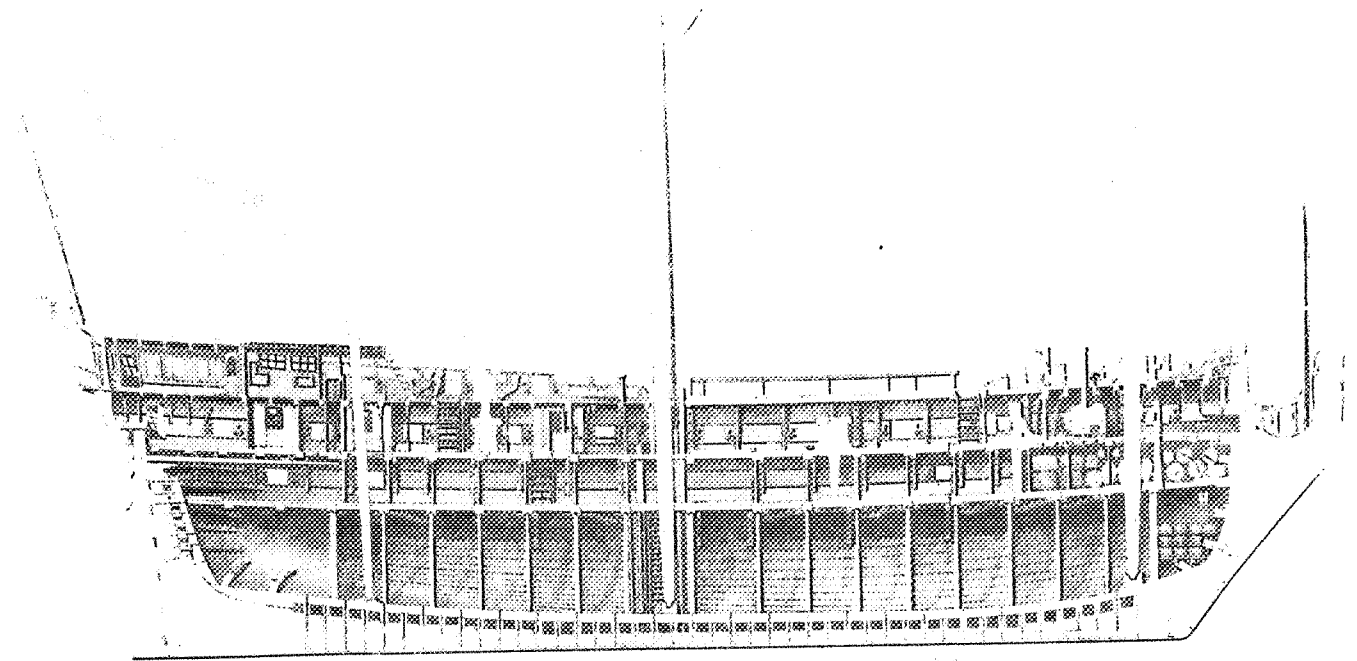


# *'Valentine'*



*First years work  
on the wreck of the  
British East Indiaman*

*The Valentine Excavation Group 1976*

## HISTORY

The VALENTINE was built by PERRY on the River Thames and launched in 1767. She had a length of 135ft. 10ins. and a beam of 34ft. 4ins and a tonnage of 690 tons.

She made her first voyage in 1768 leaving on the 2nd January, 1768 and returning on the 8th May, 1769, a round trip to Madras and Bengal of 16 months.

Her second voyage started on the 28th December, 1769 to Madras and China and she returned safely on the 9th July, 1771, a trip of 19 months.

Her third voyage started on the 3rd February, 1773 to Madras and Bengal and returned on the 27th July, 1774, a trip of 17 months.

Her fourth and last voyage started at the East India Dock at Blackwall on the River Thames. She left Blackwall on the 5th November, and moved down river to Gravesend where she took on cargo and passengers as well as loading on board her ship's cannon, which would probably have been 20 x 9lb cannon, on her gundeck and 6 x 6lb cannon on her quarter deck. She left Gravesend and arrived at Portsmouth the 26th December, 1776.

The Valentine left Portsmouth on the 1st January, 1777. Stopping off in Madeira to load wine, she arrived safely in India in September, 1777. She then traded from Madras - Masulipatam - Vizagapatam - Tranquebar - Bombay - Madras. In December she loaded her cargo for the return journey which included sacks of saltpeter, raw silk in bales and redwood. On the 29th December, soon after leaving Madras,

she struck a reef. Attempts to pull her off were unsuccessful, her top deck cannon were thrown overboard and her masts cut away. After strenuous efforts were made she was finally salvaged almost a week later and taken to Madras for repairs and the discharging of her damaged cargo.

By August 1778 she had been refitted and re-armed, probably with 9lb and 4lb cannon. She then served as a ship of the line with the Royal Navy in a battle with the French off Pondichery where she received considerable damage but made a good showing of herself.

During September, 1778, she re-loaded her cargo which included 4,000 bags of saltpeter and a large quantity of raw silk in bales, some redwood as well as some private trade. She received on board passengers and baggage in mid October and sailed from Madras on the 25th October, 1778.

She arrived at St. Helena on the 8th February, 1779, where she was to spend over four months refitting and waiting for other ships to arrive to sail in the comparative safety of a convoy, as we were at war with France and Spain.

She sailed from St. Helena on the 24th June in convoy with seven other East India Company ships and arrived safely at the mouth of the River Shannon in South West Ireland on the 2nd September, 1779. The ships waited in the River for naval escort to take them safely through the English Channel to London. On the 10th October the naval escort arrived which consisted of the Jupiter, 50 guns, four frigates and two cutters. Due to bad weather they did

not sail until the 10th November.

