

Calgary Metal Detecting Club

THE BUZZER

Volume 41 – issue 2 April 2012



Another Excellent CMDC Recovery

This Royal Army Service Corps cap badge was recovered by CMDC Club member Dale Downing in 2005

The Buzzer is published by and for the membership of the CMDC – Canada's oldest Active Metal Detecting Club.

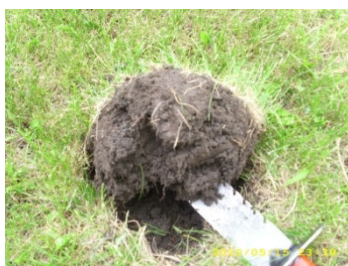
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HOW TO DIG A HINGED PLUG

Digging a proper "plug" is one of the most important things a new detectorist can learn. Even seasoned detectorists should pay attention to new methods of item recovery, because the future of our hobby depends on it. This skill may not matter as much in rural areas, although holes should always be filled carefully. For an urban metal detecting hobbyist, learning to dig a plug properly is an essential skill. Public areas in many cities have been closed to detecting because of the perception that detectorists are causing damage to parks. For the most part the damage is not caused by serious hobbyists, but we are all tarred and feathered by the same brush. It is important that we learn to recover our targets in a manner that leaves no trace when we leave the area. The best way to do this is to learn how to dig a "hinged" plug and refill your hole without damaging the root structure of the grass.

There are two main problems with recovering an item from a grassed area in Calgary. The first is that the grass here is primarily a mix called "Bermuda", which is winter-hardy but has a delicate root structure. The second is that our dry climate tends to turn damaged grass and roots brown, as the grass needs moisture to recover. The first year I detected, I left evidence of my new hobby all over my own yard, with circles of brown grass. When digging a target in a grassy area push the digging tool into the ground 3 or 4 inches deep, and use your digger to pre-cut the plug of grass in a semi-circle or square, centering your target in the middle. Leave a hinge of un-cut grassroots on one end. The hinged part should be at least an inch past where you think your target is. This hinge stabilizes the root structure, and helps it to recover. After you have used your digger to cut your proposed plug, carefully pry the "plug" up, and then flip it over on the side that has the sod hinge. Soil-moisture makes a big difference. The more moisture there is in the soil, the bigger you can make a plug. In very dry conditions, it is almost impossible to dig anything without damaging the roots. We recommend staying away from well manicured parks in Calgary during the dryer summer months, unless it has been raining recently. There are plenty of park areas that are not mowed or well-tended that still have great targets waiting to be found.

After your plug is flipped over, determine if the target is in the plug or in the hole. If your target is still in the hole, carefully dig out more soil, and use a "drop cloth" to pile your soil on. This keeps the dirt from soiling the neat grass around the hole and you can also grab the corners of the drop cloth and pass the dirt over top of your coil to see if the item was in the dirt you extracted from the hole. Some items people use as drop cloths are Frisbees, re-useable grocery bags, or actual cloths. Your target may be down pretty far, and this method allows you to dig very deep while keeping everything neat and orderly.



After you have retrieved your find, always remember to check your hole again. If the find was part of a pocket spill there may be another coin or item there. Club president, Andy Coward, once found 3 pre-1920 coins in the same hole. After you are satisfied there is nothing left to find, take the cloth to the edge of the hole and dump the dirt back in and pack it down. Then flip your sod "lid" or plug back down and stamp on it lightly a couple times to displace any trapped air, which will also start to affect the root structure. Do this properly and you can go back a week later and will not be able to tell where you were digging. When you are done, you will have no excess dirt laying around, no worries about plugs turning brown, and most importantly no worries about anyone pointing a finger at our metal detecting hobby, and using brown patches as an excuse to close an area to metal detecting.

Another great tip is to use a pouch or bag, and carry out any trash you dig up. If you take the time to dig it up, you may as well remove it unless you want to keep digging the same trash every year, or causing your buddy's to dig it later. Take the trash you find with you, and dispose of it either in a park garbage can or at home. While we can't always be perfect, at least we can try. Our motto should be "we only leave footprints behind". We should all try our best to adhere to that rule because the future of metal detecting in Calgary parks may depend on it.

For those who are visual learners, here are some excellent plug-digging videos available on you-tube.

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTDKXethwnk>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BcoHFYdyHo>

The information for this article was gleaned from several internet sites, but the pictures used were from BD Atherton's article on Factoids.com.

