

Calgary Metal Detecting Club

THE BUZZER

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Metal Detecting - Not just a summer hobby

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
2015 Metal Detecting Season!

*Merry Christmas from
the CMDC!*

We've reached the end of another Metal
Detecting Year. 2014 was an amazing and fun
Metal Detecting season!

While some club members are still detecting
in the snow, others dream of warm 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
Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year, filled
with good times, great memories, and a
multitude of recovered treasures.

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## CMDC Memories & Finds 2014



Winter Hunt - January



Fun in the Snow



400th Meeting of CMDC



CMDC Member of the Year



CMDC Banquet



CMDC Awards Banquet - April



COP Hunt - June



Alberta Fall Extravaganza - September



September Hunt & RadioWorld Central BBQ / Launch



Some amazing finds recovered by members of the CMDC during the 2014 Metal Detecting season..

# Calgary Coin Horde Recovery

By Bill Jones

It was the cloudy day in June 2014, I decided to brave the weather which was showering on and off and take out my Garrett AT-PRO International. I decided to concentrate on a community Close to center of Calgary. A particular vacant lot had my attention but last time I was there was winter and the ground was too hard to dig. The road this lot was on was noted in the history books as being the location of a number of brothels in the late 1800's and early 1900's so I was looking forward to finding some relics or coins dating back to that period.

I arrived at the hunt site around 10:30 am, and started hunting the perimeter of the lot close to the sidewalk and was finding a bit of clad and lots of junk. I was tiring of pull tabs, tin foil and bottle caps so decided to hunt around the two large spruce trees at the front of the lot, the base of the largest tree was piled high with dirt and rocks the size of my head and fist, up to about 2 feet up the trunk and a diameter of 4 feet across.

I started searching at the bottom of the largest tree and got a 77 - 79 VDI signal on my Garrett AT - PRO International which usually signifies a Canadian Penny, upon checking It was just as I had expected but nothing old only 1979. I rechecked the hole, which is always a good idea, and got yet another signal again in another cent. Now on my hands and knees with my Garrett Pro Pointer in hand I was getting signal after signal. Now realizing this was more than just a coin spill I was getting pretty excited digging and searching feverishly I plucked one coin after another for 3 hours - did I mention there was a LOT big rocks? At this point the skies opened up with pouring rain, thunder and lightning. I decided to pack up and come back the next day.

I had amassed over 200 coins the first day, but this time I came more prepared shovel and sifter in hand I got back to the hunt site at 10 am determined to clean it out. I used the Garret Pro pointer, Garret Retriever, my trusty shovel and sifter to liberate coins for another 3.5 hours and ended my day thinking I really had done a good job of cleaning out this coin cache. While I was thrilled about finding the coins I have to admit I was a bit disappointed that there was nothing older than a 1957 Nickel. The newest coin gave me the indication of when these coins were buried which was a 1999. Making this stash only 15 years old, but still a thrill to find.

My total number of I coins at this point was 660, but only low monetary value since it was only pennies, nickels and dimes. A week went by and I took my friend Jim, a fellow detectorist, down to the site of the coin stash and we hunted under the same tree for a bit and pulled out another 50 or so coins then our probes went silent. I decided to try my luck hunting the rest if the lot closest to the hole, where the foundation of the house had been. Again, nothing old - just some clad. Jim was hunting around the base of the second spruce tree and started as I had with the first tree finding coins one after another. I checked the opposite side of the tree he was working and started to find coins as well. Just as we were getting into the thick of things once again Mother Nature decided to give us a bath, so we filled in the dig and headed home, we hadn't counted the coins for that day.

Within a few days Jim and his roommate John went down to the site to complete the excavation and spent many more hours digging coin after coin - still nothing old but had a great time. The total from the two trees came to 1620 coins all in small denominations between 1 cent and 10 cents, plus an old broad axe head from early 1900's a fossil of a snail that a local rock shop said could be millions of years old and a few marbles and other kids trinkets. All in all, this was a fun time for the 3 of us, and I'm sure rates among one of the unique detector finds in Calgary.



