



Historic England

Challenges facing the State management of historic shipwrecks in English territorial waters

Hefin Meara

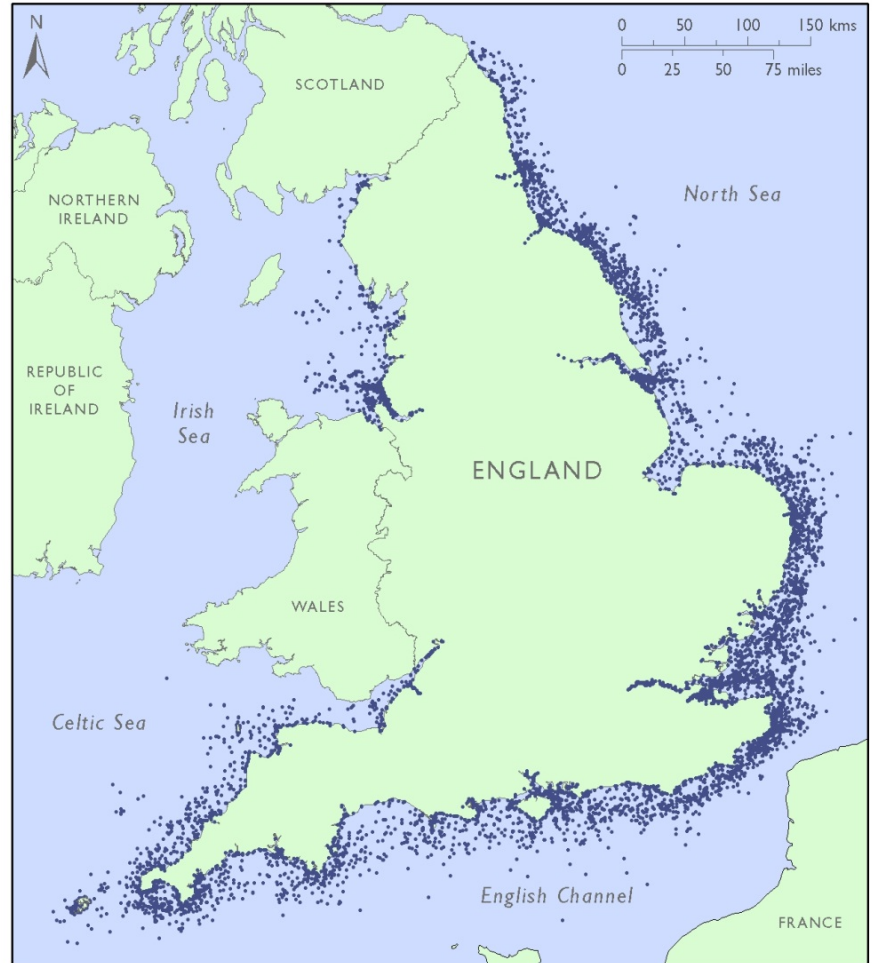
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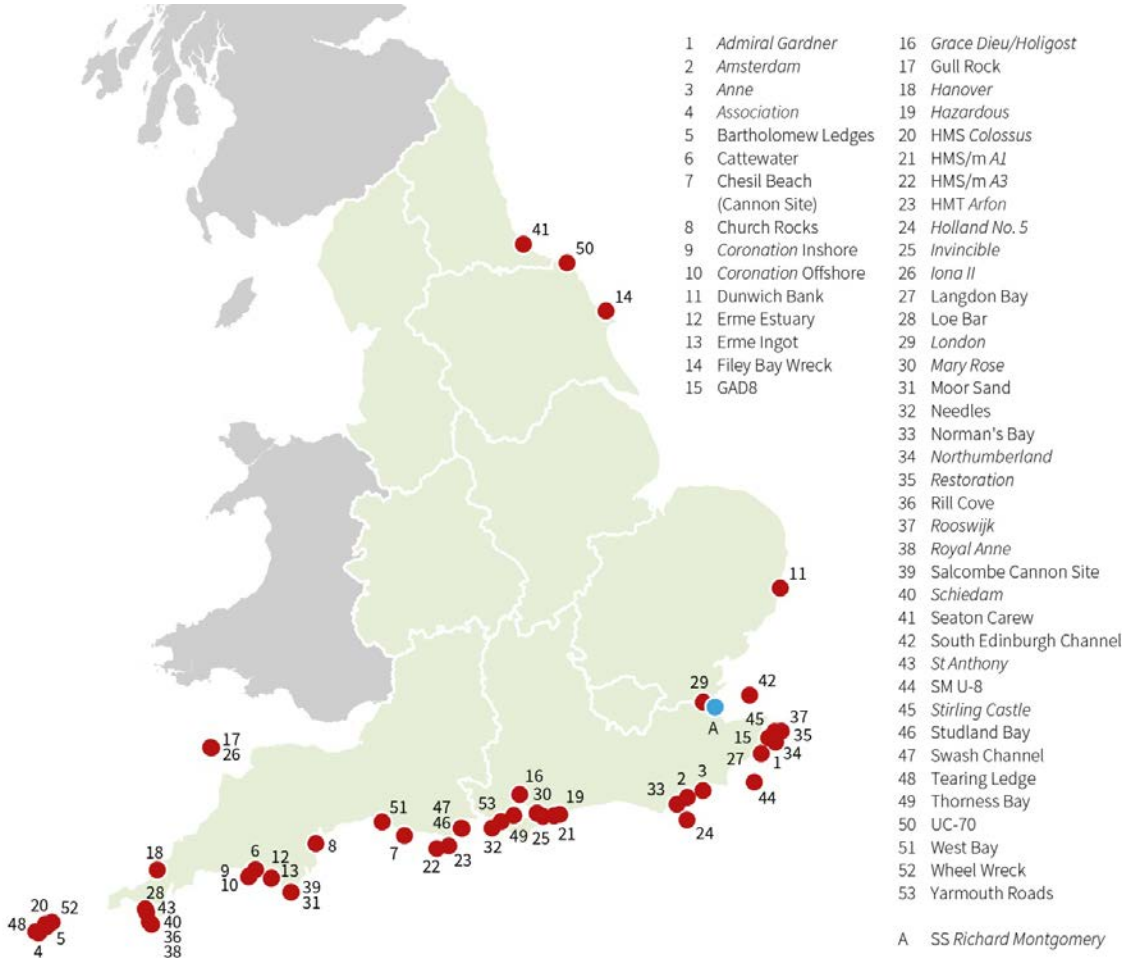
Shipwrecks in English waters

