Nautical Archaeology Society

The Society for Post Medieval Archaeology

# NAS and SPMA Conference 2015

**Venue: Portland Building, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, PO1 3AH**

## Abstracts

## Day 1 - 21st November 2015

**09.10** ***The Lion (74 guns) and the Robuste (80 guns): the naval episode in Aresquiers*.**
**Jonathan Letuppe, Bureau d'études, Éveha-Clermont-Ferrand.**

Since 2010, underwater excavations in the Mediterranean are operating on two Napoleonic French vessels The *Lion* (74 guns) and The *Robuste* (80 guns). Protecting a convoy of 21 merchant ships left Toulon on October the 21st 1809 to Rosas (Spain) in order to supply the French occupation troops, a squadron of five French warships draw off the English enemy on October the 24th attempting to intercept the convoy arrived. The issue for two vessels of the convoy is that, in October the 26th 1809 at 7:40 p.m., the bonfires are lit: The *Lion* exploded in the Mediterranean at 10 p.m. and The *Robuste* at 10:30 p.m.

Today, were discovered fourteen pieces of wreckage in connection with these two vessels, all recorded in the common prefix Aresquiers 1 (Aresquiers 1.1 to 1.14). The problematics facing these sites are numerous. Ascertained at The *Lion* or The *Robuste* is the first step to see if we are in presence of the naval episode of 25th and 26th October 1809. Comparisons between written sources (treaties, stock footage, etc.) and data collected on the sites can identify the degree of compliance with our present knowledge. Thus, we can observe, for example, the solutions adopted by the shipwrights to resolve conflicts between the standards and practices of the site to find probable architectural signatures. An inventory of archaeological artefacts is also underway in a computer database that will allow comparisons with other wrecks of the same period or of the same type of construction.

**09.40** ***The Relics of War: Stories from beneath the waves of Scapa Flow, Orkney*.**
**Dr Annalisa Christie & Dr Mark Littlewood, ORCA Marine Archaeology Institute, Orkney College University of Highlands and Islands**

The large natural anchorage of Scapa Flow has played an important strategic role as the main northern naval base for Britain in both World Wars. As a result the seabed and surrounding coast is littered with wreckage and debris associated with the wartime defences and the vessels that were part of the conflicts. The submerged remains of wartime vessels from both World Wars have been the focus of several Historic Scotland funded projects to confirm the identity and assess the extent, character and condition of these sites, providing baseline data to inform the potential for establishing an historic marine protected area.

Targeted vessels, sites, their debris fields and their surrounding seabed contexts were surveyed with side scan sonar then ground-truthed by diver or drop camera to elucidate the condition of the remains.
This paper presents the outcomes of these recent surveys to demonstrate the diversity of submerged cultural wartime heritage in Orkney – from the remains of German battleships of the First World War, to experimental anti-torpedo close protection vessels of the Second World War and from crashed aircraft sites to extensive fields of boom defence debris. These will be explored within the context of the wider wartime landscape of Orkney, examining how material culture and historic documents can be used portray the personal narratives of the military personnel who would have interacted with them and stories from the period.

The conference is sponsored by: Dive Master Insurance, PADI, BSAC, SAA, 3Deep Media, The Honor Frost Foundation and Historic England

**11.00** ***The Archaeology of Sir John Franklin's HMS Erebus in the Canadian Arctic***
**Ryan Harris, Senior Underwater Archaeologist, Parks Canada**

In September of 2014, the Prime Minister of Canada announced the discovery of one of the two lost ships of Sir John Franklin's expedition that left England in 1845. The discovery in the Canadian Arctic of the ship eventually identified as HMS Erebus came in the sixth season of survey program to which contributed more than a dozen partners from the public, private and academic sectors. Dives immediately following the discovery and subsequent archaeological projects in 2015 including through two meters of ice in April with the Royal Canadian Navy's Fleet Diving Unit have already started to yield important data to understand the site and prepare future work. The artifacts recovered so far give us an idea of what to expect of this site and offer a glimpse into the last moments of HMS Erebus and Sir john Franklin's expedition.

**14.00** ***Landing the silver darlings: herring fisheries and the landscape of coastal Northumberland*****. Dr David Petts, Durham University.**

At the beginning of the 19th century coastal fishing in Northumberland was a seasonal activity utilising beach-launched cobles and villages such as Beadnell and Sunderland were set back from the coastline. By the early 20th century, the fishing industry had expanded significantly, with steam-powered herring drifters operating from permanent harbour installations and bringing their catches to be smoke cured or salted and exported to an international market. However, these harbour installations had not been primarily constructed to support the fishing. Instead, the harbours at Beadnell, Seahouses and Craster all had their origins as ports for exporting minerals, particularly industrially produced lime.

