

Dredged Up

from the past

Spring 2008

Archaeology Finds Reporting Service Newsletter

Protocol Update



The EH/BMAPA Implementation Service has continued successfully for another year, and to date at least 17 new finds have been reported through the scheme which was extended until September 2008. Wessex Archaeology, who provide the Implementation Service, has been hard at work updating the remote learning package DVD and learning materials to help you identify objects of archaeological

interest to help our understanding of the past. This includes new material on conserving finds and how to store them.

The Implementation Service continues to be supported by the ALSF funded Awareness Programme to promote education and awareness. A regional workshop was held in Salisbury in September and for the first time, the scheme has been extended across the North Sea to wharves in Holland and Belgium.



Staff at Bedhampton Wharf examining some of the finds reported through the protocol

Team News

Margaret Christie left the Implementation Service in 2007 to embark on a new career. Brian Hession, who carried out visits to Holland and Belgium for the project, also left the implementation service in 2008 to continue his archaeological career elsewhere. We wish them both the very best! Stephanie Arnott continues to support the Implementation Service and Diana Forster has joined the team and has been conducting wharf visits as part of the Awareness Programme. Euan McNeill continues to manage the scheme.



Diana Forster: the new face of the Awareness Programme



2006/2007 Finds Awards

Following the success of the EH/BMAPA Implementation Service, BMAPA and English Heritage have granted three Finds Awards. The awards are for the most significant find, the best attitude to the Protocol by a wharf and the best attitude to the Protocol from a vessel. It was not an easy decision for Ian Oxley, the head of English Heritage's Maritime Archaeology, who assessed the importance of over 29 significant finds and the performance of over 800 industry staff involved in the Protocol.

An award for the most significant find was granted to the UMA staff at the Erith wharf for the discovery of the German aircraft wreckage, part of the same aircraft as the material found at UMA's Ridham wharf. The finds at Erith were particularly significant because they included the MG 15 saddle magazine and this contributed to identifying the aircraft as a German Junkers Ju 88 and also to dating the crash to the Battle of Britain period - late summer 1940.

The personnel at UMA's Ridham wharf, including Site Champion Jo O'Brien, were granted the wharf award due to their exceptional attitude with regards to the aircraft wreckage which was discovered, particularly in regard to the associated human remains. The award was also given for their general enthusiasm, good observational skills and prompt reporting of finds.

The crew of the *Sand Swan* have been awarded the vessel prize for their good attitude, particularly with regards to the wooden ship timbers they reported while dredging on a long established Norwest Sand & Ballast Co. licence in Liverpool Bay.

Congratulations to all those who received an award, and we hope they enjoy spending it.



Above: MG15 saddle magazine & July 1940 stamp dated ammunition (UMA)
Left: Boat timber (CEMEX)



The Protocol Ventures Across the North Sea

For the first time, the Protocol Awareness Programme has extended its programme of wharf visits and outreach to the continent. In October and November Brian Hession of Wessex Archaeology visited the Kallo Wharf at Antwerp, the Steenkorrel BV. Wharf at Flushing and Hanson's operation at Amsterdam. He provided training on the scheme to colleagues at Belgian and Dutch wharves receiving aggregate from BMAPA company dredgers operating in aggregate licence areas in UK waters.

Wharf staff reported several new finds during the visits including two anchors and even a Second World War MG15 German machine gun! The visit finished with a tour of Hanson's wharf at Amsterdam so Brian could see the practical side of spotting finds at a busy aggregate wharf.

The week of visits to Dutch and Belgian wharf staff should ensure that finds from aggregates from around the UK that are landed on the Continent will continue to be reported. As for Brian, he enjoyed his week abroad, but was more than a little anxious about getting his newly acquired machine gun through customs!



