

The Hyperbaric Times

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A Message From The Editor

AT LAST....the bumper edition has arrived!

For those of you at Portland two weeks ago I haven't yet had a chance to write the article for the Sunday but it will definitely appear in the next issue. I really can't let so many "muppet moments" go without comment (we really should start a 'Muppet Moments' column either in the HBT or on the website with an annual prize for the biggest muppet of them all!).

Talking about Portland I saw something that I can't find in any of my books so if I describe it here maybe someone can put me out of my misery.... It was like an anemone but instead of the normal anemone type tentacles it had ribbon like tentacles.

It was all white and about 60-70 mms across. It was sitting on its own on a rock. There were no others in the vicinity....well, not that I saw anyway. Does anyone have any idea what this might have been? It's moments like these that you wish you had an underwater camera. I think that might have to be my next purchase so can anyone recommend a good camera for a complete beginner?

I hope you all enjoy reading the various articles in this issue. See you on the 7th.

Best wishes
Berni

CLUB NIGHT IS MOVING

WITH EFFECT FROM MONDAY, 7TH AUGUST CLUB NIGHTS WILL MOVE TO THE FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH AND WILL BE HELD AT:

THE BLACK BOY
SHINFIELD ROAD
SHINFIELD
READING
RG2 9BP
FROM 20:30

A REVISED LIST OF SOCIAL EVENTS WILL BE CIRCULATED SHORTLY BUT WE WILL KICK OFF WITH THE

ANNUAL QUIZ NIGHT

ON
MONDAY, 7TH AUGUST
AT
21:00
BUFFET AVAILABLE FROM 20:30



Copy deadline
Copy to be received by
12 August for inclusion
in the August 2006 issue

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.

AGM 2 OCTOBER 2006 @ 21:00

MATT COOK ON HIS TRAVELS!

Hello from Bintulu!



So Matt, where's Bintulu and what on earth are you doing there? Oh I bet you're getting loads of diving in!

That's the usual question I get! Well, Bintulu is a small town in the East Malaysian State of Sarawak. Sarawak along with Sabah, Brunei and Kalimantan make up the island of Borneo. Bintulu is home to the world's largest Liquefied Natural Gas production facility and that's why I'm here. Not, contrary to popular belief on an all expenses paid diving trip!



I am managing to do some diving though, so here are a few words about my exploits and as some of you know, I'm rarely seen in the water without my camera so there are a few shots too. Take a look at the Private Gallery on the Club Website for some more pictures.

Even though I've been here a few months I've only been diving in the last month or so. The sea has been too rough but we are now entering the "dry season", not that it seems to be any dryer, but it is less windy! Always hot though! I have

made the most of it, 4 weekends running now and I'm off diving again tomorrow. There is only 1 reef that is accessible from Bintulu, Patricia Shoal. So last weekend a friend and I ventured up the coast to the town of Miri. Miri has quite a few reefs and so the diving is a little more varied.



Patricia Shoal is very nice, it is a big round reef that rises from about 25m to 12m in the middle. There are some very interesting things to see but it is not amazing and it's not going to become a place to visit just for diving.



There are too many other world class places to visit if you are going to travel this far. But the novelty of a short boat ride, water that is 28°C and a reef that only a handful of people dive has not worn off yet. It beats Swanage Pier! While I'm here I'm going to make the most of it. Patricia Shoal is not buoyed so we dive a different bit every time. It's very nice to visit the same site many times, something we don't often get the chance to do. As a photographer I always see something I'd like to shoot but don't have the right lens or shoot differently once I've had a look at the results on my laptop. No problem, I'll be back next weekend!

See you all soon

Matt Cook



Battle Of Trafalgar 2006



"Order the signal to be sent, Hardy"

"Aye, aye, Sir"

"Hold on, that's not what I dictated to the Signal Officer! What's the meaning of this?"

"Sorry, sir?"

"England Expects Every Person To Do His Duty, Regardless Of Race, Gender, Sexual orientation, Religious persuasion or Disability. What gobbledegook is this?"

"Admiralty policy, I'm afraid, sir. We're an equal opportunities employer now. We had the devil's own job getting 'England' past the censors, lest it be considered racist."

"Gadzooks, Hardy. Hand me my pipe and tobacco."

"Sorry, sir. All naval vessels have been designated as smoke-free working environments, sir."

"In that case, break open the rum ration...let us splice the main brace to steel the men for battle!"

"The er...rum ration has been abolished, Admiral. It's part of this Government's policy on binge drinking!"

"Good Heavens, Hardy. Well, I suppose we had better get on with it. Full speed ahead!"

"Er...I think you'll find that there's a 4 knot speed limit in this stretch of water, sir."

"Damn it all, man! We are on the eve of the greatest sea battle in history. We must advance with all dispatch. Report from the masthead, please!"

"That won't be possible sir."

"WHAT?"

"Health & Safety have closed the masthead, sir. No harness. And they said the futtock shrouds don't meet regulations. They won't let anyone up there until a proper scaffolding has been erected."

"Then get the ship's carpenter on to it without delay, Hardy!"

