SUMMARY
This report summarises the work undertaken on the *Coronation* Offshore and *Coronation* Inshore designated wreck sites (located off Penlee Point, Plymouth) during the period 1st December 2009 to 25th October 2010.

Further work is required to establish the extent of the debris trail in order to produce a complete site plan, to understand the level of seabed erosion, and act accordingly.

The license was authorised by the Secretary of State, under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973). The assistance provided by Ian Oxley, Mark Dunkley, Monika Schneider and Alison James of the English Heritage Maritime Team is gratefully acknowledged.

The continued support of the current survey team and particularly Peter Mcbride and Mark Pearce is also appreciated.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Coronation was a second rate 90 gun, British warship built in 1685 at the Naval Dockyard in Portsmouth. The vessel took part in the Battle of Beachy Head in 1690 and was lost a year later (1691) in a gale off Penlee Point, near Plymouth, Devon. The exact reasons for her loss are still unclear.

In two primary locations, *Coronation* is thought to lie Offshore at Latitude 50° 18.57' North, Longitude 004° 11.98' West and Inshore at Latitude 50° 18.96' North and Longitude 004° 11.57' West. These coordinates are that of the designated positions and have been supplied by the Department of Culture Media and Sport.

On 8th December 2009 a survey license was granted to the author (for both sites) to continue the work commenced under the previous License.

2.0 SITE IDENTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT

2.1 Diving Logistics

The *Coronation* Offshore site is located directly in the path of one of the main sailing routes in and out of the Port of Plymouth (located in Plymouth Sound), and lies within waters controlled by the Queens Harbour Master (QHM) / Ministry of Defence (MoD). The net effect is that there are a multitude of small and medium sized pleasure craft and police boats travelling over the site – particularly on weekends – with the attendant risk to divers. Extra vigilance and a suitably trained boat skipper is required on this site.

The Penlee Point area is subject to relatively strong tidal currents particularly on Spring tides. Although the two sites are approximately 800 metres apart, the Offshore site is approximately 684 metres south west of the Inshore site, with the result that the periods of slack water are considerably shorter on the Offshore site.

Due to the large geographical spread of the survey team and the difficulties in coordinating tides, weather, and divers' availability this has resulted in again the disappointment of less work on the site being conducted than anticipated for the 2010 season. The addition of more local divers to enable short notice dives to take place as the weather and tides have permitted has assisted in the ability to conduct

work at the sites. The total survey dives undertaken in this reporting period is 45 (as with a total underwater time of 1748 minutes at 17/10/10). However there have been in excess of 300 visits to the site for non-survey dives.

2.2 Condition of Site

Until recently it was thought that all that remains of the *Coronation* at the Offshore site is a scattering of guns and two large intact anchors, identified as Anchors A and B on the site plan prepared by Peter Holt in 1997, a broken anchor (Anchor C) and a large quantity of guns scattered across the Inshore site.

Observation of the guns confirms that not all of the guns are stable, and appear to be actively corroding. This has been re-confirmed during this reporting period with several “fins” and “fizzing” of the guns being observed.

3.0 GEOLOGY, TOPOLOGRAPHY & FLORA

The seabed in the survey area is composed of undulating natural rock (with some steep pinnacles) with small pockets (gullies) of sand. A variety of seaweeds are attached to the rocks on the site but in the licensee’s opinion this does not obstruct the artefacts from view on the offshore site. The inshore site can be almost unworkable when the summer growth of kelp has become established. This year this was the case as early as April.

The 2007 & 2009 multibeam survey data show that the Offshore site lies upon a raised area of rocky seabed that is separated from the Inshore site by a deeper ‘channel’ that is in places covered in sand. These sand filled gullies are diminishing and so giving the opportunity for new artefacts becoming exposed and subsequently recorded.

3.1 Seabed Erosion

The movement of sand from the site reported in 2007 and 2009 has been visually confirmed this year and an accurate sediment monitoring system at the Offshore site has been installed. The erosion has exposed an unrecorded gun on the Offshore site possibly a 5.25lb Saker, this has yet to be confirmed as the whole gun is not visible and is encompassed in a large area of concretion that extends up to the trunions from the cascabel end of the gun. Other areas of concretion have also been exposed on the Offshore site along with several items of later period maritime debris.

