

SDFSFA bulletin - January 2006

A service to members of the SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA

Working to develop the sport of Scuba diving in SA

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Welcome to this first issue of our “SDFSFA bulletin”. We are publishing this electronic bulletin as a separate publication to our normal monthly SDF News Sheet. Future issues of this “SDFSFA bulletin” will include lengthy articles about overseas matters of interest to recreational divers. We welcome contributions from our readers.

If you don’t have the time to read through everything in this news sheet, take advantage of the following table of contents. Click on any item of interest to proceed straight to that section.

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RAPID BAY JETTY UPDATE

As reported in our January news sheet, the Advertiser’s “Watch” on the jetty has now reached its 30th week. The newspaper reports that anglers have cut through the security fencing on the jetty and are continuing to fish from the closed section of the jetty. It had been hoped that the State Government would make some kind of announcement regarding the future of the jetty before last Christmas but that turned out to be wishful thinking. The various lobby groups are now turning up the pressure once more. Our Federation has sent yet another letter to Pat Conlon, Minister for Transport. Copies of the letter were sent to all Ministers and the opposition. In our letter we said: -
“We understand that your Government has indicated that it wishes to either repair or replace the Rapid Bay jetty. We are also aware that a feasibility study has been undertaken to determine a range of possible options regarding the future of the jetty and the associated costs.

We hope that a decision will be made soon regarding the favoured options and that these will be made known to all stakeholders and the general public.

We trust that Cabinet will then be able to approve the funding required for the work to go ahead.

An appropriate jetty platform is needed at Rapid Bay to allow anglers, divers and tourists the access that they need to enjoy their interests. The high regard for the location is well documented. It is imperative that this situation is quickly resolved. As you are aware, the jetty is significant to the many thousands of anglers who used this jetty annually and as a world-renowned dive site with its unique marine environment, harbours a diverse range of marine fauna and flora, the Leafy Seadragon in particular.

As we stated in a previous letter, South Australia cannot afford to lose an important infrastructure item such as the Rapid Bay jetty. Its loss would have significant economic,

social and environmental implications to the State.”

INQUIRIES INTO THE STATE OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

As reported in our January news sheet, an environmental inquiry to investigate the continuing degradation of Gulf St Vincent was kicked off with a hearing held in Adelaide during December. The hearing was attended by marine biologists, councils, community groups and residents. Ongoing problems such as seagrass loss, erosion and pollution were discussed. The Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee is to recommend ways of stepping up protection for the gulf this year. The Committee is inviting public submissions which should be lodged by 1st March 2006 by email to ecita.sen@aph.gov.au. Information and advice on preparing a submission are available on the Committee’s website at: -

www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/ecita_ctte/inquiries.htm. Any other queries should be directed to the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 3526. The committee’s report is due by 30th November 2006.

A Senate Inquiry into Gulf St Vincent was held late in 1999. Steve Reynolds wrote about this in his article “Inquiries Into The State Of The Marine Environment” published in the MLSSA Journal (No.11), December 2000. The article can be read on the Marine Life Society of SA web site at <http://www.mlssa.asn.au>. The Marine Life Society of SA wrote a submission to the inquiry, saying that “there had already been innumerable studies and inquiries but nothing much had ever been done as a result of them”. Steve’s Journal article said that between 1960 and 1996 “Almost 60 Government reports and inquiries have examined Australia’s coastal zone”. The article went on to detail several reviews and inquiries between 1990 and 1999. When the results of the Senate Inquiry into Gulf St Vincent were published in June 2000, the report seemed to back Steve’s statement that nothing much is ever done as a result of the numerous studies and inquiries. And now we have yet another inquiry!

It’s no wonder that the gulf is suffering. At a recent hearing about the closed Mobil oil refinery at Lonsdale, a former consultant to Exxon Mobil spoke of environmental damage within the refinery. He had witnessed bitumen on rocks along the foreshore, effluent spewing from a large broken pipe on the foreshore, abundant algal growth and dead shellfish adjacent to the broken effluent pipe, soil contaminated with hydrocarbons in a northern dump, open sludge ponds and a slick that often extended from near the refinery wharf less than 100m offshore. Steve wrote another Journal article – “The Occurrence of Oil and Chemical Spills in SA’s Marine Waters”, MLSSA Journal (No.9), December 1998. This too can be viewed on the Marine Life Society of SA web site at <http://www.mlssa.asn.au>.

