

OBITUARY

Trevor Austin: An appreciation NCMD

Metal detecting, under the guidance of the NCMD, was a major player in the successful introduction of the Treasure Act 1997, the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) and with it the careers of the many Finds Liaison Officers employed under the PAS.

As General Secretary of the NCMD, Trevor Austin, with others such as Bob Whalley and John Fargher, was the NCMD Officer responsible for organising the representations from the NCMD and the detecting community from 1992 onwards in: Negotiations for the reform of the common law of Treasure Trove and the introduction of the Treasure Act and its Code of Practice.

The establishment of the PAS and its expansion beyond its initial Pilot Phase.

Discussions with the Department Of Culture, Media and Sport on the operation and implementation of the Treasure Act during 1994/5; The Treasure Act Review (2001 to 2002).

Development of the Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting (2006) in conjunction with the Council for British Archaeology, English Heritage, The British Museum and a number of other interested parties.

Discussions with the Ministry of Justice seeking to establish a single coroner for Treasure and amend some aspects of the Treasure Act during the passage of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 through both Houses of Parliament.

Discussions on Heritage Crime issues in meetings with English

Heritage and the Police, seeking to establish protocols for dealing with incidents of illicit metal detecting. Trevor was instrumental in influencing the NCMD to become a member of the Alliance to Reduce Crime Against Heritage (ARCH).

He was also instrumental in negotiating a permit scheme with the Crown Estates to allow detecting to take place on Crown Estate foreshore and his influence is generally regarded as having been crucial in ensuring that the finalised versions of both the Treasure Act and the PAS reflected the key requirements of the metal detecting community whilst recognising the requirements of the archaeological community.

The Treasure Valuation Committee (TVC) is an advisory arm's length body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The Committee is made up of independent antiques or coin experts and it also includes a person who represents the interests of finders.

Whilst serving as General Secretary, Trevor was appointed to the TVC in 2003 as Finders' Representative and was re-appointed in 2009. During his service on the TVC, he participated in the review of Coroner's Service in England and Wales and published widely articles on the workings of the Treasure Act and the TVC for the benefit of finders, museums and other parties involved.

He was obliged to stand down from the TVC in March 2014 having served two terms of office which, under the Cabinet Office



rules for public appointments, is the maximum allowed.

The fact that Trevor was invited to serve a second term on the Committee speaks for itself and was a measure of the recognition and the high regard accorded to him by other members.

His long term involvement with the 1997 Treasure Act was to promote best practice and disseminate details of legislation and responsibilities for finders, gained by his extensive knowledge by a direct involvement in the hobby for some three decades.

Trevor was a regular attendee at detecting events and rallies to promote the NCMD and the Treasure Act, and to explain the workings of the TVC and other initiatives and legislation to participants and organisers. Such face-to-face discussions over time were invaluable in influencing and changing attitudes to recording detector-found archaeological material with the PAS and other bodies, such as local and national museums, and had a significant impact on the number of finds reported to the PAS. The achievement of this policy was to bring reporting levels up to a point whereby the PAS Finds Liaison Officers were working to capacity.

Similarly his work on the TVC allowed him to publish a series of informative articles dealing with finders' obligations under the

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Treasure Act. This approach helped to ensure that year on year, the number of Treasure finds reported increased. This was a major achievement, which ensured that many rare and spectacular (as well as more academic mundane items) were recovered to grace the collections in national and provincial museums and galleries throughout the UK.

Trevor served continuously since 1990 as General Secretary of the NCMD during which time he volunteered his expertise on an unpaid basis on a many occasions, e.g.

1. Through school outreach for primary school children at Key Stage 2 to introduce them to periods of British history and enable them to engage with historical themes through the handling of coins and artefacts. He used detecting finds to help illustrate aspect of life of the period such as coinage or artefacts in use at the time.
2. Representation at conferences, e.g. Building Bridges conference, Newcastle University, 18 June 2005. Promoting, discussing and demonstrating the use of metal detectors as an archaeological tool at the annual conference held by the Society for Historical Archaeology at the University of Leicester in 2013. Representing the NCMD at the Bulgarian Metal Detecting

Federation conference 2013.

3. Establishing NCMD membership of Central Council for Sport and Recreation (CCPR) and its subsequent body the Sports and Recreation Alliance SARA.
4. Heading up the formulation of a European Council for Metal Detecting (ECMD) with the aim of advising other EU countries on the best way forward in establishing the objective of an 'English model' for the recording of portable antiquities found by members of the public. This is currently ongoing and it is hoped that the NCMD will be able to offer guidance which is acceptable to all parties involved.
5. Regularly writing in magazines concerning best practice and the law regarding finds recorded by the general public.
6. Writing articles concerning the operation of the Treasure Act and Portable Antiquities scheme in various journals and magazines including: *Minerva*, *BBC History*, *The Institute of Archaeology*, hobby publications; *Treasure Hunting*, *The Searcher* as well as the NCMD newsletter *Digging Deep* for which Trevor was the Manager.
7. Attendance at seminars on Heritage Crime and an article on Illicit Metal Detecting in issue 70 of *English Heritage Conservation Bulletin*.



