

The Hyperbaric Times

A Message From The Editor

Welcome to new issue of the Hyperbaric Times.

We have a full packed edition with stories and dive reports.

You will see two different accounts of diving in Swanage on pages 2 and 3

On page 9 you will find a list on the various social events that have so far been arranged for this year. If there is anything that you would like to see happen that doesn't appear on the list then let Irina know and she'll see what she can do about arranging it.

Finally, the Diving Schedule has recently been updated so take a look at it to see what's on offer. You'll find it on page 10. If you're interested in joining one of the dives then contact either Mike wade (Orientation Dives) or Morag Ward (Club Dives) to check availability. Even if the dive is full it's still worth contacting them as spaces often become available nearer the time and a reserve list is always held.

Happy diving.

Caroline



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The views expressed in the articles in this newsletter are personal and should not be taken as representative of The Diving Club or its Committee, unless specifically stipulated to do so.

Swanage: Kyarra and Betsy Anna

Swanage on April 21st was a lesson in diving in poor viz and total darkness. Apologies for the lack of photo's in this article – just imagine a black rectangle.

I stepped off the back of Swanage Diver with my buddy, Tim Burge, into the usual remnants of a current before the slack and grabbed the top of the shot line as it went past. Dropping down the line it was immediately apparent that the viz wasn't going to be great. Between 10m and 15m the lights went out. After a steady swim/decent into the current we hit the wreck, literally – you felt it before you saw it! Say hello again to the Kyarra .

I guess the viz was less than 2m, maybe only 1m at times. It's amazing how you start to recognise your buddy by the colour of his light! In Tim's case, an icy blue from the fancy HID head versus my warm and cosy (and old) halogen. I covered my light and looked up. Nope. Nothing. Complete darkness. I remember being grateful that I had 3 torches with me.

An aspect of diving in these conditions, for me at least, is that I start to develop an idea of the immediate environment. In this case a nice flat wreck that we were drifting over gently and poking around looking for crabs and so forth. Then the image in my head is blown away. I drift sideways into an upright structure at least a couple of meters high that, as would become the norm on this dive, I felt before I saw. In fact, you didn't see anything unless it was right in your torch beam. This is probably the greatest danger – the fact that you don't actually know what's around you but you start to think that you do. The risk being that you inadvertently drift inside the wreck. There was no natural light so nothing to indicate if there was anything overhead. My only defense was the belief that I was following lines of wreckage along which I could re-trace my steps – but I wouldn't have wanted to put that to the test! There was an argument to line off from the bottom of the shot but with 12 divers in the water it would have turned into a giants cats cradle in no time.

Come the end of the dive, I set off the DSMB from the seabed. The line streamed out fast enough and for long enough for me to think 'good, nothing overhead then!' Until this point, the dive was quite relaxed. The ascent would be anything but. Unfortunately my computer's backlight doesn't work, so with no other reference for depth I need to juggle the reel, my buoyancy and shining my torch on my computer at a glancing angle – just enough to illuminate it without washing out the digits. Basically, I'm not that clever, so plan B is to make myself 'heavy' so I can hang off the line and use that as an indicator that I'm not becoming too positive. As a technique it works fine, but it does mean a vertical 30m swim to the surface and that's hard work. I must have guzzled more air on the ascent than any other part of the dive.

As we broke through 15m the light started to come back. Ironically, it didn't help much as it washed out the torch-light and, with the poor viz and no visible torch to follow, I soon lost Tim – or did he lose me? No harm done though and we met up on the surface a few meters apart.

Dive 2 was the Betsy Anna. Given the conditions it was impossible to orientate yourself on the wreck so we just picked a direction and pulled our way along. We managed to see a bit more on this dive and stumbled across the boilers, which I was very pleased about.

This time it was Tim who deployed the DSMB and talking afterwards it transpired he had used exactly the same technique as I had done on the 1st dive – a vertical swim. I on the otherhand had a very relaxing drift up to the surface following his light as a guide. Then we lost each other again at 10m and I finished the dive on my own DSMB. Despite the conditions, I actually enjoyed both these dives. I wouldn't want every dive to be like that – they're hard work – but the occasional one is good to have under your belt and it's a good feeling to have executed them without any mis-hap. Losing ones buddy excepted!

Nigel

Swanage—22nd April 2007

After a day of dark, low viz, somewhat spooky diving on the Saturday, I looked forward to what was described as a couple of nice simple dives. The Aeolian Sky was scrubbed as it is too easy to penetrate and in the poor viz that could be a tricky situation. No wrecks for Sunday.

