

Assessment of the diatom community in sediment cores taken from the HMS Beagle

Client: Dr Robert Prescott
Project duration: 2 months



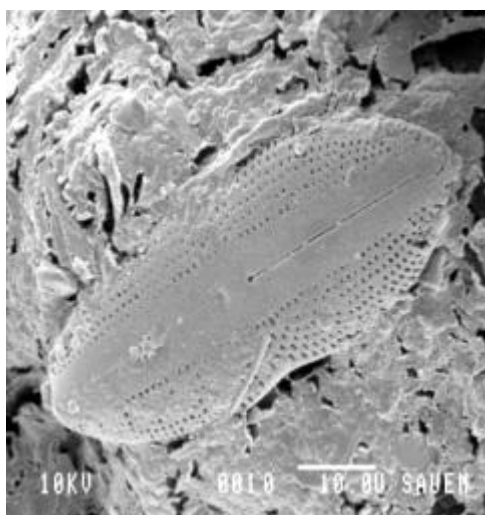
Project description:

Following historical and cartographic research, it is thought that the HMS Beagle ended her career in a mud berth on the margins of the River Roach in Essex. Ground-penetrating radar survey has located a large anomaly of a size and shape that would be consistent with the dimensions of the Beagle. As a way of assessing whether this is indeed the Beagle, sediment cores were taken from the site (to include the sediments from the bilges), and an assessment of the diatom community was made. The diatom community *may* provide evidence of a history of Pacific voyaging. The objective of

this investigation was to obtain core material from the proposed site of the Beagle for biological, Geotechnical and archaeological evaluation.

Key elements:

Within this programme, SERG:ES examined sediment from cored material under a Scanning Electron Microscope. A number of diatom species were found, and also an area of decaying wood that may have been part of the ship itself. Dr Emma Defew and Professor David Paterson presented results and a discussion of the material found on BBC Radio 2.



An SEM image of a diatom frustule found from the Beagle cores
