



Brent Brisben, left and with Staff Archaeologist, Jim Sinclair, right at the 1715 Fleet—Queen’s Jewels, LLC first annual Subcontractors’ Meeting in Sebastian, FL on 5 March 2011.

SALVAGE RIGHTS TO 1715 WRECK SITES SOLD!

PRESS RELEASE. Sebastian and Key West, FL. 7 July 2010: Fisher Family Passes the Treasure Salvage Torch— Taffi Fisher Abt, President of Mel Fisher Center, Inc. —and the rest of the Fisher family— decided it’s time to pass the torch of the 1715 fleet salvage rights awarded by the State of Florida in the early 1980s. Taffi, who has been in charge of the management of these submerged cultural resources for the last twenty-seven years stated that she would be staying on as a part time consultant to the new owners for a couple of years. She intends to spend her newly acquired free time completing the biography of her mother, Dolores Fisher, which was nearly finished when “Deo” passed in January of 2009. She will also continue to work on a digital archive of the history of modern day shipwreck salvage and resource management.

Brent Brisben, son of the new owner **William Brisben**, a successful real estate developer from Cincinnati and a former U.S. ambassador to UNICEF, will be the project manager for the continuation of the salvage operations of the 1715 fleet. The terms for the sale are confidential, however it was disclosed that of the many offers received for the shipwreck salvage rights, the Brisben family’s offer was chosen by the Fisher family even though they were not the highest offer. Instead they were chosen for their business experience, enthusiasm, and sincerity to continue the long term successful salvage operation into the future. The **Mel Fisher Center, Inc.** still maintains the fantastic treasure museum located at 1322 U.S. Highway One in Sebastian, FL which is managed by Mel Fisher’s granddaughter **Nichole Abt**.

The Fisher family is also considering some other extremely exciting projects that look very promising. **William Moore**, long time employee and friend of the Fisher family continues to operate the artifact conservation laboratory in the same location for the Brisbens’ company, **1715 Fleet Queen’s Jewels, LLC**. New project manager Brent Brisben will continue to work with the sub-contractors in the same manner the Fishers did and with a new plan that has already proved to be successful. Subcontractor **Greg Bounds** of Gold Hound, LLC has already brought up a gold rimmed locket, a gold doubloon, five silver coins, and a gold ring.* The sale of these salvage rights pertains to the 1715 Fleet only and is not related to any other projects in which Mel Fisher’s family is involved. For Further Information, contact: Nichole Abt / 1322 US #1 / Sebastian, Florida 32958 / (772) 589-9875 / Fax (772) 589-0997.

In Response to Media Inquiries:

“My name is **Sean Fisher** and I am the Vice President here at Mel Fisher’s Treasures in Key West. The deal is complete, pending approval from the federal courts. The reason for the sale is that Mel Fisher’s Treasures, Inc. is taking an aggressive approach

to a number of new projects and simply can't keep up with all of the sites on the 1715 fleet. There are definitely a couple of big piles of treasure still out there from the plate fleet, and it was a painstaking decision to sell the sites that got us started in this business, but we have a plan for the future which has us moving into deeper water projects and we had to choose where to put our resources. I think this is going to be great for all involved. **Queen's Jewels LLC** is made up of some respected and experienced historic shipwreck salvage individuals who we know will do the sites justice and bring up the rest of the treasure that is out there ... and Mel Fisher's Treasures has still retained a small interest in any future finds on the sites. This gives us the opportunity to go out and find some other new and exciting shipwrecks."

Wednesday, 07 July 2010. In the News Release above, the Mel Fisher family officially announces that the transfer of ownership to the salvage rights on the 1715 treasure fleet is completed, pending approval by federal courts.

QUEEN'S JEWELS, LLC's First Season Off To A Great Start:

Sunday, 11 July 2010. The crew of the salvage vessel *Gold Hound*, including its captain, Greg Bounds, first diver Chas Francoviglia, and contractor Brent Brisben of Queen's Jewels LLC, returned to the golden site off Indian River Shores and recovered a small fortune in gold and silver coins and other Spanish artifacts. In addition to a four-foot bronze swivel cannon (which is a rare find on this fleet), the crew logged in some twenty gold 2-escudo coins. The coins, in the days of the Spanish Main, were commonly called "doubloons", a name which is today also applied to the larger, one-ounce gold coins of 8-escudo denomination. This assemblage of doubloons contains mostly output from the colonial mint in Colombia, which the divers call "Bogies" —a reference to the mint at Bogotá. But, one is a beautifully executed piece dated 1698 from the one-year minting at Cuzco, Peru.

Friday, 16 July 2010. Meanwhile, back at the preservation laboratory, Chief Conservator Bill Moore, while cleaning the swivel gun in preparation for further treatment, removed a clump of encrusted matter from its breech. The breech, minus its block, had been filled ca. 1715 with at least 38 silver four- and eight-*reales* coins and ... at least 25 more gold two-*escudo* pieces! (Contraband of the best kind!) I am told that the muzzle and barrel are also packed with encrustation ... yet to be cleaned out.

THURSDAY, 22 July 2010. The total amount of gold and silver coins found concreted in the "treasure cannon" comes to 25 gold 2-*escudos* and 38 silvers in 8- and 4-*reales* denominations. Added to the coins found on 11 July which had spilled out, plus the few found in the same area with the gold locket and chain in June, comes to the grand sum in gold of: $1 + 22 + 25 = 48$ 2Es (the one "doubloon" recovered in June is a 1714 or 15 Mexican piece); and the silvers amount to: $5 + 17 + 38 = 60$ 8Rs and 4Rs. This is the finest example of contraband from the treasure fleet of 1715 yet to be identified as such and ... confirmation of the rumors that Spaniards (and pirates) hid booty in their big guns! [All information above excerpted from *PLVS VLTRA Newsletter*, 3rd-Quarter 2010]

SUNDAY, 15 August 2010. Working from their salvage boat *GOLD HAWG*, the daughter and mother team of **Bonnie and Jo Schubert** recovered a unique shipwreck artifact from the remains of what is believed to be *Nuestra Señora de las Nieves* but is more commonly known as the Douglass Beach Wreck ... off Fort Pierce. Standing 5-1/2 inches tall and weighing 177 grams of 22k gold, this solid gold bird was at first thought to be an eagle, but it has preliminarily been ID'd as a "Pelican in Piety"—a figure with religious histories. Bonnie Schubert will be presenting more detail during her session here at the "Frogfoot" Seminars. [Details of this find borrowed from *PLVS VLTRA Newsletter*, 1st-Quarter 2011]



<< THE "GOLD HOUNDS."
Posing in the Lab at MFC
with their Bronze Swivel Gun
(L-R): Greg Bounds, Tony
Gill, Jeff Croy, and Chas
Francoviglia

FOTO:
Bill Moore

ONE BIRD IN THE HAND. >>
Bonnie Schubert surfaces with
a solid gold 22-karat gold bird
"statuette" ... and a grin!



FOTO: Jo Schubert