



NEWSLETTER October 2010

We started the last Newsletter with the lines 'the summer rolls on' Well where did it go? Here we are in darkest October again with little prospect of sunshine and a more than average chance of getting wet and then blown away as autumn flexes its muscles.

But all is not doom and gloom. There have been two trips recently one to the Farne Isles and the other to dear Angelsey, see below for brief reports on both.

The Christmas party is sure to be a great success in December and with tickets already reserved for all members you are assured of a fantastic night at the branch Christmas Hog Roast. Before that there is the Annual General Meeting of the branch at the beginning of December where the formal and informal activities of the branch over the past year are reported on. So the nights are dark and the electric bill is going up but there is still something to look forward to!

Don't forget for up to date information on what is taking place within the branch visit

www.stalybridgescubadiving.co.uk or www.chaumontdiveclub.co.uk

Congratulations!

To Dave and Krystina who are now Mr & Mrs Redeyoff fantastic news!

And also to Jane Colley who recently completed her Ocean Diver course, albeit in warm water but it still counts. Now the not so warm waters of Capernwray beckon.

Trip Reports

The Farne Islands

If you have never visited the Farne Islands before you have missed a treat, if you have dived the Farnes before but have not visited for a while, well, it is still as good as it always was. For those not fortunate enough a little geography lesson. Get a road atlas and find Newcastle upon Tyne then go up the page until you find Berwick upon Tweed. Put your finger on the page roughly between the two where the blue and green bits meet and your finger will more or less be covering the Farnes.

The diving is varied and most tastes can be catered for. If rust is your cup of tea no problem. Wild life small and large no problem. *Really wild* wildlife, well, it turned out to be a problem.

On Sunday morning after travelling out to the Longstones rock and finding the waves to be a little uncomfortable for a 2hour wait as we dived we decided to have a dip with the seals in an area called the Bradda. This site starts in really shallow water and then drops off quickly to 30-40 mtrs. With the boats safely anchored the buddy pairs kitted up, did checks and disappeared off the side into the 8 mtr vis. Top side it's always interesting wondering 'who is watching who' as the seals move into to check out what's going on and then quickly vanish as you turn to look at them. After 40minutes a couple of DSMB's appeared a short distance from the boats. As the designated 'pick up' boat started its engine a diver was on the surface giving the distress signal and looking underwater. As the boat approached it was given the OK signal and as 2 other divers were now on the surface and caught in the strong currents it went to collect these. No sooner were the divers in the boat the distress signal was given again. This time the boat collected the diver and with Jenny safely in the boat the tale came out about her dive with the *really wild* wildlife.

On reaching the bottom and exploring some wreckage with the seals zooming around Jenny and her buddy were approached by a small inquisitive seal who then followed them around the dive getting more and more brave to the point that the usual gentle tap on the nose had no effect. After a while and getting fed up with the seal who was by now biting legs, arms and bits of equipment they decided to call it a day and head for the sunshine. But the seal had other ideas with its new found playmates. Trying to deploy the DSMB from the increasing depth the seal would try to bite the sausage and reel. A few telling blows from a well aimed torch put it off long enough to send the buoy up. But there was to be no respite on the way to the surface as the seal ascended with them and then started to bite at Jenny's fins, even though she was kicking away at it. Not content with this the seal then started to pull her beneath the surface which is where the distress signals started to be given. At the end of the day Jenny was safe and no damage was done.

After recounting the above tale the other dives seem a little tame but still deserve a mention. We had a scenic dive in an area known as the Hurkers which was a 'this is the only place we can get in option' along with most of the day boats that were out and about. The echo sounder on the boat didn't give much hope looking at the trace on its screen but as it turned out we had quite a good dive. With good vis and the odd seal zooming around, the

rocky bottom hid some little secrets that needed a little torch light to reveal their residents, one sharp eyed pair saw through the camouflage of a medium sized octopus that soon inked and jetted away. A visit to the Farnes wouldn't be complete without a drift which took place close to the wreck site of the paddle steamer the Forfarshire of Grace Darling fame in a channel called Piper Gut. And to finish off before the rain came down in torrents on the Monday morning we had some rust on the dry suits to prove we had given the wreck of the St Andre a little company for a while.

Angelsey

The sun was out, the sky was the sort of blue that automatically makes you feel good and with the wind from the north which given our location on the west side of Holy Islands means flat seas what more could we have wished for? Well for a start perhaps the colour of the sea could have resembled the sky instead of something Heinz would have labelled as 'Pea Soup' But hey ho this is Angelsey which tends to write its own rules.

As British divers poor vis is some thing that we put up with, after all, what are the other options for a weekend diving from the branch boats? But it can have its plus side. With a reasonable torch the divers' vision is focused onto what is in the beam which is usually small and often not seen in the rush to get around the site. It really is amazing what goes on on down there. From the hardy Barnacles wafting their 'arms' around trying to catch a tasty morsel to a delicate white anemone no larger than a 20p coin. Look into a crack and there are velvet swimming crabs tightly wedged in, a little further along are the larger edible crabs motionless with their powerful claws folded in front of their shells. Look closely into a garden of purple seed weed and there is what looks like a purple slug carefully balancing on the end of a frond which is being moved to and forth in the gentle swell – wonderful stuff!

