BOTANY BOTTOM SCRATCHERS SOCIETY INCORPORATED

GUIDELINES FOR SAFE DIVING PRACTICE & THE DIVER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

This section is an alphabetical guide to the safe practices of sports diving as recommended by the Botany Bottom Scratchers Society Incorporated. The ideas expressed within reflect the current thinking of the elected Committee and the advice on which it is acting.

Diving is an adventure sport and like all adventure sports its participants require differing levels of enjoyment and challenge. At one extreme we have the equivalent of the Himalayan mountaineer who, in peak condition accepts the challenge of new routes and exploration. At the other extreme we have the equivalent of the weekend summer climber who potters around on popular well-climbed rock faces.

What is safe diving practice for the former may well be very perilous for the latter and so the contents of this booklet are not a set of rigid rules but recommendations for safe diving practices. Some of these recommendations can be amended depending upon the particular type of diving being planned and the experience and capabilities of the two divers carrying out the dive, underlined text can not be amended.

Where appropriate the advice in this section is also applicable to snorkel diving.

The Diver's Code of Conduct is appended to the end of this booklet. It contains sensible advice on the conduct of all dives, and is seen as complementary to the guidance given here.

Botany Bottom Scratchers Committee

Access/Egress
Ensure that your access to the water is safe and that you can successfully regain contact with your boat/beach/shore. Always ensure, when diving from the land, that it is possible to climb out at the planned exit point at varying states of the tide.

Air Reserve
Always ensure you have an adequate reserve of air (at least 25% of cylinder(s) capacity is strongly recommended) at the termination of a dive. The amount of air deemed to be an adequate 'reserve' will obviously depend on a number of factors including the size and working pressure of your main cylinder together with the depth and type of the dive - a standard figure is not appropriate. The reserve should be sufficient for a normal ascent, plus any decompression stops, and to allow adequate amounts for surface swimming. Remember that rates of air consumption can vary enormously with the effects of cold, fitness, experience and depth and you should monitor your own and your buddy's air supply regularly.

Alternative Air Sources (AAS)
The Club strongly recommends that all divers carry an alternative air source (AAS) in the event that they may need to share air underwater.
Suitable AAS include an 'Octopus Rig' (a second 2nd stage fitted to the same 1st stage of the regulator, which includes the type fitted to a direct feed). In this case divers should be aware that a first stage failure on their regulator will affect both second
stages and render them in-operative.
A more strongly recommended alternative, however, is a totally independent air supply such as a 'Pony cylinder' (a small 2-3 litre auxiliary cylinder attached to the main cylinder with its own regulator assembly) or separate regulators attached to each cylinder of a matched pair. If a manifold is fitted to the pair of cylinders, making them into a 'twin-set', it should allow the diver the ability to isolate each cylinder/regulator assembly should a failure occur.

Altitude
Diving at altitude, or travelling to altitude (including flying), either before or after diving, involves the diver being exposed to a reduced atmospheric pressure. This can both affect the decompression procedures required and increase the diver's susceptibility to decompression illness. Decompression Tables, & Diving computers have been specifically designed to allow the various factors involved to be taken into account in a simple manner. They should be used for all dives at altitude and also for determining whether a particular dive/journey sequence involving an excursion to altitude is permissible.

Ascent Rate
Maintaining a safe rate of ascent is vitally important in preventing possible decompression illness and the risk of gas embolism. Decompression Tables have been calculated on a maximum ascent rate of 15 metres per minute up to your safety stop at 5 metres, once your safety stop is complete, it is recommended that you take 1 minute to ascend to the surface. Some dive computers incorporate slower ascent rates of 10 metres per minute but all divers are recommended to follow the practice of taking 1 minute to ascend from 5 metres to the surface.
Repeated multiple ascents should be avoided as they may result in decompression illness. Particular care should be taken when carrying out various ascent training drills, for which specific advice is available.

'Saw tooth' dive profiles which involve repeatedly ascending and descending over an uneven bottom should be avoided, but the practice of returning to the surface from maximum depth in stages is encouraged.

Authorised Club Dives
An authorised dive by Botany Bottom Scratchers is one carried out with the prior knowledge and approval of the Club Committee. All Club dives should be carried out in accordance with current rules and recommendations for safe diving.

