

The Muddy Puddle

September
2004

In this bumper issue of the Muddy Puddle we have trip reports from Scapa Flow, the August week away undertaken by some of the club, as well as from all the other dives the club has been involved in. There is also a review of the IANTD Advanced Nitrox course; we hear some of Paul Brown's favourite diving moments; DIW discusses regulators; and Diver of the Month returns once again.

CONGRATULATIONS!

To Andy Hart, Ben Stock & Chris Griffiths who, despite earning themselves the nickname 'ABC of Diving Disasters', recently passed their IANTD Advanced Nitrox Course. Good work fellas!!



Also well done to Alan Lawrence & Ben Stock, who have both passed the theory section of the Dive Leader course. Well done to both and Good Luck for the practicals!

The Conger Strikes Back

For years Conger Eels have been known to launch a ferocious attack against any angler brave enough to catch one and reel it in to the boat. Under the water though they are known to be more cautionary and generally keep themselves hidden away.



Not so anymore, apparently. Perhaps the years of being poked and having torches shone in their face have finally broken their patience. If a recent story is to be believed, it looks like Congers are on the war path.

A diver suffered bite marks and bruising to his face after a '12 foot' conger, estimated to weigh 250lb, bit him and dragged him into a wreck, slamming him against the structure. The diver believes the Conger was acting in defence of its young.

Of course, in some respects divers are like anglers, so perhaps the size of the Conger is a slight over estimate. Also, the explanation for attack may be a little far fetched, as Congers do not breed in British coastal waters, preferring to spawn out in the deep water of the mid-Atlantic. A conger dies after it has spawned so it is highly unlikely that the Conger in this case was protecting its young!

Nevertheless this should be seen as a warning to all who think they are brave enough to tackle a conger - you know who you are!



Upcoming Dives

11th September 2004: Northcoates (RIB)

25th September 2004: Shirala (RIB)

3rd October 2004: City of Waterford (Nauticat)

Contact Steve Barrett for details on any available spaces:
stephen.barrett@citigroup.com
07900-226-487

Steve is also preparing next years dive schedules, so feel free to contact him with ideas of dive sites you would like to see on the list next year.

Croydon BSAC's AGM

The Annual General Meeting will take place towards the end of November, again in the Burn Bullock pub in Mitcham. The exact date will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Please make the time to attend the AGM. This is your chance to have your say in how the club is run and to hear what the committee have been up to over the past year.



A number of positions on the committee will become available at the AGM. Currently the positions of Expeditions Officer, Dry Officer and Membership Secretary will need to be filled. Please volunteer your help if you are able to.

Missing Divers in the Red Sea

In the same month as Open Water, the film about two divers left behind by a Dive Boat in Australia, is released, 12 divers were lost in the Red Sea during a dive in the 'Brothers' region. Luckily on this occasion they were found after drifting on the surface for around 12 hours. What follows are brief accounts from both the Dive Boat they were using, the boat that rescued them and from one of the divers.

Dive Boat Account

At around 10:50am the president of the company responsible for the management of MV Oyster, Khaled Samy, received a call informing him of the missing divers. He immediately contacted the Chairman of the Red Sea Association for Diving and Watersports, Karim Helal, who in turn informed all authorities involved and started the necessary procedures. At 11:30am Khaled Samy requested an airborne search of the Brothers Islands area. A cash deposit was requested before this could start. At 12:30pm a fax from the Red Sea Governor to the air base accelerated the start of the air search operation. At 13:12 the plane took off from the Alamaza Air Base with instructions to search the area until last light. The Red Sea Governor also instructed all boats in the area to stop their activity and assist in the search.

At 5:25pm a message from the plane was received reporting a target of 8-9 people in near circle shape with orange buoys and flash lights. The report also mentioned a boat was 4 miles from the target heading away, however this boat could not be raised. At 6:40pm the plane had to refuel before returning to the area to find the target disappeared. At 7:40pm the air search was called off. At 8:15pm a call from MV Thunderbird confirmed that 12 divers have been rescued and these were reunited with the MV Oyster at 9:20pm.

Diver Account

The divers on board MV Oyster ranged in experience from PADI Advanced Open Water through to instructors, all had done over 130 dives, some as many as 600. Each buddy pair carried at least one SMB, with some pairs carrying one each, making a total of eight SMB's between the divers. Three also carried torches as well. The current on the dive was running in a South East direction at a speed of around 2.5-3 knots. The visibility was about 15 metres in the sea. There was fairly strong winds on the surface, around a force 4 to 5 coming in from the north, otherwise it was a clear sunny day.

The divers were instructed in their brief to keep the reef in sight at all times. If they wanted to try and see some larger fish then they should swim away from the reef a little, however they were instructed to keep it in eye sight even if they did swim away a little. The maximum dive time for this dive was 60 minutes. The boat's two RIB's would drop them off and provide cover for the divers as well as collecting them at the end of the dive.

At 7:10am the divers began to enter the water, carried to the dive site in two waves by the RIB's. Once in the water the divers had visual contact with the reef and drifted along with the current for a few minutes, before one of them gained everybody's attention by tapping on their tank and pointing out into the blue. This drew all the divers' attention away from the reef for a critical few minutes and it was during this time that contact with the reef was lost.

Some of the divers, including the guide, decided to surface to see where they were. After a dive time of around 17 minutes one of the divers surfaced to see they were around 300 metres from the boat. They could also see that the guide had deployed an SMB and was conducting a safety stop. The diver headed down to join the guide on their safety stop and to try and keep the group of divers together. After a dive time of around 30 minutes all 12 divers were gathered together and at the surface, finding themselves to be around 1km from the boat.

Between 3pm and 4:30pm the divers spotted 2 dive boats heading south about 2-3km east of their position. This confirmed to the group that they were being looked for and that there was a co-ordinated rescue effort. They also spotted a plane which headed straight for them for several minutes.

At around 7:30pm the divers could make out of the lights of two boats on the horizon heading South. The boats were signalled with torches held at either end of the line of 12 divers. The boats took about another hour to reach them, and they were taken on board MV Thunderbird suffering from dehydration and sun burn and apparently, on being rescued the first thing they asked for was a gin and tonic! They were later reunited with the MV Oyster and continued their week's holiday, and are keen to stress the faith and trust they have in the crew and guides.

Rescue Boat Account

Once the MV Oyster informed the authorities of the overdue divers, all ships in the area were alerted via radio and satellite phone. A plane and helicopter were also alerted and made their way to conduct a search of the area. It was the helicopter that apparently first located the divers, though they claim to have neither seen or heard a helicopter during their time in the water. The helicopter relayed the divers position to the ships in the Brothers area.

They MV Thunderbird went immediately to the given location, to find nobody there. The skipper of the Thunderbird is very experienced with the local currents and tides, and put this experience to use in deciding which direction to search. The boat continued to search despite the failing light and after several hours spotted the torches of the divers. When they rescued the divers they were around 40km from the Brothers.

Obviously there are some conflicts in these report, however they are the first reports from all involved and a full investigation is being conducted.

One thing is fairly clear though, the divers should have been keeping an eye on the reef as instructed during the dive brief. This highlights the importance of paying attention and following the instructions you are given. This story also highlights the benefits of safety devices such as SMB's and flags, which of course we all carry as part of our club diving rules!

IANTD Advanced Nitrox

The IANTD Advanced Nitrox course is designed to take fairly experienced divers with no Nitrox qualification or divers with a basic Nitrox qualification and give them the training necessary to allow them to dive to 39 meters using bottom mixes of up to 40% and deco mixes of 50%. The course consists of a day's theory followed by an exam and then between 2 and 6 dives based on the competency of the diver. Amazingly in our case it only took 4 dives and by then I think Ian, our instructor, was sick of the sight of us.



Ben, Andy and myself from the club did the course with Ocean Soul Watersports based in Peacehaven. The course started with a day of theory in Ian's purpose built classroom next to his house followed by an exam and four dives.

