

Treasure Valuation Committee  
Finds of Treasure where an abated reward has been made.  
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Continuing with the short series on rewards, this month we will look at abatements of the rewards made between 1999 and 2004.

The chart below lists all the rewards which were abated during this period.

Paragraph 79 of the Treasure Act Code of Practice lists circumstances in which finders can expect to receive no reward or an abated reward:

*“(i) where the finder has committed an offence under section 8 of the Act by failing to report treasure within 14 days of making the find or within 14 days of believing or of having reasonable grounds for believing that the find was treasure, without a reasonable excuse;*

*(ii) where the finder has committed an offence under section 42 of the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (unauthorised use of a metal detector in a protected place) (see paragraph 31);*

*(iii) where there is evidence of illegal activity in relation to a find whether or not a prosecution has been mounted;*

*(iv) where all the relevant circumstances surrounding a find, including the find-spot, were not reported;*

*(v) where a finder has failed to deposit a find promptly as directed by the coroner and/or where there is evidence that only part of a find has been handed in;*

*(vi) where there are reasonable grounds for believing that a find was made elsewhere than on the alleged site;*

*(vii) where there are reasonable grounds for believing that the finder was trespassing;*

*(viii) where significant damage has been done deliberately or recklessly either to the actual object, or to a surrounding monument or to the archaeological deposits making up the contexts which may explain the circumstances in which the object became buried or concealed, when the object was removed from the place where it was found;*

*(ix) where there are other factors that the Secretary of State thinks it appropriate to take into account in individual cases. “*

Cases often come to the Committee for consideration under paragraph 79(viii). Where significant damage has been caused the reward may be abated if it was done deliberately (that is, the act was done with the intention of causing damage). Any damage the Committee feels was intentional, whether to the find or the site, will of course warrant abatement. The reward may also be abated where the damage was done recklessly. Whether an act was done recklessly will depend on the finders' appreciation of the risk in his actions. This will involve assessing the experience of the finder and his comparative knowledge of the Treasure Act Code of Practice and its recommendations on the care of finds. The Committee may well draw different a conclusion between a detector user with many years experience, who may be presumed to be more aware of such issues, to one who is new to the hobby.

Cases considered by the Committee under paragraph 79(viii) include cases where the damage has been caused by inexpert cleaning.

Paragraph 47 and appendix 4 of the Treasure Act Code of Practice give guidance on the care of finds and highlight the dangers of vital information being lost through cleaning. It is obvious from the fact that there have been just nine abated rewards since 1999, out of approximately 2,000 Treasure cases which have been reported, that finders do take great care of their finds and are mindful of the damage which may occur through careless excavation and cleaning.

### Advice

Some metals, when removed from the ground, such as gold or silver-gold alloy, can be readily identified without cleaning, however it is best not to attempt to clean any find you discover. Keep the find in a dry stable condition and take it to a museum or your local finds Liaison Officer (FLO) for professional advice. The original surface can yield important information about the object's manufacture or use.

A series of advice leaflets will be produced shortly by the Portable Antiquities Scheme which should prove an invaluable source of information for the storage and conservation of finds.

<b>Finds of Treasure Where an Abated Reward has been made</b>		
<b>Find</b>	<b>Reason for abatement</b>	<b>Percentage deducted</b>
Anglo Saxon Pommel	Discrepancy over findspot	10% from finders share
Bronze Age Jewelry	Conflicting evidence as to whether landowners had given permission to finders.	10% from landowners share added to finders share.
Gold Coins	Failure to report after advice within 14 days. Police recovered coins.	50% from finders share, i.e. 25% of total.
Silver Spoon	Inexpert cleaning	20%
Gold Staters	Failure to report within 14 days. (coins found gradually over 2 years) Coins had not been reported promptly or honestly. Attempted amateur excavation of find site.	60% of total
Medieval Finger Ring	Failure to seek permission to detect. 2 months delay in reporting.	5% from finders share.
Roman Coins	Police had to recover quantity of coins. Not reported promptly.	60% from finders share.
Romano British Finger Ring	Heavy cleaning which may have led to loss of decoration.	20%
Anglo Saxon Mount	Soldering together of two fragments and failing to record find-spot. Also failed to ask permission of landowner.	15% from finders share.