



ESSAC NewsLetter

April 2000



Editorial

Dear Club members,

a bit late, but nevertheless, here is the first newsletter edition of this year! Packed full of reports of all the activities people have been involved in, including several articles from some younger members. A special thanks goes out to Sarah, Chantal & Tíree for putting pen to paper and telling us all about the snorkel course!

An important detail for all you swimming and diving members! The date for this year's AGM has been set for **Monday 15th of May**. Time and place will be announced nearer the time. All nominations for committee positions must be handed in to Jeff before the AGM. And on the subject of the AGM: don't forget to read John's article 'To BSAC or not to BSAC, that is the question' in this issue, concerning our future with BSAC.

Although I have mentioned this in previous newsletters, and run the risk of becoming boring, I would like to once again try and persuade people to receive the newsletters via email. This saves me and others so much work. I have had committee members running around photocopying for me, just to send out all those hardcopies of the newsletter! Sending you the newsletter via email is just one click of a button and you can print out a hardcopy yourself. An added bonus is that you can see all photos in colour (unfortunately there are no photos in this issue, so there goes my argument. Oh well.....)! If you would like to receive the newsletter by email in the future, please let me know.

Don't forget, please send any articles, information and news to my email address at home. But note: the old email address comccl@xs4all.nl doesn't work anymore! The *new* email address is:

tat.people@12move.nl

All **contributions** for the next newsletter need to be in by **15 June 2000**.
Next Newsletter will be **1 July 2000**-ish.

Sharon

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Swimming Gala 2000

A Team Captains Report.

First, to all of you, who could not, or would not, come to the Sterrenbad on Saturday the 11th of March, you missed a lot of plain old-fashioned FUN.

Barrie, our swimming officer organised the swimming gala, so a Big Thank you to him for all his hard work.

Thanks also to Phil who made some excellent fishy signs for the teams, which were a great idea and to all the other people who helped getting equipment to and from the pool and setting things up there. Not forgetting Peter our master of ceremonies.

In my team I had 5 kids (average age was 8) with mixed ability when it came to swimming but one thing in common, they gave their all and had a great time. It was competitive but in the nicest way, we cheered on our team-mates till we were almost hoarse.

After all the games the water slide was switched on which was an added bonus for the kids and younger minded adults! This was actually a very wise decision because, as usual, the fouling in the water polo was 100%. WE NEED A REF FOR NEXT YEAR! But then we would all be banned!

I did have a moral dilemma about how to get the ball off a child, only to find myself being kicked in the tummy with gay abandon. A new technique was reported of tickling, which I thought was a very good idea, but

the one used by Vladi, of trying to drown his opponents, seems to be the most effective. ----- though I am still peeved he changed teams without telling his old team mates first!

The medals for the kids as usual clinched the afternoon --- another successful swimming gala was over.

For the BBQ and disco we all made our way to ESTEC. The food as usual was superb (bar the dead animals on the grill) and on that note, another unsung hero needs a thank you. To Jeff, who spends so much time cooking the food for us all and for his unforgettable trifle, which I like others, want the recipe for.

Another thank you must go to Vladi for being an excellent DJ and the members who helped set up the disco unit. The setting up and dismantling alone require a great deal of time (something I learnt last October.) The music as usual was great and everyone had a great time bopping away.

On a personal note, it was lovely to take part in something where having fun and just doing your best was the priority and not winning.

To my team-mates Inigo, Tiree, Kirtana, Elka, Katherin and Samatha ---- Well done girls! Girl Power will be back next year, so look out everyone!!!

Myra

Swim Gala and BBQ 2000

Thanks to many late entries and extra children being 'produced' over night the Gala was very successful with five enthusiastic and competitive teams. The full results are shown in the table. Congratulations to the Crabs who were the overall winners.

	Lane 1 Whales	Lane 2 Stingrays	Lane 3 Dolphins	Lane 4 Swordfish	Lane 5 Crabs
Combined					
Relay.....	4	5	3	2	6
Peter Pans					
Parcel Post	3	5	2	6	4
Tug of War.....	4	5	5	4	6
The Furthest					
Dive	2	4	3	5	6
T-shirt					
Relay	2	3	5	4	6
The Big					
Splash	4 (130)	3 (101)	2 (93)	6 (149)	5 (140)
TOTAL	19	25	20	27	30

Observation: Next year we should insist on each team having at least two children to give a more balanced competition.

The barbecue and dancing provided an enjoyable end to the activities and the Chairman has indicated that a 'profit' was made. I would like to thank all those who helped to make the day a success, especially the Compere and Master of Ceremonies (Peter), the Disc Jockey (Vlady) and of course our Chef (Jeff).

Barrie

To BSAC or not to BSAC, that is the question.

