

Road Harbour Field Project
Methods and Techniques in Maritime Archaeology
16 May – 30 May, 2009

Program Handbook



Credit: P. Hubbard

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Methods and Techniques in Maritime Archaeology

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Description of this Project

This Road Harbour project will provide students with an introduction to the methods and techniques of maritime archaeology survey, including site recording, photography, artifact drawing, and site management. Lectures will be provided on the various research methods used by maritime archaeologists. The remainder of the unit will comprise practical training which will introduce students to the equipment used to document maritime sites.

Educational Aims

This field project will teach students a range of maritime archaeological field skills. Analytical skills and techniques will enable students to provide a significant contribution to the development, management, and research of this subject area on a global basis.

Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this program will develop a broad based knowledge of practical components of this study area. Students will also have developed a range of investigative skills which will allow them to further develop their research or vocational careers. They will be able to identify integrative methodologies, tools, equipment, research strategies and understand the integrated approaches to the practice of maritime archaeology and marine science. Furthermore to select, apply and interpret practical methods and strategies employed on site investigation.

Methods of Teaching

Professional and practical skills are introduced through a combination of lectures, and practical fieldwork sessions. In particular the management of project work and familiarization with equipment will be developed during the field program.

Requirements

The sites are located in shallow, sheltered water, with visibility ranging between two and seven meters. We will require the equivalent of PADI advanced dive certification for participation with a minimum 25 logged dives, diving and travel insurance and a current diving medical.

Methods of Assessment

Knowledge and understanding of this project is assessed through a daily journal and notebook.

Key Readings and References

Babits, Lawrence E. & Van Tilburg, Hans. (eds.). 1998. *Maritime Archaeology: A Reader of Substantive and Theoretical Contributions*. Plenum Publishing, New York.

Bowens, Amanda (ed.). 2008. *Underwater Archaeology: The NAS Guide to Principles and Practice*. 2nd ed. Portsmouth, UK.

Dunn, Richard S. 1973. *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*. W.W. Norton & Company, New York.

Green, J. 2004. *Maritime Archaeology: A Technical Handbook*, 2nd Edition. Academic Press, New York.

Greenhill, B. & Manning S., 1988. *The Evolution of the Wooden Ship*. Facts on File, New York.

ROAD HARBOUR SHIPWRECK SURVEY

Projected Plan for 2009

Underwater archaeological investigations at Road Harbour have, under the auspices of the University of Bristol, focused on the examination of two historic shipwreck sites. These sites, located during our 2005 expedition to locate the remains of HMS *Nymph* (1778-1783), have provided an excellent research opportunity as well as an ideal location for training maritime archaeologists. This harbour, which purportedly houses over 150 shipwrecks, has never been previously documented; and due to a growing danger of modern development, we have eagerly undertaken its formal study.

Our work, to date, has focused on the South site, a circa late 18th/early 19th Century vessel of 60 tons, built for trade, and originating in Bermuda or Circum-Caribbean region. During the course of investigations, the team exposed a large section of articulated hull structure, amongst which ceramics and glass, weaponry, as well as a silver coin (dating to 1755) were located. The study of this site, completed in 2008, adds a new dimension to the characterization of pan Caribbean trade in an era of social, political and economic unrest.

This year, we will be focusing on the North site (Figure 1), located approximately 50 feet north of the South site. Scantling (dimensions of ship's timbers) and wood typology suggest a vessel of approximately 250 tons, also built for trade, and constructed along the eastern North American seaboard (Figure 2). The site, which was damaged as a result of commercial dredging activities in the 1960s and 1970s, poses challenges for recording activity. This is due to exposure of the wood (resulting in *teredo navalis* – a worm which has consumed sections of timber) and material erosion out of the cut slope (thereby losing its context). Preliminary surveys have located a contiguous section of planks and a couple larger buried timbers, amongst which ceramics, glass, a section of copper sheathing, and various iron concretions have also been located.



Figure 1: Planned study area 2009 (red). Credit: M. Kent.

Although our main objective is continued survey of the North site (Figure 3), we will also be extending the survey area to inventory other submerged sites and objects in Road Harbour. With knowledge of these targets, we will be able to build a catalogue of these cultural resources thereby preserving data in advance of further changes to harbour seabed due to dredging and land reclamation activities.

