

Seahorse Dive Club - St Abbs & Farne Islands Trip Sept 2009



Day 1

On Saturday the 19th September, 14 of us congregated at Mark's place ready to depart on the long drive up to St Abbs, dropping off Mark & Laura at Newcastle on the way so that Laura could go and jog in some famous fun run that was going on. Mark was there to give her morale support and to shout 'You can do it' as she neared the finish (Congratulations on completing the race by the way Laura).

Anyway as most of us gathered at Marks by 08.30 (meet up time was 9.00), we all waited in anticipation for Phil 'The Master Organizer' Green to turn up and surprise us with who was travelling with who. And bang on the dot, Phil rolls up at 9, very punctual! After some loading of kit and the normal p#ss taking, we all got into the relevant vehicles and set off on our adventure to Sweaty Sock land.

After a long and roadwork congested journey we all roughly arrived not long after each other in the lovely, picturesque seaside village of St Abbs. We all got booked into our respective B&B accommodation. I'll not mention about Mike & Ross having a lovers tiff over the bed situation. Oh go on then I will. It turns out Ross had been given the nod that the best room in the B&B they were in was en-suite that also had a double bed in it, so once arriving Ross quickly scampers up to the said room, bags himself a nice double bed all to himself, leaving poor old Mike with what can only be described as a Childs bed I suppose! Now this upset Mike somewhat and a lovers tiff ensued, and well all I can say is that Mike had the p#ss taken out of him by the rest of the group (Derek more than most!).



Mike, was this the type of bed you had in mind.....

So now that everyone was all sorted and showered we all went to Coldingham the next village down from St Abbs, to The Anchor Inn for a few beers and some grub. Reason for this being is that there was no pub in St Abbs; well there wasn't a lot of anything really! On arriving at the Anchor we were greeted by an unusual site (though it maybe the norm for around there), the local Rugby team on a charity bike ride/pub crawl dressed up as women. There were some amongst us though that did take a fancy to a few as they thought they were the local talent! After a pleasant meal and a lot of laughter, mostly at Mike's expense over the bed issue, a few returned to their B&B's while some of us decided to go for a beer at the local campsite bar in Coldingham.....Nothing else to add about that bar.....Dire!!!

Day 2

The 1st days diving saw us have a nice lie-in (well that's what Sunday morning's are for) before a rather late meet up at half 11 down at the Harbour, to meet our skipper (Billy) and get the kit on the boat. After loading our kit on the very spacious WaveDancer II, with double divers lift (luxury), we headed out to our 1st dive site called 'Black Carrs', the known haunt of the famous Wolf fish. Buddy pairs all sorted we all splashed in. Myself, Ossie and Paul Cole were all fortunate enough to see 2 Wolf fish. I must admit they are ugly creatures but strangely still have a look of beauty about them. Mike was also lucky enough to see one but scared it off before informing his buddy (Ross) so he could have a look. I think it was Mike's way of getting revenge for the bed thing.



1st dive done and with everybody happy it was back to the harbour to chillout and have a spot of lunch. 2nd dive of the day was at Tyes Rock which started off with a swim through a long tunnel/cave. This again was another lovely dive with plenty to see. All back on board we headed back to port. While everybody went off to their accommodation, Phil and Andrew (very kind of them) drove down to Newcastle to pick up Mark & Laura. The rest of us were booked in for a Chinese in Eyemouth that evening. At the Chinese much discussion went on at the table but one discussion that did get interest was Mike saying about how he can eat really really spicy food. Apparently he has only been beaten twice in his challenge to eat something so spicy hot that it melts a polar bears balls! There will hopefully be more on this subject later on in the trip. Everybody was stuffed after the meal so it was back for an early night.

