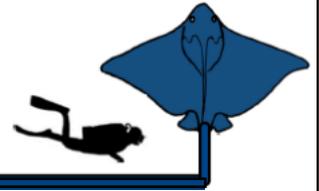


FISH-TAILS

Haslemere Sub Aqua Club

August 2013



Summer Programme 1st to 29th August

We will be back to normal club training nights at the Herons from **Thursday 5th September** — every Thursday until Christmas, except for the Club's AGM on Thursday 28th November.

Thurs Aug 29th

Last of the special summer events **this Thursday**

Boat Shed Barbecue and diving jumble

A very informal social gathering with a barbecue beside the boatshed. Also a great opportunity for trainees to buy second hand bits of kit – come along and snap up a bargain, making use of divers' tendencies to replace perfectly functional kit when something newer or shinier or sleeker comes out!

Thurs Aug 1st - Navigating the Devil's Punchbowl



The annual summer programme kicked off on Thursday 1st August with a navigation session at the Devil's Punchbowl. Under Mike T's leadership, members found their way up to the Gibbet to enjoy views north towards London. GPS and compasses returned them safely back to Hindhead for a pint.

Thurs Aug 8th

- Deep Spectrum Pool
Delayed SMBs were popping up all over the Spectrum's 4m pool, and dry suits and new kit were being checked out, making use of the extra water depth. Thanks to Liz for all the organising and transporting kit.



Thurs Aug 15th - Fantastic Farne Islands

HSAC headed north in force on this Thursday, for the Club's annual long weekend away – this year to the rugged Farne Islands where close encounters with seals awaited – **more on that later from Yvette.**

Seahouses hosted 25 of us, The Links Hotel arose early to feed us breakfast at 7.30am. Billy Shields' Glad Tidings VII, now equipped with a divers' lift and a bucket for our comfort, transported us from the pretty harbour out to the islands for two memorable dives each day.



The Ship, the Bamburgh Castle, Links Hotel and Indian Brasserie each managed to fit all of us in together for dinner on consecutive nights. Thanks to Sandy Catnach for booking and orchestrating the weekend, using her finely honed wedding skills to arrange room-sharing, and marshalling the drinks kitty. Thanks to Yvette and Steve B for carting around bootfulls of nitrox cylinders for fills, and to Yvette for bumper orders of fresh sandwiches from the bakery, and to everyone for great company!



Thurs Aug 22nd -

Skittling in Liphook

Forwards, backwards, right-handed and left, the girls team won more of the skittles matches than the two boys teams!!

Thanks to Mark for organizing another Thursday social gathering as part of the Summer Programme.



Training

SAA Regional Courses

Check the SAA list of courses undertaken outside the Club by the SAA regionally. This includes in the South East:

Diver Rescue:

28/09/2013 -1 Day Diver Rescue Theory
12/10/2013 -2 Day Diver Rescue Practical

26/10/2013 -1 Day **Oxygen/Emergency Diver First Aid**
09/11/2013 -2 Day **Club Instructor**

Contact our Regional Rep: Stefan Heathfield for more info: serep@saa.org.uk 07709276374

To book, you need to submit a NCAF (National Course Application Form) to Irene at SAA HQ admin@saa.org.uk by 26th September.

HSAC Lectures

Thanks to Peter for his continual diligence in organising the lecture programme, which has covered various parts of the Elementary, Open Water and Club Diver training over the past few months, with subjects as diverse as diving emergencies and diver rescue to protective clothing and metabolism, respiration and circulation.

NITROX training – 5th May



Grateful thanks to Chris Pitts for a very informative day of nitrox training in the comfortable venue of Churt Club. Chris sent out qualification cards, and his "congratulations to Jim, Paul, Tony, Liz, Fox and Liam (and technically Bryony, even though she already has the ticket) for passing the SAA Club Nitrox course on Sunday with flying colours."



Compressor

Please speak to Chris if you are interested in contributing to a project to set the Club's compressor up for nitrox.

