

SOUTH PACIFIC DIVERS

NEWSLETTER

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President: John Blaszczak
Treasurer: Ross Hipwell
Secretary: Audrey Mansfield
Dive
Organiser: Gary Roberts

Photographic Officer: Terry Mansfield
Social Secretaries: Miriam Roberts
Rhonda and
Karl Krieter
Publicity Officer: Cindy Belveal

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FEBRUARY 1986

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	*17 CLUB MEETING	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

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MARCH 1986

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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*2 JIBSON	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	*14 PORT ====	*15 STEPHENS =====
*16 WEEKEND =====	*17 CLUB MEETING	18	19	20	21	*22 AUS. W'LAND
23	24	25	26	27	28	

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DON'T FORGET BRISTOL POINT - APRIL 5 - 6!!

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DIVE REPORT

Saturday Feb. 1: KURNELL ROCK HOP

At last I picked some good weather - warm, sunny and almost good sea's. We had nine divers but only eight made it into the water, (we know how it is Lisa). The viz wasn't too good, about 15-20ft, but not bad for Kurnell.

Audrey saw a spanish dancer and didn't tell anybody till after the dive. All in all a good dive and day was had.

P.S. Miriam will give lessons on how not to get out of the water to anyone who needs them!

Sunday Feb. 2: TUGGERAH

What a lovely dive it was after swimming through a 2-3 knot current to get to the anchor, battling our way down to about 120ft through dirty cold water. Once the current slowed the vis improved to about 50-60ft and the dive began (Peter went and found the weight belt I had dropped at about 25ft above the wreck!)

Of the 15 mins on the bottom I think I can remember about 5, just a bit NARKED, there were lots of fish, anyhow I think there were. - Gary.

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It was a fine morning, Sunday the second of February, at Dolan ramp, however there was the forecast of a strong southerly. With this in mind we headed out to sea just after 9am by courtesy of Rick James' boat with Greg Marshall and myself completing the crew.

After a few tries we anchored on a section of reef south of "Barren's Hut" in 80ft of water. When we arrived at the anchor we found visibility down to 15ft and a two knot current running, so we restricted our exploration to the vicinity of the anchor along the rocky ledges which meet the sand.

The area proved to have a fair quantity of nudibranchs with unusual colour schemes.

After the dive we proceeded to Jibbon beach for lunch and a well earned rest. The rest did not eventuate as we met up with B.J. and Peter Stratford and their respective crews which made the basis of an aquatic gridiron match. This took up a large part of the afternoon (not including time out for injuries!).

As it appeared that a storm was being readied for our pleasure, at 3 o'clock we headed back to Dolan's via Bundeena Wharf to lend moral support to the crew of a certain marooned displacement boat.

All in all a very satisfying day out on the high seas (for some of us). - Ross.

Friday Jan. 31: Well, what a busy weekend it turned out to be for the Club. The night at the movies was a great success also. Those who were unable to make "A View To A Kill" (which turned out to be quite a comedy!) met up with the others at The Rhinendorf restaurant.

The food was excellent - and plentiful, which was good because it was around 10pm by the time we ate. For those who saw the show, the filling effect of the popcorn and lollies was wearing off, and for the others, before-dinner wines were hitting empty stomachs! But the meal was worth the wait and Gary made sure Miriam's plate was clean! - Cindy.

Terry would like anyone wanting to show their slides at the Club Meeting to contact him beforehand, so he knows to bring the projector and related equipment. You can phone him on 628 8172.

Anyone who would like a boat dive when there are none scheduled, can phone Gary on 771 3459. Due to his flexible working hours he may be able to get one organised, even for a week day if required.

We'd like to send a "Hello" to some of our Club members who are a little far away to attend the meetings, the dives or social venues but continue to support the Club by remaining financial members.

They are Rick and Anne Bewicke who are at The Gap in Queensland and Ken Healey who is living in Western Australia. Hopefully one day they'll be in this neck of the woods and visit us.

BOAT DIVES AVAILABLE

Talk to Glen Percy at Aqua Sports, 430 Hume Hwy., YAGODNA, 708 2826. Quality dives at reasonable rates.

The Club would like to Congratulate two members who were married on Valentines Day - Karl and Rhonda - who are at this time enjoying a two week Island honeymoon.

* * * * *

Miriam, Rhonda and Karl have organised the following for March/April:

Sunday March 2: JIBBON BEACH - We enjoyed last week's so much we decided to do it again. This is a family picnic day, everyone is welcome. Details of dives can be obtained from Gary before the day.

Friday March 14 - 16: PORT STEPHENS WEEKEND - As it is, we have 25 people booked on this weekend and according to availability we may be able to accommodate a few more if you are interested.