ADELAIDE COASTAL WATERS STUDY

The Adelaide Coastal Waters study into the mysterious loss of coastal seagrass is near completion. The study investigated the rapid decline in coastal water quality and *Amphibolis* (wire weed or ‘sea nymph’) loss. Scientists and technicians met in Adelaide in early December to review findings. A final report is due to be completed in July. Details about the Adelaide Coastal Waters Study were given in the State Government’s publication “Living Coast Strategy for South Australia – Executive Summary 2004” and the accompanying CD “Living Coast Strategy for South Australia”. The CD contains

much more information than the Executive Summary. According to the summary, “The *Living Coast Strategy* sets out the State Government’s environmental policy directions for sustainable management of South Australia’s coastal, estuarine and marine environments”. Objective 3 of the strategy is “To control pollution of our coastal, estuarine and marine environments”. Details about this objective mention the Adelaide Coastal Waters Study – “A comprehensive risk assessment is required to identify and prioritise pollution risks to coastal, estuarine and marine environments at risk from pollution, leading to effective management, remediation and a clear focus by Government and industry. The EPA has established the Adelaide Coastal Waters Study in response to a number of major environmental concerns about the coastal waters near Adelaide. The study is focusing on seagrass loss, seafloor instability and water quality degradation resulting from large scale modification of the coast and discharges into eastern Gulf St Vincent. It will provide new knowledge and understanding to chemical, physical and biological processes to support sustainable management options. It will identify key threatening processes and options to minimise impacts. The study will also provide a program to assess the effectiveness of management actions (including monitoring program) and strategies to communicate results”. Actions to be taken in order to achieve the above were to: -

Identify and prioritise risks to the coastal, estuarine and marine environments from pollution; and

Implement the findings of the Adelaide Coastal Waters Study.

Copies of the “Living Coast Strategy for South Australia – Executive Summary 2004” and the accompanying CD “Living Coast Strategy for South Australia” are available for loan through the SDF.

MORE ON MIDGET SUBMARINE

As reported in our January news sheet, the mystery surrounding the missing third Japanese midget submarine that attacked Sydney Harbour during WWII continues. In the meantime, some interesting aspects of the attack are surfacing, if you pardon the pun. For example, the *Yandra* which was wrecked on South Neptune Island in 1959 played a major part in the story. According to the web page

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_on_Sydney_Harbour : -

“At the inner entrance to the harbour there was an semi-completed antitorpedo net, between George's Head on Middle Head, and Green Point on Inner South Head. The centre part of the net, including boom gates, was complete but there were gaps at each end. The net had gates to allow vessels to enter and leave the harbour. The anti-submarine vessel HMAS *Yandra* on duty patrolling near the harbour entrance and a similar vessel, HMAS *Bingera*, was on stand-by at the Naval Anchorage in Woolloomooloo. The minesweepers HMAS *Goonabee* and HMAS *Samuel Benbow* were located in Watson's Bay. Six channel patrol boats armed with depth charges and four unarmed auxiliary patrol boats were also on duty in the vicinity of the boom gates. Midget No. 21 entered the harbour after Midget "A". At 10.52pm, the crew of the unarmed auxiliary patrol boat *Lauriana* spotted Midget No. 21's conning tower above the surface and signalled HMAS *Yandra*. Just after 10.54pm, *Yandra* attempted to ram the sub, near Taylor's Bay, and at 11.07pm *Yandra* dropped six depth charges. These caused

serious damage to Midget No. 21 and the crew of Lieutenant Keiu Matsuo and Petty Officer Masao Tsuzuku committed suicide with their handguns to avoid capture.”

And according to the web page at

<http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/midgetsub/doc.htm> : -

The available harbour defence craft were the anti-submarine vessels *Yandra* (one 4-inch gun and 31 depth-charges) and *Bingera*, *Yandra* being on duty patrolling within the indicator loop area while *Bingera* was "stand off" ship, lying at No. 7 Buoy in the Naval Anchorage.”

