


BUBBLING UNDER

What's on Calendar			
July	4 th to 11 th	Red Sea Trip - Whirlwind	See: Clare Barber
	7 th and 21 st	Night Dive 	
	11 th to 18 th	Red Sea Trip - Cyclone	See: Shaun West
	20 th to 22 nd	Social: Scapa Flow Talk	See Alice Townsend
	20 th to 22 nd	Isle of Mann Trip	See: Clare Barber
August	4 th and 18 th	Night Dive 	
	5 th to 9 th	Farne Islands Trip	See: Shaun West
	20 th to 22 nd	West Wales Trip	See: Shaun West
September	1 st and 15 th	Night Dive 	
	5 th	Social: Banbury Open Air Pool Open Day	See Clare Barber
	11 th - 18 th	Scillies Trip - Scillonian III	See: Louise Wallace
October	6 th and 20 th	Night Dive 	
	10 th	Banbury Sub-Aqua Club Annual General Meeting	
	30 th and 31 st	DIVE 2010 at NEC Birmingham	
November	3 rd and 17 th	Night Dive 	
	4 th	Social: Digital Submission Deadline for the Annual Photo Competition	See Shaun West
	11 th	Social: Annual Photo Competition	See Shaun West
	(TBC)	Social: Dinner Dance	See Clare Barber
December	1 st and 15 th	Night Dive 	
	19 th	Scuba Santa's @ Vobster Quay	See: Shaun West
September	18 th to 25 th	Scapa 2011	See: Alice Townsend



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- o Look Out For Leatherbacks - MCS

Seals, Dolphins and Nudibranchs

Well it's peak diving season and half the club are heading out to the Red Sea for a weeks diving on Tony Backhurst's Tornado Fleet. I am looking forward to the articles flooding in already, fingers crossed and arms twisted.

I have just got back from a dive weekend to remember in West Wales, having seen the prelude to the "super pod" of some 1,500 dolphins more on both events in this month's edition of **BUBBLING UNDER**.

Next month there is a very long weekend in the Farnes and a return to West Wales, and a possibility of a return visit to Studland. This being the Bay around the headland from Swanage rather than the nightclub, more on the last visit in the article by Robin Clark in next month's edition, arm-twisting already started.

Do you fancy taking a skill development course in Boat Handling or VHF Radio?

Well our very own Chef Singleton and Frank Betts are up for running the Boat Handling Development Course towards the end of the diving season, so names to them ASAP as places are limited and demand is normally high.

As for the VHF certification course, if this interests you, (remember you need to be an owner of this qualification to take the club boat out) give you name to Duane Knight or put you name down on the club notice board the next time you are down at club.

Safe Diving **BUBBLING UNDER** Editor *Shaun West*

BUBBLING UNDER



(And your article)

'Wall of dolphins' caught on film



A "superpod" of around 1,500 dolphins has been captured on film off the coast of Pembrokeshire by conservationists.

Eight volunteer members of the Sea Trust came across the "mile-long wall of dolphins" near the Smalls Lighthouse in the Irish Sea.

The charity's founder Cliff Benson said in wildlife terms the sight "was like winning the lottery".

Meanwhile Sea Watch said there had been dolphin sightings off parts of the Welsh coast they rarely visit.

The Sea Trust volunteers had been carrying out a small boat survey around the Pembrokeshire islands.



Cliff Benson

Mr Benson said: "As we were approaching the Smalls Lighthouse the sea was quite choppy, the sky grey and overcast. Suddenly in the distance we saw what appeared to be a blizzard. As we approached, we realised that the "blizzard" was thousands of Gannets spread out over a mile or more. Beneath them was a living wall of dolphins - a mile long and several deep. They just kept on coming pod after pod passing by the boat. Some came and looked at us but most just kept on going. This must have been a combination of many smaller pods joined together to exploit a huge bait ball of fish. It was possible to see all ages of dolphins from big adults to tiny babies."

He said it was the second time the Pembrokeshire-based charity had witnessed such a phenomenon.

"Back in August 2005 we had another superpod which I filmed and which was then shown around the world," added Mr Benson. "I did not expect to see such an awesome sight again in my lifetime, this was in wildlife terms like winning the lottery a second time."

Protective measures

In a separate development, the marine research and education charity Sea Watch has called for an extension to the Special Areas of Conservation for the species within Cardigan Bay.

It follows sightings in the past few weeks of bottlenose dolphins off Anglesey and Rhyl on the north Wales coast and Gower on the south.

