



WHAT'S BUBBLING

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The Magazine of Ealing Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC 514)
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DIVE TRIPS . . . DIVE TRIPS . . . DIVE TRIPS . . . DIVE TRIPS . . . **650 dives so far this year - can we make the magic 1000?**

13-14 AUGUST - contact Paul Chan for details on the hardboat trip diving the **SALSETTE**.

27 AUGUST - 3 SEPTEMBER - ONE SPACE AVAILABLE - SCAPA - Contact Craig quickly if you'd like to take this one space. A six days' diving, shore-based trip with diving and accommodation for £230.

TRAINING . . . TRAINING . . . TRAINING . . . TRAINING . . .

STOP PRESS : BSAC Council have just **APPROVED** the lowering of the minimum membership age to 12 years old. The committee is reviewing the implications for our Club. What do you think? Let us know!

1st October 2005 - Boat Maintenance SDC.

The Club is running a Boat Maintenance SDC on 1st October 2005. It has taken a considerable time to organise as only 1 instructor in the South is qualified and has the equipment to be able to teach it. It's a day's course learning about all types of boats/engines, and how they work! Do you know how to fix the tube, or the hull of the boat? If you are interested please sign up, (spaces are limited).

Want to hold the Seamanship Specialist Award? - Have attended the Boat Handling, Diver Coxswain, Chartwork and Position fixing SDC's and the above course and you will be. Come and learn more about boats.

Club Nitrox Equipment

Diving using a Basic Nitrox mix as your bottom gas or deco gas is becoming very popular within the Branch, shown by the number of people currently using Nitrox, and the large response from members wanting to attend a Nitrox course.

Following BSAC best practise all Nitrox mixes should be reanalysed just prior to diving; with this in mind and the increased number of Club members wishing to use Nitrox, the Committee have responded by investing in an OXYGEN ANALYSER. This will allow all Nitrox-qualified Club members to follow this best practise without the cost of owning their own analyser. (Although having your own analyser is always preferred).

To ensure that this expensive and fragile piece of equipment is only used by those trained to do so, and it is cared for as if it was a piece of your own kit (not left for a weight belt to land on it!), its availability will be controlled. If you wish to borrow the Analyser you can do so from the Diving Officer. You must hold a BSAC Approved Nitrox Qualification, and the Club through the Training Officer must hold these details. Secondly, a £50 deposit will be required, prior to taking the Analyser. This deposit will be non-refundable upon the return of the Analyser with **any** damage. (This is a piece of safety equipment and its integrity must not be compromised).

Those using the equipment will all be suitably-qualified, as such no member of the Club or Committee take any responsibility for the accuracy of the Analyser and we would remind all Nitrox Qualified Club Members of the need to check and calibrate the Analyser prior to its use.

The Analyser is for all Nitrox qualified Club members; to ensure it is available to as many members as possible the Analyser will be offered to suitably-qualified Dive Marshalls/ Trip organisers in the first instance.

Craig - Diving Officer

SOCIAL STUFF . . . SOCIAL STUFF . . . SOCIAL STUFF

Thanks to Richard Ayers for this one which will appeal to all those like myself who have paid a fortune treating the family! NOW YOU CAN HAVE A GO YOURSELF!

Thursday 18 August

BBQ and banana boat ride at Heron Lake, Wraysbury. Proceedings kick off at 18:00 with the opportunity to slide or bounce into the lake. The banana boat will be available for us and a BBQ organised by the centre. All you have to do is give me £7.00 per person (based on 50 or more takers), invite your family and friends and turn up with your swimwear! And following all that fun, you'll be pleased to know there's a licensed bar! There is a notice to sign on the club board.

Saturday 3 December - Christmas Ceilidh

Thinking further ahead - and I've beaten the shops where Christmas cards are on sale from August.

Put this date in your diary now! Time and cost etc will be announced nearer the time, but please reserve the date. The venue is the South Ruislip Community Centre, Long Drive, Ruislip. It will be a 'bring your food and drink' affair and be prepared to laugh - LOTS.

Jackie - Social Secretary

BSAC Southern Region Expedition to West Wales

Whitsunday Bank Holiday, May 2005

By James Anderson

I had been looking forward to this trip for a long time. Firstly because it is in West Wales, my old stomping ground, 15 years ago, as a South Walian trainee diver. Secondly, because of the opportunity to learn some new tricks from a group of very experienced divers. And finally because my last dive weekend with Robin had been blown out and I had an axe to grind against the British weather.

Our first success of the weekend was to get to West Wales. At 9pm Rob K, Craig, Paul C and myself were sitting in a pub eating some pretty poor fish and chips and awaiting the arrival of the rest of the 25 strong group; most of whom were stuck in various sections of the overloaded M4.

