



# **REVIEW OF PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME 2004**

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**An independent evaluation commissioned by the  
Museums, Libraries and Archives Council**

## REVIEW OF PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME

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## KEY FINDINGS

In Phase 2 of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in 2003-04

### Outreach has increased and the Scheme has extended its audience

- Working with 141 metal detecting clubs
- Regular contact with over 4000 detectorists
- Taking part in 252 finds days attended by over 13,000 people
- Giving 304 talks about its work to over 9000 people

### Participation has increased

- Around 2400 finders reported their finds to the Scheme
- 73% are detectorists and 27% are other kinds of finder
- Around 30,000 finds were recorded: 68% were reported by detectorists and 32% by others
- The number of Treasure finds reported has doubled since 2001 and continues to rise faster than the rate at which other finds are being recorded

### Making a difference – 2004 user survey shows

- Over 75% people think that the Scheme has made a positive change in educating finders and raising awareness about the importance of archaeological finds
- In general people think the Scheme needs to do more in educating about good practice and increasing opportunities for public involvement in archaeology
- Overall the public are more confident about the positive impact of the Scheme than the archaeological community

### [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)

- Page requests to the Scheme's websites have increased from 1.3 million in 2003 to 7.8 million in 2004
- Since April 2004 95% of new records on the online database have images

### 2004 user survey shows

- Most users visit the site occasionally (less than several times a month) but 10% are more frequent users
- The most common reason for people to visit the site is to learn about archaeological finds in their area
- 30% of users visit the site to learn about archaeology and finds in general
- archaeologists want to see information about recorded finds available in local SMRs and HERs
- academics and specialists want to see improvement in the standard of recording
- generally users want to see improvements in the speed and searching of the online database and a more user-friendly interface

### **Changing attitudes – 2004 user survey shows**

- 70% people think the Scheme is succeeding in changing attitudes about reporting archaeological finds and their importance
- People who have been involved with the Scheme are twice as likely to agree that the Scheme is succeeding in changing attitudes (regardless of user group)
- The public and those in museums are most confident about this change and those in archaeology are less so

## **Recommendations for action to strengthen the operation and future potential of the Scheme**

### **Building Capacity – actions for the Scheme**

- focus on training and mentoring for FLOs
- maximise capacity of Finds Advisers
- more explicit local recording policies
- monitor the level of Treasure reporting work
- increase capacity for recording by finders
- maintain momentum in liaison with clubs and NCMD
- give active support for local liaison groups

### **Informing and Communicating – actions for the Scheme**

- delivery of planned educational content for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
- develop web-based resources for adult learning
- enhancement of website and online database
- further user and audience research
- assess outcomes of educational and museum-based work
- prioritise making available finds data for HERs and SMRs
- maintain dialogue on publishing findspot information
- assess the value added by finds data for archaeology services
- deliver advice and guidance on finds conservation

### **Strengthening partnerships – action for the Scheme with its partners**

- promotion of code of good practice for responsible detecting
- support for a new project to assess the impact of nighthawk activity
- initiate liaison with land-owning and farming interests
- agree a protocol for alerting national and local bodies to important finds that require a field response
- seek provision for a more secure, long-term future for the Scheme to encourage wide public participation in recording archaeological finds and promote clear public awareness of responsible practice for finders.

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Gill Chitty and Rachel Edwards, 30 September 2004

## ABBREVIATIONS

ALGAO	Association of Local Government Archaeology Officers
ADS	Archaeology Data Service
ARC	Archaeological Resource Centre
ARM	Archaeological Resource Management
CARN	Core Archaeological Record iNdex
CBA	Council for British Archaeology
DCMS	Department for Culture Media and Sport
EE	English Government Office Region: East of England
EH	English Heritage
EM	English Government Office Region: East Midlands
FA	Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Advisor
FLO	Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer
GPS	Global Positioning System
HER	Historic Environment Record
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
KS	Key Stage
MLA	Museums Libraries and Archives Council
NCMD	National Council for Metal Detecting
NE	English Government Office Region: North East
NGR	National Grid Reference
NMR	National Monuments Record
NW	English Government Office Region: North West
PAS	Portable Antiquities Scheme
RCAHMW	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales
SE	English Government Office Region: South East
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
SW	English Government Office Region: South West
WM	English Government Office Region: West Midlands
YH	English Government Office Region: Yorkshire and the Humber

## 1. Background

The pilot Portable Antiquities Recording Scheme was set up in 1997 to encourage and develop voluntary recording of archaeological objects discovered by the public and by metal-detector users in particular. The pilot project's creation was linked to the reform of Treasure Trove, and the need for a voluntary recording programme to complement reporting of items under the new Treasure Act 1996. The background against which the Scheme developed was one of growing concern that, with the growth in metal-detecting as a leisure-time activity, loss of information about archaeological finds being made by the public had grown to an unacceptable scale. The consensus, focused by research carried for the CBA (Dobinson 1995), was that active measures were needed to change attitudes and improve public awareness of the importance and interest of their finds.

The first pilot schemes were set up in 1997 with six Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs); a further five and an Outreach Officer were appointed in early 1999. A Review of the initial pilot phase of the Scheme was commissioned by Resource at the end of 2000 in order to inform an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for further funding to support the roll out of the Scheme across the whole of England and Wales (Chitty 2001). The eventual success of the HLF bid enabled the pilot Scheme to begin a three-year programme on national scale in April 2003.

This Review follows on from that carried out for Resource in 2000 to consider the Scheme's impact since 2001 and in particular during the first 12 months of the national scheme.

## **2. Review of PAS in 2000/1**

The Review of PAS in 2000 (Chitty 2001) evaluated the achievement of the PAS pilot Scheme in relation to four user groups: museums; academic research and higher education; archaeology and historic environment services; and finders and detectorist groups. The evaluation was based on guided telephone interviews with c 70 individuals representing the four user groups. Finds Liaison Officers and other staff of the pilot Scheme also contributed to the evaluation, and an extensive range of published and unpublished sources was consulted.

The pilot Scheme's achievement was assessed in relation to six different areas:

- Providing information and advice to the public
- Strengthening links and connections between finders, museums & archaeologists
- Increasing knowledge and understanding of archaeology
- Securing long-term heritage conservation aims
- Supporting the Treasure Act process
- Providing access to a national database and information network.

The assessment considered the Scheme's achievement to date in 2000 in each of these areas and identified issues for the Scheme to address in the short, medium and long term. Many of these form part of the programme set in place as Phase 2 of the Scheme with HLF funding. Areas which remain to be addressed are identified below in Section 5 which considers the outcomes from the Scheme's work from 2001/02 to 2003/04 and the overall progress it has made in its forward programme.



### **3. Framework for 2004 Review**

#### **3.1 The structure for the assessment**

The Brief for the Review requires assessment of the Scheme both in relation to its achievement so far and to the broader context of policies and activities in

- Public access and awareness
- Educational opportunity
- Academic research in archaeology and numismatics
- Archaeological resource management
- Museum resource management.

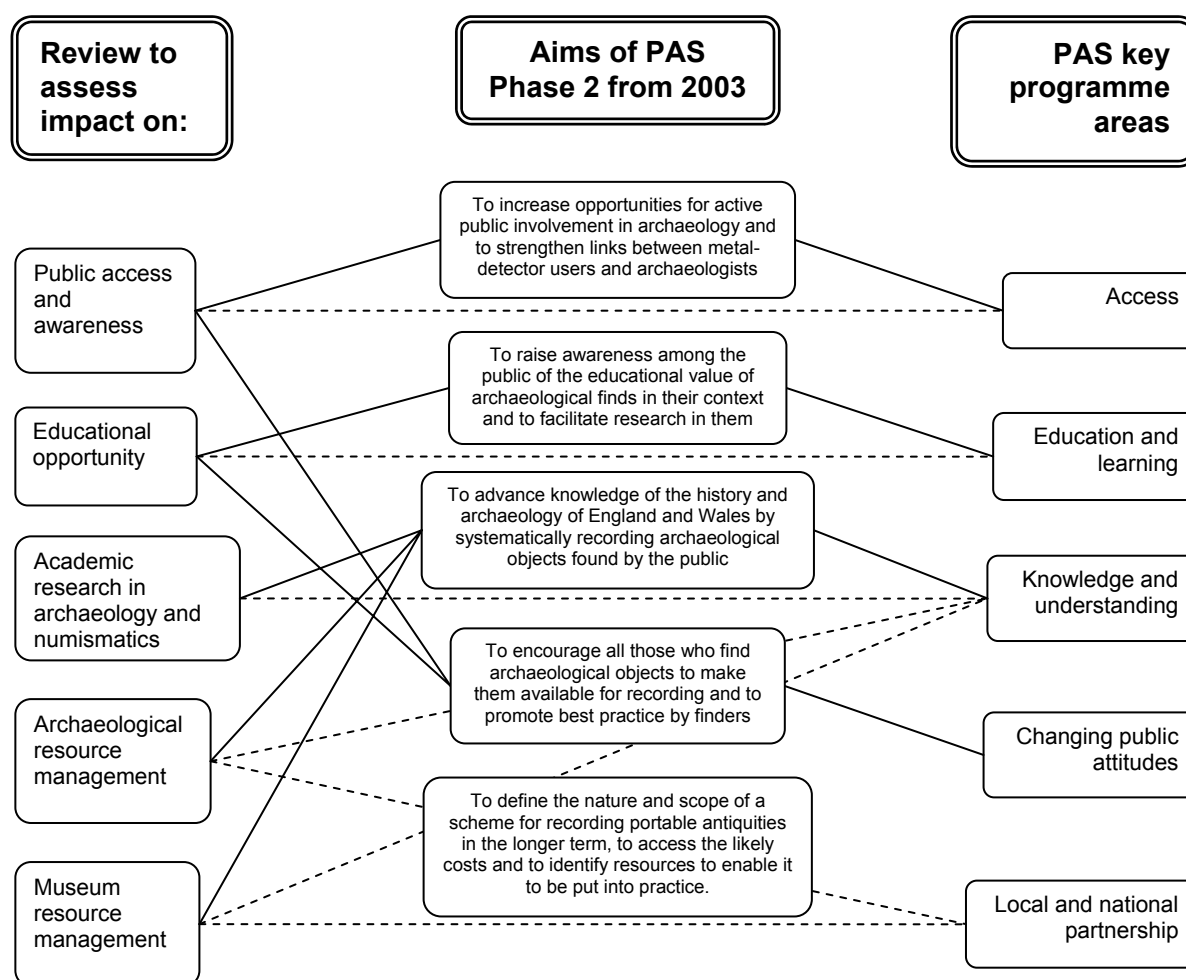
Aims and key objectives for each of the related programme areas, were approved for the HLF's support of the Scheme. They provide a robust framework for evaluating the Scheme's achievement in each of its key activity areas and for assessing evidence of the impact in terms of its planned outputs and outcomes (see Appendix 2). These original aims for Phase 2 were amended and agreed by the Project Board and HLF in 2003 to the following:

- 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 access the likely costs and to identify resources to enable it to be put into practice.

The Review framework is structured around the Scheme's main programme areas in 'Access', 'Education & Learning' and 'Knowledge and Understanding'. A fourth key area is progress with the process of changing public attitudes to voluntary recording of archaeological finds .

The diagram below (Figure 1) illustrates the key areas being addressed by the Scheme and their relationship to its overall aims and to the Review brief.

**Figure 1: Review aims, PAS aims and PAS programme areas**



The Scheme’s original planned outputs and outcomes for Phase 2 can be referred to in Appendix 2.

### 3.2 Review workshop

The Review framework was developed and explored in a workshop led by the consultants, held at the PAS offices in London on 15 June 2004. Eleven members of the PAS took part (including FLOs, Finds Advisers and the Head of the Scheme), with three representatives from NCMD and ALGAO (Appendix 1).

The workshop examined the activities, outputs and outcomes from the Scheme to identify areas where useful measures of achievement, impact and need could be gathered, including any existing PAS research into users and audiences. This process allowed the collective experience of the Scheme to inform the design of the data gathering and impact measurement. While it was accepted that precise measures of performance would be difficult to apply across the country, due to the history of the Scheme in different regions and other factors, it was possible to identify common areas of activity and services as performance indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) and key areas where feedback can demonstrate both benefits and priorities for further work.

### **3.3 Interviews**

In addition to the workshop, which provided a full discussion of the context of the Scheme's work for the Review, interviews also took place with over 30 representatives of stakeholder groups and of PAS staff (listed in Appendix 1). These provided a more detailed understanding of operational and policy issues for the Scheme, partners and users.

### **3.4 User survey**

A consultation exercise was devised to gather views from the five main user groups for the Scheme. This was a questionnaire-based survey of the views of current and potential users. The study was targeted at selected user organisations and audiences, and was conducted by means of an online survey on the finds.org.uk website and a paper consultation, between 21 July and 22 August.

Respondents were invited to assess the difference that the Scheme has made in their experience and to identify the areas where they would say it is having the greatest impact. They were also asked about their particular interest in the Scheme and their use of its website. There was an excellent response to the survey with over 420 replies, over half of which came from finders and members of the public. This level of response compares well other recent national user studies in the sector<sup>1</sup> and produced a good spread across most of the target groups for the survey.

The results of the study include both quantitative data and qualitative information about the views and attitudes of users. The relatively large size of the sample has allowed segmentation of the responses to indicate some differences between user groups. A full summary of the results, analysis and methodology can be found in Appendix 3. The analysis is integrated at relevant points in the evaluation below.

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<sup>1</sup> An online survey for the National Archives, conducted in May this year produced a similar overall level of response. English Heritage's National Monuments Record conducted a more detailed, 3-month consultation of users and stakeholders between November 2003 and February 2004 which produced 890 responses.

## 4. Evaluation of the Scheme 2001/2 – 2003/4

The evaluation for the Review has used relevant measures or indicators, either direct or as proxies for each of the Scheme's key development areas, to show

- the achievement of planned outputs from the Scheme;
- the delivery of beneficial outcomes to a range of the Scheme's audiences.

The progress that has been made towards the medium and long-term goals identified in the 2000 Review is also a useful measure of the Scheme's achievement, considered in the assessment in section 5.

Several sources of information have been used to evaluate the impact of the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The first is the data collected by the Scheme itself, and published in its annual reports for 2001/02 – 2002/03, and for 2003/04 (forthcoming). This is largely quantitative data, for example about the number and type of finds recorded, the number of individual finders who are participating in the Scheme, the activities of the Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) and the use of the website.

The second substantial source of information is the new body of data gathered in the User Survey conducted for this Review (above 3.4 and Appendix 3). Thirdly interviews with stakeholders and members of the PAS team have been used to contextualise the information gathered from other sources.

Headline findings from the User Survey are integrated in the relevant section of the evaluation with a selection of representative comments from respondents. These are italicised and attributed to particular user groups in parenthesis as follows:

<i>(Academic)</i>	<i>Academic users in Higher Education and specialist research</i>
<i>(ARM)</i>	<i>Archaeological resource management: Users in archaeological &amp; heritage services and organisations</i>
<i>(Education)</i>	<i>Educational users – learners and teachers</i>
<i>(Museum)</i>	<i>Museum sector users</i>
<i>(Public)</i>	<i>Public users who are participating in recording finds or have a general interest in the Scheme's work.</i>

## **ACCESS: public participation and awareness**

### **4.1 Key objectives**

The key objectives for Phase 2 of the Scheme in this area have been to continue

- to increase opportunities for active and more inclusive public involvement in archaeology
- to educate finders about the importance of recording their finds for the benefit of everyone
- to raise general awareness among the public of the interest and importance of archaeological finds for our cultural heritage.

Increasing and improving opportunities for participation and active involvement of finders and others is a fundamental part of the Scheme's work. It is achieved through outreach, the activities and events that FLOs organise and facilitate with local groups and individuals; through the availability of the Finds website which is now beginning to allow more interactive use; and by raising the profile of the Scheme locally and nationally.

### **4.2 Outreach activities and their impact**

Looking first at the activities of FLOs, there have been an impressive number of outreach activities to publicise the scheme and encourage finders to take part. In the last year 1055 club visits, finds days and talks have taken place. The pattern of this work varies from area to area depending on local circumstances, and on how long there has been an FLO in post.

In the initial stages of establishing the Scheme in a county, maximum effort is placed in **visiting metal-detecting clubs** to explain the Scheme and establish confidence in the recording process. 527 club visits took place in 2003-04 and the number of people attending varied from 20 up to 100.

*The PAS has made an excellent start in this area working mostly with metal-detectorists - and the results are staggeringly impressive in terms of new and previous finds being reported. Having very good knowledgeable FLOs who can talk confidently to metal-detectorist club audiences is an essential element in getting over the necessity to report all finds. FLOs must be capable of interesting public speaking about what are often mundane finds. The average detectorist needs to be encouraged to see their finds are not junk but rather valuable parts of the artefact past. By doing this FLOs will bring in more finds including the more unusual which many metal detectorists often fail to recognise as having heritage value. (Academic)*

Once established in an area, FLOs tend to visit clubs less often and rely more on finders contacting them or bringing their discoveries to finds days or museums. The FLOs interviewed commented that it is not possible to sustain the high level of club visits demanded at the outset with all the other tasks of their role and pragmatic decisions have to be taken. From the point of view of metal-detecting clubs, the FLOs' withdrawal after an initial period of familiarisation may be viewed negatively. There were a number of comments about infrequency of visits and the need to maintain good relationships with clubs.

The **number of metal-detecting clubs** with which FLOs have regular contact has seen a significant rise since the start of Phase 2 of the Scheme in 2003. In the period October 2001 – March 2003, the FLOs in the eleven areas then covered by the

scheme had regular contact with a total of 61 metal-detecting clubs across England and Wales. This figure has risen to 141 in Phase 2, of 190 known clubs. Assuming an average attendance of around 30 members at such meetings, FLOs will have been in regular contact with around 4250 club-based metal detectorists in 2003-04. To place this in context, *Treasure Hunting* magazine has a circulation of 14,000 which provides some index to the size of the population of interested public.

