

BUBBLING

party on the beach



UNDER

What's on Calendar				
May	1 st to 3 rd	Dive Fest - Pentewan Sands, Cornwall	See: Clare Barber	
	5 th and 19 th	Night Dive		
	6 th	Compressor Rota: Axl West		
	13 th	Compressor Rota: Dave Merry		
	19 th	Swanage - Studland Dash	See: Shaun West	
	20 th	Compressor Rota: Clare Barber		
	27 th	Compressor Rota: Duane Knight		
June	1 st	Compressor Rota: Martin Cook		
	2 nd and 16 th	Night Dive		
	3 rd	Compressor Rota: Dave White		
	4 th to 6 th	West Wales Trip	See: Shaun West	
	10 th	Compressor Rota: Ken McDougal		
	13 th	Social: Banbury District Show - Spiceball Park	See Clare Barber	
	17 th	Compressor Rota: Brian Harris		
	23 rd	Costal Dash	See: Shaun West	
	24 th	Compressor Rota: Paul Crooks		
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	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	
	27 th	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	



Ginge One and Miss Kitty - Swanage 2010 By Clare Barber

In This Issue:

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- o Accelerated Decompression Procedures Course
- o Seahorses & Studland
- o Oil continues to spill into Gulf - MCS

- o Stop Press - Isle of Mann Trip in July

Swanage

Well despite the camping in sub-zero temperatures and having to chip the ice off the boat in the morning it was a great weekend to be diving. We had superb calm and sunny weather with temperatures around 18 degrees above the water. It was a bit of a shock to be diving into a rather chilly 9 degrees in the water. This did not stop the ten intrepid Campers and the four day trippers from enjoying the delights of Swanage and Kimmeridge Bay.

We had fun locating the wreck of the Fleur de Lys in Swanage Bay particularly in the rather limited visibility under the water but mainly having two sets of coordinated that initially lead to a buoyed lobster pot!

We did have a nice bubble in Studland Bay over the weekend. Studland has a great underwater echo system but we did not bump into any of the local residents. I have included an article from the "Studland Seahorse Trust" on the protected local residents and a code of conduct that you need to observe around them.

Also in this month's publication there are details of Monty Hall's new TV series based in the Highlands of Scotland that looks set to be another success. We have an article on the new BSAC skill development course on "Accelerated Decompression" by Jim Watson the BSAC Safety and Development manager along with an article on the continuing disaster on the oil spill gulf of Mexico.

Don't miss the "Stop Press" addition on page 6 and the chance to go diving on the Isle of Mann in July this year.

Safe Diving  Editor *Shaun West*



Monty's Back



After a year of city living, marine biologist and professional diver Monty Halls returns to live the good life in the Highlands and islands of Scotland. This time, he and his canine companion Reuben are sharing a restored crofter's cottage on the Hebridean island of North Uist. And he has a job to do, as a volunteer wildlife ranger.

Monty throws himself into island life: Highland Games, fishing for salmon and trout, and exploring the wildlife and remote reaches of his new domain. But winter is just around the corner, and he also needs to dig peat for fuel and fatten up pigs and turkeys for Christmas.

See if you can spot the Dive Fest beanie.

Broadcast: BBC Two normally at 9:00pm on a Wednesday

Duration: 60 minutes

Web: <http://www.montyhalls.co.uk/home>

Accelerated Decompression Procedures Course



The long awaited ADP Course will be released shortly. In its development, a number of pilot courses took place – below is a selection of the feedback received on those events.

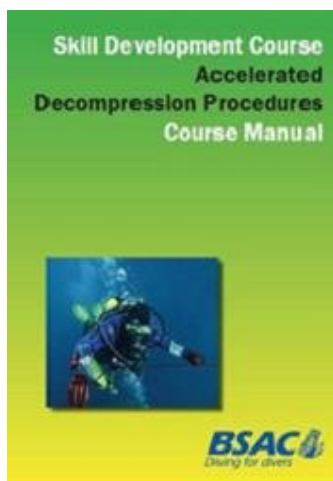
“Primarily just because you been doing something a particular way for a long time doesn't mean that you shouldn't continually assess and practice techniques and kit configuration.”

“This is a chance to emphasise to a diver (whether recently qualified or old stagers) that diving safely using accelerated decompression means good skills are vital NOT just useful.”

“Learned from dive 1 that I really needed more time to configure kit as I had issues re-stowing decompression regulator and could not have unclipped the decompression cylinder by myself (either above or below water).”

