

CLUB MEETINGS

The next club meeting will be at the Royal Beach on **Thursday 5 February**. As usual, if you are coming, can you [please let us know](#). Can I remind all club members that while your food (which we pay £7.50 for) is completely free can we ask that if you bring along guests (and we love to see them) that you let us have £5 towards the cost of their meal. We will not come and ask for it so if you just sidle up to Bill or myself and slip us the money that would be appreciated. We like you to bring your guests to the functions and hope that you think this is fair.

IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER WHY NOT WRITE SOMETHING?

Although this newsletter is sent out to a couple of thousand people, it is predominantly **your** club newsletter. And while I enjoy writing it, pontificating about this that and the other and telling you what is going on, it might be nice if the members had some more input. In the past, some of you have written articles about your travels and dives. So, I would like to get a bit more of that going on. So, if you have a story to tell, or a photo to publish, or generally have something to say that other club members and readers might be interested in, then let me have it.

FIRST CLUB NIGHT OF 2009



Well the last club do and the first one of 2009 was a corker..... The evening saw around 60 members and guests turn up at the Coast Bar for the first club night of 2009 for what was a fun social event. As in the past, the main theme for the evening was the raffle of unwanted Christmas presents. The rules were simple:

- o You must wrap the present
- o You cannot pick your own (that would just be stupid)
- o Once you touch a present its yours (no checking to see if bottles are full or boxes of chocolates are half empty)
- o You must take your present away with you - or convince someone else to.

Everyone took to the event with enthusiasm and we were inundated with unwanted presents so the chances were, unless clearly you were called Neal or Helen, that you would win something. There were some cracking gifts; anger management

blow up boxing gloves, chinese restaurant calendars - in Spanish (Sue was particularly fond of hers as you can see in the picture),



Other pressies were Rude Origami (Becci won that) and willy shaped bath salts - tasteful! The one that I managed to get hold of was an 8 metre balloon that uses solar energy to warm the air inside and then floats! Cant wait to attach that to something. The raffle raised £119 which was brilliant and all the money will be given to Water Aid, which as you know is my flavour of the moment when it comes to charities.

To everyone who brought pressies and to everyone who bought tickets - a huge thank you for making it such a fun night and helping raise the money. It was good to see you all and to get the club's year off to such a flying start. Many more club nights to come, and to remind you, the next one is going to be Thursday 5 February. Please let us know if you are coming if you can. Finally, our good friend and club member DJ had a little moan that he never got into the Newsletter so here you go:



Caption suggestion: "Santa, can you give me a right thumb to go with this one?" All other suggestions gratefully received.

SPRING BASH 11 APRIL 2009



We didn't know what to call it really it is not a Ball, or a party, or a cocktail party. But it is something rather special. For the 2009 Spring "Do" we have decided to "do" something totally different. And being the best club in the South we wanted something special, so **we have hired the Spinnaker tower for the night.**



Yes, we have hired the **whole tower**, the downstairs bar and café, and the 3 viewing platforms for what should be an excellent evening of entertainment for club members and their guests. Here is the programme of events – guest arrive at 7.00 pm at the Tower. There will be a red carpet on arrival and a selection of images from the club will be displayed in the entrance area (might even be one of you DJ, but I have a canny feeling that Maz might feature!).

On arrival you will walk down the red carpet and then be escorted to the View Deck 2, where you will have champagne and canapés. There will be a bar facility at this level and some seating. Between 8.00pm and 10.00pm a sumptuous Mediterranean buffet will be available in the downstairs café and there is also going to be seating, a bar facility and disco here. How about this for a menu

Canapé Appetizer

Mini Yorkshire puddings filled with roast topside of beef and horseradish

~

Crumbed spinach & feta goujons with garlic infused mayonnaise (v)

~

Oak smoked salmon blinis

~

Salmon, rocket & parmesan roulades

Buffet Selection

Calamari with aioli & lemon

Yellow fin sole goujons with tomato, red pepper & lime salsa

King prawns skewers with a lemongrass dressing

~

Chicken Breast Skewers with a sweet chilli dip

Sliced Serrano Ham

Sliced Italian Bresaola Beef

~

Red onion & goats cheese tartlet (v)

Roast herb potatoes (v)

Tomato & Mozzarella Salad (v)