And;

“While *Midget A* was thus creating excitement in the harbour, *Midget No. 21*, from I 22, was entering the Heads. She did not at this time reach the effective loop, so no loop indicator signature was then recorded by her, but at 10.52 p.m. the naval auxiliary patrol boat *Lauriana*, on duty in the loop area with *Yandra*, sighted "a flurry on the water" ahead. She illuminated with her searchlight *Midget 21's* conning tower 60 to 80 feet distant, and being unarmed she signalled Port War Signal Station and *Yandra*. At 10.54 *Yandra* sighted the submarine's conning tower at a distance of 400 yards, three cables 28 degrees from Hornby Light. She tried to ram the enemy "which appeared 100 yards astern, damaged, and slowly turning to starboard". Contact was lost, but was regained by sighting at 600 yards five minutes later, and at 11.07 *Yandra* attacked with a pattern of six depth-charges. "Submarine was not seen after explosions.””

ONLY KNOWN SUBMARINE WRECK SITE IN NSW

What is the only known submarine wreck site in NSW and what connection does it have with the M24 Japanese midget sub?

The former Royal Netherlands (Dutch) Navy (RNN) submarine *K-IX* (K9) is the only reported submarine wreck site in NSW. It was built in 1922 at the K.M.de Shelde yard at Flushing, Holland. With the Japanese advancing on Java in 1942, the *K-IX* escaped to Fremantle and was subsequently based at Sydney. The *K-IX* submarine was later commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy.

And the link to the Japanese midget sub? The *K-IX* was extensively damaged when a torpedo fired from the Japanese midget submarine passed underneath it and destroyed the ex-ferry *Kuttabul* during the submarine raid of 31st May 1942. The *K-IX* submarine became an expensive liability requiring constant servicing. Finally paid off in 1944, the hull was converted to carry diesel oil. The 64m- long (210') vessel ran ashore on 8th June 1945 after slipping the tow of its transport, the RNN *Abraham Crijnsen*, on a voyage to Brisbane. It ran ashore on the desolate Fiona Beach, south of Seal Rocks, NSW. For more information about this visit

http://www.dutchsubmarines.com/specials/special_kix_abraham_crijnsen.htm .

The wreck was bought at auction on 20th July 1945 for £985 but overall salvage attempts failed. On 14th January 1977 that part of Fiona Beach was officially renamed Submarine Beach to recall the lost vessel. The sub was first re-located in 1999 by Tim Smith*, a maritime archaeologist with the NSW Heritage Office, when it was completely buried under sand. At that time, the structure was lying buried under an additional 2m of beach sand and detected with a magnetometer. It briefly appeared in mid-2000 when a portion of a vertical semi-circular casing was partially exposed, but it had not been exposed to the

current extent since 1974 when the submarine became similarly washed out during a gale. The Heritage Office released a Conservation Management Plan for the *K-IX* in 2000, and Ross Gillett, Regional Director Defence Public Affairs NSW, published a running story in "Australian Warship Review". Heritage Office investigations revealed a wealth of information on the submarine including a range of historic photographs maintained in private collections. Such a collection in WA included photographs taken by the two men who obtained salvage rights to the abandoned boat in 1945. Ex-crew, such as Commodore Bryan Cleary RAN Rtd and Harry Churchill RAN Rtd, were tracked down. The Heritage Office has a long-standing interest in documenting naval shipwreck sites, maintaining a database of losses, scuttlings and abandonments in NSW's waters, and with periodic searches for the missing third Japanese midget submarine.

The *K-IX* was exposed once more (in 2001?) following king tides in the area. A large section was exposed, allowing maritime archaeologists from the NSW Heritage Office a new opportunity to study it. Strong tidal activity removed a considerable portion of sand covering the *K-IX*, allowing the Heritage Office to obtain some additional photographs of the hull.

*Tim Smith was also engaged in *PROJECT AE2* - the Australian team that travelled to Turkey in 1997 and 1998 and documented the significant *AE2* E-class Australian boat lost during the Dardanelles Campaign on 30th April 1915.