Our research goals for the North site are as follows:

1. Continue investigating site for additional structural components, focusing along the dredged channel, and with the intention to locate articulated structure.
2. Locate ballast pile. We expect to locate a larger volume of ballast than at South Site due to correspondingly larger size of scantling.
3. Continue wood sampling.

North Site			
Sample	10	Sacrificial Plank	American White Pine
Sample	11	Bottom Plank	American White Oak
Sample	12	Frame	Red or Live Oak
Sample	13	Trunnel	White Oak

Figure 2: Wood Samples from North and South Site (2005). Credit: Dr. Lee Newsom.

Finally, other sites and areas:

1. Examine in further detail ballast and steel wreck sites, located by the ferry dock.
2. Take closer look at other sites pointed out by Mr. Christopher Juredin (Commercial Dive Services) particularly those with structure, to establish size and to see whether they might be associated with either the North or South site (Figure 3).

In sum, our investigations will continue to examine the importance of Road Town’s maritime past. As a centre of cotton, sugar and indigo production, it became a bustling port for export to England and the American Colonies, during the eighteenth century. Furthermore, timber, salt and fresh water, were critical to local growth and to ships requiring supplies. With this increase in shipping, there were inevitably shipwrecks whose hulls were accidentally lost or purposefully abandoned. Our planned study will therefore present further opportunity to study these time capsules, through documentation of their physical remains.

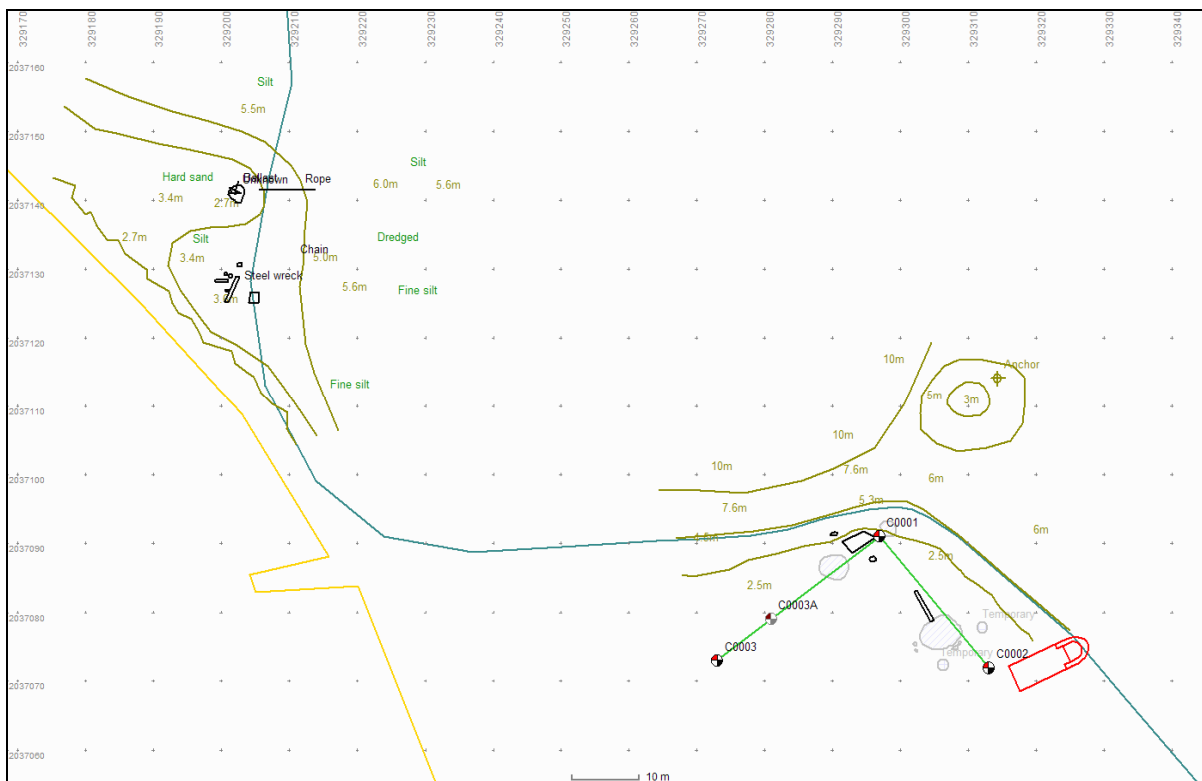


Figure 3: GIS Plan of North (C0001), South (C0002), Ballast and Steel wreck site in relation to western harbour breakwater (yellow) (2005). Credit: P. Holt.

