

Digging deep

NCMD
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR METAL DETECTING

ISSUE 3

All the latest news from the National Council for Metal Detecting

NCMD Withdraw From CBA Conference

After initially agreeing to the NCMD President speaking at the Newcastle conference entitled Portable Antiquities: Archaeology, Collecting, Metal Detecting Conference on 13-14 March, the NCMD subsequently decided to withdraw. Members should be aware that the decision was taken after much discussion at the meeting which took place on the 21st February. Below is the full text of our letter sent to the organisers, which outlines our reasons for the withdrawal.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to inform you that following lengthy and detailed discussions at our Ordinary General Meeting convened on the 21st February 2010 it has been decided that the NCMD will withdraw from its planned participation in the forthcoming CBA Conference. This decision to withdraw was not taken lightly nor was the loss of opportunity the conference presented to put on public record our concerns.

However it became apparent after fuller consideration that little benefit would be gained from participating in a gathering more overtly focused on the restriction and control of the legitimate hobby. The CBA appear to be raising public awareness of nighthawking with scant regard to the effect this is having on the legitimate hobby. This publicity often fails to inform the public that the vast majority of detectorists carry out their hobby in a responsible and lawful manner. Participation would likely be seen by the CBA and others as providing a level of endorsement to its current and future policies towards metal detecting as a whole, rather than toward the common threat from a minority

criminal grouping that use a metal detector merely as a tool of their trade.

There appears to have been deliberate manipulation of events and opportunities by some archaeological bodies and pressure groups in order to serve their own agendas towards metal detecting as a whole. To this end the NCMD must also register its increasing concern at the continued use of the issues and opportunities the current focus on nighthawking has given to attacking the hobby of metal detecting rather than the criminals and damage that this costly English Heritage project was intended to address. Recent media coverage appears to have been well supplied with adverse commentary and briefs in such a co-ordinated way which has now developed into a sustained ongoing attack on the hobby, with multiple facets covering topics as diverse as Treasure rewards, the recent Coroners and Justice Act and the Review of the Treasure Act and its Code of Practice. Dr. Heyworth's recent missive in British Archaeology is a case in point.

There are many contributory reasons for the NCMD decision to

withdraw, including the CBA's Rally Guidance Note introduced into the Entry Level Agri-environment Scheme Handbook, which seeks to unfairly and unnecessarily restrict rallies to small gatherings on the assumption that larger rallies cannot be archaeologically supervised adequately in terms of finds recording. These restrictions would also have an impact on fundraising for charity, as many rallies are held across the country for this purpose. The effect on commercial metal detecting rallies for which it appears to be primarily targeted, are not the concern of the NCMD, but what does affect us is the concomitant loss of opportunities for the smaller charity events.

Additional concerns surround the apparent widespread manipulation particularly, by the CBA, of the widely endorsed Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting now actively promoted in ways in which it was never intended to be used. I would like to remind the CBA that this was agreed and endorsed by the NCMD on the understanding that it was a voluntary code, a status which seems so easily to slip from some opponents' minds. It would

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Changes to Foreshore Permit Conditions of Use



From 1st April 2010 there are some minor changes to the Port of London Authority (PLA) permit to search the Thames foreshore. The changes are mainly concerned with reporting and with how the permit holders information is used. There are two changes outlined on the Conditions of Use document.

The changes, in italics, are as follows:

13.1 Original Wording. All objects of historical interest found by the holder must be taken to the Museum of London for identification and recording within one month of finding. The holder must provide the Museum with full details of the location and circumstances of discovery, and leave the finds with the Museum until they have been recorded under the provisions the national Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). The Museum will return the objects to the finder with a copy of the identification and PAS record as appropriate.

13.1 New Wording; *The holder must contact the Museum of London within one month of finding any object of archaeological or historical interest to make an appointment to have the objects identified and recorded.* The holder must provide the Museum with full details of the location and

circumstances of discovery, and leave the finds with the Museum until they have been recorded under the provisions the national PAS. The Museum will return the objects to the finder with a copy of the identification and PAS record as appropriate.

Note: *The Museum of London (PAS) will, by 1st March each year, provide the PLA with a summary of the finds reported over the previous year, including details of the finder and where located. This information will provide the PLA with the information it requires to confirm the individual permit holders are reporting any finds they make. The PLA may use this information when considering an application to renew a permit.*

Permit holders applying to renew must indicate on their application form if any finds have been reported to the PAS during their current permit period.

14.5 Original Wording, The holder consents to his or her personal details being recorded and retained by the PLA and the Commissioners for the purpose of their estates management and the issue of relevant communications.

14.5 New Wording, The holder consents to his or her personal details being recorded and retained by the PLA and the

Commissioners for the purpose of their estates management *and the issue of relevant communications and to this information being provided to the Museum of London and the Metropolitan police where the PLA considers it appropriate.*

The changes to 13.1 are to do with reporting and the change offers the finder the opportunity to contact the museum in order to arrange an appointment, thus giving more flexibility. The added Note is an indication that if the permit holder is not reporting finds, they may be refused further permits.

The other change (14.5) mainly concerns the PLA's duty under the Freedom of Information Act to notify permit holders that their personal information will be retained by the PLA and may be used for other purposes. The PLA's intended uses are for communication, estate management and to the Museum of London. Information may also be passed to the police if they consider it appropriate.

This is not unusual and permit holders should have nothing to fear from this. Further information can be obtained by contacting Ken Kackelman on 01474 562200.

Trevor Austin

Continued from page 1

appear that the CBA is systematically trying to introduce unnecessary controls of the 'responsible' hobby by stealth. This action threatens the good relations that have been worked hard for over the years. The CBA are seen as leading this insidious erosion of the legitimate freedom to metal detect with landowners' permission. The CBA should reflect on this criticism and curtail its attack on the hobby, or risk being singled out and blamed for destroying the goodwill that has been built up between many archaeologists and detectorists.

