

Wantage Dive Club

**BSAC
Branch No 919**



**Member's handbook
2009**

1 Wantage Dive Club

Principles and benefits

Wantage Dive Club operates under a club ethos which is 'to enable both qualified and new divers, to enjoy safe diving under the auspices of the BSAC guidelines'. First and foremost Wantage Dive Club is a 'club' run by volunteers and not a professional diver training centre. All the funds that are generated by the club are used exclusively to ensure that a safe, high standard of diving, and diver training is available to all members.

The club offers considerable benefits to both the trainee and fully qualified diver:

These benefits include:

- 1 BSAC training from Ocean Diver to Instructor grades
- 2 Access to an indoor heated swimming pool for instruction
- 3 Diving trips to suit all levels of experience both in the UK and abroad
- 4 Hire of equipment
- 5 Free air fills
- 6 Access to two club owned RIBS (Rigid Inflatable Boat)
- 7 A fun, easy going atmosphere in which to enjoy diving

2 Club structure

Diving is intrinsically a potentially dangerous sport, and therefore must be treated with the utmost respect if everyone is to enjoy both fulfilling and safe diving, whether it is a scenic drift dive, or a deep wreck penetration. Therefore, in order to achieve this goal, the club has to have a well define structure under the BSAC guidelines, and in which certain club members have specific key roles. The basic profile of these positions is as follows:

Chairman

It is the chairman's role to ensure that the Wantage Dive Club operates within its agreed structure, and that the views of its members are represented and acted upon where necessary.

Diving Officer (DO)

It is the Diving Officers who is ultimately responsible for all the diving activities within the club. It is the DO's responsibility to ensure that all dives conducted under the mantle of the Wantage Dive Club are as safe as possible and that they conform to the BSAC guidelines and Wantage Dive Club rules

Training Officer

The training officer is responsible for organising and coordinating all the training conducted within the club and will ensure that this training meets the requirements of both the BSAC and Wantage Dive Club rules.

Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for all the club funds.

Equipment Officer

The equipment Officer is responsible for the maintenance and functionality for all the equipment owned by the club.

Welfare Officer

The Welfare officer's role is to ensure that the needs of junior members and vulnerable adults are accommodated.

Due to the considerable pressures of these positions, some roles may be deputised to assistants namely, the Deputy Diving Officer, assistant Equipment Officer and Assistant Training Officer, to help spread some of the load.

Wantage Dive Club endeavours to accommodate all its members' desires, with respect to both diving and training requirements, however, understandably, given the wide spectrum of experiences this is not always possible to achieve. Therefore, all members are encouraged to take as active a role as possible in the club to ensure that as many requirements are covered as possible. For those members looking for progressive training, this is available right through from Ocean Diver to Instructor level, however, there are no pressures on those who do not aspire to reach Instructor level and just want to enjoy Sports Diving.

Fund Raising

In order to keep club membership fees as low as possible and yet still maintain, upgrade and expand the club equipment, focus is placed on some fund-raising. All members can help tremendously by assisting in the different fund raising activities which ultimately pay for new club equipment etc.

3 BSAC membership benefits

The Wantage Dive Club is a BSAC club and therefore is run under the BSAC guidelines. The main benefits that club members get out of this are as follows:

- 1 The club training programme that is available to all members has been put together in accordance with BSAC guidelines with a view to training divers how to dive safely in British waters
- 2 Professional advice on new diving techniques and principles
- 3 Every club member is covered by the BSAC third party insurance programme.
- 4 Each member will receive a copy of a monthly magazine sent to their home.

4 Club meetings

Every Friday night the club holds a meeting at The Wantage Civic Hall with the primary objective of communication. Following each meeting, which starts at 7.30 PM, lectures

may be conducted for the different training courses. These lectures normally take place in the room annexed to the equipment shed. All members are urged to arrive promptly for these meetings and lectures as a courtesy to those members who have arrived on time. During each meeting a raffle will be held, of which half the takings each evening are given as a single prize, the other half going into the club funds.

As BSAC do not condone solo diving, all club diving will be conducted as a buddy pair, therefore, one of the advantages of attending the Friday night meetings is to get to know other club members with whom you maybe diving with in the future.

5 Club committee

Wantage Dive Club is managed by a committee of volunteers elected by the club of which some of the key positions have already been mentioned. The committee typically consists of 10 positions: The Chairman, Diving Officer, Training Officer, Treasurer, Secretary, Equipment Officer, Welfare Officer and three general posts.

