

GROSVENOR (1782)

REPORT ON THE 2009 FIELDWORK SEASON



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GROSVENOR (1782)

2009 DIVING SEASON

INTRODUCTION

In May and June of 2009 the coast of Transkei was struck by a series of storms which caused large-scale movement of sand and scoured open the seabed adjacent to the shore. It was decided to mobilise a short diving season on the Grosvenor site as soon as the sea settled. The Dive Team arrived at the site on Friday 17th July 2009 to find the wreck site clear of sand for 200m.out to sea. This was the first time the entire site had been uncovered since the discovery of the wreck in 1984, and the team was afforded a perfect opportunity to get a complete overview of the site. We also had unusually calm seas for this time of the year, and were able to dive on 7 days in the period 18th July to 7th August and log 54, 5 hours of diving in that period. Most of this time was spent making a survey of the whole scatter site and taking measurements. We were also able to capture our first images of the deeper parts of the site which had previously only been identified as magnetometry signatures. Finally we were able to collect various timber samples from the site for dendro-chronological analysis.

DIVE LOG SEASON 2009

DATE	DIVER	DIVING APPARATUS	MAX.DEPTH	BOTTOM TIME
Sat 18th July	T.Botha	Scuba	8,5	270 mins
Sun 19th July	T.Botha	Scuba and snorkel	9	390
	S.Valentine	Scuba and snorkel	9	390
Tues 21st July	T.Botha	Scuba and snorkel	9	360
	S.Valentine	Snorkel	9	360
Wed.22nd July	T.Botha	Scuba	10	180
	S.Valentine	Snorkel	10	180
Wed.29th July	T.Botha	Scuba,SDDS,Snorkel	9	420
	S.Valentine	Scuba,SDDS,Snorkel	9	420
Thurs 30th July	T.Botha	Snorkel	12	75
	S.Valentine	Snorkel	12	75
Sat.1st Aug.	T.Botha	Scuba	10	75
	S.Valentine	Scuba	10	75
TOTAL				3270 mins

SURVEY REPORT

TIMBERS AND BALLAST AREA

We had previously seen only parts of this area open at any given time. However we were able this season to measure the whole extent, which proved to be 9m X 5,6m. The timbers are covered by approximately 80 pigs of iron ballast weighing about 4 metric tons. This area lies in the vicinity of the end of the tunnel drilled by the 1906 expedition, who claimed to have drilled a core upwards from the tunnel and found wood. So it is quite feasible that the wood sample they claimed to have collected was from this section of the wreck, where timbers from the hull are pinned under the ballast pigs. This area appears to be relatively undisturbed by sea action, as many of the pigs are still very regularly positioned on the planks which cover the timber frames. (See Sketch)

MAIN GULLY

This is the area which contains the greatest concentration of artefact and has been the focus of most of the excavation work which has been done to date. We were able clearly to identify the point at which the excavation had ended, and to calculate that the area covered by excavation so far constitutes about half of the total of this section. Excavation of the remaining extent of this section will require the use of a pump to remove the overburden of pebbles, rocks and shell, which is about 1m. thick and cannot be removed by hand. Using buckets and with great difficulty we managed to dig four inspection holes into this layer and found conglomerate and three timber poles 100mm. in diameter. We believe the poles to be rosewood and took a sample for further analysis.

AREA BETWEEN TIMBERS AND BALLAST AND OUTSIDE SITE

This area we had never seen open before. It was relatively easy to search as it is mostly flat bedrock which has not trapped any artefacts. All we observed in this area were a few lead pipes. There are some boulders, but they appear to be rocks from the breakwater built in 1939 and subsequently destroyed by rough seas.

OUTSIDE SITE

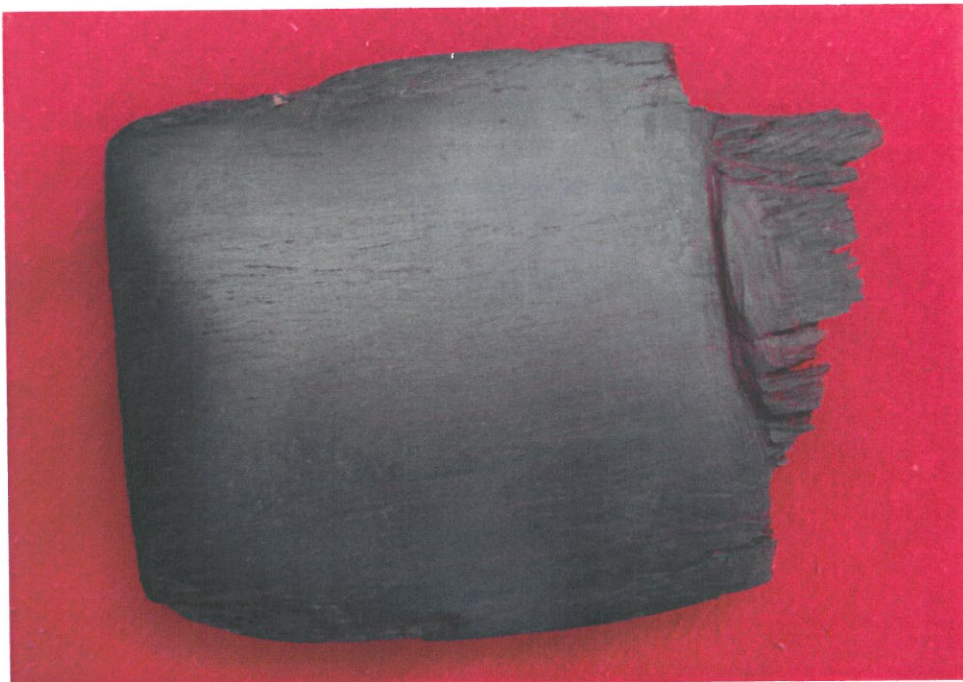
The outside site was originally located by magnetometry and is usually covered by sand. We have found it partially uncovered on several occasions and observed an anchor and 3 conglomerated cannons with ballast pigs. This area we were able to video and measure accurately for the first time. We also observed another larger anchor (See Sketch) and two further cannons which we have never uncovered before. One of these is well-preserved and may be a good specimen to recover and conserve for the East London Museum's Grosvenor collection. (See Sketch). A fragment of the ship's bell was also recovered here.

