

# SUBSCRIPT

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

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Night Dives - with a difference
- Extra safety, or not?
- Weybourne marshalling - the complete guide
- Doctor for medicals
- Diary dates
- ...and more

### 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**

## Club Communications

*Phil Sheppard (Editor)*

I have been asked to remind everybody about the means we have for distributing information (e.g. about dive trips, social events etc.) within our club, so here goes:

**Subscript** - published every 2 to 3 months and available in electronic form from the BT internal web page for BT people or paper copies sent to none-BT people.

**Adline** - A telephone information line maintained by Paul Brannan (see above for number). Paul manages to keep this well up to date so it is worth checking regularly.

**Email** - An email distribution list, set up by Pete Young, is available to anybody with email. E-mail sent to [bt-diving@srd.bt.co.uk](mailto:bt-diving@srd.bt.co.uk) will be copied to all members of the distribution list. Please don't use to send trivia or you will become rather unpopular! Send email to [majordomo@srd.bt.co.uk](mailto:majordomo@srd.bt.co.uk) for subscription information.

**WWW** - a comprehensive set of pages now exists maintained by Tim Stevens. The BT-internal pages

are more comprehensive but a public web page also exists. See left for the URLs.

**Pub** - The Lord Nelson! Monday nights after training has completed is a good time to meet people.

**Contact list** - Maintained regularly by Andy Collicott. The latest version is available from Andy in electronic form and a paper copy is sent out with Subscript to non-BT members.

## Route changes out of Felixstowe Ferry

*Ken Gould*

Please note that there have been some changes to the route out of Felixstowe Ferry.

There is now a red can buoy just around the corner from the jetty. This marks the position of a sand bank which is particularly hazardous at low tide. Please keep the red can to starboard on the way out and port on the way back into the jetty. (The bank is on the Felixstowe side of the buoy).

The position of the Deben Bar and Woodbridge Haven buoys have moved further south. The new positions are in the GPS and their waypoint numbers are:

030 Woodbridge Haven

031 Deben Bar

## Editor's bit

Phil Sheppard



Those of you who are eager readers of Subscript may have noticed that this issue is a month later than originally planned. My excuse this time is pictured below. Our baby daughter, Victoria, was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> May at 8.35pm and weighed 7 lb 6 Oz. Eleven weeks later

and she is 13 lb 11 Oz! [Now I know what it is like to be one of those people who go on and on about how wonderful their baby is and how it is the most beautiful and advanced baby ever!]. Mother and baby are doing well.



Anyway, back to Subscript, I'd like to add a bit about two of the articles in this issue:-

Night diving (Roy Lobbett) - I haven't done as much night diving as Roy but I certainly agree they can be superb. In particular one in the Red Sea (Sharm El Sheikh, Near Garden) which ranks as probably the best dive I have ever done. We saw amongst many other things an octopus, a 1 metre long segmented worm and

with our lights switched off we would sparkle with phosphorescent plankton when we moved - magic.

Weybourne marshalling (Daren Wood) - With 88 dives in the first weekend and over 50 on the second weekend Weybourne has been another great success this year. Daren has written down a host of useful information that is well worth keeping for reference whether you are planning to marshal a Weybourne trip or just want to know about how to get there, where to stay, what you will see etc.

Thanks to all those who continue to send me articles.

## Night Dives -- *with a difference*

Roy Lobbett

I was recently asked how many night dives I had done. My answer was in excess of 10, probably around 20; but this set me thinking to the range of night dives I had done.

**Shallowest = 4m** in a local lake where there used to be rainbow trout half asleep at night. Their stripes would show up very well in our torches. I also used to see several eels about 2/3 m long, one was asleep and it took several prods to wake it. After a slow start it then went off like a rocket. During one dive we encountered lots of baby fish which were coming straight at us and hurting. Apart from swimming against the school our lights were probably blinding them.

**Deepest = 18m** in the Maldives. Night diving it not really about depth -it's more about looking at night life.

Lots of coral, parrot fish, puffer fish, lion fish & several rays which I believe had been visiting an area around the corner where they were being fed at sunset.

Overwhelmed with the amount of life. It was a site I had not only dived before but had covered very well down to about 10 m whilst snorkelling on several occasions over a two week period.

The first thing I did when I spoke to the dive school about local diving was ask to go on a night dive. There were not enough experienced divers on the island at the time and their fallback was to go with me if no-one suitable turns up. Well, after

quite a few dives -still no night dive and the weather was not looking too good. Meanwhile I had a "T" shirt made showing "Night Dive Maldives" and told the dive school that I could not possibly go back and wear this without having done a night dive. When at last I did the dive I walked into the restaurant later that same evening with the "T" shirt on to lots of applause and laughter from the dive school (everyone else wondered what was going on).