- We maintain a database of shipwreck sites in English territorial waters
- The database includes over 37,000 known wrecks
 - 6,000 wreck sites
 - 31,000 recorded losses





The Protection of Wrecks Act 1973



- Currently 53 sites designated under the Act in English waters
- Designated sites range from a Bronze Age 'cargo' to a First World War era requisitioned trawler



The Protection of Wrecks Act 1973

- Restricted access to designated area
- Access is via a licensing system administered by Historic England
- Activities undertaken on protected wreck sites include:
 - Visits
 - Survey
 - Surface Recovery
 - Excavation





Managing the Sites

- Assessments of both designated and undesignated sites is undertaken by a contractor on behalf of Historic England
- Desk-based research
- Remote sensing
- Diver investigations



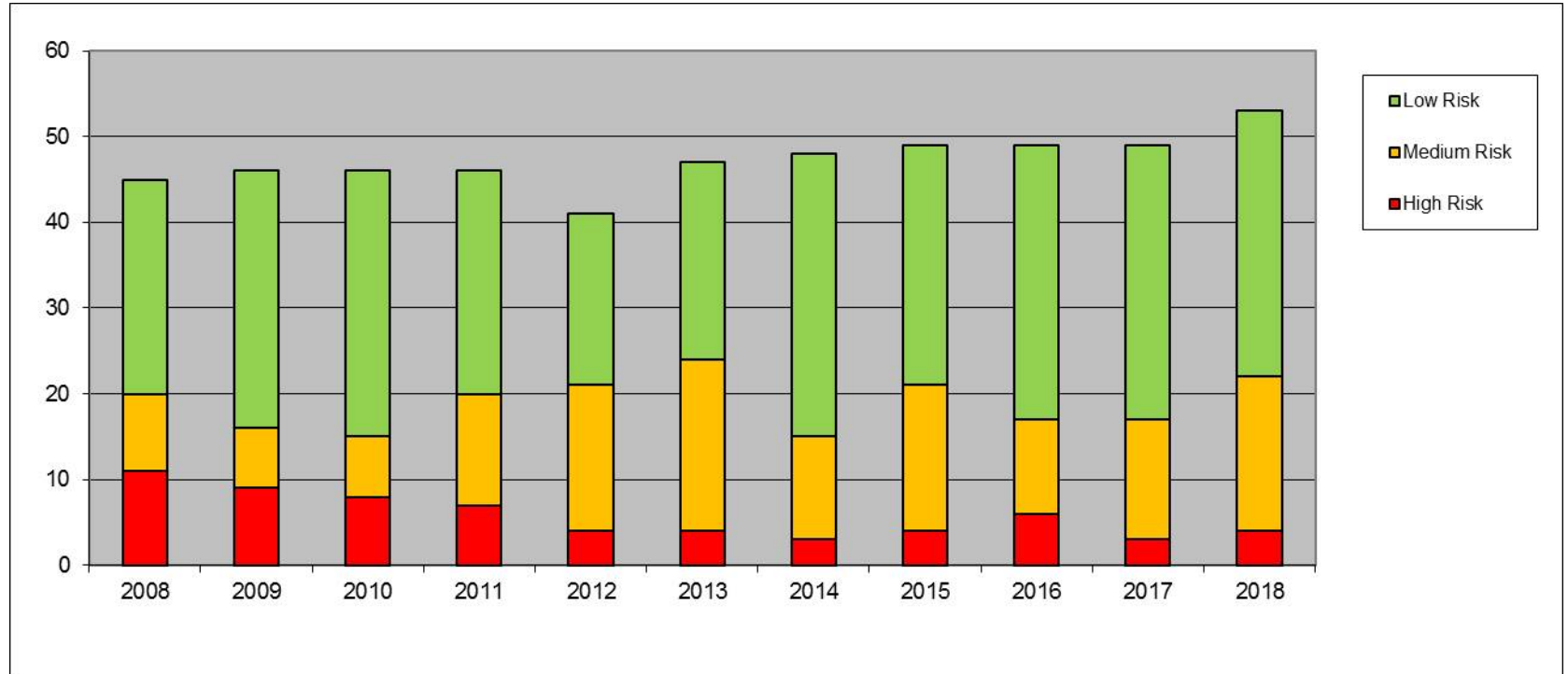


Licensees and Affiliated Volunteers

- Voluntary custodians of the sites
- Over 200 Licensees and team members diving on sites throughout the year
- Providing information on
 - Condition
 - Survival
 - Illegal activities

