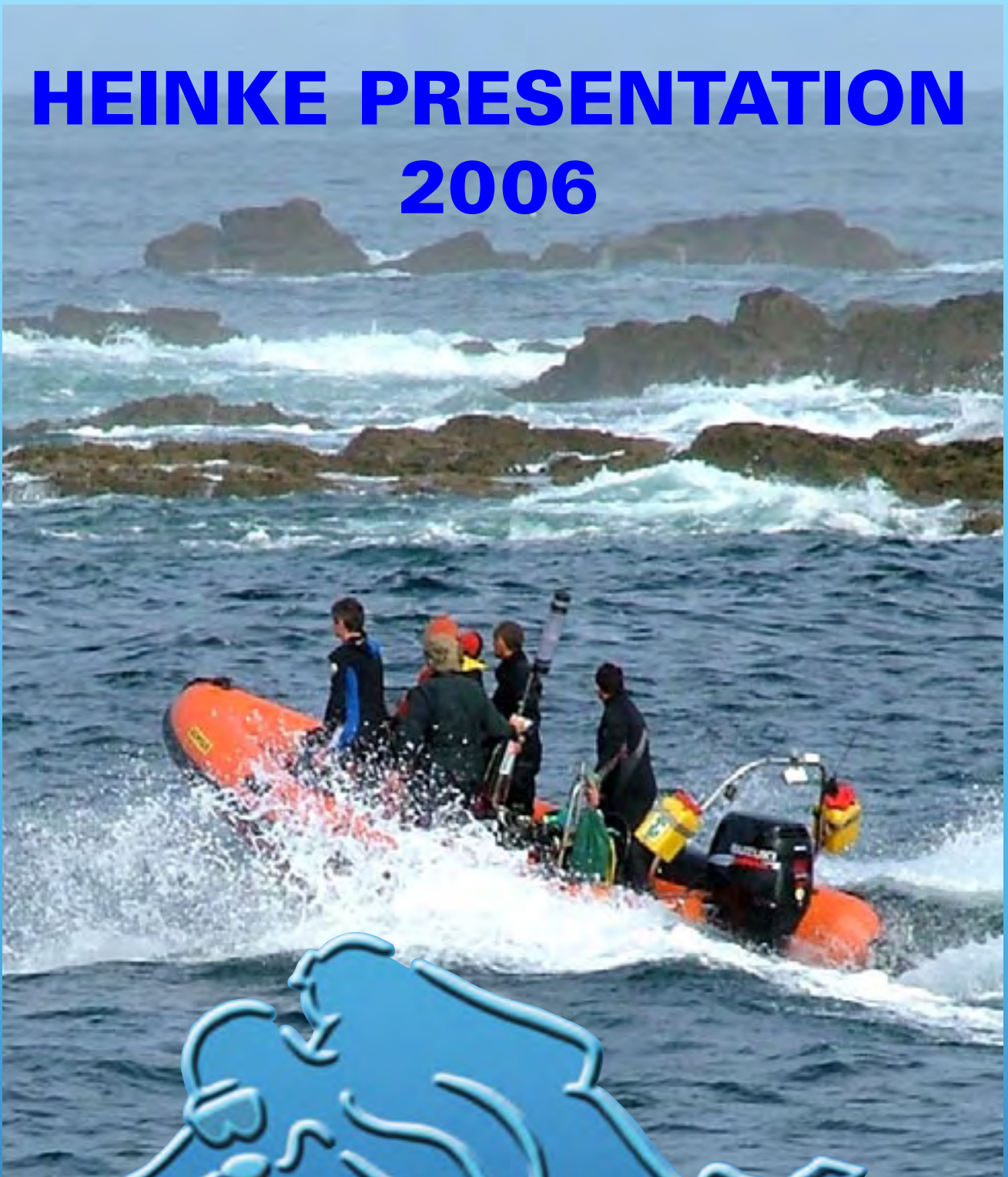


# HEINKE PRESENTATION 2006



**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

# INTRODUCTION



**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

# TOTNES SUB-AQUA CLUB

Totnes Sub-Aqua Club is about to celebrate its 30th year in this guise, although it was actually started in 1973 as South Hams BSAC, voting to change its name on 18 February 1976. During this period the Club has seen many changes, both in the kit used and in the nature of diving itself, with the rise of the 'holiday' diver in recent years, and this has presented many challenges to the way the Club operates.

As will be seen in the membership analysis that follows later in this document, the Club's membership was at its lowest in 1996, the year BSAC membership peaked, and has been rising steadily ever since, but at a cost. Members today are different, they have less time, but often more money, and demand a 'service' that is perhaps out of keeping with that which a volunteer-based organisation is used to providing. However, Totnes responded to this need, reorganising its finances in 1995-6 and mapping out a 5-year plan to improve both the Club's financial position and the benefits offered to members, in an attempt to reverse the decline in membership.

Fortunately this policy paid off, with the current membership standing at 91, almost doubling since the low of 1996, and the Club having been able to weather a double catastrophe in 2003-4, with the engine of one of the Club boats and the Club compressor both breaking down irreparably. This meant that the Club was down to one boat and no compressor for much of 2004, and 2005 has been a year of consolidation following their replacement, with the focus very much on doing what we do best – diving and training!

On the diving front, the Club has been making the most of the opportunities presented by the new BSAC Advanced Diver training regime, whereby would-be ADs are required to organise dives to places they are unfamiliar with and also diving weekends away, which has led to the Club rediscovering some old neglected sites and visiting some genuinely new ones, such as Fowey in Cornwall, and even a 2-week expedition to Vancouver Island in Canada! As will be described later in the Diving Officer's report, it has also been a bumper year for diving, with over 2100 dives having been undertaken by members, and 29 different people marshalling dives.

We have also been very active on the training front, running Ocean Diver, Sports Diver and Advanced Diver training courses in 2005, as well as progressing Dive Leader training. We have also run a number of skill development courses, and Branch instructors have also been active on BSAC regional courses and within the Instructor Training Scheme.

In addition to all the above, we also have an active social scene, with a Branch Social Secretary who organises various functions, culminating in the annual Dinner and Dance, and details of these are included herein.

Finally, the Club would like to extend its thanks to all its members for their continued support and enthusiasm, and for diving safely, and also to the large number of people who actively contributed to the preparation of this submission.

**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

# THE CLUB'S ORIGINS

Alice Llewellyn, one of the founders of the Club, and now an honorary life member, remembers its inception:

*Dick Llewellyn and I, Alice, moved to Totnes in 1973 from Banbury where we had been actively diving and teaching diving. Dick was a 1st class diver and I was 2nd class. We were excited to be so close to the sea. Banbury is virtually in the middle of the country and probably 5 hours to reach the sea in any direction.*

*According to my logbook we first dived along the Brixham breakwater and came up with an enormous crab. Can you do that today?*

*Dick decided we would start a club in Totnes and we arranged a first meeting in a room at The Bay Horse. A few interested people turned up. We needed 12 people to be affiliated to the BSAC and so we included our three children to make up the numbers.*

*We started training in swimming pools on the Dartington Estate and meeting at The Bay Horse for lectures. Sea dives consisted of meeting at Slapton Sands and being taken out to sea in our own little Humber inflatable and told to swim back to shore with the help of a compass – a dull, sandy swim with, perhaps, finding a small hidden plaice as a reward. At other times we would hire a boat in order to get a more exciting dive and gain experience. We had a biology teacher from Dartington School, Nick Evans, who could name much of the underwater wildlife. This interested me. Others like to look for wrecks.*

*By 1974/5 we had more members. Tony Hoile had joined us with his experience and with other keen members' help we were able to buy our first hard-bottomed inflatable. This was safely installed in a large hut hired to us by the Dartington Estate. We had also moved to Meadowbrook for our lectures – and refreshments. The Totnes Club had started and by the work of its members would go from strength to strength.*

These days the Club is still based at Meadowbrook Community Centre in Dartington, near Totnes, having built its own boatshed there in 1992.



# MEMBERSHIP

by Allen Murray



**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

# 1 NUMBERS

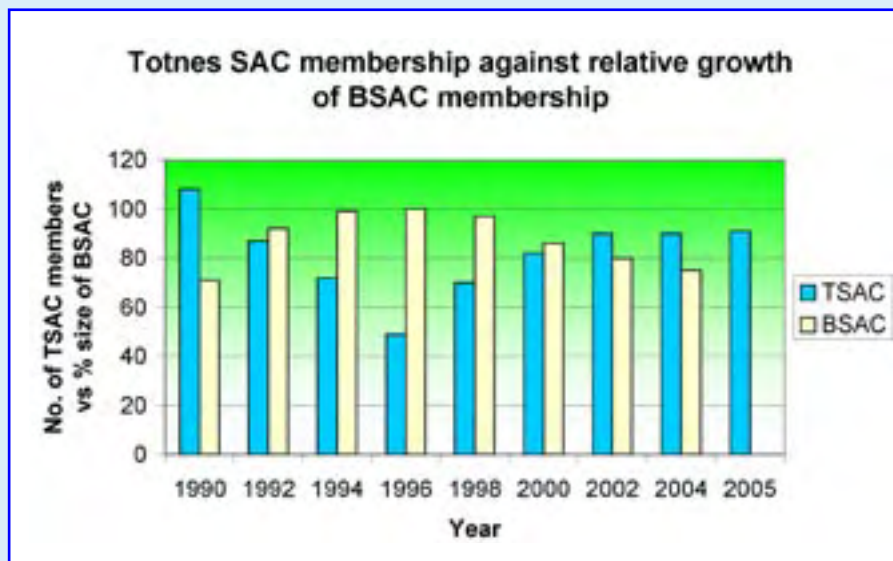
Totnes Sub-Aqua Club currently has a membership of 91, which is a 15-year high. As can be seen from Table 1 below, membership declined steadily from a high point in the late 1980s, reaching a low of just 49 in 1996, before rising again to a steady 90 or so since 2002.

**Table 1: Totnes membership**

	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005
Members	108	87	72	49	70	82	90	91	90	91

It is interesting to compare this fall and rise in Totnes membership with quite the opposite trend in the overall membership of the BSAC as a whole (data taken from BSAC Membership Information Sheet M.4), as illustrated in Figure 1 below. As can be seen, whilst Totnes membership was falling, BSAC was successfully increasing its membership, but when the BSAC membership started to fall, Totnes' membership rose. It is thought that this may be indicative of the increase in BSAC recruitment both abroad and in the 'holiday diver' market in the early 1990s, whilst Totnes took a while to deal with the loss of 'hardcore' diving members as they hung-up their fins, at the same time trying to adapt to the changing market of UK diving.

**Figure 1: Totnes membership compared to BSAC as a whole**



This point is illustrated by an analysis of the Club membership over the past 30 years, with members generally being retained for a shorter period than historically. This is thought to reflect both patterns of work, with jobs being more mobile than, say, 20 years ago, and also a trend towards shorter diving 'careers', with diving being just one of a number of interests and there being more demands on precious free time generally in today's society. Table 2 shows how many current members were in the Club in past years, which gives an indication of the turnover of the membership.

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**Table 2: Membership history**

	2004	2003	2002	2000	1994	1990	1985	1975
Number of current members who were members in year	71	65	49	38	16	12	7	3

38 members have been with the Club for 5 years or more; 16 members for over 10 years; 12 for 15 years; 7 for 20 years; and 3 for 30 years, two of whom were founder members.

A breakdown of Club membership for the beginning and end of 2005 is detailed in Table 3, below.

**Table 3: Breakdown of membership**

	January 2005	December 2005	New members	Renewing members
Full Diving Members	67	68	16	57
Reduced Diving Members	15	16	2	12
Junior Diving Members	1	1	1	0
Honorary Life Members	4	4	0	4
Snorkelling Members	3	2	0	2

A large part of the turnover each year is due to the varying levels of retention of each new batch of trainees, with many people seemingly only learning so they can dive abroad on holiday. That said there are usually a number who come to us this way and then get 'hooked', becoming long-term members of the Club diving regularly in the UK. In order to address this issue of membership retention, the Club undertook a survey of the membership in 2005, by means of a questionnaire, to try to establish members' requirements and to assess whether we were satisfying their needs. This was well received, with over 60% of the membership responding, and more detail of this exercise is given in Section 4 of this submission.

However, one very visible problem is the increasing average age of the membership, which is thought to be due to many of the factors outlined above, but as older members leave they take their experience and knowledge with them. Table 4 below gives a breakdown of the age profile of the membership at the end of 2005.

**Table 4: Age profile of membership**

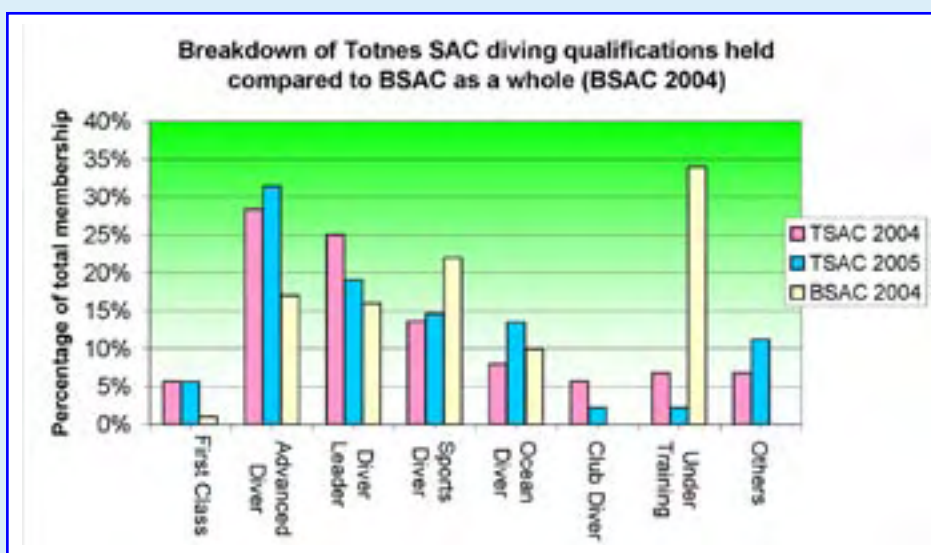
Age	Number of members
14-19	4
20-29	10
30-39	18
40-49	29
50-59	26
60 or more	4

This has required action on two fronts: firstly, the need to encourage older members to stay with the Club as long as possible, by ensuring we offer a good variety of diving and also social events, as well as through our 'reduced' membership subscription (see Section 3 for details); and, secondly, to try and entice younger members, holiday divers, etc, to join the Branch.

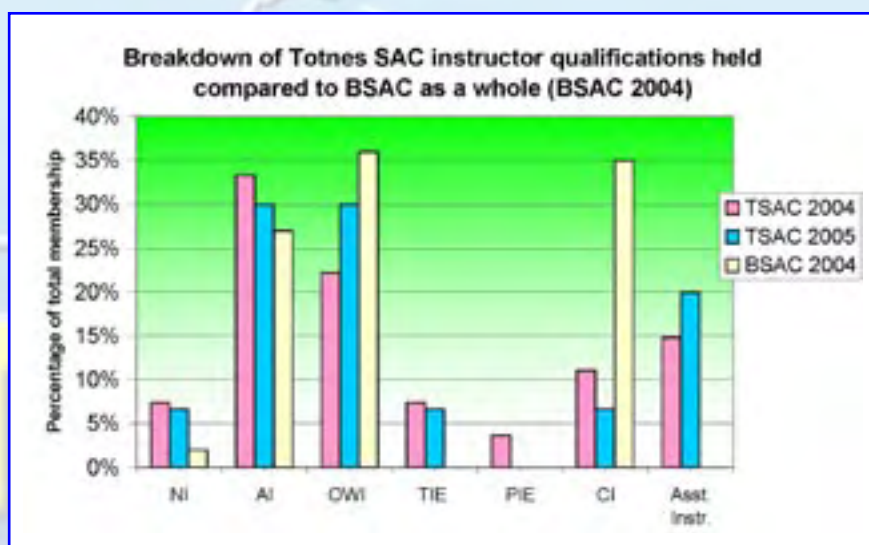
The Club has employed several strategies in its approach to younger members, including becoming a 'broad church' and welcoming divers from any training agency, although, ironically, most end up joining BSAC so they can progress their training. Indeed, this ability to provide additional skills and qualifications has probably proved one of the most positive attractions to new members, together with the regular and varied diving that the Club offers.

This is perhaps best illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 below, which show the increasing diving and instructor qualification levels within the Club over the 2004-5 period, and also a comparison against BSAC as a whole (data taken from BSAC Membership Information Sheet M.4 and also from communication with BSAC HQ).

**Figure 2: Totnes diving qualifications compared to BSAC as a whole**



**Figure 3: Totnes instructor qualifications compared to BSAC as a whole**





## 2

# SNORKELLING

### 2.1 WEDNESDAY NIGHT SNORKEL TRAINING

Totnes SAC is fortunate in having access to a local swimming pool for an hour every Wednesday evening throughout the year. However, as formal scuba training is generally only undertaken during the winter months, and the Club has to commit to a weekly hire to maintain the booking, this presents an opportunity for members to use the pool for other things such as practising their skills, trying out new kit and participating in courses such as Lifesaver. As an extension of this principle, the Club has maintained a snorkelling section for several years now, although the numbers tend to ebb and flow, and formal snorkel training is provided by one of our dedicated Snorkelling Instructors, Jim and Lorraine Pike. To this end, the Club has a wide selection of pool equipment including 30 sets of masks, snorkels and fins.

### 2.2 SCOUT SESSIONS

In addition to the formal snorkel training, we also work with local youth organisations and regularly run sessions during the year for the Explorer Scouts. Whilst primarily scuba taster sessions, they also include snorkelling work for those not using dive kit, the party generally being broken into two or three groups for convenience. This year we ran two very successful sessions for the Torbay Explorer Scouts, and another session for the Ranger Scouts was only cancelled due to the leader's illness.

### 2.3 OCTOPUSH

Whilst Totnes Octopush Club goes from strength to strength, these days there is little connection with the dive Club, although some TSAC members are still active Octopush players.



**3****ADMINISTRATION****3.1 BRANCH ORGANISATION****Branch Organisation - 2005****Diving Officer**

Sarah Dashfield  
Diving 15 years  
Member since 1992

**Chair**

Nick Booth  
Diving 4 years  
Member since 2001 [T]

**Equipment Officer**

Allen Murray  
Diving 12 years  
Member since 1993

**Treasurer**

Jo Parsons  
Diving 5 years  
Member since 2000 [T]

**Secretary**

Bella Snook  
Diving 10 years  
Member since 2001

**Training Officer**

Rosemarie Longfield  
Diving 16 years  
Member since 1989

**Social Secretary**

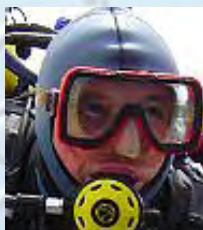
Andy Smith  
Diving 7 years  
Member since 1998 [T]

**Non-executive Officer**

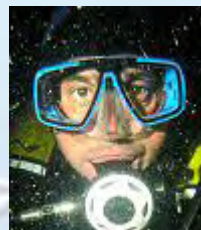
Simon Powell  
Diving 33 years  
Member since 1979

**Non-executive Officer**

Richard Handy  
Diving 20 years  
Member since 1999

**Non-executive Officer**

Stuart Smith  
Diving 14 years  
Member since 1991 [T]



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### Website

Richard Knights  
Diving 21 years  
Member since 1984 [T]



### Welfare Officer

Rosemarie Longfield  
Diving 16 years  
Member since 1989



### Membership Secretary and PR Officer

Ruth Swarbrick  
Diving 18 years  
Member since 1994



[T] denotes learned to dive with Totnes SAC.

**A committee** of ten members, elected at the Annual General Meeting, manages the Club. The committee comprises the following positions: Diving Officer; Chairperson; Secretary; Treasurer; Training Officer; Equipment Officer; Social Secretary; and three Non-Executive Officers. In addition, the Club has a Welfare Officer, Membership Secretary, Public Relations Officer and Webmaster, but these are not committee positions. All committee members must stand for re-election every year and are limited to a maximum of 3 years in any one position.

**The Diving Officer** is responsible for the safe conduct of all diving and training activities of the Club and must ensure that all these activities are carried out in accordance with current BSAC guidelines. However, whilst the Diving Officer delegates training duties to the Training Officer, ultimate responsibility remains unchanged and the DO certifies new qualifications gained within the Branch. The Diving Officer also issues the weekly Branch email detailing the diving planned over the following week and also other matters, such as social activities or training courses. The Diving Officer delegates responsibility for maintenance of the Club boats and other kit to the Equipment Officer, as described below.

**The Chairperson** is the spokesperson for the Club, both internally and externally, and either attends or arranges for others to attend external meetings that may impact on the running of the Club, such as the Dartington Recreation Association, who are the landlords of the Club premises, and the local Sports Council. The Chairperson also takes the chair at committee meetings, the Annual General Meeting and all other formal meetings of the Branch, as well as co-ordinating the working of any sub-committees that may be set-up to address particular issues of concern.

**The Secretary** maintains the Branch records and compiles the minutes of all meetings. The Secretary is also responsible for Branch communications with third parties and keeps the membership informed of matters relating to Branch activities.

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**The Treasurer** is responsible for all the Club finances, including the collection of monies from diving, pool use, membership renewals and the like during the Club's Wednesday evening dry meeting. The Treasurer keeps records of financial transactions conducted in the Club's name and prepares a report for the monthly committee meeting detailing account balances, income and expenditure. The Treasurer also compiles a balance sheet and analysis of accounts for presentation to the membership at the Annual General Meeting. Whilst membership renewals fall within the Treasurer's sphere of responsibility, this role is delegated to the Membership Secretary, as outlined below.

**The Training Officer's** role is to co-ordinate all training activities within the Branch. This includes arranging for instructors to present lectures and undertake pool training, as well as sea dives, although the Training Officer is assisted in this through a system of 'team leaders', who each look after a particular level of training, such as Ocean Diver or Dive Leader. The Training Officer also arranges for Skill Development Courses to be run within the Branch, either by Club instructors or through the regional coaching scheme. The Training Officer keeps all records of training within the Branch, together with details of all qualifications gained externally by Branch members.

**The Equipment Officer** oversees the maintenance, repair and servicing of Branch equipment and the Club's boatshed. This includes the preparation of a report to the monthly committee meeting detailing work undertaken since the last meeting and work remaining outstanding. The Equipment Officer is also responsible for advising the committee of the current state and future requirements for Branch equipment, so that the Branch may plan for any significant expenditure appropriately and in a timely manner.

**The Social Secretary** co-ordinates the social and fund-raising activities of the Club, including evening speakers, nights out and the Annual Dinner and Dance.

**The Non-Executive Officers** do not have a specific role, but are expected to assist the Officers in their duties. Amongst other things, this includes the administration of the Club lottery and the compilation of the compressor operator's rota. These positions were created partly to encourage members to become involved with committee work with a view to eventually taking on an executive role.

**The Welfare Officer** acts as the focal point for any welfare issues within the Club, and administers the requirements of BSAC's Policy on the Welfare of the Vulnerable, including instructor registration with BSAC HQ.

**The Webmaster** maintains the Club website, which has now been in existence since 1997, and has proved to be a very useful tool, both from the 'marketing' point of view and also for the dissemination of information both to Branch members and to the diving world at large.

**The Membership Secretary** looks after Branch memberships and also BSAC renewals, as well as maintaining the membership database and issuing regular updates of members' contact details to the Branch.

**The Public Relations Officer** publicises the Branch via regular press releases to local newspapers and, on occasion, to national periodicals such as *Dive* and *Diver* magazine and also to the BSAC website.

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## 3.2 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The Annual General Meeting of Totnes SAC** is held in December every year. A copy of the minutes of the 2005 AGM is included here as Appendix I.

## 3.3 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The committee meets on the third Monday of every month to organise the smooth running of the Branch and to plan its future development. All meetings are minuted and, once approved at the next meeting, these minutes are posted on the notice board for all Club members to read. A copy of the minutes of the June 2005 committee meeting is included here as Appendix II.

## 3.4 QUARTERLY MEETINGS – MEMBERS’ OPEN FORUM

There were three quarterly meetings in 2005. These are held on an informal basis requiring no agenda. At these meetings the committee report back to the Club members on subjects ranging from changes to the training scheme, and the Diving Officer’s Conference, to recurrent equipment problems, and time is allowed for an open forum during which Club members were able to raise any questions or suggestions they had to enable the committee to benefit from members’ feedback on a wide variety of issues affecting the Club.

One outcome of these meetings was a review of the way the Club dives are costed and how this relates to membership subscriptions. This review is ongoing, a small sub-committee comprising the Chair, Diving Officer and Treasurer and two ordinary Club members being tasked with considering the options and reporting back to the first quarterly meeting of 2006.

## 3.5 BRANCH CONSTITUTION AND RULES

The Branch Constitution and Branch Rules are constantly being reviewed and are approved at each AGM with a copy of both being printed the Club Members’ Handbook (see Section 4).

Motions to amend the Branch Constitution were put to the AGM in December 2005 and these are shown below:

### MOTION 1

Proposed by the committee

*That a new sub-clause 11 be added to the ‘Annual General Meeting’ section of the Constitution to read:*

*‘If a member who has been proposed for election to the committee decides to withdraw their nomination after the closing date for nominations has passed, this withdrawal shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary (which means shall include fax or email) and shall be binding. Any subsequent re-nomination shall be in accordance with sub-clauses 2 and 4 above.’*

*Reason: To clarify the rules for election of officers, as the current rules do not address the issue of the withdrawal of nominations once submitted.*

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## MOTION 2

Proposed by the committee

*That a new sub-clause 10 be added to the "Management" section of the Constitution to read:*

*'The Office of a member of the Committee shall be vacated if, by notice in writing to the Committee, the Officer resigns their office, or if the Officer fails to attend 3 consecutive committee meetings to which they have been invited without due cause having been given for their absence. Notwithstanding this rule, all Officers shall be deemed to have resigned at the AGM, in accordance with the AGM rules.'*

*Reason: To clarify the rules for the resignation of Officers, as the current rules do not address this issue.*

Both these motions were passed and copies of the current Branch Constitution & Branch Rules are included here as Appendix III.

