



No 9, October 2012

Contact Us: [WellingtonUnderwater@gmail.com](mailto:WellingtonUnderwater@gmail.com)

## ***President's Report***

Hi Everyone.

I hope you have all managed to get some diving in over the last few months. I know I did and you can read all about it in the Trip Report ☺.

While I know that winter weather in Wellington can be very different from weekend to weekend I am sure there were a few days where people were able to get out and maybe chase some scallops, fish and anything else you fancied, either with a camera or a bag!!

I would like to say a BIG thank you to the new committee who has been picking up a lot of work over the last few months and organized for training and dive opportunities to come up. The Club has offered to host the NZ Underwater AGM next year so pencil June in your diaries, we are hoping for a great turn-out and to



showcase the best Wellington diving (and not-diving) has to offer. We have also been busy liaising with DiveSki HQ in Petone and we managed to secure a good deal on the tank fills for Club dives. Remember that the Club pays for the tank fills and you as a member get your tanks filled for free if you come on a Club trip (pool sessions excluded as the Club usually pays for pool hire). We are also in negotiation for very good gear rentals and we picked up on a suggestion by Debbie that we could try to swing a discount for spring gear servicing which we have under discussion too. We have also approved another round of subsidies towards training.

Remember everyone, this is your Club and the Committee needs your support for the Club to progress, grow and thrive. It's time to renew your membership, to come on Club dives and if you think you can help in any way we would be happy for you to do so.

Thanks Alan Smithson

## ***Featured Trips***

***2013***



Dive the **Poor Knights** with an optional **TDI cavern and cave course**, 7-10 Jan

**Advanced Kapiti dive**, Jan tbc - register your interest

**Fiordland** liveaboard 7 days, details tbc - register your interest, February or March

## ***Training Subsidies***

***\$50 off your course***



WUC has 10x \$50 training vouchers for members for training organized through the club. What courses do you want to get going ahead?

Nitrox, GUE fundies, Advanced, Rescue course, ... ?

We would love to see more pool training, night dives, as well as other diving trips going ahead over summer. As usual, email us if you have an idea or if you want to organize a trip.

This year's AGM was a well-attended affair, with over a dozen members partaking in the festivities at the Thistle Inn. Sophie reflected on a very successful year, with more members, more club dives, and more activities than has been in a while.



The main attractions of the club seem to have been from divers seeking further training (incl. GUE training), environmentally aware divers and an increasing proportion of photographers (further on that later). The club partook in a number of clean-ups, and environmental submissions over the course of the year.



The official functions of the AGM went smoothly and quickly. It was noted that the discrepancy between AGM year and financial year makes accounting difficult and should be sorted when the constitution is resolved. And finally, a **new committee** was elected: Alan Smithson (president), Phil Young (treasurer), Sophie Mormede (secretary) - handed over to Klare Braye due to crazy schedule, and committee members Pete Humphris, Mike Johnston, Nicole

Miller, and Mike Penfold. Well done to the outgoing committee and congratulations to the new committee.

Festivities ensured the close of the official meeting, with the following trophies:



- \* **Best improved diver** went to **Annette Vickers** who has among others completed the GUE fundies, advanced nitrox and deco procedures, and was about to embark on the advanced wreck course.
- \* **Best Wellington underwater photo** to **Mike Johnston** for his photo of his dive buddy and blue cod.
- \* **Best underwater photo** to **Jane Harkness** for the photo of the two morays
- \* **Best topside** photo to **myself** for the photo of Bernie's cave

Check out these pictures in the newsletter. There were over 50 entries, and Malcolm Francis was very elogious on the quality of the pictures, quoting it was hard to decide the winner on most categories. We are considering doing (bi)monthly competitions...

So this is me signing out of the president's chair, and wishing Alan all the best. I'll still be involved in the committee and some diving hopefully, but other commitments prevent me from keeping the level of involvement I have given in the last couple years. This is an exciting time for the club and I hope all stay involved and help where they can.

