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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 26th November 2012 – 25th November 2013.

Further work is required to establish the extent of the debris trail in order to produce a complete site plan particularly to the southwest of the offshore area of designation. Work continues to record and 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 Alison James, Mark James and Mark Dunkley of the English Heritage Maritime Team is gratefully acknowledged.

The continued support of the current survey team and particularly Mark Pearce Visitor's Licensee and Visitor Coordinator 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 1st December 2012 a Survey and Excavation Licences were granted to the author (for both sites) to continue the work commenced under the previous licences.

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.

After installation and opening of the *Coronation* Diver Trail in 2011 the team has focussed on locating additional artefacts both within and outside of the designated

areas. The visitor scheme has identified new artefacts and additional items of interest within the designated areas and surrounding undesignated area.

The core survey team have completed a total of 144 survey dives in this reporting period. Due to the poor weather in the early part of 2013 licensed individuals visiting the sites has remained lower than 2010/11 and 2011/12. However many of this year's 202 visitors licensed divers have visited several times.

2.2 Condition of Site

The main designated sites remain stable but have again experienced sediment movement off the sites which have revealed additional artefacts. The increased diver activity has had no obvious affect to the marine life or the main artefacts.

The winter storms of 2012 have resulted in the loss of the Sonar Bell locating device and several diver trail markers were also lost. New station markers were installed in March 2013 and are holding well.

2012/13 has again seen the location of several more artefacts to the southwest of the offshore site and additional items have been located within the "Bosun's Locker" area. A second area containing many cannon ball and heavy items and areas of concretion has yet to be accurately surveyed (this area is outside of the designated area). An additional gun believed to be from *Coronation* has also been recorded as a direct result of the Geo/mag survey completed in 2012 this also is on the southwest debris trail that the team have been focussing on and has been given the local designation of Gun 21.

3.0 GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY & 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. No diving from the survey team was conducted on the inshore site this year.

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. This continues to be an area of concern as valuable artefacts that are appearing are being lost very soon after exposure. This is not as a result of surface recovery. It is a fair assumption that this procedure is occurring on a much wider area and many artefacts may be being lost to the process.

3.1 Seabed Erosion

The movement of sand from the site reported back in 2007 is still an on-going process. This has been visually confirmed again this year and the sediment monitoring system at the Offshore site has been monitored at regular intervals to confirm the mobile status of the seabed at the site.

4.0 PUBLIC OUTREACH, EDUCATION & DISSEMINATION

The *Coronation* wreck Project website has developed well and has received 12,179 hits since opening (as at 05 Nov 13).

Mr Mark Pearce (Visitors Licensee) has again been actively seeking external sponsorship and support for the research at the sites.

Although many clubs enquired about diving, it is estimated that between 30% - 50% of them failed to dive due to the poor conditions. It was however, interesting that several groups having visited Plymouth had enquired at short notice to dive the site. Fortunately due to the support of EH this has permitted several groups to dive the site who otherwise may not have been able to through traditional application procedures. This once again highlights the interest by diving clubs in protected sites of national importance and the potential that could be cultivated all over the country. The contribution these clubs could make to underwater discovery and archaeology if they could be empowered and encouraged more to take a local interest in their own areas is immense.

4.1 Conservation Report / Storage and Display

The bid for funding of a conservators report on the artefacts and archive of the site was successful and a full report was compiled by Martin Read (copy sent to EH). The plan that Mount Edgecumbe House would take possession and custody of the artefacts has been put on hold due to lack of available fundings from the estate. It is hoped that further discussion will see the *Coronation* artefacts on display alongside the established display of the *Metta Catherina* wreck. It would be a great pity if the *Coronation* display were not open to public viewing after such a long period of being in private storage. A representative photographic supplement of the artefacts is at Annex A.

4.2 Illegal Diving / Interference - Education Campaign

There were no reported incidents of illegal diving on the sites this year. The monitoring system of the site is working extremely well and the QHM Plymouth and the Coast Watch team at Rame Head are to be commended on their vigilance and support. Diving is still continuing in the intermediate undesignated area between the two sites and surrounding area. These areas have confirmed artefacts and remain an area of great concern.

The MoD Police continue to support the Licensee and have visited divers at the site to confirm their validity of being there.

The majority of local operators now fully support the *Coronation* Wreck Project and offer official visits to the site coordinated through the website.

5.0 RE-DESIGNATION OF PROTECTED AREA

As recommended in several other reports re-designation of the area of protection has been a major concern of the project team. With no action being taken a bid for an amendment to the protected areas was submitted in January 2013. The amendment being one all-encompassing rectangular / trapezium shaped site extending from the

