

Dredged Up

Issue 37
Autumn 2025

Archaeology Finds Reporting Service Newsletter



Welcome to Issue 37 of ***Dredged Up***, the newsletter of the Marine Aggregate Industry Archaeological Protocol. Since the last newsletter in Spring 2025, **51 finds** have been reported in 24 reports.

Pages **2** and **3** showcase a selection of finds that have been reported since the last issue of *Dredged Up*. We want to thank everyone for reporting all these interesting finds to us.

This issue of *Dredged Up* is a very special edition, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Protocol. Pages **4** and **5** and part of page **6** are devoted to this important milestone featuring an overview of 20 years of the Protocol!

We would also like to give a special shoutout to our Wessex Archaeology finds specialists who support us tremendously in the archaeological reporting process. In this issue we would like you to meet our nautical archaeologist Paolo Croce. Head to page **6** where he dives into his love for marine finds and shares what makes his work so exciting!

On page **7** a very special guest, a key figure in the archaeological reporting process, makes a special appearance. Flip to this page to uncover the identity of this mystery guest!

And last but not least, on page **8**, we celebrate this year's awareness visits.



**20th anniversary of the Marine Aggregate Industry Protocol
for the Reporting of Finds of Archaeological Interest**

Protocol Updates

Have you received our recent addition to promote the Protocol, the trolley keychains? And checked out the QR code, that leads you directly to the Protocol website?

If you haven't received a keychain and would like one, please contact the Protocol Implementation Team (see contact details below). Further information about the Protocol and the Protocol Implementation Service is available online: wessexarch.co.uk/marine-aggregate-industry-protocol-reporting-finds-archaeological-interest. To contact the Protocol Implementation Service, email protocol@wessexarch.co.uk or phone **01722 326 867**.



Finds Roundup

Cemex_1181

These finds from Licence Area 512 in the East Coast region comprise 11 aluminium fragments (seen below) and are most likely aircraft fragments. There are rivets visible on several pieces and one piece appears to have once been a flexible joint. Green paint is still present on multiple examples.

Images of the finds were sent to Steve Vizard, our external aviation expert, for identification. He was able to confirm that they are aircraft fragments, comprising various airframe sections. While fragmentary pieces such as this are difficult to positively identify, the fragments are most likely from a British aircraft from the Second World War.

These fragments of aluminium airframe were found in the same cargo as a piece of possible aircraft fuel tank Cemex_1182 and aircraft electronics Cemex_1183, and the finds join the 41 other aircraft finds that have been reported originating from Licence Area 512. There are no known aircraft losses within the licence area. However, given the amount of aircraft material being recovered, it is possible that a previously undiscovered wreck site is present. Vessel and wharf staff should remain vigilant and report any potential discoveries. This will help to properly position material which may provide further clues as to the location of a potentially significant site.

It is unclear how these finds came to rest on the seabed. Aircraft material is very common in British waters as a consequence of the Second World War and this material could possibly have been lost from an aircraft due to battle damage or be part of a debris scatter. Reporting finds such as these is important despite their small size as tracking these finds can help locate and identify larger aircraft wreck sites.

Cemex_1181: 11 aluminium fragments, most likely from an aircraft



Brett_1180

This find (seen below) appears to be the barrel of a firearm, most likely a machine gun. The barrel is around 1 m in length and is around 40 mm at its widest point. The barrel visibly tapers away from the bore, widening again towards the muzzle. There is a rectangular mounting piece still connected to the barrel around the bore. This block is roughly 200 mm long and 50 mm wide. The barrel passes through a circular hole at one end of the block with around 100 mm of barrel penetrating the block.

Jonathon Ferguson, keeper of firearms and artillery at The Royal Armouries Museum, was contacted regarding the find and was able to identify the find as the barrel of a Browning AN/M2 .50BMG machine gun. These were extremely common armaments used throughout the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) during the Second World War. The base Browning M2 machine gun remains in use in a variety of forms in a number of militaries to this day.



Brett_1180: the barrel of a machine gun

Heidelberg_1189

This grenade (seen bottom right) was discovered on the electromagnet at Greenhithe Wharf. As grenades are extremely dangerous, this grenade has not been handled. Pictures of the grenade were forwarded to the Protocol Implementation Service, and we sent them on to specialists. Unexploded ordnance (UXO) pose a significant risk as degradation of the device and moving the UXO could potentially detonate the device.

