



Below: These girls can!  
Right: The Farnes – seals, seals, seals

# Lutterworth

## Sub Aqua Club

This East Midlands club has a very healthy balance of male to female members as a result of its emphasis on families.  
Interview by **Kristina Pedder**



Lutterworth,  
East Midlands

**Membership Fees:**  
Adults: £120, students: £40  
**Contact:**  
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Facebook: Lutterworth Scuba

**LUTTERWORTH** Sub-Aqua Club invests its time in nurturing divers and instructors alike. Members are encouraged to make the most of a broad offering of family-friendly snorkelling and diving training, and more besides. A healthy social programme and a constant flow of trainees, young and old, keeps the club busy all year round. By inviting all the family to join in many club activities, a better than usual proportion of women members is evident at many levels, and that doesn't strike members as anything out of the ordinary.

**Q What part of the country are you in?**

**A** We are pretty land-locked in the East Midlands, but are very close to the National Dive Centre at Stoney Cove so it's easy for us to get wet throughout the year. Our members come, not only from Lutterworth

but also from a wide area including Loughborough, Leicester, Market Harborough, Northampton, Rugby, Hinckley, Leamington Spa...We have a club RIB and so we get away to the coast whenever we can, and members often organise trips abroad to the Red Sea, Malta, Norway and lots of other places.

**Q Tell me a brief history of the club...**

**A** LSAC formed in 1979 as a SAA club and joined BSAC in 1984. The club flourished and we reached 80+ members in 2004. In that year we ran two RIBs and ran a record number of trips. In 2009 we bought a brand new 5.8m RIB called Chilly Dip to replace the existing boats. Chilly is a great asset to the club, it's an expense but it adds a different element to club life. As with a lot of clubs, the credit crunch and the rise in the price of fuel saw numbers go down and we dropped to about

44 in 2013. Recently we reversed this trend and have gained new and trained divers both from BSAC and other training organisations, at the last count we had 63 members: six snorkellers, 16 trainees, six Ocean Divers, 18 Sports Divers, seven Dive Leaders and seven Advanced Divers.

**Q You have the distinction of being one of the BSAC clubs with the highest proportion of women members. Were you aware you buck the trend?**

**A** No we were not aware that we were bucking the trend. When we looked in to it 38 per cent of our members are women [BSAC's average is 27 per cent], and they are also well represented on our committee of three women and five men. At the moment 56 per cent of our Ocean Diver trainees, 41 per cent of our Sports Diver trainees and 25 per cent of our assistant instructors are women.

**Q How did you achieve this?**

**A** We have been this way for a long time and to be honest we don't really think

about it. We have an open and friendly culture – the club is open to everyone, the more varied the better as far as we're concerned life would be boring if we were all the same. We promote the club as family-friendly and we do have quite a few spouses and families within our membership.

**Q So you encourage families to get involved?**

**A** Yes, we encourage young divers to join the club and at the same time we try to get their parents to learn as well as this usually results in a further progression of the training. If parents don't want to learn to dive then we try to include them socially and on trips for open-water training. We allow family members to come and use the swimming pool during our weekly slot and arrange snorkelling and octopush alongside the swimming. When we arrange socials we always encourage family and friends to come along.

**Q How do you keep the whole family interested?**

**A** Dive trips are often organised in school holidays and where we use our own RIB we always try to offer to take non-divers out on the boat to have a play. Our boat has water ski hooks and does get used for skiing and donutting as well as diving. Our trips tend to be as much about the social aspect as the diving. By having a good mix of members – men and women of all ages – we seem to attract a good mix of members: 8 to 80 year olds. We have a great laugh with each other. We try to have regular socials including quiz nights, meals out, canoeing days, cycle rides, summer BBQs. We're here doing

what we do because we enjoy being part of the club and that shines through. If we're not enjoying ourselves then there is something amiss.

**Q What has the club achieved in the past year?**

**A** Having had a few lean years when the credit crunch hit, we are positively on the up, we have just had a larger than normal intake of nine trainees, as well as taking on some crossovers from other agencies looking for a club environment and some BSAC divers who have not dived for a while. The club is extremely busy running Ocean Diver, Sports Diver, and Dive Leader courses simultaneously, not to mention members that are working towards Advanced Diver, and of course we have trips in the planning.

**Q How much diving do you do?**

**A** Members achieve around 700 hours underwater a year. That's an average of about 20 dives per member per year, on a mix of day trips, weekends and longer trips.

**Q Where has the club dived recently?**

**A** We have a regular Easter trip to the sheltered waters of Loch Fyne: this year ten divers did 55 dives between them over four days, which is a great start to the season. We almost certainly have at least one abroad trip each year as well as visiting the UK coast at places like the Farne Islands, Plymouth, Cornwall, Weymouth, Swanage, and Anglesey. We have a healthy adult snorkelling section and we have run dedicated snorkelling weekends, both from the boat and the shore, this is largely thanks to a single member who no longer dives but is still extremely enthusiastic about the club. ●



Above right: Ice diving, now that's a chilly dip!

Below: Family fun above water



Chilly Dip, the club boat





Q Who is in training?

