

The Muddy Puddle

February
2007

HELLO!

And welcome to another issue of the Muddy Puddle. This is the first issue since I have taken over the Editorship and the first thing I'd like to do is thank Paul Brown for the sterling work he put into the magazine over the last couple of years, I am sure you would all agree he did an excellent job.

In this issue Claire Elphick tells us all about her recent cave diving course, Vicky writes about a Red Sea trip and I bore you all with a legal article! We also meet the new committee and there is the usual thoughts from some of the senior members of the committee. We also have the return of a former regular series 'Favourite Dives', though Chris 'Poshest Man in the Club' Griffiths has gone for a different approach to this.

I hope to get the magazine out every couple of months, so look forward to the next issue just before the big Easter trip.

Ben



Croydon BSAC's AGM

Since the last issue another AGM has come and gone.

This meeting was probably one of the easier AGM's of recent years, with no controversy

thanks mainly to the well organised committee. The club is now in the healthy position of having nearly 50 members, a vast improvement on a few years ago and the finances of the club are looking healthy since the decision to sell the RIB was made.

Don't Forget:

The club website:

www.croydonbsac.com



If you are not a member of the club's email list then please subscribe, details of how to do this can be found on the website.

Committee for 2006/07:

Chairman	Chris Boddington
Diving Officer	Paul Carvall
Treasurer	Claire Elphick
Membership secretary	Tony Dillon
Training Officer	Alan Glen
Equipments Officer	Alan Lawrence
Expeditions Officer	Paul Brown
Dry Officer	Clare Walton

Club Committee 2006/2007

Here are the Club's Leaders for the next year, as voted for by YOU at the AGM. What were you thinking...?

Don't forget to thank them for doing what has often been described as a thankless task on your behalf. I'll let them introduce themselves.

Chairman

Name Chris Boddington

Qualifications Padi Open Water Diver/ Bsac Dive Leader/ Iantd Normic Divers / Bsac 0023



Diving Experience 12 years/ approx 600 dives

First Dive Chesil Cove, Portland, Dorset, June 1994 : A massive 17.5metres for my first dive with 12metres .. yes 12 metres viz and no fish. Absolutely brilliant I was hooked for life!

Favourite Dive Any dive I come back from, there are many from all over the world, but having a nose bleed on a shark dive might not sound like a great dive but we saw rays, turtles, I had a close experience with a 3m+ bull shark and during the deco 20 Scalloped Hammerheads sharks shot underneath the 4 of us, banked and came straight at us, the shoal streaking straight past on all sides and through us to disappear in the distance. Almost dropped my reg from smiling. Surfaced with blood all over my face, to screams from the other divers on the boat, I never knew South Africans have such high pitch screams, that was the Pinnacles, Protea Banks, South Africa.

Most Embarrassing Diving Related Story Hmmm, any dive where someone has seen me underwater, knows I am a numpty! Too many really. But I think diving a wreck of UB-103 Submarine in Scapa Flow, and seeing only debris, 2 huge boilers and some hull plating, doing a 50 minute dive on her, after the briefing, then coming up and commenting that she didn't look very submarine-ish now, only to find out it was a destroyer. Doh Started to listen to the dive briefs after that. Oh and the viz was up to 15m.

Diving Officer

Name Paul Zoe Carvall (mum didn't know if I was going to be a boy or girl so she played safe with the names)

Qualifications BSAC Dive Deader, PADI Advanced Nitrox Diver, Technical Advisor to BSAC (that last one isn't entirely true)

Diving Experience I have been diving since 1994 (I think) and depending on which dive boat you go on, i have done somewhere between 300 and 5000 dives. I am also part of the "awesome foursome"

First Dive Was a cold Saturday in February in Larkfield, in a semi-dry, enough said.

Favourite Dive Too many to list, but in the UK an hour on the Mulberrys takes some beating, as does a bit of viz on the Oceana or the city of Waterford. Most mid rang wrecks with a bit of viz and a good buddy gets my vote. Abroad, the Carnatic or the Thistlegorm have to be up there somewhere or there was a quite magical dive in the southern red sea that took 75 minutes through passages and a reef system that was absolutely stunning. Diving with oceanic white tips and silky sharks this year really was something special even if the sharks were normally behind me most of the time!

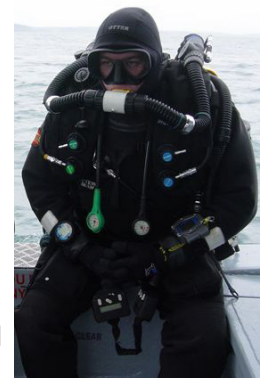


Most Embarrassing Diving Related Story Probably the time I put my semi-dry on unwittingly back to front and paraded round a dive shop in it would need to be included, Or maybe completely missing the boat on more than one occasion in the red sea would be worthy of a mention.....

Expeditions Officer

Name Paul Brown

Qualifications BSAC Advanced Diver, BSAC Assistant Instructor, BSAC Diver Coxswain, IANTD Trimix Diver, PSAI Rebreather Diver



Diving Experience Started in 1989, currently around 700 dives.

First Dive Ringstead Ledges, just outside Weymouth at Easter in 1990. I dived with Simon Fox, an old member who used to work with Tony Ray and who is now residing in the West Country. Depth was 3m, viz about 3 inches, temp was 'fkin freezing and kit was so heavy I could barely carry it (I was 14 at the time). Despite all that I got out and was hooked.

