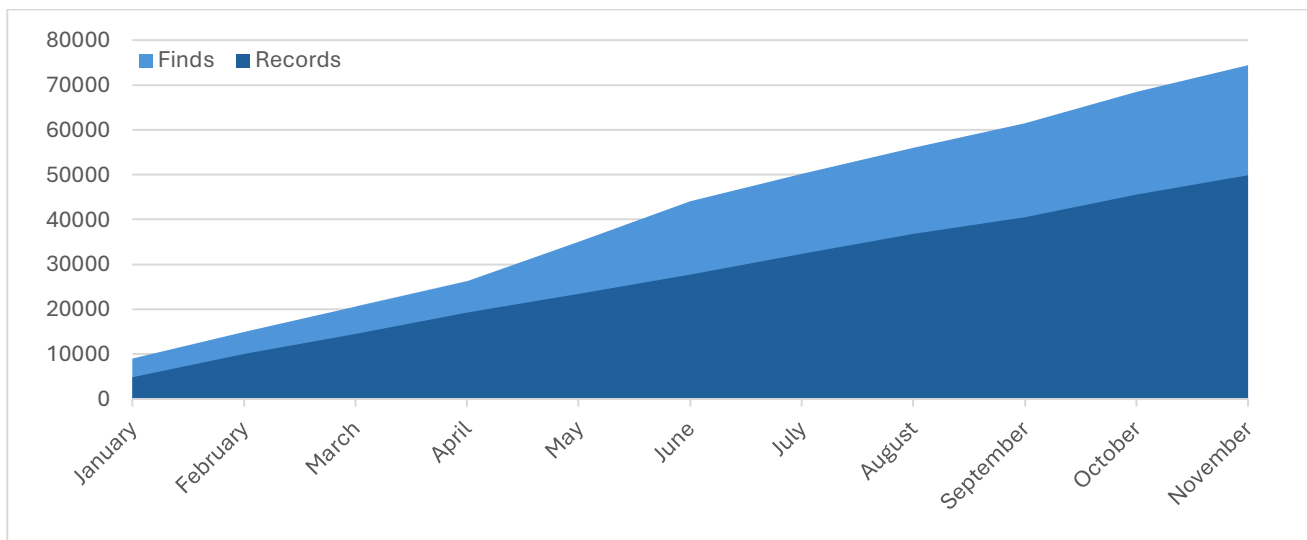


## Portable Antiquities Scheme update **November 2024**

To keep everyone in the detecting community as informed as possible, I will provide a monthly update on PAS happenings from a PAS Central Unit (British Museum) perspective. Please note that this is not a comprehensive report on all PAS work across England. Lots is happening locally...

### Finds recording

In November 2024, **5,758 finds** (within 4,295 records) were added to the [PAS Database](#), bringing the total for the year so far to 74,464 items (49,801 records). The database now holds 1,772,294 items, all added by PAS staff, their assistants, interns, and volunteers, including detectorist self-recorders. Many thanks to all the **4,039 finders** who have recorded finds so far this year. A further **139 treasure finds** were reported in November 2024, bringing the total for the year to **1,322**.



Graph: The cumulative total of records and finds recorded with the PAS in 2024 (74464 finds to date).

This month, we are keen to highlight the invaluable work our Finds Liaison Assistants (FLAs) and Interns do for the Scheme. In November, they recorded **1,203 finds** in **707 records**. Finds recording is just one of the tasks FLAs and Interns do to support the local FLO. They also write Treasure reports and assist with Finds Days, as well as produce temporary displays in local museums to highlight the work of the PAS. Pictured here are the FLAs and Interns in the North of England.



Left to right: Henry Morris, Worshipful Art Scholars Intern for the North East, sorting through a Bronze Age hoard from Durham. George Charnley-Shaw, FLA for South & West Yorkshire, conducting a finds surgery. Adam Rivett, FLA for North & East Yorkshire curating a display 'Detecting Yorkshire's Past' at the Yorkshire Museum'.

The main **object types** recorded this month were coins (1,703), brooches (283), buckles (241), vessels - mainly parts thereof (174) and tokens (144). Most items were Roman (1,432), followed by Medieval (1,224), Post-Medieval (1,124) and Early Medieval (160). 2,519 items were copper alloy.

