



## Totnes Sub-aqua Club (TSAC)

### **Q. Is TSAC affiliated to any organisation?**

**A.** TSAC is both a BSAC (British Sub Aqua Club) branch and a SAA (Sub Aqua Association) club, but we only teach using the BSAC training system. TSAC members are required to also be members of either BSAC or SAA.

### **Q. What are the advantages of club diving?**

**A.** Diving clubs can provide many benefits, for example:

- Diver training.
- Qualified Instructors, dive leaders and dive organisers.
- A friendly social environment for training, diving and recreation.
- Less expensive diving.
- Free use of the pool during our Wednesday evening “wet” session.
- Fellow divers / buddies to dive with.
- Access to club equipment: boats, compressor, etc. for training and diving.
- Regular Branch meetings, training courses, open water dives and diving holidays with friends.
- Discounts at some of the local dive shops.

### **Q. What do you mean by a diving club? Is this like dive centres abroad?**

**A.** No, the two are entirely different. If you learnt and are used to diving abroad, or even with some UK dive centres, then you are probably used to simply turning up at the centre and going diving, whereas club diving is more about everybody working together. Clubs are run by volunteers, whereas dive centres have paid staff. However, this doesn't mean that club diving is in any way a poorer alternative, it's just a different way of doing things. Another difference is that most holiday dives are conducted under the supervision of a guide whereas with club dives, the buddy pair is expected to be self sufficient.

### **Q. How is TSAC run?**

**A.** TSAC is managed by an elected committee of ten members who meet regularly to make major decisions affecting the organization and development of the branch. The committee positions are:

#### **Chair:**

The Chairperson is the official “head” of the club in all matters except those related to diving and plays an important role as leader and in the conduct of Branch affairs, in Branch meetings and in all matters relating to the Branch's public image.

#### **Diving Officer:**

If appropriately qualified, the Branch Diving Officer will be the lead instructor of a Branch; and can award Ocean Diver, Sports Diver, Dive Leader and Advanced Diver qualifications to members within their own Branch.

The Branch Diving Officer has responsibility for the safety and management of all Branch Diving, and some of the safeguards they can apply to try and ensure that good practices are maintained within the Branch.

The Branch Diving Officer has responsibility for all Branch Training and the need to ensure that training is given to a consistently high standard and in accordance with the current version of the BSAC Instructor Training Manual. This role within TSAC is delegated to the **Training Officer**.



The Branch Diving Officer has responsibility for all Branch Equipment related to diving or training, such as boats, a branch compressor, and including instructional aids such as resuscitation manikins or overhead projectors. This role within TSAC is delegated to the **Equipment Officer**.

**Secretary:**

The Secretary looks after communication with the people outside the branch and between the Branch and BSAC/SAA. They have responsibility for organising Committee Meetings and the Branch's General Meetings, taking minutes and for publishing and circulating them to appropriate members.

**Treasurer:**

The Treasurer looks after the branches finances and plays an important role in predicting income and expenditure, and budgeting for such major purchases - and for their upkeep and eventual replacement. The Branch gets most of the money it needs to run from the membership subscription. These funds are used for the day to day running of the Branch, for such regular expenses as pool and meeting room hire, insurance and in particular for the acquisition of major assets, such as training equipment, new boats, the Shogun, etc.

**Social Secretary:**

The Social Secretary has responsibility for the Branch Social Calendar and arranges talks, social evenings and the annual Branch Dinner and Dance.

There are also **three non-executive positions** on the committee, which are intended for members who wish to help, but are not yet happy to take on a full executive role, or to address a specific need on the committee.

In addition, there are a couple of positions that are important to the club, but that are not committee posts:

**Membership Secretary:**

The Membership Secretary has responsibility for taking receipt of both Branch and BSAC/SAA subscriptions and dealing with membership returns to the membership department at BSAC/SAA. The Membership Secretary also maintains the membership database and the club address lists.

**Welfare Officer:**

The Welfare Officer has responsibility for the Branch Welfare of the Vulnerable Policy and acts as a first point of contact should a complaint or concern be raised in respect of this Policy.

