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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 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013 – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

Further work is still 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. Particularly after the devastating storms of the winter 2013 - 2014

The license was authorised by the Secretary of State, under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973). The assistance provided by 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 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013 Survey and Excavation Licences were granted to the author (for both sites) to continue the work commenced under the previous licences.

Following the discovery of several new artefacts that had been uncovered over the 2013 – 2014 winter storms a Surface Recovery Licence was issued on 20 May 14.

## **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 248 survey dives in this reporting period. 2014 licensed individuals visiting the sites remain consistent with previous years. Many of this year's 228 Visitors License divers have visited several times and we have seen many returning divers from previous years.

## **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 2013 – 2014 resulted in the loss of only three station markers, which considering the ferocity of the sea is pleasing as the anchorage system was renewed following similar problems in the 2012 – 2013 winter.

2013/14 has again seen the location of several more artefacts within the designated areas and also beyond the limits of the designations. This publicising of this information has been restricted in order to ensure the items are not removed from the area by the very small percentage of divers who may be tempted to recover them.

## **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 multi-beam 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.

The loss of sediment was to such an extent this year that the recording stakes were completely uncovered and were scattered across the site. This equates in some

areas to a loss of seabed sediment/sand/gravel of over 900mm from the recorded levels of 2013.

This erosion has resulted in the discovery of a Marine's musket (finder R.Crook), a pewter side dish (finders C. Sandercock & R. Sandercock) and two model Marine Figurines (finders M. Pearce & P. Aldersley) being exposed and recovered for conservation/preservation (Annex A gives details). Other organic materials were identified including leather and timber. These areas have been sandbagged over in order to provide some environmental protection. An additional Excavation Licence was required for this (issued 11 Sep 14), as was a MMO licence. Thanks are recorded here to the Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust (MAST) for the funding of the works at York Laboratories and EH for the payment of the MMO licence fee.

#### **4.0 PUBLIC OUTREACH, EDUCATION & DISSEMINATION**

The *Coronation* wreck Project website has developed well and has received a further 2000 hits totalling 14,580 hits since opening (as at 17 Nov 14).

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

Again several groups visiting Plymouth had enquired at very short notice to dive the site. Once more they were very fortunate that the timely support from EH permitted several groups to dive the site who otherwise may not have been able to through traditional application procedures. This again highlights the interest by diving clubs in protected sites of national importance and the general trend towards an increased interest in our nation's maritime heritage.

#### **4.1 Conservation Report / Storage and Display**

Due to the lack of local government financial support to the Mount Edgecumbe Estate the plan that Mount Edgecumbe House would take possession and custody of the artefacts remains on hold. A meeting was held on 28 Oct 14 to discuss options for the *Coronation* artefacts to be displayed alongside the established display of the *Metta Catherina* wreck. It is looking very promising for at least a selection of items to be displayed at the house in 2015. Investigations will be made over the winter months as to the potential for access to Heritage Lottery Funding for the project.

#### **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 continues to work 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 still 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**

This is an area of extreme frustration for the project team. A further year has passed with no progress on the re-designation of the sites and no information has been disseminated to the team in spite of requests for updates. This whole process has been very disappointing and has left the team feeling very despondent and unsupported. This is even more so when heritage crime and its lack of protection has featured on national television and in the media.

## **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 consistent diver activity and interest in the site 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 as a priority.
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. A focussed effort to secure a permanent display of the artefacts from the *Coronation* sites.
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**

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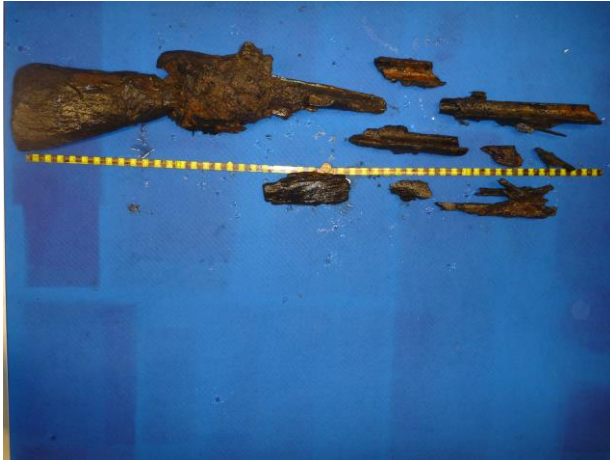
Annexes:

A. Photographic supplement of the 2014 recovered *Coronation* artefacts.

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**PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPLEMENT OF 2014 RECOVERED ARTEFACTS**

Musket





Side Dish

