

Edited by Michael Hall and Tíree Macleod-Nolan

ESSAC NewsLetter

Winter 2008



Congratulations to Nat Carthew who won a bottle of Bubbly for the Water related picture competition. The winning picture can be seen below of a mother Grebe with her babies. It was tough to pick the winning picture but it had to be done, Congratulations again and we hope you enjoy the bottle of bubbly! In this edition there is another photo competition however this time held by BSAC for underwater pictures on page 10.



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EDITORIAL

Once again we have reached that moment where all the “persuasion” has resulted in some quite sparkling articles from you. Now your editorial staff must spend the dark night hours crouching over a dusty desk and put it all together. Well, truth to tell, it is Tíree that does that part, I just do the bullying (oh I meant persuasion) to get the articles coming in. Our goal is to include as many articles as possible - as long as they approach the qualifying criterion. Ah, I hear your question, what are these criterion? Firstly they must be written in some form of English (we even would accept American English if pushed!). Secondly, the article should have either a club angle or be like wallpaper glue, mostly water based; obviously including both would give a double qualification – anyone accepting this particular challenge?

This time we have a real mixed bag, ranging from Göran admitting his antiquity whilst celebrating his 500th dive AND his 500th successful surfacing! Also included is an article from Peter (Sharkoholic) de Maagt about the plans for a super trip next year to Micronesia. On the social side we have coverage of recent events ranging from the joyous Frisbee golf (WAS joyous. Wasn't it?), to the sad, the departure of Stephanie and Kevin Bennett, just when we need to INCREASE membership!

One event we cannot allow to pass without comment is Mario's marriage. Mario Monaldi, who used to be our Diving Officer until work overtook pleasure, has finally found the time to 'get around' to tying the knot. On behalf of the whole club, we all wish the couple all the best and wonder if this could mean another member?

On this note, congratulations to Katherine Baker on the birth of her healthy baby boy Liam. Katherine was a former social secretary of the club. Liam was born on the 24th of July 2008.

We would also like to congratulate Manuela Baroni on becoming a qualified diving theory instructor.

On the more serious side, our membership is decreasing continuously whilst costs are ever rising. This is serious for our club, so please get out there and recruit your friends, your neighbours, and your colleagues - in fact anyone who has an association with ESTEC should be coerced into joining OUR club, our own ESSAC.



A Note from Our Chairman

Dear Fellow club members,

As some of you may already have heard, we have for the past 5 months, been in discussions with the 'Optisport', the company which manages the de Schelft pool, over the liability clauses they have inserted in their new contract.

The problem we have is that in August of this year, 'Optisport' sent us a 16 plus page contract to sign. In this new contract 'Optisport' insist that the ESSAC assume the full liability for any potential incident or accident, should something occur whilst we are renting the pool. In addition they are also insisting that we take over the supervising of the two pools.

In the case of the latter, under the terms of the contract, we would be required to provide a minimum of TWO supervisors (one per pool) each week. In addition the club must provide 'Optisport' with the names of all club members who will act as pool supervisors along with evidence that they have appropriate training. As in water supervision is not allowed, anyone acting as a supervisor must stay out of the water.

With regards the requirement from 'Optisport' that the club take on all legal liability, I should also point out here that as a non Dutch registered club we are not able to obtain any club liability insurance and like all ESTEC clubs we believed that we were covered by ESA's liability insurance.

In order to verify the nature of the cover, provided by ESA, Wim & I had a meeting with Jeff Noyes, in his capacity as SSCC Chairperson, in an attempt to obtain clarification as to where the ESSAC stood. We were somewhat surprised to discover that there is no written agreement, between ESA & the SSCC confirming that ESA's own liability insurance extends to the clubs. Everyone just seems to assume that if anything happens, ESA will pick up the tab. As a consequence therefore the SSCC is unable to provide us with a written guarantee that ESA or the SSCC will indemnify any club official or member, acting as a pool supervisor, against any claim made. The individual concerned would therefore have to depend on their own liability insurance, assuming they have one! The possibility of criminal prosecution & imprisonment were not addressed with Jeff but are obviously an equally serious issue, in the event that ESA does not assume full liability.

