BMAPA

Protocol

for reporting finds of archaeological interest

Site champion's notes for vessels

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Prepared by

August 2005

Wessex Archaeology

British Marine Aggregate Producers Association
and
English Heritage

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Site Champion's Notes for Vessels (SC-V)

Archaeological Finds

The archaeological finds made by aggregate workers are important because they shed light on our predecessor's use of the sea and seabed. The information that these finds bring to light helps archaeologists to better understand what happened in times long (and not so long) ago. It also allows archaeologists to better protect aspects of our history that should be conserved on behalf of future generations. Archaeological finds from the seabed also help the public to catch a glimpse of the past in an otherwise unfathomable environment.

This Protocol has been designed to deal with discoveries made on the seabed, on board and at wharves. A separate – but similar – series of actions applies in each case.

The Protocol anticipates discoveries being made by Staff, who report to a Site Champion on their vessel or wharf, who then reports to a Nominated Contact acting for the Company as a whole. The Nominated Contact for the Company will liaise with English Heritage.

Site Champions

The name and contact details of the Site Champion shall be written on the Poster accompanying this Protocol.

All Staff

Each Company shall display copies of the Poster accompanying this Protocol on dredging vessels and at aggregate wharves.

Timing

The timescales within which actions are taken may be critical to safeguarding finds of archaeological interest, and to avoiding unreasonable disruption to commercial operations.

Where Staff or an Officer on Watch notice something on a vessel, it is important that action is taken immediately. The precise position on the seabed of a find or anomaly will be a key piece of information. The occurrence should be noted and brought to the attention of the Master / Site Champion straight away, so that positions can be calculated. It is important that positions are calculated before any more dredging passes are made in the vicinity of the anomaly / suspected find. Time may also be of the essence in checking the dredging gear for any artefacts that may have become lodged in the draghead or screens.

The Site Champion will be able to take the actions necessary to safeguard finds, and information relating to them, in the short term. It is important, however, that information is passed on promptly so that decisions – which may have operational implications – can be taken for the medium term. It is expected that the Site Champion will inform the Nominated Contact on the same working day that a find is made.

The overall timescale between a find occurring, and formal archaeological advice being provided, should be no more than five working days.

Types of Find

'Finds' are considered here to mean all forms of artefact that can be found on the seabed. To be an artefact, the thing must have been made, modified, used or transported by people, i.e. their presence on the seabed is 'artificial' or 'cultural' rather than 'natural'.

Discoveries on the Seabed

Tell the Site Champion

If an anomaly such as resistance on the draghead or interruption in the flow of aggregate indicates that an object or structure has been encountered on the seabed, the Officer on Watch shall inform the Master, who will normally be the Site Champion.

Where it is possible to identify the position of the anomaly, the Officer on Watch shall avoid making additional dredging passes in the vicinity of the seabed location until archaeological advice has been obtained.

The Officer on Watch will arrange for dredging gear to be examined as soon as possible to see if any archaeological material is trapped within it, and will inform the Master accordingly.

Actions by the Master (Site Champion)

The Master shall note the occurrence as soon as possible in the vessel's log together with the time and exact vessel position. Where possible, the log entry should include a close approximation of the original position of the anomaly on the seabed. Additionally, the area shall be marked on navigational software.

The Master shall compile a preliminary record of the occurrence, as shown below.

The Master shall inform the Nominated Contact of the occurrence as soon as possible and pass on all available information, including a copy of the Preliminary Record and copies of any photographs, drawings or other records that have been made.

If any finds have been recovered, the Master shall arrange for them to be immersed in seawater in a suitable clean container, which should be covered. Any rust, concretion or marine growth should not be removed.

