



**Plymouth  
Mount Batten  
August 16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> 2006**

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## Trip organised by Ian Gregory

## Trip report by Steve Clark, Matt Watson and Ian Gregory

### The line-up:

- Steve Clark (DL)
- Edvin Deadman (OD)
- James Donnelly (DL)
- Ian Gregory (DL)
- Mark Hallworth (SD)
- Rachael Macdonald (SD)
- Stuart Moore (SD)
- Karin Müller (SD)
- Simon Parsons (OD)
- Jen Sambrook (SD)
- M@ Watson (SD) (his preferred spelling, and useful, given the abundance of Matt W's)
- Matt Worsley (DL)

### Sample costs and links:

- Accommodation in the [Mount Batten Centre](#): £32 per triple room per night (£45 at weekends)
- [Seeker](#) hire: £350 per day (weekdays), £400 per day (weekends)
- Van from Cambridge: £175 for five days, ([Cambridge Car and Van Rental](#))
- Air fills from [Deep Blue](#) (£3 for a single, £5 for a twinset, and great prices on 32%)
  
- Chinese: Crystal Dragon, 11 Southside Street, 01752 250288
- Italian: Pizzaghetti Restaurant, 23 Southside Street, 01752 665345

Typical trip cost per person (including transport) was £235 - not bad for 4 days great diving.

### The dives:

(Disclaimer: "max depth" refers to the maximum depth recorded on the described dive and NOT the maximum depth achievable at the site, which potentially may be much deeper).

- Dive 1: [The Glenstrathallen](#) (Max Depth = 18.6 m)
- Dive 2: [Tinker Shoal](#) (Max Depth = 11.9 m)
- Dive 3: [HMS Scylla](#) (Max Depth = 18.6 m)
- Dive 4: [James Eagan Layne](#) (Max Depth = 22.2 m)
- Dive 5: [Hand Deeps](#) (Max Depth = 32.0 m)
- Dive 6: [HMS Scylla](#) (Max Depth = 22.9 m)
- Dive 7: [Hilsea Point](#) (Max Depth = 22.0 m)
- Dive 8: [Cawsands Bay](#) (Max Depth = 15.9 m)

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## Day 0: Wednesday 16th August 2005

The assembly at the kitstore at Wednesday lunchtime was remarkably uneventful. Rather than the more familiar hour of faff, the kit was sorted, signed out and loaded into the van in 20 minutes flat. In fact, the rate-limiting step was not so much the kit at all. Or the van. Or anyone being late! It was M@'s attempts to print logsheets onto special waterproof paper in his department. Despite David's reassurance that it would work fine if he put masking tape onto the leading edge, it had got stuck, fused to the roller, and put a hitherto working laser printer convincingly out of action. With Ian revving the van engine ready to go, M@ took the only sensible action in the circumstances: run away and hope somebody else gets the blame!!!

Upon arrival in Plymouth, we found the Batten Centre crawling with people, and the road and car park packed. It turned out that (by coincidence), there was the National Fireworks Competition in Plymouth that evening. 50,000 rockets in 5 seconds. Everyone was impressed, except, perhaps, the Devon Fire Service!!! Jen & Karin, and Matt & Steve travelled from Manchester after work, arriving to see the end of the fireworks and in time for a couple of pints in the Mount Batten Centre 'Isobar'. The conversation soon turned to 1001 things to make out of discarded shopping trolleys.

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## Day 1: Thursday 17th August 2005

The day started with our pre-booked fried breakfasts. The uplift in price from last year was accompanied with a generous increase in cooking oil - if the trends continue it's probably best to give this a miss next year. Remarkably efficient kitting-up was completed with minimal faff in time for the arrival of Seeker, our sturdy hard-boat for the week. Whilst stowing the kit, we watched on as JK, David and the GUE guys loaded dozens of stages onto sister-ship Endeavour for their Tech 2 experience dives (nine divers, and fifty-four stage bottles).

The weather looked good, south-easterly calming down and moving round to the north. Things looked promising for the days ahead. We headed out across the sound, with little noticeable difference in swell when we left the protection of the breakwater. In a re-run of last year, the first dive of the day was to be the broken up wreckage of the **Glenstrathallen**. Rachael went in with Steve, but had sinus problem and aborted at 3 m. Steve joined Stuart & Mark for the dive. The shot was on the boiler in 15-18 m of water. They soon left the boiler and crossed over some broken plates onto the surrounding reef. As requested by the skipper, Stuart shot a SMB for the remainder of the dive. The bottom was the usual rocky outcrops covered in kelp with sandy bottomed gullies. They saw numerous starfish, a goby spotted by Mark and some edible crabs. Ian and Edwin saw a couple of congers inside the boiler (max depth = 18.6 m, time = 49 min).