When the convoy was North-east of Guernsey on the 14th they encountered a strong North-westerly gale with heavy squalls of wind and rain which broke the convoy up. The Valentine was sighted that evening "hove to" with the loss of all her sail. She being unable to "weather" the "Casquets" the Captain decided to run for the shelter of the St. Peter Port roadstead for shelter and repairs via the Great Russel . The Captain then found that he could not "weather" the Great Russel passage and was in danger of being wrecked on Sark. He let go his main anchors and cut away some of his masts in an effort to stop his ship being wrecked on a small Island called Brecqhou, which lies to the west of Sark. It was in vain. The strong wind and the fierce tide forced the vessel against a reef at the western end of the Island called Le Neste where she was badly holed. All the crew and passengers managed to reach the safety of the Island where they able to gain shelter.

The wreck lay in shallow water and throughout the next month the locals pillaged the wreck. Some of her cannon were salvaged and it is probable that the cannon that lay near the Eperquerie in Sark originated from the VALENTINE.

## DISCOVERY OF WRECK

The existence of the Valentine was known for some time before the diving clubs became interested during the summer of 1975. Two members of the club managed to persuade the diving Catamaran 'Scuba-Cat' into taking the local B.S.A.C. clubs to have a look during September of 1975 although the first actual visit to the area occurred on the 5th October. On arrival it was decided that the roll was too great to dive the area in safety so we went elsewhere (the size of the seas in this area has plagued us on frequent occasions since then).

It was two months before the weather was suitable and enough erstwhile divers could be had at the same time. On the 7th December, 1975 we were looking to the west of Le Neste and found a few pieces of lead. Two weeks later on the 21st December we were back again. The first divers found an amount of timber (red dye wood) scattered in an area about 200 metres east of Le Neste reef. The last two divers found cannon, agate and pottery but by this time the tide was so strong we had to leave the site.

Hardly over the Christmas festivities we dived the area again on the 28th December. Although the tide was not ideal each diver found pieces of pottery, agate and wood. Two pulley wheels and a bronze tap were also found and brought to the surface. During the one hour trip back to St. Peter Port a discussion took place about the wreck and our 'finds'. We decided to contact the Receiver of Wreck and declare our 'booty'.

On arrival in harbour the Island Police boarded the

boat to see what we had 'caught' (fishing by diving is not permitted in Sark waters).

On the 9th January, 1976 Richard Keen gave a lecture to all interested parties on the 'Valentine' and the accumulated knowledge we had at that time which led to the formation of the 'Valentine Excavation Group 1976'.

During the remainder of January and February 1976 the Blue Dolphins B.S.A.C., St. John (Guernsey) B.S.A.C. and the Sea Curs B.S.A.C. got together and formed the V.E.G. under the directorship of Richard Keen who had been researching the Valentine some years previously and had had experience in working on old wreck.

#### DIVING SINCE THE FORMATION OF THE V.E.G. 1976.

After several meetings and discussions during the winter evenings concerning the best way to attack the project it was decided to survey the items visible on the sea-bed at the diving site.

##### Day 1. (10.4.76)

This commenced on the 10th April, 1976. We left St. Peter Port at 11.00 hrs. Low water was at 9.53, the sea was calm and visibility 5 miles. Mr. Adams of Sark was notified by R/T that we would be in the diving area of the Valentine that day. There were 8 divers and the total dive time was 10 hrs. 31 mins. A line was laid between 4 cannon, after which kelp was cut on either side of this line. We returned to St. Peter Port at 16.30 hrs. after a satisfactory day.

Day 2. (11.4.76) saw the second dive on the site. An area of kelp was cut as planned. The sea conditions were again calm with a force 1 easterly wind. 8 divers were again in the water with a total dive time of 11 hrs. 58 mins. The maximum recorded depth was 12 metres. The following log was kept:-

Left St. Peter Port at 11.10 a.m. in Scuba Cat. Low water 11.03. vis 5 miles. diving commenced 12.08. Returned 16.15.

Day 3. (19.4.76)

We left St. Peter Port at 9.40 but returned with a cabin cruiser in tow. We left again at 9.58 arriving at the site at 10.50 with the tide running strongly to the north. We continued kelp cutting, which not only helped to clear the site but also added greatly to our general knowledge and geography of the site. 10 divers provided a total dive time of 9 hrs. 18 mins. We returned to St. Peter Port at 15.20.

Day 4. (8.5.76)

We left St. Peter Port at 8.45, contacted the Adams Bros by R/T at 9.45, and arrived on site at 9.40. Diving commenced at 9.45 with 9 divers on this expedition. We achieved the longest dive time of the year with a total of 15 hrs. 22 mins. Working in two groups, a line, marked in metres, was laid right through the dive site. This necessitated working from the western extremity of the site - the deepest point so far discovered of 14 metres. This line ran up a gully - known to the Group as 'Anchor Gully' because of the presence of a fairly new 28lb galvanised fisherman's anchor. This we later learned belonged to a

policeman. The second group had by this time already started laying buoys on the four extreme points of the site with the hope and intention of laying a boundary. During the course of kelp cutting by divers not required on these projects, new items were discovered including more cannon and a very nice grindstone. The Valentine's anchor was also found. Diving ended at 16.28.

Day 5. (6.6.76)

We left St. Peter Port at 8.30, arriving on site at 9.25 but we had to stop halfway across to recover four £1 notes which were dropped over the side. We commenced diving at 9.27 but took 14 mins. to find the mooring rope (we do not leave a buoy behind as the site is to remain a secret until negotiations for a sea-bed Lease from the Crown are accomplished).

This day saw 8 divers on Scuba Cat with a total dive time of 10 hrs. 02 mins., the main aim being to lay a perimeter line from the low buoys placed previously. This task took much time and was found to be very difficult because diving commenced before slack water and continued well after the tide had turned. Gary's luck continued to be bad - he lost his specs. over the side which were never to be seen again! Diving ended at 16.13.

During the course of these early days many photographs were taken of the object on site.

Day 6. (4.7.76)

We left St. Peter Port at 11.40, arriving on site at 12.45, diving commenced at 13.26.

The original base line had come undone and tangled.



This was refixed and pulled tighter. The main task for the day was to place numbered tags on all the main items on the site, and concrete was placed at intervals on the base line. A very short slack water was noted with the tide running from high to low water. There were 10 divers with a total dive time of 7 hrs. 59 mins.

