

NCMD

TO PROMOTE
TO PROTECT
TO ENCOURAGE



National Council for Metal Detecting

Member of: The Central Council of
Physical Recreation.

NCMD News and Views. Spring 2006

The National Council would welcome
replies and comments on the information
contained in

News and Views. Email editor at:
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1. Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales.

As reported previously the Portable
Antiquities Project Board and Advisory
Group (PAPBAG) has been drafting a
Code of Practice for Responsible Metal
Detecting in England and Wales. The
NCMD is the only metal detecting
organisation that has taken up the
invitation to become a permanent
member of PAPBAG and become

actively involved in the production of the
Code.

Following our further review of the
proposed code, Steve Critchley and Bob
Baldock attended a pre-PAPBAG
meeting, in January, with officers from
CBA, (Council for British Archaeology),
CLA, (Country Land and Business
Association), PAS, (Portable Antiquities
Scheme) and EH, (English Heritage), to
discuss further amendments from each
party.

A final draft was agreed and this was
submitted to the formal PAPBAG
meeting. It was agreed that each
organisation represented should confirm
their acceptance of the final draft by the
end of February 2006.

The revised document was distributed to
our regional delegates at the NCMD
Ordinary Meeting held on 26th February.
Approval for acceptance of the revised
code was unanimous. Notice of our
endorsement was submitted to the PAS.

The NCMD believes that this Code is
both fair and practical and that by
adhering to the Code the vast majority of
metal-detectorists will be able to
demonstrate that they have a genuine
interest in the past and wish to benefit
from the knowledge they gain from their
hobby.

In many European countries detectorists
are not allowed to operate in order to
protect antiquities, but the practice still
goes on clandestinely with finds ending
up on the black market.

Britain has always had a more tolerant
position, although the Council for British
Archaeology (CBA) fought a campaign to
ban metal detecting in the 1970's.

Things have changed dramatically. Now
they are backing the voluntary code for
the hobbyists and recognising their role
in archaeology.

Dr Mike Hayworth, Director of the CBA
says the archaeological fraternity had
changed its mind. "The Council in those

days took the view that metal detecting (by hobbyists) should be stopped and banned. We now recognise the detector is a tool that can be used”.

The CBA, landowners, and the NCMD have driven the creation of the code of conduct, which as well as encouraging responsible behaviour is a recognition that the hobby has a right to exist and a role to play.

The code has been agreed by all key archaeological bodies, metal detecting and landowners organisations.

The code is voluntary but has the full endorsement of the following signatories.

The National Council for Metal Detecting.
 The Country Land and Business Association.
 The National Farmers Union.
 The Council for British Archaeology.
 English Heritage.
 National Museums and Galleries of Wales.
 Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.
 The British Museum.
 The Portable Antiquities Scheme.
 The Society of Museum Archaeologists.
 Federation of Independent Detectorists.
 The Royal Commission for the Ancient Monuments of Wales.

Compliance with the recommendations of the Code of Practice not encompassed within the NCMD Code of Conduct are not conditions of membership. However, NCMD has endorsed and commends the Code as best practice.

Included below is a transcript of the code. Formal copies of will be distributed to members on receipt from the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales.
Being responsible means.

Before you go metal detecting.

1. *Not trespassing; before you start detecting obtain permission to search from the landowner/ occupier, regardless of the status, or perceived status, of the land. Remember that all land has an owner. To avoid subsequent disputes it is always advisable to get permission and agreement in writing first regarding the ownership of any finds subsequently discovered. (see*

www.cla.org.uk / www.nfuonline.com).

2. *Adhering to the laws concerning protected sites (e.g. those defined as Scheduled Monuments or Sites of Special Scientific Interest: you can obtain details of these from the landowner/occupier, Finds Liaison Officer, Historic Environment Record or at www.magic.gov.uk). Take extra care when detecting near protected sites; for example, it is not always clear where the boundaries lie on the ground.*

3. *You are strongly advised to join a metal detecting club or organisation that encourages co-operation and responsive exchanges with other responsible heritage groups. Details of metal detecting organisations can be found at www.ncmd.co.uk / www.fid.newbury.net*

4. *Familiarising yourself with and following current conservation advice on handling, care and storage of archaeological objects (see www.finds.org.uk)*

While you are metal detecting

5. *Whenever possible working on ground that has already been disturbed (such as ploughed land or land that has been formally ploughed), and only within the depth of ploughing. If detecting takes place on undisturbed pasture, be careful to ensure that no damage is done to the archaeological value of the land, including earthworks.*

6. *Minimising any ground disturbance through the use of suitable tools and by reinstating any excavated material as neatly as possible. Endeavour not to damage stratified archaeological deposits.*

7. *Recording findspots as accurately as possible for all finds (i.e. to at least a one hundred metre square, using an Ordnance Survey map or hand held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) device) whilst in the field. Bag finds individually and record the National Grid Reference (NGR) on the bag. Findspot information should not be passed on to other parties without agreement of the landowner/occupier (see also clause 9).*

8. *Respecting the Country Code (leave gates and property as you find them and do not damage crops, frighten animals or disturb ground nesting birds, and dispose properly of litter: (see www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk).*

After you have been metal detecting.

