



UKDFD

BORROWED *times*

United Kingdom Detector Finds Database Newsletter - Issue Number 1 - January 2007

SEARCHING for a SOLUTION



The exciting news is that the UKDFD has forged an alliance with *The Searcher* magazine to feature some of the more interesting finds from the database.

John Winter (that's me - your editor!) will be writing a regular column and I have already contacted several members asking for permission to use their artefacts. Indeed, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all those who replied in a positive way by providing additional details on the items for me to showcase in this exciting new venture.

Because of restrictions on space in the magazine, I cannot guarantee that all of my copy will be used. We will just have to wait and see - some items may be carried over to the next month.

The first column should appear in the April edition of *The Searcher*, available in the first week of March 2007. Seems a long time, doesn't it? Can't wait!

The method of choosing items for inclusion in the first article was not very scientific. I simply took a look in the database, selecting those that were both interesting and accompanied by a decent picture.

Good quality images are so important for database records, especially if you intend to publish and I didn't want to spend time having to commission better photographs. Submitting decent pictures is one of the ways in which recorders can help UKDFD and will remain as part of my selection criteria.

The zoomorphic terminal shown in the picture - number 4199 on the database - was recorded by Paul Linford, perhaps better known as Steptoe's Dad. It also won the UKDN *Find of the Month* competition.

This fascinating object has caused much speculation being described as; *a thing of beauty*; *a Celtic mount*; *a firedog finial* and even *a decorative handle*.

Clearly, apart from being a zoomorphic terminal, no one knows exactly what its function was.

Yes, an intriguing artefact and worthy of further research. See a fuller report in the first *Searcher* article available in March.

The regular column will be called *UKDFD . . . just for the record*, a rather snappy, meaningful and clever title dreamed up by the man-with-the-hat, Mr Gary Brun. So you can blame him! *Editor*

Help Make My Job Easier!

Rod Blunt, one of UKDFD's greatest assets, works tirelessly identifying finds, giving advice and generally helping the forum run smoothly and efficiently.

Unfortunately he is spending a lot of his time these days sorting out pictures of finds, in an attempt at making them suitable for publication on the database - time that could be spent more productively.

GENERAL

Please make his job easier by reading all the guidelines and image-making tips on our website. One way you can help, especially if you have any doubts about the eligibility of a find or the quality of an image, is by posting it on the forum first. The advice given will indicate whether it is suitable for uploading to be recorded . . . or not as the case might be.

IMAGES

There is a vast range of image sizes being uploaded to the database - from less than 10KB to several megabytes. **Neither of these extremes are acceptable.** Typically the JPEG file size should be between 50 and 100KB.

Do make sure that images are in focus and the right way up and upload the obverse (head) side of a coin as the first image and the reverse as the second image - by convention the obverse is shown on the left.

Avoid harsh shadows and fill the frame with the image. Superfluous background makes browsing by thumbnails impossible.

Rod reminds you to upload enough images for a complete interpretation of your find . . . the more the better.

Something a lot of posters do is to include a contemporary coin as a size indicator. Please do not do this for they may

not be familiar in a 100 years time.

Don't include time or date stamps on your images and if you use Blu-Tack make sure that it is out of shot.

Please take care to use a suitable background. Avoid hands, prominent colours and harsh patterns.

WRITTEN DATA

Please measure items accurately and don't guess sizes. The difference in size between a medieval penny and halfpenny is typically about 3mm, and their designs may be very similar.

Give full size information, not just length, for example.

Take a look at similar records when uploading and use them as a guide for completing the fields on your own.

Note that records will not be acceptable without a valid entry in the hidden 'Parish' field.

Just Messing About in the River



Gordon Heritage

Debonair aquanaut, hoard hunter and accomplished detectorist Gordon Heritage was all agog to find that one of his finds had been selected to feature in the first *Searcher* article.

No he wasn't. I just made that up. He was just pleased to help a struggling hack with a deadline.

For one of his most interesting and recent river finds you will have buy, steal or just flick surreptitiously through a copy of *The Searcher* in your local branch of WHSmiths.

Those of you who are curious and can't wait, can get a preview by checking out record number 3839 on the UKDFD.

BENEFITS of recording with the UKDFD

Isn't it great in the Summer when the weather is fine, the crops have been harvested and there is detecting land aplenty? Being out in the sun all day you may have been rewarded with little in the way of finds . . . but you are rewarded with a Ronseal dark oak satin-finish neck tan. Can't be all bad, eh?

