

HOW 'STOP' STARTED: EARLY APPROACHES TO THE METAL DETECTING COMMUNITY BY ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND OTHERS

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Introduction

'Community archaeology' is becoming an area of significant interest to academics, as recent research (e.g. Smith & Waterton 2009; Marshall 2002) demonstrates, along with initiatives in the past few years such as the development of the Community Archaeology Forum (see www.britarch.ac.uk/caf). If the idea of 'archaeology in the community' is to involve members of the public in the archaeological process, then it is appropriate in this volume to analyse professional archaeology's relationship to the metal detecting hobby. There are metal detecting clubs in every region of the United Kingdom, and umbrella organisations such as the National Council for Metal Detecting (NCMD), and the Federation of Independent Detectorists (FID). Recent research indicates that there may be as many as 10,550 metal-detector users in the UK (Thomas 2009a: 257). Hence, metal-detector users constitute a significant 'community' interacting with archaeological heritage – with, or often without, interaction with archaeologists themselves.

This chapter emerges from recent doctoral research into the relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users in England and Wales, with a particular focus on evidence from the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) archives. It is a fundamental view of the author that in order to understand the complex relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users in the UK, the history of this relationship, and its various nuances, should be more fully understood. Hence, the chapter adopts a historical perspective, discussing and analysing the reactions to metal detecting by archaeological organisations and their supporters in the UK in the late 1970s and early 1980s, during the period in which metal detecting began to emerge as an increasingly popular hobby. The events leading up to major offensives at this time predominantly on the part of archaeologists, but also metal-detector users, notably through the opposing pressure groups of the 'Stop Taking Our Past!' campaign (STOP) and the Detector Information Group (DIG), are analysed. STOP and DIG are both summarised, and

their role in shaping public opinions and also governmental decisions are examined for this period.

The CBA, since its 1944 inception, has always been involved in the safeguarding of British archaeology (Heyworth 2006), including lobbying government offices when necessary. The issue of export of antiquities, for example, had involved and continues to involve the interests of antiques and antiquities dealers, for example the inclusion of representatives of the trade on the Illicit Trade Advisory Panel (DCMS 2006). In contrast, when the metal detecting hobby appeared, initially in the mid-to-late 1960s, not only were archaeologists and antiquity dealers (and collectors) affected, but also a new interest group: those members of the public searching for metal, often ancient, artefacts for recreational purposes. With the manufacture of affordable metal detecting machines, the number of people who took up hobby grew rapidly and began immediately to cause concern among archaeologists (Addyman & Brodie 2002: 179).

Described as 'an initial knee-jerk reaction' to metal detecting (Addyman & Brodie 2002: 179), the now-infamous STOP campaign was planned from 1979 and officially launched in 1980. Authors writing about STOP with hindsight have maintained that the campaign was unsuccessful in its principal goal to persuade public opinion that treasure hunting with metal detectors was unacceptable behaviour. According to Addyman and Brodie (2002: 180), STOP led to 'loss of sympathy and the polarization of attitudes' for archaeology. Bland (2005: 441) also suggested that in the battle for public and political support, metal-detector users were far more successful than archaeologists during the STOP period, epitomised for Bland by the 1974–1976 Prime Minister Harold Wilson being made honorary patron of the NCMD. STOP is certainly regarded as a pivotal moment in the history of the relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users, and is regularly cited by commentators on this issue (e.g. Addyman 2009: 56–57). However, it has also diverted attention from earlier responses to metal detecting, some of which were more placatory (e.g. Green & Gregory 1978). In other publications, the ambiguity with which some authors have referred to STOP indicates that there is a need for a more thorough study of the evidence, in order to clarify what really happened. This is epitomised by Faulkner's (2003: 175) indirect, and obviously incorrect, implication that the looting at Wanborough may have led to the formation of STOP, despite it having occurred three years *after* STOP had been launched (and see Thomas 2009b for an account of the incidents that occurred at Wanborough). Gregory (1983) suggested that professional archaeologists' failure to communicate with the public effectively at this time had contributed to the growth in popularity of metal detecting. Yet, while metal detecting groups were indeed successful in augmenting support for their hobby, STOP also had supporters from outside of the archaeological profession, and even managed a some victories against treasure hunting. The importance of other factors, such as the impact of legislation and the role of personal opinions must be analysed further to understand the events leading up to and surrounding STOP: the Campaign against Treasure Hunting.

