

The Muddy Puddle

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

APRIL 2000

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

First Dives	1
Dive Officer Speaks	2
James Egan Lyan	2
D.O.M	3
Scallops	3
Crossword	4
The Pike	4
What is Nitrox	6

Diving into 2000: BSAC

Once again we find ourselves at the dawn of a new diving year. Most of the years diving has been planned with just a few odd days to be planned.

The first official sea dive of the year has taken place. With the recent weather changing by the day from rain to gale to shine to snow. Hopes were initially low, but the sun broke through and allowed diving.

The weather was perfect. A mild breeze and brilliant warm April sunshine, blessed those lucky enough to be aboard the RIB on her first dive outing of the year.

The site for this first outing was the Mulberry Unit, or 'Far Mulberry', off Bognor. Traditionally an entertaining

dive, amongst the remains of the concrete and steel of the portable harbour built for the D-Day landings.

Originally the Mulberry unit was 204 ft long, 56 ft wide and 60 ft high, displacing over 6000 tonnes. Today, all that remains is a tumbled mass of steel reinforcing rods and concrete. Parts of her are still discernible as a Mulberry, such as the stern with its sharp right angled corner. But most has sections have collapsed or been broken up by the navy to protect in-shore shipping.

What drags most divers here is the superb marine life. Shoals of Bib, Pollack, Mackerel, and occasionally Bass are seen here during the summer months. Crabs, Lobsters, Prawns and Shrimp thrive here.

The reason why the fish life is so prolific is that the Mulberries are an area designated for marine protection, i.e. Fishing is banned.

The viz for the dive was between 3 and 4 metres, with most species of fish being seen, including Lump-suckers.

The only trouble on the dive came when the permanent marker buoy was found to snagged, and held 2 metres below the surface, but this was released by a buddy pair, and will in future allow others to find the wreck easily. Although the re-surfacing of the buoy did wake the boat cover from its slumber I am told.

All those who took part in the dive enjoyed themselves. All hope that the year con-

Meanwhile in Kent....

Once again the hordes of Croydon Divers rush without care into the tranquil waters of Larkfield Lake,.

The well worn tracks across the green garden of England all lead to one place, the Banks of the Puddle,

here according to an ancient charter the masses of BSAC 0023 must meet before the start of the diving season proper. Here equipment configurations are to be tested, new gear soiled for the first time, and virgin divers to get their first true

soaking.

Finding out your regulator needs a service or dry suit leaks can be a chilling experience, but it is better to find out in the semi-controlled environment of Larkfield than the cruel sea.

DIVES COMING SOON

21st-24th April (Easter) Plymouth RIB/Storm/Venture

Saturday 29th April Littlehampton RIB 7.00am Dave Enderson

Sunday 30th April Littlehampton RIB 8.00am Mark Emuss

Monday 1st May Littlehampton RIB 8.30am Paul Brown

DIVING OFFICER'S RAMBLINGS

To all those who managed to stay awake reading my last contribution, can I suggest finding two matchsticks or something similar.

First of all, many congratulations to Paul Brown and Mark Emuss for (finally) passing their Diver Coxswain assessment. For any of you ignorant of the accolade this bestows on the successful, can I just explain that in order to drive the club's RIB unsupervised, you must have passed Diver Coxswain. The club still needs more DCs so anyone interested (diver grade is irrelevant) should have a word with me.

We also need more instructors. To attend an ITC (Instructor Training Course) you should be a Sports Diver

or above. The course takes place over a weekend and teaches you the basic rudiments of training divers. You come away from the course (hopefully) an ACI (Assistant Club Instructor) and spend a while helping in the pool before attempting the Club Instructor exam. Those interested should have a word with me.

We are fast approaching the true beginning of the diving season. Plymouth looms large. Seasoned divers have been seen ferreting in garages and in cupboards under the stairs trying to find the kit they mislaid last year. Some have even been seen at Larkfield lake. For the uninitiated, the lake boasts 50 metre visibility, palm fringed borders, gentle breezes and guaranteed sunshine. No, sorry,

that's the Maldives. Larkfield is the muddy pit off the M20.

As at the beginning of every season, we're all keen to get down to those wrecks. BUT BEWARE. If you haven't been diving regularly during the winter (and I know you haven't), don't be tempted into thinking that you're as "tuned in" to diving as you were at the end of last year. Gradually build up depth and time even if you've been diving for years. Use the dives in April and May (especially Plymouth) to get up to speed.

