

University of London Sub-Aqua Club BSAC 0069

# University of London Sub-Aqua Club

Issue 6 - 30th December 2004



## ULSAC Boat Force Full Throttle !!!

**Scoundrel's back in town... Congratulations are in order to ULSAC! Our full Boat Force is back in action! A welcome Christmas present for everyone....**

Following an 'Emergency Boat Meeting' the committee have decided to purchase the two remaining engines for Scoundrel in time for Easter Training this year! This is down to all the brilliant fundraising ULSAC have done in 2004!

Following the theft of all four of our out-board engines, in Christmas 2003, we were left with a shortfall of approximately £14,000. The refusal of the insurance company to cover

our claim led to us to ask the University of London Union (ULU) for help. This did not provide a long-term solution to our problem however. We could not afford to take the insurance company to court – did we sit back and wait idly by

for them to make a decision? NO! We fought back - the long-term future of ULSAC depended on it! Next came the task of recouping our losses....

Overall we have raised around £3000 from various initiatives. Most notably we have made: £1300 from the ULSAC Fun Run,

donating over £300 to the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, £450 from direct donations and, £200 from ScubaEggs, an underwater Easter Egg hunt which also raised £50 for the Cornish Air Ambulance.

You will all be pleased to know that at the end of November our sustained efforts in challenging the insurance company also finally come to fruition. This is welcome news for the long-term finances of ULSAC.



Rascal, the Twin Sister of Scoundrel © Jimmy

Lead by our fundraising ULSAC has gone from a position of financial vulnerability to one of sustained long-term financial security - whilst still managing to develop our strong diver-training base.

On a personal note I would like to thank the ULSAC committee for all their hard work, ULU for their support and understanding and finally all of you!

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.**

**By Catherine Stanley – ULSAC Chair**

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**Win 2 FREE Tickets to LIDS 2005 see page 6**

### Member Updates:-

**Wishing all our readers a Belated Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!!!**

## Dive ! Dive ! Dive !

Yes folks, you've guessed it, it's time to stop eating and drinking to excess, and dig out the dive gear for an action packed Summer of diving delights around the country , culminating in the Summer Expedition to the Sound

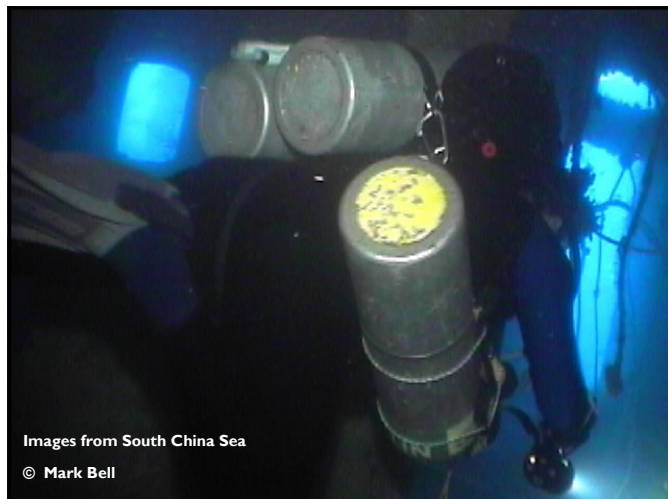
of Mull and The Clyde in Scotland.

All the details will soon be available on the web site [www.ulsac.net](http://www.ulsac.net), but if you can't wait that long, there a list on page 4 to help you plan this years diary.

[www.ulsac.net](http://www.ulsac.net)

## ULSAC & Beyond - South China Sea

Our boat, The MATA IKAN, was functional, mostly sea worthy, but not luxurious. The crew on the other hand were fantastic. After the self help ethos of ULSAC it was a novelty for three people at a time to rush around you attaching cylinders and passing fins and masks. I was also looking forward to using the lift on the rear of the boat to get back aboard, no scrabbling over the side or up a ladder,. Great.!



I was ready for our first dive on the wrecks of Force Z. For those of you unaware; this was a force of ships sent by Churchill to persuade the Japanese not to invade Singapore in WW2. Sadly HMS Prince of Wales, the newest and largest battleship in the British fleet, lasted all of 11 minutes in battle and became the first capital ship to be sunk by air-power while at sea. HMS Repulse, a battle cruiser, did not last much longer despite the Captain manoeuvring his ship to avoid the first 9 torpedoes. The next few struck home and the core of Force Z sank to the bottom of the South China Sea- as did the idea of Battleships. Aircraft carriers became the new thing to have in the navy.

