

## Summary of Feedback from Team Leaders

All nominated team leaders were asked to complete a feedback survey which was aimed at establishing their thoughts and experiences in taking part in the What Lies Beneath initiative. It was important to understand where they had encountered problems or issues in order to learn from the exercise as well as hear what went well. Disappointingly only a handful of responses were received, primarily from those who were from Branches who completed a survey report<sup>1</sup> though on the whole these were very positive. Their responses were encouraging and reflect the good story that comes from the WLB project overall for those who responded..

My thanks to all those who took the time to respond.

### General

1. What interested you about the WLB project?

**GMcG** At first I thought it was a way to progress my advanced diver grade with BSAC but after the meeting at Portsmouth, the tanks and bulldozers and the Mary Rose, I realised there was more to the project, and the interest grew from there.

**JK** Ever seen the Smirnoff “Purified” advert where they throw all the junk out of the sea, including 2 divers!!! (<http://youtu.be/-iXwzBvdrlY>) That always made me think about just how much wreckage is off our coastlines. Then one of our club members flagged up the project and I was immediately interested, it’s the whole growing up with the raising of the Mary Rose I think, we would all like to discover something no one else has seen.

**JB.** We trained with NAS 2 years ago, and this was a good opportunity not too far from our home-base.

2. Why did you want to get involved?

**GMcG** As our club is based on the Isle of Wight we have access to hundreds of sites and I thought it might be of interest to other club members if I could introduce a way of getting more out of our club dives.

**JK** Our club membership has dwindled dramatically in 10 years, and this seemed a good project to get some renewed interest in diving for our older/established members while giving the youngsters a unique opportunity. On a personal level I was looking for a challenge too, did my Advanced Diver 5 years ago but had not really done a big project since then, as a club we’ve played safe and done the same trip year on year so time for a change.

**JB** DO asked me to lead for our club, and my own interest.

3. What did you hope to achieve in putting yourself forward as a survey leader?

**GMcG** I hoped to be able to give back something to the club, maybe as a wreck specialist or someone who members could come to with unknown sites, so that we could research together and raise an interest with other members.

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<sup>1</sup> Wight Dolphins, Leamington and Warwick, Dacorum SAC, and Milton Keynes.

**JK** Get the club doing some different diving, the momentum to put our under used Ribs back in the water, and have knowledge/skills of older members passed down to the next generation.

**JB** Additional diving interest and perhaps a new over-winter dive site.

4. Have your expectations/ambitions been achieved?

**GMcG** The wreck appreciation course that our Dive officer and myself organised for 10 of our club members has been more than I could have expected. This was one of the reasons that I persevered with the WLB project to make wreck diving more interesting for our club.

**JK** Partly, got the Ribs up and running but did have issues with one which did affect our trip plans considerably. I think it has really bought those current club members together more though, as we are a small number it's everyone in together, no "Clicks" that we used to have with certain members only diving with certain others! I think it has really brought out peoples individual skills too, expertise and knowledge I didn't know some people had!

**JB** Yes

5. How many branch members helped you and took part in your survey?

**GMcG** Even though we never got to survey/dive our site the club boat was booked to capacity and three reserve divers on the list out of 40 club members 21 had their name down to take part in the survey.

**JK** We had 8 of us on the actual trip, but all 18 members of the club helped, advised or had an input in some way. During training out the survey techniques after my NAS course we had those who would not be on the trip turn up to have ago in the pool with "Tapes n Slate". Had help in fabricating slate boards and sourcing suitable metal stakes etc for Control Points.

**JB** Seven Members.

6. Please provide details about your general experiences in taking part.

**GMcG** The planning and kit preparation was quite a challenge, as backup dive plans were prepared in the event of not finding anything on the designated site, and as people had paid to dive, I wanted to not leave them disappointed. Even though a bad day on the rib is better than a good day at work.

