

Jan 2009  
Issue 128

# Free Flow

The magazine for LSAC

## In This Months Issue

Latest News  
Barwell School (really)  
Milawi Diving Safari  
Diving Stats

Cover Photo: Dead Mans Fingers  
Hope Cove – By Editor





# Free Flow

## CONTENTS

Page 1

Cover

Page 2

Editors Bit

Page 3

Page 3

Page 4

News

Page 6

Chairperson's Knock

Page 7

DO's Bit

Page 8

Stats

Page 10

Calendar

## Buddies

Quite a modest magazine this month. It's the quiet season (diving wise) and, with the confusion of Christmas I didn't give the regular contributors much time to prepare - so thanks to Phil Turney for his Chairman's Knock which he prepared very quickly and efficiently.

However this does give me the opportunity to put Nigel's report of his visit to Barwell school - which I thought I'd included last week until I came to print it!

Included in this issue is the first part of Dave Goddard's report of his recent 'safari' to Lake Malawi.

Any article is welcome for submission as part of Freeflow - but please be careful with the file size - it can be difficult to reduce the size later. Preferably all articles should be in Word, and if putting pictures in these should be sized to suit - if you are unsure how to do this see the editors (past and present).

Last month I mentioned African Diver (a free web-based magazine) this is already on it's second issue (3<sup>rd</sup> issue due on 1<sup>st</sup> February). It can be found at:

<http://www.africandiver.com/>

IanJ

**Page 3**

Page 3 has been cancelled this month in favour of  
**News Views Announcements Rumours and Letters**  
(But still there have been no letters)

**Happy New Year to All LSAC Members**

The main item of news is the forthcoming Annual Dinner  
Dance / Awards Evening.

This is being held on the Saturday 24th January - see The  
Chairman's knock for more details, and Bill Johnson to buy  
tickets.

I'm told that there are preferential rates if you want a  
drink (or three) and decide to stay the night

\*\*\*\*\*

**Easter Trip**

A new Easter trip has been announced: It is hoped to be at  
Challabrough, South Devon, and highlights include:  
accomodation on the holiday complex, sandy beach, indoor  
swimming pool, amusements etc

See Richard Hall for latest details.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Upcoming Birthdays for January:**

John Drake

Mike Flatt

(The above two will have already have happened by the time we go  
to press - so belated birthdays to you two!)

Roger Holmes

Samantha Shaw

Gill Grimes

Adam Simpson

**And a few for early February**

Peter Whittle

Adam Simpson

Danielle Clarke

Bob Tucker

\*\*\* Happy Birthday to one and all \*\*\*

IanJ

## Chairman's Knock – January 2009

First of all can I wish everybody a happy new year. I guess a number of you are cleaning up your dive kit, contemplating going for a dive in the new year. As ever there are many opportunities for club members to go off diving to our local haunts with a number of trips planned to Stoney Cover over the holiday period. A couple of members have also taken the chance to nip off to sunny climbs such as the Red Sea whilst prices are keen.

We had a good end to the year with seventeen members and friends coming out to have a beer and curry on the last Tuesday before Christmas. It was good to see so many members turning out and taking a chance to attend a social evening. We have a busy schedule most of the time with pool and training going on most of the year so it was good to have a drink and curry before the break.

In December we confirmed an exciting decision for the club. We had a presentation on the Lucky Dip boat replacement from the Boat Team. This was a very interesting evening and contained a large amount of detail on the options reviewed by the boat team. The recommended boat looks an excellent progression on lucky dip whilst keeping to the principle of providing a main dive platform which can be towed by the widest group of members. I would like to thank the boat team for their time and effort considering this matter over the last six months. Our target is to get the new boat in place as soon as we can for the upcoming dive season and we will keep you updated on our progress.

As we start into 2009 we now enter a period of dive planning for 2009. We need to put together a varied and interesting dive plan that offers diving opportunities to all members. This needs to cover diving both in the UK and overseas, experienced and new divers, and trips that cater for diving families as well as more challenging expeditions. There are a couple of dive planning sessions coming up on a Tuesday night so please come along and have your say and help out. A lot of the expeditions need to be led by advanced divers and dive leaders but it is great experience, whatever your grade, to help on a trip and spread the load so we can have the best possible programme for 2009.