An Electrolysis Coin Cleaner

Electrolysis is the fast-lane of coin cleaning. What could take months with olive oil you can do in minutes with this easily made electrolysis unit. Of course, you must realize that with the extra power comes the risk of ruining your coin. Please note that electrolysis removes a very thin layer of metal from the object being cleaned, and will strip the patina from a coin.



First you need an old power adapter of between 6 and 12 volts. Higher voltages increase the risk of electrocution while not increasing the effectiveness of the cleaning process. You will need to cut off the plug end, separate the two wires, and strip of the plastic sleeve down to the cable enough to attach the wires to metal crocodile clips. Twist the wires together before adding the clips. Use electrical tape to cover any visible wire after the clips are attached. You can find alligator clips at most department stores that have a hardware section, or at a hardware store.

Set the adapter aside and get a glass cup or bowl. A small jar should work nicely. Fill it with water to a depth necessary to cover the coins you've selected, and mix in a couple of heaping tablespoons of washing soda (sodium carbonate) or baking soda (sodium bicarbonate). For best results use distilled water instead of tap water. Stir the soda into the water until it is dissolved. You can also add a tablespoon of lemon juice to increase conductivity. Plug the power supply in, but make sure to keep the two clips away from each other. If they touch you will short out the adapter, and it will become useless. Dip the clips in the soda-water mixture and note which one fizzes. Use a sharpie to mark that clip for future use. This is the end that you attach the coins to. Attach the other clip to a piece of stainless steel. We recommend buying the stainless steel item from a thrift store or garage sale rather than using your own dinnerware. The stainless steel "anode" will not come through this process unscathed.



Stick both clips in the water, and your coin should start fizzing. Make sure the alligator clip is touching the bare metal on the coin. You may have to carefully scrape off a little of the corrosion to get to bare metal. Depending on how "crusted over" your coin is, leave it anywhere from half a minute to several minutes. The coin may fizz vigorously. If it fizzes less - that's okay, it will just work slower. If you want the action to be faster you can add a bit more baking soda.

You should notice a "cloud halo" starting to form around the coin. This means that the process is working. You will also notice that the water gets really dirty. This is mostly from the "anode" (stainless steel item). The electrolysis process causes the anode to dissolve into the water. You will want to change your water after every use, and the anode will need to be replaced to once it has become too worn. The electrolysis process can get pretty stinky, which is why you want to do this in a well ventilated area.

After the coin has been in the solution for the allotted time, take it out and carefully scrub it with a toothbrush dipped in some liquid soap. If you have left the coin in long enough the dirt/crud should start coming off after one treatment, but if there is a lot of corrosion the coin may need to go through another round of electrolysis. You can clean more than one coin at a time but you **MUST NOT** use the same solution with coins of different metals! Do not use electrolysis on copper, silver or nickel coins at the same time! If you are not sure of what type of metal your coin is, do it separately! While this article focuses on coin cleaning, this unit can also be used on other small items (trinkets, jewellery, etc). Some detectorists clean rust from pioneer era axes and fur-trade knives with electrolysis, cleaning a century of rust from items well enough to see maker's marks and other identification features. They use the same basic process and materials, but create a bigger electrolysis unit by using an auto battery, larger container and jumper cables – outside during the summer.

Warnings: If you think your coin or relic has any value, you should not attempt to clean it using electrolysis. The process could render it valueless. There are dangers inherent with the use of any electrical device. The electrolysis unit should be used in a well-lit and ventilated area, while wearing protective gear such as goggles and latex gloves. The risk of electric shock is small, but it is still wise to use precautions. Some people recommend using table salt instead of the sodas, but table salt (sodium chloride) will release a small amount of chlorine gas during electrolysis. Even a small amount of chlorine gas can be dangerous. When you have completed the process, make sure to unplug your unit. Don't ever leave the unit plugged in unattended because it gets hot and could cause a fire.

This article combines information from several sources, but the pictures used were from an article on "gometaldetecting.com"

MY BEST “WORKING HOLIDAY” HUNT

By KEVIN NIEFER



A few years back I made a trip to a real estate conference in St. John 's, Newfoundland. I thought while I was there I would try to do some metal detecting if I had any spare time. I drove by some school yards, but each one seemed to have a lot of children playing. All I wanted was a place to be by myself and a little peace and quiet to enjoy the few hours I had to spend detecting. I came across a good size park with only a few people around, and thought “this will have to do”.

