

University of London Sub-Aqua Club BSAC 0069

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON SUB-AQUA CLUB

April 2006 Newsletter - Issue 8



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A Word from the Editor

I would like to welcome you all to this new look edition of the ULSAC Newsletter, back after a year long absence. This newsletter is only made possible by the articles written by our members, and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this months edition. If you would like to write an article, story or something a bit more light-hearted, feel free to send it to me. I hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter and many more to come!

Nicholas John

ULSAC TRIUMPHS IN ULU SHIELDS

By Jeremy Davey

This year once again established ULSAC as one of the most prestigious societies within ULU. For the second year running, the University of London Sub-Aqua Club and its members were recognized in a number of categories for outstanding achievements. Shields went to Mairead Conneely and David Wright for their outstanding achievements and devotion to the club, both for their dedication to instructing and their roles in the club as Social Secretary and Honorary Treasurer, respectively. Martin Greaves was awarded the Mentor of the Year award for all his work as Equipment officer for the past three seasons as well as his contribution to the club as an instructor and member of the committee. ULSAC also walked away with the highly coveted Founder's Shield. This is awarded to clubs or individuals who show exceptional achievement in their field and promote the spirit of ULU societies. Special congratulations to Mairead, David and Martin and thanks for their continued support of the club. Mention should also go to Michelle Kim, Al Morgan and Nathan Long for being nominated



Chairman Jeremy Davies with the Founder's Shield

for the Mentor award and our thanks go out to them too for all their work in the club.

Photograph courtesy of Mairead Conneely

LONDON DIVING CHAMBER TALKS

By Mairead Conneely



On February 2nd a number of members braved the sub-zero temperatures to attend a series of evening diving talks held at the Royal Geographical Society hosted by the London Dive Chamber. This is a popular

yearly event which is essentially free-great for everyone- not just students. Money was raised during the evening for 'Scuba Trust', a charity devoted to giving people with physical disabilities an equal opportunity to experience the pleasure and excitement of scuba diving in the underwater world.

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TOP TIPS to get you diving fit for the season ahead

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LONDON DIVING CHAMBER TALK

(Continued from page 1)

The evening had various speakers including Leigh Bishop who gave a fascinating talk on the 'Lost Liners'. Along with stunning underwater photos, he talked about the Lusitania, the Titanic and Britannic amongst others, providing a unique insight into these wrecks. He also told us about previously unheard of wrecks including that of the Wilhelm Gustloff, a Nazi cruise ship - where the numbers of deaths involved outnumbered that of the Titanic, the Lusitania and the Twin Towers together.

The evening's most interesting character award went to Monty Halls. Monty had recently presented a programme on Channel 5 (Great Ocean Adventures) and showed amazing footage of his adventures from the misunderstood nature of sharks to the amazing beauty of manta rays.



Monty Halls

Lloyd Grossman also made an appearance at the talk- yes the TV chef from Master Chef - who is also a patron of the 'Scuba Trust'. He gave us tales of unfortunate talks that he has been asked to make in the past, including giving talks to only one person in the audience- who turned out was in fact the next speaker.

Lloyd has been diving since the mid 60's - when he asked if anyone in the audience had been diving as long as him, not one person had. He was witty and very charismatic and told us the only time he has been in a dry suit was to take a photo, an avid warm water diver he was an interesting addition to the proceedings.

It was a thoroughly entertaining evening and I shall be looking forward to next year's talk!

Pictures courtesy of LDC

EASTER TRAINING
7TH - 17TH APRIL

COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

By Jeremy Davies

ULSAC is governed and organised by a committee which is reshuffled and added to every year at the AGM (8th May in ULU). The committee is for all members to be involved in not just the long standing ones and is very good opportunity to give something back to the club after the great fun of Easter Training!

All you have to do is nominate someone for a position that you think they'll be good at and maybe if you drop enough hints, you might get nominated for a position yourself! It is a great opportunity to give back your support to the club. Positions on the committee are generally straight forward and there are plenty of experienced people around to help you, so don't be scared to get stuck in!

DIVING THE FARNES ISLANDS

By Kathryn Sizer

Experiencing the playful antics of the doe-eyed, whiskered pups in the Farnes Islands has to be my best moment of British diving in the 2005 season. Anyone who as ever been to the beautiful Northumberland coast will know too well that the seals love the attention provided by masses of tourists and divers who visit the area every year. Prior to the Farnes trip during the August bank holiday, I had only heard stories of divers who had often found a seal or two nibbling at a bits of kit.