Elsewhere, at ports such as Newbiggin, the lack of harbour installations meant that coble fishing continued into the 20th century. Meanwhile at North Shields, the development of the Fish Quay, in close association with the ambitious Robert Irvin, was the headquarters of a series of fishing companies that dominated the east coast herring industry as well has having commercial interests in Africa, Russia and the South Atlantic.

This paper explores the terrestrial landscapes of the herring fisheries of Northumberland – looking at the extent to which the demands of fishing and other coastal industries reshaped the landscape of a series of settlements along the coast from Newcastle to Berwick.

**14.30** ***Seaton Delaval Hall and the development of a maritime cultural landscape*****. Dr Damian Robinson, Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology.**

This paper will examine the formation of a maritime cultural landscape within the estate of the Delaval family at Seaton in Northumberland. Admiral George Delaval built the present hall, designed by Sir John Vanbrugh, in 1718, which replaced the family's former house and resulted in the radical replanning of the local landscape. Yet this was only part of a series of changes that were already occurring within this coastal landscape as generations of the family sought to redevelop its local port for the export of coal and later glass from mines and the works on the estate. This can be seen in the initial construction of an innovative sluice to flush the port clear of silt, through to the later hand cutting of a narrow channel to allow the continuing loading of vessels at low tide. When looked at in isolation the country house, which fronts onto sea and has a parkland landscape to the rear, appears divorced from its surrounding industrial landscape. However, it can be argued that it was the all-important port that was at the heart of the estate's activities and the foundation upon which the house was built.

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**15.00** ***Portuguese timber supply for Iberian shipbuilding (1580-1640): a case study*. Alexandre Monteiro, Instituto de Arqueologia e Paleociências Instituto de História Contemporânea Universidade Nova de Lisboa.**

Forest Resources for Iberian Empires: Ecology and Globalization in the Age of Discovery (ForSEAdiscovery) is a large research project funded by the European Union with fourteen participating academic institutions from nine countries. ForSEAdiscovery focusses on the construction of ocean-going ships of the Iberian Empires during the early modern period (1500-1800) and aims to consolidate a research line combining historical research, underwater archaeology, GIS and wood provenancing methods (dendrochronology, wood anatomy and geo/dendrochemistry).

Tapping into until Portuguese archives and into documentation never before studied or published, this communication will dwell into what wood was being used in the naus and galleons construction and how the supply of timber (both local supplies and imported timber) and its dynamic trade networks were organized, effectively producing a snapshot of Portuguese ships, shipyards and forests for nautical use during the period of the Spanish rule of Portugal.

## Day 2 – 22nd November 2015

**09.10** ***Portsmouth Historic Dockyard Hinterland Project: Interaction between the naval dockyard and the surrounding environs.* Jonathan Hutchings, Museum of London Archaeology.**

The Royal Navy established Portsea Island as its main harbour and base in the 16th century. As a consequence, the surrounding rural hinterland was developed with extensive facilities that served the construction, arming and servicing of naval ships and accommodated crews and dockyard workers. By the late 18th century the dockyards had grown to one of the country's largest industrial complexes, servicing an enormous fleet.

Whilst the hinterland has since largely been urbanised, much of the historic infrastructure associated with the naval base survives. Its heritage significance is not always fully recognised however, and the aim of the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard Hinterland Project is to enhance understanding of such remains and of how the hinterland has developed as a result of the naval base, for the benefit of the local community, local decision making, and management of the historic environment.

This paper will outline the project and the broad range of archaeological, documentary and cartographic sources, and extensive consultation it will entail. This information will be used to produce a definitive narrative of the development of the area bringing together different strands of archaeology – standing buildings, below-ground remains and GIS-based landscape analysis – and working between land-based and maritime perspectives to develop a holistic understanding of the post-medieval port city.

**09.40** ***Eating, smoking and gambling at sea: an assemblage of finds from the Grand Harbour, Malta.* Russell Palmer, PhD candidate, University of Ghent.**

The iconic Grand Harbour in Malta comprises a central area forming the shore of Valletta to the north and three creeks, which form the coastlines of the Three Cities, to the south. Sandwiched between L-Isla (Senglea) and Birgu (Vittoriosa) is Dockyard Creek (formally Galley Creek). From medieval origins, the harbour was developed by the Knights of St John as the home of their galley fleet, and later by the British.

Prior to the recent renovation of the Birgu waterfront into the Grand Harbour Marina, an underwater excavation was carried out in the creek far enough from the shore so as to avoid harbour-side dumping.