See you diving! Sophie

## MAANZ Celebrates Captain Cook's Birthday – 27th Oct 12 **Come along**

The [Maritime Archaeological Association Inc, MAANZ](#)

invites WUC club members to join the celebration of Captain Cook's Birthday on Sat 27<sup>th</sup> October at the Wellington Waterfront (schedule below).

11.00 - Tour Hikitia (the crane boat behind Te Papa)

12.00 - Celebration of CC's birthday with sauerkraut

sandwiches and cannon fire on the waterfront.

1.30 - Tour of the conservation lab on Hikitia, followed by walk to see Plimmers Ark (by Events Centre on Queen's Wharf) and find out why this piece of iconic Wellington marine history may be destined for the trip. **By Mike P.**



[Hikitia](#) (Image Courtesy of MAANZ website)

## Educate to Eliminate – 24th Nov 12 **Divers, Kayakers and Top-side helpers needed**

**By Stephen Jounéé (The Dive Guys)**

027 683 6249, [www.thediveguys.co.nz](http://www.thediveguys.co.nz)

Educate to Eliminate.....Yes it's back! Join us at Taranaki Wharf on Saturday 24th November rain, hail or shine to spread the word about rubbish in our ocean by showing people what lurks beneath our harbour. Once again our Mayor Celia Wade-Brown will lead the dive off and Macs Brewbar will provide nibbles après dive!

The great team from the Island Bay Marine Education centre will again be showing off our catch (or save) before returning them to a cleaner home, and speaking of cleaner home the NZ Fire service will again hose you and your gear down after the dive.

So once again we need divers and top-side helpers and this time people to go under the wharf to pick up rubbish from above the high tide mark (must bring sturdy shoes and gardening gloves, a great job for the non-diving family members). For that I also need 3 people (competent kayak drivers) to ferry the walkers and their rubbish back and forward. A big thanks to Fergs kayaks for the loan!



The plan for the day at this stage is (this may be updated closer to the day):

09:30 -10:00 - arrive at Taranaki Wharf, drop off gear, get a free parking ticket, get geared up.

10:30 - welcome and safety brief, start

11:15 - all divers/walkers to be active

12:15 - all kayakers and walkers out

12:30 - everyone out of the water, group photo

13:00 - after match at Macs Brewbar

We would love to get record numbers to this year's event (more than 40) so make sure you tell divers, non-divers, kayakers to keep the 24th of November free!

To help Stephen plan the day **please register** and indicate what part you would like to play **with WUC by 20<sup>th</sup> November**

## Local shore dives – Aug/Sep/Oct 12 by Nicole

7 pm: **65 min at Scorching Bay** – just better than every TV show.

Most of this dive we spent over sand and it was great to watch a surprisingly high activity of fish and critters.

Even a little squid was swimming quite happily in the water column, then tried to camouflage on sand and after a while changed tactic and tried to impress us by turning very dark. While Mike tried to take a picture a paddle crab



had a go on it. Luckily for the squid it managed to get away in time.

Other local WUC dives went to **Owhiro Bay** and the Snorkel Trail. The visibility on our Owhiro Bay dive day was incredible and we had a day with Wreck Galore.



Impressions from the dive at the **Snorkel Trail** end of August were dominated by the abundance of octopus. We saw about 4-5 in all different shades of colors.



## Lermontov Trip – 27 to 30 Oct 12 by Phil and Klare

If you have ever dived the Mikhail Lermontov it is likely the viz wasn't the best if it is anything like it has been when I have dived it previously. Now picture this... you are heading out on the boat from the Lermontov lodge across Port Gore with blue sky no wind, quite different to the evening before. When you arrive at the mooring you look over the side and there she is. You can see the wreck from the surface! Wow! There is a brief thought of pinching yourself to see if you are awake but everyone else is looking over the side to get a peak as well then gearing up for the first dive so there's no time for that. Once in



the water we had a massive view of the 155m wreck and as we were to find out even the starboard propeller was visible in the shadow of the rudder.