Well, that's it from me. The next thrilling instalment will be after Plymouth with its inevitable stories of lobsters, beer consumed and curries eaten.

James Egan Layne

The Egan Layne is a well known wreck. Many people have dived her over the last 35 years so that she is now virtually a diver's national monument! This is largely because she lies upright on the sea bed at little more than 22 meters to the bottom. She is easily accessed by dive boats from Plymouth and is no problem to find owing to the dive boats that congregate over her. If, however, your boat is the first to arrive then a large marker buoy moored permanently over her makes location an easy matter.

The Egan Layne was an American Liberty ship charged with the task of relaying supplies to Britain during World War 2. Hundreds of these ships were built in the early 1940's and they transported many men and supplies from America to Britain. They were built rapidly and followed a rather ugly prefabricated design. No awards were won for their elegance. But they did the job, and Britain's war effort benefited immensely from

their contribution. The Layne was built in December 1944 and by March 1945 she was engaged in convoying US Army engineering stores, motor boats and timber

from Barry in South Wales to Ghent. As she passed near to Plymouth she was torpedoed by a German U boat (U-1195) between

4 and 5 on the starboard side. Her steering gear failed and she began to flood. She was taken in tow to shallower water in Whitsand Bay where she gently sank upright on a sandy bottom. There were no casualties and much of her cargo was salvaged.

For many years the wreck was easy to find since one of her masts remained above the surface until the late 1970's. She was in an excellent condition and apparently the torpedo damage was easy to see. She is at 50:19:32; 04:04:42. She is 440 ft long and was over

7000 tons gross weight. She lies in 22 meters with about 11 meters to her deck. The stern section of the wreck is separate from the main hull and lies about 25 m to the south.

Although the Layne is now deteriorating she is an excellent dive. Usually, the diver will land on the deck and navigate over to the guard-rails. Peering over, one is confronted with a nice 'drop off' down to the sea bed. The sides of the Layne are covered with white dead man's fingers. The bows are intact and to swim around them and peer upwards at the curve is memorable.

Shoals of Pollack and Pouting congregate around the wreckage and there is much to examine on the sea bed. Inside the wreck, the holds are very accessible although there is a risk of falling metal. There are masses of wreckage and fittings strewn around. The engine room and boilers are very obvious and there are still a couple of bits of brass to be found.

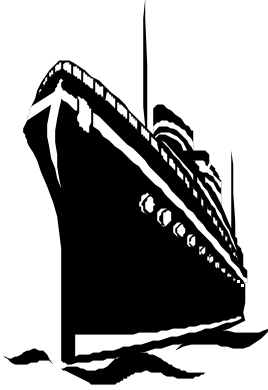
If you have not received a sheet regarding Plymouth 2000

Please contact Paul Brown

Diver(s) of the Month

This month's award goes to two members, who could well be in the running for this year's Alternative Diver of the Year Award, so strong is their nomination.

These two relatively new members, like so many of us, eagerly waited for the weather to brighten, for then and only then could they be free of the boundaries of the pool and extend their diving to open water training, in the oasis that is Larkfield Lake. Speak its name with reverence, a Mecca for divers, with its sun bathed shores and sub-tropical waters.



Ferry to Larkfield anyone?

The day dawned, when our bold divers began their journey to Larkfield. They scrapped the frost off the car, stowed their kit and began their journey from Croydon to Larkfield. They were given the standard instructions, "Once on the M25, follow the signs for the M20, via the M26. Once on the M20 take the first turning off to the left the A228".

Our adventurous duo, were due arrive at Larkfield at around, 9 am. However when they spoke to the

D.O on a mobile phone, they were still on the M25 at 9:20. But he knew where they were and predicted they would be with him within 20 minutes. They weren't.

Over 40 minutes later they spoke again saying they were in Lewisham and couldn't find the lake.

Acting like a true professional the D.O directed them back along the A20/M20 to Larkfield. They eventually enter the water around 11 a.m. After approximately 20 minutes of water bound fun, the duo returned to shore cold but enthralled. They dried off, had a bite to eat and set off home.