‘At variance with the general opinion of archaeologists’

By the time of the STOP campaign, metal detecting had already been developing as a hobby for more than a decade. In 1966, an image of a ‘Decco’ machine accompanied a caption claiming that the device could detect items at three feet, maybe even deeper (*The Times*, 14th July 1966). A letter in a British newspaper discussed the ‘threatened introduction to Britain of the American hobby of treasure-hunting’, involving the use of a device described as a ‘treasure-finder’ (Atkinson c.1969). A more positive take on the arrival of metal detectors was reported in *The Times* in 1969, describing the plans of a Lincolnshire businessman ‘to introduce the American science of treasure hunting to Britain’ by manufacturing ‘Goldmaster’ metal detectors (*The Times* 1969: np). This correlates with Green and Gregory’s assertion in 1978 that metal detecting had been around at that point for a decade (1978: 161). The rapid growth of the hobby towards the end of the 1970s has meant that later authors have stated that metal detecting did not emerge until the *late* 1970s (e.g. Dobinson & Denison 1995). Statistics available from the Home Office’s licensing of metal detectors under the *Wireless and Telegraphy Act* 1949 (a requirement which was ended in 1980), also indicate the rapid growth of metal detector use at this time.

In 1975–6 the CBA and the Museums Association (MA) formed a joint working party to look at the issue of metal detecting (Green & Gregory 1978: 161), the Treasure Hunting Working Party (THWP). By 1979 the decision had been made to embark on a campaign against treasure hunters, following the initial suggestion for such a campaign by *Rescue – the British Archaeological Trust* (Cleere, *pers. comm.*, 10th September 2005), who were by this time involved with the THWP. *Rescue*, an independent charitable trust formed in 1971, had in fact already organised a smaller scale anti-metal-detecting canvass in the earlier half of the 1970s (Cleere to Dalyell MP, 3rd May 1980). This campaign was on a much smaller scale than STOP, and mostly took the form of articles in *Rescue News* (e.g. Fowler 1972: 15). Thus, for many commentators on this period, the most memorable representation of early attitudes to metal-detector users by archaeologists has become STOP. The implication of this is that most professionals in archaeology and museums were involved with trying to reduce public acceptance of metal detecting as a hobby (Addyman & Brodie 2002: 179), due to the risks posed to archaeological heritage by the use of metal detectors for treasure hunting. However, there were also notable exceptions, for example in East Anglia (Bland 2005: 441–2) and Lincolnshire (Richards & Naylor 2009: 169).

Yet only one year before the STOP plans were initiated, the CBA and the MA had been discussing the text for a joint statement on metal detecting which, while not condoning all metal detecting, did concede that:

metal detecting is not a transient phenomenon, it is becoming increasingly apparent that many metal-detector users are motivated by the same interest in the past as archaeologists. (CBA & MA 1978)

The joint statement also acknowledged that, since the early 1970s, attitudes of 'total opposition' adopted by archaeologists created 'a polarization of attitudes, with unfortunate and undesirable results' (CBA & MA 1978). The intention had been to release the statement concurrently with a 'Code of Conduct for Metal Detector Users', which was intended to help metal-detector users who followed the code to establish 'a constructive partnership between them and archaeologists'. Henry Cleere, then the Director of the CBA, had even been in discussion with Sid Clayton, then the President of the National Association of Metal Detecting Clubs (NAMDC), a forerunner of the NCMD, on the development of this code (Cleere to Ditchfield, DoE, 3rd February 1978). The Department of the Environment (DoE), a representative of which had recently been in attendance at the NAMDC seminar in Bournemouth in 1978, was willing to offer a ministerial foreword to the final Code and even some financial support from the DoE (Ditchfield to Cleere, 31st January 1978). The DoE's presence there demonstrated, if nothing else, the politicisation of the metal detecting hobby by that time.

