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Above: Taiyo Wreck Soloman Islands .

Below: Gary takes his rebreather through the HMAS Canberra

Far Below: A photo of the channel at Ewen's Ponds

Right: A picture taken towards the surface in the 3rd pond at ewens ponds.



The Waves N Caves Newsletter

Welcome to this edition of Wetnotes. With the crazy season behind us and a new year upon us we're looking forward to less hectic times and more opportunities for diving.

Firstly, congratulations go out to Andrew, Carrie, Lachlan and Ryan who have recently passing their deep cavern course. With these new members joining the CDAA, Mt Gambier is set to be visited more often than before.

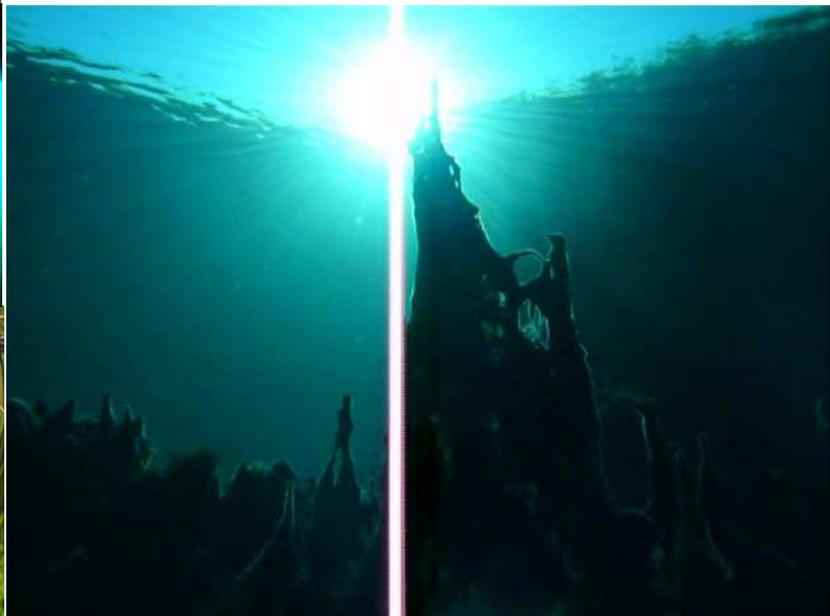
Cray bashing season is also in full swing with many hitting the sea with the intention of catching a meal or two as well as wrecks being visited once again. (This edition featured dive location is the Loch Ard wreck which yours truly has been trying to get onto for the last 3 years. More on this later).

And in other news, the SA government have new proposals for Ewen's Ponds which may allow divers to access the ponds, although there was a large push for restriction to only permit divers with some form of advanced training (more on this later too).

Other articles of interest include how to rescue yourself, and an account of the new CDAA Advance Cave (Penetration) course.

If that's not enough for you, we've also cracked open the joke jar.

So, it's time once again to grab yourself a cuppa, put your feet up and enjoy this edition of Waves n Caves' Wetnotes. ✍



Be prepared to rescue yourself.

All divers (even the good ones) will have their moments. Whether you're diving along and get caught up on something, find yourself low on gas, or something unexpected goes wrong with your equipment.

When diving, buddies are rarely observing each other enough to be able to immediately assist in a situation—even if they're supposed to be). In a perfect world, if you run into a situation your buddy will be right there in a matter of moments to assist, but in the real world too often one will see their buddy disappearing off into the distance.

What happens next? Will your buddy notice your absence in a short period of time and return to assist you, or will you be left to face the problem on your own?

We all hope that our buddies are alert enough to notice after a few moments, and come back to find us as assist us, but a good diver is prepared to rescue themselves if that does not happen.

There are six main things we can utilise to be self reliant if we find ourselves in a bad situation. These are:

- Attitude,
- Equipment,
- Physical health,
- Fitness,
- Experience, and
- Training.

Let's look at an example: Two divers are swimming underwater through some kelp. The trailing diver gets caught up in some weed or fishing line and stops suddenly. He tries to back out but finds that he's caught good and proper. His buddy doesn't see and continues on. A short time later his buddy realises that his missing and starts searching, but can't find our entangled diver.

At this point our diver is still fine. He has plenty of gas, and should be able to deal with the situation, but what happens in the next few moments?

