

RATAE SAC



Newsletter January 2003

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There was me thinking there wouldn't be much news this month

I'm thinking of organising a diving week in the scillys starting 4th September with Tim Allsop based on St Martins. It would be rib diving for 6-8 divers. The club has used Tim on several previous occasions He's an excellent skipper & is a keen diver himself. The diving is exceptional with plenty of wildlife, including seals & a high density of wrecks from all periods.

The rib charter is £148 per day (2 dives). I would favour 5 days charter leaving one full day for exploring one of the other islands (there are regular ferries between them). The return ferry from Penzance including kit transport is about £75. Tim would help us sort accommodation. The whole package would come to about £300 per person + food/drink.

Dive Write-up - Epcot Dive quest

Whilst in Florida over Christmas I took part in the Disney Dive quest program at Epcots Living Seas. I know some of the rest of the club have/are planning to do an aquarium dive but here is a brief write up of my experiences. The Livings Seas at Epcot is one of the largest aquariums in the world, around 10m deep and 120 feet in the longest dimension, it contains many varieties of fish some sharks and a couple of big turtles. Everyday two groups of 10 qualified divers can spend 40 minutes exploring the tank under the supervision of a Disney dive master. To start off with you are escorted around the behind the scenes sections and operation of the aquarium is explained. You then watch a short film (very disneyed). After putting on your wetsuits that are provided for you (as is all the kit, they like to maintain a closed system) you are paraded through the

exhibits and I got some very envious looks. The kit is all assembled for you and after a quick briefing in you go.

The dive is splint into two half's, for the first half you are escorted and filmed, you are taking around some of the main sites and get to pop up into a bubble on the bottom. After this you can explore on your own, my first solo dive! The camera man will track you down to take a bit of film with you and any non-diving members of your family behind the glass.

Although the life in the tank was quite amazing the windows make this dive something really special. With a large viewing area and even a restaurant facing onto the tank you have a large audience that you can entertain, and the other guests have no idea you are not part of the laid on entertainment. Although I am hardly the worlds greatest showman I could not help mugging for the tourists behind the glass. I quick popup at the window had children screaming in delight (and terror a few times). You are given a chance to buy the video after the dive and I found the quality to be excellent. Although not cheap, if you are planning to go to central Florida I would recommend this dive to anyone. Disney do not advertise the program on any of their literature as it is non-profit making with all proceeds going to conservation charities, so if anyone wants more details please drop me a line.

Sharm trip dec 03

Well the trip started off fine with a quick valium tablet as I sat on the plane to chill me out as im not a great flyer.

We got to our hotel early evening..quick shower and then the book in at ocean college dive centre..then of course the bar..for a few

beverages, and to meet all the people stopping at the hotel.

I was soon to find a load of ex forces guys diving from there..2 ex paras..a marine and 2 navy guys one of them being me.

We were assigned boats I was on president 3 along with the other navy guy who I found out was working for the fleet diving unit in Gibraltar. I had been on pres 3 before and was soon acquainted with "suna" the mad Muslim skipper of this boat.

First dive was a local dive on what are called the gardens just outside nama bay jetty the main port for sharm el sheikh..these dives are used to slowly introduce people to diving in the red sea quite easy with max depths of about 20-30 metres with nice sandy bottoms to rest on and take in the surroundings.

Second dive was a slight drift dive on all 3 of the gardens from far to near gardens with lovely soft and hard corals representing beautiful gardens..with the normal red sea marine life in abundance my fav being the now famous clown fish due to the film "finding nemo".

Day 2 we did the temple, called this as it rises from the sea bed to the surface like a temple, an absolute peach of a dive and one of my favourites..the top 10 metres being the best..as this allows the temple to flourish from the surface light it gets.

2nd dive was "ras katy" ras meaning head in Arabic a wall dive with deep drop of fs to about 200 metres..buoyancy expertise a must for the newly qualified divers..the coral pinnacles on this dive superb with massive fan corals to see also. This is the dive we also saw a white tipped reef shark out in the blue.

Day 3.."the straits of tiran"..this is the stretch of water in the gulf of aquaba separating tiran island from the Sinai Peninsula..4 reefs lie on this stretch of water, Gordon, Jackson, Thomas and woodhouse reefs all named after diving explorers that founded these reefs as dive sites.

Dive 1 was a drift dive off Gordon reef and did we fly scaring some of the less experienced divers but I loved it..these reefs have very deep drop of fs into the blue but some of the best wall diving to be done around sharm. this reef also has the wreck of a tanker on it due to poor navigation by the officer of the watch !!!!!

Dive 2..similar dive done on Jackson reef but without the drift..nice easy dive.

