

# QAR 2008 Project Expedition

Entry 05 - QAR Field Log  
October 27-31, 2008  
Mark Wilde-Ramsing

The weather this week prevented our continued excavations and delayed our cannon raising from Tuesday to Thursday. Yet this is an adaptable crew that seeks to make the most of the situation. QAR conservator Shanna Daniel brought down the recently conserved 'seat of ease' for display and transfer to the NC Maritime Museum. Without a cannon for Tuesday's media event, this rarely seen device quickly took center stage and brought with it the realization that archaeology sometimes is the only way we will learn about certain activities in the past. In this case, there is nearly a complete lack of information in the historical records concerning sanitary arrangements aboard 17th and 18th century sailing ships. Recently recovered concretions of various sizes were also on display along with a variety of recognizable artifacts. These included the several pieces of ceramic pots and glass bottles, a square lead disk with an "X" etched on its surface, and what appears to be the first coin recovered from the *Queen Anne's Revenge* site.



*Seat of Ease*



*Piece of a ceramic pot*



*Square lead piece with "X"*



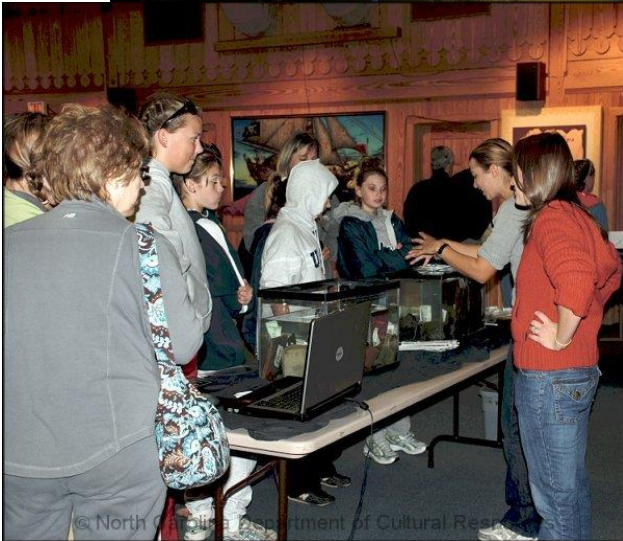
*Possible coin*



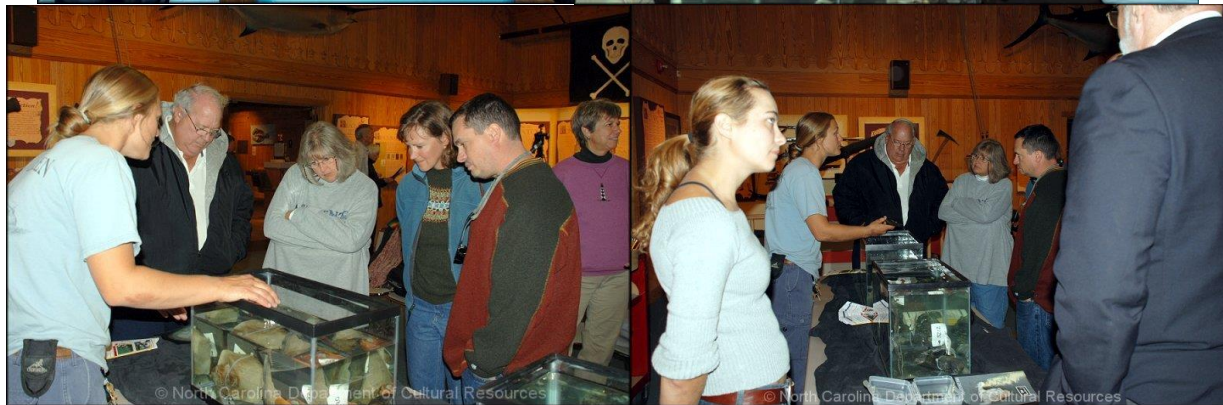
On Wednesday the entire display was transported to the auditorium of the NC Maritime Museum in Beaufort where a public viewing was held for several hours. It was quite a treat to be able to see the wet, unclean artifacts next to their displays of conserved pieces along with an exhibit on piracy. We are all excited about the museum's long-range plans for a major display for *Queen Anne's Revenge*.











