

# FATHOMS

APRIL — MAY 2011

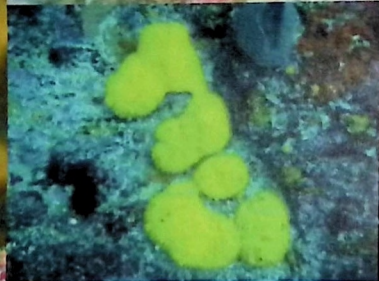
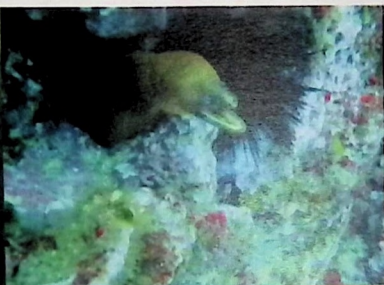


Watch out New Zealand—here comes VSAG!

[www.vsag.org.au](http://www.vsag.org.au)

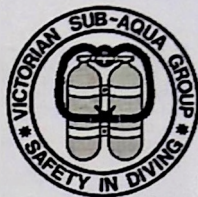
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145 Johnston St  
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# FATHOMS

*Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group*



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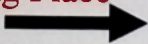
**VSAG General Meetings**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in the month

Maori Chief Hotel  
117 Moray Street  
South Melbourne, 8.00 pm  
[join at 7pm for a meal!]  
Alan Storen  
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storens@bigpond.net.au

**Editorial Submissions to:**



## The New VSAG Meeting Place



Same Day Same Time

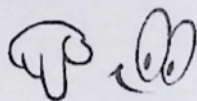
The Maori Chief Hotel  
117 Moray St  
South Melbourne

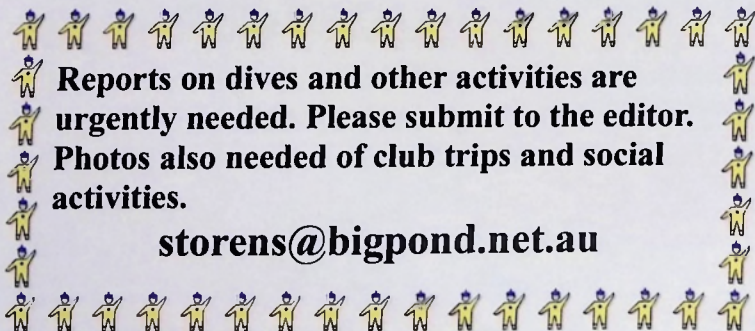


Wine does not make you FAT ...

- it makes you LEAN ...

(Against tables, chairs, floors, walls and ugly people.)



  
**Reports on dives and other activities are urgently needed. Please submit to the editor.**  
**Photos also needed of club trips and social activities.**  
**[storens@bigpond.net.au](mailto:storens@bigpond.net.au)**



# EDITORIAL

What a mixed start to 2011. When we could get out the reports were very positive and some reports are included in this edition. Unfortunately many days have been cancelled due to the poor weather and I hope the Autumn / Winter diving is much better.

Included in this edition are many reports on the club trip to New Zealand and also the weekend to Cape Jaffa, SA. Photos are from a combination of Trevor and Cathy Williams, Denise Rogers, Jan Richards, Greg Breese and mine. I hope you enjoy.



The club trip to the Prom also looks in doubt as I write this as all reports indicate that even if we could get to the Prom there might be no beach access for boats. The severe floods of last month have wiped out the Darby River bridge, caused a landslide destroying part of the road into Tidal River and the General Store, Information Centre, and Education Centre were almost a metre under water at the floods peak. Where we camp in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue the sites were under water and the toilet block was flooded causing the septic tanks to flood and the contents spread over the sites. Not good news! The river itself was flooded and washed away the recently built 'temporary road/beach access'. Parks have indicated all could be fixed by the Easter break but can give no guarantee. They have indicated not all sites will be available and that a ballot will be held to allocate site from those that have not cancelled beforehand. There is no guarantee that we will be together as a club. Watch for emails to get the latest club info. If we cancel we will be doing local diving – Sorrento, Queenscliff, Flinders, Phillip Island and possibly Inverlock – If you have any ideas please forward to the committee.

The April Club General Meeting that was cancelled, due to the Easter break starting on the Thursday, might now be held - again watch for emails to get the latest information. As I think about the June/July edition of Fathoms I am concerned about lack of diving and hence reports. If you have any articles/ stories/ photos that might be of interest please forward to me for publication. I can add photos from my collection if necessary!

The club trip to Sipadan is coming up soon (June 5) and if you are interested please contacts Mick Jeacle ASAP. I am not sure of the cut-off date but it must be getting close!

Enjoy  
Alan

**COMING SOON**

**Sipadan Trip — 6-15 June - Mick Jeacle**

**"work is only surface interval!". . . . .**

# Committee 2009 - 2010



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Committee meets 2nd Thursday of the month (except in January)  
ALL MEMBERS WELCOME  
Maori Chief 117 Moray St. South Melbourne

# President's Page



## 2011 The New VSAG!

5 Years ago when I first dived with VSAG the club had just celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, it was financially stable and outwardly flourishing. But, behind the scenes it was becoming a little tired and heavily reliant on 2 main boat owners with a committee that needed fresh blood.

Since then we have added several other keen boat owners and the committee has 6 members with less than 6 years membership. It is not uncommon for us to have 16-20 divers out on good weather days in 4-5 different boats. The club is still financially stable and we seem to have a constant supply of fresh blood joining the club.

