gives you time to re-focus and clear away some of the problems that are not really problems. If I find anything during the day, that is a bonus, but that is not why I go out detecting. I wander around a field and hit the big RESET BUTTON every Sunday and love every minute of it.

*Who among us this time last year could have predicted what 2020 would hold?*

*I lost my son in 2012 and not long after me & my girlfriend split up. I went through an unbelievably bad time mentally and started suffering from depression and panic attacks. That in turn basically turned me into a hermit. I wouldn't see anyone and wouldn't go outside.*

*I was in a bad way mentally and on tablets for depression and even contemplating topping myself, and if it were not for my daughter being here, I probably would have.*

*My dad was dying of cancer, so I was basically now in a different part of Cumbria, 20 miles away from my daughter and on my own, to cut a long story short my brother came up for a few weeks with his detector and helped me a lot by taking me back outside.*

*It was extremely hard at first, he took me detecting on the beach. I hadn't detected for a while. The hobby brought back my confidence to go back outside, nothing else worked for me, my panic attacks got less, and I started to go out again, even if it was just to the shop.*

*This hobby helped me out mentally more than any doctor ever did, or medication off a doctor, it really helped me sort my head out and still does to this day, moving back to Keswick 7 years ago and meeting a fellow detectorist in Chris Kirk was a blessing in disguise too.*

*I could go on and on about how this hobby basically saved me from a proper meltdown but think I have given my 2 pennies worth.*

*Love to all. x David*



Hi My name is Mal Duffield.

I work in IT, and manage a team who support the company's major corporate systems including customer billing, finance, work management etc. I also support a large programme of systems replacement, which has been going on for the past 4 years.

As such I work long hours, and this can be day or night. Lockdown has had effect on my working week as I can work as effectively from home, as can my team.

During this period my wife has been very supportive and understands that generally on Sundays I go detecting, this allows me time to 'switch off' relax and clear my mind of the 'day-to-day' and the frustrations associated with it.

It allows me to be outside for 6 hours in the open air, getting exercise and enjoying the countryside. I find this very beneficial to both my physical and mental health.



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR METAL DETECTING

## JUNIOR FINDS COMPETITION



OPEN TO NCMD MEMBERS UP TO AND INCLUDING 15 YEARS OF AGE.

TROPHIES FOR THE WINNING ENTRIES.  
PLAQUES FOR THE RUNNERS UP.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR THE BEST  
COINS, ARTEFACTS AND HOARDS.



Start looking in your finds box everyone  
and remember it does not have to be ancient, or valuable.

**If you like it, enter it.**

Maximum 3 entries per member, 1 coin / 1 artefact / 1 hoard

**WE WANT TO SEE YOUR FINDS**

To enter, just send a photo of your find(s)  
along with your membership number,  
a short description of the item(s) and  
a parent's phone number to



Hilary Fagen  
[Alex182sa@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:Alex182sa@blueyonder.co.uk)



The deadline for entries will be Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

The winners will be notified personally and  
all results published in Treasure Hunting

designed by Louis Ashby-Gorman (aged 12 years)

# HERITAGE WATCH - The Fight Against Heritage Crime Continues

BY MARK HARRISON AND DAVID REES

The problem of crime, and anti-social behaviour relating to historic buildings and archaeological sites (both maritime and terrestrial) has been documented for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. However, what is new is the sheer scale and extent of the criminality.

For example, in 2012 English Heritage published research which revealed that in 2011, 18.7% of all listed building, were physically affected by criminal activity. That is more than 70,000 listed buildings!

For almost 30,000 listed buildings, the impact was classified as 'substantial'. More generally, around 20% of listed buildings are harmed by crime every year. This figure is almost double for listed places of worship.



(Figure 3)

**Mark Harrison**  
Head of Heritage Crime Strategy Policy and Evidence Group, Historic England



(Figure 10)

**David Rees**  
Nation Council for Metal Detecting (NCMD)

Holes left by offenders (Figure 1) at the protected site at Old Sarum, Salisbury shows the impact illegal digging, and searching activity. We have no idea what was found, and the loss to our heritage.



(Figure 1)

The theft of lead from such as a church roof, can result in thousands of pounds in internal damage to the property with the ingress water. A recent example being, when thieves stripped £60,000-worth of lead from the roof of a 500-year-old St Martin's Church in Cheselbourne, near Dorchester, that was an attack on the shared communal life of villagers.

The theft of livestock is another crime on the increase, and with Romney ewes that graze among trees and rough ground on a Wiltshire country estate, it was not obvious at first that some were missing.

considerable distances with their dogs to commit these crimes.



