


Sussex Seasearch

Annual Report 2015



Typical not-
too-bad
visibility for
Sussex!

The 2015 season was not the best in fact similar to of 2014, the weather and diving conditions were far from ideal. However, data obtained covered 20 sites including three not recorded before (Buffer Pontoon and the wrecks of SS FD Lambert (? there is doubt over the identity of this wreck see: <http://www.thediveforum.com/archive/index.php/t-16877.html>, and SS Lalen Mendi see <http://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?80178>). This was unfortunate as we desperately need data to help support the the designations of the remaining MCZs put originally put forward, notably in the east, Beachy Head East (which includes the Royal Sovereign Shoals) and Selsey and the Hounds to the west. Hopefully we will be able to focus on these in 2016.

Sussex Seasearch dives undertaken in 2015 were:

Wrecks: *Indiana*
Clodmore
City of Brisbane
SS Lalen Mendis
Pentrych
Oceana
Steam trawler
SS FD Lambert

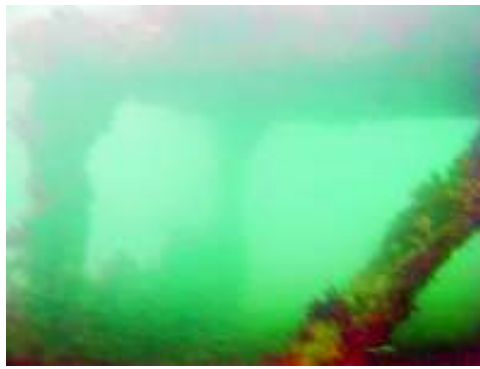
Seaford Ledges
 Brighton Marina training area (training dives)
 Anchor Lump
 SW Rocks
 Palace Pier Reef
 Gullies 250 m west of Brighton Marina harbour wall
 Seabed 2.5 miles SSW Brighton
 Mixon Hole
 Selsey Lifeboat Station* (two full surveys and several training dives)
 Inner Mulberry
 Outer Mulberry
 Buffer Pontoon

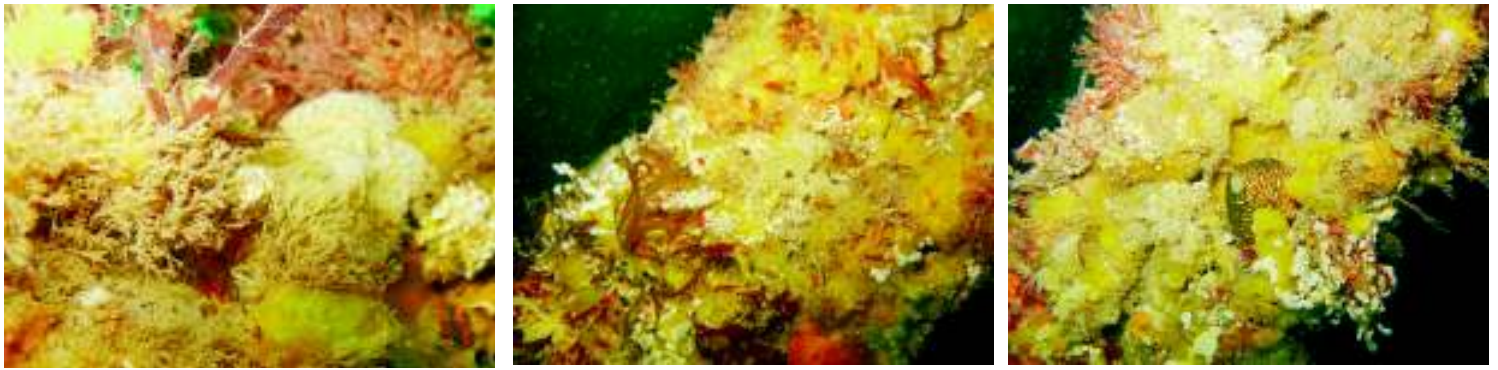
New site: Buffer Pontoon

This site consists of metal wreckage that formed part of a Mulberry Harbour *buffer pontoon* (for details on Mulberry Harbour construction and use see: <http://www.combine-dops.com/Mulberry%20Harbours.htm>) which was destined to be a roadway to the beach. The wreckage sits on a seabed of pebbles and sand with some clay exposed. The wrecked roadway consists of horizontal, vertical and inclined metal girders providing numerous surfaces for marine life. Its shallow depth means that it is largely covered in algae with areas of animal turf rich in sponges, squirts, etc. Deadman's fingers occur on the underside of some metalwork.

