



BSAC IFC
February 18-19, 2006
Norwich High School for Girls

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Report by Karin Müller

Participants:

- Johanna Belfield
- Freija Glansdorp
- Jon Knight
- Rachael MacDonald
- Stuart Moore
- Karin Müller
- Dan Reynolds
- Louisa Whitlock

The IFC (Instructor Foundation Course) is the first step towards becoming an instructor, (you qualify as an assistant diving instructor (ADI) just by turning up. This is one of the few events that we cannot run 'in-house', but are organised on a regional basis. This is just a course, not a test of any kind - you can't fail! It is a lot of fun, with lessons in giving lectures and teaching in the pool. And you even get to broaden your diving knowledge (as well as working out what all of those three-letter acronyms mean)!

For more info, [click here](#).

INSTRUCTOR FOUNDATION COURSE (IFC)
(Sport Diver)
Fee £80

The first step in qualifying as a BSAC Diving Instructor, (including the Instructor cross-over programme), is to attend the two day IFC, where the essential elements of instruction are taught. The comprehensive student pack provides candidates with course notes and a copy of the BSAC Manual 'Teaching Scuba Diving'. On completion of the course, students are awarded the BSAC Assistant Diving Instructor certificate, which allows them to teach under direct supervision of a BSAC Open Water Instructor. Following completion of the IFC members who are Dive Leaders can further build their teaching experience by attendance at an Open Water Instructor Course (OWIC). Members who have attained Dive Leader grade can complete the Theory Instructor Exam (TIE) at any stage after attendance on the IFC. Following OWIC attendance and after further practice and experience at Branch level those who have gained Dive Leader status can apply for the Practical Instructor Exam (PIE). For details of the cross-over programme contact Central Bookings at HQ. You can book [online](#).

Saturday:

We all meet up at the kitstore at 7 am after having collected our kit the evening before. Everybody is on time, so we squeeze into our two cars and off to Norwich. We are chattering away what to expect on the course. Thankfully, the venue is easy to find - no endless searching through the suburbs of Norwich!

We are immediately met by a bunch of friendly people wearing BSAC T-shirts, who usher us towards tea, coffee and biscuits and we all sign in. We get our information packs and are distributed to different groups, each with its own instructor. Louisa and I end up in group 3, together with somebody called Billy (envied by all of us for being from Norwich - i.e. being allowed to sleep longer) and Koen (pitied by all of us for having had to fly in from Germany that morning - i.e. probably had no sleep at all) and naturally, our BSAC instructor.

After a general introduction, we get to our first exercise. We are supposed to make a list of all the qualities a good diving instructor should have and very quickly it becomes clear, it is superman/superwoman. The billboard on the wall fills up, but we get prompted further to come up with more. I blurt out "Somebody mentioned good-looking!" (it's true, somebody in our group did) and "HUNK" is accordingly put on the board - laughs all round. Then, every quality a good diver should have is crossed out and we are left with all the qualities a good instructor should have apart from being a good diver (obviously). It's still a tall order. The speaker asks us if we all recognize our own instructors - again, general laughter ensues. The rest of the morning is spent with talks about how to teach people effectively and different ways of presenting lessons. Then, everybody grabs a quick lunch and we carry our dive kits to the swimming pool.

It's a lovely pool, quite large, warm and very clean. Our instructor tells us about all the little tricks to a successful brief, how it should be done

and what it should contain and about what to look out for during the lesson under water. To ease us all in, we start with a snorkelling lesson. After that, we all kit up fully. My kit-up buddy grins and remarks on my (Halcyon wing) kit "What's that old crap you're wearing?!" My knees almost give way - I have no strength when I'm laughing. I wear my long hose as usual, but clip on the octopus and breathe off the short hose. Our instructor remarks on the "techie setup" and indicates that, for ease of use for everybody during the lesson, I should let the long hose dangle off the side in a large loop. Louisa does the same. During the pool lesson, our instructor demonstrates various skills and how they should be taught using exaggerated signalling to make everything clear. In between our kit-downs and kit-ups, we are occasionally being photographed. Instinctively, I pull in my belly. After all, I don't want to be referred to as "the fat bird" in the next BSAC booklet. Then, a short debrief, back into dry clothes and we are all eagerly heading back towards the lecture room for hot drinks and biscuits.

