

The Norman's Bay Wreck

Licensee Report – November 2013

Type of licence: Survey License and Surface Recovery license.

Date issued: 1st December 2012

Date of report: 13th November 2013

Author: Mark Beattie-Edwards

Summary of activities

This year we have been very lucky with the weather and have been able to dive the Norman's Bay wreck on a number of planned dates. Other diving clubs including Thurrock BSAC and Bracknell SAC did not manage to dive the site due to bad weather on their chosen date. On every visit the underwater visibility was reported as being poor, and in the licensee's opinion the visibility was the worst experienced since he became involved with the site in 2009. The lack of visibility (less than 50cm in many cases) hampered productivity in 2013, with very little progress being made.

Details of diving operations:

18th May 2013, Chelmsford BSAC – Norman's Bay Diver Trail
10 dives. Reported visibility poor, some of the trail lines broken

9th June 2013 - Thurrock Aqualung Club BSAC 608 – Norman's Bay Diver Trail
Boat broken so could not dive

14th June 2013 – Nautical Archaeology Society – Norman's Bay Diver Trail
6 dives. Visibility very poor. Some diver trail lines repaired. Guns labelled

16th June 2013 – Nautical Archaeology Society Sub-Aqua Club – Normans Bay Project
13 dives. Visibility very poor. Some diver trail lines repaired. Guns labelled

16th June 2013 - The Diving Club, Reading – Norman's Bay Diver Trail
Awaiting details.

18th June 2013 – Nautical Archaeology Society Sub-Aqua Club – Normans Bay Project
8 dives. Visibility poor. Some diver trail lines repaired. Guns labelled

19th June 2013 – Nautical Archaeology Society Sub-Aqua Club – Normans Bay Project
8 dives. Visibility very poor. All diver trail lines repaired. Guns labelled

28th June 2013 – Nautical Archaeology Society – Norman's Bay Diver Trail
9 dives. Visibility poor.

23rd July 2013 – Nautical Archaeology Society – Normans Bay Project
6 dives. Visibility poor. Guns labelled

13th August 2013 – Nautical Archaeology Society – Norman's Bay Diver Trail
The DiveZone Dive Club. 12 dives. Visibility very poor. Guns labelled.

14th August 2013 – Nautical Archaeology Society – Norman’s Bay Diver Trail
11 dives. Visibility very poor. Guns labelled.

8th September 2013 - Thurrock Aqualung Club BSAC 608 – Norman’s Bay Diver Trail
Blown out

21st – 22nd September 2013 - Bracknell Sub-Aqua Club
Blown out

26th September 2013 – Nautical Archaeology Society – Norman’s Bay Diver Trail
7 dives. Visibility very poor.

Total for 2013: 90 dives (with some information still outstanding)

Work undertaken during 2013

1. Familiarisation dives for visiting new recreational divers
2. Cleaning and maintenance of the diver trail
3. Labelling guns/cannons
4. Recording of object UID 1092 and surrounding area
5. Research into the Battle of Beachy Head
6. Drafting of Project Design for English Heritage

All the visits made by the licensee with the NAS in 2013 have involved cleaning and maintenance of the diver trail that was established in 2011. In 2013 no permanent site marker buoy was visited used on the wreck for visitor access.

Cleaning and maintenance of the diver trail

In 2013 we have cleaned the underwater trail stations (Figure 1) and have replaced the numbered floats with new floating signs that are easier to clean and should not need replacing (Figure 2). The underwater lines that run between the 8 diver stations were replaced with stronger, heavier weighted lines that would (in theory) last longer and need replacing less often (Figure 3).



Figure 1: Diver station in 2013



Figure 2: New numbered signs installed in 2013



Figure 3: The new weighted line installed in 2013

As the site has received no funding in 2013 these new numbered signs and the new weighted rope was funded by the Nautical Archaeology Society.

Labelling guns/cannons

New labels were installed on to many of the guns/cannons that could be labelled (Figure 4, 5 and 6). As the site has received no funding in 2013 these labels were made from cut up plastic milk cartons. It has been found that the writing on these labels will last at least 2 years.