Favourite Dive The Moldavia. I think this is probably the best air-range wreck on the south coast. She is a fairly intact P&O liner lying 25 miles south of Littlehampton in about 50m of water on her port side. Viz is usually excellent, the life that lives there and the state of the wreck make this a quite incredible dive.

Most Embarrassing Diving Related Story Choice of two:

1. The first time I took the old RIB out on my own we couldn't get the thing to turn over, despite just having paid out about £500 to have the engine serviced. I was straight on the phone to the guys at the workshop in Littlehampton to have a good old go at them who agreed to send a man down to have a look at it. We were now late and wouldn't make slack on the wreck, suffice to say I had a boat load of not very happy divers. When the bloke turned up he looked the boat up and down and without taking his hands out of his pockets just said "killcord". I'd forgotten to plug the bloody thing in - as soon as I did it started perfectly. Suffice to say I never forgot to do it again.

2. I needed a suit for my first trip to the Red Sea, I went to the dive show the day before we were due to leave and tried one on. The conversation with the salesman went something like this:

Me: "That fits fine, but what other colours do you have?"
 Him: "Sorry, that's the only colour we have left in that size"
 Me: "But it's pink."
 Him: "It's not pink, it's cerise."
 Me: speechless

Fast forward a day and a half and I am standing on the rear deck of the dive boat Xanadu in a cerise suit with 17 piss-taking Croydon BSACers laughing at me. Cue unfunny-pink-suit-gags for the next 5 trips I done

Training Officer

Name Alan Glen

Qualifications BSAC Advanced Diver & Advanced Instructor

Diving Experience 804 logged dives since 1988

First Dive 1988, Far Mulberries Harbour

Favourite Dive Coln (Scapa Flow)

Most Embarrassing Diving Related Story Jumping into Horsea in front of trainees with no fins on. Arse!

Treasurer

Name Clare Cohen

Qualifications PADI OW Instructor, TDI Intro to Cave, TDI Nitrox Diver

Diving Experience Started Diving 1998

First Dive Eilat - Red Sea

Favourite Dive Llygad Llwichwr -Cave Dive South Wales

Most Embarrassing Diving Related Story Christmas Day 1999, getting lost on a reef in the Red Sea whilst taking five people on a guided dive.



Membership Secretary

Name Tony Dillon

Qualifications BSAC Sports Diver

Diving Experience 3 years, 130 logged dives (work gets in the way)

Favourite Dive Night dive on The Thistlegorm



Dry Officer

Name Clare Walton (aka Tinkerbell, Fluffer)

Qualifications BSAC Sports Diver, BSAC Advanced Nitrox

Diving Experience Believe it or not (I think you will side with the 'not') I have been diving nine years. I have no idea how many dives I have done as I am rubbish at filling in a log book.

First Dive I have absolutely no idea what my first dive was like, it was in Australia and I was 16.

Favourite Dive I have narrowed it down to three 1) The first time I dived in the South Red Sea, I was completely gob smacked at the clarity of the water and brilliance of the colours (this was before it became over run with tourists); 2) James Egan Lane - a few years ago PB and I spend ages on the wreck and even made it to the bow to see the Dog fish; 3) This year out in the Brothers I had a shark sitting on my head!

Most Embarrassing Diving Related Story I think there are too many to list but they all seem to involve either PB or PC and underwear.



DIVING OFFICER'S BULLETIN



As it is now the (sort of) closed season I have been thinking what to do in the interim. Stoney Cove sprang to mind and then I remembered breaking the ice on the puddles surrounding the lake and crossed it of my "things to do in the near future" list.

I have been canvassing opinion from my regular buddies for some incentives. One has convinced me to buy a twin set (watch out world, tekkie Carvall is coming!) and the other has found out that Sarah Beeny has been in a fitness dvd called ,I think, 'All stars workout' (or at least I think it said 'workout'). You cant buy mates like these, priceless.

Another course of action has been to replay my growing collection of Red Sea dvds, and whimsically book my next trip. Even as I write I am viewing a Sudan dvd (minefields here we come!). If I go, I have already decided that I am being airlifted on and off the boat, thus neatly avoiding any contact with Sudan's terra firma. It would appear that whilst they are not that bothered if you are innoculated, they are particularly bothered that you pay various taxes to get in, around and out of the country. I have also estimated that I will have to smuggle \$2000 (probably internally) for this purpose alone.

My next plan for inspiration has been to look through some of my log books (Shakespeare, Tolstoy and Hemingway do not be alarmed). Typical quote: 'zodiac drop off. Supreme effort to get to the reef, than hanging on for dear life. Saw grey reef shark, got headache and yacked up when I got back on board. Great.' Or: 'saw very elegant sleek silky sharks ghosting by, followed by oceanics muscling past while we were hanging on the line, looking into the blue waiting with intense anticipation. Then we went for a cup of tea.' Hmmm.

I have been that bored that in order to keep connected with something diving related, I have been reading up on re-breathers. The maths and physics are somewhat complicated, but I got a scrubber to help me ,which was much better. I understand that this is the accepted way forward in closed circuit circles.

For the new season I have decided to plan for something a little bit more spectacular to keep me gainfully occupied. I figured that having mastered Notrix© I would skip Trimix altogether and go straight to Fourmix©. Now that really would be one up for me for the coming diving months. The beauty of this would be that I would create my own qualification. This would allow me to block anybody else from becoming Fourmix© qualified, as I would have to endorse them and sign them off, which clearly I wouldn't do, just in case they were better than me. That way I could be BSACs only Fourmix buddhist breathing diver. Should a rival agency start up, I have a cunning plan.....Fivemix!