In the afternoon, we use BSAC planning sheets to put together what a good theory and practical lesson should contain and go through different subjects. Then, we pull tickets and Louisa ends up with BCDs for her theory lesson and CBLs for her pool lesson, Billy gets dive computers and AAS, Koen has DCI and mask clearing and I get away with wreck diving and AV.

After all that, it's 6 pm and we all head back to Cambridge. After dinner, I feel like just curling up in a corner and go to sleep, but I have my lessons to prepare for tomorrow. With a sigh and a hot cup of strong coffee I get to work.

Sunday

Again, we meet up at 7 am at the kitstore. In the car, Stuart next to me dozes off occasionally and it's also rather quiet from the back. Gladly, I switch off too and let the autopilot take over.

On arrival, more tea and biscuits. All the groups retreat to separate classrooms and in turn each of us gives their theory lesson. Everybody has a different style, using flipboards and stickers, overheads or a good piece of kit for demonstration. All the presentations are competent, original and fun - surprising, considering they've been put together after a tiring day with only half a brain left. I can't help but feeling that our instructor is impressed and secretly plans to introduce some of our brainwaves into future talks of his own.

Then, it's to the swimming pool for our practical lessons. Billy with AAS goes first and everything runs smoothly, in spite of hoses from the left or from the right, long or short. Then, it's Louisa's turn to teach us CBLs, followed by Koen with a mask-clearing lesson. After we've kitted down, I hold my AV lesson. After each lesson, we have a debrief and everybody can have a say in what was good and what needs changing. All of us had some sort of minor cock-up one way or the other, but nothing serious. Undoubtedly, the general 'success' of our pool lessons is also due to the fact that we are teaching qualified divers rather than total novices.

I honestly can't remember how our instructor got into this joke about long, dangly bits or what he was referring to exactly yet, I answer proudly that at CUUEG even girls can have long, dangly bits - referring to our long hoses - and we all end up sitting on the swimming pool floor, giggling madly.

After lunch, we all congregate in the big lecture room for more talks. Considering our previous day, the fact that we had finished strutting our stuff in the morning and just had lunch, the idea of secretly slipping off into a cosy nap during the next talk is tempting. However, our speaker foresees this danger and all threatens us that if anyone falls asleep he will bring out his big horn! Oh, yeah?! Everybody is laughing. Of course he means one of those signal horns connected to a pressurized air can. I'm not sure whether this slip was intentional or not; I think I see him blush slightly.

The next few talks are about how to translate all the things we have learnt so far to the planning of open water lessons. This is followed by an impromptu exercise for each group to plan an open water lesson within 10 minutes and present it to everybody afterwards. Every group manages well and of course Dan is in the A-team... The last talk of the day is all about the next steps to take on the ladder to the open water instructor, theory instructor, instructor instructor etc.

After a final briefing and shoulder clapping by our personal group instructors, we all receive our ADI labels for our qualification books and a BSAC ADI batch. Then it is time to say our good-byes and the nice lady who had arranged all the drinks, biscuits and sandwiches, urges us to take some of her leftover provisions. Dan saves her from her clearing up duties by taking the whole plate and we are off.

On the drive back, Freija entertains us with the story of her visit to "Smits" (?), a Dutch salvage company, where she was invited to try out one of their special diving suits, one of those with a helmet - so you can talk - and lead boots. We all immediately agree that she has to use her connections and invite one of those Smits guys round to CUUEG one day to speak at a dinner. Otherwise, we discuss where to sew our batches on-hmmh?! After having checked in our kit, everybody heads home.

I really enjoyed the IFC weekend and think it's a course well worth taking. Apart from being fun, it teaches you a lot of things worth-while knowing for diving or for elsewhere.