

# Introduction

## Purpose of the guide

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Thank you for volunteering to record finds with the Portable Antiquities Scheme and for taking the time to learn how to use the database. The Scheme exists to record archaeological finds made by members of the public in order to advance archaeological knowledge, and was launched nationwide in 2003. In 2014 a five-year project to encourage volunteers to use our database, called PAST Explorers, was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This guide was produced by Helen Geake with help from Claire Costin and PAST Explorers staff and is based on guides produced by Jessica Bryan and Wendy Scott.

This guide introduces recorders to the Portable Antiquities Scheme's website and database, and explains how they can record finds directly onto the database. It provides a quick reference guide to how to use each field in a record, to complement the training offered by the Scheme to volunteers. It covers the find record, details of the findspot, and how to add images and references to the record, and also gives some advice on writing descriptions.

It is legal to sell or give away most of the objects that have been recorded on the PAS database apart from Treasure (see page 5), and they can also sometimes be lost, making the record the only reliable information about important finds. For this reason we must make records that are the best that they can be.

Over a thousand objects are added to the Portable Antiquities Scheme's database each week. These records are used locally and nationally for research and publications. As volunteers can now contribute to this important national resource, the database will in the future become an even more valuable research and reference tool.

This guide has been formatted using accessibility guidelines. Please contact a member of PAS if you need this guidance in another format.

## Recording Finds

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### How we would like you to record on the database

Some people will be happy to just create basic ('skeleton') records, uploading measurements, a findspot and a photo, and let the Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) fill in the details. This is perfectly acceptable.

Others who have an expert knowledge may be able to fully identify and record their objects. The PAST Explorers team runs regular training courses to help bring you up to this expert level.

You are welcome to make a basic ('skeleton') record for a Treasure find, but please then report it promptly to your FLO (see next page).

**How you would like to work can be discussed with your local Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) and members of the PAST Explorers team.**

### What to record

Please only record items on the database that:

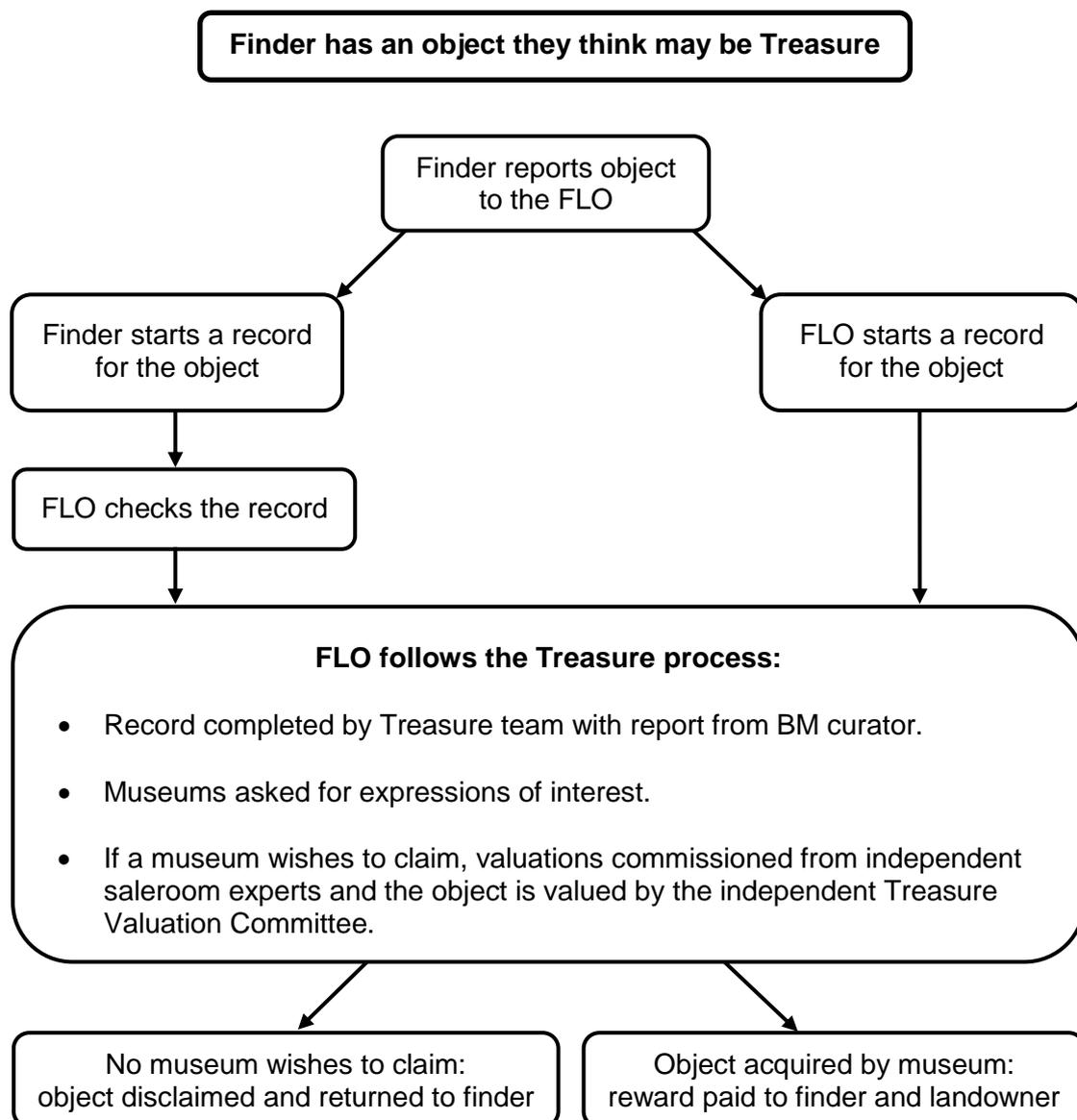
- are over 300 years old
- have been made or modified by humans
- are not from an organised archaeological project.