Now, even if all these schemes don't appeal to you, I have got one sure fire way to improve the quality, safety and ultimate enjoyment of the diving ahead of us. Here goes - each buddy pair should expect and plan to deploy a dsmb on every dive with a controlled measured ascent and carry a dsmb per diver. Why? Because I have just read the BSAC Diving Incident Report for 2006.

Paul Carvall Diving Officer

Jan 2007

TRAINING OFFICER'S BULLETIN

Greetings to all the new members and also the new committee members. I am happy to organise training for you so that you can advance your diving and progress to another skill level.

All you have to do is get in touch and I shall fit you into the current training programme.

Currently, Ocean Diver, Sports Diver and Advanced Diver lectures are in Progress.

Several people from the last Dive Leader lectures sessions have not sat the little theory test, so there is a bit of unfinished business to conclude.

Let me know what your training needs are.

Alan



CHAIRPERSONS ADDRESS



I woke up the other morning to find I seemed to have won the recent election for Chairman/person, much to my shock, horror and amazement. I have nevertheless decided to throw myself into the role, although apparently I don't get paid for this job.... Hmmm we'll have to see about that.



I, like you possibly, thought long and hard about the Chairman's role, what does the Chairman actually do? According to the front of all knowledge (Wikipedia), a **Chairman** is the presiding officer of a meeting, organization, committee, or other deliberative body. Also, a Chairman is the presiding Director over the other Directors/Officers on the board/Committee and must be fair, a good listener, and a good communicator.

Clearly I am none of these things, thus I have stark choice, either try to become a good Chairman or go to the other extreme a Dictator, yes forget democracy and rule with an iron fist. As much as the thought of goose stepping divers in matching black drysuits, a secret dive police keeping a watchful eye on you and invading Eastern Europe is appealing there is one flaw, and that is that nearly all dictatorships come to a sticky end.

Thus I shall try to marry the two; I will try to be a good Chairman, whilst hoping to help uphold the dictatorship position of the committee.

I am pleased that several of the more experienced committee members are staying on this year, but do realise that this does come at a price. I would like to thank the previous committee for all their hard work, and look forward to working with the new committee.

I feel that the goal for the year, as with every year, is to have an enjoyable years diving, with training and safety at the forefront, without having to sacrifice the sense of adventure or 'deeper cravings' and to retain the friendly homely feeling of the club.

The club has an excellent tradition of safe and enjoyable diving which we should all be proud of and along may it continue. I am sure that our Diving Officer, hence forth known as Vizeadmiral (Vice Admiral) Carvall, will have words regarding safety and diving practices for the forthcoming year. I am also sure that Grand Moff Glenn will be 'encouraging' you all to attend training. I may even undertake some training myself. Finally Oberleutnant Brown has published another exciting, and eagerly anticipated, Dive List for the year. Remember, the dives are structured towards certain diving levels and experience, please think about the dives and whether you, your training and your equipment are up to the dive, if you have any doubts speak to any of the above Officers.

If you are thinking of going on any of the club trips, Plymouth, Weymouth or even Normandy (I can't wait for that one) please try to help out, ask Oberleutnant Brown if he needs a hand with anything, I'm sure he would love the support and might even smile for you.

Finally if you have any issues, idea or concerns you would like to bring up at the committee, either let myself or any other committee member know. They don't all bite and are very friendly if offered beer or two.

Have a great winter, get some dives under you belt and stay dive fit.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY:

London International Dive Show

Saturday 10th March 2007 & Sunday 11th March 2007

Ticket Information:

Advanced tickets: £7.50

On the door: £10.50

Under 14's go free



www.diveshows.co.uk

Get your credit cards ready and be prepared for the hangover!

Red Sea 2006

(Vicky Cleaver)

After deciding that October was a crap time to be in England, we (Paul B, Paul C, Clare W, Chris G, Chris B, Andy "Gay Icon/Dive God" Hart, Tony R, Ben S and Vicky C) embarked upon the club trip to the Red Sea. We all met at sunny Gatwick at a bright and shiny time of 7.30am to stand in possibly one of the slowest queues know to mankind. Once we had successfully checked in, (with a bit of help from Ms.Walton), we all headed through to the departure lounge for the apparently customary cooked breakfast and Stella. After a reasonably painless flight, we arrived scarily sober in Marsa Alam, and were promptly whisked off on a 15 minute drive to the port at Galeb.



We had booked with Tony Backhurst on the "Hurricane", which on the whole was a fantastic boat. Other than dripping air con units cunningly placed over sleeping divers heads, you couldn't fault it. The boat is a 36m steel construction, which makes it very stable during rough crossings, and also as we discovered, quite good at taking chunks out of wooden boats. There are 11 cabins all en-suite with a small fridge. The dive deck has plenty of room to kit up, and caters for nitrox, technical, open circuit and rebreathers. There are also two 6m ribs – well one after they ripped a whole in the side of one half way through the week! The restaurant is on the main deck, and above that on the bridge deck is the bar. If you continue up from there, you reach the sun deck where most of us were to be found tucked up together in a small corner when not diving or eating.

Our 2 dive guides Joe and Karin welcomed us onto the boat, and after a safety briefing, sent us off to the first of many fantastic meals. We were due to spend the first night in the port and to set off at 6am the following morning. This didn't quite go according to plan due to local law enforcement and Ramadam, but we finally set off about 1pm for a check dive near port. After a quick fuel stop we then set sail for the Brothers, (approximately an 8 hour journey). En route we stopped at for an evening dive.