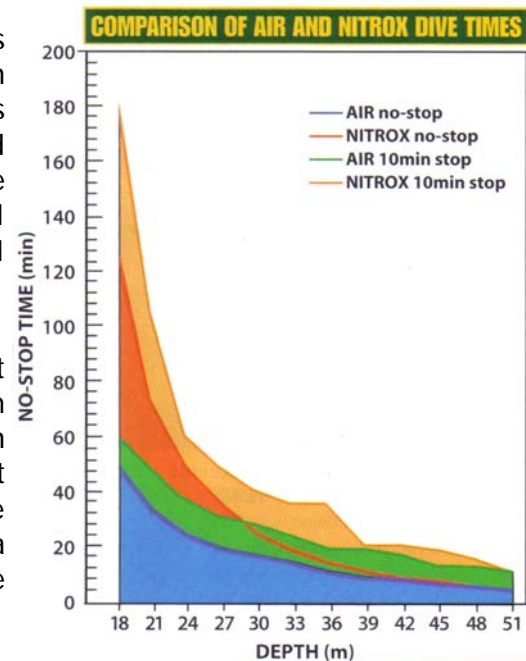
The theory part of the course covered equivalent air depths and maximum operating depths as well as opening our eyes to the added risks of oxygen toxicity associated with this type of diving. The course however also covered more rigorous dive planning and kit configuration to mitigate the increased risks. The theoretical side to the course was quite challenging but by the end of the day we were all comfortable dive planning and using the new dive tables we had been supplied with. The theory side of the course also opens up the door to the world of technical diving and is a route into extended range and Trimix.

We were each given an exam paper to complete after the day and asked to plan a couple of dives to use during the practical part of the course. We were also asked to adapt our kit configuration for the dives so that we could switch our deco mix on and off underwater. The reason for this is that it prevents you from accidentally putting the wrong regulator in your mouth and taking enough breaths to get in trouble. This did however cause a problem as my regulator would only just reach my mouth with my pony mounted upside down. This resulted in a hunch back deco stop on the dives.



The dives themselves were fairly uneventful with some humorous moments. Mainly watching Bob using a rebreather trying to send up an SMB without realizing what closed circuit really means! After four dives and revisiting some old favourites such as taking masks off and switching regulators at the same time, or as I thought of them a waste of two good wreck dives, we had successfully completed the course. I am reliably informed my Nitrox card should turn up any time now and I think it will be used for most of my fills in the future.

Nitrox seems to be a wonderful invention for both cars and diving as it allows significantly increased bottom times when diving in the 30m range or shorter stop times using accelerated decompression when making deeper dives. So when you consider that you will probably get an extra 10 minutes or so on pretty much every wreck you dive with the club for two hundred odd quid of training it seems like a bit of a bargain. I would recommend it to anyone once they have reached the requisite skill requirements to do the course!



DIVING OFFICER'S BULLETIN



For this month's column I'd like to talk about two themes that are high up on our agenda: skill levels and diving enjoyment.

Let's take skill levels first. We are all familiar with the lead up to the diving season after the winter break. Every year is pretty much the same, with the last dive being around October or maybe November and, for the lucky ones amongst us, there may well be a trip overseas for some warm water diving.

The next phase is the UK diving hibernation. This is where we can all talk a good dive in the pub without fear of being caught out. At this time we all have perfect buoyancy, long bottom times, great breathing rates and we can recount daring tales of depth with sea creatures that are bigger, better and weirder than anyone else has seen (at this point I would like to plead guilty to all of the above and for several others offences to be taken into account).

By the time February comes, those tales of daring have absolutely no grounding in the truth whatsoever. However, a problem is now on the horizon - the season starts again. So, reluctantly, its off to Larkfield/Wraysbury/Horsea (delete as appropriate). About now, as the phrase goes, it all goes 'pear shaped'.

That perfect buoyancy has disappeared, along with any notion of how to put your kit together, and worse still, the idea of putting on a weight belt becomes a distant memory. Bit by bit, embarrassment by embarrassment, dive by dive, we each manage to claw our way back to some sort of diving competence. Perhaps they buoyancy isn't so bad after all and, yes, you can remember to put your weightbelt on. Life is good in a sort of diving Nirvana way.

Now to enjoy a dive I would say you would need to be relaxed (for further information on this subject I can recommend 'Buddhism for Divers', P. Carvall esq. available in all good bookshops). Also, maybe some knowledge of the site helps (history, wreck plans?) and a few other factors as well, such as good weather, the right gas mix (providing you are not diving on 'Basic Nitrox' i.e. 21%), visibility and a kit configuration you are happy with. A further factor would be a competent buddy (thanks again for Brighton by the way Andy!). All these add up to dive enjoyment. But lets put something else into the equation - it is important to dive within or at your skill level for dive enjoyment.

Now I am not saying that you should never go towards your limit, or none of us should ever progress, BUT what I am saying us don't dive to a level you are not prepared for or qualified for. If you are a 25-30m Sports diver, don't go steaming out to the 'Moldavia' or similar - at least not until you are properly qualified and, more importantly, not until you have built up the experience. Trust me you won't enjoy it....and nor will we.

Yours in Diving,
Paul

TRAINING OFFICER'S BULLETIN

I have been approached by only 3 people in the recent past who are interested in training and developing their skills.

Please talk to me and tell me what you would like to do.

I have several diving requirements to fulfil now to get the Dive Leader candidates through and completely signed off.

As of 24/08/04 Alan Lawrence and Ben Stock have completed the DL theory and passed. The practical skills will follow when they have time to do it.

There are many things to learn about diving and I am happy to share what I know and facilitate training. Please let me know what you want to do.

Regards

Alan 020-8696-0027



Dive Reports

Unknown Wreck: 18th July 2004

(Jaime Dawson)

The Mistress

Crew: Andy Hart; Ben Stock; Chris Griffiths; Ian Hannes; Chris Boddington; Jaime Dawson; Scott Dillon; Steve Barrett

Morning meet at Newhaven marina on a grey day.

The boys (Andy, Ben and Chris G) were very well behaved on this jaunt. They were completing their Advanced NoTriX course, and were desperately trying to look more competent than each other. I'm quite sure Teacher saw through their attempts and graded them all as Muppets.

I was diving with Chris Bod and his camera (or alternatively on my own).

First dive was on an unknown wreck with the sea bed at around 37m. The visibility on the wreck was around 15m. There was massive shoals of little fish and some bigger fish dotting around. Chris wanted to take pictures of crab - any kind of crab, he's not fussy, thankfully I was safely enclosed in my drysuit.



For one glorious moment, the visibility increased and we found ourselves on the sea floor looking up at the stern of the ship with the blue/green/gray/brown backdrop of the sea. A very impressive sight which soon left the party arm in arm with slack. Typically camera buddy couldn't film anything this big as he had the wrong lens.

Chris redeemed himself by discovering A,B and C pushing hard against the wreck. They were lined up finning for their lives at 36m with Teacher hovering above them cracking his whip. We later found out that they were demonstrating how much easier it is to work at depth with a higher oxygen mix. (*not entirely, or even remotely, true - ed*)

Then there was the usual scallop hunt, and for the first time one of them actually swam away from me! I let it live for making the attempt.

Chris did some excellent navigating and we ascended the shotline to the boat. This is where things got boring - for the first time I had to do a least 15 minutes at 6m. Somehow stopping because you can and stopping because you have to feel different. Stopping because you have to is infinitely more boring. I, however, had planned for this and to relieve the boredom a lemon sherbet was floating in my cargo pocket. There was some debate as to whether the wrapper would cope with the pressure, or let sea water leak in and dissolve the sherbet. Allay those fears, lemon sherbets are pressure rated to 5 bar. The real problem with eating sweets during a dive is they can disappear into the regulator. This was a little disconcerting but a quick backwards tilt of the head and a tap on the reg soon dislodged it. I've often wondered how long I could make a sweet last for, but I always come up short by impatiently chewing. With a regulator this isn't possible and so now I know - 8 minutes.

The second dive was a shallow drift. They were plenty of crab for Chris to film, and a few scallops and oysters for me to collect.

A good day out - thanks to Grumpy & Piglet for organising.

