

# NDSAC Newsletter

## Spring 2011



Shake my claws! –Photo by G Brown

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## Editorial

A whiff of change has blown since the last edition. A generation of subjected citizens have stood and risen against dictators throughout the Arab world. An Arab Spring, has filled an oasis with the taste of democracy, liberty and love, and from those waters and oppressed people should sup deep knowing the bitter shackles of tired, old, unrepresentative, corrupt regimes have been rent asunder by the power of a united people.

And in North Dorset too revolution, insurrection and change have been abreast and on the march. A dreek, dank, dark winter it was, but as the snow left us, the wind turned to the west and a hint of warmer days to come, cold fingers leave their gloves and go looking for the touch of compressed neoprene, jollop and something to put on an O ring.

Not for these Seals a stealthy assassination in foreign lands, but an AGM in which the old guard was swept away to be replaced by a new DO, a new Chairwoman and a co-opted deputy to the post of entertainments officer! No lining up of the outgoing officers by trenches they themselves have dug for this club, oh no, a simple pat on the back and thanks for many years of good governance.

Fair well Dave A and E, thank you for your service; welcome Gwen

and Graham! Welcome back Dave G!

We know that this club would be nothing were it not for the loyal service of its members, its volunteers – the very blood that flows through its veins.

And what better way to welcome the new order that with a bumper packed Spring edition of the Newsletter. We have views, we have reviews, we have recipes, problems, poignancy, pictures and yet more reviews. It is a packed Pandora's box that I dare you to open.

But there is more. We have articles about dogfish. We have an article that was written in the skies.

So like the rear of our future queen's sister, pull yourselves together, lift yourselves up and stride confidently to at the head of a nation's celebration knowing that as the pound falls, the recession bites, the economy contracts and father time kicks you hard and square there is still the hope that by organisation, cooperation and fraternity good things may be achieved!

And next Quarter - please send in your copy so you can grace the pages of the NDSAC newsletter Summer Edition!

ED

Spring 2011

## Notices

### DIVERSE NEWS

The Barbecue is no longer at Ed's. This is sad news not because we were expecting any finer burger at Ed's diner but because Ed has hung up his flippers and pulled on his slippers. We hope his parting is not total. New venue to be arranged.

The Club still plans to go to Lundy, the Scillies, the IOW, Porth Kerries and West Wales. Places may or may not be available contact Giles.

The Christmas Dinner is likely to be in December. Speak to Dave.

### HOLIDAY PLANS

See above. Members planning to go on Club trips are strongly advised to check before booking that they have and will continue to have the support of their partners and/or loved ones for their diving hobby. Examples of difficulties that may arise include – marriages, important birthdays and anniversaries. Be safe, be sure!

### GILBY HAS A BALL

David Gilby (fast becoming the club's very own Humpty Dumpty) held a magnificent party just after Christmas and was able to remember what it was for within a few days of it. Congratulations Dave, there is nothing more sexy than a septuagenarian in a new O3 dry suit, just remember to open the valve!

## RECIPE CORNER

### *Moules Mariniere*

*Thai Style (ie YUM YUM).*

*Serve With Steamed Rice.*

For 4

### *Ingredients*

1x can of coconut juice

1 tablespoon chopped fresh ginger

2x lemongrass stalks, trimmed, smashed and chopped

1x green chile, halved lengthwise

zest and juice of 1 large lemon

6x garlic cloves

6x shallots

2x red chillies

1.5kg mussels, washed well and beards removed [DO stay clear]

bunch of coriander, chopped

groundnut oil

salt and pepper

### *Method*

Place the coconut juice, ginger, lemongrass and green chile in a large saucepan. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 10 mins. Strain and cool. Add lemon zest and juice. Season

In a deep saucepan heat a little oil add garlic and shallots, cook until soft. Add red chillies then mussels and lemongrass infusion. Shake the pan vigorously, cover and cook for about 3mins, the mussels will open. Serve in bowls with the cooking liquid. Garnish with coriander.

Do not eat any unopened mussels!

## PROBLEMS SOLVED

**Dear Ed,** I have been diving with the club for years. I have dived in Summer, in Autumn, and in the Spring and for years I have been doing so in a wetsuit. Recently, I gave in to the peer pressure that had been piled high upon me and bought a dry suit. What a waste of money! To say it is no better than the old kit I had would be a complete understatement. Worse if anything, first time I have felt cold in years. Why Oh why do we waste our money on these expensive crushed neoprene freezer bags?