"He's too busy, sir. Knocking up a wheelchair access to the fo'c'sle, Admiral."

"Wheelchair access? I've never heard anything so absurd!"

"Health & Safety again, sir. We have to provide a barrier-free environment for the differently abled, sir."

"Differently abled? I've only one arm and one eye and I refuse even to hear mention of the word. I didn't rise to the rank of Admiral by playin' the disability card!"

"Actually, sir, you did, the Royal Navy is under-represented in the areas of visual impairment and limb deficiency."

"Whatever next? Order full sail, the salt spray beckons!"

"A couple of problems there too, sir. Health & Safety won't let the crew up the rigging without crash helmets, and they don't want anyone breathing in too much salt .. haven't you seen the adverts?"

"I've never heard such infamy. Break out the cannon and tell the men to stand by to engage the enemy."

"The men are a bit worried about actually shooting at anyone, Admiral."

"WHAT? Is this a Mutiny?"

"It's not that, sir. It's just that they are afraid of being charged with murder if they actually kill anyone. There's a couple of legal aid lawyers on board, watching everyone and everything like hawks."

"Then how are we to sink the Frenchies and the Spanish?"

"Actually, sir. We're not..."

"We're not...?"

"No, sir. The Frenchies and the Spanish are our European Partners now. According to the Common Fisheries Policy, we shouldn't even be in this stretch of water. We could get hit with a claim for compensation."

"But you must hate a Frenchman as you hate the devil!"

"I wouldn't let the ship's diversity coordinator hear you saying that, sir. You'll be up on disciplinary."

"You MUST consider every man an enemy who speaks ill of your King!"

"Not any more, sir. We must be inclusive in this multicultural age. Now, put on your Kevlar vest, sir; it's the rules."

"Don't tell me, Hardy ... Health & Safety again, eh? Whatever happened to rum, bum, backy and the lash?"

"As I explained sir, rum and backy are off the menu. And now there's a ban on corporal punishment as well."

"What about bum?"

"I believe it's to be encouraged, sir."

"In that case... kiss me, Hardy."

Poole Club Dive 25-26 March 2006 Morag

Poole is usually the first weekend of the Club schedule each year, and I had booked this one a couple of weeks later than last year in the hope that the weather would be reasonable. An Orientation due the week before had to be canned due to the weather, and low numbers on the Club bookings meant that we tried to switch things around to accommodate those blown out.

As it was, the weather was still a little on the dodgy side as we got our kit ready on the quayside. Poole harbour was quite flat, but as soon as we left its protection the lumpy seas threatened to end the day before we even got started.

The first dive on Saturday was the Venezuela. I was starting to feel decidedly ill, and had to make the decision as to dive and hope I would feel better in the water, or not dive and know that whilst everyone else was underwater I would be sitting on a lolling boat. Thankfully, I had help getting my kit on and three of us went down to secure the shot. It was as black as the hobs of hell down there at about 25m and the visibility wasn't great. Tim managed to tie the shot in so that the others would have a secure descent and we set off on a little bit of a tour. As it was so dark, we stuck close together, and saw a fair amount of wreckage, including the boilers. At least, I think that's what they were! After about 15 minutes, we decided that it was too cold and too dark to continue so we began our ascent. At this point, Antony disappeared into the gloom. Getting back in the boat was interesting. Those of you who know Big Dinghy will know of its ladders. I took the one on the starboard, whilst Tim took the port side. The roll of the boat, and this being the first time I had climbed a ladder in the twins, made it difficult, but thanks to the others already onboard, I didn't make too much of a beached whale impression!

A couple of the divers hadn't managed to dive. One still felt too ill even after descending a few meters, so they aborted. The weather had taken a turn for the worse and we had to decide about a second dive. The plan had been to do something between the Venezuela and Poole, but with sea conditions worsening, it was decided that the shelter of Poole Harbour was called for. Even then, only two divers were brave enough to get in for the second dive, and explored the power cable, which runs between the mainland and Brownsea Island. By all accounts, the viz was awful.

At this point, I had to decide about the following days diving. The weather forecast indicated that Sunday would be no better than Saturday, and with much soul searching, and having had a conversation with the skipper; it was decided to pull the next days diving.

The final disappointment of the day was yet to come. Antony had been looking forward to a roast pork roll, apparently available from a vendor not far from the quayside. So, with kits packed away, off we went in search, only to find it closed! No matter... the bar in the hotel was open so it was beer/coffee all round.

The verdict on the day was that even though the diving had been disappointing, it was still good to be getting back into the diving season.

Divers:

Morag Ward
Tim Burge
Antony Rodden
Martin Day
Sean Barrett
Martin Murray
Will Tabner

Morag Ward
Club Dive Organiser

Swanage Club Dive 8-9 April 2006

Swanage in April is one of the club's regular trips. It is very rare for there to be empty spaces, and this trip was no exception. 12 divers on both days, although not everyone did all 4 planned dives.

