

April 2012

Whats Happening?

Tuesday 29 May 2012 The Half Crown Wreck is identified

A *mystery Auckland Islands shipwreck*, known until recently known as the '**Half Crown Wreck**'. Extensive research has now revealed the identity of this ship. Speakers include Bill Day, John McCrystal, Jack Fry (gold coin donation to cover supper)

We are buying **twins tank setups** – the club has a growing number of divers who want to use twins and have the training to support their use. Currently costings and rental pricing are being finalised – pictures next newsletter!

Biodiversity Book Launch 21 May 2012

New Zealand is the first country in the world to catalogue its entire known living and fossil life from 530 million years ago to today. Dennis Gordon's 3rd and final volume in the series Biodiversity of NZ was launched this week at Te Papa.

Links:

<http://www.niwa.co.nz/news/new-zealand-first-in-the-world-to-catalogue-all-its-species-through-all-of-time>

We've Done it Again! Oriental Bay Clean up

by Nicole

Thanks to **Ronel** and **Adventure Wellington** for organising a huge clean up from Freyburg Pool to the Tug Boat. More than 27, including 16 on scuba and 2 snorkellers, were helping collecting rubbish above and below water and de-crittering. Sadly, it didn't take long to bring up all sorts of stuff – lots of cans and bottles, road cones, shopping trolleys, scooters, camera and a parking sign were just some of the trash collected.

Alan and Phil found a kayak paddle and then a picnic table they were overheard saying the following.

Alan: "you know, you paddle out to your favourite picnic spot, and set up the picnic table and the weather refuses to play nice"

Phil: "yes but there is something missing, we need a beach umbrella"

Phil found the umbrella on the bottom as well about 5 minutes later!



This year was a good contribution but there is so much more to remove and we would like to go back next year with a bigger crew and maybe even a boat with a winch for the bigger stuff.

Our appreciation for those who took part: Wellington based divers, WUC divers, Victoria University Coastal Ecology Laboratory (VUCEL) staff and our Wellington Mayor Celia Wade-Brown and WWF staff providing information about the critters in the display tanks.

Special thanks to the **Parade Café** and **Beach Babylon Café** for free coffee, **Hell's Pizza** and the **Monster Energy truck** for free food and drinks, **The Dive Guys** for lots of support organising the event.

Club Meeting

Next meeting: **6:30pm, Tuesday 29 May 2012** at the **Thistle Inn**
Followed by a presentation at **MAANZ "the unnamed wreck"**

Club Info

<http://www.wuc.org.nz>
wellington.underwater@gmail.com

GUE Fundies

by Sophie

We did our second GUE Fundamentals course in March. Pete, Annette, Sherri and I took the plunge in what is often described the hardest yet best dive course ever. On paper, the course didn't look so tough, 2 nights of theory and 3 more full days of theory and dive practice. So why is it so hard...

Well, All the exercises have to be achieved in mid-water, in trim, without significantly changing depth, as a team. In other words, it's perfect to prepare you for that o-ring failure (which I had a year prior) or another emergency whilst diving. It's also an eye opener in terms of team-diving and what can be achieved underwater. Can you believe that you can actually move like an ROV? It is also fantastic for photography, you can hover near motionless and even reverse up for the photo.

Some of the finning techniques are incredible; I saw Pete managing to maintain his position whilst finning backward against current! My hat off to you. We had typical Kau bay conditions, with 2m visibility at most and current on the last day. That made it for some fun and games (try keeping position in these conditions). Outside was picture perfect Wellington weather, Jamie had to take photos of it to show Aucklanders who wouldn't have believed him otherwise. We all improved well through the course and had fun though we were well tired at the end of it. I would recommend this course to everyone, and will definitely get more tuition from Jamie anytime he is in Wellington.

Jamie's summary (the instructor)

It was a pleasure to teach. You were all motivated and interested and amazingly everyone managed to maintain a sense of humour despite some very long days. I wish all my courses could run so smoothly.

Sophie's summary

The course was all it was made to be. It was fun, it was challenging, it was the best dive course I have done. I have learnt heaps, I need to practice lots more, and there's a wonderful world out there.

Annette Summary

By far the most challenging and intense course I have done so far! Not sure anything could have prepared me for just how much you learn from this course. A little blown away but very happy to have passed.