A We have three snorkel trainees who are doing the snorkel lifesaver award at the moment, ten Ocean Diver trainees, four Sports Diver trainees, three Dive Leader trainees and three Advanced Diver trainees. We have 11 sets of standard scuba equipment that members can use. We have hour-long theory and pool slots at Lutterworth Sports Centre every Tuesday, and we adjourn to a local watering hole to be sociable after that.

Q What instructors do you have?

A We have a great group of instructors – eight Open Water Instructors, five Assistant Diving Instructors and a Snorkelling Instructor: without them the club wouldn't be a patch on what it is. The trainees have kept them very busy over the winter. When open water training begins we try to assign each trainee with a mentor as well as their instructors so that if they have any questions, they have a good point of contact.

Q Are your assistant instructors keen to progress?

A We try to offer as much help as possible to the assistant instructors to encourage them and give them the confidence to progress to OWI, and more members are embarking on the instructor route. The East Midlands regional team are great at putting on Instructor Foundation Courses (IFCs) and provide loads of other support. We also recently had them visit to provide an AED course (including some instructor assists so that we can now teach another Skill Development Course in-house) and they also offer our members Advanced Diver workshops and instructor exam revision sessions. It is rare we need to look outside of the region for anything.

Q What is the club planning for the next few years?

A We'd like to apply for a grant to buy an

AED, now that we are trained to use one. And, although it's been on the radar for a while, we'd really like to get Clubmark status. We meet most of the criteria already, so it's just a case of formalising some of what we do and getting certified. We are always on the lookout to increase our profile in the local community. We try to attend local open days and fetes, for example last year our swimming pool had a 10-year anniversary event where we offered try dives during the day. We've also had open days at the local town hall where we take the boat, and we took advantage of a BSAC pod at the Birmingham dive show a couple of years ago. We try to post any events to local websites as well as our own website and Facebook page.

Q Do you have some favourite good causes?

A We are planning some fundraisers for the RNLI/Air Ambulance (who provide rescue services for any incidents at Stoney Cove), we have done things like 24-hour sponsored snorkels around Stoney, which we first did in 2003: it really brings the club together. The night shifts are a big effort but the reward at the end makes it worthwhile. This year we are planning sponsored underwater cycling, with a team of divers swapping places on exercise bikes.

Q Anything else to tell the SCUBA readers about?

A We are working on a project to hire Stoney Cove on a Tuesday evening, for an open water club night, and we'll be inviting others along. With anything we do, the more the merrier – members from other clubs are always welcome to join in with anything we do.

Find a BSAC club near you at [www.bsac.com/findaclub](http://www.bsac.com/findaclub) or call 0151 350 6201

Studious coxes to be



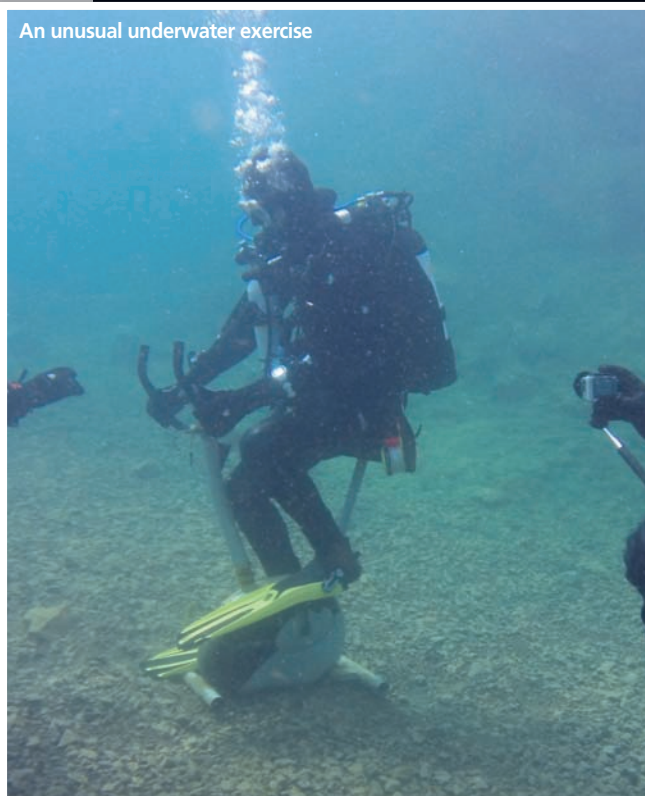
## MEMBERS ARE YOUR BEST ADVERTISING

We have learned that 57 per cent of new members heard about BSAC through a contact or friend. If your club has happy members, the chances are they will tell people and others will join as a result. Here are a few tips to boost word of mouth success:

- 1 Encourage members to tag or reference your club in the diving photos or videos they share on social media.
- 2 Upload photos and videos to your club's Facebook Page (If you have one) after ALL club trips – if members engage, your message reaches their friends.
- 3 Ask members to put up club posters wherever they can – work, gym, library, GP surgeries and pubs

For more information on word of mouth marketing please see the '10-step plan to recruit more members for your club booklet' [www.bsac.com/10step](http://www.bsac.com/10step)

An unusual underwater exercise



One of the many successful try dives

