

Underwater Exploration

To get to the Isle of Wight you must travel by boat (unless you have a helicopter!)

The sea can be a very dangerous place and thousands of boats have sunk off the coast of the Island with many people losing their lives.

In this activity pack discover more about local shipwrecks found off the Isle of Wight. Find out more about the difficult job of an underwater archaeologist and make your own paper boat.



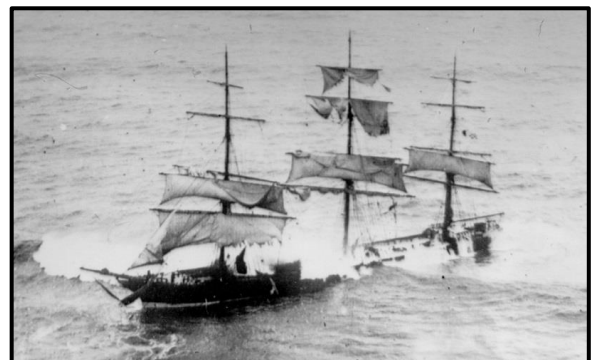
Drawing of the wreck of the steel ship 'Irex', 26 Jan 1890 by coastguard officer W Hayman.

From the collections of the Isle of Wight Heritage Service.

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What do you think is happening with the line from the cliffs to the boat?

Do you recognise the location of this shipwreck?



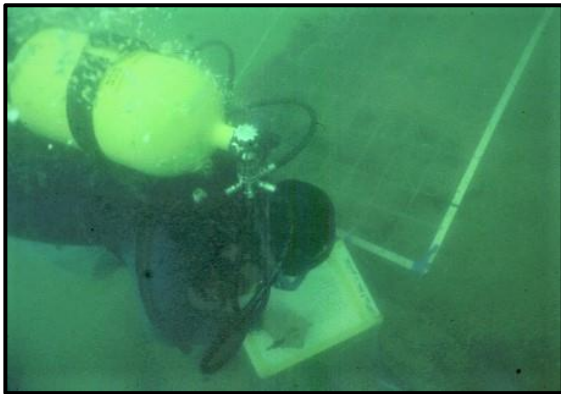
Irex

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Recording a Shipwreck

Underwater archaeologists must be qualified divers to ensure they are safe under the sea. They have tanks of air so they can breathe underwater. Whilst underwater they must record everything they find including the structure of the boat and location of any artefacts. They use special pens and pads so they can record what they find.

The water is often very murky and the sea can have strong underwater currents.



Diver surveying the Alum Bay wreck site. © HWTMA



Making a plan of the wreck using a grid. © HWTMA

Can you see the grid in the photographs? This grid helps the archaeologist plot the finds from the shipwreck. The diver has an underwater pad with a grid marked on it, they sketch an outline of the find and give it a number. Once they have recorded everything in the grid, they can put the finds into numbered bags ready to take to the surface.

All equipment is attached to the diver, otherwise if you dropped your pencil it would drift away!

The underwater archaeologist would have to be careful not to record any sea life. Any crabs, fish or shells would not be recorded.



Can you help sort these finds from a 200-year-old shipwreck?



When underwater finds are taken to the surface they are recorded and listed. List 6 of the most interesting finds and make some notes on them. The diver may have brought artefacts to the surface that do not belong to the wreck so try not to record any sea life or anything that looks modern. Remember the shipwreck is 200 years old.

Give each find a number and record your information in the table below. The first find has been completed for you.

Number	Description of object	Part of the 200-year-old wreck?
1	Long and thin, brown with scratch marks, could be bone or wood.	Maybe
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Object identification – check your finds



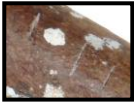
Metal pin badge - (I dig archaeology)

This badge looks brand new. It must have been dropped in the water recently as it shows no signs of rust or corrosion. The badge is not part of the wreck.



Animal bone

If you look closely at the bone you can see cut marks, this indicates the bone has been butchered. The meat may have been used to feed the ship's crew. This bone is part of the wreck.



Clay brick

This clay brick is well worn and appears to have been under the sea for a long time. The brick may have come from the ship's brick oven. The oven was used to boil water and cook the crew's food. The brick is part of the wreck.



Iron cannon ball

This ball would have been fired from a cannon. The cannon ball is part of the wreck.



Iron chain

This iron chain may have been used to secure a cannon on the gun deck of the ship. The chain is part of the wreck.



