

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A NATIONAL FINDS ADVISER FOR THE PAS

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I work for the Portable Antiquities Scheme as the Deputy Finds Adviser for Iron Age and Roman coins and part time as a Roman Finds Adviser. It's my job to help our national network of Finds Liaison Officers to identify and record all the tricky coins and artefacts brought in by metal detectorists to record and to emphasise their research potential. Every day working for the Scheme is different. The past couple of weeks have seen me give lectures at metal Detecting Clubs in Liverpool and the Wirral, attend a conference on Roman coins from Britain and record more than 1000 coins from new sites discovered throughout the country. This entry gives a snapshot of what I've been doing today.

9.15am: I arrive at work at the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum and spend the next half hour answering email queries from finders and Finds Liaison Officers. Answering queries is a major part of my role. Today, I've identified and referenced a couple of coins from the Isle of Wight, where the FLO, Frank Basford, works very hard with detectorists to record as many objects as possible. As a result, he has recorded more than 1500 Roman coins for the island which has totally changed our understanding of the Roman period there.

9.45am: I check in to the Finds Liaison Officers' Finds Forum and leave a couple of opinions on objects posted there. One of the FLOs wants to know where he can find examples of iron Roman brooches, whilst another queries whether an unusual wire feature on the foot of a Roman brooch is a repair or part of its decoration. I make a note to flick through some Roman catalogues later to try and find parallels. I post a map of the distribution of Roman knee brooches recorded by the PAS which I've been working on and it provokes some interesting discussion from FLOs...

10.20am: I start putting together a provisional object and image list for a display on 'Roman coins as religious offerings' which will form part of a new Money Gallery at the British museum. I want to use a combination of objects from the museum's collections and some reported through the PAS. I choose a selection of coins found in the River Thames at London Bridge, some cut and mutilated coins from a range of sites throughout the country and decide it would be a good idea to also have some artefacts too. I therefore email the curators in the Department of Prehistory and Europe to see whether they have any votive objects in their reserve collections which might be suitable. I'm hoping for a miniature object and a lead curse tablet!

1pm: Lunch and a bit of a rest!

2pm: I check up on my intern, Victoria, an MA student in Museum Studies from George Washington University. She's spent the summer recording coins on the PAS database and scanning accompanying images and has done an amazing job, entering more than 1000 over the past month. We get a lot of help from students and volunteers and I hope they get as much out of it as we do!

2.30pm: Back to the museum display. I've just found out I have to write the general display text to accompany my finds by Monday. It's only 80 words explaining the theme of my display but I think it's going to be a bit of a challenge.

3pm: Start recording part of a large assemblage of coins from a site in Wiltshire which looks like it might be a Roman temple site. Amongst the coins are about 20 pierced with iron nails – possible evidence of a ritual practice I aim to investigate in more detail later. I add these coins to my spreadsheet of 'mutilated coins' recorded by the PAS and will come back to them next week when I start writing an article on 'Cut and mutilated Roman coins recorded by the PAS'.

4pm: I start collecting together all the reference works and recording sheets that Victoria and I will need tomorrow. We're going to a Finds Day in Sussex as part of a team of FLOs and PAS Finds Advisers to record coins and objects. Getting out and about to let people know about the Scheme is really important. We're hoping to see some interesting finds and meet some new finders..