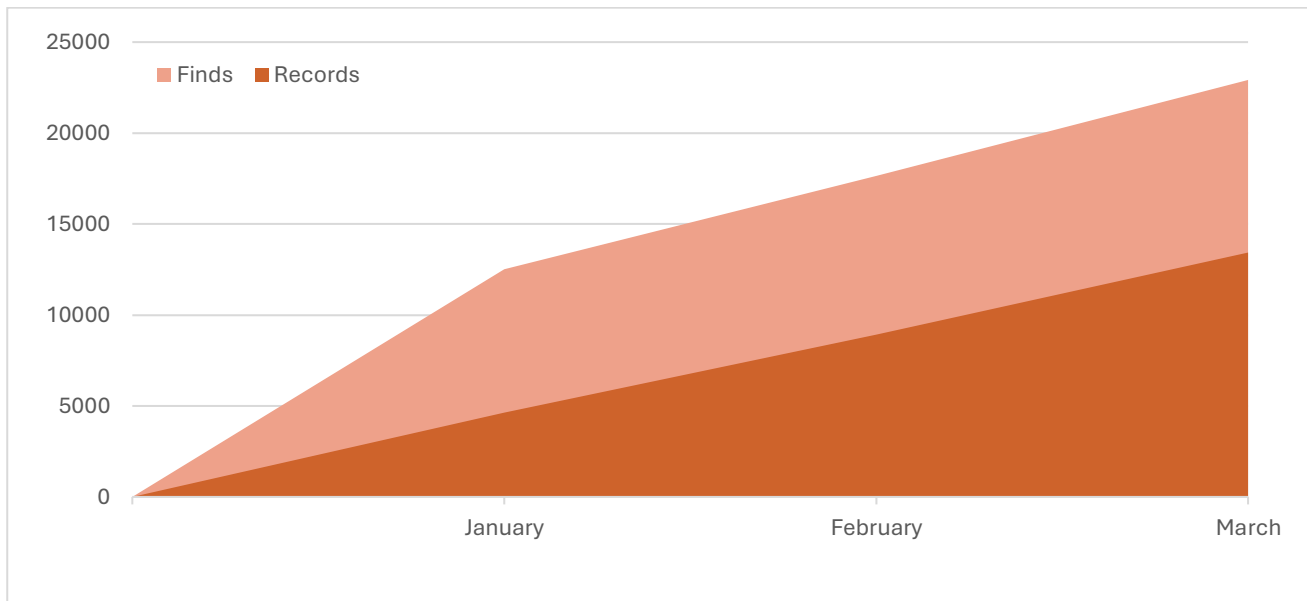


Portable Antiquities Scheme update **March 2025**

Welcome to the monthly update for March. Much has been happening at the British Museum and across the country, so this update is by no means comprehensive, but hopefully, it will give you a flavour of the Scheme's work over the last month.

Finds recording

This month, **5043 individual finds** (within 4273 records) were added to the [PAS Database](#) by FLOs, FLAs, interns and volunteers, including detectorist self-recorders, bringing the total on the database to 1,801,338 finds within 1,164,361 records. **167 Treasure cases** were also reported in March, bringing the year's total (so far) to 405! PUBLIC self-recorders logged 243 finds.



Graph: Number of finds and finds records added (so far) to the PAS Database in 2025.

The main object types recorded this month were coins (1781), brooches (256) and buckles (247) again! Most items were Post-Medieval (1314), followed by Medieval (1296) and Roman (1281) finds. Finds made of copper-alloy (2613) and silver (990) were most common.

Melsonby

This month, Historic England, Durham University and the British Museum announced the discovery of the Melsonby Hoard, one of the UK's largest and most important Iron Age finds - including the remains of several vehicles and associated objects. Initial assessment suggests the objects were buried in the first century AD, around the time of the Roman conquest of southern Britain. Discovered in December 2021 by metal-detectorist Peter Heads, it was excavated in 2022 by a team of archaeologists from Durham University, with advice from the British Museum and over £120,000 in grant funding from Historic England. Realising the objects appeared to be ancient items that might qualify as Treasure, Peter immediately contacted Prof Tom Moore, Durham University, and his local Portable Antiquities Scheme FLOs. Now that the find has been declared Treasure, the Yorkshire Museum has launched a [fundraising campaign](#) to secure the hoard for the nation.

The quantity and variety of objects are unusual for Iron Age Britain and have important implications for reassessing our understanding of the nature and use of vehicles at the time. The find could lead to a significant re-evaluation of how wealth and status were expressed. Vehicle components, for which it is hard to find parallels in Britain, include the partial remains of more than seven four-wheeled wagons and/or two-wheeled chariots. The find also includes elaborate harnesses for at least 14 ponies, three ceremonial spears and two ornate cauldrons or vessels - one lidded and likely used as a wine mixing bowl, which had been buried at the bottom of a large ditch. Some harness pieces are adorned with

red, Mediterranean coral and coloured glass and are larger than is typical for the period. While some of the objects match examples previously found in Britain, for others, the best parallels are found in continental Europe, suggesting long-distance connections and shared technology at the time.

