Welcome to the new look Sussex Scuba Dive Club newsletter!

In this issue:

- we introduce the skills workshops, held on pool nights at K2
- there are numerous dates for your diary
- we publish the hardboat schedules
- only 3 places left on the June Red Sea trip
- club members share their dive logs and experiences with us
- learn all about SEAL Team AquaMissions
- the underwater photography competition is launched
- we highlight the plight of the Moray Firth Dolphins
- we take a stand against the use of plastic bags

Please email club@sussexscuba.co.uk with your ideas for club events. We may not be able to schedule them all for this year, but we will keep your ideas in mind for the coming year.

Also, please email us details of your most memorable dive - photos - your first UK dive - or an experience which you think would benefit other club members.

This is YOUR newsletter, let’s share our experiences with one another!

Full details of the club and events can be found on the Sussex Scuba web site.

"Leave nothing but bubbles"

www.sussexscuba.co.uk
Trips and Events

Hardboats
All of our hardboat dives this year will be from Brighton Diver II out of....yes... you guessed it.... Brighton!!

Weekend dives

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Dive Site</th>
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<tr>
<td>6th April</td>
<td>0900</td>
<td>City of London</td>
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<td>4th May</td>
<td>0800</td>
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Mid-week dives

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<td>24th June</td>
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<td>15th July</td>
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Please note that this schedule is subject to change.

See the web site for full details of the trips.

West Bay, Dorset – May
We have booked a boat called the Huntress II for Saturday and Sunday, which means we can get 4 dives in over the weekend.
The boat is a Lochin 40 which is a fairly big boat and is similar to the Endeavour we dived on at the Scylla, and yes.... it does have a lift.
There will be a full review of this trip in the next newsletter.

Red Sea – June
After the success of the trip to St John’s and the Southern reefs last year we decided that we would go again!
These really are spectacular reefs, suitable for all levels of experience and even the die hard wreckies had to admit that it was very impressive diving that tempted them back from “The Dark Side”. They are very colourful, and marine life is abundant.

One of the reasons for picking the Blue Pearl is due to the success of our trip in September 2007, when we sailed on this boat to do the Northern wrecks.
If you are interested in this trip then please get in contact with the dive centre.

There are only 3 places left on this trip so you have to hurry to avoid disappointment.

“Take nothing but time.... Leave nothing but bubbles”

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**Other Events**

**Decompression Awareness**

The purpose of both the Chamber Dry Dive and the Recompression Chamber Awareness Distinctive Specialty is to provide a safe and well-supervised introduction to a Hyperbaric recompression chamber facility.

It is designed to familiarise divers to the facilities available, the procedures, knowledge, problems and hazards associated with a recompression chamber and the possible treatment therein. The first dry dive, at the beginning of February was a great success, with many people commenting on “Donald Duck” voices and much fun was had during the “narked” exercises!!

So as not to spoil it for the March group, there will be a full write up from both of the dry dives in the next issue of the newsletter.

**Bowling**

What a massive success this was... well... so long as you judge success by levels of fun and not by points scored!!! It was a little embarrassing for some members to be upstaged by Rohan - who is only 3 years old. It is fair to say that everyone had a great Sunday afternoon and it is certainly an event that should be repeated in the future.

After the last ball was bowled it was time to hit the bar for some well deserved refreshments and debrief from people who could actually hit the pins!

Check out the web site for the rest of the bowling pictures.

**Travel Insurance**

Sussex Scuba, in conjunction with Travel and General Insurance Company, are now able to offer an excellent holiday insurance policy. This policy covers all the standard diving risks, but has the added advantage of being available for short breaks even a weekend if required. This can significantly reduce the cost of holiday insurance, as you no longer need to buy insurance on an annual basis.

Please have a look at www.sussexscuba.co.uk and follow the link for more information.

**Paul Morgan Photo Workshop**

This will consist of an evening session at the dive centre where Paul will give a talk and show his photos and will offer advice etc.