Day 7. (5.9.76)

Left St. Peter Port at 11.30 on the fishing boat 'Pierre Marie' with 7 divers and a total dive time of 10 hrs. The base line was still intact and the site completely recovered in kelp. Triangulation from the metered base line was carried out but the results proved to be poor.

Day 8. (19.9.76)

Left St. Peter Port at 9.40 and arrived on site at 10.35. Diving commenced at 10.41. There were 8 divers obtaining a total dive time of 10 hrs. 57 mins. The remainder of the objects were triangulated from the base line. Later an excavation of a small area outside the perimeter was undertaken to provide the divers with some experience of the techniques involved, resulting in the recovery of a small amount of pottery.

Day 9. (14.11.76)

Left St. Peter Port at 10.34 arriving on site at 11.25 with 10 divers. A total dive time of 7 hrs 30 mins. was achieved.

During the long interval between days 8 and 9 a mini seminar under the auspices of the Société Guernsesais conducted by Mrs. Margaret Rule of the C.N.A. and Mr.

Dick Larne was held. Surveying techniques were discussed with the result that TRILATERATION superceded TRIANGULATION and all our previous work on triangulation was scrapped.

Trilateration was tried one Sunday morning on the beach. Every participant in the exercise produced a plan and the results were surprizingly convincing.

On Day 9 trilateration was put into practice and all the larger objects on a small area of the site were measured from the set points.

The sea conditions that day were heavy swell and poor visibility. Diving ended at 14.00.

Day 10. (12.12.76)

Left St. Peter Port at 9.35 and arrived on site at 10.35 with 7 divers giving a total dive time of 10 hrs. 28 mins. The reef was edged with numbered white painted stones at intervals of about one metre. The position of each of these stones was trilaterated and a picture of the reef was built up.

The first year is over and we now feel reasonably well acquainted with the site, we are happy with our new surveying technique and we have commenced a site plan showing a portion of the reef, the 'Valentine's' anchor with a cannon beneath it, a further cannon and a grindstone in the gulley.

We expect to start cutting kelp all over again in the Spring of 1977.

During the year several meeting have been held with various representative bodies of the States of Guernsey. On 17th March, 1976 a deputation of the V.E.G. was met

by the Board of Administration, H.M. Comptroller, Guernsey Customs and the Secretary of the Ancient Monuments Committee. At this meeting the aims and objectives of the group were stated and a request made to H.M. Comptroller to investigate the acquisition of a Sea Bed Lease on the area. Since that time these investigations have been in hand and we believe that this Lease should be granted early in 1977.

Application has also been made to the Council for Nautical Archaeology for approval of our project and it is hoped that this too will be granted early in 1977.

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

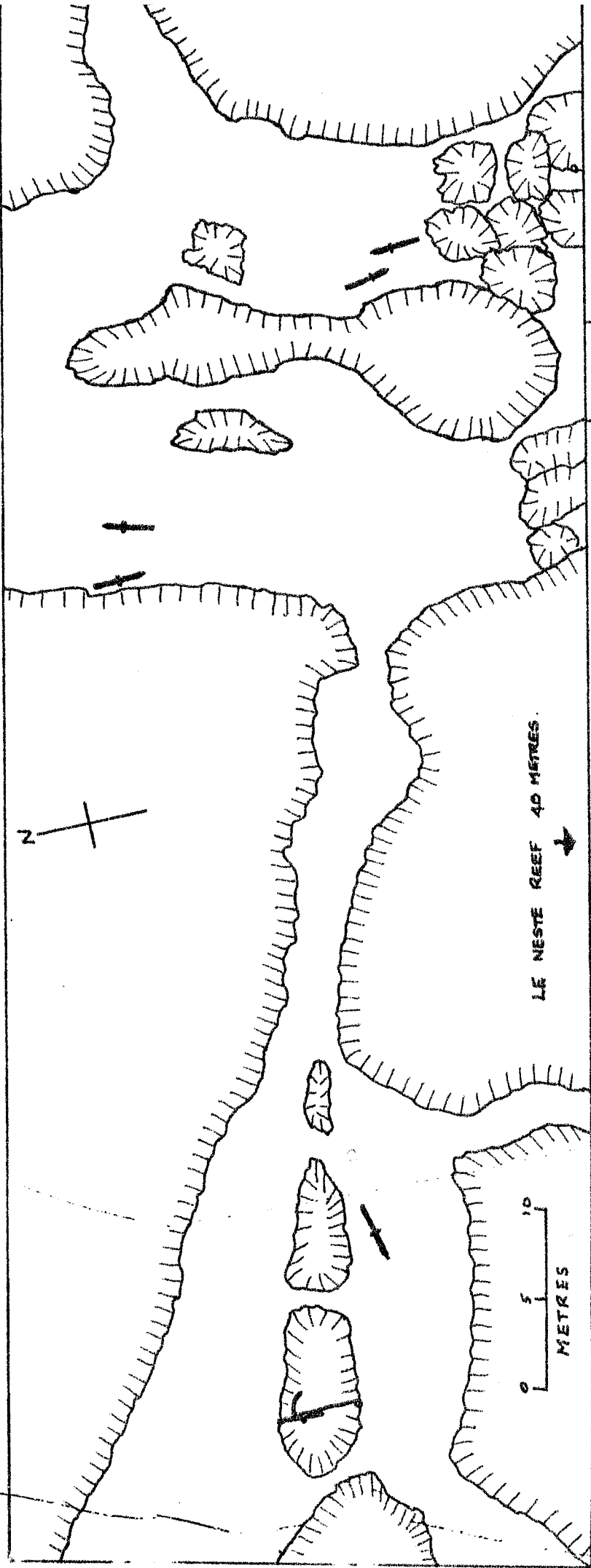
The seabed comprises a mass of rocky gullies, the rocky areas covered in kelp with some gravel lying on the bottom of the gullies.

Due to the size of the tides around the Channel Islands and the close proximity of Brecqhou to Sark, the current is always a problem, with work on the site only possible during neap tides and then only very close to the slack water.

