

ULSAC Summer Trip Report Kingdom of Cornwall Tour 2012

Logistics

Date	17 August - 2 September 2012	Springs <input type="checkbox"/> Neaps <input type="checkbox"/>
Venue	Cornwall & Devon (Porthkerris, Penzance and Torquay/Brixham)	
Marshal	Ken Obbard & Ross McLeod & Gloria Jaconelli	
Overseer	Nathan Long & Jeremy Davey	
Number of People	18 (14 Max at one time)	
List of attendees with Diver Grade in brackets (e.g SD, DL etc)	Mark Bell (AD)	Nathan Long (AD)
	Victoria Room (AD)	Jeremy Davey (AD)
	Ivan Djordjevic (DL)	Charles Hood (AD) <i>guest</i>
	Ross McLeod (DL)	Vanessa Woolhead (DL)
	Erik Rijkhorst (SD)	Gloria Jaconelli (SD)
	Sile Molloy (SD)	Ken Obbard (SD)
	Natalie Reeder (SD)	Vedika Mehra (SD)
	Elizabeth Bennett (SD)	Hannah Holdcroft (SD)
	Mladen Rachev (OD) to (SD)	Timothy Melrose (SD)

Schedule of trip

Day & Date	Base location	Dives/Activity
Friday 17 th August	London & Porthkerris	Travel: ULU - Chiswick - Chy Carne/Porthkerris)
Saturday 18 th	Porthkerris	2 Dives: Shore based
Sunday 19 th	Porthkerris	2 Dives: Volnay/Lobster Pot & Hera
Monday 20 th	Porthkerris	3 Dives: Volnay & Vase Rock & Shore at Night (Porthkerris)
Tuesday 21 st	Porthkerris	2 Dives: SS N.G. Peterson & Mohegan
Wednesday 22 nd	Porthkerris & Penzance	1 Dive: Mohegan & Travel to Trevair/Penzance
Thursday 23 rd	Penzance	2 Dives: Seggi Rock and Wolf Rock
Friday 24 th	Penzance	BLOWN OUT - surfing Newquay
Saturday 25 th	Penzance & Porthkerris	POOR WEATHER - 2 Dive: Mohegan from Hardboat Celtic Kitten & shore based
Sunday 26 th	Penzance	2 Dives: Runnel Stone &

		Helleopes
Monday 27 th	Penzance	BLOWN OUT - Bodyboarding etc
Tuesday 28 th	Penzance	2 Dives: Land's End drift & BASKING SHARKS & The Bucks
Wednesday 29 th	Penzance & Torquay/Brixham	POOR WEATHER - Travel to Torquay Backpackers/Brixham
Thursday 30 th	Torquay/Brixham	1 Dive: Dudley Rose then BLOWN OUT so Crazy Golf!
Friday 31 st	Torquay/Brixham	2 Dives: Bretagne & Bretagne
Saturday 1 st September	Torquay/Brixham	2 Dives: Perrone & Thatcher's Rock/Ore Stone
Sunday 2 nd	Torquay & London	Travel: Torquay/Brixham - Chiswick - ULU - Bed

We avoided having the usual "travel days" by diving in the morning before travelling where the weather allowed (sadly the weather did not allow that too much!). This still allowed us to have plenty of de-saturation time whilst maximising diving time. Bad weather meant we were de-saturating nearly as much as we were diving, but with the rain we were always wet though!

Travel Details

Vehicles/Vessels used:

- 1 x ULU MPV
- 1 x Long Wheel Based Transit Van
- 1 x Triton
- 1 x Red Logan (while based in Penzance)

Vehicle Hire:

Van

H&H Self Drive Van Hire
107e Bartholomew Road
Kentish Town
London
NW5 2AR
Tel: 020 7916 6616
Fax: 020 7916 6617
mail: vans@hhvanhire.co.uk
website: <http://www.hhvanhire.co.uk/contact-us/>

LWB Transit Van hire cost £932.56 for the 16 day period. As usual with H&H we had as many named drivers as were already on their books.

MPV

Angela Jelfs
Activities Development Officer
University of London Union (ULU)
Malet Street
London
WC1E 7HY

Tel: 020 7664 2007 / 020 7664 2000 (General)
Fax: 020 7436 4604
mail: angela.jelfs@lon.ac.uk
website: http://www.uln.co.uk/content/622693/contact_us/

MPV hire has to be booked and organised, as far in advance as possible, with Angela Jelfs at ULU.

