

SUBSCRIPT

The newsletter of the BT Research Sub-Aqua Club, October 1998



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Further information:

Internet WWW

From inside BT:

<http://webserver.bt-sys.bt.co.uk/httpd/docs/BTRSAC/>

From outside BT:

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

Adline (01473) 644474

AGM date

Jon Legh-Smith

This is advance notice of the 1998 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the BTRSAC.

27th November 1998 7:00pm
Small Lecture Theatre, BT Labs

A formal announcement and initial agenda will be mailed to all members of the club in the next few days. In the meantime you should put this into your diary!

You may also like to start thinking about any Motions you would like to put before the meeting. Motions need to be registered with me 7 days before the AGM (20th Nov).

You should also consider the opportunity to put yourself forward for one of the Committee posts. All committee posts are renewed annually and hence are open to members. Note however that you must be a BT member to eligible for the posts of Secretary, Chairman or Treasurer.

I will provide more details in the formal announcement. In the meantime if you have an queries please get in touch.

Club Focuses Once Again on Disabled

Dave Tonge

On 20 June, more than 20 club members helped disabled people to enjoy a SCUBA try dive at Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre pool. The SCUBA session was part of a special Disability Focus Day, organised by the local authority, and designed to provide an easy opportunity for disabled people to "have a go" at a variety of sports they might normally find more difficult to take part in. 10 students took up the challenge - many proving exceedingly competent in the water, and all thoroughly enjoying the experience of "weightlessness".

Feedback from students and organisers on the day was very positive, and the club has since received a letter of thanks from Ian Bliss from the organisation "Rethink Disability", which states:

"May I just extend a huge Thank You from all the organisers of the Disability Focus day. The event was a huge success, and the SCUBA diving certainly proved

to be a very popular activity. We were all impressed with the enormous effort and commitment provided by yourselves in a voluntary capacity....."

Can I pass on my thanks in turn to all who helped out on the day, and especially to Mick Morley who set up the event in the first instance.

Editor's bit

Phil Sheppard



Not much room for me to add anything – the articles have been building up over the past couple of months. Apologies to some of you non-BT people who didn't receive paper copies of the previous issue – I shall check the labels better this time. See you all at the AGM!

Chairman's Corner

Dave Lock



Hi all,

I've recently been enjoying the delights (or otherwise) of Oktoberfest here in Munich. Working in Germany means I've had to dash back to the UK at weekends to try and get some diving in. Unfortunately the weather has not been too kind to us this year and trips have been cancelled more often than not. However we will have to look at sheltered sites, possibly Weymouth, next year if we are to help our trainees to get to Club Diver and above. If there is enough support I'm sure we can get all our trainees to Club Diver early on and then we can go diving, which is what it's all about.

The AGM date will be fixed soon and will be published in the normal ways. Several important positions are coming free as the incumbents (is that the right word) have served 3 years and have to retire. I would ask you all to think about helping the club by either volunteering

for a committee position or an assistant position. It has been evident to me that there are a precious few doing all the hard work in the club. Often this can help them become disillusioned and retire from the sport, I'm sure that none of us want this to happen so put your names forward now!

We also need people to qualify as Dive Marshalls (Advanced Diver), boathandlers and instructors of all levels. To start helping this along there is a subsidy to help people get on the Instructor Training Course, this has some restrictions and should be published in the last Committee Meeting Minutes. I do not envisage financially helping people to obtain the other qualifications but perhaps we can run Branch SDCs to make them a little cheaper. On this point I've had virtually no input to my offer of running Branch SDCs so can I assume they are not needed? I need to know well in advance of any courses that people need as a lot of planning has to take place plus my time is limited. I am to take up a newly created position in the Eastern Region in November, this will be made formal at Underwater World. This means my time to support the branch will be even more restricted so I need to plan branch SDCs during the next month. Of course both Brian and Wilf have offered to help but they will have other things to do as well. [See the information about possible SDCs from Tracey Skirrow in this issue – Ed]

The social scene has died down recently, I know Dave Garrett has tried to organise several things but these have been cancelled due to lack of support. I'm sure that Dave has put a lot of work into arranging these gatherings but then gets no support from club members. I encourage you all to support Dave in making these social events a success. If the events are not to your taste please let Dave know, he cannot read minds!

I guess this will be the last Newsletter before the AGM where I intend to step down as Chair, so I would like to thank you all for your support during the year. It's not been easy trying to communicate with everyone from Munich so I hope this hasn't caused too many problems. I intend writing a speech for the AGM so even if I can't make the meeting I will be able to review the year and offer guidance for the next committee. My contract in Germany is finishing soon so I hope to see you all at the Christmas dinner. I don't know where my next employment will be but I'll certainly be around to help BTRSAC, Eastern Region and the Instructor Training Scheme. I'll also be on Mick's trip to the Red Sea in November, diving with my Yellow Turtle [where's the picture Dave? – Ed] and hopefully making not too many bubbles, see some of you there.

Caption Competition

The result - Ed

A bottle of wine (Red or White?) goes to Mike Saucedo for his caption below – thanks for entering Mike, I wish you'd had more competition! But I did like this one, it shows you've been reading Subscript.



