

Calgary Metal Detecting Club

The Buzzer

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SEASONS GREETINGS from the CMDC

This picture represents an item on many Metal Detecting wish-lists. See next page for article.

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

Visit us on the internet @ www.cmdc.org.



*All the Best for the
2014 Metal Detecting Season!*

Happy Holidays from the CMDC!

We've reached the end of another Metal Detecting Year. 2013 was a great season! Some of us are still detecting in the snow, while others dream of warmer weather or warmer climates before they get out their machine again.

We wish all of the members of the Calgary Metal Detecting Club a very Merry Christmas, and wish you and your families a safe, healthy and prosperous New Year, full of many recovered treasures and great memories.

****Crotal Bell****



Crotal Bells are a find on a lot of Metal Detecting hobbyist's wish lists, including my own. Crotal Bells, or rumbler bells have been in use for centuries. They are orb-shaped bells made of bronze with a slot cut down the side and a round iron ball placed inside, which made the bell ring when it moved. In medieval times crotal bells were viewed as protection against evil, and bringers of good fortune - but also had a practical use. These bells were used to warn other horse-drawn vehicle users (mostly on country roads) that another vehicle was approaching. They came in many sizes, from a small 1-inch version to bells that were many inches across. The older ones were forged while others were cast.

Crotal Bells have been worn by horses, cattle, sheep and even children. The most common use in Western Canada was on horse tack or wagon harnesses. They were often hung on a small leather-and-iron harness bracket above the horse's collar on smaller vehicles. On larger vehicles, such as delivery wagons, they were driven into the wooden frame of the wagon. In the UK, in past centuries, they were worn by sheep. The "Bell-weather" or leader of a flock of sheep would wear the bell, hence the name.

Crotal Bells have been in use since ancient times - there have been very similar bells found at archaeological sites dating back to Roman Era in Britain, and even earlier in other areas of Europe. They gained wide-spread popularity in the late 1800s, especially with the advent of the Christmas Tune, "Jingle Bells". The bell shown below on the left was found by Edmonton Metal Detecting Club member James Belke in 2010 while he was detecting in a century old neighborhood. It was his first crotal bell, and he was thrilled to find it. The bell on the right is a European version dating to the 8th Century AD. The Buzzer Cover, while reminiscent of the time of year - or maybe just the tune of "Jingle Bells", shows how they would have been used on wagon/horse tack.



AN OVERSEAS DETECTING ADVENTURE

We have a new member who recently returned to Canada after a couple of years in England. Tracy Neal moved to Calgary last year after residing in the UK for several years. Tracy discovered detecting while in England, and continued the hobby after his move to Calgary. Tracy Neal is currently putting together a "Metal Detecting vacation", and would like to include any Calgary or Edmonton Club members who would like to experience detecting in an area with history going back thousands of years. The idea is to share costs and overhead - Tracy has put together an article for the Buzzer with information about this adventure.



Tracy Neal

For those that haven't met me (lots of you!) My family lived a couple years in England and We've just moved back to Canada. I detected a lot in England and I'm thinking about going back in March and do a bit more metal detecting and I'm wondering if anyone from the Calgary (or Edmonton!) club would be interested in joining me. I'm not looking to make any money off this and it's not like the American organised trips. Since there's no profit being made we can concentrate on having a good time and unlike the American trips the ground won't be seeded. The items we find will be the same ones that were dropped there a hundred, or a thousand years ago and that's an amazing feeling to experience.

The gist of the trip is to rent a cottage and split the cost between a group of us, I'll negotiate with the cottage owner to let us detect on their land while we stay with them. I can also have the owner talk to their neighbours and arrange for additional areas for detecting, this will cost a bit extra, in the neighbourhood of £100.00 per farm but split between a few of us it's not much at all.

As far as the cottage, I haven't researched a specific one yet and if there's no interest in the trip then I won't bother with it as its going to take a serious time commitment to find just the right one. The right one will be in an area that has the history we want, hasn't been detected before, has access to plowed and pasture land and where the owner will give unequivocal permission to hunt. The permission is extremely important, we don't want them changing their mind once we get there. It's interesting some places are prime for detecting and others not so much so and they can be right next to each other so that's why we'll need to get extra farms. I have some good ideas where we should go and I'm not divulging how I know yet but rest assured I've been doing my homework. The plowed land is also important as plowing brings things up to the surface and makes digging easier. Remember what we find can be over a foot deep, it's not like Canada with our shallow finds.

