



ESTEC SWIMMING & SUB-AQUA CLUB

May 2003 Newsletter



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Editorial

This newsletter is published later than originally planned so that key points coming out of the 2003 Annual General Meeting might be reported. Everything else can be found on our website (www.geocities.com/estecessac) under the AGM 2003 icon.



The kitchen proved popular – as always!

The annual swimming gala was once again a success. The story of the gala goes back to 1988 when the committee was scraping around for new ideas on the social front. A swimming gala was hardly an original idea however, not for a club like ours but, with a generous dose of outside support in the form of business sponsorship would you believe, the idea took off and has been with us ever since. The huge

amount of work needed to make it succeed each year is something else. One person tends to shoulder the load, always with creditable enthusiasm, and usually manages to persuade others to help. While we have that one special person - long live the gala.

Interested in gardening? If so, the rose-growers amongst us have been in luck recently. The overlong lead up to the AGM identified plenty of people on high horses. Where's my bucket and shovel?



Pam and John Ives are leaving Holland and are returning to the UK. Like so many of us they seem to have been around forever. John's active-to-the-end, contribution to all things diving, has been constant the past twenty two years and will be sorely missed. Rarely absent from any of our functions, Pam and John have always been true to our club and now a deserved long and happy retirement beckons.

Phil Baker

Gala Report

A lot of kind and complimentary things have been said to me about the annual Swimming Gala. Thank you all very much but the Gala was a great success because of the actual participants who took part in it. They were the ones, who were prepared to have a go and because of that had, a really good laugh.



A load of balls this game was!

Now I have included for interest sake the actual points won by each team for each race. Pam Ives and Ann Baker took the scores and I must say a really big thank you to them for doing that for me. I was so relieved that I did not have to do that, nor work out the totals. John put them into a spreadsheet and at the click of the mouse out came the results.

My congratulation must go to Corina and Hakin Svedgem team who actually consisted of only their family members. They did superbly and Kerstin, aged only eleven won the ball throwing game. Well done and my apologies too Kerstin for mispronouncing your name at the Gala.

Now I am sure that you have all at some point been there, you know, the other half is organizing something and who gets roped in? A big thank you must go to John for all his help before and during the event. Not forgetting Chantal and Tiree for their suggestions of new games. Bryan was also a great help swimming around with John the whole time, helping with the equipment, i.e. setting out the hidden treasures and helping the participants in the water, especially the younger members. Thank you; it was much appreciated. Bryan and John didn't get the chance to take part in the Gala but their help made it so much better for everyone else.

Our compere? What can we say about Peter? He did as he always does, a super job and I am very grateful to him for his help. So many thanks Peter.

Team captains? What a bunch. Some did not read their e-mails so came without clothing and a certain one cancelled at the last minute, but

Swimmers, snorkellers and divers all dressed up in various bits of clothing, ranging from pink tights, for the three legged swimming race to the very fetching little black flowery top sported by Keith. I laughed so much that my jaw, which had recently been operated on, hurt like hell later - BUT it was worth it.

we will not mention his name or will we? Actually I was very impressed with the ingenuity of some team captains, especially in the clothes department.

Once the Gala was over, and all the equipment and all the bits of clothing left around the pool were collected and packed into the car we headed off to the BBQ and Disco. By the way I now have an interesting selection of clothing, which I took back from the pool. They are all washed and ironed. If you have lost anything please let me know. I also have a pair of swimming goggles.

Bryan and Sharon point out that this is the first time that any of their T-shirts have ever been ironed. Ed.



Definitely not barbie weather - but Jeff found a cosy spot.

Trix and Jeff Noyes had all the work of getting the BBQ organized and set up, which is a lot of work, so many thanks on behalf of all the members for doing that. Jeff also had to go back on Sunday to tidy up and put everything away. The rest of the food was also really good. I am always impressed with the wide range of dishes made and the effort put into them. For those of you who purchased their offering, we expect home made next year...

Phil helped Vladi set up the disco and we all thoroughly enjoyed the music and the chance to have a good bop, so well done guys and thanks for your help. The music makes all the difference to our evening and the younger members actually remembered to bring some of their own music, rather than giving Vladi a hard time.