Fortunately the depth of the Valentine at diving time is between 10 to 18 metres, so there have been few decompression problems.

DAY DATE	TIDE	TIME OUT HARBOUR	TIME RETURNED TO HARBOUR	NO. OF DIVERS	TOTAL DIVE TIME	WORK CARRIED OUT
DAY 1 10.4.76	Low 9.53	hrs. 11.00	hrs. 16.30	8	hrs.m. 10.31	Laid line between 4 cannon Kelp cutting
DAY 2 11.4.76	Low 11.03	11.10	16.15	8	11.58	Kelp cutting
DAY 3 19.4.76	Low 17.18	3.40	15.20	10	9.18	Kelp cutting
DAY 4 8.5.76	Low 7.49	8.45	17.28	9	15.22	Laid line through site marked in metres. Laid 4 buoys on corner boundaries.
DAY 5 6.6.76	Low 6.23	8.30	17.30	8	10.02	Perimeter lines laid Kelp cutting
DAY 6 4.7.76	Low 18.27	11.40	18.27	10	7.59	Base line refixed Tag artifacts on bottom
DAY 7 5.9.76	Low 11.37	11.30	14.35	7	10.00	Triangulation of site
DAY 8 19.9.76	Low 9.20	9.40	15.20	8	10.57	Triangulation plus experimental excavation.
DAY 9 14.11.76	High 10.34	10.34	15.10	10	7.30	Trilateration of anchor area
DAY 10 12.12.76	Low 16.03	9.35	14.20	7	10.28	Trilateration of reef near anchor





