

## IPSAC September Newsletter

It's September already, and as the dive season comes to a close it's time to reflect on the season, the coming Autumn mists and those last minute DIY chores before the winter sets in..

Just don't mention the C word its only September! Too late, the Xmas meal has to be planned!.

### Annual General Meeting

This years annual general meeting will be on October 12<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm at Durlston Country Park, followed by the usual DIY buffet.

Please bring a plate of food and a bit of drink with you so we can all have a nosh and a chat.

Important issues regarding the future of the club will be discussed this year, so please, please attend if you can.

### Diving



Nearly

50% planned dives this season have been cancelled due to weather but also very low bookings.

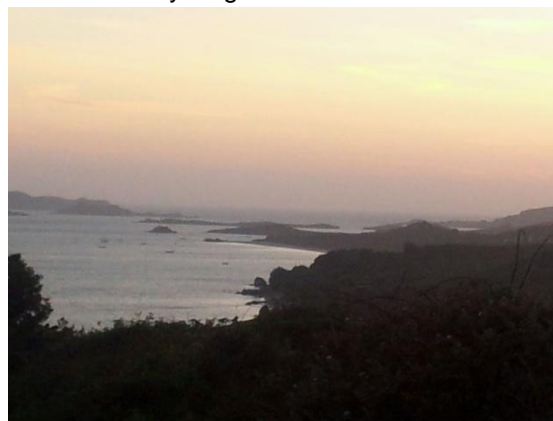
Where dives have taken place, many were only taken by up to 5 divers or fewer. This has resulted in genuine concern on the committee about the future viability of the club and options for keeping the club afloat are being considered. This is why this year's AGM is so important. It's your club and your views need to be heard.

On a positive note, there are still nearly 6 weeks of diving left so book early, get some late dives in, and support the club whilst getting your seaweed covered rocks off!.

Chris the chairman would like to draw peoples attention to a new wreck to the club **The `Heartburn`** which was dived this year.

At 37 meters it's not for the faint hearted but the deck appears to be crawling with Crabs, Lobsters, and now IPSAC divers! One to keep an eye out for in next years dive plan. Book early or I'll have eaten some of them : P

Some of the club went to the Scilly islands in May, and though the weather was a bit ..mmm....drizzly, some excellent diving was had with lots of canon, seabed artifacts from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, more modern wrecks, as well as fab granite sea walls smothered in jewel anemonies. The grey seals were particularly friendly this year, and I was pleasantly surprised to find one in a gully with me on a safety stop. They creep up on you those guys, but are so curious and playful you welcome every single moment with them.



### End Of dive season meal.

This years end of season dive meal will be on Wed 26<sup>th</sup> September, from 7pm at Tawny' s in Swanage.

**Please let me know by Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September if you are coming with your menu selection, as the club has to pay a £5 deposit per head. I won't be chasing you for confirmations or missing menu selections. A sample menu is linked immediately below.**

<http://www.tawnyswinebar.co.uk/menus.php>

### Christmas Meal

Please put **Friday December 14<sup>th</sup>** in your diary and keep an eye out for more information on the venue and start time, menu and prices.

### In other news

Nick Reed has provided an interesting article on the Valentine tanks you may be interested in - see below in thre articles section.

Mike Wilson has added his own cry of joy for the excellent plankton free viz in April see below.....

On a personal note, I'd like to apologise for fewer club organised meals this year. I plan to get back to monthly meals in the new year to ensure both diving and non diving members all get together when they can, and lets face, it to cheer us all up in the dark days of winter. .

That's it,for now,

Kind Regards,

Dominic.

Social Sec.

[dom\\_g11@talktalk.net](mailto:dom_g11@talktalk.net)

01202 280605 home

0792 2054311 text

---

## Articles

### **In praise of April Diving - Mike Wilson**

What idiot wants to dive on 1<sup>st</sup> April?

On 16<sup>th</sup> March 1870 the paddle steamer S.S, Normandy slipped her moorings in Southampton having loaded with mail, 33 passengers and general cargo. She steamed through the Needles Channel and headed for Jersey but then ran into a bank of fog. About 30 miles SW of the Needles she collided with S.S. Mary which unfortunately smashed two of her boats. There were 60 on board and the boats remaining only had a capacity for 32. In the fog, the Mary was unable to find any of the remaining 28.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 dive boat Wight Spirit motored out on the same course as the Normandy, but the sun shone on us. The chilly water (6°C) meant no plankton and having had no rain for months the visibility was a superb 10 metres. At a depth of 48 metres I switched off my torch and looked skyward though the remains of the portside paddle. There was sufficient ambient green light to clearly see the remains of this beautiful wreck.