The first dive was an area called “The Wall”. It is seldom dived these days as the lobster that used to inhabit the area have been fished out. But it had the advantage of being relatively shallow and would have better viz than the Kyarra and Betsy Ann. Dropping down the shot to 14m we found ourselves facing a small cliff about 2m tall, sprinkled with various soft corals and grasses. In spite of being the last in, we saw no other divers in the area and spent an easy 10-15 minutes wandering the wall and nearby seabed. As the current picked up, we sent up the SMB and enjoyed a leisurely 20 minute ride to finish the mornings entertainment. A very relaxing dive and the perfect answer to the previous day.

The last dive of the weekend was the Peveril Ledges. I’d done it last year and looked forward to rushing at and over the small walls that are found there. The dive went mostly as planned except, as on Saturday, somebody turned the lights out at 15m. This made things much more interesting. We soared over the bottom in a strong current in near perfect darkness, rocks and walls looming suddenly out of the black and vanishing just as quickly behind us. Viz was again about 1m, so maintaining contact with the bottom was critical and each wall threatened to pop you up into open water where all reference points were immediately lost. To add to the fun, on one flyover my feet went high and I found myself racing along fully inverted. Tuck roll, bounce off my buddy, momentary tangle in the SMB line, then back to sailing at breakneck pace across the sea floor. As one of the others put it, it was “like driving through town at 100 mph at night with your lights off in a black-out.” No fear of boredom on this dive!

And that was it. A most exciting finish to the weekend. The rib plucked us from the water and we returned to our real lives, waiting for our next chance to see what the water had to show us. Hope to see you all there.

Bryan

Monty Halls at the Black Boy

16 April 2007

Monty Halls is probably the most well known diver at the moment. He has brought diving into the public eye in a way that no-one has managed since the days of Jacques Cousteau and Hans and Lottie Haas.

He has written books on diving at the various worldwide locations he has been fortunate enough to dive in and has most recently been involved in a couple of TV series for Channel Five and Animal Planet. He also founded Full Circle Expeditions who organise diving expeditions on a worldwide scale for those who want to experience a different type of diving adventure. Since the first series of Great Ocean Adventures was filmed, Monty has been top of my list to see at dive shows – I have seen him at both Birmingham and LIDS over the last few years and (aside from my feet getting a rest) have found his presentations to be well delivered, informative, and hugely amusing.

I have been fortunate enough to meet him on a few occasions; and he always seemed to be such a nice sort of chap. I even bumped into him (not quite literally!) at Paddington Station once. Shortly after the last dive show, I heard that he was doing a book tour. He really enjoys talking to divers, and UK divers are his prime audience for his TV series and the associated books. I discovered that he had a couple of weeks available to go to any dive club that wanted him. No fee.

It seemed too good an opportunity to miss and I knew that many club members would be interested. I contacted his management company and set the arrangements in motion. Irina sorted out the club and pub side, while I sorted out the Monty side and we had it planned within a couple of days.

On the day of his talk, I was really worried. Would all those who had handed over their £2 turn up? Would there be one of those awful delays on the M4? Would I be sat in the Black Boy on my own with him? I shouldn't have wasted the energy worrying. Over 50 people turned up to hear his talk and many purchased his book, taking the opportunity to have a quick chat with him at the same time. The main focus of his presentation was the second series of Great Ocean Adventures, which is currently being shown on Animal Planet (Sundays, 9pm). He recounted incidents and anecdotes which underline his sense of humour and talked about the animals in a way that leaves you in no doubt as to his commitment to rare, endangered and special animals as well as his love of the world under the surface.

Of all the people who were there, everyone has said they enjoyed it. For those who didn't make it, you missed a brilliant evening.

Morag Ward
Club Dive Organiser

100 Hours of Blues

It was September 2002 as Irina and I, tired and hot, strolled around the Hotel. We had just arrived in Jamaica some 6 hours previously and were to get married in 6 days time. As we wandered aimlessly around the grounds orienting ourselves we came across a little white hut with various signs advertising 1 and 2 cylinder dive prices. After a chat with Irina, we sheepishly approached the counter. Before we knew it we had both signed up for the PADI Open Water Course, parted with a large amount of money, given a box with a book and various pamphlets in and told to come back in the morning. Proceeding on we found our tour operators room and booked a load of guided excursions (ok so we blew our budget within a couple of hours but it was our Wedding and Honeymoon rolled into one).

Not so bright (due to over indulging in the all inclusive bar the night before), but early the next morning we donned our swimwear and like two school kids, excitedly headed to the hut. After being given some kit, we staggered, legs shaking from the 2kg weight belts to the pool.