Day 3

Today saw us have a slightly earlier start to the days diving. 1st dive today was on a site called 'West Hurker', a lovely scenic gully and high walls followed by a cave. Once back on the boat Sue needed to have a pee but unfortunately there was no toilet onboard. Billy luckily had a spare bucket so Sue in a lady like manner sat on the bucket and did her business while all us blokes turned the other way, well apart from Ross who happened to turn around and, well all I can say is he had a rather shocked look on his face. Next dive was a short dive on the most popular shore dive in St Abbs, 'Cathedral Rock'. Billy the skipper kindly let us drop in off the boat for this dive, which was so much better than having to walk some distance around the harbour to the entry point on the shore. Dive done it was back on the boat and back to port for a spot of lunch. The afternoons dive was on a site called the 'RingHolm', which were parts of a broken up wreck scattered about the seabed. Myself, Ossie, Mike & Ross happened to surface together only to the sight of Derek standing at the back of the boat with his sea snake in his hand having a p#ss (perhaps we should call you 'Wee Jock' but I suppose it was cold Derek!). This evening's meal was back in Coldingham at the

New Inn. After a few beers in the Anchor we all bimbled over the road to the New Inn for some food. After a nice meal we all retired to the bar for dare I say far too many beers, and some rather worrying picture taking of each of us wearing Ross' rather gay looking flat leather cap, correct name of 'Duck Billed' (I think Mark actually won that one with the Er, how shall I put it YMCA look!.....young man!). A few of the hardened drinkers remained drinking in the New Inn, something which they regretted the following morning.



Day 4

This was the earliest start yet and the wind had got up considerably during the night and had made the sea state a bit choppy. Which was a stark contrast to the previous 2 days diving as it had been flat calm. We left the port at 8 o'clock on the dot to go to the site of the 'Glanmire' wreck. Some were feeling a little weary from the previous night's alcohol consumption. This dive was a dark one with rather disappointing visibility but none the less a very good dive with such a large amount of growth on the wreck. The last dive in St Abbs saw us return to 'Black Carrs' to give people another opportunity to try and see a Wolf fish. Alas I only think Mike & Ross saw one this time, with Mike making sure his buddy actually got to see it this time. And once back on the boat Mike showed everyone his stunning close up photo of a Wolf fish.....which was actually taken from the poster that was in the harbour. But good one Mike you had a few of us dooped.....even Billy the skipper at one point. All in all a thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all in St Abbs. After getting packed up and showered it was off down the coast some 36 miles to Seahouses for the 2nd leg of the diving trip.....diving the Farne Islands. Arriving at the Lodge in Seahouses and everyone sorted on rooms, a few people went to the bar, while some went for the short stroll down to the harbour to see what our boat was going to be like for the next 3 days diving, whilst also stopping off in a few drinking establishments en-route.

Day 5

1st days diving out of Seahouses saw us having to be at the harbour for 09.30 to leave for 10. Well as always we were there in plenty of time. We were diving from the boat 'Glad Tidings VII', which again like the boat in St Abbs was very spacious and had a divers lift. Our 1st dive was on the 'Knivestone rock wrecks'. This dive was not only about seeing the wreck but what most divers come to the Farnes for to see the friendly seals, and none of us were disappointed. I'm not sure what it was about Ossie's fins but the seals just couldn't leave them alone, constantly trying to have a little tug on them throughout the dive. I think everyone on that dive had some kind of seal encounter. Fantastic, nature at its best!



The 2nd dive saw us do the other side of the Knivestone rock. This time the dive started with a swim through a narrow gully while constantly being checked out by the inquisitive seals. Some of us spent the majority of the dive there just watching the seals. After following a BIG chain out of the gully to the wreckage (some of us failed to find the chain – Chris & Chris!) a very nice dive was had by all I think....with yet more seals checking you out throughout the dive. After getting back to port, a few of us took all the cylinders to get filled, while a few went for a swift beer. Tonight we were eating at the Indian in Seahouses, where we would see Mike hopefully eat the hottest curry they could muster. I must mention about Mr Hancox wanting to order so many Peshwari Nan's!!! Our hats go off to you Mr Brien for eating what can only be described as a bowl of molten lava! God help the toilet in the morning.

