

ULSAC Pembroke Trip Report Form 2004

Date	28 th – 31 th of May 2004	<input type="checkbox"/> Springs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neaps
Venue	Pembroke	
Marshal	Anjali Shah	
	Sam Denby (overseeing)	
Number of People	21	
People on the trip	Anthony Chaddock, Christian Carline, David Ebstein, David Wright, Dominic Waithe, James Royston, James Withers, Kathryn Sizer, Kristof Bostoen, Marc Jones, Mark Bell, Nathan Long, Nick Bedford, Nick John, Pau Comellas, Richard Myatt, Rosy Hosking, Will Reece and Silke Goethel(non-diver).	
Accommodation Address	Tents South Cocketts, Broadway, Little Haven, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. SA62 3TU	
Telephone Number	01437 781 296	
Cost per tent per night	1-person tent £6 2-person tent £8.50 3-person tent £11 4-person tent £12 extra persons in a tent £2.50	
Notes	Very friendly owners but there wasn't a bar on site, which was a disadvantage. Showers require 20 pence pieces but are nice. Best to book bank holiday accommodation very early.	
Launch Site	Dale Concrete slipway extends to low water mark and pontoon for tying up boats. Launch and recovery at any state of the tide. Sheltered from most winds. At LW springs tide goes out a long way. Yacht moorings so don't raise a large wake. Car park nearby. Pretty village. Cafe with good food. Sailing club kindly let us wash down our boats there. Toilets on sea front. Martin's Haven Steep road down to pebble beach-very steep for a van. No sand but small slipway only accessible at HW springs. Can shore dive off to the right side. Skomer ferry goes from the other side so inaccessible to divers. Cars to be parked on top in NT car park – take National Trust cards for free parking. Toilets near by. No café. Broad Haven and Little Haven are other possible launch sites but launching with a 4x4 is required at low tide.	
Nearest coastguard	Nearest coastguard is Milford Haven 01646 690 909	
Air Shop	West Wales Diving Centre, Hasguard Cross (on the Dale Road B4327) £3 per air fill	
Telephone number	01437 781 457	
Van Hire	H & H van hire Kentish town 02079166616 (£235) The ULSAC long-wheeled based transit van.	
Minibus hire from ULU	£20 per day and 25 pence per mile	

Dive 1	
Site:	Dakotian wreck
Max depth:	18m
GPS Marks:	51'42.215N 5'08.336W
Website info:	http://www.divernet.com/wrecks/wtour190900.htm
Brief description:	<p style="text-align: center;">The Dakotian by Will Reece</p> <p>The Dakotian is a large but messy wreck lying in the relative shelter of Milford Haven. It sits upright on the sea floor at about 18m and can be easily reached from Dale. I dived it, with buddy Nick 'Wyclef' John, on a sunny day in late May, 2004. This was my first dive of the season and so I was pleased to be doing such a large wreck as my warm-up dive.</p> <p>After the usual ULSAC procrastination, we were dropped in from one of the RIBs and went down the shot. I felt under-weighted and slightly flustered, but after a while, I settled back into being underwater. The visibility was not good, a couple of metres at most, and it was difficult to get our bearings or to appreciate the scale of the wreck as we swam around.</p> <p>From what I could tell, we were roughly in the centre of the wreck and in general it was pretty broken up. We found the large boilers and Nick spotted an excellent swim-through. This was a part of the super-structure that remained intact and it consisted of a 7m long stretch of corridor.</p> <p>The marine life on the wreck seemed to be a little limited. I don't remember seeing a single fish on the entire dive. We were being swept around by the swell from above and so it was pretty hard to dig around for other signs of life. We did however see some excellent little jellyfish.</p> <p>My favourite of these was about 3cm long and shaped like a cartoon cigar. It had iridescent hairs running down its axis and looked kind of like a (very small) deflated beach ball. Its hairs were all rhythmically twitching which I suppose was how it was being driven along. When we shone a torch on it, its translucent body glowed a vivid blue. It was very cool and seeing it constituted my favourite part of the dive (Sorry Nick -- the swim-through came a close second!).</p> <p>We were on a limited dive time due to the pressures of wave diving and so had to come up before either of us was ready to go. We came up on a dSMB from 15m, which was great fun to launch in the swell and were picked up by the boat. Overall, this was a good dive but it was shame about that crappy vis!</p>

Dive 2	
Site:	Behar wreck
Max depth:	20m
GPS Marks:	5'42.503N 5'07.067W
Website info:	http://www.divernet.com/wrecks/wtour370302.htm
Brief description:	Lots of current and the visibility wasn't that great.