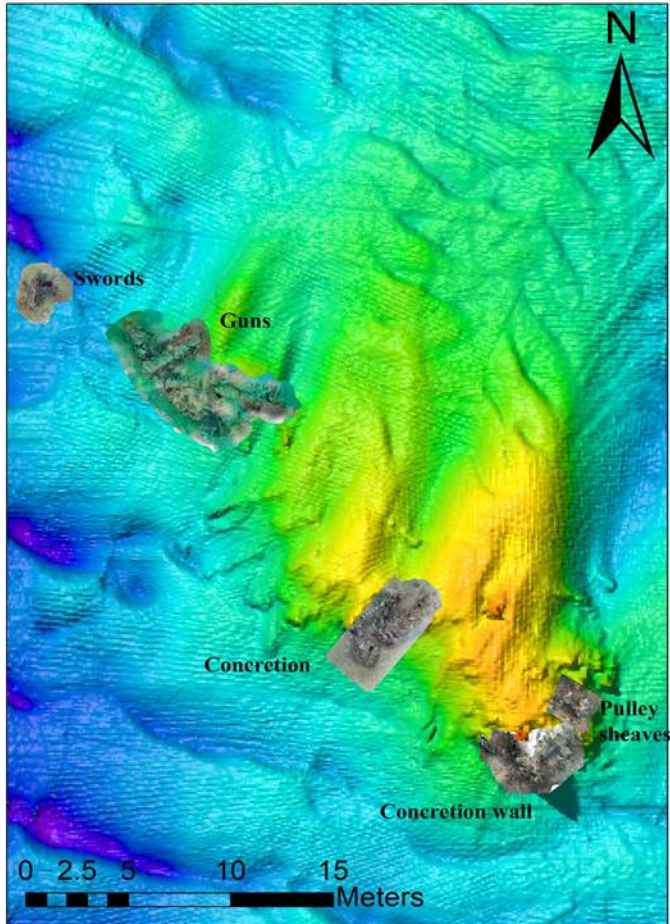


Heritage at Risk





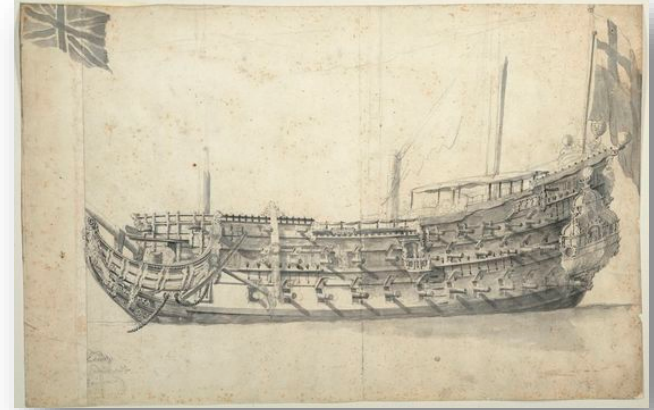
Site Management



- The management approach by Historic England varies according to the needs of each site.
- The approach to each site is outlined in a site specific Conservation Management Plan.
- Approaches include mitigation of risk through community involvement, on-going monitoring work, excavation of high risk sites and public enjoyment on more robust sites.



The *London*

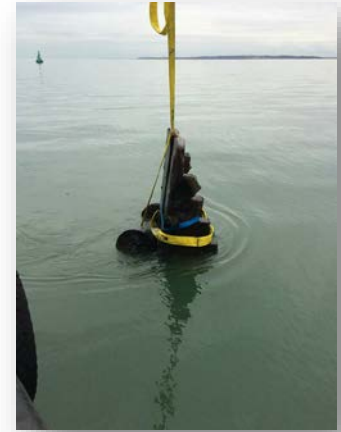


- Warship lost in 1665 in the Thames estuary
- Rediscovered in 2005 during work in advance of the London Gateway port development
- The site is located in the middle of a busy shipping lane
- Low visibility and a highly tidal environment
- In 2014 we commissioned a three-year evaluation of the site
- The dive team included both professional and volunteer archaeologists



The *London*

- In 2015 a rare gun carriage was excavated and lifted from the site.
- Carriage is currently undergoing conservation at York Archaeological Trust
- “The London Shipwreck: A Sunken Story” exhibition opened at Southend Museum in 2018.
- The exhibition includes displays of artefacts recovered from the wreck site by the licensee and his team, and conserved by Historic England

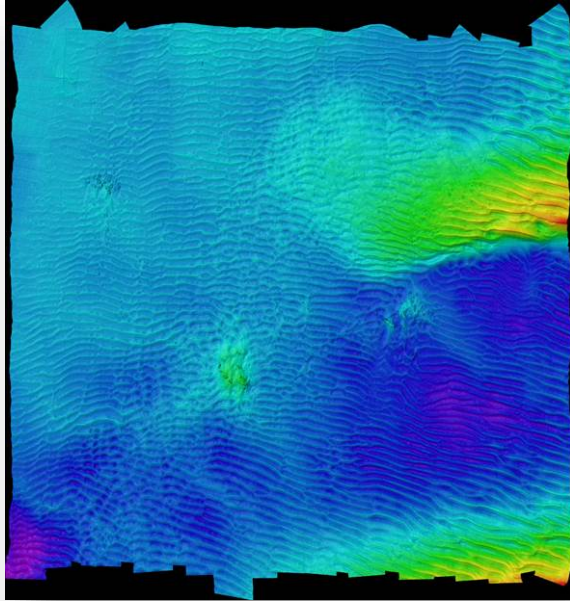




HMT *Arfon*



- Mined in April 1917 with the loss of 10 of her crew of 13
- Rediscovered in 2014 by divers
- Licensees actively involved in site security and monitoring
- Several charter boats now hold a licence to dive the site, and regularly take recreational divers to visit the site.



