

## **Chapter 9: Conclusions**

This thesis has analysed the relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users in England and Wales, using data from both historical and contemporary sources. Conclusions can be drawn about how this relationship has developed over the past decades. This final chapter goes over the main points that have been identified and analysed throughout the thesis. Firstly, the research questions are revisited, and tentative answers are offered. Secondly, in Table 6, the aims are revisited, with explanations of how each was achieved, and which chapters were most significant for each. Next, the theoretical contexts, which were introduced in Chapter 1, are reviewed. Other significant findings of the thesis, particularly regarding historical and contemporary contexts are then discussed, before recommendations are made for future research and future directions for the relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users. The thesis ends with some final concluding observations.

### **9.1 Answering the research questions**

In Chapter 1, three research questions were identified, which the thesis has attempted to answer. The research questions guiding the thesis are listed again in turn, with specific responses to demonstrate how the thesis has answered each of them:

- 1. What attempts have archaeologists and archaeological organisations made in the past in England and Wales to control the impact of metal-detector users on archaeologically sensitive sites, and how have these influenced current legislation, educational initiatives and parameters for discussion?**

The thesis has addressed this question by analysing the reactions of archaeologists to metal detecting, through archival evidence, literature review, and interviews. This research has incorporated material from even before the emergence of the hobby, through the decidedly hostile stance taken towards treasure hunting before and during the STOP Campaign (see Chapters 4 and 5), to the opportunism demonstrated in converting the negative events at Wanborough to impetus for legislative change (see Chapter 6). The effect of the looting at Wanborough, as well as at other sites as

identified by Dobinson and Denison's (1995) report, were to highlight the need for legislative change. They also highlighted the need for greater opportunity to be available for the recording of portable antiquities, and for the delivery of education about the effects of so-called 'irresponsible' metal detecting, particularly nighthawking, on archaeological heritage. Many more factors were also significant in influencing why the *Treasure Bill* and PAS would come to fruition where earlier attempts such as the *Abinger Bills* failed. These included the determination of the Surrey Archaeological Society, the involvement and support of major heritage organisations such as the British Museum and the CBA, and, in what was a perhaps a turning point for fate the planned Bill, the discourse with metal-detector users that was employed (see Chapter 6). The work of Brian Hope-Taylor, discussed in Chapter 4, reminds us that there was nonetheless awareness, even years before metal detecting became popular, that members of the public were making chance discoveries, and that it would be desirable for a mechanism to be developed in order to deal with these finds and facilitate public involvement and education.

There are still attempts to control, or at least influence, the impact of metal detecting on the archaeological heritage, but collaboration is now considered vital. A key example of this is the *Code of practice for responsible metal detecting in England and Wales* (CBA *et al.* 2006), which included involvement from representatives from both archaeological and metal detecting organisations. Chapter 7 has demonstrated that there is still an element of suspicion among some metal-detector users towards archaeologists. Certain interviews carried out for this thesis (e.g. Cleere, *pers comm.*, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006; Fowler, *pers. comm.*, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2006), and the contributions of some participants on email discussion forums such as *Britarch*, suggest that this is reciprocated by archaeologists in some cases. However, the majority of interactions seem to indicate that a more inclusive approach is taken now than at any time before. This is perhaps indicative of changes brought about in archaeological thinking by considerations that are inspired by post-processualism and post-colonialism of 'other' interpretations for archaeological material and places, and by the assertion of public and community archaeologies (see Chapter 1 for discussion of these points).

**2. What effect have these actions had on the metal detecting hobby, in terms of the development of its infrastructure, national organisation, and acknowledgement of responsibility towards heritage in England and Wales?**

The effect of these actions on the metal detecting hobby, the subject of the second question, can be seen historically, with the development of the NCMD, DIG, the FID and, later, the UKDN, as bodies through which enthusiasts of the hobby could communicate both politically and popularly. Earlier activities of these organisations, the earliest of which were smaller organisations such as the Amateur Treasure Hunters Association, formed around 1970 and the British Treasure Hunting Association (see Chapter 5) were largely organised at local levels. However, the formation of the NCMD, and, not long after, DIG, seem to have been reactive to archaeological objections towards metal detecting, which convinced metal-detector users and manufacturers that they needed a means of achieving national representation for the hobby, whether in relation to decision-makers, or for coordinating publicity. Evidence of these groups' significant influence can be seen historically in examples such as the successful petition against Clause 100 of the *Kent Bill* in 1980 (see Chapter 5, Section 5.8).

