

Treasure Talk

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

First Quarter 2003 Eerste Kwartaal



Some Gold Rings Found by Andy Naudé – see his article inside on what could well be a *World Record!*

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Dear reader

Believe it or not, but this year is the start of my fifth year as editor of Treasure Talk. If I remember correctly, approximately 30 copies of our first quarter issue of 1999 were printed. We doubled that with our second quarter issue and in the end of that year we nearly doubled our number of copies again!

So we can really boast by saying that we truly went from strength to strength. But the honour is not mine – it's persons like Owen Timmermans (who sadly passed away earlier last year), John Mulder, Dawie Berg, Andy Naude, Clarence Coetzer, Lukas van der Merwe, Mike Bull en a few others who through their articles, letters and photo-contributions, ensured the success of our newsletter.

But where are the contributions of the many other readers? Come on guys and girls – send us your many treasure hunting stories, letters, photos and other newsworthy snippets...Hope you'll have a fantastic 2003.

Pierre Nortje
Editor

Beste leser

Wel glo dit of nie, maar hierdie is die begin van my vyfde jaar as redakteur van Treasure Talk. As ek reg kan onthou, het ek so dertig kopieë van die eerste kwartaal uitgawe van 1999 gedruk – dubbeld dit met die tweede kwartaal uitgawe en aan die einde van die eerste jaar het die getal kopieë amper weer verdubbel.

So ek kan regtig spog deur te sê dat ons van krag tot krag gegaan het. Maar die eer kom my nie toe nie – dit is persone soos Owen Timmermans (wat reeds oorlede is maar wie se artikels nog gereeld verskyn), John Mulder, Dawie Berg, Andy Naude, Clarence Coetzer, Lukas van der Merwe, Mike Bull en 'n paar ander wie Treasure Talk deur die jare met hul artikels, briewe en foto-bydraes ondersteun het en sodoende ons sukses verseker het.

En so van bydraes gepraat – waarom kry ek so min Afrikaanse artikels om te publiseer? Komaan mense, stuur daardie bydraes so gou as moontlik vir my! Ek hoop 2003 gaan vir u een en almal 'n wonderlike jaar wees.

Pierre Nortje
Redakteur

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS // BRIEWE VAN ONS LESERS

Hi Pierre,

Just a short note to say thank you very much for your continued effort in producing Treasure Talk. I always enjoy receiving the latest issue.

Tim Jackson
Johannesburg

Hi Pierre

It is with some regrets that I have to inform you that Margaret and I have decided to return to Scotland on the 11th of December.

We have both enjoyed our years of treasure hunting in South Africa which we carried out with some measure of success and are hoping to carry on with our hobby in the U K. We would be greatly obliged if you could see your way to continue to send Treasure Talk to us in the U K as we find the magazine to be as informative as the overseas mags. I will call you by phone before we leave to find out if there are any costs involved so that we can settle up before we leave.

My temporary address in Scotland will be

C Hodge
c/o 7 Southfield Drive
Slamannan
Falkirk
Stirlingshire
FK1 3HG
Scotland
U K

E Mail : Alison@ahodge.fsworld.co.uk

I am hoping to be able to supply you with some articles for the magazine once I find out what is what over there. Anyone interested in what is going on as far as treasure hunting is concerned over there is most welcome to contact us.

Will contact you again soon

Best regards
Margaret & Charles Hodge
Gansbay

Beste Pierre

Hier gaan dit nie te sleg nie. Net ons somer wil regtig nie kom nie.

Al die mense hier praat daarvan, selfs oor ons radio. Net nou die dag was dit somer weer twee dae winter – vreeslik lelike koue winde. Dié jaar ry ons die 6de Desember en kom eers in Januarie terug – ons gaan vir die kinder kuier. Ook 'n draai maak daar by Lukas.

So ek gaan nou uitverloor met die soekery op die strande – maar wat – 'n mens moet so nou en dan 'n breek maak!

Ek stuur vir jou 'n kaart van al ons strande hier in Natal. As jy miskien een daar kry van die Kaapse strande, sal ek bly wees om ook so iets te kry – ek stel so belang in julle strande! So net die beste en vreugde vir jou huisgesin.

Vriendelike groete

Oom Dawie Berg
Shelley Beach

Hallo Pierre

Ek besit net een baie gekrokte Whites Coinmaster 6000DI series III wat ek maar meestal hier op my strand by Blythedale gebruik. Die masjien het al beter dae geken en ek is nou op soek na iets soortgelyk. Weet jy dalk waar ek iets in dieselfde klas as my Coinmaster kan kry - behalwe 'n nuwe een van Amerika of Engeland - net te duur vir my?!

Dit is lekker om van nog iemand te hoor wat die stokperdjie beoefen. Ek is amper kan mens sê verslaaf daaraan, maar my masjien laat my nie toe om dit ten volle te geniet nie. Ek sal bly wees as jy asseblief enige informasie kan aanstuur oor waar ek 'n tweedehandse of 'n nuwe verklikker teen 'n goeie prys kan kry. Enige tips en tegnieke wat jy ook dalk met my wil deel sal waardeer word.

Terloops, ek het jou e-pos adres by <http://www.treasurenet.com/forum/beach/> opgespoor. Dit was die eerste adres waar ek enigsins 'n verwysing van metaalverklikkers en die stokperdjie in Suid Afrika gekry het.

Bernard Jacobs
Stanger

Hello Pierre

I am enclosing a bit of news on how I became interested in metal detecting. As a result of an article that was published in the local Evening Post, I had many people phone me to look for lost items like gold chains, gold rings, house and car keys, etc.

The people at the University of Port Elizabeth sports stadium also called me over to look for the main valves that control the sprinkler systems. After telling me the field had been regrassed and did not know where the valves were, I took my Garret metal detector and started to look for the main valves.... and I found them! The engineer at B.K.S., a consulting firm, wrote me a very kind thank you letter with a generous gift of two large pieces of biltong and a box of chocolates.

About two years ago, there was a story on SA TV about the Sunridge Park old age home where 6 people died. I was called in to look in one of the burnt bedrooms for rings and jewelry. It was a big problem as I was getting thousands of sounds. I took about ten buckets of ash home and put it in a big builder's type sieve. After sieving dust out I took a large industrial magnet to pull out all the nails, screws, TV and radio components, hinges, etc. (The fire was so hot it melted brass, silver and aluminum).

After sorting the remains I got two ice cream boxes of gold and silver, brooches, reading glasses, a letter opener, one ring, margaret and some spoons. (I only searched in one room). Most people in those rooms lost everything. There were about 12 or more rooms burnt. I handed the remains of the findings to the family. Have any other fellow metal detector friends worked burned buildings?

Another useful tip is to examine second hand wood with your metal detector to determine if there are hidden old nails which may hurt your saw.

