



## Stoney Cove Training Trip

16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> April, 2010

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**Trip organised by Karin**

**Trip report by Karin**

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### Details

Our third training trip was going to an inland site, Stoney Cove UK National Diving Centre (<http://www.stoneycove.co.uk/>), just south of Leicester, about 1 ½ h drive by car from Cambridge. Similar to Capernwray, it is a flooded quarry decorated with many in-water attractions for the divers, such as a tug boat, helicopter, bus, small submarine etc. It also contains many squiggly things, such as large pike, other types of fish, pond weeds and freshwater crayfish. Naturally, it is safe from getting blown out and is pretty good for 'picking your depth' to do drills without having to worry about tides or currents. In the middle of April, the water was still on the cool side. During British Summer Time, diving is between 7 am in the morning and 4 pm in the afternoon and the entry fee is now £17/diver/day. There is a dive shop at Stoney: Underwater World (<http://www.underwaterworld.co.uk/>), - luckily (!) as they helped bail us out of the 'nipple situation' – but more of this later. For hungry bellies, there is Nemo's Diner, which sells bacon butties and other delicious bites through a serving hatch. Air fills can be done at the resident air filling station, which that weekend was very efficient, although the site was quite busy.



*Colin and O'Neil getting ready*

As trip organizer, I despotically decided that it would be quite nice to stay in a B&B already on Friday night, rather than having to make an extremely early start in Cambridge on a Saturday morning. This had the advantage that we could make fairly good use of Stoney's opening times without having to get up before sunrise...

We stayed at the Dive Inn (57 Hinckley Road, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire LE9 4LL, 01455 273313), which is about 2 minutes car-drive from the Cove. They have 3 twin rooms, one bunkroom sleeping 4, 2 singles I think and the 'Jack Ingle' caravan in the garden. The price is £20/head/night – which includes a full English – ample parking in front of the house and a heated drying room for wet dive kit – fabulous! I can really recommend this place – it's very neat and totally geared up for divers – and the host's are incredibly welcoming.

*Angus and Imogen still perky – that was before compass navi...*



Who was going? - Instructors and ADIs:

- Matt Worsley (OWI)
- Steve Clark (OWI)
- Matt Watson (DL-OWI)
- Beccy Mant (SD/ADI)
- Karin Muller (SD/ADI, organizing)

Trainees:

- Xiangyu Qin (O'Neil)
- Imogen Ogilvie
- Hugo Schmidt
- Colin Mc Swiggen
- Angus Dwyer

Kelvin (not-diving, but gladly 'offered' his car and chauffeur-ing skills to help me out with transport – I'm sure the Full English and a promised curry night had something to do with it)



*No, it's not dodgy! Matt Worsley is just getting ready for compass navi – that's all*

Beccy, Matt Watson, Kelvin and myself were driving to Stoney Stanton late Friday afternoon or evening and arrived at the B&B at slightly different times. All the trainees came with us in the cars, apart from Colin, who we picked up from Hinckley train station later on in the evening as he was coming directly from Glasgow. Fortunately, Angus was the only one caught out by the Icelandic Volcano ash cloud that weekend, and he had successfully made alternative travel arrangements to find his way back to Cambridge. As we were all a little tired, we opted to get some grub from the fish and chip shop just down the road. This was nicer than it sounds, because we could all have it in the conservatory of the B&B on nice plates with cutlery.

## Saturday

We arrived at the Stoney Cove entrance at around 8.30 am. Now this is much too late to get a space in the bottom car park and usually means you have to drag your dive kit ~ 400 yards, which is more than it sounds... However, as I discovered, it is worthwhile to ask the people at the gate very nicely whether it is possible to drive down and quickly unload all the kit before you then park up the car where they tell you. On both days this was no problem at all, so we didn't have to lug any heavy stuff around for any distance, and set up the CUUEG camp at the

key side - great!

Steve Clark and Matt Worsley had come down from the Northwest that morning and joined us at Stoney around the same time. While instructor twin sets were filling, they gave a site briefing to the trainees, and I tried to keep the CUUEG operation on the keyside streamlined and was preparing for my duties as dive manager of the day.

