

Protocol

for the Reporting of Finds of Archaeological Interest



Welcome to the Marine Aggregate Industry Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries Site Induction

This pack introduces:

- The Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries
- The Archaeology of the Seabed
- Types of Archaeological Finds
- How to Report Archaeological Finds

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Archaeology is the study of human activity in the past.

Every aggregate area is investigated for archaeological remains before a licence to dredge is granted.

Before dredging can begin, charted archaeological sites like shipwrecks and aircraft are identified so that they can be avoided. This not only safeguards the archaeology, but stops contaminants entering the load, and prevents dredging gear being damaged by metal structures on the seabed. As many ship and aircraft wrecks contain unexploded ordnance, it also keeps crews away from known potential hazards.

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The Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries

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Despite the undertaking of initial investigation, not all sites and finds are recognised in pre-consent surveys, and archaeological material can still be found amongst dredge loads. The Protocol protects these.

The Protocol is a safety-net for archaeological finds discovered during dredging

When archaeological remains are discovered – whether it's found on the vessel or at the wharf – they should be reported. This pack explains what you might find and how to report archaeology.

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The Archaeology of the Seabed

There are three main ways that archaeology reaches the seabed:

- Submerged Prehistoric Landscapes
- Boats and Ships
- Aircraft

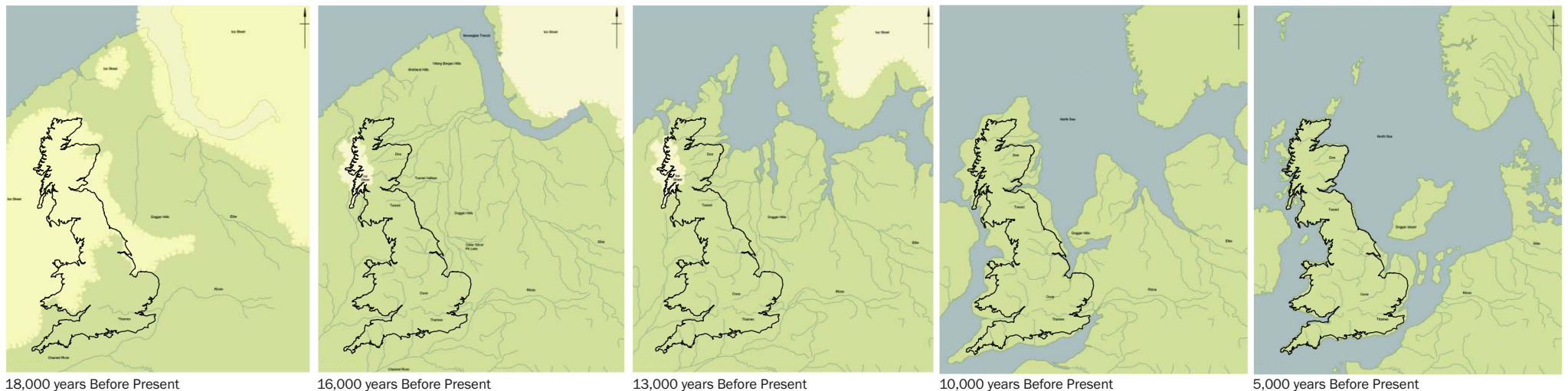
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Prehistoric Landscapes

During the last Ice Age areas of the North Sea and English Channel were dry land. As a result, archaeological evidence now lies beneath the waves. This time is called the Palaeolithic, which means Old Stone Age. Evidence from the Palaeolithic includes flint tools made by humans, and the bones and teeth of mammoth and other animals.



More details can be found on the [Prehistoric Finds handout](#)

