

DIVEFEST 2011

I decided after reading about the success of divefest 2010 that Arlene and I were going to attend this year's event. After asking around in the club I was to be joined by Phil Bennett, Kirsty, Mick Harrison and Fiona. I decided to take the caravan and the others were going to be camping.

I arrived first on the Wednesday and once settled had a look round the campsite. BSAC had booked the Pentewan Sands site at Mevagissey for the long weekend and only divefest ticket holders were allowed in.



There were two indoor swimming pools (one with flumes for the kids and one for more serious swimmers) a gym and clubhouse which served breakfasts and evening meals, though the drinks were a bit pricey. Just outside the clubhouse there were snack bar, shop and a kid's play area. The toilet/shower blocks were both clean and spacious, and within a couple of miles there were both Tesco and Asda supermarkets. Pentewan village is a two minute walk with a pub, B+B, dive centre and not much else.



Thursday came and the weather was great so Arlene and I decided to visit the Eden Project which was just a few miles from the campsite, we spent about four hours looking round the bio domes which house rainforests, Californian, S. African and European plant and fauna, then there are the extensive outdoor gardens to stroll round. By the time we got back to base the others had arrived and that evening we had a BBQ and the odd sweet sherry.



We had pre booked our diving with Sal diving through the divefest website, our plan was to dive Friday, Saturday and Monday two dives a day. Saturday night was to be the big party night so we opted not to dive Sunday. They were well organised with rib divers (you could bring your own) being launched straight from the beach and hardboats leaving from Mevagissey harbour about three miles away. Parking was "interesting" as was driving through the very narrow streets to get to and from the harbour.



Our first dive Friday was on the Kanteong Dredger at 3500ton she was the world's largest dredger in her day. She was on tow from the builder's yard in Holland to the Far East when she capsized in a storm off Eddystone. She was then abandoned and drifted down the coast to Fowey where she sank on 8th March 1937. She is broken into two parts and there are large shoals of fish hidden inside. Access is good as many of the outer plates have fallen away and we encountered several large squid which approached divers without fear.

Our second dive was at Black Head Rock a site strewn with boulders where we saw dogfish but little else.

Friday afternoon there was a Top hats and Tiara's afternoon tea to celebrate the royal wedding, with games and simulators for families and that night we ate at the clubhouse, the meals were reasonably priced and there was plenty on the plate.

Saturday dives were again the Dredger which we didn't mind as there was still plenty we hadn't seen, followed by an unnamed scenic dive which was gullies covered with kelp (yawn).



Saturday afternoon had more entertainment in the form of a circus skills workshop, more games, a survival skills walk along the beach with Andy Torbet, beach Olympics and dolphin rescue demonstration. From 6 o'clock there was a curry/Chilli night followed by the groups Gallowglass & Rock the Party playing in the main marquee. There was a Sci-Fi theme fancy dress with some excellent costumes on display.

So to Sunday morning and we were glad we decided not to dive, not because of bad heads but the heavens opened up with torrential downpours and all diving was cancelled. So we spent time looking round the “hub” marquee entering competitions and chatting to Monty Halls



who was signing copies of his latest book. In the afternoon there was a repeat of Saturday’s entertainment

Sunday night there was more entertainment in the form of The Mighty Offbeats a very good ska band and hog roast /burger bar in the main marquee. It was nice that the organisers didn’t object to people bringing their own booze to the entertainments throughout the weekend.

Monday arrived with the rain easing but sadly not the winds so again diving was cancelled. A lot of people started packing up and leaving.

Throughout the weekend there were try dives, Kirsty had a go and Phil tried out a rebreather on Sunday.

The weekend officially closed at 1 o’clock, Phil & Kirsty decided to go home a day early, Mick & Fiona went to the Eden Project and Arlene and I went to the Lost Gardens of Heligan (yes we did find it) which is 200 acres of woodland, and gardens.



We all had such a great time we have decided to come back next year and possibly bring our own boat.

Kev W