

Cleveland Underwater Explorers (CLUE) is pleased to announce the discovery of another new shipwreck off Cleveland.

CLUE was founded by David VanZandt and Kevin Magee in 2003. The team added Chief Researcher Jim Paskert in May, 2004. Our purpose is to research, locate, and explore the shipwrecks of the Great Lakes with an emphasis on Lake Erie. The team consists of individuals experienced in archival research, Great Lakes history and ship construction, underwater survey techniques and equipment, mechanical and electrical engineering, and recreational and technical scuba diving. The team is dedicated to finding, exploring, and documenting the submerged history found on the bottom of the Great Lakes. The following dive report describes the discovery.

CLUE, 2005-05-22 - New Wreck Dive Report

On Sunday, May 22, 2005, David VanZandt and Kevin Magee went diving off Dave's boat "Sea Dragon" out of Cleveland, OH. This was their first Lake Erie dive of the year. It was also a momentous occasion because it was the first dive on a newly discovered wreck. It was located by CLUE on October 11, 2004, but not dove at the time of discovery. This is the third wreck located and explored by CLUE so far, and is approximately 2 miles off Cleveland in 45' of water. The purpose of the dive was to explore and characterize the wreck - and also to get wet. The weather was pleasant with partly sunny skies and 1' seas, but the air was somewhat cool at 63-64 deg F.

Surface visibility was a decent 5', and upon descending the divers were pleasantly surprised to find 5'-8' of visibility on the bottom with bright ambient lighting conditions. The water was 51-52 deg F with no thermocline or gradient. The anchor snagged off the wreck, so a reel was deployed, and the wreck was quickly located by sweeping. It consists of a single wooden side, approximately 80' long (estimated from sidescan imagery), lying north-south with about 5' of relief. The hull is sturdily constructed with horizontal planking on both the inside and outside of the ribs. The top of the hull is highly broken with no railing or gunwale evident. The north end features a square post (likely a samson post) lying at a 45 deg angle to the west, indicating the wreck lies with the west side buried. Distinct bow or stern features could not be discerned at either end, but the samson post makes the bow most likely at the north end. The side curves outward towards the east as it travels south, then curves back somewhat towards the (assumed) stern. There is a large breakdown approximately amidships with several large boards lying on the bottom inboard (west) of the breakdown.

Exploring the bottom around the wreck, an unbroken brown ceramic jug was located amidships with a small ringed handle near its mouth. A fist-sized piece of coal was found amidships, a red brick was found near the south end, and half a

red brick was found at the north end. Searching the debris field revealed several boards but nothing significant in the way of equipment. A very fine gravel patch was located off the north end on the otherwise silty bottom. It is unclear whether the wreck is a schooner or tug, but the presence of coal and bricks makes a wooden tug the most likely candidate. There was no snagged fishing tackle on the wreck nor were there signs of previous diver activity, suggesting the wreck may be "virgin." The presence of the jug strongly suggests earlier divers may not have previously located this wreck since such items were usually taken.

After surfacing the weather began to turn gray and the waves began building to 2'. Due to the lack of a thermocline and the cool air temperatures, it was also fairly chilly after the dive, so it was decided to head back to shore. However, the divers were elated to have such great underwater visibility on the wreck, and more study will be necessary to better identify it. This may prove challenging due to the highly broken and buried nature of the wreck.