



**Friends of Mandurah Community Museum Newsletter**

**February 2020**

### ***Megamouth Update 2020.***

It seems timely that with completion of the Archaeological dig, plus replacement of the floor in the boatshed area of the museum, that we revisit our much loved Megamouth shark.

The first Megamouth found was in Hawaii in 1976. It caused great interest in the biological sphere around the world. In some ways it was fortunate to have this specimen as it had become tangled in an anchor of a U.S. Navy vessel. There was to lapse another 8 years almost to the day before the second specimen was caught in the Catalina Islands off the state of Carolina in the U.S.

Mandurah papers of the time of the beaching of 'our' Megamouth, recorded the first sighting as being in 1981 for the first shark, however current scientific articles place it as 1976.

Mandurah had the 3<sup>rd</sup> specimen washed onshore, 4 years after the second one, on August 18<sup>th</sup> 1988. Prior to the shark's death, swimmers mistaking it for a whale or dolphin tried to coax it back deeper into the ocean. They found it next day, dead and beached on shore. News spread fast and soon Barry Hutchins from the WA Museum, arrived to assess the find. Mandurah and W.A had become famous and apart from all in Mandurah who viewed the shark on the town beach, thousands of West Australians queued to see the rare find after it was moved to Perth. As of January 2020, no further Megamouths have been sighted in Australian waters.

It wasn't until the 6<sup>th</sup> shark was caught live and scientists were able to place a tracking device onto it, that more information about its habits were found. During the day it remains close to the seabed with a cruising rate of about 1km per hour. At night it rises close to the surface while following the euphausiid shrimp that it feeds on.

With good reason, Mandurah citizens of the day felt that the shark should be returned to Mandurah where it could become a major tourism drawcard. Unfortunately costs and other logistics didn't make this a viable idea although there was a lot of press about it at the time.

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**From the Editor.** Welcome to our first edition for 2020, while we appear to have been in recession so much has been happening at the museum. You will be able to read all about this in both Nicholas and Katrina's reports.

This edition features the Megamouth Shark which was carefully left watching over our archaeological dig, and also carefully observing the workers preparing a new floor for the old boat storage area.

We have updated the information relating to the Megamouth and this plus memories from Beryl Slade, Mary King and John Layton are featured in this edition. Beryl and Mary talk about the replica which was built once it became obvious that the Megamouth would remain in the stewardship of WA Museum. Currently it is possible to see this exhibit at the Maritime Museum in Fremantle.

The Essex was also taken away to protect it and we expect it back once all of the refurbishment is completed.

***Jan Baker.***

### **Special features**

**Megamouth Update 2020** Jan Baker.

**Oral History Excerpts about Megamouth.**

Mary King, John Layton, Beryl Slade.

**Index of 2019 newsletters.**

### **Regular features.**

From the MDO .

Education Matters.

Celebrating Christmas.

Maritime Moorings

Chairpersons report.

Nicholas Reynolds.

Katrina Gauci

Jan Baker

Dave Austin

Jan Baker

***Editor***

***Jan Baker.***

On 22 September 2010 Megamouth III, the WA Museum's extraordinarily rare and valuable megamouth shark, was moved from Perth Museum into a purpose built tank at the WA Maritime Museum in Fremantle.

Moving Megamouth was a massive logistical activity that took over one year to plan. Over 7000 litres of ethanol had to be disposed of, a fragile and priceless specimen had to be moved across Perth City to Fremantle, and extensive and ongoing conservation processes had to continually be developed.

But back to the Mandurah story. By 1990 the Mandurah Historical Society had been formed for 20 years and were about to become a presence in this building which is now the museum. Dudley Tuckey, the committee's president and a Councillor with the then City of Mandurah is cited on Pioneer Day 1990 as saying that he hoped that the city council would have a model of the megamouth ready for the proposed museum's extensions. Unfortunately, the society's hopes were dashed in September with the failure to access funds from the Mandurah City Council. Not to be daunted an appeal was launched to raise \$15,000 to \$20,000 to provide a fibreglass sculpture likeness for the museum. This appeal was launched with \$500 from one of the people who found the shark, John Severin.

