

BSAC DIVING OFFICERS CONFERENCE
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LONDON 11TH December 1999

OPENING ADDRESS

PHIL HARRISON

Phil welcomed everyone to the Conference and pointed to an exciting Programme which would take BSAC back to its foundation in Diving. He opened the Conference formally with a plea to make the year 2000 a DIVING year.

NATIONAL DIVING OFFICERS REPORT

LIZZIE BIRD

Lizzie likened the role of NDO to a dive; it never goes quite the way you plan. The last few months have been interesting as she put it!!

Lizzie outlined the work she had been doing in reorganising the National Diving Committee and developing a Steering Committee. The steering Committee is made up of the following members:

Chair	NDO
Diver Training Advisor	John Kermode
Instructor Training Scheme	John Llambias
SDC Advisor	Trevor Davies
Research & Development	Jack Ingle
Incidents Advisor	Brian Cumming
Overseas Liaison	Bob Brading

Once formed they had been working on an overall Strategy for the NDC and its various working groups.

NDC Terms of Reference

To provide advice to the National Diving Officer to achieve the aims of Council

NDC Strategy

- **To promote safe, enjoyable and adventurous diving in BSAC branches**
- **To regain and retain the trust of members**
Because we realise over the past year or so that confidence has been shaken.
- **To ensure effective communication**
We want to make sure membership knows what is happening and have the opportunity to contribute to our decision making.
- **To ensure Schools have a commercially viable product within Council's overall Schools Policy.**
Our schools system needs repositioning so that they become an integral part of the Club.

The bulk of NDC work so far has concentrated on specific areas including the Instructor Training Scheme (ITS) Review, the Diver Training Programme (DTP) Review and an inter-related Skill Development Course (SDC) Review, all of which would be presented to conference later during the day.

Lizzie then spoke of the development in further existing activities and policies:

The Coaching Scheme. So important in supporting the aims of NDC with invaluable support in improving our communication with Members.

BSAC Schools. An overall schools policy is a Council decision but feedback is important and Lizzie

mentioned some food for thought. Should BSAC Branches and Schools be in competitors with each other? Shouldn't we be looking at developing a co-operative relationship, breaking

down barriers that exist on both sides and, as an organisation, have the confidence to offer the choice of training BSAC either through a school or branch.

The Expeditions Scheme. Proving very successful with 9 expeditions proposed for 2000.

Our Environmental Policy. We need to back our Policy with action so work currently being done on including more 'FUN' Courses, such as an introduction to wreck diving and a more basic marine biology course that can be run in-branch. A specific working party is charged with developing this and other courses to increase awareness of environmental issues.

Rebreathers. Lizzie announced that the working group had been both reformed and strengthened by the addition of new members with specific skills. Lizzie was spearheading the group herself and they had already met and done some useful work. . From the first meeting of the new Rebreather Group it was agreed that

- **We wish to approve the use of CCRs**
But, as an organisation we have to address the fact that
- **We have a responsibility to Members overall, including the CCR Diver, in education, training and integration into Branch recreational diving.**
Common sense says
- **To approve use, we have to evaluate and put in place a system that not only serves the existing CCR diver but future CCR divers too.**
and
- **Currently awaiting coroners court hears and any litigation that may, or may not, impact on the CCR area**
We have to consider any possible litigation that may impact in the CCR area and on us as an organisation.

In addition the group is working on a number of Courses to support the use of semi-closed Rebreathers in branch diving currently approved by BSAC :-

- **A Workshop for Branches**
Marshalling
Buddy & Rescue Considerations
- **Rescue "Module" for Unit Specific or Other Agency Courses**
- **Refresher Workshop/Course**
- **A "Try It Course" – Semi Closed and Closed Circuit Rebreathers**

All the above work also includes work on Closed Circuit Rebreathers so when approval is given they will work equally well with CCRs.

On the **Research and Development** side work is continuing subject to financial constraints on various projects including

- Trimix
- DPVs
- Gas Mixer Blender

Lizzie closed by saying it had been an interesting and challenging first six months and she was looking forward to an enjoyable and productive year ahead and gave a big thank you to all members for their support.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT COURSE REVIEW

TREVOR DAVIES

Trevor began with the history of how SDC's evolved and their integration in the Advanced Diver Programme. The Review group were looking at ALL SDC's but the priority was seen as those constituting the current Advanced Diver.