Finally, the weather settled down enough to allow cannon recovery. Ever since the project started, Captain Tom Piner has been installing and inspecting his new crane. The big test came Thursday with the lifting cannon C-18 that measured 8 feet in length and weighed about 2,000 pounds. Divers Chris Southerly and Richard Lawrence quickly dug out the artillery piece, which had been placed in storage at the south end of the site. The straps were attached, lift bags filled, and the cannon gracefully made its ascent to the surface after 290 years on the seabed. With Jerry Spencer and Wendy Welsh supervising deck operations, Tom smoothly plucked the cannon from the ocean and gently set it on deck. After a short ride to the Coast Guard Station, the cannon was lifted from the deck and placed on a trailer where it was swaddled in foam and tarps, wrapped



tightly, and whisked off to the *QAR* conservation lab in Greenville where it was placed in its own fresh water tank. It's always a relief and a sense of accomplishment when a cannon is successfully recovered, especially when everything goes smoothly. Today's flawless execution was due in large part to the role NC Marine Fisheries played by providing *R/V Shell Point* and its excellent crew.



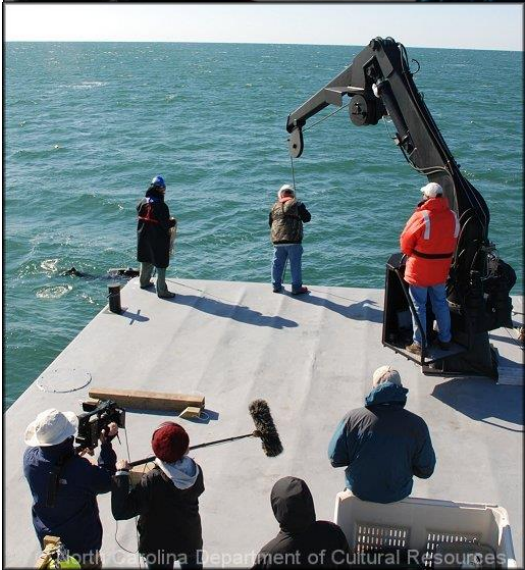




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Occasionally we are fortunate to have folks think enough of our project to feature our work for a video documentary. When this happens, however, it is often not an easy situation because of the disruption to our work routine and the fact that archaeology often proceeds a bit slowly for filmmakers. Waiting for a eureka moment, which we certainly do occasionally have, is much like waiting for paint to dry. This year, however, Lucy Parker and David Johnson of Quickfire, a British documentary company, broke the mold in terms of blending in with the crew and complementing our operations as they went about their

business. It was a pleasure to have them aboard because they had done their homework and were one of the most informed film groups to visit us. Furthermore, they took the time to go "below the surface" to reveal the intricacies of underwater archaeology as we strive to connect with the thoughts and behaviors of those who were present nearly three centuries ago on the day *Queen Anne's Revenge* was lost. We can't wait to see their movie!



**Entry 04 - QAR Field Log**  
**October 20-24, 2008**  
**Chris Southerly**



Researchers began work to the west of the main ballast pile in the midship area of the site this week. The first units (204 and 205) contained a line of dead-eye strops along their eastern edge against the main pile. While archaeologists expected to find elements of the ship's rigging, having seen some during inspection dives following storm scour events, the discover was more extensive. These strops were likely part of the port side chain plate associated with the standing rigging of the main mast. Most of the individual pieces were concreted into one large mass too large for staging or recovery without careful planning.

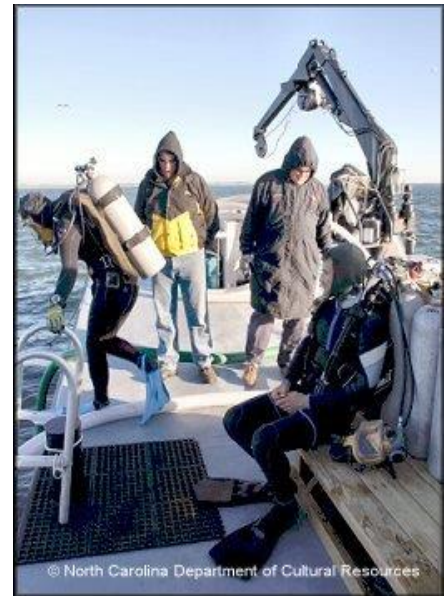


Archaeologists chose instead to reinforce the structure to protect it for later recovery. Other "smaller" but still sizable rigging concretions were recovered after being excavated and mapped.



