

The Portable Antiquities Scheme Annual Report 2022

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Museum





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Foreword



Sir Mark Jones
Director of the
British Museum

I am delighted to introduce the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) annual report for 2022, which outlines the work of the Scheme last year. 2022 was another successful year for the PAS with a further 53,490 archaeological items recorded onto its database, bringing the total to over 1.6 million finds. Some of these finds are highlighted in this report. Fundamentally, this information is being recorded to advance knowledge of past peoples, where and how they lived. As such, it reflects every part of human history, from the palaeolithic to more modern times, across the whole of England and Wales.

Most of the finds recorded (94% of the total) have been found by members of the metal-detecting community and I wanted to especially thank them for recording these items with the PAS. Although finders are required to report Treasure – represented by 1,384 cases from across England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2022 – most finds are reported on a voluntary basis through the PAS in England and Wales. This is a truly remarkable contribution. The British Museum is supportive of responsible metal-detecting, where detectorists follow the *Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales*, which has been endorsed by the main metal-detecting, archaeological and landowner organisations. As such, the degree to which the PAS has brought archaeologists and metal detectorists closer together for the benefit of our heritage cannot be overestimated. It is also a testament to the PAS that its work is being emulated in other countries, most notably Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands.

Crucial to the success of the PAS are its 70 staff across England and Wales. The PAS in England is managed by the British Museum and in Wales by *Amgueddfa Cymru* – Museum Wales. Together, we have a common vision for the Scheme and work closely to provide the same experience for finders no matter where they live. In England, I am also grateful to our local partners – over 100 local and national organisations help deliver the Scheme – employing, managing and supporting PAS staff locally. These partnerships are key to the success of the PAS, bringing together many different organisations and people to help realise the Scheme's aims and objectives. Although the PAS in England is principally funded through the British Museum's grant-in-aid from the Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), it would be impossible to deliver without the financial and in-kind support of our local partners and other stakeholders. This is a Scheme we are delivering together for the benefit of all and our shared heritage.

The PAS in England is guided by the Portable Antiquities Advisory Group, which includes representatives from Wales, as well as of the metal-detecting community, archaeologists and landowners. I would like to thank everyone involved for their continued support and hard work. Besides DCMS, which has been very generous in its support for the PAS, especially in the context of Treasure reform – the Treasure Act 1996 was extended on 30 July 2023 to include metal items of 'exceptional significance' – several other organisations and individuals have supported the PAS. These include Graham and Joanna Barker, as well as the Worshipful Company of Art Scholars, who have helped fund PAS posts, especially in areas where the needs are greatest. The Headley Trust has also continued to support fund PAS interns – this year in Cornwall and North Yorkshire – aimed at people who might not otherwise have an opportunity to work with archaeological finds. It is also great news that one of last year's interns – Clara de Sousa Cunha – is now a fulltime Finds Liaison Officer. I also very much appreciate the support of *Treasure Hunting* magazine for printing this annual report within the pages of their magazine and providing hard copies for wider distribution. In fact, it is a testament to the Scheme that it is so widely and generously supported. Long may that success continue.

Amy Downes (South & West Yorkshire FLO) and her volunteers challenging the public to identify and sort finds.

The Portable Antiquities
Scheme records
archaeological finds
made by the public to
advance knowledge,
tell the stories of past
communities and further
public interest in the past.

Key points

PAS and Treasure in 2022

53,490

finds recorded on
the PAS database

1,384

Treasure cases
reported (England,
Wales & Northern Ireland)

3,720

finders had their finds recorded
onto the PAS database finds
recorded on the PAS database

57,491

followers on social media

94%

finds made by metal
detectorists

98%

finds recorded to
the nearest 100m

927

research projects (to date)
using PAS data

233,794

unique visitors to the PAS
website and database

58,010

registered PAS database
account users

1,262

outreach events, attended
by 29,275 people

147

metal-detecting clubs
liaised with

57

training courses delivered

10,567

finds recorded by volunteers

199

volunteers recorded finds
on the PAS database

Introduction

PAS is a partnership project working with at least 100 local and national organisations across England and Wales.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) records archaeological finds found by the public to advance knowledge, tell the stories of past communities and further public interest in the past. It is a partnership project, managed by the British Museum (in England) and through *Amgueddfa Cymru* – Museum Wales (in Wales), working with at least 110 local and national partners across both countries.

In England, this work forms part of the British Museum's National Strategy overseen by the Department of Learning and National Partnerships.

There are 40 locally based Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) across England whose role is to record archaeological finds made by the public; they are supported by five period specialists (National Finds Advisers), assistants, interns and volunteers. In 2022, 199 volunteers (including 81 'self-recorders' - detectorists who, following training, recorded their own finds directly onto the PAS database) contributed to the work of the Scheme.

In England, the Scheme is funded through the Department for Culture, Media & Sport's (DCMS) grant in aid to the British Museum, with local partner contributions. Its work is guided by the Portable Antiquities Advisory Group (PAAG), whose membership includes leading archaeological, landowner and metal-detecting organisations.¹

The objectives of the PAS are to:

- Transform archaeological knowledge through the recording and research of public finds, to enable the stories of past peoples and their landscapes to be told;
- Sharing new knowledge about archaeological finds made within communities, so that people might learn more about their past, their archaeology and their history;
- Promote best archaeological practice amongst finder communities, so that the past is preserved and protected for the future;
- Support museum acquisition of finds made by the public, so that these can be saved for future generations and enjoyed by local people;
- Provide long-term sustainability for the recording of new finds, so that these discoveries can contribute to the rewriting of our histories.

These goals are taken forward by 'working groups' involving PAS staff, managers and partners involved in running the PAS, as well as other interested parties.

¹ Membership of PAAG: Arts Council England (ACE), Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO), Association for Metal Detecting Sport (AMDS), The British Museum (BM), Council for British Archaeology (CBA), Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), Country Land and Business Association (CLA), Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), Federation of Independent Detectorists (FID), Historic England (HE), National Council of Metal Detecting (NCMD), National Farmers Union (NFU), Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales, Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW), and the Society for Museum Archaeology (SMA).

Treasure Act 1996

Under the Treasure Act 1996 (finds.org.uk/treasure) finders have a legal obligation to report finds of potential Treasure to the local coroner in the district in which they were found, usually via their local FLO or relevant Treasure Registry in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. The success of the Act is only possible through the work of the PAS: its staff advise finders of their legal obligations, provide advice on the process and write Treasure reports for coroners.

The Act allows a national or local museum to acquire Treasure for public benefit. If this happens a reward is paid, which is normally shared equally between the finder and landowner. Parties may waive their right to a reward, enabling museums to acquire finds at reduced or no cost. Rewards are fixed at the full market value, determined by the Secretary of State upon the advice of an independent panel of experts, the Treasure Valuation Committee (TVC). In England, the administration of the Treasure process takes place at the British Museum and involves the preparation of Treasure cases for coroners' inquests, providing the secretariat for the TVC, and handling disclaimed cases and the payment of rewards. Treasure cases from Wales and Northern Ireland have similar processes.

Important finds reported in 2022 included a Bronze Age hoard from near Malmesbury, Wiltshire (WILT-DE7029; see this report page 19), an Early Medieval grave assemblage from near Northampton, Northamptonshire (NARC-28855E), that was excavated by archaeologists as part of HS2, and an Early Medieval gold mount in the form of a fish from Creslow, Buckinghamshire (SUR-FACB24).