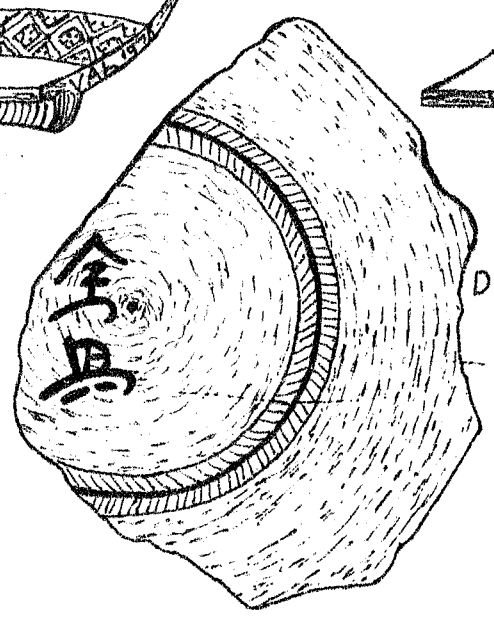
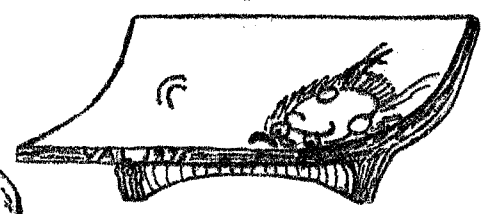
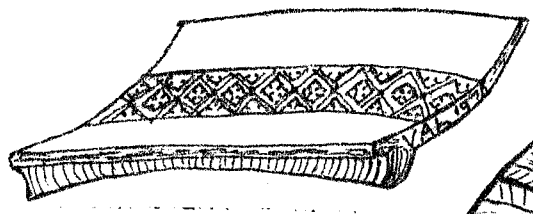
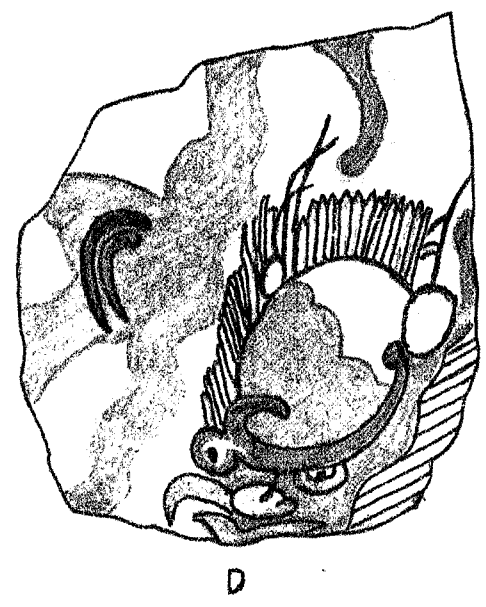
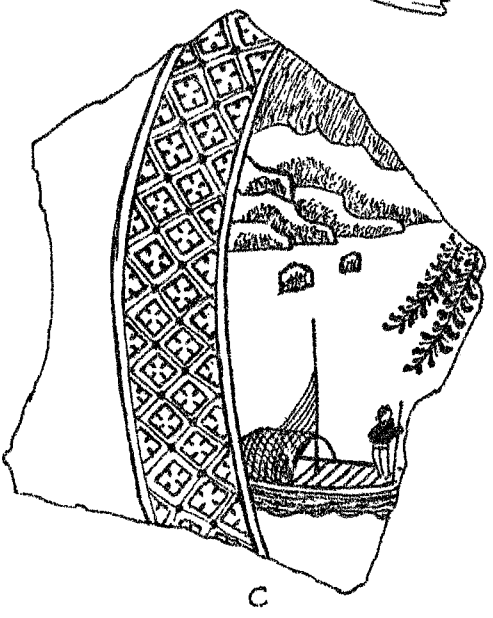
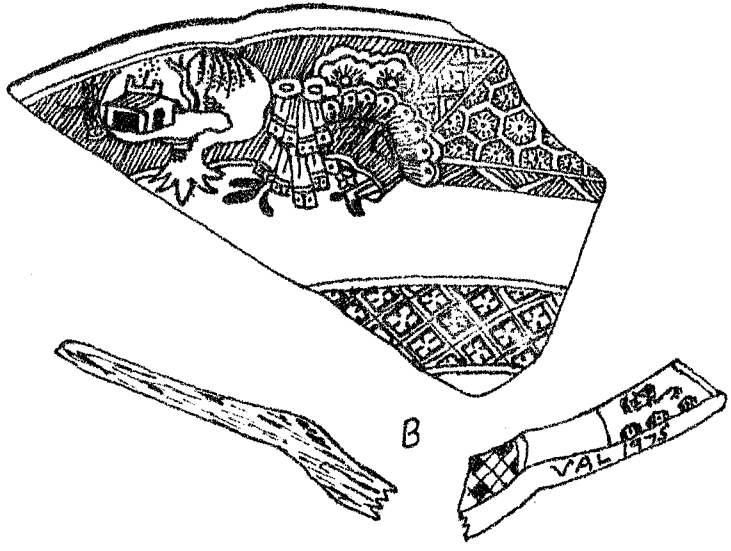
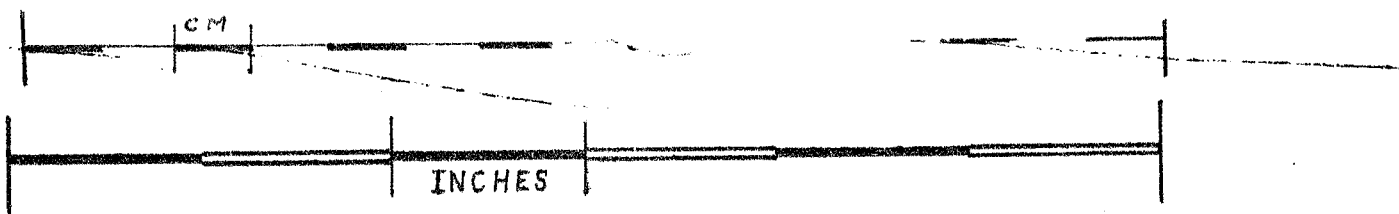
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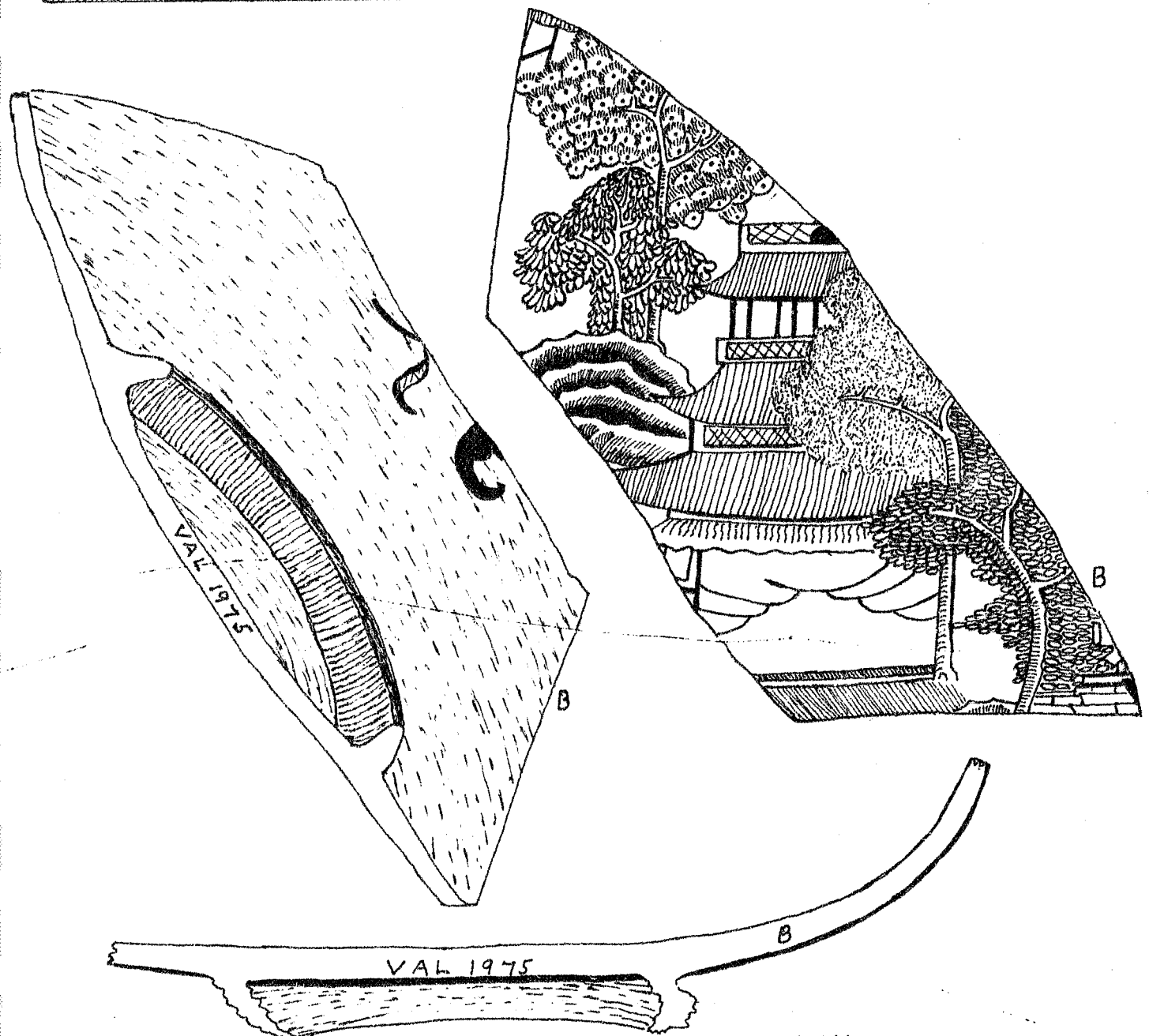
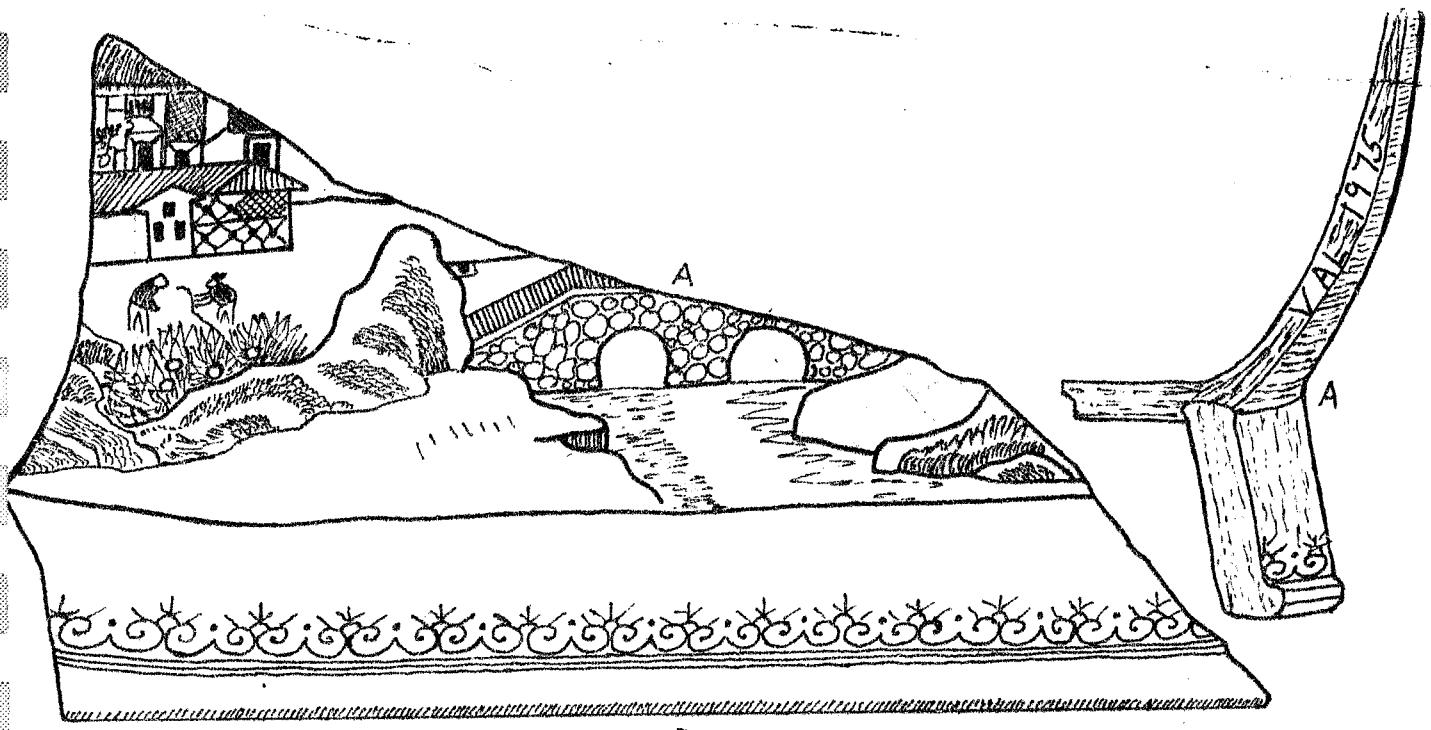
▨ REEF