## 3.6 SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Branch offers two levels of membership:

- **Full Diving Member**                    **£108.00\***
- **Reduced Diving Member**            **£46.00\*\***

\* £9.00/month by standing order (reduced membership and BSAC subs are not payable by standing order)

\*\* entitled to maximum six boat dives per year

Annual subscriptions are reviewed by the committee each January, as are the cost of Dive and Air Tickets, details of which are published in the Members' Handbook (see Section 4 for details of the Handbook).

The Branch subscription is in addition to the BSAC membership fee. Branch members are also required to join Meadowbrook Community Centre, where weekly Club dry meetings are held, at a cost of £7.00 per annum.

Branch membership provides access to:

- **Club diving**
- **Club holidays**
- **Air fills from the Club compressor**
- **Free use of the pool during the Wednesday evening wet session**
- **Training and courses**
- **Discounts with some local dive shops**
- **Help and advice from experienced divers**



**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

### **3.7 MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT**

There are many ways in which members can become involved with the day-to-day operation of the Club.

Club members are encouraged to assist in working parties in the boat-shed as and when needed, and several members assist the Equipment Officer on a regular basis.

Each week members are required to act as compressor operator and pool lifesaver. A system of rotas has been established to try to ensure that this load is spread around as much as possible.

Dive marshals are always in demand and there is a mentoring system in place for potential marshals, whether they be Dive Leaders or newer Advanced Divers.

In addition, as mentioned in Section 3, sub-committees are set-up on an 'ad-hoc' basis to deal with issues such as grant applications, changes in the BSAC training system (for example when Club Diver replaced Novice), and the current dive cost review. In each case, appointees are selected on the basis of the skills they can bring to the table and not their position in the Club.



## 4

# INFORMATION

Communication with Club members occurs through a variety of media, as described below.

### 4.1 WEEKLY CLUB MEETING 'SHOUT'

There is a 'shout' at 10.00pm every Wednesday night at the Club's dry meeting where the Diving Officer (or Chair in the DO's absence) gives out up-to-date information regarding forthcoming dives, social events, equipment problems, etc.

### 4.2 NOTICE BOARD

The Club notice board holds dive sheets for forthcoming dives so that members can sign-up for them, together with details of training sessions, compressor and pool rotas, expedition plans, notices of social events, and there is even a 'For sale' section for the use of Club members.



### 4.3 WEEKLY EMAIL

Virtually the entire membership has access to email, either at home or at work, and, consequently, this is the main channel of communication for many, particularly those who find it difficult to make the Wednesday night dry meetings on a regular basis. The weekly email is essentially an electronic version of the shout and is sent out by the Diving Officer on a Wednesday night or Thursday morning. It can also be used to give more advance notice of forthcoming courses and the like. A typical Club email is shown below:

*Hi everyone*

*Lots to get through tonight, so here goes:*

*This weekend's trip to Fowey is in the balance due to the weather, but Ruth and Dangerous are determined to do something! Please ring Ruth (01803 864864) 18.30-19.00 Friday for final arrangements. For those of you who were only planning to do Sunday, please ring Ruth on her mobile (07833 597731) 18.30-19.00 Saturday.*

*There's an Ocean Diver boat dive on Monday evening. Call-in is to Rosemarie (01364 72462) 18.30-18.45 Sunday evening.*

*Tuesday Pete Watton (01803 864703) is running a dive on Tony's boat, Falcon, out of Dartmouth. Call-in is 18.30-19.00 Monday.*

*Lifesaver training is continuing in the pool next Wednesday. Full kit please. This will be followed by a dry session at Meadowbrook.*

*Next week we have Ruth as lifesaver and snorkel helper in the pool and Malcolm Nimmo is compressor operator.*



*For those of you going to the Scillies in a couple of weeks, there will be a brief get together at Meadowbrook at 21.30 next Wednesday, to discuss final arrangements.*

*Johnny Gowdy is running a trip to Cornwall for the Whit bank holiday - the list is on the board!*

*I'm about to close the list for the Kernow w/e in June, so if you wanted to go, but haven't quite got round to putting your name up, please email me back by return!*

*I was scheduled to give a slide show on the shipwrecks of Truk Lagoon next week, but this has now been postponed until June 1st at 21.30.*

*Please keep an eye out for social event notices on the board! Andy is planning a pitch & putt and a gliding evening in the near future. If you are interested in the gliding please let Andy know. it will be at Dunkerswell (near Honiton) and will cost £25.*

*Finally, please make sure the radios are turned off when you put the boats back in the shed and that the isolator on the new boat is in the off position, otherwise you may find that a dive doesn't happen because the battery's flat!*

*I think that's everything!!!*

*Cheers*

*Allen*

#### **4.4 CLUB MEMBERS' HANDBOOK**

**The Club Members' Handbook** is printed annually, usually in January following the election of the new committee and the setting of annual subscriptions, to try to ensure that it is as up-to-date as possible. A copy of the 2005 Handbook is included here as Appendix IV. The Handbook includes the following details:

- **The year's Dive Plan**
- **Committee contact numbers**
- **Current membership address list**
- **Compressor rota for the year**
- **Branch Rules and Constitution**
- **Useful information, such as telephone numbers for the coastguard and local dive shops**
- **Social calendar for the year**
- **Dive planning and marshalling guidelines**
- **Diving accident procedure flowchart**
- **Nitrox maximum operational depth table**



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## 4.5 NEWSLETTER

**The Club Newsletter** is a new venture for 2005 and is intended to supplement the weekly email and also to allow for the relative infrequency of 'Undercurrents' (see below). It is published at intervals throughout the year and includes brief trip reports, details of forthcoming events, competitions, and the like. A typical issue of the newsletter is included here as Appendix V.



Undercurrents  
Winter 2005

Yes, it is that time again, my memory does stretch back to the last issue of Undercurrents but it does seem to have taken a while. Procrastination is a very undervalued art and as such I'd hate to make this sound like an apology. Hopefully the words and pictures (yes we do have both, although admittedly, more words than pictures) will have been worth the wait. Don't rush to the end but courtesy of Ruth we now have the forerunner to the popular Japanese waste of time known as Sudoku and a few more words afterwards but no more pictures, enjoy.

★★★★★★★★★★  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
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## 4.6 UNDERCURRENTS

**Undercurrents** is the Club magazine, which puts in an occasional appearance, although there may be only one edition in any given year. A copy of the Winter 2005 edition is included here as Appendix VI.

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## 4.7 WEBSITE

The Branch website is really more a source of general information and guidance than a regular channel of communication, providing details of dive sites and slack tide times, links to weather websites, trip reports, etc.

More detail on the website is provided in Section 5.

## 4.8 QUESTIONNAIRE

As mentioned in Section 1, the Club undertook a survey of the membership in 2005, by means of a questionnaire, to try and establish member 'wants' and to assess whether we were satisfying their needs.

The results of this questionnaire were analysed and the findings are summarised below:

<b>Total number of members responding</b>	54 (61%)
<b>Length of time diving (years)</b>	13 (average)
<b>Time with Totnes SAC (years)</b>	8 (average)
<b>Where did you learn to dive?</b>	
Totnes SAC	15 (28%)
Abroad	10 (19%)
<b>Why did you join Totnes SAC?</b> (typical responses)	Good first contact, friendly club, recommendation, local, to learn to dive
<b>How many dives did you do last year?</b>	No. % (of respondents)
1-19	15 (28%)
20-49	22 (41%)
50-99	13 (24%)
100+	3 (6%)
<b>Do you dive:</b>	
Only in the UK	6 (11%)
Mainly in the UK	43 (80%)
Mainly on holiday	5 (9%)
<b>What type of diving do you most enjoy?</b>	
Boat	41 (76%)
Drift	27 (50%)
Night	16 (30%)
Reef	39 (72%)
Shore	13 (24%)
Wreck	37 (69%)
Other	1 (2%)
<b>Comfortable depth range?</b>	
0-10m	2 (4%)
11-20m	1 (2%)
21-30m	18 (33%)
31-40m	24 (44%)
41-50m	5 (9%)
50m+	4 (7%)

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**Preferred boat type?**

Hardboat	27 (50%)
RIB	27 (50%)

**Would you like more 'special interest' diving?**

Seasearch/marine biology	22 (41%)
Nautical archaeology	16 (30%)
Underwater photography	20 (37%)
Other	2 (4%)

**Would you support an 'Adopt a wreck' initiative by the Club?**

Yes	42 (78%)
No	7 (13%)

**Would you take part in an underwater photography competition if organised within the Club?**

Yes	21 (39%)
No	24 (44%)

**Which of the following weekend expeditions would you go on, if they were organised (tick all that apply)?**

Cornwall	46 (85%)
Lundy	37 (69%)
West Wales	24 (44%)
Portland/Weymouth	20 (37%)
Swanage/Kimmeridge	17 (31%)
Lyme Bay	18 (33%)
North Devon	28 (52%)

Other suggestions Isle of Man, Scapa Flow, West Scotland, Clyde Shipwrecks, N.Cornwall, Channel Islands, N France, Scillies (long w/e?), Ireland, Farnes

**Would you be prepared to assist in organising such trips?**

Yes	34 (63%)
No	11 (20%)

**Where would you be interested in going on a diving holiday with the Club (tick all that apply)?**

UK	28 (52%)
Europe	27 (50%)
Red Sea	33 (61%)
Caribbean	21 (39%)
Great Lakes	13 (24%)
Pacific	16 (30%)

Other suggestions PNG, Florida, Indian Ocean, Africa, Canada, Galapagos, Sweden, California, Norway, Arctic, Maldives, SE Asia, Ireland, Brittany

**What would you be prepared to spend on a Club diving holiday?**

£946 (average)

**Would you favour 1 week or 2 week trips?**

1 week	34 (63%)
2 weeks	11 (20%)

SUB-AQUA CLUB

**Would you like to do more training?** Some members listed more than 1 level

Sports Diver	3 (6%)
Dive Leader	12 (22%)
Advanced Diver	13 (24%)
First Class	6 (11%)
Instructor	10 (19%)

**Skill development courses (please state which)**

18 (33%)  
Nitrox 5; BH 4; PRM 1; FAD 1; Adv L 1; DC 2;  
O2 2; SAR 1; Nav 1; Knots 1; Rebreather 1

**What dive grade do you ultimately wish to achieve and why?**

The most popular answer was Advanced Diver, although a couple of respondents went for First Class "as it's the highest grade". Several people said Instructor, although only 1 gave the reason as "wanting to give something back to the Club"

**Do you attend Club social activities and, if not, why not?**

Common comment relates to either lack of time due to other events, family, work; or just other interests

**What sort of social activities would you support (tick all that apply)?**

Annual dinner and dance	37 (69%)
Meal	25 (46%)
Dive BBQ	40 (74%)
Party	20 (37%)
Quiz night	19 (35%)
10 pin bowling/skittles	21 (39%)
Booze and clues	14 (26%)
Dry-skiing/tobogganing	16 (30%)
Opera/theatre	15 (28%)
Visit (e.g. Mary Rose)	19 (35%)
Other suggestions	Gliding, SETT Gosport, Greyhound Racing, Paintball, Visits: Charlestown, Navy days at Plymouth, Portsmouth, Plymouth Aquarium (behind the scenes tour)

**Any other (relevant) comments?**

The weekly email is a real lifeline to the Club

There have been some immediate outcomes from the questionnaire such as a dive expedition to Pembroke being organised for 2006 and the Adoption of the SS Rosehill under the NAS 'Adopt a Wreck' scheme, as detailed in Section 13, whilst other aspects will be addressed in the 2006 social and training calendars.

## **4.9 INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS**

New members joining the Branch make contact via the website, by telephone or from just meeting existing members socially or elsewhere. Whatever the route, the first step is to send the prospective member some details of the Club and to invite them to come along to one of the Wednesday night dry meetings to meet us and see what we're about.

Once at the Club, they can be shown the boatshed and other facilities, and one of the committee will tell them about the Club and how it operates. This is especially important for divers who have learnt abroad and often have no understanding of the 'club' system. If they are a trained diver, the Diving Officer will want to discuss their qualifications with them and to have sight of their certification and log book, and if they decide to join, the membership Secretary will want to record this information on the Qualifications Database, as well as processing their membership application.

New members are given a copy of the Club Members' Handbook and added to the Club email list. In addition, in 2005 the Club formalised the system of providing a 'mentor' to new members to ensure that they are looked after whilst they find their feet, introduced to other members and shown how Club dives operate, etc.

We also have an information sheet for potential trainees which sets out details of how the system works, the costs involved, the level of commitments required, etc, to try to ensure that there are no nasty surprises once they join the course. A copy of this sheet is included here in Appendix IX.

## **4.10 PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RISK ASSESSMENTS TO MEMBERS**

When the BSAC Branch Officer's Handbook (BOH) was updated in 2004, one of the major changes was the significantly greater emphasis on risk assessment. Whilst this is not mandatory for non-commercial organisations, such as BSAC branches, the committee felt that, should an incident occur, then the Club would probably be judged against 'best practice' as set-out in the BOH and we should therefore put formal risk assessments in place for our principal activities.

A sub-committee was tasked with this process and produced generic risk assessments for the use of the swimming pool, the Club Compressor and, most importantly, for Open Water Diving. Once completed and approved by the committee, these risk assessments were issued to all Branch members and a workshop held to ensure that dive marshals knew how to work with them.

However, in order to simplify the dive marshals' job, a new Club dive slate was designed which incorporates much of the information required as part of the on-site risk assessment. These were printed onto plastic sheet and are available to Club members for £3 each. A printout of the slate is included with the risk assessments in Appendix VII.

Risk assessment is nothing more than a structured method to the identification of significant hazards associated with diving and diver training activities. The process addresses these activities so that they can be performed more safely. Risk assessment is a common-sense approach and consists of five simple steps:

- **Identify significant hazards**
- **Identify who or what is likely to be affected**
- **Assess the associated risks**
- **Decide on the measures to be taken to control the risks**
- **Record what has been done**

Risk assessment is in fact already inherent in the way in which BSAC Branches and individual divers go about organising their training and diving. For example, Dive Planning and Marshalling includes many activities that are designed to assess and control risk. A risk assessment simply provides a structured way in which to address these activities so that they are performed in the most efficient and safe manner; this was the message that had to be conveyed to the Club members, to reassure them that they were not carrying more responsibility or being lined-up for a 'fall'.

The risk assessments are reviewed annually (or more often, if an issue of concern is identified) and are reissued to the members at every AGM.

During this exercise, it was recognised that new towing guidelines were required for Club members to ensure that they were towing Club boats safely and within the law. These were prepared and issued to all Club members and a copy is included with the risk assessments in Appendix VII.



## 5

## PROMOTION

As well as participating in the BSAC 'Learn to Dive' promotional week in September, we ran six 'Come & Try It' sessions during the year, with 48 people trying scuba diving and snorkelling for the first time. These sessions were offered to a variety of community organisations such as Torbay Explorer Scouts as well as to the general public. (see press cuttings in Appendix VIII).

At one of these CATI sessions, a local newspaper reporter had a go and enjoyed it so much she signed-up for the next Ocean Diver course, her progress being covered in her paper.



We are members of the Sport South Hams, an independent organisation of volunteers which meet four times a year to further the cause of sport in the South Hams District. It offers members grant aid towards small capital equipment and grant aid towards coaching expenses.

We work closely with the South Hams Leisure Services and, during the year, even provided a scuba diving taster session for the pool staff at Totnes Pavilion.

The Club had a stand at Totnes Show (see below for report) and were briefly featured on BBC Spotlight, the local evening news bulletin.

Club members also participated in a T.V. programme about a film being made about the underwater life of the Salcombe Estuary which was transmitted on the local BBC South West network (see Section 19 for more details of the film project).

Locally, the Branch has a good reputation as an active and friendly Club and it also has good contacts with local dive shops.

**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**



# Come Diving with Totnes Sub-Aqua Club

New members are always welcome at Totnes Sub-Aqua Club, whether new to the sport or experienced divers looking for a pro-active club to dive with. TSAC has two RIBs, Shogun, air compressor, training equipment and more instructors than you can shake a stick at.

Membership of TSAC gives you the chance of:

- Diving all year round on wreck and reef sites around the South Devon coast
- Regular diving trips to Cornwall sites
- Expeditions to places like Red Sea, Scilly Isles, Oban, S. France, Spain, Malta and Ireland
- Regular training courses (pool and open water) from Ocean Diver (novice) to Advanced Diver

The Club meets at 8pm every Wednesday evening for pool training at Totnes Leisure Centre and at Meadowbrook Community Centre, Dartington from 9pm for air fills and dive talk.

So if you're interested in the **BIG BLUE** – come on over and see us sometime or visit our website:

[www.totnes-bsac.co.uk](http://www.totnes-bsac.co.uk)



**How to find us:**

## SCUBA DIVING

with Totnes Sub-Aqua Club

New members are always welcome, whether you are a complete beginner who wants to learn to dive or an experienced diver who would like to join a club that does lots of varied and interesting diving.

If you would like more information on the club, please visit our website: [www.totnes-bsac.co.uk](http://www.totnes-bsac.co.uk), or telephone:

Sarah Deedfield on 01752 227880 or Rosemary Longfield on 01354 72452

[www.totnes-bsac.co.uk](http://www.totnes-bsac.co.uk)

We designed posters and flyers to be put up in local swimming pools and dive shops as well as handouts to go on notice boards in hospitals and local businesses, an example of which is included here as Appendix IX.

# TOTNES SUB-AQUA CLUB

We have an Internet website, which includes general information about the Club as well as details of many of the sites we dive in South Devon, expedition reports, members' articles and photographs, and links to other websites. It is an invaluable planning tool for dive marshals, giving ready access to information on depths and slack water times, site location, Met Office and other weather forecasts, and even general advice on dive marshalling. The site is designed as a general diving resource rather than just being for the use of Club members and receives regular praise from other divers. It has also proved to be a very good marketing tool as the Branch gets several new members each year via the website. In 2005 we were even contacted by BSAC Travel who requested permission to reproduce several of the trip reports on their own website. (See Appendix X for extracts from website).



In addition, BSAC chose to feature both the Club and selected members in the 'Meet the Branches' section of the revamped BSAC website in 2005. The relevant web pages are included here as Appendix XI.



On a slightly different note, one of our members, Malcolm Nimmo, a very good underwater photographer, gave evening presentations to a number of community groups, such as Tavistock Camera Club, and generally spread the word about the wonders of life under the sea and diving in general. Letters of appreciation are included here as Appendix XII.

## TOTNES SHOW

29 July 2005 by Allan Tudor

*Ruth Swarbrick, Allan Tudor, Bella Snook, Tony Clarke, Stuart Smith, James Drummond*

*Organised by lots of people!*

RAIN is an occupational hazard for diving, but mud? Well, yes. The Club decided to put itself on show before thousands at the annual Totnes Agricultural Show, held at the end of July. A pitch was booked, a crew gathered, a plan worked out, and then it rained ...

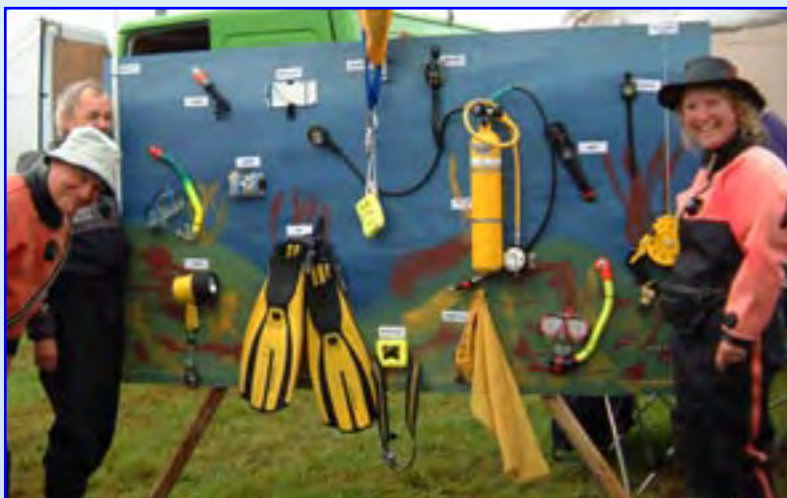
Totnes Show has a history of turning into a swamp after rain, and a ten-year drought of dry shows ended the day before with a typical summer deluge.



There were some concerns about getting the new boat on and off the site safely, but if we can get it up and down some of the slips and beaches we work, then a field is no problem. And as it turned out, we were able to get it on site easily.

Afterwards was a bit different. Rain overnight and in the morning did turn the field into a quagmire, and also dented the enthusiasm of visitors so that really by mid-afternoon the show was winding down and packing up. We took the hint, downed the gazebo, trailered the boat and we were off. Although it was downhill, the ground was by now a skid pan and even a 4x4 came to a halt.

The organisers had it sussed: a tractor driver threw a chain on the whole caboodle and we were off the ground in a few minutes. In fact it took longer to get back to the boatshed



through the traffic jam of vehicles exiting the show. Was it worth it? Yes, if only to see Tony Clarke in a dry suit all day touting for business like a car salesman, the interest people showed, and the feeling of success over adversity.

I think we almost broke even and certainly the wider Totnes community knows about us if the number of leaflet handouts is anything to go by.

Should we do it again? Certainly. A lot of lessons were learned under trying circumstances and it would be a shame not to make them pay next year. And no, I am not volunteering. Just in case it rains again.

# SUB-AQUA CLUB

# DIVER TRAINING

by Rosemarie Longfield, Training Officer



**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

## 6

## WATERWORK

## 6.1 POOL WORK

As noted in Section 2, Totnes SAC has access to Totnes Pavilion Leisure Pool between 8pm and 9 pm every Wednesday evening, throughout the year. This means that the Branch has a pool available for a variety of courses and is not just limited to a short-term hire for OD training as some branches are. The pool is open to all members to come along and practice skills, try out new equipment or just have a swim.

This year's OD course started in January 05 with eight students and carried through until the beginning of March. Seven students finished their sheltered water lessons, the 8th having emigrated to the USA. Their individual progress is recorded on a pool sheet and, so that each student progresses at his/her own pace, they are assessed on a weekly basis and paired up according to their progress. This has the advantage of students experiencing a variety of both buddies and instructors during pool training sessions. One-to-one sessions are organised as required when there is an individual problem, such as mask clearing. A copy of a typical pool sheet is included in Appendix XIII.



A life-saving course began in April with six students, five of whom qualified successfully, one dropping out due to work commitments.

In October ten students started the new Sports Diver course, using the pool for three weeks for their sheltered rescue skills sessions.

Six 'Come & Try It' sessions, including the BSAC 'Try Dive' Promotion in September, were held, providing 48 potential new divers with an opportunity to experience the sport. Two of the six sessions were for the Torbay Explorer Scouts.

## 6.2 OPEN WATER

The eight Ocean Divers started their Open Water work at the beginning of April. We set aside Saturdays for training days as well as organising mid-week evening dives to fit in with our trainees' work commitments (see attached dive log in Appendix XIII). They took part in 40 open-water 'man' dives with each Ocean Diver doing five one-to-one dives with an instructor and two as a buddy pair. They experienced both rib and hard-boat diving including an evening dive on the Scylla at the end of the course.



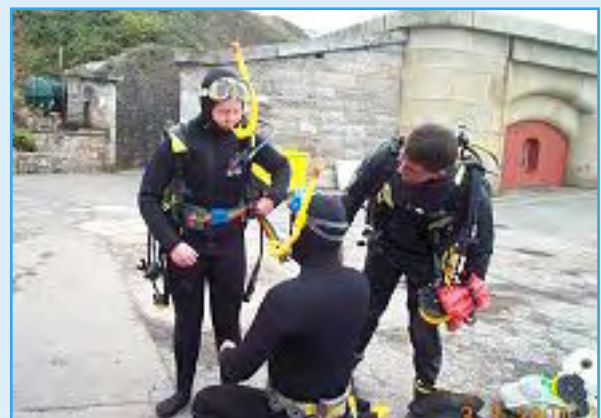
SUB-AQUA CLUB

The six Sports Divers from the October 2004 course were finishing off their open-water training in January whilst the ten new Sports Divers from our September 2005 course started their open-water work in October and it's still on going.

The eleven Advanced Divers had their first open-water exercises on 19 February, followed by exercises on 12 March and 8 May and continuing throughout the year, with some divers finishing off their rescue skills in December. On these days, the various rescue skills were carried out – including both lifts and rescue scenarios.

The Club's diving has benefited, as required by AP2, from Advanced Diver trainees being responsible for marshalling dives to a number of new local sites, as well as one expedition being organised to Vancouver Island in Canada.

We arranged a Boat Handling Course for 9/10 April 2005, where both our boats were used and six people qualified.



  
**TOTNES**  
SUB-AQUA CLUB

## 7

## THEORY LESSONS

In January we started two new qualification courses: Advanced Diver and Ocean Diver.

We had 13 AD students from the Totnes Branch, and four members from Brixham BSAC (see attached AD Timetable in Appendix XIII).

We had eight new Ocean Diver trainees who started the course on 12 January 2005. They had two theory lectures on the first day, followed by a Saturday morning session for three theory lectures (see attached OC Timetable in Appendix XIII).

Over the year we gave five crossover lectures from other agencies for those of our members wanting to continue and improve their qualifications under the BSAC umbrella.

In September we started the Sports Diver course with twelve students, five of whom were our newly qualified Ocean Divers plus six 'crossovers' and one BSAC Sports Diver doing a refresher course as he hadn't dived for 6 years (see attached SD Timetable in Appendix XIII).

In total during the year, 44 members undertook training to advance their qualification grade. We also extended our training to Brixham Branch.

**Ocean Divers:** 8  
**Sports Divers:** 22  
**Diver Leader:** 1  
**Advanced Divers:** 13 + 4 from Brixham Branch

Practical training on equipment is included for all Dive Marshals, Coxwains and members who may use the Club's equipment, so that members are updated on new equipment, GPS, VHF, etc., as and when it is introduced.