As a consequence of the above information the committee drafted & sent a letter to 'Optisport' in September, advising them that we could not accept the conditions imposed in their new contract. We also identified the key issues & problems we had with the contract and proposed appropriate modifications which we hoped they would find acceptable.

Despite the fact that we sent our letter to 'Optisport', before the deadline they had imposed in their contract cover letter, we received no reply. A phone call to the pool, the week before we were scheduled to start using the pool, resulted in us being informed that 'Optisport' had not yet addressed our letter as the key person on their side was on leave. It was therefore agreed, verbally, that we would use the pool pending a reply from 'Optisport'. The pool staff also agreed to provide supervision, pending a resolution of the issue.

Well some four months later, I have to report to you that 'Optisport' have still not acknowledged our letter. Nor have they responded to our follow up registered letters insisting that they reply by mid November. We have therefore been using the de Schelft pool these past 3 months without an agreed contract with 'Optisport'! What I can tell you however is that the staff of the de Schelft have informed us that 'Optisport' did indeed discuss and reject our proposed contract changes. What I cannot tell you however is why, they refuse to formally reply. We also understand that the staff of de Schelft are now under pressure to withdraw their present "but unapproved by 'Optisport' pool cover.

Having exhausted all possible communication channels to 'Optisport', and taking into consideration the legal uncertainty as to where we stand, with respect to using the de Schelft without a signed contract, the committee have unanimously concluded that this situation cannot be allowed to continue. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the club members to thank all committee members who turned up for an emergency committee meeting at my home and who have helped in trying to find a solution to this problem.

As a consequence therefore I have written to 'Optisport' advising them that in the light of their NON response to our letters since August, we will cease using the de Schelft pool as of the 31st December 2008.

On behalf of the committee I wish to say how sorry we are to all those who regularly use the de Schelft pool. I would also like to add that we are at present discussing with the Sterrenbad the possibility of paying for our junior members to use the children's pool in Wassenaar, on Saturday mornings, during part or all of the period we have the main pool.

Finally, despite this bad news, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy & relaxing Christmas & a prosperous & healthy New Year

John

A novice under Dutch water

Obtaining the title of Ocean Diver of the British Sub-Aqua Club requires going through a number of lessons in sheltered and open water. So, after happily finishing the pool lessons, and, instead of joining some of the students in the Red Sea, I decided to join the club for the open water lessons in the Netherlands during the weekends in July. Here is the story, so far.

The South of the Netherlands has plenty of diving locations, known for their 'limited visibility' but with interesting submarine life. Since the water temperature is expected to be low, I was advised to be prepared with enough neoprene. So of I went.

Scharendijke, Zeeland.

Great sunny day at the dike. Lots of divers. My instructor guarantees "you will never forget

your first dive". I started by getting very warm when kitting up in the sun thanks to my 7+5 mm wet suits, gloves and hood, hoping that the sea water would cool me down. But, the walking up and down the dike's stairs carrying the bottle and the lead did not help much. I was too warm. Some minutes later, in the water, I realise that I'm not getting cooler, neoprene excess, not to mention I cannot sink.

Some good instructor's advise - extra lead and less neoprene- later, I understand what the "limited visibility" means. Although at the beginning I was apprehensive, I calmed down when my instructor kindly gave me time to put myself together and, after all, we even saw some big lobsters and anemone. With my instructor's help the experience remained positive and definitely the opposite of overwhelming.

Grevelingen, Zeeland.

It was announced: Boat dive. Seven divers. Right neoprene, but somehow also wrong lead this time. It was hard trying to kit-up for the first time on a moving boat with six other divers and their kit. Even better, now try and return to the boat when

you are finished with the dive. I think there was even a moment when the boat wanted to sink us all, but it failed. What else can I say? Adventure "in eigen land". Less apprehensive than the first time. "Limited visibility", however saw a tiny lobster and many speedy crabs. I really enjoyed it and had lots of fun. I realised that the instructors had multitasking down to a fine art.

Oostvoornsemeer.

