

SDFSFA Bulletin November 2007

This bulletin is provided as 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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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 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 bulletin, take advantage of the following table of contents. Click on any item of interest to proceed straight to that section.

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NSW DIVER LOST ON *IRON KNIGHT*

According to the web pages found at

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/10/29/2072693.htm> and

<http://eden.yourguide.com.au/news/local/general/eden-water-police-assist-at-scene-of-divers-tragic-death/1079069.html>, a 42-yr old diver from the dive exploration group,

Sydney Project, lost his life during a technical dive on the iron ore carrier, *SS Iron Knight*, in waters off Bermagui, NSW on 27th October. The *Iron Knight**, which was sunk by Japanese submarine I.21 on 8th February 1943, is located in 130m of water, eight nautical miles off Bermagui. The male diver had had some equipment problems at around 70m and, despite his buddy's repeated attempts to control his buoyancy and re-establish his breathing, he and his buddy sank to the bottom in approximately 125m of water.

Further attempts by his buddy and another Sydney Project diver failed to re-establish the man's breathing and consciousness, and could not achieve positive buoyancy. The two divers struggled to hold onto their unconscious colleague in strong currents but were beginning their ascent without him, when their bottom time expired. For them to stay longer than the 20 minutes maximum at that depth, it would have put them in extreme

danger. The two divers had to make a 3½-hr long ascent to the surface during which they were circled by a great white shark. During the long ascent, they sent notes in marker buoys to colleagues at the surface, telling them of the tragedy and requesting police attendance. A Senior Constable from the Eden Water Police, who was in charge of inquiries, arranged for a technical search of the area with the aim to recover the lost diver's body and gear when weather conditions allowed. It was hoped that computers used on the dive boat would provide accurate details on what caused the problems during the dive. According to the web page found at <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22698042-2862,00.html>, two Victorian deep-sea scuba experts were leading a bid to retrieve the body of the diver, which had been missing for eight days. Police had been unable to recover the man's body because no police diver is qualified to dive that deep.

* The *SS Iron Knight* had been one of BHP's ships which had brought steel from Newcastle and Port Kembla to Port Adelaide in the late 1930s for delivery to Perry Engineering at Mile End. Perry Engineering 'finished' the steel in readiness for construction of the Birkenhead Bridge across the Port Adelaide River.

SEAHORSES RELEASED INTO SYDNEY HARBOUR

"The Sydney Aquarium has released 30 seahorses bred in captivity into Sydney Harbour as part of an Australian-first study to try to boost their numbers, but it is concerned poachers may intervene. The tiny black animals were carefully transported from a tank into the netted area at Manly Cove, in northern Sydney, this morning. The five-centimetre-long white's seahorses have been tagged and will be closely monitored by the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and a team of divers. There is already a colony of about 300 of the animals, only known to exist in NSW waters, near the sea net at Manly Cove but some have been poached from there in the past. It is hoped the research will lead to the release of captive-bred seahorses along the NSW coast and in areas overseas where seahorse populations are in danger of disappearing. Claudette Rechterik, from the Sydney Aquarium Conservation Fund, says the animals should not be too hard to keep track of, even though they are small. "Each of these 30 babies have been tagged," she said. "The tag actually expands as they grow so we'll be able to watch for these tagged animals in amongst these wild populations." Poaching fear Seahorses are protected in NSW but there is a market for seahorses both within the aquaria trade and also within alternative therapies, where they are used for various medicinal purposes. The animals are vulnerable to poaching and can fetch up to \$120 each on the black market. Ms Rechterik also says seahorses are in decline because they live in vulnerable habitats. "Sea grasses are quite sensitive to pollution, so our sewage outfalls and nutrient enrichment of the local waters have quite an impact on sea grass," she said. "Without sea grass, without habitat, the seahorses don't actually have anywhere to live." 'Clinging onto trolleys' But she says man-made structures, like the sea net, often provide good environments for seahorses. "You will find little seahorses clinging onto trolleys at the bottom of Sydney Harbour," she said. "As much as you'd like to be able to remove these bits of human remnants of trash out, you have to be quite careful because sometimes it is actually quite a rich home for many different creatures, including the seahorse." The researchers, led by DPI marine scientist David Harasti, will come back in three days to check how the seahorses are faring."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/11/13/2089359.htm> . Visit http://www.abc.net.au/reslib/200711/r199768_763755.asx to see a video of the seahorses.

BAY DREDGE PLAN TO GO AHEAD

“Victoria's Planning Minister Justin Madden has given his blessing to the controversial project to dredge Port Phillip Bay. The State Government says allowing larger ships into the Port of Melbourne is essential for the state's economy. But opponents say it is too risky for the bay's fragile ecology. It has taken two years and two expensive surveys, but the Government has the result it wanted. "It is my assessment that the project can proceed," Mr Madden said. There will be conditions on the dredging, including an independent environment monitor to oversee the project. But the conditions are not enough to satisfy critics like Dr Joe Samuel-King from the Blue Wedges Coalition. "Destroying Port Phillip Bay is just that, watching it happen is not going to help," she said. The project still needs Federal Government approval, but could start in January. Premier John Brumby says getting larger ships into the port is vital to the economy. "It is a great project for our state, it is an essential project for our state," he said.”

