

SCUBA

Official Magazine of Britain's Biggest Diving Club

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We're back!

Shore diving takes centre stage as scuba resumes



Deep Wrecks of the South Coast, part 2

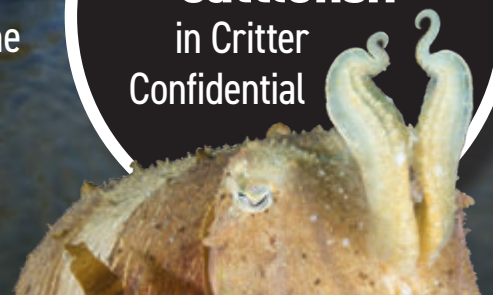
Johno and Cathy de Lara return with more iconic technical dives

Clubs that cooperate

How two BSAC branches became better, together

Plus
How to speak
cuttlefish
in Critter
Confidential

- **Kirsty Andrews** considers the ties that bind UK divers
- **Michelle Haywood** meets the fish that changes sex





DRYSUITS | WETSUITS | NEOPRENE ACCESSORIES

“All life is part of a complex relationship in which each is dependent upon the others, taking from, giving to and living with all the rest.”

Jacques-Yves Cousteau

We will all be back in the water soon, stay safe and well, from us all at O'Three.



Photo courtesy of Rick Ayrton

Welcome



These have been incredibly difficult times for everyone, but it seems we may have turned some sort of a corner, at least in terms of our freedom to go diving. Everything has been moving so fast I hesitate to sum up the current position, but at the time of writing shore diving was well and truly back, with boat diving rumoured to be following soon after.

I had anticipated marking this moment with a editorial fanfare; our triumphant return to the sea after months of lockdown. But I don't know if that's really an appropriate response, because right now everything is still in the balance.

The lockdown succeeded in flattening the curve of infection and preventing our hospitals from being completely overwhelmed, but we are a long way from the eradication of Covid-19. Indeed, there is a school of thought that these recent freedoms have come too soon given the virus reproduction numbers. Meanwhile, our governments have the unenviable task of balancing risk of infection with the long term damage being caused by closure of businesses and schools, not to mention the mental health of isolated people.

So how do we, the diving population, deal with all this? Personally, my advice is to embrace the new freedoms, but move forward with caution. Avoid shore diving areas where you have to contend with hordes of sunbathers; if tide allows, dive early or late in the day. Whether you are diving from shore or on boats, don't compromise your distancing just because you happen to be in dive kit.

Amid the chaos and depression of the Covid era, I have been inspired by the resilience of BSAC clubs. You quickly embraced the love it/loathe it webinar software of Zoom, and somehow managed to maintain the social aspect of club life. It may be some time until we regain complete normality in our club lives, but this determination to keep going could only have been achieved by BSAC clubs.

So let us cautiously celebrate our regained freedoms and I'm certain BSAC divers will be at the forefront of a smart recovery in the diving industry. But let's keep away from the chaotic hordes. Stay smart – stick to the rules – go diving.

Simon

Simon Rogerson – Editor
simon@scubamagazine.co.uk



Cover photo: Plymouth Sound divers Fran Hockley and Alice Walpole go shore diving, photo by Neil Hope

In SCUBA this month...

■ **Catherine de Lara** photographed this issue's feature about the deep wrecks of the South Coast. A member of Newbury Scuba Diving Club for 20 years, she started diving at Swansea University. Now an Explorer Mixed Gas Diver, she uses an AP Inspiration rebreather.



■ **Johno de Lara** collaborated with wife Catherine on the South Coast wrecks feature. Also a long term member of Newbury BSAC and AP rebreather user, he initially learned to dive with Corby BSAC after a try-dive at Dorothea Quarry 30 years ago.



■ **Marysya Rudska**, a London-based freelance artist, makes her first appearance in SCUBA with a beautiful story and illustration about a trip with her club, Clidive. She is now working on a full sketchbook on the same Scottish expedition, which she hopes to publish as a book.



SHARM EL SHEIKH

This is rush hour



egypt

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SCUBA

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BSAC and TRMG ensure that the paper used for printing this publication has been sourced from sustainably managed forests.



If you love diving and want to benefit from the best training and an international network of friendly clubs, you should get to know BSAC.

What is BSAC all about?

Take a look at this magazine and you'll get an idea.

Our members have a lot of fun and enjoy safe, adventurous diving all year round.

Oh, and it stands for The British Sub-Aqua Club: we've been going for more than 60 years.

We are Britain's biggest dive club, with hundreds of local clubs run by committed divers on a non-profit basis. It's not just the best way to go diving - it's also the best value. And BSAC diving is not restricted to the UK - we have excellent clubs and schools all over the world.

BSAC is also the UK National Governing Body of scuba diving, representing the interests of snorkellers and divers across the nation. You can learn to scuba dive with BSAC from the age of 12 and snorkel from the age of six.

It doesn't matter if you've trained with another agency. All divers are welcome at BSAC clubs, and everyone can try our internationally recognised courses to find out why they enjoy such a good reputation across the diving industry.

If you're looking for the highest standards of training and wonderful diving in great company, BSAC could be perfect for you. Whether you've learned to scuba or snorkel on holiday, or would simply like to give it a go, we'd love to hear from you.

JOIN BSAC TODAY: bsac.com/joinus

FIND YOUR LOCAL BSAC CLUB:

bsac.com/findclub or call +44(0) 151 350 6201



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Return to diving

BSAC's guidance leads the way

BSAC HAS RELEASED GUIDANCE TO HELP MEMBERS AND the wider diving community prepare for a safe return to diving as the Covid-19 lockdown slowly eases.

Working with key stakeholders including the British Diving Safety Group (BDSG) and the Sports and Recreational Alliance (SRA), BSAC has formulated a set of guidelines to support a safe resumption of our sport. Initially commencing with shore diving, these guidelines will continue to be updated as further guidance on social distancing and Covid restrictions across the four UK nations is released.

The current guidance aims to address all the aspects that impact on facilitating diving activities while contributing to the continued prevention of the spread of Covid-19.

Following the re-introduction of limited shore-based diving in England at the end of May, further guidance has now been issued to divers in relation to the latest Government advice:

- Shore diving in England is now open to up to six people, as is Northern Ireland, from different households, adhering to the 2m social distancing rule.
- Diving from boats in England 'may' be possible providing 2m social distancing can be met at all times (see the online BSAC guidance for full details)
- In the Isle of Man, recreational diving may now be carried out by organised clubs, in full compliance with the guidance issued by the relevant governing body.

At the time of going to press, the return to diving as well as travelling to dive has not yet been confirmed in Scotland and Wales. BSAC will continue to work with various agencies to monitor the situation and to advocate for a responsible and safe return for divers in all parts of the UK.

Meanwhile, there has been confusion over recent government advice on use of boats, which appears to conflict with earlier guidance. This new advice limits the people on board any boat, both inland and at sea, to members of the same household only. BSAC is working with other national governing bodies to resolve this conflict, and will update members as soon as the situation is clarified. In the meantime, divers and clubs should take note of the details in the government's latest guidance in order to avoid contravening rules.

BSAC National Diving Officer Dai Atkins said that all members and divers are advised to read the guidance in full, and to continue to refer to the online advice which will be updated as further restrictions are eased.

"NDC Safety Group has spent time digesting the easing of lockdown rules issued by the UK



government to determine how they may allow a return to limited diving activity. These rules are further complicated by the different routes followed by the devolved administrations. However, we believe that this framework takes the first steps in providing the necessary guidance to allow a safe return to diving activities, where allowed by law.

"The guidance will continue to be updated to reflect the understanding of the impact of the pandemic and changing national and devolved government rules so please check regularly for updates."

The latest version of BSAC's **Safe Return to Diving** guidelines are available to read and download at bsac.com/returntodiving



Dupin Dive Centre, Korčula, Croatia

We are pleased to announce our dive centre is opening on the 15th June and will be introducing added hygienic methods to the recommended guidelines



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BSAC AGM rescheduled as online event – 25 July

BSAC WILL BE HOLDING

this year's AGM online following the event's earlier postponement due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The club announced that the AGM will be held on Saturday 25 July at 10am via webinar and that voting for the BSAC Council Elections 2020 is now also going ahead.

Members will be able to attend this year's online AGM by pre-registering their wish to participate. Full details on how to register - which also includes how to register any questions you would like to be put forward at the AGM - has now been circulated to all members as part of their BSAC Election 2020 voting email, which was issued at the beginning of June.

BSAC Chair Maria Harwood welcomed the opportunity to hold the AGM online, as part of the club's ongoing efforts to overcome the challenges of Covid-19.

"It's not practical for us to hold a conventional AGM and comply with social distancing guidance, so we will be holding the 2020 Annual General Meeting as an online meeting. This should be a great way for us to stay in touch with members.

"To ease the technology challenges as well as time pressures in the meeting, we will also be encouraging members to submit questions in advance. We look forward to seeing you there."

This year's BSAC Election will see a new Vice-Chair as well as two Council member positions joining the team. The candidates are:

Vice-Chair candidates (one position available)

- Mark Allen
- Rachel Quinn

Council candidates (two positions available)

- Sharon Atkins
- Rachael Brown
- Edward Haynes
- James Mudge
- Gary Lloyd
- Heath Samples

All members should now have received an email with a unique voting link that gives access to the Civica (formerly ERS) website to cast their vote for candidates and complete a proxy form.

This facility will also allow members to pre-register to participate in the online AGM. If you have not received your voting email, please email election@bsac.com

Closing date for voting in the BSAC Election is 10am, 11 July. The successful Election candidates will take up their BSAC Council positions after the BSAC AGM on Saturday, 25 July.

Full details on the BSAC Election and AGM 2020 can be found at bsac.com/election2020

Notice of 66th Annual General Meeting of the British Sub-Aqua Club, 25th July 2020

The British Sub Aqua Club, a company limited by guarantee, gives notice that its 66th annual general meeting will be held electronically on Saturday 25th July 2020 at 10:00am. Due to the on-going situation in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic, members are prevented from attending the meeting in person and are encouraged to vote by proxy prior to the meeting by 10:00am on 23rd July 2020 or to vote as online participant at the meeting.

Details on how to pre-register to participate in the online AGM and pre-register any questions you may have for Council will be circulated nearer the time.

The meeting will deal with the following business:

1. Apologies
2. The presentation of the minutes of the 65th Annual General Meeting and any Extraordinary General Meeting held since.
3. The appointment of tellers for any poll or show of hands which may be required.
4. The Chair's opening address.
5. Presentation of annual report and questions arising from it.
6. Results of the election for the Officers and other members of the Council for the ensuing period.
7. To re-appoint Gardeners Accountants Ltd as the Company's auditors to hold office from the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting until the conclusion of

the next general meeting of the Company at which the Company's annual accounts and reports are laid before the meeting.

8. To authorise the BSAC Council to set the remuneration of the auditors.

9. Q&A opportunity for members to Council, National Diving Officer and HQ representatives.

10. The consideration of the following Motions/ Special Resolutions of which due notice has been given.

Special resolution

Proposed by BSAC Council
THAT the articles of association of the Company appearing on the Company's Website via the following link: bsac.com/proposedarticles and headed "BSAC Articles of association 2020" be adopted as the new articles of association of the Company in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, the existing articles of association of the Company titled "BSAC Articles of Association 2017".



Rachel Sharp

*Honorary Secretary
British Sub-Aqua Club (company number 01417376)
Telfords Quay
South Pier Road
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire CH65 4FL*

NOTES

1. Copies of BSAC's current Articles of Association, along with the proposed, amended articles (as per Special Resolution from Council) and an explanation of the changes from Council are available for download from bsac.com/proposedarticles.
2. A member qualified to vote at the meeting may appoint a proxy (who need not be a member) to participate and vote instead of them.
3. All members will be emailed a unique voting link at the beginning of June to allow you to access the Civica (formerly ERS) website where you will be able to cast your vote for candidates and complete a proxy form. This facility will also allow you to pre-register to participate in the online AGM.





Arrive-dive-leave

The cautious reopening of inland dive sites

AS DIVING RETURNED TO UK

shores, so the likelihood arose that inland dive centres would also find ways to operate with new protocols for social distancing. While the coast provides the aspirational heartland of British diving, the inland sites are still crucial for training schedules, shakedown dives and the pure pleasure of getting wet.

Each centre has its own schedule for reopening and its own method of accepting payments and organising visitors, so we encourage readers to carefully check thoroughly with the organisation in question before visiting. This is especially important as several centres are open only to their own registered members, or are only opening to divers on certain days or hours.

Most of them are trying to encourage an efficient turnover of visitors with minimum scope for confusion, crowding or contact. This has been summed up with the mantra 'arrive-dive-leave'. There follows a summary of inland sites and their status at the time of going to press; for anyone planning a visit do take the time to visit the website, read the rules and call to be sure.

▪ Stoney Cove, Leicestershire plans to reopen to a limited number of divers and swimmers on 17 June, entry by prepaid tickets only via the website.

Tel: 01455 273089

Web: stoneycove.com

▪ Vobster Quay, Somerset was open only to open water swimmers as SCUBA went live.

Tel: 01373 814666

Web: vobster.com

▪ Wraysbury, Middlesex was due to reopen for diving on Monday 15 June, with new rules posted on its website. Payment must be in cash, to be put in a box on arrival.

Tel: 01784488007

Web: wraysbury.ws

▪ Gildenburgh Water, Cambs is now open for diving and freediving pre-reservations only; divers are urged not to turn up without a reservation.

Tel: 01733 351288

Web: gildenburgh.com

Pools next?

BSAC IS CURRENTLY PREPARING GUIDANCE IN

anticipation of the reopening of swimming pools. The government has not yet confirmed when swimming pools are likely to reopen, but it is thought the time allowed in-water will be rationed on normal swim sessions. Swim England was due to release guidance on Monday 15 June, and BSAC is also preparing advice that relates to clubs' use of pools for training and Try Dives. Current government guidance states that pools cannot open before 4 July, but in the meantime keep an eye on bsac.com for updated guidance on pool use and training.