Unfortunately our first day of diving was beautiful, sunny and blown out. So no diving there, however we resumed on Sunday to dive the Lucy, a 36m wreck just off Skomer. Now I last dived the Lucy in 1991 and, retrieving my log, I apparently described it as "exhilarating. I descended the rope in front. At 20m the lights went out, leaving it pitch black, but clear. At 36 the wreck appeared, and we had 5 minutes of poking around the bow before we ascended." I still remember that dive like it was yesterday, and was eager to revisit the Lucy, maybe in better light conditions. Of course we knew that this was unlikely given yesterdays weather.

Craig and I descended and, like clockwork, the lights went out, except this time it was pitch black and a little murky. The Lucy sits proud on the bottom at, upright with the bed at 42 and the bow at 36. In our endeavors to see the wreck and avoid the crowded bow, we saw both of these, leaving me still wondering just what this old gal looks like on a clear day. That afternoon we pushed for duration, managing near 75 minutes (watch out Jackie) on a nice shallow dive, nearby on Rye Rocks. Bit murky, lots of spider crabs, usual stuff.

The key difference between these and normal ESAC dives was the sheer volume of kit. Diving off a large and spacious hard boat we had a full 3/6/9m trapeze with spare nitrox cylinders. 70% oxygen cylinders were also available in case of an emergency. All we needed to do, if we found ourselves in said creek without said paddle, was to send up an SMB with a knot in it and a tank would come down like manna from heaven (of course avoiding being hit by the tank on the way down, was always a good idea). On top of this, the whole weekend was an excellent opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge from a group of very experienced divers. Trimix, Rebreathers, it was all there. I even had a brief lesson on Lobby hunting, and there were some big ones about.

However Sundays diving was only a prelim to what was to come; Monday's dive on the Smalls. 26 miles off the coast of Wales this site can only be reached in good conditions. Luckily this was the case. The one dive we did there (and this was a 90 minute dive) was truly amazing. I rank it up there with ESACs dive on the Hood two years ago (for those that went and did not get tangled with PADI divers, I am sure you will remember the 20m visibility). Well the vis was not what made this dive superbe. Nor was it the lobsters, gulleys, edible crabs, dead men's fingers. It was the seals. To dive with a seal is a pleasure,

may a privilege, but to dive for 60 of our 90 minutes with up to 4 seals in full tow, most of the time chewing Craig's fins (or mine) was just plain indulgence. Each was 2 metres long, 100 odd kilos, and as friendly as a Labrador (though the teeth were bigger). A fitting end to a great weekend, and certainly a dive that made up for our disappointment regarding the first day's blow out.

James Anderson

Photos:



Craig, Paul and myself on the boat



How we exited the water



The Smalls Light House



A small problem with Craig's kit

Me and My PFO – part 2 : Greg Taylor

You may have read in the February 2005 What's Bubbling about my PFO and the start of my quest to get it fixed. A PFO is a small hole between the left and right upper chambers of the heart (the atria). The hole is normally covered with a flap but this can open under certain circumstances and allow de-oxygenated blood from around the body to mingle with oxygenated blood on its way to the brain.

Following the referral from my GP and the consultation with Peter Wilmshurst, I got an appointment to see a consultant cardiologist, Dr Ilsley, at Harefield Hospital, together with a date for the operation itself. The timing was absolutely perfect, with the consultation and the operation two weeks apart and the Porthkerris trip sandwiched neatly in between!

The consultation was really a 30-minute chat about the pros and cons of having the operation and a walk through what was going to happen. PFOs are now considered more serious than when mine was first diagnosed in 1988. They are implicated in migraine and more importantly stroke. Cardiologists are therefore seeing PFOs as threats to general health and not just to divers. This plus the fact that the closure procedure is now simpler and safer means that any PFO is seen as serious and therefore considered for treatment.

The operation itself involves the insertion of a device like a double cocktail umbrella being inserted via the big vein in your groin. The device is deployed from a tube in two stages, either side of the PFO so that it clamps over hole. A few weeks are required for it to settle into place during which time strenuous exercise (especially lifting) should be avoided. By this time a layer of cells has started forming over its surface. After three months a further scan is done to make sure that the combination of the device and your own cells have sealed the hole and then it's business as usual. At this point I'll know if my diving limit can be lifted.

I was given a prescription for anti-clotting drugs to start a few days before the operation, but apart from that it was just a case of turning up on the day and being prepared to stay the night.

