

SCUBA

Official Magazine of Britain's Biggest Diving Club

April 2026 | £4.50

BSAC
Dive with us



Responsible wreck diving

- Ethical treasure hunting
- Gateways to protected wrecks
- Lost ships of Eastbourne

Time Traveller

Kirsty Andrews delves into heritage diving magazines

Ice baby

Karen Boswarva sets out the science of sea ice formation

Bonny bunnets

Yo-Han Cha on the cultural significance of the beanie hat

Exumas strategy

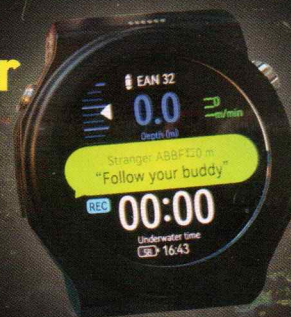
Taking it easy on the Bahamas Aggressor II liveaboard

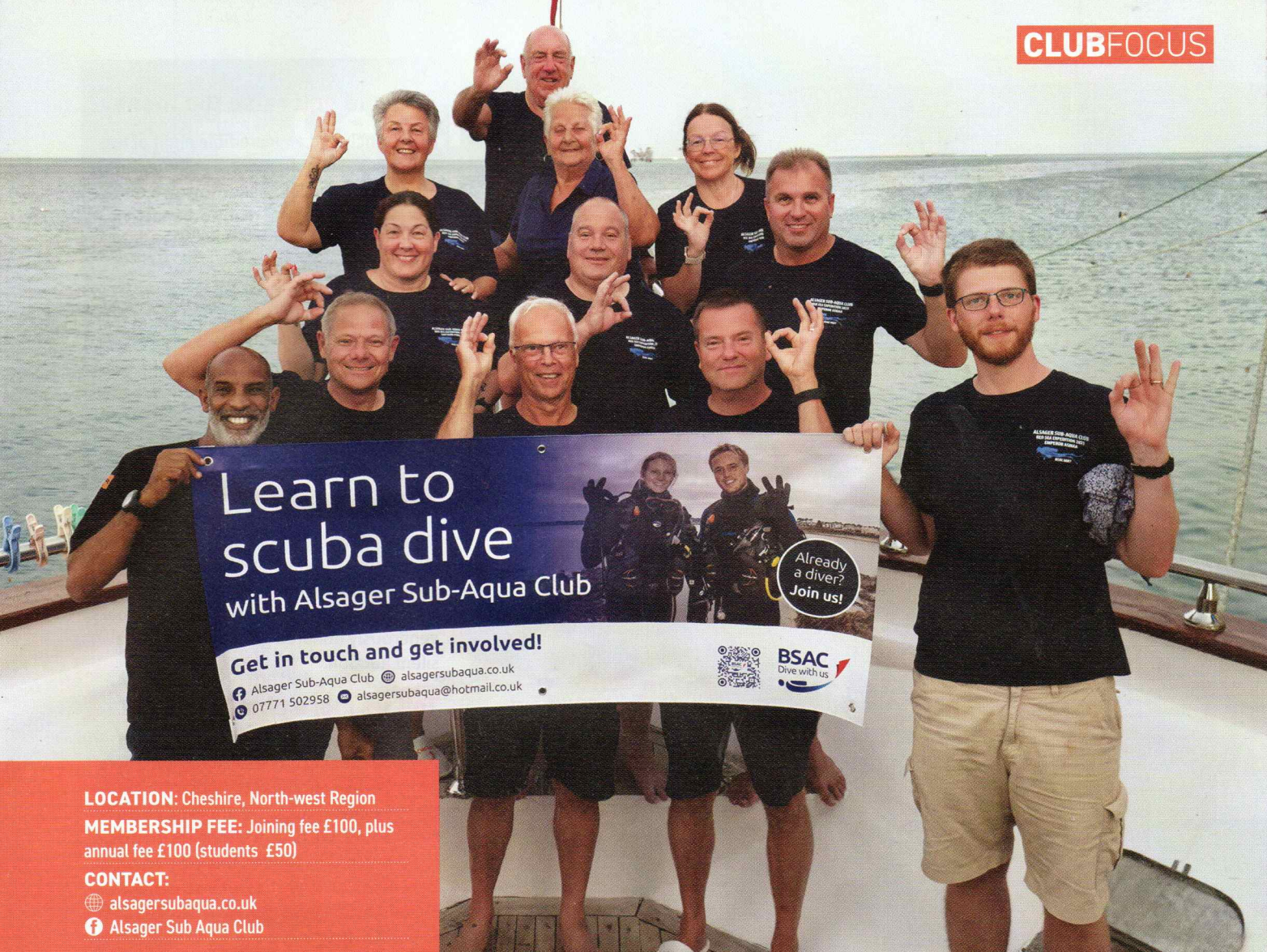
Critter v Litter

Which lasts longest in the ocean?