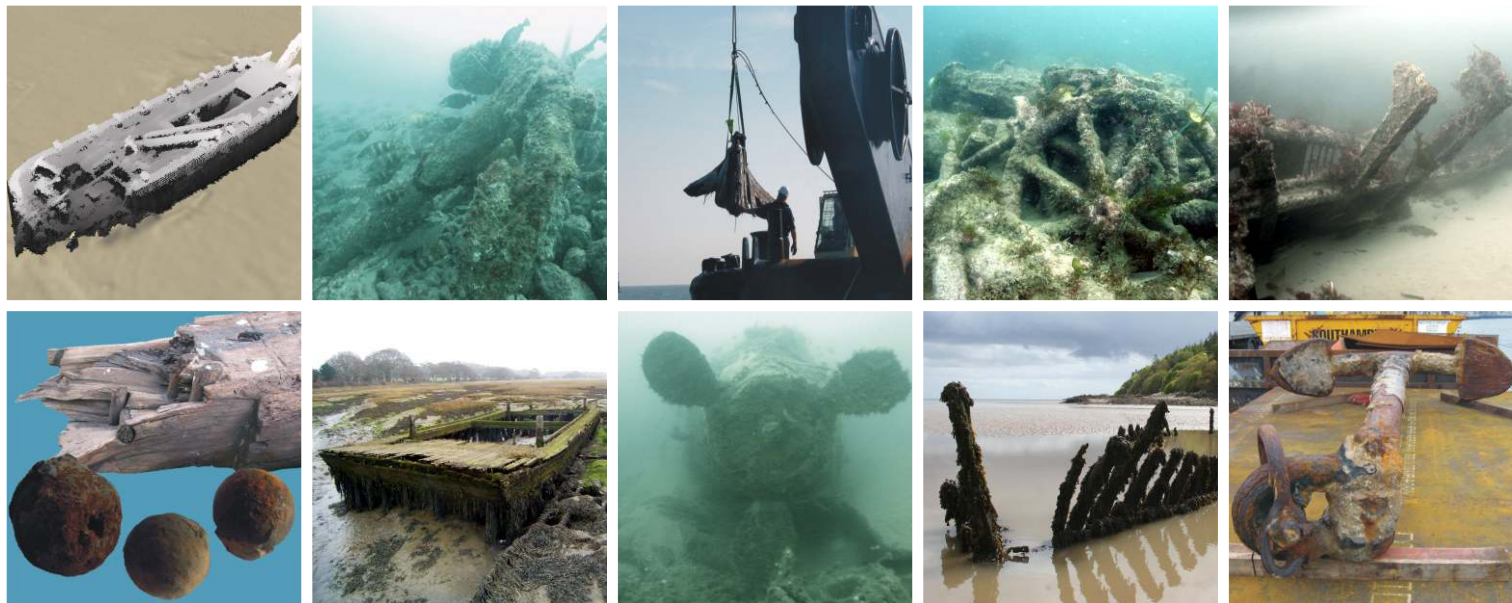
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Boats and Ships

People have been using watercraft for thousands of years, at least since the Mesolithic period (also known as the Middle Stone Age). Many of the finds that you encounter will have come from a boat or ship.



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Aircraft

Over the last 100 years, the invention, use and loss of aircraft, especially during the Second World War, has added another layer of heritage to our seabed. Aircraft crash sites are protected by the Protection of Military Remains Act (1986) and so any aircraft remains discovered during dredging should be reported through the Protocol immediately.



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for the Reporting of Finds of Archaeological Interest



Archaeological Finds

These are the types of finds you should look out for and report:

- Peat
- Flint Tools
- Bone
- Pottery
- Metal
- Wood
- Stone
- Ordnance*

* Company Health & Safety policies and established operational procedures should always take priority over archaeological reporting of munitions and ordnance

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for the Reporting of Finds of Archaeological Interest



Peat

Peat is a contaminant to aggregate loads but useful to archaeologists. Peat contains plant remains – pollen, seeds, partly decomposed plants – that can teach us what the environment and climate was like in the past, including during the last Ice Age. If you find peat, which is dark brown and fibrous, please keep a sample of it.



More details can be found on the **Prehistoric Finds handout**

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Flint Tools

These are the tools made by people in the past. They can be difficult to recognise – look for anything shaped or worked or with much of the rough chalky outer ‘cortex’ removed. If you think you have found something, but you’re not sure, send us a picture at protocol@wessexarch.co.uk. We can help.



More details can be found on the **Prehistoric Finds handout**

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Bone

You may find animal remains – either dating from the last Ice Age (mammoth teeth and large, robust bones are regularly found amongst dredged loads), or discarded more recently from a vessel. Some bones are also washed from the land into the sea.

You might also find human remains. Many people have been lost at sea with ships or aircraft. We can identify what species the bones come from when they are reported, and if they are human we will be able to advise on what to do next.



