

The Queen's Report

Update from the

Queen Anne's Revenge Shipwreck Project

Volume 1, Number 2, April 2001

Searching for the *Queen's* Identity

It is referred to as the **Queen Anne's Revenge Shipwreck Project**. It is responsible for the archaeological excavation, conservation, and interpretation of artifacts from a shipwreck located in 20 feet of water just outside Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina. But has the project been named prematurely? Do the researchers working with the project really believe they have identified the wreck of the pirate Blackbeard's flagship, run aground and abandoned nearly 300 years ago?

Many archaeologists are unwilling to form a definitive conclusion. The QAR Project staff, however, is confident they have accumulated enough circumstantial evidence to support the wreck's identification. According to Project Director Mark Wilde-Ramsing, "there is a point when the threshold of doubt is met, and I think we've passed that point." Since 1996, researchers have been collecting data and recovering artifacts from the site; the essential conclusions include:

- Blackbeard captured *Concorde*, a French slaver, off Martinique in the Caribbean in the fall of 1717. The pirate renamed the vessel *Queen Anne's Revenge* (*QAR*) and used it as his flagship for several months before running it aground and abandoning it near Beaufort Inlet in June 1718. According to geologists, many of the ballast stones on the site originated in the Caribbean.
- The wreck is located in an area where historical documents report the *QAR* was lost. The site's configuration, along with the number and size of cannon (22) and anchors (4) suggest a vessel comparable in size to *QAR*, and all other recorded shipwrecks in the area were merchant vessels that were not as large or heavily armed.
- Five cannon have been recovered, and all differ in style, size, caliber, or nationality; an indication the ship was not likely a standard naval vessel.
- The structural remains on site appear to have been constructed in the French style. Biologists identified the wooden hull planks, frames, and sheathing as white oak and red pine groups, probably from northern Europe. Radiocarbon dates indicate the trees grew in the mid-1600s.
- All artifacts recovered predate 1718, including a bronze bell dated 1709 and a cast iron cannon dated 1713. Many of the artifacts are comparable to those found on another contemporary pirate vessel.

Meet the Staff

One of the primary strengths of the QAR Shipwreck Project has been the cooperation of a number of private and state agencies, including at least 30 nationally and internationally recognized scholars and scientists. The QAR Project staff, however, consists of a small group of highly dedicated and professional divers, archaeologists, and administrators that run the Project on a daily basis.

