

Treasure Talk

NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH AFRICAN METAL DETECTING ENTHUSIASTS
NUUSBRIEF VIR SUID AFRIKAANSE METAALVERKLIKKER ENTOESIASTE

Fourth Quarter 2003 Vierde Kwartaal

Sponsored by **Santam** ons borg



Detecting near Prague in the Czech Republic
(See article inside on the fantastic experience I had)

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Letter from the Editor / Brief van die redakteur

Dear reader

This last issue of 2003 have some really nice stories...but first the BIG news – Dawie Berg from Shelley Beach is the winner of our Three-in-One competition sponsored by Gerry Freeman-Smith of England. Congratulations Dawie and thanks to Gerry and everyone that entered – the funds will be well used to enhance our humble newsletter.

My wife and I were lucky to tour Eastern Europe during September and I even had time to swing a borrowed detector on foreign soil – please see my story inside. Jumping a continent to Africa, do not miss Mike Conradie's wonderful article on their detecting trip to Colesberg – what a story! As you would soon pick up reading all the stories, almost all of them had been published on the international F.I.N.D.S. website (www.findsinternational.org - see the official forum there).

Enjoy the upcoming holiday season and happy treasure hunting to all our readers!

Pierre Nortje
Editor

Beste leser

Hierdie laaste uitgawe van 2003 het sommer 'n klomp lekker stories om te lees, maar eers die GROOT nuus – Dawie Berg is die wenner van ons Drie-in-Een kompetisie wat geborg is deur Gerry Freeman-Smith van Engeland. Wel gedaan Dawie en dankie aan Gerry en almal wat deelgeneem het.

Ek en my vrou was gelukkig om gedurende September 'n kort toer deur Oos-Europa te kon onderneem – ek het selfs kans gehad om daar 'n bietjie metaalverklikking te doen. Sien my storie binne. Moet ook asseblief nie Mike Conradie se pragtige weergawe lees van hul fantastiese besoek aan Colesberg nie. Die vondste is om van jaloesie te huil! Soos u binne sal opmerk, word die meeste van ons artikels nou op die amptelike F.I.N.D.S. webtuiste www.findsinternational.org gepubliseer – sien die amptelike forum daar.

Hoop u het 'n wonderlike vakansie seisoen en lekker skattejag!

Pierre Nortje (Editor / Redakteur)

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Hi Pierre

Once again – thank you for the “Treasure Talk”. All the readers do realise the time and effort spent to send out and put together a newsletter so interesting that time and again, a person must read through, again, and again. I myself fully appreciate; and am thankful every time I receive a new copy.

If a person could put back the clock, “o boy” with all the new detectors, improvements, better and deeper, you would spend every second detecting and loving every second.

I notice Bernard Jacobs from Stanger is looking for a coil for his Beach Hunter AT3. tell him to write to Garrett Electronics in America, and enquire, they are the most helpful people. I had the same trouble with a coil for an ADS 7. No trouble; they sent me a replacement; and still wished me Happy Hunting. They will notify him “out of stock”, (but) he may still be lucky.

It must be interesting to meet people from overseas; that can still enjoy a days outing and exchanging, and showing their finds to fellow members.

Many thanks

Tommy Thomas
Pretoria-North

I don't think Tommy will mind if I tell readers that he is a true veteran of the hobby in South Africa. He is approaching his 90th year and our oldest Treasure Talk reader. We all salute you Tommy.

Dear Sir

I have seen a list of SA Numismatic Societies in the SA Coin & Banknote Catalogue. Please could you be so kind as to send me more details regarding membership to your society, or a contact name and number

Regards

Andrew Winter
Schoongezicht
Durbanville

Readers of Treasure Talk – please send us some of your stories and/or metal detecting photos // Waar is ons lesers se bydraes? – Groot asseblief!

Hello Pierre

I am keen to buy a higher priced metal detector. Can you please give me a few tips on selecting? I want to search beach areas plus go in the water. The machine must be able to work in wet sea sand and salt.

It should be a buyers market now with the SA Rand to the USA dollar plus/minus 7.40. I also want the greatest depth possible in heavy junk areas for say silver, coins and gold. Other questions are: -

- What make of machine would you suggest is the best?
- Have you got any second hand machines in good working order?
- Have you got prices on new machines?
- Approximate delivery times?
- How many and what size batteries does it take?
- Is it a recharge power pack?

Sorry for all the questions but I do not want to make a mistake when buying an expensive machine! Thanks...

Cornelius Nilsen
Port Elizabeth

Hi Cornelius, as editor I unfortunately cannot recommend any make of machine nor do I have a second hand machine for sale. I can however forward any comments from readers to you. Anyone out there with some suggestions?

Dear Sir,

My name is Olivier BARET, I am coming from France where I use to do detection as a hobby. Now I am living in SA and I would like to know if detection is allowed here? Where can we find metal detector to buy? Is there any club or association which can tell me what to do and what not to do? My wife and I are now for 2 months in SA and living in Durban. I will be very greatfull if you could answer back to this Email.

Thank you in advance.

Regards

Olivier BARET
Durban

Olivier, I send you an e-mail (Editor)

Letters from our Readers // Briewe van ons lesers

Dear Pierre

Carol and I have recently returned from England, where we attended our niece's wedding. I traded in my old White's classic 3 machine for a new Classic ID detector. We tried it out on my brother's farmland and managed to find quite a few old Victorian coins and a George III cartwheel penny of 1797. This particular coin was only made in 1797 when only 73 000 were struck.

I was very impressed with my new detector, and since returning from England we have been a few times to our sites in Heidelberg. This new machine has a larger 10 inch coil compared to the conventional 8 inch and overall it's the best detector I have owned.

All the very best to you and all our detectorist friends.

Mike & Carol Bull
Springs

Beste Pierre

Jammer ek skryf nou eers. Die jaar was tot nou 'n dolle jaagtog by die skool. Ek het die eerste rugbyspan afgerig en ons het al in Februarie begin speel in die super sestien reeks en die seisoen het nou eers tot 'n einde gekom toe ons in die Mpumalanga halfeindstryd verloor het. Ek het elke los minuut aan die outjies gewei. Alles anders het langs die pad agtergebly.

Ek wil vreeslik graag weer Treasure Talk ontvang en sal betaal as dit moontlik is om die uitgawes wat ek gemis het te kan kry.

Ek belowe al jare om bydraes te stuur en voel baie sleg daarvoor. Ek verlaat die onderwys in Desember om my boerderybedryfie al my tyd te gee. Die laaste jaar het ek nie naby 'n verklikker gekom nie. Ek stel egter steeds intens belang in die stokperdjie en wil graag bydraes stuur.

My persoonlike kennis is egter beperk tot die geskrewe woord en daarom het ek gewonder of jy sal belangstel in 'n kwartaallikse boekresensie aangaande boeke met skattejag en ander relevante temas.

Groete

Christo Steyn
Witbank

Natuurlik stel ek belang Christo! By voorbaat baie dankie vir jou boekresensie-aanbod.

Letters from our Readers // Briewe van ons Lesers

Pierre

Die trip na Colesberg was uitstekend, soos altyd het ons baie geswaai, en toe kry ek mos my eerste Boere-oorlog muntstuk, 1901 tienie! Arundel het ook sy klompie goete opgelewer, eetvurkies, nog 'n tienie, knipmesse, knope ens. Johan de Beer was saam met ons, hy is 'n navorser van formaat en het Norvalspont konsentrasiekamp in detail nagevors....ons kyk nou met nuwe oge na die rye klippe wat tussen die tente gepak was, asook die klein bakoende tussenin. Op die koppie waar jy soveel knope ge-oes het het ons 'n ashoop ontdek en dis mos Mike Conradie se kos! Mooi goed daar uitgehaal.

Ons het jou gemis!

Groete

Bertie Rietveld

Hi Pierre

Have just arrived back in Scotland after having spent the past three months in Western Australia [Perth]. I of course carted two detectors all the way out there and only found a few coins on the beaches, no jewellery whatsoever.

The beaches in that area are long and narrow and according to the locals they had recently had a few good storms which deposited large amounts of sand and equally large amounts of what they call sea grass on to the beach. At a guess I would say that there was at least one meter of sand over the normal beach level. Metal detecting in this area of Australia seems to be mainly concentrated on gold nugget prospecting and I have brought back nine local detecting magazines called **Gold Gem and Treasure** which I intend sending out to Wolfie who can then pass them around. I would appreciate it if you could send on to me his home address and tele. number as I lost mine in the move out here. I have someone coming out that way in a month or so time and they will bring them out with them.

The mags concentrate mainly on gold and gem collecting but I'm sure some of the guys will find them an interesting read.

I am now going to concentrate on locating some detectorists in Scotland and England and get busy out here, having said that winter is just about here and that makes for heavy digging. There is a very good program on TV called Hidden Treasures out here and some of the things that are found with a detector would really make you get out there and searching hail rain or snow.

Everything of the best to all in South Africa.

Charles & Margaret Hodge
Scotland

My Detecting Adventure in Eastern Europe

By Pierre Nortje

Earlier this year, when my wife and I booked our eastern European trip to Austria, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, I had a vague hope that the trip would include a little bit of metal detecting.

Where, when and with whom, I had absolutely no idea.

I remembered that about a year ago, an English detectorist staying in Germany called "Spike", posted on this forum telling of his fantastic experiences at the national detecting championships at Tacov in the Czech Republic. I e-mailed him and he put me in contact with an Englishman (Guy Casey) who lives in Prague, capital of the Czech Republic. Guy and I arranged to meet up on the 27th of September in Prague, one of the cities that Mariana and I decided to visit.



