



PERISCOPE

The Malayan Sub-Aqua Club Newsletter

Captain's Log

Safety at all times, and in all things ...

The recent tragic dive boat fire in Southern California which took the lives of 34 of our diving fraternity has shocked the world as well as the large international diving community.

While there has been no suggestion that the horrific accident on the 'Conception' has any link to diving practices per se, it brings home to us the need for eternal vigilance in any adventure activity we participate in. As divers we preach and practice self reliance and responsibility in our chosen sport and the cultivation of a "what if ..." mentality that seeks to identify and plan for the unexpected before it occurs so as to minimise the potential for untoward incidents.

Yet there are times when we must entrust our safety to others; when we fly or use public transport for example.

As divers in South East Asia we are all familiar with the dive boats that ply our waters and bring us to remote and unexplored dive locations. We rely on the professional competence of the crews and the quality maintenance of these vessels, and for the most part they live up to our expectations.

Nevertheless, it remains our own responsibility to measure our diving and dive trips and to carefully evaluate any risks that we feel may be present. Only by doing so and, if necessary, choosing not to dive, can we be sure that we have taken all necessary action to ensure our safety. Remember ... any piece of man-made equipment can (and ultimately will) fail.

Our hearts go out to the families and friends of the 'Conception' victims in these trying times.

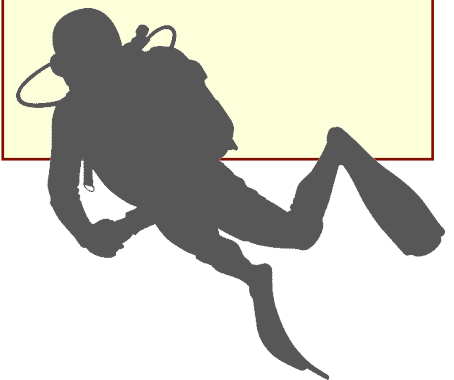


Upcoming Events & Dive Trips

November 9th to 16th
MSAC 60th Anniversary
Mabul/Sipadan OWD

December 4th
MSAC AGM & 60th
Birthday Bash

... check out our website
www.msac.org.my for more
details.



The **Malayan Sub Aqua Club (MSAC)** is one of the oldest SCUBA diving clubs in Malaysia having been formed in 1959 in Kuala Lumpur.

MSAC is a non-commercial, non-profit, multi-racial club for recreational SCUBA diving enthusiasts who are either already qualified as SCUBA divers or wish to take up the sport.

MSAC is focussed on conservation and diver safety. MSAC is a sports club with its HQ in Kuala Lumpur.

MSAC is the Malaysian representative within the **World Underwater Federation (CMAS)** and is a member of the CMAS Technical Committee. MSAC issues internationally recognised CMAS diving qualifications to suitably qualified divers.



Can You Trust Your Dive Computer?

... assuming your dive computer is perfect does not guarantee you will avoid DCS ...



Dive computers have been used extensively in recreational diving for the last 25 years with a low incidence of decompression sickness (DCS). Statistics show that dive computers generally provide a safer alternative to tables simply because they are (mostly) foolproof. They require no user interface in most cases other than, perhaps, turning them on. Thus, diver error is virtually eliminated.

Dive computers date back to the late 1950s, but early designs were not always reliable. Electronic technology has improved these designs to the point that any serious diver would be foolish to dive without one. It could therefore be argued that their use was “successful” in many respects.

However there have been reported cases of DCS, after recreational divers followed their dive computer on no-decompression dives.

Recent DAN Europe data suggests that around 80% of neurological DCS cases did not violate their diving computer recommendation.

Recreational dives are dives limited in depth and time such that the diver may ascend to the surface at any time with an acceptably low probability of suffering decompression sickness (DCS). Diving beyond these limits requires the diver to stop on his way to the surface to decompress. Hence, they are known as “no-stop” limits.

Decompression theory, no-stop limits and decompression stops have come a long way since physiologist J.S. Haldane, drafted a set of diving depth/time tables to suit a human circulatory system.

Over the years research into the factors leading to DCS has continued and is still not an exact science due in part to the large number of variables present in a diver and the circumstances of every dive.

Diver fitness, hydration and exercise level before and after diving all appear to have an effect on the likelihood of developing DCS.

Are we then to abandon our dive computers? Of course not! They still offer the best estimation of limits for multiple multi-level recreational dives. But treating dive computer information as the absolute truth and pushing no-stop times to their limits is to raise risk.

Be conservative and give yourself a safety margin (in the same way as you would make a 5 metre safety stop - not essential but a really good practice). In that way you can be assured you have taken the most appropriate steps towards a safe and fulfilling dive.

... Stewart Forbes

BOOKCASE . . .

interesting and useful publications for divers and underwater enthusiasts.

