

Coasteering Workshop
Date: 11th November 2016
Port Eynon, Gower



An overview of the workshop:

NCC Update

Tony Rees gave an update on the NCC symposium in Newquay last weekend, positive feedback from those that attended. It looked at rescue techniques in that area, including use of a “scoop stretcher”. This works well locally as RNLI are only 5 minutes away so casualty not in water for long. This would not work so well in south Wales.

The RNLI were invited to join the workshop, however they replied that they don't support coasteering as an activity. Tony will chase this at a national level to get local change.

A point was raised that helicopters don't like flying close to cliffs due to the turbulence that is created by their down draft.

A question was raised about people thoughts on the public interfering with led sessions put their presence and actions. The answers were to led by example and brief your group about expectations and what they might see.

Jumping From Height

Gary Evans ran through some facts and research about jumping from height into water. The key point here were:

- Water is NOT like concrete, it displaces when you hit it, so more open or aerated the “softer” the landing. Surface tension does not need to be broken.
- Speeds when jumping from height=
 - 10m jump = 30mph
 - 20m jump = 42mph
 - 85m jump = 80mph (terminal velocity)
- Research finds that 15 metres is agreed as a maximum height for a “normal” adult, when we apply a safety margin then we get 10m.

We are not saying that you have to follow this, but think about what this means to you. Remember that it's a LIMIT not a TARGET.

Depth Testing Data

A recent (non scientific) study tested depth of entry from 10m jumps using a variety of wetsuit/buoyancy aid/jumping styles. The findings are available [here](#).

The main points here are that you need 5m of clear water for a 10m jump, and that jumping style/position has more of an effect on depth than a buoyancy aid.

Lessons Learnt

Gary Evans took us through key learning from incident and near miss stories collected from instructors across the region. All the following are based on Real Incidents and Observations during Training and Assessment

1. Keep the group together, stay in touch with those at the back
2. Get out when conditions change
3. Avoid stringing the group out, even though there is another Instructor at the back
4. Know your site really well in low and high tides. Go and re-familiarise if it's been a while
5. Avoid long tows with injured people. Stay put or get your group to help
6. Beware of turning tides
7. Know your Assistants and co-Instructors and their experience and capability
8. The conditions are those when you are there, not those on a website !
9. Be really sure of water depths, especially in higher swells
10. Even a low jump done badly can cause injury
11. Know where you get a signal to call for help at all times
12. Monitor your group throughout, don't overdo it with tiring groups or poor swimmers
13. Your Group's capability is not the same as your capability
14. You decide where people jump in – group control

Heuristic Traps

Tony Rees presented on a topic that looked at avoiding common mistakes and pitfalls that can be made by experts and competent people.

VHF Training

Ceri Davies of Oxwich Watersports offered discounted VHF training to Providers in South Wales.

Practical Session

Thanks to Ceri from Davies of Oxwich Watersports, we used RIBs to access the Eastern side of Pobbles Bay.

From here 3 workshop sessions took place:

- **In Water Rescues** – Both conscious and unconscious casualty
- **Casualty Management** – rescue plans and calling for help
- **Assisted Exits** – Helping your group to exit
- **Working with RIBs** – Communication and interaction with water craft including casualty handling

Some Key Learning from Practical Sessions

Flares are a good way of attracting attention, especially 'general passers by'. Smoke Flares can be useful as a source of continuous communication to boats in a local area (those who may not be looking for you) and also can be of use to helicopters to determine wind speed and direction. You can buy double ended flares that contain both types of flares.

VHF can be extremely useful for communication between rocks and boat (to relay messages and info) but also to attract help from any vessel in the area

Different craft may present pro's and con's in an emergency or rescue situation, especially if help is obtained from a 'passing boat'. Consider the role of the vessel, is it capable of taking the whole group, could it be used to raise additional help, could it be used to take a causal plus one in the worst cases. There was a tendency in the scenario (because of the way it was set up) to commit all of the group to the boat and if it was a small boat then the boat could become overwhelmed with people, or group may not be aware of the dangers of a boat (props, ropes, visibility, blind spots etc.)

There are lots of ways of lifting and assisting people into the boat depending on the size / craft.

Use of boat features (such as low back or hydraulic engine mount that can 'lift' a person into the craft)

Ropes to 'roll' casualty into the boat

Making stirrups to step into the boat

"Bob and Hoist" (2 in the boat, one on each arm of the casualty, bob casualty down and use the uplift to spring board them into the boat) This works best with the casualty facing the boat and sliding over their stomach.

If the casualty has hit something under the water then ensure you and group have a safe and secure way of entering the water to inspect further or assist.

When moving a casualty out of the water use the waves to help lift.

Move casualty slowly, small steps at a time. Using their BA is the best handle.