Finally to remind those of you that haven't already got tickets that the Awards Dinner is on Saturday 24th January. This is set to be a great evening with a Dinner, top guest speaker and great live music from Hot Property [http://www.hotproperty.org.uk/~hotproperty.org.uk/public\\_html/Agent/index.html](http://www.hotproperty.org.uk/~hotproperty.org.uk/public_html/Agent/index.html) which will make for a superb evening. For those of you who would like to take advantage of the hotel and leisure facilities we have rooms reserved at a special rate.

We start back with Club meetings on Tuesday 6th January at 7:30pm so I look forward to seeing you back after the break.

Phil Turney

Chairman

## Barwell School

For the second year running, I took Lucky Dip along to Barwell Infants School for a day in October.

Last year at the same time Indira Barnard asked if I would take the boat along to show the children as part of their extra curricular activities and provide them with something a little different to the normal school syllabus.

The prospect of giving a presentation to well over a hundred children from 5 to 9 was quite daunting, but in the event went surprisingly well.

I set the boat up in the playground with as many bit sand pieces attached as I could find including 'A' Flag, O2 kit, a full set of diving kit and mask, and

# Thank You



Thank you for bring  
your bote to ar. Soole We thort  
it was vere icsting it was the  
the best day ever <sup>exciting</sup> Love from  
Joe can.

most important of all - The Air Horn.

Staging was erected down the side to give them a good view and better access.

The children came out in groups of 20 or so accompanied by a teacher and assistant, and I gave them a few minutes talk on what the boat did. For most of the time I let them ask questions.

What I found most surprising was the level of question that they asked.

Even the youngest had a good knowledge of boats (bearing in mind you can't get much further from the sea than Barwell). I have to admit to

being slightly taken aback when talking about the blunt and sharp end, when a couple replied referring to Port and Starboard.

Many photographs were taken (we can't of course print them here) and the final treat - for them at least, not the neighbours - was a go on the air horn.

My final treat was taking lunch with the children. The chairs were a little small but the fish fingers were good.

I think that all the children really enjoyed the day and as with the first year, I was presented with a portfolio of drawings and photographs to commemorate the day. A couple of the drawings are reproduced here and I'm sure you will agree that the likeness (of me anyway) is amazing.

I have sent them a CD with about photographs of various underwater scenes of the Red Sea.



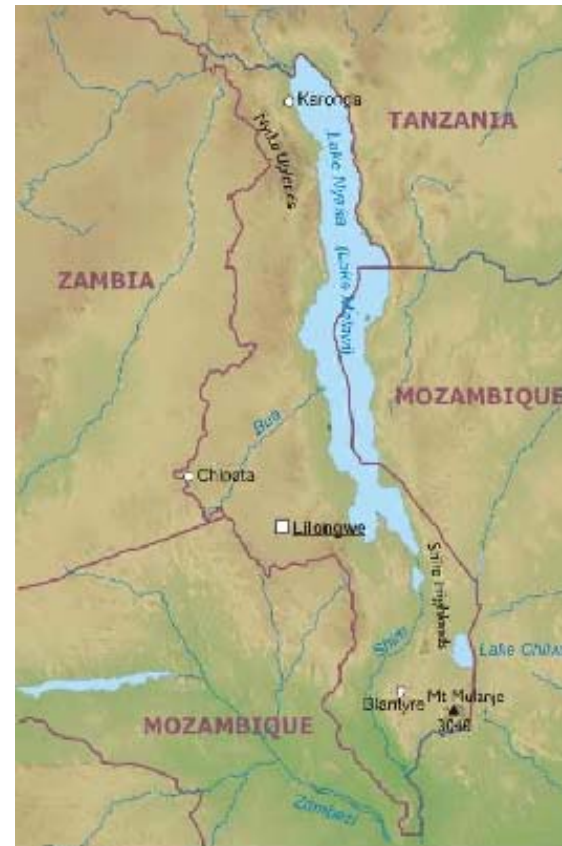
Nigel

# Lake Malawi (Part 1)



Lake Malawi, which is believed to be about 3 million years old, is the only freshwater site listed in Monty Halls' 2004 guide to 60 of the World's top dive locations. It was declared a World heritage Site in 1980.

