



## AUTUMN 2016

### Chair's report by Ali Wills.

What a busy summer! We have had try-divers who have booked Open Water courses, new Bubble Makers and lots of other courses - details to follow later in the newsletter.

None of this would be possible if it wasn't for our wonderful helpers who give up their time to support the Trust in numerous different ways and also enable the try-dives to happen. It is great to see so many of you mucking in to make the sessions work and generally spreading the word. Too many people to thank individually; you all know who you are.

Lack of uptake meant we needed to postpone the fundraiser due to have happened in September. So ...we are looking for ideas for a diving-related, sponsored event which St Albans SAC have kindly agreed to support us with by allowing us to use their pool. All ideas welcome, so please get you thinking-caps on.

In June a team of intrepid volunteers (James, Dee, Liam, Dale, Nicole, Jen, Frank, Jac, Nik and Ali) emptied and reorganised the van. Everything is documented, thanks to Dale and has a place in the van. Given the effort that went into getting the kit in order, please ask if you are not sure where to put anything.

As you know, we are always on the look-out for new holiday locations, so if anyone knows or hears of hotels with good disabled rooms and dive facilities, please let Frank know.

Hope to see you all soon at a try-dive, the Dive Show and/or Christmas Dinner!

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### **Christmas dinner.**

Will be held at MacDonald Berrysted, Ascot after the pool session on 11th December. Cost is **£32** per person.

If you were the recipient of a trophy last year kindly ensure it is returned at the November pool session so this year's recipient's name can be engraved on it.

### **Courses**

Congratulations to:

- Liam Coffey and Adam Quarterman, completing their Drysuit Speciality
- Jackie Buchanan, Dee and Liam Coffey, completing their Deep Speciality
- Adam and Liam, completing their Rescue course
- Harrison completing his Seal Team qualification
- Liam Coffey achieving Master Scuba Diver
- Dale Robson and Richard Heather, completing their Advanced Open Water certification
- Sarah Mingay, completing her Open Water certification

Courses in progress are 2 Seal Team, 1 Junior Open Water, 7 Open Water, 2 Advanced Open Water, 2 Rescue courses, 4 Divemasters and 1 Nitrox speciality.



### **EFR course**

We had nine people on this year's EFR refresher course. A long day - well done, everybody. A big thank you to Dee & Liam for hosting it. In their usual style, Mr. & Mrs. Coffey supplied lunch for all participants, which was duly delivered at midday and very tasty it was. Far too much but yummy. Well done to everyone; that's it for another couple of years.



Founder Members: Leon Golding, Brenda Carey and Alan Myers  
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## Holidays

### Oman, 2016



### Oman 2016; trip report by Sarah

My first holiday with the Scuba Trust is definitely something I will remember for a lifetime. For me though my journey didn't start there. I was a non diver; in the months leading up to the holiday, I worked hard to get my theory and pool sessions complete, ready to complete my first step on the PADI road and become a qualified Open Water Diver once in Oman. I had many people



supporting me from inside and outside of the Scuba Trust, and without them I would have struggled to achieve what I have.

The start of the holiday for some was at Heathrow Premier Inn the night before after the monthly try dive. This meant that the early start didn't have to be so early and that we were only down the road so had plenty of time to get there or so we thought. Once we got to Heathrow, there were lanes closed and signs galore. We parked up where we thought we were meant to be, to find that once we were unloaded we had found ourselves at the wrong terminal. So off we go; Liam, Dee, James and I all go in search of the correct terminal. During this time, we all start getting phone calls from Frank wondering where we were. We finally arrive 30 minutes late to find that we weren't the last ones there... Howard was stuck in traffic. A few minutes later he appears and the holiday can officially start.

I soon realised the amount of planning and organising that had gone on before even getting to this point. Even with all this planning, the systems in place were letting us down including no record that I was even a wheelchair user. But Frank was on the case and was able to resolve the issues we were experiencing.

Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to a couple of our group before the plane was off the ground. Glyn and his friend/PA Carole had to make the difficult decision not to fly due to health issues. This obviously put a dampener on things and showed me the reality of trips like these when there are people with disabilities involved. I hope you are feeling better, Glyn, and look forward to meeting you on future holidays.

The flights were long but that didn't matter. I wasn't given much time to think on the way out there as I was given my quizzes and final exam to complete. Once in Oman, we were met by a few different vehicles including a pickup truck. All of us, including our wheelchairs and luggage, were loaded and ready for us to go. Some of us managed to finally get to bed at around 3 a.m. (midnight UK time) whilst a few were still up trying to sort problems with rooms etc. Finally in bed with alarm set for 8 to be at breakfast for 9.

