

HM Submarine A1 Licensee Report 2013

By Martin Davies LRPS

Overview

This year has seen a much better year in general terms for diving on the site. No diving opportunities were cancelled and the weather in general allowed us to dive on all planned occasions. The visibility on the site has been predictable with poor visibility in the early months up until June not great and then July and August delivering good visibility which allowed many images to be taken. This year has seen a reduction in visitor numbers to the site mainly due to a charter boat that I have been working closely with over the last 5 years going out of business due to the theft of an engine from his boat. This year in conjunction with the NAS we have received money from English Heritage to create a diver trail around the wreck and produce information slates for divers visiting the site along with a 3D web package allowing divers to see the site before they dive it.

Diving

The site was visited on the following occasions:-

5 June 1 dive by NAS & myself

14 July 2 dives by NAS & myself

21 July 1 dive by NAS & myself

7 August 1 dive by NAS & myself

22 August 1 dive by NAS & myself

1 September 1 dive by NAS & myself

There were no other dives to my knowledge on the site from visiting divers, I had several inquiries to dive the site but they did not materialise into actual dives. There is a suspicion that a local dive operator has been diving the site, but to date there is no evidence to present and report on.

Dive 1 5th June

I poor visibility the first dive of the season was undertaken and a general survey of the wreck undertaken, the wreck appeared in good condition with very little change to the main structure. No more visible holes had appeared and the existing ones do not appear to be

getting any larger. Marine growth is very prevalent and a thick layer of concretion and silt cover most of the wreck protecting it.

Dive 14th July Dive 1

Visibility had improved on this dive and a survey of the marine life was done, the high amount of Tompot Blennies although not a surprise is a dominant feature as you swim over the wreck from bow to stern they are everywhere. No conger has been seen since last year, there is a change that it has left the wreck to spawn and die as the one that was there was full size. Velvet swimming crabs are the next most common species; the wreck appears to be split in terms of filter feeders such as sponges and sea squirts on the starboard side and hornwrack mainly on the port side. This would appear down to the lay of the wreck and the anomaly of the tide direction in Bracklesham bay where no matter what tide is doing the flow over the wreck appears to be east/west.

14th July Dive 2

This dive was used to capture wide angle images of the submarine and some of the fish life swimming around the wreck. A large shoal of bib/poor cod are now swimming around the conning tower. Some video footage was taken.

21nd July Dive 1

More wide angle shots and an attempt was made to take sufficient images of the hull in order to create a photo mosaic of the structure. This is proving very difficult due to the poor visibility lack of available light and general low contrast scene and not being able to get 2 metres away from the wreck in order to see a sufficient amount of it.

7th August Dive 1

This dive was used to produce some specific images with a diver in the shot and was to demonstrate some simple tasks that could be performed by visiting divers, i.e. measuring the conning tower crack.

22nd August Dive 1

This dive was specifically to shoot video clips, though it was clear from the moment of entry that, the dive would be challenging, strong currents and a huge amount of mobile weed and debris was present. The dive was abandoned eventually as the planned diver video could not be achieved.

