



Mouthpiece

AGM Special Edition

November 2021

November 11th 2021 was remarkable as the Annual General Meeting returned to meet face-to-face, together in the Balcony Bar at the Bracknell Leisure Centre.

Last year saw the first ever Zoom-AGM (for covid-related reasons) but it was good to be back, even though the bar itself was dry (for licensing reasons)!

It was a 7.30pm kick off and with the room laid out optimistically for a full house it was great to see so many new and familiar faces arrive, some we haven't seen in 3-D for over a year. There was a real buzz in the air as dive buddies caught up after an overly long, 18-month surface interval!

And a real blast from the past was the return of the annual dive-boat sign-up scramble. As had been widely publicised, all of the 2022 weekend dive boats opened up for availability at the AGM (except for the July Club Weekend which was already open). With dives from April to October and 20 to 40 meters planned, there was something for everyone.

And as the committee finished their annual reports an interval was called – fuelled by soft drinks from the vending machines – and the scramble was off! In just 20 minutes many of the boats were filled and discussions started about reserves and adding in extra boats. Just like the old days!

As prescribed by the constitution, some places were signed up by proxy and all the remaining spots are available by emailing:

signup@bracknellscuba.org.uk



This Issue...

Committee Updates

- Chairman
- Treasurer
- Diving Officer
- Training Officer

Questions, questions...

Out With The Old...In With The New Committee

And The Winner Is...

Brickbats & Bouquets



Committee Updates

Chairman – Jon “JP” Payne

With his usual relaxed air of authority our august Chairman “JP” opened the AGM with a warm welcome to members old and new. He reflected on the challenges that C-19 had caused for individuals and loved ones, on diving and the club. He said what so many of us were thinking, which is that many of us have been lucky and it’s good to be back with friends and buddies.

He thanked those members who had remained faithful to the club and who had kept up their membership even when they weren’t diving. His plea was for current members to spread the word and bring family, friends and work colleagues into the scuba family. He also invited lapsed members to sign up, re-join and come home to your scuba club!

JP thanked the hard-working dive organisers, the committed instructors and the dedicated committee who had kept things going in the most difficult of times. And finally he welcomed the new committee whose hard work will be starting on December 7th at the next virtual committee meeting.



Secretary – Simon Wilkie (*er... surely some mistake? – Ed*)



OK so the ever-reliable Richard (Dick) Watson was away with work so his trusty side-kick Simon (AKA Social Secretary, AKA Entertainments Officer) stepped in to the secretary’s role.

As well as minuting the meeting Simon took the roll call – quorum was just 15 diving members although this was complicated by some members renewing their membership on the night!

Fortunately Ms Rusilowicz wasn’t present for the roll call – she arrived a few minutes later – so she didn’t get hear Simon’s dodgy attempt at pronouncing her name!

Treasurer – Claire Nott

No one envies the Treasurer’s job when it’s been such a tough year. Bottom line is that we made a small profit last year because we didn’t pay for the (closed) pool.

Now our costs are up and our income is down – ouch! Time to recruit some new members so we can get back to break even! PS Subs are going up by just £10.





Diving Officer – Alan Ashbery

The DO started in celebratory mood considering that, after more than a year of shore leave, we finally managed to get back diving again. And of the 18 days booked, 18 days went ahead with miraculously 0% lost to bad weather (*but Dartmouth was awful, we should have gone to the pub – Ed*).

Whilst all the diving was UK based, most of it was in the sea, and more than 500 dives were safely completed. His concern however is that very many of these dives were carried out by a small core of the club – 32 divers got wet but just 10 divers were responsible for 70% of all dives.

The 2022 diving calendar was discussed and the hope is that members who haven't dived for a while will get back into the water next year along with new members and trainees. New dive managers are very welcome to get involved and Alan reminded us that there are plenty of old lags happy to help and mentor the next generation. Assuming there are no unforeseen lock downs!

Training Officer – Alan Ashbery (*really?* – Ed)

Martin Hamilton was away picking olives so his trusty DO continued with the training report. He thanked the instructors who are essential to the development and growth of the club. Despite covid, both Diver Training Programmes (OD, SD and DL) and Skills Development Courses (ADP & Twinset) were successfully run this year, combining live and Zoom lectures with pool and open water practicals.



Tanya and Evan qualified as Ocean Divers, Matt A, Richard W and Tony qualified as Dive Leaders and Andy H became the club's newest Advanced Instructor. Congratulations to everyone!