Accommodation

We will be based at Prospect Reef Resort (<http://www.prospectreefbvi.com>) in Road Town, for the duration of the field project. The resort phone number is: 284-494-3773/3311 in case you need be contacted while on island. Reception will connect these calls to your room. Outgoing local and long distance phone calls can be expensive, and are the responsibility of the participant. There is a small computer in the lobby of the resort for checking e-mail, and a couple internet spots in town. Some rooms may also have internet connectivity, if you wish to bring your own laptop (just remember a cable!). Rooms have small safes, in case you wish to store passports and other valuables. Speak with reception if you wish to arrange this.

Food

There is a RiteWay food market located 5-10 minutes walk from our accommodation. Ideally situated for any breakfast and lunch items you wish to purchase. Store hours are: 8am - 7pm Monday - Saturday, 8am - 3pm on Sunday. We will be providing evening meals, which may include (but not limited to!) chilli, BBQ chicken, fajitas and burgers.

Typical Day

An average field day begins at 7:30am, with time to prepare breakfast and pack lunches for the day. We generally remain on site from 9:30am until 5:00pm, and return to accommodation by 5:30pm with final day debriefing. Students and staff take turns (in groups of two) with dinner preparations and clean-up, allowing the rest of the crew to complete daily journals and notebooks.

Daily Journals and Notebooks

This year, we will be creating a web interface, through an online project journal. The Museum of Underwater Archaeology, have offered to sponsor our public archaeology campaign, so please do visit their site and take a look at what they do: <http://www.uri.edu/mua/>. This is a great opportunity for you to document your activities and experience while in Road Town, and publish them to the greater population. It's also a useful notch on your archaeological skills belt! A field notebook will be provided at the start of the field school in which you will need to add daily entries and submit at the end.

What you should bring

SCUBA: Everyone will be expected to bring fins, gloves, buoyancy compensator, regulator (with gauges and octopus), knife, u/w compass, diving watch (or computer). It is recommended that you bring a dive skin or full 3-5mm wetsuit for protection from sun, abrasion and marine organisms. We will provide weight and tanks.

PERSONAL: Towel, toiletries, clothes, waterproof jacket, hat, sunscreen and insect repellent. The climate of the BVI is considered subtropical with average summer temperatures of 26 to 31 degrees C (79 to 88 degrees F). Do bring long sleeve shirt and pants for protection from sun, as well as no-see-ums and mosquitoes which appear in the early morning and after sundown. You may also wish to pack one smart outfit (sundress or smart pants/shirt) since we are usually invited by the BVI government to 1-2 "posh" events, during our stay on island.

SPENDING MONEY: For any personal spending (alcohol, gifts, optional nights to "dine out") BVI merchants accept US currency. There are 4 major Banks, including: First Caribbean, First Bank, ScotiaBank and Banco Popular. You'll find ATM's at both First Bank as well as Banco Popular.

CUSTOMS, DOCUMENTS and INSURANCE: Be sure that you have a passport, since driver's licenses for US residents are insufficient for passage through USVI/BVI customs. When declaring purpose of stay, state you are on a scuba diving holiday in the British Virgin Islands. As required for acceptance on this program, you will need to have scuba diving insurance and are highly advised to have personal health insurance. Please be sure to bring proof of dive insurance with you to Road Town. You will also be required to bring your highest level dive certification card and are asked to bring your log book.

Road Harbour Field Project Tentative Itinerary

Saturday 16 May

PM: Arrive on island and make your way to the accommodation.