Soon those balmy Summer days are over and the detecting land is no longer available. What can you do to allay those withdrawal symptoms? Recording those better bits and pieces is an idea, good practice and adds a new dimension to your hobby - so let's take look at the benefits.

Benefits to the Detectorist

Recording can be done in those dark Winter months when the weather is unsuitable for detecting or when land is unavailable and provides a means of obtaining a quick and independent identification of your finds.

The advantage for many is that it can all be accomplished by sitting in front of your computer, thus eliminating the need to travel or part with finds in order to obtain an identification.

You have an opportunity to learn about your finds and the related history as well as interaction with other hobbyists. And there is a great deal of satisfaction knowing that you have participated in the identification process.

Did you know that a personal gallery is created in your name as soon as you start recording? You also have the facility to print and retain hard-copy records of your finds. I make it my business to print out the details of all my records and present them to the landowner. Details, with picture, look very attractive on the A4 page. (*see opposite*)

Benefits to the Hobby

By recording, you personally show that the hobby is making a positive contribution to knowledge and our understanding of the past. You also demonstrate that you are interested in and recognise the historical significance of your finds, so helping to counter anti-hobby propaganda.

Being a hobby-led initiative, UKDFD addresses the needs and concerns of all detectorists.

Benefits to the Public

UKDFD is accessible to all and provides a free search facility for academics and the general public. The information contained within the database is also being preserved for future generations.

So, that is the benefit of recording your finds on the UKDFD.



Certificate Style Hard Copy

As part of the UKDFD policy of continual improvement, we are pleased to announce that there is now a dedicated facility that enables users to print individual records in a 'Certificate Style' hard copy format.

The aim has been to produce an attractive layout, which, in almost all cases, will fit on to a single A4 page. The printed record will show all the related images, and the user will be able to choose one of them for display at an enlarged size.

We believe this facility will be of particular interest to our recorders, who may wish to keep a separate offline record of all their finds.

In order to use the facility, simply click 'Print View' on the blue bar below the header block and choose 'Print' from the browser 'File' menu.

— Gordon Heritage

COMPETITION



This rather blurred photograph shows one of the UKDFD team making friends with a sheep - or is it a nanny goat? Okay, it was taken a few years ago, but can you guess who it is? There are no prizes in this competition, just accolades in the next newsletter for being such a good detective. Contact the editor with your answer!

You may or may not be aware, but detecting fora are being inundated on a daily basis with new registrations.

Unfortunately, a lot of these new 'members' are not legitimate and are advertising - in the main - porn and pill sites.



UKDFD SECURITY

UKDFD is fortunate in having a couple of experienced technical bods slaving away in the engine room who have stopped most of these unwelcome guests.

The database has been built with the detectorist in mind and we assure you that your records are safe. Not only are the records and validations of the highest quality, but they are backed up every day and 'hard copies' are also taken on various Admin computers.

Some of the improvements are 'invisible.' For example, the structure of the database has been simplified and now categorises more and more classes of artefact, so that people know exactly where to look to find the information they seek. The simple interface that the user sees when entering the UKDFD database has just two sections (Coins & Artefacts), which are

split into 9 and 7 categories, respectively.

Because it is so simple to browse, users may be unaware that there are nearly 200 classes of find that are separately categorised at lower levels, but every record on the database can be displayed on the screen within 3 mouse-clicks. This structure is being continually developed as the number and variety of finds recorded increases.

We have recently started adding reference information to our website, and to date have sections on Thimbles, Galley Halfpence and Button makers' backmarks.

The last of these is probably the most comprehensive listing of British marks on the Internet, and we want to develop this even further. If you have any buttons with makers' backmarks that are not included in the list, we would be very pleased if you would post images on the forum. Rod is adding info to the master list on an ongoing basis, and we will periodically upload the updated record to our website.

We will be adding other reference information to our website during the New Year. — continued on page 3

Gordon is also working on a conversion of Rod's CoinSearcher utility for our members' use. Some of you may have seen this mentioned on UKDN, when Rod has conceded that his speedy ID of a coin was very much assisted by this little utility.

As detectorists, the coins we find are not always in the best state of preservation, but if you can see just a few letters of the legend, this will probably enable you to identify the coin, and even the mint and moneyer in some cases.

CoinSearcher comes with databases for Roman coin obverse legends, and short and long cross reverse legends at the present time

UKDFD is proud of what they have achieved in such a short time and the message is clear - we are here to stay!



