



Tech 1 Course February 2005

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Who:

- John Kendall
- David Martin
- Andy Kerslake- **Instructor**

Where:

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Part 1:

Day 1 - Tuesday 22 Feb 2005

Moral started quite low, as today was the coldest day of the year, snow threatened to make travelling "interesting". We had originally planned to take the course with Iain Smith but his rota organiser wouldn't give him the time off. We both managed to get to the B+B (Willowmead in Sapcote) by about 1430. Andy was still travelling so John started to write up the report, rather than worrying about what was to come on the course.

The afternoon was spent on theory, going through what we would be doing on the dives, the class aims and limits. We then started the theory with a bit of a recap of the stuff from Fundamentals: Environment, Equipment and Team awareness. This was followed by more about "Minimum Gas" (What used to be Rock Bottom) as well as some more gas planning type stuff. All pretty easy, apart from the silly American conversions (Luckily we don't actually need to use those).

We retired to the pub at 8ish for some grub, and lots of chatting about various diving things. John had a GPRS connection, so we were able to upload bits of the report in the evenings, as well as look at the "encouraging" feedback on the Yorkshire Divers' forum. Starting at 7:30 tomorrow morning. Arrggghhh!

Day 2 - Wednesday 23 Feb 2005

Started off the day with a fry-up at the B+B, John had a splitting headache and the beginnings of a cold. Not exactly what's wanted. After breakfast it was into the garden for some line laying practice. We have both done some of this before, so it was not entirely new. However some of the fine detail of zero-vis line following was quite interesting, especially in 4 inches of snow! In a sense of what was to come, Andy took great pleasure in allowing us to make things awkward for ourselves. David was encouraged to lay a course through the trees, whilst John's course criss-crossed the icy path and included a couple of ties on moveable objects. Andy had said that each tie would add about one minute to the time taken to follow the course in zero-vis; if anything this was probably an underestimate.

We then went back inside to warm up and to get a briefing on today's dives, before heading over to Stoney. All of the dives in this part of the course would involve line-laying. The line was primarily to act as a distraction, and whenever things went wrong, we would have to follow it back towards the primary tie-off.

Dive 1 - 43mins 5.8m 5deg in water, 1deg on surface

We were supposed to start the dive with an S-drill followed by a Valve drill. We'd got a little confused however and did a modified S-drill, then valve drills. Both of us need to try and move less while doing the valve drills. Then we did full S-drills before going into line laying. David had the line and after putting in the primary tie-off we struggled to find a suitable secondary. The video review later showed several suitable places that we'd missed. As Andy pointed out, in open water there is no need for there to be particularly large distance between the primary and secondary ties. As we headed out our neuroses began to play on us, every little sound might be Andy's bubble-gun. However, once we'd heard it for real, these minor sounds were far less worrying.

While David was laying out the line, the dreaded bubble gun came into play for the first time as John heard lots of bubbles over his left shoulder. He quickly shut it down and signalled for David to come and look. "Luckily" it was a simple failure and so David could re-open that valve. Situation resolved, we continued the dive. The next failure was somewhat of a phantom. David was so paranoid about Andy and his

bubble gun that he thought it was going behind his right shoulder, and so shut down and signalled to John. Later while watching the video, we still couldn't work out what he was reacting to!

Andy let David continue past the "tap" structure and out towards the reeds, where the tie-offs become harder to find. Once a reasonable amount of line had been let out he called an out-of-gas emergency. As David turned he allowed the line to go slack and billow-up. Since the next tie-off wasn't far away David thought that it would be OK to leave the slack and swim back along the line. But with a couple of deft hand movements Andy showed us the error of this plan. As we dealt with one entanglement another one appeared until we had removed enough of the slack line for it not to be a hazard.