Pottery

This small piece of pottery has a pattern that was not available until years after the ship had been wrecked. The pottery is not part of the wreck.



Worked timber

There is evidence that these two pieces of timber have been worked by a carpenter. They could be part of the wreck.



Cuttlebone

A cuttlebone is not actually a bone but rather the internal shell of the Cuttlefish, a small, squid-like creature. The calcium cuttlebone is filled with gasses and helps control the fish's buoyancy (the ability to float in the water). The cuttlebone is not part of the wreck.



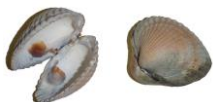
Ray egg case

Rays are a type of fish which are related to sharks. This is the egg case of a ray (often known as a mermaid's purse). You can sometimes see these on the beach. The egg case is not part of the wreck.



Limpet shell

Limpets are dome-shaped molluscs. They can live up to 16 years and grow to seven centimetres. The limpet shell is not part of the wreck.



Cockle shells

Cockles are bivalve molluscs (consisting of two shells joined by a hinge). The cockle shells are not part of the wreck.



Starfish - Sea star

Marine scientists are changing the name of the starfish to sea star because they are not fish. Sea stars use the sea water instead of blood to pump nutrients throughout their bodies. The sea star is not part of the wreck.

Tell a Tale of a Shipwreck

Each of the shipwrecks around the Island's coast will have their own stories.



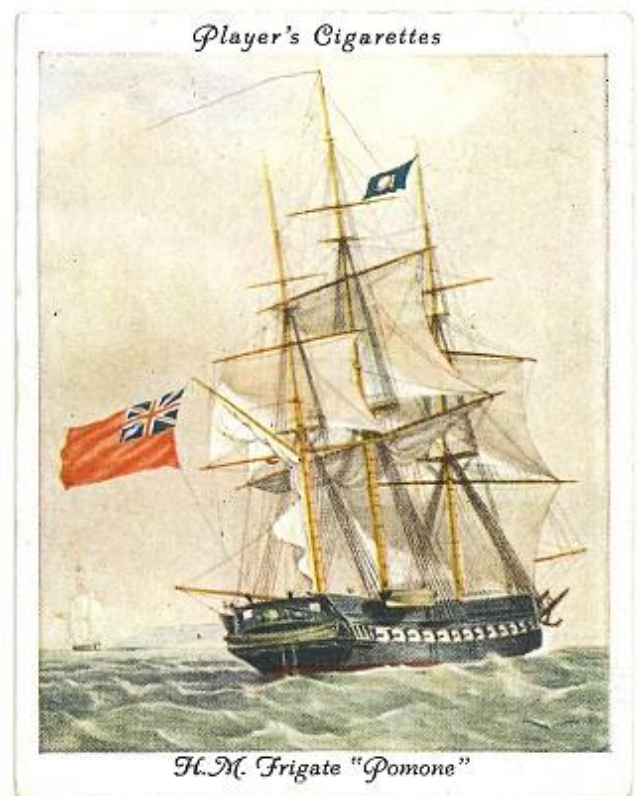
What do you think the above objects are? – explore our online exhibition to find out more [The Tale of Two Shipwrecks](#)

The Isle of Wight Heritage Service look after over 2,000 objects from HMS Pomone. This ship sunk off the Needles in 1811. Find out more and re-tell the story in the activity below.

HMS Pomone

In September 1811 The Royal Navy frigate "*HMS Pomone*" set sail from Malta. The crew needed to get back to England as quick as possible. On the 11 October 1811, the captain, *Robert Barrie*, took a short cut and headed towards The Needles. The Pomone got too close to The Needles and hit the underwater '*Goose Rock*'.

Rescue boats were sent out to help within an hour. All 283 people on board were saved. The cannons, masts, cargo and valuables were salvaged. They even managed to get the horses safely onto land.

