

SUBSCRIPT

The newsletter of the BT Research Sub Aqua Club, February 1997 issue.

LOADS OF CLUB HOLIDAYS FOR 1997!! Read on...

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- and many other interesting bits...

Further information:

Internet WWW

(from inside BT)

[http://archimedes.bt-](http://archimedes.bt-sys.bt.co.uk:8080/httpd/docs/BTRSAC/)

[sys.bt.co.uk:8080/httpd/docs/BTRSAC/](http://archimedes.bt-sys.bt.co.uk:8080/httpd/docs/BTRSAC/)

(from outside BT)

<http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/2473/>

Adline (01473) 644474

BTRSAC image clothing

John Cook

Frances will be putting in an order for some more of these soon. Frances & I both require some replacements for those that were burnt up on the minibus! There may be others out there who also need replacements, but this is another chance for any member to order anything from the catalogue.

The list is endless with lots of styles:

T-shirts

Sweatshirts

Hooded sweatshirts

Rugby shirts

Polo Shirts

Shorts

Jackets

Woolly hats

Everything is available in a wide range of colours too. Prices vary from 12-25 pounds depending on style, not cheap perhaps but those that have had the garments generally seem to be impressed with the quality.

To make your choice come down on a Club Monday night and look in Frances' catalogue which lists all the styles, colours and prices.

Expedition to the Farne Islands

Mick Morley

[It looks like there is a waiting list for this already but contact Mick anyway if you are interested-Ed]

I will be organising a trip to the Farnes, 12th - 15th September 1997, costing about £100 - £120 for diving and B&B. Diving will be mixture of wreck and scenic, suitable for Sports Diver and above. I have reproduced an article below which I wrote following a similar trip in September '93 to give you some idea of what it is like to dive there.

[For those who have already expressed interest:

I have booked a boat with a 20 mile operating licence (?), which takes 12 divers. Total cost for the 4 days is 640 pounds (53 pounds each if 12 go) I will be booking B&B (NOT Bunkhouse) accommodation in due course. This is likely to be about 60 pounds each for 4 nights. Could I ask anyone who would like to come to send me a deposit of 20 pounds to secure your place please. I will then start a waiting list.]

Dances with Seals

Mick Morley (September 1993)

Four days of beautiful diving off the Farne Islands was crowned with a spectacular encounter with grey seals. These underwater acrobats had been our companions on several of the earlier dives, swimming around us and nibbling our fins, but this last dive was very special.

We breakfasted early, loaded the boat and managed to get out of the harbour on a rapidly falling tide with just enough water left under the keel. A north-easterly breeze had raised a three foot swell, the first waves we had seen this visit. The horror stories of wall-to-wall vomit had not come to pass - flat seas and Ian's boat must have helped.

We reached Longstone End at 09:15 and Dave White and I dropped over the side 15 minutes later. A current was running so we swam towards the rocks before diving. Unfortunately we had swum a bit too close to the rocks, over a 1.5 metre platform in fact, so when we tried to dive, we found we could stand up. Further out and try again, that's better.

We decided to use an SMB and a buddy line in case we got separated in the current, so a free descent to 15 metres took us safely to the bottom. The colours of the rocks, kelp, dead-men's fingers and anemones were beautiful in the sunshine as it streamed through the clear water. We followed the rocks in and out of coves and gullies as we drifted effortlessly in the gentle current, seeing several large crabs, brittle stars, staghorn coral and hermit crabs along the cliff face with the kelp swaying gently above.

As we entered one of the coves we found a family of seals laying on the rocks on the bottom with some youngsters playing together above us. A nudge from behind announced their arrival as they checked out our cylinders and fins. They seemed to have a fascination with fins, rubbing their chins and noses around them and gently nibbling the ends. We have also seen them doing similar things to each other so I'm not sure whether this is as a sign of friendship or part of a mating ritual. If I get pregnant in the next month or so, we will know which it is.

