



Moles Monitor

May 2015

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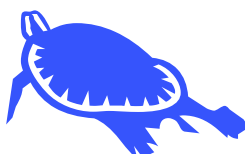
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

May 30th - Treasure Hunt Walk
June 3rd - Dive Planning Talk
June 13th - Ashtead Village Day
June 27th - 28th - Eastbourne Dive Trip
July 5th - Raft Building
July 11th - 13th - Dartmouth Dive Trip
July 25th - Aug 1st - Cornwall
August 8th & 9th - Marine ID Course
August 15th - Family BBQ
Sept 3rd - Ocean Film Festival
October 1st - 6th - Malta Trip
October 17th - 18th - Weymouth, Skin Deeper
October 24th - 25th - Dive Show - Birmingham
Dec 5th - Dinner Dance



MVSAC COMMITTEE

Janet Wynn - Chairperson
Aly Mitchell - Training Officer
Carolynn Royce - Social secretary
Eddie Fassnidge - Treasurer
Sonja Wood - Special Projects
Sue Wayland - Secretary
Bryan Gooden - Equipment Officer
Keith James - Diving Officer





Maldives

Sharon



We've just returned from our third liveaboard trip to the Maldives aboard the MV Sting Ray and we can thoroughly recommend it.

The diving started in North Male Atoll and we knew it was going to be a good week when we saw three turtles, an octopus, a moray and an eagle ray which made it a great check dive.

Then we moved on to South Male, Vaavu then back to South & North Male where all the rest of the week's diving took place.

A night dive is the norm on Maldives liveaboard, and if you get the chance to do one you won't be disappointed. We dived the Allmatha Reef at Vaavu at 16 metres and it soon became evident that all the reefs' predators were out on the hunt. With nurse sharks zipping about, free swimming morays and rays it was difficult to know which direction to shine your torch.

Our 7th dive was at Maamigili Beyru, which is known as the place to see whale sharks if you are lucky, as we were. When we arrived there were a few resort boats about, with quite a few people in the water. The first attempt to snorkel with the whale shark was disappointing but patience paid off & we were able to have a close encounter whilst snorkelling and then whilst diving.

Our 10th dive at Macfushi Express (North Male) was memorable as we were able to sit at a feeding station and watch 3 manta rays gliding through the water above us. With their mouths wide open, doing back flips and going round again and again it was an amazing sight.

That night the crew put a bright light to shine into the water at the back of the boat, which draws in plankton,





Maldives

like moths to a light. Of course the mantas are clever and know this, so come in for a feast. Just watching them from the boat is enthralling, but far better was to come as we were able to snorkel with them. The best part was when they swam close to the light and headed straight towards us, we had a great view into their open mouths, then they'd pull up at the last moment and almost skim the surface.



The Maldives is certainly is a great place

for diving if you like the big stuff. Enough grey nurse, blacktip and whitetip reef sharks, eagle rays, mantas, turtles, morays and a whale shark which kept everyone happy. If a Maldives liveaboard is not on your dive wish-list already, it really should be!

We were very lucky & went on for an additional week to the island of Kuredo which had been recommended to us by Russell. We did four dives with Pro Divers who we would happily recommend, they even emailed us a log sheets when we got home. The island has a house reef & wreck which you can dive from the pontoon. If you're considering an island holiday please talk to us as we'd be happy to give you more information.





Not the Easter Trip

Hilary



This was to be my first dive trip of 2015 and given that I had only dived a couple of times since qualifying last summer I was a little nervous. Could I still remember what to do? Would it be too cold? Did I really want to be away in a caravan with these people? The answer was yes, yes and yes!

Harry had organised the trip with twelve of us staying in three caravans. Harry, Andy, David, Russell, Connor, Keith, Carolyn and Adam in two. Aly, Janet, Sue, Angie and I enjoyed our girls only caravan. Simon and Eddie drove down for the Saturday with Brian visiting from family near by.

Saturday started bright and sunny but with a brisk cold wind, that caused me a rethink. On balance lunch and shoe shopping with the girls seemed far more appealing. Great result as we all left the shop clutching our purchases! Tasty crab sandwiches in the sun by the harbour was also a highlight. Two waves of divers went out to the Countess of Erne and reported choppy seas and poor visibility, so I definitely made the right choice!

Twelve of us went out for the traditional curry and though the service was rather slow this was made up by the food being delicious. Thanks must go to Sue and Angie for the pre dinner prosecco cocktails.

The following morning the wind had dropped and after packing up we headed back the harbour so that David Connor Janet and I could dive the landing craft and bombardon unit. Sue found that a

semi dry and all the necessary kit miraculously appeared! This enabled her, with Adam as instructor, to join us. She did so well overcoming her nausea to roll back off the boat and make a short descent before returning to the RIB., more than she thought that she would achieve. I had difficulty equalising and coping with the cold in my head so having got to about 7m agreed with Adam that I would ascend leaving Janet and Adam to continue on together. As my dive wasn't very successful I asked David (also new to the club) and Connor about their experiences. Here's what they said:

Connor"The Sunday dive had 1m or less vis. We gave up the dive after 10 minutes of exploring the landing craft because we lost it(!), and because we could not even see the bottom"

Or as David put it

"We were in the boat.

It was cold.

We got in the water.

It was cold.

We went down.

It was still cold but now we couldn't see anything.

We blundered around for a few minutes and failed to find the landing craft.