But the story does not end there; our deadly duo didn't take the

most direct route back to home. Only when they found themselves in a queue of lorries trying to board the channel tunnel did they realise that they may have taken a wrong turning and that this wasn't the way to Croydon.

Joanne and April arrived home at around 4:30, after a long days driving.

Thank you ladies for keeping us entertained, and congratulations on your Divers of the Month Awards.

For those about to Dive

For those new to the sport or have only ever dived abroad, there are a few quirks to British Diving. Detailed below is some idea of what to expect

The club has some hard rules, which all divers must comply with, and a full copy of the branch rules can be obtained from the D.O. Although every diver should already have been issued with a copy.

A day's hard boat diving means two dives over a seven to eight hour period. All equipment for the day must be stored on the boat, as must all food and drink. The reason for this is that hard boats do not put into port until the day is done.

Hard boats do not carry sets of dive kit or spare parts, so make sure you have everything for a days diving, or face the ridicule of your fellow divers and maybe make Diver of the Month.

RIB diving often involves a return to shore to replenish supplies, as space is rather limited.

If you suffer seasickness take the appropriate medication at the correct times.

The first rule of boat diving is that the Dive Marshal is to be obeyed at all times.

Another fine tip to observe the more experienced divers and kit up before the boat leaves the harbour.

Most importantly, relax, as it is all part of the joys of British diving.

NANTUCKET SCALLOP CHOWDER

A delicious twist on clam chowder, this hearty winter soup is full of tender scallops and smoky bacon.

8 slices thick-cut bacon, chopped
2 onions, chopped
1 3/4 teaspoons dried thyme
4 cups bottled clam juice
1/2 cup dry white wine
2 white-skinned potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1/2 cup whipping cream
2 tablespoons (1/4 stick) butter
1 pound bay scallops
Paprika
Sauté bacon in heavy large saucepan

over medium heat until crisp, about 6 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towels and drain well. Drain all but 2 tablespoons bacon fat from saucepan. Add onions and thyme to same saucepan and sauté over medium-high heat until onions are light golden, about 10 minutes. Add 4 cups clam juice, 1/2 cup white wine and potatoes. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Add cream and half of bacon and bring to simmer. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Bring to simmer before continuing.)

Melt 1 tablespoon butter in heavy large skillet over high heat. Add half of scallops and sauté until light golden, about 2 minutes. Add scallops to chowder. Repeat with remaining butter and scallops. Season chowder to taste with salt and pepper.

Ladle chowder into bowls. Sprinkle with paprika and remaining bacon and serve immediately.

6 Servings

Bsac 0023 cross word

The Pike or Leviathan of Leybounre (Esox Lucius)

The Pike is the Shark of Fresh Water, and it is a formidable looking fish, as many divers will tell you. Its muscular frame and streamline design enable it to lunge forward and capture anything from a frog to adult Bream. The Pike will adapt to eat virtually any living thing it can find.

