



Turtle News

Issue 16

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Forthcoming Trips and Holidays

- RIB Diving, Plymouth 27-29 August
- Oban, Scotland 16-18 September £165
- RIB Diving, Swanage 17-18 September
- "Moldavia", Brighton 26 September
- Red Sea Extraganza, Liveaboard. 7-21 October £1625
- RIB Diving, Portland 22-23 October
- "Warilda" and "Lan Franc", France 25-26 October overnight
- Annual Dinner & Dance, **FRIDAY** 9 December
- Red Sea New Year Trip, 29 December- 5 January
- Truk Lagoon, 9-19 April 2006 £2200

You wouldn't get me down there!

"You wouldn't get me down there!" If anyone asked me if I dived, that would have been the answer they would have got. Then just after Christmas I started swimming with Neil on a

I felt like a floundering fish- what was this buoyancy thing all about anyway? I was either on the surface or scraping along the bottom! Chris demonstrated the skills, and then showed the

breathe out through my nose, and began choking, coughing and spluttering, before racing for the surface! For weeks I tried to master mask clearing, and even practised in bed with Neil's



Wednesday evening at Waltham Abbey, and began to meet some of the members of Adventure Divers. After building up enough courage to even swim in the deep end, I found myself not only agreeing to do a try dive, but combining it with doing Module One of the Open Water Course that was starting the following week!

students that it was their turn to perform them. As it was getting close to my turn, I could feel my breathing rate increasing, and everything vanished in a curtain of bubbles- would I ever get used to all that air in front of my face?! The first skill was regulator recovery, which went off without too many problems, but then we tried flooding the masks. "Oh my God!!!" I couldn't

pony bottle and regs, blowing through my nose with all of my might! Nearly every instructor and divemaster helped me through my weeks of practice- it was getting to the point where I was running out of instructors to help me! Was I ever going to do it? With constant help, three nights a week in the pool, I finally got through

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the confined water sessions. The thought of going to Stoney Cove filled me with dread, so I took the softer option and signed up to go on the Adventure Divers trip to the beautiful, clear, warm, blue waters of Safaga in the Egyptian Red Sea. Here I finally



qualified as a diver! Once we got home, it was still "You'll never get me in British waters!" I think I had been rather spoiled by endless vis in the tropical balm of the Red Sea! Then, after realising that I couldn't afford to go on holiday every month, and having been well and truly bitten by the scuba diving bug, it occurred to me that I might have to give UK diving a go after all!



Along came the rib weekend in Paignton, Devon, and after some persuasion from Neil and Liz, I agreed to dive. I figured if I hired a semi-drysuit from the shop, I could always change my mind when we got down there. We travelled to the coast on Friday night, and awoke to beautiful blue skies on Saturday morning. We were up early, and down to the harbour to get the boat in, before carrying the dive gear to the beach. Soon we were kitted up, and were aboard a loaded

boat, heading out towards Ore Stone Rock for the first dive. I couldn't help thinking, "There's no turning

a sleeping ball! I couldn't believe I was seeing so much in the sea in my own country! The 49 minutes of the first



back now!" Before long, I had my scuba unit and fins on (with a little help from my friends!), and was preparing to roll off backwards into British waters.

We descended into a forest of kelp, which was a little unnerving, but we were soon out over a rocky sea bed, and had picked up a gentle current. I was doing my first UK drift dive, and what a pleasant experience it was! The water wasn't half as cold as I'd thought it would be, and at 6m, the vis wasn't bad either! There was so much to



see! Crabs of every shape and size hid under just about

every rock, while all sorts of fish swam about us, and some were even as pretty as their Red Sea cousins! I was amazed by the colourful starfish on the beds of mussels. Neil and Liz got very excited when they found a nest of sleeping lesser spotted dogfish. About 12 of these little sharks were all tangled up in

dive passed in a flash, and, just as we were about to ascend, Neil and Liz pointed out the highlight of an already

memorable dive- a John Dory! What a great way to finish my first British dive! Five dives later I had not only had a great social weekend, but I was also firmly hooked on UK diving! If you've never tried diving here, give it a go- you might be pleasantly surprised!!



Roll on the next rib weekend...!!.....

