

Free Flow

The magazine for LSAC

Nov 2007
Issue 118

In This Months Issue

Page 3 Luvlies
Odds and Ends from Internet
Diving Stats

Cover Photo Courtesy of Clarke Duncan





Free Flow

At all good Newsagents now....
Hence only downloadable from lsac.co.uk

Editors Bit...



Diving is all about putting your body on the line for the sake of the sport. All that lugging of kit, struggling with launching boats, worrying about currents, weather and tank fills. So at the end of the day a relaxing cup of cocoa is more than welcome.

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Buddies

This month's front cover reminds me of my best dive season ever. Not the most dives or my number one dive but have had a series of memorable dives. The first set was in the Faanes thousands of Pipe fish and Seals a plenty, then a few weeks later in the Black Sea my first Sea Horse then to cap this a few weeks later a Dolphin joined Phil Turney and I, on our deco stop from the M2, for 10 minutes.

Yes that means there are at least 3 dive reports out standing, which means that I'm losing my touch with regard to enticing content from reluctant victims. Still Neil Calver has offered to take over from me as Editor, so unless there is any budding Murdoch or Maxwell out there I intend to pass on the reigns after my 50th edition, which will be the Dec 2007 edition.

Ed.

Page 3 Luvlies

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So there you are sat waiting for a flight, bottle of port needing to be finished so what better way of using up than pouring some on your ice-cream, delicious. If you have further good suggestions for using up alcoholic beverages please let the Ed know.

If you would like to become Miss or Mr Dec. 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

Chairmans Knock

Following the recent AGM your new committee is as follows:-

Chairman	-	Roger Holmes
Diving Officer	-	Nigel Spickett
Training Officer	-	Fran Duinker
Equip Officer	-	Gary Rose
Boat Officer	-	Mike Flatt
Secretary	-	Richard Sykes
Treasurer	-	Ian Jennings
Com Member	-	Phil Turney
Com Member	-	Neil Calver
Com Member	-	Vicky Urch

I hope you will support the committee in ensuring LSAC continues to be such a popular and succesful club. Unfortunately the AGM was poorly attended and I hope this can be addressed next year.

We recently completed two very succesful try dive nights which has resulted in several new members. Welcome to all of the new faces in the club and thankyou to everyone who helped out with the trydives.

Due to the above intake and the ongoing training commitments it is vital that we have the support of all existing instructors (and possible future instructors – if your interested in becoming an instructor please speak to Fran) and that all club kit is returned promptly on Tuesday nights – thankyou for your help with this in advance. What's On

9/10	-	Dive Show Kit	-	Roj
16/10	-			
23/10	-			
30/10	-			
6/11	-	UK winter diving	-	Roj
13/11	-	2008 Dive Planning		
20/11	-	Open Forum		
27/11	-	2008 Dive Planning		

Future ones awaiting dates

Dive statistics – Ian Jennings
Swimming technique – Mike Hill
Saudi Arabia – Nigel Spickett
Northern Ireland/Salutay – Steve Appleton
Jordan/Aqaba – Phil Lichfield
Technical Diving – Phil Turney

Regards

Chairman Roj scubaroj@tiscali.co.uk.

Freeflow – Diving Officers Bit

The new training program is now on the website and takes us up to the end of 2008.

Fran will contact Instructors a week or two prior to their lectures or pool exercises to check that they are available and to make sure they are up date with where our Trainees are with their training. Please look at the program to see if you are involved in anything or if you are interested in a particular event.

Roger will be adding the remainder of the interest evenings in due course.

Fran and I have done our best to spread the load as far as lectures and pool work is concerned, but also to involve everyone who we think would want to be part of the training. If we have missed you out, or if you think we have put too much onto you, please speak to either of us and we will make any necessary alterations.

Please also check whether you are listed as a pool marshal/manager. The fact that we have plenty of instructors around during the pool session does not mean that we don't need a pool marshal. It is in fact even more important with so much going on, and we are obliged by our agreement with the pool to provide someone to monitor.