Figure 1 “Don't interrupt me - while I check my Nitrox mix with van der Waals equation.”

Because of the huge lack of entries for this competition I've decided to award myself a bottle of wine for the caption on Fig 2. Yes it may be rubbish but you could have won a bottle if you'd entered!



Figure 2 (voice from the side) “These novices will do anything if you tell them they get a certificate”

Northern Isles

Pete Young

This is the story of my trip to the Orkney Islands in May 1998. Along with Chris Pitts and Helen Johnstone of the Argonauts, and my buddy for the week Anke Otto from Leeds BSAC, I was a guest of Reading BSAC on their second annual expedition on the MV Jean Elaine. The plan was to explore some of the seldom-dived wrecks outside Scapa Flow, assuming that the weather would let us, and also to sample the sights of some of the outlying islands.

As part of my normal methodical preparation (hah!) I visited the shop in Woodbridge to buy a chart of the Orkneys. Fat chance. It actually requires 5 or 6 charts to adequately cover the whole of the Northern Isles, and the only alternative was a yachting map which consisted of green bits marked 'don't hit this' on a blue background!



The first dive was a warm-up on the Karlsruhe in Scapa Flow, the shallowest of the 4 destroyers from the scuttled German fleet. She lies in an area of the flow where there is a little more tide, and the visibility is usually better than the other wrecks of the Imperial High Seas fleet. This proved to be a very pleasant and undemanding dive, a welcome opportunity for us to get used to diving again after the long winter break. Following lunch in Lyness on Hoy, the adventure began in earnest as we motored south of Flotta and out into

the Pentland Firth. We made our way north up the East coast of South Ronaldsay to the site of the day's second dive, the ex-blockship Aorangi in Holm Sound.

Aorangi turned out to be a shallow and well-broken up wreck in markedly better visibility than the morning's dive. Some brass was still in evidence and muffled hammering sounds were audible for most of the 40 minute dive. A lobster was liberated from a lost pot: East Coasters one, Reading nil! The other thing rapidly becoming apparent was that my neck seal was leaking like a sieve, not particularly enjoyable in the 8 degree water. Diving over, we moored up at Balfour on Shapinsay, within sight of the lights of Kirkwall across the stretch of water known as 'The String'.

The second day dawned a bright, shiny morning. We dropped a shot on a wreck near The String and then as the weather worsened we headed out east of Deerness to dive the Cotavia, a 4,000 Te merchant ship destroyed by a mine. As far as Angus the crewman's inflatable was concerned, the spoonerism also applied as he had moored the squidgy under the outlet pipe from the head. Things went from bad to worse for Angus when the wind got under the inflatable and flipped it upside down, engine and all.

The Cotavia turned out to be the best dive of the week for me due to the excellent 15metre visibility even at 39 metres. The wreck is missing its stern and is dominated by 3 huge boilers. There are many 4" gun shells near the stern and many lobsters, well hidden under the ships plates. Also notable were the large number of friendly Corkwing, Ballan and Cuckoo wrasse. An excellent wreck, not at all diminished by the prospect of having to endure 15 minutes decompression whilst being completely soaked from neck to waist.

I decided to miss the second dive, which turned out to be an exploration of a heap of scrap in 7 metres of kelp off Stronsay. Good decision! A few weathered portholes came up, which at least proves that there was something down there.

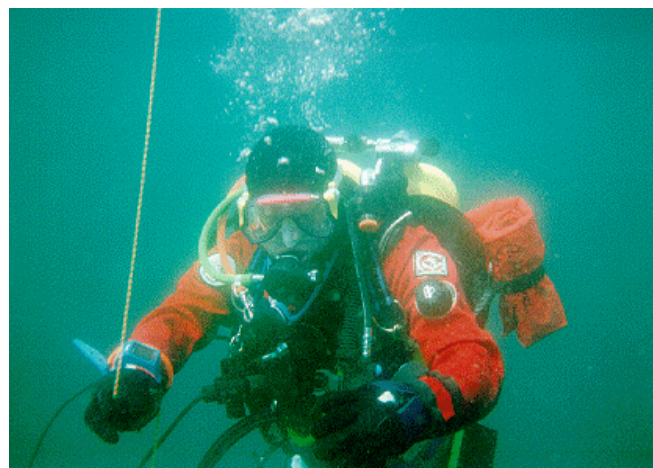
After a very entertaining night at Jimmy's bar in Stronsay we headed back into Shapinsay Sound to dive the Swiftsure, the wreck we had shotted the day before. Neck seal fortified with a length of surgical tubing tied round my neck, we headed down the shot to find loads of tide and no wreck. Instinct told us that the dark shape on the horizon was the wreck, which turned out to be one large boiler in a bed of what looked like kelp. My reaction was: "it can't be: kelp doesn't grow in 32m". I wasn't wrong. As the tide picked up still more, it became clear that the wreck was completely covered to a depth of several inches with bits of dead kelp frond

that had been washed onto it by the tide. Anke and I took shelter behind the boiler, contemplating the myriad tiny fish swimming in and out of its tubes, until tedium took over and we decided to come up.

