



Once most people take the first plunge, there is no turning back from the healthy and addictive sport of scuba-diving! It has taken the combination of adventure and skill to develop a lifelong passion for many of the SHAPE Sub Aqua Club (SSAC) members. On 20 April, fifteen SSAC divers and family members left, for what is considered by many, as a once in a lifetime trip, to dive in the Red Sea in Hurghada, Egypt. Hurghada is known for its fabulous reefs, multiple wrecks and grand marine life and has become one of the most popular diving destinations.

Among the SSAC group were newly certified divers Victoria Hash, John Orr, Tomasz Gosciniak and Petr Pilnacek all of whom had the rare experience of diving amongst some of the most colourful reefs and marine life as they explored the underworld of the Red Sea. All these divers earned their qualifications with the SSAC. The club provided them with the knowledge and skills required for scuba diving through classroom, pool and open water training, both in the SHAPE pool and a local Belgian quarry.

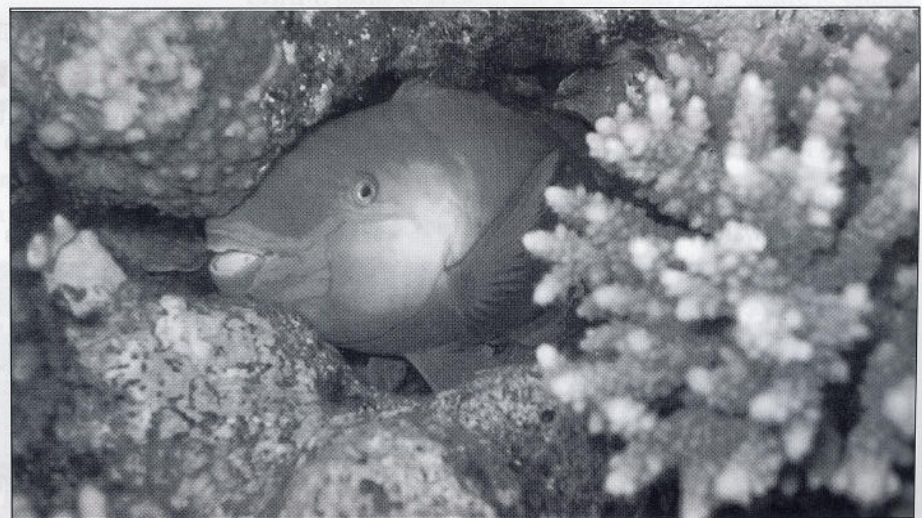


This unique diving experience also provided an opportunity for SSAC member and Dive Instructor, Angelo Leone and assistant training officer and Master Diver, Bill Ostrander to complete course instruction and practical training for previously certified divers; Steve Pratschler, Alois Hejdusek, Greg Pinter, Gary Thompson and Steve Thompson, so that they could gain their advanced diving certificates.

Advanced divers Alan and Liz White took advantage of the 20 metre plus under water visibility in the Red Sea (not found in the quarries in Belgium where SSAC divers train) and experienced the treasure trove of; shipwrecks, reefs, manta rays, moray eels and lion fish. Amongst some of the numerous other types of marine life experienced by many of the members were; sea turtles, clown fish (made famous by the 'Finding Nemo' film), large tuna, octopuses, parrotfish, sea cucumbers, starfish and fan coral.

On day three, SSAC members took a down day to take a side trip and toured Luxor and the famous Valley of the Kings, Valley of the Queens and took a short Nile river cruise. After returning to Hurghada, members spent the rest of their trip diving amongst the reefs, wrecks and marine life in the Red Sea during the day and visiting the sights of Hurghada at night; taking in some of the local Egyptian lifestyle and shopping. Although not a diver herself,

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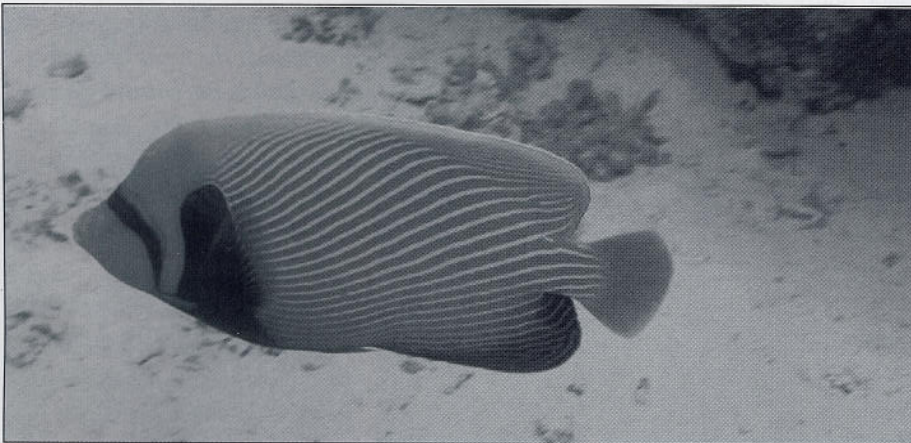
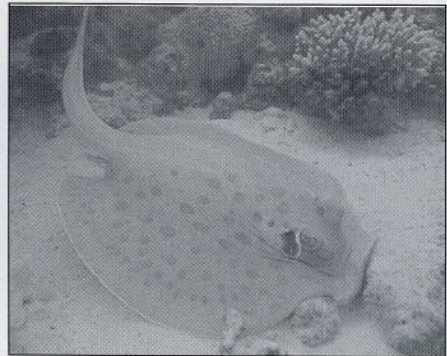
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Colleen Thompson accompanied her husband and son on the trip and took advantage of the great snorkeling and wonderful sights Egypt has to offer.

Throughout the trip, members were provided with a wide variety of Egyptian cuisine, both at the hotel and on board their dive boat. Instructor and trip organizer Angelo Leone said he enjoyed petting the octopuses and playing with one of his

favorite fish, the clown fish. "Not only did our divers get in a total of 11 dives, they also got the opportunity to take in a night dive and get up close and personal to many of the normally quick and skittish fish, whilst they were sleeping on the reefs or sea bottom."

Another highlight for the divers was a visit to the sunken minesweeper El Mina, laying at a depth of about 31 metres off



Hurghada's shore. The opportunity to take advantage of such a trip at a very reasonable cost is something all of these divers will treasure for the rest of their lives. "The diving in Hurghada is absolutely wonderful," said SSAC President Bill Ostrander, "and the great visibility and emerald green waters remind me of the beautiful diving area in my home of Destin, Florida in the US."

If you or someone you know is interested in trying out this addictive sport, getting certified, or is a certified diver looking for a new club to call home, you should make certain you contact the SHAPE Sub Aqua Club. "Our members can get certified for about a third of the price of most commercial diver clubs, both here in Europe and in the US," says Bill. The club does try-dives every Wednesday evening, starting at 1830 hours. To schedule a try-dive or to obtain more information on joining the club and taking advantage of club trips, you can contact the club at [shapesubaqu@yahoo.com](mailto:shapesubaqu@yahoo.com).



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