

The Muddy Puddle

July 2004

In this issue of The Muddy Puddle Chris Griffiths tells us all about his trip to the Maldives last year; there is a look at dehydration and why drinking water is a good idea; there are reviews of all the club's recent dives; Uncle Scubbie has a look at wings; we have the first in what will hopefully be a regular series of Favourite Diving Moments; and Diver of the Month returns with tales of more mistakes.

St Joseph's Swimming Pool



Open 8-9pm Every Wednesday Evening



Upcoming Dives

11th July 2004: Mixon Hole (RIB)
18th July 2004: Shirala (RIB)
24th July 2004: Glenlee (RIB)
25th July 2004: Northcoates (RIB)
7th August 2004: Pine (RIB)
8th August 2004: Warhelmet (RIB)
14th August 2004: Mixon Hole (RIB)
15th August 2004: Mulberry (RIB)
22nd August 2004: Argonaut (Nauticat)
28-30th August 2004: Falmouth (Under Pressure)
Contact Steve Barrett for details on any available spaces:
stephen.barrett@citigroup.com
07900-226-487

Maldives September 2003

(Chris Griffiths)

It was with some trepidation that I booked my first live aboard holiday. It was only after a long and involved search for the perfect diving holiday where I discounted a large number of options mainly because mothers do worry. This meant anything near where terrorists lived or anywhere that people lived that terrorists wanted to kill. That's the Red Sea and the Caribbean. This kind of left Australia or the Maldives and I didn't want to spend two weeks on a plane so the Maldives it was.



The next part of my search was to find the perfect live aboard operating in the Maldives. This was solved by a quick chat with PB down the pub who suggested Maldives Scuba Tours. It turns out a member of the club had used them previously and had nothing but praise for the operation. So trip booked and cheque sent and a couple of months later I was on my way.

The flight was comfy and uneventful, mainly because I'd been at a wedding the day before and was too hung over to indulge in the refreshments available on the plane. Male airport itself was a treat as the runway takes up about an entire island so once cleared through customs it was a case of finding the dive guide meeting us at the airport and then getting on the boat. This was also the last time I was to set foot on land for the next eleven days.

The MV Sea Spirit is a converted dhoni (the local style of boat) so is especially well laid out for the local conditions with a large seating area up forward that is cooled by the breeze. The cabins are all large, airy and are air-conditioned. We were given some dubious welcoming drink that definitely didn't contain alcohol and were then sent to our respective bunks for a couple of hours to get over our jet lag before a checkout dive. I was to dive with Matt for the week, he was also my bunkmate, and if you ever read this Matt you have my sincerest apologies for both! All diving took place from the dive dhoni. This was a 30 foot tender where they filled the tanks and our dive gear lived for the two weeks. This was an excellent set up as they could use the dive dhoni to take us to the dive sites without moving the main boat. It was like diving from a hard boat at home with none of those noisy, bumpy RIB things involved.





The holiday then settled into a daily rhythm of get up, dive, eat, lounge, dive, eat, lounge, dive, eat, drink and then sleep again. A typical dive in the Maldives is onto what they call a thila. A thila is an underwater pinnacle usually in a channel between the ocean and the lagoon. The ocean currents wash in and out through these channels with the tide on a daily basis. These can be quite deserted when the current is not running but come alive with a good current. So in the exact opposite of UK diving, thilas are usually dived when there is a good current running. This calls for some



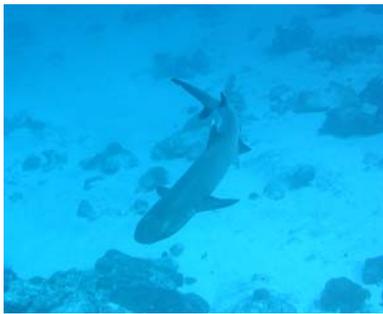
specialist equipment and a fairly relaxed attitude to surface checks and controlled descents. The usual approach was for everyone to get fully kitted up and ready to dive. The dhoni then moved up tide of the point of the thila and everyone would empty all of the air out of their BCD's and jump at once. You would then fin down like a loony chasing the dive guide to the point of the thila. This is where the reef hook comes into play. This is a shark hook with the point filed off attached to about a



yard of cord with a clip at the other end. You hook one end to yourself and then find a hole in the reef with nothing living in it and attach the hook end to that. You then put some air into your BCD and just sit there a yard over the reef watching the action.



The dives have all blurred together now after nearly a year but some of the highlights from my logbook include Grey reef sharks and numerous White tip reef sharks. There were



also Manta rays (fifteen on one dive), turtles and Napoleon Wrasse. We also saw mantis shrimps, moray eels, grouper and a squadron of eagle rays as well as a nurse shark sleeping in a cave and absolutely fantastic coral.



The one dive that does stand out in my mind was a night dive on Fish Thila. During the day this was a great dive with frequent sightings of both Grey and White Tip sharks. At night it was manic! During the day the sharks were wary and the Moray eels were in their holes. At night everything was different. The sharks and morays were rushing about intent on hunting the fusiliers as they covered among the coral. There was very little moonlight so the only light was from my torch and those of my dive buddies. This meant that you wouldn't see more than the eyes of the sharks as they reflected the torch light until they dashed into the torch beam totally fearless. You couldn't help wonder what was going on in the dark behind



you. I was as close to a White Tip as I am to my keyboard now as it shot through my legs chasing a fusilier that had become separated from the shoal. I think I'll always remember this dive as the most scary yet most exhilarating dive of my life.



In all I did over thirty dives during the two weeks and every one of them was excellent. My one regret of the holiday was that the weather was not perfect. It socced in for a storm on the second week and it was impossible to move the main boat for six days. This

meant we didn't get to the right part of the Maldives group of islands to see the whale sharks.