It is the committee's responsibility to implement the decisions relevant to the running of the club and represent the views of the club members.

Some of the key functions of the committee are:

- 1 A regular review of the club's diving activities and dive training practices
- 2 Financial planning of the club
- 3 Capital expenditure requirements i.e Dive boats, compressors etc.
- 4 Social event planning

Any club members can attend the committee meetings but may only take the floor at the Chairman's invitation. The meetings are held every six weeks on a Monday evening in the lecture room starting at 8.00 PM. The dates of each meeting will be given at the Friday meetings.

6 Equipment

The club has wide array of equipment including fourteen full sets of kit, two RIBS and two compressors.

The Kit

The purpose of the club kit is to support the training of new divers whilst undergoing their sheltered water training. Members undergoing training will have priority access to the kit for the duration of their Ocean Diver sheltered water training programme i.e. pool only. Each member will be issued with fins, mask, snorkel, BCD, regulator and cylinder at the start of their training course. Each member will be expected to look after the kit and rinse of the kit (excluding the cylinder) in the fresh water barrel in the shed each and every time it has been used in the pool - this will prevent premature corrosion of the equipment. Members are expected to report any problems experienced with the equipment to the Equipment Officer, their Instructor or their deputy issuing the kit so that it can be repaired quickly.

Access to the kit

Due to the high value of the kit, access to shed is obviously restricted. Only committee members will be given a key which is expected to be returned to the equipment officer if that member leaves the committee.

N.B The shed must never be left unlocked and unattended at any time.

Hire of club kit to WDC members

Ocean Divers

The kit hire charge (£50) paid by trainees at the start of their Ocean Diver course will cover the use of mask, fins, snorkel, cylinder, BC and Regulators for the duration of their pool and open water sessions only.

Kit hire

Club kit is also available for hire to qualified club members only (Ocean Diver and above) and may only be used for WDC dives. Please note that the BC and Regulators may only be used on dives up to a **maximum** of 20 metres in depth. The kit may only be allocated by the equipment officer as it is important that a record is kept of who has possession of these valuable resources. The hire charges are as follows:

- 1 x cylinder £2.50 per diving day
- 1 x regulator set & 1 x BC £2.50 per diving day

Payment for items hired will be added to the trip cost on which it was used. Hire charges will apply to the days of diving only, however WDC members may incur a penalty charge if they do not return the kit promptly to the Equipment Officer. Please note that kit that is already allocated to Ocean Divers may not be available for hire if it is being used by the trainee at that time. All kit must be rinsed thoroughly in fresh water prior to its return to its peg.

N.B club fins, mask and snorkel are not normally available for hire, as all club members are expected to have purchased these essential items by the time they have finished the Ocean Diver course.

Any damage or defects to the kit must be reported immediately to the Equipment Officer so that it can be repaired. Please note that if the damage is accidental, or a result of fair wear and tear, then it will be repaired by the club, however if the damage is a result of negligence then the hirer would be expected to cover the cost of repair.

The boats

The club owns two RIBs, one Osprey, and one Humber which allows club members to have superb access to many of the UK's best dive sites. In order to ensure safe handling of these boats, only members qualified in boat handling are allowed to cox these boats unaccompanied.

As part of the Ocean and Sports Diver training programme a session on RIB familiarisation will take place.

The compressors

The club owns one compressor that is located in the equipment shed for the use of pumping scuba tanks only. This compressor is run once a week on a Wednesday evening starting at 8.00 PM, and all club members' empty tanks that are in test, and present in the shed will be pumped at no charge. The compressor is suitable for air filling only, up to a maximum of 300 Bar. Due to the noise produced by the compressor it is only run on the Wednesday evening so as not to upset the neighbours!

N.B. All operators must wear the ear defenders provided when the compressor is running. Club members must be trained in use of the compressor by the equipment officer before they are permitted to use it.

Tank filling is run on a rota basis using volunteers; all club members are encouraged to offer their services for tank filling to spread the burden. Compressor training is organised by the Equipment Officer, and only trained individuals can operate the compressors. *You do not need to be an experienced diver to operate the compressors.* The rota is published on the club website.

