



**Weymouth
November 1998**

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Divers

- Sam Cockerill
- Daryl Spelman
- Alex Hennessey
- Philip Rae
- Guy Hewitt
- Phil Hylie

Introduction

We've stayed at the Aqua-Sport hotel before, but haven't taken up this £55 weekend dive package before. With a free air, a BSAC prescription lard-fest breakfast, a dive shop across the road, a jetty outside the front door and all the breakwater wrecks within 5 minutes in their RIB, I struggle to find a reason why.

Soon after we arrived, Martin (Moggy), our skipper, came over to introduce himself in the bar ("open until people stop spending money") to find out our levels of experience, maturity and responsibility, and to discuss how we planned to cope with the forecast arduous weather conditions.

Sadly, Guy misinterpreted this inquisitive gambit as an invitation to ramble wildly about his personal history of encounters with bull seals, daredevil near-misses and cavalier disregard for diving safety.

After listening wide-eyed and trembling for half an hour, Martin cut Guy off mid-freeflow anecdote and tossed his chair backwards shouting "FIND YOURSELVES ANOTHER SKIPPER!" before marching out of the room, leaving his empty pint glass rocking backwards and forwards in a puddle of beer.

Saturday - Dive 1 - Balaclava bay

With force 8 gales forecast for Sunday it was unlikely we'd get much diving done outside the breakwater this weekend, but in pursuit of a little variety we made our first dive a drift along the Bill before the storm rode in.

Although the visibility was a disappointing 2m at best, the current was motoring along at a respectable pace and our flight over the seabed at 21m demanded exceptional vigilance to spot the occasional passing novelty. I spied a small pipefish curled around a pebble, but upon stopping to take a look we were immediately overwhelmed by the cloud of silt following us over the bed, reducing our visibility to arm's length. It was clear that this was not a good time to dwell on such creatures.

In my mind I picture a crab, sitting quietly on the seabed for days on end, chewing idly through the scattered limbs of some relative in serene solitude. Suddenly a pair of wide-eyed aliens wrapped in a mass of pipes and fluorescent webbing barrel out of, and back into the surrounding murk. The crab pauses, squinting dimly into the darkness, then continues chewing.

Back at the surface a 4m swell had risen which made our re-entry to the rib something of a challenge. As we approached Phil and Alex, a freak wave had us towering on the crest almost directly above, before crashing down beside them. In retrospect there probably wasn't much real danger of us crushing them, but I couldn't help but notice Alex spent rather longer than should have been necessary cleaning out his suit trousers that afternoon.

Saturday - Dive 2 - Landing Craft

With the wind building we spent the rest of the weekend within the relative safety of the breakwater. The vis did not improve, though, and this combined with Daryl's stubborn ear to prevent us performing a planned slow-motion (if tasteless) remembrance weekend re-enactment of the opening scene of Saving Private Ryan within the open deck of the landing craft. Next time.

Sunday - Dive 1 - Breakwater N

Saw a fish. Just.

Sunday - Dive 2 BDC harbour

Having admitted defeat in the open sea, we cancelled our afternoon boat trip and spent half an hour using up our air within the confines of the harbour. After a surprisingly scenic jaunt, we were approached by a chap called Malin Dixon with two notable pieces of information:

- He dived with CUUEG in 1978 when Peter's Biscuit tin regulator would have been considered high-tech technical diving kit.
- He owns a Trampofoil (and would we like to have a go?)

Sunday - Part 3 - Trampofoil

This is a bizarre human powered hydrofoil, which when ridden correctly makes an improbably elegant and incredibly efficient mode of transport through the water. It consists of far too few pieces of precision aluminium extrusion, displaces virtually no water and resembles a large racing trike in the way it is ridden - with the pilot jumping trampoline style on the back to propel it forwards with the flexing of the rear foil. Actually it's not that much like a racing trike.

When ridden incorrectly, it sinks.

Regrettably the trampofoil website is down and the trampofoil is out of production. However, some pictures of the beast can be found at [here](#).