While several underwater excavations have taken place around the shores of Malta, this is the first post-medieval assemblage to receive a full finds analysis. This paper shall analyse the assemblage in order to explore the maritime connections of Malta during the 18th and 19th centuries and as well as life at sea. Providing shelter for vessels from around the Mediterranean and beyond, the finds illustrate adaption and repair of objects for life at sea, and the use of local and imported goods. The assemblage provides valuable evidence of life on-board the galleys and earlier British ships, including food remains, and eating and cooking vessels, which will be used to reconstruct potential diets. Other finds relate to more intimate experiences, from personal adornment and administration to gambling and the smoking of hashish.

**10.05** ***Deptford Royal Dockyard: Archaeological Investigations at Convoys Wharf, Deptford, 2000-2012.*** **Duncan Hawkins, CgMs Consulting.**

The Royal Dockyards were the largest industrial complexes in Britain until the mid nineteenth century, comprising factories for the construction and repair of warships. As the dimensions and displacement of warships increased over time so the infrastructure of the Dockyards profoundly altered. The introduction of steam power, both to vessels and to Dockyard operations, in the early nineteenth century led to radical changes in Dockyard facilities. At each rebuilding much evidence of earlier structures was removed.

The archaeological investigations at Convoys Wharf form the most comprehensive archaeological analysis of a former Royal Dockyard in England with features spanning the 356 years that the Dockyard was in operation. Of particular importance are features of the late Georgian and early Victorian period which represent a Dockyard of the early experimental steam navy and include the remains of two early wide span iron buildings. The project which will shortly be fully published represents a unique exercise in combining documentary, pictorial, cartographic, photographic and archaeological sources"

**11.00** ***The Emanuel Point Shipwrecks: Updates from the Field and Archives, Community Outreach, and Public Engagement.*** **Dr Della A Scott-Ireton (University of Florida) and Dr John Bratton (University of West Florida)**

In 1559, a Spanish fleet sailed into Pensacola Bay, Florida, to found a colony. What would have been the first European settlement in the present-day United States was destroyed before it began when a powerful hurricane struck, sinking most of the ships. In 1992, one of the ships of the lost fleet was discovered, and a second was found in 2006. Currently under investigation by the University of West Florida's Maritime Archaeology Program, these ships, dubbed Emanuel Point I and II, are revealing fascinating information about early Spanish colonization, seafaring, ship construction, and material culture. The community of Pensacola, proud of its long European heritage and colonial history, is engaged in the research through on-going media reports, outreach events, lectures and presentations on new findings, and exhibits of artifacts. The local diving community is also interested in visiting and, when possible, assisting through volunteer efforts. This paper will present the story of the Emanuel Point Shipwrecks, the current research, and the outreach strategies designed to share this exciting discovery.

**11.50** ***Revisiting Batavia: Recent excavations in the Abrolhos Island, Western Australia.*** **Professor Alistair Paterson, University of Western Australia and Corioli Souter, Curator at Western Australian Museum**.

The Dutch East India Company vessel *Batavia* was wrecked on Morning Reef in the Houtman Abrolhos archipelago, Western Australia in 1629. It was the first Vereenigde Oostindishe Compagnie or VOC ship to be lost off the coast of the Southland. Over 200 people survived the initial wreck, making their way to several small coral islands near to the wreck, the largest of these being *Batavia*'s Graveyard, now known as Beacon Island. In the three and a half months before the arrival of the rescue vessel, the number of survivors was more than halved as a result of a particularly bloody mutiny by members of the crew, including a number of the officers.

Since the 1970s the Western Australian Museum has pioneered underwater archaeological excavations centred on shipwrecked Dutch United East India vessels that passed through the Indian Ocean. The early work set the international benchmark for excavation and management of post-medieval and early modern wreck sites. Forty years on, the shipwrecks, associated terrestrial sites and artefact collections continue to be examined using new methodologies and technologies as part of the Australian Research Council project Shipwrecks of the Roaring Forties. This paper outlines work conducted on the terrestrial sites of the *Batavia* Mutiny including results from the 2015 excavations at Beacon and Long Islands.

**14.00 *Cargo, Crew and Pottery from Shipwrecks*. Dr Duncan Brown, Historic England.**

Pottery assemblages from shipwrecks have the potential to inform on several levels, perhaps the most obvious being the use of cargoes to trace patterns of trade and commercial activity. Some pottery was used by the crew, however, and analysis can show how pots were utilised and at what levels in the hierarchy, while they can also be related to the history of a ship and the various ports she called into. Given its fragility, pottery is perhaps not the most useful material to have aboard a rolling, heaving maritime vessel and it is therefore not as common as metal or wooden artefacts, but its inherent qualities of fabric and form make it a very revealing archaeological artefact.

