



---

Issue 29  
August,  
2003

---

[www.swale-divers.org.uk](http://www.swale-divers.org.uk)

Hope you are enjoying the diving season so far. I have a few dive reports from some of the newer club members on their diving experiences which make interesting reading. A fresh point of view on the old, familiar dive sites is what we need to hear. Many thanks for sharing them with us.

**Seaford Dive report -  
Report by Lyndsay Smith,  
Dive Marshall:**

On Saturday, 5 July 2003 there was a joint meeting of Swale BSAC and Cambridge BSAC. There were 8 divers - 3 from Swale (Graham P, Phil and myself) and 5 from Cambridge (my boyfriend, Simon, and Steve, Angela, Toby and Jane who you obviously won't know).

We attempted to locate the cannons which are just off the beach at Seaford. Unfortunately, Kim was unable to join us so we didn't find the cannons - Kim apparently finds them every time! (she's just a show-off!!) - but we had 2 excellent dives and everyone had a good day - despite the fact that we took Graham Pettett along!! (Graham has attempted to

dive at Seaford on several other occasions and has never been able to due to weather conditions. He had fortunately decided to leave his jinx reputation at home this time!)

Although we didn't find the cannons, there was plenty else to see. Soft rock/chalk formations made interesting habitats for Velvet Swimming Crabs and Hermit Crabs.

There were lots of sea snails and also an interesting phenomena where spring water emerged through the sand causing little whirlpools. There were some flat fish lying half submerged under the sand that I couldn't identify. The second dive produced some huge Spider Crabs and some large Starfish. But most interesting was our finding of a big Greater Pipefish (an eel type fish which lives in shallow water and hence is not seen on most boat dives.) Indeed, Graham said he has not seen one in the UK in 10 years of diving! (My turn to show-off now - I saw 2 of these on my first ever sea dive!)

Admittedly they were not as big as this impressive specimen though!

On the first dive I dived with Graham and used the dive as a training dive to learn how to use an SMB, as well as to have a pleasure dive. (I was doing a training dive because I only needed to convince Graham that I could use an SMB and could do compass navigation, because he would sign me off as a Club Diver!) For the second dive I dived in a 3 with Graham and Simon, to practice compass navigation. I was a bit too intent on this mission and went a bit fast for my buddies' liking!

The day was good and enjoyed by all participants. No major incidents to report fortunately, although Simon did get caught in fishing net and had to cut himself free but he was OK.

So "that is how the cookie crumbled" (Go and watch Bruce Almighty if you don't understand that reference!) and I would recommend Seaford to anyone else wanting to do a shore dive.

P.S. Big thanks to Graham and Simon for "helping" me organize this day! I'm

told my name was down on the website as the organizer, but in actual fact I didn't do a lot and relied on these 2 to check tides and do the real organizing!

### **Committee meeting - Wednesday, 16 July**

Roy Povey and Colin Nagi were unable to attend the meeting. The main purpose of the meeting was to confirm details for the Summer Dance. Various other issues were discussed and are detailed below.

1. **Summer Dance** - It was agreed that those Club members who had not asked for tickets should be phoned to remind them of the Summer Dance. All other details were confirmed. Jerry had spoken to a lady who could also do face painting.
2. **Club accounts** - Nigel H confirmed the Club had money in the bank.
3. **BSAC 22-28 September** - Graham P asked if the Club would be participating in the BSAC "Come and try" week. It was agreed that on Saturday, 27 September the Club would hold its "Come and try" event. Colin J said he would find out costs of advertising in the local papers.

4. **RNLI Sea Check Service** - Nigel W has received an email from Rick Bell regarding the free Safety Equipment Advisory Check on Club boats. Trevor agreed to follow this up.
5. **Lottery Grant** - No further progress on this as the Club does not have sufficient funds to match the grant.
6. **Promoting Swale Divers** - It was decided that we should approach Asda, Sainsburys and Tesco for permission to take the Club RIB to the store car park and promote the Club and its "Come and try" event.
7. **Static stand** - Leaflets and gift vouchers need to be produced. Graham P to provide. Jerry would look into costs for car window stickers.
8. **Name on the RIB** - Kim asked if we should look into putting the Club name on the RIB. As the Club is short on funds this would have to be a DIY job! Trevor can acquire some thin rubber to stick on and Graham P can provide a computer stencil. Graham would measure up to see if "Swale Divers - RIBbed for Pleasure" will fit. It was suggested that when more funds are available, a

number plate detailing the Club website should be purchased to go on the back of the trailer.

