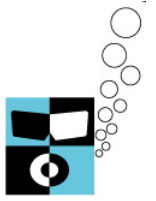




The Urge to Submerge



Triton Divers Newsletter

March 2007

CLUB MEETING DATES

There is no meeting in April due to the Spring Ball at the end of March. So the next regular meeting will be on 3 May. The usual details - 7.30 pm in the Coast Bar. Menu will be Cow and Ale pie with a veggie option for the tree huggers. Please let us know if you are coming.

FRESH WATER DIVING IN FLORIDA

I was fortunate recently to be invited out to Florida for a long weekend so thought I would tell you all about it. The whole point was to look at sustainable tourism, check out a potential holiday destination and swim with Manatees. The Manatees are a protected species and their picture is just about everywhere and plays a key role in the marketing of the Crystal River and the Homosassa region – one of the main areas to see them. We were with American Pro Diving Centre and to see them meant an early start (not helped by a change in the clocks) After we had had an environmental briefing and watched a video we were off following some very odd river boats to the harbour. The centres are extremely slick at getting boats into the water and within minutes around 60 people had loaded up and we were heading into the



river. The whole place oozed wildlife and the mist over the river made an eerie atmosphere. Keeping noise to a minimum our guide looked for signs of manatees – bubbles, disturbances on the water, patches of silt rising to the surface where they were feeding. When he found a spot we slipped into the water and waited patiently. Eventually, a mother and calf came up for air next to us. They are extremely sociable animals and believe it or not enjoy a tickle under the flipper at which they respond by rolling over to receive a good scratch. They are ungainly but graceful and don't move much. Which might be the reason they are so rotund. That and the fact they only have 5 vertebrae in their necks so cant actually turn around to get a good look at how they are letting themselves go a bit downhill! But it was a fantastic experience and I would thoroughly recommend it. Next up was a cavern dive in the same river. From the murk of the shallows we descended into one of the many springs that feed the river. As we left the surface the clarity became incredible in spite of a large number of divers trying to get in and out of small holes. Interesting, but not that exciting. After lunch we were following a boat up the highway again, trying to guess which way it was going to turn. We eventually arrived at Rainbow

river for a drift dive. The water was incredibly clear and full of life including turtles, bowfin, and wide mouth bass.



During the hour long drift dive we travelled for a leisurely mile and every few meters there would be a hole where fresh water poured through the limestone; in total 600 million gallons a day – enough to fill the river on a daily basis – so why is bottled water so expensive in Florida? Just a thought! The next day we were following the boat again for a long drive to Manatee Springs – where there were no Manatees. The first dive into Catfish Hotel was Different. It was a sink-hole covered in weed that looked uninviting but was crystal clear below the surface.



It was home to a lot of catfish (as you might expect) as well as turtles and a cavern where water flowed through a hole in the rocks some 200 m to the river itself. We didn't take that particular route as the 150 million gallons a day that flow through it tends to make the regs free flow (and we were borrowing Mares! Eek) and can hurt when you are fired out of the other end. So we tramped through the woods and entered the river at its start point. The area around the spring entrance made an interesting dive as you could play in the current which would change depending on where you were in regards to the rock face. The highlight was being able to film a Brown Water Snake as it was hunting in the current and to get some good close up shots of a Bowfin. So, how do I rate it. The diving is extremely interesting and different. Swimming with Manatees, turtles, snakes and alligators does have its attractions. Whether I would find enough to do for a 6 day diving trip I am unsure, and

the distance between dive sites is pretty huge so be prepared for some driving.



That said, it is totally different to anything else so if you find yourself bored to death with Disneyland, I would thoroughly recommend you give the diving a bit of time. For the badge collectors you could even go for your PADI Manatee Speciality Course – now there is one for the log book! I have posted a selection of photographs from the trip on the Gallery. For more details on the diving company go to www.americanprodiving.com and for somewhere nice to stay in Crystal River try the Seagrass River Resort on www.seagrasspub.com

WELCOME BACK AND HELLO

With things being so busy I am pleased to say that we have tempted Ian back to the fold from his brief excursion to the valley's of Herefordshire where he had gone to do something technical. Joining him is Cam, a graduate in marine biology and Divemaster Candidate. Cam will be taking her instructors course later in the year which will help us to cover the growing number of students coming through. Talking of which

LATEST COURSE SUCCESSES FOR MARCH 2007

Open Water Referral

Liz MacEnri, Emma MacEnri, Paul MacEnri

Open Water

Barry Huxter, Philip Tuck, Aeron Phillips, Kathryn Tuck, Edward Hager, Andrew Norman, Peter Baker, Louise Elliott, James Doggett, Emma Thomson-Murrell, Carl Halsey

Advanced Open Water

Danielle Moore, Greg Moore, Andrew Biggs, Stuart Jones

Drysuit

Stuart Jones, Andrew Biggs, Colin Saunders, Russell Eaton, Hannah Tuckwell, Becci Knowles, Kevin Piotrowicz, Tim Reedman, Mark Grey

Nitrox

Danielle Moore, Greg Moore, Sarah Metherell

PPB

Gavin Parnaby, Danielle Moore, Steve Harder, Greg Moore

EFR

Mario Cutajar, Bob Boardman, Anthony Paul, Kerry Brown

DAN O2

Dale Spree, Chris Murrell, Cam Robins, Ian Brown

DAN Advanced O2

Ian Brown, Dale Spree

DAN O2 Instructor

Dale Spree

DIVE SHOW WEEKEND FROLICS

Wow, what a busy weekend. Loads of you popped in for a glass of vino and the chance to pick up some bargains during the dive show weekend at the beginning of the month. It was our busiest weekend of the year so far and great to see you all.