### **Bring Out Your Lead - a special day for Norfolk detectorists**

The PAS in Norfolk (Norfolk County Council) teamed up with two University of Reading projects - [MeRit](#) (Medieval Ritual Landscape) and [REMADE](#) (Roman and Early Medieval Alloys Defined) - to identify, record and scientifically analyse medieval metal-detecting finds made of lead alloys. The collaboration stemmed from MeRit's interest in Norfolk as a case study area and in religious finds from south of King's Lynn in particular, as well as ongoing work to publish Lynn Museum's pilgrim badge collection. The 'bring out your lead' recording day took place on Sunday 24 November in Marriott's Warehouse, one of the best surviving Hanseatic buildings in King's Lynn. The aim of the day was to record medieval lead finds and analyse them using XRF (non-destructive analysis of metal composition), which might be useful for understanding how religious objects were made and circulated. The response from the detecting community was fantastic, particularly from members of the [King's Lynn Metal Detecting Club](#), as well as finders from as far away as Norwich and Downham Market. The PAS/MeRit team saw several hundred finds, of which over 50 were chosen for full or further recording and XRF-ing by REMADE, a project focused on studying metal alloys. These finds included ampullae, papal bullae and seal matrices. Most were made of pure lead, though there were some surprises, including a tin ampulla. In due course, these XRF results will be added to the PAS records so they can be shared with the finders and the wider public.



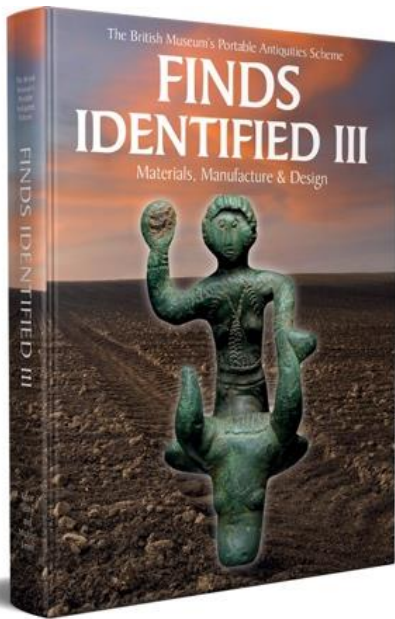
*The 'bring out your lead' finds recording day at Marriott's Warehouse, King's Lynn*

The following day, the MeRit and REMADE team ventured to Lynn Museum. The principal aim was to finish photographing medieval badges in the museum's collection, but it also offered an opportunity to XRF these objects and some others of cult centres that had already been photographed. Many of the badges have been identified with local cults, notably Our Lady of Walsingham. However, it is not known whether other badges, notably of the Annunciation (when Gabriel came to Mary), were also made at Walsingham. Here, perhaps science could help! Some 45 objects were photographed, and 65 were XRF-ed. Initial results confirm what many assume, that is, medieval badges (in general) have a eutectic mix of alloys (i.e. a special ratio of lead and tin that enables casting), whereas other objects are mostly unalloyed metals. Intriguingly, some badges from similar moulds used different recipes.

### **Finds Identified III**

Just in time for Christmas, the third in the 'Finds Identified' series has been published - *Finds Identified III: materials, manufacture and design (500,000 BC - AD 410)*. [Greenlight](#), the publisher, says: 'The long-awaited third book in the series features finds recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme to show how objects changed and developed over 500,000 years. The PAS is uniquely placed to tell this fascinating story of human ingenuity, starting with flint implements through to the end of the Roman period'. In this book, 'we look at the changes that took place as new materials, particularly metals, were introduced - their properties, the challenges they posed and how these were

overcome. These materials called for new processes and designs which are shown and discussed as each appeared. The many supporting illustrations put the finds in context, reflecting the cultures that produced them. This book presents finds in a fresh way, adding to our appreciation of them'.



Already detectorists have been saying some great things about FI3, which is lovely to see: “Beautifully presented and highly informative, this is another superb reference book”, “I love this book it’s an absolute must for any detectorist”, “A must have for any metal detectorist or those interested in archaeology”, “can’t wait to read it cover to cover...” (all Amazon reviews). The book is 300+ pages, has 1,200 photographs and costs £32.95, of which royalties support the work of the PAS.