Since provisions were running low Andy Cuthbertson, the skipper, decided that we'd dive a second wreck in the String and then head for Sainsbury's in Kirkwall. We found ourselves on the Endeavour, an 800 or so tonne boom defence vessel intact and upright on the bottom in 23m, completely covered with anemonies and dead mans fingers. Visibility was as much as 8m, even this close to Kirkwall. The wreck has sagged, and it is possible to swim under the forefoot and look up at the bow. Emerging from the shadow of the starboard side onto the south-facing port side was like going into a room and switching on the light, so bright was the orange and white carpet of anemonies growing on the wreck.

Suitable re-provisioned, we set out from Kirkwall to dive another boom defence vessel in the string and then make our way north in the direction of Westray. This un-named wreck was very similar to the Endeavour in size, but in slightly worse condition and canted over on her starboard side. Despite the wreck being dived frequently by Kirkwall sport divers, the bridge telegraph was recovered by one pair of divers after a lengthy bout of hammering. I was getting drenched again and didn't really notice the noise. Once again there were many wrasse on this wreck, including a particularly large and vivid-blue Cuckoo wrasse with a strong attraction for the video camera.

Following this dive, we headed North in steadily worsening weather conditions past Gairsay, Muckle Green Holm and Egilsay. As we set course to pass between Eday and Faray, we were able to look west into Westray Firth to see massive tide races and white breakers. Conditions which were to prove uncondusive to diving. We reached Red Head, the northernmost point of Eday, where research suggested that the remains of several trawlers were to be found. Once again I gave this dive a miss and wasn't sorry to have done so. We sailed north into Pierowall on Westray, to sample the wonderful locally-caught Haddock and dodge the man who took the 'O' out of Country 'n' Western music.



The plan for Thursday was to head down the west side of Westray to dive a wreck called the Llama, an oil tanker that was lost on Sea Skerries in Westray Firth. The group had dived this huge wreck, in 15-18m of water, last year and were confident that they were able to find the bell. Sadly, it was not to be: with winds force 4-5 West backing NW the swell rolling down Westray Firth had travelled all the way from the Faroe Islands and beyond. With memories of last year, and a 7-hour run through westerly gales to get back to the safety of the Flow, the decision was to do a drift dive off Noup Head and make a run for it before the wind picked up.

Noup Head is an extremely intimidating 200 foot cliff on the northern tip of Westray, populated by millions of seabirds. Throughout the dive, seabirds could be heard plummeting into the water in pursuit of fish suppers. The visibility wasn't good enough to see them. But wonder of wonders, I was dry once again: Chris had suggested I put a one-inch wide piece of motorcycle inner tube around my neck over the top of the latex seal, and it worked perfectly. All that training as BTRSAC equipment officer paid off! We made Scapa Flow in time for a second dive on the F2 and barge. Resigned to diving in the Flow, we drowned our sorrows in a pub at Moaness on the far end of Hoy, reached by a hair-raising trip in the Landlord's minibus which was in marginally worse condition than the one which caught fire on the way back from the last club trip to Scapa.

The last diving day was spend on more familiar territory in Scapa Flow, diving first the Dresden and then the blockship Tabarka, both of which will be familiar to those readers who made the trek to Orkney in 1996. Dresden is now showing signs of breaking up, there are areas of fresh metal all over the wreck and new holes in the bow. Having a decent torch makes entering this wreck a lot more comfortable and the visibility inside is much better than out. Having gone down two decks, through a huge hole behind the bridge, I was able to shine my torch and pick out the deck 2

more companionways below, so visibility inside the wreck was at least 20m.

Making our approach to Tabarka brought us very close to the wreck of the Inverlane, a famous landmark of Orkney and at one time one of the most popular dives in the Flow. Those days are now long-gone: the insistent tide between Hoy and Graemsay has turned the wreck onto her port side and much of the foredeck is now under water. Tabarka is also showing signs of old age: she is an upturned hull with all the bulkheads gone. The boilers have fallen from their mountings to lie on the sea bed and the engine will be joining them in the near future. All the pipework around the engine is loose and can easily be moved by hand, so great caution must be exercised by the diver in swimming around the engine lest some of these fragile and dangerous parts be disturbed.

On returning to Stromness I popped aboard the MV Karin to give my regards to John Thornton and Tom Easop, who some of you might remember from his presentation on Bikini Atoll at BT Labs. Tom is living in Stromness over the summer working on a photographic and book project on the Scapa wrecks. John is now singing the praises of the Buddy Inspiration, not surprising given that his open-circuit rig is now based on a manifolded pair of 19 litre cylinders!

This turned out to be an excellent week's diving, even though the weather interfered somewhat with the plan. The Jean Elaine is a very comfortable and seaworthy vessel with nitrox on board and an excellent skipper, and is kept very clean and in excellent order. The sites in the Northern Isles are refreshingly different from the run-of-the-mill stuff in the flow, more like the outer Hebrides in character. The only problem is that it takes 2 days to get there!

A cautionary tale concerning flooded torches.