Sunday 17 May

AM: Field trip to see (topside!) historic sites around Road Harbour (Mitch Kent)

PM: Mock Shipwreck site – introduction to underwater survey (Kimberly Monk)

Monday 18 May

AM: Setup and dive orientation

PM: On site

Tuesday 19 May

AM/PM: On site

Wednesday 20 May

AM/PM: On site

Thursday 21 May

AM/PM: On site

Friday 22 May

AM/PM: On site

Saturday 23 May

AM/PM: Free Day (ie: Sailing to Norman Island aboard White Squall II or dive to RMS *Rhone*)

Sunday 24 May

AM/PM: On site

Monday 25 May

AM/PM: On site

Tuesday 26 May

AM/PM: On site

Wednesday 27 May

AM/PM: On site

Thursday 28 May

AM/PM: On site (plus site clean-up and stabilization)

Friday 29 May

AM/PM: Completing data entry, logs, drawings, notes

Saturday 30 May

AM/PM: Departures by ferry or air

Lecturer/Field Support Biographies

Kimberly Monk, Archaeologist/Lecturer

Originally from Toronto, Kimberly coordinates and lectures on the University of Bristol MA in Maritime Archaeology and History. She holds an M.A. in Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology from East Carolina University, received a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Western Ontario, and is currently completing a Ph.D. in the Department of Archaeology at Bristol. She has worked as an archaeologist on dozens of projects within the Caribbean, United States, and Canada, including both terrestrial and submerged prehistoric sites, but with a particular focus on historic shipwrecks. Current research beyond the Caribbean includes studies of a Royal Navy fireship on the Isles of Scilly (UK), and a shipwreck project (currently in development), within the Canadian Arctic.

David Moore, Archaeologist

Hailing from North Carolina, David has conducted field research on over 175 shipwrecks dating from the 16th to 19th centuries, including the 17th century Spanish galleons *Nuestra Senora de Atocha*, *Santa Margarita* and *San Martin*. He has served as archaeological director on both the *Henrietta Marie* Project, and the *Queen Anne's Revenge* Shipwreck Project. David has authored numerous publications, and delivered hundreds of presentations on shipwreck research. He holds a B.A. in Environmental Marine Science from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and an M.A. in Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology from East Carolina University. He is currently Curator of Nautical Archaeology at the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort.

Leslie Currie, Archaeologist

Leslie Currie holds a B.A. in Archaeology from Wilfrid Laurier University, in Waterloo, Ontario and has been working as an archaeologist since 1987. She has worked for the London Museum of Archaeology (associated with the University of Western Ontario), the University of Delaware Centre for Archaeological Research, and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, including independent consulting firms. She is the president of the Ontario Marine Heritage Committee and is currently spearheading investigations of a submerged site associated with a series of caves and overhangs for evidence of prehistoric habitation. Leslie has also worked on a number of historic shipwrecks in Ontario and Florida.

Nicholas Bentall, Field Support

Nick is originally from Henley-on-Thames, England, but has been based in South West England for over 12 years. Trained as an electrical and electronics engineer at the University of West England, he has since been employed as a Senior IT Engineer, as well as in property development. An avid boater, he holds an RYA Powerboat certificate and rescue diver certification.

Christopher Juredin, Diving Support/Sponsor

Christopher was born in East London, South Africa and moved to BVI in 1994. He is currently owner/operator of Commercial Dive Services in the Caribbean; and also owner of "We Be Divin" Dive Store in Cane Garden Bay, the only dive store on the north side of Tortola. This serial entrepreneur also owns a ship registration company, the Parish Group and has spent the last seven years coordinating and managing numerous projects in the commercial dive industry. Christopher has located many wreck sites in the Virgin Islands and was a major sponsor of the 2005-2008 archaeological surveys of Road Harbour.

Michael Kent, Lecturer

Mitch harkens from Worcestershire, England. He holds a B.A in Visual Communications and an M.A. in Maritime Archaeology from the University of Bristol. Mitch is currently completing a Ph.D. in Archaeology at Bristol, focusing on the fortification network in the British Virgin Islands. Based at BVI for ten years, Mitch has worked at the H. Lavity Stouff Community College for seven years, where he is responsible for historical research, archaeology and teaching. Mitch initiated Bristol's entrance to BVI and continues to heighten awareness of shipwrecks throughout the Virgin Islands.