This was very pleasant, but most of us suffered torch death during the later/dark part of the dive. This was especially helped by the guides torch also flooding, and the strobe on the bottom of the shot line failing to work. This unfortunately was our only night dive as you're not allowed to do them at the Brothers due to sharks and currents, or possibly because no one managed to keep a torch working for longer than 5 minutes! After that it was dinner, beer and then bed.

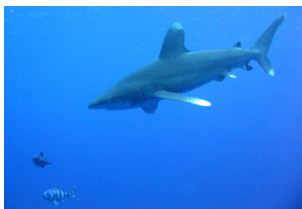
The Brothers (Big Brother and Little Brother), or El Akhawein, are 2 little islands in the middle of nowhere, which are both steep sided cones. Big Brother has a lighthouse on it, so obviously that's the one with the wrecks around it! The rest of the diving is on reef walls in strong currents and not for the faint hearted. At the time we went, it was also shark season, so if you want to see big stuff, this is definitely a place to go.



After a reasonably calm crossing, we awoke at Little Brother and toddled off for our first dive briefing where we were warned quite emphatically about currents.



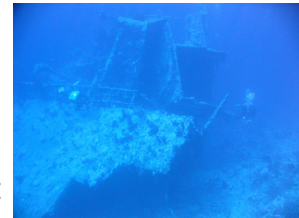
The reefs around the Brothers are stunning with the walls being covered in soft corals and forests of gorgonians and as promised the viz was spectacular. (They weren't kidding about the currents either!!) The islands attract a diverse array of marine species and large pelagics. Large tuna, Jacks and Snappers cruise in the blue, accompanied by occasional Hammerheads, Silvertips, Silkys and (much to Vicky's dismay) Oceanic White Tip Sharks. The sharks seemed to like hanging out underneath our boat, which resulted in there being more than one occasion when divers had to nudge an overly curious white tip out of the way. One of them was also especially interested in Clare's hair. (Apparently pony tails look like squid under water!)



Although Paul C unfortunately missed most of the reefs due to him being in a great hurry to get somewhere, (presumably rushing back to the boat to put on his tie-dye shirt) those of us who did stop to take a look were treated to an amazing variety of fish and coral, including giant Napoleon Wrasse, Anthias, Snapper, Blue Spotted Wray, Moray Eels, Lion fish etc. Please see Andy "Dive God" Hart for full and accurate list.

After diving it was eat time, which casually turned into loaf time, and then rather too suddenly back into dive time.

There are 2 wrecks by Big Brother that we explored. The first is the Aida II which was an Italian light house supply vessel which was carrying troops one night in 1957 when it hit Big Brother. It's a large wreck with much of it's superstructure in tact, having its shallowest point at 15m. It is located on the Western tip of the island, and the current often diverges over the wreck. This results in having to pick your location carefully as in one spot you could hang quite easily, but a few meters to the side, you could be battling to stay in one place. Fortunately, as the currents varied so much, the locations you could stay tended to be different on each dive. The Numidia was a cargo ship and is the 2nd of the 2 wrecks which sits at the Northern tip of the Island. The wreck starts at a depth of 8m where she is lying on the steep drop-off at an almost vertical angle. There are soft coral covers which cover it nicely until 55m. The stern is raised and provides a nice rounded poop deck below which the large propeller is found at a depth of about 80m.



Overall we had a great time and did some fantastic diving. I'd highly recommend the Hurricane as a liveaboard. The facilities and food were great, and the guides and crew were second to none. If reefs and sharks are your thing, then The Brothers is the place to go.

Expeditions 2007

(Paul Brown)



The diving for next year is all booked up now and as usual the dive sheets will be available when we are back at the pool after Christmas. Here's a little taster of what we have booked:

Plymouth

We have VENTURE booked for the Easter break and the second May bank holiday. I am already taking bookings for the Easter trip, where the diving will be open to all. We'll be visiting the 'usual suspects this weekend: the James Egan

Layne, Scylla, Hand Deeps, Eddystone, Persia etc. On the May weekend we will try to take a look at a few different targets – the Maine, the Oregon, the Rosehill and the Elk are all possibles.



Weymouth



July brings our usual trip down to Weymouth where we will be diving off of AUTUMN DREAM. This will be a Sports Diver trip where the diving will be in the 35m region. Weymouth has a host of excellent wrecks in this sort of depth, but as usual we will try to hit some marks that we haven't visited before. We haven't used this boat before, but it and it's skipper Len Hurdiss have an excellent reputation.

Brighton and Eastbourne

We have several days out booked with Steve on the replacement for NAUTICAT. This is a boat of similar size but that has bigger engines giving more range and a faster ride to the sites. The days out will be a mixture to deep and shallow and will include some favourites such as the Alaunia, Ashford and the best wreck on the south coast – the P&O liner Moldavia.

Littlehampton

We have book Paul Childs' catamaran VOYGER which runs out of Littlehampton for a few days. Since we sold the RIB a couple of years ago we haven't done any diving out of Littlehampton, but there really are some excellent sites out there to do. Again, this is a good boat with a good reputation. Paul is a very good, laid back skipper who I have dived with many times.

Normandy

August sees us heading off for the big trip for the year – a week diving the fantastic D-Day wrecks off of the Normandy coast. Steve is taking NAUTICAT's replacement over to France for six weeks and we have the final week of the trip. All diving will be in the 20-40m region and will consist of full days at sea doing two wrecks a day. A few of us done this trip back in 2003 and had a great time, the viz the wrecks and the seafood are all wonderful. There are two spaces left on this trip – please speak to Rick Whitby to book.

