

Invincible emerges from the sands



Photo: Mike Pitts

Following a £2 million LIBOR grant last year MAST, in partnership with Bournemouth University and the National Museum of the Royal Navy have begun the emergency excavation of one of the Royal Navy's most

historically significant ships. Built in 1744 and captured in 1747,

Invincible became the blueprint for the Royal Navy 74

gun ships of the line until the end of the Age of Sail and the beginning of the Age of Steam, marked in the United Kingdom by the launch of HMS *Warrior* in 1860.

Invincible wrecked on Horse Tail Sands in February 1758 and has become increasingly exposed with the southward movement of the sandbank.

The first diving season is complete. Divers have recovered some pristine artefacts, including at least 1.5 tonnes of spare anchor cable in perfect condition and some perfectly conserved wooden artefacts. **Continued on page 2.**

HRH Prince Philip support for *Invincible* Project

HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, has officially supported the Project noting the key significance of the ship of the development of the Royal Navy **Page 6**

Invincible 1744

A team of nine divers worked on the site last June, working in the bow area, one of the zones most at risk. Here we were working within the boatswain's, gunners' and carpenters' stores on the orlop deck and then below in the hold, the filling room, light room and general stores.

Some of the most pristine finds are fine examples of the Georgian Navy's Wooden World.



Collection of rigging blocks and tampions

These finds had been protected under the sands from wooden artefacts on the surface of the seabed.

In the gunners' store archaeologists found hundreds of pieces of stacked wadding used in cannon. Significantly many came with a tally stick attached, marked XXIII. *Invincible* had become a testbed for new technologies and the 24-pounder gun was a new gun being trialled. None have been found in the archaeological record and do not appear in any lists after 1757. The

guns were jettisoned to lighten the ship's load when she struck the sandbank.

Other finds include regimental buttons, two of which introduce a mystery to the excavation. These are two Coldstream Guards officer buttons. The regiment was not understood to be in Canada at that time but rather fighting the French in northern France.



Wadding with 24-pounder tally stick

Two bottles were recovered, one in excellent condition with its cork still in place



Photo: Mike Pitts

One of the bottles being recovered

Invincible and the military

MAST is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant which it has committed to honour and to support the Armed Forces community of the United Kingdom.

Volunteers on the *Invincible* Project will also have the opportunity to be trained and learn post-excavation skills which will include the cleaning, recording and cataloguing of artefacts.

The Project is loosely modelled on Operation Nightingale, launched in 2011 with the aim of helping veterans returning from Afghanistan. The initiative set out to employ the social and technical aspects of terrestrial archaeology to aid in the recovery process of serving and ex-Service personnel involved in the conflict. It established that there is a close correlation between the skills of a modern serviceman and those of the professional archaeologist. These include survey, geophysics, seamanship, engineering, diving, seeking or mapping ordnance (or heritage) sites (both on the surface and underwater), close and patient scrutiny of the ground, looking for improvised explosive devices (or artefacts), site and team



management, navigation and the ability to withstand hard physical work in challenging conditions.

Damian Wilson, formerly of the Royal Engineers (above), is part of the project's dive team working alongside maritime archaeological divers. He joined the team alongside an RNR officer. Both are professional divers. They will be joined by one further military diver in 2018.

NMRN and MAST host seminar on naval remains

The National Museum of the Royal Navy and MAST jointly hosted a private seminar at Admiralty House under the Chatham House Rule in November to investigate improvements in the management of underwater naval remains, and to reemphasise their protection from unauthorised intrusion and illegal salvage. The meeting was convened to consider new technologies and practice employed elsewhere in the marine environment, such as the regulation of fishing, which would improve the current approach to the UK management of naval remains.

It considered ways of mitigating the complexities of the legal frameworks and breadth of interested parties that has, in the past, created ambiguities. New ways of improved cooperation and collaboration were identified that should permit the early introduction of a new approach to management that meets the public's expectation. The group will reconvene in April 2018 to review progress with aspirations for the embedding of a new initiative that will better protect naval remains in a manner that respects the environment and commemorates naval heroism.