By October of that year, the appeal was well underway with Beryl Slade, now society president, launching a bid for all the remaining 'coppers' of the citizens of Mandurah to be donated. One and two cent coins were to be phased out in Australia in 1992.

By August 1993, Mandurah Historical Society were expecting that with the assistance of a grant from WA Museums, they would have reached the initial target figure of \$15,000. Amazingly, at this time the actual megamouth was still languishing in the 'bowels' of the Perth Museum with no funding in sight for its actual display. At that time a call for tenders for producing the fibreglass model were called.

Two sculptors, Peter Flavell and Trigg Craig completed this project, having undertaken the work in the old church hall, now known as the Sutton Street Hall or Church Studio. The question then was how do you transport such a fragile replica so important to Mandurah people and the Historical Society who had raised the funds? Commencing on the top of the sculptors veteran Valiant car, Megamouth now nicknamed *Satchmo*, was carried into the museum on the shoulders of the two sculptors at the event of Pioneer Day 1997.

It was fitting, that this was also the launch of some much anticipated extensions to the Mandurah Museum, and on the occasion of society member Beryl Slade's Life Membership presented by Dudley Tuckey.



This photo taken from WA Museum site, in the interest of correctness could any of our Friends confirm whether it was taken outside the schoolroom door at the museum.

[www.museum.wa.gov.au/megamouth](http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/megamouth)

<https://australianmuseum.net.au/blog-archive/science/megamouth-shark-movie/>

<https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/discover-fish/species-profiles/megachasma-pelagios/>

Also information and newspaper scans held by the Mandurah Community Museum.





First preservation of Megamouth was by freezing while decisions were made. WA Museum secondly preserved it with formaldehyde which was a standard operation at that time. The WA Museum after 13 years was aware of the safety issues with keeping the Megamouth in an explosive chemical. Careful planning had to go into draining and disposing of the formaldehyde with this chemical being replaced by Ethanol. Draining the Formaldehyde took place over late 1994 and early 1995, when ethanol was then used to protect the specimen.

Some 15 years later it became obvious that the shark would need to be moved in readiness for demolition of part of the museum and preparation for a new Museum being planned for the site.

Moving Megamouth was a massive logistical activity that took over one year to plan. With technological changes a decision was made to change the preservative medium to 65% Glycerol. This is what it is preserved in now.

Throughout all these operations, marine scientists needed to experiment on other fish or sharks to make sure none of the chemicals would damage 'our shark'.

Moving such a large, rare and valuable specimen some kilometres, needed careful planning, the move being undertaken on 22nd September, 2010 into its purpose built tank.

It is now possible to see the Third Megamouth Shark at the WA Museum - Maritime in Fremantle, as pictured above.



### **Museum Development Officer.**

Wednesday November 6th saw the launch of Mandurah Baptist College's short film on the history of Madora Bay, marking both the 40th anniversary of the building of the local community hall and also the 60th anniversary of the start of the area's subdivision. The museum gave teachers and students at the College assistance with research and access to information which helped them in researching the area's history. Interviews and recordings of long term residents are a feature of the film and it is now being played on the smart TV in the Museum's local studies room.

On Saturday November 9th a meeting of the Peel Chapter of Museums and Galleries Australia WA was held at the Mandurah Community Museum. Apart from the great networking opportunity that these meetings always provide, we were fortunate enough to have a presentation on the numerous shipwrecks which lie off the Mandurah coast which was given by renowned local maritime history expert Peter Worsley OAM.

The last few months have been busy again with various historical presentations being given to groups in the Mandurah area. On the evening of November 26th the MDO gave a talk to the Mandurah Probosc Club giving an outline of the early European history of Mandurah. This talk was well received with a number of local professionals having their eyes opened not just to local history but also the role played by the museum in supporting the community's appreciation of that history.