Sadly, over 800 men also went down with these two ships and it was with thoughts of the lost sailors that I prepared to dive HMS Repulse for the first time. The boat was fairly subdued before the first dive; this was a serious dive and everyone was acutely aware of the wreck's history and lost crew.

A last look skyward and I strode off the boat and into the water. After travelling down the shot-line for about mere 30 seconds a great shadow appeared in front of me. Deeper still and the whole hull of the enormous wreck, all 29,000 tons of her, appeared and then most was lost from view as I hovered a metre off the hull (she lies on her Port side with the deck at about 45 degrees to the sea bed i.e. not quite upside down.) The shot was tied into an enormous blast hole where the 10th Torpedo had struck her and the last five metres of shot line was occupied with a white

ensign courtesy of modern naval divers, which you could not help but give a little nod of salute to as you past it.

I took in the damage of the torpedo hole and marvelled at how thick the hull plating was, then moved on to examine the deck area, the wheelhouse and the 15 inch guns, Awe inspiring. The Radio mast / battle bridge tower have fallen to one side and make a whole dive in themselves, I was just fascinated. Occasionally you would see a shoe with the laces still tied or a jacket with the buttons done up, a sobering thought. There are many areas where you could enter Repulse, but it is a war grave and we respected that, look but don't touch. Repulse is resplendent, even as a wreck and as such is adorned with a blanket of soft and barrel corals. After 30 minutes it was time to leave Repulse and return to the deco- station, it was another 90 minutes before I could free myself of the water to discuss the dive.

Just when I thought it could not get any better I got to dive the 35000 ton Prince of Wales (POW). If I thought Repulse was big, the POW was gigantic. Totally upside down but resting on the super structure so that her decks are 10 metres off the seabed. We moved down the hull, to the deck area, the totally inadequate anti-aircraft guns point pathetically at the seabed now, and the two rear 15-inch guns stare majestically at you as you drop down what would have been the starboard side of this magnificent ship if it were upright. All the hatches on the deck hang open as if in invitation, but again you have to respect the site and not enter it. I find it hard to describe the POW, for once in my life I was speechless after the dive and just sat alone on the sundeck of the Mata Ikan going over the dive in my mind, this is what I took up diving for, totally mind-blowing and a stark reminder that however big you are the sea will always win in the end. You will just have train up, spread your wings and take your own journey to the POW to find out what I mean.

**By Mark Bell**





## ULSAC & Beyond - The Red Sea

Too much work and not enough play finally took its toll Andy May and Martin Greaves in 2004. So on a whim we booked a last minute trip to the Brothers islands in the Egyptian Red Sea. We met on a chilly Saturday morning on the 4th of December at Gatwick's South Terminal and boarded a nightmare flight to Hurgada. The words "Why are those lights flashing?" and "Is that engine supposed to rattle like that?" were uttered not to mention the oxygen masks dropping down on landing. The in-flight film, which would have taken our minds off things, would have been good but the sound wasn't working in our section....

After a short bus ride we arrived at our home for the next week the MY Miss Nouran, part of the Sea Serpent fleet. Drinks were served after we had handed in our shoes and an air of Egyptian relaxation began to descend.

After a series of warm-up (literally) dives on the Sunday we made the five hour over night crossing to the Brothers Islands. Shaken, but not stirred we emerged from below decks to find ourselves moored at Big Brother.

The islands consist of two columns of volcanic rock to which a reef system clings.

Above the water the water you could be forgiven for thinking that they were just insignificant, uninhabitable piles of dust because they are.

Underwater is a different story.

The weeks diving was split between the two islands, so the first few days were spent on the wrecks of Numidia and Aida and the coral plateaux of the Big Brother. We quickly introduced ourselves to the currents and the local underwater residents, including Thresher and Grey Reef Sharks. Martin even found us a nice big Oceanic White tip shark which Andy really did appreciate and was very impressed by, but was still up the ladder and onto the boat before you could say brown wetsuit. Sharks also provided the evenings entertainment as they hunted in the lights of the boat.

The second half of the week was spent moored to the Little Brother. No wrecks here but much more life

than on the Big Brother. The Captain managed to park the boat right on-top of the best diving so consisted of no more than dropping down onto the reef from the back of the boat. A short swim to the head of the reef would net sightings of Thresher and Grey Reef Sharks, which seemed to become common place, Napoleon Wrasse, Giant Moray, Trevally, Tuna, Titan Trigger fish, Turtles, Barracuda, Spanish Mackerel, Cornet fish and coral, lots of coral. We only had one thing left on the list and the last dive delivered in style.