Social - Dates for your diaries

Summer BBQ Sat 7th September

Again to be held in Sandy Catnach's wonderful garden! Please let Tony and Sandy know if you are able to attend, and if you would like to pitch a tent to stay the night.

Clay Shooting - Sun 15th September

Back by popular demand following the success of last year, Paul Williams is organizing a repeat Clay shoot event at Gunners' Wood near Priors Dean on the Petersfield to Ropley Road, followed by a 2-course lunch at the White Horse at Prior's Dean (the pub with no name!) Please book as soon as possible with Paul.

Dinner Dance – Saturday 14th December

Back at the Punch Bowl Hotel at Hindhead with live music provided by "The Alex and Phil Extravaganza". This venue has proved popular and fun the last two years so please let Fox know if you can go - all welcome including friends and relatives.

Our social team, Tony and Fox, have been busy with several great events already, including:

Wine and Food Night - 11th May



Thanks to Tony and Anne and their amazing team, who transformed Liphook Village Hall and cooked and delivered a beautifully-presented selection of gastronomic delights to suit each of the 7 wines in turn. Tray after tray appeared bearing creations such as avocado and pea shots, smoked salmon mousse, speared prawns with mange tout, endive gondolas with lemon hummus, chauvinist pig with saucy dip, and then . . . chocolate brownies with curacao creammmmmmmmm.



The wine flowed as readily as water, from bubbly through light whites to full-bodied reds and desert wines, each accompanied by a narrative about its origins from the knowledgeable and entertaining supplier of the numerous crates, from the General Wine Company.

Quiz night - 9th March

Another fun quiz evening when 30 members and friends pitted their wits against the quiz master at the Beacon Hill United Reformed Church Hall – thanks to Fox and his team for organizing this, and for all the yummy puddings!

Horse racing at Goodwood - 21st June

Great thanks to Clare who once again organized a group booking to the Friday evening races at Goodwood. The evening included 6 races – with tickets from the Gordon's enclosure (great because there is good access to the parade ring as well as the course itself) – followed by an opportunity to party on with Trevor Nelson (from Radio 1) in DJ role.

Diving

The full dive calendar was formulated early in the year, dates and sites sketched out, organizers, towers and marshals listed.

It has been subject to a few changes due to one thing or another, mostly issues with the weather and the boats!

Boat Check

First item on the list was a boat check-out on Easter Saturday 30th March, when the temperatures were still barely nudging above zero – Steve's optimistic e-mail noted that *'We generally take the boats out for a bit of a test run and to blow the cobwebs out before we start diving in earnest.'* Why he felt the need to mention that we would *'have an extra day to recover'* I'm not sure, but he also mentioned sea spray and being blown out, and advised dry suits, sandwiches and a flask!

In the event, Cobra has suffered a number of indignities this season, including further engine troubles and a slight missing bung issue leading to it being swamped and limping home to the sound of bailing without a bucket.

Diving season?

Organized in the face of wintry rain and frosts persisting into the spring, early year dives were beaten back to the drawing board by the weather.

John organised a dive in Chepstow for early April, for several people needing qualifying dives, with an encouraging e-mail: *'it's freezing and we're going diving'*!! Ten divers were on the list to dive, but very cold weather and sickness led to cancellation.

Only Chris, it seemed, reporting from 35°C air and 23°C water in the Red Sea, had managed to dip his head under the water. Presumably in an attempt to avoid feelings of envy, his message from afar was tempered with advice from a diver he'd met who had witnessed a number of incidents, and listed the things we should tell the marshal to help with searches in the case of incidents. The emergency services will ask not just entry time and expected re-surfacing time, but also colour of diving suit and fins, type of cylinder set up, personal safety location kit (SMB, flag, flare, epirob), SMB colour, length of reel, spare dSMB? Please add your kit details to Michael's list.

Chepstow

Thanks to Mike T for organizing two successful forays to the National Diving Centre at Chepstow. As the wintry spring began to give way to summer, there was training for those aiming for Diver Rescue, and for new trainees.