In troubled times, support for those who suffer

A NEW ONLINE SPORT

Wellbeing Hub has been launched, offering a range of innovative tools and resources to help people deal with the challenges of coping with the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Wellbeing Hub, available to all BSAC members and clubs, provides instant access to helpful information, guidance and screening that is tailored specifically to help care for their wellbeing and mental health needs.

Launched by Sport Northern Ireland in partnership with the Public Health Agency, the Sport Wellbeing Hub is a valuable online resource that offers a wide range of innovative tools and resources, including

guided self-assessments, self-help programmes, digital intervention tools and a wellbeing information library.

The impact of Covid-19 has exacerbated levels of anxiety and mental health across the UK:

▪ The UK's largest domestic abuse charity, Refuge, reported a 700% increase in calls to its helpline in a single day

▪ Young Minds reveals 32% of young people agreed that Covid-19 had made their mental health much worse

▪ Prescription rates for mood and anxiety disorders has increased with a higher rate in women than men.



Look but don't touch

Protecting marine heritage

BSAC'S UNDERWATER HERITAGE

Adviser, Jane Maddocks, looks at the latest wreck sites to be granted Ancient Monument protection:

Historic England's Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 aims to protect sites that are considered to be of national importance. With the Act originally used to being used to protect land-based sites and structures, this protection now extends to the sea. Divers don't need a licence to dive a site protected under the Act but must dive on a 'look don't touch' basis.

The mud berth for HMS Beagle has now been scheduled as an ancient monument of national importance. She is on the north bank of Paglesham Reach on the River Roach in Essex. HMS Beagle was launched in 1820 and is famous for being captained by Captain Fitzroy, of shipping forecast area fame. It was also the ship that carried a young Darwin off to the Galapagos and Tierra Del Fuego as he gathered evidence for what became his 'Origin of Species', turning how people thought of the world upside down.

Two American Landing ships - USS LST 531 and USS LST 507 - sunk off Slapton Sands during the Exercise Tiger preparations for D-Day have also been scheduled. These

landing ships were developed as part of the preparations for the massive amphibious assault on the Normandy beaches in June 1944. In the early morning of 28 April 1944, they were torpedoed after German E Boats intercepted their communications. They were full of tanks, supplies and men; at least 749 American personnel lost their lives in the sinking.

They now lie close to Sidmouth at about 50m. The work of divers involved in the recording and protection of the site received a very positive mention. Dan Atkinson, Director Coastal and Marine of Wessex Archaeology said: "We're delighted at the scheduling of these two LSTs which we investigated during the 75th anniversary of D-Day last year. The work we have done has not only helped to ensure that their importance to the story of D-Day is recognised, but it also complements the work to record them by volunteer divers."

▪ Capernwray Quarry, Lancs was hoping to reopen for diving and swimming toward the end of June.

Web: dive-site.co.uk

▪ The National Diving and Activity Centre (NDAC), Gloucestershire was still closed but stated via its website that opening was "imminent" as SCUBA went live. The same notice said that only cashless transactions would be possible, with bookings taken by the website.

Tel: 01291 630 046

Web: ndac.co.uk

▪ Dosthill Quarry, Staffs ('Dotty' to regulars) has reopened to wild swimmers but not to divers as SCUBA went live.

Tel: 01827 281304

Web: dosthillquarry.com

▪ The Delph Dive Centre, Lancs ('Eccy Delph' to regulars) is due to reopen to divers and swimmers on Monday 15 June, with a new booking system installed on its website.

Tel: 01257 450663

Web: thedelph.com

Help to protect the Adelaide

Jane Maddocks is calling for BSAC divers to help in the protection of club wreck favourite, the Royal Adelaide, just off Chesil Beach. A recent application to schedule the wreck for protection failed because there was insufficient archaeological evidence on which to base a decision. So, a challenge for divers who dive the Royal Adelaide: plan a project to go out and take photos of the structure and map all the remains of the vessel in that area. And, if you have the technology then photogrammetry could be useful.

Instructor exams now online

BSAC HAS BEEN TRIALLING ONLINE

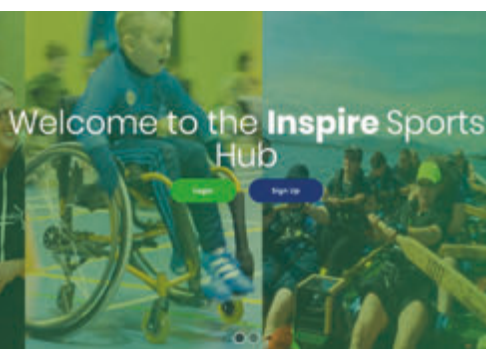
exams for the Instructor Training Scheme so members can keep progressing towards Open Water Instructor, while the Covid lockdown prevents members attending physical events.

Having successfully piloted an online Theory Instructor Exam (TIE) via Webex, a total of six online exams have been completed so far, with 40 members taking part.

BSAC has now converted other scheduled TIEs over to the online system, including the Theory Instructor Exam Prep session as well as the formal theory examination paper. More TIEs will follow as online events as needed throughout the summer.

For more information on the Theory Instructor Course and current BSAC courses that can be completed via webinar go to

bsac.com/events



BSAC CEO Mary Tetley said the Club was pleased to be partnering with Sport NI on the new initiative.

"People need help right now and there is a range of fantastic and useful resources that are tailored to the user, on the website. Whether looking for some advice or need a little more direction, please visit The Sports Wellbeing Hub."

For more information and to access the support on offer, go to www.inspiresportshub.org/sports



Microplastics invade the deep ocean

SCIENTISTS HAVE DISCOVERED THE highest level of microplastic ever recorded on the seafloor, with up to 1.9 million pieces covering just 1 square metre.

The research was conducted by the University of Manchester, National Oceanography Centre and Durham University, working with the University of Bremen and the French research institute, IFREMER.

With over 10 million tons of plastic entering the oceans every year, it is thought that accumulations of floating waste account for around 1% of plastic in the ocean. The other 99% was thought to enter the deep ocean but until now it has been unclear exactly where they ended up.

Published in the Science Journal, the team's research looked at how deep-sea currents act as 'conveyor belts', transporting tiny plastic fragments

across the seafloor. These currents then often concentrate these microplastics in large sediment accumulations on the deep-sea floor, known as 'microplastic hot-spots'.

Lead author of the study, Dr Ian Kane, said: "Almost everybody has heard of the infamous ocean 'garbage patches' of floating plastic, but we were shocked at the high concentrations of microplastics we found in the deep seafloor.

"We discovered that microplastics are not uniformly distributed across the study area; instead they are distributed by powerful seafloor currents which concentrate them in certain areas."

Dr Mike Clare of the National Oceanography Centre, who was a co-lead on the research, added: "The results highlight the need for policy interventions to limit the future flow of plastics into natural environments and minimise impacts on ocean ecosystems."

Take the low road...

A PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

which would affect two of Eyemouth Harbour's most popular shore dives will have a new access road re-routed, allaying concerns from divers about access to the sites.

The access road to the Green Ends Gully and Nestends shore dive sites is set to be closed following plans by Eyemouth Harbour Trust (EHT) to lose the road as part of a planning application for a new operations and maintenance building in the area. Following feedback from concerned divers, BSAC has now been reassured by EHT that the shore dive access road would be re-routed so divers can continue to enjoy the shore diving the harbour offers.

Options for alternative routes are being considered with a view to submitting a planning application in the near future. EHT is now inviting divers to complete a short survey that the Trust can continue to facilitate shore diving from Eyemouth.

To complete the survey, go to bsac.com/eyemouthsurvey



From rebreathers to face masks

CORNWALL-BASED AP DIVING HAVE put their skills and facilities during lockdown to community use, with a drive to design and make face masks for local frontline care workers.

The project was started by AP Diving's Jeff Parker, who after a shopping trip to the local supermarket was inspired to look at ways of making easy to use masks for staff, friends and family.

After designing the mask, Jeff brought on board AP's professional sewing team as volunteers to make the masks at home during the Covid lockdown. The masks also include disposable filters,

hand-cut from industrial-sized Numatic bags, more commonly used in the well-known 'Henry Hoovers'.

From the initial batch of 50 masks, the project has since taken off, with over 500 re-usable masks now distributed for free to community services in the Helston area as well as to local care homes. They have also sent masks to a local nursery who are currently looking after the children of key workers.

AP Diving is also providing its factory's industrial cutting machines to the charity, Cornwall Scrubs, so that they can pattern cut material to create scrubs for the NHS.

Jeff is now busy hand-delivering them to frontline workers.

"I think it has been a positive thing mentally and physically," Jeff said. "As we waited for that first wave to crash over us, the instinct was to just do 'something' to help. Then as the project grew, we all had a focus and kept busy as well as producing something which hopefully has helped in a small way.

It has been very much a team effort even though we are all isolated. I am extremely proud of the AP volunteers and the way they have all stepped up." justgiving.com/crowdfunding/jeffrey-parker

#ExperienceAqaba
Underwater Military Museum
& 1011 Lockheed TriStar



CRITTER CONFIDENTIAL

How to speak cuttlefish

Paul Naylor has been reading the latest science on the common cuttlefish, *Sepia officinalis* and why it adopts certain colour patterns

Tentacles raised to either mimic seaweed or simply show a potential predator it is ready to react

Around this time, I would usually be reviewing observations, photos and footage from wonderful spring dives with cuttlefish that have come into the shallows to breed. While the pandemic has stopped me getting any new material this year, I have taken the opportunity to learn more about these amazing animals.

In combination with perusing the output from the numerous scientific studies on cuttlefish, I have been looking back through my old photographs. It has made me respect these magnificent molluscs even more, and also helped me answer some questions that have long lurked at the back of my mind.

Why for example, do cuttlefish change their colouring to blend in beautifully with the seabed on some occasions, but flash up very bold patterns on others? Apparently, it's often about visual contrast. When contrast is fairly low, such as on sand, a blending approach works well while, if it is high, the best strategy is for the cuttlefish to break up its outline with big, dramatic shapes. One of the best-known reactions is the 'white square', and sure enough, I found photos with cuttlefish on seabeds of large stones (ie high contrast) showing exactly that pattern. The detailed science of contrast assessment and reaction is mind-boggling, and I need more time to get to grips with it!

Even more puzzling to me was why so often when you meet a cuttlefish, it raises two of its arms in an apparent 'salute'. This is the well-established 'flamboyant' response. Sometimes it can help the cuttlefish blend in with seaweed and you can see how the arms are mimicking the weed's shape and colour. But what about when there's no seaweed that looks anything like the arms? Well, and I'm paraphrasing the science here, it's a signal that means: 'Hey you potential predator, I've seen you and am prepared to react. These arms can injure you and, because I'm ready for you, an attack may well be a waste of your time and effort'. Now I know!

I was already familiar with the impressive display on the outer arms of a male cuttlefish during breeding. I knew that the bold pattern with stripes at the top and spots at the bottom of the arms was a signal to other cuttlefish that meant 'I am a male, keep away from this female'. What I hadn't realised was that it also meant: 'If I don't get this same signal in return, I will attempt to mate with you'. Aquarium experiments have convincingly proved that a non-signal-returning cuttlefish is immediately (how can I put this politely) 'accosted' whatever its gender. ●



An underwater photograph showing two divers exploring a large, dark, abstract sculpture on the seabed. The sculpture has a rounded, organic form. One diver is in the foreground, wearing a black wetsuit and yellow fins, looking at the sculpture. Another diver is further back, wearing a blue wetsuit and blue fins. The water is clear and blue, with many small fish swimming around. Bubbles are rising from the divers. In the top right corner, there is a white graphic element consisting of a stylized 'D' shape and a larger white shape.

EXPLORE THE EXCEPTIONAL

Dive into the turquoise depths of an underwater world filled with forgotten shipwrecks, unexplored caverns, and legendary blue holes. The Bahamas is home to the world's third-largest barrier reef and considered a top diving destination for novice and experienced divers. Find out why on your own deep-sea adventure.

Visit Bahamas.com/diving



Trying not to go viral

Kirsty Andrews reflects on her time in lockdown, an opportunity to catch up with tasks but also in which to celebrate the ties that bind UK divers



2020 HAS, SO FAR, BEEN A YEAR TO remember. A uniquely challenging time. A year that is not likely to feature heavily in my logbook, based on current trends. I have no doubt that among our diving community there are those who have been more heavily impacted than others; some that have been soldiering on throughout the crisis, whether in a medical capacity or other critical roles to keep the world turning.

Tragically, some of our number will no longer be with us before this finishes. I also worry in particular for those businesses in the diving industry that we all rely on, and how they will weather this storm. I for one will be booking up trip after trip as soon as I am allowed - not just to scratch my diving itch, you understand, but to support my diving brethren.

I'm in the relatively lucky position that, other than checking that potentially vulnerable family members are okay, my main responsibility over the past

seemingly endless weeks has been to shut myself away and comply with the guidance. In an effort to appear positive and reap the so-called 'benefits of lockdown', I made myself an aspirational to do list.

Top of it, clearing out my shed, a.k.a 'the retirement home for diving kit'. A tough task, that one. Also on the list, giving all my kit a proper inventory, inspection and service of sorts. My main dive kit and camera gear rarely has a chance to fully dry out over the year and absolutely not in the spring and summer months. It's certainly never previously achieved its current level of crusty dried-out solidity, so a bit of TLC will not go amiss.

We all also have that pile of random bits of bungee, leftover neoprene, clips and sundry other useful bits and bobs, which 'might become useful' at a critical moment. In my case, it's several piles secreted around the flat. Time to rationalise. Other, more achievable goals

on my lockdown list include watching all diving-related films available (however comically bad) and actually reading the gently overflowing treasure trove of diving- and natural history-related books on my coffee table and its environs.

