

# Treasure Hunting in South Africa

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I am Peter Gill and live in a small town called Westonaria which is about 50Km away from Johannesburg in South Africa.

I was born in Northamptonshire, England in 1959. I left England for Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) in 1973, stayed there for 8 years before coming to South Africa in 1981. I have been working for Johannesburg Water (Pty) Ltd since 1990, and am an Operational Manager in wastewater treatment.



I got interested in treasure hunting on the 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2005 after joining up with "TreasureNet ", the treasure hunting forum.

Although treasure has always intrigued me, after looking at all the finds on TreasureNet, I was hooked. To see that so much stuff could be found in the ground was very exciting.

I started having problems with the electric of the heart for which I ended up having five operations before it was repaired. I was told by the doctor that I could not exercise as my heart rate jumped up to 239 bpm (should be between 60 and 90 bpm) So I was going very dizzy and just felt like I was dying with the palpitations I was having.

One of the members on TreasureNet heard about my problem, and decided to send me a

Tesoro Silver Sabre II metal detector to help get me started. This was the start to my detecting, which was great for what I thought would be a little bit of exercise. After my first trip I could barely walk for a week as I was so sore.

My journey into a whole new world started at this time.

In the next couple of Months, I spent much time learning how to use the metal detector, and also how difficult it was to find places to search. But slowly I started to find sites to search, and also learnt the detector pretty well.

From reading all the topics on TreasureNet, I learnt about software like GoogleEarth © and also about websites like YouTube © for which both are a valuable tool for the treasure hunter, from then on I was moving very quickly in this great hobby.

I then started learning the history of South Africa, and found myself loving all the stories that were told about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Boer war (11<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1899 – 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1902) I then decided that these were the sites that I wanted to detect, and to try and bring life through the relics that were found.



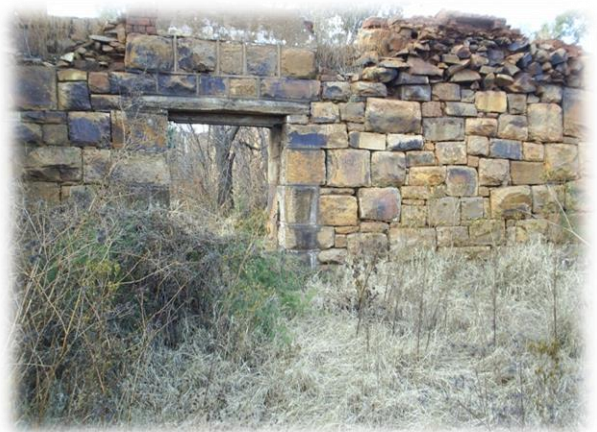
Boer War Blockhouse

There are numerous Boer war sites throughout South Africa, which are great to visit and detect around. Being national monuments, detecting can only be done around the outer edges of the sites, but this is fine, as most finds are not in the buildings, but are around the outside.

Digging the finds at these sites is very exciting, as you never know what is going to surface knowing that they have been buried more than 100 years.

Unfortunately, South Africa does not seem to have the money to look after their historical places and monuments, therefore sites are being damaged or even stripped down for the material that they are made from, and used to build other structures or sold for scrap.

Through making videos and placing my finds on my webpage, I am hoping to help keep South Africa's history alive.



Klipriviersberg Fort

Finding a relic is only the first stage in treasure hunting, finding out what the relic is, and preserving it is another. To find a relic and let it rust away is not acceptable, the relic would have been better off left where it was buried as nobody can learn from a piece of rust. I made it my priority to find the relics, and then to preserve and display them, hopefully I have done justice to the finds and the hobby.

Other great sites that we have in South Africa are the beaches at the coast, parks, and old house sites. These are generally places of modern finds, but are great fun to search.

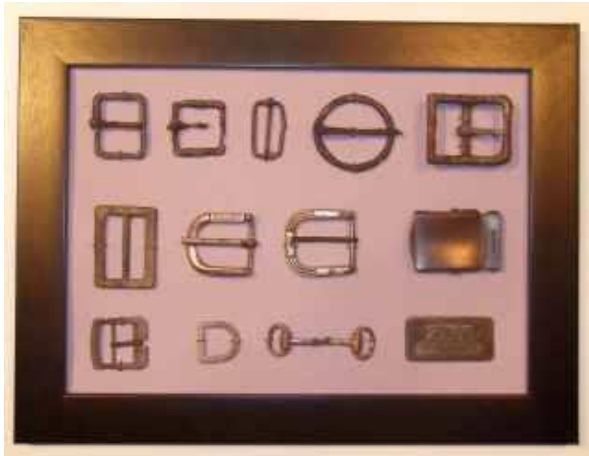


1800's Spearhead

Finds from  
Various Sites



Finds from a Horse Gear Store



Buckles from various sites



Bullet Cases of the Boer War

South Africa is rich in history and in culture. We are living in an exciting place, at an exciting time, with great weather for metal detecting, which we can do for most of the year, only being hampered by the long grass in the winter months. The winter months are the time when research takes place, and new sites are found for the following detecting season.

I hope that this introduction into treasure hunting in South Africa, has given you an idea of what we have available for the person who wants to get involved in this hobby. There are few people with detectors in South Africa, so there is no shortage of sites with great finds available.

Please visit my website and YouTube channel if you would like to see more on South African treasure hunting.