

DIGGING

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR METAL DETECTING

DEEP

DECEMBER 2025

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NCMD Round UP

Alan Tamblyn - NCMD General Secretary

Yet again we end the year on a high, metal detectorists across the country are doing an amazing job in retrieving our national heritage from the plough soil, where it would otherwise be damaged or destroyed by farming practices or lost forever under concrete as more and more of our countryside is built on.

As record numbers of finds are being retrieved, so more finds are being recorded for posterity onto the PAS database in England and Wales, and by the Treasure Trove Unit in Scotland. During 2024 the PAS recorded 79,616 finds from 53,669 separate records, which is an incredible number, especially when you consider that recording finds under the PAS scheme is voluntary.

In England & Wales, many of these items come under the classification of potential treasure, and in January of 2025 it was reported that a record 1,540 items had gone through the treasure process during 2024. That's a phenomenal number and is testimony to the honesty and integrity of the detecting community. That is also a fantastic example of the benefits of metal detecting to our shared national heritage, and of course,

with the finds and find spots, comes an indication of habitation for archaeologists to investigate and there are numerous examples of this across the country. With the continuing increase in finds comes additional pressure on the systems that record them, but the NCMD is providing solutions to those problems and going forward, this will make a major difference to both our members and to the FLO's and members of the PAS.

NCMD App & Portal

We developed the NCMD mobile app a few years ago, with the facility to record your finds and find spots but we've now developed the next phase, a portal that allows you to do a number of things. Firstly, you can access the finds recording section through your computer or tablet as well as your phone, which means you can add your previous finds to your account, which allows you to create your own digital record of all your finds and find spots, including those found years ago. Remember, only YOU can access that information, however with the portal comes the ability for you to share that information should you choose to do so. You can select the finds you want to share, then give access to your FLO or

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TTU contact. Going forward, you will be able to transfer the data directly into the new PAS database being developed, which will make it so much quicker and easier to record your finds, and it'll make life so much easier for the PAS and the FLO's. The training video will follow shortly.

The biggest winner is our national historical record, which will grow massively as a result of this technology, because more people will be able to record their finds. This increase in numbers of potential treasure items goes a long way to explain why treasure items take so long to go through the system, although not all go through the whole process as many are disclaimed and returned to the finder. Those finds that are claimed, go through the Treasure Valuation Committee (TVC), which is made up of volunteers who are all experts in their field and includes auctioneers. They currently value between 700 and 800 items per year, but it is hoped that improvements to the system will mean a speedier turnaround and, going forward a tracking system will be incorporated for detectorists to track their treasure items through the process.

Following a meeting with the BM and the TVC, the NCMD now provides a monthly update on treasure items to members and the big news, is that our very own Dave Crisp is now the detectorists representative on the Treasure Valuation Committee.



Members of the NCMD committee and Board of Trustees detecting together ahead of the 2025 AGM



Hoard's & Excavation Fund

The discovery of hoards was an area where detectorists were often criticised for taking items out of the ground and losing the contextual information that is so valuable to archaeologists. Therefore, the NCMD created the Hoard Hotline and Excavation Fund, so our members can call the hotline when they find something significant, we get straight onto a national WhatsApp group we've created and as a result, we can get an archaeologist on site very quickly, the item is excavated professionally and the contextual information is preserved and recorded. The NCMD then pays for the services of the archaeologist rather than the FLO having to source the funding, which saves them time and precious resource.

One group that has embraced this service is the Ninth Region down in the West Country. They've called us a number of times and do everything by the book. The important thing is that the more we do things in a responsible way, the less criticism we receive from archaeologists. That said, despite the massive contribution that detectorists make to our national archaeological record, there are still many archaeologists who seek to curtail the hobby we all love. We've heard calls to ban detecting, ban organised detecting events, calls to ask landowners to not allow detecting on their land, and much of this from senior members of the archaeological community. Indeed, the Portable Antiquities Advisory Group has requested Heritage England to hold an inquiry into the damage caused by organised detecting events to archaeology, which runs alongside the inquiry being held by the All Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group (APPAG) into metal detecting.

It's interesting that at no stage do these organisations seek to discuss their concerns with detectorists themselves, or with the organisation that represents them. In light of this, the NCMD has sought to strengthen the organisation by moving to the status of 'Limited by Guarantee', which legally puts us in a much stronger position. We have also formed a number



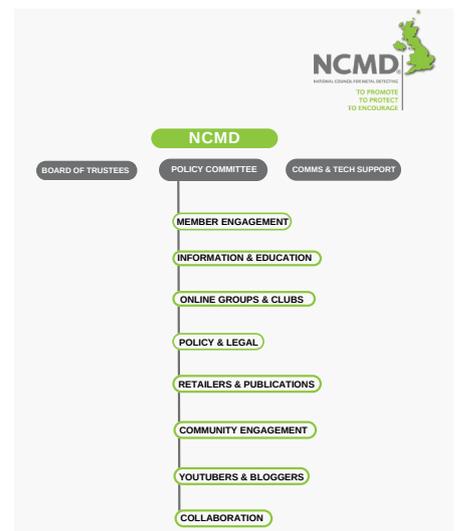
The NCMD Team filming one of the many information video's this year.

of groups within the structure of the NCMD to ensure that everyone involved in the hobby is represented and has a voice. These groups include event organisers, detecting clubs and retailers as well as Scotland and Northern Ireland, where the laws and processes are completely different. We are in the process of populating these groups and anyone wishing to get involved can email the general secretary c/o: alan@ncmd.co.uk. But full details will be emailed out to members shortly.

Positive steps also include the creation of the NCMD annual finds competition, which has been a great success and has seen some incredible finds on display. This has made the job of the judging panel extremely difficult, but our huge congratulations to our worthy winners. Another major step forward is the creation of a "Code of Conduct for Event Organisers" which is a major area under review by the academics, so putting standards in place will help to deal with the criticisms and will ensure that event organisers are doing the right things in the right way for the benefit of both our members and our national heritage.

We've created a number of information video's this year to promote the importance of recording finds and reporting potential treasure items. We also created a video to explain the proposed changes to the Treasure Trove Unit in Scotland and many

more. We're also creating a video on the finds recording section of the app and new portal, which will be released shortly. The aim of all of us across the detecting community is to help retrieve and record our national heritage, and we will continue to do so. Your support of the NCMD will help to ensure that we maintain that right for another 40 years, and as our membership is over 40,000, our collective voice is a powerful force.



The NCMD Structure Chart.

The NCMD was founded by detectorists to fight for our right to metal detect in the UK, and for over 40 years we have fought to maintain that right.

NCMD Hoard Hotline & Excavation Fund

The Hoard hotline and Excavation Fund is available to all our members who have found a hoard or significant find. The primary aim is to ensure that the finder stops digging so that important archaeological information remains intact, and the item can be properly excavated by an archaeologist. The finder simply calls the hoard hotline, we take the information and pass it to the PAS via a secure WhatsApp group, an archaeologist is then booked for a speedy recovery of the item and the NCMD covers the cost. This facility is now being used regularly across the year by both individual detectorists and event organisers.

A great example of how the scheme works is the Ninth Region, a detecting group that operates in the West Country. Last October a detectorist from the group got a signal from a previously dug hole and decided to dig it. He eventually reached what he thought was the top of a pot some 18 inches down and he immediately stopped digging and contacted the organisers, as per their instructions. The area was quickly cleared, our Hoard Hotline was called, and we arranged for a local archaeologist from Salisbury Museum to attend. Just 48 hours later, the sealed Roman sealed pot was carefully excavated under



Just one of the hoards the NCMD has helped with this year.

her supervision and the detectorists were very much involved with the digging, which was nice to see. The invoice for her services was covered by the NCMD, but this ensured a rapid response to retrieve the pot safely and reduce the risk of the pot being stolen. The Ninth Region has used the hotline on a number of occasions, indeed on one such occasion, while the pot was being recovered by the archaeologist, the organisers were detecting around the area, and two further pots were found! Luckily, the archaeologists were already on site! We await with interest to see the contents of all four pots.

Click this [link](#) to see the video of the pot being lifted.

The NCMD is committed to helping recover and safeguard our shared national heritage by working in collaboration with the finders, the landowners and the archaeologists to ensure that best practise is followed wherever possible and the best outcome is achieved.

We need more detectorists and event organisers to use this facility as it is recognised by the PAS as being an extremely positive resource that should be utilised wherever possible.

