

## CLUB MEETINGS

The next club meeting will be at the Royal Beach on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March. As usual, if you are coming, can you [please let us know](#). I mentioned it last month, but can I ask again that all club members who bring non-member guests to help the club funds by making a £5 contribution towards the food for the evening.

## SPRING BASH - 11 APRIL 2009 Tickets are going fast



The Spring Bash tickets are selling fast – at the moment there are 20 tickets remaining, so if you want to join us for a fun night in the Spinnaker Tower then make sure you book your place. To remind you we have hired the whole of the tower for the night, which begins with champagne and canapés at the top of the tower. Throughout the night there will be a sumptuous Mediterranean buffet, disco, as well as a bar and casino on the viewing levels. Tickets are £20 for club members and £35 for guest. Don't leave it too late.

## ACCOMMODATION FOR THE SPRING BASH

Many of you like to have a “sleep over” on function nights. Anyway, for those of you that wanted a hotel the Holiday Inn at Pembroke Road, just around the corner from Gunwharf, is offering double rooms for £56. This is a “pay in advance” rate that is non-refundable and includes breakfast. The Express at Holiday Inn in Gunwharf is more convenient, but it will set you back £110 – ouch.

## NEW KIT ON THE BLOCK AND THERE IS A LOT OF IT!!!

You can tell it is that time of year by the launch of all sorts of new stuff. Scubapro have launched a brand new regulator – the A700 which, was recently reviewed in Sport Diver Magazine. I think they called it the “King of Bling” and it is very shiny. The technical details are quite impressive (and as both Ian and I are technicians we kind of like that geeky stuff). As well as a polished Mark 25, which is probably one of the best 1<sup>st</sup> stages your money can buy, Scubapro have “teamed up” this up with a brand new second stage. It is not a S600 in metal clothing it is a complete redesign. One of the benefits of a metal second stage is cold-water functionality – it basically retains heat better than plastic. And coupled with the totally balanced mechanism, adjustable venturi, adjustable cracking pressure with additional metal parts it makes for what may well be the ultimate cold-water regulator. If you want the best it comes at a price, so you don't get much change from £700 – but it will probably be the only regulator you ever buy.

## COMING IN APRIL NEW FOURTH ELEMENT SUITS



Well we pretty much do everything first, so it's no surprise then that we bring you the first photos of the new Fourth Element suit. Coming in April, there are 3 new items, a hood, a 7mm suit much like the 5mm Proteus, and for those of you looking to upgrade your 5mm one piece for UK waters, the new 5/4mm “Short John” undersuit. Unlike most shortie additions to steamers, this is worn under the full suit. There are no zips, reducing cold water flushing, and it is made to the high quality as their first entry into the suit market. We will have this in stock when it comes out, but for those club members who would like to pre-order we are offering an extra 10% discount on the retail price

## AMAZING SCUBAPRO PACKAGES

Every year Scubapro put together some packages that work out to be excellent value for what is really good gear. We always pass the savings on, but this time we have gone one better. In addition to the fantastic price for the packages, we are also throwing in a free Nitrox computer – **WORTH £148** knocking the spots of the prices of all the major on-line stores and other dive centres.

## NEW FOURTH ELEMENT SUITS



The first package Scubapro have created is the top of the range Performance package, which will be sure to make you the envy of any diver. It includes the T-Black BCD, a Mk25/S600 regulator, a R395 Alternate Air Source, a Compact Twin Console, Caravan kit bag and of course a free Veo 100 Nx wrist computer. At a price of £949 a massive **saving of £437**. If you do not want to go for the absolute best then there is also a Mk17 package at £749, **saving £330** and a Mk2plus Package at £549 **saving £258**. This offer ends on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009 so jump in quick to grab one of these amazing deals and claim your FREE Nitrox computer! You can buy in the shop or on-line at [www.directdivegear.com](http://www.directdivegear.com)

### SOME CRACKING HOLIDAY PACKAGES FROM OONAS



Our friends at Oonas Dive travel have asked us if we would like to pass on their latest Red Sea bargains – and as some of you have been asking about Easter packages and Oonas have sponsored me for the MdS we are more than happy to oblige. For the week of Easter they have the following offers at the Southern Eco-Village all on a full board basis and including flights, transfers and 5 days unlimited shore diving:

- o Tented Accommodation (no single supplement) – **Only £630**

- o Royal Tent of the Mandarah Lodge – **Only £670**
- o Madyfa Guest House – **Only £705**
- o Madyfa with Aircon – **Only £770**

Note that this is not one of our escorted “club trips” it is just a pretty good deal for anyone looking to get away around Easter time.

### HOLIDAYS SPACES

There are still a couple of spaces on our holidays for this year. There is a liveaboard trip in May going to the southern Red Sea on Grand Sea Serpent from 13<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May. This is a luxury boat, offers 4 dives a day includes FREE Nitrox and all for £1150. If that doesn't take your fancy why not think about Borneo. There are 19 going on the Sipadan trip from the 30<sup>th</sup> August to 11 September, but there are still a couple of spaces if anyone is interested. The price is £2135, which is full board and includes all your diving. Let us know if you want to go – you know you want to!