## What to do if you suspect a find is Treasure

There is a legal obligation to report Treasure to the local Coroner. This can be done through your local FLO.

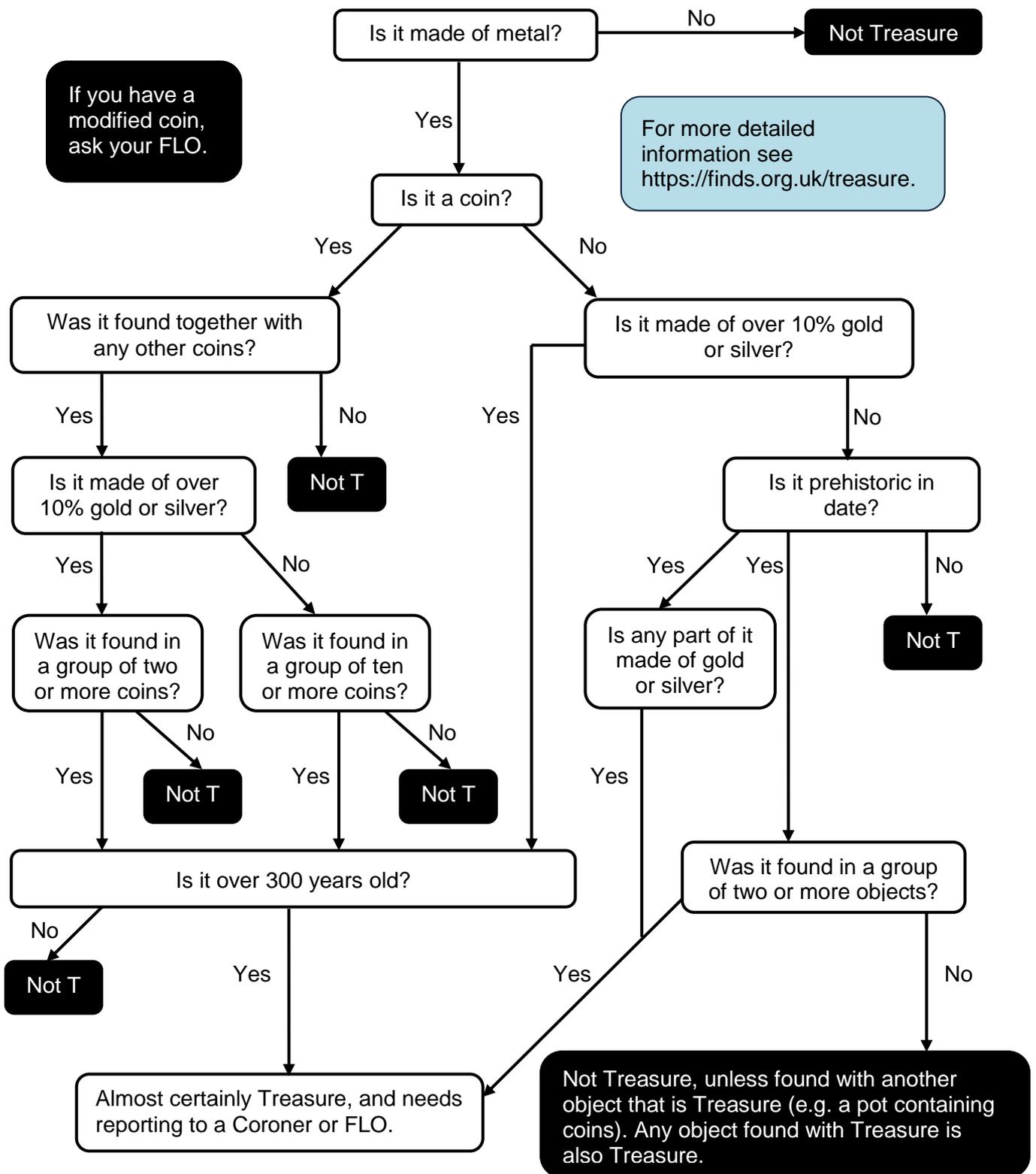
### What is Treasure?

- gold or silver objects over 300 years old
- two or more prehistoric metal objects found together
- two or more gold or silver coins found together that are over 300 years old
- ten or more base metal coins found together that are over 300 years old
- any object, whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, another object that is Treasure.



For a summary of the Treasure Act see <https://finds.org.uk/treasure/advice/summary>.

## Which finds are potential Treasure?



In addition, if an object is not Treasure but might be *Treasure Trove* (either found many years ago, or an object which is less than 300 years old, made substantially of gold or silver, deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery and with unknown owners or heirs) then it needs reporting to a Coroner or FLO.