The photos speak for themselves but we had a great four days diving in the easily accessible parts of the wreck and even ventured to some parts that that typically aren't so accessible but because the viz was so exceptional we were able to safely explore parts that if the viz wasn't as good we wouldn't have contemplated.

Not only did we get to most of the normal places, but we also got to

see them!! There are the Bolshoi lounge and Panorama bar, the Wintergarden, Nevsky bar, cinema, swimming pool and Neptune bar. We danced in the ballroom (with a blind eel- but that's another story!); dodged shredding carpet in the Festival lounge; washed our hands in the cinemas bathroom sink; sighted the rowing machines in



the gym; spotted shiny wallpaper in the hairdressers; dizzied ourselves going up 6 floors of the centre spiral staircase and read Tolstoy in the library, visited the stern winch deck, both propellers and the bridge. All of which were great with heaps of light. We also ventured in to see the dolls falling out the cupboard on the starboard side of the Wintergarden deck and the ventilation shaft of the engine room where we looked into the expansive black hole that is the engine room.

Although there were five groups diving the wreck with the viz as it was and buddies sticking to



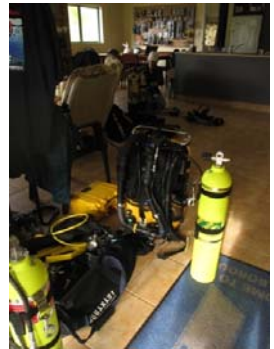
their dive plans we were each able to explore parts of the wreck without getting in each other's way; make repeated trips back to areas of the ship

that we wanted to explore first (or where we didn't find what we were looking for the first time!)



What was also interesting was to watch the array of dive gear on board. With 10 divers (6 from WUC) it was fascinating

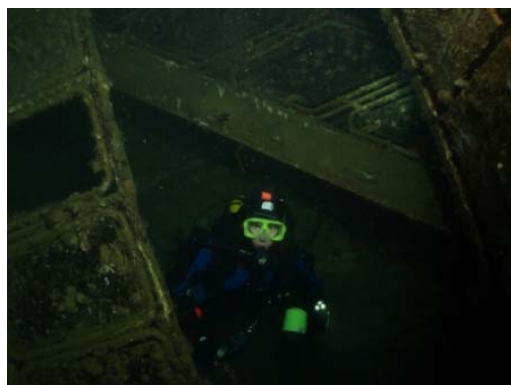
watching the efforts required of using twin sets; the obvious advantages of sling tanks/side mounts but also the complexities of a rebreather (and stunning to see the photos that are facilitated by the lack of bubbles created from open circuit reg's.



Congratulations to those completing the courses they had booked to do.....wreck diver and advanced wreck.

Apart from all the stuff inside the wreck there was also a reasonable amount of life around it. There were sightings of Carpet Sharks, Octopus, Warty Sea Slugs, Kingfish, Tarakihi and some other schools of fish cruising through.

The accommodation at the lodge was, as always, comfortable and the closeness to the wreck makes for short transit times to the wreck just across Port Gore.





## Poor Knights – 2 to 4 Aug 12 by Mike J.

If you want quality diving, the Poor Knights is the place to go. Even if you have some discomfort and sickness, as did the intrepid group on the Club dive from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> August aboard the Mazurka, the dives are unforgettable.

Off-shore storms had generated some surge that gradually died down during our time at the Poor Knights. In these conditions, you have to plan your dive and be mindful of currents, especially when there are lots of swim-through arches and channels to try out. But the visibility was good (say 15-20m) and the water temperature at 15°C made for relatively comfortable diving.

On the first day we started out a little late from Tutukaka. On the way across, the Mazurka battled into a cross swell and the visibility was down to a few kilometers. But we made it over in time for an afternoon dive at South Harbour. On the south side is Blue Maomao Arch – a spectacular spot, with the schools of blue maomao the arch is named for.