Figure 4: New labels on guns/cannons 1001, 1002, 1038 and 1016 (clockwise from top left). Photographs © Martin Davies

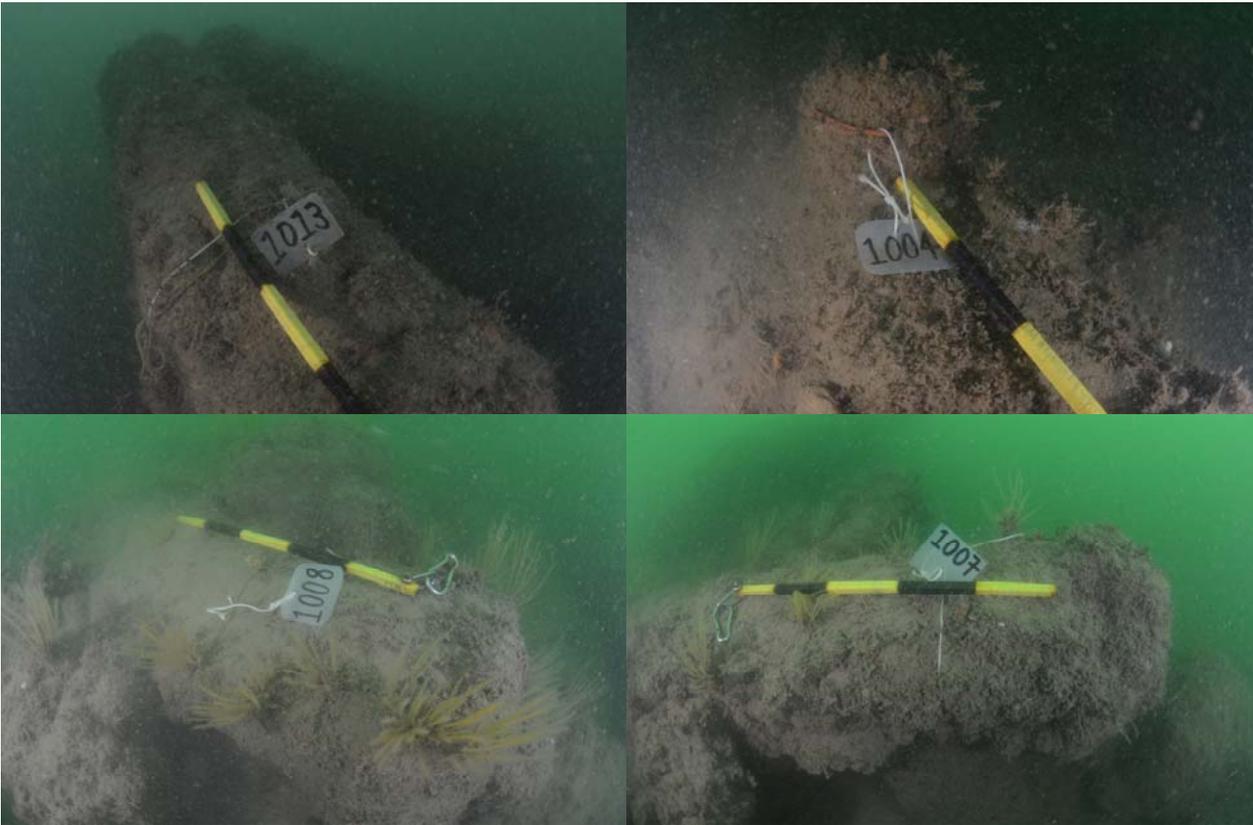


Figure 5: New labels on guns/cannons 1013, 1004, 1007, 1008 (clockwise from top left). Photographs © Martin Davies



Figure 6: New labels on guns/cannons 1005 (left) and 1040 (right). Photographs © Martin Davies.

During 2013, the licensee was supplied with a geo-referenced version of the side scan sonar survey undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in 2008. This survey data was incorporated into the “Site Recorder” survey of the site being compiled by the licensee (Fig 7). It was hoped that we would have time to visit the 7 anomalies identified, but unfortunately there was no time in 2013 to complete this.

