

TREASURE TALK

AUGUST / AUGUSTUS 1999



In this issue / In hierdie uitgawe

**OUR FINALISTS FOR THE FIND OF THE YEAR COMPETITION!
ONS FINALISTE VIR DIE VONDS VAN DIE JAAR KOMPETISIE!**

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR / BRIEF VAN DIE REDAKTEUR

How does one decide on the winner of the Find of the Year Competition? What is a good find? Does it relate to the monetary value of the item, its age, or perhaps the historical value?

Let us look at the value of the item: a ton of copper wire is probably worth a million rands, but it is not exactly my idea of a good find - value therefore does not necessarily play a decisive role. As regards age, a thousand year old nail will certainly not qualify for the first prize; and as regards historical value, one cent that belonged to Nelson Mandela or F W de Klerk will not overly excite me as a find.

So what does the above imply? By itself the monetary and historical value as well as age does not necessarily play a decisive role - it is rather a combination of these qualities. An excellent, (although extreme) example of a good find would be a 350-year old diamond ring that belonged to Maria van Riebeeck!

In this issue we publish the entries of the finalists. I am only glad that I am not the one who has to select the winner. I requested Dr Steve Raiguel from Belgium as well as Lukas van der Merwe, as sponsor, to perform this difficult task. The winner will be announced in the final issue of the year. Hold thumbs!

Greetings and pleasant reading.

Pierre Nortje (Editor)

+++++

Hoe besluit 'n mens oor die wenner van die Vonds van die Jaar Kompetisie? Wat is 'n goeie vonds? Het dit te make met die geldelike waarde van die item, die ouderdom daarvan, of straks die geskiedkundige waarde?

Kom ons kyk na die waarde van die item: 'n ton koperdraad is seker 'n miljoen rand werd, maar is nou nie my idee van 'n goeie vonds nie - so waarde speel nie noodwendig 'n deurslaggewende rol nie. Wat ouderdom betref, sal 'n duisend jaar oue spyker sekerlik nie kwalifiseer vir die eerste prys nie en wat geskiedkundige waarde betref, sal 'n een sent wat aan Nelson Mandela of FW de Klerk behoort het, my nou nie vreeslik opgewonde maak as vonds nie.

So wat sê bogenoemde vir ons? Op sigself speel die geldelike en geskiedkundige waarde asook ouderdom nie noodwendig 'n deurslaggewende rol nie - dit is eerder 'n kombinasie van hierdie eienskappe. 'n Ekstreme voorbeeld van 'n goeie vonds sou wees 'n 350-jarige diamantring wat aan Maria van Riebeeck behoort het!

In hierdie uitgawe plaas ons die inskrywings van die finaliste. Ek is net bly dat dit nie ek is wat die wenner hoef aan te wys nie. Ek het Dr Steve Raiguel van België asook Lukas van der Merwe as borg, gevra om dié moeilike taak te verrig. Die wenner sal in ons laaste uitgawe van die jaar bekend gemaak word. Hou duim vas!

Groete en lekker lees.

Pierre Nortje (Redakteur)

Address: Treasure Talk. PO Box 816, Durbanville 7551. Telephone / Fax: (021) 96-2260

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS / BRIEWE VAN ONS LESERS

Dear Pierre

I bought my Fisher-1280 X Aquanaut under water metal detector on 24 February 1998. The reason for purchasing this machine was to use it on possible ship wreck sites, but when our local Fisher agent, Wolfgang Roux, sold this machine to me he mentioned in passing that the people who were keen detectorists could pay their machines off in about one year through the value of the goods found. I thought that this was a typical, non-committal type of sales pitch. I none the less bought the machine. I don't think I ever told Wolfgang, but he need never have tried to sell the machine to me as I had already bought it before he said "good evening".

When I finally left with my machine in hand and after seeing all the golden goodies he had tempted me with I set myself a goal. I wanted to be able to say in a years time that the machine had paid for itself. It was a rough start. About a month later I found my first silver ring - wow! By early May I had not found any gold so I took some leave with the intention of finding my first gold ring. This day arrived on 13 May 1998 (who said anything about the 13th being bad luck?) when I found my first 9 ct gold band of 9,4 grams.

Well, that is all history now. My first year as a detectorist has come and gone and yes my goal was met. A year to date I was in a position to pay the machine off solely through the scrap value of the gold I had found with the R1000.00 worth of odd coins as an extra bonus. Within 11 months of finding my first gold ring I now have 53 gold rings with a combined mass of 353 grams of 9 ct gold, a small diamond and a 6.08 ct tourmaline plus all the coins. Fourteen months after I bought my detector I was not only able to pay the machine off once, but twice!

Who says detecting doesn't pay off?

Greetings

Andy Naude
Stellenberg

Beste Pierre

Ek vind "Treasure Talk" geweldig interresant en baie dankie daarvoor.

Baie groete en sterkte.

Rick Liggett
Bickels Munte en Medaljes

PRINS ALBERT SE "SKAT" GEVIND

(Hierdie artikel het oorspronklik in Van alle Kante in Die Burger [92/11/19] verskyn, en is geskryf deur Pieter Spaarwater)

HIER is 'n lekker stukkie geskiedenis en die storie van 'n suksesvolle skattejag. Maar die heerlikste is dat al die donkiewerk daarvoor gedoen is deur dr. Francois Malherbe, nie as medikus nie, maar as muntkenner en amateur- geskiedkundige.

Eintlik is die hele storie aan die gang gesit deur die skattejag. Prins Albert se NG gemeente is in 1842 gestig, en die kerk se hoeksteen in 1860 gelê. Ou kerkstukke sê dat 'n fles met **munte** en dokumente agter die hoeksteen ingemessel is.

In 1942 het die gemeente sy eeufees gevier, en daar is toe na die fles gesoek. Hulle kon dit nie kry nie.

Vanjaar is die gemeente 150 jaar oud, en die skattejag het weer begin. Dit het 'n grawery van die eerste water rondom die hoeksteen afgegee, maar hulle kon weer niks kry nie. En die soektog is gestaak. Op 'n dag sit 'n lid van die kommissie wat die fles moes soek, Flip van Niekerk, oor die saak en dink. Dit tref hom toe dat die kerk teen 'n taamlieke helling gebou is, en dat die plankvloer aan die kant waar die hoeksteen is taamliek hoog bokant die grond moet wees.

