



Pigeon Rings!



Most seasoned detectorists at one time or another will have unearthed a colourful, numbered band and wondered what on earth it is. Well, chances are it's an identity ring from a racing pigeon. All racing pigeons carry a hard plastic ring on their leg which identifies its owner. The first few letters on the ring indicates the issuing organisation (see table), the next two numbers will identify its year of birth, the remaining letter and numbers will identify its registered owner. Pigeon rings are surprisingly

collectable with some detectorists and with other collectors who buy/trade historic ones online. So if you come across one when you're out there, keep hold of it—it may be worth a few bob to someone who collects. Or why not start your own collection?!

SU	Scottish Homing Union
GB	Royal Racing Pigeon Association
IHU	Irish Homing Union
WHU	Welsh Homing Pigeon Union
NEHU	North of England Homing Union
NWHU	North West Homing Union



NIGHTHAWKING! NOTES FOR FARMERS & LANDOWNERS

What is Nighthawking?

Nighthawking is a term used in the United Kingdom to describe illegal metal detecting on farmland, archaeological sites and other areas of archaeological interest, usually in order to steal coins and other artefacts for their historical and financial value. Nighthawking refers to the fact that such illegal activity is often undertaken at night to avoid detection and arrest. Although this is deceiving as it also occurs during the day. It can occur anywhere in the country, but counties such as Wiltshire are particularly vulnerable due to the rich heritage and large amounts of arable land that exist in the county.

How do Nighthawkers operate?

Nighthawkers will enter land with metal detectors and



without permission from the farmer or other landowner. Consequently, all finds removed by them while trespassing may amount to an offence of theft. The coins and artefacts that they recover are kept in private collections or sold for personal profit. Because they are stolen property, the finders are unlikely to report their finds and valuable historical data is lost for good.

What is the impact of Nighthawking?

Where nighthawkers operate on farmland they often cause damage to crops and seedlings, gates are left open or damaged and livestock is disturbed. Where nighthawking occurs on protected archaeological sites known as Scheduled Monuments, they may commit additional offences contained within the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 namely – damage and using metal detecting equipment without a licence from Historic England. Nighthawkers have a complete disregard for the law and experts warn that we are losing the priceless heritage of our nation, simply to satisfy the greed of a minority group of criminals.



.....continued overleaf

The Legislation

Removal of any object from land without the landowner's permission may amount to an offence of theft. Travelling to a potential site with metal detecting equipment may amount to an offence of going equipped to steal. It is also an offence to damage a protected archaeological site, known as a Scheduled Monument, or to use metal detecting equipment on a Scheduled Monument without a licence from Historic England or failing to report objects that are potential Treasure.

Are all detectorists the same?

Certainly not. The overwhelming majority of detectorists adhere to The Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting and report their finds to the landowner and the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). They have a love of the outdoors and history and respect farmland. Many previously unknown archaeological sites have been identified through the PAS and it has contributed greatly to our knowledge of the past. Nighthawkers seriously damage the good reputation of responsible metal detectorists. Responsible detectorists are often members of local clubs and the National Council for Metal Detecting and assist police in combating the offences by Nighthawkers and other rural crime.

What should you do if you find Night Hawks on your land?

Whether day or night, if you find Nighthawkers on your land call the Police on 999, as there is a crime in progress. Do not approach them as this would scare them off or they may become aggressive towards you. Gather information by taking registration numbers of vehicles and descriptions of those involved and pass these details to the Police immediately.

What if I find evidence of Night Hawking?

Evidence of recent Nighthawking is usually discovered during day light hours and is often in the form of holes dug in fields with no obvious explanation. Other types of evidence that may be found are • Footwear marks • Vehicle tyre marks • Cigarette butts • Drinks bottles/cans • other discarded items. Call the police on 101 and notify them of the incident. If evidence is left behind advise them of that and ask how they would like you to preserve the evidence.



EVENT REMINDER

Weymouth & Portland Metal Detecting Club are holding a charity 2-day detecting event with an invitation kindly extended to the CDMDC. It will take place on 31st August and 1st September near Urchfont, Wiltshire.



Club Contact Details

Chairman	Terry Kearton	01249 657290
Treasurer	Peter Amer	07771 976081
Secretary/Media	Richie Bennett	07565 453369

Website: <https://www.chippenhamanddistrictmdc.co.uk>
Email: cdmdc12@gmail.com

Finds of the Month



Henry VII Half Groat



Hammered Tudor
Hoard of Four Coins



Medieval Key

This month saw a good selection of finds including an excellent quality hammered Half Groat of Henry VII found by Bev. This particular example was minted under Archbishop Savage at his York Mint in the early 16th century. More hammered coins came in the form of a small hoard of Tudor sixpences from the reign of Elizabeth I from the late 16th century. These were found by Mark. Jon rescued from the ground a beautiful, unusual medieval key. One wonders what it opened back in the day!