EEIC Halsewell



Wreck of the Halsewell by William Turner

The *Halsewell*, launched in 1778, was a three-decked, 776-ton English East Indiaman. She was built by Wells of Blackwell. She was 42.5 metres in length and 11 metres in beam. She was wrecked on January 6, 1786 at the start of a voyage from London to Madras on the Purbeck coast to the east of St Alban's Head between Winspit and Seacombe. She lost her masts in a violent storm in the English Channel, and was driven onto the rocks below a cliff on the Isle of Purbeck. 74 out of 240 passengers and crew survived.

She ran aground at the mouth of a cave. There have been cliff falls along this area of the Purbeck coastline in the last two years and it is thought, according to local divers, that these may have buried a part of the site which in itself is located in a high energy environment, artefacts thus at risk of dispersal and erosion.

Local divers in the 1960s located one of the ship's cannon, as well as coins, cannonballs, lead shot, tackle and glass. Some artefacts are held at Dorchester museum. However aside from this no actual archaeological evaluation to record the extent of the site had ever been conducted.

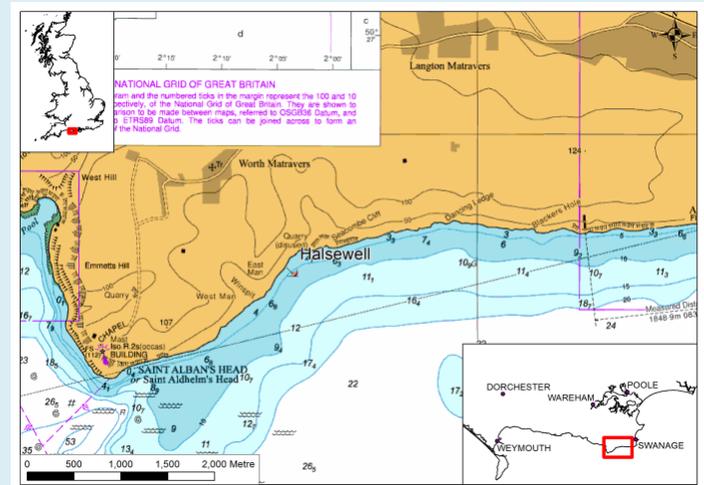
Thanks to a grant from the National Trust, MAST, alongside Bournemouth University students and staff were able to conduct a methodological archaeological survey to establish the site's distribution using magnetometer and diver searches.

Divers found a small collection of finds typical of the period and consistent with previous finds from the site.

These include a possible powder charge, some wrought iron chain link and a possible marine service Brown Bess ramrod holder. Their location was consistent with the wrecking narrative, the ship lodged aground at the mouth of a cave, which has since collapsed. The only activity in this area (quarrying or fishing) does not produce these types of finds.



Looking south towards Winspit, Halsewell rock is circled above



Map of the site location

A more substantial body of work, in the form of a Masters dissertation by a BU maritime archaeology MSc student is currently underway. The intention is to research and compare the popular understanding of the loss of the vessel with the known archaeological and historic facts.

Further details of the project are available on the MAST website.

