



# Leaky Cuffs

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## Editors Letter

Yipppppeeee .....! it's the start of the diving season. It's still a bit chilly but I know some of you rufty tufty divers have braved the freezing cold waters at Stoney and Vobster over the winter months - well done you lot, whilst others have been lolling about in the tropics.

In this issue there is a reminder of dives opening shortly and the booking procedures, plus articles on Feurterventura 2004 and Vobster 2005 plus the mammoth golf-balling event which took place on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

As its coming up to our annual fundraising event, I have taken this opportunity to do a "special" version of "in the spotlight" featuring John Burnip (for those of you who don't know John plays the drums in Sunfly).

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue - the arm twisting has already started so beware.

Anyway now for some more pressing serious news from our Equipment Officer.....!

## Important Information: by Roland Crook

I have read an article in a German Boating Magazine by a Dr Lirpalooof regarding Four Stroke engines on Diving RIB's. I feel it is my duty as Equipment Officer to share this information with you. The article was quite alarming, in that it reported that Four Stroke engines are harmful to divers. Whilst these engines produce less vibrations, and less exhaust gasses, they have the effect of making divers more susceptible to Nitrogen Narcosis, and it has also been observed that some divers that have travelled to a dive site on a RIB powered by a Four Stroke engine have actually fallen asleep whilst diving! If these findings are correct, then Four Stroke engines will be banned from use on Diving RIB's. Consequently, it would mean that as a club we would have to replace both the Osprey and Humber engines at great expense.

The only good thing about this, is that due to European Bureaucracy, this will not become advisory until April 2006.

Your ever worried Equipment Officer



## Fuerteventura November 2004

### or How to extend the dive season and escape the start of winter for another week: by Mark Giddins

Since November 2001 Roland has organised a trip to Fuerteventura (or depending on who is asking him and why) 'The Canary Islands'. Those that have been to the Canaries will know that they are renowned for their usually consistent good weather and sunshine, relatively short flight time from the UK and being very welcoming to tourists. What WDC members who have been for a week's diving will know, is that it is a way to extend your diving season and get away just as the clocks go back, putting winter off for another week!

So early on a dark Wednesday morning in November at Gatwick, 10 divers gathered (old hands wondering what funnies with check in weights would happen this time!). The lucky party of Roly, Jackie, Chris B & Claire B, Dave & Claire White, John & Belinda, Sid and Mark boarded the flight without a hitch (well apart from the chairman forgetting the pen knife in his pocket!) a clear day, a routine flight in good weather all the way, possibly a few banter style 'Are we there yet's' a lunchtime landing and on leaving the terminal building the smiling faces of Lothar and Jimmy from Deep Blue Diving, who met us and drove us to Caleta Del Fuste, our hotel and to deliver our kit to the dive centre.

Diving in 'Fuerte' is different in that we don't put the kit together on shore, load the rib and kit out at the dive site. The method is kit up at the centre, walk down to the boat, put your fins on when you are on the boat and then have a short drive to the dive site. All the diving is on permanently shotted sites so the good news is that we dive in our buddy pairs, led by one of the partners or instructors from Deep Blue. Deep Blue also describes the water, clear with usually extremely good visibility and apart from two dives this year that was certainly the case. (One of those was the night dive so it doesn't count!) The other one, led by Swedish Jimmy and we had what he called bad viz, and then couldn't understand why we were all grinning saying that we felt at home, until he remembered our sense of humour from the previous year!