SKETCH MAP OF WRECK SITE

JUNE 1976.

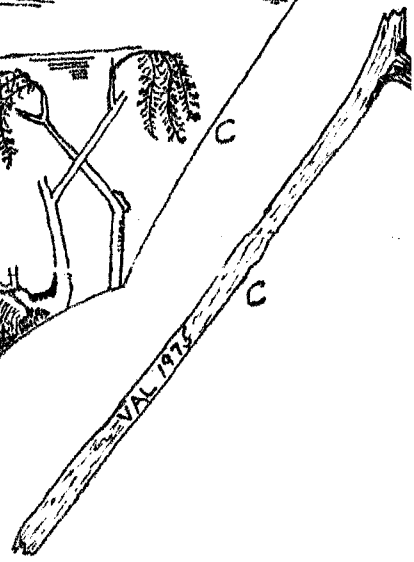
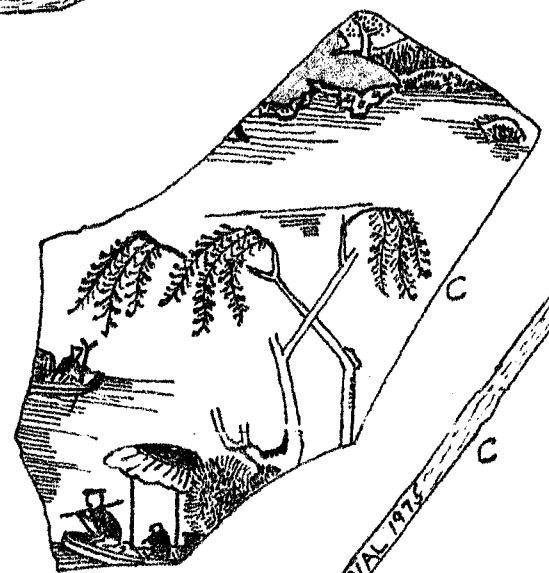
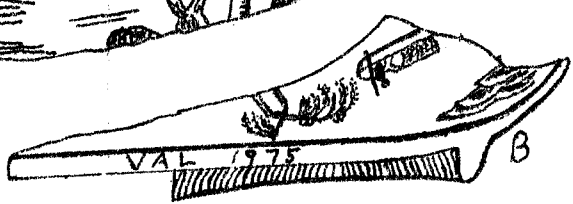
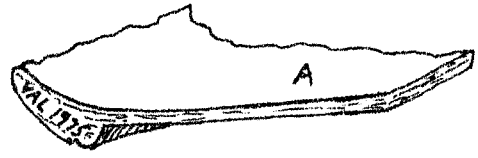
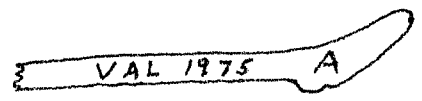
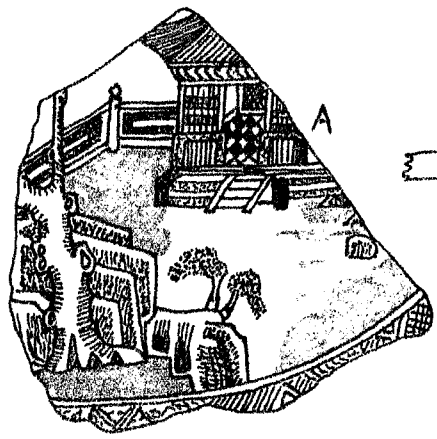
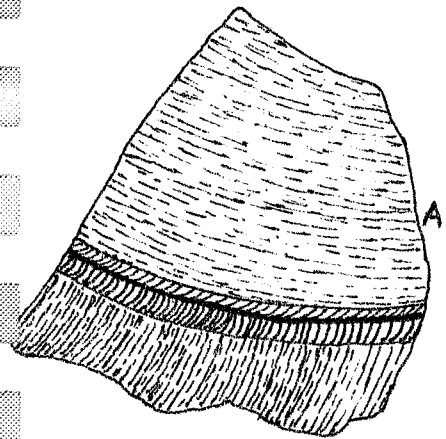
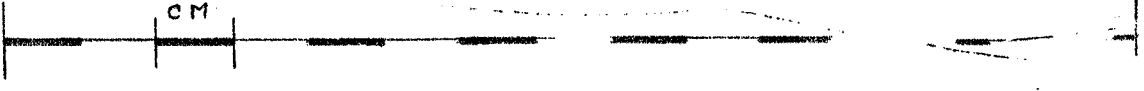


