



ULLAPOOL SUB AQUA CLUB

New Members Pack



Hello and welcome to Ullapool Sub Aqua Club...

...If you are reading this then you have obviously expressed an interest in diving and been bothered to come along and see one of us to find out more about diving with USAC....that's the hard bit done!

This information pack is designed for you. It doesn't matter if you are totally new to diving or have already got a dive qualification and want to join the club, it has got several purposes. Hopefully it will give you:

- some basic information about Scuba diving in Scotland
- What USAC can do to help you learn to dive
- Tell you a bit about USAC and its members
- What to do next.....

By the time you have got through these couple of pages hopefully any questions you might have will have been answered, or at least they might be semi answered. If there is anything that is not covered here that you want to know about then feel free to speak to anybody in club. Between us, we can give you all the answers you want.

During the winter time we dive in the pool at the Leisure centre on a Thursday evening - we meet at the pool side at 1945hrs.

During the summer time we take advantage of the long daylight hours and dive in the open water. This is weather dependant, but as a rule of thumb we meet at about 1900hrs, again this is on Thursday evenings.

SO YOU WANT TO LEARN TO DIVE IN SCOTLAND

What does the thought of scuba diving in Scotland conjure up for you? Cold memories of childhood dips at the seaside? Dark, menacing sea-lochs containing killer conger eels - not to mention Nessie! The swimming ability of the Man from Atlantis? And to cap it all a sport so dangerous that even to undertake one dive would be potentially suicidal.

The biggest surprise of all might just be this: if you thought any (or all!) of the above you would be ***WRONG***.

Scotland is a diver's paradise, a Northern marine jewel rich in sea life, shipwrecks and astonishing underwater scenery. Can you imagine what it's like to swim amongst seals and diving seabirds? To swim amongst the remains of warships and to see things that may have never been seen by another human being before?

There is no denying that to be able experience the underwater world you must be properly trained in a safe and sensible way, but that is why we are here.

There is only one official governing body for amateur diving in Scotland that offers training specifically orientated to these challenging waters, The Scottish Sub Aqua Club. The SSAC has a safety record that is second to none.

As a branch of the SSAC we make no distinction for entry and, as a non-profit making organisation offer expert tuition at minimal cost to the individual.





Just because you learn to dive in Scotland does not exclude you from diving anywhere else in Britain not to mention the world. The Scottish Sub Aqua Club qualification is recognised the world through, so no further training will be required to dive out with Scottish waters.

WHO AND WHAT IS THE SCOTTISH SUB AQUA CLUB?

The Scottish Sub-Aqua Club (SSAC or SCOTSAC) was founded in 1953 in Glasgow. By the 1960s it had grown to 10 branches and has enlarged steadily thereafter. There are now more than 70 branches with some 1900 members in total. Branches are found in very many towns in Scotland and a small number in the North of England.

The Club HQ is at:
The Cockburn Centre,
40 Bogmoor Place,
Glasgow,
G51 4TQ.

Open 9am to 5pm it is staffed by a full time administrator, Alicia Bannon.

Phone: 0141 425 1021
Fax: 0141 445 6192
E-Mail: <mailto:hq@scotsac.com>
Web Site: <http://www.scotsac.com>

The SSAC is recognised by the Scottish Sports Council as the National Governing Body for the Sport in Scotland.

The SSAC also publishes a magazine ***Scottish Diver***, Training Schedules, Log-books, and a regular Newsletter for members, Training Manuals and other items.

WHO AND WHAT IS USAC?

USAC was formed as a branch of the SSAC in 1994, though many of the original members have left the branch there are still some of them dipping their fins in the water however, they're not quite as agile as they used to be!!

There are about 28 club members and we vary in experience from newly qualified sports divers to several branch instructors, master divers and a regional Instructor.

We have got our own website where you can find out more about the club and some local dives. The website is at: <http://www.usac.org.uk>

WHO'S WHO?

Dan Holland – Diving Officer

**Tel: 01463 798 768
07900 567 496**

Dan learnt to dive at university about 6 years ago. He has done about 300 dives, is a Master diver a recently qualified as a Branch Instructor. As Diving Officer he is responsible for and in charge of all aspects of diving and training within the branch.

