

Treasure Talk

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

Special edition 2004 Spesiale uitgawe

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Surprise Issue for those that are Committed to the
Continuation of Treasure Talk

*Verrassings-uitgawe vir lesers wat ons wil Ondersteun in die
Voortsetting van Treasure Talk*



Letter from the Editor / Brief van die Redakteur

Dear reader

This special edition of Treasure Talk may come as a surprise to you. But the reason for this issue is three fold: -

Firstly I had a call from a regular reader and contributor from Kwa-Zulu Natal who informed me that he is considering taking over the editorship, which is GREAT NEWS!

But as there is a big possibility that he (and a few of us) have to sponsor future editions out of own pocket, it is of the utmost importance that we must have the names of those readers that are REALLY committed to the continuation of Treasure Talk and who would consider a small donation to the costs of publishing the quarterly issues. In this issue you will find a short questionnaire that you must please complete and immediately send to me.

The future of Treasure Talk will depend on the response we get from you the reader and fellow metal detecting hobbyists.

Secondly, I still have 20 copies of the fantastic book on South African metal detecting by John Mulder, which is a steal at R50 (all costs included). Please order a copy that I am sure will one day become true Africana.

Finally – do not forget to visit our “new” international metal detecting forum at <http://members3.boardhost.com/Charles.C/>. Here you will find stories, tips, posts and pictures from fellow metal detectorists from countries like our own, England, Canada, USA, Wales, France, Australia etc. Please put this under your favourite websites and come and say hello from time to time.

I also included a few articles in this issue that were never published in earlier editions of Treasure Talk.

Long live the best hobby in the world!

Kind Regards

Pierre Nortje
(Outgoing editor)

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Brief van die Redakteur / Letter from the Editor

Beste leser

Hierdie spesiale uitgawe van Treasure Talk mag as 'n verrasing vir u kom. Die rede daarvoor is egter drie-ledig:-

Eerstens het ek 'n oproep ontvang van 'n leser van Kwa-Zulu Natal wat my laat weet het dat hy dit oorweeg om die redakteurskap oor te neem. Dit is FANTASTIESE NUUS!

Maar aangesien daar 'n groot moontlikheid is dat hy (en 'n paar van ons) self toekomstige uitgawes sal moet borg, is dit BAIE belangrik dat ons die name ontvang van daardie lesers wat WERKLIK belangstel in die voortsetting van Treasure Talk en wat 'n bereid sou wees om 'n klein bydrae te maak t.o.v. die kostes van toekomstige uitgawes. In hierdie uitgawe sal u 'n kort vraelys ontvang in hierdie verband wat u onverwyld aan my moet pos asseblief!

Die toekoms van Treasure Talk sal in 'n groot mate afhang van die reaksie wat ons van u as leser gaan kry.

Tweedens het ek nog 20 kopiëe van John Mulder se fantastiese boek oor metaal verklikking in Suid Afrika teen 'n bykans belaglike prys van R50 (alles ingesluit). Bestel asseblief 'n kopié – ek is seker dat sal werklik nog Africana word in die nabye toekoms.

Ten slotte – onthou ASSEMBLIEF om ons “nuwe” internasionale metal verklikking forum te besoek by <http://members3.boardhost.com/Charles.C/> waar u stories, fotos en bydraes kan lees van mede entoesiaste van Engeland, Kanada, VSA, Wales, Frankryk, Australië en ooral oor. Plaas hier webadres onder jou gunsteling webwerwe en kom sê so nou en dan hello!

Ek sluit ook by hierdie uitgawe 'n paar artikels in wat nog nie voorheen gepubliseer is nie.

Lank lewe die beste stokperdjie in die wêreld!

Pierre Nortje
(Uitgaande redakteur)

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Letters from our Readers // Briewe van ons lesers

Beste Pierre

Weer eens baie baie dankie wat jy gedoen het! Ek het die tydskrif waarlik geniet en altyd uitgesien na die volgende een. Net die beste vir jou en almal wat jy liefhet. Stuur my asseblief die boek van Johan en Erica – ingesluit is die R50.00.

Baie dankie en groetnis

Oom Dawie Berg
Shelly Beach

Hi Pierre,

Met Lukas van der Merwe yesterday and am now the owner of Fisher 1225-X. Will start at CaapseHoop this weekend.

Will advise progress!

Best regards

Etienne Taitz
White River

Geagte Pierre

Ingeslote my R50 vir John Mulder se boek.

Ek wil u ook bedank vir die jare van toewyding wat u gegee het aan Treasure Talk se nuusbrieff. Alles is geliaseer en sal ek dit bewaar.

Sodra ek dit kan bekostig sal ek 'n metaalverklikker aankoop en my afgetreede tyd spandeer op soek na skatte.

Daar ontstaan 'n diep heimweë in my sodra ek 'n ou plaashuis sien waar boeremense vroeër gebly het, en ek weet dat die boervrou wat daar gebly het, inderhaas 'n trommeltjie begrawe het voordat hulle weggevoer is na die konsentrasiekampe. Ek raak ook diep verbitterd daarvoor as ek dink hoeveel mans/vroue/kinders en getroue bediendes in die Anglo Boere-oorlog gesterf het – ons kon 'n sterk Afrikaanse nasie gewees het!

Vriendelike groete

Piet Swart
Marble Hall

Detecting an old Airport

By Pierre Nortje

Before Cape Town (our local city) build its international airport in 1956, the main airport in use was Wingfield, much smaller but also nearer to the city center and build in 1926. So for 30 years Wingfield was the cities main airport and regular flights were taken both national and internationally.

During World War II, Wingfield also served as a military training base for air force personnel from Allied countries. After 1956 the whole area was proclaimed a military training area and even I did some military training there in the 1980s and early 1990s. Today there are only a few military personnel left and the area is fairly run down.

A while back I contacted the base commander to ask permission for some friends and I to detect the area and he immediately agreed.

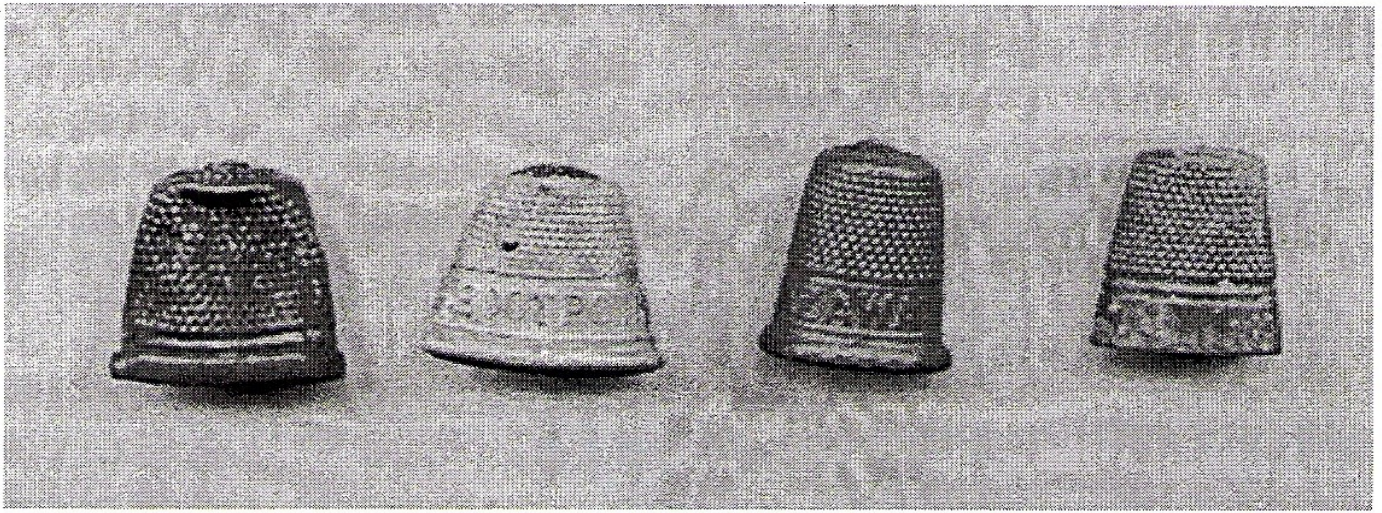
Our group decided that it was of no use to detect the areas where military training took place (as the chances were good that we would find only fairly "modern" losses)

Our eyes were on the immediate area surrounding the original smallish airport building where civilian air-travelers and tourists converged in the 1920s and 1930s. Although the old building still stands, the grass-lawn and garden area are heavily overgrown with thick 3-foot high grass and invested with mole snakes. This is where we decided to try our luck.

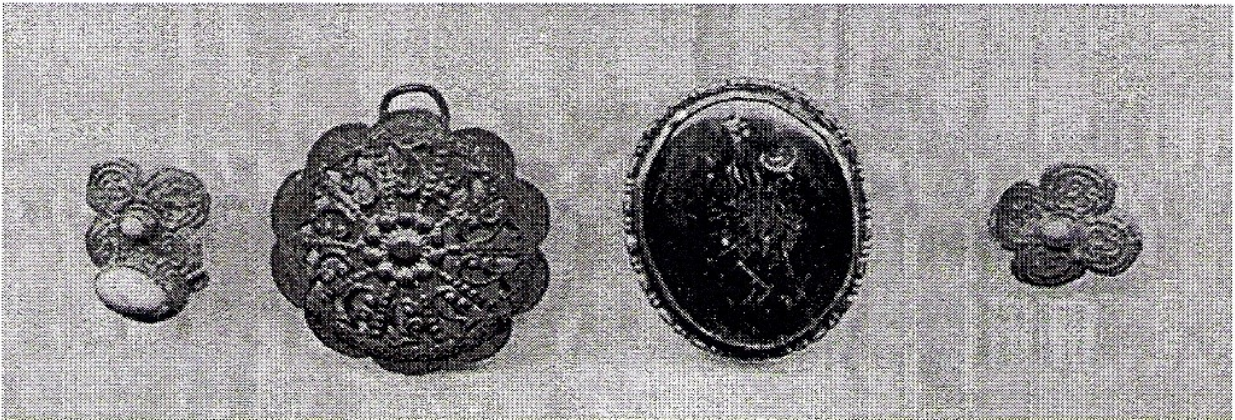
Although we are mainly beach detectorists and some of us have done some infrequent "relic" hunting on farms and Victorian battle camps and fields, this kind of detecting was, with one or two exceptions, totally new to all of us. Here are some photos of finds that we have made.