“For the first time ever I believe that I understand the principles of ‘on’ and ‘off’ gassing and how this effect varies with different tissue types. Added to this, I believe that I now understand the effects of increasing and decreasing the nitrogen differential pressure and the subsequent physiological effects that this has on the diver.”

“I particularly benefited from the instructor’s comments about adjusting my trim, having been observed ‘paddling constantly’ during one of my deco stops. The movement of just 2 Lb of lead from my weight belt to the top of my cylinders made a fantastic change to my physical attitude in the water and made the next dive’s deco stop far more comfortable and relaxed. This ‘revelation’ will stay with me for the rest of my diving time. I believe that the whole membership would benefit from looking at this simple but very important aspect of their diving technique, and the benefit and enhanced enjoyment that it will bring to them when in the water.”



The new course has a number of safety lessons that are valuable principles for divers to follow.

Theory

Building on the foundation of Nitrox knowledge contained within Ocean and Sports Diver training, the course develops this knowledge and in particular highlights the benefits that can be gained from using high oxygen mixtures to improve the efficiency of off gassing during decompression stops. The theory lessons use simple models to illustrate how this works to help divers understand the principles.

Planning

The detailed planning necessary to consider and construct appropriate bail out plans for the various potential failure points introduces a discipline and necessary attention to detail that helps ensure appropriate preparation for the dive. The understanding of the implications of extra decompression times also helps the diver commit to following the dive plan.

Equipment

The ADP course does not add significant amounts of equipment. However, it does focus on the implications of adding equipment such as decompression stages and how this affects buoyancy and trim. The ability to safely maintain decompression stop depths accurately is a fundamental safety implication. Using high oxygen mixes for decompression increases the importance of accurate stop depths. Accurate buoyancy control is therefore essential but as shown above from student comments the impact on trim that small equipment changes make can also significantly effect orientation and comfort on stops. The principles of redundancy and self sufficiency are also important themes in the course.

Practice

The supervised practice on the course has the advantage that the instructor can provide direct feedback and assistance in fine-tuning equipment and trim. Continued practice after the course is just as important especially when any change in configuration takes place.

Think SAFE – Dive SAFE

Jim Watson

BSAC Safety and Development manager

Seahorses & Studland

Despite first appearances, seahorses are fish. Like their relatives, the pipefish, they have jaws fused into a narrow tube and use bellow-like cheeks to suck in small prey.

It is thought that seahorses first evolved their upright posture as an adaptation to living in seagrass meadows, taking advantage of the vertical stems for shelter and camouflage.

Of the two species found in the UK, the spiny seahorse is the one most associated with seagrass and most likely to be found at Studland.

Studland one of the top seahorse sites in the country

The History

In 2004, Dorset Wildlife Trust's Julie Hatcher spotted the first pregnant male seahorse to be recorded in British waters. At the time, seahorses had no legal protection, so the location of this sighting was kept a closely guarded secret, though a beautiful photograph taken by Julie's partner, Steve Trehwella, was widely publicised.

Two Species Recognised

In April 2008, the list of species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act was finally amended and included both seahorse species known from the UK - the spiny seahorse, *Hippocampus guttulatus* and the short-snouted seahorse, *Hippocampus hippocampus*. This is good news for seahorses in general and should remove the threat of collectors targeting known seahorse sites.



© <http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk>

Seahorses in a Seagrass Meadow

The site of the 2004 discovery could now be revealed as Studland Bay, specifically a seagrass meadow at the southern end of the beach. Repeat visits in 2008 produced many more sightings, including pregnant individuals of both species, making Studland one of the top seahorse sites in the country.

It's not all-good news, though. The sheltered conditions at Studland that allow the seagrass to prosper also make the site an attractive anchorage for visiting boats and there is a real concern that the anchoring pressure could be having a detrimental effect on the seagrass, and therefore on the seahorses.



Spiny in Seagrass © Mike Markey

Safeguarding the Seahorses

After much discussion with the wide variety of groups and individuals with an interest in Studland, a meeting held at Dorset Wildlife Trust agreed a plan of action to safeguard the future of seahorses at Studland.

This involves setting up a trial no-anchoring zone in the seagrass meadow, which will allow a properly controlled scientific study of the impact of anchoring on the seagrass; the trial replacement of a number of the permanent moorings with "eco-friendly" moorings (which don't scour the seabed around the mooring anchor) and the development of an education and awareness programme to highlight the issues and promote "seahorse-friendly" behaviour among visitors.