Compared with the figures since the start of the scheme, overall progress in liaison with clubs seems more ambiguous, as Table 1 indicates. The total for 1999-2000 includes archaeological and historical societies, as well as metal-detecting clubs, which accounts for the large number for that period. Given the comments above regarding sustainable levels of visits to clubs, the numbers of clubs visited regularly should be monitored as an indicator for the progress of the scheme. The dramatic increase from the start of Phase 2 is likely to be the result of the scheme's expansion into new areas, with the appointment of new FLOs leading to a big increase in initial visits to clubs. For this level of regular visits to continue in the medium to long term would absorb a high level of resources which may not be sustainable.

**Table 1: Number of metal-detecting clubs visited regularly**

Annual report period	No of clubs visited regularly
2003-04	141
Oct 2001-March 2003	61
2000-2001	105
1999-2000	108 (includes other societies)
1998-1999	96

**Meeting individual finders** is another important part of the FLOs' work, but one which cannot be quantified on the basis of figures currently collected. Such meetings are much appreciated:

*I have been very happy with the way that my finds have been researched and identified for me and the enthusiasm shown towards me when I have visited the FLO at xxx. (Public)*

In terms of outreach, establishing good relationships with individuals belonging to a fraternity such as metal-detectorists can lead to improved relationships with a number of their acquaintance as mutual trust gradually builds up. This gives added value to meetings with individuals. As not all detectorists are club members, individual meetings may be the only way to record finds made by independent detectorists, who are a difficult audience for the scheme to reach and said to be some of the most prolific finders. In Sussex there has been a good rate of success in reaching independents through working with a metal-detector retail business to ensure that information about the Scheme is passed to customers. In some instances individuals may wish FLOs to visit them, which can raise safety issues relating to lone working. In terms of the overall workload, meetings with individuals are a challenging component, as a single meeting may take half a day. This part of the FLOs' work is comparable to that of all professionals in similar roles, such as museum staff, or SMR / HER officers. This is recognised by some employing organisations, which have provided training in customer care.

**Finds days**, where FLOs are available to identify objects, advise finders and receive material for recording have had a variable and successful response. They have maximum impact when they are linked to a particular event such as a museum activity day, a lecture, exhibition or club rally which provides a focus for attracting finders and adds value to the experience. FLOs attended 251 finds days in 2003-04 in a variety of venues but largely in museums. The total number of attendees

recorded at these is 13,518 but the numbers vary widely, from events that have only attracted a handful of people, to exceptional occasions such as large scale detectorists' rallies, where hundreds of people have been present. Events with very low attendance can be very demoralising for FLOs, especially as finds days often take place at weekends. The success of finds days for members of the public can be adversely affected by poor publicity, which can be a considerable source of frustration to FLOs, if the publicity is being handled by an external organisation.

**Talks** to local groups and societies, at day schools and other events have been an effective method of raising the Scheme's profile, extending its audience and encouraging participation. The Scheme has made direct contact with a large group by this means and over 9,000 people attended the 304 talks given by FLOs and Finds Advisers last year.

The increase in finds days and talks over the life of the scheme is shown in Table 2. The impact of the new appointments in Phase 2 can clearly be seen in the totals for the year 2003-04.

**Table 2: Number of finds days and talks**

Annual report period	No of finds days	No of talks
2003-04	251	304
Oct 2001-March 2003	135	193
2000-2001	102	58
1999-2000	196	57
1998-1999	166	56

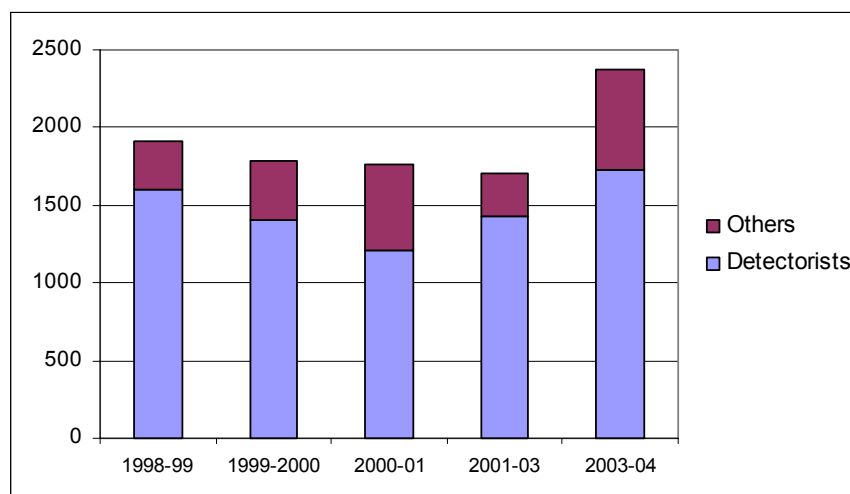
The role of FLOs as representatives and ambassadors for the Scheme is key to the its success (above p.12). The Scheme has doubled its coverage and staffing in the last year and many appointments are relatively inexperienced but enthusiastic and active younger professionals. The need for training and mentoring in their new role is essential if they are to promote the Scheme's interests and represent it confidently in large public gathering, formal meetings and occasionally in difficult confrontational situations. Most of the feedback received about FLOs was extremely positive about the exceptionally demanding work they undertake and their commitment to the Scheme's aims but there was criticism in a small number of cases about lack of experience in finds identification. This, however, is just one of the skills required in a post where a positive attitude and an ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people are essential, whilst skills in artefact identification can be improved through training.

### 4.3 Developing audiences

The **number of people recording finds** is a direct measure of the Scheme's success in encouraging and engaging participation. This has steadily increased during the life of the project, with a significant increase since April 2003 (Table 3). The largest group of finders are detectorists, who have been an important target audience, but the Scheme is also responding to the need to broaden its audience and a growing proportion of other finders are recording material from building and agricultural work, from field walking and controlled excavation, gardening and chance discoveries.

**Table 3: Who are the finders**

Annual report period	Detectorists	Others	Total
2003-04	1,726	650	2,376
Oct 2001-March 2003	1,430	274	1,709
2000-2001	1,213	551	1,764
1999-2000	1,405	383	1,788
1998-1999	1,601	316	1,917

**Figure 2: Who are the finders**

The extent of the Scheme's impact in promoting archaeological field walking and community archaeology projects, particularly where this is done jointly with a local archaeology service, is not necessarily visible in its database. Some FLOs do not record such assemblages directly themselves, provided they are satisfied that the material is being recorded by the local Historic Environment Record which may be a more appropriate system for collecting large volumes of finds data from structured and systematic collection. Some FLOs only encourage finders to bring pottery for recording if it is associated with a specific find of particular interest. They will also make pragmatic decisions as to the benefit of recording eg not recording four sherds of Roman pottery located only to county level, in the SE of England. Policies for selective recording were found to vary from area to area in response to local situations and pressure of work.

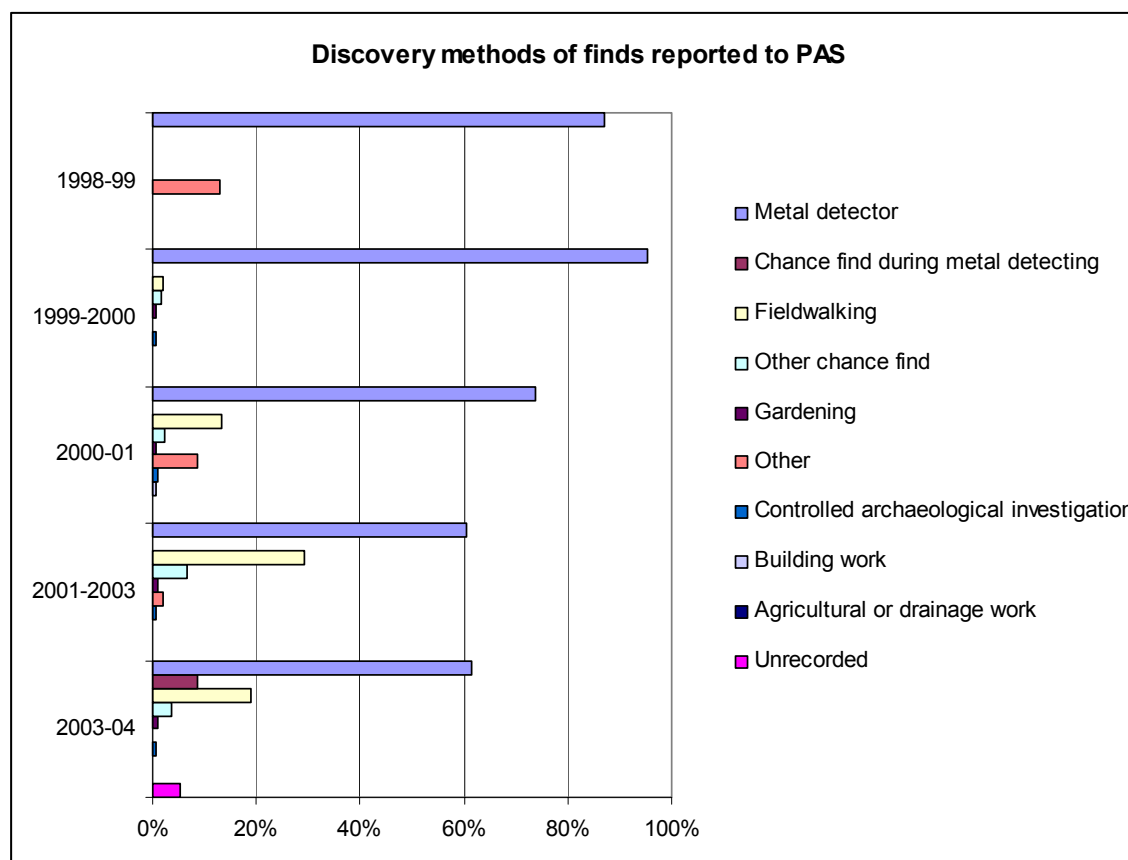


**Table 4: Discovery method**

Discovery method	2003-04		2001-2003		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Metal detector	17978	61%	29909	60%	32050	74%	17578	95%	8642	87%
Chance find during metal detecting	2576	9%								
Fieldwalking	5536	19%	14494	29%	5771	13%	338	2%		
Other chance find	1104	4%	3341	7%	969	2%	284	2%		
Gardening	277	1%	427	1%	252	1%	92	1%		
Other	3	<1%	956	2%	3762	9%			1269	13%
Controlled archaeological investigation	201	1%	335	1%	394	1%	131	1%		
Building work	38	<1%	70	<1%	310	1%	30	<1%		
Agricultural or drainage work	43	<1%	58	<1%	31	<1%	7	<1%		
Unrecorded	1560	5%								
<b>Total</b>	<b>29316</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>49590</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>43539</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18462</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9911</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figures in italics have been inferred from totals and percentages given in Annual Reports for 1999-2000 and 1998-99

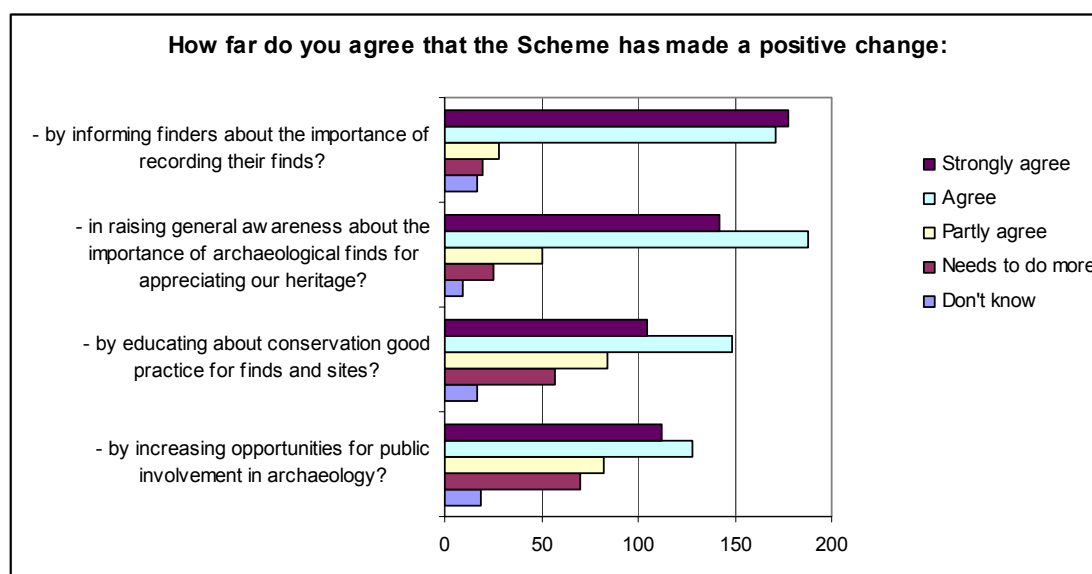
**Figure 3: Discovery methods compared**



The Scheme has little information about the profile of its audience (age, gender, disability, ethnicity or social background). It carried out an analysis of its audience social profile in January 2004, correlating postcode data with social class Output Areas based on the 2001 census.<sup>2</sup> These results were compared with the results from data provided by respondents to the User Survey in the Public response category of for this Review. The proportions of the different social classes varied from the January 2004 survey by less than 1%. The results show encouragingly good representation of C2, D and E Social Grades (48%) but this profile is based on a relatively small sample and could be usefully confirmed by more detailed audience profiling.

In the User Survey (Q2), respondents were asked to what extent they considered that the Scheme has made a positive change in relation to its aims. Their responses, presented below (Figure 4), indicate that the Scheme has made a strong impact particularly in informing finders about the importance of their finds and also in raising awareness generally about the importance of archaeological finds, with over 75% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, a significant number of respondents indicate that they would like the Scheme to do more to educate the public about conservation good practice for finds and sites and give a clear indication (70 responses, 17%) that the Scheme needs to do more to increase opportunities for public participation in archaeology.

**Figure 4: Extent to which the Scheme has brought about a positive change**



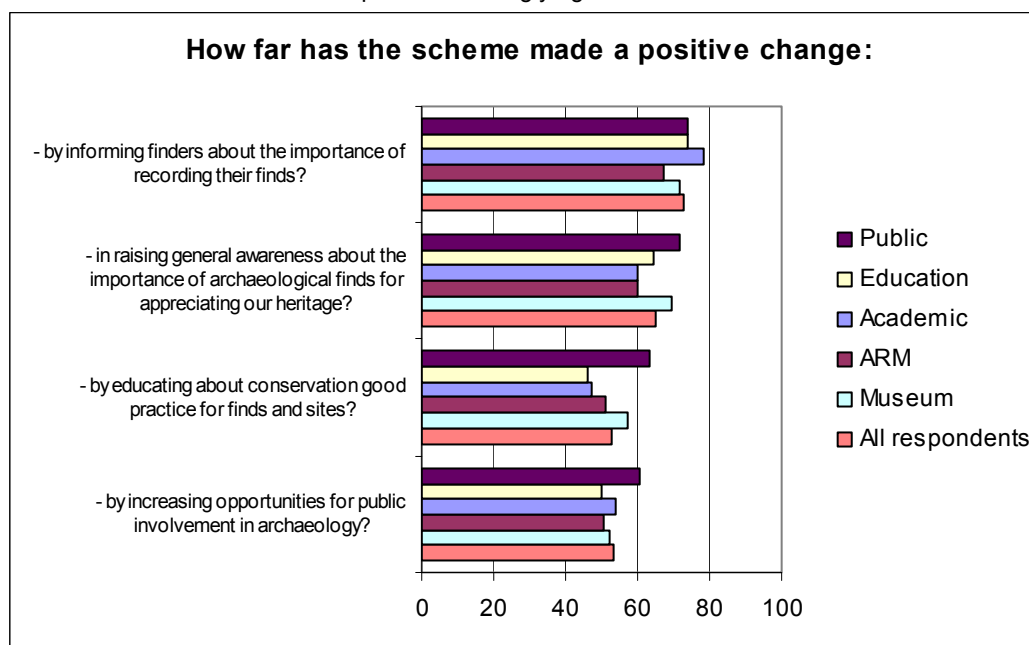
The chart below (Figure 5) compares the responses of the five different categories of respondents, including the average for all respondents. The responses shown above were scored to allow comparison, so if all members of a category 'strongly agreed' with a statement, the score would have been 100. With the caveat that the numbers of responses in the Education and Academic categories were low (12 and 23

<sup>2</sup> Data from 995 people with 965 valid postcodes were used in the PAS study. 21% of the audience were identified as from Social Grades AB, 31% from C1, 14% from C2 and 34% from DE. These compare with figures for the UK population overall: 22% from AB; 27% from C1; 23% from C2; 29% from DE. The methodology used to approximate social profile from postcodes is based on the proportions of households of different social profiles recorded in each area.

individuals respectively), this gives a guide to the areas where respondents feel there is most work to be done.

**Figure 5: Comparison of respondents' views on the positive effect brought about by the Scheme**

A score of 100 would mean all respondents strongly agree with the statement



All categories of respondent are in agreement that the Scheme has made most progress in informing finders about the importance of recording their finds. There is a perception that more work is needed in relation to promoting the third and fourth areas: educating about conservation good practice for finds and sites, and increasing opportunities for public involvement in archaeology. Whereas the Public group are fairly positive about the success of the scheme in relation to artefact and site conservation, the Education and Academic categories are less so. Overall, the Public are most positive about the success of the scheme, and the ARM group of respondents are least optimistic; however, the margins are not large, and no great divergences of opinion were evident.

#### 4.4 Developing the Scheme's web presence

Enhancement of the PAS website in Phase 2 of the Scheme is intended to produce one of its key outcomes - improved access to information, learning and resource discovery. The impact of the redesigned web presence is evaluated here, including the way that the database functions online. Issues around the content, quality and structure of the database are discussed below in section 4.13.