FRAGMENTS OF CHINESE  
PORCELAIN  
ACTUAL SIZE (A) (B) (C) (D)



FRAGMENTS OF CHINESE PORCELAIN  
 ACTUAL SIZE (A) (B)

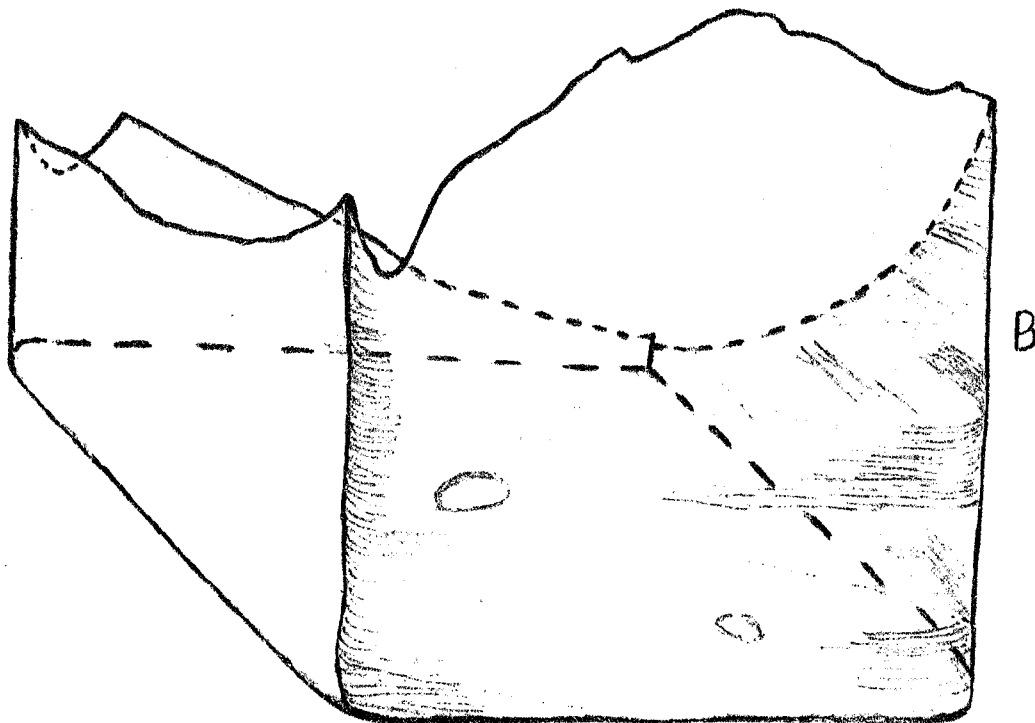
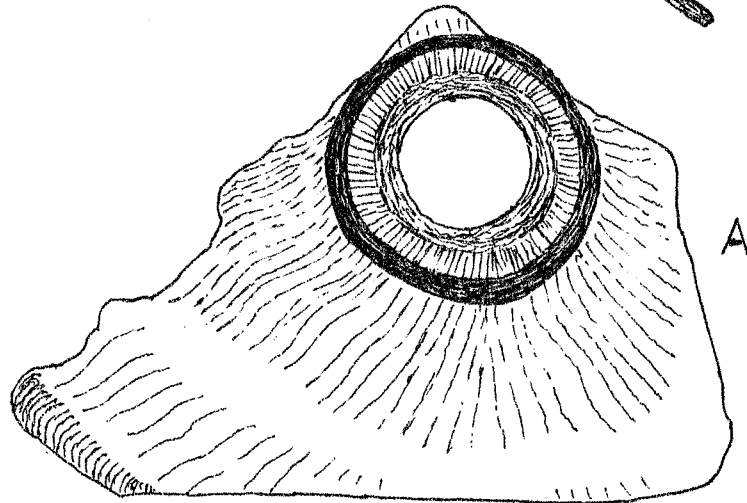
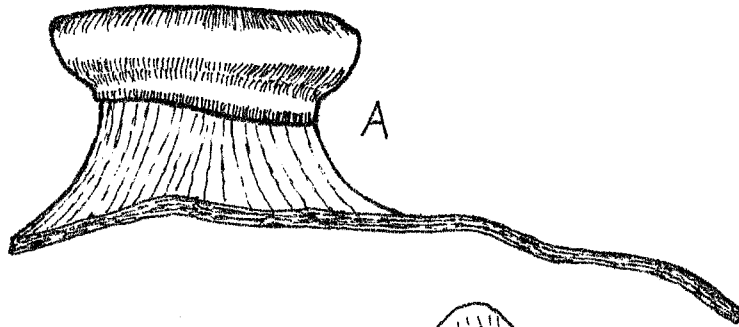
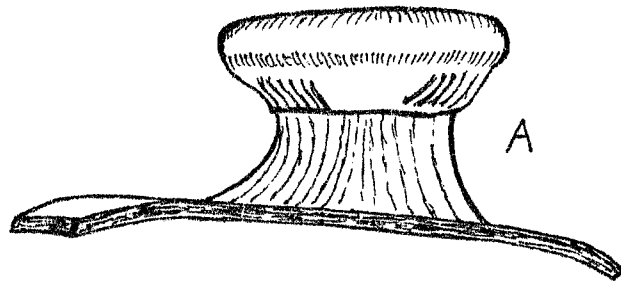




