



# HULLO

**HULL BRANCH No 14  
BRITISH SUB-AQUA  
NEWSLETTER NO 191  
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## Oban 2011

Craig's said he was setting off at 6.00 o'clock. DO said 'oh good, we can have tea before we go'. The DO immediately knew he said something wrong as Craig span around and glared at him 'IN THE MORNING SO WE CAN GET AN AFTERNOON DIVE' so early start it was.

### Wednesday:

We all met at the infamous greasy spoon at the start of the A66 for a bacon butty & coffee. I made sure I was last there so I didn't have to listen to Bob debate upon how much black pudding he was going to have. We were off again, next stop somewhere in Scotland and Craig had the bonus of having Jim in his car to help translate and navigate.

We arrived at Puffin Diving ~8 hrs after setting off. Chucked our belongings into the 2 Chalets and checked into the dive shop about a local check-out dive. Heather Island was chosen and the man in the shop informed us not to take the boats between the Green and Red navigation buoys as it was quite shallow. Craig face was ashen white with shock as he had been

motoring between these buoys for years. 2 boats launched and soon we were at Heather Island. The depth sounder said 12m so you can imagine how surprised DO was as his computer showed 30.2m and still hadn't seen the bottom. Surfaced and swam closer to the island for a pleasant wall dive. Back to the chalets for food and a bit of inter-chalet rivalry. Steph in chalet 2 had cooked an excellent Tuna Pasta bake with garlic bread and green stuff. The others in chalet 1 had something to eat but I'm sure it wasn't as good as ours.

### Thursday:

Up, breakfast, boats loaded and launched. Goto.....Longbenton.....Enter. Blooming heck said the DO, we are 286 miles from the Longbenton. The DO felt well outside his comfort zone and immediately started making excuses about it being too windy, too rainy and too rough. The DO was right (as usual) as it was wet, very windy and very rough but buoyed on by fellow team spirit and Craig's persuasive tone the intrepid trio of boats Stray Lass, Blade Runner and Sea Eagle were off on an adventure and Craig

knew where we were going and kept it secret from the other boats.

We drove past Oban and round the corner to the site of the Breda. This is a large wreck sitting in ~30m of water with the shallowest part at about 15m. Steph and I landed on the upper aft deck, had a bumble around, and peered inside the hold then dropped down to a lower aft deck and over the edge towards the sea bed. It was very cloudy down there so came back up to the deck sections. Just above our deco stop was a region of halocline where the water was a constant fuzzy shimmer. A good dive although vis was poor but certainly worth another a dive or two.

Next the Rondo. Off we set bashing our way through the rough seas. The DO shared his concern with Craig that he may run out of fuel before long. Craig reassured him that we were stopping in a few miles for fuel and air. We pulled into a little jetty and found the fuel pump was broken- bugger! A few phone calls later and we had another fuel option in Lochaline across the water from Mull. Arrived, re-fuelled, air re-fills and burgers and all was sorted. Now up to the Rondo, an unusual wreck in that it ran aground on a reef and then slipped down the reef to lie with bows at ~50m and stern at ~5m giving a great dive profile.

## Friday

The wind had dropped a bit and the sea was a bit calmer and we were off to dive the Thesis and Shuna. The Thesis, a relatively small ship was my favourite dive. We explored the vessel in poor vis. If the vis had been better then it would be an excellent dive.

We then motored to Tobermory for air and fuel re-fills and a bite to eat. This is a beautiful brightly coloured port with good mooring facilities. The plan was to dive the Hispania next but we had missed the slack window and hence were off to the Shuna. Arrived at the site and met two charter boats. When they had finished we dived. The wreck was really dark and after ~20mins we decided to surface.

## Saturday

After a 2<sup>nd</sup> dive on the Breda Craig decided to have a look at The Falls of Lora. Bob had heard of this dive site and was keen to have a go. Beneath Bobs quite plodding methodical demure there is a raging adrenaline junky waiting to get out, our clubs very own Jack Osborn 'adrenaline junky'.

The dive is at the mouth of Lock Etive, a huge sea lock where the opening to the sea is narrow and shallow. This geographical feature means that when the tides change water is funnelled through the narrows at speeds of up to 12 knots.

As you pass through the narrows the loch side sea bed plummets to ~30m and hence can give a really wild drift dive and Bob was already kitted up- proof that he can kit up quickly sometimes. Uncharacteristically Bob hadn't done any research on 'the Falls of Lora' but had heard of them. 'Back in 10 minutes' said Bob as rolled off the RiB clutching his trusty camera. 10mins passed, then 15mins then 18mins. We were picturing Bob stuck 30m down in the powerful stopper at the bottom of the falls or pinned against a rock by the extreme current. Both boat crews were scanning the water for Bob's DSMB and getting quite excited at the prospect of getting rid of Bob. Three crew members were already fighting over Bob's Chinese torch if Bob's body was found. 20mins passed and the excitement was dashed when the familiar dulcet tones were heard 'Hello, that was quite exciting. It was so dark down there I had to use my Chinese torch to see my computer and didn't have any spare hands for the DSMB' The champagne was put back in Craig's boats champagne cooler, Bob was retrieved (sorry) and both boats headed back to Puffin Diving for a wash down and packing up ready for the journey home the next day.

An excellent trip and well organised. The scenery although shrouded in mist, rain & cloud was strangely beautiful. It would be wonderful to see what it is like when the sun shines- a repeat trip Craig!!

## Sunday

We were up early-ish, had breakfast, tidy up chalets, finished packing cars & boats and set off for home.

The 14 club members on the trip were:

Captain Craig and crew Chris Butters, Jim Lawtie, Gavin Jones, Rory Flett  
Captain Pat and crew Bob Higson, Colin Jeffrey, Ron Rookledge, Steve Griffin  
Captain Tony and crew Steph Wattam, Jonno and Big Al

More details of the sites dived can be found on [divernet.com/wreck\\_tours](http://divernet.com/wreck_tours)

Breda: wreck tour 9  
Ronda: wreck tour 35  
Thesis: wreck tour 25  
Shuna: wreck tour 48  
Falls of Lora: google 'dive falls lora' or speak to Bob

**Tony Hodge**