



# 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 ... DIVE

### EASTER (Reminder)

Richard Ayers is organising a trip to **PENZANCE**. Dates: Friday 25<sup>th</sup>, returning Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March, staying in Penzance's Youth Hostel. He's reserved some accommodation already but needs confirmation from those interested NOW. You need to be of at least Ocean Diver grade and be prepared to get cold and wet!

### WHITSUN BANK HOLIDAY - SAT 28 TO MON 30 MAY

One of our newest members, Jackie Rasbach, has already got the idea and is organising a diving trip. Result!! So if you want to join her in **ANGLESEY** over Whitsun get in touch with her asap - she's promising fantastic shore and boat diving with lots to see including seals, lobsters and congas. The cost will be £32 per person per day for 2 dives. Email or ring Jackie for full details.

### 13-14 AUGUST

Paul Chan is looking for interested parties to join him on a hardboat trip in mid-August, aimed at diving the **SALSETTE**. One dive per day planned, as depth is expected to be around 40m. For this reason, the trip is restricted to Dive Leaders and above, plus depth progression dives before this August. Costs: Daily charter rate is £380 and up to 12 divers can be taken. Please contact Paul fast if you're interested, before someone else books the boat!

### 20-27 AUGUST

Nigel Ealand's organising a trip to **WEST WALES** at the end of August. Usually a caravan holiday, this year it will be b&b in the Dale/Marloes area. Accommodation will be somewhere between £20 and £30 per person per night with some excellent diving in Wales' conservation areas. E-mail or call Nigel for more details, or sign-up on the board.

## LATEST NEWS . . . LATEST NEWS . . . LATEST NEWS . . .

### Pool to Close - Divers in a Dither By our underwater correspondent - Neville Simpson

Ok, we all knew it would happen sooner or later; it has been talked about for long enough but this time it's for real. It looks as though Northolt pool will be demolished from September 2006 and rebuilt on the same site, due to re-open in April 2008.

I attended an open meeting on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> February at a local school to see a presentation by Ealing Council and the architects. This was a first stage meeting to show local residents and regular pool users the possibilities for the site. Along with members of the swimming club, I was able to ask questions during the open forum, and the Council promised to help all clubs find a temporary home during the re-building.

The architects ([www.s-parchitects.com](http://www.s-parchitects.com)) are basing their designs on a similar project of theirs in Swiss Cottage, which all Council members present had visited the day before. They were all enthusiastic about what they had seen. It is a 25m swimming pool and a training pool with a variable floor depth to 3 or 4 metres. There will also be a gym, dance studio and a café on the ground floor. All of this is to be "paid for" by flats to be built on the upper floors.

The Northolt complex would be of a similar design and, if approved, would be built on the existing site, including the police station site. The total height of the building maybe up to seven floors high (it is about four floors high at present).

However, nothing is final yet and input from current pool users is required. This is where we all can help because the Council has produced a form called "So what would you like to see?" Copies are available from the pool desk or me. It is a wish list for us, so everyone in the club should complete one and return it to James Anderson or Michelle who will co-ordinate the response for us.

An Ealing Gazette reporter was there, so look out for something in the paper dated 4 March.

### Letter from James, Chair, concerning the Pool

Dear All,

As you are aware, there has been much discussion regarding the future of Northolt Swimerama. Latest plans involve demolishing and rebuilding the pool some time in 2006 (see above article from Neville Simpson). In order to ensure that the pool meets the needs of its users, Councillor Glen Murphy, has invited input from all club members.

I would urge you all to take five minutes, next time you are at the pool, to complete one of the Northolt Swimerama Survey sheets, "So what would you like to see?" This is the best way to ensure that the new pool meets our needs. Survey sheets can be found on Northolt Swimerama reception desk. Once complete, please pass it on to either myself or Michelle Burrell, and I will send on to the Councillor.

Of course please say what you would like to see. However, as a guide, and to ensure a reasonably consistent message from ESAC, you may want to include some of the following.

**Question: Do you feel the Swimerama needs to be rebuilt or remain as it is? - Rebuilt**

**Question: What parts of the Northolt Swimerama have you used in the past? - Swimming Pool, Foyer, Meeting Room**

**Question: Do you feel it needs a cafe? - Your view entirely but a bar in the evening might be an idea**

**Question: What other facilities would you like to see in the Swimerama? - My opinion is that the following facilities would be beneficial to the club:**

**Large foyer/reception area with tables and chairs; Room for theory training lectures and meetings; Automatic doors; Disabled access to both the pool and changing rooms; Area for storing kit; Good showers; Notice boards**

**If there shops next to the Swimerama, what type would you like to see? - Dive shop**

**What other facilities would you like to see? - Car parking**

Please take the time to complete one of these questionnaires when next at the pool. Only through saying what we want can we ensure that we get what we want when the new pool is built.

