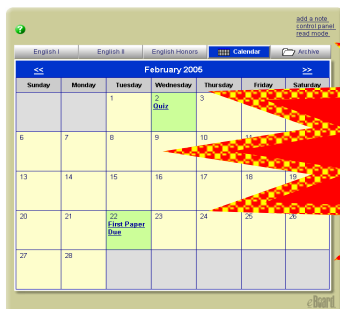


CGSB SCUBA CLUB NEWS

www.InvictaDivers.com/CGSB.htm

Welcome to your 17 December 2007 copy of the
CGSB SCUBA Club News



Click here for the Club
CALENDAR

www.InvictaDivers.com/CGSBCalendar.htm

CONGRATULATIONS !!!

Congratulations to James Hyde and to Jack Burgess who both received award certificates at the (Year 11) school prizegiving in November. James and Jack have both qualified as Advanced Open Water Divers, able to dive down to 30 metres, worldwide.

In addition, Jack received a certificate as an Emergency First Responder, able to operate equipment to restart or rephase hearts (an Automated External Defibrillator or 'AED'), to administer Emergency Oxygen, perform CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation) and give First Aid.

Happy Crimbo and New Year !!

We wish you a very peaceful Christmas and a reflective New Year

We hope that you will exercise the privileges of your diving qualifications and be a frequent diver in 2008.

As soon as it is warm enough, we will be making regular dives in the UK in 2008 (there is diving all year round for the hardy).

There will be local, accessible dives at Leybourne Lakes, day shore diving on the south coast, boat dives in the English Channel, weekend diving trips to the southwest coast and to Wales, and week-long diving holidays abroad during half terms and end-of-term breaks. And, of course, there are practice sessions at the pool on Sundays.

We hope to see you having fun underwater !!!

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“NUTHIN 2DO WID DIVIN”

Out of Sight, out of Mind

Sight is, perhaps, the most important of our senses and the one which we rely on most of all. It is also a sense that we take for granted and one of those things we don't realise how precious it is until we've lost it.

I've just had laser eye surgery to correct my eyesight. Things are still settling down but, for the first time, I'm able to get by without glasses all day – and to see clearer underwater too.

If you need glasses, I sympathise with you. Apart from all the usual jibes like “four eyes” and “should have gone to SpecSavers” you experience the nuisance of always having to find the wretched things in order to see clearly. Going from the cold outdoors into a warm room indoors means you can't see for five minutes or so as condensation forms on the lenses and gradually clears from your mobile double-glazing. They are a nuisance for sports, getting sweaty when you're hot, the frames limiting your field of vision and, if you turn round quickly, they can fly off your face. Not too useful being without them in the swimming pool, either.

Nowadays the lenses are made of plastic, but they used to be glass – and heavy, making those dents in your nose. I also remember wearing glass glasses and getting hit in the face with a racquet when I was playing squash (*gamesmanship, ha !*) and getting shards of glass in my eye – apparently the scars are still there on my corneas.

On a sunny day you need to fiddle around with clip-on sun glasses, or have a second pair of prescription sunglasses at the ready. If you're lucky, you've got “Reactolite” lenses that darken in the sun, but do they ever change quick-enough? And then you have to fumble around indoors as you wait for them to lighten up again.

Always getting scratched, always needing cleaning and, in my case, always getting sat on and crushed. *Aaaargh !!!*

I could never get on with contact lenses. Apart from being a big wimp when it came to putting them in, I just burst into tears for two hours when I put them in, and an hour when I took them out again so that's about a quarter of my useful day lost already just waiting for my eyes to stop streaming and to be able to see anything at all. Besides that, you need to put your glasses on to see where to put your lenses in !!! My problem, apparently, was very thin corneas which made my eyes really sensitive. Plus I had astigmatism (*odd shaped balls, to you and me*) which meant I couldn't wear cheap modern standard thin contacts, I had to have some expensive horrid bulky things cast in some Victorian iron furnace somewhere.

I did go to be assessed for laser surgery years ago, but my corneas were too thin to be able to reshape them. Nothing for it, then, but to send off for the white-stick catalogues. And in Braille, too.

Happily, nowadays, technology has improved, and I now just scraped in for surgery.

There is a two-part assessment procedure: your eyes are assessed first, to see if they are suitable for laser surgery. All the usual eye tests plus a few more. They poke about and a laser “maps” the surface of your eyes. They put drops in to dilate your pupils so they can have a good look inside. This makes you incredibly light-sensitive, so you need someone to lead you home by the arm afterwards.

In the second part, they assess your wallet to see if it is suitable for surgery. They want to cut a lot out of that, too, and it's not an NHS procedure.

The day of the op is tense, with a lot of waiting for various assessments and preparations. They re-map your eyes to double-check their previous readings, and that means those dilating eyedrops again. Finally, you meet the surgeon who is going to fire the thing at you (be nice to him) – though most of this meeting is signing disclaimer forms – it isn't going to work, you're going to die, you're never going to see again ... so you sign quickly to get on with it.

There are two types of procedure. In the latest method, they top the eye, like opening a boiled egg, the laser zaps the layer beneath to do the reshaping and the opened flap is put back to heal up. With the best (=most expensive) options selected, you could be up and running again with improved vision in just two hours (*says the advertising material*).

Unfortunately, my thin corneas aren't up to this and the second method is to scrape away the surface cells by hand.