We are running two overseas trips this year and our Long Weekends away are as popular as ever.

All this is good. The club is undergoing a strong period and the future looks positive.

I believe that it is now the time for some of the new members to step up and offer to help run the club. We are all volunteers and without someone offering to organize the dives, the social events, club magazine and the trips away, the club will again rely on too few, to do too much. Otherwise, eventually we risk the prospect that the current crop may "burn out" and lose interest. You don't need to be a veteran diver with 98,000 dives, just someone who wants to help the club move ahead.

To keep growing we need fresh ideas, fresh enthusiasm and an injection of fresh blood with a "can-do attitude"- that means YOU!

Personally I intend to stand down as President at the next election and I'd like to think that if VSAG means anything to people then they would consider putting up their hand before August to help in any way they can. Did I mention that this means YOU!

I look forward to being flooded with offers of assistance.

End of Rant!

By Greg Richards

At my age, the only thing  
that gets hard is my arteries.







## OPEN LETTER TO VSAG

From June SCOTT

Just writing this short note to thank Vsag and all it's members for all the good times that I have had at The Prom. At Easter times for last 30 years or so I have had a great time organising the egg hunt & races with the kids etc. I would especially like to thank Gail Mastrowicz & Mick Large for helping to hide eggs and organise the races etc.



I had wonderful times at the egg hunts and the races seeing their eyes light up and bringing their baskets to collect eggs and win little prizes for winning a race & sometimes for just running

Over the years I have seen a lot of kids grow up from Babes to adults with kids of their own and there have a lot changes in the membership to. A lot that I don't know their names and I'm sure they do not know me either



I doubt that I will attend any more away trips, the club is a good club for a good many years now and I'm sure it will be a round for a good many yet.

So I thank you all for many happy times.

June Scott



# NEW ZEALAND 2011

## Alan Storen

The adventure started at Melbourne Airport at some early hour on the 26<sup>th</sup> February. The news of mega earthquakes in Christchurch did not cause us great concern as, although they were disastrous for those involved, they were many 100s of km to the south of our proposed trip.

The starters were: Greg and Jan Richards, Trevor and Cathy Williams, Peter and Lena Altis, Denise Rogers, Greg Breese, Jude and I.

We landed in Auckland after the 4 hours flight and into a rental minibus to travel North to Tutukaka – our first dive destination. The accommodation at 'Oceans Resort Hotel' was superb and after settling in for the night we were soon jumping out of our beds to go on the first dive. I kept telling myself that it was only 5am in Melbourne even though my watch was 7am NZ! After the obligatory paper signing and qualification checks we were soon aboard the good ship 'el tigre' to travel some 45 minutes out to the Poor Knights. The boat held about 14 divers and VSAG made up about half of the boat.

The dive company 'Dive Tutukaka' was one of the most professional dive companies that I have dived with – and I say that not because they gave all the VSAG divers a complimentary T-shirt. Everything was arranged down to the superb lunch between dives and the setup could not be faulted. Very highly recommended!



The dives with them included the 'Arches' (both North and Middle) , Riko Riko cave ( a huge sea cave approx 1 Hectare in size, with enough room for several dive charter boats and with skeletal remains of a whale on the sea floor), Oculina Point/ Scary Cave ( a great wall dive with a cave that allowed 40m+penetration), Trev's Rock and Mary's Wall. Water temp was about 22-23C and the



viz about 20-30m. The fish life was superb with schools of fish everywhere as well as many nudibranches, morays, large snapper, stonefish, etc. Many walls, arches, swim throughs and caves. Good coral but probably on the small side, colourful sponges, kelp and many seastars. Most dives were in the 25 to 35m depths with dive time about 60 minutes.

For the non-divers (Jan, Cathy, Jude and Lena) the tour bus ventured far and wide – I hope they can include in their stories! One day they ventured out on a dolphin discovery trip, unfortunately no dolphins but lots of snorkelling and kayaking done. Our dive boat met up with their boat 'Perfect Day' at lunchtime as they avoided the stingers near Riko Riko Cave.

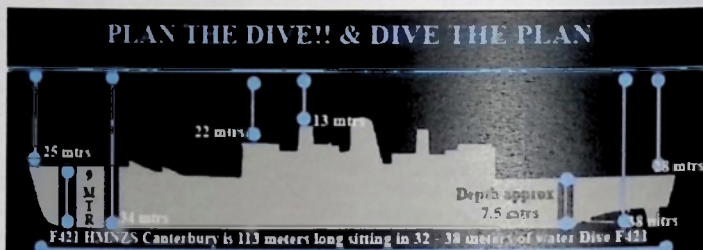


We left Greg B at Tutukaka on the Wednesday as he wanted to do more diving at this location. The rest headed for Paihia which is further to the North. This is on the Bay of Island - a highly recommended dive location. We stayed at the Bounty Inn which was very comfortable but not as upmarket as the Oceans Resort. Onroute we stopped at the most decorated toilet you could image –



Hundertwasser's  
Kawakawa toilets.  
Check out the photos!

The first dive, for most, was on the ex HMNZS Canterbury. Smaller than the HMAS Canberra ( length was about 110m compared to 140 for the Canberra) , but down about the same length of time. The marine growth was good and we explored the Captains quarters, bridge, boat deck, hanger and torpedo room. Lots of nudibranches, colourful anemones, schooling snapper, bulls eyes and bait fish. Viz was about 15m and depth to 35m. Water temp 22C.