Coronation 1685 goes virtual



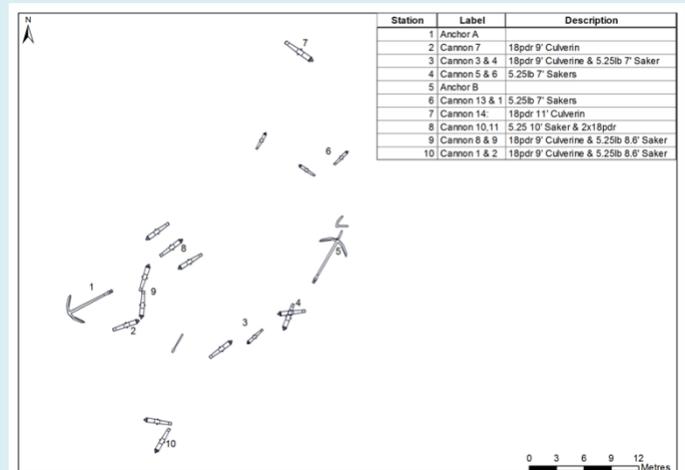
One of Cornwall's most important wrecksites is now open to visits from land. The *Coronation 1685*, was a 2nd rate, 90-gun ship of the line that sank off Penlee Point outside Plymouth Sound in a storm in 1691, a year after taking part in the Battle of Beachy Head.

Historic England commissioned a virtual diver trail which went live this year. Built by ArtasMedia and CyanSub, it is one of a new breed to trails with state-of-the-art HTML5 platform combining video, audio and 3D imaging.



Cleaning the cannon before taking the images

Before doing the photogrammetry all the cannon had to be scrubbed to remove marine growth.



The site's offshore trail comprising 13 cannon and 2 anchors

Visit MAST's website to experience the trail. It is now viewable on all media platforms.

An *Invincible* virtual trail also exists and will be developed as our excavation continues. Watch this space.

HRH Prince Philip supports *Invincible* Project

HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, has officially backed the LIBOR-funded *Invincible* Project.

The Duke, who served with distinction in the Royal Navy during World War II, recognizes the great significance of the Royal Navy's first *Invincible* and its vital influence on the development of the Royal Navy, both in terms of shipbuilding but also in technological advances.

Prince Philip had a glittering naval career, was mentioned in dispatches numerous times for his service during World War II and was awarded the Greek War Cross for valour and the Croix de Guerre with Palm. After his marriage in 1947 he returned to the Navy. His last post was as Commander of HMS *Magpie*. His active naval career ended in 1951.



Photo: Mike Pitts

LIBOR grants adjust focus

MAST, in partnership with the National Museum of the Royal Navy, the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust and the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust, applied for a grant from LIBOR to fund a volunteer veteran coordinator's post to work across all their individual LIBOR-funded projects to ensure all their volunteers to achieve the very best opportunities available to suit theirs and the projects' needs.

Whilst the project proposal received "good" and "excellent" ratings in all categories, it was felt that the partnership had already received significant funding separately in the conservation and heritage spheres.

£172 million of applications were received for 370 projects and the MAST proposal unfortunately met stiff competition.

MAST's new Archaeological Centre hosts George Anson

It is fitting that our first august visitor through the doors of MAST's new 330 sq metre Archaeological Centre in Poole was George Anson, a direct descendant of Admiral George Anson who famously captured *Invincible* in 1747 after the Battle of Cape Finisterre.

He said: "Visiting MAST and seeing the work of the dive team in recovering artefacts from the HMS *Invincible* was like taking a big step back in time to over nearly 260 years ago. It felt like my famous forbearer, Admiral George Anson, was in the room. And there is still so much more to be done. I very much look forward to seeing more recovered artefacts in the coming years".

Purchased last year, MAST and Bournemouth University spent several months removing the mezzanine and asbestos and the refitting the unit for our needs which included the



George Anson samples anchor cable off Invincible with Licensee Dan Pascoe

installation of an air-conditioned store room and office space upstairs.

Now our water tanks are set up, the artefacts are desalinating as a first stage of the conservation process with Service and ex-Service personnel alongside deprived youngsters who will benefit from working alongside the military.



MAST Open Day on December 2 attracted over 250 visitors

Distinguished Alumni Award



MAST is delighted to report that its CEO, Jessica Berry, has been awarded a Distinguished Alumni Award from Flinders University for "significant contribution nationally and internationally" in maritime archaeology. This is a great honour for both her and real achievement for MAST which launched in 2011.