There will then be a pool session on club night. This was strictly limited to 6 places and the response has been excellent.

Evening at the dive centre is Thursday March 6th at 7pm with the pool session on Monday 17th March.

“Take nothing but time.... Leave nothing but bubbles”

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Club Pool Night at K2

The Sussex Scuba Dive Club night at K2 continues to be very popular - mainly with newly qualified divers and new club members.

For the people who don’t make it regularly, please remember that it is a great place to brush up on a few skills when you have had a bit of time off from diving.

Sussex Scuba Dive Club is not affiliated to any training agency and as such is free from all the usual rules and politics.

The aim of the club is quite simple - our intention is to create a club open to any diver, regardless of whom they trained with, and to provide a venue to practice skills.

Pool nights are Monday, 8pm to 9pm, on a fortnightly basis. Check the diary dates at the end of this newsletter or look on the web site for details.

We are introducing the “workshop” to club pool evenings. This will be a chance to brush up on the skills you have previously learned. Workshops for the club members every third dive club meeting, or so. These workshops are free to club members and will be open to those who have already qualified in the given workshop topic.

Buoyancy Control

The first workshop will be held on the 14th of April and will be for Buoyancy Control.

Any club members with the following PADI qualifications, or equivalent, may participate:
- Advanced Open Water
- Peak Performance Buoyancy Speciality

If you would like to take part in this workshop, just turn up to pool and make it known that you are interested.

Rescue Diver Refresher

On the 12th of May we will be holding a Rescue Diver Refresher - if you are a rescue diver then please join in with this workshop.

We will be running over numerous skill learned on the Rescue Diver course. Please note that only members who are qualified Rescue Divers will be able to participate in this workshop.

Club Pub Night at the Three Crowns

The last pub night was a great success with Denise premiering her “September Red Sea Trip” dvd. Everyone who was there will agree that she captured the essence of the holiday - diving, sleeping and laughing!!

The next Pub Night is Thursday the 13th of March at the usual venue of the “Three Crowns” in Ashurst Wood. It is always nice to see new faces at pub, so please come along and help yourself to chips and sandwiches. For everyone coming along: could you please drop Denise a quick email (denise@sussexscuba.co.uk) to make sure that we order enough food for everyone.

Look forward to seeing you all on the 13th of March and then again on the 10th of April.

"Take nothing but time…. Leave nothing but bubbles"

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PADI SEAL Team

SEAL Team Information
The SEAL team is for young divers who are looking for an action-packed, adventurous program filled with exciting scuba "AquaMissions."

Have you ever wondered what it’s like to dive with a torch, take pictures underwater or float effortlessly like an astronaut?
If you have, this is your chance to explore these exciting adventures in a swimming pool.

As a PADI Seal, you learn the basics of safe diving and explore different AquaMissions - or specialty dives - like wreck, navigation, buoyancy control, underwater photography, environmental awareness and more.

During Dives 1 - 5 of the PADI Seal Team Program, Kids learn how to participate in underwater activities through training similar to the PADI Jr. Open Water Diver program.

The kids progress through basic scuba skills in a way that keeps the activity fun and enjoyable while working along at a slower pace to ensure understanding.

Upon completion of AquaMission 1 the child becomes an official PADI Seal team member. Upon completion of AquaMission 5 the child is issued a certificate and encouraged to continue through AquaMissions 6-15.

Scheduled throughout the year AquaMissions 6-15 of the PADI SEAL Team Program are exciting activities that may be done in any order.

Certified Parents and siblings are encouraged to join the child in the fun.