Two important Tuesday dates coming up. The Open Forum where you get a chance to express your views on the Club, and the first dive planning evening.

With the 2007 dive season now over, we need to start planning for next year.

To get your preferred date for the boats you need to start planning and make your reservations.

Diving will of course continue at least in Stoney over the winter and no doubt Thursdays (and other days in the week) will still be busy. At least the visibility will improve.

With the number of Trainees currently in the Club, the next few months look like being as busy. As ever.

Nigel

It's official: Women are better scuba divers than men

Powered by CDNN - CYBER DIVER News Network
by DAVID HARRISON

UK (29 Oct 2007) -- For years women drivers have endured jokes about map reading and reversing from men who pride themselves on their superior spatial awareness.

Underwater, though, the boot – or flipper – is on the other foot. For women divers are much more aware of their surroundings than men, according to a two-year study of scuba divers.

"Women have better orientation," said Mandy Shackleton, a marine scientist at Hull University's marine sciences centre. "They have a greater awareness of what is going on around them."

Women were found to be calmer, less aggressive and more safety conscious than their "gung-ho, sensation-seeking" male counterparts.

Men took risks and were prone to showing off. The men experienced "a chain reaction of hormones" that caused them to lose their "buoyancy control" more easily than women. The stress hormone cortisol is released first, followed by testosterone – the hormone linked with aggression – and finally, adrenaline. "The combination of these three results in erratic, dangerous diving," said Ms Shackleton.

On an ecological level, men's "spatially unaware" behaviour is damaging the world's coral reefs. There is growing concern about the future of the reefs, which are vital habitats for thousands of fish species.

Many male divers swim too close and break pieces off with their flippers or "fins". Their flippers also churn up the seabed sediment, which "suffocates" and kills the living coral.

"Men should try to relax and develop good breathing techniques to maintain control and minimise damage when they go scuba diving," said Ms Shackleton, a qualified dive master, who watched 500 divers of several nationalities, including Britons, off the coast of Kenya.

Nigel Forman, a professor of psychology at Middlesex University, said there was strong evidence that men had greater spatial navigational skills than women on land. However, he added: "Women tend to use local cues, signposts in their immediate vicinity, for navigation and it is possible that this is more effective underwater where even in the clearest waters visibility will not be as good as it is on land."



Jessica Alba tries to console several testosterone poisoned, DIR twin-tank knuckle dragging males who admitted they were depressed because they could not get squared away and keep up with women in the real world of recreational scuba diving.

Recreational scuba diving is increasingly popular, as the cost of exotic holidays has fallen. The industry is now worth around £2.5 billion globally. Just over 57,000 divers obtained certificates in the UK last year, 1,500 more than in 2005.

"Traditionally, it was seen as a masculine roughy-toughy sport," said Carol Giles, of Padi, a worldwide certificating body with several bases in Britain. "But more women are taking it up and they now make up about 40 per cent of all scuba divers. And in my experience, they do tend to have a more careful approach than men."

SOURCE - Telegraph

Race to save coral reefs from scuba divers

Powered by CDNN - CYBER DIVER News Network
by DOMINIC WAGHORN

RED SEA (25 Oct 2007) — A giant artificial coral reef is being built in the Red Sea in a move to protect natural reefs from destruction - without banning scuba divers. An estimated 50% to 70% of the Red Sea's reefs have already been destroyed in Israel, Jordan and Egypt. Divers are the main culprits as they flock to the bio diverse region in large numbers and accidentally knock the coral or create a disturbance with their flippers and diving boats.

Dr Nadav Shashar, a marine biologist at the National Centre for Mariculture, is supervising the pioneering project. He admitted: "I have well over 1,000 hours underwater and by mistake every once in a while I also break the coral." Israeli and Jordanian scientists are working together to reverse the destruction of the reefs.