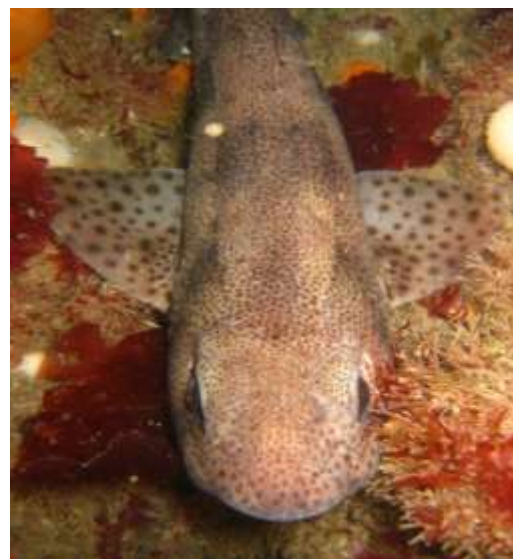
**Dear Snow Balls** – You are right to highlight this important issue, ask any elder member of the club and they will tell you (at no less than considerable length) how when they started diving they would send off to rubber factory and then cut and glue their own kits. They will tell you a wet suit is all they needed to dive carrying their 42 cu ft of air breathing on a clay pipe tied to an old length of gas pipe. Press a little though and you will find that these pioneers all dive in drysuits now because they recognise that diving to more than 5 m for more than 5 minutes can be blindingly cold.

What you my friend have not realised is that no matter how good your seals, how neatly woven is your under suit the most important difference between a wetsuit and a drysuit is a Zip. Forget it at your peril. ED

## What's That? A Dog Fish - G Brown

Did you know that there are at least 25 species of shark round the UK? Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately in the case of the Great White which is supposed to visit), most of these are either deep or rare. There are however some far more common species which we often bump into, most of which are usually lumped together as 'dogfish'.

Up north the Spurdog is common, a slaty grey shark with two needle sharp spines in front of their dorsal fins; I have never seen one off Dorset though. The ones we are most likely to bump into are now not called dogfish any more but have been labelled catsharks for some weird taxonomic reason.



Small Spot – Graham Brown

The Smallspotted catshark (lesser spotted doggie to us oldies) is by far the most common, about 80cm long, sandy grey and covered in small spots. You will find it all over; in the winter it is slow and sluggish and can be picked up easily whereupon it will roll into a hoop and play dead. In the summer it is a lot quicker but will still let you get close before it swims away.



The Nursehound – G Brown

The Nursehound (greater spotted doggie) grows up to 160 cm, twice the size of its relation. It has bigger browner spots and seems to have green eyes under artificial light as compared with its black eyed cousin. They are not nearly as common as Smallspotted but a hotspot seems to be on the reef off Chesil cove where I have seen them on several occasions and from adult to small immatures. Both species can usually be found lying on the seabed.



A mermaid's purse – G Brown

Both species lay the familiar mermaids purse eggs in undergrowth on the sea bed. The picture is of a Smallspot purse that I found in Poole bay; it has not been too long laid as it is still quite transparent, if you look closely at the enlarged picture of the purse you can see the baby shark embryo attached to the yolk of the egg.

Other Dorset sharks that you might well see are the Smoothhound and the Starry Smoothhound; two really attractive, large (160cm) graceful fish. They both have large 'sharky' looking dorsals and are far more active swimmers than the doggies. One has has small bright spots, the Starry, and both can be found on the Marl beds off Swanage.

A fifth shark that is seen here is the Tope, a larger heavy bodied fish up to 175cm long, big enough to make you jump!



A mermaid's purse – G Brown

(author's note: my picture of a Smallspot was of a freeswimming animal unlike the cruelly tethered, captive individual whose picture shamed the NDSAC photo contest. No grudge there then, Andy)



A breeding male

### Christmas Party Report – Mully -

It was as black as a witch's heart, we had driven miles into deepest Dorset and panic was beginning to set in. We had visions of

Deliverance in an area where normal family relationships begin to blur. Suddenly we spotted life when the lights of Udders Farmshop shone out like a brilliant beacon in a sea of darkness. The twice called off NDSAC Christmas 2010 Dinner was finally underway at the third attempt. Inside the stalwart members of the club had scraped off any barnacles, hosed down their equipment and scrubbed up well.

The mermaids had dressed in their best and some of the men had made a considerable effort too. Giles in a top hat without his tails and Adrian with matching fuchsia shirt and shoes were worthy of commendation.