After arriving at the dive site, I couldn't wait to get in the water to play. Within minutes of our descent, my buddy and I spotted an excitable seal sniffing around the fins of another buddy pair, fortunately they were too busy admiring rocks to notice. He soon came over to us looking for fun. We followed each other for a short while, then he preceded to perform a variety of very impressive twists, turns and back flips. It was a very entertaining display. Then he flopped down on the sea bed (very much in a way that a dog would "play dead") and looked up at me with his big brown eyes.

I knew this was my chance to get closer, so I slowly levelled myself down towards him so I too was "playing dead" on the sea bed. I was now facing him, just a foot or so apart, we were both equally fascinated by the strange creature staring back. The seal was very curious, no doubt intrigued by his reflection in my mask, so I tickled his very



cute nose. I was surprised that this didn't scare him away and that I still had my fingers. He edged closer, put his nose right up to mine and we shared an Eskimo style kiss. He then shied away (I must have embarrassed him) and swam off into the distance. I was ecstatic and absolutely amazed, as I never imagined that my first experience with seals would involve getting so close. I had a stupid grin on my face and I kept looking out for my new friend throughout the rest of the dive. To top it all off, after five minutes he re-appeared, found me and swam straight over to give me another Eskimo kiss, awwwwww, how cute.

I couldn't have expected anything better for my first dive at the Farnes. I am officially hooked and can't wait to go back.

Photo courtesy of Ivan Djordjevic

TALES FROM MAURITIUS

By Nick Bedford

When my girlfriend told me she was leaving England to return to her native Mauritius, I was not sad like some boyfriends might be. I instead went to visit her as soon as I could, and discovered for myself the aquatic paradise I had long heard rumour of.



On a gloriously warm January morning I went for a dive around the 'Mauritius Aquarium', an aptly-named dive site situated off the coast of Grand Baie in the north of the island. It was my first dive in ages, and my first ever out of British waters, so I was a bit apprehensive; soon my buddy was too, after watching me put on my wetsuit back to front and my stab jacket the wrong way round on the cylinder. But slowly things came back to me and we were setting off on the boat for the 20 minute ride to the dive site.



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and we were setting off on the boat for the 20 minute ride to the dive site.

Down the shot line we went for 15 metres in some quite choppy water (between Force 3 and 4) and what immediately struck me was how clear the visibility was (10-20 metres) compared to the murky British waters I was used to (ironically, diving for the afternoon would be cancelled because this level of visibility

was considered to be poor!) Needless to say, the water was also bit warmer than in Britain, at 24 degrees centigrade.

The Aquarium had lots of gullies, crevices and small cliff faces to explore and was home to plenty of weird and wonderful creatures – not being an expert there were loads I could not recognise, but I did recognise a stonefish and a pair of scorpion fish, both potentially deadly species that were amazingly well camouflaged (the former a grey, ugly looking creature lying still on the seabed, the latter a bit more normal-looking but with a row of poisonous quills on their backs that innocently wavered around in the water). Trumpet fish were weird, long things with mouths bulging out in trumpet fashion, I also swam around hordes of Zebra fish, Angel fish, Soldier fish, Butterfly fish and a cuddly-looking but lethal Lion fish.

I came across a Titan Trigger fish which was quite an amazing sight: imagine a normal oval-shaped fish blown up to giant-like proportions to form an absurd caricature of a fish. With perfect balance, it floated vertically on its head just above a group



of small rocks, which it proceeded to pick up with its giant, puckered-up lips and then let go of (I later learned it was looking for food under the rocks). It was not in the least bit disturbed by clumsy scuba divers and allowed me to go up to it quite closely without being distracted from its task. (Editors note: Don't try this at home, Titan Trigger Fish are one of the most dangerous fish you are ever likely to encounter and are extremely territorial during their breeding season.)

I saw a purple octopus, which transformed the water into a cloud of smoky black ink upon being apprehended by one member of the dive party. Unable to dart anywhere except in a forward motion, the octopus was 'tamed' by the simple placement of an outstretched palm in front of it, which it would then bounce

off repeatedly without thinking to change direction! Wrapped around my arm, I thought I might have a job getting it off me as it stuck to my skin like superglue with its suction-cupped tentacles, but it soon got bored with me and darted off (much like Mauritian girlfriends, but that's another story!).



45 minutes later and all those cold evenings in the ULU pool had certainly paid off, as I surfaced from what was to be my first of several memorable dives in Mauritius.

