## Calgary Metal Detecting Club

# The Buzzer

Volume 50 – issue 2 March 2021



Spring is very near – Looking forward to the treasures we will find in the 2021 Metal Detecting Season

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.

## THE CMDC NEEDS YOUR HELP

Every Spring we ask the CMDC membership think about joining the club executive, working together with others in the club to make the Calgary Metal Detecting Club the great club that it is. This is a great opportunity to make a difference and to help make the CMDC even better.

As mentioned previously, we already know of two positions on the CMDC executive that will need to be filled for 2021 metal detecting season. Jerry Leussink, our CMDC club president, moved to Sundre last summer. He won't be able to attend the meetings anymore and will be taking a less active role. Peggy Kemp has been both publicity director and Buzzer editor for over a decade. Due to family and work conflicts she will be unable to continue in her role as publicity director, and that position also needs to be filled. Peggy will remain in her role as the Buzzer editor. The CMDC needs some of our many members to step up and step into those roles.

None of the executive roles takes a significant amount of time, and we hope to have some volunteers help out. If you would like to assist the club with these roles on the club executive that would be great. Of course, there are other ways people could help – helping out at hunts or meetings (vote counting, and 50/50 ticket sales) are important too. If you think you would like to help out the CMDC – please reach out to a current board member to express your interest or send an email through the CMDC.org website.

Spring is fast approaching, and we hope that with the increased vaccinations and lower number of Covid cases, some of these restrictions will end soon. We look forward to the day when we will be able to get together for meetings, club-hunts, and other fun activities. Let's work together to make the 2021 a great year, and to make the CMDC the best club we can. Thank you all for your continued support of this great club.



"DARN! EVERY YEAR IT GETS HARDER AND HARDER TO HIDE THESE THINGS!"

Cartoonist: Dwayne Hinz. Dwayne sent this caroon to the CMDC for publication – it was origially in the Buzzer in 2016.

## 12 WAYS TO FIND OLDER AREAS TO HUNT

While there are many different places hunt with your metal detector, the thrill of recovering older more valuable coins plus holding in your hands different relics of the past will be something you will want to experience. Finding coins from the 17th,18th and early 19th Century is a far greater thrill then you can imagine. The answer to finding older sites is "Research!" Where can you find research material?

- 1- Old maps can be found in local libraries, local history books, they show old roads, abandoned railroad stations, many times school buildings and other points of interest that either no longer exist, or people have forgotten about.
- 2- Old newspapers contain a wealth of information on almost every page Stories about holiday celebration on the town square park (may no longer exist), carnival arriving in town (where did they set up?) and much more information.
- 3- Old property tax records show where older houses, farms, service stations, interstate bus stops, taverns etc., once stood. Lots of old coins to be found.
- 4- School records not only tell you where schools once stood. Find all the roads and paths that students took to get to school. Find out exactly where the building or buildings stood. School playground areas, where outside lunch benches were... etc.
- 5- Local Historical Societies are a great resource containing valuable information on dozens of older happenings of your town from it's very beginnings up till today... A valuable resource not to be overlooked.
- 6- Local museums usually have displays of historical interest as well as many books on the area's history. Spend time with anyone that works in the museum, they generally are part "Historian." Listen to what they can tell you.
- 7- Senior citizens are a walking history of your town or city. Take the time to visit the Senior Citizen Homes and events. Make friends with those folks and listen to the stories they can tell.
- 8- Old police reports can pinpoint events that can turn into a "treasure" spot. Robberies of lake front homes many times ended with the thief throwing his loot into the lake if he was about to be captured. Police calls to businesses or homes that are empty lots right now.. etc.
- 9- Old Fire Department records can indicate where many building & properties once existed. Probably the best source for what once stood on now empty lots. Fire Departments also participated in many town activities such as picnics and parades. Where did the parades begin and end? Where were the picnics held?
- 10- Churches church records will show where the earliest churches were established. Some no longer exist & were torn down or purchased for another business now on that spot. People spent time before and after church to picnic and join in many outdoor activities.
- 11- College(s) start small and add more buildings from time to time. Lots of areas outside buildings, sports areas, student eating areas, picnic spots, etc. Colleges are also a depository of information about the towns and cities where they are located. Check the college library.
- 12- Library we saved the best for last. No place has more information than the local library. Check with the Librarian who can direct you to a wealth of information about your town. (Or any town if you want to search out sites in neighboring areas) Libraries are the main "Depository" of information of all kinds,, many times having a number of items discussed above, "old maps, old books, old records, etc". Get a library card, it will really pay off!