Maar hoe om onder die vloer in te kom? Uiteindelik het hy 'n valdeur onder 'n stuk linoleum agter die trap van die orrelgalery gekry. Daaronder was 'n donker gat 'n stuk of drie meter diep.

Die skattejagter is daar in, en hy is deur 'n doolhof van steunpilare en rotse na die muur agter die hoeksteen. Dae lank is die stuk muur met pik en graaf uitgekap.

Hulle was op die punt om weer op te gee toe die holte met die glasfles daarin ontdek is. In die fles was twee uitgawes van The Cape Argus soos dit toe nog was twee uitgawes van Die Kerkbode, en 1860 se kerkalmanak.

Ook 'n handgeskrewe dokument van die name van almal wat by die hoeksteenlegging was. Daaronder is die name van die magistraat Johannes Gijsbertus Borchers en die predikant Willem Adolph Krige. Die dokument is "vervaardig deur den onderwijzer der kleurlingen K. Doedes Haak".

Dan die **munte**, en dis hoe dr. Malherbe as muntkenner by die saak betrek is. Daar is 'n goue pond of sovereign, en 'n goue halwe pond; 'n kroon, halfkroon, floryn, sjieling, sikspens, trippens en 'n halwe trippens van silwer; 'n pennie, halfpennie, kwartjie en oortjie van koper. Die **munte** is gewaardeer op R3 600.

Alles uit die fles sal uitgestal word by die gemeente se viering van sy 150ste bestaansjaar dié naweek.

**FIND OF THE YEAR COMPETITION
VONDS VAN DIE JAAR KOMPETISIE**

THE FINALISTS ! / DIE FINALISTE !

- A. David Berg: Goue Mansketting met plaathangertjie
- B. Mike Bull: George 111 Token dated 1783
- C. A J Smith: Historiese rooi koper munt-item met wapen
- D. Andy Naudé: Gold ring set with Tourmaline stone
- E. Eric van den Berg: Victorian Gold Sovereign 1887

Please see the photos with descriptions of items on the next five pages as well as the colour photo on our front cover/ Sien asseblief die foto's met beskrywings van die items op die volgende vyf bladsye asook die kleurfoto op die voorblad.

The winner will be announced in our next issue/ Die wenner sal in ons volgende uitgawe bekend gemaak word.

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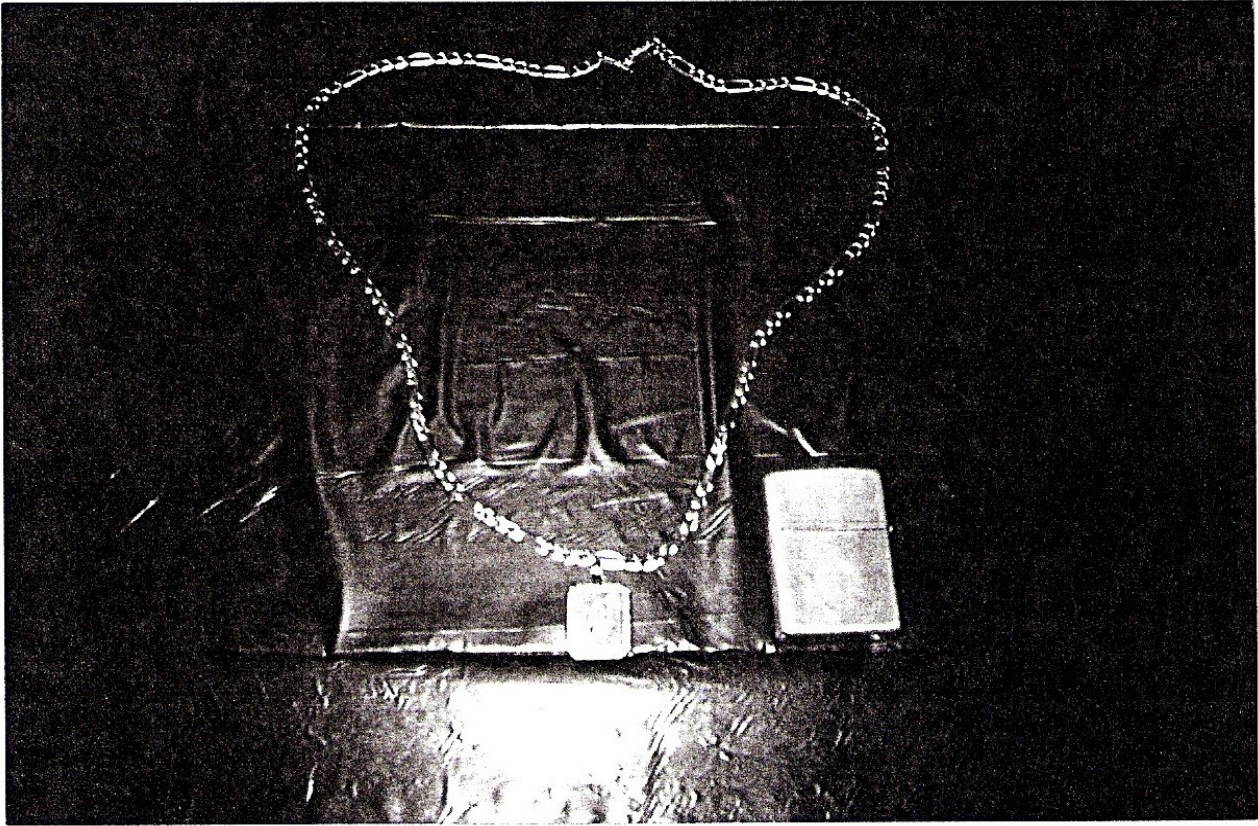
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EAST LONDON: Clarence Coetzer (Tel. 043 - 7264603)
NATAL: Dawie Berg (Sel. 0824751016)
NAMIBIA: Dawson Cloete (Tel. 0926463251165)**

FINALIS(T) A



Inskrywing: David Berg

Waar gevind: Manaba strand, Nataalkus

Masjien: Fisher CZ-7

Beskrywing van item: 9 ct Goue mansketting met goue hangerplaatjie.