Boats
Ensure your boats operate at slow speed in any area where divers are below. Those in the boat should keep close watch for divers surfacing unexpectedly.
When dropping divers into the water, or retrieving them, ensure the engine is in neutral, and that they are well clear of the propeller before you engage gear. All boats should be properly equipped before taking them to sea, in accordance with Club guidelines.
When using boats take note of the recommendations for boat users laid down in the Diver's Code of Conduct.

Buddy Diving
It is important for safe diving that divers are formed into appropriate buddy pairs. Buddy diving means a pair of divers operating as a unit, each taking some responsibility for the safety of the other. On every dive one diver, usually the senior in grade or experience, should be elected as the dive leader.
When snorkelling, dive alternately so that the snorkeller underwater is covered by their buddy at the surface.

Buddy Lines
In conditions of poor visibility, you may wish to use a buddy line to retain contact with your buddy. A line two to three metres long is ideal, with a shackle or small karabiner spliced to each end. This allows it to be looped over wrists, if so desired, or it can be clipped to a suitable piece of equipment e.g. BCD, to leave both hands free.

Buoyancy Compensators (BCD)
Divers need to be able to adjust their buoyancy underwater to compensate for buoyancy losses due to pressure changes on descent, and then to jettison this buoyancy as they ascend. This may be provided by inflation of a dry suit or by means of some buoyancy compensation device. Total reliance on a drysuit is not sensible and a suitable buoyancy compensator should be worn on every open water dive. Most are made in various sizes and care should be taken to choose the correct size and amount of buoyancy offered. All buoyancy compensators must have a direct feed mechanism for routine buoyancy adjustment.
The diver's other requirements for a buoyancy system are to stay afloat at the surface or to give emergency buoyancy whilst rescuing or being rescued. An inflated drysuit is not a good solution in these surface situations and drysuited divers must wear a buoyancy compensator to maintain and control buoyancy safely.

Compressors
For safety reasons only properly trained and competent people should operate compressors. If you use a portable petrol or diesel engine take care not to have the air intake in a place where fumes may be ingested with the air, and never use the compressor in a site where it is an annoyance to other people. It is essential that air

of a high standard of purity is delivered.

Computers
Dive computers offer accurate and automatic recording of depth and time and continuously calculate the diver's decompression requirements according to the depth and duration of the dive. Computers are also available with advanced features such as the ability to calculate decompression requirements for a variety of Nitrox mixes and mixed gases, and also to monitor available air and air consumption rates. The use of a dive computer is no substitute for proper dive planning, including proper attention to air requirements and dive time.
Individual susceptibility to decompression illness varies and can be affected by a number of factors, for which no computer or decompression table is able to allow. Divers should be aware of this and avoid pushing computers beyond their personal limits.

Cylinders (Air)
The current test and inspection specifications approved by Occupational Health and Safety are that diving cylinders must be tested according to the New Zealand standards. These standards call for diving cylinders to be visually inspected every year, and subjected to a hydrostatic test every two years. Divers should ensure that test stations carry out their tests in accordance with New Zealand standards and should obtain a test certificate which states this. The cylinder should be stamped by the test station after every Hydrostatic inspection / test and a plastic label attached to indicate when a visual inspection has been conducted.

Cylinders (Nitrox and Mixed Gas)
Cylinders for use with Nitrox and Mixed Gas should be dedicated to this use, marked with a suitable label that clearly identifies the gas mixture contained (oxygen percentage) and the Maximum Operating Depth (MOD).
Cylinders should be regularly (usually annually) cleaned to oxygen service standard. Oxygen service standard is essential where the oxygen content is 23% or greater and the cylinder is likely to be filled using pure oxygen and the partial pressure method. Nitrox cylinders should have a maximum working pressure of 250 bar. Cylinder contents should always be analysed at the time of filling and again immediately prior to the dive. Ensure that other divers are aware of the dangers of using mixed gas, when you are using Nitrox on a dive trip.

