

# Splendid Tudor jewel amongst important Treasure finds reported

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- The British Museum announces the discovery of **an important jewel (chain with pendant) associated with Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon** (Henry's first wife), reported Treasure via the Portable Antiquities Scheme.
- Over **45,000 archaeological** items were recorded in 2021 including over **1,000 Treasure** finds, including a silver medieval strap-end from Hampshire, also revealed to the public for the first time.

Today at the British Museum, Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, launched the **Treasure Annual Report for 2020** and the **Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) Annual Report for 2021**. These show that **45,581** archaeological finds were recorded, including **1,085** Treasure cases, highlighting the massive contribution that members of the public are making to archaeological knowledge. Most of these finds (96%) have been found by people metal-detecting, where most of the finds are made on cultivated land.

The counties recording the most PAS finds in 2021 were Gloucestershire (8,113), Suffolk (4,676) and Lincolnshire (4,247), with significant numbers also recorded in Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Kent, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, and North Yorkshire. For the same year, the areas where most Treasure was reported were Norfolk (85), Kent (74), Lincolnshire and Wiltshire (both 68).

These reports outline the work of the PAS in England and Wales, and the success of the Treasure Act 1996 across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Featured at the launch of the annual reports was a remarkable gold **pendant on chain linked by its imagery to Henry VIII and his first wife Katherine of Aragon** (m. 1509-33). The object is formed of a heart-shaped pendant with enamelled motifs, link, enamelled suspension

link in the form of a hand, and a chain made up of 75 links. The front of the pendant is decorated with an entwined 'Tudor rose' and pomegranate bush, with the legend + TOVS + IORS (a pun on the French for 'always') below; the double-headed white and red rose was used by the Tudors from 1486, and the pomegranate was the badge of Katherine of Aragon. The reverse shows the letters H and K (for Henry and Katherine), in Lombardic script, linked by ribbon, again with the legend + TOVS + IORS. The object was found in Warwickshire by Charlie Clarke while metal-detecting and is likely to be acquired by a museum. For more details on the item see the PAS database record [WMID-A51F34](#).

Also highlighted was a **medieval silver strap-end**, of interest since it shows a fabulous beast on either side, akin to such animals in medieval manuscripts. On one side is depicted a bird-like animal with long neck and human face, with the other side showing a dog-like animal. Such objects would have adorned the ends of medieval belts (protecting the leather or textile strap), but this one is particularly special since it is ornately decorated, perhaps belonging to someone of some status, such as a merchant. The object dates to the 14th century and was found in Hampshire by Barry Cole while metal-detecting. It is hoped the object will be acquired by Hampshire Cultural Trust. For more details on the item see the PAS database record [HAMP-120BDA](#).

**Hartwig Fischer, Director of the British Museum**, said: "The British Museum is proud of its role running the Portable Antiquities Scheme and overseeing the administration of the Treasure Act 1996 in England. It is fantastic that in 2021 so many finds have been recorded and that many of the most important have been acquired by museums for public benefit, so they can be seen and enjoyed by people across the whole of the country."

**Arts & Heritage Minister, Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay**, said: "It is wonderful to see archaeology and metal-detecting across the country thriving – helping to uncover treasures which deepen our understanding of our shared national history. Supported by the success of the Treasure Act, it means that hundreds of wonderful discoveries are now in museums across the UK where they can be enjoyed by everyone."

**Michael Lewis, Head of PAS and Treasure at the British Museum**, said: "The finds recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme have been found by everyday people (not archaeologists), mostly by those enjoying their hobby of metal-detecting. These finds, if recorded, are making a massive contribution to archaeology and (as in the case of the Henry and Katherine pendant) helping to transform our knowledge of Britain's past."

**Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive of Historic England**, said: "I'm delighted that Historic England was able to support with archaeological investigations of the pendant site. This beautiful pendant is a thrilling discovery giving us a tangible connection to Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon and enriches our understanding of the Royal Court at the time."