A good time was had by all.

Myra

Gala 2003 Results:

Game 1 The Washing Line

Team	1	2	3	4	5	6
Position	5	3	1	4	-	2
Points	2	4	6	3	-	5

Game 2 Two-Legged Swim Race

Team	1	2	3	4	5	6
Position	4	2	1	5	-	3
Points	3	5	6	2	-	4

Game 3 Canoes - Teams in lanes 1, 3 and 5

Team	1	3	5
Time	02:47.3	02:24.2	-

Game 4 Canoes - Teams in lanes 2, 4 and 6

Team	2	4	6
Time	03:23.2	02:40.2	02:49.9

Games 3 and 4 Combined Table

Position	3	4	1	2	-	5
Points	4	3	6	5	-	2

Game 5 Duck Diving Relay

Team	1	2	3	4	5	6
Position	5	3	4	2	-	1
Points	2	4	3	5	-	6

Game 6 Throw the Balls Into the Fishing Creel

Team	1	2	3	4	5	6
Balls In	1	0	0	0	-	0
Position	1	5	5	5	-	5
Points	6	2	2	2	-	2

Game 7 Finding Hidden Treasure

Team	1	2	3	4	5	6
Position	3	4	5	2	-	1
Points	4	3	2	5	-	6

Game 7b Finding Hidden Treasure

Team	1	2	3	4	5	6
Position	2	1	4	3	-	5
Points	5	6	3	4	-	2

Game 8 The Wooden Spoon Obstacle Relay Race

Team	1	2	3	4	5	6
Time	03:13	02:54	02:29	02:50	-	03:00
Position	5	3	1	2	-	4
Points	2	4	6	5	-	3

Total Points and Final Positions

5th	Team 1	Haeken	4 points
4th	Team 6	Anne-Marie	30 points
Joint 2nd	Team 2	Stephanie	31 points
Joint 2nd	Team 4	Tiree	31 points
1st	Team 3	Bas	34 points

Anecdote From An Ex-Diver

As with most things in my life I was a bit of a late starter. I joined our swimming and sub-aqua club at the age of forty two with the sole intention of learning to dive and didn't really expect to be in the club, so to speak, twenty one years later. The diving bit is for me now a fairly distant memory but, while I still have a memory, please allow me to present a tale from about that time.

I will begin with a bit of background information which may give some clue as to my approach to the business of diving. For instance, I did not subscribe to the concept of always looking out for the latest and most stylish gadgets and equipment, always being the one with the tatty yellow ABLJ (never used a stab) and the black wetsuit which, I am quite pointlessly proud to boast I never once pee-ed in. What I did have though was a depth gauge that sported an extra pointer that had to be set on zero at the beginning of each dive so that as the dive progressed, it was nudged along by the actual depth indicating pointer. Afterwards a record as to the maximum depth achieved during the dive was evident. High-tech stuff eh? On more than one occasion this proved useful.

Never fortunate enough to have an exotic dive - Barrier Reef, the Red Sea - that sort of thing - but I did get to the South of France. We were on holiday at Banyuls on the French/Spanish border of the Mediterranean - a bunch of our club divers and their families. Being close to becoming a dive leader, I still needed to log a 40 metre plus dive as did a couple of the others in our group.

Now 40 metres is very deep and therefore needs a bit of thought and preparation before going ahead. Whilst at Banyuls we used the big boat and local knowledge provided by the harbour dive school. Deep dives here were always done early in the day and some distance from the shore. Six o'clock one morning saw another *very famous member of our club*, a dive leader provided by the dive school and me, on a boat way out to sea with other divers. French dive leaders bring up images, one would assume, of young, tall, dark, handsome and extremely fit guys or gals. Ours was a middle-aged bloke, short, fat and, judging by the state of his eyeballs, had clearly only just ended a heavy night in the bar with his mates. Still, no turning back

now, and anyway my confidence was high having dived at least twice a day for over a week in pretty ideal conditions so 40 metre was going to be no problem.