A fuel card is supplied which can be used for purchasing MPV diesel and oil (if necessary) at the vast majority of petrol stations in the UK.

Hire fees are £20/day hire and 25p/mile.

We were given the Green MPV (new in early 2012) which is fitted with a tow bar but has no roof rack. The vehicle is front wheel drive and can carry a maximum of 8 passengers plus driver. This vehicle is limited to 68mph and only has a 1.9L diesel engine. **The MPV can struggle, even if not towing, on steep inclines. Please take this into consideration when launching/recovering the boats.** There is also no cruise control on this vehicle. This was a feature on previous MPVs and made long journeys less draining on drivers, in addition there is no left armrest. Also there is no A/C to Mark's increased discomfort and no climate control for the rear of the vehicle. So it can become very stuffy for passengers on the back seat. It does, however, have six gears allowing better fuel consumption and the ability to operate at around 2,000 revs when towing at the speed limit of 60mph. It also possesses an incredibly roomy, highly accessible boot, which has proven invaluable on occasion.

Dive sites (marks)

Site	Lat2	Lat3	Lon2	Lon3	lon	lat	Depth
Volnay	50:04:23	N	05:04:01	W	-5.067	50.073	22m
Porthkerris	50:03:52	N	05:03:56	W	-5.06569	50.06441	N/A
Peterson	50:07:08	N	05:03:05	W	-5.0514	50.11877	21m
Mohegan	50:02:46	N	05:02:39	W	-5.04427	50.04611	28m
Hera	50:19:38	N	04:15:13	W	-4.90427	50.20025	18m
Wolf Rock	49:56:39	N	05:48:37	W	-5.8104	49.94411	Wall
Longships Reef	50:04:01	N	05:44:53	W	-5.74819	50.06684	Wall
City of Westminster	50:01:21	N	05:40:25	W	-5.67364	50.02242	35m
Seggi Rock	50:02:28	N	05:37:59	W	-5.63302	50.0411	20m
Lamorna Cove	50:03:41	N	05:33:43	W	-5.56189	50.06148	N/A
Hellopes	50:04:32	N	05:29:37	W	-5.4935	50.07562	35m
Maine	50:12:45	N	03:50:53	W	-3.84799	50.21249	35m
Brixham	50:24:03	N	03:30:36	W	-3.51008	50.40078	N/A
Ore Stone	50:27:25	N	03:28:14	W	-3.47068	50.45697	10m
Dudley Rose	50:23:38	N	03:26:20	W	-3.43883	50.39382	35m
Perrone	50:28:16	N	03:22:51	W	-3.38094	50.47104	30m
Bretagne	50:29:27	N	03:22:37	W	-3.37699	50.49083	25m

Base Camp 1: Porthkerris

Accommodation:

Chy Carne Holiday Park
Kuggar, Ruan Minor,
Helston
Cornwall
TR12 7LX
United Kingdom

Tel: 01326 290200 / 291161

email: enquiries@camping-cornwall.com

website: <http://www.chycarne.co.uk/contactus.html>

Points of note about the base camp:

Located 30min from Porthkerris, where we were diving, along winding country roads in places so journey could sometimes take even longer (tractors, camper vans, fun reversing etc). Campsite was very busy (lots of children) and with all the rain the ground became quite waterlogged/muddy. No good parking for large vehicles supplied so you had to improvise and invent parking wherever there was gravel (near main shower block). Showers warmish 50p for 5min, soap supplied in cubicles. Marquee bar on site. Washing and Drying facilities available for clothes. But no drying room for diving gear. Staff friendly on the whole and the views (when the weather allowed) were fantastic. But just did not feel like a great place to stay for anyone on trip. Would not be first choice again.

For our first two bases our cooking facilities were supplied by Vic & Lea's camper van which was plugged into the electrics on each campsite. This made it possible for us to have hot drinks and hot meals. As well charge all of our electrical devices. Some people would be very sad without BBM! Thank you Vic and Lea!

Costs: £362 (slightly complicated pricing structure based on number of tents and people!)

Air shop:

Mike and Jo

Porthkerris Divers, Porthkerris Cove, St Keverne, Cornwall TR12 6QJ

Tel: 01326 280620

mail: info@porthkerris.com

website: <http://porthkerris.com>

Porthkerris Divers - Mike and Jo, the owners are great and really helpful.

