

The Newport Medieval Ship Timber Numbering and Coding Systems June 2013

Wooden material uncovered during the Newport Ship excavation was assigned a unique identification number on site (GGAT number), and, where appropriate, a function code. A further numbering system (Cow Tag number) was introduced in 2003. The Cow Tag number has superseded the original GGAT number in nearly all aspects of the project. Additional numbering was employed during the separate bow excavation, carried out by Oxford Archaeology. These numbers were also subsequently superseded by cow tag numbers.

1) GGAT Timber numbers

Timber numbers were given on site by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT). These numbers were handwritten on Tyvek labels and attached with staples (these labels and staples were permanently removed during the recording process). These are the numbers which appear on original plans, photographic registers etc.

The following number ranges were employed:

201-260

Assigned to timbers from geotechnical pits and the basement excavation.

500-579

Assigned to timbers underlying the ship in the restricted area excavated under the forward starboard quarter and a small number of timbers encountered underneath the ship on the port side.

1001-2545

Assigned to timbers excavated before and during recovery of the ship.

There is a timber index for these and timber record sheets for a number of these contain records made on site. Not all these timbers have been kept – prior to the decision to recover the whole ship, some timbers were discarded. These labels were usually placed on the forward face of the framing timbers, and on the inboard face towards the forward end of the hull planks.

GGAT numbers are preceded by a G in the archive (i.e. G1001)

2) Function codes

Function codes were assigned to timbers whilst still in situ. For example, a timber with the function code P8_1 is a portside hull plank, eight strakes up from the keel and the forward most plank on that strake. Function codes were written on the same type of Tyvek label as the timber number and attached with staples (these labels and staples were permanently removed during the recording process). Disarticulated timbers were not assigned function codes, although some groups of disarticulated timbers, such as deck elements were assigned a unique context number. Function code nomenclature follows Steffy (1994: 195).

Function codes are described below:

<u>Function Code</u>	<u>Description</u>
Beam	Beam
BB	Bilge board
BRP#	Brace (chock) to keelson port side
BRS#	Brace (chock) to keelson starboard side
CP#.#	Port ceiling plank
CS#.#	Starboard ceiling plank
F#.#	Framing timber: F#.0 = Floor timber F#[odd number] = framing timber port side F#[even number] = framing timber starboard side
Filler	Filler Board
Head	Barrel/Cask Head
Hoop	Barrel/Cask Hoop
Keel	Keel
Knee	Knee
P#.#	Port side hull plank
R#	Rider
S#.#	Starboard side hull plank
Son	Keelson
Stave	Barrel/Cask Stave
Stem	Stem Post
STRP#.#	Stringer port
STRS#.#	Stringer starboard
Tingle	Tingle/patch timber
Notes: #= number	?=uncertain of accuracy of function code

3) Cow Tag numbers

The primary and unique numbering system for identifying the recovered ship timbers is the yellow plastic cow ear tag. These cow tags were pre-printed with the words Newport Ship and feature consecutive numbers, ranging from 001 to 3122. Cow tag numbers in the archive are often preceded by the letters CT (i.e. CT3122).

These cow tags were attached to the timbers after the excavation (specifically during a move from one storage facility to another in 2003). The tags are secured to timbers with copper cut tacks and have remained in place throughout the cleaning, recording and conservation process. Cow tag numbers were arbitrarily assigned, with items numbered as they were removed from the tanks. Unique numbers were attached to each separate piece of wood. Hence, a timber originally given one number on site (GGAT number) may have more than one cow tag number, if that timber had become fragmented or was sampled for dendrochronological study. All wooden objects (articulated ship timbers, disarticulated timbers, and wooden artefacts) analysed during the post excavation phase were assigned cow tag numbers.

4) MSG numbers

Numerous wooden artefacts were recovered during the excavation and subsequently during the processing of environmental samples. These objects were variously assigned GGAT numbers, small finds numbers, lab numbers, or no numbers, but identified by context or find spot coordinates. In an attempt to clarify the numbering systems, a single overarching numbering system was implemented. This numbering system is called MSG (after Maesglas, the name of the industrial estate where the ship centre is located). This series of numbers starts at MSG1, and continues to MSG1344. These numbers are the unique identifiers used in the small finds database. The MSG number is used in all conservation and archaeological reports, photographs and other records. All wooden artefacts in the small finds register were assigned a cow tag number in addition to an MSG number. MSG numbers are also used to identify non-artefactual items, such as animal bones and plant remains.

Additional Site Coding Information

The main site code assigned by GGAT is 467, while the Oxford Archaeology bow excavation Site code is NESHIP03. Both of these site codes are referenced in the archive.

NESHIP03 Bow Excavation numbering:

Ship timbers were recovered from a separate excavation of the bow of the ship, which occurred outside of the coffer dam and after the main excavation had ended. These timbers were assigned numbers beginning with T and followed by a three digit number, from 114 to 175.

All of these bow timbers were assigned a unique context/timber number and recorded in-situ and after excavation on dedicated pro-forma timber recording sheets. All timbers were photographed in black and white, colour slide and digital formats, in-situ

and after removal. Three survey points (stainless steel screws and washers) were attached to each timber along with tyvek and water-resistant labels giving site code, survey point and timber number identifiers. These bow timbers were subsequently assigned cow tag numbers.

Please see the [Newport_Medieval_Ship_Bow_Excavation_Summary_Report](#) in the online archive for further information.