4.0 PUBLIC OUTREACH, EDUCATION & DISSEMINATION

The recommendation (Ward, S. 2008, *Coronation Inshore and Offshore Licensee’s Site Report)* to commence a broader outreach programme in the local area has been developed and it is hoped that a permanent “Diver Trail” of the Offshore site can be produced for the diving season of 2011. This was to have been accomplished this year however a trial of a guide line around the perimeter of the offshore site was reasonably successful but was ripped out by fishing debris; namely an abandoned short string of lobster pots. Initial support for other outreach programmes has been received from a range of local organisations. The sites have also seen a dramatic increase in interest and 315 named divers have been granted licences to visit the sites this year. On several occasions groups of divers in excess of 20 per group and

as many as 40 on one occasion have arranged dive weekends specifically to visit the sites.

Mr Mark Pearce has been actively seeking external sponsorship and support for the research at the sites and has secured the loan of two Seoux underwater scooters and the fitting of a Lowrance side scan sonar to one of the project team vessels to aide our work. Local media and International diving publications have also expressed an interest in publishing articles on the site and the work being carried out by amateur diving enthusiasts. (Western Morning news Tuesday 12 October 2010).

4.1 Illegal Diving / Interference - Education Campaign

Rumours of illegal diving on both sites have been reported; however no evidence of this has been confirmed this year. Diving is still continuing in the intermediate undesignated area between the two sites. This area has confirmed artefacts within and is an area of concern. As previously stated in other reports it may be prudent to reclassify the area into one all-encompassing rectangular / trapezium shaped site.

The MoD Police continue to support the Licensee and have contacted local "Pot" Fisherman to remind them that it is illegal to interfere with the sites and this is inclusive of the laying of pots. This has not been a major problem this year, however a small string of abandoned pots have destroyed the guideline that was placed on the Offshore site. Areas in very close proximity to the Inshore site have been subjected to potting on several occasions.

Local diving operators continue to advertise 'HMS *Coronation*' as a local dive site. Plymouth Diving (http://www.plymouthdiving.co.uk/index.aspx) for example appears to advertise the site as one of four accessible sites under 20m depths, without mentioning the site's protected status (http://www.plymouthdiving.co.uk/Content/DiveSites/Coronation.aspx) or licensing requirements.

The location of the current Licensees place of work has permitted effective monitoring of the site and the cooperation of the QHM and the Coastwatch Station staff at Rame Head is acknowledged.

The production of a "Diver Trail" with an underwater guide may alleviate some of this problem by encouraging divers to visit this impressive site under a Visitors Licence and within guidelines. The sites are becoming very popular dive sites and following the success of the *Colossus* dive trail the installation of the *Coronation* dive trail is essential to enhance the educational and enjoyment value of a visit to this impressive and important heritage site.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The changing nature of the seabed across the area presents exciting opportunities to further increase our knowledge of the site. The uncertainty of the contents of the intermediate site and surroundings combined with the acquisition of the side scan sonar and underwater scooters gives great opportunity to develop the knowledge of these sites. It is hoped that the team can now extend the research area and the following work is recommended:

1. Continued diver survey of the Offshore site to complete the 1997 plan and enlarge it to include exposing artefacts. This must also include detailed recording of those artefacts in line with Wessex Archaeology's 2003 recommendation (Black 2003).

2. Diver survey of the intermediate site and the corridor between the two designated sites to ascertain the extent and nature of the debris linking the two sites.

3. The sediment monitoring system installed on the offshore be accurately monitored and recorded at regular intervals to ascertain seabed erosion, and confirm the depth of sediment in the gullies.

4. Continue the search for the unaccounted for Best Bower anchor and cannon, using side scan sonar and diver survey techniques.

5. A corrosion monitoring system be investigated and to be installed to determine the exact nature and extent of corrosion of the guns and anchors on the site, and monitor accordingly.

6. Cataloguing of the existing material and documentary archive. Most of the archive currently resides with a previous licensee Peter McBride. It is thought that this would follow the protocols and procedures developed by Kevin Camidge on the Charlestown project, funded by English Heritage. This work is ongoing and being driven forward by Mr Jon Parlour.

7. Prepare interpretative material for the site for the diving and non-diving public to assist development of the aforementioned outreach projects. Mount Edgecumbe House being the primary location for the displays to be located.

8. Liaise with Plymouth University to combine their training requirements for survey techniques with the requirements of the team to record the intermediate site area.

6.0 REFERENCES

Black, J. 2003, *Coronation Offshore, Penlee Point, Plymouth: Designated Site Assessment: Full Report*. Wessex Archaeology, Salisbury (unpublished).

Ward, S. 2006, *Coronation Inshore and Offshore Licensee's Site Report*, Nautical Archaeology Society, Portsmouth (unpublished).

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