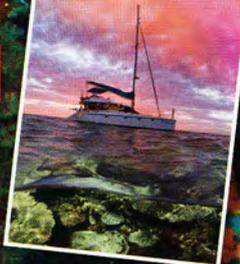


AUSTRALIA

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GEAR GUIDE

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CORNWALL

MARTYN FARR HEADS INTO BOSCASTLE'S FAMED BLOWHOLE



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Florida roadtrip heads east to Fort Lauderdale

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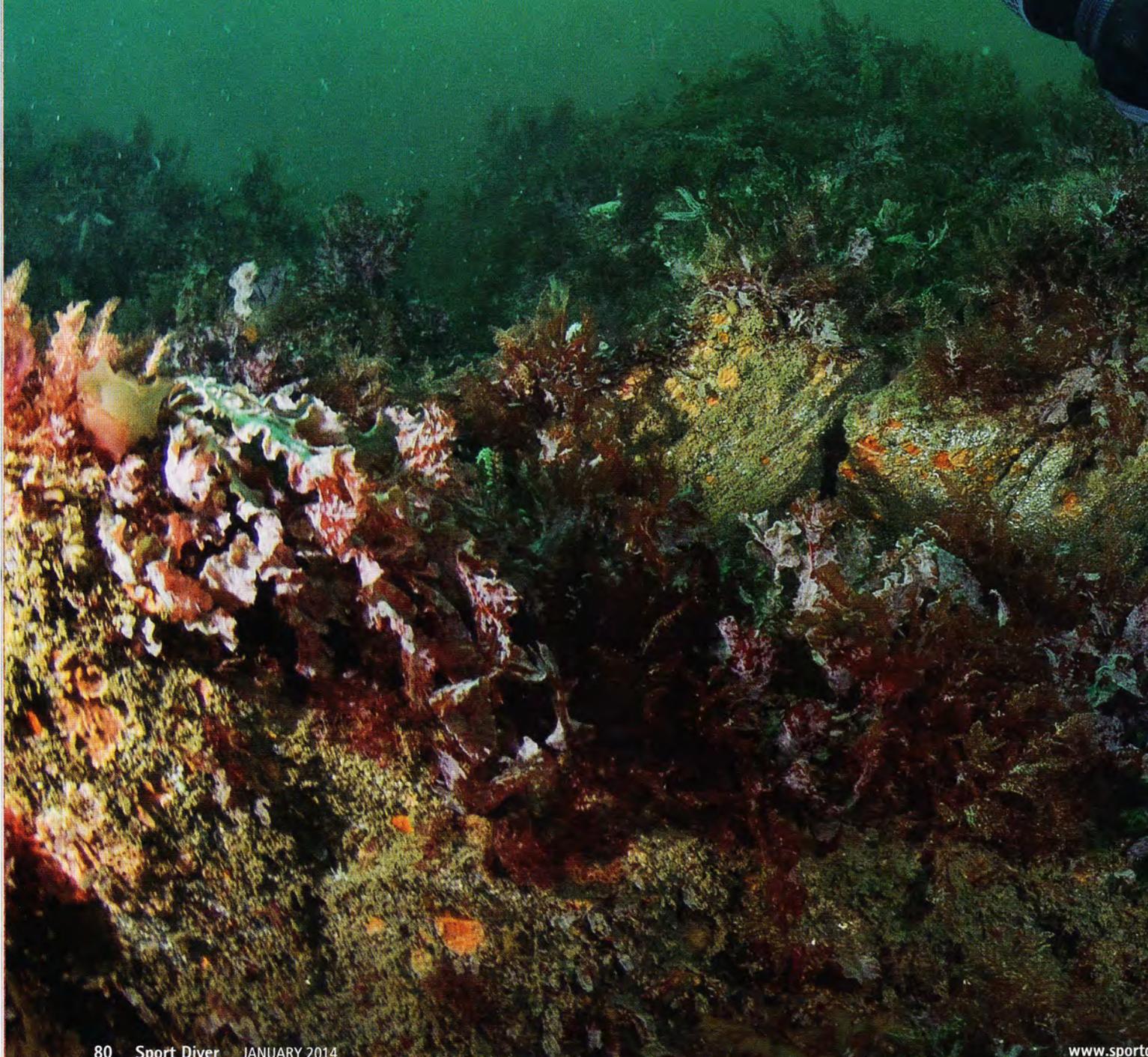


www.sportdiver.co.uk





"I have to confess that when the invitation came through in an email asking me if I would like to attend a BAD diving course, I was initially somewhat perturbed and rather offended"





