

Calgary Metal Detecting Club

THE BUZZER

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This image is just a reminder of so many great relics found around the Calgary area. This 1940 National Parks Pass Buffalo was found in June of 2004, but at least two Buffalo parks passes from other years were recovered by members of the CMDC last year. This hobby brings so much history back to light!

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.

More Great Hunting Tips

Dig those targets that don't sound good or that you believe to be trash. By digging the trashy signals, you will be getting those items out of the way for your future hunts at that site. Some of those 'iffy' signals might actually be good targets like a ring or other jewelry items. One gold ring I found this year was an iffy signal that I thought was just another piece of foil. Imagine my surprise when I opened the plug and saw a gold & diamond ring laying there!

A great way to practice pinpointing is to take a large piece of cardboard and tape a coin to the cardboard. Then, flip the cardboard over where the coin is on the underside, and place the cardboard in an area free of other metal items. Attempt to pinpoint the coin through the cardboard. When you are satisfied that you have the coin pinpointed, poke a pin through the cardboard where you believe the coin to be. Then, flip the cardboard over, and see how close you pinpointed the target. After a few times doing this, you will be able to figure out where the "sweet spot" for pinpointing is on your coil.

If you are a water hunter then you know how hard it is to see your coil when it is under water. To counter that problem, you can put a dab of white or yellow paint on the tip of your coil. This will make it easier to see your coil under water. It will also make it easier to visually pinpoint your target before you attempt to recover it with your scoop.

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## Metal Detecting - Perception versus Fact

# METAL DETECTING



What my friends think I do.



What my parents think I do.



What society thinks I do.



What my boss thinks I do.



What I think I do.



What I actually do.

## Just Hunting in the Rain

By Peggy Kemp

A recent post on our facebook group page reminded me of one of my first outings with the CMDC, in the Spring of 2008. It was a Saturday in May. I had been given my first detector as a Christmas present the previous December, and had only been in the club since March of that year. I was looking forward to getting together with others in the hobby, and was excited to head off to meet for one of my first club hunts, which was held at Baker Park.

Baker Park is a site with a lot of history . Although it is now a part of Calgary, it was originally built in the community of Keith, west of Bowness. Areas of the park have been in use since the late 1800s, and its uses during the 20th century included WWI army camps and medical facilities. The hospital complex associated with Baker Park was originally built as a rehabilitation hospital for WWI vets. By the end of its life, the hospital grounds held 5 buildings. The hospital went through many different phases in its 60 years, including use as a tuberculosis sanatorium, and a long-term disability home. The buildings were abandoned in the late 1960s, and were torn down shortly thereafter. The area was later turned into a public area park in the 1980's. Many very cool finds have come out of that park.

The weather that brisk May morning looked promising.... at first. It had been raining for about three days, but the morning was fairly fine. However, appearances can be deceiving. It wasn't long before more rain arrived, and what started off as a wee bit of damp ended up with the detectorists soaked to the skin. It was still a good hunt, and a valuable learning experience.

I learned that metal detecting in the rain is hard - something which most of the club members had already learned. Very few members showed up for the hunt, and by the end of the morning only myself and Andy Coward were present. Andy was a great help. I love these club hunts. They are a great way for a newbie in the hobby to learn from other detectorists with more experience. One thing I learned that morning is where my disappearing silver signals were going. Andy explained that a "really old" rusty nail can send a deceiving "halo" signal resulting from mineralization of the soil - at that signal sounds out like a high-tone on most machines - the same as a copper penny - or silver coin.

After a couple of hours, it started getting really wet and cold. I found out that metal detecting in the rain is messy, and metal detecting in clay is next to impossible. There was a wee bit of frustration as I pinched through a lump of clay only to find the infamous aluminum pull-tab, or modern copper penny. I had taken my watch off, so I didn't notice that we were there for about 4 hours. That was the first indication I had of how addictive this hobby can be - out for hours in the soaking cold rain, digging through clay, and I had not even noticed that much time had passed. I was excited by every bit of trash I dug up.

Andy came home with a very nice George V dime. My best find of the day was a metal sign measuring about 6" x 9". It was a day of firsts - I found my first sign, and I also found my first bit of ammunition when a lump of clay revealed a spent 22 cartridge. I went home in my mud-caked clothes, with a huge smile on my face, and the red sign that still sits in the laundry area of my house. And the knowledge that this hobby was going to stick with me a long time.