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/10/31/2077810.htm>

AUSTRALASIAN ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE 2007

The Australasian Archaeology Conference (titled “New Ground”) was held in Sydney from 21st – 26th September 2007. It was a combined conference of the Australian Archaeological Association, the Australasian Institute of Maritime Archaeology (AIMA), the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology, the Australian Association for Consulting Archaeologists and the Australian Association for Maritime History. Details of the programme and abstracts for “New Ground” were available on the web page at <http://newground.arts.usyd.edu.au/files/NEWGROUNDprogramme.pdf>. It was on this web page that we found the following details about Tim Smith from AIMA: -

“Tim Smith is a Senior Heritage Officer, and a State Government Maritime Archaeologist, with the Heritage Office, NSW Department of Planning (Sydney, Australia). With a Graduate Diploma in Maritime Archaeology and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Archaeology from the University of Sydney, Tim has surveyed numerous shipwreck sites in NSW and interstate since joining the Office in 1991. He has worked on a range of archaeological sites in the Middle East, Greece and Italy over the past 17 years. Tim participated in the 1997 and 1998 Australian expeditions that documented the historic AE2 submarine wreck site in Turkey, and served as archaeological technical advisor to the joint Australian- Turkish technical workshops held in Istanbul in 2002 and 2004. Tim is currently Director – Maritime Archaeology, for the (recently held) 2007 archaeological expedition coordinated by the Submarine Institute of Australia (SIA), and has published widely on the work. He is closely involved in the identification, mapping and heritage assessment of key naval historic shipwreck sites. Tim successfully led the search for the Dutch (ex-RAN) submarine K-IX wreck site near Seal Rocks, NSW in 1999, and is currently Project Manager for the now located M24 Japanese midget submarine wreck site off Newport, Sydney. He has been involved in several interstate projects including the survey of the J3 and J5 submarine wrecks near Melbourne. He has coordinated heritage projects aimed at documenting the important World War One-era wreck sites in NSW such as HMAS Australia (1) and HMAS Parramatta (1). He is a past

Vice President and Secretary of the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology (AIMA), and current State Councilor. At the Heritage Office, Tim also coordinates State Government compliance with their heritage management responsibilities under Section 170 of the NSW Heritage Act 1977.”

Source: <http://newground.arts.usyd.edu.au/files/NEWGROUNDprogramme.pdf>

BALTIC YIELDS 'PERFECT' SHIPWRECK

“A near-intact shipwreck apparently dating from the 17th century has been found in the Baltic Sea, Swedish television has said. The discovery was made during filming for an under-water documentary series. Public service SVT television said the wreck could be from the same era as the famous *Vasa* warship, which sank on its maiden voyage in August 1628. The broadcaster said the Baltic's low oxygen content and low temperature had helped preserve the wreck. SVT said the origins of the ship were unclear but its features resembled the work of Dutch ship-builders from the period. "Experts who have studied video of the ship conclude that it is probably the best-preserved ship ever seen from this period," the station said. A press release provided by SVT quoted marine archaeologist MR Manders as saying he was "overwhelmed" by the condition of the wreck. "You can hardly call this a shipwreck," he is quoted as saying. Mr Manders said the boat was likely to have been a trading vessel, 20-25m long, with two or perhaps three masts. The location of the wreck, between the Swedish mainland and Latvia, had been pinpointed in 2003. But it was only in May this year, during filming for The Wreck Divers documentary series, that full exploration and filming with a remotely-operated submarine took place. The programme's executive producer, Malcolm Dixelius, told the BBC the ship was found at a depth of 125m - offering "excellent" visibility. The relative lack of oxygen in the water and its low temperature meant the ship had been amazingly well-preserved, he said. SVT says the vessel probably dates from the same period as the *Vasa* warship, which was discovered in 1956 and brought to the surface. The museum where it is kept is now one of the main tourist attractions in Stockholm.”

Source:

<http://parse.pl/?redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fnews.bbc.co.uk%2Fgo%2Fem%2Ffr%2F-%2F2%2Fhi%2Furope%2F7096405.stm>

Further references:

<http://parse.pl/?redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fnews.bbc.co.uk%2Fgo%2Fem%2Ffr%2F-%2F2%2Fhi%2Furope%2F7096405.stm>

<http://parse.pl/?redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fnews.bbc.co.uk%2Fgo%2Fem%2Ffr%2F-%2F2%2Fhi%2Furope%2F7096405.stm>

KING CLEARED OF SINKING THE VASA

by Elizabeth Dacey-Fondelius

“The sinking of the *Vasa*, the famous Swedish 17th century warship, was not the fault of King Gustaf II Adolf's meddling, according a new book. The monumental work, the first volume in a multiple series, clears up former misunderstandings and popular myths about the doomed fate of the mighty ship on its maiden voyage. “The Archaeology of a Swedish Warship of 1628” proves that, contrary to popular myth, the ship was built to its original specifications, and not modified in the middle of construction. Many people believe that the instability of the ship was caused by the King, Gustaf II Adolf, meddling

with the design by adding an unplanned second gun deck. The other most notable fallacy debunked by the book is the notion that *Vasa* was lost and forgotten for its 333-year rest in the Stockholm Harbor. Volume I indisputably demonstrates that there were several salvage attempts long before the successful raising of the ship in 1961. There are also several historical references to the wreck of the *Vasa* on Stockholm sea charts. The principal author, Professor Carl Olof Cederlund, took part in the excavations and successful salvage effort. The first volume focuses on the ship's colorful history and monumental effort to raise the sleeping giant. It has over 400 illustrations and includes construction plans of the ship. The *Vasa* sank in 1628 on its maiden voyage. It lay at the bottom of Stockholm's harbor for 333 years before it was raised amid great fanfare. It's on display at the Vasa Museum in Stockholm. "The archaeology of a Swedish Warship of 1628 - Volume I" is on sale at the Vasa Museum (Vasamuseet)"