Map of Eastern Europe

I wrote about this a month ago on this forum and was contacted by first one, and then a second Dutch detectorist who asked me if they could join Guy and me in Prague – *this just goes to show how many international readers this forum have!* To cut a long story short, it was arranged that all four of us would meet up at the hotel where my wife and I stayed on the stated date at 9 o'clock the morning.

Boy, was I counting the days...!

The moment I stepped out of the hotel I was greeted by a young Dutchman who was at least 3 inches taller than me. Ray introduced me to his friend Ton Hofman and we chatted uninterruptedly for about 15 minutes before being joined by our host, Guy Casey.



Photo taken by my wife – from left to right – Ton, Pierre and Ray outside the hotel waiting for our English host (Guy Casey) to arrive

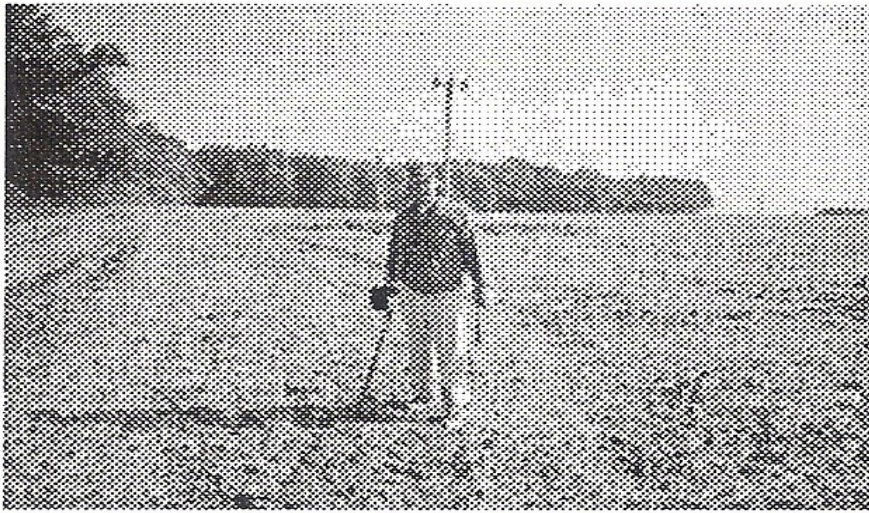
Minutes later the four of us were speeding off to a small town outside Prague. The area where we stopped 20 minutes later was outside a small village – a small forest surrounded by ploughed fields. A man with a large dog came walking up to us and after a short conversation between Guy and him; we had the OK to detect!

Guy told us that the man mentioned something about local folklore regarding an 11th or 12th century settlement in the middle of the forest...seconds later our feet could hardly keep up with us as we entered the forest. It was **"show time folks!"**



Getting everything ready

My digging tool was a small trench trowel that Guy borrowed me. I found the digging very hard in the forest – central and Eastern Europe had a very dry summer and now in autumn the soil was as hard as granite. After half an hour my digging hand(s) were killing me – I gave up and stepped out of the forest and onto the ploughed field to test the old saying that the grass is always greener on the other side. Well, in this instance it was...



A picture of me in the ploughed field with the forest on the left

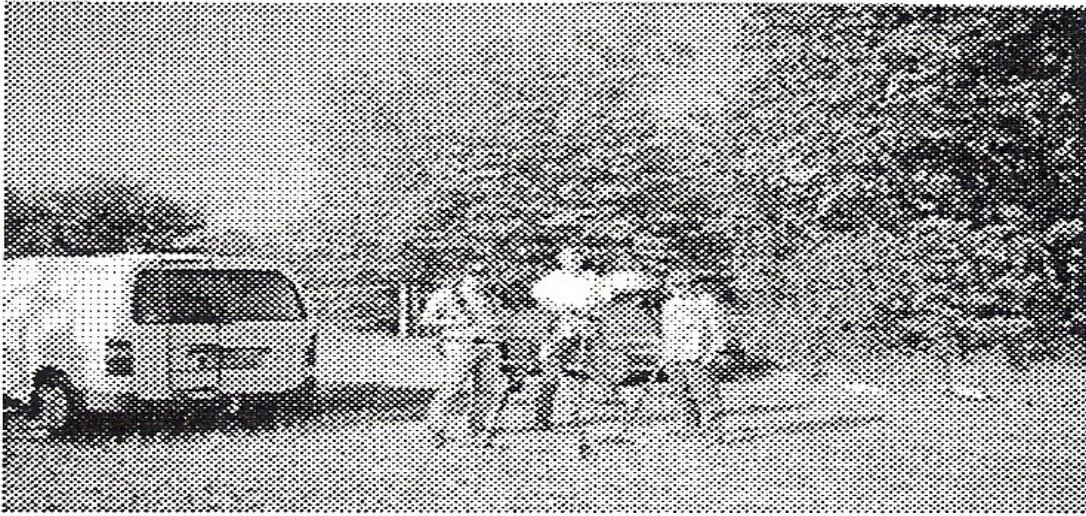
A few minutes later my borrowed CZ20 detector (thanks Ton!) gave a welcoming beep and from hardly 3 inches I unearthed my first ring in 5 years of detecting from a non-swimming area/site. (I have found more than 750 rings in that period but all from local SA beaches and areas). The bonus was it being set by a small uncut, but polished, blue stone – its twin unfortunately being lost how many years ago? I am almost sure that the small blue stone is a sapphire, but as the metal of the ring is neither gold nor silver, I have some doubts...but who cares? It is still a fabulous find and looks really ancient.



The ring with some coins I found

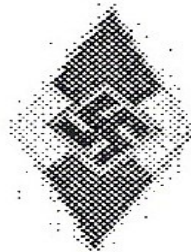
Fifteen minutes later I unearthed my first coin - it was dated 1914 and Czechoslovakian. Then a very large, hand made nail turned up that Guy later judged to be of medieval date. Then a Russian coin from the time of the occupation. Beep-beep my detector sounded off as one nice find after the other was made.

The morning stood still for me – I was in detectorist heaven in a *foreign country* on an *ancient ploughed field* in an area whose history could be traced back to even *before Roman times*. What more could I ask for?



From left to right: Ton, Ray and Guy Casey

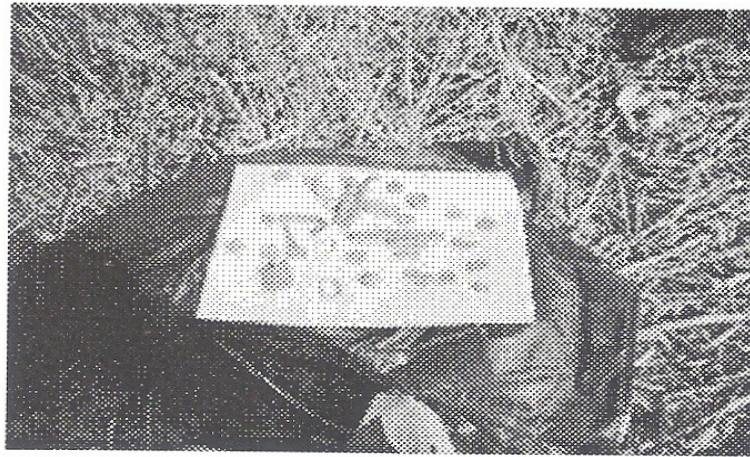
When I looked up again I saw Ton walking up to me with the biggest of smiles on his face... in his hand was a large metal military badge, complete with pin, and with the unmistakable swastika on the front. According to Ton, who has detected in all the major Western European countries, it was a great find and something that seldom turns up – I was very glad for his part. Guy also found a smaller Nazi pin badge – see photo.



Guy found a small Nazi pin just like this one – I unfortunately could not find a photo of Ton's big metal badge – he will e-mail me a photo when he is back in the Netherlands at the end of October

It was almost time to return to the car and I went back into the forest to look for Ray when my detector gave a good signal. It was a German coin from WW2. Then another and another... until I had four or five in my hand – the coins must have dropped from a German soldier's pocket 60 years ago while he sat resting in the forest.

Time was up and I returned to the car where Guy was already waiting – we showed our finds to each other and took some photos. We all made plenty of finds – the 3 detectorist "B's" aplenty – buckles, badges and buttons. I really found much more "keepers" than I anticipated as you can see from the photo. I was especially glad for finding approximately 10 coins from three different eastern European countries!



A photo of my finds made during three hours detecting – not bad I would think!