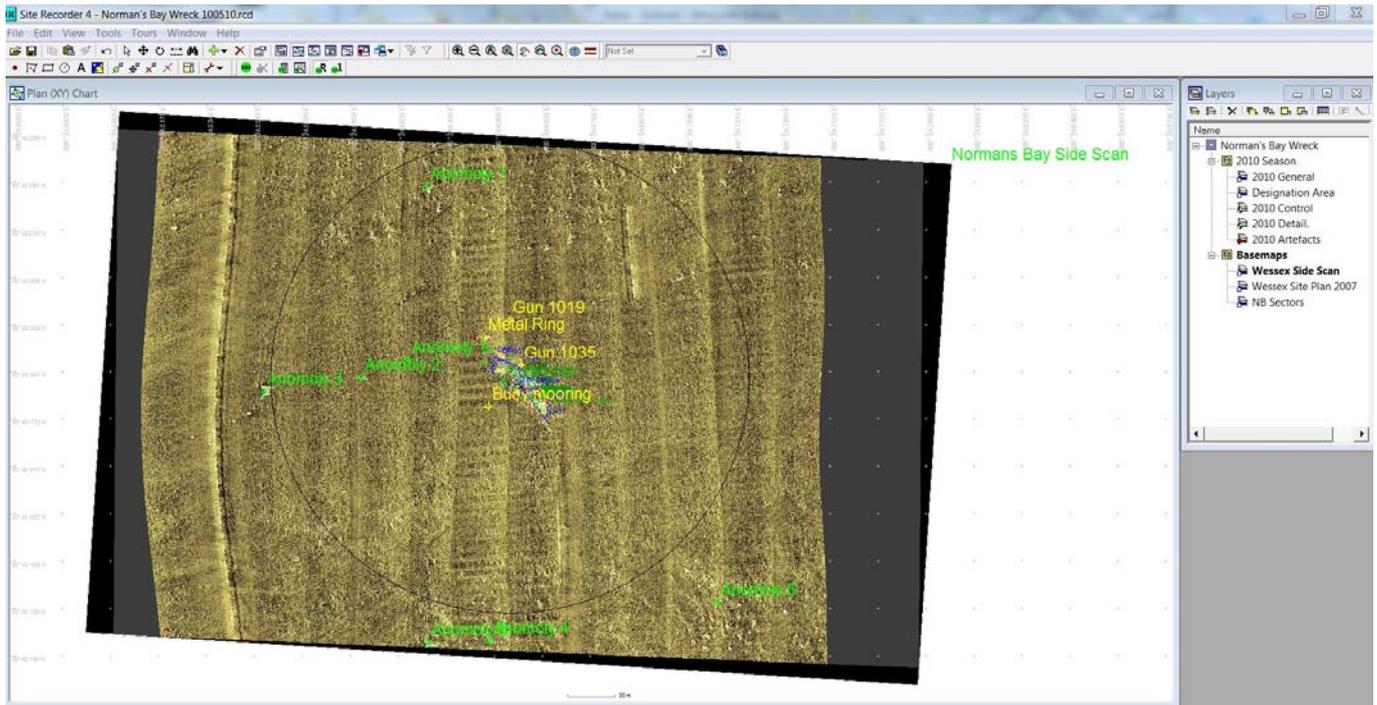


Figure 7. Screen grab of the *Site Recorder* file for the Norman's Bay Wreck (held by the licensee).

During 2013 a number of additional features, notably three new guns/cannons were found to be on the site, but not on the 2007 site plan. These new guns have been found in the central area of the wreck near to the anchor (Figure 8). They will be given UID's and labelled in 2014.

