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NEWSLETTER No.27

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GENERAL

As the editor will be away in Samoa from mid September this Newsletter is a little earlier than usual. Also with the AGM being held over Labour weekend there is information that requires some advance notice to enable you to plan ahead.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – to be held at the Dargaville Museum on Sunday October 25th commencing 11am. A lunch will follow the AGM and a dinner Sunday evening at the Museum's Lighthouse function Centre commencing 6.30pm. Following the dinner the guest speaker Dave Moran will give a presentation on the history and salvage of Ching Dynasty porcelain from the Chinese junk *Tek Sing* off the coast of Indonesia.

A field trip to Pouto on the Kaipara is being organized for Sunday afternoon following the lunch and will transit the beach stopping at wreck sites and historical places of interest. Four-wheel drive vehicles will be used for the trip along the beach with a road return to Dargaville. As a number of members will arrive on the Saturday a program of presentations on shipwrecks and associated subjects is being organized for the Saturday afternoon from 1.30pm to 5pm, at a venue yet to be confirmed. Depending on space, this event will also be possibly open to non-members for a small charge/donation. The program is yet to be finalized but will include presentations on:

exploring the *Niagara*, the search for the *General Grant*, recovery of the *Port Kembla* bell, the Northland U-boat mystery and other subjects of interest.

Please note accommodation in Dargaville over Labour weekend will be at a premium as there are a number of other events happening. At present accommodation is still available at the Northern Wairoa Hotel (09 439 8923) at a reasonable rate, there are also a number of motels and camp ground accommodation available, if you need information on this please let us know. Air NZ operates into Whangarei, about 45 minutes drive from Dargaville, rental cars are available or perhaps we can arrange for a ride from there – let us know if you need help with this.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are now due \$25 single, \$30 double & \$15 student. If you are attending the AGM these can be paid to the Treasurer prior to the start of the AGM, otherwise please mail your cheque, or for direct credit please contact us for our bank details. It will also be appreciated if you could send an up-to-date Membership Form with your payment details. This can be printed off from our website or obtained from the Treasurer at the AGM. Please note you need to be financial to vote at the AGM.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS to the UHG Committee for 2008/9 year. Please advise your nominations for Office Bearers (4) and Committee (6) by October 20th – you need to be financial to nominate a fellow financial member and a financial seconder is required. Nominations will also be called from the floor at the AGM but note; you need to be a financial member to nominate or stand for office.

PLEASE NOTE. We need to know for the AGM, the numbers who will attend the Sunday lunch & dinner so **please advise your numbers for meals** by either emailing Noel or Deanna as above or phone Noel at 09 4397718 **by October 3rd**.

We also need to know the **numbers requiring 4-wheel transport** or if you can help with 4-wheel drive beach transport required for the **Pouto trip**.

NEWS & HAPPENINGS

1. The timber remains of the wreck of the *Batavia* on display at the W.A. Museum Shipwreck Galleries in Fremantle are reported to be under threat from sulphuric acid. For over 20 years the ancient timbers recovered from the 1629 wreck site have been subject to conservation treatment and care, however they are now under attack from chemicals called sulfides that remain from bacteria growth during the centuries the wreck remained submerged. While partially buried on the seabed the timbers were preserved under the layer of sediment and low oxygen levels. However this environment also fostered the growth of bacteria and over the centuries these microbes riddled the wood with sulfides. When the timbers were recovered from the seabed the chemicals oxidised to create sulfuric acid deep inside the wood. Despite the early conservation treatment, the acids are now appearing as yellow spots and sulfurous smells. The dilemma for the museum now is if they increase the gallery humidity above 52 per cent the deterioration will increase, and in a lower humidity the wood could dry and crack. It is hoped that with improved climate control the corrosion process will be slowed. Today different methods of treatment would be used on recovered timber remains than those employed on the *Batavia* remains some 20 years ago. Efforts would now be made to first remove the sulfides from wreck timbers before treatment.

2. With reference to the item in the July Newsletter about the identity of a brick recovered from the wreck of the *Prince of Wales* in Marlborough Sounds. Australian archaeologist Wayne Johnson comments as follows; “The brick appears to be a firebrick, i.e. produced to withstand consistent high temperatures. I'm assuming it's the only one recovered (hence the lack of evidence for the early letters), and hence not being carried in bulk as cargo? My (educated) guess is that it is from the galley, where there would have been a dozen or so around the cooking place. Can't help with the name - but I would suggest someone look at firebrick manufacturers from the mid-19th century (almost certainly Britain) to see if anything turns up. The bold squarish lettering is also reminiscent of this period, so it may be part of the original ship's fit out.” Ed. - Anyone volunteer to research firebrick manufacturers?

