



This PDF is a simplified version of the original article published in *Internet Archaeology* under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 (CC BY) Unported licence. Enlarged images, models, visualisations etc which support this publication can be found in the original version online. All links also go to the online original.

Please cite this as: Nedergaard Dreijøe, K., Hertz, A., Abramsson, G. and Søggaard, R. 2025 Perspectives on and from the Danish metal-detecting community, *Internet Archaeology* 68. <https://doi.org/10.11141/ia.68.7>

Perspectives on and from the Danish Metal Detecting Community

Kristen Nedergaard Dreijøe, Arne Hertz, Glenn Abramsson and Rikke Søggaard

The Danish approach to metal detecting has been highly successful and has a positive reputation internationally especially among people who are in favour of greater cooperation between archaeologists and metal detectorists. However structural and cultural changes are now challenging the foundation of the metal detecting community in Denmark. This discussion article sheds light on the particular dynamics and framework conditions that are shaping and pushing the Danish metal detecting community, for better or worse, onto new paths which may also be of relevance elsewhere. This is a layperson's account, substantiated by personal experiences and reflections, and shared by a group of detectorists with significant formal as well as informal positions within the Danish detectorist community.

This discussion paper is in part based on a presentation (Dreijøe) and a discussion panel (Hertz, Søggaard and Abramsson) in the seminar “Social and Cultural Aspects of Metal Detecting”, held at Moesgaard Museum, Denmark, on 27th-28th of April 2023.

1. Introduction

In Denmark, the practice of metal detecting has witnessed significant growth, attracting enthusiasts of diverse backgrounds since the early 1990s. However, the lack of a formal, unified approach to educating both prospective and current metal detectorists presents a considerable challenge. Compounding this issue is the absence of accepted standardised codes of conduct, a situation prevailing among individuals, metal detecting clubs, and museums. In consequence, there is a rise in the reporting of detecting on protected sites, the improper handling of artefacts, and even artefacts not being reported.

We believe there is a need to restructure these processes and budgets so that The National Museum of Denmark (hereafter NatMus) is not the sole institution receiving funding through the Danish Financial Act to handle the rapidly increasing number of metal detector finds flowing through local museums to the National Museum every year. This surge places significant financial strain on local museums. Therefore, we advocate for the financial prioritisation of the role that local museums play in the registration and processing of archaeological finds. This would ensure a high level of scientific rigour associated with these discoveries, a swifter processing time, and greater efficiency in the future.

While [NatMus](#) has the authority to reduce rewards if, in their opinion, proper care is lacking, it can only recommend what constitutes proper care (*omhu*). The term *omhu*, as defined by NatMus, distinguishes between chance finds, such as those made by dog walkers, and deliberate artefact searches. The latter aligns largely with archaeological principles, albeit adapted to the context of detecting only in the plough layer. However, both the terms *omhu* and the precise definition of *Danefæ* (defined below) are not extensively



detailed within the [Danish Museum Act](#). These aspects remain at the discretion of NatMus and can be found on their [webpage](#). Consequently, local museums have varying interpretations of what makes acceptable care by detectorists, ranging between minimal requirements to extensive documentation.

2. Embrace or ban?

The Viking Age holds a significant place in Denmark's historical consciousness, not only because it marks the gradual emergence of the Danish kingdom, but also due to the period's lasting legal and political structures. Historical sources from the time describe assemblies (*ting*), legal practices, and systems of governance as relatively decentralised compared to later medieval institutions. These features are often emphasised in modern interpretations of early Danish history and have occasionally been linked - retrospectively - with ideals such as community-based decision-making and limited hierarchies. While such connections should be treated with caution, they illustrate how the Viking Age continues to inform contemporary understandings of Denmark's institutional roots. Building on this historical background, it is also relevant to consider the origins of Danish treasure trove legislation, which, though medieval rather than Viking, reflect continuing developments in governance and law. In 1241, King Valdemar II issued the Code of Jutland, which states:

"... what no one owns, the king owns. If any man finds gold or silver in mounds or by plough or in any other way, then the king shall have it".

