

Website Recommendations

I was asked the other day by a detectorist who appreciates the value of research in improving metal detecting find rates, how to do site research on the World Wide Web. Opportunities for site research on the Internet are somewhat limited but will undoubtedly improve as time goes on.

One site I find particularly useful is Popular Archaeology: <http://www.digital-documents.co.uk> the web pages of the Archaeological Resource Collection whose aim is to make archaeological and historical information available on the net. The most useful part of the site is ARCHI, The Archaeological Sites Index, a fully-searchable database of the positions of more than 60,000 UK archaeological sites, which range from single coins and artefacts to standing buildings. The only snag is that to gain full access will cost £32.50 for an annual subscription, which also includes the database on CD-ROM.

The database links very usefully to modern road maps: <http://uk8.multimap.com>

For large scale Victorian Ordnance Survey maps see: <http://www.old-maps.co.uk> and aerial photographs: <http://www2.getmapping.com>

Even without the subscription you can type in the name of a place, select 1, 3, 5 or 10km and get the full list of sites on the database within

the selected radius. You don't get the exact locations without a subscription but even so, if your search lists say 10 Roman sites within 1km you're almost guaranteed to find Roman material in any field you can search in the vicinity.

Also on the Popular Archaeology site is a place name finder, containing the names of more than 160,000 UK places - the most comprehensive UK place-name gazetteer on the Internet.

Tithe Maps & Apportionment Lists is in its embryonic stages but will be very useful as it develops. Currently there is only the 1838 Apportionment List for Guiseley, Yorks, available but if you haven't looked at Tithe Maps before, this will give you some idea of what they are all about. Basically you look for field names that indicate heavy usage in former times which should have resulted in plenty of losses in the ground.

I wonder what a metal detector search of Well Hole and Cross Close might turn up.

On-line Gallery of Iron Age and Saxon gold coins, Historical Figures and Events Glossary of Terms, People and Places Related Sites - other Websites classified according to subject. It even includes some on metal detecting.

David Villanueva, Whitstable

Suffolk Metal Detecting Rally

This rally will take place on Sunday 18th May 2003 from 10am - 4pm. 200 acres of undetected stubble fields are available on south facing farmland overlooking the River Stour Valley. The historic village of Clare is just 2 miles away with its Norman castle remains. A token hunt for cash prizes as well as trade stands, catering and toilets will be on site, which will be signposted from Clare and from the A1307 at Baythorne End. All money raised will go to local charities. For further details Tel Julian on 01799 502165 after 5pm.

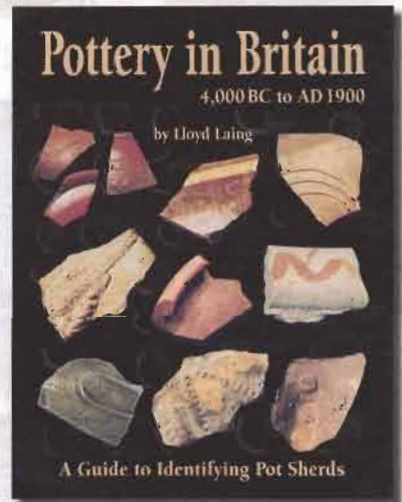
Lockdales Auction Dates

Forthcoming auction dates to be held by Lockdales are listed below. To request a catalogue please telephone or fax 01473 218588 or 01502 568468. Email lockdales@shop1.freeserve.co.uk or call in the shop. 37 Upper Orwell Street, Ipswich IP4 1HP: 18 May - Ipswich, Novotel Grey Friars Rd, closing date 12 April. 20 July - Norwich, The Swallow Nelson Hotel, Prince of Wales Rd, closing date 21 June. 21 Sept - Ipswich, closing date 16 August. 23 November - Norwich, closing date 18 October.

NEW BOOK!

Pottery in Britain 4000 BC to AD 1900

by Lloyd Laing



A Guide to Identifying Pot Sherds

This book aims to provide an introductory guide to identifying some of the basic types of pottery that may be found by accident, in systematic fieldwalking, and in archaeological excavation.

Clay is an exceptionally versatile material. It can be made into many useful and beautiful objects, decorated in a splendid variety of ways, and, if exposed to high temperatures, made into pottery. Both rich and poor have used pottery since the Stone Age, so the way the craft developed gives unusually clear insights into intimate details of lifestyle and outlooks in even remote periods.

It has been said that "archaeology is built on a foundation of potsherds". Some archaeological sites have produced over a million sherds, so, as a result of several centuries of highly complex logical reasoning, scientific analysis and cross-referencing with other material, pottery has become invaluable for making inferences about ancient societies. Although pottery is easily broken, the individual sherds are remarkably resilient. Sherds are therefore the most frequent types of find on archaeological sites and their presence in the soil can lead to the discovery of new sites. While many people can distinguish porcelain from earthenware, not everyone can tell the difference between stoneware and tin glaze or a Bronze Age urn from a modern flowerpot. Many sites, seen in retrospect as important, have been destroyed or overlooked because pottery lying on the surface was not recognised for what it was.

A general knowledge of ancient pottery is not difficult to acquire, although, as in many other walks of life, the study is very complex on a professional level.

Since whole pots are very rare finds the emphasis is on sherds rather than museum or collectors' pieces. For reasons of space it has been impossible to do more than outline the main types (out of many thousands) of pottery vessel that might be found. Local and national museums and art galleries are the first places to visit in order to become familiar with pottery in particular areas.

The book deals mostly with pottery made in Britain, though at all times it must be borne in mind that any pottery found could have come from any period or any location in the world. As a rule of thumb, lowland areas have tended to produce more ancient pottery than highland, presumably due to a combination of lifestyle and availability of raw materials.

The book contains 178 illustrations, mainly in colour, and is divided into the following sections:

The potter's craft • The study of pottery • Prehistoric pottery - the Neolithic Period circa 4000-2000 BC • The Bronze Age circa 2000-700 BC • The Iron Age circa 700/600 BC-43 AD • The Iron Age circa 700/600 BC-43 AD • The Dark Ages & Early Medieval Period • The Medieval Period - 11th-15th Centuries • The 16th & 17th Centuries • The 18th & 19th Centuries • Glossary of terminology.

(Over 100 pages (250mm x 190mm) £20.00 (UK post free) Publication date - Mid April. ISBN 1 897738 145

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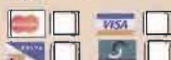
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