# Cleaning Coins with a Rock-Tumbler

By the end of the Metal Detecting Season, many of us have a collection of coins that have no particular value, but are fairly dirty or grimy - they look like they've been under the ground for years! Oh, wait - that is exactly where they've been. So, if you have recovered a jar full of coins that need to be cleaned, one quick and easy way is to use a rock-tumbler. A simple, inexpensive one will do the job nicely. If you don't have one around the house, there are inexpensive models available on-line that will do the job.



There are a couple of things you should know before you consider using this method. First, many coin collectors do not like "cleaned coins". If you have coins that might have numismatic value, this is not the cleaning method you should use! Serious coin collectors expect to see some tarnish on circulated coins. In fact they have a special name for the tarnish that develops naturally on the surface of circulated coins: "patina." If the patina has been removed they usually don't want that coin in their collection. If you have any questions about

the value of possible collectible coins in distressed condition it is best to get advice from an coin collector. We have several club members whose entry to the hobby was their coin collections.

Second - know that Cleaning coins in a Rock-Tumbler will damage the coins. Cleaning coins with a rock tumbler give them a brighter appearance, but it also wears away a small amount of metal from the surface of the coins. When you are finished tumbling the coins their surface will be covered with minute scratches and some of the details will be worn away.

The only coins that should be cleaned using a rock tumbler are those that have only "face-value", and that you intend to return to circulation. Many banks will not accept dirty or discolored coins. It really isn't them so much as their customers, who expect and demand shiny clean coins distributed from their bank. However, we must understand that uncleaned coins can also raise havoc with the bank's coin-counting machine.

Once you've located a tumbler, you need to determine the recipe you want to use for cleaning. There are several recipes available on line, but one that was often used was to place the coins in the container along with a handful of ground walnuts, a squirt of liquid dishwashing detergent, a couple tablespoons of vinegar and some fine polishing grit. If you don't have grit, you can try sand or aquarium gravel. Other recommended cleaning ingredients include baking soda, crème of tarter, or Borax Cleaner. However, if you use baking soda, you must avoid using vinegar or any other acidic solution - the chemical reaction is volatile. Remember those elementary school science fair volcanoes?

Add a small amount of water, enough to cover the coins and make a slurry. Don't overload the tumbler barrel. A general rule is to use no more than half the barrel, including the coins. The tumbling process goes better this way. Seal the barrel and start tumbling. If you are cleaning a mass of coins, you must clean the pennies separately from the other clad coins. The electrolysis action between pennies and other coins causes those coins to turn a rosy pink color if cleaned together.

The amount of time required to clean the coins depends upon many factors. As a rule, do not let the tumbler run more than 30 minutes before opening the barrel to check the coins. Take only a few coins out when checking to avoid making a mess around the barrel opening, which will cause a peer seal. Rinse these test coins off, and check them - you will know if they are clean enough. If they need more tumbling, return them to the barrel and continue for another half hour or so. Remember - you want them to look clean , but not to damage the surface.

After the first half-hour run, most coins come out rather clean -- not sparkling and shiny and looking new, but clean and passable. Some coins will not come clean no matter what you do. Once the coins are cleaned to your satisfaction, remove them from the barrel by pouring the contents into a large kitchen colander or similar device, over a large pail. Do not pour the contents of the slurry down the drain. It's not only wasteful, but it can plug up your system if done repeatedly. The slurry can be used again and again. Just let the contents settle in the pail, decant the water and add a little more fresh grit, some more ground walnuts, vinegar and detergent for your next batch.

Rinse the coins in the colander until most of the residue is washed away.. Place the cleaned coins on a towel in a sunny place and let them dry, or dry them off with a soft towel. Take them out and spend them, or take them to the bank.

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Much of the information was gleaned from an article on the website [www.canadiantreasureseekers.com](http://www.canadiantreasureseekers.com)., with more information from [rocktumbler.com](http://rocktumbler.com), and a few other websites. Canadian Treasure Seekers has many other excellent articles about our great hobby.