The water was surging inside the arch, so most of us stayed in the protected area where the boat was moored. Plenty to see there – a sand garden with a photogenic carpet shark, nudibranch, scorpionfish and wrasse to name

some. The arch was full of schools of blue maomaos and demoiselles and huge snapper and the afternoon sun was just hitting on the right angle.



That night we dived the wall on the northern side of South Harbour. The light of our torches and strobes revealed lots of colour, plus a few more nudibranch, a toadstool grouper and a yellow moray. This spot lived up to its local name - Magic Wall.

First dive next day was at Middle Arch, which you can swim right through. The walls of the arch are beautifully coloured. Several types of nudibranch – we photographed Verco's Tambja and the Variable nudibranch. There was another yellow moray poking its head out of a hole. In



the afternoon the dive was at Hideaway Bay. Plenty of moray eels again, several free swimming, a resting stingray and a shy shark in the distance, at the limit of visibility in 25m. The shallow parts of the bay revealed quite a

surprise for our snorkellers. Just after coming across a sleeping octopus cuddled up in a crack Jeannie spotted a rare sea hare (it was huge!).

Later, some of us did a dusk dive at Mary's Wall and the snorkelers had a look through the tunnel and out to the pinnacles in the middle of the bay. Then it was back to Middle Arch to night dive the



same route we had done in the morning. Conditions had changed and a

current was running through the arch. While taking photos of an attention-seeking stingray we had descended onto, we were taken right through the arch by the current. We made our way back along the north side of the arch which was as spectacular at night as during the day.

On the third day, the Mazurka took us to the Northern Arch for the final dive. The skipper had tried

here the day before, but a swell was bending round the



headland, so we had gone to more protected waters. For me the Northern Arch was the best dive. The bottom was at 35m and there was an unforgettable wall and at the eastern end a swim-through arch which looks quite dramatic in our photos. We descended to 25m in the arch,

then made our way outside and along the wall, taking in the nudibranch, scorpion fish, yellow and mottled moray and corals.

The trip back to Tutukaka was calmer and clearer than on the way over. With the sun on my face and the boat gently rolling there was time to think back. All of us on the trip had dived overseas – the consensus was that the Poor Knights was a remarkable spot and matched other places we'd been.



Our hosts for the three days were skipper Kevin Delonge (Oceanblue) and dive guide and photography specialist Kent Ericksen. They know the territory like the back of their hands, and the food they produced was great.



## South Coast Clean Up and Petone Wharf impressions by Nicole and Mike J.

As in previous years the club was cleaning up a stretch of beach and underwater at Breaker Bay. Great to see that we couldn't find much waste which is mainly due to the efforts of the local Breaker Bay community who is cleaning up the area all year round.

Overall the South Coast Clean Up was a great success. If you know community groups that have a strong link to the sea or a local beach and want to get involved let us know and we forward details on how to get involved.



Quite a few of our members were cleaning up around the Petone wharf with the crew from Dive and Ski HQ. Good to hear that the area had benefited from the clean up last year as the impression was that less debris was collected.

A look in Mike's and Karen's catch bag at the Petone Wharf still revealed lots of junk: a white plastic tray with filleted fish inside, a thermos flask, a cardboard box, a metal rod, a cylinder that looks like it was off an exhaust, a grappling hook, a pair of scissors, plus assorted fishing lines, bits of wire and plastic.



Nature is fighting back as well and one of the old shopping trolleys at the far end of the wharf got transformed into a natural reef.



Malta, a small archipelago approximately 140kms off the southern edge of Sicily. Set in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, Malta has been a strategic military base for thousands of years and was heavily bombed during WW2. The People of Malta were awarded the George Cross for their courage and the hardships they faced during the war.

It was always the history of this plucky little country that drew me to wanting to visit and the fact that there was some amazing wrecks here to dive on was not lost on me either!