All in all the Maldives is an excellent dive destination if you want to see large pelagics and coral, and the MV Sea Spirit an excellent boat with a fine and attentive crew. There are some wrecks but they are mainly small fishing boats that have been sunk by scuba schools for training. Think Scylla with warm water and good viz, so not really worth wasting a dive on. My only other advice is don't try to keep up with the crew on the dance floor if you get invited up to listen to the drums!



Divers and Dehydration



On almost every dive brief issued by the club you will find a comment about dehydration causing decompression sickness (DCS). But what is dehydration, how can it lead to DCS and what can be done to prevent it? With summer here it seems like a good time to take a look at this.

What is Dehydration?

The human body is made up of around 70% water, and water is essential to the working of the body. Water lubricates joints and eyes, aids digestion, flushes out waste and toxins and keeps the skin healthy.

Dehydration is when the normal water level of the body is reduced, resulting in a change in the balance of chemical substances in the body, such as salt and potassium. The function of the body relies on these chemicals being kept at the correct levels.

Dehydration is caused by insufficient intake of water or by losing fluid at a rate greater than it is replaced. How fluid can be lost whilst diving will be explained later.

If not properly hydrated, the body can not effectively metabolise and circulate oxygen and fluids which are essential to sustain life. Our bodies maintain core temperature by 'burning' oxygen so, when dehydrated, we become more susceptible to hypothermia.



Dehydration and DCS

It is regularly stated that dehydration is one of the biggest contributory factors in DCS and a study of the BSAC incident reports would certainly seem to support this.

Dehydration leads to increased blood viscosity, meaning that the blood is lower in volume and thicker. This results in a reduced flow of blood to the tissues and affects the blood's ability to carry dissolved gases, such as nitrogen. This means that, after a dive, it will take longer for the body to off-gas nitrogen, as the blood is not able to carry as much nitrogen away from the muscles and other tissues to the lungs to be expelled from the body. This results in a higher level of nitrogen in the body, translating to an increased risk of DCS.

How Divers Lose Water

We have seen that the loss of fluids can lead to dehydration. Listed below are some of the ways in which divers can lose fluids from the body, potentially leading to dehydration.

Breathing Dry Air: the air that we breathe from our cylinders is filtered, making it dry. Breathing this air removes moisture from the body with every exhalation. The longer you breathe the air the more moisture you lose.

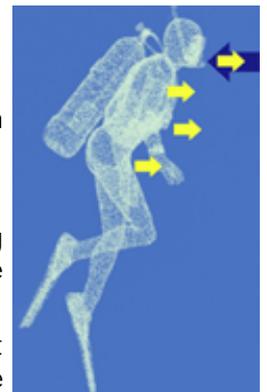
Perspiration: diving involves work, at least as far as the body is concerned. As soon as you start exerting yourself, put on a wet or dry suit you will start to lose fluids. Wet and dry suits have the same effect as a sweatshirt and your body starts to lose moisture regardless of how hot you feel. Don't forget that work under the water, such as finning, will result in perspiration.

Evaporation: this is the process where fluid is lost to the air and will occur before and in between dives.

Immersion Reflex: simple immersion in sea water dehydrates the body by a process called osmosis. Put simply the sea water will effectively draw the pure water from the divers body. This is more likely to occur when wearing a wet suit.

Immersion Diuresis: water immersion also causes a reaction in the kidneys that increases urine production. This concentration of urine draws liquid away from the rest of the body, adding to the process of dehydration.

Cold: when a diver gets cold, the body attempts to conserve heat by shutting down the extremities, increasing the amount of blood in the trunk of the body. This increased level of blood creates a higher than normal level of urine, again promoting dehydration.



Drinking Caffeine: caffeine is a diuretic, meaning that it increases the output of urine. Any drink or food that contains caffeine, such as tea, coffee, cola and chocolate will lead to a fluid loss that is greater than the liquid consumed. Tea, coffee, cola and other drinks containing caffeine all satisfy your immediate thirst but at the expense of long term fluid loss.



Alcohol Levels: alcohol is also a diuretic, in this case suppressing the hormone that permits the body to retain fluids. Again, the fluid loss suffered will be greater than that taken in.



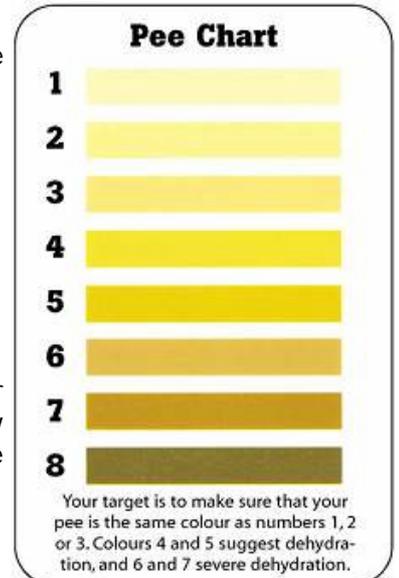
Seasickness: fluid is lost here through vomiting and perspiration.

Symptoms

Whilst thirst is a sign of dehydration it is not one that can be relied on, as by the time you are thirsty, it may be already too late. Other symptoms include:

- > low urine output
- > concentrated, dark urine
- > dry, flushed skin
- > dry eyes
- > dry mouth
- > headache
- > clammy hands and feet
- > dizziness and irritability

Generally, the easiest way to judge your hydration levels is to check the colour of your urine. Whilst this may not seem like much fun it will tell your hydration levels quickly and easily. Basically your urine should be clear, the darker the shade of yellow it is the more dehydrated you are.