One of the most significant events on the museum's calendar for the 2019/20 financial year came to fruition in the final week of January. This was an archaeological dig and associated public outreach activities which focused on the museum's 'garage' area just outside the door to the 1900 Dalrymple schoolroom. The origins of this dig lie in the problems that were occurring with the flooring in the area where the Essex ute is normally displayed. Due to this area having vinyl flooring laid over old concrete footpath slabs, the vinyl buckled as moisture has intruded causing a tripping hazard. Replacement of this flooring was requested as part of the City's capital works budget last year, and when the time came to remove the flooring it was suggested that an archaeological dig be undertaken to see if any objects from the area's time as a school or police station could be located. This was, in a way, a follow on from the successful dig and public outreach programme held nine years ago which located the foundations of the old 1854 police barracks in Dalrymple park. After the suggestion, Nicholas obtained quotes from three different companies providing archaeological services and then selected the Extent company to undertake the dig. Their team, led by former Peel regional heritage advisor Helen Munt were a fabulous professional crew to work with. It was decided that along with the dig, opportunities for community engagement would also be taken advantage of. These were worked out into three programmes. One was the opportunity for members of the public to assist an archaeologist in the dig. The second was a children's activity where kids could try being an archaeologist by digging for hidden items in sandpits and then going on to draw and describe them as an archaeologist would. The third element was a public lecture on the dig site's history, the dig itself, and objects found during the process. This was held on the Friday in the old schoolroom. All the sessions in the first two elements of

the public engagement were booked out, and with 25 people attending the Friday lecture this was also a great result. The archaeologists said that the Mandurah dig was the best attended community archaeological project that they had ever undertaken. The archaeologists are now in the process of writing their report on what was found and we eagerly await the both their analysis and the objects which have been found.

The extra attendance from the dig and associated activities lead to an all-time high for visitors in the month of January of 845 people.

With the dig now complete the works crew have been free to lay the concrete slab which will provide a firm and stable floor for the museum garage area and also to work on providing a better floor around the entrance of the schoolroom and courtroom galleries. A new wider roller door and a more finished treatment of the area will also be provided. In the workshop area the flooring will be brought up to the same level as the door which will make all our lives much easier when shifting chairs. Shelving will also be installed to help with storage. **Nicholas Reynolds**





## Mary King Oral History Excerpt.

### ***The Megamouth shark?***

Well that was a long held dream for the Historical Society and Mrs Slade instituted a system where people were invited to give, if I remember correctly their cent coins and the fundraising went on for many many years and she was the driving force behind that and I can remember it very vividly being constructed of course around in the church hall on the corner of Gibson and Sutton Street and the men casting it in fibreglass and us going around there and having a look at it while it was being built and then because they were frightened it would crack if they loaded it on a truck they literally carried it through the streets, I didn't see that but I believe it was hilarious actually [laughter – interviewee].

### ***As a museum volunteer have you found that has been one of the special items for children?***

The children loved it yes, in fact I've got to say apart from commenting on the cells and the Megamouth shark most children tended to, not exactly ignor, but the [inaudible] seemed to fade into the background. Although the letters which I am quite sure are still in booklets down in the Museum if one cares to read them, and I had read them, because they were quite often addressed to me personally because I had been taking them through, ..... but yes the Megamouth shark was always a huge hit with the children. We had to put a rope around it because a could of little people put their fingers on the teeth and we knew they had been made from rose thorns you see so, but the Historical Society had to put a railing around it.



## Mandurah Megamouth.

Date: August 18, 1988

Sex: Male

Length: 515 cm TL

Disposition: Western Australia Museum

Source: [Berra, T. M. and Hutchins, J. B.](#)

**We have 69 confirmed occurrences of megamouth sharks around the world and are investigating reports of additional individuals.** (*Florida Museum of Natural History – numbers updated 09-05-2018.*)

Megamouth sharks spend daylight hours near the edge of the continental shelf, swimming slowly at depths of 150 m or deeper. At night time it rises close to the surface to feed on small shrimp that form part of the plankton.

They are one of only three species of sharks that feed on plankton (planktivorous). They probably swim along with their mouth open, filtering plankton from the water as it passes through their gills. The other two filter-feeding shark species are whale sharks and basking sharks. Like these other filter-feeding sharks, megamouth sharks only have small teeth. Megamouth sharks are also able to thrust out their jaws (called protrusible jaws).

Megamouth sharks have soft bodies with large oily livers, flabby muscles and skeletons that are poorly calcified. These features probably help megamouth sharks to swim very slowly without sinking.

