

Sound of Mull 2010 Underwater Archaeology Fieldschool 14th June – 2nd July 2010

Fieldschool aims and objectives

Fieldschool aim:

The aim of the fieldschool is to provide participants with an opportunity to participate (under the supervision of qualified archaeologists) in an underwater archaeological survey and excavation of a 19th century shipwreck in the Sound of Mull.

Fieldschool objectives:

The objectives of the fieldschool are thus for participants;

1. To research and analyse information to contribute to the research objectives of work on the wreck of the John Preston.
2. To understand the importance of safety and risk analysis in all archaeological fieldwork.
3. To gain experience in archaeological project management.
4. To develop competency in non-intrusive (2D, 3D and geophysics) archaeological survey techniques.
5. To develop competency in intrusive underwater archaeological investigations and finds handling and recording.
6. To be actively engaged in the creation, compilation and publication of archaeological data and records.

Fieldschool personnel:

The Sound of Mull 2010 fieldschool will be taught by Mary Harvey, NAS Training Officer, Mark and Annabel Lawrence (Lochaline Dive Centre), Steve Liscoe (Fire Archaeology Unit) with the assistance of Dr Paula Martin (IJNA editor) and Dr Colin Martin. Assistance will also be provided by additional NAS tutors from Scotland.

Research Objectives:

The wreck of the John Preston (1855-1882) lies in 14-21 meters of water in the Sound of Mull. The wreck was intensively surveyed as part of the *Sound of Mull Archaeological Project* (SOMAP) over six years (1994-2000) in an effort to record the wrecks condition before it deteriorated. The John Preston was also re-surveyed by an NAS team as part of a Historic Scotland supported fieldschool undertaken in 2009 to re-evaluate the condition of the wreck. The full report on the 2009 work will be published by the NAS in April 2010.

The research objectives of the continued work on the John Preston in 2010 will be:

- To continue to monitor the condition of the wreck on the seabed, to determine whether or not deterioration is ongoing. This work should also illustrate if any new areas of material are becoming exposed as a result of changes in environmental conditions on the site;
- To determine the extent of structural remains still present at the western end of the main wreck structure. The objective of this work will be to illustrate the extent of the presumed bow structure to determine the actual length of the vessel (currently recorded as 18.9m long). This would add strength to the hypothesis that the vessel lies with its bow to the west. This excavation would abut a trench excavated as part of the Sound of Mull Archaeological Project (identified as Trench D in Figure 5.3, Robertson 2007). This trench would also test the theory that the John

Preston hit rocks with its bow causing a traumatic impact to the hull structure and causing a possible bow first sinking (Robertson 2007: 57).

Project plan / method statement:

The John Preston Project in 2010 will be undertaken over 8 days during slack water. The work is planned to include:

- Illustration and sketching
- Photography
- 2D survey techniques including offset and/or trilateration
- Planning frame drawing
- Expansion of the 3D survey using Direct Survey Method undertaken in 2009.
- Excavation of a trench at the western end of the composite wreck structure

Archive:

Data will be collected by using proforma sheets for each activity which will be subsequently written up to a paper archive. Participants will have the responsibility for writing up individual dive logs as well and processing any measurements and producing drawings each day.

The paper archive will be digitally scanned to create an electronic archive which will be stored and maintained on a project laptop computer. Digital photographs and video taken during the project will also be added to the archive and participants will be requested to also contribute photos taken of the site with personal equipment and allow these to be used as part of the project report. A copy of this archive will be provided to Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland.

Participants will be able to use the fieldschool for their NVQ Level 3 or NAS Part 2 project report and would be asked to take responsibility (under supervision) for one particular element of the work. This may simply be the recording of a number of new features or may entail processing all the 3D DSM measurements obtained. They would also be requested to submit their work as part of the NAS report to be submitted to Historic Scotland in 2011.

All artefacts recovered during the course of the project will be subjected to photographic recording and a selection of artefacts will also be hand drawn by fieldschool participants as part of the fieldschool taught courses. All artefacts will be kept wet and stable and later returned to the wreck site and reburied just off the site. The location of the reburied artefacts will be surveyed on to the site plan to ensure that they are not subjected to re-excavation in any subsequent investigations carried out on the John Preston.

Health and Safety:

The fieldwork would be undertaken under the auspices of the Nautical Archaeology Society. This is advantageous because the Health and Safety policy of the NAS is written in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and with specific reference to the Diving at Work Regulations 1997. All diving operations carried out by the NAS are covered by the NAS's employers and public liability insurance.

NVQ Level 3 / NAS Part 2 Project report:

The Sound of Mull 2010 Underwater Archaeological Fieldschool is aligned with the National Occupational Standards for Archaeological Practice (www.torc.org.uk) and the National Vocational Qualification in Archaeological Practice Level 3.

Participants wishing to use the fieldschool for evidence towards an NVQ Level 3 or for their NAS Part 2 project report should inform the NAS at least 4 weeks in advance, so that guidance notes and report criteria can be provided. Participants wishing to use the fieldschool for an NVQ Level 3 would be required to undertake some pre-project desk based research on the John Preston, to identify any sources of information on the ship, the wrecking and any subsequent salvage or archaeological investigations.

It will be possible to collect evidence towards the following NVQ Level 3 Units:

Unit 1 (AC1) Research and analyse information to achieve objectives

- Element 1.1. Identify sources and availability of information
- Element 1.2. Collect information to achieve research objectives
- Element 1.3. Analyse research information
- Element 1.4. Report results (if report generated by participant following fieldschool)

Unit 2 (AJ10) Contribute to health and safety in the workplace

- Element 2.1. Operate safely in the workplace
- Element 2.2. Respond to emergencies (via simulation/what if scenario)

Unit 3 (AK3) Develop your own resources and protect the interest of others

- Element 3.1. Develop yourself to improve your performance
- Element 3.2. Managing your own time and resources to meet your objectives

Unit 5 (AC3) Contribute to non-intrusive investigations

- Element 5.1. Prepare for operations
- Element 5.2. Observe and record measurements
- Element 5.3. Analyse and present investigation data

Unit 6 (AC5) Contribute to intrusive investigations

- Element 6.1. Prepare for operations
- Element 6.2. Undertake intrusive investigations
- Element 6.3. Prepare records and schedules

Unit 12 (AF3) Classify, compile and maintain data on the material remains

- Element 12.1. Agree methods for classifying and compiling data
- Element 12.2. Maintain data and records