These AquaMissions include:
- Creature ID
- Safety Specialist
- Environmental Specialist
- Search & Recovery
- Inner Space
- Skin Diver
- Navigation
- Snapshot Specialist
- Night Specialist
- Wreck Specialist

“Hi Denise my favourite aqua mission so far was the night dive as it was very fun and was not to hard, but I think that where I do photography it will become the top of the list for me as it sounds really fun.”
From Kelsey age 11

“My favourite mission was probably the underwater photography mission because I enjoyed taking pictures of all the creatures. I enjoyed using the digital camera the most because I was able to see all the pictures right after I took them and, unfortunately, the pictures with the other camera didn’t develop. My favourite picture that I took was the lobster one because it just looked really cool.”
From James age 10

Join the PADI SEAL Team with Sussex SCUBA

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As we approached the room, we were greeted by the massive jaws of a great white staring us in the face. Rob, our instructor for the day, was quick to assure us however, that although he had experienced diving with the great whites in South Africa with Sharkman Mike Rutzen, we would not be swimming with anything quite that large. He then showed us the jaw of a sand tiger shark that had bitten him in the past, causing an injury that required over eighty stitches to repair the tendons in his hand. At this point, John made a mental note not to annoy the guy in case he also ended up with his head on the table.

Despite this start, at no point during the day did we feel at all threatened by these magnificent creatures. In fact, the more we heard and saw on film, the more we realised that they usually swim gracefully around, minding their own business, and that any incident involving a human is a case of mistaken identity or a result of extreme provocation. Which, of course, is the aim of the day.

The experience began in the classroom with the morning spent learning about shark biology and how to swim safely with sharks. It can be done, apparently, although I think I’ll leave the great whites to the experts unless I’m in a cage. Lunch was provided which was a mammoth affair. Between the twelve of us on the course, we hardly made a dent in the huge feast that was placed before us, much to the delight of the shark team. After eating, we were invited to watch Rob and the team feeding the sharks, not that they were at all interested in eating. So much for these monstrous animals devouring everything in their path!

After lunch, we learned about shark conservation and the horrific act of shark finning. This is a truly cruel and disgusting act that results in the sharks being thrown back into the ocean still alive, without their fins, and consequently drowning as they are completely immobile. On a happier note, the day ended with the part we had all been waiting for - the dive!

Following a safety briefing, we made our way behind the scenes to where we entered the tank. We were weighted down with so much lead that after the dive, I fell to my knees and couldn’t get up again. Fins were not allowed so it was more of a shark walk than a shark swim. Cameras were also banned which was disappointing as it was a great day to have photographic evidence of.

Although we had done the dive before, this time was even better as the sharks were swimming a lot closer to us, so close that we could have reached out and touched them, had we been allowed. The huge rays were also magnificent, skimming the tops of our heads as they swam over. After the dive, the area was filled with twelve happy divers, grinning from ear to ear.

This was not a cheap day out, but one that I would recommend to anyone with an interest in sharks or anyone who just wants to do something that little bit different.

The sharks at the aquarium include sand tigers, lemon, bamboo, wobbegong, black tip, white tip, nurse and guitar as well as some very impressive rays.

It is open to anyone with Open Water Qualification (age 15 or over) and costs £225.

The dive is available by itself and costs £125.

(We would recommend an overnight stay as the journey is at least 4 hours each way on a good day.)
Favourite UK Dives

A memorable dive out of Brighton from Andrea and David Beer.

Sunday the 5th of August 2007 - Diving the Brighton Gulleys from Brighton Diver II. This was the second dive of the day, but by far, this is one of our favourite dives. It is a shallow dive, we only reached 8.8m, but the temperature at depth was a tropical 18 degrees! No hood or gloves for us on this dive. The sky was blue, the channel was calm and there was a current running - making it a fantastic drift dive.

We dropped to the bottom, which, at this point, was about 7m, and sent up the DSMB. Vis was unbelievably good on this dive, well over 10m in places! The cuttlefish were lovely and, as Denise says, they look like little aliens! Saw absolutely loads of starfish and crabs - and numerous spider crabs walking along the sandy bottom. The gulleys, which are carved into the seabed, were fascinating. There was so much to see on this dive and we barely finned at all, thanks to the current!