New Video on how to use the NCMD app

On Tuesday the 9th December we finished shooting the new video to remind members of all the advantages of using the phone app to record your finds. It didn't start out well as it was pouring with rain and the wind was blowing a gale. I had already checked if we could use my club's hall, but as normal it was fully booked. But by chance we were driving past my local museum (The Wiltshire Museum) in Devizes Wilts, and Alan said "I wonder if they have a spare room".

So, on a very long shot we went in and spoke to the director David Dawson, but his hall was also fully booked with school visits, but after we explained what we needed it for he said would one of the small galleries be any good? Good? It was great! He allowed us access to

the Saxon room, and what a fantastic display, this is truly a remarkable museum, run by some remarkable people. What a fantastic offer, now this was real cooperation between Archaeologists and metal detectorists, especially as the video is to promote the use of our app to make recording our finds on to the PAS database a lot easier for our members. The portal which is mentioned before will soon be launched and then you will have a very private photo Album to store all your digital photos of finds in.

So, our sincere thanks go out to David and his team for all their help yesterday and to the children who were obviously thrilled to see all the fantastic items of our history laid out and made interesting with many small finds on display as well. If you are ever in or near Devizes, it's well worth a visit.



The amazing Saxon display at the Wiltshire Museum.

Mike's Gold – What a great hobby!

My name is Mike. I have been a detectorist for many years, and although I took a break for a while, I restarted the hobby and rejoined by old club in Wiltshire. The club has a lot of permissions where members are free to detect and we have a great relationship with our farmers, but on this day back in September I went out with my friend Dave on one of his personal permissions. Since teaming up, we alternate between our own and shared permissions.

The week before had been a disaster; we had gone to one of Dave's farms on a field which produces Roman bits, but after a few hours of not finding anything we'd moved to another good field a mile away just to find it was ploughed deep and was not workable. I then suggested one of my farms on the way home where I knew the stubble was short, and I had had some good finds a few years ago.

The ground was perfect; it was disked stubble and flat as a pancake. But not a sausage, as they say! Nothing of interest at all. So, a whole day with no decent finds between us. But I



Mikes Gold Ingot weighing 3.88 grams.

was feeling good a week later when we got to a new field of Dave's, as it had lots of potential. Between us, we had previously found a few nice finds from this area, like the broken Bronze Age bits of rapier and axe that Dave had been lucky enough to find (in a different field in the area).

But that day it was my turn to celebrate, as a few hours in I managed to find a piece of Bronze Age rapier (knife to you and me), and later that day I turned up my own piece of gold. It's an ingot that has been worked flat and is a lovely colour, and it weighs 3.88 grams. I know it's a Treasure item so it will have to go through the Treasure process, which might take the archaeologists two, three or even four years to get the coroner to rule it as Treasure, but at least we have done our bit to save these bits of our national history. What a hobby!

Mike



The Walnut Tree's Secret

This story revolves around my grandmother-in-law's late husband, Ray. About fifty years ago, while gardening on a cold day, he lost his wedding ring. His hands were cold, he shook them, and the ring flew off somewhere into the garden, never to be seen again. His wife, Mary, always believed it was still out there and never gave up searching for it while tending to the garden over the years.

This year, after the ground had thawed, I suggested giving it a go with my metal detector. There were a few challenges – some soil had been removed due to landscaping, and in the years since losing the ring, Ray had planted a walnut tree, which now dominates much of the garden. His ashes are also buried beneath it,

making the search even more meaningful. At first, I had to battle through about forty strong aluminium signals – it turned out that when the house was built, the workmen had their tea breaks right there, leaving behind old milk bottle lids! Only after clearing those could I focus on signals that stood out as more promising.

After stopping for lunch with Mary – a bacon sarnie and a pot of tea, during which she shared more lovely stories about Ray – I returned to detecting with even more determination. Not long after, I got a promising signal about 4–5 inches down. Under the walnut tree, the very tree that Ray had planted. Over the years, the tree's roots had pushed the ring deeper into the ground. Carefully, I extracted the ring and

brought it straight to Mary, deliberately leaving it in a clump of mud so she could have the moment of revealing it herself after all these years. There were tears, hugs and endless gratitude.

Now, the ring rests at the base of a photo of Ray and Mary on their wedding day. Mary exclaimed that she's so happy the ring is home – that it makes her feel whole again. My first silver hammered coin was found with my dad, and my first gold find was this ring. I feel incredibly fortunate to have such meaningful memories tied to my finds, and it makes metal detecting even more special!

Benjamin Lawrence

Vet Tubes – *Don't Hate Them, Think What They Tell You*

You know what I mean: those tubes that come in many different shapes and sizes. I spent years hating them. You get such a great signal from the aluminium tube at any depth. You just know what it is on any detector as you get such a clear loud signal so that when you know your detector you recognise it straight away and curse; but you must dig it just in case.

Last available in the 1960s and 1970s, vets and farmers used them to treat a variety of conditions – like dry cow on the milking cows in the barns – and then discarded them in the old straw on the floor, where they were then spread across the fields. I once had a large field right next to a fairly modern church and I must have had forty to fifty out of this one lightly ridged field; a few other bits did come up, but not enough to offset the tubes.

So I ended up moving from that field, and to my regret I never went back.

It's estimated that this type of alloy might take up to 1000 years to break down and disappear. They now use plastic, which has its own problems, but at least it doesn't produce a good signal.

So why don't I hate them? Well, I have farms where I have been going for many years and quite often I go through a quiet spell where I am not finding anything of interest and that's when I like to find a tube. This simple tube then tells me I haven't covered all the field, and I also haven't found all the bits in it, as that tube could have been the find of a lifetime, and that spurs me on to continue to search and find what else I have missed.



Alan and myself at the National Museum of Scotland

Treasure Trove Scotland

All the events and rallies that we have covered in this last year will be in Alan's report, but the one item I would like to say a bit about is our involvement in the Scottish Treasure Trove revision.

We were asked by representatives of the KLTR (the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer) to help with the review at an early stage and were fully kept up to date and treated as equals right to the end

when the report was presented in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

It was a pleasant surprise that over the whole process we were treated like royalty; no effort was spared, and they also went out of their way to give us all the help we needed to do a video in the museum on the Trove system in Scotland. Which was a lot different from the British Museum, the York Museum and PAS who

together withdrew permission at the very last minute on the same day – and that was for our video to promote the recording of finds in England and Wales. You couldn't make it up!

So again, many thanks to all those involved with the process. 'Thank you very much for all your help.'

Dave

The new video about Scottish Law

Do you live in Scotland?

Do you live near the border and sometimes detect north of it?

Is part of your permission in Scotland? Well, if your answer to any of these three questions is 'yes', you should watch our new reminder video on the website.

We made this with the full cooperation of the Scottish KLTR to remind everybody that Scottish law is different. While I was there, I took this picture of a display of fantastic (1000 BC) Bronze Age gold jewellery and accessories (from the heights of Brae): 'What a lovely title.' And I thought it was all turnips and black pudding. Absolutely fantastic.



To View the video on your website scan the QR code above with your phone or tablet.

Alternatively visit:
<https://www.ncmd.co.uk/2025/11/28/changes-to-treasure-trove-scotland/>



Dave Crisp – NCMD Communications Officer, interviewing Emily Freeman – Treasure Trove Manager

Search Agreements

NCMD Policy No 10 Issue 3
Search Agreements

Regional Variations
 Search Agreement forms on subsequent pages are for England & Wales and for Scotland. It should be noted that within the UK and the Crown Dependencies there are Regional Variations in the Law with regard to Metal Detecting. I.e. Differences between England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, and the Channel Isles. It is your responsibility to check and know any variations, or different laws pertaining to Metal Detecting in the region where you are detecting, whether you use NCMD search agreements or not.

