

Digging deep

NCMD
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR METAL DETECTING

ISSUE 7

All the latest news from the National Council for Metal Detecting

On First Chairing the Treasure Valuation Committee

(2nd June 2011)

The Ministerial letter, from Ed Vaizey MP, Minister for Culture Communications and Creative Industries, had duly been received, and so here I was arriving at the decidedly grand Hartwell Room (in the directorial and administrative wing at the British Museum) to take the Chair for the first time at the Treasure Valuation Committee. I had already attended, by invitation, the last meeting of the retiring chairman, Professor Norman Palmer, and so had then met the members of the Committee as well as its staff. On that occasion I had been impressed at the large number of items – prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and mediaeval antiquities, and numerous small coin hoards – which came before the Committee for scrutiny. Amazing how many finds are made in just a couple of months!

On this occasion the agenda seemed a full one (although I was

told it was lighter than usual), with 36 separate finds for consideration and valuation. The aim is to give an accurate estimate of the market value of each find (or group of finds) at the time of discovery, for the Minister to use to determine the reward payable. This is normally shared between the finder and the land owner when 'treasure' is discovered and reported. It is important not to under-value the finds, since finders should be properly rewarded and there must be no possible financial benefit in failing to report finds.

My first impression is that the Committee members definitely know their stuff – not just about the antiquities and coins, but also about their values! Not only the experienced metal-detectorist on the Committee (Trevor Austin) and the professional dealer, but also the museum professionals and numismatists were able to debate

prices, quoting recent auction catalogues and dealers' lists. All major finds before us had prior written estimates from professional dealers (not on the Committee) – in cases of doubt more than one.

Since finders are themselves informed of the full range of estimates put before the Committee, it is natural that they should prefer the highest figure! So there can be disappointment when that highest figure is not chosen. But the Committee officials have records of recent sales. On this occasion a compromise was achieved in each case – sometimes after careful discussion – and to my relief consensus was reached with every item. I see that in the years ahead I am going to learn a good deal about English antiquities, and a good deal more about their monetary value!

Colin Renfrew



Colin Renfrew

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English Heritage Corporate plan 2011/2015



On the 23 May English Heritage (EH) launched its corporate plan at Apsley House in London, speakers included Simon Thurley, Baroness Andrews and MP John Penrose minister for Tourism and Heritage.

It is no secret that English Heritage, along with other Grant Aid funded bodies, suffered a 32% cut in real terms funding at the beginning of this year, this translates into a reduction in their resources of £51m and has not only resulted in a reduction in staff but also the restructuring of certain resources. English Heritage will be looking towards working more closely with local volunteer groups, clubs and other

organisations, who it has to be said already play a large part in looking after some of our finest buildings and monuments.

However a number of initiatives and new online facilities were announced, the National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP) which is designed to prioritise resources that are put into new designation, improving existing list descriptions and protecting heritage at risk. Portico, an online portal to some of our most historical sites; the first phase of which includes 12 detailed Portico entries as well as a brief historical overview for a further 220 lesser-known but nevertheless fascinating free sites in English Heritage's care, such as

Dunster Yarn Market in Somerset, Carn Euny an ancient ruined village in Cornwall, Castle Acre Castle in Norfolk and the Sandbach Crosses dating from the 9th century in Cheshire.

Also online is the National Heritage list for England, this is an online database which brings together information on all nationally designated heritage assets in one place for the first time. This database is searchable by name, place or map.

How does English Heritage plan effect metal detecting? Well EH will still be concentrating on heritage crime of which illegal metal detecting is *only* a small

part, however one can be forgiven for thinking that illegal metal detecting was the only heritage crime of concern in light of previous media attention.

I would also hope that any funding for projects such as 'The Nighthawk Survey', which was a project purely designed to gather information and had no realistic long-term objectives, will in future be targeted at minimising the loss of information through consultation and collaboration with the NCMD, something EH has never countenanced.

Trevor Austin

New Delegate for NCMD Individual and Associate Members

At the AGM on the 26th June 2011 John Maloney was confirmed as the representative for NCMD Individual and Associate Members.

John Writes:

I am an NHS Employee, living in Leicester who discovered detecting in early 2005 which has led to many exciting avenues ranging from filming with Time Team to running an East Midlands MD club. I am also the membership secretary of the Leicestershire Fieldworkers Group and a University of Leicester

Archaeology student The Devil finds work for volunteers and as such I was co-opted into representing the Individual and Associate members of the NCMD.

Any such members are welcome to raise any detecting related issues or queries with me for inclusion on the subsequent OGM agenda, my contact details are;

John Maloney

2 Margam Close, Heathley Park,
Leicester, LE3 9EU
jcmaloney@btinternet.com
Mob: 07766 885581



NCMD Central Register Clubs

For a number of years the subscription paid by the NCMD Clubs on the Central Register has been set at the nominal fee of £6.00 per member. This has been

at variance with the membership fee paid by both the Individual Members and Regional Members. The NCMD have been able to absorb this shortfall for a number

of years, however in times of rising costs, it is unfortunate that the NCMD can no longer justify this practice therefore from the 1st April 2012 the membership fee

for Central Register Club members will be the same as Individual and Associate Members on the Central Register.

NCMD Executive Committee

The Legal Aspect of Ownership

Following on from the earlier article 'Who's Find is it anyway' from Issue 2 of Digging Deep, and the subsequent talk by Professor Norman Palmer at the NCMD Executive Committee meeting outlined in Issue 4. Roger Mintey wrote this interesting account of some of the notable decisions made over the years which have contributed to our legal interpretation of the law on lost or ownerless goods. It should be remembered that any item of Treasure or earlier Treasure Trove was only acknowledged as such provided that its heirs or owners are unknown.

Parker v British Airways Board 1981:

On 15 November 1978 Alan Parker was waiting to catch a plane in the international executive lounge at terminal one, Heathrow Airport. The premises were owned by the British Airports Authority (BAA) and leased to British Airways who limited use of the lounge to holders of first class tickets or boarding passes or members of their Executive Club. Parker found a gold bracelet lying on the floor. He did not hand the bracelet to the airport police, probably because the time involved could have caused him to miss his flight. He handed the bracelet to a member of British Airways staff together with a note of his name and address asking for the bracelet to be returned to him if it was not claimed by its owner. Some time later Parker contacted British Airways (BA) and discovered that they had sold the bracelet for £850 and kept the proceeds. Parker sued BA in Brentford County Court and was awarded the £850, £50 in interest and his legal expenses. BA appealed but lost the appeal.

Waverley BC v Fletcher 1995:

On 28 August 1992 Ian Fletcher went detecting in Farnham Park,

owned by Waverley BC. He found a medieval gold brooch buried about nine inches below the surface. He reported his find and a coroner's inquest was held to determine whether it was Treasure Trove (this was in the pre Treasure Act era). The jury decided it was not Treasure Trove and the coroner returned the brooch to Fletcher.

Waverley BC then instigated proceedings against Fletcher claiming the brooch as its property. Judge Fawcus, in the High Court, found for Fletcher; in his view the landowner could only claim ownership of objects that were naturally in or buried beneath the land, not to lost or abandoned objects such as the brooch.

Waverley BC appealed and this time won the case. Fletcher finally took the case to the House of Lords, who again decided in favour of Waverley BC.

Judge Fawcus's initial decision raised a few eyebrows in legal circles. Previous similar cases had resulted in different outcomes.