The relationships developed between the British Museum, the PAS, local FLO's and detectorists are prime examples of the need for each to play their part in making the Treasure Act and its accompanying recording scheme a success and not as a way to exploit every means possible to put restrictions on our members activities. To return to the pre-Treasure Act days benefits nobody and will only go to serve those whose narrow mindedness harks back to a previously attempted STOP campaign that benefited no one and failed so miserably in the 80s.

In my recent speech in London I pledged that if the NCMD's fundamental rights, enshrined in law, were protected, then we would not only work within the law but also within the spirit of the law. Unfortunately that commitment does not appear to be shared by some of the Newcastle conference attendees, therefore the NCMD cannot in all conscience attend a conference whereby we may be seen to be giving credibility and support to organisations that would see this hobby restricted and even banned by the whims and desires of a few narrow minded diehards whose apparent wishes are not to work with us to uncover the past but who strive to bury the future.

Yours sincerely

John Wells
President NCMD
27/2/2010

Coroners Bill and Treasure Act Code of Practice

It was hoped that the recent changes to the coroners and Justice Bill including the new Coroner for Treasure would be implemented quite soon. However due to the consultation process of the Treasure Act Code of Practice, which will not only have to reflect these new arrangements but also consider submissions made by interested parties on revisions to the code itself. The timescale for implementation has been some-

what extended. I have therefore laid out the timetable of events as it looks at the moment.

Early 2011 The Consultation on Treasure Act Code of Practice (which will reflect the draft Treasure Regulations and, as appropriate, the wider Coroners Regulations and guidance).

October 2011 – Jan 2012 To appoint the Coroner for Treasure

Early 2012 Parliamentary approval

for the following: Coroners Regulations and Treasure Regulations, revised Code of Practice, Order specifying designated persons, Church of England Order

April 2012 Consultations with the Ministry of Justice on the development of the Treasure regulations and towards the later end of the year, consultation on the Code of Practice.

Trevor Austin

The Robin and Karolyn Hatt Memorial Trophy Competition

After the success of the 2009 Robin & Karolyn Hatt Competition, I would like you all to spare a thought towards this year's competition held in November.

It was important to us to find a method of giving as many of you as possible the means to enter this prestigious Competition. The NCMD Forum presented us with an innovative opportunity for including those who may have found difficulty in so doing. Last year we decided to set up a voting facility for Individual members and Clubs on the Central Register.

Photos and descriptions were posted in the three categories; Coin, Artefact and Hoard. These were voted on by Forum members, and the winners went

through to be included in the final judging.

Darren Hoyle of the Ashfield Central Register Club won the Artefact Section, Tom Redmayne an Individual member won with his Hoard, not forgetting Kevin Gorman from the South Lancs Club winning the Coin Section.

I think you will agree that everyone was extremely well represented across the board.

All entries must be accompanied by a jpeg picture with as high a resolution as possible, in order for the detecting magazines to print good clear pictures of entries. The on-line part of the Competition was exciting to observe with many interesting comments over a long period.

Would you like to be part of this?

All you have to do is join the Forum, a simple process, needing only a valid NCMD card.

You will find a friendly atmosphere pervading the posts, and of course there is always someone on hand to happily answer any queries you may have, or help when identification is needed.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Hilary Fagen

Competition Manager

Tel. 01253 312176

alex182sa@blueyonder.co.uk

NCMD Makes Donation



Log on and get updated

Log on to our website at www.ncmd.co.uk and view the latest hobby news.

You will also find information on the benefits that we offer our members; including the latest Insurance Certificate and together with its Terms and Conditions. Information on the Treasure Act

and the Portable Antiquities Scheme and where to obtain your beach or foreshore permit. You can also download a handy landowners agreement form and many other NCMD documents in our archive.

We also have a 'member's only' forum, where you can log on and



discuss the latest on a wide range of topics pertaining to the NCMD and the hobby of metal detecting. Catch up on the latest forum chat including back issues of Digging Deep.

The Art fund has launched a campaign for donations for the Staffordshire Hoard. The Art Fund are working in partnership with the councils of Birmingham, Lichfield, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Tamworth as well as Advantage West Midlands, Staffordshire University, British Museum, Museums Libraries and Archives Council and the Government Office for the West Midlands.

Their aim is to bring the Staffordshire Hoard home to the region of its discovery; and to ensure it is enjoyed and appreciated by as many people as possible.

The NCMD has already made a donation, for those of you who wish to contribute personally the details can be found on the NCMD website, or go direct to http://www.artfund.org/staffordshire_hoard/ or you can send a cheque to the details below.

Donations should be posted to G.B. Snow (Treasurer), Friends of the Potteries Museums & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 3DW. Cheques should be made payable to either Friends of the Potteries Museum or Friends of PMAG - which is short for Potteries Museums & Art Gallery.

Caption Competition

The caption competition which appeared in the last edition of Digging Deep produced some witty and imaginative responses.

After careful consideration first prize of a years NCMD subscription goes to Arthur Evans with his suggestion of: "WAITING FOR THE WELLS FARGHER STAGE COACH TO ARRIVE"

However we have decided to award two other prizes of a

year's subscription to the NCMD for two runners up. They are:

Darren Burgess

"FOUR EXTRAS YOU WON'T FIND HIDDEN IN THE BILL"

Tony Lane of the Grantham Club

"IF THE DEVIL WERE TO CAST HIS NET"

Each receives a year's free membership to the NCMD.



Beach detecting



Continuing on from our previous two issues, where we looked at common land and footpaths, and with the holiday season fast approaching, let us now look at beaches.

Most of us have at one time or another detected on the beach. This may have been a one off experience while on holiday, or for those of us who live on the coast a more regular experience. There are however a few procedures which need to be observed before venturing on to the beach to detect.

It goes without saying that the beach is for the most part used for various recreational activities of which metal detecting is one of many, and while conducting our activities consideration must be given to other members of the public.

While most beaches have 'implied permission' in other words, they are owned by the local authority that recognises metal detecting on the beach as a legitimate pastime to be pursued in a responsible manner. There are a small number of beaches which are out of bounds to detector users. These include certain private beaches, where it is not uncommon to find

a notice informing that detecting is not allowed, to beaches that have special status, such as SSSI or where there is a danger of disturbing nesting birds also some ministry of defence beaches are out of bounds.