1st September Dive 1

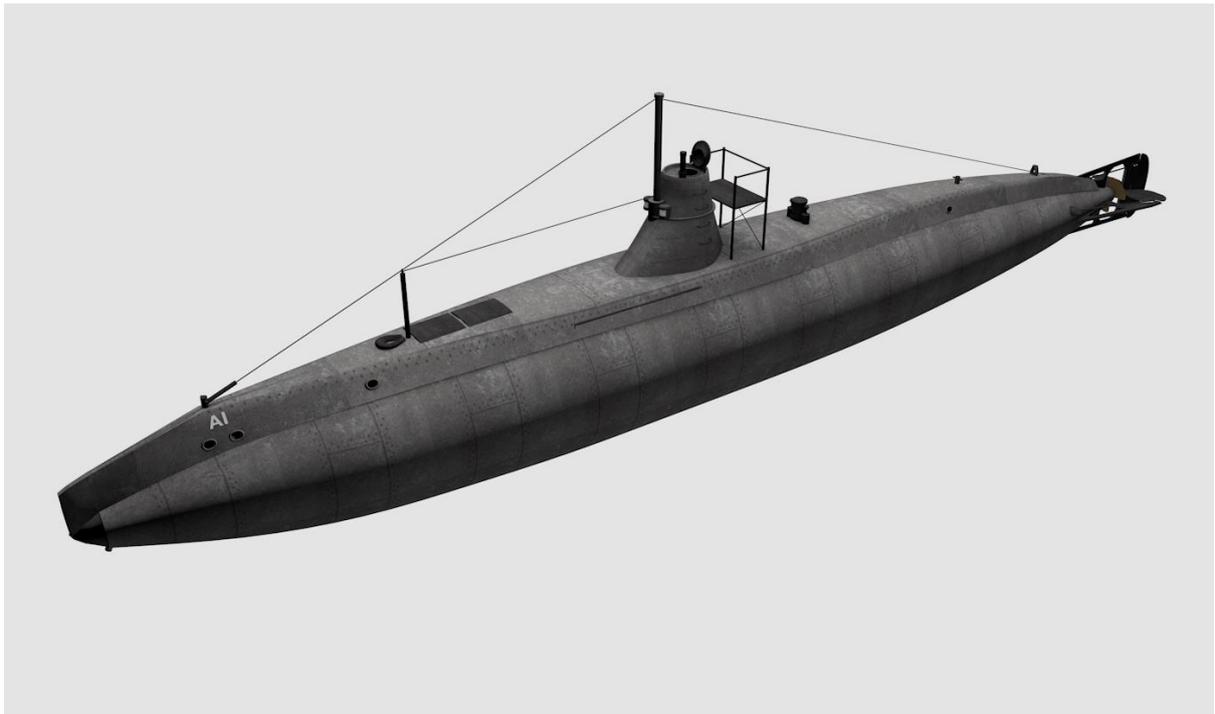
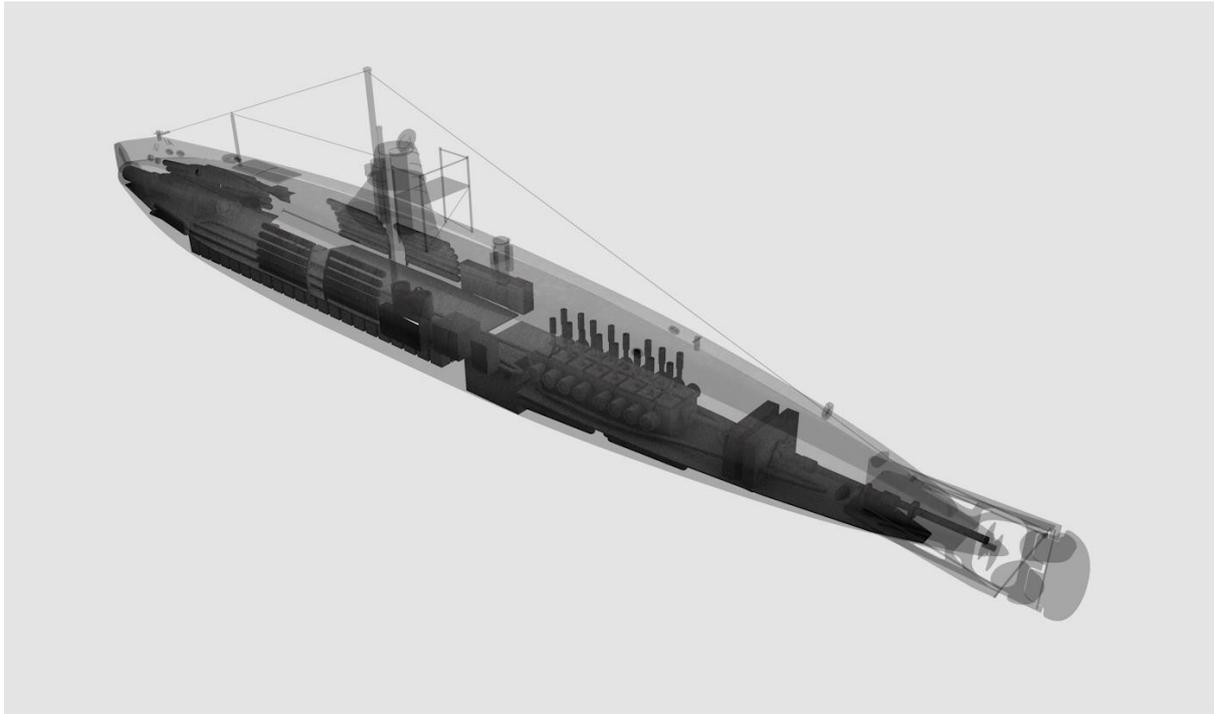
This dive was to make specific measurements of where holes are and outer casing is missing. The good visibility allowed tape measure to be ran the length of the wreck and then

photographs were taken along the whole structure. These were then sent to 3 deep media to assist in the production of the 3D model.

Creation of Submarine A1 diver trail

This year has seen the creation of a diver trail for submarine A1. Whilst in general terms it is difficult to get lost once you are on the submarine finding it can be a challenge. Overall aims of the project were to create information boards to assist divers navigate and understand features they are looking at and the creation of a 3D interactive computer model that can be embedded into a web site. The finished product will have points of interest noted and “click on” images and video, the package will be in 3 layers showing general arrangement of the submarine with outer hull and then see through hull with a final as it is now on the seabed. The whole image can be rotated in any of the layers to see around the wreck which is very neat!