The proposed code, although apparently receiving support both from metal-detector users and a government department, was ultimately not accepted by the archaeological profession itself. The two organisations involved in the THWP, the CBA and the MA, were reliant on approval from their councils for any actions to be taken. It was the MA that was first to reject the proposed joint statement and code of conduct, with some of its council members feeling strongly that any compromise that might be seen as encouraging the hobby would be unacceptable. In particular, the MA's rejection of the proposed actions was influenced by the strong opinions of certain individuals on the council, who apparently worked hard to convince other council members not to support the statement (Capstick, MA, to Cleere, 10th February 1978). However, practical issues such as the insertion of text relevant to Scotland, referring to the different treasure legislation, were also cited (*ibid.*).

The initial reaction from Cleere was to try to action the proposed statement and code of conduct as a CBA-only venture, without the support of the MA, pending the approval of the CBA's Executive Board and Council (Cleere to Capstick, February 1978). In the months following, the MA did in fact reconsider the proposed joint statement and code of conduct (again rejecting it), although in April 1978 the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA) added their support to the proposal (Davies to Cleere, 6th April 1978). However, although some regional organisations did write in support of the draft code and statement, such as the Archaeology Panel of the Area Museums Service for South Eastern England (Gowing to Cleere, 26th April 1978), others were as equally opposed to it. For example, the Surrey Archaeological Society and the Working Party on London Archaeology wrote to the CBA that 'the code of conduct would give respectability to the use of metal detectors and that this would result in more harm than good' (McCracken to Cleere, 11th May 1978).

Although many were opposed to any form of cooperation or communication with metal-detector users, there were also, as mentioned earlier, regions where steps had

already been made to communicate and in some instances to cooperate with metal-detector users. The most-cited case is that of Norfolk, with a finds-recording policy that shortly after its formation rolled out to include Suffolk (Green & Gregory 1978: 161). Green and Gregory have suggested that the initiative was in response to the lack of archaeological policy to the threat of uncontrolled metal detecting at a national level, no doubt exacerbated by a failure to reach a consensus by the MA and the CBA councils and executives. This policy, involving a leaflet offering advice to metal-detector users who find archaeological material (Scole Archaeological Unit 1978), was considered so exemplary that it eventually formed the basis for the nation-wide Portable Antiquities Scheme (Bland 2005: 442). Yet it should be noted that even in Norfolk not all professional archaeologists were in support of the cooperation with metal-detector users. Robin Walpole, Chairman of the Norfolk Museums Service and the Area Museums Service for South Eastern England, indicated his disapproval in a published letter in *Museum's Bulletin* responding to Green and Gregory's (1978) *Museums Journal* article about their work with metal-detector users:

The recent article in the Museums Journal by two members of the Norfolk Museums Service is of course a professional and personal approach but I must make it clear that it is just that and does not reflect the less naïve attitude of the Committee and its chairman. (Walpole 1978: 52)

In other regions of England and Wales, some archaeological units and museums were also taking preliminary steps to creating links with their local metal detecting clubs and societies. The CBA's regional Group 2 reported that 'formal links between some museums in South Wales and metal detecting clubs' were developing (Lynch to Cleere, 1978). Lancashire, Hampshire and Yorkshire were also regions where contact between archaeologists and metal-detector users had been established for 'many years' by the time that STOP was under way (STOP Committee minutes, 10th June 1980).

By September 1978, the Executive Board of the CBA had rejected the draft code of conduct and statement, considering the cooperative tone 'at variance with the general opinion of archaeologists' (Cleere to Smith, Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments – North Wales Office, 25th September 1978). The next step, reworking the draft statement moved more towards the anti-metal-detecting tone associated with STOP. The reworked CBA statement made it clear that the organisation felt that 'treasure hunting' (a change from the original; proposed joint statement's use of 'metal detecting'), was 'not in the public interest' (CBA 1978). The new statement did concede that some metal-detector users might have a 'genuine interest in the past', but that:

in the interests of our common heritage in the landscape, however, and not least in the interests of their own ultimate satisfaction, their participation, as for everyone else, must be on archaeology's own terms. (CBA 1978)

This time an approved code of conduct did not accompany the statement.

STOP is formed

After several months of planning and committee meetings to develop strategies, the STOP campaign was officially launched on 12th March 1980. The campaign's full title was STOP: The Campaign against Treasure Hunting. Originally it had been planned to coincide STOP's press launch with the introduction of Section III of the new Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, which provided for the restriction of metal detectors on scheduled sites (Cleere to Ridley, DoE, 14th May 1979).