Irisbrook & Ville de Bordeaux: 30th August 2004

Nauticat

(Paul Brown)

Crew: Paul Brown; Ben Stock

It is not often you get the opportunity to dive two wrecks on one dive, in fact the only place I've done this is on the Plympton and the Hathor in the Scillies...I say "done", but that's not quite true - "was in the vicinity of" would be a more accurate description.... Anyway, that's another story. About 12 miles out of Eastbourne there are two such wrecks: the Ville de Bordeaux and the Irisbrook. These lie in a T shape exactly as they crashed where the Ville de Bordeaux hit the Irisbrook amidships and are about 8m-10m apart. Depth to the decks of the Ville de Bordeaux is about 44m and to the Irisbrook about 38m, there is a scour in the gap between them where you can get 48m on a high tide. Both wrecks sit upright and are shipshape.

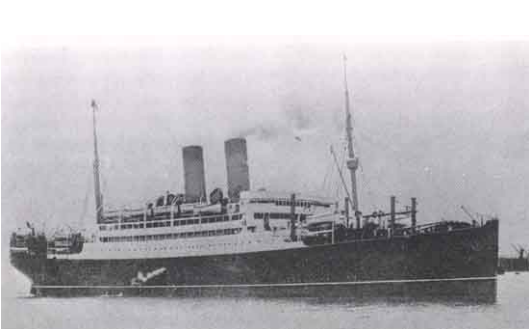
I had been wanting to dive these wrecks for a couple of years - since Steve Johnson, skipper of that old tub NAUTICAT had told me about them. This year a couple of spaces came up on one of Billericay BSAC's charters so myself and Ben Stock went for it. Steve put the shot on the stern of the Ville de Bordeaux (at the bottom of the T-shape) which is a little smashed but still recognisable. Here is where most of the 'finds' have been made, including some large porcelain serving platters and vases. We had planned to try and see as much of the two wrecks as possible and owing to the depth, time was of the essence, this meant we didn't really have time to have a good rummage. We started heading towards the bows going over about 3 or 4 holds (not too sure - deep air eh?) and the wheelhouse, complete with intact brass portholes. As we got towards the bows the wreckage became more tangled and twisted where the impact of the collision had occurred. The bows still stand a good 4m proud of the seabed though. Sticking to the plan, we dropped off the bows and started to swim off toward the second wreck. After about a minute I realised we'd gone too far and had missed it so we headed back on ourselves. About half way back to the Ville de Bordeaux I saw a large lump on metal in front of me: the Irisbrook.

This was a VERY impressive sight. She stands about 8m proud of the seabed. What I virtually bumped into was the rudder, still in place with the 3-bladed prop behind it. We ascended up on to the decks and started to swim forward. The wreck is remarkably intact with the doors still on the wheelhouse and the steps in place up to the roof. The only damaged I noticed was on the port side near the stern where the Ville de Bordeaux had hit. We went over 3 holds which mostly looked empty - other than some large lumps of coal in the first one (closest to the stern). By the time we had got to the hold forward of the wheelhouse we had been on the bottom for 35mins, which at 44m means a long deco, so up went the DSMB's after which up went Paul and Ben.

The Ville de Bordeaux and Irisbrook make an excellent dive and this is certainly a site I will be returning to next year, if you would like to join me let me know.

Nauticat

Crew: Alan Glen; Tony Ray; Kevin Stickland; Dave Elphick; Claire Cohen; Chris Boddington; Paul Brown; Bruce Ayres; Chris Griffiths; Ben Stock; Andrew Crawford; Julie Stagg

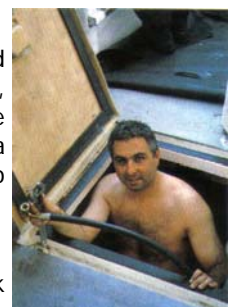


Grey skies, rivers of rain water gushing down the city streets, winds ripping the power cables down, traffic jams and mud slides. That was what the British summer had become in the previous week, however none of those things were happening as we drove towards Eastbourne for a dive from Nauticat on the Argonaut, well apart from the traffic jams caused by the blue rinse brigade around Eastbourne. The Sun was out and the sky was true blue, the only wind was caused by the previous nights curry and the sea so flat the Chunderers were quite chirpy and retained



their lunches. However the decision was taken to change our designation from the Argonaut to the Alaunia, a 13.405 ton Cunard Liner, the largest wreck in Sussex waters, standing over 10metres proud and still pretty ship shaped.

Steve, Nauticat's skipper, made tea whilst we chugged out to the wreck, all was very civilised until we reached the wreck when the usual chaos and commotion broke out as we began to kit up. The usual crowd on the boat, plus a pair of interlopers, ready to experience the Croydon BSAC's unique approach to diving. The water was pale pea green, and the silt was evident from initial entry. My buddy, Chris G, and I had agreed on the loose idea of a 25minute bottom time, or whenever he drained his twins to 100 bar, whichever came first, with some time to spend scalloping.



The silt hung in layers in the water, obscuring the wreck until we were almost on top of it, then the dull back hull looked out of the water, and at 35m we touched down, with viz not too great, not added by the shadow of the hull.



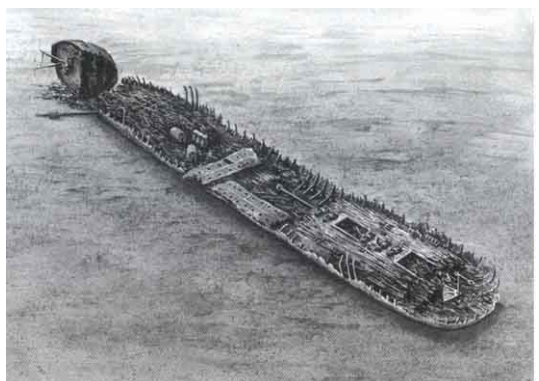
I decided to get the scallops out the way first and led Chris down one side of the hull, and into the scour, under the hull. Here we hit a rich seem of scallops, and I threw 20 or so into Chris's waiting goodie bag.

With that out the way we proceeded up onto the deck of the wreck, now its size started to become clear, the scour was a 35m, the deck at 28m, and rose before us. We headed back across the deck, over great fallen plates of steel, and missing portholes. Great masts lay across the decking and hoists and booms looming in the gloom. Huge winch rollers, visible amongst the debris of the collapse superstructure, countless schools of Pouting hung above and beside the wreck, with large Pollock trying to stay in the shadows, away from our torch beams. Large conger nestled under plating, which large edible crabs hid in nooks and crannies.

25 minutes was only enough to catch a glimpse of this massive wreck, and the time spend dangling only reinforced my commitment to return to here soon, hopefully with better viz.



Returning to the boat brought back the dangers involved in diving, for there one of our guests was laying down on the O2 after a rapid ascent. The O2 was precautionary, and he suffered no ill effects but everyone asked in hushed tones if he was ok.



Steve made more teas, more food and biscuits were eaten, then off to the second site, the Sovereign Light house, someone asked what it was and why it was there, and was duly ridiculed by all.

Not all elected to undertake this dive, which in hindsight was the wise choice, as I discovered upon reaching the bottom. The current ripped along, making for a blurred dive, in areas behind the large concrete blocks created dead spots in the current were created and had become a safe zone for juvenile Pollock and Bib.

Out in open water, the current soon carried us out across open sand, a desert underwater, no life stirred beneath us, although in the very limited silty viz, we would have been had pressed to notice. After 25minutes I had almost fallen asleep and called it quits. Time to go home after a cracker of a dive and 25 mintues in a dirty washing machine set on spin.

Falmouth, Plymouth & Weymouth: 8th—14th August 2004

Crew: Paul Brown; Chris Boddington; Clare Walton; Chris Griffiths; Ben Stock. Also joined by Dave Elphick & Claire Cohen for the Falmouth leg.

Day 1

"I can see the sea" - famous words on the start of any good dive trip, as we finally arrive in Falmouth after enduring five and a half hours of no CD player and having to rely on unheard of radio stations to pass the time away. Although I was later told by a tortured Ben this was a better way to pass the time when compared to the audio tapes of Lord of the Rings which Chris B tried to play on their journey down.

On joining the other Westward Bound party members in a nearby pub the conversation swiftly moved onto diving and things that you can and cannot do underwater. Apparently, please take note, 'if you smile your reg falls out of your mouth', a little unsure as to the validity of this statement, as it was PB that said it and everyone knows that he never smiles.