## **PAS at the British Museum**

The Portable Antiquities Scheme database [finds.org.uk/database](https://finds.org.uk/database) holds information on over 1,608,000 items all freely accessible to the public. Most of these finds were found by metal-detectorists - 96% in 2021. The British Museum supports a responsible approach to searching for finds as outlined in the *Code of Practice for Responsible Metal-detecting in England and Wales* that helps protect archaeology and advance our knowledge of the past.

The PAS records archaeological finds discovered by the public to advance knowledge, tell the stories of past communities and further public interest in the past. It is a partnership project, managed by the British Museum in England and through Amgueddfa Cymru (Museum Wales) in Wales, working with almost 100 national and local organisations, and delivered through its network of locally based Finds Liaison Officers and supported by key staff at the British Museum and Amgueddfa Cymru, as well as the Welsh Archaeological Trusts, National Finds Advisers, Finds Liaison Assistants, interns and community volunteers.

The PAS report also outlines that in 2021:

- Finds made by 2,665 individuals were recorded
- 96% of finds were found on cultivated land, where they are susceptible to plough damage and artificial and natural corrosion processes
- 98% of PAS finds were recorded to the nearest 100m, the minimum requirement for findspot information for Historic Environment Records
- 872 research projects have used PAS data to date
- 381,021 unique visitors visited the PAS websites and database. Currently, there are at least 54,500 registered account users of the PAS database
- At least 760 outreach events took place, including talks and finds days, attended by over 16,000 people.

Recently the work of the PAS featured on *Great British History Hunters* (More4) and *Digging for Treasure – tonight* (Channel 5). *Detectorists* (BBC) also highlighted the work of the PAS.

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS)**

Managed by the British Museum (in England) and Amgueddfa Cymru (in Wales), the PAS is a partnership project, working with almost 100 national and local partners to deliver the Scheme's aims. It is funded (in England) through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's grant-in-aid to the

British Museum with local partner contributions. All the Finds Liaison Officers (in England) working for the PAS are employed locally but work as a national team directed by the British Museum.

Thousands of archaeological objects are discovered every year, many by members of the public, most by people while metal-detecting. If recorded, these finds have great potential to transform archaeological knowledge, helping archaeologists understand when, where and how people lived in the past. PAS ([www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)) offers the only proactive mechanism for recording such finds, which are made publicly available on its online database.

The PAS has also benefited from Internships funded by the Headley Trust, providing opportunities for people to develop a career in archaeology. Also, the Graham and Joanna Barker Fund, which has enabled extra support for the PAS in areas where resources are low. The PAS welcomes anyone interested in supporting its work locally to contact the British Museum.

Many organizations have also supported the acquisition of Treasure finds, including Art Fund, the Headley Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund. Without these, as well as public donations, many important archaeological finds would not be in public collections.

### **The Treasure Act 1996**

Under the Treasure Act ([www.finds.org.uk/treasure](http://www.finds.org.uk/treasure)) finders have a legal obligation to report all finds of potential Treasure to the local coroner in the district in which the find was made. The success of the Act is only possible through the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, advising finders of their legal obligations, providing advice on the process and writing reports for coroners on Treasure finds.

The Act allows a national or local museum to acquire Treasure finds for public benefit. If this happens a reward is paid, which is (normally) shared equally between the finder and landowner. Interested parties may wish to waive their right to a reward, enabling museums to acquire finds at reduced or no cost. Rewards are fixed at the full market value of the finds, determined by the Secretary of State upon the advice of an independent panel of experts, known as the Treasure Valuation Committee.

The administration of the Treasure process is undertaken at the British Museum. This work involves the preparation of Treasure cases for coroners' inquests, providing the secretariat for the Treasure Valuation Committee, and handling disclaimed cases and the payment of rewards.



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Images for press can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3R6vnrN>

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