Source:

<http://parse.pl/?redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fnews.bbc.co.uk%2Fgo%2Fem%2Ffr%2F-%2F2%2Fhi%2Furope%2F7096405.stm>

NAUSICAA - THE FRENCH SEA EXPERIENCE CENTRE

NAUSICAA is the Centre National de la Mer (or the French Sea Experience Centre). The NAUSICAA web address is www.nausicaa.fr. According to the website, "From Tuesday 20th to Thursday 22nd November 2007, NAUSICAA will be host to the 1st National Colloquium (Conference?) on Marine Protected Areas, in partnership with the French Committee of the UICN (IUCN – World Conservation Union?) and the Université du Littoral de la Côte d'Opale." It says that "France has the 2nd largest maritime domain in the world. It is consequently crucial to set up an effective development strategy for marine protected areas in order to preserve marine biodiversity in Metropolitan France and in the overseas departments and territories. For 3 days, this colloquium will gather marine world specialists at NAUSICAA and the "Université du Littoral de la Côte d'Opale". They will be studying in particular the effects of existing marine protected areas in France and will be reflecting on the strategies to be implemented in order to preserve certain coastlines and the species depending on them."

Also, according to the website, "From Tuesday 27th to Thursday 29th November 2007, the European Union's Committee of the Regions, in partnership with NAUSICAA and the World Ocean Network, is organising the Forum for the Blue Planet in Brussels, centred on the new European maritime policy. Young Europeans will be asked along in the framework of the 1st Forum of Young Europeans for the Ocean, a meeting which will enable participants to share their point of view on the preservation and the long-term management of European seas, whether for fishing, transport or even the preservation of biodiversity. Numerous events are included in the programme throughout the 2nd semester. For more information, go to www.nausicaa.fr."

UNDERWATER SOCIETY OF AMERICA

According to the website at <http://www.underwater-society.org/>,

"The Underwater Society of America was formed in 1959 by the existing skin-diving councils; it was composed of and represented all divers in North America. It is the public diving organization of the United States. It is controlled by its executive committee, board of directors and delegates of the member councils and clubs meeting annually.

Currently there are some thirty councils/clubs in the Society. (The clubs are usually formed to play an underwater sport.) The Society functions to give national recognition to divers.

One of the main functions of the Society is education and information - making and keeping divers, councils, and clubs aware of the issues affecting them. Since 1959, the Society has been active in issues affecting divers right to dive, marine ecology, safety, legislation, conservation and the like. The Society offered testimony opposing a proposed extremely restrictive California regulation; as a result, the infamous 'LA Ordinance' was not enacted state-wide. Working with the councils, areas closed or restricted to diving have been opened. USOA has offered written and verbal testimony to both Congressional Houses and the National Park Service regarding proposed 'Wreck Diving Bills.' The Society has worked with and offered testimony to the Coast Guard in support of the red and white 'divers' flag.

As a charter member of the World Underwater Federation (C.M.A.S.), the Society is the sanctioning body for underwater sports in the United States. CMAS is headquartered in Rome where USOA sits on all CMAS Committees: Science, Technical and Sports. As a member of CMAS, the Society sanctions yearly local, regional and national underwater championships in Scuba, Free Diving, U/W Hockey, U/W Rugby, Fin Swimming and U/W Photography. The Society is also eligible and sends teams to all World U/W Sports Championships.

Since 1959, National Championships have been conducted in Free Diving and Scuba Diving. Underwater Hockey started in the US in the late 1960's, and UW Hockey Nationals have been held annually since 1976. Fin Swimming started with regional competitions in 1985 and National Championships in 1989. Underwater Photography competitions such as the Beach Photo Championships were first held in 1987 and 'mail in' competitions have been held on a regular basis. U/W Rugby is played on a regional level."

SHARK ATTACK ON SPEARFISHER

The Queensland diver who was attacked by a Bronze Whaler shark on 13th October was one of about 20 people on a charter boat specialising in spearfishing. They were spearfishing at Holmes Reef, about 135nm (240km) due east of Cairns. The victim was swimming for the charter boat with a fish and his spear gun in his arms when a bronze whaler shark sank its teeth into his leg. A large group of spearfishers together at such an offshore location would be quite exposed to the possibility of a shark attack. Here are the details found at <http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,22586992-5006301,00.html> : -

"Brisbane tourist Adam Wood was mauled by a shark in remote waters off Cairns. A bronze whaler sank its teeth into the 31-year-old's leg as he swam for a charter boat with a fish and his spear gun in his arms. The shark attacked from behind, biting the back of his leg and tearing into his calf muscle. The incident happened at Holmes Reef, about 135 nautical miles (240km) due east of Cairns, just before noon on Saturday. "It was a pretty deep, long tear," an ambulance officer said of the man's wound. "His tendons and muscles were exposed. The tear was about 30cm long." The man was one of about 20 people on a charter boat specialising in spearfishing.

