

UNDERWATER *Journal*

Explore • Discover • Challenge

Issue 12 • 2009



The Real Deal

"It's something we do for our children and our planet, and it's something I plan to keep doing as long as I am able."

-Tim Taylor

**Florida Shark Tournament
pushed to Catch-and-Release**

Cetacean Rescue

Wreck Dive on the Antilla

Queen Anne's Revenge

Shearwater Pursuit

CRR Trimix Simplified



Pg 4 Shark Tournament Goes Catch-and-Release

Learn how one group turned the Fort Myers Beach, FL, *Are You Man Enough Shark Challenge* (AYMESC) into a 90% catch-and-release shark fishing event.

Pg 7 One Whale of a Tale

A group of Canary Island divers comes to the rescue of a snared Bryde's whale.

Pg 11 Dive Log: Antilla

Heard of the Antilla? Well, if you haven't been to Aruba, maybe not. Discover what you could be missing on fun wreck dives in the Southern Caribbean.

Pg 17 Profile: Tim Taylor

Learn how one individual has turned a boat and a dream into reality by becoming a self-made ocean explorer who really "walks the walk."

Pg 24 Queen Anne's Revenge

Dive in with one of history's most notorious pirate ships, Blackbeard's Queen Anne's Revenge, as both historian's and volunteers bring up artifacts outside the inlet near Beaufort, North Carolina.

Pg 31 Shearwater Pursuit

Hands on review of the no nonsense, Shearwater Pursuit computer for technical, as well as highly avid divers.

Pg 38 CCR Trimix Simplified

Trimix for Dummies? Dr. Mel Clark's book is it for diving with rebreathers.



Cover - Tim Taylor takes aim at a large, female oceanic white tip shark in the waters of the central Bahamas.

Image: Walt Stearns copyright © 2009. Camera system - Nikon D300, Tokina 10-17mm lens in a Subal housing, Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes.

DIRECTORY

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Editor-in-Chief - Walt Stearns
wstearns@uwjournal.com

Art Director - Cheri Craft
Webmaster - Margaret Chatham
Assistant Editor - Karen Stearns
1st Copy Editor - Brian Bienkowski
2nd Copy Editor - Gina Rhodes

Advertising - Ralph Viscusi
rviscusi@uwjournal.com

Contributors

Heidi Coluzzi
Carlos Suárez
Pierce Hoover
Michael Salvatore
Christopher P. Weaver

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Inquiries, contact: info@uwjournal.com

Diving into Pirate History on the

Queen Anne's Revenge

Story & Photography

by Michael Salvarezza & Christopher P. Weaver

The pirate fleet cautiously approached the inlet near Beaufort, North Carolina. One of the crew members looked longingly out towards the sandy beach and green trees beyond. The life of a pirate was a tough one and the journey north had been difficult. Although the ocean was relatively calm, the early June weather was sticky and hot. The air below decks was dank and foul smelling. The ship's provisions were running low: food was scarce and the drinking water was just about exhausted. There was still plenty of rum, but it would be nice, thought the pirate crew member, to set foot ashore and stock up on some fresh supplies.

As the fleet approached Topsail Inlet (now Beaufort Inlet), three of the four vessels made it safely into harbor. Now it was time for the flagship of the fleet to traverse the tricky waters and tuck safely inshore. As she slowly made her way into the inlet, the ship lurched violently to a stop causing one of the deck crew to be thrown forward into

one of the 40 cannons on board. Fortunately, he only suffered a small laceration on his arm. The draft of the sloop had dug deeply into one of the ever shifting sandbars in this area and had run aground. The most famous pirate ship of all time, Blackbeard's Queen Anne's Revenge, was now a sitting duck!



With her master and commander, Blackbeard the Pirate, the Queen Anne's Revenge was once the most feared pirate ship on the high seas.

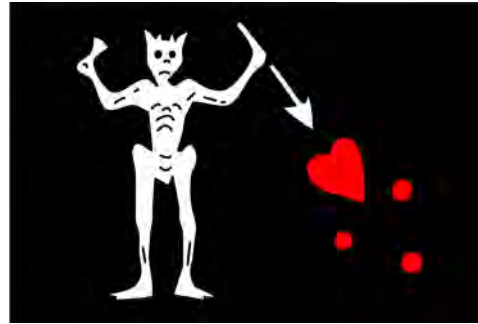
Chaos ensued as the crew tried desperately to free the stricken vessel. The Adventure, another ship in the fleet, tried to come to the aid of the Queen Anne's Revenge, but she, too, ran aground and quickly sank in the rising tide. Before long, pirates were leaping from the stranded vessel in an effort to reach shore. Some drowned during the attempt, but most made it. Because of their outlaw status, they quickly disappeared into the North Carolina wilderness.