Photos courtesy of Mauritius Tourist Board

SUMMER TRIP SCOOPS EXPEDITION OF THE YEAR

By Nicholas John

At this year's Diving Officer's Conference, ULSAC were awarded the BSAC Expedition of the Year award for the South of France trip during the summer of 2004. Organised by Jimmy Cooke and Catherine Stanley, the trip took over 30 members diving out of

Marseilles and Presqu'île in France. For many it was the first time diving other than in UK water and proved a huge success. Thank you to Jimmy and Catherine for all the hard work that went into making this trip the success it was.



Photo courtesy of Nicholas John

Life as a Boatie

This has been a very interesting year and a great learning experience. There have been some really quiet times and some pretty manic times too. The summer went pretty much without a problem, except when we had to replace an axle because the brakes had been destroyed by being towed by a MPV with a very low hitch!

Nathan spent a lovely time under the boat trailer trying to sort out the brake issue. Unfortunately this was the wrong place to look as the cable was trapped at the hitch end, not by the axle. (The offending trailer part has now been removed by Marchant's mobile workshop.) This brake issue then resulted in a great morning for Paul and Sam sorting out a replacement bearing so we could get the boat out of the car park at Swanage, 100mtrs along the



road and into the sea. The slowest 100mtrs in the history of boating, I would be willing to bet. A massive thank you to both Sam and Paul for sorting that out.

Rascal decided not to play ball on the Farnes trip too, throwing all the toys out of the pram and getting by on only one engine. It was just a good job that the sea was so smooth. It was smooth, wasn't it! That's why it took 2½ hours to get back from the islands in Hippo. I hope your back has recovered Andy.

We also had a lovely trip to Salcombe this summer, which allowed Bonnie and I, along with Andy and Will, to clock up a decent amount of deco and drift time. Sorry to all the guys stuck in the boats following us for 2

miles. This also resulted in our beloved shot being dragged under and lost forever. Well, it might still be there, we can hope. Any one fancy a trip to Salcombe this summer? We might also find two weight belts and two SMBs that we used as a temporary replacement shot. Apart from that it was a brilliant weekend in blistering sunshine.

Anyway, back to the serious stuff. We now have a full compliment of boats at our disposal thanks to the guys at BHG. Tango has been repaired and we have a 40hp engine to go with it. Rascal will be ready for the boat handling course now that she is in for a service, and Scoundrel and Hippo will get their once-overs very soon.

We will also have fixed radar reflectors on the boats this season, improving our visibility in the water for other users, and in line with the new SOLAS regulations Dave Wright has also managed to 'get his hands on' some caving rope and clips for us to make up new shot lines, so many thanks Dave.

We mysteriously seem to be down an anchor for the RIBs after the Farnes trip, so if anyone finds it in their kit bag when sorting through for the dive season, please let me know.

We also tested some diver recalls on our jolly to Mull, to find out that they were about as much use as a chocolate kettle, so we are looking into alternatives. Andy, unintentionally, checked the function of one of the boat fire extinguishers too. I think we can say that it worked fine, next time we might have a fire to celebrate. I hope everyone has managed to clear the powder from their kit by now. This empty one has been replaced with a beautiful shiny new one.

In short it has been a fairly typical year with the boats providing some great service despite a few hiccups. Most of the issues are caused by boat users, so please think about what you are doing with the boats. They are an amazing asset to the club and it would be a massive inconvenience to the club not to have them at our disposal.



The trailers need to be correctly maintained in use through correct greasing and visual checks. The boat engines must always be adequately oiled and fuelled and the boats must carry sufficient reserve fuel. The boatie is responsible for their boat on that wave, but everyone is responsible for their actions and the equipment they are using. This includes the boats, so look after them. If you don't they will no doubt fail when you least need/want it, such as during an incident.

There are always people on trips who are more than willing to help anyone unsure of what to do with the boats, so please do not be afraid to ask. There is no such thing as a stupid question, so please ask.

I am looking forward to a great Easter training trip and I hope you are all excited too!"

