



MARINE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME

GUIDE: CERAMIC FINDS



WHY ARE CERAMIC FINDS IMPORTANT?

Ceramic finds from the seabed are very important objects for discovering more about the use of the sea by past peoples. The life history of such objects can often be traced, from their manufacture and transportation to their use and discard or loss. In particular, ceramics often feature decoration, stamps or maker's marks which allow very accurate identification of the date of manufacture and origin.

WHAT WOULD I EXPECT TO DISCOVER?

Ceramic finds can include the whole array of items made of ceramic in the past – from earthenware pottery, Roman amphorae and ceramic tiles to bone china, bricks and pipe clay. Such finds might be part of a shipwreck, or may be an isolated find which was discarded from a ship when broken. If from a shipwreck, ceramics may have formed a large part of the cargo as a trade item, or may be personal belongings, or everyday items used by the crew during the voyage.

LEAVE CERAMIC WHERE FOUND

As with all objects at a shipwreck site, ceramic items should be left where found as their location not only helps in dating other finds at the site, but their position within the ship can reveal the purpose of the item on board, whether used by crew or part of the cargo. Items should only be recovered legally and with detailed recording and conservation in place.

There is a statutory obligation to report wreck to the Receiver of Wreck, part of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Recovered material believed to be 'wreck' needs to be reported to the Receiver of Wreck within 28 days of the discovery.

For further information about the Marine Antiquities Scheme please visit: www.marinefinds.org.uk

The Marine Antiquities Scheme is supported by:

