



WHAT'S BUBBLING?

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The Magazine of Ealing Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC 514)

**Editor: Natalie Ealand
Tel: 020 8582 0991
e-mail Natalie.Ealand@brunel.ac.uk**



NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

LOTTERY AWARD FOR EALING SUB AQUA CLUB

11th March '03

London Region

'Sport England Lottery Fund has awarded £10,255 to Ealing Sub Aqua Club. The award made back in October 2002 has contributed towards a new fully equipped boat, which arrived in January. Since then several members of the Club have worked hard to commission the new boat and install all the navigation and radio equipment. Last weekend the new boat, named Tigger Too, had her first sea trial. Richard Ayers, Chairman of Ealing Sub Aqua Club said "Tigger Too handled brilliantly on the water and everyone is really looking forward to this year's diving season."

Ealing Sub Aqua Club, which has been established for 30 years, has an excellent reputation for offering low cost dive training to high standards. With this funding from Sport England, the club is looking to expand and aims to attract all members of the community to train with them at Northolt Swimarama. The arrival of Tigger Too will allow the club to cater for more divers and plan more advanced expeditions.

Richard said, "This grant has given us a fantastic opportunity to expand our training and diving activities. The Club has more members now than ever before and as a result we'll be taking the boat out to sea at every chance we get. The club already has links with marine environmental survey projects and wreck conservation projects and the Lottery funding for the new boat will allow even more divers to take part in these activities."

You can contact the club via their web-site www.esac.org.uk or by calling Nigel Ealand on 020 8582 0991. Try a Dive sessions in the pool can be arranged if you think you might like to have a go at this unique sport.

This project is another example of how Sport England is using Lottery funds to increase the amount and quality of sporting opportunities available to the whole community.

For more information contact:

**Michelle Burrell, Secretary, Ealing Sub Aqua Club,
13 Malden Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 0DJ.
Telephone 020 8864 0460.'**

ENDS

The above is the press release following the news of the fantastic Lottery Fund awarded to ESAC. Congratulations to all who were involved in the process – but most of all, thanks to Michelle Burrell, who is now well versed in lottery-speak. Somehow I just know she's not done yet . . . see page 5!
Natalie

Tigger Too comes out to play

Those of you who remember the launch of Scuba Doo, will have no reason to wonder why the launch of Tigger Too took place without much fanfare on 2nd March. For those new to the Club, let's just say that last year Scuba Doo nearly didn't get launched at all, but Darren's car nearly did, the river police nearly fined us several thousand pounds for speeding on the Thames and then the boat started to sink....it wasn't the most auspicious of starts!

In contrast, the only minor problem with the launch of Tigger Too was that the main slipway at Calshot Activities Centre had been closed for refurbishment. An alternative slip was available, so using the towrope from the emergency pack on the boat, Tigger Too slipped into the water for the first time. The launch wasn't done just purely for fun, but Tigger Too was put to work straight away. Seven Diver Cox'n candidates used Tigger Too to freshen up their skills after the long winter break before their imminent exam.

Michelle Burrell was more than happy that she got to have the first drive after all her effort put into getting the lottery grant for the boat. During the day everyone took control of Tigger Too as the boat was used for practising the slow manoeuvres required for the exam. And, sadly, as Maggie Ayers had twisted her ankle the night before, Richard was unable to go out to (play) teach the budding cox'n. Instead, he and Maggie spent the afternoon in the local A & E hospital.

Meanwhile, Scuba Doo blew off the winter cobwebs with high-speed turns and man-overboard drills in the Solent. In fact, Paul Chan and Dominic Watts got more practice than they bargained for when, during some high-speed turns, they managed to launch Adrian Jones into the watertwice. You'd think that someone of Adrian's experience would have worked out to hold on tight after the first slip into the briny...but no, alas not. So both Paul and Dominic practised man-overboard drills for real.