Photos courtesy of Mairead Connelly and Ivan Djordjevic



Get back into Diving this Summer !

with our guide on how to prepare for the season ahead

By Nicholas John

With the new diving season fast approaching, for many of us the time has come to dust off our diving gear and start to think about diving again. The majority of divers start diving around early April and call it a day for the year towards the end of September. Unless you are one of those people who enjoy the freezing waters of inland sites during the winter, this means there are six months during which time our diving skills can become rusty. So in accordance to BSAC guidelines we have put together a guide to help you get ready for the new season

Personal Preparation

It is always important as you approach the diving season to get your-

self dive-fit. If, like many of us, you have gorged yourself over the winter months, it is important to get yourself fit. Not only will this decrease the risk of decompression illness, but will contribute to a lesser air consumption rate, meaning more time on that wreck. If you feel particularly rusty, then you should consider doing some refresher training in the pool. Once you do get to diving in the sea again, start shallow and build up to those deeper dives.



Check whether your skills are up to date at the beginning of the season. Revisit basic skills including mask-clearing, and buoyancy exercises to ensure they are as

natural and instinctive as they have been previously. Skill Development courses are an excellent opportunity to practice these skills while learning new ones at the same time.

Finally remember to practice, practice, practice! No one has ever regretted practicing skills that have been called upon during an emergency. Skills which are not practiced frequently deteriorate, you should practice continually to make sure you are always sharp!

Equipment Preparation

The winter months can prove to be the ideal time to get all your kit serviced. Make sure all your kit is in service and fully working. You can always take it in the pool to check - it is better for something to go wrong here than on a real dive. Not only could it be potentially dangerous, but it will also spoil the dive.

If you have bought any new equipment that you have not dived with before, take it in the pool and make sure you are confident you know how to use it.

Check that you have all the necessary safety equipment. Ensure you have fully working SMBs, reels, strobes, personal flares etc that may prove the difference in an emergency. Better safe than sorry!

Finally, make sure you look after all your kit. In the past years there has been a marked increase in the number of thefts of diving equipment from sites all over the UK. Make sure you look after your kit and try to prevent kit spread. It is always a good idea to insure your diving kit before you go away, so if the worst does happen, you aren't the one to pick up the bill.

...And Finally!

Make sure to enjoy yourself this season, and dive responsibly!

It happened to me!!

By Mark Bell

SO there I was, 60 dives under my belt, feeling fit young and indestructible as any student. I was putting my kit together for a 6 metre plop under Swanage pier due to the weather being pants. After all what could go wrong at 6 metres when I had already been to 40 metres. Having filled the tanks at the dive shop at the end of the pier, I decided to kit up there and walk back to the beach to enter the sea. Having put the kit on it seemed awfully heavy to walk all that way back to shore so I decided with my buddy to do a high level entry of the end of the pier. I shuffled to the edge but then vertigo set in and I thought f**k that! I am going back to the beach to walk into the sea. However, I had not accounted for the 3 deep crowd of tourists who had gathered across the pier to watch us go in. Ego or vertigo was the question? Well at 25 ego was always going to win! I turned to my

buddy and said, 'I will see you at 6 metres!' If I was to do this I needed to do it quickly. The plan was to go in without air in my jacket straight to 6 metres where I could relax and recover. I stepped in to the blue (the sky that is) and began to plummet! It seemed to take an age before gravity brought me down to the water, so I looked to see where it was! Doh! Smack went the water, off came my mask and I got a fat lip from the reg too. At 6 metres I recovered my composure, and mask, and went to take two reassuring breaths. Well the first one was reassuring, but the second produced nothing!!! I had been in such a hurry to get in I forgot to turn the air on. My buddy appeared giving the OK single - I replied with a one fingered bird emblem and pointed frantically at the tank valve. After 30 seconds of wild gesticulating he got the message and the dive continued.

Almost a disaster but at least I looked cool for the tourists.

Memoirs of a Dive Leader Trainee

By Richard Rowley

You know you're hard core when a) You surface from a dive and it's snowing, b) You're watching ice form under your windscreen wipers whilst driving to the dive site, c) You have compressed gas in your room at Halls of Residence or d) all of the above?

After an active first season, taking in highlights ranging from my first experience of narcosis in Torbay to the pitch blackness of a lake in Kent, I was starting to get used to this diving malarkey. I decided to sign up for Dive Leader training because I knew that it would help me to progress through consolidating what I had already experienced and provide a structure for developing further. It also struck me as quite good fun too. I suppose I also wanted to be a "Jedi"... Or is that when you become an NQI?