This was a stormy and very unpleasant day. There was only three brave divers. Trust me it was better to be under the water than above it. On the bright side, this was the easiest dive of all. Easy to enter into the water, simply just jumping off a jetty next to the car park. What also made it easier was that due to previous dives I had sorted out the right amount of weight. The downside was that we did not see a single creature apart from other divers, but instead we investigated some wrecks thanks to the amazing instructor's navigation., especially because the visibility was really "limited" and when we surfaced, the rain/hail was at its best. But then, yes, "ad hoc" rinse and then we could fully appreciate the well deserved "warm chocolademelk".



After these dives I have learned some things: the obvious: instructors are the key for a good dive! Also that the easier the access to the water the less effort for the "lazy/clumsy" diver. The not so obvious: Dutch waters are not necessarily that cold or scary, and even better, there is quite some life in them. And the best: fun and excitement is guaranteed no matter where you dive. Thanks to the great devoted instructors and the help of the divers team and club members, the Ocean Diver experience so far has been even celebrated with other kind of bubbles: Cava's bubbles!, and will be indeed, unforgettable.

Having said that, I cannot wait for my Red Sea experience!

Paloma

Frisbee golf, what fun!

On Sunday, 20th July - a group of intrepid club members set off into unknown territory in the middle of the Dutch meadows to attempt a round of Frisbee golf.

To those among us who have no idea what this entails (and the group consisted mainly of such pioneers) Frisbee golf is much the same as regular golf except there are no clubs, no ball, no fairways, no greens, not even a hole or flag! And of course it involves a Frisbee; apart from these minor points the similarity is amazing!

Our social secretary team had excelled themselves



this day. In keeping with the core activities of our club, namely water based sports, the meadows were totally soaking and the rain continued to ensure we were in our element!

The afternoon started off with a “cuppa” and some apple tart - to get us into the Dutch swing. Then off to the practice nets for some hints and explanations- something we all certainly needed! Here we discovered in our midst something truly suspicious - Phil Baker had done this before! Admittedly in Australia and in the dry and under the sun, but he HAD prior knowledge!

After our training session we were let loose into the meadows. Here it became apparent that the choice



of Frisbee was going to be important. Those with a green one had a distinct disadvantage as the camouflage effect in the long grass was outstanding! In addition, those who had chosen a brown Frisbee soon realised that it was meadow land, it was a farm, there were cows in the fields, and consequently there were a LOT more brown Frisbees than we started out with! We split up into teams of four and having braved a pontoon boat (2 oil drums and a plank) across a stream we started our games. In typical ESTEC style, we all set off in different directions, but there seemed to be no real start line and we didn't interfere with each others game.



If you have never skimmed a Frisbee into wind and watched it sail back over your head to a point behind you, you just haven't lived! Such antics ensured that the afternoon, although wet, was filled with constant hilarity. Added to this, there were those who thought the advice "don't throw your Frisbee into the water" was certainly not applicable to them!



Phil was the lowest scoring man – (TOLD you he had experience!) with Joerg a close second.

After completing the formalities, our social team once again triumphed – they spoke to the weather gods and it changed to warm and sunny, so we were all able to sit outside to enjoy the prolific BBQ. Here it has to be admitted

joy the prolific BBQ, Here it has to be admitted



Finally, we all finished and retired to the farmhouse where, to the obvious delight of most, there was a bar!! While we quenched our thirst, Brian, Wil and Rita calculated and deliberated the scores and finally were able to announce the results.

For the ladies, Myra shocked even herself by scoring lowest, with Ruth as runner-up. Ann won the prize for achieving the highest score of the day.

that, as a club we failed - despite the best efforts of everyone, there was still copious amounts of food left when we had all given up!



Lucy at the bar

All-in-all, a thoroughly enjoyable outing and a triumph for the organisers.

By Brian Hedley

Instructor foundation course

As my mother always said I feel more comfortable underwater than above it and with all my fish-like qualities, I decided to take my diving to the next level! As I enjoy all aspects of the club; swimming, snorkeling and diving, I thought there must be more I can do?



So of I went, extremely nervous and apprehensive but nevertheless I was determined. Other people have done it with no problem so why shouldn't I.? You must be wondering what I am talking about, and I will answer your question: The assistant instructor foundation course. Through my Dad, the ESSAC chairman and Laurent the BSAC regional coach I heard about the course being held in Reindhalen (Germany) in the British military base. When I arrived I was more in awe about staying on the base than the actual course. Id never been on such a HUGE military base, it was absolutely amazing. It was a small city inside walls.