We slowly descended until we were laying on the rocks, staying as still as we could. One of the young seals came over and stopped on the bottom

about two metres in front of me. I gently edged my way towards him keeping my hands by my sides to be as unthreatening as possible. When we were about one metre apart I found a small hermit crab on the bottom. I picked it up and dropped it again several times and the seal came closer and closer to see what I was doing. When his nose was about six inches away from my mask he sucked a piece of seaweed into his mouth and blew it out again. He did the same thing two or three times and then moved closer until his nose was touching my mask. He gently rubbed his chin over my mask and up onto my head, presumably feeling the texture of my hood. It is an amazing feeling being that close to a wild creature in its own environment and being trusted not to do it harm.

It was all too soon time to finish the dive and we had to take our leave of the family. We made our way back to the boat - the end of a brilliant dive.

Donation to RNLI in memory of Steve Jensen

Daren Wood

The family and friends of Steve Jensen would like to thank all those who donated gifts to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) in his memory. A total of around £5,000 was collected with generous contributions from Steve's employers, BT and Cellnet, accounting for around two thirds of this amount.

A new MFDSC Radio has been ordered for the 'RNLB The Baltic Exchange II' which did so much in searching for Steve when he was lost off the coast of South Devon in August last year.

A plaque commemorating all your donations will be placed in the Salcombe Lifeboat Station and will bear the following inscription:

'The cost of the MFDSC Radio fitted to 'RNLB The Baltic Exchange II' was met by gifts from family, friends, BT and Cellnet in memory of Steve Jensen 1997'.

The purchase of radio equipment for the 'RNLB The Baltic Exchange II' is particularly fitting given Steve's career as a respected manager in the mobile telecommunications industry and the fact that the Baltic Exchange building in London was once a Cellnet radio site.

Editor's bit

Phil Sheppard



[Sorry still no SCUBA kit!]

Well it's only been two and a half months since the last issue and look at all the info stuffed into this issue! Just goes to show what an active club we have. Do please take the time to read and thanks to those who have contributed. New contributors always welcome. Also does anybody have any interesting (diving-related)

pictures that I could reproduce next issue - perhaps some underwater shots to whet our appetite?

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!!!

If you haven't renewed by now you've missed the discount deadline but never mind just look at all the holidays, trips and events the club organises (to say nothing of the excellent newsletter) and renew now! -Ed

Medical requirements - recent information

Andy Collicott

Changes to BSAC medical examination requirements in March 1995 meant that the chest X-ray was discontinued and members between the ages of thirty and forty required re-examination every five years rather than three as before. This gave rise to the question 'Can the validity of an existing three year Certificate of Fitness to Dive' be extended to five years?'

Initially, informal advice suggested that it could, but the UK Sports Diving Medical Committee have subsequently formulated this following policy and advice:

Extending Certificates of Fitness

For divers that are between thirty and forty, there may be a situation where an extension of a Medical Certificate is requested. The Medical Committee has discussed this and has suggested the following:

- Only the doctor who supplied the original certificate can extend it.
- The doctor should discuss the extension with the diver to ascertain that nothing significant has changed since the examination (this could be done over the phone).

- Other doctors, non-medical personnel and the diver should NOT extend the certificate.

- If in any doubt as to the medical fitness, a repeat medical examination should be done.

DO Doings

Pete Young



Due to some oversight on someone's part it appears that I have been re-elected as DO! Apologies for the absence of DO Doings in the last 2 newsletters: one didn't get written and the other one disappeared during the changeover of

newsletter editors [nothing to do with us surely - Ed & ex-Ed]. Hope Phil has better luck getting me to meet deadlines than Suzanne did!

Loads of stuff has happened since the last time I wrote anything in this column, most of which has been chronicled elsewhere. Raj gave a good description of the conflagration which destroyed all our diving gear on the A1, and since then we've mostly been finding out all sorts of interesting things about household insurance policies.

No-one had specific diving gear insurance, but most of us were able to recover our losses from house contents insurance policies under a clause which covers items temporarily away from the home. Of course, this doesn't cover your gear if it is damaged or lost during use, or if it is stolen from a vehicle: but we were able to file claims because the damage was caused by fire.