After a couple of hours the crews in the boats swapped over. Greg Taylor, Jackie O'Dowd, John Mullins and Michelle took a gentler view on the high-speed manoeuvres in Scuba Doo. The best they could manage was a can-overboard drill when they spotted an empty Fosters tin in the water. A word of caution for anyone sharing a boat with Jackie this year, the first thing she did after recovering the poor can was to launch it straight back into the sea....!

It was a beautifully sunny day and the boats behaved brilliantly. Although Tigger Too was still 'running in' she was allowed to do a little high speed stuff later on in the day and she handled very nicely. Thanks need to go to everyone who helped to get Tigger ready, Craig, Dominic, Greg, John, Richard Ayers, Didier Lapierre, David Watkiss, Ian Oliver, Mr & Mrs Sat.

Recovering the boats was a challenge as the state of the tide had made the alternative slip too dangerous, but given the years of experience present in all those who were there, we managed to get both the boats onto their trailers without much incident. Both boats were washed down and then toasted with some bubbly before the drive home. The new containers have now arrived and so the length of the boats is no longer a problem. John has worked hard to re-lay the ramps and hard standing to give easy access into the containers.

All in all everything's looking just great for the new diving season.

But this was all before that fateful boat-handling course . . . and therein lies another story. See page 11.

A Taste of Thailand

So 14 months, 400 dives and 150 diver certifications later it's time for me to leave the shores of Koh Samui - next stop Mexico.

The three islands of Koh Tao, Koh Phan Gang and Koh Samui are located in the Gulf of Thailand. From Bangkok (approx. 450 pounds return) you can reach them either by coach/train and ferry, or by one hour's flight direct to Koh Samui airport. The weather's largely hot and sunny all year, the wet season being late November to early February. The best diving is March to October with a slight deterioration following full moon each month.

The dive sites here fall into three areas - The Ang Thong National Marine Park (a group of 40 small islands west of Koh Phan Gang), Sail Rock - a single pinnacle of rock between Koh Phan Gang and Koh Tao, and about 20 sites around Koh Tao itself. Each of these areas can offer stunning diving - visibility of 25m, huge shoals of trevally, java rabbitfish, fusiliers and barracuda up to 1.5m in length. That's the true magic of the diving here - hanging in midwater and seeing hundreds of fish wherever you look. Sure there's always the possibility of seeing a whale-shark (though I've seen only one this year). But if it's manta rays and sharks you're after, Thailand's west coast is a better bet. Ang Thong in particular offers some stunning coral and marine life - whip corals, barrel sponges, sea ferns, blue-spotted stingrays, goatfish, banded sea snakes, sweetlips, batfish, clownfish, snapper and chromis. It could become an extensive list.

Thailand's also a great spot to see the somewhat legendary Titan Triggerfish. A feisty creature when in breeding season, while in general it just erects the 'trigger' fin on it's head, if you get too close you can also turn around to find a fairly sizeable critter hanging off your fin! And that can really get the pulse racing!

Is Koh Samui or even Koh Tao a destination for a diving holiday? I'd say 'no'. If you want to combine sun, sand and an active nightlife with a handful of dives then it's a great venue, though the Red Sea or Malta are arguably a better value alternative from the UK. For a diving-dominated trip head to the west coast of Thailand. The Andaman Sea and the Similan Islands allegedly offer far superior diving. That's not to put these islands down. I've had a fantastic time in Thailand - the people, food and weather are great, and you can have some amazing dives.

Give me a few months and ESAC's roving reporter will give you the rundown on Mexico as well.

Sawadee krap and Hasta Luego
ROB PRATT

Thanks Rob, keep well and in touch!

NEW ASSISTANT INSTRUCTORS

Watch out you lot . . . there are four new Assistant Instructors on the loose, thanks to the training course in March. The four are:

Dominic Watts
Christine Newton
David Broad
Janine Ealand

Congratulations and well done to the four. One of them has already been labelled “as picky as her father” – now who could that be?

MORE GRANT SUCCESSES . . .

With apologies to everyone who pays Ealing Council Tax.....