3. Although not actually maritime heritage, the discovery of a mystery skull in the Waiarapa that is reportedly from a European woman, and was radiocarbon dated as over 300 years old, has caused interest from around the world. Recorded history states that Europeans were not in NZ before 1770 and if this report is proven correct it raises the question from which vessel did this unknown woman originate. The skull, at present housed in the Aratoi Museum, was found by the Ruamahanga River four years ago; it is a pity there was no follow-up with investigation of the site using ground search technology. Another skull find featured with photo on the front page of the June 19 Northern Advocate newspaper. It is reported this mystery skull, with what appears to be a bullet hole, was found on the Hokianga beach near Opononi. The find is reported to be pre recorded European era and has also given rise to speculation as to its origin. In considering the origin of these mystery skulls, UHG member Roseanne Hawarden, who is also a member of the 1421 NZ Group, comments as follows on the Waiarapa skull; “I saw the interview on TV with Robin Watts and the skull. It generates many more questions than it answers. The carbon dating was done by GNS Science and I suspect they are also having it redone elsewhere which would be prudent. The next question is what differentiates a Polynesian skull from any other? I have been doing some research on this and have also come across a range of opinions. I would also like to read the detailed report as to how gender and age were assigned for this skull. They did not appear to have the jaw and it was hard to see what teeth remain. So any decision as to age is not that certain and would be based on fusion of the sutures. She does appear to have been murdered or at least seriously wounded by the size of the hole in the skull, which seems to have rounded edges. Would love to know what a forensic scientist thought about that and whether pre or post mortem.
Rocker jaws - diagnostic of Maori/Polynesians? I recently mentioned to Roger Fyfe, curator of the Canterbury Museum, that in an article on the Wairau Bar skeletons, Houghton (who did the study) mentions that two of them do not have rocker jaws. Roger then muddied the water by commenting that not all Polynesians have rocker jaws! Don't know if I can rely on that comment. The rocker jaw determines or is determined by the angle the jaw hinges to the skull and it flattens out the skull. It looks different from the rear as a result and when viewed from the top the jaw hinges can be seen. This is not the case in modern Caucasian skulls. However the distribution of rocker jaws does not seem to be fully known but is found elsewhere in the world.

This skull needs to be compared with skulls from India, Indonesian and China of the period to be really certain. I suspect to that there is wide variety in the extent to which jaws are rounded or squared off, so again classification may be difficult. I am looking for the definitive guide on that too.”

4. We are grateful to the Historical Diving Society South East Asia-Pacific (HDS-SEAP) for the following story that featured in their magazine “Classic Diver”. HDS-SEAP members Des Walters and Geoff Reed had the rare opportunity to dive Anzac Cove, Gallipoli, and Des has recorded their dives in this place of great significance to both Aussies and Kiwis alike. (For further info on HDS-SEAP go to www.classicdiver.org)

Diving Anzac Cove - By Des Walters

The word historic is generally associated with old and ‘of significance’. I think I only qualify on one count, so perhaps this article is just about an historic dive.

The clear blue water slaps lazily against the hull of the boat. The rhythm has an almost hypnotic effect that combines with the warm sun, to make me want to doze off. I have been doing that a bit lately, but no, here comes the crew with my lunch. Three freshly grilled Blue Fish in a tomato puree sauce with a salad cut freshly on the boat. A little olive oil and a squeeze of lemon. Yum. As I look at the rugged hills I can’t help but contrast this idyllic setting with what it must have been like only 93 years ago. Over half a million young men died here. It’s hard to imagine. Dumped on the wrong beach, poorly commanded, badly supplied and fighting a war that didn’t have any real relevance for them. Is this really the adventure they imagined?

We have just completed our first dive. It’s the minesweeper ‘Lunde’, laying in 30 metres, upright on a sandy bottom. It started life as a fishing boat, but was pressed into the service of the Admiralty by the need to clear a path through the bottom end of the Marmara Sea to give the British fleet access to the Dardanelles. The pompous British imagined that the Turks would simply give up when they saw the British battle ships in the Dardanelles and they would then sail triumphantly into Istanbul. The plan did not include a land invasion, but when the first three British battleships were sunk by mines, the British changed their plans.

The ‘Lunde’ is not the ultimate wreck dive, but its history definitely makes it very interesting. The hull is substantially complete and it still has a deckhouse with a galley and the original wood stove. Massive deck winches dominate the deck area in front of the engine room skylights. The engine room is tight, but complete. There is only one level of penetration possible for divers below the main deck.