Our first task was to breathe through the regulator with our head underwater. Regulators in mouths and sounding distinctly like Darth Vader, we ducked under the water. Cool I thought, this diving stuff is easy. Turning to look at Irina, I noticed she was standing up, laughing her head off, and every time she tried again the same thing happened. Having intensively skimmed the book the night before, I instantly recognised that she was suffering from Nitrogen Narcosis.

Irina, having never even snorkelled before couldn't bring herself to take her first breath, so she pulled out of the course. Though I felt a bit sad and guilty about it, I was too excited so I carried on. It seemed as though Irina was set to become a diving widow before we'd even jumped the brush. The next day was off to the sea for me and I was hooked.

Two years later, having not done anything but my qualifying dives, we were in Crete. By sheer coincidence (honestly) there was a dive centre mid-way between our hotel and the 100 yard stroll to the beach. I signed up for four sea dives, and a quick chat with the instructor was enough for them to coax Irina into the swimming pool for a discover scuba session.

Back on dry land after the first shore dive, I noticed Irina standing by the pool, everyone else was underwater....Oh Dear! It turned out that she has done it but got out early because she was cold. Later the instructors gave her a 7mm semi with integral hood (I was in a 3mm shortie) and together with a Dive Master we ventured into the sea. I watched the Dive Master intently as he helped Irina. He was fantastic.... "I want to be as good as him" I thought to myself.

November that same year, Irina told me that on Wednesday nights she was going to go to Aqua-Aerobics with her friend for a few weeks... Some kind of cheap promotion.

Christmas Day 2004... Having left two messages with HydroDive and had no reply in the preceding weeks, I had abandoned my idea of giving Irina a surprise present of an Open Water Course, and instead got her something else. As I opened my presents from Irina I was puzzled as to why she had bought me a mask, fins and snorkel, and a book called "Adventures in Diving". "Thanks" I said, in the same sort of manner as I do when receiving undies, socks or a tie, "But, I hoped we could both learn to dive and do it together on our holidays. If I go diving I won't have anyone to buddy with". It was at that point Irina passed me a card saying she was an Open Water Diver, "I'll be your Buddy" she replied. It turned out that rather than bouncing up and down in a pool on Wednesday nights, she'd been getting all dressed up in rubber and having wet fun with a group of blokes (learning to dive with Stumpy & Divestyle). When I finally picked my jaw up off the floor I was overwhelmed with pride at her achievement. To this day I can't believe she managed to keep it a secret, even our neighbours knew!

A few months later we headed off to the Dive Show to buy some kit. After 30mins of wandering around we decided we had no idea what we were doing there, and popped back to Divestyle where Carl sorted us out with everything we needed.

Our Advanced Open Water Course was not long after, the dive show, which for me, ended prematurely. Whipping around with a DPV, but having very floaty feet in my new dry suit, I nearly crashed into the other students, jettisoned the DPV and in a blind panic started on an inverted rapid ascent, with a flooded mask. My comprehension of what happened is still limited,

100 Hours of Blues cont

but at one point I recall frantically trying to kick a Dive Master in Training who was trying to arrest my ascent (sorry Roger). That evening distressed and scared, I decided not to complete the course and to put my kit for sale on EBay.

Very soon after my impression of a trident missile, Morag came to my rescue and took me on a one-on-one dive in Wraybury to build back my confidence and help with my buoyancy issues. It did the trick. The next attempt at Advanced Open Water was successful.

Bursting with new found confidence I joined the diving club and went to Portland. Buddying with Andrew Askwith, we descended, on my first UK sea dive, some 14 metres to the Countess of Erne. "It was true what they said about UK diving" I thought, "I can't see anything! Barely even Andrew!". After a few minutes it suddenly dawned on me I'd forgotten to spit in my mask. I knew what I had to do but really didn't want to do it.... Clenching the gunnels for dear life I closed my eyes and let some water in my mask, and like a wet cat shook my head rapidly, then cleared my mask. Opening my eyes I could see a good 10 – 15 metres viz. and Andrew's hand extended towards me and shook mine. I did it!

Before I knew it, I found myself handing over my credit card again at Divestyle. Booking every course I needed to do up to and including dive master.

Since then the dives have clocked up so quickly. My 100th dive was in the Blue Planet Aquarium, it was always an ambition of mine to dive with Sharks. Against tradition, I decided the sharks had big teeth and to many of them to go naked on dive 100. Within a two week period I'd qualified as a DM, hit 50 hours and made my 100th dive.