The campaign was a direct development, as discussed earlier in this chapter, from the THWP's deliberations on how to deal with the issue of treasure hunting with metal detectors, and was influenced by an earlier anti-treasure-hunting campaign by *Rescue*. However, STOP took place on a much larger scale than *Rescue's* campaign had, with support from at least 32 separate organisations. The seven core organisations forming the STOP Committee were:

- CBA
- MA
- *Rescue, The British Archaeological Trust*
- Standing Conference of Unit Managers (SCUM)
- Association of County Archaeological Officers
- SMA
- United Kingdom Institute of Conservation

The other supporters of the campaign included, as to be expected, a number of organisations with interests in the nation's heritage, such as the National Trust and the National Monuments Record for Wales. In addition some organisations with wider remits were also willing to lend their name to the support of STOP, such as the National Farmers' Union and Institution of Park and Recreational Administration. The support of these organisations indicates that other concerns were attached to the growth of metal detecting beyond the safety of archaeological material. For example, the Country Landowners Association might well have been concerned about landowners' rights in the case of a finder discovering artefacts classified as Treasure Trove on their land, as often under the contemporary treasure trove common law (repealed in 1997), the finder only received the reward money, but not person on whose land the object was found (Cleere to Jones, landowner, 18th June 1980). For both landowners and farmers, the issue of trespass was also likely to have been a factor in deciding support STOP.

However, not all those contacted by the STOP Committee were positive about the campaign's strategies, which included a Core Document stating the aims of the campaign (CBA 1980). Patrick Cormack, Conservative Member of Parliament (MP), for example, was approached but was not accommodating towards STOP, feeling, '... that the title is very unfortunate and the whole tone too negative...' and he suggested the press release could be made:

more appealing to young people. I believe, for instance, that it is unrealistic to expect the total banning of metal detectors, and that if they were used under supervision you

could actually recruit young people to the 'archaeological brigade'. (Cormack to Cleere, 12th February 1980).

Concerns were even raised by some professional archaeologists about the possible effects of STOP. Robert Rutland, of Leicestershire Museums, expressed concern that the local treasure hunting club in Leicester, who had a good record for responsible behaviour, were all 'angered and puzzled' by STOP. He warned that if this the effect on a responsible society, what would it do to the 'rogues'? (Rutland to Cleere, 16th April 1980).

Media, government and the influence of DIG

The Association of District Councils (ADC) and the Association of County Councils (ACC) supported STOP, not only because of the threat to archaeological heritage in their areas, but also because of the potential for 'physical damage of land and property' (ACC 1980), particularly that which fell under the ownership and responsibility of county or district councils. The ADC and the ACC were in fact both pressuring the Home Office at this time for the right to issue local bye-laws which would enable local councils to control where metal detecting could take place (Thornley, ADC, to Capstick, 24th January 1980). Initial responses from the Home Office to these requests had been of the view that there was no harm in using a metal detector, and that for digging offences there was already the *Criminal Damage Act* 1971 (Thornley to Capstick, 24th January 1980). This attitude was a cause for concern for the STOP Committee members, particularly as when the Home Office reconsidered their stance with regard to byelaws, it was with the proviso that district councils have a consultation with any local metal detecting clubs before adopting any byelaws (Elder 1980: 137). Naturally there was concern among archaeologists that the Home Office had mentioned metal detecting club members as people with whom to consult, but had failed to include museum staff and professional archaeologists (Cleere to Cormack, 23rd September 1980).

This attitude by the Home Office may be an indicator of the greater success experienced by metal-detector users than archaeologists in influencing public opinion and therefore politicians, which is acknowledged by Bland (2005: 441). Certainly metal-detector users, while mostly voluntary (although with the support of metal detector manufacturers), were able to organise their own publicity and lobbying groups to defend the interests of the hobby. The Detector Information Group (DIG) was formed in 1979 in direct response to the development of the STOP campaign and the other activities being carried out at that time by archaeologists (DIG 2003). DIG's name was even chosen, according to a founding member, with the specific acronym in mind:

it was the idea for the name because I just thought well, 'dig's' the thing always coming into use in archaeological terms and I thought, if we could get a name and get under their skin, every time we mention that word it's gonna ...it's gonna grate. I thought, how can we get DIG? And I just worked out Detector Information Group with the particular letters (Mellish, pers. comm., 26th October 2007)

Significantly, DIG not only represented metal-detector users, but also 'manufacturers and retailers involved in the hobby of metal detecting' (DIG Committee 1980). Thus, although it was 'entirely founded by voluntary contributions' (DIG Committee 1980), it was considered likely at the time that there was a reasonable fund available to DIG, (Morris, CBA, to Cleere 9th May 1980), probably from the metal detector manufacturers supporting it.