Underwater texting?

Huawei enters the scuba space





LOCATION: Cheshire, North-west Region

MEMBERSHIP FEE: Joining fee £100, plus annual fee £100 (students £50)

CONTACT:

alsagersubaqua.co.uk

Alsager Sub Aqua Club

Alsager Sub Aqua Club

Kristina Pedder meets Cheshire-based Alsager SAC, whose fundraising efforts have put the club on a firm footing for a successful year

Let's meet a Cheshire-based club that supports its members in their scuba diving adventures, fostering fantastic fun and new friendships along the way. A successful fundraising year has put the club in a great place to continue spreading the experience of diving across the local community.

How big is your club?

Our current membership stands at 40. Since the pandemic, all diving organisations seem to have observed a decline in participation, although, thankfully, there appears to be an increased interest in the sport once again. We have: one Snorkel Diver, eight trainees, six Ocean Divers, 12 Sports Divers, eight Dive Leaders, four Advanced Divers, and one First Class Diver.

The branch (0887) has seen significant growth in 2025 both in trainees, trainers and fully qualified members.

Who are your members?

We are proud to have a diverse membership with a wide array of life and diving experiences. Our members range in age from Isla, who is 12 years old, to Eric, who is 87. Eric remains an active member and recently completed his sidemount training, not to mention abseiling down Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth to raise funds for the club.

What's the focus of branch activities?

Members dive for pleasure, to enhance our skills and qualifications and to experience

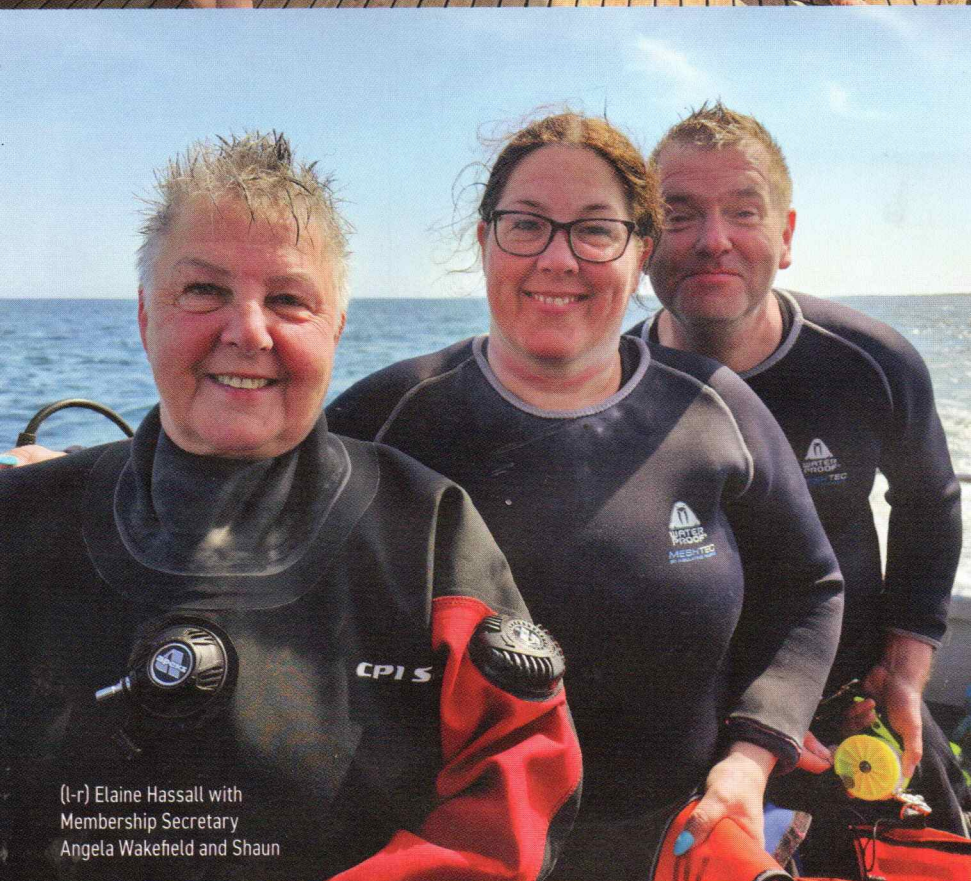
various challenges. Indeed, one of our members uses her skills to research, locate and dive previously undiscovered wrecks. We strive to ensure all members are trained to the necessary grade to enable them to participate in any of our club expeditions and avoid missing out.