- If an agreement is signed by a Tenant Farmer on behalf of the Landowner, the Landowner must be aware of this agreement.
- Remember, in England and Wales, the Landowner has a lawful right to everything that you find except for potential Treasure. The NCMD suggest that anything with a value of over £500 be shared on a 50/50 basis, note that this is guidance, you and the landowner must agree a value and split that is acceptable to you both.
- Treasure Rewards. Potential Treasure belongs to the Crown and, in England and Wales, must be declared to the Local Coroner direct or via the FLO within 14 days of realising it is potential Treasure. See Treasure Act on the NCMD website. In Scotland, all historical finds and Treasure items belong to the Crown and must be reported to the Treasure Trove Unit within one month. If the Crown does not claim the find they will offer a reward, we recommend that any reward be divided 50/50 between landowner and finder or equally between all interested parties.
- Check with the farmer if there are any restrictions on his land such as 555A, Agri-environment schemes or scheduled monuments, in which case the conditions must be adhered to, or the area avoided as is relevant. To violate any such restrictions could be a criminal offence.
- Do keep to the area the landowner/farmer has agreed to; having a map of the area is essential. Always clarify any conditions such as crop rotation at certain times of the year or whether you can go on to newly planted crops.
- Recording of Finds in England and Wales: Confirm that the landowner is happy for you to record your finds with the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), you should agree with the landowner that you can use either a six-figure grid reference, what 3 words, or just the parishes. This is the landowner's choice. (Except potential Treasure, then it must be six-figure grid reference.)
- Fill in all details so you both know what is going on, and other people know you are entitled to be there. Always carry your NCMD card, it shows that you are insured. Be polite; you are an ambassador for our hobby.
- Our code of conduct should be adhered to at all times.

Print off copies of the relevant form below so all parties have a copy.
 Issue Date: 15/08/2024 Page 1 of 3

Search Agreement Form: England & Wales

I, _____ being the owner of the land known as _____ situated at _____

Give permission for _____ NCMD No. _____ of _____ Address: _____ to metal detect on my property, from (date) _____ until (date) _____. Note: Permission may be withdrawn at any time.

Provided that:

- The detectorist(s) shall hold a current NCMD membership card showing their details and the details of their £10,000,000 Public Liability insurance cover.
- The detectorist(s) shall always observe and adhere to the Code of Conduct as set out by the NCMD.
- The detectorist(s) shall strictly observe and adhere to any guidelines or special conditions and area boundaries which may be set out by the owner/ occupier below. These may vary from time to time.
- In England, all parties must abide by the terms and conditions with respect to metal detecting access and reporting of finds specified in any Agri-environment schemes.

Ownership and reporting of finds:

- Non-Treasure items are historically the property of the landowner; however, they or their value shall be split as stated below. Findings of non-Treasure items should only be reported on the PAS system to the accuracy stated below.
- Items classed as potential Treasure must be reported, with accurate Findings, to the coroner within 14 days. If finds are disclaimed by the Crown, or a reward is paid, it shall be split as stated below.

The finder may keep all finds not owned or claimed by the Crown; however, for any finds kept with a value of over £ _____ % of the value or reward (if claimed by the Crown) will be paid to the landowner.

The detectorist(s) shall / shall not be able to record non-Treasure finds with the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) to an accuracy of _____ (grid reference or Parish).

Special conditions and boundaries,

Signed _____ Landowner Date _____ phone No _____
 Signed _____ Occupier Date _____ phone No _____
 Signed _____ Detectorist Date _____ phone No _____
 Issue Date: 15/08/2024 Page 2 of 3

Search Agreement Form: Scotland

I, _____ being the owner of the land known as _____ situated at _____

Give permission for _____ NCMD No. _____ of _____ Address: _____ to metal detect on my property, from (date) _____ until (date) _____. Note: Permission may be withdrawn at any time.

Provided that:

- The detectorist(s) shall hold a current NCMD membership card showing their details and the details of their £10,000,000 Public Liability insurance cover.
- The detectorist(s) shall always observe and adhere to the Code of Conduct as set out by the NCMD.
- The detectorist(s) shall strictly observe and adhere to any guidelines or special conditions and area boundaries which may be set out by the owner/ occupier below. These may vary from time to time.

Ownership and reporting of finds:

- All found Portable Antiquities and any Treasure items fall under the Treasure Trove system and are subject to claim by the Crown.
- Findings must be reported as accurately as possible.
- The finder may keep all finds disclaimed by the Crown.

If claimed by the Crown, _____ % of any ex-gratia payment will be paid to the landowner.

Special conditions and boundaries,

Signed _____ Landowner Date _____ phone No _____
 Signed _____ Occupier Date _____ phone No _____
 Signed _____ Detectorist Date _____ phone No _____
 Issue Date: 15/08/2024 Page 3 of 3 Member of The Sports and Recreation Alliance (SRA)

The NCMD Search Agreements are free documents available to members from the NCMD website and are used to formally record permission from a landowner or tenant to metal detect on their land. They help confirm consent, set out basic terms for detecting and clarify how finds will be dealt with, reducing the risk of misunderstandings or disputes. Having a written agreement demonstrates responsible detecting, supports NCMD insurance requirements and reassures landowners that detecting

is being carried out properly and with permission.

Using the correct Search Agreement is important because the law on finds differs across the UK. In England and Wales, finds normally belong to the landowner, except for items classed as Treasure, which must be reported under the Treasure Act. The England and Wales agreement helps both parties understand reporting duties and agree in advance how non-Treasure finds

are shared or recorded. In Scotland, all archaeological and historic finds belong to the Crown and must be reported to the Treasure Trove Unit. The Scottish agreement reflects this system and focuses on permission to search, legal reporting and how any reward offered may be shared. Overall, NCMD Search Agreements help protect detectorists and landowners alike by providing clarity, encouraging legal compliance and supporting responsible metal detecting in England, Wales and Scotland.

A Polite Reminder – Auto Renewal

Most members enjoy having their membership on auto renew, it means they can carry on detecting and never worry about their membership expiring. We always send out a number of reminder emails prior to your membership auto renewing. But, on occasions we do get calls/emails about money being taken from accounts when the person didn't want to continue their membership. Some have given up the hobby for various reasons, some are sadly from bereaved spouses, others from people who have emigrated. Whatever the reason, because their membership has not been

cancelled, it auto renews. Fact: You can easily turn off auto renew by logging into your account. As shown below, if you click on the AUTO RENEW button, it will turn Red

and say AUTO RENEW OFF. By keeping your details and preferences up to date, the gremlins in the website will not unexpectedly take your money.

[Download Card](#)

Membership Number	Region/Club	Status	Expiry Date
NCMD- [REDACTED]	Individual	Active	06 April 2026

Auto Renew: Off
Edit Details
Order Printed Card

Membership auto renewal on the website can be found once logged in under 'My Account'

Graham on Fakes

Why do some detectorists fake a find spot for a particular find?

I went to a very well-known small rally many years ago; it was raining cats and dogs and the wind was harsh and blowing a gale. Everybody and everything was wet and covered in mud. Nobody was finding anything interesting and then somebody at the burger van showed us what he claimed to have just found.

The three items were a gold Roman ring, a gold Roman brooch, and a gold Roman coin. They were immaculate and looked brand new – with not a drop of mud on them! His name could have been Walter Mitty (look it up).



Remember: It is illegal to record items you claim to have found in a different location or purchased. You can be prosecuted for this as others have been previously.

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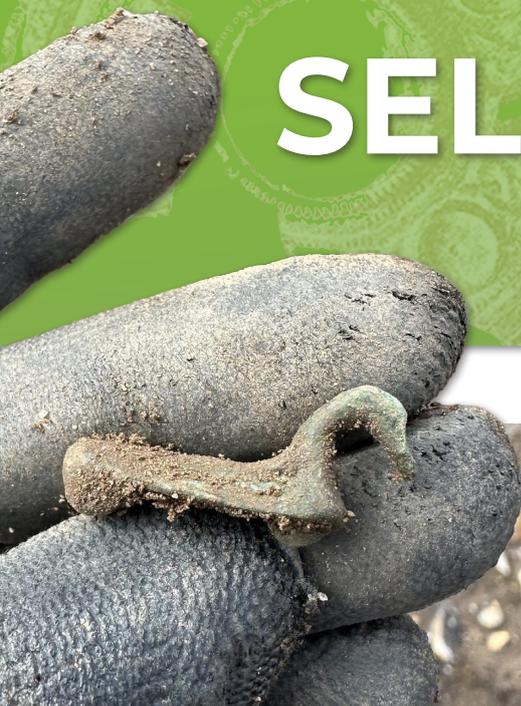
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www.ncmdshop.co.uk

SELF RECORDING

Emma Youell



Emma in the field.

How did I become a self-recorder?

When I first became a detectorist in 2014, I found some Roman and hammered coins. I was told to take them to the FLO, and they could record them onto the Portable Antiquities Scheme and tell me the age and ruler on the coins. I followed this advice, but the thing was, I love the research and story behind my findings, so I wanted to research and identify the coins myself, with guidance if I needed it. It took me a couple of months of asking my local FLO to 'onboard' me as a self-recorder. I then attended the recording 'lessons' that the Past-explorers lottery-funded scheme offered to help teach people to use the database. Unfortunately, the lottery-funded scheme has ended, but there are still valuable guides in the database for learning how to use it.

Why do I self-record?

Well, when I first find an item, I enjoy the excitement of discovering it, taking it out of the ground, and enjoying it afterwards (so long as it is not Treasure being acquired by a museum, etc.) By self-recording, I get to continue sharing my findings on the database for everyone else to enjoy and hopefully form some part of future research. I am proud to see my items within the database. I love using the database to compare my finds to those already on the database. I was also once lucky enough to find some incredibly detailed 'heartstones' (bricks surrounding a fireplace) dated 1567, which were the first type of these items on the database. Now their find spot is recorded with an explanation, and I researched them myself. This led me to find examples of the same in a German-published book, which I subsequently ordered to continue my research.

How to record

Different forms are generated for you to fill out, depending on what you will be recording: for example, a coin or an artefact. For example, by telling the database you are recording a coin, an additional information box becomes available for you to input all the numismatic information, such as Ruler/Issuer, mint, inscription, etc.; the artefact form will not give you the option to input numismatic information. But in all records forms, you will need to put a description, measurements, date range and material and a find spot location – the find spot remains hidden from all members of the public. During 2023, 108 active self-recorders were using the PAS database, of which eleven are from Kent, of which I am one. Herefordshire and Shropshire

FINDS RECORDING AS A SELF-RECORDER

had the most active recorders, with eighteen people, but Kent was the most active regarding records produced on the database. Go, Kent! The 2024 stats are still to come ...

You will also be delighted to hear that the PAS is planning an overhaul of the database to make it more user-friendly.



Ben Shires Narrator of our information videos with Dave Crisp and a copy of Dave's book.

Unfortunately, due to its complexity and all of its current records, it will not be live for a couple of years yet (Rome was not built in a day), but as a self-recorder, this is an inspiring step forward!

What you should know: The PAS Flag System

- **Red Flag:** the record is 'on review'.

This is for finds records being worked on or edited and not viewable by the public.

- **Yellow Flag:** the record is 'validated', which means it is available to the public.

- **Green Flag:** the record has been fully completed and is available to the public.

The PAS volunteer recording guide is an excellent resource for those interested in creating records for the scheme.

It can be found here:

<https://finds.org.uk/volunteerrecording>

Emma Youell

Editor's note

Emma is one of a very small number (104 in 2023) of self-recording detectorists out of the 7,000 detectorists who managed to record finds in 2023. This is 7,000 out of estimated 50,000 detectorists in the UK (of which 41,000 are NCMD members). I personally do not know where she finds the time. Emma has also been responsible for the production of the latest set of information videos that the NCMD have produced to remind detectorists about the current law on Treasure and the process you have to follow. You can find these on the NCMD [website. www.ncmd.co.uk](http://www.ncmd.co.uk)

The narrator of these information videos is Ben Shires, the BBC presenter who collaborated with us in York last year. Ben is also a very keen detectorist himself and said he had an old copy of my book, but he could not find it, so I signed another copy and gave it to him. He seemed quite pleased.

Do you wish to share your find or story with us in Digging Deep?

We're always on the lookout for captivating stories and articles, ideally accompanied by photos. Your piece could highlight a fascinating find, recount an interesting event - perhaps a Treasure item that took four years to navigate the treasure process. Share your experiences, good or bad, with PAS. Or maybe you'd like to praise someone for their help or shine a light on a speedy recording process by your FLO.

We're always eager to feature articles from our members. If you'd like to contribute, we'd love to hear from you! Email us at communicationsofficer@ncmd.co.uk



A DAY OUT ON THE THAMES

DAVE CRISP



Dave detecting on the Thames foreshore



Head of Buddha, eyes only find.

This sounds like the start of an idyllic day out, and to be fair it was. It all began when we got a phone call from a loss adjuster, asking if we could help search for a lost ring in the river Thames. As it happened, our club was going up that Sunday as the tide was just right.

Do remember that, like all places, you need permission to go metal-detecting by the Thames; this is in the form of a foreshore permit from the Port of London Authority (PLA), since the foreshore is not public land. All three of us who went that day had this permit. I spoke to the loss adjuster about this ring, and it turned out to have been lost by a paddle boarder. It was agreed that we would be paid to go to London and search just where he had lost it; if we found it, we would get 10% of the value. He sent me a map showing where the ring had been lost – right in the middle of the river. I obviously realised it would not have gone straight down, and it then would have been pulled around on every tide, in and out.

So, three of us went off early in Paul's car; there were only three of us as we had a few people pull out at the last moment. We arrived in London at the point of loss, near to a bridge. The river was still going out, and even now there was plenty of bank showing. As always, I had checked against our risk assessment, which is always a priority, and all was well. This is a must as riverbanks are very dangerous, with both mud and the tidal river itself. So we never go off alone to a riverbank. This day, however, this tidal stretch of river was very low which gave us a lot of extra riverbank and a very hard sandbank to search.

We decided for safety reasons to check the small sandbank; well, it was actually hard shingle rather than sand, but it was firm to walk on and quite hard to dig into.

We spent about three to four hours there and gave it a good search and came up with plenty of bits but no luck on the ring. We then adjourned to the local fish shop and had a great meal. In just that short space of time the river had covered the shingle bank, and the riverbank where we had started off.

So, what did we find?

Well, I found two phones, lots of fishing weights, some 3 perch lures (plenty of fishing in the Thames) and a multitude of copper and bronze bits (from boats); and all of us had plenty of rubbish. The others had many signals, but most of it was normal bits that give good indications, like mine. So off we went back to the car and homeward bound; that was a laugh as although we started off all right, there were some diversions which took us over the same bridge twice and we finished up in south London and then, without realising it, drove through a payable zone, so Paul ended up with a ticket! Fortunately, the club agreed to pay it as we were on a club day out.

We ended up taking another extra hour to get home. But all three of us agreed it had been a great day trip, even though we did not find the ring. But who in their right mind goes paddle boarding with a £20,000 ring on their finger?

PS: I did once find this lovely head of Buddha (eyes only), lying in a few inches of water on the Thames foreshore.

RIVERBANKS

'Can I detect a riverbank /mud bank/sandbank?'

This is a question I get asked every now and again. So, the answer is Yes, No, Maybe.

Not helpful? So, a fuller answer.

Riparian owners are individuals or entities that own land adjacent to a watercourse, such as a river, stream or ditch.

They have specific rights and responsibilities related to the watercourse on their property. These rights and responsibilities are collectively known as riparian rights and responsibilities.

This means that a farmer whose land goes down to the river, or a person whose garden backs on to a river can normally give you permission to detect there.

Note: The content of this article is for general information only and does not constitute legal advice. Specific legal advice should be taken in any particular circumstance. Remember, you should always ask permission and use a NCMD agreement contract.

Extra Warning

Rivers, streams and ditches are very dangerous. You should always take very special care and never detect there alone.

Detecting Stubble - "I don't detect maize stubble.!" "Why not?"



Change the way you detect in a stubble field.



I never used to detect maize stubble fields. I always made up an excuse to myself: it was too tall, too hard, too close together, too much weed etc etc. Well, I changed, and you can too if you are prepared to alter the way you swing your detector and walk in a slightly different way. Maize is a sub-tropical plant that is used in this country to feed animals and to feed digesters that produce biogas etc. It is also apparently good for aliens who make crop circles in it! It has shorter varieties, but most strains grow to about 5 or 6ft high.

The farmer sows it quite late, as it doesn't like frosts, and then cuts it later than most other crops. This gives you a different timescale. So, it's late in the season and they have cropped the field, and you are faced with a detecting nightmare. But it's not all bad. It might be six inches high and as tough as old boots, but it can be detected on.

Try walking in the wheel ruts and swinging your head a bit less, or walking at a slight angle. Where the stubble is too tall, just step over it and try further on. Or find where the tyres have created a broad flat track across the field. There will also be places where they have stacked or parked the tractors, so by being selective you can detect in stubble. And later, when it starts to rot or gets disked - stripped and the crop residue chopped up - it will get easier.

TREASURES UNEARTHED (2025)

Kevin Gorman

Treasures Unearthed (2025) marked another successful chapter in our annual celebration of metal detecting. The exhibition of metal detecting finds was conceived, organised and presented by The North-West Group (of Metal Detecting Clubs), a collective of eight passionate clubs located in Lancaster, Bolton, Manchester, Stockport, West Kirby, Mold, Widnes and Wrexham.

