

My First Dive Trip in the South Island

By David Embleton

The day started at the crack of dawn 6am departure from Halswell! Larry said something to me about the low tide and that we had to go early (Yes that old chestnut)!!lol We arrived at the point of entry set up are gear and suited up ready for the off. The weather was the greyest, cloudiest day with a smattering of rain into the mix. This wasn't going to deter us. We launched boats and headed off to, well I'm not really sure where but it kind of felt like being on one of 'Sinbad the Sailors' voyages, with the sea suddenly churning up and huge waves crashing on the rocks in the distance. I expected Neptune to rise out of the water at any moment. Failing that, there was the risk of the 'big bull sea lions' that Larry kept reminding us to look out for! Lol

Anyway gear on and entered the water, with Emma as my buddy, yes Terry and Larry were nice and warm back on the boat (very snug).

After adjusting my weight I finally managed to sink to the bottom, which strangely enough, I only knew because I felt something under my fins.

Visibility was non existent, infact I could see further if I closed my eyes!!

So after arriving on the bottom and not really knowing where up or down was, I decided I probably wouldn't be able to catch any crays! Lol

We decided to pull the pin after trying a couple of areas and went to get a feed of mussels. Of course the tide was relentless, so we had to endure the continual surging waves while hunting out the biggest mussels. Emma was quite content to keep picking mussels, whether she was on the rocks with a good footing or just been washed off and dragged down to the bottom of the rock crop, in the sea.

We headed back after our mussel gathering and took the boats out of water and de-kitted.

On the way home we embarked on another activity 'Mushroom Hunting' Now this was supposed to be a leisurely browse along the side of the road, for mushrooms but with slim pickings available, I decided that the ones in the field would be an easy target. So after negotiating the electric fence to hop into the field I was pretty much sorted with a nice full bag of very big mushrooms. Then to my alarm Terry threatened that the farmer was coming with his shotgun (just like when I was a boy I thought) so even though there was no sign of the farmer I decided to make an exit from the field.

Exiting the field wasn't quite as easy as entering; it would seem, with the electric fence being off set from the main fence by about 20cm. I finally got out and returned to the car with my swag of mushrooms, only to discover on Larry's inspection that they were all insect ridden and had to be thrown away. Boo hoo!!

So now it was getting a bit late and we should be heading on our way home, with only one small problem! Flat battery! We had to change the battery from the boat into the car in order to start the car. The operation went smoothly and we were on our way again.

There were no more hiccups to the journey and we arrived back at the Halswell car park unscathed. In conclusion I had a great day with great people and eagerly looking forward to the next adventure with Canterbury Underwater Diving Club.