Thanks you very much for all your hours of work in your newsletters

Regards

Cornelius Nilsen
Port Elizabeth

LETTERS FROM OVERSEAS // BRIEWE VAN OORSEE

Hi Pierre

I hope this Christmas season and the new year find you and your loved ones in good spirits and good health. It seems like just a couple of months ago that I wrote and sent off last years Christmas letter. Where does time go? In January and early February 2002, my fossil hunting friend, Ron and I drove to Quartzite, Arizona to sell fossils and other items at the Quartzite Pow-Wow. It was a five day event and we did fairly well in sales considering some cold days and major sandstorms etceteras. Our double space was outside and exposed to the elements.

Usually that time of year in Quartzite, the weather is warm and sunny but not this year. I will be going back again in January for the 2003 show but I'll be there alone since Ron can't join me next year. In June, I drove to Colorado and hooked up with brother Jeff for 10 days of fossil hunting in a three State area.

We dug some awesome fossil leaves and insects at a site in Western Colorado. I was lucky enough to find a very rare fossil Lilly pad which now resides in my collection. We then drove over to a rich fossil area in central Utah, a vast badlands landscape in the middle of nowhere. I had my ATV and we took turns riding through the moonscape. While Jeff was riding over hills and through gullies, he came across several very large intact fossilized trees from the Jurassic Period, about 160 million years old. They were just laying there where they fell and got covered and fossilized way back in the Jurassic. From there, we went to a fossil fish quarry in Wyoming owned and operated by the Tynsky family, long time friends of mine. We dug there for two days, moved tons of sedimentary rock, and found a lot of fossil fish. Jeff went home with the best ones though, along with some gigantic plates with multiple fossil fish on them.

In August, I flew to London to meet my metal detecting buddy Ed, from New Jersey. We rented a car and drove a couple of hundred miles up to the town of Tutbury in central England. I think I finally got the hang of driving on the wrong side of the road. There in Tutbury, we joined our friends, Neil and Big Rich, for a week of metal detecting in the agricultural fields around Tutbury. That is always a good trip and after a long day detecting in the fields, we got together at a local pub to swap lies. This year was pretty good for each of us out there, all of us having found plenty of ancient coins and artifacts. On the third day, I found a beautiful gold coin. It was from Queen Victoria and dated 1864. That was a pretty good start to what would be a six week detecting tour in several parts of England.

After a week in Tutbury, we bid adieu to our friends and drove through Nottingham on down to Norwich, in Eastern England to join Discovery Tours International. We would spend the next 5 weeks as a team detecting in the countryside around Norfolk. It was a pleasant 6 weeks in a beautiful country full of friendly people, and the detecting was pretty good too. Since my return, I have been out on a couple of fossil hunts in Nevada and portions of Northern California. My partner, David and I are building yet another mini storage building on our property at Mad River Storage Center. Seems like we never have enough units so we have to keep adding on.

Mom is doing very well and is actually trying to quit smoking. She has cut way back and is really trying. She's very active and while at home, is constantly entertained by all of her wild animal friends. The Raccoons, Foxes, and Deer come in daily for a handout and some of them eat right out of her hands. Jeff and Jane moved to Colorado last year and had a beautiful and large home built in the mountains. From the photos, it looks like a mansion on a treed and rocky mountain top in the Rockies about an hour and a half out of Denver. They're living out with the critters. In fact, Jeff emailed me a photo of some rather large Bear tracks they found one morning in their front yard.

They invited Mom and I over for Christmas so that is where we will be for the Holidays. Hope the snows hold off. I wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy Holiday Season. Eat, drink, and be merry!!

Michael J. Martin
McKinleyville, CA
USA

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Hello Pierre!

I know you like history and old coins, what about this Pierre: A good friend of mine who is a kind of master for wet sand hunting, (he is both lucky with gold, coins and rings but also a very resistant and serious "worker" when he hunts), found last summer a cache of 2500+ silver roman coins, from 30-50 Ac.

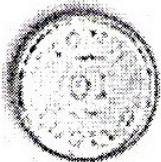
In the field he found the same day 8 gold staters juts like the one posted, same age, but French ones, and a handful of silver and bronze roman rings. What is funny is that he lives near the sea, and always spend his 15 days summer holidays in this inland region of France, for field and wood hunting. He might invite me this summer when he goes back to the field! He thinks that the field was a roman marketplace. He only covered 1/20 of the field.

About low tide water hunting he is a killer, a real sea scientist able to read a beach like none. Almost everything I know about saltwater low tide hunting is from his mouth. He had found a roman gold ring that was sold by Sotheby's for 10.000 usd, a unique Cartier gold wrist watch that is now in a museum, a WW2 British plane in a lake, and even more. I decided to meet him 7 years ago after a TV report on him and another guy who lives from sa hunting around Europe.

Regards

Francois Constanty
France

THE TOKEN COLLECTOR

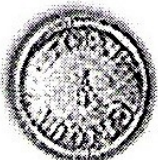
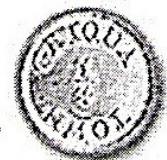


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FOUR STUNNING GOLD RINGS IN 2 MINUTES FLAT ON SCUBA

By Andy Naude

Hard to believe? I would have said so too, but it is true!

Monday had tickled my interest when I found a gold chain and a gold ring in the tidal pool at Camps Bay, near to Cape Town. I had an off day on Friday (7 Feb 2003) and had time to do a bit of forward planning. The tide was low at 13:00, the weather prediction was 30% chance of rain, and this suited me just fine. I planned to do two dives, dive one would be from 10:00 – 12:30, lunch and cylinder change 12:30 – 13:00 and dive two from 13:00 – 15:00. I wanted to do a reasonably thorough search so I took along my rope that I use on such occasions. It is not the Polly-prop type so it does not float; it has a lead weight on either side. I lay it down the length of the search area and then swim along the rope and move it 1 – 1,5 m when I reach each end. The first half of the rope I swim close to the rope, the second half I swim a bit further away. This allows me to go over each area twice, which gives a reasonable coverage at the end of the dive.

It was over cast and only started raining once I was in the water, but other than the possibility of the rain catching me while I was changing every thing was just great. I just love it when it rains and I am diving. One of the resort managers had come to chat to me when he saw the scuba gear, so there were many questions to be answered as he had also done a scuba course a few years back. "What is that?" - "A metal detector." "What do you find?" - "Coins and sinkers." "What is the rope for?" - "To help me keep direction." And so it continued.

Once while diving in Port Elizabeth a woman saw me throw the rope into the water and then disappear for more than 3 hours. Later she told me that she had gone to call her friend to tell her that she thought I had "Done my self in" with the rope.

When I reached the water it was just on 10:00. The water was not too cold maybe 14 – 16 deg Celsius. Visibility was approx. 2 – 3 m, which was great. My rule of thumb is that if I can see the coil the visibility is acceptable. So I started my dive.

