

MOUTHPIECE

"THE KEYBOARD AND DIGITAL PRINTING IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD" THURSDAY 18TH MARCH 2004

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



It seems like it has been a long time since we have been diving regularly and at last we can get back to it!!! Having released the diving program early this year Pat has been able to put together a more comprehensive dive program hopefully suiting all of our needs. There are still a few places left though, so get in quick and don't miss out (a full program of both diving and social events is available from the website: www.surreyaquanauts.org.uk

< <http://www.surreyaquanauts.org.uk/> > .

Some of the dives arranged this year will be challenging, so whether you are booked on these or it is going to be your first dives of the year, makes sure you have fully checked your kit, and are appropriately "dived up".

Since the last issue of Mouthpiece the new members dinner, now an annual event, has been held and was again another successful evening out, enjoyed by all. Thanks again Pat.

The committee is currently organising a new range of club regalia, so keep your eyes peeled for the latest in Surrey Aquanauts fashions appearing on a cat walk near you! If you have any special request then please let me know.

On a slightly different note please can anyone who changes any details through out the year supply changes to me at chris.knights@zoom.co.uk so that we can keep the clubs record up to date.

Be Safe & Enjoy Your Diving.
Regards, Christopher Knights

YOU MAY HAVE BEEN FEELING ALONE LATELY, BUT NOW YOU CAN SLEEP SAFELY IN YOUR BEDS...

FIND OUT
WHY.
FULL STORY
ON PAGE 3

HAVE YOU
MADE YOUR
DIVE
BOOKINGS
FOR 2004 ?

There are still a few places left, so to be sure of having any dives this year, contact me, Pat Gibbon, Tel: 01483 770819, as soon as possible to secure your place.





DO'S COLUMN

Welcome to another year of diving. Time to get your kit together and possibly your skills after the long winter break. It is better to find your faults in the pool than on the first hard boat dive.

As you can see the hard boats are filling up fast. It is nice to see the keenness. For the more experienced members, there is a club rib to use, lets make use of it this year. I have been checking the medicals, I am a bit short, I have forms, so please ask.

Good luck to all of those going to the Red Sea for the first time, it should be a great experience & super fun.

CLUB INSTRUCTORS

I am still waiting for names for club instructor courses! come on all you budding dive leaders.

Talk to us. We will help you complete the course and then you will be able to help so much more within the club. Helping others is very rewarding. Just as you were helped, once upon a time, by others before you.

February saw our first talk. We are now better informed as to the workings of the late Concord I hope you all enjoyed it. This was followed by yet another games night testing our stamina & engineering skills. Well done to all who took part. We need a good turn out to make these nights successful. The games are tailored to give all a chance so come on down & have a go next time.

Have a Good Years Diving & remember, **"The Brass is out there"**.

Chris Knights

THURSDAY POOLSIDE HELPERS NEEDED

We are desperate to find some other people to offer Lifesaving Help at the poolside every Thursday. If you are a qualified diver you can do it - it is as simple as that.

If you are swimming OR not swimming and could just help out by being at the poolside, watching for anybody in difficulty, then please do so. Just put on the 'yellow jacket'.

Speak to Chris Knights if in doubt.

Doesn't take much. Obviously, if you are not swimming then you obviously do not need to pay entry, just tell Sally. Many thanks

NEWS ACROSS

NEW MEMBERS DINNER

Thanks to all those who turned up to the New Members Dinner at the Bridge Barn on Saturday 17th of January. The place was full to overflowing with a record 37 people turning up.

Angelike Gibbon (her indoors) did us proud and negotiated the cheapest dinner yet at £12.50 all inclusive of 3 course dinner, tea and coffee afterwards including the tip.

The food was excellent, served by a cheerful pair.

Tracey Norrie organised the "Bring Your Worst Christmas Present and Get Rid of the Bloody Thing Competition" which was a huge success and nothing were left.

Ed seat remained empty all evening on account of him forgetting the Dinned was on that evening, Thanks Ed for making me look good.

Paul Dawkins surprised us all by phoning one hour before and requesting a ticket. As you may know, he now works in Frankfurt, Germany and travels back as much as he can to go diving and visit us. Always a pleasure to see him.

Many thanks to Paul Godfrey and Darren Stribling for listening to Gills all evening. Most kind of you to put up with her.

With nobody disgracing themselves, the evening was over all too soon.

Thank you all so much for turning up. Always a pleasure to see so many people.

Without you, the members, the evenings event would have been empty and extremely lonely.

Such pearls of wisdom.



OVER HERE JUST BEFORE THE BIRTH

An old club member dropped into the pub a couple of weeks in a row to say hello before returning to America.

Chris Howard (pictured left) and Dariarse are due to have their first baby in May. Mother (pictured right) was looking stunning and well as they caught up on club gossip. We had to fight off OK Magazine for the exclusive rights to this story.

Full details of the birth with pictures of the actual event and the first pictures of the baby, will be published next issue, so get in early and make sure that your orders are placed to receive the magazine.

It was good to see them and we wish them all the best and hope that all goes well with the birth.

THE CLUB AS IT HAPPENED

UNTIE THAT YELLOW RIBBON, POP THOSE CHAMPAIGN CORKS, ... OUR SON IS BACK NOW A FULLY TRAINED MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL RESCUE



Brains Bangle

and exhausting, I do not know how I completed the course. I am very, very brave. AND, totally unselfishly, would do anything to save damsels in distress especially ones that look like Kylie or Mick Iles. I must add, that I look bloody handsome in my blue uniform and I am available for Hen Does and Pole Dancing any time and anywhere."