It's been a source of cheer to see how the diving community has pulled together during this time. We've put a brave face on things and proved ourselves to be a resourceful bunch. BSAC has hosted diving lectures - I probably would benefit from revisiting my Advanced Diver ones (something else to add to the list). They've also got a list of special interest webinars on the BSAC site - from cnidarians to the delights of Malin Head - which I was a little late in discovering but many are recorded for posterity, so I'm playing catch-up. There's no shortage of webinars, quizzes, and opportunities to reach out and show we care for one another. Keep it up, everyone, and we will have our time in the sun and on the seas again. 🌊



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The running man

It's back to being a beginner for **Yo-Han Cha**, as he takes up running to combat lockdown flab



ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION WHEN

I was a Training Officer, I had to delicately advise students that drysuits don't stretch, therefore if their body had changed shape since they last dived, then the drysuit that they hired last time, might not fit them now. Perhaps awkwardly is more accurate than delicately.

However, recently I've found that my drysuit, although it may not stretch, has definitely started to shrink – especially around my waistline. This motivated me to take up a new, lockdown-appropriate hobby – running. This was the first new hobby that I'd taken up in many years and I came to realise that despite scuba diving and running being very different sports, being a beginner in both had some similarities.

Follow a training structure

Due to the nature of diving and none of us having gills, training is structured. We need to learn how to use the equipment correctly and what the best practices are to prevent incidents. Running is relatively safe. I'm not doing ultra-marathons, so I'll always be local to home or work. I probably should have followed some kind of structure like 'Couch to 5k', but I didn't.

Trying to keep up with my mate around Newbury for my first run probably wasn't very beneficial for either of us. He didn't get much of a workout. I thought I wouldn't make it back alive. My first few runs involved following that same patient friend. My progress seemed to be measured by the number of times I begged him to stop when I needed to catch my breath.

I potentially would've got to five kilometres by now if I'd followed a tried-and-tested-programme. As it happened, I pushed myself too hard too soon and apparently shin splints are a thing and they need time to heal. I'm almost at 5k now, and should be there by the time this is published, but I'm not quite there yet.

Invest in the right kit

Just as borrowing and hiring diving equipment is okay when you're starting, running in my general purpose trainers

wasn't really helping my progress.

Investing in a pair of running shoes that I got fitted, pre-lockdown, helped a lot; my ankles were particularly grateful.

There looks to be a lot of other running equipment I could buy, but I'll stick with the shoes for now.

Have the right support network

I always encourage new divers to join a club. There they'll hopefully be exposed to a wealth of experience. I've not joined a running club yet, but due to running being a relatively common sport, it turns

out quite a few of friends are experienced runners and happy to give me good advice when I ask typical beginners' questions. Of course, I get nuggets of wisdom such as "Go buy a pair of running shoes!" or "Don't run with shin splints". Most importantly, they've been a massive source of encouragement to carry on running when, I'll be honest, compared to diving, it can be repetitive, boring and hard work. Still, I'm told that it gets easier and more enjoyable the more I do it [that'll be the endorphins kicking in – Editor], so I'll keep persevering in the hope that my drysuit stops shrinking. ●

Yo-Han recovers after tearing around the mean streets of Reading



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Gender on the agenda

Michelle Haywood casts a scientific eye at the humble cuckoo wrasse, king – or queen – of sexual fluidity on the reef

THERE'S A GROWING AND DIVISIVE discussion within society about an individual's gender. For many people their gender identity matches their sex at birth and they live their lives happily. But for maybe a fifth of humans the issue of gender is more difficult, and may not match their sex at birth.

Although the terms 'sexual and gender fluidity' are enough to send some people into an apoplectic rant, the rest of the animal kingdom doesn't follow such a rigid approach. Even in species where the body shape and colour suggest one sex, the internal physiology may belong to the other sex. There are species that are hermaphrodite (both sexes present in one individual) and other species in which an individual's sex changes at some point in development.

As divers we encounter one of the best examples of a sex changing animal, the cuckoo wrasse (*Labrus mixtus*). Cuckoo wrasse show clear sexual dimorphism where the males and females have distinctly different appearances. Females are pink/orange in colour with three black patches on the dorsal fin. Males are a striking blue and orange striped fish with blue margins on the fins.

Cuckoo wrasse are normally found in pairs. Females lay eggs in a nest of algae and the male guards the eggs. But these roles are not fixed. Should the male be lost, the female cuckoo wrasse can change into males in a process that takes around seven months to complete.

To go through a complete natural sex change requires radical restructuring of the sex organs plus changes in morphology (appearance) and behaviour. Cuckoo wrasse have been studied by scientists as a model to explore sexual determination in vertebrates. At a molecular level, understanding how these changes occur can help explain what is going on in our own bodies.

One of the driving factors for whether to change sex at all is to do with maximising reproductive chances. The aim of any organism is to maximise the number of offspring it produces, so there may come a point when it is better for an individual fish to be a large male (capable of defending territory to monopolise matings with females and protect the nest). Smaller males are at a disadvantage and may not breed at all. Whereas if you are a small fish, being female will significantly increase your reproductive success. If Cuckoo wrasse can change to being male as they grow larger, then they get the maximum lifetime reproduction. Cuckoo wrasse are known as protogynous hermaphrodites (female to male sex change).

Once the environmental cue for sex change has been triggered, it only takes a couple of days for female hormone levels to start dropping. This change in hormones triggers a cascade of changes at cellular level. The egg-producing tissues in the ovaries decrease in size and egg production ceases altogether. Spermatocytes (which produce sperm) start to develop and their numbers increase.

At the same time as changes are occurring in the gonads, the colour of the fish will start to gradually change. Sometimes it's possible to find fish that are in the process of changing and get a true mix of the sexual characteristics. Sex change in cuckoo wrasse appears to occur mainly between seven and 13 years of age, and most adult male fish will have started life as females before gaining their tropical colouring.

The hormonal control of fish sexual characteristics has been in the news recently because of the effect that human birth control hormones have in altering sexual development in fish. Female hormones caused the development of eggs inside the male fish testes. But, and it's a big but, there is very little evidence that birth control hormones are affecting natural fish populations and the studies in this have been used by anti-birth control campaigners to try and prevent access to contraception. Pardon the pun, but this issue is a bit of a red herring. ●

A male cuckoo wrasse in a forest of pink fan coral, Manacles Reef, Cornwall





New video series Dive skills to hone at home

A new video series has been created by volunteers with bite-sized videos demonstrating skills that can be practised at home. The series, which will grow over time, covers a range of topics including:

- Entry-level videos for beginners including assembling and disassembling kit
- Equipment care demonstrations
- Dive planning
- Underwater photography and videography
- Decompression / technical diving
- Navigation, position fixing and knots

Find our video library online at
bsac.com/honeathome



The brain: seizures and epilepsy

Dr Ashley Davies of DDRC Healthcare considers the phenomenon of seizure in divers, what causes it and how to deal with it in an emergency



SEIZURES ARE CAUSED BY SUDDEN,

disordered electrical activity in the brain. Typically, we think of convulsions (shaking of the body) but the signs and symptoms produced depend on the affected region of the brain and can include disturbances in sensation, personality and consciousness. Each of us has an eight to 10 per cent lifetime risk of having a seizure.

Epilepsy is characterised by recurring seizures. It is a common neurological condition affecting approximately one in every 100 people, and is more common in the young and elderly. The cause is unknown in most patients, but may be related to brain damage or genetic abnormalities. Some people experience strange sensations before having a seizure, this warning is known as a 'prodrome'.

What else causes seizures?

Many things can provoke a seizure; hypoxia (a lack of oxygen); hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar); fever; head injury; alcohol and drugs, to name a few. It is not always possible to identify the cause. After experiencing one seizure, the risk of having further seizures is increased.

Oxygen and seizures

At high inspired partial pressures, oxygen provokes seizures. This is known as an oxygen toxicity seizure and is the reason we limit the inspired partial pressure of oxygen when diving. Common limits are 1.4 bar, increasing to 1.6 bar during decompression stops shallower than 10m. We use these to calculate a Maximum Operating Depth (MOD) for the gas mix being breathed. Observing these limits will reduce the likelihood of suffering an oxygen toxicity seizure underwater.

How will seizures affect my diving?

Experiencing a seizure underwater will incapacitate the diver and they will lose the regulator from their mouth, which can result in drowning. We must also consider their buddy, who will be at risk of injury, and possibly death, if they attempt a rescue. All divers who experience a seizure, epileptic or otherwise, should cease diving and speak to a diving doctor.

What about medications?

Anti-Epileptic Drugs (AEDs) reduce the likelihood of seizures by stabilising electrical activity in the brain. There is no single drug

that works for every person and it may take some trial and error until a suitable drug, or combination of drugs, is found. AEDs have many potential side-effects – most will cause a degree of sedation and potentiate narcosis. Unfortunately, people on AEDs are not fit to dive. Current guidance is that a person must be off medication and seizure-free for five years before they are eligible to dive. This is because when AEDs are stopped there is a risk of relapse and further seizures. This risk decreases with time and by five years is thought to be sufficiently low to allow safe diving.

Are there any exceptions?

Yes, there are a few cases where diving may be permitted after such an event. When seizures have occurred only during sleep (termed 'nocturnal epilepsy') a decision is made on a case-by-case basis, often by the UKDMC (UK Diving Medical Committee). Secondly, infants are prone to febrile seizures – these are seizures occurring when body temperature rises rapidly. These may be disregarded if they were due to the temperature rise alone and no diagnosis of epilepsy was made. If you are unsure or have any queries regarding seizures and diving, please contact a diving doctor.

What should I do if someone has a seizure?

If a diver has a seizure underwater, you should try to keep the regulator in place, but if it has fallen out of their mouth do not try to replace it. Use a controlled buoyant lift to bring the diver to the surface, remembering to control the rate of ascent. At the surface, establish positive buoyancy and keep the diver's mouth clear of the water. If they are not breathing, give one minute of rescue breaths before getting to safety as quickly as possible. Once recovered to the shore or boat follow BLS guidelines. ●



If your buddy has a seizure underwater, try and keep the reg in their mouth, but do not attempt to replace if it has fallen out

SCUBA Chat

Please keep submitted letters to no more than 200 words

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East Cheshire goes the extra 2.6

After the cancellation of the London marathon and the huge negative impact this was going to have on fundraising for charities, the 2.6 challenge was born! For us, it was an opportunity for a bit of fun in dive gear while raising cash for the Marine Conservation Society (MCS). Across ECSAC we had pledges: Jo did 26 squats a day in full dive kit; Alison walked up and down her road 26 times; both Helen and Vesta would be walking 2.6 miles in full gear, we even have video evidence of Vesta's sprint uphill which was an amazing burst of energy. Clive and Simon cycled around the delightful Cheshire countryside in snorkel and masks.



Finally, hats off (or should that be neoprene hoods?) to Marion for 26.6 seconds of snorkelling in a freezing cold water butt, Jon for playing table tennis, again in full kit, for 26 minutes and Dave R for doing 26 miles on his exercise bike in full kit and producing at least 26 litres of sweat, he assures us!

The initial target was to raise £500. With the members' generosity and through social media so far we've raised over £1,500 for the MCS.

Ian Hollingsworth, ECSAC



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Ian Hill

A diver's legacy

I am writing on behalf of Grimsby & Cleethorpes BSAC to pay tribute to one of our club members, who recently lost his battle with Parkinson's disease and passed away on April 25th at the age of 76, after developing pneumonia.



Ian Hill joined our branch in February 1959 and maintained his membership with the club until February 2020, having achieved 61 years' unbroken membership. Unfortunately, Ian hadn't been able to dive for a couple of years but kept his membership going by joining as a snorkel member, such was his loyalty to our club.

At the time he joined our branch it was less than three years old, having being formed in April 1956, so Ian saw the club develop and change through the years. The time he joined was in the days before police had their underwater teams and he often recalled searches on behalf of the police for items, or even having to retrieve things that were not so pleasant. Over the years, Ian held most positions on the branch committee. He taught many hundreds of people to dive, mentored people who had just qualified or wanted to improve their skill set and he was always the one to go to in the pool to give a prospective member a try dive.

As a plater and boiler maker in a local shipyard, Ian regularly did repairs to club equipment to keep things in good shape and running smoothly, he even manufactured diving weights for members, just asking for a donation to club funds in return.

Nobody in our club has known the branch without him being there; he has literally always been around. Even while he was ill in recent years, he was always there helping divers get dressed or just be around to chat and pass on his wealth of experience.

As you would imagine, Ian had so many stories of his time diving and many of us will also miss them. What is so tragic, due to the corona virus restrictions, attendance at Ian's funeral was restricted to just 10 close family members. However, we understand there will be a memorial service when restrictions are eased.

Ian leaves a wife, two daughters and several grandchildren. Rest in peace, Ian, you will be sadly missed but will never be forgotten by former or current members of Branch 37.

Phil Thurtle, on behalf of Grimsby & Cleethorpes BSAC 37

Diving therapy down under

I wanted to acknowledge the ongoing support my local club, BSAC South Adelaide South Australia has given to my organisation, which works with all sectors of the disadvantaged community. ReLink Australia is a national not-for profit whose charter is-rebuilding lives through recreation sport and the arts. We have run scuba diving as a therapeutic and social program since the 1990s. Our scuba diving and snorkelling program has had lifesaving outcomes for many people. The current president, Dave Jackson, along with other club members have been acting as Volunteer Instructors as commercial training is way beyond our budget. The club's support has been vital in keeping our participants who all face real life challenges up and firing.

At present our diving activity and most of our training is on hold until the Covid madness has passed.

Andy Asser, BSAC South Adelaide





Sub C's last night at the pool

It's not always about diving! The week before lockdown, we at Sub C Divers had a brilliant night in the pool. We enjoyed a game of Octopush in which everyone in the club can participate and have a lot of fun. We saw a great deal of competitive (some may say foul) play, however our own pool safety cover members were there to referee!

Melissa Halligan, Sub C Divers

Art and the underwater world

I have always been interested in marine life and fascinated by my experiences in the underwater world for almost 30 years. Last year I graduated with a degree in ceramics. My sculptures have a sea theme or are made purposely for the underwater environment.