David then took the reel again, searching for an elusive tie-off again. At this point John "lost" his mask. (Due to the cold water we were permitted to shut our eyes rather than take the mask off for most drills). David put John onto the line, but since it wasn't taught John was unable to feel it, and slowly drifted up and forwards. After the last drill's line entanglement, David focussed a little too much on reeling the line in, only watching John, rather than maintaining contact with him. Andy hit John's wing inflate, and he started to drift up. We tried to fin down and dump gas, but it was too little too late. Our only slight consolation was that Andy had got tangled in the line at this point so was looking less than his usual cool self.

This was the first time that we'd really had to deal with multiple problems, and to prioritise issues. We were also learning quite fast about line management.

Dive 2 - 48mins 6.4m 5deg in water 1deg on surface, still snowing

This dive was much the same as the last, with the addition of a 5-minute ascent/descent drill, and DSMB deployments. We started with S-drills and valve drills which mostly went OK, however John had a bit of an issue with opening his left post. John was running the line this dive, and was hyper paranoid about team awareness, however he failed to notice Andy stealing his reel and clipping it to David. Again we had the usual multitude of valve failures, out of gas emergencies and blind divers, which we managed to survive.

Situational awareness was a little low when Andy managed to balance a 4ft plastic pipe on John's twinset. David tried to tell him to look at his back, not realising that he would be unable to see it - a diver's head is not swivel mounted! The ascent/descent drill was very very messy, Andy gave up videoing - we all knew it was that bad. We'll need to practice this a bit more. DSMB deployments were a bit slow. We then misinterpreted Andy's "up" for "swim that way", and headed underwater towards the steps. We soon found the DSMBs coming down to meet us, and taking this as Andy being unhappy about their deployment, wound them in and re-deployed. Once again we'd missed the point - the priority is the ascent timing, not the state of the DSMBs. Kerslake had struck again!

We got out, got changed and headed back to the B+B for some more theory and review of the video. John gained a beer fine for failing to clip off his primary reg during an out of gas drill on the first dive that was only noticed on the video. We then retired to the pub for a Chinese meal.

Day 3 - Thursday 24 Feb 2005

We're dead Dave...everybody's dead Dave!

Today started off with another fry-up and then some more theory. As a break John took a quick trip down to Stoney to drop off our sets for filling (£26 for 32% in two sets of twin 12s!!!!) Then a bit more theory. We went down to Stoney for dives 3 and 4, at somepoint during dive 3 it stopped snowing.

Today Andy was going to introduce "complex" valve failures. The failures that we had yesterday were all fixable, ie after a brief pause the post could be re-opened. Today Andy would indicate whether a failure was permanent or not. We would also often find that we would have shut down the "wrong" post - Andy's bubble gun would move. In situations like this that another team member can help out; whilst everyone should be comfortable reaching their own valves, a team member can see what's bubbling, rather than just guessing.

Dive 3 - 42mins 9.1m 5deg in water, 1 deg on surface.

The usual S-drills and valve drills went OK until David's backup decided to freeflow, thereby turning the valve drill into a real failure. We fixed this and carried on. David started laying the line, and the dreaded bubble gun reappeared. This time moving around behind John's head. He turned off the left post (Which is where the bubbles were) but they moved, so closed the isolator and told David "my left post is off" (ask someone to demonstrate the signal) while the bubbles were still appearing behind his head. David then re-opened John's left post. The drill moved slightly faster than suggested in the briefing since John had worked out what was going on, and switched to his backup as soon as it was turned back on. David then closed the right post, and the bubbles finally stopped. We both made an error at the end of the drill: David assumed that the failure was permanent, rather pausing and trying to turn the valve on again. John failed to do a flow check however after the drill and didn't realise his isolator was still closed (Doh!).

Since John was now running with a failure, we swapped positions, with John running the line in front. Just after dropping over the edge of the 6m shelf, Andy told John to go out-of-gas. In the process of turning around, and getting David's reg, we managed to get a bit tangled in the line, and John's backup started free flowing. David closed John's left post as John sorted the line. As John was sorting the line which had now got caught on David's manifold (is line magnetic?) David's backup also started freeflowing. David resisted the initial instinct to turn the post off and waited for John to sort the line out. Once the line had been sorted we were left with headed back along the line fairly quickly. John had both posts closed, and David had a freeflow...fun! After checking his contents gauge a couple of times David could tell that the gas loss wasn't actually that great and that we could complete the exit like this without concern or compromising the second dive.

