

WW1 trawler casualties identified

A TEAM OF DEEP DIVERS is to return to a site in the North Sea where it has already found six of 14 trawlers sunk by a German U-boat during World War One.

Led by Scarborough-based wrecks explorer Andy Jackson, the team from Scarborough Sub-Aqua Club intends to dive at the earliest opportunity, probably in May.

The outing will be a continuation of a project that started in 2005 with the discovery of one of the trawlers, 20 miles off the East Coast.

A series of sonar anomalies in the vicinity of the wreck suggested that this could be the resting place of the large group of fishing boats sunk by U57 in 1916.

In 2007, using Jackson's newly commissioned 9m RIB with inboard diesel, the group returned to the area and were thrilled to locate, in about 70m of water with a reasonable 20m vis, a further five of the 14 trawlers known to have sunk after U57 intercepted them.

There was no loss of life, as the

submarine's commander, Karl Von Georg, surfaced, stopped the vessels and allowed all the crews to transfer to a vessel left intact for their carriage back to shore.

The rest of the fleet, mainly from Scarborough but also Hull, was then sunk by a combination of deck-gun shelling and scuttlings by a German boarding party.

This year's exploration will involve the same group of divers who have found the wrecks so far. Jackson, Mally Jenkinson, Colin Bell, Andrew

Oliver and Tim Lamplough, diving on open-circuit trimix, will investigate other anomalies that are almost certainly more of the fishing vessels.

"So far, all the wrecks we've found sit bolt upright and are in great condition," Jackson told **DIVER**.

"The superstructures and decks are gone, but the steel hulls, gunwales and wooden deck beams are well preserved."

The wrecks were all covered in trawl nets and even sport anglers' lines, so great care was required once up close.



Above: The group, from left, Andrew Oliver, Colin Bell, Mally Jenkinson and Tim Lamplough and (below) the restored Otter bell.

The divers have been able to retrieve compasses from all six wrecks, and bells from three, identifying them as the *Harrier*, *Otter* and *Marguerite*.

The divers are particularly pleased about the *Otter*. "This boat is famous for having been, around 1912, the instigator of what's now known as the otter board," explained Jackson.

"These steel boards sat at each side of the trawl and were shaped to exert an outward force, to keep the net wide open.

"Before, nets could only be the width of the boat, but with the boards they could be much wider, so it was a really big step."

Sure enough, in the stern of the *Otter*, along with several of the other wrecks, sat otter boards.

"That really was great, and it has caught the imagination of historians locally and in the fishing industry," said Jackson.



"Also, the loss of that whole fleet is a well-remembered part of local history, so we look forward to finding out as much more as we can about the wrecks." Project footage: www.subseatv.com



From left: An original painting of the *Otter*, owned by a grandchild of one of the crew; the *Otter's* bell, as it was found by the dive team.



We're set up to train the young safely, says club

A SUFFOLK DIVING CLUB IS LOOKING FORWARD to introducing more young people to diving, after winning a national accreditation as a well-run, responsible outfit. Lowestoft Sub-Aqua Club has gained Sport England's Clubmark status, becoming the fifth of the British Sub Aqua Club's 1200 branches to do so.

Clubmark recognises that a club has put in place structures that make for effective management, well-run member activities,

month's issue of **DIVER**.

Some still consider that children in their early teens do not have the maturity to deal with some of the threatening situations diving can throw up – and that the BSAC's and PADI's respective minimum ages for diving of 12 and 10 are not appropriate.

Others think that children can be competent

diving do not fail in their duty of care.

Lowestoft BSAC is firmly in the latter camp. "Yes, we approve of young people taking up diving, under the right conditions," Chairman Mark Owers told **DIVER**.

"Although the BSAC minimum age is 12, in practice few clubs train youngsters as young as that because they're not geared to do it.

"We believe that, with the measures we put in place to gain Sport England Clubmark status, we are now in a position



DDRC needs your help

DIVERS ARE BEING URGED TO respond in greater numbers to a survey run by Plymouth's Diving

questionnaires at the London International Dive Show in March last year. Questionnaires were also