9. *Reporting any finds to the relevant landowner/occupier: and (with the agreement of the landowner/occupier) to the Portable Antiquities Scheme, so that the information can pass into the local Historic Environment Record. Both the Country Land and Business Association (www.cla.org.uk) and the National Farmers Union (www.nfuonline.com) support the reporting of finds. Details of your local Finds Liaison Officer can be found at www.finds.org.uk, email info@finds.org.uk or telephone 020 7323 8611.*

10. *Abiding by the provisions of the Treasure Act and Treasure Code of Practice (www.find.org.uk), wreck law (www.mcga.gov.uk) and export licensing (www.mla.gov.uk). If you need advice your local Finds Liaison Officer will be able to help you.*

11. *Seeking expert help if you discover something large below the ploughsoil, or a concentration of finds or unusual material, or wreck remains, and ensuring that the landowner/occupiers permission is obtained to do so. Your local Finds Liaison Officer may be able to help or will be able to advise of an appropriate person. Reporting the find does not change your rights of discovery, but will result in far more archaeological evidence being discovered.*

12. *Calling the Police, and notifying the landowner/occupier, if you find any traces of human remains.*

13. *Calling the Police or HM Coastguard, and notifying the landowner/occupier, if you find anything that may be a live explosive: do not use a metal detector or mobile phone nearby as this might trigger an explosion. Do not attempt to move or interfere with any such explosives.*

2. NCMD Internet Forum.

Clive Sinclair, Southern Region,
NCMD Internet Forum:
<http://ncmd-forum.co.uk/portal.php>

The NCMD Internet Forum was successfully launched on the 17th March and at the time of writing this article, 70 members are now registered. The forum is still under development and currently provides the following sections for members: -

Acceptable User Policy (AUP).
General Chat Room. Suggestion Box.
Coin Finds. Artefact Finds.
Finds Identification.
Metal Detector Discussions.
UK Clubs & Contacts.
Robin & Karolyn Hatt Memorial Trophy.
NCMD News & Views.
Whats On.
PAS News.
To access the forum all NCMD members have to register by filling in and submitting an on line form, carefully following the instructions given on the front page (Portal). It is important to print out or write down the instructions before clicking on the register button, as it is not possible to go back to them when in the registration screen. The information requested is necessary to enable the forum administrators to validate that the applications are from NCMD members, as this is not a public forum.

The forum will be run on a trial basis until mid March 2007, when a decision will be made by the NCMD Executive Committee, as to whether the forum should continue on a permanent basis.

2. CCPR Report. (Central Council for Physical Recreation).

Barry Morgan, Yorkshire Region, reported the following items from the CCPR.

CCPR is monitoring closely the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill, NERC, and its implementation. Whilst welcoming and supporting the new proposals of the Bill, CCPR believes that Access and Recreation should be given due consideration and equal weighting within the Bill. They are concerned that it will not receive due prominence within the remit of the work of Natural England who should have a vital role to play in ensuring that Local Authorities fulfil their responsibilities regarding the delivery of access facilities. This recommendation should be included within the Bill.

CCPR recommends that the government give further thought to the clarification of Rights of Way In consultation with the

relevant user groups.

A copy of the briefing will be available at www.ccpr.org.uk

4. Battlefields Trust.

Brian Pollard, Midland Region, reported on a conference held at Leeds in January and chaired by Lord Faulkner. The NCMD had been requested to participate in this event and Brian gave a presentation on metal detecting and the work of the NCMD.

5. DEFRA CSS/ELS. Countryside Stewardship Scheme / Entry Level Scheme.

Clive Sinclair, PRO, has invited a representative from the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to speak to a Management Team meeting, to be held in May, on the operation of the various schemes.

6. National Finds Competitions. Robin Hatt Memorial Competition.

This is a competition for the best coin and best artefact discovered with a metal detector.

Karoline Hatt Memorial Competition.

This is a competition for the best hoard discovered with a metal detector.

The Finds Competitions are still open for entries. If you have an object that you wish to enter please contact your regional representative. The competitions will be judged at the AGM to be held in June.

7. Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) Conference, 2006.

A one day conference to explore how the Portable Antiquities Scheme has Advanced Archaeological knowledge was held at the British Museum in April.

Many speakers demonstrated how PAS data is beginning to paint a clearer picture of activity within our countryside.

The important contribution made by metal detectorists who report their finds to the scheme was recognised.

Presentations were given on wide ranging subjects including :

The PAS contribution to Heritage Environment Records data (HER's).

A report from York Archaeological Trust on the advice provided to the PAS on conservation.

Advancing knowledge of Archaeological Finds and Sites.

8. Transfer of the Administration Functions relating to the Treasure Act.

Under current arrangements, which have been in place since the Treasure Act 1996 first came into force, the British Museum (BM) is responsible for administration of the Treasure system prior to the inquest and the Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) is responsible for the administration of the valuation and post valuation stages of the process.

It is proposed that the DCMS will transfer those administrative functions to the BM. The transfer of these functions will improve efficiency and delivery of the process. It has been recognised that, since the BM is a potential purchaser of treasure items, certain measures will need to be put in place to avoid any conflict of interest.

The Secretary of State will continue to be responsible for the appointment of the members of the Treasure Valuation Committee and make final decisions on valuations.

The NCMD has been invited to be represented on the steering group of this project and we have appointed Trevor Austin as our representative.

9. Reform of the Coroner System.

The Government is committed to reforming the coroner system for England & Wales with the aims of improving the system including the role of the coroner in the Treasure Act.

A briefing note has been issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) as follows:

“Assessing whether a particular find should be classed as treasure will be removed from the mainstream of coroners’ work. A new national coroner for treasure will be appointed, to take on the work currently carried out by coroners at a local level. The rights under the Treasure Act 1996, of those who use the coroners’ service in this way will not otherwise be affected.”