You need to find your own way to Port Stephens, sometime Friday night and your accommodation in self-contained units for the weekend is provided for \$20 per person. Food, drink and dives are (naturally) extra.

Gary has organised a few boats, and dives will be arranged at the time. Please let us know if you want to go as soon as possible so you don't miss out.

Saturday March 22: AUSTRALIA'S WONDERLAND - This is still on the calendar and as yet we haven't had any response. We are still going, so if you'd like to go, let us know and we might be able to get a group discount.

April 5 - 6: BRISTOL POINT (JB) WEEKEND - This should be a good time for all. We have two group camp sites booked (no power). The amenities consist of hot and cold showers and fully sewerred toilets. These are very clean and quite new. The cost is \$2 per person to camp.

The beach is approximately a 200m walk through the natural bushland. There are plenty of open BBQ facilities and we have a BBQ planned for Saturday night - meat supplied at a cost of \$3 per person. Again, put your name on the list if you'd like to come so we can plan for you.

Report: TUGLOW CAVES, Australia Day Weekend

After awakening at the ungodly hour of 4am, our weekend began. Loaded the trailer, loaded Sonya and Sam in the back and off we went. From St. Mary's we could see Audrey and Terry's campfire burning in the distance. The tracks were dry, the air was fresh and our passengers were getting slightly bruised.

Tried a few tracks and saw the cave entrance, after walking through the bighting bushes. At the camp site whilst erecting the Taj Mahal one of the centre beams bent, then the bolt on the adjustable pole broke. Mind you, we were assured two people could erect this tent, Terry, Sam, Sonya, Wally and Ralph finally worked it out.

Dinner time, and the new port-a-gas stove packs up just after the meal was cooked, tried the gas light and it didn't work either - great start! Had a few drinks around the fires, first night upstairs, Sunday, downstairs. Sunday night we had a sing-a-long around the old camp fire.

I suppose we should tell you who was there Terry, Audrey, Lisa and Robby Mansfield, Wally, Shirley and their two children, Robby's friend Tony, Sam and Sonya, Ralph and myself. Oh yeah, someone worked out how to use the gas light the Monday morning we left.

With passengers bruised and battered, dusty and tired after someone's airbed kept popping its plug we arrived safely back to Sydney. A good time, with no major problems was definately had, especially the nice weather after a week of rain. - Jackie

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PLEASE NOTE:

FEBRUARY 23 - DUNBAR

It's not marked on your calendar but there's a dive on the Dunbar planned. Meet at Rose Bay ramp at 9am. Dive the morning, then lunch at the Watson's Bay Hotel and depending on how we feel afterwards maybe a dive at Bottle & Glass or somewhere similar.

Please ring me on 771-3459 and let me know how many divers to expect.

MARCH 2 - JIBSON PICNIC/DIVE

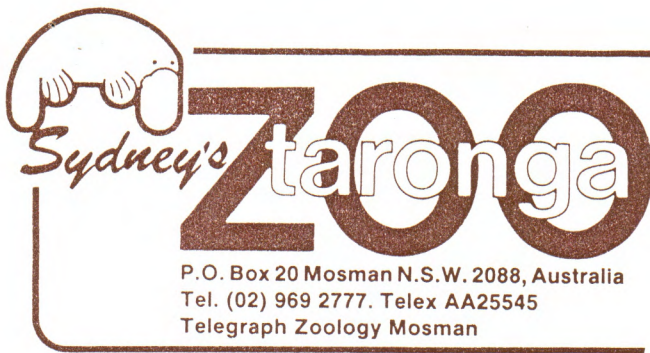
On the day we hope to have a few boats going to different dive sites out of Port Hacking so come along and have a dive and picnic.

Meet for the dive at 10am Dolan's Bay ramp. Please ring and advise me on how many people are coming. (Phone number as above).

APRIL 5-6 - BRISTOL POINT (JARVIS BAY)

Anybody who is coming down to Bristol Point that has a boat that they are willing to use for a club dive please let me know on 771-3459 A.S.A.P. please!

- Gary.



Zoological Parks Board of New South Wales

- Taronga Zoo, Sydney
- Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo

20 January 1986

Mr M Kandilas
Treasurer
South Pacific Divers Club
PO Box 823
Bankstown 2200

Dear Mr Kandilas,

We have benefited by your thoughtfulness in the past and are writing to remind you that your 12 months sponsorship ends soon.

By participating as a sponsor at Taronga Zoo you are helping not only towards the comfort, care and health of the animals living here, but also towards wildlife conservation and protection.

The government does not subsidise the costs of our food, veterinary care, supervision by trained staff or any of the other services directly affecting our welfare.

Your personal support really does make the difference!

