

## USEFUL CONTACTS

The Portable Antiquities Scheme covers the whole of England and Wales; contact details for the Finds Liaison Officer covering your local area can be found on [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk) or by contacting:

### Portable Antiquities Scheme

Department of Portable Antiquities & Treasure  
British Museum, London WC1B 3DG

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7323 8611

Email: [info@finds.org.uk](mailto:info@finds.org.uk)

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

### Treasure Registrar (British Museum)

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7323 8546

Email: [treasure@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](mailto:treasure@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk)

### Treasure Section, Cultural Property Unit (Department for Culture, Media & Sport)

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7211 6144

### Export Licensing Unit

(Museums, Libraries and Archives Council)

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7273 8265

Email: [elu@mla.gov.uk](mailto:elu@mla.gov.uk)

### National Council for Metal Detecting

Website: [www.ncmd.co.uk](http://www.ncmd.co.uk)

### Federation of Independent Detectorists

Website: [www.detectorists.net](http://www.detectorists.net)

[www.fid.newbury.net](http://www.fid.newbury.net)

The Portable Antiquities Scheme is managed by a consortium of bodies led by the British Museum on behalf of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. The Scheme is funded by DCMS with contributions from local partners.

THE  
BRITISH  
MUSEUM

A Partnership UK project



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#### British Museum

Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG

⊕ Tottenham Court Road, Holborn, Russell Square

Telephone +44 (0)20 7323 8000

[visitorinformation@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk)

[www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk)

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ADVICE FOR FINDERS  
OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTS,  
INCLUDING TREASURE



Portable  
Antiquities  
Scheme

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

## THE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME:

### ADVICE FOR FINDERS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTS

The Portable Antiquities Scheme is a voluntary scheme to record archaeological objects found by the public: this booklet provides further information about the Scheme. The Scheme complements the legal obligation to report Treasure (see page 10 onwards).



### WHAT IS THE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME?

The Portable Antiquities Scheme is a voluntary scheme to record archaeological objects found by the public in England and Wales. If recorded, these finds have the potential to tell us much about the past, such as how and where people lived and about the types of objects they made and used.

### THE AIMS OF THE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME

1. To advance knowledge of the history and archaeology of England and Wales by systematically recording archaeological objects found by the public.
2. To raise awareness among the public of the educational value of archaeological finds in their context and facilitate research in them.
3. To increase opportunities for active public involvement in archaeology and strengthen links between metal-detector users and archaeologists.
4. To encourage all those who find archaeological objects to make them available for recording and to promote best practice by finders.

### AM I LEGALLY OBLIGED TO REPORT ALL MY FINDS?

No. The Scheme is entirely voluntary. However, you must report material which constitutes Treasure, or which you believe may be Treasure (see page 10 onwards).

### ARE YOU ONLY INTERESTED IN SEEING FINDS MADE BY METAL-DETECTOR USERS?

Not at all. We would like to see archaeological objects found by anyone.

## WHAT TYPES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECORD?

We would like to know about everything that you have found - not just metal objects. We record all objects made before about 1700 and are selective in recording more modern finds. It is often best to let a Finds Liaison Officer see all your finds, especially if you are unsure what they are; a nondescript lump of metal may turn out to be of archaeological interest.

## WHEN I GO METAL-DETECTING I OFTEN PICK UP WORKED FLINTS AND PIECES OF POTTERY AS WELL AS METAL OBJECTS. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THESE AS WELL?

Yes - because these finds also provide important archaeological information.

## WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION ABOUT MY FINDS DO YOU WANT?

We would like to record details of the objects that you have found, including a detailed description, its weight and measurements. We would also hope to record where and how they were found, and photograph or draw your finds. If you wish you can have a full report of the information we record.

## HOW LONG WILL THIS TAKE?

Generally the Finds Liaison Officers prefer to borrow the finds for a time, so they can research and record them properly. You will be issued with a receipt, whilst they are in our care.

## WILL MY FINDS BE TAKEN AWAY FROM ME?

No. We only want to record information about your finds. Museums may sometimes be glad to have the opportunity to acquire your non-Treasure finds, but this could only happen if you and the landowner agree.

## WHAT WILL I GAIN FROM REPORTING MY FINDS?

Your local Finds Liaison Officer will be able to offer you:

- finds identification (either personally, or after consulting a specialist) and recording
- advice on the *Treasure Act 1996*
- advice on conservation and storage (a booklet *Conservation Advice Notes* is also available)

The Finds Liaison Officer will also be able to inform you of the importance of your material for the understanding of our history. If you would find it useful, your local Finds Liaison Officer will be very glad to pass on to you a report of the information recorded.



