

# The Seahorse Dive Club Newsletter

April 2006

Dear Club Member,

Welcome to the newsletter for April 2006. Some of you may have noticed from the minutes of the AGM that there is a new member on the committee covering deputy media and who will be primarily responsible for the newsletter, Gareth Lock, me! I joined the club last summer and have been on a couple of club trips, but have moved towards a more technical diving bent (no pun intended!) – I'm the one usually in twins (and the occasional stage) on the pool nights!

I know that I have been keeping up to speed with skills over the winter period diving Stoney, Vobster and Chepstow whilst completing my TDI Adv Nitrox and Deco with Mark Powell and GUE DIR - Fundamentals with Andy Kerslake, and a week long trip to Tenerife in January! However, for some people now that the weather is warming up and the sea temperatures are rising making sea dives more of a viable option, the spring will be the first time they have got in the water since October last year, therefore it is essential that you make sure that all your kit is well serviced and works as advertised. There is nothing more embarrassing, not least to say dangerous, than to jump in on a sea dive and find that your kit doesn't work properly. Speak to Mark if you need someone to give your kit a service before you get it wet in the salty stuff.

Diver magazine recently highlighted the problems which have befallen divers last year in their annual report <http://www.bsac.org/techserv/increp05/overview05.htm>. In addition, Yorkshire Divers has a thread from HM Coastguard <http://www.yorkshire-divers.com/forums/mca-coastguard-contacting-chambers-info-rnli-forum/30693-hm-coastguard-diving-incidents-2006-a.html> Reading both of these reports/threads can help you stop accidents happening by learning from others and thereby diving safe.

Contact: Gareth Lock [gareth.lock@imagesoflife.co.uk](mailto:gareth.lock@imagesoflife.co.uk) Steve Cain [stevecain\\_diving@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:stevecain_diving@tiscali.co.uk)

## Latest news

The AGM was pretty successful with approximately 30 people attending and some changes to the committee which are listed below. Paul Cole takes on the role of Treasurer with Malcolm standing down, Malcolm Cole is now Committee Member without portfolio and Gareth Lock has taken over from Malcolm as deputy media member and whose primary function will be to run the newsletters.

New club rule following the AGM was proposed and accepted: *No unqualified person unless under the instruction and in the supervision of an instructor, assistant instructor or divemaster should be breathing compressed air during the clubs pool session.*

Having spoken to a few people on club nights regarding technical diving there seems to be some interest. To this end I am going to try and arrange some trips/talks on this subject and these could include a trip to the London Diving Chamber to conduct a dry dive to 50m and also to invite a TDI instructor to come along on a club night to give a presentation on 'Introduction to Technical Diving'. More information when I have it.

## Forthcoming Dive Trips

Mark will be running a series of easy weekend diving, suitable for novices. He will be operating the RIBs out of either West Bay or Lyme Regis (depending on the state of the road repairs). The closest dates are the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> April. More dates are available on the website under UK diving.

The May long weekend (RIB diving on May 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> and Hardboat on May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>) is nearly around the corner and this will probably be the first opportunity for many people to get into the UK sea waters in 2006, see Mark for more details.

The Porthkerris trip is still going ahead and the only places left are those on the support RIBs. See Dave Hall for more details.

Following on from Phil's successful trips last year, he has been nominated to deputise for Mark in organising UK dive trips. So if you want to find out more about what is going on beyond the Lyme Regis trips, contact Phil or Mark.

There are still some places on the Dahab trip (11<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> May 06) being organised by Steve Cain but the trip places are about to close, see the website for more details.

## Dive Trips – Reports

As I haven't had anything forwarded to me, I will put a report of a recent course I did.

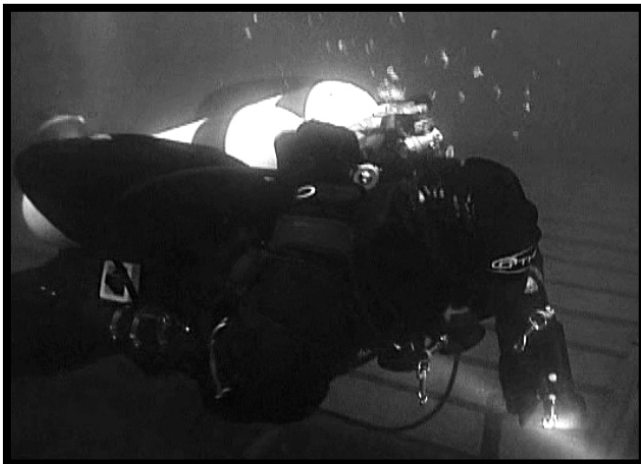
### **TDI Advanced Nitrox and Decompression Procedures Course NDAC Chepstow 8 Feb, 2 & 3 March**



Following on from my TDI Nitrox course last year and my desire to move towards the technical route, I decided to do the TDI Advanced Nitrox and Decompression Course with Mark Powell from Dive-Tech ([www.dive-tech.co.uk](http://www.dive-tech.co.uk)) in February and March of this year. The aim of the course is to ensure that the diver is fully conversant with twin-set diving including the use of a single stage bottle containing up to 100% O<sub>2</sub> and qualifies the diver to dive to 45m. My choice of instructor was down to his reputation and experience, an important factor when moving from recreational diving.