The group this year had a 50/50 split between first time and repeat Fuerte divers and we also had the largest number of digital cameras (4 or 5 I think) on the trip. With Cris 'Photoshop' Beswick and Sid 'they haven't made a memory card big enough for me' Bird amongst the group anything could happen - and as we came back with over 1500 pictures (500 odd from Sid) I can honestly say that the dive sites of Caleta have been digitally mapped in more detail than the surface of Mars by all those probes! But on the serious side it was well worth it, as this year we had some great marine life encounters. Manta Ray (a very rare visitor), Stingray, Torpedo and Electric Rays, Angel Sharks, Barracuda, Amber Jacks, Groupers, shoals of Parrot and Damsel Fish, Morays, Cuttlefish and Octopus and on the downside the ever present and destructive black Urchins. Roly still holds the records for Moray stroking, digging Angel Sharks out of the sand and his speciality Urchin killing (usually exacted after he has several of their spines in his hand!) The night dive is always memorable the highspot this year was a large Stingray resting under a ledge.

We also had the extremely strange and peculiarly British sight of two holidaymakers wearing Union Jack bandanas, using a bucket and spade to make sandcastles underwater during one dive! Cris and Sid were somewhat upstaged though when Jimmy, the guide, unzipped his wetsuit jacket to show off his Sweden football shirt!

Continued..

## Fuerteventura November 2004 - Continued..

After the last dive of the day you relax looking across the bay from the dive centre having a quality German beer, some chocolate and talking to Deep Blue's Roland, Lothar, Volker and their staff. The key to why some of us go back is the combination of good diving and weather but also a really friendly crew at the centre. At night it's out on the town for a meal, (which can always surprise - ask Roly about ordering pork and getting half a pig!) and if we're (un)lucky some Karaoke - who can forget Dave White wearing a Tina Turner wig giving us his Nutbush City Limits, or his now legendary Bad Moon Rising and Sweet Home Alabama (without wigs but swinging his pants) and Chris has a penchant for dramatic performances with the microphone! John B's Year 2000 was excellent and Claire W surprised us with a Horse with No Name - all of this is accompanied by WDC's renowned banter so there's never a dull moment! The unanswered question for me from this holiday was how does Sid's mobile receive texts when it's locked in a metal safe - but it does!

The real point is that for those of you that haven't been and are wondering what it is like, Roly and I have videos of the diving, some of the marine life photos are on Smartgroups or some of us have CD's of all the photos - the only downside 7 days seems too short!



## Dives opening shortly: by Jackie Stanley

The following dives will be opened on the dates specified:

<u>Dive and date dive taking place</u>	<u>Date dive to be opened</u>
Plymouth May Bank Holiday	- 18 <sup>th</sup> March (already opened)
Littlehampton 14 & 15 May	- 18 March (already opened)
North Cornwall 17-19 June	- 22 April
Weymouth Hard boat 15-17 July	- 22 April
2 & 3 July (location TBA)	- 10 June
30 & 31 July Dive (location TBA)	- 10 June
September Cornwall week	- 24 June
Plymouth August Bank Holiday weekend	- 1 July
10 & 11 September (location TBA)	- 5 August

When a dive opens it will be announced at the Friday club meeting, 2 weeks before it opens.

Your place on the dive will only be secured when a deposit has been paid;

£15.00 for a RIB dive

£30.00 for a Hard Boat dive

A reserve list for each dive will be kept, a deposit will not be required for this.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Jackie.



## In the Spotlight "Special" with John Burnip

Diver Grade:	Advanced Diver and Open Water Instructor	
Where were you born?	Chester-le-Street, County Durham.	
What was your favourite subject at school?	Commerce & economics (sounds brainy)	
What did you want to be when you grew up?	A professional drummer.	
What has been your biggest Achievement in life?	Marrying Stephanie.	
How did you end up living In Oxfordshire?	I came down to London in 1979. Who were based in Oxford.	
What was it like being in A famous band?	There were some fabulous moments and some horrendous moments but its not as glamorous as people think, but we had some fantastic times.	
What is your favourite Memory of this time.	Going on a UK tour with Queen for 6 weeks which happened to be the same time that Bohemian Rapsody was no. 1.	
If you had a chance, would You do it again.	Yes.	
So who is your favourite Muscian.	Eric Clapton.	
How long have you been Diving.	Since 1989. I was pissed one night and Steph persuaded me whilst under the influence and she said it would be a good idea.	
Tell us what your favourite Piece of kit is.	My 15 year old Buddy Commando BC which I still use. It used to be bright orange but its now a dirty peach looking colour.	