As we drifted further, we saw parts of a boats engine, various bits of hardware and an old wooden structure - maybe the remains of a boat?

The icing on the cake came when we unexpectedly found the upturned wreck of a flat-bottomed boat, which still had 1 of its props.

A great end to a terrific days diving!

A Dive Club Dolphin?

A cause that recently caught our attention was the plight of the Moray Firth Dolphins. Club members have been asked to cast their vote for adopting one of the dolphins. At this time we have over 20 votes cast - so, with a few more votes, the adoption will go ahead. There is still time to vote! The ballot will remain open until the 31st of March. As a club, we should take a keen interest of the wildlife around our coast. Dolphins are spectacular creatures and it is such a privilege to see and dive with them.

To cast your vote please email club@sussexscuba.co.uk, we will go with the majority vote, but it would be lovely for our Dive Club to get involved with such a good cause.

The adoption costs £32.50 for an entire year and will be fully funded by Sussex Scuba Dive Club. Every vote counts - please take a couple of minutes to say “YES” to this good cause.

WDSC - Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society

There are about 130 bottlenose dolphins in the Moray Firth population. We know quite a bit about them as WDCS has been funding research through the Aberdeen University Lighthouse Field Station at Cromarty since 1993 as well as conducting its own surveys in the outer Moray Firth and shore based research from the WDCS Wildlife Centre and Chanonry Point.

In December 2007, the UK Government stated that it is likely to allow oil and gas exploration and development in a dolphin sanctuary off the coast of the Moray Firth in Scotland. In combination with other threats, this could drive a small and vulnerable population to extinction. WDCS needs YOUR help to press the Government to keep oil and gas out of the sanctuary.

The Government has allowed until 14th March 2008 for the public to respond. We must act now! If you have not already signed the petition please do so at www.wdcs.org and follow the links. THANK YOU!!!
Conservation Issues

Who has one of the most plastic-polluted waters anywhere in the world? Britain does!

There are 13 billion plastic bags given out by British shops each year. These bags kill our sea creatures and suffocate our coastline.

On Wednesday the 27th of March 2008 the Daily Mail newspaper launched a huge initiative to “Banish the Bags”.

In response to this national campaign Sussex Scuba has recycled all of their plastic bags and switched to paper bags.

Denise from Sussex Scuba said, “When I read the newspaper this morning I was shocked about the damage plastic bags can do to the environment, all type of animals and of course the sea and the beautiful creatures who live there. I feel as divers we should try to help and reduce the damage these bags are doing, on average each of us gets handed 216 plastic bags a year - to only be used for 20 minutes before we throw them away. In our oceans these bags kill a million sea birds and 100,000 animals such as whales, dolphins and turtles each year. But these bags don’t just kill 1 creature - once the creatures body has rotted, the bag then goes on to kill again and again.

We at Sussex Scuba don’t want to add to this death and destruction and that’s why we are not having plastic bags in the shop. Instead, we are giving out paper bags for you to carry your goods home. It is a small step but, if every shop backed the campaign to ban the plastic bags, perhaps we might still have ocean full of coral and beautiful creatures for our grandchildren to see. Someday, Derek and I want to take our grandchildren diving to see coral and fish not plastic waste and a wilderness.”

Plastic bags start their life as crude oil, petroleum is heated to produce ethylene gas, this is converted into a porridge like substance, which is then cut into granules, heated and made into plastic bags. Each bag costs about half a pence to make.... and we use 13 billion of these each year? The plastic bags are generally made in China, Malaysia and Thailand. They are then printed with logos in Asia and eventually shipped to us - each bag travels 8000 miles to get to Britain.

Did you know that supermarket plastic bags were found in the Arctic? These bags had floated for 1000 miles on the Atlantic.