The PAS web presence consists of two separate websites, currently hosted at different physical locations, and with different web addresses: [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk) and [www.findsdatabase.org.uk](http://www.findsdatabase.org.uk). The former covers information about the Scheme, and the latter consists of the online searchable database and images with supporting information. This distinction between the two websites is not made clear to users of the site. The finds.org.uk website was redesigned in March and April 2002 and launched in October 2002, and the online database was trialled from April 2003 and

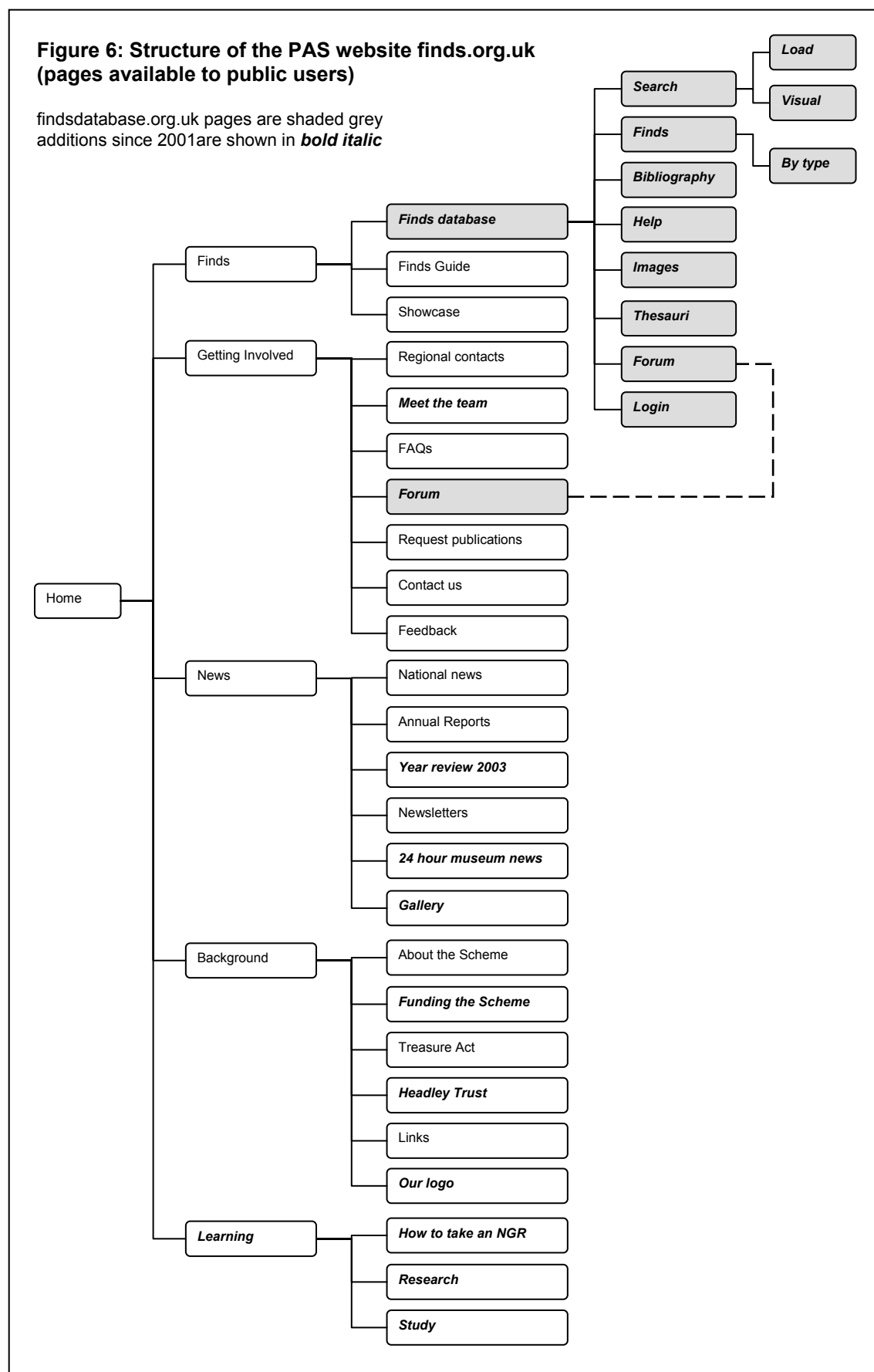
launched to the public in September 2003. The ICT requirements of the Scheme have been supported by the appointment in Phase 2 of a full time ICT Adviser since April 2003.

Figure 6 shows the structure of the public website, and indicates which sections are hosted at [findsdatabase.org.uk](http://findsdatabase.org.uk). There have been thirteen additions since the proposed website structure was published in the *Annual Review 2000-01* (Chart 1, p58), excluding the new finds database and its associated sections. The most recent innovations include the Forum, which allows users to interact with the Scheme and with each other in discussion, including a facility for finders to share images of finds for identification. The Forum was launched in September 2003, and had 141 registered users at the time of the Review, of whom 99 were members of the public. Of these, 55 individuals have posted messages, including one who has posted a total of 65 messages. The number of Forum users continues to increase steadily. In the User Study, 10% of those who use the website indicated that they use the Forum for queries and to post finds for identification.

The new database was a major step forward for the Scheme, as it allows online data entry and therefore reduces double handling of data. Previously, FLOs would enter data on their own copies of the database, then the additions would be added to the central copy of the database, and copied back to the FLOs. The introduction of the online database has necessitated the use of a login system to the database, with a hierarchy of permission levels for access to the data. This prevents casual visitors from editing records, but allows FLOs, PAS staff and trusted users to do so.

Online recording by finders is being trialled with a small group of finders in Kent, who previously recorded their finds on their own club databases, passing it to the FLO, who had then to re-enter the data on the PAS database. Direct recording by finders, or club recording officers, is a response to the fact that there is far more material being reported in the area, both to the FLO and to museums, than the Scheme can process directly. The indications from the trial are that while there may be some issues over the level of detail of records, the provision of good photographs can make up for this. This approach also relies on the continuing availability of finders willing to volunteer for this role, although the following comment from the User Survey indicates that potential volunteers are out there:

*On line reporting would be a great help, perhaps with access to maps to mark find site, and the facility to download pictures for later identification. (Public)*



Since the redesign of the website in October 2002, there has been a sustained increase in the number of page requests for the website, as Table 5 demonstrates. These figures include use by PAS staff and by the FLOs. From April 2003 the figures also include the online database at [findsdatabase.org.uk](http://findsdatabase.org.uk), which was trialled by PAS and FLOs before public launch in September 2003.

**Table 5: Website page requests**

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
	<a href="http://finds.org.uk">finds.org.uk</a>	<a href="http://finds.org.uk">finds.org.uk</a>	<a href="http://finds.org.uk">finds.org.uk</a>	<a href="http://finds.org.uk">finds.org.uk</a>	<a href="http://finds.org.uk">finds.org.uk</a> & <a href="http://findsdatabase.org.uk">findsdatabase.org.uk</a>
April	-	42,148	57,592	106,952	268,925
May	-	35,917	61,245	108,380	202,665
June	-	34,090	59,787	84,821	268,778
July	-	42,545	64,916	90,736	244,912
August	-	68,976	103,358	69,592	234,736
September	-	51,033	96,274	79,531	754,996
October	29,995	58,344	77,215	124,818	769,796
November	29,248	59,512	76,233	108,058	939,510
December	29,619	57,143	68,594	114,929	740,560
January	35,219	61,498	84,387	178,419	1,096,389
February	29,179	59,351	81,132	137,839	1,145,334
March	37,302	62,089	90,279	127,497	1,141,837
Total	190,562	632,646	921,012	1,331,572	7,808,438

The page request data are encouraging, but should be regarded as a general indication of success and overall increase in participation, rather than representative of audience size. Currently it is not possible to separate PAS and FLO use of the websites from that by other users, although changes to allow this to be monitored are in hand. One effect of the dual location of the site has been to increase the numbers of page requests overall, for example where users enter the site from [finds.org.uk](http://finds.org.uk) but then use [findsdatabase.org.uk](http://findsdatabase.org.uk) exclusively. For this reason, even were website visits, rather than page requests, used as the means of assessing use, the figures from the two sites would include a degree of overlap. Notwithstanding this, an increase from 190,000 page requests in 2000 to over 7 million in 2004 is a very substantial response from users.

In the User Survey people were asked how often they used the Scheme's website and what they used it for. Figure 7 summarises frequency of use. 69% of respondents (291 individuals) reported that they were existing users of the website (a further 65 used it for the first time to answer the questionnaire). The majority (206, or 49% of respondents) described themselves as occasional users of the website.

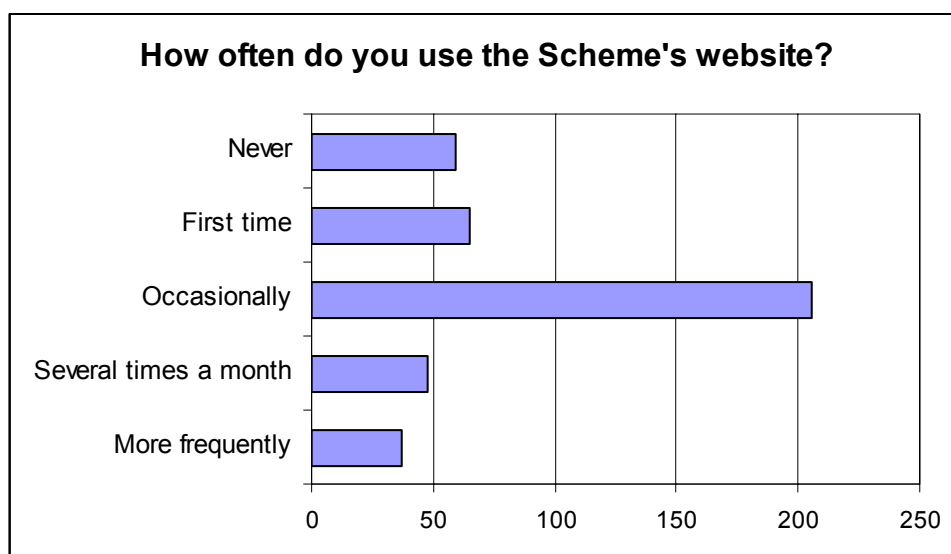
**Figure 7: Frequency of website use**

Table 6 summarises the range of uses of the website reported by respondents. The high numbers who are interested in finds from their local area or region (61% of website users) give an indication of the proportion using the database and search functions of the database. The results show that information about particular types of finds is regarded as very useful (51% of website users), and that general information about archaeology and archaeological finds is also important (30%). 'Other' responses included a significant number, mostly from museums, who use the images to assist in identification of objects.

**Table 6: Range of website use**

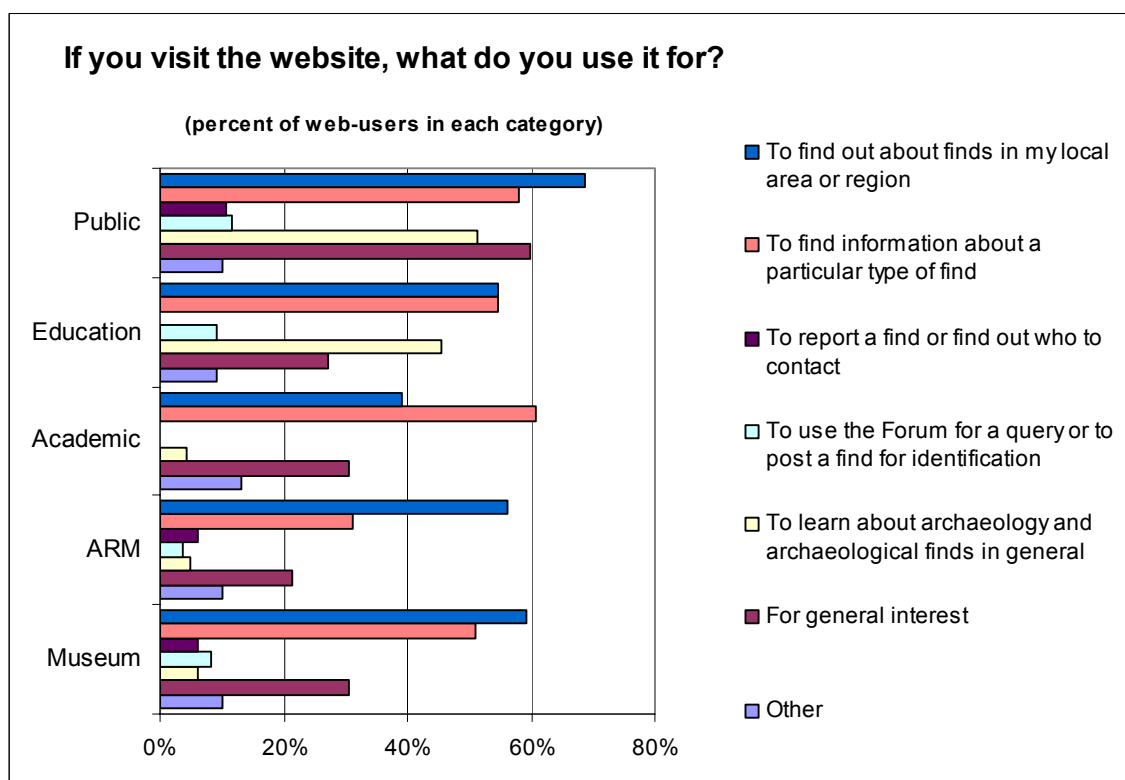
	No. of responses	% of all website users
To find out about finds in my local area or region	216	61%
To find information about a particular type of find	181	51%
To report a find or find out who to contact	28	8%
To use the Forum for a query or to post a find for identification	36	10%
To learn about archaeology and archaeological finds in general	107	30%
For general interest	154	43%
Other	60	17%

This range of responses indicates areas where further development would be useful. At present there are only a limited number of sections about finds types on the website (commemorative coins of Constantine the Great, Roman radiates, English coin weights, jetons, gaming pieces, private tokens and lead tickets and tokens), although more are planned, to cover 'the commonest types of archaeological finds which may be encountered in Britain'. The website includes very little information about archaeology in general but does provide links to other websites which can help, eg CBA, RCAHMW, EH. More guidance material is in development.

*The concept of the web site seems rather antiquarian, as it seems to just present 'the finds' with a catalogue and some photographs. Where is the contextual information - why are such finds important? What do they tell us about past societies? (ARM)*

Examining the range of responses in relation to the user categories is particularly interesting in the context of the Scheme's work towards public participation and awareness. As the following chart illustrates (Figure 8), finders and other members of the public use the website for a much greater range of purposes than the other categories of users. In comparison with the other groups, the public are most likely to want to use the site for general information about archaeology and archaeological finds, and for general interest.

**Figure 8: Range of website use by category of user**



The usability of the website is a significant aspect of the Scheme's web presence especially for active participation by users. The website attracted some negative comments in the User Survey, mostly from the Public user group, but also from Academic, ARM and Education users. In some cases responses clearly relate to use of the database, but in others it is possible that comments refer to the website as a whole. A large proportion were critical of specific aspects though it was also welcomed as 'an excellent informative site'.

The distinction between the two sites at finds.org.uk and findsdatabase.org.uk is not made apparent to users, and indeed, the design of the pages on each site are intentionally similar, although the functionality of elements such as drop down menus is different. This can lead to difficulties for users who are unaware of the distinction, and just experience such differences as confusing, for example, each site has a different 'home' page, so clicking on 'home' whilst navigating the site does not always give the expected result.

*Web site needs to be made more 'user friendly'. (Public)*



The speed of the database is an issue which the Scheme is aware of and has been addressing. Particular technical difficulties prevailed during the period of the Review. However, it is an issue which needs to be kept under review as broadband internet access speeds and user expectations continue to increase.

*The website has mostly been very slow and problematical to use; sometimes I have abandoned a search because it takes too long and continually requires refreshing. I would use the website and the information it holds much more if this could be solved. (Academic)*

*Only fault that I feel the Portable Antiquities Scheme should really rectify is the speed of the finds database, it searches and loads slow compared to average web speeds. A slow site inevitably drives users away. (Public)*

The difficulty of searching the database seems to be the main problem raised by respondents. Here, too, the Scheme has been attempting to gather feedback from users to assist with future developments, but was unable to attract sufficient interest to hold a focus group meeting. A detailed database user test was devised as an alternative, and a report on responses to this is currently in preparation.

*Really good, but the database element of the website must win a prize for the most unusable on-line database I've come across. It is fine for advanced users and those experienced with database use – it badly needs a simpler public front-end. (ARM)*

*The Portable Antiquities online database is extremely poor when compared with other online databases. Even since improvements have been made to the database, it remains extremely difficult to search for specific types of artefacts. (ARM)*

*I think the Visual Database need sorting, I have never been able to get it to work. (Public)*

From an access point of view, the fact that the database functions across a variety of different operating systems and internet browsers is in its favour. Other websites have been criticised for being biased towards Windows operating systems and browsers. Navigating and using the database is difficult at first, and responses from users seem to suggest that they give up before they have learned their way around the system. Some error messages are due to the limitations of users' internet browsers, but there is no easily accessible information to explain to users that this may be the source of the problem, or that upgrading a browser may solve the problem.

*I find the website tiresome, and have just about given up trying to use it - the jargon-ridden and unhelpful error messages are particularly irritating. (ARM)*

It is not immediately apparent how to use the different options available in the database, and the Help options are not all easy to understand.

When considering some of these views, respondents' background (heritage professional or member of the public) and level of ICT skill is an issue. The website and database make little distinction between the needs of different user groups, with the exception of the Visual database search option (but see comment above). Even professional users, experienced in HER and museum databases report that it is difficult to use, as is clear from the comments from the ARM user category.

*The web site seems a bit clunky and non-intuitive. Is it designed for professional archaeologists/numismatists? Or for the general public? It seems to fall between two stools. (ARM)*

One user commented that they would appreciate a facility for producing mapped distributions and outputs. This indicates that the facility (which is available) is not easy to find. Furthermore it can only be printed imperfectly as part of the web page, rather than copied or saved as a digital image. Comparison was made by one respondent with the Early Medieval Corpus of Coin Finds as a good model for the Scheme to emulate in terms of its speed, functionality and outputs.