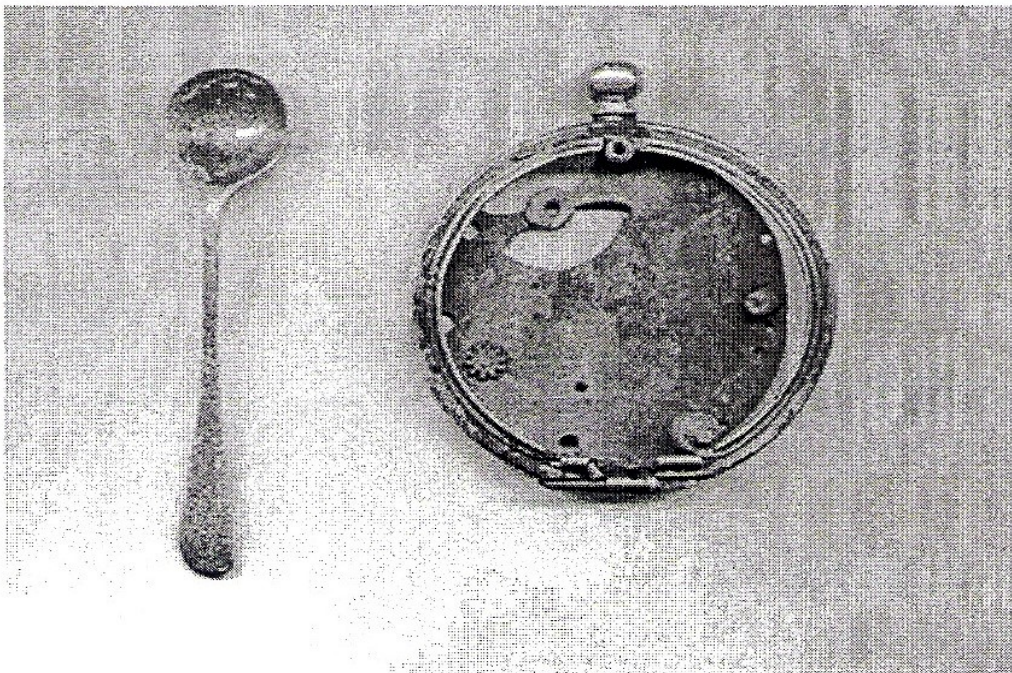
Two Silver half crowns from the 1920s and 30s



Four thimbles - two with inscriptions - the one reads "BOOT POLISH use NUGGET" and the other one "MAZAWATTEE TEA"



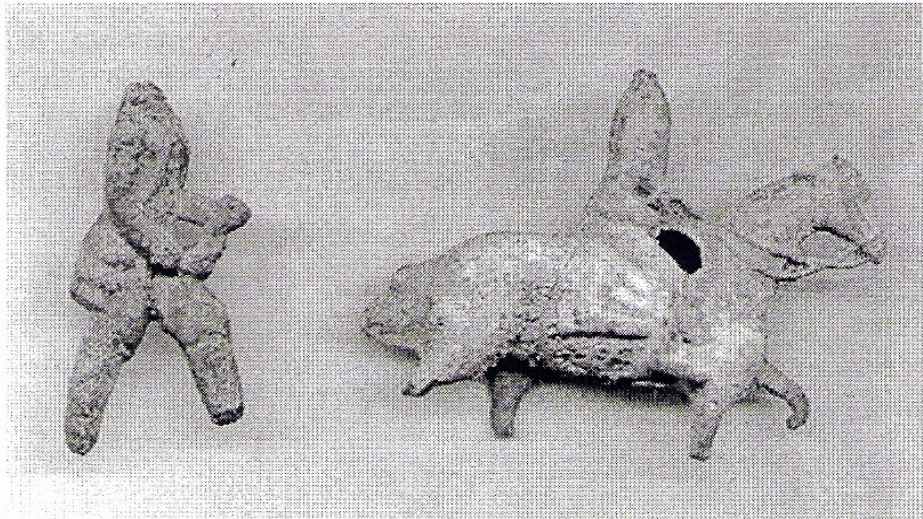
Four pieces of costume jewelry



A broken silver pocket watch and small silver mustard spoon



Two very nice buttons. The one on the left is definitely a military button, but the one on the right could be a fireman's or medical button - I am not sure. It has the letters CBL between two swords with a cross in a circle in the middle and a Roman type helmet at 12 o' clock. On the back are the words "J.R.Gaunt & Son London England". A search on the internet showed that these button makers started operating in 1899.



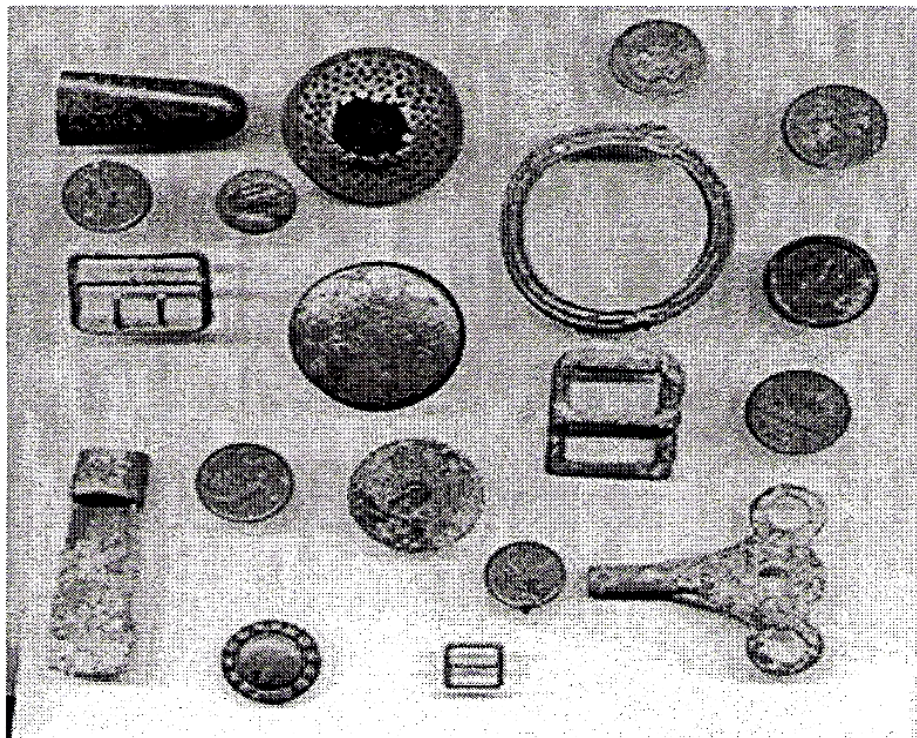
Two broken lead toy soldiers - one on horseback



Two British coins of George V - actually it is three as the copper halfpenny is two coins that have been glued together for some or other reason. The smaller coin is a silver 3 pence dated 1920.



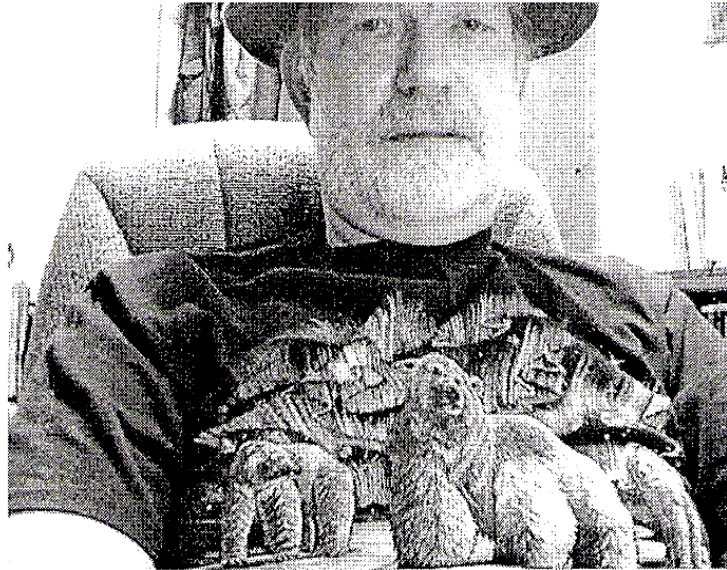
My first "old" token ever - the wording (on both sides) says R.K. GREEN & Co Ld WINE MERCHANT CAPE TOWN. This wine merchant started his business in the late 1800s



A sample of some more items recovered - buckles, broken watches, coins, copper powder box, etcetera. Many more artifacts were found and all in all we had a wonderful trip down memory lane.

GOLD!

By George White (Alaska)



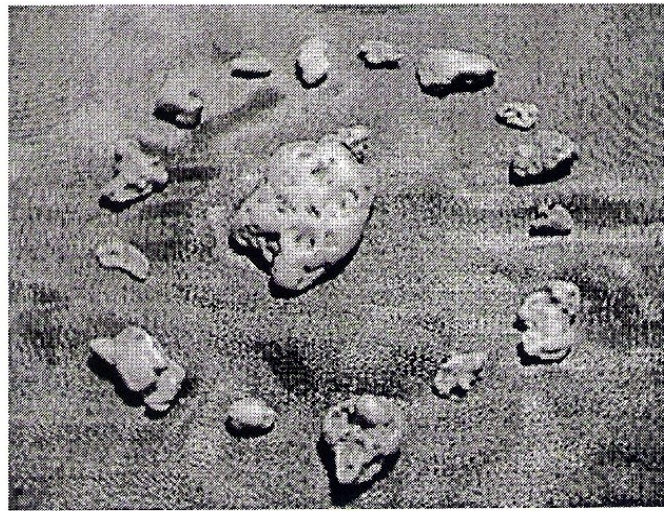
Last summer I had the chance to go back in and take a look at some ground that had been mined twice, the first time by Stampeders drift miners 1899 and that last time by a modern day miner with a hydraulic backhoe and Doodle Bug Trommel.... Over the years I had found some very nice pieces on that side of Jack Wade Cr. just systematically hitting spots that were not too overgrown to get my coil into and looking at spots where modern miners had taken a dozer thru and had dug a few test holes and exposed some new bedrock areas by dozing a trail down the stream.