Plastic Facts:

- 0.5% of plastic bags are recycled in the UK
- 77 – the number of plastic bags littering every mile of the UK coast
- 0.6p to make and distribute each bag
- 1 million seabirds are killed each year by plastic
- 34 countries have banned or taxed plastic bags
- 0.2% of the world’s oil is used to make plastic bags
- 216 plastic bags are used by each person in the UK in one year
- 20 minutes – typically the amount of time each bag is used before being thrown out

We can only hope that more businesses sit-up and pay attention, just as Sussex Scuba Dive Shop has, and ban the plastic bag.

In the dive shop, posters will be displayed to show the journey of a plastic bag, and to highlight the damage done to our environment and wildlife.

Everyone has the chance to make a difference – don’t be left behind with your plastic bags!

Why not visit the WDCS shop and buy a reusable bag - you help the environment and support a good cause! http://shop.wdcs.org click on “WDCS Range” and then on “WDCS Bags”

“Take nothing but time…. Leave nothing but bubbles”

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As so many of our members have cameras, we thought it was high time to launch a photography competition. This competition is open to all members - including Derek!!

The categories for the first annual Sussex Scuba Photography competition are:

- UK Underwater
- Overseas Underwater

The deadline for entries is end business on Monday the 27th of October 2008.

Paul Morgan, who is Sussex Scuba’s resident expert photographer, will judge the photo competition. You will probably have seen some of his work hanging in the training room - his photos are absolutely stunning!

The winners of each category will receive a shield and the best overall photo winner will receive a shield and a £50 voucher for Sussex Scuba

Email your entries to club@sussexscuba.co.uk including the following information in your email:

- Name of entrant
- Date and location photo was taken
- Category

Your file should be named with the following convention
<Forename><Surname><photo entry number>.jpeg

Eg  DerekLancaster1.jpeg
DerekLancaster2.jpeg
DerekLancaster3.jpeg

We will try to display as many photo as possible at the End of Season Party on Saturday the 22nd of November and the winners of each category will be announced at this time. Remember to put the party date in your diary!

Rules and Regulations:

- Please remember to: “Take nothing but time, leave nothing but bubbles” when taking your photos, any evidence of harm to the marine environment will result in your disqualification
- The judges decision is final
- The deadline for entries is end of business on Monday the 27th of October 2008
- A maximum of 3 entries per club member over the 2 categories listed above

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Diary

2008 Calendar

2nd March  Recompression Dive
3rd March  Dive Club at K2
13th March Club Pub night
17th March Dive Club at K2

6th April  Hardboat Dive
10th April Club Pub night
14th April Dive Club at K2

28th April  Dive Club at K2

4th May  Hardboat Dive
8th May  Club Pub night
12th May  Dive Club at K2

16th - 18th May  West Bay, Dorset
26th May  No club – Bank holiday

8th June  Hardboat Dive
9th June  Dive Club at K2
11th - 18th June  Red Sea trip
12th June  Club Pub night
23rd June  Dive Club at K2

24th June  Evening Hardboat Dive
28th - 29th June  Stoney Cove

7th July  Dive Club at K2
10th July  Club Pub night
15th July  Evening Hardboat Dive
21st July  Dive Club at K2
27th July  Hardboat Dive
29th July  Evening Hardboat Dive

4th August  Dive Club at K2
8th - 11th August  St Keverne, Cornwall
14th August  Club Pub night
17th August  Hardboat Dive
18th August  Dive Club at K2
19th August  Evening Hardboat Dive
25th August  Shore Dive and Beach BBQ

1st September  Dive Club at K2
3rd - 10th September  Red Sea trip
11th September  Club Pub night
15th September  Dive Club at K2

16th September  Evening Hardboat Dive
27th - 28th September  Stoney Cove

13th October  Dive Club at K2
16th October  Club Pub night
19th October  Hardboat Dive
27th October  Dive Club at K2

10th November  Dive Club at K2
13th November  Club Pub night
22nd November  End of Season Party
24th November  Dive Club at K2

8th December  Dive Club at K2
11th December  Club Pub night

Please note that this schedule is subject to change.
See the web site for full details of the trips.

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