

Free Flow

The magazine for LSAC

Mar 2006
Issue 98



In This Months Issue

Pathfinder Course

Members Dives to February 2006

Boat Reservations 2006

Cover Photo Courtesy of Red Sea Tripper Last year

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Free Flow

Editors Bit...



Just a reminder of why we go diving, a fine example of a Morey doing what Morey's do best, yes just enjoying being under water.

This edition comes out a bit early since a group of us will be off to the Red Sea, so I wouldn't be around when its due to be published so it was either early or late, hence its early.

For those with sharp eyes you will have noticed that we are closing in on our 100th edition. I thought it would be nice to get a photo of all the past Editors. To my knowledge it started with Alex, then Nigel, Neil T, Martyn followed by Nick and myself. I'm sure there were others between Alex and Neil T, so please let me know.

If you have anything special you'd like to put in the grand super bumper 100th Edition I be please to hear from you.

The first club trip to Plymouth has come and gone and with the Red Sea next week it would appear that the season has gotten off to a flying start.

By the time most of you read this I shall be sunning myself probably with a beverage calmly drifting upon the crest of a mill pond often referred to as the Red Sea. I shall be thinking of you all.

Pete

Page 3 Luvlies

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Talking of the Red Sea this month's luvlies are a right pair of posers from last years trip. Never in the annals of time has so much flesh been seen in the pages of Freeflow at any one time.

If you would like to become Miss or Mr Apr or know someone who should be, then please email me with the photo and a brief description of why the person should be a page 3 lovely. pete.barnard@power.alstom.com

The Chairman's Knock

Hi All,

Shortest knock yet as I've got to get packing for the RedSea!!

Sports diver and dive leader theory training has now kicked off as well as interest talks so get yourselves down the club on a Tuesday to take part.

With the start of the official dive season coming soon (did it ever end!?) remember the pool is there for you to practice your skills and try out your kit.

Try dives on 21/28th March so start spreading the word, if you have definite people interested then please let a committee member know so we plan out resources.

Anyway I'm off.....bye.....

Regards

Roj

PATHFINDER TROPHY Competition 2006

- Rule 1: All club members must submit an entry**
Rule 2: My subjective prejudices have the only and final say
Rule 3: Bribery of the judge is encouraged
Rule 4: There is only 3 rules

This year the competition is split into 3 categories so that all club members are competing on an equal basis.

Ocean and Sport's Diver Trainees

During training OO5 (pilotage) and SO4 (compass navigation) you will be practicing your pathfinder skills. When you practise and/or get signed off on OO5 and/or SO4 get the instructor to let me know how you got on. In discussion with them and our Training Officer Richard Green I'll rank the performances.

Sport's Divers

Starting with the Stoney map. Fill in all the missing items on the 6 and 20m dive area, i.e. there are a few underwater items not shown on the map all you have to do is submit a map with all these items. Bonus points for getting all the items in the correct position, yes not all those items on the Stoney map are in the correct position. All you have to do is go in and have a look. NOTE: only down to 20m. No bonus points for anything down the hole.

Dive Leader's and Above

Same as for Sport's Divers but the whole of the Cove is included. As above there will be bonus points for getting items in the correct location. There is a double bonus for estimating the minimum decompression the you could get away with if you could dive all the underwater items in one dive.

For Pete's sake!

Ok, I know I wanted to organise a dive trip and I said I'd prefer somewhere I knew. Yes I said some time in 2006, but... February! Well best laid plans ... and all that.

Notes- get something on (virtual) paper. A grand statement, okay? From Douglas Adams 'Don't panic'? No too twee. Some hours later, I settle for Black Adder 'We are not at home to Mr Cock-up', Yes very appropriate, now brainstorm what I know and think, or think I know. Days later I review the volumes. Now cut out the 'could know' and leave the 'must know'. Well that leaves the opening quote. I book the accommodation. A possible 10 people. 'Five rooms cost... ok... pay now? not likely'. Well that's Christmas cancelled.

Read a few books, read a few past trip notes. Good the basics. I go to work. Eventually I think I've got it sorted. I ask Pete for his input. I proudly display the trip notes and documentation for Pete (I made a subsequent list of 16 things I missed, but that's sorted before Pete sees this version). Pete looks carefully and nods sagely, 'just a couple of things...' Another 17 things to sort out. Why did I volunteer!

