



Turtle News

Issue 15

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Forthcoming Trips and Holidays

- Big Crab Wreck", Brighton 6 May
- "City of Waterford", Brighton 13 May
- Safaga, Red Sea 13-20 May
- "Unknown Wreck", Brighton 23 May
- RIB Diving, Plymouth 28-30 May
- "T R Thompson", Brighton 10 June
- RIB Diving, Portland 11-12 June
- "Oceana", Eastbourne 8 July
- Riverboat Disco, Sat 23 July
- Red Sea Extravaganza, Liveaboard. 7-21 October £1625
- Annual Dinner & Dance, **FRIDAY** 9 December
- Truk Lagoon, 9-19 April 2006 £2200

"Off Course" Director

We are only just out of Hurghada after a decidedly chilly check out dive at Gota Sha'ab El Erg, there's a strong breeze blowing and the sea is rough. Several unfortunate souls are struck down with severe seasickness as we plough our way northwards towards Siyuil Shagira and then Abu Nuhas, where we

are to dive the wrecks of the "Giannis D" and the "Carnatic".

Launched in Japan in 1969, the "Giannis D" was a cargo vessel carrying sawn soft-wood from Rijeka in Croatia to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, and Hodeidah in Yemen. She sank on 19th April 1983 after running into the barely visible reef at Sha'ab Abu Nuhas, her captain believing them to be in open water on the far side of the perilous Straits of Gubal, after navigating a long passage from the Adriatic. Lying between 6 and 27m she is a very scenic wreck. Her fairly broken up mid section teems with fish life, while the more intact stern

allows for penetration into various passageways and the engine room.

The much older



"Carnatic" (launched in 1862) lies nearby and also makes for an enjoyable dive, particularly for our pair of "Wreck Spec" divers, Sam and Mark, who get lots of practice lining in and out of the remaining steel hull, the wooden decking and superstructure having long since rotted away. She took several days to slip off the reef she had struck, during which time most (but not all) of her passengers and crew were able to abandon ship. She finally sank on 14th September 1896, and now lies at the base of the reef on her port side in approximately 25m.

The rough seas continue well

into the middle of the week. At one point I find myself lying in my bunk, holding on to the edge of the mattress for dear life to prevent myself from flying across the cabin, while the boat slams into another huge wave and a mountain of life jackets are catapulted from their shelf above the bed. I lie and listen to the shrieks from the upper

decks, followed by gales of laughter from Rob, as the harder members of our group slide around on mattresses up on the sun deck. Despite this, we manage to carry out some great diving in the Marine Park at Ras Mohammed, before proceeding to dive the "Dunraven" at Beacon Rock. After this, we finally reach the holy grail of the northern Red Sea wrecks, the "Thistlegorm". Prophetically, the sea, if not the current, dies down.

Ray seems to be on a bit of a mission on this one, and Sam, Mark and I are given a whirlwind

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tour, starting on the broken up stern section and then progressing rapidly towards the holds in the bow, with a quick detour to see one of the two locomotives sitting on the seabed a few metres away.



Longnosed hawkfish

The holds are amazing, being stuffed full of trucks, motorbikes and rifles. Ray presents us each with a Wellington boot from a metal crate as we enter one of the holds, and all too soon the dive is over!

Thankfully we get to do two more dives on this one, the next being a bit special for Bob and me- it's Bob's 300th and my Centenary! I decide to abandon my buddy and send him off to play with 'Meg' his trusty (hopefully!) rebreather, while I dive with Uncle Bob. Pete the Cabin Boy looks forlorn at being cast aside, so we let him, Tony and Darren tag along too, friendly souls that we are! We are warned by Amro, our dive guide, that the current is running, it is important to use the shot line, and not stray too far from the wreck as we will otherwise end up miles away! Soon we find ourselves strung out like flags in a strong wind, one above the other as we descend the shot. A great dive follows and we have plenty of opportunity to rummage through all of the holds. Taking Pete with us proves to be a good move, as he and I have more air left than the others, and together we get to explore the deck area for a while longer.