One of the most vocal organisations currently representing metal detecting in the UK is the United Kingdom Detector Net (UKDN), which hosts online discussion forums and regular newsletters. Its, at times, vocal support for PAS and largely positive attitude towards archaeologists demonstrate the acknowledged need for cooperation, which in turn suggests an understanding for the potential of metal-detected finds to make a significant contribution to knowledge about archaeology, if recorded appropriately. This is not to suggest that all metal-detector users in the past were knowingly 'irresponsible', (although definition of this term is itself open to debate), or even that they did not necessarily understand the implications of their actions. Evidence from counties such as Norfolk demonstrates that metal-detector users have a relatively long history of cooperation with archaeologists in some regions. In addition, evidence from some of the interviews suggest that many more were willing to record their finds in the past, but found that local heritage professionals were unwilling to communicate with them (e.g. Austin, *pers. comm.*, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2007). Certainly

the educational role of PAS has been vital in helping to increase awareness among finders of the informational significance of archaeological material, and this has been commented on in reviews of the scheme (e.g. Chitty and Edwards 2004: 3). However, the foundation of the United Kingdom Detector Finds Database (UKDFD), which in some ways rivals PAS as a database where metal-detected material can be recorded, has caused concern among some (see Chapter 8). From another perspective, the fact that some metal-detector users may feel empowered sufficiently to establish ‘their own’ finds database may in fact be an indirect result of the efforts of PAS and other organisations to educate metal-detector users about the importance of recording information.

Nighthawking and other illicit activity remains an issue, as results from Chapter 8 (Section 8.2), the publication of Oxford Archaeology’s (2009a) report, and even recent news reports<sup>22</sup> demonstrate. That Oxford Archaeology (2009a: 103) concluded that nighthawking is decreasing, however, may be further evidence of a change in attitudes, although Chapter 1 discusses some of the flaws with the report’s data collection.

### **3. What conclusions can be drawn from the past relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users to inform the development of better communication between the two groups in the future?**

The reaction to recent threats to PAS’ funding among many metal-detector users (described in Chapter 8) may demonstrate a positive shift in the relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users, especially when compared to earlier attempts to malign the spending of public funding for archaeology (see Chapter 5, Section 5.7). Without doubt, this change has been a direct result of increased engagement with and by the archaeological community. This has been achieved in the case of metal-detector users primarily through PAS but also across other heritage organisations, especially if the current focus on the positive outcomes of ‘community archaeology’ and other forms of outreach are anything to go by.

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<sup>22</sup> *The Times*, on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009, reported the conviction of a metal-detector user for selling fake coins: “He used legitimate digs to “discover” fake items before passing them off as genuine antiquities” (Brown 2009).

Therefore, the undeniable improvement of relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users may also be symptomatic of other shifts in archaeological perspectives, the discipline, and practitioners' greater awareness of a need to consider the importance of public involvement and inclusion in archaeological activities and the archaeological debate. This was commented on in detail in Chapter 1, Sections 1.2 and 1.8. As some authors have commented, however, there is still room for improvement in the balance of relationships between heritage professionals and the wider community (e.g. Smith and Waterton 2009: 139). Some of the comments collected from the surveys analysed in Chapter 7 also suggest that the simple fact that relationships were more troubled in previous decades have led a minority of metal-detector users to continue to consider archaeologists as 'the enemy', despite the existence of organisations such as PAS. Other reviews specifically of PAS have also suggested that more could still be done to improve the communication skills in some areas of the scheme's work (e.g. Clark 2008: 7, and see Chapter 8, Section 8.5).

