



Devon  
August 1997

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Trip report by Sam Cockerill

Divers:

- Sam Cockerill
- Eddie Foo
- Sally Wither
- Nick Harrison
- Andy Love
- Angie Lee
- Tamsin Terry
- Guy Hewitt
- Phil Hylie

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Tempered by our April experience of Plymouth's torrential microclimate, those of us who had been on this trip earlier this year took Lynn Dance's suggestion that the weekend outlook was good with a certain amount of scepticism.

However, the journey out to our first dive at the Eddystone lighthouse across a near flat-calm sea couldn't have been much smoother. After April's stomach-churning bronco ride, this was a welcome treat, and not a single fish was able to share in the delights of Lynn dance's copious lard-fest of a breakfast.

A gentle first dive in still water provided us with a good opportunity to find our fins once again, given that for some this was the first dive in a couple of months. It also gave Eddie's pet gremlins a chance to demonstrate the proficiency and comprehensiveness of their sabotage skills. Already having sent both his new drysuit and computer back for repairs, his new stab jacket was next on their list, which lost its emergency cylinder early on in the dive.

The visibility on this off-shore site was unexpectedly good, around 10m at times, with lobsters and wrasse galore. We even spotted a conga (which I mistook for a cod at first), and as an additional bonus, recovered a lost weightbelt using a delayed SMB buoy as a lifting bag. Cunning.

The second dive took us back to the J E Layne once again, the crowds having subsided by this stage. John Dance (Skipper)'s marksmanship proved accurate once again, as we descended to the shot lying squarely on the bow deck. We poked around for half an hour before surfacing into bright sunshine.

Sunday's diving had us exploring Hillsea point - this time with slightly less of a tidal run on than in April, allowing for the most part an unmolested exploration of the sheer gulleys and caves. The exceptions to this were Nick, who managed to find a peculiar geological arrangement which amplified the modest surge to exciting proportions, and Tamsin who was attacked quite savagely by an 8" cuckoo wrasse.

Unperturbed by the rain which grew steadily worse through the day, we finished off again at the Layne, which by now had a slight drift + surge on. This had the rather amusing effect of occasionally spitting unsuspecting fish through portholes and rusted voids in the hull.

By the time we set off for the return voyage the swell had grown to 4-5' which made our passage more exciting than we would have liked, but fortunately there were no casualties.

In all, another fine weekend of boats, beer and barbecue. And some diving.