

Calgary Metal Detecting Club

THE BUZZER

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This 1940 National Parks Pass Buffalo was found in June of 2004, but other dated Buffalo parks passes were recovered by members of the CMDC in recent years. 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.

2025 CMDC CLUB MEETINGS

The Calgary Metal Detecting Club holds "in-person" meetings on the first Thursday of every month. We meet up at the Horton Road Legion. The CMDC meeting will start at 7:30 and is planned to end by 9:00 pm. The Horton Road Legion is easily accessible from Deerfoot Trail, MacLeod Trail and Heritage Drive. The address for the Legion is 9202 Horton Road SW.

If there are changes and the meeting is not able to be held on the first Thursday of the month, or is to be moved to another date, the details will be published on the Facebook group page. They will also be emailed out to club members.

CMDC Club Membership Renewals

The Calgary Metal Detecting Club usually looks for membership fee renewals early in the year. You can always make a cash payment for membership in the club at the in-person meetings of the CMDC – but arrangements can be made for "E-transfer" if that is your preferred method of payment. Contact cmdcfunds@gmail.com to arrange for electronic payment options.

If you are not sure whether you are paid up, you can check with the membership director at the CMDC meeting the first Thursday of the month. You can also send an email request for your payment status to the club email. The CMDC membership director will check his records and respond to your query.

The CMDC annual membership renewal cost is:

In-town membership	\$30.00
Out-of-town member	\$25.00
Family Membership	\$45.00
Out-of-town Family	\$35.00
Senior's Membership	\$20.00

City of Calgary - Heritage Publications

If you are interested in historic Calgary communities - you might consider looking at the "Heritage Publications Walking Tours" brochures available on the city of Calgary website.

This little-known City of Calgary website section includes informative walking tours of the historic sections of Calgary's city-center and other historic communities, like Inglewood, Mission and Cliff Bungalow, Connault and the Beltline, and Parkdale. There are also historic resources outlining the neighbourhood of Mount Royal, Sandstone buildings, and early sandstone quarries around Calgary.

A review of the walking tour brochures found fascinating information about some of the earliest settlements in early Calgary. The brochures mention early homes, and businesses. Most of the homes and buildings listed in the brochures date before 1920. They also give details of where buildings are (or were, in some cases). In some of the neighbourhoods, the walking tour provides a map for building locations (by number) which might give detectorists some ideas of possible nearby hunt locations.

Picnic Grounds - Western Treasure Troves

The settlement of the Canadian Prairies brought over two million people to the West between 1882 and WWI (1914). They worked hard, establishing lives and livelihoods, experiencing a new adventure far away from their old homes and familiar landscapes.

Many of these settlers left behind extended families and social networks in their area of origin. One family out of an entire village in Germany or Scotland might have emigrated. These pioneers created new support systems in their new home. In lieu of family people developed community relationships and friendships, some as close as those left behind in the old country. In many communities the long cold days of winter were isolating, and people looked forward getting together with others during warmer seasons. Picnics were a way early Alberta pioneers congregated together.

These events were very different from today's idea of a family going out for an afternoon picnic. While researching this article I reviewed stories in community histories. It became clear early picnics were a social "get together" for the entire community. When a date or event was selected, the entire town would show up.

As one early Alberta settler stated, "In very early times (a picnic) was an all-day affair commencing about 10:30 am, with both dinner and supper served on the grounds. First there had to be a suitable place selected. Men were busy the previous day making rough lumber tables and setting up." Another pioneer recalls dressing up in their best for these events. She stated, "It didn't matter how poor you were, whether you had a dirt floor in your house, you went to the picnics in your finery." A history of the Milk River area recalls picnics where seventy families got together for an all-day event, including meals, games, races, baseball, and overnight camping in order not to miss anything.

Many Alberta community histories are available in digitized format through a website hosted by the University of Calgary. The books are searchable, and I found stories about community and club picnics dating as early as the 1880s. The digital collection also includes dozens of early Alberta newspapers, which are another great research tool. Many of the picnics were considered big news, and the local newspaper featured an article.

These stories tell the modern treasure hunter a great deal. Picnics were common occurrences in early western life and were large gatherings in almost every community. The picnics were considered grand events. They were valued by community members. Everyone showed up, with all their best garb, and some of the activities were active. Where these people gathered in their finery, playing games, dancing, holding races - there would be lost items. Those old picnic grounds could hold coins, jewellery, and other artifacts.

Historical recollections are available in the community histories or newspapers mentioned earlier. Early picnics were organized by communities, families, faith groups, clubs, businesses or schools. Almost every person in the community attended, looking forward to a day away with friends and family. There is a good chance that researching the site of a community picnic ground could lead to the recovery of coins, lost jewellery, and relics from Alberta's early history.



