

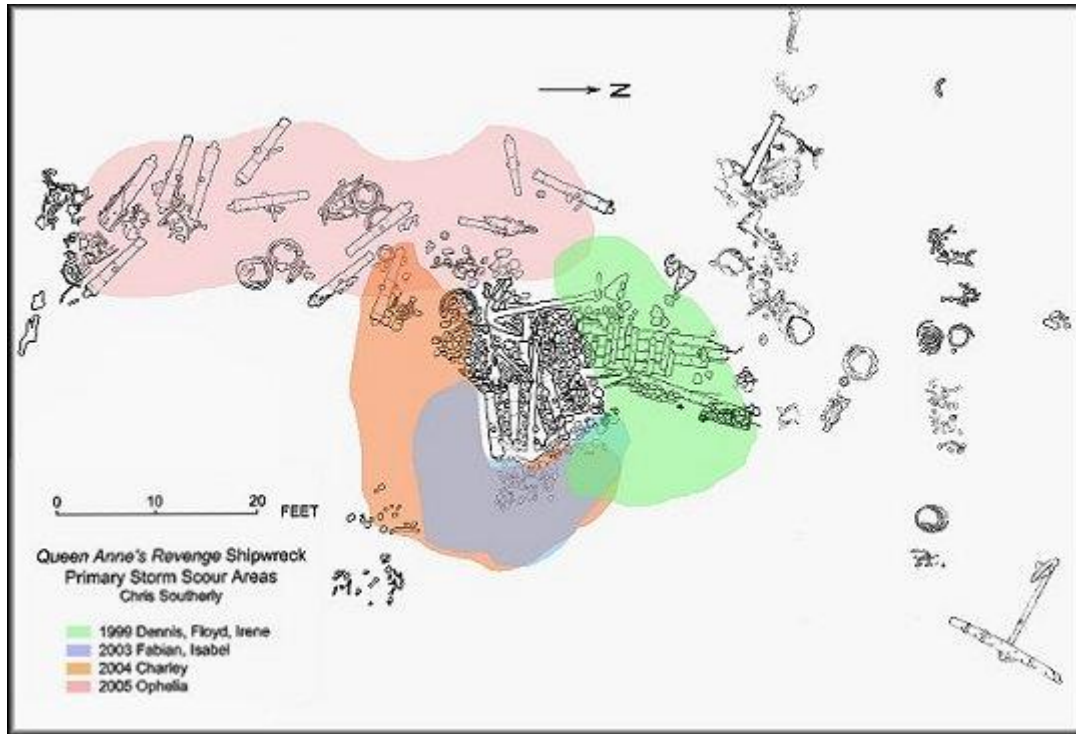
# *The Queen's Report*

*Update from the*  
**Queen Anne's Revenge Shipwreck Project**  
Volume 6, Number 1  
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## **Queen's Report Winter 2006 with the latest on site protection**

### **Director's Report**

A major initiative designed to help protect the *QAR* shipwreck site is taking place this winter as a cooperative agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers - Wilmington District. It involves placement of a sand berm seaward of the site as a potential means to reduce wave energy and provide a source for sand replenishment during storm events. The driving force behind this action has been the observed scouring and loss of protective sands on top and around the shipwreck. We reported storms of last fall, principally Ophelia, created major scouring on the south side of the main mound. More disturbing, however was a dive taken in mid-February, which found the wooden stock of the north anchor completely exposed, a feature that has always been buried in the past. Most recently a sonar survey conducted and processed by Chris Freeman of GeoDynamics Inc. as a contribution to the QAR project, provided much greater detail and showed that the site is currently lying exposed in a trough between two near shore sand ridges.