One of the more magical diving moments I always found was the first sight of a shot-line disappearing into the depths. The shot-line, a useful focal point for divers, is suspended by a buoy and anchored to the bottom by a weight. This one signalled the start of a great dive. Most divers choose to set off with a head-first duck-dive but, my preference always was to remain vertical, empty my buoyancy aid (ABLJ) of air, breath out to get things going and enjoy the gentle drift downwards. Today there was no way that the *very famous member of our club* and I were going to be allowed the luxury of a gentle ascent. Our short, fat Frenchman took off down the line like a dropped weight belt and, as he was the dive leader, we had no choice but to follow. My needle nudged through ten, twenty and thirty metres in seconds before the clear blue water changed to a blanket of murk over our 42 metre sea bed target. Once settled on the bottom and feeling surprisingly comfortable, relieved even, the three of us switched on our torches, exchanged OK signals in the gloom and began our planned ten minutes at depth.

It started well. A couple of minutes in and I spotted a cluster of red coral which really took my interest. I knew that it could only be found deep and that it is popular with the jewel trade and here it was, looking gorgeous all lit up by my torch. 'Hey guys! Look at this' I signalled. 'Guys?'. No guys. They were gone. I was alone.

The rules in this situation are clear. Don't panic - do a 360 degree visual check for your buddies and, if none seen, steadily surface and wait for them to join you. At this point I decided to be clever! Remember the murk? My idea was to get above it, look for the exhaled air coming from my buddies and let those same bubbles guide me back. The plan worked really well because, in moments I'd rejoined the other three. Three? Whoops - wrong party!

Ten minutes later and back on the surface, I'd already signalled to the boat what had happened and was waiting to meet up with the others. They eventually appeared asking me where the hell I'd got to. Strangely that was exactly the same question I had for them! Also, the *very famous member of our club* had had a slight nose bleed probably brought about by the crash-dive beginning fifteen minutes earlier. At least I was able to log a 42 metre dive towards earning my dive leader tag but, don't ask whether three minutes on the bottom was really long enough to qualify.

Later, over breakfast at the harbour café, we talked a lot about everything but I don't remember *that* dive being mentioned at all!

Oh yes! The *very famous member of our club*? Well I have to say that his performance that day in 1987 was, as always, exemplary so I have

no hesitation in telling you that it was . . . it was . . . sorry - it's gone. I did warn you about my memory.

Phil Baker

AGM 2003 Matters

The chairman opened the meeting by reading the riot act and, it seemed to do the trick.

Many expected a meeting rougher than it actually turned out but, being the responsible people that we are, it was almost pleasant.



A quorum

All the usual AGM points were dealt with without fuss. The pooltime changes discussion and vote was the most contentious however ending with the motion carried for a change during the dive training season - subject to the Sterrenbad authorities agreeing to the divers kitting-up by the poolside before the 11:00 start time.

Our 2003/2004 elected committee is:

Chairman	Jeff Noyes
Club Treasurer	Drusilla Wishart
BSAC Secretary	Drusilla Wishart
Assistant to BSAC Secretary	Bjorn Rommen
Diving Officer	John Nolan
Training Officer	Bas Galewicz
Equipment Officer	Wayne Stinchcombe
Swimming Officer	Myra Macleod-Nolan
Expeditions Officer	Anthony Thirkettle
Snorkelling	Wim van Leeuwen
Social Secretary	Trix Noyes-Hensen

The AGM minutes and the full reports presented by the outgoing committee can be found on our website under the AGM icon.

Bonaire Diving May 2003

Since leaving The Netherlands just over a year ago, Carol and I had not done any diving and we were desperate for a diving holiday. So too were Dru and Keith as we had to halt our joint plans for a holiday last November when Keith's aeroplane suffered certain mechanical problems of which most of you will, no doubt, be aware. So, with previous experience of Bonaire diving and accommodation (this was our sixth diving trip to Bonaire), we decided to go for it in early May. So everything was booked for our trip but, three weeks before departure, another gremlin appeared. Dru and Keith thought they would have to cancel due to the serious illness of their cat, Biggles. It was touch and go during the week or so before departure and, until we arrived on Dru and Keith's doorstep on the day of departure, we were not sure whether Dru and Keith would accompany us or not. However, then Keith told us that they were coming with us but "Don't say anything to the cats!" It appeared that Biggles's latest course of treatment had done the job. As our departure time was around midnight, we checked in our baggage just after lunch and returned to Oegstgeest to spend a lazy afternoon around the house and pretend to the cats that we weren't going anywhere. Keith's mum was looking after the cats whilst we were away. Finally, our taxi arrived to take us up to Schiphol for the day's last flight out of the airport. After an uneventful KLM flight, we arrived at Flamingo airport, Bonaire, at around 03:30. It was dark but it was warm and Samuel was there waiting to take us to our accommodation at Coco Palm Gardens. As soon as we had got the air conditioning sorted out and had a drink, we were able to have a couple of hours in our beds.