Treatment

The best way to treat dehydration is with fluid intake. Drinking water will help to re-hydrate the body. Isotonic drinks (such as Lucozade) will also replace salt and other essential minerals as well rehydration salts, available in chemists.



Prevention

It is best to prevent dehydration long before it gets to the stage where you can recognise any of the symptoms listed above. With dehydration it is important to take a long term view. It is not enough to just have a quick of drink water before rolling off the boat, remaining hydrated is an ongoing process.

There are various guidelines as to how much water you should drink, but they all seem to agree that between 8-10 large glasses of water a day will prevent dehydration. This should be drunk regardless of how thirsty you feel and on top of any tea, coffee or other drinks you may have.

When exercising you should drink up to one litre of water per hour of exercise, on top of the regular daily intake. It should be remembered at this stage that diving is exercise and, as we have seen earlier, fluid is lost in a number of ways. It is important to replace fluid lost whilst diving, and many agencies recommend drinking between half a litre and a litre of water after any dive.

Avoid drinking too much alcohol, coffee, cola and tea and eating a lot of chocolate. All of these will increase your level of urine production above the level of liquid taken in consuming them. That isn't to say don't have a cup of tea after a dive, just make sure to drink plenty of water as well.

As we have seen dehydration is one of the biggest causes of DCS, yet it is relatively simple to prevent. Drinking plenty of water will not only help to prevent DCS but will lead to a healthier lifestyle in general.

DIVING OFFICERS BULLETIN



We all like a bit of kit. Ideally new, shiny and sparkling, beckoning to us from the display cabinet or shop rail, saying "buy me, go on, you know you want me" or something like that. However, how often have we bought gear that is not really what we need, or doesn't fit, or was never going to serve the purpose that we bought it for?

There is also the age old problem of instruction leaflets. Blokes do not do instruction leaflets. They are clearly for girls (stay with me on this one).

This is why as a kid, when you made a model aeroplane there were always bits of the engine and an ariel left over. This is why as an adult there are numerous pieces of electrical equipment, screws from the back of Ikea wardrobes and so on that are clearly surplus to requirements, but no doubt figure somewhere in the instructions that you didn't read.

Development in diving has meant that a dive computer is a must for almost all of us. Tables serve as a useful back up, but I'm sure we would feel almost naked without that little box on your wrist. The cost of dive computers means that they are more accessible than ever before. Even a modest computer can take account of different blends of Notrix (er sorry - Nitrox).

At face value, dive computers are deceptively simple - depth, time and audible warning signals give us a nice comfort zone. However, what happens if you do not understand the information that appears on your dive computer screen?

On the surface this is no problem. But the more complicated warnings and essential information that you bought the thing for in the first place are not going to engage on the surface, they are going to show themselves at a time and depth that is more critical than normal. Now, if you are not prepared for the information that is coming your way, we have a problem, Houston, and a problem precisely when you don't need one.

The solution? Well its simple. I know it's controversial but come on boys, lets grit our teeth, and sit down with the instruction manual. Read it, memorise it and when 'Deco Stop', 'CNS' and so on flashes up it would have been worth being a girl, just for once.

Yours in Diving,
Paul

TRAINING OFFICERS BULLETIN

The Dive Leader theory lessons have been completed and the next stage is for Alan, Ben and Roger to sit the theory test. The next stage will involve diving and performing a number of skill assessments to confirm their Dive Leader status. This is an important skill level as it will, should the occasion arise, allow them to take a beginner into the water for their first dives.

I am at your disposal should you want to further your skill levels. I cannot believe that no one else in the club wants to progress further in their diving or rescue skills. Talk to me about any training you wish to do, I am sure we can organise something. 020-8696-0027.

I had proposed to run a BSAC boat handling course for a number of people who had shown some interest. However, I am personally very concerned with the current condition of the club's RIB and so this will not happen until some decisions have been made by the committee.

Are there any of you out there who have PADI or other dive qualifications, who have not had their records/status properly confirmed by BSAC with a Statement of Alternative Training (SALT). Please contact me if you have any doubts. It is a fairly simple procedure to sort this out.

Regards
Alan



Dive Reports

(Jamie Dawson)

Farne Islands: 28th - 31st May 2004 Farne Diver

Crew: Steve Barrett; Paul Brown; Clare Walton; Andy Hart; Chris Griffiths; Alan Lawrence; Ben Stock; Jamie Dawson; Dave Elphick; Claire Cohen; Roy Edgerton.



Tempted by tales of seals, wrecks and good visibility, Croydon BSAC boldly traipsed up North. This years Spring bank holiday destination was the Farne Islands. The group assembled at the Farne Diving digs in Beadnal after journey times varying from around 7 hours to 2 days (Steve Barrett)! It's a fare old jaunt from the South but 4 days of great diving and beautiful weather made every motorway service-station coffee worthwhile.



The dive boat left harbour at Seahouses, and after scraping another boat, chugged out to the Farnes. The boat was basic, plenty of space but no stowage for bottles and the most disgusting sea toilet. Crew were friendly, easygoing and skilled. Every shot line was bang on target, and surface divers were picked up speedily and assisted up the ladder. Roy Edgerton was most appreciated as the boat's air and tea bitch. Thanks also to Alan Lawrence who was his beautiful assistant on Day 4.

The shock of cold water rushing under the hood – Brrrr... it's cold up North! Unfortunately, not all dry suits remained dry and Steve Barrett's developed more holes than his beloved Leeds defence. Brave Steve, however, continued to dive in such unpleasant conditions like a true Oz. Entering the water was more of a problem for Claire Walton than for most. Her drunk seal impression was most amusing for us spectators. Her buddy (Paul Brown) looked less amused as he turned her the right-way-up.