We boarded Swanage Diver in good time to get to the Carantan, our first dive, as close to slack water as possible. The sun was shining, although there was a bit of wind, nothing to dampen the spirits of the group. A missing dry suit hose meant that although my kit went diving, I didn't. I couldn't work up the enthusiasm to jump in, and when another diver was about to can his dive, we did a quick kit swap and off everyone went. I spent the next 40 minutes or so getting trained as deck hand. This includes making hot chocolate, spotting DSMB's and gossiping. By all accounts, the Carantan was a nice dive, plenty of wreck to see, even if it is a bit broken up. It remains on my list of wrecks to dive, so it may well be on the list for the September Swanage trip.

The sea took it's toll on kit, and a couple of divers spent the afternoon getting torches replaced and missed the afternoon drift. I discovered how easy it was to mistake the Velcro on my weight harness for the Velcro on my dry suit pocket, and my buddy discovered that replacing weight pouches at 20m is easier than you would think. The visibility was good, and a fair amount of fish life was seen. At this time of year, there is a lot of growth, and I was surprised at how many anemones there were.

We got back to the pier quite early, which left plenty of time to get into the pub, do some exams (gee... thanks guys!) and generally have a gossip. A very important part of every club weekend is the social bit, and this weekend was no exception. Those of us staying in Swanage overnight met in the pub and some stayed for dinner there, while others went for some peace and quiet.

Sunday's ropes off was a bit later than Saturdays and we managed to have breakfast before leaving the B&B. It was only when we got to the pier that Pete (the skipper) asked if we could be ready about 20 minutes earlier than planned. This was to ensure that we were at the dive site in time to make the most of the slack. Although it was dark, the visibility on the Kyarra was excellent and we had an excellent dive. One or two people came up with some finds. Although the Kyarra has been at the bottom of the ocean for many years, she is still giving up her cargo, which included watches, perfume, badges, tiles and more unusual items such as Worcestershire sauce and lemon oil.

The final dive of the weekend was a drift. The weather had improved dramatically and the sea was a flat calm when we jumped in. Some of us had got ourselves into fuff mode, and spent far too long getting kitted up, even though we had the skipper, and two of the group who had elected not to dive, but had got on the boat anyway, helping us. Four of us planned to dive as a group and somehow we managed it. We picked up a few scallops which were enjoyed later.

The final custom on a trip to Swanage was the stop in the Halfway Inn, towards Wareham. Excellent food, good beer and a good debrief of the diving before setting off on the journey home.

Divers:

Morag Ward	Will Tabner (Sun)
Carl Yates	Ian Joseph (Sun)
Tim Burge	Adam Davies
Dave Capel	Frankie Farren
John Campbell	Dan Cock
Roy Stevenson	Ron Spillman
Clare Selwyn (Sat)	
Simon Berry (Sat)	

Morag Ward
Club Dive Organiser

Portland Orientation Dive 17 April 2006

As this turned out this was the first orientation dive of the year, the dives in Poole in March having been cancelled. This was also my first UK sea dive this year so I was really looking forward to it.

The weather promised to be good and all the reports about the vis set the scene for a couple of great dives.

We had a couple of newly qualified divers and some others who were just along to start the warm up process for some deeper diving later in the year.

We had 12 divers so Fathom and Blues had put two boats on for us so lots of room.

Our first dive was just a quick ride out of the harbour to Balaclava Bay for a drift dive. As we rolled off the rib into the water we appreciated how good the vis was. I reckon it must have been at least 10m. Despite the cold weather we seem to have endured all winter there was an amazing amount of life. The highlight for me was seeing a dogfish for the first time.

Our second dive, later in the afternoon, was on The Countess of Earne which sits in about 14m parallel to Portland harbour wall. The vis was still just as good as in the morning and so good in fact that we could see the wreck very clearly from the rib. Even with 12 divers on the wreck trying our best to silt the dive site up the vis remained crystal clear. There were lots of wrasse and different types of crab swimming about and lots of anemones all over the wreck.

All too soon the dive finished and we were all enjoying the best part of diving with Fathom and Blues- the hot Ribena and chocolate bar on the rib.

Thanks to everyone for coming down and kick starting the Club's orientation dive season.

Divers:

Andrew Askwith

Morag Ward

Alyson King

Simon Berry

Michelle Darby

Nick Laskaris

Claudia Scholz

Lee Royle

Clive Dedman

Allan Mclenaghan

Guy Gladish

Ken Lovell

Andrew Askwith
Orientation Dive Organiser

Torquay 22-23 April 2006

My buddy, Geraldine, and I headed off to Babbacombe late on the Friday evening looking forward to our first shore diving experience. We never thought of letting them know at the hotel that we would be arriving late so when we did finally arrive a very unhappy young man greeted us. We did try to negotiate an early breakfast for the following morning but he was having none of it so off we went to bed looking forward to a bit of a lie. That's one good thing about shore diving, you're not tied to boat departure times, you can come and go as you please. Now, we were warned that a very steep hill leads down to the bay but I don't think we fully appreciated just how steep until we got there. Later on that day we were to see a number of people pile out of a minibus and start pushing it up the hill! Then we discovered the disadvantage of arriving late at a dive site....parking! There're never enough spaces are there...luckily we got the last one! A bit of a tight spot in the corner but with the help of a number of people we managed to park...and all done with the driver, Geraldine, having a conversation on her mobile...a very skilful piece of one-handed manoeuvring I must admit...the fella in the space next to us looked a bit pale though...