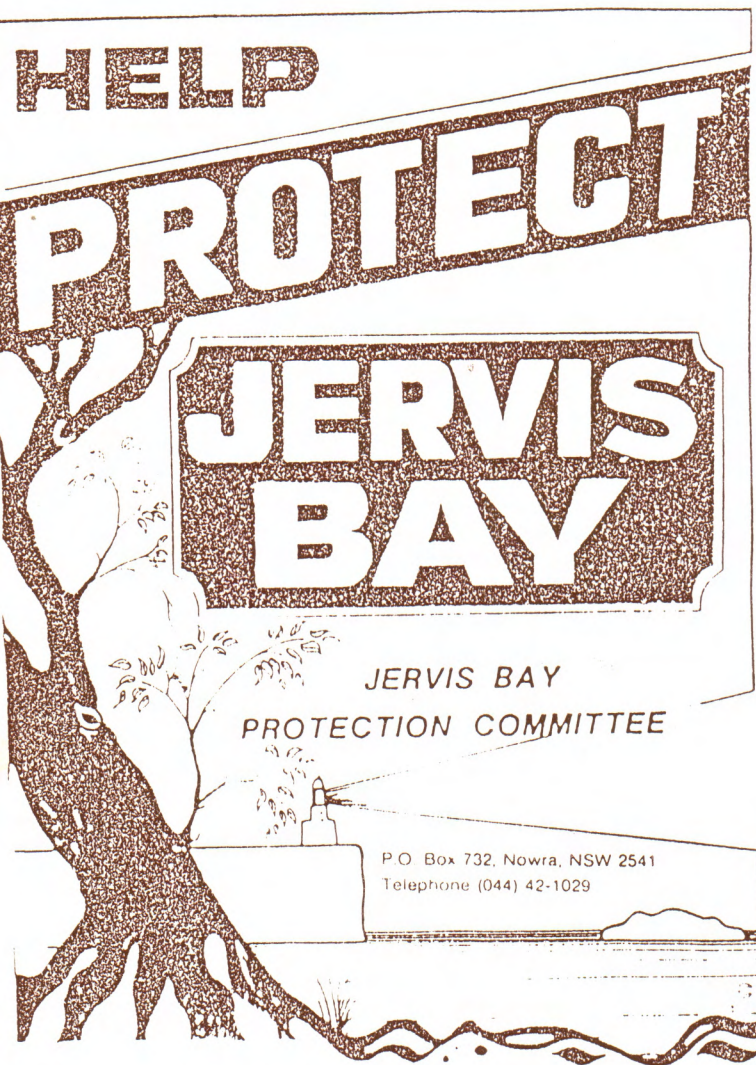
Thank you.

From the Spotted Moray Eel and Banded Sea Snake

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CONSERVE SOMETHING?

CAN YOU THINK OF ANYTHING IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT WHICH
NEEDS TO BE CONSERVED?

WE CAN!!!



SUPPORT THE JERVIS BAY MARINE RESERVE PROPOSAL

Join the Jervis Bay Protection Committee

Our efforts to care for and protect the environment

To provide for the enjoyment, appreciation and wise use of this
unique area now and in the future.

- Jervis Bay, South Coast, N.S.W. is recognised as an idyllic aquatic area for education and research cruising, exploring, fishing and diving. It is for this reason that the need for conservation of the Bay and its fragile animal and plant life is assured while providing for all reasonable use by fishermen, commercial operators, holiday makers, educators, scientists, divers and photographers.

Like to help us

Membership Rates

Full Member Single	\$5.00 p.a.
Full Member Family	\$5.00 p.a.
Full Member Business & Organisation	\$10.00 p.a.
Quarterly Journal subscriptions to "Jervis Bay Today" is included with membership.	
Financial Supporter (no voting rights) by donations thank you.	

- ☐ Here is my cheque for Donation
(Cheques should be made out to Jervis Bay Protection Committee) \$.....
- ☐ I/We apply for ordinary Membership, and agree to be bound by the Constitution of the Jervis Bay Protection Committee. \$.....
- ☐ List me as a subscriber to Jervis Bay Today (Quarterly) at \$1 per issue. \$.....
- ☐ I am willing to distribute this leaflet.
Please send me more copies.

Name:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Signed: Date:

PLEASE SEND WITH YOUR CHEQUE TO:
P.O. BOX 732, NOWRA, NSW 2541
Telephone (044) 42-1029

Membership of the AUF provides you with a membership card, Car sticker and bi-monthly newsletter mailed directly to your chosen address. It also provides access to a range of diving books, AUF and CMAS clothing and diving related products at very competitive prices. It assures you of a voice in Government and manufacturing circles. Part of your fee is returned to your State Branch and to your club for the services they provide.



1. AUF MEMBERSHIP (to be eligible for any of the services below you must be an AUF member).

If you are already a member please state:

Senior \$20.00

☐

Junior \$10.00

☐

MEMBERSHIP No.