John and Mike ascending

Yvette, HSAC's regular diving correspondent, reports:

Saturday dawned at last. The car was packed and John and I set off for Chepstow, confident that we'd be able to dive, as we were dependent on nothing but ourselves.

After checking in and having a welcome cup of tea and meeting up with Mike, Paul and Michael we kitted up and were driven down to the pontoon. Chepstow has been undergoing a lot of refurbishment and the entrance to the pontoon is now thankfully closer and more accessible, and without a long, steep slope with all your gear.

Mike, John and I went first and we were all having a shake down dive and getting used to new gear, Mike with his side lens mask, me with a WeeZle

Extreme Plus undersuit (boiling hot out of the water), and John getting back into dive mode.



John and plane

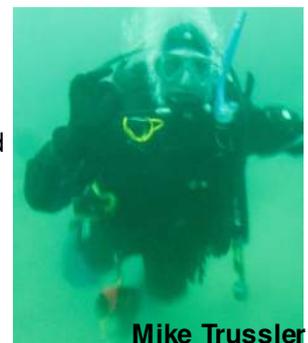


It was so great jumping into the water at 8 degrees, and away we went, with John having a first bash at navigating. Ears were a little troublesome but we sorted ourselves out

and were able to continue with the dive. Navigating as we all know is not an easy task as when you first start doing it you tend to focus only on your compass and everything else, including your buddy, tends to get relegated to second place—which is why practising in an inland lake is well worth it.

Shake down dives are all about getting back into diving mode and comfortable with your gear, sorting out the all-important weighting and buoyancy.

Mike's mask was driving him a little mad with the new peripheral vision, but he could see the benefits. I was well impressed with the WeeZle, really warm and it compacts down well so weighting didn't change all that much thankfully. Paul was very pleased with his new neoprene drysuit and he also found he didn't need much more weight.



Mike Trussler

After lunch on the deck, now a full restaurant, we swapped tanks and made our way back to the pontoon.



Paul took his new camera to play with. I also took mine and experienced a problem with the control buttons jamming so no control over ISO and aperture; so don't be too underwhelmed by the photos!

More diving

Swanage



Then there was an early June trip to Swanage, and finally, HSAC was in the sea again, among conger eels, ballan wrasse, dead man's fingers and oaten pipe hydroids.



Swanage photos
Paul Williams

Wight Diver

In the temporary absence of Cobra, Yvette was on the case and organised a dive on Wight Diver's hardboat for 13th July, planning to leave Eastney at very leisurely 1.30pm, returning about 6.30pm after a dive on Wapello and a drift. Sadly, this too was thwarted, by Wight Diver's boat being out of action, awaiting a new part!

Sussex — Britsum and Mulberry



All was well the next weekend. Sunday 21st July and the sun was shining brightly. Following its period of recuperation at the boat doctors, Cobra faithfully carried us out from Eastney for two warm and dear dives – the first a drift in the vicinity of the Britsum wreck on the beautiful Pullar Bank, when Mike T was heard to mention that he was “almost converted to reef diving”; and the second in the company of a large shoal of pollack on the Mulberry, one of the D-Day floating harbour units that sank off Selsey. Thanks to Fox for towing and washing and putting the boat to bed before heading back south again for the evening.



Isle of Wight

Early August was Cobra's next outing and Mike T organized another trip out from Eastney, this time heading for the Isle of Wight. An early start and a good dive, but unfortunately, Cobra was put back out of action with a tear in the tube from a struggle with a snagged shot.

Seasearch

Meanwhile, Yvette and Bryony headed off to Eastbourne for a day of Sussex Wildlife Trust Seasearch dives on Friday 2nd August. After torrential rain in the harbour, the day brightened, and the next thing we knew, four bottlenose



dolphins were bow-riding: <http://youtu.be/RmLKRbT6PNs>

We recorded the rocky reef and abundant marine life on the Royal Sovereign Shoals, the reef for which the area has been recommended as a Marine Conservation Zone.