The last thing some of the Queen Anne's crew members saw before leaping into the swirling waters of the inlet was Blackbeard and forty of his most loyal pirate crew, removing the plundered loot from the decks below and preparing to abandon the ships where they lay.

The Queen Anne's Revenge, once the most feared pirate ship on the high seas falls prey to the silent enemy from below and succumbs to the ever-changing sands just outside Beaufort inlet. Within days her remains gradually sank into a sandy grave only to be discovered centuries later. The crew of nearly 400 pirates had miraculously escaped Davey Jones Locker and Blackbeard the pirate

was able to disappear with the bulk of his previously captured booty.

While this account of the final hours of Blackbeard's fleet is fictionalized, the essential facts are recorded in government records: Blackbeard was a real pirate and his ship, the Queen Anne's



While most envision the flag of a pirate to be the classic skull and crossed bones, the flags of true pirates, like Blackbeard, resembled business cards. They advertised who they were, and how much to fear if you failed to yield.

Revenge, was stranded and abandoned just outside of Beaufort Inlet in June 1718. Six months later at Ocracoke Inlet on the North Carolina coast, Blackbeard encountered an armed contingent sent by Virginia Governor Alexander Spotswood and

led by Royal Navy Lieutenant Robert Maynard. Blackbeard and a number of his fellow pirates were killed in a violent battle aboard Maynard's ship, the HMS Pearl. Maynard returned to Virginia with the gruesome proof of Blackbeard's demise: Blackbeard's severed head was left hanging from the sloop's bowsprit.

The legend of Blackbeard would persist for centuries, while the Queen Anne's Revenge lay buried under the shifting sands off North Carolina. Despite repeated efforts, the wreck would not be located until November 22, 1996 when a private salvage firm (Intersal) stumbled upon the wreck while searching for a long lost sunken Spanish Fleet. The wreck, mostly covered in sand, was only identifiable by an anchor fluke protruding above the seabed. After subsequent excavations revealed large numbers of cannons, anchors and other artifacts, the identity of the wreck began to take shape. Today, although there has yet to be a single definitive piece of evidence that unequivocally identifies the wreck as that of the Queen Anne's Revenge, hundreds of thousands of pieces of evidence and painstaking research say that

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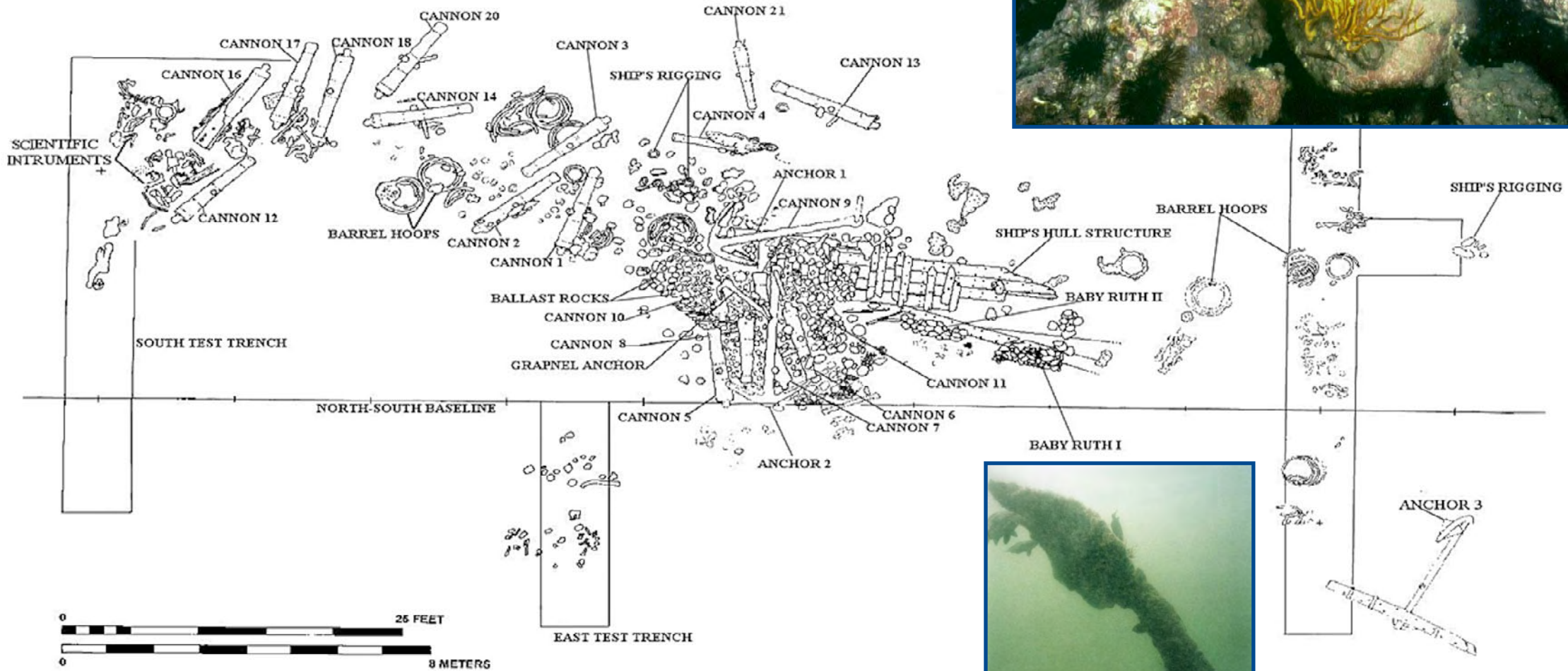
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Left: One of the Queen Anne's many cannons still remaining on the sea floor.



