



Ryan Green (OG '11)

► Hurricane Hole

I learned to dive at the age of eight, whilst on holiday in Dubai. I enjoyed the sense of freedom it gave me, and it decided my career path.

Good to know

We still have regular clean up's, we educate school children about the ocean and hold trial dive lessons, I've made the front page of the island newspaper, fame at last! As you can probably tell, I'm passionate about the Island and the world wide environment. I love the lifestyle and seek the opportunities it brings to travel, meeting new people and discovering new places above or beneath the waves.

I went on to obtain a number of recreational certifications on the PADI scheme and qualified as an instructor on my nineteenth birthday.

Work took me to beautiful places such as Cyprus, Sardinia, Florida, and St Marteen where I got to see amazing corals, reefs and marine life. I now live and work on Tortola, in the British Virgin Islands.

An exciting project I volunteered on which was funded by Richard Branson was the sinking of the Kodiak Queen. The Kodiak Queen, a former Navy fuel barge, survived the attack on Pearl Harbour. She now sits at a depth of 57ft off the shore of Virgin Gorda and has been a main attraction for scuba divers and snorkelers from all over the world.

My work as a commercial diver is quite different from recreational diving in crystal waters, visibility is almost zero, I dive in murky marina's working underwater, fixing ship channel markers, building sea defences,

cleaning cruise ships and maintaining pipelines, not such a pleasure, but I've found what I like to do.

In September 2017 the island was at the centre of the biggest Atlantic storm in history, Hurricane Irma which was followed closely by a category five hurricane Maria. Damage was beyond imagination, the entire population was affected, people were homeless, roads washed away, trees blown down, cars upturned, buildings destroyed and hundreds of boats sank. The community pulled together to repair the airstrip, clear the main road that runs the length of the seven mile island and the many steep winding roads that run up the side of the mountains, even with everyone working hard water and power was not restored for nearly five months. I had to power my home with a generator.

My task then was clearing Paraquita Bay, known as "The Hurricane Hole", 100's of boats were moored here in a mangrove surrounded bay in the hope of greater protection from the storm, but due to the severe intensity 99% of the boats broke free from their moorings, causing catastrophic damage. I worked long days for three to four months, alongside a barge and crane team. I had to dive in order to cut away riggings, such as masts, sails, booms and cables. To clear around the boat, straps were run underneath the boat and lifted slowly. Opening hatches would help drain the water as we were lifting and using a diesel pump to pump out the water, at a rate of 250 gallons per minute.



Once above the surface and the right way up, vessels were hot patched with fibreglass and moored on the edge of the bay until they were towed away for crushing or repair.

Throughout the first year my team alone salvaged around 250 boats and yachts, we had several close moments with 13 tonne straps snapping, crane booms failing to swing back the 180 degrees, or some came crashing down through the roof of the boat being salvaged.

I'm pleased to report that the island has now recovered, trees have regrown, the tourists have returned and new yachts pepper the ocean. My girlfriend is spearheading a coral restoration program so that coral lost during the hurricane, as well as bleaching due to climate change, can be regrown at a faster rate.