## **9.2 How the aims were achieved**

Table 6, below, shows each aim, the way in which it was achieved, and signposts to the chapter where this aim was primarily tackled. This is done with the acknowledgement that there is some inevitable overlap between the aims dealt with in each of the chapters, and between the research methods employed.

**Table 6 Aims shown with ways in which they were achieved in the thesis**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Key research methods</b>	<b>Chapter where primarily expressed</b>
1	To place the research questions within an historic overview of wider issues and challenges surrounding metal detecting, including the licit and illicit trade in antiquities in other countries, providing a platform for identifying challenges facing the treatment of portable antiquities and metal detecting in England and Wales.	Literature review and interviews with key individuals.	Chapter 3
2	To research the history of campaigns and activities carried out by archaeologists and archaeological organisations in England and Wales with respect to metal detecting	Research of archival material that came from the CBA and other sources. Interviews with key individuals connected with both archaeology and metal detecting yielded additional information, and evidence was drawn partially from the surveys and observations of metal-detector users and metal detecting clubs.	Chapters 4, 5 and 6
3	To assess current opinion among both archaeologists and metal-detector users, regarding the issues surrounding metal detecting and archaeology in England and Wales	Questionnaire surveys of metal-detector users, metal detecting clubs, FLOs and museum visitors. Extra information came from literature, as well as from interviews with key individuals connected with both archaeology and metal detecting.	Chapters 7 and 8
4	To draw conclusions regarding the future development of relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users England and Wales	All the other aims as described above, consolidated.	Chapter 9

### **9.3 Reviewing the theoretical contexts**

Chapter 1 introduced the theoretical contexts of the thesis, which have underpinned the whole of the research. In particular, it has been acknowledged that this thesis has not examined archaeology in an empirical sense. While archaeological material has not been analysed, the focus has instead been on those participating and interacting with archaeological heritage, principally metal-detector users and archaeologists themselves, and on the relationships between these two groups.

This analysis of ‘process’ rather than ‘product’ has been compared to recent research into eco-museology (e.g. Corsane *et al.* 2007). In addition, it is indicative of post-processual philosophies such as the employment of reflexivity and of ethnographic elements, as advocated by Edgeworth (2006), Hodder (2000), and others. This is while acknowledging that the ethnographic components of the research have not been as extensive as some other ethnographic studies, for example in terms of the amount of time spent with individuals involved in metal detecting (see Chapter 2, Section 2.6). This was due to time constraints on how long could be spent among metal-detector users (for example, a weekend at a rally rather than a whole year in their company), and the fact that other research methods were also employed for the thesis, which was not primarily an ethnographic exercise.

As suggested in the response to Research Question 3, above, and in the previous chapters, the analysis of the relationships archaeologists and metal-detector users also fits into a wider research area concerning the development of public and community archaeology. Chapter 1 has discussed the current interest in widening participation and inclusion in the archaeological process, which arguably has been influenced by post-processual perspectives on archaeology. This also relates to the historical development of archaeology, and is reiterated below in Section 9.4

The historical analysis of the relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users in England and Wales has involved the examination of historical sources and the input from different individuals through interview. Hence, the principles associated with hermeneutics; especially in understanding the different ideologies of the producers of the archival sources were essential for the analysis of the historical

context. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4, the importance (and definition) of primary sources for historical research has been discussed. The most significant findings of both the historical and the contemporary research are summarised below in Section 9.4

Another important element of the research has been the consideration of ethics. For this reason, Chapter 3 in particular addressed the wider issues of the repercussions of the trade in antiquities, and explored how other countries have engaged with treasure hunters and looters. As Hollowell has explained (2006a: 69), it is essential for researchers to understand the perspectives of other groups that interact with archaeological heritage, including those perceived by archaeologists as looters. For this reason, the thesis has attempted to move beyond regarding metal-detector users in England and Wales as potential nighthawks or looters, and engaged with their own motivations, interests, and concerns. This has happened while remaining mindful of the genuine threats to archaeological heritage, both in England and Wales and internationally.