The first day was a fairly relaxed day with final preparations for the diving to commence the following day. For most of us that meant lazing in and around the pool and I was beginning to learn whom the biggest kids were on the trip.... Ron





and Howard with the foam ball and later on in the week a foam dart to add to the mix.

Day 1 of diving and the biggest journey I was about to embark on with the first and second dives of my Open Water Course about to be completed. Dive 1, I was filled with great apprehension and mix of emotions. I was finally here and about to dive for real. I watched everyone as they prepared themselves mentally and physically, being guided by others with regards to what I needed to do. Dive 1 was physically and emotionally draining but I had finally got here and was achieving what I set out to achieve. The rest of my dives went well on day 1 and day 2 of my course.

I made great progress and was finally beginning to enjoy the experience of diving. By the end of day 2 I was qualified and so was able to enjoy the rest of the holiday knowing I had achieved what I set out to achieve.

During the rest of the holiday and through diving with different people I soon realised that my learning didn't stop on day 2 and so I continued to learn and make progress for the rest of the dives. Some lessons I learnt were tougher than others, especially when trying to get my buoyancy right. Many of my notes in my log book refer to this and some days were definitely better than others.

For some people in the group the diving wasn't as spectacular as what they have been used to on previous holidays due to visibility and a lack of big marine life. For me though this meant I could focus on me and my diving rather than getting distracted by amazing sites and losing sight of why I was there and that was to learn how to dive.

On the last night were the mandatory awards. Many people had mishaps throughout the week which led to receiving awards. All awards were received in the manner that they were meant and that was good fun. I was included in these awards, for more than achieving my Open Water. Enough said about that the better!

The final day was a relaxing day around the pool before starting the tiring journey through the night home. Some slept more than others during the flight but it was definitely a much more subdued journey compared to the one on the way out.



Well done to Richard for finishing his Advanced Course and good luck to Mike in Mexico who has one more dive to complete his Advanced Course. I have already been informed my Advanced Crew Pack is ready and waiting for me.

To summarise my whole first experience of holidaying with the Scuba Trust; it was amazing. The diving was only part of the holiday; what made it more amazing was the support, guidance and, most importantly, friendships that I built on over the week. Someone referred to the Scuba Trust as family and this is how it felt. I am fairly new to the Scuba Trust but this didn't matter. I was made to feel welcome and part of the group. To me this is what makes these holidays special and I would like to thank everyone involved in this holiday and especially Frank, who puts in a lot of effort to make sure these holidays run smoothly but also a special thanks to him for believing in me and helping me get this far.

I'm looking forward to Mexico and the new challenges I will face.

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Next trip will be **Mexico in June 2017**. If you want to join us on this trip, contact Frank ([bucdive98@hotmail.com](mailto:bucdive98@hotmail.com)); we might be able to get additional flights.

**Live Aboard 29th September- 6th October 2017 on Blue Horizon departing from Hurghada Egypt.** One week full board and diving. (Alcoholic drinks not included but available). Cost is £1100 and a deposit of £200 secures your place. The itinerary will be a mixture of northern and southern Red Sea, to sites that you wouldn't normally get to dive on the day boats. This is something different and a first for the Scuba Trust so don't miss this great trip.

## 2018 trips

We have several great locations being suggested also hopefully Sharm direct flights will be back. Liam and Dee did manage to go via Cairo last month. However it's 4.5 hours to Cairo, a 1.5 hour stop over and an internal flight of 1 hour down to Sharm. There is also an alternative route via Istanbul but times are very similar. With airport security times that's the whole day travelling and



transferring for the wheelchair users. The next review date that the industry has for resuming flights direct to Sharm is December 2016. Watch this space!

### **Murcia, Spain**

We have been looking for alternative destinations for Scuba Trust holidays, and those that were at the London Dive Show will remember Neil who was on Adventure Divers stand opposite ours. It was decided that the Coffeys and the Buchanans would check the operation out.

Adventure Divers has been established for 11yrs based in La Manga, Murcia, Spain. We were met by Neil at Adventure Divers and received a warm welcome; that was after turning up late because Liam's sat nav died on the way and we couldn't find the USB port in the hire car, but that's another story!