The Thursday arrives and all is calm, Phil is now Ian but that's fine (Trip -1). I've got air and Pete's twins are sorted, Richard has air and I have Ian's he-air. SNACKS! (I rush to Morries). Friday all is quiet. I wait for the phone-call to say there is a problem. It doesn't come, so I pack the car. Dam and blast, no room for the kitchen sink. Still I couldn't see how I'd get the outboard onboard anyway. Away I go. I have everything, 'belt and braces', everything twice for backups, except...Four good tyres. A slow puncture. Great. I stop every 70 miles to pump the tyre (it's quicker than repacking the car - I'd never get that all back in it). Strange, every time I'm driving they try to phone me and every time I stop and ring them I can't get through? Gloucestershire and Devon, huh!

I arrive; fantastic they're in the pub. They have beer, I have kit. We agree to meet half way for the keys. At the bar I find 2 of 3 and no keys, Ian passed like a ship in the night (on a single pathway, curious) still...BLAST, weather forecast for tomorrow. We agree times for breakfast over a convivial and they look over at the folder of trip info I have by me, but don't mention it. We talk and walk back to the Mount Batten. I'm almost relaxed. I paw over the weather information and make more notes and run over and over the possibilities in my head whilst watching the shadows through the window in the small hours.

Breakfast goes well. The food arrives on the plate; the plate sits on the table, but...Pete won't be diving and Ian has that look when referring to trio diving? Do I bail and have a solid dive for a buddy pair, or get in on it as I want a dive? Silly question, I really want to dive. We have a dive brief with so many backups that Pete is lost and I have to summarise and then summarise the summary. But it's agreed and we march on Skinny to launch her. Oh My God, there's ice on the inside of the rib. Whose idea was this? Richard bravely smiles as he breaks the ice and throws the shards overboard. We all laugh.

We grab the kit and load Skinny. We grab more kit and fill Skinny and eventually cast off. I ask the time and gasp at the answer. When I come around I find we are set to BST and move off. The water is calm and there is little sound. The water ripples like Stoney shivering on a good day. We come around the Mount Batten and draw up to Drakes island. The waves are coming right over the breakwater and I go green over what we might find there.

Phew, at the breakwater we remember, we're just off high water. It all looks quite sedate out there and, yes, even the wind is a light breeze, however cold. We head out...Rounding Rame head, is it mist or fog? We can't see the permanent armada over the Scylla. Closer too there is a solitary rib, nestling over the Scylla. As we approach she collects her divers and moves away as if saying 'she's all yours now boys'. The rib circles and as we kit up she drops off her second wave of divers and we meet them at about 8m on our way down. The trip is a memory now the dive is all.

The Scylla sits prideful on a 25m bottom. Gazing down on her and then up at her as we drop down the port side she seems to turn up her prow at us, as we feel shrugged off her bow. The visibility is good and as Ian bought a map of her innards we poke a head into a punctuation in her side. Ian heads in, then Richard, then myself. We can see a B-movie style 'eerie glow'... its daylight on the starboard side of the keel and we head for it single file through the hatchways. Everyone is perkier on the outside and we look along the starboard side as we glide to another grammatical void. The numerous fish; bib's and wrasse, look at us and watch as if bored, needing entertainment, but a small jellyfish just saunters past. We move into the wreck. The scenery changes from sandy yellows and jade greens all about us to the orange and browns of our torch beams, with all else black. A long black coil unfolds between Richard and me and wriggles in front of my face. I hold steady, no false moves... Hold on it's a rubber door seal, or such, sent flapping. We follow through and turn to watch the mottling of anemones and other filter feeders quilting the Scylla's flanks whilst she rests quietly.