Imagine my chagrin when this last year someone had at last set up their equipment and were digging up and sluicing the ground that I had been detecting over the years. I knew this old miner and had gotten permission to scan all of the ground he was finished with, and was happy with that much at least. This area had been Drift mined and was pretty shallow as far as most drift mines were concerned, I believe these shafts were probably around 20' deep and as the miner progressed along the bench and exposed these old workings I was amazed to see how well the stampeders had really cleaned up the bedrock.. Right at the bottom of the shaft and around the bottom edge, the bedrock was slick and bare, as if someone had washed it clean, this was done in 1899.

When they had moved away from the bottom as far as they dared these guys would move over a few feet and dig another log lined crib to bedrock. As these timbers were exposed I marveled at the condition of these 100 yr. old pieces, outside of a little discoloration they looked as if they had been recently placed in the shaft... I decided to go ahead and look some of this ground over and as most of it was exposed bedrock I used the 6" DD coil on my 17000... I took my rake and moved some of the clay around and out of the way and started to scan, I found a few subgrain pieces but nothing of significance right away.

I usually set up a little hand held sluice in the stream to wash the material that contains these little pieces, I don't spend any time looking for them, I just gather the material that has the signal in it and place it in one of several pans I have for that purpose and when these are full I take a little break, sit down on my favorite bucket and trickle the material thru the sluice. As I progressed thru the area I used my rake to remove a lot of clods, big rocks and a lot of clay that the miner had dug up, this material I imagine had given the oldtimers some trouble as it was that nasty sticky bluish stuff.

While cleaning some of this stuff from the bedrock I noticed some sediments showing up in one particular area, this is the kind of stuff you are looking for as this is ancient stream material and this is what is lodged into dips in the bedrock, where the heavy stuff collects and becomes part of the matrix. As I got this area cleaned up, the rounded gravel and discolored sandy sediments told me that the miners backhoe bucket had completely missed this area.



Well I moved the rest of the rocks and dirt out of the way and raked it flat so I could get my coil right down on ground and immediately started getting signals, excitedly I started picking pieces right out of this old gravel and these were pretty good size. I pulled signal after signal out of the hole and finally I got a nice little buzz that sounded pretty darn good.

I started digging down thru the material and exposed the largest piece, 41 grams worth. After this piece came out of the pocket, I scanned around a little, got a few more little buzzes but no more big signals, so I decided to just take my shovel and spoon and clean out the rest of the sediments from the dip and just sluice it to recover the tiny pieces that were mostly not detectable. That ended a very nice 4th of July day 2001 as all in all I recovered more than 70 Grams of old Placer Gold.

Please Remember / Onthou Asseblief

To send us the completed Blue Form if you support the continuation of Treasure Talk – do not send any money – just the completed form please.

Om die voltooië Blou Vorm vir ons te stuur as u die voortsetting van Treasure Talk ondersteun - moenie nou geld stuur nie – slegs die voltooië vorm asseblief.



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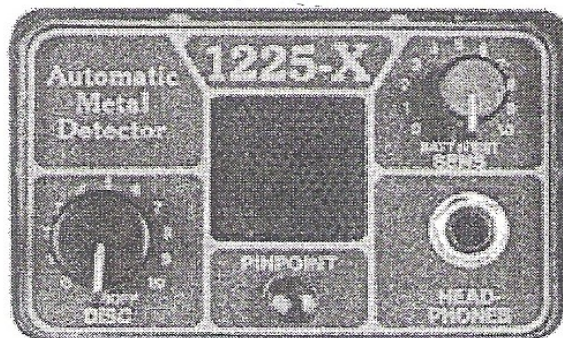
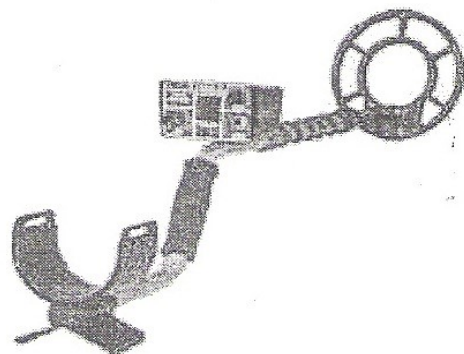
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Smile – you are on Candid Camera

Posted By: Andy Naude

As a SCUBA metal detectorist, I find the strangest of things under water in die swimming areas where I detect here at the southern tip of Africa.

It is always a bit eerie when I find these sets of false teeth, but it always brings a smile to my face (pun intended).

Sometimes my detector pics up the gold in the teeth, but other times it is just “eyes only” finds – or should I say “teeth only” finds?

Winter has hit the Cape in its fullest force so for the moment it is not the “Cape of Good Hope” but the “Cape of Storms” Regards from South Africa and please enjoy the three photos!

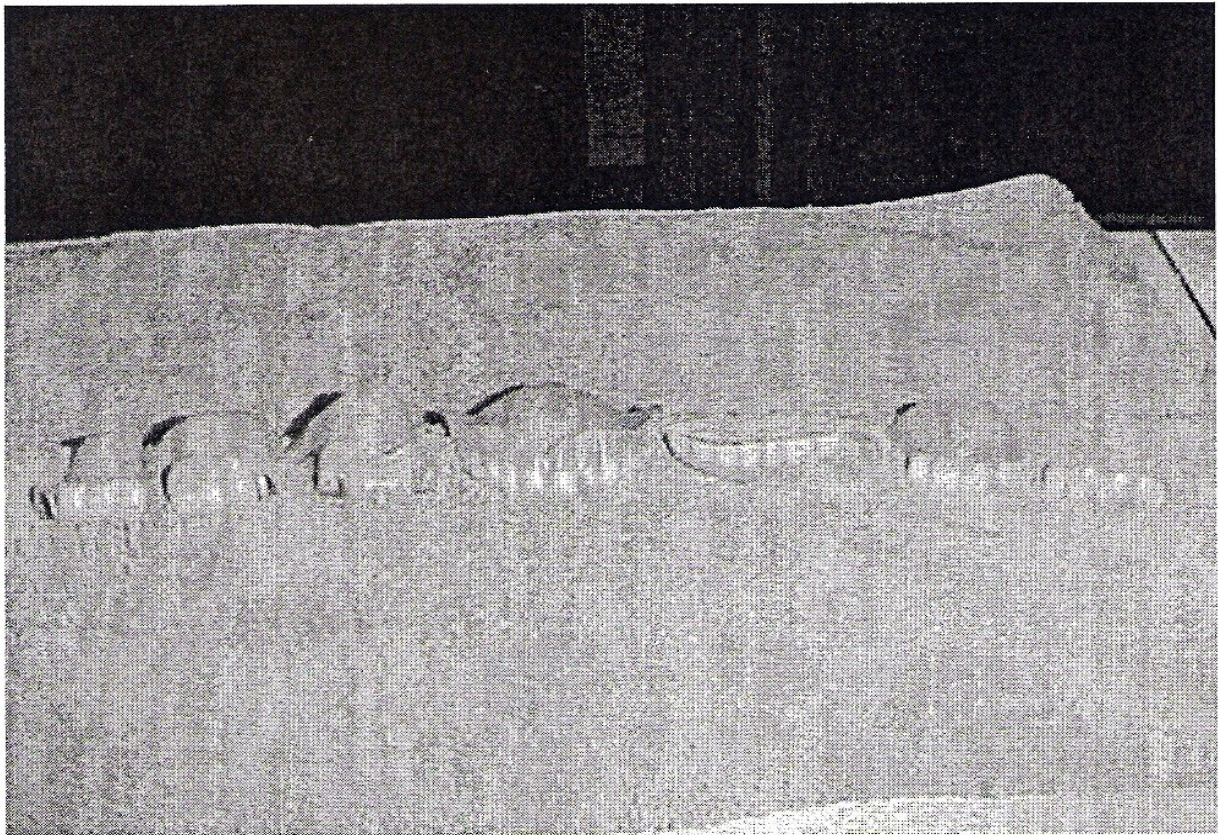


Photo 1: Quite a “bit” of teeth – spot the golden smiles on some of the sets.

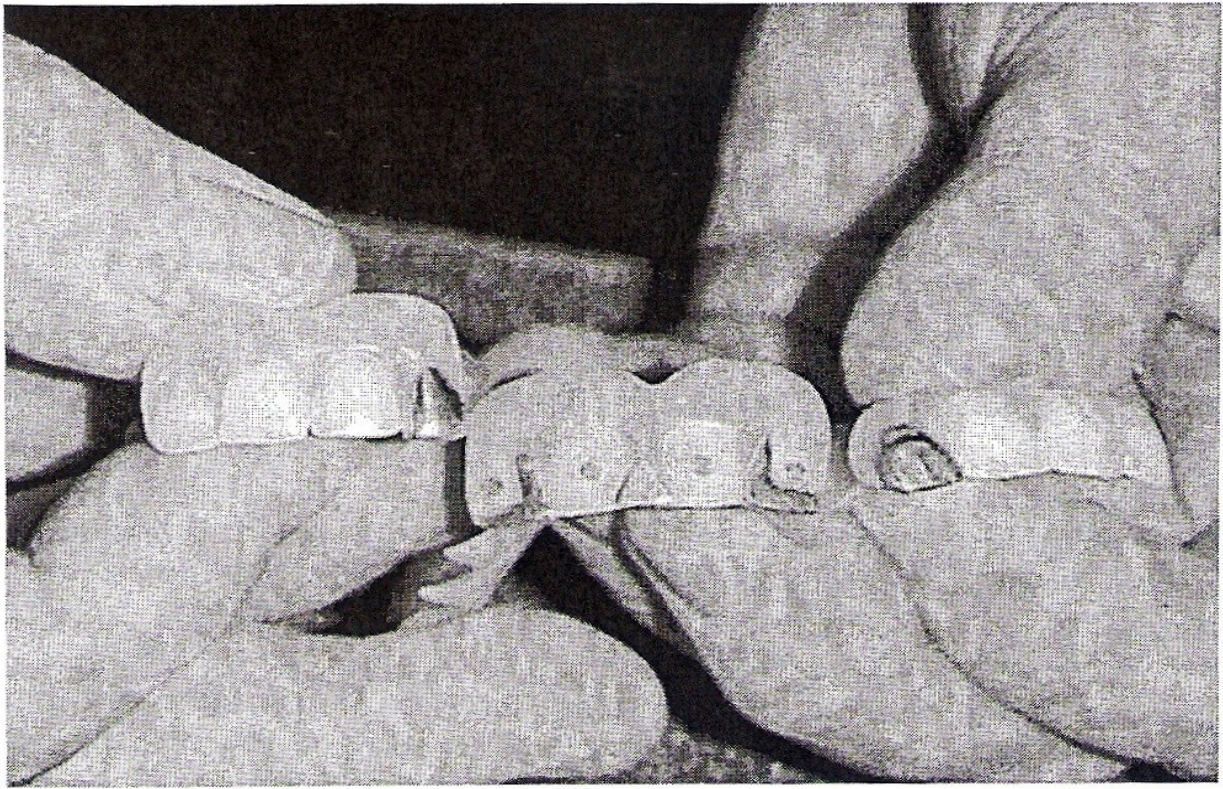


Photo 2: A closer look – the set in the middle have false rubies. These are popular as status symbols with the poorer classes. Not sure why, but they say a girl can't resist a red and gold smile – Urrgggg!!!