Like STOP, DIG had a priority of using the media as a tool to raise the profile of their cause. Press releases from the same time as STOP indicate that DIG was well organised, with even a list of regional contacts available for press (DIG Committee 1980). What is also indicated is that, at times, the information provided by DIG was designed to present metal detectors both as numerous – 'at least half a million tax paying supporters' (DIG Committee c.1980) – and therefore a politically significant proportion of the population, but also to provide inaccurate information about STOP, for example claiming that STOP's funding ran to as much as £15,000, when in fact the funds were less than £1000 in mid-1980 (Cleere to Regional Group Secretaries, 14th July 1980). It is hard to tell whether this information was deliberately falsified, or the result of assumptions on the part of DIG about how much money was actually available for archaeological campaigns. However, the regular press releases to media, organisation of democratic protests such as running a rally in Parliament Square, followed by a march to Downing Street to hand in a petition at the Prime Minister's residence (DIG Committee 2003) in 1979, demonstrate that the strategy of DIG was very determined in raising the profile of the metal detecting hobby both in a public sphere and at Government level. This development of the political aspect of DIG's campaign was particularly critical, given the perception of 'Official Archaeology' as having 'its access to the 'corridors of power' in both local and national government' (Hunter 1981: 25). DIG organisers may have also been aware of the political influence of large museums such as the British Museum and the National Museum of Wales, through the involvement of their trustees in Parliamentary debates (e.g. HL Deb, 8th February 1982, col. 30).

Another phenomenon which faced museum archaeologists and curators in the early 1980s was a type of letter which a number of museum archaeologists and curators received, asking about the whether the rumours and recent local news articles were true that local museums were refusing to identify objects brought in by metal-detector users (e.g. Souch, metal-detector user, to Bateman, Oxfordshire Museums, 28th March 1980). It was widely believed that these letters were being used as a prelude to legal action, possibly organised by DIG, and thus care had to be taken by museum staff when replying to them (Sparrow, CBA legal advisor, to Morris, 25th April 1980).

In another example, a letter was published, which readers were asked to detach and send to their local MP demanding the '*immediate investigation*' of public spending on archaeology, to discover '*what the tax-paying public has to show for its money*' (Boudicca 1982: 31). This tactic seems to have had an effect at Parliamentary level, as two Written Answers appeared in the House of Commons in April 1982, (the same month that the letter template was published). These dealt with questions about the cost of

archaeological funding and the output that materialised for that spending (HC Deb, 6th April 1982, col. 319–320; HC Deb, 7th April 1982, col. 365–366).

Treasure Hunting, a magazine for metal-detector users, also contributed a number of provocative articles, some of which were not entirely accurate. Payne's (1979) article 'STOP SCUM (that's you)' misrepresented the title of the STOP campaign, although it is unclear whether this was a deliberate action or the misreading of plans, as SCUM was the acronym for the Standing Conference for Unit Managers (who were on the STOP Committee). That this type of offensive against archaeology could occur, is perhaps an indication not only of the types of strategies employed by metal-detector users to raise their hobby on the political agenda, but also of a wider issue of the interests of the 'public', versus the vested interests of groups classed as 'authorities', such as archaeologists (Skeates 2000: 85), and the apparent failure of professional archaeology to 'take enough notice of the perceptions of the past held by the public' (Stone 1994: 195).