Completely underwhelmed by the interview so far, I had a couple of more pertinent, interesting questions to ask.

"Stephen, I could not fail to notice that you have something in your pouch. Is it a gun or are you just pleased to see me." (Editors Note: Sorry about that line, I know it was a bit naff but I am getting totally bored with this story line and need to move on).

"Now that you are a trained Member of International Rescue, what methods do you propose to employ to save the club from destruction, harm and danger?"

"Well Brains Bangle, Guinness, Guinness is at the heart of the clubs salvation and I aim to use it to its full potential."

"Finally Stephen, I need to resolve this issue once for all and put the whole affair to bed, so to speak."

"Is it true that your father is really Pat 'The Hood', or is it the third member of 'The Silver Fox Brigade, that father figure to us all, Chief Thunderturd, Brigadier Grahame Walker? After all, there are many members of the club who are totally confused."

In true star celebrity style, he replied, *"No comment - now f.k off four eyes."*



London Airport ground to a halt last week as one of OUR SONS returned to the Mother Club. Stephen Willett, Mighty Mallard, Chief Duckling flew into Heathrow amid scenes of utter disinterest. Thousands gathered everywhere and totally ignored him as he was welcomed back from Texas by nobody. Seldom had the authorities witnessed such scenes of apathy. Our Political and Homo Affairs Reporter, Brains Bangle, pictured right, was there to meet him off Thunderturd 2, as it touched down at 2.15pm local time to give him a damn hard drilling, sorry grilling.

"Stephen, on behalf of the population of England, I would like to welcome you back to this septic isle of ours - but unfortunately, I can't."

"How do you feel after your brave exploits in America, training under Jeff Tracy to become the first member of Surrey Aquanauts to become a Thunderturd muppet?"

"Well, Brains Bangle, it is actually not such a great surprise to be greeted by you in this manner, but I do think it is time you stoped shaking my appendage - my hand is actually here."

"Sorry about that Stephen. Now tell me, how does it feel to now be a member of International Rescue, and to be allowed to wear the famous IR Badge on your splendid ample chest."

"To be honest, it is not something we in Thunderturds like to talk about and modesty forbids me from mentioning it and I would certainly never use it as a means of gaining sympathy, admiration and lusting love from the females members of the human race because this would against our code of practice, be totally unfair and put me at an unfair advantage over all other members of mankind and lesser mortals. All I can say is that it was tough, so tough, difficult

“I LOVE MY JOB...”

Next time you have a bad day at work...think of this guy. Rob is a Commercial saturation Diver for Global Divers in Louisiana. He performs underwater repairs on offshore drilling rigs. Below is an E-mail he sent to his sister. She then sent it to radio station 103.2 on your FM dial in Wayne, Indiana, who was sponsoring a worst job experience contest.

Needless to say, she won. Now read on.....

Hi Sue,
Just another note from your bottom-dwelling brother. Last week I had a bad day at the office. I know you've been feeling down lately at work, so I thought I would share my dilemma with you to make you realise it's not so bad after all. Before I can tell you what happened to me, I first must bore you with a few technicalities of my job. As you know, my office lies at the bottom of the sea. I wear a suit to the office. It's a wetsuit. This time of year the water is quite cool. So what we do to keep warm is this: We have a diesel powered industrial water heater. This \$20,000 piece of equipment sucks the water out of the sea. It heats it to a delightful temperature. It then pumps it down to the diver through a garden hose, which is taped to the air hose.

Now this sounds like a darn good plan, and I've used it several times with no complaints. What I do, when I get to the bottom and start working, is take the hose and stuff it down the back of my wetsuit. This floods my whole suit with warm water. It's like working in a Jacuzzi.

Everything was going well until all of a sudden, my bum started to itch. So, of course, I scratched it. This only made things worse. Within a few seconds my bum started to burn. I pulled the hose out from my back, but the damage was done. In agony I realised what had happened. The hot water machine had sucked up a jellyfish and pumped it into my suit. Now since I don't have any hair on my back, the jellyfish couldn't stick to it. However, the crack of my bum was not as fortunate. When I scratched what I thought was an itch, I was actually grinding the jellyfish into the crack of my bum. I informed the dive supervisor of my dilemma over the communicator. His instructions were unclear due to the fact that he, along with five other divers, were all laughing hysterically. Needless to say I aborted the dive. I was instructed to make three agonising in-water decompression stops totalling thirty-five minutes before I could reach the surface to begin my chamber dry decompression. When I arrived at the surface, I as wearing nothing but my diving helmet. As I climbed out of the water, the medic, with tears of laughter running down his face, handed me a tube of cream and told me to rub it on my bum as soon as I got in the chamber.

The cream put the fire out, but I couldn't poo for two days because my bum was swollen shut. So, next time you're having a bad day at work, think about how much worse it would be if you had a jellyfish shoved up your backside!

Now repeat to yourself, "I love my job, I love my job, I love my....."

‘LEGEND’ IN NEW FERRY BOAT VENTURE ~ BUT IS IT WISE ?

Picture supplied by Steve Willett

After being successfully refloated by one of the Isle of Wight Lifeboats, the owners decided to put the boat to a new use, as a Freight Carrier. Nice idea - But was it wise ?