Back on the "Valerie" there are congratulations all round, and Bob and I have celebratory photographs taken as we await the return of the final few divers. A red speck is spotted way off stern, and a powerful pair of binoculars are produced. A zodiac is hastily dispatched to investigate the SMB, and someone comments how amusing it would be if it were Ray! Unbelievably it **IS** Ray, and we all storm to the top deck to mark his return with a standing



Rover's return!

explains how he became disorientated during a rummage dive off the wreck, to find equipment lost by previous divers, and swam the wrong way. (*Can I interest you in a Navigation Specialty, sir?!* - Ed) He does however manage to save face when he presents a working torch to a delighted Amro, plus a computer, which delights the guide even more an hour later, when it is cleaned up and found to be operable!

We round the day off nicely with a night dive inside the "Thistlegorm", which is another experience all over again, the wreck taking on a whole new dimension in the dark. I am happy to be back with my buddy, trusting that he knows where he's going (!), especially when we end up in the deepest and darkest of the holds, my torch starts to fail and my back-up is little better! Nonetheless, I am quite relieved when we finally exit the wreck after about half an hour in the cold and pitch dark.



1940s BSA motorbike, "Thistlegorm"

The following day sees me diving with Pete and Bob again, and this time we are joined by Brother Neil, as we carry out a training dive towards our TDI qualifications, on the lovely wreck of the "Rosalie Moller". This wreck lies a little deeper than many of the others and we are to do a decompression dive, carrying out shutdowns on our own tanks, before having a quick swim around, and then completing staged decompression stops while ascending on our SMBs. I am slightly apprehensive, thinking back to a similar dive in the company of Ant

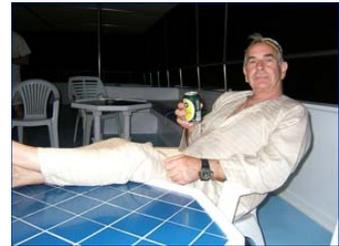
and Beaver at Stoney Cove not so long ago, where I was so marked I couldn't get off the bottom under the weight of a twinset. Luckily, this time everything goes swimmingly, and we find a few minutes to appreciate the beautiful groups of giant lionfish that inhabit the protection of the bridge. Neil does a comical impression of someone on the loo when we find the ship's "head", and has me laughing so hard that my mask is still filling with water ten minutes later.

collect yet more lost dive gear (you could open a shop with all that lot buddy! Oh, you already have!), while we dive the wreck of the "Ulysses". The wreck is far outclassed by the discovery of three hawksbill turtles further along the reef, one of which allows me to lie next to it while it eats. The final dive on "the Minesweeper" is a bit of an effort, as by now I'm feeling very tired and very chilled, but once in the water I'm okay. After swimming around the wreck several times though, Bob, Pete, Neil and I have become bored. Not wanting to end the dive too soon,

we decide to carry out a four way buddy breathing exercise while hovering at 30m! This goes pretty well until I take what Neil obviously counts as far too long a breath, and the regulator is rapidly swiped from my mouth mid-inhalation! Needless to say, that'll teach me to breathe faster in the future!

Many thanks to everybody who helped make this such an enjoyable and memorable trip:

Sam Ryan, Neil "Brother" Gibbens, Mark Ayling, Mark Harvey, Jim Barr, Andy and Penny Locke, Jules Buldock, Rob "Shrek" Wetherall, Jimmy the Jellyfish and Fatima Spence, Tony McNally, Peter "Cabin Boy" Stanning, Uncle Bob Higlett, Darren Ryall, Paul Woolley, and last, but not least, my buddy, "Touche' the Brave".



Off Course Director, Touche' the Brave!

Article by Sarah Corrigan
Photographs by Sarah and Ray

The remaining few dives allow Ray to

Narc! Narc! Who's there?

What does diving in cold water with a rapid descent to 50m mean? Narc City!! And where you ask is this delightful centre of nitrogenous fun? well, Ray, Ant and Beaver headed down the M4 to Chepstow on a sunny Thursday in March to find out. Their aim was to complete part of the TDI Extended Range course, having achieved the Advanced Nitrox and Decompression Procedure components during February in Stoney Cove.



The National Diving Centre, Chepstow. "Narc Central!"

