

**Kingston and Elmbridge
British Sub Aqua Club
BSAC 0017**

Welcome Information for New Members



Message from the President

My name is Gerry Hassell and I am the President at the club, and it is my pleasure to welcome you.

As a club we work hard to attract new members and ensure we are open to all. We are keen to ensure all members receive a positive diving and training experience and always feel welcomed and valued. To aid in this we have put together the Club Welcome booklet. The information covers the following:

- **What we do**
- **The diving**
- **Training**
- **Club house and facilities**
- **Finding information**
- **Club 'Who does what?' guide**
- **Information on policies**

I trust this will answer any questions you may have. If, however, you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the committee.

As mentioned we are extremely grateful for you joining our club. I hope you find your time with us an enjoyable experience and look forward to providing you with a positive diving experience for many years to come. If there is anything you feel we can do to improve this I would be happy to discuss this with you.

Kind regards

Gerry

What we do

You joined the club to go diving, this is a great adventure in UK, the sights you will encounter will amaze you especially when you feel confident after all the training you have done in the pool.

We have an active dive schedule throughout the year, visiting mainly the south coast: Weymouth, Swanage, Portland, Plymouth and anywhere else that the members decide to dive. There are normally three or more foreign dive holidays some of which are family friendly.

We have a RIB (rigid inflatable boat) that is stored at Newhaven so no towing involved, see details below.

We also have a social side where we meet each Thursday at our clubhouse between 8:30pm to midnight. We organise social events such as quiz nights, BBQ's and an annual dinner dance, more about these later in the booklet.

We operate a Safeguarding Policy (child and vulnerable adults), more details at the end of the booklet. Many of our instructors and committee members are DBS registered to comply with current BSAC requirements.

This booklet is aimed at any new diver and it covers some basic information with regard to training and diving with Kingston & Elmbridge (K&E), and also how we operate as a club. Existing divers who have recently joined K&E will find the information contained here useful on how we operate as a branch compared to their previous club.

The diving

Dive trips should specify the depth or diver grade as some trips are designed for the more experienced diver. There are a number of new diver trips organised to cover training requirements, please check your grade before committing yourself.

Please note, when you first join the club there will be a number of trips already fully booked. This is because the dive organisers have to book the trips sometimes a year in advance. Please be patient, there will be trips for new divers held at various sites during the year.

Club RIBs

We have an active programme of diving using the club RIBs. We encourage all members to make the most of them; look on the notice board to see when space is available. The trips are classified as Ocean – maximum depth will be 20 metres, or Sport – up to 35 metres. Trainees can book on any of the trips but may not be able to dive the first deeper dive. Ask the Dive Manager of the trip if it is suitable for your skills and level of qualification.

To drive the RIB you must be qualified. At the very least you must have attended a Boat Handling course and you will be encouraged to practice and qualify as a Diver Cox – ask the Training Officer for details.

Hard boat trips

These trips are often circulated using group email and a list on the notice board. The dive organiser decides the minimum diver level for the trip and will ask for a deposit.

We have a club rule that once you have put your name down on the list, the place is yours but should you pull out it is your responsibility to find a replacement otherwise you will be liable to pay the full amount.

Training

Pool training

The Training Officer will allocate an instructor to you, generally for the duration of your training; it's a good idea to swap contact details. On occasion, it may be necessary for a different instructor to take your lesson(s) where your 'usual' instructor is unavailable. Instructors gladly give up their time to train you so if you cannot make a session please contact them at least a day before. Please get to the Malden Centre pool in good time (no later than 7:30pm) with all the kit necessary for the session, including a full cylinder. You will need to sign in when you arrive. If you are late this will eat into the very short pool time available and this means it will take you longer to cover the training drills.

Pool kit

If you require training and do not have any scuba kit, you will need to hire it from the club for the duration of your training (a deposit will be required). By all means use your own kit in the pool if you have it, but it is not necessary to rush out and buy. It is recommended you have your own mask and pool fins.

Note: Hired pool kit is not suitable for use in sheltered or open water; speak to the Equipment Officer if you need equipment for use in these circumstances; there are sets of equipment which are specifically for hire, please speak to the Equipment Officer.

Theory lessons

Theory lessons take place in the club classrooms and typically start about 9:30pm (after pool sessions). Usually, an email is sent out to the 'students' and the instructor to remind them, but don't depend on it. Look on the notice board for the schedule. Normally, it's preferable to take the lectures in order but don't worry if you miss one, you can catch up later.

Training pack

With each diving grade progression you will have to purchase a dive pack, which contains all the theory notes and qualification card for the grade. After the initial purchase of the pack with your qualification record book you typically only need to buy the student notes for your next diver grade. These are obtained from the Membership Secretary.