Also joining us on this trip were Natalie and Cesare (who arrived on an earlier flight) and Laurent and Bojana (who came a couple of days later).

Here is some general information on Bonaire: Bonaire advertises itself as the Diver's Paradise and there are, indeed, many dive sites to visit. You will find lots of dive centres offering to take you on boat dives but most of the dive sites are easily accessible from the shore. Therefore, we always hire a van or pickup truck and organise our own dives. The advantage of a boat dive, of course, is that everything is organised for you and you simply put on your equipment and drop into the water. There are some sites, such as Klein Bonaire, that are not accessible from the mainland shore and it is probably worthwhile for new visitors to do a couple of these dives. However, there is plenty to see from the shore dives and there are lots of different sites to choose from. Also, with shore diving, you can choose when and where you want to dive and for how long (boat dives tend to insist on 45 minutes maximum). There is quite a variation between the coral reefs to the North of the island and those to the South. Nearly all the diving is on the Eastern coast as the sea on the West is

rough for most of the year. Remember, Bonaire is warm all year round but also windy (the Trade winds) and the wind is predominantly from the West so the Eastern side is the sheltered side. The water temperature is normally between 26 and 27 ° C so little thermal insulation is required e.g. Lycra or a 3mm neoprene suit is adequate. Diving is generally quite easy with hardly any currents so you can relax and admire the corals, sponges and colourful sea life. However, don't expect to see sharks as one normally finds them in regions where there are ocean currents. One word of warning about shore diving is not to leave valuables in your car whilst diving. Also, leave your car unlocked so that would be thieves don't smash the window to see if you have left anything worth stealing. A steering wheel bar lock is normally provided with hire cars and it is essential to use these. Any money that you need and the car keys should be carried with you whilst diving. Waterproof boxes, suitably depth rated, are available nowadays for putting bank notes and keys in. Unfortunately, spectacles/sunglasses are not the sort of thing you can take diving with you but essential for use above water so there are items that you do have to leave behind in the car. Clear spectacles are not normally worth stealing but expensive looking sunglasses are. On this holiday, Carol had her prescription sunglasses stolen from the car in the final days before departure. The thief probably did not realise that they were varifocal and we all hope that he trips up and breaks his leg!

Equipment hire:

We have used the Dive Inn on all but one occasion. They offer a very reasonable package for unlimited diving and previous customers get a 10% discount. The Dive Inn caters for many of the Dutch visitors and the charges are straight forward with no hassle. This is unlike the experience we had of hiring equipment from US based Captain Don's where they slapped on a service charge at the end. To dive anywhere on Bonaire you each have to purchase a Marine Park licence at a cost of \$10. So, back to our holiday.

After our rest, we spent the rest of the morning sorting out accommodation details, car hire and dive package. Then, in the afternoon, we did our check out dive across the road from the Dive Inn. From then on, we did two dives per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. For those dives that were within say 10 to 15 minutes drive from Coco Palm, we found it better to dive early and return for breakfast. This is particularly so for the dive on the wreck of the Hilma Hooker, which is a very popular dive and is better to be on the wreck before the dive boats arrive (normally from 08:00 onwards). We normally dived in the afternoon at around 16:00 h so this gave us plenty of time between morning and afternoon dives to relax, have lunch and do a bit of shopping. We had space outside our apartment (named Frangipani) to be able to congregate for an evening drink. Also, a barbecue was available for cooking our own dinner if we decided to

stay in for a meal. It is a nice place to relax and enjoy yourself.