EXPIRY DATE

/ /19

2. AUF GOLD MEDAL DIVER INSURANCE

Note: Cover commences 10 days after receipt of application by AUF.

A. SENIOR

\$10.00

☐

B. JUNIOR (18 years or under) Date of Birth / / 19.....

\$ 6.00

☐

3. CMAS INTERNATIONAL DIVER CARD,

DIPLOMA AND BADGE (A photocopy of your qualification card must accompany any application)

A. DIVER

(1) 2 STAR (NQS SCUBA DIVER)

\$20.00

☐

(2) 3 STAR (NQS ADVANCED DIVER)

\$20.00

☐

(3) 4 STAR (NQS ADVANCED DIVEMASTER)

\$20.00

☐

B. INSTRUCTOR

(1) 1 STAR (NAC LEVEL 1 SCUBA ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR OR FAUI ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR)

\$20.00

☐

(2) 2 STAR (NAC LEVEL 2 SCUBA INSTRUCTOR OR FAUI INSTRUCTOR)

\$20.00

☐

(3) 3 STAR (FAUI ADVANCED DIVEMASTER INSTRUCTOR)

\$20.00

☐

TOTAL \$.00

The Australian Underwater Federation (AUF) is the National Sporting body for all underwater activities in Australia. It represents the voice of recreational divers to State and Federal Governments, the Australian Standards Association, State Fisheries, Education Departments, the Confederation of Australian Sport and to many committees, organisations and institutions who have an interest in diving. The AUF is the national representative on the World Underwater Federation - Confederation Mondiale des Activities Subaquatiques (CMAS) - and is responsible for the maintenance of CMAS International diving standards in Australia. These International standards, modified to reflect the Australian style and manner of diving, are maintained by the Australian National Qualification System (NQS). In Australia, a diver can only become a member of CMAS by being a member of the AUF; part of your fees go to CMAS for this purpose. The AUF issues CMAS International Divers Cards, Diplomas and badges to NQS trained divers, FAUI instructors or instructors registered under the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme, on request.

Always fly with a buddy.

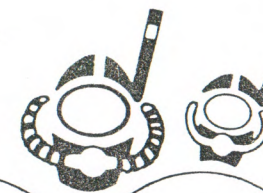
The Barrier Reef, Mt. Gambier, Mauritius. If you want to dive there, TAA will make the arrangements to fly you there.

We have a range of discounts available on airfares and accommodation.

At TAA, we're

proud to be the official airline for the Australian Underwater Federation, and we know you'll enjoy flying the friendly way.

So phone TAA, then sit back and let us organise everything for you.



TAA.
The friendly way.

THE AUF GOLD MEDAL DIVER INSURANCE POLICY (World-wide Cover)

This policy is specifically designed around the needs of the recreational snorkel and scuba diver. Any financial member of the AUF who insures under this policy will be covered for accidents while participating in diving; whether as an individual, with a club, while under instruction or participating in competitions. Cover is also provided during travel which is directly associated with diving activities, including sporting, administrative or social events. There is no qualification needed for snorkel diving, but for cover during actual scuba diving an AUF member must hold a minimum qualification of: NQS SCUBA DIVER; CMAS TWO STAR DIVER; PADI ADVANCED OPEN WATER DIVER; NAUI SPORTS DIVER OR BSAC THIRD CLASS DIVER. A limited cover is available for junior members (under 18 years) at reduced cost. The policy conditions include a 10 day excess from receipt of application to avoid post accident applications. An extract of the benefits available with this scheme is shown on this brochure. A copy of the full insurance policy is held by your AUF State Branch.

EXTRACT OF BENEFITS

EVENT

- 1. DEATH** Accidental Loss of Life.
- 2. PERMANENT DISABLEMENT** which prevents the insured Persons from following any occupation or employment for wage or profit for which he/she is qualified by reason of education, training or experience.
- 3. DISMEMBERMENT** Permanent and incurable paralysis of all limbs or insanity, Total Loss of sight of one or both eyes. Total Loss of or Loss of Use of one or both limbs, Total Loss of the lens of one eye, Total Loss of hearing, Total Loss of or Loss of Use of hands, thumbs, fingers or toes.
- 4. TEMPORARY TOTAL DISABLEMENT** from engaging in his normal income producing occupation or employment and from playing his nominated sport. Must not exceed 80% of normal income.
- 5. MEDICAL** Reimbursement of Medical Expenses, nurse, chemist, hospital, dentist, therapists, ambulance or funeral services. Limited to 75% of non-Medicare claims after deduction of \$50 excess and Health Fund rebates.
- 6. INJURY ASSISTANCE BENEFIT** Where the Insured is not entitled to compensation under Event 4 (because he is not in receipt of income) reimbursement of 80% of non-medical expenses related to the injury, maximum \$10 per day or \$500 in all, excess 14 days, maximum 26 weeks (e.g. home help, student tutoring, extra travel, etc.).