Pete Young

T'other week we were diving on Taurus, and someone had a UK 1200 torch flood at 40m. Rather stupidly, he tightened up the lens at depth and so we could not undo it on the surface. So, he left it in a bucket and we forgot about it.

Until, 2.5 hours later, it exploded. There was a muffled explosion and the reflector shattered into half a dozen

pieces. The torch body rocketed about 100 feet into the air and came down in the sea 20 yards from the boat, leaving a trail of seawater and battery acid across the deck and some people's gear. We were very fortunate that the body didn't hit anyone, since it could have caused serious injury.

The moral of the story is: if your torch floods, make sure you undo it so that pressure cannot continue to build up, and if you notice it flood at the bottom don't tighten it up any more.

Having a Great Time In Bonaire

Andy Macknelly



The heat as you step off the 'plane washes over you as if you'd just opened a huge oven door. But after the journey from Stansted to Amsterdam and then a further 8 hours to get to Bonaire, just arriving brings feelings of relief and excitement. One of the Netherlands Antilles, Bonaire is still a destination that not many British divers visit. It is, however, popular with Dutch and Americans.

The journey into town is like most journeys out of airports: past industrial units and advertising hoardings, in this case asking visitors to keep Bonaire clean in what, ironically, must be the shabbiest part of the island. Then after a few minutes the taxi reaches the main shopping street of the capital, Kralendijk, and things get better: its small, a few tourist shops and several restaurants, but friendly and clean.

Once you get to the hotel, however, in this case Captain Don's Habitat, things get better still. We had a one-bedroomed apartment with a large lounge and dining area, a well-equipped kitchen (including dishwasher), shower room, patio and air conditioning. Which is a MUST! It was clean, quiet and well-decorated with original oil paintings on the walls.

Diving is something else: they actually treat you as an adult so after a compulsory shore dive to test

divers/equipment for rustiness you're on your own. Boat trips leave at 8.30 and 11.30 in the morning and at 1.30 in the afternoon. You can pay for 2 boat dives a day and then get unlimited shore diving: the tanks are all lined up for you: its simply a case of deciding how many dives you want to do. They point out that if you can't sleep you're welcome to come down, kit up and plunge in at three in the morning if you want to.



Many people hire cars or jeeps and drive to the dive sites themselves. The island is surrounded by a coral reef very close to the shore and in many cases you can reach the same sites that the boats go to just as easily by driving. If you want to do this, you pay a reduced rate for the day and can still dive as many times as you want. All of the sites are well marked by yellow rocks next to the road. There are a lot of truly excellent sites that can only be reached by boat, though, because they are off the shore of Bonaire's little uninhabited neighbour, Klein Bonaire. This is a haven for turtles (you get to see a lot of them during your stay) and the Bonaireans are campaigning vigorously to block plans to build a hotel on Klein. Anyone who loves to see turtles (which must surely mean all divers) ought to support their efforts because the beaches of Klein are one of the few places left where the turtles stand a chance of laying their eggs without being disturbed.

In many places, especially in the South of the island, there is a double reef so you can dive on the inner one and swim across a sand channel to the outer one. There are also 2 wrecks: one is a small boat in about 10 metres just off Captain Don's hotel and the other is a cargo ship called the Hilma Hooker. My 100th dive was on this wreck and yes, we heard all the obvious jokes about going down on it. The Hooker was smuggling drugs when it ran aground. The crew did a runner, no-one claimed the ship (or the drugs) and so the authorities scuttled the ship and burnt the several tons of marijuana. The story is that as the fires raged, many of the islanders rushed to get down wind and into the smoke.



Captain Don's has at 6 fast, large dive boats so even the furthest dive sites are only minutes away. On most of the trips we took there were about 10 divers; sometimes it was as low as 6 and occasionally the boat would fill up with 14. Once you get to a dive site (which, thanks to the efforts of Captain Don himself in the sixties and seventies, are all bouyed) the dive guide gives a brief introduction and off you go. The boat will stay until the last diver comes up and I'm faintly proud to say that that was usually the Brits: Diane and me. Diving is really easy because there is hardly any current and you can go in only two directions: left or right along the reef. The guides will dive but its likely you won't see them until you get back to the boat.

So, what are the highlights of diving in Bonaire? Well, the famed town pier as a night dive to see the sponges is a must. There are lots of turtles, masses of reef fish such as blue tangs, parrot fish and angels but for me the best experience was being in the middle of a circling shoal of bait fish so dense you couldn't see out. Other notable dives included finding the resident sea horse just off the hotel reef and a night dive where all of a sudden a tarpon at least 5 feet long appeared in the torch beam no more than 3 feet in front of me. We also saw a tiny frog fish that was so well camouflaged we could have missed it if it was next to our masks.

Less pleasant was another night dive, to look at the sea horses, when in the distance Di and I could see the lights of other divers approaching. All of a sudden they were everywhere: surrounding us, knocking into the coral, shining their lights in our eyes and generally being a right pain in the a***. And then they all turned and swam off back to the hotel up the coast from where presumably they'd come from. Weird.