The diver may notice he's alone and start to panic. He starts to thrash around trying to free himself, but instead it results in more entanglement. During the process his reg line gets caught on a nearby rock and pulled out of his mouth while he's tossing and

turning.

He can't find the reg—so he quickly goes to his backup occy, but finds that it wasn't secured properly and is caught behind him and he can't get to it. Trapped below, panicking and unable to think clear enough to obtain his air supply things are fading fast for this diver.

Or—the diver **stops** what he's doing and assesses the situation. He's got plenty of air, so there is no need to panic. He thinks clearly through his head as to the situation and decides first that he'll wait a few more minutes for buddy to return. During this time he tries to remain as still as possible to avoid further entanglement and consider his other options.



If his buddy doesn't return he will need to consider helping himself. He has some cutting tools, so he knows he can start work with that—and if that fails, he's practised numerous times taking off his BC underwater—so he knows he can go to that if it becomes a last resort.

However, at no time does he do anything without first thinking it through. Even though he may be anxious he remains calm—and all his moves are deliberate and with purpose.

As you can see in the above two examples, it's not the divers entanglement that is the real danger, but how he's prepared to deal with it— first mentally, and then physically.

And, like so many situations in diving—it's not an initial problem that causes grief, but the reaction on behalf of the diver.

So keeping this in mind, let's look at ourselves and our diving setup as to what we can do to help ourselves:

How is your equipment?

Do you carry an underwater cutting device to be able to cut your way out of entanglement? Is your alternate air source secured where you're able to reach it within a moments notice at every time? Is your weight belt on the right way, and is there anything hindering you from a quick release?

Being prepared for the unexpected doesn't cost us anything—and can put us in a good position if the unexpected ever occurs.

Are you prepared and confident?

When was the last time you took off your BC whilst underwater?

Do you still practise diving without a mask from time to time to know that you can confidently handle yourself if another diver kicks your mask off, and it sinks to the bottom?

Do you practise with your buddy out of air situations, so if it ever occurs you're still comfortable with the procedure, or was the last time you did this a long time ago in the pool during your open water course?

If you ever do find yourself in an urgent situation—whether it is to assist another buddy or yourself, the most important asset you can have may be the ability to be able to think clearly and carefully about the situation.

How is your health and fitness?

Do you need to rely on your buddy for help with your equipment because of health or fitness reasons—or are you able to assist yourself if you need to?

Have you been practising stretches to make sure you are flexible enough to reach your tank valve and turn it on? Are you able to perform additional stressful activities underwater without getting out of breath and over-breathing your regulator?

Looking at the above, we can see that being prepared with both equipment, and skills goes a long way to equipping you with the right attitude if you ever find yourself in this situation.

We should always be prepared to help out our buddies whilst diving, but it is also important to be prepared to help ourselves too, and not be totally reliant on our buddy if we find ourselves in an unfortunate situation 

Did You Know?

Michael Proudfoot is lucky to be alive after breaking his regulator while investigating a sunken naval ship off of Mexico in 1991. He lost all his air in the accident but was found underwater and alive two days later!

He had found an air-bubble trapped in the ship's gallery and a tea urn full of fresh water. He was able to survive by taking shallow breaths, rationing the water and eating sea urchins.

Mistake Made in Last Wetnotes

In our last Wetnotes, we mentioned that the Eustation tube (the tube that goes between your sinus and inner ear that gives you trouble equalising when you've got a cold) had a new name, and it was called the Ilryngo Tympanic.

This infact is incorrect. The correct new name is the Pharyngotympanic tube.

Hopefully no one has been trying to equalise their Ilryngo Tympanic since our last newsletter!

Jokes

A diver boards a dive boat ready to go out to a new site. As he's getting his gear stowed away he looks up to see a packet of chips speaking to him saying "Oooh, you really are amazing. Oooh, you are lovely."

Straight after the onboard compressor shouts out "Rubbish, look at the state of that haircut. And that wetsuit doesn't fit properly, let alone the quality of his dive gear"

Quite shocked the diver asks the skipper "What was all that about?"

The skipper apologised. "I'm sorry," he said, "The chips are complimentary but the compressor is out of order."

What's the best way to avoid being taken by a shark?