The dive was rather uneventful and I started to wonder if I had not cleared most of the coins on Monday. I don't use a watch, but rather keep track of time by looking at my pressure gauge; the pressure gauge read 100 Bars so I had been in for roughly 1 ½ hours when I heard the medium tone through the CZ-20's headphones. I hoped it was a gold ring, but was more expecting to find a pull-tab. As I slowly fanned the sand away I started to see the gold braiding on the ring. I was in no rush to remove it from its resting-place. It was a good-looking ring (7,2 grams 9 ct gold) and I just quietly savored the moment. When I finally picked it up I saw the small (.12 Karat diamond) which was facing away from me



**Six gold rings found in tidal pool at Campsbay in two days
(5 in one day of which 4 where found in 2 minutes!)**



All dressed up and everywhere to go...

when it was lying in the hole. I felt just great. I placed it carefully in the goodie bag and then, like I was taught, I checked the area again and a few centimeter, maybe 10 cm, I heard another medium tone signal. OK I had the ring now for the pull-tab. Once again I fanned the sand and could not believe my eyes when I saw another gold ring (5,8 grams 9 ct gold), this one had three elephants embossed on it. So into the goodie bag it went. I started to feel a bit like a poker player thinking of what chances I had of getting a Royal Flush. I checked the area again and yet another medium tone and yet another gold ring, in the same area, this time with a slightly larger diamond (4,9 grams of 9-ct gold set with a .25 karat diamond). I don't know how many people have had a situation like this before? It is not easy to describe my emotions; it was most probably one of utter disbelief and shock, I'm surprised the demand valve did not fall out of my mouth!

How could it be that all these rings had ended up in almost the same spot? Here in the Western Cape (South Africa) it seems like a local tradition, (Or maybe not so local?) that males and sometimes females will wear their rings on a thin chain around their neck – reckless I thought. I must have sinned on many an occasion when I have seen this while walking around town. I have often wondered if in fact someone had ever lost a few rings at one time and maybe this was one such an occasion. So I thought that if there was more than one ring there might just be more so I checked the area again with the CZ-20 and low and behold there lay the fourth gold ring as I fanned away the sand. This one was a real beauty. It weighs 3,9 grams of 9 ct gold. The center stone is a .18 karat emerald that is flanked by 6 smaller emeralds on either side of the main stone. Then on each side are 8 small diamonds with 10 small diamonds surrounding the center emerald. A total of 39 stones. What a beauty!

I checked the area again and again, but that was the final ring for now. I even removed some of the surrounding sand in the hope that I would find the chain, the evidence to support my theory, but alas no chain was found. Ironically I did find a fifth gold ring (3,6 grams of 9 ct gold) later on the second dive and you may have guessed it, this one was still attached to the silver chain which once had held it so secure around some ones neck.

A total of five rings found while diving on one day. This is one of my personal records that I am sure I will break – one day. But, some how I don't think I will ever find another four rings in the same spot ever again!



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Not another lot! We had been investigating the ruins of nine British blockhouses, all in the Magalies mountain range and come across large, perfectly white shards of high quality stoneware in eight of them. We were however out with our metal detectors looking for tell tale signs of the Anglo-Boer Conflict and the shards didn't interest us.

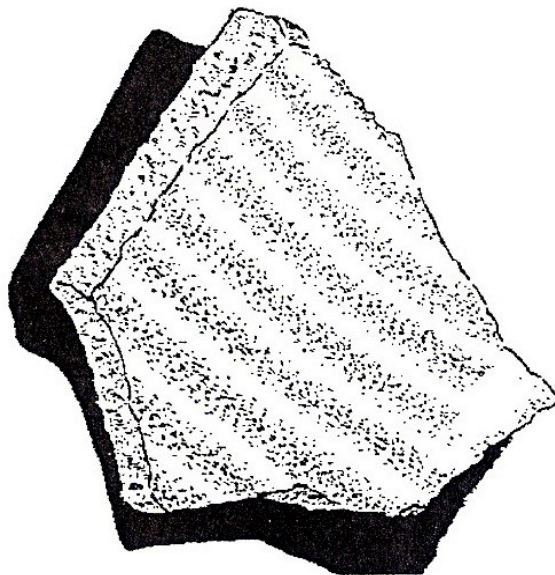


Fig.1 Salt glazed stoneware shard

Beep, beep my detector cried. A bit of a dig later and there it was, a flat object of little interest. Wait a bit, it did not look so insignificant after all. It was the bottom section of a brass, tin plated folding or collapsible cup. Officers were issued with such items. The words 'Vest Pocket Cup' were engraved in beautiful ornate scroll-like lettering into the bottom outside surface of the relic.

The word 'cup' immediately directed my thoughts to refreshments such as tea, coffee or cocoa. Alas! This cup is more likely to have been wetted by brandy!

At the time we were investigating the ruins of British strongholds east of Breedts Nek which controlled Boschfontein Nek, which at the turn of the 19th century was the recognized passage across the Magalies mountains in that area.

On casting a glance down the southern slope of the mountain chain, another circular rock structure caught my eye. It didn't look like an ancient Bantu cattle kraal. NO!, that was put up by the invading columns, probably by the Indian engineering corps. We were soon shown to be right – the detector went mad with excitement sensing such a profusion of metal objects.

We dug up clumps of hand-made, square section nails, 4-inch carriage bolts and believe it or not, a bronze spigot of a splendid, elegant and beautiful Victorian design. Its condition was of such perfection that severance from its brandy casket could well have taken place only a few days earlier

An acquaintance of mine discovered a somewhat similar, though less ornate object. It was of much larger dimensions, made of brass and was without doubt a tap once fitted to the water barrel. Being brass and not bronze, it was more heavily corroded.

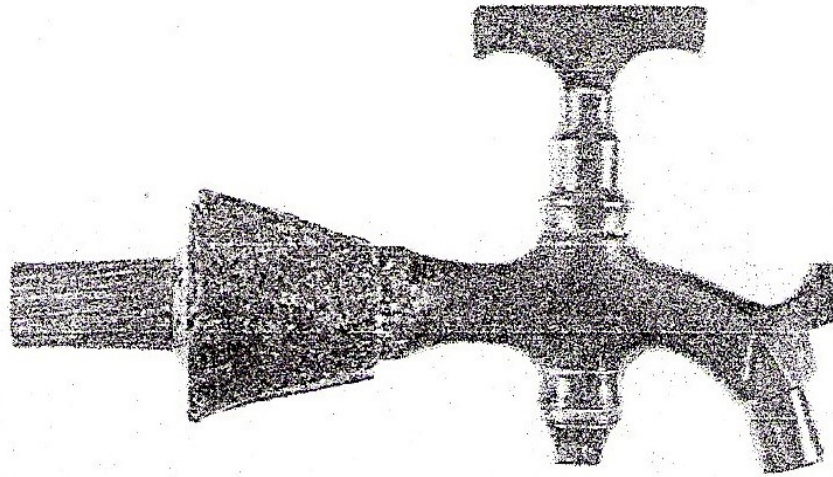


Fig. 2 Faucet used by the English Forces in the Anglo-Boer Conflict

Bronze of course is famous for its resistance to weathering, a property highlighted some time ago after recovering items from the Mary Rose. Four hundred years after the sinking of Henry VIII's warship, bronze sheaves from the ship's rigging as well as the delicate surgeon-barber's equipment were still in excellent state of preservation.

