HM Submarine A1 Licensee report 2024

By

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Overview

The wreck remains in a stable condition with no more damage seen since last year's report and no more illegal fishing has been observed over the season.

Diving

Once again, the weather has played a major part in diving activities this year on the site and diving did not commence util the 3rd week of July, with all previous dives planned cancelled due to either poor weather and or visibility.

1 visit was recorded over the season with a total of 4 individual dives done.

24th July 2024 – SSAC members visit.

Members of Southsea Sub Aqua Club visited the site for the first time in July, the submarine was noted as having no abnormalities although the visibility was less than 2m on site.

Condition of the A1 Wreck

In general, the wreck remains in a stable condition.

On the day we dived the site the conditions were poor, and this has reflected the whole season for the area, with high turbidity in July when the waters should be settling and improving through to September. The conditions through out the summer months have been high winds from the east and lots of rain at the wrong time.

The wreck on the outside appears to have little change structurally with heavy concretion over most of the wreck. However, it is probably time to have another go at recording the hull thickness again to try to establish if there are any changes to the remaining metal. The previous tests were done in May 2012 by Wessex Archaeology using the Cygnus dive gauge,

results were mixed over the points that were measured. Ideally the same points would be measured some 13 years on to see if there were any differences.

Marine Life



During the brief visit to site, much of the usual marine life was seen in the usual places. Some new observations were made in that southern cup corals have been seen on the bow; this is the first time these have ever been seen on the site.

Figure 1 Conger ell behind the conning tower ©Martin Davies



1.1.1 *Figure 2 Southern cup corals* ***Caryophyllia inornate ©Alison Mayor***



Figure 3 Lightbulb Sea squirts – Clavelina Lepadiformis ©Alison Mayor

Lightbulb sea squirts have not been seen on the wreck for several years, it is good to see a return of them this season.

The image below represents a new area of interest on the submarine that has not been previously seen. Whilst these are a relatively common species their microscopic size makes them difficult to see. These are very small shrimps that build tubes for their home.

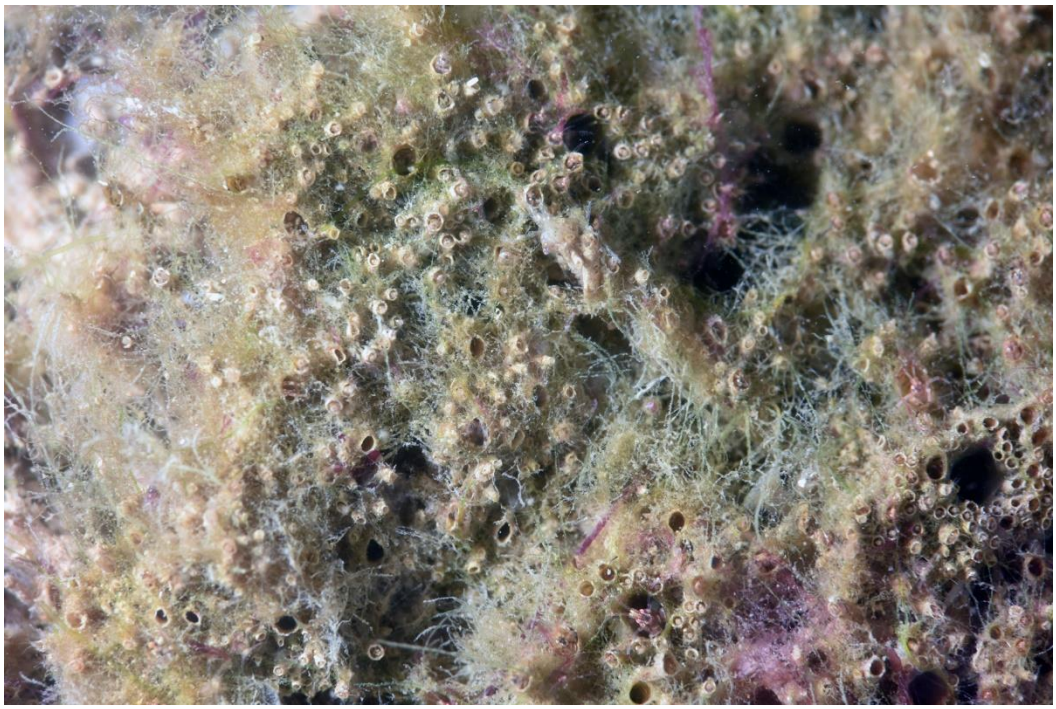


Figure 4 Shrimps (Jassa Falcata) size 3 to 10mm

Conservation Statement & Management Plan (CSMP)

The focus this year was to produce a Conservation Statement & Management Plan for the site. The aim of the document is to set out a clear and concise plan for the site coupled with extensive research to understand and expand the knowledge of the early years of the submarine service and the development of British submarines. The team (Martin Davies, Alison Mayor and Dr Douglas McElvogue) have conducted a large amount of research on the submarine over the spring & summer months to establish new information. Visits to National Archives, the National Museum of the Royal Navy, The Submarine Museum, Greenwich Maritime Museum, and the Shipwreck Centre on the Isle of Wight were conducted. As a result of the extensive research carried out in the first tranche which also accessed the British Newspaper Archives.