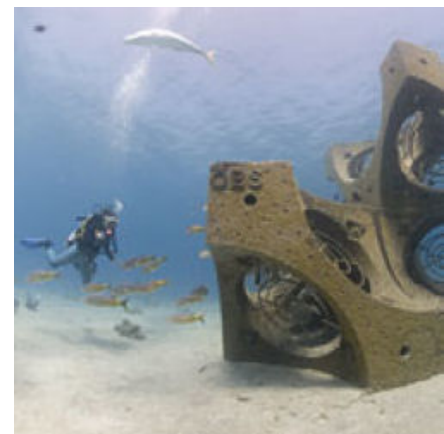
The fruit of their efforts lies a few hundred metres off the coast in the Israeli resort town of Eilat. The artificial reef is designed to give divers something else to look at and provide an alternative home for fish and coral. As we approached it diving last week it loomed out of the azure haze as big as a small house, with the appearance of a submerged spaceship.

Dr Shashar said: "We actually built it in a way that it will encourage or give shelter to endangered species. "From the divers point of view what we want is a place that they will enjoy and that will be different to the natural environment."

Artificial reefs have been used before, normally sunk ships or other submerged structures, but this is the first to be specifically designed for the purpose. But the really pioneering element of the project lies submerged further north, in Israeli waters near the border with Jordan. Here the scientists have created hanging coral gardens, or nurseries, where ranks of baby coral are growing suspended on nets and crates in perfect conditions. When they are big enough they are transplanted into the artificial reef.

"For me as a scientist and an ecologist it's almost like playing God," said Dr Shashar. "You take a piece of water and a piece of sand then do whatever you want and create the environment you are planning. And that's exciting." So far the experimental artificial reef has attracted both fish and divers and another four are planned in Israel and Jordan. And with threats growing from divers, pollution and global warming, scientist hope it could help save reefs elsewhere in the world.

SOURCE - Sky News



Scientists hope to reverse damage to coral reefs in popular scuba diving areas by building artificial reefs and establishing fully protected "no take, no dive marine reserves" where scuba divers cannot damage fragile corals.

'The Deep': At long last stunning underwater photography worth buying

Powered by CDNN - CYBER DIVER News Network

by **WILLIAM J. BROAD**

Tired of the same old boring fish pic fodder from all those so-called "professional" underwater photographers who blame everyone but themselves for the fact that no one wants to buy their predictable snapshots of clownfish, barracuda and sharks? Well dust off your coffee table and your credit card because Claire Nouvian has redefined underwater photography in 'The Deep: The Extraordinary Creatures of the Abyss', a collection of stunning marine wildlife photos plus essays by top experts on deep-sea life...

FRANCE (21 May 2007) -- When, more than 70 years ago, William Beebe became the first scientist to descend into the abyss, he described a world of twinkling lights, silvery eels, throbbing jellyfish, living strings as "lovely as the finest lace" and lanky monsters with needlelike teeth.

"It was stranger than any imagination could have conceived," he wrote in "Half Mile Down" (Harcourt Brace, 1934). "I would focus on some one creature and just as its outlines began to be distinct on my retina, some brilliant, animated comet or constellation would rush across the small arc of my submarine heaven and every sense would be distracted, and my eyes would involuntarily shift to this new wonder."

Beebe sketched some of the creatures, because no camera of the day was able to withstand the rigors of the deep and record the nuances of this cornucopia of astonishments.

Colleagues reacted coolly. Some accused Beebe of exaggeration. One reviewer suggested that his heavy breathing had fogged the window of the submarine vessel, distorting the undersea views.

Today, the revolution in lights, cameras, electronics and digital photography is revealing a world that is even stranger than the one that Beebe struggled to describe.

The images arrayed here come from "The Deep: The Extraordinary Creatures of the Abyss" (University of Chicago Press, 2007), by Claire Nouvian, a French journalist and film director. In its preface, Ms. Nouvian writes of an epiphany that began her undersea journey.

"It was as though a veil had been lifted," she says, "revealing unexpected points of view, vaster and more promising."