Questions From The Floor

Q. Can we provide AED training to paying non-members?

A. *We could offer knowledge training subject to availability but not offer certification.*

Q. How many club member have gone down with covid?

A. *Only one to our knowledge but it is not a question we can ask of our members.*

Q. Do we have a training room available?

A. *The old Leisure Centre classroom is no longer available due to covid but the balcony bar is, at cost, on an ad hoc basis.*

Q. Is there scope about sharing facilities with another group such as Dive Crew?

A. *This is being considered but there are no plans currently.*

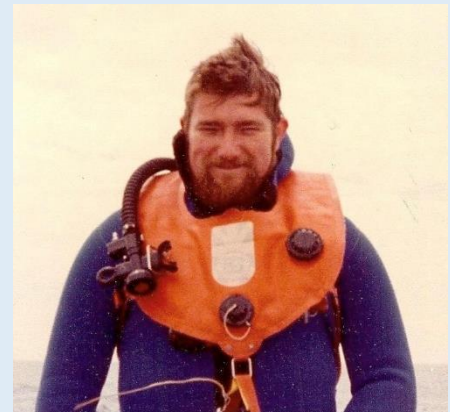
Elections

There were no contests and therefore no elections for this year's committee positions, so the "new" committee are as follows:

	2020/21	2021/22
Chairman	Jon (JP) Payne	Jon (JP) Payne
Diving Officer	Alan Ashbery	Alan Ashbery
Training Officer	Martin Hamilton	Andy Hodgson
Treasurer	Claire Nott	Claire Nott
Projects Officer	Matt Fry	Matt Fry
Publicity Officer	Nic Hallett	Nic Hallett
Equipment Officer	Richard (Bendy) Camplin	Richard (Bendy) Camplin
Social Secretary	Simon Wilkie	Simon Wilkie
Membership Officer	Geoff Baker	Matt Arris

Welcome back Andy H and a warm welcome to first-timer Matt A. All full diving members are very welcome to get involved in the committee and we welcome applications for next year – and remember that social members can apply for the role of Social Secretary.

An honorary position of Vice President was created to recognise the very significant contribution Geoff Baker has made to the club over many years. Geoff is a founding member of the club and will act in an advisory capacity to the committee. Thanks Geoff!



Awards



After the 2022 dive boat sign-up scramble it was time for some awards! Starting off with the serious awards, the committee on behalf of the membership were delighted to recognise those in the club that consistently go beyond, to benefit their diving and the club as a whole.

Catch of the Year – After some serious competition requiring tape measures and scales this was awarded to Bendy for his outstanding crabs!

Try Dive Instructors – Try Dives are a significant entry point for new joiners to the club as well as an important public relations activity. At least once a month instructors, dive kit and committee members gather to welcome potential new divers and the committee thanked all those who support this effort.



In particular: Andy Hodgson, Matt Fry, Felicity Townsend, Mike Lyndsey and Bendy (Kit Bitch) Camplin

Most Promising Diver – This goes to a newly qualified diver who has impressed the committee with their competence, commitment and enthusiasm for scuba. They often go on to do great things in the club and this year it was awarded to Evan Melleney, the third generation of the Melleney/Townsend clan to dive with 434. Here the trophy is being awarded to Evan by his instructor Andy Hodgson.



Instructor of the Year – All the instructors do an amazing job training the new diving talent and upskilling existing members. This year the DO recognised Nic Hallett for “being involved in so many different types of courses at all levels while mentoring the training program as a whole”.

Osbourne Award – This award recognises someone who perseveres with their diving in the face of significant adversity. The Chairman awarded the trophy to Alan Brown for a particularly challenging weekend that included diving for car keys, breaking his elbow, getting an infection and spending his surface interval at A&E.



Mouthpiece Award – The most prestigious award for the member that goes above and beyond with commitment and dedication to the club, often in a non-diving capacity. JP is seen here presenting the trophy to Claire Nott who, as Treasurer, has confidently overseen the club finances during our most difficult of years.

Diver of the Year – And the final award goes to... Andy Hodgson, the top award for diving related accomplishment. Having consistently been one of the club's great advocates, DO, TO and other committee roles, this year Andy successfully took on the challenge of becoming a BSAC Advanced Instructor.

AI's learn to teach the advanced skills a diver needs to drive boats, manage dives, find wrecks, use charts, carry out underwater surveys, and run projects.



Also Matt Fry picked up the inaugural **Minimalist Diver Award** for attempting to dive with not one, but both of his dive computers left back on the boat!

And the **Teabag Award** goes to Francis Jewson for an amazing dry-suit flood after her zip broke – all captured on 4k video by her supportive dive buddy!



And a heart-warming photo taken at the AGM which perfectly captures the very essence of club diving. This year's Most Promising Diver – Evan Melleney – is photographed here with his dad Neil and grandmother Felicity. Three generations of the same family; all divers, all club members and all trained by the same amazing instructor – Chris Edwards!



Thanks Chris, from all your trainees and buddies.

This special AGM edition of Mouthpiece does not replace the official minutes of the meeting which are available in draft form from the Secretary and will be made available at the November 2022 AGM.