



Archaeology begins at home

What do I look for and keep?

Anything that is not natural to the area. Everything else must have been brought in by somebody. Finding out who, when and why, is how we discover the story of our land.

In Brislington, the bedrock, that solid layer of stone under the soil, is usually either Pennant Sandstone or Redcliffe Sandstone.

Whichever type you have can be ignored unless it has any interesting markings.

Snail shells can be ignored, but not other shells such as seashells. Oyster shells, for example, may be the discarded packaging from a staple food of centuries past when they were common, and not a luxury.

What should I do when I find something?

Make a written note of where it was found.

Ideally the garden should be divided into a grid of 1 metre squares, and finds from each square kept separately. But in practice that is often too difficult. Any information is better than none, so use a system that works for you.

Some people simply keep vegetable patch finds separate from flowerbed finds. These details help build up a detailed picture of

your archaeology. Also, if you dig a fish pond, or patio, keep those finds separate.

Sketch your garden, showing where the areas are located – in twenty or a hundred years from now, your garden is likely to look very different!

Anything that looks particularly interesting should have its find spot carefully recorded with a date on the sketch.

How can I take care of my finds?

Some items are fragile or easily damaged, and many of these are best kept safely, as much as possible, in the same environment as that in which they were found (where they have already survived for years).

Others may be washed using water (not hot, and without soap) and gently cleaned with a soft toothbrush (not electric). If in doubt seek assistance, especially for fragile items. Allow them to dry completely before storing them.

Do not clean

metal
leather
textiles
wood

Safe to wash

plastic
pottery (wash the sides carefully)
glass (handle with care)
bone (unless it is disintegrating)
shell (except mother of pearl)
stone (but not asbestos, which should be sealed immediately in a plastic bag)

Where can I discover more about my finds?

For free advice and information contact:

Email

Phone

Letter

Website

Brislington Community Archaeology Project
(BCAP)

info@brislingtonarchaeology.org.uk

0117 971 0831

BCAP

1 Watson Avenue

Brislington

Bristol

BS4 3SG

www.brislingtonarchaeology.org.uk

Brislington's Online Museum (funded by the Brislington Community Partnership) may have something similar, so visit the BCAP website to browse the exhibits.

Also, Bristol's City Museum offers a finds identification service, and staff can advise you whether information about your finds should be entered into a national database.

What's the point?

By identifying and dating finds from all over Brislington, we will build up a picture of which areas were occupied at different times. By plotting this information onto maps, one for the Tudor period, for instance, one for

medieval, another for Roman, prehistoric etc, we will be able to see at a glance where the various settlement areas were. We can then target further archaeological investigations, and help protect key sites from development.

What happens to my finds?

If you are a homeowner, your finds are yours to keep (although there are special laws concerning 'treasure' and human remains).

You could put a selection of the best in a display case and exhibit them in your home. But most finds tend to end up in a shoebox in a cupboard (if you move house, ask the new owners if they would like to have them, as a

special introduction to their new home and community).

If you live in rented accommodation, all finds belong to the landlord, and should be offered to them. Many landlords would be happy for you to keep them, but their permission is required by law. BCAP can help find the owner of artefacts found elsewhere.

Anything else?

Well, it's impossible to cover everything in a little leaflet like this, and this information offers only general guidance compiled to the best of our ability. We do not claim it is error-free or complete, and of course we

recommend you consult a professional authority if you are in any doubt.

Oh yes, one final word of warning – beware, archaeology can be addictive!