



## A Bronze Age Timber Circle on the Shifting Sands of Norfolk

by Simon Draper

The tide retreats uncovering Holme II, a Bronze Age timber circle. Image: Ian Perry



Virgilio Rodrigues

### An Early Medieval Sounding Weight?

by Tiago Miguel Fraga

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MAST

### Investigating the Bamburgh Castle Mystery Wreck

by Jessica Berry and Kevin Stratford

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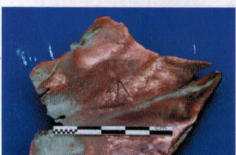


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**Nautical  
Archaeology  
Society**

Netherlands

# A Late 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Fishing Vessel

Joost van den Besselaar and Peter Seinen

*Joost and Peter are on the board of the foundation Mergor in Mosam, which is involved in nautical and underwater archaeological and paleontological projects. Here they report on their NAS Part II project on a historic fishing vessel.*

On a warm summer evening, when sailing in an ancient branch of the River Meuse near Alem in the Netherlands, we located a wooden structure just below the water surface. Closer inspection proved that this wooden structure was a fairly large vessel, and inspired our interest for further investigations. Dating an oak timber from the wreck at the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency, it was determined that the wreck is a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century vessel and apparently, therefore, of minor archaeological interest. Having in mind our ambition to gain a NAS Part II Certificate, the discovery of this wreck seemed an excellent opportunity to put together a project. The Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency granted permission for the excavations to be undertaken, which would be required to map the site. The goal of the project was to achieve an as accurate as possible account for the vessel's type, use, and history. The excavations, unexpectedly, produced a lot of artefacts that could be related to the wreck and its crew.

The wreck in question seems to be a *kwakbotter*, a well-known type of a fishing vessel, built around 1880 in Monnickendam near Zuiderzee. After 30 years of service, the vessel was probably sold to fishermen at Heerenwaarden, a small town between the two largest Dutch rivers, the Meuse and the Waal, close to Alem. This was a common practice during this period, as these vessels would have become

too unreliable for sailing on the Zuiderzee bay of the North Sea. The ship was used for fishing on both the Meuse and the Waal rivers for mainly salmon and eel, which required special techniques and equipment. Fishermen from Heerenwaarden were famous for fishing a long way upstream the Rhine, far into Germany. To maximize their profit, maintenance to their vessels and the wreck in question was limited to replacing rotten wooden parts with cement and ultimately cladding their outer surface with thin steel sheet. The unavoidable slow leakage became fatal for the vessel in question that had to be eventually abandoned and slowly sank in the river. In the following years, the vessel was vandalized leaving limited remains to be investigated during our project. The complete results of our project have been reported thoroughly and digital versions can be downloaded from our website at [www.mergorinmosam.nl](http://www.mergorinmosam.nl) as well as the official site of the Dutch Association for Volunteers in Archaeology at [www.awn-archeologie.nl](http://www.awn-archeologie.nl). ♦



Parts of the wreck are visible at low-tide. Image: Jos van der Heijden, Mergor in Mosam