Dive with a briefcase. The shark may mistake you for an attorney and leave you alone out of professional courtesy.

A man is at home dying on his bed after an unrecoverable dive accident a few days ago. Being imobile, and the doctor only giving him 24hrs remaining he decided he wanted to spend his last moments at home instead of a hospital.

Whilst pondering on his life he's interrupted of his thoughts when he smells his favorite oatmeal raisin cookies cooking downstairs.

It took all the strength he had left but he got up from the bed and crawled down the stairs. He saw the cookies cooling on the counter and staggered over to them.

As he reached for one, his wife smacks his hand as she scowls "No, you can't have those! They're for the funeral!" 

Ewens Ponds Update

The South Australian Department of Environment and Heritage have put forward their new proposals for the future of Ewen Ponds.

There were 21 submissions received in total regarding the proposed amendments, of which 13 were from individuals.

At this stage the initial proposed amendments have been altered. Most importantly to us is the retraction of the clause denying any scuba access to the ponds. Instead the current proposal includes:

- Divers will be granted access via a permit system is to be introduced to allow both diver and snorkeler visitor access arrangements to the ponds.
- Qualification level of divers has not yet been proposed, but there was significant push towards divers requiring a **minimum certification level of Advance Open Water** training, and in one instance CDAA training.
- No indemnity form will be required to be signed in order to access the site.
- There is a proposed "trialing" closure of the ponds to 'Restore and rehabilitate degraded areas'. Such trial closures will be implemented should conditions indicate that they are necessary
- The plausability of having a new entrance platform to minimise the disturbance created by entry into the pond will be investigated.

We have no information yet on when the new draft amendments are likely to be implemented. ✍

Source: http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/pdfs/ewens_ponds_cp_amend_analysis.pdf



Upcoming Events

Jan 23rd-26th (Australia Day Weekend)

Mt Gambier Cave Diving. Dive sites may include Picininni Ponds, One Tree, Little Blue, The Pines, Englebrecht's, Nettlebed, Stinging Nettle and Allendale East.

Feb 13th / 14th

Emily Wreck Dive at Portland. As an alternate, if the weather turns northerly then we will take the opportunity to visit some of the reefs off Warrnambool including Thunder point and middle island.

Feb 20th / 21st

HMAS Canberra. Day and time will be dependent on weather. Limited spots available so please advise early if you're interested in coming.

Feb 27th / 28th

Cray Bash Weekend down at the south coast. Location yet to be confirmed but currently looking at S.E. South Australia.

March 6th-8th (Labour Day Weekend)

There are currently no plans for this long weekend. May also be used as a backup if we are unable to get on the HMAS Canberra or Emily in Feb.

2nd-5th April (Easter Weekend)

Mt Gambier Cave Diving. We'll be looking to do a day at Kilsby's. Other dives this weekend to include Picininni Ponds, One Tree, Little Blue, The Pines, Englebrecht's and Allendale East.

In addition to the above, a trip to visit the new jetty at Rapid Bay is also being discussed, with Noarlunga Pier too. If you have any ideas or requests, please make them known by emailing events@wavesncaves.com

The dates above are indicative only and are subject to interest, weather and availability.

If you are interested in diving on any of these weekends please send an email to events@wavesncaves.com to submit your interest and be added to the notification list as these dates come closer. ✍

Attending The New Advance Cave (Penetration) Course

It's been two years since I passed my CDAA cave course. During that time I have taken the time to enjoy many dives over at the mount, both in cave and sinkhole sites—but it was time to go further.

The decision to apply for the Advance Cave Course (previously known as the Penetration Course) was compelled by a friendly dive buddy (Freddy) who has been encouraging (nagging?) me for the last 2 years to sit the course.

During these last 2 years it has not been uncommon for me to be exiting a cave and find myself without a mask, and buddy-breathing with Fred. This wasn't so much due to our poor planning on gas management, but to further get me used to stress, buddy breathing and diving without a mask in preparation for this following course.

After a considerable amount of time holding out I finally gave in to Freddy's demands, and the first weekend of the course had arrived. This weekend would consist of 3 site dives at Gouldens, as well as theory and exams. After hearing horror stories about previous courses I wasn't sure what to expect. We were informed that we were the first candidates to undergo the new finalized CDAA advance cave course—so things would be interesting. (Some had gone through other 'changes in progress' courses prior to us).