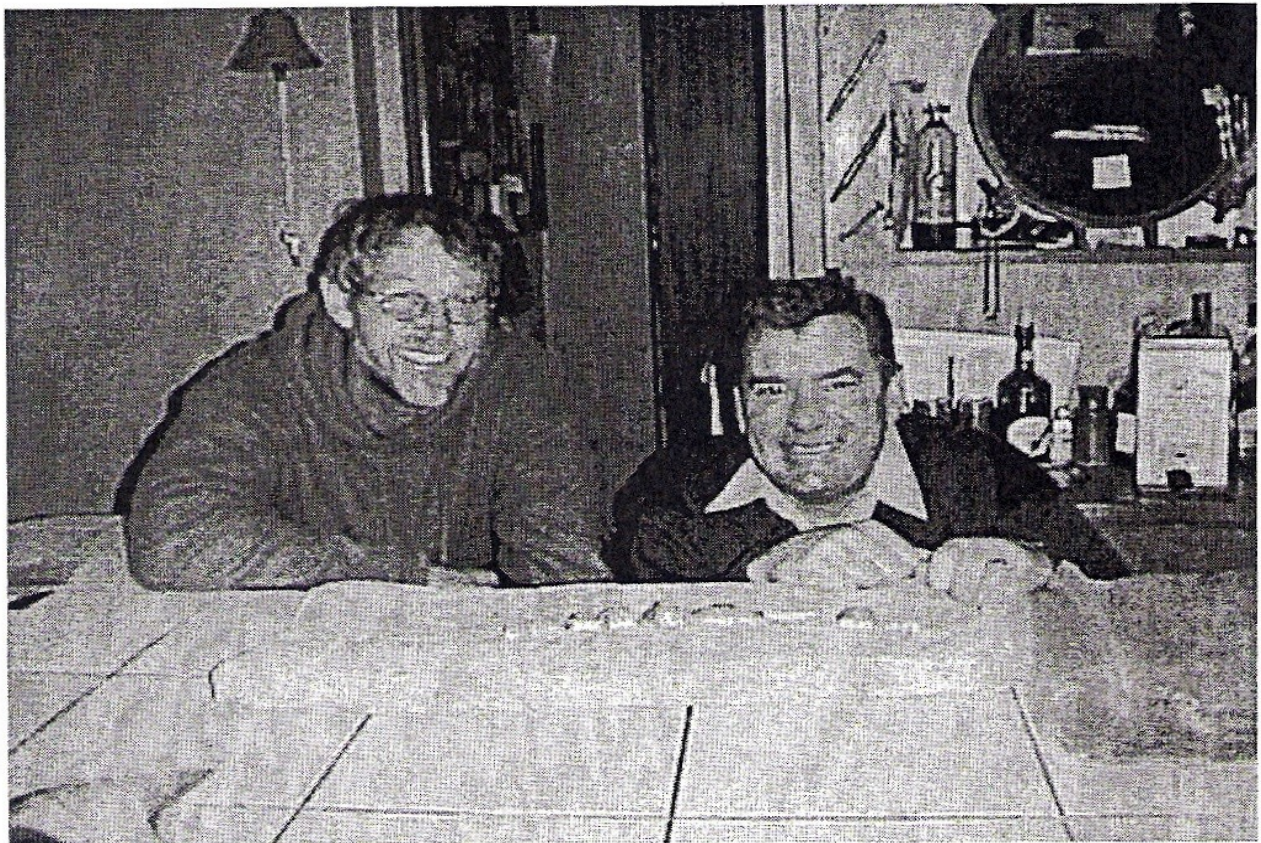


Photo 3: Myself (left) and Pierre (right) showing our beautiful (own) teeth for the camera. We have decided to start a new company to sell the teeth called **“You are (with) what you eat Incorporated.”**

AUSTRALIAN GOLD!

By Pete in OZ

Aussie Bush Gazette

A 2002 Easter Coin and Relic Detecting trip to an Old Australian Gold Town Site for Pete from OZ with sons Mick and Scott.

Well, Easter was here with us again and I had two weeks off from work. I'd asked two of my sons a few weeks ago if they were interested in coming away with me for a three or four day detecting trip to Capeville, an old town site west of Charters Towers.

Now Capeville is located 260 kms west of us here and would take about two and a half-hours to travel. Scott said yes he would come and Mick didn't know until a couple of days before hand. I was going to leave on Good Friday at 8:30 am so we would get there before lunch. Mick told me on the Tuesday that he would be going with Scott and I so it was a trip to the Supermarket to stock up on food. Judy, my wife and I had written up a list of sorts that included nearly everything we would need. I'd already taken care of a spare detector for Mick and Scott had his own. Batteries were no problem as we still had a large box from the last trip away.

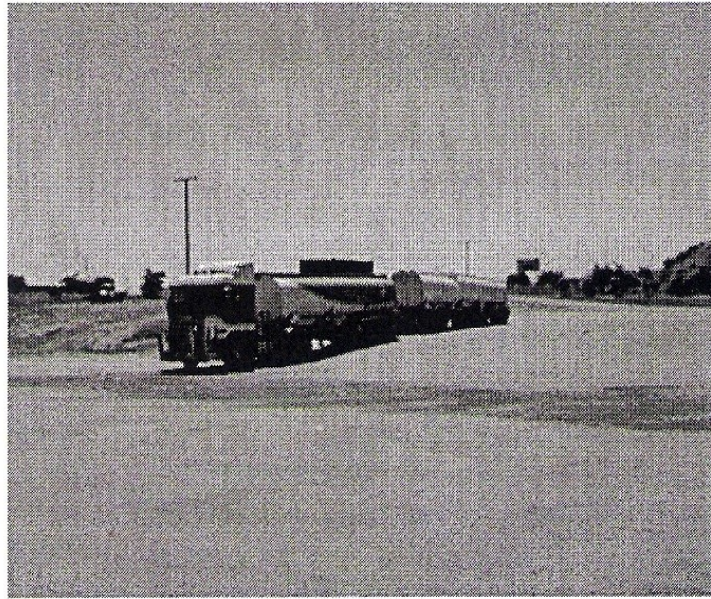
We loaded most of the gear on Thursday evening and the rest first thing on Friday morning. I'd made sure I'd packed away my reference books on the area including the Seaby Book on English coins that my Mate Charlie had sent me. I was in a positive frame of mind.



We said our farewells to Judy and we made good time to Charters Towers. I drove into the town to show Scott and Mick some of the old buildings. Charters Towers had it's own Stock Exchange during the heady gold days of the 1800's and many a deal was made there.

Just out of Charters Towers we stopped for a bite to eat and to stretch our legs. We'd stopped at a truck stop and as usual it was full of Road Trains. With the vast distances that need to be covered by road in this part of Australia the trucks can be up to 50 metres long and I've seen longer. This helps to bring down the cost of shipping and theres' less traffic on the road.

The Road Train in the picture is only a short one but you can understand what it would look like coming towards you on one of the Australian Outback roads at over a 100 kms an hour.



After leaving Charters Towers we still had a little over 130 kms to go. We had to turn off just before the small town of Pentland. Pentland is one of many small bush towns dotted through this part of Queensland.

Just before reaching Pentland we turned right and traveled some four kms before we sighted the Capeville sign. The cattle property that the old town site is on was called after the town. In Australia we don't call them Ranches. They're called Properties or Cattle or Sheep Stations.

After a few more kms we came up to the Homestead and as I parked in the yard the usual ten cattle dogs ran out to greet us. In the time it took to blink an eye three of them were fighting amid the clouds of fine dust while the rest added to the din by barking or howling their heads off.

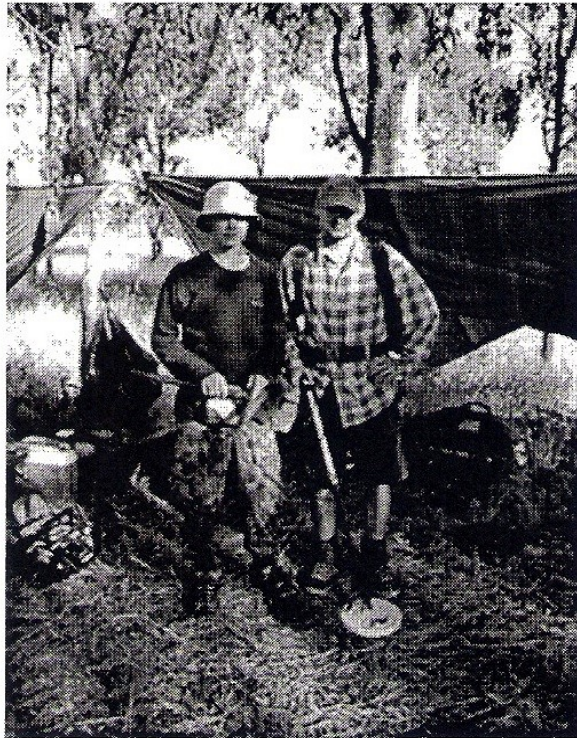
Old Max the Station Boss walked out and with a few well aimed kicks to their backsides while yelling 'shut up ya bloody mongrels' quieted them long enough so we could have a bit of a yarn.