The underwater landscape consists of rock walls and huge boulders separated by open water or sandy beaches. Away from the shore it is perfectly safe to drink the water - which in fact tastes very good. You won't get dehydrated diving here!  
The lake's waters teem with fishes and more species are found here than in the whole of Europe and North America combined!  
The most abundant family is the cichlids and from one or



possibly two early types that entered the lake when it was formed, they have evolved into a flock of roughly 800 species in a huge variety of colours, dentition types and body shapes, replicating the roles of virtually every fish you would find on a tropical marine reef. The Africans divide them into a few basic groups. Mbuna (literally rock hitter) who mainly spend their time grazing on the algae that grows on the rocks, similar I suppose to parrot fish. Utaka are mainly grouper types. Mcheni is a barracuda cichlid that is caught in open water at depths of about 60 metres on a hook and line. Chambo is a large cichlid that is relished by the Malawians (not to be confused with chamba which is cannabis).







think that's gross, well there are many other delicacies to discover such as 'mouse on a stick'. We were advised not to try these as the mice may have been poisoned. We were also strongly advised to

avoid any 'mystery meat' we may be offered.

In Africa you have to take proper health precautions! All inoculations including yellow fever are required and Malaria tablets are a must. I took Malarone - a new drug that cuts down the amount of time you actually have to take the tablets after you leave the country. No hallucinatory side effects for divers either!



Here is Charlie Boorman and a friend, photographed while staying at Cool Runnings when filming Long Way Down. This proves that mouse on a stick is something

that long predates anything written by Terry Pratchett.

In my early teens I kept tropical fish and I clearly remember the first time I saw Malawi cichlids. They immediately made every other type of freshwater tropical fish look ordinary - not only that but their behaviour and individual personalities made them seem much more than just fishes. I became such a keen fan of these animals that at one time I had five large tanks full of many different species.

These days my job and a travel addiction keep me too busy to care for any animals' especially such high maintenance tropical fish as Malawi cichlids (you have to change the water at least once a week to keep these things in top condition). But one day I'll get a new aquarium (or several if things work out as I plan)!

However, one of my dreams has always been to visit the country dive in the lake and see these creatures first hand.

A few clicks on google will reveal pretty much anything these days and late last year I contacted a Canadian guy, Larry Johnson, who visits Malawi annually and who subsequently invited me to join him on this years dive safari, described as a boat and camping adventure 'away from it all'.



Patrik Hultqvist, Per Nilsson and Larry Johnson to the right

Below is Samantha Ludick at her Cool Runnings guest house..



The flight from Heathrow to Lilongwe via. Nairobi with Kenya Airways was painless and after my dive buddies Larry and Patrik arrived, Samantha Ludick, who runs the Cool Runnings guesthouse on the lakeshore at Senga Bay, collected us and drove us the 50 miles or so from Lilongwe to the shore of the lake. The main roads in the country are very good - but, some of the lesser-used tracks really do need a 4 x 4.

We settled in to our lodgings and swam in the lake, which is completely free of bilharzia around Senga Bay. We had to be out of the water by 4.30pm as hippos often pass through at that time. Dinner that evening was excellent, Steak and chips! The alcohol is unbelievably cheap and despite what some Malawians told me I found the local brew very palatable.



We saw no wild crocs although they are endemic to the lake—this one is one was in a pit at Red Zebra Lodge. Apparently his friend escaped last year and could have been anywhere nearby.



The crocs in Malawi eat two people every week so we heeded this advice! They can grow over five metres long but even small ones can be lethal!



The next day we prepared for our first dive - Namalenje Island. This was not on the original itinerary, but our dive boat wasn't ready and so we borrowed Sam's speedboat. This location is home to my favourite fish of the entire lake. The 'Red Empress' (*Protomelas taeniolatus namalenje*). Only Patrik and I went on this dive. Larry is an old hand and said that the recent weather would have stirred up sediment around the shallow waters surrounding Namalenje Island, to the extent where visibility would be poor to non-existent. Unfortunately for us he was absolutely right. Visibility was awful and I didn't see a single male empress - just one colourless females - I was so disappointed! When we returned to shore the final member of our party had arrived - another Swede Per Nilsson.

Namalenje Island from the shore at Senga Bay



That night we moved to the 'Red Zebra' lodge, a guesthouse on the site of the Stuart Grant Fish farm, a major export centre for tropical fish - mainly to markets in Europe, North America and South East Asia. Unfortunately Stuart died last year but his widow Esther still runs the place which also operates the boat we were to use to get around the lake. Once again we had an excellent dinner. This time it was kampango (a catfish caught in the lake).



