

Whirlwind, Egypt 10 - 17 May 2008

Day 1 - Saw us all arrive on time at Triton to be greeted with smoked salmon sandwiches and bucks fizz, which just helped to dull the hangovers from the 'pre-holiday' drinks the night before. So ramming nearly all of the suitcase into the trailer, and the rest in the minibus we set off for Gatwick. After all meeting up we proceeded to check in. Donk, being the slightly built chap that he is booked a seat with extra room, only to be told that as Mrs. Donk was on medication he couldn't have it (well done Tina for telling the check in girl!). After passing through security without too much



hassle, except to Mike Gear nearly being stripped searched, Chris found that the duty free shop had a special offer on for 2 litres of gin for only £15. A very upset Chris had to be dragged away protesting that '2 litres will never last, we'll have to smuggle some more in'. Simon by now was starting to regret staying out till 4.30 the night before as the bucks fizz was starting to wear off, so decided that the best course of action would be to get stuck in at the bar. Onto the plane after a couple of beers at which point Donk found out that he had the smallest leg room on the plane ... thanks to his missus.

For those of you that have sampled the delight that is Sharm international airport you will be pleased to hear that is still the same and there are still huge queues to get through passport control. However it now comes complete with 5 (rather than the previous 3) people making sure that you've got your visa and stamp before you can get your bags. On the way to the boat there were at least another 3 passport checks and several baggage checks. The boat is very nice, almost like a gin palace, at which suggestion Chris decided to make himself a large one. After checking out the certifications and logbooks, it was time to retire to the cocktail deck, where Chris was now on his 3rd. A few beers and everyone was off to bed, ready for the ungodly hour of 7 o'clock dive brief. This is supposed to be a holiday don't you know.

Day 2 saw us at the "Alternatives" for a quick check out dive followed by the "Carnatic", a superb dive. The wreck lies on its port side, the deck has rotted away and the superstructure is visible allowing access to the inner parts of the ship. There is loads of life on the wreck now, and Donk nearly became a permanent fixture; after having a personal tour by one of the guides, Donk managed to get stuck in the doorway of the engine room. Third dive of the day was the Kimon M, another great dive. It is quite broken up, but has some good life on it. Simon was really looking forward to it, but found it quite hard to descend unfortunately. Apparently weightbelts can be useful in this respect. Buddy checks who needs 'em?



Day 3 started with an early morning dive on the Chrisoula K. However, the rest of the morning was a bit chaotic after one of the boat boys was pulled from the water where he had been snorkelling. He was not breathing and showed no signs of circulation. Myself, Jules, Chris and Noel worked on him for 20 minutes, giving him O2 and CPR at which point he started to breath again on his own. The boat headed back to Travco to meet up with an EMS Rescue RIB. The last we heard he was in intensive care in Sharm, but was, thankfully alive. After restocking with O2 we headed back to Gubal Island, stopping on the way at the Dunraven, which is an old wreck with a lovely swim through.

In the evening we did a night dive on the "Barge". Not much to it as wrecks go, but it always has surprises, especially at night – this time it was a big photogenic octopus. After being thoroughly briefed on how to find the barge, Chris and Emma jumped in, only to find that Chris and his mask had

parted company. After putting on his spare they went looking for it under the boat. Chris being not the best at navigating (he couldn't find the boat from the platform in Horsea) went off in totally the wrong direction. As well as the "occy" a monster Moray eel and hunting Lion fish were all seen on the wreck, so a nice end to the day.

The next day we did the now famous Rosalie Möller (twice) and then popped back to Abu Nuhas to do the Giannis D All excellent dives. In the evening having been practicing for the last day with his compass on the boat, Chris announced that he would show everybody the way to the reef on the night dive! With some trepidation the group set off. Apparently there should have been a wall at about 8 meters, but all that Chris and Lamby found were some small coral outcrops on a nice sandy bottom. Chris has had his DM cert revoked and is now booked on the next Navigation speciality!! The toll of getting up early and going to bed last was starting to show, with most retiring by 10. Lamby announced that he was getting worried that he wouldn't have enough time to finish all of his vodka so started with utmost urgency to put that straight.



Day 5 started with a reef dive, then the wreck of the Ulysses and then ... Thistlegorm. The majority had never dived 'The Wreck' before, so it was with great excitement that we made our way down the mooring line to the bow. After a quick look into Hold 1 and 2 we proceeded to the Captains cabin. Pete decided on the way that he didn't need all of his weight and dropped a pouch. Thinking that his buoyancy was just rubbish he proceeded into the cabin closely followed by Simon huffing and puffing carrying an extra 6 kilos. After dragging Pete off the ceiling and refitting his weights, Simon decided to leave with the guide as he'd sucked his

air down to 80 bar. I led the dive over to the ammunition and back over the superstructure to the shotline. During the ascent line the current had picked up and we "flag poled" doing a safety stop – except Mike, who decided to let go! We were lucky enough to do a night dive on the Thistlegorm and it took on a whole new feel, covered in Lion fish, Scorpion fish, Slipper Lobsters and the biggest Giant Moray that anyone had ever seen. Chris swore that 'it was going to have my arm off' and that he needed a gin to get over the trauma!

Day 6 and another 2 excellent dives on the Thistlegorm before heading off to Shag rock to dive the Kingston. This is an open wreck with only the ribs of the boat remaining, but what a beautiful dive. After exploring the site and being attacked by the hoards of Surgeon fish that were nesting on it, we drifted along the most pristine reef I've seen for a long time. At the end of the dive we were treated to a pod of 5 dolphins for nearly 10 minutes, coming within touching distance. Pete for the first time on the trip was speechless, declaring that he was quitting diving as nothing would ever beat this days diving and he wanted to quit while ahead.



Day 7 and we had steamed back towards Ras Mohamed to dive Shark and Yolanda. For those of you that have dived this site you will know that it can either be a superb drift or a fight against some wicked currents. It was the later. Silvi, the guide, assured us that 'zer is no current, it eez calm'. He's now booked on the PADI "How to recognise a current" distinctive speciality course I'm writing!! So we saw Satellite reef half of Yolanda, and then Satellite reef again. Nice big morays, some puffer fish and scorpion fish made up for the fight though.

The last dive of the trip was a lovely little drift dive Ras Ghaziani. Samhe got the current right this time, and it was a great way end what was some superb diving. Once we'd disembarked and had our passports and luggage checked again, (twice) we made our way to our hotel. I'd phoned ahead and booked the roof of the Camel Bar for 20 of us for some beer and food.

On the last day we lounged by the pool for most of the day. Tina and Donk returned with another suitcase full of Egyptian memorabilia and several market traders retired to the Seychelles on the profits. Before getting on the plane we even had time to watch Pompey win the FA cup and Phil amused the hotel staff with some very dubious celebrations.

Another good Triton trip – absolutely! As you would expect from the best dive club in the South. Going again? Yep, next year, same time (ish) boat is booked but this time we are heading deep South to see some more wrecks, reefs and sharks. Book early. (Thanks to Ian for this report)

