

QUEST MARINE SERVICES IN THE WAKE OF THE QUEST SPRING 2009

Another winter has passed and spring is here in force. All of us at Quest Marine Services are looking forward to another season of science and engineering operations, as well as continuing on our own archeological and ocean exploration projects. We would like to take this opportunity to tell you a bit about what has been going on at Quest Marine.



R/V QUEST departing Scituate harbor Massachusetts.

RIGHT WHALES AND LNG.

The winter although relatively quiet saw, some interesting projects. Most notably was a Right Whale acoustic recording project with Cornell University's Bioacoustics Research Program (BRP). This project is part of a multifaceted effort to save the critically endangered North Atlantic Right Whale. Movements of Whales in Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays are being tracked by both bottom mounted recording sensors and surface buoys transmitting data in real time. This data enables scientists from the Cornell BRP and NOAA's SBNMS to alert partner organizations to the presence of whales who in turn

notify commercial shipping traffic in the area. This system is working to reduce or eliminate the potential for large ships to strike Right Whales in New England waters.

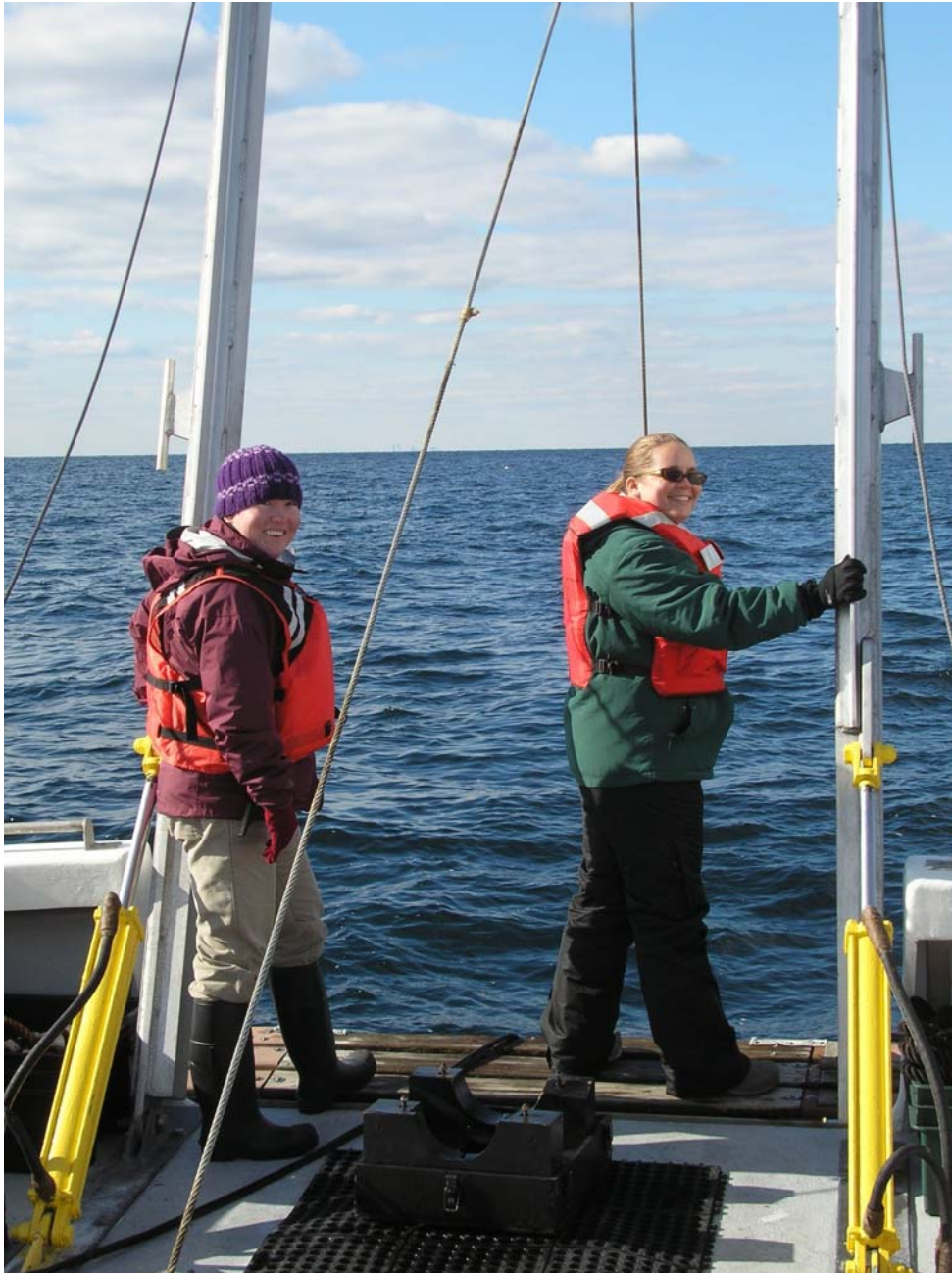


Figure 1 Lowering a sound source for Right Whale Project

