

The Hazardous Project Site Report - October 2004.

Introduction

This year as in the two years previous it was decided to use one full weekend a month, starting in April and utilizing the best neap tides for work on site and running the diver trail.

Early season weather conditions were somewhat unpredictable, due to strong southwesterly winds, however the first visit to site was made on the 11th April.

This first visit revealed that the site marker buoy was very close to sinking and on further inspection was found to be split and beyond repair. A temporary buoy was loaned by Chichester District Council coastal safety team, which we installed on the existing mooring. Conditions did not allow a proper inspection of the site until early May, at this time much sea bed movement was noted north and west of the main site, as well as within the remaining hull structure in the centre of the site.

Various sections of fishing net/rope were found entangled around the site generally, it is believed that the hauling of fishing gear through the site, possibly at night may have caused the damage to the marker buoy. No damage to hull structure was noted, although some damage was caused to the diver trail cable along with one lobster pot found wedged under a cannon on the west side of the site.

Year 2004 Objectives

Continue monitoring variations in seabed levels and timber degradation, using points set up in 2002.

Carry out further planning of areas / artefacts exposed due to erosion.

Survey and recover artefacts exposed by erosion and under threat of loss or damage.

Continue with conservation of artefacts in wet storage at present.

Continue operation of the diver trail.

Continue improvements and additions to museum display.

Field work

Ten days of diving have been conducted on site throughout the year, during this time datum monitoring work was carried out, the diver trail underwent running repairs and three escorted trips for visiting divers were arranged.

The development of a digitised site database is continuing and will be added to over the winter months.

A thirty two-page booklet about Hazardous was written and published over the winter and early spring months.

This work was carried out with the assistance of The Hants and Wight Trust and part funded by English Heritage.

Cleaning and repairs, plus replacement of all numbered points around the diver trail were required before it was opened this season. The trail continues to be popular, however because of the very unpredictable conditions this season a number of trips had to be cancelled, some are being re-scheduled for next year. As a result the number of visitors this season was only twenty-five, they all made positive comments. This initiative will continue in future years.

More underwater booklets have been prepared for use by visiting divers through this season.

Due to the unpredictable weather conditions this season it was not possible to carry out any site planning. However seabed level monitoring points were measured at intervals through the season along with timber degradation measurements and will be added to the information gathered in previous years.

Research is ongoing into the artefacts and site formation of the Hazardous by a post-graduate student from the University of Southampton and this season has involved the placing of a series of varying sized dummy artefacts around the site. The movement of these "artefacts" is being monitored and it is hoped that this work will continue through the winter months if weather windows occur, allowing visits to site.

Artefacts

No uncovered artefacts were recovered from the site this season. Some glass and bone fragments were noted in the middle of the site, at the end of a days diving early in the season. Unfortunately these items were lost or re-buried by the next visit to site.

Work continues on stabilization of artefacts in wet store.

Conservation work on a number of fragile artefacts is ongoing at The Mary Rose Trust.

Public Relations

All visiting divers were given lectures on the history, discovery and present work taking place on the site, along with an overview of the flora and fauna of the area.

The museum display was completely redesigned over the winter months, with new information boards and display backings, funded by English Nature South East Wildlife Trusts and DEFRA's Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund. This work was well received by the many visitors to the display this year.

Archive Project

A project to assess and consolidate the Hazardous archive has begun, funded by English Heritage. This will result in deposition in a publicly available archive. The project also includes a conservation assessment of the material culture. This project is phase one of a four-stage programme outlined for the Hazardous site which will result in research and publication of the current site data and information. It will also address the urgent need for further excavation on the site, which is constantly being eroded with the resulting loss of our nations maritime heritage.

Diving Schedule

Diving operations were carried out on ten separate days. This resulted in 1,871 working minutes spent underwater by eight divers.

In excess of 1100 minutes were spent underwater by 25 visiting divers.

Intentions for 2005.

Continue monitoring variations in seabed levels and timber degradation, using points set up in 2002.

Survey position of dummy "artefacts" for ongoing research into environmental effects on site conditions and distributions.

Carry out further planning of areas / artefacts exposed due to erosion.

Survey and recover artefacts exposed by erosion and under threat of loss or damage.

Continue with conservation of artefacts in wet storage at present.

Continue operation of the diver trail.

Continue developing site exhibit at Earnley Gardens.
