



WHAT'S BUBBLING

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DIARY DATES 2004

Thursday 20th May: The postponed rebreather try dive night has been rescheduled and the proposed new date is Thursday 20th May. Please meet at Bracknell Leisure Centre at 7.45. The pool session would run from 8.30 to 10.00. Please contact Michelle if you're interested.

CORRECTION & APOLOGY - EDITOR

In the last issue I re-named Denis Murphy as Denis McCarthy. My apologies for this - we once had a builder named Denis McCarthy, and I remember the incessant cheques we made out to him for vast sums of money . . . so the name somehow stuck. Sorry Denis! (and no, there isn't a cheque in the post).

NEW MEMBERS' SPOT



I joined the club along with my daughter Catherine about 18 months ago. Catherine has always been a keen swimmer and about 6 years ago she joined Ruislip Snorkelling Club and for the next 12 months I provided a taxi service before finally being persuaded to join. After a very nervous start I found I really enjoyed it and in 2001 we decided to join a Ruislip club snorkelling holiday to the Red Sea. By co-incidence we saw a PADI diving course locally and decided to do it so that we could dive as well as snorkel in Egypt.

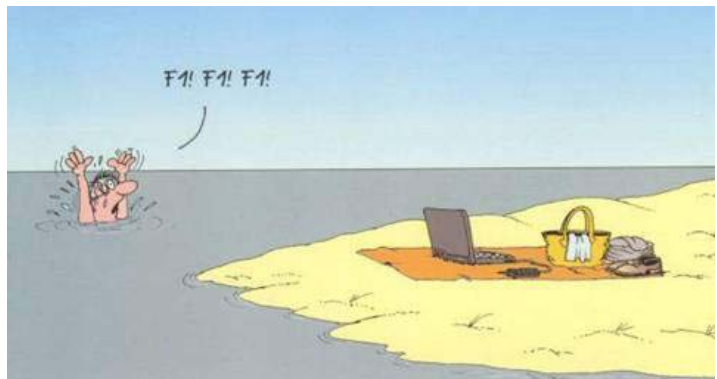
For someone as unfit as I was it was really hard work and after a weekend in Cornwall doing the open water course I wasn't sure if diving was for me but after a week in Egypt I was hooked. Back in England several of our snorkelling friends (Mr and Mrs Sat, Sita and Dennis) joined ESAC but as Catherine at 13 was too young so we didn't join. A year later we wanted to go abroad again but I lacked the confidence to dive so as Catherine was now 14 we joined ESAC doing the conversion from PADI to Sports dive. I still lack confidence and so the chance to practice in the pool and to go on dives with instructors is very helpful for me.

Last year we managed several open water dives with the club – Weymouth, Bognor and Bracklesham and after the initial fear I began enjoying them. We then had a wonderful weeks diving in Tenerife and I must admit I do prefer to dive in warm clear water but still enjoy being part of ESAC. My thanks to all the instructors who last year were so patient and understanding with me while I conquered my fear of boats and diving in cold murky water.

Sheila Holt

Cheap swimming!

Just a quickie to remind you that the family swimming charge is now paid annually and that it's dead cheap. If one member of the family has a full ESAC diving membership then for only £10, all the rest of the family (usually living at the same address) can swim in the pool on as many Thursdays as they like for a year. To put it another way, if one none-diving person in your family paid the tenner and swam 20 times they'd have **saved £47** over the pool's normal adult admission and a second person could



swim for free! If you have more than one paid up ESAC member in the family, you don't even have to pay the £10.

If this is you and you haven't paid, please do. Costs will go up substantially if/when we have to move pools so the club can't afford to miss out on any income.

Thanks,
Robin Stevens – Treasurer.

OPEN FORUM – FRIDAY 16TH APRIL 2004 – EDITOR

Colin Wilde, BSAC Regional Coach, had been invited to ESAC's first Open Forum, held at the Community Centre. A small but fairly vocal group of members met up to discuss various diving points of view and to hear what Colin had to say about what BSAC could offer us.

Colin embarked on his 3-year stint as Regional Coach in January of this year, and he's hoping to make some changes: he wants to see the website up and running to become a good source of information for members and is aiming to get skill development courses run by the Regions, which will enable members of different Clubs to meet up, encouraging exchange of views on all aspects of diving from kit configurations, dive practices, diving techniques, to sharing opinions on different diving locations. Where the web is concerned, Colin wants the London Region's site to give details of places to dive so that members of different branches can club together to make their diving more viable. He also wants to see other information on the web, like:

- Kit sales: the second-hand market for diving equipment should be very lucrative, given the cost of shop-bought kit
- Technical/mixed gas/deeper diving information
- Details of rebreather try dives; SDC courses can be arranged
- Details of how BSAC can help individuals trying for new qualifications, such as prepping for the AI and 1st Class Diver courses.

Colin expressed disappointment with BSAC's response when asked for help with the running of ESAC's OWI course last year and urged that ESAC now contact him direct for this kind of assistance. There are 76 BSAC clubs in the London Region, with roughly 50-80 members in each and Colin is enthusiastic and eager to help wherever he can. If anyone is interested in a mid-week diving trip, for example, he could co-ordinate it with members from other clubs to make the trip viable.

The evening then moved on to current issues within ESAC and to kick-off, some of the newer members were asked to give their opinion on their early days with the Club. Some interesting opinions emerged, such as:

- Someone needs to take responsibility for new members, to provide a "mentoring" service
- Diving equipment is expensive and new members have very little idea of what they should buy or how to go about it; an experienced diver could help with this
- Lack of continuity with the same instructor – frequently changing instructors during their training.

