

An underwater photograph showing two divers in blue and yellow gear working on a submerged site. They are equipped with large blue lights and cameras. The seabed is sandy and rocky, with a red and white measuring tape laid out on the ground. In the background, a large, dark, rectangular object, possibly a shipwreck, is visible. The water is clear and blue.

Maritime
Archaeology
Trust

A Year In Depth

Maritime Archaeology Trust
2024

Front cover. Project director Arnaud Casanave de la Roche and photographer Stéphane Jamme excavating and recording the 16th century Rocciu 1 shipwreck, Corsica, France.
Image: Surveying the prehistoric landscape of the north west Solent.

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Maritime Archaeology Trust 2024

The Maritime Archaeology Trust exists for the advancement of education of the public, promoting Solent-based projects as part of national and international frameworks for archaeological and environmental research through publications, mobile displays, audio visual media and museum exhibits. We have been doing this with increasing proficiency for the last 33 years but now we have an opportunity to increase our impact substantially. We have been working with the Herapath Shenton Trust, the Yarmouth community, Martin Woodward and the Isle of Wight Council to set up a museum and education centre at Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, with plans for it to become an accredited UNESCO centre of excellence. Our research, as outlined in this report, will contribute directly to new displays and dynamic exhibits incorporating Martin's incredible collection of artefacts currently at the Shipwreck Centre and Maritime Museum at Arreton where we have grown our education and outreach programme.

It is now becoming standard practice to create 3D models of the artefacts and shipwrecks we investigate, giving an opportunity to develop immersive virtual reality tours that can be explored online or to enhance our interactive engagements in our Discovery Bus, such as those conducted around the country this year. These visualisations, not only allow us to view the archaeological sites themselves but also the seabed on which they sit. This information is used to help monitor wrecks, but also their associated environments, providing valuable data on the state of our coastal seas, while also contributing a broader global knowledge base in support of the UN Decade of the Oceans programme. But this isn't limited to shipwrecks as we continue to investigate the increasingly exposed drowned landscapes. In our collaborative project to analyse DNA traces within archaeological deposits from the 8,000 year old Bouldnor Cliff site to the 5,000 and 3,000 year old intertidal structures of the Beaulieu Estate, we will provide a continual record of the changing vegetation and fauna as the Solent formed, and in a generational time scale. All these initiatives enhance the value of maritime heritage and create more opportunities to better understand our ancestors and the world they inhabited.

Cumulatively, the Maritime Archaeological Trust has produced an unsurpassed archive of data from the Solent region, collated within our online 'hub' as part of our NLHF funded Fathoming the Future project. The project concluded this year, but for us, it provides the platform for an increased phase of activity, with more volunteers and many new online and digital promotional resources, setting solid foundations from which to build. This could not have been achieved without those that have supported our successes, all of whom are listed on the back pages. I would also like to thank the many individuals for their donations and for volunteering hundreds of hours of their time. I wish to thank members of the Management Committee, our Trustees, for their guidance and support and, I would particularly like to mark the Trust's thanks to Garry Momber our Director and to all our members of staff for their vital work on research, income generation and dissemination in these continually changing times.

Chairman - Honorary Alderman M. Woodhall, BEM FRICS

Probing Preserved Prehistory

The north west Solent continues to reveal more of its unique evidence of climate-driven sea level changes and the resulting impacts on the coastline and people from the Mesolithic to modern day. The legacy of the Holocene, the period since the end of the last Ice Age, is a series of preserved land surfaces and associated archaeological evidence of human activity as the Solent formed. At Bouldnor Cliff we have continued work on the deepest archaeological landscapes that date from 8,200 years ago, while our recent work across the Solent has recorded more Neolithic, Roman and Medieval structures.

On the fringes of the Beaulieu Estate, exposed on the lowest tides, we have identified phases of Neolithic occupation that date to 5,200 and 4,900 years ago. Evidence remains of these early farmers, in the form of upright posts along with large worked timbers lying perpendicular to each other and up to 5m long. This year, more Roman posts have been located and a linear Medieval revetment dated to 1223–1277 cal AD has been revealed to run over 70m parallel to the shore. All these structures are associated with an ancient channel that first became estuarine about 4,500 years ago. These features are now exposed due to coastal erosion.