Best to all

James Anderson  
ESAC Chairman

### **ESAC'S POOL ROTA FOR 2005**

This was emailed to you with the last edition of WB. Don't forget to take your turn at marshalling and cleaning; find a replacement and let Jackie O'Dowd know if you can't do the night you're scheduled. If you've lost the rota, contact Natalie for another one. **NO EXCUSES!**

### **AND AGAIN - "IT'S NOT CHRISTMAS DINNER"!**

This one's jinxed. It will now take place, barring any more disasters, on **SATURDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH** at La Giralda in Pinner Green. Please contact Jackie O'Dowd to book your seats. Don't forget to bring a wrapped raffle prize to the value of about £5.

### **HAVE YOU GUESSED YET?**

So who did utter the phrase '*I couldn't possibly take part. I'm far too competitive and do not want the rest of the club to see just how competitive?*' We're not telling yet - not until we've got more of your £1 coins for each guess. Let Jackie O know who you think said it - she'll get your money out of you somehow!

### **DID YOU ALL FIND US?**

Has everyone now located the pub we've moved onto on Club Night? The Crown was no longer to our liking (I wonder why, answers on a postcard please) so we've returned to The Harvester by the traffic lights (out of the pool, turn right, it's straight ahead). A much more child-friendly establishment and generally a nicer pub. Maybe we'll stay awhile.

## IT'S CE - MENT TO BE!

There has been a flurry of activity down at the boat yard with some new faces getting involved. I found these two turning sand and cement into something more useful. Just to let everyone know who it was who got involved in trying to level off the slope, which can be a real pain in the a\*\*e 12 o'clock at night when you're trying to put the boats away.

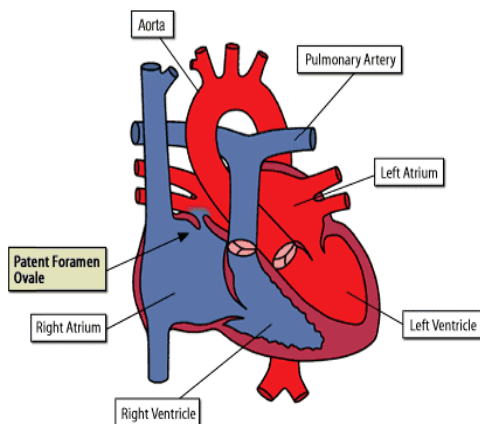
I'm told the new ramps are now installed and that by the time you read this many other subtle changes will have made the containers even more user friendly.

Richard A



## Me and My PFO – Greg Taylor

A lot of you will know that I have a 20m limit to my diving and that this is because I had an episode of decompression illness due to a heart defect known as a Patent Foramen Ovale. To those of you without a classical education, this is Latin for PFO and it means that I have a hole in my heart between the two top chambers; the Left Atrium and Right Atrium - see the illustration below:



This hole can provide a path from the venous side of my circulation direct to the arteries feeding oxygenated blood to my brain without passing through my lungs. I say can, because the hole has a “flap” which is not always open and needs to be provoked into performing this “shunt”. I’ll talk about how later on.

If this venous blood has any bubbles of nitrogen in it, as it might do after a dive, then these could potentially be sent direct to my brain without being filtered out and exhaled via the lungs. This is what happened when I had my DCI incident and led to some rather unpleasant symptoms.

The incident happened in 1987 and because the diving I'd done the day it happened was not considered extreme, the general advice was that I must be particularly prone to DCI and I should give up diving. At the time, Dr Peter Wilmshurst was beginning his work on the linkage between PFOs and unexplained DCI episodes and Ann Howard, bless her, encouraged me to seek his opinion. The examination involved an ultrasound scan of the heart area of my chest (an echocardiogram) which established that I did indeed have a PFO. The method used to illustrate the hole itself was to inject a vein in my left arm with bubbles, wait for them to reach the heart and then to see if they crossed the atrium wall (the septum). To force the bubbles across I had to put pressure on the chest wall by rolling onto my side while the scan took place. This revealed a definite PFO shunt. Dr Wilmshurst's advice was that I could dive again as long as I limited the depth to 10m. Although very limiting, this was a much better outcome than I had expected and I accepted it gratefully.

Over the years I kept in touch and as knowledge of PFOs grew, the depth limit was increased; first to 15m, then to 20m. I've adjusted to this and been happy to do long shallow dives which tend to fit in with a lot of the Club's diving anyway.

However, at the end of 2004, I did some reading around the latest thinking on PFOs and their statistical linkage with migraine and stroke. I had on a few occasions experienced migraine with aura (visual disturbances) and my father had suffered a severe stroke a couple of years ago at the age of 73. These factors combined with the PFO seemed to me to put me at a higher than average risk of stroke in later life. This was more serious than a 20m depth limit so I decided to seek further advice.