On arrival at the National Diving Centre in Chepstow we were told that the water temperature was a warm(!) 8° Celsius. Our apprehension was heightened as we viewed the site- sheer cliffs imprisoned a narrow body of inky black water! After a briefing from Ray, our task was to drop down a buoyed line to 50m, twin tanks et al, and perform some shutdown procedures, as learnt in Stoney Cove some weeks earlier. The main purpose of these procedures is to be able to isolate cylinders and exchange regulators if you have a sudden loss of gas, such as in a freeflow. Well.....as we descended past 45m Ant's primary regulator decided to freeflow. We reached the bottom at 50m and he began the drills, isolating the tank and shutting down the primary regulator. He switched to his alternate which.....also decided to freeflow, and he disappeared in a blizzard of bubbles! Welcome to narked jacuzzi diving at 50m!! Ant was very calm (due in no small part to a serious narcosis hit!) and just muddled through his tribulations. I had to do the same procedure, and although my primary regulator was fine, on its first breath my alternate decided to go out in sympathy with Ant's kit. Now it was my turn in the jacuzzi! Ho! Ho! Ho! Back on our primary regulators, Ray tried to entice us into the depths. As nitrogen fizzed through what was left of our brains, we managed to retain enough awareness to hold our depth and stick to our dive plan, despite being pretty oblivious to our surroundings! We then had to work as a pair and send up an SMB using the double deploy method (as practiced on the Advanced Open

Water course). Well guess what?- all the training in the world can't account for Sod's Law! We clipped reels together, and Ant sent up his SMB. I have a length of bungy cord attached to the end of my line to compensate for overhead swells in the sea. Of course this wound around Ant's handle, and we had a real reel jam!

(which is of course what we were simulating in our deployment). After stops at 31m, 22m, 15m, 12m, 9m, 6m, and 4.5m we ascended, dekitted and reviewed our state of narcosis on the dive! It is remarkable how much more difficult it is to react to little problems when you are deeper- the same problems at shallower depths would be quickly dealt with!

The second dive was to 40m and went relatively smoothly, save for our attempt to buddy breathe at 4.5m (another Open water skill!) which resulted in me being tied up on the surface in my own SMB line! In fairness, we were buddy breathing in mid water, and trying to hold a shallow stop- you give it a go!

After sitting through an entertaining DVD on Extended Range and Introductory Trimix, followed by the standard curry and lager for supper, we decided to make an early start on Friday. Ray debriefed us on the previous day's dives, and both Ant and I shed 3kg from our weight belts- being heavily overweighted had contributed to our rather quick descent, and increased the hit of nitrogen narcosis! We entered the water at 1.00pm (so much for our early start!) and descended at a leisurely pace to 55m. Despite being quite narked again, we actually saw the Scottie dog talking to the garden gnome, were able to make sense of the trumpet (don't ask), and at the bottom.....Ant's regulators started giving him the standard 50m jacuzzi. By the time he brought the errant regulator under control it was time for us to deploy independent SMBs and ascend. Once again Ant started his bubble factory from both regulators, and this time

needed to share air. I duly donated my primary regulator and switched to my neck ring secondary. We ascended, albeit a little fast, and because my primary hose was a little on the short side, managed to entangle ourselves in the SMB lines. I abandoned my reel, helped Ant to sort out the bird's nest, and suddenly we were at 30m doing our first planned stop! Ant switched back to his primary, which was happier in the marginally warmer water at reduced pressure, and after seven decompression stops we reached the surface.

Our second dive was fairly normal (by our standards at least!), and involved us towing each other around underwater. When your mobility is restricted by twin 12l tanks, you are controlling buoyancy using your buddy's BC, and your Instructor is making you follow an obstacle course over all manner of ridges and drop offs, this is taxing in the extreme!

Between Ant and I, we probably have over 1500 dives' worth of experience. It



just goes to show that even with this wealth of water time behind us, cock-ups can still happen. We learned some valuable lessons as we made our first forays into the world of technical diving:

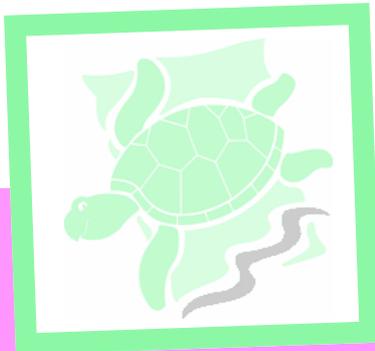
Technical clobber!