All old members will know the story, it is now 'Legendary' (sorry about that). One of our dive boats sunk on a dive around the Isle of Wight a few years ago. We still think that it was as a consequence of too much Indian food and beer the night before, as there were a few 'Chubbily Challenged' divers on board.

Fortunately, nobody was hurt, mainly because GOD was on board, but, several members lost a lot of kit, money and car keys.



The legal process still grinds on, and has now reached a crescendo of inactivity.

But the main thing to celebrate here is - A NEW WRECK TO DIVE...

Small Right Insert: Last picture of Legend after the sinking



NEW YEAR'S DAY DIVE

By Grabame Walker



Above: The WOMEN wait for their men folk to return, like the loyal 'fluffy' things they are.

This year was a bit different as there was actually a purpose to it all. A dinghy owner from Littleton Sailing Club had lost some equipment overboard during December and we had been requested to find it. (Three of us spent an hour in the water on Christmas Eve, looking for – and recovering – a sail, but that's another story! Suffice it to say that the renowned brass hunter of the club is also lucky with sails.) This time we were looking for the rudder, but unfortunately we did not find it. Nothing to do with water temperature, disorganised searching techniques, or pub time approaching, of course. Although the viz was very good, the possible location of the rudder was not nearly so clear. Perhaps understandably, when a dinghy capsizes the crew have other things to think about rather than trying to take transits.

Needless to say the turnout at the pub was much better than at the lake, and as with a lot of diving at Littleton, taking about it afterwards was much better than doing it. A good time was had by all. **Then, just as everyone was finally leaving the pub, who should arrive but our beloved Editor of Mouthpiece! Typical or what?**

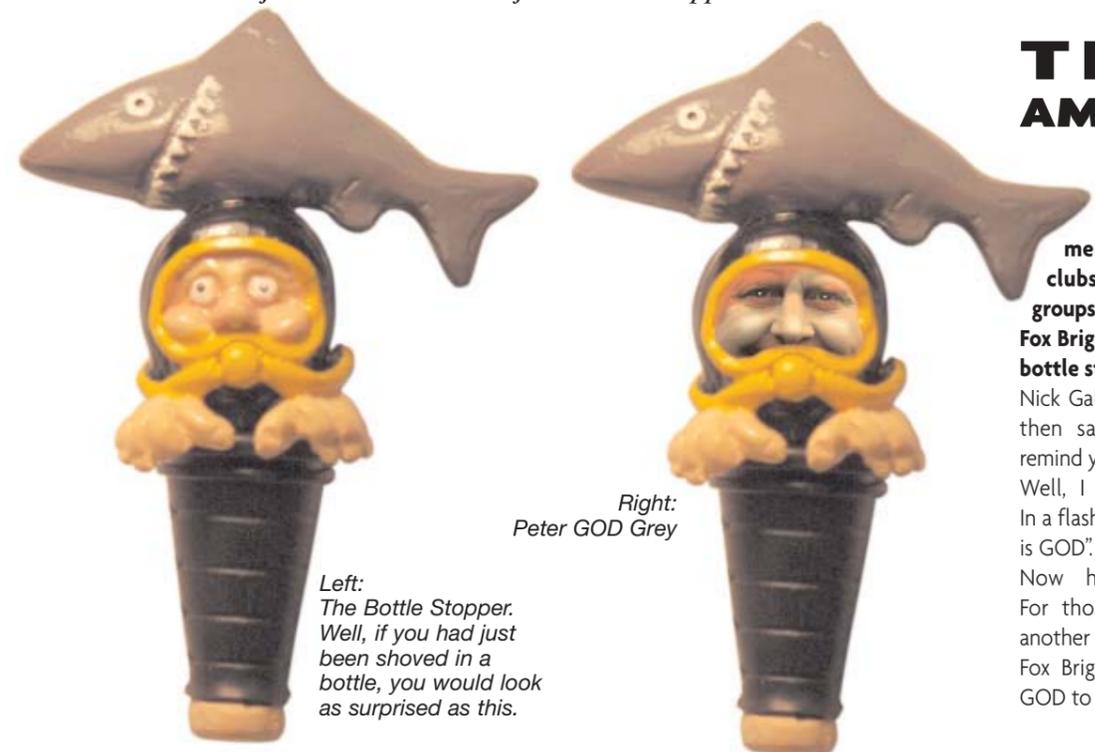
The scene at the pub as 'The Editor' arrives at the pub. At least he had a cheap round of drinks.



Well, some of us managed to get up in time and get in the water again for this annual event. Perhaps because the weather was a bit milder this year we managed a total of six divers. There were the regulars, Chris Knights; the occasional, Mick Iles, Andy Richmond and Grahame Walker; and the first timers, Brian Johnston and James Linehan. One of the usual regulars (and on one previous icy occasion, the only diver), Steve Willett, was present in body. Unfortunately, the spirit was still much too much in evidence to permit him to dive. He must have had a very good evening the night before! As ever, there were more onlookers than divers, supplying the usual encouragement.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH OR WHAT

Thanks to Nick Galt for the use and idea of the Bottle Stopper



Left: The Bottle Stopper. Well, if you had just been shoved in a bottle, you would look as surprised as this.

Right: Peter GOD Grey

TRULY AMAZING & UNCANNY!

Just after Christmas, a member of one of the clubs elite diving sub-groups, known as 'the Silver Fox Brigade', handed me a wine bottle stopper.

Nick Galt, for I cannot tell a lie, then said to me, "Does this remind you of anybody". Well, I needed no prompting. In a flash (as is my way), I said, "It is GOD".