This paper will examine the material from three post-medieval shipwreck sites, the *Mary Rose*, the *Stirling Castle* and an unnamed ship off Kinlochbervie, Scotland. In a comparative exercise, each assemblage will be discussed with reference, where applicable, to cargo and crew, patterns of deposition and interpretations of shipboard life. These ships cover the period from 1545 to 1703 and this study will show how some aspects of pottery acquisition and use changed, while others remained the same. In broad terms, the main question is what people wanted pottery to do and it is that fundamental utilitarian quality that makes ceramics such a useful resource for archaeologists.

**14.30 *VOC-ship Amsterdam 1749. Maritime archaeology and the trade and production of 18th-century Amsterdam.* Professor Jerzy Gawronski, University of Amsterdam.**

The Amsterdam is a ship of the Dutch United East India Company (VOC), which left the Dutch Republic in January 1749 for its maiden voyage to the East Indies. The newly build and fully equipped vessel was shortly after wrecked near Hastings on the south coast of England. In 1984-1986 the stern area of the wreck was investigated during a series of underwater archaeological test excavations. The Amsterdam became the focus point for further historical research into the socio-economic supply systems of the VOC shipyard in Amsterdam. The aim was to develop a contextual model to combine three levels of interpretations for the material culture of these long distance trading vessels; ship, yard, city.

The Amsterdam offered a challenging option to extend the interpretation of each archaeological find from the shipwreck beyond the level of the individual ship because of the availability of archival sources on material purchases of the yard or on the identity and professions of suppliers of the Amsterdam VOC. The model enabled a connection between the material data from a maritime archaeological context and the historical persons which were involved in the production and supply of the yard where the Amsterdam was

built. In this way, maritime archaeology added a material dimension to the world of merchants, craftsmen and shopkeepers in mid-eighteenth century Amsterdam, achieving an archaeological reconstruction of high biographical quality instead of the usual anonymous datasets.

**15.00 *Revealing wrecks through conservation and material analysis*. Angela Middleton and David Dungworth, Historic England.**

Conservation has always been closely linked with the excavation of wreck material. Their wet and unstable nature requires an active conservation approach, not only to stabilise the artefacts, but also to make them accessible to others. During conservation a close examination of the artefacts takes place, putting the conservator in a unique position to often be the first one to note residues, spot repairs or other signs of manufacture, use and decay that bring the story of artefacts alive. In this respect conservation and material analysis hugely contribute to the data-gathering-process that starts on the seabed during excavation, help to put artefacts into context and reveal details that are often hidden or obscured. This paper will focus on the latest case studies from Historic England's work on a range of protected wreck sites, including the *London*, *Stirling Castle* and *Northumberland* and will demonstrate how conservation and material analysis form an integral part of a project and how they contribute to telling the story of a wreck.

**16.00 *Building Colonialism: Archaeology and Urban space in East Africa*. Dr Daniel Rhodes, National Trust for Scotland.**

Tanzania's and Kenya's coastal harbour towns underwent phenomenally rapid transformation from the mid 1800s to the early 1900s. This was the result of British and German colonialism and the development of a new capitalist system of economic and social control. By exploring the physical remains of European activity and the way that construction of harbour towns directly reflected the colonial mission of European powers in the 19th century, this paper examines the impact and social implications of their spatial arrangement and the various systems of appropriation and reorganisation represented in the architecture and urban landscape design of nineteenth-century East Africa.

**16.30 *Freedom through Maritime Trade and Mobility: The "East End" Free Black Community of St. Jan, Danish West Indies*. Professor Douglas V Armstrong, Syracuse University.**

This study examines the role of knowledge of boating and maritime trade as a means of obtaining freedom autonomy for the East End Community of St. Jan, Danish West Indies (1754-1917). The study begins with an examination of the transformation to freedom of a group of knowledgeable and seasoned Caribbean islanders of African descent, who take up collective ownership of land on St. Jan's relatively isolated East End and establish a free black community based on a combination of local provisioning, seamstressing, fishing, and maritime trade. This group becomes known for fleet of small, locally made sloops, and its complex network of trading partners, and its ability to move goods in and out of the Danish port of Charlotte Amalie, among the many small islands of the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and down islands through the Lesser Antilles.

This paper will explore the importance of its secure collective ownership of land, its multifocal social organization, and its fleet of locally made small-scale maritime craft and the ability to trade as the community's collective means of autonomy and long term success during the years prior to the transfer of the Danish West Indies to the United States.