

This image of what is said to be Sydney's boat is baffling to even the casual observer, for the following reasons. The nearer boat appears to have lost all of its outer paint work yet the painted badge remains quite clear and unaffected by so many years submerged in salt water, like the whaler in the background which has lost all of its outer skin, but its crest too is picture perfect. This is very important as it's the only real clue to the ship's claimed identity, or is it? According to FSF it is claimed as such.

In archaeological terms these boats could be completely separate from the wreck photographs.

The nearer boat is difficult to identify with any of Sydney's equipment. It is not a whaler, its not any of the motorboats, not the gig or th 32 foot cutter. The round metal fitting near the front would suggest a motorboat as shown elsewhere, but this boat has a square deck which the motor boat does not. It appears to be carvel built, as were many naval boats, judging by the diagonal inner planking. The horizontal planking of the outer skin appears to have all vanished leaving only the inner diagonal skin still intact. But that cannot be correct either, because the top of the diagonal skin runs toward the stern of the boat, not the bow, as in this case. This looks like the stern of a boat as well, as the pintles for the rudder can just be seen faintly, one near the top and one lower down. So if this is the stern of the boat why is there a crest there? Why is the crest still intact when the outer skin has all gone?

The other boat shown in these photographs is obviously a whaler and it too has lost its outer skin but leaves an all too easily recognizable, nicely painted crest (for identification purposes). However, other boats seem to have lost their crests somehow. However, both boats have been digitally modified as can be clearly seen, which makes one wonder what it was that was necessary to delete? Having been deleted, it also puts the other photographs in a different light, can we trust any of them?

I asked the FSF Digital Manager Richard Sojka and Ted Graham why they had been altered – both denied that they had anything done to them, but a few days later when I looked again at the website, it appeared that further alterations had been made and the changes were not so obvious, although still visible.