He was winched from the boat by Cairns's Emergency Management Queensland

helicopter crew several hours after the attack. "The shark got him from behind as he was coming back to the boat," helicopter pilot Chris Maehl said. The man had been well-looked after by his crew, he said. "He was all bandaged up by the time we got there." According to the article "Cairns and Port Douglas – Gateway to the best of the Great Barrier Reef" by Nigel Marsh & Helen Rose in the September 2007 issue of "Dive Log", Holmes Reef is one of the "best Coral Sea Reefs". These "Coral Sea Reefs" are said to be "located over 200km off the mainland coast" and they "offer some of the best diving in the world with walls dropping to 1km, mamazing visibility that can be 60m at times and stunning corals and marine life". The twin reefs that make up Holmes Reef are said to have "outstanding diving" – "For wall diving there is nothing better than a drift dive at The Abyss or Golden Wall. Looking down the wall into the blackness is an eerie experience, but this feeling quickly passes as you watch reef sharks and pelagic fish patrolling the wall. The best corals are found on the pinnacles . . . These sites are also home to . . . plenty of reef sharks. There are dozens of wonderful dive sites at Holmes Reef. (Nearby?) Osprey Reef is famous for its sharks which are seen in large numbers . . . On every dive . . . you will have a dozen white tip reef sharks and a few grey reef sharks cruising around you. This is a popular shark feeding site and with baits in the water the impressive silvertip sharks turn up, and sometimes even the odd tiger shark or great hammerhead", etc, etc..

For further reading about shark attacks, visit "The science of shark attacks" at http://www.auf.com.au/HTML/science_of_shark_attacks.htm .

ABOUT ODYSSEY MARINE EXPLORATION

Odyssey Marine Exploration (NASDAQ:OMEX) is the world's leader in deep ocean shipwreck exploration. Odyssey uses innovative methods and state-of-the-art technology to conduct extensive deep-ocean search and archaeological recovery operations around the world. Odyssey discovered the Civil War era shipwreck of the SS Republic(r)* in 2003 and recovered over 50,000 coins and 14,000 artifacts from the site nearly 1,700 feet deep. In May 2007, the Company announced the largest historic deep ocean find of over 500,000 silver and gold coins, weighing 17 tons, from a colonial era site code-named "Black Swan". Odyssey has several shipwreck projects in various stages of development around the world.

* (r) SS Republic is a registered trademark of Odyssey Marine Exploration, Inc

SPAIN'S NAVY SEIZES US SHIP

According to the web page found at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/spains-navy-seizes-us-ship/2007/10/17/1192300859302.html>, "The Spanish navy has seized an American treasure-hunting ship it suspects of stealing more than \$A570 million worth of gold and silver from a sunken Spanish galleon. A navy corvette blocked the path of the Odyssey Explorer after it left the safety of Gibraltar, and threatened to open fire when the captain refused to let officers board. The warship, flanked by vessels from the Spanish Civil Guard, escorted the Odyssey Explorer to the Spanish port of Algeciras so police could search it. After a four-hour stand-off in port in which the captain refused to allow Civil Guards aboard, a dozen officers erected a gangplank and boarded the ship. Captain Sterling Vorus was arrested for failing to comply with orders given by the Civil Guard, which said it was acting on an order from a Spanish judge who in June instructed

authorities to seize two vessels belonging to the "21st-century pirates" if they ever left Gibraltar. Tuesday's drama was the latest twist in a battle between Odyssey Marine Exploration, which argues finders-keepers, and the Spanish Government, which says the Americans are plundering Spain's heritage. The feud broke out in May when the Nasdaq-listed company announced a treasure haul comprising about 17 tonnes of gold and silver coins. Odyssey claimed that the discovery was made in the Atlantic beyond the territorial waters or the legal jurisdiction of any country. But the group has refused to disclose the location or details of the wreck, code-named "Black Swan", citing a need to protect it from looters. This secrecy has led to speculation over the true ownership of the booty and caused a furious reaction from the Spanish. They claim that the wreck could be one of many Spanish galleons that sank around its coasts, or an enemy ship carrying looted Spanish bullion. Within weeks of the find being announced, Spain filed a lawsuit in the United States, asking a court in Florida to force disclosure of the Black Swan's true name and location, block future recovery efforts and claim what has already been hauled up." (by Fiona Govan, Algeciras, October 18, 2007)

Source: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/spains-navy-seizes-us-ship/2007/10/17/1192300859302.html>

Then there was this piece at

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article2801122.ece>: - "Sunken treasure overvalued to lift shares of salvage firm (by Daniel Foggo)