When considering ease of use of the database, it is important to consider who the users are, and how often they are likely to use the database. This is an issue common to all software applications. Unless an application is used relatively frequently, eg once a week, users are likely to forget how to use it. If use is only occasional, an application needs to be designed to be as intuitive as possible, using conventions common to a wide range of applications, and also allowing for the fact that different users think and remember in different ways. Some people have more visual memories, others more word-based. Many software applications provide two or more alternative methods of carrying out a single function for this reason. Figure 7 above shows that the majority of respondents using the website are occasional users. This needs to be taken into account, and more pointers could be provided about how to use the database for occasional users. PAS staff who are regular users of the database report that they find it straightforward to use.

There may be some accessibility issues with both websites, in relation to their use by those with visual or motor impairments. The on-screen text size on both websites can be altered, which is essential (although this is not straightforward in some browsers). The use of colour backgrounds in finds.org.uk may need checking with software designed to assess accessibility issues. Use of the database is reliant on mouse movements, which may make it unusable to those with motor impairments. Advice on accessibility recommends allowing keyboard alternatives to mouse options.

See section 4.13 below for further discussion of the database.

#### **4.5 Raising general awareness**

The Scheme has a clear understanding of the value of publicity for raising awareness about its work and puts a considerable effort into it. Respondents to the User Survey still consider that more could be done to raise the profile of the Scheme.

*More publicity of the scheme. When I questioned 40 workmates only 5 knew of its existence and aims. (Museum)*

*I only found out about the PAS through my hobby of metal detecting but have not seen much evidence of it in the "public Domain" (Public)*

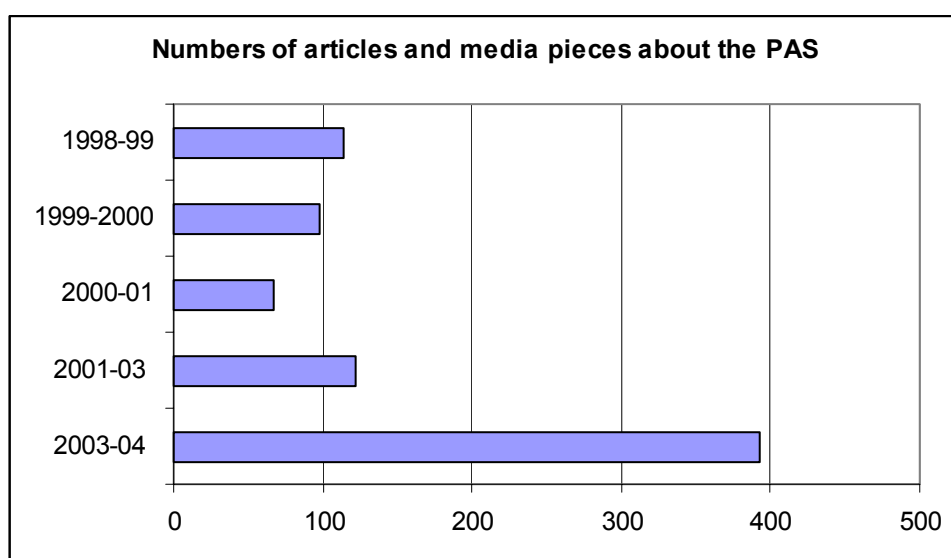
Leaflets about the Scheme are produced centrally and widely distributed. Substantial, well-presented Annual Reports have been produced since its inception. These are very detailed accounts of the Scheme's successes, year by year, but although widely distributed, they cannot be sent to every finder. As part of Phase 2, regional newsletters have been introduced, which will provide an easier means of keeping finders up to date with local progress. Display banners and boards have been produced by FLOs in some areas as well, although clearly this is something which would be useful across the country.

*Information needs to be made available to more members of the public such as at libraries, museums etc in the form of leaflets, posters, contact details (Public)*

*Needs better publicity e.g. posters, newspaper articles, 'road shows' (Academic)*

The headline statistics from Annual Reports show a very clear increase in the number of articles about the work of the Scheme which have been published or broadcast in the media over the lifetime of the Scheme. The figures for 2003-04 clearly show the effect of the Phase 2 appointments: out of the 393 articles, 350 originated from the FLOs. The newly-appointed FLOs have been putting a lot of effort into publicising their work in local papers and broadcast media. These are found to be effective means to publicise finds days and talks.

**Table 7: Articles and media pieces about the Scheme**



Of the different media, television is regarded by respondents to the User Survey as a good means of reaching the public:

*From a programme on TV I learned about this scheme and agree that this is an excellent way of educating, informing and helping the public to increase our understanding and preservation of our heritage. (Public)*

*I saw the scheme on TV recently. There should be greater exposure to the general public. (Public)*

Opinion on the BBC2 *Hidden Treasures* programme amongst archaeologists is generally negative, and respondents from the public user category were divided.

*I only know of the scheme because of my involvement in metal detecting. My wife, for example has never heard of it. Perhaps the scheme could be more widely promoted by getting mentioned on TV archaeology programmes. "Hidden Treasure" does this very well others sadly don't. (Public)*

*You still are not changing public views. You need to - especially items about cash values - and the dreadful BBC programme put back progress! (Public)*

To date, publicity has tended to focus more on publicising the Scheme itself and informing finders that the PAS is there to record items, rather than on any advocacy for responsible detecting. Even where the Scheme is initiating publicity, it has little

control over *how* it is publicised in the media and this has also prompted adverse exposure though, as noted below, this is true for archaeology in general.

*... Like the rest of archaeology, the PAS seems to be at the mercy of the media - which goes for finds with 'wow factor' rather than the more mundane stuff. Is there any way of getting it across that the mundane stuff has valuable information in it too? (I think the finders are beginning to get the idea, but not the wider public). Also, as archaeology gets more and more popular, standards of reporting seem to have dropped. I have seen some truly execrable programmes, even on the BBC! (in fact I have stopped watching). Is there anything we can do about this? - I feel that by allowing it to be told not-quite-like-it-is we are failing the public. (Museum)*

There are good indications that awareness of the Scheme has spread well beyond those who are directly involved with it. The number of respondents who reported no direct involvement with the Scheme, but who answered the User Survey, is an indication of the level of interest which the PAS has generated. Table 8 compares the numbers of respondents involved or not involved in the Scheme from the different groups consulted in the User Survey.

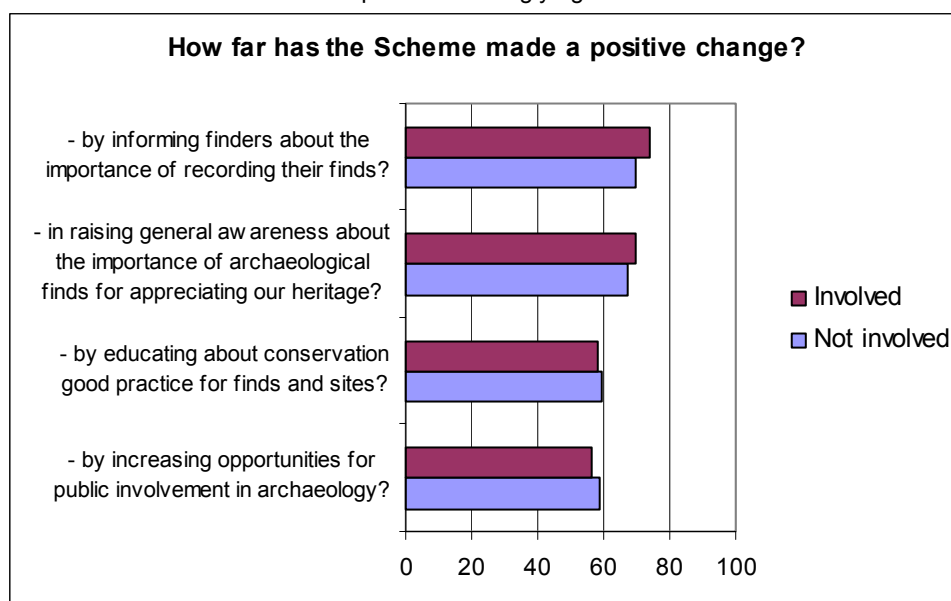
**Table 8: Involvement of different consultation groups with the PAS**

	Not involved	Involved
Online questionnaire	86	160
NCMD paper and email responses	36	85
Finds special interest groups	8	13
Society of Museum Archaeologists	1	23
Unknown	1	2

There was very little difference in opinions between those who were not directly involved in the Scheme and those who were. Both groups were positive about the change which the PAS is making in relation to its aims.

**Figure 9: Comparison between those involved and not directly involved in the Scheme: extent of positive change**

A score of 100 would mean all respondents strongly agree with the statement



## 4.6 Increasing opportunities for public participation in archaeology

The impact of the Scheme on increasing or improving opportunities for public participation in archaeological activities is less easy to gauge directly than other aspects.

There are numbers of particular cases where the Scheme has enabled individual finders, and sometimes their metal detector clubs, to become actively involved in archaeological evaluation projects that have followed on from their discoveries. A recent high-profile example of this is the finder of the Viking brooches that led to the identification of the Cumwhitton burial site, Cumbria. Respondents in the User Survey note their participation in this type of role, e.g. 'metal detector search for archaeological site survey', 'helping on archaeological dig (detecting spoil)'.

Generally the Scheme encourages finders to take part in recording as a participative activity and see that their discoveries (not just the find itself but the properly recorded context for the find) can make a real contribution to archaeological knowledge.

*I am pleased that members of the public are allowed to be part of the PAS Forum as I feel this helps in building up good relationships between finders and FLOs and gives the general public involved in the scheme access to a wider variety of opinions, ideas and information. (Public)*

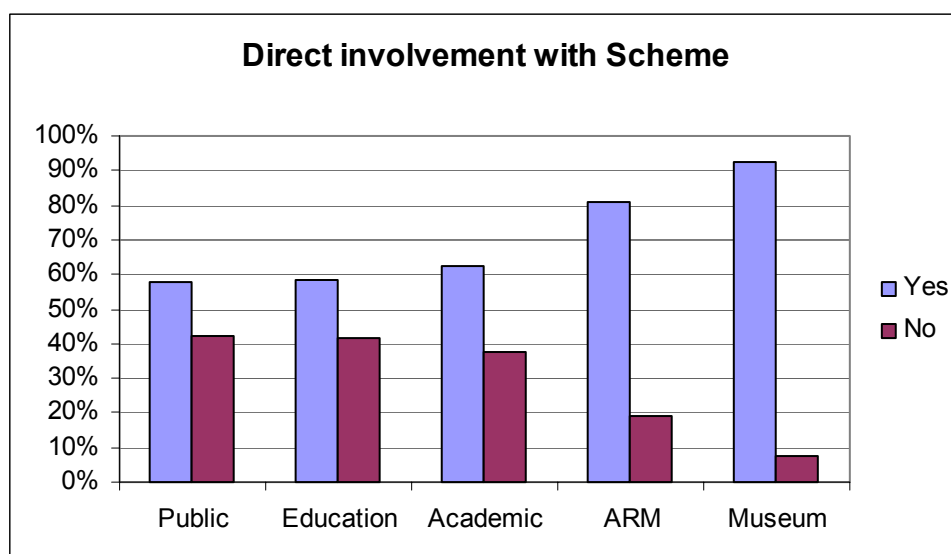
Some finders feel that their contribution is sometimes not recognised properly by archaeologists and are certainly alienated by being excluded.

*I feel some attitudes are changing but as a detector user do not like being portrayed as a thief by some high profile archaeologists. Also getting information can be frustrating. (Public)*

In some parts of the country, more formalised protocols for joint working are being developed between detectorists and professional archaeologists on development-led field work projects. A good example is the draft guidance drawn up by the Cheshire Detectorists and Archaeologists Liaison Group, *Metal Detecting on Archaeological Excavations in Cheshire*. This helps to clarify respective roles and responsibilities in field projects and to cement working relationships that are to the benefit of all involved.

Although detectorists are clearly one of the principal audiences for Scheme's activities, opportunities for participation are by no means limited to this group. In Wales the Scheme has worked actively for years with field walkers systematically collecting lithic material. The Scheme can also provide many examples of community archaeology projects stimulated by its FLOs. In the Midlands, for example, community field walking around the village of Tysoe, Warwickshire, has been supported by the FLO, working with interested local finders who had collected pottery. The outcome has encouraged residents to have a sense of ownership and pride in their archaeology from their initial curiosity about the pottery which they were finding.

The views of public users of the Scheme are well-represented in the User Survey (233 respondents or 55%) and they indicate that increasing opportunities for public involvement in archaeology is the area where they feel the Scheme needs to do most to improve, though a majority (55%) agree that it is already having a good impact in this area.

**Figure 10: Direct involvement with the Scheme by different user categories**

The User Survey also asked about participation in the Scheme, enquiring whether respondents had been directly involved with it or worked with a FLO. A percentage of respondents in all groups had not directly participated, overall nearly a third, though they felt sufficiently engaged to respond to the survey.

Looking at the public user group it is interesting to note that only just over half consider themselves to have participated directly. These may be individuals who use only the website or know of the Scheme through their detector club though they have not actively taken part. The survey shows that public users are least likely to make use of the website, and include the highest proportion of first time users, but they are nevertheless the largest user group. As noted above (p23), finders tend to make more varied and proactive use of the site than other user groups, using it to keep in contact with the Scheme, to take part in the Forum and to learn about archaeology in general.

## EDUCATION AND LEARNING

### 4.7 Background to developing the Scheme's work in education

In this programme area, the Scheme's key objective is to deliver the full educational value and learning opportunities of the project by developing resources for schools, for further and higher education and for life-long learning.

Enhancement of access and opportunities for children to participate and learn through cultural activities is a strategic priority in the DCMS Business Plan for 2004-05. Its delivery through programmes for museum education and Culture Online are both key areas in which the Scheme can be engaged. The PAS forms part of MLA's 5-year vision for England's museums, libraries and archives, *Investing in Knowledge*, as the key to creative learning and enterprise opportunities.

The Scheme's team was expanded to include an Education Officer in Phase 2 and the post was filled in September 2003. During the period under Review, the work of this post has largely been directed to an audit and evaluation of the Scheme's education activity and resources, assessing needs and drafting an Education Plan (PAS 2004a). Since only one member of staff is available for this work, but all members of the PAS team are involved in educational work in some capacity, a strategic, co-ordinated approach is essential. The focus of the Education Officer's work is in KS2 and KS3 and in adult learning. Links with higher education and university teaching are co-ordinated by the Head of the PAS Scheme and delivered through the Finds Advisors, who are either based in universities or have close links with them.

The Scheme's website is registered on the National Grid for Learning, and as a content provider for Curriculum Online, and will be enhanced for educational use in Phase 2. Educational content is still in development, however. New, web-based learning resources will be commissioned from external consultants for delivery in December 2004. Professionally designed teaching resources for KS2 and KS3 are planned to be available as downloads from the Website and as teachers' packs and handbooks. Development and piloting of teaching resources for A-level archaeology, as originally planned for Phase 2, will not be taken forward given the current doubts about the future availability of this qualification.

### 4.8 Impact assessment in school-age learning

The profile of respondents in the User Survey is not representative of education users in schools, either teachers or pupils, who could not be targeted easily in this type of survey. Evidence sources for assessing the value of the Scheme's educational work, and the scope and range of current FLO activities, are outlined in Appendix 4 of the PAS Education Plan (PAS 2004a). Evaluation of the impact of the Scheme's educational work to date is hampered by lack of consistent measures and systematic qualitative assessment, and by the sheer diversity of FLO activities. The Scheme has not (until recently) recorded the number of pupils and students with which it has worked separately from the audiences for its overall outreach activities. Indeed learning and education permeate all areas of the Scheme's activities. Interaction with finders ranges from informal guidance on use of sources for researching finds and their archaeological context to more formal learning of skills for map reading, field walking, surveying, use of GPS equipment and inputting data to

the database. In more structured learning situations, FLOs are engaged in supporting learning activities in museums, in schools, universities and colleges and with a wide variety of learning stages and special needs. Work with the CBA's Young Archaeologists Clubs and on National Archaeology Days is reported as particularly successful with young people. The Scheme is engaged with a number of innovative and successful projects such as Reticulum and the ARC in York.

In Phase 2, the Scheme will use the MLAs 'Inspiring Learning Framework' and generic learning outcomes to show evidence of its impact. The framework for impact assessment of the Scheme's educational work will be devised with MLA's advisers. Evaluation of educational activities in the Phase I Hubs for Renaissance in the Regions (the MLA's national programme to build capacity in the museum sector) has shown that learning sessions where archaeology is a specific topic of study compare favourably with other subject areas, with significantly higher percentages of pupils expressing satisfaction with the outcomes of their museum learning experience (MLA 2004). This corresponds with anecdotal evidence from FLOs that some of the most valuable learning opportunities are those where they provide handling sessions in museums, at finds days and 'road shows', that allow the public and school students to have direct experience of handling archaeological finds and understanding their context. The Scheme lends itself to multiple teaching and learning styles because of the broad range of skills, cultural and scientific aspects that it includes.

#### **4.9 Further and higher education**

The User Survey produced only a small group of responses from the education user group (3%) who have an interest in the Scheme as teachers or as students. From their comments it appears that these are largely in higher education, using the Scheme as a research or teaching resource. The low response may be in part due to the survey being conducted during the summer vacation period.

Many FLOs are involved in teaching at under graduate and post graduate level and in continuing education, A-level and HND courses. Individual FLOs are expert in their own right in specialist areas and the Scheme regularly takes undergraduate and graduate student placements for work experience to work alongside FLOs. The appointment of the Scheme's five Finds Advisers in 2003 has been successful in initiating more proactive work with further and higher education and in related research. Three of the Finds Advisers are based in universities and actively involved in teaching and supervising student research. The potential of the data gathered by the Scheme as a research resource (see 4.14 below) in archaeology is an area that the Finds Advisers are actively promoting with increasing success, e.g. 16 university undergraduate and graduate research projects have been supplied with data by the Scheme over the Review period. The 'Learning' pages of the website encourage the use of 'the Portable Antiquities Scheme's database [as] an ideal research tool, whether you are an undergraduate or postgraduate researcher or just interested in research for its own sake' and suggest topics suitable for research at different levels.

