

Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race 2004.

One of my dreams was to dive with an old copper diving helmet; you know, a real Tintin equipment with hand-operated air pump and all.

In connection with my membership of the Historical Diving Society, Denmark I suddenly got the opportunity to full fill this dream, All that was required of me was to participate in the "Cutty Sark Tall ships Race" that this year took place in Aalborg, Denmark.

July 30st I arrived at Mr. Philip Nathansen in Aarhus at 0715, for loading some of the equipment that had to be transported to Aalborg. At 0800 we were "air born" heading north towards Aalborg. After Philip, who drove in front, had shown us most of Aalborg port, without getting much closer to the exhibition site, Poul Erik (Chairman of the Diving Society and my co-pilot on this flight) and I took matters into our own hands, it was after all quite simple to find the Exhibition and tank we had to dive in. We simply just turned off the only side road we had not yet been down at. And Wupti, there the beast was. After some jokes on Philips account and handshake to those who already were there, we got the equipment discharged from my car.



Now the first problem occurred; the diving tank was filled with sea water from the harbor, but it was very green water, actually we could not see the back wall inside the tank. We also encountered the same problem a couple of years ago when we had the tank in Svendborg for the Svendborg feast days. I have of course become much smarter since then, or that I

tend to believe, so I said that it would not do, because the spectators could not see the diver inside the tank. We should have fresh water in the tank instead of; unbelievably they listened to my "clever" proposal. Now the question was just where to find 12-13 m³ of fresh water, the harbor master should have money for that. Again the lightning struck me; we could just take it from a fire hydrant. We had a couple of people in among us who worked at the fire brigade so how hard could it be.

After having tested a few fire hydrants before there was one that could provide water, as well as having borrowed almost half of the attendee's ships fire hoses, indeed, we managed to get water in the tank. To begin with it also seemed to be working, but again we were exposed to a minor setback. All of a sudden the clear water turned completely rust red, it turned out that it was because the water in the city's fire fighting



pipelines had stand still for long periods of time. Again, the water was drained out of the tank.

Now, however, we began to be short on time, there was not quite a long time that we should commence with the first dives. And the panic began to show up in our faces.

But again Finn Jensen showed who was in charge of this dive exhibition, that a diver



should never panic. Resolutely grabbed his cell phone and called Aalborg fire brigade (he has been employed as a diver at there, so he had needed relations), our water did not come with blue light and sirens, but it came very quickly and brought right to our door. A minor cleaning of the tank was needed to remove all the dirt we had been filling into the tank, but since the tanker truck also was a fire engine, it was no problem. We just used their high-pressure firefighting hose which is coiled in the car.

Then it was all about getting some water filled into the tank, which took almost 2 cars before the tank was full, but now we could also see the back wall inside the tank.

After this the exhibition was thus ready, Finn was convinced that it now was time for the official opening, this was duly done with a couple of "Cutty Sark" whiskey's (2 for each person, one for each leg to avoid going in circles all day) the shots nicely arranged on an old manual diving air pump.



The rest of the day was spent diving with the old diving equipment, talk to all the curious spectators and admire all the beautiful and well-maintained "vessels" that drifted by. Some beautiful sailing ships did also pass by☺.

We even got into an advertising spot for the event in the local North Jutland television program.

I had the pleasure to dive a Russian 12 bolt copper helmet; it was the first time since 1988 that I was diving in this kind of diving equipment. It is still a cool experience.



At the end of the day we attacked a catering facility in the port about 15 minutes after they had closed but, as we were 14 men (m/fm), they quickly reopened. After the attack and devour of a good and solid evening meal we headed for the military barracks in Nørresundby, for our sleeping quarters. It was with great regret that

Finn told us that we should not sleep in a 12-man dormitory but we all got single rooms!!!!!!.



Saturday began just as well as the day before with clear sky and sunshine from early morning. After a healthy breakfast at our exhibition all was lined up for a new day (all equipped stayed overnight in a container, duly locked). There was, if

possible, more spectator than the day before, it meant that there were more beautiful and well maintained "sailing ships" to admire. The best place was as a line tender on top of the diving tank, especially if those from the audience who was persuaded to pump, were of the female race.



That day I managed to dive with a Dräger 3 bolts copper helmet. Friday was



premiere, it was the first time in 40 years, the nod pump from 1900 was used, it was also the first time that the 3 bolt helmet was used for more than 20 years. But it went fine, the pump gave a lot of air, I had to ask my pumping girls (2 pcs. of 10-12 years of age) to slow down or else I should vent helmet constantly.

Before noon some of us got the time to get out and see Aalborg marine museum. Since the Danish Historical diving Society have a collaboration with the Museum, we came in for free, thanks for that. It was very exciting for me to see the Museum, especially when we came to the diving exhibition. They had a small portable pressure tank which originated from Fyns diving center. The exciting thing was; in this tank one of the Club 's, now older, member managed to get to 57 meters as a result of an oversight from dive club instructor and the owner Erik Østergård. He had only been supposed to go to 30 meters, however he did survived more or less without any injury 😊

The day went incredibly quick, something happened all the time, every time we dived, there were 50-100 spectators. We were well burnt off, because the Sun was shining down on us all day, there was not much wind, so it was a hot affair to stand on the dock throughout the day.

After being washed and changed dress, we gave "Dues wine lounge" a call at 2000 were a good buffet was arranged. However, we quickly agree to



skip the next day's dinner (pizza), and then instead spend the money on some extra bottles of wine. The Chairman of the society seized a moment of silence (when all had something in his mouth) to rise and thank Finn for this well planned event, and Bente (Finn's wife) for holding the pieces together. I would not say that Finn was absent-minded, but there were some similarities with an older Member of my diving club Dråben, where it always was his wife, who knew where the scuba gear have been hiding.

Later in the evening, we ended up in the street that once belonged to a Virgin that I believe was named Ane (hence the name Jomfru Ane gade). As far as I remember, here were also some handsome "ships" to look at, but when I was exposed to some local fog patches and had switched to RADAR navigation, it all are a bit in the dark. Sunday morning began just as the day before, however, in a somewhat more muted version at the common breakfast. Now with lots of Danish (this special pastry from Denmark), for we had arranged for some ourselves and then Falck who had a exhibition next to us, also gave a plate full as a thanks for the loan of the coffee machine and container.

During the day, however, I had not the opportunity to dive in the Danish 2 bolts helmet (this I have to do 14th August at Ebeltoft, but that's another story). But some



diving I did do. To the audience's great enthusiasm I jumped, with my clothes on, into the tank to Finn and gave him the finest lipstick kiss mark on the outside of the window on the dive helmet, when he was diving the 2 bolt helmet. I also just tested my new camera + underwater housing.

As the clock approached 1500 we started to pack up. At 1600 it went southward towards Aarhus again.

It had been an incredibly fun weekend, diving with equipment that only very few people are going to dive with in our days. To this have to be added the colloquial language that is used in the society (you'll be sure to hear it if you screw up), as well as the first real summer weather this year.

It is certainly not the last time that I will be enticed to participate again.