I hear you have done some fantastic fundraising

The club successfully raised £7,500, with Sport England matching this amount. To have £15,000 available to purchase much-needed dive and training equipment for the club has been an incredible achievement. It was challenging at times, but once again, the club has collaborated to accomplish this goal.



Emperor
Asmaa Red Sea
liveaboard trip



(l-r) Elaine Hassall with
Membership Secretary
Angela Wakefield and Shaun

On the Zodiac, Red Sea 2025



How did you raise the money?

Events included an incredible night of live music and entertainment, a self-funded abseil down the Spinnaker Tower, a raffle for donated gifts, and many other activities. The support we have received from some other BSAC clubs, as well as other dive organisations, has been remarkable. We held a race night event that had sponsors for each race. We like to shout out to Thor Specialities (UK) Ltd who donated £1,000, for which we are truly grateful.

We raised more funds through an Underwater Wreck Detective night featuring guest speaker Barbara Mortimer, a member of the Gasperados Dive Team. This event was exceptionally well-supported and enjoyed by all. We gained insight into the extensive research and commitment involved in discovering previously undiscovered wrecks. Members generously donated gifts, and we held a silent auction.

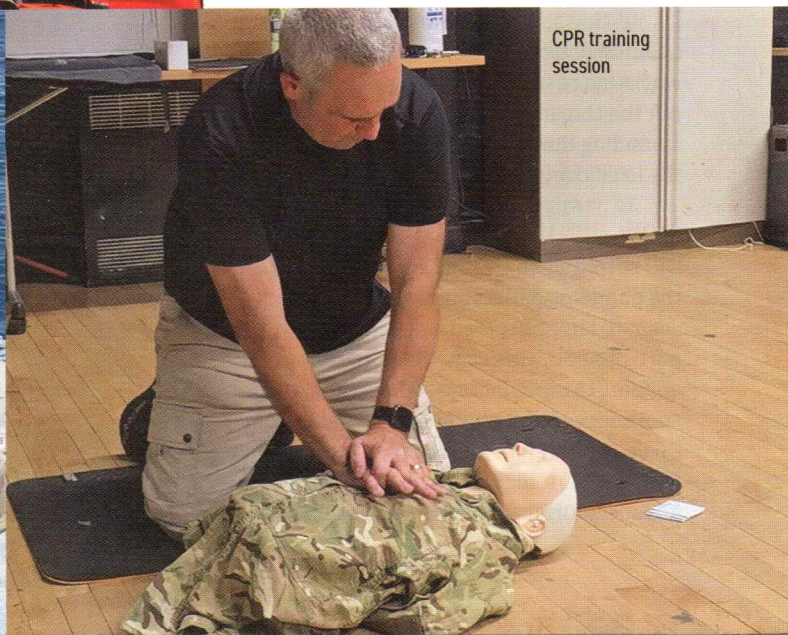
Tell us more about club life

It has been a particularly busy year. Our ongoing training has seen some members progress from trainees to Sports Divers. We hope next year to see them advance to Dive Leader. We have a strong instructor team that has expanded this year. As of December 2025, we had 14 instructors, including one Advanced Instructor and two Snorkel Instructors.

We are fortunate to possess a compressor and to have a club member who is skilled in servicing it. We have an equipment storage container, which has recently been wood lined and shelved by some of our members to safely store the new equipment, cylinders and house the compressor.

What training do you offer?

Some members choose to train for specific diving activities and are content to remain as Ocean Divers. However, most prefer to challenge themselves and continue in



CPR training
session



the Diver Training Programme. A popular Skill Development Course (SDC) is the Oxygen Administration course. We hope to encourage more members to participate in SDCs in the future as they are not only enjoyable, but it is a fantastic opportunity to enhance diving skills and knowledge. We try to arrange groups so that members can support each other during training.

The SDC that the instructor team particularly likes to encourage is the Buoyancy and Trim Workshop. It significantly enhances your diving experience by improving comfort, reducing air consumption and improving safety; teaching you to be relaxed and neutral underwater. Also, in the past year, we have been extremely pleased to see how many members have taken the Instructor Foundation Course.

Do you have a regular pool session?