So who wants to dive on 1<sup>st</sup> April? Me please!

**Valentine Tanks Article**  
**Nick Read**

**Positions**

Tank with turret                      50 39.436 N                      001 53.465W

Tank without turret                  50 39.424 N                      001 53.328W

**Depth:**                                      15m

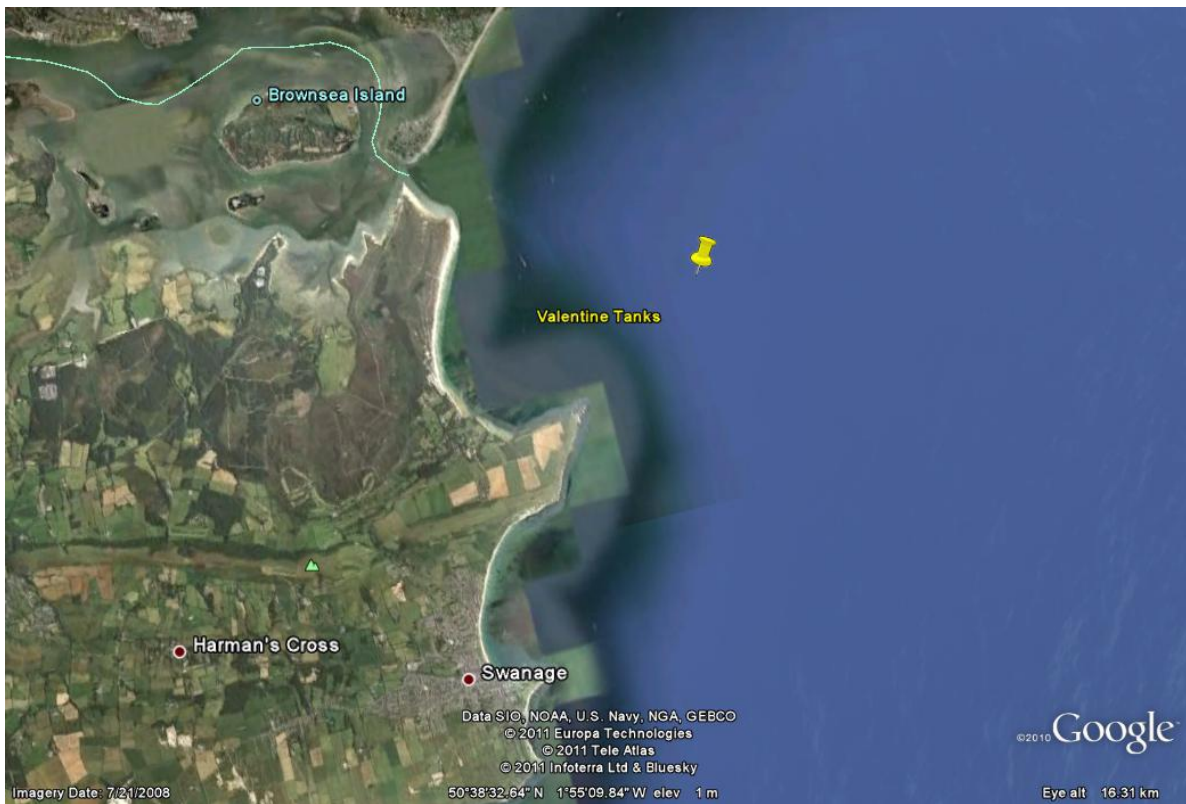
**Seabed:**                                      flat, fine silty sand with gravelly patches

**Suitable for:**                                  Open Water and above

**Type of dive:**                                  Boat Dive

**Boats:**    Poole & Swanage

**Best dive conditions:**                      best at slack water although any state of the tide possible (except for high springs). Best visibility on



