

Sophie Rennie



Please give details of all diving industry related interests, whether remunerated or not, and any other potential conflicts of interest

Exeter Diving Services is my commercial school enabling me to run bespoke Instructor courses for overseas branches. HSE Scuba qualification enabling me to dive with Historic England projects.

What do you think are the key challenges facing BSAC, and what should we be doing to address them?

BSAC is facing a continuing decline in membership due to various factors which include utilising funds for more important expenses in life whilst there is a cost of living crisis, and also a change of lifestyle which is reflected in a desire to try different adventurous activities and then once tried move on to another activity.

Clubs are supported by volunteers who may have less spare time than they used to have. In order to address this I feel that BSAC should be concentrating on the promotion of grass roots level diving and snorkelling to ensure we capture those who wish to take up or try the sport rather than those who are already in it. In addition all of us who are current members need to be looked after in order to keep our interests and membership payments on going. The overseas branches matter and as such we need to make them feel inclusive and wanted. The active promotion of visitors from BSAC UK to some of our outreach clubs should be more widely pushed no matter the level that visitor is in their diving or instructor qualification. Financial help should be more actively sought or offered to assist in this process. The continuing issue of keeping up with our competitors - we need to work with them and not try to beat them. Greater cooperation and understanding of what they do and how they operate should be a priority in our organisation's wish to continue to develop. I believe we can be more innovative in coming forward with ideas to keep us at the front of the queue rather than lagging behind and being the last

across the line. Finally, let's look more closely at the U18's - they are our future and we should not be scared of actually going through the barriers (safeguarding, D & I) and actually enabling this age group to start snorkelling or diving. We are doing some stuff but we could be doing more.

Please describe how you would contribute to any / all of these areas

I am the press relations officer for Dart RNLI and have been professionally trained to carry out interviews, write stories and talk about the subject with the correct buzz words which are essential to the positive promotion of any organisation.

In my day job I work closely with the Military and as such we are mandated to undergo D & I, safeguarding and H & S training on an annual basis.

I have been a commercial operator, albeit to assist overseas clubs who require instructor training on their terms and utilising me when I am in the area (I have family in Australia and am always mindful of being able to offer assistance where possible at minimal cost), and I am also attached to a commercial organisation out in Malta and assist in the development of their training where possible.

I have been actively involved in helping to set up commercial operators to deliver BSAC training.

I am on the board of three charities where I live and have some experience of the needs and processes required to ensure continued operation.

Personal statement

I started diving in Australia whilst backpacking round the country and then ended up working for a large oil company which sponsored a sub aqua club. So I swiftly crossed up to Sports Diver, bought a dry suit and the rest is history. I have nearly 3000 dives under my belt and have been lucky enough to travel to some amazing places in the world. I am passionate about the sport and have been an active supporter of BSAC all the way through the last 30 odd years.

Posts held include area and regional coach in London and the South West (a job which moulded me as someone who learned to listen, teach, advise, promote, develop and assist) and probably the best job I have held in BSAC as a volunteer. On NDC I have held posts ranging from Open Water Chief Examiner to Diver Training group lead and currently I am in my happy place as head of snorkelling.

I have helped to write new courses, re-write existing courses, and look at peripheral activities which may support my grass roots level idea. I have also been a guinea pig for new courses through the years and I am still here to tell the tale!

I have been fortunate to have been a Sub Aqua Diving Supervisor (SADS) for the military for some 15 years and this has enabled me to work on some fantastic expeditions all over the world - who can say that they have been to Ascension 7 times? Very few I'd wager. The skills learned going out into the real thing for the first time are amazing and I feel very fortunate to have been a part of this fantastic thing that the military do on a frequent basis.

My favourite place is muck diving in Plymouth with a syndicate of friends who don't judge or try to find your weaknesses, and probably the Galapagos islands which will soon see my third visit as it is THE best for wow factor diving. There are a few more bucket list places to dive, but I am getting there!

I would love to help move BSAC onwards and to nurture the reputation it has as the best diving club in the world. If you will have me - I am in.