Seahorses at Studland

Though seahorses are much in the news lately, they are not recent arrivals - local residents report finding seahorses at Studland decades ago. The first confirmed evidence of seahorses breeding at Studland (a pregnant male spiny seahorse) came in 2004 - there have been many more sightings since, including a pregnant short-snouted seahorse.

Anecdotally, there do seem to be more seahorses generally about over the last few years - there are certainly more reports. At Studland, that could simply be a reflection of the increased amount of effort looking for them.

Tagging Seahorses

In order to learn more about the seahorse population at Studland, the Seahorse Trust has embarked on a tagging project, which will follow individual seahorses for a number of years.

More Information

For more information about seahorses and the work of The Seahorse Trust - www.theseahorsetrust.org

For those wishing to join me on the 19th May on the coastal dash to Studland bay or if you are thinking of paying a visit please be aware of the following:

The Code of Conduct

- Put all litter in bins provided.
- Avoid grounding on seagrass - but if this happens, allow the tide to refloat you.
- Respect the voluntary no-anchor zone.
- Do not chase, disturb or touch seahorses. Seahorses are a protected species and it is an offence to disturb them. It is best for you and the seahorse to keep your distance and calmly observe. If the seahorse swims away, do not pursue it.
- Use fixed moorings to avoid anchoring.
- Divers - keep diving gear tidy to avoid trailing yourself and your gear along the bottom and reduce disturbance to the soft sediments and the seagrass.
- If you have to anchor, avoid seagrass - anchor on bare sand.
- Divers' and snorkelers' fins can stir up the sediment and potentially damage the seagrass. To avoid this, kick gently and move with care.
- Avoid using boat (sea) toilets in the bay.
- Do not pull at or hold onto the seagrass.
- Keep speed to a minimum when travelling over seagrass.
- Tell others how they can help.

Seahorses and Seagrass - Diving Protocols

These guidelines have been prepared to advise volunteer dive surveyors on the best practice when surveying in areas where they may encounter seagrass and seahorses. The protocol has been based on common standards for diving in environmentally sensitive areas, as well the general Seasearch and PADI/BSAC principles of safe diving.

- Ensure there is a boat cover - bays with seagrass are often busy areas and not all boat owners may recognise a diver's marker buoy or a flag. Adequate surface cover is particularly important on busy summer days.
- Use a Surface Marker Buoy (SMB) - an SMB will allow the boat cover and other boat users in the area to safely avoid you and track your movements.

- Dive in buddy pairs- It is always safer to dive in a pair but particularly in popular recreation areas. Working in pairs will also increase the efficiency of the survey.
- Check that all of your equipment is safe, working and within test date when participating in the surveys.
- Keep an eye on your air, time and your buddy. Maintain good communication throughout the dive with your buddy and surface safely if you encounter difficulties. The data is important but the health of the divers is more so.
- Maintain good buoyancy control - by swimming just above the seagrass and the seabed and avoiding trailing themselves and their gear in the substrate, divers reduce disturbance to the soft sediments and the seagrass.
- Keep diving gear tidy- attach loose hoses, survey equipment and other dive gear securely. This will also avoid damage to the habitat as well preventing equipment loss which adds to the marine litter.
- To actively seek out seahorses and photograph them, a licence is required. However if a seahorse is randomly encountered by a diver, guidelines are that no more than three photos with minimal disturbance, is acceptable in order to provide a record.
- Avoid sharp, sudden changes in direction when in the seagrass - fins and the wash created by them can stir up the sediment and potentially damage the seagrass. When in the habitat, change direction slowly and kick gently. Moving with care will also help maintain the visibility.
- Keep SMBs closely reeled in to avoid entanglement with buoys - there may be many boats, permanent buoys and moorings, creating the potential for SMBs to become entangled.
- Do not pull at or hold onto the seagrass, even if you are drifting. If you need to slow down or stop, brace yourself gently on the seabed and settle carefully.
- Do not chase, disturb or touch seahorses. Seahorses are a protected species and it is an offence to disturb them. It is an exciting experience to see one but it is best for you and the seahorse to keep your distance and calmly observe. If the seahorse swims away, do not pursue it.

Please send details of any sightings to
www.britishseahorsesurvey.org

MCS is deeply concerned as oil continues to spill into Gulf of Mexico

Following the explosion and subsequent sinking of the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon rig in the Gulf of Mexico that killed 11 workers over a week ago, MCS says it is increasingly concerned about both the short and the long-term damage the continuing spill of oil will have on the area's wildlife.

