

## MAST saves historic collection for the Nation

The largest and most important collection of shipwreck artefacts from the UK has been rescued from being sold at auction – by MAST. Among many hundreds of items that, until now have been homed in Charlestown in Cornwall, the assemblage contains artefacts from 12 Protected Wrecks which have the same status as the Mary Rose. Artefacts saved include those recovered from multiple Royal Navy warships including HMS Ramillies, HMS Association and English and Dutch East India Company wrecks.



The sale was announced during the summer holidays. After protracted negotiations – and planning not only exactly how to move a museum collection en masse several counties east of Cornwall, to Poole, but also how to provide a

longterm future for these treasured artefacts – MAST acquired the collection a week before the auction was due to take place.

It is neither easy nor quick to carefully sort 300 year old artefacts in environmentally controlled packaging. The job will take almost a month for the team to complete. The collection's new base will be at MAST's Archaeological Centre in Poole where we will conduct a full conservation assessment. Some pieces are in dire need. When the conservation is complete we will working with local and national museums including the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth and Chatham Dockyard to run temporary exhibitions, to share and learn from this incredible resource that not only tells the story of the development of maritime archaeology in the UK but also the history and archaeology of the Royal Navy and the development of international trade.

Once the collection begins to move to MAST HQ in Poole we will start a Blog – so watch this space on [www.thisismast.org](http://www.thisismast.org).





*The packing at Charlestown shipwreck Museum has slowly begun.*



### - Lloyds Register grant to develop the RN Loss List.

The Lloyds Register Foundation has granted MAST £10,000 to develop the Royal Navy Loss List. The Loss List is currently a full searchable and downloadable database that we developed to understand the RN's vast reach and influence across the world. The grant is now enabling us to develop as far greater and more comprehensive database that will also encompass the National Museum of the Royal Navy's collections database and MoD's Salvage and Marine (Salmo) database of Legacy wrecks so that we can build on our knowledge of centuries of British naval and military history. Thanks to Salmo's resource and its inclusion of potentially leaking wrecks the resulting new database will be useful not just for education and research but also for managing the entire maritime resource globally, looking at environmental risk.



### - Project Tangaroa

MAST is delighted to be working alongside Lloyds Register Foundation, and other partners including MoD Salmo on [Project Tangaroa](#), a global framework whose principal aim is to prevent old metal shipwrecks from leaking oil or other harmful substances through the sharing of data on Potentially Leaking Wrecks (PPWs). There are an estimated 8,500 PPWs at the bottom of the world's oceans dating from around 1870, some containing oil or unexploded ordnance – their metals

deteriorating over time, and some even more vulnerable due to their attraction to looters.

Earlier this year Giles Richardson of MAST addressed conferences in Finland and Estonia on this subject. He can be heard [here](#) at 2.41 hours in.



### - The Maritime Observatory

In March 2024 we alerted Malaysian and UK authorities to a vessel that we had detected operating over the HMS Prince of Wales site. We were concerned that this was a new attempt to loot this historic wreck happening live in front of us. In fact this vessel turned out to be Chuan Hong 68, newly released from Malaysian custody for looting HMS Prince of Wales in 2023. The Malaysian response was swift – the salvage barge was rapidly located still over the wreck, searched and forced to leave the area, returning to Malaysian supervision before more damage could be done.

Chuan Hong 68 is one of several barges that had previously targeted WW2 wrecks in the South China Sea from about 2012-2017. In that time 50+ historic naval wrecks belonging to the US, UK, Australia, Dutch and Japanese were damaged or destroyed completely, to worldwide condemnation. Chuan Hong 68 is known to have targeted three Japanese wrecks off Malaysia in Jan 2017 (destroyer IJN Sagari & troop transports Hiyoshi Maru and Katori Maru) among others. Some of the barges were detained by Indonesian and Malaysian Authorities at the time, but all were eventually released. Chuan Hong 68 is the first we have seen to return to the area.

## What is the Maritime Observatory?

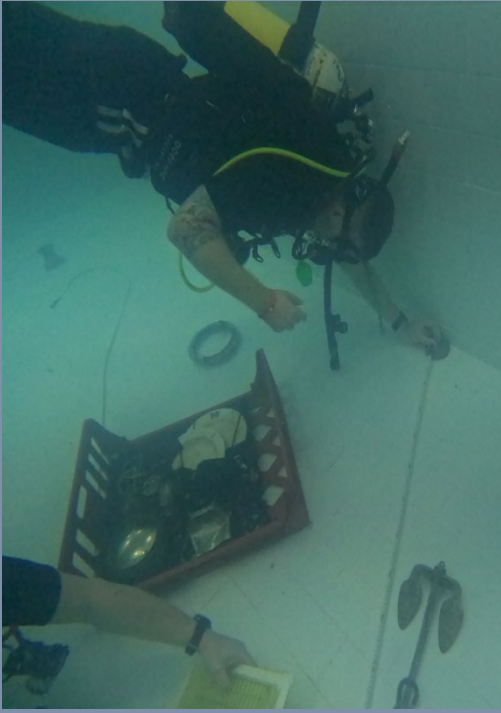
MAST and OceanMind, a not-for-profit organisation which specialises in the monitoring of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing for governments and the private sector, have joined forces to harness the growing capabilities of the space sector to better protect important maritime sites from unauthorised salvage. Our intention is to protect naval war graves and underwater cultural heritage with governments around the world. The Observatory is also able to detect oil leaking from shipwrecks, particularly important post 1870 metal wrecks.

The Maritime Observatory completed a number of important projects this year. Watch this [video](#) that explains what we do.

The Observatory's work is often triggered when vessels try to hide by turning off their AIS. Time is money for most honest people. When boats stop transmitting, this is when we sit up and check.

### - The BAD course

MAST has continued to work in partnership with Poole Diving to run Basic Archaeological Diver courses. There are now four more BAD PADI instructors so please get in touch with us or Poole Diving directly to sign up for one of our two-day courses.



*water*



*The swimming pool training and classroom before students get into the open*

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