However we will look at the most common beaches that are open to the public, have public access, and are generally owned by the local authority. I say owned by the local authority, but in fact the local authority is usually only responsible for that part of the beach above Mean High Water (MHW). The area of the beach below MHW but above Mean Low Water (MLW) is usually owned by The Crown Estate.

Technically MHW, the height of Mean High Water Neaps, is the average throughout a year when the maximum declination of the moon is 23.5°, of the heights of two successive high waters during those periods when the range of the tide is least.

The height of mean low water neaps is the average height obtained from the two successive low waters during the same periods.

In Scotland the definition is

between mean high water of spring tides and mean low water of spring tides.

Obviously as most of us do not have a degree in hydrographics we need to be able to determine which part of the beach is owned by The Crown Estate. MHW and MLW may be shown on some coastal maps but would probably not be of an accuracy for our purpose unless the map is of an extremely large scale.

One simple method, which will indicate this area, is to look for the high water mark, usually evident by the line of seaweed, shells, the usual plastic cup and other detritus strewn along the beach, MHW will be a little below this mark dependant on the individual beach.

MLW is a little more difficult to find as there will be no physical indicators, without indication and specific information about each individual beach the only alternative is to assess the location of MLW. This can be difficult and if available take a reading on a handheld GPS which can then be compared with the MLW location shown on some maps. Or, if you

do not possess a GPS and your feet get wet at low tide, you are definitely in the right area.

However for the most part determining the ownership of a particular portion of the beach will only become relevant for recording or reporting of archaeological objects.

The Crown Estate operates a no cost permit scheme for detector users which is required by anyone wishing to detect on the beach. The permit must be renewed annually and can be obtained from their website at www.thecrownestate.co.uk/metal-detecting. Please note that this does not apply to searching below the foreshore, i.e. on the seabed for which a separate consent may be required.

To help identify the areas of the coast owned by Crown Estate online users will find a handy list of maps covering all of England and Wales, the areas of the coast outlined in red being Crown Estate owned. For those who do not have access to the internet, you can telephone for information and permit on 020 7851 5267.

Trevor Austin



MEETING DATES

**The Next Treasure Valuation meeting:
14th April**

**The Next Portable Antiquities Advisory Board meeting:
11th May**

**The Next NCMD Executive meeting:
27th June**

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Metal Detecting:

An Essential Guide to Detecting Inland, on Beaches and Under Water

by John Clark

Price £19.95



John Clark comes from the Western Region and has been detecting for some 14 years or more. During that time he has obviously spent much time and effort metal detecting in all its forms, both on land and underwater. He has also delved into the depths of site research, identification and the conservation of finds. John has produced a publication which brings together all the experience he has gained over the years in a comprehensive hard-back edition that is full of colour illustrations and diagrams.

The first three chapters of the book concentrate on developing an interest in the hobby and goes on to describe the different types of detectors, along with some

historical snippets on older types of machines and the most practical place to buy a metal detector.

Once the preliminaries are completed the reader is treated to the different types of signal produced by their chosen machine and the safe recovery of finds. John suggests an excellent array of recovery tools which will help the reader extract their find from differing soil and terrain types.

It is often not appreciated just how much land we cover in our search technique, here the author gives a good understanding of the differing techniques and when to use them to maximise your finds rate.

The author has also included a cornucopia of safety first advice,

which is a repeated feature throughout the book, from unexploded ordnance, the type of clothing to wear and where to obtain it, to warming up exercises; the latter I must admit I cannot see myself performing; however there will be those who find them useful.

The most daunting challenge for any new detectorist is where to detect and here the book gives plain simple advice and even provides the reader with an example letter for those who do not want to knock on doors. The book gives ample space to metal detecting and the law, with advice on the Treasure Act and the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

For those who like to travel further

afield there are chapters on beach and underwater detecting as well as the safety equipment you will need. The final chapter shows us some of the outstanding finds made by the author's colleagues and concludes with two important case studies from recent years.

All in all I found this to be a really good book; although primarily suited to beginners, the book has something to offer us all. Whether you want to brush up on your search technique or expand into beach and underwater searching or just to add to your clubs library. At the time of writing the book is available at Amazon for £15.16

Trevor Austin

YORKSHIRE REGION

Yorkshire Region AGM

Amy Cooper the FLO for South and West Yorkshire accompanied by Charlotte Burrill FLO for Derby and Nottingham judged the recent Yorkshire Region AGM find of the year competition.

Coin of the Year was won by Brenda Orme from the West Riding Club. This is the second year running that a gold tremissis has won the coin section.

The artefact section was won by Michael Greenhorn of the York club with a beautiful 7th century Saxon ring.

The best showcase was won by the Hoyland Club.

Barry Freeman presented the trophies.



Barry Freeman presents the coin of the year trophy to Brenda Orme



Phil Dunning with the artefact of the year award



Charlotte Burrill and Amy Cooper judge the find of the year competition at the NCMD Yorkshire Region AGM

The Second Battle of Prestonpans

I know what you're thinking – there was only one Battle of Prestonpans, on 21st September 1745, and that it went down in the history books as a great victory over the Hanoverian forces of George II. The Jacobites' success was undoubtedly due to good strategic planning and the element of surprise which caught the Government forces of General Cope unprepared and left them routed in only 13 minutes...It is out with the scope of this article to debate whether this short battle deserves its iconic status, but most writers appear to believe that it was an important event.

So, what about the second battle, I hear you say? Well, the story begins in summer 2007 when the Scottish Detector Club and the Scottish Artefact Recovery Group SARG discussed the possibility of jointly hosting a Scottish rally on 250 acres of unscheduled fields adjacent to where the core of this battle took place.

The landowner was in full agreement, and costs were therefore prepared with the help and advice of an experienced rally organiser. The intention was to hold the rally in October or November 2007. However, as Rabbie Burns once said *'the best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft* agley'*...(*For readers south of Hadrian's Wall, *'gang aft agley'* means *'go often askew'*).