More details can be found on the **Prehistoric Finds handout**

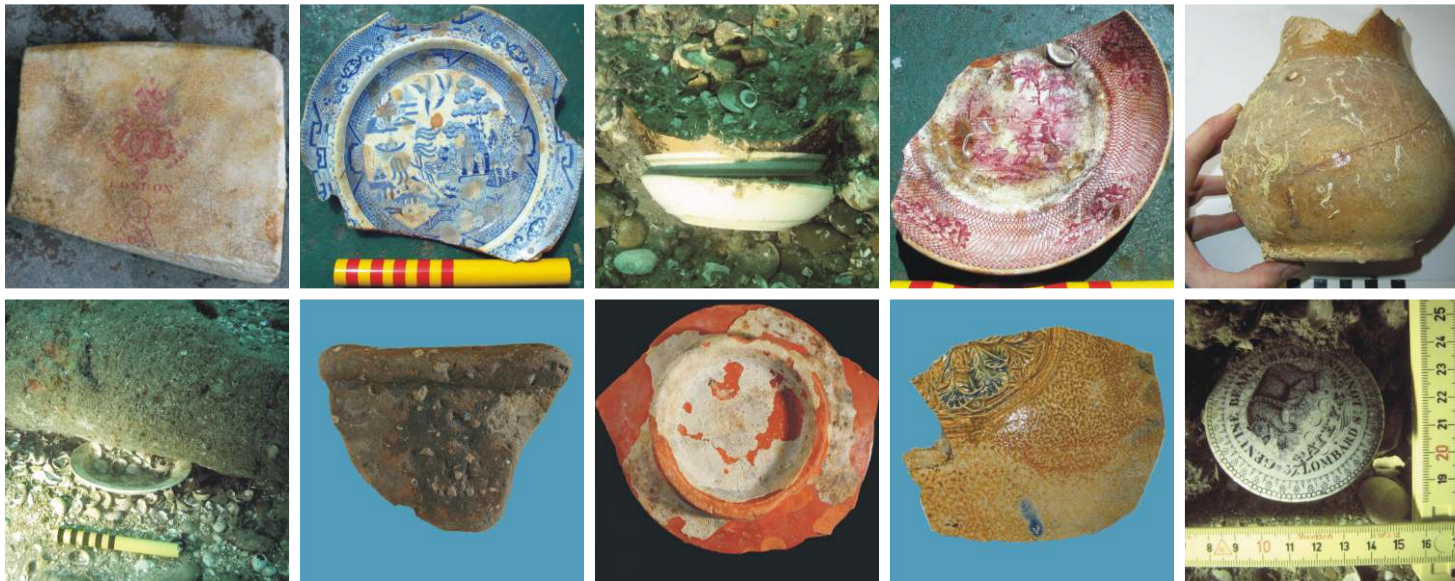
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Pottery

These are some of the most recognisable finds you may encounter. The oldest pottery reported through the Protocol so far was Roman and was almost 2,000 years old.



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Metal

These finds are commonly found on the magnet or metal detector during processing. They may have come from a boat or ship, or from an aircraft. They may also be unexploded ordnance so be aware and use the appropriate procedures. Your safety takes priority in every instance.



More details can be found on the **Concretions and Metalworks** handout

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Wood

Please report any dark, heavy wooden finds, especially if they have metal attached, or have any signs of having been shaped, worked or carved. They may be from a shipwreck.