The following morning, our boat was still not ready - but once again Sam Ludick came to our

rescue, allowing us to use her speedboat. This kept the journey short, but we managed to get as far south as the Maleri Islands and dived a site called Nakatenga. Here I saw 'red top zebra' and at 20 metres I also saw 'yellow peacocks' as the dive highlight. There was a lot of debris on the floor of the lake that stirred up very easily. I later discovered this was due to top soil that had blown or drained in following erosion caused by the heavy deforestation that is taking place around the country (Malawi's population has increased four fold in the last 50 years and wood is the primary source of fuel for cooking and heating - apart from which, burning is the primary method of ground clearance when land is converted to agricultural use). In fact, one thing Malawians do complain about is the fact that all of their trees are disappearing.



After Nakatenga, we decided on one more dive and due to time and distance constraints, not to mention my great delight, and as the wind had been calmer we agreed to give Namalenje Island one last shot. At first I saw only Copadichromis borleyi, itself incredibly coloured but after twenty minutes or so I found myself in the midst of many male Red Empress'. This is a stunningly beautiful animal - in my opinion it's the most colourful freshwater fish on the planet and found only at this one location in this one lake.



A lifetime's ambition had been achieved - I celebrated at the



bar that night!

Namalenje Borleyi male left and Red Empress male right

... to be continued ...

## Dinner Dance - Awards

Phil has already mentioned that on Saturday 24th January we have our Annual Dinner Dance / Awards evening.

Most of the awards will have been decided - but I'm sure that if you have an excellent diving story and want to 'Dob' your buddy in then contact him on [scubaholic@o2.co.uk](mailto:scubaholic@o2.co.uk) and you never know... you buddy might be chosen for the Volnay Award!

Also the result of the 'Time Underwater' and 'Instructing Time Underwater' is also probably decided but make sure that your dive details have been submitted so that we get a representative number of dives for the club.

Below is the list of previous winners - will your name be added to the list this year?

	Silver Dolphin Award	Navigation Award	Chairmans Award	Trainee of the Year	Brian Maton Award	Volnay Award	Time Underwater	Instructing Time Underwater
1983	R Ward							
1984	Steve Liscoe							
1985	Steve Liscoe	R Ward						
1986	S Griffith, S Briggs, C Franks	A Watson	T Briggs					
1987	S Briggs	C Boden	R Liscoe	Carl Gamble				
1988	C Franks	Neil Tomlin	D Evans	Alex Taylor				
1989	Neil Tomlin	Neil Tomlin	Alex Bullard	Jane Lilley				
1990	S Curnow	Eddie Price	J & C Boden	Alan Edwards				
1991	Nigel Spickett	Eddie Price	R Ward	Jane Deacon				
1992	Nigel Spickett	C Gamble/ K Spencer	Eddie Price	AnnMarie & Steve Westwood				
1993	Steve Westwood	S Westwood	Nigel Spickett	Steve Brown				
1994	Nigel Spickett	Nigel Spickett/ Pete	Neil Tomlin	Paul Gardiner	Helena Dunleavy			

		Woodcock						
1995	Steve Westwood	M Cook	Pete Woodcock	John Harvey	Ted Williams			
1996	Helen Atkinson	K Spencer/ S Brown	R Ward	Anne Liddington	Mick Faulkner			
1997	Neil Tomlin	R Court	Paul Gardiner	Sheila Brown	Sheila Brown			
1998	Steve Westwood	Bob Mulholland	Helen Atkinson	Brian Speight	Neil Brown			
1999	Phil Turney	Nigel Spickett	Steve Grimes	Ian Jennings	Steve Ward			
2000	Richard Smart	Neil Tomlin	Mick Faulkner	Martyn O'Driscoll	Laura Barnard			
2001	Ian Jennings	Ian Jennings	Steve Westwood	Mary Pearson	Bob Mulholland	Ian Jennings		
2002	Phil Biggs	Nigel Spickett	Gill Grimes	Daryl Bill	Martyn O'Driscoll	Neil Brown		
2003	Phil Turney	Helen Atkinson	Helen Atkinson	Steve Appleton	Janet Roelandts	Phil Turney		
2004	Ian Jennings	Martyn O'Driscoll	Nigel Spickett	Danielle Clarke	Roger Holmes	Jon Brewis		
2005	Ian Jennings	Pete Barnard	Fran Duinker	John Drake	Pete Barnard	Martyn O'Driscoll		
2006	Clarke Duncan	Ian Jennings	Neil Brown	Richard Lakin	Kevin Parker	Fran Duinker	Clarke Duncan	Fran Duinker
2007	Ian Jennings	Victoria Urch	Ian Jennings	Victoria Urch	Ian Jennings	Richard Hall	Ian Jennings	Nigel Spickett
2008	???	???	???	???	???	???	???	???

