

Cattewater Wreck Archive Project 5439 MAIN

Summary Statement - October 2010

Martin Read, Project Manager

'Provide a summary statement of the Project to English Heritage outlining the background aims and anticipated result.'

The Cattewater Wreck was discovered in 1973 during channel dredging in the Cattewater, Plymouth, Devon. The site was the first wreck to be designated by the UK Government under the 1973 Protection of Wreck Act and is believed to be an unidentified armed merchantman of the first half of the 16th century.

The site was partly excavated between 1975 and 1978. Most of the site documentary archive and much of the material archive were later deposited with the Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery. The Archive as presently organised does not meet the current recognised archival storage standards and has not been organised for the benefit of researchers.

Aims and Objectives

This Project aims to improve the long term care and management of the Cattewater Wreck Excavation Archive held by Plymouth City Museum with improvements to the documentation and storage.

The main aim of the Project is Archive consolidation – a formal audit and indexing of the documentary archive and all associated artefacts to create a formal record of the present archive. A secondary aim is the improvement of the physical storage of the archive to better meet modern physical collection management standards.

Outcome

The principal outcome of the Project will be a more accessible Archive better able to survive in the long-term.

Closing Statement - 5 June 2011

Nigel Overton, Maritime Heritage Officer, Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery

'Prior to completion of the project, the Contractor shall submit a closing statement to English Heritage.'

The Archive Project has facilitated the first structured review and re-appraisal of the Cattewater Wreck Documentary and Finds Archive since the rescue of the Archive by the City Museum in 1982, and the publication of Excavation Report in 1984. Moreover, and for the first time, this Project has offered an opportunity to fully study, understand and better order, document and store the Cattewater Archive in line with current approved standards for archaeological archives.

As a result of this Project, very significant improvements have been made to the care and management of the Archive as it stands. However, the Project has also paved the

Cattewater Wreck Archive Project 5439 MAIN

way for increasing awareness in the Cattewater Archive and improving future public access. This has been achieved through the use of modern conservation standard materials, more coherent storage arrangements and the completion of electronic databases that properly and fully detail the Documents, Drawings, Photographs and Finds.

The new electronic records of the Cattewater Wreck Archive will be formally deposited with the Archaeological Data Service and the National Monument Record. In the future, and as a logical extension of the Cattewater Archive Project, the City Museum itself has aspirations to create online Cattewater Wreck information and resources via the City Council - City Museum & Art Gallery web pages.

We consider that the Cattewater Wreck Archive Project has effectively met both its primary and secondary objectives, as outlined in the '*Summary Statement*' overleaf. However, the Project has also begun to catalyse some tangible and hoped for additional outcomes – including the receipt by the City Museum of missing and additional Cattewater Archive materials. These additional finds, documents and images, received during the life of the Project, have also been fully incorporated into the Archive. This was thanks to late a Project 'Variation' agreed and approved by English Heritage.

The Spring of 2011 saw English Heritage launch a series of information leaflets and outside information graphics highlighting the importance of Cattewater Wreck, along with HMS *Coronation*, and better explaining to the public the status of a Protected Wreck. Although this work was independent of the Cattewater Wreck Archive Project, the City Museum, supported by the in depth knowledge offered by Martin Read, the Project Manager, gave significant support towards the written text and visual content. Through these media, the City Museum is also advertised as the home of the Cattewater Wreck Archive and the first point of contact for further information on the Wreck. Thanks to this Project, we are now much better able to deliver on this statement than previously.

The Cattewater Wreck Archive Project has been a valuable vehicle towards enabling the City Museum to prioritise the necessary work and, as result, much better fulfil its present and future responsibilities towards the history and heritage of the Cattewater Wreck. We regard it though as a stepping stone - and, importantly, the Project outcomes will pave the way for other future initiatives intended to further enhance awareness and access to the story of the Cattewater Wreck and Plymouth wider maritime heritage.

In addition, the Project has helped to refocus the City Museum's attention on the Cattewater Wreck and Archive. As a result, we have already commissioned scientific analysis of some suitable cod fish bones by the University of York. This will hopefully show where they originated and may help indicate if fish stored on board was cargo or victuals for the crew.

Cattewater Wreck Archive Project 5439 MAIN

In conclusion, Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery would like to put on record their thanks to English Heritage and the National Heritage Projection Commissions Programme for generously supporting this Project. We would also like to formally acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Martin Read; it is unlikely the Project could have happened now, or have been delivered so effectively, without his enthusiasm, dedication and expertise.

END