Little is known about how these sharks reproduce but they probably give birth to live young which have fed on unfertilised eggs in their mothers' uterus. This is known as oophagy.

DNA studies suggest that megamouth sharks are the most primitive of sharks of the Order Lamniformes, the group which includes white pointer, mako, basking and grey nurse sharks.

<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/megamouth/what-is-megamouth>

Below.

Nicholas and Kristy also get into the Christmas Spirit. Kristy who assists us behind the scenes with some graphic design is rarely seen at the museum so it was great to have her here.



Below.

Coordinator of Libraries & Museum Team, Teena Miller relaxes with volunteers and their partners during the Christmas 'get together'.





**The Friends are once again raffling a print of the 2nd Central Mandurah Bridge, this was kindly donated by Mr Roy Bolton.**

**Raffle tickets are now available at the museum.**

**Raffle cost is \$2, and the draw will take place on the 15th of April.**

**Please support our fundraising efforts.**

## **Education Matters.**

### **Christmas Display and Treasure Hunt**

To help celebrate Christmas, the Mandurah Community Museum had a display of Nativity Scenes on loan from the store 'Tis the Season Christmas Emporium' and a free Christmas Treasure Hunt during the month of December. Many people commented on how beautiful the display was. Those that completed the hunt received a prize of a Christmas Swirl Lollipop or a Wooden Spinning Top.

There were approximately 140 children that got into the festive spirit and completed the hunt. The feedback was really positive and the hunt enjoyed by all that participated. Thank You to Tom Hardy for supplying the spinning tops and all the museum volunteers for promoting the hunt, helping people and dressing as Santa.

### **2020 January School Holiday Activity**

#### **Transformers Workshops**

Transformers Activities presented by Xanthe Turner were held at the Mandurah Community Museum over six days during the January school holidays for children aged 6+ years old. Before each session the children and parents were shown the Curious Community Collectibles display case which featured a collection of Xanthe's Transformers.

The sessions were free. The children had the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities. These included, making a Transformers mask, colouring Transformers, completing a Transformers quiz, discussing and writing who you would be in Transformers, creating a group story and playing Transformer word games.

Xanthe's presentations were lively and engaging. Her enthusiasm and interest had the children following instructions, interacting and discussing Transformers, working independently and at other times working cooperatively to complete activities.

All the verbal feedback from children and parents who attended was positive, they all enjoyed the activities.

One Grandad asked: *Where did you purchase the masks and pens from? I would like to make more masks with my*



One Mum said: *I was surprised how interactive my son was with others, usually he doesn't like to express himself. He is keen to come again.*

Another mum said: *Very good practical activities suitable for a variety of age groups. Good materials, a good holiday activity. Thank You.*

The children said: *This was awesome, we had so much fun!*



**Excerpt from John Layton Oral History relating to the Megamouth Shark.  
Megamouth shark was washed up?**

Yes, I was over there when it was still alive. Yes it was still alive when I got there.

**Talk me through it.**

It was strange seeing something like that after catching a lot of sharks, I mean I've caught quite a few different sharks here that shouldn't have been here, but to see this one was strange. I mean we had no idea what it was, then, until after the museum got hold of it, or whoever had it identified it. Yes, it was still alive, it was still alive when I left, but it didn't take long to die I believe. Yes it was quite fascinating, I've seen oar fish on the beach, and all sorts of things get washed up here. Yes, it was something to see because, there's only been 2 or 3 around the world.

**It was number 3 in the world; I think there has been about 13 now. It really started the rush.**

Yes, I mean there was one in Hawaii or somewhere, I can't remember exactly where they were, but ours was about the third one ever to come ashore, and it was strange to have a look at something that was sort of prehistoric to us.

**So you would never have pulled anything that strange out. You would normally get it identified if you.**

Yes, well I had a shark I couldn't identify, it looked like a grey nurse, but I knew it wasn't, and instead of having 6 gills, like a normal shark, I think it had seven, I noticed differences in it and it didn't have a dorsal fin, like most sharks have the big dorsal fin, this one didn't have, it had 2 fins right down the back and I took it to the Fisheries, and it was quite big it was 10 foot long. It turned out to be a seven gilled New Zealand shark, it was supposed to be in the Pacific anyhow, but it was over here. Yes, I caught that up in the bay towards Madora. As soon as I landed, [I got] it onboard, I thought, this is a strange shark. You know, you look at them, when you have handled them every day, when your shark fishing, something different comes up. Yes, it was, but they identified it, I think it was a seven gilled New Zealand shark.