Anyways back to the topic. My nervousness did not disappear as I met all the instructors and students, as I hoped it would. Everyone there was at least 15 years older than me and I was the only girl, something that also added to my nervousness was that they were mostly military personnel. The course consisted of a 2 day weekend with lectures and pool training. As most divers know some lectures can be very long and not so interesting. These however were completely different, the instructors were teaching us how to teach and also how NOT to teach. There was no tedious notes to be taken and memorizing of facts, everything was very hands on that it was impossible to forget anything.



The pool sessions were where we the students would put into practice what we learned in the classroom. The military base had its own pool, I had never seen anything like it, it was especially big and especially deep for diving, and it was heated. The only catch was it was open-air! John had warned me about this but I thought he was joking, so I was glad I took my 7mm instead of my 3mm shorty I was planning to take. The day didn't end after the lectures and pool training, we had homework! Our first ever presentation was in the morning! We had to teach a topic not only to our peers but also our instructors, there was also a pool lesson we had to teach as well.

A slight problem in preparing the presentation was that it is a tradition to go out for dinner with everyone the same night. Somehow we all managed, and in the end I was quite proud of my presentation and my drawing to go with it. Shame I forgot to show it while giving my presentation, my nerves were acting up again and definitely not only above the surface. With positive feedback from Laurent and the other instructors I was extremely proud as the youngest person there!

All in all I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend and was sad to see the Sunday evening come so quickly!

BSAC North West Region Photographic Competition

Conditions of entry

The competition is open to all amateur underwater photographers and runs until 31st December 2008.

Only one entry per person will be accepted, with up to one image per category. These will not be returned, unless accompanied by a SAE.

Event organisers, sponsors and their family members are excluded from the competition.

For categories 1 and 2 an independent judge will select the winning photographs whilst the category 3 winner will be selected by votes from visitors to 'In Deep'.

Images that have won in any other competition are not eligible for entry.

Winning entries will be announced during the 'In Deep, The Northern Dive Show', at Park Hall, Charnock

Richard, Chorley. PR7 5LP on Sunday 22nd February 2009. www.northerndiveshow.org

The organisers and sponsors reserve the right to reproduce and publish any images for the purposes of promoting current and future events, without payment, for an indefinite period. Any images thus used will

be credited to the person who entered them into the competition.

The sponsors retain the right to modify the details of the prizes; there is no cash alternative.

Submission of entry will be taken as acceptance of these conditions and that you confirm you own the copyright of all the photographs submitted.

Submission of entries.

Entries must be a minimum size of A5 and a maximum of A4, landscape or portrait, printed on gloss paper. No other formats will be accepted.

The following details must be written in the top

left-hand corner of the reverse side - Name, Category,

Title, Place, Depth, Camera set up used, Date taken and your contact details.

Post your completed entry form and images to:

'In Deep 2009' Photo Competition,

19 Cresswood Avenue,

Thornton-Cleveleys,

Lancashire FY5 3NT.

All entries to be received by 31st December 2008.

Additional entry forms can be obtained from the North West Regional website www.bsac-nw.org or email

photocompindeep@aol.com

Additional Information

Category 1. Underwater Environment.

This category is not limited to pictures of fish.

Other eligible subjects include any living organism found in fresh or

salt water; natural underwater scenery (e.g. coral gardens, Kelp forests) interaction between individuals or

species. Images of divers harassing the wildlife by handling or cornering an animal will be disqualified, as will any

where the creature looks distressed by the presence of the photographer and buddy.

Category 2. Wrecks and Artefacts.

In addition to wrecks, you may submit entries depicting other man made objects found underwater such as lost

cargo, placed objects from inland sites, other human constructions.

ESSAC CHRISTMAS PARTY

FRIDAY 12th DECEMBER 2008



To be held at restaurant de Sniep, Broekwegschouw 211,
Zoetermeer www.sniep.nl

Party starts at 19:00 hours with welcome drink
cost Euro 60-p.p. inclusive dinner and drinks (not spirits)

GUESTS WELCOME !!