Chris G phoned several times to let us that his GPS had got him lost whereas Chris B was more concerned with filling his stomach with food by having two large dinners.

Day 2

Waking up to find you are going diving is enough to excite anyone. Chris G apparently excited more than most appeared to be bursting at the idea of diving, so much so that his new weight belt did not fit "I brought this new weight belt and it doesn't go round my gut". Oh dear!

Not to worry about rushing around thinking you are going to miss the boat as we found that Cornish time runs at a slower pace to London, while we were all on the boat for 9am ready to go the skipper had other plans, and we were still sitting in the harbour at 10.30.



Chris B told the group about Ben's special friend, Mr. Hankie the Falmouth poo – we all appreciated him telling us this, especially while the karaoke and dancing relay team were practising for their deco stops.

While some were having fun with flashing pens, Chris G revealed his new weight belt to which PB asked "So does your new weight belt fit?", "I think it will fit a Teletubby" replied Chris. "Well it needs to!"

Finally got to dive the Mohegan, a Victorian steamship, lying in 22-26m water, with 6-7m vis, you could see large wrasse, crabs, and cuttlefish.

Under Pressure's skipper Steve makes brilliant tea, it especially tastes nice if it is your buddy's tea you are drinking, and it is always accompanied with biscuits. Steve's biscuits breed while you go diving as long as you always leave two left in the tin. Amazing.



Curry is the norm for dinner on dive trips but this time we went out on a limb and headed off to Padstow for dinner at Rick Steins which is a small and **very** expensive seafood restaurant. Chris B had a starter that was the size of a house and while he waded through the mound of seafood with his usual elegance he still managed to send shell flying across to the next table. Claire C had the oysters which was followed by requesting to the waiter that she wanted to take the shells home so could he wrap them up for her! While we were there Rick came in and made himself comfortable at the bar, which

gave a nice touch to the evening, partly because I paid £60 for cod, chips and ice cream, and they did not even have curry or brown sauce.



Day 3

Woke up to find the sun shining, although by the time it came to heading for the harbour it was raining. Now boys being boys remembered to bring rain jackets. I however, remembered my five pairs of shoes, four skirts, three bags, two hair straighteners and one baseball cap, but no rain coat. What the boys didn't realise is rain coats are not essential items on a dive trip – hair straighteners are, thank you Claire C for agreeing and also forgetting a rain.

Dived a Dutch streamer called the Epsilon, which was just a lump of metal. Chris G managed to forget his weight belt but did not realise until he got into the water and over to the shot line and then could not work out why he was not descending like his buddy.

The time had come to leave Falmouth and move onto Plymouth, arriving to find the British Fireworks Championships Finals and British Toppers Championships Finals were taken place, this meant there were no car parking spaces and everywhere was packed. Chris B played a well thought-out game plan by wearing his gay t-shirt out on the town, this then cleared the way for us to eat at the Gangues – good work.



Day 4

Weather still held out which brought a good dive, although quite a bit of swell meant most of us were over the side feeding the fish. We dived off the boat Venture, onto the HMS Elk. This was a great dive with plenty of scallops, cuttlefish, jellyfish and lots of fish, it was a small wreck but definitely worth a visit. A few of us experienced an underwater controlled explosion on ascending which nearly took Chris B away from the shot line.



I managed to do my little party trick of going over the side of the boat and landing perfectly with my feet in the air, unable to get them back below the rest of my body, this takes practice and should only be attempted by professionals.



Venture, unfortunately, did not have a lift as advertised in Diver, which Ben made good work complaining about the whole day threatening to take the issue to Trading Standards.

Day 5

Not the best day to go diving as it was overcast and windy. But still we are roughly toughy UK divers, so were going diving, but not before I ask Pete if I could come on his boat! Pete asked PB to sort out the mooring ropes at which he failed dismally and got shouted at. PB retaliated with "I'm a f****g paying customer and this is the way I get treated", so Pete let him drive the boat to make him feel better, bless.



Due to the large swell we were unable to get out to the Eddystone so we dived the fort just inside the breakwater. This was only in about 10m and clever PB asked Pete if he should take his stage bottle with him, anyone would think he is a tekkie diver.

After bubbling around the fort and getting very bored Chris B and I came across two funny looking creatures. Chris, braver than myself, decided to hitch a ride on the back of one of them, which turned out to be Ben. Before we surfaced Ben thought he would get a few dance moves in right in front of my face, which of course made me smile and believe it or not my reg fell out of my mouth! So there you have it, the theory has been tried, tested and found to be true.

On surfacing we found that Pete had decided to move the boat whilst we were under, the cheeky little so and so. After eating the biggest and nicest Cornish pasties ever for lunch we headed out to Hilsea Point, a very nice scenic dive.

Again it was time to depart and we headed for Weymouth. Great forward planning allowed us to have a BBQ on the beach which lead to pole dancing around lamp posts by Chris B, Master Chiefs of the Year Chis G and PB whipped up an assortment of food stuffs, while DJ Piglet and DJ Miss Behaving sorted out the tunes.



Day 6



Diving was unfortunately blown out due to the weather and upset us more as the boat we were due to dive from was lovely, and had a lift for Ben too. No diving motivated a few of us to do something unheard of, and we went on a cultural tour of Nothe Fort where we spent hours looking in all the rooms, pressing all the buttons (most of which did very little), read a lot of the information signs (but not all, they were very long) and I sat astride a big gun!! A pub lunch, ice cream, tour of Weymouth and a trip to the beach, where Ben rugby tackled me to the sand, filled the rest of the day, followed by more drinking.



Day 7



Saturday arrived and we were diving from Kyarratoo with Paul, the grumpiest skipper in the world. This was the best dive of the week, the St Dunstan, a bucket-dredger that sits in 30m water and was absolutely packed with life.

Last night of the week led us all to a night on the town in the very chic Yates, the only pub where you are allowed in wearing shorts and trainers. Large volumes of alcohol were consumed including test tubes of disgusting tasting shots, followed by a stop off in the kebab shop for some, and a stagger home for all of us.

Day 8

Little bit hung over so went and got ice cream before the long drive home.

A great week was had by everybody. A big thank you to Paul Brown for organising it all.

Fortuna: 4th September 2004

(Ben Stock)

Nauticat

Crew: Steve Barrett; Sue Eames; Alan Glen; Kevin Stickland; Paul Carvall; Andy Bennett; Andy Hart; Ben Stock; Scott Matheson; Chris Matheson.

A day out of Brighton that was described by none less than our illustrious Diving Officer as 'British diving at its very best'.

An early start to the day did little to dampen our crews' enthusiasm, who arrived in Brighton at around 7am on a lovely day. The weather had clearly decided that, after a summer of being frankly rubbish, it was time to buck its ideas up and be nice. Even at that early time of the day the sun was out and it was nice and hot. There was hardly a breath of wind at all and, even better, the sea was as flat as it is possible to be. Even Andy Bennett was clearly going to struggle to bring his breakfast up again today, though there was talk of a sweepstake about that.

Nauticat, with Steve Johnson in a surprisingly jolly mood at the helm, left port and headed out to the Fortuna, a journey of just under an hour. The Fortuna, also known as The Cement Wreck because of the (now solid) bags of cement that can be seen piled up in the holds, lies in about 34m of water. An amazing bit of forward planning by the Expeditions Officer (*or blind luck - ed*), meant that we were diving on both neap tides and low water and so the maximum depth would be 28-30m. The Fortuna was sunk after hitting a mine on 22nd October 1916, with the loss of 15 lives. She is now sitting upright and around 3-4m proud of the sea bed, in a shipshape condition.

I was diving with Kevin Stickland, and thanks to us kitting up quicker than anybody else we were first in. Descending the shot line it first seemed we would be in for another low-vis Brighton special, as there was a thick Plankton bloom to swim through. However, after a few metres this cleared nicely and the vis improved dramatically. We hit the wreck a little sooner than either of us were probably expecting, landing on some of the bags of cement. We had a good look round the wreck, taking in both the bows and the stern, a number of the holds as well as seeing much of the winch machinery that still looked remarkably intact.