The photographs she has selected celebrate that sense of the unexpected. Bizarre species from as far down as four and half miles are shown in remarkable detail, their tentacles lashing, eyes bulging, lights flashing. The eerie translucence of many of the gelatinous creatures seems to defy common sense. They seem to be living water.

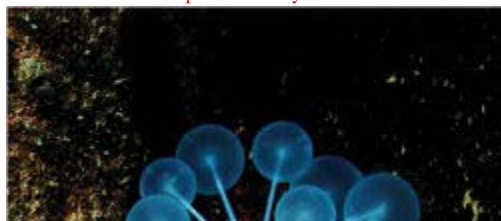
On page after page, it is as if aliens had descended from another world to amaze and delight. A small octopus



Fanfin Seadevil - Photo by Claire Nouvian



Dumbo Octopus - Photo by Claire Nouvian



looks like a child's squeeze toy. A seadevil looks like something out of a bad dream. A Ping-Pong tree sponge rivals artwork that might be seen in an upscale gallery.

Interspersed among 220 color photographs are essays by some of the world's top experts on deep-sea life that reflect on what lies beneath. For example, Laurence Madin of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution notes the violence that air and gravity do to creatures without internal or external skeletons when they are pulled up to the deck of a ship, obliterating their varieties of form and function.

"This unattractive jello-like mass," he writes, "is the unfair land version of amazing and delicate creatures that can display their true beauty only in their natural watery environment." The photographs in the book right that wrong, and not just for jellyfish.

One shows a dense colony of brittle stars, their arms intertwined and overlapping, their masses in the distance merging with the blackness of the seabed, alive, inhabiting a place once thought to be a lifeless desert.

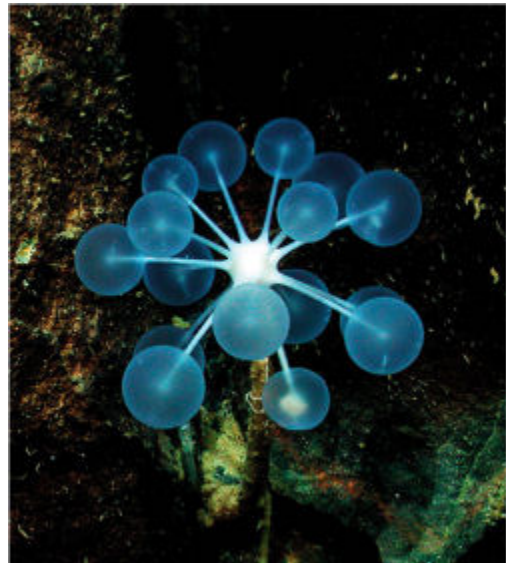
Craig M. Young of the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology writes in the book that the diversity of life in the abyss "may exceed that of the Amazon Rain Forest and the Great Barrier Reef combined."

Beebe, who ran the tropical research department at the New York Zoological Society, surely had intimations of what lay beyond the oceanic door he had opened. "The Deep" brings much of that dark landscape to light, even while noting that a vast majority of the planet's largest habitat remains unexamined, awaiting a new generation of explorers.