An underwater salvage company that claimed to have discovered \$500m (about £250m) of sunken treasure in the Atlantic has been accused of inflating the value of its find, so boosting its share price and providing a bonanza for its executives. The allegation comes amid disclosures in stock exchange documents that some of the bosses of Odyssey Marine Exploration cashed in millions of dollars of shares within days of announcing their recovery of 17 tons of silver coins from the wreck. Other papers show that the Florida-based company privately estimated the worth of the silver coins at £1.2m. A few days later it claimed publicly that the coins had been valued at more than 200 times that amount. The identity and ownership of the ship have since become the subject of a court battle and Odyssey has issued a defamation action against Jim McManus, a diver and a director of a UK-based historical website and internet blogger from Florida. He is one of several people in the online maritime community to suggest that the company pushed up its share price by overstating the value of the find. Following an announcement by Odyssey to the media on May 18 that it had discovered 500,000 silver coins, the company's share price rose to more than triple its April value as speculators piled in. Media reports put the valuation of the hoard at about £250m. On May 21 Odyssey issued another press release saying that the figure had come from estimates provided by a coin expert retained by the company and that it was "comfortable" with his calculations. Instead of retaining the shares once a formal valuation had been carried out and their entitlement to the treasure confirmed, several Odyssey executives and board members started offloading their stock from May 22. Shortly afterwards, ownership of the treasure was challenged in the Florida courts by the Spanish government, which believes it came from a Napoleonic-era warship, the Nuestra Senora de las Mercedes. That ship was sunk by the British off the Portuguese coast in 1804 while carrying more than 1m silver dollars. If Spain's claim is upheld it is possible that Odyssey would be ordered to forfeit its haul. Whatever the outcome, Odyssey's bosses have already profited from their

discovery, according to documents filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the stock exchange regulator. John Morris, Odyssey chief executive and co-founder, sold £650,000 of shares four days after the issuing of the May 18 press release, while David Morris, the company secretary and treasurer, earned himself more than £343,000 within the following 24 hours. George Becker, then Odyssey's executive vice-president and who has since left the company, also sold shares worth £193,000 within 12 days of the announcement. The commission declined to comment this weekend. Odyssey has refused to disclose the exact name or location of the wreck from which the haul was taken, giving it only the codename Black Swan. Following the announcement there was widespread speculation in the media that the treasure had been taken from the Merchant Royal, a privately owned British cargo ship known as the El Dorado of the Seas, which sank off Land's End in the 17th century. Treasure recovered from so old a ship would have been very valuable. The Sunday Times disclosed in June that Spain believed the wreck was really that of the Mercedes and it has since become clear that it cannot possibly be of the Merchant Royal. An export licence, applied for by Odyssey on May 14 when it was seeking to transport its haul to Florida via Gibraltar, shows that it was taken from a location off the Iberian peninsula, rather than Land's End. It also shows that Odyssey gave the silver coins a valuation of only £1.2m. The £250m valuation was given by Nick Bruyer, a coin marketer who has sold coins for Odyssey in the past. He is said to have valued the 500,000 silver coins at between several hundred pounds and £2,000 each. John Morris and Greg Stemm, Odyssey's founders, have previously been prosecuted by the SEC. It accused them of inflating the value of shares in a company of which they were directors by overstating the worth of salvaged artefacts. They were acquitted by a jury in 1997. A spokeswoman for Odyssey said: "The value put on the export licences was based on an estimate of what we believed to be our cost basis at that time. In accounting for US companies we are required to value artefacts at our cost of recovery, which has nothing to do with retail value. The company has not estimated the total potential value of the Black Swan recovery and will not do so until we have conserved and priced them all. John Morris, David Morris and George Becker legally sold parts of their positions after the appropriate waiting period as part of their personal financial planning."

Source: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article2801122.ece>

Comments on this last article can also be read at

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article2801122.ece>.

UNDERSEA TREASURE CHEST STIRS UP TENSIONS

by David Willis

"Shipwrecked treasure, recently recovered from the bottom of the South China Sea, is threatening to inflame a diplomatic row over an area believed to be rich in oil. Divers working for the French oil company Elf, stumbled across the wreck of a 15th Century Chinese galleon containing a hoard of priceless porcelain and ceramic pieces. The ship went down off the coast of Brunei and is thought to contain one of the largest hauls of buried treasure ever uncovered. Using the same two-seater submarine as those used to survey the Titanic, archaeologists uncovered an Aladdin's Cave of intricately painted ancient pottery. For more than two months, a daily haul of hundreds of artefacts were hauled to the surface. Back on land, a vast hanger was built to clean and catalogue the

discoveries, thought to be worth millions of dollars. It's a fascinating project," says John Perry, Managing Director of Elf Petroleum Asia. "The artefacts themselves, in their day may have been ordinary things in the street but today they have a timeless beauty, which is so hard to define but so real to touch." For Brunei, a nation keen to lessen its dependence on oil revenue, the discovery has become a source of new national pride. The artefacts provide the tiny sultanate with something money alone cannot buy - symbols of a cultural identity which, officials hope, will boost tourism. But the discovery of a series of such wrecks has been seized upon by China as evidence reinforcing its historical claims on the South China Sea. Beijing says the discoveries prove Chinese vessels have been sailing the area since ancient times. Five other countries in the region also lay claim to all or part of area's maritime territory - in particular to the Spratly Islands, which are reputed to hold the key to a much needed new source of oil. East Asia is an energy hungry region, and some analysts warn that rival claims to oil untapped oil reserves under the South China Sea could spark a new regional war. China watcher Dr Lee Lai To believes this latest find of sunken treasure may bring the competing claims to a head. "All these finds will remind claimants that it is important for them to consolidate their control of their own areas," says Dr Lee. "It is important for them to reiterate their claims and to find some way to control these areas." For centuries, the South China Sea been the main transport route between Europe and China and the sea is said to be littered with many more wrecks. This latest discovery is bound to heighten interest among treasure hunters keen to unearth their fortune from the seabed, but it could also inflame already simmering tensions in some of the world's most heavily disputed waters."