**Q. How is TSAC financed?**

**A.** The club is run financially by annual fees from its members as well as numerous fund raising events through the year.

**Q. How long has TSAC been running?**

**A.** The Totnes Branch of the British Sub-Aqua Club was formed in 1973.

**Q. How many members does TSAC have?**

**A.** TSAC currently has almost 100 members.



**Q. Do I have to live in Totnes to join TSAC?**

**A.** No. We currently have members living in Plymouth, Newton Abbot, Torbay, Exeter, Dartmouth, on Dartmoor, in Cornwall and even one near Sheffield.

**Q. Where do you meet?**

**A.** The branch has a "wet" session at Totnes Leisure Pool at 8.00 pm on a Wednesday evening, where members and their families are welcome to come and swim, snorkel or to practice their diving skills (the pool is free to TSAC members, but families pay a small fee to cover pool costs). This is followed by a "dry" meeting in the upstairs bar at the Meadowbrook Community Centre, Dartington, from around 9.00 pm onwards, for a social get together and to plan the following week's diving.

**Q. Are new members welcome?**

**A.** New members are always welcome, whether you are a complete beginner who wants to learn to dive or an experienced diver who would like to join a club that does lots of varied and interesting diving.

**Q. Do you train people to dive?**

**A.** The branch runs regular training courses, both for those learning to dive and for more experienced divers wishing to increase their skills, such as boat handling and lifesaving or to gain higher qualifications, either using our own instructors or in conjunction with other local clubs.

**Q. How do you differ from other local dive clubs?**

**A.** The club gained national recognition from the BSAC in 1994 when it was awarded the Heinke Trophy. This Trophy is awarded annually to the branch judged to have done most to further the interests of its members and the BSAC and is hotly contested. We were also the runners-up for the BSAC/Diver Spotlight Award in 1998 and the Heinke Trophy in 1999. We won the Heinke Trophy again in 2006 and to cap that one of our members (Richard Handy) won the Wilkinson Sword trophy for his performance in the National Instructor exam.

**Q. What's the diving like in Devon?**

**A.** South Devon is undoubtedly one of the places to live if you are a diver, with enthusiasts from all over the UK coming to the West Country every year just to dive off our coast. Underwater visibility can be as good as 20-30 metres and the water abounds with colourful marine life. The area has as much to offer underwater as it does on land, with spectacular underwater scenery and many local shipwrecks to be visited. Diving is organised throughout the year at sites all over South Devon, visiting wrecks like the Scylla, the Persier, the Maine and the James Egan Layne; or more scenic dives such as Hilsea Point, the East Rutts and the famous Eddystone Reef.

**Q. Do you organise trips away and holidays?**

**A.** There are regular trips to Cornwall and expeditions to such places as Lundy Island, Newquay, Portland, the Scillies, Scotland, Pembroke, and the Channel Islands, plus club holidays to more exotic locations such as the Red Sea and the Maldives.

**Q. What equipment do you have?**

**A.** The branch owns two boats (RIBS), each fully equipped with radio, echo sounder, electronic navigation and safety equipment. These are kept in a purpose built boatshed, which also houses our 4WD vehicle and compressor.



**Q. Do you also have social events?**

**A.** Yes, we have a regular programme of talks from invited speakers, an annual Dinner and Dance, and other social events.

**Q. Is there a training programme?**

**A.** No, Branch training is arranged by the Training Officer to suit demand.

**Q. Do you organise hardboat diving?**

**A.** Yes. There are regular Tuesday evening hardboat dives from Dartmouth during the summer, plus occasional expeditions away.

**Q. Do you organise shore diving?**

**A.** Yes, both for training and to suit demand.

**Q. Do you do student membership?**

**A.** No, TSAC do not offer this, although student membership of BSAC is available.

**Q. Why do I need to join BSAC/SAA?**

**A.** It is a requirement of the branch that all members are members of either BSAC or SAA. This ensures that both the individual member and the branch are protected by insurance in the event that an incident should occur. It is not sufficient for the member to simply have their own insurance, as this will not provide the branch with the necessary protection.