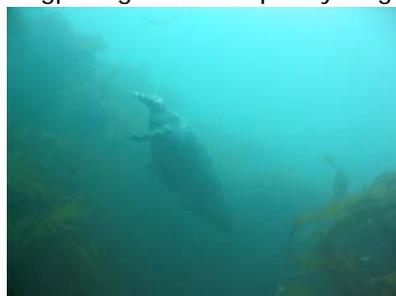


Our first dive was the North Hairs – a scenic shallow dive of gulleys, wall, kelp and wreckage. There were very few fish but an abundance of jellyfish. The second dive of the day was far more special as we dived the shallows next to a colony of basking seals. Pootling through gulleys and kelp, grey seals swooped around and across us. One in particular became bolder and bolder, and nibbled at Piglet's (aka Ben Stock) fins. Whilst doing my safety stop at 20 cm (blowing more air into my limp SMB) the seal nibbled at mine – much to Piglet's amusement. Back on the boat most had had a close encounter of the grey seal kind, and if they hadn't there was always tomorrow.

The Somali was a great dive. We rummaged around the wreckage searching for the now mythical toy soldiers (the ship went down whilst allegedly carrying the EU toy soldier mountain). Sadly, it being a bit dark and deep, and we being a bit daft, meant we didn't find any. Instead on closer inspection of the contents of Ben's goodie bag; I had found one lump of petrified something (possibly poo or scrap metal), and a wooden paint brush handle (no bristles). Ben had found a dice! Well it was a dice until someone with more nouse pointed out it was a white plastic electrical connector block, "It's for joining two wires together".



After a hard days diving, we settled around a tables at 'The Lobster Pot' in Beadnal (a pub serving a high standard of food). A sample or two of the local brew (Farne Island) and then bed – because when Bagpuss goes to sleep they all go to sleep...



Weymouth: 26th - 27th June 2004 Kyarratoo

(Paul Brown)

Crew: Paul Brown; Clare Walton; Paul Carvall; Tony Ray; Bruce Ayres; Ben Stock; Andy Hart; Chris Griffiths; Ian Hanness; Bob Lenham; Ian and Tracey McLean.



A Wet Weekend in Weymouth

11am, Friday 25th June 2004: "So we're calling it for tomorrow then? But Sunday's a go'er? No probs, I'll let everyone know". Thanks to the wonderful UK weather the first day of Croydon BSAC's latest Weymouth beano had already been cancelled. A bit of e-mailing, a few calls and a couple of messages later and I had told everyone the bad news. Just to make it difficult though the DO decided to tell as many people as possible that the weekend was off all together: cue another round of calls and e-mails! So it wasn't the start we wanted, the thing with Croydon BSAC is everything has a booze-filled silver lining - "Sod it" we thought "lets still go down on Friday and have a few beers"....oh dear.



11pm, Friday 25th June 2004: "Are they OK getting in with shorts on?" "No problem mate, in you go. Welcome to Weymouth Yates". The hardcore of the club had made it down and we're doing their best to put their mark on an unsuspecting Weymouth. Booze flowed in the normal manner, and led to highlights such as legs being bent behind the head, scrounging loose change from under peoples feet, knob-poking, pole dancing, a performance on the dancefloor from the man now known as Snake-Hips, kebab-shop-arm-wrestling and some barely legal interference with a maid called Molly.....



Saturday morning came all too soon and our weary heroes were up at the breakfast table. With a full day to kill the plan was to go and try to do something constructive, maybe visit the Fort, go to Monkey World (favoured by the DO) or go to the Sealife Centre. What actually happened was somewhat different and basically amounted to a tour of crab sandwich shops, dive shops and pubs. Its safe



to say that we achieved nothing other than to launch a club wide IBS survey and to wind Broken-Hearted-Ben up about being dumped... (NOTE: all queries regarding the IBS-survey to be made to the DO. For queries regarding technique please see Andy Hart). The evening brought the usual curry from Weymouth Tandoori and an earlier bed time, ready for diving the next day.

Sunday and there is a bit of breeze but it is diveable. Our target was the wreck of the Alex van Opstal - a liner on the east side of Portland in 27m. www.divedorset.com provides this information on the wreck: "Alex Van Opstal, 27m: This 5965 ton Belgian



passenger liner, 420' with 57' beam, sunk in September 1939 by a mine en route to Antwerp. One of the few large wrecks on the East side of the bill. Her highest point is 7 metres above the seabed."

On the way out it becomes clear that we may be seeing last nights curry again. Prime candidates in the chunder sweepstake were Paul B and Ben. As ever these two stalwarts of the sick bucket came through with gusto, proving that the form book

doesn't lie. Once on site we have a half hour wait before slack by which time everyone is gagging to get in the water. The wreck itself is fairly broken but is big. The side plating lies collapsed on the centre sections of the wreck and there is a fair bit of life. The usual suspects such as some big congers and a few lobsters were seen, but nothing came up. After diving we headed back to Portland for lunch in a sheltered bay, micky taking of those who were doing their nitrox (or is that notrix?) course skills and a bit of a scallop dive to end the day.



So that was it - a weekend in Weymouth that only amounted to 2 dives (sounds a bit like the old Easter trips eh?). It was, like the weekends away usually are, a good laugh. Many thanks to all those who came.

Oceana: 15th June 2004 Nauticat

(Ben Stock)

Crew: Paul Carvall; Ben Stock

A cheeky little mid-week dive out of Eastbourne for our DO and myself. Despite the traffic heading down to the tennis tournament we made it, if only just in time to load up the boat and get some breakfast.



A nice relaxing boat ride out to the site follower, during which Paul managed to sort all his kit out, though mildly resembling Elphick whilst he did so. It was fairly clear that we were probably the least tekkie divers on board, with most other pairs all diving with twinsets and some with stage bottles, so we volunteered to go in last. After an equipment problem though we got in before another group, only for them to barge past us to get to the shot line first, meaning we had to wait for a few minutes at the surface. Still it was a nice day and the sea was flat so surely nothing could go wrong?