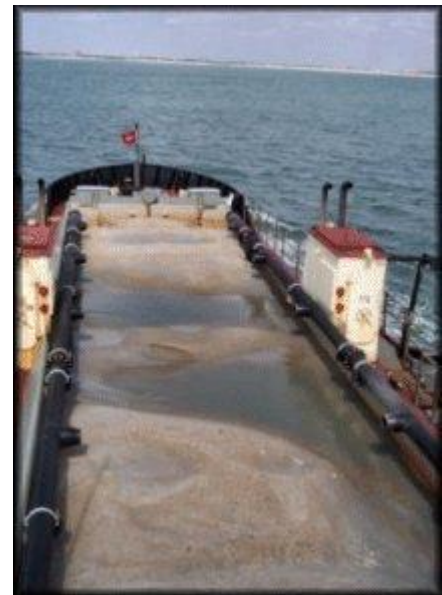


Given the fact that even if we had the resources to begin full scale recovery today it would take months needed for startup purposes and then several years to accomplish. At best this will leave the site threatened, especially by storm currents during the upcoming hurricane season. Facing these realities, it was fortuitous that a dredging project was scheduled at Bulkhead Channel (near Beaufort) this winter, in which the US Army Corps of Engineers had the opportunity to use their shallow draft hopper dredge *Currituck*. As opposed to most dredges working in the area, this vessel is able work within the water depths (c. 23 feet) that are necessary to drop sand close enough to have an effect. More importantly, Wilmington District Colonel Pulliam and his staff recognized our need for immediate assistance and were able to direct sand disposal to the vicinity of the *QAR* site and provide periodic sonar monitoring in an effort to help buy time at the site prior to archaeological excavation.

### **The details of the project are as follows:**

- The project involved the dredging of 30,000 cubic yards of sand from the Bulkhead Channel, located less than two miles from the shipwreck, and transporting it to a dump site located 400 feet seaward of the shipwreck site. This will create an artificial sand berm or submerged sand dune, that will extend approximately 600 feet long, 200 feet wide and rise 6 feet above the seabed.
- The dredging and disposal work began February 23rd and lasted several weeks. The federal dredge plant *Currituck* will carry out dredging.

- The creation of an artificial underwater sand feature, which is highly experimental, will tell us some important things about site-specific sand movement on the seabed and the potential to protect underwater archaeological sites in the dynamic coastal environment. After the sand is deposited sand movement will be monitored both physically by having divers measure sand levels at reference stations and through the implementation of periodic sonar surveys.
- What we will be looking for is how the deposited sand keeps its shape and position under the influence of currents, particularly during storms.
- If the feature stays stationary would provide us the basis upon which to place sand directly on the *QAR* or other threatened shipwrecks in the future. Without this knowledge we are reluctant to do so for fear of potentially disturbing exposed remains and adding contaminants to the *QAR* site, thus creating a worse situation than exists now.
- Since the prevailing currents, especially during the hurricane season, are in a shoreward direction, we expect that the deposited sand will deflate and slowly move toward the site. In extreme currents this may provide a source of sand to counter scouring at the wreck site.
- It is possible that the artificial sand feature, if it stays intact, will act as a buffer that will serve to deflate wave energy and in turn the intensity of currents reaching the site. However, it may also act to increase speed of those currents and worsen the situation by creating eddies and vortices behind the sand mound. If possible we will deploy current meters to observe this effect. What we will be looking for is how the deposited sand keeps its shape and position under the influence of currents, particularly during storms.



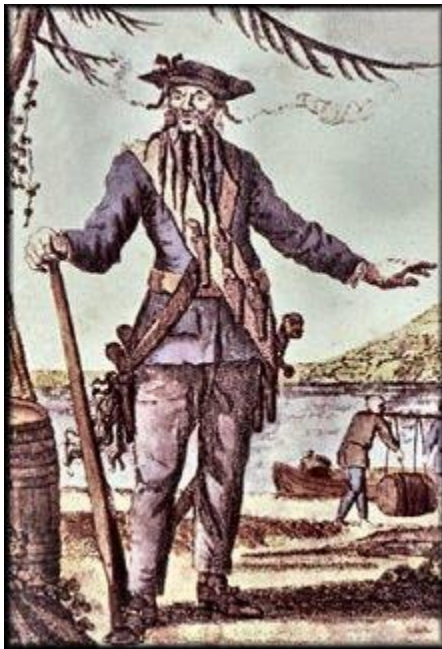
Depending on what we learn over the next few years, this study has broader implications in understanding the dynamics of the near shore environment with regard to sand transport (an issue, for example, that is very important for beach renourishment) and examines the potential for adding a measure of protection to threatened archaeological sites through directed sand disposal. Specifically for our needs, we can only hope that these efforts and a lull in hurricane activities will allow time for major recovery at the *QAR* site to remove historic remains and archaeological evidence from harm's way.

