
'The Dive' Questionnaire

Read over the following account of one diver's adventure. When you have done so, identify all the potential problems and explain the dangers involved.

Hi I'd like to introduce myself.

I'm experienced OC diver with over a hundred open-water dives (mostly Trimix in the 125-175 metre range) and have recently joined the Inspiration fraternity.

I bought my unit recently from a mate in my local club who did his course a few years back but never used his unit after that.

Before wasting good money on a course, I decided to tag along with Scott from Aberdeen Watersports on a little dip in the Nine Lums mine near Burntisland. I had to tell him I was a qualified cave diver (Stoney Cove's a quarry, which is close enough). I even had to fill in a form and make up a lot of technical stuff to keep him happy (no-one ever checks this stuff anyway).

I don't take chances, so although the unit was in perfect condition and still in its green box, I had the cylinders filled and opened up the scrubber unit to confirm that the Sofnolime was still fresh and purple.

The walk to the mine was over 2 fields. I had to stop for a smoke break twice on the way.

When I switched the unit on it beeped and said "Must Calibrate". I pressed "Yes" and the thing promptly said "Low Battery" before going blank. Fortunately my Inspiration has a spare handset, so I switched that on. When it said "Must Calibrate", I selected "No" (once bitten eh!)

I decided to let Scott lead so that I could watch him and see what the big deal was about cave diving. He probably thought he'd fooled me, but I could see he was following some sort of line. Every time he came to a branch in the line he either put an arrow or a clothes-peg on it. He kept putting the arrows on pointing the wrong way (the opposite to that we were going), so I had to turn them all round. I'm not sure what his game with the pegs was, so I moved them to the branch we weren't taking.

This wasn't easy as the vis was getting poor. Scott obviously couldn't make his mind up where to swim and just went along in the middle. I like to make myself a bit negative and pull myself along the bottom. Each to his own.

As often seems to happen, even on simple dives like this, a number of unforeseeable things all seemed to happen at once.

We'd just dropped down to a section at 90 metres, when the note of my buzzer changed. It had been a constant regular bleep, but now started making a more persistent noise. Checking the handset, I saw that two of the cells were reading 1.2, and the other was reading 2.5. I'm rather unimpressed that they can't stay at 1.3 like they're supposed to. Not a problem - my VR3 would adjust my deco. I was running air as a diluent, so that helps keep my deco low too.

'The Dive' Questionnaire

Then the battery pack of my Custom Diver's HID light exploded and the switch fell off. This is an excellent torch BTW and every time I send it back for repair it's fixed very quickly.

While I was looking for the switch, that stupid line wrapped itself round me.

To make things even worse, I feel Scott tapping me on the leg.

I wasn't in the mood for a chat, so pushed him away. Maybe I was a bit stressed, but I think I might have kicked his mask off. His problem. I managed to break the line and dragged myself back along the shaft.

I had to pull myself along the line in the dark. At each tee I knew to follow the branch without the peg or go the opposite way to the arrow. Easy once you get the hang of it.

Soon I got back to daylight. My VR3 said I had no deco to do, even though I'd spent an hour at 90 metres. Just as well, cos I had a blinding headache, was feeling a bit sick and suddenly very twitchy.

The twitchiness went quite quickly, but the headache didn't. I also had a really bad cough suddenly. I'd derigged, waited an hour or two, and was on my third Capstain Full Strength when Scott surfaced. He climbed out of the water, tore his mask off, and came towards me. His face was purple and he was waving his arms about - must be that helium he uses (dangerous stuff).

"Look Matey," I said "No offence, but you're obviously not cut out for the leading-edge type of diving I'm into." He stopped dead, stared at me, and his mouth hung open. I don't like hurting people's feelings, but he had to be told. "I'm going to have to find another diving partner." He took it very well and I saw him pull himself together. "Too right!", he said. He's a good sport really for taking it so well.

The guys at APD tried to con me into sending my unit back for a service. I've got better things to spend 25 quid on thank-you very much.

They said that I'd probably have to change the cells. What a rip off! The unit's only done 10 hours since 1997.

I'm organizing a drift dive through the Corryvreckan next weekend, so book early to avoid disappointment.

Ewan ;o)

Disclaimer:

The Author, Ewan Rowell is actually a very experienced diver and the above email conversation is written as a parody only, and any similarities to persons living or dead is purely unintentional.

'The Dive' Answer Sheet

'The Dive' Answer Sheet