The spigot at once directed our interest to the stoneware shards.

This material is manufactured out of high purity clays which on firing to a high temperature turns it into a hard, dense object impervious to water, even without the application of glaze but for enhancement and facility of cleaning it often is glazed. Was the spigot used on such a stoneware jar? The answer is almost certainly in the affirmative.

I used a formula which enables one to calculate the diameter of a cylindrical vessel from the curved and straight distance between two points on the surface of the jar taken at right angles to the height. This direction is easily determined from the horizontal grooves, finger marks, present on the inside of the vessel. Such marks were clearly visible on the stoneware shards.

The calculation told us that the containers were 9 inch in diameter.

There is no way of calculating the height from information derived from shards.

We also found glass shards, thick old bottle glass.

There are an infinite number of different glasses but we only need to concern ourselves with the common bottle glass which was made by mixing finely ground sand, soda ash and limestone in the right proportions. On heating the mixture, chemical reactions take place and a viscous glass mass forms, the viscosity largely depending on the temperature in the kiln. Gases are liberated and if the viscosity of the charge is too high due to too low a temperature, such gases fail to escape and are shown in the articles made of the glass as bubbles.

Another source of bubbles in the glass may be derived during shaping of the bottle. Air gets accidentally enclosed within the viscous glass mass and thus form the large bubbles we so often found in the shards about the blockhouses.

Several of the glass shards we found were coloured a delicate light purple. On visiting old graves dating back to before the turn of the 19th century, we noticed a glass flower bowl tinted a similar delicate purple.

Neither the bottle which broke into shards, next to the British blockhouse nor the bowl placed on the grave of a beloved one, were purple when sold over the counter.

All these glass relics were purpled by exposure, for decades to the strong rays of our Transvaal sun.

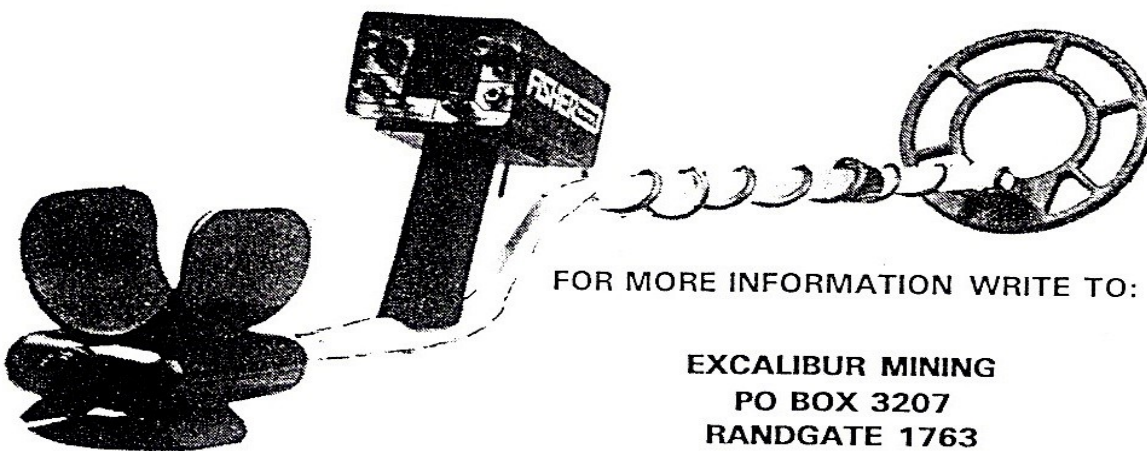
Research has shown that glasses which purple best date from 1850 to about 1910. These were the years that manganese dioxide additions were made to the glass batch to mask iron colours introduced as impurities in the raw materials used.

After 1910 selenium began to be used to mask the iron colours and purpling of the glass by the sun's rays ceased to happen. Purpling therefore is a sure sign of old, old glass!

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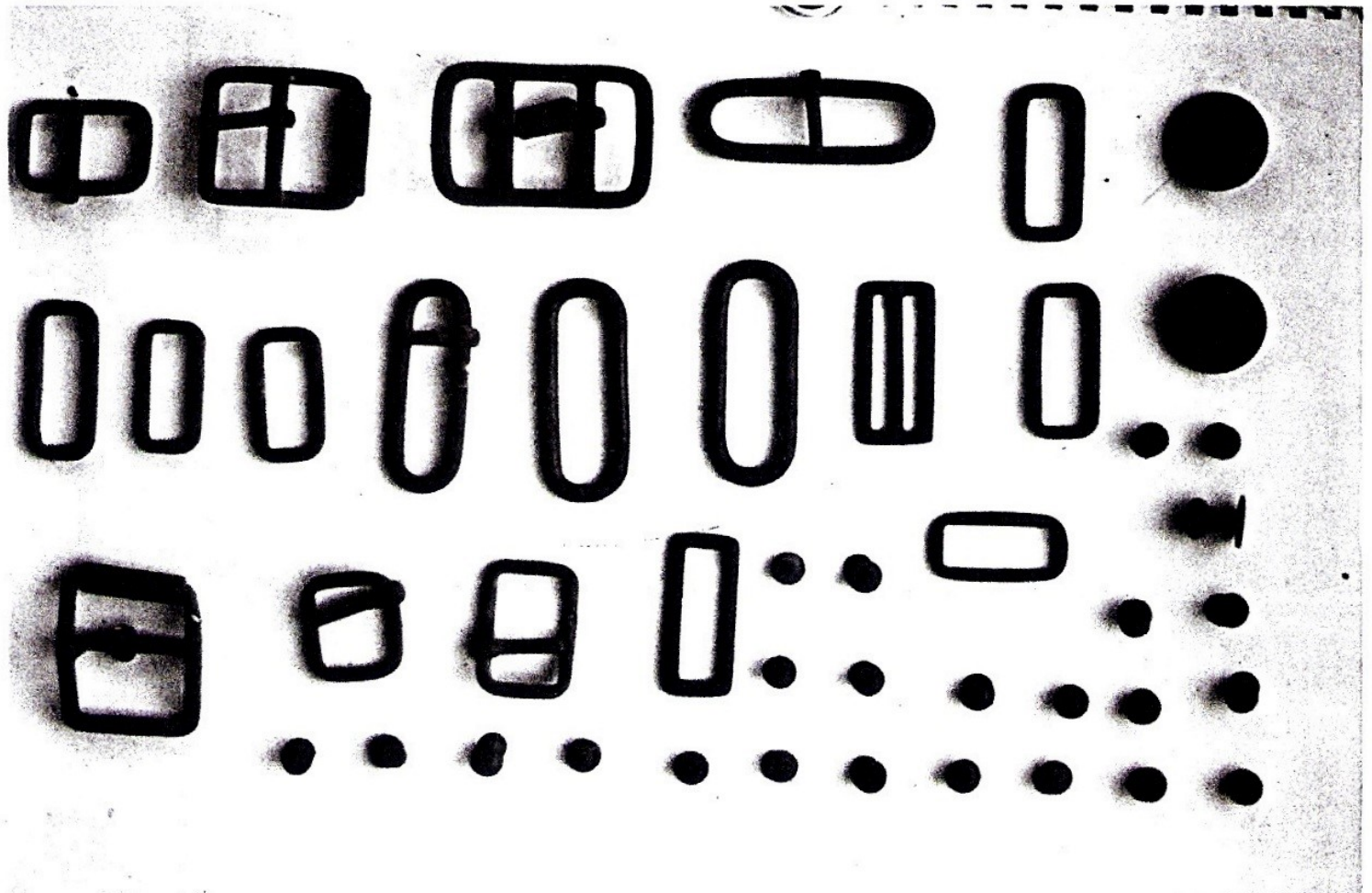
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Leave No (Flat) Stone Unturned