DISPLAY OF DEAD SEA ARTIFACTS

According to Meir Ronnen, in the article titled "Dead Sea anchors were carefully designed", two remarkably well-preserved wooden anchors more than 2000 years old were discovered recently on the shores of the Dead Sea. These two anchors are now on display opposite the bookshop at the Israel Museum. They are both on loan from the Israel Antiquities Authority. The anchors are being displayed along with 1400 tiny Hellenist bronze coins from 80BC. They were probably dropped from a Hasmonean ship near the edge of the Dead Sea. The tiny coins are a reminder that the trade routes also had to be defended. They were found near the naval complex of towers and slipways constructed near the northern end of the Dead Sea during the reign of Alexander Yannai. They are just part of a hoard of tens of thousands of coins that may have been intended to be payment for mercenaries defending the area against the Nabateans, who were menacing the eastern and southern shores of the Dead Sea. Each coin features a two-armed anchor and the Greek inscription of King Alexander on one side. The reverse side of the coins has an eight-rayed star and the words "Jonathan the King" (the king's Hebrew name was Yonatan). Also on display is a copy of a mosaic map depicting ships sailing the Dead Sea. The original mosaic, with its clear plan of the *Cardo* in Jerusalem, decorated the floor of a 6th-century Byzantine church at Madaba in Jordan. As for the two well-preserved wooden anchors more than 2000 years old, over the last few decades, Israel's diversion of water from Lake Kinneret into the national water carrier has caused the progressive drop in the level of the Dead Sea, reducing its size by nearly half. The receding waters uncovered the two wooden anchors, which were spotted by an archaeologist called Dr. Gideon Hadas during a stroll along the shore. One of the anchors is approximately 2,500 years old. It was found where the Ein Gedi harbor was once located and it may have been used by the Jews of biblical Ein Gedi. It is in an astonishing state of preservation and it still had some of its ropes attached to it. The oldest Dead Sea

anchor known, it was made from the trunk of an acacia tree, with one of its branches sharpened to a point and originally reinforced with metal, to engage the seabed. Amazingly enough, most of the trunk is still covered in bark. The 12.5m-long ropes were made from date-palm fibres, each fashioned from three strands and lashed into grooves in the wood. The other anchor is some 2000 years old. It was constructed according to the best Roman technology and probably belonged to a large craft used by one of the rulers of Judea. As the sea recedes further, we may yet get to see the ship which this anchor belonged to. The anchor originally weighed a massive 130kg and it is made from a Jujube tree. It was reinforced with lead, iron and bronze. While the wooden parts are very well preserved, its metal parts have disappeared almost entirely. Their traces have survived only in the crystals encasing the anchor. The design of the anchor is surprisingly modern. There are two flukes, which were reinforced with a hook joint and a wooden plate fixed with wooden pegs, and a lead collar. The anchor also had a trip line, which was used to haul it out of the water. Both anchors were weighted with a heavy stone lashed laterally. So it appears that the Dead Sea was once very much alive, a bustling trade route in ancient times. Ships carried salt, asphalt and agricultural goods, says David Mevorah, Curator of Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Periods and curator of the special exhibit. David says that the lack of oxygen in the Dead Sea water preserved the wood of the anchors. All that normally remains of ancient anchors found in the Mediterranean is their metal parts. The wooden elements are normally rotted away.

Many thanks to Neville Skinner for his assistance with the above article.

BOATING SAFETY TIPS

Marine Safety Victoria recommends the following simple boating safety tips for boaties to follow: -

- Lifejackets save lives – wear a lifejacket when boating alone, crossing bars, in bad weather, at night, if you are a weak swimmer and in an emergency;
- Always let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return;
- Ensure you have the correct safety equipment;
- Know how to use the safety equipment, ensure it is in good condition and readily accessible in the event of an emergency;
- Make sure your boat is properly maintained, the battery is fully charged and a supply of fuel is onboard;
- Seek up-to-date local knowledge;
- Operate at a safe speed and maintain a good lookout;
- Stay with your boat if in trouble;
- Don't drink alcohol while boating.

The Scuba Divers Federation of SA is a member of the following: -

Sport SA (SA Sports Federation Inc.)

Recreation SA

Recreation SA's Adventure Activity Standards Working Committee for Snorkelling, Scuba and Aquatic Wildlife Tours

SARFAC (SA Recreational Fishing Advisory Council)
Fleurieu Reef Management Committee (Ex-HMAS *Hobart*)
TRAIL COMMITTEES - SA Trails Coordinating Committee (Office of Recreation & Sport) and Port Noarlunga Reef Underwater Trail South Australian Trails

The SDF's sponsors are: -

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Contact the Federation's Secretary on info@sdfsa.net to be included on the mailing list for this electronic bulletin.

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