

# THE DIVE

After just six weeks underwater, algae was up to 15 centimetres long on the upper surfaces, almost covering the huge chain links on the foredeck, and completely blanketing the flight deck. Hydroids had established on almost everything inside the ship, particularly on the captain's and navigators chairs in the bridge.

There are seven levels and a labyrinth of passages, rooms and hatches to navigate. The top of the funnels are in about 14 metres, but even powerful torches don't illuminate the entire vertical tunnel down to the engine room some 12 metres below. The empty engine compartments provide access to the auxiliary machine rooms, and the huge gearbox. In the AMR's are the huge 16V149 Detroit Diesel generator engines and other equipment including compressors and a workbench with a large vice. The Junior Sailors Mess has the famous mural painted by crewman Kade Rodgers over a decade ago.

You don't have to penetrate the wreck to have a great dive – at 138 metres long there are enough external features to entertain for many dives. The bow is very pointed and provides stunning photos. The huge "02" ship numbers at the bow have already attracted growth, and the chain on the foredeck is also photogenic. The superstructure rises from the foredeck like a block of flats, and you can choose to check out the upper deck's gun mounts and towers, or the many features along the port and starboard sides. Another option is to start from the Flight Deck and swim under the counter stern where the hydroids are the thickest. Other features that include the flight control, crane davits, funnels, and the banks of valves for the fire fighting system.

It is a great site, with a variety of experiences to be had, but most of all, it is so new and different to the range of world class site already available in Victoria.

# SUNKEN TREASURE

Deep beneath the waters of Bass Strait, the wreck of HMAS Canberra is thrilling divers as an artificial reef complete with marine life, coral and ghostly features

Looking to pose: The old frigate HMAS Canberra, sitting in the sand off Ocean Grove (main picture) and providing the framework for a reef after being towed (top left, left of Lonsdale Pier) to where the war-torn vessel is located. It now has to slowly sink into the sea. The main picture shows the wreck in the water and the top picture shows the ship being towed. Photos: NABY HALLIDAY

## DIVE THE EX-HMAS CANBERRA



AUSTRALIA'S NEWEST AND MOST COMPLETE SCUTTLED WAR SHIP

The Dive Victoria Group has exclusive operating license to service the H.M.A.S Canberra from centres in both Portsea and Queenscliff. Our centres can cater for every divers needs and accommodate individually or groups for short or long stays.

QUEENSLIFF DIVE CENTRE 37 Learmonth St Ph: 1300 DIVE VIC or 03 5258 1188 www.divevictoriagroup.com.au

DIVE VICTORIA QUEENSLIFF Shop 1/6 Harbour St

DIVE VICTORIA PORTSEA 3770 Point Nepean Rd

Long-time *Sport Diving* contributors Mary Malloy and Alan Beckhurst continue to push the boundaries of underwater photography in Victoria from their home port of Queenscliff on Port Phillip Heads.

Both were involved in the December scuttling of the former frigate HMAS Canberra as a artificial reef/dive site off Ocean Grove and have been capturing changes to the ship in its new home on the Bass Strait seabed.

In the February issue of our sister publication *DiveLog Australasia*, a monthly give-away tabloid, Alan and Mary supported Jayson Slater's Dive Victoria Group by providing some of the first dive reports and images from this new artificial reef. They recorded an amazing increase in marine life on the hull and fish moving in to the wreck. Mary's images appeared in a magnificent double-page colour spread in

Melbourne's *Sunday Herald Sun* (Australia's highest circulating daily newspaper) on January 10, 2010. Congratulations to Mary Malloy and the *Sunday Herald Sun* on a wonderful promotion for the Victorian dive industry. All Victorians and the world now have a taste of the vast underwater adventures to be experienced in our local waters.



Mary Malloy and Alan Beckhurst