By Dave van Rensburg

I wiped the sweat from my brow and gazed down into the valley far below. I had been climbing for three hours and my T-shirt stuck wetly to my back. I had been following the route the British soldiers had taken when, on an April day in 1902, they had attacked the Boer positions high above where I now stood. A long, steep and difficult action taken place on the steep slopes of the Strydpoort mountains.

It had been a good day so far and my collecting bag boasted 2 can openers, 2 tunic buttons, .303 Mauser and Martini cartridge casings, some heel irons and unfired Lee Metford, Martini Henry and Mauser cartridges. Above me on the slopes I could make out another schantz and more sangars. I marveled at how determined these soldiers were to pursue an almost suicidal impulse to engage an enemy on this inhospitable mountain.

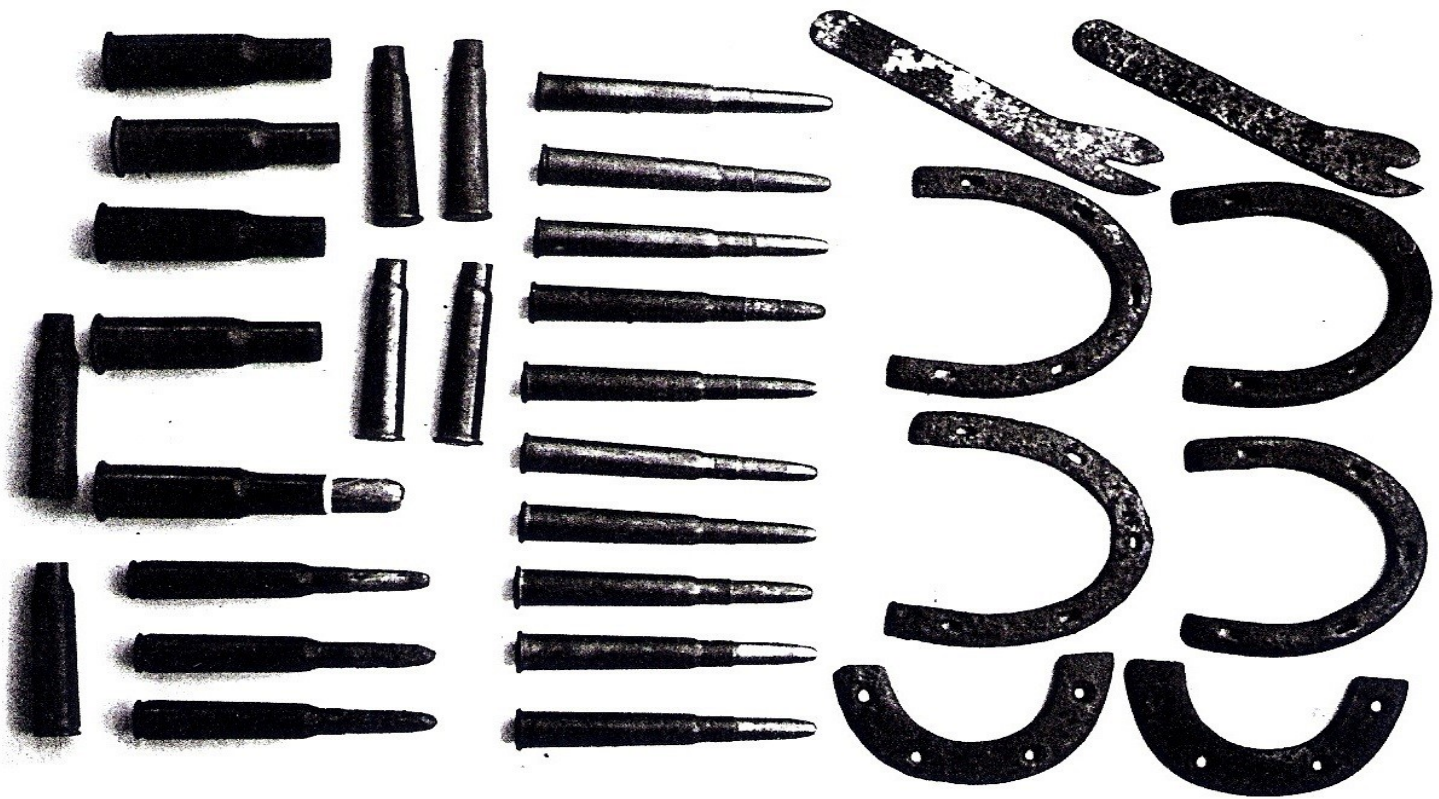


I moved forward, my Fisher impulse steadily swinging and approached a ridge which finally led onto a plateau about 800 meters from the sangars. This plateau exposed to deadly Boer fire, must have been a serious obstacle to the British. I moved below the ridge just out of sight of the sangars above and found some signals revealing some more cartridge cases. No doubt the British had also used this route with caution.

I came up against a flat stone of approx. 2'6" in diameter and suddenly picked up a weak signal against the side of the stone. I moved the coil along the edge of the stone and picked up another faint signal – where were they coming from? Suddenly my heart beat faster. There must be something concealed under the stone. I lifted the coil and passed it over the top of the rock and sure enough, I picked up a faint signal in the center of the stone. I put the detector down and feverishly dug under the edge of the stone. I put my fingers underneath it and heaved and strained until the stone lifted. I pulled it sideways and let it fall to expose the area beneath. I could see nothing and my heart sank. Had I picked up signals from minerals within the rock? Picking up my detector I quickly checked the exposed area. With a thrill of excitement I picked up a hard signal.