**JK** It was probably a bigger challenge than I expected, with tons of planning and research but we had a sub-committee of 5 (including our D.O.) and this helped a great deal. Loved the NAS course and couldn't wait to get on to our site. Our one and only trip was disappointing in that we didn't find a sausage, and didn't get the opportunity to return or try and alternate site, BUT as a team effort, and friends enjoying some diving the weekend was a real success.

**JB** Our experiences were fine. We were a little time constrained due to planned year of main diving already in place.

7. Do you intend to submit a report? If not, please explain why you are not able to report.

**GMcG** Yes. (I have already submitted a report in word format.)

**JK** Yes.....moving house at the moment so taken a back seat slightly but report very close to completion.

**JB** Yes.

### Support

8. Did you get the support you needed from; a) your branch; b) project leader (Alison) c) NAS? Please provide details / comments about your experiences.

a) your branch (e.g. D/O, Training Officer, branch members)?

**GMcG** I got all the support I needed from all above, Alison came over to our Wreck appreciation course that we ran and gave a talk on the Tanks and Bulldozer site and also told us about the Mary Rose, this generated a vast amount of interest with club members, to the extent that a subcommittee is being set up to cater for wrecks.

**JK** Total support from all.

b) the project leader (Alison)?

**GMcG** NAS put on a bespoke field school for us at Fort Cumberland in Portsmouth for the WLB e-learners, this was held over 2 days in June 2013. This also gave us the chance for the WLB members to have a 2 day get together/bonding course and chat about the WLB project face to face instead of by email.

**JK** Always very quick to respond to any queries, and encouraging even when we found nothing of our site

**JB** Yes.

c) NAS?

**GMcG** c) My club had set aside favourable tides through the year to dive our site. Even though the tides were good the weather was not. The D/O is as interested in the WLB as I am and the training officer Chris Marsh has commented that survey side is a good way to improve the buoyancy finning techniques of the members.

**JK** Great training, lovely instructors, really enjoyed the course. Their monthly email that we are now subscribed to is very informative and has given us ideas of how to continue so we don't lose momentum after all the work that has gone in this year.

**JB** No contact. But its staff are fine when I have had other contact.

### Training

9. Did you undertake any NAS training? (Please give details course/dates etc.)

**GMcG** I signed up for the Introduction course by E-Learning at the LIDS in March , after I had completed and passed this course, in May I signed up for the Part 1 course again by E-learning. After completing this course I arranged with Rachael Quick at NAS for a bespoke field school to be held at Fort Cumberland over the weekend of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013.

**JK** April 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> did Intro and part 1 all together. Quite intensive with SO much information to take on board, but by doing it at Stoney Cove we were able to put the training straight into practice by diving the Gresham wreck. I was fortunate that the club was happy to pay the full course fee for me to be able to attend.

**JB** My wife Alison, and others, are already NAS Part 1 trained.

10. Please share your thoughts about the NAS training and how useful/relevant it was in planning a survey.

**GMcG** The NAS training was a real eye opener, when I went diving before the training, a wreck was a wreck. After the training course a wreck was a glimpse into the past and I realised that there are not many people who get to see what us divers see. The training taught me how to record and analyse what I had seen underwater so "landlubbers" could access this info to give them an idea of what was under the water.

**JB** I am a civil engineer and a leisure/work diver. Alison (my wife) and I have been involved in surveys and artificial reef work previously. NAS did not particularly add to my physical surveying knowledge, at NAS Part 1 level, but the training was interesting.

11. Did you undertake any other training (SDCs and diver grade) associated with the project? (Please provide details course/dates).

**GMcG** As I was Black at buoyancy and had already undertaken a SDC in accelerated decompression techniques at Chepstow. The WLB project has enabled me to further my progress in my Advanced Diver Grade with BSAC.

**JK** I passed on the NAS training to my fellow club members

**JB** No

## Planning

12. Did you develop a diving/survey plan? If so, please provide details of programmed diving and survey plans. If not, what prevented you from planning the diving/survey?