When Guy Casey dropped me off at the hotel I did not know what to say to him – how do you thank a guy that you have never met before and did so much for you just because you share the same hobby? To him and our two newly made Dutch friends, Ray and Ton, I can only say – “Thanks a million guys”

Some comments from F.I.N.D.S. readers on the International Forum

...Not much of a language barrier when it comes to Detectorists and their hobby ...Well-done guys! George (Alaska)Priceless Pierre! Course, your trip was pretty good! John (USA)Amazing post Pierre and some excellent finds, given the limited time you had to detect. Dino (England)Great story and fantastic finds also. The best finds were the friends you made. Great stuff!!!! Marcel (Canada)There can only be one answer to this post and that is it takes metal detecting to bring strangers together and become life long friends. What a hobby. Sir Charles (United Kingdom)It was a pleasure to meet you and the other person Guy and off course Ton. Ray (Netherlands)... ..Pierre - What a haul for such a short time!! That sure sounds like a fun time - maybe the guys will show up on your door sometime and you can repay them! Steve (USA).... ...Thank you for sharing your trip with us. Yikes... you made a heck of a lot of great finds in your short time out. Thanks Again and Happy Hunting to Ya!!! Jack (Canada)What's amazing is the new friends you made Colin (Canada)...It doesn't get any better than this Jim (USA)...Great post and some very nice finds also Scott (Canada)Great post and it's good to hear you and the Mrs. are now home safe as well. Bill (South Western Ontario)... ..Detecting...the only way to travel Andy (Florida USA)Glad you enjoyed the trip. Spike (Germany)

GOLD RING FOUND ON THE BEACH

Imagine searching for a gold ring on the beach if you don't know where it was lost, possibly even in the waves? You must be dreaming! Yes, even though the search went hot and cold, it did end like a dream come true.

Wednesday 3rd March while metal detecting on Look Out Beach, a lady approached me enquiring if I may be able to assist finding a wedding band lost earlier during the day. Her name is Rags and she had spent the morning on the beach with Sharon and Mike Robins.

When they arrived at the beach Mike pitched a small tent on the dry sand behind the lifesaver's chair and then went for a swim. When he returned from the water he discovered he no longer had his wedding ring on his finger. She was convinced he had lost the ring while pitching the tent. So it appeared all cut and dry that we would find the ring if we conduct a search on the dry sand where the tent was pitched.

However, experience also taught me to double check the circumstances surrounding a loss so I requested that Mike gives me a call to obtain the whole story firsthand direct from him.

Wednesday evening and Thursday morning we conducted a thorough search of the entire section of beach behind the lifesaver's chair, without any success.

Noon Thursday Mike phoned to give me his version of the circumstances of the loss and indicated that he thought he may have lost the ring when he was swimming behind the waves, which now puts a whole new perspective on the search.

Considering all these uncertainties and also the difficulties involved in a water search, we decided to abandon the exercise, except that in the event of us ever finding a ring answering to Mike's description, we should contact him in Johannesburg since it was of great sentimental value. His wife gave him the ring when they were married 18 years ago - and he offered a reward if ever we did find his ring!

The conversation ended on the basis that I would phone him early Friday before his return to Johannesburg, if by chance we found his ring by then on our daily visits to the beach.

I then took it upon myself to continue the search in the water Thursday evening and early Friday morning, but still no sign of the ring.

Friday morning as I came out of the water my sixth sense said to me perhaps Mike lost the ring when he arrived at the beach and was on his way to pitch the tent, so I decided to extend the search to this new section of the beach.

What a surprise I had when after just a few minutes the metal detector signalled a target below the sand and up turned a gold ring answering to the description Mike gave me.

I phoned Mike and both him and his wife Sharon were overjoyed by the good news and arrangements were made for them to collect the ring late on Friday.

Mike then told me Rags had dreamt on Thursday night that we had found the ring and that I would phone him Friday morning to give him the good news.

Seems like dreams do come true if everyone does his bit, including the dreamer.

JOHN & ERICA

The Day the Sea Gods Smiled

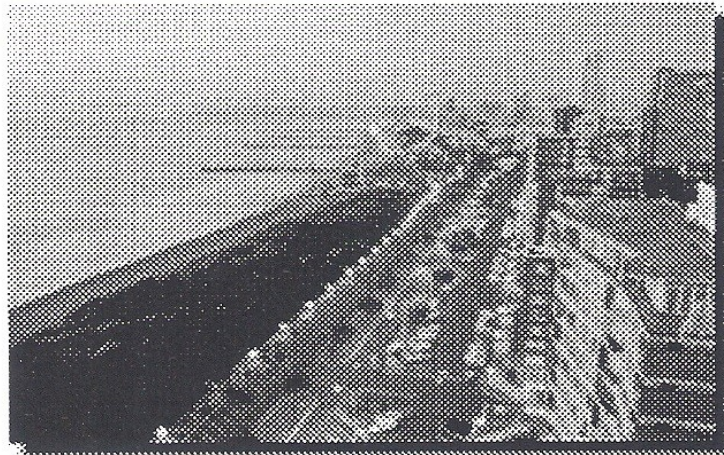
Dave van Rensburg

Not a bad day on the beach. I had found quite a few coins and most of them were still in good condition. I had been busy for about two hours and the signals were beginning to dry up. It was a lovely warm day and I looked out to see where the ships were anchored in the anchorage. From Battery Beach, here in Durban, one could see the ships clearly.



Durban, with its warm subtropical climate, is one of South Africa's favourite holiday destinations

I decided to check the wet sand near the concrete drainage pipe on the southern side of the beach. I moved into the area and there were no signals forthcoming. I decided to do one more sweep and then call it a day. I swept around the edge of the pattern I had marked on the beach.



Durban's so called golden mile at sunset

Suddenly my Fisher Impulse gave out a loud hard signal. I pushed my digger into the sand and about five inches down I felt something. It was not a coin as it was obviously bulky. I dug carefully into the hole I had made and came into contact with blue plastic.

I dug around the object and pulled a package out of the sand. It was a parcel of 1 foot x 6 inches and felt quite solid. My heart beat faster. What was in the parcel? What had caused my Impulse to whine so loudly? I picked the parcel up and moved onto the dry sand. I put the detector down, sat down and took a closer look at the parcel.

The outside covering was an ordinary plastic bag. This I tore loose and found the object then wrapped tightly in strips of cloth. I unwrapped these and then came to a layer of buffing tape. This tape was tightly wrapped around the object and it took a good ten minutes to unravel the tape. Under the tape the next layer was newspaper and I noticed the print was probably Chinese. This fact now intrigued me and I glanced out to the sea. Perhaps a Chinese ship in the anchorage had something to do with this mystery?

I tore the tightly wrapped paper away and the first glimpse of the mysterious object came to light. It was a glimpse of porcelain with the typical golden lines used by Chinese artists. I tore the rest of the paper away and out came a perfect Chinese vase. Where did the signal come from? I then noticed that the vase had paper inside it. I pulled this out and out came an iron ring. This ring had given me my signal and attached to it were long strips of paper charred at the bottom edges and smelling of incense.



The Chinese Vase

It then occurred to me that Chinese sailors must have had a ceremony to their sea gods – wrapped the vase and dropped it in the sea.

The iron ring was the giveaway and because of it I found a very unusual find. Once again, I mused, one just never knows what is waiting out there to be discovered. Who would ever think that a perfect Chinese vase would be on the list of finds?





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Boers vs. Brits : The 3rd year at Colesberg vs.



Posted By: Mike Conradie from South Africa (*proxy.cpt.mweb.co.za*)

Date: Saturday, 20 September 2003, at 11:17 a.m.

Early August I arrive home from work to find a "Santam" envelope in my postbox. I, like most South African metal detectorists, know what this means – the latest copy of our favourite SA hobby magazine "Treasure Talk".

Before I can open it, the cell phone rings and on the other side is Lukas with a "Hey Mike, we're going to Colesberg, you coming?" Yes! Yes! Oh Yes! I will be there (I missed the first two trips due to work pressures and still kick myself for not going). After a short chat its hello wife, kids, dogs and open Treasure Talk devouring the contents including the add for the forthcoming trip, all of this before supper.

I eventually sit down for the meal and halfway through the phone rings once again. This time round it is my metal detecting buddy Dave who starts informing me about the forthcoming trip (he also just received a copy of T.T.). My food gets cold, I loose my appetite as we talk metal detecting and in the process develop an ailment common to detectorists called treasure hunting fever, sound familiar?

Well it's 4 long weeks, some planning, checking equipment and a lot of reading in preparation for the trip. At last Sunday 7 September arrives, Dave and myself take to the road. From Durban to Colesberg via the Transkei is a distance of 1002 km (600 miles) – it takes us 10 hours.

On arrival at "Ventersfontein" (the farm at Colesburg where we stayed) we greet all the other treasure hunters. Lukas van der Merwe, Kobus Nel, Danie Human, Bertie Rietveld and Johan de Beer from Johannesburg, Johan Oosthuizen from Struisbaai, Dave van Rensburg and myself from Durban make up the 8 treasure hunters.

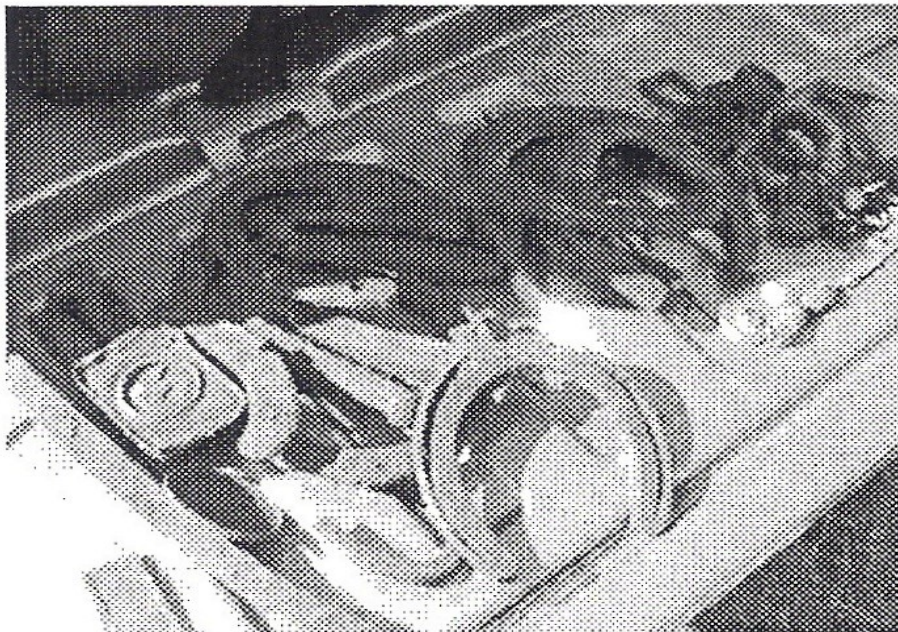
The chaps from Cape Town? Well some fell ill whilst others claimed commitments abroad – shame on you Pierre.