A little higher we move to another gateway into darkness. No Halloween glow this time, but we are braver now, but we take time to check our air, because we're not daft. Inside is closeted blackness with shifting patches of brick coloured ironwork in our only solitary lights. We move on through. A hatchway, a corridor, but no lights excepting own. More rooms, more opportunities and considering these we silently agree and head out again in reverse order. The wrasse watch quizzically as we go, the spider crabs view us without comment, whilst the filter feeders and silt swirls wave at us. Outside the visibility is tremendous the hull rushing away from us on both sides and we float up and onto the deck with flickering dapples of light. I am absorbed. The deck is freshly painted with silt, only a few scurry marks from crabs mar the coat. The occasional lichenin growth is almost out of character. We move over the firework stations and imagine her last glory and then pass the forward missile pads and remember her purpose. At the rail we pause and look back, it's a long way, with good visibility and a respectful moment, before we say goodbye. Richard deploys his DSMB and it signals the final part of the dive as we drift up and away on the ebb and flow. Emerging into cold light and colder air, we are very glad that Pete is close at hand, eager to get us aboard and us more so of hot thick coffee.

I had heard of co-ordinates for a submarine, the A7, lost in Whitsand bay, so shivering a little we had a hunt to seek it out. After a text book search from Pete and Ian, we agreed that it was too well hidden and headed towards the breakwater before we lost the light and any chance of feeling our fingers and... toes again. Skinny skipped over the gently shaking water and made good time back to the Mount Batten, where we gladly moored and unloaded. A long hot shower never felt so good, feeling gradually returning before we met in the corridor between our rooms, to go out to eat.

In the long tradition of dive trips, we spent our time waiting for the ferry carefully eyeing the river through the bottom of our pint glasses and hoping for a quick transfer. The trip was short and bracing and having played following the leader along the streets in full view of the public, a quick detour to a reluctant cash point (it wouldn't give any of us money on our first asking) we entered the warmth of the obligatory Italian and huddled out of the draft near the radiator. The banter was fast and at times low, but it kept us buoyed up through our first pint and several tears of laughter at other aquatic oddities observed by the wary. The food seemed to be our given fair accepting that we almost asked for 'our usuals, please', but it was eaten with contemplation of another pint and another dive ahead.

Finishing before food lulled us, too much, we braced ourselves for the night and headed towards a few known pubs, but connoisseurs of culture we trawled the barbican area for a good pint and settled in with some of the locals for the evening. We knew they were locals as a caricature

watercolour on the wall where we sat showed most of these patrons in the exact same positions in 1991.

To ease the flow of beer a pack of cards was sort by Pete. When given the pile of cards we quickly realised that Pete was well stacked. Sixty one cards from three strikingly different packs, to be exact, heavy on royals and very sparse of serfs. Pete suggested a wager and we all lost a pint in pennies to Pete over the subsequent pints. Throughout the trip Ian, Pete and Richard were mindful of the amount they were drinking by making the pledge to make me pay for a round every time I apologised for something. Needless to say that that got my Scot's blood up and they had less to drink they might otherwise have had.

When we couldn't get another full glass and Ian felt unable to spill out Pete's pint any further, we made an early move for the ferry stop. A little bit of luck this, as it was arriving there as we were, but we docked ahead of a group of lassies who were almost worth dunking a buddy for. Being the gentlemen we are though, we waved to them on the keyside... as we sat hunkering down on the taxi-boat considering a warm bed... what bunk! At the Mount Batten we found extra duvets in our rooms (didn't I mention that the heating was broken) and the walls bouncing, well there was a wedding reception below our rooms and associated activities in the rooms above ours. So we sat to watch TV and contemplate life... and which of us was going to be the mug to get hit by the annoying kid's waterbomb on the chance of knowing his guardian school-mam better. Well, Pete stepped into the breach, but it wasn't worth a cold water-bomb down the back of your neck on a freezing night, especially when all of the other invited kids wanted to have a go! Still there were the obligatory women crying crumpled in the corridors and the suited suitors squaring up outside, oh and a newly launched battleship of a woman who nicked my parking space.

I spent a few nail chewing minutes with the forecast of -3°C and freezing fog overnight as well as for Sunday morning before retiring and telling myself I should have retired, as DTO, ignobly in December. We all slept. I say slept as we did eventually, at some point, for a little while, in between the party and the party guests settling themselves.

With the light came my apprehension to open the blind on a clouded view of the window sill and six inches..... of murky fog. I stood at the window for a few seconds choosing a deity and then pulled the cord...Yes, only six inches... Hold on, it's condensation! The air was crystal clear and the temperature, well not as much ice this time.

