

Magee's Memos

Osprey Dive Charter Wrecks

"Crystal Wreck" - This is an unidentified wooden schooner that sank in 110' of water off Long Point, Ontario. It is completely intact except for its missing cabin, and the hull stands high off the bottom. The deck can be viewed at 90'. It features all its original equipment, including a windlass, anchor, capstan, winch, hand pump, deadeyes, and cargo hatches. The bowsprit juts out impressively high above the lake bottom. This wreck is also judged to be one of the best recreational wrecks in Lake Erie since it contains a wealth of other interesting artifacts. Seen on the wreck last year were: the wheel, potbelly stove, various dishes, a frying pan, a pair of spectacles, and one leather shoe.

"Tradewind" - This three-masted barquentine sank in 1854 off Long Point, Ontario, in a collision during a snowstorm. It sank in 120' of water, but it can be easily viewed swimming at 100' due to the excellent visibility (which is typically 50' - 100'). It is actually more intact than the "Crystal Wreck" since its cabin is still in place — a rarity. This ship's wheel sits mounted at the top of the cabin, and the rudder is visible. All original equipment is in place, including the bowsprit, two large wood-stocked anchors hanging off the railings, windlass, capstan, winch, and cargo hatches. The deck cargo of railroad iron is scattered on the deck like match sticks, and all its masts are lying parallel to the wreck on the bottom on the port side. This wreck has a wealth of details to examine and see—more than the bottom time will allow.

"Boland" - This large steel freighter sank in a storm in 1932 off Barcelona, NY. It is lying on its starboard side in 135' of water, but its large relief allows the port gunwale to be in only 100' of water. This is a huge wreck that cannot easily be seen in just one dive. The rudder and propeller are easily seen at 90', and the stern section, where the mooring is located, offers a view of the cabins, deck equipment, and the beginning of its cavernous cargo holds. Adventurous divers will swim the length of the wreck to also view the bow with its officers' cabins and wheelhouse, although there is plenty to see and do at the stern. Visibility is usually an excellent 50'-100'.

"Betty Hedger" - This wooden barge sank during a storm in 1937 off Barcelona, NY, in 115' of water. Its cargo was sulfur, which is in a huge pile at the center of the wreck. The wreck used to be called the "Sulfur Barge" before it was identified. The large cargo hatch frames, bow deck and parts of the stern's cabin are still standing high off the bottom at 90'. The entire structure is supported by teetering on a series of center posts down the middle of the ship, and the sides of the barge have fallen outwards. The bow deck contains a small Navy-style anchor, winch, capstan, and navigation light. The cabin still contains portholes with their screens installed. The area around the wreck is also scattered with all sorts of interesting debris to examine, making for a pleasant dive.

"George C. Finney" - This is a new wreck that was revealed to the public last year. It is a wooden sailing vessel that sank in 1891 in 100' of water off Dunkirk, NY. Much of the decking is gone, but the ship's wheel is present as well as the windlass, anchors, hand pump, and winch.

"Niagara" - This is a wooden steamer that sank in 1899 in 90' of water off Dunkirk, NY. The port side has collapsed inwards and the starboard side outwards. There is a nice engine as well as a bilge pump, windlass, and a cargo of shingles. Not much else is known because few people have dove it yet.

"Dean Richmond" - This large wooden steamer sank in a terrible storm in 1893 with the loss of its entire crew. It was rumored to be a treasure ship that Gary Kozak spent nearly 10 years searching for, but no treasure was found when it was finally located. It lies upside down in 110' of water near the Penn.-NY state line. Its large relief allows the wreck to be easily viewed at 90', and it can be circumnavigated in one dive. Despite being upside down, there is a lot of debris to examine and see. The mast can be seen stuck upside down vertically into the bottom, and many salvage holes in the hull allow peering into the interior. The mooring line is located at the stern where the rudder, one propeller, and one empty prop shaft can be seen. The second propeller was removed by salvagers. Visibility is usually an excellent 50'-100'.

"Indiana" - This wooden barquentine is also called the "Stone Wreck" because of its sandstone cargo from Buffalo, which eventually helped to identify it. It sank near Erie, PA, in 95' of water. The stone cargo litters its deck, which is collapsed at the bow. The rudder post is standing, and various equipment items can be seen scattered about the deck and collapsed areas. Several cargo hatches are intact, and deadeyes can be seen on the railings.