Alcohol is used to loosen the surface cells (*the surgeon had some alcohol to hand ... I didn't know whether this was a good sign or not...*) and then he gets to work. Plenty of practice with lottery scratch cards probably pays dividends. Your eyelids are pinned back, so you can't blink and you just can't avoid seeing everything that's going on. Happily, they squirt a local anaesthetic in, so it doesn't hurt. Then it's a squirt with water to rinse, and the laser gets to work. You can't see it flash, but you can hear it click, and you can just smell something like burning hair. Another squirt with water and the jobs done – then the other eye and it's all over. The whole procedure takes maybe twenty minutes. Then into a dark room, as you eyes are very light sensitive.

They check you a day later (*I guess to make sure they didn't sneeze and burn right through to your collar - that piercing in my eyelid is just a fashion statement, honest*), then after three days more, and a week more, and then a month after that. In the procedure I had, the cells that they scraped away have to grow back and it takes longer to heal than the other procedure with the flap. Every day, my focus changes as a few more cells have formed, and it feels like you have lots of pieces of grit in your eyes (*its worth it though !*). There are eyedrops to put in, and you can have painkillers too. From time to time, your eyes are painfully light sensitive and then, eventually, you're able to bear the light and start to focus on things. A few moments at a time at first, as your eyes get ever so watery, and then you can focus for longer and longer and start to read and catch up on emails and things.

If you do need glasses, I would encourage you to get assessed for laser eye correction. They won't do it until you're 18 (21 preferred) but it could offer you a lifetime of easy vision without the disadvantages and hassle of glasses or contacts. It is expensive, but it is once-only, and think of the *long term* costs of glasses and contacts. I hope that, one day, it is a procedure that could be offered to everyone who needs it, as an *entitlement* on the NHS. *Write to your MP now !!!*

CGSB SCUBA CLUB NEWS

www.InvictaDivers.com/CGSB.htm

Let us know what kind of diving you would like to do,
so that we can organise it for you

YOUR OPINION REALLY DOES COUNT

Please click on this link and complete an online survey so we know what kind of activities to organise for you.

<http://InvictaDivers.co.uk/tinc?key=kzYxhwto&formname=CGSBDivng>

You can vote for and against ideas, strongly or mildly and, *most* importantly,
you can write in your own ideas and suggestions.

There are already ideas like diving with seals, to shore dives, to non-diving activities ranging from paintballing to dive-shows.

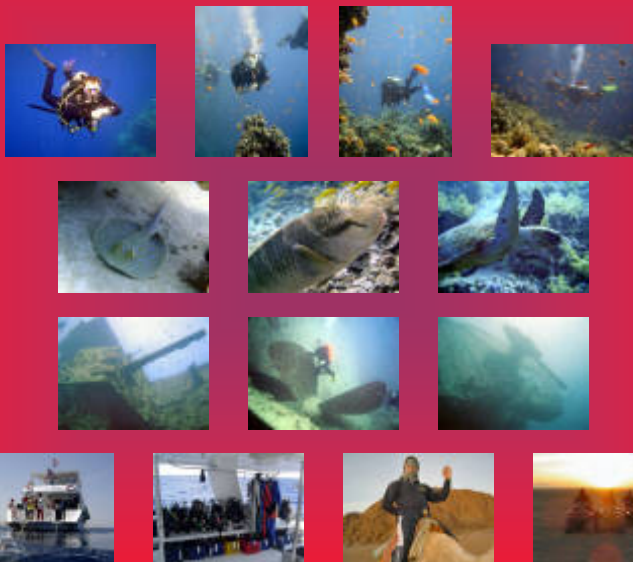
Note: if this link doesn't take you to a survey form when you click on it, try cutting and pasting the link into your browser. If that doesn't work *please do let us know !!*

(P.S. you may need to activate Java in your browser settings)

RED SEA DIVING HOLIDAY

"The best diving available to us on a short haul flight"

We're off to the Red Sea for a diving holiday for half term (February 17th - 24th)
Will you be joining us, diving in warm clear waters, or shivering in the UK ?



For a description of the holiday, and more photographs, click on this link:-

www.InvictaDivers.com/CGSBRedSeaHoliday.htm

LOOKING BACK . . . Click on this link for backcopies of CGSB SCUBA Club Newsletters

www.InvictaDivers.com/CGSBNewsletters.htm

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Lucky for Some !

A big "thank you" to everyone who helped out at the SCUBA-Taster sessions in September

13 new CGSB students have embarked on their Open Water courses, ready to hit the water (when it thaws out again) in the Spring.

PADI PRIZE DRAW

Enter the monthly PADI prize draw for introducing friends and family to the world of SCUBA Diving

Click on (or cut and paste) this link to read more>
www.InvictaDivers.com/CGSBPADI DiversGetDivers.htm

Looking ahead to Diving Holidays in 2008

Generally, we aim to have a holiday or activity for you for each half term or main term break. The long summer holiday is a *bit* of an exception, as you tend to be taking family holidays during this time - and anyway - it is a *great* time to dive in the UK, so we have lots of activities closer to home that you can join in with !!

(but do let us know in our survey – if enough people want to go in the summer, we'll arrange something for you !)

Dates for your diaries so far include:-

February Half Term – Red Sea Diving Holiday

Early Spring Break (April) – Gozo Diving Holiday

Whitsun Half Term (May) – we are toying with a Diving Holiday to Cuba (depending on demand, so let us know !!!), or we'll be going to our favourite, the Red Sea

October Half Term – Red Sea Diving Holiday

For an overview of holidays and dates, click on this link:-

www.InvictaDivers.com/DivingHolidays.htm

- Do you have any questions ?
- Any ideas and suggestions for the club ?
- Have you been diving on a family holiday ?
- Do you have any news or pictures to publish in the newsletter ?

Let us know ! Send us an email:
CGSBNewsletter@InvictaDivers.com

We hope that Santa brings something "divey" for you !!!

We look forward to diving with you in 2008