



July 2019

Note from the Chair

(Not the Maldives sliding one!)

We had a Trustees meeting in the Maldives. I just wanted to say that not for any good reason.

I am happy to report that the vans interior set up is nearly sorted. This is largely due to the efforts of **Michael** and **Dean**. Thank you guys; great work. We will soon have the Scuba Trust logo on the van along with those of the **Eight Foundation** and the **Hospital Saturday Fund** whose donations made the purchase possible.

The Maldives holiday was a great success as you can read below. It was also a great example of the resourcefulness of our group. Working as a team and joining with locals to literally build a great holiday.

One benefit of 'The Trust on Tour' that we do not always recognise, is the educational value we bring. Other cultures and groups are sometimes less understanding and welcoming to our group's needs. However, once they have experienced a visit from us, they are enlightened and become more confident in working with similar groups or individuals in future.

Some of us have recently attended an event in Brighton called 'Paddle Round The Pier'. We have been linking up with Oyster diving and intended to Fund raise by offering try-dives in a large inflatable pool. Unfortunately, the pool was deemed unsuitable at the last minute by HSE. We spent time raising awareness of the Trust. We are looking to develop the relationship with Oyster Diving and thank them for their support.

You will remember we were working with the Injured Rugby Players Foundation. We had plans to take a bespoke group to Egypt. Sadly, the group had difficulty gaining fitness to dive medicals and the hard decision to cancel the trip was taken by the Rugby Players Foundation. We have learnt a lot from the planning and organisation that took place, and look forward to moving this forward again next year.

Finally as you all know we have lost the RGS Dive lectures as a major fundraising event. I am looking at a couple of possibilities to replace this loss with grants or donations. Ongoing Insurance, pool hire and kit servicing amount to over £5,000 this year alone. If anyone works for, or knows of, a company that has a social/community fund that might support us, then please let me know and we can follow up any leads.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Safe Diving! Eric



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Van update

The new van is well on its way to being completed. **Michael** and **Dean** have spent many hours fitting the new van out internally. They have also reduced the amount kit that is carried in the vehicle. The final part of the refit will be the new tank racks. There have been a few plan As and plan Bs on designs and modification to each plan. However, Michael has said that the new racks will be sorted very soon. The Trust logos and contact details are due to be finalised and sign written in the next few weeks.

Try dives

Howard Sobey is working very hard to put each month's pool sessions together, so please when you receive the monthly email please respond to it. If you are Instructing, please confirm with your student(s) the arrangements for the following session they are attending so that you can let Howard know. He can then let **Michael** and **Dean** know if additional kit is needed on the van.

Nicole Smart is bringing tea, coffee and cakes down to each pool session so please support her fundraising efforts by putting your donation in the collection box before consuming the cakes and refreshments. The cakes are yummy.

Holidays

The Maldives trip was a great success and enjoyed by all. I won't say more than that as you can read **Daria's** holiday story on the trip.

The Hurghada trip is now well under way. If you would like to join us don't delay get in touch with Frank and send your deposit to confirm your place. Don't delay your decision if you want join us as the cost of the flights may well go up very soon.

7th October 2019

TOM770 dep Gatwick 13:00hrs arr Hurghada 19:30hrs.



14th October 2019

TOM771 dep Hurghada 20:30hrs arr Gatwick 01:10hrs 15th October.

Baggage 1 x 20kg plus extra 5kgs allowance on production of diving cert at check-in.

Staying at Hilton Hurghada resort 7 nights on All-inclusive basis sharing a room.

Dive package 5 days 10 dives inclusive.

Marine park fee 8€ plus lunch on boat per person per day payable locally.

Cost £1,160.00 per person.

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Certifications

Michael Smart and **Dean Humphreys** qualified as PADI Open Water divers and are well on their way to gaining their Advanced qualification.

Courses in progress:-

Jackie Buchanan - PADI AI

Adam Quarterman and **Daria Gliszczynska** - PADI DM

Michael Smart, Dean Humphreys and **Harrison Quarterman** - PADI Advanced

Sophie Wanner - PADI Junior Open Water

Paul May - PADI Open Water

Lewis Quarterman - Seal Team.

The 13 Air Cadets are well on their way to gaining their BSAC Ocean diver certification most having completed dives 1 and 2.

Our thanks to all the Instructors and helpers who are teaching and giving up their free time to run the courses.

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Donated kit

Our thanks to **Surrey Dive** for the recent donations of diving kit.