The R/V Quest was deployed in November and again in April to conduct bottom mounted recording array calibration cruises.



Figure 2 Recording sound data for Right Whale project.

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/brp/update-items/right-whale-projects>

TRAINING

Crewmembers from Quest Marine Services participated in an intensive four-day “fast rescue boat operations” training session at Massachusetts Maritime Academy this past October. The course focused on the use of two 7-meter high speed rigid hull inflatable boats for recovering people in the water. The four days were spent developing and fine-tuning response times, rescue and emergency first aid skills. We of course hope to never have the need for these types of skills, however safety is our highest priority. Continual training and drills help us to maintain our level of overall readiness.

WEB SITE

Recent additions have been posted on our web site in the Ocean Exploration section. Look for more updates soon.

OCEAN EXPLORATION

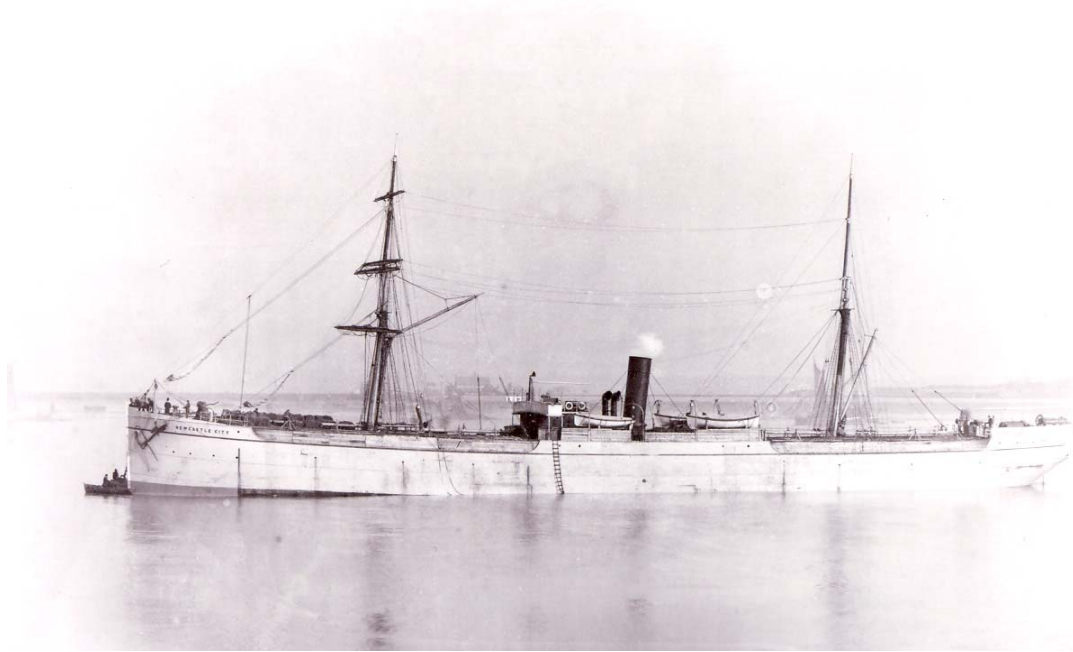


Figure 3 SS Newcastle City at anchor 1885

An exploration team aboard the R/V Quest located the remains of the 19th century British Steamship Newcastle City on August 24th 2008, in the Atlantic Ocean South of Nantucket Island. Follow up dives conducted by the team on October 11th and 12th confirmed the identity of the wreck as that of the British steamship SS Newcastle City.

