

# HORNTON HISTORY GROUP

## An Exercise in Metal Detecting.

Presented by Peter G. Spackman and assisted by Stuart Robbins.

Hornton Grounds Farm. 20<sup>th</sup>. November 2021

By kind permission of Catherine and Graham Vint.

Feedback on the main finds including cleaning, identification, and observations.

An orchard of mixed fruit was allocated as the first area to be searched and after a demonstration in the art of digging a hole, appropriate to the art of Metal Detecting, which involved removing a 'plug' of earth rather than the traditional gardeners 'spade full'. The purpose of this was to remove the artefact from said plug and replace plug neatly grass side up and firm in leaving the ground as found. This was shortly followed by the two resident canines feverously copying the process by digging multiple holes much to the amusement of those present.

The orchard appears to have been the chosen spot to dump all manner of unrequired bits of metal including parts of: metal fencing, tractor footplates, nails, brackets and a very interesting tree identification plaque (fig. 1) which was the highlight of The Orchard.



Fig. 1. The broken Pear Tree plaque.



Fig. 2. No not a fig, but a pear.

The pear is identified as a Marie Louise variety (*Pyrus Communis*) a brownish-green dessert pear, but the topic of conversation soon turned to identifying which tree the object had fallen from as it was found under 5cms of soil below an apple tree. It did not take long as modern technology soon came up trumps as Catherine identified a picture of the pear on a mobile device only to disappear and reappear almost immediately clutching a pear picked last month and proclaiming, an identical match and pinpointing the tree from which it came (about 10mtrs. from the find spot).

The Orchard was obviously infested with metal and I believe that if everything that produced a signal was 'dug' we would be talking hundredweights and it was somewhat a relief that it was suggested we move onto the next area; the Avenue of Trees.

The group divided into two and started at the centre point of the 2mtr. wide straight woodland path and some interesting finds beginning with our first coin of the day which was a very worn Victorian half-penny with a faint outline of a young Queen displaying a 'bun head' but so worn the reverse was void of any detail meaning no date was visible so 1837-1885 is as near as we can get. I've seen more detail on an old 'shove-halfpenny'. Next to come forth were a scattering of .303 cartridges so an indication of military activity sometime during WW1 which I have cleaned and identified see Figs. 3,4. The cartridges we all found in a glade on one of the offshoots from the main path. There were many signals working around back towards the main path all of which were the detritus of walkers, picnickers and the like as silver foil wrappers, which unfortunately give excellent signals could be found and must be dug.



Fig. 3. Cartridges cleaned.



Fig. 4. Bases showing manufacturer marks.

From Fig. 4 top left in a clockwise fashion (for those who are digital top left – top right – bottom right – bottom left):

- (1) Made by K. Kynch & Co. Witton, Birmingham. UK. Legend, K 1940 VII (Manufacturer, Date, Version).
- (2) 2.40 rest indistinguishable.
- (3) Made by Dominion Arsenal, Montreal, Canada. Legend, DA 1940 VII
- (4) Made by Greenwood and Batley, Leeds UK. – legend, GB 1940 VII

On the main woodland path itself six brass buttons Fig. 5 were found at regular intervals all at the same depth 3-4cms below the surface in a layer of dark ash as if they had been in a fire and after cleaning, I was able to identify some if not all of them.

From around the 1750's most metal buttons display the manufacturers details on the reverse which you would think that would make identification and dating easy but not without a bit of research. On that subject it brings into focus one of the main pleasures of Metal Detecting; the cleaning cataloguing and identification of the day's finds often taking many days to complete. It's no good recovering artefacts without being prepared to do the, absolutely necessary, research work; just like archaeology it's no use digging up loads of artefacts without the infrastructure in place to form a basis of accessible knowledge gained.

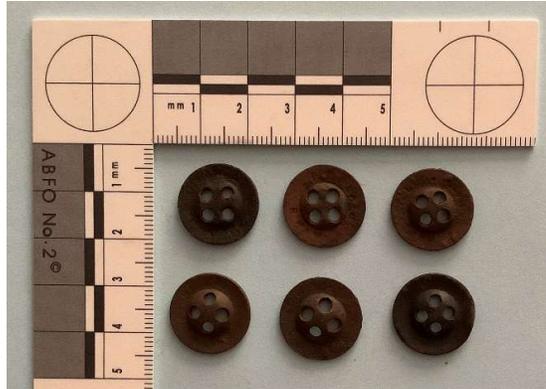


Fig. 5. Buttons from the woodland path.

Two of the buttons have legends, Wright, Edgware, MDX. Who manufactured brass buttons from WW1

One by F. T. Heath, B'Ham.

One by Buttons Ltd. B'Ham. Buttons Ltd. had in 1913 three factories in Birmingham, Portland Street, Worstone Lane and Clissold Street making, amongst other things. Buttons.

One has a legend of H. A. M.

One unreadable.



Fig 6. Two buttons from WW1.

The buttons shown in Fig. 6 are an identical match to two of the buttons found on the woodland path, so it appears that military visitors were welcome during both wars or perhaps the billeted soldiers of WWII assisted in replacing old uniforms from the Great War??

A big thank you to 'The Vints' for their hospitality and I look forward to exploring the rest of the farm.

Much Regards

Peter G. Spackman

PS. Finds will be returned at the earliest opportunity.