Jonathan Ferguson from the Royal Armouries Museum and Mark Khan, owner of Command Post Media, identified this grenade as a British Mills hand grenade. Mark classified it as a type Mills 36 grenade. According to Mark: 'they were in use from the First World War through the 1970s. These types of grenades were issued on Royal Navy ships. One of their purposes was to signal submarines when exercising with surface ships. The detonation of the grenade would be heard inside the submerged submarine.'

From the picture, Mark identified that the striker lever (a safety device) is in place and that the grenade has a base plug fitted. The base plug was required to be removed (unscrewed) to allow the detonator to be inserted. After the insertion of the detonator the base plug was screwed back in.

Tarmac_1186

Wharf staff described this object, seen right, as an iron fixing. It is partially broken down and heavily concreted. It is likely that it is made from copper/iron alloy. The nail measures 160 mm long and 15 mm wide.

On further inspection of the photographs sent by the Site Champion, it is evident that this is likely a ship fastening from a wooden vessel post-1800. It could possibly be a 'dump nail' or 'dumpy bolt'. These fastenings are defined as large and round, with solid headed bolts with a circular cross section and were made of alloys. The bolt was used to fasten wooden ships to their components, such as to hold strakes to frames, and were used as a primary or secondary fastening method before the introduction of through bolts. The origin of the bolt is unknown, as many countries and boat building techniques have variations, and there has been very little research done on metal ship fastenings.

Tarmac_1186: a ship fastening



It is unlikely that this bolt represents a site of a shipwreck due to the fact it is an isolated find, and there have been no further maritime remains discovered. It is likely that it has fallen off a vessel or drifted out to sea as part of a ship or a wooden construction. It is possible that any associated wooden material may be heavily deteriorated.



Heidelberg_1189: a grenade found on the electromagnet at Greenhithe Wharf



Some of the finds highlighted in Issue 7 of *Dredged Up*: a collection of silver tableware dredged with aggregate from the East Coast region and discovered by staff at Tarmac's Ridham Wharf. The crest engraved on this burnt candle holder was identified as the Arms of John Dalrymple, 6th Earl of Stair (1749-1821).