After all the formalities we glance at the sun, +/- 2 hours of daylight left. We grab our detectors and head for the field. The first site is Arundel siding where a British camp once stood during the Anglo Boer War (1899 – 1902) . Amongst ourselves we agree that the first to find a regimental button will buy a round of drinks for the group once we get to town.



As the sun were setting the detectors were humming

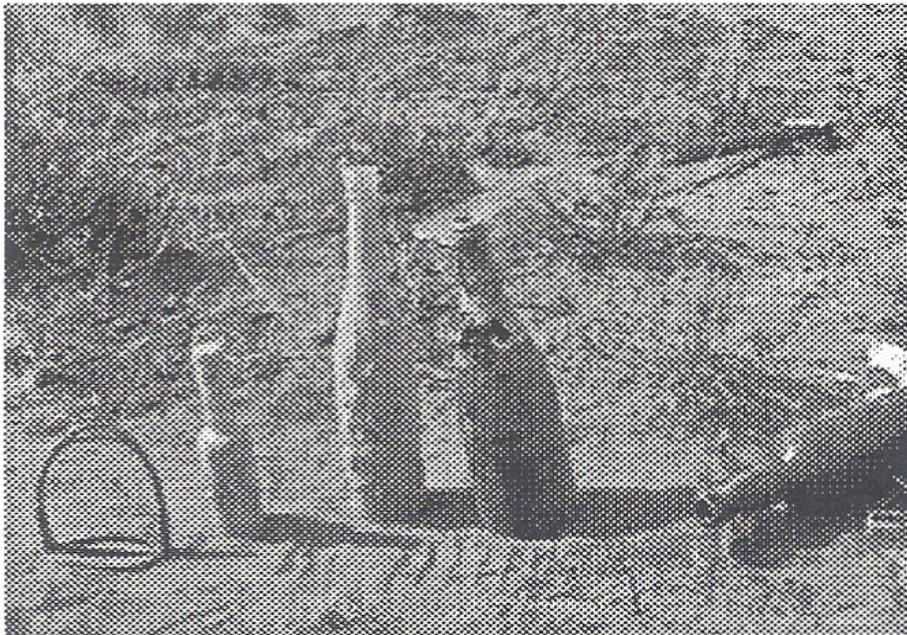
I head for soft ground where a couple of Aardvark and Meerkat have burrowed into the ground. A loud signal and my first find – a spike and tether ring for horses. A couple of feet further, loud signal and another spike and tether ring. Danie finds the first regimental button and a few minutes later uncovers a silver 3d Victorian coin dated 1900 in pristine condition. The others also find their fair share of goodies ranging from Lee Metford Cartridges to buttons, buckles and horse spikes. I find a large New South Wales Lancers button and two pocket knives. With our appetites whetted we head for home and a well-deserved rest.



Some Victorian military metal artifacts recovered

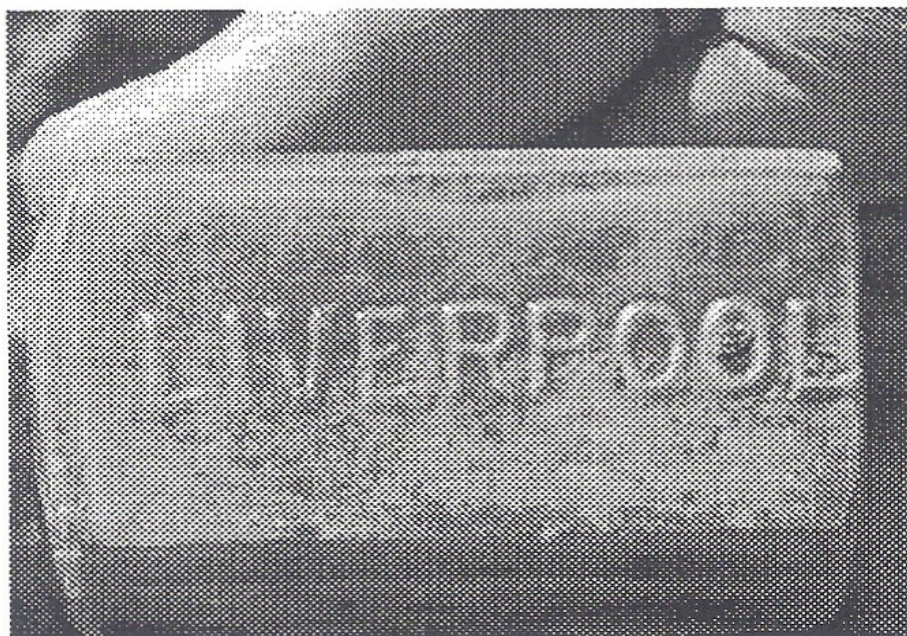
Monday Morning 06:00, breakfast consists of eggs, bacon, toast and coffee which prepares us for the long day ahead back at Arundel camp. I continue to find horse spikes and tether rings; all are plotted on the GPS whilst the others continue to find various items. Many surface finds are made and after 103 years of exposure are still in a remarkably good condition. Dave finds the mystery item a large button inscribed, "Oh you damn lair".

I wander around searching for something else. Some sign that will confirm my suspicion that we are not searching the main camp. This thought keeps nagging me, why so many horse related relics? Then I receive a broken signal over a relatively wide area. I check the discriminator, which is set between 0 and 1. Why then this strange broken signal? The only way to find out is to dig.



Bottles and other artifacts

The hole I dig gets bigger and bigger with one then two horse shoes appearing. I call over to Lukas, Kobus Danie and Johan to share this hole of "lucky" horseshoes. In total I dig 53 and realize that I have found a small ash pit. Danie and myself proceed to dig further; a Roses Lime Juice bottle appears followed by 2 champagne's, Holbrook's Worcestershire Sauce, Eno's Fruit Salts and stouts. A stirrup, button, buckle and other oddments also appear confirming my belief that the site is that of a cavalry camp – the Lancers used horses did they not? Yet the main camp still eluded us.



Whilst closing the hole Danie looked up and commented about the fact that by face was dirty and black from all the dust, was his the same? We just laughed and retired for the day. Back at base we packed out our finds sharing our prizes with each other over drinks. A braai and bon fire ended our first day. Tuesday morning 05:00, wake up call, we're heading for Norvals Pont and should we not be there by 07:00 no access will be granted to the site. Needless to say, everyone is on time. Johan is extremely excited in anticipation of what can be found as his interest and research centers around Boer War Concentration camps. Boer woman and children were kept in these camps having been removed from their farms all over the Free State at first and later the rest of the country. This is also one of those sites where many woman and children lost their lives through illness; disease, malnutrition etc. yet Norvals Pont was one of the better organized camps.

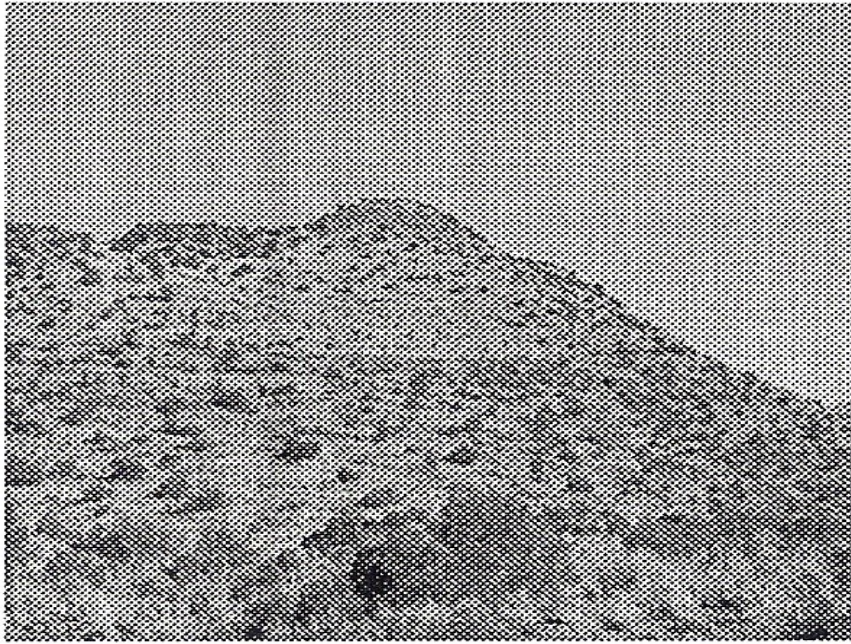


This was the opportunity for Johan to take his research out of the library into the field. Lukas with a GPS and Bertie with his talking detector spent most of the day pinpointing where the rows of tents, the baking ovens, even the veldt church and other structures once stood. For the untrained eye very little remained but on closer inspection a picture started unfolding. We pored over photos and compared landmarks and features on them to the hills and mountains that surrounded us pinpointing various locations. This was history, alive and well and we experiencing it first hand.