Article by Linda Creevy
Photographs by Daren

Safaga Night Fever

"I want to get in! I want to get in!" I thought. "How much longer is Bling going to make me wait?" we'd agreed on 8pm but how much darker did dark have to be? Finally Bling gave me the nod, laughing at my impatience. We descended slowly into the inky water, aware that the reef was ahead of us. Straight away Bling pointed out a moray eel, wrapped up in a hole. Lionfish took their time crossing the sandy sea bed in search of supper. We slowly finned around the corner, where a scarlet Spanish dancer flapped its frilly skirt as it flew through the water. I could see other flashlights in the distance, and decided to turn mine off- as my eyes adjusted to the gloom, I waved my hand in front of my mask, and the water sparkled with bioluminescence! With time running out, we looked for the strobe hanging from the boat, and made our ascent. As I sat on the stern of the boat, with Spaniel educating me on constellations of stars, a loud splash in the water made me jump. We looked overboard and saw a dolphin leaping in and out of the waves- what a fantastic end to a magical dive!

The next day I was buddied with Spaniel. We were at 15m, minding our own business, when two random divers with moustaches like handlebars made pointing gestures to the reef. A blue triggerfish was darting back and forth. We had seen this fish already, but were grateful to the handlebar divers for pointing out such a gem! I rolled my eyes at my buddy, and we made our way back to our route, although in the excitement, we seemed to have lost our bearings a little. Spaniel was confident he knew where we were, but I wanted to check. We surfaced and took a bearing on the boat, before descending to 5m and swimming back. My mask filled up with water since I was laughing so hard at my buddy's disgust at having to surface! We were greeted with hoots of laughter and were ridiculed for losing our way. I had been recognized from the boat because of my distinctive fins. That'll teach us for getting carried away!!

The next day I sat watching the sunrise, waiting for the others to arrive at the dive school. Alan was the first to join me. I told him I was hungry, or was

it apprehension? We were due to dive the "Salem Express". Alan promised me a bite of his Mars Bar once we were on board. My spirits lifted rapidly- its amazing what a girl will do for chocolate!

Once at our destination I felt queasy, but determined not to waste the earlier treat. The "Salem" was a ferry returning from Jeddah, carrying pilgrims from Mecca. At around midnight on 15 December 1991 she struck the reef outside Safaga and sank within minutes. While she was listed as carrying 690 passengers, it is believed twice that number were aboard. Only 180 survived. I descended with my eyes closed, not ready to take in the full view of such a huge vessel. As I opened them, Spaniel was staring at me in disbelief and was signaling was I ok? I signaled I was fine and we made our way to the bow and on to the sea bed. I was trying to take in the piles of shoes and radios- swallowing hard, I didn't want to leave my buddy's side! Spaniel insisted on getting really close to the deck, shining his torch into every nook and cranny. Images of giant morays flashed into my head- other divers had said they liked to live in the wreck. "Oh my God! Get me out of here...." I got a grip and we ascended to 12m. I felt a little better. I could see Ant and Beaver taking photos of the bridge. I looked down and saw clothing tumbling out of the windows! Reaching the line, I signaled to Spaniel that I was low on air. I had had enough. I followed Daren back to the boat- Spaniel stayed below with Ant. I have come to understand that not all diving is going to be enjoyable. Diving the "Salem Express" was very moving- I was spooked! I can now appreciate just how much the sea is in charge.

Unbeknown to me Abu Kefan was to be my last dive of the week. Big Al was my buddy, and boy, can that guy fin! We took a long 15 minute swim to a sandy plateau, where Al took pictures of beautiful corals. Those of us who looked hard enough were rewarded with sightings of painted frogfish and stonefish! I followed a masked puffer on his travels

along the reef, until I could feel the current pushing me away from the plateau. Al signaled for us to make our way back. I watched him fin with ease through the current, and I started to laugh at my pathetic attempt to follow. With water flooding my mask again, Beaver beckoned to me to follow him into the shelter of a nook in the reef, occupied by a large growth of coral. We then inched our way around the corner, using what protection we could find. The current was now behind us, and it allowed us to rest as it pushed us back to the boat. I was tired. Once on board I enjoyed a wafer biscuit and water- then it hit me! I proceeded to spend the next 45 minutes in the "head". Perhaps the biscuit had been a mistake! What I had thought to be a cast iron stomach was, in fact, rather delicate!

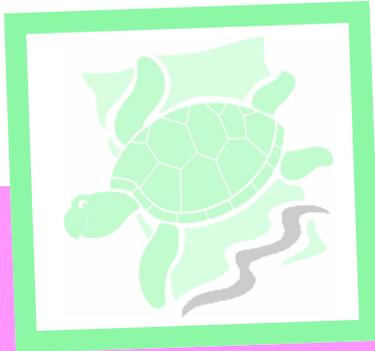
Back on dry land came the knowledge that the end of the holiday was ap-

proaching. Not to be dismayed, we went out with a bang! Congregating in the shisha bar, we lay on cushions under the stars, smoking apple tobacco and drinking cold Sakaras and pinocoladas. Spaniel kept on about it being the last night and we should have a dance. Bling gently persuaded the DJ to open up the club, and Tyrone was the first on the floor, with Spaniel hot on his heels. By the time the rest of us joined them, Ty was running around the club like Tigger, bouncing off walls and stripping to his underwear!