Having survived that, we were wondering what was next. Blind diver was the answer. We managed to avoid getting totally tangled this time (result!) and John lead David back along the line. It took a little while to start moving, but as we were learning it's better to sort stuff out before

it becomes a problem, and a short pause to deal with stuff is often sensible. Even the short ascent from 9 to 6m added quite a bit of complexity. The drill was a bit messy but we achieved our goal without dying.

We retrieved the line, and then started a 6-minute ascent from 6m. We have done these hundreds of times. Andy didn't need to Video it. We were shit. Enough said.

A couple of quick kit maintenance issues which we had neglected to sort earlier: David had to de-tune his backup and clean the schraeder valve of the drysuit, whilst John had to swap his primary reg and wing inflate.

Dive 4 - 35mins 9.1m 5deg in water, 1 deg on surface

We started this time with a modified S-drill and flow check as time was quite tight. John was running the line on this dive, so tied in on what was becoming quite a familiar metal post. He also put the secondary in nice and tightly (due to a suspicion of what was to come). As John was laying the line over the slope, David had an out-of-gas issue (this was also becoming a bit of a habit!), so John turned around with reg out-stretched, backup in, dealt with reel, and then back along the line. The only issue with this drill was David forgot to clip off his long hose. Andy picked it up, considered tying it around the manifold but thought better of it and let it fall back over David's right shoulder. This coincided with David remembering that he hadn't clipped it off, so he did only to find as he looked up that Andy had cut the drill.

We returned down the line, John had just put in a tie-off at 9m when his mask was requested by the Evil Blue Glove. Five-degree water is quite harsh on the face. David was a couple of metres further back having just rearranged where the line went over the cliff edge, and having seen the Blue Glove headed towards John as fast as he could, only to find that the Blue Glove wanted his mask off too. After struggling with putting the mask on the back of his head David tried to search for John who was dealing with holding the reel and his mask and trying to find David. When we made contact we established that neither of us had masks - John was still holding his and after bashing David's head a couple of times found that David didn't have a mask of his own either. John was having issues controlling his breathing due to the cold, so put his mask back on. (Andy had said before that if we had issues with the cold to replace the mask and close our eyes). Meanwhile David was wondering if he'd found John or Andy - he'd opened his eyes when John had knocked his face and seen blue gloves. (He'd forgotten that not John was also wearing blue dry-gloves - not all blue dry-gloves are Evil Blue Gloves.)

We managed to get ourselves back to the top of the slope, where David decided that the light wasn't serving any useful purpose, so might as well be clipped off. Then things started going wrong. David was leading and noticed that the line was loose. He assumed that Andy had pulled off a tie-off off tried to take up the slack in the line. However the slack got greater, and he had soon pulled the all of the line towards him (mistake no.1). David found the end of the line, which had been cut. Andy informed us afterwards that a vicious pike was to blame, but that it had moved to fast for the video... Since we hadn't learned many touch signals, all David could say to John was "hold". It was time for some improvisation.

David pulled out his spool and started to tie into the line. He made the minor mistake of detaching the boltsnap before completing the tie, so was trying to find one bit of slack line to tie to another bit of slack line (without being able to see). This was made slightly easier since David wears thin sailing gloves which leave the tip of the thumb and forefinger exposed so he could at least feel the line when holding it. However he'd already made another two serious mistakes (the first being pulling the cut line): (2) he hadn't re-packed his pocket when removing the spool, so Andy had clipped a double-ender to the line behind him, (3) he hadn't secured the slack line.