9. **Club polo shirts** - Kim will send out an email to Club members requesting orders for the new Club polo shirt. The shirts will be light grey with a black logo.
10. **Pool marshals** - George brought up the fact that very few Club members volunteer to be pool marshals and it seems to be the same few who are left being lifeguards for the majority of the session. The Council have said that we must provide a qualified lifeguard at all times if the Club wishes to use Sheerness Pool. Graham P confirmed that Sports Divers and above are qualified to be pool marshals. It was agreed that every 15 minutes there should be a changeover of pool marshals thus enabling everyone to enjoy swimming. The Committee agreed to monitor the situation.

### **Dive Report -**

**Report by Graham Pettett,  
Dive Marshall:**

On Sunday, 20 July I took the Club RIB to Littlehampton Marina. The weather

conditions were fair with underwater vis of 2-4 metres. It was a bit rough on the way out about a F3, the boat coped very well though with 8 of us on board and could easily have planed but it was too uncomfortable. We dropped onto Kingsmere Rocks. Some had a better dive than others. The wind had picked up a bit as we went back in. By the time we went back out the wind had dropped considerably. We made the 6 mile trek, (again very quick and easy with the new engine) to the site of the Indiana. Having dived this before we knew it was pretty flat, but after 20 minutes we weren't really sure we were on it. Graham and Kim went in first, but immediately put up a DSMB to confirm they weren't on the wreck. We tried another spot but still couldn't find it, so we all ended up doing a fairly dull drift across a shingly bottom.

### **Summer Dance - Saturday, 26 July**

The Swale Divers' Summer Dance took place for the first time upstairs at the Sheerness Conservative Club. The evening was a great success with approx 90-100 tickets being sold. A raffle was held and there was face painting for the kids (and big kids, Kim!). Many thanks to Jerry, Carol and Colin and all their team of helpers for setting up and organising the

event and thanks to those Club members who prepared the buffet. We are all looking forward to the next Club dance at Christmas on Saturday, 6 December.

### **Cornwall Dive Report - Report by Graham Ashbee, Dive Marshall:**

On Saturday, 10 May a group of 13 of us went to Cornwall. Diving was arranged through Porthkerris Dive Centre who supplied a RIB for the weekend. The weather was sunny with underwater vis of 5 to 8 metres. We managed to do 2 reef dives and 2 wreck dives. A great weekend was had by all. Hopefully our next trip to Cornwall in October will be just as successful!

### **Going Silly in the Scillys -**

#### **Dive Report by Graham Pettett:**

Some might say having been diving on the Great Barrier Reef 10 days earlier, diving in the Scilly Isles was a bit of a come down, but I was really looking forward to getting back to some 'real' diving. Blue water diving is just too predictable. I wasn't to be disappointed.

We all congregated at the ferry port in Penzance early on the morning of 21 June. 10 divers (Graham P, John M, Anne M, Jane, David, Stuart, Matt, Trefor, Roy and Anne P)

and 4 non-divers (Julie, Enid (Jane's mum), Maurice and Pat (Trefor's wife)). It was looking to be a good week, it was lovely and flat for the 2½ hour crossing. We were met on our arrival on St Mary's by Jim Heslin, who some of you know from previous trips by the Club. We split up to go to the various B&Bs we were in, all just a short walk away (like everything on the island!). Stuart, Matt and I were staying at Jim's place so we were able to blag a lift, great we thought - until we found we had to stop off and load up all the 20 cylinders we needed for the week. When we arrived and were shown around, I asked where our keys were, to which the response was "oh we don't worry about that, the front door is always open". There isn't a big crime problem on the Island, we didn't see a single locked building or car.

For our first night, Jim had recommended the Scillonian Club. In true Club style we descended and re-arranged all the furniture to suit. They were very friendly, and helpful. We had a good evening, so good we went back several times during the week.

Sunday morning and the start of our diving. Jim no longer skips the boat, he has Jo Allsop, a 25 year old lass from St Martins running the boat for him. She will be buying it

from him at the end of the year. She proved to be a very knowledgeable and helpful skipper having been diving for 10 years and skippering for 7.

Being as this was only the first or second dive for a lot of people with new kit, we decided to do a nice easy 10m shake down dive. Jo dropped us in Bread and Cheese Cove. Quite a reasonable dive, a bit kelpy. Viz was a bit low at about 8-10m. Jo said the water had recently warmed to 12°C causing a plankton bloom.