## Metal Detecting Code of Ethics

The Metal Detecting Code of Ethics has been around a long time and is a good common-sense approach to the hobby. I remember seeing it included in the instructions that came with my first metals detector over a decade ago, and I know that it is much older than that.

The future of our hobby is affected by public perception of it. If we all abide by these basic "common sense" rules, Metal Detecting will be around as a hobby for our enjoyment for a long time.

- I will respect private property and do no metal detecting without the owner's permission.
- I will fill all holes, and replace all plugs neatly. I will leave my digging area just as I found it.
- I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural and cultural resources, wildlife and private property.
- I will use thoughtfulness, consideration, and courtesy at all times.
- I will make sure all gates are closed behind me.
- I will not litter. I will remove litter and trash recovered during my detecting, and properly dispose of all trash found.
- I will not destroy property, buildings, or what is left of ghost towns and deserted structures.
- I will not tamper with signs, structural facilities or equipment.
- I will return an item, by any means, if someone can adequately describe it.

Remember - We are an ambassador of a pastime/hobby that we want to protect and enjoy. The hobby may be judged by our actions, and behavior.

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## **Treasure Hunting Quotes**

"There comes a time in every rightly constructed boy's life that he has a raging desire to go somewhere and dig for hidden treasure." Mark Twain. (For some of us, that raging desire doesn't end until we are 90, or older.)

The sky is the limit, I like to say. Anything that has been lost or hidden can be found with your metal detector. This includes coins, rings, watches, necklaces, tokens, medallions, relics, and more things than you can imagine.." Charles Garrett."

"Metal Detecting is the modern man's way of going treasure-hunting. Instead of following red "X's" on pirate maps, you can use your metal detector to scan the ground for valuable items, like old coins, relics, jewelry, and gold nuggets." J.J. McGregor.

"We always go out looking for old coins because that is our favorite thing to find, but it's always the other weird items that come out of the ground—guns, rings, unique jewelry, tools, and so on—that are the most interesting and surprising." Tim Saylor

"Treasure hunters don't just sweep any old place. Before they head out on a quest, they often do research in their local library. They look up the location of old settlements, fair grounds, mine sites and even shipwrecks to get a lead on where treasure might be found." Gord Manaray

This article by CMDC member Rich Nixon was an entry submitted for the CMDC Silver Dollar contest in December.

Great story, Rich!

## **Engagement & Wedding Band Recovery**

While reading our community Facebook page I noticed a member had recently lost both her engagement and wedding bands in a local park while watching her two boys play soccer. She was sitting on the grass and had taken her rings off and placed them on the blanket she was sitting on. When the game ended, she forgot the rings were still on the blanket and ended up dropping them in the grass when she packed up her stuff. It was only later that day that she realized what she had done...

The family went back to the park and thoroughly checked the area. Searching the location where she had felt she lost the rings on their hands and knees combing the long grass with their fingers in hope of finding something - but no luck. In her Facebook post she had discussed borrowing a metal detector from another community member to attempt to try and locate them. After reading her comments, I offered to help but at that time they felt they could manage with the borrowed machine. I commented back "No problem, let me know if you change your mind. I can certainly have a look". After getting their hands on the metal detector they went out and tried their luck once again.

They searched high and low but again with no success. In her mind the rings were certainly gone. The City had recently mowed the field and she believed that they were likely sucked up into the mower and destroyed. I again offered to go and have a look but at this point she was convinced all hope was lost. The rings were gone. They had to have either been found by another person or destroyed in the lawn mower.

Thinking about the details she provided and being familiar with the park I decided to give it a try on my own. There was a good chance the mower would not have picked up the rings especially if they had worked themselves to the bottom of the grass. It was worth a try, but the park was large and had several different soccer fields. Which one did they play on?

I arrived at the sports field and parked my vehicle in a nearby parking lot. Before I began, I thought to myself what would the average person do if they came here? They would definitely park their vehicle in the same lot where I parked. That's easy. But what field would they play on? There were so many. Well, I thought to myself, when given a choice people generally pick a path a least resistance. There is a field close to the parking lot so they must have played there rather then walk to a field further away. Right? OK, that made sense to me. It was the nearest field, so I hiked over. Now where would it have been lost? If she was watching her boys play soccer with each other where would she decide to sit? There were a number of options, but to give yourself the best view of the game someone would choose a spot near midfield to allow the best view of the game! Ok, I am sold. I will start my search there...