By this week the weather and equipment delays accumulated to the point that the projected timeframe would not allow archaeologists to reach the area of cannon C13, the planned cannon for recovery. Archaeologists

shifted cannon recovery plans to C18, one excavated during the fall 2007 season and staged to the south area of the site for later recovery. Divers worked to excavate C18 from the protective sand overburden migrating in to the site holding area from the sand berm placed south of the site by the US Army Corps of Engineers in March 2006.







Most of Friday was spent doing the final work on R/V Shell Point's new davit crane in preparation for next week's cannon recovery. Minor adjustments were made to hydraulic lines and check valves for its load test safety inspection. This marked a major addition to the researcher's "tool kit" for artifact recovery and was only possible through the diligent hard work of Capt. Tom Piner. Friday also marked the weekly processing and packing of recovered artifacts for transport to the project conservation lab outside Greenville, NC.

**Entry 03 - QAR Field Log**  
**October 13-17, 2008**  
**Chris Southerly**



This week archaeologists completed 5 new units and the re-excavation of 2 sampling units from May 2006. Extensive time was necessary in units 202 and 203, immediately east of the main ballast pile. These units were layered with concretions and large quantities of ballast stones. More pieces of lead strainers, likely from the bilge pumps were recovered. Other discernable artifacts included some lead shot, glass, and pipe

stems. One large concretion contained the base of a glass case bottle, three pieces of red earthenware ceramic, a pipe stem, and a lead sheet that might possibly be another cannon apron. Additional artifacts still hidden within the concretion will remain unknown until it can be x-rayed at the lab.



By weeks end, work on the east side of the site was complete. Divers moved the reference grids to the west side of the pile and carefully removed sand overburden with the 6" induction dredge in preparation for beginning excavation, documentation, and recovery of potentially concretion/artifact rich units beginning next week.

So far this season, researchers have completed 26 units in 13 field days on the water, logging a total of 206 dives.

**Entry 02 - QAR Field Log**  
**October 6-10, 2008**  
**Chris Southerly**



Excavations continued this week working out toward the edge of the site along the east side of the ballast pile. By mid-week, onboard sediment processing let archaeologists define the eastern boundary of the artifact scatter. From the eastern boundary a new line of excavation units began working back toward the ballast pile. Since the outer units were not heavy with concretions work proceeded quickly allowing researchers to complete 13 units.



Archaeologists and conservators also collaborated this week to set up an in situ monitoring of corrosion potential on the north anchor (A3) and start a passive conservation process. Look for more details of this process soon in a joint field/lab write-up.



**Entry 01 - QAR Field Log**  
**September 28 - October 3, 2008**  
**Mark Wilde-Ramsing**



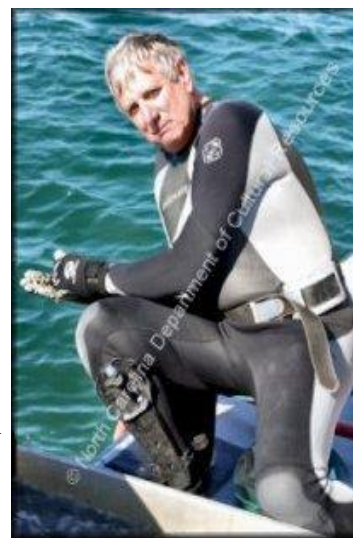
Finally...work begins this week!! Delays from weather and the availability of *Shell Point* pushed our start date back two weeks. Everything was well-prepared and the crew was more than ready. Over the course of the week we completed 6 excavation units on the east side of the main ballast mound during 80 dives. We expected to find lots of ballast stones and cask hoop fragments in this area since we were in the lower hold of the ship. We also weren't surprised when the strainer on one of the ship's pumps came up

for it would have been deep in the bilge to pump out water.

What keeps things interesting are the other items that we didn't expect. This included a large piece of earthenware crockery, a thimble-sized brass cup for weighing gold dust, and lead shot with impressions fabric that may have been part of a canvas bag. Of course, the many objects in concretions plus the minute artifacts in the dredge spoil that are collected from every unit will not be revealed until they are cleaned and x-rayed at the *QAR* conservation lab in Greenville.