The thesis has also explored, particularly through the last two chapters that dealt with contemporary issues through the direct interaction with hundreds of questionnaire interviewees, the concept of ‘social capital’. This has also been visible in the historical chapters, for example the relatively good relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users in East Anglia, without doubt assisted by the work of Tony Gregory and others in their creation of social inroads and networks with the metal detecting community. Significantly, social capital was developed by the actual researcher, perhaps identifiable through the ethnographic notion of ‘gatekeepers’ (see Chapter 2) that enabled access to further information, from privately-held archive collections through to permission to attend metal detecting rallies, where much of the material for Chapter 7 in particular was collected.

However, the researcher also recognises that the social ‘standing’ and ‘cultural capital’ related to status and perceived status is a huge topic in itself, and perhaps one that warrants future research in relation to archaeologists and metal-detector users as a separate, principle topic. This, along with other recommendations for future research, is discussed later in this chapter.

#### **9.4 Historical and contemporary relationships**

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 presented and analysed the historical context to the relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users in England and Wales, including evidence about heritage professionals' concerns with the public's actions on portable antiquities from before metal detecting had even emerged. They have shown that, from the inception of the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) in the 1940s, the protection of archaeological material in Britain was considered of key importance. The prioritisation of this protection included identifying concerns about a potential market for artefacts, tackled by attempts to strengthen export-licensing rules, and of course concern with different forms of treasure hunting, such as searches for flint objects and even American Servicemen allegedly approaching agricultural workers in search of Anglo-Saxon brooches in the 1950s.

Chapter 5 described how metal detecting emerged fully as a pursuit accessible to the public in the mid to late 1960s, with some metal detecting clubs even apparently surviving from that period until the present day (see Chapter 7). This is earlier than some other reports have suggested (e.g. Dobinson and Denison 1995). Despite, or perhaps even slightly because of, early overtures from metal detector manufacturers for cooperation, major archaeological organisations such as the CBA viewed metal detecting with suspicion. A draft statement that acknowledged the interest in archaeology held by many metal-detector users and that suggested giving them the opportunity to collaborate with local archaeological organisations was rejected by archaeologists in 1978, and anti-treasure hunting campaigns throughout the 1970s culminated in the nationwide STOP Campaign in 1980. This campaign aimed at persuading public opinion that the growing use of metal detectors constituted a major threat to the archaeological heritage, which should instead be safeguarded “*for the good of present and future generations*” (CBA 1980: 1). Not unlike Hope-Taylor's draft proposals in the 1940s, the emphasis of the message of STOP seemed to be that particularly professional archaeologists (although amateur archaeological societies were not excluded in the case of STOP), were placed in the position of ‘guardian’ of the archaeological heritage on behalf of the wider public. This also reflects early approaches to cultural resource management, with the professional archaeologist effectively acting as custodian and interpreter of the archaeological resource. As

discussed in Chapter 1, the advent and enhancement of the concepts of public and community archaeology has shifted ‘ownership’ of and participation in archaeology towards the wider public. In some ways, the more recent engagement with metal-detector users on a national level by such as PAS has mirrored and formed part of these developments.

That is not to say that single and regional events and developments have not also had their impact on the course of the history of relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users. The significance of individuals with pioneering approaches towards cooperation with metal-detector users in the recording of their finds, as was experienced in East Anglia through the work of Gregory and Green (1978), was clearly significant for later developments. The Director of PAS has even acknowledged this work as providing the model for PAS (Bland 2005b: 442), and a Norfolk-based metal detecting club (see Chapter 7) has specifically testified to the history of good relationships in that county. A particular incident, and the way in which its repercussions were utilised, even exploited, to lead to legislative change, is exemplified the nighthawking of the temple site at Wanborough in 1983. Chapter 6 has demonstrated the significance of that site as an opportunity, as well as a tragedy, for British archaeology.