(Figure 2)

In 2005, Mark Harrison (Figure 3) was a Chief Inspector with Kent Police. His responsibilities at this time included the development of the force's response to

Rural, and Wildlife Crime.

The team recognised that there was a regular crossover of offending in the natural and historic environments and decided to integrate, what was later to be termed 'heritage crime', into routine policing activity.

By 2006 they had developed a range of activities and interventions that would assist in the prevention of crime, and anti-social behaviour; and, where offences did occur, the capacity and capability to undertake a timely and effective investigation:-

- Partnership training involving: Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers, Kent County Council Wardens, Metal Detectorists,
- Crown Prosecutor in heritage-related crime,
- Dedicated Heritage and Wildlife Crime Coordinator,

Figures released by the rural insurer NFU Mutual reveal that farm animals worth £3m were stolen from UK farms in 2019. Add the losses in machinery, plus damage and the figure is huge.

There is also coursing (Figure 2) shows the results of hare coursing, and the cruel killing of innocent wildlife. That is a growing problem in many isolated areas, with the often-brazen offenders travelling

- Dedicated Point of Contact within English Heritage (now Historic England),
- Dedicated Crown Prosecutor trained in Heritage and Treasure Act legislation,
- Regular engagement with the Finds Liaison Officer from the Portable Antiquities Scheme.
- Heritage practitioner working with Kent Police as a Police Support Volunteer,
- Identification of 'high-risk' heritage and archaeological sites allowing crime prevention strategy to be developed,
- Network of volunteers linked with Neighbourhood Watch.



(Figure 4)

Moors National Park

In 2010, Mark was offered the opportunity to undertake a secondment as the National Policing Advisor for English Heritage (now Historic England) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (now the National Police Chiefs' Council). His primary objective was to develop an understanding of the scale and extent of crime in the historic environment; and, to develop an effective partnership capable of providing the requisite knowledge, expertise and resources to tackle issues such as: theft of metal from historic church buildings; criminal damage and arson; interference to shipwrecks and military remains; and, illicit metal detecting (sometimes referred to as 'nighthawking')

The Heritage Watch logo (Figure 5) and badge is now displayed at many locations in England. By 2011, a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was agreed and signed by Historic England (formerly known as English Heritage), National Police Chiefs' Council (formerly known as the Association of Chief Police Officers); and, the Crown Prosecution Service.

The memorandum was underpinned by the formation of 'ARCH' - the Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage, and the first 'Heritage Watch' scheme in the Cheshire West and Chester.

Over the next two years points of contact were identified in each police service in England to act as the Heritage Crime Liaison Officer (HCLLO). This was complemented by an extensive regime of training workshops. The primary objective was to raise knowledge and awareness of the heritage crime and, importantly, how to deal with it.

**SINCE 2011 OVER 10,000 PARTICIPANTS HAVE ATTENDED A HERITAGE CRIME TRAINING WORKSHOP, SEMINAR, OR CONFERENCE.**

In 2012 research that relates to scheduled monuments considered what types of heritage asset are most affected by crime? The variation in overall heritage crime risk was slight between most heritage asset types. Criminal damage is the main heritage crime risk for Listed Buildings, and in Conservation Areas. Damage by owners due to unauthorised changes is a non-trivial element of the total picture. Metal theft is not a great risk to buildings in Conservation Areas that are not individually designated.



(Figure 6)

Scheduled Monuments are different to other heritage assets, in being at rather low risk of metal theft and criminal damage, and higher risk of other crime such as unauthorised digging and metal detecting.

This is PC Andy Long, (Figure 6) Heritage Crime Liaison Officer for Essex Police, and tactical advisor for Operation Chronos, the National Campaign to tackle illicit metal detecting and trade in tainted cultural objects.

In 2014, the National Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Working Group initiated three national campaigns:-

- Operation Crucible - Theft and Illicit Disposal of Heritage Metal.
  - Operation Birdie - Damage and Loss to Historic Shipwrecks and Protected Military Remains.
- and,
- Operation Chronos - Illicit Metal Detecting and Disposal of Cultural Objects.

'Operation Chronos' is coordinated by Mark and PC Andy Long, and as well as being the Heritage Crime Liaison Officer (HCLLO) for Essex Police, Andy is a keen and active metal detectorist.

In 2015 the NCMD became a member of ARCH.



(Figure 7)



(Figure 8)

A bronze age spear head (Figure 7) seized following a house search in Kent. This axe formed part of same hoard discovered as a result of unlawful metal detecting. Also, a Bronze age socketed axe head (Figure 8) seized following a house search in Kent. The axe formed part of a hoard discovered as a result of unlawful metal detecting.