TOTNES  
 SUB-AQUA CLUB

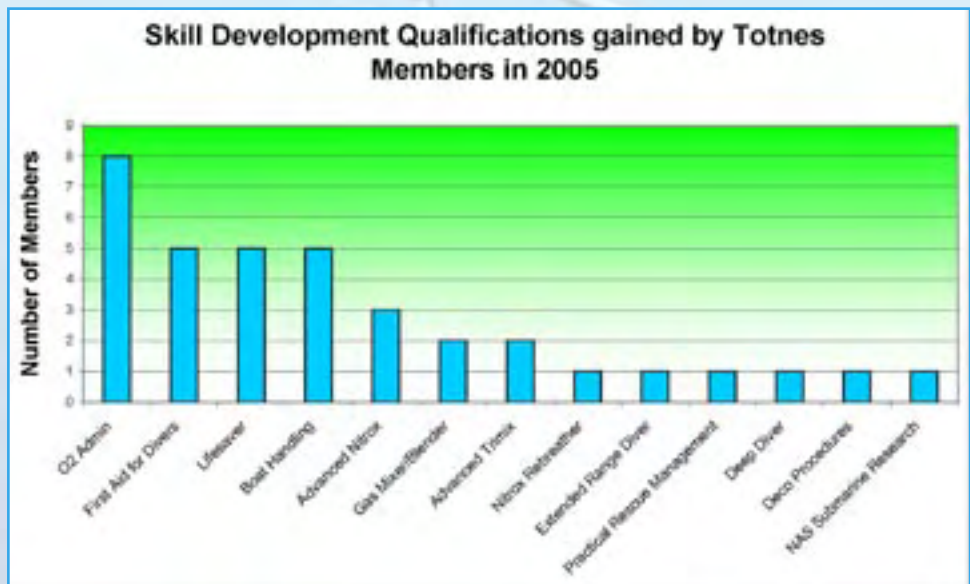
# 8 COURSES

Various courses were run within the Branch, as detailed in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Training courses run in-branch during 2005**

Date	Course	Students
January 8th	Advanced Diver Course Lectures	10 Totnes students & 4 from Brixham SAC
January 12th	New Ocean Diver Course starts – lectures up to March	8 students
February 12th	Towing training session	6 students (Branch workshop)
April 8th & 9th	Boat Handling Course	5 students
April 13th	Life Saver Course – over 8 weeks – over 8 weeks	6 students
September 21st	Sports Divers Course starts – lectures up to November	11 students
December 10th	O <sub>2</sub> Administration Course	8 students
December 18th	First Aid for Divers Course	5 students

In addition to Diver qualifications, the Branch is in the enviable position of having a large instructor base, albeit not all active, and is able to run almost all the BSAC Skill Development Courses (SDCs) in-house. A total of 27 students undertook various Skill Development Courses during 2005, either in branch or elsewhere, the qualifications gained being shown in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4: Skill Development qualifications gained by Totnes members in 2005**



## TOTNES SAC IN TOW (an introduction to towing - the Mike Balmforth way!)

by Bella Snook

As I haven't towed a trailer since my days of motorsport many years ago, I signed up for some lessons with the Club.

So one Saturday in February I arrived at Lister's farm, with Macey the dog for moral support. I tied Macey up in the field, as I wasn't sure of her reaction to my efforts.

Peter Butcher was my patient instructor, and we set off round the fields, while he acquainted me with the delights of the Shogun, in particular, reversing using only the wing mirrors, which wasn't too bad as I sometimes drive a white van. Macey barked a lot, I'm not sure if it was praise or otherwise.

Then we hooked on a small single-axle trailer, which was fine for driving forwards; however, reversing was much harder. The reactions of the trailer were difficult to predict on the bumpy field. However, I eventually managed to reverse the whole rig into a 'garage' of traffic cones. By this time I had brain fade and Macey was fed up, so I called it a day.

Some other students got much further, with the boat on the trailer, and even venturing out onto the public highway.

Also instructing was Mike Balmforth, and other participants were Lis Leader, Johnny Gowdy, David Davies and Paul Newland.

I enjoyed what I did, and would like to continue on another occasion.

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## BOAT HANDLING COURSE

April 2005

by Kristzina Leake

What's the worst thing can happen?  
– I kept nagging Malcolm on the Friday afternoon. What I really meant was how would I embarrass myself – overturn or run-against the boat, collide into the only police boat in Plymouth Sound... the possibilities were endless. I was somewhat scared, being the only female trainee on the course, desperately trying to disprove the male misconception that women are completely incompetent in anything that is technical – a reputation I personally justly earned throughout the years. Well, here was my chance to start a new chapter and establish myself as a budding aquatic Schumacher.



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However, I found the 6am start on the Saturday morning hard going: but a cold shower, a big caffeine infusion and a quick but fierce chase by the Hounds of Yelverton got me going. I realised that my prayers had been answered when the Weather Goddess had granted an ideal weekend for the course: little wind, sunshine and no rain.

Carole and Allan first went through the theory lectures – all of them professionally done and dusted by about 1pm. Theory lectures were followed by the first meeting in the boatshed with all of the would-be-boat-handlers. Alec and myself were assigned to the smaller, newer of the Club's Humbers under the supervision of Carole, while the rest of the novices, Paul, Simon and Pete, had the pleasure of Humber Senior, with Allan the Elder on board as instructor. Once in our little group, Carole showed us how to secure the boat on the trailer; all the things that must be on the boat before and once the boat is launched; how and where to place technical gadgets such as the radar reflector, GPS/Echo sounder; how the fuel system works and what all the buttons and handles are for – all in all, she gave us a very thorough tour de boat. We then set off for Plymouth Sound feeling so much more confident after the lectures and practical in the boatshed, eager to finally get down to business.

A word of wisdom and just thought from Allan: for most of us diving, the day ends when we leave the beach. Those, however, who have volunteered to tow the boat back to the boatshed face not just a tiring journey, manoeuvring through the narrow lanes of Cornwall and Devon packed with caravans (or grockle cans), but also cleaning and tidying up the boat and its equipment before they can even start to think about the Sunday roast. Wouldn't it be nice to meet the tower at the boatshed with a cuppa and help to tidy up the boat? Please, please give it a thought!

After Carole navigated Humber Junior out of the Sound she looked at me and said: "Hop onto the driver's seat". There I met my very first challenge and discovered and understood a very important law of physics: the amount of Christmas pud consumed is inversely proportional to the shrinkage of my drysuit.



From there on we had endless fun and lots of hard work. Luckily the favourable weather conditions made the rest of Saturday and all of Sunday ideal for learning and practising the various exercises of the course. My particular favourites were the man-overboard and the approaching-and-picking-up-divers. I was a little cautious with the turn-around-in-confined-space and parallel-parking manoeuvres (I have problems with these in a car let alone in a boat on water!).

We also enjoyed driving around the big buoy and navy ships, but our fun did not last long – the Boys in Humber Senior stole OUR buoy! We then decided to test the speed of the boat and practiced various turns at high speed. This was particularly therapeutic for me, especially in Humber Junior which is a smaller boat than Humber Senior, and I was not sure about the boundaries of its stability. Carole, however, demonstrated that these boats are

# SUB-AQUA CLUB

very stable and fast, and indeed Humber Junior was much faster than the fishing boats, a lot of the yachts and navy boats and almost as fast as the police launch....but not quite....(just joking). Sunday afternoon we swapped boats just to get used to their different responsive natures. This proved very useful indeed: being a bigger boat, Humber Senior was different on the plane and the throttle-response differed from Humber Junior.

Ultimately the two-day course was very well structured and instructed; it was hard work but lots of fun. BIG, BIG thanks to Carole and Allan Tudor. They gave us information and some insight as to how much further you can get if you complete the advanced courses in boat handling.

Carole and Allan were very generous to teach us beyond the course syllabus, providing wisdom, secrets and tricks from their boat handling arsenal, based on a wealth of experience. Although, the certificate awarded allows us to legally practice boat-handling, it does not give us experience. So you veteran boat-handlers out there, get off the saddle and let the fresh graduates ride the waves....

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## EXTENDED RANGE DIVING COURSE

by Allen Murray

Forget those articles in Dive or Diver where John Bantin or some other lucky individual gets to go to the Red Sea to do a BSAC/PADI/TDI (or whatever) deep diving course, I was in Plymouth on a particularly stormy weekend in May to take the BSAC Extended Range Diving (ERD) course and it was chilly!

The ERD course is open to BSAC Sports Divers with a minimum of 20 dives (!) plus an Advanced Nitrox qualification and aims to promote safe deep diving techniques. It doesn't allow you to dive any deeper (unless you really were only a Sports Diver), the BSAC recommended limit for air diving still being 50m, but hopefully it will provide you with the additional skills to deal with the situations that may arise when diving to these sorts of depths and undertaking extended decompression stops.

The course was based at Deep Blue's dive shop at Mountbatten in Plymouth, the Mountbatten Watersport's Centre having been taken over by BSAC Eastern Region for another course that weekend, and the students came from all over the South of England (including London) as it isn't run very often. The first day was largely theory, dealing with things like personal preparation (managing stress, coping with narcosis, self-reliance, etc); decompression diving; equipment systems and configuration; dive platforms and decompression systems; and extended range dive planning. This was followed by a practical session where we got to see how the various instructors had configured their own kit and why, which was very informative. Then we did a dive planning exercise for the next day's dives (well, the dive centre said we'd be diving, and I guess they know the local conditions better than us?!?! – Okay, I know I live in Plymouth.)

The next day we all turned up at the dive centre and, after some delay, we were told that the diving was off! It appears that the engine on the RIB had died and the skipper didn't feel that conditions were suitable for their hard boat to operate (well, it was pretty lumpy out there). So we all agreed to check our diaries and to email Phil Harrison, the course boss, with a series of dates we could make it on for the actual diving. This was to be a skills day followed a bit later by an assessed deep dive.

As is perhaps not surprising in the height of the summer diving season, co-ordinating a date when everyone could make it proved impossible, so Phil ended up spending most of his weekends in June and July running one-to-one or one-to-two diving sessions with various people, which just goes to show how dedicated BSAC volunteer instructors are!

For my part, I spent a long Saturday in June in the National Diving and Activity Centre in Chepstow (okay, it sounds impressive, but it's still a quarry) going through shutdown drills, stage removal, mask swapping, line laying and more

shutdown drills until I could do them with my eyes shut (quite literally) whilst hovering in mid water. One thing this did make me realise was how difficult it really was to reach the valves on my twin 10l cylinders because they sat just too low on the back, so I ended up investing in a set of twin 12s before the sea dive!



The final stage of the course was a dive to a maximum of 50m where we could demonstrate proficiency in the skills practiced in the quarry and then conduct an exploratory dive, all the time adhering strictly to a pre-agreed run time schedule. This is where the Club came to the rescue, as I had arranged a dive to the Riversdale on 9 July and, as Dive Marshal, was able to divert one of the boats for use on the course. There were two students (myself and a chap from Plymouth Uni called Nathan) plus Phil and a “shadow” instructor, Mike, who was going for his ERD instructor ticket. We were blessed with what is probably the best viz I have ever seen on the wreck and also managed to put the shot on top of the superstructure (well done Richard!), which gave us a starting depth of just 35m. This was perfect for the skills exercise, which fortunately went well, and we had a very enjoyable dive to boot!

So, what did I think of the course? If you are thinking of going in for deep diving with extended decompression stops, I would say it is an absolute must, and, whilst it was hard work at times, it was also very rewarding!

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## FROM TRAINEE TO OCEAN DIVER

by Richard Smith

It all started during the summer holidays of 2004. My daughter, Vikki, was working with me and said, “Dad, there are certain things I would like to achieve before I am 30!” (I instantly thought - This is going to cost me money!). Top of her list was to learn to dive and, to her surprise and mine, I said; “I fancy doing that as well.” For my part I think it was a mid-life decision and it is something I have always wanted to do but never got round to doing it. We walked round to Totnes Pavilion and picked up a leaflet on diving and, after reading the leaflet, we both thought – “Let’s go for it, it can’t be that difficult”.

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When Vikki arrived home she rang Rosemarie and, as luck would have it, there was going to be a try dive the following Wednesday. At 7.30pm we arrived at the swimming pool and were greeted by Rosemarie and some other instructors. We changed into our swimming gear and vests and, with the novices, waited our turn to put on the diving gear. Each try dive was expected to last about 10 minutes but, by the end of the evening, Vikki had about 45 minutes of try dive and I had about 30 minutes. We both fell in love with the experience and could not wait to go again.

We joined the Club in January 2005 and met the new members and qualified divers at Meadowbrook where we were made to feel very welcome and were included from the word "go" in all of the activities that a trainee diver could do. We went out and invested in a pair of fins, goggles, snorkel and semi-dry suit (money well spent). After several pool lessons and late Wednesday nights and Saturday theory classes, we were ready to take our exams which, to me, was quite nerve-racking as the last exam I had to take was 34 years ago! The exams were not hard but I realised that it was very important to understand the safety aspect of diving for myself and my buddy. When we passed our theory we were allowed, with supervision, to dive off the shore at Brixham. Even though the visibility was not very good, that first experience will stay with me always: the feeling of being in an alien environment under the sea with all the different types of sea life and colours around you. After that first dive we invested in decent buoyancy jackets, air tanks and regulators.



One of the strangest diving experiences I had was in July 2005 on our first rib trip which was from a small sandy beach just outside Salcombe. We were to be picked up in the afternoon at about 2.30. At 2.00 we changed into our diving gear. I had 44lbs of extra weight around my waist and Vikki had 28lbs and the thing that was strange was that this was a very hot Sunday afternoon, with people on the beach in swimming trunks and bikinis, sun bathing, and we had to walk through them and wait for the dive boat to turn up. The temperature must have been in the 80's but, to us, it felt over 100 and it must have looked really strange to the sunbathers to see us standing there all kitted up, waiting. The dive that day was in warm crystal clear water – viz was good and the dive even better. As a trainee diver I have now personally dived on three wrecks which was absolutely brilliant and I would recommend diving to anyone who is reasonably fit – it can be physically strenuous. Vikki and I became qualified Ocean Divers in August 2005 and I would like to thank TSAC and its members, especially the instructors, for allowing us to experience what they have experienced and for all their help and patience.

Thanks again from Richard and Vikki Smith.

**WOMEN  
SUB-AQUA CLUB**

## ADVANCED DIVER

by David Davies

How did I get to become an Advanced Diver?

It all started off really one lunchtime when I was trawling through the BSAC web site, when I found a section talking about the BSAC considering an "Advanced Diver" to be fully trained. Hmm, did this mean that all lower diving grades are considered to be only partially trained? Guess so.

I take the view that diving is one of the sports that I do where safety considerations and risk management are key in avoiding accidents and possible death or permanent disability. To this end I feel that everyone should take every opportunity for additional training in all aspects of diving to make our sport a safer one. The second reason for wanting to become an Advanced Diver, is so that I can run my own dives within the Club, without having to find another Advanced Diver to oversee my every move.

When the Club announced that it was going to run an Advanced Diver training course I signed up. It was only then that I realised some of the other trainees who had signed up were much more experienced divers than me. Oh well, lets see how it goes, I thought. In fact, I think our mixed bunch all learned from each other as well.



The classroom lectures all seemed to go OK. In fact I was quite surprised at the content of some lectures finding that they were just stating the obvious, but I guess the course has to cover all areas and make sure that nothing is missed out. As I come from a strong sailing background, the subjects of chart work, tides, boats, ropes, weather forecasting, etc., were all second nature for me. So all I had to do was swot up on all the diving, reading everything I could find.

Open water lessons came next. One particularly memorable drill was the mask clearing at 20m, not a real problem, but doing this in mid-February in the murky waters off Berry Head when the sea temperature is only 8°C is really something that has to be experienced. Various other rescue drills and incident management exercises followed.

The day of the theory test was upon us. How would we all fare with the ubiquitous BSAC multiple choice questions? You had to work through each question, think about it, and perhaps do some working out, think about it again and then see if your answer matched one of the five possible answers – if so, then good, if not then go back and work it out again. How did I do? Well I passed OK – had a bit of a problem on one question about a North Cardinal mark, but I blamed the long-winded way the question was written, and me not reading the question properly. The rest of the guys on the course all took the piss out of me for this, as being the sailor, this the one question that I should have got right.

# SUB-AQUA CLUB

All OK so far, now just the dive marshalling to go. This is the bit that takes lots of motivation to get sorted. Trying to come up with plans for dives to unknown sites takes some thought, research, and lots of effort to go out and pull a plan together. I think this is one of the toughest parts of the Advanced Diver course. Up until now everything had been planned by someone else and pretty much all we had to do was sign up on the list, turn up on the day to do the drills. Now, though, it was down to every trainee to do the work. I worked with Ruth as a joint conspirator on a plan for a weekend of diving down in Fowey. All was looking good, until the day of the call-in, when the good old British weather decided to intervene. So what could we do but cancel the trip and then start planning again for another day? On our second attempt we actually got to Fowey and had a nice day's diving. A few weeks later I then managed some more dive marshalling and fitted in another unknown site.

Was I all done now? Not quite, just had to go through my dive log book and write up my list of qualifying dives.



All done now, and a fully signed up Advanced Diver! What can I say but a very big thank you to all the Club's instructors/ members that have helped out along the way. Without your help none of this would have been possible.

Where do I go from here? I am a firm believer that what really matters is not the actual Advanced Diver award, but getting on and doing the diving, and continuing to build experience in a wide range of conditions.

P.S. (Having just come back from a week's diving in the Red Sea) Don't go telling the dive organisation you intend to dive with that you are 'Advanced', as you then get put in with all the PADI Advanced Open Water lot. Go get yourself a BSAC card with the CMAS equivalent of CMAS 3 star printed on the reverse side, then you do not have to start explaining what the BSAC is, or stands for!

**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

## LEARNING TO DIVE WITH A REBREATHER

by Simon Levy

### A Notion is born...

I had always been led to believe that the Closed Circuit Rebreather (CCR, 'box', 'bag of death' or whatever you want to call it!) was the domain of a few brave technophiles. How wrong I was!

It was when open-circuit Trimix diving on Pat Dean's Lodesman in July 2004 with Bill Reid's group that I made the decision to dive with a box. Most of the group were using rebreathers, and had only started the previous year. Bill was keen to extol the virtues of the Ambient Pressure Inspiration Rebreather, and over the week I began to warm to the idea of getting one. There is no reliable source of helium in Paignton, so after a day's diving I had to travel to Plymouth every other day to fill both my twin 12Ls with trimix at £40 a fill, sometimes only to find the dive the next day cancelled due to the weather. I was often stuck with a mix waiting for the right dive, so in the meantime my diving was restricted or I used my Scooby Gear with My Little Pony. The rebreather guys could just top up their little 3L pony-sized diluent cylinders from a twinset of mix and replace the Kitty Litter in their CO<sub>2</sub> scrubber. CCR divers affectionately call Sufnalime 'Kitty Litter' because, believe it or not, it looks just like kitty litter. It has been known for some to use their expired Sufnalime as such (No, I don't have a cat!).

### Out on the hunt...

That autumn I decided to get a rebreather, and put my Yamaha WR250F motorcycle on eBay to pay for it. Dave Pelly from Sandford and Down began a search for a good second-hand unit for me. This was to prove difficult until after Christmas 2004 because of high demand.

A seller in Southampton wanted £3000 for a 6-month-old unit freshly serviced (£4000 new). A deal was done and the seller, who was travelling to Devon anyway, dropped the unit off, asked me to be a good little boy and not use it until trained, and sign some disclaimers in quintuplet in case I decided to do a suicidal dive without training.

### Reality at last...

I then stood there in my garage thinking, "What can I do now? I know, I shall sit here and look at it my new pride and joy". I couldn't use it yet!

Another student and I sat in Sandford and Down's classroom like attentive puppies eagerly listening to Dave give the lecture for the theory of the Closed Circuit Rebreather, which whetted my appetite for getting to use the CCR. We were excited but also had some trepidation since CCR is very different from the open-circuit (OC) scuba we all know very well. Dave's excellent manner put us at ease and reassured us, and as he went through the classroom material, I thought "Hey this isn't too bad after all"; even I could follow it.

### What is it really like...?

It was on a blustery February evening that we finally arrived at the Central Pool in Plymouth for our confined water session. There was just me and another student for the class. The instructor put the units on to us, dressing us up saying "This bit goes here, tuck that in there, leave that bit alone, don't press this and this goes in your mouth". In I went, taking my first breath out of what is effectively a bag. The breathe is totally different from OC because there is no breathing resistance. The buoyancy was weird at first, since the gas just moves from the lungs to the bag and so I could not adjust my buoyancy by breathing. This is a big thing that OC divers take time to get used to. It was crucial to keep a close eye on the ppO<sub>2</sub> displays every 30 seconds or so, far more frequently than OC divers checking their air.

CCR Divers must always know their ppO<sub>2</sub>! The other thing I learnt was to close the mouthpiece when removing it underwater or it floods making a horrible gurgling noise.



The drills sounded complicated, but once I understood what I was doing, they were actually quite easy. They were designed to train us to deal with the main hazards of the CCR. Quite simply, these are too little or too much oxygen, and CO<sub>2</sub> poisoning. The drills were drummed into us until we could do them silted out upside down inside the deepest and dingiest wreck.

With proper unit maintenance and procedures, the likelihood of these problems is very small.

### First taste...

With confined water training done, it was time to get the unit salty. Dave's very unfortunate incident (a neurological bend) meant my training was transferred to Ritchie Stevenson at Big Blue. His next CCR course was for three days in April, over a month and a half away!



The time came, and Ritchie refreshed us on our drills in the classroom since it was two months since our pool session. We went in at Bovisand, and I made my first CCR open water dive. We kitted up and, after more briefings, entered the water. He led us along the harbour wall and out along a bottom line. We did some drills, then came back and did two dives. The next morning I stood there in front of Ritchie who had his "I'm sorry mate the weather is just too bad" expression on. We were blown out over the next two days that we had arranged.

### Will I ever finish...?

We re-scheduled for later in April. I got the time off work for it. We had got one dive in, then Ritchie's suit had become a wetsuit so we had to abandon further training for the time being. I don't blame him since the water was barely 10°C!

When he had finally repaired his suit, the next session was abandoned after 10 minutes in the water because the visibility was just too poor. This was to make the training take until late May to complete.

We finally dived from Seeker on a wet, windy, slate-grey day in early May, sheltered behind the Plymouth breakwater. After completing all the drills in 10–16m of water, including the low and high oxygen drills and bailouts, I then had an interesting event, to say the least. I had a new Scubapro SMB that inflates from a low pressure inflator. I used my drysuit line, and yes, the bag went up OK, but together with the contents of my diluent cylinder. The line had free-flowed and emptied it in seconds before the diluent valve could be shut down. Ritchie was right there and calm. We made the ascent as normal, and I learnt from first-hand experience that the rebreather does not need any diluent during ascent. This is because the gas volumes need to be vented during ascents, and O<sub>2</sub> is added to maintain the correct O<sub>2</sub> levels.

At last I was certified to use my box, and not a moment too soon. My training had taken over 4 months to complete.

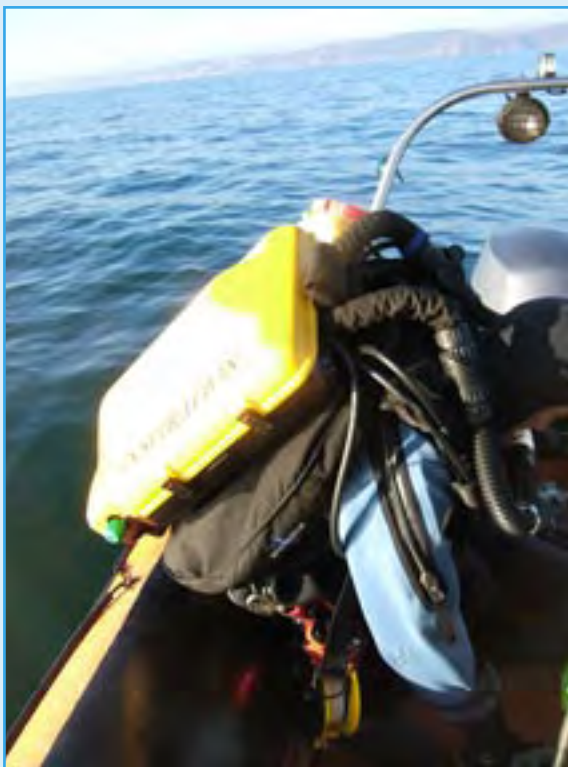
10 LINES  
SUB-AQUA CLUB

### Introducing an Inspiration...

I finally came to introduce my new friend to the TSAC. The first dive was the humble Mew Stone out of Dartmouth on *Falcon*. It might as well have been the *Britannic*, with my excitement at using my toy without supervision. My buddy was, as ever, Tekkie Richard Wood. We reached 29m, which was my deepest so far on the CCR, but I don't remember much of the dive because I was glued to my displays, so as to know my ppO<sub>2</sub>. As confidence grows this will hopefully become more natural.

### Scillies...

A week in the Scillies consummated my relationship with the CCR. I put in 10 good dives, getting to 40m and good hour-long dives. It was here that the advantages of the CCR became evident. The other divers were twinned up on OC. They had to worry about gas fills for each day's diving, whereas I could last four dives on 230 bar in a 3l. My gas bill for the week was £6 for 3l of O<sub>2</sub>. I also found the rebreather had a warm moist breathe, when the scrubber removes the CO<sub>2</sub> its gets warm and moist because of the chemistry in there.



### A Retro Step...

Upon return I was involved with a TSAC training dive off Brixham beach. I needed to return to my OC Scooby set for this. I was amazed at how noisy OC is. Those bubbles are deafening! It was also quite hard to breathe at first. I was not used to a DV any more.

### This is what it is all about...

I have found the TSAC are a forward-thinking club and welcomed the CCR on dives. At first there were a few puzzled expressions as to why I would bring a 'fridge' onto the RIB but over time the Club members have become more used to it. Some would at first say "too technical", but now know that there is no big deal with buddying a CCR diver.