Greg R and Denise opted to do a reef dive on Bird Rock and from all reports this also was an excellent dive with lots to see and enjoy. Our second dive was on the Cathedral Cave. We dived from the entrance along a wall at about 20m. Peter was caught in a strong surge near the end of the cave and all Trevor and I could do was watch. Fortunately all turned out well and we spent the rest of the dive



looking at rays and enjoying the marine life on the walls or the millions of fish feeding on the surface.

The next dive was one of my dive highlights of the trip – the Rainbow Warrior. This ship, once the flag ship for GreenPeace, is laid to rest in the Cavalli group of Islands after being mined in Auckland Harbour by members of the French Secret Service on 10 July 1985. She was on her way to protest at the French nuclear testing on Mururoa Atol when she was sunk.



It was refloated and moved to the Cavallies as a dive site and artificial reef in 1987. Denise and I had a great dive on her as we explored the internal and external features of the wreck. Mega bulleyes, anemones, lots of marine growth and a very interesting wreck. Max depth was about 27m and we spent over an hour exploring her from top to bottom. Viz about 20m and temp 22C.





Our last dive was on a reef called Nukutanga. Relatively shallow at just over 10m but very interesting marine life as Denise and I spent nearly 80 minutes exploring every nook and cranny at the site. Many nudis, a small cray, huge stingray, mega fish which just loved the freshly crushed urchins. An excellent 'photographer's dive' to finish the trip.



We almost did an extra days diving on the Saturday but the weather gods were not pleased and so we spent the day as surface interval!! Some went to Russell and others just chilled out. I was one of the later.

The non divers did not sit idle while all this diving was happening and many trips were undertaken – but that is their story so please read the other reports! I did ask all to contribute 10 lines so we should have many stories to fill the pages!

With the diving completed and into 'off gassing' mode we spent the last couple of days on the west coast. The kauri forest was great, Waitangi Treaty tour very interesting as we worked our way back to Auckland. On the Tuesday Trevor, Kathy, Jude and I headed back to Aus while the others remained in NZ to soak up more of the atmosphere. I needed to get back to head for Cape Jaffa on the Thursday for some more diving– but that is another story!

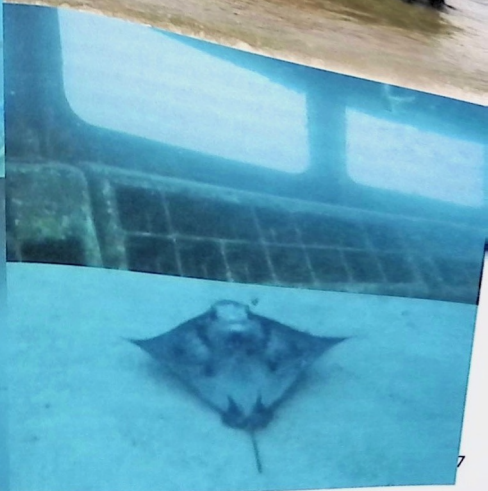
A great trip, great company, great diving, lots to enjoy, lots of laughs and a highly recommended location if you are looking for a relaxing dive trip. Many thanks to the Greg(s) for the planning and their local knowledge, to the drivers, to my dive buddies for the great dives and to all for their great company – I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.



Alan







## **North Island New Zealand 2011.....**

### **Did the earth move for you too???**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2011: Whilst sitting at work daydreaming about my upcoming holiday in New Zealand, and planning all sorts of adventures in the South Island, my wife rang me to say a major Earthquake had hit Christchurch again. After quickly checking the news and realizing this was no minor tremor, I began changing my holiday plans.

The following day was a blur of phone calls and emails cancelling accommodation and rental cars, and then working out what to do after the VSAG dive trip to the Poor Knights was over. The decision was made to try and dive White Island- New Zealand's only active Marine Volcano.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> Feb 2011: The main group assembled at Tullamarine for the 11.30am departure, around 6.00 pm NZ time all 10 of us were in the rental bus and off to Tutukaka for a late check in. After 4 hours in the bus I was knackered and still didn't feel as if I was on holidays. Greg Breese kindly offered to drink some of my duty free whiskey to relax me.

The next three days were taken up with some superb diving as the crew at Dive Tutukaka went out of their way to spoil us with some of the easiest diving one could ever imagine. In some cases they backed the boat up to within meters of the sheer rock walls. All you had to do was swim over to the wall and decide to head left for the huge arch swarming with fish or head right to the drop-off next to the cave with the massive whale bones in it! OMG!...Decisions.

The water was a balmy 22C and the water blue with average visibility of 20m to 25m. The fish life was usually swarming around you, with most dives punctuated by zooming Yellow Tail King Fish coming up close to check you out. If you dropped down into the Eklonia Kelp and swam through it you got to see the rest of the fish life and Moray eels all competing for your attention.

The Dive spots varied each day, but usually consisted of one wall dive and at least one cave or Arch dive. The Knights are renowned for their fabulous Arch dives. We had the privilege of diving of the Northern Arch and Middle Arch and they were certainly memorable.

Although strong currents are not prevalent, there can be strong tidal flows through the archways, as we found out when we dived the Northern Arch! As I approached the Arch I could see that it was packed with literally wall to wall fish. All just holding their position into what seemed at first to be a mild current. As I attempted to enter the archway I was met with what felt like a solid wall of immovable water. I could swim across it, but the only way into the arch was hand over hand on the walls. I'm told that Peter Altis and Greg Breese did manage to get through and then just flew back again!