David then signalled to move, planning to search for the missing line (or more realistically the distinctive spiky post that it had been tied to. This was mistake number 4; when searching like this, one team member should be left as a fixed reference point rather than everyone moving and losing further location information (the "fixed point of lostness"). Shortly after moving Andy cut the drill. We were running out of time (we needed to be out of the water by 4pm), and Andy had concluded that we had got ourselves into enough of a mess to be "dead". Back on the surface David protested that he would have liked to continue a bit more just to see if he could have got back, we had at least another hour worth of gas left. In actual fact we were only about 2m from the rest of the line. 2m with no sight is a hell of a way though.

Then all that was left was to reel in the line, and try to get back to the surface without actually killing ourselves. We managed that, but we a bit dispondent about the drill. Andy said that the point of the drill was communication and situation management, not survival. It turns out that only one team has ever managed to find their way back to the start on any of Andy's courses; however, this didn't really make us feel any better.

So back to the B+B to warm up and the last of the theory. Deco on the Fly. I could tell you how to do it, but then I'd have to Kill you! :-). Retired to the Mill on the Soar for supper (The carvery was running) and chat about diving and the joys of video!

Day 4 - Friday 25 Feb 2005

Theory Exam

Started today as previously with a fry-up. John's cold had been getting worse over the last few days, and he felt really grotty today. Just right for trying to do the theory exam. The exam is open book, and designed as a discussion between the participants. It is very much weighted towards the dive planning questions. We managed to come up with the same answers to everything, and managed not to get anything wrong. It did take a while to get there though.

Dive 5 - 57mins 6.4m 5deg in water, 1 deg on surface

Today we added a stage bottle into the mix. Started the dive with S-drills and valve drills. Amazingly the stage bottles seemed to unclip "themselves" while we were doing the valve drills, however we were paranoid enough to keep checking them, and so noticed before getting too tangled. We then moved onto laying line again. The tails on the lower boltsnaps were both too long, (we'd lengthened them when using multiple stage cylinders, and had forgotten to loop the long ends through to shorten them) which added to our general poor appearance on

the video. Today David's reel decided that it was going to tangle itself. No really. Aside from causing him to put it down with slack line by introducing a complex valve failure as he was struggling to make the secondary tie-off, Andy had nothing to do with it. In fact it took the 3 of us a good few minutes to untangle it (by undoing the primary tie and working the line back through the knot from the other direction) before moving on with the dive.

After a few more complex valve failures, it was time for a no-mask gas-share: John found himself blind again, with David out of gas. Not wishing to repeat the floating-up on loose line incident from before David got John to hold onto a post on the "pegboard" (now covered by the Armoured Personnel Carrier) as he sorted things out; he locked the reel and put it down about 2 inches from a tie-off that he'd wrapped a few turns of spare line round. Since we'd already done no-mask gas-shares, Andy added some extra "fun". He unclipped John's stage's lower clip, which John quickly noticed and re-attached. Then, as we moved off he unlocked the reel and chased after us wrapping it round David's manifold. David put John onto a suitable holding point (the bottom of the ladder to the bus stop) to work out what to do. David couldn't see where the line was caught, but could tell that it wasn't the line we were following, so he pulled his knife out, and after realising that Andy wasn't going to be nice and remove the line, he cut it. After this we continued swimming, and made it to the secondary tie before Andy cut the drill. We seemed to survive; it wasn't pretty, but we didn't die; which is an improvement.

We then retrieved the line. (This confused John a little as the reel was not attached to the line, nor was it where we had left it, but it made more sense later watching the video.) Next was a 5-minute ascent/descent drill with a gas-switch at 3m on the ascent, and restow at 3m on the descent. It took us about 8 minutes, not helped by John's stage reg snagging his contents gauge and jamming the reg hose. No idea how this happened (again it wasn't assisted by Andy). We then sent up our DSMBs and finished the dive.

We didn't manage to get the second dive in today due to time, but we did have a list of skills to work on before the next phase of our course, which we hoped would be in April once we've had a chance to work on some of the stuff. Skill-wise, John needed to work on dealing without a mask, and David needed to work on keeping his feet still. We both needed to do some ascent practice.

