

# Stratford Divers

The Newsletter for Stratford Upon Avon Sub Aqua Club



Issue 9 | October 2020

## Committee Bits

It feels as though we could publish this newsletter on a daily basis and still not keep up with the changing COVID rules and restrictions. We are committed to keeping the pool and club operational as long as possible but we must reiterate the importance of maintaining social distancing. We are increasingly falling into a murky grey area of what is allowed and not allowed, so the onus is on us all to ensure that our pool and club sessions are safe for all users.

This also applies to coastal and inland dive sites. It is imperative that we follow relevant guidelines, stay safe and dive responsibly while we can.

## 1500 Dives

**Congratulations** to both Sally Richards and Hilary Wilson for achieving an incredible milestone of 1500 dives each.



Both divers achieved this within weeks of each other and were able to celebrate while diving in Greece. More on this story is available on the website.

## Trips Highlights

### Return to Greece

Hilary and Miles' trip to Greece earlier in the year was so successful that they decided to go back. This time they were accompanied by Chris Bradbury and Sally Richards. The diving was based on the island of Alonissos and from the pictures it is clear that the visibility was great, the water was warm and there were some very impressive wrecks and sites. The full report is available on the website.



### Lundy

Angie's ever popular Lundy trip went ahead in August after a series of Covid related interruptions.



The diving again did not disappoint, all divers had seal encounters galore. They played with fins, posed, swam around and generally showed off.

As with all the trips this year, we extend our thanks to the organisers for making this happen. A full trip report is available on the website (The address is below) <http://www.stratforddivers.co.uk/>

## COVID Reminder

The pool remains open subject to the usual rules. The football club is still open but please be aware that new rules are in place. On arrival you will need to scan the 2D barcode, which will log your arrival with the NHS track and trace app (please download it if you can, it's very good). All orders are taken at the table (which is nice...a bit continental) and we need to be OUT!! by 10pm. We need to wear masks as you enter and leave.

## New Members

This month we are pleased to welcome 3 new members, Simon, Alex & John. This month we include a short bio for Simon (see page 2), We will include introductions for Alex and John over the coming months.

Look out for new faces at the pool and be sure to say hi.

## Simon Gurney

Diving wise I believe the UK waters offer some of the best diving in the world. Our sad but fascinating heritage of wartime wrecks, our clean swept tidal locations full of colour and creatures and the sheer variety we have are unrivalled. For me west is best whether in Dorset, Plymouth, Cornwall or Wales and one of my favourite places, is the north-west of Scotland where it's usually great viz with most of the best diving less than 30mt and often at 8-15mt. Looking abroad I've had many fabulous trips to Dahab, Tulum, Malta, Bali and the Azores. There are still many places on the bucket list though, including the Farnes. Every year with a few cave-diving buddies we head to the Dordogne which offers an array of amazing subterranean adventures. It's not for everyone, that's true, but I love it. It was the dive to 1300 horizontal metres into the earth at Trou Madame that convinced me to get a pee-valve installed. As a BSAC diver from the beginning I remember during my own training through the grades how dedicated and committed my instructors were and resolved early on to give back and so achieved OWI a few years ago.



Memorable moments: 1) Towing the rib to Cherbourg for my AD exped, and leaving the D.O. behind in a French service station after fuelling up. 2) Mantas in Lembongan. 3) Getting battered by a shoal of krill in the Azores.

Outside of work, and diving, my wife Caro and I have some allotments and two lovely rescued pets, a dog and a cat. As an ex chef I love working with food and in our house there's usually some baking going on, and some things fermenting or dehydrating. Both sons, now in their early twenties, are divers too, so that's been expensive....the eldest Joe works at Dive Newquay as an SSI Instructor Trainer, and Eddie is at Bournemouth Uni studying Forensic Science.

Strange but true is that, unusually, we have not had a television for more than 20 years! There's plenty to do!

Pool sessions run each Thursday between 8pm & 9pm at Stratford upon Avon Leisure Centre

Cost is £3.00 payable on the night

After the pool we meet at Stratford Football Club for drinks

## October 2020

Date	Event	Organiser	Cost	Spaces Available?	Minimum Diver Grade
18 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Stoney Cove Fun Dive	Simon Watkins	Approx. £20	Yes	Ocean

Please note – The October Stoney Dive is at high risk of cancellation due to the changing covid situation.

## November 2020

Date	Event	Organiser	Cost	Spaces Available?	Minimum Diver Grade
1 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Scapa Flow	Alastair	Contact for cost	Yes	Sports Diver
15 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Stoney Cove Fun Dive	Simon Watkins	Approx. £20	Yes	Ocean
21 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Christmas Lights	Ellen Rowe	TBD	Yes	Open to all

## December 2020

Date	Event	Organiser	Cost	Spaces Available?	Minimum Diver Grade
12 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Christmas Party	Ellen Rowe	TBD	Yes	Open to all
20 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Stoney Cove Fun Dive	Simon Watkins	Approx. £20	Yes	Ocean

## September 2020 Update

### General Instructions

We will not be permitted into the pool until the sharks have left and we will need to exit the pool to ensure that we are totally out of the building by 9:10 at the absolute latest.