We have recently obtained a grant of £300 from Ealing Council’s Development fund to pay for the Tutors and course materials for three Running Sport Workshops. These workshops were a condition of the big lottery grant that funded Tigger Too. As part of our agreed action plan with Sport England (who administer the Lottery Capital Grants Fund for Sports), workshops in Funding and Promoting your Club, Child Protection and Best Practice and Volunteer Management took place during the end of March and beginning of April. The grant paid for 5 members of ESAC to attend each workshop for free. Better still, Michelle has worked out that by opening up the workshops to other voluntary sports clubs and getting them to pay for the privilege, there may even be a profit to be made....now that really is how to fund and promote your club!

We have also managed to get a grant of £250 from Ealing Council’s Sports Development Fund. This money has been used to purchase fins, masks and snorkels in small sizes suitable for teenagers and women. Those of you who have helped with Try A Dives will appreciate that we don’t have the widest range of sizes in our pool kit, and some of it is in pretty poor shape. This grant has provided up to seven new sets of kit, and hopefully make Try A Dives a more enjoyable experience.

We are also in the process of applying to the Awards for All scheme, which last year funded the engine for Scuba Doo. The aim of this grant will be to pay for a new ResusciAnne with an electronic skill guide (tells you how fast and how deep...apparently) and 7l tanks and smaller jackets for use in the pool by trainees or Try A Dives. We’ll keep you posted as to progress on this one....

MAURITIUS (IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR SOME) . . .

One of the better dives I’ve experienced, even better than Boulder reef off Bracklesham (Rik’s favourite), is Pigeon House rock on the north coast of Mauritius. Pigeon House rock is renowned for its birds and sharks. Sharks are more my cup of tea as I relate better with them than birds.

On 28th May 1997 just before noon, we started a boat dive on a warm and sunny but windy day. The water temperature was 25°C. The first part of the dive was a straightforward dive around the rock which protrudes from the sea. The birds are at the top. To get to see them you need to be well versed in mountaineering, so hardly worth the hassle. The dive itself

presented the usual array of tropical fish; angelfish, squirrelfish, moorish idol, puffer fish, grouper and morays. After the tedious introductions we headed for the shark bowl.

The entrance is at 8m and is basically a gulley leading into the rock. The gulley opens out, into a bowl with the base at 11m and the rim at 6m. At the centre of the bowl is a big boulder. Around 10 white tip sharks up to 1.5m in length circled monotonously around the sides of the bowl. As we entered the bowl the sharks swam in smaller circles on the opposite side of the bowl to where we entered. When we settled down on the bottom by the boulder, the sharks gradually widened their circles until they were once again using up the full diameter of the bowl and passing overhead. Under the boulder a moray was hiding which barely got a glance as frankly the sharks were more interesting. The sharks were quite happy to keep circling until after about 10 minutes, when we moved on, swimming to the opposite side of the bowl. As we did so the sharks kept their distance. We went over the rim and into an adjacent pool and got a mild shock as we stumbled across another white tip, this time around 2.5m long, relaxing in its private pool. It was a lot more relaxed than we were, but we were between it and the open sea, so we made our excuses and left.

We then went into the "swing" which is a gulley where the surge swings you to and fro. After a few minutes playing on the "swing", we headed away from Pigeon House rock to the open sea and the boat.

Paul Chan

Have you ever wondered what the Committee actually does with its time....

From: Craig Burrell
Sent: 12 February 2003 22:12
To: Committee
Subject: Waterproof cover for CD player

All,

I have just been flicking through a new catalogue full of useful stuff for boats when my eyes were drawn to a new item, a waterproof cover for a car CD player. Reading on I have costed the option:

Car Radio with 6 CD changer - £179.95
Waterproof cover - £ 24.95
Waterproof speakers - £25.95

Total cost £230.85

WE COULD HAVE A MUSIC ON THE WATER FOR AS LITTLE AS £230

Michelle - please add to the agenda for debate/approval at next meeting.