#### **4.10 Life-long learning**

Responses to the User Survey show that in life-long learning the Scheme is having a major impact and is clearly a benefit enjoyed by many participants in the Scheme, from active involvement in projects to those who only access the website. As many as 30% of respondents to the User Survey indicate that they use the Scheme's



website principally to learn about archaeology and archaeological finds in general, and for public users this is a significant area of use (see above p23). This is an encouraging indication of the potentially wider value of the Scheme's web-based resources for individual learning and resource discovery and its success to date.

*I am an interested amateur living far from a chance to get in-depth current published sources on British archaeology. This site gives me a wonderful opportunity to increase my knowledge and whet my curiosity about Romano-British history and finds. I love it. (Public)*

*From a programme on TV I learned about this scheme and agree that this is an excellent way of educating, informing and helping the public to increase our understanding and preservation of our heritage. (Public)*

An assessment of adult learner needs was undertaken for the Scheme earlier in 2004 with a small group of 30 finders (all detectorists) participating in the Scheme interviewed by FLOs and the Education Officer (PAS 2004a, Appendix 2). This study gathered perceptions about what kinds of learning activity were viewed as most valuable by finders. The responses reflect a pluralistic approach to learning among detectorists drawing on multiple types of resources, including magazines, television and museum collections, as well as events at their club. There was relatively low interest in pursuing qualifications or a formal course of learning. Interestingly the internet was not mentioned as a source for learning about archaeology, although it was undoubtedly used by many of the respondents.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

### **4.11 Key objectives**

One of the key objectives of the Scheme is to continue to arrest the large level of archaeological information lost every year by actively recording this material on a systematic basis for public benefit, for its use

- in planning and managing conservation of the historic environment
- in museums as centres for knowledge and enquiry
- in advancing research to improve knowledge and understanding about the past.

The Review in 2000 indicated that in the long term the full value of the Scheme for enhancing knowledge and understanding of archaeological finds would be achieved most effectively in partnership with others:

The research possibilities will become more apparent when Portable Antiquities information can be searched in parallel and combined with other information resources. Its wider potential will be seen as it is integrated and interpreted in regional and local authority environment records, in national and regional research projects, in relation to museum collections, to the work of specialist study groups, in schools and local community projects” (Chitty 2001, 46).

The extent to which medium and long-term goals have been achieved in this area of the Scheme is a measure of its progress and of the need for further improvement. Improving the flow of publicly available information via the website and for use by HERs – identified as a significant issue in the last review in 2000 – is a key performance indicator for the current review of the PAS.

### **4.12 Sharing PAS data with local archaeology and museum services**

To realise the full value of the rich body of information gathered by the Scheme it is essential that it can be contextualised with wider information about the historic environment (for use in planning and conservation management and related archaeological research) and for collections management and research in museums. Progress towards making PAS data available for these purposes and facilitating its transfer to HERs/SMRs and other record systems was identified in 2000 as an important goal for the Scheme in Phase 2. This has not yet been achieved for England and the current situation presents a mixed picture.

In Wales, the RCAHMW has since July 2004 acted as the distributor for PAS data to ENDEX partners (Cadw and the four regional Welsh Archaeological Trusts) and the National Museum of Wales. The Welsh SMRs also integrate records of some finds, those reported to them directly, straight into their record systems. PAS data in Wales is now therefore theoretically available for reference in full either through the Welsh NMR, the National Museum of Wales or the relevant Welsh Trust SMR. It is also available on the internet in summary form with 4-figure NGR through CARN (Core Archaeological Record iNdex).

In England a small number of HER/SMRs and museums have fully integrated PAS data with their records where the FLO is co-located with the HER and museum or has a close working relationship with the organisation. Norfolk is a case in point where, due to the long history of working with detectorists, more finds data is held in the HER than in the Finds database. The PAS system administrator is also able, on

request, to make detailed finds data, with full locational details, available to HERs and local authority services in response to specific queries, e.g. for major development areas or specific research requests. In the majority of cases, however, HERs and museums currently only have access to the public level of the PAS database on the website.

This unsatisfactory situation is reflected in the frequency of comments about this issue – some positive but largely negative – in the responses from local archaeology services, as the comments below indicate.

*Data provided by scheme is proving very useful in Development Control work, as finds may be the only indication of archaeological potential. Close liaison with FLO very effective at fostering closer working relations with Detectorist groups – used regularly in archaeological surveys. (ARM)*

*It's disappointing that national agreement over data exchange with SMRs/HERs has still not been reached.... We have agreed short-term local data exchange arrangements with our FLO, but currently I have no direct access to the online database. (ARM)*

*The fact that the scheme refuses to transfer information to SMRs is highly regrettable and means that it is making no contribution to the protection of the historic environment. Given that detectorists reported finds to the SMR before the scheme began and are now instead reporting them to the PAS, the PAS has actually been a retrograde step in the protection of the historic environment in (ARM).*

*As a Local Authority Archaeologist who manages the regional SMR/HER I am STILL waiting to receive ANY information / data from the scheme at all. This is VERY unsatisfactory. (ARM)*

Museums also would like to see more sharing of data:

*Better cooperation between finds liaison officers and local museums - unless I ask specific questions I receive no information about finds from the museum collecting area being reported directly to finds liaison officers.(Museum)*

The Scheme has been pursuing a workable solution in this area for the last four years. Agreement has not been a straightforward matter given the varying approaches and different information systems of the c100 HERs that operate in England. The technical issues, which were one of the difficulties blocking data transfer in 2000, have now been resolved. The remaining obstacle to agreement is one of principle over the issue of publishing locational data about finds sites on the internet. NCMD, representing detectorist finders, supports the transfer of full information from the Scheme's database to HERs but, for publication on the internet, wishes to see locational data limited to a 4-figure NGR. This limitation has been a concern to the membership of ALGAO which represent local authority services and their HERs. An interim arrangement which would allow all HERs to have full access to PAS data was close to agreement but is now delayed subject to further discussion of terms and conditions. It is subject to the wider issues of online publication being resolved later. The CBA continues in the role of facilitator in the negotiations between ALGAO, NCMD and the PAS.

This dialogue has been coloured by differences in attitude towards the aims and achievements of the Scheme. The results of the User Survey show that those working in archaeological and heritage services are less positive in their perceptions about the impact of the Scheme compared with public users. It is also noticeable that comments relating to its archaeological impact are strikingly negative in tone, while

detailed comments about other aspects of the Scheme are fairly equally spread between positive and negative opinions.

More generally, a majority of respondents agree (60%) that the Scheme has made a positive change in educating about conservation practice for sites and finds but a third feel that this is only partly the case and that the Scheme needs to do more.

#### **4.13 The finds database**

The content, quality and structure of the database have an impact on its contribution to knowledge and understanding, but at the same time, the expectations and requirements of the different categories of user affect how the database is regarded in this context. The Academic user group were most likely to comment on content and quality issues.

The quality of object identifications and descriptions has been raised both by respondents to the User Survey, and by some researchers (Crummy 2004). The present system, introduced in 2003, ensures that records created by FLOs are then validated by experienced Finds Advisers and has gone a long way towards solving this problem. In Kent a pilot has been running with local club 'recording officers' carrying out direct data entry and this is helping to assess the record quality issues which will be an issue for wider adoption of this practice in the future. In some areas the volume of finds may lead FLOs to having to make difficult decisions: is it better to make brief records of as many finds as possible, or to make good records of only some of them? At the same time, the system of validation by Finds Advisers has introduced a bottleneck in the information flow which has meant that there can be a considerable delay before artefacts appear on the publicly-accessible database. The Scheme is aware of this issue and is introducing a new workflow system to publish records on the public database as soon as they are submitted by FLOs, flagging them as still under validation. The fact remains, however, that there may be scope for improvement on the object identifications in some older records. There is an opportunity here for the Scheme to encourage greater interaction from its users. An email link from the database could be provided for feedback which would identify a record number and allow the user to contribute to knowledge about that artefact.

The advantages to researchers of incorporating images in the database have been highlighted (Crummy 2004). Where descriptions lack significant detail, a photograph can provide the necessary detail for specialist interpretation.

*...the importance of a photographic record of the recorded finds cannot be emphasised enough. It is gratifying that this need has already been identified and addressed. (Academic)*

It is easy to criticise the earlier records of the scheme for their lack of photographs, but it must be acknowledged that digital cameras and software able to manipulate the sheer volume of images produced by the Scheme represent significant technological and software advances. This is another area where there is, and will always be, a discrepancy between the quality of records made early in the Scheme, and those made recently.

The usefulness of the database to all researchers is related to how easily and reliably data can be extracted. The use of thesaurus terms is designed to facilitate this, although it is not apparent to all users that thesaurus terms are being used in all cases. As software potential increases, it is likely that enforced use of thesaurus terms will become less important. Related to this is the issue of the hierarchy of terms used, which is a concept familiar to those with a museum or record

background. However, it is something which is difficult for many other users to understand, and which is not explained clearly, nor are the hierarchies of terms set out in an accessible form.

In addition to the difficulties of searching for data on the database, producing convenient output is also problematic. Search results can only be printed out, not saved to disk. The printout options are extremely limited, consisting only of single records, printed in full. Listings can be printed as internet page prints, but each page must be displayed individually, and some of the screen falls off the edge of the print. There is no printout or digital save option available for distribution maps. These issues add to the difficulties facing academic users who may want to use PAS data as a source of information.

*We relied on obtaining data for the regional research assessment direct from the Finds officers (online database not so helpful) and the new information has made a real contribution to understanding the region's archaeology. (Academic)*

Although data can be provided on an individual basis from the Scheme's central office, this will not be sustainable in the longer term if all researchers start sending requests for data downloads.

The structure of the database is closely related to those used for museum catalogues, where each item is seen as a separate and individual item. Information linking items found as a group cannot be included in the description. The same applies for links to other records, e.g. SMR records of known sites. Whilst this is a sensitive area from the point of view of those wishing to protect the anonymity of sites, from the point of view of researchers for whom context is significant, this information is being lost. If detailed findspot information is recorded to 10m or even 1m accuracy (8 figure or 10 figure conventional grid references eg AB 12345 67891), these contextual links between finds and sites can be reconstructed. If the information is available, but the database structure does not allow it to be recorded, this information is lost.

*I feel that there is a tendency to study objects in isolation from their site context, producing catalogues and statistics, but at this stage not research on assemblages. (Museum)*

The Scheme is now working on an additional database screen for recording hoards and deposits found at the same time, which is a positive step towards the study of assemblages of artefacts.

Whilst the Scheme's aim for the database is to be 'a central information resource for the historic environment', the relationship between it and other sources of information on archaeology and finds should perhaps be more explicit so that the limitations of its research potential are clearer. For some users, any information recorded is good information, but for others, record content, quality and context are significant. The Scheme can be proud of an innovative database which offers enormous potential. The quality of records has improved significantly over a relatively short time, and the Scheme has shown its commitment to continuous improvement in the content and reliability of its database as one of the permanent legacies of its work.

#### 4.14 Realising the research potential

Clearly the Scheme's greatest research contribution lies in bringing together and managing information about archaeological finds in a systematic way that others can go on to exploit as a resource for research. The Scheme has recorded an extraordinary new corpus of material which continues to grow in diversity and significance as it increases in scale and in scope with national coverage. This is abundantly illustrated in the Scheme's *Annual Report* series and in the exceptional new sites that have been identified and investigated as a result of the Scheme's work. For this evaluation, the focus has been how the value of this new corpus of finds information can be fully realised.

The research potential is being fulfilled in a number of ways. The study of finds distributions at county, regional or national scale, can reveal patterns of trade, manufacture, movement of people and changes in fashion; or can show the presence of activity in an area at a particular period that is otherwise not apparent from field remains. In this respect, the Scheme is now making an active contribution to Regional Research Frameworks in England and Wales.

At the local level, PAS data can bring new understanding about a site or landscape when brought together with HER/SMR data and site investigation. The Scheme's annual report provides numerous examples of chance finds that have evolved into archaeological research projects in this way.

Systemically recorded finds from ploughed sites, collected over a long period, provide large assemblages with high research potential. Some 'productive sites' produce hundreds or thousands of coins and artefacts, as the land is re-ploughed each year. The movement of archaeological material in agricultural contexts and the rate of its deterioration *ex situ* are both subjects for current research. Studies of particular artefact types and series, manufacture and composition support a range of research in specialist studies of cultural artefacts. The image library that the Scheme is gradually building, with thousands of photographs in its database, is a rich resource for artefact studies now and in the future. This has been a big step forward from the first version of the PAS database which did not allow image capture. Although the early records lack this essential visual reference, up to 95% of newly recorded finds now have an image.

Archaeological specialists remain ambivalent about the research value of finds corpora that lack an archaeological context, however well-provenanced they may be (Crummy 2004), but the potential is still considered to be good and its value will increase as the corpus of material that can be searched grows. The Scheme continues to have an important and well-established relationship with other major sources for numismatic research, the Early Medieval Coins database, the Celtic Coin Index and the British Numismatic Society's Coin Register to which it continues to be a major contributor.

In the long term the acquisition of finds material by museums provides a research 'bank' for future study and reinterpretation. Many finders working with the Scheme donate important finds and collections to local museums. The recently opened Anglo-Saxon and Viking Gallery at the Castle Museum, Norwich contains a significant number of important items given by and purchased from finders.

*I'd also like more emphasis in lobbying to acquire finds for museums, and the provision of funding for this. When a find can't be examined first-hand by another researcher (by long-term curation in a public collection) its value is greatly diminished*

*- fine as a 'dot on the map' in distribution studies, but unavailable for renewed interrogation as questions and typologies change (eg scientific analysis, wear studies). (Museum)*

The Scheme has limited resources to carry out its own research. Many FLOs and Finds Advisers publish material in local and national periodicals but, in interview, most indicate that this is often done in their own time as day-to-day pressures of recording and liaison work leave little time for research and writing. The Finds Advisers appointed in Phase 2 of the Scheme (4 full-time and one part-time) provide expertise and technical guidance on specialist finds, coin identification and recording standards. They have responsibility for promoting and co-ordinating research opportunities nationally and for academic publication of the Scheme's findings, in annual submissions to the main period journals, for example.

The Education pages of the website include a section of suggested research topics for student research using PAS data. Numbers of undergraduate and post graduate researchers have made use of the Scheme as a research resource but its full potential for this purpose is far from realised. To date around 16 research students have been supplied with datasets by the Scheme. The need for more finds-based research is recognised by AHRB which is funding post graduate studentships in this area. A recent post doctoral appointment at York University is one of the first such AHRB-funded research projects and will work with both the PAS and the Early Medieval Coin database supplemented with information from HERs and investigation of field contexts. More research projects like this one, designed to explore the limitations and potential of using finds data, will assist in developing theoretical models and practical techniques to exploit the new research possibilities.

Crucial to delivery of the Scheme's research potential is assurance about the quality of its data and its accessibility and usability for research. The Finds Advisers have a key role in quality control for the Finds database, validating the content and structure of submitted records. The creation of these posts, strongly supported by the last review of the Scheme, was designed *inter alia* to address concerns about the consistency and quality of the content of the Finds database.

The challenge for these five posts is the sheer volume of records submitted by FLOs for validation before they are 'promoted' to the database. Inevitably backlogs of material awaiting checking have accumulated and there can be long delays before finders are able to see their recorded finds on the website. One FLO has estimated that less than half of the records compiled in the last year are available via the website and has devised a parallel means of disseminating records to finders more quickly. A system of provisional posting of records, prior to validation, is about to be introduced to improve this situation.

In the last Review of the Scheme, three independent specialists in finds and coins provided peer review of the Scheme's research potential and outcomes. This exercise is planned to be repeated later in Phase 2 of the Scheme. For this Review the main specialist finds groups in archaeology were invited to contribute their views to the User Survey. Comments confirm that generally the research potential is clearly recognised with some reservations about the current limitations of the database and its variability in quality.

*The online database still needs improving for research purposes. I find it frustrating to use when searching for a particular object. I expect it is even more difficult for those outside the profession who do not work with databases regularly. (PAS)*

*Identifications and descriptions need not just to be improved for new finds but also retrospectively. (Academic)*

The comments below, from a single respondent, present a cross section of the views expressed during interviews and in responses to the survey.

*As an archaeological researcher it is becoming increasingly obvious that the quantity of information being generated by the Scheme is beginning to change artefact studies.... Of course the PAS data rarely contributes meaningfully to questions of chronology, but will become increasingly essential in studies of distribution and morphological variations.*

*Access to, and quality of, the data remains problematic. Although precise find spot information is not important for the way I personally use the data and interrogate the database, the importance of a photographic record of the recorded finds cannot be emphasised enough. It is gratifying that this need has already been identified and addressed.*

*The quality of some of the artefact descriptions available on the database remains poor. Perhaps more worrying are the examples of relatively common artefact types posted on the PAS forum site by FLOs who cannot identify them. Hopefully, as the FLO workforce becomes increasingly experienced these problems should become less marked, however, they do illustrate the need for further staff training for those employed on the Scheme. (Academic)*



## CHANGING ATTITUDES AND PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

Central to the Scheme's educational purpose is the work of encouraging a stronger sense of public awareness and responsibility for reporting finds, and an appreciation of their archaeological significance as well as their intrinsic value as objects. Measurement of attitude change in this area is a complex issue since there are many types of 'public' for the Scheme's work. As one of its goals is also to promote better liaison and stronger working partnerships between finders, museums and archaeologists, the attitudes of professionals to finders and to detectorists are just as much of a concern.

Specific output measures and outcomes are not identified for this area in the Scheme's programme although the pattern of increased and more diverse reporting is in itself evidence of changing practice (4.3). The User Survey provides a point-in-time indication of the Scheme's impact on attitudes and a benchmark for repeat surveys in the future. Other indicators include improvement in the level of reporting of Treasure finds and progress that is being made in embedding joint protocols and good practice measures which will strengthen the position of responsible finders and detectorists.

### 4.15 Reporting of Treasure

The operation of the Treasure Act is dependent on finders being aware of the requirements of the Act and voluntarily declaring finds. As the *Treasure Annual Report* series continues to demonstrate (most recently DCMS 2003), the level of recording is steadily increasing in parallel with the growth of the Scheme. It plays a very important part in publicising the Act and, more importantly, promoting a culture of voluntary recording within which the Act can operate successfully.