After a quick 'OK' at 3m or so we headed to the bottom. Or at least I did, and I got a great view of the wreck looming out of the blue. I hit the bottom with the usual thump and turn to find our DO, who is nowhere to be seen. Just as I was about to give up waiting and head back up to see where he has got, to he appeared. Turns out he got tangled in the shot line, a theme we will be coming back to later. Heroically he had managed to untangle himself though. Reunited we headed off for what can only be described as a great dive. The vis was pretty good by Eastbourne's standards, there was plenty of life on the wreck and we managed to see a great deal of the wreck.

We had agreed on a bottom time of half an hour before we jumped in, which gave us plenty of time to look around. As we were coming to the end of the dive our DO showed why he has the top job, by finding the shot line. In the celebrations though he returned to his usual form, flooding his mask whilst taking a bow.



With a few minutes left we decided to have a quick scout round the shot line. Once again though we reckoned without Paul's unnerving ability to get himself caught in any line he finds. This time it was on some line that caught on the wreck, which, for a change, he tangled round his fins. We sorted that out then headed back up the shot line for a few minutes of stops.

The second dive was also a cracker, with just the right current speed for a nice relaxed drift and enough vis to see where we were going. We used Paul's home made buddy line to make keeping together, and it worked a treat. In a later issue we will have instructions on how to make one of these. 45 minutes after jumping in we started to get a bit cold, so it wastime to call it a day.

All that remained was the drive home which, if you were me, flew by. Mainly as I fell asleep within 5 minutes of leaving the Marina and did not wake until getting to Coulsdon!

The Jamie Dawson (PhD) Guide To Avoiding Sea Sickness

Following some heavy doses of sea sickness in recent weeks, we have the Jamie Dawson (PhD) guide to avoiding being a member of the chunder club.



1. Pills are important, but make sure to buy the right sort. You are aiming to buy pills that will make you a little drowsy when the recommended dose is taken. Boots own brand are tried and tested and are highly recommended in this regard.
2. Timing is important. You should aim to take the pills around 30-45 minutes before getting on board the boat. This will give them time to make you feel a little sleepy but still be able to lug your kit to the boat.
3. It is important to take the right dose. Read the instructions on the packet and pay particular attention to the recommended dosage. Then double it. At least. This will help you be very drowsy on the boat.
4. You should be feeling nice and drowsy by the time the boat leaves port. Find a quiet spot and fall asleep. Under the table in the wheel house is a prime spot.
5. Get somebody to kick you awake as you reach the dive site. Kit up and jump in, in the quickest time possible.
6. Repeat steps 4 & 5 for the second dive.



Next time we will have the Jamie Dawson (PhD) guide to the Diet Coke Theory of Decompression.



Shirala: 12th June 2004 RIB

(Roger Wishart)

Crew: Steve Barrett (Cox); Chris Boddington; Bruce Ayres; Andy Bennett; Chris Griffiths; Alan Lawrence; Ben Stock; Roger Wishart.

As our Illustrious DO would say 'Dear Diary, I was GREAT!'

OK maybe not great but sufficient, they all came back at least and that will do nicely for my first attempt as a Dive Marshall.

Great start, almost everyone there on time. The RIB came out but didn't want to play. With only three changes of batteries this time and some gentle persuading from the Coxswain and Boat Office once she got wet and refused to go. I got to nominate myself for diver of the month as my weight belt was still in the car when the RIB finally did start.



So far, so good. My first job was to nominate Ben as Assistant Dive Marshal (ADM). The Coxswain set course and took the scenic route, via another dive site, simple mistake really, it did begin with S. Andy demonstrates that there is another use for the ADM as his sea sickness pills didn't work, covering Ben with warm Mars bar (I was not happy – ed!).

Time to kit up & jump in but not before attempting to flood the boat. The Skipper had already laid down the dive times, saving me the job so I launch into the dive brief, only forgetting to add that 8 men had gone down on Shirala not that I'm superstitious. Over we all went, without first deploying the dive flag.

So I got to lead my second dive. I didn't get lost this time or lose my buddy and found some sea life. Even the deployment of the DSMB was hitch free. Getting the shot back on board was not. So the second dive was made by a couple of our dafter members (Chris B & Ben) to rescue the shot line. With the tides on the way out we headed back to shore, all accounted for.

OK, so maybe not text book, but things can only get better...!

Danger Mouse
(Or should that be Dive
Marshal)



City of Brisbane: 20th June 2004

(Andy Bennett)

Nauticat

Crew: Steve Barrett; Chris Boddington; Andy Bennett; Chris Griffiths; Alan Lawrence; Ben Stock; Roger Wishart; Tony Ray; Alan Glen; Roger Smith

Captains Log (not **that** kind of log. Stop your sniggering at the back).



The intrepid adventurers of Croydon BSAC set forth on their vessel, the Nauticat with top skipper Steve Johnson at the helm, which was fortunate. If he'd been at the stern we'd have been bugged (stern, behind, bugged. Geddit? Oh I'm wasted, wasted!)

Our destination was the City of Brisbane, a World War One wreck and the last victim of UB-57 on 14th August 1918. Lying in about 27m, this well-broken steamship weighed 7138 tons.

The weather forecast had promised decent weather but once out of the harbour the huge swells proved the Met Office had got it wrong.

The Chunder Twins, Ben Stock and Andy Bennett, managed to make it into the water without disgracing themselves whilst pondlife around the whole of the south coast let out a collective sigh of relief as Alan Lawrence forgot his grab-bag.