## HERITAGE WATCH - The Fight Against Heritage Crime Continued...

Once these stolen items are sold either in the UK or abroad, they are lost forever to the UK, and represent a loss of our shared cultural heritage.

In 2016, the Sentencing Council updated the sentencing guideline for Theft and Handling Stolen Goods. The new guideline specifies that loss of a heritage asset is an aggravating factor that the Court should consider when deciding the type and duration of sentence to impose

Crime scene investigators (Figure 9) examine an excavation created as the result of unlawful detecting at Ilchester Roman Settlement, Northamptonshire.

In 2019, this guideline was complemented by an updated guideline for Criminal Damage and Arson, which also highlights the status of heritage and cultural assets.

Before 2010, the number of formal sanctions and interventions taken against those individuals engaged in illicit metal detecting and trade in tainted cultural objects was extremely low. This is no longer the case, and over the last ten years there have been a number of successful prosecutions, culminating in 2019, in the conviction and imprisonment of four men for their part in the illicit excavation, recovery and disposal of an Anglo-Saxon Hoard found in Herefordshire.

Coming up to date, Mark can say that significant progress has been made in our ability to protect the historic environment. The Heritage Watch Scheme continues to grow and develop; and Heritage Crime Liaison Officers are now operating effectively in every police service in the United Kingdom.

Since early 2019 there have been meetings and training in Wiltshire that were attended by David Rees (Western Region NCMD Chairman): the MoD: NFU: the County Archaeologist and FLO: the Heritage lead for the CPS: English Heritage and Historic England. Some training has also included Police officers from other neighbouring forces.

David Rees (Figure 10) has a background partly in law enforcement, and the rehabilitation of offenders, and is a qualified teacher and Associate Lecturer for a leading College and University Campus. Enjoying the hobby of metal detecting for over 40 years, he is the Chairman of a Wiltshire based club, and the Western Region of the NCMD.

He regularly attends meetings of the National Council for Metal Detecting (NCMD), and became keenly involved in the Heritage Watch when asked by the Council, concluding that criminals, and anyone detecting anyway other than in a responsible manner bring the hobby into disrepute.



(Figure 11)

Silbury Hill (Figure 11) when viewed from the Wessex Long barrow. This prehistoric artificial chalk mound near Avebury in the English county of Wiltshire, is part of the Stonehenge, Avebury, and Associated Sites UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Early in the year the prehistoric landscapes of Avebury and Silbury Hill in Wiltshire became the target for illegal metal detecting. As a direct result of the heritage partnership, positive interventions have been implemented and highlights the benefits that a Heritage Watch initiative can deliver.”

David will state, “If we are to continue to enjoy the hobby well into the future, we need to work in partnership with professional bodies that are trying to conserve: protect and save the loss of our heritage to criminals. Anyone using a metal detector illegally, anywhere, is not your friend and goes against everything the NCMD stands for.”

The Region has a public Facebook group that members in that region are encouraged to join, and it can be found at

[www.facebook.com/groups/2727825540819334/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2727825540819334/)

Metal Detectorists are often out alone, travelling to and from and searching in quite isolated locations. A recent success in this region was when a lone detectorist saw a car drive into his field with four occupants. They drove around a bit, and he called the landowner and informed him.

**THE LANDOWNER AND HIS SON MADE THEIR WAY TO THE FIELD AND BLOCKED THE EXIT WITH THEIR TRACTOR. THE CAR WAS ABANDONED, AND THE OCCUPANTS TRIED TO RUN AWAY JUST AS THE POLICE ARRIVED ON THE SCENE. ALL FOUR WERE ARRESTED, AND THEIR LURCHER TAKEN INTO CUSTODY. THE CAR WAS ALSO A STOLEN VEHICLE.**

The next steps will be a Training Programme for more NCMD Members and law enforcement and heritage practitioners. Mark is delighted that he will be joined in developing and delivering this workshop with David. The aims of the training will be to establish new partnership working, and help attendees to better understand the extent, and variety of criminal activity, and to become eyes and ears on the ground as part of the Heritage Watch initiative.

For those living and detecting in Wales, or visiting to do so, we would like to draw your attention to Cadw's Cof Cymru service. It is an online service that shows where all the legally protected historic assets are in Wales. It shows the location, extent, and boundaries of the c. 4,200 Welsh scheduled monuments. Obviously, a Section 42 license will be required from Cadw for any detecting activity within these designated areas, and unauthorised detecting on a scheduled monument is a criminal offence. See: <https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/cof-cymru/search-cadw-records> Metal detecting on any of these sites would be a criminal offence, and you could be arrested and bring the hobby into disrepute.

**If you would like to help and be considered for the training when it comes to your area, please contact David with your details.**