Each club is guided by its own committee who meet with their members monthly, with delegates from each club coming together for the group's monthly meetings to share updates, collaborate on group matters and shape events such as this exhibition. At the time of writing, the group has 543 members, and along with this event, we also offer our members an annual free-to-members detecting dig. We are entirely voluntary, self-funded and non-profit. Every decision is made jointly with each club representing one vote.

The group coordinating committee includes:
Dave Edwards – Chair (Wrexham MDC)
Kev Gorman – Secretary (North-West MDC)
Cliff Passey – Treasurer (South Lancs & Cheshire MDC)

This year we were fortunate to once again have permission to hold our exhibition in the historic and architectural grandeur of Chester Cathedral. Our home for the day was the Chapter House and Vestibule, a magnificent setting with huge stained-glass windows and Gothic pointed arches, portrayed beautifully by the entrance leading from the cloisters into the Vestibule and our exhibition (Fig 01).

Saturday 19 July 2025 was the date set for this year's event, and by 08.00 a.m. the clubs had arrived and were unloading their precious cargo of finds – finds that have been accrued over decades. By 09.30 a.m. we were set and awaiting the first visitors. We didn't have to wait long. By 10.00 a.m. the ancient oak floorboards were creaking under the weight of the early arrivals, and this set the scene for the rest of the day, a never-ending stream of visitors, young, old, families and groups. As the visitors approached the exhibition entrance via the cloisters, they



Seven members of the Wirhalh Skip Felagr, a Viking re-enactment Group



Alan Tamblin and Dave Crisp manning the busy NCMD stand.

were met by seven members of the Wirhalh Skip Felagr, a Viking re-enactment Group, all in full regalia, exhibiting their skills: coin striking, weaving, weaponry, delighting all ages, particularly the young ones, most of whom entered the exhibition grasping the freshly minted medieval coin gifted to them by the coin striker.

Stepping down the well-trodden stone steps into the Vestibule section of the exhibition, we had the stand of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, manned as always by Finds Liaison Officer Heather Beeton (Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside). Accompanying Heather this year was Peter Carey (assistant Finds Liaison Officer). Both Heather and Peter were kept very busy by the detectorists looking for information, and the general public

quenching their thirst for knowledge of the hobby.

Also on their stand was Steve Gluning, PSV (Police Support Volunteer), representing the Cheshire Rural Crime team, as for some time detectorists have been the eyes and ears for the Rural Crime team, and the North-West Group of metal detecting clubs unanimously supports the work of Steve and his colleagues. Facing the Portable Antiquities stand was Graeme and Mel of Unearthed UK, with their trade stand, offering a whole range of detecting equipment along with responsible hobby advice to the public, visiting detectorists and would-be beginners. Graeme and Mel have become synonymous with the Northwest Group following years of interaction and support.

A celebration of the hobby of metal detecting

Also enjoying the beauty of the vaulted Vestibule space was the stand of the ever-present National Council for Metal Detecting (NCMD), manned by the General Secretary Alan Tamblin and the Communications Secretary Dave Crisp. Dave has recently been invited to serve on the British Museum's Treasure Valuation Committee (TVC) and the North-West Group sends its best wishes to Dave in his new role. Both Alan and Dave were kept extremely busy for the whole of the day's event. The final stand in the Vestibule space was taken by the first of our finds exhibiting clubs, The Northwest MDC. It was this club that, later in the day, was to be awarded the prestigious trophy for best overall show stand. The image shows five members of the club along with the judge of this category, Luc Van Assche.

Leaving the Vestibule and moving into the Chapter House visitors were met with beautiful, giant, stained-glass windows overlooking the marvellous array of finds, in the dozens of showcases, including every conceivable type of find that a metal detector can uncover, from the mundane to the spectacular. The clubs exhibiting in the Chapter House were Wrexham MDC, West Kirby MDC, Lune Valley MDC, H.S.S. Mold and the South Lanc's and Cheshire MDC, between them showing over forty showcases of their favourite finds, everyone hoping to go home with one of the four trophies up for grabs in the finds competitions. Also up for grabs were four metal detectors (courtesy of our sponsors MINELAB), tickets for these prizes being restricted to group members only.

Each year we try to alternate one or more of our competition judges, and this year we had three new judges who had no previous experience of our exhibition. For the coin competition we were lucky to have Alan Dawson. Alan is a numismatist who is also Secretary of the Ormskirk Numismatic Society. Specialising in Tealby pennies, Alan is happy to offer free identifications to all NCMD members. amdawson45@yahoo.com

Every year as part of the finds competition, we include a 'Themed Showcase' trophy, this involves choosing a theme, say, 'buckles through the ages'; this year the theme was 'Trade items' and this could include anything that could be justified as being part of everyday trading: tokens, bag seals, hack gold/silver etc. The showcase is made up from all club members' contributions. The judge (and newcomer) chosen for this competition was Andrew Clark, Andrew is a member of the Crewe & District Coin & Medal Society. The third newbie to judge on the day was Luc Van Assche, from our sponsors MINELAB. Luc was given the job of choosing the best overall show stand in the exhibition. All the stands were spruced up ready for the final inspection and Luc spent lots of time at each stand, evaluating the 'visitor feel-good experience'. It took Luc a long time to reach a final decision. The last trophy for the best artefact was judged again by the ever-reliable Graeme Rushton from Unearthed UK. Graeme has a vast knowledge of artefact detector finds and put it to good use in his final selection.

Competition Winners

Best Coin – Dan Cameron from H.S.S. Mold was awarded the trophy for his Gold Noble. Dan is pictured here with his trophy and alongside the Coin judge Alan Dawson.

Best Artefact – The artefact judge Graeme Rushton chose a beautiful Quillian found by Steven Lewis from the Wrexham MDC. A proud-looking Steven is captured here being presented with his trophy.

Themed Showcase – It's never easy compiling a showcase made up of several members' finds but the Lune Valley Club managed to do a superb job and were duly awarded the trophy. Seen here are members of the Lune Valley club collecting their winning trophy.

Best Overall Show Stand – The trophy that all the clubs want but only one can win. The judge Luc Van Assche had to work hard to separate the winner from the rest, but eventually chose the Northwest MDC. James Snelson from the winning club, is seen here proudly accepting the trophy.



Best Coin – Dan Cameron from H.S.S. Mold was awarded the trophy for his Gold Noble.



Best Artefact – A beautiful Quillian found by Steven Lewis from the Wrexham MDC



Themed Showcase – Lune Valley club collecting their winning trophy



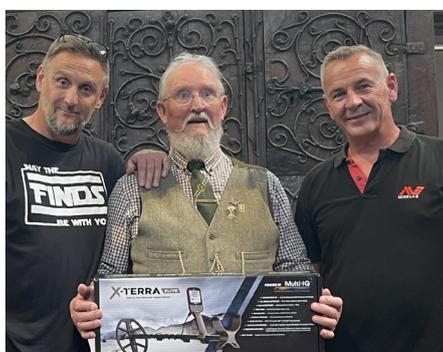
Best Overall Stand – James Snelson FROM Northwest MDC proudly accepting the trophy.



1st prize – Vanquish 340. Steven Davis, Lune Valley MDC. Luc Van Assche presented the prize to William Hargreaves in Steven’s absence.



2nd prize X – TERRA Elite. Michelle Power, West Kirby MDC. A delighted Michelle accepts her prize from Luc Van Assche.



3rd prize – X TERRA Elite. Linda Herbert, Lune Valley MDC. William Hargreaves again steps in and accepts the prize in Linda’s absence.



4th Prize – Go Find 22. James Snelson, North-West MDC. James Snelson accepts the final prize from Luc Van Assche.

Raffle Prize Winners

Once again, we thank our sponsors MINELAB for providing the amazing raffle prizes. We are a non-profit group and raffle ticket sales are exclusive to group members only.

1st prize – Vanquish 340. Steven Davis, Lune Valley MDC. Luc Van Assche presented the prize to William Hargreaves in Steven’s absence (Fig 13).

2nd prize - X – TERRA Elite. Michelle Power, West Kirby MDC A delighted Michelle accepts her prize from Luc Van Assche (Fig 14).

3rd prize – X TERRA Elite. Linda Herbert, Lune Valley MDC. William Hargreaves again steps in and accepts the prize in Linda’s absence (Fig 15).

4th Prize – Go Find 22. James Snelson, North-West MDC. James Snelson accepts the final prize from Luc Van Assche (Fig 16).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The organising committee wishes to sincerely thank: Our sponsor Minelab Unearthed UK.

