

The Queen's Report

Update from the
Queen Anne's Revenge Shipwreck Project
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Cannons and Timbers Moved to Greenville



Just about everybody from the main office at Fort Fisher came to Morehead City September 9th to help the *QAR* staff move cannons and other artifacts 85 miles to their new home at the *QAR* conservation laboratory facilities on the West Research Campus of East Carolina University. The move would not have been possible without the help of Mike Byers, who drove down from Raleigh with the NC Historic Sites 18' tilt bed truck and Anthony Nelson, who furnished and drove the NC Marine Fisheries forklift. In preparation, one group drained the water from the tanks where the fifth cannons have been

curing for several years. Once the water was out, they hoisted the cannons onto pallets, wrapped them in wet rags and plastic pond liners, and carefully, inch by inch, maneuvered them out of the building where the forklift put them on the truck. Meanwhile, another group listed and stored smaller artifacts into buckets.



By early afternoon, the truck, followed by a caravan of nervous staff, was on its way to Greenville. With the cannon at the *QAR* lab, Chief Conservator Sarah Watkins-Kenney and her staff will be able to closely monitor their progress with the expectation that at least some will be ready to go on exhibit at the NC Maritime Museum in 2004. On November 6th, timbers from the hull of *QAR* were moved with essentially the same procedures and personnel. Timbers are more fragile to move, and great care was taken to keep them wet and to protect their fragile surfaces. After the tanks were drained, the timbers, some which exceed 15 feet in length, were wrapped in heavy foam and plastic for transporting to Greenville. Needless to say, there was great relief when all the artifacts were safely put to rest in their new home.



Newsletter Questions

In our summer issue, we reported on a 1718 meeting of the Pennsylvania Provincial Council where the colonial commissioners agreed to sell the contents of a captured pirate ship only if they could keep the munitions for the defense of their colony.

We listed some of the entries: "a sponge, a pateraroe, and caggs of patridge" and wondered what they were referring to. Nathan Henry, archaeologist with the N.C. Underwater Archaeology Branch at Fort Fisher in Kure Beach, supplied the answers. A "sponge [sponge]" was a sheepskin attached to a rammer that was wetted and



shoved down a cannon bore between shots to extinguish sparks. Otherwise, the next charge of gunpowder might explode prematurely. A "pateraroe" was a small, breech-loaded cannon that was used liked a shotgun for deck control when a ship was being boarded or to quell a mutiny. Patararoes were loaded with the contents in the "Caggs of Patridge [partridge]." They were small wooden barrels or kegs full of lead birdshot.

In this issue we wonder why geologists have recently used a sub-bottom sonar instrument in their quest to better understand the environment surrounding *QAR*? What were they searching for? We look forward to hearing what you think.

What? Another Hurricane

The small spot on the weather map, far out in the Atlantic didn't look like much of a storm, but a week later forecasters were predicting that yet another hurricane, with a possible intensity at a maximum five strength, was headed toward North Carolina. On Monday, September 15, after canceling the photo-mosaic expedition, *QAR* and UAB staff enlisted aid from NC Marine Fisheries and the Coast Guard at Ft. Macon to secure the warning buoy marking the *QAR* site. Staff reported that the weather was calm and clear, but the swells, even three days before Isabelle struck, were awesome. Every time one passed under them, the boats went down in a trough to the point that land was not visible. Back on shore, visiting archaeologist Mike Beach volunteered to climb the 30-foot tower at Fort Macon and retrieve the security camera. He performed admirably with both wind and wasps working themselves into a fury. All was secured for the blow.

Returning to the site on October 2nd, *QAR* staff observed first hand nature's strength this fall.

Hurricane Isabel's strong currents were evident due to their scouring effects on the east side of the site. A month later, assisted by a team of archaeologists from ECU Maritime Studies, headed by Frank Cantelas and Nathan Richards, the project was able to map artifacts in the newly exposed area. A few items, including parts of a bilge pump strainer were recovered and taken to the lab for treatment. As in the past, we expect the site to slowly refill over the winter and once again bury the newly exposed remains. Unfortunately, with storms such as Isabel and Floyd, the extent of damage and loss to *QAR* artifacts and their integrity is not really known. It is agreed that with hard-packed sand underlying the site, strong currents will continue to affect the site and consequently, monitoring and emergency recovery are only short-term solutions for preserving *QAR*.