Lukas became so engrossed in the task at hand that he did not see a fence in the middle of the search area as an obstacle. He hopped over and came face to face with a very irate farmer who at gunpoint marched him off to the Police station laying a charge for trespassing. After he explained the situation to the officer he was immediately released but it caused some sweat – luckily no harm was done!

Finds at the old Boer concentration camp were disappointing but expected as there was not much that these “prisoners” possessed or could have lost. Some arrived in camp with only the clothes on their backs and nothing else, the english soldiers under orders having burnt the farms and killing the livestock. I climbed the kopje overlooking the camp finding sentry and defensive positions packed out of rock. Sitting down in one of them I tried to

experience it the same way a Tommy might have done. I however did not have the fear of being attacked and shot at.



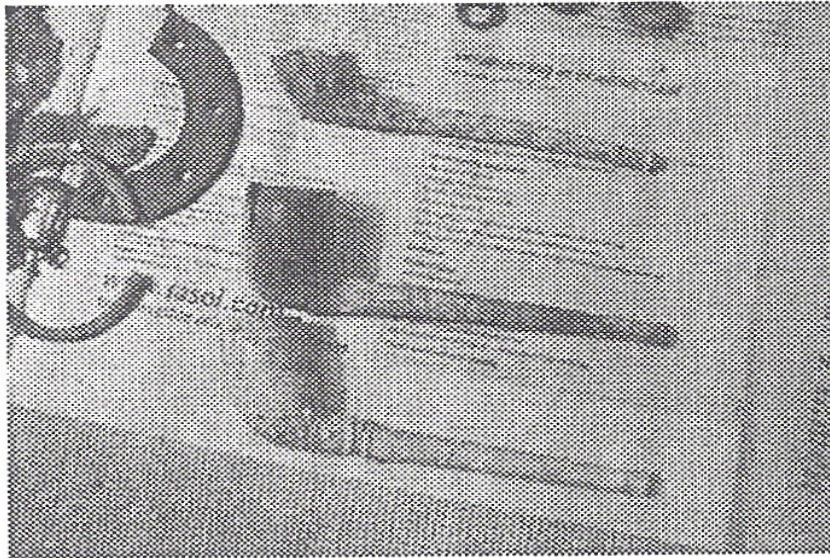
Small mountain or hill (but extremely hard to climb) called a "kopje" with well camouflaged British fortifications that are very difficult to see

Towards the afternoon we decided to try a site overlooking the Orange River. This was the point where the railway line crossed the river and the Boers had blown the bridge. A strategic position worthy of defense throughout the war. Up the kopje we climbed Lukas in the lead, detectors bleeping and everyone finding items. Bertie's talking detector, whilst in the process of identifying a signal, was rudely interrupted by him saying, "I don't believe it. My first coin". In the palm of his hand he held a silver 1901 3d piece. This coin had lain on the ground for more than 100 years exposed to the elements looking like it was lost yesterday.



Horse "peg"

Many surface finds were made due to the terrain being very rocky. Late afternoon Lukas and Danie discover an ash pit and started digging it. This proved to be one of the better pits to dig as button after button appeared flowed by clay smoking pipes, bottles, studs, buckles etc. A pair of hobnailed boots were recovered and carefully packed away. All the brass studs and nails could be seen and in our opinion would make a good display in the detectorists museum. A total of 35 regimental buttons and 2 repairable intact pipes were recovered, in all a fruitful day.



Smoking pipes

Wednesday was the day I was looking forward to. The day we were going to Slingsfontein. Slingsfontein is one of the campsites that in Feb 1900 were photographed from a vantage point high on a kopje. My objective was to find the rock from which the photo was taken and then to take another photo 103 years later to compare and plot the camp. On arrival 5 of us headed for the kopje and a climb that sapped my energy.

On reaching the summit we searched and found the spot we were looking for. I took the photos and plotted my search area. All were finding their fair share. The GPS was working overtime as individual tents were identified and plotted, the horse holding area was pinpointed, as was the area where the 4 guns of "O" Battery once stood. Shrapnel was found in camp confirming reports that the Boers had fired projectiles into camp at regular intervals.

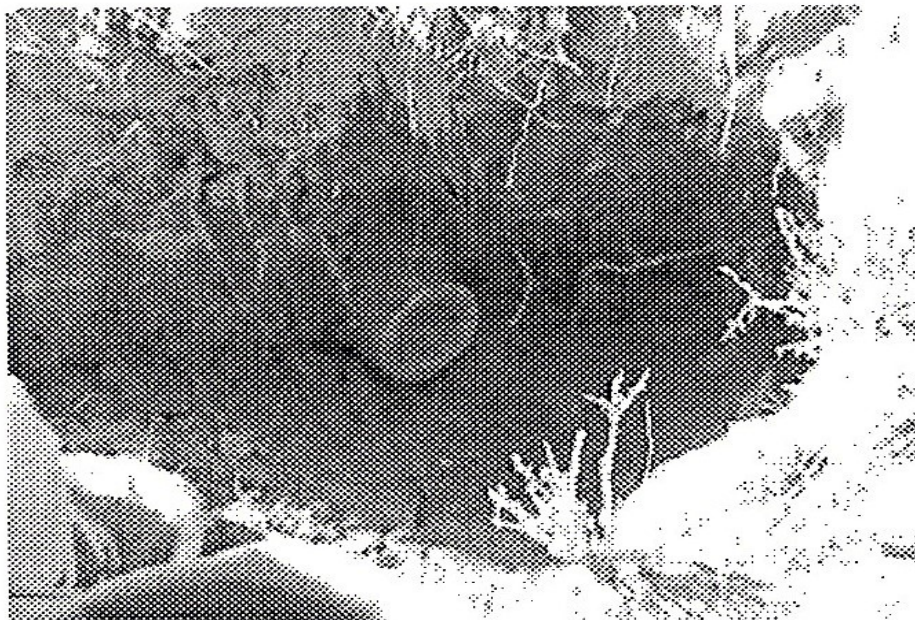


Silver Victorian 3 pence (1901) found by Bertie



British Boot Polish tin

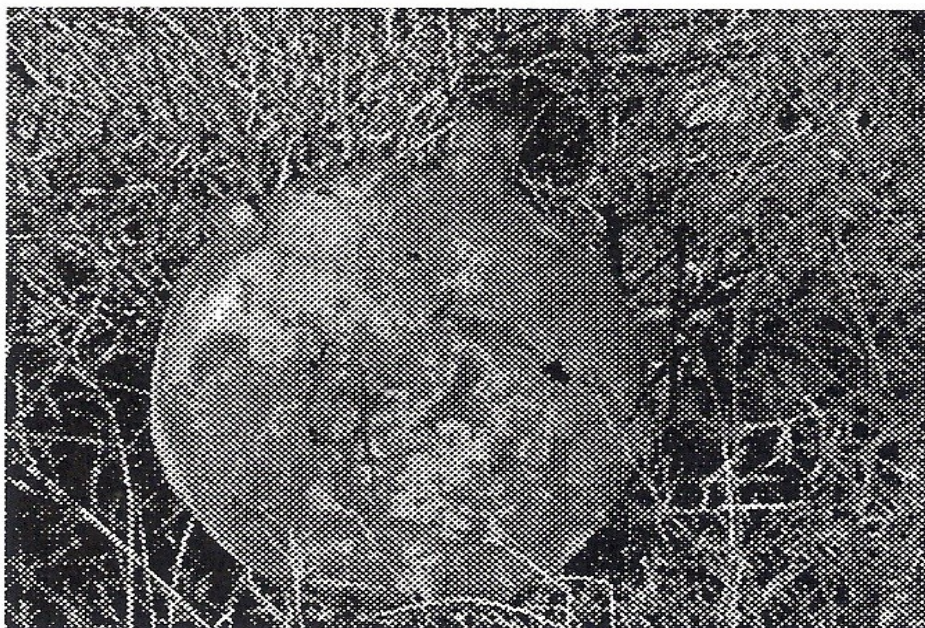
I found a Worcestershire regiment shoulder badge, buttons, live ammo and plugs from the shells fired by the cannon. The area was littered with tins, all showing the soldered joints. Dubbin tins abounded inscribed with the manufacturers name and dates ranging from 1897 to 1900. Dated tent pegs, horse spikes and many more relics were found. On the way back we visited the sight where 4 New Zealand Mounted Rifles members were buried and committed ourselves to cleaning up the site making it more presentable and accessible to future interested parties.



Spot the Bottle

The last day was spent at the museum in Colesberg. The curator Belinda Gordon has a wealth of knowledge about the war around Colesberg. She showed us relics; photos and documents that made ones mouth water. She inspired us so much that we decided to climb Coleskop. I thought to myself that if the British could drag a cannon up the mountain taking about 3 hours

to accomplish this feat, then it would not be so difficult for a person carrying a metal detector and digging tool. By the time I reached the halfway mark I was bushed and my admiration for the Royal Engineers and Artillery increased 10 times.