ARTEFACTS RECOVERED

As previously noted, we spent most of the diving time on the site surveying and measuring in order to take advantage of the fact that the site was so open. We did however remove some objects from the site, including (as previously noted) samples of the ship's timber and the rosewood poles and a fragment of the ship's bell. Other exposed artefacts which we recovered were from two areas:

At D.P 20 on the grid we found a small section of conglomerate missed during the 1999 excavation. It measured 1m X 0,2m X 0,2m and there were visible coins embedded in the conglomerate – 15 rupees, 1 half-rupee, 1 star pagoda, 1 VOC duit, 1 Charles III pillar dollar, 1 unidentified silver coin and a small piece of gold jewellery.

At D.P.22 on grid in the area of worn cannons near to the mouth of the Main Gully we recovered a piece of a silver buckle, 1 Venetian ducat and 1 Charles III pillar dollar. (See Photographs)



Samples of Rosewood Beam



2 pillar dollars of Charles III



Rupee and 1/2 Rupee



Venetian ducat, star pagoda and piece of jewellery



Piece of the crown of the ship's bell

CONCLUSION

This season enabled us to get a good perspective of the wreck site. The observations and measurements we were able to make will enable us to discount a fairly large area of the scatter site and focus our future efforts more productively.

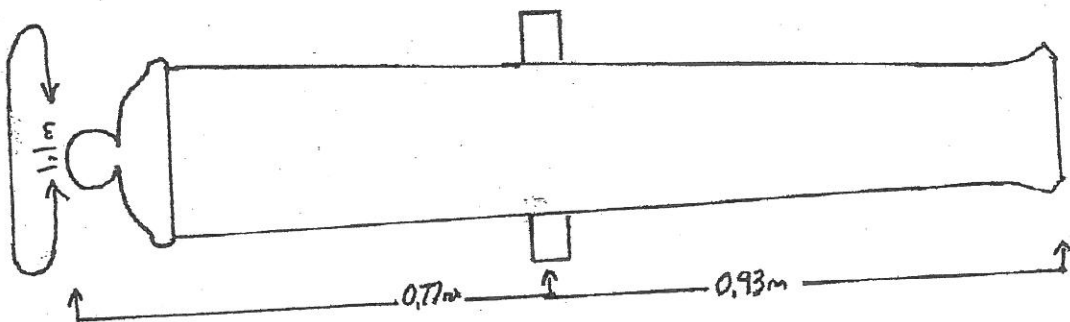
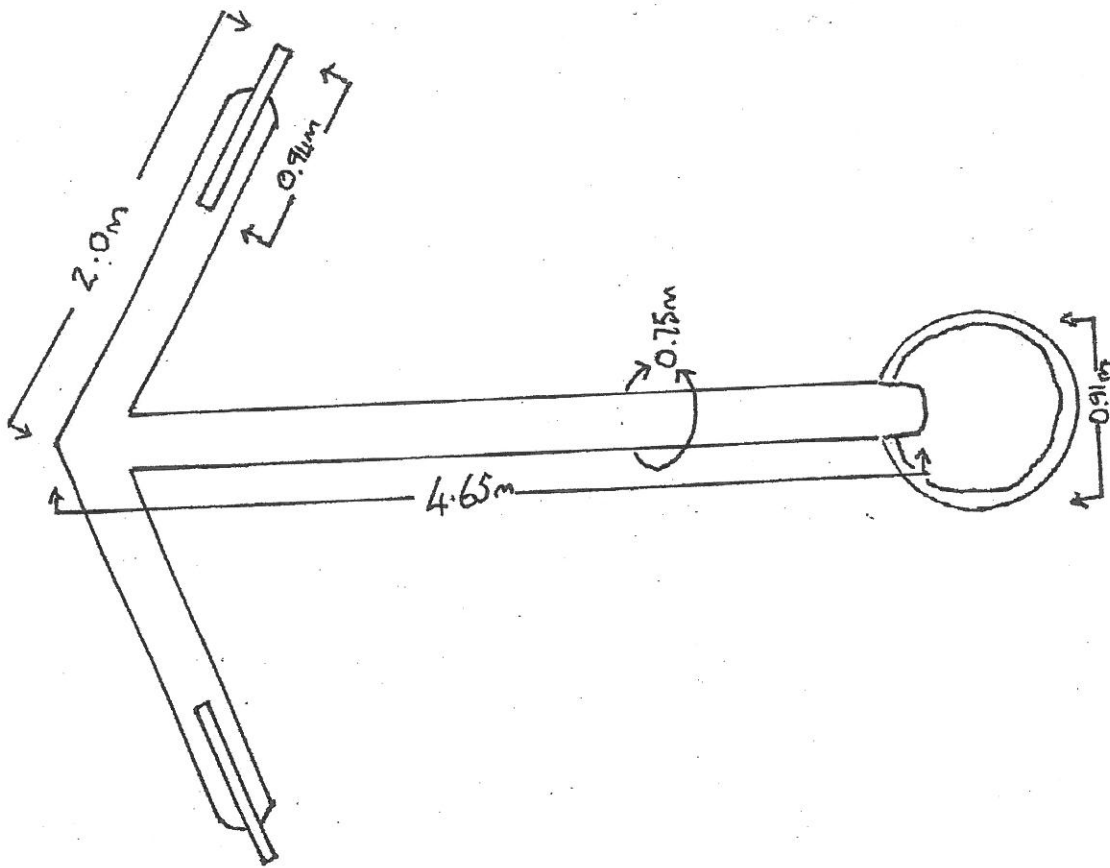
We have identified the main search area that needs to be excavated as seawards of S 34 datum point on the end of main gulley. This is the deepest section area and is covered with 1 m of shell, sand and rocks.