With the forth coming loss of the Life Boat Station this site and other inshore wrecks will provide new foci for survey work and the distribution of species.

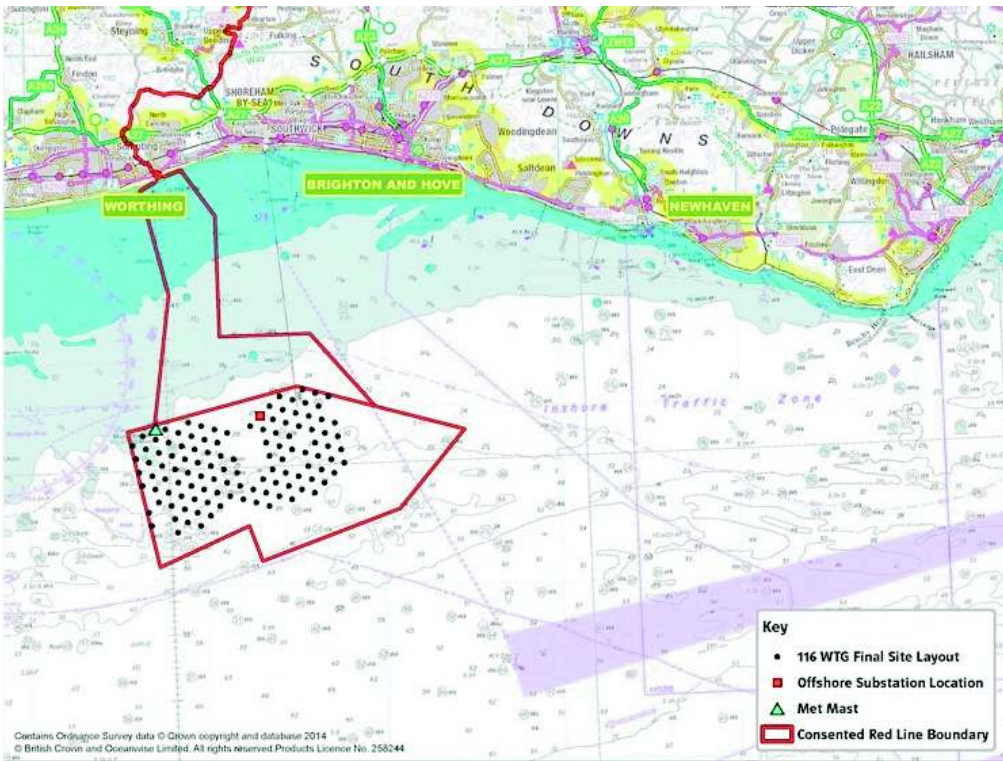
Images ©Michelle Legg





Courses

In April James Lucey taught a course in Brighton organised by Neil Watson where 12 people took part. For 2016 an Observer course is being arranged by Olle Åkesson for the 25/26th April 2016. For further details contact Olle: olleakesson@sussexwt.org.uk .



Rampion Wind Farm

The Rampion Wind Farm, the large offshore wind farm development by E.ON, under construction off the Sussex coast. It has a target capacity of 400 MW. Construction is expected to be completed in 2018. The first offshore foundation were laid in February.

There are proposals to survey the colonisation of the turbine foundations and have a community benefits fund which may be able to be used to this end. The undersea structures will certainly provide numerous niches for life and be of considerable benefit to the marine diversity off our coast.