Our long-term investigations at Bouldnor Cliff have been boosted by a new project funded by the Leverhulme Trust and delivered with Warwick University, to investigate the ancient Seda DNA of the flora and fauna populations within the landscape. Samples from cores recovered in the Solent will be taken at intervals equating to between 20 and 100 years. These will provide high resolution data on changes associated with the fluctuating environment as the sea level rose and climate warmed during the last 10,000 years. Particular attention will be given to sites where we have found the remains of human occupation; this will cast a light on their immediate environment, the resources they could exploit, the manipulation of the landscape or the possible transport of goods from further afield.



Top: Divers Jez Davies and Anthony Hayward diving on Bouldnor Cliff. Middle: MAT Director Garry Momber with the Hon. Mary Montagu-Scott examining flints after recovering them from Bouldnor Cliff. Bottom: Posts in the 70m long, 13th century Medieval revetment on the Beaulieu Estate (20cm scale).

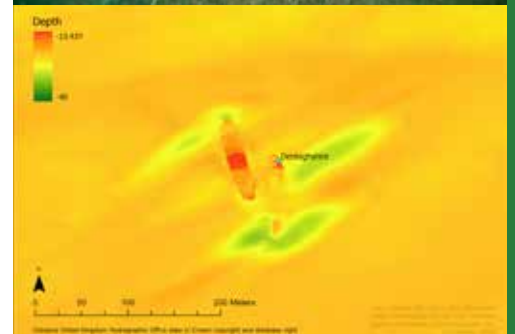
Revealing Wondrous Wrecks

Investigating historic wrecks has been a fully global experience this year, with diving investigations in the Solent and South America and a new research project illuminating trans-oceanic impacts of metal hulled sailing vessels.

HMS *Agamemnon*, the 64-gun, third rate ship of the line, said to have been Nelson's favourite, highlights links from our Solent shores at Buckler's Hard, where the vessel was built, across to Uruguay where the ship was lost in 1809 in the River Plate. Working with an international team, MAT have used our expertise to record the wreck using photogrammetry and create a 3D model of the site which includes parts of the structure of the lower hull and associated artefacts such as ballast blocks.

Closer to home, one of the Protected Wreck Sites on the Shingles known as NW96, which was found and reported by Martin Pritchard and Dave Fox, has been revealing more of its amazing cargo of lead ingots. Again the MAT team have photographed the site to develop a comprehensive site plan. This fascinating wreck is thought to date to the 16th century and, along with the unique lead artefacts, has stone shot and what are thought to be iron swivel guns present. With a possible link to a historical reference of a salvage operation in 1547, there are hints the ship could be a Venetian trading vessel, but more work is needed to investigate this further.

Delving into online and archive research, a new project funded by Historic England, is investigating the remains of metal hulled sailing vessels which lie within English territorial waters. Dating from the mid 19th century through to the early 20th century, these ships reflect a period of dynamic change for shipbuilding technology which was heavily influenced by economic and geopolitical factors. Volunteers are involved in researching these fascinating shipwrecks. Many of the ships travelled the world, carrying a range of cargoes and people before wrecking, in a variety of tragic circumstances, off the coast of England. Over the coming year we will continue to reveal more vessel stories and identify the most significant examples.



Top: Timbers on the wreck of HMS Agamemnon. Middle: Diving on the Shingles NW96 site. Bottom: Bathymetry for the Denbigshire, one of the Metal Hulled Sailing Vessel research targets (Contains United Kingdom Hydrographic Office Data © Crown copyright and database right).

Museum Merriment & Moves

It has been a successful and busy year at the Shipwreck Centre and Maritime Museum (SWC); as well as welcoming 7,500 visitors through the doors there have been exhibition developments, open days and a host of education and outreach activities. Based around Martin Woodward's fantastic collection, with additions from our work with submerged landscapes, MAT manages the SWC which helps us deliver maritime archaeology stories, artefacts and messages to a wide audience.