No mention of the Poor Knights would be complete without a trip into Riko Riko cave. Reputed to be the biggest sea cave in the world, it is certainly impressive the first time you see it. Some 130m long, 83 metres wide, 25m deep and 35 m to the ceiling- this is some cave. Quite large vessels can enter and turn around inside it. During WW2 a Japanese submarine hid in it for 2 weeks to effect repairs.

The **Poor Knights Islands** are a group of islands 23kms off the coast. Uninhabited since the 1820s, they are a nature reserve. The Poor Knights Marine Nature Marine Reserve surrounds the island. This means there is absolutely no fishing allowed here, hence the fabulous fish life.

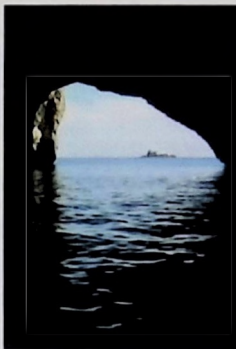
The chain consists of two large islands (Tawhiti Rahi, the larger at 151.5 ha, and Aorangi 101 ha with a group of smaller islets between the two, the largest of which is Motu Kapiti. *Tawhiti Rahi* is also the Moari name for the entire chain, which has a total area of 271 ha. The islands are the eroded remnants of a 4 million year old volcano. At their highest they stand over 200m above sea level, and the cliff faces we dived against probably averaged 100m high.

The Dive team from Dive Tutukaka was exemplary. Always helpful, always smiling and nothing was too much trouble. If they can't make you happy- take up knitting! Not to mention the diving is both fabulous and varied. The most professional well run dive operation I have ever come across.

Most nights we ate out and the meals were good and the beer cold. On our last night in Tutukaka, we decided to save our hard earned and eat at home. The team of Jude, Kathy, Lena and Jan scoured the local supermarkets and we dined on a sumptuous BBQ feast fit for a King (or in this case perhaps just a Poor Knight!) All up it cost \$7NZ each- roughly \$5AUS. At that price I didn't care that Breese was still helping me drink my duty free Whiskey.

It was time for the main party to move up the coast to Paihia in the Bay Of Islands. We left Greg Breese behind to continue with the Poor Knights, as he said he had no interest in diving the wrecks we were targeting up North. Strangely ironic considering on the day we left he booked in with Dive Tutukaka to do the twin wreck package?

The trip up the coast was interspersed with a 2 hour stop over to view the famous Hundertwassers toilets in the backwater logging town of Kawakawa. Riveting stuff indeed! This town has everything one wants in a tourist destination. Disaffected overweight youths, standing around in the main street practicing their kick boxing skills, teenage mothers with their 2 kids strolling past, pubs with signs warning that gang members are only welcome if they don't wear their "gang patches" and heavy logging trucks rumbling through every 2 minutes. On the plus side, I did get to urinate in a work of art, and surprisingly the bus was





still where we hid it, when we returned.

We arrived at Paihia, and the crack diving team of Trevor Williams, Alan Storen, Peter Altis, Denise Rogers and me checked in to the dive shop to prepare for tomorrow's dives. The dive shop was somewhat small and unassuming after the previous few days, but we held high hopes for the diving to come.

Dive Paihia has a system of loading all the dive gear onto 2 large metal trolleys and then waltzing 200m through the main street with them and down to the wharf, before unloading them onto the boat. After watching this with a mixture of amusement and befuddlement, we set forth for the first of our dives.

The target dive was the scuttled wreck of the former HMNZS Canterbury. Can't comment on how good it was as Denise and I opted to not dive it and dive a place called Bird Rock instead.

Well what can I say! Bird Rock was the standout dive of the holiday so far. I haven't seen this many fish in such large concentrations swarming all around me for I don't know how long. I didn't want to come up. The viz was only average, the terrain interesting, but the action was just non-stop.

The second dive was next to the famous Hole in the Rock that the day trippers all go to sightseeing. Diving in the Hole in the Rock is apparently very good (it is after all just a giant Arch much like the ones we had already dived) however it is fraught with danger due to the ever passing tourist boats overhead. Hence, the reason we dived the cave next to the Hole! An interesting dive and on preparing to surface I was engulfed in a feeding frenzy of several different species of fish and spent a few mesmerizing minutes at 3m just watching the action all happening around me.

The next day we set off in the Dive Shops Mini-bus for the 1 hour drive up further North to dive the Rainbow Warrior. Whilst we were bouncing our way up the coast road, our non-diving crew were out on a tour boat checking out the Islands that the Bay is so well renowned for- including, needless to say, the "Hole in the Rock" By all accounts they loved it, although as with their day out at the Poor Knights they failed to see a single dolphin. They did however roar through the Hole in the Rock without killing a single diver.



After our gear was loaded into the oversized inflatable, we did a beach launch and smashed our way out to the dive site.

After a quick site briefing we descended onto the wreck of

the Rainbow Warrior. As we descended we could pretty much see the entire wreck laid out below us. Viz was at least 25m and for most of the team this was voted the best dive of the holiday. Very pretty wreck with lots of swim thru's, masses of fish life and much colourful life growing on every inch of space.

For lunch they turf you off onto a deserted beach with the dive leader and the food, whilst the other 2 staff members stay on board the boat and swap all your gear over ready for the 2<sup>nd</sup> dive. I like it! I even managed to grab a quick nap on a very uncomfortable rock on the beach without being noticed. If any photos of this alleged event find their way into Fathoms, I can assure you they are the work of Photoshop.