I turned up at Harefield at 07:30 on Tuesday 21st June (the Longest Day!) to find that there were three of us to have the same job done that day. One was a commercial diver from the Scilly Isles and the other a woman from Ruislip with no diving connections at all. The latter had her PFO diagnosed after her optician had noted some abnormalities in the blood vessels at the back of her eyes. He had insisted that she get this checked thoroughly and she had subsequently been diagnosed as having a PFO by Dr Ilsley, who immediately recommended it was closed.

It's amazing how quickly we openly discuss medical details with complete strangers under such circumstances! A camaraderie of the condemned soon built up, with heartfelt "good lucks" being exchanged as we were called one by one. Being the last in, I passed one of the others coming back on a trolley and thinking how legless a dose of anaesthetic makes you look! The last thing I remembered was being told I might get a hot sensation in the arm as the stuff went in.....

Next thing I knew a woman I'd never met in my life before was leaning heavily into my groin and smiling, telling me she couldn't stop me bleeding. Being in a somewhat comatose state and having no particular plans for the next day or so, I decided to let her get on with it. A little later it was obvious manual pressure wasn't working and the "Femstop" was called for. This is a device designed to apply a controlled amount of pressure to wounds such as the hole in my groin. It consists of a Velcro girdle that holds in place a domed pressure pad inflated with a hand pump bulb, and I was getting this on the NHS!!!!

Anyway it stopped the bleeding and I was wheeled back to the ward. I then had a visit from Dr Ilsley who told me that the PFO had been larger than expected (11mm!) and they had used a 28mm

“Starflex” closure device on it. I subsequently wrote to Peter Wilmshurst about this and he told me that this is the size of hole one would expect to find in 0.5% of the population compared to the 25-30% who have a PFO of some size.

Because the bleeding had taken a long time to stop I stayed in overnight. I was looked after extremely well even though as a PFO case I was hardly the most needy patient on the ward. The nursing staff were great and the food was surprisingly good.

Since then, I've recovered steadily; the extensive bruising to the groin is disappearing quickly and none of the holes have showed any signs of infection. The only problem I've found is that being on the anti-coagulants makes me bleed and bruise, something I never normally do and I've already turned my little toe completely black and blue stubbing it on the bed!

I'm looking forward to seeing what difference not having a PFO has on my general well being and on running speed. A 11mm hole must surely have been slowing me down. I'll let you know!!

Greg Taylor July 2005

Porthkerris Trip Report 11th to 18th June 2005 – Enrico Marconi

I will be out of the country when this edition of What's Bubbling is published, so it is my turn to tell you the truth about Porthkerris.

I'd been looking forward to this trip since the beginning of the year, especially diving the Scylla in Plymouth. I thought - fresh air; nice sunny day; all dressed up (in rubber!!); and then Scuba Doo's engine started to bleep.... Tigger 2's steering was not working properly. Wasn't that a good start to the trip. There was a strong smell of manure wafting around, Ian got a bit excited!!! But then he went quiet again... I was told later that he was still feeling the loss of his small horse!! (called pony). HA HA HA! Ouch!

I'm not mechanically minded so I left most of the boys hard at it. For the divers who were able to go down to the James Egan wreck, it was pretty exciting. Seeing all of the cast iron cauldrons, got my gastric juices going - we had to stop for Sunday roast. We almost got down to Cornwall without a hitch, ask Greg. HA HA... Settled down at Elsie's place in St Keverne. She told me that she has a soft spot for Italians . . . I know I am always a hit with the ladies over 80.

After the compulsory dives to the Mohegan, the Vase Rock, Ragland Reef, and somewhere near Penvin, here comes the faithful Volnay. If you would be fortunate enough to dive the Volnay again from now on there is an extra bonus. No it's not lead pellets but it is quite shiny. It goes tick tock but will not blow up. Oh yes, it answers to the name of Rob W's watch!! I did look for it but I was bugged if I could find it! Happy Hunting.

A special thanks to all the instructors who put me through my paces during my dive leader training. Especially Jackie who managed NOT to leave me at the bottom of the sea, whilst deploying her delay SMB. Well Done Jackie.

A super thanks to my room mate Dennis who showed us if you really want to dive you do not need all your equipment. As Rik said "The only diver who dived more than his weight belt." Perseverance paid off - good for you Dennis!!

The best bit happened on Saturday, picture this - Big engine roaring, 9 people wearing rubber, easterly wind force 4 to 5, sea state slight, Jonathan on one knee, and Angela said YES. Congratulations. She did finish the day with a bump on her head, but this is another story! I am looking forward to the Stag Weekend. John, are you taking notes?

Aaaahhh, Porthkerris what else can I tell you about this trip, expertly organised, good food, interesting dives, brilliant company. Even without the chopper I'll do it again next year.

Thank you very much to all of you.

Enrico Ciao