**Coldest approx. 2 deg. C** at Gildenburgh in Feb. Wearing every bit of insulation available to me e.g. undersuit, drysuit, two hoods and dry gloves. I was cool in the legs (I have a compressed neoprene drysuit which is thin), but comfortable & it was my second dive that day.

The water was very clear. The dive was good fun with two of us doing a nitrox course with an instructor. We each had powerful torches and at one stage there was a person in the top floor of the double Decker bus fully lighting it and another person in the lower deck fully lighting it and yours truly entering the bus by the open door (at 15m) feeling almost like I was picking up a well lit bus along the street at night. We saw several large perch swimming in the open.

**Warmest 27 deg. C** in the Maldives. Wearing a short thin wet suit. Any warmer & all I would need is a towel after the dive.

**Most colourful** with the most sea life in the red sea /Sharm diving with Nigel Willis. We covered quite a lot of coast line and saw a lot of sea life including an octopus which did it's best to hide from us by changing it's colour and shape to blend in with the rocks.

One of the **main attractions of a night dive** is to see night life which you will not see during the day. Lion fish freely roam at night and are a joy to follow as they glide along. Some creatures like a parrot fish are very approachable at night since they sleep under coral and can often surround themselves in a cocoon.

A lot of sea creatures glow at night, particularly plankton and several corals open up to feed on plankton. The corals often close if a light is shone on them.

I often feel sorry for some fish which are either asleep or hiding and suddenly a diver finds it with a powerful torch and then several other divers join in with their torches and the poor creature is better lit than in daylight. If I was a predator I would just follow night divers around.

As we finned back to the boat on the surface we could see the stars with a new moon on it's back near the horizon with Venus immediately above it.

**Lowest visibility** = a night dive search for a canoe in a 4m lake where the viz. was zero in places due to the silt being stirred up through people trying to find the canoe earlier in the day. We found it, got our air paid for and a pint each to boot.

**Most fun** = after a 340 mile drive to Plymouth for a diving holiday we cooled off by having a night dive in and around the bay at Bovisand. There had been a severe storm in 1988 which had caused a lot of damage to the area and we were familiar with the site which had changed quite a bit due to the storm e.g. a 25 ft ladder we used to climb was now on the seabed. There was also the challenge of looking for a cannon and anchor which Bovisand moves around when doing lifting courses.

The moon was out. It helped to light our way & give a reference point.

Please note you need permission from the dive centre at Fort Bovisand to do such a dive and must have an SMB. I had placed a flashing light on ours.

**Site I dived the most at night** is the local 4m lake where my dive buddy (Gary Edmed) worked. We had special permission to dive there and at one stage (several years ago) ran a couple of try night dives for several members of this club.

**With an underwater video camera** and light in the red sea. I have two complete night dives filmed. The first was in full darkness and I only picked out what appeared in the lights including an octopus and sleeping parrot fish. The second was just before darkness fell, this was to see the change-over of sea life as darkness fell. The day creatures going to sleep and the night life coming out. The camera was on a very low light

setting which picked out a lot more divers and sea creatures including lion and puffer fish.

**Poorest weather** was during a severe storm at sea/ on the coast, but the dive was in the 4m inland lake which was very well sheltered by trees. Despite being in dry suits it was quite cold due to being winter & the wind chill factor, particularly after the dive. I do not think there could have been many other people diving that day let alone at night.

**Next poorest weather** was in the red sea on the second night dive. We embarked from behind the shelter of a jetty. It was high tide and the waves were breaking over the jetty (onshore wind). The visibility was poor to the left of the jetty (it reminded us of Felixstowe) due to the sand being stirred up but the visibility to the right where we spent most of our time was pretty good due to being more rocky.

We were 5 experienced divers from the club (Dave Borthwick, Raj Mistry, Howard Westlake, Mike Saucedo & myself) who had a solid dive plan & kept together as a group throughout the whole dive. Some novices were going to be taken in that evening but had to abort due to the conditions, any worse & we would not have done it.

Nigel Willis & myself had explored the proposed night dive site in the afternoon of the day and several of us had previously dived there, so we knew it well. We also asked for and took advice from the local dive site owner (with respect to the conditions) who helped to guide us back to the jetty with a powerful torch. Dave Borthwick had also placed a strobe on the jetty underwater.

**Craziest** thing done during a night dive was in the second night dive of the red sea was where we all planned to settle down on a sandy part of the seabed as a group and turn our lights off and wait to see what comes out. We would then turn our lights on again to see it. The biggest surprise was the lack of things which came out. We saw a crab like creature and a puffer.

We did not discuss exactly how long we would sit there before turning our lights back on again. It was the case of who was going to break first. In reality, we probably did not go longer than a

minute but we were all thinking who will turn his light on first. In case you would like to see this I have it all on video, where this part is absolutely dark and consists of the sound of bubbles from yours truly (nearest the camera) breathing from my DV.

Most of these dives lasted 45 mins. This is due to ensuring that the safety cover knew when we were coming up.