Under the Treasure Act 1996, interested parties may waive their right to a reward so that finds might be acquired by museums at no (or reduced) cost. Examples include a fragment of a gold Bronze Age penannular ring from 'North Norfolk' (NMS-775561) and a gilded silver medieval pilgrim's badge from Topcroft, Norfolk (NMS-6EB2F9), both donated to Norwich Castle Museum.

NMS-6EB2F9

Medieval pilgrim's badge
from Topcroft, Norfolk.



Outreach and research

The Portable Antiquities Scheme reaches out to all those who might discover archaeological finds, and highlights the value of responsible metal detecting.

Outreach is an important part of the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), especially in terms of encouraging people to show their discoveries for identification and recording. Meeting people is also important for helping to promote best practice (especially amongst the metal detecting community) and highlight the value of finds recording, to further research and advance knowledge.

The Scheme's Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) are the front line of the Scheme. They, and most other staff, are employed and based locally (so outside London), supported by their host partner institutions. This provides PAS staff with a strong platform for archaeological outreach. This section provides some examples of this work.

Advancing knowledge

For many people metal-detecting is a hobby that gets them out of the house into the countryside and is sometimes practised for health benefits. But the main thrill is finding things and learning about the past. If undertaken responsibly – i.e. following the *Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales* (2017) – metal-detecting can add to knowledge. Key to accessing this information is the PAS database (finds.org.uk/database), which now contains over 1 million records of over 1.6 million finds. Every day this resource is being used by university academics and professional archaeologists, among others, to better understand Britain's past.

Watlington Hoard

The Watlington Hoard, a nationally important Viking-Age hoard of over 220 precious metal objects and coins, was buried around the end of 870s. It is linked to the Viking Great Army which was defeated by King Alfred 'the Great' of Wessex (r. 871–99) in 878. Found in 2015 in southern Oxfordshire, it was acquired by the Ashmolean Museum, becoming the focus of a major outreach and research programme funded by The Heritage Fund and The Art Fund; the former organised jointly between the Ashmolean Museum and Oxfordshire Museums Service. Activities included events at local libraries around Oxfordshire, themed weekends at the Ashmolean, engagement with local primary schools and formal loans both within Oxfordshire and elsewhere. Over 150,000 people visited these events during the overall outreach programme (including visits associated with the external loans), highlighting both the role individual finds can have in museum outreach programmes and the public's appetite for exciting stories about the past. The project ended in 2022 with the publication of a research monograph, *The Watlington Hoard: coinage, kings and the Viking Great Army in Oxfordshire, AD 875–880*, as a printed book and an open-access download.

The Power of the PAS database

Two 10-hectare Roman rural sites in Surrey, both partly excavated and carefully surveyed by geophysics, were also intensively worked by controlled metal detecting. Over 900 Roman coins (of which 50% pre-dated AD 260) spread out across each have been fully identified and recorded on the PAS database with detailed findspot information. Local archaeologist David Calow, site director of one site, spent 2022 setting them in context for publication.



John Naylor (Finds Adviser) with the Watlington Hoard book



PUBLIC-7D9BD6
Copper-alloy *nummus* of Honorius or Theodosius II, dating to AD 408–23, from Flexford, Surrey. A site surveyed by David Calow.

The PAS database, with its ability to compare finds data by parish, district, county, region, type, material, period and many other attributes, has been instrumental in interpreting the sites. This suggests that they are on a traditional route across south England used from the Late Iron Age and throughout the Roman period. Heat maps have revealed over 300 other coin-rich places across South East England. Analysis shows that the Surrey sites are unusual because of the number of coins and that so many date to the second century AD. Contextual research also highlights the significance of other finds made, including steelyard weights and brooches.

‘The PAS database is a remarkable resource - a huge vote of thanks to the many people involved in creating records for our use’
(David Calow, archaeologist).

PAS Publications

Every year PAS staff are involved in a diverse range of publications that engage with a broad range of audiences. These include magazine articles and reports aimed at the general reader, as well as scholarly reports and academic research – notable are ‘round-ups’ in *Britannia*, *Medieval Archaeology*, *Post-Medieval Archaeology* and the *British Numismatic Journal*. In 2022, PAS staff (past and present) were involved in an edited volume, *Back in the Bag*, published in memory of our colleague David Williams (formerly Surrey FLO) who died suddenly in 2017. Other recent academic publications by PAS staff using PAS data include a book about the (aforementioned) Watlington Hoard, a book chapter on transformations in medieval religious material culture, and a journal article on Roman coin hoards from Wiltshire.

‘A series of interesting object studies in their own right, the papers coalesce into a demonstration of the research potential of PAS data’

Review of *Back in the Bag* in The Finds Research Group newsletter.

‘An impressive volume, which demonstrates the value of collaboration between archaeologists, heritage professionals, and responsible metal-detectorists’

Review of *The Watlington Hoard* in *Current Archaeology* magazine.

Sharing knowledge

There is a public fascination in the past, not only in finds, but also the stories behind them – how items came to be buried in the ground and how they have been subsequently discovered. The PAS is keen to share knowledge about the items it records as widely as possible. The main ways this is done is through media, exhibitions and displays, as well as public talks and other outreach events. Below are some examples of this work in 2022.

PAS on TV

Several recent television shows have featured the work of PAS. ‘Digging for Treasure’ was a four-part mini-series shown from August 2022 on Channel 5. In three of the programmes (North Yorkshire, Norfolk and London) PAS staff (Andy Agate, Helen Geake and Michael Lewis) took centre stage, identifying finds and talking about them. The aim of the series was to show how metal detecting can add new knowledge. Although ‘Detectorists – 2022 Special’ (BBC 2), did not feature PAS staff, it did highlight the work of PAS and the role of the British Museum, albeit quite subtly. In this episode, Lance (Toby Jones) was reluctant to report his discoveries for fear that ‘the beards (archaeologists) would be all over his site’, but Andy (Mackenzie Crook) encouraged him to do the right thing...



The Detectorists – Andy (Mackenzie Crook) and Lance (Toby Jones). Image courtesy of Mackenzie Crook.

Tattenhall Park Primary School

In September 2022, Heather Beeton (Cheshire, Greater Manchester & Merseyside FLO) went to Tattenhall Park Primary School, Chester, to deliver an interactive assembly to eighty 10–11-year-olds about the PAS and local archaeology. This was based on a group of finds that had been discovered by detectorist who works at the local Bolesworth Estate. Besides giving an overview of archaeology, the work of PAS and what people should do when they make such finds, the children also had the opportunity (in groups) to handle finds, think about what they were and how they were used: these objects ranged from the Bronze Age to modern day. Following the assembly, Heather then gave a talk to local residents about the finds and others that have been discovered in the Tattenhall parish. In this, she gave more information about the PAS and the value of finds recording.

‘What an excellent assembly it was. The feedback I received from staff and children was very positive’

History Lead, Tattenhall Park Primary School.



The PAS stall at Conisbrough Castle.

Conisbrough Castle Heritage Day

English Heritage's Conisbrough Castle, Doncaster, was the setting for an Archaeology and Medieval Fun Day in July 2022, organised by the 'It's Our Heritage' community group. Conisbrough residents were encouraged to bring their finds for the PAS to identify, and learn more about the castle through guided tours, author talks and living history displays. Amy Downes (South & West Yorkshire FLO) and her PAS volunteers provided a stall where visitors, old and young, were challenged to identify and sort finds into chronological order while learning about the work of the PAS and the importance of recording finds.

Promoting best practice

Metal-detecting can make a positive contribution to archaeology, but it is important that finders follow the *Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales*. This outlines what finders should do before, whilst and after metal-detecting, with a focus on gaining proper permissions to search, avoiding damaging protected sites and in-situ archaeology and (of course) recording finds with the PAS. It is therefore one of the key aims of the PAS to promote best practice, so that detecting makes the maximum contribution to our understanding of the past. The examples below help to illustrate that point.