Obviously I can't speak with any authority about other hotels on the island since I didn't stay anywhere else, but Captain Don's Habitat is certainly a great base to stay. Its (Welsh) Manager was enthusiastic, outgoing and seemed to care deeply about pleasing his guests. He even plays a mean guitar and got a band together for

one evening's entertainment. The hotel has mainly Dutch and American guests, which might explain its high standards: I mean, we Brits just don't complain enough. The hotel has a good swimming pool, restaurant and a relaxed open-air bar. For divers, the first class lecture rooms, excellent reef just in front of the hotel and refreshing attitude about diving freedom make it just great.

On several evenings each week the hotel hosts slide shows. One was by Dee Scarfe who has written several books about diving and has a different perspective to what we are used to. Basically, she argues that you need to touch things to love them and so its OK to touch anenomes (they don't sting, apparently) octopuses and so on. She has some excellent slides of having her fingers picked over by cleaner fish and shrimps.

Another slide show was presented by Jerry Schnabel who has had his work published widely and Captain Don himself also does a show in which he explains how he moved from selling coral to being a pioneer of reef conservation. All three shows were interesting enough to make them worth 2 viewings.



What else is there to do on Bonaire? Well, for non-divers the island has some wonderful scenery but its easy to do a full tour of it in one day since its only about 12 miles long. Many people do the tour on hired bikes. The Atlantic side is rough and rocky with incredible coral formations in bands up in the hills. It has the largest number of bird species in the Caribbean and the North of the island is a nature reserve. Incidentally, the whole reef, down to 60 metres is in a marine park which is strictly protected.

So... good points were the brilliant diving, the friendly people, the great hotel (although I'd swap the dishwasher for a TV), the excellent hotel staff and the weather. The water temperature doesn't vary much from 28C and the prevailing winds ensure that the west side of the island is usually calm.

Bad points were the long, long journey, especially since we had to get the second plane from Amsterdam to Stansted because apparently its not possible to get luggage from one plane to another in an hour and a half. This means that you get to spend 4 hours at Schipol. The smallness of the island means that on non-diving days there isn't a whole lot to do. Also, bit by bit, my gear packed up on me. First to go was my computer battery (no spares on the island) then the brand new first stage I'd borrowed blew an O ring and finally the purge button on my regulator popped out when it knocked gently against the floor. Yes, all three have been replaced! No real problems but all irritating because it meant that for a couple of dives I had to use American guages. Blimey, what does 3000 psi mean again and how deep is 55 feet?

But with all the pros and cons weighed up, is it worth it? Definitely!

Possible Skill Development Courses

Tracey Skirrow

Dave Lock has kindly offered to run/organise any Skill development courses we are interested in, so let's take advantage of him!

The SDC's which we could run are:

	Entry level	Duration (days)	Location
Rescue Courses			
Lifesaver Award	NI	2	P
Oxygen Administration	SD	1	C
First Aid for Divers	SD	1	C
Practical Rescue Management	SD	1	O
Advanced Lifesaver	SD+PRM+ FAD+LA	1	O
Technical Courses			
Equipment care	Any	1	C
Expeditions	SD	1	C
Search and Recovery	SD	2	O
Nitrox Diver	SD (+20 dives)	1	C
Advanced Nitrox	DL (+20 dives)	2	O
Combined Nitrox	DL (+20 dives)	2	O
Seamanship Courses			
Boathandling	Open	2	O
Diver Cox'n (Exam)	Boat handler+ open	1	O
Chartwork and			

Position Fixing	DL	2	O
Outboard and Boat Maintenance	SD	1	C

Scientific Courses

Marine Life Identification	SD	2	O
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The location of each course will be (P)ool, (O)pen Water or (C)lassroom

PRICES

At a rough guess each course which doesn't involve the use of a boat will cost 15 pounds per day plus expenses. If the course involves the use of a boat then the cost will be around 35 pounds plus any additional expenses. Final prices will be calculated once we know we have enough interest in a course and have some idea of the number of people attending.

REGIONAL COURSES

There are a few of the SDC's that BSAC offers missing from the above list, such as Dive Planning and Marshalling, Extended Range Diving and Advanced Diving Techniques this is because they involve diving activities and Dave would prefer that these are done on one of the regional courses at Weymouth, where there is less chance of the diving having to be called off because of bad weather.

If you are interested in any of these courses then let me know and I'll coordinate things. If you know of anyone in the club that doesn't have email access, please could you pass on these details to them. For more details see <http://www.bsac.com/learn/sdcguide.htm> (you'll also see that it's cheaper to do these courses as branch SDC's!)

If there is enough interest then the first one will be the Oxygen Administration course which will be run at BT labs in JANUARY (not November as I said on Monday) and the cost will be in the region of 15 pounds. I have 7 people interested in this course so far.

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How deep is deep?

Dave Tonge

On 28 September, before the pool session, Dave Tonge gave a talk at Fore St Pool entitled "How Deep is Deep?" The objective of the talk was to encourage a critical and informed approach to the risks of deeper diving.

Dave opened with two quotations from the October 98 issue of "Diver":

1. (page 32 - John Bantin) "They call it the Titanic of the Caribbean, and it seems to be visited by divers about as frequently as its northern counterpart. Which is strange, as it lies in a mere 50m of water....."
2. (page 78 - BSAC News) "A catalogue of diving accidents around Britain during August left five dead and numerous others bent. On 17 August, two divers, aged 20 and 50, from Leicester, died after diving on to a wreck at a depth of 50m, 25 miles off Littlehampton."