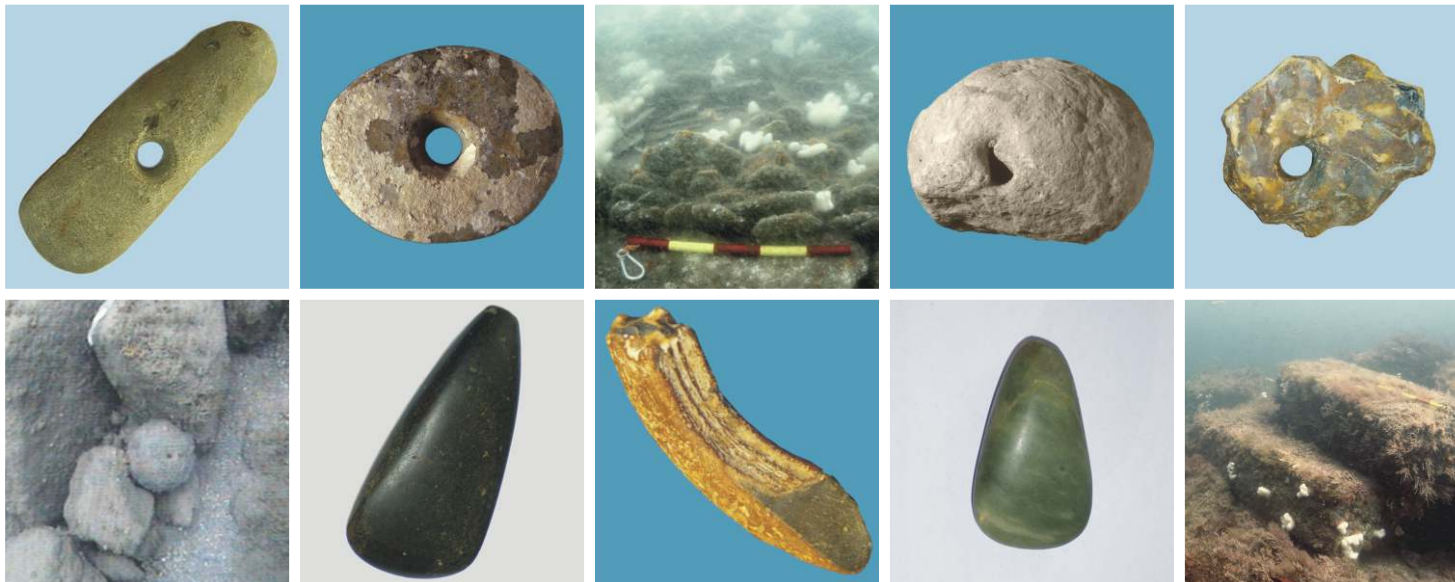
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Stone

Worked and shaped stone can be archaeological too. Several net weights – stones with clearly drilled holes – have been found and reported through the Protocol.



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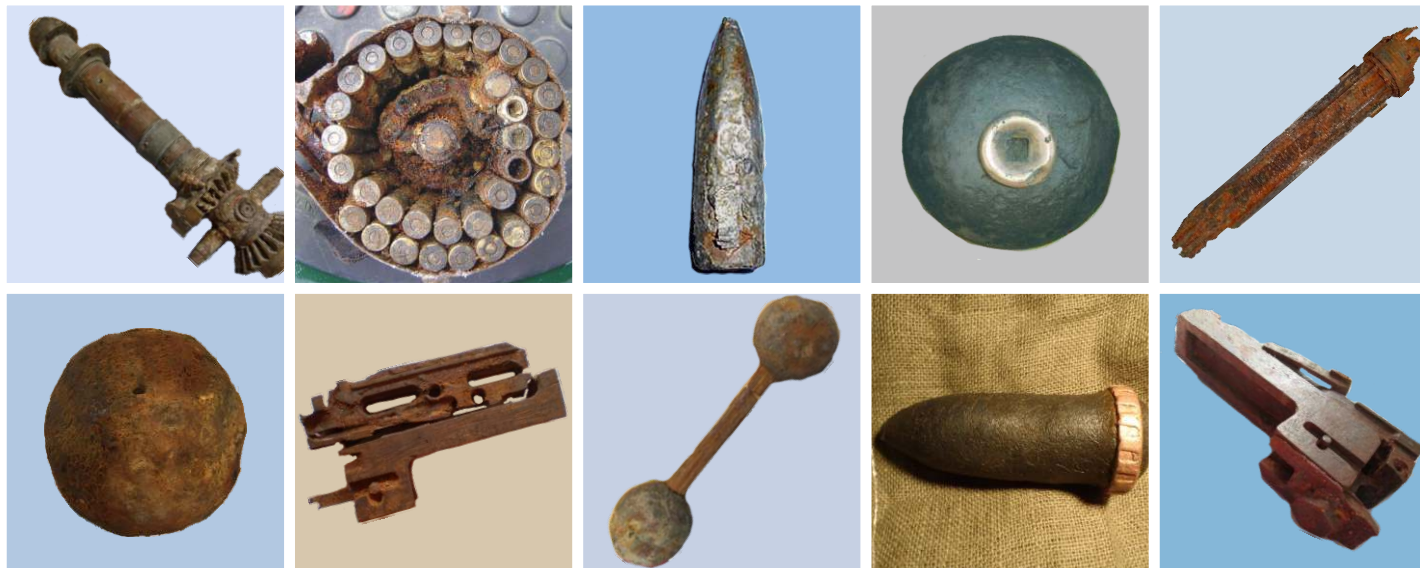
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Ordnance

Ordnance objects can enhance our understanding of naval and aerial warfare and are indicators of the types of weapons used in past conflicts. They may also indicate the presence of the remains of a vessel or aircraft.

