

# Forna Point - Gozo 13.09.15

Article & photos by Tano Rolé

The Northwestern coast of Gozo is one of my favourite dive locations. The dive sites include sizeable caves, cliff walls, boulder fields, swim-throughs – the lot. So I made sure to book a place on the boat as quickly as possible. The weather was also perfect; a southerly whisper of a wind which ensured calm, flat seas.

We were dropped off just outside the spectacular Ghar Forna (Forna Cave). One glance at the opening of the cave is enough to realise why it got its name; the straight angular features give the impression that one is about to enter an oven! Of course, my speleological interests went into overdrive and we quickly entered the cave. Some of the most remarkable aspects of this cave are the potholes and phreatic tubes. Potholes are formed when rocks collect in a shallow depression and are spun by running water. This creates a grinding action and characteristic circular depressions. Moreover, the rocks are also ground down into circular pebbles. The lack of marine growth on the pebbles indicates that this process is still going on and the driving forces are marine waves.

We by-passed Ghar Gholi (High Cave), located west of Ghar Forna, since the entry to this cave is quite shallow and we were swimming at a deeper level. Once again the name of this cave is evident since the cave mouth towers some twenty metres above sea level. One fish *Cervjola* or *Accjola* must have been disturbed by someone inside the cave so it sped out of there, only to meet Adin and me just as we were making our way into the cave.

Despite our best efforts, we could not find any nudibranchs, squat lobsters, octopus, or any other photogenic subjects. To make up for this, I concentrated on taking some footage of the spectacular caves – some sporting spectacular archways and pot holes. One of the best aspects of these caves is that they contain very little silt so the photos and videos that we took were thankfully free of the usual backscatter.

My greatest misgiving during this trip was that I missed capturing a wonderful photo of a canoeist skimming right on top of me; past the shoreline and beautifully framed by an indentation of the cliff-face. I was not expecting a canoe to shoot past and, in my hasty excitement, I managed to push the wrong button and switch off the camera instead of the shutter button. Oh well; these things happen – I guess – but they seem to always happen at the worst possible time.

I tried out the Suunto Eon Steel dive computer as part of my review (published in this edition of Bubbles page 11-12) and, when I placed it on my forearm, it raised quite a lot of interest from other club members. Of course, “interest” is a kind way to describe the flood of comments regarding my obsession with diving gear. They had honestly thought that I had gone completely overboard and that I was about to start diving with three computers from now on!

We had to surface early from this dive – my 12lt 300 bar tank was only filled to 220 bars and Alex (my dive buddy) was also running short of air. We therefore decided to swim back to the boat on the surface and this turned out to be very pleasant indeed. I turned on my back and enjoyed a majestic sea-level view of the Gozitan cliffs from an oily calm sea. It was so quiet and beautiful and I thoroughly enjoyed the tranquillity of the moment. Such is the stuff of great memories!

Dive Safely. Tano