Dive 3	
Site:	The Lucy
Max depth:	42m
Website info:	http://www.divernet.com/wrecks/lucy599.htm
GPS Marks:	51'44.452N 5'16.616W

Brief description: The Lucy by Mark Bell



Entering my 12th full diving season with ULSAC I had been to Pembroke in South Wales on six occasions -but had only one short visit to the wreck of the Lucy - a famous dive site which I had heard so much about but, sadly my first visit was marred by the worst viz ever and a post curry malaise.

This time I was determined to dive the Lucy, and dive it well and I took every opportunity to remind Anjali (our dive marshal) of that fact. Sunday morning arrived and the Lucy dive was to be in a few hours- the weather did not look promising. I was in a state of pre-caffeine injection, it was too early morning and there was mist over the sea- I was not pleased.

But- I need not have worried, we were privileged enough to be given the Hippo as our own personal runabout with just my kit, my buddy Sam Denby and his kit and the Boatie to load. As we whisked across the now sun-drenched and flat calm bay- Caffeine on board and the ubiquitous hot, greasy bacon and egg sandwich consumed- I was pleased.

For the uninitiated- The 450 ton Dutch coaster Lucy was on its way from Barry to Norway with a cargo of calcium carbide. At midday on February 14 1967 the Lucy struck "the Cable", a rock at the south end of Jack Sound, and became firmly wedged. The Lucy remained on the Cable most of the afternoon, but with a rising tide the ship came free just as it was getting dark. The current carried the Lucy north through Jack Sound then west along the north side of Skomer Island. It eventually sank just outside of North Haven.

The wreck is permanently buoyed, in a relatively sheltered area next to the fast race of "Jack Sound" and as we kitted up in the luxury of a two diver boat I felt an unusual knot in my stomach- I was very excited by this dive and apprehensive – unusual for me. Sam and I were relatively quiet until the buddy check and the sense of anticipation was tangible this was going to be good!

We slipped over the side, a quick OK to Sam and I propelled myself down the line as fast as the tables would allow the deck is at about 26 metres and the shot is tied to the very bow of the upright and seemingly intact wreck. I made my customary bottom of the shot kit checks and then looked up to see Sam in the parachute position dropping in to hover above the deck. We set off along the entire length of the Lucy using the various bits of equipment on the decking to fight our way against the waning current towards the super structure. The holds are in accessible from the deck- at least I could not find a way in.

As we approached the superstructure something caught my eye and we hovered – I could not hear Sam's breathing and so I assume he was holding his breath just like me- a natural reaction to the sight of a large and slightly disgruntled seal caught in the beam of my HID Light! As we watched it move from the deck, swim towards us and then drift nonchalantly away we set off in hot pursuit – alas we did not see our friend again- but wow- a special moment!

Having reached the superstructure I managed to slip through the various corridors, doorways and windows despite my frame, my twinset and accompanying stage bottle- when I looked back Sam's face appeared at the wheel house window but did not follow- I saw steps and machinery ahead – a very inviting way into what I assumed would be the engine room. But without a proper plan, good lead lines, my buddy and the serious amounts of silt on show in the area I decided not continue into the wreck returning to the window where Sam was looking very relieved.

We slipped over the stern of the Lucy, checking out the rudder and the stump where the prop should have been but isn't and then explored both sides of the hull looking for a way in and some indication of why this ship sank! I guess most of the damage must be underneath the hull, as we found nothing. By now we had reached 39 metres – the seabed was a couple of metres further down and the deco time was beginning to stack.

