

UNDERWATER FINDS

WRECKS CONTAIN clues to our maritime heritage and if respected they can provide enjoyment for all divers. Maritime archaeologists work to build up a picture of our past from clues from wrecks and objects found underwater. Some of these objects end up on display in museums but others after study are left where they are found.

Help preserve your maritime heritage, and leave it undisturbed for others to enjoy. If you make a discovery of historical importance, you will be encouraged to continue your involvement. You will also be encouraged to do further research and your part will be acknowledged in books and articles.

WHAT TO DO

What to do if you find an object or wreck you think might be of historical importance?

Whenever possible, leave it alone. Removal of artefacts could cause irreparable damage.



Even glass-ware can survive for centuries but still be in need of conservation.

Objects, even very fragile ones, can survive in the marine environment for centuries if left undisturbed.

Most finds from the

sea will start to decay once out of the water. Those made of wood or iron, or made up of a combination of different



Cannons salvaged 30 years ago have rusted, spoiling them forever.

materials, usually decay most quickly. The cost of conservation can easily exceed the value of the find.

To detectives at the scene of the crime the original position and the relationship between objects is very important and they are just as important at the scene of a wreck. This information can give vital clues to what happened in the past.

Objects may also be part of the ecology of the seabed. Wreckage can diversify habitats by offering protection and shelter to marine life and by providing a home for organisms such as corals and kelp.

Some of the best and most beautiful dive sites in the world are wrecks. Please treat them with respect so that future generations of divers can enjoy them too.

Want to get involved?

A diver using a video camera to survey a wreck site.



The Nautical Archaeology Society organises training courses in association with BSAC, PADI and SAA, ranging from basic archaeo-

logical techniques for divers to advanced courses such as the archaeological use of remotely operated vehicles and side scan sonar.

Wreck investigation projects are also organised as part of the training. Call the NAS on 01705 818419

Conservation advice may be obtained from UKIC at 109, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QD. Tel: 0171 721 8721.

This leaflet was prepared by the Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee, BSAC, PADI, and SAA and has been endorsed by the Dept for Culture, Media and Sport, English Heritage, CADW, Historic Scotland, Dept of Environment, N.I., The National Trust, UK Institute of Conservation, NAS and the Coastguard Agency.



R E S P E C T

O U R

COASTGUARD

Record the precise location

To find a discovery again, record the depth, use a marker buoy and take photos of landmarks where possible. Use GPS or land bearings to fix the position as accurately as you can. Sketch a plan, take photos or video of the site and note any details you think might be significant.

Divers record details of a shipwreck using simple surveying methods and a drawing board.



Report the find to the Receiver of Wreck

All wreck material, however mundane it may appear, when discovered in the sea or washed ashore from tidal waters, must be reported to the Receiver of Wreck. It is an offence under the law not to do so. Your report will always be taken seriously and, if requested, the Receiver will treat your information in confidence.

Everything found at sea or on the foreshore belongs to someone, even if hundreds of years have passed since it was lost. The Receiver has a duty to try and find the original owner, but is sympathetic to the archaeological needs of historical material. The Receiver has to act impartially between interested parties but always works hard to protect the rights of

the finder who acts honestly. The Receiver can also advise you on where to seek specialist assistance. Whatever happens you will be advised of the importance of your discovery and of decisions affecting it.



Diver using a planning-frame on a designated wreck to position accurately the ship's structure and artifacts.

If you find a wreck, you can apply for it to be designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973.

Finders of sites are encouraged to continue with investigation under license while designation protects the site.

For reporting finds and for further information, contact:

The Receiver of Wreck
The Coastguard Agency
Spring Place, 105 Commercial Road
Southampton SO15 1EG
Tel: 01703 329 474 Fax: 01703 329 477

Need archaeological advice?

For general information on underwater archaeology and the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973, contact:
Secretary
Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
3rd floor, 2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH
Tel: 0171 211 6360 Fax: 0171 211 6382

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