Part 2

Thursday 12th May 2005

Well today we didn't die.

Dive 6 - 57min, 13.1m, 10 deg in water

Started the day with a bit of a shake down dive. Nice and easy; well that's what we were told. We dropped down to 4m and did S-Drills and valve drills. A little bit messy but Ok. Then off to lay some line. John was looking for some of the rocks that we'd grown to love from the last part of our course. This would have been fine except someone seems to have dumped an Armoured Personnel Carrier on them!

He laid out the line a bit, and then saw flashing light, David's left post had "died". John checked it and turned it back on and we continued. Next was an out of gas drill, combined with some added "line issues" which were easily solved. Once that drill was finished we continued laying line. Then it happened again, we carelessly lost both of our masks. Whoops. This would have been fine (well to some version of fine) except that communication broke down a little bit and David didn't realise John also had no mask for almost 2/3 of the drill. We survived this just about, although we did find our line going a somewhat different route to the one we had laid, with a lot of slack and under a pile of rocks. It only took us 22 minutes to travel 25m!!!!!! Then back to the end of the line to retrieve it. Finally we ended the dive with a 6m ascent drill with gas switch. Not too bad, only about 1 minute over time.

Anyway, so much for the nice gentle shake down!!!!

Dive 7 - 35min, 20.4m, 10 deg in water

The 2nd dive was a 20m dive, started swimming off along the wall towards the Wessex, planning to then head towards the Stanegarth. However then plan was somewhat altered when suddenly David's lost his mask and John had no gas. Whoops, this is getting somewhat repetitive, we must stop doing this!!! When John took David's reg, David assumed that it was Andy telling him to be out of gas - and so dropped his reg and tried to get to John for gas. A reg was placed in his mouth, and he then tried to clip-off his long hose. He couldn't find it, nor was his back-up where he expected it to be. He then realised that John was breathing his long-hose which meant that he was unlikely to be breathing John's long-hose. Thus with the regs accounted for it was time to get on with the ascent. Some many minutes later we reached the surface. We had managed to gas switch. However, the less said about the ascent the better.

Then we moved on to unconscious diver and toxing diver drills. These were more fun than we were expecting however it would be rather different if we ever had to do this for real.

Friday 13th May 2005 - "Hump Day"

We had a leisurely and relaxing start, and got down to Stoney at just before 10 o'clock, where we met Claire (Gledders), Al (Star) and Andy (C), who were just getting out from a dive. After waiting for John's headache to subside and for his rather pungent dry-gloves to dry out in the sun we kitted up. Needless to say we were somewhat apprehensive about the dive!

Dive 8 - 36min, 35.1m, 6 deg in-water

Not the best of starts: John's dryglove leaked as he jumped in, whilst David's torch failed to light - the bulb had blown in spite of (or perhaps due to) checking it at the car. We left Andy with the stages whilst we changed the bulb. David probably didn't position it properly, since it refused to focus as tightly as it would normally do. Knowing that bad luck supposedly runs in threes we were almost hoping for a third problem before we got underwater. We started with a full "S"-Drill and then valve drill. John had a few issues with the valves on his (borrowed) set since they were stiffer than his own. No surprises then when Andy's bubblegun appeared behind John's head as we swam towards the pit. The failure moved from left to right and then miraculously resolved itself. We confirmed that everything was OK and headed down. Soon the edge of the 22m shelf appeared, the cold dark water of the deep pit looking none-too-inviting before us. We got to 35m, hovering above the bottom, expecting something to go wrong. Andy let the suspense play for a minute or so, then David lost his reg. No sooner had John donated his reg to him than the pike ate John's mask too.