### PRESENTATION EVENINGS

Unfortunately Phil Short has had to cancel the May date due to other commitments, so his presentation will now be 1 October – put the date in your diaries. Also, I have been speaking to Tooni Mahto, one of the presenters from the “Oceans” TV programme and she is going to try and fit us in during the summer. We will let you know the details when we have them. Watch this space.

### THE COST OF EGYPTIAN BEER

(An observation by Ian Brown - age 5 ¾)



For those of you that have not been to Egypt lately and are perhaps planning to later in the year you'll be glad to hear that the diving is still as fantastic as ever, the taxi drivers are still as mad as ever and Travco still stinks of

diesel. But you might be appalled to hear the beer prices are astronomical!!! By astronomical I don't mean like if you went to eat in The Ivy and were drinking bottles of Crystal for £350 each, but compared to a year or so ago they have certainly shot up. Back then you could buy a bottle of your best Sakara Gold for 17LE the equivalent of £1.70. In Dahab it was even cheaper at 11 LE. However, now there seems to have been a 30% increase across the board and coupled with the fantastic exchange rate the pound seems to be attracting that same bottle of Egypt's finest foaming nectar is going to cost you the best part of £2.70!!! and that's in a cheap bar! Dahab has also been affected with beers in the Blue Beach at around 17 LE and in the “smart” hotels at the lagoon; they are now 25 LE, which is a whopping £3.57! So, I hear you ask, should we all still go? Well yes, for a number of reasons:

- o Because the diving is fab, the water is warm and it still works out good value at the end of the day
- o You can always take a bottle of spirits with you from the airport
- o You can nip into the supermarket and stock up your room fridge with tins of Sakara at 6LE each
- o You don't have to drink in the posh hotels.

The next club trip to Dahab will be in November. You know it is going to be good. More details in due course.

### RUN ACROSS THE SAHARA

By the time the next newsletter goes out I will be warming up (literally) on the start line of the Marathon des Sables. There is still plenty of time to get some sponsorship in by logging onto my appeal website, [www.run-the-sahara.org](http://www.run-the-sahara.org). And you will be able to see how I am getting on by logging onto the official MdS website

[http://www.darbaroud.com/index\\_u\\_k.php](http://www.darbaroud.com/index_u_k.php)

While mobiles won't work the organizers do have satellite phones and email facilities, so with any luck I will be able to provide some “en route” reports.

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## LAMBY GOES TO CUBA (By Lamby Lamby Lamby – age 12 ½)



I had been skiing, Christmas and New Year were just a fuzzy memory and I still had some holiday to take. A quick search on the internet and I found a credit crunch busting package deal .... to Cuba. I had never been to the Caribbean before so had no preconceived ideas about what it was like – although I had been told that it was a good place to party – it was sounding good right from the start. And I have to say, yes, yes, yes, I had an amazing time. The price of £675 for the 2 week holiday was a fully inclusive holiday based in the Galimeera hotel which was right on the beach. The hotel was 4 star (ish), clean, and comfortable. The food was excellent and there was plenty of choice including English, Cuban and Italian dishes every night. Unlike some all-inclusive packages (the Egyptian ones spring to mind) that limit you to wine and beer, or have local spirits there was none of that here – this was the fully loaded drinks trolley! Rum had to be on the menu as it was the Caribbean and I did my best to put a dent in the Cuban economy while I was there by making the most of the all inclusive aspects of the deal.



The bar was open all night but you will be pleased to know that I always managed to get to bed by 4.00 am – which was when the Salsa dancing stopped! As well as being my first holiday in Cuba it

was also my first time diving in the Caribbean and I had no idea what to expect. All I can say is, it's not going to be my last. The diving was good but would not slap you in the face in the same way as say the Maldives might, but then apparently there were other places around the island that I did not manage to get to that would. But it was still quite lovely .....



There is, as in much of this part of the World, a lack of large fish, due inevitably to the Cuban's love of seafood. However, the reefs were full of vibrant colours and aquatic life (hey, get me being all poetic and lyrical!). This coupled with a significant turtle and Nurse shark population made up for the deficiencies. The other real bonus was the underwater geography and topography, quite amazing and very different to anything I have seen so far in my diving travels.



The Cubans are ACUC trained divers – for some strange reason known only to Cubans and their most friendly neighbours the USA, PADI does not feature very much here – wonder why?. And while they are lovely people they are a bunch of big girls if the sea temperature goes below 20, or the wind creeps to anything near to a "light chop to choppy" in which case your day's diving is over and there is no alternative but to make some more significant inroads into the rum reservoir back at the hotel. I have to say I had a cracking 2 weeks. Cuba revolves around rum, cigars, rumba and salsa dancing. It is an amazing place, you don't get hassle, service is good and there is loads to do. I visited Havana, which for me was

well worth the 1hr flight and was a great place to spend my birthday. Cuba was not at all what I expected, it was better than that and I would definitely recommend it as a diving and holiday destination.

