Diving deep – HMS Invincible project calls for volunteers



Senior archeaologist Giles Richardson with a bowl retrieved from HMS Invincible Mike Pitts

A major showcase for the most important underwater excavation in decades begins with a call for volunteers, thanks to National Lottery players.

Since 2017 the £2million underwater excavation of HMS Invincible 1744 by the Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust (MAST) in partnership with Bournemouth University has grabbed the nation's imagination.

Now, MAST and the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) have been awarded a £360,000 National Lottery grant, for a three-year project to include ground breaking digital resources and major exhibitions which aim to take these stories from the sea bed to the land.

The most important maritime archaeology project since 1980s

A dedicated team of archaeological divers guided by Dan Pascoe, the site's licensee, has been working against time in the Solent to reveal the wreck's secrets in what is the country's most significant maritime archaeology project since the 1980s.

[quote=Matthew Sheldon, Director of Heritage, The National Museum of the Royal Navy]“The Invincible provided the model for the backbone of the Royal Navy right up to the end of the Age of Sail..."[/quote]

HMS Invincible was built by the French in 1744 and captured by the Royal Navy in 1747. It sank in the Solent in 1758. Her special design, unique lines and 74-gun capacity were copied and her Class became the backbone of the Royal Navy’s fleet right up to the end of the sailing navy and the beginning of the age of steam.

Call for volunteers to help reveal wreck's stories

The project is to start with the creation of a significant volunteer programme in Portsmouth and in Poole which will get people involved in essential work. To find out more about the project or how to get involved as a volunteer please visit the NMRN website for more information.

Matthew Sheldon, Director of Heritage, The National Museum of the Royal Navy, said: “Seeing the technologies which the project’s archaeologists and dive team use to understand this amazing wreck has been fascinating – almost better than being there.”

Jessica Berry, Chief Executive of the Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust (MAST), said: “The Invincible provided the model for the backbone of the Royal Navy right up to the end of the Age of Sail, the maintenance of her class of ship triggering the Industrial Revolution that began in Britain’s dockyards. This is a fascinating project and we are hugely grateful to National Lottery players.”



The restored HMS Caroline



HMS Warrior 1860 at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

Future of HMS Warrior secured