We should not be waiting in the reception area, so please wait outside. For instructors, please hold briefings outside, or better still before you even get to the pool so you can minimise the face to face chat before we go in.

Please do not come to the pool unless you are swimming or training (or working in the equipment cupboard). We are not allowed spectators, the viewing gallery has limited seating.

Where possible:-

- Arrive in your swimwear. Clearly you can wear normal clothes over them, nobody is expecting budgie smugglers or banana hammocks to be paraded across the car park, but you should be able to get ready for your swim poolside and not use the changing rooms at the start of our session.
- Arrive with your kit assembled as far as possible. If you do have to set up kit, please use the whole pool edge rather than just the area by the shallow end to ensure we can maintain distance between members.
- Please pay by contactless card if you can, we want to minimise cash handling.
- Wash your hands or use a sanitiser on arrival and on exit of the leisure centre.
- Changing rooms can be used at the end of each session if needed, but please try to ensure we are out in good time to allow cleaning of the cubicles.

It is essential that:-

- You stay away from the pool if you or any member of your household has had symptoms of COVID or if you or anyone in your household has been contacted by NHS track and trace.
- Please download the NHS track and trace app if you have not already.
- You follow current guidelines for mask use in the leisure centre – masks are not required at the time of writing.
- You bring a solution for demisting your mask, no spitting is permitted.

When you arrive make sure you are registered with whoever is on the club welcome desk. If any of us falls ill, we need to know who to contact.

We will have a theoretical limit of members in the pool, but we don't think we will get close to it based on historical numbers. If you have never used the pool in the past, but suddenly feel the urge to jump in please let Alastair know so we can manage numbers if needed.

### **Pool Layout**

The swim lane is temporarily removed to ensure we can comply with COVID regulations.

In the stamina lane, please note:-

- Members should not crowd at the ends for a rest or a chat.
- The board was removed because everyone knows what they are doing. If you are new to the stamina lane and need some ideas as to what to do let the pool marshal know and they can put it back...alternatively you can follow and copy someone else...from a safe distance.
- Members in the stamina lane should keep moving where possible without pausing between lengths. If you need a break, step out of the pool for a few minutes.
- As always, movement is clockwise and try to leave adequate gaps between each user.

### **Training**

Priority will be given to members currently in training. All instructors MUST make sure that they have read and understood BSAC's post COVID training guidance, particularly re AS.

For instructors, please consider the following:-

- Try to hold your briefing for the session virtually prior to arriving at the pool.
- Arrive with clean, dry kit fully assembled as far as possible.
- All dry runs should be performed in full kit, in shallow water with masks on and regs in.
- As far as possible, use signals instead of talking.

- Do not share regs, for example the instructor should not take an octo that the student will later use.
- No rescue breaths to be performed except for couples (we do not expect that all trainees must inter marry in order to progress, but if you happen to already be a couple then you are good to go).

### **Casual SCUBA**

We are a SCUBA club, so we don't want to limit Scuba in the pool, but at least for the initial few weeks we would ask that casual SCUBA is kept to a minimum to allow us to focus on the trainees. If you have an urgent need to test some kit for an upcoming trip then please do go ahead, but if you just want to check that your reel is still 40m long, please consider doing this in your garden.

### **Equipment**

Any equipment that you are using in the pool should not need any special cleaning after use. The chlorine is sufficient to destroy the virus if it is present. If in doubt, submerging any equipment for a minimum of 30 seconds in the pool will make it safe.

In general: -

- Absolutely no sharing kit.
- Where possible please bring your own kit and minimise the need to use equipment from the cupboard.
- Instructors, please take your kit home with you and where possible please do not store it in the cupboard.
- The equipment officer will make sure that all borrowed kit is either submerged in pool water for a minimum of 30 seconds prior to use at the start of the session and before storage.
- The equipment officer will wipe all surfaces, pillar valves and handles with a disinfectant wipe prior to storage.

### **Summary**

As expected, the first few weeks have gone well and any little uncertainties were overcome and we worked through it.

## Useful Information

Huge thanks must be given to Chris Hastie for pulling out the pertinent bits from what is probably thousands of pages of fluff on the subject of COVID and swimming. There is lots of reading material out there for anyone interested in this, see below for some suggestions. In the highly likely event that you will not want to read all this, I would suggest speaking to Chris if you have questions.

1. Government guidance for providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/providers-of-grassroots-sport-and-gym-leisure-facilities>

2. Swim England guidance on returning to the pool:

<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/pool-return-guidance-documents/>

3. Jim Watson (BSAC Safety and Development Manager) on getting back to the pool

<https://www.bsac.com/news-and-blog/getting-back-to-pool-diving-and-training/>

4. BSAC Pool guidance: <https://www.bsac.com/document/swimming-pool-guidance/>

5. BSAC Equipment guidance: <https://www.bsac.com/document/equipment-guidance/>

6. BSAC training guidance: <https://www.bsac.com/document/diver-train>