This is widely regarded as being the oldest predecessor of a treasure trove legislation in the world. However, it is crucial to note that this was not driven by a desire to preserve antiquities for cultural heritage. Instead, it aimed to bolster the treasury and maintain a position of power - a strategic pursuit continued under Valdemar II to expand the Danish realm, following in the footsteps of his predecessors, Valdemar the Great and Knud VI.

The King had faith in people delivering those precious objects that emerged from the Danish ground. But more importantly, it established a precedent for the still-dominating principle that finders are indeed not keepers but are however obliged to hand over valuable findings to the King. In the 17th century, this principle was strengthened by adding a compensation mechanism to encourage people to deliver what was then in Old Norse labelled *dánarfé* ("inheritance without a living heir"), a compound of **dán* ("death") + *fé* ("property") (Petersen and Høstmark [2008](#)).

Today, a clear legal framework mandates that items believed to be *Danefæ* or treasure must be reported to NatMus, which in practice takes place through 27 local culture historical museums with archaeological responsibility ([Museumsloven](#)). When declared as *Danefæ*, the finder is rewarded a tax-free compensation; however, this compensation may not necessarily align with an identical item's potential value on the international antiquities market (where resale is legal). The principle enjoys wide acceptance in Denmark but faces challenges, especially from novice detectorists, due to perceived delays in processing at local museums. NatMus, in contrast, has been subject to specific time limits for processing *Danefæ*, but the local museums currently lack such defined timeframes. Coupled with only a small percentage of the ten thousand objects found each year actually being exhibited or utilised in publicly available research, this has led some detectorists to believe that artefacts are better cherished and admired at home rather than tucked away in a pile of work for years at the local museum, and later hidden in the depths of a dark museum storage facility at the National Museum.

The emergence of commercially available metal detectors in the 1980s called for regulation to protect the national archaeological heritage. Many Danish archaeologists feared that the



advent of the metal detector would create so-called 'British conditions' with grave robbing and nighthawking of archaeological sites if not banned (Nielsen and Petersen [1993](#)). The metal detector was depicted as [the Devil's creation](#) in the journal *Skalk*, 1983/1. It was hanging in a balance: embrace or ban. In the end, the 'old way' won.

3. Trust and dialogue - the Danish model

The result was a road paved with trust and dialogue for those who pursued exploration with metal detectors. They were given freedom with responsibility (Henriksen [2016](#), 19). Freedom to go where the landowners grant access (excluding restricted archaeological sites/areas), and responsibility to evaluate and hand in finds they believe are of archaeological value.

Today the King's privilege has been transferred to NatMus acting on behalf of the Parliament. Amongst other initiatives, NatMus seeks to support the 'Danish Model' through providing:

- An annual 'Treasure Trove Day' where a range of the most distinguished archaeologists present latest knowledge relevant for metal detectorists and, since 2013, an annual exhibition of detector finds which has become a central part of NatMus' portfolio of exhibitions (Baastrup and Feveile [2013](#), 294).
- The administration of the *Danefæ* Treasure Trove compensation scheme, where most compensations are accompanied by a letter explaining each find and its archaeological significance.

For the local museums, the Danish Model is supported by:

- [DIME](#) - Digital METal detector finds - an app-based, real-time digital finds registration for detectorists in the field. Developed by four museums, it is used by 29 museums and most detectorists despite being only a few years old. It is very easy to use and provides a suite of database tools for both detectorists and museums.
- Archaeologists with special responsibility for receiving finds, and for daily dialogue with the detectorists in the respective areas, are appointed at all local museums.
- Engagement between local museums and detectorists, which varies significantly but has been increasing over the years.

The Ministry of Culture also indirectly supports the 'Danish Model' through providing an online national heritage map [Fund og Fortidsminder](#) which is open access and where all archaeological finds and sites, including those made by metal detectorists, are registered (in varying detail) and can be accessed by both a map-search and a traditional text-search by place name, parish and municipality, for example.

Information sharing between the museums, both local and national, and the public is a critical component of the Danish approach, and this is highly appreciated by Danish metal detectorists.

4. The shaping of detectorist clubs

The umbrella organisation [Danske Amatørarkæologer](#) (DAA) unites 18 detecting clubs, but it has not historically engaged in any political advocacy. Though there may be a shift on the way, it is unlikely to happen in the near future. The lack of regular communication between local clubs and DAA has led to some clubs disassociating from DAA. Attempts to create other forums have also failed. This has left the role of educating all newcomers to metal detecting to club introductions and some engaged individuals on Facebook.