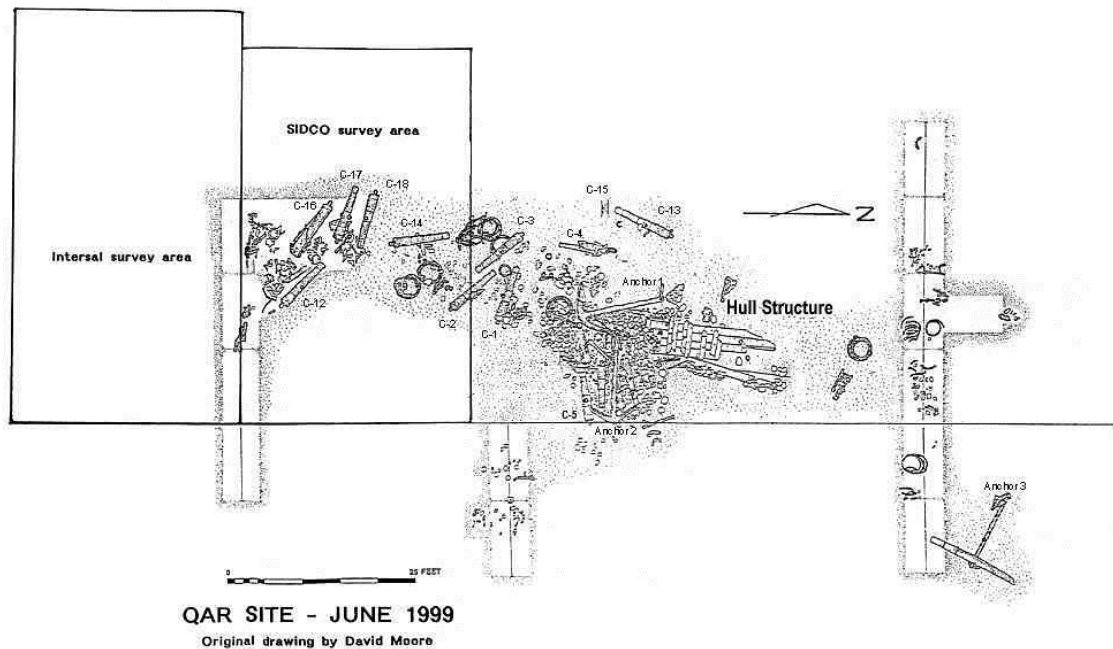


Staff (Left to right): Top: Mark Wilde-Ramsing, Director; Wayne Lusardi, Conservator; Connie Asero, Special Projects Coordinator. Bottom: Mike Plakos, Archaeologist; April Varnam, Documentation Technician; Kim Eslinger, Conservation Technician

Question of the Month

How will you raise the Queen Anne's Revenge, and do you have any plans to sail it?

Such questions are often asked by young school children that understandably have problems visualizing the condition of a shipwreck after nearly three centuries submersion in seawater. There is, of course, no intact ship sitting on the bottom of the ocean. The Project is not about raising a ship, only the surviving remains of a vessel that deteriorated long ago. Ship parts, pewter plates, ballast stones, cannon, anchors, and other objects are scattered over an area about 150 by 50 feet, and most of the artifacts are buried in sand. A detailed drawing of the QAR site can be viewed below:



News From the Shipwreck

Spring dive planned: QAR project archaeologists will conduct a brief spring dive from May 7th to 10th. The main objectives will be the installation of a permanent reference datum and the testing of elevation equipment. The highlight of the expedition will be the recovery of "Baby Ruth II", a small cannon that is covered with ballast stone and resembles a large candy bar. This 1200-pound artifact was excavated last fall; its recovery was delayed until a large water-tight tank could be built for its conservation. On May 9th, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources Secretary Lisabeth C. Evans and guests from the participating institutions and agencies, as well as the media, will be on hand to observe the event. Participating in the event will be research vessels from UNC- Wilmington, Cape Fear Community College, North Carolina Marine Fisheries and the 824th Army Reserve Unit of Morehead City.

Live Dive postponed: QAR Live Dive II, the second live internet broadcast from the site of the Queen Anne's Revenge shipwreck, tentatively scheduled for this spring has been postponed until October, 2000. Last October over 1,600 registered students in 64 American and Canadian schools, colleges, and museums participated in QAR Live Dive I, watching their computer monitors and asking questions as divers went about their work. Evaluations were positive and enthusiastic, with the typical comment being that QAR Live Dive made history "real." Although the public will not be able to communicate with researchers during the spring expedition, daily reports of all activities will be posted on the QAR web site. Please stay tuned for Live Dive II coming this fall to computers everywhere!!

Site buoy wanders home: During the last week of March, a fierce northeaster lashed the Cape Lookout coast. Its fury was strong enough to break the chain holding the large buoy that marks the location of the QAR site. It was found the next day on the beach. Thanks to the Town of Atlantic Beach staff, the wayward buoy was recovered and taken to QAR headquarters. It will be re-deployed next month during the spring expedition. Bad buoy!



Blackbeard sails Again!

Only this time he was in the BBC/Discovery Channel video shown to passengers on board the *Seaboard Pride*, a Cunard Line cruise ship out of London. When Cunard contacted QAR supporter Josie Hookway in Bath, North Carolina, she sent them the video along with QAR websites and current Project information. When the *Seaboard Pride* sailed along the American coast from Maine to Florida, guest lecturer Sylvia Pender-Johns used the materials as a basis for a lecture on Blackbeard and the QAR Shipwreck Project. The video was shown during her lecture and was also transmitted to the passengers' cabins. Ms. Pender-Johns, from Dulwich, England, is a strong supporter of QAR studies, and has spoken extensively in the US and UK on travel and maritime heritage.

Contributions

Contributions to assist with the recovery, conservation, and display of artifacts from the QAR shipwreck should be sent to Maritime Research Institute, a nonprofit corporation, c/o Carteret County Chamber of Commerce, 801 Arendell Street, Morehead City, North Carolina 28557.

In the Morehead City/Beaufort/Cape Lookout area?

Visit the North Carolina Maritime Museum at 315 Front Street, Beaufort, NC and see many of the actual artifacts from *Queen Anne's Revenge*.