

1 The Portable Antiquities Scheme

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The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) is an organisation aimed at the recording of archaeological objects found by members of the public. Begun in 1997 the scheme has now grown to cover most of England and Wales. Prior to the implementation of the Scheme many items found by the public were not recorded in any way leading to a vast loss of valuable information and in cases where items were given to museums there provenance was unknown. This caused further issues as the context of finds is every bit as important to the archaeological record as the find itself. How artefacts came to be where they were found, their relationships to other objects in the area and their stratigraphy amongst other factors combine to provide a wealth of information about the past. The aims of the scheme as listed on the PAS website (<http://tinyurl.com/7ox9au>) are as follows:

- To advance knowledge of the history and archaeology of England and Wales by systematically recording archaeological objects found by the public.
- To raise awareness among the public of the educational value of archaeological finds in their context and facilitate research in them.
- To increase opportunities for active public involvement in archaeology and strengthen links between metal-detector users and archaeologists.
- To encourage all those who find archaeological objects to make them available for recording and to promote best practice by finders.
- To define the nature and scope of a Scheme for recording Portable Antiquities in the longer term, to assess the likely costs and to identify resources to enable it to be put into practice.

The primary contributions to the scheme come from private metal detectorists who regularly discover a great number and wide variety of objects which would otherwise remain unrecorded. Members of the public who come across items of interest, composed of both metal and non-metal substances, can also report these objects to the scheme. Finds that legally constitute treasure are dealt with through the Treasure Act of 1996. This however concentrates on precious metals, prehistoric base-metal, and finds associated with them. Non-prehistoric base metal and non-metal finds would not be recognized as treasure and would therefore be unrecorded. PAS exists to fill this gap.

The Scheme funds qualified Finds Liaison Officers (FLO) positioned around the country to whom items can be reported for examination and identification. The FLO also advises finders of the best practice for uncovering finds and the relevant legislation governing the discovery of archaeological artefacts. The type of find along with its function, date, material and location are recorded on a database allowing for further analysis of the information gathered concerning specific areas. This has, in the past, led to the identification of previously unknown archaeological sites. The PAS database is accessible to the public at <http://tinyurl.com/9hfgwn>.

Any non-treasure finds reported and turned over to the Scheme for identification remain the property of the finder or the landowner, dependant on their own agreements, who are subsequently free to deal with the items as they see fit.

The relationship between archaeologists and metal detectorists has always been a somewhat difficult one which has, on occasion, led to clashes between the two groups. The close links which are established between the FLO's and metal detecting societies in their area have been seen as advantageous to this situation however as the Scheme encourages the two groups to work together for a mutually beneficial cause.

There are currently 36 FLO's working with the PAS all of whom are willing to take on volunteers to aid in the identification and recording of finds. For more information about the Portable Antiquities Scheme and how to get involved visit <http://www.finds.org.uk/>.

2 Interview with an Archaeologist - Museum Curator Mr Andrew Morrison, Yorkshire Museum

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1. **What is your job title?** Curator of Archaeology
2. **What are you current projects, museum or personal?** We will be soon embarking on a complete refurbishment of the museum, costing £2 million. We will be setting a third of the museum over to science exhibits, taking the museum back to its original aims and widening the scope of the exhibits to incorporate a wider span of periods, Bronze Age to around the 1600's. We will be closing November next year (2009) and re-opening to the public August 2010.
3. **What first got you interested in Archaeology?** Playing in mud! The older sections in History interested me. As a child we holidayed on a boat; one year an excavation was taking place nearby and I joined in for a day. I was under 16 and it would probably be against every health and safety law now.
4. **How did you get into the Archaeology careers field and your current job?** I got too old and it got too cold to be a field archaeologist! My first job was with English Heritage and a lot of my working career was through chance. I started on the circuit as a field archaeologist then went to Bournemouth University to do a diploma in Field Archaeology. From there I went on to do more digs. Then I went to Durham University to do an undergraduate degree, skipping the first year. I've worked in France, training conscientious objectors in archaeology, and cataloguing medieval buildings for English Heritage. From then I worked in curatorial jobs and have been at the Yorkshire Museum for four years.