

LOUIS SHIED

<http://www.submerged.co.uk/louishied.php>

For those of you that don't know this dive, I thought that I would put some of my knowledge of this dive venue down on for your info, it is one of the dives I've done the most & there are still new things to see

ACCESS BY ROAD

This is very simple, apart from the last 10 miles. Take the M5 Southbound, continue on the A38, when you see a signpost that includes the place name Ugborough (it includes Loddiswell also, but I just remember Ugborough), turn off & head towards Loddiswell. I'm not even going to describe the rest of the route, as for the first ten years of diving this wreck, I always took a different route every time, I know the best way now & would never dream of trying to explain it. You are ultimately going to end up @ Thurlestone. When you get to Thurlestone, continue straight through the village, go past the golf club & take the next (very small) turning on the right, this is on a left hand bend. There's a small triangle of land here, that is used as a car park, charge is now £2 per day. Park as near to the front & left as you can, if the car park guy tries to put you over on the right tell him you're diving & he'll understand

ACCESS TO WATER

Kit up fully (except fins mask) at the car. You've got to walk about 100m down to the beach, once on the beach turn right & walk towards the rocks (about 150m). You can then sit on the rocks & put your fins & mask on @ your leisure

NAVIGATION

It always used to be easiest to snorkel out @ low water to this wreck, as a pipe & plate used to become exposed @ low water. This doesn't happen any more, except @ the most extreme springs. I've found it easier now to swim to the wreck underwater. You don't really have to navigate, but it helps if on the odd occasion you get disorientated. The rocks that you are sat on, are a triangle, you're sat at the base & the wreck is at the tip. So swim out keeping the rocks on your right, there is quite a clear definition between rocks & sand. After about 5 or 6 minutes you'll see the odd bit of plate & probably a large channel section, this leads you straight on to the wreck.. you'll see a large tube, about 300mm diameter, suspended 2m off the seabed, I think this is the prop shaft, as the ship went into the rocks blunt end first. Follow this tube and here you're going to see lots of pretty large Wrasse, it also seems to get used as a regular cleaning station for a lot of these Wrasse. It's also quite common to see some of the Greeny Brown Wrasse, playing dead, trying I guess to look like weed.

This prop shaft takes you to a large lump of the wreck, go left when you get here for about 2 or 3 meters & you'll get to the edge of the wreck (the port side). It's now very easy to swim along the side of the wreck, which stands about 1m raising to 3m high, until the side of the wreck breaks up. If you turn right here, you're onto the boilers, these stand 4m high, there are 3 of them (for 10 years I thought there were only 2!). I've seen a massive conger in one of these boilers & a very large lobster. There isn't much point in going further than the boilers, as the wreck broke in half here & the other half is a few hundred meters away (although I've yet to find it!), when you've done the boilers, go down to the bottom again & follow the Starboard side of the ship back to the rocks. Coming back keep the rocks on your left. It's very easy here to swim into a sandy cul de sac & find a difficult exit. You have to move to the right about 4 times (still keeping the rocks on you left), before you get a clear run in & an easy exit

DEPTH

6 – 9m depending on the state of the tide. Doing a leisurely excursion all around this, takes about 55 mins from getting in, to getting out

WHAT'S THERE TO SEE

Fairly well broken up wreck with these 3 quite dominant boilers, it's best to keep @ the edges of the wreck as it is not very interesting in the middle, apart from the lump @ the end of the prop shaft & the boilers. Looking under the hull is quite rewarding as there always appears to be shoals of pouting or whiting under there. I've seen a couple of big lobsters there, a massive conger & generally lots of Wrassee, the odd Pollack & occasional Basse, John Dory & Tope. The closer you look the more there is, so a torch to look under plates etc is quite important

GENERAL

There's toilets just opposite the entrance to the golf club, there is no air. The beach is beautiful & first class for the non divers. This site is best dived with Northerlies or Easterlies. I've dived this when it has been blowing Easterly force 8, the water was flat calm & the vis good. The pub in the village is excellent. I've not seen so many people diving this wreck since the parts that used to protrude at low water have disappeared & those that do, don't always find it (as can be seen by their surface marker bouys) There is no air available, the nearest being Plymouth. It's also quite a nice walk over to Hope Cove, along the coastal path, takes about 30 minutes & there's a nice pub, although the food isn't brilliant, when you get there. The following web site is quite informative if you wan to know a bit about the wreck <http://www.submerged.co.uk/louisshied.php>

Update 13 06 05

I dived this in very good visibility & it would appear that the water action has exposed some plates that I haven't seen previously, these are on the Easterly side & past the boilers. On this occasion I swam approx 25m past the boilers (following the newly exposed plates) & came across a small up right structure (2.5m tall), previously I have swam past the boilers & there has been very few plates to follow, this time there was a lot, that led me to the upright structure

Update July/Sept 05

The last couple of times that I have dived this, I have seen one or two seals on the wreck, usually underneath the prop shaft. The second time it was an adult seal that circled us 3 times at very close quarters (< 1m), it was extremely inquisitive of us & unusually for seals didn't mind eye contact. It makes a good dive, spectacular