Research director Peter Evans said: "Our surveys and photo ID research are revealing just how far the bottlenose dolphins from Cardigan Bay can range not just in winter but in summer too.

"These sightings have important implications for the wind farm developments at nearby North Hoyle and Gwynt y Mor since there has been cause for concern over possible disturbance during both the construction and production phases.

"Under the EU Habitats Directive, bottlenose dolphins require specific protective measures and that's why two of three SACs in the UK were created in Cardigan Bay for the species.

"However, we now know that the Cardigan Bay animals are regularly coming here as well, so that conservation management must extend to this region."



The superpod was seen near the Smalls Lighthouse. (Photo: Sea Trust)

More information and see the video at:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/south_west/8127670.stm

West Wales



Well we got a fantastic weekend in June for the club weekend in West Wales. The tides were right, the weather was right and the accommodation was superb. I have been to West Wales many times, but this is the first and not the last I will be staying at Upper Neeston Lodges. These are luxury 5 Star, energy efficient barn conversions on a family run sheep farm close to the Milford Haven Waterway in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, making it ideal for divers.

The facilities include ample parking for cars and boats, separate laundry/drying room, outside wash down area and secure kit storage areas. There is also access to a garden and paddock for BBQ's or just relaxing.

There are two independent units, one accommodating 10 people and one accommodating 8. We stayed in the Barn, a two-storey conversion with an upstairs sitting room and kitchen/dining area with TV. Also, but no need for this weekend, was a wood-burning stove.

The bedrooms are downstairs sleeping 6 and 2 in bunks each with an en-suite shower room. I completely recommend it.

The conditions were so good on the Saturday we decided to head out to the "Smalls", basically a light house on a few rocks some 20 miles straight out to sea, with promises of fantastic visibility, superb diving and the possibility of seals.

The journey was long but that was forgotten when a dolphin popped up in front of the boat. At first I thought I had imagined

it. Axl, who had been sitting on the suicide seat at the front of the boat confirmed he had seen something too. We stopped the boat and looked around... nothing!

Putting it down to wishful thinking and heat induced hallucinations, we set off again. Within 5 minutes we saw a small pod of 4-5 Dolphins. I

manoeuvred the boat to try and get them playing on the bow wave, but to no avail and we continued on only to stop again shortly after when we sighted another slightly larger pod of Dolphins. Again they did not want to stop and play but it was fantastic to watch.



Photo By Duance Knight



Photo By Shaun West

We arrived at the site as calculated right on slack water but we still had around a meter of swell. As we worked our way round the rocks to find the best place to dive we became aware we were being watched, slowly but surly seals began to pop their heads out of the water to take a look.

Space was at a premium with all eight of us on the boat, but deftly the first two divers kitted up and entered the water with the seals. Now the seals here are not as used to Divers as those in the Farnes, but their curiosity shone out and everybody had an underwater encounter with them.

We only did the one dive with the seals and headed back to St Brides Haven to pick up the second cylinders and to head off for an afternoon dive on Stack rocks.



On our way back we passed the snow covered Grassholm island home to some 15,000 breeding pairs of Gannets. On approach the smell emanating from Grassholm was a hint the island was not covered in snow.

After our lunch stop in St Brides Haven we headed over to Stack Rocks, a pleasant enough dive but not a patch on the mornings.

Saturday night, and we headed into Milford Haven for a curry at the Tajmahal Indian Tandoori Restaurant.

Sunday started not quite as early as Saturday but started off just as nice. We put the boat in again at Gelliswick Slip. A few spots of rain fell as we prepared the boat for launch, but that soon disappeared to leave us with another wonderful day.

Today's plan was to dive the Wall at North Haven on Skomer then to head over to St Brides Haven again for lunch and a cylinder change and head back for a second dive on Skokholm Island.



Photo By Shaun West - *Janolus cristatus* see http://www.bansac.org/Bubbling_Under/BU03_2009.pdf

Well I always enjoy diving on Skomer and today was not an exception. We entered the water on a Marine buoy denoting a site of underwater interest, a large area of sand festooned with large anomalies, and headed over to the wall. Once past the kelp and heading out to sea the scenery was fantastic with lots of Dead man's fingers, a colonial soft coral that forms thick, fleshy and irregular masses, which are often finger-like in appearance. Not a patch on the amount we had seen on the Smalls but lovely all the same.