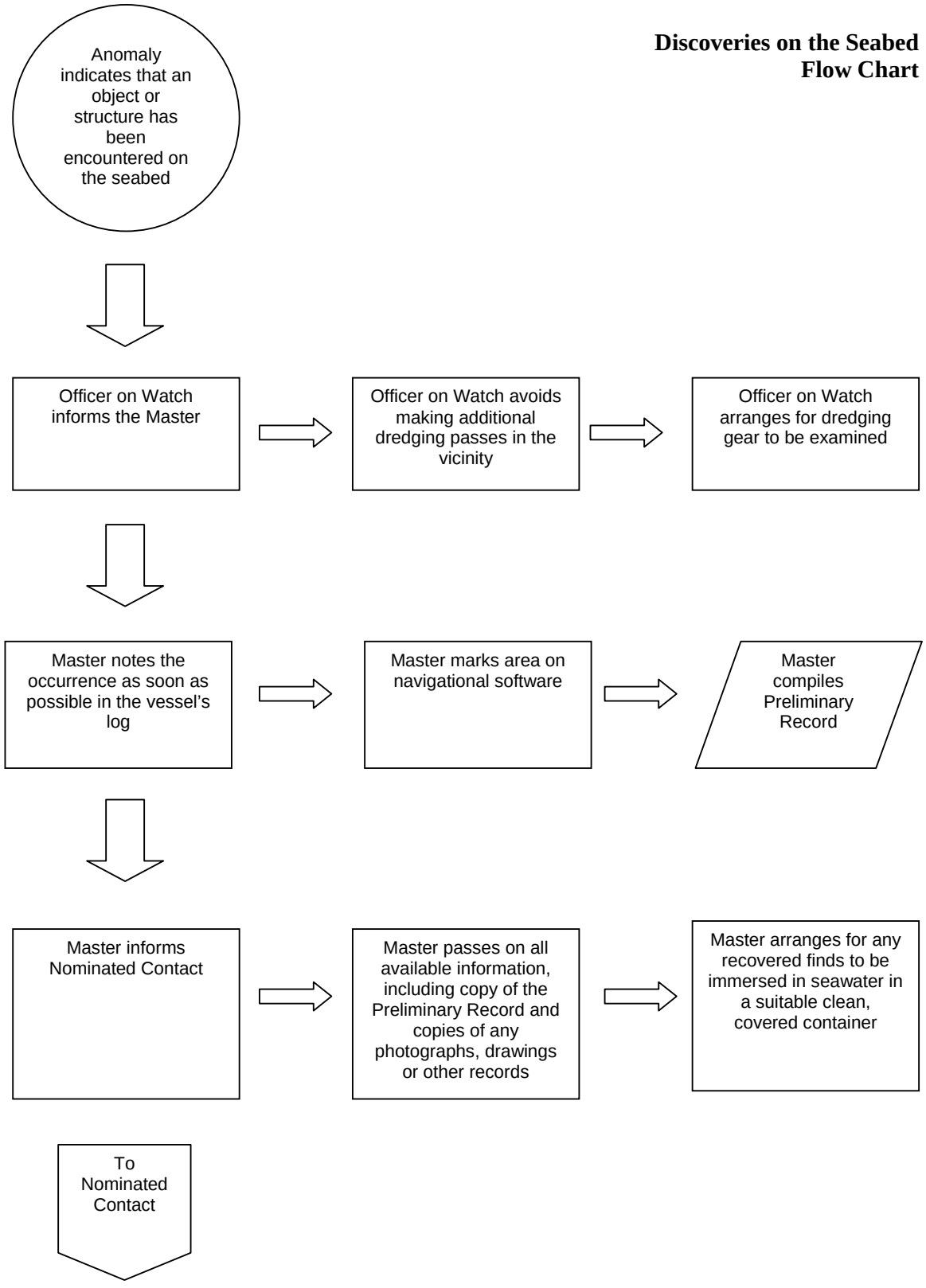
If no archaeological material has been recovered, then no additional actions are required of staff on the vessel.

Discoveries on the Seabed: Preliminary Record

Vessel Name:
Dredging Area:
Date:
Time of compiling information:
Name of compiler (Master/Site Champion):
Name of Officer on Watch:
Name of finder (if different to above):
Time at which anomaly encountered:
Vessel position at time when anomaly was encountered:
Original position of the anomaly on the seabed:
Notes on likely accuracy of original position stated above:
Description of the anomaly:
Apparent extent of the anomaly:
Details of examination of dredging gear:
Were any finds recovered?:
Description of the finds:
Details of photographs taken of the find(s):
Details of any drawings or other records made of the find(s):
Details of treatment given to find(s):
Any other notes:

There is a record form at the back of these notes that can be photocopied and filled-in for each anomaly.

