The Portable Antiquities Scheme –

https://finds.org.uk/

Since 1997 the scheme has recorded over 1.5million finds and over 17,000 Treasure finds!!

Introduction and background

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) is a partnership project to record archaeological finds discovered by the public, to advance knowledge, tell the stories of past communities, and encourage public involvement in archaeology. Every year thousands of archaeological objects are discovered by members of the public; people walking, gardening or using a metal-detector. Their discoveries help us build a bigger, better picture of the past.

The work of the PAS is transforming our understanding of the archaeology and history of England and Wales. Since 1997, the Scheme has recorded over 1.5 million finds on its online database, most of which would not otherwise have been.

Through the PAS, local museums are presented with a unique opportunity to acquire some of the objects which are recorded. This allows museum collection to be continually enhanced providing the public with the opportunity to enjoy, learn about and be inspired by their local history.

What types of finds would we like to record?

We record all human-made archaeological objects over 300 years old regardless of what material they are made from. This includes metalwork, pottery and worked flints and stones. We may be selective in recording finds of later date and best to speak with your local FLO if you're unsure whether your find can be recorded.

What happens to the finds and the data?

We like to borrow finds so that full and accurate records can be made, including photographs, weights and measurements. The information we gather is recorded on the

Portable Antiquities Scheme database where it is available to researchers and the general public. Sensitive information such as personal details and precise find spots are not made publicly available on the website. The finds will then be returned to the finder along with a copy of the report and photographs. Searching the PAS database is a great way to get to know the archaeology of your area.

What is Treasure?

Finders are required by law to report any finds defined as 'Treasure' under the Treasure Act 1996. The Act was passed after years of consultation with detectorists and archaeologists. It replaced Treasure Trove, which has existed in English Law for at least 1000 years.

In order for an object to be considered Treasure it needs to meet one of the following criteria:

- Any object over 300 years old and made from more than 10% gold or silver by weight
- Two or more gold or silver coins found together (hoards)
- Ten or more copper alloy (bronze) coins found together (hoards)
- Groups of prehistoric base metal objects (hoards)
- Any prehistoric objects (Bronze Age or Iron Age) with any amount of gold or silver
- Anything that would have qualified as Treasure Trove
- Any items found in association with objects which are Treasure.

Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) report objects to the Coroner who decides if an object is legally Treasure. FLOs liaise with the finders, landowners, the British Museum (which oversees the process) and local museums who may wish to acquire the objects.

Searching the database

There are many ways that you can search the database to find out more about your local area. Whilst it won't be possible to cover them all in this handout, here are some tips to help you with your search:

Finds Recording Guides

https://finds.org.uk/counties/findsrecordingguides/

The Finds Recording Guides can be found on the County Pages or a link under the 'Guides' tab on the website.

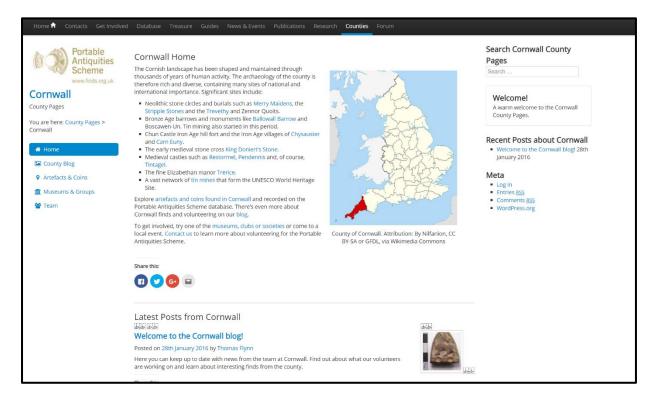Here you can search by A-Z of images, use and function and guides by time period.