Source: <http://parse.pl/?redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fnews.bbc.co.uk%2F2%2Fhi%2Fasia-pacific%2F331763.stm>

MARY ROSE COULD BE LOST IF LOTTERY FUNDING IS REFUSED

19th July this year was the 462nd anniversary of the sinking of Henry VIII's flagship, the *Mary Rose* in 1545. 11th October this year was the 25th anniversary of her raising from the Solent in 1982. (The anchor and the bowcastle - the raised front section of the ship – were both brought up in 2005 after being missed during original excavation.) According to the web page at

http://parse.pl/?redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fnews.bbc.co.uk%2Fgo%2Fem%2Ffr%2F-%2F2%2Fhi%2Fuk_news%2Fengland%2Fhampshire%2F7037289.stm ,

“The *Mary Rose* was Henry VIII's flagship. She sank after 34 years of distinguished service, fighting in two wars against the French and one against the Spanish. The main section of the *Mary Rose* was raised in 1982. Millions of people watched the salvage operation on television. She is now on display at Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard, where she has been seen by more than 7m visitors. The 25th anniversary of her raising is being marked with a series of events and lectures.”

The team restoring her says that the *Mary Rose* is a national treasure which could soon be lost if lottery funding is refused. According to the web page at

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/england/hampshire/7037289.stm: -

“*Mary Rose* 'at risk of being lost' by Dominic Blake, BBC News, Portsmouth

The *Mary Rose* is a national treasure which could soon be lost. That is the stark warning from the team that helped to raise the Tudor warship from the Solent 25 years ago. The *Mary Rose* Trust needs £35m to complete conservation work and to house the vessel in a

new, permanent museum - but it can only raise £14m by itself. Admiral John Lippiett, chief executive of the trust, said the ship's fate is now once again in the hands of the Heritage Lottery Fund, which is considering an application for the remaining £21m. Last year, a bid for £13.5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund failed. He said: "If we aren't successful, the outlook would be very gloomy indeed. "We have a small museum which is a temporary exhibition, and the ship is in a temporary structure which was built in the early 80s with a 10-year life. "The conservation is costing us many hundreds of thousands (of Pounds) a year. "If there is no funding, then there will be no *Mary Rose*. It is as stark as that. "Eventually the *Mary Rose* will cease to be a visitor attraction, it would have to be disposed of...sold for firewood, who knows?" Diver and maritime archaeologist Christopher Dobbs helped to raise the ship and he has devoted most of his working life to the *Mary Rose*. He said: "If we had to stop showing the ship to the public, it would negate everything we did 25 years ago. "I just think it would be an enormous shame if we couldn't complete what we set out to do in the 1970s, which is to display the *Mary Rose* for all time, in Portsmouth, and that's why we need the support of the public, of donors and also the Heritage Lottery Fund." A successful bid would secure the ship's future and transform visitors' experiences. After years of spraying to replace seawater with conserving chemicals, the ship would finally be released from her misty cocoon. Then she would be reunited with exhibits in the nearby Mary Rose Museum and another 14,000 stunning artefacts, which are currently locked away. Cannons and cannonballs, pewter ware, wooden plates and jugs and Tudor gold coins are among some of the items brought up since the ship was raised after 437 years under the sea. Only half the hull was found to be intact when she (was) raised from the Solent in October 1982. In 2005, the bowcastle - the raised front section of the ship - and the anchor were brought up after being missed during original excavation. Mr Lippiett said: "The spraying comes to an end in 2011, then we want to bake her dry and build a new museum over the top of where she sits now in the dry dock. "We want to build the other half of the hull as a virtual hull and then put the artefacts back in so visitors will really see this time capsule as it was on the day she sank. "It is an extraordinary collection - the finest anywhere in the world - and this is the only 16th Century ship that exists like this. "It would be a wonderful visitor attraction for Portsmouth and the south of England. We want to have the conservation completed and the new museum open by 2016." The Heritage Lottery Fund said it could not comment on the outcome of live applications, but chairwoman Dame Liz Forgan told BBC News: "The *Mary Rose* is one of the most important pieces of our nation's heritage. "The trust rightly considers such a treasure deserves a truly world-class museum to tell the story effectively. "We have been a huge supporter of the *Mary Rose* in the past awarding nine grants of over £7.5m and we hope to work with the *Mary Rose* Trust to realise its ambitions in the future." The application will be decided on 22 January. Mr Lippiett said he and his team had done everything possible to secure a positive outcome. "We've been working with world-class museum designers and architects. Our business plan shows that we can be sustainable. "Once we have combined our two visitor attractions - the ship and the museum - into one, we can hold our own and we won't be begging for any more money. "The *Mary Rose* is a national icon. She is absolutely unique in the world. We have got to keep her.""

