

NAS Part III Advanced Certificate in Foreshore and Underwater Archaeology

Part III Ancient Technology Module

Cordage (Rope Making)

Aims:

This course will provide an introduction to the principles of the technology of cordage, its historical importance and the role of wet site archaeology in increasing this knowledge. This will be achieved by a combination of short lectures and practical problem solving and manufacturing sessions. The course is aimed at individuals undertaking the NAS Training programme, as well as professional archaeologists wanting to improve their ability to recognise, understand and record cordage from archaeological sites.

Course outline:

Day one

- Theoretical introduction to cordage, ropes and rigging. What can be found, why is it important, how can we record it.
- Practical problem solving session, investigating the basics of the technology. Material properties, preparation, laying up rope, plaiting lengthening / joining fibres, stitching planks.
- Theoretical session summarising cordage materials, their preparation. Principles of a rope.
- Theoretical session: Lime Bast to Hemp. Post Mediaeval ropemaking technology.

Day two

- Practical session using replica eighteenth century ropemaking equipment
- Practical session: recording and conserving ropes, ropework and pulley blocks.
- Practical session (if time permits and need exists): Ropework or 'matelotage'. Sennit, splicing, basic knots. Caulking and luting. Basic principles of blocks and tackles.
- Theoretical session: archival, written sources and discussion.

Teaching Outcomes:

It is intended that participants will complete the course with a raised awareness of the importance of cordage in archaeology, of what questions to ask when uncovering the evidence, and how to record it. On completion of this course participants will have been introduced to the principles and materials used historically for cordage. They will be familiar with post mediaeval ropemaking and will have been introduced to basic ropework techniques. They will have made samples to keep and will have recorded and disassembled other items made during the course.

NAS Part III Point allocation:

Ancient Technology module:

11 points maximum

Suggested Reading:

SANCTUARY, Anthony. *Rope, Twine and Netmaking*. Aylesbury, Shire Publications.

SANDERS, Damien, Knowing the ropes: the need to record ropes and rigging on wreck sites, and some techniques for doing so; *IJNA* 2010

SCHJØLBERG, Ellen. 1988. Cordage and Similar Products from Bryggen in Bergen.

In: *Bryggen Papers, supplementary series 3*. Ed. HERTEIG, Asbjorn.

Norwegian University Press.