New for the 2024 season, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, was an exhibition focused on the Protected Wrecks of the Solent, inspired by 50 years of the Protection of Wrecks Act in 2023. This brings together the amazing collections from wrecks which already featured within the SWC, along with material kindly loaned from the Isle of Wight Museum Service and from the licensees of the Shingles Protected Wrecks.

Activities linked to the new Protected Wrecks display were only the start of a packed programme for schools, families and groups, many delivered through links with the Island Museums and Schools Group and as part of the 'Its Your Museum' initiative. Some highlights were new themed sessions on diving and pirates, increased work with schools and with community groups, working with colleges for Extended Project Qualifications and an outreach plan for adult groups.

The power of the museum to draw audiences was shown through free open days in October 2023 and in April 2024 which were themed to link to projects. For Fathoming the Future, digital links and storytelling included a new QR code trail and VR headset experience, while in support of a project being delivered for the Ministry of Defence by our trading company Maritime Archaeology Ltd with ABL Group, we focused on explosive and polluting wrecks.

There are also exciting developments underway for the future at the site of the former Primary School at Yarmouth. We are planning for what will be an amazing space to display and interpret the SWC collections and to set up a centre for maritime archaeology. Greater capacity for educational activities will mean we can look forward to further expanding our outreach programmes.



Top: The Protected Wrecks exhibit at the Shipwreck Centre. Middle: MAT Director Garry Momber and Management Committee Member Valerie Fenwick exploring the VR experience. Bottom: A young visitor to the Shipwreck Centre learns about dive kit.

Digital Discovery on the Road

It has been a bumper year for outreach, including events with the Discovery Bus which has been out and about across the south coast and around the shores of the UK. Through 28 events we have reached over 3,000 people with artefacts, games, videos, interactives and digital experiences which the Bus takes directly into communities.

Funding from the Charles Burnett Foundation has enabled us to reach across the Solent attending events such as Lepe Marine Wonders and the Netley School Fayre. We have also developed work with Barton Peveril College to encourage volunteering, through which new poster resources for the Bus have been produced.

As part of the Unpath'd Waters project MAT has created the Needles Voyager, which gives innovative online access to wrecks. This is just one of the digital resources produced as part of this consortium project which has over 18 partners and is exploring linking and using maritime data. The Bus was used to take the project outputs including a Virtual Reality navigator, Doggerland digital simulator, 3D prints and data on wrecks in the Irish Sea out to six different Museum venues in England, Scotland and on the Isle of Man, enabling those who came onboard to immerse themselves in the resources.

We were delighted to work with Culture in Common and a consortium of heritage and community organisations to help support D-Day commemorations around the New Forest. The Discovery Bus was specially branded for 'Stories from a D-Day 80 Forest at War'; onboard there were posters, videos, oral histories and activities such as morse code challenges. During visits to a wide range of venues we heard stories from those that remembered the New Forest at war from their childhood, while visitors of all ages learnt about the significance of the event and local connections.

Alongside Bus events we have also been providing talks to a range of community groups and audiences and attending events such as careers fayres and heritage days, further increasing our impact with diverse audiences.

"It has been an amazing experience. The great staff have explained details about objects and how passionate they are about their jobs".

"Thank you for your lovely child friendly chat. We loved the artefacts and the videos".



Top: The Discovery Bus on the Unpath'd Waters tour in Hartlepool. Upper middle: Jan Gillespie demonstrating on the Bus in Portchester thanks to the Charles Burnett fund. Lower middle: The Unpath'd Waters Needles Voyager. Bottom: The Discovery Bus during D-Day 80 events.

Left to right: Visitors engage with maritime archaeology on the Discovery Bus. MAT team members Christin Heamagi, Lauren Tidbury, and Iro' Camici in the Western Solent. Volunteer Mike Greaves explores resources at the Fathoming the Future showcase event. Painting of the HMS Pomone wrecking on the Needles. The wreck of HMS Agamemnon.