I dive in Ireland and at least twice a year with Hannah and Simon at Abyss Diving in Fuerteventura. A few years ago, I began taking my porcelain sculptures underwater around Ireland and became fascinated at how sea creatures have explored and interacted with them.

When I first asked Hannah if she would mind me taking photographs of my sculptures underwater she didn't know what to think. It has now become the norm with many amazing encounters. The octopus and cuttlefish in particular are inquisitive. I have images and video footage of octopus inspecting and moving my sculptures whilst trying to take them into their dens. Cuttlefish have also been inquisitive and spent time exploring these while changing colour, apparently to mimic the item. It was this activity and an interest in my sculptures that led to Hannah and Simon commissioning an underwater piece for Remembrance Day 2019. This has been underwater for seven months and is thriving. Life has attached to the surface and is evolving with sea creatures feeding from it and nursery fish using it as shelter. It has become part of the environment and is visited daily by divers.

Annita McKee, BSAC Direct



This photo shows Annita's mini installation, 'Remember Them'

Sara Kitching

A tribute from Spalding SAC

Our friend and fellow Spalding SAC member Sara Kitching died on 13 January at Nottingham City Hospital, months after her fifth operation on a long term brain tumour, aged 53. For 15 years, Sarah had been partner to founder member Dave Gilham, and met at the club (started by Dave in 1979) on 11 August 2004. Sara was one of those people who was instantly likeable, with a great sense of humour; she even called her tumour her 'pet brain tumour'.

Her brain surgeon, the famous Henry Marsh, described her as 'truly remarkable' for her attitude and resilience in the face of what she had over a 23-year period. The way she dealt with it was heartbreaking but inspirational.

Her first brain tumour operation was shown on a BBC programme called 'It's All in the Mind'. Sara is seen being woken up in the middle of the operation for the surgeon to stimulate areas of the brain with a probe whilst she is asked questions. She is heard to ask for a drink because she is thirsty and asks that the drink be a Cabernet Sauvignon! Got to admire that spirit and sense of humour!

She was a very competent diver and she and Dave had dived in many oceans around the world since they met. Sara was a very popular lady and always smiling... Dave has been unable to find a photograph of her when she hasn't had a smile on her face.

Sara lit the room with her smile and showed tremendous courage. She was a sweet, kind, vivacious woman with a big heart, who was bubbly and always lived life to the full. She exuded kindness and warmth, was generous to all, and had a way of putting people around her at their ease.

Sara had an incredible spirit and love for a life well spent. She will be sorely missed by everyone here who knew her. Rest well, Sara.

Jonathan Ellis, on behalf of Spalding SAC



More thoughts on ears

I read with great interest the article written by Michelle Haywood on the condition known as exostoses of the ear canal [Under the hood, SCUBA May 2020]. As she says, this is bone growth just above the ear drum that can lead to a partial or total blockage of the canal and is caused by exposure to cold, such as prolonged diving in British waters.

This is a condition I suffer from and probably have for a long time although it was only diagnosed less than 10 years ago. As I have been diving since 1973 and teaching professionally since 1983, mainly in this country, there are no prizes for working out the cause of my exostoses.

I would, however, like to point out to your readers that, in my experience, most GPs are not very good at diagnosing this condition. They look down the ear canal and see the exostoses bone growth, which with only a partial blockage has a hole in the middle. This can be mistaken for the ear drum and looks as if it is perforated. If the reason you want to see your GP is ear ache then the cause may well be an infection caused by a build up of wax, debris and damp between the bone growth and the ear drum. It then looks to the doctor as if you have a perforation with puss pouring out of it.

This situation has happened to me a couple of times, the first was just before I was going on a diving trip. I suspected my doctor was incorrect, so I had to pay to see an ENT specialist in a hurry. That was when my exostoses was first diagnosed and the specialist explained that many GPs do mistake this condition. He cleaned out my ears using micro suction and prescribed some appropriate ear drops and I had a good diving trip.

My advice to divers who have been diving in cold water regularly and are told they have a perforation is get a second opinion from a diving doctor or an ENT specialist. **Stewart Tattersall, Chester**

Editor's note: Always seek specialist advice from a diving doctor if you are contemplating going on a dive trip soon after experiencing (or during) ear infection symptoms.

Ilfracombe's swab support

Ilfracombe and North Devon Sub Aqua Club are proud to say they are supporting their local NHS Covid 19 swab station. They are providing the use of their clubhouse for Northern Devon Healthcare Trust nurses so that they have toilet facilities next to their testing site and overnight storage space.

This is an important support to care and key workers living and working in the North Devon region. It covers Ilfracombe and other nearby rural parishes, the next nearest testing facilities previously were in Exeter and Plymouth, a journey of at least an hour and a half each way from Ilfracombe. The region has a high percentage of elderly and care settings in the population compared to other parts of the country, with fewer fast transport networks.

Having a programme of events planned for the year to celebrate the club's 60th anniversary is just on hold for the time being. So the committee had no hesitation in offering their unique clubhouse, a former sail loft, designated as the location for the swab hub. **Ilfracombe BSAC**



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Clubs that collaborate a formula for success



Kristina Pedder reports on a joint project between two South Yorkshire clubs that could have been rivals but became successful partners – Barnsley BSAC and Dearne Valley Divers

When BSAC clubs experience difficulties, lose instructors, lack active members to organise trips and regular activities, or are unable to support training, this does not have to end in disaster. Over the past two years, two Yorkshire clubs have worked together to secure the future and growth of both clubs, with many positive outcomes. There is an opportunity to turn around our thinking to see this as an opportunity to enrich individual clubs, to reciprocate, by working in true partnership with

others, says Paul Tarn, Diving Officer at Dearne Valley.

The cooperation came about when Barnsley's DO, Rob Mason, wanted to finish his Advanced Diver training but his branch didn't have the resources to help. He visited a neighbouring BSAC club, Dearne Valley Divers, based just seven miles away. It had only 16 members at the end of 2016 and had just sold the club boat, but many members were experienced instructors. By contrast, Barnsley was bottom heavy; it had worked hard to increase membership to about 50 members including lots of Ocean Divers and Sports Divers, but only a handful of instructors.

Looking at their location, and catchments, logic says that these clubs should have been in competition. "But BSAC isn't about competition," said Rob. "It is the biggest dive club in the world, so why not have two branches that cooperate?"

Culturally, the two clubs remain very different. They have separate committees, they make separate decisions on trips and training, but collaboration is key. It took the best part of two years to work out

Barnsley DO
Rob Mason
with Sports
Diver trainee
Cameron Austin





Members from both clubs on their annual Farnes trip

the relationship, including identifying any threats, says Rob, as some members were sceptical. “It wasn’t plain sailing... but the cooperation is now embedded,” he says. “We have achieved the three outcomes that we wanted: increased training; increased socialising; and, of course, increased diving.”

The technicalities

The two clubs spent the best part of 2017-2018 working each other out. Both Diving Officers recognised that there would be some suspicion and a fear that one club would lose members to another. Rob and Dearne Valley Diving Officer Paul Tarn became members of each other’s clubs, giving them a formal voice on both committees, but this was definitely not a merger. They wanted to put policies in place to protect both clubs. It was inevitable that members would ask, what’s in it for us?

In fact, the clubs put in place an associate membership scheme, as they wanted to discourage members migrating between the clubs. As a result, any member who contributes to

club activities can become a BSAC joint member of the other club; they just need to ask. The joint membership rules allow use of both club pool sessions, and get you onto the mailing list for all open-water training and trip plans. Associate members have no voting rights, and can’t become committee members at the associate club. They tend to be the more active divers, and around 20 of them now benefit from the scheme.

Now the two clubs can use each other’s pool facilities. Barnsley’s Secretary Linda Marsh said: “We were worried that with both clubs using our pool, it could get like ‘diver soup’, but the Training Officers have been able to coordinate enough so that doesn’t happen.”

The Training Officers regularly work together on club and open-water training. A definite benefit is that the clubs can ensure consistency of instructing and run more in-house Skill Development Courses to add value for members. For 2020, each club planned its regular monthly open-water training dates during the previous autumn, and the two series are a week apart so that instructors can teach on either. It’s great to have extra instructors to call on now the club is so busy, says Ann Bailey, Training Officer at Barnsley.

Barnsley trainee Lee Saunders joined his club just over a year ago, when the collaboration was well underway. “I was emailed every weekend and told what training I would be doing the following Tuesday and I could attend open-water days when I possibly could to complete my Sports Diver qualification. Unbeknown to me, each time I received any training, or buddied someone on a dive, I could be diving with someone from another club.” It was only in passing that someone mentioned this, he says, making the point that the link between the two

was seamless. “There was no competition, no club was better than the other. It just seemed everyone, despite where they paid their subs to, was pulling together to help and encourage people to dive.”

And, if students can’t make a particular date they can take advantage and attend the other club’s session. “As someone who has a job where hours don’t tend to be set and can vary from day-to-day, I’ve been able to take advantage of there being a large set of instructors. When I’ve been available for my Sports Diver training there has usually been an instructor available too,” said Dan Stephenson from Barnsley.

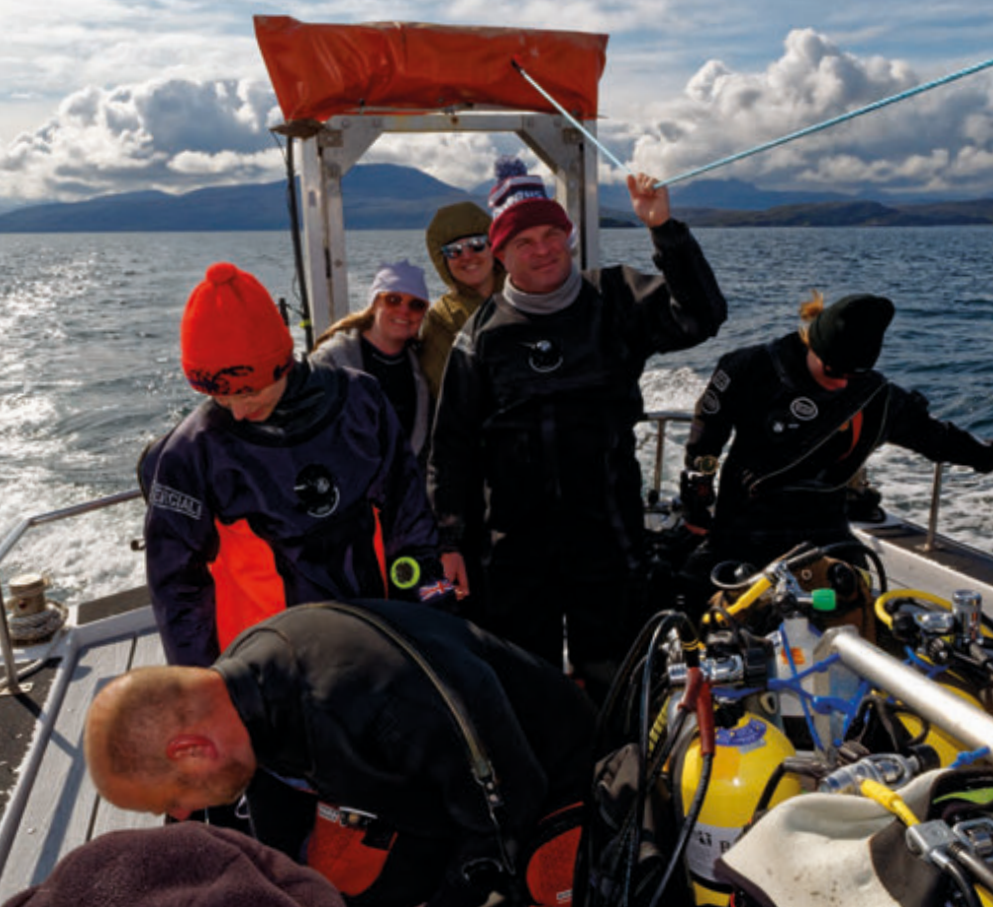
The collaboration on training has also been great for instructor development. During 2018, the clubs sent nine members on Instructor Foundation Courses, and the Assistant Diving Instructors get plenty of experience. Assistant Open Water Instructor Richard Slater, from Dearne Valley, says the collaboration has given him the chance to instruct twice a week regularly. “This has helped to speed up my instructor development and given me access to a wide range of trainees at all different skill levels,” he said.

Going diving

There is also a joint trip policy. For any club trip, once announced, members and joint members have four weeks to sign up before the trip is opened to both clubs. There are also a couple of formal joint trips a year. It was a Barnsley staple to go seal diving in the Farne Islands and this became a joint trip in 2018. The organisers chartered Billy Shiel’s biggest boat and 26 members dived together. After successful trips in 2018 and 2019, this is scheduled again for 2020. Dearne Valley organises a joint technical trip each year. In 2019 it was part of the Scapa 100 project and in 2020 a trip to Narvik, Norway, has been booked.

Below: The two clubs managed to fill William Shiel’s big boat with 26 divers





“Both clubs offer excellent expertise and knowledge and work well together to share this with members. Joint club trips offer different experiences for all members at all levels and gives support to divers,” says Mick Gwilliam, a Dive Leader trainee at Barnsley.

Suzie Robinson, an instructor at Barnsley, says collaboration between the dive clubs has expanded the club’s horizons more than she could have imagined. “We are now doing more diving, in a greater variety of locations and all of our dive trips run at full capacity. There are so many more opportunities to go diving now,” she said. Leigh Holmes, a Dive Leader trainee from Dearne Valley agrees. It’s great meeting up with Barnsley’s members, she says. “Having this close a link to another club has meant large group dive trips, such as the now annual and extremely popular Farne Islands trip, can go ahead.”

What has changed?

Both clubs have grown during the formal collaboration. Divers and instructors are much more engaged, and both clubs are much more interesting places to be around, with joint monthly presentations open to both.