After a short RIB ride to the tip of the reef the plan was to swim back to the boat, gradually rising up the reef. After hanging out at the North West tip for a while we started on our way back thinking that was our last chance gone. We stopped to show one of the other divers a little box fish that she had been looking

for. A little further on Andy glanced down between his legs and there they were; a fine pair, Two Scalloped Hammerhead Sharks right in close to the reef, fantastic. After shouting and signalling like a mentalist we managed to make sure that the rest of the group saw them too. In celebration Martin was given a hug by a turtle (no way dude!) and we were both treated to a fly past by some very big, very hungry tuna.



Images from the Red Sea  
© Andy May and Martin Greaves

The fusiliers, that they were chasing, decided the safest place to be was behind us. If you have never heard a school of fish swimming underwater it is quite a disconcerting experience! We made it back onto the boat exhausted but happy. The bubbles finally got to us and it was twenty minutes before the giggles subsided and the crew could actually dekit us.

That just left us with an eight hour rollercoaster ride back to shore and a couple of warm down dives before an overnight stop in a hotel and take two of the flight from hell to get us back to Gatwick. Temperature in Hurgada when we left, 27 degrees C. Temperature in Gatwick when we landed, 0 degrees C.

**By Andy May**



# Christmas Party Madness

Another year, another Christmas party. We decided to go against tradition and branch out from the "Ming and Queen" and ended up in Leicester Square instead. Our lovely DO decided she had more than just diving to teach us about and demonstrated how to light a Sambukka in her mouth!!! Crazy girl!

She then bought everyone a shot so that we could all give it a go, which I think is a stroke of genius on Michelle's

part and recommend it should be adopted as a new UL-SAC tradition for all future DOs!

Hopefully everyone enjoyed themselves and as an added bonus we raised over £100 for our boat fund.(and thanks to Keith and his hair we raised an extra £100 from the sale of the ULSAC Calendar 2005 – thanks Keith!). I'll look forward to seeing you all at the next social -get your wallet ready Michelle!

## Dive Planning and Marshalling Meeting

During the "Dive Planning and Marshalling Meeting" that ULSAC holds at this time every year; we, as a group plan out the majority of club diving activities for the next 12 months (in particular the summer season),. Judging by the list below we have the golden oldies such as Easter Training and the Farne Islands. It is also great to see the newer members of the club getting involved in the dive planning and marshalling on the weekend trips, and dare I forget: the Summer expedition for this year to the Sound of Mull and The Firth of Clyde, some great wreck diving, and what year would be complete without the "Somewhere Nice Trip" (which as always will be meticulously planned, only to be let down by the weather). Don't forget to sign up on the Website as soon as lists are published as places are limited.

**ADVANCED DIVERS** there are still people who need supervision, any offers to the DO please.

**25th March - 3rd April**

**Easter Training -**

Details from Training Team

**16th-17th April**

**Portland -**

Hannah Morgan & James Withers

**20th April - 2 May**

**Plymouth -**

David Wright & AD

**14th-15th May**

**Aeolian Sky (Weymouth/Portland)-**

Rosy Hosking & Sam Denby

**28th-30th May**

**Torbay -**

Richard Rowley & AD

**4th-5th June**

**Venue TBA -**

Stephen Rome & AD

**18th-19th June**

**Dive Leader Weekend Venue TBC -**

Andy May

**2nd-3rd July**

**Littlehampton -**

James Royston & AD

**16th-17th July**

**Swanage -**

Dean Williams & AD

**30th-31st July**

**Dive Leader Weekend Venue TBC -**

Marcus Allen

**5th-21st August**

**Summer Expedition - Andy May**

**"Sound Of Mull and the Firth of Clyde Wreck Special"**

**27th-29th August**

**Farne Islands -**

Zoe Sharpe & Marcus Allen

**10th-11th September**

**"Somewhere Nice Trip" -**

Jo Graham & James Withers



## Dates for Your Diary

January 2005						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February 2005						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

March 2005						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### Social Events for Your Calendar

- Look out for a Pre-Easter Training Party, dates to be confirmed...
- 5th-6th Mar LIDS 2005 @ ExCeL

#### Key

- Special events
- Fundraising Events
- Dive Trips
- Bank Holidays

### Upcoming Diving Trips for Your Calendar

- 22nd Jan Wraysbury - Jimmy Cooke
- 5th-6th Feb Portland - Jimmy Cooke
- 23rd Mar -3rd Apr Porthkerris - Mark Bell
- 12th-13th Mar Drills/diving weekend - Jimmy Cooke

## Training

**New Trainee Divers** - Now only 18 Pool Sessions till we leave for Easter Training, so make an effort to attend so as to avoid the inevitable rush at this time of year.