I began sweeping the sideline of the field in a slow and coil low fashion listening for a slightest chirp or pop in my headphones. There were a couple targets found, a dime, a penny, and of course a pull tab, but no rings. I searched up the sideline of the field until I reached midfield and BAM I got a scratchy signal on the AT Pro and noticed a VDI reading in the low 50s. Now that looks promising! Crouching down on one knee and using my pin pointer I was able to accurately locate the target. I shifted thru the grass and there they were sitting side by side on top of the dirt, two gold rings! 15 minutes into my search they were found!





A message to owner was short and simple.... A photo and the comment added to her original Facebook thread "Look what I was able to find... let me know when you want to pick up.". She was overjoyed and the community page lit up with praise and support. It is a great feeling to be able to find and return a lost valued possession, especially when all hope is lost and spirits are low.

## COVID COIN CACHE IN SUFFOLK



In July of 2020, a metal detectorist with a decade of experience got "a permission" to detect the grounds behind his local Pub in Lindsey, Suffolk (UK). Little did he know that the detecting outing would lead to a coin cache of over 1000 coins, and the biggest find of his career.

Luke Mahoney was glad to be able to spend a Sunday out detecting. When he sat down for lunch at the pub he was already happy with his morning's finds of a gold coin and a silver sixpence. If that had been all he found, Luke still would have considered his hunt a complete success.



Charlie Bucket, the owner of the Lindsey Rose Pub, began getting calls from Luke Mahoney shortly after lunch telling him to come out back to see what Luke had dug up. At first Charlie ignored the calls. Charlie explained, "Luke gets quite excited about everything he finds so I was like 'yeah OK,' but he kept ringing and told me I had to come down and see what he had found."

After his return to the field after Lunch, Luke Mahoney almost immediately hit this "super" silver signal, and pulled out his first Charles I coin. "Then I hit another signal, and another", Luke said. Before the day ended, Luke Mahoney unearthed 1,061 silver coins dating back to the 15th to 17th Centuries. The 15-acre field behind the pub had been recently cropped and it is suspected that a plough had somehow managed to crack the clay earthenware pot containing the coins. It was buried 2ft under-ground.

The most popular theory from experts and historians was the coins were buried by a wealthy landowner who had gone off to fight in the Civil War. It was estimated that the hoard could fetch at least £100,000 at auction/ (\$173,000 CAD). A local coin validator stated that the earliest coin in the find was an Elizabeth I era shilling dating back to 1573-78, while it also contained a number of Charles I half crowns from 1641-43.

The British newspaper "The Economist" stated in an article about the Lindsey Rose Cache recovery that "Lockdown" and the furlough scheme have given detectorists even more free time to forage. They have unearthed Neolithic arrowheads and ancient coins in their back gardens. In June, a detectorist in Scotland happened upon a complete Bronze Age horse harness and a sword still in its scabbard, with the metal and wood preserved by the soil. Another enthusiast discovered a 467-year-old coin thought to be worth around £15,000." I'm sure we will soon be hearing about more magnificent finds from the UK.



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## Canadian Nurse's WWI Medal

In April of 2020, a Langley detectorist was out with a couple of friends detecting in a field in Chilliwack. British Columbia. Brandon Kuczynski of Langley was out with his fiancée Bailey Andrichuk, and friend Brad Cappon of Chilliwack. The three are metal-detecting hobbyists, and call themselves the "Dirt Hounds."

Kuczynski said his equipment started beeping like crazy when it detected the silver medal in the old field. It was down fairly deep. On previous field hunts they had recovered coins, a few gold rings and cellphones, but they weren't expecting anything like this. This was the first time a rare item like a nurse's medal from the Great War fell under their coil. "I had no idea what it was at first," Kuczynksi said. "I'd never seen anything like it." Kuczynksi said that they thought it was an old coin or token when they first dug it out of the ground. The medal was buried almost a foot beneath the ground.

Brad Kuczynski has been metal detecting for a couple of years but says he has become thoroughly hooked with the outdoor hobby, and the artifacts that can sometimes come out of the dirt. "It's addicting especially when you find cool stuff like this." Handing over the long-lost keepsake to a family member was the group's fondest hope with this historic artifact they unearthed.