The image above is not the final package but an example the output from 3deep media the company that are producing the graphic.

Examples of the wet information boards that are being produced (not final version).

<h2 style="text-align: center;">HMS/m A1 Submarine Protected Wreck Visitor Trail</h2> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> </div>			
<p>Finding the site: Please try not to drop your shot directly on the wreck as this risks damaging the historic monument</p>	<p>Bow (WGS 84) Lat. 50° 44.549' N Long. 00° 55.285' W</p>	<p>Good shot location off to the west of the wreck (WGS 84) Lat. 50° 44.541' N Long. 00° 55.288' W</p>	<p>Stern (WGS 84) Lat. 50° 44.538' N Long. 00° 55.273' W</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div>
<p>Area of Ampelisca beds Conning Tower Open area of hull revealing exhaust pipes Buried stern</p>			
<p>Torpedo tube opening</p> <p>Deep scour at the bow</p>			<p>A circular feature off stern, possibly an old buoy</p> <p>2013 multibeam sonar survey kindly provided by MSDS Marine & Sonar Services</p>
<p>Bow towing and lifting cable Torpedo Loading Hatch Stern towing and lifting cable</p>			
<p>20cm photograph scale for your pictures</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="width: 150px; height: 15px; background-color: black;"></div> <div style="width: 150px; height: 15px; background-color: black;"></div> </div>			

<h2 style="text-align: center;">HMS/m A1 Submarine Protected Wreck Visitor Trail</h2> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> </div>			
<p>Built: Vickers Sons & Maxim Ltd at Harrow-in-Furness Length: 103 ft / 31m Owner: Mr Martin Woodward</p>	<p>Launched: 9th July 1902 Discovered: 1989</p>	<p>Lost: In 1911 whilst being used used for underwater target practice Protected: By the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) in 1998</p>	
<p>(c) Martin Davies Scorpion Fish</p> <p>(c) Martin Davies Dover Sole</p> <p>(c) Martin Davies Conger Eel</p>	<p>(c) Martin Davies Tompal Blenny</p> <p>In Depth Photography</p> <p>(c) Martin Davies</p>	<p>During your visit to the HMS/m A1 submarine please feel free to help record the marine life that is so abundant on the site for the MCS Seasearch Project.</p> <p>Please take photographs and video of the wreck and supply copies to either the NAS or directly to the wreck's licensee.</p> <p>Finally, have a go at measuring or photographing the crack that runs up the forward face of the conning tower (see image below) and use the space to record your notes and observations. The photographic scale (overleaf) can help to record the size of this feature.</p>	
<p>Notes / Observations / Measurements</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>			
<p>Find out more about the HMS/m A1 submarine and the work of the NAS on</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> </div> <p style="font-size: small; text-align: right;">Did you enjoy your visit to the A1 submarine? Please remember to fill in a feedback form about your visit. Did you know that there are also diver trails on the Norman's Bay Wreck (Eastbourne), HMS Colossus (Silly Isles) and on the wreck of the Caranion (Lanwall)? Contact the NAS for more information on accessing these protected wreck visitor trails. Tel: 02393 618419 nas@nauticalarchaeology.org</p>			

Images from 2013 season



Figure 1 - Large shoal of bib around conning tower



Figure 2 - Friendly Tompot blenny



Figure 3- Diver measures Conning tower crack

Marine Life

The wreck remains a haven for marine life with lots of marine life using the wreck as a home, the most common species being Tom Pot Blenny. Other species that are regularly seen are edible crab, lobster, velvet swimming crab, no conger eel this season, a large shoal or bib or poor cod reside in the summer months. Sponges, hydroids and sea squirts are the next most dominant animals to be seen. Large Ampalisca beds are prevalent on both sides of the wreck

The Scour at the bow remains similar to previous years while the seabed around the wreck contains a lot of mobile silt and is very easily disturbed by careless diver fining activity. The silt build up in the wreck is similar to last season but also has a large amount of weed inside the hatches also.

Threats

There was present as of last year's report a string of commercial cuttle fish pots within the 300m exclusion zone. These pots disappeared mid-way through the season and are no longer a threat. The biggest threat identified is the risk of a dive boat throwing a heavy shot weight onto the protected wreck and damaging the hull, creating more holes that will speed up the deterioration of the structure.

Conclusion

The overall condition of the wreck remains good, despite good weather over the summer the level of interest in the submarine this year is down from my perspective. I am hoping that the new diver trail will spark new interest in the wreck site for next season. There are many divers that are in the area that have not visited the wreck site and the lack of boats to take them there is an example of how access has become limited and clubs with their own boats are the only ones who can get to the site. I am considering working more with local club and businesses to promote the site once the diver trail is full established.

Martin Davies