Even some of the publicity developed by the STOP Committee, such as a series of posters designed by Bill Tidy, a popular British cartoonist, were limited in their success due to their limited distribution. STOP Committee meeting minutes and letters from that period indicate that material such as the posters, and also car stickers and badges, were having to be *sold* rather than distributed freely to assist with the financial provision for STOP (e.g. STOP Committee minutes, 3rd October 1980). Despite car stickers and other stickers selling quite well, by December 1980 only a few hundred STOP posters had been sold (STOP Committee minutes, 1st December 1980). If these posters had been distributed for free, one can speculate that more posters would have been visible nationally than only a few hundred, and it is perhaps another issue for archaeology, i.e. funding and sponsorship, that is most to blame for this. It perhaps points to another issue that archaeology has not always been most successful at securing funding and sponsorship, as initial investment would have been needed to cover the costs associated with producing posters or other items for free distribution. Layton (1994: 18), for example, has commented on the importance of gaining public interest and support, since so much in archaeology relies on public spending. The issues of financial support for archaeology can again perhaps be linked back to the success or failure of archaeology to gain public support and understanding, although to raise awareness in the first place in order to gain public interest, as with the visibility of STOP posters, it may just form part of a vicious circle.

One of the most significant legislative victories of the metal-detecting lobbyists still cited decades later (e.g. DIG 2003) was the successful petition against Clause 100 of the Kent Bill. The Bill was 'to re-enact with amendments and to extend certain enactments in force within the county of Kent' (Dyson, Bell & Co, 1979–80: 1). Clause 100 was a provision to grant Kent County Council new powers to control metal detecting, not unlike the ACC and ADC requests to the Home Office for the power to enact byelaws on this matter, already discussed in this chapter. The Clause had three petitions against it, from C-Scope (a metal detector manufacturer), DIG

and a private landowner (STOP Committee minutes, 15th July 1980). One of the results of this defeat was the publicity released by C-Scope (1980), which also cited the exemption of metal detectors from the Wireless and Telegraphy Act 1949 requirement to have a licence as a further victory and 'freedom for individuals' (C-Scope 1980). In the battle to use the media to greatest effect, STOP responded by placing their own positive spin on the removal of metal detector licensing:

Now the licence for metal detectors has been abolished, treasure hunters can no longer claim the spurious respectability of being 'officially licensed by the Government' to carry out their hobby, when in fact the issue of a licence gave no right to extract objects of antiquity from land, whether public or private, without the owner's permission. This will help to make it clear to the public at large that it is archaeologists, not treasure seekers, who are truly interested in recovering the evidence by which we understand and appreciate our country's past. (STOP July 1980)

Another Bill that could have altered matters in favour of archaeology, but was not successful, was the *Antiquities Bill* 1981, known as the *Abinger Bill*, presented to the House of Lords 1982. This Bill had already been pursued in 1979, when it lapsed with the fall of the Labour Party administration (Bennett & Brand 1983: 148). The Bill, 'an act to provide for the better protection of small antiquities discovered in the ground and elsewhere; to amend treasure trove; and for connected purposes' (Abinger 1981), was introduced a second time in 1981 under the Conservative administration, when it again failed. The reasons for the second failure of the Bill were various, but certainly there were connections with the results of the STOP Campaign.. The Bill sought to broaden the categories classed as Treasure Trove, and to remove *animus revertendi* – the 'guessing game, in which one seeks to decide the intention of the person who deposited something in antiquity' (Hanworth 1995: 174). It was successful in the House of Lords, but was finally 'deliberately and cynically killed' in the House of Commons according to Cleere (1984: 57). More recent parliamentary debate suggests that the Abinger Bill failed, 'not because of opposition in either House but because of a lack of parliamentary time' (HC Deb, 8th March 1996, col. 571). However, Halfin (1995: 20) suggested that the Government 'was fearful of the effect... ..on property laws and on the rights of ownership' that the changes listed in the Bill would entail. Whatever really happened, it was not until over a decade later that the treasure trove law was finally discarded and replaced by the *Treasure Act* 1996.

While the metal detector licence from the *Wireless and Telegraphy Act* 1949 was repealed, and it was to be another 16 years until treasure trove was reformed, the archaeological community did experience some success in the 'STOP period' in bringing about legislation to protect archaeological heritage from different threats, from agriculture and town planning, to metal detecting. There had been an *Ancient Monuments Act* from 1913 with several amendments already (HL Deb, 5th February 1979, col. 454). There had also been an attempted prosecution under the 1913 Act of two people accused of 'injuring or defacing a scheduled monument' in connection with the Mildenhall site, but the prosecution had failed (Munro to Dalyell, 14th April

1980), illustrating the Act's weakness. The *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Bill* (AMAA Bill) sought to strengthen and enhance the existing provisions, including pointing to the significance of rescue archaeology (HL Deb, 5th February 1979, col 457). Unlike the *Abinger Bill*, which was a Private Members Bill, the AMAA Bill had Government support, and was devised as a team effort by the DoE, led by Andrew Saunders, the Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings (Cleere, *pers. comm.*, 22nd October 2008). The Bill's origins may also be found in a 1974 consultation document issued by the DoE (Wainwright 2000: 920).