- And the most useless                      A snorkel.
- Where is your favourite  
Dive site?                                      Wolf rock in the Galapagos where we saw hundreds of hammerheads on one dive.
- Best underwater experience?              Being surrounded by hundreds of hammerheads.
- Where would you like to  
go next?                                        Visit Papua New Guinea and the Sea of Mexico, try Ice Diving and cage diving with Great White sharks.
- What advice would you  
Give any diver?                                Know your limits and stick to them.
- What would you like to  
See happen in Wantage  
Dive Club in the coming  
Year?    More new recruits - it's a shame that we didn't get a bigger intake this year. Also I would like to see more of the current Dive Leaders progressing through to Advanced Diver level and Getting more qualified instructors through.
- Most hilarious moment at  
WDC?    There have been so many, its hard to pick just one but these are a few of the funniest moments.
1. Watching Alistair (our previous Chairman) struggling trying to get across a reef in Dahab - he was so gentle and careful not to stand on any of the corals but he forgot to take his glasses off and only realised when he was in the water so had to struggle back again. Alistair used the term "Chairman's Disease" quite often or Alzheimers to you and me.
  2. Paul Crellin on the Ireland trip running a sweep stake to see who would be the first to get seasick on the ferry over. I won as I bet it would be Crellin who as ill first.
  3. When we first used to go to the Farnes we once stayed in a pub/guest house and the landlady was not very pleasant and was a bit of an old bag..... On our last night a certain person who shall remain anonymous managed to get hold of all the keys to the premises and thought it would be funny to change all the key fobs around. You can imagine that the majority of us didn't hang around the next morning.



## VOBSTER QUAY: by Justyn Soames

I chose to go to the February Vobster Quay trip for my first dive of the season, seemed a good idea at the time sat in the warm Civic Hall. For those that do not know or have not been to Vobster Quay, it is a disused quarry that has been turned into an inland dive centre.

After meeting Andy and Debbie we set off in Mikes 4X4 Mitsubishi 'Animal' thing for the wilds of Somerset. Andy assumed incorrectly that I had been before so I was nominated to navigate. Mike had been informed that the M4 was closed due to an accident, great start! So I decided to take a route the back way. I knew my way to Trowbridge but that was it. Having left Oxfordshire in temperatures of two degrees I kept looking at the external temperature gauge mounted in the centre of Mikes dash. It reached all of four degrees when we hit Trowbridge. I remember thinking that as Vobster is sheltered perhaps the water temperature may be quite reasonable for the time of year, how wrong I was. A few wrong turns later (due to bad signpost workmanship) we arrived at Vobster. Mikes temperature gauge still displayed four degrees but as I stepped out, or should that be down, the cold air hit me, I think Mike needs to get the gauge checked! I was not perturbed by the cold as I had a new thermal undersuit to try. After the ritual visit to the toilet, cup of coffee and briefing we kitted up. I was buddied with Rachel, as Andy thought I had been before and Rachel had not, so it was to be the blind leading the blind. We looked at a map of the quarry and decided on a route, which would take us to a tunnel.

There is a choice of entry, stride off the side or wade in from a little slip. Due to congestion at the slip we opted for a stride entry. Looking over the edge the water was very clear and strangely inviting. 'F\*\*K that's cold' I thought as the water hit my face, perhaps that is why the slip was so busy, everyone was going in slowly to get used to the cold. As we descended I had a sudden 'Ice cream' headache and severe ear pains. The descent was slow, due to all the ear equalising I was doing. Rachel and I spent about half an hour finning in cold murky water at 25m expecting to see cars, boats, aircraft and anything else they have decided to chuck in. However thanks to tremendous navigational abilities, displayed during the trip down I successfully managed to miss everything!! After surfacing we had a thirty meter swim for an exit ladder, which was at least two meters high, this proved to be a real struggle and I nearly decide to jump back in and swim the fifty or sixty meters to the slip.