Geoff Reed and I have wanted to dive Anzac Cove since we first went to Turkey in January 2007 and our host Dr. Murat Egi was determined to make it happen, but the problem is the bureaucracy. Foreign divers in Turkey need permission to dive from the Department of Tourism, the Department of Primary Industry, the Coast Guard and the Harbour Master. The application must come from a dive boat that is registered with the Government as a DSV. The first time we tried to get permission, the dive operator accepted our passports and dive qualifications, but then was reluctant to submit the paperwork. He tore it all up and suggested we dive anyway and just pay

the fine. He said it was easier than submitting the application. Undeterred, Murat persevered and eventually found an operator prepared to submit the application, but his boat operated from a port about 100 kilometres away. No problem it will be a special charter just for us. It turns out that foreign divers just don't dive Anzac Cove. I am not surprised, because of the procedure. We were the first for quite a number of years.

The big day arrived. We were told to be ready to leave the wharf at 10 o'clock. We arrived on time, but were told to sit down and have a cup of Turkish tea. A tradition it seems, however it was obvious to us that something else was happening. The local military commander has arrived, complete with his bodyguard, following ten steps behind and armed with a machine gun. He and the dive operator got into deep discussions. We had another cup of tea. The Coast Guard boat arrived. The military commander seemed satisfied, but then the dive operator had to go and talk with the Coast Guard. Well, another cup of tea was good. The Lieutenant Commander of the Coast Guard vessel decided he needed to come on board with us, so with a crew of three and the Lieutenant Commander, we set off. Just as well, the tea was working its way through and I needed to use the head.

After lunch it was time for a second dive. This time it was a small landing craft at the Northern tip of Suvla Bay where the English soldiers landed. It's in about 16 metres and is upside down, but it is complete. I imagined it loaded to the gunnels with troops, all fired up and ready to land on the beach. Judging by its distance off shore I would say it never made it. How many troops survived we will never know.

I am not sure why I am so affected by this place. Geoff and I stood in the water on the beach at Anzac Cove and looked up at the battlefield. The first thing that strikes me is that although Anzac Cove is only about 600 metres long and twenty metres wide it has a cemetery at each end. Those poor blokes didn't get far. Probably didn't even get off the beach. Then we looked at Lone Pine and realised that the battle there was in an area about 60 metres long, smaller than a footy field, and over 6,500 soldiers died there in only three days, on average three for every square metre. This for what the British commander called a feint, a diversionary tactic to draw attention away from the real objective. I am lost for words.

A days diving done we go back to the hotel for dinner. Turkey is about food and history and we got our fill of both. Raki is the national drink and is served with cheese and melon. The side dishes come first. Heaps of beautiful Turkish bread, eggplant, seaweed, muscles in rice, calamari, mixed seafood in olive oil, sardines, pickled herring and stuffed peppers. It all looked strange to us, but tasted great. We pigged out thinking this was the complete meal, but no, then came the main course, Kebabs and of course this was followed by desert. Figs with goat's milk cream, fresh fruit and a white sticky milk pudding that has chicken in it? Then of course it's Turkish coffee and a green peppermint liqueur.

We waddled to the boat for the second day of diving, now that the permits were organised it was easier. The Lieutenant Commander came with us again. He had loosened up considerably and turned out to be a good guy. Geoff gave him a boomerang and of course he needed lessons to throw it. A sleeping dog gets the full force of a wayward boomerang. We dived what they call a water boat. It appears to be a desalination boat to supply fresh water to the thousands of troops on the beach who

had no other water supplies. It's in about 24 metres and it's a great dive. Massive boilers with distilling coils take up pretty much all of the deck space. The final wreck was a small craft in only 6 metres just off the beach in Anzac Cove. It apparently delivered coal, for fuel. It's been pretty much hammered and it consists of mainly the keel, ribs and a bit of the gunnels, along with a heap of coal that has survived, but it helps us complete our mental picture. There were live bullets, in a very decayed state all over the bottom of the cove and I discovered a copper box about the size of a car battery that had blocks of white material stamped 15 ozs. 1914 RCPF. We decided that this could be explosive, so carefully left it where it was.

A visit to Anzac Cove, and if you can manage it, a dive on some of the wrecks that lie there, will give you a different perspective of the Gallipoli story. It's a must for the Aussie & Kiwi tourist in Turkey.



Des Walters inspects the *Desal* boat at Anzac Cove.



Geoff Reed swims over the wreck of the minesweeper *Lunde*

DON'T FORGET TO ADVISE YOUR AGM MEAL & POUTO TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS.

KEITH GORDON
Editor