After the dive we headed over to St Brides Haven for the cylinder exchange and lunched the boat again. We entered the bay dead slow because of all the divers under training and moored up the boat. It was at this point a member of the club gave a perfect demonstration of why you should not travel on a RIB with your dry suit unzipped, particularly if you are under two meters tall and you enter 1.8 meters of water. I have a feeling there may be a possible nomination here for a club award ...



HOTY

Once fed and watered, and dry in one particular case, we headed out to Skokholm for the last dive of the day.

We reviewed the possible dive sites and opted to dive just round from "Peter's Bay" in the bay with the landing Quay.

We each selected a slightly different point in the bay to dive, everyone having another good dive.

All in all a cracking result of a weekend, and I for one am looking forward to the next weekend in August and someone else writing an article about it!

Safe Diving
Shaun West

Snorkel Club's new RIB thanks to Sport England!



Oxford BSAC has just been successful in securing a Sport England Grant for a new RIB dedicated to its snorkel members.

Here, the club reports on how it continues to grow and develop its snorkelling and encourages other branches to look into snorkel funding:

Oxford BSAC has been running since 1956. It has a long tradition of shore diving, boat diving (including from our 31ft hard boat Gemini II) and charter boat diving but not much snorkel diving.

The branch started to develop the snorkelling side about 15 years ago with particular emphasis on junior snorkel divers through our then snorkelling officer, John Waterhouse.



A year ago, Debbie White, who is the current snorkel officer together with John Waterhouse, now the club's regional snorkel advisor and another couple of members, decided to further develop snorkelling within the branch, for existing and new members by expanding our instructor base and improving our open water snorkelling capabilities.

Once we had looked at our existing members, what qualifications they had and where they wanted to go in the future, we contacted local community groups and held try-snorkel evenings for over 35 sea scouts.

Chris Watkins, Sea Scout leader said "Every scout that took part really enjoyed their time in the water. I have been pleasantly surprised how everyone managed to pick-up the basics and been quite proficient after just one hour, probably down to the stepped approach and patience of all the instructors."

In February, Oxford BSAC hosted a Snorkel Instructor weekend organised by BSAC headquarters and Sport England where three members from Oxford BSAC qualified as Snorkel instructors, along with around 40 other snorkel divers from the South of England.

During March the club took part in the BSAC Try Snorkel 2010 campaign, successfully introducing more members of the public to this fascinating underwater sport.

After all this early enthusiasm, we came to a halt - without going out into open water, the members were reaching Snorkel Diver level then losing interest.

So the club decided to apply for a grant from Sport England for £10,000 to purchase a five metre RIB capable of carrying eight snorkel divers into shallow open water. Not only would

this allow us to move away from the pool environment, but it opens up many chances to discover the amazing sights the British coastline has to offer.

In June we had the fantastic news that the club had been awarded the full £10,000 from Sport England.

The new RIB will enable the club to train current members to the next grade, Open Water Snorkel Diver, and hopefully encourage new members as well as inspire the club's family members who don't scuba dive to join in the fun.

All this means sustainability for Oxford BSAC.

It is important that we can capture the enthusiasm and maintain these snorkel members, especially the children and young adults, as these will be our divers of the future, our potential committee members and our up-and-coming instructors who will allow us to continue Oxford BSAC for the next 60 years.

After our successful grant application with Sport England, we encourage other branches to consider applying. With these types of grants, the accessible and affordable sport of snorkelling will have a future.

Debbie White

www.oxfordbsac.org.uk

Who's making a difference to YOUR dive season?

Is there someone in your club that is going the extra mile...and making a positive impact?

on your diving this summer

Then why not nominate them for BSAC's Branch Volunteer of the Year 2010 - they could win a Suunto D6 for their efforts!

The BSAC Branch Volunteer of the Year award aims to recognise the significant and invaluable contribution our many volunteers make to both BSAC and branch diving. Sponsored by Suunto, we have a D6 computer, worth £575, to award each of our 30 Volunteers of the Year 2010, to be selected from around the regions.

In addition to the regional winners, there will also be an overall Volunteer of the Year 2010 selected, who will be awarded the prestigious Jonathan Crusher Award.

We are looking for members who have made an exceptional contribution to your club. There are a wide variety of reasons why a member is nominated but they could include: going beyond the call of duty to make things happen, outstanding service and dedication to the branch or fundraising, training, recruiting of new members.

ANY branch member can nominate a fellow member for Volunteer of the Year.