Dive Knives & The Law

(Ben Stock)



In recent months several members of the club have asked me where the law stands with regards to dive knives, particularly in light of the recent crack down on knife crime and the coverage this has received in the press. The general answer is that there shouldn't be a problem with dive knives. This article will expand on that answer and explain why that should be the case. Please bear in mind though that I am a police officer and not a lawyer!



There are two main pieces of legislation that exist currently to cover knife crime and possession of knives in public places. There are various other laws related to the sale and purchase of knives, but as they apply to James in Amphibian and not us as divers I won't be going into them.

The first piece of legislation is **Section 1 Prevention of Crime Act 1953**, which deals with Offensive Weapons. Put simply this makes it an offence for any person to be in possession of an offensive weapon in any public place without a reasonable excuse.

An offensive weapon is defined as 'any article which is made or adapted for use for causing injury to a person, or intended by the person having it with him for such use.' From this it's clear that there are three types of offensive weapons – made, adapted and intended, this is how the police look at them. A made offensive weapon is something that is made solely for the purpose of hurting another person, examples of this would included a baton, a knuckle duster and a flick knife – the only reason these exist is to hurt other people with. An adapted offensive weapon is something that, originally, has an innocent use but has been altered in some way for the purpose of causing injury, for example a cricket bat with nails through the end. A dive knife in itself would not fall into either of these areas; it is made for the purpose of being used as a tool whilst diving and has not been adapted to cause injury.

A dive knife, therefore, could constitute an intended offensive weapon. This would be the case if the person who has it with them intends it to be used to cause an injury to somebody else. Realistically this is unlikely to be the case if you have a dive knife in the boot of the car along with the rest of your kit on the way to the coast – it's fairly clear that you'll be using the knife to go diving. However, if the knife is in the driver's side door pocket with nothing else dive related in the car then questions are going to be asked.

The law does state though that the offence is only complete if there is no good reason or lawful authority to be in possession of the offensive weapon. Again, having it with you along with other dive kit would constitute a good reason (at least in my opinion). So from this we can see that a dive knife would not usually constitute an offensive weapon and so for divers there should not be a problem as far as this part of legislation goes.

The second piece of legislation is much clearer and was written only with knives in mind. This is **Section 139 Criminal Justice Act 1988** which makes it an offence for any person to have with them in a public place an article which has a blade or is sharply pointed.



The only exception to this is folding pocket knives with a blade that is less than 3 inches long can not be locked into position. So whilst Swiss Army Knives would be considered legal a dive knife would not. Again though the law states that the offence is only complete if the person does not have a good reason or lawful authority to have the article. So here you would be lawfully in possession of a dive knife if you were on the way to a dive with the rest of your kit but be could be committing an offence if it was in your pocket on the way to the pub.

That is the two pieces of legislation that could be applied to cover the possession of a dive knife looked at. From these it should be fairly clear that a dive knife is perfectly legal unless you intend to use it to harm somebody. Whilst there may be some members of the club we would all like to hurt I don't think there is anybody in the club who would actually go that far. Should you be unlucky enough to be stopped whilst in possession of a dive knife then any Police Officer worth his sort would be satisfied that you are not committing any offence after asking just a few basic questions.

Hopefully that all makes sense and answers the question about the legality of carrying diving knives. Now, as so many of you seem to think that's all we do, I'll go back to harassing innocent motorists!

Piglet

Full Cave Diver Course-UK Style

(Claire Elphick)



So, the plan was to arrive at Llangattock in south Wales on the Sunday, set up camp with Dave ready & refreshed to start the course Monday morning. Here in Llangattock I was excited, nervous, apprehensive oh & very cold.....For any of you campers out there you will know that there is always something you forget. In my case it was the minor detail of a sleeping bag! How was I going to get by diving all day in 7 degrees water & sleep in the Brecons without thermal protection!!!.....I love my wheeze extreme, that's all I can say. Stink though I did by the end of the course, I was toasty all day and all night.

Day One - White Lady Cave

Our day started at 9am with an introduction to Steve –the other student & Dive brief & kit review from our instructor "Sir Martyn of Farr". Before we knew it we were off heading for the hills to dive White Lady Cave. British cave diving, I have found can be broken into 2 separate challenges/adventures.

- 1) Getting to the dive site
- 2) Diving the dive site

We had a lot of gear to carry so the deal was to hump half the gear in a backpack up hill, through forest, Down slippery muddy stream to dive base.....Then do it all over again with the other half. Phew, sheparing equipment now complete we were ready to kit up & dive in a real cave. This would be my first real cave dive as past dives have either been in flooded mines or caverns. I was trying to keep an open mind, I knew I wanted to cave dive. Alluring pictures & video footage of crystal clear waters of a Floridian Spring or the mysterious Mexican Cenote dazzle my imagination but would I enjoy cave diving here in the UK, cold, terrible viz & muddy as hell? Well, if anything, if I can learn in this environment than hopefully I will be competent enough to dive the Mexican Cenotes. Our training for the day would encompass line laying, cave surveying & lost line drills. Into the water we went with a surprising 3 metre viz & really not that cold. The cave was approx 3 metres in depth & too wide for our lights to fathom. All skills went well until my dry suit decided it preferred adorning the ceiling of the cave instead of gracefully gliding mid water.....B*lllocks I found myself having a fight with my auto dump whilst trying to stay close to the line & it didn't look pretty.....Martyn didn't think it looked pretty either!