I wrote to Peter Wilmshurst who kindly called me one evening to chat over some of my concerns. He suggested that a consultation would be the best starting point, including a re-examination of the PFO itself. So after getting a referral letter from my doctor (who is always happy to help me with my self-inflicted conditions - DCI, running injuries etc.) I went to see Dr Wilmshurst at the beginning of February. He has his divers clinic in Shrewsbury on a Thursday (how apt!) so I must apologise to Adrian and Jane for abandoning them that evening.

The tests were rather more extensive this time. We started off with the echocardiogram and the bubble injections as on that occasion 17 years ago. I should explain how the bubbles are made; it's not just injected air you know! A line is put into a vein (left arm again!) and a syringe of blood is drawn. This syringe is joined via a valve to another full of saline solution. The valve between the syringes is opened and the blood and saline is frothed up by pumping it backwards and forwards between the two. It's then pushed back down the line and into the vein.

The pictures were much clearer than I remembered before, medical imaging technology has improved a lot in 17 years. Another thing that has changed is the way of provoking the bubbles into crossing the PFO. Dr Wilmshurst and his colleagues have found that a simple sniff is often the best way. This proved to be true in my case; I gave a sharp sniff as the bubbles arrived in the left atrium and the right was flooded almost immediately. I joined in the laughter until the implications sank in. What's one of the most likely things a snotty nosed diver is likely to do back on the boat after a dive? Yes, made me think too! This examination was followed by an ECG, a chest X-Ray and a lung function test – all pretty good I'm happy to say.

We then spent a good three quarters of an hour talking over the test results, my diving history and the options available to me. The implications for my general health are hard to quantify because a PFO is not necessarily an indicator of poor health. The higher risk of stroke is there simply because any clots or other debris in the venous circulation could possibly get across the PFO and land up in the brain – it doesn't make me any more prone to generating the clots themselves. Dr Wilmshurst did however say that I should take particular care to heed advice about Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) on long flights, so I now have an excuse for the stockings! As for the diving, because the regime I've adopted ("ramp" profile dives where possible, reduce bottom time for "square" dives and 2 minutes at 6m whatever the dive) has protected me from the PFO effects, this can continue unchanged. He agreed that using Nitrox would lessen the risk further, so that's an option I'll pursue this year. The most interesting development is that PFOs can now be closed

without surgery and this is something I'm now actively pursuing with my GP backed by Peter Wilmshurst's report. I'll tell you how I get on with that in another article.

This story is about me and my particular medium sized PFO. However, it has been shown that at least 25% of the general population has a PFO of a detectable size so it's worth bearing this in mind when thinking about your own diving. The BSAC 88 tables and the algorithms in most computers are based on the mythical "normal" human's physiology and therefore don't necessarily apply safely to a sizable minority. It makes sense to dive with this in mind. It doesn't really make sense for everyone to have a depth limit, the statistical probability says there must be divers with PFOs doing deep dives regularly, but it makes sense to make sure you think about dive profiles as well as maximum depth, make sure your buoyancy control is up to doing long stops and give yourself that extra minute at 6m. It might avoid a trip to Shrewsbury on a Thursday!

Greg Taylor  
Feb 2005

## THE D.O.'S PAGE ... THE D.O.'S PAGE ... THE D.O.'S PAGE ... THE

### [Revals 2005 - Further Info](#)

For this year's Reval there is a slight change in format in that on the night you will not have to answer any questions on diving, just show your wonderful diving ability. Gary Miller will be organising the pool sessions so please watch out for the timetable and make his job easier by turning up on time.

For the knowledge part there'll be a set of questions (as attached to this WB). These have already been emailed to divers with the request that they be answered and returned to me by 24<sup>th</sup> March. Have fun with the questions and I expect 100% from everyone; I have not yet decided if we will publish the scores in 'What's Bubbling' so make sure you have a good go. We'll organise some CPR type work on the dummies in March for those who want it.

### [Use of the Boats 2005 - Refamiliarisation session](#)

As everyone knows that we must protect our boats, and because we have all read the Boat Rules (!), we know that at the start of every season all Club Coxswains and Club Boat Handlers must attend a familiarisation session. This allows us to familiarise ourselves with the Club RIBS and the boats' equipment and update ourselves on seamanship best practice. This year we will do this in two ways: firstly, a short quiz that must be completed and returned to the Boat Officer, (the answers are in the Coxswain Pack); secondly, a half-day checking that all the equipment in the boats is ready for the season ahead. If you want to be known as a Club Coxswain or Club Boat Handler please contact the Boat Officer, Ian McEwan, or Diving Officer, Craig Burrell, to collect the revalidation quiz. A date for your diary - the session at the Boat Yard will be at **9.00am on 20<sup>th</sup> March** and should last no more than 2 hours.