If you have household insurance and you're relying on it to cover your diving gear my advice is to check the small print, and if necessary purchase a top-up policy to cover the gear when it is in use if that worries you. Since I will soon have a large quantity of new gear to play with, I'm thinking hard about some specific insurance for it.

The return journey apart, the Scapa Flow holiday was most enjoyable, and my thanks to all the participants for all getting on famously and indulging my little idiosyncrasies: it certainly made the job of organising the trip much easier. Next time we go by plane - Easyjet Heathrow to Inverness is £29! My abiding memory will be Paul Brannan's comment the morning after a late return to the MV Karin and a low tide

required a flying leap from the Quay onto the deck. "We knew it was you", said Paul, "we didn't think anybody else would be delivering anvils at that time in the morning!"

By the time you read this it will be the time of year when people are thinking about going diving again. I'd like to ask everyone to make sure that their gear is in good working order, and that regulators have been properly serviced over the winter. Also, please make sure you take the proper precautions for diving in cold water, and start gently and work up your depths and times.

To aid the smooth running of branch dives this year, a Dive Marshalling symposium will be held in early 1997 - details can be found elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter. The purpose of this is to pass on some information about recent changes to BSAC safe diving practices and to make sure that all the Dive Marshals are up to date with current techniques. I hope that as many Advanced Divers and Dive Leaders as possible will be able to attend this event, and if anyone else wants to come along please let me know - we'll fit you in if numbers allow.

There's also a report on the Diving Officer's Conference elsewhere in this newsletter. Once again the Incident Report highlighted the peak in the number of incidents happening at the start of the diving season because people weren't adequately prepared. Be ready, and be careful.

BSAC Diving Officer's Conference 1996

Pete Young

This is my report on the Diving Officer's Conference, which took place at Wembley Conference Centre at the end of November. Despite the nonsense written about the event in Diver magazine, this is the most important conference in the UK for recreational diving and deserves a detailed report. Besides the guest speakers and what Dave Lock calls the "what we did on our holidays" slots, there were some important announcements which I'll try and summarise here.

Safe Diving Practices

There has been a number of changes to Safe Diving Practices, mostly to do with conservation. The BSAC now recommends that you do not collect shellfish. If you do, only take mature ones and make sure they're not berried, and only take enough for your own

personal needs (nice to see BSAC getting in line with BTRSAC for a change!).

Other changes: the wording on the section on assisted ascents has been changed to emphasise that an alternative air source is the prime method of assisted ascent and that all divers should carry one: BSAC Nitrox tables are mandated for planning dives with Nitrox.

Anyone with access to the Internet will be able to read the Safe Diving Practices leaflet and lots of other interesting things on the BSAC's own www site, <http://www.bsac.com/> in the new year.

It also emerged that BSAC is to reconsider its policy on solo diving and the use of rebreathers for sport diving. The NDO is considering whether buddy breathing should still be taught.

BSAC Nitrox training

Details of the BSAC Nitrox training and tables were given. There are currently 3 courses: Basic Nitrox is a 1-day theory class open to Sport Diver and teaches the use of the BSAC Nitrox tables for non-decompression diving. Advanced Nitrox is a 2-day theory/practical course available to Dive Leaders who have done the Basic course, and teaches decompression diving on mixes up to 50%. Finally there is a 2-day combined course for experienced Dive Leaders who haven't done the Basic course.

Nitrox courses from other agencies will not gain equivalent qualifications, but they will allow divers to transfer to the BSAC scheme. For example, an IANTD Basic Nitrox diver can attend a BSAC Advanced Nitrox course.

An Extended Range course will be available in late 1997. This will be open to BSAC Advanced Divers with Advanced Nitrox, and will concentrate on deep air diving and the use of Nitrox mixes of more than 50% for decompression. This will be aimed at recreational benefits rather than being a stage to become a Trimix diver: BSAC does not believe that Heliox and Trimix are suitable for the recreational diver. A rebreather course is also likely to be available in 1998, with a generic module plus an equipment-specific module to be taught by the rebreather manufacturers.