To nominate your 'unsung hero' simply complete the online nomination form. So with the dive season now upon us, don't delay and nominate the person who is making a real and lasting difference to your branch.

For further information, to read more about last year's winners and nominators and to nominate your own club's unsung heroes go to www.bsac.com/volunteer2010



Heatwave prompts surge in massive basking sharks off British shores

The baking summer has raised a bumper plankton crop for the harmless giants that feed in our waters. Now wildlife conservationists want the hotspots protected

Record numbers of basking sharks have been spotted off the coast of Britain and Ireland after the recent hot weather boosted levels of their favourite food: zooplankton.

Last year there were only 26 sightings of the 11-metre sharks in two and a half months off the most southerly headland of Cornwall. This year more than 900 sightings have been recorded since the beginning of June.

"Last year we had a really poor year because of the weather. But even though temperatures have obviously picked up, we never expected to see the sharks in such large numbers," said Tom Hardy of Cornwall Wildlife Trust, who is co-ordinating the southwest basking shark project.

The trust uses 40 volunteers working in half-hour shifts for 10 weeks to record sightings. The volunteers have also recorded sharks breaching the surface of the water five or six times. "That is very rare," said Hardy.

Off the coast of Ireland, a record number of sightings was also recorded in June, with 248 basking sharks counted last month by the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group.

Conservationists believe one of the reasons for the high numbers could be unseasonably warm weather increasing the amount of zooplankton. Basking sharks - the world's second largest fish - use highly developed senses and will travel hundreds of miles to seek out the densest patches.

Simon Berrow, of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, is carrying out a pioneering tagging project to find out more about the elusive sharks and has been taken aback by the numbers.



"In a three-day period we tagged more than 100 sharks in just one bay in north Donegal," he said. "You only ever see five or six of these creatures on the surface, which doesn't reflect what's going on under the water."

Around the coast of the Isle of Man, another basking shark hotspot, 400 sightings have been recorded since the beginning of May.

"We saw a lot more in May than is usual and after a couple of quiet weeks sightings are picking up again," said Fiona Gell, marine wildlife officer for the Isle of Man government.

Basking sharks can weigh up to seven tonnes, but despite this they have tiny teeth and pose no threat to humans.

They have also been turning up in unexpected places this year. A rare sighting off the coast of Felixstowe caused a flood of wildlife watchers to head for the Suffolk coast last weekend. Extremely little is known about the species, and their seasonal and annual movements are a mystery to biologists. The high number of sightings is encouraging news for basking shark specialists who will meet at a conference over three days next month.

The 47 local wildlife trusts across the UK, the Isle of Man and Alderney are working to identify basking shark hotspots and hope that this summer's bumper crop of sightings will strengthen their call for further protection of the species. The trusts would like to see some of these areas turned into marine conservation zones, a new type of protected area being introduced through the Marine and Coastal Access Bill currently going through parliament. This could result, for example, in speed restrictions being imposed on boats in the area.

"One of our principal aims is to ensure there is no loss in the population size of these magnificent creatures," said the wildlife trusts' marine policy officer, Lissa Goodwin.

"The fantastic number of sightings we have seen this summer show how crucial it is to protect these basking shark hotspots in the future."

Lisa Bachelor
The Observer, Sunday 5 July 2009

guardian.co.uk | TheObserver

Look Out For Leatherbacks

– The Turtles With A Built-in Central Heating System

9th June 2010

Endangered turtles make their way to UK's summer seas. They look like a black leather sofa with spots on and the shape of their shell inspired the boating phrase 'to turn turtle' and, according to the Marine Conservation Society (MCS), they're about to arrive off the coast near you.

MCS is urging coastal path walkers and sea-users to look out for leatherback turtles, and report them online to MCS, as part of ongoing work to determine UK hotspots for these critically endangered reptiles that migrate to UK seas each summer.



"Leatherbacks are amazing creatures, the biggest of the turtles, growing up to a couple of metres in length and weighing up to a tonne – about the same as small car," said Peter Richardson, MCS Biodiversity Programme Manager, "But what makes them really special and unlike any other reptile is the fact that they can maintain their own body heat, even in our chilly seas. This means that each year adult leatherbacks migrate from the tropics to UK seas, arriving in the summer just as our jellyfish start to gather in huge numbers."