# Metal Detecting Ethics & Tips

Treasure hunting is a great recreational sport that should be enjoyed by anyone that wishes to participate. It should make you feel like a kid again— like you are on that clichéd quest for buried pirate treasure. The detecting experience should be shared by friends, talked about, and laughed about. In doing so, respecting private property and obtaining permission will go a long way to keeping sites open for detectorists.

## **Why We Hunt for Treasure**

As you know, we all hunt treasure relentlessly and with great passion, and although we have assembled what some would consider awesome piles of coins and artifacts, the truth is that after a lifetime of treasure hunting, the cost of equipment, gas, food, and other expenses outweighs the true value of the objects by a landslide. In other words, we are not in this hobby to make a living off of the objects we dig up, and they couldn't, even if that was indeed our goal.

We got into this game because we enjoy the thrill of the hunt and the tangible history that comes with digging up, say, a well-worn 1897 Barber dime. While worth next to nothing and easily obtainable at the coin shop for a few bucks, it is precious and incredible to us, because we can hold it in our hands, feel the smoothness of the coin, and imagine who might have lost it and why. Sometimes it's the small, insignificant find that can be the spark to ignite a lifetime of passion for history, collecting, and learning. Not to mention, being outdoors with friends and family, exercise, fresh air, and being away from the TV for a while is good too.

So with that in mind, here are some tips to keep metal detecting a positive and enjoyable hobby:

### **1. Get Permission Before You Hunt**

Always ask the landowner or homeowner before you hunt a site. This should really go without saying: Trespassing is illegal. If you don't get permission, you are breaking the law. Note that state and federal lands are usually off limits, as well as national monuments. Some city parks and public beaches are open to detectorists, but you need to check for possible restrictions before hunting on any particular public site.

### **2. Fill in Your Holes / Clean up After Yourself**

Every site is unique. The terrain can vary from loose sand to rocks, yards, lawns, fields, beaches, etc. Landowners are also unique. Some don't care if you dig trenches, while others have meticulously groomed lawns that they don't want disturbed. No matter where you hunt, go into the site planning to leave it looking better than when you arrived. Take your dug trash, as well as any other trash you encounter with you (whether it's yours or not). Note that there are many ways to dig an object from the ground. If it's shallow enough, you can pop it out without even digging a traditional plug. In rocky, dirt fields, you often can't dig a neat, traditional plug, so you need to adapt to the terrain the best you can.

### **3. Return Lost Items**

If you run across tools, keys, or personal objects specifically lost by the landowner, be sure to return them. Before you hunt, ask them if there is anything they might have lost that you could help them find. It's just one more way to be helpful to your neighbors, and you will likely be invited back with such behavior.

### **4. Get Rich Quick Myth**

No matter what you have heard, hobby metal detecting is not a sensible "get rich quick scheme" any more than buying a lottery ticket is a sensible retirement plan. By the time you add your gas, food, time, batteries, and other expenses, you will almost always lose money on a day's hunt, even if you find something interesting or "semi-valuable". While it is wonderful to find silver and gold, you are bound to be disappointed if you are not out there for reasons beyond financial success. Team ATC rarely sells or trades anything we find, so we are obviously in this for the love of history, adventure, and the general idea of having fun with friends. If we were in it purely for profit, it would make much more sense to go to the coin store and just buy coins as an investment.

## **Metal Detecting Ethics & Tips (continued) .**

### **. 5. Archaeological and National Historic Sites**

Archaeological dig sites should be left alone. Plain and simple. While most of us have absolutely no interest in intruding on such sites, looting national monuments, or raiding tombs, it's still worth noting. These sites have been determined to be of particular historical significance, and should be left to professional archaeologists to study. This includes our national monuments and other highly important and/or ancient sites. While extremely unlikely, there is always a chance that you could stumble onto a potentially significant or important burial site or find. If you run into anything you believe is of serious historical importance, please contact the proper authorities so they can determine how best to handle the site. Many hobbyists have made incredible finds that have contributed to our historical knowledge base. And while there are many differing opinions on what should and should not be considered off limits to hobby detectorists, ranging from nothing to everything, please respect the current laws and sites. Only detect where you have obtained permission to hunt. This will help ensure that detectorists will continue to have access to the practically infinite number of yards, fields, and other sites of lesser importance that will never become archaeological dig sites, and to potentially important sites that would never be discovered without us.

