



ULSAC

Newsletter

ET 2009



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New look Newsletter!

Welcome to the new updated version of the newsletter. First off I would like to apologise to all those who have sent articles in that haven't been published yet. However, don't despair, they are all scheduled to appear across the next three issues.

2009

2009 was a big year for the club. As we wrapped up the celebrations for our 50th Anniversary we received the unfortunate news that our founding member, Don Moody had passed away.

However, it wasn't all bad news. We welcomed over 20 new members to the club at ET, 5 members passed the lifesaver award in the pool during the summer, we qualified new instructors and also some dive leaders. We attended the first Dive Fest, where despite the weather ULSAC dressed up as pirates and of course well done to Martin who the PADI Digital Underwater Photographer award.

Last but not least, ULSAC members are often involved in many activities in aid of both our seas/marine life and charity. This year Anouk spent an hour on the plinth in Trafalgar Square in favour of the Marine Conservation Society.

A new look for the newsletter for 2010

In a bid to make the newsletter shorter and more regular, it will now be coming out in monthly installments. I have enough articles to keep it going until ET, however, beyond that I will need content from YOU. So if you have any news, funny stories, jokes, photos, songs etc that you would like to share then please send them in.

Got the diving blues?

Through this and the next three issues of the newsletter you can read about what ULSAC got up to during last year's diving season. For those newer members of the club this is a good insight into what you can expect at ET and beyond.



Tomoko shares her experiences of ET in a letter home p.3

When I moved to London from Cambridge about three and half years ago, I used to dislike London so much but now, I really enjoy the life in here. I have something I like doing (my study), loving friends to spend time with, having something I care about and somewhere that I belong to.; ULSAC.

I would love to return something back to the club in the future as I was helped so much this year. This is great stuff and it makes me feel like staying in here for a lot longer.



Siobhan shares a few words of advice for PADI crossovers p.4

I have to admit I was not there for the full Bovi experience but my five day escapade into the depth of ULSAC madness qualifies me to say a little something about the Easter training.



Next month: Captain 'Borat' Spunk's Special

You can look forward to Captain Spunk's latest poem: Only Fools and Divers and quell some of those diving blues by reading Captain Spunk's account of the Swanage trip which included diving the Kyarra and Aeolian Skye.

Dear Mum, 15/04/2009

Hope this finds you well. This is a letter to say thank you for giving me the opportunity to go to the Easter Training 09 with ULSAC this year. You may have been surprised last year when I told you I started diving training in the pool at ULU. This trip was my first open water diving experience and I had absolutely amazing 10 days in Plymouth with people from ULSAC.

The trip started and ended with carrying stuff around which may sound not so exciting but actually, we learned to form a chain and even a crocodile chain (stand opposite to the person next to you). We had so many equipments and bags to carry to Plymouth from London as well as at the dive site loading and unloading the boats. I found it was quite technical, and following the experienced members' instructions, the trip started and ended with team power!

In this trip, time keeping was one of the difficulties. We are always told to be SLICK! It was a bit like in an army. However, I did realize the importance of plans made by dive managers who calculated the tide, weather, wind and made plans according to them. It seems there are so many things to consider which I don't notice as a trainee.

In the transportation (cars, vans) we always played music. We clapped our hands and sang along like a teenage school trip =).

The weight belt was something totally new for me. It is basically a black belt of metal tagged and we had to put it on our waist very very tightly. I used only 5-6kg of lead while others were using over 15 kg or more. It is actually quite uncomfortable and pretty heavy on land but once in the water, I forgot about it. In the ocean, due to the difference in the density of water, we use them all the time.

Diving in the sea is quite different from the training in the 3m pool at ULU. There are current, waves, lower temperatures, poor visibility, salty, we have to wear suits and weight belt etc. We gradually progressed our maximum depths, from 3m in the pool to 20m by the end of the week!

We had some drills in the harbour and quarry but most of our dives were from the boat. I really enjoyed time spent on the boat; it was a bit like horse riding. I luckily didn't easily get sea sick and I would love to learn how to handle the boat too.

As you may know, diving is always done with a buddy. Under the water, we cannot hear each other's voices, so we have some signs to communicate. This is quite useful on land as well in fact. We always check with each other to make sure if he/she is ok, air consumption, depth and time. One day when we went to dive at the fort, despite of the perfect blue sky, it was such a poor visibility under the water. I lost my buddy from my sight. Maybe it was only a couple of minutes- but it felt like much longer. It was pretty lonely feeling being in the silent, dark, silty, water. I looked everywhere 360degree and up and down as we were taught in case of separation. I really thought about aborting the dive and start ascending but then, my buddy tapped my shoulder from behind. You can imagine how relieved I was!

