



the

searcher

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EXCLUSIVES

EARLY MEDIEVAL PRESSBLECH

THE WATTON HOARD

ANGLO SAXON GOLD RING

CONSTANTINE
THE GREAT

MARK
H

RALLY REPORT:
SPRING DETECTIVAL

PRODUCT REVIEW:
NEW EASY SWING HARNESS



HOARDS JUST

METAL DETECTIVES GROUP

MARK BECHER

Fortunately for us, the day turned out to be a pretty nice day. Dry and almost spring-like which helped, as we were perched on the side of a hill overlooking a beautiful Buckinghamshire valley.

The dig kicked off at 9.30am after the usual dig briefing with me swearing at everyone to fill their holes, remove their unwanted finds and to show us their discoveries for photographing before leaving the site. To be honest I'm sure I must be speaking in another language or complete gibberish most of the time as the usual, badly filled holes, rubbish left on the surface (or reburied) and people leaving the site without getting finds recorded or photographed happened yet again!

On Sunday 12 March we had arranged for the Metal Detectives Group (MDG) members to visit two new fields we'd not detected before. The fields were in close proximity to other fields we'd previously searched which had produced some brilliant finds including a good number of Anglo Saxon pennies, sceats, brooches, strap ends etc as well as lots of Roman and Medieval finds also being unearthed. So, as you can imagine, we had high hopes for more Anglo Saxon finds and other great discoveries.

Funnily enough, I also warned the members that day that I had a strong feeling about the dig and made a point of saying that if anyone found a hoard, to call me right away ... and after a few hours my phone rang with Steve's son George on the other end, informing me that his dad was very probably on to a hoard. So I jumped in the truck and headed off to the field in question. Sure enough, as I arrived Steve was just unearthing his seventh or eighth Roman bronze coin from a very small area. It's fortunate that we've a fair few wise and knowledgeable members in the group, including Eddie who helped take control of the area before I got there.

The slow search, for what we would be a pot of Roman coins had already begun. However, after several hours searching the small area, we'd failed to find a pot but we did manage to uncover around 120 Roman, bronze coins scattered in an area of around 1m². As the daylight was fading and the dig was drawing to a close, we decided we had to stop searching, which was a bit disheartening as there were still many signals coming from in and around the area. So, it was decided after talking with the landowner, that we would return the following Sunday to continue the search for any main concentration of coins.

During the week I spoke with the landowner and the wonderful archaeologist Anni Byard to see if she would be able to attend. We were all very aware, from the amount of signals still coming from the area, that we were pretty sure that somewhere there could be the 'mother lode'.

KEEP COMING!



HAD WE LOCATED THE POT?

Sunday came around quickly and Steve Waterall (the finder) came along early, so we could get out to the hoard site and get the search underway. Anni Byard arrived a short while later and I delivered her, along with her equipment, out to the site. Again, lucky for us, the weather was again spring like with another pretty nice day for us to continue our efforts.

The search began next to the original find spot and straightaway started to uncover an area of approximately 2m². This time, the signals seemed deeper and fainter than many of the signals from the previous week. It took us a little longer excavating the area, layer by layer, and under the watchful eye of Anni Byard we worked our way down, taking it in turns using small trowels and pinpointers to locate loose scattered coins. After several hours and many scattered coins, the pointers started going crazy ... had we finally found the pot? As we worked even more slowly towards the target, the pointer was going absolutely bonkers, and now, in more than one area. Was there more than one hoard?

A few small pieces of Roman pottery revealed themselves along the way which led us to speculate what we could have discovered. Trying to work out how the coins became so scattered, with no obvious signs of previous ploughing or major disturbance in the soil's stratification. Additionally, how the coins depth had varied so greatly from 3-4" to around 2' deep. It was at this depth it became apparent that there were two-three separate deposits with no obvious containers or pots. One concentration had 68 coins and the other 100 coins, with many scattered between the two deposits. Speculation was now running into overdrive ... could it be multiple hoards, an occupation site, a shrine or a temple?

As the hours ticked by and the dig began to draw to a close the decision was again made to back fill, secure the site and arrange to organise a proper archaeological excavation of the area, as there were still signals in and around the area.