After stocking up on drink and food and taking a short break, I somehow agreed to a second dive. I think it may have been that I wanted to check the temperature reading on my dive computer, this indicated seven degrees on the first dive. This time we entered where we had exited on the first dive and headed for a nearby marker buoy for some aircraft wreckage. We made our way slowly along an old road and saw most of what we missed on the first dive although the vis was not fantastic, at least we saw more than just a silt bottom! Strangely my dive computer still indicated a water temperature of seven degrees, I am sure it was not seven degrees more like minus seven. The same temperature sensor manufacturer obviously supplies Suunto and Mitsubishi!

Despite the cold and the murk it was an experience and good practice in these sort of conditions which is what diving is all about Experience' and 'Practice'.

## Nine Thousand, Five Hundred and Ten Golf balls! by David Parker



That's right; over 9,500 balls were fished out of the lake on Sunday 20th March! This should contribute nearly £950 to the club fund for a new trailer for the Osprey (once they have deducted the range and unusable balls).

Huge, enormous, nay gargantuan thanks go to; Les, Mike, Kathy, Tony, Kay, Andy, Debbie, Mark, Roly, Jackie, Mike, Cris, Claire, Glen, Quintin, Matt, Gary, Brian, Adam, Claire, Steph, Tom, Daniel and Joseph for making this possible. Apologies, if I have missed anyone or have spelt any names incorrectly.

I arrived at the car park with my fingers crossed, hoping that my e-mail pleas for assistance had not fallen on stony ground. As I pulled in I saw three enthusiastic divers already kitted up and itching to get in there - excellent. Within minutes, the car park started to fill up as more and more members of Wantage Diving club turned up for an afternoon of fun and frolics, soon there was hardly any room left for the Golfers. We quickly filled up the Cushman with kit and so it was time to call out the tractor, trailer and the invaluable services of Brian Jones to drive it.

Whilst Mike B, Kathy and Tony (nice waders) set about the top pond, eleven of us kitted up to blitz the lake.

It was a beautiful spring day on Sunday, a few clouds scudding across a blue sky, a light breeze rustled the Willow fronds and the Narcissus bowed their heads towards the emerald lake. OK without the Marketing glasses on it was a bit overcast, quite breezy and the Daffodils were soon trampled underfoot, but at least it was really warm. The first ones in enjoyed the almost Mediterranean water clarity but this soon deteriorated to more of a 'virtual' visibility - where light brown is up and dark brown is down.

I must admit that the solar heating system used to warm the lake is more effective in August than in March, but it did feel warmer than Vobster Quay the week before. As soon as you settled on the lake bed, you could start to pick up golf balls, in fact there were more balls than you could shake a stick at and very soon the containers were starting to fill up. The shore party of 'I've got a hangover Kay', 'it's not a hangover it's the Flu Andy', 'it must have been something I ate Lesley', 'Mind my nails Debbie', combined forces with Mark, Claire, Tom and Steph, assisted by new young recruits Daniel and Joseph to start the big count. Meanwhile Roly and Jackie disappeared onto the island for what seemed to be a very long time, amid a lot of rustling from the undergrowth.

Come four o'clock most of us were starting to feel the effects of 2 hours immersion in 6 degree water, but not Cris B who donned a new tank and leapt back in, muttering something about a wreck he could have sworn he saw down there. So whilst Cris was off searching for Nemo, Clare and Kathy were not to be outdone and dived in to start clearing the weed by hand. An interesting sight, not dissimilar to that of a brace of Sea Otters wrapping themselves in seaweed. Mike B, Brian, Glen, Quintin and Adam soon joined them, heaving out great handfulls of weed. Tom reckons we should sell it to the Garden centres, so if you have pond at home and would like a bit of oxygenating weed, you know where to find it.