The Newcastle City was lost on a voyage from South Shields, England to New York with a general cargo that included several tons of antimony ingots. During the early morning hours of December 23rd 1887, the ship struck an uncharted shoal south of Nantucket Island, severely damaging the ships hull. The ship slowly filled with water and sank several hours later. After an arduous row of over six hours the crew of 26 and one lone passenger reached safety aboard the Nantucket Lightship, where they remained for two weeks until being brought ashore by the lighthouse tender Verbena. The Newcastle City was a transitional type passenger / cargo steamship built in Newcastle England in 1882. Although powered by a two cylinder compound steam engine the ship was also rigged as a brigantine. This was a common practice during the period in time when steam was replacing sail as the primary means of motive power for ships, in the late 1800's.

The wreck was located after several years of historical research followed by field investigations during the 2006 and 2007 seasons. Several interesting sonar targets were identified late in 2007, one of which appeared to be a likely target for the Newcastle City. Dives conducted on the suspected sonar target on August 24th of 2008 confirmed the target to be that of the wreck of an iron hulled steamship slightly less than 300' in length. The wreck lies on a white sand bottom with the hull largely collapsed, although portions of the bow and stern are somewhat intact. Two large boilers and a two cylinder compound steam engine are prominent features, rising 15' off the sea floor amidships. The wreck is a complete time capsule from the 19th century when iron hull construction and steam propulsion were surpassing wood and sail as the means to move the worlds commerce. The wreck site is littered with artifacts from the period both from the ship itself and the cargo. Deadeyes from the ships rigging are intermingled with steam fittings. A rare Trotman anchor stands 8' off the seabed at the bow, with an equally rare Porter anchor lying nearby. At the stern a huge pile of antimony ingots polished by the sand and swift currents glitter like silver bars.