The Development strategy would concentrate on

- SHORT TERM - minor changes to support materials and the removal of barriers to training for Advanced Diver SDCs ONLY. This will continue in parallel with the Long Term Strategy.
- LONG TERM – Advanced Diver and other SDC's and how they integrate with the rest of the Training Programme and follow the same consistent format

The Minor updates would address

- Ensuring that the Course promoted the Relevant emphasis for skills required
- Courses would remain largely unchanged
- Support Materials – Instructor notes/Student notes/Visual aids
- Barriers - would be reduced through the removal of Regional Coach final approval and more recognition of alternative agency qualifications
- Lead Instructors – with IMMEDIATE EFFECT to assist Branches in running Advanced Diver Courses the minimum qualification for the lead Instructor will be reduced to **OPEN WATER INSTRUCTOR & ADVANCED DIVER** for the following Advanced Diver Courses
 - Search and Recovery
 - Advanced Diving Techniques
 - Practical Rescue Management
 - Chartwork and Position Fixing
 - BoathandlingDive Planning and Marshalling will **continue to require to be lead by ADVANCED INSTRUCTORS**
- Administration - Course Approval will become Course Registration and time-scales will be reduced

Feedback request – email no. for Trevor. trevor.davies@bsac.com

DIVING INCIDENTS SURVEY

BRIAN CUMMING

Brian introduced the Incidents Survey for 1999 which covered the year from October 1st 1998 to 30th September 1999. Overall there had be a slight reduction (382 form 431 in '98) in the number of incidents reported. This could in part be due to the loss during the year of a Press cutting service. However allowing for previous levels of reporting Brian believed that there was still an overall reduction in the number of Incidents. The trends for incidents were similar to previous years and the number of fatalities involved, though showing an increase (17) over the 10-year trend (14.8), was not believed to be an indication of a major increase due to the relatively small numbers involved.

Brian summarised the report by saying that most incidents could be avoided by adopting some very simple procedures.

- Gaining appropriate qualifications
- Keeping up to date with skills, fitness and experience
- Conducting standard safety checks on people, equipment and boats
- Diving within personal and training limits

Copy of report can be obtained fromtechnical@bsac.com

CHILD PROTECTION UPDATE

MALCOLM WARD &
MIKE SMITH

Malcolm Ward of the NSPCC gave an interesting and informative talk on the importance of the responsibilities we all have in safeguarding young people. In particular he praised the BSAC over their foresight in devising and implementing the Child Abuse Policy. Malcolm stated that ALL Organisations which encompassed children would be forced to implement similar policies and by making the move now BSAC had ensured that they were well prepared and able to improve on their policy still further.

Mike Smith then outlined the current position with BSAC Policy and announced that a review of the Policy is being undertaken with assistance from the NSPCC and other bodies. The Policy will be continuously reviewed to ensure that children (under 18's) within the BSAC are safeguarded together with the interests of BSAC Members.

UPDATE ON DIVER TRAINING REVIEW

JOHN KERMODE

John began by detailing the issues which the Review Group had identified.

- There was a strong demand to return Advanced Diver Training to Branches
- Following the retention of Dive Leader it was felt that the Grade required some strengthening
- The Training Materials for DL and AD were becoming dated
- The foundation Grades could benefit from a boost in content and form
- A repositioning of some aspects of Diver Training (e.g. DSMBs)

John indicated that there was something of an imbalance between some of the foundation grades and higher levels such as Advanced Diver and First Class. He illustrated this using the number of hours training necessary for each grade and whilst each grade up to and including Dive Leader took around 20 hours each, Advanced Diver took almost twice this amount. In order to redress the balance John tried to identify areas where reorganization could take place

- Sports Diver – to include more diving skills such as the use of a DSMB
- Dive Leader – concentrates on teaching the Leading of Dives and encompass Dive Marshalling
- Advanced Diver – to act as a Manager and Organiser
- 1st Class Diver – Lead Expeditions

The constraints placed on the Review had to take account of

- the need to identify and allocate funding for any re-writes and production of Training Materials
- The need to ensure that not just 1 person is responsible for writing the Programme but that a consistent and high quality format is maintained
- The need to commit to starting the Review and seek a consensus

This presentation formed the start of this process and John outlined what the first steps would be which included the appointment of Chief Instructors for each Diver Grade up to Advanced Diver. These Chief Instructors would form the basis of the Review Group which would then

- Review the Training Programme
- Consult with the Membership and all interested parties
- Inform and liaise with the ITS Review Group to ensure a coherent and complimentary Training Programme for Divers and Instructors
-

John invited anyone who wanted to get involved to contact him through his E-mail address john.kermode@bsac.com

His closing exhortation was that the aim was to produce a Diver Training Programme to teach **REAL, FUN & SAFE DIVING.**

UPDATE ON INSTRUCTOR TRAINING REVIEW

JOHN LLAMBIAS

John introduced the latest position with this ongoing review.

Aims of the Instructor Training Review

The aim of the ITS review is to develop and put in place an instructor training scheme which:

- enable more divers to be instructors
- is relevant to the Diver Training Scheme
- blends seamlessly with the diver training grades
- is relevant to today's diving & today's BSAC
- is flexible
- maintains the high quality of the instructor training

Proposed Instructor Grades

The current proposals are based on three Nationally Qualified Instructor (NQI) Levels. These are:

1. NQI Level 1 - This Instructor can teach and examine Club/Ocean Diver, Sports Diver. This instructor will be operating generally within the branch environment
2. NQI Level 2 - This Instructor can teach and examine up Dive Leader and Advanced Diver. This instructor will be operating generally within the branch environment and the region, perhaps as an Area or Regional Coach. He/she will be a figurehead within the branch
3. NQI Level 3 - This Instructor can teach and examine all aspects of the BSAC Diver Training Programme up to First Class Diver. This instructor will be operating generally within all spheres of the BSAC, and this may include national and international level.