The decision to apply a trust-based regulation of Danish metal detecting has opened the playing field for the amateur archaeologists to populate the space with their own structures and behaviour-regulating mechanisms.

The first generation of metal detectorists that took to the fields were probably a relatively homogeneous group of technical-minded nerds with an interest in history and a knowledge of the minesweepers used in World War II. They started to create detectorist clubs around the country. Twelve of these clubs have developed more formal organisations, some of them with several hundred members. These clubs developed a strong sense of responsibility towards the privilege assigned to them, and developed their own individual codes of conduct, club houses, websites and formative structures for newcomers. Further, the acquisition of knowledge to identify their findings and to make a qualified pre-screening in the field spurred the development of very skilled amateur archaeologists amongst the detectorists. They became specialists in various categories of finds that even professional archaeologists would consult. Databases of competencies, compilations and knowledge resources have all been developed by these amateur archaeologists, accessible for everybody and accelerating the competence building of newcomers and experienced metal detectorists alike.

The number of active metal detectorists grew slowly but steadily during the '80s through to '00s. Regional detector clubs were established either as independent societies or as organised groups within established amateur archaeological societies. The emergence of Facebook created an online meeting place for Danish detectorists, notably the Facebook group 'Detektor Danmark', created in 2012, where people could brag about finds, seek knowledge and ask for help about technical problems. The Facebook group to this day has also functioned as a monitoring tool for the identification of unwanted behaviours while also facilitating public education and familiarisation with the environment, relevant legislation, best practices, and the heightened ethical standards within the metal detecting community.

As Denmark is a fairly small country, a national self-governing group is in many ways an efficient regulatory mechanism. Occurrences of mishandling or improper treatment of artefacts have been observed and addressed internally to prevent escalation and provide education, thus mitigating the need for the local museums to involve authorities. Identification of individuals engaging in unauthorised activities, such as 'nighthawking' or trespassing on protected prehistoric monuments, have also been promptly identified, leading to immediate notification of the relevant authorities.

5. Clubs and training: examples

Achieving common ground remains a complex challenge, and this is especially sad as collaborative efforts between archaeologists and engaged detectorists with a high level of *omhu*/proper care have produced amazing results. The following are examples selected from some of the activities involving some of the authors.

Sønderjyllands Amatørarkæologer - Arne Hertz

As the chairman of a local archaeological society, Sønderjyllands Amatørarkæologer, that has gradually transitioned into a detecting club, one of my primary responsibilities is to serve as a facilitator for promoting a sense of proper care - *omhu* in the Danish Museum Act. To fulfil this role, we maintain an [informative website](#), a Facebook page, and conduct two one-day detecting introduction sessions annually. These sessions consist of a PowerPoint presentation in the morning and an afternoon in the field guided by experienced detectorists. We also distribute find slips for registering artefacts and ensure follow-ups during rallies and club meetings. This approach is effective for individuals who discover Sønderjyllands



Amatørarkæologer's resources or join other like-minded clubs. However, a growing influx of newcomers, enticed by media stories of valuable discoveries, and supermarkets selling detectors or free detectors bundled with magazine subscriptions, has led to a surge in hobbyists in all age groups, ranging from preschoolers to retirees. Unfortunately, the education and access to relevant information for this diverse group remain inconsistent.

Compounding this problem is the lack of a unified, comprehensive nationwide guide. Individuals are currently often directed to local museums, private websites or social media pages for information, such as [Allan Faurkov's website](#) or the private page 'Detektor Danmark' on Facebook. Consequently, my ambition over the years has been to foster the creation of written materials that all clubs and museums can collectively endorse and employ in the education of newcomers to the hobby. While this remains a crucial need, it has become apparent that an online course, enabling participants to progress at their own pace, could be a more inclusive approach. The objective is to reach a wider audience at an earlier stage, with assessments in the form of control questions and a final exam, resulting in an auto-generated PDF diploma for successful candidates. To facilitate this, a demo using EasyLms.com, a Learning Management System (LMS), has been developed with assistance from Martin Hirtius from our club. I facilitated this by using links to websites, pictures, videos and text. Ideally, the national finds registration scheme, DIME, should host this LMS. However, the lack of cooperation among museums and detecting clubs does hamper progress in establishing common ground for defining and ensuring adequate standards of *omhu* to be used in such an LMS.