Ian Jennings

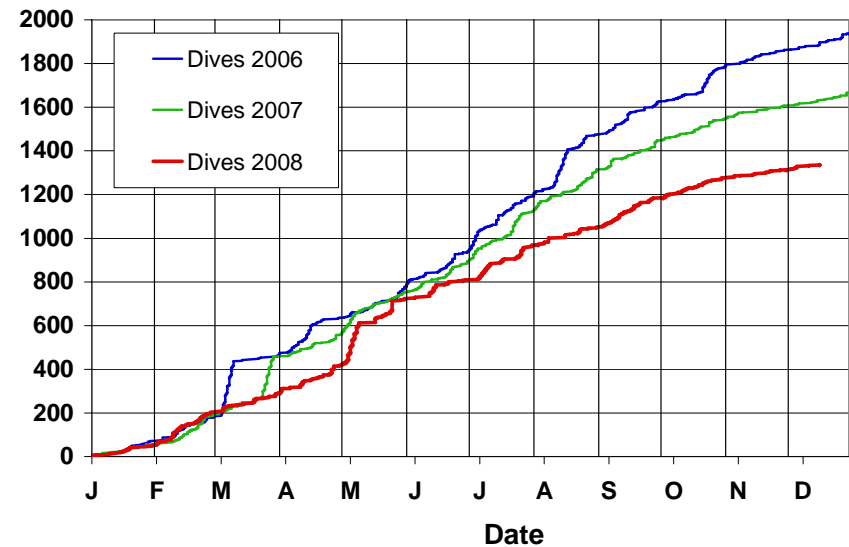
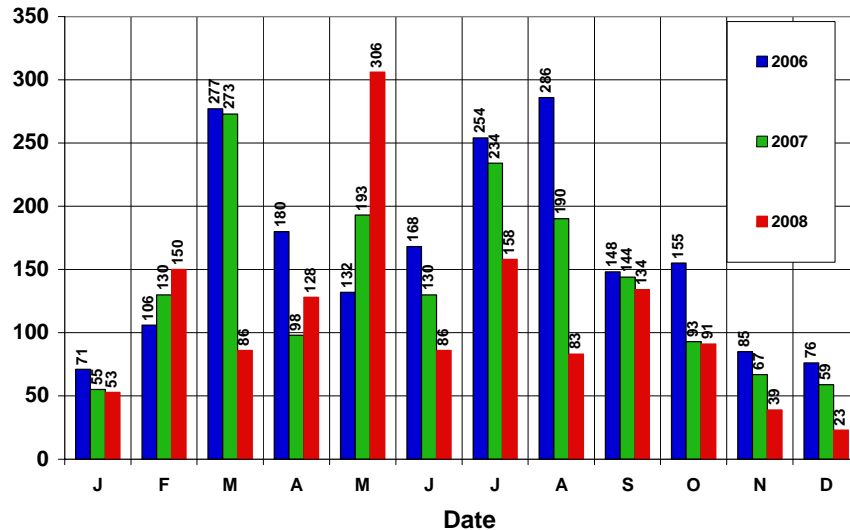
## Members Dives 2008 - Towards The End of 2008

This month I am not publishing the chart - so you don't know who has probably come at the top of the lists - will be announced at the awards eveing. But please make sure that all your dive details have been submitted for 2008. If (without the chart) you aren't sure how many dives I've got recorded for you, then I can let you know. Sent me an e-mail (to [FBGJennings@googlemail.com](mailto:FBGJennings@googlemail.com)) and I'll send you a resume of what I think you have done. (There will be a bit of a delay though... I've taken advantage of cheap deals and gone to start the year's diving in style in some warmer waters! Nigel says he only wants to hear a dive report if it's bad - so I hope I'll have nothing to report!)