Now how spooky is that. For those who do not know, another member of 'the Silver Fox Brigade' is Peter Grey - or GOD to us lesser mortals.

ROCKY HORROR DINNER DANCE

It promised to be another spectacular, raunchy party, held as usual at Chobham Village Hall, and it was. Such a shame that the Dive Show decided to alter its date and have it on the same weekend as our Dinner Dance. The least they could have done was to contact me. Bastards.

This meant that the numbers attending were lower than normal, so we only just broke even on the event, thanks to some extremely tight budgeting and generosity of Sue. Again, many thanks.

However, because of the Raffle, very well organised by Traci millett and Dr, Nicky and contributions from you all, we managed to raised £310 in dosh for the club. Brilliant

Anyway, we had new caterers this year, as the last lot, Maria and Crowd, decided to retire.

Fortunately for us, we have a professional caterer in our club. **SUE PARFETT**, one of our longest serving members, was the caterer this time AND she did an absolutely fabulous job. We all thank her so much for her efforts. Chef Henry was her only paid helper, and our own **JANE WEISZ** did an equally splendid job, rushing around like a rushing around thing, serving etc, and being Jane. Without belittling Maria's great food of past years, Sue's food was the best that we have ever had. I have no idea how she did it so well, so tasty, at such a cost.

Thanks Sue
(pictures left having a rare but well deserved rest)



I was sorry that the Magician, supplied for your entertainment, did not make a bigger impression. He was young and did his best and was probably a bit daunted by such a rabble of divers.

He also supplied the 'Disco' although I hate that word. If anybody can suggest a new, good DJ for next year, it would really be appreciated.

The Fancy Dress theme, as always, was optional, but for those brave enough to indulge us, the theme of 'The Rocky Horror Show', was enough to bring out the wierd from the woodwork and present us all with our own HORRORS.

Nick Galt as Frankinferter, was the best dressed male, Tim Hayter (pictured right) was overall winner as best dressed female and Rowena, Traci and Linda bestest females and overall winner, judged by a select group of totally impartial judicators, who were bribed with the promise of sexual favours.

He looked terribly white and goolish in his brilliant costume. Congratulations Nick. However, I have a confession to make. I promised a prize to the best, but forgot to present it immediately and as a result of the delay, Hajo drank your prize, a bottle of bubbly which he grabbed from me - sorry.

Thanks to all those who helped with the laying out and decorating of the room - Sally Walker, Chris Knights, Traci millett Millett, Sarah and Hajo, AndyBonze, Jane, Christopher, Linda and Andy BinglyBanglyBongles (sorry if I got the spelling wrong and left anybody out), and also to the many who cleared up afterwards. You all did a good job.

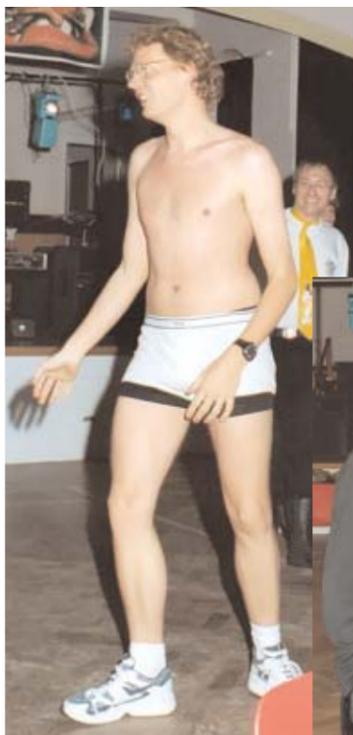
This event is always a team effort, and none of it would be possible but for you, the members, coming. Please continue to do so. It is for you to enjoy and I thank you all for turning up.

Tim Hayter as 'The Total Slut' above, why do blokes just love dressing up as camp sluts. He does it so well.

BinglyBonglyBangles below. Nick and Peter without makeup or fancy dress (God usually looks like that).

Left, the two drunks, Brian and Simon - no change there.

Far left, Hajo near naked - Don't ask.



This letter was sent under plain brown envelope and comes from a highly respected, handsome, fit young healthy adult male that is a very handsome devil.

Letter to the Doctors:

Dear Doctors,

I am so pleased that you are there. I have a medical problem and I do not know what to do about it.

My problem is a deep down below problem. About 6 months ago, I noticed that I had a permanent bloated feeling and that I was unable to pass any stools. Chairs, tables, club hammers did not seem to be a problem, but for the life of me, I could not pass any stools from my system. The problem is continuing and i am desperate for some relief. Without a solution from yourselves, I fear that I will never be able to dive again. Please can you help me, a poor member.

Please, as it is very personal and embarrassing problem, I would be forever in your debt, if you could help me, keep the details a total secret and keep this letter anonymous, and not reveal my name.

Reply from the Doctors:

Dear Pat

We have today received your X-Ray from the Radiology Department. Yours is an extremely rare complaint. Seldom have we ever come across such a difficult case to diagnose. It has taxed our skills to the limits. We have raised the issue with the Medical Council and have published a paper in the Lancet We have finally found the answer to your problem.

It would appear that you have **Digitalis Insetus Rectumnastyus**. we strongly recommend an operation and if we successful, we are sure that we can permanently remove the finger from your bum. I thank you.

Do you remember back in 1998, "The Dive Doctor" had a regular slot in this great magazine.