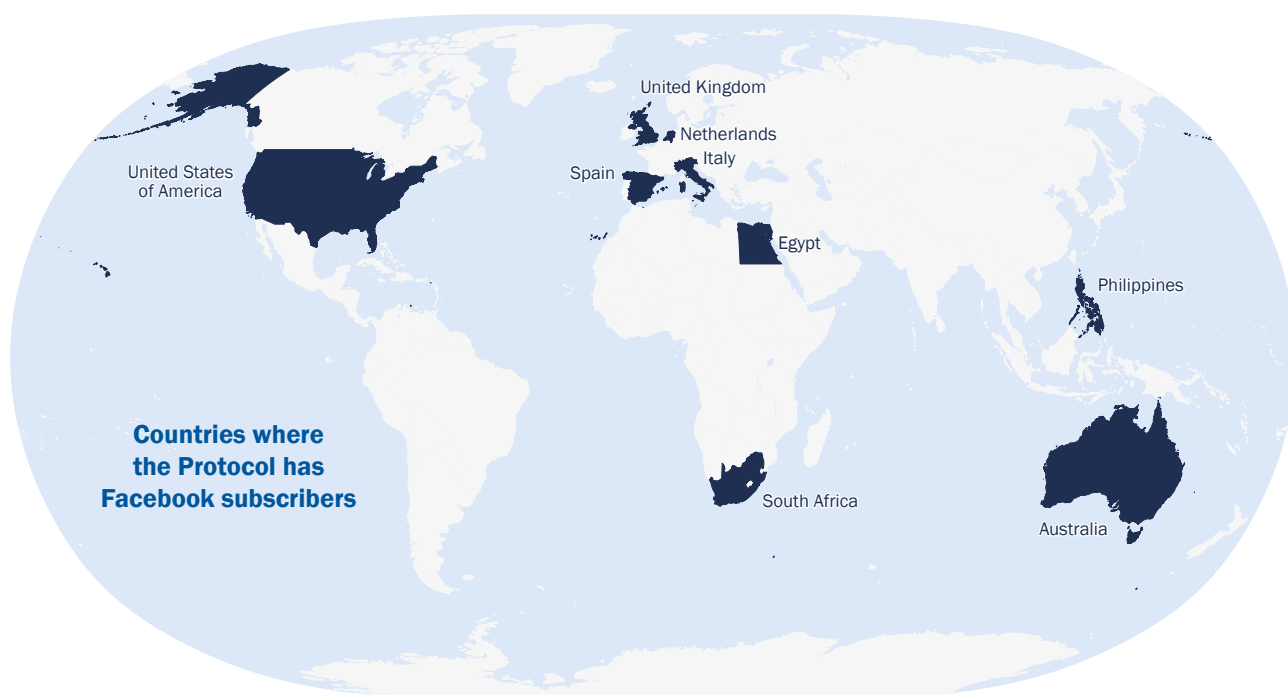
Awareness visits

Since the Protocol was implemented, over 200 awareness visits on wharves and online were conducted by members of the Implementation Team. An impressive amount!

Facebook

The Marine Aggregate Industry Archaeological Protocol Facebook page was set up in March 2017 and can be found on: [facebook.com/marineaggregateindustryarchaeologicalprotocol/](https://www.facebook.com/marineaggregateindustryarchaeologicalprotocol/)

The Facebook page contains posts about the latest Protocol updates and publish the final Wharf Reports. Between 400-500 people follow and engage with our page and we even have viewers from all over the world, from South-Africa to the Philippines! The invention of the Protocol and the collaboration with different wharfs around the UK is very unique and we are incredibly thrilled that our Protocol has so many international viewers as well. Spread the word!



Countries where the Protocol has Facebook subscribers



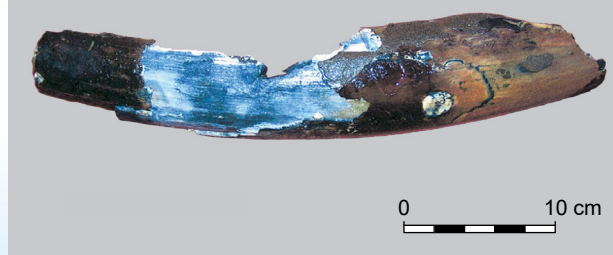
Finds

And now the most important part about the Protocol: the archaeological finds. Over 2500 finds have been reported over the course of 20 years. These range from a single animal bone to a large section of a shipwreck to aircraft material.

The license area with the highest number of reported finds is Area 240, within the East Coast dredging region. This area is also the hotspot for Palaeolithic finds material, like mammoth teeth, animal bones and a mammoth tusk. But also, aircraft material and ship timber pieces have been found in Area 240.

The highest numbers of finds were reported in Protocol year 2006-2007 with a total number of 350 finds, followed by Protocol year 2019-2020 with 202 finds. Most reports were produced in Protocol year 2015-2016 with an amazing report count of 96!

Mammoth tusk discovered by Cemex Sand Falcon



Annual Report

The upcoming Annual Report will feature a case study with an overview of the Protocol statistics from the last five years in particular. As we like to say on our Facebook page: stay tuned!!!

Wessex Archaeology Specialists

Archaeology is a huge field. There is a lot of ‘the past,’ and it was filled with a huge range of people who faced the challenges their world presented them within their own ways. That’s one of the things that makes archaeology so interesting. It also means that no one person can be an expert at everything, there’s just too much out there.

As presented in the Spring issue of *Dredged Up*, the Protocol Implementation Team want to introduce some of our amazing specialists to you. In this edition, we have a chat with one of Wessex Archaeology’s nautical archaeologists, Paolo Croce.

Paolo Croce

1. What exactly is your specialism?

I am a nautical archaeologist, specialising in the investigation and analysis of maritime artefacts and shipwrecks. By studying old timbers and other evidence, I determine the relevance and dating of these finds, helping us travel through time and uncover the rich history beneath the waves.

2. How long have you been working in this field?

I’ve been working in this field for almost 18 years. While it might seem repetitive to some, archaeology thrives on patterns – same periods, same styles – and understanding one little detail often unlocks the secrets of many others.