I started my hunt by looking in the Southwest corner of the park where it seemed likely that a lot of people would sit under the trees. All I was finding was bottle caps & pull tabs. An older man came up to me and asked how I was doing. I told him that I didn't find anything yet. He explained that they had a lot of concerts in that part of the park, and that locals did a lot of drinking beer in that area. Well, that explained all the bottle caps and pull tabs I was finding. I hunted that area for a while more and found a few new pennies and a nickel.



I decided to wander over to another part of the park by a band stand where I found a few more coins, but it was mostly new stuff and pennies. I saw a ball diamond on the West part of the park. I had started towards it when I hit a “good” signal. I dug it, and pulled a Coronation token out of the ground. Wow! It was the first one I have ever found. Then about 3 feet away I had another signal that showed a coin. I started digging and found a U.S. silver mercury dime from 1944. Cool! That Mercury dime was only third one I have ever found.

After working the park around the ball diamond for a while, I found a few more coins, but mostly modern pennies. It was time to start working my way back to the car. I followed the path, working my detector off to the side of the pathway, and BINGO! There was a great sound, reading “coin”. I dug it, and out popped out a King George V Newfoundland large cent (1920). That was the first large cent I ever found. It was a dream come true.

When I started the day all I was looking for was one good coin, and now had found three. I got up with amazement and started again, then BAM! The same sound again – and out popped another George V large cent, this one was from 1927. I detected about 6 more steps, when I got another great sound. To my amazement out came an 1899 Queen Victoria Canadian large cent. Wow! Life couldn't be any better than that.



This was one of my best days detecting, ever. I found 3 large cents all prior to 1927, a silver mercury dime and a Coronation token - all in about 2 ½ hours. I also found 51 other coins, mostly pennies – but some were King George VI. Western Canada isn't really that old. Living in Western Canada it is harder find really old coins, as the most of the Calgary area dates back less than 100 years.

With such a great day's hunt, I couldn't wait to go back and get in another dig before I left Newfoundland for home. After the conference ended the next day I headed back to the same park. I went to the area of the park where I found the 3 large cents, and started hunting. The first thing I found was a 1974 Riverdale Tennis Club tag. After a few pull-tabs, I hit another great sound. I dug down and found a nice 1906 (King Edward VII) Canadian large cent. I got up from digging that coin, and the very first swing of my detector located a 1919 George V Newfoundland large cent. Within 6 inches I located another large cent, this one from 1919.

I started gridding the area, but found nothing else, so I headed towards the South end of the park. I was working around the big beautiful old trees, when I had couple of nice sounds reading an 81 on my Whites DFX. I pulled out a 1962 silver dime. I started to grid-hunt the area, and about five feet away pulled out a 1940 king George VI dime in excellent condition. It looked like it was dropped yesterday. A few feet away, out popped a third silver dime, this time from 1952. Over the next 15 minutes I found a 1942 and 1943 Newfoundland pennies, a 1951 commemorative nickel, and pennies from 1939, 1942, 1951, 1960, and 1962. Well, I pulled out 39 coins.

The two day total for my trip to Newfoundland was 6-large cents, 4 silver dimes, a Coronation token, and a total of 90 other nice coins. This is one my best hunting trips while on a working holiday. I can't wait to get down East again, where older coins are so easily found.

Kevin Niefer is a local Re/Max real estate agent. He has been an avid metal detecting hobbyist and a member of the CMDC for over 20 years. Look into his proposed metal detecting TV reality show, "The TV Metal Detective". You can find the promo on You-tube.

On a recent hunt "out East" he recovered a 1800s ships token. This story was edited for size to fit "the Buzzer".

Spring is Sprung! Time for Club Hunts to begin!

With the arrival of April, we are hoping that winter is far behind us – although you never know when that last load of spring snow is going to hit. Most of us haven't had our detectors out during the winter, so this is a good time to get out your detectors and clean the coils and boxes, and get them ready for the coming metal detecting season. Get the old batteries out and put in fresh new ones. If it is a rechargeable battery get it charged up, and do the same thing with your spares.

Get out the owner's manual and re-read it. You can always pick up a few hints from the owners' manual. Check out your headset and make sure it's in good working condition. A good headset is worth its weight in gold especially if you're trying to hear those really deep signals.