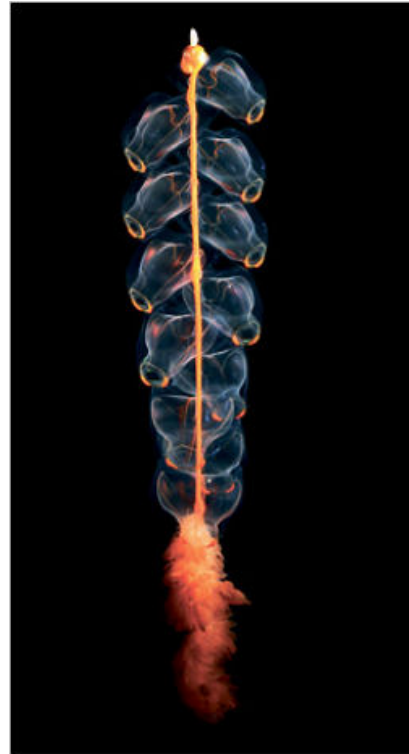
SOURCE - New York Times



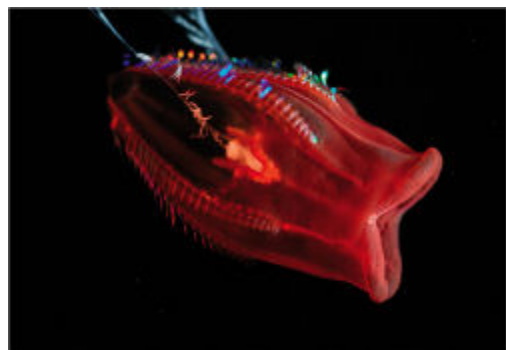
Dumbo Octopus - Photo by Claire Nouvian



Ping-Pong Tree Sponge - Photo by Claire Nouvian



Siphonophore - Photo by Claire Nouvian



Unidentified species - Photo by Claire Nouvian



Pathfinder

Hi all.

The competition is still wide open so if your buddy – or someone you know has done some 'above average' underwater navigation don't forget to nominate them for the Pathfinder competition

Just as a reminder: - There are no Rules. Put simply if you have been impressed by someone's navigation on a dive (for whatever reason) then nominate him or her (to me) for this award.

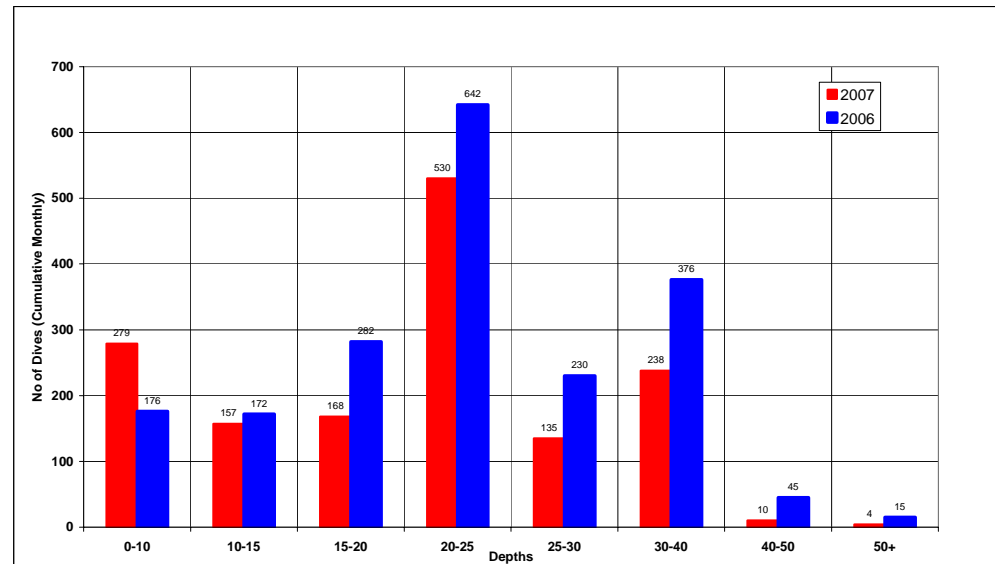
Consideration will be given to the grade of diver, so an Ocean Diver finding the APC at first attempt could well win over a 1st Class Diver doing something much more difficult.

Members Dives 2007 – To the End of October

Hi (again).

It's all change at the top of the 'Hours Underwater' chart: 1st and 2nd have swapped position with Neil Calver now in top slot, and 3rd and 4th have also swapped with Pete Barnard demoting Fran Duinker. It's a similar story in the Instructors chart with Nigel Spickett demoting Fran Duinker from the top slot! All these fact (and many more) are shown on the chart on the next page.

Below is the chart showing how many dives we have done at what depths, and comparing this year's figures (in red) with last year's (in



blue). This shows that although we have done less dives than last year at most depths, we have already done more (by over a hundred) dives of 10m or less. I guess we are doing a lot of training!

Ian Jennings - November 2007