Glenbow Archives NA-2691-20
Community Picnic - Leo, Alberta



Glenbow Archives NC-166
Conference Picnic - Lethbridge, Alberta



Glenbow Archives PB-805-2
Church Picnic, Bowness Park, Calgary

ROMAN LANTERN DISCOVERY IN ENGLAND



The BBC News in 2009 reported that a rare Roman lantern was found in field near Sudbury, England. The lantern was found in a field near Sudbury in Suffolk. Detectorist, Danny Mills, found the lantern. It is believed to be the only intact bronze Roman lantern discovered in Britain. Mr. Mills is aware of the history of the Suffolk area. 1600 years ago, the area was dotted with plush Roman villas and country estates.

In autumn of 2009, Mills found the bronze object whilst taking part in a metal detecting "rally". He reported the discovery to Suffolk Archaeological Unit, who were amazed at the condition, calling it 'magnificent'. A Colchester and Ipswich Museums (CIM) spokeswoman said: "It turned out to be the only complete example of a Roman lantern found in Britain. "Only fragments of similar lanterns are held in the British Museum and the closest complete example is from the famous Roman site of Pompeii."

The roman lantern was found on land belonging to Mr. and Mrs. P. Miller who donated it to Ipswich Museum. CIM conservator, Emma Hogarth, declared that "It has been a pleasure to work on such a magnificent object."

Danny Mills was thrilled, stating, "It was an amazing feeling. It took a while to dig down to see anything and once we found it, we had to go really carefully around it to get it out of the ground. It took the best part of an hour. I looked it up on the internet on my phone and matched it up with some others from Pompeii."

The lantern dates from between 43 and 300 AD. It is like a modern hurricane lamp and the naked flame would have been protected by a thin sheet of horn which had been scraped and shaped until it was see-through. The horn is an organic material that did not survive as it will have rotted into the soil. The flame would have been produced by placing a wick into olive oil in a holder at the base of the lamp, similar to a modern tea light holder.

QUICK TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL HUNTING

Some sites can be extremely busy at times. Work out when your preferred sites are being used and aim for the quiet times so that you are free to swing wherever you want. For example, sports fields are often used for Saturday morning sports events or for training in the early evenings. Parks are often used more in the afternoons. Try heading out early in the morning, or right around the supper hour to hunt your preferred site when others are not around.

Cover the site from multiple angles. An experienced treasure hunter will cover the same ground many times from many angles if they believe that there may be a coin cache beneath. Different angles will give off different signals and ensure that you fill any gaps that were missed when you were trying to overlap swings.

If you find a path in the woods that appears straight (and not a game-trail), your best bet would be to check it out. Most paths are not new, and when there is evidence that a path has been there a while, you never know who might have been using it. It could date back to pre-settler days. Also, note that old trails were often made into roads. Searching near an old road or trail may be a good idea because people walked along the road years ago. They would move off to the side to rest or have a bite to eat. Keep a lookout for overgrown paths, and old wagon ruts. Sometimes an early aerial photo may show a walking path or trail. It might give you a new place to search.

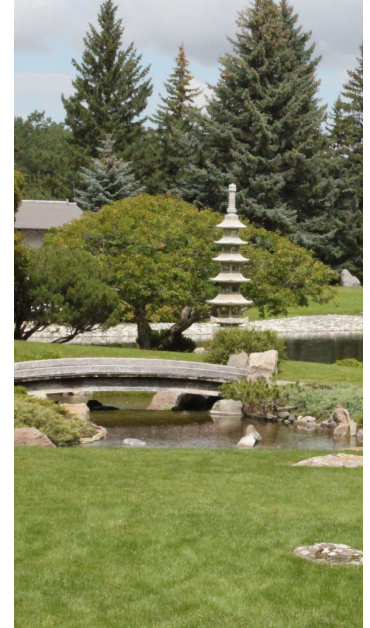
BLAST FROM THE PAST

This Buzzer Story was written by CMDC member, John Syrratt, who now lives in Nanton. It was originally published in the October 1999 issue of the Buzzer.

On one of those rare warm and sunny days in July, a customer named Elsie brought family members to view the show suite where I was working. Elsie's sister said they had just returned from the wedding of a cousin at the Japanese Gardens beside Henderson Lake Park in Lethbridge. Elsie said that her cousins wedding was great, except for one thing - the ring-bearer lost the bride's ring.

Elsie added that they had someone search for it with a metal detector, but they didn't find it. I mentioned that I visited Lethbridge often to see my son, Jay, and that I'd try to look for it the next visit. I love projects like this.

