


Swanage Pier Dive Plan and Information

Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th May 2010

Organiser	<p>Steve Begg</p> <p>T: 01438-369331 M: 07970-132884 E: steve@nextmedia.co.uk</p>
Objectives	<p>To enjoy a weekend of diving beneath and around Swanage Pier. Where applicable, for trainee and newly qualified Ocean Divers to gain their first sea dive experience in the relative safety of Swanage Bay. This is also a great venue for you to hone your underwater photography skills.</p> <p>This venue would be ideal for trainee Sports Divers to gain Dive Marshall experience. For anyone wishing to do specific training, please discuss this with your training officer and the dive manager to see if this can be accommodated.</p> <p>If there are sufficient Dive Leaders for Ocean Diver trainees, more experienced dive buddies may wish to use the shuttle to dive, for example, the wreck of the S.S. Kyarra (22m-30m) or The Betsy Anna (20m-24m).</p>
Dive Manager	<p>Steve Begg</p> <p>A final review of the predicted weather, site conditions, risk assessment and buddy pairing will be conducted during the week leading up to the event. Please monitor email, scuba-text and the club website for last minute information.</p>
Deputy Dive Manager	<p>A deputy will be nominated before each day to act as Deputy Manager and will take over responsibility when the Dive Manager is in the water having his own dive.</p>
Dive Marshall	<p>A Dive Marshall shall be appointed by the Dive Manager for each dive on the day.</p>
Dive Site	<p>The pier is some 195m long, is in sheltered water and can be dived at any state of the tide. Swanage has a very low tidal range (2m max) and gentle tidal currents (even with spring tides). Diving is shallow, safe and gently slopes to a typical maximum depth of 5m at the end of the pier. Visibility is usually between 3m to 5m. Access is down steps on the inshore side of the pier by the gents toilets.</p> <p>From the shore, the pier runs initially at about 13° from magnetic North, turning in three stages to 78° (roughly 40m + 75m + 85m).</p> 
Pier History	<p>The old pier was constructed in 1859/60 and built for shipping local stone – you can still see the some of the tramways connecting the pier area to the centre of the town. To cope with ever increasing cargo and day-tripper traffic, the first pile of the new pier was driven in November 1895 and the pier opened in March 1897.</p>

Mid Herts Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC Branch #1784)

Marine Life	In the Summer months the pier legs are completely covered with invertebrate life and the marine animals are varied and prolific including:- sea squirts, sponges, hydroids, Tom Pot blennies, gobies, wrasse, sea bass, john dories, grey mullet, lobsters, squat lobsters, cuttle fish, squid, shoals of pollack, hundreds of spider and edible crabs, anemones with their tentacles wafting in the current and snails and hermit crabs going about their business. Towards the far end of the pier there is a bench, and there are numerous girders littering the seafloor. The pier posts are covered in barnacles and kelp.
Directions	It is roughly 155 miles from North Herts to Swanage Pier and takes roughly 3h15m (plus breaks) to get there. Fuel will cost you between £30 and £60 – depending on your car's MPG. The route is broadly A1(M), M25, M3, M27 (at Southampton), A31, then to Bournemouth/Poole. From here, there are two routes – the longer around Wareham and Corfe Castle, or the shorter across the Sandbanks car ferry, coming into Swanage from the North via Studland.
Parking	For those taking their car, there is very limited parking (38 spaces only) available on the Pier. On Bank Holiday weekends, the pier <i>normally</i> opens at 7:00am and its car park is often full by 7:30am (7:45 latest). There is a nearby car park 200m up the hill south of the pier. For divers, the Pier Trust provides trolleys for you to lug your gear from the car to the dive entry points. These are essential if you are unfortunate to not get a pier parking space – where they allow you to unload your car of scuba gear just outside the gates.
Costs	There is no deposit required for this trip - the cost of travel, food and accommodation is to be organised by yourself. The Pier Trust charges £2.00 per day for divers and £6.00 per day for car parking.
Accommodation	For those wishing to stay overnight there are plenty of good B&Bs from around £60 to £100 per night for two sharing. There are nearby caravan and camping sites at very reasonable rates. Note that this is a Bank Holiday weekend and booking your accommodation at least 2 weeks in advance is recommended. Further help can be found from the Swanage Tourist Information Centre on 01929-422885
Equipment	You will need full open water kit, delayed SMB & reel (if you plan to dive away from the pier), appropriate cylinders and maybe a compass if you have one. It is advised that you have a drysuit as the sea temperature will be around 12°C (air temperature should be 16°C). As this is a shallow sea dive, ensure that you bring an extra 2kg or 3kg of extra weights for your weight belt. Divers Down, the dive shop situated on the Pier, sells a range of kit if you should have any kit failures or leave any essentials behind. Full equipment hire is available at £40 per day (£70 for the weekend) – but it is advisable to book ahead.
Air	Please arrive with a full cylinder of air (or arrive early enough to ensure a fill at the dive shop). Subsequent fills are available from Divers Down at the end of the Pier. Fills are £3.30 for 10L/12L and £3.50 for 15L. Nitrox is also available for 10L/12L up to 39% at £7.50 per fill.

