The AHSSPP: Interim progress report

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Project background

February 2012

- $500,000 AUD Australian Research Council Grant
- Ten Partner Organizations and three Australian universities

Case studies:

1. **Clarence** (Port Phillip Bay, Victoria)

2. **James Matthews** (Cockburn Sound, Western Australia)
Partner Organizations

- Western Australian Museum
- Norfolk Island Museum
- Northern Territory Government
- Australian National Maritime Museum
- Heritage Victoria
- Queensland Government
- Australian National University
- NSW Government
- Office of Environment & Heritage
- Australian Government
- Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service
- The University of Western Australia
- Government of Western Australia
Clarence April/May 2012 Fieldwork
Project tasks

- Sandbag support along exterior
- Pre-disturbance ecology survey
- Sediment cores
- Excavation
Project tasks

- *In-situ* and *ex-situ* artifact recording
- clean, number, photograph, X-ray (if necessary), document
- wrap in geotextile and then shade cloth
- Leave in saltwater until reburial phase
Artifact reburial and sacrificial samples
Tierce casks

A tierce is equivalent to:

- 1/3 of a pipe
- 42 wine gallons
- Half a puncheon
- ~158 to 160 Liters

*Clarence* staves averaged between:

- 876 mm to 890 mm for the interior
- 911 mm to 930 mm for the exterior

(English stave lengths: 31.5 inches or 800 mm)
Identified features:

- branding marks
- incised lines and circles
- branded names
- hoop marks
Leather bag or satchel which is thought to be a bosun’s bag.

Bosun: A petty officer on a merchant ship or a warrant officer on a warship who is responsible for the maintenance of the ship and its equipment.
Final Phase
(Nov 2012)
March, September and November 2013
Long-term management:

- Visual site inspections
- Program of regular compliance patrols
AUSTRALIAN
HISTORIC SHIPWRECK
PRESERVATION PROJECT
THE IN-SITU PRESERVATION & REBURIAL
OF THE COLONIAL TRADER CLARENCE (1850)

Clarence (1850)
Excavation and on-site Artifact Conservation

In April-May 2012 a team of 65 Australian and international participants took part in a month-long excavation of the historic shipwreck Clarence (1841–1849), located off the coastal township of St Leonards on Victoria’s Bellarine Peninsula.

The team consisted of professionals, student and volunteer divers, maritime archaeologists and conservation scientists; many of the participants had final-year skills and backgrounds including photography and marine ecologists.

Together, we undertook pre-disturbance survey, ambient sampling, excavation, artefact recording and conservation on-site and artefacts from the Clarence.

At the end of the excavation all artefacts were removed on or near the site in a designated secure depot and the research was collected and covered with shade cloth for protection.

Clarence (1850)
Site Rehabilitation and Future Research

In November 2012 a small, highly experienced team of divers returned to the site to undertake the largest-scale in situ shipwreck reburying program ever attempted worldwide.

The team deployed 2500 ft of shade cloth and 2500 ft of PVC sheeting over the site, completing covering in 15 expeditions, an incredible 200 hours of excavation and subsequently burying the shade cloth and terracotta to the seabed. This aims to create an anoxic environment beneath the covers for the future preservation of the hull and artefacts.

The site is now fully covered and the project team returns annually to recover sacrificial samples of timber and metal and other artefacts for chemical analysis to determine how the reburying of the site is helping Clarence to enjoy a longer life.

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Search for "Preserving the Colonial Trader Clarence"
James Mathews (1841)

- French-built wooden brig, used in the slave trade
- One of the world’s best-preserved examples of a 19th century illegal slaving ship.
- Excavated in the 1970s
- Experimental *in-situ* reburial trials began in 2000,
James Matthews fieldwork
18 – 22 November 2013
November 2013
RIP

JAMES MATTHEWS