Decompression
All dives involve some decompression, which normally takes place during the ascent and subsequent period on the surface. It follows that it is as important to correctly perform these stages as it is to monitor the dive itself. Decompression computers can assist in this if they are correctly used and are programmed to an appropriate algorithm.
It is important to realise that both tables and computers are unable to make allowance for factors such as age, fitness, exertion, obesity and injuries, which may all significantly affect susceptibility to decompression illness (DCI). Divers should therefore be aware of these factors and avoid diving beyond their personal limits. Take particular care when planning repeat dives. Where two or more dives are being made the same day it is good practice to carry out the deepest dive first. It is also good practice to achieve maximum depth as early in the dive as possible and to avoid descending once any ascent has commenced.
Decompression illness symptoms vary between those so sudden, that immediate air

evacuation to a chamber is vital, to those which may not become apparent for some hours. Some of these less dramatic symptoms, such as tingling and numbness, may well be delayed but can be more serious and produce greater disability than the excruciating pain often associated with DCI in a joint. Tingling and numbness are included in this category.
Severe DCI symptoms, occurring at sea, require rapid transfer of the subject to a recompression chamber, laid flat on their back and if possible, the administration of 100% oxygen and fluids. Being bounced, repeatedly, in a small boat is almost certainly going to worsen the symptoms rather than help the situation.
For assistance with decompression illness, advice in New Zealand can be obtained from the Diver Emergency Service at the Slark Hyperbaric unit, Devonport Naval Base, via the following 24-hour telephone number:
0800 4337111.
When at sea, contact should be made via the Coastguard.

Decompression Stops

Dives requiring decompression stops should be well planned beforehand and executed according to recommended techniques using a diving computer with the capability to calculate decompression requirements. Avoid deciding upon decompression stops once in the water.
An accurate means of measuring depth and time is essential, as is an appropriate means of controlling the depth of the stops, such as a shotline.
Any diver who has missed planned decompression stops could be suffering from decompression illness and should be returned to the shore as quickly as possible. No attempt should be made to carry out any form of re-entry decompression as this inevitably worsens the situation. The diver should be treated as a potential casualty, kept quiet and administered oxygen and oral fluids. Emergency advice should be sought and their recommended actions followed - see the section on Decompression for contact information.

Decompression Tables

Dive planning tables promote safer diving practices, particularly by encouraging slow, controlled ascent procedures and allow divers for the first time to make allowance for atmospheric pressure changes due to weather or changes in altitude. Due to the wide variations in human physiology and the large number of factors that can affect your susceptibility to decompression illness, no table can guarantee to protect you against all risk. Whenever diving the following advice should be taken into account:

1. The maximum recommended depth for recreational diving, when using air, is 40m. Specific depth restrictions, appropriate to skill level and experience, are applicable to some diving grades (see Depth). When carrying out two or more dives in one day, perform the deepest dive first.

2. It is recommended that no more than 3 dives be performed in any 24 hours, and any dive series involving consecutive days diving to 30m+ should be limited to three days, after which a 24 hour break should be taken.

3. Always be in control of your buoyancy, especially during the ascent, and observe the recommended ascent speeds. (15m/min to 5m and 1 min from 5m to the surface).

4. It is permissible to conduct slower descents and ascents, whilst remaining within the dive profile envelope, but multiple 'saw tooth' ascents and descents should be avoided.

5. Be aware that smoking, alcohol consumption, tiredness, age, increased body fat and any medical condition affecting the respiratory or circulatory systems may increase your risk of decompression illness. Susceptibility can also be increased with excessive physical exertion during or immediately after a dive.

Depth

A depth of 40 metres is recommended as the limit for normal recreational air diving. Within this limit divers have additional restrictions upon the maximum depth to which they should dive, dependent upon their diving grade.
There is a statistical evidence that decompression illness is more likely to occur on dives deeper than 40 metres, even though decompression tables may be strictly adhered to, and such occurrences are usually serious, with central nervous system involvement. When diving deeper than 35 metres, special care with planning is vital, and recommended deep diving practices should be adhered to.
When diving with oxygen enriched mixtures it is essential that the maximum operating depth for the mixture is adhered to. Failure to do so may have fatal consequences due to the onset of oxygen toxicity.