Our Guests

Portable Antiquities Scheme
NCMD
Wirhalh Skip Felagr

Our Judges

Luc Van Assche, Alan Dawson, Andrew Clark and Graeme Rushton

Our hosts

Richard Hodge, Assistant Sales & Events Manager for Chester Cathedral
Kevin Gorman (For the North-West Group delegates)



Five members of the club along with the judge of this category, Luc Van Assche. Luc was visiting the exhibition in his role as representative of MINELAB our exhibition sponsors.



A member of Wirhalh Skip Felagr, a Viking re-enactment group in full regalia,

NEW TO THE TVC JOB

Dave Crisp

Hi, my name is Dave, and I am a newbie to the TVC – the Treasure Valuation Committee. I have been a metal detectorist for over thirty-six years and have recorded over 1800 items on the database of the PAS (the Portable Antiquities Scheme). I could actually record more but my FLO – Finds Liaison Officer only allows me to record ten items at a time, and it can take four to five months, to record that few, so I will never catch up. I have been lucky over the years and have had about twelve Treasure items of my own; I still have a few items going through now. My day job now (I retired in 2011) is working part-time for the NCMD – the National Council for Metal Detecting – where for the last three and a half years I have been the Communications Officer, working for the members to ensure that detectorists get the recognition and help that they deserve, as there are still people out there who want our hobby banned. They are still working at it, since being defeated in the 80s – by the NCMD committee then.

Except for the last 10 years, we have previously had a detectorist on the TVC committee. Trevor Austin was the last one; he was a well-known and respected NCMD detectorist and a committee member, and I myself, now taking up the post, hope to do justice to the role. Trevor had a passion to ensure members got a fair deal. But all this was before social media, mobile phones and all the technology we use today became so prolific. My job in the TVC is to help the other excellent and knowledgeable members of the team to look at the professionally sourced estimates and, from there, to work out a fair figure that we believe the item might raise if it was put up for auction. The team use their vast experience of the prices at auctions across the UK and compare like



Dave Crisp – NCMD Communications Officer (Right) pictured with Professor Roger Bland OBE (Left) Chairman of the Treasure Valuation Committee.

for like. So, a gold or silver ring that sells at auction at any given price can be used to value another ring of the same type, always taking into consideration the quality of the ring, the difference in condition, and the weight. Also, the date the first ring sold, how prices have changed since that date, and even the gold price at the time of the find – as this could sometimes be five years earlier. It's all relevant to the price that the second ring could be worth, if it were to go to auction. This figure is then recommended to the Minister as the figure to pay out the reward for ensuring our history is saved and recorded and the Treasure is available for display by a museum. This recommendation of price is also sent to the finder and landowner, and both have a chance to query it.

Please remember all this TVC work is done at the end of a very long process which might have taken four or five years within the PAS & Coroner system to reach the TVC.



I have been detecting for over 36 years.

The TVC meets at the British Museum and on Zoom whenever possible. Sometimes the item must be seen by the members to get a better understanding of the condition and finer details. So, it might get put back to the next meeting (a month later). We are all unpaid volunteers, and we have no axe to grind to reduce the reward, as has been

suggested on social media. We meet to consider Treasure items about eight times a year and consider approximately 500 cases a year. But some of the items discussed are second or even third viewings. These are when we need more information, or a better photograph, or there is a query about a recommendation. Sometimes a third valuation is needed, or we need to see the item to give a fairer recommendation to the Minister.

In these cases, the British Museum/TVC commissions one or two trade experts to give their opinion of an estimate of what they think it might sell for at auction. It's normally based on past prices and their experience of the trade. They will consider past prices of very similar items that were sold at auction (but not an estimate of what an item will sell for in a retail sale, as that's a different kettle of fish., as it's just a guess, called an 'offer to buy'. We need true valuations. We also have to take into account the price of gold etc, at the time of finding the item (though most worked items will be worth above the scrap value of the precious metal they are made from).

Before getting this appointment as a detectorists' representative I have been through the process as a finder of Treasure twelve times, and I have always believed the system was and still is fair. So, in my view, the TVC part of the system works well and relatively quickly. It might take three, four or even five years to reach us, but that is due to many factors within the Treasure system, from the initial notification and deposit of the find, report writing by FLOs or curators at the British Museum, Agueda Cymru-Museum Wales, or the National Museum Northern Ireland, scientific analysis and/or conservation, decisions on acquisition by local museums, the time frame for the coroner's court, and the production of the provisional valuation by an expert in the trade. When the TVC gets to see the item at a meeting, that is the first time we see or hear about it. Valuations for most of the items are finalised then, but a few valuations are queried, and some are put back to check facts, or we might like to see the item in person at the next available meeting. Also, all parties then have a choice to accept the recommendation or

put in a valuation from another expert – but the detectorist should always reply to the email.

NOTE: If there is doubt about the permission to detect given to a detectorist, then the finder's share of the reward can be recommended to be reduced (the technical term for this being 'abated', but, for instance, where there is clear evidence of permission from a person that the detectorist assumed had authority to grant permission (e.g. the tenant farmer) then this can be set aside.

Finder's or landowner's views range from good sound reasoning to strong arguments, or – worse – written abuse. In my view there is no need for this type of comment: if you have a point to make which is backed up by good examples, then send it in and the committee will review it, and you will get a polite answer back. One complaint I received said that 'all his club members are experts and know all about prices as they sell everything on eBay'. Well, what we recommend to the Minister are items of Treasure. If what he implied was true, it would mean that his club members were selling their potential Treasure items; that is against the law. Another said that we force the reward down so museums could buy an item cheap. Again, a lie. Why would we? Remember that we are unpaid volunteers and the TVC is completely independent of the British Museum; although we do work alongside the PAS etc, we answer to the Minister and are overseen by the DCMS (the Department for Culture, Media and Sport).

If you have a genuine complaint with independent facts to back it up, write to the Minister and let her/him deal with it. So, to sum up, keep trying to record your finds, and report or email all potential Treasure to your coroner via your FLO within the fourteen-day rule. If you are not sure about an item, let your FLO see it. If your item is taking too long to be assessed (say over two years), contact your FLO or the acting head of PAS (Ian Richardson) and ask him or his team to see where it is in the system.

Remember, detectorists are still responsible for 94% of all Treasure finds.

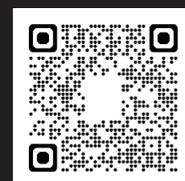
Not the archaeologists who use their very large diggers to remove and dump the topsoil

Not the FLO whose paid job is to write a report on your item. Some of them do a fantastic job and are very supportive of metal detectorists.

It's you, the detectorist, who is unpaid but does the right thing.

That is why you should go on with the struggle to record your finds with the FLO and always report potential Treasure items.

All the best
Dave



To find out more about the Treasure process and the Portable Antiquities Scheme scan the QR code above.

'NOW YOU CAN SEE IT!'

It's just a bit of lead; or is it? That's what I thought six years ago, but it came off a Roman site and it was deep (very deep); it was also a perfect circle (well, nearly), and had four holes set at the top, the bottom and the two sides. As I always do I, recorded it with PAS and it was put down as a Roman (probably) piece of lead (well, that bit was right), a disk that was possibly a lead label, which is what I suggested it was. (WILT-9BF416)

I didn't think much of it and after recording it with my local FLO it went into my lead display case with the other bits like lead seals, weights, pot mends etc. It's amazing if you think about it; lead is very poisonous (see warning below) but we have been using it for thousands of years, and the Romans were masters of using it.

Anyway, early this year the club was booked to do our normal display at the Wiltshire Young Farmers (WYF), as we have done for over thirty years, even counting the year the chair had forbidden us to attend (sorry, I digress). It was there as I was showing a visitor (with gloves on) the many uses of lead down through the ages that I noticed faint scratching on one side. It only showed up as the afternoon sun was at an angle, but it looked like a figure. Later I examined it again and I could clearly see a figure of a girl looking a bit provocative (alluring), as you would have on a label now selling a commodity like a posh watch. Well, that made sense to me as a Roman label would be saying, 'Would you like to feel my grapes?' (or similar).

So I had a perfectly round flat lead item with four holes for tying on to a jar, pot, amphora, box, casket etc, and we know that the Romans imported huge amounts of goods into Briton during their 400-year

holiday here. So, it would make sense to have a label or two showing what was inside, would it not? But it was hard to see, so I sent an email (with a photo) to the British Museum and asked if they had a graffiti expert who could look at it. They do advertise a help desk, and I am sure they have somebody there who specialises in the Roman language (Latin). The reply was revealing: 'It's a PAS item.' And it was passed on to them, who politely replied that there was no graffiti.