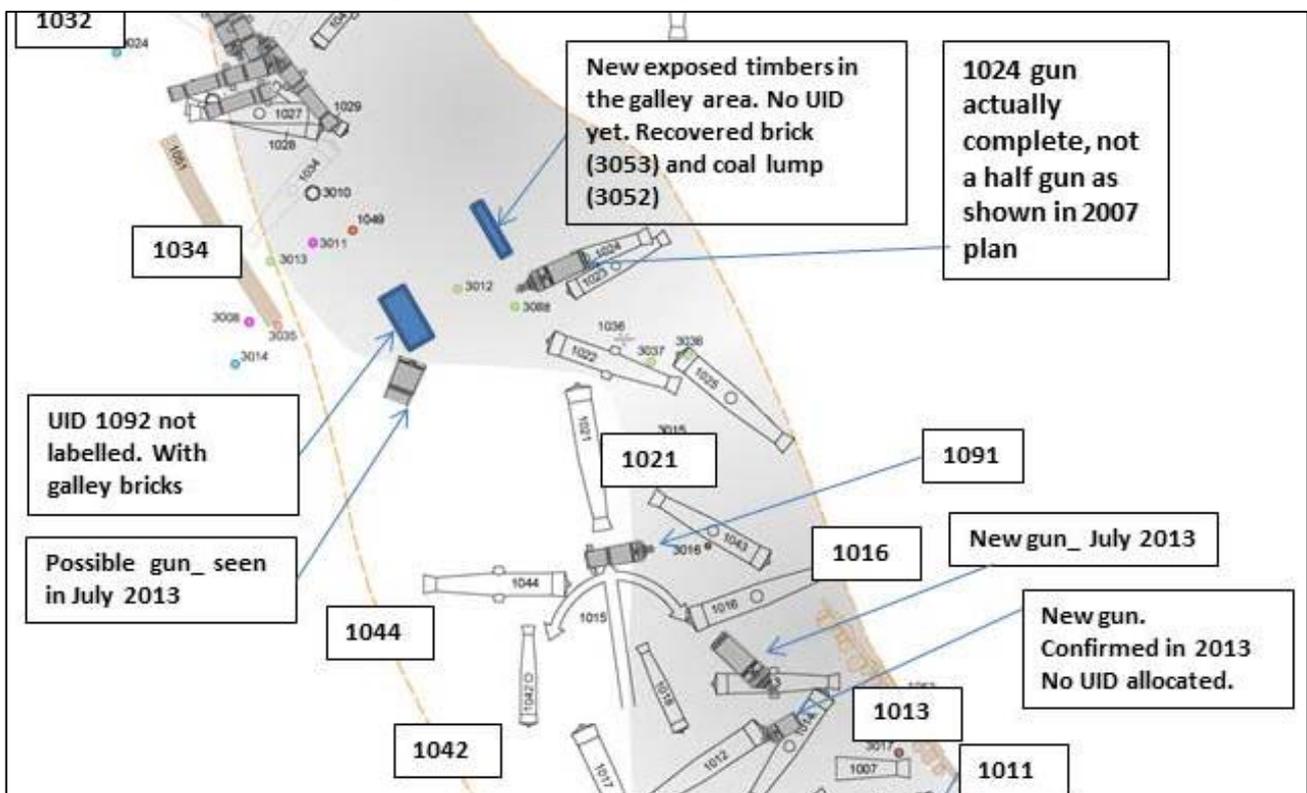


Figure 8: Location of new guns/cannons found in 2013.

Unknown object 1092 and surrounding area

As reported in the licensee's report in 2011 and 2012, UID 1092 was found by Mark Beattie-Edwards and John Gibson on the 9th April 2011 between diver trail stations 1 and 2. UID 192 was recorded and videoed in 2013 but the identity of UID 1092 is still inconclusive (Fig 9). During dives in 2013, UID 1092 was reported as still present on the site and seabed levels around it seem to be dropping. In 2014 it is hoped that more of UID 1092 may be visible.