### **Basic recommendations for a night dive:-**

1 Do a practice night dive in shallow, controlled conditions, with low lighting to try-out yourself and your gear e.g. Broomhill or Gildenburgh.

I often try to arrange for a night dive session at Broomhill swimming pool at the end of the season, please come along if we use Broomhill this year, it's ideal conditions to give it a try.

2 If you haven't night dived before, dive with a partner who has.

### **More detail /with my preferences:-**

3 Have no problems prior to the dive with anything. Be conversant with your gear and your partner's.

4 Have two torches. A main and a small back-up. A strobe is also useful. Use new or good condition batteries & check them & the torch before the dive.

I often wear a small torch on my mask at the side of my head during a night dive. This is very useful for hands off. I've used it to keep track of my partner (quick glance), to give hand signals by lighting my hand, to read gauges and found it very useful after a dive to put my gear away.

Some people wear a helmet with torches on. In either case, one has to learn not to look directly at one's partner else one can blind him/her.

5 Have a solid dive plan e.g. pre-determine the maximum depth (say 15m max, 10m typical) and dive time (say 45min) and if necessary define sensible limits on how far one goes underwater.

Given air or any other factor is not an issue, if go

out from a point, turn around on time e.g. 22 mins out & 22 mins back.

6 Know the site. Dive it in daylight beforehand to ensure you know where you are diving, in particular to avoid hazards and can sensibly plan the dive.

7 Have shore cover with a light defining entry and exit points.

8 Use gauges which are very clear, easy to read & glow once lit. A compass is often useful - it depends upon what you are doing.

9 Ideally, avoid poor weather, currents / tides.

10 Be aware of residual nitrogen from the night dive with respect to possibly effecting a dive the next morning (mainly applies on diving holidays).

11 **Most importantly to round it off, have some-one with a hot drink (though some would say a pint), some food and a smile, waiting for you after a night dive.**

Please consult the BSAC manuals & club lectures for additional info.

**...Have Fun.**

## Emergency Navy line is unchanged

*[There was some confusion a while ago as it appeared from a notice in Diver that the emergency line had been cancelled - according to this information supplied to me by Ken Gould it has not. However it is still true to say that at sea the Coastguard should be the primary point of contact (or local emergency services inland) - Ed]*

The Royal Navy's Institute of Naval Medicine in Gosport has issued a corrective statement regarding its emergency telephone service for divers involved in decompression-related incidents, with reference to last month's Diver news item Emergency Navy line is discontinued. The Navy states that mobile number 0831 151 523 has "been in use for several years and has neither been discontinued nor relocated to Plymouth". The number is manned 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by a Duty Diving Medical Officer at the Institute. "The telephone number may be contacted for emergency or non-urgent diving medical advice," the Institute states. "The Duty Diving Medical Officer can accept referrals for recompression treatment [at the nearby Royal

Hospital Haslar] and liaise with other hyperbaric centres on referrals and treatment both in the UK and abroad."

"If for any reason this number cannot be reached, contact can also be made via the switchboard at the Royal Hospital Haslar on 01705 584255."

Divers are also offered a 24-hour emergency telephone service by the Hyperbaric Medical Centre (DDRC Plymouth). The service runs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

"We are very happy for the line to be regarded as a national emergency line for British divers," says Dr John Shepherd of the DDRC.

"A doctor is always on hand to offer advice."

The DDRC emergency advice number is 01752 261910.

## Medicals

*Tim Stevens*

I've recently had a medical from a local GP who is ex RN, and a hyperbaric specialist. He'll do medicals for 30 GBP as long as there's more than 1 at a time. He also said he was happy to be phoned up with general diving type questions. Best to contact via the Stowmarket health centre, I should think.

*[Note from Ed - you may find that your own GP will give a discounted rate for diving medicals for people on their books (mine does)...but you may feel you want somebody with special diving medical knowledge, and this is a very good price]*

Details reproduced from his flyer:

"Dr Simon Rudland BMed Sci BM BS DA DRCOG MRCP

General Practitioner with a special interest in diving medicine

Career Synopsis:

Qualified from Nottingham University to join the Royal Navy & pursue a special interest in diving. Qualified ship's diving officer, Senior Medical Officer HMS Challenger, saturation diving and seabed operations vessel.

Medical Officer submarine escape establishment HMS Dolphin, where trained in the water to instructor standard, including 30m bottom drops. Visiting registrar Freemantle Hyperbaric centre Western Australia, busiest hyperbaric centre in Australia.

Currently:  
General Practitioner  
Stowmarket Health Centre  
01449 615151

Clinical Assistant  
Emergency Department  
Ipswich Hospital

Contact:  
Via DiveLine  
01473 715533  
Mobile  
0402 262726"  
Though he did say his mobile no. is going to change.