Pete's Summary

For all my experience there is so much more to learn... debunk the myths, learn the skills and prepare yourself for serious enjoyment with diving. Like Sophie, I will continue to line up for courses with Jamie.

Night Dive by Phil

On a beautiful starlit night the option was to sit in the pub and talk about diving on a club night or go for a night dive. Hard call but the dive won out, especially as the following day was ANZAC day with all that time to wash and dry gear. Anyway, after a week of northerlies the South coast was fantastic, cold and clear, but fantastic.

Klare, Tony, Phil and honorary club member Martin kitted up in tough kiwi style – doning wetsuits – except that sooky Tony who slid into his dry suit and we went seeking night creatures.

Setting off from the bathhouse and meandering over to the island we came across all sorts of wonderful beasts – all be it that few of them were larger than 3cm – even the one crayfish that was spotted. We found flat fish hiding themselves in the sand – with only those very very tiny eyes visible; squiddleys that glowed magnificently by torchlight and played for ages swimming towards a beam – a bit disconcerting when wearing a mini Q40 torch on your mask – but very awesome.

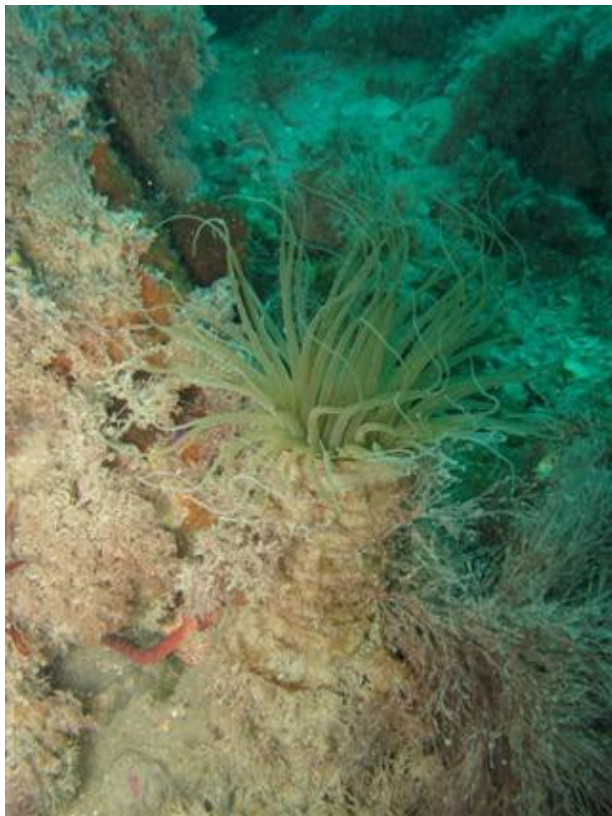
We saw a conger eel that was more than 3cm, he was pretty cool; then there were the wandering anemones that were racing around the weed; and hermit crabs having a party on the sand and other things with tentacles coming out that probably have a scientific name, (this is written by a non technical type!!).

We headed out on a bearing of 164 degrees, just missing the island, bottom time 56minutes, temperature 12.8 degrees, with a mad dash to pizza and beer after to warm up.



Some of the clean up trash collected in Oriental Bay

Beastie of the Month



Unknown Anemone by Sophie

This wonderful anemone was found by Sophie and Nicole on the last Kapiti Trip. Another trip to see if a specimen can be found, sampled and identified is planned.



Club Dives continued by Nicole

1 April Rocky Bay Report:

Saturday was a great day for snorkeling and the Porirua webcam promised another sunny and warm day for our 1st of April Club dive. I entertained myself snorkelling and taking (lots of) pictures in the shallows of Rocky Bay waiting for my two buddies to gear up before the dive. Once again I was surprised about how much you can find so close to shore. We then snorkelled out and followed a channel into deeper water. The dive offered a huge variety of fish and critters and all sorts of wired things in between big boulders, sandy patches and some gravel area. Alan kept us well entertained on our 60 min dive with our "lost of found objects" and we were well impressed with the largest seven armed sea star we had come across ever. The way back up the hill offered a bit of cardio exercise, but made space for some delicious date scones for afternoon tea (thanks Jane and Ian)



14th/15th April – Club dives with a fellow diver from Auckland University Underwater Club (AUUC). A scenic drive around the South Coast and breakfast at the Maranui Cafe started off a real Wellingtonian dive weekend for our visitor from Auckland.