Want to be a **BAD DIVER?**

Experienced instructor David Jones took umbrage when someone invited him to attend a BAD diving course, but he soon discovered it was more about becoming an underwater Indiana Jones rather than besmirching his scuba reputation

Photographs by DAVID JONES





I have to confess that when the invitation came through in an email asking me if I would like to attend a BAD diving course, I was initially somewhat perturbed and rather offended.

After 35 years of pretty consistently sticking my head underwater, I was fairly confident that I could hold my own among my fellow devotees of sub-aquatic sports when it came to ability. I certainly wasn't in need of any corrective training akin to a driving awareness course in lieu of points for a speeding offense!

However, I had jumped to completely the wrong conclusion - this was an invitation to undertake the Basic Archaeological Diver course. It was a new one on me, but I have to admit I was intrigued. I have always been fascinated by all things archaeological and like nothing more than a good Wilbur Smith romp through ancient Egypt, or a Nat Geo documentary on Mayan ruins; in fact, even Baldrick getting over-excited on Time Team is enough to grab my interest - well, sometimes.

And while I was aware that the Nautical Archaeology Society ran courses, I had never really felt like going down that route. However, the BAD course was different. It was a PADI Distinctive Speciality, which appeared to place a lot of emphasis (like all good PADI courses) on fun. Written in part by Ginge Crook of MAST (Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust), who I had known for many years, had taught on an IDC, and have the greatest respect for, I thought I would give it a go.

The course I attended was run in Plymouth over two days. During the first day we covered quite a lot of theory, but it was all put across in an interesting way - and it was all relevant! The first aim was to examine what archaeology is, before moving onto the dos and don'ts of marine archaeology, and this elicited lots of anecdotal participation from the students on the programme. This was all about the organisations and legislation that you need to have a grasp off. Why was the UB81 changed from being