We planned to go to Lethbridge after work on the Sunday night of the long weekend in August. Earlier I had searched the internet for info on Nikka Yuko Japanese Gardens (the official name). I found some pictures of the place and a contact number. When I called I told them that I was a member of the Calgary Metal Detecting Club and informed them of what I wanted to do. They were aware of the lost ring, and were happy to let me hunt for it. Jay and I booked a tennis game with some friends for 9:00 am on Monday, August 2nd - so I arranged to be at the gates of the Japanese Gardens at 7:30 am.



It was a beautiful morning, and Jay and I were excited about the hunt and the tennis game. We met the head gardener at the gate, and he led us to the open green space behind the main building. It was a lawn about 100' by 78' running north and south from a walkway to a pond. We could see impressions in the grass made by chairs from an event held the day before, but they were not sure where the aisle for the wedding had been. We started to cover the west side of the lawn and work our way in to the middle. Further hunting brought up copper pieces from roofing work, so we tried a different area - and came up with more junk.

We thought that maybe the ring-bearer, being a kid, could have run around before the wedding started and lost it out on the edge of the walkway leading to the green space. We searched up and down the walkway on both sides to no avail. Jay suggested we give the green space one more quick search. At 8:50 am, just before we had to leave for our tennis game, one of the Garden's hostesses came over and asked what we were doing. I told her and asked how the seating for the wedding had been arranged. She pointed it out to us, and with only 5 minutes before we had to leave, we started sweeping my detector quickly down the imaginary aisle. I swept and Jay probed. About 75 feet along I got a good hit and Jay immediately jumped into action probing the sod. Two seconds later he said, "I've got it!!" There was the beautiful little white and yellow gold ring that never made it to the bride's finger. We thanked God out loud and jumped up and down. The gardener looked over the fence at us in disbelief, "Is that the ring?" After a couple of photographs with the hostess, Jay, and the ring - we headed off to our tennis game.

I contacted Elsie's cousin and asked her what the ring looked like. She described it perfectly. I told her we had found her ring, and she couldn't believe it. It was returned only two weeks after they'd lost it. What a great day!

Yo Ho Ho – Treasure?

In summer of 2009, Angie Moore of Atlanta was vacationing with her father in South Carolina. They decided to take their metal detector to the beach. Angie says she was really excited when her detector indicated something big in the sand outside their resort.

“I started digging,” Moore said. “We finally cleared the top of it off and ... it was one of those moments where you can’t believe what you’re seeing.” A foot down in the sand they saw the wooden lid of a treasure chest. Working to excavate enough to dig it up, and then the other shoe dropped.

As Moore explained, “The wooden chest had really degraded so as I attempted to lift it, part of the wood came off and we got our first glimpse of ‘gold.’”

Seconds later, Moore and her father realized they’d been had by a joke that was likely years, if not decades, in the making. “We went from, ‘OMG, it’s a treasure chest full of something gold’ to ‘Oh wow, those are toy coins.’” No one knows why the play money was hidden on the beach, but Angie Moore and her father saw the humour in it. “Best thought I can give you is that we found a treasure chest.” Moore chuckled. “If nothing else, it’s a great story.”

It’s not far-fetched to imagine finding treasure on local beaches, due to the hundreds of sunken ships off the coast. Multiple shipwreck recovering operations are ongoing off North Carolina and South Carolina, and backers have reported finding 18th-century coins and gold jewellery worth thousands of dollars.

Best of Metal Detecting with Kids

I was detecting with my toddler – she likes digging in the dirt, so I was trying to get her hooked early on the hobby. When I got a signal she was pretty excited. I dug down and found a beer bottle cap. I was disappointed, but it had a picture of a polar bear on it that my little one thought was a kitty. My daughter was pumped and ran to her mom to show her the cool kitty circle. A few minutes later I found a silver quarter and called her over. She picked it up and threw it over her shoulder, asking if I had another kitty circle for her new collection.

I had my grandson detecting with me at the beach, and kept digging pull tabs and bottle caps. Every time I dug another one up, I said “Ah, fuggit,” not realizing that the grandkid was listening to everything I said. Later I took a break in the shade, enjoying a cool drink. My grandson ran up to me with a handful of pull tabs and bottle caps yelling, “Look at all the fuggits I found, Poppi!” I’m a little more careful with my swearing when he’s detecting with me.

Michael was metal detecting with his grandfather in a wooded area behind an old farmhouse, when he got a huge signal. He started to dig it up, and realized it was bigger than he thought. It took a while, but he managed to uncover the entire ... metal detector. Using his 21 century Garrett Ace 150, Michael dug up a 1970’s era Garrett master hunter. It was never going to work again after being buried for more than a quarter century, but was still a fun find for Michael.