Hundred year old Waterbottle

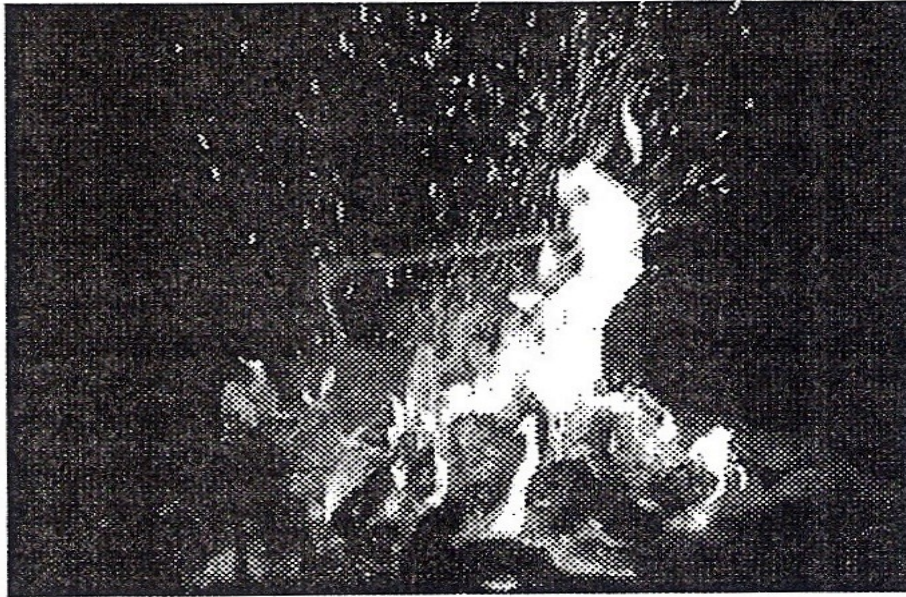
By the time I reached the summit I understood the significance of cannon on the mountain, one could see for miles in any direction and the range of the cannon would have been something in the region of 15 miles. The Boers could not afford to get too close to Colesberg in the fear of being shelled. Some 4000 rounds were fired from the top of Coleskop, 4 cannon doing the honors. This became such an irritation to General De La Ray, that he attacked Coleskop with a commando and in the process destroyed 3 of the cannon by having them thrown off the mountain. On the mountain a few relics were recovered, mainly trigger mechanisms for the cannon.



Back in town Danie bought that round of drinks before heading back to base. Packing started in preparation of our return home the following day. Relics were donated to our hosts and photos taken of all the finds. Over drinks and a braai (barbeque) the experiences over the past couple of days were discussed. Plans were made for future trips and we all turned in for the night knowing that friends, detectors and the same interests are an unbeatable combination.

Regards from a tired team of South African detectorists

Mike



...and the accolades just kept on coming from all over the world...

*"Very interesting, Mike! Thanx for sharing!"*Sergei (United States of America)

"My kind of metal detecting! Great article. I am heading on my trip in two days. Wish us luck, and keep those great posts coming. I would love to get to SA and do some detecting w/ you'all!" John (United States of America)

"A trip back in time! That was fantastic. Just like been there. I'd love to see the NSW Lancer button as that is were I was born. I had a distant relation that served in the Lancers at the turn of the century." Pete (Australia)

"Just a superb post Mike !! Thanks for sharing this awesome adventure. I completely enjoyed reading it" Bill (Canada)

"Mike - Great post!! What an enjoyable story - almost like being there - which I wish I had been! thanks for the posting", Steve (USA)

"...You had me hanging on every word. Terrific writing and fabulous pictures" Dino (England).

"Mike..thank you for a great post and story. It was like being there to see the area and the finds. It is certainly very different detecting over there and very interesting to read. Thanks again" Scott (Canada)

VERLORE TROURING OP STRAND GEVIND, DANKSY PA EN SEUN SE “STOKPERDJIE “

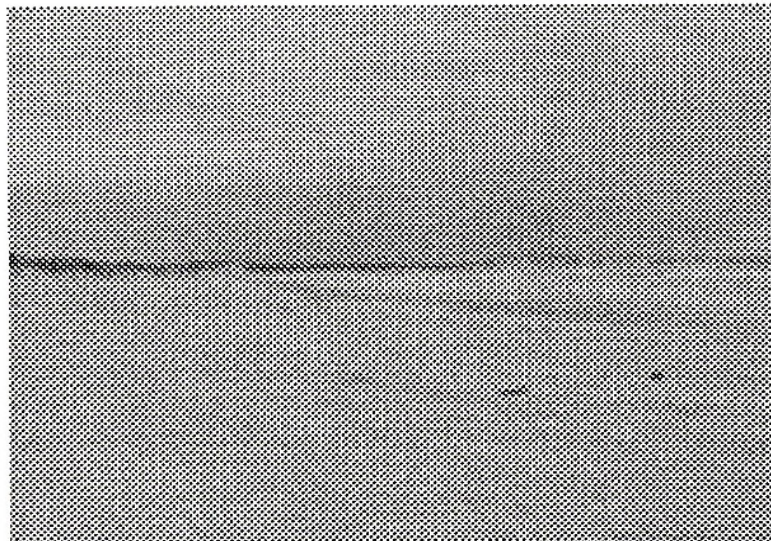
Hendrik van Rensburg

Vir twee Caledonners, Johannes en Toinette du Toit, was hul vakansie by die see byna ramspoedig. Haar kosbare trouing het in die see, op Struisbaai, van haar vinger afgely en in die water beland. Gelukkig het iemand hulle van Johan Oosthuizen en sy seun Stefan, wat 'n metaalverlikker het, vertel.

Maar, dit is nie sommer vir stap see toe, die verklikker aanskakel en die ring optel nie. Nee, die ring was onder die hoogwater in die sand en daar moes saans met laagwater, tot nege uur gesoek en gegrawe word. Dit is byna ongelooflik, maar die tweede aand wat hulle probeer, kry Stefan die ring. Die vreugde was groot en die Du Toits het 'n stewige beloning aangebied. “Stefan het seker 10000 gate gegrawe, want as die alarm afgaan, weet jy nie of dit iets waardevols is, of dalk net 'n koel drankdoppie nie” sê Johan.

Hul gebruik is om niks wat opgetel word (behalwe sinkers) te gebruik nie, maar dit in 'n vertoonkas uit te stal. Die versameling in die kantoor van die huisverhurings-agentskap in Hoofstraat, Struisbaai, is nogal indrukwekkend. Seker die interresantste item is 'n staaf growwe lood, wat hulle op die “Plaat”, redelik ver van die see af, byna 'n halwe meter onder die sand gevind het. Dit was een van tien stawe, gemiddeld 10 kg elk. Volgens 'n Argeoloog van die Mariene Museum in Kaapstad, is die lood deel van “ballast” wat destyds vir beter stabiliteit, op die kiel van houtskepe ingebou is.

'n Ander fonds was 'n 1934 tieke wat gevind is en lyk soos toe dit nog in gebruik was. Dit is ook opmerklik hoe ouer munte heelwat beter bewaar bly as ons moderne geld. Toe was 'n pond nog 'n pond, né!

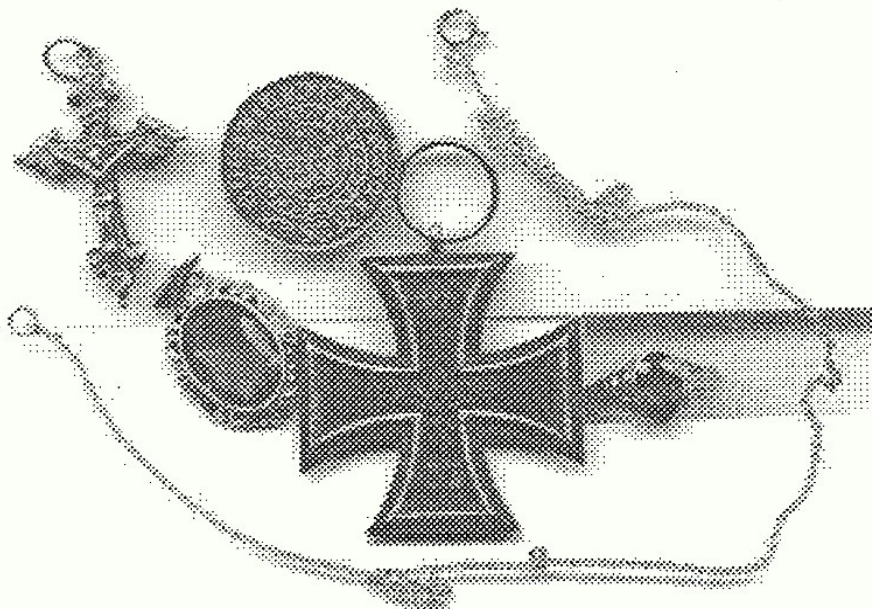


Die “Plaat” by Struisbaai

Finds from Prague

By Ton Hofman (Netherlands)

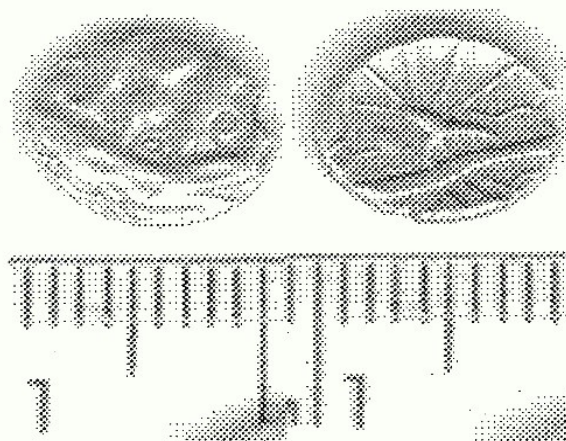
Before I detected with Pierre, Ray and Guy near Prague in the Czech Republic in September, I have visited the old city many times and detected in the lakes in and around the city . The following finds are examples of some stunning finds I have made over there quite recently.