GREAT SOUTH RUN – 28 OCTOBER

For the 5th year running we are going to be running the Great South run... And once again we are looking for club members to put their best foot forward and join us in this excellent event. Last year we raised a lot of money for the Lifeboats and we will be doing the same again this year. However, if you have your own charity that you want to raise money for please feel free. You can register for the event now by logging on to <http://gsr.realbuzz.com/> or www.greatrun.org and following the links.



Last year 9 staff and club members registered for the event and 6 managed to complete it. This year we have 8 entries already registered and this includes some new faces looking to get involved. I heard last night that the "mystery lady" is also planning on having a go. The race is 10 miles and the crowds carry you along whether you do it in 2 hours or 4. Some runners sprint the whole way around and some just walk so whatever your fitness levels you can have a go. So, if you are interested in taking part why not log on to the Great Run website and register. Spaces do go quite quickly so make sure you do it as soon as you can. Then once you have registered let us know. We are planning to have a few practice runs throughout the summer as well as a few other things going on to build up a "team" spirit as well as hopefully setting up a blog so that we can track how training is going as we lead up to the event. So come and have go! You will love it.

A GOLD AWARD FOR YOURS TRULY

Well last month it was an award from Oceanic and this time Its meeee! I know, I don't like blowing smoke up my own bum but just wanted to let you know that I got a Gold award from PADI as a CD for the number of instructor level certifications I conducted last year. Check me out!

PADI LAUNCH DIVER INSURANCE PROGRAMME

Some time ago PADI got together with insurance brokers Tett Hamilton to launch a Professional Liability insurance for instructors and dive centres. Following on from this, they have now introduced an annual travel insurance scheme to rival that being provided by DAN. To give you some idea, worldwide cover including winter sports cover comes in at £115, or £149 for a couple. To find out more pop into the dive centre or log onto the website www.diveinsure.co.uk

BOAT DIVES COMING UP IN APRIL

The season is pretty much underway now and with a few more days of calm we might see some reasonable viz. The price for this

season is £45 for the 2 dives. There are spaces on the following:

14 April – Camberwell and a Drift dive. A 30m wreck dive. Departure time is 12.00 (nice and sensible methinks!)

15 April – Camswan and Drift. A great wreck for an AOW diver; easy and safe, about 18 – 20m if you dig a hole with plenty of life. Departure time is 7.00 am.

21 April – The Mulberry Harbour and Landing Craft – great for OW divers and above the Mulberry Harbour can offer some great opportunities for photography. 12m maximum depth. Departure time is 8.30 am.

22 April – That old favourite the Luis followed by a drift. At 18m, this popular wreck has plenty of life and history about it. Departure time is 9.00

28 April – U1195 Submarine followed by a drift. This is a 30m wreck and is fantastic. Departure time for the dive is 12.30 (another sensible one!)

SPRING BALL

The spring ball at the Queens Hotel was another great success. Kevan C-H has been away for a while and there were a few unsuspecting new club members there for the first time And he got 'em. Charlotte Reedman was one of his first victims as he threw his dance partners around the floor.



As always it is good to see Dr Evil enjoying himself (any captions for this one to me please!) and I have posted another interesting picture on the BLOG that also demands a look and hopefully a caption. Apart from the antics on the dance floor it was as always a classy and fun do. Steve and his Jazz band "Out of the Blue" entertained us extremely well during dinner and the dancing went well on into the night with Colin and his disco. The raffle raised £500 and many thanks to everyone who donated prizes and bought tickets, but in particular David Reed for the iPod NANO and to John at Oceanic for the Shadow wetsuit. Which brings me onto the next function

THE SUMMER BALL – 14 JULY

We have gone for the Queens hotel again because it is nice, they look after us well and it has a garden which we can spill out onto if it gets a bit hot. The price of the tickets is going to be the same as well, so once again it will be just £10 for members and £30 for guests, for a 3 course meal, bottle of wine, live band and disco. It doesn't get much better than that. We already have around 30 seats booked and it is limited to 120 so if you want to go please let us know early.

WEEKEND IN DARTMOUTH 30 JUNE – 1 JULY 2007

After the success of last year, not surprisingly this trip is now fully booked. If you have put your name down for this can you let us have payment as soon as possible.

SPRING SPECIAL OFFER FANTASTIC COMPUTERS AT KNOCK DOWN PRICES

We have just got some great offers from Oceanic and we are passing them on to you. Take a look at these great prices:



The Veo 180 - This is a great entry level fully functioning Nitrox Computer which has loads of great features. The normal RRP for this is £225. Our Spring Special offer price is more than 20% off at only £180



The "NEW" Geo. Another fully functioning nitrox computer in a watch. The latest of the Oceanic range is also on offer with over 20% off in the Spring sale. RRP for this computer was £267. You can buy it for just only £209



The VT3. This is a serious 3 gas computer for the serious diver. It can operate with 3 transmitters (available separately) from 3 separate tanks so ideal for pony cylinders or stages, or even just to keep an eye on your buddy's gas. Normal RRP for this computer is £416. We are giving an incredible **£100 off** making the sale price just £316



The last special offer is on the Atom This computer has all the features of the VT3 ... in a watch. A rival for the D6 and the D9 without the high price tag. Again, it can operate 3 gases and 3 transmitters. RRP is £418 and again we are taking £100 off this computer making the sale price just £318.

THIS OFFER IS FOR A LIMITED PERIOD – AND WE MEAN LIMITED. OFFER WHILE STOCKS LAST

COMING UP NEXT MONTH

- More film stars hiding in the club as we work with Discovery Channel
- The Twin Set Speciality course takes to the water
- New Pinnacle undersuits
- Triton get involved in the follow up to BBC's "The Blue Planet"