Our first day started off at 8:30am with powerpoint presentations and some theory. After a few hours we broke to go outside and do some land drills with line work. This included line jumps, arrow and line placements, lost line searches and bridging a line whilst entangled in it and cutting out.

Then it was off to Gouldens for our first training dive. We were informed that every dive we did could result in failure of the course—so we needed to make sure that we kept our mind on what we were doing.

All of these dives would also consist of a few unexpected problems to work around, such as air drills. (Where the instructor would put an air gun near one of our valves to simulate some sort of leak—and we would need to deal with it).

To complicate matters one of the divers was suffering from a cold which added to his stress.

This first dive would start by running a line to a fixed line a few metres down. Pegging our line, we would then follow the fixed line through a restriction. We

would then perform a jump (marking our exit with pegs) along the way to another line, and then perform a second jump.

(Pegs are used when joining onto fixed line to mark our way so we know which way to turn when reaching an intersection on the way out).

After performing the second jump we would drop our stage off, and follow the line to the end—at which point we were required to do a mask exchange. After the exchange we were blacked out, and would need to find our way back to the start—collecting our stage and jump reels along the way.

Once we completed our way back to the main line, our masks were removed. We were then to go back to the restriction, remove our gear and push it through the restriction, get through ourselves and then re-gear up the other side before finishing the dive.

After successful completion of that we would then perform our line cutting exercise underwater, and once finished back to the theory for the rest of the day and into the night.

The second day started with Theory at 8:00am and another dive in Gouldens. This second dive really consisted of two different excersizes—first a lost line search and OOA (out of air) excersize, with the second half back in to do the dreaded stress test.

Unlike the old 'pen' course—failure to complete the stress test this time around would not necessarily be considered an instant failure. It would be up to the instructors discession to decide whether we could undertake it again the following day.

However—for us students this wasn't an option. Having to come back and resit the stress test would probably be even more stressful the second day knowing that we failed first time around—so we were focused on getting it right the first time round!

However, in saying that, I found it encouraging to see that the course had changed slightly to recognize that any diver can have a 'bad day' even if they were good capable cave divers and that a diver won't be penalized if it is their buddy that stuffs up.

We started the dive the same as the previous day—running a line to the fixed line—peg that—through the restriction, pegging and performing a jump and dropping off our stage bottle. After we did this we would continue down the line a little more until we were blacked out and then moved by our instructor to 'some point' in the site.

From there we were to perform a lost line search and once we located a line we needed to get our bearings (using line arrows), locate our stage and start our exit whilst still blacked out.

After we found our way back to the main line our blindfold was removed and we waited for the other diver (who did the same dive over the other side of the cavern) to return. Once returned, one of us would be out of air, and we were to share air (not buddy breath) back to the restriction.

We were then to navigate the restriction using the long hose and back to our safety stop.

After completing this we were to do our stress test. This involved going back into the site again (this time together. Once we reached the fixed line we were to drop our stages, and one of us would breath off our buddies long hose). We continued and once through the restriction we would go back to our own air supplies further into the cave, performing a jump and finding the next fixed line.

We would then follow this fixed line until we had our masks removed and one of our regs removed at the same time. At this point we were supposed to start our buddy breathing excersie and then exit the cave.

The guys I had been diving with had decided previously that one of the best ways to perform this dive was to dive 'side by side' together with the line between us. This way when we had our out-of-air situation, we were right next to each other ready to go, and the line was right between us—thus avoiding any unnecessary swimming to 'catch up' to our buddy first and reducing the risk of losing the line.

However—all did not go to plan for us. At the point that we lost our masks and air, one of the instruc-

tors made a little mistake. We ended up losing both our mask and **both** our air supplies!!!

At this point I noticed my buddy coming to me to get my reg out of my mouth—but I did not have one for him!

I found my hose which the instructor was still holding onto, and gave that straight to my buddy—at which point we immediately commenced buddy breathing.

With that unexpected (and unplanned on the instructors behalf too) problem sorted out, we got ourselves into a rhythm and started to exit the cave.

When we reached the restriction we were to go onto our buddies long hose—navigate the restriction and pick up our stage bottles on the other side, and then exit the cave breathing off our own stages.