Celtic Gold Coin Found

By Gerry Freeman-Smith (England)

...tried my luck again on the "Brooch" field, and another Celtic gold unit. This time a Quarter Stater, and an early uninscribed one of unknown origin as yet...help with ID needed on this one. I also picked a Celtic bronze unit...but the soil had not been kind to it! That brings the total up to 5 units in seven days (2 gold, 2 silver, 1 bronze)...outstanding! Back again tomorrow.



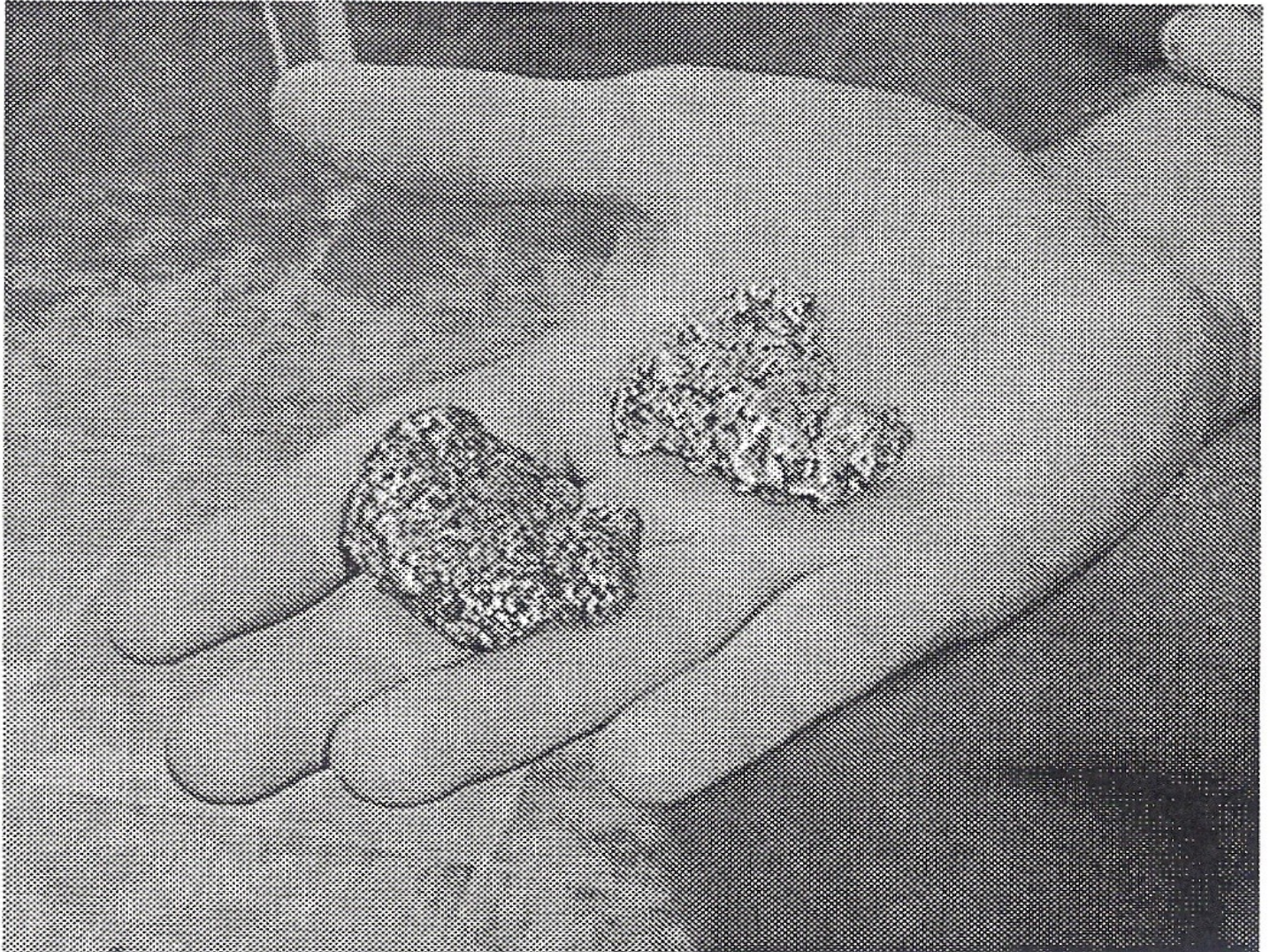
Australian Gold Nuggets

By Peter Kane (Australia)

Well the Tuesday night just gone was the second monthly meeting of the Townsville Metal Detecting Club here in Queensland Australia. It was also 'Show and Tell Night' when club members bring in their best finds for the month to show everyone. I took my digital camera with me as one of the club members at the last club meeting had brought in a couple of beautiful gold nuggets.

I'd asked Keith if he could bring in his nuggets so I could take a couple of photos, as I wanted to post them on the forum. As you can imagine Keith won't tell where he found the nuggets (I wouldn't either) but I just had to show you what is still been found here 'down under'. Keith had also found a gold specimen, which to the people that don't know is a mixture of rock or quartz and gold with maybe a little ironstone thrown in. When you see these nuggets and specimen I think your eyes are going to pop out just that little bit.

Now the first picture is of my mate Scott holding two of the nuggets. I took this photo so I could show you the size of the nuggets compared to his hand. All up these two nuggets are just that little bit short of 185 grams which I think is almost 6 oz. Now at the moment I think gold is about \$385 American so convert that to Aussie dollars (around \$572) and that's a nice little earn in anybody's books. There's a bit of ironstone in the nuggets but that adds to their beauty.



HE WAS JUST AN INNOCENT KID.



By Charles Cater

The year was 1940, and the British Empire was at war. Young men from all walks of life were conscripted into the services to fight for their freedom. There were also volunteers from all the free nations too that wanted to free the world of tyranny.

One young lad comes to mind, never had he been given the opportunity to wander further than an arms length of his family. He was a very keen lad who felt the need to put things right in the world. Being out of a worthwhile occupation and in need of some hard cash he forced himself upon the local jobs center Teller known then as the Labor Exchange Officer for a position of quality and importance.

After due deliberation he was informed of a position that just may bring this conflict to an end quite rapidly. On learning this he accepted without any hesitation, after all it was the country that beckoned his services. This position of importance was relayed to his parents, who, with a little skepticism thought that maybe it was a passing phase of a 15-year-old. It was obvious to the lad that they were not quite with him as you see it meant him traveling to an airfield, which was being upgraded to take those new fangled bombers called Lancasters. The runways were never designed for such monster aircraft and it needed skilled workers in laying tarmac down in just the quantity required without waste, after all there was a war on.

He was instructed to meet a bus at 6 am on the Monday morning at a defined area within the town center. Now 6 am was pretty early for a lad only used to arising at 8 am whatever the weather. This was different to school days and was not greeted with enthusiasm. On the morning just told, his Papa shook him to life after an exciting night with practically no sleep and gave him his breakfast, which consisted of a slice of thick bread with beef dripping spread liberally upon its surface (beef dripping was the fat from the previous days roast, or what was afforded). This concoction, mixed with salt, was a tasty snack at this time of rationing; nothing was wasted in these years of austerity.

Arriving on time for the transport to take him into another world, he had never ventured away before so this was an experience to be remembered. On boarding this transport he was confronted with three of his schoolmates to who also wanted to bring this terrible conflict to a swift end. They greeted each other like long lost brothers and settled down to make the journey into the unknown.

There was Bill Bonner, a larger than life boy of fifteen who was the lad's childhood pal, always willing to help in any way he could and was known at school as the gentle giant. Next was George Clayton, somewhat more robust in his attitude to life, not averse to telling you what to do if it did not please him but the lad always kept on his good side as a friend, which was regarded as a smart move by others. Then there was Rich Williamson, not too keen on work but was willing to give it a try, well for the time being anyway.

Tom Sykes was a genial lad, always pleasant to be with, he was orphaned at 2 years of age and his Gramps brought him up in a very strict regime. It did not seem to affect him at all being disciplined at the slightest whim; she was compared with Tom Sawyer's auntie who was

always calling "Thomas". Then there was 'Bleucher' Fogg, a crusty old salt from the First World War. He was at the battle of Jutland, hence, the nickname Bleucher after an Admiral I believe. He always dressed in navy blue, the trousers were of thick woosted material and a thick navy blue sweater, he typified a sailor of standing. His tales were of quality to us kids but we soon got tired of his escapades. The old salt's duties were to make refreshments for the surveying team when required; still, it was work of a kind that brought a few shillings to the coffers at the end of the week.

So here we are, four stalwart kids and a sailor making their mark upon history and the war effort.

On arrival at the airfield that morning, the mist still hanging low over the meadows that skirted the field gave them an eerie feeling. They were greeted by a grumpy looking individual that you would only expect to see on your first day in the services, would make a good sergeant major, ramrod straight and rather brisk in his manner which was daunting to say the least to these raw recruits.

The task was to get allocated to their particular jobs by 'grumpy' in which could be seen that no favors were given. This lads first job was to help Bleucher put the kettle on the hob for a cup of sustenance in the form of tea, a beverage much loved by the English.

