

# Reality Check

Shipwrecks have a very limited lifespan. Seawater is a dynamic electrolytic chemical soup which in time consumes/dissolves all it comes in contact with, even affecting objects made of noble metals. Sand abrasion, sea-ice and tidal action (particularly during storms) work in concert with biological agents to create a fairly rapid natural recycling of all manmade objects.

An Exercise for consideration: Case in point: The Le Célèbre - a 64 gun French ship-of-the-line, sunk in action during the siege of 1758 in Louisbourg harbour. Currently it has only about 8% of its original bulk remaining. The continued existence of these remains is merely a matter of time. Intervention in the form of archaeological excavation followed by conservation would likely carry a cost in excess of \$2,500,000. (Look at the Federal Government's Red Bay Nfld. Basque ship project). Please note that this scenario would in fact cover only one of eleven (11) historic ships "known" sunk in Louisbourg harbour.

Food for Thought: Question the dog who habitually chases cars; what would you do with the car if you ever caught one? (Should "Government" assume total responsibility over this type of "Heritage" asset?)

- 1.) Who would administer, decide and oversee the programs' implementation, and assess the success of each undertaking? How will this to be accomplished? Provide details and expected results!
- 2.) Will "publicly funded" projects and goals be assessed with cost- considerations measured towards the public good (or need)?
- 3.) Who is to provide funding for this and to what extent?
- 4.) Who is to sustain the long term funding for the inevitable conservation costs, (conservation labs), and follow-up maintenance of temperature- and environment controlled warehousing suitable for long term storage of a large volume of "treated" artifacts? (Here, psssstt, would you like some 200 waterlogged cast iron cannons? How about several hundreds of cannonballs and anchors?)
- 5.) Towards what purpose or end use will all of this serve? Would it be worth the price? Personally, I would prefer to see these desperately needed public funds diverted to cancer cure research
- 6.) What in particular does the "Archaeology/Heritage community" hope to achieve by eliminating private enterprise from the process?

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