## **DON'T DRINK AND DIVE - Yo-ho-ho for Boozy treasure hunter**

*[This article picked up from scuba-uk by Pete Young. It seemed appropriate to put it immediately after the medical info! No idea if it is true - I hope not! - Ed]*

A diver was rushed to hospital suffering from suspected bends had a simpler excuse for his staggering and slurred speech - too much rum. Rescuers who airlifted him to hospital thought he'd surfaced too quickly. But his bender in the pub the night before was the cause of the trouble. The diver began reeling around after hunting for sunken treasure in a deserted cove near Weymouth, Dorset. He was slurring his words and complaining of feeling dizzy - the classic symptoms of the dreaded bends, caused by rapid decompression sickness.

A full scale emergency was launched and a helicopter flew him to the recompression chamber at nearby Poole Hospital. But there doctors found that the problem was a nasty hangover from the night before. A coastguard said "The symptoms are very similar - dizziness, slurring words, pins and needles in the arms and vomiting. It was eventually found that this man had seriously indulged on the alcoholic nectar the previous evening. He didn't need to go to the chamber. At the end of the day if someone staggers out of a pub in a diver's suit with a bottle on his back, we would take the same precautions".

## **Beware the dangers of added safety**

*Mick Morley*

It is obviously in the best interest of every practising diver to ensure that safety margins are as wide as can be sensibly achieved for each dive. For example, the use of a completely independent air supply such as a pony cylinder significantly reduces the dangers associated with failure of first or second stage, associated hardware such as the cylinder's pillar valve, O ring, etc and plain running out of air. In addition, the move from breathing air to breathing Nitrox reduces the risks of decompression illness by reducing the proportion of nitrogen being absorbed into tissues.

However in introducing these changes, the complexity of the diver's systems can also increase. This complexity can introduce new dangers of its own, which paradoxically can reduce the safety margins. We all must be sure that whilst striving for safer and safer diving methods we take account of this added level of complexity.

Whilst on a recent dive trip, I experienced first hand examples of this phenomenon. In the first instance, I learned a valuable lesson concerning Nitrox computers and computer-based diving in general. Although I was diving on air, and had been on the previous dive, I assumed that the Nitrox setting on the computer had not been changed. After entering the water as usual and descending the shot-line, I was surprised to find my computer alarm sounding continuously and the display flashing when I reached approximately 25 metres. On carefully checking the display, it became apparent that the oxygen mix setting had been changed to 46%. The computer was therefore telling me that I was entering central nervous system oxygen toxicity levels and that I should return to a shallower depth. I later concluded that this erroneous setting must have happened whilst I was washing the computer after the previous dive. Because the computer screen is normally blank before entering the water, it is not obvious that anything has changed. Also, once in the water, the settings cannot be changed and you are stuck with the current setup. Running a computer suitable for Nitrox diving had therefore put me in a situation where, although the time and depth readings were still perfectly valid, the decompression information was wrong.

The lesson learned is always to set your computer into surface mode whilst kitting up to check that it is functioning correctly, battery levels are adequate and

that such settings as the oxygen levels are appropriately set.

The second situation happened later the same day. Approximately 15 minutes into the dive at a depth of about 36 metres I suddenly experienced difficulty in breathing and then complete failure of the air supply. I reached down to get the pony cylinder demand valve from the holder and found that it was not in place. Because my main regulator also has a octopus second stage which I use when instructing, I had put this octopus into the pocket of my STAB jacket out of the way. I therefore got the octopus out of the pocket and prayed that the supply failure was due to a second stage problem and that this one would therefore work. Pressing the purge button showed that there was air available and with considerable relief I found that the demand valve functioned perfectly. I tried again breathing from the valve which had given problems and found it was still impossible to draw any air from it. I therefore return to the octopus and signalled to my buddy that we should terminate the dive. We had only just gone into decompression time so it was only necessary to stop for two minutes at three metres. After returning to the boat and dekitting, I again tried the regulator which had failed and found that it was still not working. On careful examination of the rest of the rig, I discovered that the contents gauge for the pony cylinder showed that it was completely empty. The main cylinder however still contain 150 bar of the 200 bar that I started with. I therefore concluded that I had used the pony cylinder throughout the dive and had completely breathed it dry. Checking the contents gauge during the dive had consistently shown me that I still had plenty of air left and I obviously could not have looked at the readings closely enough to noticed that it wasn't dropping at all. I must have inadvertently placed the wrong demand valve in my mouth immediately before entering the water and, as both my main DV and my pony DV are the same model, I had not noticed.

For me the lesson is therefore that the pony cylinder demand valve must be made to be obviously different from the main cylinder valves. This is recommended practice when using high Oxygen mixes in ponies for decompression so that you don't inadvertently exceed safe partial pressures, but it also seems sensible for other reasons. I have now colour-coded the hose to the pony valve with a flexible sleaving which also means that it feels considerably different and is instantly recognisable.

In trying to make my diving safer, I have also made it more complex. This complexity has to be properly managed by thinking through potential problems,

learning from your own and other people's mistakes and modifying practices appropriately.