Cases of reported Treasure have doubled, from 214 in 2001 to 413 in 2003, with the extension of the Scheme in Phase 2. This rise can be expected to be sustained in 2004. While it reflects in part a 'backlog' of unreported cases in areas that have only recently been covered by the Scheme, the underlying trend in reporting also continues to rise, as illustrated in Figures 11 and 12 below. The new FLO posts appointed in the latter part of 2003 achieved on average a five-fold increase in reporting, and even in areas where a FLO was already in post in January 2003 there is still a significant upward trend. This is taking place against the background of a significant *decrease* in the rate at which other types of finds are being recorded (Table 4).

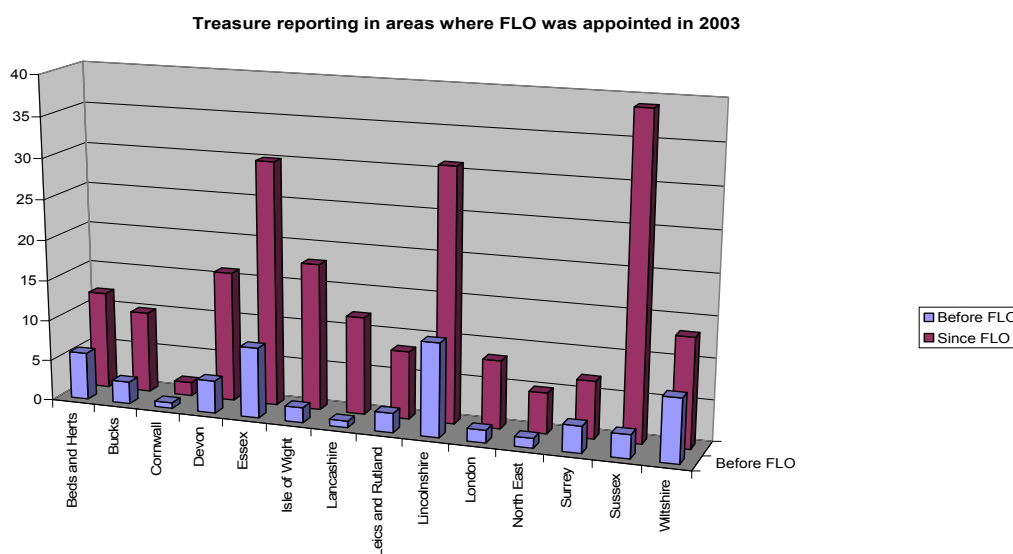
FLOs continue to play an important role as intermediaries in Treasure reporting, often co-ordinating the process and providing a point of contact for finders and increasingly for coroners. In areas which produce large numbers of cases, Treasure-related work will typically occupy several days a month for FLOs. The impact of steadily increasing numbers of Treasure cases has a clear impact on their capacity to progress in other areas of their work though some efficiency savings may be possible in more effective management of routine cases.

Museum respondents commented on the way in which valuation of Treasure is affecting the ability of smaller local museums to acquire local finds. This is a matter that lies outside the Scheme's purview although it is aware of the issue and is bringing it to the attention of the Treasure Valuation Committee.

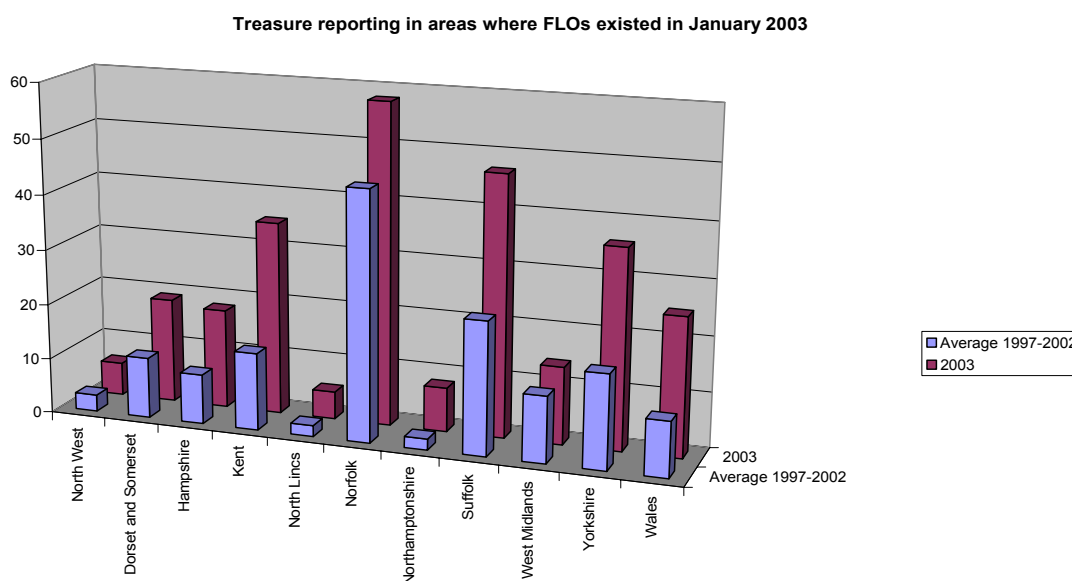
*The law which rewards finders and owners with huge financial rewards at the expense of the local community museums who can't afford to purchase the object for the local community is wrong. Finders should get a standard £1000 and there should be a national fund for local museums to buy their own cultural objects for the local community. (Museum)*

*In my opinion the Treasure Valuation Committee often overvalues the treasure objects. The valuations given by the professional valuers are usually very high, and represent a London, rather than regional, valuation.. Normally every penny for museum acquisitions must be raised externally, and the lack of funding means that material which should be acquired is being disclaimed after valuation as the funds are not available. (Museum)*

**Figure 11: Treasure reporting in areas where FLOs were appointed in 2003**



**Figure 12: Treasure reporting in areas where FLOs existed in January 2003**



#### 4.16 Conservation of finds

The Scheme aims to ensure that finders and owners are better informed about appropriate measures for the conservation of finds and how to care for them responsibly. There is no conservation post within the Scheme. FLOs receive basic training in this area and some host and partner organisations are able to offer advice on an ad hoc basis. The need for advice to be available consistently in this area, if possible with freely available guidance literature, was identified in the last Review. Assistance in this area was initially offered to the Scheme by English Heritage, from its in-house conservation staff, but it was subsequently unable to provide this because of its own limited resources. The Scheme has therefore sought permission to reallocate HLF-funds to an independent contract for this purpose.

During the course of the Review the Scheme commissioned York Archaeological Trust Conservation Laboratories to develop policy and provide conservation advice and training over the coming year. This will involve producing a leaflet and webpage aimed primarily at detectorists, and arranging seminars and practical sessions for FLOs and detectorists in each of their 6 regions. Advice and some assistance may also be provided to FLOs on emergency on-site recovery, but YAT will not be undertaking any conservation of privately-owned finds. It is hoped that during the next twelve months regional networks will be established to provide continuity and spread the word on best practice in the care, handling and cleaning of finds. Respondents endorsed strongly the need to develop conservation advice in this way.

*The scheme desperately needs the new conservation advisory post it is about to trial, but this post should not provide short-term, watered-down training in conservation treatment/investigative cleaning, as has been proposed by some. This risks considerable damage to finds through finders not having a thorough grounding in archaeological materials and their treatment & this would be a backward step. This role should be there to direct finders to sources of professional help where necessary, and give preventive care advice otherwise. (Academic)*

*I would like to see more professional conservation advice on the correct handling, packaging, long-term storage and display and good/bad methods of interventive treatment of finds delivered through the PAS (as the best way of guaranteeing the long term survival of most m.d. finds); both indirectly, by training of the FLO's in best preventive practice, so they lead by example, and directly to detectorists, by lectures, leaflets, workshops, etc. It would also be helpful to have stronger guidelines about just what constitutes disturbed "ploughsoil" vs. undisturbed contexts, and especially given the (surprising) lack of awareness in some parts of the m.d. community of the importance of retaining context and assemblage. (Education)*

More generally the overall response in the User Survey indicated that there is support for the Scheme to put more resources into this area (above p34). 33% of respondents disagreed, or only partly agreed, that at the moment the Scheme is making a positive difference in this area.

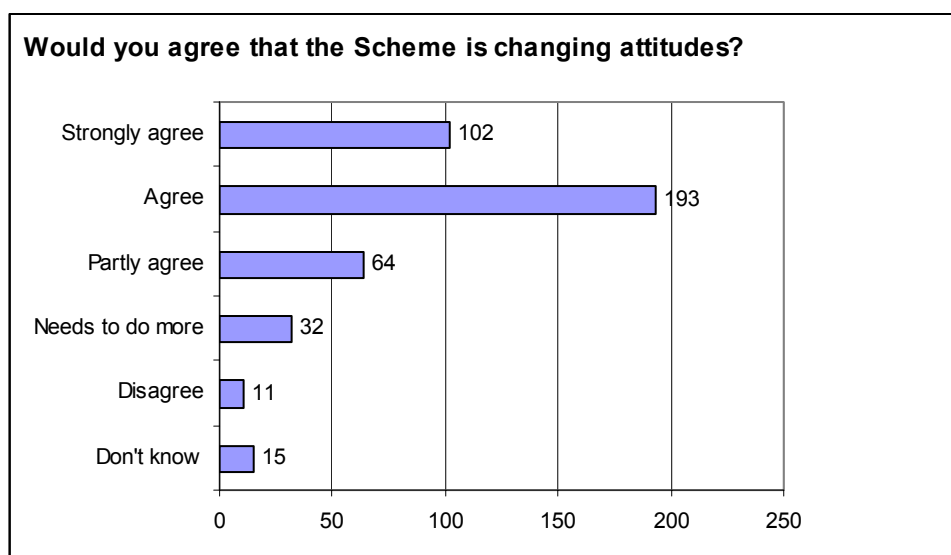
#### 4.17 Perceptions of changing attitudes

Evaluating the impact that the Scheme's work has made in changing public attitudes towards recording finds is a different matter from evaluating the difference it has made to recording practice among finders. The latter is relatively straightforward to measure; the former relies on gathering sufficient subjective, personal views on a

specific question of attitude to be able to make a generalised statement about the scale of agreement or disagreement.

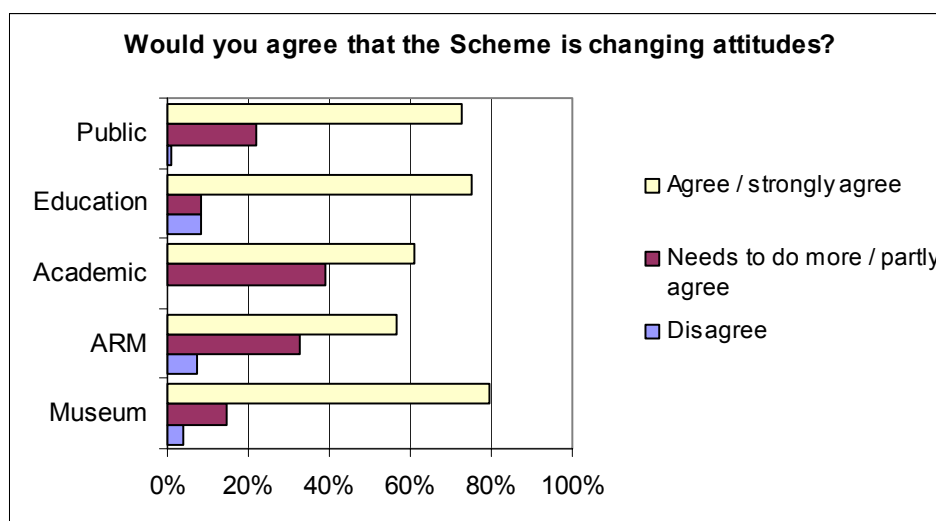
Participants in the User Survey were asked to indicate how far, if at all, they agreed that the Scheme is succeeding in its long term aims: 'to change attitudes and improve awareness so that there is a common understanding of the need to record and report archaeological finds'.

**Figure 13: Respondents' views on the success of the Scheme in changing attitudes**



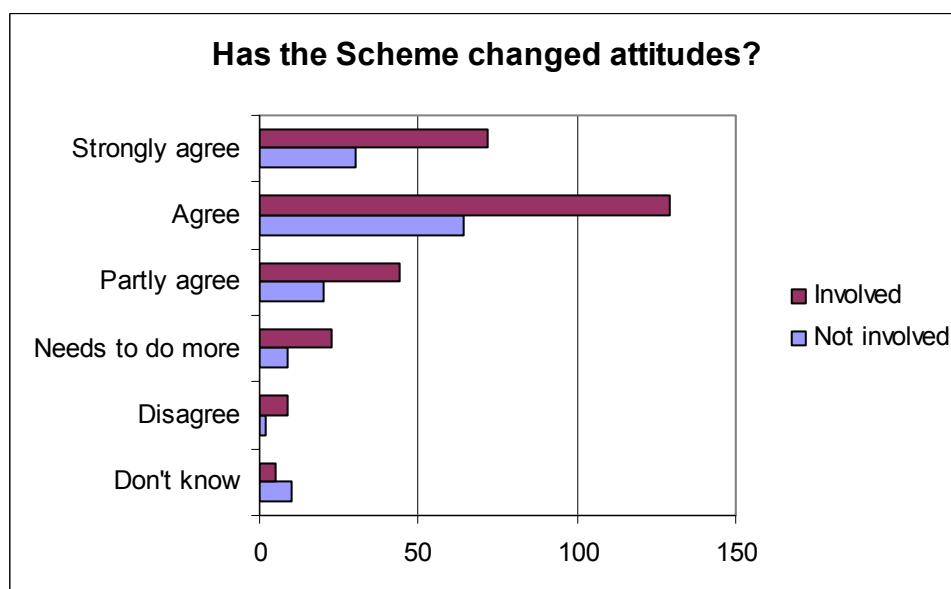
70% of respondents agreed or agreed strongly that it is succeeding in doing this. A small minority of 11% disagreed or said that the Scheme needs to do more. Looking more closely at the differences between user groups (Figure 14 below), the greatest agreement came from the museum group (80%). Among the public user group which forms the majority of the sample, 73 % agreed or strongly agreed and 23% only partly agreed or disagreed. The least agreement came from those working in archaeology where, while over half agreed, 38% only partly agreed or disagreed. This disparity of views was also reflected in a large number of negative comments discussed below.

**Figure 14: Comparison by user group of views on the success of the Scheme in changing attitudes**



Involvement in the Scheme does appear to be a strong factor in views about this subject. Figure 15 below shows that those who indicate that they have been involved with the Scheme are significantly more likely to agree that it has had a positive effect on attitudes, presumably based on their direct experience.

**Figure 15: Comparison of views on the success of the Scheme in changing attitudes by involvement with PAS**



The User Survey provided an opportunity for respondents to add comments on any aspect of the Scheme and there was a good rate of response to this. Comments varied from very positive to negative on most aspects of its work. While these are not numerically representative of the majority view (in general those with negative views are more strongly represented in written comments), they provide good qualitative feedback on the issues that face the Scheme. Many of the comments have been quoted above and those below are selected to represent as fairly as possible the range of views expressed.

There is a noticeable cluster of negative comments from those working in archaeology. A large majority of these concern issues around the accessibility of detailed finds information for HERs/SMRs and its use for managing archaeological sites (quoted above p34); also the quality of locational and contextual recording by finders.

*More emphasis needs to be put on accurate reporting and recording of findspots locations. This is crucial for understanding the context of any archaeological find and protecting the archaeological heritage. Otherwise, the scheme is recording finds for their own sake only. (ARM)*

Equally finders comment on their concerns about providing detailed grid references for findspots:

*Many finders accept that, to be of use for research and development control purposes, find spots must be as accurate as possible. However, until the difficulties over the transfer of PAS data to Historic Environment Record operators are resolved, finders cannot record detailed find spots without the risk of them being published at an unacceptable accuracy. (Public)*

In cases where land is known to be sensitive or is an inappropriate area on which to conduct detecting, archaeologists will continue to have real concerns about the potential or inadvertent damage caused by uncontrolled metal detecting.

*I am unhappy about staff encouraging metal detectorists to return to particular sites to further bias the finds assemblage & deplete it for possible scientific investigation (ARM)*

*Protection of sites of importance needs to be a higher priority for the scheme (ARM)*

*I don't think PAS pays enough attention to the fact that metal detecting on archaeological sites under pasture as opposed to arable field or long-term leys is likely to be archaeologically destructive. (ARM)*

*Too geared towards identification of metal detecting finds without promoting wider awareness of archaeological and conservation issues. (ARM)*

Finders are also concerned that poor practice is counterproductive but in general appear to be more sanguine about the Scheme's future while recognising it will be a long and gradual process to embed good practice.

*The corpus of data gathered by the Scheme is only a part of what can be made available for recording. Finders, with the landowner's permission, should be encouraged to record on a field assemblage basis, rather than just one or two items from that field. The archaeological landscape should be viewed as the resource and not just a few productive fields – absence is as important as a presence of data. Similarly, selective recording by finders should be discouraged. (Public)*

*As a member of the NCMD I support the PAS in principle and basic practice, but we are continually battling with rumour and examples of bad practice by coroners and SMR / HER officers which alienates metal detectorists to PAS. The [ ] club operate 100% reporting on club organised searches. But we do have problems convincing members who find items on their own sites or rallies to report everything. (Public)*

*Port ant's is a great scheme ... Unfortunately there are still the detectorists out there that pirate sites...I was told all the old horror stories about archaeologist when I first started detecting. I decided to make my own mind up & have been glad that I took no*

*notice of these stories. However, I still hear some bad tales on detecting forums about other county museums & archaeology units. I feel that while there is hostility by archaeologists towards detector uses, there will be many finds that will remain unlogged by museums & archaeologists. (Public)*

Polarities of view remain striking. Extremes of opinion from archaeologists and from detectorists are aired almost daily on several forums for discussion on the internet (Time Team Forum, Britarch, UKdetector Net). These were watched during the period of the Review. A very small number of individuals are active contributors but have effectively used these public platforms for debate to colour wider views in the archaeological community and among those detecting as a hobby. These polarities of view are also evident in a small proportion of responses to the Review and came from both archaeologists and finders.