The last dive of the VSAG tour was a shallow splash off a nearby Island that all bar one of our group enjoyed. On re-entering the boat Peter Altis was asked what he thought of it and replied " Not Much , maybe 4 out of 10" The dive guide promptly pushed him back in the drink for his temerity. Upon resurfacing, the spluttering response from Peter was "*Expletive deleted*...3 out of 10 then..." I was so impressed by the guide's actions that I spent a few hours drinking with him that evening at the Mako Bar down the road.

We did plan to dive again the next day but the weather was getting progressively worse, so we did a group bonding thing in the rain at the quaint little town of Russell just across the bay from our base. I could have swum home in my clothes to get wetter, but the difference would have been minimal.

Finally, it was time for some to head home and for others to roam mindlessly across the width and breadth of the North Island. All 9 of us packed up and headed for the wild west side of the Island and toured through the giant Kauri Forests, before trying to find our Top 10 Cabins at some god forsaken place in the middle of no-where.

Well, what a surprise! The cabins were completely renovated and backed onto our own private BBQ area complete with a babbling brook ripping past our back door- this was paradise! The park was magnificent and so was the BBQ we laid on that night. Don't know who did all the drinking, but in the morning I had to take out 9 empty wine bottles just from our cabin alone. Must be that Storen fellow!

We reluctantly left, and moved down to Auckland, stopping at two museums on the way. The first was somewhat underwhelming, but had the attraction of having the masts from the Rainbow Warrior set up on site. Too tired to cook we wandered up the street for our last nite together as a group. The local Irish Bar provided good grub and a cold Speights, so it proved to be a winner.

After splitting up, Jan and I headed South towards the aptly named Bay Of Plenty. Our target was the active volcano "White Island" situated some 50kms off the coast from the township of Whakatane. We arrived late afternoon, just in time to book onto a tourist boat going out to the Island the next morning.

Without doubt this is the main non diving highlight of our trip; this is a spectacular, awesome, gobsmacking experience. The 70ft boat takes about 90 minutes to get you there, including numerous stops to film the huge pods of Common Dolphins that encircle the boat. You then hop into a small inflatable to transfer the last 100m. Then you have to scramble up a rudimentary ladder onto a wrecked rock jetty complete with hard hat and gas mask to be confronted by what looks like a movie set about the apocalypse.

We spent 2 hours wandering around the live volcano, right up to huge steam vents and up to the lip of the crater lake. This leaves anything Rotorua has for dead. After we returned to the boat, the skipper took us for a leisurely trip around the Island as we ate lunch, before heading back to land (and more dolphins) I was so impressed I decide to bite the bullet and pay the exorbitant amount and dive the damn thing. I booked in with Divewhite and waited for Friday.



Friday March 11<sup>th</sup> 2011: Due to the other divers on the boat having as little as 10 dives experience I couldn't get out to Volkner Rocks, these volcanic spires stick up 100 or more meters in the air and drop off down 150m- all in crystal clear oceanic waters teeming with life. They are part of the volcanic chain about 5 kms off the Island itself.

The first dive was on a reef known as Homestead Reef, about a 100m off the Volcano itself. We started under the boat with a bottom only 11 m deep, then a slowly sloping drop off to 30m plus. On hitting the bottom I was surrounded by the biggest schools of Pink and Blue Mao Mao I had ever seen. Directly behind them was a massive school of Yellow Tail Kingfish .Everywhere I looked I could only see fish. When the dive guide signaled to move on I wanted to kill him- it



was just that good. As we drifted across the plateau away from the boat we encountered less and less fish. Finally we returned to under the boat and I spent the last 15 minutes alone under the boat in sheer bliss.

The second dive was at a place called Spanish Cave. Reputed, according to the dive books, to be one of the premier dive sites at White Island. Didn't blow me away, but I did see a few Bronze Whalers, large quantities of Kingfish and compared to most dives it was still an 8/10.

However, the best part of the dive was the food after. This mob really knows how to feed a hungry diver. They cook up a storm on the boat including after an after lunch pizza!!

Finally, Jan and I were snuggled up on the couch in our luxurious beachfront cabin looking out over the flat calm blue seas to the ever smoking White Island clearly visible on the horizon when the news from Japan suddenly came through. Our trip started with a catastrophic earthquake and now an even worse one.

As the Tsunami warnings for the Bay of Plenty came through we prepared to leave at 1<sup>st</sup> light. We had planned on catching up with Denise Rogers on our last nite so we booked into a cabin on the West Coast in a fishing village backwater called Port Waikato. We arrived almost simultaneously and settled in with a cold Speights followed by watching a magnificent sunset over a calm ocean, on a black sand beach with fish and chips. Only in New Zealand! Our holiday was over.



\*\*\*\*\*

Postscript: As we relaxed in the cabin I read the ubiquitous park information folder in the room. It said that in the event of a Tsunami the park management would advise what to do- hardly inspiring stuff. At this point a warning siren sounded and my pupils dilated somewhat. Turns out they test it every day at that time. Great! I still needed a stiff drink, so I fought of the 2 women for the last stubbie.

## DIFFERENT WAYS OF LOOKING AT THINGS

Two guys were discussing popular family trends on sex, marriage, and family values.

Bill said, 'I didn't sleep with my wife before we got married, did you?'

Larry replied, 'I'm not sure, what was her maiden name?'

---

A little boy went up to his father and asked: 'Dad, where did my intelligence come from?'

The father replied. 'Well, son, you must have got it from your mother, cause I still have mine.'