SUSS-959F28
Viking Age sword from near
Wartling, East Sussex.

Helen with a new find,
discovered during the
detecting survey over the
area of the Bickmarsh Hoard.



Magnet fishing

'Fishing' for metal objects with powerful magnets in lakes and waterways has become increasingly popular. However, there are many risks involved, including finding unexploded ordnance and possibly drowning. There is also the risk of damage to the object and its archaeological context, particularly at sites of ritual deposition. The PAS advises against this activity which is banned by the Canal and River Trust on its waterways.

On the Waller's Haven, near Wartling, East Sussex (SUSS-959F28), a Viking Age sword was discovered in the river bank through magnet fishing. Unfortunately, the item was recovered without the landowner's permission and was also damaged in the process of excavation; the organic remains of the hilt fell away and became lost in the river. The item was subsequently recorded with Jane Clark (Sussex FLO) but also required conservation and storage in a protected environment. As such, the landowner donated the item to Bexhill Museum, where it will be placed on public display after conservation.

Bickmarsh Hoard

On 13 October 2022, members of the PAS West Midlands team assisted Worcestershire Archaeology in conducting a metal-detecting survey over the area where the Bickmarsh Hoard (WMID-784D2D) was discovered. This significant find for Worcestershire, containing 26 Anglo-Saxon coins, including issues of Burgred of Mercia (r. 852–74) and Æthelred I of Wessex (r. 865–71), was seemingly scattered by the plough from an unknown context. Thirteen detectorists helped out as part of the survey, most being involved with the original discovery of the hoard. Three more coins were found near what is assumed to be the focal point of the hoard based on a feature highlighted by geophysics. Further investigation will be done post-harvest 2023, to see if more coins can be found as well as trying to identify the original context for the hoard.

Afterlife of private collections

Every year, FLOs are contacted by family members of deceased detectorists who are seeking advice on what to do with their loved one's collections. In many cases, the finder will have already recorded part of the collection with PAS, but there may often be other finds awaiting recording. Relatives will also often ask for advice on what to do with the finds once recorded, especially in instances when the finder has not made their wishes known. These collections also often have sentimental value to the families involved. To better understand the issues around the fate of archaeological collections held privately, Adam Daubney (Adam Daubney Archaeology, formerly Lincolnshire FLO) undertook research on the 'Afterlife of Private Collections', which was funded by Historic England. The project found that while most owners of portable antiquities took pride in their collections, few had given much thought to what will happen to them in the longer term. Also, that owners of private collections would value advice on preparing their collections for the future. This might involve very pragmatic steps such as offering advice on inheritance, bequest, donation, or sale of significant cultural objects to public museums. Thoughtful engagement with owners is needed to encourage them to curate their collections in such a way that third parties can make sense of them, especially where finds have not been recorded. Adam is looking to work with the PAS on a follow-up project.



Megan King (Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire FLO) setting up for the 'Marvellous Metals' event at Bradford Industrial Museum.

Supporting museums and the heritage sector

The partnership nature of the PAS is complex but is also a key strength that binds it together. Although the Scheme is managed by the British Museum in England, all of its FLOs are managed and hosted locally, normally with museums or other heritage organisations (see list, pages 40–41). This means that PAS staff can benefit from both the expertise of colleagues at the British Museum (including curators, conservators and scientists) but also their local colleagues. This also provides the Scheme with unique opportunities. Highlighted here are examples of that work where the PAS supports museums and the heritage sector more generally.

Pop-up Museum at Goring Village Museum

Ed Caswell (Oxfordshire FLO) along with colleagues at the Oxfordshire Museum Service hosted a pop-up museum at the Goring village museum, which was one of three events organised as part of a GLAM-funded (Oxford University Gardens, Libraries and Museums) project. The exhibition focussed on the nearby site of Lowbury Hill, which dates back to the Roman period, but has later activity also. It is a site currently being investigated by Summer Courts, a PhD student at the University of Reading and Cranfield University. The exhibit was able to form the focus of a series of events including guided walks, heritage days, workshops and more. The PAS provided support on creating 3D digital models and organised a finds identification session at the heritage day. This project has been hugely successful both in establishing new collaborative partnerships between numerous local groups but also in attracting over 1000 more visitors to the library during the same period in 2021, as well as increasing new borrowers from the library by 10%.

'The whole project has been really exciting and I have been so pleased by the response our community had to the offer of artefacts from the museum service. It has been such a great project to be part of and I hope other libraries get an opportunity to share the museum's wealth of treasures in this way. I think it really caught people's imagination and we have had a lot of fun with it'

Kate Cheng, Goring Library Manager.

Marvellous Metals

In July 2022, Ayla Karaman (Treasure Registration & Resources Manager) and Meghan King (Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire FLO) collaborated with the Council for British Archaeology to run an event for the 'Festival of Archaeology' at Bradford Industrial Museum. 'Marvellous Metals' ran over two days and was an opportunity for both children and youth leaders to explore how archaeological metalwork is identified and recorded by FLOs. The event also included hands-on craft activities and live demonstrations by experimental archaeologists, all of which were used to explore the use of metal through the ages. Using Meghan's handling collection, participants were able to place finds on a timeline and discuss how they identified the objects, whilst Ayla produced several artefact identification worksheets using PAS objects from around Bradford. The session also gave youth leaders an opportunity to discuss the PAS and how to incorporate it into their work to encourage more community engagement and public use of the PAS database, particularly within local Young Archaeologists' Club groups.

'Working with the PAS as part of our Marvellous Metals weekend was a fantastic opportunity for our participants to get hands-on with a material assemblage spanning some 5000 years, a rare opportunity for most of them. Participants left with a newfound appreciation of artefacts discovered in their local area, the role of the PAS and the value of sharing knowledge by reporting finds, so everyone can benefit from their discovery. Our youth leaders will be able to share this information and the many activities created by the PAS team with young people across the UK'

Joanne Kirton, Delivery & Engagement Manager,
Council for British Archaeology.

Treasures Unearthed Exhibition

In August 2022, detectorists across North West England and North Wales gathered at Chester Cathedral to show off their finds as part of the 'Treasures Unearthed' exhibition. Joining the many detecting clubs who had stalls exhibiting their finds, was Heather Beeton (Cheshire, Greater Manchester & Merseyside FLO) and Susie White (North Wales FLO) with a joint PAS England and Wales stall. Besides handing out information about the PAS they also had a handling collection and engaged with over 500 people. They also spoke to many new finders and other individuals new to metal detecting, as well as members of the public who are not metal detectorists but are interested in heritage. It was a brilliant event that increased the profile of the PAS in the region, providing both FLOs a platform to talk about the PAS, finds and best practice. Heather was asked to award the prize for the best stand by a club, which was presented to the Kendal Club for promoting best practice.

The joint PAS England and Wales stand at the 'Treasures Unearthed' exhibition at Chester Cathedral.



Recording finds

The PAS records archaeological finds made by the public to advance knowledge. Most of these have been found by metal-detectorists, and all shed new light on the archaeology and history of England and Wales. Highlighted here are just a few of the many examples found in 2022, of which more can be found on the PAS database (finds.org.uk/database).

Flint and stone 800,000 BC–Present

The PAS recorded 2,212 items of stone and flint in 2022, of which the vast majority (94%) date to prehistory. Unless items are unusual (see below), it is best not to recover common items of worked flint (such as simply worked flakes or debitage) unless properly recorded as part of an archaeological survey as intense collection can strip a landscape of evidence. As the examples below illustrate, lithics can be useful for understanding people of the past and the places they inhabited.

