



## **Coroners and Justice Bill and the provision for a dedicated Treasure Coroner**

### **National Council for Metal Detecting Statement**

The National Council for Metal Detecting is a representative body of elected volunteers formed in 1981 to provide a means whereby responsible metal detector users would have a democratic forum to discuss problems affecting the hobby and to provide an authoritative voice to counter ill -informed and frequently misleading criticism of the hobby.

It does not represent the trade or archaeological interests.

As recommended by the Luce Report, during 2006 consultations took place as part of a review of the role of Coroners. Proposals were made to create a single Coroner to deal with all Treasure cases in England and Wales. This much needed change would go a long way to reducing the constant and at times frustrating delays experienced by finders in the processing of Treasure finds.

This Bill has now been published and regrettably the provision for the Treasure Coroner has been dropped without further consultation or explanation. Following its second reading in Parliament the Bill has now begun its way through Committee for detailed scrutiny.

It is understandable that many Coroners give low priority to Treasure inquests and delays of a year or more are not uncommon; the present average of 182 days to deal with Treasure is twice the recommended time period of 90 days.

The NCMD actively supported the provision for a Treasure Coroner in the draft Bill as a mechanism to help streamline the Treasure process thereby reducing delays. These delays are the single most common cause for complaint by NCMD members and detectorists in general who have reported Treasure finds. According to the 2005/6 Treasure Report metal detection accounted for some 93% of finds of Treasure. We believe that the current levels of delay are unacceptable. They are severely testing the goodwill of finders and undermining the provisions of the Treasure Act by introducing a disincentive to reporting. The NCMD considers that introduction of a workable system can only be successfully achieved by the reinstatement of the provision for a dedicated Treasure Coroner in the Coroners and Justice Bill.

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