Craig

From: Dom Watts
Sent: 13 February 2003 09:45
To: Committee
Subject: Re: Waterproof cover for CD player

I trust you have checked out the anti-shock capabilities – Swanage in a F2 is not exactly the same as a jaunt around the M25. Mind you might make the journey through Poole Harbour a bit more enjoyable.

Some tunes for the boats: Nirvana - Dive, Some disco queen - Rock the Boat, Madness - Night Boat to Cairo, David Gray – Last Boat to America, All About Eve's - Martha's Harbour, The Platters – Harbour Lights, Tom Waits – Lost in the Harbour, or for Scrappy – Row Row Row your boat.

Obviously you will need to cost in some CD storage too – after all 6 CDs just won't be long enough to keep the boat crew entertained whilst waiting for Jackie to surface.

Dom

From: Richard Ayers
Sent: 14 February 2003 09:16
To: Committee
Subject: Re: Waterproof cover for CD player

Stop ! Arrghhh! This will only draw attention to the boat, then some one will break in thru' the windows, then they will go for a joy ride, then there will be the need for two, then the trailer won't be strong enough, then the tow car will need to be a land rover & anyway, if you can sort out a waterproof bag and some water proof speakers, I've got an old weather proof CD player you can have for free.

Dom's point is valid though; how many CDs will you need to cover Jackie & Craig's dives?

Richard A

So the question needs to be asked, what tracks would you take out on our boats? And are there enough of them to keep you entertained while you wait for Jackie and Craig to come back? Similarly, what tracks would you ban from the boats?

Answers to Natalie (editor@esac.org.uk). No prizes but a lot of kudos for the funniest!

Michelle

Where it all Began...

Well for those of you who have been in the club a good few years (i.e. about 17) you will probably have your own memories and horror stories of my childhood that at this point will not be mentioned or ever spoken of again (I hope). I think I'll start a little further into my life, about the age of 14, as I have been told that some of you out there may be vaguely interested in why I ever began to dive and how on earth my Mother ever let me!

The decision to learn how to scuba dive I found very difficult to make. I was only 14, had to part with a large amount of my savings (as do many of us regularly for diving), and I was still greatly affected by my Dad's diving accident which I had seen at the age of eleven. Diving terrified me but then I also had this great desire to try it. I wanted to learn about the sport that I had grown up with. I was walking around at the age of eight with a clip board

demanding to know air in and out, and waiting at the sea shore with a pair of binoculars to spot the bright orange dive boat coming in, in the hope that there might be a kids' ride. I have been dragged, sorry brought, to almost every British club diving holiday since I was born but didn't really know what it was all about. Why was all this equipment strung out over the caravan and why was I woken at 7 o'clock in the morning to the sound of someone knocking on the caravan door to ask if Dad wanted to go diving in the rain? I wanted to understand what had happened to my Dad on that day when I wasn't allowed to go in the big yellow helicopter but he was.

The opportunity came with a holiday to Florida. I wanted so much to see the fish and the wrecks that were in the books, perhaps not the close inspection of a nurse shark that I got, but it was an added bonus. With the help of Jackie O'Dowd I managed to persuade Dad to let me learn how to dive so I could have a go in Florida. The deal was that I would become a qualified Club Diver (now Ocean Diver) and have a couple of dives out there and then that would be the end of it. In the end I did every dive going in that week and saw some amazing marine life such as free swimming nurse sharks and a sea tortoise. I think at this point Dad thought I had got a bit too enthusiastic about it all and tried to put me off a bit by letting me do a night dive, whilst we were out there, on a shipwreck we had dived that afternoon. However this didn't really work as I think I was the first one in the water and absolutely loved the whole dive. At this point Dad was looking more anxious about my enthusiasm. When we came back I completed Sports Diver so that if ever again a foreign holiday was planned and I fancied a dive then I had a better level of knowledge on diving. But I didn't really just want to dive now and again; I wanted to be a proper full-time diver. This may be when Dad's plan two of steering me off diving sprung into action after the night dive had failed to deter me.