The medal was engraved with the name "C. Whittle". The Dirt Hounds wanted to return the medal to family, but it was not an easy process to research the name. After a local CTV station did a short piece on the "Dirt Hounds" recovery in early 2021 a local ancestry sleuth, Marion Robinson, tracked down the living relatives of C. Whittle in Chilliwack. Robinson said she saw the story when it aired and got right to work on her laptop, researching the Whittle family roots. She came up with a fascinating history of a real Canadian hero.

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the surviving Chilliwack niece of Carrie Whittle was presented with the medal her aunt had earned caring for soldiers more than 100 years ago. Lois Maurer, 95, described how wonderful it felt to have the medal back in the hands of family in an interview with Lois and her daughter, Nada Reid, on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Marnier knew about her aunt's WWI legacy, but never met her as Carrie Whittle left Canada before she was born. Marnier assumes that the medal was lost by a family member after Carrie's departure in 1920.

Kuczynski believes that finding the medal has put the spotlight on the life of a nurse who cared for people most of her life, which is timely during a global pandemic with the primacy of front-line healthcare workers. The image of the wartime nurse is gradually coming into focus. Carrie Whittle was born in England in 1881, but moved to Canada to join family who emigrated to the Chilliwack area. She arrived in B.C. in 1911.

Caroline (Carrie) Whittle enlisted in 1914 to go overseas as a nursing volunteer and served in England and France. She was awarded the nurse's VAD medal, Two Scarlet Efficiency Stripes, and in May 1919 was honoured with the silver British War/Victory Medal. Carrie had been engaged, but her fiancé was killed in France. She worked in a convalescent hospital after the war, and shortly after her return to Canada, Carrie Whittle decided to join a religious order. She travelled to the Virgin Islands from 1920 to 1929 to serve as Mother Noel Juanita in the Order of St Augustine. Whittle worked as a nursing and teaching sister all over the world for decades, ending up running a major hospital as "Mother Superior" in Colorado until she died in 1971.

Brandon Kuczynski and his friends were on hand to deliver the cleaned and polished medal to Lois Maurer and her daughter on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The family has decided to donate the medal to the Chilliwack Museum for posterity and safekeeping, and to share the story of their extraordinary relative with the community. The "Dirt Hounds" are happy with that. "I think the museum is a great spot for it," said Dirt Hound Brad Cappon.

## **Hunted Out or Not?**

So you were thinking of hitting a local park for a quick hunt. Other people in the club tell you that its been "hunted out". Should you hunt it anyway? By all means! Yes!

First of all – there is no such thing as a "hunted out" park. In some cases there may be a more modern debris than older items, but most parks are self replenishing. Look at the area of the park you are hunting. Is it in an older neighbourhood? Sometimes the finds close to the surface have been dug out, but deep down, another treasure has been waiting a long time to be found. When Andy Coward found his Barber Dollar in Bowness Park, he dug down almost a foot – and then found not only that dollar, but two other coins in a 90-year-old pocket-spill. Sometimes you need to swing low and slow, and learn what your machine is telling you, in order to find a deep signal.

Another question is - how much do you depend on your numerical ID display? If something showed up as a penny or a pull-tab, for example, did you pass over it for a better signal? You might have missed something good. Sometimes a penny sound could be silver, and nickel and gold tones can be pretty similar. What many people don't realize is that metal detector manufacturers use software that averages out the numbers on the display, since they can't fit everything on there. It is extremely rare that anything a detectorist finds is pure gold, silver, copper, etc. Almost everything is an alloy of blended metals, or in some cases, metal over metal.

If you've been detecting for any length of time, I'm sure you've encountered items that showed as a certain number on the visual ID display, yet when you dug them, they turned out to be something very different. Your detector identified what it has been programmed for the item's metallic composition. I can tell you that my first large cent sounded more like a zipper-pull on my Ace 250 than a copper penny. Some of my best gold ring finds on my AT Pro had the same tone and numerical identifier as a pull-tab.

As you hunt more, you will learn to identify the numerical identifiers and what the different tones mean on your machine. A lot of this comes with experience. Like any hobby, the more you get out detecting, the better you will understand what it is that your metal detector is telling you. But you are always going to miss some information with alloyed metals. At a club hunt in an older park a few years ago Clayton Blanchard's son persisted in digging an unclear signal and recovered a beautiful old copper pocket watch case – at one time it was likely to have been silver-plated. The amazing thing about this hobby is the number of interesting finds that come out of the ground.