Babbacombe Bay

Now, shore diving, how difficult can it be? You get kitted up, you stroll down the beach and enter the water...no problem. Never thought about rocks! Just when you think you've got your foot firmly planted on a rock, it moves and you find yourself face down in a few inches of water....very hard to stand up again when you can't stop laughing! 30 minutes(!) after first entering the water we were finally ready to descend. The main reason for visiting Babbacombe at this time of year is cuttlefish. First dive for us....lots of sand, a few crabs but no cuttlefish. My buddy and I decided that we would take this opportunity to play with the SMB...so how many of you have been entangled in an SMB, it's very easily done isn't it....first it was me, around my foot then, when I'd been freed, it was Geraldine's turn, around her cylinder.....loads more practice required there I think! Then we had to get out. Not sure which was more difficult, getting in or getting out....being knocked over by the waves, clinging on to rocks whilst your buddy tries to remove your fins, rocks moving so your buddy takes a tumble backwards with you in tow....crawling on hands and knees over the rocks because you can't stand up...wondering if anyone will ever come to your rescue.....and then Will appeared - our hero! Lunch and a cup of hot chocolate later we're ready for dive two. Bruises on bruises as we again end up part walking, part crawling into the water. This time Geraldine decides she'd like to practice her navigation skills. We very nearly ended up in the next bay, well done m'dear, but still no sign of those cuttlefish! When we finally clambered out from this dive and met up with the others we discovered that we were the only two people yet to encounter them.



Night Divers!

Late that afternoon a number of people decided that a 'night dive' would be a great idea. The sensible few amongst us decided that the pub would be an even better idea! It was during this evening dive that the first of the two heroic acts that took place over the weekend occurred...a woman had thrown a frisbee for a dog, the frisbee had ended up in the sea and no way was the dog going in to get it.....so Mike to the rescue..... The second heroic act took place the next day. This time it was Andrew and Dave to the rescue with the removal of a hook and some fishing line from the mouth of a dogfish.

Now, the fact that Geraldine and I were the only two not to have seen cuttlefish was playing on our minds, so much so that a rash promise was made to Roy over dinner that evening if he were to take us to where the cuttlefish were... something to do with "p-valves" and "relieving"....I can't quite remember!!

Day two. Roy had bravely taken up the challenge from the night before and was confident that he could show us cuttlefish. This time we managed to enter the water in a much more graceful fashion ie we stayed upright. I'd been chatting to (not "chatting up" as has been suggested...) one of the fellas at the local dive shop the day before whilst waiting for a fill. He gave me some advice on where best to enter and exit the water...oh if only we'd met the day before... Sure enough, Roy took us to cuttlefish....amazing! Two males. No sign of a female but hey, we'd seen cuttlefish! Oh dear, memories of that promise came flooding back... Luckily Roy hasn't insisted that I honour the promise but I'm sure it will come back to haunt me one day.... He also managed to find a tiny nudibranch for us too. Definitely must invest in some prescription lenses for my mask! We obviously missed the spot exiting the water though because that proved just as entertaining as it had done the day before...this time I ended up rolling around on my back with Geraldine looking down at me with a look that said 'so, what do you want me to do about it...' as she struggled to remain on her feet! Buddies eh, what use are they! We finally managed to crawl out and decided enough was enough. Bruises on bruises on bruises by this time so time to sit in the sun, relax and enjoy...oh, and laugh at everyone else trying to enter and exit the water of course...



Cuttlefish

Divers:

Andrew Askwith
Roy Stevenson
Morag Ward
Carl Yates
Jane Wilkinson
Andrew Hibbitt (first sea dive)
Helen Hibbitt (completing Open Water Qualification)

Will Tabner
Clare Selwyn (Benjamin)
Roger Selwyn
Lee Royle
Claudia Scholz
Irina Wade
Mike Wade

Sharlene Hatton
Anthony Champness
Dave Dommett
Jackie Jarvis
Steve Hammer-Matthews
Geraldine Felix
Berni Kehoe

Berni Kehoe

Tenerife 4-7 May 2006

It has been a couple of years since the club had a trip abroad and Tenerife seemed the ideal place to go. It is not too far, and, in May, the weather and the water are reasonably warm. I have been there twice before, and enjoyed the diving both times. The Dive Centre, Agua Tenerife, is a 5-Star IDC and is run by David and Yvonne Taylor. David is the only Course Director permanently based in Tenerife.

We finally got ourselves organized at Gatwick having seated ourselves at the bar (where else?). After 4 hours and only about 20 minutes late, we arrived at Tenerife Airport, located our baggage (I knew most of it was on the plane, as I had watched it being loaded) and found our hosts for the weekend. By 9pm we were, once again, drinking beer – this time, soaked up by pizza in the restaurant about 100 yards from the apartment complex.

It is easy to get into a routine when you are away, and we slipped into one really easily...