When the Bill was introduced in 1979, the proposed Section 42 in Part III ('Miscellaneous and Supplemental'), which proposed forbidding metal detecting without permission on protected sites and monuments, was significant to the (not yet launched, but certainly planned) STOP Campaign. As Baroness Stedman explained at the debate in the House of Lords at the time of the second reading of the Bill:

The need for this restriction arises from the recent hobby of 'treasure hunting' with the aid of electronic detectors. This can be an innocent pastime, but it can lead to irreparable damage and loss of knowledge. It is not, of course, the detector itself that is harmful but where the metal object it locates is below ground, the action of digging up that object is very likely to be harmful to an archaeological site. This is because the removal of the object from its context, that is the stratum of soil in which it was contained, destroys a relationship that would be significant to a scientific understanding of the site. (HL Deb, 5th February 1979, col. 462–463)

The mention, in the same debate, of developing a strategy to educate treasure hunters may be another reference to the development of STOP, particularly as Baroness Stedman suggested that any work should be led by the CBA and its associated branches and organisations (HL Deb, 5th February 1979, col. 487). However, she also stated that, 'the Department is certainly willing to help as much as it can in the education of treasure-hunters by giving advice or in any other way which is possible' (HL Deb, 5th February 1979, col. 487). This would seem more in line with sentiments of the 1978 THWP draft statement discussed earlier in the chapter, and eventually abandoned ahead of the more hard-lined STOP Campaign.

The Parliamentary debates around the AMAA Bill consistently referred to metal detecting. There were arguments that the use of metal detectors, increased by the growth in popularity of treasure hunting, posed a threat to archaeological sites if not controlled (e.g. HL Deb, 5th February 1979, col. 479; HC Deb, 4th April 1979, col. 1371). On the other hand, statements such as the one below by Arthur Jones MP, indicated that views of advocates of metal detecting were not being ignored either:

It is difficult to say that metal detectors should not be used elsewhere, because they have been instrumental in revealing sites that might not otherwise have come to our notice. (HC Deb, 4th April 1979, col. 1371)

The eventual enactment of the AMAA Act 1979 must have been considered a success, as it had support from Rescue, the CBA, and the wider archaeological community

(Cleere, *pers. comm.*, 22nd October 2008), many of whom were also involved with STOP. While scheduled monuments had some legal protection before, the provision in Part III Section 42, which actually came into force in 1981, made a significant political statement by drawing attention specifically to metal detecting. It also indicated the difficulties faced by most Private Members Bills, such as the *Abinger Bills* and even the 1994 version of the *Treasure Bill*. Government support for the AMAA Bill and indeed the 1996 *Treasure Bill*, which became the current *Treasure Act* 1996, may well have been crucial to their enactment.

Conclusions

The STOP campaign ran for only a brief time, as a letter from Henry Cleere to Mr L.G. Tagg (Commerce and Technical Librarian, Central Library, Newcastle) in early 1983 regarding STOP's inclusion on a mailing list explains:

This campaign was a relatively short-lived joint activity of a number of organisations for a specific purpose. Although it has not been formally dissolved, I think it is fair to say that its work is completed. (Cleere to Tagg, 26th January 1983)

Although STOP had effectively ended by 1983 its repercussions are still felt today. There are certainly metal-detector users still actively pursuing their hobby who remember with genuine sadness the difficulties they faced in the early 1980s, as uncovered by the author during her doctoral research. While many commentators have remarked on the relative failure of STOP to influence public perceptions as successfully as DIG (e.g. Bland 2005; Addyman & Brodie 2002), this chapter has demonstrated that there were nonetheless some successes which can be attributed to STOP. For example, where some observers have criticised the number of different archaeological organisations in existence in England and Wales, let alone the UK as a whole (e.g. Austin 2009: 121), the STOP Committee did at least bring seven of those major organisations together in a united effort. Equally, the ability to gain endorsement from at least 32 quite different organisations, demonstrates that STOP was not without its supporters. The National Trust, for example, was directly influenced by the prevailing views of STOP when it adopted a policy of not allowing metal detecting on its land (Thackray 2001: 21). This policy, based on the view that artefacts were better off left *in situ* in the absence of professional excavation, but not taking into account the threats of modern agriculture, was only questioned twenty years later (Thackray 2001). The insertion into the AMAA Act of legislation specifically prohibiting metal detector use on protected sites was extremely significant.