Iron Age coin  
from Firle,  
East Sussex  
(SUSS-B68308)

## WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE INFORMATION ABOUT MY FINDS?

Our aim is to make as much of the information available as possible while protecting your personal details and archaeological sites from damage. We will publish details of the finds you show us on our online database ([www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)), but the findspots of objects will not be identified more precisely than a National Grid Reference (NGR) of four figures (which identifies 1km<sup>2</sup>); the most sensitive findspots will not be identified as accurately as this. This data is made available to third parties, such as Historic Environment Records, who must agree to abide by the same terms and conditions for publishing data online as the Scheme follows. Please note that the information given to Finds Liaison Officers is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act* (2000) and the *Data Protection Act* (1984).

## DO I NEED PERMISSION BEFORE I START SEARCHING WITH MY METAL-DETECTOR?

Yes. Always obtain permission to search from the landowner/occupier, regardless of the status, or perceived status, of the land before using a metal-detector. Remember that all land has an owner. To avoid subsequent disputes it is always advisable to get permission and agreement in writing first regarding the ownership and recording of any finds subsequently discovered. You must adhere to the laws concerning protected sites, such as those defined as Scheduled Monuments or Sites of Special Scientific Interest, where metal-detecting is restricted (you can obtain details of these from your Finds Liaison Officer). We cannot record objects that have been illegally recovered.

## WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR METAL-DETECTOR USERS?

The Portable Antiquities Scheme encourages metal-detector users to act responsibly, and abide by the *Code of Practice for Responsible Metal-Detecting* in England and Wales (see fold-out, page 18).

All finds are evidence of human occupation and can help us understand more about a particular area or object type. As more and more finds are recorded we will begin to be able to trace patterns in the way they are distributed and these may provide vital clues to the activities of our ancestors. In this way, together we can learn more about our past.



Roman strap-end  
from Wall,  
Staffordshire  
(WMID5951)

**I HAVE BEEN METAL-DETECTING ON A LOCAL FARMER'S LAND AND HAVE DISCOVERED A WHOLE RANGE OF MATERIAL FROM ROMAN TO MODERN TIMES. IF I REPORT THESE FINDS, WILL THIS SIMPLY LEAD TO THE AREA BECOMING A SCHEDULED MONUMENT, MEANING THAT I CAN NO LONGER DETECT THERE?**

This is highly unlikely. Only sites of national importance are scheduled (which means that it is illegal to use a metal-detector on them without permission from English Heritage or Cadw) and metal-detector finds on their own are not enough to lead to a site being scheduled, although such sites may be scheduled if other, more detailed, information about them exists. There is no known example where new detector finds have, on their own, led to a site being scheduled.

**I HAVE BEEN DETECTING FOR MANY YEARS AND HAVE A LARGE COLLECTION OF FINDS. AM I EXPECTED TO HAVE THIS MATERIAL RECORDED?**

We would be very glad to know about all your finds, no matter how long ago you found them. If you have a lot of material the Finds Liaison Officers are likely to concentrate on the most recent or important discoveries. It is best to discuss the logistics of recording a large collection with your local Finds Liaison Officer.

**HOW CAN I CLEAN MY FINDS?**

Most of your finds will need no treatment other than dry storage. For further information about cleaning and conserving your finds refer to *Conservation Advice Notes* (also available on our website - [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)).



## THE TREASURE ACT 1996: INFORMATION FOR FINDERS OF TREASURE

Under the *Treasure Act 1996* there is a legal obligation to report all finds of Treasure: this leaflet provides a summary of the main points of the Act. We strongly recommend that all other archaeological finds are reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme (see page 2 onwards) but this is completely voluntary.

The *Treasure Act 1996* replaced the common law of Treasure Trove in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and was extended on 1 January 2003.

### WHAT OBJECTS QUALIFY AS TREASURE?

The following finds are Treasure under the Act, if found after 24 September 1997 (or, in the case of category 2, if found after 1 January 2003):

1. Any metallic object, other than a coin, provided that at least 10 per cent by weight of metal is precious metal (that is, gold or silver) and that it is at least 300 years old when found. If the object is of prehistoric date it will be Treasure provided any part of it is precious metal.
2. Any group of two or more metallic objects of any composition of prehistoric date that come from the same find.
3. All coins from the same find provided they are at least 300 years old when found (but if the coins contain less than 10 per cent of gold or silver there must be at least ten of them). Only the following groups of coins will normally be regarded as coming from the same find:
  - hoards that have been deliberately hidden
  - smaller groups of coins, such as the contents of purses, that may have been dropped or lost
  - votive or ritual deposits.
4. Any object, whatever it is made of, that is part of the same find as another object that is Treasure. An object or coin is part of the 'same find' as another object or coin if it is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, the other object. Finds may have become scattered since they were originally deposited in the ground.
5. Any object that would previously have been Treasure Trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. Only objects that are less than 300 years old, that are made substantially of gold or silver, that have been deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery and whose owners or heirs are unknown will come into this category.