Breakfast passed with few words, mainly as I didn't say much, and we set out only a little later than I wanted too (that flipping kitchen sink again). The sky was a whole packet of pastels in a full rainbow from north to south and even the steam from a factory on the far, far shore was drifting vertically away from the chimney, barely moving. The water ahead was calm and oily, reminiscent of the slick that we left behind us, but the millpond idea worked as well. The top of the breakwater had a dusting of white water, but it was high tide. As we passed it the seaward horizon was moving into monochrome and I felt my nails shorten at the sight of it. Again in Whitsand bay there was only one other boat and it wasn't as much moving as gently bobbing. It was the same rib as Saturday over at the Scylla... *copycats*. When we got there they were incredibly glad to see us. No-one else was in sight and their engine had failed.

Ian and Pete swung into action with capes flying as they made fast and took them under tow. They moored to the Eagan Lanes buoy and made to recover their divers, whilst Richard and I got 'kitted up'. They gave us a few pointers and as we were about to take the plunge commented on how much the Eagan Lane had broken up and fallen down in the last few weeks. Richard and I glanced at each other, took one deep breath, held our breath and... 'Divers ready!'

Descending to the Lane was a world apart from the Scylla only 100's of meters southwest. The water was a marbled soup of yellow and fawn coloured detritus, which thickened at 10m, but then parted as a veil at 15m to display the Lanes prow. Following the line to the deck we paused momentarily then dropped over the port side to the sandy bottom to have a look along her. Moving to the breach in her port side we were buddied by wrasse and eyed by spider crabs on the port rail gazing down on us. Into the superstructure was like entering the secret garden, weeds swaying in the gentle breeze and fish like birds all around us. The cargo of the Lane looked like a derelict garden in summer under us. In and out of the superstructure we glided enjoying the rummage and scenery until I heard an impatient groan of metal.

A second later we inspected the starboard side of the hull (from the outside) for a minute before exploring a less claustrophobic part of the wreck. With no further complaints from James Eagan we entered the debris field between the fore and aft sections and made forward. Near silence (open circuits!), we looked whilst listening and came gently up to, then over, the superstructure to the fore-section where Richard deployed his DSMB and we left the Eagan Lane to contemplation as we rose towards the surface. A shroud of milky jade closing over the James Eagan from some 10m distance.

The surface temperature was a good 6°C below water temperature, so despite leaving the Lane feeling chilly we were both cold once aboard Skinny. The diving was called on a high note, the two wrecks dived were the main aim of the trip and we headed back. At the breakwater there was a whirlpool off the breakwaters western end, as there had been yesterday, a reminder. The air was very cold and still, almost hesitating, but very clear all about.

Pete waggled the boat, there were some large pieces of tree coming down stream, it didn't matter. We were booked out, we had had a laugh, we had two cracking dives, we were warming up (a little) and the views were glorious. On land Skinny was tended and parked, whilst we packed the cars. All safe, some laughs, a good trip. I trailed Skinny, Ian and Pete, giving air to my tyre twice *en route*. I got home relieved and incredibly tired; more so than on any other trip to date.

I asked to organise a trip and it was nerve racking in places. I got to dive and see different things and things in different ways. Would I go on this trip again? Yes. Would I volunteer, sometime, to organise another trip? The answer is still, Yes.

Neil Calver



Eds addition:- This photo of Neil was to be a page 3 at some time but I thought this article needed at least 1 token photo

Members Dives To (partway-through) February 2006

Leading Positions

The leading positions in the main competition at the time of writing are:

- 1st Fran Duinker 897 minutes
- 2nd Steve Appleton 864 minutes
- 3rd Kevin Parker 762 minutes
- 4th Martin Wileman 570 minutes
- 5th Ian Jennings 544 minutes

(I took the places down to 5th because I have crept into the top 5!).