After the dive, on the boat, the following conversation was overheard:

**M@:** "Did it work?" (Referring to Simon's shiny new Apeks high-profile dump-valve).

**Simon:** "Yes! I'm dry! I love you man, you're the best kit officer ever!"

**M@:** "I wish I'd seen your celebrations when you got out after your first dry dive."

**Simon:** "Well, I didn't really know at first whether I was dry or not. It wasn't until I got out of my wing and unzipped my dry-suit that I knew for sure that it had worked."

**M@:** "Unbelievable! How can you not notice the absence of 2 pints of water sloshing around in your suit?!"



Stuart & Mark



Goby & Edible Crab

**Extract from M@'s Marvellous Musings (a.k.a. his logbook):**

### **The Glenstrathallen**

Buddy: Matt Worsley

Max Depth: 15.6 m

Total time: 54 min

The Glen Strath Allen was designed as a 690 tonne steam trawler, but when the firm who ordered the vessel went bankrupt, the millionaire Corby Cullen bought the ship and had her fitted out as a pleasure yacht. The vessel was deliberately sunk at the request of the late owner's will on the 27th of April 1970. Unfortunately, the wreck became something of a hazard to the local fishing boats, and after a dispute as to who should pay to maintain a buoy on the Glen Strath Allen, Fort Bovisand was ordered to disperse the wreck, which now lies very broken on a 12-15 m seabed near shagstone.

We descended the shot to the boilers, which stood about 3-4 m proud in 15 m of water. There was lots of life on and around the boilers. Matt and I saw a tompot blenny on top of the boilers and a large crab hidden under some plating nearby. There were also plenty of cotton spinners (type of sea cucumber) scattered around the seabed, which Matt seemed to like stroking?! After about 10 minutes we swam away from the boilers. The rest of the wreck was very broken with not much to see, although we did find a bit of wreckage with a brass porthole in situ and played with some small wrasse. At one point I thought I saw a sea scorpion scurry under a bit of plating, but after prodding around in the hole all I managed to do was annoy a couple of crabs that scuttled off across the seabed. With our bottom time nearly up, Matt launched a blob and we ascended with 1 min @ 12 m, 1 min @ 9 m, 6 min @ 6 m and 5 min to the surface (ascent was quite good, but still needs work).

All in all, not a bad site, but most of the interesting stuff is around the boilers, so no point in straying too far from the shot. The sheltered location and shallow depth made for a good warm up dive.

For lunch, we moved inside the breakwater and watched a nuclear sub pass beside us, heading out into the channel for sea trials. The afternoon dive was on **Tinker Shoal**, a reef outside and parallel to the breakwater, identified by East & West Tinker shipping buoys. Rachael and Steve were dropped on a shallow section of reef in about 8 m, close to the easterly buoy and deployed SMBs from the bottom for the duration of the dive. They found a neat gully with a kelp ceiling, 5 m deep and 1 m wide. There were plenty of sea urchins on either side, just a little awkward towing an SMB (max depth = 11.9 m, time = 41 min).

#### **M@'s Marvellous Musings:**

##### **Tinker Shoal**

Buddy: Matt Worsley

Max Depth: 14.7 m

Total time: 49 min

Tinker Shoal is a fairly shallow reef just south of the Plymouth breakwater. The bottom is mostly made up of kelpy gullies and makes for a good rummage dive with lots of cargo, presumably cast off from ships passing through the port.

I led the dive. We made a free descent to a kelpy bottom at 12-13 m and I put up a blob (as the skipper had told us to use SMBs). Although billed as a drift dive, I soon noticed the distinct absence of any significant current! Given the presence of far too much kelp for my liking, we decided to follow the slightly deeper "gullies" where the fronds were less dense and have a good rummage. Found some blasting chord, some bits of dredging tackle that must have got snagged on the rocks, and loads of broken pottery. On one sandy patch we found a group of well camouflaged gobies (good skills by Matt in spotting them) and played with them for a while. I also saw lots of tiny cushion stars on the kelp fronds and the usual assortment of small wrasse.