### O2 Administration Course - 5/6th Dec Sam Denby

A group of twelve eager students arrived at UCL at 10:00 on Sunday 05/12/04 to take part in a branch oxygen administration course run by Sam D and his glamorous assistant Jimmy. Much fun was had by all, plenty of tea and coffee was consumed and Annie was saved several times over! Everyone passed (including the instructors)! and ULSAC can sleep easy knowing there are twelve new Oxygen administrators in the club.

### Boat Handling - 20/21st Nov Jimmy Cooke

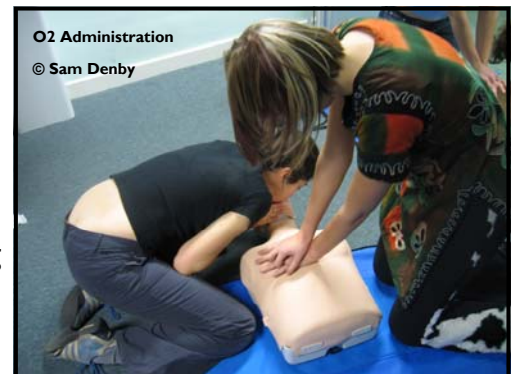
The trainees awoke at dawn and gazed out over the incredible view from the freezing caravan overlooking the tip of Portland. After the legendary big breakfasts at the Aquasports hotel the lectures began in one of the, very reasonably priced, classrooms.

Marcus has helped trial the new Diver Coxswain exam for BSAC earlier in the year, and was ably assisted by Andy who recently passed his Diver Coxswain assessment, Bonnie and I ran several of the theory classes. It was a very chilly day and students were glad to thaw in the classroom for warm cups of tea and snacks while studying chart work and tide tables. Then there was the toughing it out in the cold driving the boats.

Some other clubs were evidently taking advantage of the sheltered harbour over the weekend in order to run boat-handling courses, but we didn't see any divers (and not just over the Hood which we used to practice use of the echo sounder), not surprising given the air temperature...

Driving a boat is very much like making love to a beautiful woman. it takes an experience to handle her correctly, without someone at the helm she is uncontrollable, she shows her topsides, hides her bottom and when coming into port, always heads for the buoys.

Two days of training later, and the club had another 8 assistant boaties, and a new boat-handling instructor now all we needed was some more boats!





U.L.S.A.C.

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## EASTER TRAINING

23rd March-3rd April 2005

If you haven't already, make sure you've signed up for our Easter Training Extravaganza in Porthkerris, Cornwall.

Guaranteed to be Wet and Wild, A little bit tiring, but most of all a great start to the British diving experience. Please contact any member of the training team for more details, or read first hand experiences from last years event in the April 2004

Newsletter which is available @ [www.ulsac.net](http://www.ulsac.net)

## London International Dive Show 5/6 March, ExCeL, Docklands, London



As the 2005 season gets underway over 14,000 divers will be heading to the London International Dive Show to catch up with the latest kit developments, newest holiday destinations and dive leisurewear.

The Show, which is taking place at ExCeL in London's Docklands on 5/6 March, will house over 250 companies showing everything that seasoned and wannabe divers will need for the coming season. Running alongside the show will be free

seminars by Great White Shark expert Mike Rutzen and explorer Innes McCartney. And, at the heart of the show will be a Try-Dive pool and the BSAC's popular Rebreather Try-Dive Pool.

Tickets to the show cost £7.50 in advance or £9.00 on the door (children £2.00). Tickets can be booked online on [www.diveshows.co.uk](http://www.diveshows.co.uk) or by calling +44 (0)208 977 9878.

### Tsunami Disaster Appeal Fund

50 pence will be donated to the Disasters Emergency Committee ([www.dec.org.uk](http://www.dec.org.uk)) for every show ticket booked in advance via the ticket hotline or the show website.

### **WIN 2 FREE TICKETS to LIDS**

by answering the following question...

### **Which Great White Shark Expert will be speaking at LIDS 2005 ?**

Answers via E-mail to [boatie@btinternet.com](mailto:boatie@btinternet.com) or on a postcard to 6 Beechwood Court, West Street Lane, Carshalton, Surrey. SM5 2PZ.

All correct answers received by the 21st February 2005 will enter the draw for a pair of tickets.