Please make sure you report all your dives - the more dives we actually get recorded the more active the club appears to outsiders!

The first graph I'm showing shows how the number of dives we did over the last three years have reduced year on year. Can we turn this trend around this year?

Maybe we can 'blame' the weather, so my second graph shows the number of dives done each month. Which month had the worst weather? May shows up as a good diving month - but I guess this is because the Red Sea trip moved to May this year (from March). February shows an excellent number of dives - more that previous years - but the biggest 'disappointment' must be reserved for August - more that 200 dives down



on 2006 and over 100 down on 2007! Can the August figures be simply attributed to the weather?

As I said before lets turn this around and lets get diving in this new year - we will hopefully have a new boat to play with, so lets get out there and use it!

Ian Jennings - December 2008



Below is the Calendar from the Website - not sure how up to date, but it's a good basis!

06-Jan-09	OT 5 - Pete Woodcock	ST 6 - Mike Flatt		Instr. Eve - Buoyancy - FD.	Instructor group - KH/FD		Rich Hall	Night dive - Stoney 7th	06-Jan-09
13-Jan-09	OT 6 - Neil Tomlin	Catchup/Revision - Neil B		Buoyancy Course	Dive Planning - 2009 - NS		Kath Hall		13-Jan-09
20-Jan-09	OT 7 - Pete B	Exam - Fran.		Buoyancy Course			Mike Hill	Night dive - Stoney 19th	20-Jan-09
27-Jan-09	Revision/Catchup - Phil T.	Exam debrief		Buoyancy Course	Compressors - NS		Roger Holmes	Annual Dinner 24/01/09	27-Jan-09
04-Feb-09	Exam - Fran.						Dave Jaques	Night dive - Stoney 5th	04-Feb-09
11-Feb-09	Exam debrief				SDC Presentation - FD		Ian Jennings		11-Feb-09
18-Feb-09	Mentor evening			Boat Handling Theory - Nigel			Bill Johnson	Night dive - Stoney 19th	18-Feb-09
25-Feb-09					Instructor evening - FD		Mary Pearson		25-Feb-09
03-Mar-09				Boat Handling Theory - Fran			Gary Rose	Night dive - Stoney 4th	03-Mar-09
10-Mar-09			DT 1 - Fran D	Boat Handling Theory - Neil B			Sam Shaw		10-Mar-09
17-Mar-09			DT 2 - Neil B	Boat Handling Theory - Pete W			Nigel Spickett	Night dive - Stoney 18th	17-Mar-09
24-Mar-09		ST 1 - Fran	DT3 - Neil T.	Catch-up		Sports Diver Training	Claire Brown	Boat Hand. Course 27-29/3/09	24-Mar-09
31-Mar-09		ST 2 - Nigel	DT 4 - Phil Turney			Sports Diver Training	Richard Sykes	Night dive - Stoney 1st	31-Mar-09
07-Apr-09		ST 3 - Gary R.	DT 5 - Pete Barnard		Rebreathers - FD	Sports Diver Training	Fiona Tomlin		07-Apr-09
14-Apr-09	Easter - no meeting	Easter - no meeting	Easter - no meeting	Easter - no meeting	Easter - no meeting	Easter - no meeting	Easter - no meeting	Easter - no meeting	14-Apr-09
21-Apr-09		ST 4 - kath H	DT 6 - Phil T.			Try Dive	Neil Tomlin	Night dive - Stoney 15th	21-Apr-09
28-Apr-09		ST 4 - Neil B	DT 7 - Practical - Roger			Try Dive	Phil Turney	Night Dive - Stoney 8th	28-Apr-09
05-May-09	Spring bank holiday - no mtg	Spring bank holiday - no mtg	Spring bank holiday - no mtg	Spring bank holiday - no mtg	Spring bank holiday - no mtg	Spring bank holiday - no mtg	Spring bank holiday - no mtg	Spring bank holiday - no mtg	05-May-09