At the last AGM, an action was placed on the incoming Committee to evaluate alternatives to the British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) as the parent diving association to which the ESTEC Swimming and Sub-Aqua Club (ESSAC) is affiliated. This letter tries to summarise the outcome of the Committee's response to this action. This letter is intended to be a briefing to the Club's membership such that the issues

resulting from the action can be fully discussed and, if necessary, voted upon at the next AGM in May of this year.

It was understood by the Committee that this action arose from a fairly wide-spread feeling of dissatisfaction amongst our Club's divers with the BSAC and that this dissatisfaction was due to three main causes:

- Dissatisfaction that BSAC lost its affiliation to the Confederation Mondiale des Activites

Subaquatiques (CMAS), meaning that BSAC qualified divers cannot obtain a CMAS qualification card that would ensure recognition of their diving qualification anywhere in the world. For example, it is under discussion within the Netherlands whether Zeeland permits should only be issued to CMAS-recognised divers - so the issue can be quite close to home !!

- A feeling that BSAC, over the past few years, has been mismanaged, leading to the financial crisis that occurred in late 1998 / early 1999.
- A strong feeling that BSAC has been putting too much emphasis in the areas of professional diving schools and overseas marketing activities at the expense of the Clubs, the traditional backbone of the BSAC.

Therefore, in seeking an alternative to the BSAC, the Committee looked to satisfy the following criteria:

- The diving association to be based around non-profit-making Clubs.
- The basic diving grades, at least, to be trainable within the Club environment, using other (suitably qualified) members of the Club as instructors.
- The training material to be available in English.
- The diving association to have the infrastructure to organise training events local to an overseas club like ours for the gaining of qualifications that cannot be granted within the club.
- The diving association to be affiliated to CMAS, to ensure that the qualifications are recognised world-wide.
- The diving association to grant qualifications to divers already qualified under the BSAC scheme by direct equivalency.

- The diving association to be well organised and well managed.
- The membership costs of the diving association to be comparable to those of BSAC.

The initial search for alternatives was conducted on the Internet. The sites of CMAS, BSAC, PADI, NAUI and SAA (the Sub-Aqua Association in the UK) were visited. The CMAS and BSAC sites were visited for general background: PADI, NAUI and SAA as potential alternatives to BSAC on the basis of being based around the English-language.

PADI has the attraction that, having made the initial outlay to gain one's dive qualification, there is not thereafter an annual membership fee. PADI is also recognised world-wide. However, PADI is aimed at teaching diving on a profit-making basis, both for the Instructor and for PADI: It is not aimed at supporting the teaching of diving on an amateur basis within a club environment. It would take a sizeable investment either from our Club or from individuals within our Club to have a sufficient number of club members qualified as PADI Instructors for us to maintain a self-sufficient training capability. PADI is therefore not considered a suitable parent organisation.

This left just NAUI and SAA. Letters were sent to both associations with further questions relating to the training programmes and the equivalency granted to BSAC grades. NAUI never responded, so also is not considered further.

The only real contender therefore appears to be the SAA. Indeed, when you look into it, the SAA appears to meet many of the criteria listed above.

- The SAA is based around a non-profit-making Club-structure. Indeed, there appears to be no SAA equivalent of the BSAC professional

- school system, nor any overseas marketing of its training programme.
- The basic grades, up to and including the equivalent of the BSAC Advanced Diver, can be trained and granted within the Club.
 - The training material is in English.
 - The SAA is affiliated to CMAS. (In fact, CMAS will recognise only one diving association per country: In the case of the UK, this is the SAA. As long as this remains the case, the BSAC cannot become recognised by the CMAS. However, it is understood that BSAC is trying to reach an agreement with the SAA whereby BSAC members can obtain a CMAS card by virtue of the equivalency between SAA and BSAC grades. Obviously, we await the outcome of these discussions with interest!
 - The BSAC diving qualifications are recognised by direct equivalency. Indeed, the SAA training programme and diver grades appear to almost exactly mirror those of BSAC.
 - The membership subscriptions are comparable to those of BSAC. (BSAC now offers reduced membership subscriptions to divers holding, for example, instructor qualifications. There is no such scheme operated by SAA. It is therefore not possible to make a singular price comparison that is applicable for all grades.) The SAA membership includes personal accident and third party liability insurance, but does not include receipt of a magazine every month.

The only areas in which the SAA did not fully meet the criteria were as follows:

- The SAA does not have the infrastructure to ensure training events local to our Club for those grades that cannot be granted

within the Club, though they were willing/interested to support us on an ad-hoc basis.

- It cannot be said that the SAA presented itself as a well organised and a well managed organisation; their responses to our enquiries were painfully slow. The impression was also gained that their "Headquarters" was run on a shoe-string budget.
- In the UK, each sport can be represented in front of official government bodies by only one association. In the case of diving, BSAC is the one recognised to be this representative. Gaining this recognition often opens up the door to government grants and other sponsorship that would not be available to the other associations. This means that the SAA is relatively poor compared to the BSAC in terms of its grant potential.