Many more dives followed, some eventful and other less so, but all of them great. I recall when diving in the Farnes on what was a particularly uneventful dive (aside from boats breaking down, running out of diesel, etc) I lost sight of Irina for a while. Suddenly I felt a tug on my fin, turning around I spotted her. I carried on for a minute or two and then another tug, and another. "Will you stop it?" I thought to myself as I waved my finger at her and dropped behind so she couldn't tug my fin again. Another tug on my fin and I was confused. I turned around rapidly, and looking at me like a puppy wanting a toy was a seal. I knew I had some apologising to do. We played with the seal for a while before starting our ascent.

It was the Saturday 21st of April 2007, 6:30am as I jumped for the first dive of the day at Swanage. Slowly descending as the light levels dropped, my buddy and I reached 16 metres there was another 10 to go. In near zero visibility, shining my torch onto my computer I confirmed it was three minutes into the dive. I smiled to myself briefly in the darkness...."100 hours".

Diving has had a profound impact on my life (and my credit card), and I'm sure will continue to do so. I'd like to thank everyone who has played a part in my experience. The journey has not always been easy, but is always exciting and thoroughly rewarding. Along the way I have met many new friends. Now I look forward to the IDC & IE courses and (fingers crossed) becoming an instructor. Only 7 to go before I reach dive 200.

Mike Wade

My First UK Sea Dive

Date: 29th April 2007, Location: Poole

I only got in to diving to look at fish really. Having dived the Barrier reef and had a look at a wreck off Dubai I decided I needed a couple of UK dives to keep up my diving between holidays and find out what UK diving was really like. Being a semi-dry suit diver I wasn't about to tackle Scapa in January, but I knew from my qualifying dives in Wraysbury that with a hood and gloves I shouldn't be too uncomfortable off Poole harbour at the end of April.

The dive was organised by Mike Wade, and following his pre-trip advice I purchased a small dive torch, SMB and reel, a knife, my own weights (finally) and hired a couple of cylinders. Mike's directions and instructions were spot on and so I found myself getting into my wetsuit in the Thistle hotel carpark attracting no interest whatsoever from the fisherman meeting there who had obviously seen all this before.

Meeting the rest of the divers on the quay Mike recognised me from training which was a nice feeling as I was a little nervous being surrounded by seasoned UK divers. We headed out on the Big Dingy on what was actually a beautiful morning. Sunshine, little swell and a good couple of dives in prospect. Mike buddied me as I was a newbie in UK waters, and also offered to show me the intricacies of deploying an SMB.

On reaching the first site Mike told me that we would go in first, descend and then reposition the shot line so that the remaining divers could find what remained of the wreck we were to explore. Our descent was the fastest I had ever experienced, and whilst juggling a torch, keeping hold of the line (there was a bit of a current), keeping an eye on Mike and clearing my ears, I forgot my mask and experienced a massive mask squeeze at about 12m which subsequently brought blood spots to the surface of the skin around my eyes and caused a small blood vessel to burst in the surface of my eye! Don't worry, it was all superficial and has all cleared up now.

On reaching the bottom Mike and I conducted a search to find the site (The Lenny) and moved the line accordingly. At first we looked around the shot line, but couldn't find the wreck, so Mike attached his reel to the shot and we made a wider search using his line as a reference. All of this took less than 10 minutes and we had a good mooch about finding some of the largest Lobster either of us had ever seen. Mike showed me how he depoloyed his SMB while we were down. Surfacing went without a hitch including a safety stop, and I was pleased to see my new Gekko computer was performing well.

The second dive was to be a drift. Again I was to go with Mike. We descended at a little more leisurely pace this time, and once on the bottom I successfully deployed my SMB. Although I could feel a bit of a current, I was not prepared for what happened next... When I let my SMB go it shot off, up and away at an angle of about 45 degrees. Mike and I rose from the bottom and the current took us off at what felt like 20knots shooting across the seabed. I was neutral and flying about a metre off the seabed. It was flashing by at an incredible speed, and with my arm extended in front, separately hanging on to my SMB, I felt like superman flying in the sea.

Before we threw ourselves in the water, we had been briefed that the seabed would shallow to about 5m before deepening again and to watch for premature surfacing if we didn't control our buoyancy. With this in mind, as I flew along I was keeping my gauges in my hand to watch the depth. Suddenly the seabed duly rose through 12m – 10m – 8m so I dumped all the air from my BCD just as I shot over the ridge. Immediately after it I descended again following the seabed contour. A quick squirt of air to make me neutral again, and I was off with the tide. Glancing round I had completely lost sight of Mike. Shortly after this I spotted a rock I thought I could grab. I did so and my body immediately swivelled through 180 degrees. Now I am hanging like a flag in the breeze, holding my SMB, the ridge, trying to flash my torch around. But no sign of Mike. I didn't wait long, I knew in this current we were well and truly separated.