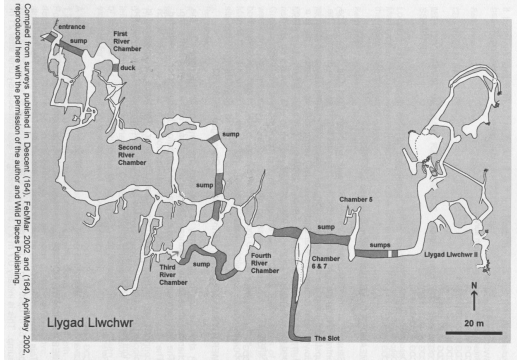
Day Two - Llygad Llŵchwr

This turned out to be a most excellent resurgence cave. Our skills for the day (apart from gas management & line following) were purely to experience typical British Sump diving. This meant a squeeze through a letter box shaped cave entrance followed by a 15 metre dive at 7 metres. This continued into a river passage which we followed with all dive equipment (climbing clambering & crawling 'Y' words in tow). Followed by several more diving & dry cave sections. Calcite formations were amazing & when our humble mini q-40s shone on the ceiling & walls they would sparkle as if coated with silver glitter. This was an amazing place!



Day Three - Day off, I can't walk & my muscles have given up & are waving a little white flag!

Day Four - Forest Of Dean (Iron Mine)



Muscles now eased, just as well really because this particular number was going to be a toughie! Martyn had explained that he wanted us to experience different overhead UK environments. This particular mine was said to yield 30 metre viz but as usual with UK cave diving, taking the rough with the smooth meant enduring a 20 minute walk to the mine entrance. Followed by another 20 minute difficult slippery journey part abseiling down through the mine just to get to dive base. Kitting up in near blackness & in silence I contemplated the dive ahead of us. We were to follow a permanent line, marking any line junctions with our pegs in order to follow the correct line on exit.

After checking our gas & working out our turn around point, we checked all equipment & breathed from our regs with heads just below the surface. We entered the crystal clear waters (yes crystal clear) and followed the line slowly descending above the uneven rocks.

This definitely did not feel like a mine environment. This felt like a huge fortress like cave with 30+ viz & azure coloured water. I could easily see the first line junction ahead, with peg in hand I slowly descended to reach out & peg it.. Oops missed, missed again. I had water in my mask and was misjudging the distance. I looked up & cleared my mask & immediately put my peg on the line. B*locks in an instant I realised what I had done, I had pegged the wrong line. I quickly removed it & placed it on the correct line hoping to god Martyn hadn't noticed my terrible error. The rest of the dive was relatively problem free & we all had a chance to appreciate our surroundings. Now back at the pub like every evening so far we each assessed our days diving. It turned out that Martyn's hawk like eyes hadn't missed my exit pegging antics & reminded me just how crucial it was to be 100% on the ball. I realised that if I had been diving solo & pegged the wrong line & not realised it I may not have ever come out of that dive site. In this environment there is very, very little room for error.

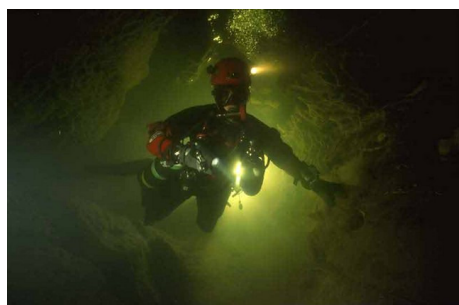


The Final Day – Porth Yr Ogof

Our last day. Warm & sunny and a relatively short walk to dive base-sheer luxury!

This particular cave was extremely popular with cavers & tourist alike. I'm sure we added a good source of amusement to the passer by, not for the fact that we were about to dive into a mud hole but for scoring a fine 9.4 on the

gimp-wear-o-meter. Yes cave diving gear from a girls point of view is definitely not glamorous. Cave diving equipment shall we say has a certain DIY feel about it. The much loved "snoopy loop" Fashioned from car inner tubes proved an indispensable piece of equipment with a 101 uses. Needless to say I had these rubber loops wrapped round every part of my drysuit. After Martyn's briefing it was time to drop down into dive base knee high in an outflow of water. My job was to secure a secondary reel to a raw bolt on the rock face and

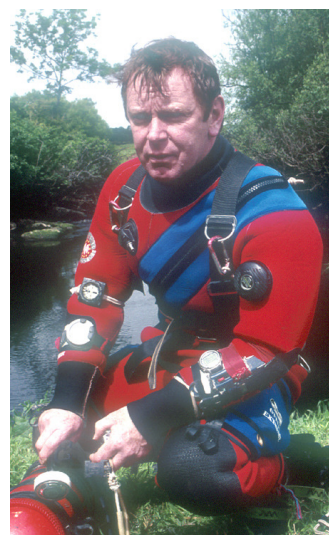


dive down a couple a metres and attach the secondary reel to the permanent primary line. This done I was to lead the dive following the permanent line until reaching the first air bell again pegging any junctions we may encounter. Viz was approx 2 metres, not so bad but where was that damn air bell. I had been diving a good 10 metres in with Martyn behind and hadn't seen it yet. I started to curse myself, I must of missed it but how?? We finally reached the air bell only to find that this was actually the second & that I had clean missed the first! The rest of the dive was highly enjoyable ducking & twisting between narrow pneumatic tubes against a slight current. We reached our turn around point

at about 200 metres in and was carried back out gently by the current. We finished off our day with a quick dip in "White Horse Pool" completing the course practicing stage bottle carrying & deployment.

Wow! What a week. With a course like this you really want to be picky with your choice of instructor. Martyn's instruction is second to none with his wealth of experience patience & good humour, this, coupled with access to the most outstanding awe inspiring dive sites I've had the good fortune to fall upon, made this course well worth it.