As far as the laws go, we'll need insurance coverage and I think we can get it for about \$10.00 by joining the British Federation of Independent Detectorists. We will abide by the treasure laws and anybody found to be in breach of the laws will be asked to quit detecting.

The very rough breakdown of costs would look something like this, and honestly its off the top of my head so we will have to nail down costs better if folks are interested.

Air travel is about \$1800.00

Cost of car rental for a week \$500.00 (split between us) Cost of cabin

rental about \$300.00 per night (also split) Grocery prices are a

little cheaper in England and restaurants are about the same as here and we can choose to eat cheaply sometimes and nicely other times. Every town will have a local pub with decent meals and great beer and the cottages are always well set up for cooking.

So once we're there, minimum costs will be about \$700.00 per week per person. Pretty cheap vacation actually! I'd suggest a trip of at least 10 days as the air travel is the most expensive part and we might as well make good use of the time. As well, it rains in England (!), and the more days we have the less chance of getting rained out. On rainy days there will be lots of things we can do and see so don't worry about being stuck in a cabin with a bunch of other smelly detectorists. We can detect in the rain too - if it's not pouring.

An Overseas Detecting adventure - Continued



If you want to look at the map and get a feel for the spot look at the Chelmsford area - it's a cracking good one!

The Chelmsford area has had human occupation since the Neolithic period and it has a cross section of metal detecting items that range from Bronze Age to the present. So we can expect to see anything from bronze age items, such as axes to roman items and coins, hammered silver coins, lead trade tokens, lead bag seals, lead spindle whorls, coins ranging from ancient to recent. There are also non metal items such as clay pipes, pottery, flint tools etc. Really it's very hard to give you guys an idea of these items as they are so varied but for those interested I can show you what I've found and then you'll know what you can expect.

The countryside we'll see will blow you away, the more medieval the town is the better the detecting. Expect to see thousand year old churches, skinny one track roads with stone walls on each side, blackberry bushes hanging over the walls, 400 year old houses. The countryside is both modern and ancient and its has a quaint beauty that's absolutely gorgeous. You can expect to detect for a lot longer than seems common in Canada, I usually do at least 6 hours per day because it's so much fun and I'm knackered by the end of it. The only thing that can revive me is a pint of good ale.

If you are interested in more information - you can contact Tracy at calgarychef@yahoo.com - with the subject line "metal detecting trip".

Winter Detecting



For most of us in Calgary, Metal Detecting is considered a three season activity. We will put away our detector as soon as the snow stays - and be back at it at first thaw. But that doesn't mean that we shut detecting out of our mind. There are still chinooks!!! Even if we can't actually dig the ground up there are a variety of ways you can still be involved in metal detecting during the winter months.

Though the ground may be frozen, you can still hunt for treasure in the snow. Places like sledding hills, ice skating and hockey rinks, light displays, and other winter gathering areas can lead to a great deal of treasure like jewelry and coins since items easily fall out of people's pockets during activities like these. You can find them all winter long with your metal detector! I know some hobbyists are out in wooded areas where there is a lot of leaf litter and little snow, even in December and January. We can also help people who have lost keys or sentimental items in the snow.

If it's just too cold and too frozen to be outside metal detecting where you are, you can begin researching places to hunt once the weather breaks. The best, most successful metal detectorists do their research before they head out into the field. They look for specific spots that were well traveled, or where events took place in the past. Information on your area can easily be found at places like the local historical society and the library. Longtime residents of the area can also be excellent resources. If you are going out in the winter, make sure you dress for the weather!

Although searching for treasure in the actual ground may not be possible during the winter, you can still have a Detectorists positive attitude, and get ready for all those great treasures you are going to find! By preparing for spring, summer, and fall metal detecting trips during the winter, all your treasure hunts become more successful. Don't put your metal detecting equipment away when the weather turns. Use these tips to find ways that you can keep up your hobby all year long no matter what mother nature throws at you!