---

'Mr. Clark, I have reviewed this case very carefully,' the divorce Court Judge said, 'And I've decided to give your wife \$775 a week,'

'That's very fair, your honor,' the husband said. 'And every now and then I'll try to send her a few bucks myself.'

---

A doctor examining a woman who had been rushed to the Emergency Room, took the husband aside, and said, 'I don't like the looks of your wife at all.'

'Me neither doc,' said the husband. 'But she's a great cook and really good with the kids.'

---

An old man goes to the Wizard to ask him if he can remove a curse he has been living with for the last 40 years.

The Wizard says, 'Maybe, but you will have to tell me the exact words that were used to put the curse on you.'

The old man says without hesitation, 'I now pronounce you man and wife.'

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The graveside service just barely finished, when there was massive clap of thunder, followed by a tremendous bolt of lightning, accompanied by even more thunder rumbling in the distance...

The little old man looked at the pastor and calmly said, 'Well, she's there.'



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## LEXIPHILES

To write with a broken pencil is pointless.

When fish are in schools they sometimes take debate.

A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.

When the smog lifts in Los Angeles , U.C.L.A.

The professor discovered that her theory of earthquakes was on shaky ground.

The batteries were given out free of charge.

A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.

A will is a dead giveaway.

If you don't pay your exorcist you can get repossessed.

With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.

You are stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.

Local Area Network in Australia : The LAN down under.

A boiled egg is hard to beat.

Police were called to a day care where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.

Did you hear about the fellow whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now.

If you take a laptop computer for a run you could jog your memory.

A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.

When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds

The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.

He had a photographic memory which was never developed.

Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.

When she saw her first strands of gray hair, she thought she'd dye.

Acupuncture: a jab well done.

*Several men are in the locker room of a golf club.*

*A cell phone on a bench rings and a man engages the hands-free speaker function and begins to talk. Everyone else in the room stops to listen.*

MAN: "Hello"

WOMAN: "Hi Honey, it's me. Are you at the club ?"

MAN: "Yes."

WOMAN: "I'm at the shops now and found this beautiful leather coat. It's only \$2,000. Is it OK if I buy it ?"

MAN: "Sure, go ahead if you like it that much."

WOMAN: "I also stopped by the Lexus dealership and saw the new models. I saw one I really liked."

MAN: "How much ?"

WOMAN: "\$90,000."

MAN: "OK, but for that price I want it with all the options."

WOMAN: "Great! Oh, and one more thing. I was just talking to Janie and found out that the house I wanted last year is back on the market. They're asking \$980,000 for it."

MAN: "Well, then go ahead and make an offer of \$900,000. They'll probably take it. If not, we can go the extra eighty-thousand if it's what you really want."

WOMAN: "OK. I'll see you later! I love you so much!"

MAN: "Bye! I love you, too."

*The man hangs up. The other men in the locker room are staring at him in astonishment, mouths wide open.*

*He turns and asks, "Anyone know whose phone this is ?"*













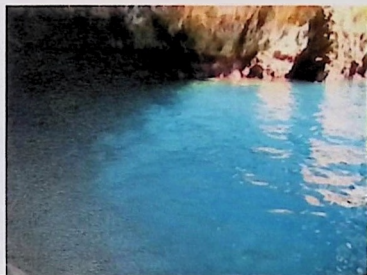


## Thoughts from New Zealand

(or Ten Lines from Denise Rogers)

1. Too scared to close my eyes in case I missed something.
2. Millpond like sea
3. I haven't seen the visibility this good for a long time
4. Like diving in a huge aquarium, so many fish almost beyond belief
5. Fantastic dive buddies, I felt safe and relaxed to dive with them
6. Beautiful colours of the sea.
7. Perfect weather no wind, sunny, not too hot
8. Lots of laughing and eating
9. Relaxing
10. Being asked out, by a 22-year-old hot looking local boy!
11. Telling the 22-year-old hot looking boy, that I could not go out with him, as I was going home for a nanny nap!





## NEW ZEALAND TRIP 2011—Jan Richards

Just want to thank Jude, Alan, Denise, Trevor, Kathy, Lena, Peter and Greg B for being wonderful companions on this trip. How great was the diving, the walks, the afternoon sitting and having a drink and a chat. The community barbeques, the fantastic boat trips where we saw the caves and arches that nature has made over hundreds of thousands of years, and learned all the local history. The majesty of the kauri trees – how great was the museum that gave the history of those magnificent trees, I could have spent 2 days there but alas we only had half a day. I have to say to the girls that they should have stayed on for a few more days and gone to White Island – this was an incredible trip which produced those elusive dolphins we could not find at Paihia. Circled by a pod of well over 100 dolphins on the way to White Island and then on the way back to the mainland.  
Great trip- thanks to all involved.

Jan





## NEW ZEALAND 2011 - Jude Storen

Enjoyed another fabulous overseas trip with VSAGers this time 10 days to North Island, New Zealand where I had not been for 30+ years when I went with my mum leaving Alan (a gem) with our 3 young ones.

Weather was great only rained one day which restricted us. Stayed in 4 different lovely locations, Ocean Resort ,Tutukaka then Paihia near Bay of Islands, in the tranquil rainforest where we bushwalked and a night walk hoping to spot a kiwi, saw huge ancient Kauri Trees and last night stayed near the airport.