Waarde: R3 300.00

Algemeen: "Ek het op Manaba strand op die nat sand geloop en kon slegs 7 munte vind. Na sowat 'n halfuur het ek besluit om terug te loop na die motor en het toe 'n "pull tab" sein gekry. Ek het besluit om maar te grawe en op 'n diepte van ongeveer 12 duim die wonderlike goue mansketting met goue plaathangertjie gekry" (Nota: sigaretaanstecker vir grootte-vergelyking)

FINALIS(T) B



Finder: Mike Bull

Where found: Heidelberg (Gauteng)

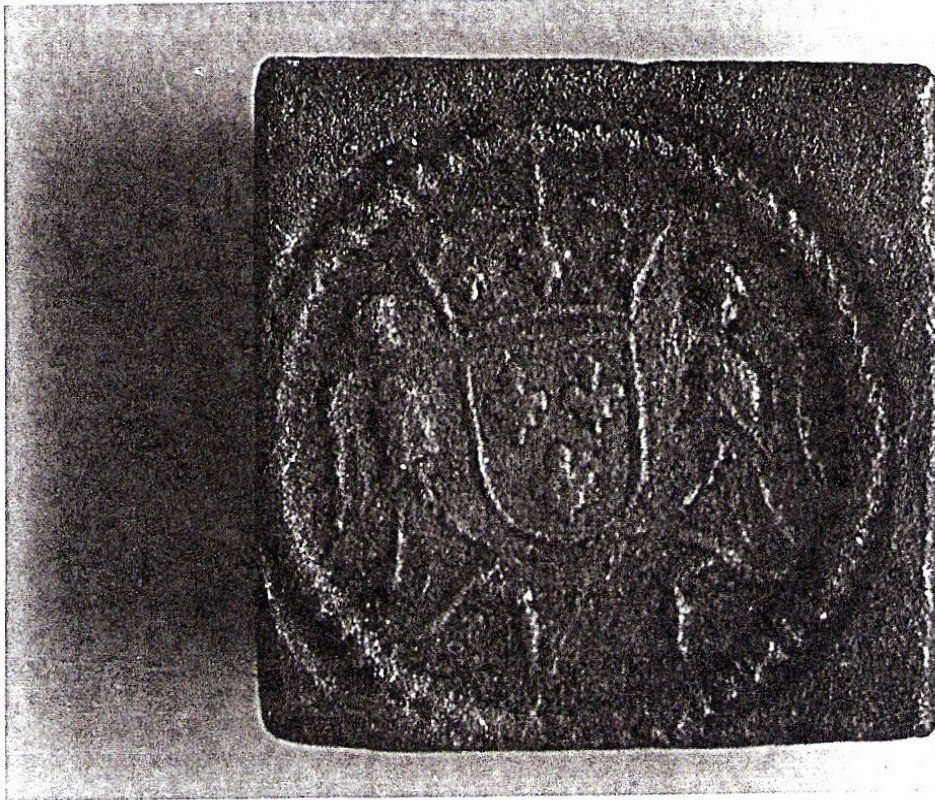
Detector: C Scope 4ZX

Description of item: Copper token of George 111 dated 1783 in good condition. On reverse side it reads "In memory of the good old days"

Value: Unknown

General: "This item was probably worn around the neck of a British soldier during the Anglo-Boer war (1899 -1902) and lost near a military camp site. I found it in shallow ground close to some rocks in February 1999."

FINALIS(T) C



Inskrywing: A J Smith

Waar gevind: Struisbaai

Masjien: Fisher 1225 X

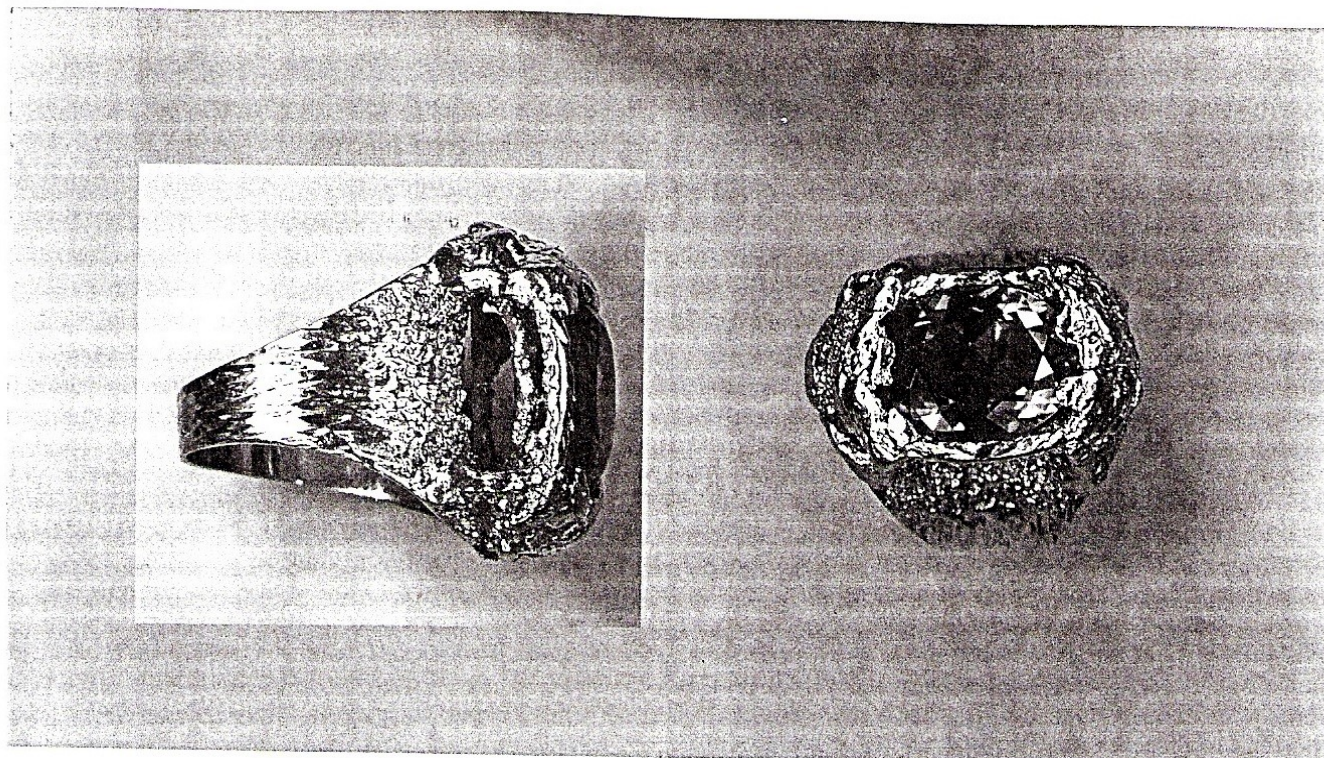
Beskrywing
van item:

Rooi koper item, oortrek met 'n "brass" laag. Grootte van vonds is 13mm x 13mm x 3mm dik. Agter op die item is die letters nie duidelik nie. Daar staan iets soos U of Oc of S en in die middel A, C of S met 77 of syfers soortgelyk. Op die voorkant is 'n wapen soos op die foto gesien kan word.

Waarde: Onbekend

Algemeen: "Ek het die item gedurende Desember 1998 op die Struisbaai plaat gevind. Struisbaai is geleë aan die mees suidelike punt van Afrika, waar nog baie onontdekte vondse gevind kan word"

FINALIS(T) D



Finder: Andy Naudé

Where found: Tidal Pool Hermanus, Western Cape

Detector: Fisher 1280X Aquanaut

Description
of item:

1 x 18ct yellow gold hand made dress ring, weighing 15,7 grams and set with oval green Tourmaline stone of excellent quality. Tourmaline measures 14 x 10 mm with an approximate weight of 6 ct, whilst set.

Value: R14 425.00

General: "The tide had started to come in and the areas that were previously inaccessible were now in deeper water which (as a diver) made it easier to detect. I lifted my head out of the water to see where I was. I was 3-4 m from the shore where my son was waiting, I signalled that I was coming out. Still swinging the detector, I heard a signal and dug up an old R1 coin. I swung the detector to the right of the area I had just dug out the coin and heard another signal. I saw the gold colour lying on the sand between the rocks and thought that it was a chocolate wrapper. As is the detecting custom on land I remove all the junk that I find be it glass bottles or pulltabs. Was I surprised when I felt the weight and realised that I was holding a rather heavy gold ring in my hand with a green stone..."

FINALIS(T) E



Finder: Eric van den Berg

Where found: Heidelberg (Gauteng)

Detector: Minelab Sovereign XS 11 Pro

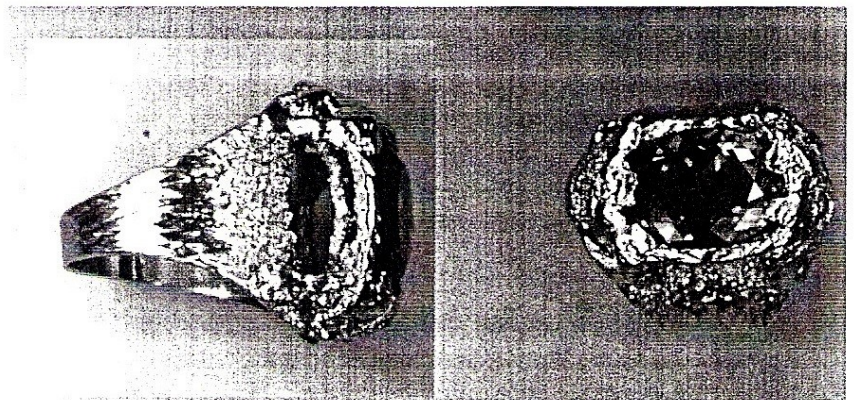
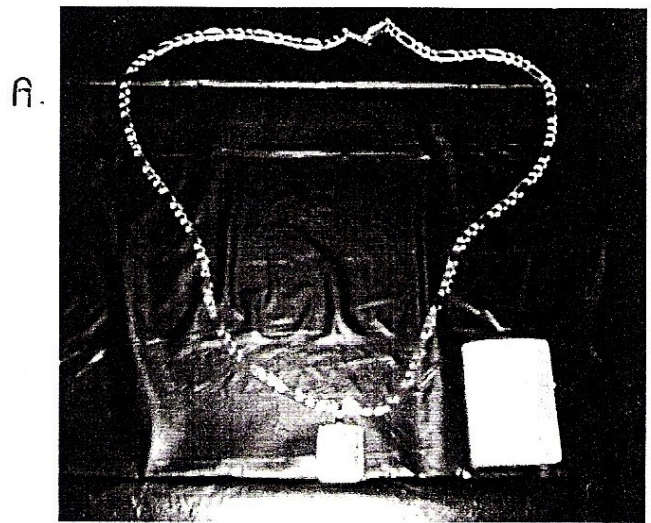
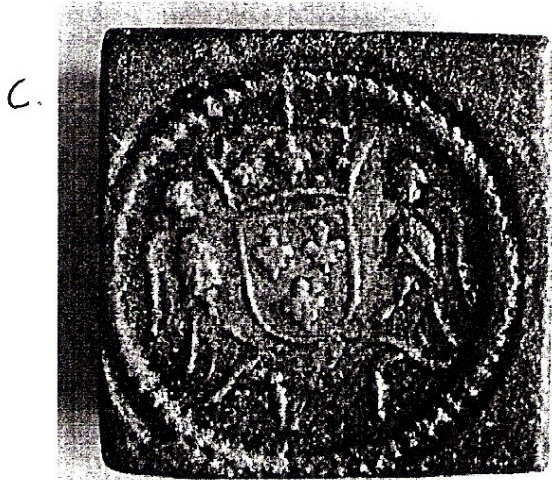
Description of item: Victorian Gold Sovereign dated 1887