Darrell Campbell – Chairman

**Tel: 01854 612 383
07714 219 406**

Darrell is one of the founding members of the club, although his diving career can be traced back much further than the last 10 years. Darrel is a Master diver and a Regional instructor, he has dived both commercially and as a sport diver. As chairman of the club Darrell is





responsible for overseeing the smooth running of the club and taking charge during committee and Annual General Meetings

Andy Venters – Equipment Officer

**Tel: 01854 666 263
07752 274 993**

A Branch Instructor and Master Diver, Andy has been diving since 1995 and is one of the clubs longest serving members. As equipment officer he looks after all the club the kit and can help point you in the right direction for hiring club kit or giving you advice when you come to buy your first set of gear

Stewart Dingwall – Vice Chairman

**Tel: 01854 612 822
07900 996 247**

Stewart started diving in 1998 after doing a short course while abroad in Australia. When he came home, hooked on diving he joined his local club and continued his training with SSAC. He is now a master diver and branch instructor.

Briony Hume – Treasurer

**Tel: 01854 612 822
07762 345 670**

Briony has been diving now for about 7 years. Like Stewart, she did a short course in Australia. On returning to the UK and to Ullapool she looked into diving in this country and found the Ullapool Sub Aqua club and the rest I suppose is history!! Briony has been an active member of USAC for about 5 years now, being involved in both the committee as treasurer, and as a Branch Instructor.

Kevin Macleod – Boat Officer

**Tel: 01854 612 392
Tel: 07729 061 868**

Kevin learnt to dive with the club at the start of the pool sessions in 2003. He very quickly progressed though all his training and by the spring of 2004 was confident and competent in the open water. He's an example of how quickly and well you can be trained in USAC

**Maria MacLeod – Vice chair and vulnerable adults contact Tel: 01854 612 392
07799 037 155**

Maria joined the club about 18 months ago and did a cross over to SSAC from her advanced open water qualification with PADI. Maria, as the committee member responsible for vulnerable adults and children deals with all aspects of the welfare and care of club members of any age and background.

Andy Holbrow – Secretary

**Tel: 01854 622 261
07840 658 197**

Andy has various qualifications from almost all UK diving organisations. He is a former commercial diver and used to run a local dive charter. He has recently qualified as a Branch Instructor and can captivate anybody with stories of calamities and over indulgence in the diving world. His role as secretary means that he is responsible for the admin side of things within the club

How much will diving cost me?

You will need to join SSAC. Their membership fees vary according to your circumstances. There are full details on their website or the application form can be found at the back of these few pages.

As well as this, you will have to join USAC. Our fees are £144 per year (adult) or £92 (junior). This must either be paid in full at the time of joining or a monthly standing order set up. Briony will be able to give you the bank details.





THURSDAY NIGHT TRAINING DIVES:

All hire of equipment is FREE (including use of boat and air fills.) Club subscriptions sustain this.

WEEKEND DIVES:

There is a charge for all kit hires (and air fills) at the weekend. Money towards the boat (fuel, insurance and maintenance) must also be paid.

KIT HIRE

Regulator	£2.00
Stab Jacket	£2.00
Air Cylinder	£2.00
Mask and Weights	Free
Full kit hire	£5.00

BOAT USE & AIR FILL

Air fills are charged at £2 per cylinder for club members.

There is no set charge for diving from the club boat. The boat will always be leaving full of fuel when you set off for your days diving. When you return it will be filled up again, the cost being shared equally between those who dived.

Typically though, a days diving out to the Summer Isles costs about £10 per person when there are about 5 of you on board.

MIDWEEK DIVES:

When midweek dives don't incorporate any training, the same fees apply as a weekend dive.

ALL MONEY FOR KIT HIRE AND DIVING MUST BE PAID ON THE DAY OF THE DIVE.

Every USAC member must be a fully paid up member of the SSAC, so you are covered by their insurance. The first year you join you must pay a joining fee as well as annual membership. Only once you are a member of SSAC and USAC can you use USAC cylinders and diving equipment.

WHAT WILL THE TRAINING INVOLVE?