Unfortunately he has to go off to save the world, but we have since found a panel of 4 esteemed noteworthy doctors, willing to take up the fallen mantel and offer assistance to anybody in the club who has a dive related medical problem or just a medical problem.

All details and names will be kept in strict confidence and we promise to abide by The Data Protection Act.

~ Give us a call ~
no problem too big or too small



The John Pos Section of the Magazine

If you would like your own section of the magazine, just like John, then just swamp me with stories, pictures and articles as he does. Dumping always works

HAWAIIAN DIVING ADVENTURE

By John Pos

Angela and I were spending ten days in Waikiki Beach Ohahu, Hawaii at the Imperial Hotel about 50 m from the beach. Surrounded by a forest of 20 plus story high rise hotels and apartments where was the paradise I was expecting? I hoped to find it underwater. The coral was less spectacular than the Red Sea as the island is lashed by some of the largest waves in the world. More a surfing paradise I feel than for divers. I took Angela Snorkelling onto the world famous Waikiki Break about 100m off the beach and we were surrounded by over a hundred surfers. A bit hairy for Angela but I enjoyed it.

Hanauma Bay is the premier snorkelling spot on Oahu. It is a quite unique spot as it is a bay formed within an extinct volcanic crater and comprises steep cliffs on three sides. About one third of the bay comprises shallow coral reefs which are well protected from the famous Hawaiiin Swell. Hanauma bay reminds me of the beach in the movie The Beach as it has a very nice beach sheltered from the perpetual summer trade winds. It is possibly the most beautiful coastal spot on the island. Angela and I spent 2 fantastic days snorkelling there.

We also did the usual tourist thing of visiting the Waimea Falls Park on Waimea Bay where we watched some amazing high diving from the top of the 60ft high water fall. Waimea Bay is world renowned as the spot where the largest waves in the world have been ridden in a surfing competition. We saw a demonstration of Hawaiian martial art and we were introduced to a particularly nasty weapon made out of sharks teeth. The photo shows a Hawaiian maiden defending her honour with this nasty device which is just about to severely dampen the ardour of her suitor.



Left: Better than a chastity belt. Hawaiian shark tooth club being applied to suitor

Below:
Was that 5 shots or six?
I can't remember.
Are you feeling lucky Punk!?



Of course we also visited Pearl Harbour to see the USS Arizona Memorial, the USS Bowfin (WWII Sub) and the Battleship Missouri.

The Missouri at around 45,000 tonnes is twice as large as the German first world war battleships in Scapa Flow. It's nine 16 in guns could hurl 2600lb shells 35 miles. The photo shows the view along the barrels of these guns. Dirty Harry would love this six shooter. Enough foreplay lets get to the serious stuff of scuba diving (extracted from my trip diary).

Saturday 12 April

I was picked up at 7.30am outside my hotel and taken to the Kewalo Basin to meet up with the dive boat. I had booked the dive through South Sea Aquatics. I had phoned around and found the cheapest price which was \$80 for 2 dives. I found out that some people were paying around \$100 to \$120 for the same dive. I was learning that this is very common in Hawaii where everyone tries to maximise their profit.



Loading the dive boat at Kewalo Basin for a dive on the Sea Tiger

We waited for the boat to be loaded and were joined by a bunch of divers from the AAA dive shop. No one wanted to look at my qualifications or log books.

Editors Note: "Bloody good job or you John, otherwise you would have kicked you off the dive boat"

Our first dive was on the Sea Tiger which is a 168ft trawler sunk in 1999 in about 35m of water. It sits in the sand even keel. My buddy was a member of the crew Akiya a Japanese Padi dive master. He was an excellent guide and led me through the various swim throughs in the wreck. The wreck was surrounded by an amazing shoal of eagle rays that swam with languid strokes around the wreck. Akiya also pointed out two frog fish to me. As usual I nearly put my hand on the second frog fish while looking at the first. I remember doing the same thing while looking at a Stone fish in the Red Sea. The wheel house was interesting, it still had the brass compass mounted. I wonder how long that would have lasted in the UK.

Our second dive was on the Kewalo pipe line just off the Kewalo basin Marina. It was an old disused concrete pipeline through the reef. The reef coral was relatively small and showed much damage from Hurricanes. We saw a shovel nosed lobster and two types of Morays. Apparently Hawaii has the most different types of Morays in the world.

Monday 14 April

7.30 am I was picked up at my hotel by the dive charter boat skipper. We set out from the Kewalo Basin and about 15minutes later we were above the YO-257. 175ft naval oiler sank in 1989 in 30m of water. The wreck has been well opened up with large hatch ways open up in both port and starboard sides. What makes this wreck site particularly good is that the St Pedro a 125ft ex Chinese smuggling boat has been sunk about 25m away from the YO-257. I has the same buddy as before namely Akiya. As before he was an excellent guide. As we had to take in two wrecks all within the no deco limit Akiya set a very demanding finning pace.

We headed down the mooring rope over the YO-257 and directly to the St Pedro. The vis was awesome and we could see the whole ship from bow to stern silhouetted against the surface light. What a site! If we only had vis like this in the UK. We headed directly down into the forward hold where we saw a large pacific green turtle and a small shark. We then headed up to the wheelhouse and then swam back to the YO-257. On route we swam with a large pacific green turtle which had a large shark bite wound in its side which had healed. We swam up from the bow and could see the whole ship lying even keel on the bed. We swam along the deck and through a few swim throughs before we reached the wheel house.