inshore site through the offshore site and beyond to the southwest where it is perceived more items await discovery. The area has been kept to the minimum currently required to afford the appropriate protection to the known artefacts present. Annex B gives details of the area submitted. Unfortunately despite numerous conversations and e-mails the designation is currently still being processed at EH headquarters. Disappointingly for the team it would appear that a decision on the outcome cannot be expected in the near future.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The ever 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 increased diver activity and visitor recording sheets 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. Complete the re-designation of the sites to include the newly located items and potential extent of the wrecks debris trail. See Annex A.
2. Continued diver survey of the sites and the areas to the southwest of the site and the targets identified by the magnetometer and sonar survey commissioned by EH and carried out by MAST.
3. 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.
4. The continuation of sediment monitoring on the offshore site be accurately monitored and recorded at regular intervals to ascertain seabed erosion, and confirm the depth of sediment in the gullies.
5. Continue the search for the unaccounted for Best Bower anchor and cannon, using side scan sonar and diver survey techniques.
6. Maintenance of the Diver Trail and carry forward the momentum and outreach activities that the Diver Trail has generated.
7. On-going liaison with Plymouth University to combine their training requirements for survey techniques with the requirements of the team to record the intermediate site area and set up an on-going multi-discipline research study for the undergraduate courses conducted at Plymouth University.

7.0 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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Crook, R. 2012 *Coronation Inshore and Offshore Licensee's Site Report*, Plymouth (unpublished).

Annexes:

- A. Photographic supplement of *Coronation* artefacts.
- B. Proposed area for the new designation of the *Coronation* protected site.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPLEMENT OF ARTEFACTS

1. Spur



2. Bottle Cap



3. Cauldron Tap



4. Scuppers



5. Sword Hilt Cover



6. Deadeye



7. Deadeye



8. Sounding Lead



9. Sounding Lead



10. Cauldron



11. Cauldron



12. Bell



13. Gunners Ladle



14. Gun Apron



15. Gun apron



16. Sheaves



17. Sheave



18. Lead Pipework



19. Nail



20. Nail

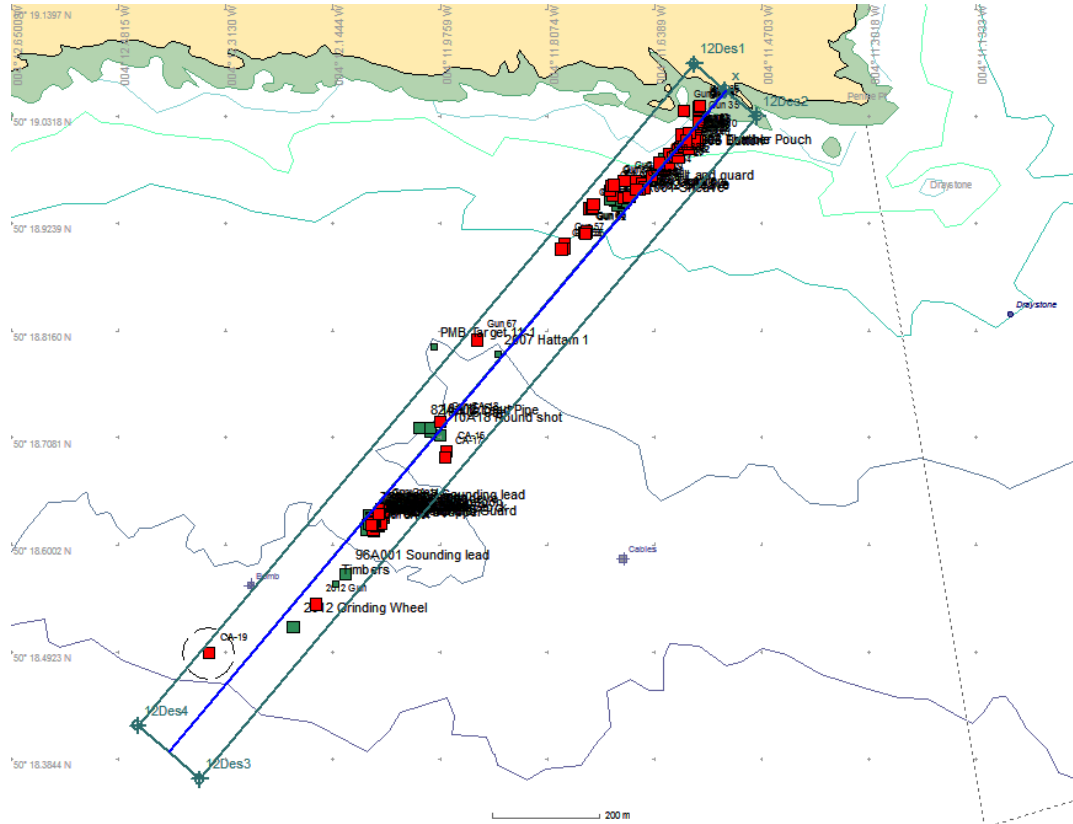


21. Pewter Plate



The above photographs represent a selection of artefacts that have undergone the conservation assessment in 2013. They await long term packing and storage at a more suitable location. The aim is to house the entire collection at Mount Edgecumbe House, Cornwall.

**PROPOSED AREA FOR THE NEW DESIGNATION OF THE CORONATION
PROTECTED SITE**



Designation Coordinates

1. 50° 19.0960 N 004° 11.5750 W
2. 50° 19.0440 N 004° 11.4749 W
3. 50° 18.3677 N 004° 12.3341 W
4. 50° 18.4207 N 004° 12.4327 W