The UKDFD continues to grow. The basic figures shown here were extracted from the database on the 14th December 2006.

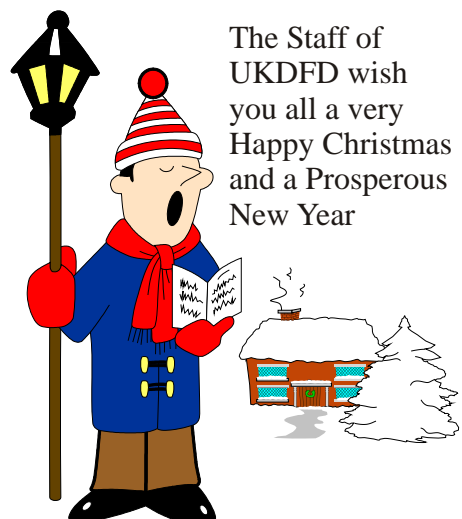
Registered users 519
Number of records 4,769
Disk space used by the data directory 1,592.64 Mb
Total views 932,306



The number of database views is approaching 1 million - 932,306!

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are very pleased to announce that John Mills (john gm) and Rob (Bob Hoe) have recently joined the UKDFD Team as Finds Advisors.



The Staff of UKDFD wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year



Many detectorists have kindly made details of their finds available for everyone to share and enjoy through the UKDFD website.

Copyrights to all of the material on this website are retained by the individual rights holders. They have allowed use of their information on condition that it is used only for personal or educational, non-commercial use, as stated in the Terms and Conditions:

We urge all site users to respect copyright so that the goodwill of our contributors is not compromised.

Please note that when uploading images and descriptions of your finds, you must not infringe the copyrights of other parties. If your finds photos were taken by the PAS, for example, they own the copyright to them, not you. We specifically cover this point in our terms and conditions as follows:

3.3. You warrant that you are not infringing the copyrights of any third party in respect of the images or other data that you upload to the UKDFD website.

It is most important that everyone complies with this requirement.

The Identification and Validation Process

Identification and validation follow the uploading of a record and full details of the recording process are covered on the UKDFD website.

1. When a recorder uploads details of a find, the record goes into a non-public area of the database. This area, like the public database, is split into two sections: **Coins** and **Artefacts**.

2. Although the area isn't public, it can be viewed by recorders, so that the status/progress of their own record(s) can be monitored, and all members can play a part in identifying those items that defeat the efforts of the ID Team. We welcome everyone's participation.

3. The ID Team consists of Finds Advisers and Validators. Both are equally involved in the identification process, but to ensure a degree of consistency, and for security reasons, the database records can only be edited by validators.

4. The first stage of the process is to check the uploaded information, both images and text. If the find is ineligible for any reason, or the images do not meet quality requirements, or information seems

incorrect (wrong size, wrong material, etc.), the recorder is sent an appropriate email message. This may request new images/further information etc., or may advise the recorder that the record is not eligible for the database. A copy of the email is also pasted on to the record itself, and the record is highlighted on the database in yellow. On receipt of requested information, the record is updated and the highlighting is removed. Ineligible records are retained for a few days, or until the recorder acknowledges receipt of the email. (If recorders fail to respond to requests, the record concerned may be deleted.)

5. The ID team discusses the identification of finds and shares the results of members' research in a dedicated non-public area of the forum. Research is carried out using both the Internet and published works of reference.

6. When the identification of an item has been determined, one of the validators will annotate the record with 'Pending [name]' in the 'Validated by' field. This is to ensure that everyone is aware that the validation process is in hand, and to prevent two or more people editing the record at the same time. It is also an indication to recorders that validation of their record is in hand.

7. The validator edits the record as required, and on completion, moves it from the non-public holding area to the appropriate category of the public database. The structure of the database is hierarchical, and there are large numbers of individual categories and sub-categories under each of the two main sections, **Coins** and **Artefacts**.

8. When the record is transferred to the public database, the recorder receives an automatically generated email advising that the record has been moved, and providing a link to it.

9. Currently the overall 'success rate' for identifying finds is about 96%, with virtually all coins having been identified, and about 200 artefacts outstanding.

10. Records may be updated at any time in the light of new information. If the update is a significant change to the original identification, the recorder is advised by email. Minor changes are made on a fairly frequent basis, and recorders should check their records from time to time. (If recorders are aware of errors, even minor ones like spelling mistakes, we would like them to let us know.)

**THANK YOU
FOR RECORDING
WITH UKDFD**