Lord Rupert Redesdale,
c/o All Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group
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Delivered by email.

29 April 2024

Re: CIfA response to APPAG Inquiry on Archaeology and Metal-detecting

Dear Lord Redesdale,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this inquiry. CIfA's answers to the inquiry's questions are as follows:

1. *What are the main factors contributing to better relations between archaeologists (whether academic, commercial, community, museum-based, organisational etc) and metal-detectors users (both independent and within detecting organisations), and how could these be advanced further?*

   CIfA welcomes opportunities for communities of interest to interact over a shared interest in the investigation and study of the physical remains of the past. We welcome groups, activities, and events which further an ethical approach to this investigation and study. Sharing understandings, CPD, and a passion for the past are all valuable. Visible authorities for archaeology and metal detecting must encourage a deepening of a shared commitment to good ethics and practice, possibly by adherence to standards. CIfA supports the Detectorist Institute & Foundation (DIF) but notes that, at present, it is a very new organisation, with limited reach and reputation with the majority of detectorists.

   The perception of past cultural differences between archaeologist and metal detectorist communities – while by no means all-encompassing – does mean that there are certain barriers to seamless relations. For example, while some members of the metal detecting community may be able to subscribe to archaeological ethics, there remains a too great focus in the law, policy, practice and promotion of hobbyist metal detecting, on the financial value of finds, along with principles like 'treasure hunting' which are anathema to archaeological ethics. For instance, CIfA members are obliged to voluntarily 'forego

reward of payment based on the market value of any material they find or assess' and must 'discourage focus on the potential sale value of archaeologically significant objects'.

2. *What is the role of hobby metal-detecting (as a research tool) in the context of advancing our understanding of the archaeology and history of Britain, and how does that link with professional and non-professional archaeology?*

Metal detectors are one of many remote-sensing technologies that are used in archaeology, and like all others they work best when they are in the hands of skilled users. When archaeologists and detectorists work together, they need to understand what the potential of the techniques are and what are the questions they could best be used to answer.

Metal-detecting is recognised by many of CIfA's Registered Organisations as a valuable research tool in archaeological work and has been shown to significantly increase the recovery rate of metal objects, and thus can help many projects to better address research aims. These professional archaeological companies employ metal detecting as part of investigatory methodologies in development-led work in a variety of ways, including working with trusted avocational practitioners.

3. *How should access to metal-detected finds (especially those in private collections) be facilitated, for both the wider public and academic study?*

CIfA supports the principle that PAS should protect significant metal-detected finds by ensuring that they are accessioned into public collections. This cannot be the case with all finds, and to this end greater encouragement or requirement for finders to report finds through PAS is required. We do not currently have a view on whether finds in private collections should be made more accessible for public views, but we support the fostering of a sense of common purpose and collective benefit resulting from the archaeological object and collections. As such, we would welcome efforts to provide collectors with information about facilitating access for public view or research of privately held collections.

4. *What is the relationship between metal-detecting and other forms of community archaeology, and how could closer cooperation be encouraged?*

We believe that there is much to encourage in terms of engagement between metal detecting and community archaeology. Engagement opportunities, such as the annual Council for British Archaeology Festival of Archaeology should target metal detecting communities, and shared CPD events should be encouraged.

In addition, while archaeology's structure as a commercial industry and academic field of study may historically have been responsible for some of the cultural dislocation with metal detecting communities, in an era of community engagement with archaeology in the planning system, and community impact in academia, we see opportunities to deepen relationships in these areas as well.

5. *How do we better promote responsible metal-detecting, and what are the roles of archaeological bodies, landowners, detecting organisations and those that organise events for detectorists, such as those organising detecting holidays and rallies?*

CIfA is supportive of the Institute for Detectorists (now the Detectorists' Institute & Foundation (DIF)) which has developed training, and guidance to better explain good-practice to detectorists. We encourage membership of DIF and the ongoing development of relationships with CIfA, CBA and other archaeological bodies.

We would, however, support greater regulation of metal detecting rallies and holidays to ensure that these events – which have the potential to have a proportionally significant impact on archaeological remains on a site – are appropriately controlled and archaeological finds recorded and analysed.

6. *How could archaeologists better facilitate the use of metal-detectorists (and the wider public) in archaeological projects, and what are the barriers to that? Might it be possible to develop and promote methodologies for systematic metal-detecting surveys?*

Metal-detecting is used in archaeological projects in a variety of ways. Its continued use as one of many tools available to archaeological contractors will be dependent upon the nature of the site and project. Nonetheless, CIfA recognises that the practice of topsoil stripping for archaeological investigation – which provides an opportunity to employ metal detecting as it often contains a lot of information – could be encouraged to be more consistently applied.

7. *How do archaeologists, metal-detectorists and others work together to better acknowledge best practice? What is the role of museums (for example) and other publicly funded bodies in highlighting the positive contribution of metal-detecting?*

CIfA currently sits on the advisory committee of the Detectorists' Institute & Foundation (DIF) which has an objective of upskilling metal detector users to improve the position contribution and public benefit. As previously stated, better opportunities for local archaeology societies and metal detecting clubs to engage and be supported by organisations providing training and good practice resources are needed.

8. *How have museums benefitted from detector finds, and how could mechanisms be improved to enable museums to acquire more public finds?*

The archaeological record has been significantly enhanced by the volume of information obtained as a result of the reporting of metal-detecting finds through PAS. Strain on the system as a result of limit resources, itself a result of increased popularity of metal detecting, or increased use of the scheme, may limit the effectiveness of PAS to secure the acquisition of all objects of sufficient significance. It will be imperative that resources for PAS keep pace with this growth if the system is to remain effective.

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9. *What should happen to archaeological finds found through metal-detecting not acquired by museums? How can metal-detectorists be encouraged and supported to document their collections and plan for when they can no longer look after them?*

No comment.

Yours sincerely,

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