See **e-on**

<https://www.eonenergy.com/About-eon/our-company/generation/planning-for-the-future/wind/offshore/rampion-offshore-wind-farm/project-information/offshore-layout>

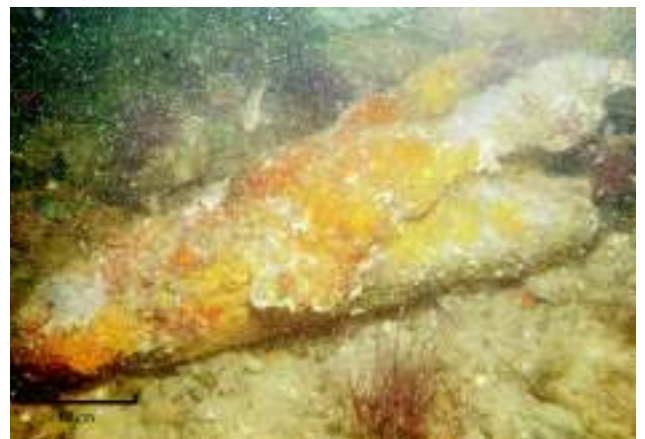
Special species

A few 'new' species to the area were seen, all on the Selsey Life Boat Station: a stalked jelly fish *Haliclystus auricula*, the tunicates *Distomus variolosus* and *Lissoclinum perforatum*. These finds show just how significant this site is and it will be sadly missed when it is demolished hence the homage to the site, below..

***Selsey Lifeboat Station Development**

The redevelopment of the Life Boat Station progresses and at the time of writing this the steel-work for the new station was being erected (beginning of April 2016). Presumably, once this is complete the old station will be demolished but at present it still stands and is in use despite some damage from storm Katie on the 28th March. To keep up-to-date with developments visit the website: <http://www.selselylifeboats.co.uk/index.html>

A very rare and unusual find below the Life Boat Station was the almost complete tibia of a Pleistocene hippo (?). The adjacent Selsey East Beach is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (linked with Selsey West Beach and the Bracklesham Bay SSSI) This group form an important Quaternary site for a sequence of freshwater and estuarine deposits of Ipswichian Interglacial age. Evidence from the sediments and the pollen and microfaunas they contain, indicates rapid climatic amelioration at the beginning of the interglacial and a marine transgression at about -1.8m OD in pollen zone



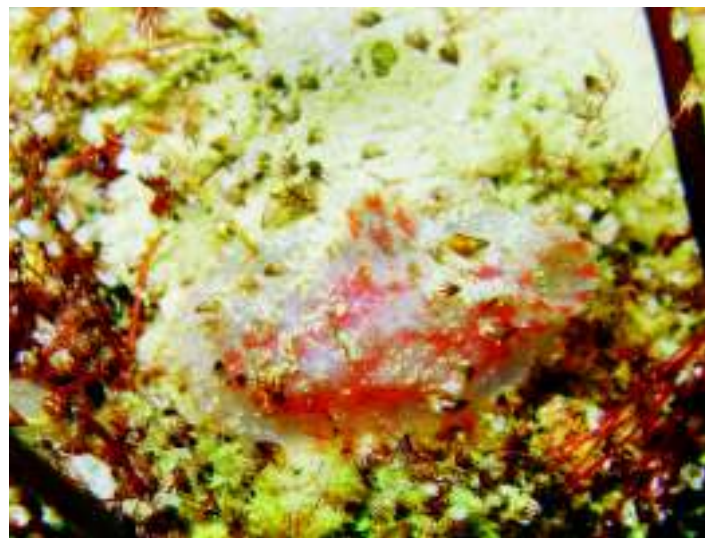
IIb. At Selsey West Beach raised beach deposits overlying the estuarine sediments extend up to 7m OD. The deposits at Selsey East Beach are of