The clubs contacted the Heritage Officer, East Lothian Council to make her aware of the plans as the clubs had worked with her before and it was known that she had an interest in the battlefield – BIG MISTAKE! It turned out that Prestonpans battlefield and its surroundings were considered 'sensitive' areas, and the clubs were asked to leave the area undisturbed, despite the fact that these fields had been detected by individuals over the last 30 years..! It was also explained to the clubs that the Prestonpans Project funded by Heritage Lottery funding was about to get under way, and there was every chance that club members would be invited to assist with survey work

in the area as part of this project. The clubs were therefore asked to put their plans on hold, and (reluctantly, it must be said) they agreed.

One year on, by summer 2008, no survey work had been proposed or carried out on any of the fields. (This has of course, given rise to Rule No. 1 in the Modern Detectorists Handbook: *Distrust all advice by Council Heritage Officers*). The clubs therefore decided to aim for a rally in Autumn of 2008, but after considerable debate, were persuaded once again to delay it.

Fast forward to mid-2009...still no survey work on the fields in question although some work had been carried out earlier in the year on fields about 1km to the west and in parts of Prestonpans itself, including the gardens of some residents. A number of club members assisted archaeologists in this exercise. (Rule No. 2: *Archaeologists are always there when they need you*).

At this point, the clubs' patience ran out, and a firm decision was made to scale down the original plans for a big rally and proceed to organise a standard joint club outing. A date was fixed in October 2009 and it was agreed as a gesture of good faith, to record finds in detail. Bearing in mind that there was no obligation to do this, it was hoped that this would be seen as a compromise which would satisfy the Heritage Officer. However, it quickly emerged that the Centre for Battlefield Archaeology at Glasgow University (CBAGU) had got wind of the proposal, and they indicated that they would not be pleased to see anything less than a full-blown survey carried out to professional standards. The clubs therefore invited personnel from CBAGU to assist with finds recording to standards which they would prefer to see, but they decided that they would be unable to assist. A missed opportunity if ever there was one...

By early October it was clear that further discussion with the Heritage Officer and CBAGU was

pointless and the clubs proceeded to put their own plans into place. SARG had already pioneered a simple recording system for two of their club outings, and the same system was adopted for Prestonpans. Each field would be allocated a total of five 6-digit Ordnance Survey Grid Reference points, one for each field corner, and one for each field centre. Every find could then be allocated to the quarter (or centre) of the field where it was found. Not rocket science admittedly, but enough to highlight any patterns of finds or 'hot spots'. In addition, the positions of every musket ball found were individually recorded using hand-held GPS units which would give a grid reference to 10 digits or 1 square metre accuracy (subject to GPS system specification/accuracy). As a further concession, an area c.100m x 65m was cordoned off where unscheduled crop-mark records had shown signs of an early settlement with ditches.

36 members took part plus the landowner himself, a keen enthusiast.

Over 220 finds were bagged plus 26 musket balls and 2 pistol balls. Apart from musket balls, only about a half-dozen items appeared to relate directly to the battle – a few military tunic buttons and buckles - so no great excitement, and the clubs were left wondering what all the fuss had been about. All finds were then collated on spreadsheets and submitted to the Treasure Trove Unit at the National Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh for assessment where they currently remain for identification/evaluation.

This, then, was the climax of the second battle of Prestonpans. A technical and moral victory for the detectorists, but at what cost? Did it damage our reputation? Certainly, in the short term, our image might have been dented in the eyes of certain professionals, but hopefully, people will be sensible enough to put this aside and move on. If nothing else, this episode was valuable in testing and revealing the true nature and



extent of trust and co-operation that exists between detectorists and archaeology professionals in this particular locality. For those who are in any doubt, the following points should be noted:

1. There was no obligation to advise anyone other than the landowner that the clubs were intending to detect these fields (and with the benefit of hindsight, some people might feel that it should never have mentioned it outside of the clubs...)
2. The clubs did nothing illegal as the fields are not scheduled.
3. The fields were already known to have been detected previously (and there is currently nothing to stop this recurring).
4. It had been hoped that the exercise would be seen as a salvage operation that could help minimise the impact of incursions by lone detectorists in the future, but this seemed to be disregarded. It is also important to note that lone detectorists don't make a habit of recording findspots in any detail, if at all.
5. The area detected covered some 250 acres, and despite the good turnout, the attendees were like a handful of ants on a football pitch. They hardly scratched the surface, and the pattern of finds was typical of what would be expected in any average arable field.
6. The underlying implication of the archaeological arguments was that by detecting here, we would somehow be undermining current knowledge and understanding of this area. The clubs took the view that whatever was found could only add to the knowledge.

The protection of battlefields and their surrounding areas is an ongoing issue for Historic Scotland which is currently looking to devise a 'detecting code of practice' which may require detectorists to voluntarily keep away from such

areas. The NCMD Scottish Region will be closely involved in this to ensure that detectorists' interests are represented. Voluntary codes however can be breached, especially by individual detectorists who may not even be aware of a

code's existence. It also raises the spectre of further requests to voluntarily stay away from many other areas on the grounds of their being *sensitive*... Ideally, we need a clear steer from the Scottish Government in the form of primary

heritage legislation – a field should either be protected by law or not. No grey areas. Anything less than this will not solve the problem of detecting around battlefield areas.

Alastair Hackett

NORTH WEST REGION

Coin Straightening – The Dilemma

It's fair to say that almost every detectorist has faced this dilemma with varying degrees of success; it's very much a personal choice and is usually governed by the rarity of the find.

In November 2008 I was detecting with our club on a stubble field that had not offered much in the past, towards the end of the day I picked up a crisp, clean signal and I unearthed my first and only Saxon penny. Even though it was quite badly bent I



was delighted and on my return home began a search for the best method of straightening the coin, Saxon coins are thicker and more brittle than the more common medieval silver pennies.

After scouring the websites and learning about work hardening, annealing, embrittlement and much more I decided to straighten it myself, I would never offer advice on this subject, as I, like many others have lost the odd coin to this practice, but I will offer this,

before you begin the straightening process photograph the coin enlarge the image and look for cracks, stress marks etc, repeat this throughout the straightening process always mindful of the possibility that the faults may worsen, this process may just keep your coin in one piece.

