



Moles Monitor

December 2014

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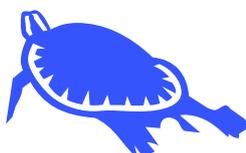
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

January 21st – Try Dive
January 28th - Pool Games
January 31st - Quiz Night
Feb 14th & 15th - Dive Show 2015
March 29th - 5th - Maldives Dive Trip
April 2015 - Portland Dive Trip - (Dates TBC)
May 2nd - 4th - Weymouth Dive Trip
June 27th - 28th - Eastbourne Dive Trip
July 11th - 13th - Dartmouth Dive Trip
July 25th - Aug 1st - Cornwall (Dates TBC)



MVSAC COMMITTEE

Janet Wynn - Chairperson
Aly Mitchell - Training Officer
Carolynn Royce - Social secretary
Eddie Fassnidge - Treasurer
Sonja Wood - Special Projects
Sue Wayland- Secretary
Bryan Gooden - Equipment Officer
Keith James- Diving Officer





Awards



Novice of the year
Hilary Trebble



Diver of the Year
Russell Orgill



Member of the year
Carolynn Royce



Frank Whittam Trophy
Adam Royce

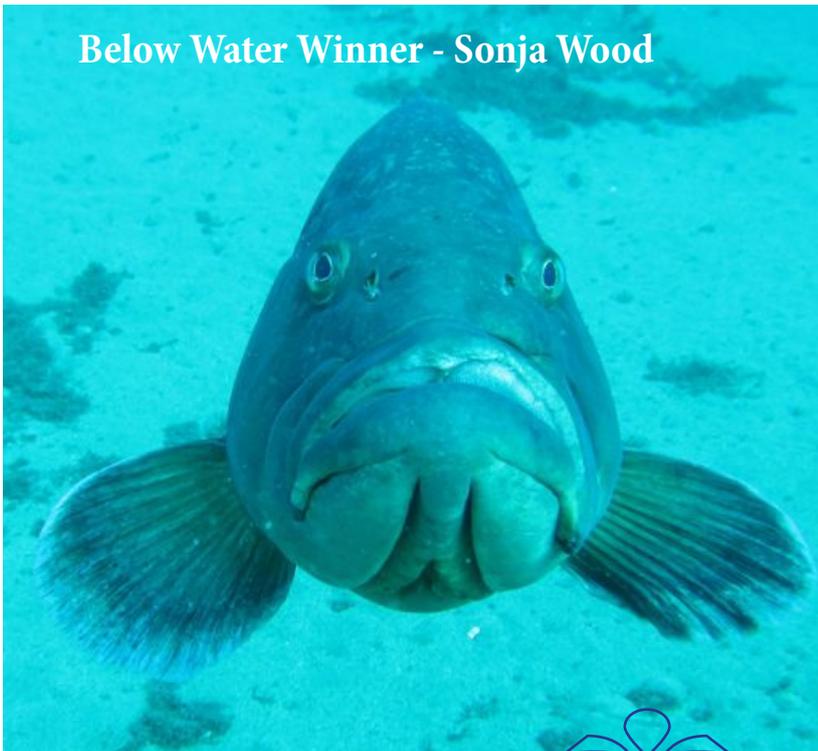


Photography Competition

Above Water Winner - Harry Cooper



Below Water Winner - Sonja Wood



Photographer of the Year - Sonja Wood



Moles in Scapa

Carolynn Royce

In September (during the same week that Scotland voted on Independence), 10 moles (Adam, Carolynn, Keith, Russell, Steve P, Jon, Mike Bailey, Eddie, Harry and Greg) and one interloper (OK, the organiser – Matt G), arrived in Stromness in the Orkney Isles after a 688 mile drive and a ferry crossing for the start of a week's diving in Scapa Flow.

For anyone who doesn't know, Scapa Flow (a natural harbour) is one of the world's greatest wreck diving destinations. It is where the German High Seas Fleet (a total of 74 ships), were interned as part of the Armistice agreement at the end of World War I. However, on 21 June 1919, under the mistaken belief that the peace talks had failed, Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter gave the command to scuttle the entire fleet. A total of 52 ships were sunk. However the majority of the ships were raised in one of the largest ever salvage operations in history, leaving only seven, a mixture of light cruisers and battleships. These lie in around 30 – 40m of water. Other dives in the Flow include the blockships (old merchant ships sunk to protect the harbour by preventing access through the channels by the enemy).

For further information on the wrecks and Scapa Flow a good website is <http://www.scapaflo-wrecks.com/>

We spent the week aboard Sunrise, a converted fishing vessel not quite as luxurious as a Red Sea liveaboard and a bit of shock for some..... including surprisingly those of us who had been before – we had forgotten just how small the cabins were and how low the ceiling of the kitting up area was! Just as well Tristan didn't come – he would have had to cut off his legs! The showers and toilets were off the main living area so a troupe of men



(wearing not all that much in some cases) provided entertainment - for me at least - when we were not playing cards in the late afternoon/evening.

Visibility in the water was generally very good and the best vis we have had in the UK this year. We dived the seven German wrecks (the Dresden, Cöln, Karlsruhe, Brummer, Kronprinz Wilhelm, Markgraf and König) together with some of the other wrecks - the F2 (a WWII escort boat) and barge, the Gobernador Boreis (a blockship) and UB116 a German sub which is well broken up and no longer recognisable as a U Boat. The German wrecks are much more broken up than on our last visit 10 years ago but this serves only to increase their interest as much more can be seen. Steve and Adam saw rather more of the inside of some of these wrecks than the outside! The battleships are generally upside down and the cruisers on their sides. The cruisers therefore tend to be the more interesting of the wrecks. The wrecks are covered in life including soft corals, dead mans fingers, brittle stars etc. They are also huge so one dive is not enough to see the whole of the ship.