Sheena made an early attempt to sabotage the photographic competition by knocking the board to the floor and mixing the labels on the photographs. Dave Gilby fresh from a no alcohol diet was bouncing around like a jumping bean on E numbers.



Multitudinous members.

As it was a belated Christmas do, it was only right that we had all of the trimmings and Udders did us proud with carols, crackers and party hats. The icing on the cake was a BSAC pen for everyone. Once seated the drink flowed, food was eaten, time passed.

Finally it was time for speeches and awards: best joke award to yours truly. Unfortunately when given the Gilby make over treatment it fell rather flat even though it was about Welsh sheep shagging. Thanks were given to all of the people who had contributed to the activities of the club throughout the year. Special mention to Dave Gilby, Andy, Dave Andrews, Giles, Adrian, Annette and Doug as well as the other members of the committee who worked quietly behind the scenes. A plea was given for more people to attend the AGM which this year is on 31<sup>st</sup> Mar. It was generally agreed that the diving year had been good with no major incidents and only 1 visit to the pot although the DO had a near miss.

The DO trophy was awarded to Dave Gilby for his contribution to the social activities of the club. Robin was presented with a golden crowbar to take the place of an old friend.

The Wooden Weight Belt was this year presented to Louis Weston who had managed to lose his integrated weights. Louis was so pleased with his award that he wore the belt for the rest of the evening presumably to make sure that he did not lose this as well.



Seaman Stains

A clean sweep of the ad-hoc awards was achieved by Seaman Stains (Simon Glen) who picked up; the scalloped bell for Unbridled Optimism, the black golf ball for Effort Above and Beyond and a Blue Willy certificate (also awarded to Giles) for winter dipping. A considerable all-round achievement.

The raffle followed without major disruption and we moved on to the results of the photographic competition. Unlike the previous year where the winning selection was made by a knowledgeable individual, this year members voted throughout the evening picking three photographs and

then ranking their preferences. Andy Douch who has an interest in culinary personnel dating back to his childhood was to be found hanging around the kitchen area for much of the evening. Coincidentally this was where the photographic board was located and he was observed whispering in voters ears. The result of the competition was a dead heat between a black and white photograph of Andy Douch with buddy and a grey and white photograph taken by Andy of a dogfish. Allegations of vote rigging were strenuously denied but we may well need NATO peace keeping troops for next year's dinner.

Once the main events of the evening were completed there was a gradual trickle of people leaving and your reporter also withdrew before those who had partaken heavily could turn to high jinx.



Our former DO Does. ANON

## Injunctions and Club Stalkers

- Ed -

There is in man's affairs a need to strike a balance between the right to privacy and the right to a free press. Just because some famous footballer has played away with a pretty young thing who if not quite signed up to a professional side is at risk of losing her amateur status does not mean that he would have done the same in a public place. He has a right and a left and a need to be able to hide his more salubrious activities off the field and well as on it. So it is with great sorrow that this Editor find himself unable to reveal the identity of XYG nor any details of YHG and what HYG did to HJK. Notwithstanding this you will find distasteful video footage of men tied up in rope posted on some internet sites (based in the US of course). A stalker is amongst us, a porpoiseful paparazzi, who dives amongst us only to obtain footage of our most private a delicate moments. Beware!



Who needs a shakedown dive?

**A Diver In Memoriam**  
– Ed Friel -

We boarded the boat late afternoon at the Taba Hilton and secured the 2 top cabins. Both cabins were basic, but the air-con worked well. Bid and I were in the starboard side cabin with Ariel and Jeanette in the port side cabin.

The boat was a typical Egyptian dive boat, with a dive deck and platform at the stern, 2 ladders, and the saloon forward of the dive deck. The upper deck comprises a shaded seating area, our 2 cabins and the captain's cabin / bridge.

The other divers arrived early evening. They proved to be a group of 8 friendly but very loud Israelis. We set off shortly after daylight heading south toward Dahab and 3 days diving along the route. Ariel had been a divemaster along this coast years before, clocking up in excess of 10,000 dives. He was visiting dive sites that he knew intimately. Due to his back injury he was only able to do the first dive of the day, but they were the best dives of the day.

The third day dawned like any other, but I knew it was not going to be like any other. We were diving The Bell and Blue Hole at

Dahab. I knew the intimate history, as I had helped Ariel to prepare a what amounted to a witness statement.