I led the ascent - 1 min @ 12 m, 1 min @ 9 m, 6 min @ 6 m and 5 min to the surface, which went quite well with us breaking the surface bang on time. Although we had a good rummage on this dive, given the calibre of dive sites around Plymouth, I wouldn't recommend this site.

In the evening, we headed for the Barbican via the water taxi. After some debate, we took Karin's advice and headed to a pub for dinner. Excellent choice - reasonably priced good food. The conversation deteriorated after the third pint. It went something like this:

Ian: "You know that sometimes when you get p\*ssed the room spins."

M@: "Yes."

Ian: "and you know that when you're on a boat it sways around."

M@: "Yep."

Ian: "Well.... do you reckon the two could cancel each other out? A bit like destructive interference?"

M@: "What? So you get totally sh\*t-faced and they go on a boat? Ermmm....."

Although from the physics point of view I'm sure this seemed like a sound concept, looking at the problem from a more physiological perspective, M@ failed to see how impaired motor functions coupled with sporadic chundering could compare in a side-by-side test with, say "Stugeron" in preventing seasickness???. No doubt this has been thoroughly tested over the years by slightly worse for wear Water Taxi patrons...

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## **Day 2: Friday 18th August 2006**

Today we headed-out to Whitsand Bay to dive the most popular wrecks in the area before the weekend. On the way out, the skipper spotted a Sunfish basking in the sunshine on the surface. In the morning, we dived **HMS Scylla**. Now 2 and a half years 'old', she is supporting remarkably more life than last year. The outside of the hull is becoming totally covered in soft corals and sponges.

Steve went in with Simon, aiming to have a good look at the deck and superstructure. They swam the length of the port side, passing the sea-wolf and exocet missile launching platforms. Just past the bridge they saw a John Dory near the rail. They swam over the stern, which is now completely covered in life. Crossing back over the helicopter deck into the hanger, They exited through the torpedo magazine onto the port side. They had another expedition inside, before coming-up a deck to enter the bridge via the windows and out through the roof. We finished the dive with a look around the signal deck and deployed DSMBs for the ascent near the base of the funnel. Nice safe ascent, 3min@6m, 3min to the surface (max depth = 18.6 m, time = 43 min).

#### **M@'s Marvellous Musings:**

## HMS Scylla

Buddy: Ian Gregory  
Max Depth: 25.1 m  
Total time: 57 min

HMS Scylla was a Royal Navy Leander-Class Frigate. The Scylla was decommissioned in 1993 and was bought by the National Marine Aquarium, Plymouth, in 2003 who deliberately sunk the ship on the 27 March 2004 in Whitsand Bay as Europe's first "artificial reef."

This was my 25 m depth progression with Ian (not to mention a big ass wreck). We descended to the wreck via the bowshot. After exchanging OK signals, we swam over the railings and made the descent to the seabed at just over 25 m. Ian saw a decent sized goby and I found a pink plastic kiddies sandal?! Looking up from the seabed the view of the bow was awesome - it seemed to go up forever. We ascended slowly while swimming along the port side of the hull. There was much more life than I had expected, with small dead men's fingers, sponges, sea squirts and the odd anemone.

We swam round to the helicopter deck and saw a nice sized John Dory (Ian to this day insists it was a flatfish swimming on its side, but I have the photos to prove it!) then entered the hanger where lots of pollack and wrasse were hiding in the gloom. We swam through the upper decks of the wreck several times on the way back to the bow and found the captain's en suite bathroom (complete with head and bath!) and had a look at the exocet missile launchers before ascending up the shot. Didn't really like ascending the shot as kept nearly getting trashed by muppet divers descending, so drifted off the shot a couple of metres for the stops. Nice dive but surfaced late due to waiting for a boat above the shot to leave and crowding on the shot line :o(

In the afternoon, we dived the **James Egan Layne**. Steve and Simon went back in together (max depth = 22.2 m, time = 42 min). Lots of squeezing through holes, a load of pollacks (sorry, the old ones are the best!) and edible crabs. The most notable post-dive event was Ian's drysuit zip throwing a tooth, meaning he only had a slit 18 inches long to get out through. Luckily, James's midwifery training kicked in, and Ian slipped out in no time!