Once down, things were a lot calmer. Vis was average, about 2-3m and it was hard to make out the wreck. Nevertheless, we managed to see plenty of fish, a huge spider crab and a couple of lobsters.



Back up top the weather had worsened. The rain bucketed down, there were more white horses than a Guinness ad and estimates varied between 3-6 for the size of the waves. This had an adverse effect on our valiant crew and even hardened sailors began to meet Huey, but not, it must be said, Tony Ray, who practised his Zen of Diving and woke-up only when we hit the second dive site.



The second dive was a 15m drift. Worryingly, before getting in Steve Barratt looked as though El Presidente had transported into his body, as he showed alarmingly Elphick-like tendencies in getting ready. Fortunately, he managed to fight-off this anomaly in the space-time continuum and normal service was soon resumed.

The second dive was, by all accounts, uneventful except Alan Lawrence managed to grab two weedy specimens for the pot only for them to be liberated by the skipper for being only as big as his thumbnail.

Interestingly, there were two Rogers on this mission both wearing black semi-drys. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough time to study this strange species so we will have to return to carry-out a more thorough examination...

CHANNEL ISLANDS EXPEDITION

9TH – 15TH August 2005



I have booked a trip to the Channel Islands for the above dates for next year. Plan is for 7 days diving in the crystal clear waters of the Islands using Sark as a base.

I dived here over 10 years ago on a club trip and have always wanted to come back. The visibility, wrecks and life were fantastic.

The plan is to use a day boat while based on Sark. There will, however, be plenty of opportunity to explore the (tax free!!!!!!) islands during the week.



We'll be diving off Ivor Janson's Weymouth based boat PROTECTOR which will relocate to Sark for the week and will also be our transport out and back. The Boat is an 11m RIB that comes with all the luxury of a hard boat (kitting up benches, diver recovery lift, tea etc). Diving will be in the 35m range so will be open to virtually all members of the club.

Cost will be somewhere in the region of £400 for boat, digs and air (exact price TBC).

There are 10 places going and I have already half filled it, so if you are interested I need you name and (more importantly) £50 deposit ASAP. Same rules apply for trip booking: **IF YOU SAY, YOU PAY.**

STOP PRESS!
At the time of going to press this trip has been filled.
The reserve list is open though and somebody is bound to drop out in the mean time. So let Paul know if you are interested

If you want more info please feel free to have a chat on Wednesday or call/e-mail me.

Cheers

Paul Brown

Favourite Diving Moments

Suggested by the Diving Officer, **Paul Carvall**, this will hopefully become a regular series where members of the club nominate some of their favourite moments in diving. As it was his idea, this month we feature a few of Paul's favourite moments.

- > Rolling off a RIB and going down a shot line, not knowing what I will find.
- > Plymouth/Weymouth/Dive Shows etc - standing in a pub with tears of laughter over a joke that clearly won't be funny in the morning.
- > Watching a Cuttlefish, the little devils.

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





In the second of a regular series, **Uncle Scubbie**, the club's resident DIW divers discusses 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.



Last month we looked at cylinders and explained why twins are best, as long as they are V shaped. This month we take a look at another important part of equipment for divers who follow the 'Way', the Wing.

As recreational divers most of us will have used a BCD at some point. However, as any serious DIW diver will tell you, your ordinary BCD is not suitable for proper diving. Lets face it, as any woman will tell you, wings are best. A wing system is made up of bladder, a harness and a back-plate.



BCD - Wrong

Bungeed and the Un-Bungeed. These will have a dramatic effect on your diving. A bungeed bladder will have elasticised ties to contract the bladder when not inflated, this will create a more streamlined approach which will reduce drag allowing the diver to follow one of the guiding principle of DIW diving, Think Like the Fish, Be the Fish. This will reduce the gas consumed thus allowing for a greater dive time. However if the bladder bungeed, then they should be pulled at tight as possible to constrict the size of the bladder.



Wing - Right



Bungee Cord - keeps things tight

Some agencies do not recommend this as it will be harder to orally inflate, but as every DIW diver knows, you have an inflator hose which at the press of a button will inflate the bladder, and if you cannot inflate the bladder from your tank then you are out of air and manual inflation of your bladder with gas from your lungs will not help your situation. Another argument is that constriction reduces the lift potential of the bladder, but unless you are over weighted initially this should not be a problem as you can always leave your weight belt



Inflator hose - handy

behind and claim on the insurance. No, a nice constricted bladder in the way forward for most.



Un-Bungeed Wing - need to adapt fining style

However Un-bungeed bladders are also popular, and although do not have the reduced drag advantages of the bungeed bladder, and thus break the Think Like the Fish, Be the Fish rule, it does actually meet this rule when a small adaptation to fining style is made. The diver should no longer try to mimic the dolphin or fish when swimming but try to consider a Nudibranch or flatworm or even Manta Ray and their swimming method. The Spanish Dancer Nudibranch has an ideal swimming



Nudibranch - strange swimming style

method to copy. This will involve the diver gyrating and flexing his body to propel himself through the water column, no longer using fins, the unbungeed bladder will act like a mantle or skirt and aid the diver in his efforts to move.

Not everyone can adapt to this new method of propulsion, it does require some getting used to. Finning in the traditional way results in the bladder forming itself into a large sea anchor and counteracts the fining action.

Regardless of type of bladder one should always go for maximum lift or buoyancy possible. Nothing less than 40kgs should be considered and anything over 60kgs is recommended. This will allow you to get out of trouble a depth quickly, very quickly. Twin bladders are an excellent option as this will double your buoyancy and increase your ascent speed coefficient. Two exhaust valves at the base of bladder is recommended as this will quickly dispel any water and leave a twin vortex of bubbles informing your buddy where you have gone and also looks rather cool.