I let go off the rock and orientated myself into superman mode again. Checking my gauges I was down to 100 bar, at 12m and on my own doing heaven knew what speed across the seabed with viz at about 3m. I began to surface reeling in my SMB. At about 6 to 8m I couldn't see the bottom or the surface. All I know was I am still flying, hanging on to my SMB. At 5m my gekko went mad because I was surfacing too fast. I then spent several minutes trying to establish neutral buoyancy at 5m for my safety stop. This proved to be really difficult, but I made it and my faithful Gekko said I could surface.

On surfacing, my SMB was about 4m away and the rib was bearing down on me from about 30m. As I handed up my SMB I saw Mike. He said he had got stuck after the 5m ridge in an eddy, by the time he had finned his way out, I was long gone.

A great day, fun dives, but I'd rather not travel at that speed across the seabed, I thought diving was supposed to be about relaxing and doing things slowly. Next dive is later in the summer at Swanage. Looking forward to it already.
Steve Carter

Notice of The Diving Club Annual General Meeting

The 2007 Annual General Meeting of

The Diving Club

Will be held at The Black Boy

On Monday 1st October, starting 7:30 pm

If you wish to include an agenda item, please submit to the Club by Sept 1st 2007. Discussion may take place on items not appearing on the agenda but no business other than that concerned with items on the agenda shall be transacted.

The agenda shall be published in The Hyperbaric Times issue immediately prior to the AGM.

Social Events Calendar

Here is the list of up coming events:

2nd July Black Boy food night and presentation on O2 kit by Peter Wright

22nd July Picnic day at Wellington Park

2nd August Dry Dive at London Diving Chamber

6th August Black Boy food night

19th August National Maritime Museum in London

For all social events please see the website for more details or contact Irina

Irina
social@thedivingclub.co.uk

Diving Schedule 2006

Start Date	Days	Venue	Free Spaces	Description
30/06/07	2	Plymouth (AOW+)	2	Location: Plymouth Boat: Ceeking
07/07/07	2	Weymouth (AOW)	FULL	Location: Weymouth Boat: Tango
14/07/07	2	Technical Dive - Portland (AOW++)	3	Location: Portland Boat: Top Gun (www.divedorset.com)
04/08/07	2	Swanage (OW)	1 sun	Location: Swanage Boat: Swanage Diver Cost: £45 per day Diving: Maximum Depth 18m
25/08/07	3	Manacles (AOW+)	FULL	Location: Manacles Boat: Cornish Pussy
08/09/07	2	Technical Diving weekend - Portland (AOW++)	6	Location: Portland Boat: Goose (www.divedorset.com)
15/09/07	1	International Cleanup Dive	TBA	International Cleanup Day Details to be announced, but basi- cally we will be jumping in a river or lake and collecting rub- bish. Hopefully this will be local to Reading.
22/09/07	2	Brighton (AOW)	FULL	Location: Brighton Boat: Spartacat
29/09/07	2	Weymouth (OW)	1 sun	Location: Weymouth Boat: Tango

Please read 'Guidelines for club dives' on the website or contact the Dive Organiser for a copy

Attendance on club dives is dependent on individual's qualifications and experience

For latest information on spaces please check the website

For further information please contact the Dive Organisers:

Club Dives: Morag Ward 07904 207306
Orientation Dives: Mike Wade

diveclub@thedivingclub.co.uk
diveorientation@thedivingclub.co.uk

Membership Matters!

Membership Matters!

Looking to June, let's just forget how many days I was stood in a soggy field with horses finding my mind wishing for a sunny day on a boat!!

We do now have the facility for new members to join online. Follow the link on the right hand side of the home page, any problems do contact me on any of the details listed below.

Members who have joined in the last month are: Bernard Farr, Victoria Hodge, Gareth Egarr, Martin Kelsey, Demelsa Mundy, Martin Purnell, Louise Simpson

If you see any of these folks in the pub or on a dive, please make them feel welcome.

We are now at a total of **170** members.

If you have not received an email notification of this newsletter, please let either myself or Caroline Kennedy (Publicity Officer) know – there may be a mistake with your e-mail address.

If your contact details have changed in anyway, don't forget to let us know. You can also change your email address via the website.

Please make a note – the contact info for the membership secretary is:

Clare Selwyn

Home address: 14, The Mews

Bramley
Tadley
Hampshire
RG26 5QX

Tel: 01256 882119

E-mail: membership@thedivingclub.co.uk

Your Club Website is: <http://www.thedivingclub.co.uk>

THE DIVING CLUB

**We're on the web:
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