## Flash from the Past - 1921 Fishscale Stories.



The article this "Flash from the Past" entry is based on was originally published in the Buzzer in July of 1992 - by one of the original CMDC members, Alf Wrigley. If the name sounds familiar, some of you might recall that the "Alf Wrigley" memorial plaque is given to the CMDC Member of the Year. It is an abbreviated re-telling, but all the essential facts are there.

The date was April 15, 1982. A little amount of springtime in the atmosphere, but it was still a very late Spring, with frost in the ground. Glyn Williams was a relative new-comer, and devoted to the hobby of treasure hunting. He couldn't wait for spring, and a complete thaw-out of the ground. This hunt was about his tenth time out in 1982. The frost in the ground was softening.

Glyn's favorite hunting ground turned out to be an old rodeo and picnic site some 35 miles out of Calgary. Glyn knew this part of the country like the back of his hand. He knew the residents in the area. In fact he had a sister living just two miles from the site. It was ground that had been used for rodeos, picnics and country dances since before the turn of the century. It was also ground that had been treasure-hunted since metal detectors first came into Calgary. The Foothills Treasure and Relic Hunters Club (now the CMDC) had a Club Hunt on this ground in 1976, and over 400 coins were found, with many dating back to 1900 or earlier. Treasure hunters have been hunting it ever since.

The site was surrounded by bluffs of trees, and Glyn learned that on the outer perimeters where the tree-line was taking over, there was an area between the picnic and rodeo grounds that had become overgrown the tall grass, briar bushes, and seeds to the extent that hunting this area was almost impossible. That is, until Glyn got a gasoline powered weed-eater, and permission to use in on the grounds. The first step was to go over an area with the weed-eater, and then to go over the cleared ground with his metal detector. It paid off with a good many finds in old coins and other treasures.

On April 16th, 1982 Glyn Williams left Calgary for the rodeo grounds after work, and had only one and a half hours to hunt before darkness set in. Towards the end of the hour, he got a good signal, and retrieved a Canadian silver 5-cent piece out of the frozen ground. That alone was a great find, but then he checked the date - 1921! That makes a spectacular find! Glyn's thoughts at the time were - "Geez! a 1921! Can't believe it!". Then he put it in the coin section of his apron and went on hunting. He remembered a week earlier when he thought he had a 1914D American penny, only to get home to have his son show him that it was actually 1918D. 10 minutes later, he had to have another look. It still looked like 1921 to him. A few minutes later when it was too dark to hunt, Glyn had his magnifier out in the lit car, and confirmed that it was 1921, alright. Needless to say, that coin took "Find of the Month" in May of 1982 (and probably find of the year, although I was unable to confirm that).

This "spectacular find" is just another instance that you never know what to expect when you are a treasure hunter. For days and days, months and months, and yes even years and years, one can go on finding treasure of the usual variety, and the...BINGO, something out of the ordinary turns up. Talk about thrills! Glyn Williams knows about them!

Alf Wright published a magazine article about this amazing recovery in the "Western and Eastern Treasures magazine" in the 1980s.

One might ask what is so special about a 1921 5-cent piece. Up until 1921 the 5-cent piece was about half the size and half the thickness of a dime. This makes it one of the hardest coins to find with a metal detector, and also makes it a much sought after coin on many a detectorist's wish list. Canadians thought the early 5-cent pieces resembled the scales of a fish because of their tiny size, and gleaming silver appearance. That is how the tiny silver 5-cent piece got the nickname, "fishscale".

## Flash from the Past - 1921 Fishscale Stories - Continue

In 1921 the silver 5-cent piece was changed to the current size and made of nickel (hence the name). That year both sizes of the 5-cent piece were minted, but most of the silver coins were melted for use in other coins. The estimate is that out over 2 million 5-cent coins minted in 1921, less than 500 silver coins made it into circulation. The small quantity of 1921 fishscales in circulation makes them a rare find, and very valuable.