The sucker that I am, I still have to do a further 1 days training to enable me to pass the course. Besides all my efforts I fell short on a few skills (pegging the wrong line being one on them!). Admittedly, this kind of diving is not to everyone's taste but hopefully this report has given some insight into what British cave diving is all about & the subterranean world that surrounds it!



Martyn Farr

Favourite Diving Moments

(Chris Griffiths)



Scene opens and is the set of Jonathan Ross, the great man is sitting there himself with Pete Doherty and Kate Moss.



Jonathon: 'That's very interesting Pete so after urinating in the Police-man's helmet because he refused to buy a stolen car from you they had the audacity to lock you up? And Kate has stood by your side through all of these trials and tribulations? A fascinating story of love in the face of adversity I must say.'

Anyway to our next guest Chris Griffiths. No doubt you all know Chris as the famous underwater explorer who has mapped out the tunnels of Horsea Island and found the famous toilet of the HMS Waterford.'



APPLAUSE Chris walks in stage left to the sound of some gay blokes singing 'Octopus' Garden in the Shade.'

Chris: 'Evening Jonathan good to see you again.'

Shake hands, hug in a completely non gay way that some blokes can pull off (well foreign ones anyway)

Jonathan: 'Chris it's a great honour to have you here.'

C: 'You're welcome.'

J: 'So what tat are you flogging?'

C: 'It's my latest anthology of great dives, entitled 'BSAC Log Book Jan 2001 to Nov 2005' Jonathan, a great read if I say so myself.'

J: 'Yes, I was reading it the other day knowing you were coming on the show and I have to say that it's not just a great read but also full of useful technical information. I was particularly interested in the sea state readings logged for your dives. Can you explain the difference between a 'bit wobbly' and a regurgitator special?'

C: 'Of course John, you don't mind if I call you that? We work on the club vomit scale. This is quite simple: millpond is equivalent to a 1. This is when Andy Bennett is sick and Ben Stock looks a bit green. Then you get on to 'a bit wobbly' or a 2. At this point Ben is throwing up and Paul Brown is starting to get grumpy (Editors Note - Starting?!). We then hit a 3 and we now have three backsides over the side of the boat as Paul joins Andy and Ben and the rest of the crew start talking about greasy food for no apparent reason. This stage is known as the 'regurgitator special.'

J: 'Thanks for that it's putting me off my tea you know.'

C: 'No problems John, it is ok to call you that I take it?'

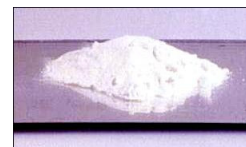


J: 'No problems Chris.'

C: 'Please call me Christopher.'

J: 'Ok Christopher, so tell us about your three greatest diving experiences.'

C: 'I'm glad you asked me that John, and also that you let me know you were going to ask as it give me plenty of time to think about it. Mainly as I was sitting in the Green Room finishing off Pete and Kate's coke and trying to ignore their inane waffling.'



Obviously my most memorable diving moment was the first shark that I ever saw on a dive. This was in crystal clear water off the Bahamas and we were fining along a wall when a reef shark circled us and then came for a closer look. He was a big fella with a glint in his eye and I swear he winked at me. This left me with a profound impression of sharks as slightly scary critters that you shouldn't poke with a stick unless you were safely on a boat.



Other than that and the famous discovery of the toilet on the HMS Waterford and the Horsea Island adventures it is difficult to pick out specific dives as 'the best.' I sometimes find this slightly ironic when you consider how easy supermarkets find to do this. Diving is a sport that is about an hour underwater after a shit nights sleep, a long drive and eight hours on a wobbly thing. Consequently it's the guys that you dive with that make the diving and the camaraderie and conversation rather than just the diving experience fantastic though it is. There's also the alcohol abuse and shiny toys to buy. I'm sure that I'm not the only member of a club that's gone away on a dive weekend knowing that there's no chance of any actual diving.'



J: 'That's fascinating Christopher, so tell me where is this great book of yours available?'

C: Well John, if you look in one of the really obscure hobby sections of your nearest WH Stones you might find a slightly dog eared copy.'

J: 'Well Christopher I hope it all goes well.'



Pete Doherty: 'Are you checking out my bird?'

C: 'Well obviously.'



P: 'Thank god for that I thought she was losing her looks with all the drugs.'

J: 'Night all.'

CROYDON BSAC 23 Belated Christmas Party

Saturday 10th February 2007

7pm - 11pm

The Spread Eagle, 39-41 Katherine Street, Croydon,
Surrey CRO 1NX

ALL WELCOME

Tickets are £10 per person
A buffet will be available

There will also be a raffle with lots of
prizes on offer

Tickets can be purchased from Clare

For further information email clare@croydonsac.com or call 07971 455 892



WANTED:

Articles of this fine magazine.

Writers will not be very well paid for their time of effort, but articles on just about anything dive related would be gratefully appreciated.

These can be sent to me in just about any format, though if our beloved D.O. has finally got to grips with email then there is no reason anybody else should not be able to!

Feel free to send your efforts to:
stock.ben@gmail.com

Ben/Piglet
Editor - The Muddy Puddle



"A fantastic experience!"
Pauline Brown (BSAC Diver)

"Enlightening and entertaining
- A fantastic day for any diver!"
Gren Hamlyn (PADI/BSAC diver)

"The organisation and
speakers were excellent"
Basil Brooks (SAA Diver)

"We will encourage all our dive
club members to come next year."
Bob Hardwell (PADI diver)

Bigger & Better.