Distress at Sea

Distress at sea can range from an extreme form of decompression illness, where life is threatened, to divers being lost on the surface having been swept away by the tide. Liason with the Coast guard using VHF radio is your first course of action. If your boat does not carry VHF radio it is sometimes possible to attract the attention of passing vessels who may radio on your behalf.
Flares can be used to attract attention, either from the shore or from other vessels in the area. It is important that flares are not wasted, so only fire them if there is someone likely to see your signal. Several Maritime and Coastguard Agency reports, each year, indicate that some divers leave it too long before raising the alarm. Do not delay too long if you are convinced problems are arising which you cannot control.
For distress at sea, where decompression illness is involved, see Decompression.

Dive Discipline

It is a rule of the CLUB that the Dive Supervisor has the authority of the Club Committee to suspend a member from diving if instructions are not obeyed.
(See Authorised Club Dives)

Dive Leadership

See Authorised Club Dives/Buddy Diving, also Dive Planning and Organisation.

Dive Planning and Organisation

When boat dives are taking place, make sure that a responsible person on shore has details of your dive plan and estimated time of return. The Coastguard is always grateful for a phone/radio call to brief them of your intentions, and confirmation that you have returned to shore safely. Accurate records of diver training, dives and expeditions should be kept at all times. Individual divers need to ensure that they inform the dive supervisor with truthful & accurate information of their dive profile & any other concerns as soon as they can following a dive.

Diving Flag
The International Code Flag 'A' should always be flown when divers are in the water. For small boats it should be at least 1 metre square and should have the means to fully extend it in calm conditions. It should not be flown when travelling to or from a dive site.

Diver Propulsion Vehicles
A Diver Propulsion Vehicle (DPV) is a very effective and effortless way for the diver to cover a large underwater area. By riding, or being dragged along by the DPV, the diver is provided with greater mobility and range for the dive, as well as breathing a reduced amount of the appropriate breathing mixture due to the reduced effort required for motion. Such a reduction in gas consumption may therefore also allow the diver to spend a longer period of time underwater, subject to the personal decompression requirements.
The major risks related to DPVs are listed as follows:
Difficulty looking at, and therefore properly monitoring, pressure, depth and other gauges whilst holding on to the DPV. However the diver can pause from time to time to review these instruments.
Loss of equipment due to the speed of the DPV. The diver will need to ensure that all ancillary equipment such as torches etc. is securely strapped to the person, and, in addition, do not dangle from the body where they could fall into the propeller guard.
Barotrauma and other pressure related injuries could occur as a consequence of a rapid descent, and particularly on the ascent. Due to the potential speed that the diver may travel using a DPV, these vehicles should not be used for the descent and ascent phases of the dive.
It is important that both members of a buddy pair use DPVs, since if only one member of the pair has such a vehicle then it is quite possible that the pair may become separated due to their obvious different speeds of movement through the water.

Diver Recall Systems
When divers need to be recalled to the surface and a buddy pair are using SMB's a pre-arranged signal on the line is sufficient. Though a weight tapping against the ladder of the boat is usually audible.

Drugs
If you are taking prescribed medication of any kind, do not dive unless clearance has been given by an approved Medical Referee.

Drysuits
There are two main types of drysuit in common use, the membrane type (which requires adequate undersuit thermal protection) and foam neoprene drysuits. Each type has different weighting requirements. The buoyancy a drysuit provides cannot be guaranteed to support a diver on the surface safely - the air in the suit is too easily vented when swimming or in rescue situations. For this reason, plus the common sense of having a 'redundant' method of obtaining controlled buoyancy, a buoyancy compensator (BCD) is worn.
Drysuit training can be undertaken by the Club sheltered water/pool training, is essential before progressing to open water. Do not wear excess weight when using a drysuit, wear just sufficient to be neutrally buoyant at 6 metres with a nearly empty cylinder. Divers have experienced problems on ascents because they have used both buoyancy compensator and drysuit to compensate for buoyancy loss, and have

not enough hands to operate all the controls plus coping with whatever else they might be carrying.
The Club recommends that drysuited divers adjust their buoyancy underwater by introducing air into their drysuits, rather than into their buoyancy compensators.

Fitness to Dive
Diving uses as much energy as moderate to heavy work. Before resuming diving, after a lay off, you are advised to regain physical fitness, practice basic underwater skills in the pool or sheltered water training area and complete a series of 'work up' dives before diving to depth. Ensure all divers are both physically and psychologically fit for the dives they plan to undertake.