Leatherback turtles feed almost exclusively on jellyfish and are listed as critically endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Leatherbacks face huge threats to their survival including habitat destruction and disturbance at their tropical nesting beaches. They can get entangled and drown in fishing gear and die from starvation when they eat plastic litter, which they mistake for jellyfish, blocking up their digestive system. Sadly, each year small numbers of leatherbacks drown and wash up on UK shores after becoming entangled in pot buoy ropes or as a result of plastic ingestion.



"We encourage anyone who has spotted a turtle in UK waters, be it dead or alive, to report it immediately," said Peter Richardson, "The more UK turtle sightings we hear about, the better our understanding will be of these fascinating creatures, and the more we will know about how to make sure they are safe when they visit our seas." So far this year five have been seen, including two off west Wales, one off the Isle of Man, another off the Isle of Skye at the end of May and the most recent off Cleveleys Beach, north of Blackpool, by Simon Smith out walking his dog on Monday June 7th.

"The sea was very calm, and I was throwing the ball in for the dog to fetch when I noticed this big thing floating about fifty yards offshore. It looked like a corpse in a body bag! I threw the ball closer and it dived and then resurfaced further down the beach. I followed it and watched it with binoculars and realised it was a giant turtle. I got within about thirty yards of it at one point and watched it for almost 2 hours before the light faded. It wasn't scared at all, and because there were a lot of jellyfish about I think it must have been feeding. It was a truly amazing experience!"

Five species of marine turtle have been reported in UK waters, with leatherbacks making up 75% of the records. MCS has been encouraging the reporting of marine turtles in UK waters since 2001, and publishes the UK Turtle Code, an information sheet on how to spot different turtle species and who to report them to.

UK and Ireland turtle encounters can be reported to MCS online at www.mcsuk.org and www.euroturtle.org/turtlecode where there are photographs and information to help identify the turtle species found in UK waters.



Nudibranch of the issue



Thecacera pennigera



Common name: None Montagu, 1815

Phylum: Mollusca
 Class: Gastropoda
 Order: Nudibranchia
 Suborder: Doridina
 Family: Polyceridae

Description

This species may reach 30 mm in length, with a ground colour of white, and numerous irregularly shaped orange blotches and jet-black and yellow spots over the dorsum. The black spots are always smaller than the orange areas. The rhinophores issue from complex sheaths, which are open mesially, and rise to form massive clubs behind. There are 3-5 bipinnate or tripinnate gills, white with orange and black spots, and behind the gills is a pair of club-like, dorso-lateral, glandular, defensive ceratal processes. The front of the foot is produced into antero-lateral points, the podial tentacles. No oral tentacles are present

Habitat

This species feeds upon the bryozoan *Bugula* spp. It is always found in shallow water, to 20 m, and it seems probable that its distribution has been assisted by shipping, like its prey.

Distribution

Only in the southern North Sea (Distr. *T. pennigera*)
 Further distribution from Arcachon and the Mediterranean Sea (as far as Sicily), Brazil, South Africa, Pakistan, Australia, Japan and New Zealand.

Identifying Features:

- Rhinophores with incomplete sheaths.
- White with orange and black spots.

Shaun West

Next Issue

- ✓ What's on Calendar
 - Details of local and national diving events
- ✓ Nudibranch of the issue
 - Another little critter for you to keep a lookout for.
- ✓ Studland
 - An article by Robin Clark

Coming Soon:

- ✓ More "Your new committee"
 - Personalised detail of your committee.
- ✓ Your article?
 - **Something you want to share?**

Chefs Corner

A few more practical hints for divers and campers on simple preparation and cooking of selfish.



Chef Singleton says "*Another dish I picked up from my old friend Leo*"...

Scampi, Squat Lobster and Crayfish

Drop into fast boiling water and cook for approximately two minutes. After Fast boiling and leaving to cool down these need to be shelled in the same way as the Lobster in **BUBBLING UNDER** June 2010, sharp scissors will do the job, it's the tail part that is eaten remove the head, claws and the black vein down the tail. May be eaten cold or dipped in batter and deep-fried for approximately one minute or until golden brown.

http://www.bansac.org/Bubbling_Under/2010%2006%20BANsac%20Newsletter.pdf

Crab

Kill humanely by drowning in cold fresh water then drop into fast boiling water. Boil for approximately 20 minutes per pound weight, up to a maximum of 35 minutes. Discard black stomach sac and gills ("dead men's fingers"). All else is edible. Pick out the dark and light meat, mix together and repack into clean shells. Serve cold.

Chef Singleton

