

2008 *Queen Anne's Revenge* Shipwreck Field Summary

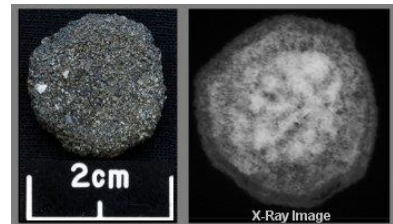
The fall 2008 season was the third field expedition to the *Queen Anne's Revenge* with a goal of working towards full excavation, documentation and recovery of the site. Archaeologists reached the half-way point by the conclusion of this fall's project and estimates are that another three field seasons will be necessary to remove all of the artifacts from harm's way.

The planned eight-week expedition was severely curtailed by research vessel delays and unfavorable winds and weather. The crew only had four full weeks and the equivalent of a fifth week in partial days. Despite the challenges good progress was made. Thirty units were completed at the site corresponding to the midship area of the vessel, immediately east and west of the main ballast pile.



The majority of units excavated were located around the main ballast pile and heavily laden with ballast stones. In total 553 field numbers were assigned. Objects recovered included 440 concretions, 8 loose ceramics, 7 pewter fragments, 3 lead strainer fragments, 1 nesting weight, 1 cannon apron, 1500 ballast stones (weighing just over two tons), dredge spoil, and other miscellaneous objects: wood fragments, lead shot, modern cola

bottles, and a turtle bone. In October archaeologists discovered two artifact types not yet seen on the site, a sword guard and a probable coin. These were transferred to the Conservation Laboratory as soon as possible, to see if X-radiography would reveal their secrets.



In addition to the systematic process of excavation, documentation and recovery of artifacts from the site, cannon C18 was raised from the large object holding area. During the 2007 expedition, researchers decided, because of space limitations at the conservation lab, to stage large excavated objects like cannon and cask hoop sets to the south of the excavation area for later recovery. Originally excavated from unit 125 in September 2007, Cannon 18 became the twelfth cannon recovered from the site and transported to the lab. Raising the nearly one-ton cannon was the first official lift with R/V Shell Point's newly installed crane. The recovery was successful and demonstrated the great benefit the crane will be for artifact recovery in years to come.



Archaeologists and conservators also collaborated to set up an in situ monitoring and passive conservation process on the north anchor. The progress of this process will be regularly checked throughout the year. If subsequent readings are favorable, additional in situ conservation could be set up on other large iron objects (cannons and anchors) and have the potential to shorten the desalination and stabilization time once recovered and in the lab.



Three temporary crew members joined the permanent staff to support the 2008 field expedition: Franklin Price, Lauren Hermley and Lisa Briggs.

Franklin Price has worked with the project in the field and lab for the last three years. An experienced archaeologist, he is always busy helping out in many areas but most of the time he can be found excavating on

the bottom or panning recovered sluice sediment. He helps keep the workflow going at a steady pace, especially with artifact photography and recordation once objects come ashore.

Lauren Hermley has been involved with the *QAR* Project since 2005 when she helped create the DiveDown Program for recreational diver education and outreach. In addition to her training in underwater archaeology, she is a very experienced diver and SCUBA Instructor. Because of her additional background in marketing and non-profit management, Lauren is currently the Executive Director of newly launched Friends of *Queen Anne's Revenge*, a non-profit organization engaged in fundraising and public outreach for the *QAR* Shipwreck Project.



Lisa Briggs was a volunteer/intern on the project in 2007 and returned for the fall 2008 expedition as paid crew. Although from Virginia, she completed most of her education and archaeological training in Europe. While most of her work has been around the Mediterranean, she enjoys the opportunity to explore the archaeology of her native US, especially underwater.



Experienced field personnel are critical because without their help the project could not progress at the pace set for the last three years.

Their hard work and dedication was essential in making operations run efficiently on site and on shore. Each staff member is well versed in the rigorous procedures and protocols required as they may be asked to take over a different task at any time. Much of the fieldwork extends beyond diving. There are numerous forms for data recording of artifacts: before, during and after recovery. The artifacts themselves have to be packed in wet foam and rags to protect them and keep the objects wet until they can be transferred to shore for

photography before being placed in the field storage tanks. Once a week the artifacts are carefully

packed and transported to the conservation lab in Greenville.

There were two additional highlights to the most recent field expedition. Two Charleston, WV police officers and divers, Dana Rowsey and Herb Doss joined the archaeological crew for a week in early October. Detective Rowsey is in the process of developing an underwater crime scene unit for evidence documentation and recovery from the rivers, lakes and reservoirs around West Virginia.





As detective and archaeology work has much in common, techniques in tagging, mapping, recovery, recordation, and transportation were shared to the benefit of all. Shortly after the CSU divers left, an English production crew from Quickfire Media joined the archaeological team. Lucy Parker and David Johnson spent three weeks both on the research vessel and ashore working on a documentary for BBC: *Blackbeard's Pirate Ship Revealed*. This will air in America on the PBS show *Secrets of the Dead* as "*Blackbeard's Lost Ship*."

As with all fieldwork this past fall met with myriad challenges, rewards and surprises. The quality and success of the expedition can be attributed to the caliber and professionalism of the research team and the cooperation and contributions from other state and federal agencies. NC DENR Marine Fisheries loans the research vessel *Shell Point*, and her captain Tom Piner, while Parks and Recreation provides housing for project personnel at the Fort Macon State Park barracks. The US Coast Guard Fort Macon provides dock space, secure shore storage, and logistical support for project operations.

Research and conservation will continue throughout the winter and spring before work and plans begin again in summer for next year's expedition to the site.