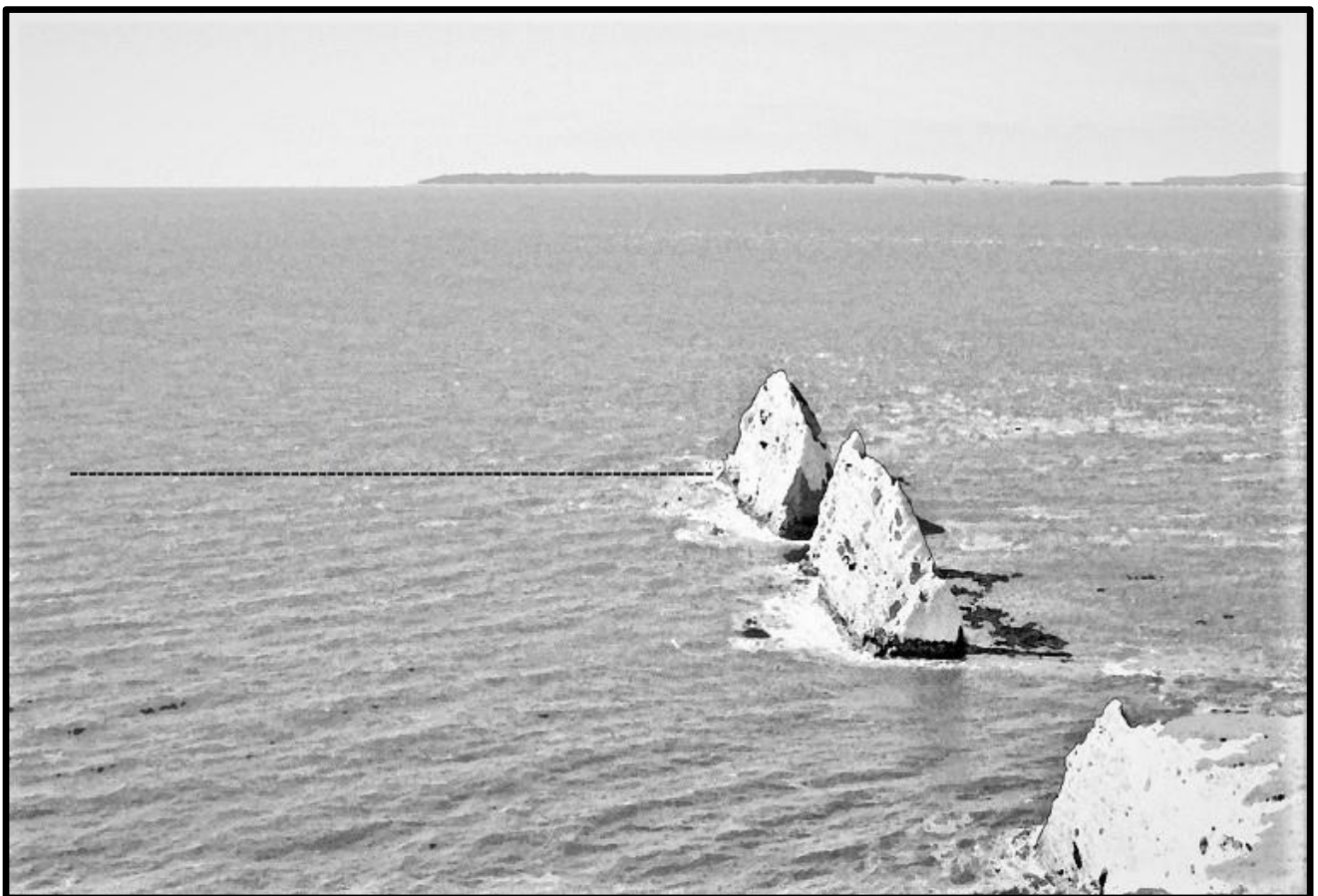


HMS Pomone, 1936 Player's cigarette card from a series of cards of old naval prints from the National Maritime Museum.

Tell your own Tale

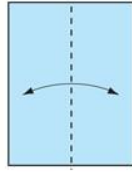
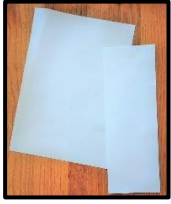
1. Print and colour the picture below. Or you could draw your own sea scene and draw a picture of a boat. Use a thin card if you have any – or paper will be fine if not.
2. Cut a straight line in your picture - along the dotted line. Please get an adult to help as this can be tricky.
3. Attach the picture of a boat onto the top of a lolly stick or piece of card. Push the ship up through the slot from the back of the card.
4. You can now tell the story of a shipwreck.

To find out more about the story of Pomone visit the online exhibition [The Tale of Two Shipwrecks](#)

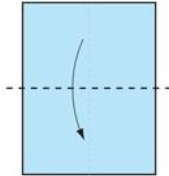


What is missing from the above picture that you can see at the Needles today?