Well, sorry, but I beg to differ. I believe (and a few friends agree with me – yes, I do have some) that I can see a lady standing facing right, leaning back with one knee raised and a hand on her hip, wearing a short skirt. I have dismissed a friend's idea when she said she could see an elephant as well, but hey, who knows. So, have a look and make up your own mind. Is there some graffiti there or not? But whatever happens, I know I have found a piece of Roman history that probably originated in another part of the Roman world.



A selection of Roman lead weights which although nice the lead is dangerous.

LEAD WARNING - Lead is poisonous. If you find old lead when detecting, especially if it has a white powder coating, ensure you wash your hands thoroughly after touching it – especially before eating your sandwiches. It is very toxic, especially to children and pregnant ladies.



Can you see the graffiti on the lead disc?

THE STORY OF THE 2019 HACK SAXON COIN

- Unique ID: SOM-DC13B5

'Once upon a time in a land far away.'

Well, that's how fairy stories start normally, but not this one. This one started in 2019 on a rally, where I had the privilege of being then the Rally Coordinator, which is a fancy title for somebody that likes to know just what's going on from start to finish on any rally we were holding. My job never stopped.

So all this started in September at a rally in Wiltshire. It was a one-day event on 300 acres of land that had produced a few items over the years, for the few people that had permission: items like a few hammered medieval artefacts etc. It was not thought to be a fantastic site; you know, the type of field you go to when it's available and your best fields are not. Well, it's that sort of place, just a 300-acre field in a 1200-acre farm. I still remember that Sunday.

The rally was going well, as we had plenty of land in good condition, the weather was great, and the ground was soft and mostly disked (remaining stubble cropped and chopped into the ground). Anyway, halfway through the day I was told about a bit of hacked silver in the finds cabinet; it had been stamped with an impression of a Saxon coin. So off I went to see this fantastic item, and as normal Doug and Steph were the two marshals who were responsible for ensuring the security of all the coins and artefacts on show. I had to do a double take as there it was, a large 25mm chunk of flat silver stamped with what looked like a Saxon coin. It had been cut into a rough octagon (an eight-sided shape) and looked like it had just been minted.

It was a piece of hack silver about 2½ cm across and stamped on both sides. On

one side was an Alfred's name (AEL F[R]E D) in a circle, and on the other some more writing I now know as VVL[F]RED. Who was apparently the moneyer to King Alfred the Great, who ruled Wessex in the late 800s and died in 899 CE. He was also responsible for the famous 'Alfred's Jewel', which was a famous gold and silver pointer as an aid for reading a Bible. I could not believe it! I had searched that field for a couple of years and never found anything remotely Saxon, but there it was – a struck coin on a chunk of thick silver about 2½ cm across. Well, later I was thanking the finder for putting it in the finds box so that everybody could see it, along with all the other items that had been found that day. I reminded him it was worth recording as it was potentially Treasure, and he said he was going to anyway, with the FLO in Somerset where he lived.



cm

The Portable Antiquities Scheme / South West Heritage Trust

The hacked silver with the stamped impression of a saxon coin.

I was involved a few weeks later as it is one of my jobs to look after the landowners' interests and to liaise with the FLO and Treasure Dept at the British Museum (BM). When the finder handed it in, it really caused a stir as it was such an unusual piece. Was this a Viking copy of a Saxon coin? Maybe a trial piece, or just a piece of booty used to make up the weight of a silver tribute? So I inserted myself into the process and informed the Treasure unit and PAS that I was the landowner's representative and asked to be included in the process and to be sent any documents that they send out. Anyway, it all went a bit cold as evaluating Treasure/potential Treasure now takes at least three years, sometimes four, and occasionally even more on more complicated cases. The finder knew the search agreement that we agree with on all our rallies; this is a £1,000 limit on what you find. This is always published on signs at each rally; after this, if an item is worth more, then it's a 50-50 split with the landowner. It also states that, for fairness, the finance committee will oversee the whole process. We think this is very fair to both parties and have always made it a condition of entry.

The BM in April 2023 had a photo valuation done in preparation; this put the piece of silver at just £7-900 which we thought was very low, considering it might be Viking hack silver with a stamped Saxon coin on it. I have a few friends in the auction business, so I asked around and showed the same photographs and BM reports and it came back as £2-3,000 as a starting figure, but all depending on a hands-on close inspection and confirmation of the age. This I then sent to the BM Treasure dept and to the finder. We had also been told that a local museum was very interested in purchasing it, as is their right. I did ask a certain curator I know; but he just smiled – it's like getting blood out of a stone; they are all the same, well, some of them at least.

It must be on the curriculum at archaeology school. But then came an e-mail revelation with no explanation, asking if we would object that they were giving it back to the finder, as it had been disclaimed as Treasure. I certainly did object as it had a potential of £3,000+ value. So I, on behalf of the landowner, asked them to halt the process so I could find out from them just what was going on. Anyway, to cut the story short; for four years through the process, it was believed and written up (see DC13B5) and agreed by all and sundry

that this piece of silver was over a thousand years old, so probably Saxon or Viking. Then a bright academic noticed it was similar to some forgeries that had been produced by somebody in the early 1960s. This then led to it being scientifically checked by analysis and it turned out to be modern silver – so no way could it be 1100 years old.

This was only noticed after four years, but they are only human (as the saying goes). Apparently, in the 1960s a person called Trevor Ashmore had started making copies to sell as replicas, but some carried no makers' marks so could easily be mistaken for the real thing, and supposedly he sold a lot to Americans (well, some people will buy anything). You can see these types of replicas today in museums across the country. Just not made of pure silver. Some, or maybe a lot of these, were probably sold on later as genuine items. This is why it was sent for scientific analysis; and this is the report received back: Non-destructive X-ray fluorescence analysis of the surface of an object with coin stamp from Broad Hinton, Wiltshire, indicated a precious metal content of approximately 86-88% silver. However, its composition is not consistent with it being at least 300 years old. It is therefore not Treasure as defined under the terms of the Act.

The object weighs 13.93 grams.

Department of Scientific Research

The British Museum

As soon as it was confirmed as a fake and the price had dropped below the £1,000, I asked the BM to release it back to the finder.

But as to the final question: what was a 1960s copy of an Alfred the Great coin of the 880s doing in a field in Wiltshire? I personally have no idea. I have heard a few guesses of people that were there, but in truth, we shall probably never know. However, our day out detecting made a lot of money for the Cancer Unit at Bath Hospital, and nearly everybody had a good time, so for us it was a win-win situation.

I also would like to pass on my thanks to the Treasure team, and the research unit who got there in the end. The PAS find report is as it was originally written, with the update attached at the end.



Update:-

Treasure Registrar at the BM ©

On re-examination of the object prior to valuation it was noted that the object showed strong similarities to recorded modern replicas of genuine Anglo-Saxon coins produced by an individual called Trevor Ashmore. These are widely sold as replicas, but are also sometimes passed off as genuine coins, as they are more accurate than many modern replicas, and carry no distinguishing maker's marks unlike some other commercial replicas. It was therefore carefully re-examined by multiple experts, who all agreed that it was likely that it was produced from the same dies as the modern replicas.

As a result, it was decided to confirm through scientific analysis whether or not the metal content of the object was consistent with a genuine Anglo-Saxon object. The analysis confirmed that the metal content was not consistent with a genuine Anglo-Saxon object but was consistent with modern production.

I hope this is helpful.

Kind regards,

Daria

TIMEFRAME OF FINDS

Let's talk time - Dave Crisp

No, this is not about Star Trek, Alien, Doctor Who or any other fantasy time warp thing; this is about what has happened here on our bit of rock since we crawled out of the sea to inhabit what we now call Earth.

Our ancestors really did live in the sea, and from there they developed a multiple complex system of diversity to form what we and all other living creatures are today. In doing so, we came along after the dinosaurs had been and gone, but I mention them as we (detectorists) find the fossil evidence of them and other creatures in our never-ending pursuit of the history of our green and pleasant land. Or, as some suggest: 'Did we just come as a packet of seeds from another planet?'

I am mentioning these time-scales as they are relevant because we can find the fossils of the creatures that came before us. But we are most interested in Man (and Woman) who lived as humans where we detect, and we can find objects showing how they lived and died, all of them years ago.

So here are my ten finds from this very large time chart. Note that three of the items are eyes only. It pays to keep your eyes on the ground!

So, just a list of finds good bad and indifferent, but that's how it goes. And there you have it: a short-list of finds from 120 million years ago to present day. The NCMD's new catch phrase says it all.

"Preserving our history, one find at a time."



1.
An orange chert fossil from a nautilus, possibly 120 million years old

2.
A Palaeolithic flint blade from 14,000–10,000 BC



3.
A flint knife from the Neolithic Age 4000–2500 BC

4.
A Bronze Age chisel 1000–800 BC





5.
A broken bronze harness fitting from the Iron Age.



6.
An early Roman chair leg decoration 200BC–450AD



7.
A broken fitting from an Anglo Saxon bridle horse bit



8.
A rare medieval silver penny of William 1 1070–1072



9.
A Scottish rider gold coin of James VI 1599



10.
A very modern memory stick

NCMD

PROMOTING, PROTECTING, AND ENCOURAGING METAL DETECTING FOR OVER 40 YEARS.

Trevor & Sue Austin Memorial Awards Monthly Finds Competition

The new and modernised competition has now been running since November 2024. Named in memory of Trevor & Sue Austin, who were two of the founding members of NCMD. They worked tirelessly with other founding members to protect our great hobby from outside interference.

The Finds Competition runs every month, and is open to NCMD members only. You can enter anything that you have found during the current calendar month. For example: any coin, artefact or hoard you find from 1st December to 31st December can be entered into the December finds competition.

You can enter any/all of the categories: Best Coin, Best Artefact and Best Hoard.

Please note that any Hoard entries will only be judged once a year in November for the Annual Awards.

Monthly Prizes

Each category winner gets a personalised plaque plus:

Best Coin – £100

Best Artefact – £100

Annual Award Prizes

Glass Trophy plus:

Best Coin – £500

Best Artefact – £500

Best Hoard – £500

We ask that all entries are reported to a FLO. If we see potential Treasure, we will advise you so. Once we advise you of any potential treasure you will be given 14 days to report it, after which the NCMD reserve the right to notify the appropriate body.

Judging

Our judging panel consists of a number of volunteers deemed to have the level of knowledge that is relevant and conducive to this competition. The members on each judging panel can vary from month to month depending on availability.

All judging is anonymous, the judges cannot see finders names and they cannot see what any of the other judges have chosen and scored against. The scores are totalled up in the background, with the highest score from each category being named as the winners.

How to enter

Full T&Cs and the entry form can be found by visiting the 'Competitions' section on the website, which can be found under the 'Members Only' area. Alternatively you can enter via the link in the NCMD App. (You will need to have a current membership and be logged in to enter)

Good Luck!



"Your discoveries deserve a prize!"

NCMD
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR METAL DETECTING
TO PROMOTE
TO PROTECT
TO ENCOURAGE

ARROWHEAD

AWL

AXE

BELL

BADGE

BIT

BOSS

BRACELET

BROOCH

BUCKLE

BULLA

BUST

CAMEO

CHISEL

CHAPE

CLASP

COIN

DEBITAGE

DAGGER

DART

DIPLOMA

FOB

FERRULE

FINIAL

GOUGE

GRINDER

HANDLE

HELMET

HILT

INGOT

KEY

KNIFE

MACE

PENDANT

PESTLE

PHALERA

POMMEL

PUNCH

RAPIER

RAZOR

RING

ROUNDEL

SCRAPER

SEAL

SPEAR

SPOON

SWORD

TAG

TILE

TOKEN

WASTE

WEIGHT

WHISTLE

NCMD

WORDSEARCH COMPETITION

£2000 IN PRIZES TO BE WON

FIND THE 3 ITEMS THAT ARE ON THE LIST, BUT ARE NOT IN THE WORDSEARCH GRID.

DO NOT USE THE REFERENCE LETTERS IN THE RED RIM.

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r
1	t	q	e	l	i	t	e	l	u	r	r	e	f	f	l	z	b	r
2	k	n	i	f	e	f	e	z	w	z	v	l	a	a	a	u	g	e
3	g	n	a	e	j	l	g	l	v	w	e	x	i	r	l	r	s	i
4	b	j	i	d	t	n	d	z	e	m	e	n	e	l	i	e	q	p
5	v	o	q	o	n	s	o	n	m	c	i	l	a	n	a	n	g	a
6	e	a	f	j	c	e	a	o	a	f	a	q	g	l	j	w	g	r
7	g	m	h	c	n	u	p	w	p	h	g	r	e	p	a	r	c	s
8	a	o	l	e	s	i	h	c	p	s	v	d	b	f	a	g	k	v
9	t	l	f	y	r	e	g	g	a	d	n	t	q	z	w	e	j	t
10	i	p	z	e	l	t	s	e	p	u	a	b	o	s	y	z	h	v
11	b	i	t	w	j	e	g	u	o	g	w	r	j	l	v	g	y	t
12	e	d	a	e	h	w	o	r	r	a	g	q	a	l	i	g	n	v
13	d	a	r	i	n	q	h	e	l	m	e	t	w	e	j	u	f	f
14	a	r	l	e	w	g	r	i	n	d	e	r	w	b	p	w	v	p
15	r	t	q	p	d	r	o	w	s	v	g	p	q	b	o	s	s	g
16	v	f	g	a	v	g	r	e	n	t	s	a	f	m	f	a	j	w
17	v	w	f	h	e	g	d	a	b	f	l	v	g	z	l	q	y	s
18	e	l	k	c	u	b	o	e	m	a	c	e	h	c	o	o	r	b

1st PRIZE £800.00

2nd PRIZE £600.00 - 3rd PRIZE £400.00 - 4th PRIZE £200.00

Once you have found the three items that are not in the wordsearch grid, write them in the box below, then either post or scan / photo to wordsearch@ncmd.co.uk. Or complete the form below and post to us before 12 O'clock on the 31st of January 2026. Postal Address: NCMD, PO Box 13183, Gordon, TD11 9AJ

NCMD membership No:

First name:

Surname:

Address:

Town:

County:

Post code:

Phone number:

The 3 items:

ONLY ONE ENTRY PER MEMBER. The answers and competition winner details will be on our website after the draw

2026 NCMD MEMBERSHIP

IF YOU ARE ON AUTO-RENEW YOU CAN IGNORE THIS NOTICE.



Dear Member,

Just a reminder that for many of you, your membership expires on 1st April 2026. This means you will need to renew your membership by midnight on 31st March 2026. (Did you know that you can renew up to 90 days in advance without losing any of your current membership!) To continue enjoying your membership benefits including insurance cover (with zero excess), please renew using one of the following three options:

- If you are a member of a club, the renewal process will continue as normal.
- If you are an individual or a new club, please visit our website at www.ncmd.co.uk/membership
- Please only apply by post if you are unable to use the two methods above. Remember to include a cheque or postal order made payable to the 'NCMD' with your postal application form.

Previous NCMD membership number:

First name: Last name:

Address:

County: Town/City:

Post Code:

Email: Telephone:

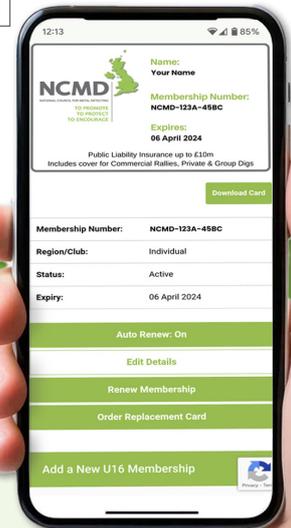
Please tick below your chosen length of membership.

- 1 year £8 2 years £15 3 years £22 5 years £35

Please send this form and a cheque/postal order to:

Membership Secretary
PO Box 13183
Gordon
TD11 9AJ

Remember: You can automatically renew your membership online, when you choose 'Auto Renew'



Any membership queries, please email membership@ncmd.co.uk

From time to time the NCMD needs to update members regarding PAS, PAAG, Heritage Crime, British Museum, NCMD Meeting Minutes, Prize Draws, Competitions, Digging Deep newsletter, Polls and give members the opportunity to have their say.

Please tick below your preferred method of contact you are happy for us to use to keep in touch with you;

- POST EMAIL TEXT I DO NOT WISH TO BE CONTACTED

If you tick this option you will not receive the Digging Deep newsletter or be able to take part in Draws and Competitions.

The National Council of Metal Detecting (NCMD) is a member of SARA (The Sports And Recreation Alliance). If you have any queries or require more information on the NCMD, please visit our website at www.ncmd.co.uk Alternatively, please email communicationsofficer@ncmd.co.uk