**GMcG** I have included all my dive plans in my previous word docs that I sent to you.

**JB** Yes. Will be in my Report.

13. What obstacles / problems did you face/overcome?

**JK** Our plan was to put 2 pairs of divers on to the site to do an initial recce, take photos/video and ensure shot in place. Then the following 2 pairs were to set up a base line or control points dependant on what the first divers told us of the site. Subsequent dives were then to be planned around what area to be surveyed, the whole site (dependant on size) or a broken section like the bow or prominent feature.

**JB** Simple lack of diving opportunity. If we did this again starting now, it would really need to be for 2015, as 2014 looks pretty full.

## Diving

14. What happened? Please provide details of any diving and the experiences of you/your team.

**GMcG** Again these were included in the word doc.

**JB** Will be in my Report.

15. Did the diving go to plan/with out incident?

**GMcG** Again these were included in the word doc.

**JB** Yes.

16. What problems/issues did you encounter, and how did you try resolve them?

**GMcG** Again these were included in the word doc.

**JK** Unfortunately we had problems firstly with the 2 GPS units giving different readings, loosing time so not diving at slack water and then electrical problems with the Rib so engine would not start! When back at the harbour we took our chart position and then ratified which GPS was giving the wrong reading. With loosing the Rib engine we had to radically change the dive plans

**JB** Some cross-channel ferries following routes out of Portsmouth in surprisingly shallow water. One major ship not reported as being expected by the Marine Authorities,

### **Survey**

17. How did you get on surveying an item underwater?

**JK** Trained out the survey techniques to the club, able to use Stoney Cove to give a "real" feel.

**JB** Did limited physical survey on one of the three sites allocated to Reading BSAC - Sites 6, 13 and 19, and SeaSearch survey on that site. The other two site were not of great interest at this time (ie one was very shallow and had some chain, the other was really a debris field, and too close, for us, to the routes of major shipping).

18. What survey techniques did you use?

**JK** Taught base line and Triangulation

**JB** Reasonably successful, and we plan to continue surveying one site over the coming winter.

19. How successful were you and your team?

**GMcG** Due to adverse weather conditions the planned dives were cancelled to due to safety.

**JK** Did Ok in the Cove with reduced Viz but of course no current to contend with!

## Funding

20. When you volunteered for the WLB project how important to you was it that there may be possible funding to help with NAS training costs?

**JB** Not crucial.

21. Did you receive any financial support from anywhere else? eg your Branch, free NAS e-learning?

**JK** Club paid for NAS training, we hoped to put any grant money towards equipment cost but we managed to make up slates through club members so have only purchased tapes/pens/clips and small items.

**JB** No. But we did not ask.

22. Do you think your NAS training was good value?

**JK** Yes, hope to be able to repay the club by passing on the knowledge and using the skills next year on another project.

**JB** Not applicable.

23. Please share any comments about other costs and funding issues associated with participating in WLB

**GMcG** When I signed up for the WLB course funding was mentioned, but it was not the reason I joined, even though it is nice to be recognised in a monetary way, I was not looking for free training. NAS did offer free e-learning but it was, pay upfront and the claim the money back. The E-Learning was a bit overpriced considering it was all online and the certificate was a PDF email. The cost of the field school element of the course was on top of the e-learning. I have paid all of the costs myself and my club has not contributed to this, to be honest I have not asked them for a contribution.

**JK** Due to the project been announced in January, we had already done our 2013 dive planning in November 2012. Therefore most of the members had already committed to other trips. With cost of fuel and accommodation we were therefore only able to do one 3 day trip to the site.

**JB** We had no external or RBSAC funding.

## Communications

24. Did you find the Yahoo group useful/interesting?

**JK** It was Ok, I'm personally not a big social media user, but I did pick the brains of Ginty of the Isle of Wight dive club for local knowledge. This is something with hindsight we should have made more of possibly??

**JB** No.

**GR** Yahoo wanted my sex and date-of-birth before I could register, and I felt they didn't need to know this personal information. So I didn't create a yahoo account..