Dive kit maintenance

Our thanks to **Michael** and **Dean** who are ensuring that the kit maintenance is being kept up to date. Please note if you are hiring kit for a holiday trip or open water dives please see either Michael or Dean with requirements; don't just take kit as it may not have been serviced. This will ensure we do not have kit on hire that was due to be serviced taken away.

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‘WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG’

MALDIVES 2019

by Daria Gliszczyńska

From the start something was brewing in the air, literally in the air; the original flight date was changed from 30th to 31st June by Sri Lanka Airways, with no apparent reason. Although slightly disappointed with the news, when the Scuba Trust family finally met at Heathrow airport, spirits were high at the prospect of going to paradise for the fourteen of us: Frank, Jackie, Liam, Dee, Sue, Mike, Ron, Big Al, Amanda, Howard, Neil, Frank D., and I (plus Eric and Annie to join at the Maldives) .

The journey, which lasted almost two days, with the interchange and stayover in Colombo, went quite uneventfully and rather fast. The wheelchair users were transferred onto the plane without many issues. No equipment broken or missing afterwards! The meals, entertainment, and comfort were fine. The interchange hotel, located within the airport in Colombo, was quite good. We had meals included at the local restaurant, so we relaxed and tried local beverages. Just a shame we could not explore the Sri Lankan capital as with 12 hours between the flights we could have had the possibility of that extra experience, but after the Easter terrorist attacks, we were not allowed.



My “roomy”, Amanda, and I treated ourselves to a foot massage at the airport. Best thing ever! Every airport should have foot massage parlour; it’s all you need during or after your journey!

The flight from Colombo to Gan was a breeze.

We arrived at Gan, our final destination, on Sunday, 2nd June, at 2:50am in the morning. Gan is a lovely island at the bottom of the southern-most atoll, called Addu Atoll or Sennu Atoll, in the Maldives. There are 26 Atolls in total. Gan, has the second biggest international airport in the republic, which was an ex RAF base. It’s a charming little place within a string of islands linked by bridges, and the inhabited part of the islands are called Addu City. The view from the flights around Gan is spectacular, which we could not see on our way down as it was too dark, but on the return, I appreciated it so much. It's like flying over emerald and sapphire jewelry. Pure beauty!

On our arrival, we were greeted and whisked to the hotel by bus and taxis. It’s always a bit of a commotion with the amount of luggage, equipment, wheelchairs when transferring to and from local transport, but it did not take long to be comfortably arranged in the bus and taxis, and the luggage and wheelchairs went on a truck. A few minutes later we were at the hotel, which was conveniently placed near the airport. The staff and the manager of the hotel were waiting for us, and we were all issued with a certificate of crossing the Equator safely! We were happy but too tired to celebrate as it was still middle of the night, so we all quickly dispersed into our lovely bungalows. What could possibly...

...not so fast with a peaceful slumber for Amanda and I! Two beds had become one! We were not up for that, so a quick call and a moment wait sorted the problem. The staff member almost tangled himself during the process of separating and making the beds, but finally, each of us had our own bed. Or shall I say, skate beds? They were comfortable but cruising around the rooms on their little wheels each time any of us moved. Never mind; we were longing for some sleep and soon after putting our heads down we were dreaming sweetly of paradise. We actually were to wake up too soon...

Within the next twelve days we did the following:

Chilling out days: Sunday 2nd, Tuesday 4th and Thursday 6th relaxing within the hotel grounds, biking around the islands, swimming, kayaking, paddling, pool games. Monday 10th - Island hopping trip.

SCUBA TRUST NEWSLETTER

Diving with Disabilities

A few days within the first week were rainy, but it was not an issue at all. Air temperature 38C plus, ocean 30C, the rain was warm, refreshing and clouds were needed at times. Otherwise, we would burn to a frazzle.

The hotel had a few things to offer. The rooms were quite big, clean and comfortable, and the most important thing: all air-conditioned and fans ready to be used at any point of the day or night. However, the hotel was not 100% adjusted to wheelchair needs but everyone seemed to manage slight discomforts well. Some of the rooms were amazingly decorated for special occasions: birthday and other events (see picture). All rooms located within a few minutes' walk of the beachside and the all-inclusive package with the restaurant and bar were as close as the beach, which made it all quite easy for us.