Before starting the ascent, David looked at his Vyper: 21min. Once we left the bottom we got to 24m without too many issues, and the trim wasn't too bad. Sadly, things then deteriorated somewhat. The 24-21m move wasn't particularly sorted. We fell about 3 min behind on the gas switch. We never really settled at a stop depth; fortunately we didn't drop below it sufficiently to warrant switching back from to backgas from the 50% bottle (since David was out-of-gas, this would have required taking John's primary again). David also managed to twist John's long-hose and his own stage reg hose together as he deployed the stage reg. After John's gas switch we headed up. The next task was deploying the DSMB. Let's just say that this is somewhat easier in a team of three than two since attaching the spool to the DSMB really requires two hands, which David didn't have. Then just for added fun, David's stage reg decided to freeflow when he removed it to blow into the DSMB, fortunately it stopped when he put his tongue into the mouthpiece hole. Second time around it worked. With the DSMB sorted, all we now had to do was come up at 3m/min. This part of the ascent wasn't too bad - although certainly not pretty. Obviously not content with the problems so far, David also took the opportunity to get the DSMB line tangled round his manifold although not without some "assistance" from a certain nearby gloved-hand.

Back on the surface we were relieved to have made it. We'd overrun by a couple of minutes - the ascent had taken 15 minutes rather than 11. We'd also used quite a lot of gas. Our SACs were 25 and 28 L/min. We talked through some things, including some tricks for the sighted diver to cope with doing tasks whilst encumbered with the blind diver, and prepared ourselves for the repeat experience in dive 9.

Dive 9 - 25min, 34.8m, 6 deg in water

Started with a modified S-Drill and flow check at 4m ish. Then problem 3 occurred. John's left ear wouldn't clear. Damn! Luckily this sorted itself out by surfacing. We then headed back down towards the pit. We were somewhat less apprehensive this time as we pretty much knew what was going to happen. At the bottom of the pit the Pike was back. This time it ate David's mask. Amazingly, just after this happened John had "no gas". Grabbed David's long hose and he went onto backup. Then Up. Quite quick actually, Not too quick, but it felt fast at the time. We were much more controlled and relaxed on this dive (Well as much as you can be in this scenario!). Gas switch was much quicker, then headed up past 21m. John was so surprised by the gas switch working so well that he forgot about the DSMB. He remembered at about 18m-ish. Unfortunately David managed to get cramp in his legs at about this point too. However since there was very little he could do with this other than get to the surface we continued up. John wasn't going to let the line get slack on this dive so tried to keep it nice and tight. We got to the surface about 1 minute late, which is really not bad. However trim was fairly poor throughout the ascent; but there are times to look cool, and times when just surviving is more important. We both considered this to be one of those times. It was something of a relief to have completed this day. Probably the worst bit of the whole thing was on the first dive (dive 8) before the failures, but after getting to the bottom. We knew it was coming, just not when, or to whom.

Back on the surface, time to retrieve the DSMB and back to the cars. Then the video debrief, Not much on this that we hadn't already picked up on the dive, other than that John's quick and dirty reg servicing in the carpark obviously worked as neither his right post, nor his argon reg were bubbling on the afternoon dive.

Part 3(a)

Thursday 24th June 2005

Dive 10 - Salsette, bottom time 26min, total run time 64mins, 43.9m, 14 deg in water, 29 deg on surface

We had tried to book a couple of sea dives of approx 45m to do the two experience dives. Unfortunately we didn't manage this, but did get one booked on the Salsette. We've both dived this a few times before so were reasonably relaxed about the idea. Obviously we had the all seeing eyes of Andy K to cause us a little bit of apprehension. When we got up, the sun was shining, and there was no wind. Couldn't have asked for nicer conditions. Not wanting to tempt fate we both took a stugeron and had light breakfasts. When we got out to the wreck we were feeling quite warm, and so were quite happy to get into the water and down the shot. John was leading and was going to run the Deco, David was going to deal with the DSMB. There was a little bit of current running, which was slightly annoying as it was trying to sweep us into the wreck. Just as we started feeling relaxed, David "ran out of gas". John deployed his long hose without much issue, but did get pushed against the wreck by the current. We sorted ourselves out and then got told to cut the drill, so restowed everything and carried on with the dive. A few minutes later John also suffered an out of gas problem. This was also dealt with fairly easily. We called the dive when John hit Minimum Gas and headed up the wreck. We were slightly slow getting from 24 to 21m but the gas switches went fine. At 18m John tried to twist his reg hose a little to make it a bit more comfortable, and the o-ring decided it had had enough of life. Lots of bubbles. Damn. John tried turning off the valve and reseating it didn't help. Andy tried too, but again to no avail, so John throttled the valve for about 5 minutes of stops until he realised that he had plenty of gas and wasn't losing that much so stopped. We got to the surface with no problems, then back onto the boat.

