

Gozo 1 - 8 October 2006

The holiday got off to a bit of an early start it has to be said. Emma and Ben deciding that they wanted to leave a day early. Well actually they just got the date wrong but it was a bit of a shock when they turned up on the Saturday morning all raring to go. Infact, the fact that everyone got there was a bit of a miracle. I had the tickets but had a 20th reunion with some old army buddies in Chatham on the Saturday night - and I had the tickets!. The plan was to have an early night and meet everyone else at the airport. The mobile was ringing constantly on the Sunday morning to make sure I was up!



In addition, Gilly and Vince (last seen on the Philippines trip a few years ago) came back from Bermuda the night before, had a flying visit to relatives in Brighton and then made it back (complete with boogie board and bermudan tat) in time for Gozo. Gilly had picked up a stomach bug and was hurling into plassy bags on arrival. Mmm, nice! Still it all went according to plan and we arrived in Malta late afternoon. Our first experience of Maltese driving skills was a race to the ferry terminal and then a quick transfer to our accommodation, 3 rather lovely farmhouses, each with a pool and all the facilities we would need.



The following morning we were picked up early for the usual paperwork and kit routine before driving down to Hondoq for a shakedown dive. Nothing special but had to be done. Then it was around the corner for another shallow dive.

The following day was boat dive day and time to dive Comino Island. 38 dive tanks, 19 sets of gear, 21 people and a very small boat. The logistics were interesting but it worked. Dive 3 of the holiday and we were straight into our first cavern dive, with a lovely descent through a chimney and under the peninsula,

into clear blue seas. Marine life was not brilliant, but the topography made up for it on every dive.

During the whole week we were treated to wonderful swim throughs, arches and caverns on every dive.

There was a slight swell and we steamed round the corner for shelter and lunch so as to spare the fish the sight of Lou's breakfast! The afternoon was a long dive into the caves of Santa Maria, Zoro and the other one (name escapes me)!

Evening were taking a pretty familiar pattern by this time - finish diving, wash kit, go to shop, buy alcohol, shower, sit by pool and drink alcohol, walk to restaurant, eat, drink more, order sambuka's and see how many different ways you can drink it and so on



The next day was a real treat. A bit of a drive to the inland sea, an inland "lake" fed by a crack in the rock (words fail, see the pictures). The deep blue going through the crack was incredible. On the far side in 30m we watched Tuna feeding on a bait ball - see there are fish in the med! After lunch it was over the other side of the jill to the famous blue hole. Getting in was a bit interesting, especially without bootees on, but it is a lovely dive and well worth the effort.



We woke the following morning to dark skies and ominous looking storm clouds. The first dive site was a bit choppy to say the least, but we amused ourselves for a good 30 minutes watching some brave (or was it foolhardy) divers negotiate some precarious rocks and plunge into surf that was quite scary. The whole gang

hung
around
on the
off
chance

of a bit of carnage and splattering on the cliffs, but it didn't happen. With mutterings of "barking mad" and "you wouldn't get me doing that" ... etc etc we then went to the next site, climbed down loads of rickety and dangerous steps with heavy gear on and jumped into water which was absolutely teeming with nasty little jellyfish which gave a painful skin. And we thought they were barking mad!



If was worth the odd bit of pain though in order to get the chance to ascend into cathedral cave. The luminous blue was amazing and again well worth the effort. After the liberal application of hydrocortizone and antihystimean (all the medically trained members will now be correcting my spelling) we went for lunch and found ourselves in the middle of a huge storm. As tables and chairs floated down the middle of the road and the sea turned a rather muddy brown, we had a liesurely lunch ... then one beer ... then 2 beers ... and that was the diving over for the day!



With the coast of Gozo looking like the mouth of the Amazon after the whole population of Brazil had been to the toilet at the same time, we had no option but to jump on a boat again and head further afield for the last day. The first dive was the wreck of the Rosie in the harbour on Malta. Nice wreck, good visibility ... and some appalling divers from another boat. No more to be said there! Then it was back to Comino



for Alexanders cave. The best bit was the cavern which you could ascend into at the end of the cave. Doh - you all missed it!! The last dive was in Crystal (yes I said crystal) Lagoon. The heavens opened once more with a deluge of huge proportions. As the droplets skimmed from Neals now rather painful but still shiney head, we descended into the blue then the green then the dark green ... and finally finishing with the muddy brown. It was a good dive, but the route back was more like Horsea as once again the run off from the land poured into the sea. Still, it was just like being in the Solent so everyone felt at home. And that was it for diving. That evening we took the dive team of Rich, Franco and Sharon out for a bit of nosh and even more Sambuka abuse.



For those of you who have not been I would thoroughly recommend Gozo. It is not expensive, easy to get to around a 2 hour flight, and has some great diving, especially if you like caverns and topography. [Blue Waters Dive](#) cove are a friendly bunch and very efficient and accommodating. Thanks to all the guys there for a great week.