Value: Unknown

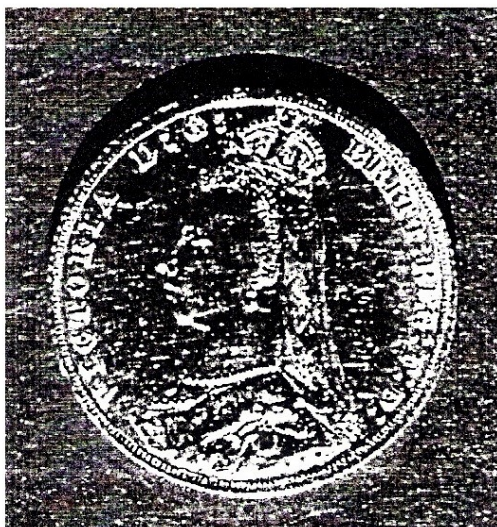
General: "On Saturday the 23rd of January 1999 I found the Sovereign just outside Heidelberg, at the foot of a hillock near a new shopping complex. This in turn is close to the "old side" of town where most of the houses still are and dating from before the Boer War (1899 - 1902). The old main road ran along the bottom of the hill and turned into town somewhere at this point. During the war, the British soldier's main camp was on the side of the hill which is now a residential area. Many bits of badges, helmet pieces, buttons and other personal belongings have come from this area. The gold coin is slightly scratched, but still in a beautiful condition and was about 5 cm deep."

WHO IS GOING TO BE THE WINNER? WIE GAAN DIE WENNER WEES?

See our next issue / Sien ons volgende uitgawe



D.



- A. David Berg: Goue Mansketting met plaathangertjie
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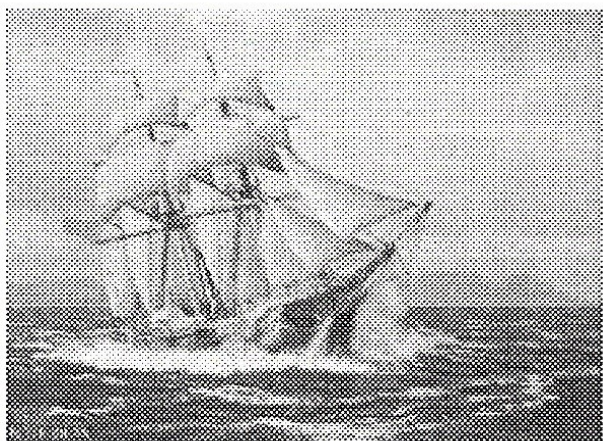
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H.M. Paddle Steamer Birkenhead

The Shipwreck that set the Historic Precedent of "Women and Children First"



Launched by the Marchioness of Westminster, in December of 1845, HM Paddle Steamer Birkenhead, was designed by John Laird, and built by the shipyard of Laird's of Birkenhead. She was 210 feet in length, with a beam of 37½ feet, and displaced just over 1900 tons on a load water line of just short of 16 feet. Her engines were by George Forester & Company, each developing 350-h.p.

Originally designed as a Frigate, she was born at the time when the controversy was raging over the merits of the traditional wooden hulled vessels, and the advantages of the "modern" iron hulled vessels. Accordingly, her design and purpose were changed during the course of her construction, to that of a troopship.

It was the Birkenhead that in August 1847, was primarily responsible for freeing the S.S. Great Britain, and then succeeding, under the most adverse conditions, in towing her from Dundrum Bay where she had gone aground, to the safety of Liverpool Merseyside, for repairs.

Although decommissioned in early 1848, then recommissioned in late 1850, her conversion to that of a troopship being restarted and finally completed, Birkenhead accounted well for herself, in all that she was called upon to do. At last, the British Admiralty started looking upon her, with some favour. They were certainly not displeased when she took only 45 days to convey a regiment of Troops to the Cape, a task usually requiring some 64 days to accomplish.

On the 7 January 1852, under the Command of Captain Robert Salmond R.N., the Birkenhead sailed from the port of Cork in Southern Ireland, to convey additional troops to Lieutenant General Sir Harry Smith, the then Governor and Military Commander for the Cape to reinforce British troops engaged in the Kaffir, or Eighth Frontier, War in the eastern Cape. On board were drafts of the 2nd, 6th, 12th, 45th, 73rd, 74th and 91st Foot, the 12th Lancers and the 43rd Light Infantry, some accompanied by their wives and children. The senior military Officer on board was Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Seton, then aged 38 years.

The vessel made stops at Madeira and Sierra Leone, before arriving at the island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic, on the 9 February 1852. She stayed in port for just as much time as it took to revictual, and continued on her southerly voyage.

On 23 February 1852, she docked in Simons Bay. 350 Tons of coal topped off her bunkers, and fresh water and supplies were taken on board. This took the better part of the next two days, and she finally left Simons Bay at 18h00, on Wednesday, the 25 February 1852.

The sun set at 19h31, and the moon at 22h35. The weather was calm, and the Birkenhead continued on her course S.S.E.½E. at a steady 8½ knots. While the course plotted kept her well clear of a coast known for its treachery, either compass error or stronger than anticipated currents took the Birkenhead inshore of her intended course.

At just before 02h00 on the morning of 26 February 1852, she foundered on a rock pinnacle about one mile off Danger Point, sinking inside of 20 minutes.

What transpired during the course of those 20 minutes, was to change the course of history, forever.

On striking the rock, her metal hull was torn open, just aft of the foremast. Troops accommodated in the lower decks foreward were doubtless overcome. As the remaining men and officers appeared on deck, Lieutenant-Colonel Seton addressed his subordinate officers, instructing them to place themselves at the disposal of the Master of the vessel, Captain Salmond, and to obey and execute any command that he may give them.

Almost immediately, sixty soldiers were assigned to the pumps in the lower after-deck, and a further sixty were put to the tackle securing the paddle-box lifeboats. Captain Salmond then gave orders that the cutter be got ready, and lowered, for the women and children, who had gathered under the poop awning. They were then passed into the cutter, and ordered to stand off, at about 150 yards distant.

No sooner were they off the boat, than the entire bow section broke off at the foremast, the funnel collapsed, and stove in the the starboard paddle-box, with its lifeboat still attached to it. The port paddle-box lifeboat capsized on being lowered to the water. The large lifeboat in the centre of the Birkenhead, could not be moved, as the vessel was breaking up at the bow.