They were a party of Argentinians. As an Argentinian, Ariel was looking forward to taking a group of his fellow countrymen and women on a jeep diving safari. The group proved to be very difficult clients. In addition to Ariel, there was another experienced Dive Marshall. The group of divers was divided into 2, with each Dive Marshall having a mixed group of divers, some reasonably experienced and some less experienced divers.

When the group arrived at The Bell Mrs X announced that she would be diving with Ariel. Not only did Ariel speak Spanish, but he was (and still is) excellent at showing divers marine life. Ariel told Mrs X that she was part of the other group. They had planned the dive and she should dive the plan with the other Dive Marshall and her husband (who was her buddy). Mrs X was obviously not happy, but rejoined the other group.

The Bell is a chimney which goes straight down. It can be exited at various points. Ariel signalled for

me to go into the Bell. He remained outside The Bell whilst I descended and exited at 30m. I could tell immediately that Ariel was not right. His buoyancy is normally spot on, but on this dive it wasn't. I knew the history.

Ariel went down The Bell first and exited at about 10m. The rest of his group appeared one at a time. The weakest divers in the group were 2 women divers. When Miss Y appeared her eyes went wide in panic at the sight of no visible bottom. Ariel took her hand and she calmed down. When Miss Z appeared her eyes also went wide in panic at the sight of no viable bottom. Ariel signalled for her to take Miss Y's other hand and this also had a calming effect. The other member of the group all appeared to be OK.

Ariel is about to signal the group to fin off towards The Blue Hole when suddenly Mrs X appeared out of The Bell on her own. She had abandoned her group and followed Ariel's group into The Bell. She sees that there is no visible bottom and panics. She panics Miss Y and Miss Z, both of whom freeze in panic.

Now Ariel is holding 3 divers who are frozen in panic and sinking. Ariel fins for the surface, but he literally has his hands full with 3 divers frozen in panic and cannot reach his inflate button. Ariel strains every sinew. His breathing is "going through the roof". No other diver comes to help. They are now sinking faster and are below 30m going down. Ariel knows that if nothing changes they are all going to die. He must choose who to save. At approximately 40m he lets go of Mrs X and presses the inflate button. Mrs X falls into the abyss as Ariel does a controlled buoyant ascent with Miss Y and Miss Z.

When they hit the surface Miss Y is screaming and Miss Z is unconscious, having let her regulator slip from her mouth. Ariel starts mouth to mouth resuscitation. Other dive marshals come running and held Ariel pull Miss Z out of the water. She very quickly revives. Another dive marshal takes over her care whilst Ariel tries to calm Miss Y.

Suddenly Mrs X appears on the surface her BC fully inflated. Survival instincts must have taken over. However there is blood. She has not only inflated her BC but

also her lungs and held her breath. They drag her out of the water but she is in a bad state. They take her to the shore. She says "I'm sorry". Ariel is still with Miss Y and hears one of the dive marshals say "we are losing her". Despite all efforts, Mrs X dies.

We fin gently along the wall. I am hanging out in the blue about 4m from Ariel who is about 4m from the wall. It is a great wall dive. I take some photos of the wall and the overhang. I cannot see Ariel's eyes as his mask has reflective lenses, but I can tell that he is being swamped by memories.

We gradually ascend to the point where we can enter The Blue Hole. However we are not going to dive to the exit at 55m on air (rather than trimix) with a half empty single 12L, so we exit the Blue Hole and send up a delayed SMB. The boat is there to pick us up. Ariel goes up the ladder first whilst I fight with the delayed SMB.

When I get onto the dive deck Ariel is crying and being comforted by Jeanette who is also crying. I say "may the Lord have mercy on her soul and may she now rest in peace". The 8 Israelis are in stunned silence - it is not often you

hear prayers for the dead on a dive deck. Ariel explains the history to them.

Ariel told me subsequently that seeing me hanging out in the blue helped him realise that there was no reason for anybody to die on that day. I do not really understand why, but if it helped I am happy. Ariel tells me that in doing the dive a weight has been lifted from his mind.

Nobody can no know what was in Mrs X's mind, but she left a trail of damage across the years.

### The Portland Light House - D Gilby -

Back in January, Annette came up with a brilliant idea. "Look" she said "March is a bloody useless month, bugger all going on, let's liven it up and have a Hooley, down at the Portland lighthouse." She went on to explain that the lighthouse house she was talking about was not the big bugger with the red stripe, but the much smaller jobby up the road, painted in pure virginal white. This is known as the Portland Bird Observatory, and we could hire bunk rooms, and share the building with a strange group of people who spend all their waking hours peering

through super size telescopes, and saying such things as "Wow look at those Tits" The sort of comment that is guaranteed to make a bunch of divers very twitchy indeed.