Following on from this session, Nigel gave a short presentation on his contribution to the sinking of HMS Scylla last month. Having seen this presentation *ad nauseam* in the comfort of her own home, your Editor received this version with a slightly jaundiced eye. However, the video and chat were very well received and Nigel returned to his bottle of red quite pleased with himself.

The account of Richard's doings in Tenerife (which gained himself and Michelle the prestigious qualification of BSAC Advanced Instructor) were also most informative and enjoyable. I did wonder at one point whether he'd also taken a Powerpoint qualification whilst he was at it, as he seemed to gain as much satisfaction from his presentation as he must have from gaining the diving qualification. However, you can get the basics of his report from April's What's Bubbling and needless to say he and Michelle had the congratulations of all present. Craig then highlighted the Roles and Responsibilities of an ESAC Cox'n.

A short report followed on the Sport England Workshops currently being offered by ESAC. Details of these courses have already been emailed to Divers and information will doubtless be on the notice board. All are encouraged to attend one or more of these.

The final item on the agenda was What's Bubbling, and whether it was what the members wanted. Nobody said it wasn't, which mightily pleased your Editor. However if it is to remain an enjoyable read, however often it appears, it needs members' contributions. No-one wants to see page after page of committee fodder; we want to read about past diving trips, past social events, good ideas, good kit buys (and, more importantly perhaps, bad kit buys), etc. Anyone any good at drawing cartoons? Please contact me!

Natalie

COMMITTEE UPDATE

Following a recent accident at the pool can I please remind everyone that walking around with full dive kit on your back does have risks associated with it? For those of you with limited experience carrying this amount of weight, please take extra special care, especially in the changing rooms. It would be safer to do two trips and carry less weight. Would those who are involved in instruction please discuss, with any trainees, the methods of carrying kit whilst at the pool or a dive site to minimise the risks of falls. - Safe Diving - DO

Weymouth Divers

Having organised the diving for this year's trip, I really appreciated the kind words I received from many of you over that weekend, and from those who either did not manage to speak to me before I left Weymouth, or wanted to reinforce their sentiments, via email afterwards. It certainly made me feel appreciated, and that all the time and effort of organising such a trip had been worthwhile. As you are all aware, for someone who cannot dive this year, being the Diving Officer and organising trips for the enjoyment of others is not an easy task. Thanks for all the support. Craig

Incident Reporting

For those of you who have been brave enough to report your near misses or actual accidents to me over the last couple of months, thank you. I assure you they have been dealt with confidentially, and are being used to try and prevent your fellow divers having similar incidents or accidents in the future. With that in mind, I am finding that people are having a few issues with control of their buoyancy early in the season, and in particular when using their dry suits. If anyone would like a refresher on how to use your dry suit for buoyancy or may be you have never been taught, please contact the Training Officer and he will arrange it for you. - DO.

Robin on the road to Damascus.

When I was about 13 there was this brilliant arcade game called Missile Command where you had to shoot all the invading spaceships before they hit the Earth and destroyed the human race. I'd listened to Roy Castle carefully, I wanted to be the best, I wanted to beat the rest and so I knew getting my name at the top of the scoreboard would take dedication. Every week when my Dad and brother went to Brierly Hill swimming baths for the diving club, I would tag along to put in my bid for fame. Eventually I got so good that I could eat a packet of salt and vinegar Smiths square crisps at the same time and still get in the top ten. Mission accomplished, it would have made perfect sense to drift into diving but somehow flopping about like a fish seemed totally unexciting compared to saving the planet. What's more, I never got on very well with water:



Mmmmm... crisps



Some fungus

On one of my very first swimming lessons aged 4ish, I was scared and decided I wasn't going in the pool. I don't know what the teacher was thinking but she lost it and pushed me in - hard. I tried to jump out of the way only to bounce awkwardly off the side of the pool into the water and leave my leg looking as bruised as tree fungus. My Mom sorted her out but I'm still emotionally scarred now. In addition, since the age of ten, I'd been called all the names under the sun for my genetic inheritance – four eyes, speccy, Adrian Mole etc... and then once in the swimming pool I'd take my glasses off only to suffer further, not being able to see where the abuse came from. Why would anyone want to deliberately make a lost, blind, panicky, flailing victim out of themself?

Fast forward to 2002 and Robin discovers that Specsavers do prescription swimming goggles for £30. "Bargain; I'll have some of them as well please". I was trying to inject some much needed exertion into my sedentary desk jockey's carcass. I started doing lengths in a pool that I passed on the way home and usually the only other person there was the lifeguard watching me like a lonely slow motion tennis spectator. It was a small old-fashioned pool with big round windows at the end and great solid shafts of sun would stream down and then turn to subtly shifting curtains of light as they climbed in to swim with me. I could stay there for hours just watching the water through my magic goggles. The problem was that I could only hold my breath for a couple of minutes at best. When my Dad and brother invited me to learn to dive and come on a trip to the Florida Keys I jumped at the chance. Fantastic!!! Over a hundred dives later and I've never looked back. Makes me wonder what else I might have been missing out on all these years... But surely golf is rubbish?



Florida Cheese: From right to left – some bloke who got in the photo, my brother Chris (Oxford Equipment officer), me (ESAC Treasurer) and my Dad John (Nautilus fossil).



And finally, some advice for the ladies out there still seeking the perfect mate . . .

1. It is important that a man helps you around the house and has a job.
2. It is important that a man makes you laugh.
3. It is important to find a man you can count on and doesn't lie to you.
4. It is important that a man loves you and spoils you.
5. It is important that these four men don't know each other.