I got a hand-me-down detector as a kid. I found enough money to keep me in soda pop, but never anything that cool. I did end up with the strange habit of burying a bunch of my toy cars with little notes, with the hope that someone like me might find them someday.

Found Memories

This great Recovery story is from a 2002 American metal detecting club newsletter. It seems to promote some of the best parts of our hobby. It was written by Steve Livernash, of Wisconsin

"My single greatest find was a gift back in time to my grandmother Cecelia. I found it on her 80th birthday, not knowing the value at the time. We had a party for her on the Du Bay lakeshore.

This tract of land has been in our family for generations. A site full of past memories in the form of detected relics, it has produced numerous great finds such as Barber coins, Shield nickels, plus an 1863 'Navy' token, but none greater than the one I found that day.

When the picnic lunch had settled, I started off to go detecting. Grandma sat on the picnic bench, listening to the birds and watching in amazement at the new technology and what it could unearth.

A good signal sounded off about 10 feet in front of her. She watched me dig and bring to light a beautiful costume-style pearl brooch. I then brought it over for her to examine more closely. She looked at it with a bewildered gaze. I mentioned that it must have been lost by someone in the family years ago. I watched her face change from a puzzled look to tears flowing from her eyes. 'What is it grandma?' She said it belonged to her mother.

The 70-some years of being in the soil had taken its toll and changed its appearance, but she knew what it was. She remembered when she was a little girl, holding her mother's hand and looking up and seeing the same brooch shining in the sun. She then proceeded to pick it up and pin it to her pretty pink dress. It meant so much to her that she didn't even bother cleaning the dirt from it before putting it on. It was a birthday gift no amount of money could buy. Grandma is above us now, but has left behind the true meaning of family for us to carry on. The costume brooch is of no monetary value, but is truly my greatest find ever!

Young Detectorist Discovers Shipwreck

In summer of 2023 a family visit to Points Farms Provincial Park in Ontario resulted in the discovery of a long-forgotten shipwreck. Eight-year-old Lucas Atchison was looking forward to the trip, eager to use the new metal detector he received for his birthday. He was detecting the beach with his father, when he heard a strong "beep". He dug down to recover his treasure and unearthed a metal spike.

Lucas's father shrugged off the find, believing it to be something for tying off a boat. The next sound was another spike, but this time it was attached to a piece of wood. And then another. The father-son duo had stumbled across the remains of a two-century old shipwreck.

The Atchisons immediately informed the provincial parks staff, who contacted the Ontario Marine Heritage Committee. It took two years for the OHMC to obtain the permits for an archeological dig of Lucas's shipwreck, but work began early this spring. Lucas was thrilled to visit the dig in May of 2025.

In late May of 2025, the OHMC released information about the excavation of the wreck. While they not yet found definitive proof, OMHC researchers believe the ship to be a great-lakes schooner named the St. Anthony, sunk in 1856.

Detecting in the Heat of Summer

Calgary has an interesting climate. While we love the warm dry winds of the chinooks in the winter – in the summer that dryness is still around. Calgary is a lot more arid than communities in other provinces or states – and we seem to get extra dry in the late summer. If you are not careful about how you dig a target in the hotter part of summer (July and August), you can accidentally damage the sod in the park, leaving a disc of dead grass in your wake. These damaged areas are likely to create bad feelings towards detecting as a hobby. So early this summer I want to leave everybody a reminder about damage that might be caused by improper digging. It is worse some years than others. Last year was super hot, so the damage may have been more evident than in other years.



Found in a local park in July

Most of these issues are caused by lack of knowledge of the climate in Calgary, and in other areas of Alberta. It is easy to watch a video about digging a target at sea level in a humid area and not think about how different the Calgary climate is from that area. We are one of the driest areas in Canada. Think about it – leave a damp towel out overnight in Vancouver, and the next morning you have a damp towel. Summer days in Calgary you can hang a sopping wet towel up inside the house out of the sun - and have that same towel dry in an hour.

In the same way, when the root system is entirely separated from the water table, the summer heat and arid air can sap the moisture away from the root system, and the grass will die. This is evident in the posted picture of a plug discovered detecting a local park after somebody had already been there. I know we all hate to see dead-grass discs in parks.

Wayne May posted several pictures he took last week on the Calgary and Area Facebook page, which showed just how dry the area was. He found an area near his neighbourhood where somebody went out detecting, leaving badly filled holes, and in some places. In some areas, the holes were left unfilled and the plug meters away. He repaired over twenty badly dug plugs, many of which already had dead grass and dried out areas.

In the summer season you will start to hear other detectorists make comments about “needing to learn how to dig a hinged (or horseshoe) plug.” The hinged plug will not dry out the same way a circular plug will. There are a lot of you-tube videos showing people digging circular plugs, but most of those people live in areas that are not as “dry” as Calgary. If you want to learn how to dig a hinged plug, there was an article in last month’s “Buzzer” – but CMDC member Clayton Blancher also made an instructional video that he placed on the Facebook group site that was very well done.

When it is really hot, you are best to avoid parks where the grass is mowed regularly (short) and stick to less developed parks. It is easy to find a park where the grass isn’t mowed at all, or areas that are well shaded by tall trees (which helps). Natural prairie areas are another option, but they are harder to swing the coil through. We find park areas with longer grass hold the moisture better. That may help, but remember - although longer grass holds the moisture better, it also is more likely to have swarms of mosquitos waiting for dinner.

Remember to take care of yourself the same way we want you to care for the park areas. In the heat of summer make sure that you are carrying water, and stay hydrated. Bring a cellphone in case of emergencies, and in isolated hunt-areas – inform someone where you plan to detect. Remember to bring bug spray. Summer is one of the best times for metal detecting, especially as the long summer evenings allowing us to keep detecting late at night. Hoping you all find “Cool Finds” on those hotter days and longer nights.

Swing Low – Swing Slow

Many new detectorists are cautioned by more experienced dirt fishers to "go low and slow". This is excellent advice but what exactly does it mean?

Going low is just that - the lower you get to the soil, the further into the ground your signal will penetrate. If you are leaving two inches of air between your coil and the ground, you have just lost 2 inches of downward signal penetration into the soil. If you keep your coil barely above the ground, you will hit deeper targets – and might not miss that deep silver signal.

The "going slow" part is a little more complex. The electromagnetic current generated through your coil is conducted through the ground by way of water and air molecules. When the current hits a metallic target, it bounces back and returns to be "caught" by the coil, and the information is relayed to your detector display. The signal from a concentric (round) or elliptical (oval) coil goes into the ground as an inverted ice cream cone, narrowest at the bottom. When you swing, the signals follow this cone into the soil, narrowing down the further down the signal goes.

If you swing too fast, the signal has no time to flow all the way down the "coil cone" via the molecules, hit a target, and return. That word "return" is the most important part. If you swing too fast, your coil will travel past the returning signal, and will not receive the signal. Once again, you will miss those deep targets because by the time the "beep" gets back, the coil isn't there to catch it. When you are swinging too fast the only beeps you will hear are shallower targets where the signal can get back in time.


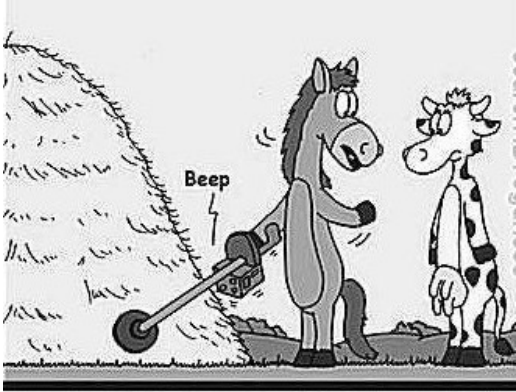

So, if you want those deeper targets, let your detector do the work it was designed for, and keep Low and go Slow!



LOCATION AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

CMDC meetings will be held at the Horton Road Legion and are scheduled for the first Thursday of every month. The meeting dates will be published on the CMDC.org website calendar, on the CMDC Facebook group page. We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming meeting.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

<p>GPS Central & RadioWorld Central</p> <p>Metal Detectors, GPS Units, Radios, and other electrical equipment & tools. Visit them on the web at gpscentral.ca, or the store at:</p> <p>#8, 711 - 48 Avenue SE Calgary AB Canada T2G 4X2 403-239-1400</p>	<p>The CMDC annual membership renewal cost is:</p> <table><tr><td>In-town membership</td><td>\$30.00</td></tr><tr><td>Out-of-town member</td><td>\$25.00</td></tr><tr><td>Family Membership</td><td>\$45.00</td></tr><tr><td>Out-of-town Family</td><td>\$35.00</td></tr><tr><td>Senior's Membership</td><td>\$20.00</td></tr></table> <p>Contact the Calgary Metal Detecting Club (CMDC) By email at cmdclub@gmail.com</p>	In-town membership	\$30.00	Out-of-town member	\$25.00	Family Membership	\$45.00	Out-of-town Family	\$35.00	Senior's Membership	\$20.00
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