However, the metal detecting community was also successful in its publicity and political campaigns at this time, and had the support of both a national magazine and metal detector manufacturers such as C-Scope, particularly in its lobbying to drop Clause 100 of the *Kent Bill*. In addition, if DIG claims were true, then half a million Britons were metal detecting in 1979-80 (DIG Committee c.1980), which historically

certainly seems to be the period of the hey day of metal detecting. Ultimately, if there was a battle for public opinion between STOP and DIG, many have claimed that DIG was more successful than STOP (e.g. Bland 2005). As one metal-detector user observed about archaeologists and STOP, ‘they really did think that that would work. Well, we beat them’ (Wood, *pers. comm.*, 20th November 2006).

Drawing comparisons with conclusions drawn by Stone (1994: 201) from the survey of four English urban areas in 1983-4, more people would appear to have been interested in, or at least to have been able to have the opportunity of, accessing the past through the metal detecting hobby (whether their motives were to learn about that past, or to make money out of it), than in accessing it through information provided by professional archaeologists. This was in part due to the failure of archaeologists to ‘disseminate their findings widely and in an acceptable form’ (Stone 1994: 201). The 1978 Joint Statement, rejected by the majority of MA and CBA officials, which looked to opening a dialogue with metal-detector users rather than trying to ‘stop’ them, is a case in point. The statement and the proposed code of conduct were even welcomed by at least some contemporaries, who seemed to have been more aware of this lack of public communication in archaeology: ‘In essence, I feel that the metal detector problem is merely a symptom of a general failure by archaeologists to communicate with non-specialists...’ (Kerr to Cleere, 11th May 1978).

It is worth noting that in 2006 a code of practice, the *Code of Practice on Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales* (CBA *et al.*), was launched – almost 30 years after the THWP’s initial attempt, mentioned in this chapter. Other metal-detector user-led codes of practice or conduct exist, devised by the NCMD and the FID (2008 and 1996 respectively). Ostensibly, and certainly compared to the era of STOP, the achievement of 2006 *Code of Practice* of garnering support from both archaeological and metal detecting bodies, albeit only applicable for England and Wales, seems impressive indeed. While there are some limitations in its actual application, it is particularly significant when placed in the context of so many other codes and regulations devised by different heritage and Government organisations that affect metal detecting, such as the English Heritage advice leaflet for ‘Users of Metal Detectors’ concerning Scheduled Ancient Monuments and protected archaeological areas (1985). Austin (2009: 121) suggests that these different regulations and guidelines, especially if produced without consultation with the NCMD and other metal detecting organisations, are counter-productive, and that the Portable Antiquities Scheme, as an archaeological organisation with a tradition since 1997 of cooperating with metal-detector users across England and Wales, should be the main channel for communication between archaeologists and metal-detector users:

I want to send a clear message to all these bureaucrats: ‘get off our case’, leave the responsible hobby alone. You are preventing serious co-operation by trying to inflict archaeological controls; matters that relate to the detecting hobby should be channelled through the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The Scheme had already succeeded in gaining our confidence while you were messing about formulating rulebooks! (Austin 2009: 121)

Austin's comments indicate, certainly from the perspective of the metal detecting hobby, that the multiplicity of professional archaeology and its various agencies and organisations, and the failure at times of these different organisations to coordinate their strategies, especially regarding interfaces with the public, is not only potentially confusing but may even have a negative effect on developing relationships with different communities and stakeholders.

The issue of communication between archaeologists and metal-detector users has nonetheless improved, with '*closer integration and mutual understanding*' favoured in more recent times (Hodder 1999: 7). Ultimately, the question of professional archaeologists' abilities to engage with the public at large is the bigger question of which metal detecting is only one part. This is something which the current *zeitgeist* of 'community archaeology', if practised in a fully inclusive and sensitive manner, has the potential to address.

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