

Lyme – Long weekend September 2008.

I missed the Friday diving, due to a meeting at work. This is a great shame as I really enjoy the Friday and Monday dives on the long weekend. Again we were very lucky with the weather.

The Family, Helen (wife) and Joanna (Jo 11) came down with me. We put the awning up and Phil joined us in the Awning's bedroom extension. Much to the amusement of others. We were hoping Jo would complete her open water that weekend. But the weather and visibility were looking to be against us.

It was my turn to act as money man for the weekend on Miss Patty. To which fortunately everyone was very co-operative. Helen joined Jo us on the boat that Saturday. Helen enjoyed experience being with the club on the boat, even though she did get a little seasick . She opted to take the awning down on Sunday so I did not have to do it Monday.

Jo managed two of her open water dives. There is nothing to her and she found it cold. This combined with the poor visibility presented Mark with a challenge. On their first dive Mark told her that they were going to be like little piggy's rooting around at the bottom. Phil, who was assisting Mark, concluded he had lost it. While Jo was cold when she got out she had a great time and really enjoyed her dive. The scope of choice for her second dive was more limited and it was more a case of pragmatism than pleasure. As I mentioned there is nothing to Jo and she finds the kit very heavy. So rather than a 10 litre tank they strapped a Pony to her back. Well, she only has little lungs.

Fortunately for me the visibility below 18 was pretty good. Phil and I dived on Saturday morning. A great dives at some 32 minutes at 24 meter with an average of 18 meters in the morning. As usual we had put into West Bay for a lunch break and loo stop. In the afternoon I dived with Marcus and we got over 1 hour 06, at 12 meters on West Bay high ground being Steve C's choice It was a bit murky but very pleasant chill dive at comfortably over an hour.

Sunday brought the Gibel Hamam at 31 meters. Ross, Marcus and I did 30 minuets at a max of 30 meters and an average of 21. It was a bit dark with a lot of net. Marcus cut a fellow diver's (Tony) legs free at one stage. Very advanced diving. The afternoon at the Heroine was incredibly full of fish but the current made it impossible to stay long, so we drifted off and while visibility was good it was a shame we could not have stayed on the wreck

But I particular enjoyed the Monday..... While not everything went according to plan it was a lot of fun. There were only 5 of us Mark, Sue, Chris, Derek and I. Only Mark had boat handling experience so we all had a lesson. It was lovely calm sunny day and we took it in turn to dive the boat and Mark taught us how to approach and pick up. When with the family at Salcombe one firm wanted some £250 for two hours playing with a rib. Here I was and it was part of the club dive day!

Mark, Chris and Derek went in together and I got to play with the boat. During which time I was a little over zealous during the second dive.

The first dive was the St Dunstan 29-30 meter bucket-dredger hit a mine and sank in 1917 in Lyme bay. Mark shotted the wreck and went down with line the others. There was quite a current running. He took a yellow small buoy / ball with him. Once the shot was firmly secured he released the ball as a signal that we would tie the boat off on the shot. Naturally we recovered the ball first. This meant that when they came back up the shot line we were there waiting. Mark came back first and helped us kit up and we were in before Chris and Derek were on board. Visibility was excellent and the fish prolific. I freed up the shot and attached the lift bag Mark had given me to take down. Opening the attached cylinder filled the bag and the shot was away, piece of cake. I was so engrossed in this and the aquatic life I had not appreciated the difficulty my buddy had experience getting down. She had now discovered her weight belt was still on the rib. We decided to return to the boat. Had we thought about it we should have put some rocks in her pocket to make the ascent easier. Maybe next time. We got safely back on board, but had missed the slack tide and so did not go back down.

The real fun came in the afternoon.

This would be a drift dive on James Bond reef so called due to it's sandy bottom on the edge of the reef. Mark went in scalloping and Chris and Derek buddied. Sue and I watched out for the SMBs. The bubbles seemed to go one way and then another. But hunting for them meant I had to play with the boat. No choice! Unfortunate for Sue.

On one occasion, I forgot to check that she was firmly holding on before moving off. And the throttle was a little more responsive than I anticipated. Sue went over backwards. Fortunately not overboard! And fortunately did no lasting damage. If I had not felt so bad about it, I guess it would have been quite funny. We managed to pick them all up safely, and it was fun doing so and watching the SMB so keep track of them.

Sue and I had a terrific gentle drift dive. She spotted a John Dory with all it tendrils flapping away. Most delightful. After about 40 mins it was getting a little murky and so we came up. Sue, bless her, had sped the last 10-15 minuets swimming 5 meters above me extending my dive time as I had nitrox left from the morning's short dive and she was on air. She can't have been able to see much at all, I should have noticed sooner.

Jo finished her open water with Mark at Vobster and looks forward to coming on further trips with me. So if you have a really really small size 8-10 dry suit to fit someone about 5 feet tall.....