## M@'s Marvellous Musings:

### The James Egan Layne

Buddy: Ian Gregory  
Max Depth: 21.7 m  
Total time: 50 min

The James Egan Layne was a US liberty ship built by the Delta Shipping Company, New Orleans in 1944. The ship sank on her maiden voyage when she was torpedoed by U1195 on the 21 March 1945 just off Plymouth, and lies on a sandy bottom at 21 m in Whitsand Bay. Similar type of dive to the HMS Scylla - Ian Gregory grand tour to get an overview of the wreck. We descended the bow shot, then dropped over the side and headed towards the seabed. Got an awesome view of the bow - much more life than on the Scylla. We then swam round the starboard side of the wreck about 3-4 m off the bottom looking at the many dead men's fingers, anemones and starfish that covered the hull. Ian molested a cotton spinner and I got covered in the "goop" :o(

The current was making it hard work swimming on the outside of the wreck, so we entered into the second hold via a large break in the hull. The wreck was nice inside the hull, though the vis. was pretty crap. We saw lots of pots and pans, cartwheels etc., but didn't have time for a good rummage. Saw Steve and Simon + Matt and Edwin inside the wreck (they looked to be enjoying themselves). The beam from Ian's torch probed many of the nooks and crannies in search of life, and hopefully an elusive conger - something I have yet to see. We swam to the point where the stern had broken off with a couple of nice swim-throughs on the way. We then turned and swam down the other side of the wreck, which was much the same, but more broken and returned to the bows where we were met by some playful cuckoo wrasse.

Although the wreck had more life growing on it, I saw far fewer fish than on the nearby Scylla (though this may have been due to the lower vis.) We ascended the shot line. I was kicked in the head by a diver who was flailing like mad on his way down to the wreck, so I drifted off the shot a little and finned occasionally to keep close to Ian. Moral of this story: don't ascend shot lines unless you have to as there are too many inconsiderate and/or sh\*t divers out there...

We stayed Batten side of the water that evening, with dinner at the Mount Batten Hotel. Fish & chips for some, but for the more adventurous, the Mountbatten Hotel Extreme Triple-Burger Challenge™ beckoned. After perusing the menu and finally deciding what to order, someone pointed out the triple burger on the specials board. "Are you man enough....?" Well that was settled: M@, Ian and Edwin (the intrepid lard meisters) embarked upon the challenge: Triple burger and chips.

Finally the burger arrived. Now we're not talking one of those poxy little MacDonald's triples..... This was one serious hunk of cow! So much grease was dripping off it that the bottom bun had already started to dissolve. I could feel my arteries starting to clog before the plate had even reached the table. However, 20 minutes later the triumphant trio were sitting there feeling rather ill, but safe in the knowledge that they had beaten the burgers. Fortunately, we didn't have a ride on the water taxi this evening, so it stayed CUUEG 3, triple burger 0.

With superb weather today, we headed out for the off-shore reef of **Hand Deeps**. This is west of the Eddystone, about 13 miles off shore. On the way out, the keen-eyed skipper spotted a Basking Shark. About 2 m long, it circled around us for several minutes.

Matt, Steve and Rachael went in together, planning to sign-off Rachael's 30 m Sports Diver experience. The dive went to plan, descending over the drop-off to 30 m with excellent (15 m+ vis). Life. The ascent went well, with Matt successfully gas-switching to 50% and holding a good set of stops (max depth = 32.0 m, time = 43 min).

Ian unfortunately had to abort his dive with Edvin and Simon because the shot had been pulled-off the reef into deep water. Not that either Edvin or Simon would have noticed this, since they both managed to drift off the shot, despite Ian's increasingly vigorous attempts to attract their attention. Bound by the Ocean Divers' 20 m depth limit, and at 19 m with no visible bottom, they made a safe ascent to the surface on a mid water blob and sat out the dive.

### **M@'s Marvellous Musings:**

#### **Hand Deeps**

Buddy: Jen Sambrook

Max Depth: 26.5 m

Total time: 53 min

Hand Deeps is an offshore reef to the northwest of the Eddystone lighthouse. The reef rises up to within 7 m of the surface from a 50 m + seabed and is surrounded by sheer walls and ledges, with vis. often exceeding 20 m! This site was a long way out from Plymouth harbour, but the trip was broken by stopping to look at a sunfish and a small (about 8 ft) basking shark, which circled near the boat for about 10 min. The water was calm and there were lots of other boats on the site when we got there.

We descended the shot line, which was supposed to be in about 12 m on top of the pinnacle. However, it wasn't until 18 m that we dropped off the line onto a ledge at about 22-25 m. After a slight signal misunderstanding, which resulted in me following Karin and Stuart for about 15 m before Jen came alongside and pointed out that I was a wally, and that her signal had in fact meant DON'T go that way (sorry Jen) we were underway. We dropped over the edge of the 25 m ledge to reach out target or **26.4 m**, randomly decided on by Jen the night before after a few beers (needless to say that our buoyancy control was not up to the task and, despite much cheating, neither of us managed to nail a 26.4 m stop).