### A WORD ABOUT SERVICING

Here at Triton, we have always had professionally trained technicians on the staff since the day we first opened. We believe this is important not only because we can service your equipment in a timely and professional manner, but also because it means we understand the equipment better and can provide you with the best technical knowledge and advice. The benchmark of quality when it comes to servicing is probably the Association of Scuba Service Engineers and Technicians (ASSET) course.



This provides the foundation of knowledge and is something you should look for when getting your gear serviced. On top of this, our technicians attend a range of courses provided by manufacturers so that they understand those specific makes. We do our servicing on site. This means that we can turn around your gear quicker (our average is a week but we can do it the same day if necessary) and you know that it has been done to the highest standards. It also means that when you have a question about your gear that we actually know what we are talking about and can give you the right advice. Although the Solent is looking a bit murky and probably not worth diving for a month or 2 yet, it won't be too long before we are loading up the dive gear and heading off down to Portland for the first club dives of the season. So now is the time to start thinking about sorting out your gear. If it is coming up for the 12-month period then it is a good idea to get it serviced even if it has not been used much over the last year. O-rings start to perish over the time and lubricants need to be replaced, so don't be lulled into a false sense

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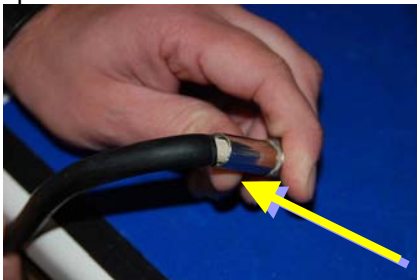
of security just because it stayed in your dive bag for the last 6 months.

### WHY NOT GET A FREE KIT CHECK

We want you to be safe so why not bring your gear in for a quick check-up. It only takes a couple of minutes and we will be able to give you an idea of whether it needs a service or not by doing a couple of tests. And it is **TOTALLY FREE!**

### A FEW TOP TIPS ON REGULATOR CHECKING

While there is no short cut to professional servicing you can help yourself to some extent by thoroughly inspecting your kit. So with this in mind here are a few top tips.



First of all have a good look at it. Check all the hoses to see if they are bulging or have any cracks, especially under the hose guards that can hide a whole host of woes.



If the hose "creases" too severely then it has lost its integrity – time to get a new one.



Check the filter on the first stage if you can see it. If it's gone a bit green it could mean that water has also got into your first stage, although this is not always the case. On the second stages look at the mouthpiece. Give it a good clean with something like Milton. Are the lugs still in one piece and

are there any holes in it – usually they occur close to the tie wrap. If there are, change it. Give the body of the second stage a good rinse out in some warm water – if the body of the regulator is full of sand from that last beach dive give it a good rinse out. If you give the body a shake you may hear the lever arm clicking slightly but it should not flop around excessively – if it does, bring it in



If you are getting water in your mouth when you breathe it can only really come from three things; a hole in the diaphragm, the exhaust port or the mouthpiece. If you have already checked the mouthpiece that leaves the other two. Unfortunately, you normally need to gain access into the body of the demand valve in order to check. Normally this is a simple case of unscrewing the top cover, but only do this if you feel confident – if not let us do it for you. Remove the diaphragm and then stretch it carefully and hold it up to the light. Are there any holes in the diaphragm or does it have a "cracked" appearance, if so it will need replacing. Then put a small pen or something plastic but not sharp into the hole where the exhaust mushroom is. It should be flexible and "snap" back into place when released.



Put it back together and if you have your own cylinder, then stick your regs on it and pressurize it. If you have a free flow it could be a first or second stage problem and will need to be looked at by us, however you might find that by pressing the purge button repeatedly this problem goes away. While you might think you have cured it, it is still worth

bringing it in to be checked. Have a breathe on it. The rasping farty sound that sometimes occurs can be due to a dry diaphragm so don't worry about the noise too much. Does the second stage give you air easily or does it feel hard to breath in? It should be easy. Finally, stick the second stage in a bucket and see if it is bubbling – again if it is, it will need adjusting professionally, or a service. Remember all club members are entitled to a 10% discount on servicing charges, so if you are unsure, bring it in.

### COMIC RELIEF – RED NOSE COLLECTION EVENING



Last year you may remember that we had a very successful charity-raising event in support of comic relief when a group of us ran a mile in Scuba Gear around the track at the Mountbatten Centre. We raised several hundreds of pounds and this year we want to do the same. Slightly different format, similar kind of theme! On the evening of 7th March we are going collecting along Albert Road. The plan is to nip into the odd hostelry and persuade as many punters as possible to give up some cash. Of course, the plan is to wear scuba gear at the same time. Inevitably we will have a couple of drinks in one or two just to make sure that we remain refreshed for the evening. The plan is to start at the dive centre at 7.30 pm issue out collection boxes and make our way down the right hand side of Albert Road, turning around at the end and coming back the other side. Well that's the plan anyway. Should all be done by about 10.00 but obviously you can bale out at any time. We will finish in the Festing. If you want to join us and help raise some money please let us know. More details are available on our Facebook Site. Don't forget to get your Red Nose.

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