

## MAY 1964

A recent addition to the groups equipment is a 17 foot boat and out-board motor. The group was able to secure this at a very reasonable price and after some minor renovations will be available for members use on a roster system. It should hold at least 6 divers and equipment, and through its use the group hopes to considerably extend its diving activities.

The fish shelters at Congwong Bay, on which a number of research projects were under-way, were unfortunately badly damaged by the very heavy seas running earlier in April. They will be rebuilt and cemented into position as soon as possible.

Attention is drawn to the "subject preference" forms now being compiled. If you have not yet filled one in, please do so tonight. Forms are available at the committee table and are self explanatory.

Many members no doubt read with interest the article in the Sunday Telegraph dealing with Clarrie Lawlers discovery and observations of the tropical cleaner prawns (*Stenopus hispidus*) in Congwong Bay. These were kept under observation each week-end for 8 months and eventually sent to the museum. The results of the observations provided a definite scientific "first" in this field and congratulations go out to Clarrie for his work.

On Sunday 26th. April, a group of U.R.G. divers carried out a salvage operation off Bare Island, La Perouse. A cache of very old army shells had previously been discovered by the U.R.G. and the Randwick Historical Society, which now controls Bare Island, was informed. They were most anxious to secure the shells for their museum and the U.R.G. was able to supply the divers for the job. A representative selection was salvaged and presented to the Historical society. Needless to say it was first ascertained that the shells were no longer in a dangerous condition. The Historical Society will be able to supply more details on the type and origin of these shells later, but it is believed that they are at least 60 years old. They contained large numbers of lead shot and had the unusual feature of a wooden nose cap. These shells can be examined on Sundays at the Bare Island museum. A further batch of much larger shells is still to be salvaged by the group after the safety of such an operation is verified.

The U.R.G. Diving Schools are still being regularly conducted and if anyone is seriously interested in assisting as an instructor, David Landor, who is running the schools, would be pleased to hear from

you.

Several new members have joined the committee, which for general information is listed alphabetically below. Any of these men will be pleased to answer your questions regarding club activities and to put forward your ideas and suggestions at committee meetings.

Helmut Apel, Barrie Bowden, Howard Couch, Frank Davis, Jon Jansons, Barry Jentsch, David Landor, Clarrie Lawler, Les Leigh, Bryan Robertson, Wez Tyler.

The club has decided to assist the Shark Research Group with the printing of a newsletter. It will publicise the objects, activities and results of the groups research. The group needs keen divers to assist in several projects now being formulated. Contact David Landor, who is one of the U.R.G. members in the Shark Research Group for details.

Members are reminded that the U.R.G. now dives every Sunday morning at Congwong Bay, La Perouse. At these dives, other supplementary dives at a variety of locations are often arranged. New divers are always welcome and needed to assist in research projects now underway. The club still holds its monthly dive as usual, and all members are particularly requested to attend if possible. The location of these monthly dives is announced at the general meeting preceding it.

U.R.G. GROUP DIVE. (REPORT FROM C. LAWLER).

The April group dive was held in heavy rain at Fairlight. The weather being so foul the dive was organised from the Eastern, or pool, side of the cove to obtain shelter for clothes, gear etc. under rock ledges. In spite of these conditions about 10 divers and 3 trainees had arrived by 10am. All divers with the exception of the trainees entered the water and followed the reefs in a westerly direction towards the opposite shore. The reef here is about 25 to 30 ft. deep and honeycombed with small caves and crevices. There is a very large amount of coral, sponge and other marine growth in this area and the numbers of slate pencil sea urchins must reach the thousands. While there is a great deal of the brilliant green or light blue encrusting coral "Pleasiastria" only one growth of the brown, Tabular coral "Coscinaraea" was found.

At a point about midway between both shores of the cove and wedged in a crevice at the foot of a steep undersea cliff was found a large, old type anchor. The length of the stock of this anchor was over 7'-6" and the distance across the flukes was all of 6ft. Traces of wire rope led

form the anchor toward the north western shore, where large pieces of steel plate were discovered.

Four specimens of various sized red whelk shells were collected for Dr. D. McMichael of the Australian Museum and one unidentified Port Jackson shark was seen near the anchor.

After lunch, ditch and recovery exercises were carried out in the pool. All trainees and three group divers successfully took part in these training manoeuvres, the times needed for completion varying greatly.

POT DIP. (REPORT FROM F. DAVIS)

Scheduled for the near future is a 'pot dip' at H.M.A.S Rushcutter.

A few facts gleaned from such a dip may help to dispel any uneasiness felt by one about to enter the 'pot' for the first time.

A 'pot dip' could be translated as a simulated dive in a recompression chamber if. As you read this, you are inclined to scoff at the 'uneasiness' bit then I can only suggest that you 'wait and see'.

On April 7th. With Clarrie Lawler in a party of 8, I stood outside the chamber and saw the looks of mild apprehension on the faces of the majority of the party. The chamber, built by Saunders and Roe, is a cylindrical tank 5 and a half ft. in diameter and some 9ft. long lying on this 9 feet side. It is entered through a circular hatch into the first airlock section about 3 feet long then through another hatch to the main chamber providing seating for about 6 persons and a small 'airlock' entry for food or small articles.

Basically this is the 'pot' but to function effectively a host of attendant ancilliary equipment is essential, from the compressed air supply to the exhaust valves with all the valves and gages in between.

We were advised to discard coats and ties because of the temperature and pens and watches because of the pressure, the one by one we scrambled through the two hatches and settled ourselves in the main chamber. The hatches were closed and shortly air began to enter the chamber.

I experienced the need to 'clear' my ears far ore frequently than when actually diving.

We 'went down' to 66 feet and spent 10 minutes 'on bottom' during which times it was noted that it is impossible to whistle and that the

voice is 'squeezed' into a high pitched metallic note.

It was hot and stuffy in the crowded chamber and all were thankful when the 'dip' was finished. The sensation of pressure coming off the ears was quite different from an actual ascent in water, the eardrums seem to crackle like an iron roof in sunshine - this noise apparently is damped out in water.

Standing by at all times during 'pot' dip is a diving Officer and a Doctor and inside an experienced diver so that no alarm be felt at any time.

The usual reminder that news items, articles etc. from club members are required to make this news sheet a success. Please send your contributions in regularly to U.R.G. News, C/- B. Jentsch, 44 Coopernook Ave, Gymea Bay or hand to a committee member.

B. Jentsch

Hon. Editor.

STOP PRESS:- The 'pot dip' at H.M.A.S. "Rushcutter" has been arranged for Saturday 23rd. May, at 2:30p.m. The Navy is agreeable to put through two groups, of 8 divers each. The 'dip' will be followed by a talk from Lt. Cmdr. Cuthbert, O.I.C. Diving Section on the various types of equipment used by the diving team.

All intending participants are requested to leave their names with the committee to-night. The response from the club will determine future navy assistance to this group.