**Q. Do you provide diving equipment (or can I rent equipment from the Club)?**

**A.** No, you need to have your own dive kit, other than during basic training.

**Q. How much does it cost to use the pool?**

**A.** The pool is free to club members. Family members can also use the pool at a cost of £2 per session.

**Q. How much is the diving?**

**A.** Diving from the branch RIBs costs £10 per dive (dive tickets are available from the Treasurer every Wednesday evening), although this varies slightly for expeditions away to places like Cornwall. If the club arranges hardboat dives the cost is based on an equal division of the total cost between those present. However, if you have booked on a hardboat dive and fail to turn-up, you will be expected to pay your share. There is no cost for shore dives, other than incidental costs such as parking.

**Q. I hear that I get free diving if I tow the boat. Is this correct?**

**A.** Yes, if you use your own vehicle. However, if you only tow one way and someone else tows back, you only get a 50% reduction.

**Q. How much does it cost to join?**

**A.** Current (2009) membership rates are set-out below. It is necessary for branch members to also be members of either BSAC or SAA and also to join Meadowbrook Community Centre. These costs are also set-out below.

**TSAC Membership**

Totnes full membership . . . . .	£114.00#
Totnes reduced membership . . . . .	£50.00*
Totnes snorkelling membership . . . . .	£10.00

**BSAC Membership**



BSAC full membership.	£50.00
BSAC full membership (AD/CI/OWI).	£45.00
BSAC full membership (AI/First Class Diver)	£40.00
BSAC full membership (NI)	£30.00
BSAC abated membership	£35.00
BSAC full snorkelling membership	£50.00

**SAA full membership.** .£35.00 (renewal – add £10 if new member, plus £30 for student pack if below club diver qualification)

**Meadowbrook Community Centre**

Full membership	£13.50
Senior citizens and juniors	£7.00
Joining fee	£5.00

**Q. Can I pay by standing order?**

**A.** Yes, you can pay your TSAC membership by standing order – this is currently set at £9.00 per month. However, BSAC and SAA membership cannot be paid by standing order, as we have to pass subscription monies on, in full, each month/year. Please ask the Membership Secretary or Treasurer for a standing order mandate.

**Q. Can I pay by credit card?**

**A.** No, we do not accept credit or debit cards

**Q. What is reduced TSAC membership?**

**A.** Reduced membership entitles you to a maximum of 6 boat dives per year, including expeditions using the club boats. If this is exceeded the balance of full membership becomes payable.

**Q. What is abated BSAC membership?**

**A.** Abated membership is available where two full diving members reside at the same address and only one magazine is required - there is a reduction in the subscription due for the second member, e.g. husband and wife, etc.

**Q. Is there anything for my family to do when I go diving?**

**A.** We do organise some beach based family days during the summer, and some club holidays are suitable for families/partners.

**Q. What's the difference between the Diving Officer and the Dive Manager?**

**A.** The Diving Officer is responsible for all diving related activities in the club, whilst the Dive Manager looks after a specific day's diving, or diving expedition.

**Q. How do I book on dives?**

**A.** The procedure for booking onto club dives is set-out below:

- A branch dive programme is published every year on the branch website and also on the notice board. This details the diving that is planned and, usually, who will be organising (managing) the dive. However, this can be subject to change and other dives can also be added.
- Try to be at the club on Wednesday evening where details of forthcoming diving will be announced.
- Put your name, qualification, whether you can tow and any special requests on the appropriate dive list posted on the notice board.
- Make a note of the Dive Manager's telephone number, time to phone and any



other relevant details.

- The club email will contain details of the next week's diving. If you haven't been able to be at the clubhouse on Wednesday then you can still phone or email the Dive Manager to add your name to the list – provided you do it early. Don't leave it till the last minute because you may be disappointed.
- Ring the Dive Manager at the appointed call-in time to find out whether the dive is on or not, where you have to be and when you have to be there.
- If your name is on the list then it is imperative that, whether you wish to dive or not, you phone the Dive Manager at the appointed time before the dive. If you cannot dive please let the Dive Manager know as soon as possible.

**Q. Can you do air fills?**

**A.** Yes, we have our own compressor and air fills are available from the boat shed every Wednesday evening until 9.15 p.m.