The other thing you can do is mark your calendar, and plan to join the other CMDC members for our upcoming club hunt season. The Calgary Metal Detecting Club plans monthly club hunts from April to October, with the possibility of an unofficial club hunt in November if the weather permits. Hunt directors Andy Coward and Guido Mennes are hard at work choosing areas for our monthly detecting extravaganzas, and already have some great places in mind. The dates of the club hunts have been selected, but the locations will not be announced until shortly before each hunt. As in past years, the weekend club hunts will alternate between Saturday and Sundays. This allows club members who have to work Saturdays and club members who attend church both the chance to get together with the rest of the club, and enjoy our great hobby. Remember to mark your calendar with these dates, and plan to attend our awesome CMDC Club Hunts:

- Saturday, April 28, 2012
- Sunday, May 27, 2012
- Saturday, June 23, 2012
- Sunday, July 22, 2012
- Saturday, August 18, 2012
- Sunday, September 16, 2012
- Saturday, October 13, 2012



BUZZER CONTEST

A new feature being tried out in the April Issue of "The Buzzer" is a Trivia Contest. We will wait to see how well the contest is received before we decide to make it a regular part of our newsletter. Answer the following 5 questions for the chance to win a prize at the May CMDC meeting.

- What is percentage of silver is meant by "Coin silver"?
- What Alloy were Canadian nickels made of in 1942 and 1943?
- What does the term 925 refer to when you are talking about Silver Jewellery?
- Name the mine mentioned in the last issue of the Buzzer (January 2012).
- What famous inventor is credited with the development of an early metal detector in 1881?

Send you answers by email to kempp@telus.net with Buzzer Contest in the subject line. The contest entrants who answer all 5 questions correctly will have their name placed in a random draw, and the winner will receive a prize at the May CMDC club meeting. You have to attend the meeting to receive the prize. Final date to make an entry is April 30th, 2012.



WOW! I think its circa 1980. Great relic find!

❄️❄️ One Detectorist's Trash is Another's Treasure ❄️❄️

We might chuckle a bit at the cartoon above, but it is not too far from the truth. Remember that a lot of what we find was considered trash only a few generations ago. I personally love to find old etched bottles (while somewhat hard to do with a metal detector – it is still an excellent find in my book). I love to find old bottles from the first half of the last century where one of the best means of advertisement was logos or pictures formed right into the glass. I was recently watching a “you-tube” video, and was horrified to find that the detectorist had found a bottle dump, and smashed all the old bottles. Nooooooo!

One memory from when I was a child is of a month-long game of “War” between my brothers and our neighbours. The battle ground ended up with toy guns, cast-metal army toys, and plastic soldiers flying throughout the yard. A year later I found one of those army men the hard way while running through the yard in my bare feet (ouch). I sure wish I could go back for a hunt at that old house and look for the rest of those missing toys, now. I know a metal detecting hobbyist that loves to find old toys – the older the better. He would be thrilled to find any of the cast metal soldiers or die-cast tanks lost during that battle.

One of the best things about this hobby is its diversity. Some people love to find treasure, and everything else pales in comparison. Another hobbyist might love to find relics, and be thrilled by bits of rusty knives or kettles from pioneer days. Another detectorist loves coin-shooting, and dreams of pulling up Victorian or Edwardian silver. Whatever you love to find, don't discount your other recovered items. Bring the items you think that someone else might think are cool to the CMDC club meeting to show off. You might have recovered something on another member's wish list.

Incidentally, I did find one bottle with my metal detector. It was an old brown stubbie beer bottle with a 1980s era metallic label. The label had disintegrated, and leached into the soil surrounding the bottle - it is still there to confuse some future detectorist, but the bottle came home with me and is sitting on my shelf as a conversation piece.

Location and Membership Information

The club meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm in the auditorium of the Brentwood Co-op store which is located just off Crowchild Trail between Charleswood Drive and Brisbois Drive N.W. You have to enter the store and go down-stairs to the meeting room.

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The Club's yearly dues are:

In-town membership:	\$25.00 CDN
Out-of-town membership:	\$20.00 CDN
Buzzer subscription fee for non-members:	\$10.00 CDN

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Do you have an interesting story, idea for an article, or a comment that you would like to see in "The Buzzer". Write it down and email it to kemp@telus.net with METAL DETECTING STORY in the subject area.