Elwes v Brigg Gas Company 1886 was about a prehistoric boat buried about 5' down on Elwes's land. Gas company workmen found the boat but Elwes refused to allow them to take it away. The court held for Elwes the landowner even stating that the landowner owned everything that lay beneath



Hackney Hoard – Gold Double Eagle © PAS

the surface right down to the centre of the Earth. A similar judgement was reached in **South Staffordshire Water Company v Sharman 1896**, where Sharman was cleaning out a pool on SSWC's land. He found two gold rings embedded in mud at the bottom and handed them in to the police who eventually returned the rings to him. SSWC sued for the recovery of the rings. They won. The judge ruled that the landowner had a manifest intention to exercise control over the land and any objects which may be upon it or in it.

Precedent for the judgement in **Parker v BA** can be seen in **Bridges v Hawkesworth 1851**.

Bridges found a bundle of banknotes on the floor of the public area of Hawkesworth's shop. He handed the notes to Hawkesworth. The person who had lost the notes never came forward but Hawkesworth did not return the money to Bridges until later ordered to by the court. In **Hannah v Peel 1945** Peel owned a house before WW2 but never lived there. The empty house was requisitioned by the army. Lance Corporal Hannah was adjusting the curtains in the sickroom when he found a brooch on top of the window frame. On the advice of his commanding officer he handed it to the police. A year later the police returned the brooch to Peel, the house owner who sold it to a jeweller. With help from the army Hannah sued and won the case. Peel was forced to handover the sale proceeds.

It would now appear that finder's have better title than landowners over items, most likely recently lost and then found on the surface

of land in a public area. The landowner would have a better title than the finder over items most likely lost in antiquity later found buried in the land.

This would also likely apply to ancient object found 'eyes only' on the surface of a ploughed field, where they clearly had been buried previously. The landowner's title to objects buried in his land based on the judgement in **Waverley BC v Fletcher** has been incorporated into the Treasure Act.

The original owner, the person who lost the item would still, however, most likely have a better title than either finder or landowner. The most recent case which demonstrates this is **Moffat v Kazana 1969**. In the late 1950s an elderly man, Mr. Russell owned a house. He hid his life savings of £1987 (banknotes contained in a biscuit tin) in a disused chimney. £1987 was a considerable sum in those days. Russell sold his house to Kazana in 1961 but being old and forgetful had forgotten about the money in the chimney. In 1964 Kazana had the property renovated and workmen found the hidden money. Mr. Russell had recently died and Moffat had been appointed his executor. Moffat found out about the hidden money and sued Kazana for its return. He won the case. The court decided that Russell had never intended to 'sell' the biscuit tin and its contents to Kazana and thus it remained Russell's property and on his death passed to his executor.

A more recent case, this time determined by a coroner, reflects the same legal principle.

In 1939 Martin Sulzbacher a

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German Jew, fled to Britain with other family members to escape from the Nazis. He brought over his life savings of 80 gold double eagle dollar coins and stored them in a bank safety deposit box. After war broke out his family were interned. Martin was sent to Canada on the Arandora Star and was one of the few people to survive when it was torpedoed. Meanwhile his brother, fearing a German invasion, buried the coins in two jars in the back garden of their house in Stoke Newington. In 1940 Martin's brother and four other family members (everyone who knew about the burial of the coins) were killed in an air raid.

When Martin Sulzbacher returned to London he found the deposit boxes empty. Searches of the garden in Stoke Newington proved fruitless. But in 1952 a landscape gardener dug up one of the jars and a coroner ruled that the coins should be returned to Mr. Sulzbacher. The second jar did not

turn up until 2007 when it was given to the Museum of London by an unnamed person. After a local historian came forward with an article from *The Times* reporting the 1952 find the coins were identified as belonging to the Sulzbacher family. Martin Sulzbacher had died in 1981 so the second batch of coins were returned to his 81 year old son Max, who plans to donate one coin to Hackney Museum. Roger Bland commented (Times 19 April 2011) *"The case was one of the most compelling he had ever encountered with an incredible human element to the story that is absent from many archaeological finds."* The coins were eventually handed over to Mr Sulzbacher, 81, a retired chartered accountant who lives in Jerusalem. He said that he would be using the proceeds of the sale to give the finders of the coins a reward and to restore his family's gravestones at Enfield Cemetery, north London.



Hoard of Civil War silverware
Nether Stowey © PAS

Extract from *The Times* 16/5/2009

A coroner is appealing for descendants of the owners of a hoard of Civil War silverware to come forward and stake their claim. The collection, which includes a goblet, four spoons and salt and pepper holder(sic), were found by Arthur Haig 70, with a metal detector as he searched a friend's garden for her lost bracelet. Michael Rose adjourned

an inquest in Taunton, West Somerset for six months to allow time for a claim to be made. The items bear the letters CGA, which may stand for the initials of Angel Grey then owner of Stowey Court, near by, and his wife Catherine. The Coroner later called a halt to the search as no claimants had come forward. The items will be purchased by Somerset County Museum.

Roger Mintey

The Robin & Karolyn Hatt Competition 2010



Looking back over the many historic and diverse finds made in 2010, I am very excited over this year's competition.

Last year we had many wonderful entries, making it hard to choose a winner, and I am sure this year will be the same.

With many finds reported in the media, the NCMD has had an influx of new members, who we hope will take part in a

competition which showcases the fact that our hobby enriches this country's historical knowledge, with museums and scholars benefiting.

Two years ago, the NCMD realised it was difficult for some to take part, so provided a facility on our friendly Forum for both entering finds, and voting on them.

This is now in its third year, and I am hoping many more of you will

take advantage of this by posting details and photographs of the finds you feel worthy of entry.

This is open to 'Individual' members and clubs on the central register, so please look for details from late August 2010. The final judging round is held in November.

All finds must have been found between January 1st and 31st December 2010 inclusive.

We appreciate some things may be either in museums or going through the treasure process, so good clear photographs are acceptable.

Please feel free to contact me with any queries on either Tel. 01253 312176 or alex182sa@blueyonder.co.uk

Hilary Fagen
Competition Manager

Competition Rules

1. The National finals of the competition will take place at the November Meeting of the Executive Committee.
2. The items entered should have been recovered by their finders during the previous calendar year (1st January to 31st December).
3. Entries will be accepted from each NCMD Region, from the Central Register and Individual Members.
 - a) The method of selection of the entries is at the discretion of the Region.

- b) Each entry should be accompanied by a formal identification and brief notes on the finder and the circumstances of the find. (no find spot details to be revealed)
- c) In the event of Treasure finds where the material is being held by the coroner or his agent, and is not therefore available, entries may be submitted in the form of photographs and appropriate literature.
4. The owners of all submitted entries may attend the

- competitions, but must be aware that no expenses can be claimed from NCMD funds.
5. The owners of entries, whether brought by themselves or by an agent should be made aware that no insurance cover is provided by NCMD.
6. The winners will be selected by secret ballot, with the only eligible voters being officers and delegates present in the room. No proxy votes and no absentee or postal votes are to be allowed.
- 7 a) Each winner will be presented with a trophy

which is returnable to the NCMD at the end of 12 months, or in time for the final judging, whichever comes sooner. During that time they may have their name and year of success engraved in the appropriate place on the trophy, and submit a claim for the engraving costs to the NCMD.

b) Upon the return of the trophy, the holder will be awarded with a permanent keepsake in the form of an engraved plaque.

Agreements or Disagreements

Having seen numerous cases where there has been disagreement between finders, landowners, clubs and sometimes tenant farmers, I thought it would be a good idea to look at search agreements and some of the problems that can arise between interested parties when items of value are discovered.

Most detector users that go searching on their own (and I include myself) rarely enter into a formal written agreement between themselves and the landowner, unless it is a condition of the landowner or tenant farmer. But what is a formal agreement or contract? To begin let us define the term **Verbal Contract and Written Contract**. A **Verbal Contract** is a contract expressed in words either written or spoken. By contrast an **Oral Contract** is a contract in which the terms have been agreed by spoken communication. In law the usual **Oral Contract** between two parties carries as much weight as a written or spoken one.