**Q. How much are air fills?**

**A.** Air tickets can be purchased from the Treasurer and are priced £2.25 each, or £10.00 for 5, for a standard 12l cylinder. The cost of fills for non-standard cylinders is set-out below:

- Up to 3 L (pony cylinders) **£1.00** – cash
- >3 L & up to 15 L **£2.25** (normal rate) – token or cash
- More than 15 L **£3.25** (i.e. normal rate plus £1) – token + £1
- Twinsets of more than 15 L (combined volume) & not manifolded will be treated as 2 cylinders (i.e. **2 × £2.25** payable) – 2 tokens
- Twinsets of more than 15 L (combined vol.) & manifolded will be charged at 15 L rate (i.e. **£3.25**) – token + £1

**Q. Can you supply nitrox?**

**A.** Yes, by prior arrangement. There is a nitrox rota and you will need to contact the duty gas blender to find out which night he/she is filling nitrox.

**Q. How much are nitrox fills?**

**A.** The cost of nitrox fills is calculated based on the amount of oxygen required to achieve the desired mix, plus the cost of an air fill. Oxygen is currently charged at 1p per litre of “free” oxygen.

**Q. Can I arrange my own dives?**

**A.** Yes, provided you are a BSAC Dive Leader you can manage a club dive. However, club rules state that a club dive using club equipment (i.e. boats) should have at least 4 club members present, one of whom must be an Advanced Diver. Anyone managing a club dive must obtain the Diving Officer's agreement to the planned dive and to the use of club equipment.

**Q. Am I expected to help?**

**A.** Yes, but this can be by helping at the boat shed, launching and retrieving boats, refuelling, towing, etc, or by offering to assist with the running of a social function, running a raffle, or whatever suits you best.

**Q. Can I use Trimix on branch dives?**

**A.** Yes, mixed gases are allowed on club dives, but members must satisfy the Branch Diving Officer that they hold the relevant and recognized qualifications for their use. All diving to be carried out in accordance with the latest recommendations from BSAC's National Diving Committee.



**Q. Can I drive the branch boats?**

**A.** An approved boat handler must be present in the boat at all times, and only persons having undertaken a recognized boat handling course and subsequently satisfied the Branch Diving Officer of their competence may handle the boat unsupervised.

**Q. What depth can I dive to?**

**A.** The depth limitations applicable to branch dives are set-out below:

1. "Trainees for Ocean Diver:- no deeper than their previous training dive, unless on a training dive. Maximum depth 20 metres.
2. Club/Ocean Divers and PADI Open Water divers:- Maximum 20 metres limited to no stop diving.
3. Under BSAC rules a PADI Advanced Open Water diver can dive to 30m if they are paired with a BSAC Dive Leader or equivalent. If they are buddied with a Sports Diver, Ocean Diver or another PADI AOW the maximum depth they can go to is 20 m. The PADI 'Deep Diving' qualification is not recognised by BSAC.
4. Sports Divers (no matter how experienced):- Maximum 35 metres.
5. For diving deeper than 30 metres, divers should have done at least five recent dives deeper than 20 metres.
6. For dives in excess of 50m, mixed gas or Trimix should be used and BSAC currently recommends a maximum depth of 80m. All diving to be carried out in accordance with the latest recommendations from BSAC's National Diving Committee.

**Q. Do you service equipment?**

**A.** No, but we know people who can.

**Q. What sort of diving do you do?**

**A.** The club carries out a wide range of diving from shallow reef dives through to deep wreck dives. Many divers dive for the pleasure of experiencing the underwater realm, but there are many other hobbies to pursue. For example:

- Underwater photography
- Underwater archaeology
- Wreck exploration
- Marine ecology and conservation

There are a number of club members interested in wreck exploration, underwater still photography and video photography. We also have a number of technical divers in the club using trimix and rebreathers

**Q. How old do I have to be (or am I too old) to join?**

**A.** The minimum age we will accept someone for training or diving is 14. However, for 14-17 year olds we do require that a parent or guardian is also a diver and is present during all training and diving. At the other end of the scale, one is rarely too old to start scuba diving there are many active divers in their 70s in the UK.