- 8.45 pick up and taken to the dive centre to organise kit.
- Sometime after, depending on fuff level, leave for harbour.
- Set up kit and load onto boat
- Arrive at dive site one, complete a dive (see details)
- Leave dive site one, have breakfast/lunch and switch tanks for the second dive,
- Arrive at dive site two, complete a dive (see details)
- Those who chose, went for a third dive
- Return to the dive centre to rinse out kit (well, some of us bothered to rinse kit!!) and purchase milkshakes/ice cream/T-shirts as necessary.
- Drop off at the apartments.
- On to the balcony for a beer. Followed by either a further beer, or a shower, followed by beer (in no particular order or frequency) to ensure that the group were adequately prepared to consume beer over dinner in various locations.
- Further consumption of beer and other beverages on the balcony until exhaustion or anticipation of the following days diving prompted sleep.

The Diving

Friday



Dive 1 - The Steps

This site is so called because the volcanic rock formations are very distinctive with drop offs and vertical pillars. Max Depth about 25m. Volcanic rock formations, which have a little growth on them, but an abundance of fish life and swim throughs. It was a great way to start the weekend. Octopus, Roncadore, Cardinal Fish, Crabs, Damsel Fish and Parrot fish were among the species we saw. Sea Urchins are in abundance here.

Dive 2 - The Rays

This dive had it's disappointments as well as it's pleasures. It can be one of the most enthralling dives in the area. There is a small wreck at the site, which we were informed was called 'el Storm' (Hmmm... I am sure it was called the unknown wreck, last time I dived it!) There is a pretty reef about fifty meters away and between the two is a patch of sand normally filled with different rays who will take fish from your fingers. Today, however, there were very few rays in sight, which is very unusual. One or two rays appeared along with an Angel Shark. The viz was quite poor, only about 15m.

Saturday

Dive 1 - Pal Mar Cave

The first dive the next day had us dropping over the edge, and along a wall which dropped down to about 30m. Unfortunately, we missed the cave, as there was a bit of confusion between Ami who dropped the anchor, and Ziggy, who was our guide. We did, however, see a statue of the Madonna, which has recently been placed as a memorial. Some people also reported sightings of Kermit and Red Panda. They must have been feeling the effects of Nitrogen Narcosis.

Dive 2 - Coral Arch

Actually, it is a rock arch. There are a couple of memorials here, one of which is to Jacques Cousteau, who did a lot of diving in Tenerife. This site is home to three of the biggest Moray Eels I have ever seen. One of the huge benefits of having a guide is that they know where things like this live.

Dive 3 - Punta Negro

Four brave souls gave up beer for a third dive. A drift dive, which was a bit of an experience for them. They were just outside the harbour, and again, spotted Atlantic rays.



Sunday

Dive 1- Cita Del Mar

The group split into two for the first dive on Sunday. The Cita Del Mar is a wreck a bit deeper than the majority of the group were qualified to do, so two of us were given the privilege of diving the site on our own. The wreck is very eerie, it lies in sand about 50m from the nearest rock. Fishing nets have been caught on the superstructure, which gives it a sort of surreal feeling. There was a big school of Roncadore, cuttlefish and Octopus down there. After our dive, we surface to see the boat waiting for us after dropping of the rest of the group on the nearby site.



Dive 2- Shark Cave

The main group dived Shark Cave which is another popular dive site. The cave is more of a swim through than either a cavern or a cave. Following the drop off there is plenty of fish life to observe and photographic opportunities. Judging by the expressions on the divers faces, this dive had been an absolute hit with them all.



Dive 3- Condesito

I last dived the Condesito on January 2005, and it was a fairly well intact cargo ship. It was possible then to penetrate much of the hull. However, the sea is doing her best to reclaim the ship which sank after the crew decided that it would be a good idea to set the 'auto pilot' and go below for beer. Sadly, they forgot that Tenerife was in between them and their destination. Now, it has collapsed and there are creaks and groans from the wreckage left. Only one part of the ship is safe to penetrate, and I know a few of the group had a peak inside. The wreck itself is quite small, and does not lend itself to a whole dive. Before exploring her, we had been taken down some gulleys where there were pipefish in abundance as well as an extremely friendly Moray Eel who was quite happy to come out of his hole after a bit of encouragement

Dive 4- The Canyons

The Intrepid Four again went for a third dive. This was a drift, but as the currents can act a bit strangely in Tenerife, they had a spectacular dive and surfaced without a boat in sight. Apparently, the current was running one way at the surface and the opposite way at the bottom. The skipper lost sight of their bubbles before their DSMB was launched. Fortunately, Ami spotted them only a few minutes after they surfaced.

Apart from the diving, on any club weekend, there are the usual tales to tell and a few statistics to share. I am under orders not to name names and if you want to know more, you will have to ask someone who was there!

Someone managed to not only lock one person in the apartment, but two days later locked 3 people out.

Howard and HowardRoom-mates, buddies and clothing and kit twins

72 cans of beer. For those of you who think this is a bit weak for a diving weekend, this doesn't count all the beers drunk over dinner each night, which was roughly 54, or the bottle of Baileys, or the wine.