Incident Report

The Incident Report contained the usual collection of tragedy, folly, incompetence, bad planning and flat-out bad luck. 14 divers died in 1996, 7 from BSAC including Steve Jensen. This seems like a lot, but is 4

fewer than last year and is a tiny fraction of the number of successful dives. Many of the non-fatal incidents were caused by poorly serviced engines and regulators, and by divers getting lost on the surface. All these are avoidable: you can all make sure your gear is serviced every year and carry a surface visibility aid such as a flag or a delayed SMB.

I have a copy of the report if anyone would like to read it. It should also be available on BSAC's www site when that goes live. I'll pick out one incident for special mention, to discourage anyone who thinks that doing your own equipment maintenance is a good idea.

"The pillar valve of a diving cylinder exploded from the cylinder during filling. Extensive structural damage was caused to the building, and the operator received severe arm and ear injuries. The cylinder thread was 3/4" BSP and a new valve had been fitted which had an M25 thread. The new valve had been fitted by the owner under what have been described as DIY conditions."

Events for 1997 and information for instructors

A full programme of events for 1997 was circulated. The Eastern Region events were published in the last newsletter and Tim has put a copy on the www page. If anyone wishes to consider courses outside the region please contact me or John Cook for details. In passing, I note that BSAC is running not one but two SDCs on Coral Reef ecology this year, in that well-known tropical paradise, Northampton.

There have been minor changes to the O2 administration, PRM and First Aid for Divers courses. There is to be a new Rescue First Aid award. BSAC also plan to introduce a rule change at the next AGM which will lower the minimum age for SCUBA training from 14 to 12 years old. This will bring BSAC into line with PADI - note that the Diving Officer will need to decide whether a person of such tender years is suitable to be put through the training.

BSAC will soon introduce a Disability Awareness course. This is a formalisation of much that BSAC already does to enable the disabled diver to participate in the sport, and the intention is to put in place the necessary safeguards to enable those currently unable to take part to do so. More details are available from me or by writing to Fran Duinker at BSAC HQ.

BSAC has produced a new publication in the training manuals series entitled 'The Teaching of Sport Diving'. This seems to be a well-written and well-illustrated

publication and was selling extremely well at the BSAC stand.

Also, just to note that anyone who wishes to be an Advanced Instructor now has to complete an Open Water Instructor qualification first.

Other presentations

Dr. Maurice Cross from the Diving Diseases Research Centre gave a presentation which showed us what the new DDRC looks like, including a shot of the new "Saddam Hussein Memorial Chamber".

The new pot was destined for Iraq until the Gulf War broke out, and Maurice got it cheap at a boot fair. It is big enough to treat an entire RIB-full of divers at one sitting. Despite the usual incisive wit ("during the years all kinds of crazies have been down to see us - this is the Avon and Somerset Police Diving Team"), Maurice is an angry man. He is currently investigating diving fisherman populations in Indonesia, and someone is supplying these guys with enough kit to get themselves very seriously bent. Being a member of DDRC costs only a covenant of 15 per year for 5 years. I'm a member - if you're not, why not?

The much-hyped Sylvia Earl was rather less than convincing, and rambled on too long, hampered it must be said by spectacular incompetence from the back-room boys, who clearly need a 6-year old on the team to operate the video recorder. Don Walsh, the deepest man on earth, gave a rather more interesting presentation on the history of submersibles. Rico had the funniest slides but the feeblest material, going off on a diatribe against pollution from Sellafield.

Finally, spell-checking buffs might like to know that Microsoft thinks 'Saddam' should be 'Sadism', and DDRC should be 'DARK'. On the other hand, everyone knows that PADI should say 'PAID'!

Eastbourne diving on the (new) Taurus

Pete Young

Dear divers,
You're getting this message because (1) you're a member of BTRSAC or (2) you came out on Taurus last year which has earned you priority over the great unwashed on NDG.

Steve Howland has a new boat, still called Taurus, which will now take up to 12 divers. Costs will be 300

per day, which is 25 each assuming we can fill her, plus the cost of air which I think will remain at 2.50per fill.