\$20,000
\$20,000
\$20,000 or such percentage specified in Company Policy Schedule
\$150 per week. (52 weeks) (14 day excess)
\$1000
\$500

SEPARATE HERE

AUF NATIONAL OFFICE
P.O. BOX 1006
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608
Phone (062) 47 5554

I would like to take advantage of the services offered to the Australian recreational diver by the AUF. My requirements are marked with a tick ☒ on the other side of this application.

I understand that through this application I also become a member of my State Branch of the AUF.

SURNAME INITIALS PREFERRED NAME
.....
ADDRESS.....
..... POSTCODE.....

Occupation..... Club Name.....
TELEPHONES: ()(W)(H).....

DIVING QUALIFICATIONS

CERTIFYING BODY	LEVEL
.....
.....
.....
.....

I enclose *cheque/money order for \$

Date / / 19..... Signature

*Delete where necessary

OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED / / RECEIPTED / / No.

INSURANCE COVER FROM / / 19.....

INSURANCE EXPIRY DATE (Last Day of) / /

CMAS No. Membership No.

Sydney Gap rocks smashed sailing ship to splinters

ON FRIDAY morning August 21, 1857, the coastal steamer Grafton entered Sydney Harbor after battling her way down from Newcastle in a blustery gale that had been blowing in from the Tasman for several days.

As the ship passed through the Heads the crew noticed wreckage and debris floating on all sides. Ship's timbers, bales of goods, furniture, enough children's toys to stock a shop were all ominous signs of the wreck of a large vessel somewhere near the Harbor entrance.

The ship was the Dunbar — 81 days out of London — which the previous night had been wrecked on the rocks at the Gap near the entrance to Sydney Harbor.

It was one of Australia's most tragic shipwrecks because all but one of the 122 passengers and crew on board perished in the boiling water or were dashed to pieces on jagged rocks.

The loss of the Dunbar was Sydney's worst shipping disaster and one with which many of its citizens became personally involved. Even today skin divers still search for relics of the ship in the water off the Gap.

As soon as the docked Captain Charles Wiseman of the Grafton reported the wreckage seen at the Heads, news of the likelihood of a wreck quickly spread through Sydney with people excitedly retelling wild rumors.

With no wireless, ships could not send news of arrival ahead. So there was no means of telling — except by finding wreckage or survivors — which of many expected vessels had met disaster.

SALVAGED

Word of the wreck was sent to two Watsons Bay pilots who immediately began searching along the cliffs and around the rocks at South Head.

They saw spars, cargo and bodies floating in the waves offshore but could not identify the ship they came from.

Later that day however, debris began turning up all over Sydney Harbor and the name of the wreck was established.

An invoice in a crate of boys' cricket bats washed up at Camp Cove, a mailbag found at Watsons Bay and a Bible salvaged on Forty Baskets Beach were all marked with the name Dunbar.

A fine three-masted sailing vessel of 1321 tonnes and built specially for the England-Australia trade, the Dunbar had been expected to arrive in Sydney at any time on her second voyage.

Sydney's Saturday newspapers the next morning, August 22, confirmed that the Dunbar must have been wrecked.

She had left Plymouth on May 31 under Capt James Green and carried 63 passengers, a crew of 59 and a mixed cargo valued at \$144 000.

Early that Saturday morning South Head Road was thronged with horse-drawn vehicles as well as crowds of pedestrians making for the cliffs at the Gap to try to glimpse the wreck.

At least 1000 spectators, deducing the Dunbar must have been wrecked near the

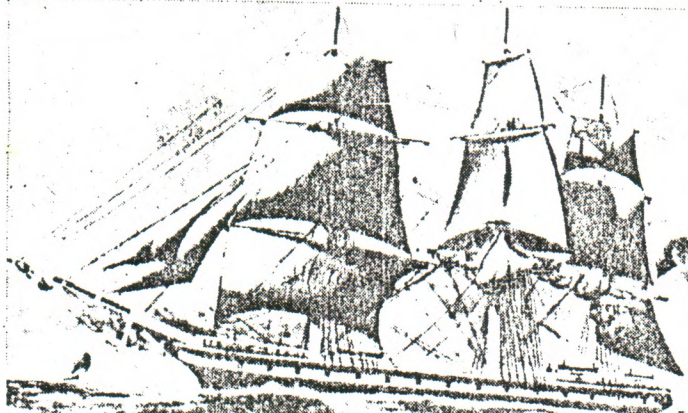
HISTORICAL FEATURE

Gap, gathered on the cliff top. Below was a horrible scene and one of those present wrote: "Corpses of men, women and children, some of them fearfully mutilated, were dashed against the beetling crags and as rapidly drawn back again by the relentless surge."

