



**Newsletter No 2**

**Jul/Aug/Sep 2009**

Welcome to the second edition of the Bicheno Dive Centre newsletter.

### **Training update**

Several divers have recently completed some of the advanced training courses on offer here at BDC. Qualifications attained include two new Master Divers, one XTR Gas Blender, two Stress & Rescue Divers and six Nitrox Divers. Additionally, October will see Tasmania's first **XTR Technical Foundation and Advanced Nitrox and Decompression Procedures Courses** being run by Bruce here in Bicheno. These courses will be exclusive to BDC in Tasmania, with the first already full and another starting in November. Certain prerequisite qualifications are needed for participation (including a current diving medical certificate) so phone or email Bruce for further information and to reserve your spot. **Normoxic/Trimix fills and training** are also available at the centre.

And while on the subject of training, Pat Taylor is now running **SSI Accident Management, DAN First Aid, and Oxygen Provider courses**. Pat will arrange for group or individual bookings, and can be contacted on 03 63751046 or via the dive centre.

### **In-store Products**

New dive gear on show includes the latest in the tec-diving range of BCDs - **wings and backplates from Alpha Diving Products**, a great

Aussie company. If you'd like to get the feel of using one of these BCDs underwater then get in touch with Bruce for an obligation-free trial.



Alpha Diving Products is one of the oldest tec-diving companies in the world and has been manufacturing their high quality dive gear for the last 20 years. Another great Alpha product, a new compact stainless steel torch will be available from BDC soon. This torch has a burn time of 3.5 hours and is complemented by a very small battery compartment. We'll include a picture of this product in the next newsletter.

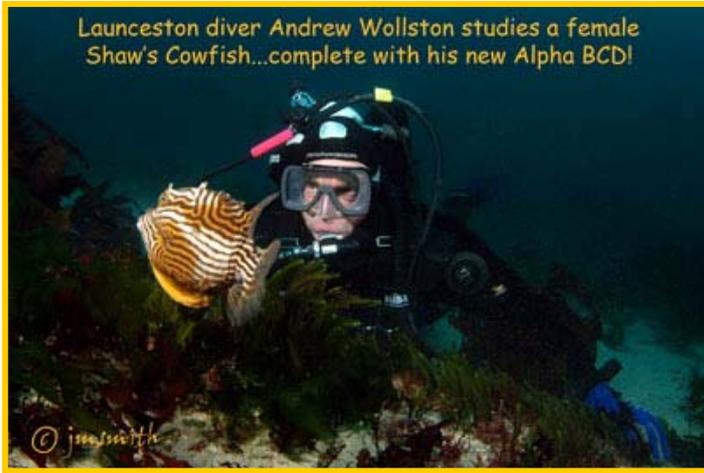
Just as an aside there will be no boat dives available from BDC during 1-11 September, when a group of us will be trying out our new Alpha BCDs and working up a tropical tan in the Solomon Islands ... still a couple of spots available on this trip so get in touch if you're tiring of that winter chill! But don't worry, tank fills, hire gear and equipment sales will still be available from BDC over this period.

Another product now in-store is the new **Evolution 3 drysuit from Pinnacle**. It's a tough, durable front-entry trilam suit, with full custom made-to-measure available. The expanding torso with integrated crotch strap make entry and exit a breeze, and it's nice to see a few splashes of red on this latest design to make you stand out from your buddy. Coupled with their thermal undersuit it's a nice way of staying warm without necessarily having to head for the Solomons! Contact Bruce if you'd like to test dive this great combination.



## Critter Corner

One of the more commonly photographed marine critters around Bicheno is undoubtedly the Shaw's Cowfish, represented on our BDC emblem. This little bloke is a member of the boxfish family and like most of his relatives is generally shy, retreating into the kelp when



divers approach and peeking out from behind the weed. The female is less brightly coloured than the male with brown to black scribbled lines on a white, yellow and brown background, while the male has bright blue lines on a yellow to green background.

These fish are relatively small and not well suited to medium or wide-angle photography, and approaching for close-ups can often prove difficult. The trick seems to be to observe the cowfish from a reasonable distance until it resumes a normal feeding pattern - i.e. blowing a jet of water into the sand and consuming organisms uncovered. Then after another few minutes of quiet observation the fish generally becomes accustomed to the presence of the diver and tolerates a careful approach, sometimes as close as 20cm from the lens.

But if you're not prepared to spend the time waiting for that opportune moment, you can always join us on one of our **monthly night dives**. Like many marine creatures Shaw's Cowfish are attracted by light and will readily pose for photos at night. The only problem then is getting them far enough away from the lens to focus properly! Of course an added advantage for the night photographer is that the fish's colours tend to be more pronounced - so get aboard for our next night dive and capture that perfect image of a Shaw's Cowfish for yourself. Contact Bruce for details.



## Local news

### Combined Clubs Weekend

The June long weekend saw over 100 divers and their families descend on Bicheno for the annual Tasmanian Combined Clubs Weekend (CCW). Bicheno was once again the chosen venue for this meeting because of its



central coastal location, abundance of tourist facilities and ready access to world-class diving. Unfortunately the weather this year turned unfavourable, but despite heavy rain and big seas all divers managed to participate in various

shore dives, with quite a few venturing into the marine reserve for boat dives as well.

The success of this year's event despite the adverse conditions was a tribute to a lot of hard work by organisers, as well as generous donations of prizes by sponsors for the many competitions run (including underwater photographic competitions) over the weekend. This year a group of interstate divers also attended the gathering, demonstrating that Tassie's CCW is fast becoming a premier dive calendar event, not just within the state but further afield as well.



And a recent announcement by organisers indicates that next year's CCW is also planned for Bicheno, again over the June long weekend. For those interstate and international divers contemplating a diving trip to Tassie, this would seem the ideal opportunity. So please keep in touch with Bruce for progressive updates.

### Loss of local fishing boat

A recent incident in late July saw the unfortunate loss of another of Bicheno's little fishing fleet. The 1960s 17 metre wooden-hulled crayfishing boat, the 'Wave Crest', dragged its mooring in winds exceeding 130km/hr and was holed on shoreline rocks in Waub's Bay and sank. Typical of this part of the coastline, the very next day saw huge seas in the bay abate to mill pond status, with exceptional u/w visibility. Unfortunately, once refloated the Wave Crest was assessed by insurers as unsalvageable, dragged ashore onto Waub's Beach and broken up for scrap - a sad end to yet another piece of Tasmania's maritime history.



### Diving conditions

On a lighter note, water clarity around Bicheno is excellent at this time



Well-known Tasmanian videographer Mark Newman descends the crystal clear waters of the marine reserve on a recent filming trip to Bicheno.

of the year with visibility in the bay reaching 20 metres, and up to 30 in the marine reserve. Last weekend saw many divers descend on our little village to enjoy the clear water, as well as

sightings of dolphins and whales in the bay. A small group of seals which appears to have taken up residence on Alligator Rock is also growing in number and beginning to enter the water as divers approach.



So that's the news for this issue. Once again we look forward to seeing you soon and sharing the fabulous underwater world and wonderful sights that Bicheno has to offer.

Safe diving,  
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