After a number of classroom lectures, my first open water training session took place at Wraysbury, near Heathrow in October. On the first dive I was so thankful when Marcus ended the dive when he did; was so cold I was going to do it myself. Six months later I finished my Dive Leader training at the same site. My training took me to a variety of sites including the NDC at Chepstow (I got up at 4AM on a Sunday!), Wraysbury (a lot), a basement lab at UCL (role play and resuscitation), and Portland – in the sea, in February! For ULSAC Dive Leaders, it's all about "Winter Training" and as much bacon as you can eat.

For me, I suppose Dive Leader training happened at the right time. I was beginning to really enjoy going diving and spending a weekend away with my mates. The Dive Leader course gave me the structure to learn more about why we do things the way that we do, as well as to develop wider responsibilities within our branch. An amusing result of this was driving my first Transit van. Through central London, on a Friday afternoon before a Bank Holiday weekend. Nice. At least being bigger than my car meant people got out of the way... I surpassed myself a few months later driving another Transit out of

Glasgow city centre for the first time without getting lost! I suppose this is another part of becoming a Dive Leader; developing new skills which, whilst not on the syllabus, are still related to broadening your role within your branch.

Part of becoming a dive leader is learning how to plan and run dive trips and despite sleeping for nearly 24 hours when the trip I organized with Marcus was over, I must admit that I enjoyed the experience. Well I did once I finally booked a campsite. It was becoming touch and go in the end before someone gave me someone else's num-



ber who knew someone else who had a campsite. Dive Leader trainees take note: sort out accommodation first; spend ages perusing local dive guidebooks and divernet.com later!

Obviously, being a Dive Leader trainee is not all about dicing with hypothermia or trying not to get lost in an unfamiliar part of London; or even England for that matter! It's also about having a lot of fun: after all a large part of it is going diving, in addition to the drills. So, whilst I did these dives for fun, you could say that part of my Dive Leader training was watching two of my mates dropping starfish on each other in a gully near Plymouth, or catching two crabs mating on the *Akka* in the Clyde estuary. Or blowing smoke ring-like bubbles with Mairead during a deco stop above another wreck in the same area.

Dive Leader training is a process which takes a different length of time for different people because we all take different periods to progress. For me neutral buoyancy was just like physical fitness where you plateau for a while (in my case quite a while...) before you suddenly realize that the last dive you did showed a marked improvement.

It's highly rewarding in the end, not just when your qualification book gets stamped, but when you feel it coming together as an overall concept; what it means to be a Dive Leader, rather than as a series of lectures, drills and boxes to be ticked. A bit like revising for an exam when you realize that you're not going to fail your year and have to explain why to your parents!

Then it hits you: now I have responsibilities! All this training was great fun, but now I can't just wait to be told what to do: I could need to take the initiative. Thankfully, you've taken the drills, the theory, the cock ups you've all laughed about later in the bar, and learned from them within the context of club diving. So you understand your role as, although more senior that you were before, still a part of the same team; just more a more useful part. Diving may not be a competitive sport, but it certainly is a team one!

Even when you think: no more Wraysbury in the sleet for me! You remember you've done the IFC so you're an instructor trainee. Which means at some point you'll be hip deep in cold, cold water, walking out towards the end of the slipway at some inland site in January, waiting for your hands to go numb in a lake where someone's kicked up all the silt so you can't read your computer in five metres without the backlight.

I knew that going to university would change my life, and I joined ULSAC as my choice for which sport to get into as part of the experience, but I never expected it to reveal that side to my character! Well, there's more to Dive Leader training than I thought. If I'd known this a year and a half ago would I have still done it? No doubt.

Photo courtesy of Phil

THE ULSAC EASTER QUIZ

By Martin Greaves

So you think you're a true ULSAC diver?

Take the Easter Quiz and find out...

You've just completed a pleasurable morning's diving on the Betsy Anna, but regrettably the shot has got snagged in the wreck. Being responsible divers you've opted to go back for lunch and come retrieve it later. What is the optimum number of masks that the intrepid shot-retrieving buddy pair should take with them?

- A) Four – one each to use, and one each as a spare
- B) Two – one each – after all mask straps never break
- C) One, which one of you can use – if you're any good the other can just dive by Braille

Just suppose you've got a two week trip to France and a Red Sea liveaboard coming up in the next few months, so you clearly need to protect your ears. Now suppose that another Ulsacer has challenged you to leap into the sea from the (very high) pier at Bovi. Do you:

- A) Decline the invitation with grace and valour
- B) Reach a suitable compromise, such as both jumping together from somewhere less extreme
- C) Go for it regardless, despite the certainty of a perforated eardrum that would cost you the holidays – a true Ulsacer will never decline a challenge.