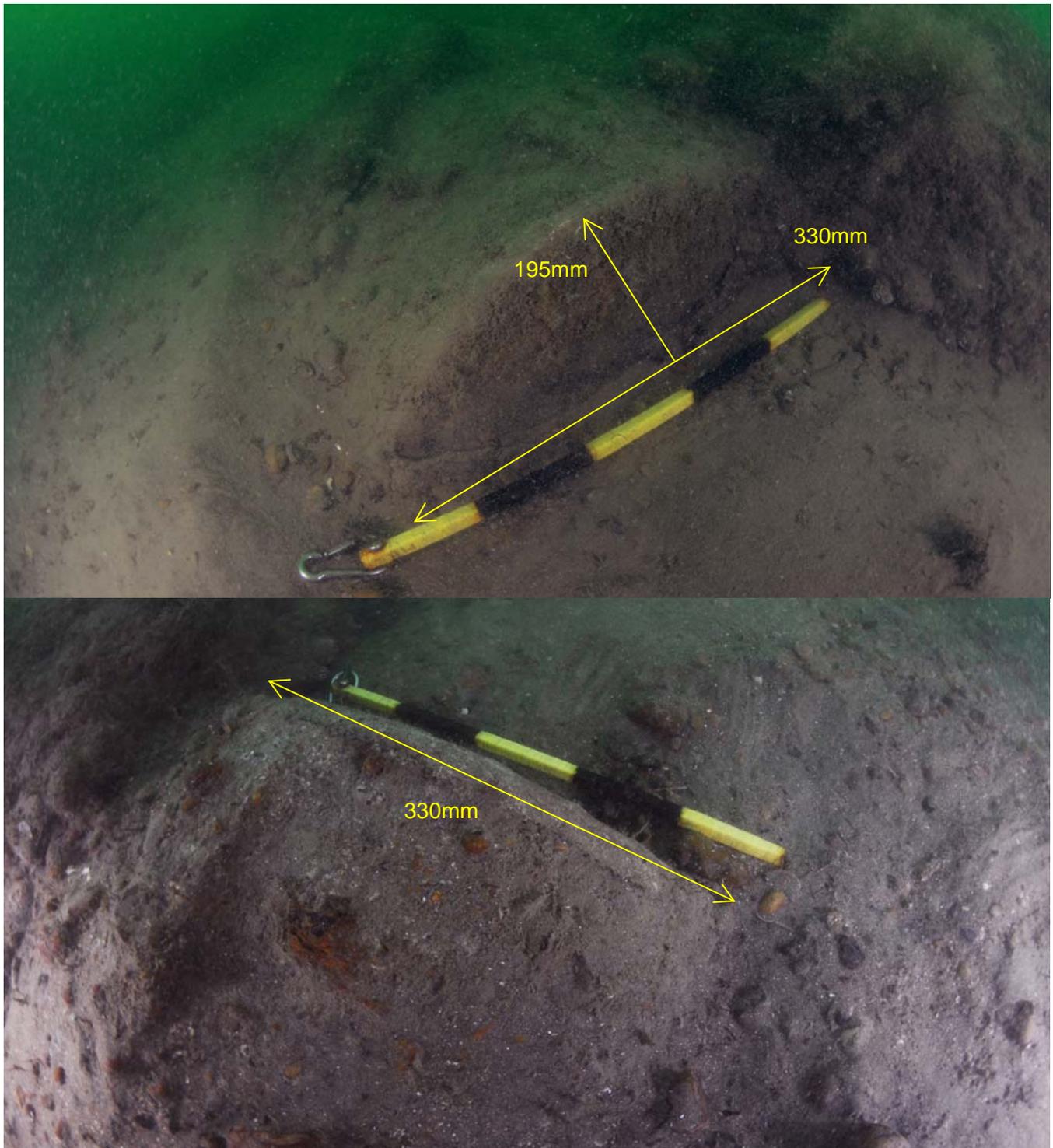


Figure 9: UID 1092 in profile (top) and from above (bottom). Photographs © Martin Davies.

The area surrounding UID 1092 was also recorded in 2013 and a new area of galley bricks was found that had not been noticed in previous years (Figure 10).