I was very lucky to end up with this most beautiful Edward the Confessor penny.

Kev Gorman

WESTERN REGION

Scrap Lead Benefits Local Hospice

Our Chairman Nick Keeler sadly lost his wife to cancer in 2004. During the latter stages of her illness she was cared for by St Peters Hospice in Bristol. Since that time Nick has been raising money for them so that they can continue the excellent work that they do in the community for the terminally ill.

Last year Nick noticed that although SHRADS members were finding a lot of lead on club sites

most of it was being discarded. Nick asked members to collect any lead that they discovered, hand it to Nick and he would sell it to a local scrap dealer. Every meeting and club outings Nick provides a large orange bucket for members to deposit unwanted lead that usually varies from small pieces to lumps of old water pipe. The pieces are sorted and cleaned before being taken to the scrap dealer.

To date Nick has collected over 250 kilos (39 stone) which has been sold for £210.00 and the money passed to St Peters Hospice. He has also sold some of the more unusual items such as musket balls and loom weights on eBay raising a further £40.00 again donated to St Peters Hospice. Nick would like to thank all members of SHRADS and WHRADA who have donated their scrap to this good cause.

We are sure that many clubs have similar schemes but if all NCMD affiliated clubs were to do something similar then we believe that a considerable sum could be raised for which ever good cause was nominated by the various club members.

Keith Arnold (PRO) PP Nick Keeler (Chairman)

Sevensvale Historical Research and Detecting society

MIDLANDS REGION

An Old Speedometer?

It was a lovely mild, balmy spring day in 1984. I was out searching in the woods that surrounded the barracks where I was based. About 400 metres from the barracks perimeter, I walked down an incline to a large hollow of some kind. The ground in the bottom of the hollow was about six feet lower than the outside and around it.

However, it was not apparent to me whether the hollow was fabricated or not. I ventured in, anyway. I had only been searching for about five minutes when I got a positive signal and dug down about two inches. It turned out to be an old speedometer from a vehicle - of which make or type of vehicle, I had no idea. I did not consider it very exciting, so put it

into the finds pouch, and eventually, took it home to gather dust with all the other finds that were cluttering up the cellar.

On the Saturday morning, a week later, I thought that I ought to go into the cellar, and clear out the various bits of metal 'junk' that I had accumulated over the few past weeks; military cap badges, lots of empty bullet cases (I found

lots of live rounds too, but took those to the Military Police, which they hated*). I also found bottle tops and coins - but they were so badly corroded that they could not be identified, and I put them in the bin. When I took hold of the 'speedo', I pondered which make of car it might be from - Mercedes Benz perhaps. Whatever. I thought, if I run a wire brush over

the front, it might reveal the name of the car company.

At the time it had seemed unusual that a car speedo' would be found so far off the beaten track. However, as anyone who has been involved in this hobby for any length of time will agree - there are always more questions than answers. As I ran the wire brush over the front of the dial, it revealed the words 'Alt - Thousands of Feet.' My heart missed a beat. I had found a crashed airplane's altimeter!

I made enquiries with people who worked in the local barracks, particularly one civilian who had

stayed on in Germany, as a National serviceman, after the end of the Second World War. He was really helpful (sadly, I cannot recall his name after all this time) and he said he would do some research for me. When I saw him again, he told me he had learned that there were two British planes that had crashed. Both had come down in the immediate vicinity of the barracks. Both crashes occurred shortly after the end of WWII.

One was on a low-flying mission - the crew survived. The second plane reportedly had some technical difficulties, and it

crashed into the woods, but from a higher altitude. Unfortunately, none of it's the aircrew survived. I was also told that the graves of the aircrew are in the military cemetery, just a few kilometres away from the barracks. I also tried to determine what type the planes were (Shackleton, Mosquito), but never found out, even via my researcher friend. I still do not know, to this day.

* When live rounds are found, it is normal routine for a military board of Inquiry to be held. After I had visited the Military Police for about the fifth time with live rounds (bullets) the police duty personnel

became exasperated. The duty 'bod' said, "*Sir, please do us a favour - hand them straight to the bomb disposal guys in future - they will dispose of them. If they were recent, i.e. clean and obviously not left over from the 1940's, it would be worth our while to carry out an investigation, but in this case, they are clearly .303 and of World War II vintage, and can be destroyed by 'Felix.' If we make it an official find, it creates 'sooo' much paperwork for us.*" Therefore, from then on, that is what I did.

Alan Hollis

One Pfennig Piece dated 1858



I started my metal detecting hobby back in 1983. I was in HM Forces in Germany, and picked up a copy of *The Searcher* in the local YMCA.

After getting very enthusiastic about the possibility of finding some 'long-forgotten treasure', I decided on purchasing the Fisher 1260-X from Joan Allen. I still have it, and it works fine. Along with the standard coil that comes with the machine, I bought the smaller coil, as a back-up.

Not knowing much about the local area, I wrote to the local 'Council' (German Admin Ampt), and purchased a copy of a map of the barracks area, which was dated 1878 (or thereabouts). Of course, there was nothing there in those days, no municipal buildings, or any significant structure (at least it wasn't shown on the map). It was just a large expanse of wooded area, south west of the nearest German town.

I opened up the old map and overlaid it with a large sheet of

thick, clear plastic. I drew onto it all the main roads and main tracks (for many were just that, horse and cart tracks), and then laid the plastic over the present day (1983) map showing the barracks and main roads in the area.

When making the comparison, it was apparent that there were five tracks that intersected each other in the woods, about 400 metres from the barracks perimeter fence. I took my trusty Fisher 1260-X out there and noted that these tracks all circled a large oak tree. At this

point, I wondered if it was a significant meeting point all those years ago. I switched my machine on, and began a search around the trunk. To my surprise, I found a One Pfennig piece dated from 1858, and it was in very good condition! What a buzz! My first real and significant find. I popped it into my finds pouch and walked on - about 6" taller and with a grin like a Cheshire cat!