Moles in Scapa



We did 2 dives per day and were generally finished diving by early afternoon which provided ample time for a bit of sightseeing and visits to the well stocked dive shop Scapa Scuba and the grocery store for nibbles! If any of you ever wondered where Cathy's tigger hood was from - well now you know (Scapa Scuba not the grocery store!).

On one day the boat moored up so that we could visit the museum at Lyness, Hoy. The museum outlines the importance of Scapa Flow as a base for the British Fleet, concentrating on its role during the two

world wars. By 1940 over 12,000 military and civilian personnel were stationed there.

We also visited the Standing Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar – part of a UNESCO World Heritage site. Unfortunately on this trip we were unable to visit the Italian chapel built by Italian prisoners of war who were working on the Churchill Barriers during World War II.

Scapa is a great place to dive if you like wrecks and many of the dives are the perfect depth for Nitrox. Whilst we had a great time aboard Sunrise, the consensus from those who were on the trip is that, now that we are all getting older, next time we will stay on shore and go out in day boats to dive!

Biggest Loser!



Twelve MVSAC members took part in The Biggest Loser, organised by Carolynn. The participants were: Carolynn, Mike Bailey, Greg, Russell, Andy, Hilary, Janice, Jon, Keith, Sonja, Eddie and Adam. 70lb in weight was lost in total and £264 was raised for Cancer Research. Congratulations to Mike Bailey who lost 20lb - 10% of his body weight in 10 weeks!





Cycling & Chepstow

Janet Wynn



In October Moles, family & friends old and new headed to the Cannop Cycle Centre in the Forest of Dean for a morning ride carefully mapped out by Carolynn. While some raced onwards up the initial hill they thankfully waited for those who had a more relaxed pace. A couple of hours later we enjoyed speedy service and a tasty lunch at The Rising Sun inn. The heavens opened and we huddled under the pub umbrellas initially but then came to our senses and headed inside. Cycling the remaining 4 miles back to the car



park was tough in the rain, and for most the 17 mile trip was enough while the more enthusiastic continued on to complete a 24 mile ride. Well done to Adam, Carolynn, Steve, Sharon, Steve Richardson, Keith, Russell, Greg, Aly, Sue, Champ, Malcolm, Helen, Andy, Mike, Christine, Eddie, Kate, Mark Powell, Simon, Jodi and our young cyclist Isaac.

We were joined on Saturday night by Angie, Mike Naylor and Maureen for a meal at the George Inn & Millingbrook Lodge in Aylburton. The in the morning it was just 10 minutes up the road to the National Dive Centre at Chepstow.

Single, twin, wet or dry, air, Nitrox or Re-breather whatever your dive style there is plenty to explore in the quarry with depth ranging from 11-70m and buoys marking points of interest. Adam & Carolynn, Champ



Cycling & Chepstow

& I, Steve & Sharon, Mike & Connor along with Keith & Russell got our kit ready and into the van for the ride down to the pontoon by the quarry. Champ and I started at the helicopter at around 25m then managed an unplanned navigation back to the helicopter before heading off to come across a plane and a double decker bus. While I missed seeing any fish I am certainly going back to discover some of the other wonders in the quarry or maybe some of the other experiences on offer such as the zip wire, zorbing or even fly over the water on a Fly Board. A two hour trip home via the majestic Severn bridge was a perfect end to a great weekend. Thank you Carolynn for organising this fabulous weekend and to all who came along.





Diving Officer's Annual Report



A total of 580 dives were carried out this year as compared to 824 last year however there were no big trips abroad this year (last year 255 dives were carried out in Egypt and 119 in Malta). The total number of dives carried out in the UK was however up compared to last year. This year 504 dives were UK based, last year only 415.

We have visited some new locations and been back to some of our old haunts. Whilst some members dived in Pembrokeshire 20 years ago, this was a relatively new location for us and 57 dives were carried out. We returned to Scapa Flow after 10 years and this is the location where the greatest number of dives were carried out (113). Weymouth/Portland came a close second with 102 dives partly due to the large number of members who came down at Easter this year, where we took our own RIB. The RIB was also taken down to Cornwall again this year and a good week was had by all who went.

Unfortunately in general the RIB was very under utilised this year from Littlehampton but this was not because we didn't try! Several trips went out to dive but the visibility was exceedingly poor due to the dredging that has taken place in the Solent so many dives did not go ahead. Having said that, visibility reports were poor all along the South Coast (whether that is the effects of the dredging or the wet winter is difficult to say). We are hoping for some better visibility next year and aim to put some dates in the diary early so that we can plan to take the RIB away.

The person with the greatest overall number of logged dives this year is Mike Bailey with 47 dives. Steve Pavey comes a close second with 43. In terms of dives logged in the UK this year, Eddie Fassnidge and Steve Pavey share joint first with 39.

The split between dives conducted using Air and those using Nitrox is closer this year, and due to the numbers of dives conducted in the UK shows that more divers have used Nitrox in the UK than previously.

We have only had one incident this year which could have proved to be very serious but luckily, was not and an email has been sent around about this.

As in previous years I would urge people to make sure that they conduct build up dives and practice their skills. Remember the pool is there for all members, not just for instructors and trainees. If you want to practice, why not ask around, you might well find someone else who would happily come to the pool with you as they want to practice as well. Also if you have new kit, make sure you familiarise yourself with it - Wraysbury is a perfect place for trying out new kit.

We have several trips planned for next year already including a big trip to the Maldives so I hope we have a successful year.

I am standing down this year and wish the new DO and Committee all the best.



Adam Royce