The vision of a detector school through an online LMS remains in a state of uncertainty and awaits broader collaboration, especially because all LMS platforms require a monthly fee that is beyond the economic capacity of an individual or club. But it is my hope that this article may be a small step towards achieving this more unified approach to educating and upgrading detectorists.

The Danish Archaeological Association Harja - Glenn Abramsson

The Danish Archaeological Association Harja was founded in 1971. The association gathers archaeology enthusiasts from the island of Funen and the smaller islands south of Funen. One of the active groups within the association includes members interested in metal detecting. This part of the association has steadily grown over the years due to the increasing interest in metal detecting as a hobby in Denmark.

As a consequence of the rise in active metal detector users, Harja, in collaboration with local museums on Funen and the islands, saw the need for increased efforts in educating these new metal detector users before they actively started searching. This was done with the aim of informing them about the requirements imposed on metal detector users by museums and legislation but equally to help them get started with the metal detecting hobby.

It was decided to develop course materials that would form the basis for a course held at Harja's clubhouse. The course content would be presented by a representative from one of the local museums as well as by active and experienced metal detector users in Harja. The museum's representative would instruct on the legal requirements and guidelines that the museum expects metal detector users to follow. More practical aspects related to metal detecting would be taught by Harja's own active metal detector users.



This course has been conducted continuously since 2019. The total duration of the course is about 5 hours plus breaks. The course, the content of which is outlined in Appendix 1, has been held as two evening courses or as a single-day weekend course.

6. Success of the Danish model

There is little doubt that the trust-based approach has been very successful in terms of avoiding the problematic situations that have occurred elsewhere, with a relatively low degree of illegal unearthing of artefacts and destruction of archaeological contexts. When we were asked to draw out some perspectives on the Danish metal detecting community for this special issue, a mental map of the main actors and the relationships between them became useful in order to structure the various arguments in a coherent way (Figure 1). The model does not by any means pretend to be all-inclusive or refer to any particular theoretical

approach, rather it is just a product of a metal detectorist's (Dreiøe) strand of thought.