Ten people holidayed in all with 4 of us non divers – Cathy, Lena, Jan and me. We had no trouble occupying ourselves whilst divers explored the depths. We'd set off in our mini bus, huge thanks to our brilliant driver Cathy for adventurous days. Outings included many tourist locations - coffee locations, galleries, chocolate factory, orchards, many varied walks, saw many and swam at a pristine

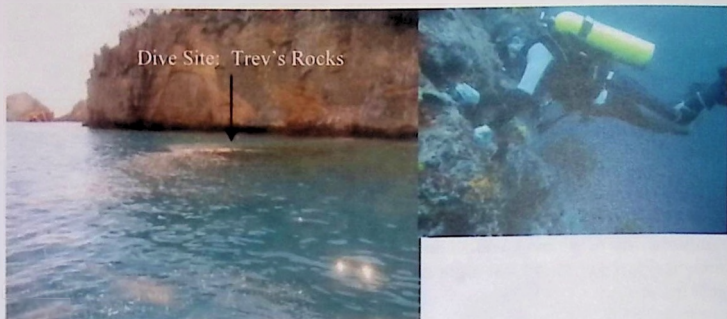
beach, 1 boat cruise where we snorkelled, kayaked (2<sup>nd</sup> time lucky getting in, got wet 1st try) with Cathy into a giant sea cave and managed to manoeuvre thru a sea arch, 2<sup>nd</sup> a Dolphin cruise around the Bay of Islands but unfortunately did not swim with or see a dolphin, saw Hundertwasser's colourful unique Public Toilets at Kawakawa also nearly beat Greg Grrr at pool whilst having a pub beer or two, museums ( best by far was Kauri one at Matakoho ), visited interesting Waitangi Treaty grounds, ferried to quaint historic Russell from Paihai would have liked to stay there longer. Dinners were varied and enjoyable either bbqs at accommodations, restaurants etc. On two occasions there were local volunteers minding cars at parking areas over weekends due to high theft.

Thanks very much to the organisers, much appreciated, any all for their company.- I had a ball! Some remained to continue enjoying beautiful New Zealand whilst the Williams and the Storens flew home.



## The Pied Piper of the Poor Knights:

A tale of fishlessness at Tutukaka.



Trevor's Rocks: a more virile, erotic name for a dive site is unimaginable. Thrusting, surging rocks. Licentious gardens under sun-filtered foam. Swarming chevroned Koheru, schooling blue Mao Mao.

Yonder, bareheaded, moustachioed, the culprit barely breathing draws the hoard. Tens, hundreds of intermingled Koheru and blue Mao Mao trail the Pied Piper of Tutukaka. Slowly, steadily, relentlessly, the hoard departs the rocks.

Zilch, impotent nothingness. Riches to raggedness. Trevor no longer rocks.

Regards,  
Trevor Williams



Ed. Trev and I dived as buddies on this dive—unfortunately the fish followed me. Alan

## Greg B's Poor Knights trip part one!

I left work on Friday the 25th of Feb with an extra spring in my step, I'm going on a dive holiday! Plus I had also sequestered a bottle of white wine (or paint stripper masquerading as white wine) from my Friday work drinks. This was a decision I would soon regret. flying Air New Zealand I opted not to have a meal on board. So there I was at the airport standing in queues miles long, hung over, packed in a hurry, no breakfast and STARVING. After checking in for my flight listening to the worms roar in my belly I went in search of food. McDonalds was unappealing as was anything else greasy. My search for food came up empty with everything either shut, or serving greasy mayhem that would do me no favours on the flight. At least Emma had thought to stuff a cookie in my bag and lucky for me she had as otherwise I would have had nothing at all.

After a long and hungry flight I was lucky enough to short cut the queues to the baggage collection (hooray I thought, i'll get a cheeky bite before the others show up!). My bag was one of the first half dozen out and still no sight of the others. So off I hurried through the gates to the arrivals lounge to be greeted by Peter, who had flown on a separate flight a little earlier. I left Peter to maintain a vigil for the others and I hurried off believing in my mind I had little time to satisfy the growing hunger pains. On my way to finding food I decided to stop and purchase a prepaid broadband dongle so I could stay in touch. Another mistake. I joined the Vodafone queue to see a single shop assistant slowing plodding her way through selling a prepaid phone to two older American women. 20 minutes later as she continued to explain how to use one of these new fangled mobile phones I was contemplating triple homicide.

Eventually I was able to make my purchase, I commented idly on how hard it is to find good help these days, with the shop assistant pausing to take the time to agree with me. Ahh irony. Lost on the younger generations.

I scurried over to Mc Donalds and grabbed a burger, then joined the now fully gathered VSAG crew, stuffing my face as we checked in and sorted our sturdy wheels.

The drive to Tutukaka was fairly uneventful, with some sly bourbon and coke, pink sheep, and me slowly educating my companions on the correct pronunciation of them big confusing Maori words. Be sure to ask Trevor how to pronounce Whak in Maori. You may be surprised.

Now as a result of my love for the Poor Knights Islands I decide to self book to stay in Tutukaka for the duration rather than follow the gang up to Paihia and the rest of the Bay of Islands. So rather than staying in the flash hotel I opted for the holiday park. The holiday park for anyone interested offers accommodation from self contained units (kitchen and bathroom) through to cabins with beds and bunks down to the humble space to pitch your tent. A bit of something for everyone. On our arrival I gathered my gear and headed off to the Holiday park, a brisk walk of 100m or so to my cabin, a brief chat with the night guard and I was hunkered down for the night. The others enjoying 4 star luxury a stones throw away.