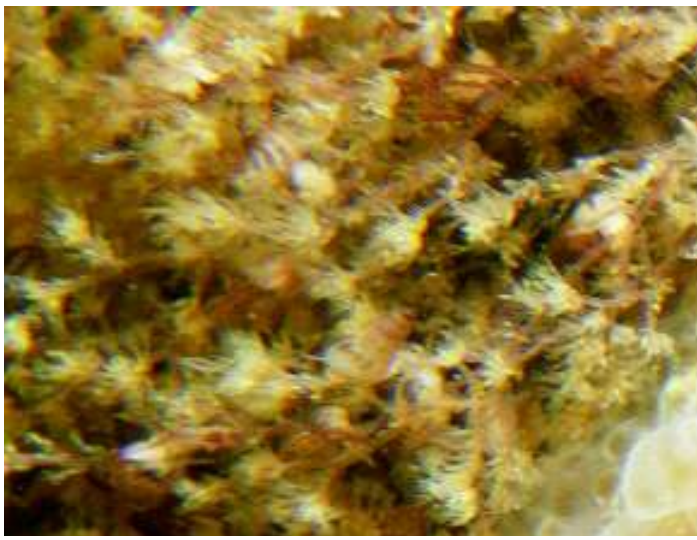
unique importance in providing Pleistocene vertebrate faunas from the very early part of the Ipswichian Interglacial. The faunas include beaver, straight-tusked elephant, an extinct rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus hemitoechus*, hippopotamus, horse and European pond tortoise. Much potential exists for vertebrate research at this locality particularly with regard to stratigraphy and pollen zonation.

Images ©Gerald Legg/Michelle Tebbs/chelififer.com

Life on a pier leg – Selsey Life Boat Station









Oceana

As one of the most heavily wrecked coasts Sussex wrecks provide havens – oases – amongst the relative deserts of sediments of sand, shingle and mixed ground. Species present vary with the depth of the wreckage. Any wreckage is rapidly colonised as is any hard substrate deposited in the sea.

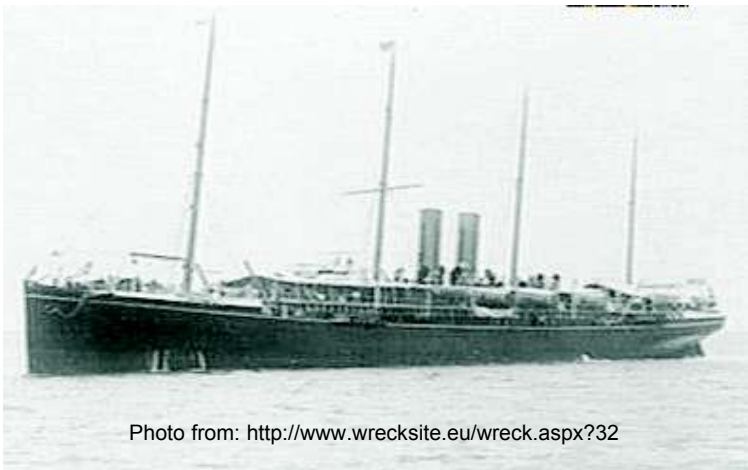


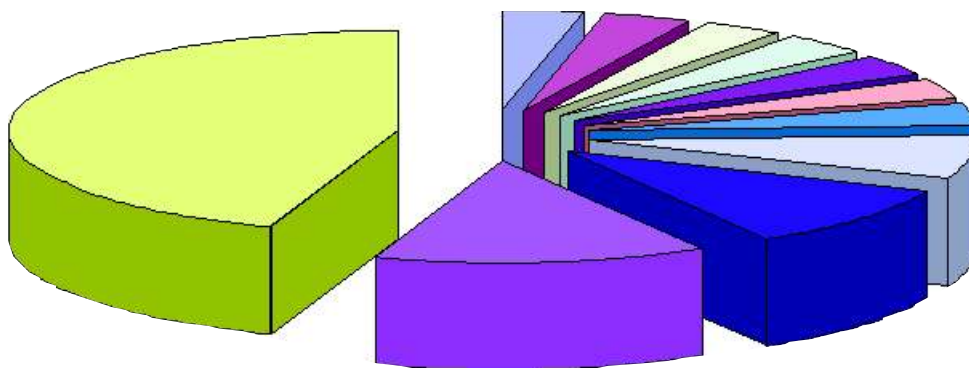
Photo from: <http://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?32>

One of the many wrecks is the *Oceana*, sunk after collision with the *Pisagua* on 16th March 1912 (for more see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Oceana_\(1887\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Oceana_(1887)))

Image ©Graham Jackman



Proportions of biotopes recorded



- Mixed faunal turf communities
- Piddocks with a sparse associated fauna in sublittoral very soft chalk or clay
- Infralittoral fouling seaweed communities
- Silted kelp communities (sheltered infralittoral rock)
- Moderate energy littoral rock
- Crepidula fornicata* with ascidians and anemones on infralittoral coarse mixed sediment
- Sabella pavonina* with sponges and anemones on infralittoral mixed sediment
- Moderate energy circalittoral rock
- Soft rock communities
- Sublittoral mixed sediment
- Circalittoral fouling faunal communities (wrecks, piers etc)