*Finds Identified IV* is already in press and will cover the later period, through the Early Medieval, Medieval, and Post-Medieval periods, with a greater focus on design and decoration.

### Find of the Month

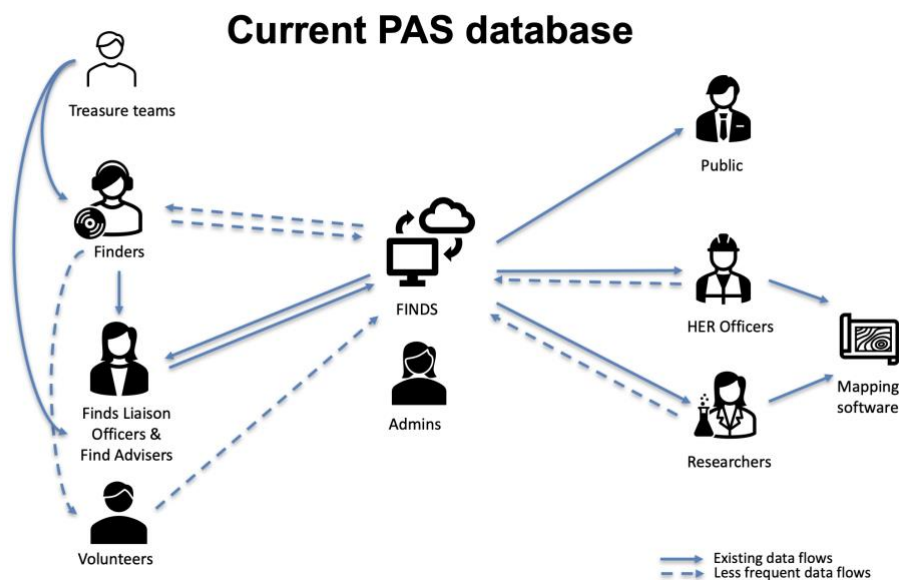
For November’s find of the month, I have chosen a complete Late Bronze Age copper-alloy socketed hammer, dating to c. 950-750 BC. It was found by Jobe Burnham at Loddington, Leicestershire ([LEIC-05A837](#)) and recorded with Megan Gard (Leicestershire & Rutland FLO). Socketed hammers are rare finds, especially when compared to socketed axeheads. Less than 65 socketed hammers have been recorded with the PAS, and this is the first to be recorded from Leicestershire and recorded. It was once thought that this form of hammer might be Middle Bronze Age, but that has been reconsidered on the basis that they are more common in Late Bronze Age hoards.





## PAS Database Development

The big news of the month is that work has begun on the new PAS Website and Database, thanks to funding from the Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). The main aims of this project are to: 1) overhaul the database software (much of it is about 20 years old), 2) improve the user experience of the PAS website and 'finds' database (ditto), 3) better meet the research needs of users, so that they can more easily search the database and have results presented in a more useful way, 4) implement a 'treasure tracking system', so that it is possible for finders/landowners etc to follow their treasure cases, 5) make it easier to record finds, including the ability for finders to better contribute to the PAS, so democratise the recording of public finds through citizen science. After a long and thorough procurement process, [Numiko](#) has been chosen to develop the PAS applications. They have a track record of working with the heritage sector and rebuilding their digital technology. This includes the British Museum [website](#) and [Collections Online](#). Numiko has already begun work on the 'discovery stage' (finding out what people need from the PAS website and database), including workshops with finders, PAS staff and researchers, amongst others. More sessions are planned over the next few months, building on work that was also done several years ago. The new database will be built (and - hopefully - launched) in the second half of 2025.



Word from Numiko: “We are very excited to be working on designing and building a new application for the Portable Antiquities Scheme. We spent a lot of time gaining an understanding of the current site and its myriad processes when writing our proposal. Over the last few weeks, we have deepened that knowledge by speaking directly to all types of users during the ‘Discovery’ phase of the project. This is where we uncover the detail of how different user groups use the site – what is working, what needs improving and how we can use this user-based evidence to design a new site. One which meets a variety of users’ needs and helps them to work in a more efficient and satisfactory way. We will be involving users at each stage of the production process to gain their input, from the new information architecture through to new designs and interactive prototypes, and we’ll post updates as we move through production”.

## Contacting the PAS

Please use the details below to contact me if you wish to discuss any aspect of the PAS's work. 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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