How to make a paper boat



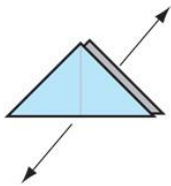
1. Take a piece of A4 paper, fold the paper perfectly in half.



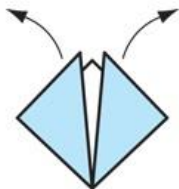
2. Now fold the paper in half again.



7. Pull the sides apart and then flatten into a square.



8. Pull the top flaps outwards, forming a boat.

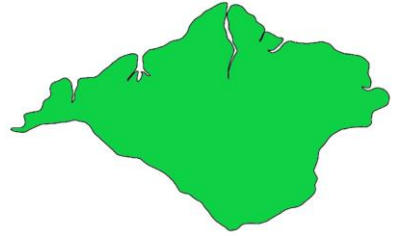


9. Work the bottom into shape so the boat will stand up.



Shipwreck Detective – Find out more

Over 4,000 shipwrecks have been recorded off the Isle of Wight. Find a map of the Island or draw an outline of the Island on a large piece of paper. Search on the internet for information about Isle of Wight wrecks and mark the location of the wrecks on the map.



Find out more about ‘rocket designer’ John Dennett and how his invention saved lives at sea. <https://iwhiddenheroes.org.uk/john-dennett-1780-1852/>

Shipwreck word search (straight from the seabed)

f	i	r	a	r	k	a	n	d	d	b	l	e	d	g	e	j	w	c	m
m	o	b	f	v	s	n	o	i	g	r	o	b	e	q	o	n	r	a	n
r	t	x	r	w	o	h	s	v	k	i	e	r	w	p	i	h	r	m	m
t	h	c	i	l	a	m	h	i	c	t	a	d	f	e	s	y	s	p	m
y	e	b	g	a	i	w	i	n	c	a	n	t	k	o	r	t	z	a	a
u	s	c	a	i	c	f	p	g	h	n	u	y	o	o	s	u	u	s	t
t	e	l	t	g	u	y	w	r	a	n	q	t	s	h	a	s	h	s	r
a	l	k	e	o	l	t	r	a	r	i	s	e	h	i	s	s	i	k	o
o	d	j	w	e	a	y	e	t	m	a	i	d	g	c	y	d	n	l	p
b	e	i	n	k	t	o	c	t	h	v	r	d	z	j	a	j	a	d	e
e	e	h	e	r	n	y	k	g	w	g	e	s	a	i	i	y	n	e	o
u	n	g	v	a	a	o	c	s	g	x	i	l	k	j	r	l	i	c	l
c	k	f	i	f	s	o	t	b	a	l	p	w	a	r	d	s	h	c	i
s	j	d	b	r	u	s	i	r	e	x	e	g	f	t	t	p	a	r	d
e	h	s	e	o	y	u	t	s	g	v	d	v	e	o	y	t	i	a	s
r	c	a	n	n	o	n	b	a	l	l	y	v	c	w	e	i	f	t	a
k	o	s	m	c	r	o	d	b	a	x	i	h	v	q	a	l	d	i	q
p	f	a	m	a	i	s	s	a	v	r	a	v	i	t	e	l	s	o	w
a	d	s	d	h	m	s	p	o	m	o	n	e	n	a	h	k	g	i	w
s	g	l	a	d	i	a	t	o	r	u	r	n	y	o	t	j	h	s	e

Can you find the following words in the grid?

They can be backwards, forwards, up, down and diagonal.

Shipwreck
Cannonball
HMS Pomone*
Santa Lucia*
Isle of Wight
Britannia*
Rivet

Yacht
Ledge
Needles
Lead shot
Iano*
Cat
Irex*

Diving
Mary Rose*
Gladiator*
Frigate
Varvassi*
Rope
Rescue

*These are the names of vessels that have sunk around the Island's waters.

Search for those wrecks

Other websites with great information about shipwrecks around the Island and Solent waters.

The Maritime Archaeology Trust - <https://maritimearchaeologytrust.org/>

The Shipwreck Centre & Maritime Museum at Arreton Barns - <https://museum.maritimearchaeologytrust.org/about-us.php>

Mary Rose Museum - <https://maryrose.org/>

Phone 01983 823433

Email - museums@iow.gov.uk

Web - www.iwight.com/museums

Isle of Wight Council Heritage Service

