TOP TREASURE

Find this at

SHIPWRECK CENTRE
& MARITIME MUSEUM

Education Contact:
museum@maritimearchaeology.org

Questions

- What do you think it is?
- Can you describe it?
- What do you think it is made from?
- How big do you think it is?
- What do you think it was used for?

FACT FILE

‘Brown Bess’ musket

What is it?

A ‘Brown Bess’ musket and musket balls. Salvaged from the wreck of a ship called the Henry Addington which sank off Bembridge Ledge on the Isle of Wight.

What is it made from?

The musket is iron and brass and the musket balls are lead.

How old is it?

The ship it was aboard was wrecked in from 1798. This style of musket (British land pattern) was designed in 1722 and was in use for over 100 years with little change.

Significance

At the time of its sinking the Henry Addington was on its second journey, carrying bale goods and naval stores. The ship had previously stopped at Portsmouth after its initial departure from London.

Brown Bess muskets were widely used by the British Army and other armies around the world, they were the standard choice between 1722 and 1838. The East India Trading Company, who the ship was in service to, was a supplier and contributor to Britain’s military in the 18th century.

Other facts

Martin Woodward, the founder of the Shipwreck Centre, recovered many artefacts from the Henry Addington shipwreck in 1980, He used a proton magnetometer, a device that detects very small variations in the Earth's magnetic field, allowing ferrous (iron containing) objects on land and at sea to be found.

Why don’t you?

- Research some of the other ships that were wrecked off the Isle of Wight in the past. You could start with this website: www.backofthewight.co.uk. Create a fact file about the one you think is interesting.
- Imagine you were diving one of the shipwrecks you have researched. What sort of things might you discover? Make a list of your finds, thinking about what the people on board might have needed for their journey or what they might have been transporting.
- Discovering and understanding historic artefacts found at sea is called maritime archaeology. Explore this timeline (tiny.cc/maritime-timeline) and search online for “Maritime Archaeology Trust Explore the Past” to find interactive resources.

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