Max told me that he and one of his boys, Jason do a bit of detecting themselves and Jason had scored a beautiful 19 gram gold nugget a few days before. Max told me that a few years ago he'd taken a bulldozer and taken about a foot of the top soil off one area and run it through a large wire mesh frame to look for gold and he had found many old English coins.

My ears pricked up when he told me and then he said that people had picked up coins just down the road. Thanking Max we made our way to our selected campsite and in no time had unloaded the car, set up camp and made a brew (coffee).

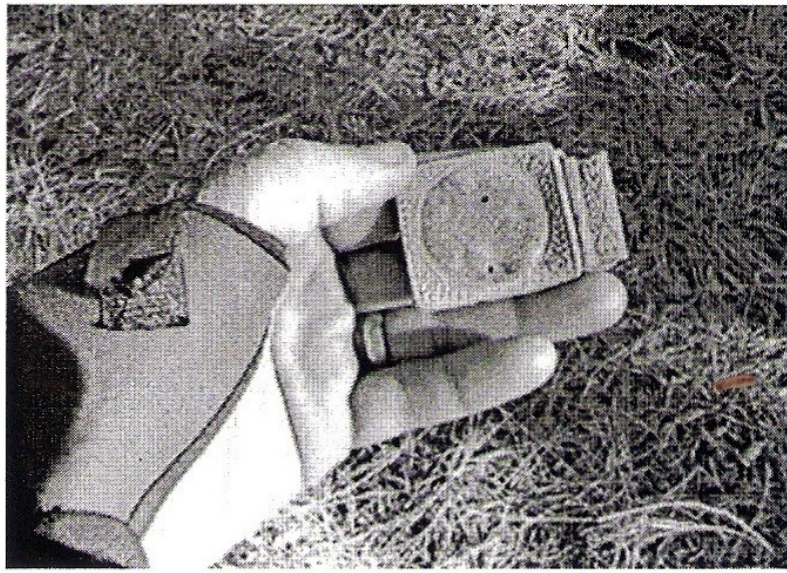


I picked out two trees and unrolled my swag (bedroll) and tied it off then told the boys I would get in a bit of detecting.



As there had been a bit of rain in the last few weeks (20 inches) the grass was quite high in places but we weren't going to let that stop us. Mick and Scott put on their gear and we all went our separate ways to swing the coils.

Scott came up to me a half an hour later to tell me that he'd broken his pick in the concrete hard soil. He took his detector back to camp and knowing that I have a bad left hand helped me dig my targets. We started picking up a few buttons as well as the rubbish you will find on the old town sites. The clumps of grass made detecting difficult and we missed many areas but we were having a great time. I had a good signal and after Scott had dug it up we saw that it was a beautiful belt buckle with the center piece missing.



A few hours later we called it a day. We went back to camp and I made a meal of pasta with bacon and tomato sauce followed by a hot brew. Off went the boots and up went the feet. We watched the sun setting through the trees. That night we talked and planned on what we would do tomorrow and what we would find. Coins, coins and more coins I told Scott and Mick. What an ending to a perfect day.



I woke up the next morning expecting to have to tip toe around the camp for a while until the boys woke up, but no, they were both up. I asked them had they slept well

and the reply was they would have if there hadn't being a 'bull elephant' snoring a few feet away. Me snore?, I've never heard myself snore yet.

We had an early breakfast and watched the sun rise through the trees. We didn't bother to hurry as we knew what we were looking for had spent over a hundred years in the ground waiting to be found so a little bit more time wasn't going to hurt.

We had discussed what we would do the night before. We were within 5 metres of the site were I had found a 1900 English Penny and a Chinese coin last time I had been here. The grass wasn't that high here so Mick and I would start at opposite ends and work our way towards the center. We put our gear on then we worked out how we would grid the site. I made my way to my end of the grid, turned the detector on and away I went. I started getting good signals straight away but most proved on digging to be lead.

As Mick had a gold detector he was digging everything and every time he dug a piece of lead he would complain. 'Dad, how many targets would you say you have to dig before you find something good', he asked. 'Oh, about every 2,419 targets', I replied. I didn't hear his answer or maybe I just shut my ears. After all he is 24 years old.

Apart from the bits of lead I started to get a few buttons from the site as the morning progressed and even Mick was happy when he dug one. Before we knew it was 10:00 am so time for a break and a cold drink. During the break Mick said he was going to try in the paddock (field) on the other side of the fence. I told him I'd stay here for a while and Scott said he'd look on. The break over we continued detecting and near the base of a tree I got this great signal. I lay the detector down and swung the pick and there staring at me among the soil was this large green and dirt encrusted disc. I picked it up and brushed a bit off dirt off it but I couldn't make it out.

I gave it to Scott so he could have a look and he said it looked like there was a cricket bat on it plus some other things. I ran a bit of water from my 'Camelbac' over it and I could make it out as well. I had in my hand a sports belt buckle and it was a top find.

It was at this time that Scott said he was going down near 'Half Crown Creek' to look for old bottles. 'Righto Mate, I'll see ya later', I said and he was off. I continued detecting as I moved over the road.. I detected around some tall grass and then I saw it. I stopped dead in my tracks and just stared. There amongst a lot of broken glass was a bottle dump. I turned the detector off and placed it on the ground than I started to gently move some soil. I pulled out a complete bottle then another one; then yet another. I couldn't believe it.

I undid the belt from around my waist and let it and the control box drop to the ground. I ran down the road and called out to Scott. As I reached him I told him what I had found and we were both so excited we ran back to the bottle dump. All Scott could say was 'WOW' when he saw it. Soon we were pulling bottle after bottle from the ground.

As Scott was scrapping away the dirt and broken glass from the dump I looked up and saw that there were complete and broken bottles just lying on the ground around us. Now this was a real eye opener. I'd always wished to find a bottle dump and here I was, surrounded by them. We dug short ones, we dug tall ones, we dug dark and

light green ones, we dug stoneware ones, we dug blue ones and we dug black ones. They just kept on coming.



Of course for every complete bottle there was heaps of broken ones or so it seemed. I found half a spoon and not long after that a fork came to light. There were broken plates, cups and jugs. It was a thrill just to see the different types of patterns on the crockery.



Scott and I dug in turn's for what seemed hours and we had over a hundred bottles lying in the grass. We had only taken the surface off the dump and the mind went into overdrive when thinking what else was in there. Scott got up for a rest and moved about five metres away and then yelled that he'd found another bottle dump. I dropped the pick and straightened my aching back then walked over for a look. Yep, it was another bottle dump alright.

I don't remember stopping for lunch but soon it was 4:00 pm. Scott was still having a scratch around at the bottle dump but I needed a detecting fix. I moved over to where Mick was detecting and asked him if he had had any success in the paddock he had detected in earlier. All he said was that he had got heaps of junk.



I thought I'd try my luck so I moved over to that area and started detecting. The grass made going very slow and after half an hour without a good target I was going to call it a day. I went to turn the detector off when I thought there was something wrong. I had another look and I noticed that the Sensitivity on the detector was turned right down. No wonder I wasn't getting any deep signals.

I adjusted the Sensitivity and not three metres away I got this nice deep signal. Less than a minute later I had my first token in my hand. I knew it was a token as it had the word 'Merchant' but due to the amount of dirt on it that was all I could see. Someone had cut grooves around most of the edge but for what purpose I didn't know. As I moved back to camp I had another signal and an 1863 Halfpenny saw the light for many a year. Near the gate leading to the camp I had yet another great signal and after digging I had another 1863 Halfpenny. I'd never dug a Halfpenny before at an old town site and here I had two with the same date within ten minutes of each other.



When I finally got back to camp Scott and Mick were already there. I showed them my finds and then we put dinner on. After eating and the clean up I was putting some gear in the back of the car and as I turned around Scott yelled out 'SNAKE'.

There not a metre from his chair was a Taipan. He was only small (about a metre) but we had to get him away from our camp. I picked up my pick but before I could get close to him he had gone under the boys tent. I shook the tent and Mick yelled that he was now on the other side.

We lost him after that until Mick said 'he's back'. Well that was the end of it for me. He had to go. We had to get him and soon as it was getting dark and I didn't want him anywhere near the camp. Mick kept the torch (flashlight) on him and I was able to get close to him with the pick and that was it. On the fire he went and all was peaceful again.



Later around the fire the three of us were talking about the snake and Mick said 'Dad, do you realize that you were chasing the third most venomous snake in the world with bare feet in long grass. I looked at my bare feet and all I could say was '%#@'. 'Oh well, all's well that ends well', I've always say,

We talked around the fire for a while then we were off to bed.

On the Sunday morning before finally pulling the zip on my swag I listened to the sounds of the Australian bush. I could hear Magpies in the trees and on the next hill a flock of Sulphur Crested Cockatoos screeched their greeting to the new day. I at last rose from my dreaming and climbed out of a lovely warm bed. I walked barefoot around the camp thinking what the new day might bring. Then I lit the stove and boiled the water for that heart starting first coffee of the day. Before long the boys crawled from their cocoon like sleeping bags and soaked in the warming rays from the sun. Then we stood and talked around the remnants of last night's fire.

I asked them what they had planned for the day and Mick said he would stay at the camp, put his feet up and read for a couple of hours. Scott was back off to the bottle dump to see what treasures he could uncover for the day.

Me, well I was here for one thing and that was to detect. I grabbed the detector and pick and I was off. Soon I was in another world as I swung the coil. I was getting good signals and I started to pick up relics but as yet no coins.