By July I was up to 20 dives and I had a Club dive on the wreck of the Riversdale. I was with Richard Wood. We descended the shot to the

wreck, and went to the bow; this had collapsed to one side. I was aware that fish would come close to my silent world, as I moved, amongst a shoal of the humble bib. We went to the stern area, onto the quarterdeck, and looked over the stern to see the screw. We had good visibility on this one. We dropped down to the screw. I sat there and looked up at the vast hulk above me. I often turn my torch off to make the dive more atmospheric, especially when looking up at the wreck. We returned to the shot, and ascended. I had cut tables for a square profile dive. My planned stops were about 20 minutes, and Richard's longer. I stayed with him until he completed his profile. This had been the biggest dive so far on the CCR, and I look forward to getting some magic gas in there next year.

### So what do I think?

As I write I have some 40 dives on the CCR. I feel very comfortable with it. I do feel better after diving on what is the perfect nitrox mix at all depths. I can now listen to the underwater world so often masked by regulator and bubble noises with OC. I can hear OC divers breathing, and recognise the noise signature of a Poseidon regulator!

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The nitrox CCR (air diluent) actually has more of a depth limitation than air. At 52m the nitrox CCR would effectively be giving air at a 1.3 bar set point, and any deeper would be worse than air!

I have spent this year doing typical Club dives to get experience with the box. I propose to do a CCR trimix course next year to enable me to go deeper to the 60 to 80m ranges.

### Is it for you?

It is a big capital outlay to buy an Inspiration Rebreather, but the running costs are reasonable. Whether it is worth it depends on the sort of diving you do. It would work out more expensive per dive for typical Club diving. If you want to start doing deeper dives over 50m then it is worth thinking about. You can offset the costs of twinning up on OC to getting a CCR. A good twinset, wing and a pair of good DVs that can cope with the depths will set you back around £1500.

CCR diving does require more discipline and maintenance, but it is simple to do and becomes second nature after a while. Unit preparation takes about half an hour before and after a day's diving. If you are the 'chuck the kit in the garage still all salty' after the diving and 'Oh bugger my cylinders are empty' the night before a dive type of person, then it is not for you! If you want to explore many of the deeper, less-dived wrecks, or simply want something new to add to your diving experience, and have some money in your pocket, then the CCR is the way forward!



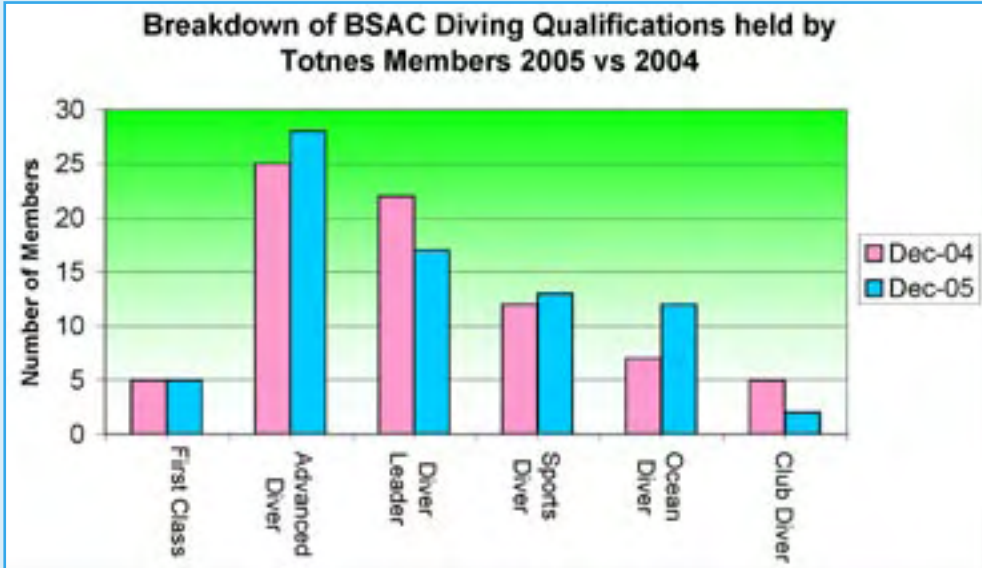
  
**TOTNES**  
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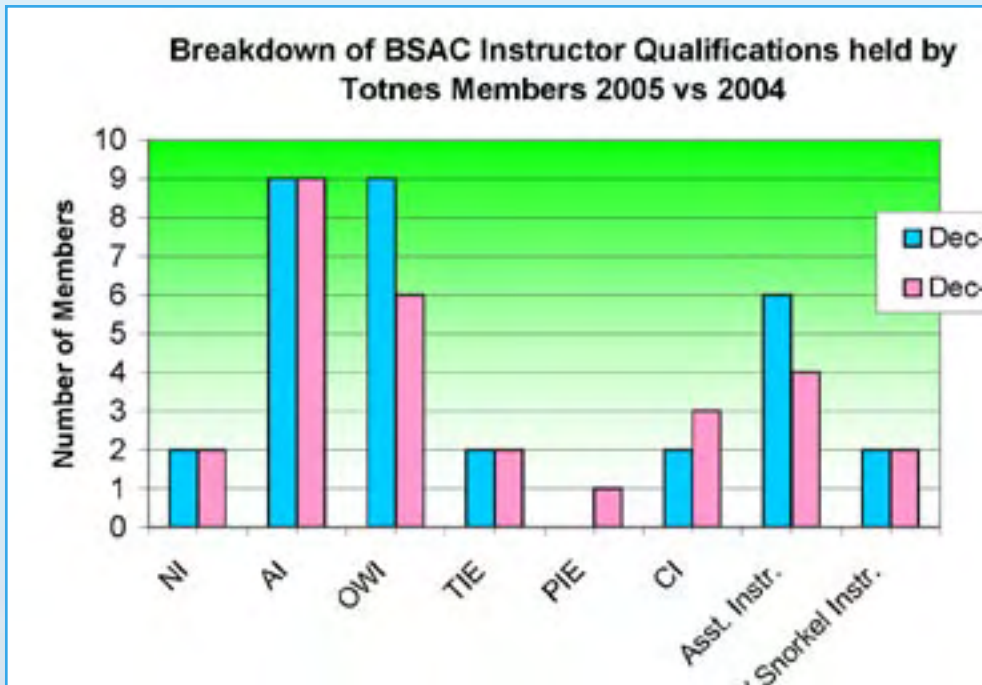
## QUALIFICATIONS

The Diving and Instructor Qualifications held by Club members, in both 2004 and 2005, are shown graphically in Figures 5 and 6 below. A full listing of members' qualifications follows these figures.

**Figure 5: BSAC Diving Qualifications held by Totnes members**



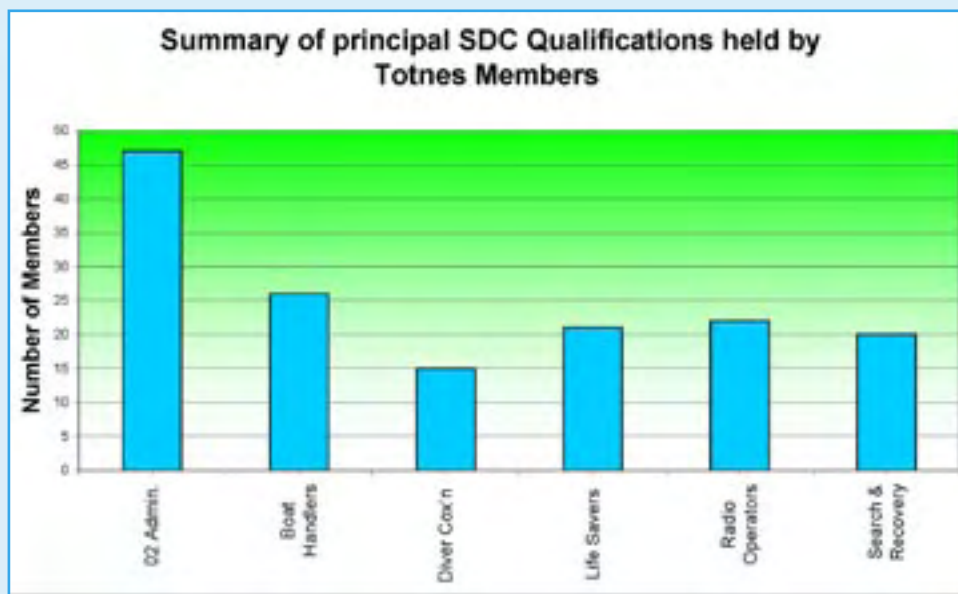
**Figure 6: BSAC Instructor Qualifications held by Totnes members**



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Totnes is fortunate to have a large pool of members with a wide range of skills to draw upon, as illustrated in Figure 7 below, which details the principal skills held.

**Figure 7: Principal SDC Qualifications held by Totnes members**



## DIVING QUALIFICATIONS HELD AT DECEMBER 2005:

### First Class Diver (5)

Tony Hoile	Louise Sessions
Richard Handy	Allan Tudor
Kevin Sessions	

### Advanced Diver (28)

Mike Balmforth	Bob Michael
Bjorn Barton-Pye	Gill Michael
Lister Bass	Allen Murray
Tony Clarke	Martin Mead
Steve Copley	Jane Nelson
Sarah Dashfield	John Panton
David Davies	Nick Parsons
Ian Duff	Jim Pike
Louise Handy	Simon Powell
Alec Jacobs	Marcus Smyth
Richard Knights	Bella Snook
Rosemarie Longfield	Simon Temple
Roger Marsden	Dave Topley
Nigel Mortimer	Carole Tudor

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## DIVING QUALIFICATIONS (cont...)

### Diver Leader (17)

Nick Booth	Lorraine Pike
Peter Butcher	Malcolm Purcell
Chris Catt	Malcolm Rahn
Adam Course	Paul Slemmings
Johnny Gowdy	Stuart Smith
Steve Hill	Ruth Swarbrick
Lis Leader	Pete Watton
Simon Levy	Richard Wood
Malcolm Nimmo	

### Sports Diver (12)

Phil Butcher	Paul Newland
James Drummond	John Oliphant
John Dunford	Jo Parsons
Paula Jones	Pete Rogers
Alan Jones	Andy Smith
Krisztina Leake	Will Stubbs

### Ocean Diver (14)

Ryan Barter	Alan Tucker
Andrew Nicol	Steve Whittaker
John Hern	Hayley Wood
Mike Martin	Nick Wood
Darren Rowe	Naomi Tolley (still under training 05)
Vikki Smith	Sara Tapyia (still under training 05)
Richard Smith	Chris Martin (still under training 04)

### Club Diver (2)

Ian Nicol  
Viki Wearmouth

### Other agencies' qualifications (10)

Greg May – PADI OW	Tony Newman – PADI AOW
Steve Ward – PADI AOW	Tony Custerson – No information
David Butt – CMAS 1*	Rob Coombes – HSE Part 1
Daz Clarke –SAA Club Diver	Tom Hibbitt – PADI AOW
Kevin Hampson – PADI AOW	Charlotte Smith – PADI AOW



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## INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS HELD AT DECEMBER 2005:

### National Instructors (2)

Tony Hoile  
Allan Tudor

### Advanced Instructors (9)

Bjorn Barton-Pye	Kevin Sessions
Iain Duff	Louise Sessions
Richard Handy	Dave Topley
Rosemarie Longfield	Carole Tudor
Martin Mead	Nick Parsons

### Open Water Instructors (9)

Mike Balmforth	Lorraine Pike
Lister Bass	Simon Powell
Tony Clarke	Marcus Smyth
Richard Knights	Bella Snook
Jim Pike	

### Theory Instructors (2)

Allen Murray  
Malcolm Nimmo

## DIVING QUALIFICATIONS GAINED IN 2005:

### Ocean Diver

John Hern	July 05	Vikki Smith	Oct 05
Richard Smith	Aug 05	Hayley Wood	Nov 05
Steve Whittaker	Sept 05	Drew Nichol	Nov 05

### Cross-overs from other agencies

Mike Martin to (OD)	Darren Rowe to (OD)
Alan Tucker to (OD)	David Butt to (OD)
Ryan Barter to (OD)	

### Sports Diver

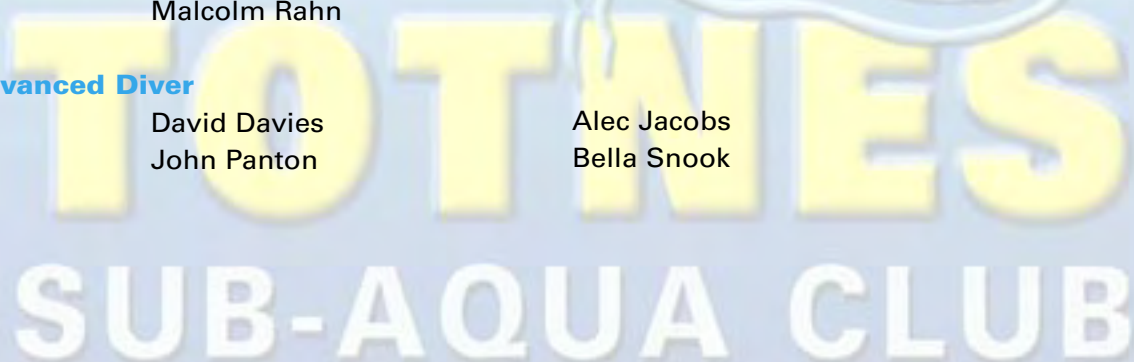
Paul Newland	Pete Rogers
John Oliphant	Krisztina Leake

### Diver Leader

Pete Watton	Johnny Gowdy
Malcolm Rahn	

### Advanced Diver

David Davies	Alec Jacobs
John Panton	Bella Snook



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## INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS SOUGHT IN 2005:

### IFC

Ruth Swarbrick – Nov 05

### TIE

Bella Snook – April 05: Passed  
Allen Murray – April 05: Passed

### OWIC

Allen Murray – April 05  
Sarah Dashfield – April 05

### OWI

Mike Balmforth – April 05: Passed  
Bella Snook – April 05: Passed

### AI Theory

Tony Clarke – April 05: Passed

### NI

Richard Handy – July 05: Failed

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT QUALIFICATIONS GAINED IN 2005:

### Boat Handling

Paul Slemmings  
Simon Levy  
Krisztina Leake  
Alec Jacobs  
Peter Butcher

### Lifesaver

Krisztina Leake  
Naomi Tolley  
Allen Murray  
Alec Jacobs  
Simon Levy

### Practical Rescue Management

Pete Watton

### First Aid for Divers

Alec Jacobs  
Allen Murray  
John Oliphant  
Tony Clarke  
Malcolm Purcell

### Advanced Nitrox

Krisztina Leake  
Paul Slemmings  
Darren Rowe

### Oxygen Administration

Simon Levy  
Will Stubbs  
Paula Jones  
Pete Watton  
Roger Marsden  
John Oliphant  
Krisztina Leake  
Richard Knights

### Extended Range Diver

Allen Murray

### Decompression Procedures (TDI course)

Allen Murray

### Advanced Trimix (TDI course)

Allen Murray  
Richard Wood

### Gas Mixer/Blender (DSAT course)

Allen Murray  
Richard Wood

### Nitrox Rebreather (TDI course)

Simon Levy

### NAS Part III in Submarine Research (NAS course)

Allen Murray

### Deep Diver (PADI course)

Darren Rowe

New instructors are essential to the future of the Club and to this end the Branch funds 50% of the Instructor Foundation Course fee charged by BSAC, to encourage members to take the first step on the road to becoming an instructor. Instructor progression is also supported and both would-be and new instructors are enlisted to help with training courses.

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## INSTRUCTOR FOUNDATION COURSE

by Ruth Swarbrick

Held at Exeter on 26/27 November 2005

Bright and early on Saturday morning I arrived in the car park at the venue for the IFC course. I was expecting some kind of direction from here to the actual location of the course – but there wasn't anything or anyone around. Then I saw a guy unloading a diving cylinder from his car! Aha, I thought, I'll follow him! It was a long way from the car park to the classroom and it was up a couple of flights of stairs!! You need to be fit for this Instructor lark, obviously.

The first morning was spent on the theory of how we learn, together with a practical demonstration of the 'perfect' lesson, courtesy of Sophie Rennie.

Then after lunch it was on to a practical session in the pool. Each instructor (ours was Sophie) had four pupils and she took us through a variety of pool drills, giving us a practical demonstration of how it should be done. Sophie made it look easy as she gave us our poolside briefing and then broke each lesson down into easy steps. The rest of the day was spent preparing for our own theory and practical lesson the following day.



First thing on Sunday we all had to give a (strictly timed) 10 minute lesson on a subject we had prepared the night before. Each presentation was followed up by feedback and constructive criticism from our instructor and the other trainees. Then, with hardly a pause, it was into the pool as we each gave our 20-minute pool lesson. It had been stressed the previous day how important it is to keep briefings concise and to the point as pool time is precious. I think all of us found it amazing how quickly 20 minutes goes....

For trained divers of some experience, it is very easy to overlook a basic step that you take for granted but which the trainee just doesn't know to do unless you tell them. One of the guys in my training group gave a great poolside briefing, then turned to his trainees and said "Right, OK, let's get kitted up". As new trainees, we all duly stood round looking dumb (not all that hard to do!) until he realised his mistake and took us through 'how to kit up'.

The IFC is a great introduction to instructing. The focus of the course is extremely hands-on. There's no exam at the end of it but it's still a bit nerve-racking giving presentations and lessons, especially in front of the SW area coach!! However, the emphasis was firmly on passing on tips and helping us all start out on our journey up the instructing ladder. It was a full-on weekend but all the trainees helped each other out and the instructors gave freely of their vast collective experience.

I really enjoyed it and am looking forward to building on my new skills with some real trainees!!

10 MINES  
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## TIE EXAM

by Bella Snook

Having started my instructor training in Cambridge early in 2001, I managed to complete my Open Water Instructor Course and my Practical Instructor Exam during 2003 and I really needed to finish things off.....

The dates of local events always clashed with my other commitments, so early one Sunday in April I travelled to deepest, darkest Cornwall.

My subject was The Shot Line, and previous experience taught me to take the 'Idiots' Guide' approach. I made up a series of slides using lots of pictures and few words, and rehearsed to ensure my timing was OK. Allan Tudor also gave me some coaching on knots just in case the examiners asked extra questions.

So, armed with the Branch's overhead projector, (and a spare bulb) I set off to meet my fellow candidates who would be acting as students. I also took along a model shot line consisting of a pebble, some string and a film canister all set up in a glass vase.

The lecture went smoothly as I'm quite used to doing presentations, though usually with animals and small children!



I got my results through on the day my car failed it's MOT, so it really cheered me up to discover I'd passed.

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## DOING THE NATIONAL INSTRUCTOR EXAM

by Richard Handy

Totnes Branch supports the complete range of diving, and diver training, programmes on offer by the BSAC. The Branch is actively involved in the full range of BSAC activities from Ocean Diver to National Instructor. I have been a member of Totnes Branch for about 6 years, and in that time, the Branch has supported me through Advanced Instructor and First Class Diver. This year I attempted the National Instructor (NI) exam, which, for the first time, was held on the Isle of Man.

The NI exam is a very tough exam, and even with much preparation the pass rate is only a few individuals a year across the entire BSAC. The exam is a gruelling 4-day event with 22 separate elements of assessment, and a good performance across these elements is needed to pass the exam. The key areas include the instructor trainer programmes (IFC, OWI, AI), teaching Skill Development Courses, teaching all aspects of boating and seamanship, and teaching diving in every respect up to First Class Diver level. Clearly, there is much preparation to be done by the candidate, and even seasoned instructors regard a 2-year cycle of preparation for the NI as the minimum.

A lot of preparation can be done individually, but there is also much that requires help. The only way to pass the exam is to have highly polished skills and this means practice.... practice.... and more practice. Totnes Branch have helped with this in many ways, including:-

- **Instructor development sessions in the pool.**

The NI candidate is required to deliver and assess perfect pool lessons. To achieve perfection requires great familiarity. Branch members were quick to offer help. This included fairly formal training sessions held early in the year for assistant instructors to refresh their teaching skills in the pool. This not only allowed me to practise but was also a great way of ensuring uniformity in skill amongst our instructors before the next batch of Ocean Divers arrived. Crucially, some of our most experienced instructors (Richard Knights, Mike Balmforth, Tony Clarke, and others) gave up their time several Wednesdays before the exam to ensure the performance was polished. I could not have done this without them, or indeed, the Branch pool!

- **Open Water Instruction lesson on the shore.**

A second element of the instructor training on the NI exam is a simulated OWI lesson. Once again the Branch offered up help, with several members joining me on the beach for a day at Brixham to put me through my paces. Thanks to many including Sarah Dashfield, Mike Balmforth, Tony Clarke and Richard Knights. Thanks also to the Branch training officer (Rosemarie Longfield) for allowing this to fit in to the training schedule.

- **Keeping SDC presentation skills up-to-date.**

The only way to do this is to do the real thing. The Branch has hosted many SDC events over the last couple of years, and everybody wins. It's good practice for me as NI preparation, good for the Branch members, and since we often invite other local branches in the area to join in, great for inter-branch relations. The courses are many and include Practical Rescue Management (PRM), Oxygen Admin, First Aid for Divers, and Dive Planning and Marshalling (DPM).

- **Seamanship and Surface Teaching**

Every dive has the potential for some teaching, and running the Advanced Diver Programme and Dive Leader training this year has given me numerous opportunities for this teaching. These include practical skills on the boat such as knots, chart work, pilotage, coxswain, boat safety checks, VHF procedure, shotline deployment techniques, etc.

In addition to this, I should like to thank the Club for the loan of shot lines, spare kit, etc., for the NI exam itself. The Club also loaned a boat for one of the prep events so that a group of potential NI's could get together for practice.



The outcome of the exam reflected the successful input from the Branch and although I didn't quite reach the overall pass mark this time, I did get merits on the bits that Totnes SAC helped me prep. Clearly, this is a valuable contribution to success. I will give the exam another shot next year, and members of the Branch have already offered to help once again.

# 10

## EQUIPMENT

by Allen Murray, Equipment Officer

The Branch is fortunate to have all the equipment it needs to function safely as an active dive club, although this has not always been the case! The Club has a boatshed, which houses two boats and a 4WD vehicle, plus the Club compressor and training equipment.

### 10.1 THE BOATSHED

In 1991-2 the Branch built its own boatshed, which is attached to Meadowbrook Community Centre in Dartington, near Totnes, where the Wednesday evening dry meetings are held.

As part of a general risk assessment exercise at the Club, new fire extinguishers were installed in the boatshed in 2005, an accident book provided, new compressor operation instructions written and various other improvements made.

### 10.2 BOATS

One of the Club RIBs suffered a major engine failure at the beginning of the 2004 diving season and, having looked at various options involving new and second-hand engines, in May 2004 the Club made the decision to replace the boat in its entirety. This was possible due to sound financial planning from earlier years whereby the Club already had some £11,000 saved for a new boat, albeit not due for another 2-3 years,



supplemented by the sale of the hull of the old RIB and the starting-up of a Club lottery to raise additional funds from members. Unfortunately, owing to build delays (there was a fire at Humber), the new boat was not finally commissioned until November 2004, and 2005 represents its first diving season in use.

The Club now owns two Humber RIBs: Totnes Diver 1, which is a 5.8m long boat with a 100hp Yamaha 4-stroke engine;





and Totnes Diver 2, a 5.3m long boat powered by a Suzuki 90hp 4-stroke.

Both boats are fully equipped with combined gps/echo-sounder units and radios, as well as carrying a full range of safety equipment, having been comprehensively upgraded in 2005 to comply with the recommendations of the Combined Diving Associations' *Guidelines for the Safe Operation of Member Club Dive Boats* which was issued by BSAC in late 2004 (refer to Safety Equipment section below for details).

In addition to the Branch RIBs, we also have access to a hard boat, Falcon, owned by one of our members, Tony Hoile, who runs regular Tuesday evening dives throughout the summer for the Club.

## 10.4 SHOGUN

When the Club first chose to buy a heavier, deep-V RIB in 1999, it was acknowledged that this could create towing problems, the number of members with towbars having already reduced significantly over the years, and the decision was made to buy a Club 4WD vehicle.

Our first vehicle was a vintage Landrover, but this was replaced in 2002 with a Mitsubishi Shogun. This has really proved it's worth and is used to tow one of the Club boats on almost every dive, as well as transporting kit to the pool for training and the regular 'Come and Try It' events that the Club holds.



## 10.3 COMPRESSOR

The Club compressor broke down in November 2002 after 10 years of trouble free operation and, after an unsuccessful attempt to repair it, it was decided that a replacement would have to be found. However, after completing a costed feasibility study, it was concluded that a new compressor, whilst desirable, was financially impossible, not just in terms of initial outlay but also the payback period required to cover the outlay – it wouldn't generate enough revenue even to cover the loan that would be required to buy it! The hunt was

therefore on to find a second-hand compressor. After a few months of fruitless searching, one of our members spotted a small ad in the back of Diver offering a compressor for sale and, after a couple of telephone calls and emails, we had agreed to buy it, subject to an inspection by a compressor engineer we knew. So, in the late summer of 2003, a member of Newbury BSAC, who was coming down



to Devon for the weekend, delivered the compressor to us in a horsebox! However, because of difficulties with the electrical fittings and starter panel, we didn't finally manage to get the compressor fully commissioned and operational until the autumn of 2004, and 2005 is the first full year of operation.

The compressor is a Bristol BM18M capable of delivering 18 cubic feet of air per minute, either directly into dive cylinders or into our "bank" of three air receivers, which have a total capacity of 478 litres.