Back-plates - confusing

Finally, some DIW divers have recently taken to using an auto-inflator. Here you only need to press your inflator button once and the wing will be inflated to its maximum without the need for further diver assistance. This new device was a British invention but there is great interest in this luxury item from the American market. Concerns over excessive gas usage are counter-acted by the reduced gas consumption levels required as the depth is decreased.

Back-plates are used to attach the bladder, tanks and harness together. Ideally the plate should be made of the heaviest metal available, however after experimentation it was found the gold and brass back-plates were often stolen making it not cost efficient. Lead back plates would be a better solution however the lead is not usually strong enough to hold the weight of the twin set, so then we come to steel. The back-plate should have lots of small holes drilled in the sides of it and the design of the plate should be so that it requires a NASA genius to assemble the harness to the back-plate. The small holes will allow for extra kit to be attached, and remember the more holes the more bits of kit. Aluminium plates should be avoided as they are for Softie Warm Water Divers who want to play the DIW game but have not found the 'WAY'. The ABS back-plates are a design failure that should be left to pool-bunnies and never brought on a hard-boat for fear of Crap Kit Shame (the biggest killer of inexperienced divers).



ABS Back Plates - No



One piece harness - hard work

Harnesses - many organisations recommend a one piece but this is nonsense, have you ever watch someone wriggle out of their harness? It is reassuring to see your webbing flapping around during the dive, this is something that a one-piece harness will not allow you. The multi piece harness will allow for the DIW divers best friends: clips, rings and buckles by the hundred. An integrated weight system can be added as well to aid the comfort factor. As any self respecting DIW driver will tell you, you need as many buckles, d-ring and clips as possible, otherwise you are in fear of breaking another DIW rule, Leave Nothing In the Box. This will require you to clip everything that you could possibly need on for the dive, and if you don't have those D-rings and clips then where do you put it? Do not use plastic clips or buckles, as these are liable to break. Steel or Brass is the only way to go and can be polished during the winter to remain attractive and gives her/him indoors something to do.



Multi-Piece Harness - Comfortable



Clips & Rings - You'll Need Lots

Crotch straps are a necessity; with the more the merrier as this will enhance the stability, and is very fashionable at present with the new wave of S&M fashion styled diving gear.

So to sum up, a good DIW rig should be a set of twins V mounted, on a steel or gold back-plate, with a 100kg lift bladder (bungeed or unbungeed depending on finning style) with a multi-piece harness with 25 d-rings (stainless) 7 buckles and matching clips, integral weights with 18kgs of shot. This set-up will allow any prospect DIW diver a good start on their journey to DIW heaven. A final word of warning, please try to ignore TDB's (Technical Diver Bollocks) as this will only lead to trouble.

In future articles we shall discuss Regulators + Hoses: It's my air not yours; Reel SMB deployment; Why One Fin is Better Than Two; Computers: reading the manual is optional; and much more.

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



QUIZ TIME

Q. Its a few days before you are going to put the next issue of the club magazine out and you have a page to fill. What do you do?

A. A pointless quiz of course! All of these questions are either part of the BSAC theory lessons, or come from Dive magazine. So you should all know the answers. In case you don't they are at the bottom of the page.



1. At 30m the absolute pressure is:

- A. 1 bar
- B. 1.5 bar
- C. 3 bar
- D. 4 bar

2. The expansion of a given volume is greatest between:

- A. 30m and 20m
- B. 20m and 10m
- C. 10m and the surface
- D. 40m and 30m

3. Which part of the body, if unprotected is the greatest source of heat loss?

- A. hands and feet
- B. head
- C. legs
- D. chest

4. What does the buddy check BAR stand for?

- A. Buoyancy Air Releases
- B. Buoyancy Air Rescue
- C. Briefing Ascents Releases
- D. Briefing Availability Rehearsal

5. When is the safest time to dive a wreck exposed to tidal streams?

- A. early in the morning
- B. at low water on spring tides
- C. at slack water
- D. in the evening

6. Which of the following is recommended practice when deploying an SMB?

- A. inflate it using your primary DV
- B. disconnect the reel from yourself
- C. inflate it until full then release it
- D. inflate it using exhaust bubbles

7. What is the partial pressure of oxygen in air at 20m

- A. 0.4 bar
- B. 0.6 bar
- C. 1.6 bar
- D. 2.4 bar

8. A gas that is called Nitrox 32 will contain:

- A. 20% oxygen and 80% nitrogen
- B. 32% oxygen and 32% nitrogen
- C. 78% oxygen and 32% nitrogen
- D. 32% oxygen and 68% nitrogen

9. Your buddy's dive computer is beeping during a dive. The likely reason is:

- 1. the battery is low
- 2. the computer needs a service
- 3. your buddy is ascending too fast
- 4. your buddy may have missed a decompression stop

A: 1 only B: 1+2 only C: 3+4 only
D: all four

10. Which of the following are duties of the surface cover organised by the dive marshal?

- 1. watching for divers surfacing
- 2. monitoring the weather
- 3. helping with rescues
- 4. assisting divers from the water

A: 1 only B: 1+2 only C: 3+4 only
D: all four

11. What does a GPS unit do?

- A. displays current position
- B. displays the depth of water
- C. measures wind speed
- D. measures barometric pressure

12. The skipper tells you to swim north west. What bearing will this be on our compass?

- A. 135°
- B. 270°
- C. 315°
- D. 275°

13. In the UK, which of the following colour code denotes oxygen?

- A. blue and white quarters on shoulder
- B. all white shoulder
- C. all black shoulder
- D. white and black quarters on shoulder

14. What should you do if you are treating a casualty with 100% oxygen and the gas supply runs out?

- 1. give nitrox if available
- 2. use the nitrox mix with the highest oxygen content
- 3. do not administer gases other than 100% oxygen
- 4. give entonox if possible

A: 1 only B: 1+2 only C: 1+2+4 only
D: all four

15. At what rate should you aim to administer fluids to somebody suffering from DCI?

- A. 1 litre per 10 minutes
- B. 1 litre per 30 minutes
- C. 1 litre per hour
- D. 1 litre per 24 hours

16. What is the best way to treat nitrogen narcosis?

- A. remain calm and slow down
- B. take large deep breaths
- C. administer oxygen
- D. ascend to a shallower depth

DIVER OF THE MONTH

Welcome again to the Diver of the Month awards.