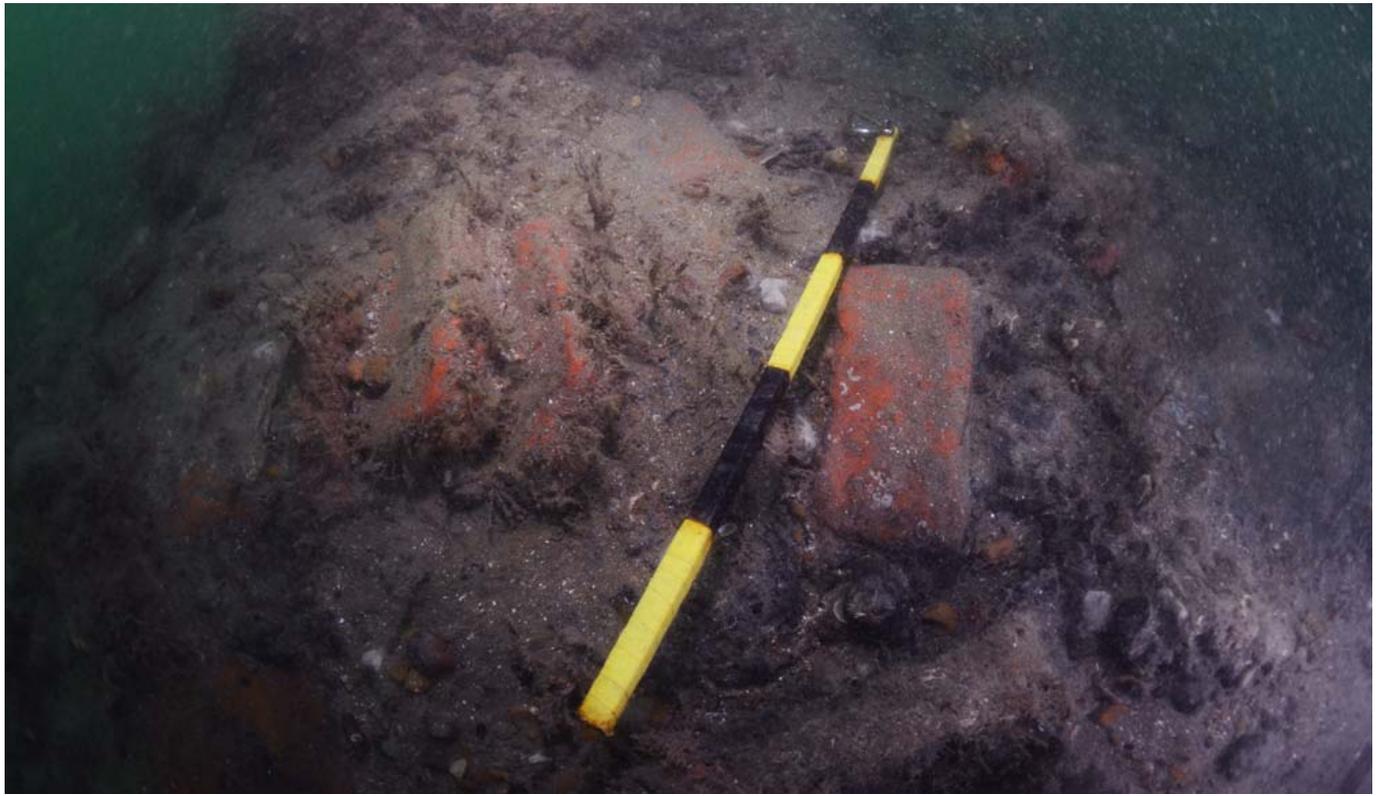


Figure 10. A new area of galley bricks and other objects near to UID 1092. Photographs © Martin Davies.

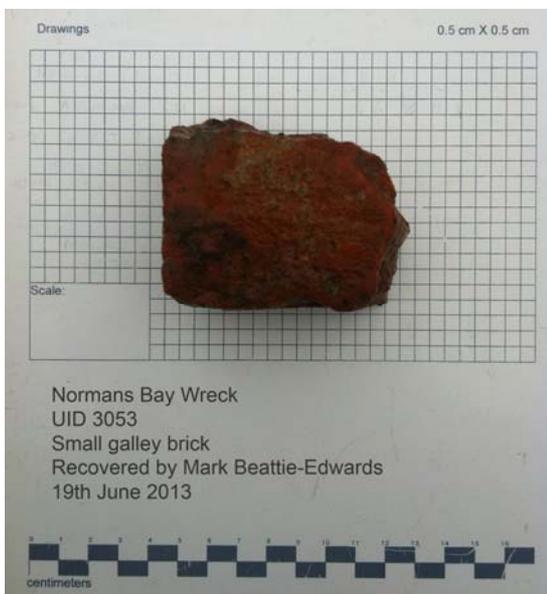


Figure 11: Small galley brick © NAS



Figure 12: Coal lump © NAS

Two small objects were recovered from this area in 2013. UID 3053 was a small piece of galley brick (Figure 11) and UID 3052 was a small lump of coal (Figure 12). These objects are currently being held by the NAS at the NAS office at Fort Cumberland, Portsmouth.

