

Anguilla's Underwater Cultural Heritage

My PhD researches local attitudes towards underwater heritage. I am using Anguilla's 2009 Shipwreck Survey to determine how to raise archaeology's profile in order to increase local awareness while at the same time building a database of known sites that can be used to improve resource management and facilitate future research.

The 2009 Anguilla Shipwreck Survey builds on ECU's work in 1996 to identify the scale and importance of this unique resource.

1628

1772

1996

2009

Between 1628 and 1900 more than 27 ships were lost around Anguilla. The survey in 2009 will locate as many of these wrecks as possible.

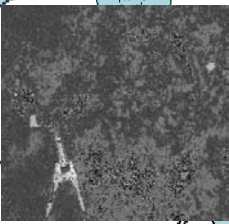
Three months after Dutch Admiral Piet Heyn captured the homeward-bound silver fleet in northern Cuba, a Spanish Merchant ship became Anguilla's first recorded shipwreck on Prickly Pear Cays 12, 1628.

Two Spanish ships "find" Anguilla. The *Buen Consejo* and *Jesús María, Y José* wreck off the coast in 1772.

Discovering the Past

In 1996 East Carolina University and volunteers from the Maritime Archaeological and Historical Society (MAHS) survey the site of the *Buen Consejo*. In 2009 the Anguilla Archaeological and Historical Society, the University of Southampton, and MAHS will undertake an Underwater Archaeological Survey.

From July 1-21 the Anguilla Archaeological and Historical Society and a team from the University of Southampton's Centre for Maritime Archaeology (including many volunteers from the USA and UK) will survey Anguilla's reefs to identify the island's historic wrecks and submerged cultural heritage. This survey will provide a baseline of information for future surveys and research.



Note - Inshore navigation in the waters off Anguilla should be undertaken only with local knowledge.

Contemporary depiction of Heyn's Victory (Image from Dutch National Archives and Atlas of Mutual Heritage)

Excerpt from document in the Archivo General de Indias describing a wreck off Anguilla



Cultural material from shipwrecks can be loose on the surface (on land or underwater) or embedded in coral. This visible resource is vulnerable to both natural elements and human activity.

Discover

Protect

Promote



Artefacts recovered from the site of the *Buen Consejo* include religious medallions (left), eating utensils, and an English cloth seal (right). These small objects provide a rare glimpse into life in the 18th-century.

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage came into force this January. In May 2009 the AAHS endorsed the full convention and its annex!



Protecting Anguilla's heritage

In December 2008 members of the AAHS learned about several artefacts which were illegally removed from the site of the *Buen Consejo* and smuggled off Anguilla. With the FBI's help these artefacts (approx 20 Religious Medallions) were recovered and returned to Anguilla in a ceremony on June 2, 2009.



Promoting Local Culture

From the historic *Warspite* to modern boat racing, Anguilla's maritime culture is rich. Discovering the island's historic shipwrecks will raise local awareness of this unique resource. Information gathered will be used for future education and research programs.

Many of Anguilla's historic sailing vessels were commemorated in a series of stamps issued in 2003.



NAUTICAL MILES