

Pennies in a Pot

Text and photographs: Chris Durant

My dad, Ken Durant, in his retirement, spent many hours engaged in one of his various pastimes in and around Merriott - metal detecting. We still have many of his finds stored in boxes and jars, each having been carefully washed and stowed away.



His journeys, from memory, took him around the paths of Scott's Nurseries (his employer in his more youthful days) down across Hitchen and some fields somewhere out Hinton Road, to name a few.

There are some old battered, unidentified things that could be coins, the usual small change of Victorian and Georgian reigns, a few things that could be horse brasses, an array of buckles and buttons, and empty shell cases probably fired by the local farmer, poacher or gamekeeper - I don't think that they came from the anger of the wars.

There are also some remains of toys probably lost by unfortunate small children playing in the field whilst their parents toiled on the land when Merriott had a reputation of a major market garden centre and had a successful nursery employing a large local workforce.

There could well have been some current legal tender, no doubt spent not long after the time of finding. Alas, there are no tokens in the remains.

Update



Since my earlier contribution, I have taken a closer look at the contents of a coffee pot, or rather old coffee jar, which I found at the back of a shelf in my father's shed. It contains Victorian, Edward VII, George V, George VI and a few Elizabeth I pennies and halfpennies. There are about 180 Pennies and 140 halfpennies in the hoard.

This hoard was the result of countless forays out Hinton Road fields, down Over Mill, across Hitchen, Half Acre Lane and out Holwell, to name only a few places. After finding, they were no doubt all washed in warm soapy water with a soft scrubbing brush in my mum's kitchen sink, before being dried off and stashed in the pot.





Victoria – young and old. 1837-1901



Edward VII 1901-1910



George V 1910- 1936



George VI 1936-1952 (left) and Elizabeth II 1962 -



Their current value to collectors in this day and age is probably not much but to the original owners in the years gone by they were a large proportion of the hard earned rewards of their labour and were probably inadvertently dropped following a drunken stagger home back from one of the many pubs in the village, or having fallen through unmended holes in the pockets of their clothing. Their use in this day and age could be for use in a penny arcade at the seaside, or as a general exhibition an a museum or educational establishment None of the coins can be described as being in very fine condition so they are virtually valueless, except from a family point of view having being collected by my dad they are priceless!