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## Nine Thousand, Five Hundred and Ten Golf balls! by David Parker (continued)

All in all, it was a great afternoon, lots of laughs and lots of fun and it is true that many hands really do make light work, though there was a bit of a hangover theme that was quite prevalent! Four Golf balling virgins (Cris, Clare, Glen and Gary) lost their cherries (but found lots of balls), amid claims that some of the descriptions used in the advertising were in breach of the trade descriptions act - that will teach them to believe anyone in marketing! Good job I didn't mention the fact that the mud from the lake bed is rumoured to have the same skin rejuvenating effects as the volcanic mud from the shores of the Caspian Sea!

Once again, huge thanks to everyone involved and maybe next time we can coax even a few more out to break the 10,000 ball barrier. Special thanks must go Brian who isn't even a club member but made the mistake of spending six hours in the car with me the week before - resistance was futile!

P.S It best not to chew your fingernails for at least a week after golfballing!



## Feelings from the heart by Roland Crook

As I have been a long standing senior member of the club, I am aware of what is going on, and general fund raising is always left to the dedicated few. Where as we all get certain pleasure from helping others, it does get rather wearing at times.

When we announced our support of "The World Pooh Sticks Championship", we asked for support on the river bank, but what did we get, nobody, or as I would normally say, sweet F.A. This is an annual event which raises monies for the RNLI, whom any one of us may need to call, for their services at some time or another. I am very disappointed as it would not have hurt just a few of you, to spend a Sunday afternoon looking after your buddies, who were freezing their bits off in the aid of this fine charity.

Please think of others, and not just yourselves, it would be nice to see all of your friendly faces at the club bash on the 9<sup>th</sup> April.

P.S. It was good to see a big turn out of club members (even those with hangovers!) at the Golf Club the other Sunday, where we earned in excess of £900 for the club, perhaps the message is slowly getting through, not before time.  
Well done to Dave Parker and his Merry band.



## WANTAGE DC - THE HOME FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE A SLICE SHORT OF A LOAF by Roland Crook

THIS WAS THE FIRST TRIP OF THE SEASON TO PORTLAND AT EASTER.

When most others were having a lay in, enjoying some of the pleasures of life like Easter Eggs or was it sex! six people from the above home descended on Portland followed by someone who ought to have known better. Anyway Jackie and myself arrived late on Friday night to be welcomed by a smokey flea pit of a room, but after a few drinks it did not matter.

Very soon Saturday morning came around, off we went on the rib for a jolly around to the James Fennel where Debbie and Justyn went in first, got to 9m and Debbie came back to the surface and said "its too dark", miserable cow! Anyway it was now back to the breakwater to get the rest in the freezing cold water. They all had a pretty good dive and Jackie practiced her delayed deployment but Graham had to spoil it by saying my hands are numb and cold, wimp! The afternoon dive was much the same, cold and bad vis, then back to the flea pit for a nice hot shower, anyway I did, Jackie went after me for a cold shower - someone must tell her its rude to point.

Sunday was a little the same, but the sun came out to make things that much better, the highlight of the day was that we found a big can floating in the sea and when we opened it, it was full of powder, drugs we thought and contacted the Police who met us at the slip and took it away for testing, we shall see...! All things considered it was good to get back to sea.

PS: *Roly asked me to put this in.....*"does anyone know where the lesbians at Portland have gone? As they are not there anymore". *Apparently those of you who visit Portland often will understand this.....!!*



Don't forget to purchase your tickets for this annual fundraising event from Jackie Stanley

### Welcome:

Welcome to two new members recently joining WDC

Les Durham  
And  
Phil Campbell

### Last but not least!

Have you worked out the April Fool yet.....?? If not, then read it again....!

See you next time and keep the articles coming in.

Kay

