

## PADI Open Water with Abyss Dive Centre

After a recommendation from a friend it wasn't long until we were on our way to [Abyss Dive Centre](#) to have a chat with Ian (the lovely gentleman I had been on the phone to for an hour) about diving.

Dave and I got into diving at different times, I experienced my first try dive in Egypt back in 2007 and Dave had his first experience in Greece in 2012. We both wanted to do our Open Water and after a few more short dives we decided to get on with it.

It took a while for two reasons, both relating to me!

**Fear of drowning** - as a child I had someone jump on my back in the deep end of a swimming pool and hold me under for what felt like an eternity. I was a strong swimmer and swam competitively but that incident still haunts me.

**Claustrophobia** - it only happened once, I was on a school trip on a 'team building exercise', we were blindfolded and told to follow a rope around a course. I was having great fun until we reached a tunnel. It was only wide enough for my shoulders so I had to pull myself through the narrowing gap, my helmet was banging of the roof, my shoulders were getting stuck as the gap got tighter, it was pitch black and I was half submerged in water. It was enough to put me off this long.

I never thought I would be able to Scuba Dive and I never dreamed I would be able to pass my Open Water!!

**Theory:** After collecting our diving packs we couldn't wait to get home and start learning. Personally I struggle having to learn from large books, so found it really helpful that we had a DVD to cover a vast majority of the content. Having a visual guide really helps you to understand the principles of diving. We arrived for our theory session geared up and ready to go, our Instructor Mark and Dive Master Craig talked us through some of the more complex theory and thoroughly answered any questions we had. The 'test' was not like a test at all, we had so much knowledge we breezed through it and any incorrect answers were then explained to us all in detail, no one is perfect.



**Confined Dives:** Finally we were about to get wet! Joined by more of the Abyss family we all had the opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and get to know each other. At no point were we ever alone, there was always someone keeping a very close eye on us and any small sign that we were uneasy they were there. We built up skills and confidence

quickly, a true reflection of the quality of those teaching us to dive. By the end of the session we all felt ready to dive in open water.

**Open Water Day 1:** The Delph, a lovely little quarry with the most amazing café... turns out it is one of the serious considerations when choosing somewhere to dive! We were once again talked through our equipment, until this point I hadn't really considered the quality of our kit. Everything we used was clean and in excellent condition, if something wasn't right Abyss made a massive fuss to get it perfect. We spent the day going over the skills we had covered in the pool but deeper under water, if we didn't quite get it right we repeated it over and over so we were confident we had the skills to stay safe.



Abyss comes into its own when you have a problem. I panicked underwater, I felt out of control and the walls were closing in on me, I forgot to equalise my ears and I needed to get out. Within half a second of signalling I wasn't happy I was being escorted back to the surface by Jill, who preceded to calm me down and get me out. Without a second thought she got me out of my heavy kit and sat me down somewhere quiet, talking to me whilst I got my breath back. The whole team were great, each either helping me or just leaving me to regroup, they knew exactly what I needed when I needed it, this is the reason I knew I was going to be back in the water the next day.

**Open Water Day 2:** The water was visibly clearer and the dive area much larger, the weather was perfect and the group was in high spirits. I was introduced to Darrell, who I knew was going to have his work cut out for him! We were quickly in the water (after some good banter with other divers) and once again going over the skills we had covered in the pool. We descended along a line and I was taken down at a pace I was comfortable with 1-1, we ascended a little when my ears wouldn't equalise and then continued to descend with no issues a few seconds later. Much more confident I knew it was going to be a great day!



We finished the day with a free dive, we planned our time with the ERDP and set off for our first real swim. It was a much deeper descent so the Abyss team took us down one at a time. Darrell took me down slowly and remained by my side the entire dive, we swam over a gym and around a commercial plane! Once back at the surface we were arranging to return with the team before we even had our fins off! We were all hooked!

Filling in our log books was a proud moment and we are already looking to book our [Advanced Open Water](#).

There are a lot of dive schools, but hopefully after reading this you will realise that Abyss is a family. There was a laugh a minute and a feeling of complete trust towards the team from the moment we all met. If you are looking to [try diving](#), get your [open water](#) or [advance your skills](#) just pick up the phone and you will be in safe hands.