

Briefing for Marine Bill Consultation Debate 26th February 2009

Safeguarding Scotland's cultural maritime legacy

This briefing has been prepared by the BEFS Marine Bill Historic Environment Taskforce.

Scotland's marine historic environment: Scotland's maritime heritage is of immense importance to the nation's history and identity and is internationally renowned. From the beginnings of human prehistory to the maritime developments of the industrial revolution, much of Scotland's story is recognised in its underwater cultural heritage. As well as the wrecks of boats, ships, submarines and aircraft, the marine historic environment includes drowned landscapes which have the potential to reveal aspects of human life that are not able to be recovered in land-based archaeology. In this the Year of Homecoming, this heritage, which is closely tied into the emigration of thousands of Scots worldwide, has particular resonance.

We endorse the following extract from the AGMACS statement on the 'Desired State of the Marine Environment' (by Michael Scott):
"(21) Damage to the marine cultural heritage – including wrecks, sub-surface structures and drowned landscapes – has been reduced to acceptable levels, by effective mapping of these features, and by the introduction of protective measures under ICZM to maintain and allow access to this heritage, supported by statutory protection where necessary."

Needs and opportunities: We very much welcome the statement given in *Sustainable Seas for All* that 'Scotland's Historic Environment has a positive contribution to make to the social, economic and cultural fabric of today's Scotland'. It is clear that in order to embrace the exciting challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, the historic environment should be fully embedded within the proposals outlined in the Bill. Our priorities for the Marine Bill are:



The ship's compass from the Cromwellian wreck 'Swan' in the Sound of Mull (photo: Colin Martin)

International context - The Marine Bill should be consistent with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, but in particular to its Annex, which the UK has adopted.

Duty of care - Marine Scotland should have a duty to care for the marine historic environment, in the same way as it will have a biodiversity duty.

Marine Planning - The cultural aspects of the marine environment should be treated in the same way as nature conservation, i.e devolved to 200nm. Marine

Protected Areas provide opportunity for enabling better protection not only of the natural environment, but also cultural heritage assets.

Marine Scotland expertise - Marine Scotland should have an in-house capacity to deal with the marine historic environment, as well as having close links with Historic Scotland in relation to designated sites.

Science & Data – The marine historic environment needs to be integrated into future scientific initiatives, in order to develop our understanding of this hugely significant cultural resource.