We ascended back to the 25 m ledge and found the biggest sea urchin I have ever seen! Jen was laughing at me, so I threw it at her, and a mid water sea urchin volley ball game ensued. Eventually Jen felt sorry for the urchin and made me go find it a home on a nearby ledge. We ascended slightly to a small ledge that had lots of soft corals and sea fans on it, then skirted round a wall. Jen was "attacked" by a spiny starfish and I spotted a big spinney spider crab on a ledge. We swam over to take some photos and a group of female cuckoo wrasse came along to play with us - they were very timid and if you kept very still would approach to within a few cm!

After about 20 min we slowly ascended to 15 m where the kelp had taken over and saw a really big pollack swimming gracefully against the current. All too soon it was time to come up, so I launched a blob as we slowly drifted off the reef and ascended. This was a **superb dive (my best to date)** the vis. was excellent and the rocky pinnacle covered with life.

Although billed as a "pick your depth" site, with the kelp going down to about 18 m you really needed a 20 m + dive to get the most out of this site.

On the way back, the skipper spotted a pod of four dolphins.

In the afternoon, we dived **HMS Scylla** again. This time, Matt, Steve & Rachael planned to explore some of the compartments within the hull. They successfully found the radar room by counting holes back from the bow on the starboard side. Once inside they passed into the operations room, complete with consoles and data racks. They had a look into the main corridor and were met by a diver apparently swimming the length of the wreck solo(?). Since he'd kicked-up all the silt, they gave the corridor a miss and exited through the adjoining room. They swam to the stern and ascended off the helicopter deck when Rachael had reached minimum gas (Matt & Steve getting lucky with overfilled sets from the morning dive) (max depth =22.9 m, time = 31 min).



**M@'s Marvellous Musings:****HMS Scylla (2nd dive)**

Buddy: Jen Sambrook

Max Depth: 17.1 m

Total time: 52 min

On the trip over to the Scylla from Hand Deep's the skipper spotted some bottle nosed dolphins, which swam along with us in the bow wake. Those of us with cameras rushed round to the front of the boat and leaned over to try and get a few snaps. After about 5-10 minutes the dolphins departed, and we resumed course for the Scylla.

Given that I didn't have a torch, and Jen's torch wasn't quite as powerful as Ian's "light cannon" we decided to restrict our dive to the upper deck. We descended the bow shot to the wreck. Rather than have a grand tour (as on my previous dive on the wreck with Ian) we had a slow bumble around the upper decks, focusing more on the life that was taking hold. We swam over the exocet launchers and made our way along the port side of the wreck, where we met Ian, Simon and Edwin, before entering the wreck for a short swim-through where we bumped into James and Mark (a 113 m wreck with 4 decks and we had to play how many C.U.U.E.G. divers can you get into a tiny little room...).

Had a couple more swim-throughs, and saw a big plumose anemone in one of the corridors on the portside of the wreck. We drifted slightly off the port side of the wreck to take some photos, and a large shoal of pollack started to swim around us (very cool). As we headed into the helicopter hanger a John Dory swam past. Jen looked excited, and we wondered whether this was the "juvenile flatfish" Ian had seen the day before? Jen had a poke around the hanger with her torch, but other than the shoal of pollack that now seemed to be following us, we didn't spot anything interesting.

After a short swim into the wreck we ascended out of a hole in the top of the deck to about 12 m, where I launched a blob, and we drifted off the wreck for the ascent. Another excellent dive on what is becoming a nice wreck now that life is starting to take hold.

In the evening, we headed back over into Plymouth for a Chinese booked in advance by Ian (Crystal Dragon, 11 Southside Street, 01752 250288). Highly recommended. We thankfully avoided a bistro-matics spreadsheet to split the bill, although James did come very close to making us use the single transferable voting system to choose which set menus to have. Then on to Mount Batten Bar.

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**Day 4: Sunday 20th August 2006**

To give a good depth range for the group, we headed out to **Hilsea Point**, a reef about 40 mins east of the Sound. It felt a little disappointing to be passing by the Persier (Ian insisted it was too deep for the group), but this soon evaporated as soon as we saw the life in the water. The shot was dropped just north of a small pinnacle at about 6 m. Mark and Steve were diving together. Highlights were compass jellyfish, edible crabs, a spider crab walking across a sandy bottom, sea cucumbers and a sand skipping thing.