So why enter into a written contract?

There are certainly circumstances where a written search agreement would not only simplify the disbursement of any reward or monies which may arise from the discovery of detector finds, but would also serve to protect the interests of third parties should a disagreement arise. An example would be where one person detecting alone makes the discovery of a small number of

coins and then invites a second party to assist him in searching for more, subsequently a significant number, or hoard, is then located and recovered by them both. At this point there may well be disagreement as to how any reward is disbursed; Common sense would suggest that both finders are entitled to an equal share of any reward, excluding of course the small number found by the detectorist while he was searching alone. In this scenario it would clearly have been of benefit to have had some sort of agreement, possibly in writing.

Clubs too may wish to draw up a search agreement for use on club outings, where there may be a large number of people searching the same area. The discovery of a large number of coins in this situation may well result in disagreement between long standing club members as to who found what and the disbursement of any reward. But there is no 'one size fits all' here, where some clubs may wish to share any reward between all the club members, others may limit it to the person or persons who made the discovery, but whatever the policy of the club, having it in writing would negate any future disagreements.

There may also be the situation whereby the finder/s wishes to reward the tenant farmer, at present where an item of treasure is found, and a reward paid, there is no mechanism for rewarding



The finders of the East Riding weapons Cache which was not Treasure (pre 2002) had an oral agreement and were still good friends after a long conservation and acquisition.

anyone other than the finder/s and landowner. A situation some clubs or individuals may wish to correct through a written agreement.

In some instances the landowner may wish to forego any reward, this may either be waived or he may wish his share to go to the finders in such cases the landowner would have to write to

So far we have concentrated on finds of treasure, but an agreement, whether written or oral is a good idea when you consider that non-treasure finds belong to the landowner. Most landowners are quite happy for non-treasure finds to remain in the possession of the finder and as we know many take only a casual interest



East Riding Weapons Cache excavation



These two young detector users found this hoard of Sestertii at the Robin Hood Rally



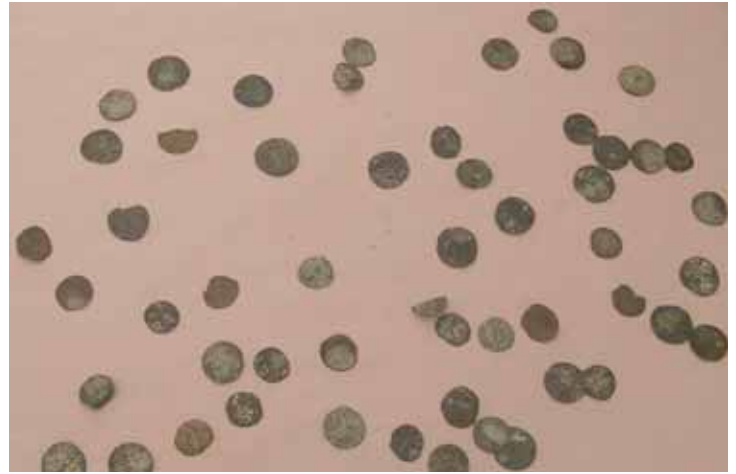
the treasure registrar stating his wishes, a prior agreement would negate this.

The detector user or club must also consider a search agreement when asked to participate in any excavation or site investigation, although unless it is an amateur excavation, it is usual for the excavation director to ask participants to sign a waiver to any reward or their interest in any finds they may discover.

unless the finds have any financial worth. However I well remember finding a rather nice denarius on a field that had previously only produced plated or contemporary forgeries, on showing the farmer he said "how nice, I'll have that one" well I was rather gutted to say the least, but in the absence of any agreement to the contrary he was entitled to take it, clearly a lesson to be learned there.



Some of the coins from Creslow.



The Creslow Hoard found on a rally had numerous finders and who found what was difficult to ascertain.

A good friend of mine found a rather nice Bronze Age flat axe; he was over the moon as he had never found one before, again the landowner exercised his right to keep the axe and decided that he was going to donate it to the local museum. While the finder agreed, he would have liked the

opportunity to have a copy made beforehand.

So agreements can take many forms, whether it agrees how to share any reward paid from the finding of treasure, who will be eligible for any reward and in what proportions, to who will own non-

treasure finds or disclaimed items of treasure and it really depends on the club or individuals situation and indeed if the landowner actually wants to enter into an agreement, which some are reluctant to do. But it is well worth considering, even if you only discuss the matter with the landowner and

agree an oral contract.

For those who wish, there is a model search agreement available on the NCMD website, members can adapt or modify the wording to suit their own particular circumstances.

Trevor Austin

Detecting trip to the Isle of Wight



For a number of years I have run a metal detecting trip to the Isle of Wight by coach. It has proved to be very popular with my club for the last three years. So I have

decided to open it up to other detectorists. My next trip will be on 3-7th October 2011 followed by a further trip early next year on the 20-24th February 2012.



It is a 5 day trip, with three days detecting and the remaining two days free to do as you wish, there is lots to visit on the island including Brading Roman Villa which houses some of the best mosaics in the country, Newport Roman Villa is also worth visiting, with its under floor heating and bath house, or you can have a leisurely day at the Needles Park.

The cost for the trip is £160.00 per person, per trip, and the price is inclusive of coach, ferry, hotel and meals. If you are interested and would like to go, or have any enquiries, please contact Frank on Tel: 01924 830138 and I will be happy to answer any questions.

Anybody interested must be NCMD paid up members. Pick up

points for the coach will be: Ferrybridge services, A1, M62 Junction. Woodlands Doncaster, Hoyland Barnsley, Barlborough Junction 30 M1, Trowel services south bound M1 and Leicester Forest East Services south bound M1.

There will be a further charge of £6.00 per person, per day for detecting. Deposit of £50.00 to be paid at time of booking, and balance to be paid on the coach. The deadline for bookings will be Sunday 31 July 2011 for the October trip and Wednesday 30th November 2011 for the February trip. Places are limited so be quick!

Frank Tanner

Review of the Treasure Act Code of Practice – Part 4

When I began writing this series of articles I had expected that at this point in the proceedings we would be well into the consultation, however that is not the case and the enforced delay in the review, brought about by the decision whether or not to implement a recommendation made under the previous Government to adopt among other proposals a single Coroner for Treasure, has meant that at present there is no definite timescale for either the review or the public consultation.

While the single Coroner for Treasure is universally accepted as being the best way forward in speeding up the treasure process (see flow chart), due to financial constraints the present government decided not to go ahead with the Coroners and Justice Bill in which the Coroner for Treasure was a part, however

the minister did agree in May last year to look again at the Coroner for Treasure. So what is holding up the review? Well it would appear that although there is general agreement from both the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the DCMS on the need for a single coroner, an agreement cannot be reached on the administration and funding.