Now at this point it was reckoned that the job might just be right for the money, pay was little, appreciation small and it was well known thereabouts that to get the tea post was the cream in the coffee, so to speak. Within an hour or so the lad was upgraded to be assistant to the surveyor, not that he knew anything about surveying but he could fetch and carry with the best of them. This individual was not too friendly either, flaunting his academic authority, but things generally went well at first, all the equipment got to him in a reasonably complete condition although the binocular that sits on the top went missing.

He was furious until I told him it was in his car, he look at the lad, grunted, and stalked off without a bye or leave. Thinking that this must be part of everyday activities he dismissed the reprimand as a misunderstanding. Two weeks had elapsed, all the coming and goings ceased and the time was ready for the influx of workers mainly from Ireland. In they were shipped, by the lorry load, about 50 or more in all, speaking a language that the boy had not been heard before.

Getting settled in to the barracks was a monumental task, having heard arguments who should sleep on the lower bunk. It was always the bigger chap that got his own way, well he would wouldn't he, after all who wants to argue with a six foot, eighteen stone navy who only knows that an argument can only be settled with the fist. The runway was reinforced in record time and the time had arrived to hear of his fate. Most had been told to finish and go home with 'a little extra for your trouble'. That extra being five shillings (25 new pence) a goodly amount I might say.

The lad was told to come back on Monday to help the surveyor to finally tidy up. Arriving as usual on the Monday turned out to be locked in his memory for life. The airfield was now open for business and the big wigs from the Ministry of Defense were coming to receive the first aircraft to occupy the strip. The survey and old Bleucher, was instructed to keep clear of all areas within half a mile of the barracks. This they did, the lad and his companions sat upon a mound that looked suspiciously like a bomb dump to await the first arrivals. It was not too long before the drone of engines could be heard; these monsters advancing with stealth were soon overhead. The lad was overawed with the size of them and the noise was deafening, shaking the inside like an earthquake shaking buildings in a 7 on the Richter scale.

Four of them there were, the first Lancaster bombers ever to be seen in the area, massive loud four engined aircraft that turned out eventually to be a legend in the history of Britain. They circled once and came in one by one so gracefully it was hard to believe that something so huge could leave the ground let alone fly. The end was near and the experience appreciated, it is now time to leave the friends he made during his short stay. He knew that what he did must surely end the war that much quicker so that he could get back to a normal

life. He went on to other things on July 20th 1944, but that is another story. He told his children, grandchildren and now his great granddaughter what happened then and what it did to change his life. He has his memories to fall back on.

Well that is the end of a true story. Oh! By the way I forgot to tell you, that lad was me.

I then went into one job and then another, not knowing really what I wanted out of life other than to get through this trauma. I finished up working on the railroad as an apprenticed fireman in Peterborough, Northamptonshire, but that came to an abrupt end when it was found I had a sight deficiency in one eye.

They were very strict about that and color blindness. I was eventually packed off back to my hometown of Boston in Lincolnshire and within a matter of a few weeks was asked by the Ministry of Labor if I wanted to be recruited down to the coal pits. I made a point of asking why there was a shortage of coal when such a lot was to be seen on top. I declined of course but I think that it was inevitable that I would be drafted into the forces. This happened on December 2nd 1943, going into the 10th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment Infantry. My Primary training went well, and was sent to Bacton near Cromer for my Divisional Training, this went on for 3 months when finally the time had come for me to move on closer to the object of my training. Having spent a week in Aldershot (Salisbury Plains) I was allocated French coinage, which led me to believe they were sending me on holiday.

Not so, I was whisked down to Newhaven docks and boarded a ship there. We were told to make our last letter home before sailing into the unknown. Little did I realize that the convoys ahead were not disembarking as quickly as they should and we were left languishing for 24 hours in rough sea in the English Channel just off the coast of Normandy. Now to say I was ill cannot be over described, I could not keep anything down for many minutes and felt as if I was dying there and then, I was not alone by any means.

Eventually arriving off Arromache I was delighted to see the concrete structures that had been lowered into place to make a small harbor. Those who had arrived earlier did not have so much luxury; I never got my feet wet.

Three days elapsed and I found myself coming into an encampment, which received new intakes, there I met my brother-in-law who incidentally happened to be the chief cook. The meeting was a funny affair. Those not familiar with the routine in this situation must realize that it was no holiday and the facilities, which have to be visited, was an embarrassment in itself, with no privacy at all, you sat side by side, chatting if you felt like it. The meeting happened when I saw this squady (soldier) playing hell about the indiscriminate use of the recent daily newspaper. I recognized his distinctive voice immediately and I shouted to him, he turned and saw me there in all my glory.

Back in civvy street we were great pals, he was my mentor. The greeting was typical of him, saying to me "What the hell are you doing here". Now it did not need a high school certificate to figure that one out but I had to explain that I was forced there and I certainly did not volunteer.

As it was a holding unit, a sort of rest camp, I was not to stay very long as we were moving on beyond Bayeux which had just fallen. Before departing he loaded me with tins of soup and meat, the type, which, when a cigarette or match was applied to the center of the top of the tin it burned and heated the soup, I think it was called Maconachies soup.

It was a very welcomed addition to my diet until after a few miles trekking along the narrow Normandy country lanes turned out to be too much for my slender physique. I eventually threw them to some children who were begging along side the road. They were grateful for the morsels. I walked alongside many French Canadians who had joined us with others from the Empire and was proud to have been part of what eventually turned out to be victorious.

Cutting a long story short I eventually finished up back in Victoria Hospital, Netley, Southampton exactly one month after arriving in France convalescing over in Richmond Convalescent Home, only to find being in line of the buzz bomb menace. They were more of a

nuisance than a threat as they were intended for further a field around Croydon mainly. However, as Richmond was high above sea level, by the time the buzz bombs passed overhead they were no more than a hundred feet above us and that was uncomfortably close for my liking.

I was eventually transferred to the 59th Vehicle Reserve Depot in Thornton Hough in the Wirral Nr Birkenhead where I met my wife Marie. I married her two years later and we had first a daughter Marilyn and then four years later a son Christopher who, between them produced six grandsons and a great grand-daughter for Marie and I.

Marie and I have been together now for 57 years and hope that we can make it to our Golden Day. I hope that this story, short as it may be, will give you some idea of who I am about. Although there are many pages to be written both before my experience doing my bit at fifteen to the present day the editor would not look upon it likely that I wonder into those realms.

Best wishes from Charles

Please visit my Homepage: <http://c.cater.users.btopenworld.com/HTMLFiles/index.html>

Note from the editor

Charles Cater (a.k.a. Sir Charles) is the administrator of the *UK and International metal detecting forum* – the sister forum of the F.I.N.D.S. forum. He is also one of the co-founders of F.I.N.D.S. Please visit his forum at: - <http://members3.boardhost.com/Charles.C/>

Here is what he has to say on metal detecting: -

"I have been metal detecting now for over 20 years and have recovered many artefacts and coins that I would like you to see on my website at : <http://c.cater.users.btopenworld.com/HTMLFiles/index.html>. A lot has been said by academics regarding their heritage and that we detectorists are robbing the country of their heritage. I would like to add that what we recover is our heritage as well, and not a single individuals.

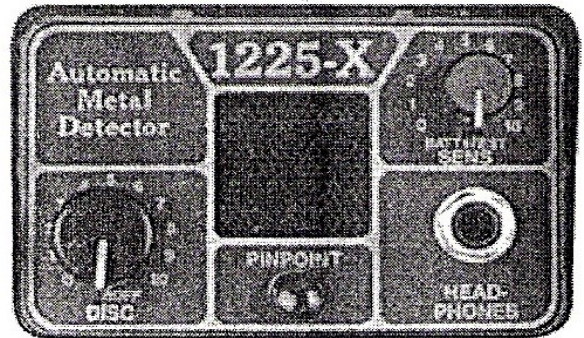
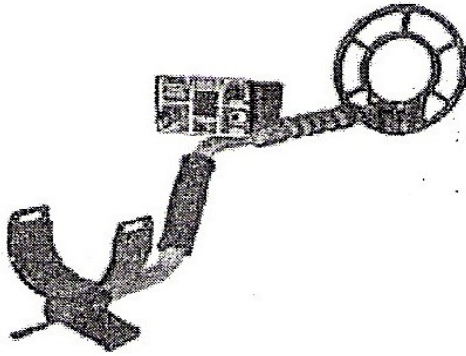
There are still a few out there that don't agree with our methods of recovery but suffice it to say that we, as responsible citizens, have done more to enhance our knowledge of our heritage and that has not cost the country one pennies worth. All expenses have come from our personal contributions to this hobby"



Here is a photo of Charles and his lovely wife Marie at the Wrexham MD club annual dinner

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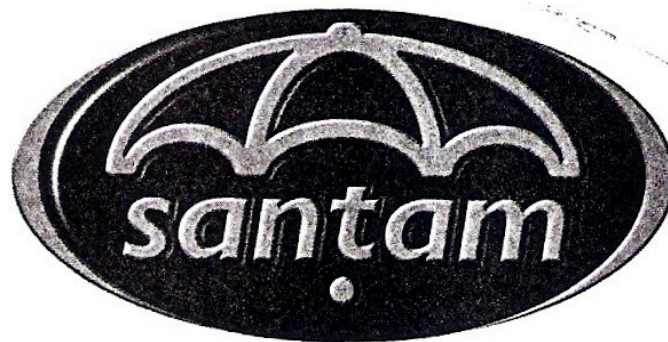
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