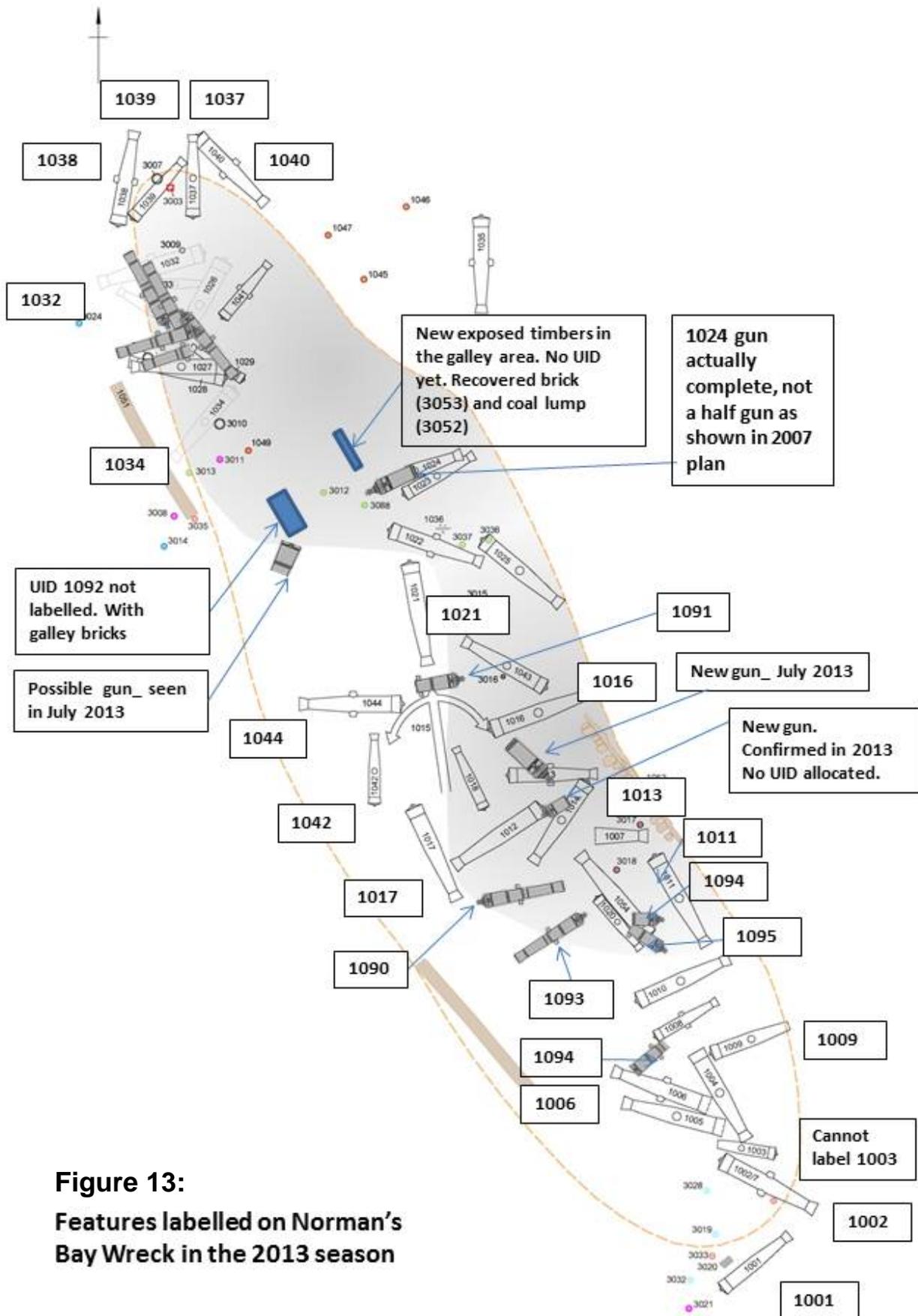


Figure 13:
Features labelled on Norman's Bay Wreck in the 2013 season

Research into the Battle of Beachy Head

In 2013 the licensee has been able to make contact with a number of well-known maritime historians who have undertaken research in to the Battle of Beachy Head. Although at a very early stage these historians have offered to help highlight the events that took place in July 1690 to help in the identification of the Norman's Bay Wreck.

