



MARINE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME

GUIDE: SHIPS & BOATS



WHY ARE SHIPS AND BOATS IMPORTANT?

Ship and boat sites that are discovered may tell us more about the progress of technological development, such as the transition from wooden hulled ships to iron and later steel, as well as the change from sail to steam propulsion. They can also provide information on major themes such as migration, military undertakings and commerce.



WHAT WOULD I EXPECT TO DISCOVER?

Shipwrecks are the most commonly known underwater find, and this is unsurprising as there are thousands of shipwrecks lying in waters around the coast – the majority of which date to between 1840 and 1950. Some vessels are better represented in the known record than others. Recreational vessels, such as yachts, and cargo and transport vessels are well represented. In contrast, passenger vessels are relatively rare. As expected, relatively large numbers of military vessel wrecks are recorded.

Finds from ships and boats can come in all shapes and sizes and range from simple log boats to wooden sailing ships, steamships and even submarines. Common types of material include wood and metal.

Vessels and shipwrecks on the seabed rarely survive in their entirety. Instead, both natural and man-made factors influence what is left to be discovered. This can include the process of wrecking – whether accidental or deliberate – salvage operations both in the past and more recently, damage by fishing boats or nets, and disintegration through seabed movement.

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:

