

## Landowners, Occupiers and Searchers for Archaeological Finds in the Isle of Wight

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years archaeology has been popularised through the medium of television and as a result more people are visiting the countryside to search for archaeological finds.

The majority of searchers are metal detectorists, most of whom belong to clubs that are affiliated to the National Council for Metal Detecting or the Federation of Independent Detectorists. Each of these organisations has a Code of Practice by which their members operate. The Council for British Archaeology has a fact sheet which provides advice for users of metal detectors, available online at [www.britarch.ac.uk](http://www.britarch.ac.uk).

Some detectorists are not in clubs. However, most metal detectorists on the Island are well informed regarding codes of practice and their ethical and legal responsibilities.

There are two clubs on the Island, 'Vectis Searchers Metal Detecting Club' and the 'Isle of Wight Metal Detecting Club'.

### SEARCHING AND THE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME

Searchers need permission from the landowner/occupier to go on private land. All finds belong, in law, to the landowner and it is normal practice by metal detectorists following a search or rally to show the landowner/occupier what has been found. It is recommended that landowners/occupiers have a written agreement with searchers setting out who will have possession of any finds prior to a search taking place.

The County Archaeologist recommends that all finds made by metal detectorists and other searchers should also be shown to Frank Basford, Finds Liaison Officer of the Portable Antiquities Scheme at the Island's Archaeological Centre. The Portable Antiquities Scheme is a national scheme for the voluntary recording of archaeological objects found by members of the public. Between 1997, when the scheme started, and the end of 2003 about 85, 000 finds were recorded nationwide.

Finds brought into the Archaeological Centre by detectorists and others are normally left with the Finds Liaison Officer whilst they are identified and recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database. Only finds pre-dating 1700 are normally recorded. However, some later finds of local interest may also be recorded. All finds are returned to the finder(s) within two weeks at which time they are provided with a report for each object. Finders are credited with their discoveries but the locations of find-spots are always treated in confidence.



*Lead Papal Seal of Pope Gregory X 1271-76  
Found in Shalfleet Parish*

## THE TREASURE ACT 1996

Although the Portable Antiquities Scheme is voluntary, the Treasure Act 1996 states that finders **must** report individual objects (other than coins) which are more than 300 years old and which by weight are over 10% of gold or silver. Two or more of gold or silver coins, or ten or more base-metal coins found together and over 300 years old, also qualify as 'Treasure' under the Act, as do finds of two or more Prehistoric (Iron Age or earlier) base-metal objects found together. Objects found in association, for example a ceramic pot which contains a coin hoard, also qualify as Treasure.

The Treasure Act also states that a national or local museum may acquire items of Treasure for their collections. In this case the Coroner will hold an inquest to determine whether the item is Treasure. Later a current market valuation will be made by an independent committee of experts. Once the acquiring museum has paid for the find the payment is converted to an ex gratia reward and it is usually shared equally between the finder and landowner. The reward will be the full market value of the object.

If a museum does not wish to acquire a Treasure find it will be 'disclaimed' and handed back to the finder. However, the landowner and occupier (if different) will be informed of this decision and will have 28 days to give notice of any objection.

It is recommended that landowners/occupiers have a written agreement with searchers on their land setting out how a reward would be apportioned in the event that Treasure is discovered.

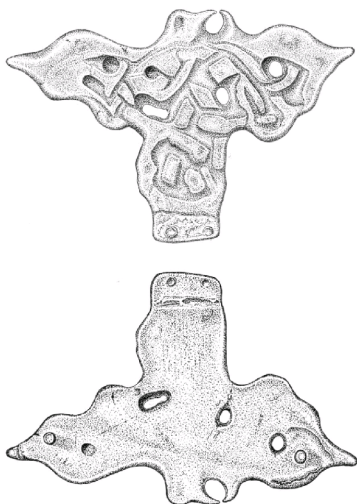
## SCHEDULED ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS AND SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

It is illegal to use a metal detector within these protected areas without permission from English Heritage and English Nature.

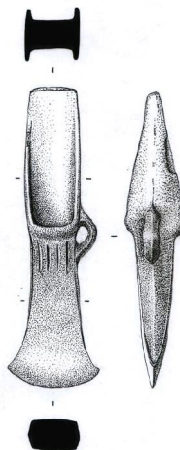
## COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEMES

In order to metal-detect on 'agreement land' metal detectorists will need the permission of the landowner/occupier and a licence from DEFRA.

Detecting is permissible on the remaining 'non-agreement land' within the scheme. However, the landowner/occupier must ensure that known archaeological sites are avoided by metal detectorists. Landowners/occupiers can find out about any known archaeological sites or finds on their land by contacting Rebecca Loader, the County Sites and Monuments Records Officer.



*Copper Alloy Harness Fitting of the late 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> Century AD  
Found near Newport*



*Bronze Axe of the Middle Bronze Age,  
1500BC – 1200BC  
Found in Bembridge Parish*

## OTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained by contacting one of the Archaeology Officers listed below:

Frank Basford, Finds Liaison Officer  
Ruth Waller, County Archaeologist  
Rebecca Loader, Sites and Monuments Officer

County Archaeology and Historic Environment  
Service  
61 Clatterford Road  
Carisbrooke  
NEWPORT  
Isle of Wight  
PO30 1NZ



01983 823810

[www.iwight.com/living\\_here/planning](http://www.iwight.com/living_here/planning)

The Portable Antiquities website can be visited at [www.find.org.uk](http://www.find.org.uk) where a full text of the Treasure Act 1996 and the Treasure Act Code of Practice can be viewed and downloaded.

## ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

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PLANNING SERVICES