Alan Hollis

Ding Dong Bell and Rubberlegs

Two hours into my traversing the newly mown paddock, I was feeling tired. It was a beautiful evening in September and at 7:30, I was contemplating heading back to the car. It was a good mile away over three fields and uphill all the way.

With ground mist gathering at the lower end of the field, the sun was still up in the west and was throwing long dappled shadows over the ground from the long row of sycamores behind me.

Going over in my mind what I had managed to find this time, I was only partially aware of my surroundings. With headphones still in place and the ground balance tone in my ears, practically deaf to the outside world. A black shadow detached itself from those on the ground and danced about until it joined my own. There in front of me was a large, shiny, black dog happily wetting itself at the sight of me. With tongue lolling and teeth glistening he was the picture of boisterous health but was friendly looking. I held out my spade hand and he bounded in, showering me with pee before retreating at speed. His back legs catching up to his front pair as he went.

Slipping my phones around my neck, I could hear some chap calling out *"here boy, come here"*. Looking about me I could not see anybody at first, then, off in the shadows of the trees I saw him. I never did remember his Christian name, something like Carl or Corey I think, but I found out later that this was Ding Dong Bell. *"What you be about?"* he called, as he lunged at the frolicking beast. Ready to reply that I had permission to search, he said: *"and what's your friend doin?"* I realised he had been addressing the dog.

On he came, clad in an old Barbour jacket that had passed many a shower without the benefit of oiling, a tweed deerstalker pulled over his ears and brown scuffed brogues on Lovatt green stockings to his knees and moleskin trousers. Unusually, he was wearing khaki gaiters, he looked the spit of Monty of World War II fame. Same wiry frame and weather-beaten sun tanned face. His moustache was nearly white and well clipped. *"Any luck?"* he called nearing me. *"Some"* I replied, *"nothing of value, lovely evening"* I commented. *"Aye bootiful, what you got then?"*

At that I cupped my hand and drew out the small collection of mouldering buttons, lead waste, coin, broken buckle, just odds and ends, and held it out to him. Up bounded 'Rubberlegs' and aerialised the lot! As his snout hit my hand, he barked his delight and dropped down snuffling at his ill-gotten gains. *"You devil, wot you done now?"* The man yelled. *"Ah it's alright"* I chuckled, *"friendly blighter isn't he?"* *"Aye"* says he *"he's not a year old yet and full o' beans. I bin'trainin'im, but him's got a mind on his own, gertcha!"* I had noticed the leather collar didn't have a tag attached but had a loop ready for one. We walked on up the field together, after I had retrieved what I could without actually detecting for it.

"That your car?" he asked, pointing to the horizon in the direction of the road with his hazel stick. *"I'm headed there"* I replied, *"I'm ready for a beer at the sheaf then off home."* *"Well"* says he *"that's where we're off to". "I'll give you both a lift if you can stop your dog leaking!"* I offered. *"Aye good on yer' ta"*. He said.

"Barney's my name" I said. *"My names Ruff! Ruff! Ruff!"* as he mouthed his name through the

noise of his dog sounding off and bounding into the nearby hedge... *"living in the cottage on Bell's farm,"* he finished. This was the neighbouring farm to the one we were presently leaving, and was the brother of the owner.

On reaching the fireside of the 'sheaf, with 'Rubberlegs' drowsily ensconced on the hearth rug and with brimming glasses in hand, we spent a while lost in our thoughts, and then made our separate ways home.

I saw Ding Dong and Rubberlegs once more that year. Rubberlegs gained a silver dogtag, one I had detected a year before. I had found out from the old chap the dog's name was Robbie, I presented them with it fully inscribed. 'ROBBIE' on the front, 'RUBBERLEGS' on the back.

Quite apt really!

Barney

Plate Brooch

This normally uninteresting 2nd/3rd C plate brooch was recovered some 15 years ago from a small rural Roman site in the Lincolnshire. An unremarkable remote little site which amongst the general scatter of occupation debris, produced a small number of 3/4th century bronze coins and this one brooch.

A careful examination shows that the normal cast glass central boss, having being lost, had been replaced with a piece of a glass from a contemporary container or other vessel. This new piece of glass has been roughly chipped and shaped to fit and more remarkably has remained in place after the subsequent loss of the brooch by its owner so it could be considered to be a good ancient bodge job.



It is also an example of ancient recycling and repair or 'making do' as we northern folk say and perhaps also a case of keeping the lady of the dwelling happy. We can only imagine the cost of such a brooch when new or the difficulty obtaining it by trade or purchase from a distant market or perhaps its intended use as a gift to display a bit of bling in those far off days.

Perhaps it was a sad loss for the owner and I have assumed a lady, but it may equally have belonged to a man. A very welcome find for my detector on what was a very cold windy and wet January day.

Volisios

Positive Co-operation

Kent is considered to be fairly well advanced in working in co-operation with archaeologists. However, West Kent has been the poor relation with respect to metal detecting liaison with archaeological groups. This is mainly due to the influence of a prominent anti-metal detecting archaeologist who was heavily involved with the STOP campaign to ban metal detecting in the late 1970's. As a result, there has been practically no co-operative work done for the last 30 years.

However, a new archaeological group was established approximately two years ago and since then co-operative efforts have increased significantly. A consequence of this is that West Kent Archaeological Society were recently approved, unanimously by the detecting club delegates, to affiliate to LEGISE:NCMD (SR), the first archaeological group to achieve this status.

Co-operation in West Kent started slowly and with a certain amount of caution from both sides. Two experienced detectorists, Geoff and Lesley Burr of the West Kent Detector Club, were called upon to assist with a metal detecting survey and as Geoff is a voluntary



assistant finds recording officer with the PAS, all the small metal finds were duly recorded. The survey work then expanded to include other interested members of the West Kent Detector Club, while geophysics, field walking

and trench digging also took place.

Word spread of the co-operative effort and another archaeological group, based in Sussex, also requested metal detecting assistance. The quantity of

important finds made by the detectorists on these sites have greatly added to the information gained and detecting support is usually now requested to cover every dig.