Now we move ahead in time. Ten years and six weeks later, another lucky hunter discovers a 1921 Canadian silver five-cent piece. The second find happened under different circumstances. The Foothills Club was now known as the Calgary Metal Detecting Club (CMDC). The club had recently gained a new member, Alex Palin, who resided in the town of Didsbury, Alberta, roughly 75 kilometres north of Calgary. In Didsbury there was an old (closed down) bible college with lawned grounds. The building was about to be renovated and remodelled into a home for senior citizens.

Alex Palin made arrangements for the CMDC to have a club hunt on the grounds on the date of Saturday, May 23, 1992, starting at 10:00 am. The day turned out to be quite chilly, and working conditions were wet as it had rained quite heavily during the night. There were about 15 CMDC members participating in the hunt. Lots of coins were being found. About 1pm the members stopped for lunch, and then continued their hunt. Thirty minutes later, member Dan Couture, using a Garret model ADS7 machine retrieved a tiny Silver coin. He dug up a Canadian silver five-cent piece, and upon examination the date looked like 1921!

In order to do this account of the second 1921 fishscale find, here is the question put to Dan; "Your feelings when you realized what you had found?". The answer, "Couldn't believe it. Al Blayney was very close by, so I stepped over to him and said, "Take a look at this!" Al looks, but he hasn't got his glasses, but he said "That looks like 1921 to me." CMDC member, Al Dedman, was just another few feet away, so they showed him. Al Dedman said "That's a 1921!"

Very soon all the hunters were congregated and celebrating Dan's Spectacular find. Dan says the coin's depth in the lawn was about 2 inches. Dan has also showed it to some dealers and numismatists, and they are all agreed that it is a VERY FINE plus grade. It calls for an echo of the last paragraph of the last story - Talk about thrills! Dan Couture now knows about them!

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### ❄️❄️ Toboggan Hill Detecting ❄️❄️



One place that can be detected during the winter season is areas set aside for sledding or tobogganing. As the winter weather allows, and that metal-detecting urge hits, and we can't possibly wait until Spring - it could be a good time to hit those steep slopes. This chilly weather fun can provide a bonanza of lost coinage falling out of pockets, not to mention jewellery lost by kids and adults sliding or tumbling down those toboggan hills.

The City of Calgary Parks page lists a selection of areas that are designated sledding hills. Take a drive on a sunny cold day and look at the park listed for your area. Watch where the most popular spots are on the runs, watch where people have those mishaps, and where they gather together at the bottom of the hills. They may take their gloves off, and we all know when it's cold your fingers shrink and off comes the rings. If they are wearing necklaces and have a tumble there is a chance it will get broken and go flying somewhere in the snow. There is an opportunity for some excellent finds on a popular toboggan hill.

Of course, if you don't want to drive out yourself, you could just check out "Calgary Toboggan" or "Calgary sledding" on YouTube - that is if you don't get distracted by all the metal-detecting videos from areas where the ground is still soft and the finds are still coming out of the earth.

As a side note, try your luck at shopping mall parking lots. Check out those snow piles from plowed lots.

# Edmonton Winter Ring Recovery

By James Belke

James Belke from the Edmonton Metal Detecting Club has given the Buzzer permission to retell his winter wedding ring recovery story from December of 2012.

The club received an email from Crystal who described that she had lost her wedding ring in the deep snow of a parking lot late on Friday night (after CFR) when she had removed her gloves on the way to her vehicle. Crystal and her husband, Justin, made repeated attempts to find the ring, but were out of luck.

Finding information on the Edmonton Metal Detecting Club on the internet, they reached out to EMDC. Both Dana Wiley and I were able to meet up in the evening for a recovery hunt. Dana and I were a little bit worried that the snow removal crews could possibly have captured the ring in a huge 12' high pile of snow along the edge of the parking lot, but we didn't let that deter us from our mission!