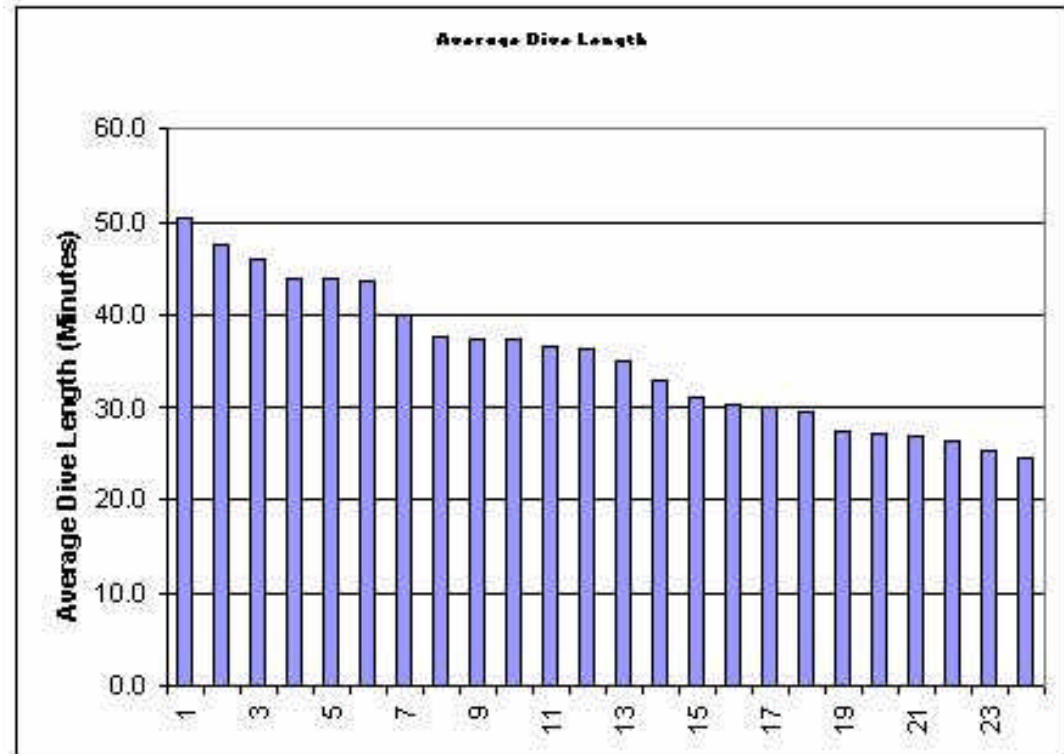
Fran & Steve have lurched even further ahead because of their trip to Oban, but just wait until the rest of us go to the Red Sea, I think they will lose their top slots!

The leading positions in the instructor's competition are

- 1st Fran Duinker. 152 minutes
- 2nd Martyn O'Driscoll 146 mins
- 3rd Roger Holmes 66 minutes
- 4th Nigel Spickett 45 minutes
- 5th Neil Tomlin 43 minutes

Though I'm sure there is more information out there... (Fran's Nitrox training dives? - though she doesn't need any more time as she is leading already!)

The statistic I am highlighting this month is dive length - I'm surprised how much they vary. Below is the spread of average dive lengths (for all people who have done 3 or more dives):



The 'top slot' goes to Gary Rose (50.5 mins), followed by Kevin Parker (47.6 mins) and Roger Holmes (46 mins).

(Hmm... maybe these Ex Marlin lot are trained to tolerate the cold better than the rest of us!)

The bottom three? well... Nigel (26.3) Neil (25.3) & Andy (24.3) - the surnames you can probably guess!

Keep the marshal sheets coming in.