The Committee considered three possible ways forwards:

- Stay with BSAC.
- Transfer allegiance to the SAA.
- Run a dual membership scheme, whereby the ESSAC continues to perform its training under the auspices of the BSAC training programme, but additionally maintains affiliation to the SAA. This would allow people who pay subscriptions to both organisations to gain CMAS cards according to their SAA diving grade achieved via equivalency from their BSAC grade. ESSAC divers would not be forced to join SAA; it would be their choice primarily on the basis of their gaining the CMAS card.

The table below tries to summarise the Committee's assessment of the pros and cons to these alternatives.

Taking all these factors into account, the Committee does not recommend the second alternative, i.e. that of transferring allegiance entirely to the SAA. Rather, the Committee recommends to continue to implement the training programme under the BSAC scheme, mainly because of the considerable infrastructure now available within Europe for supporting the training of those BSAC diving qualifications that cannot be granted within the Club. This recommendation also takes note of the promises coming from BSAC to return to its Club-roots, to pay more attention to

concerns arising within the Clubs, for example, with regard to training programme restructuring, and to streamline and

improve its internal management.

If enough interest is shown, the Committee feels that it would be both feasible and reasonable to run the dual membership scheme with the SAA in order to gain the CMAS cards. If initiated, this could always be dropped in the case that BSAC finds a way for CMAS cards to be issued directly to its members.

The Committee invites all members of the ESSAC, divers in particular, to consider and discuss the content of this letter with the intention of drawing conclusions on these issues at the next AGM in May of this year.

John Ives

	BSAC	SAA	BSAC & SAA
Club-based?	Claim to be returning to their Club roots.	Yes.	As per BSAC.
Basic grades trainable in the Club?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Overseas training support?	Yes.	No, but willing to discuss on an ad-hoc basis.	Yes, as per BSAC.
Possible to have CMAS cards?	No, but in discussion to find future solution.	Yes.	Yes, through SAA and their grade equivalency with BSAC.
Well organised and well managed?	Not in the recent past, but promises to get better.	Questionable: Slow response to enquiries; HQ very small scale.	Would face the limitations of both associations.
Extra cost to the Club?	None.	Small: Initial purchase of Club copies of SAA training material, etc.; plus an annual club-registration fee to the SAA.	Small: At least Diving Officer, plus a couple of other Committee Members, must hold dual membership to administer granting SAA grades by equivalency. Their SAA sub.'s should be paid by ESSAC; plus an annual club-registration fee to the SAA.
Cost impact to the individual diver?	None.	E.g. for the Sports Diver, slightly cheaper.	E.g. for the Sports Diver wanting dual membership, about Dfl 80 extra.
Extra Club administration effort?	No.	No.	Yes.

Announcements from the committee

Pool opening times:

Please be advised that:

1. The De Schelft Pool in Noordwijkerhout will not be available to us on Sunday 9th April.
2. and the Sterrenbad in Wassenaar will be closed on Saturday 29th April - this day has been allocated as the "Koninginnedag" for the pool staff.

Please remember that the pool in Noordwijkerhout has been booked by the Club for the Sunday sessions until the end of May this year.

BSAC Club Dive Weekend

Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd July 2000
De Kabbelaar, Scharendijke

See Bob Gelsthorpe for details!

The BSAC Club Diving Weekend is all about going diving in and around Scharendijke, with people you know and have not seen for a while, with people from your branch and with people from other branches.

The whole of the 'De Kabbelaar' dive centre has been booked for accommodation Friday and Saturday night.

The idea is that all turn up and go boat diving or shore diving and have lots for fun. This weekend is a great opportunity to dive in open water, on and off a boat. It also allows newly qualified Club Divers to do some interesting sea diving and to have a great weekend.

The accommodation at the centre is normally four persons to a room, there are some double rooms but book early. The cost of the Bed and Breakfast for Friday and Saturday is approximately 110 Dfl per person.

If we fill the dive centre or you do not what

to stop there, that's ok as there are plenty of B&B's in the local area.

On the Saturday night there will be a meal arranged and this will cost about 30 Dfl per person and can be paid on arrival. If its not broken do not try to fix it so the format of the diving with a Dive Marshal team, one member from each Branch.

If you are interested, please let Bob know by the end of April.

Snorkel Course

When I was first told about the snorkel course I was very excited but a bit nervous. When I was sitting on the bench listening to the teacher about what I had to do I was a bit scared because the lesson sounded complicated but when I got into the water I felt it was going to be all right.

