



The Meg and Kell in Atlantic Cove – within the area of the photograph are at least nine known shipwrecks

Here too we found large dahlia anemones, so brightly coloured they would not have been out of place in the Chelsea Flower Show. Deep reds, pink, yellow, green, blue, pure white and even multi-coloured – they were quite magnificent. Parts of the seabed itself were a soft yellow sponge that attracted molluscs and sea-squirrels of every colour and description.

Our second dive was to the south of Atlantic Cove, almost within the shadow of the former RCAF buildings. This was shallow diving but of enormous interest to anyone who finds small artefacts from yesteryear to be of interest. In one concentrated area the *Aurora*, *Briton Elliot*, *England's Queen*, *Minerva*, *Ocean Belle*, *Pallas*, *Vanguard* and *Elloit Heste* were all wrecked at varying dates between 1845 and 1903.

Naturally, the wreckage from one lies confused with another, but anywhere else in the world this would be a dive site to bring divers back time and again. They will find buttons, badges, clay pipes and coins, all in among the blocks and tackle and deadeyes from an era of wooden ships, with their rigging. Then there are the steel plates of the more recent hybrid vessels: not even the combined efforts of sail and steam could prevent *their* demise.

POSTSCRIPT

In the UK, it is difficult enough to get any vessel of 'historical importance' designated as a protected site. There was a time when, I am sure, these problems also existed in Canada. They resolved the question by laying claim to everything underwater, and in so doing left their maritime history on the seabed until such time as each piece can be studied individually.

Of course, some ships will never be studied, but in the meantime, they – and those of greater importance – are quite safe where they are. As for divers, St Paul Island affords an opportunity for real expedition diving with a purpose. Terry is able to provide all the tents, food and equipment to sustain any size of expedition for any length of time and believe me, you are very likely to be the first to see a particular wreck! Yet few divers ever visit St Paul Island.

With incredible visibility of 30m during the summer months, this is a location for a club expedition like no other.

It had been a hot day and the sunset was as spectacular as anywhere on earth



Travel information

Accommodation: Ned Middleton travelled with Diversion Dive Tours and stayed at the Lord Nelson Hotel – walking distance from all the main shops and harbour complex. This is one of the best hotels available and is a real divers' hotel.

Travel: Flights were by Icelandair, departing from Heathrow. An excellent service, although it did necessitate a one-hour stopover in Iceland – a direct flight would be much better.

Halifax: This is a great city and the people are famous for their friendliness. It is a great place to stay and an even greater place to shop.

Diving with Splash Watersports: Splash Watersports has an imaginative, first-class diving programme for locals and visitors alike. They employ the very best instructors and it is a PADI five star centre.

Climate: Just to destroy a few myths, we spent two weeks in Canada in September and there was not a polar bear in sight – we came back with sun tans! In fact, it was more like a tropical Canada. Certainly we were north, but not as far north as the Channel Islands. Altogether, a summer vacation in Halifax is a very welcome change.

Electricity: The flat pin system with 110/120V.

Currency: This is remarkable value for money. The Canadian dollar is approximately C\$2.6 to UKE1, which makes Canada one of the cheapest places to stay and shop.

Time: GMT -4 Hrs (Summer time -5 hrs)

Miscellaneous: The water temperature is similar to the UK and below 20m doesn't change much throughout the year. A drysuit is the best option, although I was comfortable in a 6mm wetsuit.

Contact: Diversion Dive Tours, PO Box 252, York, YO26 6XG, Tel/Fax: 07044 750242.

Splash Water Sports direct in Canada: Tel: +1 902 455 3483; Fax: +1 902 455 3482.

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