What made the dive so good was the amount of life there was to see. There was a massive amount of fish on the wreck, so much so that at times it was almost impossible to see the wreck through them all. There was a number of large conger as well, and I counted at least eight, though Kevin with his keen eye saw more than me. One particular conger could only be described as huge, the largest our DO has ever seen in fact.

After a great dive it was time to surface, where the sun was still beating down. A nice relaxing surface interval followed, sitting in the sun and loafing about with some good company, taking in the sights of 'Front' magazine to boot.

The second dive of the day was on a reef just outside Brighton, not far from the pier. To make the day even better the second dive managed to be far better than usual, with just enough current to drift along on and plenty of crabs, lobsters, flat fish and even cuttlefish to see.

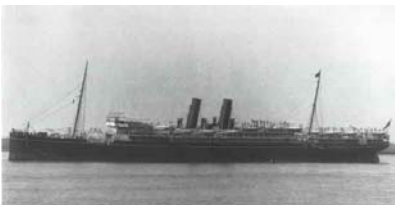
To finish the day off properly, a few of us sat in the Mariner to have a pub lunch and work on the tan (sun burn). All in all two great dives and a great day out, you can't ask for much more really.

Defiant

Crew: Paul Brown & Ben Stock

Having watched the weather forecast for the day getting steadily worse over the course of the week we were both expecting this dive to be cancelled. Paul's first four attempts to get out to this wreck were all called off due to the weather, and my first go appeared to be heading the same way. So it was no surprise when Paul phoned on Thursday evening to say 'bad news I'm afraid mate'. Here though the conversation took a bit of an unexpected turn, 'Its on'.

The Moldavia seems to be THE wreck to dive on the Sussex coast. Some would suggest it is one of the best dives in the country, and it featured in the top 5 when Diver magazine listed the top 100 UK wrecks as well as in the book 'Dive England's Greatest Wrecks'. So this clearly was going to be a special dive and one I was excited about doing.



The 9,500 ton Moldavia was built in 1903 on the River Clyde in Scotland and soon came to be known as a beautiful, well-designed and very seaworthy liner, popular on the Britain to Australia run. In 1915 she was requisitioned by the British Government for war service and fitted out with 4.4 inch guns to become the HMS Moldavia. Towards the end of the war she was used as a troop carrier.

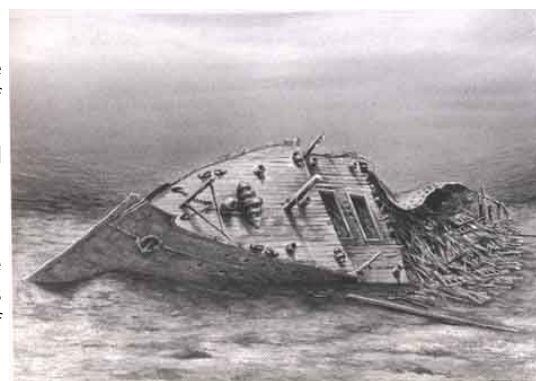
It was in this role that she met her end. On 23rd May 1918, whilst carrying American troops to Europe, she was torpedoed by UB-75, skippered by Oberleutenant Han Lohs (the man responsible for a number of wrecks on the South Coast). She sunk with the loss of 57 lives and now lies 25 miles south of Littlehampton in a general depth of 48m.

Friday morning arrived and we were heading down to the coast, trying to fool ourselves that the weather was going to be good and there wasn't much wind about ('there is still some mist, wind can't be that strong'). We arrived in Littlehampton to see that it was windy, but that we were on just about the biggest dive boat ever, so we lugged the kit on board, took some pills and sorted our kit out.

During the 2 hour steam out to the site it was clear that not all on board were feeling too healthy. More than the odd member of the crew was seasick, though despite my best efforts I managed to avoid this (made a pleasant change!). We arrived on site to get a good view of two big container ships passing by. We kitted up and got in relatively quickly, though not quick enough for Paul who was a little bit sick after he had put his kit on (sorry - I'll be quicker next time!). This being my first 'deep' dive I was, perhaps understandably, a little nervous, but this soon passed on hitting the water.

We started to descend in what can only be described as crystal clear water. The shot line stretched out in front of us for what seemed like miles, and at a depth of 27m or so the wreck became visible. We landed on it at about a depth of 45m, sorted ourselves out and headed off for a swim around the aft section, as we had agreed on beforehand.

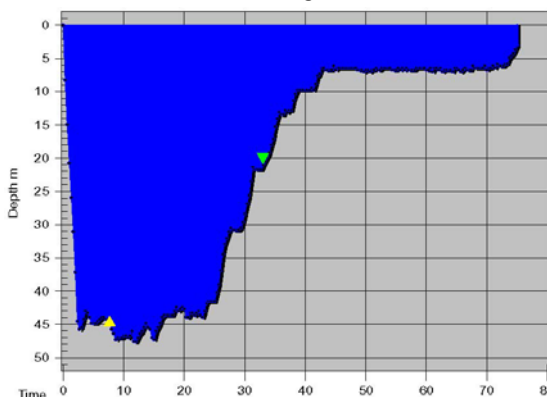
Now it being a little deep, with most of the dive being around 46-48m, and me being a little new to deeper diving, I was somewhat narked. Paul, however, was diving on Trimix and so had a clear head and can probably remember a lot more of the dive than I can!



What I do remember of the dive though was that The Moldavia is an awesome wreck. She is lying on her port side and is a massive wreck. The size alone is impressive, but the fact that it still looks much like a ship makes it even better. We swam towards the aft and the props, however the current on reaching this area was a bit strong so we doubled back on ourselves for more of a look around. Paul led the way through a swim-through where it was possible to see some of the 1,000 portholes, some of them still with glass intact. We also saw one of the guns, which was still pointing up towards the surface. There was also an amazing number of fish to see, though to be honest I was more interested in the wreck!

After 25 very enjoyable minutes it was time to head up. We both deployed SMB's and headed up to complete about 50 minutes of fairly uneventful decompression, except for a small free-flow on one of Paul's stage regulators which he fixed with a big thump. Paul had even thought to bring a copy of 'Front' magazine along with him, and kindly showed me a page every now and again to keep boredom away on the long 6m stop.

Its fair to say that this write-up doesn't do justice to what was a great dive. I can't wait to go back and do it again, hopefully sometime soon. Thanks to Paul for sorting it out and looking after me!



SCAPA FLOW

(Alan Glen)



Just returned from an extraordinary expedition to Orkney. Only had 9 people this time, however we managed to get out of Scapa flow for 2 days and keep to the eastern edge as there was a strong westerly wind all week.

We had 3 days in Scapa to start with and 6 dives on 2 cruisers and 1 battleship, and as second dives we did 2 block ships and the F2 and the barge .



On Wednesday morning we headed south out of Scapa Flow and around South Ronaldsay and then north again up along the east side of SR. The plan was to do some very shallow dives which would keep us occupied and also reduce our nitrogen load after 3 days of 35m first dives. We dived on some gulley which were a wreck site rather than a wreck as such. The damage done by waves and swells was evident by the gulleys and the sculpturing of the rocks. I believe that very little steel of the wreck was still there however all the brass fittings that had once been fastened to steel were still there.

I was leading as we swam up a gulley about 1m wide with squat lobsters on the sides of the gulley and much colour. I first spotted some bullets and some turbine blades in a crevice. I knew we were getting close. While I gathered these up Nigel swam over me and ahead to what I can truthfully describe as a unique and extraordinary sight.



I believe that the great swells and waves from gales in the north sea had picked up all sorts of brass components and washed them up the rocks into the shallows. As they all fell down again they settled in a rocky depression beside a cliff. There are probably several places like this on the site. I believe that we were the first people to see what we saw as most divers would have taken a few souvenirs and all these brass components seemed to be untouched and just piled up there. All were gleaming due to being buffed by the sand and wave motion. The sea bed looked golden and in 6m the light was wonderful. We had over 1

hour of bottom time and I set about piling up a load of interesting parts. There were portholes, bullets, shells, bearings, oilers, clips, hose couplings, machinery bearings with white metal still on them, flanges, gears (1 was about 1m across and too big to move with my lifting bag).