*I feel the PAS has been detrimental to archaeology in quite a profound way. It has given the green light to metal detecting, raising it to a beneficial thing to do from what was previously a frowned upon activity. In reality people are pilfering sites, most items gets squirreled away. We are leaving nothing to future generations and this is scandalous, we will not be thanked. Other countries have banned Metal Detecting except as part of a research project. (ARM)*

*The Scheme has been only partially successful in overcoming the negativity and prejudice that existed within archaeology towards the use of metal detectors and the recording of material found by that method. The overt efforts to restrict, control and even ban metal detection have given way to a variety of covert initiatives with the tacit approval of some leading archaeological organisations. (Public)*

There are also perceptive comments about underlying tensions:

*I am concerned that the tide is turning against the PAS again, partly due to the perceived (and actual) misgivings of archaeologists as to the merits of the scheme, and also the growth of online SMRs which aim to break down the barriers to access that detectorists would like to remain in place. The issue of appropriation of cultural heritage by another interested party seems to still be a divisive wedge driven between detectorists and archaeologists. (ARM)*

*I believe that it is much too early to determine whether the scheme is making any real inroads into the entrenched attitudes displayed by both the archaeology and detectorist communities. My suspicion is that those regularly reporting at the moment would have reported in the past had it been more convenient.... In equal measure I have seen little evidence that many in the archaeological community are prepared to change their views. My suspicion is that it will take as much as 10 years for attitudes to really change, and for this reason above all others the scheme needs to be out on a more permanent footing as a matter of urgency. (ARM)*

The success of closer partnership and joint working on all sides is recognised but there is also clearly a need to build on this, including closer liaison by FLOs with detector clubs and regional NCMD officers and with local archaeological services:

*The Scheme is needed, but it must evolve to survive. Policies and strategies for its effective operation and development must be worked on, not in isolation, but with stakeholders at all levels. (Public)*

*I think that the PAS has bridged very real gaps and helped tie together many parts of the heritage sector that were very disparate before. The FLOs act as a physical bridge between the community, the museums, the libraries and art galleries, local government and both amateur and strategic bodies. I have worked in this sector for 7 years and cannot believe the difference that is has made! It is OUR past and I worry*

*that if we as a sector don't continue to build upon the work done by the PAS we really do so at our peril. (Museum)*

*I think the scheme would have more chance in achieving some of its aims ... if the FLOs actually worked closely with the HER officers within the area that they cover so that they are fully aware of what is going on. (ARM)*

A significant number of respondents specifically recommended the continuance of the Scheme, and highlighted the need to resolve the question of its long term funding:

*It is imperative that the long-term future of the PAS is secured, through the provision by the government of secure, ongoing and adequate funding. (ARM)*

*The scheme has done nothing but good for us here in terms of PR and quantity and quality of reporting of finds. We would feel its loss very much indeed. (ARM)*

*From a management point of view it is imperative that the question of continued funding for the PAS, beyond the life of the present agreement, is resolved as soon as possible. It would be disastrous if all the excellent work by FLOs over the past few years does not continue for lack of resources. These resources must somehow come from Central Government, as it is unlikely that local authorities in my area will give the PAS a very high priority, given all the other calls on their funds. (Museum)*

*The PAS must secure long-term funding - otherwise everyone will have been wasting their time up till now. In the old days one might have expected the local authorities to gradually take over funding FLO posts but in these cash-straitened times, this isn't going to happen - or at least coverage would end up being patchy. (Museum)*

*... I hope that the scheme receives permanent funding and I hope that I am still recording important archaeological information and meeting the FLOs in 20 years time via the scheme. (Public)*

*Long may you be funded by government, so much has been done at every level it would be a disaster for archaeology and the public if funding was removed. I would say it has been such a success that more money should be put in i.e Lottery grants. (Public)*

#### **4.18 Good practice and partnership**

*Whether we like it or not metal detecting is a legal hobby here and this 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. (ARM)*

*The system stands or falls on the basis of mutual trust & respect. It must be extremely frustrating for the FLO at times, I admire their patience, their undoubted professional academic skill, the total focus in making the scheme achieve its desired goal.... It's important the FLO/PAS scheme flourishes. Irrespective of the means by which an individual pursues their love & passion for Archaeology, I believe the passion, the respect, the responsibility for what's unearthed is mutual within all, whose quest is to expand the knowledge. (Public)*



Interviews with stakeholders and feedback through the survey indicate that there are a number of areas where new momentum is needed in liaison and joint working. Among the drivers for this are the continuing activities of irresponsible, and illegally operating, detectorists and traders and the lack of a mutually recognised 'standard' to provide responsible finders with a means to endorse their good practice publicly. There is also increasing frustration on the part of forward-thinking organisations and individuals at persistently negative attitudes (on both sides) which have effectively hampered progress in developing protocols for strengthening partnership and joint working.

After the relatively rapid progress that the Scheme made in its early years in facilitating improved relations and recording practice, there is inevitably disappointment with the perception that this has 'slowed down'. While a measure of disaffection from the aims of the Scheme is beginning to be evident among some finders over the publication of findspots, others incline towards a formal system of regulation.

*Like many other detectorists, I am extremely concerned about the possibility of 8 figure findspots being put on the database. Unfortunately there are those few who spoil things for all genuine seekers and SAVERS from the plough soil of historical objects, who could use the information for nefarious purposes. I really fear that enormous damage could be done to the scheme if this information is given on the internet to anyone who seeks it and people will simply refuse to report find spots other than in a particular parish or area. (Public)*

*I'd like to see the introduction of an annual licence fee, the granting of the licence directly linked to proof of full & current reporting. The NCMD should be the one recognised body, both representing & regulating their responsibility in close co-operation & consultation with the PAS. ie: No finds recorded = no licence = no Insurance & Membership. PAS & NCMD databases should be cross-referenced. Landowners via DEFRA & the NFU should be advised not to permit search activity where a valid current licence cannot be produced. Anglers support & contribute financially to the welfare & regulation of their past-time. (Public)*

The perceived lack of progress has been seen, both by archaeologists and by detectorists, as due to a lack of commitment to a set of agreed common principles, although a number of codes of good practice promoted by different bodies are in existence. However there now appears to be an emerging consensus on the idea of a developing a jointly-owned policy and code of good practice for promotion through the Scheme. This would endorse not just responsible recording but move forward to responsible detecting to protect the sustainability of the archaeological resource in the interests of the future of the historic environment and the hobby. There appears to be a general recognition that there are sensible and reasonable limitations for the hobby which, if jointly agreed, will secure the maximum benefits for everyone. The process of agreeing the framework for a jointly agreed code is being facilitated by the CBA.

In parallel, English Heritage is in the final stages of drafting national policy and good practice guidance on portable antiquities, 'Our Portable Past', for consultation with all interested parties later in the year. This relates to finds from terrestrial and maritime sites and will be concerned with all types of surface collection of archaeological material. While principally intended to apply to statutorily designated sites and areas, to English Heritage properties and to projects and programmes that are resourced by English Heritage, the policy may also be regarded as a model for use by other historic estate / land managers and agencies.

This initiative links in turn to an area of liaison that a number of stakeholders believe is now urgently needed with landowning interests. Far-reaching issues include the attitude of landowners towards surface collection and detecting on their property and the public dissemination of information about potentially valuable finds and vulnerable sites on their land. These interests are necessarily bound up with the implementation of a national policy for portable antiquities and a code of practice for responsible detecting and there is an opportunity here for opening a dialogue that has been identified by some as long overdue. Finders most frequently cite the reluctance of landowners to disclose findspots as one of principal reasons for withholding information about find sites, together with the threat posed by nighthawking.

The activities of 'nighthawks' and irresponsible, or illegally operating, detectorists are deplored on all sides, as is the lack of effective action that has taken place to deter this. While this is not an area in which the Scheme can play a direct role, its partners are in a position to pursue the issue. The CBA Portable Antiquities Working Group is developing a proposal for a project to assess the impact and frequency of night hawking incidents, and will be seeking support from partners for commissioning this from the 'Stealing History' unit at Cambridge University's McDonald Institute of Archaeological Research.

The Scheme itself is directly concerned with the growing incidence of illicit trading in archaeological finds, particularly on the internet where there have been an increasing number of identifications of unreported Treasure finds apparently being sold illegally. Discussions between the Scheme, MLA and the administrators of Ebay are continuing.

## **5. ASSESSMENT OF FINDINGS: ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2000**

The assessment identifies strengths and weaknesses in the Scheme's achievement to date and the opportunities and challenges identified in the Review. Referring back to recommendations in the report of the Review in 2000, it looks specifically at how the Scheme has been able to deliver on the short term, medium term and longer term goals for the project. The assessment follows the same structure as the evaluation, looking at the Scheme's four main programme areas: Access; education; knowledge and understanding; changing attitudes and promoting good practice.

### **5.1 Access: public participation and awareness**

The evaluation shows that the Scheme's planned outputs in this part of its programme have been delivered very successfully. Outreach activities (visits to clubs, talks, finds days and other community events) have increased significantly in line with increased resources and have diversified to include a wider audience. Allowing for the fact that 2003-04 is the first year or part-year of Phase 2 of the Scheme, it can be expected that the numbers of individuals reached by the Scheme will increase substantially again in 2004-05 to achieve an impressive size audience. Although the number of clubs with which the Scheme regularly has contact has now reached a substantial level (141 out of the Scheme's estimate of 190), feedback from the User Survey and interviews indicate that, after the initial period of making contact, clubs sometimes receive fewer visits. There is a need for the Scheme to be sensitive to the balance between FLOs' other tasks and a reasonable frequency of liaison with clubs in order to maintain 'visibility', sustain interest and involvement and to reach new members. This will be a matter for local judgement about the most effective use of limited FLO resources in a particular area.

In terms of developing an audience of 'active' finders reporting to the Scheme, it has successfully responded to the need to broaden its audience; numbers of non-detector users have grown steadily and now form over 25% of finders. The number of detectorists participating is also rising but in 2003-04 there is only a small increase over the numbers reporting to the Scheme in 1998-99 (Figure 2). This partly reflects the fact that there is a relatively high turnover in finders but, given the resources for bringing new finders into the Scheme, it is still a relatively small net increase. The Scheme may need to look again at the relative balance of new and established participants to gain better understanding of the dynamics of this situation. The number of finds being recorded in 2003-04 appears similarly to reflect a lower level of activity than might have been expected, compared with previous years. This may simply be the result of gearing up to the full national scheme during 2003 (recruitment, training and outreach in new areas) and the outcome of this phase in reported finds will not be apparent until figures for 2004-5 are available. It remains, however, a most impressive achievement at almost 30,000 recorded items in 2003-04.

In terms of its outcome in public participation, with over 2,300 finders, the Scheme has good reason to justify its claim to be the largest public archaeology project in England and Wales. Recent media coverage branding it as 'the largest community project' in the country is misleading, however, and risks overstating the element of genuinely local community archaeology in the project. The Scheme is unique in being the only national archaeology project in which any member of the public can take part by reporting their finds and can proudly promote this aspect. In terms of its social reach the indications are good. The audience social profile, as approximated using post code analysis of finders, includes 48% of C2 and DE households which is an

unusually good representation of these social groups for the sector and overall close to that for the UK population as a whole. More detailed audience research will be required to produce a more reliable profile of the interests and backgrounds of participants in the Scheme.

The User Survey has produced a positive outcome in this area. It shows over 75% agreement among users and stakeholders that the Scheme is bringing about a positive change in informing finders about the importance of recording and in raising general awareness about the importance of archaeological finds for appreciating our heritage. The public group indicated the most positive views and the archaeologist user group least positive but all user groups were in a very similar range of agreement on these questions. The Scheme can be heartened by this result which, despite some negative individual comments, shows that there is a generally a strong perception of positive impact.

The development of the Scheme's web presence (4.4) has been one of its major access developments over the last two years. The re-launched site and new database have had a dramatic outcome in increased internet usage of the Scheme's resources and provide a window onto all the Scheme's activities as well as a Forum for active participation. The high level of usage indicates a healthy demand for information about the Scheme, though most users appear to be occasional rather than regular. Public users show a diverse and active use of the site which has encouraging potential as a resource for general interest and learning as well as for specialists and finders. There was a noticeable level of negative comment from the Survey about the 'unfriendliness', slow speed and functionality of the website and database searches.<sup>3</sup> The Scheme is aware, from its own user research and experience, of the need to respond with improvements and is currently reviewing this area. In the medium term it also needs to look at responding to the requirements of different user groups. Encouraging more feedback from users and a follow on survey, perhaps offering an incentive to participate, will be essential to continue improving understanding of user needs.

Raising awareness about the Scheme and its aims is an area that has seen a significant increase in activity. Coverage in published articles and other media has been varied and the increase in output in Phase 2 of the Scheme is very evident. Its outcomes in terms of effect are less clear. It is probably safe to assume that this level of exposure, particularly on television, has resulted in wider knowledge about the existence of the Scheme and high profile Treasure finds have attracted a lot of media attention. Much of this publicity is good news but in a few instances attitudes to the Scheme have been affected adversely by some media attention. The BBC's *Hidden Treasure* series and the recent publicity for the Cumwhitton Viking burial site have both been highlighted by negative reactions during the course of the Review. Active debate on a number of internet forums, albeit by a small number of people, tends to amplify such reactions and to colour the general debate. The Scheme and its partners will need to remain alert to keeping a sensitive balance between raising awareness about its message for a popular audience and retaining the serious attention of responsible finders and archaeologists.

Opportunities for public participation in archaeology (4.6) through the Scheme are increasing and good work is being done through club liaison and community archaeology groups at the local level. The perception of a majority of users (55%) is

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<sup>3</sup> It was noted that the servers for the database were out of action for part of the Review period and the interim arrangements provided a less efficient service than is usually the case.

that the Scheme is making a positive impact in this area. Nevertheless feedback indicates that this is also the area where users feel the Scheme needs to do most to improve. In working with the detector community and local communities, the Scheme is developing the type of public archaeology outreach role that many local authority archaeology services have also been providing for many years and wish to develop. The Scheme has had some notable successes in this area but, as a natural consequence of increasing awareness and encouraging interest in archaeological finds, it is increasing the demand from finders for opportunities to take a more active part in organised archaeological projects in a voluntary capacity. This is a demand that the Scheme alone does not have the resources to satisfy. Discussion is taking place independently of the Scheme on internet forums about the need for a recording 'tool kit' to allow finders to be more active in recording large volumes of material themselves. The Scheme itself is piloting a system for doing this with clubs in Kent which have their own recording officers to deal with a volume of finds material that exceeds what the FLO alone could expect to process.

Partnership with finders, harnessing the club network, and partnership with public archaeology services are indicated as the two means by which this area can best be developed further.

## **5.2 Education**

The planned outputs for the Scheme's Education programme (Appendix 2, section 2) could not be assessed at this early stage in developing the education programme. In particular the development of teaching resources and educational content for KS2 and KS3 on the web site is still underway.

Responses to the Survey indicate that there is beginning to be a gradual take-up of the Scheme's resources in higher and further education (4.9) through the work of the Finds Advisers though this is still relatively modest in scale. More general use of the online database as a resource for higher education could be assessed through a survey more closely targeted at this group.

In terms of life-long learning opportunities, the Scheme's FLO outreach activities have been the principal outputs and successful in extending and reaching new audiences with very varied activities for different groups, as noted above (5.1). Over 50% of public users of the website indicate they use it for learning about archaeology and archaeological finds in general which shows good potential for further development in this area.

## **5.3 Knowledge and understanding**

Providing access to the Scheme's database for local authority HERs is one of the principal outputs for Phase 2 of the Scheme and this remained in discussion at the time of the Review. During the protracted negotiations since 2000, several different factors have presented as obstacles to agreement. In some respects this unresolved issue is an indicator of the extent to which attitudes remain unaligned in terms of data confidentiality and public accessibility (discussed below in 5.4). Until the Scheme's data is fully accessible for use by local archaeology services, and with other information resources, the Scheme is hampered in demonstrating its value, the sector is unable to assess its value and the contribution of finders remains undervalued. Resolving this remains a crucial goal for the Scheme and its partners.

The HEIRPORT portal demonstrator created by ADS, for which the Finds database was one of the pilot targets, showed the potential for searching multiple data sources as an alternative to more complex data transfer operations. Further development of this, and of similar portals for information about the historic environment and archaeological collections, offers an alternative long-term solution for accessing the Scheme's data in parallel with other relevant resources.

The finds website and database as an information resource for the historic environment now offers by far the largest, publicly accessible dataset for the study of archaeological artefacts. Its value for research and its usability can, and will, increase as the Scheme continues to develop and to improve systematically the quality and coverage of its find records. As an image library, as a forum for discussion and as an information resource it is well on the way to substantially achieving its planned objectives. Continued focus is needed on improvement in the areas identified in the evaluation: maintaining and improving the quality of content (descriptions and identifications), improving output options from the online database and a facility to link related records.

Consistency in recording practice was an issue identified in the last Review and was raised again in interviews for this one. At the local level individual FLOs are implementing different approaches to recording to manage the flow of finds for recording, in some cases to encourage and in others to limit the material that is reported. It is important that the Scheme is responsive to local circumstances but inconsistencies in recording practice between areas in the same region have not helped to engender confidence.

In terms of the academic use of the database for research, since 2000 there has been modest but increasing use by undergraduate and graduate students and in higher education teaching. The corpus of recorded finds in some parts of the country is now making a real contribution to regional research assessments. As the potential of the Scheme's data is more widely recognised, there are signs that confidence in its research value should continue to grow with more systematic validation by experienced Finds Advisers. The extensive availability of images has made a significant difference to users. The legacy of earlier recording of variable quality is certainly an issue but one that the Scheme can afford to acknowledge openly to users. Many finders and academic users have considerable expertise in particular specialist areas and could be encouraged to provide feedback online to correct errors and comment on individual finds, as they already do on the Forum. Local museums value the expertise that the Scheme's officers are able to add to their own in-house resources which may be very limited.