However, the story has not simply been one of influential archaeologists and high profile looting cases. The severity of tone taken by STOP may have underestimated the public perception and understanding of, and hence sympathy for, the archaeological point of view concerning metal detecting and heritage protection (e.g. Hodder 1984: 29). Yet, it also arguably triggered the coordination of metal detecting manufacturers and hobbyists into organisations such as DIG and the NCMD, lending their cause a more convincing voice as far as politicians and the media were concerned, than that which they had had before. Hence, archaeologists attempted to maintain a significant political influence through prominent politicians such as Lord Renfrew (e.g. HL Deb, 9<sup>th</sup> March 1994, col. 1487) and Lord Redesdale (as secretary of the All Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group), as well high profile organisations such as the British Museum and the National Museum of Wales (e.g. HL Deb, 8<sup>th</sup> February 1982, col. 30). Meanwhile, metal-detector users became increasingly able to organise their own political lobbying, often at a grass roots level through the

encouragement of metal-detector users to write to their MPs, and through the national coordination of regional groups through the NCMD. In such an environment, it is arguable that the development of an outreach-based organisation that encourages involvement on a voluntary basis, such as PAS, (rather than more stringent action through enactment of new legislation), was the only logical way forward.

The activities of PAS have dominated current debate about archaeology and metal detecting in England and Wales. However, as Chapters 7 and 8 have shown, while it appears to engage with the majority of metal-detector users on some level, and is regarded a successful system by many, by no means are all metal-detector users engaging with PAS. Nor are all of those who do engage, doing so at an optimum level, for example, with respect to the level of National Grid Reference detail that they provide (Vomvyla 2008).

Chapter 8 demonstrated that, even in recent times, there have been question marks over the future of PAS. Like many heritage organisations, its future is dependent on the provision of adequate public funding, and ultimately on decision-makers at Government level. The support forthcoming from both archaeologists and metal-detector users in 2007-8, when the continuation of PAS seemed threatened by the ring-fencing of funds by MLA, demonstrated the strong feeling of many that losing the scheme would constitute a disaster, perhaps with relationships deteriorating rather than improving as a result. On the subject of improving or deteriorating relationships, it will be interesting to observe over the next few years whether the recent report into nighthawking (Oxford Archaeology 2009a and 2009b) will have any impact.

The focus on outreach ideas and the inclusion and education of different members of the public, (in the case of the *Buried Treasure: Building Bridges* conference described in Chapter 8, the metal detecting community in particular), is an approach that is common in current archaeological and heritage practices (e.g. Corbishley 2004: 71). The fact that PAS itself developed is in some ways a reflection of the broader recognition by the heritage and museum sector, including archaeologists, of the importance of communicating with the public who may have an interest in the past and allowing that public an opportunity for participation.

Nevertheless, PAS is not the only medium through which interaction, or even finds recording takes place. The UKDFD has been discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. Although it has been criticised by some archaeologists, and is much smaller in its reach than PAS at present, it should not be ignored by researchers of archaeological material recorded by metal-detector users as a potential source for information. In addition, evidence from the surveys indicates that metal-detector user involvement in archaeological fieldwork is not uncommon. With increased emphasis on wider community involvement in archaeology, and the hypothesis that increased involvement with archaeologists may lead to increased understanding and cooperation on both sides, it is hoped that inclusion of metal-detector users in archaeological work will continue and even increase. Yet this has to happen in a sympathetic manner if relationships are to improve rather than worsen, as negative experiences documented in Chapter 7 have demonstrated that metal-detector users are aware when they have not been included in certain aspects of a field project, such as the withholding of the project's results. As with the recommended selection of appropriate individuals to work as FLOs (Clark 2008: 7), interaction needs to be carried out on the part of the archaeologists by individuals with adequate social and communication skills.

Yet, there are still issues to address. Over the years, anxiety has been raised on a number of occasions about the availability of information from SMRs, in light of the records' vulnerability with regard to abuse by nighthawks and others (e.g. STOP Committee minutes, 15<sup>th</sup> July 1980). In Chapter 1, the apparent obliviousness to the law that concerns scheduled sites by some was mentioned. The current transparency concerning the location of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) (see English Heritage 2006; Cadw 2002), is a different approach than vetting all potential enquiries, as was suggested in the height of the STOP Campaign (STOP Committee minutes, 15<sup>th</sup> July 1980). This change is perhaps partly indicative of a change in attitudes towards the motivations of those who may wish to know the location of SAMs, although there is still possibly little enforcement when offences are committed concerning the disturbance of scheduled areas, as highlighted by Oxford Archaeology (2009a: 53).