Wraysbury

Martin and Nick organized a trip with Charlotte and Liz on Wed 7th August to balmy 20°C waters at Wraysbury, as an opportunity for practice and dry suit experience before braving the chilly North Sea waters of the Farne Islands.

2014 Diving

There is talk of a return to the Farne Islands, a trip slightly further north to St Abbs and Eyemouth, or even further north to Scapa Flow. If these are not sufficiently chilly or exciting for you, Russ has a 'vague plan' to go to Iceland to dive in the crack between the continents – where you can stretch your arms out and bridge the gap!

Any more ideas?

Farne Islands diving

16–19 Aug 2013 *Yvette reports:*

The sun was shining and car all packed as Steve Bond and I left for the dive to Fame Isles. We made excellent time and sharing made the time pass quicker, or at least it did for me... After booking in at the Links hotel we ambled across the road to find Fox and Kat having coffee and all of us quickly retired to the Old Ship Inn, a truly delightful pub that became our home from home after each day's diving. The staff were welcoming and friendly, the food excellent with a great choice of ales and wine to please even the fussiest palate.

Friday Breakfast at 7.30am was enjoyed by all, many opting for the generous full English as well as the really delicious kippers, gorgeous and definitely not the boil in a bag ones. Then it was a short drive down to the harbour to unpack and meet the skipper and boat we were to spend the next 4 days using. Leaving most of our kit on board was welcomed with delight, especially at the end of the day when looking up the steep flight of stairs. They also kindly offered to take cylinders for air fills as well. *(Thanks also to Yvette for transport for nitrox fills –Ed.)*



With the sun out, we set off in great spirits to our first dive site – The Pinnacles. *At the south end of Staple Island stand the "Pinnacles" - rock columns almost as high as the cliffs. With huge boulders scattered around the sloping seabed and conger and wolf-fish hiding amongst them this makes an interesting dive; the shoals of fish which gather here in late summer are really spectacular. Very often you can see puffins and other seabirds "swimming" underwater.*

Everyone buddied up and jumped in, most choosing to go east to see the wreck, whilst Chris and I opted for a slower scenic dive along the lobster pot line. We were lucky with the viz, a good 7m and had a lovely pootle amongst the rocks seeing loads of edible and velvet swimming crabs, ballan wrasse, blue lion mane jellyfish, deadmans fingers, dahlia anenomes, starfish – bloody henrys and sunstar, plus a few brittle stars, a fast moving topknot and lots of gobies. A great hour spent happily drifting gently around and just relaxing.

Back on board everyone was full of smiles and much talk of how great the viz was compared to what we have been used to back home. Then it was onto our next site – The Hopper, home of the seals. *The Hopper Rock is on the east of Longstone Island and has a vertical wall of 20m, full of marine life including edible crab, lobster and octopus. This is a frequent haunt for grey seals and consequently a popular site with divers.*

Sadly Chris' drysuit had sprung a leak and he was a tad wet and very chilly, water temp was 15C, so I was very glad I finally decided on wearing my weezle so was as snug as a bug. Sandy and I buddied up for this fun dive amongst the grey seals.



This is a great dive site as it has lots of walls filled with deadmans fingers, seaweeds, a butterfish and lots of small stuff to search for such as shrimps and sea slugs, a source of great delight for me personally and of course the ever playful grey seals that are amazing. They have fantastic breath control and the ability to just hover upside down and take naps in the most amazing positions. Steve B found a great sand patch with 2 seals relaxing and soon started to imitate them, soon it was difficult to tell who was posing for whom! Sandy and I found a lovely shallow gully to play hide and seek with the seals whilst we did our extended safety stop.



Needless to say the smiles from everyone on surfacing were huge with everyone having had a seal encounter of the dopest kind.



Facilities were rather basic apart from a lift designed for people with seriously long legs; those of us with normal legs had to try to get fins down and let the lift catch us on the way up - somewhat challenging. The gents took full advantage of the lift edge when required and all was well as long as you were upwind; while in the cubby hole below the wheelhouse, was a bucket, and a towel which Sandy observed had evolved into a new life form.