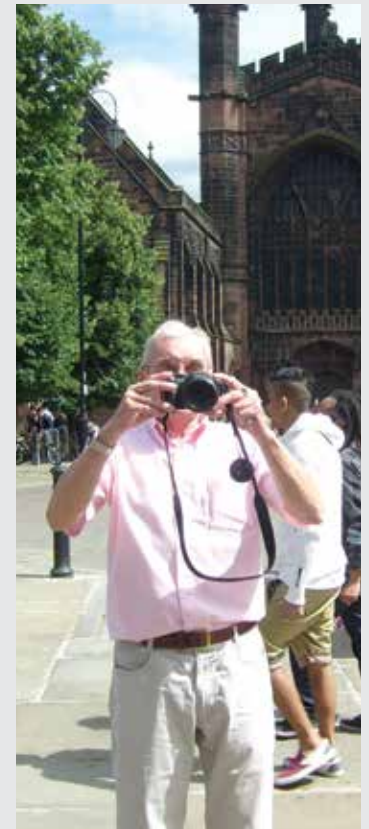
8. Numerous meetings with: English Heritage, Council for British Archaeology, Crown Estate and the Duchy of Cornwall, all on behalf of the NCMD.
9. Constant communication with finders discussing their problems and their concerns.
10. Work on Treasure finds and added comment on the relevance of legislation to deal with such finds in Jersey and

the Isle of Man and responses on behalf of the NCMD to the Normand Review (2003) of the Scottish Treasure Trove system.

Trevor consistently sought to promote responsible detecting at every opportunity. In 2003, he was a consultant to, and appeared on, BBC2's 'Hidden Treasure' series. He also contributed to and appeared in various TV programmes including 'Countryfile'



Sue and Trevor



(25 February 2011) 'Look North' 'BBC North East', 'Inside Out' (BBC1 7 March 2011) as examples. He was interviewed on various radio programmes: BBC2 and local Radio, Radio Sheffield, and Doncaster Royal Infirmary Radio. He was in regular demand for comments on prospective TV programmes and other media articles pertaining to metal detecting, nationally and regionally important finds made by individual and groups and the recording of portable antiquities.

Trevor was elected as Secretary to the Yorkshire Region in 1990. Whilst in that post he was involved in arranging three fundraising rallies for Martin House Children's Hospice in 1992/93/94. He also arranged regular monthly outings for the Region's members raising funds for that charity which still survives today.

He was involved in exhibitions of detecting finds at Sewerby Hall Museum, Flamborough during the 1990's as well as two at the Lincolnshire Museum, Scunthorpe, and he organised detecting events to go along with the NCMD Bridlington Conference commitment 1993/94. Trevor was also given an award by a Spanish detecting magazine in recognition of his work in the management and promotion of the hobby of detecting in a European context whilst General Secretary.

In his voluntary role as General Secretary he gained great respect amongst his fellow Officers of the Council, past and present, and consistently demonstrated a willingness to take on new responsibilities and levels of work commitment far beyond the duties of his post as outlined in the NCMD's Constitution.

In conclusion, Trevor Austin was highly respected amongst the detecting community and was regarded as unique in his personal dedication to the hobby and tireless promotion of responsible metal detecting as a key contributor to the nation's heritage. His dedicated service to the hobby over the last 35 years was nothing short of outstanding and he will be sorely missed.

Trevor's wife Sue assisted Trevor in her role as NCMD Assistant General Secretary over all those years, and our thoughts go out to Sue and her family at this time.

Obituary

The passing of Trevor has cast a dark shadow. He will be very much missed by all who knew him. I have known Trevor for over 30 years – since the early days of the National Council. He worked tirelessly as General Secretary of the NCMD and Secretary of the Yorkshire Region – along with ten years of service as a Member of the Treasure Valuation Committee.

In recent years, despite deteriorating health, Trevor travelled to Europe to advise on metal detecting issues, best practice, and the way forward for them. We must also recognise his huge contribution to Digging Deep.

With his knowledge of, and commitment to, the hobby of metal detecting, he was a true ambassador. We all owe him a large debt of gratitude.

On a personal note, apart from business, Trevor and I often shared jokes at Yorkshire Region meetings. I remember that among the bewildering array of raffle prizes at an AGM, there were a number of envelopes containing five and ten pound notes. When one of the tickets was drawn we said 'Hey, you've won a tenner, or would you rather have a fiver?' Then we fell about laughing like two school kids. I take comfort from the belief that Trevor will be remembered for many years to come.

My sincere and heartfelt condolences to Sue and all the family.

Sleep well my friend.

Barry Freeman
Chairman NCMD Yorkshire Region

In memory of Trevor Austin

My deepest condolences.

Obeisance to the incredible personality of Mr Trevor Austin, a colleague and a friend who we had the honour to meet and know and about whom we could say only the best words from all of our hearts!

When people like him leave this world we realise that their place among us will remain empty forever.

We will always grieve for you and never forget you!

Rest in peace, precious friend of ours!

Iliya Iliev,
Bulgarian National Metal Detecting Federation

Trevor Austin

I met the late Trevor Austin for the first time at a charity exhibition staged at Folkestone by the NCMD Southern Region in 2000. Everyone present was impressed that he had made the effort to travel all the way there from Doncaster in order to support the event.

This summed up Trevor's contribution to our hobby. He would always drive the extra mile or maybe 50 miles. He would always make the extra phone call or do just one more email in order to do his best for the NCMD and for metal detecting. No day was ever too long for him.

He also spent eight years as the Finders' Representative on the Treasure Valuation Committee.

Maybe everyone involved in the hobby should consider setting up some kind of memorial trophy in Trevor's honour. It would be a fitting tribute.

Roger Mintey
Chairman NCMD Southern Region ED. Several other parties have suggested having fitting memorials for Trevor and this is currently being discussed with Trevor's family.

Sincere Condolences

We share your grief and that of the family of Mr. Trevor Austin in these difficult moments.

Trevor leaves us the memory of a blameless and upright man. He was an enjoyed man here in France, each person with whom he exchanged by mail or phone or even met him, will keep a lasting memory.

Please accept our sincere condolences on behalf of all the members of our association.

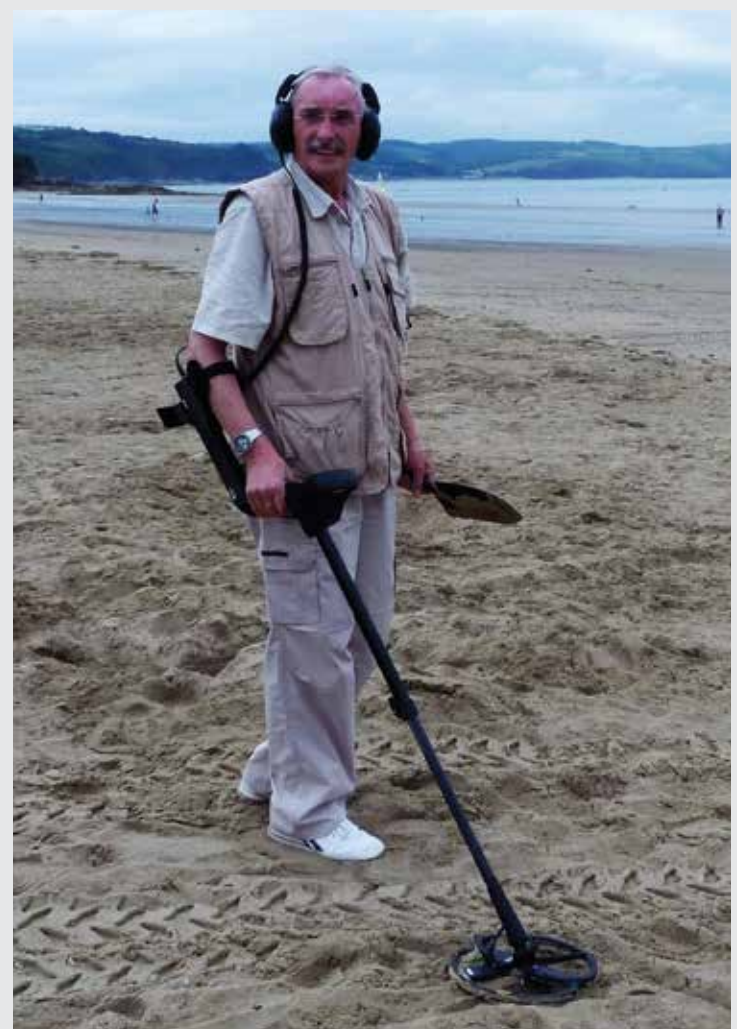
Mr Jimmy Benard
GMTAF French Association President

Rest in Peace Trevor

Our condolences go to Sue and his family and to all NCMD companions.

We will miss him, rest in peace friend.

Francisco J. Gómez
DM Magazine
FEDD



Robin & Karolyn Hatt Memorial Trophy Competition

Hilary Fagen, Competition Manager



The Robin & Karolyn Memorial Trophy Competition set up by the NCMD is the only NATIONAL competition which encompasses ALL finds including those that fall under the Treasure Act.

It truly celebrates the hobby and is run for detectorists by detectorists.

The larger regions such as the North West, Yorkshire, Southern and Midland have an existing procedure that delivers their finalists into the National Finals in November of each year.

As the **Central Register Region** is made up of both individuals and associate members and clubs which are located around the UK, we wanted to make it easier for them to enter this great competition.

If you are in the **Central Register Region** all you have to do is fill in the Competition Entry Form opposite (or download a copy from www.ncmd.co.uk) and your entry will be published, along with all the other Central Region entries, in the Summer issue of *Digging Deep*.

The **Central Register Region** members will then get to vote on the entries and the winners will then join the other finalists from the other Regions in November at the National Finals.

The closing date for all **Central Register Region** entries is 14 May 2016.

There are three categories (Limited to one entry per category):

Best Coin
Best Artefact
Best Hoard

Entries are for finds found between 1 January to 31 December 2015. Please email entries to Hilary at:

alex182sa@blueyonder.co.uk

It is essential that you provide good quality images that are in focus OR photographic prints of complete finds. If entering via email please save images as high resolution jpegs or PDFs. Call Hilary Fagen on **01253 312176** if you want to post your entries.

There will also be an Entry Form available for download from the NCMD website.



DIARY DATES

Next NCMD AGM and OGM 5 June

Next PAAG meeting 12 October

GET IN TOUCH

For membership enquiries contact the Membership Secretary:

John Rigby

6 Arkholme Avenue, Blackpool, Lancs, FY1 6QJ

Tel: 01253 692313 jjrigby@sky.com

For all other enquiries please email NCMD@Glemsford.net

Have you moved recently?

Could I remind members of the importance of keeping their membership details up-to-date.

If you happen to change your address could you please let John Rigby know at jjrigby@sky.com



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR METAL DETECTING



Robin & Karolyn Hatt Memorial Trophy Competition

CENTRAL REGISTER REGION (Including their Clubs, Individual and Associate members) Entry Form

Please complete the form and email it with colour images to Hilary Fagen at alex182sa@blueyonder.co.uk or call Hilary Fagen on 01253 312176 for postal information.

Find found between 1 January and 31 December 2015

Closing date for entries is 14 May 2016.

Category: COIN ARTEFACT HOARD

FIND TITLE:

Find description:

.....

.....

.....

County found in:

PAS Number (if recorded):

Treasure Case No (if applicable):

NAME OF FINDER/S:

Finder's Address:

NCMD Membership Number:

Club Name (if applicable):

Region/Individual member:

Telephone Number:

Email address:

If you have any queries regarding the form or competition please call Hilary Fagen NCMD Competition Manager on 01253 312176.

Lincolnshire PAS Conference 2016

Celebrating Reporting

Metal detecting, archaeology and the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in Lincolnshire.

Following on from the National PAS Conference at the British Museum, previously reported in *Digging Deep*, it was time to head east for the first regional PAS Conference in Lincoln.

Hosted at The Collection in the heart of historic Lincoln this conference was certainly more focussed on detecting related issues. Additionally it may demonstrate how the PAS could look in the future as local governments change ways of working and the ever increasing volume of finds almost overwhelms the system.

Lincolnshire is a prime example of the success of the PAS with a forward thinking FLO in Dr Adam Daubney and one of the founders of the Scheme in Dr Kevin Leahy, both of whom were to speak at the conference.

The first speaker after the traditional introductory coffee's and registration was Dr Michael Lewis who heads the Scheme from the central unit at the British Museum. His presentation focused on the PAS strategy leading up to 2020, but equally, he mentioned one or two topics that would have many experienced detectorists raising an eyebrow.

There was a good outline as to how the currently recorded finds have brought in £1.47 million in research funding and their future use for finds as an educational resource for schools.

There was discussion about how the PAS can continue to promote itself, contribute to European Finds Groups, promote recording and prioritise recording finds that provide the best quality data eg. accuracy of findspots.

He spoke about the need to improve the links with the Historic Environment Record (HER). In many areas there is no integration with the HER which leads to a loss of archaeological knowledge. There were several other interesting points raised particularly around the Treasure Act, the Treasure process and rally guidance.

More of that later as the format didn't allow time for questions until the end of the day. Definitely an event to make notes and to keep one's powder dry!

Michael expected, in terms of PAS funding, the income from the BM will remain flat and local council cutbacks won't have too much detrimental effect on the scheme. Having received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the PAST Explorers project there are, of course, certain targets that need to be achieved such as engagement with 300,000 members of the public and recruiting at least 500 volunteers.