MUSIC and DANCING to DJ VLADI

Please give your name before 5th December by email to
brian_hedley@yahoo.com and transfer amount to account
52.96.44.888 ESTEC Sub-Aqua Club, Noordwijk

Wassenaar 25th October 2008 ...Mmmh a Try Dive you say?

It was actually my Dad's suggestion as he himself had become a keen diver. Much as I was curious and interested in his "new" hobby, I was still doubtful and slightly terrified at the thought of trying out something so alien. Not being a swimmer AT ALL, the mere thought of getting soaked didn't exactly sound like my kind of thing. Anyway in for a penny, in for a pound I agreed to do a Try Dive.

Setting off for the swimming pool without any real expectations, other than setting out for a new experience, I started to feel slightly nervous at the sight of the kit laid out. Am I supposed to know what to do with all that *stuff*?

After a brief cup of coffee and meeting with Tiree, my instructor for the morning, we hit the changing rooms. Armed with a bathing suit and waterproof mascara I was kitted out with goggles and a snorkel and left in Tiree's capable hands to 'sort me out'. Starting with simply getting used to being in the water and then gradually building up to the actual diving. By this time I was also starting to build confidence and enthusiasm about this alien activity. Once geared up with an air supply, flippers and jacket, the instructions continued to follow. Although there's a lot to think about (mainly breathing), the pace in which I was being taught was very comfortable. Every new thing, bit by bit with time allowed for any questions however insignificant it may have seemed.



Once we were actually down in the water and getting used to the equipment I started to realize that I was actually diving, and more to the point I was really enjoying myself. Reading Tiree's hand signals and reminders and just floating round the pool. It was quiet under water, nothing but the sound of bubbles from your own air supply. Much to my surprise I found the experience relaxing... We must have been in the water for quite some time, but it is true: *"Time does fly when your having fun!"*



Congratulations!!!



Congratulations to Mario and Maryna who got married in Tonder, Denmark, on September 12, 2008. Mario Monaldi has been an active member of the club and was also last years Diving Officer.



Congratulations to Katherine and Jeroen on their son Liam who was born on the 24th of July 2008. Katherine was once the Club's social secretary. In the picture baby Liam with grandmother Ann Baker.

A diving problem??? We are ready!!!

Who ever said we weren't prepared?

A full day practicing rescue management scenarios just in case a problem ever arose at a dive site just to make sure that we would be prepared.

For this exercise it was a joint exercise with the Harings (the Hague BSAC diving club) as the more bodies the better! Luckily this time the weather was with us, I cannot remember the last time the weather was not so kind. It was a great day as well as good practice!



Not only the divers benefitted from this activity but there were some non divers who learnt just how to react on the shore if something did go wrong. These exercises are crucial to ensure that each diver knows how to cope in a stressful situation of a diver or divers becoming casualties.

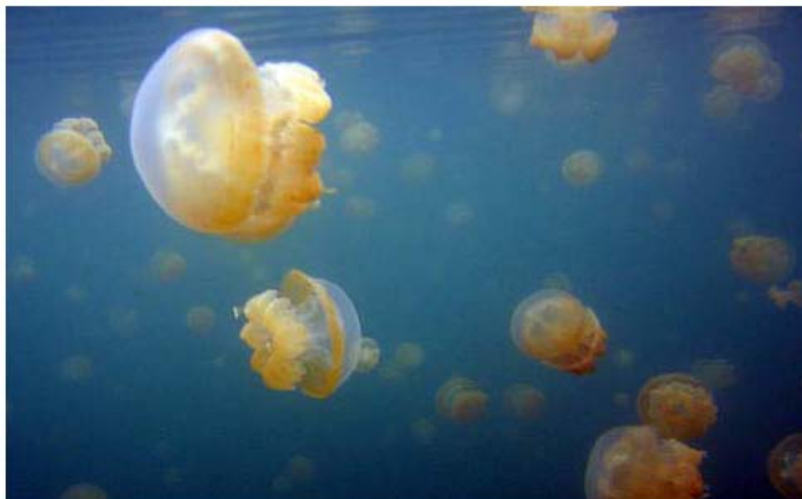


CLUB TRIP MARCH 2009 MICRONESIA: PALAU AND YAP



Dear Club members, this is supposed to be the highlight of next year and is a very nice exclusive trip. We are very fortunate to be able to combine the manta mating season in Yap and the international shark week in Palau. This will allow us to participate in shark research and enjoy evening shark seminars with international presenters. Needless to say that the regular diving in Palau is also phenomenal, so you can easily decide to skip the shark week and simply join for normal diving in Palau (you will save approximately 200 euros).