I woke up early on Sunday morning, stole some breakfast from the resort and headed off to Dive Tutukaka with the diving crew. Once there they studiously packed our own gear into their wet bags and added a wetsuit for myself. It was here we met the lovely and bright Tamera (same as camera, but with a T) who was our guide for the first days of our trip. Onto the vessel El Tigre (generally used for the more experienced divers) and introduced to the double fronted life vest we were ready to go (the life vests have front printed on both sides. Obviously these are designed for the Americans who don't know how to use mobile phones).



Our first dive was to RicoRico cave, largest cave in the southern hemisphere or some such. 132m long and 84m wide it is almost a hectare inside. Last year they had a sperm whale carcass wash into the back of the cave, leaving a host of whale bones within the cave. The bones are very porous and very light. I imagine these will erode relatively quickly and be reclaimed by the giant moist. We found the jaw bones, some pieces of the vertebrae, and a number of other bones we can't identify. The cave itself is quite an easy dive, with a max depth in the mid 20's. I haven't been diving much recently, and on this trip I had some new gear I had never used including a new 1st and 2nd stage and a trial wing from dive tub. Over the course of the week they proved themselves to be very very good equipment. Me on the other hand proved himself to be a total tool. In one dive.

My air consumption was significantly worse than anyone else, and buddied with the other Greg I signalled 50 bar. As we swam back to the entrance of the cave we spotted another large Whale bone and dropped from 18m to 24 for a closer look. After an inspection of the bone we started our ascent. Greg asked me how much air I had left and I signalled 30, so we would have to continue up to the surface without anymore exploring. I noticed my reg getting harder to breathe, and after a few more breathes it died completely. I signalled to Greg I was out of air, when I got no reaction I took my reg out of my mouth and waited expectantly. I heard the turning or wooden gears and the audible thunk as he realised I wasn't actually putting it on and did in fact need air. Watching Greg search for his occy it reminded me of the last time it was his shout at the bar as he padded himself down looking for his wallet! (Or in this case the occy). I sucked one last half breathe out of my reg as I waited and Greg handed over his Occy. We proceeded to the surface without delay.

I had some explaining to do! I blame my SPG (and still do) for reading incorrectly. The dive boat swapped my SPG for one of theirs and the rest of the week continued without issue. Time for a new SPG for me!!!

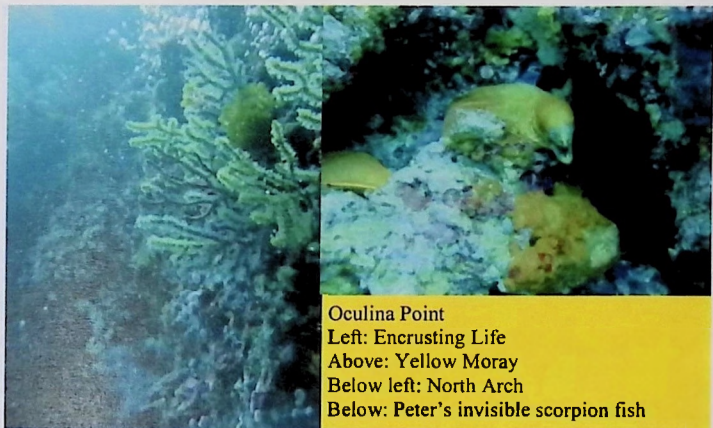
Next up was Oculina point, with amazing Gorgonian fans and encrusting life on the wall. This was an excellent and shallow wall dive. The highlight here really was the sponge and encrusting life

Dinner and beer soon followed for the intrepid NZ VSAG crew. For the first night we hit up the fish and chip/pizza shop. Complete with bar (that has two beers on tap)! The food was good, though some of the waits were a little long.

Day 2 and the Dive Tutukaka peeps had repacked all our gear ready to go on the boat. Talk about service!

Our first dive of the day was Northern Arch. Here you can swim past the massive arch (famous for it's photos of stacked stingrays) and out to a point to peer off the edge of the wall into the wild blue deep. Buddied with Peter (I guess Greg wanted all his air to himself) the dive plan was to go past the arch and out to the point, have a look and swim back checking out the arch on the way back. What a bastard arse exercise that was. I've never been more knackered after a dive.

There was some mild swell at the surface, but at the arch this turned into significant current. You certainly couldn't make headway swimming against. Oculina point was excellent and we



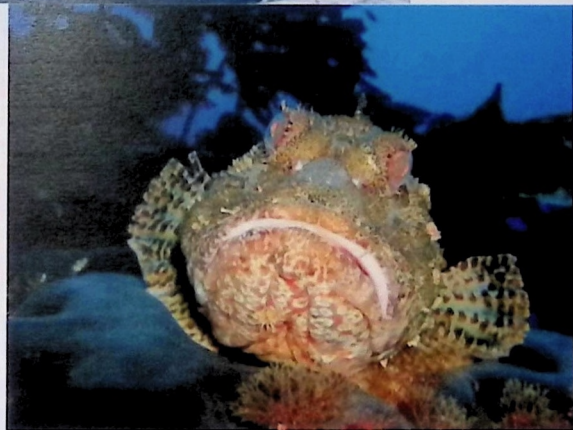
Oculina Point

Left: Encrusting Life

Above: Yellow Moray

Below left: North Arch

Below: Peter's invisible scorpion fish





Above top: Trev's Rocks  
Middle: Baby Moray  
Bottom: El Presidente and Friend  
Right top: Mary's wall Gorgonian fan  
Middle: Lord Howe coral fish  
Bottom: Nudibranch

Greg B.