The vis was probably at its worst on the wreck of the Editor where it was grim. 4 mtrs below the surface and the torch had to go on to stop getting separated. Once on the bottom the scattered remains added interest to an otherwise grey and dark dive which did little to keep the mind from wandering to the image of the huge seal that approached the boats on the surface totally unfazed by our presence it looked at us and then kept disappearing beneath the surface just where the wreck lies. With Jenny's experience in the Farnes fresh in our minds there was no arguments when the 'up' signal was given after 30 minutes.

After the 'Editor' experience it was up to 'Carreg Coch' to save the honour of Angelsey. This rock (Carreg Coch translates into Red Rock) which rises from the bottom at about 22 mtrs to just 3 mtrs below the surface is the end of a submerged reef that extends out from the town off Rhosnieger. Providing an immovable object to the tidal currents it is a high energy site and as such is only divisible on slack water with neap tides being the best, we however, were on spring tides and some of the biggest of the year. So as the saying goes 'game on'

On submerging there was still a little current running which was fine as it moved away any disturbed silt that had gathered on the kelp. Once below the kelp line the water cleared to give a credible 3 mtrs vis. As you may expect with the currents carrying the food the site is dominated by the filter feeders displaying their stunning colours. Along side the anemones perched

in the current are the Deadmens fingers giving off their eerie white glow in the green water, a close look at a number of these and a few small brittle stars were seen to be hiding. Having dived this site before I remember seeing large numbers of Dogfish but not today, not even a tiddler. Rounding a corner the force of the tide which had now turned became apparent – to fin against it was impossible so taking shelter on the down tide side of the rock we began to slowly meander back to the kelp line to deploy the DSMB which shot off at a diagonal angle...oops! With over 20mtrs of line out in 7 mtrs of water we left the shelter of the rock and carried out the rest of the ascent just 'going with the flow'

Back at base the shore party, or beach crew as they were now, managed to prise themselves from the comfort of their beach chairs and avoiding the sandcastles, thermal food boxes.....containing bottles of wine!! and beach games came down to the waters edge to lend a hand with the boats.

With the sun still high in the blue sky, the smell of sun screen on the air, kids thrashing around in the water and another group just lighting their BBQ, is this the end of September? As we said Angelsey makes its own rules.

Social Events

2010 Christmas Party
18th December

CHAUMONT
BSAC 1149

Christmas
2010

December 18th
GREENFIELD TENNIS CLUB

7pm start

HOG ROAST • LIVE BAND • DJ
All Welcome

Under 5's - Free, 5-15's - only £5, Adults - £20

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Since the last newsletter there have been a few changes to the Hog Roast, all we hasten to add, are for the better. First the date has been changed to allow more flexibility in the way we run the event. Second, because of this fact the good news is that children are also welcome turning the night into a Christmas family event only a week away from the big day itself. Third, we now have not only the services of a DJ but we have now recruited 'The Crabbs' a fabulous 4 piece live band and their take on some of the best cover versions of recent years. Along side all this don't forget the star of the show the Hog itself. A whole free range Hog that is slow spit roasted for up to 6 hours before being expertly carved and plated before your eyes. Served with mouth watering 'crackling' a selection of salads, roast potatoes, seasonal stuffing, bread rolls and condiments. It is a seasonal feast in its own right!

If you are not a meat eater or Hog is not to your taste a Salmon or totally meat free option is available (please call and let us know if you would like these options)

This event is open to all members and non-members alike and as there are limited tickets to this fabulous night our advice is to get your tickets.....quick. **Once the allocation of tickets are sold there are no more so don't be disappointed.**

As members of Chaumont we have reserved for you four tickets each which are enclosed with this Newsletter. All we ask is that you purchase the tickets that you require and return any that are excess to your requirements so these can be re-sold. The cost of the tickets are; under 5 years free, 5-15 years £5, 16 years upwards £20....exceptional value for a great night!

You can pay for your tickets on the Monday evening branch night by seeing Gary Clayton or send your cheque (payable to 'Chaumont BSAC 1149') to his home address, 8 Whitehead Close, Greenfield, Oldham, OL3 7PP. With a covering note with your name and number of adults/children attending. Should you need more tickets then give him a call on 01457 871709. The cut off date for ticket sales to allow our caterers to find a volunteer Hog is Monday 6th December.

And Finally

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the branch takes place on Monday 6th December at the Wharf Tavern, Caroline Street, Stalybridge. Shortly you will be receiving notice of the meeting along with a nominations slip for you to put yourself forward to help run the branch over the next 12 months. Also included will be a reservation slip to reserve your free supper. Historically the free supper slip has had more returns than the nominations slips. Wonder if we can reverse that trend this year? Hate to be serious but the branch won't run itself and it needs new ideas to move forward and carry on providing training and diving for its members....that's you by the way.

The next Newsletter will be out early in December following the AGM with some highlights of the year to jog memories and a seasonal recipe for you to get creative in the kitchen with.

As usual, if your contact details are changing and you wish to be kept in touch please contact Marie Arrowsmith 0161 368 2467/07768393750