Day 6

I must begin today's write up with a mention of me getting locked out of my room after finishing breakfast. My room mate, I'll mention no names...Chris Pope.... had gone back for a shower and had locked the door and pulled down the blind.....what was he up to do you think????? Was the Pope bashing the Bishop! Today saw us have ropes off from the harbour at 09.30. 1st dive was on a site named 'The Hopper'. This

turned out to be a very scenic dive with lovely walls and of course SEALS.....and they didn't disappoint us, yet again being their playful selves. After a nice chilled surface interval anchored in a sheltered part of one of the islands it was time to kit up ready for the 2nd dive, named 'The North Wamses'. This was a dive along a rock face going into a gently sloping, rocky bottom. The skipper told us to keep an eye out for Laura...Oops I mean Larry the Lobster which he said was a mighty big boy. A few of us did manage to find Larry and he did live up to his name, with claws the size of Mike's.....Hand! There was a little prank played on one particular diver (Big Bird, Banana Man.....you work out who it is!), whereby an 'L' plate was stuck onto his cylinder just before he jumped into the water (See picture below). Everybody found it highly amusing, even the unsuspecting victim. Another amusing bit that was caught on video was the PADI way of 'How not to send up an SMB'.....I'll let you all try and work out who it is (Click on the links below for the full movie & other movies/pictures from the trip).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLbArmNUq10>
<http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=MichaelBrien&view=videos>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mike-b/sets/72157622418073310/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mike-b/3957991837/in/set-72157622418073310/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mike-b/3958766416/in/set-72157622418073310/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mike-b/3958766710/in/set-72157622418073310/>



On the way back to port there was much joviality onboard about the said prank. Another good days diving was had by all. The evening's meal was in 'The Ship' down at the sea front in Seahouses. Once we were all sat at the table, Laura had a nice surprise for all us guys, a piece of ladies attire to wear all packaged in an envelope with a little verse for each of us. And here they are:-

- Phil – This is a pretty thing just for you but look at your buddy – he has one too!
Andrew – This is a fluffy one, elegant for you. You'll match your buddy as he has one too!
Paul – Wear this pretty thing if you dare, it's just for you and your curly hair!
Malcolm – A pretty one just for you, tie it tight and say Ooooh!
Mike – Wear this and I think you'll look hot or you can use it later to wipe your bot!
Ross – Embrace your feminine side, you have nothing to hide.
Chris P – One to help you look all girly. It might help your hair go curly!
Chris S – You must wear this – but don't despise. It matches the colour of your pretty eyes.
Steve – Try this one, it ain't too shady and you will be like a real lady!
Ossie – Put this on – don't be boring but I fear it won't help with the snoring!
Mark – It's your colour I think you'll agree. Now put it on and spank me!
Derek – A pretty wee bonnet for the chief stirrer. Maybe it will turn you into more of a purer!



If you look closely, in the right-hand picture above, you'll see a picture of Mark in the bath with his rubber ducky as the desktop background on Laura's phone.....How Cute!!!! And look at Ossie trying to be the Karate Kid...at his age.....wipe on, wipe off!



Do Phil & Andrew remind you of those two cleaning ladies.....Err who are they? Ah Yes that's it Kim & Aggy.....Polish my wood!

After a pleasant meal in the ship a few of us had a night cap and a few games of pool with the skipper and deckhand in the Lodge bar before retiring to our pits. Though I suspect Mr Green had consumed rather a lot of alcoholic liquor as upon passing him to go to my room, he said 'Goodnight Chris!', and there was me thinking all along my name was Steve! Must have been the bottle of Scotch Phil.....Hic!

Day 7

This was the final day of diving on the trip. 1st dive was on the wreck of the 'Somali', a WWII cargo ship and it was a fantastic dive with great vis, plenty to see but unfortunately none of us found any artifacts. Well done to Chris Smith for doing the dive after having second thoughts after not enjoying the rather dark and limited vis on the 'Glanmire' in St Abbs. And I think he certainly enjoyed this dive as the big smile on his face said it all after the dive. After a nice long surface interval, our final dive of the trip was on 'The Hopper', a dive which we did the previous day. The whole group agreed to do this dive again as the seal interaction was fantastic. And again this dive did not disappoint and the majority of the group enjoyed some great seal encounters. Diving over we headed back to port to unload and pack up the kit. A few of us were heading back to sunny Swindon straight away whilst the rest were staying the Friday night and I expect having a few beers.

All in all the trip was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all I think.....great diving, great company and a great social.

And I think everyone on the trip would agree that a big big thank you is in order for Phil 'The Master Organizer' Green for once again arranging another fantastic trip.....Thank you Phil.