25. Any comments about the level/nature of communications generally?

**GMcG** The yahoo group has been a good way of contributing material to a single place and even though it has gone a bit quiet with the messages it was quite prolific during the diving season. The facility to upload photos and files of our field school was good as well.

**JB** Yahoo Groups did not work for me. Fortunately Alison, my wife, did receive emails and forwarded them to me manually.

### Benefits

26. How has WLB benefitted you? ... and your club?

**GMcG** The amount of interest generated in wrecks through the WLB course and the forming of a subcommittee within our club to investigate unknown/known wrecks would not have been possible at the beginning of the year. I myself have become a member of the club who people come to, to consult with me on possible dive sites that they can undertake as dive managers and ask my opinion on whether it will be any good. My reply is lets research it together and see what we come up with.

**JK** Given me the confidence to do different dive trips, and try new sites. Because we are a land locked club we have to plan our trips so far ahead. Peoples personal commitments too mean we do not as a club look at the weather and think "lets go diving tomorrow" you don't want to disappoint, so risking an unknown site and having a naff dive is always a concern when people are paying for a weekend away. However, those that have been involved this year are keen to look at the charts and point the finger at it and see what's there.

**JB** A definite new, nearly local, dive site (some kind of wrecked-craft at 12+ metres) that we will survey further over the winter.

27. Areas for Improvement

As a novel and innovative approach to project and expedition diving we are keen to learn how things could be improved for the future - please add any thoughts that may help future regional projects.

**GMcG** I think a yahoo type site should be set up so future project sites can be uploaded and relevant details added to the site. This would be so other dive clubs could dive the same site as other clubs and upload missing info or pictures of the same site. This could then be collated and a bigger picture of the site exists. If 1 club dives the same site 5 times it could get boring, but if 5 clubs dive the site once it would be a new site. Any information gathered on the site can then be researched by members of other dive clubs, many hands make light work.

**JK** Whether our club would want to be involved in a big project like this again I'm not sure, but certainly look at something we could achieve at a club level. We had intended to "adopt" the wreck had we found anything, I'm sure there is still something out there but we were just not quite on it! Hoping next year to return as I feel I have unfinished business with the site. After all the Mary Rose was not found in a day was she!

**JB** 1. Communication via Yahoo Groups did not work for me.  
 2. Perhaps some kind of 'seeding' around allocation of sites. ie those clubs with their own boats, that they use regularly, being deliberately allocated some 'interesting sites'. We probably have the capacity within RBSAC to survey more than one site over the next couple of winters. Sites need to be in a reasonable depth of water, and away from theoretical and actual shipping lanes.

### **And Finally**

28. Overall, did you find taking part a positive experience?

**GMcG** The best thing about the WLB project has been the taking part, I used to go diving to every weekend (weather permitting) and just dive. Now there is a purpose to the dives that I plan and I spend 2-3 hours researching the dive sites and gathering information on the wreck so I can give all the divers on the boat a brief of what we are diving on and how the wreck got there and what they can expect to see.

**JK** Really enjoyed the project, I was initially very disappointed that we a) didn't find anything and b) haven't been able to go back and make a better fist of it but overall the club and its members have benefited from the experience. Hope this is just the start now and we can build on it. Really would like to return to the site as we have so much knowledge now of what to expect, the difficulties and actually put the "Tapes n Slates" to action!!

**JB** Yes. Very much so, and it has added to our club's winter diving choices.

29. Would you be interested in taking part in another project?

**GMcG** Even though we still have our site to survey in 2014 I would be interested in taking part in more projects, as would our club.

**JK** Yes

**JB** Yes. But probably not leading it, with my present time availability.

**GR** MKSAC's involvement was probably noticeable by its absence.... Being a long way inland, we generally moor our boat on the coast for the summer. This year, we had planned to use a marina in Portsmouth, which would have been great for this project. But a last minute change meant we used Portland instead. Getting to the Solent for the WLB project became impractical. Sorry :-)