CUUEG is renowned for kit faff, but the almost 3 ½ h it took to get the first dive pair in the water that day was probably Guinness record-worthy. The delay was caused by the 'Nipple Problem': Imogen and Colin's suit inflators had nipples that didn't fit our club inflator hoses. Their own drysuit hoses were still on club regs from the Capernwray trip - which I wasn't aware of during packing because no one told me - and promptly I took the wrong regs. While I was starting to pull my greying hair out and saw my first training plan ever go to rat shit, Steve worked his magic by turning off the nipple of his wife's suit and Matt Watson went to the shop, where they supplied a suitable connector from one of their second-hand suits - for £4. With all the CUUEG nipples sorted, we finally could launch. Steve was teamed with Colin and O'Neil, Matt Worsley was teamed with Imogen and Angus and Matt Watson and Beccy went in with Hugo, who was doing his first ever UK drysuit dives in open water. Although we had been promised around 4-5m vis at the B&B in the morning, it became clear pretty soon that the water wasn't (hihi), at least not in the shallow training area. However, vis was well good enough for training and everybody got on with it.



In the evening, we returned to the B&B and hot showers. As the weather was excellent and we had plenty of time until dinner, Steve decided to give a practical on-land demonstration of line laying in the large back garden of the B&B, tying up trees and various garden furniture to save himself some time on Sunday morning. Also, we put together a training plan for the next day over a nice beer. Later on, we all went for the traditional 'Stoney Curry'. The Star Inn, the Pub/Indian Restaurant right in the centre of Stoney Stanton we used to go to does not exist anymore. So we opted to go to the 'Taj' - a little further to walk though. This turned out to be an excellent choice and they provided lovely Indian food, slightly different from your bog-standard curry house. (Another possibility would have been to get a Chinese TakeAway from the 'Peking', which is also in the centre of town.)



*Line laying practice in the evening in the garden of the Dive Inn*

## Sunday

As on Saturday, we had absolutely gorgeous weather on Sunday - very warm for April. The instructors had decided to keep the pairings the same as on Saturday. The only change was that Beccy was doing all the marshalling that day, while I was going diving with Matt Watson and Hugo. As on Saturday, the vis in the training area was somewhat reduced, but still pretty useful. My third dive that day with Matt and Hugo was quite memorable - maybe for the wrong reasons:

We decided to just do a couple of short drills at the beginning of the dive - drysuit inversion and something else I can't remember - and then go for a nice dive along the quarry wall at around 12m to get depth progression. As Matt's twinset had been fairly low after the previous dive, he decided to go in on a single cylinder using Beccy's kit. So we went in, doing drills and going for our dive along the wall. We had Hugo safely 'sandwiched' between the two of us and I was leading and buddying Hugo, while Matt was 'watching'. I tried to find some of those lovely crayfish for Hugo to see, but only found a dead one - still Hugo found it quite cool. We carried on diving and Hugo was doing well with his buoyancy, when Matt started to signal we should go shallower. I couldn't quite figure out why, Hugo was doing well and enjoying himself, and we weren't too long into our dive. So we carried on. 'Go shallower' signals came again from Matt and we started to ascend a little. More 'go shallower' signs from Matt as we headed back to our entry point. I couldn't quite figure out why he was so eager to get out - after all: Matt never gets cold and he doesn't breathe (maybe he needed a pee?). So we kept on heading towards the exit, when Matt surprisingly gave a 'go up!' signal, and we slowly ascended. As it turned out, exchanging cylinders before this dive had meant - strangely - that Matt had actually gone in with less air than he would have had if he had taken in his 'empty' twinset ???. Apparently, he had given me signs telling me his gas during the dive, but they had been completely obscured by Hugo swimming between us. Sure, I did know from the buddy check that Matt was



going in with a partially filled cylinder. However, having dived with him many times in the past, I also knew that he actually does have gills and only takes cylinders on dives because they look cool... So, the lesson to be learnt: take your buddy seriously! Oops!

After all that, we stowed everything back into the cars, said bye to Steve and Matt and drove back to Cambridge and the kitstore. Most people headed off to see friends, while Beccy, Matt, Kelvin and I went to the Panton for a pint, deciding that it had been a good weekend.



*Hugo and Beccy getting kitted up*

I think overall, the training went well that weekend. Imogen, Angus and O'Neil did compass navigation and DSMB (SO4), as well as SO3 and the 'drill bits' of SO5. So now, they mostly had rescue stuff and 'Plan and lead a dive' left to do. Colin got OD signed off, due to a requested 'beasting' by Steve. Hugo had his introduction to cold water diving and got OS1, OS2 and most of OS3 signed off. So – off we go some time – to the next training trip!



*Angus and Imogen again, this time in full kit*