This has also worked both ways with West Kent Archaeological Society members helping to investigate a hoard find by members of the West Kent Detector Club and they are also assisting on an unusual site of Roman occupation in Surrey. More recently some members of South East London Metal Detecting Club have also joined in with metal detecting survey work and a third group, Romney Marsh Club, are currently working with members of West Kent Archaeological Society on a site of great interest in their area of Kent.

It is hoped that from this small start, the ball will continue to roll and every detecting club in Kent, Surrey and Sussex will welcome archaeological support on their sites and will be ready to offer their help to the archaeologists in return. We can only hope.

Clive Sinclair



English Heritage Nighthawking Seminar

At last November's Nighthawking Seminar the President of the NCMD John Wells gave an address.

Although the full text has been made available on the NCMD forum, there have been numerous requests for it to be included in its entirety in Digging Deep.

The seminar has produced much debate both on the forums and in the media and it is envisaged that certain archaeological bodies will continue to pursue their own agenda towards legislation, however the NCMD reaffirms the findings of the Nighthawk Report, which stated that no new laws were necessary.

Nighthawking: The NCMD Response

When the Nighthawking project was commissioned by English Heritage it appointed Oxford Archaeology to carry out a pre-report survey and produce a final report.

At that time the sponsors of the report did not feel the need to involve the NCMD or other metal detecting organisations or request input of any kind. In fact, apart from the initial brainstorming session to which the NCMD was invited, that then evolved into a steering committee, from which the NCMD was then excluded. This came as no surprise to us as the history of past relations with the Archaeological fraternity is littered with promises to involve the NCMD on issues that directly impact us only to discover that an invitation has been mislaid or overlooked. We have over the years, become accustomed to having metal detecting issues being spoken about and examined by those who have a particular agenda to follow or have a less than comprehensive understanding of the issues. There has always been a reluctance on the part of archaeology and the government to involve metal detecting organisations in opinion making who, because of their wealth of experience are usually best placed to give informed, constructive opinion and comment. This has been the case since the early 1980's when the NCMD was set up to oppose Surrey Archaeology's (STOP TAKING OUR PAST) or STOP campaign. The STOP Campaign is now widely recognised as the biggest own goal archaeology has managed to date and was directly responsible not only for the loss of 30 years of portable antiquity records, something which not only could have changed the way we look at this nation's historical

development, but also the rise of the nighthawk.

Since then the NCMD has been a reactionary organisation that has been forced to challenge and oppose any threats to its existence that have frequently arisen.

When in 1994 Lord Perth invited the NCMD to his home to discuss the proposed changes to the ancient laws of treasure trove and its effects on the hobby, assurances were given that the hobby was safe from any efforts to ban it. To this end it was agreed that the Treasure Act and the introduction of the Portable Antiquities Scheme would be supported and endorsed wherever practicably possible by the NCMD.

This appeared to signal a change from the confrontational and adversarial position for so long adopted by the archaeological fraternity towards the hobby. We took the view that if our members fundamental rights, enshrined in law, were protected, then we would not only work within the law but also within the spirit of the law.

However all is not sweetness and light and there are still those in the archaeological fraternity who would see the hobby restricted or even banned. So when news of a survey into nighthawking was announced and that we were not to be involved, then suspicions arose that this was yet again to be another means of demonising and vilifying us.

The difficulties of preparing the Nighthawking report have been well documented by the NCMD which despite such an inauspicious start, agreed to assign two experienced officers to the project. They attended all Steering Group and other meetings they were invited to as observers. This provided a

valuable insight into the tactics and at times tantrums of some of the representatives of the project's sponsoring bodies. The report's scope and terms of reference inevitably provided ammunition for conflicting viewpoints and in particular what the final recommendations would be and whether these would satisfy the agendas and expenditures of the sponsors.

Despite the best efforts of Oxford Archaeology, whom the NCMD believe to have been honest brokers in this enterprise, who were commissioned to carry out the pre-report survey and produce the final report, no radically new findings were uncovered to illustrate the archaeologically perceived widespread scale of the problem. Despite many attempts to modify the brief and broaden the scope of data collection, the continued failure to identify and obtain unequivocal factual data to support the sponsors' perceptions and satisfy their agendas against metal detecting in general, was very telling. The reliance on suspect, often anecdotal and hearsay data did little to raise expectations within the NCMD that a fair and balanced report would be forthcoming. This was highlighted by the inclusion of information and photographs from contributors, who had reported badger diggings and accompanying latrine photographs, complete with contents, as the activity of nighthawks. When the NCMD pointed this out it was removed from the final report whereas its inclusion would have further highlighted the poor quality of data and desperation employed to support these preconceptions with unequivocal evidence. There were other examples of misleading evidence where boot prints, a common feature in any public

access countryside area, were highlighted as being those of a nighthawk! The strong suspicion that some evidence was fabricated or an event precipitated remains.

There is not the time today to dwell on all the facts and figures of the report suffice to highlight an example of the final data such as that referring to incidents on Scheduled Ancient Monuments, the most expected nighthawk target and for which the Project initiators have a responsibility for, to have actually fallen from 1.3% of the total in 1995 to 0.41% in 2008.

Having given a brief summary of the NCMD perception of the report's preparation and execution I must return to the main focus of this seminar. Firstly to fully understand the issues we must consider the reasons for nighthawking: it would seem somewhat selective to simply look at combating a problem without looking at the causal factors as it is here that is the key to dealing with it. Nighthawking is not a new phenomenon, it being a frequent topic for discussion within NCMD meetings for many years. Nighthawking was a response to Archaeology's prejudiced and uberethical approach to metal detecting beginning around the time of the first STOP Campaign of the early 80's. The introduction of negative access policies at the instigation of some of the organisations and individuals here in this room today, began the slippery slope to the nighthawking free-for-all of the mid 80's to the late 90's. Access was denied in many areas to detectorists because of archaeological influence on private as well as institutional and local authority landowners, and in many instances these policies are still

active today. The propensity of archaeology to view metal detecting and the accompanying recovery of portable antiquities in black and white terms perpetuated the problem simply because there was not the will to see anything in-between. Instead the progressive and planned alienation of detectorists became greater, and regrettably there were some who saw the invitation to many thousands of acres of ploughed out Scheduled sites as a temptation too great to miss. The introduction of better detectors capable of operating in a switch-on-and-go mode made the rewards even greater for those willing to become criminals simply by using a metal detector as a tool for theft. The problem was self-perpetuating as archaeology sought to portray all detectorists as the issue and promote more and more negative access policies and thus by default, driving away responsible detectorists. Archaeologists were instrumental in persuading more landowners not to allow detecting on their land and thereby giving a green light to competition-free areas to nighthawks. The continued exploitation of the agri-environment schemes is a case in point where the archaeological intent is to make accessing such land more and more difficult, again giving more areas of competition-free detecting to the nighthawks.