We then moved on to our second speaker, the avuncular Dr Kevin Leahy. Dr Leahy provided a very entertaining and amusing look back on the start of the PAS, describing himself as popular as Osama Bin Laden in archaeological circles ... this at a time when the Council for British Archaeology was actively

promoting the STOP campaign in the 1970's. Alongside a few colleagues, Kevin realised that, as agricultural practices changed, there was a large amount of artefacts, coins and metalwork in the topsoil of many fields with one easy recovery method. In fact, he suggested that farming had done more damage to archaeology than the reformation. Having started the Scheme and overseen its growth and development he was full of praise as to how well-recorded finds had changed the perception of the Dark Ages and he confidently said that as more research comes to light a "Golden Age is coming".

We then broke for coffee and a chance to catch up with some of the 110 attendees that ranged from students to detectorists and some forward thinking archaeologists.

Speaker three was our host and organiser Dr Adam Daubney the FLO for Lincolnshire. Adam discussed a number of interesting aspects of the Scheme and which is developing new knowledge or enhancing known knowledge, ideas that a number of speakers considered. Adam had started in 2003 with no laptop, no books and as he candidly admitted ... no idea! How things had changed in 13 short years. Adam has now recorded 25,000 finds, published papers, gained a PhD and two children ... there was an ironic dip in the number of records relative to childbirth!

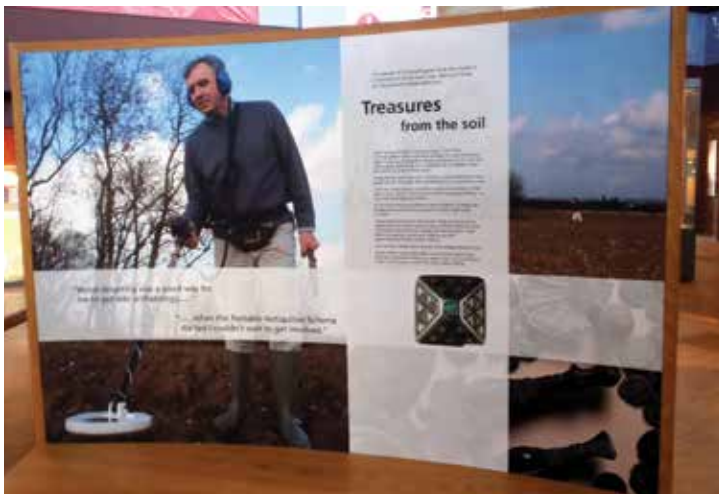
Adam spoke eloquently and with passion about how 70% of finds were from 'unknown' sites that could easily be ephemeral or

temporary areas of activity as well as detecting finds also adding to 'known' sites such as Torksey.

There was also a lot of focus on considering scattered and associated finds that, with research, could easily provide evidence of activity that isn't recorded in any other way. The reality is that detectorists go to places that many don't and with that there is a real need to look at the bigger picture of a 'productive area' and associating accurately recorded finds.

We were then introduced to Dr Caitlin Green who spoke about how research based on PAS data can provide evidence of our collective past by both what is found as well as what isn't. Sometimes the absence of finds can be as useful as the presence of finds as it can show how the environment has changed over the centuries. A distribution map of 'known' Anglo Saxon cemeteries expanded greatly when recorded detecting finds were added. Sites that would have remained unknown or possibly lost to agriculture if they hadn't been searched and recorded accurately.

Our fifth speaker was Dr Peter Chowne who spoke on the importance of context in Bronze Age metalwork. In Lincolnshire this can be interesting and challenging with lots of land drainage, ditch digging and ditch cleaning. All of which can almost turn the archaeological record upside down. Again there were many examples of public engagement with detecting finds and how transient settlements of the



Bronze Age could be evidenced by associated finds and detritus such as slag which might be discarded by the less knowledgeable. Even the 'scrap' matters.

There was then a break for a buffet lunch with more opportunities to network with other FLO's, delegates and the speakers.

Tom Redmayne then delivered his PAS National Conference paper on the experience he had gained working as a volunteer self-recorder with the scheme and his interaction with Adam. Tom explained how volunteering had added to his personal skill set, widened his network of knowledge and enabled him to call on a wide range of fellow detectorists or National Finds Advisers. This in itself has led Tom to write papers for the Finds Research Group and develop his own skills as a small finds advisor. In Tom's experience, it has been a two way street in that he has been able to give something back as he, in turn, has gained development and new skills.

Saturday 5 March was also the 80th anniversary of the first Spitfire and our seventh speaker was Peter Atkinson (aka: Yoda) who has worked alongside the

PAS and community based archaeology as part of Operation Nightingale. Nightingale is a well known scheme that helps injured service personnel reintegrate with civilian life and develop new skills whilst recovering from the physical and mental trauma of war and service. He spoke with humour and passion of the difficulties encountered during 'Operation Bateleur Eagle' the recovery of a Lincs based Spitfire from WWII, a very emotional and poignant talk.

