

FINDS CARE · FREE RESOURCE

How to Photograph Your Finds

Take clear, useful photographs that make coins, buckles, buttons and mystery finds easier to identify.

What's inside

- ✓ Clear, practical steps you can use straight away
- 📄 Written for real UK detecting, not theory
- 📄 Plain-English guidance, checked against official sources
- ☆ Free to print, keep and share



**Written by
detectorists**



**Checked against
UK guidance**



**Free to print and
keep**

Equipment setup

- ☐ A modern phone is fine; you do not need a fancy camera
- ☐ Clean the lens first
- ☐ Steady it on a stand, books or a table edge
- ☐ Hold the camera parallel to the object

Lighting & background

- ☐ Use indirect daylight or soft, diffused light
- ☐ Avoid harsh direct sun and on-camera flash
- ☐ Use a plain, neutral background (grey or mid-tone card)
- ☐ Fill the frame, but do not crop the object

Settings

- ☐ Tap to focus
- ☐ Turn off portrait or beauty filters
- ☐ Do not use digital zoom
- ☐ Keep the original, unedited images

Common mistakes to avoid

- ☐ Cleaning the object just to improve the photo
- ☐ A busy or patterned surface
- ☐ One blurry angle only
- ☐ Losing the scale reference

The shots to take every time

Front (first side)

The main face of the object, filling the frame

Back (second side)

This is often where the maker marks and fixings are found

Edge with scale

Shows thickness; the scale on the same plane gives the true size

Any fixing or mark

A close-up of loops, shanks, rivet holes, lettering or wear

Use a filename convention. Name each photo so it links to the find, for example sitecode-findref-front.jpg. Do not reveal precise location metadata publicly.

Why photos matter more than you think

A clear, well-lit set of photos with a scale can be enough for a Finds Liaison Officer or an experienced detectorist to identify an object without handling it. Use 'obverse' and 'reverse' only for coins and medals.

This resource is provided for general information and personal record-keeping. Rules, official guidance and access arrangements can change. Check the current requirements for the place where you intend to detect.

Get more free metal detecting guides, templates and practical advice at DetectoristWorld.com.