Above: A Barnsley trip to North West Scotland made possible by Dearne Valley taking up spare places

Below: Dearne Valley Assistant Instructors Richard Slater and Chris Stuart between dives at the Scapa 100 joint trip



Barnsley, which still focuses mostly on standard recreational diving, has grown its membership steadily from 2016 to the present, doubling numbers in three years. The collaboration was an outcome of this growth. “It was a bit like Whack-a-mole,” Rob says. “With so many new members coming through the doors, we had problems delivering training, providing resources and keeping newly trained divers interested and engaged. Once above 50 members, it became apparent that we needed an extensive annual programme of events to achieve this.” So in October 2019, for the first time both clubs agreed 2020 dates for open-water training, diving, and social events.

Dearne Valley, on the other hand, had been struggling to grow. Since the collaboration began in 2017, however, it has seen exponential growth. It became one of the top 10 BSAC clubs for recruitment, growing from 16 to 40 members in a year, and now has more than 50 members. Dearne Valley focuses more on technical diving, and more challenging trips, and has the instructor capability to offer in-house technical training such as Twin Set Diver, Buoyancy and Trim, and Accelerated Decompression Procedures skill development courses, which are open to both clubs.

The result is there are two huge clubs in the area running lots of diving activities. Before, it was difficult to organise and get



Farnes inspection at the inaugural joint club trip in 2018

a good number of people to attend trips, as the club members were attracted to different types of diving, says Dearne Valley Assistant Diving Instructor and Dive Leader trainee Kerry Thomas. “Now there are a wide variety of trips in the UK and around the world, which suit all tastes and budgets. The club has gone from a few people who got together for an occasional dive trip to a vibrant joint community that has lots of fun and social events both in and out of the water.”

The collaboration was key, and central to the growth of both clubs. The collaboration also feeds into the region, Paul says. Both clubs now support regional activities and training by providing members of the regional team

– the joint working has supported and encouraged members to get involved.

There is no reason why any town club can't repeat what we've done, says Rob. “Selfishly, from a Diving Officer's perspective, we have standardised training, exposed our divers to more trips and more social opportunities,” he said. “We set aside our pecuniary interests and did something we think is special,” Paul agrees. “This collaboration is about trust, integrity and commitment, putting aside parochial interests to grow and develop each club.”

“If we deliver value to members, we can't help growing the club. And after all, what is BSAC? It's a club. So let's use the club system to our advantage...”



Mick Gwilliam strikes a pose at the front on a joint trip to the Menai Straits

My greatest ever safety stop

Artist **Marysya Rudska** reflects on an expedition to Scotland with Clidive BSAC that culminated in a glorious wildlife spectacle

Let's be clear that I'm not a huge fan of safety stops, but hey - that 'safety' is there for a reason. Typically by this time of a dive, I am tired and a tad cold after refreshing British summer waters. Yet, there are at least those three minutes still to go. At six metres with nothing in the range of visibility beyond my buddy, and I am bobbing on the line with my attention fully devoted to a dive computer. Few more minutes, while I could be lucky to see a jelly or a transparent larva bobbing around. Still, another minute.

I was to learn that a safety stop could be completely different! Last summer I joined the Clidive club expedition to the very end of Scotland. I am only a couple of years into diving, so this was my first expedition and my first time diving in the area. On the day in question, we planned dives around Handa island, which has beautiful rocky shores all covered by puffins, razorbills and guillemots. Our RIB crawled to approach the colony for a closer look first. Shortly after this customary bird watching, we dived at a nearby site.

These northern dives were gorgeous, with the rocky bottom all covered in life. In the overgrowth of seaweed there were hiding lobsters, velvet, edible and sponge crabs, a couple of octopus, huge sun seastars, feathered stars, bright sponges

and tender sea squirts. After this lovely scenery, I was all mentally prepared for that typical safety stop. Three minutes of boredom after all this richness we just saw.

Suddenly, I had to forget about my pity plan! A guillemot cut through the water. What looked like a mostly black bird, was now all dressed in a thin silver jacket of air with a trail of bubbles behind. This dandy flew underwater by slowly flapping its wings past me!

In a few seconds, the water boiled around us with dozens of guillemots and razorbills joining the dive. They seemed to be attracted to our air bubbles, with the sheer dedication to examine their source. Some of the birds went a step further biting my bright orange DSMB line, while most of them human-watched from a metre or two away. It was stunning to be inside of this whirl!

At my safety stop, I am usually overcome with a feeling that my dive computer has frozen to extend those long minutes. On that dive, we spent even more than three minutes mesmerized by the beautiful birds. Now, this was my best safety stop so far, when on the boundaries of water and air my favourite hobbies combined - diving and birdwatching.

MARYSYA RUDSKA, CLIDIVE 410

EDITOR'S NOTE: In his keynote address at the 2019 BSAC Diving Conference, Dr Neal Pollock talked about innovations in diving down the years, and their subsequent effect on the scene. His favourite innovation was the shallow water safety stop, which he said is "probably the best protection a diver can have against decompression stress". When you add diving guillemots into the equation, there is a compelling argument never to miss your safety stop. ◉



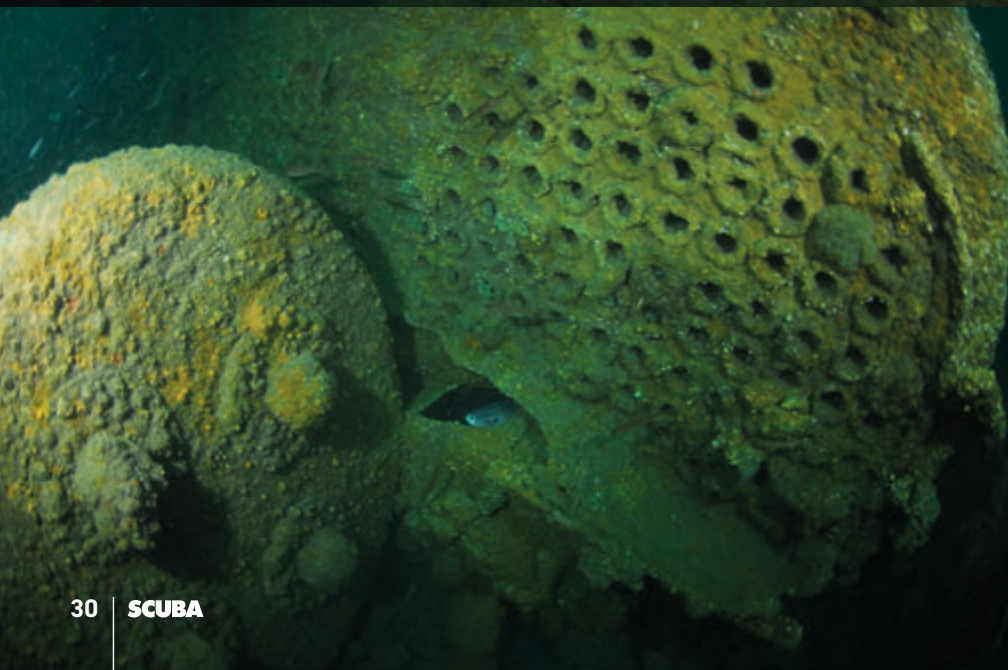


Deeper wrecks

of the South Coast

Part 2

Johno and **Cathy De Lara** of Newbury BSAC have found much to see by going that little bit deeper off the South Coast. Here are the second five of their top 10 wrecks in trimix range



A common question that people ask when we dive sites such as these deep wrecks in the English Channel is how they are identified. In some cases, items such as the ship's bell or a boiler-maker's plate make it easy. In the case of the SS Luxor, one of the five wrecks described below, it was a combination of location, size and a broken piece of crockery with the shipping line's crest on. So, when you are diving wrecks, it is worth always keeping an eye out for clues.

The recovery of SS Daylesford's bell was carried out in compliance with MMO guidelines, and reported to the Receiver of Wreck.

[Note: BSAC does not recommend the removal of artefacts from wrecks]



SS Daylesford

In the early 1900s, the mainstay of shipping around the British Isles was the transport of coal. The road network as we know it was a distant dream, consisting mainly of single carriageway roads that went through towns and villages. The canals were in decline and the railway network for goods still growing. The UK coal mining industry was in full production, providing coal for home use, but also exporting coal to other industrial countries. It is against this backdrop that the SS Daylesford was steaming from Blythe, Northumberland, to Spain full of coal on a late March day.

As she manoeuvred down the channel making good progress despite the thick fog, she was in close proximity to the schooner, Puhlin. At about 7am, as they rounded the Isle of Wight, there was the inevitable collision. The Daylesford was seriously damaged, but as the captain recognised this very quickly, the whole crew was able to transfer onto the Puhlin. The Daylesford went down in five minutes, about 17 miles from St Catherine's Point, the southerly most point of the Isle of Wight.

In 46m of water, time on the wreck is quite limited, even with Trimix. A dive on the Daylesford is dominated by the large, two-cylinder compound engine and the two boilers. The engine is bolt upright and affords a great opportunity to investigate the quality of 1880s engineering. Despite being underwater for more than 100 years, it is in remarkably good condition: with the cylinder heads, valves and con rods all in position ready to drive the 1,400-tonne ship through the water. Congers, crabs and lobsters live in the crannies, with bib and pollock swimming about.

Finning aft, you can follow the driveshaft over the holds and winches to the stern. The stern is very broken, as you would expect with the collision point being at the stern. This does mean you can clearly see the propeller, with a missing blade and steering quadrant. Moving forward from the engine, the site is covered in broken wreckage and winches all the way up to the anchors that mark the bow. A good rummage will reveal the bridge and forward winches. On one dive, a rummage in this area resulted in the location of the ship's bell.

Left: Juvenile fish at SS Daylesford's winch

Below left: Spot the conger in the boiler!

Below centre: A lobster forages on the Daylesford

Right: The engine block stands proud





SS Ajax

The Ajax was one of seven ships sunk from convoy CW9 (aka Peewit) in August 1940. The naming convention CW9 indicates this was the ninth convoy in the channel heading west. CW9 began in Southend, following the successful – measured by no losses – easterly convoy CE8. German Field Marshall Göring had just publicly announced that the channel was in German hands, hence the British Navy commanders running CW9 were under immense pressure to get the convoy through, to prove Goring wrong.

The Germans had been monitoring this convoy as it moved through the Dover Straits, using the new Freya Radar system. They used the four available E boats (aka Schnell boats or Motor Torpedo Boats) to lie in wait for the convoy, and succeeded in sinking four ships before the convoy reached the Isle of Wight. Then, as the convoy passed St Catherine's point, the weather cleared and the Luftwaffe had clear sight of them. Ju87 bombers and Me109 fighters began an attack. Out of sight of the ships, the RAF was in support of CW9. Aircraft countered the attack and the ensuing air battle became one of the initial engagements of the Battle of Britain. In the initial attack by the Ju87s, two bombers and a fighter attacked SS Ajax. Three bombs hit the forward section of the ship and she sank within five minutes. Thankfully, all but four of the crew made it safely off the vessel.

SS Ajax now lies in 40m of water on a white sandy bottom and it is an interesting dive. The bow is the most substantial part of the ship lying on its port side, with two anchors in place. The boilers are there, just forward of the triple-expansion engine. The stern is very broken. The most striking feature is the rear steering position standing proud of the white sand.



Top: Lighting up the rear steering wheel

Middle: Check out the cute boiler!

Below: This bow shot shows how the wreck lies





SS Terlings

The tactics employed by the British in 1940 ensured that ocean-going vessels were protected in convoys while they travelled down the channel and out into the Atlantic. Once a convoy was in open water, and theoretically clear of U-boat attacks, the ships then scattered. In this way, the U-boat threat was nullified without vast convoys crossing the Atlantic. This had to be revised later in the war as the U-boats became more successful.

SS Terlings suffered damage during a German attack on convoy OA178 (see the Dallas City, featured in Part One, SCUBA April 2020) but she was repaired within a month and during June 1940 she went back into service. She joined CW7 for protection in the Channel until she could get clear of German attacks. On the afternoon of 21 July 1940, SS Terlings was passing the Isle of Wight when the Luftwaffe found the convoy and attacked. The attack was from the rear of the convoy and the ship was hit nine times, with the loss of eight men.

Sitting in a moderate 40m of water, the Terlings is a good depth to enjoy a reasonable dive time and not incur too much in the way of decompression penalty. As you would expect of a 90m-long ship that took nine hits, the wreck is fairly broken. The bow lies to port and was half clear of the sand when we dived. There is a large starboard anchor, level with the seabed, and only the forecastle railings still visible. The two boilers and the engine are exposed amidships, but the engine is partly covered with debris.

The wreck is increasingly broken-up aft of the engine, but it is still easy to navigate to the stern. The stern is broken off and is facing upwards. It is an impressive sight, with an obvious steering quadrant visible. The rudder pintle can be seen where it goes through the hull, but only the top of the rudder shows, and there is no sign of a prop. There is a very large stern gun out on the sand to starboard and boxes of ammunition piled up close by, in what would have been the storage area below deck.

Top: Another wreck-dwelling conger eel!

Middle: Examining the broken gun

Below: At the Terlings' bow





Motor Tanker Y48

In January 1945 there was a vast amount of shipping from the United States that had come across the Atlantic to help in the war effort. At this time everything that the troops fighting in Europe required had to be shipped from the UK across the channel. To help, the US supplied ships to carry goods and fuel. Y48 was such a vessel, hastily constructed and not given a 'name', it was only ever known by its designation Y48.

In January 1945 Y48 was reported to be in a sinking condition, south-west of the Isle of Wight and was subsequently sunk by allied forces as she was a hazard to navigation. The 633-tonne vessel lies in 58m of water, upright and seemingly in good condition. It looks like a tanker, with the pipes and pumps clearly visible on the deck. Also on the deck, covered in wreckage is the spare propeller. Moving forward to the forecastle, the first thing you will see is the spare anchor, between the two doors. Looking inside the doors will reveal an American motorcycle of the era. This is probably a Harley, but as it's a tight squeeze to access, this not been investigated.