In addition, there will be an Instructor Trainer qualification for instructors to train BSAC Instructors.

The Review will look initially at the NQI level 1 grade but will encompass ALL grades and will have to integrate with the Diver Training Programme too. The objective is to begin the consultation process immediately with circulation as widely as possible of the ideas behind the Review and take account of feedback from all areas. This period of consultation will aim to complete the overall outline structure of ALL Instructor grades and work out the detailed content of NQI Level 1 in order to bring firm proposals to DOC 2000. This would be followed by further consultation and formulation of the final details in 2001.

John stressed that due consideration would be given to the transition between the existing and new Instructor levels and that no one should miss out through the process. This would be achieved by ensuring a sufficiently long transition period to allow everyone to attain a suitable level. This is reflected in the fact that the planned conclusion of the Review and final implementation is scheduled for 2002.

However one early concession was made to the overall Scheme. John announced that the Theory Examination for the Club Instructor Exam was to be de-coupled from the existing format in the early part of the New Year. Currently candidates must take all three elements simultaneously (Theory, Pool & Classroom Lessons) and if one element is failed the whole exam must be retaken. The full details of how this are to be implemented are to be announced by Derek Cowan in the New Year but the likelihood is that candidates who fail just on the Theory will be able to retake just this component.

Feedback and ideas on the ITS review can be made to John on john.llambias@bsac.com

VIEW OF THE FUTURE

JACK INGLE

Jack gave an intriguing and tantalizing view of the future of diving both general and within the BSAC. Including developments such as Rebreathers, DPVs, Full FaceMasks and mixed gases. A continuing trend is in improving diver Safety that requires

- Proficiency of diver skills through the following considerations
- As Divers
- How we learn skills
- As Instructors
- How we teach skills
- Better skills mean safer divers
- More proficient in the water

Jack closed with his Training Philosophy in the form of a List of Actions

- Improve personal skills
- In water training time
- PRACTICE- PRACTICE -PRACTICE
- Seek to attain Reflex reaction so that skills are second nature
- Repetition training
- Progressive Instruction
- Which practical skill? – ALL OF THEM
- Branch system is the perfect environment

OBJECTIVES are

- Diver Safety
- Practice-Practice-Practice
- Achieve and maintain perfection

THE BSAC COACHING SCHEME

KEN SMITH &
ANDY HETHERTON

A view of the Coaching Scheme past, present and future was given by 2 Regional Coaches, Ken Smith (North East) and Andy Hetherton (Southern).

In particular Ken stressed the importance of Communication and how it was a two-way action. Coaches were tasked with getting out and contacting members but it was equally important for Members and Branches to contact the Coaches and let them know what services they want. An increasingly effective tool being used by the Coaches, and the rest of the BSAC, was contact by E-mail. All Regions were building their own E-mail communication rings and everyone was invited to notify the Coaches of their contact details.

Andy echoed this sentiment and went on to detail the concepts behind 'The cunning plan' which was piloted by Southern Region. The foundation of this is in getting a number of local branches to collectively run SDCs with support from the Coaching Teams. This has a number of important advantages not least the opportunities to share ideas and resources and expand the diving opportunities of the Members in the Area.

DIVING UK WRECKS

GILES ROWLEY

Giles, son of Mike Rowley skipper of the MV Maureen, presented a fascinating and inspiring video on diving the wrecks of the English Channel. The quality of the presentation and the diving showed just how good UK Diving can be and was in keeping with the Chairman's wishes that we should all make diving our objective for 2000.

AWARDS

The following awards were made during the course of the Conference

FIRST CLASS DIVERS

Charlotte Hope	Jeff Errington	Martin Sinclair
Dennis Wigg	John Hall	Michael Travis
George Gradon	Andrew Hunt	Kim Godfrey
Steve Anderson	Phil Karran	Andrew Reid
Peter Church	Dave Kitchen	Michelle Hartz-Coutts

NATIONAL INSTRUCTORS

Sean McKenna
Paul Smithson
Allan Goodwin
Daz Cosway

WILKINSON SWORD TROPHY

Andrew Hunt (for First Class Exam)

BSAC SAFETY AWARDS

4 members of Cleveland Branch received awards in recognition of their attempts so resuscitate another diver who had collapsed whilst diving in Scapa Flow

Andrew Jackson
Trevor Morrison
Eddie Meehan
Gordon Hogg

4 members of Edinburgh University received awards in recognition of their successful recovery and resuscitation of a member of their Branch who became unconscious underwater

Geoff Ballinger
Chris Taylor
Alex Wooton
Phil Mason

COLIN McLEOD AWARD

Alan Bax

HEINKE TROPHY

Clidive Branch

EXPEDITION AWARD

Operation Saratoga

LA SPIROTECHNIQUE AWARD

Alistair Reynolds