The sea bed was covered to about 1/2 m depth with brass parts. They were all slightly distorted and battered and all rounded due to being tumbled about by the waves. At some stage, a torpedo was supposed to have gone off at this site which blew some of the wreck onto the cliff top. We saw pieces of brass blasted into the rock.

The dilemma was how full to pack my goody bag as I was unsure how much my lifting bag would support. My prize possession was a tripping hook which is stamped up as tested for 1/4 ton and the date 29/3/15.

Virtually everyone found something however Myself and Nigel found the mother load. Wild excitement on board. Even the skipper was astonished. We continued to head north towards Kirkwall and did another shallow wreck before tying up in Kirkwall.

Next morning we headed south again to visit another shallow site of the Tennessee 12m approx via the most eastern island in Orkney where we saw lots of wild life. Then further south to the "wreck of all wrecks". This time I did not find the site however 1 pair did and came up shouting their heads off as they had not believed Nigel and myself from the first dive. Again, we all got a few bits.



On Friday morning we were back in Scapa and dived the Dresden at 32-34 and then the site of the Seldits. Various bits fell out of it when it was raised in the great salvage effort between the wars. It makes an interesting second dive.

Then back to Stromness for packing up/loading the minibus and then a celebratory meal in the Royal Hotel.



Next morning I woke up with a strange feeling in the little finger of my left hand. I could not decide whether I had been lying awkwardly on my left arm all night or it was evidence of a bubble. Let's face it, having me lie on anyone's arm is asking for trouble. I decided to follow my own dogma, when in doubt get recompressed. I had myself recompressed in Stromness while the team went south by ferry and road to London. I had been on 30% nitrox all week and had been following the air tables for decompression and the 2 days out doing shallow dives should have dealt with any residual microbubbles from the first 3 days. A bit unexpected to say the least, however all ended well and I arrived back in London 24 hours late.

The Pot people said no flying for 36 hours and no diving for at least a week preferably 2 - 3 weeks. I have logged my dry dive in the pot to 18 m as dive 668 in total and number 45 of this year.

Paradoxically, the only provocative thing that the Pot people could suggest that we might have done was the shallow dives where we were up and down to 8 then up to 6 m etc as we explored the gulleys. This was borne out by the print off of my dive computer by the Pot people (sawtooth) but very shallow. They could not say that I had done something wrong as the decompression plots for the last 2 dives were straight lines as I was hanging on my DSMB as usual.

It just goes to prove that anyone who goes diving can have symptoms of decompression sickness, despite being careful.

I have booked another week for next year 9th -16th July 2005. Please let me know if you are interested.



NATIONAL TRY-DIVE WEEK

This years the club will be taking part in the BSAC National Try-Dive Week, which for the club will take place on Wednesday 29th September 2004.

A Try-Dive promotion is the best way for the club to recruit new members. Running an efficient and enjoyable event for those taking part will help to promote the club in a positive way.

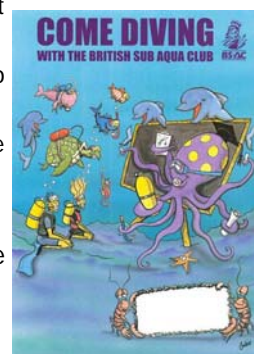


A number of people have already shown an interest in coming along during Try-Dive week and giving the sport a go. For this event to be a success we need as many of the club to be there on the night to help out. People will be needed to take the trainees in the water, but help will also be needed with other aspects that will help to make the evening a success. If you are unable to make it, then please loan some of your equipment to the club for the night.

For those of you who are prepared to take people in the water, the following is a suggested outline of how to conduct the dive:

1. Introduce yourself, giving your name and qualification. Ask their name and ask about any previous experience they have of diving.
2. Let them know what you will be doing that evening. Make them aware that this will be a chance to experience, not a training session as such.
3. Show them the equipment and explain what it does. Adjust mask and fins to fit them.
4. Go over safety aspects, including how to equalise ears and mask. Go over the basic hand signals.
5. Help them to get the equipment on and enter the water. Demonstrate breathing above the water and let them practise. If they are ok then allow them to breath just under the water, kneeling in the shallow end.
6. If trainee is confident with this, then do some swimming with them in the shallow end to allow them to get used to fins and moving underwater.
7. If they are still confident then carefully increase the depth - taking them to the deep end if they are comfortable.
8. Help the trainee to exit the pool and debrief the session.

So please come along on the evening and show your support. Alan Glen is organising this, so please contact him to let him know you will be there to lend a hand. Give Alan a ring on 020-8696-0027.





In the third of a regular series, **Uncle Scubbie**, the club's resident DIW diver, discusses the DIW principles of equipment configuration. This system has taken years to evolve and has many strict followers, though not all realise they are DIW divers.

EQUIPMENT CONFIGURATION

Setting up your diving equipment for efficient and practical diving can take years to accomplish, and the move to a technical set-up can cause even greater problems. But divers who dive the 'Way' divers have come together to formulate a standard configuration to help all divers to DIW perfection.

So far in this series we have looked at cylinders, explaining why a V-Shaped twin set is the way forward, and wings, which should have a heavy back-plate, lots of d-rings and bungee cord to hold the bladder together. This month we take a look at regulators.

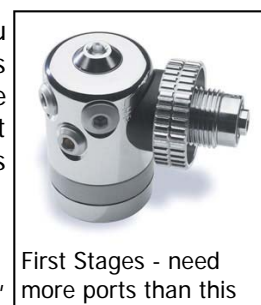


Regulators are probably the most important thing you will buy as a diver. A good reg will last you years and keep you alive. You should have a primary second stage regulator for yourself and a secondary one for your buddy in case of an out of air situation, or in case your main reg fails. You should service your regulators at least once a year or every 60 dives whichever ever is less.

The above statements are often rolled out to new divers by various training agencies and divers. They are, of course, hogwash.

We shall look at the designs of regulator that you need for proper DIW diving, then the extras and upkeep.

Firstly, the first stage, the bit that fits to your tank. You will need to check what type of fitting you have on your pillar valves to match it to the 1st stage. Then you will need to get a regulator with as many ports as possible. Multiple high and low-pressure ports are a good thing, as it will allow the maximum number of hoses to be connected to the 1st stage. Eight is the magic number if you want to have a proper Octopus set-up. A 4 or 5 hose set-up isn't an 'Octo'-pus set-up is it, as Octo means 8, that would be a quinpus or cectopus which just sounds silly and un-DIW.



First Stages - need more ports than this

Many equipment manufacturers will try to baffle you with breathing resistance weights and such, whilst diver mags will hire namby pamby warm water divers, to try out regs, who as we all know are not real divers. None of this really tells you what they are truly like.

True DIW divers will tell you unless it is black and has a bit to bite on it's no good, the more knobs the better, and providing it puts gas in your gob it's a winner.

Venturi systems are not a flash in the pan marketing gimmick, which changes the airflow and resistance, it is a big silver knob on the side of the second stage that looks good. In recent months experienced DIW divers have experimented with a new form of Venturi system, taking the knob out and leaving a big hole there instead. This dramatically reduces the effort required to take a breath, however it can result in a slightly wet breathing regulator.



Side Venting Regs - Not the DIW Way

Some people will try to convince you that side mounted exhausts on the second-stage are better, with some stories about no bubbles in the face or that when in really strong tides the purge button can't be pressed by the current. Ignore this advice, front mounted systems are best, because they are the DIW way. The bigger the better, if you can get one to cover your chin as well all the better.

If you have a big mouth you will need a bigger reg, although a smaller mouth can still be accommodating. The mouthpiece should fit comfortably within your mouth. For divers with dentures some manufacturers produce

a denture grip.



Bulky 2nd Stages - for the ladies

Heavy regulators can result in jaw ache or even lock jaw, after prolonged use, so should only be used by women.

Some regulator 1st stage casings are made entirely of metal, this does not allow you to see the flexible membrane, which controls the working pressure of the unit. Some units allow the addition of what are called Cold Water kits. These are basically a small rubber cap filled with alcohol, which are fitted to the reg. Now this may sound like a good idea, however this system can be expensive and is designed for the regulator's use not yours.