## WHAT OBJECTS DO NOT QUALIFY AS TREASURE?

The following types of find are not Treasure:

- objects whose owners can be traced
- unworked natural objects, including human and animal remains, even if they are found in association with Treasure
- objects from the foreshore which are wreck
- single coins found on their own
- groups of coins lost one by one over a period of time

If you are in any doubt, it is always safest to report your find. Your local Finds Liaison Officer will be glad to record all archaeological objects that you find.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND SOMETHING THAT MAY BE TREASURE?

You must report all finds of Treasure to the Coroner for the district in which the finds were made, either within 14 days of the day on which you made the find or within 14 days of the day on which you realised that the find might be Treasure (for example, as a result of having it identified). The obligation to report finds applies to everyone, including archaeologists.

## HOW DO I REPORT A FIND OF TREASURE?

You may report your find to the Coroner in person, by letter, telephone, fax, or email: your Finds Liaison Officer will be able to help you to do this. Finds made in one of the few areas in which a Treasure Franchise operates (the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall, the Corporations of Bristol and London), should be reported to the Coroner in the normal way.

## WHERE WILL I HAVE TO TAKE MY FIND?

Your local Finds Liaison Officer is normally the main point of contact for Treasure finds (details of your local Finds Liaison Officer can be found at [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk), email [info@finds.org.uk](mailto:info@finds.org.uk) or telephone +44 (0)20 7323 8611). Upon depositing the find you will be given a receipt. You will need to provide information about exactly where you made the find (the findspot), wherever possible to the equivalent of a six-figure National Grid Reference (100m<sup>2</sup>): in official dealings, the parish or a four-figure National Grid Reference (1km<sup>2</sup>) will be used, whilst a more general location description may be used for particularly sensitive finds. It is strongly recommended that you and the landowner should keep the find-site location confidential.

## WHAT IF I DO NOT REPORT A FIND OF TREASURE?

The penalty for not reporting a find that you believe (or there is good evidence for believing) to be Treasure, without a reasonable excuse, is imprisonment for up to three months, a fine of up to £5,000 (level 5), or both. You will not be breaking the law if you do not report a find because you did not at first recognise that it may be Treasure, but you should report it once you realise this.



Medieval silver-gilt livery badge from Kellington, North Yorkshire (2003 T402)

### WHAT HAPPENS IF THE FIND IS NOT TREASURE?

If the find is not Treasure, the Coroner will be informed and the find would normally be returned to you without the holding of an inquest.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF THE FIND IS TREASURE?

If the institution or individual receiving the find on behalf of the Coroner believes that the find may be Treasure, they will inform the British Museum or the National Museum Wales. They will then ascertain whether they or any other museum wishes to acquire it from the Crown.

If no museum wishes to acquire, the Secretary of State will disclaim it. When this happens, the Coroner will notify the landowner that the object is to be returned to you, after 28 days, unless the landowner objects. If the landowner objects, the Coroner will retain the find until you and the landowner have resolved any dispute.

### WHAT IF A MUSEUM WANTS TO ACQUIRE MY FIND?

The Coroner will hold an inquest to decide whether the find is Treasure. If the find is declared to be Treasure then it will be taken to the British Museum so that a valuation can be recommended by the Treasure Valuation Committee: this amount is what a museum will pay to acquire the find. However, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport wishes to encourage finders and landowners to consider donating their finds (therefore waiving their right to this financial reward)



Post-Medieval  
gold posy ring  
from Wixford,  
Warwickshire  
(2004 T70)

and gives certificates to all those who do. This in no way prejudices the rights of finders and landowners to claim a reward if they so choose.

### HOW IS A FAIR MARKET VALUE FOR A TREASURE FIND ARRIVED AT?

The Treasure Valuation Committee, which consists of independent experts, values all finds that museums wish to acquire. The Committee will commission a valuation from one or more experts drawn from the antiquities or coin trades. You, the landowner and the acquiring museum will have the option to comment on this valuation, and/or to send in a separate valuation for the Committee to consider. The Committee will inspect the find and arrive at a valuation. If you are then dissatisfied with the Committee's recommendation there are opportunities to appeal. If you are still dissatisfied, you can then appeal to the Secretary of State.

### WHAT IF THE CORONER OR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM LOSES OR DAMAGES MY FIND?

They are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that this does not happen but, if it does, you should be compensated.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A SHARE OF THE REWARD?

This is set out in detail in the *Treasure Act Code of Practice*. To summarise:

- the finder who has obtained permission to be on the land from its owner, and acted in good faith
- the landowner
- the person who occupies the particular site as a tenant of the owner (unless this is precluded by the terms of the tenancy agreement)



## WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A SHARE OF THE REWARD?

- an archaeologist who makes a Treasure find
- a finder or a landowner who has acted in bad faith, and not in accordance with the *Treasure Act Code of Practice*, may expect a reduced share of the valuation, or none at all

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE BEFORE I RECEIVE MY REWARD?