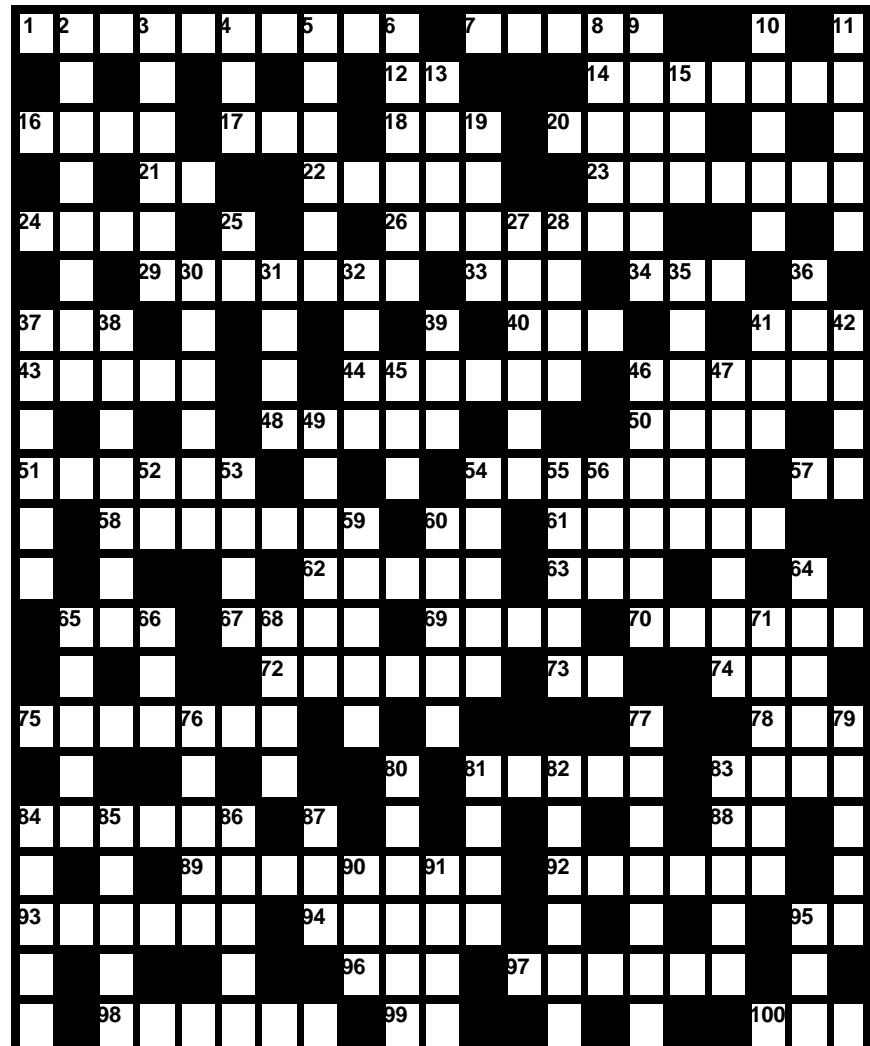
Pike favour ambush attacks, using their mottled flanks to blend into the weeds. By taking slow and careful movements to get close to their prey. Their eyes are set high on their head, to scan of sights of prey above them. The posses a lateral line, which detects move with in the water and have a keen sense of smell.

The jaws of the Pike have two distinct sections. The Lower, longer jaw has long needle sharp teeth designed to rip, pierce and slash. The top shorter jaw contains many smaller teeth, but no less sharper. Often the inside of its broad head has many hundreds of small tiny hook like teeth, stretching across the roof of the mouth. The Jaws can extent out, causing a vacuum, sucking in any prey.

Pike are surrounded by myth and legend, especially regarding their diet. Pike usually eat other fish, usually the mid and high water species such as Roach, Rudd, Dace and Trout, as well as worms and insects. However Pike do take water rodents, and birds, particularly in late spring, when the young water fowl are taking their first swims. It is true that Pike have been known to take small dogs and even bite small children, but this is usually a case of mistaken identity. There has never been a case of a Pike eating a diver (Yet). The favourite food for Pike is other smaller Pike, thus cutting down the competition.

The size of pike usually depends on the size of water, but small ponds can hold monsters if stocked with prey.

There is a well-used rule, that for



every pound a Pike is an inch long, once it reaches 30 lbs. Thus a 35lb Pike would be 35in long. Like most fish species, the Females are usually the larger.

I had the privilege of catching the Pike of Larkfield, the Leviathan of Leybounre, as some diver call it. When I caught it back in '94 it wasn't 6 foot long, with a mouth that could swallow a mini. It was a handsome 16lb 9oz, and about 28-30 inches long. Considering the fish life in Larkfield I'm sure it is the same fish, and would estimate it to be 10-12 lbs heavier, still an awesome fish in anyone's books, even if it doesn't swallow small children alive. The record Pike caught on Rod and Line is 55lbs, a fish you don't want to meet in poor viz. However back in the early 1900's, when the Serpentine was drained a true Monster was found, it weighed in at over 100lbs. When dissected it was found to contain the remains of several birds including a juvenile Swan, a small dog and several machine made items. This was a true Monster, and is unlikely to be matched.

Next time your in Larkfield, undergoing some "training", look out for the Pike, he may not be a monster to other Pike, but he has inspired stories and dreams in many divers over the years. Don't be scared and jump and start, just remember that you're too big to be food. Treat him with respect and be in awe of the Leviathan of Leybounre.