I want to stress that the airline tickets are a significant element in the overall cost and as the prices of the tickets change by the day. So, the closer to the announcement that we can confirm our bookings, the more likely it is that we can obtain it for the indicated price.



We will stay in the Rose-Garden Resort in Palau and the Manta Ray Bay Hotel in Yap.

In case you want some back-ground info about the hotels and sharkweek:

Rose-Garden Resort Palau: <http://www.palau-hotel.com/>

Manta Ray Bay: <http://www.mantaray.com/>

Fish 'n Fins (Shark week): <http://www.fishnfins.com/Shark-Week.html>

The plan is the following:

Palau - Yap

5 March Amsterdam - Manila

6 March Manila - Palau

6-15 March stay Palau (9 nights)

15 March Palau - Yap

15 - 20 March stay Yap (5 nights)

20 March Yap - Guam - Manila

21(22) March Manila - Amsterdam

Price (split)

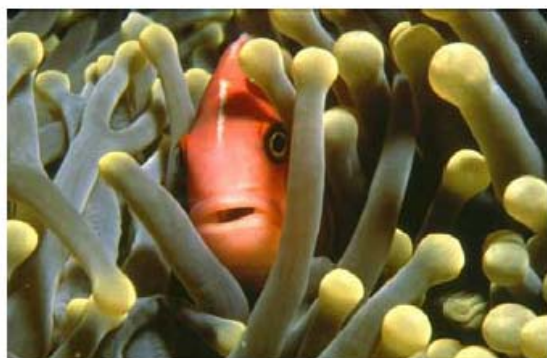
Amsterdam - Manila KLM	€ 1183,-
(this includes € 35,- ticketing fee, tax: airport tax, fuel tax, airport tax which amounts up to about € 372,-)	
flights Manila- Palau - Yap - Guam - Manila	€ 585,-
Sharkweek Rose Garden (9 nights)	€ 963,-
Yap 5 nights	€ 560,-
1 night Manila (mandarin Oriental Hotel)	€ 80,-
Total (approximately)	€ 3371,-

This is based on double occupancy (two people sharing a room).

You can save a significant part if you book the part of KLM using your frequent flyer points!!

Palau

Palau is the most western island of Micronesia. It is located approximately 750 kilometers southeast of the Philippines. Most of the 25 islands are uninhabited and are coral islands. The capital of Palau is Koror where two third of the population is living. Just like the island of Yap, old traditions play a big role in everyday live. Palau is covered with lush tropical forest and its flora and fauna is one of the richest of all Micronesia.



Diving

You are diving with PADI diveschool Fish 'n Fins. Fish 'n Fins was the first diveschool of the island. Palau is known for its steep walls, big fishes, blue holes, wrecks and coral gardens. Palau is also very known for the sharks which can be found at the divespot called 'the blue corner'. The blue corner is the most popular divespot and one of the best. Lots of different species of fish can be found here. Besides reefdiving you can also dive in caves, for example 'chandeliars cave'. Diving in the famous jellyfish lake is a unique experience. Around Koror you can find a lot of WWII wrecks mainly of the Japanese navy and airforce which are a great dive.

For Further info. contact Peter de Maagt (Peter,de,Maagt@esa.int)



Rose Garden Resort Hotel (4 Stars Resort)

Rose Garden Resort Hotel (4 Stars Resort) Brought to you by Carlton Holiday Group, an international hotel and resort chain, Rose Garden Resort represents the Carlton Holiday entry into the resort sector.