We put up a buoy and surfaced.

Surprise! It was boiling hot!

Actually, it was still cold.

But I loved every minute, especially the pre-dive hanging around in a carpark."

A great weekend none the less. A big thank you to Harry for organising everything and to Adam and Andy for the boat handling.



New Zealand

Sonja

On our first day in NZ we collected our camper van and headed to Anthony at the "Dive Doctor" in Auckland to collect tanks and weights. Anthony was really helpful and had some great tips on where to dive and who to contact. We spent some time comparing notes between MVSAC and the BBS, or the Botany Bottom Scratchers.

Day 2 - having been re-united with our luggage, including dive gear, we made a dash out of Auckland to dive the next day with Cathedral Cove Dive & Snorkel in Hahei. Two, shallow, relaxed dives allowed us to adjust our weight back to wet suits and singles, to re-acclimatise to the underwater world, and to get a taste of what diving in New Zealand had to offer. Crayfish sat snug in crevices, the snapper had grown accustomed to divers in the marine conservation zone and architectural grey sponges lined the rocks. An eagle ray was discov-



ered in amongst the reads, our group watched it until it decided it had had enough of the audience and glided gracefully away.

An early start the following day took us to Whitianga to meet up with Dive Zone. The trip out to the Alderman islands on "Scuba Doo" took about 1.5hrs, the crew were friendly, welcoming and passionate about their diving. We dropped in to find



eagle and sting rays under the boat and 30metres of viz. Heaven... A shoal of koheru fish moved as one, in a mass that twisted and turned and glistened in the sun. A little too mesmerised by them, I found myself having to dump air so that I could re-join my buddy, who was by now, below me, looking confused as I had suddenly disappeared from view.

Two days diving with Dive North on the Canterbury in Deep Water Cove revealed bright pink and vivid orange jewel anemones which sat besides more subdued peach and ivory versions. I discovered that scorpion fish make great subjects for photography practice, as they just sit and look a bit bemused at the fact that they've been discovered, despite their very effective camouflage

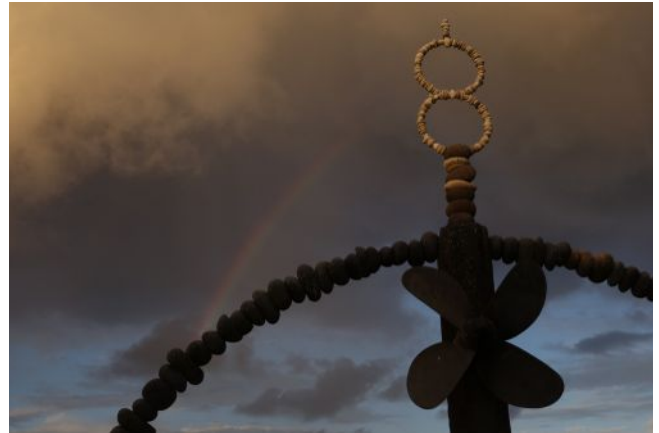




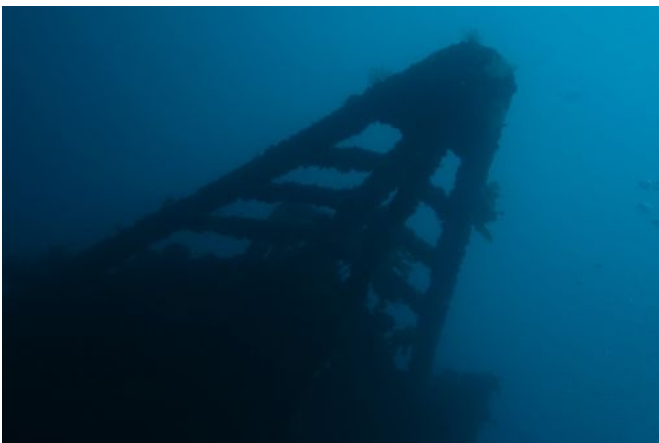
New Zealand

We headed up to Matouri Bay and spent a relaxed day on an idyllic campsite with beaches on two sides, clear white sands and crystal clear water. In the evening we took a stroll up the cliffs to see the monument to the Rainbow Warrior, which looks out to the spot where the boat was finally scuttled just off the Cavelli islands. We were treated to some dramatic skies as the rain came through and a rainbow appeared behind the monument.

The next day we met up with Pahia Dive, the rib was launched from the campsite and we had an 8



minute trip out to the wreck. Once submerged, we



made several tours of the wreck before exploring inside. In the years between her scuttling in 1987, she has become a haven for marine life, and now lies upright, in 24m of water, encrusted with brightly coloured sponges, jewel anemones and corals. A dash south took us to Tutakaka Marina, where we joined Oceans Blue for a two day liveaboard trip to the Poor Knights on MV Mazurka. The scenery, both above and below the water was stunning. At Middle Arch the sea was bubbling with layers of demoiselles and trevally which dispersed in an

instant as the predatory kingfish swam though. At the pinnacle, we dropped down to the bottom at 30m and then spiralled up gradually to the top at 5m, perfect for our safety stop. On the way up, we enjoyed watching pink and blue moamao's, free swimming murray, starfish, scorpion fish, as well as the colourful sponges and anemones that lined the rock.

We thoroughly enjoyed diving the North Island. It was really satisfying to return with a bit more experience which, meant more relaxed and enjoyable diving and dives which had previously been out of reach.