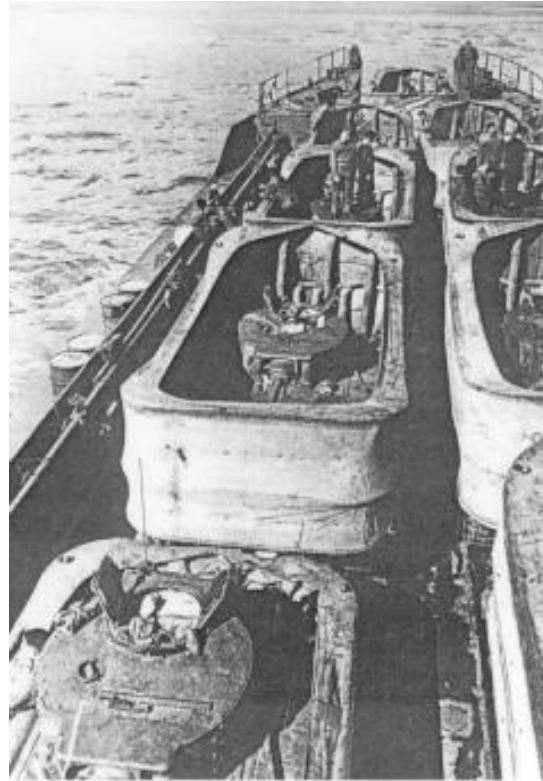
**high water slack**

During the night of 4<sup>th</sup> April 1944 a small fleet of tank landing craft approached Studland Beach. Approximately two miles offshore they dropped their ramps and a flotilla of experimental amphibious Valentine tanks slid into the water. As they drove ashore the wind began to pick up and before long waves were crashing over the

canvas skirts that turned these tanks into amphibious vehicles.

General Sir Robert Ford, was a lieutenant in the crew of one of the tanks. He vividly remembered the disaster.

"Within ten minutes of launching the wind grew stronger, and the waves increased in size, beating against the canvas screen and sloshing over the top. It was quickly obvious that the pump was not adequate at removing the water. Suddenly one of the struts snapped and the canvas screen sagged. Within seconds water poured in, and turning around I saw ahead of us a wave which appeared to be three or four feet higher than the screen. The outcome was inevitable"



Of the tanks launched that night seven never reached the shore and six crew members lost their lives. Over sixty years later the seven tanks still lie on the seabed of Studland Bay. Only two are relatively intact, the others having being blown up in 1987 as a result of a diver bringing up an unexploded shell.

The two remaining tanks lie in 15m of water on a flat seabed. Visited by charter boats from Poole and Swanage they make an ideal first wreck dive for an open water diver or a second dive for more experienced divers.

A temporary buoy marks the tanks during the summer, and this makes an ideal shot line to descend to the wreck. The buoy is attached to the complete tank and, dropping down the line, the shape of the first tank is often obscured by the shoal of bib that surrounds it. The seabed in the area is very flat and the tanks act as artificial reefs, attracting a wide range of marine wildlife. This can present a problem as the wrecks are popular with fishermen. Care must be taken holding onto the shot as it is not uncommon to find hooks and fishing line tangled up with it.

The bib often hang around the shot and simply part to let the diver through. On a sunny day this can be a rather magical experience, with the sun picking up the silver stripes on the fish.

The tank's main gun points upwards, and to the northeast, at around 12m. It forms a useful guide to reach the turret in poor visibility. The hatches to the turret are open and a torch reveals the gun breech and some of the internal workings. There can be ropes trailing around this area and divers should be careful to ensure that gauges etc do not get caught in them.



The rear of the tank is also fairly complete and the hatches to the engine are also open. Over the years the engine compartment has silted up and the engine block is no longer visible.

The seabed lies at around 15m and care should be taken when dropping down to it as the bottom is fairly silty and careless finning or an uncontrolled descent can result in the visibility dropping dramatically.

Having explored the top of the wreck it is worth spending a good deal of time exploring the nooks and crannies around the track wheels. Apart from a section on the port side, most of the tracks have been lost or are buried in the silt. This has opened up the structure and provided hiding holes for edible crabs, tom pot blennies, prawns and even conger eels.



The driver's compartment is fully open and there are few features to be seen. Whether this is due to the action of the Navy or just the ravages of time is unclear.

The other tank lays around 90m away and there is usually a rope joining the two. As with the shot

line care should be taken pulling along the rope as there is often fishing debris entangled with it. At first glance the seabed looks fairly featureless but closer inspection reveals creatures such as slipper limpets, burrowing anemones, hermit crabs and fan worms.

The rope leads you to the upturned turret of the second tank. The lip where the turret sat in the main body of the tank is clearly visible as is the breach of the gun. While the main body of the tank is fairly recognisable as a tank it is in much worse condition than the first tank. The tracks are gone completely and the track wheels lie at odd angles next to the hull. As with the other tank exploration of the holes reveal a lot of marine life.



Depending on the dive plan you can either send up a delayed SMB from this tank and ascend or make your way back to the first tank and ascend the shot line.

The tanks are only around 5m by 3m and so many groups arrange for half the group to visit the main tank first while the others go to the turret less tank.