Sites will be the usual deep (35-45 m) wrecks, possibly we will be able to try some new stuff because the new boat will be able to go a bit further. You will need to be Dive Leader or equivalent and preferably equipped with twins or pony bottles (Spare Air doesn't count unless your name is Barbie!)

I have the following dates for 1997.

Thurs 10th/Fri 11th July - Low Water Springs in the morning - early start

Thurs 4th/Fri 5th September - Ditto

Saturday 18th/Sunday 19th October - No idea about the tides but it's a bithit and miss with the weather at this time of the year.

Please email [or phone if you haven't got email- Ed]me to let me know your preferred dates. I'll need a deposit of 10 quid for each pair of days. Payable to either P Young or S.Howland, sent to me , 7, Fernhill Close, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1LB.

Full payment will be required 4 weeks before the sailing date.



[What happens on Taurus? - well, reproduced from last July's Subscript on this page two pictures that show eminent members of our club living the excitement! - Ed]



West Midlands Regional Conference

Wilf Tanser

Dave Lock's foreword:

Anyone fancy going to this, the talk on grant aid should be particularly interesting to the committee. After the news in Diver about some clubs getting more than £15,000 we must progress our application!! By the way Bury St. Edmunds got a very nice boat for £16,545!!!

Hello divers,

Just to let you all know the West Midlands coaching scheme are holding a diving conference on 2 February 1997 at Walsall Memorial Hall.

Details are on my home page:-

http://www.btinternet.com/~wilf.tanser/reg_conf.htm

tickets are available on site from me,

Email:- tanserwg@boat.bt.co.uk

Diving at Weybourne

John Cook

Just a note to set provisional dates for the annual club outing to Weybourne.

Good low tidal stream weekends are:

- 11-13th July (mostly before the schoolhols)
- 1-3 August (mostly during schoolhols, therefore busier)

Please put these dates in your diary.

We'll aim to go both weekends but of course this will depend on viz, weather, availability of Marshals etc.

I'm looking for volunteers to:

- 1) Tow boat
- 2) Marshal dives (at least 2 people each day)
- 3) Cox boat (Buzo) (at least 2 people each day)

I recognise that there is a conflict on the 11th July with a planned trip by some members to Eastbourne, so I'm particularly interested in finding people available to help out on that day when I won't be able to be there myself.

[For those of you who haven't been on a Weybourne weekend yet - it is excellent, lots of dives very close to the coast in shallow water and a great social get together as well - Ed]

Trip to the Dive Show

Kate Potter is organising a club trip to the show on 22nd March (Sat).

If you're interested please contact her on 01394 387453

Costs will depend on level of interest but should work out around the 15 pound mark including show ticket.

Nitrox courses

Dave Lock

Having done an IANTD Advanced Nitrox course and recently having taught on a BSAC Combined Nitrox course, I'll try and tell you the differences.

IANTD - mixes up to 40%, deco mixes up to 50%

EADs, Buhlman Tables - photocopies only!!

O2 tracking, CNS and OTU

Photocopied workbook of poor standard!

Lots of calculations

BSAC - mixes up to 40%, deco mixes up to 50%

No EADs, BSAC level 1 tables for 21%, 27%, 32% and 36% - hard copies

O2 tracking as above but OTU becomes UPTD

Excellent quality workbook

No calculations, everything in tables

I was pleasantly surprised at the standard of material available from BSAC. I was horrified at the amount of maths on the IANTD course, each step could lead to error. The BSAC system seems to be the best, the problem is that we only run 2 courses a year! If you

need further info or a glance at the materials, BSAC or IANTD, please contact me.

Scapa Flow diving

Chris Pitts

We are currently trying to pull together a trip to Scapa Flow, Orkneys on the MVF Karin liveaboard (John Thornton's boat, for those who know him).

The proposed dates are the 12th-17th October this year. Total cost will be around 300 GBP, including travel.

There are some spaces still available.

The diving will not be mega-deep or demanding, but it will not be suitable for Novices or newly-qualified Sport/Club divers. You will need to be dive-fit, and some experience of 30m+ would be desirable.

If you are interested, then contact me by email, snail mail or phone. 70 GBP deposit (non-refundable) is required ASAP so that we can confirm the booking.

Branch Officer's book

John Cook

I am now the owner (on the club's behalf) of an up-to-date branch officer's handbook.

This was ordered sometime ago at Daren's instigation but the book was out of print at the time. It was reprinted last September when we should have been sent it automatically as an outstanding order. But it seemed to have got lost in the mailshop's files somewhere and I've had to convince them that they owe it to us. Anyway it's finally arrived.

It is a reference book for information about how BSAC is organised (or not as it seems sometimes), how to organise clubs, training courses and qualifications available, insurance and stuff like that. I could put it on circulation but I fear it'll go missing again. Instead I'll act as keeper and if anyone wants to see it I'll send it to them on the understanding its home is with me. Then if anyone else wants it with a bit of luck I'll know where it is!

(Unless anyone else wants this job.....)

1997 Eastern Region Coaching Scheme SDCs*

[this information supplied by Dave Lock↓, the list just keeps on growing doesn't it Dave! - Ed]



| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---|
| January 18/19 | Advanced Nitrox | Ipswich |
| January 26 | First Class Theory Prep | Ipswich |
| February 8/9 | Oxygen Admin | Havering |
| March 8 | First Aid for Divers | Havering |
| March 9 | Oxygen Admin | Ipswich |
| **March 22 | Equipment Care | Ipswich ** Late news: will NOT run on this date - Ed contact Paul Brannan for further information. |
| March 23 | Decompression Workshop | Ipswich |
| April 5/6 | Search & Recovery | Ipswich |
| April 26/27 | Boathandling & Diver/Cox | Ipswich/Felixstowe |
| May 17 | Practical Rescue Management | Guildenburgh or Ipswich |
| June 28/29 | Dive Planning and Marshalling | Portland |
| September 13/14 | Chartwork and Position Fixing | Ipswich/Felixstowe |
| September 27 | Practical Rescue Management | Guildenburgh or Ipswich |
| October 4/5 | Boathandling & Diver/Cox | Ipswich/Felixstowe |
| October 18/19 | Advanced Nitrox | Ipswich |
| November 22 | Oxygen Admin | Norwich |
| November 23 | First Class Theory Prep | Ipswich |

* SDC = Skill Development Course

Local (Branch) SDCs 1997

Marine Radio Operation

Dive Planning and Marshalling

Outboard and Boat Maintenance

I need to have at least 6 weeks notice to arrange Branch SDCs, so contact me in good time. If you need to see a syllabus or want to know the entry level for any SDC you can ring me, Dave Lock on 01473 605622.

Diving kit for sale

Typhoon Tracer Drysuit - suitable for 5ft 8" - 5ft 10" person

Size 6 boot

As new condition (used only six times) complete with Thinsulate undersuit (also only used six times) and inflation hose.

Total cost new L680.

Accept L340.00

Tel: Sara Kennell - 01473 287084

Mares Vector 840 Stab Jacket - size medium

As new condition complete with inflation bottle.

L220.00

Tel: Sara Kennell - 01473 287084

DIARY DATES

Subscript deadline

31 March 1997.

Early submission of articles appreciated.

Events, courses (SEE ALSO the SDC list on the previous 2 pages) and holidays

| Date | Event (all holidays!) | Contact |
|------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| February | Red Sea / Jordan | Roy Lobbett |
| 22 March | Trip to the Dive Show | Kate Potter |
| 10/11 July OR | Eastbourne on board Taurus | Pete Young |
| 4/5 September OR | | |
| 18/19 October | | |
| 11-13 July | Weybourne | John Cook |
| 1-3 August | Weybourne | John Cook |
| August | Skelligs, Ireland | John Cook |
| 12-15 September | Farne Islands | Mick Morley |
| 12-17 October | Scapa Flow | Chris Pitts |

Next committee meeting

Monday 10th March, 7pm at the Lord Nelson pub.