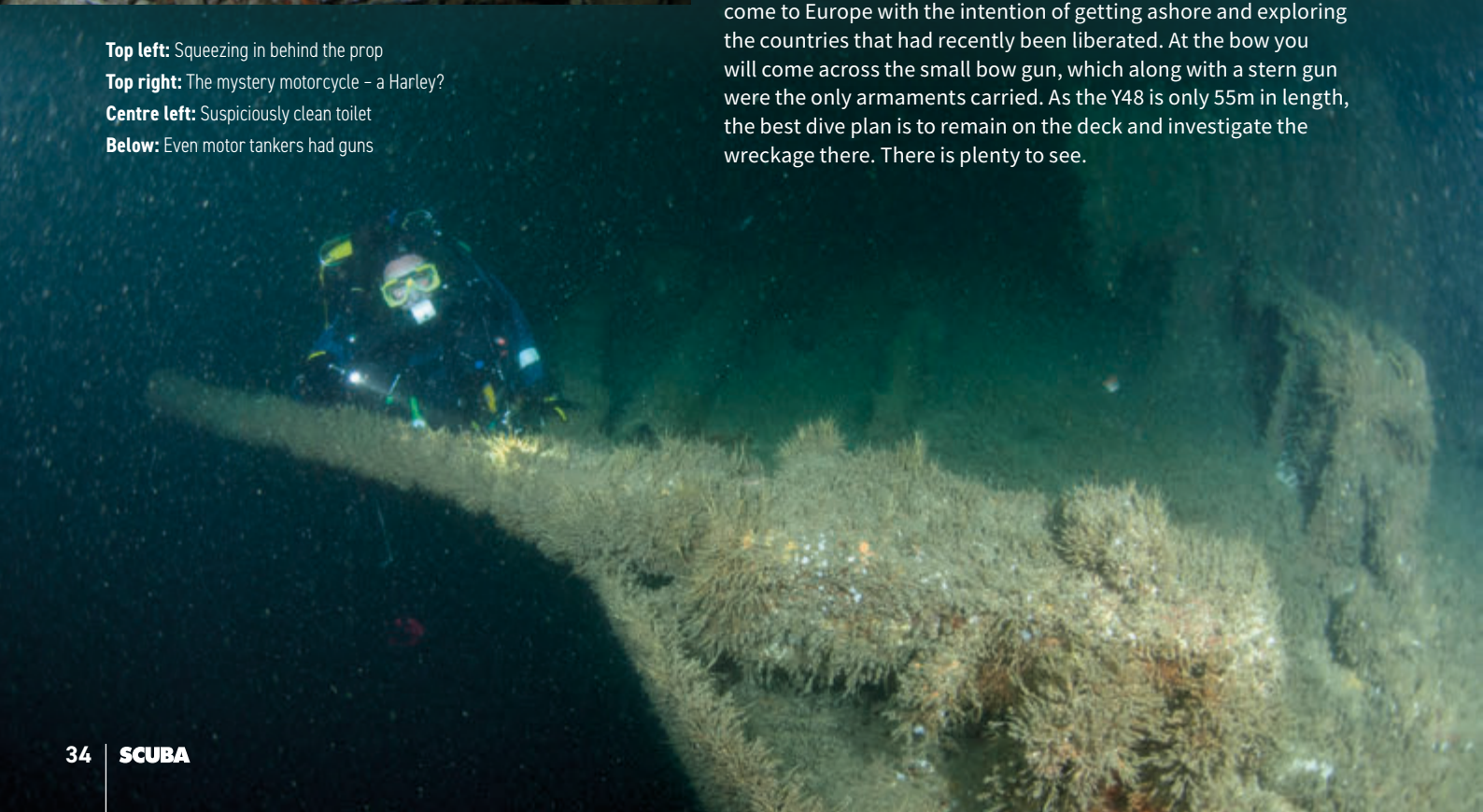
The bike's presence indicates that although Y48 was working ship, someone on board (captain or chief engineer maybe) had come to Europe with the intention of getting ashore and exploring the countries that had recently been liberated. At the bow you will come across the small bow gun, which along with a stern gun were the only armaments carried. As the Y48 is only 55m in length, the best dive plan is to remain on the deck and investigate the wreckage there. There is plenty to see.

Top left: Squeezing in behind the prop

Top right: The mystery motorcycle – a Harley?

Centre left: Suspiciously clean toilet

Below: Even motor tankers had guns



SS Luxor

In early 1918, ships were produced and sent straight out to work in the convoys feeding Britain. The SS Luxor was one such a ship. Soon after her maiden voyage, she was heading from Cherbourg to Barry, Wales, in ballast, in a convoy. About 2am on 19 March 1918, the speed of the convoy had reduced to 6.5 knots and St Catherine's Point was within 30 miles. UB-57 was waiting in this area and spotted the convoy, and the very 'colourfully painted' Luxor. A torpedo was launched and hit the ship just aft of the engine room. The Luxor went down so rapidly that no SOS message was sent. The good news is that all 40 of the crew successfully abandoned ship and were rescued by the convoy escort.

The SS Luxor sits on a shale bottom at about 60m, with the stern on its port side and the bow very broken. The stern is an interesting dive in its own right, as the four-inch gun is still in place, resting on the seabed but still attached to its mounts. Moving forward, there are a number of winches that make good homes for conger eels and lobsters. The engine is hidden under plates but the boilers are accessible and there is a swim-through between them. The bow is very broken, but further investigation reveals the hawse pipes, and an impressive anchor.



Above: SS Luxor's hefty anchor

Below: The huge chain should defy corrosion for many more years



The diving practicalities

In these two articles, I have shared with you details and photographs of a number of little-dived wrecks off the South Coast of England. All of these dives were made from the charter boat Wight Spirit under the guidance of the skipper Dave Wendes (wightspirit.co.uk). Dave is a recognised authority on the wrecks of the south coast, having written *South Coast Shipwrecks off East Dorset and Wight (1870-1979)* and a newly published companion volume, the

supplement to the same.

The dive team are all experienced divers who use a mix of open-circuit scuba set-ups and closed-circuit rebreathers to dive on these wrecks in the 40-60m range. In all cases, each diver carries enough gas to be self-sufficient, although the buddy system is still used. All divers carry and use a delayed surface-marker buoy with at least one spare.

To dive in this range, you need to be trimix qualified and the ideal qualification 'set' is Twin Set, Accelerated Decompression Procedures and at least Explorer Mixed Gas on open or closed circuit. On these courses you will learn how to use a twin set, the use of rich nitrox mixes for decompression and the safe use of trimix. As with any training, once qualified you'll need to ensure that you do sufficient build-up dives and practise your new skills. Finally, the key is to build a team of like-minded divers, you'll become friends, and go diving. ●

It's a Shore Thing

With diving activity returning to the UK, **Simon Rogerson** asks a wide range of divers for their recommendations – where to go for a great British shore dive



Shore diving is undergoing a Renaissance after restrictions were lifted (initially in England), allowing the first wave of divers to acquaint themselves with the pleasure of breathing air underwater. For the benefit of this feature, we'll be looking at the shore diving experience all over the UK in anticipation of the same freedoms being extended across the nation.

Right now, my social media is ablaze with posts from divers who have scaled the ankle-twisting summit of Chesil Beach to enjoy a dive in Chesil Cove, where there is a measure of shelter against the easterlies that so cruelly greeted the easing of restrictions. Clubs and buddy teams were quickly getting to grips with the new distancing advice issued by BSAC, cylinders had somehow been filled

and the first official dives of the 2020 season were finally underway. It must have borne some resemblance to the golden era of the 1950s and 1960s, when clubs would rock up at beaches and march determinedly into the water. Shore diving is deeply ingrained in our scuba culture – it's what we did before the lust for rust lured us to ever deeper sites offshore.





As we learned to respect the environment and the challenges it presented us, so the rules of safe shore diving were established. Shore divers must always be acutely aware of their entry and exit points, and of the site's tidal status. Without a boat to follow an SMB and legislate for 'improvisations' you need to stick rigorously to your plan, and have proper shore cover in place to alert the rescue services if you fail to surface at the appointed time and place.

Relatively few UK shore dives are straightforward steps into the sea. More often than not, they entail scrambles down pebble slopes, across jagged rock or mini marathons in full kit from harbour car parks. You need to find places to clip fins and cameras so that if you fall, your hands are free to protect yourself as you go down. If you're jumping in, you need to be aware of the water depth. Obviously, the less weight you carry the easier your entry and exit will be. I favour wetsuits for shore dives, and typically use a 10-litre cylinder. Ensure you are wearing a sturdy pair of neoprene boots – the basic tropical ones simply don't have thermal or physical protection for walking over jagged surfaces.

As with all diving, seek out local knowledge and assess weather forecasts and surface conditions. Shore diving in

rough seas is not recommended – in addition to making the entry and exit hazardous, conditions can impact on surface swims, safety stops and general wellbeing. Above all, you need to realistically assess your own levels of fitness and strength in relation to the demands of the site.

At the moment, it is also important to double check for local restrictions at your intended location. Shore diving may have opened up in England, for instance, but Swanage Pier was still closed to everyone at the time of writing, as the local authority saw it as a choking point for crowds. Do avoid peak times when your entry/exit point could be crowded with members of the public. My friends have been going midweek, very early in the morning – though of course this becomes a lot easier if you happen to be with a coastal branch that doesn't have to factor in motorway journeys.

Happily, the vast majority of shore dives go without a hitch – it should be all about making life easy for yourself, especially if it's an early season dive. As the first wave of shore divers hit the English coast, I asked a cross section to recommend their favourite places, the sites they would be returning to in the coming weeks.

Thanks to Plymouth Sound divers Fran Hockley and Alice Walpole, who demonstrate distanced shore diving in the photographs that accompany this article. All photographs by Neil Hope



The South Coast

The Dorset coast saw a lot of action, although the arch at **Durdle Door** got all the headlines in the non-diving world for crowding and emergency helicopter landings.

Divers, knowing much better, visited less geographically restrictive locations along the Dorset and Devon coasts. With **Swanage Pier** off-limits, local divers headed to sites such as **Chesil Cove** and **Portland Castle**, which were bristling with nudibranchs during May. These sites were recommended by Paul Pettitt, an award-winning photographer and member of Isle of Purbeck SAC who also frequents **Newton's Cove** to the south of Weymouth and **Kimmeridge Bay**. Known for its rock pools and variety of marine life, Kimmeridge was also picked out by BSAC's Heritage Adviser, Jane Maddocks. Graham Pettett of Swale Divers recommended another famous spot on the Jurassic Coast, **Lulworth Cove**, in addition to a few locations further to the east – the outer wall at **Dover Harbour** and **Seaford Beach** near Newhaven, where Graham says it is possible to find canon.

National Instructor Sophie Rennie put in a strong shout for one of the best known shore dives of South Devon – **Brixham**

Breakwater. Underwater visibility is notoriously unreliable there, so if at all possible you should check before travelling.

Heading west, we come to the Devon coast, home to **Babbacombe Bay**, nominated by photographer Gillian Marsh. What 'Babs' lacks in shoreside parking facilities, it more than compensates with seasonal events such as mating cuttlefish in early Spring. This kelpy bay yields all manner of treasures, including nudibranchs, cat sharks and the occasional grey seal.

And so to Plymouth, which has as good a case as anywhere to call itself the shore diving capital of England. Dan Burton, cameraman and veteran technical diver, recommends **Firestone Bay** and **Eastern Kings**, the latter also nominated by tech diver Steve Mortimer. On the first day of June, Craig Holdstock of Plymouth Sound Divers dived this site and put up a superb set of images and video the same day. His film shows a descent along walls festooned with hydroids, sponges and jewel anemones, interspersed with edible crabs, lobsters and flatfish. Firestone was also namechecked by Plymouth diver Mark Pearce, as one of the few places in the UK where you can get as deep as 40m just by walking in from the shore.

To Cornwall

Moving further west, Cornwall's remoteness filters out the numbers, and at the time of writing there were mixed feelings about the return of tourism; while it was potentially good for the local economy, some felt background levels of Covid infection across the nation were still too high, and an influx of visitors could cause problems.

Nevertheless, for local divers, or those who could justify the journey without recourse to castle-based eyesight tests, Cornwall is home to some of England's most beautiful and varied shore dives. Roisin Maddison, a graduate of Falmouth University's Natural History and Marine Photography course, recommends **Pendennis Silver Steps** near Falmouth, where you can enjoy the same marine life the university's students capture as they learn the ropes. There's also the twisted, barely recognisable remains of seven German U-boats to pick your way through.





winds. Stackpole is known for its spider crab aggregations in May, but has a fair smattering of shallow marine life throughout the year.

BSAC's Chair Maria Harwood recommends the spectacular **Menai Bridge**, where diving on slack is an absolute must. The classic dive route takes you around the bridge after a surface snorkel to an island. It's quite an adventure, so double check your local knowledge with this one.

Also in North Wales, Andy Clark puts a shout out for **Rhosneigr, Anglesey** and **Porth Castell**, a network of gulleys and passages. "There's all sorts of marine life there, from cat sharks to thornback rays, jellyfish and crabs," Andy says. "It's perfection."

Still in the Irish Sea, I had a few shouts for **Port Erin Jetty** on the Isle of Man, which my friends Lesley Anne Corkhill (Discover Diving) and Maggie Russell (Chester BSAC) recommend strongly. It is an excellent night dive, bristling with crabs, octopus and conger eels. Just make sure you're out in time to make it to the Indian restaurant in Port St Mary, or your shore cover may get anxious.

David Taylor of Fell Divers represented North East England with some well informed choices. **Beadnell Point** in Northumberland is a relatively complex shore dive involving a scramble to the headland for a dive that offers a mix of wreck and wall dives. David also mentioned **Howick Beach**, traditionally a spot for trainees, though it does involve a long walk with kit.

Northern Ireland was somewhat under represented in the feedback, but BSAC expeditions guru Andy Hunt assures me that divers there will be heading to the wreck of **MY Alastor** in Strangford Lough. A luxury motor yacht, this vessel was commandeered by the Royal Navy in 1939 for use as a supply ship, but caught fire and sank. Today she sits upright and largely intact, though the bridge has gone – watch out for moray eels in and around the funnel.