Flares
Orange smoke and red handheld/parachute flares should be carried by all dive boats in order to attract attention when in difficulties at sea. Similar flares, in waterproof containers, are available for divers to carry in the event of them becoming lost at sea. Flares should not be used for signalling purposes in a non-emergency situation.

Flying and Diving
Flying or travelling to altitude after diving can give rise to decompression illness, it may also increase the risk of decompression illness on a subsequent dive. It is therefore recommended that divers use Decompression Tables or a computer dive planning function to forecast whether your intentions are safe.

Hyperventilation
Hyperventilation, before a snorkel dive, should be avoided at all costs, as it has the effect of flushing out carbon dioxide from the respiratory system. Build up of carbon dioxide, rather than lack of oxygen, creates the desire to breathe and, by getting rid of carbon dioxide in this way, snorkellers are more likely to suffer a 'blackout' through hypoxia (shortage of oxygen)

Ice Diving
See No Clear Surface.

Neutral Buoyancy
Neutral buoyancy is achieved when the diver is able to remain in a static position in the water and rises or falls as a result of breathing in and out. Comfortable diving means the achievement of neutral buoyancy, if required, at any stage of the dive. Correct weighting is critical to gaining neutral buoyancy easily, the diver should carry just enough weight to hold a 5m decompression stop with a nearly empty cylinder.

Night Diving
Night diving, especially in tidal waters, requires very careful planning. Each diver should have a working torch otherwise the dive should be terminated. Each diver should carry a backup torch or some other means of identifying their position if their main torch fails. An efficient system of marking the point of exit must be employed. Care must be taken with diver to diver signals to ensure that the torch highlights the hand signals used and is not shone directly into the diver's buddy’s eyes.

Nitrogen Narcosis
Nitrogen Narcosis decreases a person's ability to cope with emergencies, slows down reaction and realisation time and increases the risk of an accident. There is

strong evidence to suggest that 40m should be regarded as the maximum depth for most sports divers, as below this depth narcosis problems can become debilitating.

Nitrox

The use of Nitrox (nitrogen/oxygen mixtures where the oxygen content is greater than that of air) as a breathing gas can provide a safety benefit in terms of a reduced risk of decompression illness, or enable longer dive times/shorter decompression stop requirements with little added risk. The use of Nitrox has certain disadvantages which require training and suitable equipment to minimise the risk.
Properly trained and qualified Club members are permitted to use Nitrox on Club dives, with the approval of the Dive Supervisor.
Failure to observe the Maximum Operating Depth for any gas mixture may have fatal consequences due to the onset of oxygen toxicity. (See Cylinders (Nitrox and Mixed Gas)).

No Clear Surface

(Cave Diving, Ice Diving, Diving inside Wrecks)
Members wishing to dive in caves should contact the appropriate cave diving organisations, as this is very specialised diving, in terms of technique and equipment, and is not covered by recreational diver training organisations.
Diving under ice should only be undertaken with a surface party of at least two. This allows one to tender the divers, while the other is free, if required for any reason, including an emergency. One of the divers must be securely roped to the surface, if diving in pairs, and contact between them should be by means of a buddy line.
Wrecks should not be penetrated without proper training and equipment. (See Wreck Diving)

Odd Numbers

It is very strongly recommended that diving in 'odd numbers' be avoided, as the 'odd man out', to some extent, is without a buddy.
(See Buddy Diving).

Oxygen

The administration of 100% pure oxygen following a decompression accident is recognised as an effective FIRST AID TREATMENT and may result in much less serious injuries. It SHOULD NEVER be regarded as a substitute for recompression, which is the only effective treatment in such cases. Members who have taken part in appropriate training courses and who have approved equipment, are recommended to use oxygen to treat divers showing symptoms of decompression illness, while they are waiting for recompression treatment. Where 100% oxygen is unavailable as a therapy gas, a Nitrox mixture may be used, although the benefit will be much less than that of pure oxygen.
The use of Nitrox mixtures containing up to 80% oxygen is permitted for diving by properly trained and qualified Club members. Mixtures containing more than 80% oxygen are NOT recommended for use by recreational divers. (See also Rebreathers).

Pots and Markers

Dive well away from fishermen's buoys, pots and pot markers, unless there are special circumstances.

Rebreathers
Botany Bottom Scratchers does not currently advocate the use of rebreathers on Club diving trips.