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**December 2019.**

Robert Holmes: Policeman of the Peel. Sue Doherty & Debra Armstrong.  
Elizabeth Thomas. Jan Baker. Committee of Friends of Mandurah Community Museum.  
Volunteer outing, Mandurah Dreaming.

**October 2019.**

Coastal Trading: A century ends. Henry B Halliday. John Thomas.  
Emily Chambers & Jan Baker.

**August 2019.**

John Tuckey. Emily Chambers & Jan Baker.  
List of shipping owned by the first Tuckeys.  
Emily Chambers. Vale Bob Corby. Jan Baker.  
Poem by Bob Corby  
Opening the Courtroom.

**June 2019.**

Coastal Shipping and the Tuckeys Pt 2. Captain Daniel Scott. Rose Abatamateo & Jan Baker.  
From the Editor. Jan Baker. From the MDO.  
Nicholas Reynolds.

**April 2019.**

One Woman's Enterprise in Mandurah: Theatres and Entertainment 1920s - 1940's. Ursula Brimble. Museum Mural Fact Sheet. Moving pictures in Australia - Timeline.  
Update on Leslie St.

**February 2019**

Coastal Shipping and the Tuckeys Pt 1. Emily Chambers. Ex Slave Ship - James Matthews.  
Dave Austin. Return of the Essex. Jan Baker.



**Friends Raffle - 2020.** While the museum is currently undergoing quite significant works which include the Megamouth/ Essex area, the Friends are running a raffle.

Many of you assisted with our 2018 raffle which successfully raised funds for an interactive game which is now much used in the Courtroom/ Industrial Gallery.

Due to the popularity of the photo print of the old bridge we have been fortunate that Roy Bolton has again generously provided this print worth in excess of \$500 for us to raffle. This is now ongoing until the 15th of April when it will be drawn.

We are hoping that all our Friends might buy or better still sell for us some raffle tickets to contribute towards our efforts. We have designated these funds to a display unit for just outside the schoolroom.

**Please help if you can.**





**Celebrating Christmas.** For more than ten years, volunteers at the museum have gathered together for an informal gathering to celebrate the Christmas season. This year was no different with more than 20 volunteers with their partners joining in the event.

There is nothing formal about it, we just bring along our own drinks, a small plate of nibbles and a happy face. On our table were a range of food stuffs with both savoury and sweet holding the limelight. We like to remember absent friends at these events and also welcome new volunteers who have joined within the last year or so. This year there wasn't any recipient of our ten year award but in the past we have acknowledged those volunteers who have spent so much time with us. Who will it be next year?

Left: Julia and Linda.

2020 will see Katrina eligible for her Long Service Leave and Nicholas headed well towards his next set of Long Service.

The volunteers all enjoy our time spent with Katrina and Nick who are unfailingly helpful and make our time at the museum so pleasant. Many of us feel as if this is a club we belong to, rather than a volunteer unit.

So many volunteers at the museum are also overdue for Long Service Leave themselves.

Right: Nick and Katrina.  
Below: Our festive table.







Above: Linda, Allan & Colin



Left: Michael & Dave.

For Katrina's sake, we have to be prepared to dress up in crazy Christmas costume and of course have our photograph taken. Everyone got into the spirit of this and you can see how glamorous we are.

In the past we have benefited from Ruth Watson's cake making and decorating by raffling it for the benefit of the Friends and their works. As Ruth wasn't able to be here we sent out an S.O.S to all volunteers for a small item (not more than \$5), to put into a Christmas hamper. Lots of donations were received and we finally managed two small hampers and several individual items, so we were able to spread the 'joy' around. We finally made \$95 which will go towards our next big investment for the museum.



**Maritime Moorings.** Firstly, a very big thank you to those who kindly donated cushions to make the hard wooden seats in the museum's boat a more comfortable experience.