All week we had good weather and were able to bring our new crewmembers Lisa Briggs and Lauren Hermley quickly up to speed. Their archaeological training, excellent diving skills, and great attitudes have quickly made them valuable members of an excellent and highly experienced team.

We were also pleased to have Jim Dugan volunteering his services throughout the week during which he was instrumental in helping track down and reactivating an important boat mooring on the east side. These moorings, which are large cement blocks with heavy chain, often become deeply buried and must be relocated through probing and then dug out. Without moorings in critical places around the site *Shell Point* would not be able to stay stationary and support divers as they excavate units directly below.



We were also very pleased to have Charleston, West Virginia policeman and divers Dana Rowsey and Herb Doss working with us. Dana is a crime scene detective, who is in the process

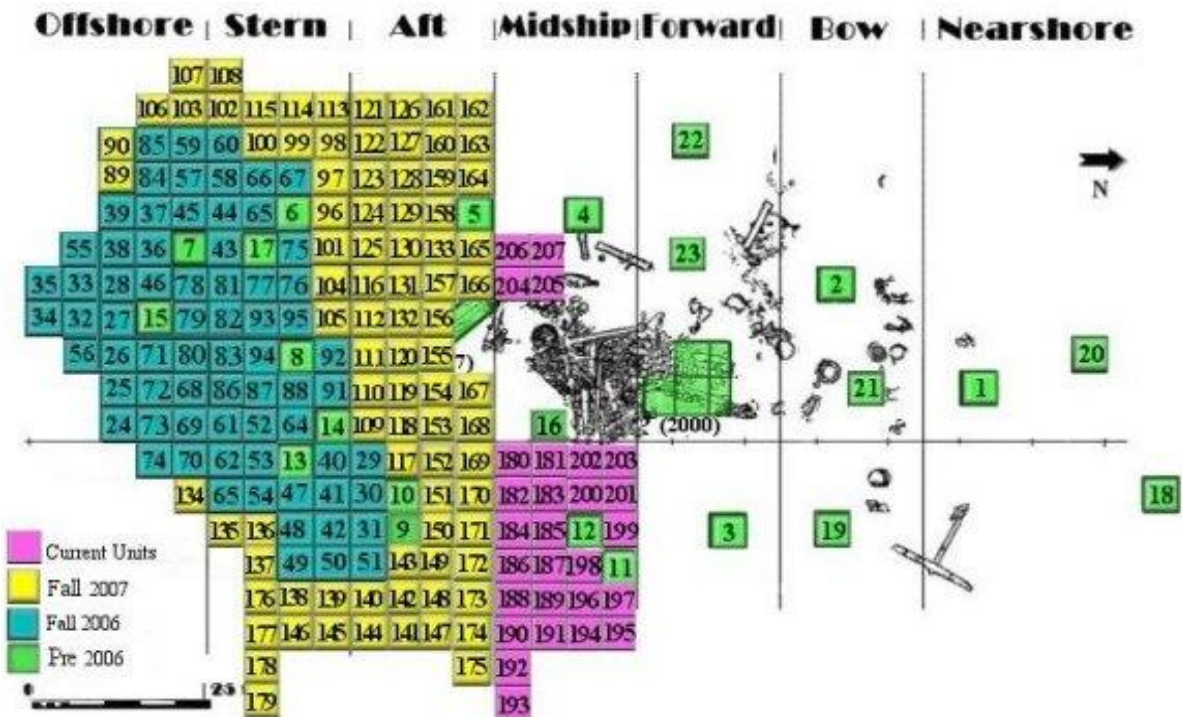


of developing an underwater crime scene unit to document and recover evidence from rivers, lakes, and reservoirs around the state. Currently they have no such capabilities.

Detective work has much in common with archaeology and vice versa. We were more than happy to share our 'tricks of the trade' in terms of mapping and tagging techniques, evidence recovery using sluices and panning methods, and recording, and transportation procedures that take items of interest from the seabed to the lab. The whole *QAR* team was very, very pleased to have gotten to know Dana and Herb and wish them the best in their underwater investigations.



## Site Progress Map







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