The period between the find being received by the Coroner, or by the organisation to whom he/she has directed that the find be delivered, and the payment of an ex gratia reward should not be longer than twelve months (provided no challenges are made), although it may be necessary to exceed this period in exceptional cases such as large hoards of coins, or finds that present particular difficulties.

## FOR FURTHER ADVICE ABOUT TREASURE:

Finders are strongly advised to obtain a copy of the *Treasure Act Code of Practice*, which provides further information about the Act, including guidance on the payment of rewards and advice on the care of finds, and has lists of useful contact addresses. This can be downloaded from the Department for Culture, Media & Sport's website ([www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)) or obtained from the British Museum's Treasure Registrar, your Finds Liaison Officer (see [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)) or through the National Council for Metal Detecting or the Federation of Independent Detectorists (see back of this leaflet for contact details).



## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RESPONSIBLE METAL-DETECTING IN ENGLAND & WALES

### *Being responsible means:*

#### Before you go metal-detecting:

1. Not trespassing: before you start detecting obtain permission to search from the landowner/occupier, regardless of the status, or perceived status, of the land. Remember that all land has an owner. To avoid subsequent disputes it is always advisable to get permission and agreement in writing first regarding the ownership of any finds subsequently discovered (see [www.cla.org.uk](http://www.cla.org.uk) or [www.nfuonline.com](http://www.nfuonline.com)).
2. Adhering to the laws concerning protected sites (e.g. those defined as Scheduled Monuments or Sites of Special Scientific Interest: you can obtain details of these from the landowner/occupier, Finds Liaison Officer, Historic Environment Record or at [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)). Take extra care when detecting near protected sites: for example, it is not always clear where the boundaries lie on the ground.
3. You are strongly recommended to join a metal detecting club or association that encourages co-operation and responsive exchanges with other responsible heritage groups. Details of metal detecting organisations can be found at [www.ncmd.co.uk](http://www.ncmd.co.uk) or [www.fid.newbury.net](http://www.fid.newbury.net).
4. Familiarising yourself with and following current conservation advice on the handling, care and storage of archaeological objects (see [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)).

#### While you are metal-detecting:

5. Wherever possible working on ground that has already been disturbed (such as ploughed land or that which has formerly been ploughed), and only within the depth of ploughing. If detecting takes place on undisturbed pasture, be careful to ensure that no damage is done to the archaeological value of the land, including earthworks.
6. Minimising any ground disturbance through the use of suitable tools and by reinstating any excavated material as neatly as possible. Endeavour not to damage stratified archaeological deposits.
7. Recording findspots as accurately as possible for all finds (i.e. to at least a 100m<sup>2</sup>, using an Ordnance Survey map or hand-held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) device) whilst in the field. Bag finds individually and record the National Grid Reference (NGR) on the bag. Findspot information should not be passed on to other parties without the agreement of the landowner/occupier (see also clause 9).
8. Respecting the Country Code (leave gates and property as you find them and do not damage crops, frighten animals or disturb ground nesting birds, and dispose properly of litter, see: [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk)).

#### After you have been metal-detecting:

9. Reporting any finds to the relevant landowner/occupier; and (with the agreement of the landowner/occupier) to the Portable Antiquities Scheme, so the information can pass into the local Historic Environment Record. Both the Country Land and Business Association ([www.cla.org.uk](http://www.cla.org.uk)) and the National Farmers Union ([www.nfuonline.com](http://www.nfuonline.com)) support the reporting of finds. Details of your local Finds Liaison Officer can be found at [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk), email [info@finds.org.uk](mailto:info@finds.org.uk) or telephone +44 (0)20 7323 8611.
10. Abiding by the provisions of the Treasure Act and Treasure Act Code of Practice ([www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)), wreck law ([www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk)) and export licensing ([www.mla.gov.uk](http://www.mla.gov.uk)). If you need advice your local Finds Liaison Officer will be able to help you.
11. Seeking expert help if you discover something large below the ploughsoil, or a concentration of finds or unusual material, or wreck remains, and ensuring that the landowner/occupier's permission is obtained to do so. Your local Finds Liaison Officer may be able to help or will be able to advise of an appropriate person. Reporting the find does not change your rights of discovery, but will result in far more archaeological evidence being discovered.
12. Calling the Police, and notifying the landowner/occupier, if you find any traces of human remains.
13. Calling the Police or HM Coastguard, and notifying the landowner/occupier, if you find anything that may be a live explosive: do not use a metal-detector or mobile phone nearby as this might trigger an explosion. Do not attempt to move or interfere with any such explosives.