Buying your own kit

Once you have finished your basic training it is expected that you buy your own equipment. There is a vast array of manufacturers and designs of equipment all of which is very functional but in the end it is down to personal choice. The recommendations given to you by club members will reflect their personal preferences and you are best talking to recent members who have purchased equipment as they have done the most recent investigation of what's hot or not and the best prices.

There are two dive shows held every year, in London at the Excel Centre and Birmingham at the NEC. Both these shows have equipment manufacturers and retailers showing their products and offering special deals (especially for multi item purchases). There are numerous items for sale on Ebay and Gumtree as "Previously used" but, please make sure you understand what you are buying and it has been serviced recently; ask the seller for receipts for the service or the test certificate.

The clubhouse and facilities

Times of club opening

Our clubhouse (with well stocked bar) is open on Thursday evenings from around 8.30pm onwards and closes about midnight. Feel free to invite your friends and family along as a guest for the evening and perhaps encourage them to do a try dive!

Pool use at the Malden Centre

You can use New Malden pool (roughly a 10 minute drive from the clubhouse) on Thursday evenings from 8pm until 9pm for training, trying out kit or just a swim or snorkel. The club subsidises the pool but there is a small charge for use. Please check with the Training Officer, or Pool Marshal before turning up with kit unless you are with an instructor.

Kit hire

The club has a small selection of kit (but no wet/dry suits) to hire for open water diving but you are encouraged to acquire your own equipment once you know what you want. Rest assured, there will be plenty of members who will happily offer advice (whether requested or not) on which is the best kit!

As you move to open water diving and want to try dry suit diving we can usually find someone in the club who can loan you a suit to use. However, remember to do a dry suit training session at the pool first (this is included in your membership fees).

Club hire

Members can hire the clubhouse for free for their own personal use for parties; ask the Bar Manager for details.

There are charges for bar staff and for cleaning after a hire.

Club workdays

We have a lot of facilities in the club but they do require maintenance to keep them up to date and working. Periodically, we have 'work days' where essential maintenance is carried out. You do not need any special skills to get involved; there is always something for everyone to do. Your efforts will be much appreciated and it's a good way to get to know other club members.

Voluntary organisation

Please note that the club is a "not for profit" organisation, the club is run by the members for the members. You are encouraged to get involved and help out where you can but, more importantly, please appreciate that everyone including instructors and committee members are giving up their time voluntarily to help and they receive no financial or other, in kind, benefit for their efforts.

Club social events

It's not all about the diving: the club has a very active social side. Past events have included a James Bond evening, river boat discos, day trips to Chatham Dockyard, Portsmouth Dockyard, Epsom racing days, and an evening event at the Tower of London. We hold an annual summer BBQ, Christmas party and in the past we have held children's Halloween parties. Also, the highlight of the dive club's social calendar is the annual dinner dance held in a local hotel where awards are handed out and it's an ideal opportunity to leave the rubber and cylinders at home and dress up!

Family and friends are always welcome at all social events. Emails about social events are regularly sent out. Also look on the website and notice board in the clubhouse for details.

Air fills, nitrox and trimix

Air fills are free to members and cylinders are filled on Thursday evenings, subject to there being a qualified compressor operator available. Your cylinder must be in test (it will not get filled if out of test). You must also make sure that your name and charge pressure are clearly marked on your cylinders (ask if you are not sure).

Only qualified compressor operators may fill cylinders and use the compressor. It can get a bit lonely out in the compressor shed so feel free to lend a hand – it will be most welcomed. If you are not qualified, but would like to fill your own cylinders ask the Compressor Officer about helping out, and the Training Officer about relevant courses that are available.

The branch also has a 'nitrox club'. If you use nitrox regularly, you will save quite a bit of money on refills you have to mix your own so it is only open to those who are qualified to mix gas (nitrox or trimix) and use the compressor. Again training can be organised for those who wish to learn how to do this.

There is an annual membership fee for the nitrox club (and a one-off fee to join).

Finding information

Website address

The website address is www.kingstonsac.org. We have a comprehensive website, which not only includes all club information you should need; training schedules; trip reports; photos etc but is also a great way to keep up to date with all club diving and social events.

Club notices

Have a look at the club notice board; here you will find details of organised dive trips, training programmes, social events, articles, kit for sale and lots more.

How to get onto the email group

Give your email address to the Membership Secretary and they will ensure you are added to the list.

How to send a group email

To send an email to all the group simply address it to scubakingston@yahoogroups.com. All email group members will receive the email from your sending email address.