Firstly, who will fund the new single coroner? Funding cuts have meant that the MOJ are not in a position to provide extra funding and the DCMS are also reluctant to do so although it has not been ruled out. The NCMD agrees with Dr Roger Bland that there will be a net saving in the cost of administration to the coronial system, this saving however would not be directly apportioned and would require additional funding to any single coroner for treasure which would be

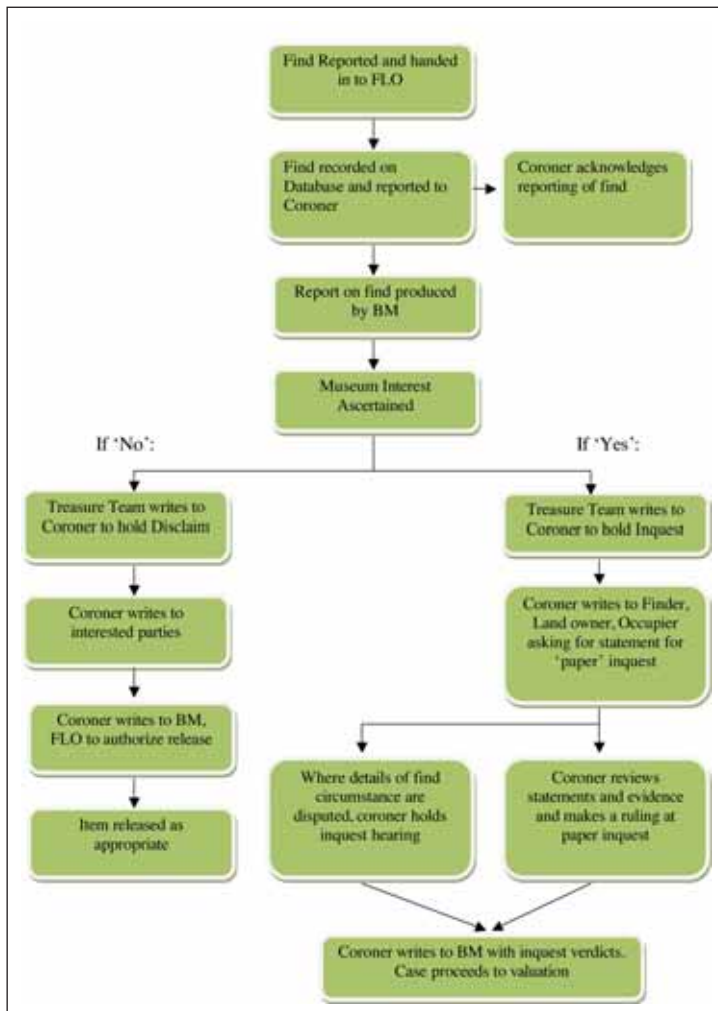
administered by the British Museum Treasure Team, and there lies the second problem.

Does a perceived conflict of interest arise from the single coroner being administered by the Treasure Team?

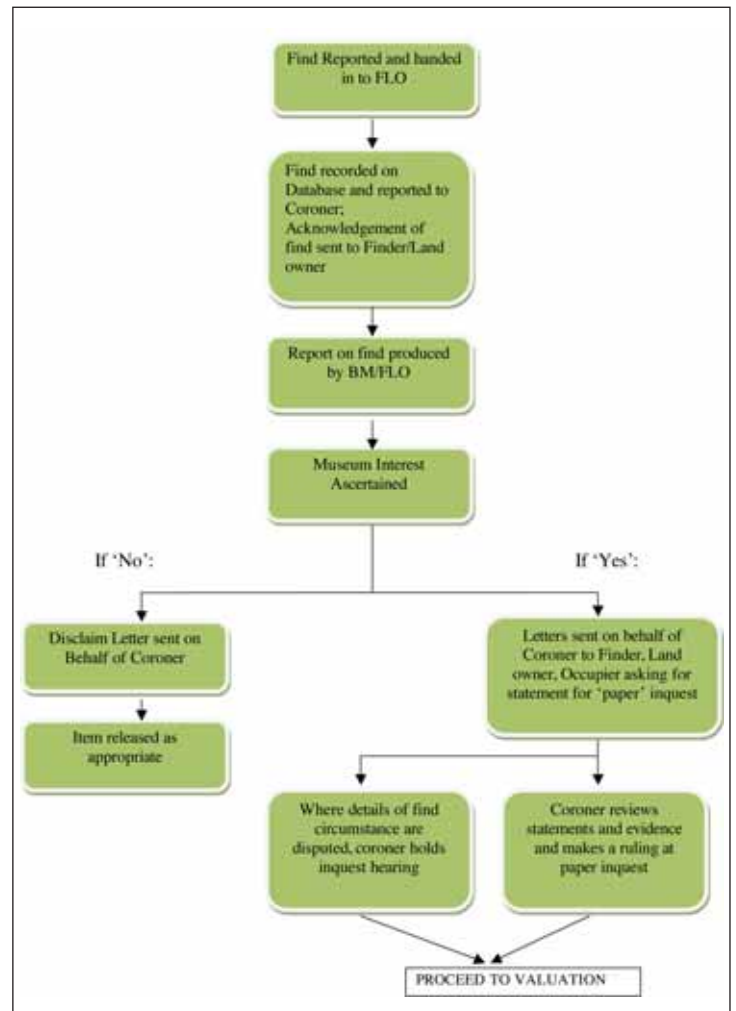
The treasury solicitors obviously think that it does, or are being cautious in giving their approval for such a scheme, and have advised the DCMS that a consultation be undertaken with coroners to assess this issue. The DCMS have now received a response from the Coroners Society, however we must await evaluation by DCMS. The NCMD, among others, have advised the DCMS that it does not perceive any conflict of interest, Professor Norman Palmer also stated "The

British Museum already provides substantial support for the work of coroners in their exercise of the treasure jurisdiction, not least by supplying much of the evidence as to the history and composition of finds in terms that help the coroner to identify whether they are treasure. The British Museum also acts as the secretariat and seat of the Treasure Valuation Committee. There has been no realistic suggestion that the involvement of the Museum in this manner vitiates the credibility or propriety of those bodies. I would respectfully suggest that the new working pattern proposed by Dr Bland can also, if prudently managed, be effectively distanced from the spectre of actual or perceived bias. By encouraging efficiency and reducing cost, this proposal should also enhance the public appreciation of the treasure

How the current system should operate



Treasure team assisting Coroner for Treasure



system and the benefits that it brings to museums, archaeology and the public at large.” At the moment it is difficult to see how a way forward can be found, but it would be a shame not to proceed with the single coroner for treasure after so much was promised from the system.

So what are the benefits of a single coroner for treasure. I would suggest the main benefit to finders is obviously the speed of handling cases, while other less obvious advantages such as clear and uniform verdicts will speed up the valuation process.

See the flow chart, produced by the Treasure Team, of how the proposed coroner for treasure system would work outlining some of the advantages. It must be remembered however that under present legislation it is the duty of the finder to report any potential treasure to the coroner.

Treasure Team Offer of Services:

It has been suggested that the British Museum Treasure Team could assist the Coroner with administrative services. This would entail:

- Sending official notification to Finders that their item(s) has been reported under the Treasure Act.
- Preparing a case file for the coroner to Review prior to inquest. In addition to the material already contained in BM Treasure Case files, it would also be necessary to collect official statements from the interested parties (Finder/Landowner/Occupier).
- Working with coroner to ensure all relevant information has been assembled before inquest is conducted.
- Notifying Finder/Landowner/ Occupier/Museum of Inquest result.

NB. Specific practicalities will need to be discussed in more detail.

Processes that can be streamlined:

FLOs and the Treasure Team already do considerable research into details of landowners in Treasure cases. It could be a function of our role that when sending acknowledgement of the find, the Treasure Team instructs the Finder to complete any missing details from the Treasure Receipt, with the stipulation that

the case will not advance until he/she has done so.

Currently we insist on a short report being produced by or verified by a BM curator for every reported Treasure find. This can cause considerable delay in a find reaching the inquest stage. Working with the coroner, it is likely that reports on finds that are to be disclaimed or 'Not Treasure' could be limited to short descriptions by FLOs and checking by Finds' Advisors.

The Treasure Team already sends letters to Coroner/FLO/ Finder informing them of a case being 'Disclaimed' by the Crown. By working with the coroner, this letter could in theory be combined with a notification to the Finder/Landowner of the Disclaim with a request to the Landowner to submit objections of a return of the find to finder. The net effect on the workload of the Treasure Team should be minimal.