NEWS FROM VICTORIA II

Neville Skinner recently forwarded to us some details regarding two stories from Victoria of interest to divers. Firstly, we were told that a diver had recently died (6/10/07) off Flinders on a shore dive. His three buddies had apparently surfaced to find him gone and then found him dead, face down, 300m away. Neville says that Flinders is an easy shore dive; typically the depth is 2-5m. "Probably a heart attack would be my guess," he says. Below is a report of the incident (taken from

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/10/07/2052804.htm>): -

"Diver's death to be examined

An autopsy will be conducted on the body of a man who died while diving on the Mornington Peninsula, south of Melbourne, yesterday. The 46-year-old from Clayton was diving near the Blowhole Track at Flinders when he became separated from his family and friends. His son and a friend had jumped in after him, but he was dead by the time they reached him. The ambulance service's Ray Rowe says the man's friends did all they could. "The paramedic was winched down from the helicopter and together with the skin diver, was able to get the man to shore and from there he was taken up to an area and unfortunately he was deceased," he said."

The following report (taken from <http://www.cdnn.info/news/safety/s071006.html>) tells a similar story about the incident: -

"Man dies scuba diving in Australia

(Powered by CDNN - CYBER DIVER News Network by LUTHER MONROE - CDNN Safety News Editor VICTORIA, Australia - 6 Oct 2007)

A man died while scuba diving with friends off Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. The victim, 46, was diving on Saturday afternoon with three other divers at Blowhole, a popular dive site about 100 meters offshore at Flinders. Authorities said the divers realized that the victim was missing when he failed to resurface with the group. After searching at the surface for a few minutes, they found the missing diver floating face down and unconscious about 300 meters east of the dive site. Police said a helicopter was scrambled to rescue the diver, but paramedics could not resuscitate the man. The scuba diving accident is under investigation and an autopsy has been scheduled to determine the cause of death."

The second story to come out of Victoria was about how a mortar/artillery shell was found under Portsea pier (which many local divers walk down to get onto dive boats). Neville Skinner said at the time that "this story is extremely interesting (to say the least). How many of us, including myself, have walked past that very spot....?" he said.

Complete details regarding the discovery of the shell under Portsea Pier are available at <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22553789-2862,00.html> . Those details were included in the October issue of our SDFS Bulletin. A second shell was later found under the Portsea pier. Here are the details found at

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=303244>: -

"Navy team blasts shell at Portsea

Navy clearance divers have, for the second time this week, detonated a World War II vintage artillery shell found on the sea bed at the Portsea Pier. But the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will not investigate how the shells came to be near the pier or search for two similar objects reported by a recreational diver to police. The navy divers arrived from Sydney to examine three objects found by the recreational diver near the pier, a popular

diving, fishing and sightseeing spot on the Mornington Peninsula, 90km south of Melbourne. The recreational diver, a local man, had seen media images about an unexploded shell found at the pier on Sunday and thought it was similar to three others he had seen nearby. A badly corroded six-inch shell, thought to have been lost for 40 to 50 years, was discovered by amateur divers on the seabed at the end of the pier on Sunday. It was removed by naval clearance divers the next day, towed to a remote location in Port Phillip Bay and detonated. Police using photo-imaging equipment tried to locate the three new shells before a team of naval clearance divers arrived later in the day. An Australian Defence Force spokesman said the team found, removed and remotely detonated one shell that "appeared to be of similar size and vintage" to the one found on Sunday, but did not locate the other two reported objects. The ADF would not conduct a wider search in the area for other unexploded ordnance, nor would it investigate how the two stray shells came to end up at the pier, the spokesman said. The Portsea area, near the western tip of the Mornington Peninsula, has a long and colourful military history. Point Nepean was occupied by a series of artillery emplacements from the 1870s until the end of World War II. The batteries guarded the entrance to Port Phillip Bay. Large sections of Port Nepean National Park are closed to the public because of the potential presence of unexploded ordnance left over from military exercises. The Portsea Pier lies only 500 metres east of commonwealth-held military land on the peninsula."

ROMAN SHIPWRECK FROM 1BC

According to the Institute of Nautical Archaeology website at <http://ina.tamu.edu/> , "For over three decades, INA researchers, in association with the Nautical Archaeology Program at Texas A&M University (<http://nautarch.tamu.edu/>), have been exploring humankind's seafaring past under water and on land; via shipwrecks and sunken cities; from North America to the Middle East, Africa, and beyond!" Deborah N. Carlson, Assistant Professor, Nautical Archaeology Program, Department of Anthropology, Texas A&M University recently advised that the INA-TAMU (Institute of Nautical Archaeology - Texas A&M University) shipwreck excavation at Kizilburun, Turkey is now featured on the National Geographic Magazine web page at <http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/missions/map.html>. Click on the "NEW - Roman Wreck" link on the map to link to "Roman Marble Trade and Shipbuilding" where you can listen to an audio track of Deborah Carlson explaining how she is leading a team to excavate an early first century B.C Roman shipwreck and its cargo of huge marble columns. You will also find the following details there: -

"In the early first century B.C., a Roman vessel transporting eight sections of a monumental marble column wrecked off the west coast of Turkey at Kizilburun. Now National Geographic grantee Deborah Carlson (Texas A&M University) and a team of staff, students, and volunteers from Texas A&M and the Institute of Nautical Archaeology are trying to figure out why it sank and where it was going when it met its demise. According to Carlson, isotopic analysis suggests that the marble came from Proconnesus Island, a popular source of marble for Roman sarcophagi in the third and fourth centuries A.D., but relatively unusual for large architectural elements in the first century B.C. Each section of the column (called a drum) is five feet (1.5 meters) in diameter, three feet (0.9 meters) tall, and weighs approximately seven tons (6.3 metric tons). Extrapolating from its cargo, Carlson estimates that the ship may have been 45 to