The purpose of the group mail is to publish diving and club related messages:

- Announcing a dive date
- Announcing a party that would be open to members (including birthdays etc)
- Any diving related article (sometimes by including a web link)
- Selling your own scuba kit
- Asking for assistance, sharing lifts to dive sites or borrowing kit
- Diving related queries – e.g. anyone know where I can get a xyz widget
- Asking for an opinion on a bit of dive kit (be prepared for lots of conflicting advice)

There are a few don'ts, (in common with most group email and form part of our club rules) as follows:

- No swearing
- Racist, sexist or otherwise rude or offensive emails are not tolerated. If it could be misconstrued, don't send it
- Do not promote your business or use it frequently to sell non diving stuff – we are not eBay
- No circular emails – these are just spam!
- In general don't reply to the whole group – respond to the sender only

Staying up to date with K&E

You can stay up to date with postings to the K&E website by subscribing to email updates or following on Twitter or Facebook as follows:

- 1) **Subscribe to email updates:** access the website and click on the RSS icon or link at the bottom of the home page and follow the instructions. From then on, if there have been any updates you will have them automatically sent to you in an email.
- 2) **Follow on Twitter:** If you have a Twitter account you can now be informed of updates this way, the easiest way to find us is from the links on our web site.
- 3) **Follow on Facebook:** There is a page of our Facebook feeds on our web site, you can also like our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/kingstonsac>

How to submit a web article

Articles for the website are very welcome and you are encouraged to contribute frequently. They can be about anything that might be of interest to other club members and a wider audience, for instance, dive trips, social trips, funny stories (diving or otherwise), experiences on training or skill development courses, photos, historical or technical articles.

Have a browse through the archive to see the sort of articles submitted and photos are most welcome addition to any article.

To get an article published on the K&E website, send it to the Web Master; see the website for details; or simply send it to any committee member. They will check the content (for do's and don'ts) and edit it if necessary; put it on the website; and send a group email to advise club members that a new article has been added.

A word of caution: The web is open to anyone – so in addition to the few don'ts mentioned above for emails you must not write anything defamatory or libellous even if it is said in jest. In particular do not criticise boat skippers, hotels, B&Bs or inland sites as they are commercial organisations and can be a bit sensitive to criticism. Some matters are best left off the website; there is further guidance on the website if you want to write an article.

Who does what?

The committee is made up of the following:

Position	Responsible for...
President	direction and advice given and for club policy
Chair person	efficient day to day running of club
Training Officer	all aspects of training
Equipment Officer	club dive kit
Diving Officer	safe diving activities throughout the club
Membership Secretary	enrolling new members and dealing with annual renewals and

	ordering the training manuals
Treasurer	looking after club finances
Buildings Officer	maintenance of clubhouse
Branch Secretary	club administration
Compressor Officer	compressor facilities and rota
Boats Officer	maintenance of the club RIBs and RIB hire
Pool Marshall	monitoring pool use and signing in pool users
Bar Manager	stocking and running the bar, and private club hire
Social Secretary	arranging club social events

Other roles within the club include the following:

Position	Responsible for...
Web Master	updating and maintaining K&E website
Diver Cox	decisions relating to the boat and diving when out RIB diving
Dive Manager	organising dive trips and accommodation if spending nights away
Safeguarding Officer	vulnerable persons, safeguarding and a confidential ear to all members
Welcome Officer	new member 'induction'

Every year the entire committee disbands (except for the President's role) and all positions are available to any full member who would like to sit on the committee. You will need someone to nominate you and second your application. The committee positions are elected at the AGM, usually the last Thursday in November. In the event of a tie it goes to a membership vote.

There is a picture board on the web site and in the club house. Please introduce yourself to as many of the committee as possible, we don't bite and want you to feel very welcome.

Feel free to offer to assist in any way, and we encourage suggestions so please approach any committee member at any time with your ideas.

Finally, we wish you a warm welcome to the club and hope you enjoy our company. We look forward to diving with you.

Policies

We operate under the BSAC rules and bye-laws and as such we follow their direction when they issue policies. We also have our own local policies and are currently contained in our club constitution.

Safeguarding

We adopt the BSAC safeguarding policy for children and vulnerable adults in snorkelling and scuba diving details can be found at:

<http://www.bsac.com/page.asp?section=1307§ionTitle=Safeguarding+policy+for+children+and+vulnerable+adults>

Whilst every effort is made in ensuring these articles are current, it is the British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) that maintains these policies and we rely on BSAC to keep them in line with current legislation and recommended practice.

In Conclusion

We hope you enjoy learning to dive, we can run the theory and pool lessons to allow you to progress your training quickly. You do then need to undertake the open water training to complete your diver qualification, so look out for the specific open water training events. If you can master diving in UK waters then diving abroad becomes a lot easier!

Enjoy your time at Kingston & Elmbridge branch and get involved in the club activities.