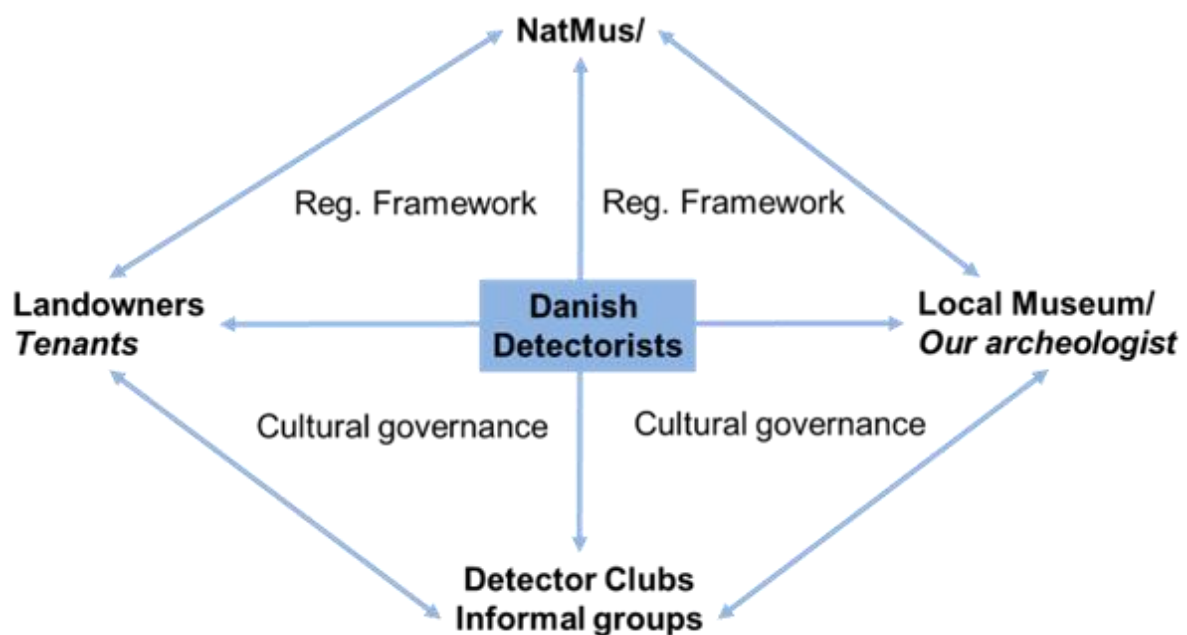


Figure 1: Schematic model of the main actors and their respective relationships within Danish metal detecting, as understood by Kristen Dreiøe.

The model points to actors as individuals and as organised entities, and to the formal and informal governance or regulating frameworks that guide and determine how these actors act and interact, and as a result it creates a particular community, albeit a community that is dynamic and constantly undergoing change. Thus, when looking at the Danish metal detecting community, it is an evolving organism with some particular characteristics, some of which we present here.

Today, the majority of metal artefacts exhibited in Danish museums have been found by detectorists or originate from archaeological excavations which have been initiated because of detector finds. In contemporary discussions within the museum and archaeological communities, there is a noticeable shift happening in how they view interactions with detectorists and handle their finds. While some see this engagement as enriching, especially in terms of public involvement, others find it burdensome, particularly for local museums that



struggle with limited resources. It's worth noting that this burden is primarily financial since museums often lack funding to deal with the influx of metal detector finds.

In response to this challenge, many museums have started hiring specialist staff to manage the increasing number of discoveries and foster better relationships with metal detector users. This proactive approach has led to improvements in how we register finds, communicate with stakeholders, and integrate these artefacts into our research and exhibitions. However, without clear and consistent guidelines, there is still significant variation in how different museums handle finds. The prevalence of finds from metal detecting varies widely from one archaeological area to another, further complicating matters. The quantity and quality of these finds calls for a substantial reorientation of the scientific practices and foci of all museums with responsibilities towards the metal detectorist community.

In recent years, museums have increasingly recognised the research potential of metal-detected finds and have begun to integrate them into their research strategies. Today, several archaeologists and museum professionals have their academic career closely tied to local detectorist communities and their achievements. Archaeologists are to a still larger extent integrating metal detecting as a natural part of the scientific investigation during excavations. Some museums now hire detectorists or use volunteer detectorists while archaeologists themselves take up metal detecting, blurring the traditional roles.

Quite a few detectorists have also found themselves taking on a liaison role between landowners and museums, as the museum professionals cannot possibly be in contact with all landowners in their area of archaeological responsibility. When a find calls for archaeological excavation, it is of critical importance that the landowners are positive towards the intervention from the local museum. This includes informing landowners about potential outcomes (such as excavation if significant objects are discovered) when seeking permission to search on their land. This is particularly important in terms of financial implications, as landowners do not bear the cost of excavation prompted by metal detector findings. In most cases, the excavation can be planned according to the active crop season, or the landowner will be provided with alternative arrangements, such as the reimbursement of destroyed crops during the active crop season. Landowners may deny museums any excavations that are not related to their own construction activities. It is evident that there is a process of integration and stronger ties building between the stakeholders and organisations in the Danish metal detecting community, where mutual knowledge and competence creation and sharing is being accelerated. In many ways, it is fair to say that the Danish model of regulating metal detecting has been instrumental in developing one of the most significant examples of citizen science in Denmark. This process however, together with other external factors, is putting the Danish model under pressure.

7. The Danish model under pressure

'Freedom with responsibility' (mentioned earlier) as a governance framework depends on the prevalence of shared cultural and ethical values between the Danish detectorists. However, developments over recent years have challenged the coherence of this system.

Spectacular finds and technological advances that make the hobby more accessible have resulted in a rapid increase in public attention, and subsequently in the number of detectorists (also from abroad) on the Danish fields. In 2012, approximately 3,000 detector finds were received by NatMus for Treasure Trove assessment. Six years later this number had grown to around 18,000.