(Note: Save yourself some money and have a tot of whiskey before the dive, thus ensuring a warm dive whatever the water temperature)



Neck Chain - stop others stealing your air

Hoses and octopus regulators, your primary hose should be long enough to supply you with air comfortably. The mouthpiece should be fastened to you via a small stainless steel chain lopped around your neck, and should be just long enough to squeeze over your head without a hood on. Your spare mouthpiece should be connected to a short hose once again just long enough to reach your mouth, it should not be more than 60cm long, as this will encourage other divers to 'borrow' some of your gas when they are running low. To further reduce this risk, if it is possible, turn off the 1st stage attached to the spare regulator (when using twins or a pony). This will give the offending diver a nasty shock and they properly will not try it again. The hose should colour coded yellow or red as a warning sign to other divers not to use them.



An out of air diver - not your problem



Gauges - PSI gives more air

A contents gauge can be a good idea for the conscientious DIW diver. There are various models to try but they should show either BAR or PSI. Measurements in BAR will confuse our American colleagues and meet E.E.C. rules, whilst a PSI gauge will give you much more gas, usually 10 times as much, and annoy Brussels. They should be made out of plastic if possible (especially if you are male) as the have habit of falling (painfully) between your legs whilst performing a backward roll from hardboats. Big clear dials are important as occasionally you may want to read them. Newer digital gauges can be a good idea, although their failing comes when trying read them when narced as dials are easier to read in stressful situations than numbers.

Inflator hoses for wings and dry-suits should be located towards the back of the second stage and if too long should be wrapped around the pillar valve to reduce their length.

A special hose should be set up for an underwater Air-Horn, as this will allow you to warn other divers or fish to get out of your way on a wreck, just a horn on a car can be used herd pedestrians. It can also be used to attract attention and entertain people onboard dive boats and quaysides.



Air Guns - lethal in the right hands

A hose should be set aside for use with an air gun, this will allow you to fill lift bags and in the mouths of sleeping Dogfish, so you won't even have to net them to get them in the boat.

Your regulator set should be washed with fresh clean water after every dive, to eradicate salt and infections. The best way to do this is to take the regulator in the shower or bath with you after the days diving. This way you will guarantee that the regulator is as clean as you are. Please do not put the caps on as this is to prevent dust not water, and your regulator should be cleaned both inside and out.

For servicing you have two choices depending on the regulator. Never and Never. If you buy top of the range expensive regulators then according to the manufacturer they should be serviced every year or 60 dives. However if they are under warranty or insured then towards the end of the year either break or lose the regulator and request a new or fixed one, which they will of course service for you.

If you buy an inexpensive Regulator, then loss or break it towards the end of the year, however it may not be properly warranted or insured so you may have to buy a new one in this case, however you will be able to replace it with a better model at this time. True DIW diver never get their regulators serviced, and if they do they usually do it with the aide of a crowbar and WD40.

Hopefully this has given you an insight into buying a DIW regulator good luck with your purchase.

Until next time this is Uncle Scubbie signing out....



Coming Soon...



...to a computer near you, Croydon BSAC's new website.

The old web site has seen better days, so it was decided it was time for an update. The club has recently purchased a proper name for the site as well, along with some flash new email addresses for all the committee.

Chris Boddington has nearly completed the initial work on the site, which will be launched in the very near future. After that it will need to be maintained on a regular basis, so if you have any ideas of what to include on the site let him or any of the committee know.

The web site is a great way to advertise the club, so please help if you can - any ideas you have would be great.

The launch date will be confirmed very soon. Or go to:

www.croydonbsac.com

to see if the new site is up and running.



T-Shirts

Its been a few years now since the last lot of club t-shirts were done, so its time to get some more.



The committee are currently looking at a few suppliers and there will hopefully be a trial run of a few shirts produced in the next couple of weeks.



So look out for the trial shirts which will hopefully soon be modelled by some of our better looking members (*who exactly are they then?! ed*). Then hopefully early next year there will be some details in this magazine for club t-shirts and maybe even an order form.



To Croydon BSAC!



Favourite Diving Moments

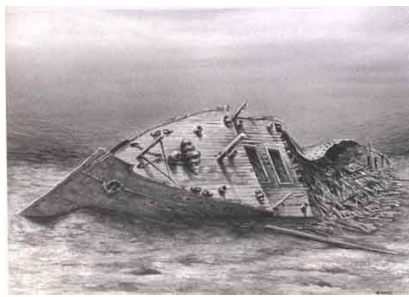
The second of a regular series looking at members of the club favourite diving experiences. This month **Paul Brown**, the clubs resident Tekkie Diver, gives us a few of his favourite moments.

> My first sea dive. 3m depth for about 20mins with Simon Fox (ex-club member) at that old club favourite Ringstead Ledges, just outside Weymouth. After carrying all my gear and the old boat down to the beach I was treated to a whole 6inches of vis and bugger all life - that was me hooked!!!

> My first dive on my favourite wreck, the Moldavia. After being blown out on the 4 previous occasions we'd booked, we had flat seas, vis of over 15m and we got to swim the entire (400 foot) length of the amazing ship. This was several years ago now and I have revisited the wreck several times since, a simply fantastic dive.

> My one and only cave dive. This was in Menorca on a cave system called Pont den Gill. The dive started with a 6m jump into the sea. We visited 3 caves in the space of a two hour dive in gin clear vis and my twinset was so empty and buoyant by the end of the dive it was dragging me up!!

Next month we will feature another Divers favourite moments, and hopefully we will run down some of the more popular choices in the future.



DIVER OF THE MONTH

Welcome again to the Diver of the Month awards.

Yet again there have been a number of high quality entries for the coveted Diver of the Month award. In fact some people have been so busy that not all entries have made it through to the shortlist. If you are disappointed not to see your name here then you will have to try a little bit harder next month.

So here are the tales of when Major Calamity came to town.

A surprising first entry goes to **Shazan**, the curry house over the road from the pub. Twice we have attempted to go there for a post diving curry, on both occasions bookings were made in advance. On both occasions the service was, frankly, crap. On neither visit was there actually a chef in the building to cook us some food, so both times we left without eating. Fair to say we wont be going there again.

Paul Brown is no stranger to these awards and puts in another solid effort this month. On the way to out to the Moldavia its fair to say the sea was a little bit lumpy. Paul was doing well until the boat arrived on site and the kitting up started. Having strapped himself into his own body weights worth of cylinders he started to feel a little bit unwell. Three times he managed to stop himself from being sick. The fourth he couldn't and with no chance of making it to the back of the boat he had little choice but to be sick where he was, meaning that it went all over himself. Unsurprisingly everybody else got out of the way when he wanted to get in.

Alan 'Scapa' Glen has been with the club for nearly a year now and has kept quiet when it come to these awards. This all changed on his recent trip to Scapa Flow when on the last morning he awoke with a tingling sensation in his little finger. Some may have attributed this to sleeping awkwardly and left it at that. Alan though is more sensible that that and so made a trip to a chamber just in case it was a 'little finger bend'.

Another surprise entry goes to the **Weather**, responsible for cancelling a number of dives recently. Now we all know that July and August are meant to be summer months and you might think that with summer comes sunshine and hot weather. Apparently not this year. Clouds, wind and rain have been the order of the day far too often recently.

Yet another mention in these awards for **Clare Walton**, who surely has the most nominations for somebody not actually in the club. This time she is nominated for her packing for the August holiday some of the club went on. Her decision to take along five pairs of shoes, three handbags and two sets of hair straightners will never be understood by any bloke. Not taking along a rain coat was possibly a mistake and the unpredictable British weather made sure she wont forget one again.

Chris Griffiths is somebody who, it could be suggested, has more money than sense. You only have to look at his recent car and diving kit purchases to see that. He also has a little bit of an over reliance on technology, as was demonstrated when the flash GPS unit in his car couldn't find Falmouth. This follows on from its complete inability to find the right part of Peacehaven for the nitrox course and the fact that it couldn't recognise anything north of the Watford Gap on they way to the Farne Islands. Maybe the more traditional road map might be useful.