On Meyuns island, the Rose Garden Resort, is perched on a hillside overlooking the Philippine Sea and the bays of Koror. Stone pathways and stairs lead up the hilltop to 10 wood and cement cottages, divided into 24 mahogany decor rooms, each with

individual private balconies and a spectacular view of the sun and moon-rise. Two of these rooms will be handicap-accessible. The 3,200 square meter complex will also include a full-service restaurant and parking lots on two levels to accommodate 20 cars and 1 tour bus.

Yap

Micronesia is a wide spread nation of islands, covering thousands of kilometres between Japan and New Guinea. One of the main islands is Yap. Actually yap is built out of four islands very close together and connected with bridges. Names of the islands are Yap, Tamil-Gagil, Map and Rumung. Yap is not a volcanic island and is covered with forest. Yap has some very unique mangrove forests which you can discover by kayak. Old customs are still in use. Some islanders, for example, still walk around in traditional clothing. Yap is a very isolated island and some people still live as centuries ago. There is a tour every week to a traditional Yapese village. Here you can see the dances of the island and meet the locals. Most of the dances tell stories about the history of the island. For divers Yap is known for the manta's. as for non divers yap is known for the stone money which is still in use today. The bigger the stone (named Rai) the bigger the value. Age also adds value to the stone. Some stones can weigh up to 4500kg. Nowadays the Stone money is used symbolically.

Diving

Yap is a good dive and snorkel destination. The dive school we are using is called Yap Divers and is PADI 5star. Yap Divers has five speed-boats which will bring you to the divespots in no time. The seas around Yap are very clear with an average visibility of thirty meters. The coral gardens have a great variety of species. Yap is especially known for its manta rays. The mantas are part of a group that 'live' around the island. Every morning they are visiting the cleaning stations where they get rid of parasites by shrimps and small fishes. Besides the mantas there is also a lot more to see. There can be found five species of clown fishes. The average temperature of the water is 28 degrees.

Manta Ray Bay

The place you will stay in Yap is the Manta Ray Bay Hotel. The hotel has 23 rooms which are nicely decorated and contain air-conditioning. Sat TV, video, minibar and private bathroom. The hotel has a restaurant called the Manta Ray Bistro where a variety of international dinners is served. For example American, Japanese, Indonesian, Thai, Mexican and continental dinners are served. In the evening you can take a drink at the Nautical Weaver Bar, which is the bar of the hotel. Yap Divers is located next to the hotel. Manta Ray Bay is often referred to as "The Best Little Dive Hotel in the Pacific".

ESSAC BBQ goes to plan, weather perfect

For the first time ever an ESSAC BBQ went according to plan. Or did it?

At exactly 4pm on Saturday, after days of steady preparation, it was discovered that the BBQ grill had gone missing from the Tennis Club. "Don't panic!" Zoran said. So I panicked.

What were we going to do with all this meat and fish that Wil was busy preparing? What were we to tell all the ESSAC members and families who were already on their way? Luckily help was at hand in the form of Jos, the Sodexo Restaurant Manager, who just happened to be in Escape at the time and manfully came to the rescue.

Zoran, Jos and I towed the Sodexo gas grill from the restaurant and the evening was saved. So after a perfect day of warm sunny weather, food and people arrived and the jollity began.

DJ Vladi added to the atmosphere with the usual diverse range of exciting music and a few brave people let their hair down on the dance floor (fools, if only they could see themselves).

And we had a raffle, thanks to the efforts of younger members, Andrew, Helen and Pierre.

Some club members accused the organiser of fixing the result, just because he won the top prize!!

But all ended well, especially for Andrew, Helen & Pierre who each received a chocolate letter weeks before Sinterklaas's arrival.



Great to see such happy faces and especially nice to see Maria after her recent hospital visit.

A presentation was made to long standing ESSAC members Kevin & Stephanie Bennett.

Thanks to all who contributed to the festivity and special warm wishes to Kevin & Stephanie, please don't forget us.

Brian Hedley

Göran's 500th Dive Celebration in the Zeeland Long Weekend!



Congratulations to Göran on completing his 500th dive.

A feat achieved during the clubs annual diving trip to Zeeland.