I was just getting into the dive when Akiya in true PADI Divemaster mode indicated that we were a couple of minutes away from deco time and should head back to the anchor rope. When we got to the anchor rope we realised that the dive boat was gone. It appeared the mooring line had broken. Akiya went into his crewman mode abandoned the safety stop and headed to the surface with the mooring line in his hand to find the lost boat. I looked back down the line and saw a gaggle of divers below us looking rather concerned. When the boat had been tied up again we resurfaced. The whole episode was too much for one of the divers who surfaced in a column of bubbles. My only regret was that I didn't see the tourist submarine that frequents the wreck.

The second dive was on Kewalo reef. Which was next to the Kewalo pipeline dive of a few days before. Akiya lead me along the reef which varied between 10 -17m in depth. We ended up back on the pipeline and Akiya pointed out two frog fish. I am really not good at spotting these critters. It took me some time to understand what I was looking at. They are the strangest looking fish who braced themselves against the pipe on short stumpy feet. We also saw trumpet fish and some more morays. We had a nice long dive about 50 minutes.

Friday 18th April

I was picked up by Captain Bruce's Dive Charters at 7.30 am. It was an hour drive from Waikiki to Waianae Harbour on the West Coast of Oahu. We waited while the tanks were loaded onto their dive boat. I inspected the modern small craft harbour and note the dolos armour units. They were quite organised and had our names next to our two tanks. Again no one wanted to look at my qualifications or log books. When I asked about buddies I was told we would dive as a group following Derek Horan the Divemaster. I soon found out this meant do as you like! I ended up effectively diving solo on the fringes of the group. Most relaxed!

We dived on the Mahi an 186ft long American Minesweeper sunk in 1980 in about 28m if water. The sea was flat calm and when we anchored above the wreck I could see the whole ship from the surface! Absolutely awesome! The ship was had buried itself about two metres deep in the coral reef. I am not sure that it punched into the reef when it sunk or worked its way into the reef during storms. The ship showed extensive storm damage. I was able to penetrate down into the engine room and explore the whole inside of the stern section.

I then swam along the length of the ship to the bow and dropped down on the sea bed where I saw a shoal of eagle rays. I swam

towards them against a fair current and lay below them on the sea bed as they held station flapping away into the steady current. What beautiful creatures! Like a flock of giant magpies. I was extremely reluctant to finish the dive but was forced to by a beckoning Derek stationed on the deck at the bottom of the shot line. It turned out that everyone had an excellent dive and did not want to surface. Given the absolutely perfect conditions it was hardly surprising.



Dive Boat above the Makaha Caverns

Our second dive was if anything better! We dived on the Makaha Caverns off Lahilahi Point at Makaha. The caverns were the remains of volcanic lava tubes in which the red hot magma flowed into the sea. A most amazing dive. I spent 71 minutes exploring the complex of interlocking caves at depths of about 10 to 12m with the vis in the 25 to 30m range. I found a number of Pacific Green Turtles sleeping in the caves. I also spent some time lying high on a ledge in one of the caverns watching a procession of turtles and divers swimming through the caverns totally oblivious of my presence. It was a totally surreal experience. I realised that most divers don't really take in their surroundings.

The bottom of the cavern had a deposit about a metre deep of broken stag horn coral that had been washed into the cavern during hurricanes. The broken coral had fascinating shapes and I sorted through the pieces like a kid engrossed with his toy soldiers. Unfortunately I had to leave them behind. Every now and then I checked that the dive boat had not left me by peeking through a small hole in the cavern roof. I was in the water about 20 to 30 minutes longer than most of the other divers. Fortunately one of the instructors was taking photos around the caverns so no one was too fussed. As I said these guys were relaxed.

With the long dives and the long drive back to Waikiki I only got back to the Hotel around 2.30pm. After a quick shower it was off to Hooters at the Aloha Centre for an early supper. I can get used to being served food by blonde bimbos in skimpy well filled tank tops and running shorts. I pondered the meaning of Hooters through the bottom of my beer glass as I attacked the famous Hooters wings.(Angela was not amused).

Verdict

Not primarily a diving destination, much more a surfing destination. Coral generally of poor quality due to large seas and relatively high latitude. Accommodation and eating out is expensive, however we got round this by buying relatively cheap steaks at the supermarket and bbq them in the beach. A few good wrecks which I have described and a very good snorkelling spot at Hanauma bay. You will need a few weeks to explore all of the Hawaiian islands which are spread out over a few hundred kms. Generally well worth a visit.

ADRENALINE DIVING!

Shark Diving on the Protea Banks

By John Pos, the only Diving Member who bothers to write about his experiences and without whom, this RAG would be empty of anything to do with diving

This is an account of three of the best dives in my life. I managed to get in the right place at the right time to experience some of the most amazing shark diving I have seen. Not the staged stuff where sharks are drawn in by bait as in the Caribbean but shoals of shark attracted by large shoals of fish. The spot the Protea Bank off Shelly Beach in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa. What follows is an account of these dives extracted from my trip diary.

Dive 1- Saturday 27 September

In the morning I got on the phone to try and organise a dive on the Protea Banks. I organised a dive at 11am with African Dive Adventures through their sister dive shop Aqua Planet in Shelly Beach. I got to the launch site at about 10am and met up with Roland Mauz who runs African Dive Adventures when he returned with the first group. I was pleased to be able to get a 15l tank because I was in for a deep dive.