The food was always fresh and tasty. No tummy bugs! There was a good selection of freshly prepared food such as fish: fresh tuna or reef fish, salads, curries, and puddings. There was always a huge table prepared for our large 'family' where we were always meeting for tasty and refreshing breakfasts, lunches and dinners. That's also where the stories of Pedro, the fly, (there is public demand for the author of the original story and his collaborator to finally write a book about that famous fly), other creatures and different stories were told to the amusement and continuous giggles of us all.

Great Chefs and waiting staff! They were friendly and very helpful, especially with assisting The Wheelies to get their food, and to settle by their table. The bar was open for drinks, which offered reasonable and quite good quality drinks: G&T, beer, cocktails, and soft drinks. Teatime snacks went down well too. Homemade cakes and cookies with teas and coffees were always ready around 5pm.

There was live music some of the evenings, we often gathered by the bar enjoying the warm nights, cool drinks, chats, review of photos and videos, and arguing about the size of various creatures.

During the dive-free days, some of us went kayaking between the hotel and the airport, and admired the blue and emerald ocean, colorful fish and the little baby sharks just by the beach.



Paddle-boarding, was particularly fun when some of us were trying to be cool and stand gracefully on the board trying to paddle; only one of us managed to do it. Ann was the queen of elegance and stability on the board.

Pool games, in a large L shaped pool with some islands in the middle, were great. I could not believe how inventive and relaxed people could get.

The pool play between the two Scuba Trust gentlemen had everyone in stitches. No words to describe it as well as what you can see:



We loved the island-hopping boat trip to Meedhoo, where we had a stroll around the village. It was a lovely hot day; what could possibly go wrong when searching for some cool shade under the coconut tree? Oh, yes! Only one step divided that person between being still with us and departing to paradise! During that trip, we also went to a small uninhabited island called Bushy for some BBQ and snorkeling. The food tasted amazing! Crystal clear water and plenty to see underwater! It was a great day though very, very hot!





We also did some biking around the Addu City and cycled through a few towns connected by the bridges. It was great to cycle around small towns, villages, look at the local houses, beach roads and meet the locals. What could possibly go...? Puncture, not one but two! The tyres did not manage heat too well and apparently, we were too big for Maldivian bikes!

Sadly, wheelchair users were unable to join in some of the local trips but there were always chilled areas on the beach by the ocean or the pool with plenty of seats and beds, perfect for reading, painting, chatting, meditating or relaxation. There was also a gym, tennis court and spa for grabs if anyone wanted to use them.

The local fauna and flora were pleasing to the eyes and soul. Beautifully kept gardens with lovely flowers, palm trees, white local birds, geckos, shore crabs, mozzies (unavailable), then cats, chicken, and flying foxes! Flying foxes, huge fruit bats the size of a large seagull! They petrified me at first, looking like Nosferatu, but then they started fascinating us. They are harmless and fly past in the afternoons. As for the cats, you know they rule humans! There was no exception in the Maldives. The creatures quickly figured out a couple of us whom they enslaved to smuggle chicken out for them. A little farm of animals was formed and always waiting, making a lot of noise by that particular door at specific times, until the food was delivered to them.



Diving:

Monday 3rd(dive sites: Gan Inside, Banana Thila), Wednesday 5th(British Loyalty, Bushy West Channel), Friday 7th(Horda Faru, Maakandu Corner), Saturday 8th(Molikolhu Inside, Bushy West Channel) Sunday 9th(Kuda Koholha, Fihali Fara), Tuesday 11th(Demon Point, Maakandu Corner). Plus extra days diving at special request.

What could possibly have gone wrong, you might ask? Where to start... a disappointing disaster to begin with. The boat was not suitable for people with disabilities, particularly for those without the use of their legs. For them, it would not be possible to climb the long ladder from the surface of water to the boat. It was quite shocking to us how unwilling the manager of the boat was to help and look into solutions. His attitude was impossible, uncompromising and we were on a verge of leaving.

While everyone was waving clenched fists with furrowed brows, and making social media threats and firing off emails, one ingenious member of the Scuba Trust, Ian, had a little chat with the hotel manager. Although, the diving center was nothing to do with him he arranged for his maintenance team to meet us on the boat after lunch. Ian, whose name is going to be remembered on that island for a long time, liaised with them and they hatched a plan to build a lift, created from a chair, with sunbed cushions to protect from a rough deck to move divers with disabilities from the water, using ropes attached to the chair, along the ladder onto the boat. The boat crew fully engaged with this unique solution and even the center manager listened to the suggestions. The maintenance team were absolute stars!!





