

The Norman's Bay Wreck

Licensee Report – November 2014

Type of licence: Survey License and Surface Recovery license.

Date of report: 21st November 2014

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 three out of the five planned dates. On every visit the underwater visibility was reported as being poor. The lack of visibility (less than 20cm in many cases) hampered productivity in 2014, with very little progress being made.

Details of diving operations:

Date: 20th June 2014

Dive Platform: Dive 125, Skipper by David Ronnan

Dive Contractor: Nautical Archaeological Society

Divers: Mark Beattie-Edwards, Sara Hasan, Ian Apps, Steve Mould, Sid Payne, Gemma Buckley, Chris De Souza, Natasha Trenchard, Stuart Hughes, Andy Grant

Condition: Visibility 1 m maximum, poor ambient light

Tasks: Familiarisation dive for new visiting divers. Repairing diver trail.

Dive statistics: 10 dives

Date: 2nd July 2014

Dive Platform: Dive 125, Skipper by David Ronnan

Dive Contractor: Nautical Archaeological Society

Divers: Mark Beattie-Edwards, Sara Hasan, Laura Coombes, Rob Hutchin, David Williams, Peter Talbot, Peter Neal, Sally Richards, Steve Savage, Andy Last, Tony Crowley, Peter Ruff, Sylvia Pryer, David Ronnan

Condition: Visibility 1 m maximum, poor ambient light

Tasks: Repairing diver trail. Familiarisation dive for new visiting divers

Dive statistics: 14 dives

Date: 16th September 2014

Dive Platform: Dive 125, Skipper by David Ronnan

Dive Contractor: Nautical Archaeological Society

Divers: Mark Beattie-Edwards, Sara Hasan, Dave Ronnan, Sylvia Pryer, Kirstie Harris, Paul Harris, Ouis Sadique, Grant Crooke, Ryan Dearnaley, Tina Burton, Simon Garrard, Callum Rudd, Maxine McKenzie, James Buckshall

Condition: Visibility 2 m maximum, poor ambient light

Tasks: Repairing diver trail. Familiarisation dive for new visiting divers

Dive statistics: 14 dives

Date: 17th September 2014

Dive Platform: Dive 125, Skipper by David Ronnan

Dive Contractor: Nautical Archaeological Society

Divers: Mark Beattie-Edwards, Sara Hasan, Matt Cass, Dan Potts, Darren Shipman, Paul Ritson, Linda Ritson, Phil Grigg, Claire Kavanagh, Sylvia Pryer.

Condition: Visibility 1 m maximum, poor ambient light

Tasks: Repairing diver trail. Familiarisation dive for new visiting divers

Dive statistics: 10 dives

Work undertaken during 2014

1. Familiarisation dives for visiting new recreational divers
2. Repair and maintenance of the diver trail
3. IJNA article and Museum Exhibition for the Shipwreck Museum, Hastings

All the visits made by the licensee with the NAS in 2014 have involved cleaning and maintenance of the diver trail that was established in 2011. In 2014 no permanent site marker buoy was visited used on the wreck for visitor access.

Cleaning and maintenance of the diver trail in 2014

In 2013 we have cleaned the underwater trail stations (Figure 1) and had 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 all 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

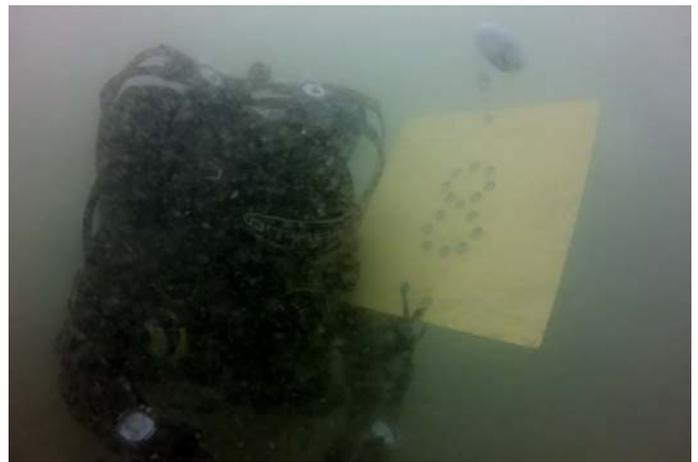


Figure 2: The numbered signs installed in 2013



Figure 3: The weighted line installed in 2013

Unfortunately since visiting the site in 2013 all the lines and numbered floats had been removed from the diver trail. A number of the diver stations (the buckets filled with concrete) had moved on the seabed, with station number 3 to the north of the site being at least 15 meters from where it should have been located. The licensee moved the diver station number 3 back to its correct location.

IJNA article and Museum Exhibition

During 2013, the licensee 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.

This project is set to complete in February 2015.

Dissemination of the Norman’s Bay Wreck

The *Nautical Archaeology Society* has continued to maintain webpages on its 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.

A five page article on the wreck, authored by NAS diver Martin Davies appeared in the August edition of SCUBA magazine.

Recommendations

From the visits undertaken in 2014 it is possible to highlight a number of recommendations. All these recommendations were made in the licensee’s 2013 report for English Heritage.

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: 21st November 2014