## 10.5 TRAINING EQUIPMENT

The introduction of BSAC Club Diver training in 1998 involved more sea dives and to greater depth than with the Novice Diver qualification it replaced, and the Club purchased six full sets of new stab jackets and regulators to accommodate this change. However, due to the withdrawal of the manufacturer, Seaways, from the UK market, the cost of annual servicing of the DVs was becoming excessive and it was therefore decided to replace them all, ready for the start of the 2005 Ocean Diver training course. One of our local dive shops was approached and a deal done to purchase seven new US Divers Calypso regulators and octopus rigs, with the pressure gauges and jacket feeds being retained from the old valves, at a cost of just under £1000. It was calculated that the saving in servicing costs (approx £60 per set) would recoup the outlay within 3 years (even assuming that parts continued to be available for the Seaways rigs), and trainees would benefit from better quality equipment. As it was, one of our members managed to sell the old DVs on eBay, and we have covered the additional spend from the saving in servicing costs from 2004 and 2005 alone.

Our next aim is to raise money to allow the replacement of the Club's Rescusi Annie training manikin, which is some 15 years old now and it is no longer possible to get replacement lungs, requiring a complete disassemble and disinfect after every use. We have just instigated a new Club lottery to raise funds for this and other training and safety equipment (see Safety Equipment section below for details).

In addition to the demand valves, the Club currently has 14 stab jackets, in a variety of sizes, and 16 cylinders which are available for trainees to use and for 'Come and Try It' sessions in the pool, plus a large stock of lead weights for sale.



## 10.6 SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Following the release of the Combined Diving Associations' *Guidelines for the Safe Operation of Member Club Dive Boats* in late 2004, the decision was made to upgrade the safety equipment carried by the Club boats to comply with not only the 'Essential' but also the 'Recommended' equipment requirements listed therein. In many cases the boats already routinely carried the necessary equipment as a matter of good practice, such as an oxygen kit in each boat, but some modifications and additions were required. The addition of a fire extinguisher to the boat equipment caused some deliberation as it proved difficult to find somewhere to locate it which was both accessible and yet out of the way during normal operations, the A-frame at the back having been excluded as it was a bit too close to the most likely source of a fire, the engine! Eventually it was decided to modify the cylinder racks fitted to both boats to provide a purpose-made container in which to house it. The decision to remove and adapt the racks also allowed new pole holders to be added for both the A-flags and also the new radar reflectors that the boats now needed to have. Other additions to safety equipment included sound devices, laminated chart extracts, upgraded first aid kits, and diver recall tags for SMB lines. In all, the Club has spent more than £500 in 2005 just to address the recommendations of the CDA guidelines and bring the boats into line with best practice.

We are currently raising funds to purchase two new handheld radios, and replacement EPIRBs for the boats, as the current units use the 'old' emergency frequency of 121.5 MHz, which is being phased-out in terms of satellite coverage in preference for 406 MHz (although new units often retain 121.5 MHz dual frequency capability simply to allow SAR helicopters to home-in during final approach).

## 10.7 INSURANCE

It has always been Club policy to insure the boats and this naturally extended to the 4WD when purchased, which also has breakdown cover. In addition, the training equipment is insured against both damage and loss, including emergency jettison, and the compressor is covered against both negligent misuse and surrounding property damage arising from explosive failure of the air banks.

TOTALINES  
SUB-AQUA CLUB

## 10.8 MAINTENANCE

Given the complexity of modern 4-stroke engines, only basic checks on oil and the like are performed in-house, with servicing of the boat engines and the Club 4WD vehicles being out-sourced to specialist mechanics. However, there is still plenty of basic maintenance to be done by Club members, such as replacing brake shoes on the boat trailers, greasing jockey wheels, checking tyre pressures or just keeping the boatshed tidy! A typical copy of a monthly "to do" list, used to report to the Branch committee, is attached, illustrating the jobs to be completed during the period.

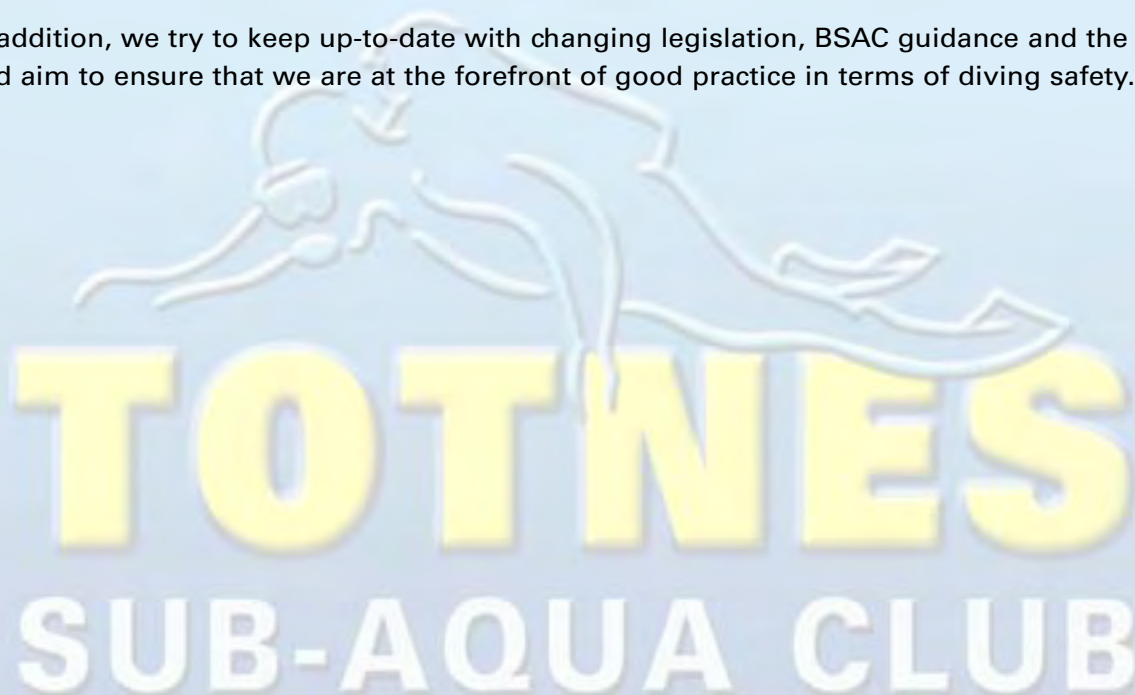
As Equipment Officer, I would like to thank the large team of members who have been involved, to a greater or lesser extent, with keeping the kit running, spot repairs, and general assistance throughout 2005 (and apologies if I've missed anyone out):

Allan Tudor	Richard Handy
Alec Jacobs	Richard Wood
Carole Tudor	Rob Coombes
David Davies	Roger Marsden
John Oliphant	Rosemarie Longfield
Johnny Gowdy	Ruth Swarbrick
Lis Leader	Sarah Dashfield
Lister Bass	Simon Levy
Martin Mead	Simon Powell
Mike Balmforth	Stuart Smith
Nick Booth	Tony Clarke
Paul Newland	

## 10.9 THE FUTURE

The Branch continues to plan for the future and currently puts money aside on a monthly basis for both the new boat fund and the compressor fund. We plan on a life expectancy of 10 years for a boat, which means that we have to raise sufficient funds every 5 years for a boat (having two boats at any one time), so our older boat is due for replacement in 2009.

In addition, we try to keep up-to-date with changing legislation, BSAC guidance and the like, and aim to ensure that we are at the forefront of good practice in terms of diving safety.





# DIVING ACTIVITIES

by Sarah Dashfield, Diving Officer, unless stated otherwise



**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

## 11

## BRANCH DIVES

Club dives were organised on Saturdays and Sundays during the summer months and mainly on Sundays in the winter to sites along the coast from Plymouth to Torbay.

To assist Dive Marshals in planning their dives, a Club Dive Plan is prepared by the Diving Officer at the beginning of every season, and this is published in the Club Handbook as well as being posted on the notice board and on the Club website.

The 2005 dive plan is reproduced below:

**Table 6: Club dive plan 2005**

Date	H.W. Devonport	Range (m)	Suggested Site	Minimum Qualification
January 1	08.50	3.2		
January 2	09.28	3.0	Oregon	S
January 8	15.46	3.2	Maine	S
January 9	16.49	3.8	Mewstone Ledges	
January 15	09.20	4.6		
January 16	10.01	4.0	Gammon	
January 22	15.54	2.6	SD Training/Mewstone Dropoff	
January 23	16.42	3.1	East Rutts	
January 29	08.04	3.9		
January 30	08.34	3.8	Rosehill	S
February 5	14.14	2.4	Shipwreck Conference/Hilsea	
February 6	15.37	3.0	The Bull	S
February 12	08.17	5.3	AD Training	DL!
February 13	08.55	4.9	Truk/James Eagan Layne	
February 19	14.25	1.6	Truk/Newholm	DL
February 20	15.32	2.1	Truk/Eddystone	
February 26	07.12	4.3	Truk/Boat handling course	
February 27	07.44	4.4	Scylla/Boat handling course	
March 5	12.25	2.0	Yealm Sea Grass Survey	
March 6	14.13	2.2	Hands Deep	S
March 12	07.10	5.4	AD Training	DL
March 13	07.49	5.3	Persier	S
March 19	11.32	1.4	OD Training/Dartmouth U-boat	DL
March 20	13.57	1.4	Newholm/Start	
March 25	05.34	4.3	Cornwall/Local Site	
March 26	06.11	4.4	BST starts - Cornwall/Local Site	
March 27	07.46	4.5	Cornwall/Local Site	
March 28	08.19	4.6	Cornwall/Local Site	
April 2	11.49	2.4	OD Training/Bretagne	S
April 3	13.27	2.1	Hilsea	
April 9	07.02	5.2	OD Training	
April 10	07.14	5.2	Galicia	
April 16	10.53	2.0	Cornwall/Local Site	S
April 17	11.58	1.5	N. Cornwall explore /Local Site	S
April 18	14.11	1.4	N. Cornwall explore	S
April 23	05.49	4.2	AD Training	DL
April 24	06.40	4.3	3 Pinnacles	

Date	H.W. Devonport	Range (m)	Suggested Site	Minimum Qualification	
April	30	10.47	3.1	Cornwall/Local Site	
May	1	11.54	2.5	Cornwall/Local Site	
May	2	13.30	2.5	Cornwall/Local Site	
May	7	05.53	4.6	Wreck Research	
May	8	06.34	4.7	Persier	S
May	14	09.51	2.7	Foyle	DL
May	15	10.37	2.2	East Rutts/Untiring	
May	21	17.02	3.5	Scillies/Local Site	
May	22	05.20	3.9	Scillies/Local Site	
May	28	10.00	3.9	Scillies/Cornwall/Local Site	
May	29	10.53	3.4	Cornwall/Local Site	
May	30	11.56	3.1	Cornwall/Local Site	
June	4	17.03	3.7	Lundy	
June	5	05.24	3.9	Lundy/Local Site	
June	11	09.04	3.1	Kernow Festival	
June	12	09.44	2.9	Kernow Festival/Local Site	
June	17	14.16	2.6	Ireland	
June	18	15.17	2.9	Ireland/Skaala	DL
June	19	16.16	3.2	Ireland/Hands Deep	S
June	20	17.12	3.5	Ireland	
June	25	09.10	4.5	Wreck Research	
June	26	10.00	4.3	Persier	S
July	2	15.35	2.7	Medoc	DL
July	3	16.30	2.9	Hatt Rock	S
July	9	08.18	3.5	Riversdale	DL
July	10	08.56	3.3	East Rutts	
July	15	12.13	2.6	Lundy	
July	16	13.14	2.6	Lundy/Local Site	
July	17	14.27	2.6	Lundy/Bretagne	S
July	23	08.09	4.8		
July	4	09.00	5.0	James Eagan Layne	
July	30	13.46	2.4	Riversdale	DL
July	31	14.58	2.0	Oregon	S
August	6	07.26	3.7	Hilsea	
August	7	08.03	3.8	Eddystone	
August	13	11.25	2.8	Totnes Castle	DL
August	14	12.29	2.3	Lannacombe/Newholm	
August	20	07.03	4.8		
August	21	07.51	5.2	Gammon	
August	27	11.33	3.5	Scillies/Cornwall/Local Site	
August	28	12.27	2.7	Scillies/Cornwall/Local Site	
August	29	14.22	1.9	Scillies/Cornwall/Local Site	

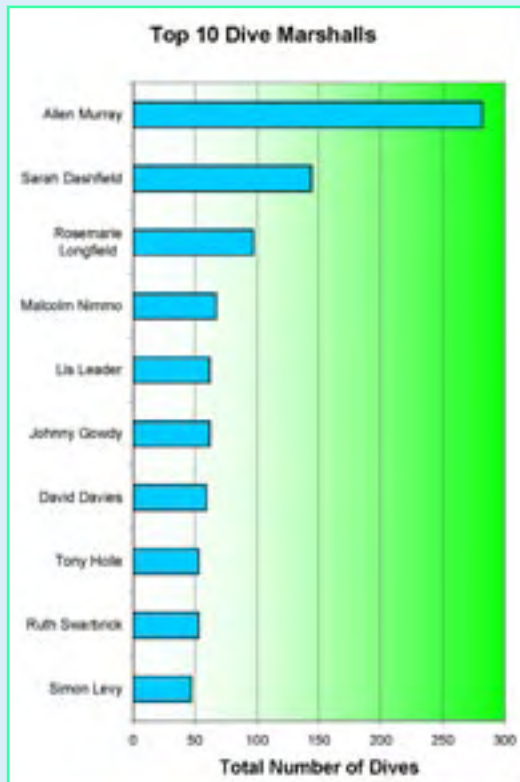
SUB-AQUA CLUB

Date	H.W. Devonport	Range (m)	Suggested Site	Minimum Qualification
September 3	06.29	3.8	Scillies	
September 4	07.05	4.0	Maine	S
September 10	10.07	3.2	Hatt Rock	S
September 11	10.53	2.7	3 Pinnacles	
September 17	05.57	4.5		
September 18	06.43	5.1	Poulmic	
September 24	10.10	3.3	Medina	DL
September 25	10.42	2.6	Eastern Blackstone	
October 1	05.24	3.4	Ambassador	DL
October 2	06.02	3.9	Mewstone Ledges	
October 8	09.12	3.8	Unicorn	DL
October 9	09.49	3.4	Hilsea	
October 15	17.04	3.8	Elk	S
October 16	05.36	4.6	Scylla/JEL	
October 22	09.06	3.9	Wreathier	DL
October 23	09.34	3.2	West Rutts	
October 29	16.16	2.5	Dartmouth U-boat	DL
October 30	15.59	2.2	BST ends – Start Point	
November 5	07.24	4.2		
November 6	08.01	3.9	Hands Deep	S
November 12	14.43	3.0	North Sea	DL
November 13	15.37	3.6	Rosehill	S
November 19	07.12	4.1		
November 20	07.41	3.7	Hilsea	
November 26	13.17	1.8	Dartmouth U-boat	DL
November 27	14.19	2.2	Eddystone	
December 3	06.34	4.3		
December 4	07.16	4.2	Persier	S
December 10	12.58	2.6	Riversdale	DL
December 11	14.05	2.8	East Rutts	
December 17	06.22	4.0		
December 18	06.55	3.9	Glen Strathallan	
December 24	10.58	2.2	Oregon	S
December 25	11.58	2.2	Xmas Pudding Reef	FC
December 26	13.06	2.0	Brixham Breakwater	AD
December 27	14.14	2.4	Mewstone Dropoff	S
December 31	05.36	4.2	Louis Shied/Barrier Reef!	

**TOTNES**  
SUB-AQUA CLUB

Occasionally we ran evening dives using the Club RIBs and also shore dives during the summer. Diving was arranged on the Wednesday evening, when the lists would be put up on the Club notice board. The sheets would contain information on the proposed site, Dive Marshal's name and contact details, then the divers would add their names, qualification, whether they could tow and if they were using nitrox. A weekly Club email would also be sent out inviting divers to contact the Dive Marshal in advance of the call in if they wanted to be added to the list. Copies of the Club's dive planning and dive log sheets are included here as Appendix XIV.

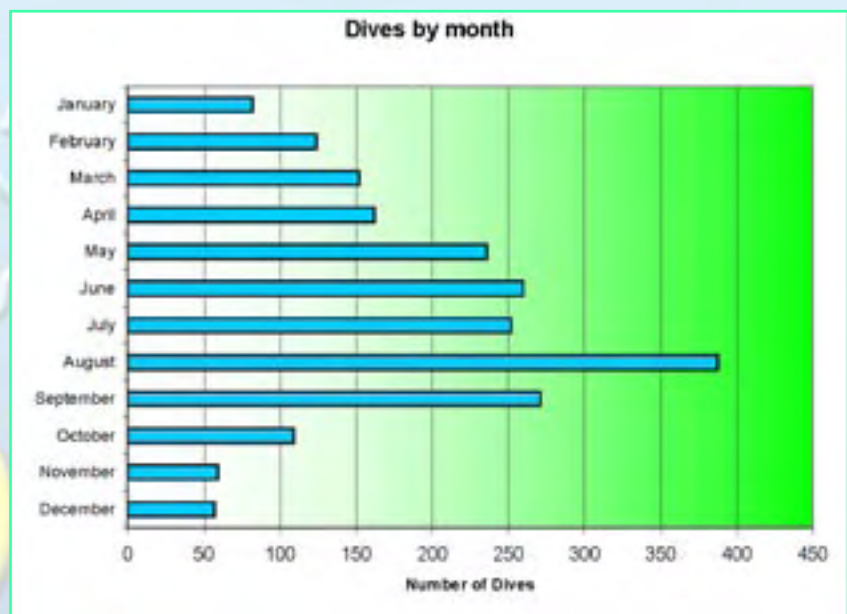
**Figure 8: Top 10 Dive Marshalls in 2005**



Sunday diving was open to all levels of qualification, and trainees were encouraged to come along for a shallower afternoon dive to build on their experience and to integrate them more into the Club. By running the RIBs in waves everyone was guaranteed at least one dive on a Sunday. As many of our members have families, during the summer we would launch from places such as Hope Cove and Challaborough beaches so they could bring the kids along. Saturday dives were either for general or speciality dives, such as deep wrecks for more experienced members, training dives for a variety of levels of qualification, or a specific project.

Including expeditions, a total of 2152 individual dives took place during 2005.

**Figure 9: Monthly breakdown of diving in 2005**



In addition to regular weekend diving during the summer, we also booked two local hard boat evenings. On the Tuesdays the *Falcon* took divers out of Dartmouth and on Thursdays we used *Maid Maggie* from Plymouth. These dives were open to Sports Divers and above. However, we also arranged a hard boat dive to the Scylla one evening to give the recently qualified Ocean Divers a new experience.

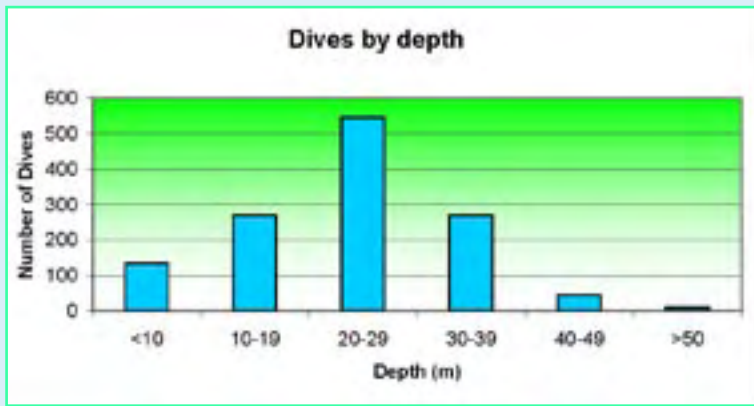


Figure 10:  
Breakdown of dives by depth

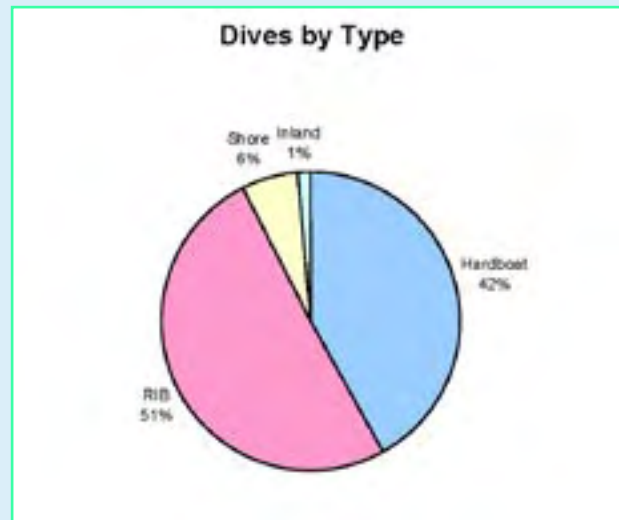


Figure 11:  
Breakdown of dives by type

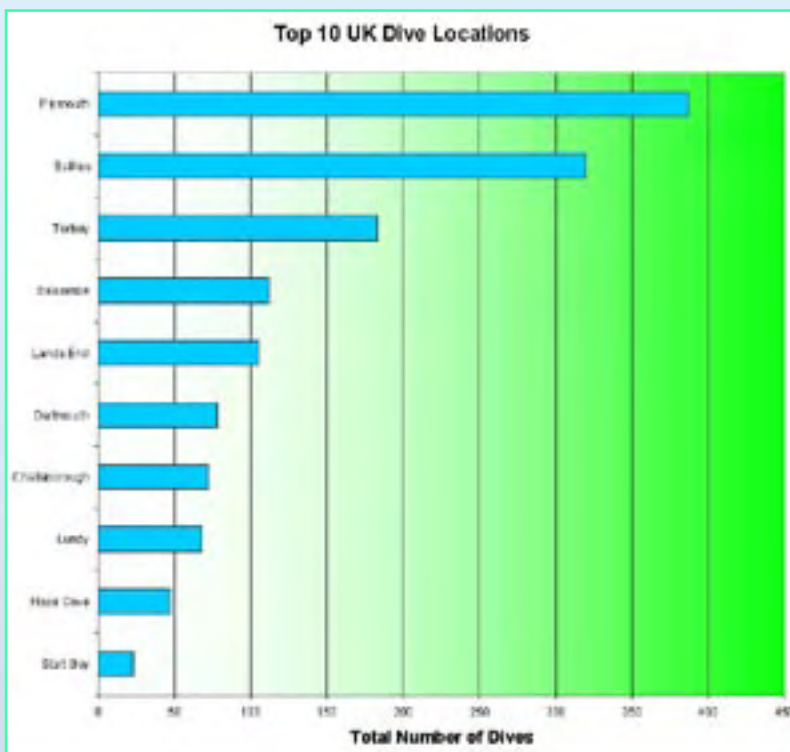


Figure 12:  
Top 10 UK dive locations visited by Totnes in 2005

During our local Club dives we visited a total of 38 different sites in 2005.

## 12

## EXPEDITIONS

Totnes always tries to run a number of expeditions in any given year, ranging from the old favourites like the Scillies and Cornwall, to more remote and exotic locations such as Thailand, Micronesia and Scapa Flow! Whilst the weather was such that several of the regular Cornwall trips were cancelled, Table 7 details those expeditions that took place during 2005. Expeditions to the Scillies, Pembrokeshire, Cornwall, the Red Sea and the Galapagos are already in the planning stages for 2006-7.

**Table 7: Totnes Expeditions 2005**

Date	Location
February 13-26	Truk Lagoon, Micronesia
May Bank Holiday	Penzance & Lamorna, Cornwall
May 21-28	St Mary's, Isles of Scilly
June 4-5	Lundy
June 11-12	Kernow Diving Festival
June 17-20	Dingle Peninsula, Ireland
July 3	Fowey, Cornwall
July 15-17	Lundy
July 30 – August 6	St Martins, Isles of Scilly
August Bank Holiday	Sennen Cove, Cornwall
August 29 – Sept 3	St Martins, Isles of Scilly
September 9-23	Vancouver Island, Canada
September 23-26	St Martins, Isles of Scilly

Club members prepared reports on both Branch and personal expeditions/trips and a selection of these are included below:

### SCILLIES, MAY 2005

by Lis Leader (*photographs Stuart Smith and Mike Balmforth*)

The rain is absolutely heaving itself at my window. The clouds have settled in for another British winter – the light of morning, no different from that at the end of the day. If only it were May again, a sunny Saturday setting sail for the Scillies! But no, it's a dull end to October and I'm faced with only memories staring back from my catalogue of computer images. There the nine of us are, smiling back at the camera whilst the wind tears at our clothes and a few nearby passengers turn green. Indeed, it was a very lumpy passage. There's another of Jo mooring up *Moonshadow* on our first day of diving. The rest of us are lined up in the background, passing cylinders down to the boat. From the expressions, I'm certain Mike has said something silly. Despite his awful sense of humour, I know I couldn't have asked for a better diving buddy!

I never hurry any more when it's time to kit up. There's no point. As soon as we're on site, Mike is usually helping someone into their stab, then sorting out someone's cylinder, then rinsing out a mask or turning on some air, then finally hunting for his fins. No matter what, it's inevitable we jump in last.

SUB-AQUA CLUB

No matter what, it's inevitable we jump in last. This used to bother me, but I'm getting used to it. On the other hand, Mike's extraordinary in the water. He pays attention to detail, delights in sharing each and every experience, and is an excellent and attentive diver. Besides, he can't tell bad jokes with a DV in his mouth!

We dropped in just northeast of St. Martins and descended to Flat Ledges. Wow! Such an abundance of life. Hundreds of nudibranchs and even more egg ribbons. Carpets of plumose anemones and wall upon wall of jewel anemones. But this was only the start of a wonderful week of diving.



Diving with Jo Allsop is a treat.

And in May, the weather's usually sunny and warm. A normal day out on *Moonshadow* starts early out of St. Mary's island. We're usually loaded up and away by 9:00 am and in the water by 10:00. *Moonshadow's* a Lochin 33 and can take up to 12 divers. With only nine of us though, there's plenty of room. Jo knows all of the 150 Scilly dive sites, as well as loads more that she and her dad have discovered. Reefs range from steep-sided canyons to sheer 50m walls, and because of the strong tidal movement, are incredibly rich in marine life – walls of jewel anemones, fan corals, ross coral, dead man's fingers, plumose anemones, sponges and more. Jo also knows exactly where to drop us when we have an urge to visit wrecks, of which there are many. After our first dive, Jo usually anchors up in a well-sheltered bay, and we break out lunch, often followed by a snorkel with the local population of grey seals. Invariably, at least one dive will involve playing with seals. Because they're so used to divers, the seals won't hesitate to tug on your fins or just swim alongside.