First we did clearing the snorkel and mask, then we started swimming a few lengths and then we did duck diving. At first in the deep end I couldn't do it but when we did it in the shallow end I was able to do it. Then we did it again in the deep end and I could do it.

At the last lesson before the test we learnt to do towing and rescue. A week later at the test I was very nervous. We first swam a few lengths then we did duck diving which I managed very well and as last we did towing which was very hard but I still managed to get my certificate.

I was very glad that I did the snorkel course and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you to all the people who taught me how to do snorkelling.

Sarah Urwin
Age 9

A 'thank you'

We have very much enjoyed & appreciated the snorkelling course recently finished; What we most appreciated, was the warm welcome given by the instructors and members of the ESTEC Swimming & Sub-aqua Club. Just arrived from Spain last autumn, we approached the club with the idea of going to the swimming pool once a week and we soon realised that, there was much more to it than just a pool; A friendly atmosphere and an enthusiastic will to share the activity with its participants, starting by a warm welcome.

Thank you all & special thanks to its devoted members,

Iñigo & Asun

Thank you for teaching us to snorkel. I really enjoyed the course but I also learned a lot to. My sister and I were delighted when we heard there was a snorkelling class on, then I just could not wait. Thanks to Jane, Stephanie, Kevin and Phil.

Tine

The snorkelling course took place at Noordwijkhout swimming pool on Sunday. I did not know before how to clear my mask or how to hold someone if I had to rescuing them. It was a shame it finished so quickly. Thank you, Jane, Stephanie, Phil and Kevin for organizing it. It was great!

Please tell me: When is the next course?

Chantal

Snorkel Lessons

On February 6th some fifteen members met at the Noorwijkerhout pool for the first of four lessons in snorkelling and how to improve their techniques in spitting and spluttering. The ages ranged from 8 to 58 which shows it is an activity that appeals to a wide age group. The lessons were given by Phil, Kevin, Stephanie and Jayne.

Lesson one began with some basic advice on the equipment, i.e. snorkel, mask and fins and information about a special sign language for use when in the water. This is a sort of deaf and dumb code for nautical mermaids, to be used with your "buddy". First we had to swim three lengths on our front and then one on our back as an ability test. Very soon we were spitting in our masks and slipping on our web feet, and then, into the water to practise mask clearing and giving signs to say you're OK or not OK, going up or down or whatever. For this we had to just sit on the bottom of the pool which is much more difficult than you think because you cannot sink with air in your lungs.

Then on to snorkel clearing, which is blowing out water that from the tube and which otherwise causes breathing difficulties (spluttering and choking). Next we had to take out the snorkel tube and put it back

whilst under water, glug! glug! Soon we had to do this while swimming along and then do fancy things like passing the snorkel from hand to hand around our bodies and back to the correct orifice again. All without drowning!

Lesson two started with a reminder of things learnt in lesson one and then we were shown different ways to get in the water. First, lookie, lookie, to make sure it is all clear, then hold your mask and step off like a penguin (don't jump that's not right), just step off like a penguin, splash, wonderful! Then another way; always lookie, lookie and hold your mask, and just roll in backwards. This is somewhat disorientating but survival instincts always seem to point you upwards in the end. Snorkel clearing is really useful now, good job we learnt that first!

Quick break for instruction on the poolside; Kevin had made a beautiful shapely model to explain the technique for duck diving. The key point is to bend the body at ninety degrees at the waist and then straighten up with your legs vertically out of the water, this gives momentum to go down. Back in the water, it's funny how it doesn't seem so easy in practise, however after some critique and thoughts about what was wrong, suddenly it came right and I nearly banged my head on the bottom of the pool. By this time the children were zooming up and down like minnows or dolphins and showing us all up.

Lesson three and now it's getting really serious, the deep sea stuff! First, learning to duck dive and pick up rings from the bottom, then skimming along the floor of the pool like plaice or other flat fish trying to hide away from some would-be predator. After several practice runs this went quite well and so we proceeded to circus training; duck dives through hoops standing up on the floor. You have to get right down low to glide through the rings. Now, underwater gymnastics, backward somersaults, one, two, three, tipping over sometimes, but great fun. Then forward somersaults, which are more difficult to keep stable because you

are curled up and cannot see so well. Sometimes I breathed out completely and then realised I could not breathe in again so I had to make a rapid ascent to find air. Finally we did rescue towing on our back, pulling a helpless 'buddy' for a length. This is a valuable life saving technique.

Lesson four was 'the test' where we had a number of checks to demonstrate that we could do all the things we had learnt. Every one was successful and very happy with the experience and extra confidence gained from what was, a short, but very effective course. Many thanks to Phil, Kevin, Stephanie and Jayne. Fortunately Peter de Maagt had brought his camera and we were able to have a group photograph. Two weeks later we were presented with beautiful, certificates reflecting our achievement.

Barrie