

Diary Dates

- 11th Feb Ceildidh, Oldbury Park School
- 26th Feb Dive at Llandegfedd Reservoir
- 28th Feb Rebreather Awareness Evening
- 5th March Oxygen Administration Course

Committee News

- The boat has now been delivered to Hull for re-tubing and should be back soon. We are having a few repairs made to the bottle rack, and some modifications to the trailer to make it easier to launch and recover.
- Please note that your BSAC 3rd party insurance may not be valid if your membership is not up to date. The committee have therefore agreed that no person will be allowed to participate in club diving activities unless their membership is up to date.
- We're looking for a new Try-a-dive co-ordinator to take over from Howard. He has done the job admirably and receives our thanks. Interested? Give us a call.
- Social Membership of the club is now available—do you know any ex members or friends who may wish to join? If so please contact the committee.

New Members

A big welcome to our new members:

- Emma Wilkinson
- Elke Eldredge
- Steve Eldredge
- Kevan Spencer
- Jackie Marshall
- Alys Duggan

A Winter Trip to Stoney Cove



You know how it goes, you get a phone call out of the blue to ask if you're interested in going to Stoney Cove for a winter dive. "Yes" you quickly reply.

The day quickly arrives and you find yourself getting up at 6am on a Sunday morning. With clanking of cylinders and slamming of doors to wake the neighbours you load the car and you're off.

First surprise of the day is that

Stoney still has parking spaces at the front when we arrive—marvellous! - no long walk with the kit. Perhaps it's because it's a cold foggy morning in January, perhaps divers are realising the pleasure on Sunday morning lie-ins after all.

Get the camera gear out of the car and make sure it's all looking ok, then we kit up.

First dive of the day proves to be mostly uneventful, with a few cooperative Perch and Roach. Go looking for the Pike, but he's nowhere to be seen. Still did manage a respectable 80 minutes underwater.

Between the dives we get chatting to some other divers who tell us that the Pike has been hanging around the cockpit—worth a try for the second dive, but we expect it to have gone by the time we there.

Surprisingly, he's still there when we arrive at the cockpit on the second dive. We positioned ourselves with our cameras and shoot the closest shots we've had of this magnificent fish. Not only does the Pike pose for shots in the cockpit, it comes out and swims between our legs! In all we spend over an hour taking shots of the fish, not even noticing how cold the water is!



What we expected to be an ordinary winter trip to Stoney, turned into one of the most memorable dives I have done for some time.

The Wreck of the 'Hesparas'

Six of us got up at five o'clock to catch the four o'clock ferry to Lyne Down Bay. It was a sunny rain drenched morning and the sun shone brightly through the thick cloud base.

Undaunted the three of us climbed the flat boat mooring to the dive site of the Hesparas situated in a fresh water lagoon in 6.231 metres of water.

Between us we had over 180 years of experience and our equipment, including snark, horse collar (ABLJ), crocodile skin wet suits and snorkels with ping pong balls, had all been thoroughly checked out for our last dive 10 years previously.

We checked the tide tables, height above sea level and last flight times and realised we would need to "get a move on" if we were going to get last orders.

Discussion took place on who was going to dive with who as we were all equally experienced in passing our pool training and dive lecture programme.

The three of us drew lots for first, second and third pairs. This we realised was true democracy at work. I won and decided to dive in a threesome.

I checked the water temperature, as per pool training, and dipped my big toe. It was freezing. Undaunted we cut a hole in the ice with the tooth pick I always carry for emergencies. We could see the outline of the Hesparas far below us with underwater visibility of some three metres.

Recalling our lectures we planned the dive to dive the plan. The problem was no one had a plan with them. Only an outline drawing for a proposed building plot in Shrewsbury. We decided to use the rear of this to set down some bullet points. No one had any bullets so we used a pen. Two hours later we had cracked it. Kit up, dive, exit, last orders. Simple isn't it with experience.

Next came the buddy check. This was going to be a problem as we had only met three hours before. We decided to give a brief history of our lives, including all the sordid details because this was more interesting than knowing what one does for a living. We got carried away doing this and decided to write a book after the dive.

We entered the water and followed the shot line down into the murky depths. Surface cover was my mate's dog "Randy" who was trained to fetch and retrieve. The wreck was exactly as we had recalled it when we sank it by accident five years earlier. Three metres long, one metre wide and the oars still in the rowlocks. It was like going back in time when we recalled the foolhardy stunt of trying to boil a kettle of water in the bottom of a wooden boat.

We checked our bottom time my mate had a Suunto Titanium Stinger and a very good dive watch whilst I had a Sekonda Xpose. We were concerned we had not allowed for British summer time but as it turned out, without spectacles, we couldn't see them anyway.

We had been down four minutes and the tide, we thought, was starting to turn. Later we realised that my mate's snark had got caught on the rowlock and his finning frenzy was causing considerable water disturbance.

We left the wreck as we had found it for future generations to explore and surfaced with enough air to blow up our airbeds.

We unkitted and threw the equipment in an old dustbin we found and left the site as we had found it. Covered in litter, old coke cans, tyres, scrap cars and superstore plastic bags.

For those old enough to remember is the "Wreck of the Hesparas" hasn't changed a bit!

Malcolm Copson

Local Press Try a Dive



On Thursday 2nd Feb we were pleased to host a try a dive session for Worcester Evening News reporter, Lauren Murray. She came along on a busy evening with four other try divers. A huge thank you to all those who made the evening such a success!

Useful Web Links

Over the last few weeks I've discovered a few new websites, which may be of interest to club members:

www.xray-mag.com/ - Excellent website with very comprehensive pdf download magazine.

www.submerged.co.uk/ - lots of information on SW coast sites.

www.ukdivers.net - good weather & tide info, as well as UK sites.

www.babbacombebeach.com/ - has live webcam of excellent shore diving site, plus lots of underwater photos

www.wetpixel.com/ - good site for underwater photography information and discussions.

Do you know any more sites? - mail me to include them

For Sale

Wanted

Please contact editor if you want to advertise here

What Fish is this?

Can you help? - I took a photo of this fish at Babbacombe, but can't identify it!

Any clues?

It has a very distinctive fan shaped tail and was approximately 15cm in length. It was being very territorial when photographed.



wanted..wanted..wanted..wanted..wanted..wanted..wanted..wanted..wanted..wanted..

For future club newsletters

- Your diving stories and experiences
- Your photographs
- Your recipes
- Adverts—for a small fee!

