

## **Diver Locates Bronze-Age Ring with Underwater Metal Detector**

Diver, explorer, treasure hunter, museum exhibitor, writer, and lecturer are some of the words used to describe New Jersey resident Nelson Jecas. He has pursued his passion for research and artifact recovery for many years and has uncovered a number of historically important pieces from sites near and far. Jecas shares his findings with scientists, educators, students, and the public. One very important discovery was an ornate dagger made of bronze with a serpent coiled around the handle, a lion on the blade, and other detailed engravings along its entire length. This beautiful piece has been dated to the 1500s and was donated to a local museum. Another significant find was a mini teak treasure chest, called a coffer, about 8 inches long. The box is in remarkably good condition considering how long it was submerged in the ocean. The metal bands on the top and sides, along with the fixtures on the front and rear are all still intact. The coffer came from a sunken English ship and was probably the personal property of one of the ship's officers; his "piggy bank". In the box were five British coins of different sizes and values all dating to the 1800s, but unfortunately most of the markings were almost completely obliterated by time. The detector of choice in these expeditions is a JW Fishers Pulse 8X; a powerful, commercial-grade machine he describes as, "easy to operate and works great".

Jecas' most recent find is even more amazing. While detecting in England he recovered a pewter ring with what appears to be a Celtic cross, recognized as both sacred symbol and a scientific instrument. In the prehistoric religion of Bronze Age Europe, crosses in circles frequently appear on artifacts identified as cult items. The Celtic Cross has also been described as, "a machine to measure the wheels and cycles of nature and the heavens with which our ancestors kept time and invented the zodiac". The ring has been examined by several experts who say many artifacts have been discovered bearing this cross, but a ring like his has never been found.

Another diver and history buff that spends as much time in the library as metal detecting is Mike Drainville of Massachusetts. Mike enjoys metal detecting both on land and underwater. He has traveled to sites around New England and across the mid Atlantic states hunting historic battle sites for colonial relics and diving harbors and rivers searching for time capsules from the past. Some of his favorite places for detecting are the local beaches and swimming holes in nearby lakes and ponds, where he scours the bottom looking for lost coins and jewelry. On a recent dive Mike was working with his Pulse 8X in 15 feet of water about 50 yards offshore when the detector started to scream. He slowly put the machine down so as not to raise a cloud of silt then gently slid his hand into the muck where the detector sang out. As he squeezed the mud from between his fingers he felt something hard. As he rolled it around in his hand he immediately recognized it as the unmistakable form of a ring. As the silt cleared he raised his arm toward the sunlit surface and was awe-struck at the glinting gold in his hand. Returning to shore so he could more closely examine the find, Mike noticed the ring was engraved with a peace sign. It was then he realized the ring was probably lost about 50 years ago in the 1960s, a period in American history marked by antiwar protests. When he got home that evening Mike put the ring on a jewelry scale and was astounded that it weighed more than half an ounce.

Mike reports, "I love my Pulse 8X. That thing has traveled everywhere with me and has seen some rough treatment, but it's practically bulletproof. I never leave home without it. You never know when you'll come across a great place to hunt. Sometimes just the geography of an area tells you; this is probably a place soldiers marched through, or where ships traveled, hundreds of years ago."

A few of the many other divers that have made valuable finds including rings with their Pulse 8X detectors are Ed Rosacker at Divers Cove in Connecticut, Bill Nichols of Timber Bay Sport & Dive in Wisconsin, Capt.

Charles March in Panama, Barry Shipman in the Virgin Islands, Tep van den Heuvel in Aruba, Canadian Larent Latiegne, Tim McPhillips in Ohio, Charles Debski in Florida, Randy Miller in North Dakota, Don Marshall in British Colombia, John Duffy in California, Pedro Martinez in Arizona, and Richard Carney in Maine.

For more information on JW Fishers complete line of underwater search equipment go to [www.jwfishers.com](http://www.jwfishers.com). Photo attached: Main photo: Mike Drainville with recovered ring; Left Inset – Close up of Peace ring recovered by Drainville; Right Inset – Bronze-Age ring recovered by Nelson Jecas.

