

The Queen's Report

Update from the
Queen Anne's Revenge Shipwreck Project
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Dedication of QAR Conservation Laboratory

On January 15, 2004, an estimated 250 people jammed into laboratory and office spaces at East Carolina University's West Research Campus to dedicate the new 4,000 square foot Conservation Laboratory for the *Queen Anne's Revenge* Shipwreck Project. Those in attendance represented scientists, local, state, and federal agencies, business organizations, universities, and enthusiastic individual supporters. The event was one more example of the cooperative spirit that has dominated the Project since it began in 1997.

It was a festive occasion with congratulations among old and new friends, numerous exhibits and artifacts on display, lab tours, a ribbon cutting ceremony, and a buffet luncheon. Prominent individuals were on the program to welcome the group and praise the creation of the Lab: Secretary Lisbeth Evans, N.C. Department of Cultural Resources; ECU Chancellor William E. Shelton, Dr. Tim Runyan, Director, Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology, and James T. Cheatham III, Maritime Studies benefactor; Dr. David Nateman, Director, North Carolina Maritime Museum, and Sarah Watkins-Kinney, *QAR* Conservator.

Secretary Evans told the group that the "facility is a wonderful addition to the *QAR* project, not only because it increases the number of artifacts we can raise, but it also provides double the space for conservation". Over 11,000 artifacts have been transferred from cramped quarters at Morehead City and Fort Fisher. Some of them are nearing the end of their conservation treatments and will be sent to the N.C. Maritime Museum for display. *QAR* conservation efforts have been greatly assisted by graduate assistants from ECU as part of their academic studies.



George F. Bass: Finding Artifacts Is Not Archaeology

Archaeology magazine, in its July/August, 2003 issue, published excerpts from an interview with George F. Bass, Professor Emeritus in the nautical archaeology program at Texas A&M University. Bass is often called the father of underwater archaeology and has been conducting



research around the world for more than forty years, accumulating numerous honors in the process. Here are some of his comments. "I still look forward to the day when all archaeology students simply learn about watercraft as a normal part of their studies. Almost forty years ago I asked why we speak of underwater archaeologists and no desert archaeologists, jungle archaeologists, and mountain archaeologists. We may use different field techniques, but technique is not what archaeology is all about."...the majority of ships sink "because they hit land, and shallower wrecks carry the same archaeological and historical information as deep ones. It's more cost effective to get the same information from shallower wrecks. I believe new archaeological

information around the world will continue to come mostly from sites hundreds, rather than thousands, of feet deep." (Note: The *QAR* shipwreck is in about 20 feet of water.)

What has been your most exciting discovery? "...my most exciting discoveries have all come in the library, long after the diving was over. It was perhaps half a year after the conclusion of the Cape Gelidonya excavation before I had the first inkling that we had excavated a Near Eastern rather than a Mycenaean ship. The notion first came to me when I was studying the ancient merchant's pan-balance weights, which proved to be based on Near Eastern weight standards. This led to further library research that later rewrote part of Bronze Age history. I could repeat this story many times. Finding artifacts is not archaeology." For more, check out "Other Work of Archaeologists" in the Spring 2003 Queen's Report.

Whale Breaches off Bogue Inlet

This story has nothing in common with Blackbeard or the *QAR* Shipwreck Project except maybe the ocean, but it happened nearby and is such a good story that we decided to pass it on to you. It was first reported in the Swansboro, N, C, Tideland News for October 29, 2003.



While fishing with family and friends, nine year old Gianni Petrilli, from Cape Carteret, spotted a humpback whale about three miles from Bogue Inlet (about 12 miles from the *QAR* site) His father Ed Petrilli, using a new digital camera, managed to snap sequence of photographs showing the whale breaching the surface from start to splash down. North Carolina is not exactly considered the best place to go whale watching, but locals say it is not uncommon to see whales breaching off our coast. The Tideland News stated that the big fellow was probably headed south to the Caribbean for the winter just as pirates were apt to do 300 years ago.