After returning to shore we refilled with nitrox at Sovereign Divers and met the very knowledgeable and friendly Toby who gave us all very generous fills, well over 200 bar which was much appreciated as it extended our dive times, as the skipper did not limit us.

Supper was at the Old Ship and everyone was able to meet up, including all the partners and families. Fortunately in Seahouses there is lots to do topside, with the lovely boat trips to see the seals and puffins, fast flapping black birds that defy the laws of gravity – sorry Suzy—as well as the castle and many scenic walks.

Farne Islands diving

Saturday Early breakfast again, wind forecast was a bit grim but we were able to get out which was great as there had been a chance of no diving.



Although overcast and a bit drizzly we headed off to Blue Caps. **Blue Caps** is a popular scenic dive with depths of 25m at the east end ascending to 15m in the west. Vertical walls, gullies and overhangs are filled with colourful marine life and this is a good spot to find lobster and octopus. Grey seals are regular visitors at Blue Caps, swimming in the shallows to the west of the rock and through the natural channel.

I do not envy those who suffer from motion sickness as there was quite a swell, and although the dives are great the time spent on board must be pretty hellish. We all changed buddies so that everyone got as many opportunities to dive as possible, especially the trainees. I was buddied with Martin and had a lovely shallow dive amongst the walls and gullies and saw loads of ballan wrasse, shrimps, hermit crabs etc.

After a surface interval and lunch we made our way to the Coryton. **The Coryton** was a steel 4550 ton British steamship built in 1928. She was on passage to Hull when bombed by German aircraft in February 1941 and the Captain decided to beach her on Ross Sands. The wreck lies in 10m, to the NW of the Farne Islands, close to Holy Island. A huge boiler, propeller shaft, winches and structure are spread out over a sandy bottom, making this an enjoyable dive. Velvet swimming crabs and lobsters can be found under steel plates.

We ambled around the wreck (did not manage to get to the bath Peter found) and had an enjoyable time amongst the spread-out wreckage looking at the hermit crabs that were out in force. Steve B and Fox tried a crab race but alas they all went sideways in different directions. Martin took advantage of the sandy bottom to keep practising his buoyancy control as this trip was his first experience of diving in a drysuit. Anne was able to join us for the second dive after a really long trip up with huge delays, and it was great that she persevered.

Supper was really good, at the Links hotel, after several drinks at the Old Ship.



Sunday dawned fair and mild and we were off to **Little and Big Harcar**. Liz and I had a lovely, gentle dive amongst the rocks and gullies looking at the small stuff, and there was so much of it. Sea slugs (or nudis) abounded so I was in slug heaven, got a really lovely photo of a yellow and white Polycera that I was very pleased with (I know, totally sad). Loads of whelks, seaweeds and kelp gently swaying in the current, lobsters, crabs of all types made for a really great scenic dive.

After freshly-made sandwiches in the sun we returned to **the Hopper** for another dive with the seals. We ambled along the walls finding a pogge (very strange looking fish), more nudis and crabs. Fox had a really enjoyable time with Bryony who makes every dive a real learning experience for those wanting to see the macro environment that is so easily missed when moving a little quickly.



The seals were out and about when Liz and I ended up in a little narrow gully for our safety stop that soon stretched into a meet and greet session with what seemed like the entire seal colony. They swooped and nibbled at fins, hoods and

the DSMB, amazingly didn't deflate it, given their teeth and how much they were tugging. Their ability to move through the water so gracefully given their shape is incredible - the ballet dancers of the sea, as sometimes they look as though they are *en pointe* when their flippers are close together. Needless to say we were both feeling full of the joys of life after that experience.



Sadly Ann had lost a fin and decided to split up the long journey home and so left at the end of the day. The rest of us all met up at Bamburgh Castle Inn for drinks and supper and to celebrate Liam's birthday - which once again fell on our club trip.

Farne Islands diving

Monday was another lovely sunny day, apparently we had been really fortunate in the weather as the following weekend the weather and wind were worse. Our last dives of the trip were to Longstone End.



