



*Tridacna clam*

# Diving Granny's Return To Red Sea

**Diving Granny Sandie  
Gray told us about her  
first nervous trip to the  
Red Sea in 2004. Now  
she's a hardened  
veteran ...**

IF ANYONE remembers my 'Red Sea Trip with a Difference' in the July/August 2004 edition of **SCOTTISH DIVER**, I promised then that if I ever went back I would write a proper account of my trip.

So on September 1, 2008 16 of us from Eastwood SAC set off from Glasgow for the Red Sea. It was better already, no early morning bus ride to Manchester. We were heading off for a live aboard on *MV Snapdragon*, another first for me, as last time we were shore based.

We arrived in Sharm about 5pm, where we were collected by coach and taken to the boat. First things first, we set up our kit, unpacked and went for a welcome dinner. The cabin was basic and the beds had strange pink furry bed covers which

were a little like baby blankets. The pink furry things looked like they needed a good wash so I used my towel as a top sheet!

I felt a little nervous about the first dive on Tuesday at Sha'ab Mahmud. I usually feel like that in new places, however once my weight and buoyancy was sorted, I soon relaxed and enjoyed the dive.

The next dive was the *Dunraven*. We launched from the RIB. It was also my 200th dive and my buddy Sharon's 50th. We both really enjoyed it and did the swim-throughs as well. I had never ventured into a wreck properly before. We saw a crocodile fish, nudibranchs and lovely giant clams. I really love them - they are so colourful.

Sharon and I were low on air and were sent up first. Last time I was terrified at the thought of being on the surface with no guide. This time we just looked around, spotted our 'wee guy' and waved. He came quickly to pick us up. No worries!

The next three dives were on the *Thistlegorm*. You may remember last time I had my own dive guide as I was so nervous and there was a big swell. This time we went down the shot line and as it was early morning we had it to ourselves. We did the stern first dive, then the bow and the last one was the holds. We managed all the swim-throughs no problem. We saw the

resident turtle, a coronet fish, and nudibranchs. On the second dive, as I was feeling more relaxed I decided to take my underwater camera for its first ever dive. I saw shoals of fusiliers, and batfish and the locomotive.

Three lovely dives with a max depth of 31m and the longest dive being 41 mins - I was really pleased with that. Big improvement on last time!

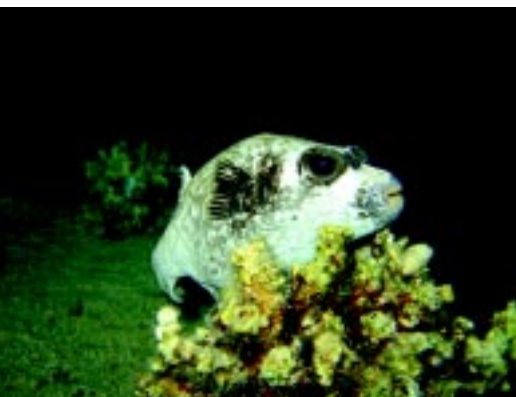
When I looked at my photos after the dive they were all 'scatter'. My son Alex told me to put the flash off and see if that was better.

I did the first of my two night dives at Ras Katy. We saw a snake eel, lots of lion fish, a Moses sole, puffer fish and blue spotted rays. A pleasant 51-minute dive.

The next few dives were drift reef dives and I took some nice photos. We did the *Koromoran* wreck which had lots of life on it; saw a lovely shoal of sweet lips.

The last dive Sharon and I did was Shark and Yolanda. We had sat this one out a few days earlier, and after it Alex, said I would have hated it as they had all been swept along in a strong current one way, then back the other way. They saw almost nothing on the dive. This time we did it though and Sharon was amused at the toilets. We saw two moray eels, Red Sea banner fish and bird wrasse.

On this trip I managed 14 dives, four more than last time, and I was relaxed and happy enough to take photos and actually enjoy what I saw



*Puffer fish*



*Baraccuda*



*Masked butterfly fish*