The interested parties can be informed of the result of the inquest by the Treasure Team. This would require an additional series of letters to be sent, however, it would be beneficial in providing an early clarification to those parties on the valuation stage of

the process, and hopefully would result in fewer inquiries (to FLOs and Treasure Team) at this stage.

Large Scale Benefits:

The administrative staff in the BM Treasure Team spend a significant amount of time communicating with the administrators of coroners (or the coroners themselves) throughout the country. There is a great deal of time misspent in simply trying to pass on pertinent information to the coroner in order that he or she may hold an inquest confidently and in good time.

Further, experience has shown that the current standard with which inquests are conducted and the information gathered therein is passed to the BM Treasure team (in its role as the TVC Secretariat) are not uniformly efficient. Details of a case which have a bearing on the ultimate allocation of rewards by the Secretary of State, and which could be clarified or resolved by the coroner, are not always done so.

Both of these inefficiencies could be corrected if the BM Treasure Team were given a more direct role in providing administrative support to the Coroner.

Trevor Austin

Hoard of Viking silver coins unearthed in Furness

A metal detectorist uncovered a Viking hoard of silver coins and artefacts in the Cumbrian countryside.

The collection, which has been provisionally valued at tens of thousands of pounds, was found in an undisclosed site in Furness.

It is being examined by experts at the British Museum and is expected to be declared as treasure.

Experts at Barrow's Dock Museum hope to acquire the hoard and said it was an exciting find for the area.

It consists of 92 silver coins and artefacts including ingots and a silver bracelet. Among the coins is a pair of Arabic dirhams.

Experts believe it is significant evidence of material culture of the 9th and 10th Century Vikings in the peninsula.

'Exciting find'

Dock Museum curator Sabine Skae said: "This is a very exciting find for Furness.

"It has national significance because hoards from this period are rare and also nothing has been found in such quantity in this area before.

"While it is difficult, at this stage, to place a precise value on the find, it is likely to be worth tens of thousands of pounds."

The British Museum academics will give their verdict on the coins to the coroner who is expected to confirm it as treasure.

If it is, it will be valued by an independent committee and the Dock Museum hopes to acquire it.

British Museum Viking expert Dr Gareth Williams said: "On the

basis of the information and photographs that I have seen so far, this is a fascinating hoard.

"By the mid-950s, most of England had become integrated into a single

kingdom, with a regulated coinage, but this part of the north-west was not integrated into the English kingdom until much later, and the hoard reflects that."



The Crosby Garrett Helmet

and why it cannot be treasure

The discovery and subsequent sale of the Crosby Garrett helmet certainly caused a stir in both metal detecting and archaeological circles, not merely for its rarity and beauty, but also for the fact that it ended up being purchased at auction by a private anonymous buyer.

Without exception, everyone I have spoken to believes that the helmet, being of national importance, belongs in a museum and not hidden away in some private collection and both the internet forums and emails have been full of comments on the subject. There have also been questions asked from both the metal detecting fraternity and bloggers as to why the minister did not make the helmet treasure on the grounds of it being of *“outstanding national importance”*.

This is not the first time that I have heard such comments; the unique Coenwulf gold penny produced a similar reaction when it was found. So let us have a look at what has caused many people to misunderstand the way the Treasure Act and Code of Practice work.

Section 2 of the Treasure Act is the offending section here and has obviously been misinterpreted or not fully understood, so to set the record straight I will explain what the section means and how this section works in practice.

If you look at Section 2 below, you will see that section 2-(1) seems to indicate that the Secretary of State has the power to designate any object or class of object as Treasure. However a closer scrutiny of the wording will reveal that the important words in section 2-(1) are *“by order”*. It should also be read in conjunction with the rest of Section 2 which goes on to explain, albeit in a rather convoluted way how the secretary of State would implement such an order. So I will try to explain the section in simpler terms.

There are two main reasons why both the helmet and the Coenwulf penny could not have been

designated as treasure. Firstly; it is a statutory requirement that the Treasure Act and Code of Practice are reviewed *“when appropriate”* five years after the publication of the revised Code of Practice and it is during this review (which is conducted with interested parties) that any changes to the Act or Code of Practice are proposed; as is the case with the present review which is currently under way. At the end of the review the Secretary of State has the power to lay before parliament a draft outlining any changes to either the act or the code of practice which may be made by a *“Designation Order”*. This must be approved by resolution in both Houses. We have an example of this happening with the *“Designation Order 2002”* whereby prehistoric base metal assemblages were added to the definition of Treasure. But there is no fast track method or magic wand that the Secretary of State can use to circumvent this procedure and furthermore there is no statutory instrument for designating individual objects or coins as Treasure.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, any order to designate any class of objects that would include the Crosby Garrett helmet or the Coenwulf gold penny could not be retrospective and any order would only include subsequent finds of this type made after the order was implemented.

The upshot of all this is that the helmet was not Treasure and could not have been made Treasure retrospectively once it had been discovered, no matter how valuable or important to the nation.

There is however one further point I would like to make; the current review of the Treasure Act and Code of Practice has a proposal that all Roman base metal assemblages, of which there has only been half a dozen discovered since the introduction of the Act, be designated as Treasure, a subject I recently covered in the National Council for Metal Detecting newsletter *Digging Deep*,



© Christies

and if the review had taken place when it was originally intended, with the proposal accepted, then by virtue of the fact that the helmet was reportedly discovered with another bronze object, it would have been Treasure.

2.-(1) The Secretary of State may by order, for the purposes of section 1 (1) (b), designate any class of object which he considers to be of outstanding historical, archaeological or cultural importance.

(2) The Secretary of State may by order, for the purposes of section 1(2), designate any class of object which (apart from the order) would be treasure.

(3) An order under this section shall be made by statutory instrument.

(4) No order is to be made under this section unless a draft of the order has been laid before Parliament and approved by a resolution of each House.

Trevor Austin

A Wonderful Response

Sam Moorhead (National Finds Adviser for Iron Age and Roman coins)

It is five years since I started as National Finds Adviser for Iron Age and Roman coins with the Portable Antiquities Scheme. It has been a very busy, but extremely enjoyable and rewarding, time that has seen me venture

into almost every part of the country. When I started, there were just over 30,000 Roman coins on the PAS Database (www.finds.org.uk). It became clear very early on that the general policy was to record the more



Silver Roman Republican denarius, struck around 205 BC at Rome. The oldest Roman coin on the PAS database – BERK-65D307 © Portable Antiquities Scheme



Gold aureus of Claudius (AD 41-54), struck at Rome, found in Staffordshire – WMID-626B77 © Portable Antiquities Scheme



Copper alloy sesterterius of Hadrian (AD 117-38), struck at Rome, found in Surrey – SUR-A600A3 © Portable Antiquities Scheme



Copper alloy of Domitian (AD 81-96), struck at Rome, found in Suffolk – SF-5A1BE1 © Portable Antiquities Scheme



'Lovely Grot' from Wiltshire. 90% of these 'radiates' and nummi can be identified for use in future research. A large proportion of this batch is from the House of Valentinian (AD 364-78), many from the mint of Arles. © Portable Antiquities Scheme

desirable earlier coins – Republican denarii, Imperial denarii, sestertii, dupondii and asses – and the better preserved 'radiates' and nummi. From a purely numismatic point of view, this practice was understandable; from an archaeological point of view it was untenable. Roman coins make up the largest group of Roman artefacts found by detectorists, and also comprise the largest group of artefact recorded on the PAS Database. Therefore, they provide the most immediate evidence for assessing the size and dating of particular sites. Four decades ago, Richard Reece and John Casey developed a system for using coin periods to provide profiles for individual sites. Such analysis shows enormous variation in sites across Britain.

