



# Let's Go Minelabbing 2017

Daniel Spencer

GO MINELABbing



**ABOVE** Cut half and snake ring found by Graham Fallows

**ABOVE RIGHT** More finds from the rally



Every year, Minelab has an International Go Minelabbing day which runs (where possible) simultaneously across the globe. With scores of giveaways and expert advice on offer, it was an event many of us were looking forward to and Friday 19 May couldn't come quick enough.

Friday, 7pm and the weekend had started. The car was fully loaded the previous evening. Mark my detecting partner and I headed off up the A417 hoping that we could get to the camp field in time to put the tent up in the daylight.

The weather was looking precarious the closer we got. Reports of hail, lightening and thunder were already popping up on social media! Thankfully it wasn't raining as we approached the dig which was well signposted so we made it with minutes to spare. Once the tent was pumped up, we got involved in the social side of things before bedding down for the night ready for the main event.

Saturday morning offered a bit of a reality check. The day before had dumped a huge amount of rain over the area and the site was already very muddy so we were hoping for the sun to show quickly, but it wasn't to be. Mark and I had set up **The Searcher** event stand and were chatting to the hoards of detectorists that had descended on Ludlow for the weekend. It was great chatting with so many people whom had interacted with the magazine in the past and those hoping to in the future.

Many were chatting to Neil Jones and Julian Sammon from Minelab who had set up an impressive test bed area. This area was test by name and testing by nature. During the course of the weekend we saw no-one walk straight up to the test bed area and find everything first go, in fact most could find no more than one or two out of the 14 odd items buried! Neil had set this up to prove that machine, technique and setup are as equally as important as each other. There is no standard setting on an 'off the shelf' machine that will find you everything first time.





An impressive set up of items were offered up on the trade stands. Peter from LP Metal Detecting and Craig from Crawford's had already got off to a good start with their Aladdin's cave of machines and accessories. I heard them offering all sorts of advice to detectorists new and old. The best I heard was "just get out and enjoy yourself"! I think we are all sometimes too wrapped up in trying to find the holy grail of machines and programmes, which takes a little of the enjoyment away. John Rigby was offering membership on his NCMD stand and promoting responsible detecting whilst Gail and Mike from Roman Remains were selling an assortment of detecting finds from Bronze Age arrows through to Medieval coins with everything in between.

After breakfast and close to 9am, the briefing for the day was held and Chris Bailey from LGD explained which fields would today be available. All fields this weekend were pasture so the quote 'Slow and Low' was being bound around quite a bit. It had to be pointed out to me that just over my shoulder in the distance was an Iron Age fort ... this was around one mile away and looked beautiful sitting proud in the landscape.

That certainly gave a little boost to expectations! Within seconds of Chris finishing his talk, the event field was deserted and the detectorists had headed off to the fields. There was a token hunt in the first field that offered a variety of prizes from the sponsors which included machines and accessories from Minelab. It wasn't long before tokens were being held aloft from all around the field. Amongst these tokens, some finds were also starting to appear. Steve Moodie of Mudsharks had popped up a lead token (c.17th Century) and a broken hammered coin. I saw many of the usual buckles, watch winders and Victorian/Georgian pennies that had popped out but still we awaited that one wow find to appear.

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Various trade stands including the Minelab stand and more finds from the weekend

After lunch, new fields were opened up and these fields were further down in the valley with a stream running through the bottom. As I spent the morning socialising with the Minelab team and dealers, I left Mark on our event stand and headed down with the others. The whole time I was down there I managed to find a few 'bits' but nothing of note. The land was very soft and easy digging which made things better and a little less frustrating.





Unfortunately, the weather turned and we were engulfed in monsoon type rain showers. There were odd clear patches but it meant there wasn't a lot of detecting being done so the finds dried up unlike the weather which didn't really let off until the evening. It wasn't all gloom today as winners of prizes included John Parkin (CTX – Saturday's raffle prize) Beck Buckley (X-Terra 505) Karl Ward (X-Terra 705) and Lee En Fathea (Years subscription to **The Searcher**).

That evening, chilli, rice and chips was cooked up by the LGD team which went down a treat. A little later on and the evening's entertainment consisted mainly of Country and Western singer Les Spear in the main tent and a gathering around the fire pit outside. To say the singer and his wife were entertaining would be an understatement, a few of us got involved and managed to hold our own dance off before heading back to the tent and getting our heads down once again ready for what would hopefully be a more productive day for all.

Sunday started off well, much clearer skies, temperature was up and breakfast from the Lets Go Digging cafe had gone down a treat. Once again Chris started the brief explaining where the new fields were. These new fields were up on top of the ridge on the same level the Iron Age fort was located. This certainly got our hopes up as it was quite clear the valley hadn't had much occupation over the years.

On offer was another token hunt field offering more fantastic prizes, two fields running along the ridge of the valley and another couple on the level. It was to prove that those two fields would be the most productive of the weekend. Not long after the off, reports were already coming back of finds just inside the gates of these fields and as the detectorists moved further into them, more and more finds were reported. Among these finds, Graham Fallows had his first ever cut hammered, followed by six other hammereds for other detectorists including a cut quarter which is always a feel good factor knowing how small these are.

The two pieces of gold from this trip came up in this field which although being modern rings, they were very welcome all the same. Mike Shilton had a cartwheel penny, a find that still eludes me!

As the day started to draw to a close, it was apparent that the weather and finds had been much better on the Sunday and it was a well deserving end for all those whom had braved all that mother nature threw at them over the weekend.

The Sunday raffle prize was won by John Hughes. The raffles and token hunts were without doubt the highlight this weekend and Minelab had not let anyone down with all on offer. From the exceptional advice offered by Neil Jones (Minelab Expert) to the hospitality from Julian (Minelab Business Development Manager) and prizes galore, it was a well organised event hosted by Lets Go Digging.

It goes without saying that the people behind these events are the true hero's of the weekenders. I witnessed everything from loaning of equipment to help pushing cars and motorhomes on and off the site through the muddy tracks churned up by the vast amount of detectorists that had come to support the event.

A big thanks to Minelab for sponsoring the event and Chris Bailey and Paul Howard (with extra help from Morley Howard) for a well organised rally. For more info on equipment available from Minelab, please visit [minelab.com](http://minelab.com) or your local Minelab dealer. ●