50 feet (13 to 15 meters) long, though the team has only recently begun to uncover portions of the ship's wooden hull. Resting at the bottom of the ocean, more than 140 feet (42 meters) from the surface, sections of the ship were preserved beneath the marble cargo, which pressed it into the ocean floor and protected it from shipworms and the destructive effects of two millennia in the Mediterranean Sea. Carlson and her team moved the marble drums off the ship remains with specially designed slings and lift balloons. "The layers of wood underneath were flattened like a wafer cookie," Carlson explains. "This makes it hard to know what part of the ship has actually survived." The team has, however, been able to identify two different types of wood used in the ship: black pine and ash. Carlson hopes further analysis of the shipwreck, marble, and other artifacts will provide insights into the vessel's construction and reveal new information about ancient shipbuilding technology. She also hopes to pinpoint where the column was being shipped." The photo featured with the report shows two team members preparing to raise part of the marble cargo from the Kizilburun shipwreck.

Visit <http://ina.tamu.edu/kizilburun/> for more information such as: -

"The Kizilburun Column Wreck was first located in 1993, on one of INA's annual shipwreck surveys" and "Since 2005, an international team of archaeologists, staff members of the Institute of Nautical Archaeology, and graduate students from the Nautical Archaeology Program at Texas A&M University have been pursuing the excavation of a Roman stone carrier wrecked off the Aegean coast of Turkey southwest of Izmir at Kizilburun ("Crimson Cape"). This ship was transporting all the elements of a monumental marble column, in the form of eight individual drums and a single Doric capital." To view some underwater images, visit <http://ina.tamu.edu/kizilburun/images-uw.htm>. Visit <http://ina.tamu.edu/kizilburun/Images-artifact.htm> to view some images of artifacts.

Also visit <http://nautarch.tamu.edu/shiplab/> for the web page regarding the J.Richard Steffy* Ship Reconstruction Laboratory, Centre for Marine Archaeology and Conservation under Director dr Felipe Vieira de Castro (Frederick R. Mayer Fellow).

* The Ship Reconstruction Laboratory was created by Mr. J.Richard Steffy 31 years ago in 1976.

BATTLE TO CREATE SANCTUARIES FOR GREY NURSE SHARK LOST

On 16th October, the Nature Conservation Council lost a court battle to create marine sanctuaries in 18 known key habitat areas for the Grey Nurse Shark, and help prevent its extinction. Although the court acknowledged the extreme danger of extinction of the Grey Nurse Shark, it inexplicably allowed the fishery responsible for close to half of Grey Nurse Shark's yearly deaths to continue to operate within the shark's habitat sites.

According to the web page found at

http://nccnsw.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2196&Itemid=607,

the pressure is on the NSW Government after the Nature Conservation Council lost a court battle to save the Grey Nurse Shark: -

"Pressure on NSW govt after environmentalists lose court battle to save Grey Nurse Shark - The only hope to save the Grey Nurse Shark now lies with the NSW Department of Primary Industries, after environmentalists lost a court battle to ban fishing in 18 known habitat areas along the NSW coast. "The court recognised that the Grey Nurse Shark is at dire risk of extinction, but that the responsibility to act lies with the NSW

Department of Primary Industries,” Cate Faehrmann, executive director of the Nature Conservation Council said today. “The NSW Department of Primary Industries, is required by law to implement fishery closures for the Grey Nurse Shark by 16th November. There are 16 known areas in NSW waters where the Grey Nurse Shark feeds and breeds that will require a 1500m area closed to fishing if the Grey Nurse Shark is to have any hope of survival. The Administrative Appeals Tribunal today decided that despite the stated risk posed to the Grey Nurse Shark by commercial and recreational fishing, the court alone did not have the power prevent the extinction of the Grey Nurse Shark. The Administrative Appeals Tribunal recognised that the loss of even a few female grey nurse sharks each year can affect the survival of the species. Nearly half of the recorded female deaths are caused by the NSW Ocean Trap and Line Fishery, but the court decided the fishery is not detrimental to the conservation status of Grey Nurse Sharks. With fewer than 500 Grey Nurse Sharks left off the east coast of Australia, this decision is a significant blow to our efforts to increase protection for this critically endangered species. Unless the NSW Government acts, commercial and recreational fishing will continue to drive this population to extinction. The NSW Ocean Trap and Line Fishery has recently increased shark fishing. Without additional protection, it is inevitable that more and more Grey Nurse Sharks will be accidentally caught and killed.”

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

Rapid Bay Jetty Design Group

SARFAC (SA Recreational Fishing Advisory Council)

Fleurieu Reef Advisory Group (Ex-HMAS *Hobart*)

TRAIL COMMITTEES - SA Trails Coordinating Committee (Office of Recreation & Sport) and Port Noarlunga Reef Underwater Trail South Australian Trails

Contact the Federation’s Secretary on sdfs@adam.com.au to be included on the mailing list for this electronic bulletin.

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