Further advice for finders

Finds, such as hoards, may be sensitive to disturbance as not only are they likely to be fragile, their situation may contain valuable archaeological information that could easily be lost.

In this event:
- leave the object or coins in the ground (use protective covering if necessary),
- take note of its position with a GPS unit or mark it on a map
- contact either your Local Authority Archaeologist or the Treasure Trove Unit immediately.

Do not clean finds or attempt to apply any substances such as wax or lacquer as this will damage the artefact resulting in a loss of valuable information.

Many archaeological sites are protected under Section 42 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979 and it is a criminal offence to damage, disturb or use a metal detector on such areas. If in doubt seek advice from Historic Scotland or see their leaflet Metal Detecting: Yes or No? www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/metal_detecting.pdf

Treasure Trove and the Law

Treasure Trove is based on the principles of the Scots common law bona vacantia (ownerless goods). All treasure trove, which comprises any portable antiquity regardless of its age or material, are the property of the Crown.

The Queen’s and Lord Treasurer’s Remembrancer is the Crown’s representative in Scotland for such property and is supported by the Treasure Trove Unit in the exercise of their functions in relation to treasure trove.

Useful Links

Historic Scotland: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk
National Museums Scotland: www.nms.ac.uk
Queen’s and Lord’s Treasurer’s Remembrancer (QTLR): http://qltr.gov.uk/
RCAHMS: www.rcahms.gov.uk

Contact Details

Treasure Trove Unit
c/o National Museums Scotland
Chambers Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1JF

Tel: 0131 247 4082/4355
Email: info@treasuretroverscotland.co.uk
Website: www.treasuretroverscotland.co.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/TreasureTroveScotland

‘Protecting our archaeological heritage for the nation’
What is Treasure Trove?
The role of Treasure Trove is to ensure that objects of cultural significance from Scotland’s past are protected for the benefit of the nation and preserved in museums across the country.

Our ability to protect and preserve significant objects is supported by Scottish law. In Scotland any ownerless objects found by chance or through activities such as metal-detecting, field-walking, or archaeological excavation become the property of the Crown and therefore may be claimed as Treasure Trove.

With the exception of modern objects such as Victorian coins and machinery fragments any object considered to be significant, regardless of its age or material, may be claimed as treasure trove by the Crown.

If an object or group of objects are claimed as Treasure Trove the finder will be offered an ex gratia award. The object is then allocated to a museum, preferably a local museum, in Scotland to be made accessible for public display and research.

What happens if I find an object?
If an object or group of objects are discovered, finders should try to:

♦ Record as accurately as possible the find-spot i.e. where the object(s) was found
♦ Reduce as much as possible any potential damage to the object(s) (see Further Advice for Finders)

The find should then be reported to the Treasure Trove Unit as quickly as possible. Reporting forms may be downloaded online from our website, or posted on request. Any images of the object and its find-spot are helpful and may be included along with your form.

The object(s) can then be handed in to the Treasure Trove Unit, based within the National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh.

Alternatively, objects and coins may also be deposited with your local museum or Local Authority Archaeologist.

What happens after I report a find?
Research is carried out by staff within the Unit to establish the significance of the object and whether it is suitable to be claimed as Treasure Trove.

If a find is claimed the finder is informed by the Queen’s and Lord Treasurer’s Remembrancer (QLTR) of the Crown’s intention to do so. Interested museums are offered the opportunity to acquire the object.

The Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel, an independent body of heritage experts, are then responsible for advising the QLTR on which museum is to be allocated the object and the level of the ex gratia award.

Finds not claimed as Treasure Trove are returned to the finder with a certificate in which the Crown formally disclaims title.

What should I not report?
It is important to report all finds to the Treasure Trove Unit, however we would not expect to see objects such as Victorian & modern coins, glass and ceramic fragments.

Object finds such as fossils are not covered by Treasure Trove.

If you are unsure do not hesitate to contact the unit for advice, as even the most unpromising looking objects, such as the lead toy soldiers (right), can contribute to our understanding of Scotland’s Past.