They now offer various camping close to their beach (which would have been cheaper than Chy Carne) and in the near future will have dorms all tailored for divers, with drying room etc. General onsite facilities included toilets and warm showers (£1 for 5minish), hose to wash down kit, refill water, dive shop, plenty of parking and cafe (hot drinks and food). Recommend looking at this as a camping location for future trips rather than Chy Carne – to avoid costs going back and forth.

Most people got changed in the toilet block which was quite large. But I found it was easier to get changed in one of the four shower rooms which were quite spacious and as no one was showering first thing, you were less in the way than in the toilets. Where in the gents at least there were only three stalls and often people were waiting for the more gentele divers to finish donning their suits behind closed doors before they could use the facility for what it was actually built for!

Porthkerris Divers (see below). Can do nitrox and 300 bar fills. And have a quick turn around.

Costs: £3 per air fill (with student discount)

Launching and berthing:

Mike or one of his staff will launch you down their very very pebbly/stoney banked beach with their Lamborghini tractor. He then leaves the trailer high up beach but still on the stones as then only someone with a tractor can steal it! So with the SAS clamp double protection there.

Berthing is done on one of their buoys about 50m swim out depending on the tide. They will give you heads up if they think weather means you need to take boat out. Strong Easterlies are the main threat to safe berthing.

When you come to leave the site we highly recommend allowing Mike to tow the trailer with the boat up the hill as far as he is happy to. He offered to do this when taking our boat out of the water and we were most grateful. We do not think the MPV would have had enough grunt to get up the steep winding slope with the boat in tow. The journey out is also not easy as the tight road banked with high hedges meant some very delicate driving was necessary and we only just about got through...just. Jo told us that by next year the road should be widened. But there is also the option of requesting to leave by their other road, which is used by HGVs but this route is not publicised (if your back is to the sea you would turn LEFT after the dive shop to take the HGV road). I have not personally driven this road to give any opinion on it.

The weather was so bad in Penzance one day that we returned to Porthkerris to dive off their hardboat 'Celtic Kitten'. We dived the Mohegan with Dave skippering (good man) and he dropped us perfectly next to the boilers. The whole operation is pretty slick. You board the catamaran from the beach via a ramp at the bow with your scuba gear ON, no goodie bags. You then sit down, keeping the gear on, and after a boat safety/dive brief you taxi out. Buddy check, pop your fins and mask on, and away you go. There is even a lift. Keep your kit on and disembark. There are normally people lined up on shore ready to board for their next run.

Costs: Launching/Recovery - £15 launch. Overnight mooring - £5. Parking - £2 per vehicle per day

Celtic Kitten - If you book the whole boat (12 divers) they deduct the cost of one diver from the bill. So you pay £275 instead of £300 (£25 per diver for one dive).

Points of note about the diving:

Be careful when shore diving, the surf can be rough and easily knock you over. And the shore can just drop away very steeply! Best to go in/out sideways, knees bent, leaning slightly forward, edging your way in/out going **with** the motion of the sea (not against it! simply brace yourself when it does move against your direction of travel) then once you are deep enough get off your feet and on to your back with a nice inflated BC. On the way out it is possible to remove your fins just off the shore, so you are more sure-footed on the way out. Help your buddy and take it slow and steady!

Lots of wrecks/scenics to see off Porthkerris. If you only have OD (20m max depth) though, you are a lot more limited, but plenty of diving still possible.

The Volnay - great to get acclimatised on and under 5min from shore in the rib. Big boilers and lots of metal strewn all over the place for a good way. There is also a fair amount of life about. Very Broken so doesn't take the form of a ship any more, but still a rewarding enjoyable dive.

Max Depth 20m (Stands Proud 2-3m at boilers. About 1m max everywhere else)

The Hera - Far more intact than the Volnay but still well broken. It is a lot longer journey, roughly 30min travelling at 25 knots. There is penetration and long swim-throughs with a little bit of a squeeze on your tummy going along the coarse sandy bottom. Lots of life on the wreck. You can spend a lot of time investigating on this one. Can be a bit currenty but still very do-able.