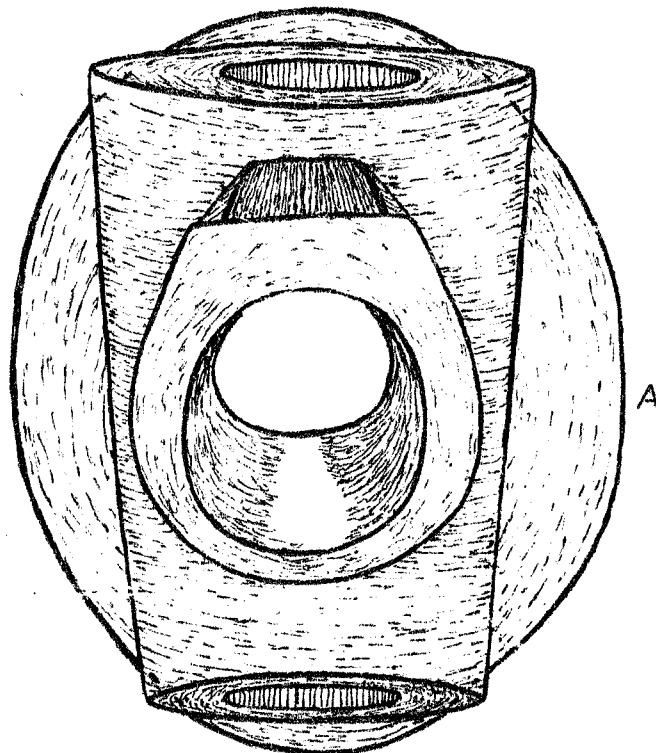
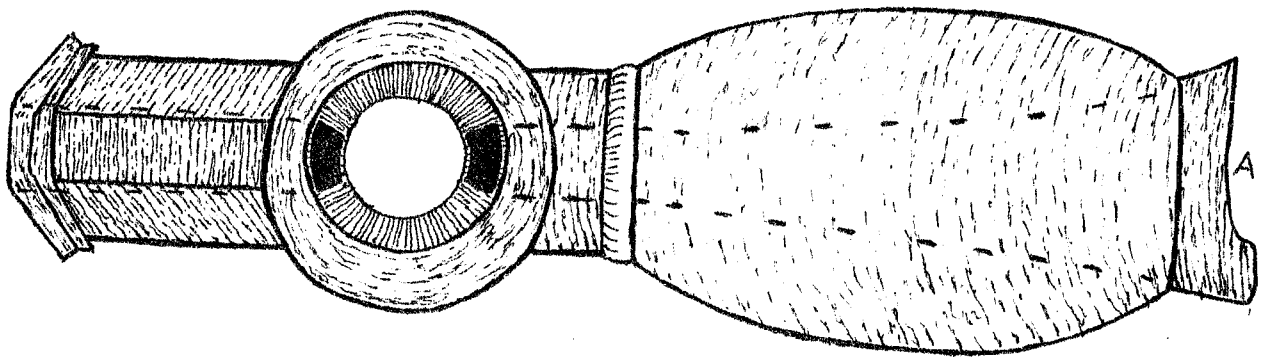
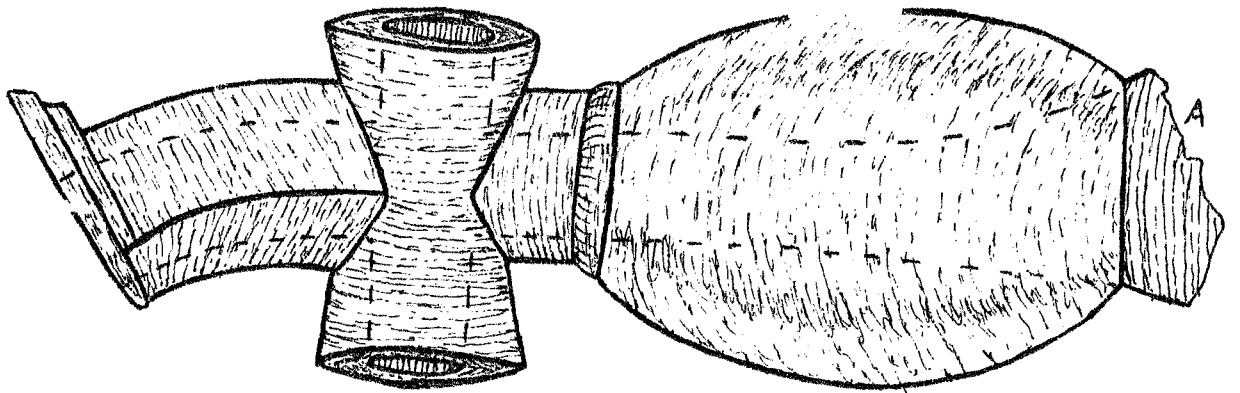
FRAGMENTS OF CHINESE PORCELAIN  
ACTUAL SIZE (A) (B) (C)

FRAGMENTS OF A TOWEL BOTTLE

7/12



BROWN TAP SIZE



## CONCLUSION

Much has been learned during the first year's work, both above and below water, and we look forward to 1977 with the knowledge that we now have a workable system of surveying and easy access to the advice of experts in the field of Nautical Archaeology.

Produced by: The Valentine Excavation Group 1976.

Drawings by: H. Carre.