In the past, when the standard of entrants for this award were not as high, something as simple as forgetting a weightbelt could earn a diver this award. However, in recent years people have come to realise the importance of winning a Diver of the Month award, and with this the standard of entries has risen substantially. Now it takes something fairly spectacular to win a Diver of the Month award.

So here are this months tales of when Mr Fu*k up paid a visit.

Fresh from winning the International award last month, **Andy Hart**, decided to have a go at winning a second award. So impressive was his entry that, had it been but a week earlier, it would certainly have earned him the SMB award. On a dive off Nauticat out of Eastbourne Andy agreed with his buddy that he would deploy the SMB at the end of the dive. This he duly did. However, his decision not to attach the reel to the SMB may have been a little bit daft, to put it mildly.

Ben 'Piglet' Stock appears to be no stranger to the odd little mistake. On the Saturday on the Farne Islands trip there was a very civilised lunch time meet at the harbour, giving our crew plenty of time to have breakfast and sort themselves out. Ben still managed to forget a few little things though, namely his undersuit, hood and gloves. Only minor things those...

Whilst not a member of the club, **Clare Walton**, takes part in enough of our dives to qualify for these awards. Her entry this month is for her somewhat different method of getting into the water displayed at the Farne Islands. Most of us would, after rolling off the boat, make some attempt to right ourselves to get head up in the water. Not Clare though, who just stayed in an L shape with her feet out off the water, waiting for somebody else to sort her out.

Chris Griffiths earns a nomination for a couple of reasons. Firstly on the same Saturday as Ben forgot a few items, Chris thought he had left his computer in the room, forcing him to borrow Roy's against his best wishes ("I don't want to use that, it gets people bent!"). It was only after he had completed his days diving and returned to his room that he realised that it was, in fact, in his dry bag and had been on the boat all day. His second nomination may well be for a greater offence however. Chris nicely gave Ben a lift to the Farne Islands. His mistake here though was in his music collection, which could well be described as criminal. Most of the CD's were acceptable, however the Daniel Beddingfield number is just unforgivable.

Jamie Dawson had been informed that the wreck of the Somali in the Farne Islands still contains a number of interesting items, including a lot of toy soldiers. Along with her buddy she went hunting for them. How she managed to mistake what was clearly a bristle-less paintbrush as a toy soldier is anybody's guess.

A special entrant here for the **breakfast cook** at the Farne Islands. The breakfasts were possibly the most disgusting things ever and were floating in grease. After the second attempt few people even bothered turning up to the breakfast table.

Most of the club have suffered from a leaky dry suit at some point in their dive careers. However, few of us have suffered as badly as **Steve Barrett**, who may as well not bother wearing his, so leaky is it at the moment. This may explain the funny shade of blue he looked after every dive in the Farne Islands.

Steve also earns a second nomination after coxing the RIB to a dive on the Shirala. After the usual fiasco of sorting the RIB out our crew set off to the dive site. After steaming out for 20 minutes or so Steve decided to check the right site was selected in the GPS. It wasn't.

Whilst an inanimate object, and therefore not really responsible for it's actions, the **shot weight** earned itself a nomination after the Shirala dive. So determined was it not to come back to the surface that two of our dafter members had to head back down to fetch it. In its defence though, using 35m of line on a 24m wreck may have been a mistake.

Roger Wishart has been diving with the club for some time now, however he has only just felt confident enough to make an entry. For his first attempt Roger decided to update an old favourite, the forgotten weightbelt. Most of us have, at some stage, managed to forget this item, some realising before they get off the boat some not until they attempt to descend. Roger decided to go one step further, and leave the thing in the car. Luckily somebody noticed before the RIB set off, so it was an embarrassed jog back to the car, rather than a missed dive.

Our DO **Paul Carvall** is no stranger to this award, and has made another strong entry. This month he decided to attempt to get out of his dry suit without undoing the zip first. Not much chance of that working really.



Bob Lenham of Amphibian fame was fortunate enough to join the club on our Weymouth trip, where he was making his first sea dives with his new Inspiration rebreather. Having access to all the best equipment does not always help Bob, who on the first dive forgot to fill the crack bottle for his SMB. A simple mistake. His nomination is for the efforts he made to deploy the SMB after realising the bottle was empty, including attempting to fill it from the exhaust of his rebreather. The more technical amongst you will realise that the words 'exhaust' and 'rebreather' don't really belong together.

However, there was only ever going to be one winner this month. **'Apollo' Alan Lawrence** is either unsure how his computer works, or was a little bit narked, as he managed to rack up a few minutes of stops on the Somali. His decision not to let his buddy know that his computer had not cleared and that he needed to stay at the stops for a few more minutes was probably a mistake, and a few heart rates were raised when he came up the ladder with his computer beeping loud enough to be heard for miles around. Luckily after a spell on the O2 kit he showed no ill effects. Might be an idea to dig out the manual for that computer though.

Thank you to all for their fine efforts, and well done to Alan on winning this months award! Keep up the good work everybody and good luck for the next month!