The course started at NDAC Chepstow with a brief on equipment configuration. As my buddy (Rob Dobson) and I have undertaken some training using the GUE philosophy, our kit did not need any modifications to undertake this course but Mark says that he has had people arrive on the course who have no idea on how their equipment should be configured. During OOA drills, the course is based on the long primary hose principle whereby in the event of an emergency or OOA situation, the diver donates the working regulator on the long

hose from their mouth and takes the back-up regulator which is necklaced around their neck. This method ensures that the OOA diver will always have a working regulator. This is sometimes strange for divers who have always donated the octopus – it does work though! The next lessons were on gas planning and gas choices for decompression. In recreational diving, it is assumed that all dives are no decompression limit dives where the diver can ascend straight to the surface in an emergency, even if they have an OOA situation. In the realms of technical diving to 45m and beyond this is not possible and the team must ensure that they have enough gas to conduct the dive, and be able to ascend, even if gas-sharing, from the maximum depth and at the end of the dive. This means that from a gas usage planning point of view, the team need to know how much gas they will use. To this end, the course taught that you need plan you gas usage properly rather than jump straight in and end the dive at 50 bar! The rules state that you must keep 1/3 of your gas for emergencies, eg if you needed 3000 litres of gas to complete your dive (twin 12's 125 bar), you would need to start the dive with 4500 litres (twin 12's 190 bar); this buffer would cover gas-sharing to the surface or the first gas change. When using deco gases you take twice the required gas. The choices of different decompression gases from 40%-100% were also covered.

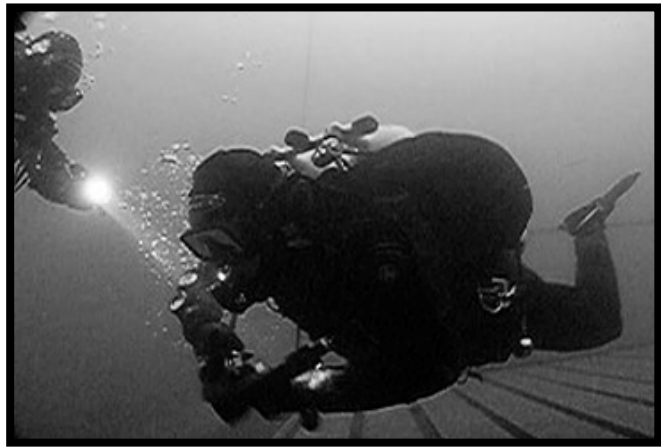


Next it was time to get wet, jumping into Chepstow in February with a water temperature of 5° was fun, well sort of! First off was to conduct some drills like shutdowns using the manifolded twinsets where each valve is turned off and then on again to simulate a leaking first stage or free-flowing second stage (a real possibility in these temperatures), some stage drills including removal and replacement and some mask off drills (lots of fun in 5° water!!). Then Rob and I swam off to 18m to practice some more drills including OOA where a diver simulates being OOA, and the donor gives his long

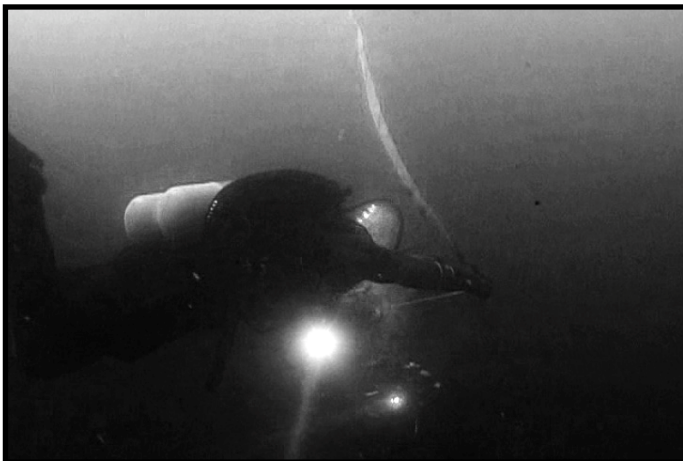
hose before carrying on or aborting the dive. Then we had to launch an SMB mid-water at 12m, before conducting a switch to a stage bottle at 9m and then a 3m/min ascent to the surface, all of this while being horizontal in the water. I think the phrase “Could have done better”, was on Mark’s lips when we surfaced. Or as Rob and I put it, that was ‘cr\*p’ and we have done much better! Next dive was similar including more drills, the final one was the towing of a casualty (Rob) to the edge and the removal of his one piece harness. This didn’t prove too much of a problem and Rob was ‘rescued’ safely. Debrief ensued and the errors of our ways for the day were pointed out!!