However, to carry out such analysis, we must have access to all coins found. It is no good just analysing desirable and well-preserved coins. A case in point is the latest bronze nummi from the Roman period, the small pieces of the House of Theodosius (AD 388-402). On several occasions I have found these coins missing from groups of well-preserved coins, only to find a number in the 'grot' pot which was at first not presented for research. These coins are crucial evidence for determining when sites ceased to function in the broader monetary economy of Britain – there is no

doubt that many sites had no such coins, but the PAS had identified many sites which do in fact have such coins.

With such considerations on my mind, I led a major campaign to record all grots from the Autumn of 2007. This involved various written pieces on the PAS website and in the detector press, but most importantly it entailed direct communication with detectorists, either via the extensive Finds Liaison Officer network or through lectures to Detector Clubs. FLOs have secured a large number of assemblages from detectorists, some groups containing almost a 1000 coins. I have given around over 150 talks in the last few years, of which 80 have been to



Roman coin finds recorded on the PAS Database until the end of 2010. Each dot can represent one coin to over 1000. © Dr. Philippa Walton

Detector Clubs; almost every Club visit has resulted in another group of coins being made available for cataloguing. I have been greatly heartened by the responses I have had at most Clubs and I extend my deepest gratitude to all the Club chairmen and members who have made me so welcome and who have provided coins for recording on the PAS database – this is especially gratifying in the cases where initial resistance to recording has given way to the open-hearted delivery of objects for research. Giving lectures to clubs is a truly enjoyable experience and I relish the chance to show detectorists how their data is changing our understanding of Roman Britain.

In 2006, I entered a bid for Arts and Humanities Research Council money to fund a PhD student to carry out research on the coins recorded by the PAS. As a result, Philippa Walton (a former FLO) spent three years at the British Museum and Institute of Archaeology (UCL) comparing the PAS data with existing data. She has completed her research and, as Dr Walton, is now acting as my deputy for a year due to generous funding from an American benefactor. There is not the space in this article to cover her findings, but suffice it to say that the leading academics in the field acknowledge that her work has revolutionised our understanding of Roman Britain. Because of her work we can safely say that a significant number of Roman Republican denarii arrived before AD 43, that the commonly found Claudian copies of asses were used by civilians as well as the military, and that at least 30% of Severan period denarii are copies. She has also identified a North-South divide in coin-use which chimes chillingly with similar developments today – she will be writing about this soon in the detector press. Furthermore, she identifies a gradual shrinkage in coin-use in the 4th century, from

its peak in the period 330-48 down to the cessation of major coin importation in AD 402. However, her analysis of clipped siliqua has helped to ascertain that there was a monetary economy in Britain after AD 410, possibly lasting until AD 430. This was all determined from a dataset of 58,000 coins, her cut-off point being in 2008.

Since 2008, we have doubled this total with about 116,000 Roman coins on the database. This is a staggering achievement and finders, FLOs and volunteer recorders involved with the scheme are to be congratulated. The PAS has been in existence since 1997; to double the number of Roman coins in the last three years is quite simply remarkable. Furthermore, Dan Pett has incorporated all of the Welsh data for 52,000 Roman coins compiled by Peter Guest and Nick Wells. So, at almost 160,000 coins, the PAS database has now overtaken the summary listing of Richard Reece in 1991 which covered 150,000 coins (50,000 of which came from Richborough). Furthermore, initial analysis of the coin data suggests that detectorists have located around 900 new Roman sites across the country – a staggering total!

This new material is giving us a great deal of information about Roman coins. Many new varieties have been identified and we are very grateful to all of those detectorists who have donated coins to the British Museum. Some coins might be in very poor condition, but they are often the only specimen known. Furthermore, I am really touched by the donations of Carausian coins, one detectorist donating four wonderful examples of coins not in the National Collection. I always say at Detector Clubs that I do not mind who owns material, as long as we can record it. When it comes to coins struck in Britain, however, I'm always keen to

acquire material which is unpublished or not in a public museum. This includes Iron Age coins, pieces struck by Carausius and Allectus and coins from the London mint. It is our duty to make sure that we maintain and develop as full a collection of such coins in the British Museum for future generations to enjoy and research. It has been a pleasure to host detectorists at the museum, some who come in with new material, others who come to see their donations sitting amongst their new brothers and sisters, and others who come as club groups to see coins from their regions and samples from the major hoards held in the Museum (such as the Hoxne and Elveden hoards).

Life will continue to be very busy. We now have a good number of large assemblages arriving at the British Museum and Philippa and I, with assistance with enthusiastic university interns, are trying to get the coins identified and on to the database. Now is certainly the time to get major groups of coins to us as I am not the only person working on the material. Quite simply, it is the duty of my generation to record as much of the material found by detectorists over the last forty years. I am only too aware that a significant number of detectorists are now very elderly and that some have died without adequate records of their collections being made. I always say that we need to look forward a hundred years and to consider that any object not recorded now will not be available for our grandchildren to study.

I do not want to sound a negative note, but there are still issues that we need to resolve. Nearly all of the clubs and detectorists that I meet are united by a common resolve to seek and record our national heritage; this desire has certainly grown stronger in the last ten years or so and I am sure it will bear amazing fruits in coming decades. However, there are still some clubs

who are not keen to record with the PAS and who restrict access to FLOs. I have visited some clubs where this has not been the wish of many of the membership; in several cases this has led to the formation of new clubs which record with the PAS. I hope that it will not be that long before all clubs are recording with us. My other main worry is the issue of rallies and 'detector tourism'. Both result in an enormous number of finds being made. In some circumstances, PAS is able to record the material and I thank the rally organisers and tourist organisers who enable us to record finds effectively. However, the PAS is not always made aware of events and due to our very thin coverage of the country we quite simply do not have the resources to attend all the events that we might want to. From a heritage point of view, then, such events are a real concern and we need to find a way to ensure that the material found on such events is recorded alongside everyday finds. I do believe that the NCMD and other metal-detecting groups, PAS and other organisations need to work together to ensure that such large events are not allowed to denude us all of major parts of our heritage.

With such organisations as the NCMD, the future of detecting seems secure. There is no doubt that the battles of the 1980s are now a thing of the past and that there is an increasingly good rapport between detectorists and the archaeological fraternity. This is shown by how many detectorists work on archaeological sites and how many of them have taken formal courses in archaeology. We need to build on this foundation and I see enormous scope for detectorists at regional levels to help with a new tranche of local historical and archaeological research – many are already doing so. It is an exciting prospect and I look forward to working with many of you in the future.

MEETING DATES

The Next NCMD Executive meeting will be on the 20th November 2011

The Next Treasure Valuation Meeting will be on the 20th July 2011

The Next Portable Antiquities Advisory Board meeting 14th September 2011

GET IN TOUCH

For membership enquiries contact the Membership Secretary: **John Rigby**
6 Arkholme Avenue
Blackpool, Lancs, FY1 6QJ
Tel: 01253 692313
jjrigby@sky.com

For all other enquiries please contact the General Secretary: **Trevor Austin**
51 Hilltop Gardens
Denaby, Doncaster, DN12 4SA
Tel: 01709 868521
trevor.austin@ncmd.co.uk

Detecting in January

The Oxford Blues Metal Detecting Club

David Conner

It's not everyone's idea of a good time, is it? Let's face it, when the alarm clock goes off early on a Sunday morning, and the windswept drizzle is drumming on your bedroom window, straight away you've been given two good reasons to stay right where you are; all tucked up and cosy under your quilt with the potential for another couple of hours in the land of nod! But us detectorists are made of sterner stuff, and laugh in the face of alarm clocks we thought we had given the day off. And as for wet windows being the first thing we see when we draw our bedroom curtains? We're not going to be denied our day out detecting, are we? After all, that's what we bought all that wet weather clothing for, isn't it!