Our final speaker was Antony Lee, Archaeology curator from our venue The Collection. His talk was based around donation, acquisition, curation and display. It was very informative in terms of what happens "behind the scenes" and how many museums have to strike a fine balance as to what to collect ... local or national? How to curate and conserve (Lincs have around 3.5 miles of shelving!) he also touched on Treasure and donations and how the donors can be better recognised and accredited.

Having heard the speakers, and some having overrun a little, the time for questions was limited after the traditional thanks and presentations to some of the organising team.

Question one set the tone ... "As this event is hosted by Lincolnshire County Council why do they have a blanket ban on detecting on their land holdings?" That caused a certain degree of nervous shuffling and a consensus that it could be reviewed if the finds were accurately recorded and donated.

Another attendee commented that certain parts of the Lincolnshire PAS maps from various speakers that showed large areas of "nothing" was owned by Christchurch College in Oxford who hold a similar view regarding detecting. Is the record of finds being lost to agriculture, or night hawking? Again it's a conversation for several organisations to consider sooner rather than later.

The third question to Michael Lewis was concerning the PAS proposed 'Rallies Guidance' and the responsibility for recording qualifying finds being placed on the organiser, as the resource of FLO's attending such events is very limited. Michael was asked if there would be a stronger definition of what constitutes a rally rather than a club dig. The comments were taken on board and the ubiquitous promise of a "consultation with stakeholders".

Michael also alluded to an improved Treasure Tracking system. It is an often commented frustration of finders that their finds go into the system for sometimes prolonged periods yet neither finder or landowner are aware of what stage they are at. He had linked this with the long awaited review of the Treasure Act, however it seems this review has yet again, suffered slippage or lack of resource to complete as the government throws those resources at the pending EU referendum.

Question 4 was a real jaw dropper for many in the room when a contracting archaeologist asked "How easy would it be to get a detectorist to work on dig sites?" I think a large percentage of the attendees were dumb struck, however the idea was very popular and several FLO's said they could easily provide responsible, recording detectorists.

All in all a very enjoyable, educational and well organised conference that may lead to many more in the regions. Get in touch with your FLO as they need us as much as we need them!

John Maloney

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR METAL DETECTING

Membership Renewal Form



MEMBER OF SPORT AND REACTION ALLIANCE

Dear Individual Member

Your membership of the National Council for Metal Detecting expires on the 31 March 2016. We hope that you have received prompt attention throughout the past year and thank you for your continued support of the hobby.

Subscription for 2016/17 for Individual members on the Central Register, £8-00.

(Please note subscription for individual members of a NCMD region may vary and individual members are advised to contact their Regional Secretary)

If you have not yet renewed your membership, please complete the attached form and return with your subscription.

All cheques should be made payable to the National Council for Metal Detecting and returned to the address below.

Alternatively you may wish to pay online at www.ncmd.co.uk/membership.htm by either PayPal or Debit/Credit card.

Please ensure that all information we hold on record is correct. If you have already sent your subscription for the forthcoming year, please ignore this reminder.

Name.....

Address

E-Mail

Membership Number 2015/16

Subscription Enclosed. £8.00Signature

John Rigby, 6 Arkholme Ave, Blackpool, Lancs, FY1 6QJ Tel. 01253 692313 E-mail. jjrigby@SKY.com

Pete Pearce pedals to Paris

Pete Pearce, the very successful Site Officer for the Wyvern and Historical Detecting Society (W&HDS) in Swindon, was recently diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS). Instead of this becoming a 'stopper', as it would be for most people, Pete is to hit the saddle and pedal his way cross-continent to Paris in order to raise money for a charity close to his heart - despite not having ridden a bike for at least a decade.

He has been given the best possible start for his 300-plus miles adventure after Society members clubbed together to buy him the bike that he would complete his challenge on. Chairman Gary Clifford said: "The members have funded the bike because Pete is so well thought of among us."

Pete said he wasn't fazed by the challenge and was eager to support the MS Trust while he was still fit and able. He said: "This really

appealed to me, simply because while I am still able, and still consider myself to be fit enough, I can make a difference to peoples' lives."

He will embark upon the journey on July 20, 2016, with the ride planned to take four days, taking in a route down to Dover to cross the channel on a ferry to Calais before journeying down through France to Abbeville, Beauvais and finally into Paris. Their arrival in the French capital is set to coincide with the Tour de France.

"It is going to be absolutely fantastic," said Pete. "I cannot believe that at the age of 70 I am tackling something like this."

Pete has set himself a £3,000 target and no-one who knows him has any doubts that he will achieve this and more.