Supporting the UN Decade of Ocean Science

The Ocean Decade is a 10-year framework initiative to identify, generate and use critical ocean knowledge to manage the ocean sustainably. Our projects contribute towards the Ocean Decade priorities:

This year saw:

7408 visitors to the Shipwreck Centre

79,000 website views and **23** new blogs

71 volunteers contributing **511** days

Over **3000** people visiting the Discovery bus

Over **16,000** social media followers, **41** new videos, and **135,219** video views

We firmly believe in creating '**An inspiring and engaging ocean**': we organised several activity days, took part in numerous fayres and career days, and hosted open days to connect the public to our shared maritime heritage.

Our fieldwork at Bouldnor Cliff and in the North West Solent investigates how climate change and erosion affect the preservation of submerged landscapes in the Solent, contributing to '**A predicted ocean**'.



Supporting Us


The MAT is a charity and relies on the support of trusts, foundations, funding bodies, companies, organisations and the general public in order to continue our work. If you would like to support us, please visit:
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In line with **'An accessible ocean'**, all of our resources are freely accessible by audiences of all backgrounds and ages through our website and our newly launched Discovery Hub.

Learning from shipwrecks and understanding coastal change caused by human activity provides wisdom of hindsight that helps make **'A safe ocean'**.

Records of marine life on wrecks like the HMS *Agamemnon* show how these wrecks are artificial reefs. These can be monitored to record change or pollutants, providing knowledge on the UN Decade **'Clean ocean'** societal outcome.



Fathoming the Future Finale

A celebratory showcase event in May marked the end of the two-year project *Fathoming the Future: Promoting Digital Engagement with Maritime Archaeology*, which was generously supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project had been developed to digitise and catalogue MAT archives and use them as inspiration for creating a wide range of digital resources to engage new audiences with maritime archaeology. Further aims included reinvigorating our volunteer programme following Covid, increasing the number of young people (under 25) volunteering with us and addressing the gender imbalance within MAT's online audience which was 70% male.

Thanks to the amazing efforts of 78 volunteers, 52 of which were new to the Trust, contributing 714 days of their time, it was possible to achieve fantastic results:

- 7,701 slides, photos, documents, plans, videos, powerpoints and models digitised and/or catalogued.
- 95 videos produced and shared on YouTube or social media channels.
- 15 online talks delivered.
- 30 blogs on a wide range of themes shared on the MAT or SWC websites.
- 2 Esri Storymaps made archive material from the Itchen and Hamble Rivers available.
- A range of audio recordings and our new podcast series 'Uncharted Maritime Tales' produced and disseminated.
- Booklet published exploring Women's Maritime Heritage Stories from across Southampton.
- 25 3D models of artefacts produced, with a number turned into online tours alongside 6 new site tours.
- An impressive Virtual Reality experience of the SS *Gallia* wreck produced.
- 9 paintings created by Mike Greaves to accompany stories and resources.
- The new online Discovery Hub was launched to provide easier access to MAT's digital resources.



Left: Nigel Atkinson Esq, HM Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire opening the Fathoming the Future showcase event.

The project brought people together and made the digital resources available by taking them out into communities with the Discovery Bus, providing talks to groups, and by linking them via QR codes at the Shipwreck Centre where we also held Open Days, with in-person events directly reaching over 4,000 people.

The online digital resources have grown our audiences over the two years, and helped to raise our profile and number of followers. Just some of the highlights include over 219,000 video views on YouTube and TikTok, online talks viewed by over 55,000, blogs read by over 13,000 and audio resources over 44,000 listens, while associated social media posts across the project have gained over 770,000 impressions.

The development of new resources to tell a greater diversity of maritime stories has had success with our online website audience now being 40% female, while on YouTube this shift was striking, moving from only 5% female to 30% at project close. We have also attracted more young volunteers, at outset the proportion of under 25-year-olds was only 7% but after the project was 35%.

The wider legacy for MAT is a more accessible archive of past investigations and the digital skills development by volunteers which has meant they not only produced great outputs for this project, but are now continuing to apply these through other projects.

