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RSC/ERDF Lecture

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The Mary Rose: Preserving An Old Wreck With Nanoscience

Professor Alan Chadwick
University of Kent

The Mary Rose was built in 1509 and, after an illustrious career she sank in Portsmouth Harbour in 1545 following a confrontation with the French fleet. She remained on the seabed until she was re-discovered in 1967 and raised in 1982. A large fraction of the wreck's hull was recovered, conserved and is currently on exhibition to the public in a new purpose-built museum. The ship, along with the associated 20,000 artifacts, represent a unique insight into Tudor life and are a national treasure. The conservators at the Mary Rose Trust were faced with a wide range of problems when embarking on the conservation project. The trust has collaborated with a team of scientists at the University of Kent, including Professor Chadwick. The team focused on a specific problem, termed the 'sulfur problem'. The team's work involves a wide range of techniques, particularly synchrotron radiation at the Diamond Light Source, and has determined a possible nanomaterial solution to the sulfur problem.



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