With this growing community, the established detectorist societies have voiced concerns over the more diversified nature of detectorists' motivations and agendas for engaging with the hobby (e.g. Lykkegård-Maes and Dobat [2022](#)) such as treasure hunting for personal gain rather than for the common good, less respect for the formal and informal codes of conduct.

Increasing tensions can also be observed in the Facebook Group 'Detektor Danmark, where the nature of dialogue has become more aggressive, where we see more trolling and less concern for exchanging viewpoints to gain higher levels of understanding. In fact, this development has spurred many of the more serious and established metal detectorists to migrate to other more focused and closed Facebook groups of like-minded members.

One may worry that 'Detektor Danmark's status as the main informal meeting place and platform for conveying knowledge and culture for detectorists is deteriorating, and in this sense, it potentially weakens the coherence and stability of the 'Danish Model'. A related problem is that it may become harder for the archaeologists to monitor the trends within the Danish detectorist's community.

The growing number of detectorists has also encouraged detecting clubs located in areas with many hot spots to restrict access of new members. This is done both to protect the well-established culture of collaboration with landowners and local museums, and to protect the archaeological heritage.

There is also the increasing direct involvement of archaeologists in the local detectorist clubs, where they actively participate with advice on best practice and convey knowledge undoubtedly also to influence the orientation and culture of member detectorists. Some museums trade information about potentially find-rich areas with detectorists who have demonstrated a high level of desired behaviour to incentivise good detecting practice. The involvement of members from detectorist clubs at archaeological excavations (from which non-members are excluded) can also be used as an incentive.

There is no doubt that the Danish detector community has matured over the last three decades and become very organised in societies and informal groups, with strong friendships evolving across the country (Lyngbak [1993](#)). But there is a risk that a growing number of detectorists are not organised within the different clubs, and as a consequence, an increasing diversity of agendas and practices may be evolving. Together with the trend of an increasing involvement of detectorists in archaeological research processes and projects, this accentuates a concern amongst some archaeologists and museums that the Danish model needs adjustments to secure there is a sufficient skill level and an understanding and propensity by Danish metal detectorists to follow the spirit of the Danish Treasure Trove. This could be adjusted through stricter regulation, compulsory courses and certification for example.

A more formalised national body to represent the Danish detectorists in the necessary dialog with the museums, authorities, and politicians could also be required. Up until very recently, the DAA had been unwilling to take on that role even though most detecting clubs are listed as members. A recent general assembly suggests that this may hopefully will change in the future. It is crucial that a balanced approach is found whereby the many positive characteristics of the Danish Model are preserved while also supporting the growing use of metal detection as an integral part of archaeological research and knowledge building.

On the side of archaeology, there seems to be a need to develop scientifically verified methods for metal detecting applied in archaeological investigations and research. Maybe these methods could even be an integral part of archaeological studies (see Aagaard *et al.* 2025 in this special issue). As metal detecting increasingly occupies a prominent role in



Danish archaeology alongside developer-funded excavations, it is apparent that it should eventually be reflected in the curriculum of the country's two archaeological education institutions. Currently, the focus of artefact education often revolves around settlement, burial, and votive/deposit finds, with loose finds receiving comparatively less attention. However, many artefacts are significantly affected by their exposure in the plough layer, which often results in fragmentation to varying degrees and surface alteration due to oxygen, weathering, and agricultural fertilisers. A greater focus in the curriculum on such fragmented artefacts more accurately reflects the material submitted by metal detectorists to the country's museums. The sheer volume of artefacts underscores the necessity of encouraging students to engage with detector-derived material and incorporate it into their studies and research. Such an approach would establish a robust foundation for future archaeologists and their work.

8. What the future will bring

One of the challenges facing the metal detecting community is how to continue accommodating new members of the hobby while expecting an increasing level of proficiency, both in terms of recording and knowledge of various artefacts. This places significant pressure on beginners and makes it difficult for them to establish themselves in the field. Experienced detectorists should remember that they themselves were once at a point where they may not have been able to distinguish a circular fibula from a round keyhole cover.