Evidence of flint-working

For every fine flint artefact found there are hundreds of pieces of waste produced by the reductive process used to work flint. The process starts with a flint nodule, either from a flint mine, like Grimes Graves in Norfolk, or a cobble from a gravel deposit. This was knocked into shape to produce a 'core' (SUSS-2BF60D) with the flat face needed for further working. Using a hammer stone or bone, punch blows are struck onto the flat upper face to dislodge the strip-like flint blades (SUSS-2BCD41) suitable for further working. Not every flake is suitable for making a tool, so prehistoric sites can produce vast amounts of waste. The core and the waste are the intermediate raw material that shows flint-working was being carried out on the site.

Kevin Leahy



SUSS-2BCD41

This flint flake comes from the same site as the core, at Loxford, West Sussex, and shows what was being produced.



SUSS-2BF60D

Flint core from Loxwood, West Sussex, dating to 8000–4000 BC, that has been used to produce blades used to make implements. The pale-coloured area is 'cortex' – the flint's nodule's original surface. Grooves running down the faces of the core show where blades have been removed.



PUBLIC-3A831E

Firestones represent an interesting phenomenon, these examples being from Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. Typically, they are quartzite cobbles that have been heated until they are red-hot in a fire and then dropped into water to boil it. The stone shatters leaving a rough fracture and craze-cracking on the surface which is often reddened and crumbly.



SWYOR-B8AEDE

Mesolithic flint microlith from Ripponden, West Yorkshire, dating to 8000–4000 BC, that shows how flint blades were used. The facets down one face are where previous blades had been removed before this one was extracted. A section of the blade was carefully trimmed using a stone, bone or antler, by the removal of tiny chips from around the sides. Although the edges were blunted the point remained sharp and deadly.



Bronze Age 2350–800 BC



SF-76516B
Stone wrist-guard from
Debenham, Suffolk.

LIN-7F0558

Copper-alloy Late Bronze Age sword from Bucknall, Lincolnshire, belonging to the Ewart Park-type metalworking tradition (c. 950–750 BC), which has been deliberately broken - 'killed' - into four pieces.

WMID-249A43

Copper-alloy faceted socketed axe of Late Bronze Age date (c. 950–750 BC) found at Alton, Staffordshire. The axe is relatively short and stubby and is known as a 'baggy axe'.

WILT-DE7029

Gold bracelet from the near Malmesbury Hoard (below) and the finder's image of the hoard in situ (right).



Of the 1,210 Bronze Age items recorded in 2022, most are weapons or tools, including scrapers (75), spearheads (57) and axeheads of various types. Also represented are copper-alloy tools and weapons in hoards (41). Perhaps less common than thought, Bronze Age items account for just over 2% of the finds recorded last year, of which some finds (highlighted below) are of particular note.

Bronze Age 'bracer'

A complete, though worn, Early Bronze Age stone wrist-guard was found at Debenham, Suffolk (SF-76516B) and recorded with the PAS this year. Dating perhaps to c. 2300–2100 BC, this roughly rectangular guard of the narrow type, has holes drilled at either end to enable its attachment. The notches visible at one end of the guard attest to its being tied in place. Documented across northern Europe, stone wrist guards of this kind are mainly known from contemporary elite male burials. The most spectacular of these, that of the 'Amesbury Archer', included one worn on his forearm and another by the knees. Once thought to function as an archer's bracer, protecting the forearm from a bowstring's 'snap-back' when fired, their placing on the body revealed in graves (usually on the outside of the arm), as well as practical considerations, now suggest this to be unlikely. Held in place with a leather or fabric armband or cuff, instead they are more likely to symbolise the wearer's virtuosity in archery and warfare, than a practical piece of kit.

Malmesbury bracelet hoard

Several Bronze Age hoards were found in 2022, but one of the most interesting, dating to the Middle Bronze Age (c. 1500–1100 BC), consisted of three complete gold bracelets, two of them folded and flattened prior to deposition. It was found during a metal-detecting rally near Malmesbury, Wiltshire (WILT-DE7029), but sadly the organisers had not planned for any in-situ discoveries, so it was not archaeologically excavated. The three objects were packed tightly together and reported with soil still adhering to them. The penannular bracelet is decorated with four embossed ribs, resembling a slightly larger Early Bronze Age armlet from the hoard of gold objects excavated from a barrow at Lockington, Leicester. The two gold strips or 'ribbons' have been tightly folded and flattened. Both carry similar surface decoration, comprising continuous parallel incised lines in four bands on one example and in two bands on the other, in the latter case with a plain band in between. Their decoration expands the repertoire of patterns used on metalwork of this period.

Sally Worrell



Iron Age 800 BC–AD 43



GLO-9F984
Copper-alloy 'mask brooch'
from near Cirencester,
Gloucestershire.

Finds of Iron Age date are relatively rare and therefore important to record. Only 1,345 items (representing less than 3% of the total number of finds) were recorded last year. Most numerous were coins (509 items), followed by brooches (144). Also recorded were a good number of items associated with the horse, showing its importance in the Iron Age.

Rare 'mask brooch'

To the best of our knowledge, a copper-alloy Maskenfibel (mask brooch) found near Cirencester, Gloucestershire (GLO-9F984), is the first documented example from Britain of a prestigious Iron Age ornament type. Despite the damage - its hinge, pin and catchplate are lost - the complexity of the brooch remains perceptible. It carries decoration in high relief, including a human face with bulging eyes at the hinge end and a more ambiguous motif at the centre of the bow. Depending on the viewer's perspective, the latter comprises either two peltas spiralling from a loop or eyes above a drop-shaped mouth, the concentric circles within hinting at a gaping orifice. Characterised by a beguiling combination of stylised human and zoomorphic decoration, this brooch type is mainly documented in central Europe, often in association with high-status graves. It dates to the early La Tene period, the 5th to 4th centuries BC. However, in this case, the brooch's form and decoration suggest that it might be an insular copy inspired by continental examples.

Iron Age horse gear

A complete copper-alloy strap mount, decorated with yellow and red enamel, was found at Titchmarsh, Northamptonshire (NARC-E3BCDD) in 2022. It comprises an openwork circular loop, framing a face-like configuration of two roundels and a pelta, and a rectangular plate, connected by a right-angled 'collar'. A rectangular strap slide projects from the back of the plate. This find is like the 'lyre-shaped' horse harness mounts documented from eastern England and dated from the Late Iron Age into the early Roman period. Others have studs which suggest a likely use as cheekpieces or 'bridle burrs', so fixed to the bridle on either side of the head to aid control of horses used as draught animals; a pair of such mounts in mirror image form has been documented in a metalwork hoard from Wood Dalling, Norfolk (NMS-3E5C7E). The absence of such studs from the Titchmarsh mount suggests an associated use as harness decoration.

Gold quarter *stater* of the Belgae, of 'Danebury Scrolls Right' type, dating to c. 60–20 BC, found in Wield, Hampshire (SUR-CFA2AD). Alongside an example from West Tisted, Hampshire (DEV-17FB6B), this is one of two PAS examples with right facing horse from a scarce group centred on Hampshire.



NARC-E3BCDD
Copper-alloy strap mount
from Titchmarsh,
Northamptonshire.





NMGW-7CCD14

Copper-alloy zoomorphic mount, probably a vessel escutcheon, in the form of an ox-head. It is likely of late Iron Age to early Roman date, and was found at Llancarfan, Glamorgan.