CANADIAN COINS AND SILVER CONTENT



Silver Canadian Coins were first minted in 1858 by the Royal Mint in London, England. The first silver coins minted were five-cent, ten-cent and twenty-cent coins containing 92.5 percent silver.

The twenty-five cent coin (Silver Canadian Quarter) replaced the twenty-cent coin in 1870 and the fifty-cent coin (Silver Canadian Half-Dollar) was introduced. Some of these silver coins were minted by the Heaton Mint (a privately owned mint located in Birmingham, England) and bear the "H" mint mark. In 1908, the Royal Canadian Mint was established to begin production of Canada's coins.

Silver coins with 92.5 percent silver fineness...

Silver Canadian Nickel(1858-1919): Gross Wt.=1.167 grams.
Silver Canadian Dime(1858-1919): Gross Wt.=2.33 grams.
Silver Canadian Twenty-Cent Coin(1858): Gross Wt.=4.67 grams.
Silver Canadian Quarter(1870-1919): Gross Wt.=5.81 grams.
Silver Canadian Half-Dollar(1870-1919): Gross Wt.=11.62 grams.
Note: There are approximately 31.103 grams in a Troy ounce.

Due to the rising price of silver, the Canadian government made the decision to 80 percent. This started in 1920 and continued until 1967.

Canadian Nickels containing silver were discontinued after 1921. 1966 was the last year for Silver Canadian Dollars.

Silver coins with 80 percent silver fineness...

Canadian Silver Dimes(1920-1967): Silver Content=.0585 Troy ounces*
Canadian Silver Quarters(1920-1967): Silver Content=.1463 Troy ounces*
Canadian Silver Half-Dollars(1920-1967): Silver Content=.2925 Troy ounces*
Canadian Silver Dollars(1936-1966): Silver content=.600 Troy ounces.*

*The silver content for the above coins are for circulated coins. Uncirculated coins have a slightly higher silver content due to lack of circulation "wear".

By mid-1968, silver was removed from all Canadian coins. By mid-1967, Canada reduced the silver content of the Canadian Dime and Canadian Quarter from 80 to 50 percent. No Silver Canadian Dollars were minted after 1966 and silver half-dollars were discontinued ins of these denominations.

Silver coins with 50 percent silver fineness...

Canadian Silver Dime(1967-1968): Silver Content=.0375 Troy ounces, Gross Wt.=2.33grams
Canadian Silver Quarter(1967-1968): Silver Content=.0937 Troy ounces, Gross Wt.=5.81 grams

To determine the approximate value of a Silver Canadian Coin, multiply the amount of silver (in Troy ounces) by the current spot price of silver.

"TREASURE HUNTING TIPS FROM THE HEART"

Written by Dick Stout & originally published in *Western & Eastern Treasures*

It's hard for this detectorist to offer up any unheard of, hidden, bet you did not know this, kinds of tips or hints that will put you on easy street. Are there such things at all? Perhaps....and just maybe you've discovered all there is for the moment, the day or the year. Setting this control to this or that, lessening or increasing your discrimination, cranking up your sensitivity, changing out your search coil....all ideas and theories that have been passed along for months and years. Some have worked for me, and others have not.

At the age of 64 I've mellowed quite a bit when it comes to metal detecting, treasure hunting, whatever you care to call it. The tips I now offer to anyone who will listen are based on many years of in-the-field trials and errors, and lots of valuable good friends and life experiences. I feel certain they might not make your to do list for this month or year, but I hope you will put them on the back burner, and consider them down the road.