He allowed me to dive on holiday at Brixham. Tim Biglin had lent me all of his diving gear throughout my training, and holiday in the States, and agreed to let me use it all again in Brixham, along with his drysuit. Maybe he thought that a change from the warm clear Florida waters to the cold murky British would put me completely off the idea. No such luck! Diving here was completely different but I found it just as exciting. I got to go out on the dive boat, which was odd the first time because I was waving goodbye to the families on the beach whereas I had always been with them waving off the divers. The first dive that holiday I class more as an experience, since I don't think I was down long enough to call it a dive. The drysuit was a little too big for me and I hadn't dived a lot with one. We got down to 12 metres and I couldn't dump air from the wrist dump. The air moved to my feet as I flipped up-side-down, grabbed onto Jackie, and came back up to the surface, legs in the air with Jackie O'Dowd hanging off me. At this point I declared I would never dive again. However that lasted only a matter of hours because the next day I'm back in and diving. This time I saw a little more, in fact a whole mass of crabs. Dad had to explain later why they had chosen to sit on top of each other. I dived for the rest of that week and loved every minute of it, and dedication's when you empty water up to your calf out of your drysuit after every dive (I think I may have beaten you on that score Adrian!).

After that holiday Dad gave in and agreed to me being a permanent diver and never regretted it since I still have the same excitement and enthusiasm every time I dive (except at Wraysbury).

Janine Ealand

Anyone fancy a dive? But can YOU tow the necessary boat? . . .

I have been asked by a number of people about tow bars recently. Can I advise those who are thinking of getting a tow bar fitted that 'Towsure' can supply all the bits you need at a fraction of the cost from a garage.

Call them on 0870 60 900 70 or visit the web site www.towsure.com

If anyone needs help fitting a tow bar or wants it fitted for them, we have club members who can assist, just let me know. Similarly, if you want advice on what you need to buy to set yourself up to tow, let me know.

Remember if you have a tow bar, your opportunity to go diving increases greatly! Currently the club has nearly 80 members, 3 boats and only 6 tow bars between the lot of us. This puts quite a bit of pressure on those people. As yet we have never had to cancel diving because of the lack of a tow bar, but with an increasing membership and increased number of planned dives, it is only a matter of time.....

Please let me know if you need any help. I am more than willing to set up towing practice sessions for those who are new to the whole thing.

On the positive side of things, I have a towbar, and I know I can go diving any time I want ;-)

Craig

Pre-season Reminders

Dear All

A number of changes have occurred in Club practise during the winter months. This article is just to bring everyone up to speed before diving starts in earnest.

Next of Kin and Medical Forms

It came to our attention last year that a couple of people were diving with the Club even though there had been a substantial change in their health status. Not only did they endanger themselves by not seeking medical advice, but they also put their buddy at risk. The Committee decided that as part of this year's revalidation process, everyone should complete a self declaration medical form, just to prompt everyone to check they are fit to dive.

Equally, our next of kin forms are out of date. A new database has been established which will hold all the information. An emergency cascade system has been set up so that in the event of an accident Club Officers will be informed and issue the relevant details. This ensures that all the information is kept confidentially, but at the same time accessible when required. It is in your interest to ensure that this information is complete and up to date. If you would like to check the information please ask Michelle for a personal printout. A list of forms still required is on the notice board. Please return all forms to Dominic or Michelle as soon as possible, or the DO has the right to stop you diving!!

Safe Diving Practises Booklet

Also as part of this year's revalidation we have been issuing the new BSAC SDP booklet. This is a handy little guide that contains information covering all aspects of diving. If you have not yet got a copy, please let Michelle know and she'll be only too glad to get rid of the 30 or so still lingering in her bag!

Dive Planning

For a number of reasons, the dive planning sheets have been updated. Some of the changes have occurred because of changes to the law at sea (SOLAS V regulations) which mean we have to plan our journeys and take that plan with us on the boats. Several members have attended Practical Rescue Management skill development courses, which showed that we needed to have a way of recording more information about our divers in case of accident, including time that divers enter the water (how do you know they are late otherwise?), the capacity of the tank and air in (how do you know when they are in trouble if they are late?) and the expected dive time for each buddy pair.