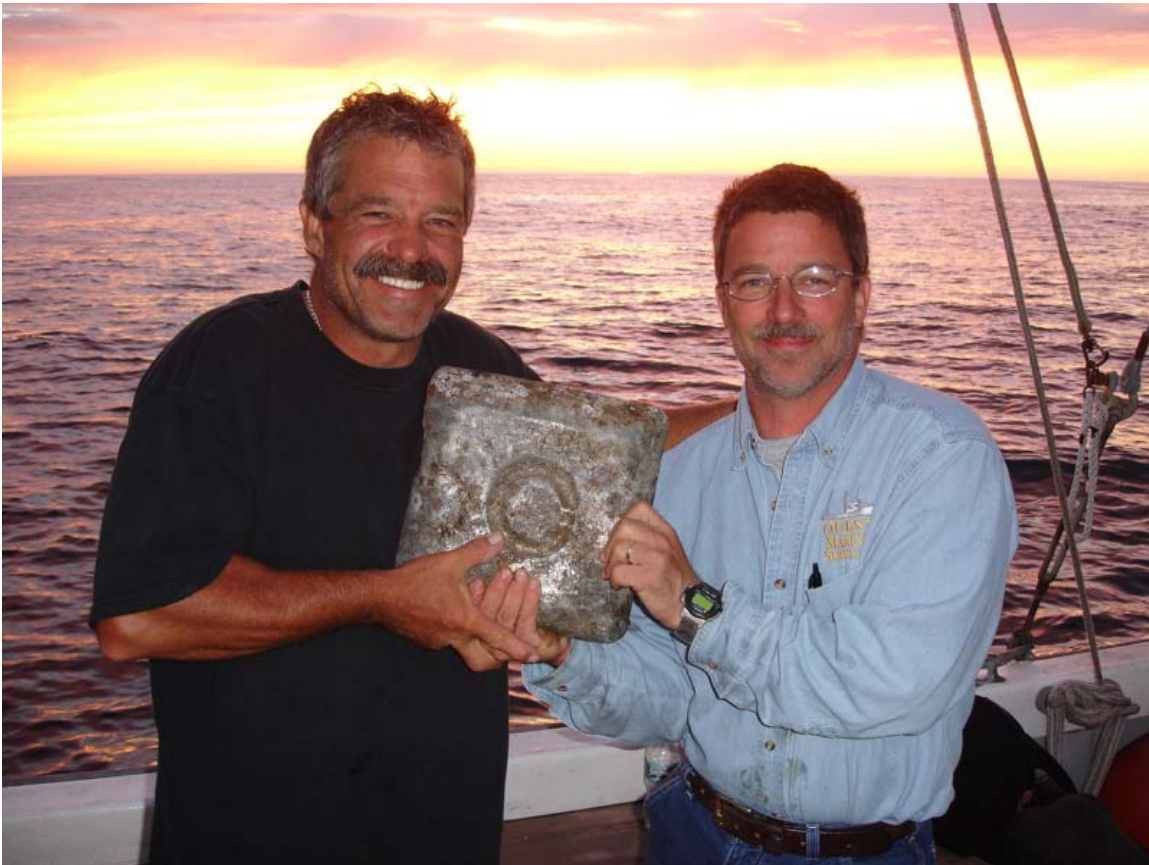


Figure 4 Pat and Eric with an Antimony Ingot.

Follow up dives were conducted at the wreck site on October 11th and 12th 2008, for the purpose of gaining additional photographs and information. Measurements taken on the

ships machinery matched exactly, specifications listed for the ship in Lloyds Register of Shipping. The ships helm was also located with the words “NEWCASTLE CITY LIVERPOOL” engraved in the face of the wheel.

The exploration team working from the R/V Quest included captain Eric Takakjian, Steve Gatto, Tom Packer, Patrick Rooney, David Morton, Tom Mulloy, Michael Dudas, and Joseph Mazraani.

Additional dives will be conducted this season for the purpose of gathering more still and video images of the wreck site.

MARINE SURVEYING

There has been a recent increase in survey activity. Two ships belonging to our longtime survey client Atlantic Frost Seafood’s were transferred to shipyards on the West Coast of Central America for refits. Following extensive shipyard periods the F/V Sun Dragon and F/V AJ will resume pelagic fishing operations in the Pacific. Quest Marine Services provided survey and voyage consulting services for both ships prior to their departure for the West Coast.



Figure 5 Jo Linda, ex Sun Dragon nears completion in Costa Rica.

Recently Quest Marine Services was called upon to provide condition and valuation surveys on two of the oldest working tugboats in the United States, the former steam tugs Sisters and Bath. Both vessels were recently purchased in Maine and will be redeployed to the Caribbean working out of Port Au Prince, Haiti.

The tug Sisters has the distinction of being the oldest working tugboat in the United States. Constructed of riveted iron as the Rebecca by the John H. Dialogue Shipyard in Camden New Jersey in 1874, just nine years after the end of the Civil War! The Dialogue yard was well known for turning out many fine iron hulled steamships in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Converted to diesel power in 1940 the tug served for many years on the Delaware River before moving to Maine in 1959.

The tug Bath was built for the Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad at Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry-dock in 1908. Newport News Shipbuilding is still in business today as part of the Northrop Grumman Group and is the only yard in the United States that currently builds aircraft carriers for the US Navy. The Bath worked in the port of New York shuttling railroad car floats between Weehawken, New Jersey and Brooklyn from 1908 until she was sold to Portsmouth Navigation Company of Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 1958. The Bath remained working out of Maine ports for the rest of her working life and was for many years a common sight on the Portsmouth waterfront. Remarkably the tugs name has never been changed in her 101 years of service!



Figure 6 Tug Bath at Gloucester Marine Railways

All of us at Quest Marine Services would like to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer! We look forward to working with you on your next project.