Company Health & Safety policies and established operational procedures should always take priority over archaeological reporting



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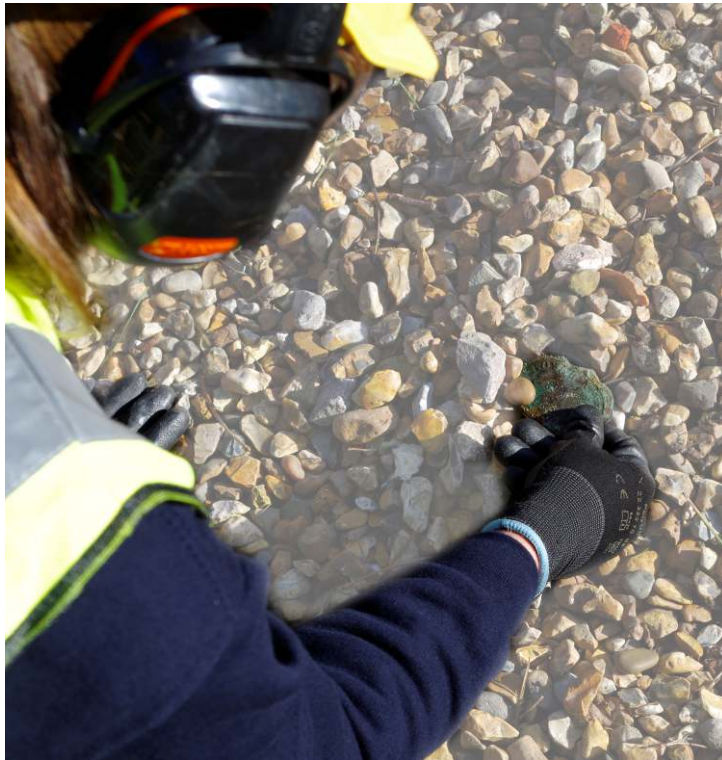


How to Report Archaeological Finds

- If you find something
- Preliminary Report
- Photographs and Measurements
- Looking after your Find
- What Happens Next
- Your Reports are Important
- Further Information

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If you find something:

- Inform your **Site Champion**
- Fill in a Preliminary Report
- Protect the find by keeping it **cool**, **wet** and **dark**. Label it clearly with your name, the date of dredging and the licence area

More details can be found on the **Reporting Process** [handout](#)

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for the Reporting of Finds of Archaeological Interest



Preliminary Report

This is available online or from your Site Champion. It records basic information about the find including:

- The licence area
- The date of dredging
- Your name (which will appear on reports)
- A description of the discovery
- How the find has been stored

If you are not sure which cargo the find was from (for example if it's found sometime after discharge or from a mixed cargo) you can still report it – just tell us as much as you can about it.



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for the Reporting of Finds of Archaeological Interest



Photographs and Measurements

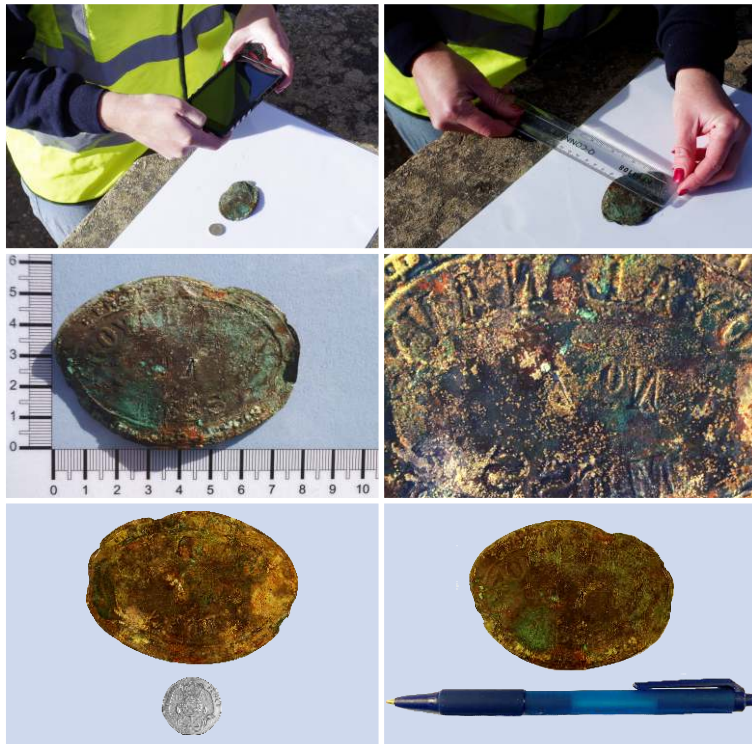
Photographs of new discoveries are incredibly important and can provide a lot of information about an object. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words!