Max Depth 18m (Stands Proud 2m where hull still intact. About 1m max everywhere else)

The Mohegan - Right off the Manacles, in fact 10m East then 30m West of the Sirens (pair of rocks) to be precise if you go with Porthkerris Divers Mike's advice. Worked for us! This was the highlight of my diving out of Porthkerris, and perhaps the whole trip. We dived her several times and each time she was rewarding. Very easy to want to stay longer than allotted time or get into deco. But if the current gets up while you are on her OR you need to go shallower to avoid deco and prefer to do your safety stop with someone to look at. HEAD WEST. You will then find yourself with a series of rocks to swim along, lots of underwater flora taking you to about 3m below the surface. The 3 or 4 boilers on this are HUGE about 4m across. From the boilers if you go North the wreck gets a bit deeper and is spread out with lots of wreck to look at for quite a way, but you can fit it all in to a 30min dive and work your way back to the boilers. Or go South and the wreck is a little shallower and edged by rocks which themselves have some good life on. There is a good chance there are a few wrecks all mixed in here. But just make sure you see the boilers...if the current gets strong they would be a serious obstruction to try and dodge while holding on to your smb!

[Divernet Wreck Tour No. 8](#)

Max Depth 28m (Stands Proud 5m)

SS NG Peterson - this Danish steamship went down after colliding with a Norwegian steamship. Very broken up and all seems to be scattered around a 'mound' of dirt with bit of wreck popping up out of it. That may sound awful but it wasn't bad actually. The viz was ok, despite normally being quite poor on this wreck and if you looked for it, there was quite a lot to see. Anchors have been dragged through here a lot recently, and when we dived her there seemed to be a 'road' about 2m wide made right through the 'mound'. There are meant to be a lot of congers on this wreck and my buddy saw a ray! So keep your eyes open and look in all the nooks and crannies. This is also meant to make for a great night dive. **Please be aware we were advised to contact the Falmouth Pilot on Channel 19 before diving her** as there is a lot of large vessels in the area, however some of them do NOT USE a local pilot, so please be vigilant. The pilot insisted we should have a technique for diver recall, so ensure you thoroughly brief your divers. We contacted the pilot before and after our dive.

Vase Rock - submerged rock just off the Manacles from 8m - 45m. Can be quite difficult to find and needs to be dived on slack water, as the local currents are pretty strong. At low water spring tide it breaks the surface. Kelp is thick and goes down to at least 12m. Lots of dead man's fingers and jewel anemones. Cat sharks and Anglerfish use this site for breeding in Spring. Best life to be found above 25m.



Base Camp 2: Penzance

Accommodation:

Phil and Val Luxford
Trevair Touring Park
South Treveneague,
St Hilary,
Penzance,
Cornwall
TR20 9BY.

Tel: 01736 740647

email: info@trevairtouringpark.co.uk

website: <http://www.trevairtouringpark.co.uk/contact.html>

Points of note about the base camp:

On arriving here, everyone said how much nicer it was than Chy Carne. "This is more like it..." seemed to be the most common utterance. But then the sun was shining when we arrived! Located under 30min (towing) from Penzance Sailing Club (TR18 2LL) where we launched from every day. Ten or so minutes of the journey involves country roads until you get on the A-roads. Tesco and Morrisons to choose from on the way off the A-roads, so good access even for towing vehicle. So easy to do the shopping and both have petrol stations so could fill up boat directly from pump and keep good account of fuel economy. Showers warmish, one was very warm (second on the left as you look at them from the door!) 10p for 3min. Washing and Drying facilities available for clothes.

I don't think a drying room for diving gear but there might be, he is diver friendly and has a plastic tub filled up with water for rinsing suits and with a hose next to it situated by the showers. Phil and Val are really chatty, great to speak to and will happily give you advice on places to eat etc. Phil will happily give advice on diving too, as he with lots of his friends found most of the wrecks around there! I think he has 3 bells and one of his mates incredibly has over 50!

IMPORTANT NOTE: Listen and follow their directions as to how to conduct yourself while at their campsite, they do not take very kindly if you do not (understandably in a lot of ways considering how long they have done this for). And some divers we met said never be staying there and tell him you got air from someone else, supposedly that doesn't go down well, but to be honest his air is really good and convenient so no need to do that. (see last line: <http://www.trevairtouringpark.co.uk/divingair/cornwall.html>)

Costs: £375 for whole week stay for the whole group (variable pricing structure based on numbers of people and tents)

Air shop:

On-site...as in on the campsite! Phil was a diver and I think puts the air through 5 filters? It may have been more. He does nitrox and trimix and doesn't skimp on the fills. Each night we came back to the campsite he was happy to get the compressor going and would have them all done (up to 30 tanks) done in about 40min?????. We did always arrive early evening, I doubt he would want to do them any later, but if you speak to him in advance and tell him you plan to do a night dive or whatever, then perhaps he will accommodate you.