The spill could severely affect turtle nesting beaches, fish and fish eggs, seabirds, shrimp fisheries and oyster farms in both the open sea, and in key wetland areas on coastlines which may suffer a greater long-term impact.

MCS says the combination of the nature of habitats and the oceanography of the area, the quantity and type of the oil being leached, and the long-term toxic effects of large oil spills on both man and nature will all have a part to play on the effects of this environmental disaster.

The slick - currently as large as Jamaica - is leaking from an area 50 miles from a complex system of tidal sandy and muddy areas at the mouth of the Mississippi delta. The considerable intertidal salt marsh areas provide nesting habitat, and wading / feeding areas for vast numbers of birds. The rather futile attempts to block the oil with surface booms from hundreds of miles of coast will not stop contamination of these areas. The Gulf has a clockwise current gyre which could push the slick towards the beaches and intertidal habitats of Alabama and northwest Florida, beyond those of Louisiana.



The fuel is being leached from the seabed where it will be very complex, and costly to contain. There is the option of capping the leak at the seabed, or drilling a reserve well to relieve the pressure. The latter could take three months. The former could take at least two weeks, and may not succeed. All this suggests that the 42,000 gallons a day being leaked, could surpass the Exxon Valdez (11 million gallons) in terms of the scale of the leached contaminants.

The heavier grade sections of this oil material will be most problematic - it will not evaporate, can't be 'burned off', and will cause immediate damage to intertidal habitats, kill animals and plants living in sandy areas, and will smother seabirds. Over half a million seabirds were killed by the Exxon Valdez spill alone in 1989.

The less obvious damage from the spill will come in the long-term effects on the whole ecology of the region. There is considerable evidence from the species affected by the Exxon Valdez, that the oil can cause vast problems for the egg development of fish, can cause mutations in the anatomy of higher mammals and fish, and have long-term implications to generations of species such as gastropods and crustaceans.

Effects will also be felt by people working in wildlife and there are at least two wildlife refuges that will be directly affected if the oil lands in significant quantities. People who live off the natural resources in the region will also be affected. Shrimp fishing and oyster farming are big business. Fishermen are fearing for their livelihoods, and many individuals will be affected emotionally by the spoiling of these vast natural habitats and wetlands. Hoteliers, and people in the tourism sector will also be severely affected. People at the sharp end of the Exxon Valdez were actually treated for Post Traumatic Stress.

Nudibranch of the issue



Facelina annulicornis



Common name: None Chamisso & Eysenhardt, 1821

- Phylum: Mollusca
- Class: Gastropoda
- Order: Nudibranchia
- Suborder: Aeolidina
- Family: Glaucidae

Description

The body is translucent with scattered spots of white pigment. Around the mouth the skin has a rose coloured hue. The rhinophores are lamellate, both the rhinophoral and oral tentacles are tipped with white pigment. The digestive gland is visible through the ceratal epidermis, it may be brown, orange or green in colour. The adults can grow to 40mm in length.

Habitat

This uncommon species is known to feed on a variety of hydroids, and also to attack and devour other nudibranchs, especially Coryphella species.

Distribution

A southern species in the British Isles, with records extending northwards along the west coast of Ireland to Donegal Bay and Portrush, Co Antrim. Further distribution south to the Mediterranean.

Identifying Features:

- o Brown animal with regular white speckles all over body and cerata.
- o Rhinophores with sloping lamellae.

Shaun West

Next Issue

- ✓ What's on Calendar
 - o Details of local and national diving events
- ✓ Nudibranch of the issue
 - o Another little critter for you to keep a lookout for.

Coming Soon:

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



Hello all

Just wondering if anyone is interested in diving with Basking sharks, seals and seeing whales etc. I would like to arrange a trip to the Isle of Man and the owner of the dive centre is willing to give us a discount, as it's one of the last weeks he has available.

It's from Tuesday July 20th for three nights. He will include 2 boat dives per day, tank and weights, air fills, accommodation, breakfast and we will have say on where we dive etc. The cost for all this is £180. We will also need to pay for a flight or ferry across.

I need a minimum of 8 people to make this trip at this cost with a maximum of 10. If you are interested please let me know ASAP. You will need to be willing to pay ASAP.

If you are interested but cannot make the dates please do let me know, I may arrange another trip for next year but it will be more expensive.

Many thanks

Clare Barber
Social Secretary / Instructor