Kallo Wharf, Antwerp, Belgium



Above: MG15 Machine Gun

Right: A staff member of the Kallo Wharf in Antwerp examines some finds reported through the Protocol





Aircraft Crash Sites at Sea



Junkers Ju 88 aircraft

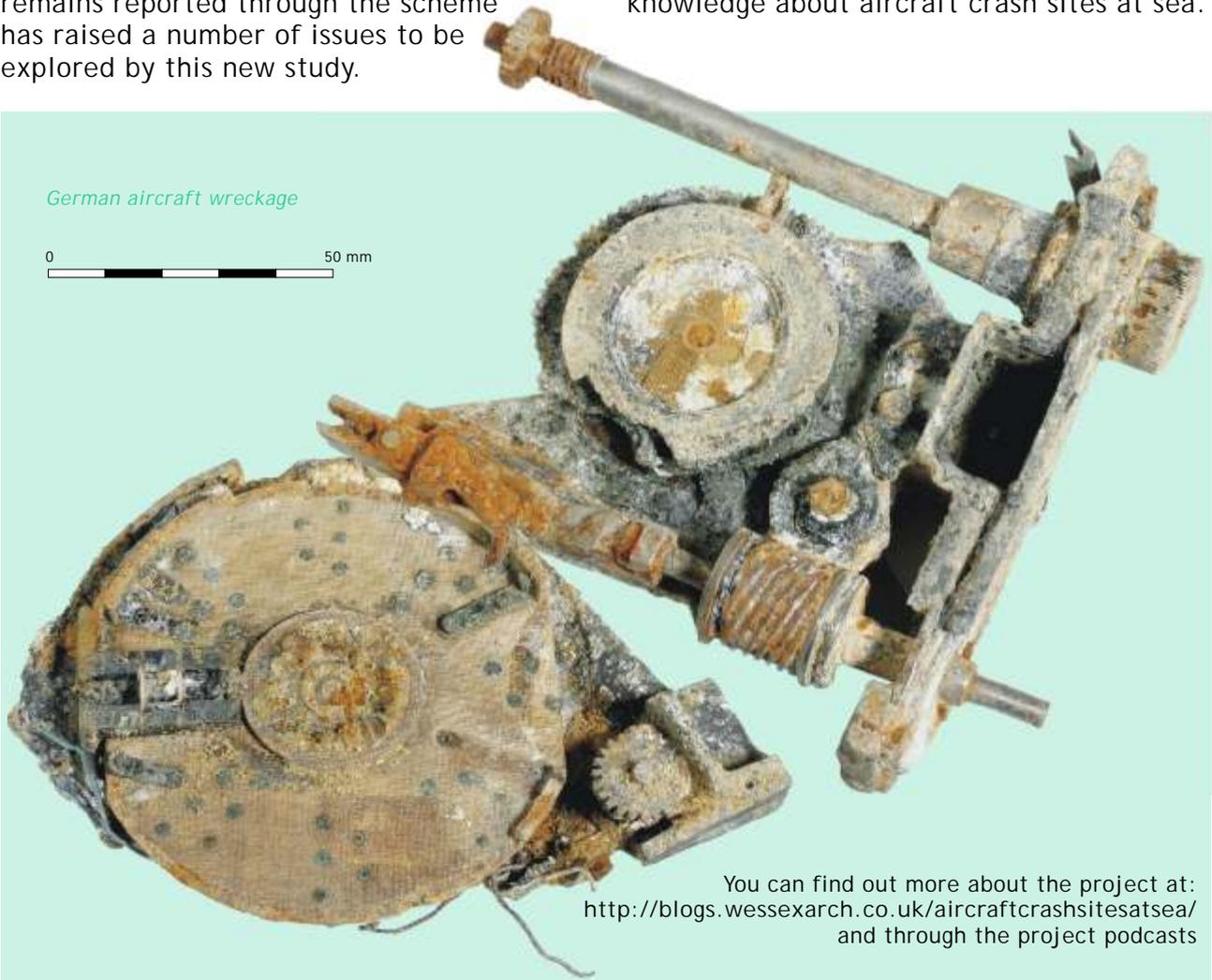
Building on the success of the reporting scheme is the new “Aircraft Crash Sites at Sea” project, funded by English Heritage through the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund. The discovery of a series of aircraft remains reported through the scheme has raised a number of issues to be explored by this new study.

