



THE BRITISH SUB-AQUA JUBILEE TRUST

REGISTERED WITH THE CHARITY COMMISSIONERS No. 275835 R

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EXERCISE JURASSIC SHARK 3 (Result – Winner)

Leader Andrew Reid

Team Members Stuart Edmonson ; Mark Foster ; Peter Hale ; Ian Macfarlane ; Philip Blake ; Aaron Thomas ; Thomas Wood ; Ross McLeod ; Simon Griffiths ; Caroline Zelaya ; Jenny Beck ; Gareth Thomas ; Nicholas Ward ; Andrew Jackson.

This team and its predecessors have been developing and improving shark tagging techniques since 2006. Their work was continued in 2010 in the Cocos Island National Park. This is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Comparatively little is known about the local movements of large sharks and even less about their possible migrations. The only way for this information to be gathered is by electronically tagging individuals and then recording data on an array of acoustic receivers distributed over the sea bed. Information on the movements of these animals is necessary since many are now becoming severely endangered due to a combination of `shark fin fishery` and environmental climate change. In the latter case waters around Cocos are showing a noticeable temperature rise which will discourage certain shark species.

The expertise of this team lies not so much in the scientific interpretation of data but in developing a safe and successful technique for tagging large sharks. When one considers that to successfully attach an electronic tag the shark has to be `shot` with a special, non-lethal spear from very close proximity. To their credit the team has evolved a technique of approaching the target individual whilst its normally aggressive or fear reactions are reduced when presenting itself at a cleaning station. Nevertheless shooting a shark with a spear gun and lodging a metal tag in its dorsal musculature, whatever it is doing, presents considerable risk to the diver. The use of bubble-free rebreather equipment has assisted in the diver approach to the shark.

In total the project has tagged 50 large sharks over the years it has been running. Since these fish are long-lived considerable quantities of data can be expected to be recovered. Not only are the acoustic recorders placed around the Cocos Islands but also in the Galapagos and at Malpelo (Columbia).

An extension of this endangered species tagging programme to include Eastern Pacific Green Turtles was undertaken by the team.

This project is a very good example of cooperation whereby fit and competent divers provide information gathering expertise to scientists not expert in underwater operations.

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HMS VENERABLE, ARCHAEOLOGY (Result – Highly Commended)

Project Leader Stephen Clarkson

Team Members Neville Oldham ; Dave Parham ; Jessica Berry ; Ron Howell ; Mike Turner ; John Bawden ; Alison Bawden ; Clive Weatherby ; Katalin Weatherby ; Paul Fiander ; Nick McVernon.

HMS Venerable was launched at Perry's Yard in Blackwall in April 1784. She saw action at the Battle of Algeciras and the Battle of Camperdown. She was lost off Roundham Head in Torbay in 1804.

The wreck site is very close to shore and a great deal of salvage took place soon after the sinking, most of the 74 cannon having been retrieved. In subsequent years more materials have been removed from the site. The vessel has not been registered as 'protected' due to the amount of previous salvage, nevertheless significant material does remain. It is also very likely that considerable sections of the hull are still preserved since divers in the 80's reported seeing many timbers. The shifting sands have since obscured these, probably to a depth of 2 metres or more.

The team set up a simple but very effective triangulation system to record visible artefacts. In fact a single cannon still remained and could be used as a

fixed datum for this survey. Several large pieces of copper sheathing were recovered. One piece dated 1794 might possibly indicate that the vessel had not been sheathed for the first ten years of her life. Another piece dated 1804 was presumably from her refit in Plymouth in that year.

This survey, as with the previous submission, expended considerable energy on involving and training amateur diving archaeologists. The organisers also spent a good deal of time lecturing about their work to other public bodies.

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SOLENT WRECK ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY (Result – Highly Commended)

Project Leader Victoria Millership

Team Members Jane Maddocks ; Daniel Pascoe ; Jan Gillespie ; Dave Robbins ; Lauren Tidbury ; Philip Alcock ; Doug McElvogue ; Rachel Bynoe.

Many wrecks are known in the Solent. Some locations are well known, they are well excavated and properly documented. Others however are little known beyond a rough position on a chart or in a skipper's logbook. This team undertook to examine five previously un-researched wrecks. These five consisted of :- A wooden Collier ; SS Londonier ; SS Lapwing ; A 19th Century wooden sailing ship ; SS Serrana. Little or no information was currently available regarding their condition, extent and features. The sites ranged in depth from 18 to 40 metres. The currents around the Isle of Wight and in the Solent itself made diving particularly challenging. Careful timing to dive at slack water was essential. Once in the water divers experienced extremely poor visibility, often of one metre or less. It is to the credit of the project organisers that the professional maritime archaeologists and experienced divers were able to safely introduce amateurs to the rigours of underwater recording and to get them to eventually produce useful and accurate data.

All five vessels have now been adequately surveyed to give a useful picture of their current state of preservation. Accurate site descriptions of artefacts and their spatial relationship to one another have been recorded. Photographic records have also been collected, despite the highly unfavourable light and visibility conditions in the Solent. Exact locations using GPS have been recorded and published for some of the sites, whereas for others this information has been retained to avoid unauthorised pillaging of the artefacts.

The results of this survey will form the base line for future work. The instruction of amateur diving archaeologists in the appropriate techniques to use in poor visibility and difficult diving conditions ensures a workforce of competent people for future work in the Solent. The team also reported on the variable ability of amateurs to make accurate records and identifications. This has led to the planning of a series of instructive programmes aimed at improving amateur recording.

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