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Prince Andrew with the Queen.

Prince retires from duties

One of the Queen's sons, Prince Andrew, has announced he will no longer carry out public duties on behalf of the royal family. The news came after he was criticised for a TV interview in which he tried to defend his friendship with a convicted criminal. The prince also said he would stop being a patron (official supporter) of all 230 organisations that he represented. It is reported that the Queen has cancelled a party to celebrate his 60th birthday.



Some of the items.

Sacred items are returned

Manchester Museum will return 43 sacred items to the Aboriginal people from whom they were taken more than 100 years ago. Australian Aborigines are the country's indigenous people – they are the descendents of those who lived there before British and European people arrived in the 18th century. The first of the items were handed over to a representative for an indigenous group in a special ceremony at the museum on 19 November.



Both sides of the giant coin.

UK's largest coin is minted

The Royal Mint, which creates new coins and official medals, has made the UK's largest coin. It's the size of a dinner plate, weighs five kilograms and has a value of £5,000. Only one was made and it has already been sold to an unknown buyer. The coin is part of a collection called Great Engravers, which celebrates artists who have worked on British coins. The set is completed by four other coins, each weighing two kilograms and worth £2,000.



Searching with a metal detector.



Some of the items from the hoard.

Detectorists are punished for selling Viking treasure

Two men have been jailed for stealing Viking treasure worth as much as £12 million. The detectorists (people who enjoy searching for objects using a metal detector) found an astonishing hoard of 300 coins and jewellery in a field in Eye, Herefordshire, in 2015.

Under the law, George Powell and Layton Davies should have officially reported their haul, but they decided to sell it instead. Only a small portion of their discovery, which dates back more than 1,100 years, has been recovered.

There are different laws around the UK about what must be done when historical objects are found. Objects thought to be treasure must always be reported to local authorities. Treasure is generally any man-made metallic object that is at least 300 years old and made of at least 10% gold or silver, or anything prehistoric made from any gold or silver.

There are specific rules for anything that is officially proved to be treasure

because technically it belongs to the Queen. If it is treasure, museums can bid for it at an auction. The money is then generally split between the finder, the landowner, and whoever currently lives on the land. If the authorities decide it isn't treasure, it is returned to the finder. Different rules cover groups of coins or objects found alongside other treasure.

Powell and Davies decided to tell the National Museum of Wales about only two coins and three items of jewellery. They sold the rest of the hoard. If the two men had been honest about their haul they would have received more than £500,000 each. Instead they will spend several years in prison.

In a joint statement, experts from the Herefordshire Museum Service and

Herefordshire Council said that because most of the objects were missing, it was very difficult for them to piece together the history behind the treasure. They also said that the hoard was the most significant 9th century find ever uncovered in the region.

A BIG DEBATE
In September, we asked our readers whether people should be allowed to keep any treasure they find. 67% of you said they should.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Dog puts car in reverse and drives around in circles for an hour" *sky.com*



Detectorists are punished for selling Viking treasure

Read the article and then try the following activities...



Hold a debate

Detectorists are often digging up valuable relics of the past that they have found with their metal detectors. Most of them are honest and report their findings, but not all. Is it time to ban metal detecting unless it is being done as part of a recognised archaeological group? After all, such finds can reveal important insights into the lives of previous cultures, but only if they are dug up and recorded in a careful way that doesn't just focus on valuable objects. Or do you think detectorist should have the freedom to pursue their hobby independently? Most of them do behave appropriately so it is not fair to punish the many for the poor behaviour of the few. Anyway, they usually discover items that would never have been found by an official archaeological dig. What do you think?

Writing challenge!

Choose one of the following writing warm-ups.

1 Write a set of instructions detailing what you should do if your metal detector has just signalled that it has found something that could be interesting or valuable under the ground. Remember to use sequencing conjunctions and imperative verbs.

2 Imagine you are a detectorist who has discovered a hoard of treasure. Write a diary entry describing your day, remembering to use the first person and powerful words to describe both your find and your feelings.

Investigate

What are the top three biggest treasure hoards ever found in the UK? Say where and when each find was made and give an outline of what was discovered.