Newest Member of the Staff



Recently Project Director Mark Wilde-Ramsing conducted a two-hour staff meeting during which a strange looking shape draped with a cloth sat behind him. At one point he chastised a staff member for trying to peek. At the end of the meeting he introduced the newest member of the staff by removing the shroud and revealing a strange contraption on wheels complete with a mounted camera. It turns out the staff were complaining about difficulties photographing details of long artifacts, such as cannon and hull planks. The new "staff member", with its wheels, wide span, and

adjustable arms, makes it possible to roll over the artifact and quickly take multiple, controlled digital photographs. These can be easily stitched together in the computer in a composite image and provide the detail needed for artifact documentation during cleaning and conservation. Where did Wilde-Ramsing buy it? He didn't. He designed it and built it using materials he purchased at the local hardware store. We have been trying to come up with a name for it. The current favorite is Mark II.

Director's Report



The *Queen Anne's Revenge* Shipwreck Project is entering an exciting period. Artifacts that have been locked up for nearly three centuries on the seabed plus several years in the laboratory storage are now receiving the treatment they deserve. An archaeological crew from Fort Fisher, headed by UAB conservator, Nathan Henry, has spent the past year disassembling nearly two hundred concretions that produced thousands of artifacts. These vestiges of Blackbeard's voyage on the high seas range from specks of captured gold, an enormous variety and amount of lead and iron shot, pieces of sail cloth and bones from the dinner table, to an

intriguing lifting device that resembles our bumper jacks of today. In concert with laboratory activities is the work of *QAR* archaeologist and data manager Chris Southerly, who has been patiently working with consultants and staff to adapt the Office of State Archaeology's artifact database specifically for *QAR*'s needs. This system allows project personnel to track, analyze and manage the tremendous amount of data being collected during all phases of the project. Currently we anticipate over 15,000 individual artifacts from recovery efforts. Data cataloging and entry of the backlog of paper records has become an obsession by all *QAR* staff since we are staring at the fact an estimated 98% of the shipwreck still lies on the seabed!

With all this meticulous labor, why is the project entering an exciting period? These extensive efforts are now allowing staff archaeologists to begin putting all the pieces together and see the overall picture. Collectively, artifacts and their relationship to each other can reveal where the galley was located, how many times the ship was overhauled, what ports of call it made, how they prepared for battle and many other things. We look for specific clues to help answer general questions about life aboard ship, how the ship wrecked and what happened to it afterward. For instance, do the numerous red earthenware pottery shards come from the



same storage vessel or do they represent many containers? If they represent many different pots we begin to understand consumption and storage practices of the pirate crew. If, however, the pieces are from a single vessel scattered across the site, then we have some notion about how waves and currents have affected the site as the ship sank into the inlet sands.



We expect to continue our focus on completing the analysis and conservation of the recovered artifacts over the next year. In late spring or summer we anticipate bringing together the many specialists who have examined *QAR* and its artifacts over the last six years. In a workshop setting they will present their findings and discuss future research questions and a program for long-term management of this important submerged cultural resource. Other aspects of the *QAR* program will focus on the shipwreck itself. Foremost on the list is to complete a photo mosaic of the entire exposed portions of the shipwreck site. We will rely on the assistance of a team from the National Undersea Research Center,

NOAA Marine Sanctuary, and ECU. Data cataloging and entry of the backlog of paper records has become an obsession for the *QAR* staff. An estimated 98% of the shipwreck still lies on the seabed!

Donations

We thank Sylvia and Leon Sylvester for their generous donation to support our proposed study to allow limited diver access to *QAR* through an educational certification program. Their contribution matched funding from the Crystal Coast Development Bureau.

You may have noticed a new addition to the *QAR* website - our electronic donation box, which will make it easier for those of you who have expressed an interest in helping out. Becoming a member of the *Queen's Crew* will help us Continue the Voyage.

Your support is greatly appreciated.

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*