7 Pool sessions

Wantage Dive Club rent the use of either the Wantage Leisure Centre pool or Radley College swimming pool for use in training. The pool can also be used by club members for recreational swimming during this period as long as this does not interfere with the diver training.

All members using the pool are required to remove their outdoor footwear room to prevent the ingress of mud and dirt into the pool area. Also please could all members ensure that they treat the pool in a manner that is not likely to cause offence to the owners i.e. please be careful not to damage the tiles with the tanks and remove the cylinder valve masking tape prior to entering the pool.

Any kit that has been used in the pool must be returned to the shed and rinsed thoroughly.

Members can also use the pool facilities to try out new equipment (such as new dry suits) but only under suitable supervision at the poolside.

8 Training

Unless already qualified, the training will start with Ocean Diver and the aims of this qualification are to train a person to be competent in the safe and correct use of scuba diving.

Course duration: Theory 5.5 hours, Practical 8.5 hours. The theory training typically takes place on Friday evenings after the general club meeting. New members will be required to complete a self-certification medical before any in-water training can commence.

The training that is given at Wantage Dive Club conforms to the BSAC training programme and club members can receive training from Ocean Diver to Instructor level. The club has a number of hard working instructors who give their time on a purely voluntary basis. Club members can assist these instructors tremendously by arriving promptly at training sessions and reading up beforehand any relevant coursework.

Training lectures, pool training and open water training may be given by Assistant Dive Instructors under the supervision of an Open Water Instructor. The Training Officer or lead instructor will give details of which instructors will be conducting the training prior to each training session.

Current BSAC diver qualifications	Instructor qualifications
Ocean Diver	
Sports Diver	Assistant Dive Instructor
Dive Leader	Open water Instructor
Advanced Diver	Advanced Instructor
First Class Diver	National Instructor

In addition to this linear training progression, the BSAC also offers training in other specialised areas such as first aid, oxygen administration, Practical Rescue Management, Nitrox diving etc, details of which will be given at the Friday meetings. Even if members do not wish to progress beyond Sports Diver they are encouraged to attend some of these affiliated training programmes due to the valuable knowledge that will be gained.

9 Diving trips

The club tries to organise diving trips that meet the requirements of the members, and typically members will have the choice from the following:

Training dives, Shore dives, Wreck dives, Scenic dives, drift dives, Wall dives, RIB dives, Hard boat dives, Day trips, Weekend trips, week long holidays, overseas holidays etc...

Obviously each of these trips have their own requirements, however, there are a number of elements that will make the trip more enjoyable for both you and the other members:

- Members should try to be as self sufficient as possible i.e. arrange all the kit that they will need ahead of time, rather than arrive at the dive site expecting to be able to borrow it!
- Arrive at the dive site early, often parking is difficult and lugging kit takes time. Divers arriving late may not get to dive.
- Get as much detail as you can about the dive site before you get there so that you know what to expect.

- Help the marshals/instructors/boat handlers to make the dive run smoothly by offering to fill their tanks for them, get cups of Tea etc.

The following is guide to what every diver should take with them to the dive site:

- Mask
- Fins
- Snorkel
- BCD
- Regulator
- Two cylinders (preferably)
- Weight belt
- Knife/net cutter
- Dive suit including hood and gloves
- Delayed SMB (including reel)
- Torch (advisable)
- Dive computer or depth gauge/dive timer and tables
- Compass
- Dive bag to hold it all!

Club trips

Lists for all the club trips are held by the Treasurer and you only formally get on a list by paying the required deposit. These deposits are not normally refundable.

All club trips are charged on an actual cost basis i.e. the club will not make a profit out of diving. These charges could cover cost of towing, launching fees, petrol, oil etc. The cost of these charges will be evenly split between the numbers of dives and then charged accordingly. Also in order to accrue the necessary funds to cover high cost item replacement (new RIB, engine etc.) a small dive levy will be charged for all RIB dives. This will ensure that the people who use the RIBs most will contribute the most to their upkeep. The dive levy does not apply to hard boat trips.

Club trips that involve booking accommodation and/or hard boats always require a deposit from the club. Club members that sign up for any trip do so on the understanding, that if they cancel, for whatever reason, and they cannot find a replacement to take their slot, that they will be liable for whatever charges are incurred by the club. Basically the club is not a travel agent, but will book accommodation and/or hard boat places on the members' behalf, and therefore, members must be responsible for any costs involved.