The Protea Banks is a serious dive as it rises from about 70m to its shallowest point the western pinnacle which reaches about 35m depth. The launching site is Shelly Beach Harbour which is simply a concrete ramp on the upper part of the beach. The sea was very rough with a large swell and strong wind. In knew that that the surf launching was going to be interesting. I was not disappointed. We waited for a long while and then the skipper went for it. Unfortunately we were caught by a huge breaker which sneaked up behind an even bigger one. "Hold on!" Roland shouted as we punched through the wave. The large rib went almost vertical while we all threw ourselves forward to try and bring the bow down. We were flying through the air and it seemed like an age before the bow came down and we hit the water with a crash. By this time my life had flashed before my eyes and I had nearly had a heart attack. I reckoned after the boat ride the sharks would be a breeze. One of the guys on board, a one legged Johannesburger, asked if he could get air miles as we had been in the air so long. It didn't even raise a smile from our three Germans each hugging gigantic £2000 cameras to their chests.

When we got to the dive site about 30 minutes later we kitted up and then Roland took us to the exact spot, told us to deflated our BCDs, and follow him down to the bottom at 36m as quickly as we could so we did not miss the pinnacle. We flipped over backwards and bombed to the bottom following Roland as the line streamed from his reel as he powered to the bottom. Roland tied his reel to the side of a gully which opened into two caves. My buddy was a nubile young blonde called Alison which made a very nice change. As I descended into the gully Alison motioned to me and I narrowly avoided head butting a 9ft ragged tooth shark (known as a Sand Tiger in other parts of the world) in the belly. That got my heart pounding. It was quite dark underwater as the sky was overcast and about the first 20m of water was quite murky with about 3 to 4 m

vis opening out to about 20m vis underneath. I had my back up torch with me in my BCD pocket and shone it into the caves. The caves were full of large raggies lying peacefully on the bed in the far reaches of the caves, that was of course until the Germans arrived with their gigantic strobes. Then Roland called us with his underwater hooter to move to the next set of caves and this chased a number of the raggies out of the caves. Now I know why they are called Tigers. That got the old heart pumping again. Roland calls this Adrenaline Diving! He was not kidding.

Left: Sand Tiger Shark Eye Ball to Eye Ball

Alison then showed me a swim through which was quite tight and then we moved through a much

larger swim through and then on to a much larger cave. This was awesome, it was the size of a triple garage illuminated by a central hole in its roof. We lay on the floor of the cave watching a 12 ft and an 8 ft raggie swim slowly around the cave moving in out of the ceiling light and illuminated by my torch. At one stage they headed straight for us but turned away at the last second. Awesome man! While in the cave I heard my computer alarm go off, we had been down less than 15 minutes and already I was in deco. We were deep. Roland hooted for us to start a slow ascent. As we moved upwards a couple of raggies followed us up and were joined by three black tip reef sharks. Could this dive get any better? Yes it could! At about 18m depth we looked up and two 12ft long hammer head sharks passed directly over us. Their hammer heads clearly silhouetted against the bright surface. Unbelievable! And to think that the last time I dived this site I didn't see a shark!

I reflected that I had just had three hairy diving weekends in a row. On the 14 Sep I had been run over by the Loyal Helper and nearly chopped to mincemeat by the propeller, the following Saturday I had been stuck in the fo'c'sle of the wreck of the Rockeater 35m down in Smitswinkel Bay, Cape Town while my buddy had a full on panic attack and now this! Who said Scuba diving is boring.

Dive2-Monday 29 September

Got down to Shelly Beach harbour at 7.30 pm to meet up with the African Dive Adventures guys. Organised my 15 l tank and weights and then helped the guys launch the boat. The sea was quite calm and the tide was very low so we had quite a battle as the tow vehicle can only operate on the concrete ramp and at low tide the sea was quite far from the toe of the ramp. No air miles this time with the launch. The sea was quite flat and we had a very nice ride out to Protea Banks. This is how it should be. On the journey to the dive site I was telling my dive buddy James about my previous dive. I told him to watch out for the amorous male ragged tooth sharks. I explained that as sharks don't have arms they grab hold of the female with their teeth as they make love.

We flipped back wards into the water and bombed down into the depths following Roland. The first 15 or so meters were very murky so imagine our surprise when we broke through the murk into the clear water below to find ourselves surrounded by about 15 to 20 raggies ranging in size from 6 to 12 ft. We were absolutely surrounded by sharks. I turned my head to the left there was a shark next to me. I turn me head slightly up and looked down the throat of another. I turned my head to the right and one passed by a meter away. The funny thing is I felt no fear, I was simply overwhelmed by the experience. I was having one of those rare almost religious experiences called Rapture of the Deep when awe is more powerful than fear. As we drifted down to the caves below our toothed disciples parting to allow our passage. Every now and then a diver spooked one of the sharks. It was as though a slow motion scene had suddenly been speeded up. Suddenly the sharks smooth silky body was transformed into hard brutal mussel that rippled in waves through their skin as they bolted away. The caves were empty, the sharks were obviously enjoying the calm conditions.

Right: Sand Tiger Shark. What fine teeth you have!

We continued on through the swim through to the second much larger cave which was also largely empty, again a large congregation of raggies were picnicking out side. I spent some time in the cave with Roland looking for shark teeth and was fortunate enough to find two which I slipped under the sleeve of my wet suit. We were into deco and we descended slowly through our toothy friends trying not to disturb their picnic, not wanting to become the main course. Unfortunately we saw no hammer heads on the way up. When I got to the surface I found I was bleeding, those shark teeth I had slid under the sleeve of my Jacket were sharper than I had thought. I had nearly become guest of honour at the raggies picnic.

