# Beachcomber discovers Second World War gas mask on West Runton beach



John Aldridge, an avid beachcomber with a penchant for crafting items from driftwood, made an intriguing historical discovery while exploring the groynes at West Runton beach in Norfolk. While initially searching for pieces of driftwood, Aldridge noticed an unusual object partly embedded in the wooden barrier. At first glance, he thought it was a discarded shoe, but on closer inspection, he found something quite different.

"I said, 'Oh look, there's a shoe!' I gave it a bit of a pull and thought, huh? This isn't a shoe; it's got two eyeholes and glass on it," Aldridge recounted. His discovery was revealed to be a Second World War gas mask, a relic from a past era that unexpectedly surfaced on the beach. Using mobile phone reception and Google Lens, Aldridge confirmed his discovery with a mixture of surprise and excitement: "It's the sort of find that makes the hairs on your arm stand up a bit."

Further examination of the gas mask revealed markings on both the glass and the rubber components, notably the number "39," which Aldridge identified as a reference to the year 1939, the outset of the Second World War. This detail helped to contextualise the item historically.

After carefully cleaning the mask with a toothbrush to remove accumulated sand and dirt, John Aldridge now proudly displays the gas mask on a shelf in his home, preserving this tangible connection to the area's history during a turbulent period in the 20th century.

The Eastern Daily Press is reporting this unique finding, highlighting how everyday activities such as beachcombing can sometimes lead to uncovering unexpected pieces of history.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-norfolk-43475897> - This article discusses the discovery of World War Two soldiers' graffiti on Norfolk's sea defences, highlighting how coastal activities can reveal historical artifacts.
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-norfolk-67658072> - This report covers the detonation of a World War Two shell found on a Norfolk beach, illustrating the ongoing surfacing of wartime relics in the area.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd7x7wx2rnwo> - This piece details the discovery of World War Two helmets linked to an SS massacre in France, underscoring the historical significance of such artifacts.
4. <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/instant-articles/man-finds-remains-wwii-plane.html> - This article describes the finding of German WWII bomber remains on a UK beach, demonstrating how beachcombing can uncover historical military artifacts.
5. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/lifestyle/20799215.luftwaffe-bomber-remains-discovered-norfolk-beach/> - This report details the discovery of a Luftwaffe bomber's remains on a Norfolk beach, highlighting the region's role in WWII history.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-norfolk-67630594> - This article discusses the exposure of a World War Two pillbox on East Runton beach due to storms, illustrating how natural events can reveal historical structures.
7. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25121170.wwii-gas-mask-found-north-norfolk-beach-fossil-hunter/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data