All military aircraft that crash in UK waters, or British military aircraft anywhere are protected by the Protection of Military Remains Act, whether they were active in conflict or not. The possibility that some aircraft sites may contain human remains makes this a very sensitive issue. Not to mention that military aircraft crash sites may also contain unexploded munitions that could present a hazard. This makes locating aircraft crash sites once material comes to light very important. Also it is an offence to disturb these sites once their presence has been established.

The aircraft crash site project will be using information on aircraft found and reported through the Protocol to help fill gaps in our knowledge about aircraft crash sites at sea.

German aircraft wreckage

0 50 mm



You can find out more about the project at:
<http://blogs.wessexarch.co.uk/aircraftcrashsitesatsea/>
and through the project podcasts

Door plaque (UMA)



Conserving Metal Finds

Des Barker, a corrosion specialist, works part time for the Mary Rose Trust and has been heavily involved in the conservation of the submarine *Holland 1* in the Museum at Gosport, a first world war Gun Boat in Portsmouth dockyard and a host of other projects with the Hampshire Museum Services. He gave a useful talk on how to conserve metal artefacts that might be found by dredging at a workshop in Salisbury.

Des has conserved a wide range of artefacts ranging from very large ones such as submarines and canons down to very small coins and needles. His advice is still applicable to all metallic artefacts no matter what their size. The key thing, Des tells us, is to get the salts out of the concretion and metal corrosion products if you can. The salt and oxygen gas dissolved in seawater corrode the metal to form the corrosion products that you see on metal artefacts recovered from the sea.

The simplest way to keep a metal object stable is to keep it wet as this will prevent the salt becoming more concentrated as the metal dries out. Immersion in fresh

water would be an ideal first stage but sea water is better than nothing if no fresh water is at hand, as long as you transfer the artefact into fresh water as soon as possible. Distilled water is the best to use as the amount of dissolved oxygen gas is much lower than in fresh water. The water should be changed regularly to get rid of the salts that eventually build up in the freshwater from the corroding metal.

So remember, no matter how unpromising a lump of concretion or metal you find might look, keep it wet! That way if it does turn out to be something special, you have maximised its chances of survival.



Metal concretion (UMA)



German aircraft wreckage



Finds from the Third Year of the Implementation Service



An aircraft fuel gauge (Hanson)

Finds from dredgers and wharves continue to be reported at a steady rate and the variety of material is very encouraging. An artefact described as the back of an aircraft fuel gauge was found at Hanson's SBV wharf in material dredged from licence area 242, about 24km north east of Lowestoft. A closer inspection of the photograph revealed that the object was manufactured in Britain by S. Smiths & Sons (Motor Accessories) Limited, a company which manufactured fuses and aircraft instruments during the First and Second World Wars. This find may indicate that there is an aircraft crash site in the area so a close watch needs to be kept on material from this licence to ensure that any further wreckage is spotted. If more aircraft wreckage comes to light, we may be able to locate a crash site.

Two animal bone fragments were discovered by Ray Smith at UMA's Bedhampton wharf from material dredged from licence area 122/3 off the east coast of the Isle of Wight. Specialists from the Natural History Museum identified the fragments as a partial rib and vertebra and almost certainly from a bovid such as a cow, sheep or goat. The bones show signs of butchery which suggests that they may have derived from an animal carried on board a ship as provisions. The bones may have been discarded as waste following the butchery of the carcass.

WWII Rubble?

A curious variety of finds have been dredged up from the Isle of Wight dredging region. These finds range from bricks, bones, plaques and even a number of forks and spoons, although strangely we have yet to receive any knives! UMA have stated that these finds have come from a large spread of rubble extending from south of the Portsmouth coast to the west of Nab Tower. It is thought that this rubble accumulated due to the dumping of domestic scrap or demolition debris following WWII. At present we are unable to conclusively identify the source of this rubble, but are continuing to investigate its origin. Recent finds from the area discovered by Arthur Farmiloe at UMA's Bedhampton wharf are inscribed with a Broad Arrow, a symbol used to mark items belonging to the Royal Navy. As such, the possibility of a wreck in the area is not ruled out!