Discoveries on the Seabed
Flow Chart



Discoveries on Board

Tell the Site Champion

If a find of archaeological interest is made on board the dredging vessel, either within the cargo or trapped in the dredge gear (drag head, screens etc.), the vessel staff should inform the Officer on Watch. The Officer on Watch shall inform the Master, who will normally be the Site Champion.

Where it is possible to identify the seabed position from which the find originated, the Officer on Watch shall avoid making additional dredging passes in the vicinity of the seabed location until archaeological advice has been obtained.

Actions by the Master (Site Champion)

The Master shall note the occurrence as soon as possible in the vessel's log together with the time and exact position. The log entry should include a close approximation of the original position of the find/anomaly on the seabed. Additionally, the area shall be marked on navigational software.

The Master shall compile a preliminary record of the occurrence, as shown below.

The Master shall inform the Nominated Contact of the occurrence as soon as possible and pass on all available information, including a copy of the Preliminary Record and copies of any photographs, drawings or other records that have been made.

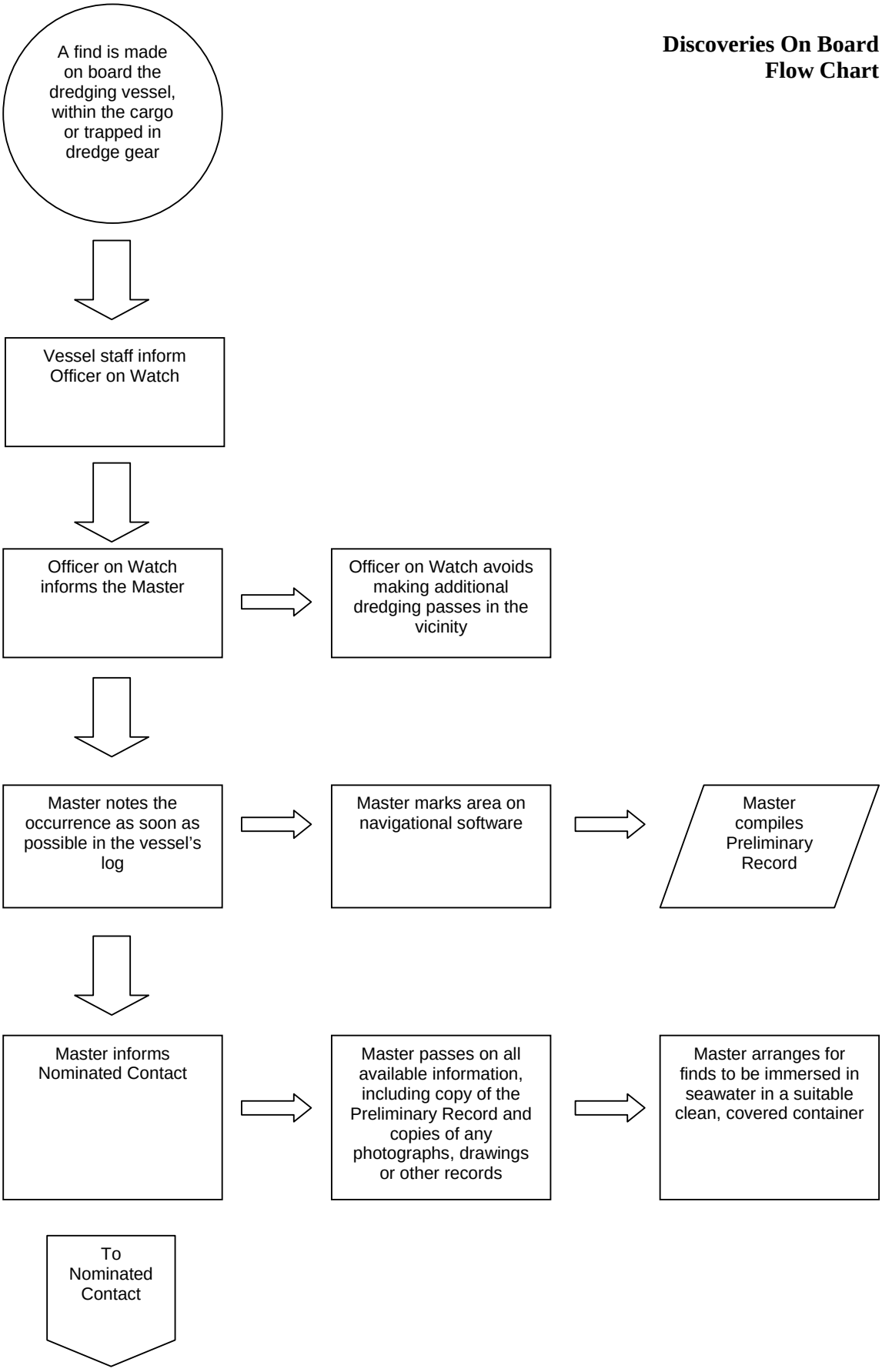
The Master shall arrange for the find to be immersed in seawater in a suitable clean container, which should be covered. Any rust, concretion or marine growth should not be removed.