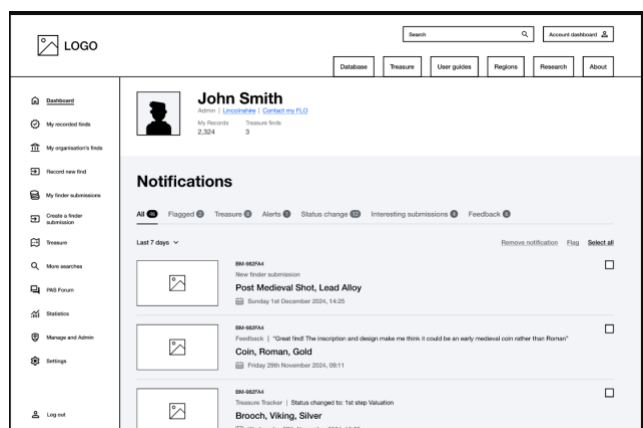


Dr Sophia Adams (Curator, British Museum) and Dr Keith Emerick (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England) studying some of the objects found as part of the Melsonby Hoard.

PAS Database Update

Prototypes of the new PAS website have been finalised. Numiko (the developer) and the British Museum project team would like to thank everyone (including many detectorists) who gave feedback. We have now moved on to production designs, which are well underway. These should be finalised by mid-April, and we will be very excited to share them! The new website/data will have features that we think will increase community engagement with the platform, such as a new ‘user dashboard’ providing them with personalised notifications and all the user-specific actionable functionality in one place. The database will also allow finders to submit basic details of their finds, creating an online personal repository of their finds that they can share with the public and FLOs/PAS. In some instances, where finds are particularly interesting, these ‘finder submissions’ will form the basis for complete PAS records. Otherwise, they will be available (if finders wish) alongside PAS data. We think this will help the PAS record more finds, especially those that are very common but still of archaeological interest. We also hope it will help us focus our resources. There will also be an ability to track Treasure cases end to end. We have started the first steps of developing the finder submission functionality and have made very good progress with the backend that supports this, focusing mainly on the findspot recording and image uploading features.

Wireframe (basic visualisation) of the new users’ dashboard, showing some submitted finds.



Sensing Culture

Michael Lewis (Head, PAS) and Isabelle Diggle (Kent FLO) met with 'Sensing Culture' at the Beane House of Art and Knowledge, Canterbury. Sensing Culture, led by artist Wendy Daws and Beane Health and Wellbeing Programme Coordinator Leanne Macdonald, provides monthly creative workshops for adults with sight loss. These aim to give attendees an opportunity to socialise and create artworks inspired by the museum's collection. This time, the focus was archaeological finds made by the public and recorded with the PAS. After talks by Michael and Isabelle on the work of the PAS and its FLOs, attendees handled finds - the most exciting part! This included prehistoric flintwork, Roman and Anglo-Saxon brooches, medieval coins and more modern items, like crotal bells, some with active ringers. Then, everyone had a go at creative responses to the items they had handled. Metal scribes were used to draw the objects using embossing film placed on gel mats. Also, designs were drawn on Swell Touch paper using special black pens. When the drawings are passed through a Zychem heater, the heat causes them to swell. Both techniques give texture to the illustrations.



Find of the Month

My find of the month is a copper-alloy medieval jetton – really (!) I hear some of you say... but it shows that it is worth checking out what might seem reasonably mundane finds. This example was found by Sean O'Bryne whilst detecting at Shiplake, Oxfordshire ([OXON-2B30DB](#)), and recorded with Ed Caswell (Oxfordshire FLO); thanks to Simon Maslin (Surrey FLO) for help with the identification. It is a French jetton dating to 1250-1325. While similar to published examples, it has a notably different reverse - making it a 'find of note'. The obverse (on the right) shows the royal arms of France bearing six lis arranged 3-2-1, surrounded by a beaded border. The reverse (on the left) has a cross patty fleuretty with a single rosette in each angle, surrounded by a beaded border. Then there is the 'inscription' of a rosette between two l's, repeating in each quarter. Then, around this is another beaded border.



Contacting the PAS

Please use the details below to contact me to discuss any aspect of the PAS's work. Please note that the PAS is a partnership project with Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) and other staff (in England) employed locally. So, in most cases, it is best to [contact the local FLO](#) or their manager.

Michael Lewis

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