Dave went on to emphasise that it is all too easy these days to believe that 50m diving is a "piece of cake", a misconception unfortunately only reinforced by the kind of reporting quoted above. Ten years ago, 50m would have been considered far too deep for any but the most experienced, well-equipped and adventurous of divers. However, nothing has really changed to the human body over this period, and the risks of accident or misadventure remain much the same.

In order to continue to enjoy the sport of diving safely, Dave emphasised the need to adopt a progressive, professional and conservative approach to greater depth. He compared the degree of skill needed for deeper diving with that required for a winter mountaineering expedition - where years of experience, a high degree of skill, meticulous planning and top-range equipment are all pre-requisites for success.

Dave also described some useful work carried out by Roy Lobbett, to help quantify the need to dive regularly to keep skills up-to-date, and the progressive approach needed to build up safely to depth again after a lay-off.

Further contributions were made to the discussion by Pete Young, Tracey Skirrow, John Cook, and Mick Morley - who described the unanticipated dangers that can be encountered by carrying extra safety equipment!

The slides below give a good idea of the structure of the talk, which Dave is happy to repeat at any time an interested audience can be gathered together!

How Deep is Deep?

A Personal Perspective

by Dave Tonge

Risk Assessment - Walking



- Winter Mountaineering



- Fell Walking



- Country Ramble

- Walk in the park

Risk Assessment - Diving



- Shallow (say 0 - 10m)



- Intermediate (say 10m - 20m)

- Deep (say 20m - 30m)

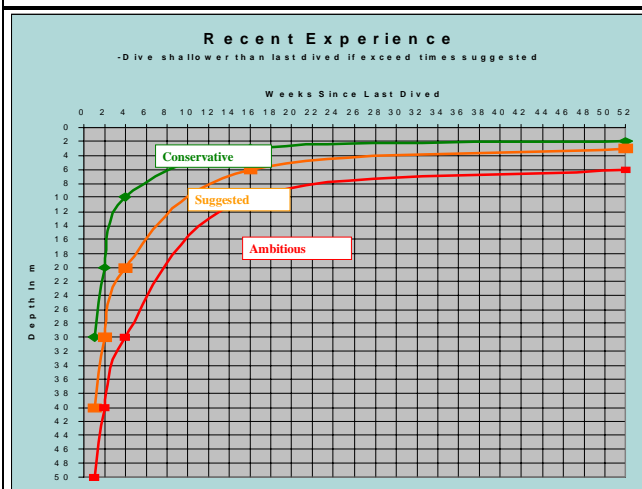


- Very deep (say 30m +)

How Deep is Deep?

Depends on many things, eg:

- Dive history/training
- Currency of diving skills
- Recent diving experience
- Personal dive fitness
- Equipment specification
- Dive site conditions



Deeper diving - risk factors

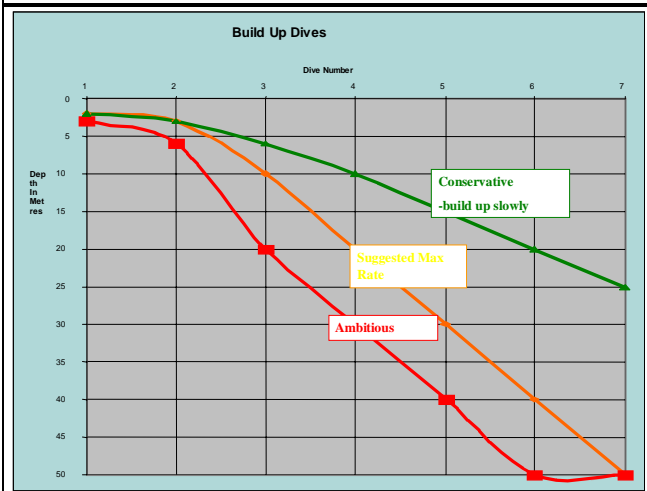
- Risk of gas toxicity effects
- Risk of DCS much higher
- Air used more quickly/denser to breathe
- Much further from the surface
- Usually much darker/colder/less colour
- Fear and apprehension greater

Why Dive Deep anyway?

- Most light and colour near the surface
- Most life in the top 15m
- Warmest in top 10m
- Gas toxicity effects minimal
- Danger from DCS minimal
- Longest safe dive times

How to enjoy Diving and Stay Safe

- Take all your training seriously
- Take an interest in marine biology
- Work up to deeper diving *progressively*
- Always take 30m + diving seriously
- Always dive conservatively
- Beware of dilution of standards by other clubs, organisations, or cavalier reporting



In Conclusion ...

Diving is a great sport, but

- Like any adventure sport, it does have its attendant risks
- Learn to manage the risks by a *progressive, professional and conservative* approach
- Enjoy a long, rewarding, and trouble-free diving career!

Safe Diving!

Red Sea – the missing bit!