Once we exited the water on this dive we were estatic. So many nights lying awake in bed thinking about this dive - and it was finally over! This was a huge relief. It looked quite possible that we were all going to be able to pass this course!

After completing this dive it was back for more theory. At the end of the theory we performed a written exam, as well as a communication exam where we had to prove we could communicate through hand-signals to our buddies.

This was a huge day. I believe it ended up somewhere around 11:00pm—a 15hr day! We were exhausted.

However now—our theory was behind us. All we needed to do were dive.

Our third day consisted of (hopefully) our last dive

Looking for Accommodation in Mt. Gambier?

Whether you're chasing it for a night, a weekend or a week, this spacious 3 bedroom house with good size living areas and fully furnished, located in Wimmera Street Mt Gambier may be what you're looking for.

It includes an outdoor entertainment area at the back with facilities for diving gear to be hung up on. Perfect for scuba divers visiting the Mt Gambier region, whether to dive in caves or the nearby sea.

It also makes an excellent place to stay while doing your CDAA course! Prices start at \$20 / head / night.

For bookings, contact Kelvyn or Paula Ball

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Email: freddy@wavesncaves.com



at Gouldens. With the stress test behind us, all we were expected to accomplish was most of what we had already done previously. This included more jumps, more stage bottle excersises, another lost line search and another gear removal—through restriction and re-gearing up.

This day was complicated slightly by a second diver catching a cold—but we all managed to get through it with few issues.

It was time to go home—as our site dives were to be performed on the following weekend. Finally—some time for sleep! This first weekend had been huge. Trying to fit all the theory, exams and training dives into 3 days was exhausting at the least. Considering the stress of the course itself, it would have been nicer to have had the theory spread out a little more—but it was behind us now.

Unfortunately during the week yours truly also caught a cold. The second weekend arrived, and we only had two days of site diving to accomplish.

The first dive was early in the morning at Pines. This dive consisted of running a reel from the surface to a fixed line. Performing a couple of jumps (whilst dropping our stages along the way) and following our way to the 'end of the line'.

At this point we were 'blacked out' and had to navigate our way back out of the cave.

Thankfully for me I was able to equalize, but unfortunately on the exit I experienced a number of vertigo hits from my ears equalizing at different times.

In addition to this, I also experienced a rush of bubbles shortly after being blindfolded. The instructors love their air guns! I was able to reach my right post at which point I closed it down and the bubbles appeared to stop. I then opened up the post again and shortly after the bubbles continued.

However—the bubbles seemed to be coming up my front. I disconnected my drysuit inflator hose, but this didn't fix the problem. After a few more moments of pondering what the problem may have been I thought that maybe these were exhaust bubbles coming out of the cave from where we had been, and because of where I was at in the cave (in a more vertical position) they had caught up with me and were simply coming past.

I decided to move on a few more metres to see if this was the case, but no—the bubbles were still there. I stopped again, and performed another set of valve shutdowns (even reaching the left post in the middle of my back on independents this time) - but the problem continued. What was my instructor

trying to pull?

I then disconnected my drysuit inflator hose again—no problems there. And then I felt the problem—my first stage on my right post (currently clipped to my vest) was leaking where the hose joined the reg. It wasn't the instructor at all, nor a simulated problem—I was having a real problem! That's not supposed to happen on courses!

The whole time I had been trying to think what the instructor was trying to do—never crossing my mind that there could be a real problem.

After a few moments I was able to fix the leak by tightening the connection, and we were off again. Who knows what my buddy was thinking waiting for me this whole time.

We returned along the line, collecting the jumps while we went, and then struck another problem. There were added stage bottles where we left ours. We knew this would happen in advance though—and had marked our stage bottles uniquely so we could 'feel' which ones were ours.

After successfully attaching the correct stage bottle and started breathing off it, we came across another jump. We checked, and identified that it was not ours, so ignored it and continued until we found our jump and then exited the cave.

The dive was a success. Only two more dives to go—and all had performed well to this point. The hard bits were behind us.

The next dive was at Iddlebiddies. The dive plan for this dive was simple. Get in—follow the cave to the end—do a mask exchange and then exit the cave. (On our exit we would be restricted to only one backup torch between the two divers). There was one important aspect to this dive. We were not permitted to touch the cave at all. Neither the floor, roof or sides of the cave.