A similar issue regarding public disclosure of locations of finds came about from the reporting of chance finds through PAS, with concerns from both archaeologists and

metal-detector users for the implications of making public the find spots of many artefacts. The development of PAS was analysed in Chapter 6. This particular point is cited here to remark on parallels between the concerns of archaeologists about disclosing scheduled site locations to metal-detector users and later shared concerns about the disclosure of metal-detected finds locations, although their motivations for protecting the location of the find spots have different roots. For example, an archaeologist may be concerned that publicising the location of an interesting find might lead to more destructive treasure hunting of the area before an archaeological investigation could be carried out. A metal-detector user may also fear this, but their concern might rather be motivated by a wish to protect a lucrative site from rival metal-detector users, or by a wish not to betray the trust of a cooperative landowner. There might even be the fear that the land would in turn become scheduled or the subject of an excavation, which would almost certainly lead to the metal-detector user's exclusion from searching that site ever again.

Another very significant indication from the thesis is that metal detecting may in fact be in decline. Further research would be needed into past and present metal-detector users (see Chapter 7 conclusions) to gain a better picture of just how many metal-detector users have taken up the hobby more recently, as compared to previous years, and how long individuals tend to continue with it, and to verify this particular observation.

## **9.5 Recommendations and areas for future research**

For the English and Welsh (and more broadly, the British) situation, other than the work presented here, much other current PhD research into metal detecting impact on archaeology still focuses on the product (the archaeological data) rather than the process (the individuals and relationships involved). This issue has already been discussed earlier. Hence, there are still many areas within contemporary archaeologist/metal-detector user relationships where research could be extended, and where findings from this thesis could be extended and built upon.

With regard to the historical context of the current relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users, the thesis has made a significant contribution by analysing material held by the CBA and others that effectively charts the reactions of professional archaeologists to the emergence and development of metal detecting, as described above. However, other individuals and organisations without doubt hold yet more archival material. Further historical research incorporating material from Rescue, or the Museums Association, for example, could shed further light on the views of other stakeholders in the STOP Campaign. Research at the National Archives, especially as more material becomes available each year – a document held in Public Record Office becomes an accessible “*historical record*” after 30 years (*Freedom of Information Act 2000*, Part IV Section 62 – OPSI 2009) – could perhaps indicate, for example, why such Bills as the *Abinger Bill* failed, despite apparent widespread support. The extent and nature of metal-detector user political lobbying as compared to that carried out by archaeological organisations could also be analysed.

Most have acknowledged the role of archaeologists in East Anglia in developing a conciliatory but pragmatic approach to working with metal-detector users (e.g. Addyman 2009: 58). Initial enquiries by the researcher indicate that at least some archive exists in Norfolk that might shed further light on just how and why this developed, which are not believed to have been studied as of yet (Gurney, *pers. comm.*, 2006). Hence, this would prove another significant avenue for continuing an enquiry into the history of relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users.

Another stakeholder group not targeted in the thesis is the metal detector manufacturers. It is not known the extent to which existing companies would possess archival records of sales statistics and relevant correspondences, nor whether they would permit access to a researcher. If records do exist and are accessible, then there is clearly the potential to investigate the historical and contemporary role of this group.

Further research into contemporary metal detecting relationships with archaeologists could continue to apply ethnographic methods. For example, the researcher

recommended in a conference paper on evaluating the Durobrivae (Water Newton) metal detecting rally (made available online in 2007 and presented in early 2008) that:

*“...similar evaluations of metal detecting rallies over a number of years could potentially indicate whether metal detecting attitudes towards archaeology and archaeological participation were changing, and whether more could be done to communicate and co-operate with this particular ‘community’”.*

(Thomas 2007)