Ian Jennings 24/2/06

DATE	LOCAL MEETING	SPORTS DIVER	DIVE LEADER	SKILL DEVELOPMENT	INTEREST EVENINGS	POOL TRAINING
03-Jan-06	NO CLUB - HAPPY NEW YEAR		ND. Stoney Wed. 2/2			
10-Jan-06	OT4 Catch up - Pete Barnard					
17-Jan-06	OT7 Catch up - Neil Tomlin				Dive Trip Planning	
24-Jan-06	EXAM - Neil Tomlin				Dive Trip Planning	
31-Jan-06	Drysuit Intro - Roger Holmes				Dive Trip Planning	
07-Feb-06				Dive Planning & Marshalling	Equipment maintenance-Pete Barnard	
14-Feb-06				Dive Planning & Marshalling	Alex Bullard-Diving south China Seas	
21-Feb-06		ST1- Jon Brewis		Dive Planning & Marshalling	Frans talk on New Zealand	SS1
28-Feb-06		ST2 - Neil Brown		Dive Planning & Marshalling	O2 - Refresher	SS1
07-Mar-06		st2 Pratical		Dive Planning & Marshalling	Boat Instruction NS	SS1
14-Mar-06					Open Forum	
21-Mar-06		ST3 - Pete Barnard				
28-Mar-06	NO CLUB - EASTER					
04-Apr-06		ST4 - Roger Holmes			Sponsored Snorkell Pete W	TRY DIVE
11-Apr-06		ST5 - Gary Rose			Chartwork NS	TRY DIVE
18-Apr-06	OT1 / INTRO - Neil Tomlin	ST6 - Phil Turney			New Zealand Talk Fran	Intro Course
25-Apr-06	OT2 - Jon Brewis	Catch up week			Tides NS	OCEAN DIVER
02-May-06	No Club May Day Bank Holiday					Bank Holiday
09-May-06	OT3 - Neil Brown	REVISION - Neil Brown		AT2 - Advanced Diving - Neil Tomlin		OCEAN DIVER
16-May-06	OT4 - Richard Green	Exam - Neil Brown		AT2 - Advanced Diving : Twinset configuration - Roger Holmes		OCEAN DIVER Twin Set
23-May-06	OT5-Roger Holmes			AT2 - Advanced Diving : Rebreather awareness - Fran Duinker		OCEAN DIVER Rebreather
30-May-06	NO CLUB - WHITSUN BANK HOLIDAY					ND. StITSU
06-Jun-06	OT6 - Gary Rose			AT2 - Advanced Diving : Rebreather awareness - Fran Duinker		OCEAN DIVER Rebreathr
13-Jun-06	OT7 - Phil Turney					OCEAN DIVER
20-Jun-06	Catch up week			O2 CPR Neil T		OCEAN DIVER
27-Jun-06				O2 Diving Incidents Pete W	Talk from mikes on servicing	OCEAN DIVER
04-Jul-06	REVISION - Neil Tomlin			O2 Casualty Assesment Neil B		OCEAN DIVER
11-Jul-06	EXAM - Neil Tomlin OT1/Intro NB			O2 admin practice Equip Jon B		OCEAN DIVER
18-Jul-06	OT2 Neil Brown			O2 Use of admin equip All		OCEAN DIVER
25-Jul-06	OT3 Nigel Spickett			O2 Positive Pressure vent/Assesment Fran D/All		OCEAN DIVER
01-Aug-06				O2 Positive Pressure vent/Assesment Fran D/All		OCEAN DIVER
08-Aug-06	OT4 Jon Brewis					OCEAN DIVER
15-Aug-06	OT5 Richard Green					OCEAN DIVER
22-Aug-06	OT6 Neil T					OCEAN DIVER
29-Aug-06	NO CLUB - AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY					ND.StGUS
05-Sep-06	OT7 Neil B					SS1
12-Sep-06	Catch up week/Revision					SS1
19-Sep-06	Exam				Marine Biology Anne Marie	TRY DIVE
26-Sep-06	AGM					TRY DIVE
03-Oct-06	OT1 / INTRO - Neil Tomlin	ST1- Pete Woodcock		Life Saver Award	North Ireland Fran	Intro Course
10-Oct-06	OT2 - Ian Jennings	ST2 - Ian Jennings		Life Saver Award	Talk on GPS NB	OCEAN DIVER
17-Oct-06	OT3 - Bob Mulholland	ST3 - Bob Mulholland		Life Saver Award	Chart Work Nigel S	OCEAN DIVER
24-Oct-06	OT4 - Nigel Spickett	ST4 - Nigel Spickett		Life Saver Award	Knots/Shots/Anchoring Pete W	OCEAN DIVER
31-Oct-06	OT5-Fran Duinker	ST5 - Fran Duinker		Life Saver Award	1-2-1 session on gps /Diver coxs NB	OCEAN DIVER
07-Nov-06	OT6 - Alex Bullard	ST6 - Alex Bullard		Life Saver Award/Boat Handling	1-2-1 session on gps /Diver coxs NB	OCEAN DIVER
14-Nov-06	OT7 - Neil Tomlin	Catch up week			Open Forum Roger	OCEAN DIVER
21-Nov-06	Catch up week	REVISION - Neil Tomlin			2006 Trip Planning NB	OCEAN DIVER
28-Nov-06	REVISION - Neil Tomlin	EXAM - Neil Tomlin			2006 Trip Planning NB	OCEAN DIVER
05-Dec-06	EXAM - Neil Tomlin					
12-Dec-06	Quiz and Social Night					
19-Dec-06	Christmas No Meeting					
26-Dec-06	New Year No Meeting					
	INTRO/OCEAN DIVER	SPORTS DIVER	DIVE LEADER	SKILL DEVELOPMENT	INTEREST EVENINGS	POOL TRAINING

The Club Boats

Both the Club's boats are now ready for this year's season, and in fact Skinny Dip has already been out for its first trip to Plymouth.