68 dives, which meant approximately 55 hours underwater

3 cases of sea sickness, non of which ended up with fish feeding

2 cases of kit failure (both sorted and no diving lost)

2 weight pouches dropped (both by the same person, one of which belonged to another diver!)

One person accused another person of not being able to speak English, at which point the accused pointed out that he was in fact attempting to speak French (NB, Tenerife is Spanish Territory)

Someone went to the pool for a 'swim', which translated to standing ankle deep in the complex pool chatting to other group members and de-touring to the bar for a beer.

The final day, Monday, was spent lounging around, drinking the remaining few cans of beer and enjoying the amenities of the apartment complex. We all gathered for a quick pizza before being collected and returned to the airport.

The weekend had gone without a hitch and everyone in the group agreed that it had been an excellent weekend. My thanks go to everyone who went and made it so enjoyable, especially my flatmates who managed to go a whole weekend without leaving the loo seat up!

Divers

(L-R)

Carl Yates

Michelle Darby

Simon Berry

Will Tabner

Nigel Stephenson

Morag Ward

Bryan Johnston

Tony Sammut

Lee Royle

Claudia Schulz

Morag Ward



Morag Ward
Club Dive Organiser

East Wittering 7 May 2006

At last a warm, dry day for diving. I really was beginning to wonder whether I would ever manage any more diving this year.

After the usual sparrow's fart o'clock start because my chauffer for the day must suffer from insomnia and therefore sees no reason why anybody else needs sleep(thanks Mr Happy) we arrive at Wittering all keen ready to go.

We all arrive in plenty of time to make sure we are ready for the boat to leave bang on time and then we find the first snag - we have to wait - no boat! Perhaps someone has forgotten to tell Wittering Divers what time we are supposed to be diving.

We waded out to the boat without too much trouble even with some of the waves almost knocking Helen off her feet.



We eventually arrive at our dive site – The Far Mulberry Harbour and wait – tide is still running - this is also late!

Wayne our skipper starts explaining to us what the dive site looks like and where the best places to see life are. I am very confused when he starts talking about the point bit at the front – I have only ever seen the Mulberry in Portland Harbour a huge rectangular lump of concrete so how can it have a bow like a boat? The answer was pretty obvious when Wayne explained it – they were designed to float and be towed across the Channel so they needed to be streamlined.

Helen and I were the last pair in and so hopefully would just be able to follow everyone else to find the wreck. The sea bed is about 14m and the top of the Mulberry is about 8m so a really good dive for a first real sea dive.

Unfortunately the vis wasn't brilliant so we weren't able to really swim off the wreck to try to understand the perspective. Despite that I really enjoyed the dive and would definitely want to do it again.

Our second dive was a drift dive over the fossil beds looking for fossilised shark's teeth. I managed to find a few which I stuffed into my glove but by the time we had got back on board the boat they had all fallen out – another good reason for going back.



Deadmens Fingers

Thanks to all who came along and a big thanks to Dave Dommett, Alyson and Jane for helping to look after the newer divers.

Divers:

Andrew Askwith
 Dave Dommett
 Jane Wilkinson
 Alyson King
 Paul Rowse
 Helen Hibbitt
 Andrew Hibbitt
 Dave O'Brien
 Alistair Richardson
 Clive Dedman
 Lee Burgess
 Geraldine Felix

Andrew Askwith
Orientation Dive Organiser



Shark Trust 3 May 2006

Morag Ward introduced a presentation by Grant Bates, who had come along with two fellow Shark Trust members to tell us about the work that they are doing to protect sharks.

The **Shark Trust** is a UK registered marine conservation charity dedicated to promoting the study, management, and conservation of sharks, skates and rays in the UK and internationally.

Grant introduced himself as an Ear Nose and Throat Surgeon working within the NHS in Oxford, and said that this partially led to his interest in sharks due to their extraordinary sense of smell.

Grant went on to describe various pelagic species including sharks, skates and rays, which of course included some stunning photographs. Grant had also brought a long a number of sharks teeth, a few from today, which looked as most of us have seen, and a couple from the dim and distant past (sorry I forget the date), which were about 3 or 4 inches long, giving a good impression of the size a megalodon (pre-historic shark) would have been.



Of course behind all this is an important point. Sharks have inhabited the world's oceans for millions of years but, within only a few decades, humanity has put many species at risk. An estimated 100 million sharks are being killed every year as a result of bycatch and the vast international demand for shark fins for soup. To support this Grant showed a very sobering film, showing sharks being caught, finned, and then thrown back alive.

A recent report on sharks in the Northwest Atlantic reveals that populations of some large species have fallen by 75% to 90% since 1986. Other research indicates that some formerly highly abundant species are now present at less than 2% of their original numbers.

After this Grant showed some more pictures to lighten the mood, and encouraged us all to join the Shark Trust so as to help fight for legislation to protect these endangered species.

More information about the Shark Trust can be found at www.sharktrust.org.