At this point, all the men remaining on board made their way aft, and mustered quietly on the poop.

By this time, an estimated 15 minutes had elapsed since the Birkenhead had first struck. Captain Salmond called out to all those remaining who could swim, to jump overboard, and make for the boats. Captain Wright and Lieutenant Girardot, the two most senior officers under Lieutenant-Colonel Seton called out to the men not to go overboard to the boats, for

fear of them being swamped, knowing that at least one of the boats was filled with women and children.

No sooner having said this, than the vessel broke in two for a second time, crosswise, just abaft the engine room, the remaining stern section filling immediately, and going down.

Of the 638 souls who sailed from Simonstown, 445 perished, leaving only 193 survivors.

Since then, to this day, the conduct of the troops has become known as the Birkenhead Drill, and is embodied in the cry, "Women and children first!", and prompted the following poem, written by Rudyard Kipling, entitled "Soldier and Sailor, too".

Gold, reputed to be worth £300 000 went down with the Birkenhead, and while the remains of the wreck lie in only 30m of water, within fairly easy reach of Scuba divers, and three Admiralty attempts to recover the gold were made, in 1854, 1893 and 1958 respectively, no finds have been reported to any authorities.

This internet article (<http://www.gans.co.za>) was sent in by one of our readers.

BIRKENHEAD-SKAT BESTAAN, "MOET GESOEK WORD"

Uit: Die Burger 88/10/08

"DIE skat is daar. Ons moet net aanhou soek." Só het dr. Allan Kayle, leier van die span bergingswerkers wat nou reeds drie jaar lank soek na waarskynlik Suid-Afrika se mees gesogte skat, dié op die stoomskip Birkenhead, gister aan Die Burger gesê.

Die Birkenhead was 'n Britse skip wat in 1852 naby Danger Point met groot lewensverlies gesink het. Van die 638 mense aan boord het 445 omgekom.

Die verhaal van die Britse soldate wat in gelid en op aandag gestaan het terwyl die skip gesink het om die sewe vroue en dertien kinders kans te gee om met die reddingsbote die veiligheid van die wal te bereik, het 'n legende oor die wêreld heen geword.

Die 250 000 goue munte wat glo aan boord was, word reeds langer as 'n eeu deur skattejagters en bergingsduikers gesoek.

Hoewel dr. Kayle en sy span reeds duisende artefakte gevind het, het hulle net 24 goue muntstukke tussen die wrakstukke van die Birkenhead gekry.

Dr. Kayle het gister op 'n simposium oor mariene argeologie in Suid-Afrika gesê die goue muntstukke wat gevind is, was waarskynlik die persoonlike eiendom van veral die offisiere aan boord.

Uitsluitel oor 'n dispuut tussen die Britse regering en Suid-Afrikaanse owerhede oor wie se wrak dit is, is nog nie bereik nie. Die Britse departement van buitelandse sake beweer dat die wrak van die Birkenhead en alles daarop aan Brittanje behoort, omdat dit 'n Britse oorlogsgraf is.

Volgens dr. Kayle word daar tans nog oor die Britse aanspraak onderhandel.

"Selfs al het ons voor die tyd geweet dat ons nie die skat sou kry nie, sou ons steeds voortgegaan het met die projek. Die Birkenhead is Suid-Afrika se belangrikste skeepswrak, en dit was hoogs bevredigend om daarop te werk."

PERSBROKKIES

LONDEN. 'n Man het 126 Romeinse goue munte, sommige uit die tyd van keiser Nero, in 'n oop stuk veld naby Oxford ontdek kort nadat hy 'n metaalverklikker gekoop het. "Dit is van die waardevolste vondste nog," het mnr Roger Bland van die Britse Museum gesê. Dit dateer van 64 n.C. tot 161 n.C. Daar sal môre besluit word of dit tot krooneiendom verklaar gaan word. (Sapa-AFP) Die Burger 7/12/95

MELBOURNE (Australië). Minstens een Australiër vier vanjaar 'n goue Kersfees. Deur die ontdekking van 'n klont goud kon 'n Aussie vanjaar sy wildste Kersdrome waar maak. Sy vonds is S32 000 (Sowat R150 000) werd. Na 'n volgehoue, daelange soektog met 'n metaalverklikker in die Ballarat-omgewing, sowat 110km wes van Melbourne, het die fortuinsoeker die klont van 2,154g slegs 5cm onder die grondoppervlakte gevind. Mnr Cordell Kent, eienaar van 'n goudinruil-onderneming in Ballarat, het gesê die man het die goud sowat tien dae gelede gevind. Hy wil anoniem bly. Volgens mnr Kent het die suksesvolle goudsoeker sy ontdekking nie ver van die tradisionele goudvelde gedoen nie. Hy het besluit om sy soektog uit te brei en uit te wyk na 'n onbekende terrein waar hy die goud byna bo-op die grond gevind het.

(Sapa-AFP) Beeld 17/12/96

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KAIRO - Sewe Egiptiese werkers het 'n eeue-oue skat van goudmunte in Kairo gevind wat volgens kenners meer as R260 miljoen werd is. Volgens die polisie het die werkers 'n amfoor - 'n antieke kruik met twee ore - met 2 700 munte van 24 karaat goud gevind toe hulle 'n gebou restoureer. Die kruik is agter 'n muur in 'n historiese gebou in die ou buurt van Kairo, naby al-Azhar, versteek. Die werkers is almal in hegtenis geneem en aangekla omdat hulle nie die vonds aangemeld het nie en die buit tussen hulself verdeel het. Beeld 21/09/90

THE LOST TREASURE OF SKELETON CANYON

(The epic adventures of Indiana Raiguel)

By Steve Raiguel

On the wall above my desk in Houston there hung for many years a 1.5m rattlesnake skin that is the only surviving relic of my first adventure into treasure hunting. Snavelly the Snakeskin eventually succumbed to the relentless nocturnal attacks of the six-legged pirhanas that Texans call cockroaches, and having grown somewhat threadbare-looking as a result, was finally retired to a box in the attic. Occasionally, I still dig it out to impress my 5-year-old, and to remind myself of the adventure in the Arizona desert I had so many years ago that was my first exposure to metal detecting - indeed to treasure hunting in general - and one that was also very nearly my last. Chalk it up to youthful enthusiasm, which, it has been pointed out, is what we all have before a few of life's more disastrous experiences have had time to teach us the art of caution.