With bated breath I started to dig and out popped a buckle, then another buckle. I swung the coil over the area again. Still another signal. One by one a complete set of webbing buckles came to light. Then a brass shirt stud followed by a belt buckle embossed in Latin "In God we Trust". Now followed many small signals and one by one nineteen brass rivets came to light, these from the inside of a British helmet. With all signals accounted for I sat down and had a drink of water from my water bottle and thought about what I had just found. A British soldier must have exposed himself to a Boer marksman and paid the price. Either wounded or killed his mates must have removed his helmet, belt and webbing and shallowly buried them. To make sure the Boers did not find them they must have manhandled the stone on top of the buried items. There they lay and rotted away over the past 100 years until only the brass remained. Then after all this time I was fortunate enough to discover the cache and to experience the excitement of uncovering them.

Time was moving on. I placed my finds into my collecting bag and stood up. I looked down at where I had found the cache and knew I would never forget the excitement I had just experienced, the thrill of uncovering that which was hidden 100 yrs ago. I thought to myself "That's what detecting is all about. You never know where or when or what you'll find. The chance is always there". I turned and started the long trek back down the mountain, a good days detecting over but new memories to dwell upon...



Troubles with Archie

Steve Raiguel (Belgium)

As I've mentioned before, there was a Roman village in Elewijt, on the other side of the Zenna river from us, about two km. from our village here in Flanders. I frequently detect there, and through my finds around the old Roman settlement I have become acquainted with many of the area's amateur archaeologists and historians. Last month I received a frantic call from Jos Lauwers, a historian who has written a number of books on this region's past, to the effect that a 'verkaveling', or housing development, was underway in Elewijt, and that Roman roof tiles and other artifacts were being unearthed and carted away indiscriminately to a landfill somewhere. The next day, I sneaked away from work a bit early and arrived at the site ready to take pictures and notes of anything of interest. Naturally, I brought along my trusty old Fisher CZ and my new Whites DFX.

The sight that greeted me - a pit around a meter and a half deep, measuring about 20 by 40 meters - looked suspiciously like an archaeological dig, with a couple of carefully uncovered rows of stones and a number of smaller test pits dug in the floor. Fragments of Roman roof tiles were everywhere. I set about taking photos, measuring distances, and scribbling notes, just in case Jos had been correct, and this site really was about to be covered by an apartment complex. Once the documentation was out of the way, I grabbed the DFX and began searching the pit bottom. I had no more begun than a middle-aged gentleman showed up with an ancient Whites Coinmaster. He told me that he was 'bevriend met de archeologen' (friends with the archeologists) who had been busy there earlier, but that they were now finished here, and had moved on to a series of smaller pit sites about 100m down the road.

This same story - that this particular site was finished - was later substantiated by one of the neighbors. By tacit agreement, 'Meneer de CoinMaster' (I've no idea what his actual name was) searched one side of the pit, I the other. Neither of us found anything except a couple of large iron nails, disappointing considering the considerable promise that the abundance of roof tiles had held out. After he'd gone, I decided to give his side of the pit going-over, in case he'd missed anything with his relatively insensitive Coinmaster. Sure enough, in one of the small piles of earth that had been taken out of one of the test pits, I found a bronze as, possibly of Trajan the elder.

I returned twice over the next few days to search the spoil piles around the pit and discovered a fibula brooch, a broken hinge brooch, a badly corroded and unidentifiable sestertius, and a beautiful sestertius of Hadrian, bearing the portrait of his wife, Sabrina. My joy over these finds was to be short-lived, however: Three days later, I received a call from Ton Cardux, an acquaintance of mine belonging to the same historical society as I, and who is an ardent amateur archaeologist who often works closely with the professionals. His somber tone immediately told me that he had not called simply to congratulate me on my excellent finds.

It seems that archeologist in charge of the site was not, after all, finished at the pit I had visited. Having heard - probably from the neighbors to whom I had proudly shown off

threatening legal action. I was hurt, and more than a little angry myself, since not only had my intentions been the best, but I had been acting under the impression that I was actually rescuing objects that their investigation had missed. I normally try very hard to do nothing to exacerbate the considerable antipathy that exists between detectorists and real archaeologists, by keeping away from their active and potential sites, and even by volunteering to assist them at dig sites on a couple of occasions. I felt that, for my pains, I was being threaten with indictment.

I explained my situation to Ton, asking him to convey to the archeologist my initial misunderstanding, my profound apologies, and my desire to help in any way I could, even up to giving them the material I had found, if they thought it would aid their investigation. I also gave Ton a large, high-resolution color photo of the finds, together with a detailed description of the items and exactly where they had been recovered, to pass along to the archaeologist.

The following day, I received a second call from Ton. The archeologists were not only appeased, but were actually pleased, even to the point of offering to pay me (which I naturally declined) for the photograph. Apparently, my willingness to cooperate, plus the fact that I had found all but one of the items in spoil heaps where they would have otherwise been lost, had made an impression. As soon as they refill the excavation, Ton says, they're going to call me to come detect the dirt that has been replaced in the pit. Naturally, any further finds I make under those circumstances will be turned over to the archaeologists, but that's fine with me. Finally, to my great relief, they don't seem to want the items that I had found earlier.

All's well that ends well, I suppose, but the whole experience has left me a little shaken. Belgian law is somewhat ambiguous on the subject of detecting: it states that it is forbidden to "dig for objects of archeological value at 'monuments' without a permit", but what, exactly constitutes a "monument"? Is it only the places on the officially declared - and secret, so as not to give them away to potential looters - list of protected sites? What about undeclared sites, or fields in the vicinity of such sites which will never be the subject of archeological investigation?

What about that ordinary field in our village, where I've found a couple of medieval hammered coins? And what does 'digging' mean, exactly? I think we'd all agree that this includes serious digging, say, for grave goods using a backhoe at a Roman-era burial site. But what about detecting a newly-dug basement at a housing development that just happens to lie within a former Roman villa? Does scratching around with a garden trowel in a plowed field, which has already been 'dug' thousands of times by a plow, constitute digging? To the archeologists I've spoken to, who seem to believe that everything old and in the ground belongs to them, personally, it apparently means all of these things. As a detectorist, it seems to me that unless a serious investigation of a site is planned, everything shallower than 40 cm (within plow depth, and hence, out of any possible context) should be available to whoever is willing to make the effort to search for it. Finally, as a scientist myself, it seems to me that if the mutual antipathy could be overcome, there are many possibilities for the two groups to work together to one another's mutual benefit. Realistically, I don't foresee widespread cooperation breaking out anytime soon, but it's something that we can all strive for.

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See photos with descriptions of Steve's finds on next page =>



Picture of Items

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Picture of items

I'm attaching a picture of the items - the same one I printed out on high-quality photo paper for the archaeologists. It's quite large, so as to lose as little detail as possible, but it can be easily reduced in size if necessary. I'm also attaching the description of the items that I gave them along with the photo.