Ed modestly told us he got lucky because it was practically the first time he had used the camera, and it helped that the whale breached about 20 times before disappearing. Yeah, right, Ed, lucky maybe. Most of us amateur photographers wish we could get so lucky.

Pirate Club at UNC-Chapel Hill

In its November 20, 2003 issue, the Raleigh, N.C. News and Observer reported on a pirate club started by freshman Daniel Goans from Greensboro. He has been surprised that nearly 300 people have signed up to be members and nearly 200 have purchased "Shiver Me Timbers" T-shirts. Seems Goans, who likes to dress the part, has been interested in pirates since childhood, wrote a paper about Blackbeard in high school, and last summer visited a shipwreck off Bermuda. We are often reminded of the fascination people, especially children, have for pirates, so we were relieved that history buff George S. Baroff, retired UNC psychology professor gave the pirate club a lecture in reality. Pirates were (and still are) brutal robbers who intimidate people with rape, torture, and murder. Not only that, there was nothing carefree or leisurely about a pirate's life in Blackbeard's time in the early 1700's. It was hard! They spent lonely months at sea eating food hardly fit for animals, and if they couldn't capture a ship, they didn't get paid. And about every two years, a pirate crew could expect a 33% turnover due to disease, fights, battles, or executions.

We Get Mail

Yes, we do, and we love it. We have hundreds on our mailing lists, and, last time we looked, we had had over 45,000 visits to our website in the past four months. We also get numerous email and postal letters, inquiries for information, and requests for interviews or help with research and technical problem.

Many of our questions come from school students, seeking the truth about hearsay or old folk tales: how many times did Blackbeard swim around his ship after his head was cut off; where is the fraternity drinking cup with Blackbeard's skull in it; where do you think Blackbeard's gold is buried; how do I find out if I am a descendant of Blackbeard; have you found any gold, pictures, portraits, skeletons, rum, flags, etc.

Many of them are more sophisticated: what is the water around the site made of; why did Blackbeard steal; were these pirates talented, that is, were they "good" pirates; and, a question that seems stupid at first glance but reveals a future engineer's thinking: how do you bring up a whole ship? And, of course, we get questions we have no idea how to answer: can you tell me how much gasoline horse power it takes, at 100ft- for a 6-inch airlift?



We welcome all these contacts. We like it when you ask us questions. A serious component of our mission is education. It has been a pride and joy to us to be able, when we had the funds, to sponsor two DiveLives that broadcast live underwater exploration so that divers could talk to students through their school computers, and students could ask divers questions over the internet. We try to take each request for help seriously, no matter how simple or complicated. We take interviews and make presentations when it is feasible for our limited staff.

If we get a question and we know the answer, we supply it. If we don't know, we try to refer you to someone who can. We are largely electronic, that is, a good summary of what we know is on our main website at <http://www.qaronline.org/>. We also recommend [East Carolina University's](#) and the [North Carolina Maritime Museum's](#). There are many others websites available, some of them from agencies who have helped us. To find them search "Blackbeard", "pirates", and "*Queen Anne's Revenge*", and you will probably get thousands of leads. As a rule, we also suggest you look into modern piracy which is still prevalent in many parts of the world.

The "*Queen Anne's Revenge* Shipwreck Project covers a broad field of subjects: archaeology, anthropology, geology, metallurgy, history, and underwater technology to name a few. And we like to talk about them. What are you studying or thinking or planning? Do you have an idea to try out, have information we don't have, or have completed a school project you want us to see? Talk to us. We may want to consider it for publication in our newsletter.