- Use a scale (if no ruler is available, use a recognisable object such as a coin or biro)
- Take photos from various angles
- Take close-ups of any unusual markings

More details can be found on the **Photographing Finds** [handout](#)

Providing the measurements of finds can also aid their identification. If possible, please provide the following:

- Length, width and diameter
- Weight (where possible)



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for the Reporting of Finds of Archaeological Interest



Looking after your Find

Marine finds are very fragile and can quickly degrade if they're not treated correctly. Follow these three simple steps to ensure your find is handled correctly:

- 1. Keep the object WET**
- 2. Keep the object COOL**
- 3. Keep the object in a DARK place**

Note: If a find is **DRY**, do not place it back into water as this can cause further deterioration. Instead, keep it in a **COOL, DARK** place.

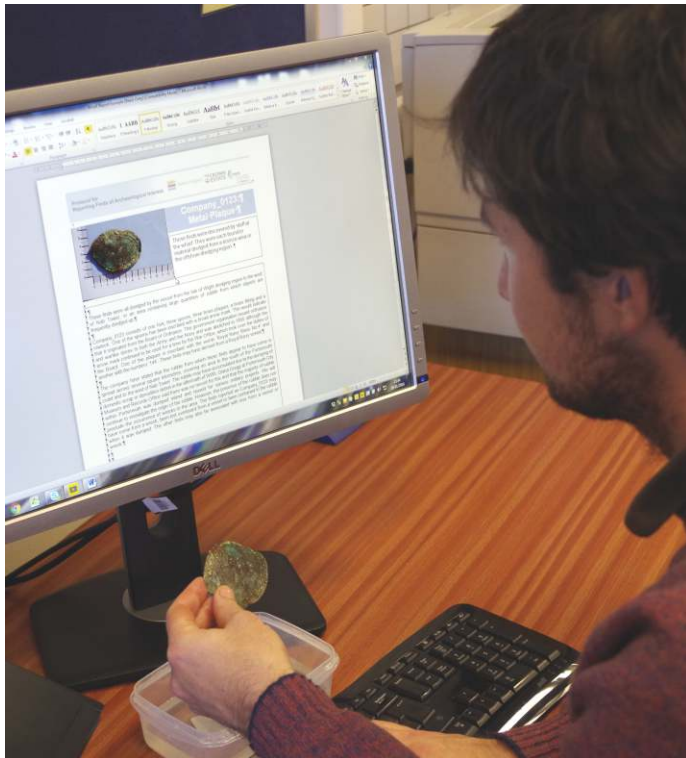
Make sure to label the container holding the find with **key information** (including brief description, date found, finder and licence area)

More details can be found on the **Conservation and Storage** [handout](#)



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for the Reporting of Finds of Archaeological Interest



What happens next?

Pass the find and the preliminary report to your **Site Champion**. They will inform your company's **Nominated Contact**. Wessex Archaeology will investigate the find and try to understand what it is, and how it came to be under the water.

Wessex Archaeology shares this information with you, with Historic England, and with various local and national heritage agencies.

Your find can make a difference

If you don't know who your **Site Champion** or **Nominated Contact** is, contact protocol@wessexarch.co.uk

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for the Reporting of Finds of Archaeological Interest



Your reports are important

By reporting finds you:

- Meet legal obligations set down in the **Merchant Shipping Act 1995**
- Help meet your company's Marine Licence and Production Agreement requirements
- Help to fulfil your company's Corporate Social Responsibility commitments
- Fill gaps in our knowledge about underwater heritage
- Protect archaeological finds for future generations

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for the Reporting of Finds of Archaeological Interest



Further information and resources are available online at
www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/marine/bmapa/index.html

You can also receive advice or support
by contacting Wessex Archaeology via
protocol@wessexarch.co.uk or **01722 326867**
and asking for the Coastal & Marine team

**Thank you for
undertaking this training**