I was slightly feet light on my previous dive which the instructors picked me up on, so for this dive I decided to make sure that light feet wouldn't be a problem by not using any air in my drysuit. Instead I was going to use my wing only and put up with the drysuit squeeze.

We performed this dive, and this was the first dive that I ran into real complications. My trim was out too much in a head down feet up attitude, which caused all sorts of problems. I wasn't feeling right through the dive, but didn't know what the problem was.

This was extremely dishearteneing. As I progressed

through the cave I already knew it was over for me. To have come so far, to get through the real hard stuff, and then to stuff up here.—on what should have been a straight forward dive.

After exiting I was briefed by my instructor, who at this point revealed to me that I also had forgotten to do up my crutch strap. What an idiot—something as simple as that brought me undone (or so I thought).

I was basically told that the course was all but over, but to my surprise I was going to be permitted to dive Englebrechts West. Since I had dived so strongly during all the other dives they were comfortable for me to do West as they didn't see me as danger—but I needed to prove myself with my trim.

I was told if I performed a perfect job with my trim and buoyancy, and prove that the stuff up in iddle-biddy was just an overlook on my crotch strap, I may get through—but I would have to do everything perfect this next dive.

The following morning we arrived at Englebrechts west. We were to follow a fixed line to the first air chamber. Get out and go over the silt mound, enter the second sump and run our own line there. This dive went relatively well, but I needed to have perfect trim. This time I made sure my crotch strap was done up, and like last time I was going to make sure no air got in my feet by using only the wing.

Unfortunately I still had feet light trim complications throughout my dive, and I couldn't figure out why. It came as no surprise to me then when the instructors told me that I would be required to return to complete my course.

After yesterday's dive in Iddlebidy I was expecting this—but the instructors were extremely encouraging. They complimented me on many strong points and explained that it was only my trim—that I needed to find out what was wrong, and prove to them I had it fixed.

At this point when you realize you have failed it takes all the fun out of diving. You are emotionally and physically exhausted, and don't really feel like continuing with diving at all, let alone cave diving. The encouragement I received from the instructors was extremely helpful and went a long way to having me mentally wanting to come back and complete the course.

The following weeks consisted of trying to figure out what was wrong with my trim. During my Iddlebidy and West dives I had done everything right (or so I thought). I had squeezed my drysuit as much as I could, using only my wing for buoyancy to avoid any air getting trapped in my feet.

Back in the pool we tried all sorts of configurations including a 9lb tail weight which was roughly 15cm below the bottom of the tank—and I was still slightly feet light. Something was drastically wrong!

Later with some helpful advise we discovered that it wasn't my equipment—but the way I was driving it that was giving me grief. The very thing I did to try and lessen the head down / feet up attitude was what was increasing the problem!

I was used to diving with air in both my drysuit and wing, but because of the trim issues I decided to dive with my wing only—my decision to do this to try and fix my trim issue was what made it worse.

As soon as I let all the air out of my wing, and used my drysuit for buoyancy—my trim changed. It was spot on!

While I can't figure out logically why this caused the opposite effect—we proved that it did.

With this problem sorted out, I was able successfully completed the resit for my advanced cave course. What a relief! . It was rewarding—but for more than one reason. Not only had I passed the course—I had also learned a very valuable lesson.

No longer would I be diving squeezing my suit in trim-critical locations. Instead I would be using my drysuit with more air. This has lead to more comfortable dives, as well as increased warmth!

My wife is also happy now. I no longer come home from diving with unexplained hickies all over my body too!

So—what are my conclusions of the course?

Firstly—it is extremely important to practice and practice lots! The course went much smoother because all divers had practiced considerably before the course. (The other 3 divers I dived with constantly for 6 months prior to the course). This made the training dives so much more pleasant and easier than expected.

This includes practicing with stage bottles. I thought that we were going to be introduced to stage bottle diving, but in fact—you are expected to already be able to handle your stage bottles in a cave environment with correct trim when you arrive. Every dive except for Englebrecht's west involved using stage bottles so it pays to be comfortable diving with them before attending the course.

Secondly—be prepared for long days. (Especially for the training dives and theory). The following

cave site dives were fine, but the weekend before was extremely tiring.