Back on deck and moving purposefully towards the shot I now had time to notice the fantastic amounts of fish, the spectacular spread of plumose and daisy anemones and the 10 metre viz- just awesome.



THE LUCY AS SHE IS TODAY

Back on the shot with 25 minutes of deco to do I tried to communicate all the aspects of the dive to my buddy- sadly my efforts to convey the simple message “did you see the seal?” led to nothing but both of us laughing hysterically causing much mask flooding – slight loss of buoyancy and in my case a damp arm as I tried to indicate seal by pulling the wrist seal of my dry suit- obviously a science PHD does not imply a high level of visual comprehension!

The journey back was a happy one- objective achieved and the return dive on the Lucy already planned and later the rest of the non- Lucy divers would be thoroughly bored by our tales.

How would I describe the Lucy- small but perfectly formed -and well worth getting your extended range qualification for, so you can dive it properly!

Dive 4	
Site:	Stack Rocks/Hen and Chicks
Max depth:	15 metres
GPS Marks:	51'46.474N 5'10.430W (off a chart)

Brief description:	<p>Hen and Chicks by Rosy Hosking</p> <p>The Hen and Chicks is a great wall dive with lots of gullies to explore. Although it is a fairly long drive from Martins Haven, but is definitely worth the wait while Sam (boatie) made sure he had the coordinates right. I was diving with the lovely Nick (Wyclef), and immediately impressed him with my diving-prowess by failing to switch on my dive timer before descending. After some complicated maths at the surface with a dive slate and one press of the button later, we were back down amongst the purple sea urchins, starfish, a couple of spider crabs and even some tiny jellyfish, which I hadn't seen before. The weather was lovely, and so I didn't think about being cold at all, which I think is a first for me. I was also super excited as this was my first dive with my birthday-SMB (extravagantly decorated that very morning). Nick held onto it for most of the dive, though, so I can't claim to be an expert yet. Having spent the whole morning waiting for the more experienced divers who were diving the Lucy, I think we were justly rewarded by such a cool scenic dive – and then fish and chips back on the beach as the sun set – lovely.</p>
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Dive 5	
Site:	Night dive in Martin's Haven
Max depth:	6 metres
GPS Marks:	
Brief description:	<p style="text-align: center;">Night dive in Martins Haven by Kristof Bostoan</p> <p>It had been a nice day with the most experienced on the trip diving the wreck of the Lucy in the morning and the lesser gods diving the stony outcrop of 'the Hen & Chicks' in the afternoon. A night dive was planned and so we did what we do best, which was to wait. In this case it was waiting for the sun to set and darkness to descend. We soon discovered that this takes a long time in summer and is maybe not the best time to plan such activities. After fish and chips the first wave of divers went in and we watched the water in the Haven flicker with glow sticks and torch light.</p> <p>As the first set of divers returned we prepared to explored the abyss of Martins Haven. The first challenge was to find enough depth to immerse all of our kit. This involved a lot of hand-holding and backwards stumbling until a safe depth in the harbour was found. A quick flick face-down and some stones added to our BCDs and we were finally wet. Surprisingly the bottom was nowhere to be seen due to the kelp obstructing our vision.</p> <p>Slowly moving north we quickly reach the outer limits of the defined diving area and turned east to a rock wall. On our way as we swept our torches around us we saw various sparkling jellyfish moving around on the rhythm of their personal light show. Different types of crabs did balancing acts on top of kelp strands whilst eating. We surfaced after exact 20 min as planned and had dived to 5 metres. The dive proved that you do not need depth and light to have good fun. I look forward to the next eerie night dive.</p>

General Details

The experience of divers on this trip ranged from newly qualified ocean divers to advanced divers. A series of dives were planned to suit all interests and experience.

Eating fish and chips watching the sunset, before the night dive was fantastic. Better organisation was required for packing up after the night dive.

Hurray for us towing back a Welsh dive boat with 'rescue boat' written on the front. Their engine had failed and we towed them back to the jetty. Thanks to Richard for driving someone round the bay to their car and trailer, so that they could retrieve their boat with Mark's help.