After a second dive, we're usually back to St. Mary's by 4:00 pm, which allows for time to wander through the town, bicycle ride out to one of the beaches, or just read and relax.

It's hard to describe dives. After one or two they become a menu of animals or a list of diving conditions, unless it's a wreck and you have a wealth of information on its history and the circumstances surrounding just why it's at the bottom of the sea. I dive to experience an alien world and a

vast, diverse population designed to flourish in this watery world under pressure. I've not yet become a 'wreckie'. Although each underwater experience is unique and usually incredible, once topside, I'm stuck describing the menu. That said, I did have my most memorable dive on this trip.

SUB-AQUA CLUB



Wednesday woke sparkling. Paul Slemmings had joined Mike and me to form a three. We'd been preparing for this dive since the day before, a dive to take Paul and me to 50m for the first time. After buddy checking and reviewing the plan one final time, we jumped in... last.

Mike, the most experienced, was leading. Our plan was to descend quickly to depth and then enjoy a slow ascent.

Let me tell you, King Cad is the absolute perfect site for a deep dive. At 50m we were floating over sand next to the most spectacular wall that rose to the surface.

The conditions were ideal to meander upwards against a wall of jewel and plumose anemones peppered with live cowries. Dead men's fingers mingled with boring sponges. Fan worms hung from overhangs like ghostly apparitions, only to disappear as our shadows glided past. Chubby sea lemons and nudibranchs with translucent white bodies slid over marine greenery the closer we came to the surface.

Buoyancy control here is a must, especially if you just want to linger. And linger we did, pointing out spectacular, colourful patterns, and the tiny details of life amongst the ledges of this incredible rock. Yes, indeed! This dive is fantastic!

All too soon, it was time to head back to reality



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## IRELAND (MAGHAREE ISLANDS, CO KERRY)

17–20 June 2005 by Johnny Gowdy (pictures Nick Booth)

Although I understood the logic behind Nick's planning – maximise the number of dives and minimise the number of days off work – I hadn't quite realised what this entailed. It wasn't until we were loading Nick's van on Thursday evening to drive up from Totnes to Fishguard for the 2am ferry, that it dawned on me what Nick's plan was: we would travel at night, giving three full days of diving – all we had to do was not sleep!

The first part of the trip went very well. We arrived in Fishguard just after midnight with plenty of time to take in the sights and smells of the port. Paul Slemmings celebrated our arrival by cracking open a few beers that he had been threatening to drink since leaving Totnes. No offence to the Norwegians, but the Stena ferry, which plies the route from Fishguard to Rosslare, is a bit of a dump. If it were cleaned up a bit, and with some care and attention, it would make a superb artificial reef.

The pasties under the heat lamp in the bar cabinet looked as if they had been there several weeks. So we settled for a few pints of Guinness and a packet of cheese and onion crisps. Three pints later, and after a couple of hours sleep, we were on the road from Rosslare heading for the west coast of Ireland. It's only about 200 miles on the map but driving across Ireland hasn't changed much since I left my homeland 20 years ago. Six hours later we pulled into Castlegregory, Co. Kerry.

We were tired and hungry, so it was a joy to find ourselves in probably the most relaxed dive centre/hotel you could imagine and with the added attraction of a gastronomic restaurant. "You're just in time for lunch," said Mrs Fitzgibbon, "the special today is grilled mackerel, just caught this morning": Lovely!

The Waterworld Centre, in Castlegregory, is owned by Ronnie and Pat Fitzgibbon and as we tucked into our fresh mackerel their daughter, Sandra, gave us a briefing about the centre and the diving ahead. "Perhaps you'd like to have a wee nap after lunch and then maybe we could arrange a dive for later this afternoon," she enquired. This was turning into exactly the sort of relaxed diving holiday we had hoped for.

The Magharee Islands (also known as Seven Hogs, although not by anyone we met) are a group of rocky islets just off the Magharee headland on the north side of the Dingle peninsula. The headland separates Tralee bay from Brandon bay and is surrounded by a horseshoe of mountains. The tallest of these is the enigmatic and mystical Mount Brandon, which, as well as being one of the tallest mountains in Ireland, is inhabited by fairies. Strangely enough we never saw the top of Mt Brandon the whole time we were there, on the day we arrived the sea and sky collided in an extraordinary palette of dark greys and blue-black, but even on the clearer days the summit was shrouded in mist and cloud. It would be easy to believe that the top of Brandon was the realm of all sorts of mythical beasts and Gaelic heroes, and this possibility we discussed over several pints each evening.



Whether you believe the myths or not, it is certain that this is one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world. It evokes a sense of melancholy, a timeless sadness, something in the way the peat-covered mountains curve into the sea, or drop in sheer cliffs, silent and still except for the breaking waves below, the call of seabirds and the advancing shades of light as the Atlantic fronts roll in. The sense of sadness is heightened if you know a little about the history of the west of Ireland, especially in the famine years, which were heaped with death and desperate immigration. I'm sure this was in our thoughts as we walked along the cliffs and stopped next to the outline of the old stone cottages abandoned at this time.

'Relaxed diving', that's what we wanted and that's exactly what we got. It wouldn't be a good location for teckie/wreckie divers – we didn't do any dives below 25m – but around the islands the marine life was superb. We got our gear together and loaded the van each morning at a civilised 9am, then had a spot of breakfast before walking the 100 yards down to the small harbour to load the RIB. The islands were a short ride away and we were able to do two dives and be back for a late lunch. The rest of the day we could go walking along the beautiful long beaches or just sit and watch the light dance across the sea as the clouds swept in from the west. As if by magic, each evening the clouds cleared and we were treated to a long sunset as we made our way to the pub for a couple of dark ones.

The marine life was similar to Devon, just a lot more of it and seemingly bigger. Nick and I were hovering above the kelp on our second dive when the biggest dogfish (bull huss) I have ever seen swam beneath us and settled for a photo call. Then just to add to the scene, a conger eel swam over and seemed to check out the dogfish before leisurely swimming away. We also saw quite a few lobsters, two or three on each dive, and big crayfish, which I have never seen in Devon. Around the rocks, tompot blennies shared ledges with rows of prawns furiously feeding. On seeing this, Nick patted his stomach appreciatively and made a gesture of breaking open heads and dipping into chilli sauce. Another highlight was a beautiful scorpion fish perfectly camouflaged, reddish pink and yellow against the seaweed and sponges.

The visibility was at times superb, especially at the start of the dive known as "the Gully" on Inishtooskert, when we descended into an overhanging cavern and made our way along a boulder-strewn gully. The only down side on some of the dives was the amount of kelp, but once

1000 HOURS  
SUB-AQUA CLUB

you got in amongst it, the marine life was superb. On one dive we came across a rock face, the base of which looked as if it had been scoured daily by the sea, it was so smooth, with what looked like man-made circular holes about the size and smoothness of large cooking pots, testament to the winter storms along this coast. Yet even here lived beautiful snakelocks and dahlia anemones securely rooted into the bare rocks.

I was surprised by the lack of tidal currents around the islands. When we asked about slack water times at the dive centre they just laughed. I suppose that because the islands are so exposed to the wide Atlantic, with no channel or headlands to funnel the water (as we have around Devon) the tidal energy is dissipated into a slow heave and trough. Instead of tidal energy, we experienced the energy from the oceanic swell coming in from the Atlantic. Even on a calm day, and below 20m, you could still feel the push and tug of the ocean.



In all we did six dives, five around the Magharee islands and on the last day we made the longer boat trip across the bay to dive beneath the cliffs of Mount Brandon. Although this was not the best dive – the swell was strong enough to stir up the bottom and made swimming a matter of fin-like fury and then grabbing on to something immovable – it was the most memorable. As we kitted up beneath the towering cliffs of Brandon, with seabirds overhead and a big sea lifting our RIB, I thought, this is really crazy. I looked across at Nick, Paul and Viv and guessed that they must be thinking the same thing, judging by the big stupid grins on their faces.

In all it was a great trip, relaxed diving in good company. I would definitely recommend the location to anyone looking for good marine life or photographic diving, especially if you have the family with you and want to spend plenty of time out of the water.

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## NEARLY FOWEY, WEEKEND

3 July 2005 by Ruth Swarbrick and David Davies

*Ruth, Rob, Allen, Sarah, Dangerous, Nick & Jo Parsons, Stuart Smith*

Organised by Ruth & Dangerous

This was the weekend to Fowey rescheduled from May. Due to the appalling forecast, we cancelled camping on Friday night, then we cancelled diving on Saturday and then camping on Saturday, and ended up just going to Fowey for the day on Sunday.

We parked and launched from Caffa Mill car park – just next to the Bodinnick Ferry. The first dive was *Gwineas Reef* (just out from Gorran Haven) – the guide book was glowing about this site. Some had better dives than others – obviously glorious in patches!

The second dive was the *Kanteong* dredger. By now the wind was increasing, so it was a wet trip out and then we had to hang around while a hard boat fuffed around getting his divers out of the water and then made even more of a fist of getting his shot-line back! The *Kanteong* dredger is in around 17m and is very kelpy – reminded me of the Delaware in the Scillies. It's very broken up, the area of strewn with wreckage, with one big piece of the frame and a couple of the bucket dredges to see.

After these two2 dives I can see why Fowey isn't swarming with dive boats in the summer! Good fun but nothing to write home about...

## LUNDY ISLAND

15-17 July 2005 by Ruth Swarbrick

10 divers: Allen, Sarah, Ruth, Rob, Nick B, Lis, Mike B, Pete Butcher, Tony Clarke, Marcus Smyth

Organised by Allen Murray

Bright and early in the car-park in Clovelly, we were ready to start the long process of lugging our gear to the dive boat. We were so early in fact that the dive boat couldn't get into the quay until the tide came in a bit.

Saw a sunfish on the journey over to Lundy – a good omen? On arrival at Lundy we unloaded all the camping gear. How can 10 people have so much stuff for just two nights?

The first dive was *MV Robert* – a small coaster which sank on her starboard side in about 25m of water – a pretty dive with absolutely masses of small fish shoaling all over the wreck, particularly in the holds. And where there are small fish there are bound to be bigger fish – most noticeably congers and pollack. The hull is festooned with white and orange plumose anemones – a good dive to start.



Next day's diving was 'organised' by Ruth (with some help from the skipper – Colin – who definitely wanted us to dive the *Iona III*! This is a protected wreck of a steamship on her way to try and break the Confederate blockade during the American Civil War. She only got as far as Lundy! A pretty but very broken wreck, with masses of fish and plenty of lobster.

The scenic dives were more disappointing on the whole. They were all carried out on the east side of the island in the marine reserve, so there was plenty of life, including lobsters, on every dive and on one dive seals! However, the viz was always disappointing, due largely to the amount of silt covering everything.



The last dive of the weekend was the best. We dived *The Knoll Pins*, two rocky pinnacles – the viz was good, the marine life was plentiful and Nick and I ended up surfacing by standing on the top of the inner pinnacle!

Luckily for us the weather was glorious for the whole weekend, so camping was fun! In the evenings we had a lovely, huge and very reasonably priced meal in the only pub, *The Marisco Tavern*.

The sunfish was obviously an omen of things to come – we had some good dives, some fantastic weather, seals to snorkel with, puffins and dolphins. The only thing missing was the 20+ basking sharks that had been seen a couple of days before we arrived. Not bad!

LOWLANDS  
SUB-AQUA CLUB

## CORNWALL, - AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY 2005

by Allan Tudor (photographs Alex Coxall and Malcolm Nimmo)

After a number of foiled attempts, due to poor weather, the guardians of the Longships were able to get out to the world's best dive site on the August Bank Holiday and inspect it, to make sure it has not been damaged, moved away or melted.

There was a shifting crew of 13, coming and going, doing the honours as a dozen of the regulars were diving in the Isles of Scilly. We were to experience a long weekend which highlights just why this site is so special.

The weather was wall-to-wall sunshine, a tremendous ground swell washing up to the base of the lighthouse – ask Krisztina – and disappointingly poor viz. But that poor viz brought with it some unexpected highlights – more basking sharks than we have seen in years, from babies of 3m to giants longer than our 5.8m RIB. We saw them almost every wave of diving we did. Unfortunately the viz which brought them in hampered any chances of good underwater shots, and all we could see was a gigantic tail sweeping past at speed to vanish in the green gloom.



However Mike B became almost enthusiastic about seeing them. The viz also brought in shoals of mackerel and sprats which were feeding at the surface, and one pair of divers were engulfed by a shoal while doing their stops. There was also a small sunfish to entertain one group. The viz was better the deeper we went, and despite tides which allowed almost non-stop diving, we were not able to make a full inspection as we would have wished to do in our self-appointed role of guardians of the rocks. So we are just going to have to go back again – hoping for better viz, even if that means no sharks.

As a non-diving bonus we were also able to see the Sennen lifeboat launch – not for real – just as an exercise.

Thanks to Simon L for organising, and the rest of the crew for making the weekend so enjoyable.

*Crew: Simon L, Dangerous D, Mike B, Paul N, Malcolm N, Krisztina L, John D, Simon T, Andy S, Stuart S, John Panton, on perhaps his final Club dives before emigrating to Canada, and yours truly, Guardians: Allan T and Richard K.*

**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

## SCILLIES – AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY 2005

by Ruth Swarbrick (*photograph Allen Murray*)

Diving with St. Martins Diving Charters & Tim Allsop

*10 divers: Allen, Sarah, Ruth, Rob, Nick Booth, Pete Butcher, Nick & Jo Parsons, Simon Powell, Richard Wood*

Organised by Allen Murray

Well, what can I say that hasn't already been said about diving in the Scillies! Tim treated us to yet another superb week of diving. He even sorted out some great weather and some nice early starts! OK, the early starts weren't nice but it was great to have done two cracking dives by lunchtime, which gave us plenty of time for going to the bakery and sitting in the garden at Rock Cottage supping copious cups of tea and munching cakes! We even had time to explore the island for the remainder of the day, or just sit on the beach taking it all in!



The highlight of the week would have to be our brand new dive site. Whilst motoring around when we were in the water diving the *King Cadwallon*,

Tim noticed a lump showing on the echo-sounder. As is Tim's wont, he jumped in during our surface interval to check it out. He came up with a rather large grin on his face and as it became our second dive of the day we soon found out why! 'Tim's Treasure' is a deep-ish pinnacle, starting in about 25m and slowly dropping away to over 60m. It is absolutely covered in orange and white anemones – totally stunning. We just didn't have long enough down there!

Well, nothing could top that, though Sarah, Nick and Simon did have a rather interesting time when they got caught in the surge after completing their dive on the *Isabo*!

All too soon the week came to an end, but we've all booked for next year already. I'm sure I'm not the only one who checks ScillyWebCam every day and wishes they were back on St. Martins?

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## VANCOUVER ISLAND, CANADA

September 2005 by Lis Leader (*photographs Richard Knights, Malcolm Nimmo, Mike Balmforth and Allen Murray*)

The Bamfield Road is carnivorous. It's a series of enormously explosive potholes, abruptly finishing at jagged edges, strewn with rocks and debris slipping down off the dissolving mountain from which it's hung, and scarred from the abuses of seasons, weather and the malignant bulk of logging trucks. If you come face to face with a logging truck and the road's not big enough for you both, it's up to you to get off – either into the mountainside or over the edge. It had been nine years since I'd travelled down that road. The last time, I was part of a documentary film crew. This time, I was bringing members of my Totnes Dive Club on an adventure. I couldn't not let them experience the road!

Plans for this trip started a year in advance. I'd organized it so many times before for film teams, that I was certain not much could go wrong with divers. This time, we'd only have a couple bags

each, unlike the 30 plus film cases that required all sorts of permits, bonds and excess baggage payments. My first task was to book the 11 of us with Broken Island Adventures, a dive charter and friends from my earlier years. The only available dates were 11 – 20 September. From Vancouver it's a ferry ride to Vancouver Island, and a 40-minute drive to the logging town of Port Alberni, and then the logging road to Bamfield.



British Columbia is a magical place, and the journey between Vancouver and Vancouver Island

is no exception. It's a dramatic vista of snow-capped peaks and an expanse of blue, dotted with green islands. It's the moment when you take that first step into wilderness. An hour or so later, we arrived at Nanaimo's Departure Bay, picked up our bags and waited for the West Coast Trail



bus to arrive. Half an hour passed, then another. I phoned the company. *"You told us you were arriving yesterday. Our guy waited over an hour."* *"No, no, I booked the transport for today! I told the guy we were flying yesterday. How could we possibly have gotten to Nanaimo the day we arrived?!"* *"Well, we haven't got a driver for today, so you're out of luck."* I remained calm. I didn't want to blow the little chance I had of persuading them to sort it out for me. *"Okay, call us back in 20 -minutes and we'll try to get you a driver."* I waited. *"You're in luck. Bob will pick up the bus and come get you in about 30 minutes."* Phew!

Bamfield itself is a small village dominated by its immense and unpredictable oceanic neighbour. Most of Bamfield's 300 residents rely on the natural resources of the environment or the local marine station for an income, but all share a profound appreciation for remote living and a healthy respect for nature. Rush hour is unlike most places, determined by daylight hours and consisting mostly of fishing boat traffic with seagull and bald eagle entourage. Even the children go to school by school-boat, kayak or canoe. Time to get settled in. John and Cheryl, our hosts, were waiting at the government dock to ferry us over to the west side, where their set-up and our accommodation was.



We boarded the Grunt Sculpin at dawn on a still, crystalline day, and set off for the Broken Group, a unique cluster of islands that are scattered throughout Barkley Sound. *"You're lucky,"* said John Mass, the skipper of the boat. *"Your charter's coincided with a pilchard run, which means there are loads of "humpies" in the Sound. I wouldn't be surprised if you saw a whale or two on a dive."* *"What's today's first dive site?"* asked Sarah Dashfield, our Club's Dive Officer. *"Renate Reef,"* John replied.

At 7:30, Mike and I rolled into the water. Green! The water was a murky green! "Oh no!" Six metres down and it began to clear. At 20m the viz was spectacular! *Renate's Reef* is a pinnacle that descends to about 35m. As we descended into the clear water, we were amazed at the diversity of unfamiliar life. At depth, we were introduced to curious ratfish that wove languid circles round us, strange-looking creatures with pointy snouts and large eyes that reflected the light from our torches. As we began a leisurely ascent, we discovered patches of strawberry anemones, each the size of a dinner plate. Giant green anemones swayed like sentinels on



reef walls. These leviathans are thought by marine biologists to be as old as 500 years!

Our second dive of the day, after a restful meandering along the boardwalk, took us to *Sandford Reef*. Another amazing experience, and our first glimpse of wolf eels. Adult males and females often share their crevice habitat. Peering out, they look like grandparents with wrinkly heads and toothless gums. Their

appearance is deceiving, though, for they grow up to 7 feet in length and are equipped with large, strong canine and molar teeth. Here, too, we passed through ghostly fields of plumose anemones, anemones as thick as a tree trunk and as tall as 3 feet. Enormous sunflower stars patrolled the canyons at the base of the reef, intent on finding an unsuspecting urchin. Every nook and cranny was gorged with life. Not bad for our first day!

Most of the dive sites are within a 40 minute boat ride, and the *Grunt Sculpin* is ideal for these waters. A custom-built 27-foot vessel, it boasts a large open back deck and a heated, covered cabin. All of us enjoyed sitting in the sun on our way out to *Wiebe*, our second dive location. In fact, the 40-minute journey turned into a whale-watching experience as well. Dozens of humpbacks spouted in the distance, and now and then, one would breach as it engulfed hundreds of pilchards. *Wiebe* itself wasn't as spectacular to me as previous dives, but it did provide me with an introduction to juvenile giant octopus, a lot smaller than the adult version!



On Tuesday, September 13, we headed out to *Christie Reef*, a steep reef with a lot of bull kelp. I also saw a number of keyhole limpets. When attacked by a starfish, these invertebrates raise their slimy mantle over their shell to ward off the attack. If that doesn't work, a commensal worm pops out from under the shell and bites the starfish's feet!

**HOT TIMES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**



In between dives, there were more opportunities to see wildlife. Walks to Brady's Beach provided glimpses of bald eagles. Some of us kayaked up the inlet or out into the sound and quietly followed black bears with cubs as they turned rocks over on the beach, in search of a pawful of tiny shore crabs. Kingfishers flitted by, as did oyster catchers and murrelets. Others from our group, more inclined for relaxation, took to the outside hot tub or just sat reading in the sunshine. Evenings, each house took turns cooking a meal and we'd have an opportunity to swap dive stories. Malcolm had us in stitches when relating his encounter with a giant

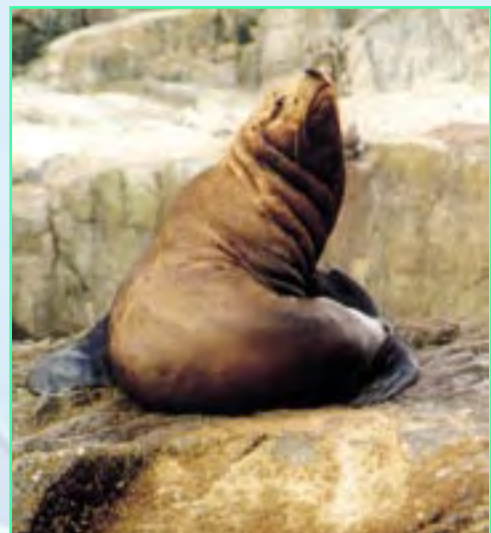


octopus. *"It came out of no where and it was huge. Suddenly it just spread itself out and flung itself at me."* *"Where was your fiancée?"* someone asked. *"I turned around and just saw her fins!"* Apparently, they'd broached the octopus' territory, and it was just displaying as a warning to 'get lost!'

There were still some of us who had an irrational desire to get in the water with Stellar sea lions.

So on 15 September, those of us who were slightly insane set off for the *Grotto* at Leach Island. And yes, there were hundreds of belching, farting, grunting and growling sea lions lounging on the beach and rock ledges. *"Just get in the water,"* John urged. *"They'll come find you."* We formulated a plan: jump in the water and all together head southwest towards the beach.

Two by two, with trepidation we slipped in. We descended to 12m and then promptly separated. Mike and I found ourselves meandering at the base of a rocky outcropping. The seabed appeared muddy and it dawned on me that we were actually diving in sea lion pool! Fifteen minutes later and nothing. We carried on. The barking became louder and we realized that we were heading up the sea lion beach. Mike was playing with hermit crabs and missed the torpedo-shaped body of what must have been a two-ton Stellar as it whizzed past. I did my best to express the incredulity and fear that I was experiencing. It was time to head back, which we did and immediately became tangled in bull kelp. We surfaced and swam back to the boat. Poor Mike, he was the only one to miss out. He'd sacrificed a sighting for hermit crabs!



On Friday 16 September, we decided we wanted to do some exploratory diving. Each group would choose their dive site from the charts. I was in the group that dove (yes, I'm American and allowed to say that!) *Devon Pinnacle*, also known as *Totnes BSAC Pinnacle* (we couldn't decide which name to settle on). The other group got to dive Sarah's *Screamer Reef*, also known as *Six Gill Alley*! Now, which dive would you prefer?! Yes, Sarah and John descended to about 28m and spent 15 minutes in the company of a six-gill shark. As they describe it, it was just as curious

about them as they were about it. Six-gills are considered one of the earliest sharks, dating from the Triassic period about 200 million years ago. My group's second exploratory dive of the day took us to a site we now refer to as *The Crap Stone!*



The same idiots who chose to dive with sea lions decided to try a night dive. *Ohiat* seemed the best choice, as it was a mere 10 minutes outside of the inlet and a well-protected site. At 8:30 p.m. we set off. In this remote corner of Vancouver Island, night time is black! Not the black haloed by an urban glow. Nor a black enhanced by streetlights. Black here is the real thing. Black black. Ancient black. The black you once knew lay under your bed. Black of our ancestors who kept it at bay with campfires. The only sounds perceivable were the constant murmurings of the Pacific Ocean, fragmented by barking sea lions somewhere out there in the black. I knew I wasn't the only one a bit intimidated by the prospect of the night dive. We jumped in and descended. It was dark. We swam along. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. All the creatures who'd been scampering about on our previous dive had disappeared. Very strange indeed.



Our last day of diving was 19 September, and for our last dive, we chose *Mahk Rock*. Also known as *Ratfish City*, it's actually a collection of parallel running reefs, and a location where many divers see large skates (as I did). It was a gentle way of bidding Barkley Sound goodbye.

On 20 September, we were on the West Coast Trail bus and enjoying the road back. We had a day and a half in Vancouver to look forward to, and then the long flight home. All of us did pretty much our own thing, wandering around the city, touring museums and the aquarium, shopping and buying last-minute gifts. And then all too soon, it was time to go. I'd asked everyone to meet in the hotel's reception area with their bags at 5:00 p.m. I had a surprise for them. The morning of the 21st, I'd been calling around, trying to find the most economical means of transporting everyone to the airport. It turned out to be a limousine service. So at 5:00pm, two very white stretch limos pulled up in front of the hotel and we set off for the airport, sipping drinks and giggling. A fine end to a very wonderful, enchanting dive holiday!

## OTHER TALES

There are too many reports to include all of them here, and the others can be found in Appendix XV. Many of these are also posted on the Club website, for the enjoyment and information of both other Club members and the wider diving community. As noted earlier, BSAC Travel Club have now copied several of these reports to their own website, having first sought the permission of the Club, and these are linked back to the Totnes site, providing a useful point of contact with the Branch.