The club does have a history of, occasionally, damaging the odd dive boat. Never intentionally mind, just when people are playing about. The latest boat to be damaged by the club in some way was Nauticat. **Tony Ray** decided it would be fun to lock **Ben Stock** in the toilet. Ben, showing strength that will be put to good use in the police, barged the door thinking Tony was leaning up against it. That will be a new lock needed then.

The more technically minded amongst you will be well aware of the advantages of nitrox. You may also be aware that dive computers can now be programmed to the gas mix you are using, which offers many advantages. However, the computer become pretty useless if you are diving on air and your computer reckons you are diving on EANx30 (look it up!), doesn't it now **Chris Boddington**?

On the August week away our crew decided that a bit of fine dining would be in order, so they treated themselves at Rick Steins seafood restaurant. A very posh place and somewhere you really need to be on your best behaviour. **Chris Griffiths** calling the sparkling water 'fizzy' was embarrassing enough. **Claire Cohen** asking if she could take the shells from her dinner home with her really was too much.

Paul the skipper on **Kyaratoo** is, rightly, famous for his exceptionally grumpy attitude towards well, just about everything really. Having a go at Chris Boddington for coming back up the shot line was just another example of his grumpiness. Maybe he should have mentioned it in his brief then.

A very surprising first entry here for the one of the clubs most qualified divers, **Sue Eames**. Sue took part in the recent Fortuna dive off Nauticat out of Brighton. Now Sue is a very experienced instructor as so kindly agreed to do some DL skills with her buddy for the day, Steve Barrett. On the second dive it was agreed between the pair that Steve would practise some rescue skills at the end of the dive and everybody on board was informed of this. The pair got ready and jumped in, whereupon Sue immediately froze and looked a little unhappy. She had forgotten to do her drysuit up and was more than a little wet. Clearly one of the skills they were not practising was the buddy check.

Chris Griffiths makes a second, solid, entry, for the many problems he had with his weightbelt on the Falmouth leg of the August trip. As some of you may be aware Chris has recently bought a lot of new kit, which included a new weightbelt. Luckily he found out that it was too small for him before he got on board the boat and had time to buy a new one. Then, on the first dive in his new kit there was a little bit of a problem with his weighting, resulting in him having to use a hefty bit of iron to stop himself floating upwards. Finally, on the second day of the Falmouth leg he jumped in forgetting the thing altogether.

Another solid entry from **Ben Stock**, which (if I wasn't judging!) would probably have won. On the St Dunsten dive out of Weymouth on the August trip Ben and his buddy had a great dive, and had completed a circuit of the wreck and had returned to the shot. However there had been a bit of a current on the dive so Ben decided the ascent would be more comfortable to ascent under an SMB. The mistake he made here was being a little too close to the shot line when he put it up. The SMB promptly got tangled in the shot line.

An entry here from one of our quieter divers when it comes to the Diver of the Month awards, **Bruce Ayres**. Most of the club will be familiar with the Sovereign Lighthouse, seen on top of the reef out of Eastbourne. Apparently not Bruce, who foolishly asked all on board Nauticat what it was there for. Why are lighthouses ever where they are Bruce?

Yet another entry for **Chris Griffiths**, who probably thinks he is being picked on. Most people in the club will probably be aware of the problems Chris has had with cars this year. No need to go opening up old wounds, so suffice to say the Audi TT he is driving now is not his first new car this year. It would seem that Audi have introduced a special design feature, aimed specifically at Chris who likes to collect the odd scallop and is always looking for ways to keep them fresh on the way home. Audi rose to this challenge and introduced a special boot lid for him, that lets rain water in and stores it ready for when he is looking for somewhere to keep those scallops. Rumour is that next Audi will be looking into introducing tropical aquariums in their TT range.

But, whilst all of there are some fine entries this month, there can be only one winner. This months Diver of the Month is awarded to **Roger Wishart**.

Roger took part in a dive on the Mixon Hole off one of Wittering Divers RIB's, with his buddy Chris Boddington. For those of you who have not dived with Wittering they anchor the RIB close into shore, leaving you with a short wade through the sea to the RIB, carrying your kit. Most people, faced with this task, would sort all their kit then wear as much of it as possible to make the process as easy as possible. One item of equipment that they would be sure to look after would be their dive computer which most would put securely on their wrist. Not so Roger, who decided that the safest place to put them, whilst wading out into the sea, would be in one of his fins which he then carried in his arms rather than in a goody bag.

It wont come as much of a surprise then that, having passed his kit on to the RIB and climbed on board, he was unable to find his computer. A hunt round the boat was unable to locate it, and a now visibly sulking Roger was forced to concede that it was lost. He was forced to conduct the dive relying on his buddy for timings and so on, as he had no back up with him. To try and keep this as safe as they could, our pair stayed fairly shallow.



Roger's computer, meanwhile, had a better dive without him. It had a look around the bay, scooted about seeing what it could find and playing with some fish. Of course, being a good computer, it completed the Suunto 6m stop, then headed back to shore. Here a kind elderly gentleman picked it up, as it was too tired to wade up the beach and into the car on its on, and passed it to the local Coast Guard who looked after it until it could be reunited with a clearly delighted Roger.

However, Roger's story does not end here. Ignoring the fact that he conducted a dive with no method of measuring time we shall move onto the end of the dive. You all know how it works at the end of a RIB dive. You surface, hopefully somewhere near your SMB, signal OK to the boat, sort yourself out and then pass your weights and kit up to the boat. Roger surfaced with his torch in his hand, signalled the boat and sorted himself out, before passing his kit up and clambering on board. It was then that he noticed that he no longer had a torch, either in his hand or attached to his BCD. Another search of the boat showed that it was not on board, and he must have dropped it at the surface. So that will be lost then. However, if his computer is anything to go by, it will no doubt surface when it is good and ready!

So well done to Roger, who must be very proud of winning his first ever Diver of the Month awards. Commiserations to all the other entrants, you all did very well but a fine late entry came through and stole the prize!





Word Search

D	E	C	O	M	P	R	E	S	S	I	O	N	I	S	T	A	V
A	S	Y	M	X	V	S	W	E	T	S	U	I	T	N	A	R	D
E	B	L	P	K	L	I	G	A	D	G	E	T	S	P	M	I	F
D	W	I	N	G	H	J	Y	S	U	I	T	Q	R	M	V	B	L
P	A	N	F	G	B	U	R	I	N	G	K	W	V	E	J	K	C
A	E	D	J	K	U	E	N	C	I	I	S	M	R	H	O	P	O
T	B	E	K	U	O	M	L	K	L	Q	T	V	H	O	S	E	M
Y	R	R	U	C	Y	L	I	L	F	I	V	R	G	S	A	C	P
S	E	H	A	H	L	P	U	Y	B	S	F	H	O	S	R	L	U
J	F	A	M	P	H	I	B	I	A	N	E	T	E	X	Z	K	T
T	T	N	C	V	H	F	I	G	P	L	Y	M	O	U	T	H	E
M	R	N	J	B	C	D	E	W	O	C	V	W	J	H	O	L	R
D	I	A	Z	Y	H	F	P	U	R	B	B	P	R	I	B	D	A
F	M	H	D	R	Y	S	U	I	T	W	R	U	E	E	R	I	T
T	I	N	M	S	B	R	B	T	H	D	P	U	D	Y	C	M	L
A	X	N	F	M	G	H	E	J	O	E	A	R	S	D	J	K	K
X	S	A	S	A	R	R	E	E	L	C	D	R	E	G	Y	R	F
C	A	S	B	Q	W	B	R	H	E	B	I	N	A	O	C	E	D
A	E	R	S	C	U	B	A	D	I	V	E	R	G	M	A	S	K



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|---------------|-------------|----------|
| Decompression | Wetsuit | Gadgets |
| Cylinder | Seasick | Wing |
| Curry | Bell | RIB |
| Dive | Computer | Hose |
| Nitrox | Lift | Buoy |
| Amphibian | Trimix | Fins |
| BSAC | Scuba Diver | Mask |
| Red Sea | Wreck | Drysuit |
| SMB | Reel | PADI |
| Buddy | Pub | Beer |
| Plymouth | BCD | Porthole |

One word is repeated - which is it?

The author has hidden her name in the puzzle as well.