We were also able to identify items to be recovered and conserved for East London Museum.

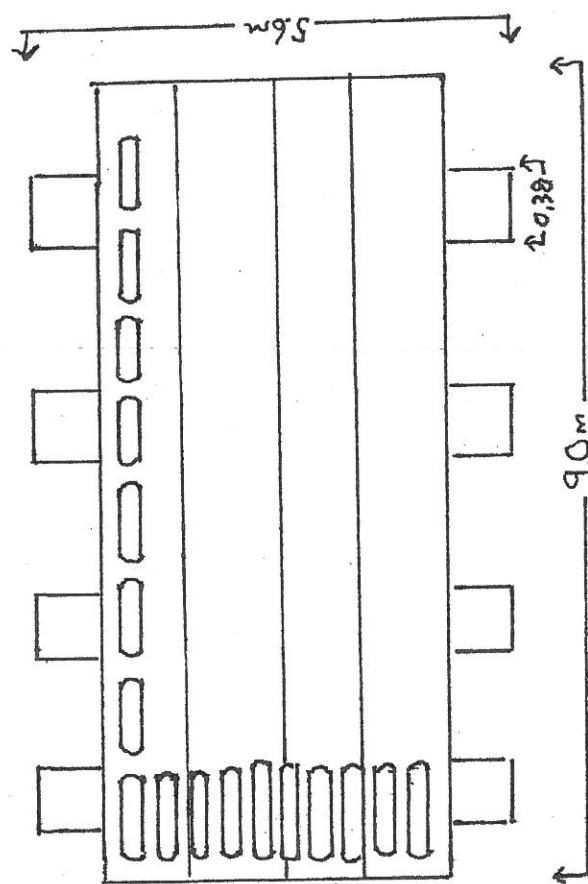
2010 GROSVENOR SEASON

After 2009 season we have been able to target priorities for 2010 season.

- Firstly to carry out the total station measurements and accurately plotting in several of the datum points which we re-established in 2007 season.
- We have identified the anchor and cannon to be lifted and taken back to E.L Museum for conservation. The airforce has agreed to do this for us using one of the Oryx helicopters.
- To continue with the excavation seawards of the where we ended in 2001 season i.e. at datum point S 34. This will require the use of pumps.



Dimensions of anchor and cannon to be recovered



Dimensions of timber and ballast located in the gully

6525510
6525500
6525490
6525480
6525470
6525460
6525450
6525440
6525430
6525420
6525410
6525400
6525390
6525380
6525370
6525360
6525350
6525340
6525330
6525320
6525310
6525300
6525290
6525280
6525270
6525260
6525250
6525240
6525230
6525220
6525210

777160 777190 777220 777250 777280



Ruin

General site map
WGS84, UTM

Tunnel

Northern benchmark

Central benchmark

Southern benchmark

Gully

20

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KEY:

- Datum Points
- Test Holes
- Timbers
- Cannon
- Anchor
- Ballast
- Proposed 20 excavation