Remember Day One - *First piece of advice I can offer is to never forget what it was that got you interested in this pastime. There was a seed, a sincere interest, something that prompted you to find out more about metal detecting and treasure hunting. The unknown, the desire to look under that rock, the urge to seek what is around the bend or down the road....whatever it was, strive to keep it alive! That curiosity, that desire to find more is exactly what keeps the ardent treasure hunter going day in, day out, and will keep you going till you can't function anymore. No one else has to understand or sympathize. It's your passion, your thrill and that's all that matters.*

An Educational Experience - *Next remember the educational part of your passion....the desire to get better at what you do. You knew from day one that you wanted to find treasure, no matter the definition, and to find it more frequently you became a student. You read all you could about detectors, their functions, their abilities and their limitations. You read about your local area. It's history, it's beginnings and if you are typical you got involved in its future. This ongoing desire to learn more made you a more integral part of the community, and gave you an appreciation of all that went before. Remember this, and understand it's importance to all you find each and every day.*

A Lifelong Family - *Next tip..... Keep in touch with your treasure hunting family. Who are they? The folks you come in touch with as a result of your endeavors over the years. The guys and gals in your club, the folks you met at the last hunt, the inquisitive youngster, who saw you detecting and wanted to know more. I couldn't begin to name all those who made my years so enjoyable. I was privileged to be a little more involved in the business than most, and feel blessed to have so many friends. I do my best to stay in touch with them, and look forward to hearing from them as well. Many have passed away, and while I mourn their passing, I am better off for having met them in my lifetime. Memories may be all I have at this time, but as long as I can recall them....they are true treasures.*

Defining Treasure - *Lastly, I often get asked "what's the best thing you've ever found?" I sometimes respond with a few of the old key coins I've found, or the old Roman coins found overseas. Then again it's hard not to brag about that diamond ring, or that small cache of coins found in the chicken coop. Now when I'm asked....it's easy. It's that tear that was shed after returning the class ring to its owner after so many years. It's that fun day I had with my hunting buddy Dan, when we didn't find one coin, but laughed ourselves silly over nothing. It's that day I discovered the fence was indeed electrified, or that day when I drove twenty miles only to find out that I had left my detector in the kitchen.*

Treasures are what you make them. I know what they once were, but today I can see what they really were, and for that I am thankful. I hope in some way you understand what I am saying, and in doing so enjoy each and every day you get out into the field. It doesn't matter what you come home with - it's the possibility that today will be more exciting and surely more fun that most others will have! Good hunting! See you in the field.

CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers



Winter-Season CMDC Themes

During the winter, the CMDC has monthly themes for displaying the years finds. Here is a small reminder of the upcoming "Winter Themes". Bring any items you have to the meeting to share.

JANUARY ~ TOYS MONTH – Bring all those great toys or childhood related items that you recovered through-out the year, from any era. It doesn't matter if they are modern or vintage.

FEBRUARY ~ SHOW AND TELL MONTH – Whatever your favourite finds were during the year, bring them on in and share them with the group. Bring everything if you want to

A Hunt from Warmer Days

One fine Sunday in June of 2008 - Peggy Kemp & James Belke hunted one of Calgary's oldest park areas - the grounds of "Central Memorial Park Library" built in 1911. This was one of the first libraries in Calgary. The weather was great - sunny and warm, but with a recent rain which made for easy digging.

As this park is close to the downtown core, it was bound to be a bit challenging - with lots of targets buried amidst trash. By working slowly to distinguish signals, James was pleasantly surprised by this site. At the time he stated that this was one of the most "target concentrated" sites he had ever hunted, and his hunting experience goes back decades. While the finds were mostly newer coin drops, James said there was a good signal every second or third sweep of the coil. Tons of coppers from the '70s to 2008, which lead him to believe that this spot had been overlooked by detectorists for a while. James' recovered 104 coins during the hunt, totaling over \$12.00. James also found a 1922 small cent, a rosewood & brass knife, and a 12 gauge shot-gun shell, which he believes dates back to when the area used for hunting (before the library was built).

Peggy didn't do anywhere near as well. She joined James about 2 hours into the hunt, after her church service ended. She still had a blast, and was delighted with her finds. Peggy came home with \$5.00 in Clad - including a number of early Elizabeth era coins (although no silver). She also recovered a "Chinese Good-Fortune" symbol earring, and a period "Guns n Roses" button from the eighties.



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 (door by the Bakery) to find the meeting room.

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The CMDC's yearly dues are:

In-town membership : \$25.00
Out-of-town membership: \$20.00

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