I arrived in late August when the tourist trade has started to ease and the weather still fantastic, we had around 34-36 Deg. C every day and not a cloud in the sky!! The airport is very modern and after a few hours wait, I was joined by some relatives from England and we set off to our home for the next 7 days, a 3 bedroom apartment in Melleha. It was brand new and for 500 Euros it was very good value. (The owner picked us up from the airport and dropped off at the end of our stay for free ☺ )



I checked out the local dive operator the next day at Paradise Lagoon, called Paradise Diving.

They were based at the beach which made dive operations very easy, kit up, walk to boat, go 300 m, dive to 35 m and there you have it, the wreck of the Rozi, scuttled in 1992 as an artificial reef. The wreck is an old tugboat and sits upright on a sandy bottom.



Penetration of the wreck is very easy with lots of entry and exit points and no silt to speak of. With visibility of around 25 to 30 m and a water temperature of 27 deg. I was not complaining! The Rozi is very well preserved after 20 years on the bottom

and there is very little marine growth on it. With several divers exploring her, it is quite ethereal to sit back and watch the bubbles leach from the hull, almost as though she has just been sunk.

After 11 minutes on the wreck it is time to ascend up the gentle slope of the rocky reef to the top which sits nicely in 5 m of water and a little mooch around while burning off the safety stop. The fish life here, while abundant is not vastly colourful yet there are the odd surprise, like the peacock wrasse which are lovely but very elusive when it comes to getting a photo of them!!!

Soon it was back to the beach, swap out the tanks and kick back over lunch for a little while then off to the next site, the Patrol Boat P31 which was scuttled in 2009 and sits in approx. 26 m of water just inside a protected headland on Comino. Again the wreck here has lots of unimpeded access ways through the hull and cabin and it was fun to clank the loose bar at the

front of the wreck and watch everyone looking around nervously!!!

The last dive of the day was also around Comino in the beautiful limestone caves, nooks and crannies which were filled not only with rubbish unfortunately but also the Bearded Fireworm. The bearded fireworm gets its name because once stung, the affected area feels like it is burning. The fireworm's stinging hairs are actually extremely brittle, hollow spines that can pierce and lodge in a diver's skin. The spines contain a neurotoxin that causes the burning sensation, occasionally accompanied by dizziness and nausea. The severe pain lasts for a few hours, and irritation can last for much longer. Signs and symptoms of a bearded fireworm sting also include inflammation/redness, swelling, and numbness.



One of the things that annoys me greatly is when I go to a new dive site and ask the person experienced in the area we are diving and ask "Is there anything in the water that is hazardous and we should be aware of?" and I get the answer no there is nothing here that is dangerous. Well true to form the Instructor here said "oh no the jellyfish season is over so there is no problems". As you can see that is plainly not the case here and there is, in fact, a hazardous creature to be aware of. As it so happens, I am a cautious diver to begin with so I gave these little suckers a wide-ish berth but as we were diving in shorty wetsuits I can see how easy it could have been to brush up against one of these little beasties!! Just for the record, no I didn't get stung and I am very happy about that!!

I was lucky enough to get another dive on the Rozi and I dived an amazing 20 m vertical chimney down to 28 m then through an amazing swim through under some huge boulders before slowly making our way back to the shallows.

If you are planning a trip to Europe and plan to do some diving and you would like to get on to some wrecks then Malta is definitely the place to have a look, the food is great, the people are friendly and it is very easy to get around, an all day bus ticket cost 2.60 euro! There are several WW2 wrecks here as well and although I did not get a look at them, I am sure they will still be there the next time I visit!!!