SCUBA TRUST NEWSLETTER

Diving with Disabilities

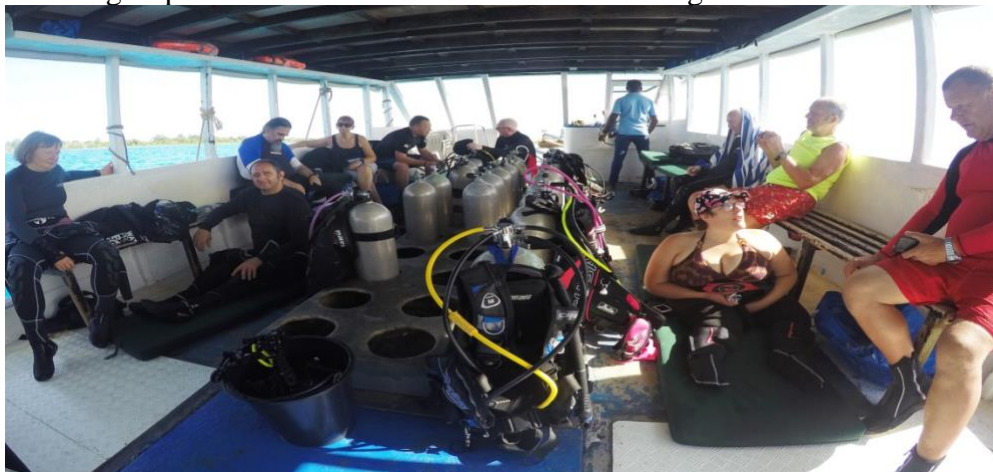


After the usual issues - forgotten kit, leaking kit, overweight, underweight, a few adjustments to be made both to the 'lift' and the crew was still getting used to our needs - everyone did two dives each by the second day. The ocean was also quite rough to start as there were stormy days. Some visibility not good, some currents including downward, some poor coral, 30C degrees at 30 meters but we coped with it all. There were some minor injuries: jellyfish sting, ear problems, sunburn, coral scrapes, but none of us or the crew gave up!

Afterwards, divers were diving, the crew was sailing, beautiful fish were swimming, some smaller and giant turtles, sharks, Mantas, humphead, napoleons, barracuda, leaf fish, nudibranchs, crayfish, octopus, triggerfish, yellow tip tuna were appearing. Although they didn't appear as often as we would wish whenever they did, they provided a lot of joy and satisfaction. One of the highlights of diving was to see a fever of eagle rays, cruising in the ocean. What a treat! Also, over 100 spinner dolphins gave us an amazing show right next to our boat for a good quarter of an hour.



No major diving incidents although some rules were bent a little. There was a little air sharing going on underwater and on the very last dive unexpected current parted all of us into a few smaller groups. I love drift dives but that was a strong one! We all did well.



The last day diving approached fast, and we could not be more grateful to the boat crew for all they did for us. We thanked them and handed a 'thank you' envelope for all their

help. The captain of the boat was incredible. He was understanding and tried to dive with diving gloves, which were then gifted to him. He did not mind them in pink as well

Last day:

Wednesday 12th.

It was a particularly hot day and instead of the planned trip to Addu City, most of us decided to relax by the pool! Later, during the day we had some certificates printed for the maintenance crew with thanks from the Scuba Trust for the work and commitment they gave to us. There was a big presentation, certificates and some collection given to them. Wonderful people!



In the evening, we gathered by the dining table to our last meal. We had a great time and pleased that we could help some of the service staff to see beyond what they used to do, learn and develop with us! This was reinforced the hotel manager giving a speech about how much they have learnt from us!

Where there's a will, there's a way! If anything goes wrong, it can be fixed with the right-minded people, positive attitudes and a good sense of humor!

Special thanks to Frank Buchanan for organising the trip! Thank you all for a fabulous holiday!

Here's to the next happy getaway with the Scuba Trust diving family!



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Facebook & Twitter

A big thank you to everyone who posts 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 .

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Try-Dive pool sessions

A few polite reminders -

Please remember that pool sessions start at 10.30 a.m. and finish at 12.30pm prompt (unless otherwise stated), and we have to be out of the pool by 12.30pm as there is often a group following on. Please plan to arrive for 10 a.m.

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.

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Regalia Sale

We have a few hoodies left and looking to clear the stock at a reduced price of £12 each.
Sizes we have are:- 1 x XS, 1 x S, 1 x M, 3 x L, 2 x XL, 1 x XXL.

Hoodies



Polo shirts





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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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