But to what extent of responsibility and what associated tasks can reasonably be placed on the shoulders of detectorists? Some museums expect extensive spreadsheets containing far more information than just a registration number and coordinates for the discovered artefacts. While we detectorists pride ourselves on excelling in citizen science, it's important to remember that citizen science hinges on voluntary participation—and the current legislation and requirements from the National Museum do not encompass track logs or GPS notes, even though it is appreciated and encouraged under the 'care' supplement. The increasing demands from many local museums can be viewed both as a result of their lack of necessary resources to carry out such tasks independently, and as a response to the growing scientific methodologies being developed and applied to metal detector finds.

The fact that certain finds are no longer classified as Danefæ, despite their age, sets a precedent for what Dobat also refers to as 'good' and 'bad' finds. Namely, those that warrant compensation and those that do not (Dobat [2013](#), 716-717). Over time, all of this may lead to collection biases in our collections, as many of these seemingly insignificant finds are actually markers for trading places, workshops, and settlements.

Today, initiatives like DIME serve as crucial platform bridging between metal detector users, local museums, and NatMus. The aim is to alleviate some of the emerging issues and the considerable workload that currently burdens all components of the system. Furthermore, DIME is highly appealing for beginners as it covers the most essential basic information in relation to registration: time, location, and photographs. The remaining details can be identified either by the local museum or by engaged users, with ample opportunities for learning on the sidelines.

While metal detecting is inherently an individual pursuit, much of it still occurs within a communal context. Denmark has always been characterised by a strong tradition of associations and a desire to form communities with like-minded individuals. Therefore, we believe that both beginners and the Danish model will continue to benefit from local, regional, and perhaps eventually national communities of metal detector users. Knowledge-



sharing often occurs most effectively through conversation, and hands-on training by experienced detectorists is akin to having an encyclopaedia in one's pocket.

Ultimately, it boils down to time. Spending hours in the field and dedicating time to research and learning fosters skilled detectorists, and a strong community encourages enthusiasts to brave the sometimes-inclement Danish weather in pursuit of traversing the fields.

Appendix: Harja metal detecting course

Glenn Abramsson

The outline of the course contents are as follows:

Metal-detecting archaeology seen from the Museums perspective.

Goals for the collaborative work between the museums and the metal detectorists:

- Archaeologists and metal detectorists mutually respect, recognize and value the knowledge and experience that each party represents.
- Clear expectations and demands for responsibility lead to a greater sense of responsibility for cultural heritage.
- Amateur archaeologists recognize and respect the Museum Act as well as the guidelines drawn up by professional archaeologists and other authorities (e.g. the Nature Conservation Act).

The Danish Model at its core

- Very limited use of government tools and restrictions.
- "Democratisation" of cultural heritage based on voluntariness and mutual trust.
- The metal detectorists are expected to respect the legislation and guidelines.
- The metal detectorists respect the museum authorities' announcements.
- Metal detecting archaeology is a hobby that obliges. *That is why cooperation and dialogue is important!*

Legislation

- Museum Act 2001, Chapter 9, Section 30 (what is *Danefæ* and what happens when one finds *Danefæ*). The participants are introduced to the museums act and what it encompasses.

Do's and don'ts

- Where to detect (fields under cultivation) and where not to detect (scheduled sites).
- It is recommended (not required by law) that detectorists refrain from metal detecting on areas that are not actively being cultivated such as forests and permanent meadows.
- Don't dig below ploughing depth (approximately 25 cm).

What should be recorded and what happens to the find from when it's handed in and until the receipt of the Danefæ letter from the National Museum?



- Important to record anything that is not modern. This includes amongst many other things lumps of melted metal. In fact, many finds that are not *Danefæ* are still of great interest to the local museum and therefore should be handed in.
- What happens to the finds when they are handed over to the local museum and from there are sent on to the National Museum for further processing?

The following topics are presented by Harjas own detector users:

Permits that must be obtained before you can start detecting.

- Ask the landowner for permission and if relevant also the lease holder.
- Advice is given as to how best to approach the landowner when asking for permission.
- Always ask if other detectorists already are detecting on the land, and in that case refrain from detecting on the same land.

How to register finds in the field.

- Setting up the GPS and how to log finds are shown in guides found on Harja.dk
- Recording finds using finds cards, placed in 'Ziploc' bag together with the find.
- Recording finds using the DIME app. A short introduction to how DIME-Mobile works (recording in the field) is presented with reference to the detailed guide found on the DIME site.
- How to finalise the find information on PC is also shown.