### [Surface Marker Buoys.](#)

At the start of a new season it is always good to remind ourselves of what diving is all about and make sure we're up-to-date with best practice. Along these lines could I therefore please remind everyone of two of the changes in last year's Club Rules:

## Rule

- 2.4 Diving pairs shall use a surface marker buoy, except when overruled by the Dive Marshal, in which case delayed surface marker buoys shall be carried by all divers trained in their use.
- 2.3 Club diving shall follow the rules and standards and practises as published by BSAC and as translated in writing by the Diving Officer.
- 2.2 All divers diving in open water must be fully equipped. Minimum diving equipment is: Suit, Fins, Mask, BCD, Air Cylinder, Knife, Regulator and Contents Gauge, Alternative Air Source, Timer, Depth Gauge, Compass, Whistle.

Craig Burrell

And thanks to Craig for this one . . .

## LUCKY DIVER

A diver is lying in a recompression chamber with an oxygen mask over his mouth. A young nurse arrives to check on his condition. "Nurse", he mumbles from behind the mask, "Are my testicles black?" Embarrassed, the young nurse replies, "I don't know, I'm only here to check your breathing and pulse." He struggles again to ask, "Nurse, are my testicles black?" Finally, she pulls back the covers, raises his gown, holds his willy in one hand and his testicles in her other hand and takes a close look and says, "There's nothing wrong with them!" Finally, the man pulls off his oxygen mask and replies, "That was very nice, but are my test results back?"

## Mucking about at sea, again – Nigel Ealand

Yes, I've been sent to sea again, this time not to sink a ship but to film a rather brave lady called Ellen Macarthur. She's only 5' 2" and the yacht is enormous.

The brief was this: we don't know when she's arriving, she could be finishing anywhere between the north west tip of Brittany and the Lizard point and we don't know which port she's going into, but we want great live coverage - "marvellous" I thought, "another miracle to perform!"



As it happens this is the first of two jobs at sea that I have to do this year, the other being Trafalgar 200 (anniversary of the death of Nelson, 28<sup>th</sup> June, Southsea). A little epic involving two hundred of the world's navy ships parked behind the Isle of Wight, a re-enactment of the Battle with Tall Ships, flypasts, Royals - we're talking the Full Monty here.

Anyway, these Navy chaps very kindly invited Imelda (my producer) and myself to a cocktail party on HMS Sunderland, moored at the

London Boat Show. What an evening, I rubbed shoulders with a fist-full of Admirals and Sir Mathew Pinset. Amazingly I met a chap who turned out to be the Navy's Press liaison officer for Ellen's return. He was sending out a Coastal Patrol Vessel to meet her at the finish. "Can my film crew hitch a lift?", I enquire. "No problem" he says, "Result!" thinks I.

Later we discovered she's docking in Falmouth. Hmm, who do I know that has a boat and is "Street wise" on the ocean? Next call was to Mike at Porthkerris Divers, to book his rib and to brief him: "Nudge your way right up beside her boat so that our Reporter can do a "shouted" interview; I'll have a helicopter overhead to bounce the transmission back to shore (Pendennis Point)". The crew got booked into the Three Tuns, St Keverne, along with a "Good Pub guide" map in the planning notes.



As the days passed, each morning I would log onto the Internet only to find instead of her slowing down as predicted somehow she had the wind behind her and she was still coming at a rapid 17 knots. My deadline was getting earlier and I wasn't ready!

So far, so good. I'd got my Navy ship; we added a couple of marine Inmarsat terminals, which looked remarkably like upside down dustbins, and a videophone so we could transmit video at sea. I'd got my RIB, next was the helicopter.

The helicopter was a problem. I had to fly it down from Norwich, it could not fly offshore at night and it could not land in HMS Cauldrose (local MOD heliport) over the weekend. Thank God she arrived in Falmouth on a Tuesday morning. I also pointed out to the pilot that there would be no problem in setting down on Porthkerris beach, as I happened to know that a Sea King had landed there only last summer (how could I forget).

Anyway she did it; our videophone captured the moment (flashing strobe light in a sea of blackness). 71 days, 14 hours, 18 minutes that was 1 day 8 hours faster than Joyon's record. As she approached Falmouth, Mike's RIB got slammed by other boats. He did the job, got right in there and Robert got his interview. The helicopter pictures were magnificent and a coverage in Pendennis Port that I was rather proud of.

Next . . . Trafalgar 200 . . . which could make the Solent look like Pearl Harbour, but don't mention it as the Americans are coming!

Nigel Ealand  
Feb 2005