We spent our last day by the pool, eating pizza and playing with the Beaver Bomb. This small rugby ball shaped toy has fins on one end, and whistles through the air when you throw it- I must be deaf! I never heard it coming, and have a small scar to prove it! Then the good news came- we were to be delayed a day! Beaver and Ant had the right idea- they pulled out a bottle of Scotch. What will be will be! So what was our last night, turned out to be the night before the last night- and in true Adventure Diver style we still had to celebrate the last night! Sakaras all round.....?

Article by Kirsty Hays
Pictures by Ant





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 Trust the Turtle

Society News

It hardly seems possible, but here we are in the middle of the summer, well into the British diving season. Sea temperatures are a respectable 18°C, and visibility in the Channel has been quite decent, with 8-10m not uncommon! The RIB has run successfully, although anyone who was at Portland halfway through June might disagree! Even then, Mitch's sterling efforts must be commended, as we weren't left to shore-dive for very long, and he had the boat seaworthy by late on the Saturday afternoon. Despite the fact that Lesley has spent most of the year in the Antipodes, midweek "Diving with Mother" has proved to be as popular as ever. Our most recent excursions to the "Oceana" and "Alaunia", both out of Eastbourne, were particularly good dives, and certainly beat working on Fridays!! Travelling a bit further afield (with the RIB in tow!), an adventurous group made their way up the East Coast to dive the Farne Islands. Reports of encounters with seals have been drifting back, and I hope to bring you an article about their exploits in the next issue! May found us leaving the vagaries of the British spring behind us, as we headed off to Safaga, on the Egyptian Red Sea. While the town is much quieter than either Hurghada or Sharm, the marine environment is less spoilt than the more northern sites. We enjoyed a week of superb diving, with highlights being the "Salem Express" and Abu Kefan. If you like the idea of diving in an "aquarium",

this trip is for you! While the nightlife was disappointing, you can't take 22 Adventure Divers away and not expect something to give, especially when Bling, Ty and Spaniel are in the group! The dancefloor techniques observed on this trip were amazing, to say the least!

We showed a little of what we'd picked up in Egypt at the hugely successful Riverboat Disco in July! Once again this enjoyable cruise in a narrowboat on the River Lea took pride of place in the summer social calendar- it really is one not to be missed!

The summer closes with the two week Red Sea Extravaganza in October, while a final trip to Egypt, to see out 2005, is planned for December.

We are pleased to make some official Hatching and Matching announcements in this issue: first, our congratulations go to Gary and Carly Liscoe on the birth of Gabriella- we look forward to the pitter-patter of her tiny bubbles in about 8 years time! Secondly, very warm wishes for a happy future together go to Dave Bell and Amanda Tyrer, who have taken the buddy system to the extreme, and were married on August 12!

Well done to Andy Garton, who may now be found in his new role, Divemastering on various courses!

The sea is still warm, and there's plenty of diving to be done before the next Turtle News comes out!

See ya in the blue, Ant.

Courses

- Advanced Open Water**
 - Orientation 1st September
 - Open Water 3rd & 4th September
 - Orientation 6th October
 - Open Water 8th and 9th October
- Dry Suit Specialty**
 - Orientation 25th August
 - Open Water 3rd September
 - Orientation 29th September
 - Open Water 8th October
- Wreck Diver Specialty**
 - Open Water 27th-29th September, Plymouth
- Rescue Diver**
 - Commencing 18th September
- Emergency First Responder - 21st August**

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

Extravaganza!



So you like diving in the Red Sea? Then how about this: two weeks of the best diving the Red Sea has to offer! You'll take in sights from the wrecks of Abu Nuhas in the north; you'll visit the renowned Brothers Islands, with their dramatic walls, and possible encounters with oceanic white tip sharks; you'll see the imposing lighthouse on Daedalus Reef, and then dive the cold drop off in search of hammer-heads; you'll go to places with romantic names like Zabargad



and Rocky Island, where reef sharks bask on the sandy flats; you'll explore the stunning coral gardens of St John's Reef and the Fury Shoals, where mantas and dolphins might escort you on your dives; and you'll get to experience the tragedy of the "Salem Express" as you run back to Hurghada. And if all this is not tempting enough, you'll be based on the luxurious "MY Valerie", with en suite cabins, air con, and every whim catered for by the attentive crew!



KEEN? CONTACT RAY OR DAREN TO BOOK YOUR SPACE NOW!