

## Gildenburgh Water

We visit Gildenburgh Water (Gildy) quite a lot - about six times a year. No one is going to pretend that Gildy is a dive site at which people will take holidays but it is better than anything in and around the M25. It is close enough to London to travel there and back each day, if you wish, and far enough away (it is 100 miles from Canary Wharf) to make a weekend of it. Gildy was previously worked by the London Brick Company and there is plentiful evidence of this in the water. The site is a clay pit, 22m at its deepest, fresh water with perch, rudd and pike to look at. Whatever the weather, apart from fog which is uncommon, diving takes place so our schedules aren't affected.

Gildy is for divers only - no fishing, no wet bikes, no sailing, nothing other than diving. This means we get it all day. Lots of parking close to the water means we don't have to get there at 0600 and we normally aim to arrive for breakfast at 0900. Breakfast is pretty good and is the best meal of the day at the dive centre, and after the diving has finished the local town has a good Chinese restaurant and an Indian restaurant both within walking distance of the B&Bs and pubs.

### What do we do there?

We use Gildy to complete the Open Water Diver course and carry out our further education courses. There are four open water dives to be done as part of the Open Water Course and Gildy is ideally suited as a venue; easy access to the water, designated training areas, objects of interest for divers to explore and an environment that is both safe and exciting. We aim to run the dive schedule to leave sufficient time on Sunday afternoon for newly qualified divers to have a dive under their own authority - no instructor or dive master to cramp your style - many people find that this dive is the one on which they learn most and afterwards really feel that they are qualified divers.

We also use Gildy for the Advanced Open Water course, particularly when the OWD course has been completed abroad. Gildy makes a good introduction to temperate waters diving. There are five dives on this course which could well be Dry Suit, Wreck and Navigation on Saturday followed on Sunday by Deep and Search & Recovery. This last dive is often done in conjunction with the Rescue Diver course search scenario.

### How to get there:

Plan to arrive at 0900 for breakfast. Gildenburgh Water is 100 miles North of Canary Wharf, allow two hours if travelling from East London. To get there from Docklands go all the way up the M11, onto the A14 for about 20 miles then join the A1(M) Northwards for about 12 miles. Take the slip road (junction 17) that offers A605 left to Oundle or some other A road right to Peterborough. Take the Peterborough road. It is a dual carriageway, stay on it until you come to a left filter signposted A605 Whittlesey. Take the A605; stay on it over many roundabouts into Whittlesey and out the other side. On the left you will pass a vehicle sales place (used to be a garage), 200m later, on the right, will be a sign saying "Welcome to Gildenburgh Water" or such like. Take the track and pay the entrance fee. Park and join us for breakfast.

After breakfast and a brief you will need to collect your equipment from the van. Wet suits, if there is none that will fit you from school stock you will need to book one from Gildenburgh – only you can describe your size. The telephone number is 01733.351.288, tell them you are with docklands dive school. If you need to book but do not book one there may be none for you when we get there, there is a shop where you might buy one that fits. We will then assemble kit, check buoyancy and start the diving.



### **What Should I Bring?**

Bring with you two photographs, your logbook and your dive tables, as well as your swimming things. We will do two or three dives on day one and one or two on day two with a lunch break between the two dives. If you are staying overnight ask Andrew to book a room for you, normally shared, at one of the B&Bs in Whittlesey, expect to pay £20 (2005) per night. If you are staying then don't forget to bring your toothbrush ☺ On Saturday evening we usually retire to either the Chinese or Indian restaurant.



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