Don't get discouraged by the amount of trash you find – we all dig up trash, and at least we are cleaning the environment when we put it in our trash pouch and dispose of it later. I often say that most detectorists will find 80% trash to 20% keepers. There is an important thing about finding trash in a park that most people don't mention. The cool thing about trash is that it tells you that people have been in the area. That is when you want to start to pay close attention to the clues that your machine is giving you. Think about the way the park is set up. Where would you sit down on a hot day for a picnic? That is a good place to start. Personally, I usually head for shady areas with a bit of privacy – and I have found some pretty cool items.

Actually, parks, with all their trash and varieties of coins, are a great place to practice listening to audio tones to identify if a signal is good enough to dig. Try going slower to get those deeper tones, and listen closer to the tone itself. Then go out and detect those hunted out spots, and you might be surprised with what you find!

## Finding the location of an old House

When you've done the research and located a possible old house-site in a park, or have permission to hunt a property that once held a house, the next step is to find the home-site. If you're lucky, you might find it on an old map or surveyor's plat, or locate it using the aerial photographs available online through the University of Calgary. It might even be in a community history book. Many of these are available online.

If those methods don't work, the question remains - how do you find the location of the house on that property? There will still be clues in the area. One thing to consider is the landscaping. Look for large tree(s) out of place (straight line or in a pattern), spring flowers growing in a row, or a cleared grassy area. You can also look for perennial flowers or bushes like peonies or lilacs or nan king cherries. These are the type of things that would have been planted close to a house.

Check out the ground for miscellaneous objects. When old houses were lived in the trash was usually not far from the house. You might see nails, old tins, odd bits of wood, or broken pieces of pottery and glass. If the house was torn down, some of the remnants might still be there – there may be cinderblocks, bricks, chunks of sandstone foundations, or metal chimney piping. Another thing to remember is that you want to reset your metal detector so it doesn't discriminate anything out. You want to hear iron! If there was on old house on the site, you will find an area that is loaded with nails and other iron objects. Once you get in an area heavy with iron noises, you've located the home-site. Then you can discriminate out the iron signals.

Lastly, there may be some clues based the streets around you. If all the houses are set about the same distance, that might give you an idea of where to check. If the sidewalk indicates a driveway entrance, that is another clue. Don't forget telephone poles in older neighbourhoods – the phone wires would stretch from the pole to the house. There are many clues we can pay attention to that will lead us to our next great area to hunt. Happy Hunting!

## **Check your Trash before Tossing it**

I was reading an article in anther club newsletter when I found another reminder about the benefits of checking miscellaneous items carefully before considering them trash. Dave Steck of the Gateway Metal Detecting club found what he thought was a simple a table-knife in the ground at an old school site. Like most of us who find forks or spoons in schoolyards, it went into his trash pouch.

Later Dave was checking his trash before tossing it. As he looked over the knife, he realized that although the handle was pitted, it appeared to have decorative etching. A closer look found the blade was worn down, but with a bit of elbow grease and cleaning, he was able to make out the words "Thomas J. Advertising, Inc.". etched on the blade. After research, Dave discovered that Thomas J. Burrell was the founder of modern advertising, and the originator of the concept of including "special items" with grocery purchases. .

In this case David Steck, with the help of the internet and a neighbour, discovered that he had recovered an advertising paring knife from the 1950s. This knife had been inserted into a box of "Cheer" laundry detergent, and probably taken to school to cut something in a young child's lunch. Personally I would like to find some of these early advertising tokens, like the "Nabob coffee scoops" shaped like a Genie, a store discount token, or a Palmolive Soap token. Any of these items might show up in your pouch – make sure you give trash a good look-over before it hits the bin.

## LOCATION AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Although cancelled until further notice, the Calgary Metal Detecting club usually meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm in the auditorium of the Brentwood Co-op store, 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. We will restart the monthly meetings after the Covid 19 crisis is over.

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## **SMI PROSPECTING & ELECTRONICS**

The SMI Prospecting & Electronics web site offers a wide range of products to metal detectorists, gold- panners, prospectors, and other outdoor enthusiasts.

Based out of Langley BC, SMI Prospecting provides an on-line presence. Visit them on the web at

smi-elec.com

#### The CMDC's yearly dues are:

In-town membership: \$25.00 Out-of-town membership: \$20.00 Family Membership \$40.00

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