

## PROPERTY OF THE WEEK

## PHILIPPA RUDD

# you by the hand

Our columnist answers questions about what landowners can do if buried treasure is found on their property.



**I live in a remote part of the county and we are lucky enough to have the ruins of a castle in our garden. The ruins have been designated by English Heritage as an ancient monument. I fear this means that anyone who searches local records may discover that these ruins exist and there may be all sorts of treasure buried near the ruins. Is there anything I can do to protect my land?**

No one can enter upon your land without your consent. There has been publicity recently regarding "nighthawks" who trespass on land at night, conceal finds and sell their discoveries through a network of dealers rather than officially declaring them.

I suggest you speak to the police who will advise you as to how to protect your land. If any "nighthawks" cause damage to your land or attempt to sell any items they find, they face fines and possible imprisonment.

**I am happy to permit reputable persons to metal detect on my land, but only if they are obliged to hand over any finds to our local museum. Is this the law?**

If your land is a protected site because of the presence of the castle ruins, special permission may be needed before any metal detecting takes place. You should check with English Heritage. A reputable metal detecting club will be familiar with the provisions of the Treasure Act, which sets out the law relating to the finding of treasure.

Generally, any find will belong to you as the landowner, but in the case of "treasure trove", special legislation applies.

**What is "treasure"?**

Treasure is any object at least 300 years old – basically, gold and silver – which was originally hidden and where the original owner cannot be found. All treasure belongs to the Crown and all finds must be reported to the coroner within 14 days. If the museum wants to keep the find, a coroner holds an inquest to decide if it is treasure and, if so, it will be valued and the "reward" split between you as land owner and the finder.

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**■ If you have a question or dilemma over the legalities of buying or selling a property which you would like to appear in this supplement, please contact Philippa by e-mailing caroline.culot@archant.co.uk**

**■ These questions and answers are not intended as a complete statement of the law. Specific legal advice should always be taken.**



and it is a fascinating fragment of history. Off the dining room is a large rustic kitchen/breakfast room.

There are several staircases. The main one from the hall is Jacobean

and is a real feature, with original balustrades and a latch door. On the first floor is the wonderful master bedroom. It has wide floorboards and two doors either side of one



wall, one of which is a miniature dressing area which overlooks the surrounding countryside and has an original wig cupboard. The bedroom also boasts an en suite bathroom

with a roll-topped bath. On this floor are two further large double bedrooms and a beautiful family bathroom. This shows the later Georgian style of architecture; it has a fireplace from this period and gorgeous panelling on the wall. I love this contrast with the older styles which dominate the house.

The main staircase goes up to the second floor and you get another example of how this house was made when you examine a large wall, which goes right back to its original wattle and daub structure, complete with bits of straw! Up on this top floor there are two bedrooms/attic space, one with a pretty Victorian fireplace, and a shower room.

Outside, the owners have further worked their magic, creating landscaped gardens, an office and workshop. The rear of the house has a wisteria growing across it, which looks gorgeous when in bloom. The setting is wonderfully private, with farmland on either side.

**■ The Manor House, Denver, is for sale for a guide price of £795,000 with Bedfords on 01328 730500.**