Day 4..was ras Mohamed national park....a marine and land preserved park much protected by all in Egypt to preserve the wonderful reefs in this area.

Dive 1 was jolanda and shark reef..named jolanda..as the wreck of a transporter ship named Yolanda that hit it and slipped into 800 metres of water below leaving behind some of its cargo on the reef of toilets and baths which now make nice homes for moray eels..not wise to go sitting on them !!!!!!!

Dive 2 was ras zat ar..another wall/ drift dive..with glorious corals some wonderful barracuda..turtles..reef sharks and wonderful colours..this is due to it being part of the red sea where 2 currents meet..the gulf of aquaba and the gulf of Sinai..some fast currents can manifest here so it can be hard diving but well worth it.

Day 5 the day I was to dive with my niece for the 1st time who had completed her ocean diver course in 4 days !!!!!

I am not a great advocate of these learn to dive quick courses and this was soon to ring

true to me..although she had the basics her buoyancy was very poor and I had to watch her like a hawk all of the time..but at least she was seeing the wonderful undersea world of the Sinai peninsula..she was over the moon with the sites she saw.

We did the gardens again as this is a great dive for the novice diver.

Day 6..the last day..we did temple again and raskaty also due to the fact these dives are for the less experienced..but once again temple was a great dive and to the new diver a wonderful experience.

The diving in sharm is some of the easiest I have ever done..it is all laid on for you..all you need to do is dive..the Egyptians do all possible to make your diving stress free..the only time you handle a tank is when you put it on your kit..if you move boats they move your kit overnight..lunch is made onboard for you each day on your surface interval and drink as much as you like all for £3.00 this includes lunch.

So once again time to come home..one more valium and before I knew it I was back in England...i left sharm around the pool in heat of 95C and landed at Gatwick 5 hours later...: 3c.chilly or what.

Well this is small account of diving in sharm..if anybody would like further details on this wonderful dive resort please do not hesitate to contact me.

Mark willoughby

After the success of the previous two trips I have booked a charter with Anglesey Divers next year for August 14/15th next year. For those that have not been before, the diving is shallow and pleasant and not particularly challenging. We usually get some good life and plenty of wrecks. Diving is on a rib run by the ex-senior cox of the Trearddur Bay lifeboat.

The cost will be £70 for 4 dives + air. Accommodation is not booked yet until I get some idea of numbers but will probably be around £20-£25 per person per night and be in Trearddur bay (was everyone happy with Moranedd last year?). Deposit for the diving will be £14 and a deposit of £10 is usually required for the accommodation. We are usually allowed to settle up the balance during the trip itself.

As in previous years we will be looking to launch from Trearddur bay but if the weather closes in we may be forced to launch from Holyhead and I have no idea on the quality of the diving that side of the island.

I know its quite a way away but let me know if you want to go (via email) and I send me a cheque for £24 (payable to me) and I will make the arrangements. We usually end up making further bookings as the trip approaches so don't worry if you cannot make a commitment straight away.

Lynne wants camera

To re-advertise Martin Crookes appeal; at the AGM it was decided to have a Marshalling weekend for trainee Dive Leaders and Advanced Divers. It has been suggested that this should take place at Pembroke. Martin needs to know peoples availability. This trip isn't just for marshalling and would make a good club trip anyway. Martin has heard from only one person so far (Mark Willoughby who can only make April 3-4). Can you let me or Martin know weekends you CAN'T make, or as a starter if you can make Mark's suggestion of April 3-4. Can you let him/me know interest ASAP so that things can get booked. Martin does not want to book it up if everyone drops out.

he pool and class are booked from this Thursday (8th). If you need a lecture or want to go in the pool then let me know so that we can make sure there is someone there. lynne and my self (that's Mark, not me) are doing sharm on 29th april 04...there are some places left with explorer tours..here are the details if anybody is interested.

1 week b+b in hotel £328 pp

6 days diving £145
 single room supp £49.00
 visa entry to egypt £12.00 payable at the airport

deposit £75.00

anybody who fancies it let me have a cheque
 asap made payable to explorers tours.the
 balance is due 8 weeks before departure.

WEYMOUTH

Many of you may have dived HMS Hood, which lies in the mouth of Portland Harbour. I have recently heard that diving has now been banned on the Hood, those that have dived it will know what a loss this is to the UK diving community!

Rob Cuss

EVENTS CALENDAR

TRIPS CALENDAR 2003			
19 th November 2003	Stoney Cove		Mark Hessey
3 rd December 2003	Stoney Cove		Mark Hessey
17 th December 2003	Stoney Cove		Mark Hessey
February 2004	Chester trip	£75	Rob Cuss
4 th September - 18 th December 2003	Hind Leys	Thursday evening diving	