And this is the scenario for this particular story - typical mid-January damp, cold conditions, sandwiches and flasks made up, cars packed with all the necessary gear required to brave the elements for several hours... sounds like the Sunday morning ritual for detectorists everywhere I suppose. In this instance, it's the ritual of the Oxford Blues MDC members, on their way to a farm they gained permission on less than two years ago.

The site in question sits near the bottom of a hill, with most of its land running up the hill to the back of the village, (which happens to have started out as a Saxon linear settlement). Sadly, as yet, no Saxon finds have come to light, but we continue to live in hope! Having said that, we have had a good showing of hammered coins from later periods, as well as some Medieval buckles, trade tokens and the likes, right up to pre-decimal coins. It just goes to show that fields that have been pasture for many years, can, with a little perseverance, be very rewarding places to detect. They can also have the potential to throw up some totally unexpected finds...read on!



So, 09:30 and time for our Sites Officer, Ken, to blow the start whistle. The attendance sheet only has 34 names signed on it today. The grim weather conditions play havoc with many a club's attendance sheets I shouldn't wonder.

Long time club member David Barton decided to head off down the hill, away from the village, down to where a public footpath comes across the lower field from a lane that leads to some old half-timbered thatched cottages. A signal here, a signal there; lead, foil, bottle caps, the usual stuff you have to contend with when detecting near public footpaths. But you know how it is, you're always hoping that in amongst all the junk you might pull out a coin

or two, accidentally dropped by one of the thousands of people who must have passed that way over the years.

David found himself on the right end of a good two-way signal, which he pinpointed and proceeded to dig. David takes up the story in his own words here. *"I dug down about six inches or so, and recovered something that was obviously a medal, but I wasn't sure what it was. I swept over the hole again, and was surprised to hear there was another target down there. I dug that one, which turned out to be another medal. Just a few inches forward, and I had another good signal, and when I dug this one, out came another four medals!"* David's first signal turned out to be an O.B.E.,

followed by the Distinguished Service Medal, a WW1 Allied Victory Medal, the 1937 Coronation Medal, a WW2 Defence Medal and the WW1 British War Medal. A little while later, club member Allan Cook found himself detecting about ten metres from David's find-spot. He too found a medal, The Order of St. John (serving Brother's Badge), and swiftly followed this up with the Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. This brought the total to eight medals. The whole of that area was given a thorough search, before it was concluded that all the medals had now been recovered.

We were now faced with the question: who owned these medals, and how on earth did

they end up where we found them. Surely no-one would have just dumped them there on purpose? Back at the cars, the medals were looked at in more detail, and the edges of some revealed the name - Ralph Sheldon. Now we had something to go on, and both finders were adamant that we should try to reunite the medals with the rightful owners. It's very fortuitous for us that club members Bob Ashby and Alan Ross happen to be keen genealogists, and new member Dave Morris, an expert in medals. The research they carried out follows. It makes for some interesting reading, and really brings home the fact that these aren't just medals, they are milestones in the life of a fascinating character, a certain Mr Ralph Sheldon, O.B.E., K.P.F.S.M. 'Ralph Sheldon was born in 1898, and was brought up in Shropshire. On leaving school he trained as a butcher, but at the outbreak of WW1 he enlisted aged just 17 years and 11 months. He joined the Grenadier Guards, and 9 months later transferred to Machine Gun Guards. Within months, he was appointed Lance

Corporal in the Machine Gun Regiment, seeing active service in France in 1918. At the end of WW1, Ralph had earned himself the WW1 British War Medal, along with the WW1 Allied Medal. He then joined the Metropolitan Police in 1919, and it would have been there that he gained his WW2 Defence Medal, as the Metropolitan Police were an approved unit.

1937 saw the Coronation of King George VI. Ralph, having taken part in the procession, received the 1937 Coronation Medal. We understand that by this time, he was head of security at Buckingham Palace. 1946 saw Ralph, (now Commander of the Metropolitan Police) being awarded the King's Police and Fire Service Medal for distinguished service. 1950 saw Ralph being awarded an O.B.E.

In 1951 he was awarded the Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal for 22 years full time service. In 1952, Ralph Sheldon, O.B.E., K.P.F.S.M. was awarded The Order of St. John (serving Brother's Badge). Later that same year, he died, aged just 54.'

We were all amazed at what this man had achieved in his lifetime, and the long service that he gave to his country. I think it's fair to say that none of us should ever look at anyone's medals again, without thinking about the deeds of bravery and service that must have been performed to gain them.

The next job was to try and find the members of his family. And as luck would have it, the first phone call we made was to a Katrina Sheldon, who lived in the village where the medals were found. Katrina turned out to be the daughter-in-law of the late Ralph Sheldon. After introducing ourselves, we asked her if she knew a Ralph Sheldon, as we had found a group of his medals. Katrina was surprised to say the least, and explained that the medals had been stolen during a burglary back in 1999. As no one was ever caught, the family had resigned themselves to the fact that they would probably never see them again. We were all amazed when we realized that the medals had been found in a field just yards from the family home, twelve years after they had been stolen! It would seem the thief had

made his getaway across the footpath that runs through the field, discarding the empty jewellery boxes and medals as he fled the scene. The jewellery boxes were found by the family soon after, but the medals were lost in the grass, and were then trampled into the ground by grazing cattle.

We then arranged a suitable date and time to hand back the medals, and all met up at the family cottage. It was a gorgeous sunny afternoon, with coffee and biscuits served on the patio - wonderful! Sadly, Ralph's son, (also called Ralph) a double Bafta award winning film editor, was too ill to attend, but Katrina did us proud, and said that Ralph and the rest of the family were delighted to have the medals back.

It was great to have a reporter and photographer from the local newspaper there, too. They took plenty of photographs, and interviewed Katrina and the finders. We were thrilled to see their article in The Oxford Mail just a few days later. Some very welcome press for our great hobby!



The Midland Federation of Metal Detector Clubs

The Midlands Region of the NCMD are pleased to announce that, as part of Coventry's Heritage Weekend held every year, where places of historic interest are only opened to the public for a very limited time, it has been invited to display an exhibition of metal detector finds in the historic Draper's Hall in Coventry. This historic building is in the very centre of Coventry, 30 yards from the old Coventry Cathedral and 70 yards from both the new Coventry Cathedral and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum.

This exhibition will be held over two days on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 September. This will give the hobby a great opportunity to display hitherto unseen collections amassed by our members over the past years and will enable enthusiastic detectorists to talk to and demonstrate our hobby to possibly thousands of people.

Many Midlands clubs will be in attendance and it is hoped that Individuals and Associates will join us on the day to display their collections. All aspects of our hobby are welcome to attend but this is not a commercial venture. Admission is FREE and there will be refreshments laid on for Exhibitors and Volunteers. There will also be an opportunity to visit at no cost, the nearby Guildhall where Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned and many more interesting historic buildings and events. Access to the Old Coventry Cathedral Spire is also free on this weekend, as are all the other historic buildings included in the Heritage weekend.

We have a wonderful opportunity to showcase our hobby to the general public at a venue that money couldn't buy. Please support your region as a club or as



an individual and make a date for September. There may be members of Midlands clubs and Individuals who would wish to take part and display in this unique opportunity as individuals. If so contact John Wells,

Chairman, Midlands Region, at jwells2@hotmail.co.uk for details about car parking facilities, refreshments etc.

John Wells

Chairman /Acting Secretary
Midlands Region, NCMD

Anne's joy as lost keys are found

A pensioner has told of her joy after being reunited with her house keys she feared would fall into the hands of burglars.

Anne Vernon dislocated her shoulder and hit her head when she missed the step down from her front door and 'took a head long dive' into the hedge.