Roisin also recommends **Mullion Harbour**, a small cove on the western side of the Lizard peninsula, where you navigate around the harbour walls using an SMB at all times – it's a kelpy dive but with plenty of life on the rocks. We can't mention the Lizard without also namechecking Porthkerris Dive Centre and its famous shore dive, **Drawna Rocks**. It's an easy dive with enough variety to keep divers coming back year after year.

Heading north, then east

Moving up the Irish Sea, we had a few nominations for shore dives in Wales. As SCUBA went live, diving had not yet opened up there, but when it does these are some of the sites people want to

visit. Thanks to Allison and Brad Carter of Rhondda Sub Aqua Club for nominating **St Bride's** in Pembrokeshire, adding the caveat 'if the viz is good'. It's an easy dive with a straightforward entry from a car park and across a beach. Awaiting you in the water are nudibranchs, corkwing wrasse and friendly pollock.

Another advocate for Pembrokeshire is Louigi Williams of Spalding SAC, who recommends the **Blue Lagoon**, a disused slate quarry which has flooded with sea water. This dive's USP is the life on the cliff walls, which are dotted with fan worms, squirts and sponges. Louigi also recommends **Stackpole Quay** in Pembrokeshire, which has some protection from north or westerly



Around Scotland

At the time of writing, all dives were still off-limits in Scotland, but in anticipation of this restriction being lifted I received plenty of recommendations. Shane Wasik, owner/ skipper of Basking Shark Scotland put in a shout for **Dunollie Point** in Oban, West Scotland. Ideal for Sports Diver and above, it features an easy entry down a slip, where you can drop off kit and divers before parking nearby. The dive takes you north around the bay, crossing reefs covered in soft corals and Devonshire cup corals – watch your tides carefully, as current can make the exit problematic.

Photographer Alex Mustard is a fan of the varied benthic life

of Scotland's sea lochs, and recommends **Conservation Bay** and **Strome Castle**, both in Loch Carron. Alex also favours **Rosehearty** on the Aberdeenshire coast, which has something of a cult following for its swim-throughs.

I received some choice recommendations from commercial diver Mike Bramham of Atlantic Diving Services, who regularly posts superb videos of Scottish marine life on social media. He

repeated the earlier recommendations of Conservation Bay and Dunollie Point, adding **Portskerra** at Thurso and the **Kylesku Narrows** of Aberdeenshire. The latter is a highly tidal and really demands a neap tide and local knowledge – the payoff is a marine scene dense with life, including yarrell's blennies, goldsinny, carpets of brittlestars and countless nudibranchs.

Mike also recommends the classic **Cathedral Rock** at St Abbs, a site favoured by many visitors to Scotland, including my friend Robert Ellwood of University of Nottingham SAC, who notes the harbour wall can be a spectacular site when weather conditions are optimum.

Further reading

That concludes SCUBA's whistle-stop tour of shore-diving recommendations. There are of course plenty more sites out there, both secret and public knowledge and we welcome readers to write in with their own favourites. However, we couldn't end the feature without recommending a superb book by BSAC member Anita Sherwood, *Top 100 British Shore Dives*. We will be running excerpts from this recently updated book over the coming months – but really every active shore diver should have the book, which is available from britishshoredives.co.uk, priced £14.95 ◉

Flexible friend



HAVING RECENTLY TAKEN OVER THE DISTRIBUTION OF SEAC

products in the UK, Devon-based Sea&Sea supplied the Test Centre with the Italian manufacturer's latest addition to its drysuit range. SEAC's Dry Plus 4.0 is a 4mm, high-density neoprene suit with a traditional BDM rear entry metal zip. It's available in both male and female versions and sizes.

Double-lined in nylon with inner waterproof neoprene taping, the suit's panels have glued and double-stitched seams. The neoprene itself is very flexible, with the panel design allowing stretch in all the right areas. This makes it both easy to don and comfortable to wear.

Weighing a tad under 3.2kg, including hood, that's pretty lightweight for a neoprene suit and it rolls up nicely to pack away in the supplied carry bag. Soft glide-skin wrist and neck seals provided me with a nice, close fit to the skin, while the integrated neoprene collar supplied additional warmth and protection.

The black with blue highlights colour scheme has a stylish look to it, enhanced by the large PU printed chest area and although I quite liked this feature it may not be to every diver's taste. Tough skin neoprene knee pads offer somewhat minimal protection, while the legs terminate in soft neoprene boots.

The boots - not quite socks but pretty close - have printed PU protection on the soles. However, to all intents and purposes they'll require a pair of rock boots for anything but the most benign of surfaces and especially so for UK shore diving. A medium-sized pocket suitable for a small reel and dSMB is located on the right thigh, with a small pinch-clip to attach the hood directly beneath.

One advantage of testing kit in an inland quarry during the winter months is that you're instantly aware if there are any leaks, however small. Thankfully, the Dry Plus 4.0 lived up to its name and there wasn't the slightest ingress of freezing-cold fresh water to spoil my dive.

While compressed neoprene suits offer an increased range of movement, are generally lighter and don't suffer from changes in density with depth, it did mean that my choice of undersuit left me a little colder than expected. However, after a quick change to a more thermally-efficient version for subsequent dives, that little extra insulation made a noticeable improvement.

The chunky and easy-to-access Si-Tech inflation valve located centrally on the chest worked well in tandem with the left-sided shoulder dump. The latter offered a particularly wide range of adjustment. Underwater, the suit gave excellent maneuverability when twisting and turning, similarly so at the surface, where the inner braces held the suit's bottom half securely when stripped to the waist between dives.

Neil Hope

SCUBA SAYS

SEAC's lightweight, flexible neoprene Dry Plus 4.0 suit offers great comfort and excellent maneuverability in an affordable package.

SEAC Dry Plus 4.0

COMPANY: Sea&Sea

TEL: 01803 663012

PRICE: £899

WEB: www.sea-sea.com



Shine a light

AFTER PURCHASING A DIVER'S

essential life-support kit requirements, a good torch is probably one of the wisest and most versatile purchases he or she can make. Perfect for eerie night dives, wreck penetration or the exploration of caves and caverns, a dive light can also double as a very effective emergency signalling device.

Ideal for replacing the colours and hues of marine life and organisms which are lost at depth, good lighting can also improve the look of both still and moving images. For something that covers all of the above in an inexpensive and compact form, then you'll not go far wrong with Tovatec's Fusion 1050.

Supplied in a nicely-presented soft, padded zipped case, the 100m-rated Fusion is manufactured from corrosion

resistant, aircraft-grade anodised aluminium. Just over 170mm high, it's large enough to operate with ease in a gloved hand thanks to its textured 'grippy' surface. Compact enough to store in a BCD pocket until required, its weight of only 33g including battery, also allows it to be easily mounted on a camera arm system.

Powered by a single 18650 rechargeable Lithium-Ion cell, the battery is inserted via a double O-ring protected threaded cap, which is also home to an overpressure valve. Charging is undertaken using the supplied USB-powered charging base and there's also a handy adapter allowing a trio of AAA alkaline cells to be utilised as an alternative power source.

The single XM-LT6 LED bulb provides a 1050-lumen beam and thanks to the Fusion's push-pull head – like the zoom of a telephoto lens – it provides anything from a concentrated 12-degree spot to 100-degree wide coverage. This great feature lets you concentrate the beam for spotting critters, or alternatively zoom it out wide for shooting video. The latter worked admirably with all but the most extreme of wide-angle lenses, where the

slightly lighter outer halo became a distraction.

The zoom head however, is also removable and this expands the angle of coverage to 140-degrees, giving a much wider – and more importantly for video – flat and even illumination.

With a colour temperature of 5600-6600K, equivalent to the normal daylight spectrum, the Fusion also provided ample illumination to use as a constant light for close-up stills photography.

The recessed push-button accesses on/off, 100%, 50% and 30% settings in turn, plus an emergency strobe mode that was particularly effective with the zoom head removed. A button-integrated colour-coded battery level indicator gives a handy visual indicator of how much power remains.

Green signifies full capacity, yellow for half power, red for low and a flashing red just before shutdown. I averaged around 1.5 hours runtime at full power with the supplied rechargeable cell; using AAA alkaline batteries should provide another half hour's duration.

Neil Hope

SCUBA SAYS

Tovatec's Fusion 1050 dive light offers excellent all-round use in a compact and very versatile package that offers great value for money.

Tovatec Fusion 1050

PRICE: £89.95

TEL: 01424 442663

WEB: www.cpspartnership.co.uk



Titanium triumph

THIS IS THE LAST IN THE TRIO OF dive watch reviews we will be featuring in Test Centre. I have reviewed the Baltic Aquascaphe – a modern take on Blancpain's 50 Fathoms – and the chunky Panzera range, which references the Panerai designs of the 1940s.

Now we come to Christopher Ward, the microbrand that hit the big time. The company started off producing elegant but fairly generic watch designs and selling them exclusively online for a price that was so competitive, they were (falsely) accused of lying about its components. The company USP was and remains its bespoke Swiss-made movement, of a far higher quality than the stock movements used in other competitively priced automatic watches. So with Christopher Ward, you get a watch with understated English style, allied to Swiss attention to detail.

The latest addition to the Trident diving range is the C60 Elite 1000, which I've been wearing for two months, and which must be returned to Christopher Ward tomorrow. I am in mourning.

Why? Well, just look at it – a modern dive watch that is robust but incredibly light, thanks to the grade 2 titanium case. The company has upgraded its movement to a Sellita Sw22 COSC, which gives you a day/date function, and the rear of the case has a window that allows you to see the miniature mechanics in all their beauty. The rotor is engraved with Christopher Ward's 'twin flags', to represent the brand's Anglo-Swiss heritage.

I would need to have used the watch

for a much longer time to describe its underwater use as a proper test (are you hearing me, CW?) but I wore the Elite 1000 on my last dive trip before lockdown, a liveaboard to the southern Maldives where we were using reef hooks and getting bashed about on almost all the dives.

The front of the case and the crystal took a few thumps along the way, but the watch emerged completely unscathed and still looks like new. Let's be clear, this is no boardroom accessory – while

it looks discretely cool under a shirt cuff, this is every inch a proper diver's watch, rated to 1,000 metres. I'm not convinced the helium release valve is an important feature, but perhaps it's nice to know it's there in case of any unexpected submarine operations.

It comes in two colours – a glossy navy blue with orange highlights, or a black dial with red highlights. I asked for the latter, which also had a matte finish on the ceramic bezel. I don't know about you, but I place huge significance in the quality of click from my bezel; I can't stand anything too industrial, but I do want smooth, discernable clicks.

You can get the watch with a natty hybrid rubber and cordura strap, but we're talking about a titanium watch here, so my advice is to spring the extra for the quick release titanium bracelet. It's one of the best watch straps I've ever tried, and of course is super light and extremely resistant to corrosion.



Does this watch hark back to any particular design? There may be echoes of the hugely influential Rolex in its DNA, but after 15 years of making watches, Christopher Ward's designs have established their own hallmarks, and the sheer quality of the Elite 1000 had me smiling every time I looked down at it.

Simon Rogerson

SCUBA SAYS

Christopher Ward continues its dynamic progression through the world of diving watches with the C60 Elite 1000. The price tag is creeping up, but a fraction of what designer brands charge for a timepiece of similar quality.

Christopher Ward C60 Elite 1000 diver's watch

COMPANY: Christopher Ward

PRICE: £1,250 - £1,470

WEB: www.christopherward.co.uk



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THE BIG FAT SCUBA QUIZ

PART 2

Pit your wits against quizmaster **John Adams** in the concluding part (for now) of our diving knowledge quiz

Round 6 Marine Life ID Name the marine creatures in these close-up photographs by Jane Morgan



5



6



7



Round 7 Science

- 1 How fast does sound travel underwater?
- 2 How many times faster is heat lost in water than air?
- 3 What organ in the inner ear is used by underwater vertebrates to navigate?
- 4 What pigments are used by octopuses to help them camouflage?
- 5 What are the stinging capsules of the cnidarians called?
- 6 How are bryozoans known to be feeding?
- 7 What does an algae require to go through the process of photosynthesis?
- 8 Let's move to tropical waters and coral reefs. What necessary relationship do corals have to survive and with what species?
- 9 How many species of sharks are known to live/pass through UK waters?
- 10 What is the maximum depth some whales have been known to go to and can you name the whale?

Round 8 First Aid

- 1 On land, if you find a casualty unresponsive and not breathing normally, what is the first thing you do?
- 2 If a casualty has been diving and is suffering from shock, what do we NOT do?
- 3 You find someone who appears to be very drunk in the middle of the afternoon lying outside a pub. What test could you easily do instead of walking past them?
- 4 What do the initials AED stand for?
- 5 In BLS (CPR) the correct sequence is _____ compressions followed by _____ rescue breaths.
- 6 What depth and rate would you compress the casualty's chest?
- 7 What is the most common object to block a casualty's airway?
- 8 What does DRABC stand for?
- 9 What are the three levels or depths of burns described as?
- 10 What is the condition of having low blood sugar described as in diabetes?

Round 9 Film / TV

- 1 Who played the Captain in this film about a merchant ship hijacked by Somali pirates?
- 2 A young man survives the ocean in the company of a Bengal tiger in this film.
- 3 Adrift follows the real life story of survival on a 4,000-mile sailboat journey. Who survived?
- 4 Name the TV diving series from the late 1950s starring Lloyd Bridges
- 5 What was the name of Captain Pugwash's ship?
- 6 Who was the female lead in A Fish Called Wanda?
- 7 Which of the Thunderbirds was a submarine?
- 8 In Finding Nemo what kind of fish is Dory?
- 9 Who directed The Abyss?
- 10 In what year was TV series Blue Planet first aired?