That evening and following morning, I had a weird experience. Everyone said one of the major signs of a DCI hit was denial, and I was in denial! I had gone to bed with some pins and needles in the palm of my hand and had thought it was just the way I had been sitting at the table, but I woke up with them too, but the profiles we did the previous day were very benign. In the end I called the DDRC and spoke to the Doc who said that he didn’t think I had a bend but to make sure I was to have a neuro test done by a GP and shouldn’t dive that day. I finished some more theory with Mark before seeing my GP who said that I had a trapped median nerve and it was this that was causing the pins and needles. It took a lot of will power to make that first call especially as I was on a course and the pressure was on. However, my advice, if there is any doubt, there is no doubt.

3 weeks later I went back to Chepstow to complete the remaining 4 dives of the course. These involved more of the same, OOA drills, shutdown drills, stage removal and replacements, mask removal and replacements and finally some nice touches! A mask off, breath-hold swim of 15m, before a further 15m swim (regulator in) to drop off a stage and a final 15m swim to pick it back up again! The idea of this is to make sure that candidate does not panic when faced with a potential silt-out situation



and losing their gas supply. At all times the instructor is beside you (but you can't see him) with a reg waiting for you if you need it! The next fun drill was line-laying during which Mark gave me a shutdown drill which necessitated me dropping the reel. The reel mysteriously bounced off the training platform and then wound itself around my legs before landing back on the platform! My other buddy, John, carefully unwound me while I was still doing my drill and by the time I had finished the reel was where I left it! The idea of this drill is to make the sure that neutral buoyancy can still be maintained while being task loaded. If you are caught in line, the last thing you want to do is struggle and panic, you need to keep calm and wait for your buddy to help you, that's what he is there for.



The final dive was to 35m using a simulated decompression schedule based on a 30 minute bottom time at 45m, a total planned time of 58 mins in the water; we also had to launch as SMB from 18m mid-water after carrying out a switch to 50% at 21m. This was the qualifying dive and almost ran on rails...Mark had a suit leak at 8 mins and aborted the dive but we still had to stick to our deco schedule and our No.3 "got lost" while we were at 21m and left the team, we did a quick search for him but we could not do much other than follow deco schedule.

He rejoined us at 9m. He had had a buoyant moment but there was Tech DM to follow him and make sure that he was okay!

Overall this was a really worthwhile course which did provide me with some task loading in cold water, but it will also enable me to reach some of the mid-depth wrecks lying off this and other coasts. Although it may sound daunting reading it here, after some practice the drills come naturally. However, before you do this course, you must be familiar with your equipment – if you have not done Twinset diving before, Mark runs a Twinset familiarisation course which will cover basic equipment configuration plus drills including shutdowns. If you want more details on the courses, contact Mark Powell at [www.dive-tech.co.uk](http://www.dive-tech.co.uk) and I am sure he would be glad to help.

## Courses and Training

During the forthcoming months Jason and Mark will be running a variety of courses. Contact them for more details.

Jason can be contacted on: 01793 347998 or [elephantmann@hotmail.com](mailto:elephantmann@hotmail.com)

Whitehorse Divers is at: <http://www.againstthewind.org.uk/whitehorse/index.htm>  
Mark can be reached on: 01793 731843

## Social

I have not been notified of any forthcoming events.

Don't forget that if you have an idea for a club social event then get in touch with Mark Hampshire, your Social co-ordinator committee member.

## For sale

Club clothing is now available. We can now offer a range of Polo shirts, Fleeeces, and Caps with the club logo tactfully embroidered on them.

Contact Paul Cole [paul.e.cole@virgin.net](mailto:paul.e.cole@virgin.net) for prices and to order. They really are very good quality. We expect to see more items from a new supplier soon; with the same quality of course.

If you want to sell some of your old dive kit to make way for new kit that you received at Xmas or got at LIDS, don't forget you can advertise it here.

## Links

Some useful Links and contact numbers:

Seahorse Dive Club: <http://www.seahorsediveclub.co.uk/>

White Horse Divers: <http://www.againstthewind.org.uk/whitehorse/index.htm> Tel: 01793 731843

Website of the month: <http://www.direxplorers.com>

Contributions are always welcome, if you have something you want including in the next newsletter then please send it to: [gareth.lock@imagesoflife.co.uk](mailto:gareth.lock@imagesoflife.co.uk) or [stevecain\\_diving@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:stevecain_diving@tiscali.co.uk)

Please send pictures as JPEGs or TIFFs and any text as .txt or .doc.

Remember, this is your club, your Newsletter.

## Get involved!

This Newsletter is published on the first day of every month.  
Please submit any content you want considering for publication by the 21<sup>st</sup> of the month preceding the publication date.