To make a donation to his efforts visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com>



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"WOW, out popped a silver "Roman Seal Matrix". This is a significant find for the museum as it appears to have been from a family and the details will provide some insight as to who they were and their levels and titles of magistrates. The matrix has a man, woman and child with lettering around the outside."

-Scott

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We Change People's Fortunes



Wyvern Historical & Detecting Society exhibits in Swindon Museum and Art Gallery

During the whole month of February 2016, it was the turn of the Wyvern Historical & Detecting Society to exhibit in the Community Pick of the Month Cabinet in the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery.

The Community Pick of the Month Cabinet is housed the Museum and is used for non-commercial community/local exhibitions and presently houses exhibitions for a month at a time.

Members of the Society temporarily donated some of their detecting finds for the duration of the exhibition. The display was arranged by Pete Hyams and Gary Clifford from the Society and Stefanie Vincent from the Museum.

There was an explanation written by member Richard Wasielecki of what they do as a Society and how they record finds such as these with the Portable Antiquities Scheme via the Wiltshire Finds Liaison Officer.

During the month, the Museum had nearly 2000 visitors. The museum staff said that the exhibition was very well received by visitors and it showed off our hobby in a very positive way.

The Society has said that they are very much looking forward to their turn with Community Pick of the Month Cabinet coming round again.



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Mid Fed update

As 2015 drew to an end the Midland Federation of MDC's had good cause to celebrate as it had not only been one of the best years yet for charity fundraising events, it had also been a bumper year for new memberships.

To celebrate, a special combined meeting with a buffet and bar was arranged to coincide with the Coventry Heritage Detector Society's (CHDS) finds awards presentation evening. These combined events originally started the previous year as a pre-Christmas celebration and it proved to be so successful that the annual event looks set to become an annual tradition.

Our first fundraising rally of 2015 was held in April on behalf of SMA, the Spinal Muscular Atrophy charity. A cheque for £2,745 was presented to representatives of the charity by members of the Midfed

committee at SMA headquarters in Shipston on Stour, Warwickshire. Unfortunately, due to a change in administration, we weren't offered land for an April dig for this year, 2016, until it was too late to make all the necessary arrangements. Organising a large rally is a very time consuming affair and in order to widely advertise the event there has to be quite a long lead-time. However, despite the disappointment this year it is hoped that a rally in aid of this very worthy cause can be organised for 2017.

Our annual September rally in 2015 was held on farmland in Leicestershire. The committee had to overcome a lot of difficult circumstances at a very late stage in order to allow the event to go ahead.

Thanks to a lot of hard work put in by John Wells and his committee

during the week preceding the rally a late cancellation was only narrowly avoided. Fortunately on the day of the rally the sun shone for us and we dared to stop holding our breath.

The Lutterworth Rotary club had also worked very hard in organising the event and with the outstanding co-operation of the landowner it turned out to be a major success. Unfortunately the local FLO was unable to attend, but members of the CHDS made themselves available to record and photograph finds.

Some excellent finds there were too including an Anglo Saxon brooch in such good condition that there was originally some doubt as to its authenticity. It was, however, positively identified as an outstanding example by the FLO at Birmingham Museum.

Later in the year a cheque

presentation by members of the Midfed committee was made at the headquarters of the Lutterworth Rotary Club to their Chairman, John Wilson.

The cheque amount was £2,800, a large part of which will be going to their nominated charity Hope Against Cancer. Mr Wilson announced that a raffle and the takings for catering on the day had raised a further £200 rounding the final amount raised to £3,000. Lutterworth Rotary Club were so pleased with the outcome of the event that they have already committed to finding us land for another rally in September 2016.

During 2015 the Midfed had some very interesting and well-attended talks. These included an talks on the Magna Carta, 'The King In The Car Park'.

In January 2016, Following the success of the BBC4 series



Members enjoying the pre Christmas buffet



Members of the Midfed Committee presenting a cheque to SMA representatives



Midfed committee members presenting a cheque to the Chairman of Lutterworth Rotary Club

'The Detectorists' and the follow up Christmas special, Joe Shute, a reporter from the Daily Telegraph asked if he could join a few of the Midfed committee on a detecting trip. Arrangements were quickly made to meet him and a photographer at a previously undetected farm site. Unfortunately, on the day, the farmer was busily offloading huge amounts of manure to an ever-increasing mound of steaming dung. All part and parcel of the hobby we informed him as we set about detecting.

John Wells had lent Joe a detector so that he could experience the thrill of the hunt himself, and full of enthusiasm, he set off to detect. He only found a handful of 303 calibre rifle bullets and a tractor bolt, but it seemed he'd enjoyed himself. The best find of the day was a hammered Edward III penny and the four committee members had quite a few interesting items by the end of play.