Sunday 18 February 2007 • Surrey University, Guildford – 9am - 5pm

All day event including refreshments. Packed-lunch is an optional extra. Full details can be found on the website

ONLY
£5



More stands. More speakers. Open to all divers!



This years presentations include...

- **British Wreck Diving** - Leigh Bishop and Teresa Telus, Deep wreck divers – the Lusitania, Britannic and the Egypt to name a few
- **Tompots to tower shells, Skye to Sussex, the wonders of British marine life** – Paul Naylor, Author of "Great British Marine Animals"
- **Innes McCartney** – submarine explorer extraordinaire
- **A Rough Guide to Ship Wrecks** – Rod Macdonald, Wreck hunter and author of "Dive Scapa Flow" and "Dive England's Greatest Ship Wrecks"
- **Nautical Archeological Society**
- **Dark and Dirty** – The role of the Police Underwater Search Units – Phil Marsh, Police Diver
- **Beyond Boundaries** - Mark Threadgold, Blind rebreather dive to 100m plus
- **How to get out of a submarine at 180m and survive** - Andy Jeffery, Submarine Escape Instructor

Full details and booking:
www.bsac-se.org.uk
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2007 SDC/ITS PROGRAMME



BSAC

South East Region

We suggest you discuss any of the featured courses you are interested in with your Training Officer or Diving Officer and then book online checking the pre-requisites at the appropriate website:

Booking Skill Development Courses (SDCs)

Book online at:
www.bsac-se.org.uk

Or, contact Joanne Eaton
(Skill Development Course
organiser) on 07913 232275

Booking Instructor Development Scheme (ITS) Events

Book online at:
www.bsac.org

☎ 0151 350 6209

Please have your membership
number available when calling

Skill Development Courses (SDC)

Date	Course/Event	Location	Cost
28/01	Compressor Operation	Folkestone	£38
03/02	Oxygen Administration	Crawley	£43
04/02	First Aid for Divers	Crawley	£35
10/02	Advanced Diver Theory	Guildford	£20
24/02	Rescue First Aid	Crawley	£40
25/02	Diver Cox Preparation	Newhaven	£20
03/03	Rebreather Try Dive	Brighton	£25
04/03	Outboard and Boat Maintenance	Crawley	£51
17/03	Practical Rescue Management	Maidstone	£55
18/03	Diver Coxswain Award	Newhaven	£36
31/03	Oxygen Administration	Crawley	£43
14/04	Boat Handling	Newhaven	£78
21/04	Extended Range Diver	South-East	£200
28/04	Combined Nitrox	Kingston	£83
28/04	Advanced Nitrox	Kingston	£73
12/05	Extended Range Diver	South-East	£200
19/05	Dive Planning and Marshalling	Crawley	£73
02/06	Chartwork and Position Fixing	Crawley	£73
08/09	Boat Handling	Newhaven	£78
15/09	Search and Recovery	Crawley	£60
15/09	Diver Cox Preparation	Newhaven	£20
29/09	Combined Nitrox	Kingston	£83
29/09	Advanced Nitrox	Kingston	£73
20/10	Diver Coxswain Award	Newhaven	£36
27/10	Boat Handling	Newhaven	£78
03/11	Oxygen Administration	Crawley	£43
04/11	First Aid for Divers	Crawley	£35
10/11	Rescue First Aid	Crawley	£40
11/11	Compressor Operation	Kingston	£38
17/11	Equipment Care	Kingston	£48

NB: Extended range Diver is a 3 day course, the final day from each of the two events will be held on 01/09 and 02/09.

Instructor Development Events (ITS)

27/01	Instructor Foundation Course	South East	£95
25/02	Theory Instructor Exam	South East	£30
28/04	Instructor Foundation Course	South East	£95
16/06	Practical Instructor Exam	South-East	£40
17/06	Open Water Instructor Course	Horsea Island	£45
29/09	Practical Instructor Exam	Horsea Island	£40
30/09	Open Water Instructor Course	Horsea Island	£45
27/10	Theory Instructor Exam	South-East	£30
03/11	Instructor Foundation Course	South-East	£95

Surface Interval

For those quiet moments on the boat.



Sudoku

	2	1			8		5	
9	5		7				1	2
				5				4
7			8	2	9		6	
		4	6		7	2		
	9		9	4	3			1
2				6				
8	4				1		4	6
	4		2			3	6	

Easy

			5					8
6	9		1			2		
	2			7	4	3		
9		2					8	
	1	8				8	6	
	6					1		9
		9	8	5			2	
		6			9		1	5
2					1			

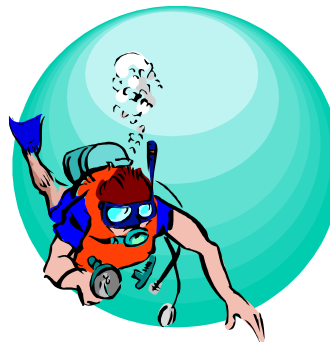
Mild

6	2				5	3		
8							5	
				1		7		
4		6		3	8			
			4	2		8		9
		3		4				
	5							4
		7	5				9	1

Hard

Word Search (by Hannah Stock)

- Wreck
- Reel
- Diver
- Fins
- Mask
- BSAC
- Decompression
- Computer
- Bell
- SMB
- Drysuit



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

Caption Competition



Why is our Editor beating up our former Membership Secretary? And should the new Secretary be worried?

Most original entry wins a prize!

(Pic. By Chris Boddington, Red Sea 2006)