

Paul Gee's and Steve Cain's trip To The Red Sea

Steve picked me up at about 10am from Junction 16 of the M4 on Saturday the 18th of July for our trip to Gatwick Airport. We were going to do the Northern Wrecks and reefs tour of the Northern Red Sea.

When we arrived at a rather quiet Gatwick we met the rest of the divers who would be on the liveaboard with us for the week .The Trip was organised by the Oxford Dive Centre through Tony Backhurst Scuba.

After a rather uneventful flight we arrived at Sharm el Sheik airport where the quiet Gatwick was replaced by disorganised chaos!

We queued for our visas from the Tony Backhurst rep which was quite tame to what was experienced next. We were hit with security that thought we had the black plague. Everybody had surgical gloves and facemasks on and insisting we fill in a medical card saying we weren't going to infect the whole of Egypt.

After that bit of fun we then proceeded through the only one passport control that was open, bearing in mind that two planes had just landed.

We the finally got onto our coach after nearly two hours for one more surprise. When we got to the marina where our boat was moored we had to get off the coach again and put our hand luggage through another X-ray machine

We finally got to our boat the Typhoon to be met by our guides for the week, Ulli and Wolfgang. After a quick safety briefing we assembled our dive kit, had a bite to eat and crashed out about 3.30 am.

We had a leisurely breakfast the next day and completed a check dive at about 9.30 at the Alternatives dive site.

We then moved straight on to the wreck of the Chrisoula K and finished the day with a night dive on Sh'ab Abu Nuhas Reef.

The rest of the week was made up with 3 day dives and one night dive per day except the last day which was completed with 3 day dives.

The dives on the wrecks were very good and Steve managed to get some good photos, the highlight being the three dives on the world famous Thistlegorm. The night dive was fantastic and was finished off with a visit by the resident turtle as we started to ascend the shot line.

Towards the end of the week most of the diving was spent diving on reefs which were spectacular with the fish life and the beautiful colours of the soft and hard corals.

My highlight on the reefs was seeing two grey reef sharks and two eagle rays.

The diving was very enjoyable and well organised. The entries to the sites were from the boat, static and moving and by rib

The guides were very knowledgeable and the crew were very helpful.

The atmosphere was very relaxed on the boat especially towards the end of the week. Several men were sporting black nail varnish on their toes, penalty for falling a sleep on deck.

Also the food was very nice with a good variation of food during the week

This was our itinerary for the week

Day 1

The boat moved off early morning and the check dive was made. The boat then moved to Abu Nuhas and dive on the Chrisoula K was followed by a night dive at Abu Nuhas reef.

Day 2

Dives were done on the Carnatic & Giannis D before doing a day and night dive on the Barge.

Day 3

We dived Bluff Point before crossing to the Kingston. The day finished with an afternoon dive and night dive on the Thistlegorm.

Day 4

Early start to do a last dive on the Thistlegorm before diving Shark & Yolanda and Jackfish Alley refs with a night dive back at the Alternatives'

Day 5

A dive was done again at Shark & Yolanda, followed by Ras Ghazany with a third dive on Jackson reef. The day was completed with a night dive in the lagoon.

Day 6

The final day's diving was done at Thomas, Gordon and Woodhouse Reefs.