

## Website Guidance

### North & East Yorkshire Emergency Excavation Protocol

#### **PAS North & East Yorkshire Policy for the discovery of potential Treasure, finds of archaeological significance or human remains during amateur surveys and metal detecting.**

Produced in consultation with City of York Council, North Yorkshire County Council, and East Riding of Yorkshire & Hull Historic Environment Record Offices.

Archaeological discoveries made during metal detecting can be of tremendous interest and can add to the recorded heritage of an area. However, if not undertaken in a responsible manner, there can be negative impacts from otherwise exciting discoveries.

#### **Aims**

The aim of this guidance is to encourage best practice and manage expectations in relation to the discovery of finds of archaeological significance or human remains during amateur surveys and metal detecting. It also aims to ensure a united approach to such discoveries across North & East Yorkshire for the benefit of archaeological knowledge.

#### **Before you go metal-detecting or conduct a survey**

- Ensure you have read the [Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting 2017](#).
- Be aware of current Treasure legislation and procedures [The Treasure Act \(finds.org.uk\)](#).
- Obtain landowner permission; all land (including parks, public open-spaces, beaches, and foreshores has an owner. An occupier (such as a tenant farmer) can only grant permission with the agreement of the landowner.
- Obey the law concerning protected sites such as Scheduled Monuments, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and military crash sites.
- Be aware of other restriction to metal-detecting such as land under Countryside Stewardship or other agri-environment schemes. You can obtain details of these sites from several sources, including:
  - local Finds Liaison Officer: [Scheme contacts \(finds.org.uk\)](#)
  - local Historic Environment Record: [HeritageGateway - Historic Environment Records](#)
  - the National Heritage List for England: [Search the List - Find listed buildings, monuments, battlefields and more | Historic England](#)
  - Magic Maps: [MAGIC \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)

#### **Potential Treasure or a site of archaeological interest**

If you believe you have uncovered **potential in situ Treasure** (e.g. hoards or prehistoric base metal assemblages) **or a site of archaeological interest** during an amateur archaeological survey, metal detecting event or rally, please follow the advice below.

- **Stop** all excavation immediately.
- **Do not** advertise your discovery on social media.

- If you make the discovery between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, please contact the Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer **OR** the relevant Historic Environment Record Office **OR** the British Museum Treasure Registrars by the means listed below.
- If the discovery is made outside of regular working hours contact should be made as soon after 9am on the following Monday as possible or a message left on the answerphone/e-mail sent. Finders will need to provide the following information:
  - Findspot details such as a minimum 8-figure National Grid Reference
  - Photographs of the site/discovery
  - The depth of the find
  - The type of land it is on (e.g. cultivated or pasture)
  - Confirmation that you have informed the landowner and any tenant farmers of the discovery
- Ensure you understand your legal requirements under the [Treasure Act 1996](#) and its [Code of Practice](#). Not adhering to this may lead to a reduction of any future reward for the discovery of potential Treasure.
- Whilst we are happy to advise, **neither the Historic Environment Record Offices nor the North and East Yorkshire Portable Antiquities Scheme have the resources to assist with the physical excavation of unexpected finds or potential Treasure.** Based on the information you provide we will make a recommendation for what we believe to be the best course of action.
- Each discovery will be assessed on a case by case basis.
- If archaeological intervention is advised, we recommend that you contact an archaeological unit to attend the site as soon as possible to professionally excavate the remainder of the potential Treasure and/or any associated archaeological deposits. Please be aware, this will incur a cost which we would recommend the finder/landowner pay for or contribute towards.
- We only recommend commissioning Registered Organisations with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: [Find a registered organisation | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists](#)
- In some cases, HERs may be able to part fund excavations, seek external funding, or refer to local amateur societies. Any potential funding and resource allocations to assist with excavations will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- In cases where archaeological intervention is sought all parties should be aware that this may take some time to organize. Finders/landowners should take steps to secure the site until intervention can take place.
- In some cases, preservation in situ may be advised.
- Failure to attempt to ensure the adequate excavation of potential Treasure may lead to a reduction of any future reward.

### **Case study examples**

If you are unsure whether or not you need to cease works and contact the PAS/HER, the following case studies may be of help.

1. You find a **single gold ring in the topsoil**. In such incidents, when you have found an isolated item within the topsoil or plough soil, you may retrieve the item but please ensure you note where you found it (preferably with a GPS, logging a minimum 8-figure National Grid Reference) and report it to your local Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) as soon as possible. Whilst the North and

East Yorkshire FLO will be happy to assist, if you live in a different county to where the find was made it is also acceptable to contact your local FLO.

2. You find **three isolated items of various material and use within the plough and top soil** across a large area. Ensure you note the location of each find and report to either the North and East Yorkshire FLO or your local FLO as soon as possible.
3. You find **two or three gold jewellery items within a relatively small area within the plough soil**. Whilst these objects are not within a stratified archaeological context, the quantity of finds may be suggestive of an archaeological site, such as a cemetery. In such cases we recommend ceasing works and contacting the HER/PAS to obtain advice.
4. You find a **hoard of silver coins**. Stop works and contact the HER/PAS for advice.
5. You find a **hoard of bronze axes within a deposit undisturbed by the plough**. Stop works and contact the HER/PAS for advice.

### Human remains

If you believe you have uncovered **archaeological human remains** during an amateur archaeological survey, metal detecting event or rally, please follow the advice below.

- **Stop all excavation immediately.** It is illegal to disturb human remains without a licence from the Ministry of Justice.
- Call the Police (101) or Coroner immediately.
- Notifying the landowner/occupier.
- Make the discovery site secure. **Do not advertise** your discovery on social media.
- If you make the discovery between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, please call the relevant Historic Environment Record Office immediately (see below for HER contacts). If you make the discovery out of these hours, please call at the next available opportunity. Neither the Historic Environment Record Offices nor the Portable Antiquities Scheme have the resources to provide cover outside of normal working hours.

### Contacts (2021)

- Portable Antiquities Scheme
  - Rebecca Griffiths, Finds Liaison Officer:
    - [Rebecca.griffiths@ymt.org.uk](mailto:Rebecca.griffiths@ymt.org.uk); 01904 687 668
- Portable Antiquities Scheme: Treasure Department
  - Treasure Registrars:
    - [treasure@britishmuseum.org](mailto:treasure@britishmuseum.org); 0207 323 8611
- City of York Council HER
  - Claire MacRae, City Archaeologist :
    - [archaeology@york.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@york.gov.uk); 01904 551402
- North Yorkshire County Council HER
  - Leonora Goldsmith, Historic Environment Record Officer:
    - [archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk); 01609 532331
  - Peter Rowe, Principal Archaeologist:
    - [archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk); 01609 532316
- East Riding of Yorkshire & Hull HER

- Victoria Bowns Senior Historic Environment Record Officer:
  - [archaeology@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@hullcc.gov.uk); 01482 612789

**Map of Local Authority Areas**

To ensure you contact the correct Historic Environment Record Office, check the map: [HeritageGateway - North Region](#)

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