## **Try dive - help wanted**

*Ray Mistry*

The next try dive sessions will be on the 18 August 1997 and 1 September 1997. I am looking for volunteers to instruct the try divers on the night. A number of our club instructors will be away on holiday on these dates so I will be looking for people who have done this before but may not necessarily be club instructors.

We will also need people to assist with equipment on these sessions so let me know if you can help. I will send out a time table of events and who is doing what once I have your responses.

Also, if you know of anyone interested in having a go then give me their names and I will chase them. I still have a few places to fill so the more the merrier.

# Marshalling the Weybourne expedition

*Daren Wood*

After several years of club diving off the same shingle beach on the north Norfolk coast, the annual dive expeditions to Weybourne have become something of an institution in our club.

Here is a practical account of this summer's three-day trip which took place on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July 1997; the first of two such weekends this year - the second being 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1997.

## Getting there

The 80 mile journey to Weybourne from Ipswich normally takes less than 2 hours. Starting from Ipswich, head towards Bury St Edmunds on the A14 (formerly the A45) until you get to the junction with the A140. Turn off the A14 onto the A140 and head towards Norwich. On reaching the Norwich inner ring road (ignore the new outer ring road which is 2 miles South of the city), turn left onto the clockwise carriageway and follow the signs to Cromer which will take you back onto the A140 north of Norwich. After passing Norwich airport, turn left on to the B1149 to Holt. On reaching the mini-roundabout at Holt, turn right onto the A148 and head towards Cromer. Turn left towards Weybourne (the turning is about 3 miles from Holt and is sign-posted).

## Finding the beach

On reaching the first junction at Weybourne village, turn right towards the church and then left onto the A149 towards Hunstanton and King's Lynn. Take the first right turn next to the Spar shop and following the road down to the Pay and Display car park. Parking here costs £1.50 for 5 hours or more - if you forget to pay and display, you may find yourself fined £25 (or £10 if you pay the fine promptly) - an attendant checks the car park every day !

## Accommodation

Foxhills camp site tends to be most favoured by club members who intend camping. To get to it take the A149 from Weybourne towards Hunstanton for about half a mile. At the top of the hill, you will see the second of two signposts to the Muckleburgh Collection of military vehicles. Foxhills camp site is directly opposite this sign-post and you will need to make a sharp hairpin turn to drive into the entrance - watch-out for traffic coming towards you over the brow of the hill ! It is advisable to book your pitch about a week in advance, particularly in August. Give the proprietors, Mr. & Mrs. Wharton, a call on Weybourne (01263) 588253. The cost is £5 per person per night.

You can take a caravan to the Foxhills site if you are a member of the Caravan Club, otherwise the second most favoured site is the Kelling Heath Holiday Park. This is on the road half-way between Weybourne and the A148 as detailed in the above section on how to get to Weybourne. As you head out of Weybourne towards the A148, the Holiday Park will be about one mile on the right. Book about a week in advance by calling Weybourne (01263) 588181. The cost is £11.75 per night (£13.50 with electricity) - an additional awning or small ridge tent will cost £1.45 extra. A tent pitch is the same cost as a caravan - better go to Foxhills !

## Food

If you don't want to take your own provisions with you, there is a Spar shop in Weybourne village on the junction with the A149 and the road that leads to the Pay-and-Display car park as detailed in the above section on finding the beach. This is open from 8:00am to 8:00pm every day except Sunday when it opens at 8:30am. Here you can buy basic groceries (milk, bread, etc.), ready-made sandwiches and pasties, drinks (water, soft drinks and alcohol !) and various other bits and bobs such as maps, postcards and dressed crab (in case you don't catch one of your own !).

For an evening meal and drinks, the club tends to meet-up in the Maltings Hotel which is at the foot of the hill leading towards the Foxhills camp site (to stagger back to your tent !). A typical starter costs about £3.00 and a main course costs about £6.50. There is an a-la-carte menu but it is VERY expensive ! A pint of Wolf bitter costs £1.60. Rather than descend upon them en-masse, give them a call on Weybourne (01263) 588731 to book a table or two - a table for 10 at about 7:00pm is usually sufficient ! Booking a table in July is not usually a problem but it gets busy in August. They stop serving at 9:00pm sharp; indeed, you will have problems finding anywhere serving food at this time in the evening !

## Communications

There is a public payphone in Weybourne village on the side of the A149 between the Spar shop and the church. Take a few 10p and 20p pieces in case you need to use it. There is also a private payphone in the Maltings hotel. If you've got a BT Chargecard you'll be able to use it with the public payphone but not the private one.

If you've got a mobile phone then check which network it operates on. Cellnet digital (GSM) coverage in this area is very poor; indeed, you may have to drive a few miles in-land towards Cromer to get a decent signal but the Cellnet analogue (TACS) coverage is reasonable. Vodafone, however, have kindly erected a digital base station next to the Foxhills camp site !