Longstone End is spread over an area of reefs and underwater gullies. Depths range from less than 10m on top of the reef to 20m down a face. Sponges and anemones litter the walls and seabed, with lobsters and crabs in the crevices. Seals often visit this area and haul out on the north

Fox was my last buddy of the trip; my treat saved for the end... This dive site was great, lots of walls and gullies with so many soft corals and anemones, loads of lobsters and the Big Daddy of them all lurking in his lair - so big he made all the ones that followed seem somewhat inconsequential. A lovely blue jellyfish was spread out on a rock, not sure if by intention or accident, but I was not going to enquire. Saw two small sea scorpions as well as light bulb sea squirts. I was really pleased with the variety of marine life we had been able to see over the weekend. And of course the ever present seals especially in the one narrow gully. We saw one seal who seemed to have an itch he couldn't scratch, trying to do everything he could to get to the source of the itch - firstly using his flippers, then lying on some rocks and finally Fox's fins, this caused much merriment for us both. One was determined to have my slate rather than my fins. Fox did an assisted DSMB - an excellent job.

And so sadly the very last dive of the trip had arrived and we returned to **the Hopper**, venue of so many playful seals and smiles. Unfortunately the viz was not the best of the trip, and the seals were not quite as curious or playful. Fox did a solo DSMB with great finesse and on our ascent we spent a while avoiding the long, extremely thin tentacles of a lion's mane jellyfish that had stung Phil a little earlier.

Dinner at the Indian.



All in all a wonderful trip both in the sea and topside, and huge thanks to Sandy for organising the diving and the accommodation for us all. Congratulations to all the trainees who were able progress every day. Phil is now a club diver and several of the other trainees are well on their way with their qualifications too. Thanks to all the trainers for making yourselves available as it did allow everyone the opportunity of several dives. I for one am definitely looking forward to a return to the Farne Isles.

Yvette

Thanks to Yvette for this great report

2014 CALENDAR PHOTO COMPETITION

There are plans to have a photo competition - for a 2014 HSAC calendar of UK diving - so start sorting out your best shots. More details from Steve T and Nick to come.

Members and Committee

Try Dives

There were two very successful Try Dive evenings in February - the first for the Alton College students going to Cuba, and the second the traditional annual HSAC Open Night.

AGM - Thursday 28th November

Please come along to hear a report on the activities of the Club over the past year, and to help plan for next year, including voting in the new Committee.

Our Committee for 2014

Please consider if you would like to take on a role on the Committee next year. The whole committee stands down each year, some willing to stand for another year, and some wishing to have a break! So please step forward if you are interested, and speak to Paul.

The SAA South East region has resurrected our periodic regional meetings - including one on Monday 17th June in Borough Green, Kent.

RNLI diver safety survey

If you have a few moments, do support the RNLI in their efforts to improve diver safety and rescue - and fill in their short survey: <http://www.rnli.org.uk/diving/substance.coop/>

Sportivate - training for young members

Thanks to Paul for making a successful bid for another round of Sportivate funding, which provides support for the Club in helping young new trainees in diver training.

Boatshed Alarm

Thanks to Sandy Busek who has kindly donated and fitted an alarm system to the boat shed.

Haslemere Sub-Aqua Club is an active diving, training and social Club, welcoming both qualified divers and new trainees at any time throughout the year. We meet and train at The Herons Pool, Kings Road, Haslemere GU27 2QA every Thursday evening, except at Christmas, and in the summer holidays, when an alternative programme of events is organised. We organise a full programme of diving throughout the summer in the UK, as well as Club holidays abroad.

As a member of the Sub Aqua Association, Haslemere Sub-Aqua Club (SAA 259) follows the SAA diver training programme, leading to qualifications which are recognised world-wide. The training is designed to build confidence and enhance skills through a series of lectures, pool sessions and open water dives. Experienced instructors provide one-to-one and group tuition in a friendly environment.

www.haslemeresubaquaclub.com

info@haslemeresubaquaclub.com