Right: Referred to as "The Pile," the center of the wreck is a jumbled pile of artifacts heavily covered with growth and oxidation, making identification extremely difficult.



Queen Anne's Revenge Site Map



One of the Queen Anne's two primary anchors in the sand off the north end of the wreck site.

it is. Nothing has been found to be contradictory to this theory and the wreck is now generally presumed to be the long lost wreckage of the most famous pirate ship of all time.

All of the evidence thus far supports the theory that this is the Queen Anne's Revenge. The anchors found as well as the ship's recovered sternpost indicates that the ship's design is that of a 300-ton French vessel. The design and quantity of the armament found matches with the documented records for the Queen Anne's Revenge, which was carrying some 40 cannon when she went down. No artifact recovered thus far dates from a period later than 1718, the date of the sinking. And through extensive geological study, scientists have modeled precisely where the shifting sandbar off Beaufort Inlet would have been in 1718... exactly where the wreck site lies today. Indeed, as Chris Southerly, Project Archaeologist states, "We would win a conviction in court with all the evidence we currently have today."

Today, the wreck site is identified simply as 31CR314 and is protected by the state of North Carolina. Without special permits, diving is prohibited here. And despite its close proximity to shore, the site is actually very difficult to locate. However, we

had been invited to participate in and document a unique program called the "Dive Down" program. Sponsored by the North Carolina Archaeology Branch and the Carteret County Dive Operators, the two-day program affords a limited number of recreational divers the opportunity to learn



One of the most prized finds on the Queen Anne's Revenge is her ship's bell. For historians, the ship's bell - from 16th through early 20th century vessels - is often the only means to confirm the identity of the vessel. Most items with name recognition would have rotted away.

30
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more about the history, discovery and recovery of the wreck as well as the chance to dive on the actual archaeological site itself. "Dive Down" is one way to explore the rich history of pirates as well as to experience a truly exhilarating dive to a genuinely historic shipwreck.

The "Dive Down" program combines a fascinating mix of classroom style lecture, hands-on student participation and SCUBA diving on local wrecks, including the actual archaeological site that is believed to be the Queen Anne's Revenge shipwreck. Divers who complete the program earn a PADI Specialty Certification ("Heritage Awareness Diver"), which can be used as part of the requirements for the PADI Master Diver certification. Participants are encouraged to take part in discussions on coastal geology, underwater archaeology and marine ecology. More importantly, they will learn how these various disciplines played a key role in unraveling the mystery of the Queen Anne's Revenge from the actual archaeologists and scientists working on the archaeological site. Further, extensive discussions on the recovery of artifacts from the wreck site, as well as the efforts to preserve these important items, are also conducted.

The curriculum also includes a visit to the North Carolina



Hard to believe the mass above and the cannon below are one in the same. Many of the ship's artifacts are completely encased in a thick layer of concretion because the remains are located in such shallow depths.



