



ESTEC SWIMMING & SUB-AQUA CLUB

www.geocities.com/estecessac

March 2004 Newsletter



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Editorial

An ongoing problem that newsletter editors, past and present, have is getting hold of enough interesting material for each issue.

An edition-per-three-months with the odd special thrown in, is about right for each club year. However, the editor almost always has to contrive to pad-out the columns in an attempt to produce more than just four pages each time. This inevitably brings up the odd complaint that the editor is imposing his own preferences on the readership which, of course, is what editors do. In my case I try to only inject stuff that I'm reasonably au fait with and that is proving to be a bit obvious.

My own view therefore is that, assuming members interests go beyond just swimming and diving, there is a wealth of interesting other material out there to be tapped and should be seriously considered, if for no other reason than to get to know our club colleagues, and what they get up to, even better.

Something slightly unusual about this edition is the almost total lack of pictures. Normally one of the editors more difficult tasks is to politely explain that, to avoid over-long download times, graphics have to be limited. This time - nothing! Anyway, thanks

to all of our contributors to this issue.

Our annual club swimming gala and social is coming soon (see Swimming Matters for details) and it is one of those occasions when the club is happy to throw its doors wide open. In other words, guests of club members are welcome - particularly the youngsters.

Finally, remember that this, and all previous newsletters, can be seen in glorious technicolor via our webpages.

Phil Baker : email: panda.baker@wanadoo.nl

Ongoing Club Activities

The "improvers course " for swimmers is running at De Schelft at the moment. It proved to be so popular that we are planning to put on another course before we lose the Sunday pool slot in April.

Because of the demand for another swimmers course we will move the planned snorkel training course to the Wassenaar pool and run it in May / June when the novice divers will have finished their pool training. Running the course at this later time could also make it interesting for anyone planning to do some snorkelling during their summer holidays!

Go Karting and supper are the order of the day or rather of the evening on March the 27th. Come along and try your skills on the track - it's much safer than on the roads these days. See Trix if you haven't got your tickets yet.

Preparations for the Swimming Gala are well underway so let's see a big turnout at the pool and afterwards at the BBQ. April the 17th

is the big day. Get involved in the preparations and activities on the day - see Myra.

The club trip to the ESA Astronaut Training Centre in Cologne on Koninginnedag was over subscribed within days of it's being announced. Seems like everyone wants to jump into that neutral buoyancy tank - see Anthony about possible cancellations! You never know you may get lucky.

Plans for a water skiing event in Alphen in May / June are in the pipeline so watch this space! Also, everything is in place for the Scilly Isles diving trip and I hope that we will get an article on that for the newsletter when our intrepid divers return.

Congratulations are in order to John and Wayne for achieving their Advanced Diver certification (I must have missed the Champs).

Even more celebrations are in the offing shortly when those who have completed their boat handling course successfully pass their Vaarbewijs 1 en 2 exams (should be a huge bash as there are about ten of them).

In the last newsletter I asked for more support for club events and I must say that the response has been encouraging. Please keep it up and if you have some ideas for new events that you think the club should try out, send me an email / give a call or chat to me or any of the committee at the pool or wherever.

Con

Training Matters

ERD Experience

Since I started diving with the club four years ago I have been on a couple of Skill Development Course's (SDC) that have had various degrees of interest to me. Just to name a few: The Combined Nitrox course was definitively good fun but on the other hand the Oxygen Admin course was very necessary and not so much fun because there was no diving involved. But, the Extended Range Diving has been the best to date. This article is a brief overview of what one can expect from the course and a little bit about the place where the course was held.

To start with the course itself: basically

it contains two parts. The first is a theory weekend together with some pool/shallow water practise sessions. The second part of the course was some real diving in the Porquerolles. We did the first part of the course in Heidelberg. The boys from European Molecular Biology Laboratories (EMBL) had done a great job in preparing to receive our group of students. There were lecturing rooms available and a nice local swimming pool to do our drills in. The morning of the Saturday was completely filled with theory on the diving we were going to be doing during the course and the skills involved. It soon became apparent that extended range diving was far more a personal thing than I first thought. The whole idea was to extend the range of diving that each participant had done to date. The following was covered during the morning: longer deco stops techniques (lazy shot and trapeze) kit configurations, dive planning (introduction to run time) visualisation techniques etc. All very good stuff and very easy to listen to thanks to Penny Glover and Mike Spiegel - our course instructors.

