

# INTO THE DEEP!

Wotcha readers! I'm currently at the deepest part of the ocean, almost 11km down, in the Mariana Trench!

It's dark down here - let's hope I don't find any scary monsters...

This month, NG Kids' time-travelling mouse, Max, dives into the deepest part of the ocean...

The Mariana Trench is between Japan and Australia in the Pacific Ocean, right next to the Island of Guam...

Japan

Australia

It was created thanks to the Earth's crust pushing under itself along a boundary of two Tectonic Plates.

It's so deep that if you put Mount Everest in there (world's tallest mountain), you'd still have over 2km of ocean above you!

Woohoo! Check me out! I climbed Mount Everest!

The Trench was first stumbled upon by pioneering ship HMS Challenger in 1875. For five years Challenger dredged and measured the world's oceans. It mostly collected mud, which drove most of the crew mad with boredom, so discovering such a deep trench must've been extremely exciting.

We've discovered some really deep mud!!

Yay!!

Because of the volume of water crushing down on you, the pressure at the bottom would be like having 3,500 elephants standing on top of you!

Blimey! It's bad enough down here without this lot standing on me!

It wasn't until 1960 that a manned descent into the trench took place in the Bathyscaphe Trieste with Jacques Piccard and Don Walsh, using gasoline for buoyancy.

Have you released the gas?

Yes, sorry, I had Scotch eggs for lunch.

It took them 4 hours 47 minutes to reach the bottom at a descent rate of 0.9 metres per second.

The first creature they spotted was a flat fish!

Well, I wasn't a flat fish before all those elephants stood on me!

Disappointingly there wasn't much else to see, apart from a shrimp passing by.

What a strange looking creature!

After 20 minutes of taking scientific measurements, they ascended back to the surface.

Only three other descents took place over the next 54 years. Two unmanned robotic probes, Kaiko in 1995 and Nereus in 2009, collected biological and mud samples.

We've explored the Moon more than we have the depths of the ocean!

Sigh... All this technology, and I'm just collecting mud.

And in 2012, Canadian film director James Cameron (Avatar, The Abyss) descended in the Deepsea Challenger.

Ooh! A film director? Can I be in one of your films?

sigh...

Many more trips to the Mariana Trench are planned. And it's possible that, using the technology developed, in the future we can start exploring the icy moons of Saturn and Jupiter!

Imagine what we might find out in their oceans!

Illustration and words: Gary Northfield.