Round 10 Music

- 1 Who sang about Sailing in 1975?
- 2 Who had a hit song with the theme from Titanic?
- 3 Who was famous for his song La Mer?
- 4 Mendelssohn composed this overture after visiting Scotland...
- 5 Who 'Rocked the Boat' in 1974?
- 6 Wagner's opera about a legendary ghost ship
- 7 Who sang Surfin' USA?
- 8 Who sang 'Whale of a tale' in the film 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea?
- 9 Who composed How Deep is the Ocean sung by Frank Sinatra?
- 10 Who sang Sea of Heartbreak?

YOU WANT ANSWERS?

No problem!
You'll find them on the Crossword, page 51.

YOUR POSTCARDS

Every month we will publish a series of your photos. Make sure you and your club get noticed! Send in your photos to simon@scubamagazine.co.uk



Gillian's Galapagos gloves

BSAC member and underwater photographer Gillian Marsh had an impressive pre-lockdown trip. Gillian is pictured, right, at Darwin Island in the remote northern Galapagos. It's rare to see her wearing gloves, but for this trip they were listed as compulsory due to the need to hold on to jagged volcanic rock. She took a pair of old sailing gloves purchased 30 years ago, which fell part as the trip progressed. Gillian continued with bare hands and was fine, but as she went to bin the ragged remnants of her vintage handwear, a crew member asked if he could have them, as they could still be re-stitched. Remember, readers, good gloves are valuable currency in the Eastern Pacific, as are rubbish ones.

It's a dog's life

Coventry BSAC member Dave Nicolson found the need to don scuba kit too hard to resist during the Spring heatwave. "Who needs to dive Stoney Cove when you have the dog's pool?" he asks, tongue firmly in cheek.



Chester's busy calendar

Thanks to Mart Holloway of Chester SAC for responding to the Editor's request for pre-lockdown club trip photos. He sent in an impressive selection showing Chester Divers in action, including these photos from Trearddur Bay, Anglesey.

Memories of a diving dream

Members of Aldershot Dolphins are pictured on their return to a Red Sea liveaboard last year. "By May 2020 we would have had a few club trips already around the South coast and Lanzarote," says member Ria Das. "But instead we are finding ourselves reminiscing our last club trip in the warm waters of the Red Sea. Photos like these keep us hopeful and ready to make new memories."



King of the cut-out

During the lockdown school closures, Helen Nunn of Leeds University Union SAC had to find ways of entertaining her four-year-old son, Dylan. Helen says: "My several years' worth of SCUBA back issues came to the rescue as we cut out pictures to build a mini ocean scene. Dylan is looking forward to diving with us, though he still has a few years to wait yet!"



Sutton Coldfield raises £9k for Children in Need

Sutton Coldfield Sub Aqua Club celebrated 50 years as a club last year and decided to do a charity diveathon for Children in Need back in November, thinking 50 active divers could all try to raise £50 sponsorship. In the end, the total raised was more than £9,000! Thanks to the modest members for eventually bringing their story to SCUBA.

Putney's silent night

Pre-lockdown, Putney BSAC put on a rebreather try dive for seven of its members, with help from the then London Regional Coach Gillian Bell and her friend Nick. "A great evening was had by everyone," reports Putney's Training Officer Emma Spring. "Gill and Nick got all of us totally hooked. Debrief was concluded in our usual Putney social night at a close-by pub."





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Devised by Charles Wheeldon

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SCUBA Crossword Prize

Please print out and fill in your completed crossword, then scan the print (or take a good quality telephone photo) of the completed puzzle and email to simon@scubamagazine.co.uk.

Make sure you include which month of SCUBA the crossword appeared in, your full name, email address and a contact number. One winner will be selected at random and will receive a prize of £50.



NUMBER 2 - JULY 2020 QUESTIONS

ACROSS

- 6** The two famous underwater pioneers out on Liverpool Bay (9)
- 7** Can be laughing before or light afterwards, it provides a heady mixture for divers (3)
- 9** A test in five years' time (11)
- 11** A former sea bird in service! (4)
- 12** Driving under influence initially to obtain dry suit (3)

13 Davy Crockett's resting place, without Oscar, offers the last word for this Red Sea resort (4)

14 Diving some of West Ayrshire coast gives support (4)

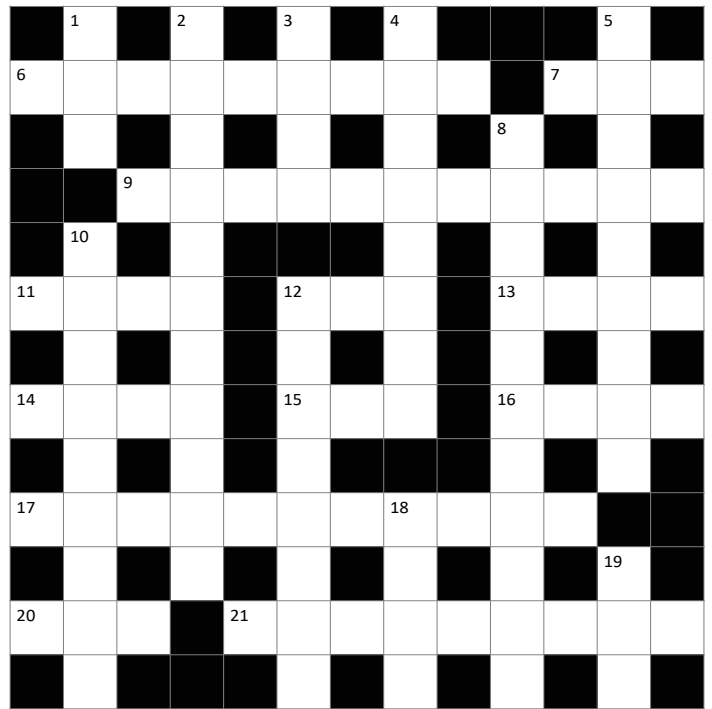
15 Half a dance in Paris identifies type of buoy (3)

16 Sounds like a top manufacturer of 21 (4)

17 Where you get wet in the Maldives, for example (6,5)

20 A type of 7 craved by divers (and non-divers!) (3)

21 Essential controller of 7 or 20 (9)



DOWN

- 1** Fish possibly associated with a Firth sometimes turns to jelly! (3)
- 2** Helps to keep one's head above water (8,3)
- 3** Russian in part of brig or other vessel (4)
- 4** An output from 7 often measured for health and safety (8)

5 A trainee diver does this in search of a pass (9)

8 A man can lap a meandering waterway (6,5)

10 Crab in tin opened up for classic Mediterranean wreck (9)

12 A diver would have done this with 7 or 20 to make a transfer (8)

18 Ancient BSAC weapon? (4)

19 Show deference to this part of the ship (3)

NUMBER 1 - JUNE 2020 ANSWERS

1	T	R	2	A	W	3	L	E	4	D	5	K	N	6	O	T	7	S
	R		L		U		E		A		M		E					
8	A	R	G	O	N		9	M	A	R	G	A	T	E				
	N		A		D		I		W		N		D					
10	S	T	R	A	I	T	S		11	E	X	I	T	S				
	I		V				T		L									
12	T	R	E	A	13	D	S		14	P	A	N	15	P	A	16	N	
				A		17	F				R		E					
18	R	E	19	G	A	L		20	A	N	21	C	H	O	R	S		
	A		U		T		R		O		F		T					
22	F	O	G	H	O	R	N		23	S	K	I	L	L				
	T		E		N		E		T		L		E					
24	S	I	N	U	S		25	S	E	A	W	E	E	D				

ANSWERS FOR THE QUIZ ON PAGE 46

Round 6 - Marine life ID

- Cuttlefish
- Bobtail shrimp
- John Dory
- Scallop
- Wolf eel
- Spiny starfish
- Stalked jellyfish
- Crangon shrimp
- Tompot blenny
- Grey seal

Round 7 - Science

- 1500 m/s
- 25 times faster
- Otolith
- Chromatophores
- Nematocyst or cnidae
- By filtering the water
- CO₂, light and water
- Symbiotic (mutualism) with zooxanthellae
- 40
- 2,992m, 137mins, Cuvier's beaked whale

Round 8 - First Aid

- Call 999 or 112 before starting CPR
- We don't raise the legs when treating for shock.
- We could do the FAST test to see if he really is drunk or has a stroke, the latter being life threatening.
- Automated External Defibrillator
- 30 compressions followed by 2 rescue breaths.
- A depth of between 5 & 6 cm at a rate of 100 to 120 per minute
- The tongue
- Danger, Response (level), Airway, Breathing, Circulation
- Superficial, Partial Thickness or Intermediate, Full Thickness or Deep.
- Hypoglaecemia

Round 9 - Film / TV

- Tom Hanks
- Life of Pi
- Tami Oldham
- Sea Hunt
- The Black Pig
- Jamie Lee Curtis
- Thunderbird 4
- Blue Tang
- James Cameron
- 2001

Round 10 - Music

- Rod Stewart
- Celine Dion
- Charles Trenet
- Hebrides
- The Hues Corporation
- The Flying Dutchman
- The Beach Boys
- Kirk Douglas
- Irving Berlin
- Johnny Cash

Attempting re-entry

Andy Torbet welcomes back the freedom to snorkel from the shore, albeit with a warning to the hasty...

As I write, news has just come in that diving or snorkelling from the shore has been approved by the British Diving Safety Group. With this promise of a return to the water you will be, if you're anything like me, champing at the bit to get right back in where you started. But we'll have been out of the water a long time. For me it's likely to have been four months... which may be the longest time out of water in 14 years.

But there are a few things to consider at this stage. And the first is our safety and fitness to dive. As many of you will be aware, we tend to see a spike in diving related incidents in the early months of the season when most divers, having stayed dry over winter, are returning to the sea.

People often try and pick up where they left off without considering the skill fade or equipment deterioration that may have occurred over the quiet months. This is less

of an issue for us simple snorkellers but still worth bearing in mind. We don't want a broken mask or fin straps to ruin our day and we must consider if our fitness, water-confidence and appreciation of reading conditions will have waned slightly over the break. I'd advise starting easy. And working back up to the epic snorkels you were doing last autumn.

On a more positive note I'm considering where my first splash should be. I think, although like everyone right now this is sheer speculation, there will be some kind of staged lifting of the UK's lockdown. This may mean limited travel and small groups. Fortunately for us, two is enough to make a buddy pair (plus at least one for surface cover) so consider which of your snorkel-buddies you'll most like to see after so many months apart.

Then think about which sites are reasonably local to you, so you can make

best use of whatever restrictions are in place, bearing in mind my advice above. It need not be the sea and I've ranted in this column enough about the potential of our rivers and lakes to, hopefully, convince you. It may be that this is an opportunity to explore somewhere new and local you've always dismissed.

Once the lockdown is more fully lifted I think we'd all appreciate that opportunity to get together with as many friends as possible and take to the road. So perhaps this is finally the time to get a team together and make that epic, snorkelling road trip. Maybe it's to Orkney, to the HMS Port Napier in Skye, to the Scilly Isles or Jersey, to Rathlin Island, to Bass Rock...

One thing is certain – no matter how long this lockdown rolls on, the seas and waterways of Britain will still be there. Waiting for you, your friends and your snorkel. ●



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THE COMPETITION

SCUBA Shorts

competition closed as judging commences



We at SCUBA and BSAC just wanted to express our thanks for all the entries that have arrived for our short story competition, which is now closed for entries. At the time of writing we had loads of great entries from a broad range of divers; the plan is to publish as many of them as possible in the coming months. The first tranche will appear in the August issue – a winner has not yet been chosen, so all stories published are in the running. “I have read about a third of the entries so far, and hugely enjoyed them,” said SCUBA Editor Simon Rogerson. “We deliberately kept the brief wide open, and people have responded with a startling range of styles, from gritty reportage to sci-fi fantasy. The lockdown certainly got everyone’s imagination fired up.” All stories will be judged by a panel led by Simon, alongside monthly columnists Yo-Han Cha and Kirsty Andrews. There is a single prize for first place... but what a prize, and we suspect a strong motivator for the large volume of entries – the winner will receive an O'Three 90-Ninety Tri-Lam drysuit worth £1,795. The 90-Ninety is a prestigious, premium quality suit from a respected company with a proven track record in keeping divers warm and dry in the most demanding environments. During its development, O'Three reinforced key areas internally and externally, so that the suit will meet the demands of an experienced cave diver and still be suitable for any recreational diver. Made of high stretch Rip-Stop Trilaminar, it has a number of quick-replace systems to choose from, including Si-Tech’s ‘QUICK’ neck ring and KUBI’s wrist / dry glove fitting. It comes with a quality suit bag; a changing mat; vented semi-dry hood; Jollop wrist seal lube and Zip Tech solid zip lubricant. So be sure to check your copy of SCUBA next month and thereafter to see your story and of course to find out who will eventually win the coveted O'Three 90-Ninety drysuit. ●

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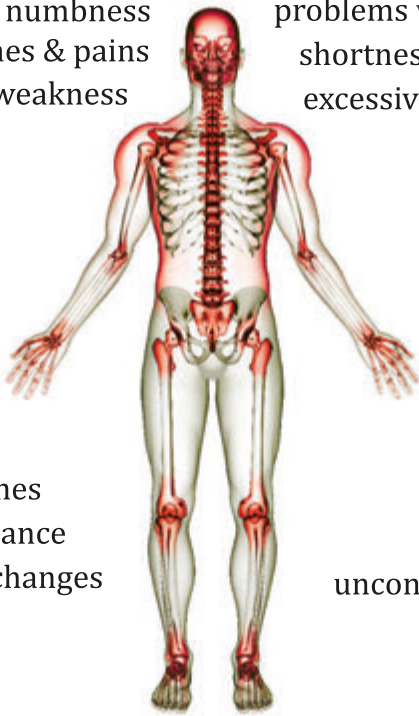
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- muscle weakness
- problems with vision
- shortness of breath
- excessive tiredness



- nausea
- skin rashes
- poor balance
- mental changes
- coughing
- dizziness
- confusion
- unconsciousness

FIRST AID

- Lie the diver down
- Give 100% oxygen
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