The research undertaken for this thesis into metal-detector users at metal detecting rallies could also be extended to observing and surveying participants at charity rallies, rather than only at commercial rallies as had happened for the thesis. As mentioned in Chapters 2 and 7, the intention had been to attend charity rallies as well originally, and so this would form a logical route for extension of the research. As well as adding weight to the data already collected, by increasing the total number of individual metal-detector users interviewed, comparisons could be drawn between commercial and charity rally attendees, as already suggested in Chapter 7, Section 7.1. Given that the surveys began in 2006, the survey results could also be monitored for changes in response types over time, as mentioned above. Chapter 7 (Section 7.5) also included recommendations that more detailed research into the years in which current and past metal-detector users took up the hobby could take place. This could provide verification for, or else challenge, the hypothesis made in this thesis that such data will reflect trends suggested in the historical evidence that metal detecting was at its most popular in the 1970s and early 1980s, and may in fact now be in decline. Greater use of analysis techniques that utilise the postcode data collected could also be the subject of future research, and further survey work may add more accuracy to estimates of current numbers of metal-detector users.

Several other researchers have visited metal detecting clubs as part of their studies (Ferguson *in prep.*; Vomvyla 2008). However, this has not been done, to the researcher’s knowledge, as a specifically ethnographic exercise, and so this could be a potential avenue for further research, mirroring Goddard’s work (*in prep.*) with pot-hunting communities in South West USA. This could (and perhaps should) be

extended to observing club and individual searches, which would be smaller than the metal detecting rallies visited for the thesis, and would show some different aspects to the behaviours and interactions of metal-detector users, particularly within their immediate community of club or society. Further research into relationships between metal detecting clubs and PAS could also build in initial findings by Vomvyla (2008) concerning the effect of the attitude of the club's chair towards PAS on the overall relationship between the club and PAS. Here, ethnographic techniques could again be employed to observe interactions between club members and the FLO.

Chapter 2 introduced the suggestion that observing participants may in fact affect their behaviour (e.g. Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 18). It is feasible that a metal detecting club's behaviour on a group search would potentially alter in the presence of an observer, particularly one that was from an archaeological background (although, as experienced on informal visits to metal detecting clubs, the gender and age of the observer may also have an affect). This should not necessarily be regarded as a limitation however, as the effect of an archaeological presence on a club dig, as well as keeping note of instances where observation might not be permitted, would be of interest in itself. The presence of an archaeologist on a metal detecting club search, particularly if in an observational capacity (without intervention in the techniques used by the metal-detector users on site), might be regarded as controversial, and could even be interpreted by some as an indirect sanction of metal-detector user activity and methodology. However, a researcher from an archaeological background need not necessarily carry out the future research. The ethical justification for accompanying metal detecting clubs on club searches would be that understanding metal-detector user motivations and behaviour better would ultimately lead to better means for communication, returning to concepts of social and cultural capital, and thus perhaps to metal detecting field methods that were agreeable to more individuals from both groups.

Metal-detector users could be observed in future research in environments such as rallies and club contexts, mirroring the observations of archaeological excavations, and the social activities connected with them, from ethnographic and reflexive perspectives (such as the papers edited and presented by Hodder, 2000). In addition,

these types of observations could also be carried out at excavations where metal-detector users are incorporated as part of the excavation team.

It would also be useful to use focus groups with metal-detector users, particularly in different parts of the country to test the hypothesis that relationships with archaeologists vary based on historical background. For example, it might be expected that East Anglia would experience very positive relationships due to the long history of working together (e.g. Scole Archaeological Unit 1978, Green and Gregory 1978). The North East of England, on the other hand, is a region where there is only a relatively recent history of metal-detector users and archaeologists cooperating and communicating (Collins, *pers. comm.*, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2006; Walton, *pers. comm.*, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2003), and parts of Wales experience much lower PAS interaction than England (see Chapter 8, Section 8.5). Focus groups could apply to groups consisting of metal-detector users, but perhaps also to groups of archaeologists, including (but not only) FLOs, and to groups consisting of both metal-detector users *and* archaeologists.

