

## Late Breaking: Chairman's Message



Many of you will be aware that Andy Saunders and four other members have decided to leave Sunstar and start another club. The committee has been working very hard since the end of November, when this came to light, to understand why he felt a new club was necessary. Andy and I have talked it through at length since November but I have not been able to understand what was causing his frustrations. We met again last Sunday, along with Dave Garratt from Andy's group and Tracey Skirrow from Sunstar, to try to clarify things further. Dave Lock came along as Regional Coach and Wilf Tanser as Area Coach to put the BSAC position and provide an arbitration service.

Andy quoted examples of a number of frustrations and concerns on the way the club is run which various members had voiced when he had 'phoned them. Some of these related to problems which are only too clear and which we have been working hard to solve for at least the past two years. For example the need for dive dates to be known in advance and available to all (see the calendar in Subscript), planned open water diving for CD and SD qualification, more effective communication generally within the club, and being more welcoming to families. Others appeared to have been triggered by personality clashes or single incidents, which all organisations of our size experience however hard they try to avoid them. But underlying these was a more disturbing message about people not feeling part of the club and being excluded from events. In particular that non-BT people were not treated equally and that a small inner clique had developed. As Chairman I must take full responsibility for this and I very much regret not being sufficiently in touch to realise the strength of feeling that appears to have been building up.

In addition it was felt that BT managers were running Sunstar as if it was a business rather than an informal club. I made it very clear when I took on the Chairman's role in November 98 that my view was that there were fundamental things we had to change if we were to survive, with so many more organisations around trying to attract members, such as the name of the club and connection to BT. I am very proud of what we have achieved in setting a new direction (see the "2001 Vision" reprinted in the recent newsletter) and the level of professionalism demonstrated in everything the committee has done. I therefore make no apology for that, but I do regret that those who had misgivings did not feel able to come and discuss them with me.

After much thought, I offered my resignation to the rest of the committee so that we could see whether a different Chairman and style would be more effective in implementing the remaining changes to the club that we have identified as necessary. Following their overwhelming support and unanimous view that I should remain in post until the end of my three year term, I have decided to stay on until the next AGM.

I am convinced that there is far more right with our club than serious problems and that the club will be strengthened even further by these recent experiences.

Let's make 2001 a very special diving year.

Mick Morley



# Sunstar Sub Aqua

## Dive trip to Exmouth in Devon 1-4 June 2000

I am putting together a dive trip to Exmouth in East Devon for the weekend of 2-3 June 2000 (which has good tides) - please reply to me if you would like to come along. This replaces the Cornwall trip mentioned earlier in the Sunstar diary of events.

The plan is to leave Ipswich on Friday 1.6.00 at lunchtime, have 3 days of diving (sat, sun, mon) and return Monday evening.

There is a good variety of diving available from Exmouth. Wrecks between 20-35 metres and scenic dives at shallower depths. Diving would mainly be from Southwest diver's big RIB although scenic shore dives are possible. Air and Nitrox fills are available.

See <http://www.southwestdivers.com> for the Southwest Diver website (which is also a franchise for Mike's Waterside Warehouse) - there is quite a lot of dive information available on their web pages.

Exmouth is a nice seaside town at the end of the M5, so travelling to it is fairly straightforward and faster than going to Cornwall (around 6 hours).

If you would like to come please email me at [mike.elliott@bt.com](mailto:mike.elliott@bt.com)  
or tel. 01473 640489 (work)