Roger Selwyn



www.sharktrust.org

Diving Schedule 2006

Date	Location	Details	Max Depth	Cost	Level	Spaces Remaining
29 July	Portland	Fathom & Blues	18 m	£40.00	O	Full
5 August	Swanage	Pier Dive	7m	£5.00 + Entry	O	Full
5 August	Swanage	Swanage Diver	35m	Approx £36.00 per day	C	8
6 August	Swanage	Swanage Diver	18m	£35.00	O	Full
12/13 August	Plymouth	Ceeking	40m	£108.00 (inc 2 nights B&B)	C	1
9/10 September	Swanage	Swanage Diver	18m	£35.00 + Entry per day	O	Full
23/24 September	Swanage	Swanage Diver	20-40m	Approx £36.00 per day	C	Full
7/8 October	Poole	Big Dinghy	18m	£35.00 per day	O	Sat Full/ Sun 1
16—23 June 2007	Scilly Isles	Moonshadow Charters	Various	Diving £165.00/ Accom £35.00ppn	All	11

*Two cylinders needed

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

A supplement (approx £2.00 per dive) is added to provide a subsidised place for the Dive Marshall on Orientation Dives

Non Club members will be asked to pay a £5.00 supplement per day

For latest information on spaces please check the website

For further information please contact the Dive Organisers:

Club Dives: Morag Ward

07904 207306 diveclub@thedivingclub.co.uk

Orientation Dives: Andrew Askwith

07786 551462 diveorientation@thedivingclub.co.uk

Guidelines for club dives

1. Responsibilities of the Diver

- **Divers are responsible for ensuring that they have the appropriate qualification and experience to undertake a particular dive and that their diving experience is current, i.e. that the period since their last dive is no greater than that recommended by their qualifying agency. Evidence of qualification may be asked for.**
- It is the diver's responsibility to check with the Dive Marshal the day before to ensure that there are no adverse weather conditions which may prevent the dive from going ahead. The Dive Organiser will not contact divers unless there has been a change to previously given advice.
- The supply of equipment appropriate for the planned dive is the responsibility of the diver. Standard kit includes (but is not limited to): regulators, (including primary second and alternate second stage), Submersible Pressure Gauge, depth gauge, timing device, buoyancy compensator, cylinder(s), 'personal' kit (e.g. mask, fins etc), emergency signal device (e.g. whistle), cutting tool, Delayed Surface Marker Buoy (mandatory on Club Dives), appropriate exposure protection and weight system. Any diver who does not have the appropriate kit may, in the interests of safety of the whole group, be refused entry into the water.
- Divers are responsible for planning their individual dives within the limits of their qualifications and those set by the appointed Dive Marshal.
- Divers are required to complete the Marshalling Sheet before entry into the water.
- Divers must surface no later than 3 minutes after their declared run time (run time being defined as the total time from when the diver leaves the surface to when they are back on the surface) stated on the Marshalling sheet. NB There is a coastguard requirement to notify them if a diver is more than 3 minutes overdue.
- The diver shall respond to their name being called at any roll call. They should not respond on behalf of another diver.
- The decision of the Dive Marshal/skipper is final.

2. Booking and Payment

- Dives booked by the club will be published on a schedule which will be available on the club website, the notice boards, and from Committee members on request. It may also be possible to obtain a copy from DiveStyle.
- Bookings for dives will be on a 'first come, first served' basis.
- When you register your interest in attending a dive with the appropriate DIVE ORGANISER whether by phone, e-mail or face-to-face, a deposit must be paid within 2 weeks, either by post, online via the club website, or to a Committee member on a club night.
- Any diver who does not pay a deposit within two weeks of booking will forfeit their place unless they have notified the dive organiser of the reason for the delay.
- Once a deposit is paid, the diver is obliged to pay the remaining balance by the due date. If the diver is subsequently unable to dive for any reason, they will only be released from their obligation if another diver fills the place.
- The balance of the dive and any accommodation cost is payable one month before the date of the dive. Any balance not paid by that date will result in the diver forfeiting their place on the dive unless agreement has been reached with the Dive Organiser
- When all the spaces available on a dive are full, a reserve list of those interested will be kept. Those on the reserve list will be approached should a space arise. If they still wish to go on the dive, they will be expected to pay a deposit or full balance according to the guidelines.
- Accommodation is the responsibility of the diver unless indicated otherwise on the dive schedule.
- On Orientation Dives, an additional payment will be incorporated into the published price to provide 3 supplemented spaces for a Dive Marshal and two Assistants. Any diver accepting one of these reduced cost spaces on an orientation dive will be expected to participate in all planned dives unless there are exceptional circumstances (eg injury).
- The Dive Marshal and Assistants will be Instructors, Divemasters or Rescue Divers (or equivalent from other agencies) with a minimum of 30 dives, including UK sea experience.

3. Refunds, Cancellations and Changes

- Diving is weather and tide dependant. The club or boat skipper may change boats, dive sites or departure times according to weather and operational requirements.
- If a dive is cancelled due to adverse weather or for other safety requirements, refunds will be made in accordance with the contract the club has made with the boat skipper. Normally, this will either be a refund, or the option of attending a rescheduled dive.
- Dive bookings are accepted on the understanding that if you have booked for a specific site and the weather does not permit diving that location, where possible, an alternative site will be sought taking into account the previously published dive type, qualifications and prepared gas mixes.

