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GENERAL

As 2008 draws to a close, the Committee has been looking at projects for the New Year. One possibility is the filming of a 30-minute DVD on the background history and activities centred on the wreck of the *Boyd* in Whangaroa Harbour. The 200th anniversary of the capture and burning of the *Boyd* will be commemorated in December 2009. The Boyd Commemoration Committee (BCC), of which UHG Committee member Leighton Collins is the Secretary, is planning a program of events for the occasion. Although the UHG is not involved with the BCC planning, some members have been conducting magnetometer and sonar surveys of the harbour in an attempt to locate *Boyd* artefacts, such as anchors or cannon and have relocated the hull remains of the historic vessel. Our Group has members who are experienced in documentary filming and discussions have been held on the possibilities of the UHG putting together a DVD about the *Boyd* - featuring our search activities plus images of the wreck remains and existing artefacts as part of the background story. Filming of local areas connected with the incident and interviews would assist with telling the story. With the 200th anniversary publicity, such a DVD should appeal to a wide range of interests and also as an educational aid. The possibility of some heritage grant funding to defray expenses is being looked into, as will the possibility of sponsors to help with the costs. A meeting with the Historic Places Trust Northern Manager and Area Archaeologist to explain our plans was encouraging. If any member is interested

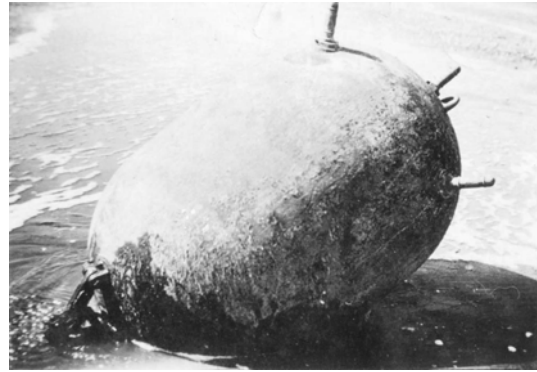
to be involved with this project, or can assist in any way, we would like to hear from them. A decision whether to proceed or not will be made in January.

UHG Officers and Committee take this opportunity to wish all our members, their families and friends of the Group – a very Merry Christmas & Best Wishes for the New Year.

NEWS & HAPPENINGS

1. A new book I found in the local library “The Hidden Galleon” by John Amrhein Jr. ISBN 978-0-9796872-0-4 is an interesting 523-page book about the author’s research and search for the Spanish galleon *La Galga*, lost in 1750 off the coast of Virginia USA. The comprehensive story includes the author’s experiences in working with conmen & dreamers, who invent treasure shipwreck scams and the infighting that goes on over wreck claims when treasure is involved. Of interest are the references to using magnetometers & metal detectors to search for shipwreck remains. Also the fact that if Spanish coins are found on a wreck, it does not necessary mean the wreck is Spanish – the currency was widely used in the USA until the mid 1800’s. However US government agencies and the Spanish ignored this when they used Spanish coinage found on wreck sites as a basis for claiming shipwrecks off the American coast. This book will also appeal to readers interested in shipwreck law & how archaeologists and government authorities in the USA can manipulate the laws to suit their own agendas.
2. UHG members, Noel Hilliam, Rosanne Hawarden, Matt Conmee and Keith Gordon completed the AIMA/NAS Maritime Archaeology Parts 1 & 2 courses sponsored by DoC and held recently in Auckland. The objectives of the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology / Nautical Archaeology Society (UK) internationally recognised courses, are to provide training & basic archaeological skills in methods and procedures employed in underwater archaeology. The courses were held over four days at North Head with a field trip to Rangitoto Island to survey the hulks in Wreck Bay. Practical demonstrations of side scan sonar, a session at the Auckland University covering the preservation and identification of wood artefacts, and a site recording survey exercise carried out at Torpedo Bay, were included in the program. Instructors from Australia were assisted by Andy Dodd, who is now with NZHPT Wellington, and archaeologist Matt Carter, a UHG member from Dunedin.
3. The remains of what was reported to be a WWI mine was found this month on the West Coast north of Karamea. Reported to have originated from the mines the German raider *Wolf* laid off Farewell Spit in 1917, the discovery by M. Hansen, a DoC employee, has caused some controversy and involved our secretary Mike Fraser. Mike, who has published a translation of the German book “S.M.S. Wolf” and who was involved with the discovery and exploration of one of the *Wolf*’s WWI mine victims, the *Port Kembla*, was contacted by the media and appeared on a TV3 news item about the find. Mike’s view is the discovered mine is not a WWI mine but is rather of WWII vintage. Experts in the UK have been asked to assist with identifying the mine’s origins. Mike is

planning to search for another of the *Wolf's* victims, the *Wimmera* sunk in 1918 by a mine off Spirits Bay. The book "S.M.S. Wolf" can be purchased from Mike Fraser, PO Box 34496, Birkenhead, Auckland. Details on www.mascom.co.nz



The Karamea Mine (M. Hansen DoC) WWI mine from the *Wolf* (M.Fraser)

4. The site of New Zealand's worst civilian maritime disaster has been registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. The SS *Tararua* hit Otara Reef off Waipapa Point in Southland in 1881; 131 men, women and children lost their lives. The registration includes the wreck itself, the cemetery where 64 bodies were buried and the Waipapa Point Lighthouse built in response to the disaster. The trust says it's a reminder of New Zealand's early maritime history.

5. The fishing vessel *Seawyf* ran aground on Fair Way Reef, Doubtless Bay in March this year. At first it had been hoped the vessel could be salvaged but stormy seas put paid to that plan when the vessel rolled off the reef and sank. Matt Conmee later inspected the wreck and his photos below illustrate the power of the sea and what it can do to a shipwreck in a short time.



Seawyf on Fair Way Reef (J.Lyle)



Ocean force – The remains of the *Seawyf* (M.Conmee)

6. On a recent CC rebreather dive at the Poor Knights, UHG member Greg van der Hulst came across a divers tow vehicle in 55 metres that somebody had lost on an earlier dive. The growth on the vehicle indicated it had been lost some time ago, no doubt to the chagrin of the owner (anybody know who?). Although not yet covered by HPT, after checking if the battery still had any charge, Greg left the “wreck” on the bottom. Perhaps in the distant future, after some 90 years, it will become a protected underwater heritage item to be discovered and studied by future archaeologists as an example of technology from the past!



Greg checks if the battery still has charge– Ian Skipworth photo.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & BEST WISHES FOR 2009