Adventure Divers use a catamaran, which is shared with other dive operations; it has a two-person hydraulic lift to get divers in and out of the water - perfect for paras and able-bods alike. Being a 'cat', there was plenty of room on board; however, no facilities. A little like the Caribbean boats, they go out at 8.30 a.m. for the first dive and return to port. Second dive they go out at 11.30/12. If you're up for it, the third dive goes out at 5.30 p.m..

The marine park has some very challenging diving. On two of the dives we quite literally pulled ourselves down and then back up the line due to extremely strong currents/up-wellings. That said, the marine diversity was incredible. From many hundreds of Barracuda schooling around us on one dive to shoals of glass fish being hunted by larger Caballa. If you ever want to see a large Grouper this is the place to go. There were superb specimens of Common Dusky Grouper as big as most of the divers in our group.

We managed to check out a couple of the hotels with disabled rooms; the one at La Manga was just perfect. Disabled rooms and incredible views, a pool with wheelchair ramp into it fitted the bill. The only drawback would be a daily transfer from hotel to boat. The diving would be for the more able divers, you must have Advanced OW or above, with a medical and dive insurance. These are marine park rules and are strictly adhered to. We had a visit on one day by marine police who checked everyone on board ID and paperwork.



The logo for SCUBA TRUST NEWSLETTER features a stylized figure in a wheelchair, colored in shades of purple and blue, with bubbles rising from the wheels. The text "SCUBA TRUST NEWSLETTER" is prominently displayed in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below this, the tagline "Diving with Disabilities" is written in a smaller, blue font. The entire logo is mirrored on both sides of the central text.

# SCUBA TRUST NEWSLETTER

Diving with Disabilities

Verdict - Yes we would go back again; it was a thoroughly enjoyable trip. Thanks to Neil & Adventure Divers. A big thank you to Dee's parents, Jim & Marie, for allowing us to stay at their villa and being the best hosts ever.



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## **Dive Kit and Servicing**

### **Donated kit**

Our thanks to Aqua Lung for the huge donation of new kit - fins, masks and wetsuits. A big thank you and it will be put to good use.

### **Van clear out.**

On a bright sunny day in a peaceful suburb of Basingstoke the Scuba Trust descended on Ali & Nik's house and proceeded to dump the van's contents on to their front garden. A major cull of old/damaged or just unserviceable kit took place. Ali was sure that some would be able to go on eBay or our "Donate & Take" stand at the shows, while Nik saw more and more items to be stored. "Where?" was Nik's question!

"Oh somewhere," was the wonderful Ali's reply..... Nik's reply is not printable.

And so the kit that was being kept on the van was duly logged and replaced in perfect order by Dale and Michael. All the BCDs and reg sets are now logged and tagged by Michael and Dale. A servicing database has been set up and all the kit is up-to-date. A big thank you to Dale Robson and Michael Apps for looking after the kit and keeping the database and all the servicing up-to-date.

Many thanks to everyone who turned up and to Nik, Ali and Monty for your hospitality, great food and liquid refreshment. (Monty is their soppo, loveable dog).

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### Facebook & Twitter

A big thank you to everyone who post on our Twitter and Facebook pages, to Pippa Ashley who monitors Facebook for us and to Suzanne Harper who looks after our Twitter account, @ScubaTrust .



### Regalia

We now carry a stock of Scuba Trust Hoodies in Navy Blue £16.99 and Polo Shirts (Navy, Maroon & White) in a range of sizes - £14.99 each. All items have the Scuba Trust logo individually embroidered on them. These can be purchased at any pool session or we can post at additional cost.

#### Hoodies



#### Polo shirts





## Try-Dive pool sessions

A few polite reminders -

Please remember that pool sessions start at 12.30 p.m. and finish at 2.30 p.m. prompt (unless otherwise stated), and we have to be out of the pool by 2.30 p.m. as there is often a group following on.

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the school grounds. This is not our policy but the schools and must be adhered to. If you wish to smoke you must leave the school grounds.

Also it would be appreciated if kit you are using was broken down and returned to the van. If you are teaching it is good practice for students to carry this out as part of their course and everyone's help is appreciated in clearing up.

If during a pool session you notice a problem with any piece of Scuba Trust kit, please attach a completed **RED** tag and place the faulty item on the seat in the front of the van. This will greatly assist us in keeping all kit in a serviceable condition.

## Spreading the message

Many of the instructors are now able to teach a full range of PADI, BSAC, DE and DDI courses so we are able to spread the enjoyment of diving further.

Do you know of any organisations that would benefit from hearing about Scuba Trust, and how regardless of the disability, diving is an accessible activity?  
Please contact any of the Trustees who will be happy to help.

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