Coin #1. (31 x 5mm) Almost certainly a sestertius from the size, this coin is very badly corroded, and little can be said about it other than the portrait appears to be bearded. The first letter, "S" of the S.C. is visible on the reverse, the rest is occluded by a hard concretion, impossible to remove without damage. It was found in the collapsed wall of one of the small prospect holes dug near the front of the pit, about 5m from the front, and near the East-West center. Rather atypically for a sestertius, this one appears to be bronze, rather than orichalcum.

Coin #2. (31 x 6mm) By far the best-preserved of the three, the size weight of this coin tell us this can only be a 1st or 2nd-century sestertius. There is no exposed metal to be able to see the metallic composition. The legend is clearly readable "sabrina augusta hadrianus", thus this coin dates from the reign of Hadrian and depicts his wife, Sabrina. The reverse is a seated female figure flanked by the stamp of senatorial permission (S.C.). This coin was found in one of the large spoil piles beside the pit, about midway down the length of the excavation.

Coin #3 (27 x 3 mm) There is no exposed metal to be able to determine directly whether this coin is bronze or orichalcum, but since the portrait lacks a radiate crown, it is probably an as and therefore made of bronze. The worn portrait is smooth-shaven, and appears to have a laurel crown. There is a resemblance to portraits of Lepidus, Octavius Caepias, Caius Caesar (Caligula), Trajanus (father of emperor Trajanus), and to the sons of Antonius Pius, Calerius Antonius and Aurelius. For various reasons, including relative abundance, the few details that can be discerned from the coin, and timeframe, Trajanus seems the most likely. While resemblance is strongest to the Calerius portraits, the rarity of that coin makes it an unlikely candidate. The Reverse of the coin is, unfortunately, poorly preserved, and it is possible only to discern a vague standing female figure. This coin was found in a pile of dark earth lying in the middle of the pit, about 10 meters from the front, that had apparently been removed from one of the holes dug in the bottom.

Brooch (?) #1 (21 x 10 x 2 mm.) Probably a broken hinge-headed brooch. In support of this interpretation, the reverse side appears to have been in contact with another piece of bronze, which may have been the hinge pin. Unfortunately, this has become separated, probably when the item was dug, since this it was recovered from the spoil pile, near the rear of the pit. Some of the original design remains as faint striations.

Brooch #2 (45 x 20 x 5mm). Obviously a fibula brooch, probably a variety of one of the La Tene types. Traces of gilding remain on the surface, and are visible at low magnification. This item was found at the very edge of the excavation, near the rear, in some earth that had fallen in from the large spoil pile to the East.

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Metal Detecting in South Africa

By Pierre Nortje

Metal Detecting as a hobby started in South Africa in the early sixties. The first machines were usually self-built by electrical hobbyists from technical and electronic magazines. The assumption therefore is that the first SA metal detectorists were rather electronic "fundies" than people really interested in historical artefacts or local history. These first hobbyists were people like Clarence Coetzer from East London (SA) and Tommy Thomas and Noel Swartz from Johannesburg.

In the late sixties and early seventies the hobby steadily grew and local businesses started to import metal detectors like the Garrett and C-Scope ranges from the USA and the UK. Clubs were formed and many new enthusiasts were "converted". The hobby started to branch out and for the first time hobbyists could be categorized according to the type of detecting they did, for example, beach, relic, coin shooting, etc. Machines that are currently imported are Fisher, Garrett, Whites and Minelab.

In the eighties the first SA metal detecting newsletter "SA Treasure" was published but unfortunately did not survive as the editor immigrated to the UK. In the late nineties a new quarterly newsletter "Treasure Talk" was started and is still being published. Free back copies could be ordered from The Editor: Treasure Talk, PO Box 816, Durbanville, 7551, South Africa. (Please supply approx. postage costs). Please also note that it is a bilingual publication in both English and Afrikaans.

Although many thousands of metal detectors were sold in South Africa over the years, there are relatively few active detectorists in the country today. No formal association or national club exists, although the active hobbyists keep in touch through the quarterly newsletter "Treasure Talk". In our neighbouring countries like Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, the hobby is almost non-existent.

Note: This short article was written for the international F.I.N.D.S. website (www.findsinternational.org) as an introduction to metal detecting in South Africa – if you have any comments or additional information, PLEASE send it to me at PO Box 816, Durbanville 7551



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NEW YORK WORLD TRADE CENTRE TOKEN

Most tourist and visitor points of interest in North America have roller presses where you can convert a one cent piece into an oval token depicting the building or structure at that location - as was the case with the Twin Towers of New York before "9/11". Yes, "nine eleven" is established terminology in everyday communications of Americans meaning one thing only, that tragic and shocking event in their history.

On May 17 2002 we were metal detecting on Plettenberg Bay beaches when Erica found this WTC copper token in the dry sand. It is not unusual that we find USA coinage on our beaches, but this WTC find is unique and will have a very special place in our collection of treasures.

It relates to one of the most horrific and tragic acts of hostility in present day history and draws attention to the underlying religious tensions of the peoples of the world.

Together with this WTC token Erica simultaneously scooped out of the sand a silver shilling of Ghana (1958?).

Except for the heavy wear evident on the Ghana coin, neither of the two pieces show any sign of salt/sand corrosion and it appears possible that both pieces may have been lost recently on the same day by the same person.

What extremely two divergent treasures to find in one scoop. So divergent that one can't stop wondering what interest anybody may have had in two such worlds apart geographic locations (and times) to carry them in the same pocket.

Such are the mysteries of treasure hunting that will linger in our minds for years to come.

JOHN & ERICA



ALIEN FINDS

When we go treasure hunting we expect to find the usual treasures like coins, jewellery, watches, etc. - that which people normally have with them when they go to the beach.

Sometimes however we are mystified when we find something out of the ordinary:-

- that which is not normally worn or carried in your pocket to the beach;
- not of local (SA) origin or everyday use;
- and obviously of a bygone era.

And this sets our minds in motion: -

- what is it used for;
- where did it originate;
- who owned it; and
- how did it find its way to the beach. This must be what passers-by on the beach refer to when they ask ... "have you found anything interesting" (they seldom ask how much money you have found).

This is the stuff that treasure hunting is really made of and sticks in your mind long after you have spent the coins you found and after liquidating the jewellery your wife didn't want. It is the second phase of the search called research - a very fascinating part of treasure hunting.

The nearest I came to such mysterious finds were the following:-

1. The gold chain I found in the surf at a P.E. beach with the price tag still attached - see Treasure Talk Special Edition 2001;
2. The three brand new dentist's pliers for extracting teeth - found in the waves on Plett's Main Beach (stolen and dumped in the ocean? - would have been less effort and trouble if dumped in a refuse bin on the street.)
3. The strange looking key-like brass object (see Treasure Talk special Edition 2001) I found on Buffelsbaai beach where a fishing trawler sank many years ago. This mystery solved itself when shortly afterwards I found the "lock" for this "key" on the same beach - the screw cap of a 44 gallon fuel drum;
4. More recently, a few days after that vicious sea storm of early June 2002, I found this Henry Ford medallion on the beach at Herolds Bay:-



So what makes this find such a mystery?