It was possible to park the van right next to the air shop, and there was space for the MPV alongside too. We parked the boat trailer with the engine close to the old water pump. That was we were not blocking any one in. It is best to keep the vehicles in the car park: 1) Because then you don't disturb other campers when you leave early in the morning 2) No chance of getting stuck, as all other parking is on grass alongside the tents.

Costs: £3.50 per fill

Launching and berthing:

We hooked up with ex ULSAC D.O. Charles Hood, of DIVE and now SCUBA magazine fame, to get the best out of the local diving. We were very happy we did! Charlie is a great guy and allowed us to dive off his rib (7m Orange rib with twin 90 outboards called Red Logan) in combination with our own to facilitate the extra numbers we swelled to over the bank holiday weekend.

His local knowledge really helped us and though not everything was perfect, as the currents are difficult to get right around there and the weather was doing its' darndest to shut us down completely, we got to dive several of the best dive sites in the area.

Charlie also told us it was best to launch from the slip by the Penzance Sailing Club (TR18 2LL). This is possible except for when the tide was at its' very lowest. It is a well-graduated slip and very easy to launch from with it's floating pontoon alongside to moor on. Only at the very bottom of the slip (only apparent when the tide is out) is a 'drop', which you can ease your trailer over carefully without any trouble. The slip is about 7-8m across and there is a good amount of space to pull into at the top and straighten up before reversing.

Be aware that in the early evening the slipway becomes very busy with local sailing and gig rowing clubs, as well as visiting diving clubs. Please allow in your planning for the sadly normally dull affair of dealing with some people who have no slip etiquette. One night we suffered to the tune of an hour and a half of wasted time because of other's thoughtlessness/blissful unawareness. That said, as always, if you are polite and ask in the right way normally everything can be sorted out. Most of the time the slip was empty and cost us nothing to launch.

We had to take the boat out every day as berthing was limited and expensive. This became an easy routine and we had ample parking back at Trevarr so was no problem, just be very careful when pulling in and out of the campsite car park, it is a blind corner and quite tight for the trailer (Go Wide!).

The parking situation during the day, while we were at sea, in the car park adjacent to the sailing club was a little tricky. Despite the best local intel and advice, which we followed to the letter, we received a parking fine for our trailer being slightly out of the parking bay while attached to our towing vehicle. Given the length of our trailer it is impossible for it to fit in any parking bay supplied by the local authority. Odd given that so many people have trailers in this port town and leave them in this car park, that there is no trailer parking provided.

On speaking to a parking officer the next day, there had apparently been a new rule brought in that trailers ALSO need a parking ticket, something that shocked the locals we relayed this to (I must add at this point, that our NON-LOCAL vehicle seemed to be the only one to be fined that day, despite all vehicles parked the same as ours). The best advice we were given by the parking officer was to park the trailer separately in the bays closest to the harbour and place the nose of the trailer as far over the wall as possible so that the rear wheels are inside the lines (we were told this was also acceptable for camper vans et al). Then park the towing vehicle in another space and display tickets for each.

We did observe that some trailers that were parked in this way but had no ticket nor was there a towing vehicle near by with an additional ticket on display for said trailer. We also noted that such trailers had no parking fines attached to them at the end of the day!!?! Take from that what you will.

Costs: Launching = £0 Parking All day = £5.70 per vehicle or trailer

Points of note about the diving:

In short there are an abundance of dive sites - both wrecks and scenics. In fact most were actually a combination of both. We always dived in tandem with Charlie's boat and took our lunch with us, often eating it a safe harbour along the coast. As a precaution we always took 2 emergency fuel cans and 2 Marinor with us aboard Triton. We travelled long distances and stayed out for the whole day spreading the extra tanks between the two boats.