ACROSS

1. Straightforward & Honest afloat (10)
7. It's so easy to tighten a belt (5)
12. Dive Supplier & Item of Diving Kit - Inits. (1,1)
14. Normal surroundings for any life (7)
16. Irish County & Buoyancy Aid (4)
17. Emergency Service for Divers - Inits. (1,1,1)
18. Abbreviated description of Visible distance (3)
20. Not a fish to meet on a dark night ! (4)
21. Hospital Treatment for De-Hydration -Inits. (1,1)
22. Nitrogen Compound that will give you a laugh (5)
23. Maritime Pursuit - No not Diving ! (7)
24. Don't let this water put you off (4)
26. Far Eastern Tidal Wave - Wipe Out !! (7)
29. A Ship's Compass is mounted on these (7)
33. You're supposed to do this to air in a free flowing regulator (3)
34. There's certainly a lot of this in 90 Across (3)
37. This Firm could sell you Oxygen - Inits. (1,1,1)
40. Island String around Florida (3)
41. Sea Vessel - Abbrev. (3)
43. Ship-Board Stabilizers - Abbrev. (5)
44. Breathable Diving Mixture (6)
46. To reduce in strength - As in Tidal Flows (6)
48. Watch out for this falling around 9 Down (5)
50. An ideal Body-Type for Diving (4)
51. Southern Ocean (6)
54. The riskiest part of Diving (7)
57. Capacity of Tank - Inits. (1,1)
58. To sink yourself in - Ooo er!! (7)
60. To hover this needs to be just right - Inits. (1,1)
61. I doubt if the Titanic will ever get this (6)
62. Initial Stages - Especially an Illness (5)
63. Pay your way for a Grecian Storage Vessel (3)
65. British Naval Ship designation - Inits. (1,1,1)
67. A type of Drink & a Window (4)
69. These may also be Corrective (4)
70. Eyes should never be this underwater (6)
72. Not in this Country (6)
73. Frequency Measurement - Abbrev. (1,1)
74. To sever or chop - As in Hose, Trees or Limbs (3)
75. Sea-Dwelling Crustacean (7)
78. An American Enforcement Agency that you may meet whilst on the Water - Inits. (1,1,1)
81. A Solution handy for Masks (5)
83. A Weight - Abbrev. (4)
84. You shouldn't need this to work a Dive Table ! (6)
88. Surface Emergency Air Equipment - Inits. (1,1)
89. If your buoyancy is this - Your going down !! (8)
92. Lacking in Oxygen - Medic. (6)
93. If you like White this is the place to go ! (6)
94. Get you Kit on to explore these underwater (5)
95. "The Nations favourite Airline" - According to Bob Ayling - Inits. (1,1)
96. You might find 41 Across in one of them ? (3)
97. Jamie Oliver say's it's Pukha with Fish (6)
98. Deleted the S.A.S Motto - Anag. (6)
99. Proper Procedure for using Radios - Inits. (1,1)
100. Expected response to Captain's Orders (3)

DOWN

2. Ability to displace mass in Water (8)
3. Ancient Mariner fond of a little pillaging (6)
4. Keeps you Neutrally Buoyant - Inits. (1,1,1)
5. Temporary suspension of Breathing (6)
6. You might find a Lifeboat hanging from these (6)
8. Undersea Valley or Trench (5)
9. The land of Five-O - Nice Surfing !! (6)
10. Have a drink with Frank ? (5)
11. Type of Decompression (5)
13. London Skow on 25th March - Inits. (1,1,1,1)
15. Body responsible for Tank Testing Specs - Inits. (1,1,1)
19. He may be watching over you in Greece ? (4)
25. Forces Supply Officer - Get your Kit Soldier !! Inits. (1,1)
27. Popular make of Cameras - Plur. (6)
28. At the pinnacle of a Regulator ? (4)
30. American Suit Measurement - Suits you Sir - Ooo!! (6)
31. Nautical Term & Ray of light (4)
32. Don't burst this or you'll be sorry ! (4)
35. Old Boat Measurement System (6)
36. Take your lead from a Snooker Implement (3)
37. What 82 Down usually does when used (6)
38. Rare Metal & Satellite Phone (7)
39. Best to give this to the Coastguard - Inits. (1,1,1)
41. Where an Air "Guzzler" could be said to live (3)
42. Our esteemed Organisation - Inits. (1,1,1,1)
45. British System of Measurement - Abbrev. (3)
46. Keep under this & avoid Sunburn at Sea (6)
47. Naval Establishment at Woolwich - Not the Dockyards (7)
49. What we do with Nitrogen at depth & supposedly knowledge (6)
52. Coping in an Emergency - Procedure Inits. (1,1)
53. Spring Low Tide (4)
54. Novice Seaman stars in Drama ? - Anag. (5)
55. Depth at which 42 Down is starting to buckle (5)
56. Make sure this is not blocked !! (3)
59. Backward Roll, Giant Stride etc. (5)
60. Countermand order at Sea (5)
64. Fend off Boarders ! (5)
65. Popular Weapon on Bikini 50 years ago (1,4)
66. International Distress Signal (1,1,1)
68. Don't forget the Petrol or you'll need these ! (4)
71. Cars, Stars & Rubber Boats ? (6)
77. Mind where you steer - or you'll be here ! (7)
79. Main Blood Vessel (5)
80. Sure sign of Hypothermia (6)
81. Jeanette collects these - It's like getting Blood out of a Stone ! (4)
82. Emergency Signaling Devices (6)
83. Food for Whales - They're very small ! (4)
84. Nautical Term - Could be a T.V Award ? (5)
85. Environmental Protection Project - Inits. (1,1,1,1,1)
86. Mammals found in Drysuits - No not Humans (5)
87. Absence of Air - Abbrev. (3)
90. Use a Faucet to attract attention - Using Tank (3)
91. Release Air from Suit (4)
95. Coastline Feature (3)