SW Rocks constitute part of a sequence of chalk reefs which includes Looe Gate and Ship rock, Marine Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (mSNCIs) (non-statutory sites identified due to the occurrence of special interest features (habitats, flora, fauna, unusual geology or geomorphology). In the case of these sites, their submerged chalk reefs and associated biological communities. SW Rocks occurs 4.5 km SW of Hove 50° 47.6'N; 0° 12.5'W. For further information see <http://www.seasearch.co.uk/downloads/Sussex%20Chalk%202010.pdf>

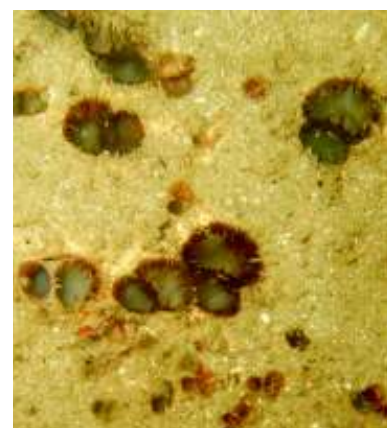
It consists of 270m of vertical north-facing chalk cliff reaching 2m above the seabed and undercut at its base. The cliff face and upper surface are densely covered in marine life: red algae, sponges and bryozoans. The many piddock holes provide homes for many organisms, including burrowing sea cucumbers found in 1990 (not seen



Biotopes

The predominant substrates recorded include metal and concrete, chalk, sandstone, clay, sand and mixed ground. Each of these supports a number of biotopes characterised by their faunal and floral assemblages.

Metal and concrete wreckage provides niches for a large number of diverse species, followed by soft rock and sediments.

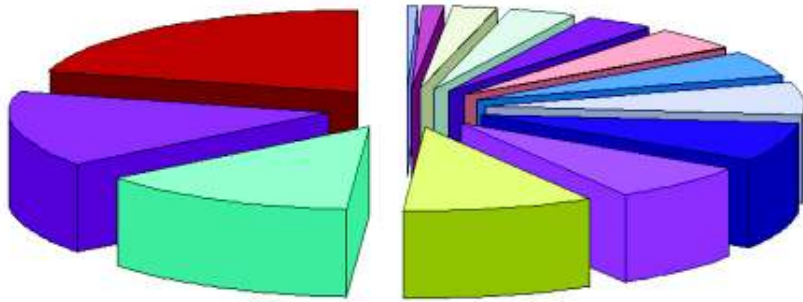


SW Rocks

since but not because they are not there still). This is the only record of this species in the eastern Channel.



Proportions of records for each major group for 2015



Species Recorded

Elasmobranchia (rays, sharks)

Scyliorhinus canicula
Cephalopoda (squid, cuttlefish, octopus)

Sepia officinalis

Nudibranchia (sea slugs)

Aeolidia papillosa

Doris pseudoargus

Flabellina pedata

Acanthodoris pilosa

Limacia clavigera

Thecacera pennigera

Janolus cristatus

Echinodermata (starfish, urchins)

Asterias rubens

Psammechinus miliaris

Bivalvia (clams)

Pholas dactylus

Mytilus edulis

Crassostrea gigas

Ostrea edulis

Aequipecten opercularis

Pecten maximus

Gastropoda (snails)

Calliostoma zizyphinum

Gibbula cineraria

Aplysia fasciata

Crepidula fornicata

Rissoa parva

Buccinum undatum

Nucella lapillus

Nassarius reticulatus

Annelida: Polychaeta (bristle worms)

Arenicola marina

Aphrodita aculeata

Bispira volutacornis

Sabella pavonina

Serpulidae

Filograna

Hydroides

Spirobranchus triqueter

Spirorbis

Lanice conchilega

Tunicata (squirts)