Given that the thesis has focussed on England and Wales, it would be hoped that, whether for contemporary or historical research, any of the research presented in the thesis or suggested in this section could also be applied to or carried out in Scotland, Northern Ireland, or the UK Crown Dependencies. While there is not an equivalent to PAS in these parts of the UK, there is nonetheless the potential to carry out relevant archival research, to observe archaeologist/metal-detector user interactions and activities and to explore current relationships under existing legislation.

Some researchers in other countries are currently looking at non-professionals and their relationships to archaeologists and artefacts, such as Goddard (*in prep.*) and McGill (*in prep.*) both of whom study different treasure-hunting and antiquity-collecting communities in the USA. Collaboration with such researchers, and international comparisons in general, could yield interesting comparisons between different countries, ranging from legal parameters and professional and governmental attitudes, through to the opinions and activities of the treasure hunters themselves.

## **9.6 Final conclusions**

This thesis charted and analysed the relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users in England and Wales. Multiple sources and research methods have been used, borrowing from historical research as well as anthropological and sociological techniques. It has been the mainstay of the thesis that both historical and contemporary data is necessary to understand the current situation, since actions in the recent past can have a direct impact on contemporary issues. Table 6 revisited the Aims of the thesis, showing the research methods that were employed to achieve them, and the chapters in which they were mainly (but not exclusively) dealt with.

With regard to the relationships themselves, it is clear that there is still a mixture of opinions to be found, in both archaeological and metal detecting communities. It is also quite possible that the use of the metal detector in archaeological fieldwork as a survey tool has been limited due to the connotations associated with it.

Interaction in contemporary times occur mostly, although not exclusively, through PAS. While this model has been criticised by some as too lenient, and even as something that has empowered metal-detector users further than some archaeologists feel comfortable with, others have felt that it is in fact a model that other countries envy. This is certainly the case within the international metal detecting community (Austin, *pers. comm.*, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2006), and reflects comments made to the researcher informally by public archaeologists in North America at a conference in 2008.

However, interaction and discourse with metal-detector users by archaeologists must not be something that is perceived to be limited to occurrence through PAS alone. Indeed, working with metal-detector users ought to be regarded as part of a wider need for archaeologists become more inclusive of the public in their work and in the way in which they communicate their activities. As one archaeological resource manager commented in response to a 'User Survey' distributed as part of a review of PAS:

*“Whether we like it or not metal detecting is a legal hobby and it is unlikely to change. Therefore the whole archaeological community needs to promote best practice, not just the PAS. It will take time to build relationships, and change attitudes and practices. However in my experience when this happens there is every chance that we all benefit, learning more about the archaeological record and so having the opportunity to understand and preserve it better. More generally we must all do more to provide opportunities for the public to become involved in archaeology.”*

(Survey Respondent, cited in Chitty and Edwards 2004: 47)

The relationships between archaeologists and metal-detector users have often been a matter of gaining trust, as demonstrated throughout the thesis. From a research perspective, this has been demonstrable in the value of ‘gatekeepers’ discussed in Chapter 2. ‘Gatekeepers’ were of paramount significance with regard to unlocking much of the data ultimately available to the researcher. From invitations to metal detecting rallies and clubs, to permission to view previously un-researched archives, personal contact has been essential. A higher response rate might have been experienced in the FLO survey had the researcher explicitly requested the endorsement of the Director of PAS for the questionnaire (see Chapters 2 and 8), thereby installing him as ‘gatekeeper’ to this particular dataset.

A session at the 2008 World Archaeological Congress in Dublin titled “*Exploring ‘Non-Professional’ Connections to Artifacts: Research Methods on Motivations*” (*sic.*), demonstrated that research focussing on the ways in which treasure hunters in different countries, including Greek ‘looters’ and American ‘pothunters’, is currently under way. That all the contributors were PhD candidates indicates the newness of this type of research. Thus, even though metal detecting has been around as a hobby affecting archaeology in the UK since the 1960s, research into this hobby, particularly into its participants (rather than into its physical impact on archaeological sites and material), has become a matter of academic debate only in recent times. Thus, in some ways, this thesis marks the opening of serious discussion of *archaeologists* and *metal-detector users*, rather than simply *archaeology* and *metal detecting*.