# SUB-AQUA CLUB

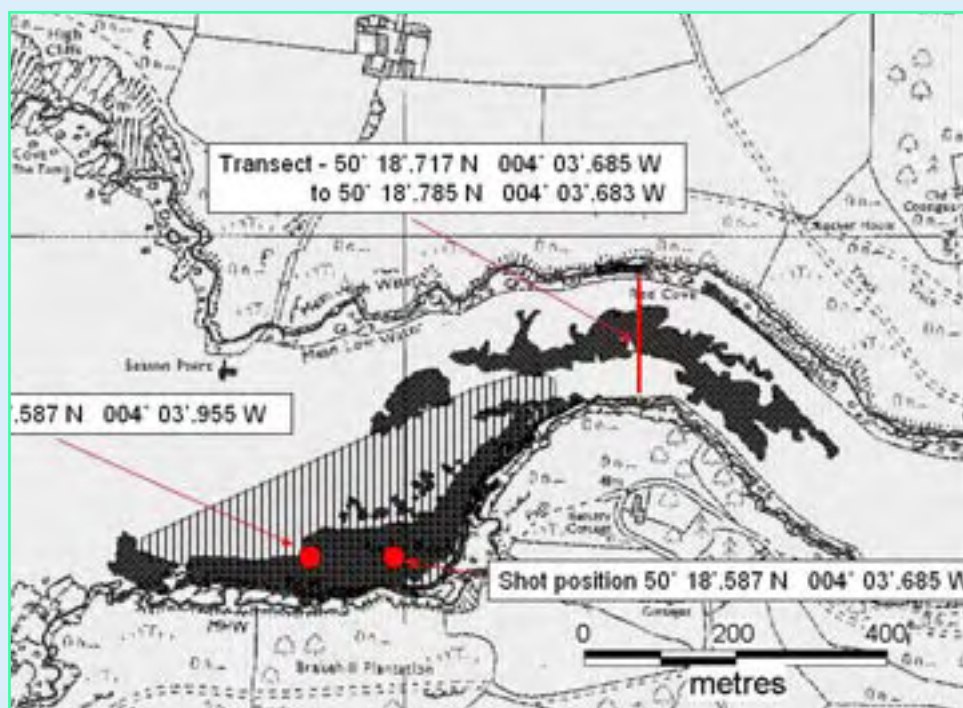
# 13

## SCIENTIFIC

### 13.1 SCIENTIFIC MARINE SURVEYS

We received a request from Nigel Mortimer, Marine Conservation Manager for the Salcombe and surrounding estuaries, to survey the Yealm seagrass beds for English Nature. The Club provided boats and divers for the survey. We took measurements from several positions where beds had been spotted previously and went out along transits using a tape measure and quadrats to count the number of stems, length of the leaves, estimated the percentage of epigrowth on the plants and took notes of the other marine life. The information was then incorporated into a report by Nigel and sent to English Nature. A full copy of the report prepared following the survey is included here as Appendix XVI.

**Figure 12: Yealm Seagrass survey plan**



In another survey for Nigel we went to the Salcombe estuary to search for fan mussels and seahorses, which had previously been recorded in the area. Divers were spread along a line and swam slowly in a particular direction. None of the organisms that we were seeking could be found. Species found during the dive were recorded.

The Club also received a request from Sally Sharrock, the local MCS organiser, to help with locating seagrass beds in the Dart Estuary. Totnes members assisted by providing boat handlers and divers for the survey. Although areas of the estuary were suitable habitats for seagrass, none was located.

In addition, the Club was a consultee on the Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary Environmental Management Plan.

There was also an unexpected success from the Club underwater photography competition (see section 14). One of the photographs taken by Club member Paul Newland was a species of scorpion spider crab, *Inachus dorsettensis*, which was on the MarLIN "wanted" list of images and is now included on their website.

TOTNES  
SUB-AQUA CLUB

## 13.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

There is a general interest in nautical archaeology within the Club, which is understandable given our proximity to a particularly unforgiving stretch of coastline. However, there is also some more focused involvement, as one of our members, Allen Murray, is Chair of NAS (South West), and also helps to organise the annual shipwreck conference in Plymouth which attracts 150+ delegates every year. Another member, Alan Jones, is currently heavily involved in the creation of the Shipwrecks UK database which, once completed, should offer the most comprehensive source of information about shipwrecks around the coast of the British Isles. The entire contents of the six Lloyds Register Shipwreck Index volumes have been expanded and transformed into a computerised database with a unique interactive mapping system to provide what will hopefully be a unique insight into our maritime history.

### NAS PRESENTATION

by Ruth Swarbrick

In March 2005, Jon Parlour, an ex-TSAC member who now teaches underwater archaeology courses on behalf of NAS, came to the Club to give a presentation on NAS and their 'Diving with a Purpose' initiative. This was followed by a couple of very interesting local case studies, *HMS Coronation* and the *Catharina von Flensburg*, both of which are located within the Plymouth area.

*Die Fraumetta Catharina von Flensburg:*

*Under Raven's Cliff's, divers from Plymouth Sound BSAC found a bronze bell sticking up out of the mud at 30m in October 1973. On closer investigation the partially intact wooden hull was discovered of what is now known to be the Danish brigantine Die Fraumetta Catharina von Flensburg. This ship arrived in the Sound on 10 December 1786 seeking shelter from an increasing southerly gale, while on passage from St Petersburg to Genoa with a cargo of hemp and leather hides. That night, having parted from her anchors, the 53-ton ship drove over The Bridge, tore open her hull and foundered in the dark. Her captain Hans Jensen Twedt and his crew all managed to reach the shore safely. Her cargo is quite remarkable, both for its nature and condition since the reindeer hides, six to each roll, include the animals' legs, ears and tail, and often carry Russian markings. Preserved by the tanning they received with willow bark, and birch oil currying, followed by some 200 years buried deep in silt, the hides are generating funds for a continuing excavation programme, being made into bags, holdalls, wallets and belts by a leather worker near Truro.*



The *Catharina von Flensburg* sank in Plymouth Sound on her way from St Petersburg to Genoa with a cargo of reindeer hides for the leather trade.

She was found 30 years ago by a group of local divers who lifted the bell, and lies in approx 30m of dark, murky water. She has been excavated fairly extensively and has provided a wealth of information about her cargo, her crew and her construction. The Plymouth mud has preserved her so well, in fact, that reindeer hides recovered from the wreck have, after extensive washing in fresh water to remove the salt, been in good enough condition to go on sale!

This talk was very well received and created a fair bit of interest amongst Club members for some archaeologically focused projects.

## MAGNETOMETER SURVEYS

One outcome of this was that when Pete Holt from NAS (South West) contacted the Branch and said that he wanted to investigate some of the shallow waters within Plymouth Sound, he received an enthusiastic welcome. So, having been blown out on the first attempt, the Club found itself out on the water on 19 November, using a magnetometer to survey a number of different sites, and diving where there were positive "hits". We found a tractor wheel, an old concreted ship's nail, old pottery and part of an old aircraft. It was an informative and enjoyable day.

## 'ADOPT A WRECK'

Another result was that the Club decided to 'Adopt a Wreck' under the NAS Adopt a Wreck scheme and, after some deliberation, selected the *SS Rosehill* in Whitsand Bay, Cornwall, as its subject.

Archival research has already started and has established that the *Rosehill* was built in 1911 by S.P. Austin and Son of Sunderland, and was first launched as the *Minster* by her owners, Stephenson Clarke and Co. The *Minster*, 314 feet long with a gross tonnage of 2733 tons, was fitted with a triple expansion engine made by the Sunderland firm of North Eastern Marine Engineering. In 1914 she was sold to a Welsh steamship company called W.J. Tillet and was renamed the *Rosehill*. The *SS Rosehill* was a non-commissioned collier, armed for defence en voyage from Cardiff for Devonport when she was sunk by torpedo without warning on 23 September 1917.

It is planned to start surveying the wreck of the *Rosehill* during the 2006 diving season.

## SUBMARINE RESEARCH

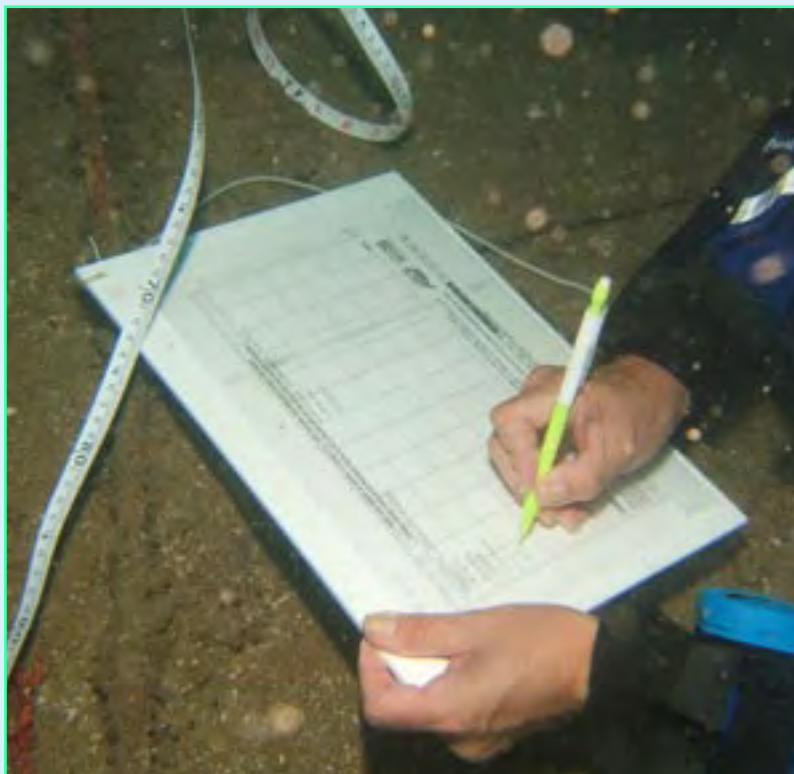
by Allen Murray

Well, what would you do? You get an email offering you the chance to dive the wreck of the first submarine ever to be commissioned into the Royal Navy – you jump at the opportunity, of course you do!

So there I was in the middle of August on the dive boat *Spartacat* in the middle of Pevensy Bay off the Sussex coast, getting ready to dive the *Holland V*, a designated historic wreck under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. This was the culmination of a 3-day course run by the well-known submarine expert Innes McCartney under the auspices of NAS.

Day one was held at the NAS headquarters at Fort Cumberland in Portsmouth, itself a site of significant historic interest, as the name suggests. This consisted of Innes running through the history and development of the submarine, from the early "pioneers" (I'm not sure that you could call Mr Day's vessel the *Maria*, which was submerged in Plymouth Sound in 1773, a submarine as it never re-surfaced, thereby failing to meet one fairly essential criterion – the ability to rise as well as sink!), through the pre-WWI British A & B Classes to the German U-boats of WW1 and WW2 (calm down Richard!) and then the post-1945 British S & U Class boats. After this we had a talk on the sinking of *HMS M1* in 1925 and *HMS Affray* in 1951, two peacetime submarine losses with all hands on board, the *Affray* being the last British submarine to be lost at sea; and then Innes gave us a break with a show of his photographs from his dives on the Operation Deadlight U-boat wrecks off Ireland and Scotland. The day was rounded off with a submarine photo ID session, just to prove that we'd been paying attention during the day!

The next day we had a tour of the Navy's submarine museum at Gosport, which has had a significant new addition since the last Club trip some 5 or 6 years ago. When we were last there



the *Holland 1* was in a conservation tank, as she had been since 1994, but now she's on display and housed in an impressive new building, which means you can walk around and even go inside the boat. This was excellent, as we were to dive the sister ship *Holland V* the next day and it was tremendously useful to get a feel for the vessel without the limitations of English Channel visibility! After visiting the *Holland*, we did a tour of *HMS Alliance*, which is also on display at the museum, and then had the rest of the day free to wander around the other exhibits.

So, back to the *Holland VI*! I was fortunate enough to be first in, buddying Innes, and tasked with trying to get some photographs of the wreck (not too successful) and the other NAS divers who were to measure various parts, draw sketches, and the like (better), which meant there was reasonable visibility for our dive. It also meant I had some freedom to roam about the wreck with the camera (whilst keeping my buddy in sight) whilst Innes spent most of his dive cutting netting away from around the main hatch.

So would I recommend the course to anyone else – I certainly would, but only if you're interested in history and old wrecks!

One immediate follow-up to this is a plan to try to identify positively a U-Boat sunk off the Dartmouth Mewstone. This is variously identified as the *UC113* or the *UC49* and presents an interesting challenge as it is sat in the mud at 50m. However, several members of the Club are now trimix certified and Innes McCartney has agreed to join us for dives planned in 2006.

### 13.3 SPECIAL PROJECTS

Throughout the year members have been involved in a film project based in the Salcombe estuary. As well as helping with lighting and filming, members have been boat handlers and dive supervisors. See Section 19 for more details.



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SUB-AQUA CLUB

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## COMPETITIONS

## CLUB UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

We held an in-house photography competition where members could submit three photos taken over a specific weekend's diving and three photos from anywhere in the world, taken during the last year. We then held a photography evening where Club members could vote for their three favourite photos in each category. A total of 49 images were submitted and the winners were published in the local press and also put on the Club website.

There were two categories. The first was an 'open' category where members can submit up to a maximum of 3 images taken anywhere in the world provided they have been taken during 2005. The second was an 'on the day' category where all images are taken on one day and at one location (this turned out to be the *Morris Rogue* on a marginal day to dive).

The winners in the open category were: 3rd Will Stubbs with *Paula Watching Fish*, 2nd Mike Balmforth with *2 Kissing Rockfish* and 1st prize went to Nick Booth for *The Cute Porcupine Fish*. In the *Morris Rogue*, Brixham category: Paul Newland's *Hermit Crab* came 3rd, Alec Jacobs *Cuttlefish* came 2nd and Allen Murray's *Edible Crab with Parasitic Anemone* came 1st.

All the submitted images competed 'head to head' in a single competition and were judged by ballot of the assembled membership at a presentation 'slide' show of all the images in each category projected in random order.

## Open Category Winners



1st Nick Booth  
*The Cute Porcupine Fish*



2nd Mike Balmforth  
*2 Kissing Rockfish*



3rd Will Stubbs  
*Paula Watching Fish*

## 'On the Day' Category Winners



1st Allen Murray  
*Edible Crab with  
Parasitic Anemone*



2nd Alec Jacobs  
*Common Cuttlefish*



3rd Paul Newland  
*Hermit Crab*

SUB-AQUA CLUB

# GENERAL ACTIVITIES



**TOTNES**  
SUB-AQUA CLUB



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# BRANCH MEETINGS

Branch dry meetings are held every Wednesday evening at The Meadowbrook Community Centre at Dartington after our pool training session, between about 9 and 11pm.

We have the use of a private room upstairs. We also have the use of a small committee room for training lectures and a larger function room where we can have talks, hold theory examinations, and carry out dry training sessions with manikins, do navigational exercises, etc.

In addition, there is the opportunity for members to have their cylinders filled by the Club's compressor which is housed in the Club's own boatshed attached to the Meadowbrook Community Centre. The compressor is run by the members every Wednesday evening during the dry meeting on an organised rota.

We also have pool training every Wednesday evening between 8 and 9pm at Totnes Leisure Pavilion where there is a 25m-long pool (2.5m deep), which is available to members free of charge at this time for swimming, skills practice and generally trying to stay/get fit.



TOTNES  
SUB-AQUA CLUB

# 16 SOCIAL

by Andy Smith, Social Secretary, unless stated otherwise

The Club has a very active social side, which hopefully caters for all tastes. Table 8 below details the various social events that took place in 2005 and this is followed by reports on some of them.

**Table 8: Social events 2005**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
2 January	Walk at Hallsands
15 January	DDRC visit
29 January	10-pin bowling
5 February	Plymouth Shipwreck Conference
23 February	Rebreather taster session
26 February	Sno-Tubing
23 March	Nautical Archaeology Society talk
24 March	Sea Turtle talk at Marine Aquarium
9 April	Falmouth Maritime Museum visit
12 April	Wine tasting
20 April	Photographic evening with Malcolm Nimmo
27 April	Photographic evening with Alec Jacobs
28 April	Scylla talk at Marine Biological Association
6 May	10-pin bowling
1 June	Truk Lagoon talk by Allen Murray
23 June	Gliding
9 July	Fireworks party at Lister's Farm
5 August	Pitch and Putt
19 August	Fly fishing
2 November	Photo Competition judging
5 November	Marine Conservation Society Conference
17 November	Plymouth No Take Zone talk
18 November	Annual Dinner and Dance
14 December	DDRC talk
18 December	Christmas Meal
26 December	Boxing Day walk at Hope Cove
31 December	New Year's Eve party

# TOTNES

## SUB-AQUA CLUB

## DDRC RECOMPRESSION CHAMBER TOUR

Saturday 15 January by Bella Snook

On a cold Saturday in January, divers from all over the South West, including five from Totnes SAC, descended on the Diving Diseases Research Centre (DDRC) in Plymouth to witness the presentation of a cheque for £750 raised by the Kernow Federation of Dive Clubs' 2004 Summer Dive Festival, and to have a tour of the facilities. Kernow Fed is an association of dive clubs, mostly in Cornwall (but some in Devon) who meet several times a year to share ideas and training opportunities and have a few beers. They also organise joint diving weekends, the main event being the annual Festival weekend in June which last year involved 95 divers from nine clubs with ten boats!



DDRC, which was established in 1980 to research the effects of diving on the human physiology, is the largest and busiest Hyperbaric Medical Centre in the South West and, despite its name, mainly treats patients requiring Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, which includes burn victims, cases of carbon monoxide poisoning, and much more, but true to its roots it also deals with diving emergencies and remains a charity.

On our arrival, we were welcomed into the lounge area with hot drinks, and caught up with members from other clubs. We split into two groups and set off on our guided tour. We saw two small chambers (2-3 man), which seemed quite cosy inside. The control panels looked complicated, including gas mix set-up, and vital communication links. Due to the high oxygen levels involved in treatment, fire risk is very high, and strict measures are taken to minimise this.

Next we looked at the larger 10-12 man chamber, and we all went inside; those of us that managed to grab a seat were pleasantly surprised by the comfort of the airline-style seats. Each patient has individual gas supply, with a choice of mask or hood delivery. Entertainment on offer was a DVD player, with no sound facility! Perhaps subtitled films are easier to follow. We were told divers' favourites are *The Deep*, *The Abyss*, etc! Because of the fire risk, each patient is only allowed one book. Considering chamber dives last several hours, boredom must be an issue. There is a refreshment hatch, and "conveniences" are situated in the entrance chamber.

# SUB-AQUA CLUB



Then we swapped guides and viewed the technical part of the building. This was an amazing complex of compressors and storage tanks. It must be very noisy when it's all running. Again, there were complex control panels to deal with the various gases involved. The amounts of oxygen used couldn't be delivered in cylinders by BOC, so quarterly deliveries of liquid oxygen are stored in huge (maybe 30 feet high) tanks just outside the building.

We all enjoyed this fascinating visit, but hope not to return in any other capacity!

## TEN-PIN BOWLING EVENING

Saturday 29 January

Fourteen members of various sizes, sexes, and shapes turned up at the Bowling Alley in Newton Abbot on 29 January to take part in what turned out to be a very enjoyable social evening.

Once we were all kitted out with some decidedly dodgy-looking footwear, the only problem for a few of the chaps, being rather well-endowed on the digital front, was to find a bowling ball with large enough holes to accommodate their big butch fingers. Anyway, we managed and, once Alan Tudor had taken the transits to locate our lanes, and Chris Catt had tested the strength of the safety gate with a well propelled initial "Go!", we settled down to a full two rounds of bowling (and, yes, bad backs were reported the following day!). The intense sporting exertion was broken at the half-way point for a veritable banquet of varying fast food E-numbers, all with lots of slimming chips! Spurred on by food-induced lethargy, we kept going until quite late, when Jo Parsons, expertly style-coached by Nick, carefully observed by most of the other guys, and photographed by Simon, came with a late spurt to win (as is her habit, or so we're told)! She was more excited than she has been in recent memory to be presented with the fabulous prize at the Club the following week!

# SUB-AQUA CLUB

A few late night social butterflies (or should that be moths?), remained undaunted despite all this exertion, and decided to give the adjoining "Enigma" Nightspot (formerly "R(Sh)afters" the benefit of their seasoned observation. Reports back confirm that some of the young ladies who dive this site have very interesting kit configurations indeed, suitable for only the warmest of waters, with an easy entry and exit, and little chance of experiencing any form of bend. Unfortunately, Simon had returned his camera to the car or, no doubt, from his extremely low-level viewpoint, he could have shared some most interesting sights with us, and probably been thrown out as well! Despite the dancefloor exploits of Dirty Dancing Dangerous Dave Davies (hereinafter referred to as D5 for short) in his undaunted efforts to woo some exotic Newton Abbot disco diva (diva, not diver, or ....maybe.....?), we all left without major incident some time on Saturday morning. Just for those of you who are wondering - we did ask and, no, they don't give discount for the over 50s!

## **SNO TUBES & FONDUE EVENING**

Saturday 26 February

About a dozen TSAC Members and a couple of friends braved the plastic South Devon snowfields at the Plymouth Dry Ski Slope on a brisk February evening to enjoy the pleasures of SnoTubing, previously unsampled by any of those attending.

We all turned up suitably kitted out for the occasion, though some did think Dangerous Dave's extreme skiing sun shades a bit over the top, if only because we actually did this at night. There again, I suppose the "look" is all important for the après-ski set! Such fun was had though, that several members were actually claiming to be getting hot by the time we finished and began removing various items of clothing.

Sno Tubing as a sport is fairly easy on the intellect – you plant your bottom into this rubber ring which itself has a bottom, handles, and towing leash. That is, unless your name is Stu, when you do it the other way up, or with a girl between you and your ring! You then slide down the ski slope completely out of control, causing as much havoc as you can on the way. Things got off to a great start when Andy's guest met her first two Club members – poleaxed by Rob, then demolished by Stu whilst trying to recover!

Such fun and much varied formation sliding continued for half an hour or so, by which time everyone was feeling a little tired (after sliding down the hill in the Tube, you had to pull the bloody thing back to the top again!) and, with Woodsy on his second trimix deco stop 6m from the top of the slope, we all adjourned to the alpine ambience of the delightful Alpine Ski Lodge. Surrounded by tasteful decor, in romantically dim lighting, and looking out over the delightfully alpine A38, Sainsbury's, and the Industrial Estate by moonlight, we purchased the odd drink and enjoyed the delights of either cheese or steak fondue food, unless you were next to Paul, when you never quite knew what you might be eating next – it simply depended on what had last fallen off his cute little fork!

No prizes awarded for this one, though we all felt Mike B could have cleared the fence at the bottom, and probably the A38 as well, if he'd bothered to turn up!

## **FALMOUTH MARITIME MUSEUM VISIT**

Saturday 9 April by Ruth Swarbrick

Well, it was only the bare bones of a plan but it looked like it was coming together: meet outside the Falmouth Maritime Museum at 11am. It was 11:15am and we were all assembled.

Even though it was the last weekend of the Easter hols it was remarkably quiet in the museum, which gave us plenty of space to push all the buttons, run all the computer simulations and sail our own remote-controlled boats.

There's masses to see in the museum. For instance, they currently have on display the International Finn dinghy that Ben Ainslie sailed to a Gold medal in the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. They also have some of the bits of Team Philips that have been rescued from around the NE Atlantic. Wow, that boat was huge!



The Tidal Zone is just that – it's two huge windows situated below sea level, allowing visitors to look out into the underwater life of Falmouth harbour. However, being divers and not wanting to waste good tides, our visit had been planned during just about the lowest spring tide of the year and there was approximately 6 inches of water to see!!

The museum is much bigger than at first sight. Just when you think you've seen it all, there's another room you haven't yet been in. Allowing for a lunch break, we spent around 3 hours exploring

There's also possibly the largest maritime library in the country outside of the Greenwich Maritime Museum. The Bartlett Library houses over 10,000 maritime reference books. Among the huge collection of Lloyd's registers etc, etc, there are also the daily log books of the Falmouth Harbour Master which, at times, make fascinating reading. The library is free to visit – so any time you're in Falmouth??



## WINE TASTING EVENING

Tuesday 12 April

After a poor initial response (like, divers don't drink wine...yeah!) and lots of phoning around, Andy managed to assemble 11 people to attend the wine tasting at the Totnes Wine Company's well stocked shop on the High Street.

A most pleasant evening of wine drinking was had by all, with Paul, Chris, and Andy saving the Club's

reputation by drinking up everything that nobody else wanted! We learned a lot about the different types of wine, a few fancy terms, and the methods employed in the assessment and tasting of wines. Mike had one most interesting variation on the latter (would, wouldn't he?!), which involved sticking your nose well into the glass, and then inhaling so strongly

that the actual liquid, and not just the bouquet, passes up the nose and into the lungs! This was followed by copious amounts of coughing and spluttering, a good impression of drowning, and laughter from everyone else present! The evening was finished off with slices of pizza, to eat with some of the wine and apparently, according to Nigel the proprietor, Chris Catt even asked some sensible questions – he must have been pissed!

The most amazing thing about the whole evening was that Paul managed to weave his way home, after having difficulty in finding the shop in the first place! Maybe this could hold the key to a new diver recall system!

## TEN-PIN BOWLING EVENING

Friday 6 May

A maximum of thirteen members (depending on what time you took the numbers at), families, and friends turned out in Torquay for our second Ten-Pin Bowling Night of the year. We had to go to Torquay this time because they closed Newton Abbot after our last visit!

Performance levels varied considerably, star moment going to Andy, who scored a "Turkey" (no, not a designer drug or sexual deviation, but three strikes on the trot), only to miss completely with the next two balls. Paul Slemmings proved to be the most consistent performer, with a second game highest score of 140, to win the luxury liquid prize! Simon joined us later after (he claims) finishing work, and it was great to see young Adrian on the mend following months of drug abuse (aided by lots of cuddles from assorted females)!

We didn't go for the meal with the bowling this time, but opted to visit the new "contemporary curry house" just down the road from the Bowling Alley. This was Paul's idea, and he was obviously having a good night, because we enjoyed an excellent meal, and didn't get home 'till late!

## GLIDING EVENING

Thursday 23 June



Of all our social events this year, this was the best one for people booking in advance. Eleven TSAC divers and friends managed to pull ourselves away from the dubious attractions of the English Channel for an evening with our heads well and truly in the clouds! The weather was kind, and we had a fine sunny evening for our gliding experience, though conditions for gliding were apparently not at their best – not enough thermals or something, and only just enough lift to get the Chairman airborne!

