

Summary of Feedback from Diving Officers

In addition to the feedback from Survey Team Leaders Branch Diving Officers were also invited to provide their thoughts on how the WLB initiative. Again the number of responses was limited. However even though all of the responses were from branches who had not achieved all of the objectives (2 submitted reports and 2 did not) there are some positive comments on the project and some lessons to be learned for the future.

My thanks to the Diving Officers of Wight Dolphins, Leamington and Warwick, Southsea SAC and Milton Keynes for their responses.

Branch Participation

1. How did your branch become involved in WLB?

WD We were contacted by BSAC, we then attended the meeting at Southsea Sub-Aqua club.

L&W One of our members saw it advertised on facebook and contacted me, he thought it would be a great project to be involved in and would I consider it for the club. So I went ahead and emailed Alison.

SSAC Through previous involvement Alison Mayor is part of our club

2. In nominating survey Team Leader(s) what things did you consider?

WD Experience, Also the person who would give commitment and would benefit themselves and our club.

L&W Diving ability and grade, length of time they had been in the club, their willingness to be involved in the project.

SSAC Their development mainly, building new skills and then being able to demonstrate and put in practice those skills, eventually passing on to others.

3. How much oversight/involvement have you had in the Team Leaders training and survey/diving plans?

WD I have been fully involved in all the planning (although we have not managed to get on site as yet).

L&W Team Leader went to the initial meetings without me (I was actually away with work). However fully involved in all that happened back at the dive club, her plans for training others on survey techniques, training in pool and open water and then the main trip that we did to the IOW.

SSAC Mainly conversations at the beginning to assist them and give them indicators as to best time to dive and what was required. What I failed to do is have regular meetings and get updates from them as the year went on. This is a point I have noted and taken on board for next time.

4 Please comment on how has the survey Team Leader(s) responded to the challenge?

WD Garry has been up to the challenge 100%, He is fully committed and a valuable club member.

L&W Jules responded very well to the challenge, she took on board what needed to be done and her experience as an Instructor also helped.

SSAC The challenge was more difficult than anticipated by the team leaders, their lack of experience of finding and shotted wrecks, understanding navigation and sonar equipment also contributed to the difficulties, I don't think that they were aware of how difficult just that operation alone can be. Is there a BSAC course for that? I am disappointed in particular with one of the team members who is attempting to become an advanced diver and has more time available to him than others as he is retired. Despite having many conversations about actually doing something he has not delivered anything worthwhile. He continually asked me if I would find his wreck for him! Overall I have learnt that it is people that drive projects and it is obvious now that it is a certain type of person that is required to plan, dive and deliver. I have stepped back from the project this year and not been involved directly and now I see what happens or doesn't happen. The small targets also were and are an issue, needle in a haystack scenario. Having seen great things happen in previous years when the club has been a hive of activity and enthusiasm, this year has been a real let down from my perspective.

5. How has your branch benefitted (or not) from participation in the WLB project?

WD We have run a wreck appreciation course with more than a third of the club attending, Alison came over to see us during this course to tell the students about the Project. Since then we have developed a sub section of the club that has been set up to run projects for the search / history behind objects located during this project and beyond.

L&W Our branch really pulled together to make this work. We set about to get as many people who wanted to become involved in the project as possible could do so. Once we decided that as a club we wanted to go ahead with the project, we set up a team. Then we had a sub set of members who concentrated on what needed to be done for our first weekend away, (we had originally planned for 2-3 trips). We also had to keep the cost down as much as possible as this project came a bit later in our Dive Planning (we had already planned some of our 2013 dives in Nov 2012 – so some people were financially committed to other weekend dives). A lot of effort was involved by many members. Benefits;

- Team Leader NAS training
- Members learned survey techniques
- Club got our x2 RIBS up and running (had not used them properly for a few years)
- Members learnt what was needed to run a bigger trip like this.
- Members learned about the RIBS – what needed to go in them/how to set them up etc
- It got the whole club working together
- Got older members enthused again and teaching newer members about the RIBS (knowledge transfer)
- Taught basic chart work to new members

6. As experienced divers and Diving Officers please share any thoughts or comments you may have on the WLB project...

WD We have welcomed the project and are very pleased to be part of it, we plan to extend our searches into next years diving season and develop our knowledge of what lies beneath.

L&W Project was a great idea, our club did not find anything at our allocated site, however to me that was fine. We had problems with one of our RIBS which did not help the weekend we went away. Our aim had been to go to an alternative site however that plan did get changed due to the location and problem with our RIBS. So a few managed to get a 'normal' dive in.

SSAC This year I don't believe we have benefited from the project as a club due to limited diving and difficulties in finding small sonar targets. Limited diving meant that fewer people were involved.

MK I've quizzed the member who took over "What Lies Beneath". His answer doesn't fit any of the spaces on the form. I pass on his response below: -
"Communication of WLB moved from email to a Yahoo mailing group. While I was attempting to sign up, Yahoo asked for a quantity of personal information which I felt uncomfortable submitting and not relevant to the project so did not proceed"
As he did not revert to either our Branch or (presumably) the WLB organisers, we in the branch assumed that either WLB had not progressed or, at the least, that the WLB team were aware our RIB was otherwise engaged as we left it in Weymouth for much of the summer. As DO I apologize, I've learnt (again!) what assumptions do.