Apollo and a Bull: the first Iron Age coins of Britain

The first coins produced in Britain are known as 'potins' and were cast in clay moulds (rather than struck with dies) using a high-tin copper-alloy. An initial Kentish or 'Thurrock' type, dating to the 2nd century BC and named after the discovery of a large hoard of these coins from Thurrock, Essex, in 1987, depicts the head of Apollo on the obverse and a butting bull on the reverse. Over 300 cast examples have been recorded by the PAS, and these derive from earlier bronze coins issued by the Greek city-state of Massalia (Marseilles, modern-day France) that were struck on cast flans rather than cast in moulds. One, from near Margaret Roding, Essex (SF-B3BB97), is either a struck Massaliot type or an early Gallic copy, of probable late-3rd to early-2nd century BC date. This type appears as part of the struck and cast coinages of Gaul, with the letters MA above the bull referencing the original place of issue. Although struck Gallic examples are rarer in Britain, this coin, recorded in 2022, provides an excellent example of the Gallic prototype, which inspired and was replicated on the earliest Kentish potins (e.g. KENT-7CFED2).

Sally Worrell, Andrew Brown and Sam Moorhead

LIN-86E933

Copper-alloy knife handle with a terminal in the form of a stylised bird's head, with curvilinear incision and cross-hatching, reminiscent of the decoration on late Iron Age mirrors. It was found at Empingham, Rutland.



SF-B3BB97

High-tin copper-alloy 'potin' from near Margaret Roding, Essex.

KENT-36F937

Gallic cast bronze 'potin' of the Suessiones, of 'Confronting Animals' type, from Adisham, Kent. This depicts confronting goats on the obverse and a wolf and boar on the reverse. It was probably issued around the Gallic War period, c. 60–52 BC.



Roman AD 43–410

Over 35% (18,495) of the finds recorded in 2022 date to the Roman period; 9,550 of them were coins. As in previous years, albeit (understandably) dominated by metal finds, they represent all aspects of Roman life in Britain, as well as Britain's connections with the wider Roman world. Below is information on some of the most interesting discoveries made this year.

Figurine of a Satyr

Found at Kingsley, Cheshire (LVPL-C7C9F6), was a well-modelled copper-alloy figurine of a satyr. Despite the missing right arm, right leg and left foot, the figurine is otherwise well-preserved, if worn. He is recognisable as a satyr from the nebris or deerskin garment stretched from shoulder to hip, the vine-leaf garland encircling his head and, above all, from the small tail looping upwards from the base of the spine. The bulge of muscle at the right hip suggests that the now missing leg was raised, putting the satyr in a dance pose familiar from other examples. The extended left arm perhaps once grasped a staff or shepherd's crook. Satyrs are among the companions of Bacchus, the Roman god of wine and pleasure, attested as dancing figures, musicians and wine-pourers; this piece perhaps belonged to a statuary group which included the god himself, perhaps propped up by his followers. The Bacchic retinue also cavorts as decoration across many Roman household objects recorded by the PAS, a symbol of the good things in life.



LVPL-C7C9F6
Copper-alloy figurine
of a satyr from
Kingsley, Cheshire.



SWYOR-7D4B98

Coins of Didia Clara (AD 193), the only daughter of Emperor Didius Julianus (r. 193) and his wife Manlia Scantilla are rare; Julianus only reigned for 66 days. This silver *denarius* from Eshton, North Yorkshire, is the first piece of Didia Clara recorded through the PAS.



SUR-7A2E23

Silver *denarius* of Otho (r. 69) from Bradley, Hampshire. It is one of four PAS recorded silver *denarii* of a type previously thought only to have been issued in gold.



WILT-BD4B5F
Swindon Hoard, with
unexcavated jug inside
bucket container.

Swindon vessel hoard

A hoard of copper-alloy vessels, comprising a handled bucket containing three other vessels and perhaps further objects were found near Swindon (WILT-BD4B5F). The bucket is of 'Hemmoor' type, named after the site of one of the first discoveries near Hamburg, Germany. The largest vessel within the bucket is a spouted jug, beneath which were two possible cups; both objects feature in the scene of a luxury domestic interior carved on the inner surface of a sarcophagus from Simpelveld, Netherlands. One function for such buckets was to mix wine, while jugs of this type served to heat water for diluting wine; limescale has been recorded on comparable examples. The bucket dates to the first half of the 3rd century, and therefore gives a likely *terminus post quem* for the hoard. As a group, this might be a burial assemblage or an offering after festive drinking. Since the bucket was reported with the soil left within, it is hoped that scientific analysis by Historic England will shed further light on its nature and history.

Civil unrest and 'the Year of the Four Emperors'

Following the death of Nero in AD 68, the Roman Empire fell into Civil War with four Emperors – Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian – vying for control in what has become known as 'the Year of the Four Emperors' (AD 69). Coins of this period are varied, often short-lived, and until Vespasian relatively scarce. They often represent unique pieces of propaganda promoting victory, the military, or a return of peace or political order. For Otho – in power for just three months and characteristically depicted on his coins wearing a wig(!) – the PAS has recorded about 60 coins. Discovered at Bradley, Hampshire (SUR-7A2E23), in 2022, is one of four PAS recorded silver *denarii* of a type previously thought to have been issued only in gold. It is not uncommon to see gaps or variation in the coinage of this period and, combined with examples in the British Museum (BM 1867,0101.1628 & 2005,0834.1) and elsewhere, the PAS coins provide evidence for the type having been issued in silver as well as gold.

Sally Worrell, Andrew Brown and Sam Moorhead



DUR-3A62E6
Silver openwork brooch,
dating to c. 200–400, found
near Ravensworth, North
Yorkshire. The type is very
rare, with occasional parallels
documented from continental
Europe, its form perhaps
echoing brooches made for
military consumers.



WILT-A646EC
Silver finger-ring fragment found
at Heddington, Wiltshire. All that
remains is the bezel, showing two
facing busts, man and a woman,
each up one hand as though
addressing each other. It is
inscribed VIVA TIS (may you live)
and shows the sun (above) and
moon (below) to represent the
heavens, and thus Aeternitas
(Eternity). This item is almost
certainly Christian.

Early Medieval AD 410–1066

KENT-06A52C

Silver early penny, or *sceat*, belonging to 'Series R2' and dating c. 700–10. Found at Barham, Kent, its design is influenced by Roman coinage with the *radiate* bust on the obverse and a standard on the reverse.



The Early Medieval period (often referred to as the Anglo-Saxon period in England) was one of immense change with migration, invasion and settlement from overseas. Consequently, the material culture is diverse and varied, with localised clusters of some artefact types or forms. In 2022, the PAS recorded 2,774 items of Early Medieval date, representing just over 5% of all finds recorded last year. This tells us much about life at that time, as highlighted by the following case studies.

Anglo-Saxon animal art – Style 1

Early Medieval metalwork is noteworthy for its abstract zoomorphic (animal) designs. Swedish archaeologist Bernhard Salin (1861–1931) divided this art – found across northwest Europe – into 'styles', still used to describe them. 'Salin Style 1' (475–600), considered here, can be found on several Anglo-Saxon metal-detector finds recorded with the PAS in 2022. Characterised by disjointed quadrupeds (or birds), with mixed-up body parts and often in close-knit patterns, such beasts can be hard to make out, especially for the untrained eye. Still, deciphering them is important for understanding these objects. Examples include rectangular copper-alloy mounts from Burton on the Wolds, Leicestershire (LEIC-9C3C24) and Whitsbury, Hampshire (SUR-25B8CC). Both consist of similar gilt chip-carved designs showing elongated beasts, the body indicated by two sinuous curves of triple-ridged ribbon and with two limbs, but only the one from Hampshire has an obvious eye; it is their eyes and limbs that help interpret the animals shown. A triangular copper-alloy mount from Wyham cum Cadeby, Lincolnshire (NLM-91BD9A), has upon it a beast that is crouching, facing right, with its head looking back over its body with one raised paw. Its (possible) silver (or high tin) insert plate bears the zoomorphic design. The back of the object has rusted, pointing to it becoming detached from a ferrous setting, perhaps from the iron straps of a bucket.