## **5.4 Changing attitudes and promoting good practice**

### **5.4.1 Reporting of Treasure**

The continuing annual growth in reporting of Treasure is one of the notable successes of the Scheme. It has more than justified this aspect of its operation through raising awareness about the Treasure Act, creating a network of information about finds, and providing a point of contact for finders. The FLO network has proved essential to proper implementation of the Act and the five-fold increase in reporting of Treasure (with all the resource implications this has had for the Scheme and for the national museums) is a direct result of the mediation of FLOs in the reporting

process. As in other areas, there may be a risk that the Scheme becomes something of a victim of its own success. The steadily rising demands on FLO time have been noted (4.15). The focus on precious metal objects and hoards has also to be kept in balance with the Scheme's long-term goals to educate finders about the importance of the archaeological context of finds rather than their intrinsic worth.

Concerns have been expressed by local museums, keen to acquire important local archaeological finds for public collections, about the system of valuation for Treasure. Limited local resources may mean that finds are disclaimed (and sold on the open market by the finder) rather than brought into local collections. Since January 2004, the Headley Trust ([www.headleytreasures.org.uk](http://www.headleytreasures.org.uk)) has established a new programme for funding Treasure acquisitions by regional museums, to run jointly with the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund. Between them these two funds now can fund up to 87.5% of the price of Treasure finds and should provide much needed support for local acquisitions.

#### **5.4.2 Conservation of finds**

One of the planned outputs for Phase 2 is to produce 'good practice guides and information for finders and landowners about the conservation of archaeological sites and finds'. Very limited progress has been made so far in this area which is also one where users identified that the Scheme needs to do more (4.16). The recent appointment of a specialist consultancy to undertake this work is expected to begin to have an impact in coming months.

#### **5.4.3 Perceptions of changing attitudes**

The User Survey indicates 70% of the public and professional respondents agree that the Scheme has been successful in changing attitudes, promoting a common understanding of the need to record archaeological finds. This is an encouraging outcome and belies perceptions in some quarters that there is a generally negative view of the Scheme's impact amongst archaeologists. Nevertheless there is a high proportion of negative written comments from this group of respondents, and there are clearly still deep-seated concerns and differences across the Scheme's participants (4.17). The Scheme has made significant progress in this area but is under no illusions itself about the task that it still faces.

The greatest successes in engendering good working relations have been in the longest established parts of the Scheme, especially in those places that had a history of liaison with detectorists some years before the Scheme commenced, e.g. in East Anglia and in Kent. The results of 15 or more years of joint working are certainly evident in these areas, not least in a scale of reporting that the Scheme is scarcely able to accommodate. What is abundantly evident on both counts is that there is a pressing need to continue with a scheme for reporting finds made by the public, promoting good working relationships and responsible practice.

#### **5.4.4 Good practice and partnership**

Stakeholders indicate several important areas in which the Scheme should progress with its partners in order to promote good practice and to encourage responsible detecting as well as responsible recording. These are areas in which the Scheme cannot act alone but will be a lead partner with CBA, Cadw, ALGAO, English Heritage, and NCMD. Some very positive developments were noted in the Review.

An important initiative is a jointly-agreed code of good practice for detectorists, which is being taken forward by CBA with NCMD. A commonly developed and agreed statement of principle about good practice will strengthen the position of responsible detectorists and provide a benchmark for the continuing process of changing attitudes.

It has been suggested this could be linked to beginning an active dialogue with landowning interests, to secure their support for adoption of a new code of good practice and to ensure that landowners are better informed about the Scheme and its aims. This action was recommended as a priority for the Scheme in the short to medium term in the Review in 2000: “to open a broad dialogue about the land owning and land management issues raised by the Scheme’s work”. English Heritage’s policy for portable antiquities will also play a part in this area.

Finders frequently cite the reluctance of landowners to allow disclosure of find spots (because this might place restrictions on farming and other activities) as one of the principal reasons for withholding information about find sites. The other key issue is the vulnerability of findspots to the threat posed by nighthawking, also of concern to landowners as well as to finders and archaeologists. These two factors appear to be the main deterrents to public disclosure of detailed findspots, even for responsible finders, and have to be addressed seriously in order to resolve the issues around public availability of such information through the Scheme. A two-fold programme of action seems to be called for: to develop dialogue with landowning interests and to identify measures to deter irresponsible detectorists. A study of the impact of illegally operating metal detector users on protected sites, as the first stage of the latter, is proposed by the CBA’s Portable Antiquities Working Group. The Scheme itself is continuing actively to pursue the illicit trading issues arising from internet sales of archaeological material.

## **5.5 Overall assessment of progress since the PAS Review in 2000**

In terms of the opportunities for the Scheme identified in the 2000 Review, there has been good progress, broadening outreach, extending audiences and the range of finds being recorded, and improving the level of detailed findspot information about finds. The re-launched websites and new online database, with its much increased image content, have been major achievements. This interface with the Scheme’s work will need to continue to change and improve in response to the needs of public, education and research users.

One of the core activities has been to extend and broaden contact with individual detectorists and clubs, closing gaps in the Scheme’s coverage, and increasing active involvement of detectorists in archaeological projects. The number of clubs and individual detectorists now engaged with the Scheme is impressive. In reaching out to new areas and projects, the Scheme has also to strike a balance in sustaining good relationships with existing participants and partners: finders, their clubs and local archaeological organisations. Local or county liaison groups representing all interested parties are proving to be successful models for strengthening local networks and could be used more widely to keep FLOs in touch with the constituent groups in their area. The variation in numbers of detectorists participating in the Scheme (above Table 3 and p49) suggest underlying factors that could be monitored more closely for better understanding of this situation.



The momentum of the Scheme has been maintained through difficult periods when future funding was uncertain and during the implementation of the HLF-funded national scheme, with an unprecedented number of partner organisations for a voluntary recording scheme of this type. There are 63 national and local partner organisations in Phase 2 of the Scheme. The logistics of recruitment to fill this large number of posts, and to sustain working practices and an integrated ICT network for widely dispersed staff in a variety of different institutions, have been among the considerable challenges that the Scheme has met. Training and mentoring staff will continue to be high priorities to achieve consistent standards and delivery of the Scheme's objectives at a local level. The HLF's monitoring of the project confirms that the Scheme's administrative and project management arrangements are effective and efficiently organised. In the course of conducting the Review, evidence was noted of appropriate health and safety, training, ICT security and organisational procedures.

Phase 2 of the Scheme is beginning to implement the development opportunities identified in 2000 for educational resources, for specialist advice and training for staff and for increasing joint working with local partners and specialist groups in archaeology and museums. The strengthening of the Scheme's central team is beginning to make a significant difference to the research potential of the finds database with systematic validation of content and specialist advice from Finds Advisors. The results of the User Survey show that perceptions about the Scheme's impact are generally positive although there is undoubtedly much more to be done with the archaeological and detectorist communities to improve working relationships and good practice. Further peer review and user studies should form part of the Scheme's programme.

The Scheme's programme in Phase 2 is developing in several new areas of the country and new areas of work. Some staff have been in post for less than a year at the time of the Review and though it is possible to see from the results so far that progress is being made on several fronts, outcomes are not yet demonstrable. The areas outlined below are those where outcomes have still to be demonstrated and assessed and will be important elements for the Scheme to take forward in the remaining two years of the present programme.

- Provision of access to detailed information from the finds database for use in context by local HERs based in archaeological and historic environment services and museums and its impact
- Implementation of its Education Plan
- Ensuring that the wider research potential of the information gathered by the Scheme is available to national and regional research projects and to the work of specialist researchers and study groups
- Implementing a finds conservation programme with provision of advice and training
- Formulating a policy with partners to liaise with land-owning and farming interests to ensure better understanding about the importance of recording archaeological finds.

## 6. ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE: SCOPE, SCALE AND FOCUS

The Review report concludes with some recommendations about the scope, scale and focus of the Scheme, identifying areas where further action would strengthen the operation and future potential of the project.

6.1 The Scheme has the support of HLF and its partners through to April 2006 and has reached a half way point in this 3-year national programme. It depends on three main areas of development to deliver its aims and objectives for the programme and to realise its future potential. These are

- **Building capacity** with its national network of finds officers and advisers – the public face, ambassadors and expertise of the Scheme
- **Informing and communicating:** enhancing its ICT system for managing information and finds data – to provide maximum opportunities for sharing information, public access and educational use and to secure long-term preservation of its data
- **Strengthening partnerships** with user groups and stakeholders – to bring about change in attitude and practice and to integrate its work in new policies and projects.

### Building capacity and strengthening the FLO network

6.2 The Scheme's outreach programme is showing good results from a high level of investment by FLOs in making new contacts and extending audiences. There are positive outcomes in engaging new finders, increasing reporting of finds and raising awareness about the importance of this among finders. The FLOs are the front line for the Scheme on the ground and their commitment and personal skills in building a community of interest in the Scheme are crucial. There have been a large number of recent appointments, some of whom are relatively inexperienced in finds identification and liaison roles. Arrangements with host bodies vary and in some cases local line managers can provide only limited support and expertise. The Scheme should

- Keep a strong focus on continuing **training and mentoring** for the FLO network.

6.3 The new Finds Adviser posts are playing an important role in training and advising staff and in raising the profile of the Scheme as a resource for archaeological research and teaching. These posts are adding value to all aspects of the Scheme's work and increasing perceptions of it as an authoritative resource. Their role in validating records assures the quality of the Scheme's records. This a key, new activity but carries the risk of creating a bottleneck in the flow of new records into the public domain. The Scheme is now addressing this and should

- Explore scope to streamline the record validation process to **maximise the capacity of Finds Advisers** and use of their expertise.

6.4 The scale of finds being reported in some areas exceeds the capacity of the Scheme to record them. Partly in response to this, but also due to other factors, FLOs are developing different local policies for selecting material to record. Finders note these differences and are critical of inconsistency. Researchers using the database are also aware of differences in recording practices. The Scheme aims to record all objects more than 300 years old but is necessarily more selective about more recent objects and in recording large existing collections of finds. Some level of selectivity is also exercised by FLOs for earlier material (e.g. common Roman coins,

Roman and medieval pottery sherds) in certain local situations. The Scheme could be more explicit about this and provide guidance to FLOs on developing local recording policies. Work related to Treasure reporting has a high priority and appears to be growing relative to other finds recording work. The Scheme is aware of these trends and should

- Work towards local **recording policies** to make more explicit and consistent the *de facto* selection processes that are in practice in different areas
- Continue to monitor the **level of Treasure-related work** undertaken by FLOs.

6.5 Pilot recording work in Kent, an area that produces high volumes of finds, is being carried out by local club 'recording officers', reporting on finds made by their club members. This increases the recording capacity of the Scheme. Recognising that there are issues about monitoring the quality of content if this develops more widely, it is still a very positive development. Current discussion among finders on internet forums shows interest in a 'toolkit' for experienced finders to enable them to record their own finds. The Scheme should continue to develop

- Opportunities to **increase the Scheme's capacity for recording** by equipping responsible finders to generate their own finds records for inclusion in the Scheme's database.

6.6 In the current phase of the Scheme national coverage is inevitably still very uneven. The approach required in a county that has only just come into the Scheme will be very different from in one where there are mature working relationships between detectorists and archaeologists. There is some evidence from feedback and interviews that the Scheme needs to keep up its momentum in maintaining good liaison with detectorists even in areas where the Scheme has operated for several years. Local liaison working groups for archaeologists and detectorists (above p28) are being shown to be an effective way of building joint working and keeping detectorists, clubs, archaeologists and museums in touch with each other. Links with regional NCMD council members are particularly important to maintain. The demand for more opportunities for finders to take part in archaeological projects can only be satisfied by all partners working together and the Scheme should

- Maintain momentum in **liaison with clubs and NCMD**
- Support new **local liaison groups** between Scheme partners to cement working relations and create new opportunities for joint working.

## **Informing and communicating**

6.7 The growth and development of the Scheme's web presence has greatly increased accessibility to the Scheme's work, produced some good outcomes and shows high potential for further development. Rapid progress has been made over a relatively short period and this can be strengthened by continuing to seek feedback from users and to add new content to the site. The website content for school age learning is already identified for development. More could be developed for adult learners and for higher education, liaising for the latter with the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre.

- Delivery of the planned **educational content** for KS2 and KS3
- Development of new web-based **information resources for learning about archaeology and finds** in general

6.8 The Scheme needs to learn more about its audiences – who are they and what do they want to see from the Scheme? It has a wide range of users and it is a challenge to try to meet the requirements of them all. Changes to enhance the

website and online database have been identified in the Review. Improvements should continue to be linked to the needs of specific user groups aiming to

- **Enhance the websites and database** in response to feedback from user surveys about improvements
- Consider a **further user survey** in 2005/06 including more detailed work on **understanding the Scheme's audience**

6.9 At present, though the Scheme can demonstrate a considerable output of work in education and in museums, it knows relatively little about the value of the Scheme's outcomes in either of these areas. It should consider putting in place measures to

- Assess the **outcomes of educational and museum-related work**

6.10 Access to the Scheme's full database for use by local archaeology services and HERs is an outstanding issue and is a crucial goal for the Scheme and its partners. Once achieved (and there is an expectation that an acceptable interim agreement is close) it will also be important for the Scheme to demonstrate the outcomes, i.e. the level of use and the impact that its data has in development control and land use planning for archaeology. These are important public benefits from the Scheme and at the end of its 3-year national pilot it will be important for the Scheme's partners to be able to assess these. The Scheme should

- Give priority to making the Scheme's **data available to HERs and local archaeological services**
- Maintain the **dialogue about publishing findspot information** on the internet
- Devise measures to assess the **value added for local archaeology** and conservation services through the contextualisation of finds data with HER information.

6.11 Sharing the Scheme's data with HERs is one way in which it can ensure the wide availability and use of its information. The Scheme's database is also available through the Archaeology Data Service where it can be searched in parallel with many other information resources for archaeology. The Scheme participated in the ADS portal demonstrator project, HEIRPORT, and it is expected that there will be further development of portals for the historic environment and for archaeology. The Scheme should continue to

- Explore the scope for including the Scheme in **future portal development** for the historic environment and museums

6.12 Providing good practice guidance and advice on conservation to finders, on first aid and storage for finds, was identified in the last Review. The Scheme has recently appointed York Archaeological Trust as its consultants and should make progress to

- Deliver **advice and guidance on finds conservation** for finders and FLOs.

## **Strengthening partnerships**

6.13 The Scheme seeks to serve a broad range of user groups: the general public, detectorists and academics, local authority archaeological services and museums, teachers and learners. The User Survey indicates that there is a good consensus across all these groups about the positive outcome of its work in raising awareness, educating finders and changing attitudes. It also shows that those who have had an involvement in the Scheme are more confident about its benefits than those who have not been involved. In general the public – the finders with whom the Scheme

works directly – are significantly more confident about this positive outcome than the archaeological community is at the present.

6.14 There is scope for the Scheme to address this gap in confidence and to correct perceptions that its concern with recording objects found by detectorists and Treasure finds is necessarily in conflict with ensuring the long term protection of archaeological sites. The focus on working positively with detectorists will remain central to the Scheme's work but a change in tone could do much to alter perceptions in the archaeological community. One of the ways in which the Scheme can begin to do this is in a clear shift to emphasise responsible good practice for finders as well as responsible recording. This would be timely as the Scheme moves into implementing its education plan and finds conservation programme. A new momentum is needed for liaison and joint working. The drivers for this are the continuing activities of irresponsible and illegally operating detectorists; the lack of a mutually recognised 'standard' as a benchmark for responsible finders to demonstrate their good practice; and last, but not least, the concerns, interests and responsibilities of landowners.

6.15 The Scheme's partners are now working towards a new joint code of good practice and English Heritage will be publishing a consultation document on its national policy for portable antiquities in the autumn. A project to assess the impact of nighthawk activity is proposed by the CBA's Working Party. The process of liaising with and educating landowners on their stewardship role has not yet begun but as the Scheme matures into its eighth year this is a significant new area for its future work, and one that has been emphasised by several of the Scheme's partners.

The actions below are ones in which all the Scheme's partners will expect to be concerned and actively involved.

- Positive promotion of a **code of good practice** for responsible detectorists
- Support for a project to assess the **impact of nighthawk activity** on archaeological sites
- Liaison with **land-owning and farming interests in their stewardship role** to promote better understanding about the vulnerability of archaeological sites and finds.

6.16 The Scheme has no provision in its programme for archaeological field investigation to evaluate the archaeological context of important finds and to understand the character and condition of related sites. It has relied on negotiating *ad hoc* arrangements for funding or help in kind from the two national museums, from English Heritage and Cadw and local archaeological services. Such arrangements often have to be put in place at very short notice when a site is thought to be at risk and channels of communication between the local and national level need to be clarified. An agreed protocol (procedures for notification and channels for seeking advice and additional support from relevant bodies) would help ensure that there can be an effective, speedy response in the field when this is needed. The Scheme and relevant partners should

- Agree a **protocol for alerting local and national bodies of important finds** that require a field response to evaluate archaeological context.

6.17 The long-term future of the Scheme beyond March 2006 remains uncertain. It has a crucial role in continuing to educate finders and encourage responsible detecting and in facilitating reporting under the Treasure Act. The outputs from its recording system are increasing in quality and in scope as an important resource for archaeological research and conservation management. The Scheme's outcomes in

terms of outreach, building audiences, informing and raising awareness among finders are also exceptional. Uncertainty about its long term future, however, is an issue for the success of many aspects of its work. Retaining experienced staff, supporting liaison with local groups and sustaining the network of trust and goodwill are all essential to achieving the Scheme's long-term aims. The results of this Review show that, while attitudes *are* gradually changing and there have been big achievements, there is still important work to do in developing a responsible attitude to detecting and reporting of archaeological finds by the public.

Evidence from those parts of the country where these initiatives have been in place longest indicate that real changes have taken place over a period of 15 - 20 years. The Scheme would work most effectively with a more secure, longer-term future, within which – with its partners – it can continue to work towards a framework of good practice that will encourage public participation in archaeological discovery while protecting the public interest in safeguarding the historic environment.

- Seek provision for a more secure, long-term future for the Scheme to encourage wide public participation in recording archaeological finds and promote clear public awareness of responsible practice for finders.

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