She managed to pull herself up and stagger to her neighbour's home and raise the alarm.

But while Anne was spending two nights in hospital the one thing on her mind was the worry that while she was there someone may find the house keys she dropped when she fell and break into her home.

She said: "I had my keys in my hand when I fell into the thick ivy hedge and I couldn't find them again. My neighbours were looking to but to no avail.

"I kept telling myself if none of my neighbours can find them then hopefully no one else will be able to.

"I contacted the police who said I would have to change the locks, but I knew they were there somewhere."

Anne posted an advert on the internet appealing for the help of anyone with a metal detector. The message was picked by the National Council for Metal Detecting and referred to metal detectorist Mike Butler from the Northern Searchers Metal Detecting group.

Mike said: "The Membership secretary of the NCMD got in touch with me and put me in contact with Anne.

"She was very worried about her keys, which had her car key on as well as her house keys. It took the machine about 20 minutes to locate them as they were about a foot deep in the bushes and Anne was cock-a-hoop when I pulled them out."

Anne added: "It was such a relief when he found them I offered to



Photo and story © Champion Media Group

pay him for his time but he wouldn't take a penny – not even petrol money!"

Mike said: "A lot of people have the wrong idea about metal detectorists. Guys like us tend to get painted as treasure hunters, but we are in fact history finders. Everything we do is by the book and legal, we arrange with

farmers to use the detectors on their land and record everything we find to archaeologists and whatever we find we split 50/50 with the farmer.

"I didn't do this for the money; the reward is in the finding and if you can help someone along the way then that is just great."

By Stephanie O'Conner

SARG Club find lost ring for Strathclyde Police

Members of the Scottish Artefact Recovery Group (SARG) were recently thanked by Strathclyde Police, for recovering a wedding ring from the site of a fatal accident involving one of their officers.

Earlier this year, Nigel Goldsmith, the SARG Secretary gave a presentation on detecting to a meeting of the Hamilton Burns Society. That meeting was attended by a senior Police Inspector from Strathclyde Police. He contacted SARG some weeks later to ask for help to recover a wedding ring. This had been lost in a fatal road traffic accident involving Superintendent Neil McCover. He had been cycling with colleagues in his lunch break near Strathclyde Police training college at Jackton, when he was tragically killed and died at the scene.

Officers had previously conducted several fingertip searches of the site but failed to find the ring. The senior officer remembered the Burns Society presentation and contacted SARG, who sent five members to the accident site to detect for the ring, accompanied by a police constable who briefed them on the circumstances of the accident. The area was not a good detecting site - a roadside culvert full of empty cans and bottles - despite this club member George McMenam found the ring after 20 minutes, George has been detecting for over 20 years and used his experience and expert survey of the area to recover the ring.

The ring was returned to the police officer's widow and thanks were greatly received from her to the club. She was amazed that people were willing to give up their own



time to try and recover the lost ring. Club Chair Lesley Sleith commented, "We generally offer a free recovery service to create goodwill in the community and promote the club, but this was one request we were only too

happy to get involved and were all delighted to find the missing ring" the recovery team conducted themselves very professionally in very difficult circumstances.

By Nigel Goldsmith
Secretary SARG

Paisley Daily Express reports...

AN AMATEUR treasure hunter last night revealed how he came within inches of a being blown up - by a live hand grenade.

Darren Leitch, 26, stumbled upon the unexploded World War II device while scouring the banks of the Black Cart Water near Inchinnan.

But bookies shop manager Darren didn't realise that he could have been killed if he had trodden on it.

He only discovered his good fortune when a Royal Navy bomb squad checked the 70-year-old explosive and found it was still primed to go off.

Cops immediately set-up a 100-metre cordon round the scene on Saturday afternoon and a safety order prevented planes from landing and taking off at near-by Glasgow Airport while bomb disposal experts carried out a controlled explosion.

Metal detector buff Darren admitted he breathed a huge sigh of relief after being told he had been just one step away from death after his find on Thursday.

"It could have been curtains for

me if I had taken one more step," said Darren, from Linwood.

"After I found out that the grenade was still live after all these years, I just thought that I was lucky to be alive.

"I was told it was too dangerous even to touch. The salt water corrosion had made it unstable and the bomb squad guys said it could have gone off at any time.

"If I had not seen this rusty old lump poking through the mud I could have trod on it and then I'd have been a goner. It's scary to think."

Darren uncovered the grenade as he walked along the banks of the river while searching with his £600 metal detector.

But he admitted he thought nothing of his discovery until concerned workmates told him to call him cops.

He said: "I'm down near the Black Cart Water quite a lot looking for stuff.

"I had a spare couple of hours on Thursday and popped down to the river. As I was walking along I

could see this shape that looked like a grenade but I wasn't sure.

"It was all rusty and as I got closer, I could see that it was a grenade. I ran my detector over it and it came up as iron, so that confirmed it for me.

"I walked round it but thought to myself that it would probably be a dud by now and thought nothing more of it. I mentioned it to some people at work on Friday and they said it was probably wise that I called the police."

By Saturday, a massive search mission was underway as worried cops raced to find the device before it was swept downstream by rising tides.

Streets round the scene were closed off and aircraft were barred from approaching Glasgow Airport.

The coastguard was called out to stop boats sailing up the river, while bomb squad technicians carried out a controlled explosion.

Darren was taken to a safe distance while the grenade was disposed of but said its deadly force was still clear to see.



Darren Leitch
© Paisley Daily Express

He said: "The police took me to the Arriva bus garage a few hundred yards away while the bomb squad worked on the grenade.

"But even from back there you could feel the power of the blast hitting your chest. There was a huge bang as well.

"I knew then I'd had a real lucky escape."

A police spokesman confirmed that Darren's find could have ended in tragedy.

"The thing was still live - and it was only good luck that this didn't end in tragedy," he said.

The photo shows Darren at the scene near Inchinnan.

As reported by Andy Newport of the Paisley Daily Express.

Roman Coins and Their Values Volume 4

David R Sear.

The Tetrarchies and the rise of the House of Constantine.

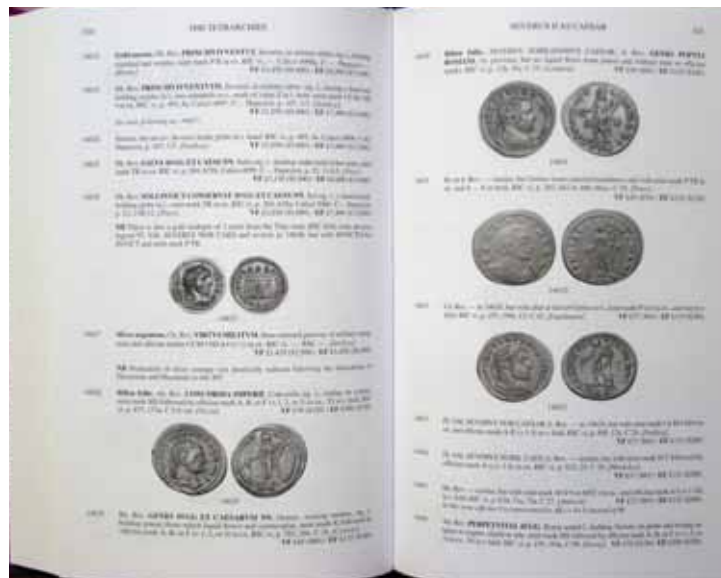
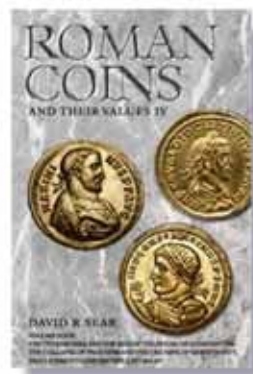
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