‘DIVER DOWN’

REAL-WORLD SCUBA ACCIDENTS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

Captain Michael R. Ange, author of ‘Diver Down’, wears many hats in the diving industry, including Managing Director of the Americas Division for the Professional Scuba Association International and contributing writer and technical editor for *Scuba Diving* magazine.

An author, photojournalist, and internationally recognised lecturer, Mike has a personal training background as varied as his list of students, including military, law enforcement, and technical and recreational training.

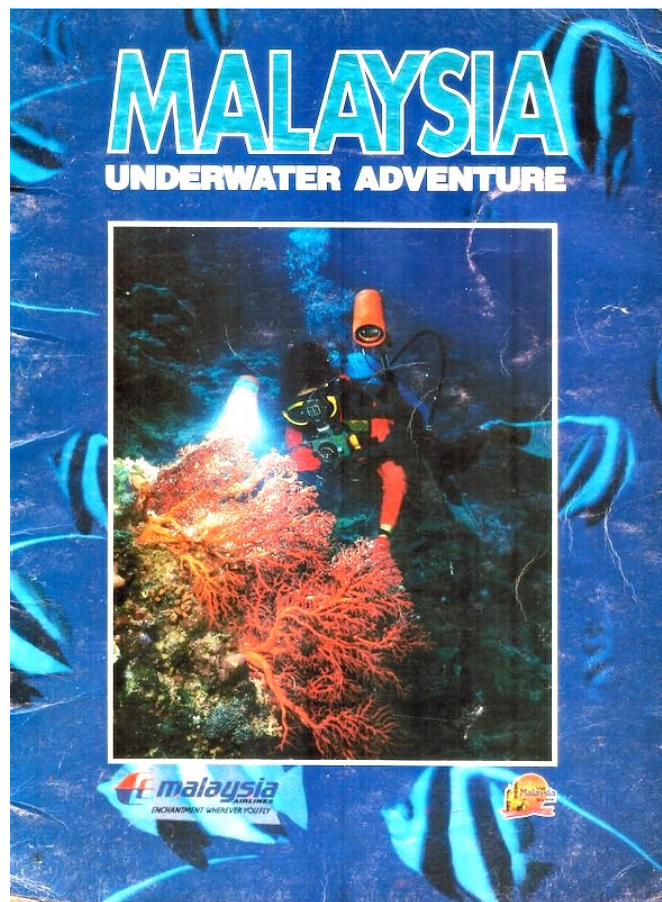
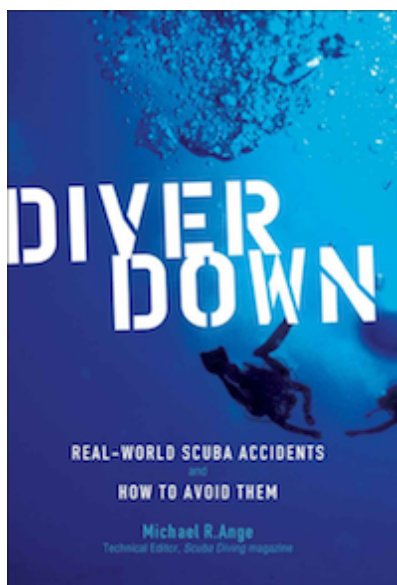
‘Diver Down’ catalogs numerous stories of diver-related mishaps; out-of-air situations, DCS hits, and lost at sea incidents. Sometimes these are accidental and sometimes the result of diver error or overconfidence, with serious injury or even death as an outcome.

This book is a salutary lesson to all divers, not merely those practicing higher risk technical diving, about the need for training, safe procedures and a proactive approach to incident (and accident) prevention.

Mike Ange pulls no punches in describing the various incidents, the events leading up to them and the consequences (sometimes tragic),

But this not merely a vicarious listing of horrific diving accidents. With his background as a highly experienced diver trainer and journalist, Ange provides insights into the technical aspects of each incident and discusses the potential for accidents and proper safety approaches to minimise risk.

In addition, ‘Diver Down’ opens with a section on ‘Scuba 101’, covering in brief many of the aspects of Scuba diving which



BLAST FROM THE PAST!

MAS's first brochure promoting Malaysia as a dive destination (1989) ... and guess who is wielding the Nikonos V on the Sipadan wall?

form the basis for recreational and technical diver training world-wide. While not a diving manual per se, these sections and inserts complement other training materials with valuable, experience based knowledge and insights of use to divers everywhere.

Nevertheless, ‘Diver Down’, in an eminently easy-to-read style, is a call to action for divers to learn and follow established safety protocols and be ready to practice emergency responses in real-world situations.

- Stewart Forbes,
MSAC Diving Officer

‘Diver Down’ can be found for purchase in the Amazon on-line book store as a hard copy or Kindle book.