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<p>Tides, Sunrise & Sunset (Saturday 29th)</p>	<p>Slack water 1hr before and 6hrs after High Water (Dover) Low Tide 04:50 hours High Tide 09:51 hours (Spring Tide) Low Tide 17:00 hours</p> <p>Sunrise 05:03 hours Sunset 21:08 hours</p>
<p>Tides, Sunrise & Sunset (Sunday 30th)</p>	<p>Slack water 1hr before and 6hrs after High Water (Dover) Low Tide 05:26 hours High Tide 10:31 hours (Spring Tide) Low Tide 17:35 hours</p> <p>Sunrise 05:02 hours Sunset 21:09 hours</p>
<p>Dive Plan</p>	<p>For each day, divers should plan to congregate at the open air café just outside the Pier gates for 8:15am for the dive briefing (and breakfast !!). Please note that you may wish to arrive earlier to guarantee a pier parking slot.</p> <p>Two dives will be planned for each day, either side of high tide. It is possible to enjoy a third dive (with the DOs approval), late Saturday afternoon, around low tide – however, from the steps, there is a long walk over rocks to reach the water’s edge beneath the start of the pier.</p>
<p>Main site risks</p>	<p>The most popular entry point is via the steps nearby the Gents toilets and the lower few steps can be very slippery (especially on exit when you are tired and only have sea-legs). Note that there is no handrail – and it is advised that fins are fitted when in the water, or sitting on the lower two steps.</p> <p>You will be sharing the pier with anglers – where there is a risk of entanglement if you stray from under the pier (be also aware of lead bombs coming down from crab lines).</p> <p>There are pleasure boats in the area – and risk from propellers – if you dive away from the pier. Note that at low tide, boats can fit beneath the pier and props can be inches above your head !!</p> <p>At peak times, congestion is a risk – it is all too easy to follow the wrong buddy !! Standard buddy separation procedures apply, but come up beneath the pier if possible to avoid entanglement with angler’s lines.</p> <p>Under the pier, be aware of the cross-braces which join the main piles – especially when these are at water level, where they are difficult to see.</p> <p>The pier dive is very shallow and it is possible to dive for up to 75 minutes. With this, and sea temperatures of only 12°C, there is a risk of getting too cold.</p>
<p>Emergency Cover</p>	<p>A full First Aid kit, along with Oxygen and an AED unit, will be available onshore. The location of the kit, and the names of qualified personnel will be made known to everyone on each day. In an emergency, the helplines below may be of further assistance.</p>

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<p>Helplines</p>	<p>Divers Down – 01929-423565 Swanage Boat Charters – 01929-427064</p> <p>Poole Hyperbaric Hotline 1 – 01426 316636 Poole Hyperbaric Hotline 2 – 03367 771883 Institute of Naval Medicine - Gosport Hotline – 07831 151523 DAN National Emergencies – 01224 585747 Portland & Weymouth Coastguard – 01305 760439 DDRC Poole – 01202 678278 DAN Non-emergencies – 01970 821222 Portland Hospital – 01305 860111 DCI Poole A&E – 01202 442202 Medical Dorchester A&E – 01305 251150 Portland Police – 01305 821205 Marine Call (Lyme Regis to Selsey Bill and 12 miles offshore) – 0891 505357 Onshore – Dorset & Hampshire – 0891 505303</p>
<p>Other Information and Amenities</p>	<p>The Pier is open during the Summer from 7am and closes approximately one hour before dusk. On the Pier itself, there is ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a small shop, selling food, drinks and snacks • a Ladies and a Gents toilet, each with a hot shower • a dive shop, Divers Down, selling air refills, kit, etc. • a fresh water shower (free) to wash down you and your kit <p>Nearby the pier gates (on the opposite side of the road) is a superb open air café which sells the honourable all-inclusive British fried breakfast plus a proper mug of tea for around £5.</p> <p>Swanage town centre is full of shops and many cafés, fish & chip shops, pubs, to cater for every need – and is a 10 minute walk away from the pier.</p> <p>For non-divers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steam trains run to and from Norden calling at Corfe Castle and Harmans Cross • Boats operate to Bournemouth, Poole, the Isle of Wight and along the Purbeck Heritage Coast • Durlston Country Park operates an 'Under The Pier Show' • The Pier Shop has an exhibition of pier history, a display of model RNLI Lifeboats, a collection of saucy postcards by Donald McGill and several 'Penny in the Slot' machines in working order, as well as artefacts donated to the Pier by Divers on show