[I promised Michael that I would publish the last half of his Red Sea article, the first half of which was in the Feb '98 edition of Subscript (you know the one with all the pretty pictures). For some reason the email chopped off the last half of his article and I didn't notice! - Ed]

Michael Worsley

[see Feb '98 Subscript for first half]
cont.

This was my first diving trip abroad, and the variety of all the life turned my head. So many different sights on each dive, it would be hard to single out one as an especial favourite. Would it be looking up to see a turtle silhouetted against the sun, and watching in awe as with a few powerful strokes it dove to just below where you were and started munching on the coral? Or seeing a shark lift up of the sea-bed at your approach and fin off into the blue distance? Seeing a large shoal of Jacks hunting on the reef? Even Steve who has been regularly diving the Red Sea for years, was astonished at the sight of hundreds of needlefish on the surface on one dive. The list goes on and on: seeing a shimmering shoal split silently at your approach; at the end of the night dive, seeing calamari hunting, their slightly transparent bodies picked out of the dark by your torch and suddenly seeing them dart forwards to envelop some small creature in its tentacles; watching an octopus crawling across the coral and changing not only its colour, but also its texture.

The most puzzling fish I saw was probably one particular needlefish. This fish tends to swim a few centimetres under the water, maybe going to around half a meter for a particularly choice morsel. It was a bit of a shock for my buddy and I to encounter one around 17m deeper than normal....

With so many fish about, it seems easy to forget the backdrop to which it is all set: the grandeur of the coral reef. Getting up close, it is possible to see each individual polyp with its feeding tentacles extended, and the skeleton that gives the coral its form. At the middle distance, you can see the entirety of huge fan corals or table corals, and at long distance, there are valleys, gullies and cliff walls that are more spectacular than any forested glen in Scotland.

For five of us, our appreciation of the reefs and other creatures about was enhanced by attending a talk in the middle of the week on the marine biology of the sea where we learnt, amongst other bits and bobs, that coral

polyps are really only "upside down jellyfish with crunchy bits" as Frances so accurately summed up and also precisely what the barnacles claim to fame is (answers on a postcard to this address).

One of the most famous wrecks in the Red Sea is the Thistlegorm. A trip was planned out to it on the Sunday, at an additional cost of \$100. Being on a somewhat tight budget, I could not afford this additional expense, and so I owe everyone else who went a big thank you for offering to pay for me: thanks! The first view of the Thistlegorm was clouded by immense shoals of Blue Fusiliers. As we descended to the bow, we could see Giant Jacks around the sides, sheltering from the current. The Thistlegorm is an impressive wreck, not only for the sheer volume of life, but also the differing number of bits to explore and look at, ranging from motorcycles to rifles to locomotives.

Steve's warnings about current were accurate and entirely truthful, as Mick, Raj and Jonathon found out on the first dive of the last day's diving... part of the briefing ran something like as follows: "Near this corner, the current *really* picks up, so when you see me stationary around here, do not go past me, because you will be swept along and we'll have to send the boat to pick you up."

The afore-mentioned trio thought that this meant there was about 10m beyond Steve where they could safely get back. Raj and Mick were later picked up by one of small flotilla of dive boats that had appeared whilst we were down, and Jonathon found out where Fire Coral gets its name from...

Award for Best One-Liner of the week goes to Kevin, for the line: "What about Cyril?" What had happened was this. A fair few of us decided to go into Sharm El Sheikh proper one night for a meal at a restaurant that several people remembered from a previous holiday. Cyril wasn't feeling particularly hungry, but decided to come in with us nonetheless for a wander around Sharm. We arranged to meet up outside the restaurant after the meal, at about half past nine. Well, after the meal, we piled into our taxis and set off back to the hotel. Half way there, Kevin suddenly remembers Cyril, and, cruel as it sounds, we burst out into embarrassed laughter. Luckily, the people in the other taxi had remembered him, and waited for him to turn up. Cyril, I wish to extend my humblest apologies.

On-shore one evening, Dave learnt yet another nugget of wisdom, this time not related to diving. When Raj offers around a chilli and says "Be careful, it's hot" he means it. For the rest of the meal, Dave could taste

nothing but chilli. Whether or not this improved the taste of the beer is open to debate.

All our thanks go to Mick Morley, for organising a wonderful holiday, and Steve and Yves at RSC for being excellent dive guides.

My thanks go out to everyone: Pete Young, Dave Locke, John and Frances Cook, Paul and Tracey Skirrow, Howard and Jill Westlake, Paul Brannan, Kevin Reeve, Jonathon Leigh-Smith, Cyril Pulleng, Andy and Di Macknelly, Raj and Tina Mistry and Mary Morley for all being part of what was the best holiday I have been on to date, and for the generous offer of paying for my trip to the Thistlegorm: thank you one and all for making it a holiday to treasure.