As each diving trip is opened a statement will be made about what is the minimum level of experience that is required. This is made for the safety of the members as some trips involve a greater degree of potential risk than others, for example a dive that involves a 35 metre wreck with some tidal flow and reduced visibility would normally be restricted to experienced Sports Diver and above.

Dive sites

The club visits a large number and variety of sites but some sites are visited regularly e.g. The Cornwall holiday – typically held the last week in May based near Penzance, Skomer Island area in Pembrokeshire, Plymouth/South Devon, Farne Islands in Northumberland, North Cornwall, West Bay, Weymouth/Portland harbour.

Week long holidays are often enjoyed at a variety of destinations:

- Scapa Flow, Orkney Islands
- Oban, Scotland
- The Isles of Scilly
- Gozo, Mediterranean
- Canary Islands
- Red Sea, Egypt

Directions to some of the most commonly used training dive sites:

Stoney Cove (<http://www.stoneycove.com/>)

Stoney Cove is a large flooded Granite quarry that is the site for a purpose built training centre for diving. At the site they have a well equipped shop that includes equipment hire, hot food, changing rooms, air fills and a recompression chamber. Stoney Cove is 38 metres deep and the water can be both cold and dark but the visibility is usually quite good - especially during Winter and Spring

It takes about 1.5 - 2.00 hours to get from Wantage to Stoney Cove and there are a number of different ways to get there. The easiest is to take the M40 to junction 15, then the A46 north, and then the M69 to junction 1, head east on the A5, turn left towards Sharnford on the B4114 and turn left towards Sapcote. go through village until you get to a junction at Stoney Stanton, turn right and then immediately left. Although Stoney Cove can be seen on the right hand side a little ways down this road, the entrance is off to the left. Stoney Cove gets very busy at weekends and often the lower car park is full by 7.30 AM.

West Oxfordshire Sailing Club (<http://www.wosc.org.uk/>)

The WOSC is a shallow (4 metres) flooded gravel pit that is used by Wantage Diving Club for some training exercises as it has the advantages of being close by and can even be used in the evenings. There are no facilities at the club.

To get there, take the Witney road A415 and turn right onto the B4449 after Stanlake. The entrance (a narrow gravel drive) to the WOSC is on the RHS after the gravel works, follow this to the second lake on the LHS.

Cromhall (http://www.cromhall.com/community/cromhall_diving_centre.php)

A 15 metre deep flooded quarry that is great for rescue training. It only takes about 1hr 15 mins to get there from Wantage. Facilities are very limited at Cromhall so it best to go prepared with lunch, drinks and two cylinders.

Vobster Quay (<http://www.vobsterquay.co.uk/>)

A 35 metre deep flooded quarry that is good for warm up dives though it can be quite dark and cold as the entrance wall is North facing. Full facilities are available. It is best to download the detailed map of how to get to Vobster from their web site as it is quite difficult to find. NB do not trust your Sat Nav!

Chesil Beach

Chesil Beach is used for shore dives as the water drops away to 9 metres fairly quickly. To get there go through Weymouth on the A354 to Portland Bill at the roundabout past the Hellipad, bear round to the right and at the next fork also bear round to the right and follow the road to the end where there is limited parking. Further back along this road is more parking and also a dive shop. There is a cafe and toilets nearby.

Swanage

Swanage Pier is used early season open water dives to gain experience after pool training. At the pier there is a mobile cafe, toilets and air fills, but very limited parking. Swanage Pier is well signposted from the town centre

10 Website / Mailing List & Forum

The club runs a website at <http://www.wantagediveclub.com/> which is the most likely route that new potential members will find out about our club. Members are invited to submit content for the website especially reports on club trips members have attended and any photos both above and below the water.

The club runs several mailing lists. All club members will be subscribed to the members list (wdc@wantagediveclub.com). Only subscribed members may send email to this list so as a result there is no spam.

Club instructors will be subscribed to wdc-instructors@wantagediveclub.com

Club committee members will be subscribed to wdc-committee@wantagediveclub.com

We also run a private forum, you can find the link to the forum on the contents panel on the main website. The forum is only visible to subscribed club members once they have logged in, ie anything posted to the forum is not available to any internet user or search engine.

Administrators are as follows:

Website/ mailing lists – Steve Colam
Forum – Les Durham

Updated October 2008