Nigel has emailed these sheets to Club members, but if you haven't yet got a copy please ask. This is important information. Laminated versions will be on each boat and by the law, they must be completed before you leave shore.

Emergency Cascade

As mentioned above, we have examined the way we would respond to an emergency situation while diving. Of course, on many trips, our next of kin are with us, but in that is not always the case. In order to keep personal information confidential, only the BSAC Officers (Treasurer, Chairman, Diving Officer and Secretary) will have access to the database. In the event of an emergency where you need to notify next of kin follow the table below.

When the persons involved in the cascade are present on a dive trip, they will carry a copy of the information so that it is readily available. Please keep a copy of the phone numbers in your dive bag or the glove box of your car, so that should you ever need it (and we hope you never do) it will be handy.

Emergency contact cascade for Ealing Sub Aqua Club

To be used in the event of a serious diving incident or accident, which requires notification of next of kin.

First call:

Dominic Watts **01628 472553**
07711 747495

If not available, then call

Michelle Burrell 020 8864 0460
07941 927721 or 07771 650181

If not available, then call

Richard Ayers **020 8995-5031**
07810 058583

If not available, then call

Nigel Ealand 020 8582-0991
07802 213768

These persons have up to date next of kin information, which will be used to notify next of kin.

Boat handlers and Cox'ns

Several Club members have attended boat handling courses in November last year and March this year. Additionally, several experienced boat handlers have done Diver Cox'n assessments. We now have an unprecedented number of people who have received some training in how to handle the boats. However, it doesn't stop there. This is a small appeal to all the experienced Cox'ns to let the new boat handlers have a go at taking the boats out, under supervision; and to all the new boat handlers to use all the new skills that you've just learnt. Let's not have the same old people driving again and again. Everyone has worked hard to get the money for the boats, and everyone's dive charges and subs fund them. Let's all have a play!

After all trips on the boat, the Cox'n is responsible for completing a boat report form (part of the Dive planning file) and returning it as soon as possible to the boat officer, John Mullins. Do not wait until the next Club night to give John the form as there may be another trip out in a few days time, and finding out that something needs attention on a Thursday night doesn't allow any time to actually do the repairs in time for the following weekend. You are obliged to assist John in carrying out any repairs that have arisen as a result of your dive trip. The boats should always leave the boat yard in a good state of repair, and you should return them in the same state.

Tigger Too – an update

Many people will be aware that Tigger Too sustained substantial damage whilst being used for a BSAC Boat Handling Course with an approved BSAC Boat Handling Instructor. This matter is now the subject of discussion between ourselves and BSAC which is likely to result in an insurance claim by us against BSAC. We have our own boat insurance, but a specific exclusion of our insurance is running the boat aground, as this is always considered to be the responsibility of the Cox'n. It's a bit like running into the back of the car in front of you – no question but it's your fault.

No blame is attached in any way whatsoever to any of the ESAC members who were on the boat which grounded, but may we take this opportunity to advise you of the correct procedure.

1. Firstly, study the chart before you set out. Be aware of restricted channels, drying rocks, sand bars etc. Know what time high tide is and use the rule of twelfths to calculate the depth of water.
2. Obey buoys in channels. It costs the government money to put them there, and they don't spend out unless they need to...
3. Use the depth sounder on the boat. This piece of equipment is there for a reason (not just to fill a space on the console).
4. Proceed with extreme caution in areas of restricted draft. Lift the engine to reduce the depth needed for clearance if necessary.
5. If you do strike anything, it will cause damage to the boat, even sand can be very destructive. Cut the power to the engine. Manoeuvre the boat away from the hazard. This may mean using reverse, letting the tide or wind carry you off, using the oars to push yourselves away. Aim to minimise damage to the boat and engine.
6. Inspect the damage to the boat when you return to shore and fill out a boat report form. Inform the boat officer as soon as possible.