You're on a trip out to the Binnendijk but sadly have no echo sounder on the boat. Fortunately there's another boat full of wanabee Advanced Divers nearby undergoing examination who are bound to be able to help. How competent can you expect such assistance to be?

- A) AD trainees are the epitome of diving perfection so will doubtless place the perfect shot, provide the faultless boat cover and even give you tea and cakes afterwards
- B) Should be pretty good – will at least drop you a shot on the boiler
- C) Hopeless – they won't even have a shot in the boat, and their random signals supposedly guiding you in will mean yours misses the wreck completely and is subsequently

found 100m away. Then to make amends they'll send in a pair of Sport Divers to tie SMBs to the wreck. But by now the slack is long gone and you'll be swept off the flimsy line.

You're diving the Riversdale but for the first time ever in history the shot has been dragged under. You really want to dive – what should you do?

- A) See if there are any other boats in the area that would be willing to let you use their shot and stick around to the end of the dive providing boat cover.
- B) Borrow a shot from another boat for an agreed fee (probably involving beer)
- C) Tie a couple of weight belts to a DSMB, sling them in and hope that the SMB doesn't just get dragged under in less than a minute.

You're the esteemed boatie of one of ULSAC's invincible craft and have just sent in a pair of divers to bag the shot and send it on its way to the surface. Should you:

- A) Maintain a safe distance from the buoy, aware that a lifting bag with a substantial weight attached could break the surface at any moment
- B) Get one of the other boats to lift the shot for you when it surfaces – the years are catching up and you've had enough exercise for one day
- C) Grab the buoy and pull as hard as you can, hoiking the shot up and down. Divers love a moving target when they are trying to fill a lifting bag.

You're diving the Countess of Earne in Portland Harbour. Where should your weight belt be?

- A) Securely fastened round your waist – and like a good diver you checked it for tightness when you reached the bottom at the start of the dive
- B) Weight belt? I'm all integrated weights me – besides the Boaties need the exercise hauling it all back in at the end of the dive
- C) Round your ankles – the visibility on the Countess is rubbish anyway so dragging your weight belt through the silt behind you won't make it any worse. Then when your

(Continued on page 8)

DON'T FORGET THE ANNUAL DINNER - JUNE 16TH

(Continued from page 7)

buddy realises something is up he's bound to CBL you to the surface (weight belt still round your ankles) to save you all that pesky buoyancy control on the way up.

You're diving the Aeolian Skye with a cute new Sports Diver you're keen to impress. How much care should you take over your weighting?

- A)** Take extra care – she's new so you need to be spot on in case of any problems
- B)** Just take the usual – you're old and crusty now and will cope whatever
- C)** None at all –having to fin to get down, then to finning to maintain your stop depth and finally popping out feet first is all good stuff and helps show the newer people that even the great and the good are fallible.

You're relatively new to a drysuit and (like anyone in the same situation) still coming to grips with it. How should you control your buoyancy during the descent?

- A)** Practise first in the pool, then when you are happy there progress to the sea, starting with easy shallow dives and building up
- B)** Descent is easy – just remember to put some air in on the way down to equalise
- C)** Fiddle about incessantly with the dump valve. Roll down the rock face like a mini avalanche and land in a heap on the sea bed, using whatever means you can (apart from putting air in) to slow down. And the more life you remove from the rock face on your way down the more points you get!

It's New Year's Day and you've decided to take a refreshing plonk in Wraysbury. What equipment should you take?

- A)** Full kit including drysuit with every warm item of clothing you own underneath.
- B)** Just the usual – another day, another dive
- C)** Everything except your weight belts – all the turkey and chocolate over Christmas will more than make up for forgetting to put them on.

You're doing an AAS ascent from the deck of the Stangarth in Stoney Cove in 15m. How long should it take to get to 6m and how much air should you use?

- A)** Normal ascent rate – say 10m/min, so about a minute. Breathing rate should be pretty normal too (perhaps a little higher) so approx at 25l/min SAR say 10-15bar from a 12l tank

- B)** Perhaps a bit longer than usual – there's an NQI watching and you don't want to get it wrong – so say 2mins. And it's quite tiring so let's say 30bar.
- C)** At least 8 minutes – it's quite normal to be overweighted and with little or no air in your drysuits and to then spend the ascent finning like nutters arriving at 6m with only 30bar left.

You're planning some rescue drills in Swanage Bay. How should you find out if the present state of the tide is suitable?