Clavelina lepadiformis

Didemnum coriaceum

Didemnum maculosum

Diplosoma listerianum

Diplosoma spongiforme

Lissoclinum perforatum

Trididemnum cereum

Aplidium proliferum

Aplidium punctum

Ascidia mentula

Asciodiella aspersa

Ciona intestinalis

Perophora listeri

Molgula manhattensis

Botryllus schlosseri

Dendrodia grossularia

Distomus variolosus

Styela clava

Bryozoa, Ectoprocta (sea-mats)

Bryozoa indet crusts

Pentapora foliacea

Bugula

Bugula flabellata

Bugula plumosa

Bugula turbinata

Cellaria

Cellepora pumicosa

Chartella papyracea

Flustra foliacea

Membranipora membranacea

Reteporella

Crisia

Crisia eburnea

Tubulipora

Algae

Dictyota dichotoma

Fucus serratus

Halidrys siliquosa

Chorda filum

Laminaria hyperborea

Ulva lactuca

Rhodophycota indet. (non-calc. crusts)

Delesseria sanguinea

Corallina officinalis

Dilsea carnosus

Furcellaria lumbricalis

Chondrus crispus

Gigartina pistillata

Polyides rotunda

Scinaia furcellata

Palmaria palmata

Plocamium cartilagineum

Rhodymenia pseudopalmata

Rhodophyceae (red algae)

Porifera (sponges)

Porifera indet crusts

Leucosolenia

Sycon ciliatum

Pachymatisma johnstonia

Dysidea fragilis

Cliona celata

Polymastia boletiformis

Suberites carnosus

Suberites ficus

Axinella dissimilis

Halichondria (Halichondria) panicea

Hymeniacion perlevis

Haliclona (Haliclona) similans

Amphilectus fucorum

Hemimycale columella

Clathria (Microciona)

Raspailia (Raspailia) ramosa

Cnidaria (seafirs, anemones, corals)

Anemonia viridis

Urticina felina

Diadumene cincta

Metridium senile

Actinothoe sphyrodeta

Cereus pedunculatus

Sagartia elegans

Sagartia troglodytes

Alcyonium digitatum

Corynactis viridis

Caryophyllia (Caryophyllia) smithii

Tubularia indivisa

Aglaoophenia pluma

Clytia hemisphaerica

Obelia geniculata

Halecium halecinum

Nemertesia antennina

Plumularia setacea

Hydrallmania falcata

Sertularella

Sertularella gaudichaudi

Sertularia

Rhizostoma pulmo

Chrysaora hysoscella

Haliclystus

Crustacea (crabs, lobsters, prawns, hoppers, Amphipoda species)

Jassa species

Cancer pagurus

Inachus dorsettensis

Macropodia tenuirostris

Maja squinado

Homarus gammarus

Pagurus bernhardus

Palaemon serratus

Liocarcinus depurator

Necora puber

Carcinus maenas

Perforatus perforatus

Teleostei (bony fish)

Anguilla anguilla

Conger conger

Gadus morhua

Pollachius pollachius

Trisopterus luscus

Trisopterus minutus

Lipophrys pholis

Parablennius gattorugine

Callionymus lyra

Gobius niger

Gobius paganellus

Gobiusculus flavescens

Pomatoschistus

Pomatoschistus minutus

Pomatoschistus pictus

Thorogobius ephippiatus

Ctenolabrus rupestris

Labrus bergylta

Labrus mixtus

Symphodus melops

Dicentrarchus labrax

Pholis gunnellus

Spondyliosoma cantharus

Pleuronectes platessa

Zeugopterus punctatus

Agonus cataphractus

Taurulus bubalis

Zeus faber



Selsey Lifeboat Station
(© Google Earth)

Thank You All

Our thanks to those who took part in 2015: Brian Bailey, Christine Bohea, David Brander, Dawn Moss, Evan Thomas, Gerald Legg, Glenn King, Graham Jackson, Hilary Ryan, Hugh Waite, Jackie O'Dowd, Leanne Collinson, Liam Beckett, Lois Nippard, Lorna Nye, Mark Harrison, Michelle Legg, Neil Watson, Nigel Macnab, Olle Åkesson, Paul Jackman, Roxana Preston, Sarah McKenzie, Zöe Sylvester.