Above: A 'blue brick' (UMA)

Left: Bone fragments (UMA)

Below: Various artefacts from the Isle of Wight dredging region (UMA)



A copper bolt (UMA)



New Discoveries of Ship Remains

Recent discoveries through the Protocol have included a number of artefacts which appear to have come from ships. A large anchor was discovered by M. Forster on Hanson's Arco Dart vessel in material dredged from licence area 377, approximately 9km south of Penarth, Wales.

The anchor appears to represent an Admiralty Pattern, a standard anchor used by both navies and merchantmen and often nicknamed the "common stock anchor". The Admiralty Pattern was developed in England in 1841 by Admiral Sir William Parker. These anchors were originally wooden-stocked although later examples appear to be iron-stocked. The lack of a stock on this anchor may imply that it was originally a wooden-stocked anchor, thus representing an earlier form of the Admiralty Pattern. The anchor may have come from a 19th century vessel.

Other finds relating to vessels include a variety of brass items which were discovered by Darren Taylor at UMA's Bedhampton wharf in material dredged from licence area 395/1. Of the objects, one of the most interesting finds is the brass plate fuse cover. Some of the inscriptions on the brass plate refer to the Boys' pantry and bathroom. The word 'Boys' may refer to 'boy seamen', a term used to describe the young male members of Admiralty-run boys training establishments.

These establishments provided pre-sea training facilities for boys, preparing them for service in the Royal Navy. The training establishments used the hulks of old warships for accommodation and class room space and it is possible that these brass finds may derive from one of these vessels. As the brass plate refers to electric light, the vessel is unlikely to date from before the early 20th century.



Left: Large Admiralty type anchor (Hanson)
Below: Ships timbers (UMA and CEMEX)



Wessex Archaeology



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Explosives and Munitions

Up to 10% of the bombs that fell on the UK during WWII failed to function and so far only a fraction have been recovered. This quantity does not include those munitions left over from World Wars which were dumped or those which were carried as cargo on ships which subsequently sunk. Underwater sites are of particular risk as many shipwrecks and aircraft crash sites still contain live ammunition which can be extremely unstable, especially after a lengthy duration of being submerged in the sea.

Since the start of the EH/BMAPA Implementation Service, a number of potentially dangerous finds have been reported through the Protocol. During 2007-2008 so far we have received one such item which posed a potential threat to wharf staff. The German Aircraft Wreckage was discovered in January 2007 by Barry Gould at UMA's Erith wharf and Jo O'Brien, at UMA's Ridham wharf in material dredged from licence area 430.

Of the various pieces of aircraft wreckage, a saddle magazine was found from a German MG15 machine gun, which was rightly reported immediately to the Metropolitan Police. The Metropolitan Police called in an Explosive and Ordnance Disposal consultant to deal with the find. Various types of ammunition were in the magazine including tracer rounds and amour piercing rounds. In a demonstration for Wessex Archaeology, Ian Jones the Metropolitan Police Civilian EOD Officer sectioned one of the armour piercing rounds under controlled conditions. This round contains a small amount of white phosphorous around the armour piercing head, designed to ignite fuel. On exposure to air the phosphorous spontaneously combusted and burned for two minutes - even after 60 years of being submerged.

So please remember that if you find any munitions, other than cannon balls, they should only be reported through the Implementation Service once the necessary actions have been completed under the protocols defined in the Munitions Guidance Note. It's always better to be safe than sorry, so if in doubt treat the suspicious find as potentially dangerous and report it according to the Munitions Guidance Note.



Top: Royal mortar shells (Brianma)
Right: Shell timer (Hanson)
Far Right: Possible Zeppelin bomb (Hanson)