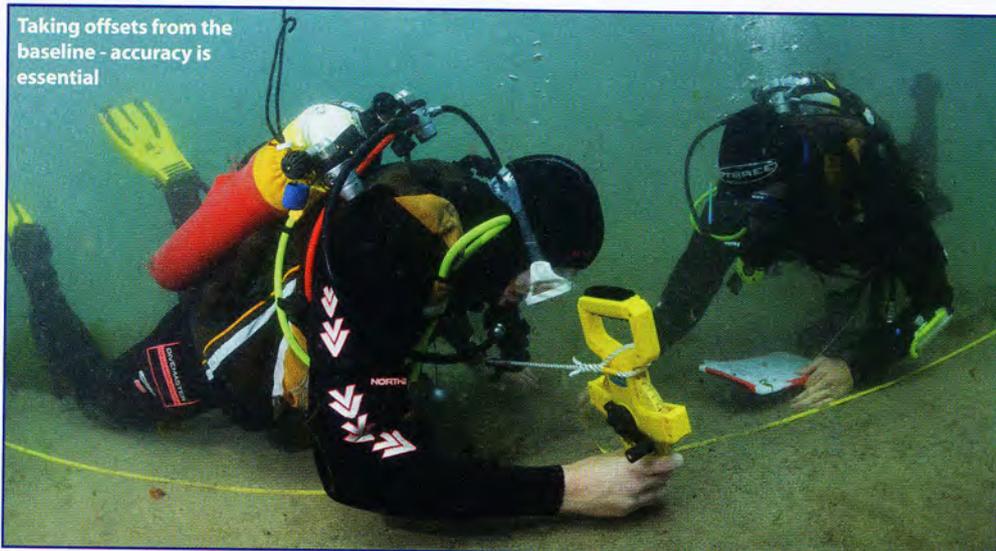
Writing down figures, in water



Measuring from the base line



Trilateration



Taking offsets from the baseline - accuracy is essential



All points of the are measured

A wipeboard is the marine archaeologist's best friend



Putting new-found knowledge to good use on the wreck of the Coronation



BASIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIVER – POTTED HISTORY

You don't get very far off the coast of England before you bump into a shipwreck: we have wrecks off our coast dating back to the Bronze Age, bearing witness to hundreds, if not thousands, of years of trade in cargo, people and ideas – and wars. They and their artefacts can tell stories that even the history books can't.

The PADI Distinctive Specialty course created by the Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust (MAST) aims to equip divers with the basics of underwater archaeology, how to record and interpret the thousands of wrecks off the coast of the UK and beyond – and there are more wrecks off the coast of the UK than any other country on Earth. The course is written and designed by maritime archaeologists with experience in a great variety of underwater sites around the world. It is all part of a cunning plan, of course, to recruit a new generation of eyes and ears to become the guardians of our underwater cultural heritage. The only hope we have of preserving our future is by learning from our past, by recording and appreciating our wrecks – these vessels represented society's most-developed or technologically advanced pieces of equipment, comparable to today's spacecraft. Enter the vast amphibian army of fearless British sports divers. Armed with little more than tape measures and cameras, students learn over two days just how much of a difference they can make in preserving our underwater heritage.

Included in the price of a BAD course with MAST in Plymouth is a reduced price voucher to dive the Coronation protected wreck site, guided by one of the licensees, expert on the site and its history. All the profits from the course contribute to underwater heritage research projects. Thanks to its popularity, these proceeds have so far paid for the conservation of two of the 17th century Swash Channel wreck carvings.

Jessica Berry
CEO, Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust
www.thisismast.org

"I know an awful lot of divers whose idea of a rummage dive includes carrying those well-known dive accessories, the crowbar, lump hammer and 50kg lift bag that could be well advised to attend this programme for that reason alone!"

a protected wreck to a controlled wreck under the Protection of Military Remains Act? How do I go about getting a visitor's license to dive on a protected site like the HMS A1 submarine? If I find a wreck, is it mine? When is something flotsam and when is it jetsam? Should we be applying for a license every time we dive the SS Mendi? Is the Receiver of Wreck a real person and do they bite? Rather than being boring (which you might have expected being all about legal stuff) it wasn't. In fact, it was all rather fascinating and while I thought I knew the 'rules of the road', as it were, I clearly didn't. I know an awful lot of divers whose idea of a rummage dive includes carrying those well-known dive accessories, the crowbar, lump hammer and 50kg lift bag that could be well advised to attend this programme for that reason alone!

From there we moved on to some basic archaeological techniques. We learned about dating techniques, including typology (a simple method of making comparisons), stratigraphy, which examines 'layers', and scientific techniques.

The practical 'surveying' techniques were covered in the classroom before moving out to do a dry run in the car park. The course covered the various site surveying alternatives and explained how the art is in selecting the most-appropriate technique

for the site. We then took those techniques and jumped into Bovisand harbour, where we suddenly realised that the edict 'prior planning and preparation' might have been useful. Identifying what to measure through an initial 'rough' site recce was essential. Results were drawn up and apart from a couple of wayward offsets, it was not too bad (no pun intended). The following day was more practical application on two open water dives, establishing control points, undertaking offsets and trilateration on a variety of 'archaeological' finds, and then drawing everything up.

At the end of this two-day programme I felt extremely satisfied. I knew a whole lot more about maritime archaeology and I had a lot of fun. The day following the course some of us decided to stay on and dive the wreck site of the Coronation. It is a protected site but we were all able to dive it by applying for a visitor's license issued by English Heritage. Well, I didn't know that before I had become a BAD diver! ■

Courses are currently available in Plymouth through MAST (www.thisismast.org), in Portsmouth through Triton Scuba (www.tritonscuba.co.uk), and in Tyne and Wear through Cormeton Dive Support (www.cormetondivesupport.com)