"Here and there heads or,

was Wollier who found the man after he had worked his way round to the foot of the Gap by "wedging and jamming himself between rocks to prevent being washed away."

Whether Wollier found the survivor or not, there is no doubt he did descend the cliff.



The 1321-tonne Dunbar in all her splendor. When she perished at the base of the Gap the vessel, built specially for the England-Australia trade, was on her second voyage to Sydney.

limbs which had been torn off by repeated concussion against the rocks were thrown up as if in jeering mockery by the very element that had caused their destruction."

Among the crowd staring, fascinated at the grim scene below was Sydney watchmaker Alfred Flower. He had walked out to South Head with his young apprentice, 17-year-old Antoine Wollier, who came from Iceland.

Young Wollier asked Flower if he could go down to check if there were any survivors on the rocks unable to be seen from the cliff. Flower agreed and took the youth's hat, coat and boots.

Wollier found a spot where the drop was not so precipitous as at the Gap and made a perilous descent. What happened next is open to doubt.

Eyewitnesses later could not agree and Wollier never made any statement.

Some people said that while they were all peering down to catch a glimpse of Wollier someone noticed a man on a ledge not far above the waterline.

A rope was lowered to this survivor of the wreck and he was hauled to the top "to the accompaniment of loud cheers."

Others however swore it

and that he made sure there was no one else down there.

He searched around for 45 minutes before he climbed back again. He was greeted with cheers and the Mayor of Sydney, Alderman Thornton took up a collection from the crowd in appreciation of his courage.

More than \$20 was quickly donated and handed to Wol-

by a doctor he was found to be uninjured and not seriously affected by his experience.

From Johnson came the only account of what happened to the Dunbar.

He described how the ship had tussled with a succession of gales which threatened to drive her inshore all the way up the east coast of Australia.

At about 8 pm on Thursday, August 20, land was sighted near Botany Bay. Slowly the Dunbar plunged northward in heavy seas on the last few kilometres of her long voyage.

The weather thickened and sight of the coastline was lost. But occasionally South Head light was visible momentarily through the lashing rain squalls.

Capt Green was worried because he knew he was on a dangerous lee shore. Constant vigilance and hard



A 1963 skin-diving crew raises a carronade — a short, large-bore cannon — from the wreck of the Dunbar.

the Dunbar broadside into the cliff.

Capt Green did not make any turn. Sending the third mate forward with two men, he ordered them to keep a sharp watch for North Head.

Clearly he intended to make his turn only when they saw North Head and he knew he was right in the opening to Sydney Harbor. Instead there came a shout from forward: "Breakers ahead, sir. Breakers ahead and very close."

Captain Green shouted orders to swing the Dunbar away but it was far too late. Now the cliffs could be seen looming above the ship.

Two minutes after the warning call from the third mate the Dunbar hit the rocks. It was just after midnight on the morning of August 21.

Shouts of panic as the passengers came tumbling on deck mingled with the howl of the storm. At the inquest James Johnson told of "passengers running about the deck screaming for mercy."

The captain, he said, was "roof and collected" but there was "great confusion and uproar on deck with the shrieks of the passengers."

At the first impact the topmasts snapped and crashed down in a tangle of ropes. Huge seas pounded the stricken ship, smashing bulwarks and boats and washing a number of people over the side.

Capt Green and his officers tried to quell the passengers' panic. "The Dunbar cannot break up," the skipper told one group of men and women. "She'll last until morning."

But, veteran seaman as he was, Capt Green even then must have felt the deck quivering beneath his feet as hammering water below forced the planks to straining point.

Then came a tell-tale creaking and within five minutes after striking the rocks the Dunbar began to disintegrate.

One survived Dunbar horror

lier. He was overcome by emotion but managed to stammer out in his halting English: "I thank you all, but I did not go down for money. I did it for the feelings in my heart."

EXAMINED

Meanwhile the single survivor had given his name as Able Seaman James Johnson, aged 23, of the Dunbar.

After a tot or two of brandy he was able, with assistance, to walk to the Marine Hotel at Watsons Bay. Examined

"Just before midnight there was a wink of light through the murk. Its direction indicated the ship had passed to the north of the lighthouse and Capt Green knew he was close to the entrance to Sydney Harbor."

Later it was suggested that the skipper of the Dunbar mistook the opening in the cliff called the Gap for the Heads and turned to port too soon. James Johnson refuted this at the inquest.

Through the storm Capt Green could not see the light let alone any narrow opening in the dark cliffs. What happened was that the wind and current were slowly taking

When the final break-up came, with a roar like the explosion of a cannon, seaman James Johnson found himself in the foaming water clinging to a large spar.