Dive 3-Tuesday 30 September

I was down at Shelly Beach Harbour again at 7.30 am. I wanted more. Unfortunately the weather had turned windy again and the sky was over cast. Also the swell had picked up again. Also we were carrying passengers, two young teenage girls and a young lad of about 6 years old. Not a good idea. We were joined by two of the Germans from Saturday and an American. They made a happy trio sitting on the pontoon of the rib clutching their gigantic cameras to their chests. The American Chester was my buddy. The exist was exiting but happily un-eventful. As we travelled out the bank the wind and the swell picked up dramatically and our passengers become green. Even the site of copper sharks broaching as the chased fish didn't raise their spirits. My buddy was not looking happy as we dogged the large swells. "I will meet you on the bottom" I said.

I flipped over the side, located the DL as he plunged to the bottom and powered after him. We were in a very strong current and I could see Roland below battling to reach the gully above the first set of caves and then tie his buoy line to the rocks. Two large groupers darted out of the gully when he arrived. It was a battle to

reach the caves and when we did we were three divers short. My American buddy and the two female divers had not made it to the bottom. The boat skipper revved his engine three time to indicate all three divers were aboard.



Above: Sand Tigers in Cave

With the strong current all the raggies where inside the caves and even the antics of the Germans couldn't coax them from the caves. They just stared at as blankly from behind their toothy grins and waited for us to leave. Which we did with 15minutes bottom time we had to move on. Through the swim trough and onto the large cave passing a large Marbled ray on the way. Again this cave was filled with raggies. The site of a large one legged diver and his buddy descending into their home was too much for one 12 ft raggie that took off and rammed head first into the roof of the cave. We could hear the crunch under water. He then trashed around inside the cave stirring up all his buddies one of who brushed past me on the way out. Being stuck in a cave of large frenzied sand tiger sharks was a little too hairy for my taste. We ascended up through the shoal of agitated raggies who were further stirred up by the Germans and their strobes.

We entered the murky layer and suddenly Roland was pounding his head with his fist. No he wasn't going mad he was giving the sign for hammer heads. We were in a middle of a large shoal of 12 ft hammer head sharks. What made it scary was they were moving fast in water with about 4m vis. These huge forms were gliding past us at the limit of our visibility like ghostly nightmarish apparitions. Not for the faint hearted. Another rapture of the deep moment.

Was this an awesome dive or what?

Left: Hitting the sand at Shelly Beach



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IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY DURING 2004

Please keep these date free NOW

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th March 2004	First hard boat dive of the year. Loyal Helper out of Pool, Dorset. Bookings now being taken for all dives.
Friday 26th March to 2nd April 2004	Red Sea Diving Expedition. Peter Grey taking bookings now.
Sunday 4th July 2004	Club BBQ by the side of the River Thames at Laleham. It is really nice there.
Saturday 13th November 2004	Annual Dinner Dance

THE CLUB NEEDS DIVE LEADERS to come forward and TRAIN TO BE ADVANCED DIVERS and above to help with the training of the new intake . Please help by contacting Chris Knights. The club will help with the expense of training so why not improve your diving skills AND put something back into your club ~ what have you to lose ?.

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"Quotes of the month"

by
Captain Anonymous
the little bogy man who is
always listening over your shoulder
~ so be warned !

" Couldn't get the right
portion to go down ??? "

James Linehan's wife
October 2003

" He has to have it
once a year "

Sally about Grahame
Cricketers Pub
October 2003

" No, no, I have to do it
myself now, these days "

Grahame.s reply to Sally
Cricketers Pub
October 2003



" Do you want me
to go down ? "

Dr. Nicky to Steve, Cricketers
Pub, October 2003

" ?**!*gulp!** "

Steve's answer Cricketers Pub
October 2003

HAVING A BAD DAY? JUST REMEMBER, IT COULD BE WORSE...

The average cost of saving and rehabilitating a seal after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska was \$80,000. At a special ceremony, two of the most expensively saved animals were being released back into the wild amid cheers and applause from onlookers.

A minute later, in full view, a killer whale ate them both.

Frank was excited about his new rifle and decided to try bear hunting. He travelled up to Alaska, spotted a small brown bear and shot it. Soon after there was a tap on his shoulder, and he turned around to see a big black bear. The black bear said, "That was a very bad mistake. That was my cousin. I'm going to give you two choices. Either I maul you to death or we have sex." After considering briefly, Frank decided to accept the latter alternative. So the black bear had his way with Frank. Even though he felt sore for two weeks, Frank soon recovered and vowed revenge. He headed out on another trip to Alaska where he found the black bear and shot it dead. Right after, there was another tap on his shoulder. This time a huge grizzly bear stood right next to him. The grizzly said, "That was a big mistake, Frank. That was my cousin and you've got two choices: Either I maul you to death or we have rough sex." Again, Frank thought it was better to cooperate with the grizzly bear than be mauled to death. So the grizzly had his way with Frank. Although he survived, it took several months before Frank fully recovered. Now Frank was completely outraged, so he headed back to Alaska and managed to track down the grizzly bear and shot it. He felt sweet revenge, but then, moments later, there was a tap on his shoulder. He turned around to find a giant polar bear standing there. The polar bear looked at him and said, "Admit it Frank, you don't come here for the hunting, do you?"

Frank Hoxley was not available for comment.