NLM-91BD9A

Triangular copper-alloy mount from Wyham cum Cadeby, Lincolnshire.

SUR-25B8CC

Rectangular copper-alloy mount from Whitsbury, Hampshire.

SUR-EBD937

Gold disc pendant, dating to the late 6th to 7th centuries, found at West Overton, Wiltshire. It is embellished with (two arms of) a cross motif, which is typical for this type, with a central setting for a gemstone or similar.







CORN-8F1D47

Gold strap-end or tag with scrolled filigree design and possible garnet settings. From near Redruth, Cornwall, its U-shape form resembles Carolingian strap-ends, but the use of filigree is more typical of Anglo-Saxon metalwork.



CORN-A629AF

This silver penny is one of the earliest Anglo-Scandinavian coins. Issued in the Danelaw of eastern England in the late 9th century it copies the 'London Monogram' type of King Alfred 'the Great' of Wessex (r. 871–99). It was found at Pakenham, Suffolk and is only the third coin of this type recorded by the PAS.

Irish metalwork

From Ewerby and Evedon, Lincolnshire (LIN-89F702), was found a buckle plate decorated with *champlevé* enamel (that is to say, enamel set within cut recesses). It dates to the 7th to 8th century, and parallels a gilded belt buckle from Lagore Crannog, Ireland. The circular setting at one end is empty but probably once contained a glass gem. On each side is the head of a beast shown in profile, gripping the setting in its jaws. Circular eyes can be seen in bulges at each side of the plate and their nostrils flank the setting. Between the two lugs (at the lower end of the image) is a panel containing chequered *millefiori* glass; this is created by slicing multicoloured glass rods (as if it was seaside rock). This object joins the increasing number of Irish-style Early Medieval finds recorded with the PAS. It is likely that they were brought to England by the Vikings: in addition to their raiding, there was a well-established Viking trade route between Dublin and York. Finds recorded by the PAS are concentrated around York and in eastern England, part of the area known as the 'Danelaw'. While finds like these might have been looted by Vikings in Ireland, they might also show the presence of Irish soldiers in the Viking army.

Copper coins of ninth-century Northumbria

Ninth-century Northumbrian coinage was struck on small thick flans, different to southern English issues which were broader and thinner. These Northumbrian pennies, often called *styca*s, name the King or Archbishop of York on one side and the moneyer on the other. Their designs are not elaborate. Most simply have the inscription around a cross, as on a fine example for Archbishop Wigmund (r. 837–54) found at Spofforth with Stockeld, North Yorkshire (YORYM-230927). A variety of other motifs are known, with a penny of Æthelred II (second reign; r. 844–8?), found at Ryther, North Yorkshire (NLM-58223D), including a central star with the moneyer's name Eardwulf outside. Their colour betrays a high copper content, the levels of silver diminishing to nothing in the reign of Eanred (r. 810–41). Generally discovered across the Vale of York and the Yorkshire Wolds and south into northern Lincolnshire, they are rarer finds elsewhere. One found last year at Formby, Sefton (LVPL-0957F4), struck by the moneyer Brother for Eanred, is the first PAS-recorded stray find from Merseyside north of the River Mersey, and another of Osberht (r. 848/9–62/3) from near Cockermouth, Cumbria (LANCUM-40C861) is a rare discovery so far north-west.

Michael Lewis, John Naylor & Kevin Leahy

LIN-89F702

Irish-style enamelled copper-alloy buckle-plate from Ewerby and Evedon, Lincolnshire.



YORYM-230927

Copper-alloy Northumbrian penny (*styca*) of Archbishop Wigmund of York (r.837–54) found at Spofforth with Stockeld, North Yorkshire

Medieval AD 1066–1540



KENT-011B77

Probable button made from a copper-alloy jetton found at Halliford and Sunbury West, Surrey.



WILT-799CC0

Copper-alloy figurine from Bremhill, Wiltshire.

LANCUM-8B79D3

Gold locket in the form of a miniature padlock from near Adlington, Cheshire, with the inscription 'en ioie / tut vie' (the whole of life in joy). It joins two other examples, also with amatory phrases, found as part of the Fishpool Hoard in 1966 and at Rolleston (DENO-E69756) in 2008, both Nottinghamshire, and therefore suggested to be of the same workshop. This example might challenge that assumption.



LON-78B66F

Bone rosary bead of memento mori (remember that you die) type, showing the face of a young woman on one side and a skull on the other. It was found on the River Thames foreshore at Queenhithe, City of London.

The material culture of the Middle Ages is varied, representing all aspects of medieval life, though (of course) metal items dominate the detector finds recorded with the PAS. 13,200 medieval finds (including over 5,000 coins) were recorded with the PAS in 2022, representing over a quarter of this year's data. As such it is an important source for understanding the medieval past, as the case studies below illustrate.

Making new from old

Recycling is often seen as a modern 'invention', but people in the past were much more adept than us today at 'making new from old'. As shown through the finds recorded by the PAS, reasons for reuse can be varied, and at times unclear. A very worn (and once enamelled) harness mount was found at Mundham, Norfolk (NMS-BAB152). Its reverse has the remains of an integral attachment stud that has been broken off and worn or ground down. Next to this is a secondary (off-centre) hole, strongly suggesting this was for remounting the object, though maybe for a different reason than originally intended. A clearer example of reuse is provided by a probable button made from a jetton that was discovered at Halliford and Sunbury West, Surrey (KENT-011B77). The original object was stuck at Bourges, France, during the reign of Charles VIII (r. 1418-37), though it is doubtful that was of any significance for those that recycled it. The choice of a papal *bulle* for the spindle whorl found near Bringsty, Herefordshire (HESH-422BFE), might have been for very practical reasons also (it is a good weight and shape for a spindle whorl), but maybe it was because of its religious associations. We will never know of course...

Religious figurines

Several holy figurines have been recorded with the PAS in 2022, highlighting the importance of religion for medieval people. Finds recorded with the PAS reflect both the 'lived religion' of medieval people (i.e. their everyday faith and practices) as well as the influence of organised religion (i.e. the Church). Most figurines recorded by the PAS probably reflect the latter. From Bremhill, Wiltshire (WILT-799CC0), was found a gilded copper-alloy draped male figure, his right arm bent at the elbow with the palm of his hand facing outwards, and in his left hand a book. It is suggested this might be a representation of St John the Evangelist from a crucifixion group, perhaps from a processional cross. More certainly from such a cross is the gilded figure of a draped male from Brookland, Kent (KENT-0D79C3). Here the figure's posture is similar, but the detailing is less impressive. In fact, his right hand has been awkwardly shortened. This holy person is mounted on an octagonally faceted stand, likely the remnants of a processional cross. Intriguingly, found in the same vicinity (KENT-04B7BD) in 2022 was another figurine, of similar form, again with part of the shaft for mounting it still attached.







SWYOR-A151B9

Lead pilgrim badges rarely preserve well in cultivated land. This example from Kirk Deighton, North Yorkshire, seemingly representing Christ, falls within a series of *vera icon* (true image).