After the morning we rushed on to the swimming pool and started off with a quick overview of our kit. Was it up to spec with the diving that we intended to do? Well, it was very informative to hear everyone's explanation for why they have their configuration the way it is. After going through the usual discussions we went into the pool to go through the drills. Basically there were three types of drills that we had to go through about a million times:

- Change of regulator to back-up regulator
- Shutting down isolation valve on twinset and shutting down either side of twinset
- Disconnecting and connecting stage cylinder

After a couple of hours of this we ended with some practise on solo DSMB deployment. This is a skill that I for one definitively need more practising on...during our diving weekend I managed to lose my reel while trying to deploy the Delayed Surface Marker Buoy (DSMB) solo while hanging onto a shot line in heavy currents...

Ok, so the next day we went through the

same drills in open water at St. Leon's in Heidelberg. The only thing to highlight there is the cold really. It was 4 degrees and the dexterity in your fingers disappears very quickly in those circumstances. When this happens it is not easy to do shut downs or disconnect snap on bolts etc.

Well all of us did well enough to qualify for the real dives so we met up with Penny a couple of weeks later in the Porquerolles. After a mad drive through a completely snow covered Belgium which took a long time we made it by late on Friday night/Saturday morning to the region where we would meet the others: Hyeres in the South of France. We were in a lovely hotel along the motorway which Penny had organised for us. The next morning we headed off early to the island itself. We were met in the harbour by Jean Paul who was our skipper and dive marshal. The boat was the Courthard - a big floating bath tub! It seemed very sturdy but when it was put to the test in bad weather it did not completely fulfil my expectations. But anyway his help was great and it wasn't really his fault that the weather was bad. Especially the Sunday was very rough: it was snowing and blowing a gale.

All in all the diving was great. We started off with some relatively easy dives in which each group practised the skills some more because we all knew that at some point Penny would come along and test our skills. We dove Le Vapeur the first day. It is a pretty broken up wreck but had some nice marine action. The second dive of the Saturday was a Sec...or a pinnacle for us non French people. It was quite nice but not as impressive as the wreck in the morning. The second day we followed exactly the same schedule: a deep dive in the morning on a wreck and then a pinnacle in the afternoon. The wreck was the Greque this time and I was more impressed. The wreck was in a far better condition than the one of the previous day. The weather was quite bad and some of us were suffering with sea sickness so the second dive was a very mild one and only half the group made it.

On the last day my buddy and I did the dive that we had prepared to extend our range of diving. The wreck, Michel C, was at around 35m with the deepest point we reached around

43m. For me this was the first time that I had gone so deep. We had a run time worked out. My buddy led the dive and Penny came along with us to start with to go through some of the drills for our assessment. Both of us performed up to spec but I was perhaps a little heavy given my cycling action when trying to reach my isolation manifold. All I can say is that I am no acrobat which is nearly a must if you are to reach over and grab the valves with a just adjusted crotch strap in position. The answer came from Penny: undo your crotch strap first if you need to reach the valves. Simple right...but underwater it did not occur to me.

After the dive my buddy and I started our drive back to Holland. The memories of the Porquerolles are very good ones. The diving was excellent. The dive station was excellent (it was with Porquerolles Plongee for those interested I have a number to make reservations or whatever). The shipper did his work perfectly.

As for the course: you must be a Dive Leader and in possession of the Combined Nitrox card. You can expect to receive another card at the end of the course allowing you as a ERD diver to fill your cylinders with 80% O2 which is a good mix for deco use. It was rather expensive but not to the point where it was ridiculous.

Bas

Swimming Matters

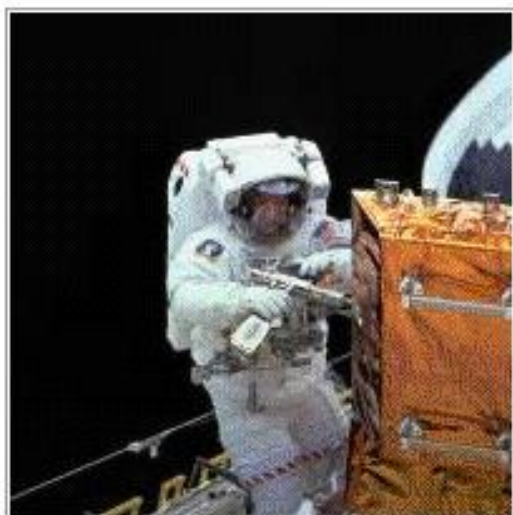
The 2004 Gala is on the 17th of April at 4pm in the Sterrenbad. BBQ as normal will follow in the evening.

Myra

Expedition Matters

It is about time I wrote an article in the newsletter! A lot has been happening in the world of expeditions at least behind the scenes. The real fun is yet to come. At present there are two trips planned, the first to the European Astronaut Centre in Cologne on the 30th of April 2004 and the second is the big expedition to the Scilly Isles in May.

Last year Manuela and I were on a live-aboard in the deep south of Egypt when one of the other guests mentioned that they had heard about open days at the astronaut centre. Well, quite frankly I wanted to go to the astronaut centre myself and so I thought it would be a good excuse to turn it into an ESSAC expedition'tje.



