

Tim Wood taking delivery of recycled equipment

The mystery container

RECYCLING FEATURES REGULARLY IN many BSAC members' daily lives. So when the University of East London (UEL) approached HQ with an offer to recycle the contents of the dive club's shipping container on the site, the opportunity was quickly taken.

Liam O'Dell, Acting Director of Projects at UEL, approached HQ asking for the disposal of the contents of the container belonging to the university sub-aqua club. The equipment was stored in a shipping container that had not been opened for three years, and for which no inventory was held.

Dean Pyle, Space Manager and NAUI Instructor at UEL, had been tasked to remove all the containers off the Docklands campus site as part of a development project. He thought the container housed wetsuits, BCDs, masks, snorkels, a RIB and maybe cylinders. To avoid employing a contractor and incurring costs, he wanted BSAC to come and inspect and remove any suitable equipment.

Wendy Meadows, Chief Operating Officer, tasked the coaching teams to contact UEL, inspect the equipment and find a home for suitable items among the London clubs. The task fell to myself and South East Regional Coach Steve Batt.

Unfortunately, UEL held no keys for the container, so the UEL maintenance team had to cut off the locks to gain access.

Now, it has to be said there is a sense of anticipation, similar to those reality TV shows, when you don't know the contents of what you are getting and yet hoping for treasure.

Would the container hold a newish portable Bauer compressor suitable for expeditions...was the RIB 5.5 or 6.5m long? Such thoughts tantalised the imagination and we joked that this was how opening an Egyptian tomb must have felt like. Who should go first to avoid the curse?

Well the contents didn't appear cursed, but neither were they tantalising. There was no RIB, compressor, cylinders or regulators but there was an interesting insight into a BSAC university dive club

from yesteryear. Clearly they were very well organised, their training records and materials filed away in orderly manner. Equipment was boxed and sized, and there was plenty of evidence of planned trips to various dive sites.

Our task came down to sorting out what was still useable, which came down to wetsuits, fins, gloves and boots. Other items needed careful disposal, notably a large box of out-of-date flares!

Less worrying was a supply of old ABLJs, or 'adjusted buoyancy life jackets' for the uninitiated. Working with a small cylinder stored behind the 'horseshoe', they predated the jacket-style BCDs worn today. There were old style large-volume dive mask and a large number of fins of all sizes.

Emptying the container took several hours and resulted in a very full Ford Ranger. Then it was back onto the M25 and time to head to Ruislip and Northwood Sub Aqua Club, BSAC206. Tim Wood keeps his club's equipment on his farm in another container and took delivery of the recovered items between mucking out his pigs and horses.

Ruislip and Northwood BSAC had a need of serviceable dive kit, so for them the opening of the shipping container presented an opportunity. The club's Diving Officer Karin Lockett said: "Thank you so much for helping Ruislip and Northwood Sub Aqua Club. We have basic scuba equipment to loan to our Ocean Divers, but we never have owned any protective clothing suitable for open water for our students to borrow. This gift of used wetsuits, hoods, gloves, boots and fins will help both students and instructors make the leap from pool to open water. I will no longer have to beg students to return my own wetsuit! A big thank you from our club instructors and future students."

MARK PAISEY, BSAC Coaching Advisor



UEL maintenance accessing the container



Vintage ABLJs and single lens masks among the haul