

# Hurghada 1990

My first trip to Egypt was in February 1990 as part of an 8 person group from our local dive club. For all of us it was our first experience of flying to a diving holiday, and for some a first experience of holidaying abroad. We were headed for Hurghada on the Red Sea but at that time the nearest civilian airport was Cairo which then involved a 6 hour road journey. In our case it took nearly 10 hours as the bus ran out of petrol in the middle of nowhere, having previously dumped some of our suitcases in the road when we hit a big bump (they were on a roof basket but not properly tied down).

We stayed at the Princess Club on the Southern edge of Hurghada and used a day boat from their own jetty. The first dive was an absolute revelation after years of British cold water diving. The warmth, the water clarity, the shoals of fish and above all the vibrant colours were a revelation. Sadly, although the volume of visiting divers was not high in those days, you could already see signs of impending damage caused by careless anchoring on the reefs and dynamite fishing (and lack of diver care/training to respect the reefs).

During our holiday we looked longingly at the nearby military airport and sure enough a couple of years later it was opened up to Civilian aircraft. This made the area accessible to a much wider cross section of travellers. I think we were privileged to see the Hurghada reefs when we did. In my view they are now a shadow of their former glory.

We had booked a 5 day diving package and decided to use the 6<sup>th</sup> day to drive to Luxor to see the sights and then take the overnight sleeper to Cairo, getting off at Ghiza to see the pyramids. It was a great plan and the first half worked like a dream. Thanks to our guide we managed to see all the major tourist attractions around Luxor including the valley of the Kings, The Valley of the Queens, the temple at Karnak and various other places whose names escape me. The train left at 9pm and after a comfortable night we awoke early only to find that we had travelled no more than 30 miles overnight due to a track problem. In the end we just made Cairo in time to catch our plane, all we saw of the pyramids was a couple of small blobs on the horizon. Nevertheless it was a fantastic holiday We had a great time and in my case at least it signalled a major change in my future diving habits. I have enjoyed at least one and often 2 or more warm water diving holidays ever since many of the to various locations in the Red Sea. On this trip we dived at:

Gota East – 12M	Gota West – 12M	Erg Abu Ramada – 22M
Seven Corals – 12M	Umm Gamor – 32M	Carless Reef – 22M
Meir Abu Ramada – 24M	Bel El Sabal – 14M	Harbour Wreck – 32M
Torfa Hamda – 12M		

After all this time I can only remember the names of the following participants: Keith Stone, Martin Tarrant, Dick Hanlon, Mike Patterson and Sharon Taylor,

The pictures were all taken with my Nikonos 5 camera (and an Ikelite Strobe for the u/w scenes). They were scanned at fairly low resolution from the original prints in 2003 so they do not do justice to the originals and are now pretty dire. This is just a small selection though it is noticeable how relatively few pictures I took in those days (about 120) because of the cost of film & processing compared to using digital today. Also a high percentage were so poor as to be not worth scanning but you did not find this out until you got home.



Blue Spotted Ray



Gorgonian Sea Fan



Moray Eel



Soft Corals



Antheas and nice clear water



Nice Coral block



Hard corals in good condition



Feeding a Napoleon Wrasse with eggs - banned a few years later as it proved to be injurious to the fish.



Sunbathing between dives - note how small the boat is



Princes club gardens



Relaxing after a days diving



Princess Club Marina



Valley of the Kings - Tutankhamuns Burial Chamber



Temple of Hatshepsut - Valley of the Queens



Not sure whose temple this was but its a nice group photo



Temple of Karnak