

## Breath-hold diving – yet another record

Dear Editor

Further to my previous two letters to the Journal concerning breath-hold diving,<sup>1,2</sup> I am writing to advise that yet another breath-hold diving record has been broken.

Writing in the News section of *The Daily Telegraph* on 22 July 2003, Richard Luscombe reported from Providenciales Island, Turks and Caicos, that Tanya Streeter had the previous day become the first person to dive to a depth of 400 ft in the ‘variable ballast’ discipline. This is widely regarded as the sport’s toughest because it forbids the use of buoyancy aids and compels the diver to return to surface completely under their own power. The descent in this category is, however, assisted by means of a weighted sled.

The previous women’s record for the category was 311.7 ft and the men’s record, held by Patric Musimu of Belgium, was 393.7 ft. The duration of the dive was 3 min 38 sec.

In October last year a French woman, Audrey Mestre, died whilst attempting to break Streeter’s record dive of 525 ft in the ‘no limits’ category when her inflatable lift bag designed to propel her back to the surface failed.

Luscombe also reported that her feat made Streeter the only female in any sport to better the world record of a male counterpart. Last month the Turks and Caicos Government, which sponsored her most recent attempt, marked her achievements by featuring her on a set of British postage stamps – apparently the first living person other than royalty to be accorded the honour.

Well not quite! In the same paper on 23 July 2003, Charles Heap wrote to the Editor and reported that in 1922 a Miss G W Ballantine caught a 64 lb salmon on the river Tay, in Scotland and, much to the chagrin of many male game anglers, this still stands as the largest salmon ever caught on a rod and line.

Similarly, on 24 July 2003, Kevin Glover wrote to claim that in 1990, whilst he was on secondment to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from the Royal Navy and serving as the Senior Police Officer, Royal Overseas Police, on the Island of Diego Garcia, he too appeared on a set of postage stamps that celebrated the island’s British stewardship. He went on to say that it has often crossed his mind that by doing so he had, inadvertently, broken royal protocol.

The following day, Tom Webb wrote to inform readers that during the siege of Mafeking in 1890 the town ran out of postage stamps. The British commander, Colonel Baden-Powell, famous for founding the Scout movement, used his renowned initiative and had replacements printed: the penny stamp with a picture of one of the boy messengers serving in Mafeking, and the threepenny blue with Baden-Powell’s own head on the stamp. Queen Victoria was not amused.

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### References

- 1 McKie NIP. Jacques Mayol. *SPUMS J* 2002; 32: 25-26
- 2 McKie NIP. Breath-hold diving – an update. *SPUMS J* 2002; 32: 224

### DECOMPRESSION ILLNESS (DCI) in the SE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION in 2002 Divers treated for DCI as reported to DAN-SEAP by recompression chambers