Feedback from volunteers has been very positive. Here are just a few examples:

"I have learned skills and learned about specific resources which have already come in useful to me and will undoubtedly be useful in the future for other research".

"My GIS skills improved greatly and I got hands on experience dealing with archival records for the first time. I was also able to take part in a 3D modelling workshop and improved my skills in that area too".

"Very impressive, it teaches you a lot about the shipwrecks and makes you see them in a different light".

"I loved being given the chance to go around the museum and learn about its collection. Also learning about the different processes of logging artefacts and being able to log some of the artefacts".

"The inspiring team from MAT – so knowledgeable and dedicated, makes it all fun".



Top: Painting of ships in a storm by Mike Greaves. Lower top: Visitors to the Discovery Bus. Upper middle: 3D model of the Yellowfin, on the Isle of Wight. Lower middle: Volunteers Jack Torode and Mohammed Israr at The National Archives. Upper bottom: The Discovery Hub. Bottom: A Winter Talk Series presentation.

Immersive Education For All

Through our programmes for volunteering and work placements we offer a range of opportunities to get involved in all aspects of our activities to develop 'hands-on' skills and to experience working within maritime archaeology. The many and varied aspects of the discipline mean that skills required are highly transferable and can be applied within the world of work or volunteering.

This has been a busy year for placements and we have welcomed work experience students at a range of different educational stages, including three in year 10/11, three at college and two at university who have spent a total of 71 days with us. The focus of each placement varies depending on individual interests; we aim to provide a positive environment where students can contribute to projects while learning new competencies. Just some feedback:

"The placement has been extremely fun as well as being very useful for the future, it showed us a more realistic way of how the world works in the industry. Staff were very friendly from the beginning, making the overall environment have a safe and relaxed feel, which was brilliant for us. This has been a really good experience" (S, P & L, Barton Peveril Students).

"The attitude in the office workplace seemed joyful and light-hearted. No negativity was spread, and I felt comfortable being there. Overall this has been an excellent experience in the world and I would thoroughly consider this a viable option for work in the future" (A.S, Work Experience Student).

With limited chances to gain experience in maritime archaeology fieldwork we offer important options for volunteers to get involved with projects either diving or in the intertidal zone. Feedback from diving volunteers demonstrates the value of these opportunities:

"I hope I speak for all the volunteers, when thanking MAT for inviting us and giving us the responsibility to contribute to the Bouldnor investigations. Despite the murky conditions and occasional challenging current, the dives were hugely enjoyable. I very much look forward to working with the team next year" (Jez Davies, Diving Volunteer).

Students Adrian Segarra Gual, Andrew Bellis, and Mar Garcia record artefacts at the Shipwreck Centre.



Understanding the Discipline

As MAT has now been operating for 33 years we are one of the most experienced maritime archaeological organisations in the country; we have been applying our acquired knowledge to projects which help better understand the history of the discipline and to address overlooked issues or research areas.

Women and Protected Wrecks: Examining Engagement

This project used a survey, interviews and research to examine the lack of women involved with protected wreck (PW) sites. Supported by Historic England, it was inspired by 2023 marking 50 years of the Protection of Wrecks Act. Results revealed that at the time of writing, only 6% of licensees and 20% of PW team members are female, 20% of speakers at maritime archaeology conferences in the UK are female, and a similar percentage of authors in key journals are female. While there are slightly more women than men in the maritime archaeology profession (56%), this varies in other parts of the sector, with just 35% of university teaching staff, 37% of membership-based organisations and 30% at trustee or board level being women. This gender bias is also visible in UK diving where 30% of those involved are women.

While all those represented in the project found working with PWs positive and highly rewarding, many had also experienced gender-based issues. Their contributions helped identify key barriers to involvement including a lack of female role models, being offered fewer diving opportunities, constraints related to social expectations as primary care givers, and physical issues such as kit designed for men and boats without toilet facilities. A range of recommendations for future actions are included in the project report.

