

ARCHAEOLOGY & PHOTOGRAPHS

June 29, 2012 Roman Baths Museum Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2012, Museum Archaeology, Post Medieval Archaeology, Computing, Ireland, Mosaic, Photograph, photographer, Schull, Square Box Mosaic









When a site is being investigated for an archaeological study one very important resource can be old photographs.

Photographs record an instant in time which can be invaluable at a later date for identification purposes particularly if the scene photographed has changed greatly over time. Fields may have been ploughed over, buildings demolished or altered or the people depicted have long gone.

As cameras became cheaper and readily available more and more people start to take photographs of their relations, friends, homes, towns, excursions and travels abroad. In addition, they also record scenes of particular interest to them and this often includes archaeological remains. This includes the roman mosaic shown below when newly discovered in Box, Wiltshire.

Identification, however, can be problematic particularly if the scene has changed greatly over time and is not identified either on the photograph itself or on documentation to accompany it. This can also make dating difficult as can not knowing who the photographer was. Despite this, however, they are an invaluable resource.

Some examples of photographs which could be of archaeological interest include some from a collection of glass magic lantern slides ranging from 1890 to around 1914.

One of these is of the Box mosaic previously referred to, found in 1898 and now reburied to preserve it from frost damage. Others in this collection where the location is recorded could also be of use to archaeologists. These include a cottage in Schull, Ireland, a windmill near Rhyll, Wales and a replica medieval cross in Bristol. The original was moved to Stourhead in Wiltshire, while parts of the replica were moved to Berkeley Square

Box Mosaic 1989.176.8.69

Cottage, Schull 1989.176.8.5

Rhyll Windmill 1989.176.8.17

Cross Bristol 1989.176.8.72

Others in the collection are not identified so any help with possible locations would be appreciated.

These include:

1989.176.8.36 The name of the shop owner is clear but where was the photograph taken?

1989.176.8.37 This was probably taken near Warleigh but does anyone know who the people in the photograph are ?

1989.176.8.12. Finally, this stone tower building may possibly be in Cornwall, any ideas?

Penny, collections volunteer