Wildlife wise stay alert sunfish seem to pop up most days, even just in front of your bow at 20 knots! (Well avoided Jer!) Or even underwater at depth for one lucky pair (Jer and Ness). Charlie has been diving most days for years down there and he has still not seen one at depth, just give you an idea of how lucky they were. The group also stumbled across three basking sharks, oddly we have the weather worsening for this as it forced us to change dive sites. The experience swept everyone up, with one of the basking sharks so content with the food he had found, that several hours later our snorkelers (see they do come in useful!) were still gawping as this majestic behemoth flowed past. Ken also saw a Portuguese Man-of-War, but wasn't sure what it was at the time, but luckily only "looky no touchy" - a good policy with all marine flora and fauna. Ken has informed the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) of his sighting.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-19516091>

There were also sightings of dolphins (Ken saw some for a moment he reckons, and was backed up by a few others...hmmm) in the area from Charlie but we never got to see or play with them. There also seemed to be quite a few fish that enjoyed back flipping out of the water. So eyes peeled and enjoy.

Wolf Rock - is a remote off shore rock that is marked by a lighthouse. Can supposedly be dived at any state of the tide as you can always dive on the lee side. We attempted to dive on the lee side, but there was still current running along the wall Charlie was trying to get us on. Most people who found the wall loved it and came up enthusing. Anemones of all different colours flow along the wall, this is a feature of a lot of diving in this area. There was also a large shoal of pollock relaxing in the current.

Looking at the sounder, this area is littered with potentially amazing wall dives some dropping from 10m down to 60m+ ideal for DL+ dives. The seals that were on the rocks and in the water, but sadly were not seen by any of our divers. But that doesn't mean to say they weren't there. This was a difficult place to cox as there are a lot of underwater obstructions rising to within 2 metres or less of the surface.

Runnelstone/The City of Westminster - the Runnelstone has claimed many many ships making the area around her like a full-scale wreck puzzle. The City of Westminster is one of the key wreckage sites. This is of course if you find them! Next to the Runnelstone is another large rock, and if you so happen to find yourself going around that instead, well you might see a couple of axles or find a weight belt with lead on it but not much else. Supposedly we must have been inches away. There are some very big boulders on lots of the dive sites in these waters with light coloured sand forming the sea bed. So doing someone's depth progression to 35m is a nice experience here. Progress around the rock was not so easy with the water movement when we dived, so be aware.

The Bucks - are two rocks connected by a reef system that shows at low water. But disappears otherwise, so be very careful when coxing. If you find it there is a 35m wall to enjoy and the wreck of the Garonne also rests here. The kelp line goes quite far down possibly even below the 14m. When we dived the site the visibility was not very good, possibly because of the storm that had blown up over the previous two days. But from what we saw, you could see how this could be a good dive. In mid-May Basking sharks descend in great numbers on The Bucks to feed on the plankton bloom.

The Hellopes - had a buoy on her. The weather was quite overcast when we dived her late on in the afternoon. As well as the darker light the visibility was also not the best, again possibly because of the storm. As we were doing depth progression to a maximum of 35m and planned deco dives her two boilers were about all we saw. They are impressive though supposedly standing about 5m proud (but I definitely remember the Mohegan's seeming bigger). Close to the bottom of the boilers was around 35m. But the large rudder and propeller are also meant to a sight to behold. Most of the instructors who came up said what a great DL dive it would be, especially for depth progression. Everyone came up wishing they could have seen more! She was dark but enticing.

Seggy Rock - Charlie gave us a dive plan for this site but it didn't work out for a lot of people - trouble getting down, current, where they were dropped etc. The plan was to drop down the face of the rock, through kelp line, and follow the gully/channel between the big rocks into deeper water then work your way back. The mighty Mladen made sure everything went to plan! The underwater rocks were huge and actually looked like they had been cut into giant cubes. They were everywhere as we descended heading South. The way they are stacked means there are plenty of swim throughs although fan corals/sea fans do obscure some of them, so best to skirt around. Actually felt like it could be the Med when we got to our target depth of 25m (depth progression), as the sand is very light in colour. The ascent was a reverse of our route, very spiderman like going up, until you find yourself in the lee of Seggy Rock itself and the flow of the water very gently takes you along the anemone rich face of the rock. However when we turned around to allow us to stay on the rock and ascend to our safety stop the current felt less calming and the plentiful kelp proved to be good for handholds. Once we had worked a few metres back and were at 3m we just let go and enjoyed the short drift to the end of Seggy Rock where we made our ascent to the surface as the plan had dictated. A very rewarding dive, but I am sure everyone would agree it would be far better to have a longer dive in less current.