The Living Sea

A presentation by **Linda Pitkin** with slides from her book
"The Living Sea"
Excellent photographic images will make this event a feast for the eyes.

8:00 pm
Monday 26th June 2000
Pitchers Sports Bar,
Sutton

For tickets contact
Dave Elphick.
020 8 688 5161

To Bubble or Not to Bubble??

The Close Circuit Rebreather seems to be transforming diving, and to have gripped the diving press in a state of frenzied excitement.

But what is the truth and what is it really like? Now you can have a chance to find out

Mark Emuss is putting together a session on the Buddy Inspiration Close Circuit Rebreather. This will involve a talk by a Rebreather user and then a try dive with the unit.

Details are still to be arranged but if you would like to attend please contact Mark Emuss. Places are limited.

'Journey Around the World of Sharks'

National Marine Aquarium Plymouth
Easter to September 2000

An exhibition of over 30 live Sharks, some up to 2.5 metres long, from both British and tropical waters.

The Dry Officer has several ideas for dry (land based) activities for club members but is in need of more.

If you have any ideas
please inform Dave Elphick.
020 8 688 5161

Near Larkfield lake is a pub, which recently, a man walked into carrying a cardboard box. He put the box on the bar and ordered a drink. It was quiet, and the barman was a talkative fellow — he naturally asked what was in the box. The man didn't answer, but opened the box and took out a miniature grand piano, then a miniature piano stool, and finally, a little man less than a foot tall, who sat at the piano and started to play the most incredible music you had ever heard.

"He's fantastic!" said the barman, "Where did you get him?"

"Well," said the customer, "I had been diving in the lake when I saw this frog swimming in the middle of lake, at about 5 metres, and looking very tired. I took hold of the frog and carried him to the surface. The frog seemed very relieved, so I carried him to the shore. "When I put him down — and you're not going to believe this bit," the man said, " — the frog started to talk! He said he wasn't really a frog, but was a handsome prince turned into a frog by a wicked fairy. And because he had never learned to swim, he wasn't making a very good job of being a frog. And as I had just saved his life, he was going to grant me a wish.

"Now, the frog did seem to have difficulty equalizing as we surfaced, and it must have affected his hearing, because I told him my wish — and that was how I got a 10" pianist!"

Editorial

First off, many thanks to all those who contributed this month, and for all the secrets I've been told but am unable to print. For those expecting the concluding part of Diving into 2000, it has been delayed and should be published next months. (I haven't finished it yet)

Hopefully over the coming months, there will be some new areas added to the mag and possibly less work for me to do. Several of the more experienced members of the club have agreed to produce articles of the more technical aspects of diving. I hope this will be echoed by the more travelled members, who I would like to become involved in writing of their travelling experiences. I am still however still waiting for the Chairman's Christmas article.....

Finally those members who use to receive this publication via e-mail, I must inform you that the publication package has changed, if you drop me a line I'll send to an electronic copy, for you to try to access.

Chris. Chris_Boddington@Hotmail.Com