With him were two Dutch crew members and the ship's elderly bosun, Charles Sappy.

Within a couple of minutes both Dutchmen were washed away. Johnson and the bosun still kept their grip on the spar and finally a breaker picked them up and dashed them on to the rocks.

A few seconds later the exhausted bosun fell back into the sea and sank from view. Johnson was luckier and crawled up out of reach of the water.

He wedged his body into a crevice and remained there all that night and all the following day and night. Below him he could see floating bodies and he realised he was the only survivor.

It was noon on Saturday, 36 hours after the wreck, when Johnson was sighted and rescued. Over the rest of the weekend 31 bodies were found of the 121 who were lost in the disaster.

An inquest into the 121 deaths was held at the King's Arms Hotel, Lower George Street, on the Monday following the wreck, August 24.

The jurors went to examine the recovered corpses or parts of corpses at the morgue. According to one newspaper report "one juror fainted while others were so deeply moved that they were compelled to leave the place."

When he gave his evidence Johnson loyally stood up for his skipper.

PROCESSION

"Capt Green could not stand off the land more than he did," he said. "He did all he could in the easterly wind, so far as I could judge."

The jury however, was non-committal in its verdict. It decided that, though there may have been an error of judgment in the vessel being so close to shore, it attached no blame to Capt Green or his officers.

That same afternoon 20 000 people stood along the route as the funeral procession of the recovered Dunbar victims made its way to O'Connell Town (now Camperdown) Cemetery.

Those remains which could not be identified were buried in a common grave.

Survivor James Johnson did not return to the sea but settled in Australia. He married and for many years was the keeper of Nobby's lighthouse at Newcastle.

Johnson died in 1915 while living in retirement at Lewisham in Sydney. He had survived to see the 50th anniversary of the wreck of the Dunbar.

He also was present when (following the recovery of one of the ship's anchors by a deep-sea diver in 1910) it was erected at the Gap as a monument to those who lost their lives in the disaster.

With the development of skin-diving many Sydney enthusiasts, after first locating the wreck in 1955, have scoured it and the vicinity.

They have recovered many relics such as old bronze coins, rings and jewellery, forks and spoons, pieces of scrap metal, even a half-full bottle of castor oil.



Above: James Johnson, the sole survivor of the Dunbar. Right: In full sail, the clipper Dunbar before her wrecking.

Midnight on August 20 will be the exact 115th anniversary of what has been described as Sydney's most tragic maritime disaster.

Although shipwreck has been a familiar theme to our great seaport, this tragedy created what the newspapers of the day termed "an unprecedented emotional impact," and for some days a sort of mass hysteria prevailed.

First intimation of anything wrong was when the head light-keeper at Macquarie lighthouse was aroused by the barking of a dog as a full SE gale shrieked through the flag-staff rigging.

Returning from a visit to the tower, he resumed his sleep.

It is remarkable that nothing of the disaster was known for another 10 hours, and that the lone survivor was not rescued for another 36 hours when the full story was told.

People refused to believe that a great ship had been destroyed within sight of its destination.

The Dunbar, of English oak and Burma teak, copper fastened and strengthened with iron, and one of the soundest and most modern ships of her day, had been built by Laings at Sunderland in 1853.

She was to the Sydney people of her time what the mighty liners Canberra and Oriana are to us today.

She was a three-masted, full-rigged ship of 1321 tons, 201 feet 9 in. long.

For comparison, the length of the Manly ferry Baragoola is 199 feet.

She was owned by Duncan Dunbar of London, and cost \$200,000.

Captain Green, her commander, was very highly thought of in Sydney shipping circles.

Rounded

She made her maiden voyage out here in 1856. For some time she had been engaged carrying troops to the Crimea.

On May 31, 1857, she sailed from Plymouth on her second voyage to Australia.

Many of her passengers were immigrants, others were well-known settlers.

With a crew of 59, the Dunbar carried 122 all told.

Cargo stowed under hatches was valued at \$144,000.

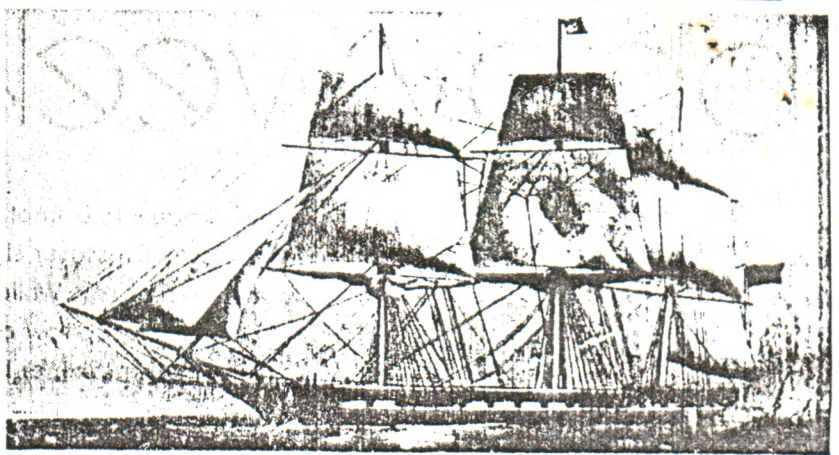
She made a good landfall at Kings Island in the Bass Straits after a fast passage, and all was well as she rounded Cape Howe and shaped a course up the NSW coast for Sydney.