Large Edible Crab



Compass Jellyfish



Spiny spider Crab



Cuckoo wrasse

### M@'s Marvellous Musings:

#### Hilsea Point

Buddy: Stuart Moore

Max Depth: 22.0 m

Total time: 49 min

Hilsea Point is a reef type dive site just east of the breakwater with a pinnacle at 8 m and deep rocky gullies leading off down to 25-30 m max. There was a much larger swell today than on the previous days as the skipper dropped the shot in at Hilsea Point. We dropped down the shot, which was placed on top of the reef in about 12 m. We headed south, where the reef swallowed to about 10 m then dropped off into a series of rocky ledges and gullies going down to about 30 m. We skirted around the ledges and gullies between 16 and 22 m.

The life was very similar to that at Hand Deeps, but the vis. was not as good and there was slightly more seaweed and fewer soft corals. Stuart spotted a large edible crab hiding in a crack, and there was the ever-present assortment of playful wrasse. We found a nice sandy-bottomed gully that we swam through. This opened out onto a wall that dropped off to about 30 m. We skirted around the wall, gradually ascending into the kelp at about 14 m. There was quite a big swell here, but with bottom time nearly up we headed towards the shore where the depth swallowed to about 9 m. I rummaged around in the kelp and found lots of small fishes taking refuge amongst the fronds and Stuart poked around with his torch in a few cracks, but found nothing to rival the huge crab we had seen on the deeper ledges.

I put up a blob and we ascended, 6 m stops were OK but got a bit sloshed around on the 3 m stops (should probably have done them at 6 m). All in all a very good dive, the scenery was rather like Hand Deeps, but you didn't have to go as deep to get a decent dive.

The weather started to freshen up as we headed back to the sound for lunch. We were originally planning to dive a recently discovered wreck of unknown origin to the east of the Sound. Given the conditions, we opted for a scenic dive in **Cawsands Bay**, well sheltered by the headland.

We were dropped into 8 m and deployed SMBs for the duration of the dive. Ian (diving with Jen, to her amusement), upon finding the kelp gave way to a sandy "beach" at 14 m, swam delightfully down onto the golden sand, sat down on the bottom and attempted to build a sandcastle.



Large Edible Crab



Compass Jellyfish

## **M@'s Marvellous Musings:**

### **Penlee Point to Cawsands Bay "drift"**

Buddy: Stuart Moore

Max Depth: 15.9 m

Total time: 62 min

Penlee Point is on the west side of the Sound just south of Cawsands Bay. The bottom is fairly flat with a mixture of rock and sand and makes for a good drift dive. We were supposed to be drifting on an incoming tide just off Penlee Point in Cawsands Bay with depths ranging from 6-15 m over a varied bottom. Once in the water, Stuart inflated an SMB, and we made a free descent onto a weed covered 8 m bottom. With very little in the way of current we decided to swim out into deeper water and check out anything we found interesting as well as have a good rummage. There were plenty of wrasse of all varieties, which Stuart had a tendency to go barrelling after with his torch, and a large number of Cotton Spinners compared to the other dives. I attempted Ian's trick, but my cotton spinner seemed unwilling to part with its innards, and Stuart just gave me a strange look. We spotted some nice sized blennies and gobies on a sandy area, where we bumped into Ian and Jen. Ian swam towards me with a maniacal grin, brandishing a rather large spinney spider crab, but for some reason decided against whatever he was going to do and (much to the relief of both myself and the spider crab) decided to let the crab go.

Shortly after we left Ian and Jen, Stuart found a velvet swimming crab hiding in a small crack and I spotted a small cuttlefish, which was remarkably well camouflaged against the sandy bottom. We followed many of the chains and cables that littered the bottom, but failed to find anything significant attached to the end of any of them. With Stuart running low on air we decided to ascend and broke the surface bang on time at 62 min (my first 1 h + dive!). This was a nice easy dive with a varied sandy/rocky bottom probably suitable for all levels (especially with as little current as we had in this site!).

Well. That was that. We washed the kit (again, with amazing efficiency) while Ian paid large sums of money to various people, and made a booking for an identical trip next year. The journey home, was fairly uneventful, apart from the excitement associated with the sighting on the M4 of the "Slough Trading Estate" sign as seen on the opening credits of "The Office".

*(Photos by Steve Clark)*