I discovered under the water- totally different world under the water. It is silent, dark, blue; slow settle but beautiful world. We dived the Fort, and shipwrecks called the Scilla, and the James. I saw lots of lives are breathing there; various sizes and colours of fish, star fish, corals, sponges, sea weeds, etc. When I look up towards the surface of the water, it is like a blue mirror. I loved spending time under the water. We were lucky - the weather during this trip was great, most of the days, there were blue skies and I enjoyed a lot after coming back from the bottom of the ocean, waiting for the boat to pick us up.



Quite a few of us went to local pub literally every night! We played pool and table football there. In another pub, we played with a peg. "Where is the peg?" One night we went out for curry and a bar nearby. We danced a lot that night and had great fun! I love people who can be both serious and funny. Sunday night (last night in Plymouth): Maartje and Kaisa and I got cards for all the instructors and made personalized pegs. Most of us are qualified as either Ocean or Sports divers during this trip and we were given nicknames. Mine is "quick silver" it is because I fin really fast and I have pretty light blue shiny fins!

Also, I cannot tell how much the people there meant to me as well. I terribly miss the Bovi sand and people I spent time with there. I remember and smile thinking about people I have come to know better there, the ocean, looking at the line between the sky blue and ocean blue. I feel washed and cleaned - It is some sort of spiritual retreat. I suffered from Bovi-blues indeed! We wake up all together with a group goal in mind. It was truly a unique experience to be on a dive trip, with a

group who I barely knew, but whom after only a short while, I felt like I know them like family.

Anyway, thanks again for the best birthday present ever! It has been a wonderful start of my 24th year. I cannot wait what more things are going to happen this year. I would love to go more trips over the summer if I can spare time during my project.

With much love, Tomoko xx

Points for PADI (warm water) crossovers

HIYAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I have to admit I was not there for the full Bovi experience but my five day escapade into the depth of ULSAC madness qualifies me to say a little something about the Easter training.

Siobhan Cox

Point 1

As I found out on my first water day at New England Quarry. Nothing tamed the beast of all hangovers like squeezing your self in a cold wet suit, followed by hurling yourself into FREEZING cold water and topping it all off with a bit of nose sucking and people dragging. Luckily for me I belonged to the 5'2 crew so there was no carrying of burly blokes; I got it easy when I was buddied with Tomoko.

Editor's note: Diving with a hangover is not permitted, however, in this case Siobhan stayed on the surface and did not actually go diving so it was ok. ET is not just about the diving, but also about socialising too. Tip: save those late nights drinking for when you know you won't be diving first thing the next day!

Point 2

When there is nothing to do play TIC TAC TOE, or if you prefer hangman. It is a FACT sometimes you have to do the boring dives. If you are like me and need entertaining, if there is nothing to do make sure you carry a supply of things that will entertain you, and you buddy for that matter. BUT try not to scare your instructor like I did. If they see you scrabbling with your BCD pocket they might think you are freaking out (sorry about that Kat)

Point 3

Wrecks RULE!!!!!!!!!! For the tropical pansy like myself we cross over to BSAC believing that nothing beats the rose tinted/ candy coated diving experiences of the somewhat warmer climes. Here I have to tell you that you are wrong. Yes while coral waters give you the explosive diversity that you will struggle to see elsewhere; cold waters are home to an abundance of AMAZING wrecks, which themselves serve as really cool mini ecosystems.

Points 4

Yes you can find coral in cold waters. Hard to believe I know BUT TRUE. Thanks to Martin on my first ever cold-water sea dive I got to see a really rare cold-water coral. The fact that it is rare makes it even better. I have seen hundred of species of coral and I have to say this was the cutest (if coral can be cute)

And finally.....

Point 5

Get excited about Kelp. Ok so it is not a frogfish or a pigmy seahorse but it is still pretty amazing. Yes your ULSAC friends will laugh at you but who cares I bet they would get excited about mangroves!!!

There is so much more that could be said about Easter training, but I am sure you all have you own stories. For me ET was all about trying out the cold water and I have come away loving it. Thanks for a great trip everyone XXX



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