

March 2006



## What's in This Issue?

- Editor's Comments
- Membership Renewals
- Trips/Activities Planned
- Easter - The Lizard

## Editor's comments

Well, here we are again preparing for the first major club trip of the year, Easter. Once again our thanks to Pete Shelton for organising this mammoth task and I wish everyone safe and happy diving!

If you have any articles for the Herald such a trips, reports, etc please forward them to be as soon as possible.

Contact me on: [angela.ward@awardsforall.org.uk](mailto:angela.ward@awardsforall.org.uk)

## Membership Renewals

Just a reminder that the following memberships are due for renewal from 1 March:

Andrew Meyhew  
David Overall  
Gavin Campbell  
John Macken  
Mark Shelton

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*We're on the Web!*

*See us at:*

[www.scubanaut.co.uk](http://www.scubanaut.co.uk)

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## Trips/Activities Planned

### **Swanage**

25 - 26 March

A diving weekend is being put together for the weekend 25/26 March.

The boat is a hard boat called Mary Jo and can take up to 10 divers and has a lift to get back into the boat. What more can a diver want after a dip in the sea? There are a few places left.

Cost is £35 per day, 4 dives over the weekend, plus accommodation roughly £20 per night. Deposit is £25.

The dives are aimed at ocean / sports divers, the Kyarra can wait for another time. But wrecks, drift scenic dives are all on offer and for an excellent shallow dive - a shore dive under Swanage pier cannot be bettered. Frances/Paula are taking names on Wednesdays.

### **Easter - The Lizard**

15 - 22 April

See Pete Shelton for further information.

### **Farne Islands**

27 - 29 May

See Chris Chew for further information

### **Scapa**

7 - 14 July

See Jeff Bell for further information



## Easter - The Lizard

**Raglan Reef** - Most popular of the reef dives on the Manacles. A pinnacle dive from 6-42 mtrs, with abundance of life and colour. Most spectacular are the dead men's fingers and the jewel anemones, but there are plenty of other varieties of fish and flora.

**Mohegan** - The Mohegan is the best-known and most dived wreck on the Manacles. Her loss was a major tragedy. Built in 1897 and launched as the "Cleopatra" 6,500 tons in weight. It takes at least 4 dives just to cover the wreck. She sailed from Tilbury on 13 Oct 1898 as the Mohegan. Off Plymouth the Coastguard sighted her 10 miles offshore, but from there her course and the cause of her loss remains a mystery as every deck officer went down with her so the truth died with the ship. She was seen brilliantly lit coming into Falmouth Bay and the local coxswain of the Coverack Lifeboat who spotted her knew instinctually that she was going to hit the Manacles as no vessel of that size should be so close inshore so called his crew and their boat was ready to launch before the Mohegan struck. This saved many lives. She lost her rudder on Vase Reef. Her engines were stopped but, presumably incapable of being steered, she crashed into the seaward face of the Voices. The loss of 106 lives. The wreck is an unforgettable dive, with the bow in some 15 mtrs and the remainder in 29 mtrs. Lots of fan corals, dead men's fingers, jewel anemones and a vast array of fish life.

**Spyridian Vagliano** - A Greek owned steamship that sank on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1890 when it hit The Manacles. Not a lot remaining but a nice easy dive, at a depth of 18-25 mtrs.

**Volnay** - Many shipwrecks have brought benefit to the locals around the Manacles, but the Volnay, 6,500 tons, outshone them all. Homeward from Canada with luxury goods and ammunition she detonated a contact mine on 14 Dec 1917 off the Manacles, and was brought into Porthallow bay and anchored a ¼ of a mile off Porthkerris beach, where she sank in 21 mtrs. A non-tidal, nice and easy wreck to dive.



## Easter - The Lizard Cont'd

**Carmarthen** - Steamship of 3,000 tons launched in 1916 under the name Arlington, this armed steamer was in convoy from Genoa to Tees in ballast, having called at Falmouth she was torpedoed by a German submarine, UC-50, off the Lizard on 26 July 1917. Despite her extensive flooding she managed to reach the shallows off Kennack sands before she sank in 20 mtrs.

**N G Peterson** - Danish steamship 1,282 tons, built in 1898. She was carrying iron ore from Bilbao to Newport, when she collided with the Norwegian SS Siri 13 March 1918 in Falmouth Bay. Her remains, which were flattened lie in 19 mtrs and provides the home for 5-16 resident congers.

**Porthkerris** has one of the best shore dives in Britain a must for both the experienced and novice divers. The cove nestles under high cliffs, and is protected from all but east winds. So in the summer, when the prevailing winds are occasionally very strong from the south-west, Porthkerris is generally flat calm. The beach drops away quickly towards a fringing reef at the northern end of the cove, that breaks surface no more than a 100 mtrs offshore, even at high water. Behind these visible rocks, a submerged reef arcs out for a further 200 mtrs or so, accessing depths of 18-20 mtrs, depending on the state of the tide. So you can explore everything from shallow inshore reefs to deeper waters all within a 300 mtr swim. An ideal area for newly qualified divers. As you follow the reef the depth increases gradually from 6 mtrs to 12-15 mtrs depending on the tide. Getting below the kelp line reveals garlands of jewel anemones, tunicates, sea cucumbers and sponges. Don't ignore the sea bed as this is home to all sorts of bottom dwelling fish, crustaceans, tube worms, anemones, sea urchins and, in the spring and summer months, hordes of juvenile cuttlefish.



## Easter - The Lizard Cont'd

The reef is bisected by a number of cuts and gullies crying out to be explored although your first dive is best spent familiarising yourself with the topography and routes for your return. Continue seaward until the big reef wall terminates on your right and you encounter some large individual rocks, which are the beginning of the reef running further out into deeper water. Here, again depending on the tide, you can either continue seaward on the low reef to deeper water and return the same way, or continue right along the seaward face of the reef. Beware of the currents during spring tides.

There is a section of wall, slightly undercut in places that reaches 4-5 mtrs in height before the reef forms a series of steps and ledges towards the surface. Because this face is exposed to tidal current it is covered with filter-feeding deadmans fingers, jewel anemones and sponges, making it quite colourful especially in a torchlight beam.

Maximum depth here approaches 18-19 mtrs at high water. This part of the reef is home to several varieties of fish: marauding Pollack, the occasional bass, ballan and corkwing wrasse, cheeky cuckoo wrasse that peer right into your mask, and more unusual species such as red gurnard and Jon Dory.

Also do not be too surprised if you meet something bigger than yourself out in the bay during the summer. More often than not basking sharks cruise within a 100 mtrs of the beach and a pod of dolphins make regular visits so you can never tell what might turn up along with occasional seals looking for a "Playmate".