## Application for Preservation

The North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources has applied to the National Trust for Historical Preservation (NTHP) for placement of the *Queen Anne's Revenge* shipwreck site on their 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. NTHP provides no funding per se, but placement on the list would significantly contribute to the awareness of the danger of continued loss of the site and the catastrophic results a major tropical storm event could have on site integrity. The application states that the *QAR* archaeological record represents a self-sufficient, micro society of eighteenth century mariners in general and piratical society specifically. It is the oldest shipwreck discovered in North Carolina waters and one of the oldest in the United States. Its artifacts can shed light on shipboard life, the period's shipboard ordinance, ship construction and repair, colonial provisioning, pirate culture, and the French transatlantic slave trade.

The *QAR* and its artifacts represent not America's elite who wrote our history, but the outsiders, runaways, renegades, and rogues who left only these traces of their story behind.

The criteria that NTHP will use to judge our application will be (1) significance: not necessarily famous but significant within its own cultural context and illustration of important issues in preservation; (2) urgency: a disaster or an imminent one, or a pattern of destruction is evident and will lead to loss; (3) potential solutions: likelihood threats can be removed. NTHP typically receives around 100 applications annually. Preservation professionals evaluate sites and make recommendations to a panel chaired by National Trust President Richard Moe. Competition is stiff - keep your fingers crossed and we'll keep you informed.



**A Different Look At Pirates.** It is difficult to avoid association with 17th and 18th century piracy while we are excavating the wreck of what we believe was the flagship of the notorious Blackbeard. Previously, we have commented that pirates were low-down, murdering thieves whose lives were not as glamorous and romantic as they are portrayed. However, John Kerr of Durham, NC has supplied us with information, that at least gives us a different perspective. His source is Dr. David Cordingly, Curator of the National Maritime Museum near London. The usual pirate was an out-of-work seaman just trying to make ends meet. Not all of them blew their money on rum and women. Many were family men who sent letters and part of their loot home to their wives. There is no evidence they ever made their victims walk the plank, and they didn't bury treasure and keep secret maps. All their booty was divided up among the crew and never hidden away. Pirates were actually democrats, often voting to choose a captain. And they voted him out if he

didn't deliver the loot! They even had a kind of workers compensation. Men injured in battle earned an extra share of the spoils, apportioned to whether they had lost arms, legs, fingers, or eyes.

The pirates' black flag with the skull and crossbones was not as feared as one might suppose. The Jolly Roger was actually a





welcome signal meaning, "We're pirates, but maybe we can negotiate." What was really dreaded was their red flag, which meant, "We're taking no prisoners!" Rarely did they swing through the rigging, cutlasses at the ready, and board a merchant vessel. Sensible merchant captains surrendered rather than defend a cargo that didn't belong to them anyway and was probably insured.



**Speaking of Rum.** Lest you think that pirates were the only thieves and rum drinkers on the high seas, here is an item that has been making its rounds on the internet. The story goes that our own revered U.S.S. Constitution, known also as "Old Ironsides", pulled a few shenanigans some eighty years after Blackbeard. The Constitution as a combat vessel carried 48,600 gallons of fresh water for her crew of 475 officers and men. This was sufficient to last during six months of sustained operations at sea. She carried no evaporators. However, let it be noted that according to her log, "On July 27, 1798, the U.S.S Constitution sailed from Boston

with a full complement of men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder, and 79,400 gallons of rum.

Her mission was: "to destroy and harass English shipping". Making Jamaica on October 6, she took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,300 gallons of rum. Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there November 12. She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 64,300 gallons of Portuguese wine. On November 18, she set sail for England. In the ensuing days she defeated five British men-of-war and captured and scuttled 12 English merchantmen, salvaging only the rum aboard each. By January 26 her powder and shot were exhausted. Nevertheless, although unarmed, she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. Her landing party captured a whisky distillery and transferred 40,000 gallons of single malt scotch aboard by dawn. Then she headed home, arriving in Boston on February 20, 1799 with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, no rum, no wine, no whiskey and 38,600 gallons of stagnant water.



Neat story, right? Well.....maybe, but something about it doesn't seem right. What do you think?  
Write to qar@ncdcr.gov and tell us what it is.



**Special Thanks to Virginia and William S. Powell.** The Powells recently attended a presentation in Raleigh by *QAR* Shipwreck Project Director Mark Wilde-Ramsing and pleasantly surprised him with a significant financial contribution to the project. Dr. Powell is a noted Professor Emeritus of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has written extensively about the state and the South. Their generosity has made it possible for our conservation staff to purchase an adjustable lighting system with reflectors to assist in the detailed documentation of artifacts as they are cleaned and conserved. We thank the Powells for helping "shed light on history"!! Please join them in support of the *QAR* project.