Moonrise Spring Equinox - Gilby

For only 15 quid a head, we could sleep in a too small bunk, prepare our own food, and engage in social communication with alien twitchers. What's to argue with? So 'Nette booked the last remaining 15 bunks, and arranged for Adrian to have his birthday that weekend, and so it was done.

We arranged to meet on site at 1pm on the 19th. Doug and I drove down together and arrived dead on time. True to form no one else was there yet. We went to The Pulpit Inn and allowed the Landlord to extract £3.20 a pint from us, and we sat in the sun for an hour looking forward to a good weekend. At 2ish we went back to the lighthouse to find 'Nette Adie and Steve busily

stoking three assorted barbecues.



Just one of the high-tech Barbies there!

We had previously informed everyone that barby food would be available from 3pm. And so started 12 hours of gentle imbibing. The wine flowed. The beer flowed. The food flowed. Soon everyone was flowing. As the sun started to drop to the horizon, some of us decided to have a wander to the Big lighthouse, and Pulpit Rock. With a view to having a bit of a breather to allow even more wine to flow later on. Several of our

worthies decided that they would climb The Pulpit, using very inadequate carved footholds. In a rare moment of lucidity, I decided that despite my ascent of Everest in my youth, a scramble up Pulpit while 60% pissed was not the best idea.



Adrian, Doug, Simon and Giles climb Pulpit Rock

So I contented myself with taking a few pictures. Soon there was a girlie squark from the top of Pulpit. From their vantage point they could see the moon coming up over the sea. It was big and it was orange. And it was very impressive. I don't know how 'Nette arranges these things for Birthday Boy, but apparently the Moon was 50,000 miles nearer the Earth than usual, just for Adie. I thought it was a sign of the second coming, and wondered which of

the strange twitchers would be the new Messiah. My photographs do not do justice to the sight.



Moon up Aidie's birthday

Back at the little Lighthouse, the barbecues were still producing a variety of food, with wine and beer, and the evening flowed on. Some of the Twitchers were photographing the moon through their monstrous telescopes, and allowed us to have a peek. Actually the Bird Watchers explained to us that they were not twitchers, apparently to be a twitcher you have to be completely mad. I have taken the mick a little bit. In fact they were all nice people. Well educated and just a little bit bemused by our own strange antics. Really and truly the only thing that marked them apart from ourselves was the fact that for

some reason to be a bird watcher you have to dress in complete camo gear as if you were leading an SAS strike team. Each to his own. After all we dress up in rubber.



The bird observatory

Earlier in the day we had been discussing the World Record achieved by a man who had dived from 100 feet into 12 inches of water. Later in the evening around 1am I think, I suggested that the theory of how you don't die performing this stunt could be demonstrated by diving from the kitchen table into a wet sponge. I awoke to find 'Nette in her administering angel guise, mopping up blood, and sticking plasters all over my head until I looked like a mummy. Apparently I had badly grazed my forehead, which as the more discerning amongst you will have noticed, is not protected by hair. [Mercifully our narrator has taken anaesthetic in quantity before sustaining injury – what foresight! ED]

The next morning I was up with the Lark. Which was one up to us, as the official bird watchers had all wandered off to find a very rare specimen called a Hoopie, which had been spotted recently having flown all the way from somewhere very far off. In actual fact this was another of 'Nette's birthday surprises, and was I think, a special offering on the barbecue a few hours before. It had been suggested that we all go horse Riding on Sunday morning, and everyone of the 15 had said they were up for it, but in the end, only Andrea, Chris and myself hove off to the riding stables a couple of miles up the road. It was all very gentle ( thank goodness) and we rode the coast path, up the East side overlooking the harbour, and circled back through the centre of the island. At one point we were riding a narrow track along the top of a 200 foot cliff, with only the meanest of tiny fences to prevent a world record dive attempt. We covered a lot of ground at the trot, but did find space for a canter or two, before getting back to the stables.



Spidge hunting

Back to the Lighthouse, and another amble around the sea front looking for spidge and a pint of Coke in The Pulpit before leaving for home. Well worth doing, and no doubt we will do it all again at some point in the near future. Does anyone know how to wind in the moon?

**BLUE FLASHING LIGHT  
PART 1  
-ANON-**

This is an account of a summer's evening potter about out in Weymouth Bay.

In order to protect the identity of the people involved no names are used, only letters to represent them. These letters have been picked at random and bear no clue as to the real names!