The Dive Marshal should ensure that the club VHF transportable is taken on the expedition to contact Yarmouth Coastguard. Before and after each day's diving they should be called on Channel 16 and they will usually ask you to change to Channel 67 where you should remind them of your details, advise them of how many are in the party that day, that you intend diving in several waves throughout the day on the Rosalie and gullies between Weybourne beach and Sherringham - give them the co-ordinates if they ask for them. This is also a useful way of checking the radio(s). It is useful to take a second VHF transportable, if possible, for communication between the boat and shore on Channel 06. Both transportables will need to be re-charged overnight so some sort of battery charger will need to be arranged. A pair of binoculars is also handy to keep a watchful eye on the boat and see when the divers have been recovered.

The Marshal should contact the Yarmouth regional Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) on Yarmouth (01493) 851338 a day or two before the expedition to advise them of the imminent arrival of around 30 divers to their shores ! They will want to know the description of the boat (Buzo is a 4 metre orange inflatable), a contact number if there is one (perhaps someone's mobile phone number - preferably with voice messaging such as Cellnet's Callback enabled) and the precise locations of the dive sites; the Rosalie lies 52° 57'N, 1° 8.3'E and the gullies run from West of Weybourne beach (52° 57'N, 1° 9'E) to Sherringham lifeboat station (52°57'N, 1° 12'E) - about 2 miles. The Coastguard may also want to know the call sign of the VHF Transportable - it is T101191.

## Weather

If the wind is Force 3 or above from North, there will probably be too much surf to launch the boat. However, it may still be possible to launch up to Force 5 if the wind is blowing from the South. Light rain is not normally a problem.

It's worth keeping an eye on television/newspaper weather reports for about a week ahead of the expedition. About 2 days before the expedition make a call to the MarineCall service on 0891 500 455 (for the area covering the Wash to North Foreland in Kent). Calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p per minute at all other times.

Radio 4 broadcast general forecasts at 0048, 0555, 1355 and 1750 local time (British Summer Time between 30<sup>th</sup> March 1997 and 26<sup>th</sup> March 1997 inclusive) on 198kHz and a coastal waters forecast at 0550 local time. It's a good idea to get a MetFax for the next three days the day before the first day's diving - lift the facsimile handset, dial 0336 400 472 (for the area covering North Norfolk) and press START/RECEIVE after the message or set FAX to POLL receive mode. Calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p per minute at all other times. Any problems, call the helpline on Bracknell (01344) 854435 or fax 01344 854018.

It is worth arranging for an advance party to get to Weybourne the night before the first day's diving to keep a watch on local conditions as they are sometimes at odds with national forecasts. The forecast for Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July 1997 was for North-easterly Force 5 in the morning veering South-westerly and dropping to Force 3 by the evening; in actual fact it began Force 3 (gentle breeze) Easterly and veered Southerly dropping to Force 2 (light breeze) by the evening. The rest of the weekend the wind was a South-westerly Force 1 (light air) and the sea state was calm - perfect !

Yarmouth Coastguard broadcast local & strong wind forecasts at 0040, 0240, 0440, 0640, 0840, 1040, 1240, 1440, 1640, 1840, 2040 and 2240 local time on Channel 67. Bacton Radio broadcast storm warnings at 0303, 0733, 0903, 1503, 1933 and 2103 universal time (Greenwich Mean Time) on Channel 07.

## Tides

All times are British Summer Time (BST).

The nearest harbour to Weybourne is Blakeney which lies 5 miles to the West. The standard port for Blakeney is Immingham. On neap tides there is likely to be about 5 minutes difference between Weybourne and Blakeney Bar.

Accordingly, during neap tides:

High Water (HW) at Weybourne is 30 minutes after HW at Immingham, and  
Low Water (LW) at Weybourne is 35 minutes after LW at Immingham.

For Friday 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July 1997 the HW tide times at Immingham were as follows:

Friday 11/7/97	Saturday 12/7/97	Sunday 13/7/97
1035	1116	1206

### High Water at Immingham

Slack water at Weybourne was observed to be 2 hours before HW at Immingham and 4 hours after HW at Immingham. This may be summarised as follows:

	Friday 11/7/97	Saturday 12/7/97	Sunday 13/7/97
Slack water (A)	0835	0916	1006
Slack water (B)	1435	1516	1606

### Slack water at Weybourne

The tide sets easterly for about 6 hours after Slack water (A) and westerly for approximately 5 hours before Slack water (A).

About Neaps the tidal rates are about 50% of Springs so the Rosalie was diveable with a current of less than 0.5 knots 30 minutes before Slack water (A) and 1 hour before Slack water (B) for about 2 hours.