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Maritime Museum to see some of the publicly displayed artifacts and also gives each participant the opportunity to learn how to use various tools and techniques to sift through actual wreck site sediment in search of gold flakes, lead shot and other small artifacts. With a dive at the end of the first day on a local inshore wreck to orient divers to the conditions on the Queen Anne's Revenge, the schedule of activities is jam-packed and thoroughly interesting. Of course, the highlight of the two-day program is the dive at the conclusion of the second day: a 24 foot dive to the nearly 3-century old wreck site presumed to be that of Blackbeard's pirate flagship.

The descent to the wreck is a short one, a mere 24 feet down the anchor line but it is a 300-year journey back in time. Divers first encounter a carefully placed line extending the length of the site, called a "Baseline" which is used for accurately mapping the location of every single artifact recovered by the archaeologists.

Even in limited visibility, the wreck can be easily navigated by means of the baseline. Following the



A cannon being hoisted up from the bottom. Back on shore, it will go through a lengthy cleaning and treatment process before it can be displayed.

line north, divers will come across a large fluted anchor (Anchor 3) partially buried in the sand. At the center of the baseline, divers will find "the pile" which represents a sizeable collection of artifacts, including anchors (Anchor 1, Anchor 2, and the Grapnel Anchor), ballast rocks, and cannons buried under centuries of encrustation. Other areas of the wreck site hold

various artifacts, including barrel hoops, ship's rigging and more cannons. The greatest hazard to divers is the often-poor visibility, moderate to heavy surge and the hundreds of sea urchins that literally cover the wreck site.

Our dives on the presumed wreck of the Queen Anne's Revenge were captivating and far too short. We left the water thirsting for more

time and more opportunity to explore this rich piece of American Maritime history. For most, Pirates are characters from the musty past, their colorful lives and violent exploits documented in sparing detail in the dusty

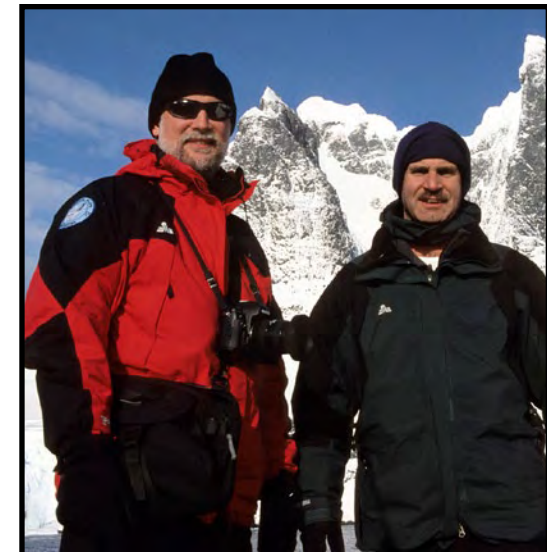
pages of historical records long hidden away in Government Archives. But for a select few divers who participate in the Dive Down program, history can come alive in only 24 feet of water near Beaufort Inlet.

Long before Blackbeard's name struck terror in the hearts of merchant seamen, pirates had been pillaging and plundering ships the world over. Indeed, for as long as men have taken to the waters in vessels to transport goods and services, rogues and criminals were there to attack and steal merchandise and valuables...and perhaps kill a few sailors along the way. Despite Hollywood portrayals to the contrary, pirates were not romantic figures. Pirates really are just thieves who rob others at sea and generally act outside the law. And they continue to do so today.

Under the watchful eye of the nearby Cape Lookout Lighthouse, Pirate history and the legend of Blackbeard can be experienced firsthand. Who knows, perhaps one of the lucky recreational divers participating in the Dive Down program will spot the telltale piece of evidence that definitively proves the identity of this historical wreck site. For now, we bid farewell to the ghostly remains of Queen Anne's Revenge and to Blackbeard himself. His story is more alive today than ever before.



Divers carefully search the bottom for small artifacts, while another member of the archaeological team inspects newly found squat-shaped wine bottle.



Michael Salvatore and Christopher P. Weaver head **Eco-Photo Explorers (EPE)**, a New York based organization promoting interest in protecting our ocean environment by creating awareness through the use of underwater photography.



UWJ would also like to thank the North Carolina Archaeology Branch, Dive Down Program: <http://www.qaronline.org/DiveDown/divedown2008.htm> for several of the images featured in this story.