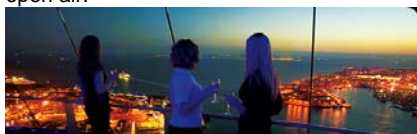
Mixed olives with chilli & parsley dressing (v)

~

Menu includes:

Sundried tomato & basil loaf, extra virgin olive oil & balsamic vinegar and locally produced chilli relish

Food will be served until 10.00 pm. On View Deck 1 (the one with the glass floor) you will have a casino with black jack, roulette and other games to try your luck. All guests will be given a pile of "play" money to use – so see how much you can get by the end of the night. And if you feel like you want some fresh air you can venture up to the very top section, which is open air.



During the evening you can come and go as you please between the various levels so you can take in the sights of Portsmouth at night while you have a drink, have a flutter on the tables, eat some food or just dance the night away – the whole tower is ours until 1.00 am and the bars are open until 12.30. This is a black tie event but not the normal sit down meal we normally have, but we think it is going to be great fun and completely different. The cost of this fantastic function is going to be £20 for club members and £35 for guest – just a little more than the Royal Beach, but then it is something really special. It is a ticket only event and places are limited to 120, so if you would like to go, please let us know as soon as possible. We need payment either by cash or cheque (no credit cards I am afraid) **at the time of booking**. It's going to be a fun night, so make sure you get your tickets early.

MARATHON DES SABLES 2009 AN UPDATE



Well this month my attempt to run the Sahara in the Marathon des Sables made Sport Diver magazine – if you didn't get it then you can click this link:

<http://www.sportdiver.co.uk/sport-diver-news/news-2>

Anyway, as it has made the diving press I just thought I would update you on my preparations for the Marathon des Sable – less than 2 months away now. I am training like mad using the beach as the best option to get used to running on sand and soft footing. That seems to be working well. The diet has now been sorted out for the run – I have to carry at least 2000 Kcalories for every day, but this is not enough. The problem is that this amount of food can weigh a lot. So with a mix of freeze dried food, dried fruit, nuts and other high calorie stuff, I have a reasonable menu for the week. One thing that I did need was some hills – the run includes some mountainous sections and that is very hard to find here. So I took myself off to Wales for a couple of days – pictures are on facebook for those that want to look.



Although it was very snowy it was useful as it gave me the opportunity to stretch my legs in a different direction and get used to running up and down using the lightweight poles for balance and support. Many thanks to the following club members who have donated so far:

- o Sue Whiting and Terry Stocker, Joe and Mary Cordina, Ian Perry, Eve and Brian, Ed Butcher, Steve and Maz Redman, John Williams, David Standley, Graham Cole, Sarah Bignall and Brenda Miller.

With around 150 club members (140 not including the 10 or so who have sponsored me already) and another 1800 plus who are on the distribution for this newsletter, I am still hoping that I can raise some serious money for charity. Don't forget, any amount you can give will help. You can use the sponsorship form so why not get a pound from half a dozen workmates, or hold a raffle or collection in support of the charity. Or you can simply put your hand in your pocket because you think I am barking mad but it is a worthy cause. You can donate by bank transfer, cheque, cash or by making an on-line donation through www.run-the-sahara.org and don't forget to look at the site and leave a comment.

INSTRUCTORS MEETING



We had one of our regular 6 monthly Instructor and DM meetings this month. We held the meeting at the Noble House restaurant and 20 of our regular instructors and DMs turned up. It's a good excuse to get together and go out, but also lets us update everyone with what is going on in the industry, ensuring that you continue to have fun, get the best training possible and stay safe.

OUR NEXT GUEST SPEAKER

A little bit of advanced notice from time to time we bring you guest speakers at club nights and it is time for another. Anyway, I have spoken to my old friend and cave diving and technical diving guru Phil Short and he has agreed to come and give us a talk. He is away at the moment but I will confirm the date and location in next months news letter.



Phil has done some extreme diving in his time, including the exploration of some of the huge underground systems in Russia. It is going to be a great evening with some great stories and fantastic images. More details next month.

Coming up Next Month:

Phil Short - More details about the club night and Presentation Evening
New Regulator – Scubapro launch a new one and it's very shiney!
plus much, much more

The best training - from the premier dive centre in Portsmouth