Your flights starts with trying to work out how to put the parachute on without injuring yourself, and then prising yourself into the front seat of the glider, with your toes up in the nose! Behind you sits your instructor, who you trust knows how it all works, and you are offered the choice of either "having a go at flying it" or him taking you for a slightly more adventurous flight. Once you're strapped in, the glider is attached to a long length of rope, and a winch, hidden out of site below the skyline, pulls you rapidly forwards and propels you to a height of 1000 feet very quickly, and at an angle of at least 45 degrees!



Pleased to say, we all held onto our stomach contents! It's a wonderful experience, though not as quiet as expected, due to the air noise.

Flight lengths varied depending on the conditions, with Adrian and Chris getting the best value for money, being up for some 20-odd minutes. Ian went for the complete roller-coaster ride by doing a "loop the loop", as did Adrian, though it took those watching on the ground to

confirm this for him – "Well, my stomach went all funny, could see the ground above me, and my face was pulled all over the place!"

All in all a very successful evening, finished off by a bar snack at the local "Keeper's Cottage" pub, where Paul particularly enjoyed his meal, having waited to get it until everyone else had finished theirs!

## GOLF EVENING

Friday 5 August

We all met up at Broadsands as arranged, Andy having checked that the course would be open until at least 8pm that night, and having arrived 15 minutes early to book everyone in, only to be told, at 6.45, that the attendant had cashed up and was closing the course because he needed to go home to the loo!

All the best laid plans, and all that...! After an initial reappraisal of the situation (shall we go straight to the pub, or what?), we headed for the Cayman Golf at Churston, only about 5 minutes away. On the way we collected Jo and a couple of friends from the very posh Churston Golf Club where, to the shock and horror of all the elite members, they thought we were playing!

Cayman Golf is just like ordinary golf, but with a softer ball, which doesn't go so far when you hit it, unless you hit it like Andy, when it disappears into the far distance, and a field of maize. The only other ball casualty was Jo's friend Wendy, who managed to land in the middle of the lake ("look at those cute little ducks!") while playing out of "Telly Tubby Land" – a term of affection for all those little green hillocks they put in the way on golf courses.

Play extended well into the evening, and the light was failing (and the bar closed) by the time we finished our game, so we all headed off to the "Dreary Ploughman" pub to swap golf stories over some decidedly average 19th-hole fayre.

Simon Levy managed to play almost as good a game as he talked to take the "Tiger" — Beer, not Woods — trophy, at the Club meeting the following week.



## TROUT FISHING EVENING

Friday 19 August

Nine of us turned up for this evening at Newhouse Fishery, near Gara Bridge, including two Mini-Smiths, who brought their Dad, Stu, to give him a bit of a night out.

Only Andy had ever done any fly fishing, and some of the casting styles and techniques were decidedly unconventional, varying from Bill's laid-back, one-handed approach to Stu's



frantic "whip 'em into submission" style. Nobody got injured, or fell in the lake however, except for Scoobie, the owner's dog!

The fish didn't oblige by throwing themselves onto the hooks as predicted, but we did manage to land six rainbow trout between the nine of us, with Stu and Bill getting two each, and Andy and Rosemary one apiece, the latter (fish) having a decidedly pink tinge! Simon L was most impressed

by the whole idea, apart from the fact that the fish didn't attach themselves to his hook, whilst Richard K simply appreciated the finer aspects of the art of fly fishing!

It was dark by the time we finished, and as it was also getting rather cold, and we hadn't all caught something to cook, we went to the pub instead of having a barbecue.

## FUND-RAISING

In addition to general fund-raising in the form of raffles during the dry meetings and at the annual Dinner and Dance, which raised some £300 or so, there were also some targeted fund-raising activities during the year. As mentioned in Section 19, there were two golf ball dives which raised in excess of £300 for good causes; an RNLI raffle that raised £40; a 'whip-round' during the DDRC talk in December that raised £50; and of course the Kernow Summer Dive Festival, of which we were proud to be a part, raised a further £1200 for DDRC. Appendix XII includes copies of letters of thanks/acknowledgements of donations.

**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

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PUBLICITY

Our Public Relations Officer sends out regular Press Releases of Club activities to local papers covering our membership area and follows up with contacts to ensure maximum coverage. As Totnes is a small town situated between two large towns – Plymouth and Torquay – there are a greater number of daily and evening papers, as well as weeklies and Sundays, than would normally be expected. Some examples of the coverage achieved are shown below, and Appendix VIII includes full details and a sample press release.



### High seas fail to deter divers

**Duo qualify despite poor diving weather**

By ALLAN TIDOR

TWO of Totnes Sub-Aqua Club's newest members have been making progress despite poor diving weather.

A club spokesman said: "For the past few weeks the weather has been particularly intransigent for divers."

"Strong winds, big swells and plenty of rain mean the sea became churned up and visibility becomes much reduced."

"In these conditions the South Devon undersea visibility, which is typically 15 to 20 metres good, goes down to only a couple of metres."

Despite this the trainers have persevered and John Ogham and Kristina Leake have both completed their sports diver training.

The club's diving officer Sarah Dashfield and their instructor Richard Knights congratulated both divers on their achievement at achieving this qualification.

Both John and Kristina have been members of the club, a branch of the British Sub-Aqua Club, for around a year.

The spokesman said: "With their new qualification the whole world of diving is now open to them."

"As their experience grows they can move to further diving applications leading ultimately to First Class Diver."

"Very few divers attain this lofty achievement but Susan can boast to have done three First Class Dives within 10 weeks."

There are also lots of other supplemental qualifications in disciplines such as boat handling, first aid for divers, marine biology and underwater photography.

The club always welcomes new members, whether you can already dive or would like to try diving, just contact Sarah Dashfield on 01752 32688 or Ruth Swarbrick on 01752 36266.

It meets at Totnes Pavilion for pool training on Wednesdays from 7pm, and afterwards at the Meadowbrook Community Centre to arrange diving for the real world.

It also has a web page on [www.totnesbsac.co.uk](http://www.totnesbsac.co.uk)

■ **WELL DONE:** Kristina Leake is congratulated by instructor Richard Knights after completing her final dive required before becoming a sports diver. PHOTO: H2510767\_SUB\_001



■ **PASSED:** John Ogham, left, has his qualification record book signed by diving officer Sarah Dashfield watched by instructor Richard Knights. PHOTO: H2510767\_SUB\_001

### Top diver Ruth awarded trophy



RUTH Swarbrick was honoured as Totnes Sub-Aqua Club's diver of the year for 2005.

Club diving officer Sarah Dashfield said: "This trophy is awarded to the member who has done the most to support the club during the year."

"Ruth has been involved with a number of club activities apart from the actual diving."

"She has looked after the production of our in house magazine; assisted with our public scuba sessions at Totnes Pool; stood in as treasurer; and also organised club visits, such as to Falmouth Maritime Museum."

"In addition to this, she has almost completed her British Sub Aqua Club advanced diver qualification and has just signed-up to becoming an instructor."

Drew Nicol and Vikki Smith have completed their training to becoming ocean divers.

Totnes is a branch of the BSAC and trains at Totnes Pool, on Wednesdays, and meets at the Meadowbrook Centre, Dartington, on Wednesdays.

■ **SUPPORT:** Ruth Swarbrick receives her trophy from Totnes Sub-Aqua Club chairman Nick Booth. PHOTO: H2510767\_SUB\_001

TOTNES  
SUB-AQUA CLUB

# WATERSPORTS *Diary*

## Diving goes back further than you would imagine

HUMANITY HAS PRACTICED diving for centuries. Evidence of ancient artefacts such as mother-of-pearl ornaments and depictions of divers in ancient drawings date diving back thousands of years. In ancient Greece, breath-hold divers are known to have hunted for sponges and engaged in military exploits, a reputation handed all in the story of the Greek Scyllia in about 500BC.

During a naval campaign, the Greek Scyllia was taken as prisoner aboard a ship by the Persian King Xerxes I. Then when Scyllia learned that Xerxes was to attack a Greek fleet, he took a knife and jumped overboard. Unable to find help in the water, the Persians presumed he had drowned. However Scyllia surfaced at night and made through all the ships in Xerxes's fleet, cutting each free of its moorings, all the time using a hollow reed as a snorkel to keep his actions secret. Scyllia is reputed to have thrown away nine miles (15 kilometres) to reach the Greeks off Cape Sphacteria.

While breathing through a hollow reed allows the body to be submerged, it soon became apparent that reeds were not the best long term work tool because the water pressure makes it difficult to breathe. Breathing from an air-filled bag while under water was also used but failed due to rapid loss of carbon dioxide.

During the 16th century, diving bells were used to supply air from the surface, which made them probably the first effective way of staying under



There's a whole new world waiting to be discovered

for any length of time. The bell would be kept stationary a few feet from the surface with its bottom open and its top portion containing air compressed by the water pressure. A diver could take air and then leave the bell for a couple of minutes to replenish.

During the 16th century in England and France, full leather diving suits were created to dive down to up to 40 feet. Air would be pumped from the surface through a manual pump. From them, metal rebreathers were later made to withstand even greater water pressure and divers went deeper still.

Starting in the 19th century, diving was

advanced by the work of Paul Ben and John Scott Haldane, from France and Scotland respectively. Their studies helped explain effects of water pressure on the body and defined safe limits for compressed air diving. At the same time, improvements in technology – compressed air pumps, carbon dioxide scrubbers, regulators, etc., made it possible for people to stay under water for long periods.

There are two different types of diving now: breath-hold diving (also known as free diving), diving with compressed air coming from the surface, and diving with compressed air carried by the diver known as scuba diving.

Breath-hold diving is still practised for sport and commercial purposes however such dives are normally restricted by the individual's tolerance for breath-hold and the risk of drowning from hypoxia, so it only a minute or less.

When diving supplied from the surface, air reaches the diver through a long umbilical pipe. In more sophisticated systems the air is delivered to a dive suit or some larger enclosed space. In this case the diver breathes air at the same pressure as the surrounding water pressure, and so is at risk for decompression sickness (bends, or embolism, etc.) if they do not ascend correctly and rapidly.

The form of diving with compressed air carried by the diver called scuba diving falls into two categories: open and closed circuit. Open circuits involve expiring air into the water and in the tanks used in primarily recreational diving.

Closed circuit systems involve exhaling air being 'rebreathed' after carbon dioxide is absorbed and oxygen added however this is now rather dated.



Members of Totnes Sub Aqua Club getting the feel of being under water

### South Hams' surfing guru Martin Connolly writes:

WIMBORNE'S CHRIS KELLY proved to be one of the best guests in the country when he passed through to the final of the under-22 division at this year's Big 5 of English National Surfing Championships. This competition, held at Walsgate Bay near Netley, is regarded as one of the most prestigious in the contest calendar.

Also competing was Kingsbridge Community College pupil Jason Madroxen, who continued his great run of contest form, competing against the best surfers in England. Jason's aggressive style earned him fourth position in the under-18 longboard division. Jason also got through to second place in the under-18 shortboard division.

Sam Harvey from South Hams, working to the open division, battled against other seasoned competitors (including professionalists), reached the semi-finals. This year's result earned the 16-year-old a victory over a West Wyalong.

South Devon's Eugene Sabatinoche is also being mentioned from his back operation, and hopes to be in the water within a month, the former English Champ damaged the neck while surfing in North America.

The Chalfonts-based Devonian Association held its first ever event in 2013 that just at the popular month (June Bank Tide) of surfing held it in a big town format. Wimbury's term that of James and Neil Brown took 1st place, closely followed by Chalfont regular James Carey and Ian Roper.



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In addition, as mentioned earlier, the Club also had a stand at Totnes Show and were briefly featured on BBC Spotlight, the local evening news bulletin.

Club members also participated in a TV programme covering a film being made about the underwater life of the Salcombe Estuary, which was transmitted on the local BBC South West network.

The Club also has regular entries in the 'Club Notices' sections of both *Dive* and *Diver* magazines.

# TOTNES SUB-AQUA CLUB

## 18

## INTER-BRANCH LIAISONS

## INTER-BRANCH AND REGIONAL/NATIONAL TRAINING

by Richard Handy - Totnes Branch member and Area Coach for South Devon

Lots of branches in the BSAC run skill development courses, and elements of the main diver training programme. The key thing that distinguishes Totnes from other branches (and I visit a lot as area coach) is their willingness to help other branches and get actively involved in the regional coaching events. There have been a number of events this year where we have run diver training (e.g. Advanced Diver, Dive Leader) and invited members from other local branches that are less fortunate and without experienced instructors. In particular, the Advanced Diver training requires Advanced Instructors – these are in short supply and branches such as Brixham Branch join us regularly for training.

The Branch also contributes to the success of official regional events by providing instructors, boats, classrooms and equipment on numerous occasions. In addition to this, there are less tangible contributions of equal importance. For example, on a number of events we provided instructors so that other instructors could be released to do other things such as manning stands at the dive show, and teaching boat-handling courses outside the region. A summary of events this year is listed in Table 9 below:

**Table 9: Totnes inter-branch and regional/national events**

Date	Event	Club Contribution
29/30 Jan	IFC South West (Bristol)	Instructors: Tony Hoile and Richard Handy.
19/20 Feb	Advanced Diver Training	Instructors and boats for our Branch members and other local divers to join in.
23 Feb	Rebreather Course	Totnes provides the classrooms.
26/27 Feb	IFC Exeter	Instructors; Richard Handy
12/13 March	Advanced Diver Training & DPM workshop	Shared event with local branches, all instructors and classrooms provided by Totnes.
12 March	Diver Cox'n, Plymouth for Exeter BSAC	Branch provides examiner.
2/3 April	OWIC/PIE Brixham	Richard Handy was the local organiser for this event, but another instructor from the Branch took on this job (Rosemarie Longfield), so RH could attend an NI event outside the region.
4/5 May	Advanced Instructor Course (Drtmth) & AI exam in June	Instructors, local organiser, and the boat provided via Totnes Branch members.
Wk beginning 4 July	First Class Diver Exam prep.	Richard Handy is the liaison for this prep, and several candidates are helped with local knowledge, shown sites, etc, in prep for the exam on 9/10 July.
9 July	Regional ERD course	Branch provides boat and arranges qualifying dive.
8/9 October	OWIC/PIE Brixham	Branch provides instructors, local organiser, and projectors.
16 October	Regional PRM course.	Branch provides instructor, local organiser, and hard boat arrangements (Jim Pike).
29/30 October	IFC Truro	Branch provides instructors.
19 November	Advanced Diver Training	A last chance to finish off before the end of the year for local branches!
26/27 Nov	IFC Exeter	Branch provides instructors.
27 November	Diver Cox'n, Plymouth for Bristol University Club	Branch provides examiner.
10 December	Oxygen course	Open to divers from local branches, and instructor observes for instructors in the region. Hosted by Totnes.
18 December	First Aid for Divers	Open to divers from local branches, and instructor observes for instructors in the region. Hosted by Totnes.

## KERNOW DIVE FESTIVAL 2005

11-12 June 2005 by Ruth Swarbrick

*Penzance Harbour and various dive sites. Approx 130 people in total, with 12 from TSAC*

The Kernow (or Cornish) Dive Festival is now in its third year and even though Totnes is in Devon, it is an active member, this being the second festival it has attended. In addition, Totnes member Allen Murray acted as Treasurer for the Festival this year.

Clubs taking part:

- Totnes BSAC
- Ilfracombe and N Devon SAC
- Tolgus SAC
- East Cornwall Divers
- Coventry BSAC
- Peninsula SAC
- Mid Cornwall Divers
- Phoenix Divers
- Duchy Divers
- Budehaven SAC
- Falmouth and Penryn Divers

This is basically how it goes:

Each diver decides in advance which two sites from the given list they would most like to dive. Each dive club supplies its own boats, which are allocated to the various sites and are then filled with the appropriate divers. It's a monster feat of organisation but it worked. We all got into boats going to the sites we'd nominated.

The most popular site of the weekend without a doubt was *Wolf Rock* – a rock pinnacle that rises from more than 70m and breaks the surface at low water. On top of it they put a lighthouse so that dive boats can easily locate it.

The current was still running as divers were going in, thereby deciding the direction of the dive. The viz was superb – easily 30m – and the scenery spectacular. The sheer wall drops away beneath you into the darkness – good job the old neutral buoyancy skills are working well today. The wall was covered with literally thousands of jewel anemones that were still out feeding in the current. However long your dive time here, it just isn't enough!

In the evening a BBQ had been organised at the campsite. There was more than enough food to go round and it was a chance to meet up with some divers from different Clubs and swap a few (tall?) stories.

The next day was more informal and largely depended on how many divers turned up following the night before! Both Totnes boats initially went out to Gull Rock where we had another superb dive.



The weather conditions for diving were perfect as it was largely sunny and flat calm, and we all had a fantastic weekend of diving.

Additionally the weekend raised £1200 for DDRC (Diving Diseases Research Centre) located at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, which was presented to the charity on 27 September 2005 and received coverage in both *Diver Magazine* and the local press.

**SPECIAL  
ACHIEVEMENTS**



**TOTNES**  
**SUB-AQUA CLUB**

## 19

# SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

### 19.1 "SALCOMBE ESTUARY - THE NEIGHBOURHOOD"

by Lis Leader

April 2004 saw the commencement of film production for the long-awaited one-hour documentary, "Salcombe Estuary: The Neighbourhood." For Nigel Mortimer, South Hams Council's Marine Conservation Officer, long-time Totnes SAC member and Associate Producer, it was a dream coming true. With his years of experience and knowledge about the biodiversity of the estuary, Nigel plays an integral role in the making of this film. Long famed for its wealth, its spectacular views, and as a summertime playground, Salcombe is a popular destination. However, most people who go there have never witnessed the rich and varied life just below the water's surface. From the spectacular gardens of jewel anemones, through the mesmerising eel grass world of pipefish and seahorses, to the very mouth of the estuary, where pelagic dolphins and basking sharks stop by for a visit, this film will reveal the unique wonders of this rich environment. With a financial contribution from the Environment Agency, and the invaluable help and support of the Marine Biological Association, English Nature, South Hams District Council, the National Marine Aquarium, The Seahorse Trust, and a host of individuals, the production was launched in April 2004. Producer and BSAC diver Elisabeth Leader is working weekly with a Totnes BSAC crew of cameramen, lighters, animal-spotters and boat handlers to document the estuary's extraordinary life through the seasons. The film should be completed by end of 2006.

### 19.2 TSUNAMI GOLF BALL DIVE

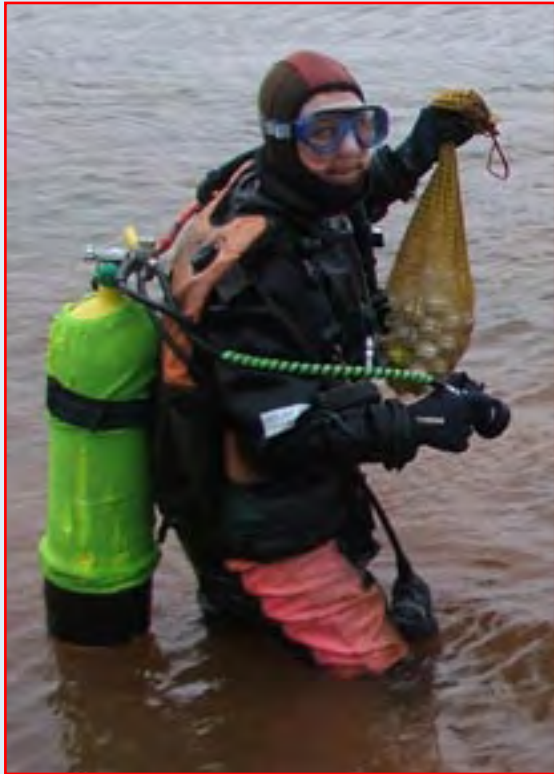
by Paul Slemmings

*Sat 16 January 2005 – Dartmouth Golf & Country Club, Approx 8-10 people  
Organised by Bella Snook*

On a cold, gloomy – in fact I think it was even drizzling – day in deepest, darkest, gloomiest January, what better way to brighten up your life than find the darkest, coldest, gloomiest (although not deepest, it has to be said) place to be and go there. I could also mention the stinking mud but if I make it sound too exciting those unfortunate Club members who missed out on the golf ball hunt might just lose the will to live.

Anyway we met at the leisurely time of 8.30am (having had plenty of time for a lie-in, huge fried breakfast and enough coffee to kill a badger) in the car park of Dartmouth golf club. Gleefully we clambered into our drysuits; a few attempts later, having got the legs out of the arm holes and remembering to undo the zip first (some of us hadn't dived for a month or so), we were all suited up with kit loaded on golf buggies. Minutes later the lagoon came into view





into view through the heat shimmer. We parked beneath one of the many coconut palms, donned the rest of the kit, then slid into the turquoise shimmering surf. Turquoise took on a subtly greener hue, then somehow brown made its first appearance, rapidly followed by black and the world of light swiftly slipped into memory. Fortunately there was no shortage of sensory experience to replace the lack of visual stimuli, although most of this was to do with sliding through filthy black mud, groping for golf balls. It was so black in, fact, that on my second descent, when I seemed to be taking a long time to get to the bottom, I executed a graceful duck dive and mashed my mask into the mud 6 inches beneath me. Time became impossible to judge, and golf balls and mud became my universe; not, perhaps the universe I would choose to live out my days in, but it certainly made a change.

Once the second bag was full of golf balls, we had no choice but to return to the light and coconut palms and golf buggies. Just when it seemed like there could be nothing to make the day more idyllic, Ruth treated us to a demonstration of stunt driving – power slide isn't a phrase I've ever associated with golf buggies before and I had no idea Bella could make a noise like that.

Whilst the club has occasionally dived for golf balls in the past, either to raise club funds or for charity, this dive was put together at short notice in response to the tragedy of the Boxing Day tsunami in South East Asia. Altogether we collected just under 2000 balls that morning, which were then sold back to the golf club for cleaning and reuse. This raised a total of £165, which was donated to *Shelter Box*, a charity that provides tents, sleeping bags and other basic equipment to the needy following natural and other disasters.

**the question: What do we do when disaster strikes?**

**the SCITAF club answer: SHELTER BOX**

**SHELTERBOX IN ACTION**

the challenge: sheltered by Shelter Box

the solution: sheltered by Shelter Box

the impact: sheltered by Shelter Box

# T SUB-AQUA CLUB

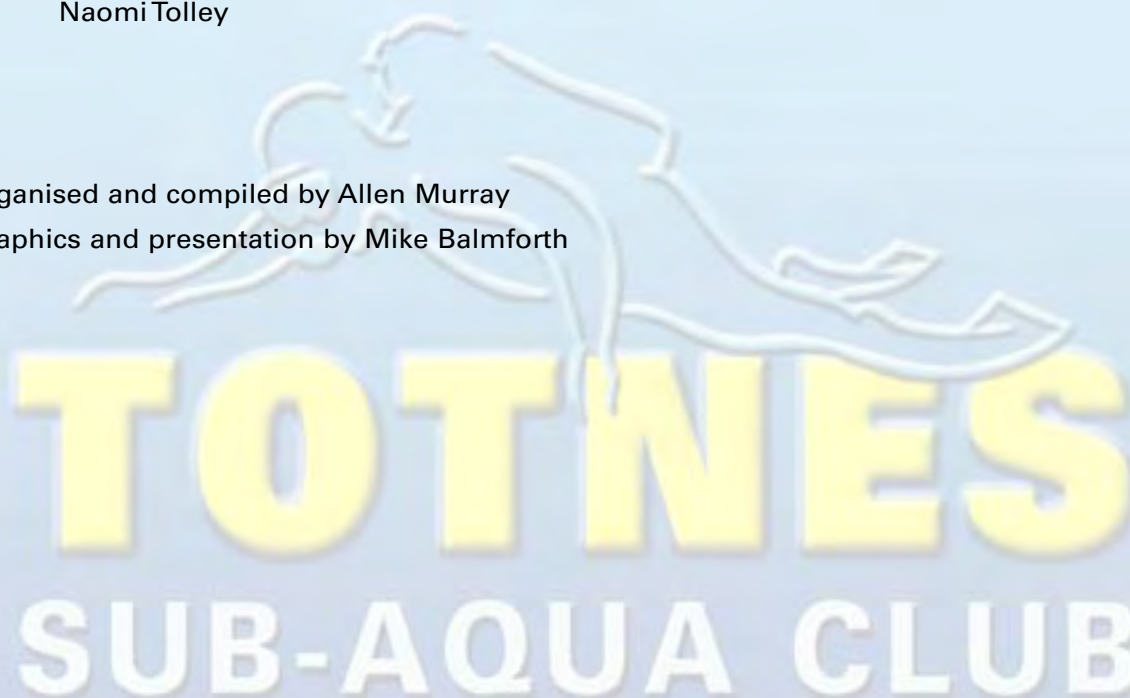


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Without the contributions of individual Club members, this Heinke application would not have been possible. The following list is intended to be comprehensive, but apologies if anyone has been left out!

Alan Jones	Nick Booth
Allan Tudor	Nigel Mortimer
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Andy Smith	Paula Jones
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Bob Michael	Richard Handy
Carole Tudor	Richard Knights
David Davies	Richard Smith
Gill Chamberlain	Richard Wood
Gill Michael	Rosemarie Longfield
James Drummond	Ruth Swarbrick
Johnny Gowdy	Sarah Dashfield
Kevin Hampson	Simon Levy
Kristzina Leake	Simon Powell
Lis Leader	Simon Temple
Lorraine Pike	Steve Hill
Malcolm Nimmo	Stuart Smith
Malcolm Rahn	Tony Clarke
Marj Clarke	Tony Hoile
Martin Mead	Viki Wearmouth
Mike Balmforth	Will Stubbs
Naomi Tolley	

Organised and compiled by Allen Murray  
Graphics and presentation by Mike Balmforth



**TOTNES**  
SUB-AQUA CLUB

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