



Scubanaut Herald

Spring edition 2009

This is first of, we hope, a new series of Heralds designed to provide info on Club activities, trips and more BUT this depends on YOU submitting articles, photos, ideas etc.

Could you volunteer to guest edit, just one issue, to spread the load? If you think you could do a better job than this one from Chris - STEP FORWARD.

Remember, if you don't contribute there won't be a Herald. We don't need long items – a few lines will do - so send in anything you think suitable to the guest editors...to be announced.

Your Committee will be soon be publishing a questionnaire asking you what you want from your Club and from your diving. There will also be an opportunity to let people know what you can contribute to the Club – watch out for this and PLEASE respond ASAP. The Committee will review the responses and try to act on comments – BUT we need your feedback!

EXCESS BAGGAGE



Recently some of our members have been out to **Marsa Alam** and **Sharm-el-Sheikh**. Both trips have been enjoyable, and the diving was great, but both trips were affected by the whims of airlines when it comes to baggage allowance. In these times of credit crunch it isn't a surprise to find that budget airlines try to get every penny out of additional services and excess baggage. Baggage allowances are being reduced, which makes it just that bit more difficult to arrange a dive trip abroad. But the most disappointing thing about this is that some of the carriers seem to be deliberately trying to confuse their customers, hoping that we will not argue and will just pay out, after all you can't really just refuse and leave your dive kit at the airport. The good news so far is that with persistence and aptly worded letters of complaint some of the Club have been able to reclaim their excess baggage charges. Advice - do your research and take copies of website promises on baggage allowance, get any advice from the airlines in writing if you can, if all else fails ask Fran to help you write a complaint letter!

CREDIT CARD CRUNCHED

A double whammy on the Sharm holiday when a debit card was blocked by the bank. With no service number on the back of the card it took over half an hour to sort the problem out with Barclays bank, at some considerable expense in phone calls. The good news is that following a written complaint Barclays refunded all expenses without question. It seems that there have been many more incidents recently of cards being blocked by banks when they are used abroad, and not just outside of Europe either. The banks say they are acting to protect customers from fraud. The banks advise that you let them know when you are going abroad, but this does not necessarily guarantee they won't block your card anyway. We would advise taking a second card for emergencies and asking your bank for a telephone number to call if this happens to you (preferably a free one).

YOUR D.O. RANTS: TIME TO DUST OFF THOSE COBWEBS.

If your kit has been stuck in the garage since last summer you can't assume it's still in tip top working order. Have a go in the pool to drown the spiders and see if it still works. A trip to Stoney is always good to check your kit and refresh your skills before going to the sea. Check those dates on cylinders and try to remember the last time you had everything else serviced.

Remember to have an appointed Dive Manager (ask if you don't know what one is) and to follow safe diving guidelines.

For further safety advice, sign up to BSAC's Talk e-newsletters. (Google BSAC.com and click Quicklinks – BSAC Mailing lists and carry on from there!)

SCUBA-FOLK:

I would like to welcome the recent new members to the Club:

James Garfield
Tom Johnston
Dan Anthony-Curtis
Stewart Holmes
Natalie Lodge
Neil Parsons (*not pictured*)



Stewart and Neil are both PADI trained divers, come to us the dark art of UK diving.

to learn

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Natalie and Stewart for passing their Ocean Diver theory.
Gavin Campbell for qualifying as a Snorkelling Instructor.
James and Tom who have both done their first open water dives (in Stoney, in a dry-suit!!).
Neil for finishing his PADI to Ocean Diver cross-over.

PORTLAND FEBRUARY 2009

In February Andy organised a trip to Portland Harbour, staying in Castletown. Remembering to book good weather ensured that diving could take place all day Saturday and well into Sunday. The RHIB got a run out. We stopped at the Breakwater which has seen some improvements, more rooms are ensuite and they are having a go at providing posh restaurant food. We also spent an evening in the celebrity hangout of Green Shutters, with the Ocean Odyssey crew in attendance. These are the guys that are salvaging the HMS Victory.



Over the weekend we managed three trips – to the Countess of Erne, the Dredger and the Encuri; and 15 dives for the start of the year.

Big thanks go to Andy for organising a great weekend.

UPCOMING TRIPS



This Easter Pete has organised a trip to Paignton. The Easter trip has always been one of the best attended Club outings and one to which divers of all qualifications are invited, as well as family members.

In July Pete and Sandra celebrate their birthdays with a club trip to Lanzarote.

We also hope to get some weekends to the coast sorted out soon, using the club boat, chartering hard boats and maybe some shore diving too.



And don't forget: *DIVE FEST; party on the beach event at Pentewan Sands Holiday Park, Cornwall, organised by DIVE Magazine.*

Friday 15th May until Sunday 17th May, with bands, kit stands, bonfire, treasure hunts, beach games AND DIVING . . .

www.divefest.co.uk

REMINDERS & OTHER THINGS TO GET INVOLVED WITH:

This years EMUP (East Midlands Underwater Photographers) programme is up and running. Informative presentations are held from 8pm on the first Tuesday of the month at Stoney Cove. The likes of Alex Mustard have spoken to the group. Competition entries need to be in by the previous Sunday. Some of our members have already picked up awards. For details go to www.emup.org.uk

On a similar note Allan Laird's basic underwater photography course will start shortly. There will be a classroom session, underwater session in the pool, and a Photoshop session. Suitable for Ocean Divers and beginners at underwater photography - let Allan know if you wish to attend as numbers will be limited. Further courses may run, including the certified BSAC photography course, in the future.

Check the BSAC website for the schedule of Skill Development Courses scheduled by the Regional BSAC Coaching Teams. Always good for improving your own skill set and seeing how other divers do things.

AND FINALLY:

The Council's pool fees have gone up so we need to raise more money, preferably by recruiting more new members – persuade your friends to come along for a chat and maybe Try Dive.

Fancy acting as our Trips Officer – you will only be expected to coordinate our efforts, not organise all the trips, and plenty of support will be available from the Committee.

The boat has been checked over thoroughly and some necessary repairs have been made and some upgrades have taken place to keep it operating efficiently and SAFELY. To get good value from our investment we need to use it for a lot more trips