We picked Scorching Bay for our dive on Saturday and the dive lived up to expectations. The locals were out and about – lots of spotties, large banded wrasses, blue mokis, blue cods, lots of colorful reef creatures, masking crabs, little crays and other common Wellington species and on top we found two seahorses and a banded weedfish. Next morning we dived the snorkel trail in the Taputeranga marine reserve. South Coast offers a quite different terrain and we got to see different critters. The vis was reasonable in the shallows as well and in one of the cracks we saw a thornfish trying to hide itself. Beautiful day outside for the BBQ and for a visit in the Island Bay Aquarium. Great to show a few of our local sites to Gareth and to catch up on recent (dive) adventures.



Rocky Bay – 12 May 2012 by Nicole

One of the main advantages of diving in Wellington is the variety of dive sites. Even if the weather isn't good enough for a boat dive there is usually an alternative. Rocky Bay was ours and surprised us again with it's variety of live.

The water was warmer than a few weeks ago and even diving in a wet suit was pleasant. Nudibranchs all over the place, huge variety of anemones, lots of cracks and channels – a great place to look for little things and experiment with camera settings.

The following is a montage of photos from the various club dives:

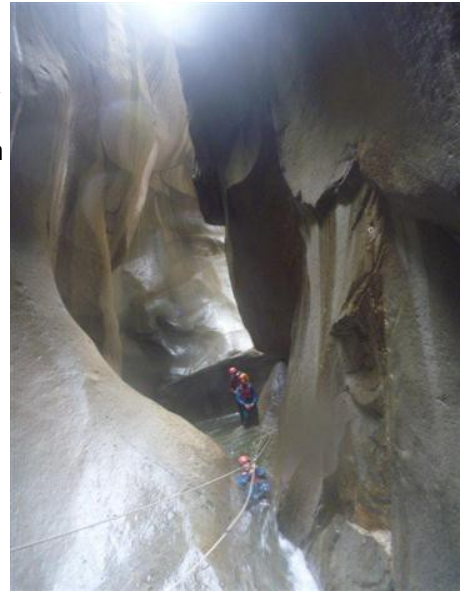


Reunion Island by Sophie

A few weeks back I was called to a work meeting in Reunion Island, an offer I couldn't refuse. Reunion island is a French tropical island 800 km east of Madagascar. It is a big playground for adventurers, with lots of tramping, canyoning, rock climbing, scuba diving, swimming, surfing, paragliding, helicopter and ULM rides. Although I spent most of my time working hard, I managed to squeeze in a couple dives, a tramp and canyoning and a helicopter ride.

Recently, they have had lots of shark attacks: 6 in 6 months of which 2 fatal – Bulldog and tiger sharks are to blame. The issue is so critical that there are now signs everywhere and people don't really swim much out there. I was still assured diving was ok – we didn't see any.

Diving was rather lovely: 27 degrees, diving in a shorty with NO weight belt, 30+ metres visibility, and a few neo-coloured fish. However, there weren't that many fish around and those that were are mainly small, a sure sign of over-exploitation of the stocks. As a purely diving destination, I wouldn't recommend it, but if you also want to tramp, or do other adventurous sports, then I would highly recommend it. Canyoning would have to be my favourite activity of the trip (I guess the 5mm two piece suit made me feel right at home), and those mountains are absolutely gorgeous.



Upcoming Activities

When	What	Cost
2-4 June 2012	White Island 3 days - Discover NZ Volcanism	\$850 + travel, approx 10 dives
2-4 August 2012	Poor Knights 3 days photographic live-aboard	\$595 + travel, approx 10 dives
Sat, 11 August 2012	Niue 1 week diving/holiday with Dive HQ	\$2885 including 10 dives, whale watching, not meals
27-30 September 2012	Lermontov 4 days, nitrox or wreck course optional	\$670 + transport, approx 11 dives
Coming soon	4WD overnight trip around the south coast	tbc
March 2013	Fiordland	tbc
Coming soon	Riwaka resurgence	tbc