Discoveries on Board: Preliminary Record

Vessel Name:
Dredging Area:
Date:
Time of compiling information:
Name of compiler (Master/Site Champion):
Name of Officer on Watch:
Name of finder (if different to above):
Time at which find(s) made:
Vessel position at time of making find:
Original position of the find(s) on the seabed:
Notes on likely accuracy of original position stated above:
Description of the find(s):
Details of photographs taken of the find(s):
Details of any drawings or other records made of the find(s):
Details of treatment given to find(s):
Any other notes:
Date and time at which Nominated Contact informed:

There is a record form at the back of these notes that can be photocopied and filled-in.

Discoveries On Board
Flow Chart



Annex I: Guidelines for Identifying Finds of Archaeological Interest

Rubber, Plastic etc.

In most cases, rubber, plastic, bakelite and similar modern materials are not of archaeological interest and can be disregarded.

One exception is where such materials are found in the same area as aluminium objects and structures, which may indicate aircraft wreckage from World War Two. Such material should be reported.

Iron and Steel

The potential range and date of iron and steel objects is so wide that it is difficult to provide general guidance. In broad terms, iron and steel objects which are covered by a thick amorphous concrete-like coating ('concretion') are likely to be of archaeological interest and should be reported.

Pieces of metal sheet and structure may indicate a wreck and should be reported.

A Munitions Code of Practice applies in respect of ordnance (cannonballs, bullets, shells) which should take precedence over archaeological requirements. However, discoveries of ordnance may be of archaeological interest, and they should be reported.

Other Metals

Items made of thin, tinned or painted metal sheet are unlikely to be of archaeological interest.

Aluminium objects may indicate aircraft wreckage from World War Two, especially if two or more pieces of aluminium are fixed together by rivets. All occurrences should be reported.

Copper and copper alloy (bronze, brass) objects might indicate a wreck, or they may be very old. All occurrences should be reported.

Precious metal objects and coins are definitely of archaeological interest because they are relatively easy to date. All occurrences should be reported.

Bone

Occasional discoveries of animal bone, teeth and tusks are of archaeological interest because they may date to periods when the seabed formed dry land, and should be reported. Such bones, teeth, tusks etc. may have signs of damage, breaking or cutting that can be directly attributed to human activity.

Large quantities of animal bone may indicate a wreck (the remains of cargo or provisions) and should be reported.

Human bone is definitely of archaeological interest, and is also subject to special legal requirements under the Burial Act 1857. Any suspected human bone should be reported, and treated with discretion and respect.

Objects made out of bone – such as combs, harpoon points or decorative items – can be very old and are definitely of archaeological interest. All occurrences should be reported.