Where are we now?

As mentioned before, we have the Portable Antiquities Scheme and a better motivated hobby which as well as dealing with nighthawks in its own way, has been able to overcome the negativity and prejudices of some of the archaeological establishment to show that it can and does contribute to the archaeological casual loss resource of this country. We now have modern enlightened archaeologists who recognise the benefits of metal detecting and even though in some cases such thoughts and actions can still stifle careers, the ethical grip is being lessened. This has worked to the advantage of all parties with record numbers of finds being reported to Finds Liaison Officers throughout the country. Good will and collaboration has broken out where once there was mistrust and suspicion. The value to the national record has increased the academic

knowledge base, in particular to that period of history known as the "Dark Ages." Over recent years our members have shown a willingness to engage with academia and share in the enjoyment of "OUR SHARED" history.

This in itself will not combat the problem of nighthawking which remains; that will require some genuine moves by the archaeological establishment to recognise that all is not black and white and be able to accept a little bit of grey. Regrettably the activities of some archaeological bodies and the continued promotion of nighthawking as a widespread problem suggests that the sponsorship of the Nighthawking Project for some was as a means to serve their own agendas against the hobby of metal detection and not that towards those criminals who simply use a detector as a tool of their trade just as a burglar would use a jemmy. Are we now seeing this nighthawking survey as a precursor to the second STOP Campaign, only this time by the back door? The NCMD and the wider hobby remain to be convinced that we have not been seduced by false promises and disingenuous comment. The many recent press articles on the topic are evidence that the old prejudices still hold sway with some.

Granted the report confirmed that there are sufficient legislative measures already on the statute books to deal with nighthawks, but do the enforcement bodies in the form of the police and courts realise that the true extent of the current problem has not yet been adequately defined? There is too much reliance on anecdotal hearsay and poor quality evidence. The proposed intent to issue landowners with leaflets on this topic and instruct the inexperienced and well meaning on how to spot badger latrines, sorry nighthawk diggings, as a means to defining the extent of what is currently perceived to be as widespread as some parties wish us to believe, is fraught with dangers. Inexperience and the need to get results will lead to all detectorists being viewed with suspicion and any "shoot first ask questions later" law enforcement approach will alienate many.

Put into perspective the mismatch

of resources to actual criminal acts does not bode well for the tackling of those nighthawks who remain active. Such resources would be better allocated to tackle criminal activities of greater concern to the general public and it must be questioned as to how long these scarce resources are to be tied up chasing ghosts and will-o-the-wisps on a darkened field. Intelligence may well be the key whereby in each area local detectorists will be able to point out the hot spots for activity and advise on when and where to look. This will not be the Scheduled sites of old as they are considered by many nighthawks to be worked out. Nor will it be the new archaeological excavations because according to the Nighthawk report's recommendations these will be searched as a part of a new protocol to involve local detectorists to remove vulnerable material.

Instead it will be on the many new sites made available on the Historic Environment Record published online and other databases such as that of the PAS. These will be the new green light areas provided by the new internet age.

Above all there is a need for all partners in this venture, be they sponsors, legislators, implementers, enforcers or observers to collaborate on a level playing field to deal with the remaining problem once and for all. The tools are in place and have been for a long time, but those who had the chance to make them work did not use them. Instead resources were given to getting rid of metal detecting all together not as a consequence of nighthawking, but as a means to satisfy the long held and still extant archaeological prejudice towards the hobby. This has not gone away and these agendas still operate alongside those to tackle the criminals. Recent evidence of the NCMD's commitment to the preservation of this nation's heritage was demonstrated in the recent discovery of the Staffordshire Hoard of Anglo Saxon treasure.

If that finder, who is an NCMD member from my own area in the Midlands Region were not an honest and law abiding man and was not encouraged to report his finds in the manner prescribed under the Act, and if he had not fully co-operated with his local

Archaeologist and Finds Liaison Officer, then we as a nation might have been culturally and historically the poorer for not giving him the means of declaring his finds using a system that benefits everybody. If he were driven to the point that his hobby became a criminal offence, banned under the law and if he was forced to pursue his pastime at night, illegally without any consideration save his own would we not be poorer both culturally and ethically.

Look at your Television screens where you see hundreds of people waiting in queues for up to three hours to see what ostensibly belongs to them. If the archaeology industry does not grasp that real people are fascinated by their past and genuinely want to see it displayed to its best advantage then unlike the Staffordshire Hoard it won't be repeated any time soon.

The NCMD has not, does not and will not condone or encourage going equipped to steal.

The NCMD encourages the full use of the law and supports the strongest actions against wrongdoers.

The fact that I have to say this in open forum is an indictment on the system that has for years put my Organisation on the back foot and imputes the integrity of my members and thousands of other law abiding detectorists who would no more consider going equipped to steal than they would otherwise break the law.

In Conclusion

There are those, and some are in the room today, that take the view that they would rather objects remain rotting in the ground rather than be found by honest detectorists. This dog-in-a-manger attitude is so out of date in a country that has come to expect more return for its heritage expenditure.

History, its makeup, its relevance today and its evidence tomorrow is not the sole domain of those with Archaeology degrees. It's our history, created by and rediscovered by ordinary people like my tax-paying members who cherish this nation's past and look to safeguarding its future.