One fine evening in early summer G.A.D wanted to try out his new engine on his Rib, and it all being new and unknown, he wanted someone else to come with him and ideally another boat for possible breakdown recovery. So, S.G.L offered to be a crewman for G.A.D, and A.J.U said that he would bring his Rib along for the trial. It was a lovely warm sunny evening, the sea was sparkling, and the sky was blue.

No trouble in launching from Weymouth town slip and off we went, out into Weymouth bay. All went well, the engine was sweet and after a while, A.J.U closed up

to us and said had we ever been to the Secret Harbour on Portland Breakwater? G.A.D and I said "no, but we'd like to see it "!

A.J.U said that we could tie up in it and land on the breakwater to have a poke about in the old round fort gun emplacement there. However, he said that we would need a torch. Well, G.A.D said that he had a key ring torch on his car keys with him. This was decided to be sufficient for exploring inside a Napoleonic armoured fortress.



The group

We motored over to the Main breakwater channel and on into Portland harbour itself, then on up to the Secret Harbour. As its name suggests, it is not that obvious unless you know it's there.

When we got there, we tied up and stepped ashore, casually ignoring the Two feet high red letters that said "DO NOT LAND HERE, MOD PROPERTY " We thought that as the Navy base had closed, this stern warning no longer really mattered.

As we clambered up the rusty ladders and old stone steps into clanking old metal blast doors, a pilot boat came back from duty out

in the bay and we saw a frosty looking pilot carefully observing us.



Anyone want porridge?

I was wearing a bright yellow storm coat to keep the wind chill off my wetsuit and so didn't really blend into the stonework. A.J.U lead the way with the key ring torch, deep into the stone labyrinth of tunnels and gun rooms. It was very dark. I was the last in the group and was horrified to find that I was stepping over rusty metal beams over a black and seemingly bottomless pit. This it turned out was one of the ammunition pits from which large battleship style shells were hoisted up from subterranean magazines. I would have been killed had I actually fallen down into it. Suddenly this venture seemed just a tiny bit dangerous! Maybe a one key ring torch amongst three in an underground warren of rusty metal and deep pits wasn't quite sufficient!

After a bit more poking about, we decided it was time to make our way back to the surface.

As we got nearly to the top and could see daylight, we could hear a police siren, this seemed strange but we thought they must be chasing some dodgy characters up to no good. When we emerged into the sunlight we could see a fast Motor torpedo Boat approaching the breakwater with blue flashing lights and sirens blaring. Wow, what is going on? We asked ourselves. Then with a sinking feeling we remembered those words we had seen about not landing there and the fact that Pilot boat had watched us with such interest.



The Fort

The MTB approached us and came right into the secret harbour effectively blocking off any chance of escape for us. A very serious MOD policeman said over his loudhailer that we were to come aboard his boat and explain ourselves! So as it was A.J.U's idea that we had gone to the fort in the first place, G.A.D and I volunteered A.J.U to be the one to jump over onto the MTB. We were happy to let him do the talking!

A.J.U did his best to placate Mr Job's worth and said that we were only three guys out for a summer's evening explore about and surely

he himself would have seized the opportunity to have a delve about in the old fort if he had the chance? He wasn't about to give in to A.J.U's smooth talking, but you could see a ghost of a chuckle under that ice cold manner. He lectured us about security and the Olympics etc etc and made us give our names and addresses and phone numbers. Curiously we all seemed to develop sudden Dyslexia and amnesia; it must have been the stress. I forgot my correct phone number, G.A.D even forgot who he was, A.J.U couldn't remember where he lived.

We did our best to oblige him and he let us go with a stern warning and was there a hint of a wry smile?

So, engine good, probably the only opportunity ever to explore the round fort on Portland Breakwater, and then back to Weymouth Quay for a fish and chip supper and a pint of excellent beer with good company on a glorious summer's evening.

That's what being in the NDSAC can offer you, so for all the new members in the club, there are plenty of opportunities for adventures and maybe you will get to join the Blue Light Club!

## Recipe Corner 2

-Anon-

As the recipe column is proving to be popular, I thought I would ask my friend the popular TV chef,

Huge Furry Whippinbouy for a little something special. Especially as he lives not far away, and is forever ransacking the sea in Lyme Bay for anything that moves, and might be eaten.

So here is his first offering  
.....