We have successfully completed a number of informative heritage cruises during which we visit ten historic sites. We intend to continue these on a monthly basis as and when we have enough people interested and conditions are favourable.

We have also completed an exploratory cruise up the Serpentine River to the approximate site of the Barragup Mungah (aboriginal fish trap). Accompanying us was Ian McCann, a maritime archaeologist, who is keen to locate the exact location of the Mungah using special equipment like side scan sonar etc.. However, this will require the cooperation of the traditional land owners. Nick will set this up with George Walley who we hope will accompany us on a more in depth exploratory trip.

After looking at this site we checked out what was a kind of natural underwater stone bridge that was used for a thousand of years by the aboriginal people to cross the Serpentine River. The stone bridge was blown up by the Europeans to allow the passage of their boats. We then visited Coopers Mill to complete our morning trip prior to returning to Mandurah. It is hoped we will be able to make this a regular heritage educational cruise for staff and volunteers, and perhaps these cruises could be offered to other departments. **David Austin.**

**From the Chair.** With only a small space left in this edition, I will keep this very brief.

**Fundraising Raffle:** The Committee of the Friends worked very hard together, to get the raffle books and permission ready to commence sales just prior to our Archaeological dig. We are now in full swing with this raffle and hope you will all come in and see us to purchase tickets or even to collect books of tickets to take away to sell.

Planning is underway for our first general meeting of the year to coincide with the presentation and opening of this year's Anzac Display. More information on this will come to you as soon as we have the name of the speaker and the display. The raffle will wind up at the same time with a draw and later information in the local newspapers of the winner.

The new look courtroom continues to be a draw with children enjoying playing the game which was provided from funds raised last raffle. If you haven't done so please come and see the 'new' courtroom. **Jan Baker.**

**Beryl Slade Oral History Excerpt.**

**238 It was during your time that the Megamouth was washed up on the shore.**

Yes.

**I believe you were very heavily involved in the replica.**

Yes.

**Tell me a little about it, because the children adore the Megamouth.**

Yes, I think we all do. It came about that we wanted a replica of it made, and the Historical Society put up \$5000 and the council came up with another \$5000, and two young men from the Perth Museum who were experts at it were given the job of having the replica made.

**250 Do you know how you raised the funds? To put in your part of the \$5000.**

Through good management I would say, we had an excellent treasurer at the time, and just fundraising.

**Can you recall any of the kinds of fund raising you did?**

No we had it all in fixed deposits.

**There is something unique about the Megamouth's teeth, they had trouble I believe finding something that was appropriate.**

Yes they did. So ...

**The teeth were...**

The teeth were made from rose thorns, and then painted.

**275 And the megamouth wasn't built at the museum, how did they get it to the museum?**

Well it was built in the old Methodist church at corner of , opposite Coles, and we were having a big affair at Museum House behind the present Museum and the two boys decided that they wouldn't put it on a truck. They would man handle it through the streets of Mandurah and bring it down and put it together for us down there which they did and we were all on pins and needles because they didn't come. And the boys were having such a wonderful time of parading down the streets and everybody saying "that was a big one, it must have been hard to pull in".

**So they stopped traffic did they.**

Yes (laughter), but they eventually got it down to the museum.

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MANDURAH WA 6210.**

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**Email: [museum@mandurah.wa.gov.au](mailto:museum@mandurah.wa.gov.au)**

**Internet: [www.mandurah.wa.gov.au/Facilities/Museum/Friends](http://www.mandurah.wa.gov.au/Facilities/Museum/Friends)**

**Opening hours.**

**Tuesday to Friday. 10 am to 4pm.**

**Saturday & Sunday. 11 am to 3pm.**

**Closed Mondays and Public Holidays.**

**Friends of Mandurah Community Museum,  
3 Pinjarra Rd,  
MANDURAH WA 6210.**

**Meetings 4 times per year as notified.**

The mission of the Friends is to provide assistance and support to the Museum in all its endeavours. The 'Friends' also seek to promote the heritage and history of Mandurah, and to assist other like minded bodies.

Membership of the Friends is by a yearly membership fee of \$10 due each August.