

Cattewater Wreck: Developing the archive

Highlight report

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

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

This Project (Project Number: 5439 MAIN) aims to improve the long term care and management of the Cattewater Wreck Excavation Archive held by the City Museum with improvements to the documentation and storage. The principal outcome of the Project will be a more accessible Archive.

Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this 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. The principal outcome of the Project will be a more accessible Archive.

Stage 1

To achieve the projects main aim of Archive consolidation during this stage, the objective is the systematic filing and indexing of the documentary archive, allowing an audit of the current documentary archive to take place. Other objectives were recording of the artefacts, including digital photograph/s of each item, the creation of features/context descriptions, the establishment of plan matrix, an overall site plan and the completion of Harris matrix of inter-relationships.

To achieve the secondary aim of the improvement of the physical storage of the documentary archive, the objective is to replace ring binders and non-archival storage materials (such as staples and cello tape) with archival standard materials (acid-free boxes and folders).

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