### **6. Coin Cleaning / Coin Scratching**

Any coin you believe is extremely rare or potentially valuable should be professionally cleaned, if cleaned at all. Obviously, over 99.9% of the coins we dig up are worth way less than \$20, so we are not always as careful as we could be during the excitement of a dig. If we see that we have a wheatie or a rosie, and we know it's not going to be worth a million dollars, we generally don't feel the need to treat it like the crown jewels. You, on the other hand, may treat each of your finds as delicately as you deem necessary.

### **7. Running out of Treasure**

The so-called "issue" of popularizing the hobby so much that we will begin running out of treasure to dig up is laughable. There are so many objects in the ground that none of us could ever find them all in 100 lifetimes, and they are constantly being replenished. Even as I write this sentence, someone is unknowingly dropping a coin or a gold ring onto a sandy beach. It has been written that there are more coins in the ground currently than there are in circulation. Do the math. Believe me. You are not going to run out of signals.

This is an abbreviated article originally found on nationalgeographic.com & written by "Diggers" George Wyant and Tim Saylor.



## **CLASS RING LOST FOR 50 YEARS RETURNED**

MASON CITY, Iowa – Tom and Lois had only been dating for a few months when they lost his class ring in the Great Blanket Toss of 1967. “She had laid my ring on a blanket that she was sitting on in the grass,” explains Terry Long. “When we got up to go , we picked up the blanket, and shook it out, and never did find the ring.” They both felt horrible, and went back week after week to search the grounds, but after they couldn't find anything, they did their best to put it out of their heads.

Almost 50 years later, while Mason City postal worker Tom Teeter was scouring a field with his metal detector, he found the ultimate treasure. “I thought I had found just another nickel, so I dug down to about 5 inches and what I saw just shocked me,” he says. It was Long's ring, still in pretty good shape, just waiting to be discovered.

“The next day, I decided to do a little research on the computer and found a picture of the graduating class of 1965 Meservey Thornton High School,” Teeter explains. “There was only one person with the same initials that were on the ring, TL, and so I had a name, Terry Long.” After tracking Terry down through a former employer, Tom finally delivered the good news through a phone call. The very next day, the three met up, and Teeter returned the precious find to its rightful owner.

“I feel that God has a plan in our lives,” Long says. “And the ring was lost for a reason, and that reason was to show Tom's honesty.” The Long's have been looking into restoring and repairing the ring.

# FINDS OF THE MONTH CATEGORIES

You've found our great hobby, and had fun digging something up – Now it is time for the Calgary Metal Detecting Club meeting, and you are wondering just what category your treasure fits in – The CMDC has four categories that are voted on each month for "Best Find of the Month." Each member may enter one item in each of those four categories – their own personal best "Find of the Month."

## BEST COIN

Best Coin includes any piece of metal that represented legal tender for the nation or region in which it circulated. If the coin has been incorporated into a piece of jewellery, it could go into the Treasure category instead. The coin can be made out of any metal. Any attempts to sneak in wooden nickels or Canadian Tire money will be frowned upon.

## BEST TREASURE

If it's made out of a precious metal (gold, silver, platinum) and isn't a coin, it belongs here. Gold rings, silver rings, gold bracelets, gold bars, gold dust ... you get the idea. Club members in the past have brought in gold nuggets, and Silver Victoria Jubilee teaspoons. The best way to tell is if your item is "treasure" is if it has a hallmark, but that isn't going to present in every case. Some jewellery is Artisan crafted, or was created in a country where hallmarks are not the norm.

## BEST RELIC

The CMDC considers relics as items over 25 years of age. That doesn't seem very old, but Calgary is a fairly young area. If your item is a non-precious metal, is over 25 years old, and it's not a coin or piece of jewellery, this is where it fits in. Tokens, buttons, bullets, militaria, watches, tools, antique toys, medals ... anything that is over 25 years old is welcome.

## BEST TRINKET

Any other item that you find can be entered under Best Trinket. This can include Costume jewellery, modern toys, newer tools, nifty gadgets or anything that just doesn't look old enough to be really considered a Relic. Think of such things as being "Relics-In-Training".



## 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)

c/o 6201 Penedo Way SE  
Calgary, Alberta T2A-3N2



"I think he misinterpreted the metal detector analogy in your 'seek and ye shall find' sermon!"

### YOU COULD BE A PUBLISHED AUTHOR!

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

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