### BAKED SEA CUCUMBER

Most divers will take advantage of nature's treasures, and will often take home a crab or lobster to cook for supper. Those are the obvious snacks to look for, but it is a great pity that many other creatures are there for the taking, and are overlooked by the average diver, simply because he hasn't got a clue about how to cook them. Well here is an easy one to start with, and makes a great addition to the beach barbecue, so beloved by rufty tufty divers.

The sea cucumber has two great advantages over some other creatures of the deep, such as mussels.

- 1 They are quite big, with plenty of meat.
- 2 They are not very good at getting away.

Having collected a few, don't be put off by the fact that they are actually animal and not vegetable, and are A K A sea slugs. First search the beach for suitable drift wood, and having found a couple of logs about a foot long by 3 or 4 inches diameter, carefully lay the cucumber between

the two, at this stage you may add seasoning of choice, and a good sprinkle of black pepper, English mustard and/or mayonnaise may be spread over the living flesh.

Prepare the barbecue fire and whilst this is burning down to a bed of hot ash, scour the sea edge for strands of kelp, and bind the driftwood tightly around the cucumber with a good wrapping of the weed. It is essential to do this as quickly as possible after seasoning, as the pepper and mustard will give the little blighters an added incentive to leg it back to the sea. Lay the parcel in the embers, and cover with sand or pebbles and leave to bake for about 20 minutes for a rare one, or 30 to 40 minutes for well done. Carefully remove the parcel from the fire, remembering that the sand covering the food will be red hot, and will cause much swearing to ensue if attempted with bare hands. The aroma escaping through the now cooked kelp is so delicious that people will be arriving from miles away for a sample.

Unwind the kelp and put to one side. Gently prise open the driftwood, and scoop the cucumber from within. Take it down to the sea, and chuck it back from whence it came. Return to the fire and prepare to tuck in to a tasty dish of seasoned driftwood and kelp.

For more information go to Huge Furry Whippinbouy's website, [www.ifitmovesiwillcookit.com](http://www.ifitmovesiwillcookit.com)

### My Trip to OZ -Graham Brown-



We went to see our son in Brisbane in January and I managed to get a bit of diving while we were there. As a diving holiday it was a bit disappointing owing to the huge floods that managed to destroy the vis right up the coast. Our first try was out at Lady Musgrove reef in the southern GBR, far enough out to sea for good vis but very tourist type diving. Poor coral but the biggest loggerhead turtle I have ever seen. All the local diving was blitzed out vis wise.

0730 I dived with my son Ewan who some of you will know, a good diver as NDSAC trained!

Getting desperate for an N2 fix we headed for Coffs Harbour so that I could dive the Solitary Island

marine reserve in NSW where I had to put up with Ozzy stick for being an hour late not knowing that the Queensland/NSW border is a time zone.

The site, an island a good bit out, was brilliant but there was a huge swell and we got swashed around on the sea bed.



A blue Grouper, State fish of NSW.

We saw huge rays and glimpses of the Grey Nurse sharks but I have had better dives.

Next further south to South West Rocks a small town with some lovely diving. I did two dives on Fish Rock which is very famous (one of the many hundred Top Ten dives in Oz). A small island, it is famous for its Grey Nurses, and they were there aplenty.



Proper looking sharks with raggy teeth but fish eaters so harmless,

also they ignored careful divers and came right up alongside. There is also a cracking swimthrough of about 130m right under the whole island, stuffed full of crays and wobbegongs.



For those who don't know, wobbies are ground sharks and are responsible for more attacks than any other shark; we saw some 3m. long and they are well camouflaged so people step on them.



Back to Brizzy for a bit where I learned a new sport in which Australia is leading the world; Cane Toad Golf.



These nocturnal horrors were introduced and are now marching across Oz killing all in their path as they are highly poisonous to everything and they eat everything else! You need a torch and a 5 iron. Enough said.

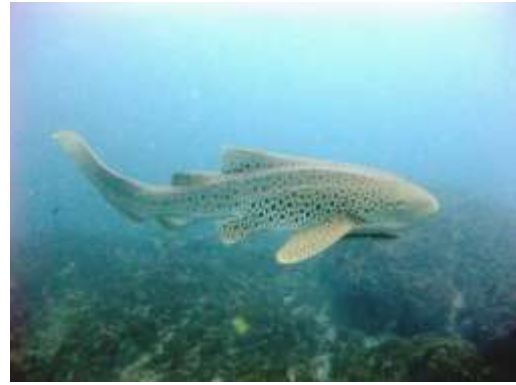
For my last attempt to get wet we headed for the hippy town of Byron Bay, as far east as you can go.



and the Julian rocks marine reserve.