The licensee has also received help in finding several 17th century "Old Dutch" documents held in the National Archives of the Netherlands in Den Haag. Unfortunately the translation of these Dutch Admiralty documents from Old Dutch will cost £600.00. It is hoped that at some point in the future we will be able to afford to have this documents translated

Drafting of Project Design for English Heritage

During 2013, the licensee has produced a project design for English Heritage, titled "***The Norman's Bay Protected Wreck - Publication and Exhibition***", under the English Heritage National Heritage Protection Plan Commissions Programme (Project Number 6965). The aim of this project is to build on all the previous studies to create a publication summarising the current state of knowledge about the wreck, whose identity and even nationality remains uncertain. The publication will also be used to support an exhibition on the Norman's Bay Wreck at the Shipwreck Museum in Hastings.

Dissemination of the Norman's Bay Wreck

The *Nautical Archaeology Society* has continued to maintain webpages on it's own webpages dedicated to the wreck – see <http://www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org/projects/normansbay.php> and has included the diver trail project in talks and presentations given by NAS Staff and tutors.

Recommendations

From the visits undertaken in 2013 it is possible to highlight a number of recommendations.

These are:

- 1.** Continue to maintain and manage the Norman's Bay Protected Wreck Diver Trail (as funded in 2011 by English Heritage). It has become apparent that a number of maintenance visits per year need to be undertaken in order to clean and replace parts of the trail, including number floats and the diver navigation lines. Funds should be made available to label the site up with proper heavy duty plastic labels
- 2.** Continue to undertake a non-intrusive survey to build on the existing survey which has proved to be of invaluable assistance, but still contains inaccuracies in a number of places. This survey should especially concentrate on the new "galley area" or bricks around object UID 1092.
- 3.** Work with Shipwreck Heritage Centre in Hastings to update their exhibition on the Normans Bay Wreck. Following the lack of dialogue with Bexhill Museum who had previously agreed to curate objects from the Norman's Bay Wreck, the licensee has obtained the support of the Shipwreck Heritage Centre in Hastings during 2013. It is recommended that the licensee and English heritage obtain the support of the Shipwreck Heritage Centre in Hastings for the curation of objects from the Norman's Bay Wreck.

4. Undertake a magnetometer and diver survey over the site to look for additional outlying cannon and other features possibly associated with the Norman's Bay wreck and other wrecks from the Battle of Beachy Head, including anomalies found in 2008 by the Wessex Archaeology side scan sonar survey (Figure 7).

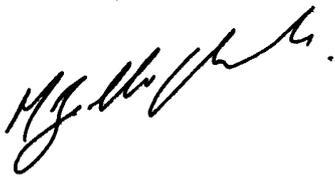
5. Remove the concretion from a single cannon from the main concentration of cannons. Being made from cast the concretion would need to be removed to help identify the type, age and provenance of the gun. This would help identify whether the wreck is English or one of the Dutch ships lost in the Battle of Beachy Head in 1690. It is suggested that this could be done in water without the need to physically recover the cannon to the surface.

6. Continue to look for small pottery sherds that could assist in the identification of the nationality of the wreck. It is hoped that perhaps the new "galley area" found in 2013 might be a source of a pottery find.

7. Undertake an excavation of the eastern area of the site, where organic material (in the form of hull timbers) are known to survive. The only way we are going to learn the nationality of this protected wreck, for certain is from small finds. The lack of small finds surface over the last 5 years demonstrates that these finds will not be made without excavation.

Name of licensee: Mark Beattie-Edwards, MA, MIfA

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Beattie-Edwards', written in a cursive style.

Date: 13th November 2013