For a second dive, Jo took us to a site to dive with seals. We saw 3 or 4 while under the water. They were quite amazing. They love swimming up behind you and nibbling your fins. At one point I swam around a rock and came face to face with a seal. I'm not sure who was more startled. This certainly proved to be the talking point of the evening.

Monday we started on the wreck of the Juno. Not much left. Jo went in first and ran a guide line between various anchors and cannons, which we would otherwise have missed

amongst the kelp. For a second dive we elected to do a scenic site, the Gilstone. This is a fairly sheer wall covered in various anemones. It was really fantastic, even better than the Vase or Ragland Reef.



Tuesday began on the wreck Italia. This was well broken. Jo put us right in the middle of the debris field. We saw some fairly large boilers and the prop shaft. The second dive was quite fun. It started by following another guide line that Jo had laid for us which led us to more anchors and cannons down in some narrow gullies. This then led to another wall again covered in anemones.



Wednesday's first dive was on a sheer wall dropping to 56m at Trenamene. The second dive was for me the highlight of the week. We dived the bow section of the Cita, a

large container ship which went down in 1997. This had proved to be Christmas come early for the inhabitants of St Mary's. Containers floated ashore containing designer clothes, doors, tyres, computer parts and much more. The wreck is very well intact, all be it in 3 sections getting progressively deeper, the stern being in 45m. The general consensus of the group was we could have easily dived on this all week there was so much to see.

Thursday began on a the site of 2 wrecks - the Hathor and the Plympton. These are well broken, we found 4 of 5 boilers, the prop shaft of one and a small intact bow section. The second dive was on the Minnehaha. In the evening we jumped on a shuttle boat over to St Agnes to a pub, for a meal.

Friday, by popular request we did the bow section of the Cita again. I could still dive this again several times and not see it all, and this is the smallest part. The stern is supposed to be even better. We finished up on the broken wreck of the Lady Charlotte. But of course this wasn't the end of the holiday.

For our last night, we went back to the Scillonian Club. We were in luck, after that closed there was a major concert in the town hall (as

major as this gets on an island with 1500 people), were we had a few more beers and a good laugh.

Saturday morning we had a last walk around the Island, and of course a beer or 2. It was a fantastic week of varied diving. We had great weather, absolutely flat all week. We had also been lucky enough to have several encounters with basking sharks and dolphins.

Our thanks must go to Malcolm for organising the trip.

(For more underwater photos of this trip see "**Where we dive**" on the Club website at [www.swale-divers.org.uk](http://www.swale-divers.org.uk).)

## Club visit to Tesco and Asda -

The Club has approached the above supermarkets for permission to take the Club RIB to the store car park and promote the Club as part of BSAC's "Come and try" event. Kim (the Secretary's secretary!) has received written confirmation from Asda in Sittingbourne that we can set up at the front of the store on Saturday, 6 September. Kim is still waiting for confirmation from Tesco in Sheerness that we can attend on Saturday, 30 August. We will need a steady stream of volunteers to help give out leaflets to the public throughout the day. Please

contact Kim if you can spare some time on either date.

## Florida Keys -

Graham Pettett is considering organising a holiday to the Florida Keys in March 2004. There will be a mixture of reef diving and some excellent intact wrecks. Dates and costs will depend on how many people are interested. If you wish to find out more details please contact Graham ASAP.

### Swale Divers - Profile

Name:	<i>Kim Ashbee</i>
Age/Family:	<i>41/Married to Graham</i>
Number of years diving:	<i>12 years - 1991, joined to dive in Kenya on holiday</i>
Diving qualifications/ Club appointments:	<i>Dive Leader, Nitrox Diver, Assistant Club Instructor, Club Boat Handler</i>
	<i>Fundraiser 1992-95, Magazine Editor 1999-2002</i>
Best diving experience:	<i>Maldives, warm water and plenty of marine life</i>
Worst diving experience:	<i>Portland - Hit head on boat going in, dislodged mask, couldn't clear mask and aborted at 27m</i>
Location would most like to dive:	<i>Papua New Guinea, Palau</i>
Occupation/Other interests:	<i>Business Development Manager in print supply company/Any adventurous activity</i>

If you have any comments on any of the articles published in this Magazine, please contact me, Jayne Payne, Magazine Editor.