Directors Report

The opening of the conservation lab in January is the biggest news and the fact that all the artifacts are under the care of Sarah Watkins-Kenney and her capable staff. Besides Lab Manager Wendy Welsh and Assistant Conservator Eric Nordgren, Sarah has received help from well-trained graduate students from ECU's Maritime Studies Program, Danielle LaFluer, David Krop and Jessica Curci. An essential part of the conservation process is data management and due to the diligence of Chris Southerly, who works out of Fort Fisher with the lab staff and Karen Browning and myself in Morehead City, systems are up and running. We are now working with Connie Mason at NC Maritime Museum to develop procedures for artifact transfer. All ballast stones have been previously sent over to Gallants Channel and various classes of artifacts will be heading that way later this spring. I should mention that Jim Craig and my father-in-law, Sim Wilde, have provided countless hours on all aspects of the project here at Morehead City.



Analysis of the *QAR* materials and their distribution

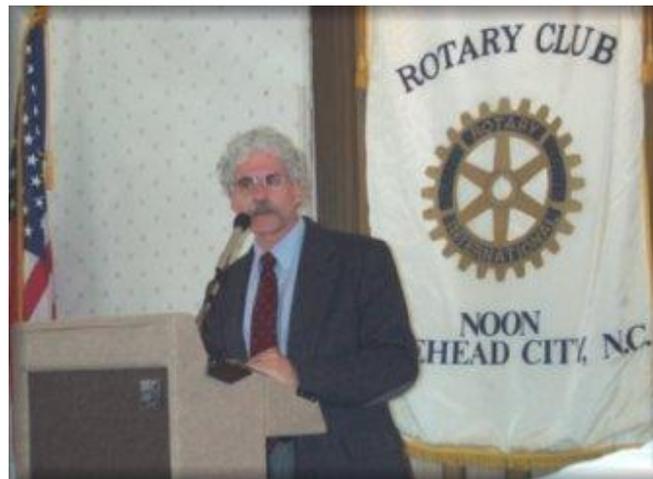
across the site is becoming our focus now that data entry and conservation are well underway. For example, I just returned from a trip to DC in which I took the entire faunal collection of 75 specimens to Dr. David Clark for analysis. The short version is - the pirates weren't eating high on the hog. Actually they were eating low on the hog, mostly pig feet plus some low-yield cuts of beef. One fish vertebrae may represent sturgeon. We will continue to gather all artifacts within various classes for analysis sessions with respective experts in order to gain a high level of understanding of what they are and what they mean.

With the help of the Fort Fisher crew we have monitored site conditions every few months and in the fall mapped a large scour area on the east side of the site as a result of Hurricane Isabel and recovered a bilge strainer fragment. Later this spring we will again attempt to record the exposed portions of the wreck to create a photomosaic. Chris is currently working out the details. As in the past participants are likely to include staff members from the National Undersea Research Center, NOAA and ECU. The project is being partially underwritten through a grant from

National Geographic magazine. On the horizon, Sarah W-K and the conservation staff have submitted a proposal to determine the relative condition of each cannon and anchor in situ. In this way, we can better understand which ones are in the worst shape and potentially begin the conservation process as they lay on the seabed. All this is new, experimental and exciting. Hopefully we'll receive the grant, which was submitted to the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training.



Through a grant from the Carteret County Tourism Board and the Sylvester family, we have completed a feasibility study on an Educational Outreach program, which will culminate in allowing participants a controlled visit to the *QAR* site. Details are still being worked out. The program will be supervised by Underwater Archaeology Branch staff, run through the museum and their Friends group, and facilitated by local dive shops. We are proceeding slowly to see if the program is viable, in the public interest, and maintains protection of archaeological integrity of *QAR* site. If things continue on schedule, there will be a trial run with NC dive operators in May and program implementation this fall. Attached is the executive summary for your perusal. We have been keeping the *QAR* website up to date, thanks to the initial work of Bridgette Iris and more recently from Karen. We truly appreciate your visit.



In the Morehead City/Beaufort/Cape Lookout area? Visit the North Carolina Maritime Museum at 315 Front Street, Beaufort, NC and see many of the actual artifacts from *Queen Anne's Revenge*.