Some of our favourite dive sites are:

To the South of Kralendijk:

The Hilma Hooker – a large freighter that was caught running drugs, confiscated and deliberately sunk by the authorities. It is located on the sandy bottom between the two reefs near Angel City. Here you will see Tarpon and Barracuda as well as Trevallies. It is quite safe to swim into the holds as it is all open.

Angel City and Alice in Wonderland – all part of the double reef system. Lots of nice corals, sponges and varied fish life. Notable fish are Black Durgon, Margates, Jacks and large Green Morays.

Salt Pier – written permission is required from the harbourmaster but is well worth it to see the various species that occupy the pier structure. Barracuda are always around and octopus can often be found here. This year we also saw lobster and a large green Moray. On a previous occasion, we have seen a large fish ball. This tends to occur during the period of a full moon. It is great experience to swim through such a fish ball.

Pink Beach – Lots of sponges and fan corals

To the North of Kralendijk:

The Cliff – a small wall dive accessible from Captain Don's Habitat. However, we had a problem this year as they wanted to charge us \$5 each to dive from the pier. We refused and walked a short distance to the adjacent Hamlets and dived from there without difficulty. Tarpon are usually present around the wall. This also makes a nice night dive which we have done on previous occasions and then we have seen Snook in the shallows above the wall.

Andrea II – a good place for seeing young squid. We also saw a Green Turtle here.

Oil slick Leap – Straight into the water from rock edge using a stride entry. There is a ladder for getting out. Often see Bumphead Parrotfish here. Lots of Christmas tree worms here.

Weber's Joy – very picturesque in the shallows (6-8m) featuring coral pillars and fan corals. Many spotted Morays and Sharp Tail eels. Never disappoints.

Ol' Blue – aptly named from the blue water you see as you drop over the reef. From here to the North, the reef becomes steeper and is quite different from that of the South. Access to Ol' Blue can be difficult when the sea is rough.

Karpata – again entry can be difficult when the sea is rough. We did not dive it this time. It is, however, adjacent to the Marine Park research station and diving is only allowed to the South. Nevertheless it is an impressive steep reef with lots of life in the shallows.



Washington National Park (North Bonaire):

We went with three cars into the National Park for the day loaded up with tanks for two dives. Entry to the park costs \$10 each and is worth the experience of some adventurous rough road driving. It is always advisable to go with more than one vehicle, as there is a risk of punctures or breakdown. The wardens do come around later in the afternoon, however, to ensure that everyone gets out of the park before dark. We dived **Playa Benge** and **Boca Slagbij** whilst in the park. Of the two, Playa Benge was by far the better dive. Boca Slagbij is a dive that we have done a number of times before but it is a long swim out and the coral was found to be damaged and covered in red algae, so rather disappointing. At Playa Benge, however, we saw lobsters and a large Clinging Channel Crab as well as Barracuda.

Carol and I did an afternoon check out of the site of **North Belnem** which we selected for the others as a night dive. Then we marshalled the night dive using lamps and a flashing strobe to mark our shore position. This site is directly in line with the airport runway and Carol and Bojana started to get rather worried when a plane came in to land and passed overhead seemingly only a few meters above us!

At the end of our holiday we departed Flamingo airport at around 14:00 h on our direct flight back to Amsterdam, arriving at four o'clock in the morning. We had enjoyed our Bonaire holiday but suffered from jet lag for some days afterwards. Fortunately for me, I didn't have to go to work afterwards!

Roger Smithson

For Sale

DUI , red, mens large drysuit with woolley bear inner suit and booties.

DUI , red, small drysuit, small with woolley bear inner suit and booties.

Ladies 7mm wetsuit, black/grey, long johns and hooded jacket, size 10, in very good condition.

Buddy Commando stab, large, yellow with lifting bottle.

Buddy Stab, medium, orange with lifting bottle
Two 10 litre tanks, barely used, with handles.

7 litre pony pool-tank.
Regulators and gauges (Spiro).

Any sensible offers considered.
Contact Mark.Nesbit@esa.int, 071 565 5191.

Does this mean that Mark and Vikki are giving up diving? Ed.