Copying English pennies on the Continent

When Edward I (r. 1272–1309) reformed English coinage in 1279 it was already well respected around Europe for its quality. The earlier short and long cross coins had been imitated on the Continent (eg. BERK-03E4E8) and the same happened with Edward's new pennies. Known as 'continental sterling imitations', they were issued extensively in the Low Countries, reaching England through trade and other routes, including with English troops returning home from Flanders following war with France. Restrictions were placed on their importation to stop them from circulating, although problems persisted well into the 14th century. Twenty-six examples were recorded in 2022. Early types are most easily identified with many bust designs lacking a crown. Some are bareheaded, known as a pollard, such as an issue of Arnold V, Count of Looz (r. 1279–1323) found near Nettleton, Lincolnshire (LIN-8417C9). Other types have roses instead of a crown and are known as a crockard. An example found at Denmead, Hampshire (SUSS-3E7DDC) is a type produced in 1296 for the Bishops of Cambrai during a time when there was no bishop; it is only the second of its type recorded by the PAS. Later issues more closely resemble English coins with crowned busts, some even copying the original inscriptions. An example of Robert III of Béthune as Count of Flanders (r. 1305–22) was found at Easington, County Durham (DUR-FDD825). Another, found at Langrish, Hampshire (HAMP-7F9E7D), was issued for Henry VII, King of the Romans (r. 1308–12) with an eagle below the bust.

Michael Lewis and John Naylor

NMS-EAFD04

'Enamels' produced by the workshops of Limoges, France, are not uncommon finds in Britain since they were widely traded from the mid-12th century. This mount from Suffield, Norfolk, though worn and missing some enamel, is relatively well preserved. It depicts an eagle, the symbol of St John the Evangelist, and would have probably been fixed to the back of a processional cross.

OXON-EA2C24

Copper-alloy strap-end found at Cuddesdon and Denton, Oxfordshire, which is of interest since it has an additional applied plate showing a standing figure praying. Perhaps this figure represents its owner.



BERK-03E4E8

English 'short cross' pennies were regularly imitated on the Continent. This example found at Watlington, Oxfordshire, copies an issue of King John (r. 1199–1216) but was struck in Westphalia (part of modern north-west Germany) in the 1230s or 1240s.



SUSS-3E7DDC

Silver continental sterling imitation struck for the Bishops of Cambrai and found at Denmead, Hampshire. Note the roses in place of the crown.



DUR-FDD825

Silver continental sterling imitation of Robert III of Béthune, Count of Flanders (r. 1305–22) from the mint at Alost, modern-day Belgium. This was found at Easington, County Durham.

Post-medieval AD 1540 onwards



SF-606C13

Copper-alloy buttons are common detector finds, but this one, found near Hornead, Hertfordshire, is both unusual and interesting. Upon it is the enamelled arms of the Commonwealth (1649–60), when England was last a republic.

The period following the Middle Ages experienced rapid growth and social changes, thanks due to ‘Enlightenment’, industrialisation and increased urbanisation. The material recovered through metal-detecting reflects this. Even so, the PAS is necessarily selective in recording finds of Post-Medieval or Modern date, albeit a significant number of items dating to after 1540 are recorded each year. In 2022, for example, 13,445 items dating to after the Middle Ages were recorded, accounting for almost 26% of the PAS dataset.

Reading and writing

Often taken for granted nowadays, reading and writing are much-desired skills - especially in largely illiterate societies. Without ‘education’, a person’s ‘life chances’ were limited. An interesting object type sometimes found through metal-detecting – indeed five were recorded with the PAS in 2022 – are ‘hornbooks’, which are devices to teach the alphabet. Originally these were ‘wooden paddles’, which, as their name suggests, could employ horn in their manufacture. Those recorded with PAS are miniature versions (usually) made of lead. Intriguingly, given their presumed function, they can miss letters and/or have (apparent) mistakes. Many hornbooks date to the 17th century, when some letters – like ‘J’ and ‘U’ – were not so much used (although ‘J’ was distinguished from ‘I’ in the 1629 revision of the King James Bible), so the absence of these letters is expected (indeed usual); see, for example, a hornbook found at Freeby, Leicestershire (LEIC-52EEDF). As in this case, miniature hornbooks can be circular, but rectangular tablets are also found. For example, one from Steeple Langford, Wiltshire (SOM-973D63), has the letters ‘G’ and ‘S’ reversed. The back of the object is decorated, in this case with a geometric device. Another, from Buckden, North Yorkshire (SWYOR-26EE02) – which (usefully) has the date 1692 – also has the letter ‘G’ reversed, but also ‘Q’ in lowercase. Such ‘mistakes’ are common, suggesting that miniature hornbooks might just be toys rather than teaching aids.

The problem of small change in the 17th century

From the medieval period, small denominations (halfpennies and farthings) became an important part of the circulating currency. Too few were struck though, so by the end of the English Civil War in 1649 there was a dire shortage leading to the private issuing of tokens. These are common finds with more than 400 recorded with the PAS last year, produced for a range of people and institutions. Some were issued by local authorities, such as a farthing token found at Rowlands Castle, Hampshire (SUR-A5DA78), for the town of Bridgwater, Somerset. The reverse shows the town arms, consisting of a forbidding castle above the bridge and river. City arms, this time a shield enclosing three pears for the City of Worcester, are also seen on a halfpenny token of a mercer called William Colbatch, found in Enstone, Oxfordshire (OXON-D2FE6C). Pubs and inns regularly issued them, resulting in numerous examples of tokens issued by innkeepers being recorded. A farthing token found at Dowgate, City of London (LON-C97FC3), for example, was issued by The Grasshopper, a nearby inn on New Fish Street, an area later devastated by the Great Fire of 1666. In 1672 private tokens were outlawed and official issues resumed. While in production these small objects give us an important glimpse into everyday life in the 17th-century.

Michael Lewis and John Naylor



SUR-A5DA78

Farthing token issued in the name of the town of Bridgewater, Somerset, found at Rowlands Castle, Hampshire.



LON-C97FC3

Farthing token issued by The Grasshopper Inn, London, and found at Dowgate, City of London.



GLO-1185B7

Gold unite (worth 22 shillings) from early in Charles I's (r. 1625–49) reign was found in Dodington, South Gloucestershire. Its reverse inscription 'FLORENT CONCORDIA REGNA' (through concord kingdoms flourish) perhaps recognises the difficulties facing his rule.



SWYOR-B7A00C

Found at Burythorpe, North Yorkshire, this gold florin of Henry II, Duke of Lorraine (r. 1608–24), recounts a famous story. The coin's reverse shows Lorraine's patron saint, St Nicolas, standing with his hand raised in blessing above three children whom he had brought back to life after they were murdered.



SWYOR-26EE02

Miniature hornbook from Buckden, North Yorkshire.