(http://www.divingcornwall.com/fp/sites/west/landsend/seggy_rock/index.html)



Base Camp 3: Torquay/Brixham

Accommodation:

Torquay Backpackers
119 Abbey Road
Torquay
TQ2 5NP

Tel: 01803 299 924/07912 426252

mail: torquaybackpackers@yahoo.co.uk

or jane@torquaybackpackers.co.uk

or fill out the form <http://www.torquaybackpackers.co.uk/contact/>

website: <http://www.torquaybackpackers.co.uk/directions/>

Points of note about the base camp:

We decided to live in the lap of luxury for the last few days of our trip. OK - that's not the truth. We

were in a dorm room that held up to 12 in bunk beds. But we did have it to ourselves. The room has a sink and mirror at one end and an en suite shower, toilet and sink at the other end of the room. (But I still missed my tent.) We decided to stay there as Vic had gone home with her magic camper van - boo! So we needed somewhere to cook and we hoped at this point of the trip everyone would be a lot more dived up. So there was a chance we might be doing some deco diving. Taking all that into account we thought it would be ideal to have a roof over our heads and proper beds.

The staff and other residents all seemed friendly. The kitchen was well equipped and nothing was stolen (food or otherwise) while we were there, so that was good! Next to the kitchen is a communal area with tables and benches, so that is where we spent most of our time while we were there.

There is also a TV room and a pool table outside (put under cover) but none of spent any time in either place.

I didn't try the showers, but they seemed ok. But as with all youth hostels, there is the going up and down flights of stairs trying to find a vacant toilet, especially in the morning!

Parking - we used the free on street parking at night for the MPV on Croft Hill but on some parts of that road you have to pay between 0800-1800 or possibly only stay one-hour maximum during that period.

Air shop:

There are several options but the best was "Baz" - in fact he was some what of a god-send. He is a diver, lived in the area a long time and just came over to speak to us one day while we were in the public car park by the breakwater (next to the Marina). He will come down and pick up your tanks from the car park and bring them back later all filled. He is a really lovely guy and if you ever want to go down and dive in Brixham (even without taking our boats) it would be worth giving him call as he also has mates who do cheap accommodation and organise diving off their boats.

Baz
Brixham Dive Shack
St. Mary's Yard
Horsepool Street
Brixham
TQ5 9LD
01803 850444, or **07527463968**
<http://www.brixham-bsac.co.uk/brixhamdiveshack.htm>
Air to 232bar

Costs: £3.50 per air fill

Launching and berthing:

To avoid extra costs we launched from the public slipway on the other side of the bay from the marina (there is also a slipway right next to the marina/public car park). Getting the towing vehicle lined up is a bit awkward as there is not a lot of space forward from the top of the slip, but once all the holiday makers stop walking behind you along the 'promenade' and actually let you reverse, it is do-able. Then Jer drove the boat over to the marina where it was moored. The trailer was stored near the slipway we launched from. We checked with local parking attendants and they pointed to a spot where they had no jurisdiction and where they said people normally left their trailers. We asked some locals as well and they were confident it should be fine to leave the trailer there too. We left it alongside what seem like makeshift fences that surrounded a local boatyard where locals keep their small sailing boats. Just make sure it is not in the way of the gate to the boatyard and as far out of the way as possible.

Launching costs: £0

Brixham Marina

The best thing about mooring in the marina was having access to their showers and toilets (there are also public toilets next to the breakwater). The showers were fantastic and are a real boost at the end of the day and helped avoid the “waiting endlessly for a shower” at the youth hostel. The shower/toilet block was less than two minutes from where we loaded the boats each day – down a flight of steps alongside the breakwater slipway.

Berthing costs: £14.50 per night

Parking

We kept the van at the breakwater car park and just paid for 24 hour tickets (make sure they are clearly on display and that nothing slips down your dash and covers them up! Otherwise you get fined, like we did...again!) Apart from removing the need to look for extra parking close to the youth hostel each night the biggest gain from leaving the van in situ was holding on to the best parking space! Next to the large recycling bins is a good size area for kitting up and the prize parking space right next to it. The slipway is close by too. There is also a tap next to it with fresh water for refilling drinking water and washing down kit. Most people don't notice the tap but it is there along the wall and was a great little find. Parking spaces are tight so drivers should be careful when maneuvering and opening and shutting vehicle doors.

