

Aim

To determine the potential value of using historic newspapers to identify the locations of British slave ships that have wrecked around the coast of Britain.

Venetian glass trading beads recovered from the *Henrietta Marie*.



Photograph of slave shackles found on the *Henrietta Marie*.



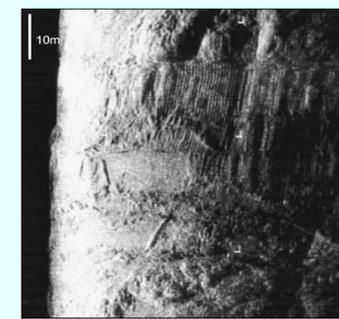
Method

Using wrecks listed in the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, searches were conducted on the Gale Database of Historic Newspapers, using a combination of the name of the ship and the name of the captain (for example, the *Spy*, Captain Matthews).

The results found were then filtered for relevance and usability, and any newspaper article mentioning the fate of the ship, or a given location, was transcribed and added to the Newcastle database of slave shipwrecks.

Further study was undertaken on wrecks which proved to be particularly interesting in terms of their journey or the circumstances of their loss. Primary sources from the National Archives were then used to find details on cargoes, slave numbers and wreck location.

It is written from the Island of St. Thome, on the Coast of Guinea, the 17th of August, that the *Jaba* of Bristol, Capt. Allen, coming over the Bar of Benin, in Company with the *Charming Salley* of London, Capt. Hogg, struck on the Bar, and was fear'd to be lost; and that before this Disaster happen'd, her Negroes had mutinied, and mortally wounded her Chief Mate and three more. (5)



Above: Extract from a Newspaper of 1734.

Side Scan Sonar image of the wreck of the *Enterprise*, located near Mew Island in approximately 5m of water. (Quinn et al 2000: 297).

Introduction

Between c. 1680 and 1807 Britain transported approximately 3,250,000 Africans into slavery. Slave ships were part of a global network of exchange between Europe, Africa and the Americas, and many were lost at sea.

Excavations of slave ships such as the *Henrietta Marie* have revealed valuable insights into the ways in which the slaves were kept and treated whilst on-board demonstrating the archaeological potential of slave ship wrecks.

According to the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database (slave voyages.org) over 1000 ships were lost at sea. The location of most are unknown. By using newspapers contemporary to the slave trade, we can begin to see where, around the coast of Britain and elsewhere, these ships are wrecked.

Quinn, R., Cooper, A. and Williams, B. (2000), 'Marine geophysical investigation of the inshore coastal waters of Northern Ireland', *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 29, 2: 294-298.

<http://www.melfisher.org/henriettamarie.htm>

<http://collections.nmm.ac.uk/collections.html#csearch;searchTerm=slave%20ship%20wreck>

The St. Michael, Lewis, from Kit's and Galway for Bristol, is ashore at Ulist, the West part of Scotland. (1)

On Saturday le'nnight the dead bodies of several unfortunate people belonging to the Molly Snow, lately cast away near Bristol, floated—ashore at Uphill, and particularly that of Capt. Storey King. There were found in his pockets several pieces of Foreign Gold and a Silver Watch. (2)



The Ashampo Snow, Capt. Hughs, from St Christophers, coming from the Downs for the River with a Pilot on board, run ashore near the Northshoreland, and was almost full of Water. (3)

The ship Hornet, of Bristol, John Carson, master, from Jamaica for London, which arrived at the Motherbank on Monday last, and sailed on Tuesday evening, got on the Owers the same night, and immediately went entirely to pieces. The smallest remains of the ship was not discoverable, so perfect was the destruction occasioned by a fresh wind and heavy sea. (4)

(6) *The Luxbrough, laden with Sugar from Jamaica to London, Capt. Kellaway, in Lat. 41, 45, 54 North Longitude from the Crooked Islands, was unfortunately burnt on the 25th of June past; the Fire in half an Hour's Time prevail'd to that Degree, that they had no Hopes of saving the Ship, or any of their Lives; they endeavour'd to get out their Boats when 'twas to late; however they got the Yawl out, into which went the Captain and twenty one Men more, leaving fourteen in the Vessel. They had not one drop of Drink on Board, or Morfel of Victuals, no Comfats, Malt, or Sails, and but three Oars, most of them died for want Provisions; at last the Yawl by good Providence drove into St. Lawrence's Harbour on the 7th of July, but the Captain died next Morning: Six Men that were left alive,*

Above left: newspaper article from 1727, explaining what happened to the ship, which is featured in the adjacent painting.



Results and future outcomes

This project has been very successful. A total of **382** wrecks were located, with **114** of the wrecks around the coast of Britain and Ireland.

The project has generated new data for the Newcastle database of slave shipwrecks, and has been incorporated into the National Monument Record shipwreck database. The results are due to be presented to English Heritage on 23/11/2011.

This project has demonstrated the potential of historic newspapers as a source of information on slave shipwreck locations. This method may one day help to pinpoint the precise location of a wrecked slave ship, opening up possibilities for excavation and memorialisation.

<http://find.galegroup.com/>

(1) London Chronicle or Universal Evening Post (London, England), February 14, 1765 - February 16, 1765; Issue 127

(2) London Evening Post (London, England), September 30, 1732 - October 3, 1732; Issue 755

(3) Daily Gazetteer (London Edition) (London, England), Monday, December 3, 1739; Issue 1389

(4) Sun (London, England), Friday, October 17, 1794; Issue 641

(5) London Evening Post (London, England), November 2, 1734 - November 5, 1734; Issue 1086

(6) Evening Post (1709) (London, England), September 5, 1727 - September 7, 1727; Issue 2828

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