	Friday 11/7/97	Saturday 12/7/97	Sunday 13/7/97
Slack window (A)	0805-1005	0916-1116	1006-1206
Slack window (B)	1335-1535	1416-1616	1506-1706

### Slack windows at Weybourne

Dividing the above slack windows into three waves produced the following boat launch times:

Wave	Friday 11/7/97	Saturday 12/7/97	Sunday 13/7/97
1	0805	0846	0936
2	0845	0926	1016
3	0925	1006	1056
1	1335	1416	1506
2	1415	1456	1546
3	1455	1536	1626

## Boat launch times for wreck diving the Rosalie

As it turned out, the first pair of divers on the Friday went down to tie a buoy on to the Rosalie at 1007 just as the slack ended at 1005 ! However, another dive on Saturday ended at 1425 when the current was observed to be slack.

In order to get at least three waves of divers onto the Rosalie, dive times should be limited to about 30 minutes. It took 10 minutes between loading the boat with fully kitted divers and dropping them onto the wreck site and another 10 minutes to recover the divers and unload the boat back at the launch site - an average round-trip time of 50 minutes. However, the slack window was only two hours so we were a bit pushed for time - a dive pair abandoned their dive at 1005 on the Saturday because the current was too strong for them !

Whilst there are 6 hours between Slack water (A) and Slack water (B), there are only three and a half hours between slack windows as follows:

	Friday 11/7/97	Saturday 12/7/97	Sunday 13/7/97
Drift window (A)	1005-1335	1116-1446	1206-1536
Drift window (B)	1535-	1616-	1706-

## Drift diving times at Weybourne

To fit 3 waves of drift dives only gives 1 hour and 10 minutes each as follows:

Wave	Friday 11/7/97	Saturday 12/7/97	Sunday 13/7/97
1	1005	1116	1206
2	1115	1226	1316
3	1225	1336	1426

## Boat launch times for drift diving the Gullies

In order to get at least three waves of divers onto the gullies, dive times should be limited to about 30 minutes. It took 30 minutes between loading the boat with fully kitted divers and dropping them onto the drift site and another 30 minutes to recover the divers and unload the boat back at the launch site - an average round-trip time of an hour and a half. However, with only 1 hour and 10 minutes between slacks windows we were, again, a bit pushed for time and, in fact, one or two drift dives were decidedly static !

The maximum current occurs at HW Immingham for 4 hours

## Launching and recovering the boat

Weybourne beach seems to get steeper every year ! It's a heavy shingle bank that is constantly eroded by the sea and re-built by the fishermen. The easiest way to launch and recover is to persuade them to tow the boat up and down the bank with one of their tractors. Failing that, you will need a long length (at least 30 metres) of sturdy rope a heavy vehicle with tow hook/bar and a lot of manpower ! The manpower help the vehicle haul the boat and trailer up the shingle bank in stages and hold the boat while the rope is re-tied to the vehicle between hauls.

## Finding the Rosalie

At High Water, the wreck of the Rosalie will be fully submerged. If possible, buoy the wreck at Low Water when part of the wreck is clearly visible or take bearings of the visible obstacles from the shore. Sometimes there is a lobster pot buoy on the wreck but this cannot be relied upon as this is not always the case and may, indeed, not be on the wreck at all !

Alternatively, the Rosalie lies on a transit running from the furthest of two gates from the launch site visible on shore; the first gate faces East/West whilst the second gate faces North/South. Line-up the left-hand gate post of the North/South facing gate so that it appears to touch the footpath behind it. Move along this transit until the middle of three radio masts to the West appears to be directly in the middle of the outer masts. Beware of the obstacles which will only be about 2 or 3 metres below the surface at High Water and may be just below the surface at other times.

## **Finding the Gullies**

Experience over the years suggests that there are two sets of gullies. The better gullies lie almost immediately off the shore at Sherringham, just past the lifeboat station. However, it takes Buzo with the Mariner 40 and six divers up to half an hour to get here from Weybourne beach - even with a smooth sea and no wind. It is advisable for these gullies be dived on a Westward tide so that the dive party will drift back towards Weybourne.

With up to 3 waves of divers waiting to dive the gullies, it is better to try and find the nearer set of gullies. The extreme West of these gullies lie about half a mile North of the cottages perched precariously on the edge of the Weybourne cliffs about half a mile East of the launch site. On a westward tide, it will be necessary to start the drift at least half a mile further West of this point. Its normally a good idea for the cox to drop the divers in amongst the lobster pot buoys. The fishermen may well come out to see you're not damaging/raiding their pots but a friendly wave and a chat should reassure them !

The Cox should advise the party that if they run into a sandy bed on the Gullies nearest to Weybourne they should swim out to sea for the best chance of finding the gullies (that is, swim to the left on an easterly drift or swim to the right on a westerly drift) - this advice should also ensure that the drift party doesn't disperse in all directions. Conversely, they should swim further inshore when diving the Gullies just off Sherringham.