- A)** Check the tide table in the Almanac, then consult the tidal diamonds on the chart and work out what the current is and which direction it's going in.
- B)** Ask another dive boat – they are bound to have done their homework
- C)** Ask some random bloke in the dive shop, who tells you there are no tides in Swanage Bay so it doesn't matter. Then when get to the bottom and find it to be steaming past you at a rate of knots decide to rough it out because the DL trainees will appreciate the challenge, and beside the other NQI will think you're a woos if you bail out. Then thank the boatie hugely for the pick up when you surface only to find you've drifted over 2 miles and are now right in the middle of Peverill Race.

You're a wannabee Advanced Diver and are doing boat rescue drills. The examiner wants you to practise giving a mayday call. Do you:

- A)** Demonstrate exactly what you'd do in a real situation, except for (crucially) not actually sending Mayday calls.
- B)** Explain to the examiner what you'd do without actually touching any equipment
- C)** The only way to practise is to do it for real, so press the transmit button anyway so that the Coastguard can join in assessing the effectiveness of your Mayday calls

You're on a mussel picking dive in Portland but haven't the faintest clue what a mussel actually looks like. Do you:

- A)** Consult a book before setting off, noting size, shape, colour and habitat
- B)** Ask the skipper of the boat discretely so as not to let on you haven't a clue
- C)** Cram your goody bags with whatever you can find thinking you've got a good 5kg each. Then when you realise everyone else's are about 5 times the size chuck yours back before anyone notices, explaining the empty bags by saying you'd forgotten you were allergic to shellfish.

(Continued on page 9)

THE ULSAC EASTER QUIZ

(Continued from page 8)

You're off to Easter Training - when's the best time to put the dive marshalling bag in the van?

- A)** As soon as possible – you can't be too careful, the trip depends on it
- B)** Whenever – doesn't matter so long as you've got it before you go
- C)** Actually the vans are already overloaded (as usual) and those pesky radios and GPSs weight a lot so just leave them at home - there's bound to be someone who can persuade an onsite builder to let them into a (locked) ULU to get it and bring it with them the following morning.

You're on a liveboard in the Red Sea, and being safety conscious you've tied your (twin) cylinders to the boat so that they don't fall over as the boat rocks about sailing between dive sites. (this also applies to hard boats from Weymouth). When's the best time to untie your tanks?

- A)** Wait until you've got your kit on, then get your buddy to untie you – then there's no risk of the tanks falling over
- B)** Untie them as soon as you start to get ready – better than suffer the ignominy of trying to stand up
- C)** Wait until everyone else is in the water (you're always last anyway), then try to rip the tanks free with your immense strength on standing up. Then sheepishly get one of the crew to untie you – with extra points if the whole episode is caught on video.

You're diving the Binnendijk out of Portland. What's the optimum number of fins?

- A)** Two – one for each boot
- B)** Three – it's good to have a spare (although this is taking redundancy a bit far)
- C)** Just the one – then assume that the reason you felt lopsided throughout the whole dive and swam round in circles was because of the weight in your pocket.

You're in the Red Sea and have just done your last dive of the day. For reasons we won't go into your wetsuit booties need rinsing out. What's the optimum rinsing strategy?

- A)** Carefully repeatedly fill with seawater and empty out, then give a nice rinse in the shower with a bit of Wash'n'Go (neoprene edition)

- B)** Rinse with the freshwater shower on dive platform then poke through the handrails to drain
- C)** Fill with water, then chuck the whole bootie into the sea losing it forever – life is too short to do washing. Extra points if you lost the matching fin last month...

You are diving the Glen Strathallan out of Plymouth and have placed a shot right on the boiler. When is the best time to lift the shot?

- A)** When all your divers have surfaced safely and are back on board.
- B)** Shortly after the last pair have gone in.
- C)** The following day after arriving back at the slipway and noticing that a large orange object is missing.

You're a super fit RN Marine about to go on a 21m dive "somewhere nice". How do you choose your weight belt?

- A)** Carefully select the right amount of weight, based on the buoyancy check you did this morning
- B)** Whatever happens to be lying around – you're hard and you can cope with anything
- C)** None at all – you're really hard so can fin down like a crazy thing and then pick up rocks and bits of wreck to keep you down once you get there.

