



Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust

MAST is a charitable company based in England with operations in England and abroad. It was founded in 2011 to address a gaping disparity in the way our underwater maritime cultural heritage is protected compared to how cultural heritage is respected on land.

Since becoming accredited to the Governing Bodies of the UNESCO Convention on UCH 2001 in 2015, MAST has become a champion for maritime heritage in the UK and internationally, conducting maritime archaeological projects; quietly influencing heritage management by Government; increasing public awareness, education, training and campaigning. MAST's early experience of maritime archaeology in the UK showed that everything relied on project funding which enabled short term activity but prevented the development of capacity, which at that time in the UK was reducing. MAST's funding model enables the use of Project funding to solve short to medium term problems but uses the charity's invested core income to maintain and develop capacity in the field.

Since 2017, the team has grown to combine high-level strategic management with experience unrivalled in the heritage sector in investigating and analysing threats to historic and designated wrecks within the UK Territorial Sea and the wider UK Maritime Area¹. MAST has led the ongoing investigation into the exploitation of UK historic wrecks by commercial treasure hunters and salvors (described below) including the attacks on designated World War 1 wrecks and wrecks defined under the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage 2001.

Below describes MAST's achievements since 2017:

Since its last report to UNESCO States Parties in 2015, MAST has forged a partnership with the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) – the heritage arm of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) – and the two organisations together have launched a series of seminars for senior maritime stakeholders, Government departments and law enforcement agencies, designed to improve the way different government departments such as MoD, Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Department for Transport (DfT) and law enforcement agencies including the police and, Border Force work together – developing maritime domain awareness, sharing information and coordinating enforcement. One NMRN advisor told MAST that its political engagement was amongst the most extensive achievements in developing the case to enhance protection of underwater cultural heritage following the first seminar in November 2017. The success reflects a multi-track approach: the public (MAST's direct dealings with Government departments), and discreet, private démarches through the MAST/NMRN seminar series. This series was prompted by a number of high profile reports of looting of Royal Navy wrecks from the Battle of Jutland (1916), the Battle of Java Sea (1942) and a number of other RN ships and submarines which were being ignored in Government.

MAST has recently advised the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) policy in the British Antarctic Territory (BAT), which initially contained no mention of UCH. This new Headline Strategy is available for download now on MAST's website and also the FCO's. MAST expects to continue its advisory role in the FCO's development of a new UCH strategy for all British Overseas Territories.

MAST is launching a pilot project that will, if successful, ensure that no illegal salvor or treasure hunter's activities will go unmonitored. It is actively engaged in harnessing the growing capabilities of the commercial satellite sector to launch an International Maritime Observatory whose purpose is to establish a cross sector hybrid organisation with strong government input, but also key commercial organisations that creates a hub for monitoring the maritime and marine domain. Its purpose will be to actively monitor and share information between relevant stakeholders. It is working closely with a number of companies and charities and key government departments to establish the project. Initially, during the pilot stage, MAST, with its partners, are focusing on specific areas of British waters, after which it will look to robustly develop the Observatory internationally to enhance its abilities to influence decision-makers and to continue working for improvements in both national and international policy for UCH.

Changes in technology now enable the detection and exploitation of previously undiscovered wrecks that were once protected by remoteness and depth. These once inaccessible wrecks are now at risk of illegal salvage. Entrepreneurs are able to exploit such opportunities because current legislation, governance, regulation, surveillance, monitoring, detection and enforcement are insufficient, making prosecutions rare

¹ UKMA as in the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 including EEZ and Continental Shelf
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and difficult. With occasional exceptions such as *Mary Rose*, routine UCH activity tends to be unseen and therefore unknown, attracting little official scrutiny, priority or funding.

MAST is the lead partner in a major rescue excavation of HMS *Invincible* (1744). The other partners are Bournemouth University (BU) and the NMRN, the receiving museum. Built in France in 1744 she was captured by the Royal Navy in 1747. She sank in 1758 in the Solent. The excavation became possible after MAST gained £2 million in funding through LIBOR grants and then most recently (July 2018) MAST received a further £360,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is the largest archaeological excavation in the UK since the *Mary Rose* in the 1980s. In 2016 MAST bought an industrial unit in Poole and transformed it into a major archaeological facility which includes a modern conservation centre and office space. This is the only “cradle-to-grave” facility in the UK which includes artefacts excavated directly from the seabed that are conserved and then passed on to the receiving museum. It is currently conserving all artefacts being raised from the HMS *Invincible* project (see below) and a number from other sites. Once conserved, the *Invincible* artefacts, will be acquired by the NMRN.

MAST intends to continue to provide a “cradle-to-grave” maritime archaeological facility – from discovery to the museum door. In the absence of any such national facility MAST had to develop one as part of the *Invincible* Project. MAST wants to maintain capacity in the UK for multiple projects as a national resource to be able to deal with urgent cases of maritime archaeological sites at risk or threatened by destruction such as was the case for HMS *Invincible*.

MAST is also working in partnership with BU on a number of other, smaller maritime archaeological projects. These include the Alderney Elizabethan wreck project to complete a full survey of the burial environment in partnership with the Alderney Maritime Trust using photogrammetry.

Also with BU, MAST is working on developing a project on the WW2 Valentine duplex drive (DD) tanks (made buoyant by the provision of a canvas skirt) which formed a key component for the D Day Landings and later WW2 landings in southern France on 15 August 1944. The role of the DD Tanks was to provide armoured support for the first waves of infantry ashore. To achieve this, they were to ‘swim’ 2¼ miles to land just (c.5 minutes) ahead of the first wave of infantry. MAST and BU will be displaying their work at the internationally renowned Bovington Tank Museum Tankfest in July 2019.

MAST continues to be involved in training recreational divers in maritime archaeological good practice, both in theory and practice. Since its last report to States Parties MAST’s Basic Archaeological Diver (BAD) course, initially a PADI Distinctive Specialty is now also a Scuba Schools International SSI Specialty and recognised by the British Sub Aqua Club (BSAC). The course is designed to instill an appreciation and understanding of our underwater cultural heritage. It is well proven now that education and understanding of our UCH is effective in preventing of looting and damage to historic sites.

MAST is dedicated to enhancing the understanding of our Nation’s rich underwater cultural heritage through archaeology and political engagement. Britain has more wrecks off its coastline than any other country on Earth. There are more wrecks of UK-flagged vessels in international waters than any other country. The UK also controls significant sea areas outside Western Europe.

MAST is equally dedicated to protecting our maritime war graves by ensuring that warships and other government-owned or operated vessels retain Sovereign Immunity. There is still political work to be done in this area.

With regards to 2019 projects, MAST will principally continue the *Invincible* excavation and will also be developing the International Observatory pilot project. Other ongoing projects are mentioned above.

Please also see MAST 2017 and 2018 Newsletters, available for download on its website.

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