No raggies here but some big lazy but impressive leopard sharks.



The first day we had well led dives but some less than brilliant divers- 'gee I have never had to put the valve on the tank before, how do you do that?' True!

The second day the vis went all to pot, a Uk style 2m!, so I gave up.

Oz diving is very expensive, typically £80 UK for a 2 dive day using your own equipment. Also they cater for travellers and tourists so it is idiot proof diving rather than white nuckle; still it gives you a thirst.

### Club Legend's Life

-John James -

So here I am in Club flying back from LA and I'm trying to think of an article to write. I'm somewhat maudling after at least 3 of those pissy little bottles of red so excuse the rose tinted view below. Bahrain was and is a shit place to be. Pity, as the people are lovely.

I was brought up in a port, Newport in South Wales, and had always been associated with sea based jobs: submarines, oil rig design and finally oil itself. Unfortunately the company I worked for went severely bust and

I had to find a job PDQ. I decided the further from the UK (and Thatcher {SIT DOWN GRAHAM! – ED]) the better. I was offered a job at the oldest refinery in the Middle East in 1979 and so moved us all to Bahrain.



Puts the Suave into Soave!

Given some association with the sea, wanting to dive has always been important to me. We learnt in Bahrain as a privileged ex-pat in a club run by an Aussie (Alan Aldous) and an English wife (Lorraine). Yup, those names date you, don't they? Every season began the same: A-test followed by 'how many Fosters can you drink'? The main dictum wasn't so different from NDSAC we wanted to teach the sport of diving to any riff raff that came through the door. So we taught mainly Irish (oh, and Danes, and Greeks, and Pakistanis and Azerbaijanis and even a few

Yanks). I enjoyed teaching in those days. No one drowned either so stuff you BSAC.

The most important ritual was the 'deck chair special'. This was a dhow that had deck chairs over its otherwise flat, deck. The seas surrounding Bahrain (the name means, apparently, Two Seas) are mostly very shallow, even drying by repute between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia (12 miles distant) at times of extreme high pressure. This meant we needed to voyage to the 'hole' – a limestone sink of 25m depth or else north towards Kuwait which was more adventurous, equally shallow but with unreliable weather and neighbours (this was in 1980 or so).

Next to the 'hole' was the 'half tanker' so called because it was a half tanker. The captain had got pissed and had full steamed ahead into a coral reef. Curiously the twin furrows made by the props (about 6m) stopped at the engines but the bow had continued unabated for another mile. You knew when you were at the dive site as you could hit it.

Quite frankly the deck chair makes Fearless feel like a compensated cross channel ferry. I don't think any diver (or partner, child or dog) was actually washed overboard but often the deck washed across from

both sides. Dhows are designed for those seas and not for comfort.

We saw, however, coral reefs full of life. Many Hamour (a cod, really tasty curried), sea snakes and live corals. I remember the warmth of the seas and the warmth of the people in the club. It was also my only experience of running. We entered the Bahrain Marathon. It was a charity event, and if you couldn't run 26m then a team of 15 could also take part. After weeks, nay days, perhaps hours, of practise I could run 3k and so contributed.

The only dive I can really remember now was when we cleaned the Amir's bottom. There were several Greek members of the club (we're still even in distant contact with one family) and the Amir wouldn't let Bahraini's near his boat and his Baluchi mercenaries (from Northern Pakistan) can't swim. So for some astronomic fee the clubs 'white members' (don't even mention pc-ness) were co-opted to scrape his little yacht. Nudity wasn't permitted so I still had a white member and joined in. I don't know if Sun Seeker even gets close. It was a 3500 nautical mile power boat with helicopter (in on-board garage) and twin (craned) speed boats. I don't remember its actual

displacement. I remember especially having a beer (it's a Muslim country) in the state room from the Greek Captain and then being shown around (bare foot) some of the quarters. I think I couldn't see my toes in the carpets. Still the Sheik did hold a competition every Friday (a holiday) at the ex-pat beach for the woman with the briefest bikini so I'm sure those lucky winners had a lot of fun!

Ex-pat life isn't all it's made out to be and so after 3 years of 'shall we go to the beach again' we came home to cold and eventually the prospect of a job that would take us to Berlin.

And that's another diving story!

**COMING NEXT EDITION!**

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**Articles please!**

The Views and Opinions expressed in this Newsletter seldom express the views of the committee, those of the editor or even the authors. Some of the words may be sequentially misplaced. Who'd have thought we could get through a whole issue without mentioning Douch's snoring!!!