The article was published in the *Sunday Telegraph* on 24 January with the heading 'Where there's mud there's brass' and a sub heading 'Is real treasure hunting anything like the BBC comedy *The Detectorists*? Joe Shute finds out'. The article wasn't as long as had been promised and was remarkably short of photographs considering that the photographer had taken literally hundreds of photographs during the day.

The online version fared slightly better as some photographs were included there. Sadly, although the

reporter had taken several pages of notes from our interviews, it seems that the editor had decided to cut the piece down quite considerably. At least we didn't attract a bad report and although we may still appear somewhat 'nerdy' I don't think we did the hobby any harm.

In May we will be holding the hotly contested 'Midfed Quiz' where teams from the Midland region compete for a large silver trophy. The trophy is currently held by a team from Wyre Forest.

Already an invitation has been received from Coventry City Council

to stage what has now become an annual finds exhibition held at St Mary's Medieval Guildhall in Coventry City Centre. The Exhibition has had great success in previous years and during the National Heritage weekend in September 2015 it attracted over 2,000 visitors through the doors.

With the membership of the MidFed at an all time high we are looking forward to celebrating yet another great year.

Alan Charlish



Peter Huxford delivering his talk on Richard III



Sunday Telegraph reporter Joe Shute finds a tractor bolt



Joe Shute interviews Mid Fed committee member Dave Gray

the searcher

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Meeting with Dr. Evelyn Silber, Chair of S.A.F.A.P.

Officers of the Scottish Region met recently with Dr. Evelyn Silber to discuss developments since her last meeting with the NCMD Scottish Region.

Dr Silber was asked for her views on the recent merger of Historic Scotland and the RCAHMS to form Historic Environment Scotland (HES) but it was considered too early to draw any conclusions as it would undoubtedly take some time for the new system to fall fully into place.

The issue of under-reporting of finds was raised by Dr Silber

and responded to by the Region Secretary who pointed out that this was an issue that had already been subject of considerable correspondence in the past between the NCMD and Prof. Ian Ralston, former Chair of SAFAP. NCMD Officers expressed their concern and regret that alleged under-reporting was still apparently regarded as a serious issue in certain quarters.

There was general discussion about including finders' names in museum displays, and it was noted that the current Treasure

Trove Unit reporting form clearly advises finders that it is a matter for individual museums whether they will include any acknowledgement of the finder in its display.

There were no changes being considered for the current Treasure Trove Code of Practice.

Concerns were expressed by everyone regarding continual cuts across museums' budgets. Dr Silber confirmed that she was making sure that Government Ministers were made fully aware of the implications of cuts.

Officers raised the issue of delays

in the processing of finds through the TT system, pointing out that the Code of Practice states that assessments should be concluded '*within 12 months*'. This was not always the case in practice. Delays generally were one of the commonest complaints received by the NCMD and Dr Silber accepted that this was an issue and explained why in some cases extreme delays could arise and were unavoidable.

Alastair Hackett

Assessment of the Extent and Character of Hobbyist Metal Detecting Activity in Scotland

Alastair Hackett

Scottish Region members will be aware of the above project which is aimed at gathering quantifiable data on the extent and character of hobbyist metal detecting activity in Scotland.

The results of the questionnaire survey that has been issued to members, is to be used to inform future guidance, community engagement and heritage management strategies connected to metal detecting.

This is a partnership project between Historic Environment Scotland and the Treasure Trove Unit, and the assessment is being undertaken by GUARD Archaeology Ltd. which specialises in the management of archaeology and cultural heritage projects.

The project is being advised by a reference group of key stakeholders whose role is to ensure that the project achieves the research aims, meets the needs of stakeholders and addresses any challenges or concerns raised during the project.

In order to achieve this, the organisers have therefore aimed to have as broad representation as possible within the advisory group including voices from academia, the heritage sector and the metal detecting community in Scotland.

Members of the group are:

Alastair Hackett, Chairman, NCMD;

Grant Maxwell-Thomson, Administrator, Detectingscotland.com;

Dr Natasha Ferguson, Unit Officer, Treasure Trove Unit, NMS;

Kevin Munro, Senior Designations Officer, Battlefields and Conflict Heritage, HES; Dr.Christopher Bowles, Scottish Borders Council;

Derek Alexander, Archaeologist, National Trust for Scotland;

Dr. Suzie Thomas, University of Helsinki.

GUARD Archaeology Ltd. are represented by Project Manager, Warren Baillie and Managing Director, John Atkinson.

Two separate sets of questions have now been issued – one targeted at detectorists, and another targeted at representatives of ALGAO, Museum representatives and other heritage professionals.

The project period is expected to end on 21 March 2016, and at time of writing, analysis of the questionnaire responses from all parties is still under way.

I will give an update on the outcome of the assessment in a future edition of *Digging Deep*.