- In the pool.

Your training will start in the pool with a try dive. This will give you a small taste of using an aqualung. After this, and for about the next 12 weeks you will progress through the practical use of scuba diving equipment. The pool provides the ideal controlled and safe environment for you to learn these new skills.

Running alongside this practical training, there is a lecture series. These are given within the club by the various branch instructors. They are not complicated but will provide you with all the relevant knowledge and theory that you require to understand the principles of scuba diving.

At the end of these lectures there is a revision session where you can go over any of the theory covered with an instructor. This is followed by a theory exam. This is nothing to be





afraid of, it is not something that should worry you, the instructors are all there to get you through this and help you learn.

A timetable of the lectures will be given to you when you start your pool training. All the material covered can be found in the SSAC training manual which you will get when you join SSAC or you can get it from their website.

- In the open water.

This is the moment that you have waiting for!!

Your first open water dive won't involve any training. It will just be a straight dive with one of the branch instructors. After this you will have various training assessments to carry out with one of the instructors. These are all similar to those you will have just completed in the pool and can be done at your own pace, though we encourage you to try and get them done within your first 10 dives.

When you have completed these open water assessment you will have qualified as a SPORTS DIVER.

SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I have to be an expert swimmer? No. A good basic level of swimming ability is all that is required.

Do I have to be super-fit? No. A reasonable level of fitness is enough. However we will encourage you to maintain a reasonable fitness level.

Is there anything that might preclude me from diving? There are very few cases where someone is unable to dive. Conditions like severe asthma or ear problems, lung or heart disease, epilepsy and diabetes could possibly prohibit you entering dive training. All prospective divers are required to undertake a self certification medical prior to commencing aqualung training. Should you answer yes to any of the questions you will require a full UK sports medical – you will find the medical form at the back of this pack

Is it dangerous? It can be, that's why you need training. To put things into perspective though there have been several deaths each year, given that there are many tens of thousands of active divers in the UK, making hundreds of thousands of dives each year, the headlines in the papers can be misleading. Like any adventure sport diving is as dangerous as you personally make it, you are probably at more risk driving to the dive site than actually diving.

How deep do you go and how long are you down there? Most UK diving is in the 10-30 metres range. Your sports diver qualification will enable you to dive to 30m. You are allowed to dive deeper but only with further training. Average dive duration would probably be 30 to 40 minutes.

Is there much to see underwater in Scotland? - And isn't it always cold?- Scotland is a diver's paradise, which is visited by divers from all over the world. A combination of clear water, abundant sea life and a multitude of shipwrecks make it an ideal location for scuba diving. Ullapool and the Summer Isles are renowned as some of the best diving within the UK

Conditions do vary a lot with the weather, particularly the wind, but on a good day it is unbeatable. The water temperature varies from 13° C (September) to 3° C (March).





Can I dive abroad with my SSAC qualification? Yes. The qualification is recognised world-wide.

How long does it take to train? This depends on you. The normal arrangement is to meet once a week and the training commences with pool skills, supported by lectures, followed by open water training in the sea, which is reached about 2-3 months after starting out. If you are keen and enthusiastic it may be sooner.

How old do I have to be (or am I too old)? You have to be fifteen to start aqualung training. You are rarely too old to start scuba diving.

...Well, if what you have read so far has not put you off completely then read on and find out what to do next....

What next?

So, you came along to the club or spoke to somebody in it, you've read the information pack and you want to know what to do now.

It's easy, start coming along to the club nights in the pool on Thursday evening. At the back of this pack are some forms you will need to fill in, though if you have downloaded it from the club website then you'll also have to download the forms from the training page.

These are:

- SSAC membership forms
- SSAC self certification medical forms and Medical questionnaire.
- USAC membership form. *Don't worry if you are struggling to fill them in somebody in the club can help you if you want.*

As soon as you are a member of USAC and SSAC you can start your aqualung training. It can take a week or so to get the SSAC membership processed, but you can get some elements of your pool training underway before that.

And finally, if there is anything you want to know that this pack has not answered then feel free to get in touch with anybody in the club, and they will do their best to help you out - some of the contact numbers are included in here for you.