How do you best handle your finds before they are handed over to the museum?

- Refrain from cleaning the finds and preserve potential remnants of archaeological importance.
- Certain types of finds (coins and the like) may be lightly cleaned using distilled water. This increases the usability of the photos taken of the find, which are subsequently loaded onto DIME. Without proper photo documentation, DIME loses its power to serve as an effective research tool.
- We refer to Harja.dk where we have videos where the local archaeological conservators explain how to deal with finds, before handing them over to the local museum.

Code of Ethics (interaction with other detectorists).

- Interaction with the landowner, let him know what you find.
- Respect the fact that the land may be used by other interest groups than your own (hunting, wildlife observers etc.).
- Don't search on land that is under investigation by the museum.
- Don't search on land that is already being searched by other detectorists, unless there is an agreement in place between the detecting parties.
- Make sure you have properly familiarised yourself with the heritage listed sites in your search area, as detecting on those areas is prohibited.
- We recommend that our members refrain from metal detecting on areas that are not actively being cultivated such as forests and permanent meadows.
- Keep updated via Harjas web page via the many guides including the museums joint guidelines and newsletters posted on the site.

What to do before handing in your finds? Finds-report, finds form, search tracks etc.



- Finds report.
- Finds sheet.
- Search tracks.

Search tracks and GPS. How to make search tracks and why are search tracks so important?

- What type of devices can be used to register find coordinates?
- How to set up your GPS - Guides can be found on Harja.dk
- Why use search tracks? The reasons for recording search tracks are presented to the participants. One of the most important reasons for using search tracks, is that they, in combination with finds maps, provide background information that is necessary to interpret finds distributions.

Equipment that is necessary or good to have. Detecting techniques.

- Necessary equipment.
- Nice to have equipment.
- Detecting techniques.
- Always collect and take trash with you from the field.
- Careful hole digging on pastures and lawns.

Where to find information about the objects you find.

- The participants are introduced to various sources, both books and the internet.

A lot of information for beginners is available on Harja.dk (all in Danish).

Bibliography

Aagaard, J.R., Hjulmand Larsen, C., Bødstrup Christoffersen, J.E., Munch Thomsen, J., Birk, K., Kaas, M.H., Fur, R., Termansen, S.S. and Dobat, A.S. 2025 Metal Detecting in University Education: Empowering future archaeologists through training, *Internet Archaeology* 68. <https://doi.org/10.11141/ia.68.1>

Baastrup, M. P., and Feveile, C. 2013 'Danefæ—Samarbejdet mellem finder, lokalmuseum og Nationalmuseum', *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark* 2013, 284-95.

Dobat, A. S. 2013 'Between Rescue and Research: An Evaluation after 30 Years of Liberal Metal Detecting in Archaeological Research and Heritage Practice in Denmark', *European Journal of Archaeology* 16(4), 704-25. <https://doi.org/10.1179/1461957113Y.0000000041>

Henriksen, M. B. 2016 'International detektorarkæologi - Indtryk fra en konference i Glasgow', *Fund&Fortid - Arkæologi for Alle* 2016(3), 15-23.

Lykkegård-Maes, M. and Dobat, A. S. 2022 'Hunters of the Past. A Study of Demography, Attitudes, and Values among Danish Metal Detector Users', *Danish Journal of Archaeology* 11, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.7146/dja.v11i.125546>



Lyngbak, E. 1993 'Amatørerne' in S. Hvass and B. Storgaard (eds) *Da klinger i muld... 25 års arkæologi i Danmark*, Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab and Jysk Arkæologisk Selskab, 280.

Nielsen, K. H., and Petersen, P. V. 1993 'Detektorfund' in S. Hvass and B. Storgaard (eds) *Da klinger i muld... 25 års arkæologi i Danmark*, Copenhagen: Det Konge Nordiske Oldskriftselskab and Jysk Arkæologisk Selskab, 223-227.

Petersen, P. V., and Høstmark, J. 2008 'Danefæ på Nationalmuseet—Eventyrlige oldtidsfund gennem 200 år'. In *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark 2008*, 25-54.