Re-Entry Decompression
If a diver misses planned decompression stops, no attempt should be made to enter the water again in order to complete them. In this situation the diver is increasing the risk of decompression illness.

Repeat Dives
Decompression Tables should be used for planning and performing repeat dives. Where two or more dives are being made the same day, it is good practice to carry out the deepest dive first. You should also take care if you are involved in several days of diving deeper than 30m. It is possible to accumulate excess nitrogen over this period, and apparently 'innocent' dives, carried out near the end of the period of diving, can cause decompression illness. It is therefore recommended that any dive series involving consecutive days diving to 30m+ is limited to three days, after which a 24 hour break should be taken.
(See Decompression Tables).

Ropes
Divers should take great care with the use of ropes underwater. Reels for SMB use should float independently, have a quick release system such as a bayonet fitting snap lock and divers should be taught how to use them. When divers do get into difficulties on ascent it is often the best course of action to ditch the reel so that both hands are free to deal with the situation. When using a reel and line as a bottom distance line, we recommend that a reel and line which sinks is used and that when deploying line, hold the reel and line away from the body and especially the legs. It should also be recovered from in front of you. Never let a bight of line develop in front of you; slow down and wind in. Divers should always carry an adequate knife, especially when dealing with ropes.

Separated Divers
If divers become separated underwater, a brief attempt (approx. 30 seconds) to re-locate should be made, after which the divers should surface. If the dive is subsequently re-commenced appropriate decompression planning must first be carried out.

Signals
Divers should be completely familiar with the standard code of visual signals and should give them accurately and clearly. All signals should be acknowledged. The 'Come and get me' signal by a diver at the surface is to be used only for distress, and not as a 'Pick me up' signal.

Solo Diving
Solo diving should not be undertaken.

Stand-by Divers
On the majority of dives your stand-by diver is your buddy. A stand-by diver is usually only required when a solo dive, using a rope tender, is in operation.

Surface Marker Buoy (SMB)

SMBs should be used in significantly moving water, when operating well off shore and in areas with heavy surface traffic. There may be times, other than these stated, when their use might be deemed prudent by the dive supervisor. It is essential that correct training is given to new members in their use, as for any unfamiliar equipment.

Tangle Nets/Gill Nets

Indiscriminate fishing, particularly on wreck sites, with difficult-to-see monofilament netting, is a real hazard around the coast. Experiments have shown that the average diver's knife is very ineffective should the diver become entangled. A line cutter or a curved blade 'dinghy' knife, with a blunt end, are probably the most effective for this purpose and need to be worn on the arm. A knife with a sharp point could lead to a diver stabbing himself when in difficulties. Small shears or scissors are recommended as an effective tool for cutting netting. Once caught in netting, it is advisable to partially inflate your BCD, so you rise inside the net, putting it under tension and making it easier to cut. The positive buoyancy will also help to 'tear' you away. If your buddy is free of the netting they may be advised to cut you out, still enmeshed, and worry about completing the job on the surface.

Tides

The success of any sea dive depends on accurate, local, tidal predictions for the dive site you wish to visit. Naval charts give accurate large scale predictions and should be used in conjunction with the relevant local tide tables. Where possible, dives should be undertaken at slack water.

VHF Radio

VHF radios are a valuable aid to safety at sea and, together with suitable waterproof housings, are frequently used in small boats.
Radios should only be used by, or under the supervision of, someone who holds an appropriate Certificate of Competence.

Weather

Acquiring an accurate weather forecast for your dive site can save a lot of unnecessary travelling expense and can mean the difference between a controlled successful dive and a risky experience.
Some daily newspapers carry a good forecast with weather map, the Coastguard always has an up to date forecast and the Meteorological Office (Met Office) provides a telephone message service: its helpline is 0900 999 (+ area code for planned dive).

Weightbelts/Integrated Weight Systems

weight systems, when used, should always be fitted with a reliable quick release and fitted so that they will always fall clear of other equipment when released. You should be practised in releasing your weights and should also make sure that your buddy is well briefed and fully familiar with your release mechanism, if using a belt it should be a right hand release for you. If the buckle is of the same type as on the cylinder harness, it is wise to alter the harness so that it operates in the opposite direction.