4. Responsibilities of the Dive Organiser

- The Dive Organiser will attempt to plan the dive sites in advance of bookings being taken
- Dive details will be published with the approximate depth of the deepest planned dive and a maximum planned depth.
- Orientation Dives will be published with a maximum depth of 18m. Club Dives up to a maximum of 40m.
- The Dive Organiser will appoint a Dive Marshal for each dive. The Dive Marshal will agree to carry out the role and may refer anything to either the appropriate Dive Organiser or Chairman or any other Committee member.
- The Dive Marshal will be provided with:
 - o The list of divers expected and their relevant qualification
 - o Dive information, time, location, planned dives
 - o Appropriate paperwork, including Dive Roster, Emergency Contact List and Marshalling Sheet.

5. Responsibilities of the Dive Marshal

- The Dive Marshal will be appointed by the Dive Organiser.
- The Dive Marshal may seek advice from the Dive Organiser, Chairman or President.
- All diving activities will be agreed with the Dive Organiser prior to a trip.
- In cases where weather or other circumstances prevent the planned dive going ahead, any changes must not require a qualification increase without reference to the Dive Organiser and/or Chairman
- Ensure the appropriate club kit is complete and taken: O2 and First Aid, Dive Marshal File
- A risk evaluation of the site will be carried out, to minimise the risk to all divers, including:
 - o Weather Conditions
 - o Water State
 - o Tidal Conditions
 - o Diving Conditions
- Advice should be sought from an appropriate local source (e.g. the skipper) in the event of a change in dive sites
- The Dive Marshal will ensure all divers complete the Dive Marshal Sheet before they enter the water.
- If the Dive Marshal is unsure as to the qualification level of any diver they may request sight of proof of qualification level.
- Any diver who cannot provide such proof will not be allowed entry into the water.
- The Dive Marshal may, in the interests of safety, refuse a diver entry into the water
- On Orientation Dives, the Dive Marshal will assist in organising buddy teams appropriate to training and experience. Individual requests will of course be taken into account. For Club diving, the Dive Marshal will, where appropriate, assist in organising buddy pairs.
- The Dive Marshal will ensure that all divers are accounted for before leaving a dive site and/or quayside by a roll call
- The Dive Marshal will advise the Dive Organiser and Chairman of any problems, or incidents as soon as possible but no later than 6 hours after the incident
- The Dive Marshal will manage and co-ordinate activities in the event of a diving incident. This will be done in full co-operation with the boat skipper and Emergency Services

Membership Matters!

Summer is well under way now with people talking of diving all over the place. Farnes, Portland, Pembroke, Canada and I'm counting the days to my first trip to Sharm el Sheikh.

Members who have joined since the last newsletter are: Andrew and Hester Grafham, Guy Gladish, Gareth Blades, Steve Watson and Mandy Smith, Simon Carr, Tony Champness, Sharlene Hattan, Steve and Chelsea Crosson-Smith, Kathleen Lambert, Lee Burgess, Mandy Isham, Steve Carter, Sally Richards, David Suter, Tim Bourne, Stephen Bourne, James Bourne, Liz Bohan, Bandna Sood, Stephen Wallace, Nick Silk, Keith Shaw and Matt Deegan.

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 **173** members. The good news is that this is 13 more member than last year, with still nearly three months go to until the end of the membership year. Therefore, a big thank you to everyone for helping us reach this target.

If you have not received an email notification of this newsletter, please let either myself or Berni Kehoe (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

THE DIVING CLUB

We're on the web:
www.thedivingclub.co.uk

Divestyle
Mike's Waterfront Warehouse
Maiden Lane Shopping Centre
Lower Earley
Reading
Berks
RG6 3HD

Tel: 0118 926 2288
Fax: 0118 926 9616
Website: www.divestyle.co.uk

The Diving Club is a chapter of the PADI Diving Society and aims to allow newly qualified divers and existing members a forum to meet and dive with other divers. We are a PADI orientated group, which accepts divers from any diver-training agency (eg BSAC, SAA, NAUI, IANTD etc). We have close ties with Divestyle, who conduct all our training and offer us use of their pool sessions for equipment testing and practice sessions when space permits.

The Diving Club Committee Members - Contact Details

President

Peter Wright
T: 0118 926 2288
E: president@thedivingclub.co.uk

Chairman

Roy Stevenson
E: chairman@thedivingclub.co.uk

Treasurer

Matt Cook
E: treasurer@thedivingclub.co.uk

Club Secretary

Michelle Darby
E: secretary@thedivingclub.co.uk

Orientation Dive Organiser

Andrew Askwith
T: 07786 551462
E: diveorientation@thedivingclub.co.uk

Club Dive Organiser

Morag Ward
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E: diveclub@thedivingclub.co.uk

Social Secretary

Irina Wade
E: social@thedivingclub.co.uk

Membership Secretary

Clare Selwyn
E: membership@thedivingclub.co.uk

Publicity Officer

Berni Kehoe
E: publicity@thedivingclub.co.uk

Webmaster

Roger Selwyn
E: webmaster@thedivingclub.co.uk