12-May-09	Intro /OT 1 - Fran	Catchup -Rich H	Catchup - Neil B			Ocean diver training	Vicki Urch		12-May-09
19-May-09	OT 2 - Neil B	ST 5 - Pete Barnard.	Catchup - Fran D			Ocean diver training	Barry Walford	Night dive - Stoney 20th	19-May-09
26-May-09	May bank holid - no mtg.	May bank holid - no mtg.	May bank holid - no mtg.	May bank holid - no mtg.	May bank holid - no mtg.	May bank holid - no mtg.	May bank holid - no mtg.	May bank holid - no mtg.	26-May-09
02-Jun-09	OT 3 - Rich H	Catchup/Revision - Neil T	DT 8 - Pete Woodcock.	O2 Admin.SDC		Ocean diver training	Kevin Yeates	Night dive - Stoney 3rd	02-Jun-09
09-Jun-09	OT 4 - Kath H	ST 6 - Mike Flatt	DT 9 - Nigel.	O2 Admin.SDC		Ocean diver training	Pete Barnard		09-Jun-09
16-Jun-09	OT 4 - Neil T	Catchup/Revision - Kath H	DT 10 - Rich H	O2 Admin.SDC		Ocean diver training	Steve Beesley	Night dive - Stoney 17th	16-Jun-09
23-Jun-09	Catchup/Revision - Mike F	Exam - Fran.		O2 Admin.SDC		Ocean diver training	Simon Benton		23-Jun-09
30-Jun-09	OT 5 - Pete W.	Exam debrief				Dry suit training	Neil Brown	Night dive - Stoney 1st	30-Jun-09
07-Jul-09	OT 6 - Pete B						Erica Clarke		07-Jul-09
14-Jul-09	OT 7 - Phil T						Jason Day	Night dive - Stoney 15th	14-Jul-09
21-Jul-09	Revision/Catchup - Nigel S.						Fran Duinker		21-Jul-09
28-Jul-09	Exam - Fran.						Mike Flatt		28-Jul-09
04-Aug-09	Mentor evening						Dave Goddard		04-Aug-09
11-Aug-09				First Aid for Divers SDC			Rich Hall	Night dive - Stoney 5th	11-Aug-09
18-Aug-09				First Aid for Divers SDC			Kath Hall	Night dive - Stoney 19th	18-Aug-09
25-Aug-09	August bank holiday - no mtg	August bank holiday - no mtg	August bank holiday - no mtg	August bank holiday - no mtg	August bank holiday - no mtg	August bank holiday - no mtg	August bank holiday - no mtg	August bank holiday - no mtg	25-Aug-09
01-Sep-09				First Aid for Divers SDC			Mike Hill	Night dive - Stoney 2nd	01-Sep-09
08-Sep-09				First Aid for Divers SDC			Roger Holmes		08-Sep-09
15-Sep-09				First Aid for Divers SDC			Dave Jaques	Night dive - Stoney 16th	15-Sep-09
22-Sep-09	AGM	AGM	AGM	AGM	AGM	AGM	AGM	AGM	22-Sep-09
29-Sep-09				Instructor evening		Try Dive	Ian Jennings		29-Sep-09
06-Oct-09						Try Dive	Bill Johnson	Night dive - Stoney 7th	06-Oct-09
13-Oct-09		ST 1 - Nigel S.				Sports Diver Training	Mary Pearson		13-Oct-09
20-Oct-09		ST 2 - Fran.				Ocean diver training	Gary Rose	Night dive - Stoney 21st	20-Oct-09
27-Oct-09	Intro /OT 1 - Fran/Nigel.	ST 3 - Gary R.				Ocean diver training	Sam Shaw		27-Oct-09
03-Nov-09	OT 2 - Kath Hall	ST 4 -Neil B				Ocean diver training	Nigel Spickett	Night dive - Stoney 4th	03-Nov-09
10-Nov-09	OT 3 -	ST 4 - Phil T.				Ocean diver training	Claire Brown		10-Nov-09
17-Nov-09	OT 4 - Nigel	Catchup -Kath H				Ocean diver training	Richard Sykes	Night dive - Stoney 18th	17-Nov-09
24-Nov-09	OT 4 - Neil T.	Catchup - Fran D +				Ocean diver training	Fiona Tomlin		24-Nov-09
01-Dec-09	Catchup/Revision - Ian J.	ST 5 - Pete Barnard.				Dry suit training	Neil Tomlin	Night dive - Stoney 2nd	01-Dec-09
08-Dec-09	OT 5 - Pete Woodcock.	ST 6 - Mike Flatt.					Phil Turney		08-Dec-09
15-Dec-09		Catchup/Revision -					Vicki Urch	Night dive - Stoney 18th	15-Dec-09