Wood

Light coloured wood, or wood that floats easily, is probably modern and is unlikely to be of archaeological interest.

'Roundwood' with bark – such as branches – is unlikely to be of archaeological interest. However, roundwood that has clearly been shaped or made into a point should be reported.

Pieces of wood that have been shaped or jointed may be of archaeological interest, especially if fixed with wooden pegs, bolts or nails. All occurrences should be reported.

Objects made out of dark, waterlogged wood – such as bowls, handles, shafts and so on – can be very old and are definitely of archaeological interest. All occurrences should be reported.

Stone

Small to medium size stones that are shaped, polished and/or pierced may be prehistoric axes. All occurrences should be reported.

Objects such as axe heads or knife blades made from flint are of prehistoric date and should be reported.

Large blocks of stone that have been pierced or shaped may have been used as anchors or weights for fishing nets. All occurrences should be reported.

The recovery of numerous stones may indicate the ballast mound of a wreck, or a navigational cairn. All occurrences should be reported.

Pottery

Any fragment of pottery is potentially of interest, especially if it is a large fragment. Items which look like modern crockery can be discarded, but if the item has an unusual shape, glaze or fabric it should be reported.

Brick

Bricks with modern proportions and v-shaped hollows ('frogs') are of no archaeological interest. Unfrogged, 'small', 'thin' or otherwise unusual bricks may date back to Medieval or even Roman times and should be reported.

Peat and Clay

Peat is black or brown fibrous soil that formed when sea level was so low that the seabed formed marshy land, on the banks of a river or estuary for example. The peat is made up of plant remains, and also contains microscopic remains that can provide information about the environment at the time it was formed. This information helps us to understand the kind of landscape that our predecessors inhabited, and about how their landscape changed. It can also provide information about rising sea-level and coastline change, which are important to understanding processes that are affecting us today.

Prehistoric structures (such as wooden trackways) and artefacts are often found within or near peat, because our predecessors used the many resources that these marshy areas contained. As these areas were waterlogged, and have continued to be waterlogged because the sea has risen, 'organic' artefacts made of wood, leather, textile and so on often survive together with the stone and pottery which are found on 'dry' sites.

Fine-grained sediments such as silts and clays are often found at the same places as peat. These fine-grained sediments also contain the microscopic remains that can provide information about past environments and sea-level change.

While aggregate dredging companies try to avoid the places where peat and clay are found because they contaminate the aggregate, any discoveries of such material would be of archaeological interest, and their occurrence should be reported.

Discoveries on the Seabed: Preliminary Record Form	Aug 2005 SC-V
Vessel Name:	
Dredging Area:	
Date:	
Time of compiling information:	
Name of compiler (Master/Site Champion):	
Name of Officer on Watch:	
Name of finder (if different to above):	
Time at which anomaly encountered:	
Vessel position at time when anomaly was encountered:	
Original position of the anomaly on the seabed:	
Notes on likely accuracy of original position stated above:	
Description of the anomaly:	
Apparent extent of the anomaly:	
Details of examination of dredging gear:	
Were any finds recovered?:	
Description of the finds:	
Details of photographs taken of the find(s):	
Details of any drawings or other records made of the find(s):	
Details of treatment given to find(s):	
Any other notes:	
Date and time at which Nominated Contact informed:	
Signed:	**Date:**

Discoveries on Board: Preliminary Record Form	Aug 2005 SC-V
Vessel Name:	
Dredging Area:	
Date:	
Time of compiling information:	
Name of compiler (Master/Site Champion):	
Name of Officer on Watch:	
Name of finder (if different to above):	
Time at which find(s) made:	
Vessel position at time of making find(s):	
Original position of find(s) on the seabed:	
Notes on likely accuracy of original position stated above:	
Description of the find(s):	
Details of photographs taken of the find(s):	
Details of any drawings or other records made of the find(s):	
Details of treatment given to find(s):	
Any other notes:	
Date and time at which Nominated Contact informed:	
Signed:	**Date:**

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BMAPA is one of the constituent bodies of the Quarry Products Association, the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt and ready-mixed concrete industries.

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