These guides are a fantastic way of searching our database if you have any particular interest areas or just want to see what kind of finds that we record. Clicking on an object will give you a bit more information about it, how we record them and should link you to some examples on the database.
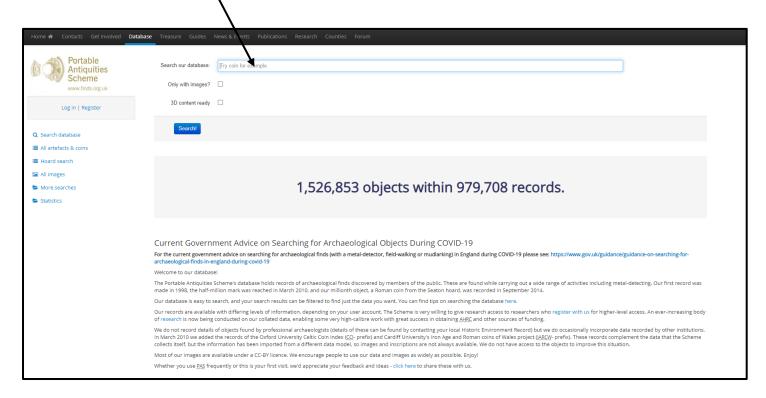
County Pages

https://finds.org.uk/counties/

Here you can keep up to date with events, outreach, blogs and recent finds from your County. As I mentioned in the talk, the page for Cornwall is in early stages but hopefully soon there will be lots of information for you to look at and keep up to date with the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Cornwall and other areas across England and Wales.

General Search

Under the Database tab, you can do a general search of all artefacts and coins using the database search bar:

This link will take you to some tips on searching the database, although it can be quite confusing so I will include some basic points below.

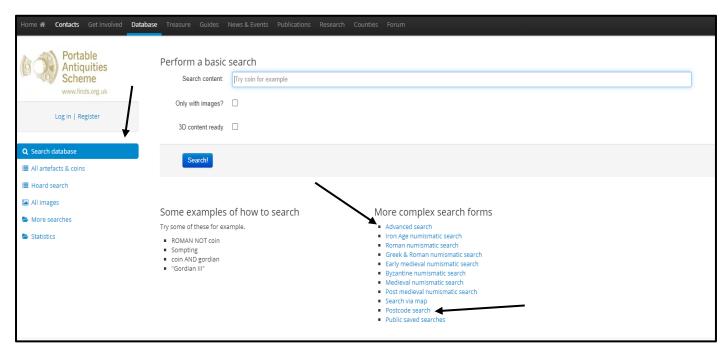https://finds.org.uk/help/database/topic/id/15

When searching all artefacts and coins, you can filter on the right-hand side searches by period, county, object type, material etc. I would suggest turning on the button at the top that says 'only result with images', as this will help you filter down search results.

Have a play!

One of the best ways to get to know the database is just to have a play around with the different search and filter options.

If there is anything specific you are looking for and cannot find then don't hesitate to send me an email.

Advanced search

You can also use the advance search by clicking 'Searching our database' on the left hand side tab. This will bring up the option to do more advance searches such as postcode, by map and numismatic information. If you click 'Advanced Search', this will bring up the option to search by different fields that we enter onto a record.

To search by Parish, scroll down to Spatial Details, enter the County, European region, and District (Cornwall should automatically come up when entered in County). Putting in this information will then bring up a list of Parishes and you can select which one you wish to search by. Hitting 'Filter' at the bottom should bring up a list of artefacts found in that Parish.

You can search by Postcode by selecting 'Postcode search', or an area on a map by clicking 'Search by map'.

Workflow status

Green flagged records mean that these records have been verified by a Finds Advisor for that period and are records that won't change. Orange flagged records are 'Awaiting Validation' and need to be checked by a Finds Advisor but they are unlikely to change. You won't be able to see red flagged records under public access but that means they still need editing or information adding and are not ready to go public.

Contact Details

If you have any questions about the Scheme or any finds to report, feel free to contact me. I am more than happy to help with any queries.

Email: finds@museumofcornishlife.co.uk

Twitter: @CornwallFinds

Facebook: Cornwall Portable Antiquities Scheme