Around 9:00 am four Stockman (cowboys) rode up with the ever present cattle dogs in tow. One of them informed me that they would be bringing a mob of 500 head of cattle through here about 11:30 and for safety sake to keep close to our camp. One of the young blokes was Jason and he asked me if I had any luck detecting. I told

him about the token I'd found with the cuts around the edge. He said that he'd found a few himself and that he'd done some research and found out that the 'old timers' were making spurs out of them. Out of my pocket came the sports belt buckle and he said he had never found one in such good condition.

After a bit more small talk they were off. I continued to detect and around 11:30 I made my way over to the camp to have a cold drink. Mick and Scott were both there and as we sat we watched the helicopter in the distance mustering the cattle.



It was 30 minutes later when we heard and saw the cattle moving our way. It was exciting to see the Stockman round up a runaway steer. The Stockman and his horse were as one as they drove the wandering steer back to the herd. The steer lashed out with his powerful rear hooves as one of the dogs gave him a nip along on a rear leg.

After lunch I told the boys I was going down to the old diggings to have a look. Mick grabbed the Sovereign and said he'd detect for a while. Scott was again off to the bottle dump.

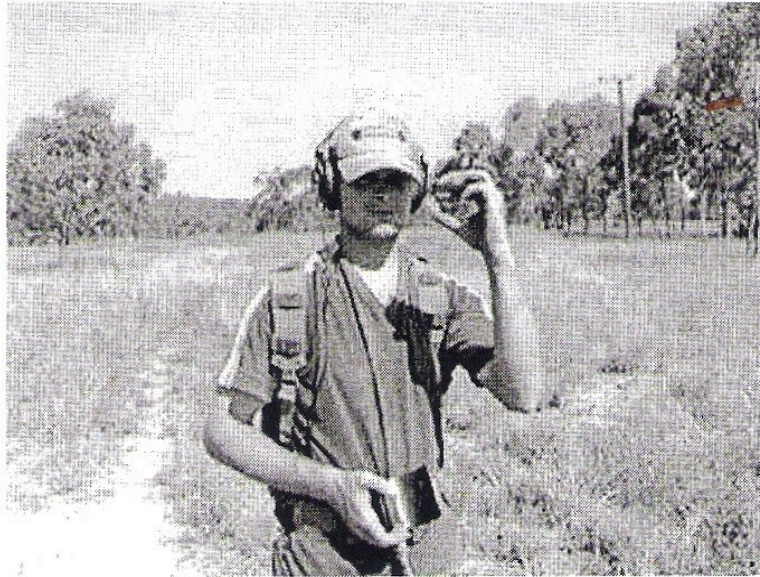
While I was walking down to the diggings I could see that there was a large amount of dead fall around so I was quite wary of more encounters with snakes. There was quartz lying as far as the eye could see and I wondered just how much gold still remained to be found. As I came to the creek bank I cast my eye down to the creek bottom and almost had a heart attack. There not five metres away was a two and a half metre King Brown snake soaking in the warm sun. I kept an eye on him as I slowly backtracked to the safety of higher ground.

Taking this as a hint I started to make my way back to camp when in the distance I heard Mick yelling 'DAD, HEY DAD'. I quickened my pace and was soon at the fence line. I saw Mick in the distance and yelled to him asking him what was the matter.

On seeing me he just bolted up to me yelling that he had got a gold nugget. On reaching me he said 'feel the weight of this sucker', and then dropped this beautiful

golden nugget into the palm of my shaking hand. I just stared at it with wide-open eyes.

I've been detecting for close on five and a half years and never come close to a nugget but Mick on his first detecting trip scores a little beauty.



It was a little larger than a Aussie five cent coin but worth a hell of a lot more. Mick asked if it was an ounce in weight (31 grams) but no I said it would be closer to 9 or 10 grams. With the price of gold at the moment it would be worth around \$160 Aussie dollars.

It was a beauty and Mick had to almost prise it out of my hand. Scott came over and we passed it from hand to hand then Mick took us to where he had dug it. Looking at the area Mick had found it I was sure I'd been over this area myself and I wondered just how close I had come to it. I would never know. To see Mick's face as he described how he had got the signal then swung the pick and then he had seen the nugget was worth a million dollars.



We all came to the conclusion that an 'old digger' must have dropped it as it was only a couple of inches deep in soft. As Mick said, 'his loss, my gain'.

Mick said I could have the detector back if I wanted it (gee, thanks Mick) as he already had his gold. As I started to detect again I thought just how many, if any nuggets were still lying around. Not long after I found a Chinese coin and then I decided to finish up. That night as we sat around the fire we passed the nugget from hand to hand talked about the many larger nuggets that had been found here those many long years ago. Just before going to bed we decided to pack up our camp tomorrow and make our way home. With that we went to bed and camp went silent.

Monday morning was as bright and sunny as the others. The three of us had not had much sleep as the cattle in the yards not 300 metres away had ~~been~~ bawling their disapproval all night at being penned in. After breakfast we packed away our camp and apart from my detector everything else went into the car.

I told the boys that before we set off home I wanted to detect on the other side of Half Crown Creek. We then walked around the camp to make sure that no rubbish had being left behind. With that done we jumped into the car and drove the 300 metres to the creek. I left the car this side of the creek as there were deep washouts and the car would never have made it across.

The two boys stayed with the car as I made my way over to the other side. I only counted on being half an hour. I picked a spot just off the side of the road and started detecting. After ten minutes without a signal I decided to detect on the track and not a minute later I jagged a button. I then had another signal, I pinpointed and swung the pick then watched this little coin spin in the air then land back on the ground.

Time stood still and I never moved. I held my breath then slowly released it never taking my eyes off the coin thinking it would disappear. There on the ground facing the sky was a young Queen Victoria. She wasn't on a Sixpence. She wasn't on a Shilling or a Florin. No, she was on a 'GOLD HALF SOVEREIGN'.

I slowly bent over and picked it up and took in its beauty. I looked at the date on the coin, 1861. I turned the coin over in my hand and on the reverse was,

'SYDNEY MINT'

'AUSTRALIA'

'HALF SOVEREIGN'

I was indeed holding history in my hand. This coin had been minted at the 'Rum Hospital' in Sydney.



I've been told by all the people I had meet detecting that the ultimate coin anyone wanted to find was a gold coin and here I had one in my hand and it was mine.



Holding the coin tightly I turned and yelled to the boys 100 metres away 'GOLD, HEY GOLD'. Mick and Scott both jumped out of the car and then I told them to bring the cameras.

Mick grabbed the cameras and ran all the way. As he got closer he asked how big was the nugget. I told him it wasn't as big as the one he had found, then I dropped the coin into his out reached hand. He said 'it's a coin WOW'. I then had him video me telling how what I had just found and how. I gave the coin a last look then put it in my pocket and Mick and I talked as I continued detecting. Then 'BANG', I had another great signal. I turned to Mick and said, 'I wonder if it's another gold coin'. No, it wasn't a gold coin but a huge silver 'Half Crown'.

How anybody could lose a coin this size was beyond me. We could only make out the first two numbers of the date, 18?? Someone those many years ago had scratched 'CB' on the face of the coin. Not long after that I called it a day. I was just too excited to detect anymore. As we made our way back to the car my heart was still pounding and we couldn't wait till we got home and showed Judy our finds.

This trip will live in my memory as the best to date and I think Scott and Mick think so to.

Well that's it for the Aussie Bush Gazette. I hope you enjoyed reading about our adventure as much as I enjoyed telling you about it.

Till my next detecting trip.

All the best,

Pete Kane (Australia)

Stel u belang in 'n boek oor Metaalverklikking in Suid Afrika?

Bestel die boek deur John en Erica Mulder van Plettenbergbaai

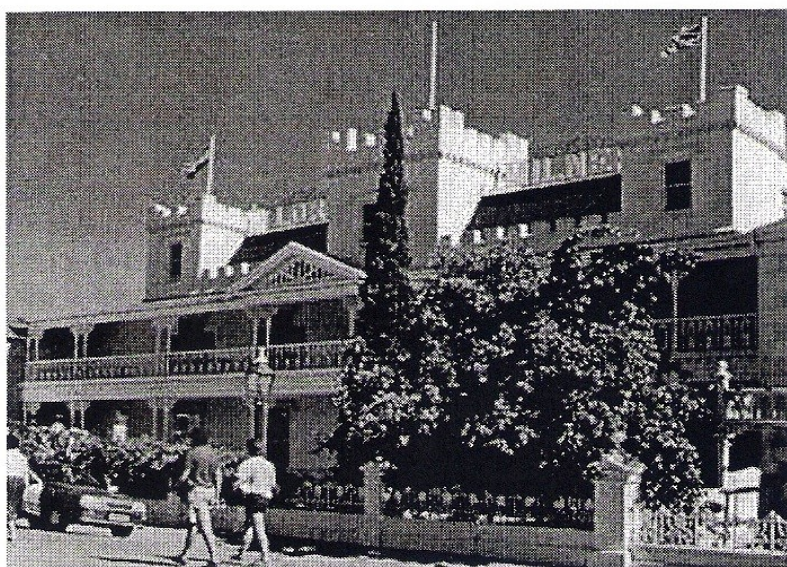
(Bestelling kan op die ingeslote Blou Vorm gedoen word)

Detecting Matjiesfontein

By Pierre Nortje

The tiny Karoo (semi desert area in south -central South Africa) hamlet of Matjiesfontein (Matjiesfontein is Afrikaans for Fountain of Little Mats – reeds grow there near a small river that the locals used in the manufacture of matting) was founded in 1884 by the British immigrant James Douglas Logan. He worked as a luggage porter at the Cape Town station and soon the agile and energetic man was promoted to station master.

When the land around the station in Matjiesfontein was offered to him, he seized the opportunity and within very short time, created an oasis in the semi-desert. In 1889, he built a production plant for mineral water in Matjiesfontein and generated a good income from selling drinks and other provisions to the train passengers.



The Lord Milner Hotel – Full Victorian splendor

He developed Matjiesfontein with imported items such as London lampposts. His house was the first private residence in South Africa with electric lighting. He planted trees, built fountains and a hotel.



Entrance to the hotel

The little settlement soon became a popular stopover and rapidly grew until, at the turn of the century, Matjiesfontein had turned into a fashionable spa for the upper class. Clever Logan sold the dry, clear air of the Karoo as a cure for lung disease. Many famous persons like Cecil John Rhodes, Lord Randolph Churchill (father of Sir Winston Churchill), Edgar Wallace, Rudyard Kipling and the author Olive Schreiner become residents in Matjiesfontein. Nowadays, affluent Capetonians come here by train for a weekend to celebrate their grand fêtes.