Also—don't get locked into a mindset that every problem you experience is simulated. It may be the instructors, but it could also be for real.

Whilst on mindsets—also check your attitude as it will be one of the things that you are assessed on. Not only will your attitude be assessed as to how seriously you take safety with cave diving, but also whether you will listen to the instructors, accept criticism and correction or be stuck in your own way of thinking. Even though you may not agree with some of the things the instructors say, you need to be willing to give it a try anyway.

The course itself was quite rewarding. Our instructors we great to get along with, tough but fair—and we did have a lot of fun.

However, now that it's behind me it is also quite a relief. I can finally extend my dive range, which may include diving this new and vast, but little known about extensive pushed out section in Mudhole we heard talked so much about during our course! ✍️

Featured Dive Location

Loch Ard Wreck

The Loch Ard was a clipper ship which was wrecked at Mutton Bird Island just off Port Campbell along the Shipwreck Coast of Victoria.

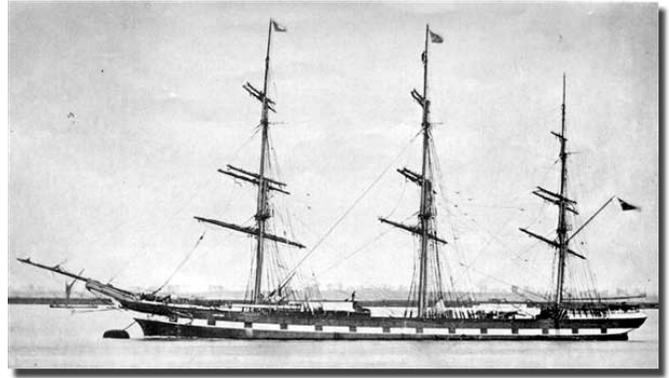
The Loch Ard belonged to the Loch Line, a major shipping line operating between Great Britain and Australia. It was a three-masted clipper ship, of 263' in length, with a gross tonnage of 1693 tones and operated from 1873 until 1878 when disaster struck.

The Loch Ard departed England on 2 March 1878, bound for Melbourne, commanded by Captain Gibbs and with a crew of 17 men. It was carrying 37 passengers and assorted cargo.

On 1 June, the ship was approaching Melbourne and expecting to sight land when it encountered heavy fog.

Unable to see the Cape Otway lighthouse, the captain was unaware how close he was running to the coast. The fog lifted around 4am, revealing that they were heading towards breakers and cliff faces.

Captain Gibbs quickly ordered sail to be set to come about and get clear of the coast, but they



were unable to do so in time, and ran aground on a reef and against the cliff face.

The masts and rigging came crashing down, killing some people on deck and preventing the lifeboats from being launched effectively. The ship sank within 10 or 15 minutes of striking the reef.

The only two survivors of the wreck were Eva Carmichael, who survived by clinging to a spar for five hours, and Thomas (Tom) R. Pearce, an apprentice who clung to the overturned hull of a lifeboat.

Tom Pearce came ashore first, then heard Eva's shouts and went back into the ocean to rescue her.

They came ashore at what is now known as Loch Ard Gorge and sheltered there before seeking assistance.



The Loch Ard's cargo included a range of luxury goods, including a large decorative porcelain peacock made by Minton in England, intended to be displayed in the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880.

The peacock was recovered completely intact and is now on display at the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum in Warrnambool, along with a number of other relics of the wreck.

The ship has been resting for more than 100 years now at the bottom of the cliffs, but items still remain to be explored, including part of the hull of the ship, along with the keel (which rest up against a reef, making a cave like environment to swim through).

The site extends between 16 -25 meters in depth, and includes lead and zinc sheets, sections of hull concreted to railway irons, copper plating, marble, ceramic tiles, lead shot, bottles, ceramics, wooden drums and numerous small artifacts.

Due to the wrecks proximity to the cliff face, the site requires good calm conditions for diving. The closest boat ramp is a little over 20kms away by boat, being the Peterborough ramp which is quite steep and requires a 4WD with low range.

The site also contains a number of marine life, and is just inside the marine park sanctuary—so you can look, but you can't touch.

The Warrnambool Sub Aqua Club boat visits this wreck a few times a year, when the weather conditions are good. 🐟