3. What is it that excites you about your chosen specialism?

The excitement lies in recognising the evidence – often you cannot see what you do not know. And each discovery is a piece of the past that can only be understood through careful analysis. There’s a thrill in uncovering a secret that has remained hidden for centuries and piecing together its story.

4. How can your specialism help us when trying to understand the past?

Archaeology is a powerful method for exploring and interpreting the world. It provides the tools to ask meaningful questions about history, helping us reconstruct how people lived, how their environments changed, and what we can learn from the past. It also allows us to discover that other worlds were possible, and that things change. Recognising and reckoning with change helps us understand that the past was not static, and our world has not always been the way it is today.

5. Moving into 2025, what challenges are faced by you and others working in your field?

The biggest challenge is ensuring that the stories told by objects and places are understood in a rapidly changing world. Archaeologists are tasked with educating new generations about the value of their past and how understanding past failures and successes helps us prepare for future challenges. It’s about creating meaning within our life and giving people the tools to engage with the past – hopefully as a way to better navigate the complexities of the present and future.



Receiver of Wreck

In this edition of *Dredged Up* featuring the 20th anniversary of the Protocol we can't forget an important member in the reporting process and that is the Receiver of Wreck, Stephen White. Some of you might have had contact with the Receiver before, but for some the Receiver remains a very mysterious person, working in the background on the finds from the seabed.

To give the mysterious Receiver of Wreck more background we invited him to do this interview for *Dredged Up*!

Stephen White

1. Who is the Receiver of Wreck?

My name is Stephen White, and I have been the Receiver for nearly two years. I was a Detective Sgt for 30 years prior to taking on this role.

2. What is the role of the Receiver of Wreck?

The main purpose of the Receiver is to reunite property with owner. All finds from the sea that classify as wreck material (from a vessel) have to be declared to the Receiver. I ensure that they are correctly reported and try to identify an owner.

3. What led you to become the Receiver of Wreck?

Right place, right time. I have always been interested in history, and the sea. I had just started working for the MCA (Marine Coastguard Agency) on the enforcement team when I saw a presentation on the role by the former Receiver. I told my line manager that it sounded like a fantastic job, and a week later the job was advertised. At the time the department was falling behind in its processes, and with my background I was able to make a good case for the job. Just lucky!!

4. What aspect of being the Receiver of Wreck do you find most rewarding?

Finding homes in museums for the most significant historical artefacts and educating diving groups on the role through speeches and presentations.

5. What is your role in the Protocol?

As per the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, all finds from the sea need to be reported to the Receiver. My deputy, Andrea Bailey, and myself, receive those reports and try and identify an owner. It's lovely to see the reports from Wessex Archaeology into the history of the items, which I don't normally receive for the majority of items reported to us.

6. What is your favourite Protocol find?

Good question, and there is such a variety, from cannon balls, aircraft parts, anchors and old pieces of metal. A recent find of an old hand grenade was very interesting!!

Top right: Stephen White, seen on the left, with the Carentan Bell handover from Anthony Reed; bottom right: recent find of hand grenade, Heidelberg_1189, see page 3.



Awareness Visits!

This year the Protocol Implementation Team is back on the road again! We travelled to different wharves across the UK to talk about all the different types of archaeological finds that can be encountered, and how to report them.

On this page we want to highlight two of the wharves that we have been to this year. Special thanks to **Heidelberg Rochester** and **Heidelberg Greenhithe** for the warm welcome and the keen interest of the staff and Nominated Contacts in the archaeological finds process.

Did you know?

A member of the Protocol Implementation Team often receives newly discovered archaeological finds from staff whilst at the wharves. Significant discoveries may be brought to Wessex Archaeology's Salisbury office to assist in the reporting and conservation process of these finds.

And did you know?

Do you have a new starter, but there is no need for an entire afternoon of awareness visits? Please reach out to us and we can arrange an online awareness presentation. In this online awareness presentation we will discuss all the necessary information regarding what to look for, and for reporting and storing archaeological finds.

Arrange a visit

We are happy to arrange an awareness visit for you if you haven't had one in a while or when new staff members have recently joined. To arrange an awareness visit, please get in touch with us by emailing protocol@wessexarch.co.uk or call **01722 326867**. Alternatively, contact us if you have any questions or need advice. We are happy to help!



Above and centre right: an awareness visit at Heidelberg Rochester; below: an awareness visit at Heidelberg Greenhithe