## **Re-charging air cylinders**

Every diver should bring enough air for two 10 metre dives for about 30 minutes. At an average consumption rate of 25L/minute at the surface, this equates to 3000 Litres (a 15L cylinder or two 7.5L cylinders at 200 Bar) - novices should bring at least two 10L cylinders !

At the end of the first two day's diving, these cylinders will need to be re-charged. This was normally done by taking the cylinders en masse to JW Automarine but they have now sold their large compressor.

Instead, Nordive at Fakenham (about 17 miles from Weybourne) will exchange up to 20 of their full cylinders for our empties (there's no charge for their cylinders !) - we then swap them over again the following evening. Arrange this about a week in advance by calling Chris or Ian on Fakenham (01485) 528007. They close at 3:00pm and open again at 6:00pm until 8:00pm including Sunday. However, they will open anytime if needed. Cost is £3 for a 15L fill and £2 for smaller cylinder fills.

An alternative is Rowleys Dive Shop in Holt. Arrange this about a week in advance by calling them on Holt (01263) 711126. They open from 9:00am to 5:00pm but will open at other times by arrangement. However, their compressor (which is not actually in Holt and can only charge six 10L cylinders per hour) was out of service on the weekend of Friday 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July 1997.

As a last option, the local club has a new small compressor on a trailer about 5 minutes from Holt or there is Kings Water Sports in Lowestoft (01502) 730182. Oxygen clean cylinders cannot be filled at any of these stations with the possible exception of Lowestoft.

## **Costs**

At the end of the expedition, the costs were calculated and found to be as follows:

Petrol for the boat came to £46-40 for the whole weekend. Petrol for towing the boat came to £10.18 each way; this was refunded to the person(s) towing the boat ! This equated to about 66p per dive to cover these costs.

In addition, the club charges £5 per person per dive to cover the maintenance of the boat so each dive cost £5.66.

Whilst air re-charging cost £3 per 15L fill and £2 per fill for less than 15L, the people who transported the cylinders to and from the compressor were reimbursed for their petrol. Thus each diver was, in fact, charged £3.97 for each 15L fill, £2.64 for a fill of less than 15L and £1.49 to re-fill a pony cylinder.

So a typical diver, diving 6 dives over the weekend with two 10L cylinders was presented with a final bill of around £45 - most people, however, only dived a day or two and so only paid a fraction of this !

### **And finally ... a few tips for the Marshal !**

Marshalling a typical Weybourne expedition is no easy task. With, typically, 90 dives over 3 days some serious delegation is essential if you are to get some diving in yourself !

Take at least 2 marshalling slates; one on the boat for the cox to record air (cylinder capacity and pressure), time in and time up/dive time for each diver while the information from the previous dive on the other slate is transferred to paper before being cleaned ready for the next wave of divers. A folder containing at least 30 log sheets should be taken for this purpose together with pens/pencils (tied to the folder !) and rubbers for cleaning the slates. Appoint someone to swap-over the slates as dive waves are being changed (its a good exercise for a novice !). It is important that this task is done and is done consistently, so the same person should do this throughout the whole day (different people can do it on other days). When that person is diving, they should be given leave to do this while their kit is unloaded from the boat for them by the rest of the party !

Entry and exit RG should be recorded on the paper sheets once the dive details have been entered. This task can be shared-out amongst any other novices on the shore who are not diving in the next wave (and, therefore, not worrying about getting kitted-up); its a useful exercise in using dive tables so make sure you take some BSAC tables with you !

Use a pair of binoculars to see when divers have been recovered. It will take the boat about 5 minutes to then return from the Rosalie and 10 minutes from a drift dive (20 minutes if the drift ends at Sherringham). A 5 minute call for the next wave of divers to fully kit-up can then be made so that they are ready to get straight into the boat when it returns. A second VHF transportable can also assist in this process - particularly if drift diving off Sherringham which may be too far away to see clearly. Make sure someone is ready to relieve the Cox and is fully briefed as to the next wave (see finding the Rosalie and Gullies above) !

My thanks go to the Dive Marshals for the weekend; Andy Saunders (Friday), John Cook (Saturday) and Mick Morley (Sunday) for reviewing this article. Thanks also to Charles Newbigging for helping me with the tidal information.

# 1997 Eastern Region Coaching Scheme SDCs\*



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

## 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.

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\* SDC = Skill Development Course

## DIARY DATES

### Subscript deadline

20 September 1997.

Early submission of articles appreciated.

### Events, courses (SEE ALSO the SDC list on the previous page) and holidays

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event (all holidays!)</b>	<b>Contact</b>
17-23 August	Skelligs, Ireland	John Cook
24-30 August	Mull	Simon Keating
12-15 September	Farne Islands	Mick Morley
12-17 October	Scapa Flow	Chris Pitts
20 November	Red Sea, Sharm El Sheik	Mick Morley
5 December	Club Christmas Meal Marlborough Hotel Henley Road, Ipswich	Frances Cook