The boats were well used last year and have both undergone a complete overhaul over the winter period. The engines have been serviced, trailers serviced and touched up, Lucky Dip's trailer rollers re fitted, all the various little faults corrected and everything cleaned, including Lucky Dips sponsons which are now orange again.

Lucky Dip also has a new VHF radio. The display on the old one had failed, and whilst the radio itself worked OK, you did not always know what channel it was tuned to. The new radio has a GMDSS and DSC facility. This means that sending a distress signal is a matter of pressing a button. We are hoping to interface it with the Garmin GPS which will mean that you will not even have to advise the Coastguard of your position. Anyone who has done the VHF course recently will have covered the use of GMDSS. Some of us also took a supplementary course updating our licences. If you have a licence which does not include the use of a GMDSS system, you should arrange for an upgrade course as soon as possible. It's only a day's course (a short day in fact) and does not cost much. See Richard who will no doubt arrange a suitable course.

We already have quite a few bookings for both boats for this year, but there are still plenty of weekends (and weeks) available, particularly during August and September when the sea will be at its warmest and good weather still likely. Within this issue of *Freeflow*, is included an up to date programme of boat bookings together with a list of trips and their details. If you fancy a trip somewhere, why not make a provisional booking, then put the idea forward at the forthcoming trip evening, or on any Tuesday night. If you need help, or are short of a diver cox, advanced diver or someone to tow the boat, speak to Neil B. or myself and we will do our best to make sure the trip happens.

Lucky Dip is now 7 years old, and the fact that it is still in excellent condition and has cost comparatively little in repairs and maintenance is a credit to the way Members have used it, and looked after it, and a reflection of the fact that a great deal of thought went into it's specification at the time of purchase to ensure that we got the correct boat for the Club. As I am sure most Members know, part of the original deal from the Lottery fund, which gave us two thirds of the purchase cost, was that we establish a sinking fund to cover its eventual replacement. We contribute £2000 per year to this fund which is ring fenced and cannot be used for any other purpose. The principal being that at any time the value of the sinking fund combined with the residual value of the boat will be sufficient to buy a new boat. It is virtually impossible to get Lottery funding to replace any item. At present the fund stands at £14,800. (The £800 was left from the original purchase).

At the moment we have no intention of replacing Lucky Dip, but we must plan for this event in the future, probably in 2 to 3 years time. The last thing we want is for the boat to become unreliable as we know from past experience that if this happens it just won't get used.

Obviously at that time we will involve all the Club Members to ensure that we buy exactly what the Club wants, but in the mean time I am carrying out a theoretical exercise, pricing a replacement, to ensure that our financial arrangements are on target.

Skinny Dip also has a sinking fund into which we put £500 per year.

Whilst the high number of bookings is excellent, (I'd like to see both boats out every weekend) it can lead to a few problems and busy midweek's for us. In most instances I will not get the boats back until Monday or even Tuesday night, and they may well be required for the next weekend on Thursday night. This leaves me Wednesday night to do any repairs. May I ask Dive trip organisers and Diver cox's to give me the best chance by advising me as soon as possible of any problems. If a problem occurs, or something breaks, give me a call at home or on my mobile so that I can order a part or even just start thinking about what needs to be done. I would hate to jeopardise the next trip by not having the boats ready.

Finally, my thanks to the various people who have helped with the boats over the past month. Robin performed his annual task of lifting the boats off and on the trailers, Steve Appleton steam cleaned the trailers, Ian has been making some stainless steel components to hold the new radio and radar reflectors, and of course Neil B. doing his usual job on the electronics.

Nigel

Home phone and fax - 01455 553516

Mobile 07740 464058

Email nigel.spickett@tiscali.co.uk

