

GROSVENOR (1782)

REPORT ON 2010/2011 FIELDWORK SEASON



BY:
S.Valentine- permit holder and
Conservator

Introduction:

In 2009 we identified the area seawards of S₂ as the main area to still be excavated. This is a significant area as it is the deepest area of the wreck. Considering the powerful washing action of the sea, this would be an area that artefacts gravitate to. Unfortunately being the deepest area it is also the last area to desand.

2010 season:

Our strategy was to send a small advance team to assess the sand situation and to mobilise a full team with an archaeologist if excavation was possible.

We went to the site from the 26th April until 27th May. The visibility on the site was very bad due to rough seas churning up sand. We decided to stay and try dive despite rough seas and poor visibility. We only managed to dive after 2 ½ weeks as the sea remained too rough. When we eventually dived we found the wrecksite open to position S₇ but the area we needed to excavate was under a 1/2 meter of sand. This would make excavation impossibly slow. The rough seas and sand situation forced us to postpone excavation until conditions were suitable.

2011 season:

We went to the site 26th May to assess the sand situation. We managed to dive 2nd and 3rd June and found inside wrecksite heavily sanded from D.P₃ with about 1 meter of sand over the area still to be excavated. We decided to stay until the next flat weather spell to check the outside site to lift the anchor and canon as this is sometimes unsanded when the inshore is covered. Unfortunately a storm caused the Umzikaba River to come down in flood and the sea was the colour of coffee and unlikely to improve over the next few weeks, so we headed back to Cape Town on 12th June.

We stopped at the East London Museum to meet with Deon Smit (Curator) and to check on the conservation of the artefacts there.