After about 20 minutes of grid searching the parking lot and landscaped boulevard area, I started a new grid pattern across the roadway when I picked up a strong signal on the edge of the driving path. The loud and clear sound had my heart racing with excited anticipation... after chipping through the 2" of packed ice to get down to the road surface, I was quickly disappointed to find I had only found a rusty dime!

The grid search continued and another loud and clear signal was received right in the middle of the roadway. With a car approaching I quickly used my digger to mark the spot with a big X and get out of the way of traffic. Once the coast was clear, I ventured back out into the roadway and chipped through the 2 inches of packed ice and even under the parking lot lights could clearly see Crystal's priceless beauty sparkling!!! Once I brushed the ice and road grit off the ring I realized that it had been run over a few times and was a bit worse for wear and now in a bit of a squashed oblong shape.

On returning to the truck where Crystal and Justin were anxiously waiting, we were able to bring the search to a happy ending with the return of the precious keepsake. There were huge smiles all around, but I'm not sure who's smiles were bigger, Crystal and Justin's - or Dana and my own for being able to help bring some happiness and relief to the young couple... we will let the picture answer that question and tell the rest of the story!!!



This story was originally published by James Belke as a Facebook Story. There has been light editing for clarity and grammar.

## ❄️❄️ Winter Metal Detecting ❄️❄️

### NON SEQUITUR BY WILEY WINTER TREASURE HUNTING



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For many of us the Calgary Metal Detecting season is at an end, but you do not have to give up your favourite hobby just because it is winter. We have a few members in the club that go out detecting every month of the year, and come home with some pretty spectacular finds. In winter, like summer, there are treasures to be found, and there are people who need our help to locate missing items. Several of our members have taken time out of their busy lives to locate a missing ring, pendant, or set of keys lost in the snow.

Calgary is fortunate in its winter weather - we get some nice chinooks and very sunny days in the winter. In fact, CMDC member, Andy Coward, found one of his favorite rings in a snowbank in early January. If you do plan on metal detecting during the winter, there are a few basic rules for warmth and safety.

It is important to dress for the Weather. Be prepared not only for the immediate weather, but also for forecasted weather. This is important. Remember – this is Calgary - and changeable weather comes with the territory.

Before you go out for a winter hunt, familiarize yourself with the signs of hypothermia. Watch yourself, and those you hunt with. Make a plan to take a break someplace warm if someone's health seems at risk.

This common sense rule applies both summer and winter - let someone know where you are going. Either hunt with a partner, or let someone know where you plan to hunt. This is especially important if you are headed someplace without any people around.

Another common sense rule in any season is to have a cell phone with you, and charged, especially on a trip to an isolated area. In the case of an unexpected event like getting stuck in the snow, or being injured - it is important to have a way to get help.

Winter treasure hunting might be best suited for recovery of surface or near surface finds. Frozen earth requires vigorous digging. If you are trying to retrieve a deeper object in winter, it is not only difficult, but the effort could damage your potential find. If you suspect that deeper object has historical value or might be a precious metal, make a note of landmarks or take a GPS location. You can always come back and make a recovery when the weather is warmer, and the ground softer.

Spring will be here soon. We are only four months away from our the beginning of our monthly club hunts. While winter doesn't necessarily mean the end to our season – if you find that it is too chilly - winter is a great time to do research and make plans for future hunts. Many great hunt locations are the result of research time during the cold season.

Remember that the CMDC still meets during the winter. Its a great time to get together and talk about our hobby. I hope to see you all out at the next meeting.

## 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

Contact the Calgary Metal Detecting Club (CMDC)

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Calgary, Alberta T2A-3N2

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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 [kempp@telus.net](mailto:kempp@telus.net) with METAL DETECTING STORY in the subject area.

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