The Rooswijk project

- Site at high risk as remains vulnerable to environmental factors and illegal salvage
- Partnership between Historic England and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands
- Survey undertaken in 2016
- Two seasons of excavation undertaken in 2017 and 2018.
- The aim of the excavation was to gain a better understanding of site formation processes, to recover at risk remains, and to develop improved management strategies for the wreck site

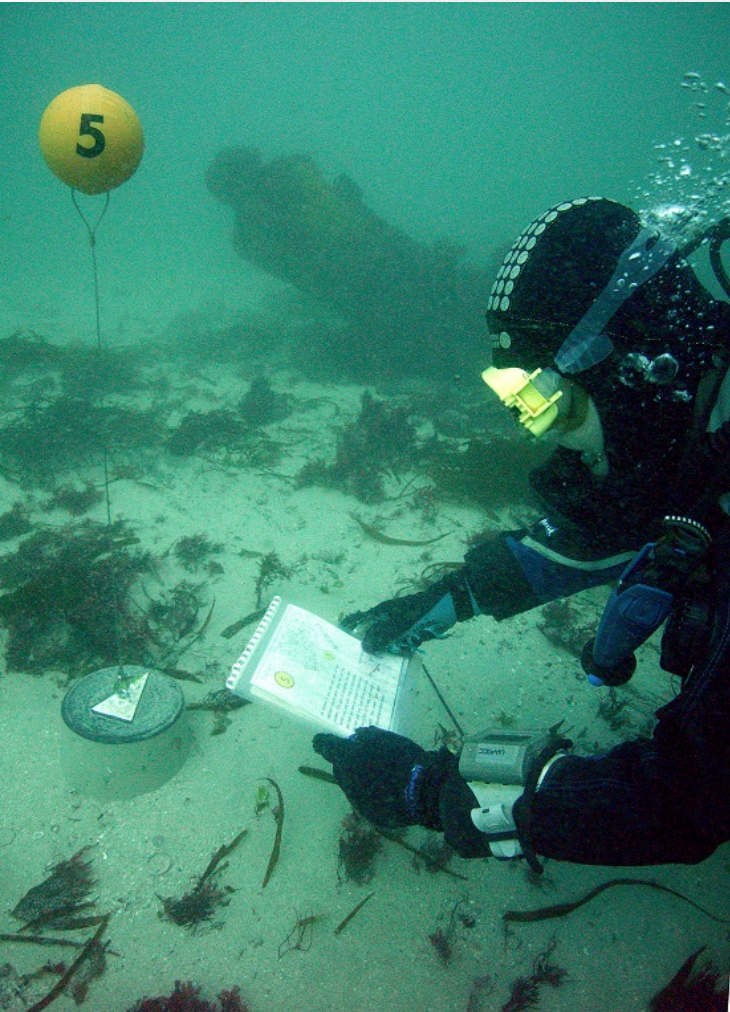


Rooswijk project

- Student placements and internships - hands on experience and training in maritime archaeology, conservation and environmental archaeology
- Engagement with divers – chance to dive the site during the course of the excavation, and to study outlying part of the site
- Several public open days, during the excavation and during the post excavation phase



Public access via Dive Trails

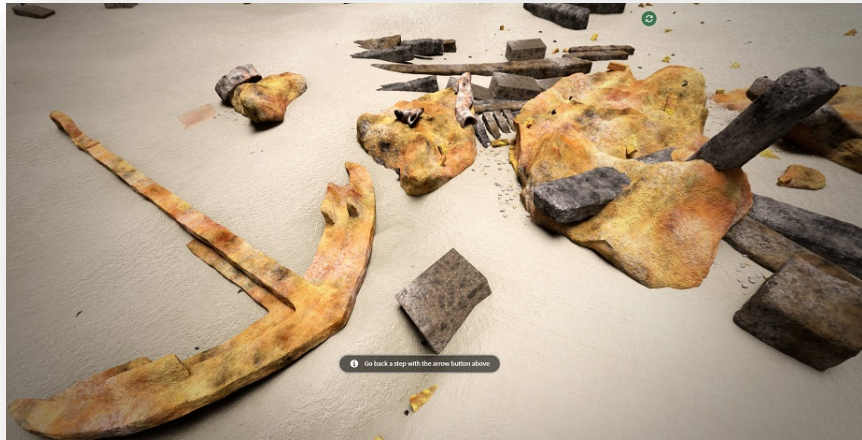


- Dive Trails aim to enhance responsible access and the visit experience
- All managed locally by volunteers
- Historic England benefit from increased site knowledge
- Increased presence on sites helps combat illegal activity
- Local economic benefits too

Public access via virtual dive trails



- Not everyone can dive so we have developed virtual tours
- Built from archival evidence, geophysical surveys, underwater photos and video footage and cutting edge computer generated imagery.





Find out more

- The National Heritage List for England:
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>
- Twitter: @HE_Maritime
- Marine and Coastal newsletter from Historic England – to sign up contact
maritime@HistoricEngland.org.uk