1. Sort your weight out properly.
2. Ensure your equipment is serviced, and is up to the demands of the dives you are undertaking.
3. And most importantly: STOP, THINK, ACT!

We still have more sea dives to do in order to complete the course, and will keep you informed of our progress!

Beaver, Ant and "No Bubbles" Ray!

Article by Beaver



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Visit us at:
www.adventuredivers.co.uk
 Trust the Turtle

Society News

The new season has arrived, and the sea is still there, even if the water temperature is a chilly 8°C! Now is the time to haul out your gear, brush off the cobwebs and get it diveworthy- if it hasn't been wet for a while you might want to think about dropping it into the Centre for a service. If you've been overdoing it on the mince pies and hot chocolate through the winter, think about getting back into shape- why not come down to a pool evening and lug umpteen scuba cylinders up the stairs at Walthamstow?! We'll even overhaul your water skills and get you thinking diving again with a Scuba Review! Our team of Instructors has been busy learning new Specialties, and we are equipped to teach you something different and exciting this year. For those of you pursuing PADI's prestigious Master Scuba Diver rating, remember you need five Specialties and Rescue diver behind you. While the lucky few were pottering around the northern Red Sea wrecks at Easter, other Adventure Divers were braving the English Channel at Swanage (although by all accounts, the dry suit divers were a lot more toasty than their Egyptian counterparts!). The long weekend proved to be hugely successful, even if the diving was pants, with iffy visibility! Some of our newer members got to meet, and dive with, seasoned stalwarts! The RIB weekends are a great way to experience South Coast diving, and tend to be quite social affairs!

Congratulations to Sarah Corrigan and Bobby Smith, who qualified as Divemasters- welcome to the team! After much practice in the pool, Robert Cameron successfully and deservedly passed his Instructor Examinations- well done! Both he and Mitch Compton are now Master Scuba Diver Trainers and are available to share their expertise. The School continues to run both recreational and technical courses. While the latter are not necessarily for everybody, if you are up for a challenge and want to learn something radically different, Ray will take you under his wing!

The Adventure Divers calendar is as busy as ever, with trips and courses scheduled throughout the summer. Visit the website, or pop into the shop to find out what you can do. This year's premier trip is without a doubt October's Red Sea Extravaganza, which promises to be the ultimate Egyptian experience- there are limited places available, so book now to avoid disappointment! The Riverboat Disco, on a narrow boat on the Lea, is booked for Sat 23 July- put this in your diaries, as it's normally a pretty good jolly!

I hope you like the new Photographic Gallery featured in this issue- it's time for all the budding David Doubilet out there to send me their pictures on disc or as e-mail. Let's share some of the exciting and wonderful things we see in the sea!

See ya in the blue! Ant.

Courses

- Advanced Open Water**
 - Orientation 19th May
 - Open Water 21st & 22nd May
 - Orientation 23rd June
 - Open Water 25th & 26th June
- Dry Suit Specialty**
 - Orientation 9th May
 - Open Water 22nd May
 - Orientation 20th June
 - Open Water 26th June
- Deep Diver Specialty**
 - Open Water 30th & 31st July
- Wreck Diver Specialty**
 - Open Water 28th- 30th May, Plymouth
- Underwater Photographer**
 - Classroom 9th June
 - Open Water 11th June
- Rescue Diver**
 - Commencing 18th June
- Emergency First Responder**
 - 5th & 12th May
 - 4th June

TO BOOK ON ANY OF THESE COURSES CONTACT RAY OR DAREN AT THE SHOP.

Wreck Heaven



As you drop deeper, the shadow below resolves into the outline of a ship. You swim past the ghostly bridge to the

bow, where the anchor chain hangs in an elegant loop, its winding gear encrusted in coral. You dip into the holds, full of vintage cars and bombs and bottles of wine, before heading down a companionway to find the galley with its enamelled ovens. Continuing through the bowels of the ship you find the engine room, crammed with cogs and cranks and benches of

tools. You exit past the enormous propellers, and surface towards the light. Whether it's the history of the site, the thrill of exploration, the search for artefacts, or the abundance of marine life associated with sunken ships, there's something for everyone on the Wreck Diver Specialty. Interested?



CONTACT RAY OR DAREN TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN WRECK DIVING.

