

“Brunei Darussalam Offshore:
Deep History”

Wednesday, 28th September 2016 at 2:30 p.m.

IAS Meeting Room 2.27, Level 2, FASS Building

Abstract

The paper is part of a research project proposal that studies the offshore region of Brunei Darussalam including the war wrecks that can be found in it. Specific focus will be on the war wrecks as there are three sunken WWII Wrecks offshore Brunei which can still be visited by divers. Only two of these three wrecks can be visited by recreational divers. A few kilometers offshore Muara Island, the USS Salute and the Japanese Imabari Maru (also known as the Australian Wreck) sank in water of 25 to 35 meters deep and are now resting on a muddy sea bottom. These wrecks are still clearly visible in their full shape and with several war artefacts still found on their surfaces (e.g., bullets, cannons and automatic guns). These two wrecks are both sites of memory of World War II in Brunei. Especially in the larger Imabari Maru a number of victims are still located within the vessel compartments. The sinking of such massive and large vessels on the muddy sea bottom has created over the years an amazing ecosystem where an impressive variety of life can be observed as it gathers there due to the hard substrate created by the wrecks. Various species of corals, sponges, sea urchins and mollusks form themselves primary food sources for many more different species of small fishes. These in turn then are the food sources to larger fish. Sharks are often seen patrolling the wrecks. Both sunken wrecks are now a protected fishing area and their disturbance on the Brunei sea bottom has revealed to be a massive boost for the local biodiversity after just 50 years since both ships sank and created that natural habitat.

Speaker's Profile



Dr. Antonino Briguglio is a palaeontologist at the Faculty of Science teaching sedimentology and micropalaeontology in the Geology group. He was a lecturer at the Department of Palaeontology at the University of Vienna, Austria and collaborated as a research postdoctoral fellow at the Natural History Museum in the same city. He did his undergraduate degree at the university La Sapienza in Rome, Italy where he became interested in Eocene Larger Benthic Foraminifera. During his PhD he focused on the hydrodynamic behavior of nummulitids. His scientific interests cover mainly integrated biostratigraphy (Cenozoic), systematics, ecology and biology of Larger Benthic Foraminifera. During the last three years he focused his scientific attention on the correlation between the past and the present by routinely collecting sea bottom samples offshore and he compares the modern biodiversity with the fossil one.



Dr. Frank Dhont is a historian of Southeast Asia interested in the growth and development of modern nationhood in the 20th Century in Indonesia and the larger Malay World. His work specifically focuses on the Japanese era in Southeast Asia during World War II as catalyst of major change and socio-political development both for intellectual elites as well as ordinary people in the modern nations of Southeast Asia. Working at the University of Brunei Darussalam his focus is also specifically Borneo in the 20th Century.