Good Bye & Good Luck to Stephanie and Kevin



It is sad to say that yet again we are losing two club members. Kevin was at one time the ESSAC diving officer and Stephanie the diving training officer. They have enjoyed all aspects of snorkel and dive training and were members that have been part of the swimming, snorkeling and diving club for a long time. We are sorry to see them move back to the UK but wish them all the best.

Report from Guatemala

Editorial note:

When we assumed editorial control of this club Newsletter, we the editors, felt that it was important that the newsletters would focus on items related to the core activities of the club. i.e. Swimming, Snorkelling & Diving. The following article, although not related club activities does however justify us making an exception to our rule, not simply because it was written by a club member but because it concerns a very good cause.

Being retired now gives me more time to devote to other interests , principle among these is the Guatemala Children's programme which my wife Maria and I have been heavily involved in for the past three years.

In 2006 we set up a workshop as part of a vocational training centre for street kids in Guatemala City, most of the parents of these kids exist by scavenging on the city garbage dump and live in extreme poverty. In 2007 we set up an outreach programme to "advertise" the skills which these kids were learning and to put them in touch with prospective employers. Five got job offers out of this.

This year we have started another workshop in another part of the city which is now up and running. We are currently running two classes per day , one



I just came back from there recently and would like to tell about a trip which a Guatemalan colleague and I made to a couple of remote villages in the east of the country on the Caribbean coast . Our destination was the village of Nacimiento which has a population of about one hundred, no electrical power or running water and is reached after a drive of about one and a half hours from the town of Rio Dulce via a track which requires a 4 wheel drive vehicle.

The village had been given plastic piping to bring water by gravity flow from a river 2.5 km away and higher up the mountain , the problem was that after they had laid most of the piping in there was no water coming out the other end . So we took a few tools, some pipe fittings and set off from the city early in the morning as it is a five hour drive to Rio Dulce before even starting the climb to the villages.

There were two of us in the truck and we got to the first village (Los Flores) mid afternoon , While we were there a 7 year old boy fell out of a tree where he was picking guave fruit and had multiple fractures in his arm -- bone sticking out of his wrist , and shoulder at a funny angle . We had to do an emergency evacuation as they had no way of getting him out fast and no facilities in the village so we took him down to Rio Dulce but couldn't get any medical help for him there.



in the morning and one in the afternoon with 10 pupils in each class The objective is to have these boys ready for employment as trainees / improvers in local workshops within one to two years, this will have a life changing impact on the students who will then be able to earn a wage and contribute to the support of their families instead of the current situation where many drift into a life of drugs , gangs and crime

Report from Guatemala Continued

Eventually we got the R.D. Volunteer Fire Brigade who said they would take him by ambulance to a hospital in Puerto Barrios (1.5 hours away) but they had no diesel for the ambulance so we bought some fuel for them , gave the mother some money



to go and stay with the boy and they went off.

We then set off back to Nacimiento (the village where we were going to fix the water supply) in the dark and a tropical storm started as we were travelling , we ended up with the truck stuck in the mud and the 4 wheel drive did,nt work so we abandoned the truck and walked to the village in the rainstorm -- fortunately it was not too far . In the morning the village people helped us to push the truck out -- filling the holes in the "road" with stones and branches etc.

It took about two hours to get free so we then had a

look at the water pipeline and it was soon obvious that there were several airlocks which were preventing the water from flowing. We explained to them how to fix this and had to leave as we were concerned about getting stuck again and wanted to be back on a solid road before dark

We heard a few days later that they now have fresh water flowing to the village for the first time ever and that the little boy had been successfully operated on and would soon be home again. So it was an eventful weekend but a very satisfying one

The one benefit which some of these villagers get from 21st century technology is the cell phone and this is their only means of communicating with the outside world for emergencies etc, the problem is that to recharge the phones they need to walk to the next village which has electric power , leave it to be recharged and come back to pick it up again

The one way journey is about 45 minutes and they are charged 25 Euro cents.

So (one of) next years projects for me is a small solar electric installation with a couple of solar panels , enough to recharge their phones and hopefully to power a couple of laptop computers (sponsors needed) in the school which would greatly enhance the job prospects of any of the kids who go to find a job in the city.

Con Mc Carthy

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