## Upcoming Activities

### Upcoming club meetings Thistle Inn, 6.30 pm

- 30 Oct (Tue)
- 27 Nov (Tue)
- 29 Jan (Tue)

### Upcoming club activities October

- 27 Oct (Sat), Captain Cook's Birthday Celebration with MAANZ (details see above)
- 27 Oct (Sat), Start of our Open Water Dive Course

### Upcoming club activities November

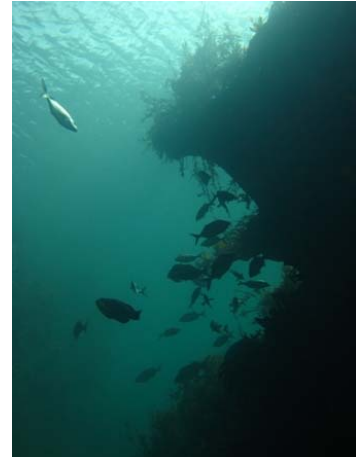
- 12 Nov (Mon), Evening shore dive
- 13 Nov (Tue), GUE refresher with Jamie
- 15 Nov (Thu), GUE - diving doubles the GUE way with Jamie (*only one space left*)
- 18 Nov (Sun), Shore dive - Search and Recovery Skills Refresher
- 24 Nov (Sat), Educate to Eliminate - Clean up dive (please confirm)

### Other Events November

- 24-25 Nov (Sat-Sun), 24h Dive - fundraising for the Wellington Coast Guard by Dive and Ski HQ. Get in touch with Brain and register interest

### December

- 1 Dec (Sat), Kapiti Boat Dive (limited spaces, sign up now)
- 8 Dec (Sun), Local Boat Dive (limited spaces, sign up now)
- 9 Dec (Sun) Pool Training at the Kilbirnie Pool, 11am-1pm



### Dive trips 2013

- \* 7-10 Jan (Mon-Thu), Dive the **Poor Knights** with an option on **TDI cavern and cave course**. 4 day liveaboard trip to the Poor Knight Islands January 2012, 7th-10th, **just two spaces** left on the boat and **only one spot** left for the TDI cavern and cave training. Nitrox available. Email us for details.
- \* Advanced Kapiti dive, tbc - register your interest
- \* February or March, **Fiordland** trip, tbc - register your interest



... and any other weekday or weekend club members want to go out, just let us know a few days ahead so we can spread the word and find you some dive buddies. You can also join us on one of our club meetings and if you have friends interested in diving just bring them along.



## Training Success

We love to celebrate success with our members recently completed their training courses.... Over the last months Sophie, Geoff, Annette and Nicole completed Wreck (S, N) and Advanced Wreck (G, A) courses.

## Buddy Wanted

... for a dive trip to the Lermontov. Diving 27/28/29/30 November and out the evening of the 30<sup>th</sup>. There will be an option to join in for an advanced Nitrox and Deco Course or to just go diving. Email WUC if interested for further details.

## Kicks and Bubbles (aka other things you might be interested in)

Check out Mike's photo in the Ikelite advertisement in the Aug/Sep issue of Dive NZ Magazine on the inner front page ('Shades of Colour' photo comp entrant).

Ingrid Visser presented her current research about NZ orcas at Te Papa. Find out more information on: [www.orcaresearch.org](http://www.orcaresearch.org)

The Rena is still in the news. Find articles on [www.underwatertimes.com](http://www.underwatertimes.com).

Become a marine mammal medic - Project Jonah can give you the confidence and skills to be ready to help stranded animals. Training courses are available in Wellington both on Sat and Sun 24th and 25th November ([www.projectjonah.org.nz](http://www.projectjonah.org.nz))

Use your iPhone to follow tagged sharks and the research from Stanford University scientists. [itunes.apple.com/us/app/shark-net-predators-blue-serengeti/id542042032?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/shark-net-predators-blue-serengeti/id542042032?mt=8)  
If you don't have an iPhone check out the homepage of Global Tagging of Pelagic Predators: [www.gtopp.org](http://www.gtopp.org)

Be aware of octopus – they are clever as <http://deepseanews.com/2012/10/octopus-steals-food-and-casually-wrestles-shark/>

Read more about current developments on the NZ Shark Alliance <http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/nzsharkalliance>