Claude Nicollier repairing Hubble

Of course I asked a certain relative whether or not EAC organises such events and before I knew it I was in direct contact with EAC and the visit arranged itself, well with the kind help of Hans Bolender and Herve Stevenin who arranged everything and set up a schedule for the event.

All that was left for me was to find some participants, but fortunately I was not the only person interested in visiting EAC. The list was full within a week of Con announcing the visit.

The schedule is as follows:

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|-------------|--|
| 10.30-11.00 | Welcome and presentation of EAC roles and activities |
| 11.00-11.45 | Tour of EAC Training Facilities |
| 11.45-12.15 | EAC Neutral Buoyancy Facility |

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|-------------|--|
| | (NBF) Introduction |
| 12.15-12.45 | Check of Divers
Certif./Med./Logbook
Documents |
| 12.45-14.00 | Lunch break |
| 14.00-14.30 | Equipment preparation and check |
| 14.30-14.45 | Dive Briefing |
| 14.45-16.00 | Dive in NBF |
| 16.00-16.30 | Post dive activities |
| 16.30-16.45 | Closure of Visit |

I hope all the participants have a great day or weekend in Cologne, I know I'm looking forward to it!

For some more background information on EAC check out the following link:
http://www.esa.int/export/esaHS/ESAJIEOV/MOC_astronauts_0.html

The Great Scilly Isles Expedition May 7th to the 15th 2004

It was John Ives who first suggested an ESSAC scuba diving expedition to the UK. To be honest my first thought was, isn't that going to be cold? Well, since that first moment of naivety on my part I've heard many things that have convinced me that this will indeed be a great place to go diving.

The first thing to change my mind was Manuela buying a dry suit, which left us with no excuses (that goes for Vinkeveen as well). I dived into my copies of the free underwater photography magazine (for Scilly Seals see issue 9: www.uwp-mag.com) along with the BSAC Dive magazine and found some very good diving indeed.

According to the information I've received there are over 150 top dive sights including reefs and wrecks. The marine life on the reefs consists of jewel anemones, Fan Corals, Ross Coral, Dead Mans Fingers, Plumose Anemones, and many other anemones. The reefs are full of colour and there is the chance to dive with Grey Seals! There are lots of wrecks in the Scillies, including artefacts such as canons, canon balls, shot, anchors, and fittings, remaining from old wooden sailing ships as well as modern steel wrecks.... I can't wait! The list of (fully paid up!) participants for the Scilly Isles trip are:

Anthony Thirkettle, Manuela Baroni, Bas

Galewicz, Brigitte v. Brug, Keith Miller, Drusilla Wishart, Wayne Stinchcombe, Roger Smithson, Carol Smithson, John Ives, Jennifer Ives, Wim v. Leeuwen and Goran Pilbratt.

Thanks to Drusilla for paying bills and for generally keeping me well informed about the money side of things!

The itinerary is to travel to Penzance arriving the evening of the 7th of May. We'll all be staying at the Lombard House Hotel on the first night (booked and paid for from the collected fees). The ferry costs from the Netherlands to the UK are not covered by the fees. The reason was that I expect people to have varying travel preferences and might be car sharing, going on different dates, etc. So please remember to book the ferry or the channel tunnel to the UK, leaving enough time to drive to Penzance. It will be quite a long drive.

Remember also to book the ferry from Europe to the UK not the other way round!

The next morning on Saturday the 8th we will have an early start to catch the Scillonian III ferry (booked and paid for) to St. Mary's in the Scilly Isles. From there we will catch a second small ferry to St. Martins (roughly £3 to be paid on the spot) our destination. The accommodation and diving on St. Martins are also covered by the fees. The accommodation is self-catering and will be divided between the Dive flat and the Rock cottage. We will be diving twice a day for the six days that we're there.

On the return journey we will again stop off for a night in Penzance before making our way back to Holland or staying in the UK for an extended holiday.

I hope everyone is looking forward to the Scilly Isles and the EAC trips as much as I am.

Anthony

Stop Press:

A useful snippet of information received from your diving officer :

There is a dive shop in Katwijk offering a 10% discount to ESSAC members on diving and snorkeling gear. It is called *Dive Post* and the address is:

Katwijkerbroek 39a

2223 XN Katwijk

Tel.: 071 40 8775

Fax.: 071 40 87375

email: info@divepost.nl

Web: www.divepost.nl



The owner/operator is Cees Langmuur and he is (or was) the editor of the Dutch dive magazine "Divekrant".

John Nolan

Our Committee

Our 2003/2004 elected committee is:

Chairman	Con McCarthy
Club Treasurer	Drusilla Wishart
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 committee minutes and reports can be viewed on our website under the 'Our Committee' icon.