All in all a nice dive, however we didn't really concentrate on the wreck. We'll be back there again, possibly with some toys: scooter, video

camera, and camera :-)

Part 3(b)

Friday 25th June 2005

Dive 11 - NDC Chepstow, bottom time 14min, total run time 37mins, 46.0m, 8 deg in water

We've never dived at Chepstow before, and should have remembered that you don't get sunshine on Glastonbury weekend. As such, it was raining when we got there. There also seemed to be no-one else around. It's quite an imposing place. We set the kit up, wandered to the end of the pontoon and jumped in. On the way to the shot line, David felt that his reg was breathing a bit odd, but it worked fine once submerged a little. Bubble check, modified S-drill and flow check all at 6m then down the shot. We had a little bit of discomfort as we dropped down the shot, as we realised that normally when we do this, there is a slight current running, and Backward kicking while descending quickly is actually quite difficult. David had a new camera and housing that he hoped to use on the second dive, but since the surface interval would be short, Andy suggested that he took it on the descent, and handed it off once he was satisfied that it wasn't leaking. It was quickly obvious that the left-shoulder D-ring was not the best choice of storage location, and after a quick check at 45m, Andy moved it to David's rear D-ring, where it was almost un-noticed. We then had a quick look at the "Gnome Garden" before following one of the walls. A couple of minutes later and John has "something wrong" with his left post, so he reaches back, starts shutting it down and signals to David. David checks it, but it is unrepairable. Normally we would have called the dive there and then, but Andy signals to carry on. Another minute or two, and as David pauses to work out which way to swim, John finds that his right post has gained a problem as well. Another signal to David, this time a little bit more urgently, and take his long hose. At this point we do call the dive, and since we're on thirds David assumes that we're required to head back towards the shotline. Andy corrects him, so we ascend where we are and head on up to our first deco stop at 33m. We were a little slow during the deep stops (due to the short bottom time these could be 30s rather than 1min per 3m). The gas switch at 21 went ok as did the rest of the deco. We were half expecting another issue during the deco phase.

Dive 12 - Not really part of the course! 27mins, 33.8m Once we were back on the surface, John reset all his valves, and we changed the team order, as David had his new camera he wanted to play with, and Andy joined the team for the first time, so John lead, with David second and Andy third. We dropped down to about 33m for a gentle swim around so David could take some photos - more to get used to the camera than because there was likely to be anything worth photographing. It was quite nice that absolutely nothing went wrong with the dive. There is very little to see at Chepstow though, and about about 25m the water has a lot of very fine suspended silt in it which really reduces visibility. Although it's fine for this kind of thing, it's probably not worth the bother going there from Cambridge for anything else. Once we were back at the surface we then had the odd experience of trying to climb up the ladders. With the exception of the one near the deep drop-off, which we'd already swum past, they don't appear to be designed to take twinsetted divers, with stage bottles. John got out first, and as he did so the ladder moved quite alarmingly - he had visions of disappearing back into the deep holding onto the ladder.

After that all that was needed was to pack up the kit, and head home. The sun had come out while we were in the water and the rain stopped, which was nice. We think we've now had every kind of weather during the course. We started in the snow and finished in the sun, with wind and torrential rain occurring along the way.