The Brass foundry proved a useful visit, some of the plans and initial drawings of the A class were seen and notes from designers of the day with their thoughts on equipment to be fitted and hull design. The visit was a real insight into the origins of the design and development of the class.

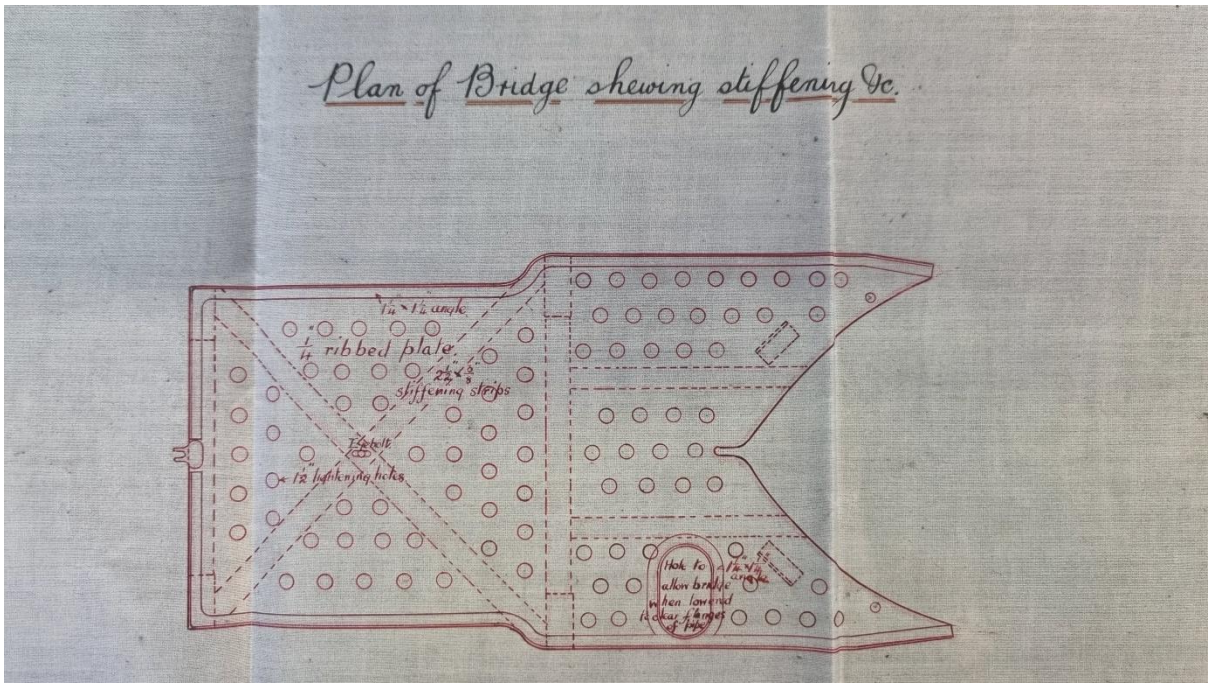


Figure 5 Archive plan of the stand on the bridge



Figure 6 Images being taken of archive documents at the Brass Foundry ©Martin Davies

A visit to the shipwreck centre on the Isle of Wight was useful to discuss with the owner of the A1 submarine, his thoughts on the CSMP. Martin Woodward had also recently had the submarine hatch, and a ladder returned to him, and it was now on display at the centre.



Figure 7 The hatch of the A1 submarine ©Martin Davies

The National Museum of the Royal Navy who now house the Submarine Museum collection provided us with archive files also which were recorded



Figure 8 The National Museum of the Royal Navy ©Martin Davies

Sediment Sample

The planned sediment sample removal that was going to be taken from the inside of the boat has not taken place yet as it has taken a while to manufacture the equipment to take the sample. This activity will now take place in 2025.

PWA50

The submarine was also featured in the short film that was commissioned by Historic England PWA50 HMS/m A1

The film is available to watch here:- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfKp3bBv874

Plans for 2025

Many of the aims for this year were not achieved due to a variety of reasons so they will continue into 2025.

As Licensee my main aims for 2025 are:

- Continue to promote the historical importance of the wreck and facilitate access under the terms of my License.

- Continued monitoring of the wreck condition/structure including the development of a plan for consideration by HE to conduct hull thickness testing for comparison against previous measurements taken by Wessex Archaeology.
- Sediment sampling from inside the hull of the wreck in support of project CHASM.
- Continue support to Operation Oyster.
- Get a specialist team of Seasearch surveyors to look at the marine life in detail on the boat.
- Investigate the possibility of an advanced mooring system to reduce the risk of damaged to the wreck from using a shot line and heavy weight. This will also allow divers to access the wreck much easier.