Statistics

Table 1
PAS finds
recorded,
finds records
and Treasure
cases reported
(geographical
area).²

Area	PAS finds	PAS records	Treasure cases
Bedfordshire	529	295	6
Berkshire (inc. Reading, Windsor & Maidenhead, Wokingham)	708	692	17
Buckinghamshire (inc. Milton Keynes)	1,007	952	29
Cambridgeshire (inc. Peterborough)	694	501	29
Cheshire (inc. Warrington, Wirral)	489	468	20
Cornwall	317	265	10
Cumbria	356	238	22
Derbyshire	185	164	10
Devon	604	543	21
Dorset (inc. Poole)	821	655	32
Durham, Co. (inc. Darlington, Hartlepool, South Tyneside, Stockton, Sunderland)	154	134	9
Essex (inc. Southend)	456	416	57
Gloucestershire (inc. Bath & NE Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset)	1,593	941	35
Hampshire (inc. Portsmouth, Southampton)	2,444	2,359	83
Herefordshire	190	188	22
Hertfordshire	774	760	11
Isle of Wight	774	774	27
Kent (inc. Medway)	1,878	1,765	81
Lancashire (inc. Bury, Blackburn, Knowsley, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Sefton, St Helens, Tameside, Trafford)	771	293	21
Leicestershire	811	753	17
Lincolnshire (inc. North & North East Lincolnshire)	6,560	5,105	66
London, Gtr	599	587	13
Norfolk	5,207	4,265	95
Northamptonshire	1,117	1,049	14
Northumberland (inc. North Tyneside)	195	104	11
Nottinghamshire	1,233	1,148	20
Oxfordshire	2,248	2,059	49
Rutland	350	332	3
Shropshire (inc. Telford)	531	497	53
Somerset	753	677	30
Staffordshire (inc. Stoke-on-Trent, Wolverhampton)	1,269	939	31
Suffolk	3,915	2,727	75
Surrey	689	653	8
Sussex (East & West, inc. Brighton)	966	909	51
Warwickshire (inc. Birmingham, Solihull)	2,094	752	19
Wiltshire (inc. Swindon)	1,988	1,591	70
Worcestershire (inc. Dudley)	908	831	16
Yorkshire, East	290	265	16
Yorkshire, North (inc. Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland, York)	2,727	2,106	74
Yorkshire, South (inc. Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield)	805	642	7
Yorkshire, West (inc. Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield)	586	439	3
Wales (all counties)	697	648	76
Northern Ireland (all counties)	n/a	n/a	10
data not yet available	2,208	1,830	15
TOTAL	53,490	43,311	1,384

The above table gives information about where finds were made by geographical area, not necessarily where they were recorded as FLOs may record finds from outside their area. The counties with the most finds records in 2022 were Lincolnshire (5,101), Norfolk (4,265) and Suffolk (2,727). These also had the most finds recorded: 15,682 items in total. Most Treasure cases were reported from Norfolk (95), Hampshire (83) and Kent (81).

² Data downloaded 3 January 2023.

Table 2
PAS finds
records and
number
of finders
recording finds
(by recording
institution).

FLO Area	PAS records	Finders
Berkshire (BERK)	1,234	77
Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire (BH)	1,057	49
Buckinghamshire (BUC)	526	34
Cambridgeshire (CAM)	194	45
Cheshire (LVPL)	1,204	120
Cornwall (CORN)	294	54
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire (DENO)	672	72
Devon (DEV)	700	98
Dorset (DOR)	692	63
Durham (DUR)	702	87
Essex (ESS)	332	59
Gloucestershire (GLO)	906	86
Hampshire (HAMP)	969	125
Herefordshire & Shropshire (HESH)	163	27
Isle of Wight (IOW)	825	54
Kent (KENT)	1,425	142
Lancashire & Cumbria (LANCUM)	705	76
Leicestershire (LEIC)	1,353	117
Lincolnshire (LIN)	1,476	102
London (LON)	549	90
Norfolk (NMS)	3,550	198
Northamptonshire (NARC)	1,452	77
North Lincolnshire (NLM)	3,305	180
Northumberland etc (NCL)	45	13
Oxfordshire (OXON)	1,818	97
Somerset (SOM)	416	38
Staffordshire & West Midlands (WMID)	1,224	128
Suffolk (SF)	2,581	157
Surrey (SUR)	2,400	161
Sussex (SUSS)	993	120
Warwickshire & Worcestershire (WAW)	1,684	110
Wiltshire (WILT)	1,611	112
Yorkshire, North & East (YORYM)	475	55
Yorkshire, South & West (SWYOR)	2,453	139
Wales (NMGW etc)	947	205
Finds Advisers etc (BM etc)	415	249
Public – self recorders (PUBLIC)	1,964	104

Recording institutions logging the most finds records in 2022 where NMS (3,550), NLM (3,305) and SF (2,581). A further 1,964 records were made by 104 (PUBLIC) self-recorders (detectorists given training to record their own finds). Finds made by at least 3,720 finders were entered onto the PAS database: other people would have shown finds to FLOs that were not recordable (e.g. finds of limited archaeological interest). FLOs making finds records for most finders were based within NMS (198), NLM (180) and SUR (161).

Table 3
PAS finds recorded (by government region in England only).⁴

Government Region	FLOs ³	FLAs	PAS finds	PAS records
North West	3	1	1,607	992
North East	2	1	345	234
Yorkshire	3	2	5,570	4,493
West Midlands	4	2	4,856	3,072
East Midlands	4	1	8,842	7,265
East	7	2	9,638	7,398
South West	6	3	5,505	4,206
South East & London	10	3	10,044	9,507

The English government regions logging the most finds records in 2022 were the South East and London (10,044) and the East (9638), followed by the East Midlands (8842).

The following people worked as FLAs in 2022/23: Malcolm Adams (WM), Naomi Bergmans (SE), Adam Daubney (EM), Finlay Larkin (SE), Aidan Lockwood (NW), Adam Rivett (Y), Alix Smith (SW), Lindsey Smith (SE), Alyson Tanner (SW), Brittany Walsh (SW) and Sarah Williams (WM).

Table 4
PAS finds and finds records by period (where known/recorded).

	Stone Age	Bronze Age	Iron Age	Roman	Early-medieval	Medieval	Post-medieval
Finds	1,722	1,210	1,345	18,495	2,774	13,200	13,445
%	3.30	2.32	2.58	35.44	5.31	25.29	25.76
Records	1,057	717	980	13,681	2,154	12,049	11,753
%	2.49	1.69	2.31	32.28	5.08	28.42	27.73

Roman finds accounted for the highest number (and proportion) of individual items recorded (35.44%), followed by those of Post-Medieval (25.76%), then Medieval (25.29%) date. In fact, together, these finds account for over 86% of the dataset. It is clear, however, that some Bronze Age and Roman finds are found as part of larger groups (hoards).

Table 5
Method of discovery where known/recorded (based on finds records).

	Metal-detecting	Chance find while metal-detecting	Field-walking/mudlarking	Other chance find/gardening	Controlled archaeological investigation	Building/agricultural work
Records	40,823	654	1,283	434	92	20
%	94.27	1.51	2.96	1.00	0.21	0.05

Over 94% of all PAS finds were found by metal-detectorists – while metal-detecting, spotted by chance (eyes only) or during archaeological works.

Table 6
Findspot precision (based on finds records).

	4 fig	6 fig	8 fig	10 fig	12 fig
	434	6,685	3,584	29,848	20
%	1.07	16.48	8.83	73.57	0.05

Over 98% of completed PAS finds records in 2022 had at least a 6-figure NGR (National Grid Reference – precise to 100m), with over 82% having at least an 8-figure NGR (precise to 10m). This level of precision is essential for the data to be archaeologically useful.

Table 7
Land use (based on finds records), where known/recorded.

Land use	Finds Records	%
Cultivated land	24,154	93.31
Grassland/heathland	634	2.45
Woodland	114	0.44
Coastland	210	0.81
Open fresh water/wetlands	486	1.88
Other	288	1.11

³ Most FLOs are fulltime but in some areas they are part-time or job share. Most FLAs are part-time, of which many were recruited as new posts in 2022-3.

⁴ This is based on where the finds are made and does not include PUBLIC records.

Over 93% of finds records (where land use was recorded) were discovered on cultivated land, where they are vulnerable to agricultural damage and natural corrosion processes.

Michael Lewis and Ayla Karaman

Portable Antiquities Scheme partners

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