This medallion is alien to the local scene - it is not a local issue and is unknown to Ford South Africa and some of its employees dating back to 1950.

- Why would someone from North America (?) bring this medallion all the way to South Africa and then go swimming at Herolds Bay with the medallion in his pocket?
- The obverse side commemorates Henry Ford, so apparently it was issued shortly after his death in 1947 - that's 55 years ago.
- But what about the reverse side:- what is VIAFLEX? / what's the connection with Henry Ford? / why the peculiar wording ..."You'll never forget ..."
- Most metals deteriorate quickly in the ocean except gold. This medallion, despite possible lengthy exposure in the surf showed no obvious signs of abrasion or chemical corrosion - what metal is this?
- There is a small letter "S" stamped on the knot of Henry Ford's tie - what's the significance?

This is a well-made solid medallion and must have been expensive to produce:-

- very detailed artwork;
- excellent metal (copper alloy?);
- large diameter, 45mm and heavy;
- depicts an important person;
- carries a mysterious inscription.

So it must be of some importance - but what?

Our first approach was with Ford of South Africa who relayed the enquiry to the Ford Archives in the U.S.A. - but after six weeks still no answer.

Our search on the www traced Viaflex to Baxter Health Care, a company at Illinois in the U.S.A. and they say Viaflex is a plastic material used for IVP drips and for packaging of steroids, but to date their search for the origin of the medallion has also not produced any results.

The next enquiry will be with Mark Parker's column in Western & Eastern Treasures and we hope that he will be able to provide specifics of this medallion.

John and Erica Mulder (Plettenberg Bay)

Beste lesers...

Ons soek dringend artikels in Afrikaans – groot asseblief!

FROM THE PRESS // UIT DIE PERS

Mossies verloor ereplek op SA se kleinste munte

NEELS JACKSON uit *Die Burger* 7/04/2002

PRETORIA. - Dis totsiens aan die mossies. Die gebruik dat dié klein voëltjies op die keersy van Suid-Afrika se kleinste munt verskyn, gaan nou - saam met 'n stukkie kultuurgeskiedenis van langer as 'n eeu - tot 'n einde kom weens die besluit dat die lastige 1c- en 2c-stukke nie langer gemunt gaan word nie.

Die gedagte om mossies op die kleinste munt aan te bring, het in die Anglo-Boereoorlog in 'n konsentrasiekamp op Bethulie ontstaan. 'n Groep vroue het Matt. 10:29 as oorlewingsleuse gekies: "Is twee mossies nie vir 'n sent te koop nie? En tog sal nie een van hulle op die grond val sonder die wil van julle Vader nie."

Die vroue het besluit om hulle ná die oorlog daarvoor te beywer dat die mossies op die land se kleinste munt afgebeeld word.

Hul wens is in 1923 verwesenlik toe twee gewone mossies (*Passer melanurus*) op die keersy van die nuwe kwartpennie aangebring is. In die ontwerp van Kruger Gray, stempelsnyer van die Britse Munt, het die mossies vir mekaar gekyk. In 1961, ná desimalisering, het dié ontwerp op die halfsent verskyn.

In 1965 het 'n 1c verskyn waarop twee mossies, een skuins bo die ander, op 'n takkie sit en van mekaar wegkyk. Dié ontwerp van die Suid-Afrikaanse stempelsnyer Tommy Sasseen is gegrond op 'n skildery van Dick Findlay. Dieselfde ontwerp is ná 1970 op halfsente gebruik.

In die nuwe muntreeks van 1991 het die mossies op die nuwe 1c weer vir mekaar gekyk. Dit was 'n ontwerp van William Lumley, losweg gegrond op die oorspronklike Kruger Gray-ontwerp van 1923.

Me. Terése de Klerk, skakelbeampte van die SA Munt, het gesê Suid-Afrika was die enigste land ter wêreld wat mossies op sy muntstukke gehad het. Daarteenoor is die visarend, wat in 1991 sy verskyning op die nuwe 2c gemaak het en nou gaan verdwyn, een van baie visarende op muntstukke van Afrikalande.

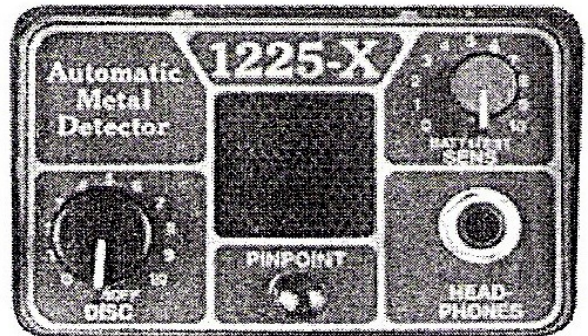
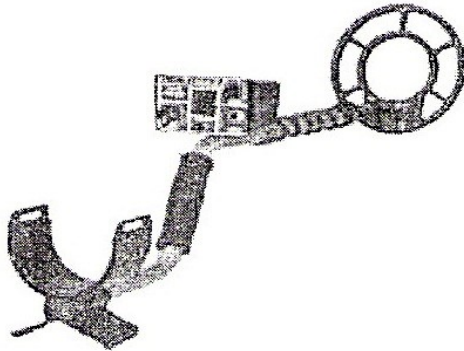
Die bloukraanvoël, nasionale voël van Suid-Afrika, wat sedert 1965 op verskillende 5c-stukke afgebeeld is, is ook uniek aan plaaslike munte. Dié voël sal voortaan op die land se kleinste muntstuk verskyn.

Ter afskeid aan die 1c en 2c gaan die Munt saam met vanjaar se proefmuntstelle en ongesirkuleerde muntstelle gedenkmedaljes slaan wat dieselfde grootte as die 1c en 2c is en dieselfde tema dra, maar nie die denominasie aandui nie.

In die ontwerp vir die 1c-gedenkmedalje word teruggekeer na twee mossies wat skuins onder mekaar op 'n takkie sit, maar dié slag kyk hulle, vir oulaas, vir mekaar.

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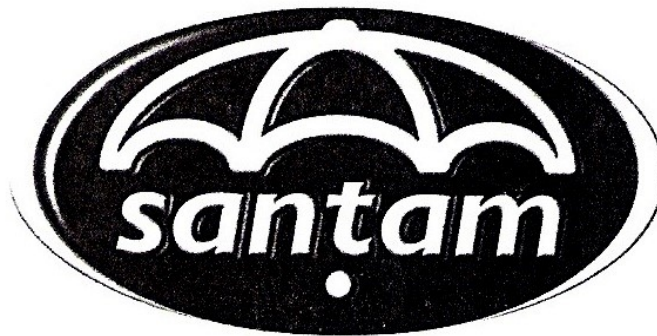
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