The old jail in the museum – see the red Victorian military uniform

During the Anglo-Boer War (1899 to 1902) Matjiesfontein served the British as a military stronghold. When the Anglo-Boer War broke out in 1899, Matjiesfontein was used as a command headquarters. On its outskirts, a huge remount camp for over 20 000 troops and 10 000 horses was established. Among those based there were some crack British Regiments of the day, such as the Coldstream Guards, the Seventeenth Lancers, the Middlesex Regiment and the ill-fated Highland Brigade under the command of Major General Andy Wauchope, who was killed at Magersfontein. The stately Lord Milner Hotel became a war hospital and after that, it became quiet in Matjiesfontein.

After Logan's death in 1920, David Rawdon, an experienced hotel entrepreneur, bought the hotel and revitalised the whole village.



The Victorian railway station

Matjiesfontein is steeped in history and was declared a National Monument in 1970. The station and the beautiful Victorian buildings were meticulously restored and a little museum opened to document the unusual history of the village and its inhabitants.

A few years ago, on our return to Cape Town after a detecting trip to the Anglo-Boer war battle sites of Coleberg, we stopped at Matjiesfontein for a beer and I asked the Hotel Manager (who also "runs" the small Victorian village) if we can detect the area outside the the small hamlet where the British had a large military camp in 1899. **He said that it was OK and we planned a detecting trip for the next weekend of which I will tell you more in Part 2.**

Part 2

When the Anglo-Boer War broke out in 1899, Matjiesfontein served as a command headquarters and "home" to many British officers. This was the furthest north that wives and sweethearts were allowed to travel. Many were seen strolling on the arms of officers and dining in the hotel, which later served as a convalescent hospital for wounded officers.

Soldiers are reported to have used the turrets of the hotel as lookout posts and it is said that bands of Boers were often spotted moving through the hills. On the outskirts of the village was a huge remount camp for over 20 000 troops and 10 000 horses was established.



British Hospital tent

Some crack British regiments were based at Matjiesfontein. Among them were the Coldstream Guards, the Seventeenth Lancers, the Middlesex Regiment and the ill-fated Highland Brigade under the command of Major General Andy Wauchope who was later killed in the war.



British troops called “Khakis” by the Boers on their horses

At daybreak on a cold Saturday morning, myself, Andy Naude, Peter Stoklas, Pat Cassidy and Allen Miller left Cape Town on the 200-kilometre trek to Matjiesfontein. On arriving there, we had word with the local museum “curator” who seemed oblivious on the whereabouts of the British camp – “somewhere there” she pointed to an area about a kilometre outside the hamlet, and continued reading a paper back book.

Before we left, I had the good fortune of finding an old privately published book on the military activities at Matjiesfontein with photos showing the camp – it was actually three camps. But as always with these detecting excursions when trying to match old Victorian photos with the actual terrain – it is an almost impossible task. So it was more guess work than anything else when we settled on an area we thought the biggest camp was situated on and start searching.



Typical Karoo landscape



Getting ready for the search. Allen Miller is standing with his back to the camera – as he was born in England, he was very excited searching the old British camp(s)

British tunic buttons and horse shoes quickly came to light as we swept our coils over the dry semi desert ground – in some areas there were thickish bushes but overall it was easy going. I had some doubts; Because of the “openness” of the terrain, I could not understand how a soldier can loose an artefact and not see it fall or another person spotting it...but for some or other reason the finds came up from 1 to 3 inches deep – how did they get there? Maybe during irregular thunderstorms the area was very muddy and artefacts were soon buried – I just do not know.



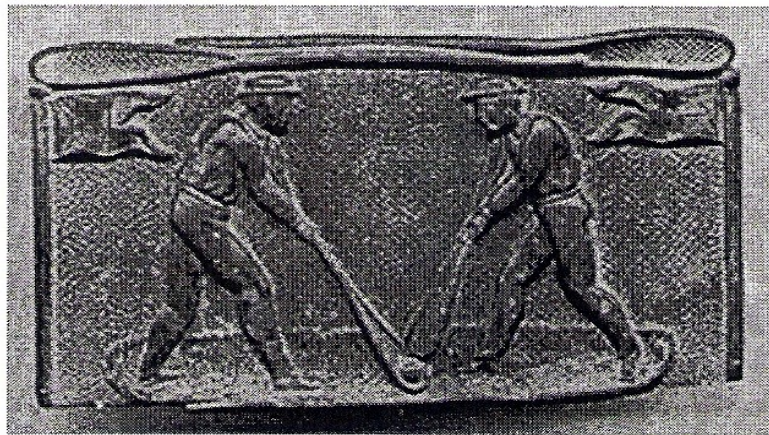
Andy Naude made the first good find of the morning with a button that not one of us have previously seen – it was a regimental button of the Irish Fifth Royal. (see button on left and “normal” button on right)

My first “keeper” was a tiny and intricate badge of some sort. I am still not sure what exactly it is. My next good find was the outer casing of a silver pocket watch. As I moved on swinging my detector I came to an area that was full of broken glass which I guess was a rubbish dump of some sort. I picked up a broken piece of china/porcelain and could clearly read the words “R.H.& S. Plant. Longton. England. Amongst the broken glass I also found plenty of the old glass “marbles” that was used as stoppers in bottles in the late 1800s and early 1900s.



Bully beef tin and some live rounds

Peter Stoklas came walking up to me and showed me a very interesting item that he had just found. It was a brass belt buckle with what look like two hockey players playing with two strange looking sticks and two flags in the back ground. We later found out that it was actually a La Crosse belt buckle. This sport is almost unknown in our country and the buckle was probably brought over from Canada where it is a big sport - many Canadians were stationed with the British troops at Matjiesfontein.

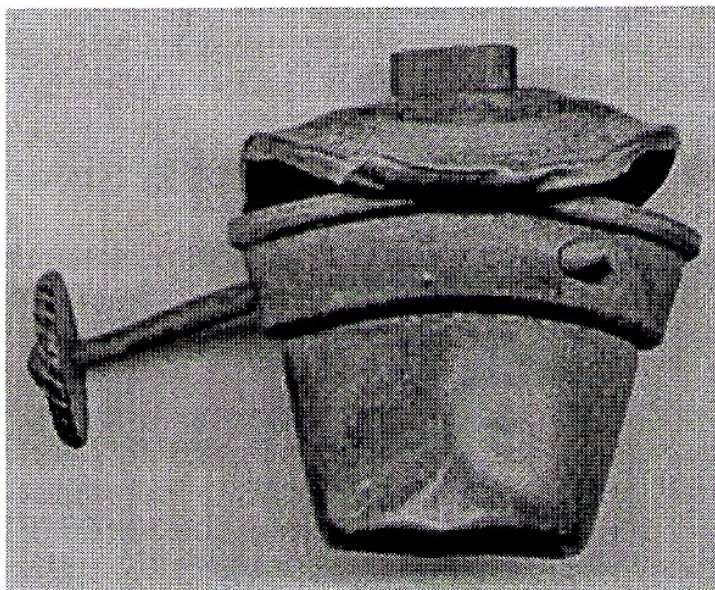


The La Crosse brass buckle

As I wondered off again I came to a small stream partly overgrown with reeds. Here and there were open sand banks and I deduced that the soldiers probably washed themselves and their clothes in the stream and must have lost some items in the process. After 15 minutes I did not receive one single signal and after half an hour I gave up and sat to contemplate the reason for this. Easy explanation! When I had spoken to Peter I turned my detector off and forget to turn it on again afterwards! I felt like a you-know-what and did not tell the others this afterwards!



After starting up again I found a strange brass or copper object - see picture above - with the words GRAY'S $\frac{3}{4}$ ELTA PAT & R2 - the two sides were broken off where it was attached to some porcelain object(s).



My next decent find was a small primus (?) stove or part of a lamp that the soldiers used to warm up their tins of food.

And so the day carried on with all of us making some welcome finds. Everyone had a bag full of keepers and at 3 o'clock the afternoon we called it a day. Even in winter, the Karoo temperatures can easily reach 30C plus and after 6 hours of detecting we were dead tired.



Miscellaneous items

After a quick beer at the Lord Milner Hotel where the British offices stayed more than 100 years ago, we took the long road back to Cape Town. It was a wonderful day with memories that we will treasure for years.

Post script: A few weeks later I had a letter from Allen Miller. He wrote.

I had an interesting coincidence yesterday. You may remember when we are Matjiesfontein we found some rather fat, heavy bullets. I mentioned then that they were Schneider .577 bullets and my thoughts at the time were that they were of the wrong period for the Boer war site we were detecting. Those bullets I knew were from an early British rifle, which was a conversion from muzzleloader to breechloader, a Schneider Enfield. This rifle was made from 1873 to about 1880, when a smaller caliber Henry Martini became standard until about 1893. Our cartridge finds were from Lee Metfield / Lee Enfield rifles in 303 caliber, the successor and first modern British repeater.

Last evening I went to a lecture about rifles "From Flintlocks to Lee Enfields" held by the South African Black Powder Association. After the lecture was over I spoke to one of the officials and casually mentioned that we had found several Schneider bullets at Matjiesfontein, several of which like examples were on a table with muskets, before me.

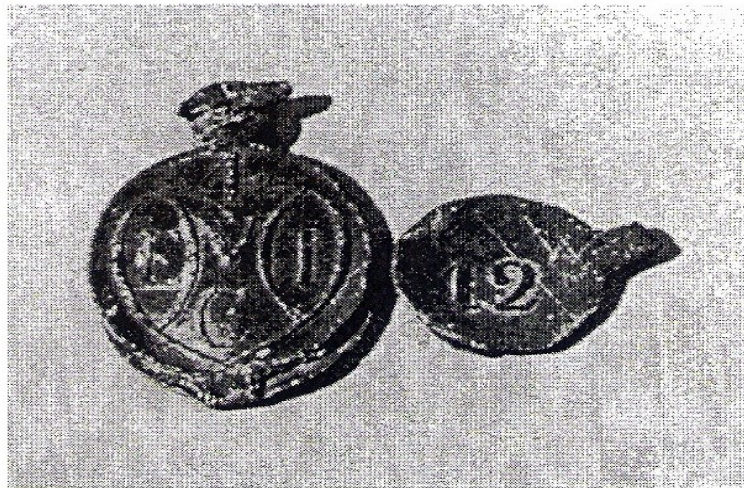
The chap then said "Oh we put them there. We have our Schneider shoots at Matjiesfontein. We fired them from the butts towards the kopjie (small hill) and I'm afraid they ricocheted all over the place. I expect you even found some of them behind the kopjie? Quite a coincidence hey? How often does one solve a small mystery like that?!"

