



What Happens After You Qualify?

If you ask 20 divers why they dive, you will probably get 20 different answers.

Some will say they love the peace and quiet of being underwater.

Others will talk about the excitement of wreck diving, or the chance to explore sites rich with marine life. For some, diving is as much about the community as it is about the dive itself.

For me, however, the answer is slightly different. The greatest pleasure I get from diving comes from teaching other people how to dive. That is probably not surprising, given that I spent my entire professional life as a teacher.



So, when I took on Wight Dive School it was the teaching side of diving that interested me most. It was also the area I was most determined to make work.



Since the school opened in 2025, we have faced and overcome a number of challenges. However, thanks to the support of so many people within the Island's diving community, Wight Dive School is now firmly established as the only PADI dive school on the Isle of Wight.

It has given me enormous pleasure to work alongside Kim, Dan, Carly and the rest of the team in delivering high-quality PADI dive courses over the last year. Seeing new divers grow in confidence, develop their skills and take their first steps into the underwater world has been a real privilege.

So what happens next?



We have now trained our first Open Water divers. We also have dozens of students who have completed introductory scuba sessions, with many more currently on the journey towards completing their full Open Water qualification.

This month also sees the start of our first Advanced Open Water courses, so it is no surprise that people have begun asking the obvious question: what happens next?

As a team, we have thought carefully about this. We decided that we do not want to move away from our main purpose. Wight Dive School is, and will remain, exactly that — a dive

school. Our focus is on delivering high-quality PADI training, including Open Water, Advanced Open Water, speciality courses, Rescue Diver and Divemaster courses.



For that reason, we have decided not to branch out into organising club dives or guided dives. There is another very good reason for this: the Isle of Wight already has a number of highly successful and well-established dive clubs. Rather than trying to duplicate what they do, we would much rather introduce newly qualified divers to the excellent opportunities that already exist locally.

Most clubs will quite rightly want divers to have the appropriate level of training and experience before joining their dives. In many cases, an Advanced Open Water qualification is a sensible next step, as it gives divers greater confidence, a broader range of experience and access to more varied dive sites. For those joining a BSAC club, PADI qualifications are recognised, and club members will be able to advise on the most appropriate next steps for your own diving journey.

It may not surprise you to know that, if you do join one of these clubs for an Island dive, you may well see Kim, Dan or me joining in too. Carly, of course, will continue much of her diving on the mainland with the Maritime Archaeology Trust, where she actually gets paid to dive. Lucky thing.

So, for anyone wondering where to go after completing their training with Wight Dive School, here is some information about key local dive clubs, along with details of Esprit Freedivers, should you wish to try something a little different.

Plassy Radar Sub Aqua Club — PRSAC

Plassy Radar Sub Aqua Club, known as PRSAC, is a friendly scuba diving club based at Yaverland Sailing Club. The club has its own fully serviced dive RIB and regularly dives around Sandown Bay, as well as further afield towards the West Wight.

PRSAC is affiliated to BSAC and has been diving together for over 40 years. The club welcomes new divers who hold a PADI Advanced Open Water qualification or above, and is also happy to hear from suitably qualified divers interested in guest diving.

For more information about joining or guest diving with PRSAC, please contact the club's Dive Officer, Adrian Johnson, on 0777 956 1970

Alternatively, you can contact the club secretary, Claire Kemp, on 07990 517 101. Claire also runs Esprit Freedivers, her freediving school (see below).

Wight Dolphins



Wight Dolphins Sub Aqua Club (BSAC 807) is a friendly and active scuba diving club based on the Isle of Wight. They offer advanced BSAC training, regular shore and boat diving, skill development courses, and a welcoming social atmosphere for divers of all experience levels. Whether you're new to diving or an experienced diver looking for great local diving and club trips, they'd love to hear from you.

Throughout the diving season, Wight Dolphins take part in regular shore-based dives and also uses its own 7-metre RIB to explore the many wrecks and marine features found in Island waters.

With more than 4,000 shipwrecks around the coast of the Isle of Wight, local diving offers a wide variety of sites, from Victorian steamers and tug boats to warships and even U-boats. These wrecks are also home to a rich variety of marine life, making the Island an exciting place to continue diving after qualification.



For details of forthcoming dives and information about joining Wight Dolphins, please see their website at <https://www.wightdolphins.com>

Esprit Freedivers



For anyone who would like to explore the underwater world in a different way, on only 1 breath, Esprit Freedivers offers freediving training and experience days on the Isle of Wight and beyond.

Esprit Freedivers was founded by Claire Kemp, who is also connected with the Island diving community through PRSAC as well as a PADI Open Water scuba instructor. The school provides PADI Freediver training, taster days, pool training and trips for both new and experienced freedivers. Its aim is to inspire people to explore the underwater world together, using breath-hold techniques rather than scuba equipment.

Courses and experiences include Freediving Yoga experience days, PADI Basic Freediver training, pool training for certified freedivers, and PADI Freediver open water courses at Vobster Quay. The school also offers opportunities for experienced freedivers to refresh their skills and enjoy training with a certified buddy. The highlights of their annual programme are:-

- Marine Conservation talks & underwater safaris, part of the IW Biosphere Festival - <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/espritedivers/2129460>

- Croatian freediving retreat August – a bespoke week of tailored freediving, boat trip & also opportunities to enjoy scuba in warm, clear Adriatic waters
<https://www.instagram.com/reels/DV3vJFODJXR/>

To enquire about joining, training or taking part in an experience day, contact Claire Kemp at claire@espritfreedivers.com or visit <https://www.espritfreedivers.com>

Vectis Diving



Vectis Diving is another exciting addition to the Island's diving community, with more information available at www.vectisdiving.co.uk. This BSAC school can deliver crossover courses for divers who wish to move more fully into UK diving, which is one of BSAC's particular strengths. Its main focus, however, is on developing expedition-focused divers, with training aimed especially at experienced Sports Diver (BSAC) or Rescue Diver (PADI) level and above. Vectis Diving can also deliver MOD 1 rebreather courses and BSAC Instructor courses.

The club side of Vectis Diving is now beginning to develop, with a focus on local diving around the Isle of Wight, as well as trips further afield, mainly within the UK but occasionally overseas. Future plans include exciting environmental and wreck heritage projects, alongside expedition opportunities such as the Mull Oyster Expedition in October 2026, for which places are currently available. Separately, Vectis Diving also offers commercial scientific diving services.

Keeping diving local

One of the great strengths of diving on the Isle of Wight is the community around it. We are fortunate to have experienced divers, active clubs, varied dive sites, fascinating wrecks and people who are generous with their time, knowledge and enthusiasm.

At Wight Dive School, our job is to help people take their first steps into diving and then support them as they develop their skills and confidence. Once they are ready, the wider Island diving community is there to help them continue the adventure.

So, whether your next step is Advanced Open Water, joining a local club, exploring Island wrecks, trying freediving, or simply gaining more experience in the water, there are plenty of opportunities waiting for you.

We look forward to seeing where your diving journey takes you next.



Ian Vallance Owner Wight Dive School www.wightdiveschool.org