BSAC Full Face Mask (FFM) SDC

Dave Lock

Last weekend [10th /11th Oct – Ed] I was invited to the first pilot course in Worcester of an SDC to be introduced at the end of November. The logistics of getting there found me leaving home at 05:00 after flying in from Munich the previous evening. The course started with a series of lectures covering:

1. The FFM
Parts of the FFM
Configuration and Compatibility
Emergency Procedures
Manifold Block (for gas switching)
2. The Equipment
History and Development
Regulator Design
Advantages/Disadvantages
CO2 Toxicity
3. Types of Mask
Operation
Preparation
Fitting and use
Post dive procedures
Simple Maintenance
4. Underwater Communications
Basic Underwater Comms
OTS BuddyPhone
Practical Use
Handling and Storage

Practical Sessions

After a short break for lunch we started a 3 hour pool session. There were a couple of instructor demos followed by a chance to use 5 different set-ups as detailed:

Ocean Reef Neptune 2
Scubapro
Exo 26 (Kirby Morgan)
Interspiro Divator 2 with BuddyPhone Comms
Interspiro Divator 2 Positive Pressure with Thompson gas switching block

The first 2 FFM's are primarily recreational type equipment and are at the lower end of the price scale, the others however are fairly expensive, although the Exo 26 is a very serious piece of kit.

The pool sessions demonstrated breathing resistance at different body positions, FFM flooding and clearing, bail-out, comms and gas switching. This session needs to be well managed to get maximum benefit for the students.

Then a final classroom session looked at Equipment Care and Storage before the usual debrief.

After this followed the logistics of running a course within the Regions, BSAC has purchased 5 sets of kit as detailed above to support this SDC. This means a course will be 10 people or less and will be priced at a very competitive #45.

Why a FFM SDC?

There are 2 distinctly separate sets of people who will attend this course:

People who are considering buying a FFM and who want to evaluate the different types.

People who want to try out the equipment for fun!
I have not included the poser element who would pay lots of money to strut up and down Stoney car park with an Exo 26 hanging from their sets!!

The idea is just to give a flavour of the types of FFM generally available and in no way is a full course in the use of a FFM, the coursenotes will reflect this. Some people will wonder why amateur divers are moving on to FFM's and the course explains this in a simple way. Personally the added protection from the symptoms of Hyperoxia and Hypercapnia when rebreather diving is making me go along this route, although none of the masks used are immediately suitable for use with a rebreather.

Conclusions

As usual any course that Jack Ingle has designed is well thought out and modular with lots of practical information. The course details and handbooks will be printed using the feedback from the people on the first 2 pilot courses, these were all experienced instructors and BSAC Regional and Area Coaches. Pool time is limited and you only get to try each set-up for 15 minutes including putting on and taking off. Eastern Region will be running a course later in 1999 and Ali and I will be instructing on it (more work!), entry level is Sports Diver. If anyone wants further details contact me and I'll see what I can do.

Baltic trip update

Dave Lock

The Baltic Trip is still on but I have further details:

Diving + Accomodation + Food - cost 330 Pounds Sterling for 8 day trip.

Travel - cost estimated at 200 pounds sterling.

Brochures are not available yet for the 1999 season. I envisage Harwich to Hamburg via sea being the easiest option.

An 8 day trip gives us the chance to get to Sweden/Denmark but if not we can cover the Baltic from Kappeln to Kiel and Neustadt or L|beck. The first day is starting 18th June. Here's the present list, they have first refusal until the end of November:

Dave Lock	Steve Davies
Ken Gould	Pete Young
Susie Young	Jon Legh-Smith
Simon	Bill
Ali White	Pete

If you want to go on the reserve list, let me know.

Alternatively if you're on the list and can't go please inform me.

DIARY DATES

Subscript article submission deadline

15 January 1999.

Events, courses and holidays

Date	Events	Contact
November 13-20	Red Sea	Mick Morley
November 21/22	Underwater World '98, Harrogate	
November 27 7.00 pm	Annual General Meeting Small Lecture Theatre, BT Labs	Jon Legh-Smith
December 17	Christmas Party, Branagans	Dave Garrett
June 18 1999	The Baltic	Dave Lock

Eastern Region Skill Development Courses (SDCs) 1999

See the article by Tracey Skirrow plus Chairman's Corner for further information on SDCs.

Diving Wordsearch Puzzle:-

"It's Good To Dive"

"BTRSAC" -See if you can find it
best regards from Roy Lobbett

C B O A T H A N D L I N G E N
 O R E Y H P A R G O T O H P S
 M O D E E R F M C G S G C E E
 P O R B L Q O T N E R L V B V
 A M E E U S O I Z U O I Y T I
 N H D L X P L E B W D D A R D
 I I S L U K E N N T D L A S L
 O L E S R R E F H U T Y Y A A
 N L A O B D I G B O S D S C M
 S D N A L S I E N R A F L T B
 H S E I H N V W E Y M O U T H
 I S G B L I A R E T H U S A S
 P E T S D T U R T L E S R S I
 H J B S E L O H T R O P W C F
 E E N R U O B Y E W S Y O U B

Altonwater	Rays
Arethusa	Fish
BTRSAC	Freedom
Bells	Gildenburgh
Boathandling	Maldives
Broomhill	Nightdives
Buoys	Octopus
Clownfish	Redsea
Companionship	Seabreezes
DiveBuddy	Snorkling
Eels	Turtles
Farneislands	Weybourne
Photography	Weymouth
Portholes	