The only draw back is the town centre is a good walk away, so dive managers beware of someone saying they are just going to “pop” into town. It takes a lot longer to walk there and back than people realise. So if you want to get out for another wave of diving, best keep them close by. There is a café and ice cream shop close by.

Also be aware Brixham town centre can appear somewhat of a maze and there a few narrow roads. DO NOT DRIVE DOWN OVER THE COBBLES TO GET TO THE WATER FRONT it may seem like it is the way to the breakwater but it is a dead end and is a real pain to turn around in a van.

(<http://goo.gl/maps/jTRwL>) Follow the main road around to the right away and up from the water and you will be at the breakwater within 5 minutes.

Parking Costs: £7 per vehicle for 24 hour period

Points of note about the diving:

Compared to the wonderful visibility we had enjoyed in Cornwall, we were all a little shocked by how dark the diving appeared to us here in Devon. Having said that there was still some marvelous metal for us to spend our last few dives enjoying.

Bretagne - A true favourite of South Devon diving. This wreck is sat upright in about 30m and it is possible to do a pretty good circuit of it on one dive. A very health population of bib and Pollack swimming around the wreck to couple with the numerous conger eels (Ken was extremely excited to have detected one during his dive). Top of the wreck is around 20m so it makes for a nice dive to get plenty of bottom time without clocking up too much (if any deco). Everyone enjoyed this dive so much that it was a firm favourite for diving again!

For more info on the history of the wreck visit the wreck tour:

http://www.divernet.com/Wrecks/wreck_tours/159457/wreck_tour_21_the_bretagne.html

Dudley Rose - This wreck was incredibly dark so it made investigating it quite good fun. Seemed to go on forever though and most divers kept bumping into each other as they swam around. There seemed to be lots of sections which were quite proud of the sea bed which made for quite a convenient dive profile. Without better viz it was very difficult to discern much about the wreck sadly.

Perrone - Once again a pretty big wreck but incredibly dark for some reason. Would be nice to see if

the visibility gets better (I have recollections of Torbay having much better viz) and I think this would be quite an impressive wreck if so.

More information to be found here:

<http://www.teigndivingcentre.co.uk/dive-sites-of-torbay-and-lyme-bay/peronne-perrone-wreck-dive-torbay-lyme-bay.html>

Thatcher's Reef - Not a mind blowing reef but a few nice mussels beds and for a 10m little bumble close to shore it served a neat purpose. I think Ken was more impressed with himself on the navigation side as he basically could point his finger at it!

Local Hyperbaric Chamber:

If you suspect Decompression Illness (DCI) or any other diving related illness and you are in the South West of England call DDRRC immediately on 01752 209999 (24 hrs) Elsewhere in UK except Scotland contact Royal Navy Doctor on 07831 151 523 or if in Scotland, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary on 0845 408 6008 If you are at sea contact the Maritime Coastguard Agency (HM Coastguard) on VHF Channel 16, DSC Channel 70 or call 999 and ask for Coastguard

Diving Diseases Research Centre Hyperbaric Medical Centre Tamar Science Park Research Way Plymouth Devon PL6 8BU UK

Tel: +44 (0)1752 209999 (24 hrs)

Fax: +44 (0)1752 209115

General Email: info@ddrc.org

Training Email: training@ddrc.org

Research Email: research@ddrc.org

website: <http://www.ddrc.org/ddrc-contact.html>

Chamber proximity to helicopter/winch point - **On site**

Time to mobilise chamber **20 minutes**

Category of chamber - **Category 1** (the highest)

Responsible health authority or trust Plymouth NHS Trust

References:

As always the best resources are dive operators etc who operate in the area. Always ask and double/triple check your information. Most people are always happy to help. Some are even happy to give you their Marks!

[100 Best Dives in Cornwall – by Charles Hood](#)

This is a great aid to planning your diving, well worth getting a copy.

Charlie's website - <http://charleshood.com>

[Totnes BSAC website](#) Very informative

[South West Mafia](#) – Jer likes this a lot (akin to Yorkshire Divers site)

[Diving Cornwall Website](#) Some ok stuff on here

Many thanks go to everyone who made this such a good trip. A special thanks go to Charles Hood for his local knowledge, Ken for his support in planning, the boat drivers, the vehicle drivers, and of course the cooks and the washers up!

A little bit of Ken, Jer and Nathan