Just suppose you're diving the Volnay at Porthkerris at Easter Training and you've volunteered to do the DSMB on a dive (it's good practise). If the reel jams, do you:

- A)** Let go of the reel instantly
- B)** Look to your buddy for guidance, then let go when she gesticulates wildly
- C)** Hold onto the reel – the kit is new and shiny and you don't want to lose it – besides a nice fast ascent just means you get your tea sooner.

You see a large object breaking the surface and creating spray some way in front of your hard boat. Do you:

- A)** Check the chart to see if there are any rocks ahead
- B)** Ask the skipper if the adjacent cardinal buoy means anything
- C)** Shout "WHALE" and point excitedly at the object, nearly causing the boat to sink with the weight of all the people crammed onto the foredeck.

Answers on the next page...

How did you do?

- Mostly As ?** You girlie swot, you obviously talk a good dive and have read the books but have never actually done one. Why not come diving with us next year and find out what it's really like.
- Mostly Bs ?** Good effort – you obviously know how to have a sensible dive and a bit of fun whilst you are at it.
- Mostly Cs ?** Well done – you are obviously a proper battle-worn ULSAC diver with plenty of tales to tell. Top marks.

Diving Officer's Report

By Bonnie Webster

Ten weekend dive trips to various UK coastal regions took place last season and there was also a two week summer trip to the Isle of Mull and the Firth of Clyde. ULSAC members enjoyed a variety of diving experiences on these trips whilst maintaining the club's one hundred per cent safety record with no occurrence of any diving related incidents.

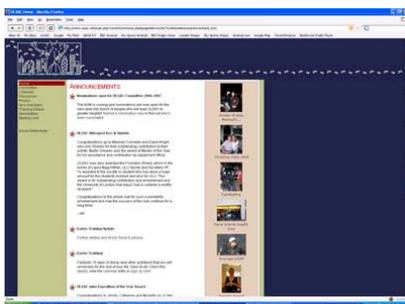
During the winter training season the club has been joined by a number of new members, which hope to complete their qualifications at the Easter training trip to Weymouth. Also over the winter we have qualified 4 new dive leaders and 5 of our assistant training instructors have gained their open water instructor qualification. ULSAC continues to prove itself as an extremely successful BSAC branch and this is down to the dedications of its members, especially the committee members and instructors, all of which have worked extremely hard throughout the year. As the ULSAC Diving officer I have had a very enjoyable year, I have learnt a great deal and have felt very proud to be apart of ULSAC.

Items for Sale

1 pair of Scubapro Twin Speed Fins Reasonable condition. £30 o.n.o Contact Nick on 07796 952192 (nicholaswjohn@hotmail.com)

**Any thing to sell?
Just email in a brief
description and
contact
details for
the next issue**

ULSAC ON THE INTERNET!!



Visit **www.ulsac.net** for all the latest club news, trip sign-up lists, photos, downloads and much, much more!

Any Contributions or Comments please send to:

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Monks Risborough
Buckinghamshire
HP27 9JF

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Phone: 07796 952192



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Dates for Your Diary

April 2006							May 2006						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1	30	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31	1	2	3
30	1	2	3	4	5	6	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

 Easter Training
 Dive trip (see below for information)
 Annual General Meeting

Upcoming Diving Trips for Your Calendar

Easter Training, Weymouth, Dorset - 7th to 17th April

Our annual training trip to transform our novices into fully qualified divers. Not to be missed!!!

Trip Organiser: Michelle Kim
Contact: michelle.kim@lchclearnet.com



Looe, Cornwall - 29th April to 1st May

This is your opportunity to come and join us for a long weekend diving out of one of the most picturesque seaside villages in England that boasts crystal clear waters, fantastic wrecks as well as the best fish and chips in the world! Wrecks will include the Scylla, James Eagan Lane as well as many other previously undived by this club.

Trip Organiser: Nicholas John
Contact: nicholasjohn@hotmail.com



Swanage, Dorset - 6th to 7th May

The Jewel in Dorset's crown, this trip will take in the sights and dives off Swanage including the famous pier!

Trip Organiser: David Wright
Contact: davidwright_uk@yahoo.co.uk



Portland, Dorset - 20th to 21st May

A chance to dive out of one of the best diving spots on the south coast, and to do all those wrecks we wanted to do during Easter training!

Trip Organiser: Ivan Djordjevic
Contact: djordjevicorama@gmail.com



Isle of White, Hampshire - 27th to 29th May

Previously undived by the club, this beautiful island offers new wrecks and scenics for all levels of divers!

Trip Organiser: Alyn Morgan
Contact: alynmorgan@yahoo.co.uk