At the time, I was living on the plains of Lubbock, Texas and working as a technician for the Texas Tech Medical School, with few responsibilities, a sports car, and was generally enjoying what a life of rakish dissipation had to offer a randy young male at a university full of attractive coeds. My best friend at the time - call him "Bob" - had a PhD. in history, no job, and little inclination to possess one. Like all of us, though, Bob dreamed of being wealthy and spent much of his not inconsiderable free time in reading, mostly about history, with an eye to anything that might make him rich without interfering too much with his drinking or requiring the investment of excessive, unpleasant effort. Somewhere in this reading, he had come across the tale of the "Lost Treasure of Skeleton Canyon", which was to involve us in a saga during which we were ourselves very nearly reduced to lost skeletons.

Our story actually begins in the mid-19th century in the Southeastern corner of the state of Arizona. This part of America was once the northernmost region of the old Spanish empire which had established a few lonely outpost towns such as Taos and Sante Fe, and had then withdrawn back into the heart of Mexico, abandoning this expanse of desert to the Apaches, the giant saguaro cacti, and the Gila monsters. Although the area had nominally become a part of the United states through purchase and conquest, it was in fact an ungoverned and ungovernable no-man's land between Mexico and the United States, the haunt of outlaws and gunfighters such as Billy the Kid and John Wesley Harding. The old trade routes passing through this region from Mexico City and Monterey, in the south, towards Sante Fe in the north still existed, but were fraught with danger. One of the most feared and notorious legs of the journey passed through the gap of Skeleton Canyon, a narrow pass between two low mountain ranges, forming a favorite site for ambushes by renegade Indians or outlaws. Indeed, the very name of the canyon derives from the presence of the many unburied reminders of those, man and beast alike, who had failed to make the perilous passage safely.

One of the outlaw gangs operating in the area consisted of a pair of desperados name Billy Grounds and Zwing Hunt. The story goes that these two had gotten wind of a particularly rich caravan passing through the area reputed to have been transporting, among other items, a gold statue of the Virgin Mary from Monterrey to Sante Fe. The statue supposedly stood a meter tall and was worth over a hundred thousand 19th-century dollars. The robbery, however, went badly for the gang, and despite their making off with the loot, Zwing Hunt had been killed outright, while Grounds had recieved a chest wound that would soon lead to his demise - not, however, until he was able to bury the loot somewhere in the mountains to the West, burn the wagons, and hobble back to Galena, where he was cared for by his uncle. Alas, his wounds proved fatal, but before he expired, he is supposed to have given the uncle a description of the area where the treasure had been buried. The

site, it was said, was located in the mountain range to the west of the canyon, between two springs along a long-vanished trail that ran from Galena to Douglas, Arizona.

Armed with this pitifully inadequate information and a couple of U.S. Geological Survey maps, we set out for the deserts of Arizona, with no more preparation for this 800-km journey than stopping on the outskirts of town to gas up "Old Blue". "Blue" was Bob's '78 Cutlass, a vehicle bearing the rather unique distinction of a pair of badly-patched .223 caliber bullet holes in the left front fender, but that's whole 'nother story, and probably one best left untold. From somebody or other, Bob had managed to borrow a cheap Radio Shack detector that probably was incapable of detecting anything smaller or deeper than a brick-sized gold ingot resting on top of the coil, but that was irrelevant, since neither of us had the foggiest idea how to operate a detector anyhow.

Eventually, we arrived at the border town of Douglas, and set up our base camp in a hotel that looked inexpensive, but wasn't. I was more than willing to pay the exorbitant price, however, for after the grueling 10-hour trip in the summer heat, all I wanted at this point was a cold shower and an opportunity to spend some quality time in front of an air conditioner blasting at maximum volume. Even this modest expectation evaporated when we discovered that the water issuing from the egregiously misnamed "cold" tap had been warmed by the desert heat to the body temperature of a malaria-stricken hummingbird, and neither was the air conditioner going to condition much air, since it bore a hand-lettered "out of order" sign. These were surely bad omens of things to come. Even Bob felt the need to supplement his eternal optimism with a few extra draughts from his bottle of Old Grand-Dad.

The following morning, however, was full of promise. We'd spent a pleasant enough night, for the desert cools quickly once the sun goes down, and the next day dawned cool and clear. We grabbed a hearty breakfast at a nearby diner and took the road north to the turnoff onto an "unimproved" road running along the foot of the mountains to the area where we deemed that the treasure had been buried. There was a ranch house there at the gate, and having been brought up in Texas where ranchers are known to shoot - well, okay, shoot at - the occasional trespasser, we thought it expedient to ask permission before proceeding across the ranchers property, although, strictly speaking, it probably wasn't his, but was public land leased from the Bureau of Land Management.

"Shore, y'all can go back over there as far as I'm concerned" he said with an amused smile, "but y'all ain't a-gonna make it in this here car. You'd need a 4-wheel drive to get through them washes." Seeing as how he didn't mind as how we went ahead and gave it a try, anyway, and ignoring his "Them got-damn fools" shake of the head as we roared off, we began to make our way down what was, loosely speaking, a road. Well, it began as a road, but quickly atrophied to two parallel tire tracks cut by increasingly deep washes. About 15km back into the desert, poised on the brink of a precipice, we realized what the rancher had been talking about. We had encountered the Mother of All Washes: ten to fifteen meters across, over two meters deep, and with 45-degree, boulder-strewn banks.

"Well, guess me might as well turn back, or try to walk the rest of the way" I said. "There's no way you're going to get Old Blue across that".

"Aw, we might as well go ahead give it a try, since we've come this far." Said Bob. He'd been nipping on his bottle of Old Grand-Dad again, and his characteristic optimism had returned. Old Blue, you see, had this magical quality about it, not unlike Cinderella's pumpkin on potent plant steroids, and had been known to turn magically into a race-prepared rally vehicle after Bob had had a nip or two of his liquid optimism.