Wreck Diving

Wreck diving is one of the most popular forms of diving and requires extra safety precautions if divers venture inside the wreck. Many steel wrecks are in a dangerous state of decay, and loose overhead objects or steel plates are a real hazard. Never venture deep inside a wreck without ensuring your route to clear water is certain, and

use a reel and line secured to the outside of the wreck to mark your return route. Avoid excessive finning inside a wreck as sediment stirred up is very slow to settle, due to lack of tidal flow. Always allow an adequate reserve of air at the end of your dive and never run down your air supply when attempting to remove an artefact. Never try to lift heavy objects from wrecks using your BCD and/or drysuit.
See Diver's Code of Conduct

THE DIVER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

More and more people are taking to the water. Some for recreation; some to earn their living. This code is designed to ensure that divers do not come into conflict with other water users and sets out some guidelines which should be observed alongside the regulations relating to Marine Nature Reserves.

Before leaving home
Contact the dive operator local to the dive site for their advice. Seek advice from them about the local conditions and regulations. If appropriate, have the correct chart and tide tables for the area to be dived.

On the beach, river bank or lakeside

1. Obtain permission before diving in a harbour or estuary or in private water. Thank those responsible before you leave. Pay harbour dues.
2. Try to avoid overcrowding one site, consider other people on the beach.
3. Park sensibly. Avoid obstructing narrow approach roads. Keep off verges. Pay parking fees and use proper car parks.
4. Don't spread yourselves and your equipment since you may upset other people. Keep launching ramps and slipways clear.
5. Please keep the peace. Don't operate a compressor within earshot of other people - or late at night.
6. Pick up litter. Close gates. Be careful about fires. Avoid any damage to land or crops.
7. Obey rules and local bye-laws and regulations about camping and caravanning.

In and on the water

1. Ask the harbour-master or local officials where to launch your boat - and do as they say. Tell the Coastguard, or a responsible person, where you are going and tell them when you are back.
2. Stay away from buoys, pots, and pot markers. Ask local fishermen where not to dive. Avoid driving through rafts of seabirds or seal colonies etc.
3. Remember ships have not got brakes, so avoid diving in fairways or areas of heavy surface traffic and observe the 'International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea'.
4. Always fly the diving flag when diving, but not when on the way to, or from, the dive site. Never leave a boat unattended.
5. Exhibit caution when coming in to bathing beaches under power. Use any special approach lanes. Do not disturb any seal or bird colonies with your boats. Watch your wash in crowded anchorages.

On conservation

1. Never use a speargun when using scuba equipment.

2. Shellfish, such as crabs and Crayfish, take several years to grow to maturity; over-collecting in an area soon depletes stocks. Observe MOF laws and restrictions on the season, size & number of your catch.

3. Be conservation conscious. Avoid damage to weeds and the sea bed. Do not bring up sea-fans, corals, starfish or sea urchins - in one moment you can destroy years of growth.

On wrecks

1. Protected wrecks are wrecks that have been sunk for over 100 years.

2. Military wrecks should not be disturbed or items removed from them. This includes the debris field. The debris field is the trail of wreckage that comes away from the main body of the wreck during the sinking process. This trail can consist of parts of the ship, the cargo and the personal possessions of the crew.

3. Do not lift anything that may be of archaeological importance.

4. If you do discover what might be an historic wreck do not talk about it, but contact the Police, who will advise you about your next steps. If your find is important you may apply for it to be designated a protected wreck site. You can then build up a well-qualified team with the right qualifications to investigate your site with the assistance of a qualified archaeologist.

5. If you do lift any material from the sea-bed, it is a legal requirement to report it to the Receiver of Wreck as soon as reasonably possible, even if you own the wreck that the material has come from.

6. Know and understand wreck law. If you remove material from wreck, which you then sell for profit, you are diving for reward, which is outside the scope of sport diving and you must conduct your dives in strict accordance with OSH regulations. A sound knowledge of wreck law will prevent you breaking the law, perhaps even ending up with a criminal record where no crime was intended.

Members are reminded that in the light of this policy following any conviction of any Club member for an offence in relation to the code of conduct the member will be liable to have his or her membership withdrawn for bringing the Botany Bottom Scratchers into disrepute.

Don't let divers down - keep to the diver's code