Dusk on August 20 found her 10 miles off Botany Bay close-hauled on the starboard tack under three reefed topsails and foresail.

She was signalled from South Head signal station: "What ship?" . . . "where from?" . . . "how many days out?"

But answers were received only to the last two, so she was not positively identified.

Wind was full gale force, veering and backing between ENE and ESE with



CLIPPER DESTROYED



• Captain C. W. T. Henderson is the author of today's feature, one of a series by members of the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society.

frequent heavy rain squalls.

Under these conditions, with shortened canvas, and making heavy leeway, there was no guarantee that either port or starboard tack would take the ship off the land.

The Dunbar, in fact, had been doomed hours before she struck.

At 11.30 p.m. Macquarie light was observed abaft the mizzen rigging.

From the survivor's account, the captain, who had ordered the foresail to be hauled up to reduce headway on approaching port, now gave the order to "wear ship".

The Dunbar's yards, in the carrying out of this order, had only been squared, and, as she ran before the wind, she was steered on her course towards the land.

This account has given us a clue to her captain's thoughts.

It reveals his intention to put her on the port tack, but this was not carried through.

The situation must have been very tense indeed for Captain Green, standing beside the helmsman on the poop.

What agony of mind did he go through when, before the manoeuvre was completed he possibly realised he was closer to the land than he had believed.

He also possibly realised that, having lost further ground by starting to "wear," decided his only chance was to make a run for it.

Indeed, he missed by barely a mile.

Double look-outs on the

forecastle head reported "breakers ahead."

Captain Green reacted immediately.

The helm was ordered hard down, and both watches went to the port braces to trim sail in an effort to claw off the land.

The hard-pressed Dunbar reacted to her rudder, but her shortened sail and the state of the sea gave her no chance.

An enormous sea picked her up and landed her bodily on the rocks at the foot of cliffs 100 feet high.

In a few moments, she was being ripped apart, piece by piece.

A blue distress signal was burnt, but it was not seen from the shore.

Above the turmoil of the overwhelming seas were heard the cries of passengers who, coming up on deck, were swept quickly over the side.

Soon it was all over.

Where previously there had been strict order and seamanship, now were only wreckage and flotsam.

First the mizzenmast fell, followed by the main topmast, last of all the foremast.

What an hour before had been a noble ship was now matchwood.

An accurate account was given at the Coroner's Court, George Street North, the outcome of which was that Captain Green was exonerated.

Rescued

The main factor for the loss was held to be inadequate lighting of the port.

As a direct result of this, Hornby Light was built on Inner South Head.

The main leading lights were not established until 1911.

It was after the wreck that a man, the sole survivor, was noticed.

He had been washed up by a freak sea on to some rocks where he lay unconscious for 36 hours.

Many thousands of people rode and walked to the scene.

One, Antonio Woollier, an Icelandic, volunteered to be lowered over the cliff face, and he attached a line to the survivor who was then hauled up.

In 1866, nine years after, by a quirk of fate, he was as-

sistant lightkeeper of Nobbys, Newcastle.

With a mate, he rescued from a raging sea the sole survivor of the paddle-steamer Cawarra, which foundered on the dreaded Oyster Bank with a loss of 20 lives.

More than 20,000 people witnessed the funeral procession to the Dunbar Tomb at Camperdown Cemetery of many of the Dunbar victims.

A day of mourning was observed, and all town business was suspended.

The procession arrived after nightfall, and the bodies were laid to rest in a common grave by the light of an eerie moon and some spluttering torches.

When the remains of the Dunbar was sold some years after the wreck, they

brought only \$365.

Many relics from the tragic wreck still exist in Sydney, from her anchor at the Gap to the bell which from the fore-castle head struck the passing hours, now housed at St John's Church, Darlinghurst.

The anchor was rescued from the ocean depths in 1910 and established at its present position in 1930.

The Royal Australian Historical Society erected a commemorative tablet there.

The ship's Bible was salvaged from Forty Baskets Beach, North Harbour, the day after the wreck.

Printed in 1838, it is still in a remarkable state of preservation, and is used for scripture reading at the Dunbar commemoration service.