After what I have to admit was only a token show of reluctance, I agreed we should give it a try. We backed up 20 meters or so, and Bob gunned the engine. "Whump"! We flew over the first bank. "Rrrrrr...", we plowed through soft sand in the bottom of the wash. "Whump! Clang!" And with that, we found ourselves halfway up the far side of the wash, high-centered on a boulder the size of a baby elephant. The back wheels, now a good 10 cm off the ground clearly weren't going to provide the traction we were going to need to get out of here. With an ingenuity born of a fair-to-moderate state of "optimism", Bob suggested we try jacking up the car and moving the boulder. Surprisingly, the idea worked, and after a grunting, sweating hour during which the car threatened any number of times to fall off the jack and pulverize us between the chassis and the boulder, we actually managed to pry and muscle the rock out from under the car and were once again on our way. After the ordeal of getting there, arrival at the area itself proved surprisingly anticlimactic. We found a few iron items that might have been from an old wagon, then again, maybe they weren't. The metal detector, predictably, proved as pitifully inadequate for the task as we were, and seemed to have only two operating modes, which included beeping continuously and not beeping at all. The spring shown on the map, which we'd thought might correspond to the spring in Grounds' description apparently didn't exist, at least not this time of year. There was nothing to do but head back, since getting there and extracting Old Blue from the wash had taken much of the day and it was now late afternoon.

As we made our way back to the car, there was a surprising amount of wildlife about. In addition to the usual quail and jackrabbits, a herd of perhaps thirty pronghorn antelope wandered up to within about 30 meters of us, eyed us cautiously, then ambled off. Back at the car an enormous diamondback rattler slithered lazily across the road, saw us, suddenly remembered urgent business on the other side of the desert, and quickly picked up the pace of his slither. Not quite enough to make good his escape, though. Thinking what a great-looking belt the snakeskin would make, I dispatched the hapless reptile with a couple of shots from the .22 sidearm I was carrying, tossed the carcass into the back of the car, and we were on our way back to Texas.

Well, almost. For between us and Texas there was still the matter of the wash, and it turned out that the bank we had come down was at least as imposing as the one we had had so much difficulty in going up. This time, however, the final "Whump-crunch" failed to leave us teetering on a boulder, and we seemed to be home free. That is, until the unmistakable odor of petrol began to permeate the car, exceeding even the stench now rising from the rapidly decomposing snake's corpse reposing on the warm floorboards. We briefly exchanged knowing "uh-oh" glances, and Bob stopped so we could inspect the car. Sure enough, a jagged rock had holed the fuel tank, which was spritzing a pencil-sized stream of gas onto the hot exhaust system where it sizzled evilly, making a sound ominously like that of a lit fuse. Either the tank was going to blow, taking us with it, or all our precious fuel was going to disappear into the thirsty ground, stranding us in the middle of the waterless desert. Either way, we were toast! Thinking quickly - or rather, not at all, since if I had actually thought about it, I'd have realized what a precarious situation I was placing myself in - I cut a mesquite twig, whittled it down to a point, dived under the car, and drove it into the hole with a

piece of rock. The green wood sealed the hole perfectly! With no further misadventures, we finally made our way back to the junction with the main road, where the rancher eyed us curiously. We simply smiled, waved, and kept on going, unwilling to admit that he had been right about the wash.

There at the junction stood a ramshackle building that was a combination post office, general store, cafe, and bar. A hamburger and a good, stiff drink - our close call had left us feeling a might pessimistic - sounded pretty good to both of us, so we stopped and entered the establishment. The cool, dark interior was decorated, or rather cluttered, in the style of tourist-trap chic, consisting of typical wild-west and mining memorabilia : ropes, saddles, hunting trophies, mining lamps, picks, and the requisite mounted "jackelope". Half the watering-holes in the southwest must have one of these mounted jackrabbit heads on the wall sporting a surprisingly convincing pair of horns made from rooster spurs. The Yankee tourists on their way to California invariably think them real, to the delight of the local residents, who think that Yankees are darn fools, anyway.

The owner-cook-bartender-postmaster turned out to be an easy-going, talkative fellow, and a third-generation resident of the tiny settlement. He was well versed in desert lore, and had, in his time, ranched, mined, prospected, and collected snakes and other varmits in addition to running his little cafe. He took the time to show me, with an expert's touch, how to skin out the snake that I had shot, and advised me how to tan and preserve it. He had inherited a small gold mine located behind the cafe, he told us as we munched our burgers and sipped bourbon and water, that his father had worked for years, and was familiar with the lost treasure story. When we told him where we'd been and what we'd been up to, he said that his grandfather had prospected for years in the very area where we had been. One time, out there in the middle of the desert, the old man had found a solid gold spoon. Could this have been a part of the lost treasure we'd been looking for? Perhaps someday, a lot older, a little bit wiser, and certainly better equipped, I may just have to go back to Arizona and find out.

Editors note:

Dr Steve Raiguel, the writer of this article, has sportingly agreed to be one of the judges in our Find of The Year Competition. I have met Steve through the internet and we have become good "long distance" friends. I wish to thank him through the pages of this newsletter for his excellent articles and his support for our hobby here in South Africa.



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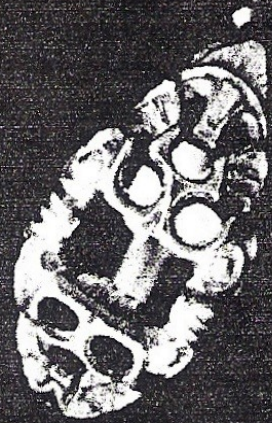
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This nice photo has been received from one of our fellow Treasure Hunters, Shaun Engler, as a suggestion for a future front page. As you can see from the photo, Shaun just loves to hunt the beaches around Cape Town.

TREASURE TALK NEEDS YOUR HELP!!

Treasure Talk is planning "the mother of all issues" for the end of the year. Contributions are sorely sought. Please send in those photos, letters, articles or any other snippets relating to our wonderful hobby. In the meantime, keep that coil to the soil!



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Treasure Talk beplan die "moeder van alle uitgawes" vir die einde van die jaar. Bydraes word dringend gesoek. Enige foto's, briewe, artikels of enige ander relevante bydraes sal hoog op prys gestel word. Intussen, voorspoed met die vondse!