Listening to Our Past: Recording the History of Maritime Archaeology

This project is taking the opportunity to interview the pioneers of maritime archaeology who were involved in the 1960s to 1980s, a period of rapid transformation for the field, to record their stories and reflect on the development of maritime archaeology as a discipline, practice and profession. Working with the Honor Frost Foundation, this programme of collecting oral histories and creating transcripts has now been ongoing for several years, with representatives from around the globe having been recorded. The current stage of work is the continuation of interviews and the development of an online portal through which the project database will be made publicly available as a research resource for all.



Top: Jan Gillespie, Greta Clarke, and Christin Heamagi of the MAT dive team. Middle: MAT archaeologist Lowri Roberts prepares to dive with camera equipment. Bottom: Dr David Blackman (left), an early pioneer interviewed for the Listening to Our Past project.



Follow the QR code to explore the Women and Protected Wrecks project webpage.

Engaging with Maritime Archaeology Globally

The past year has seen a growth in MAT's global profile as we find ourselves being invited to participate on international platforms. As an accredited NGO for the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage we have been called on to present at the Annual Scientific, Technical and Advisory Board meeting at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris and the regional Meeting at the Department of Culture in Madrid. This coincided with our Director, Garry Momber, taking over as Chair of the Accredited NGO group and Business Development Manager, Brandon Mason creating a database for the NGOs, their experts and their activities. We are now working on a project titled 'Use of Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage (SoMUCH) Below the Waves', to record the UCH around the world as datable markers to help monitor changes in our oceans. This links to the UN Decade of Ocean Science and we have applied for SoMUCH to become a UN accredited project. This initiative will also provide valuable data on any pollutants on or emanating from wrecks; this ties in with international project workshops on Potentially Polluting Wrecks which we have been invited to attend.

The potential environmental risks from wrecks is a growing concern around the globe and MA Ltd, along with our partners ABL, have been commissioned by the MOD to evaluate their priority wrecks through historical desk based assessments. This proactive approach is leading the way towards greater understanding and our organisations are perfectly positioned to support and deliver these initiatives.

Of particular value is our expertise in diver survey, photogrammetry and the creation of 3D models. This has been conducted as far afield as Uruguay (see page 3 for HMS *Agamemnon*) and the Red Sea, where we have recorded coral reefs for the Saudi Arabian National Wildlife Centre, and closer to home with work commissioned by Historic England on the Protected Wrecks of the Shingles Bank. The results from many of these projects will be featured in our new Centre in Yarmouth, where as full members of the International Congress of Maritime Museums, we will liaise with other museums around the world to collaborate and share exhibits.

Garry Momber takes questions from a global audience at the International Congress of Maritime Museums following his presentation titled 'Museums, Maritime Archaeology and Ocean Literacy' at a session chaired by Dr Fred Hocker.





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Jasmine Noble-Shelley – Lauren Tidbury – Lowri Roberts – Ian Vallance

Shipwreck Centre Staff

Helen Woodward (until April 2024)
Mick Bridger – Will Foreman – Paul Newhan – Izzy Turtle

And of course a big thank you to all our volunteers, without whom we could not achieve what we do. Find out more about the work of volunteers and how you can become involved at:
www.maritimearchaeologytrust.org/support-us/volunteering



Promoting interest, research
and knowledge of maritime
archaeology and heritage

Maritime archaeological discoveries offer new perspectives on human history and the marine environment from the earliest of times. For 33 years, the Maritime Archaeology Trust has provided rare opportunities for active involvement in archaeology under water, on the foreshore, along the coast and through research in archives, museums and from home. We remove barriers to access, raising the profile and understanding of our fascinating maritime heritage through education and outreach activities in schools, colleges, outdoor learning and public events, a museum on the Isle of Wight, touring exhibitions, our mobile Discovery Bus, publications, leaflets, and a whole host of online digital resources.

The Maritime Archaeology Trust objectives are to:

Investigate: maritime, coastal
and underwater archaeology

Engage: people, communities and schools
through involvement, enjoyment and education

Promote: hard to reach and
inaccessible maritime heritage

Protect: through supporting heritage
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