Seals and Research

By Andy Naude

Whilst Scuba detecting near Simons Town – the Naval military base near Cape Town, I found two strange looking lead items. I first thought that they were seals from old bank bags so I searched the area again and again, but to no avail.

At home I looked at the strange letters under a magnifying glass. The larger of the two seals (38mm) bears the inscription V E I C 4 and the smaller seal (26mm) V E I C 4 with a “12” on the reverse. After some reading up in some of my books, I learnt that the in Old English lettering the letters “V” and “U” are interchangeable and that the letters indicated to the United East India Company. Here is a picture of my two seals



After typing the words “United East India Company” and “lead seal” into Google search engine I got ONE hit. Here is what I found...

In January 1805, the Earl of Abergavenny sailed from Gravesend on its fifth voyage, outward bound for China via Bengal. The ship carried 30 cannons and was heavily laden with cargo valued at £270,000.

Copper, tin, lead, iron, cloth, hats, glass, saddles, wines, Wedgwood china and £67,000 in silver dollars were to be unloaded at Bengal, to be exchanged for Indian cotton which would be sold to the Chinese.

The profits from the sale of the cargo to the Chinese would be used to purchase tea, fabrics, porcelain and other oriental objects much in demand by fashionable society in Europe, including Britain. It was a highly profitable trade for the East

India Company and the captain and his fellow officers were allowed to do some private trading on their own account.

To ensure the system was not abused everyone's cargo was clearly labelled. The initials on the cloth seal stand for the United East India Company. The logo was widely used by the Company to identify its property and was even used on cannons. (Frustratingly it has not been possible to work out the meaning of the figure '4'.)

There was also a picture of a seal in the article that is almost an exact copy of my larger seal – here it is – please compare it with my own in the picture above.

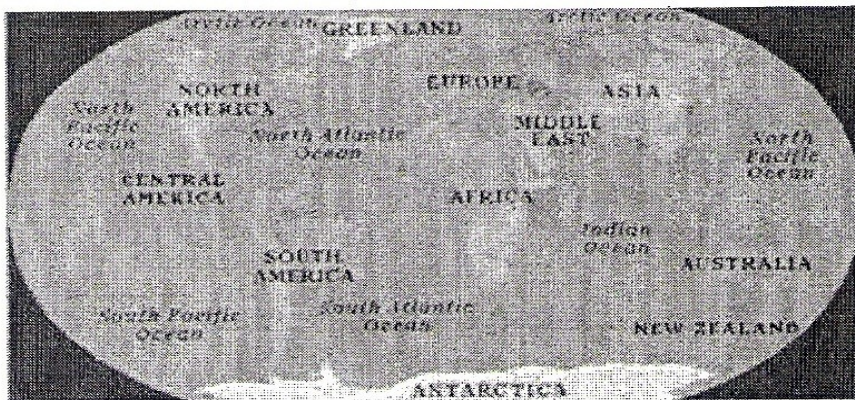


Although the ship in the article – the *Earl of Abergavenny* did not sink near our coast, I found out that another UEIC ship, the *Colebrook* did sink near Simon's Town on 24 August 1778.

Could my seals be from that ship?

Regards

Andy



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An Unexpected Prize

By Charles Cater (Wales)



In June 1997 I was invited by the farmer to detect on his land . This particular day was hot, very hot, being mid-summer. He greeted me as if I was a life long friend but that was not unusual because he was a gentle type of person, always willing to hold out a hand in friendship which is very refreshing these days. Before starting off he told be some hairy tales of what could be seen in mid-winter bordering on the occult.

The saying goes that at certain times of the year an apparition can be seen running across the fields in pursuit of something that cannot be caught. It always happens after a storm. Now I am not one to believe or disbelieve so I had to take his word for it.

It satisfied him to have a listener to his tale so that stood me in good stead for the future, not that I needed it as he was as I said a gentle soul, one type I would have liked for a second father.

A cup of tea now disposed of I bade him farewell and went on my way to the nearest meadow. Now I get feelings about some areas and this meadow was no exception, it looked like it had been occupied in the distant past of history.

There was the usual inundations here and there as if the meadow had been used for occupation. As the land sloped down to a small copse of about an acre or so a small area attracted my attention, it was an odd shape on its surface and indicated to me that there must have been a dwelling there at some time or another. To the rear of the rise was a ditch of about 4 ft in depth and 5 ft across which separated this meadow from the next.

I searched for a while with not much to show when the farmer made an appearance on his way to collect some cattle. He told me that this was the meadow with the regular apparition, I wish he had not told me that as I was not keen on continuing with what he had told me still fresh in my mind. I honestly think he was trying to "tell me a tale" so to speak but I still had forbodings so I left that area and went down to the rear of the copse.

The ground was hard having all the moisture taken out by the trees and the hot days drying the top soil out.

After a while I found it was time to go, the sun at its highest and so hot. I always keep my detector switched on even when walking back to the car and dig any signals that I may hear on the way. Now this is the where the odd part of this missive ends. I got a signal which appeared to be a deep object and I nearly dismissed it as too dry to dig. I took a pace or too and stopped I thought to myself "go back, you I never know what it may be".

On returning I could not find a signal at all, missed it completely until I remembered a small stone projecting from the ground. I remember thinking to myself that maybe something may be hidden under there and tried it for sound. Nothing. But this is the area I had the previous signal . Another go produced the sound I had been waiting for.

My spade would not touch the clay soil that had gone rock hard so I got down on my knees and poked my knife into the clay to loosen it. It suddenly struck me that if it is a deep object I would be here all day so I used my spade to assist the knife in penetrating the soil. I had removed no more than a handful of clay when I saw what appeared to be a twisted piece of brass. On closer inspection I saw it was also plaited into a ring shape. Three strands of thin wire where the six ends had been entwined and cold welded together. It looked like ring of sorts, but so shiny.

I took this for the farmer to see and he thought it may have been off a bailing machine. I was not convinced of that. I popped it into my finds bag and continued home, tired and weary.

My wife commented that she thought it was gold. GOLD! I said, "Well, maybe your right." The pattern looked familiar. Now where had I seen this before? My curiosity got the better of me when a thought passed through my mind that it might be something of importance. So I took it to the museum for their opinion. The curator disappeared for a while and came back and asked, "Where did you find this?" I said it was found in a meadow on the particular farm I am writing about.

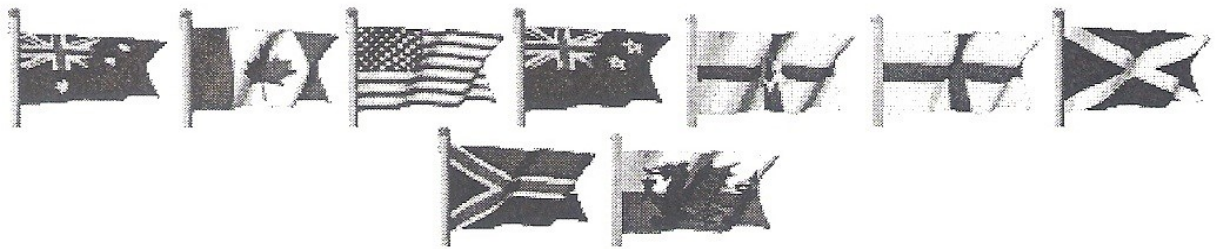
"Well," he said, looking at me through thick hornrimmed glasses which had glass that looked like a bottle bottom "you have found a Viking gold ring dating to 850 a.d."

I was flabbergasted, it appeared twice as beautiful as when I recovered it. The curator said that it could have come from a trade route from central England after the Danes settled here. How it came to be there is anybody's guess but the thought had passed through my mind that the apparition may have been looking for it. Well! You never know , do you?

I declared it for treasure trove but the coroner said it appeared to be a single loss and he said it was not necessary to go through as such. This was before the recent 1996 Act.

To all South African "Treasure Talkers" – REMEMBER to post the included Blue Form TODAY to Pierre Nortje at PO Box 816, Durbanville 7551

How to join and participate in the The International Metal Detecting Group



Instructions how to read and post messages on the FORUM at

<http://members3.boardhost.com/Charles.C/>

<i>English Instructions</i>	<i>Afrikaanse Instruksies</i>
<p>1. Type the website address (see above) into your internet website address block and click on “enter”. <u>You do NOT have to pay anything or register.</u> That is all! You can now view posts and pictures from other metal-detecting hobbyists from around the world.</p>	<p>1. Tik die webtuiste adres (sien hierbo) in jou internet adres blokkie en klik op “enter”. <u>Dit is gratis en jy hoef NIE te registreer nie.</u> Dit is al! Jy kan nou ander metaalverklikker entoesiaste se briewe, fotos en artikels van reg oor die wêreld lees.</p>
<p>2. If you wish to post yourself it is very easy – just follow the following steps</p> <p>2.1 Click on [<u>Post a Message</u>]</p> <p>Type in the following blocks the relevant information: -</p> <p>Your Name: Your Email (this is optional): Subject: Message:</p> <p>2.2 Click on the “Post” button – that is all!</p>	<p>2. As jy self wil pos is dit baie maklik – volg bloot die volgende maklike stappe:-</p> <p>2.1 Klik op [<u>Post a Message</u>]</p> <p>Tik in die volgende blokkies die relevante inligting:-</p> <p>Jou Naam: Jou e-pos (dit is opsioneel): Onderwerp: Boodskap:</p> <p>2.2 Klik nou op die “Post” knoppie – dit is al!</p>

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