Yes, we train weekly on Thursdays at the Alsager Leisure Centre. We turn up at 7.30pm for an 8pm start and an hour in the pool. We do training, refreshing skills, try dives, side-mount taster sessions. We simulate night dives in the winter months by turning the lights out and using torches; a particular hit with the members. This

year, we are planning a simulated restricted surface dive. The pool will be three-quarters covered. Divers work in pairs and go under the cover attached to a rope as if under ice. We intend to run a full-face mask and rebreather taster session.

Where do you go for theory sessions?

Dry practical sessions take place at the leisure centre. We are also fortunate to have access to a room at the Alsager Cricket Club, which we use for theory sessions that use PowerPoint presentations. We also host our annual general meetings and dive planning discussions there.

And social events?

Following pool sessions, we socialise at a local pub. Sadly, that's not for the younger ones. The wider social aspect of our club, though, is truly wonderful. There is always something happening. We attend the theatre two or three times a year, with one of these outings typically around Christmas time. We've also visited the Black Country Museum and the famous Mad O'Rourke's Pie Factory. The Saw Doctors band is simply brilliant. We arrange a Christmas meal for our members. Five of our members attended the BSAC Diving Conference,

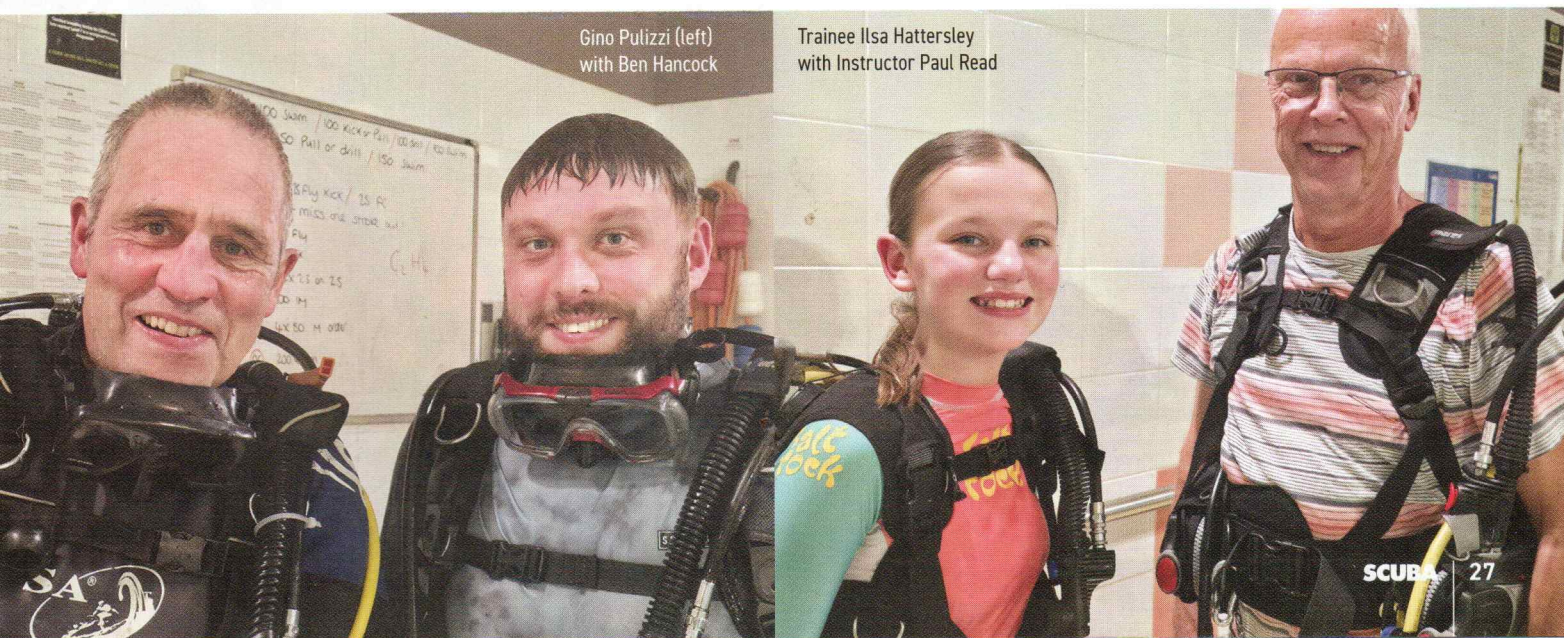
which was fantastic and well organised. We also participated in the BSAC Northwest Dive Fest; even Storm Amy didn't dampen our spirits. A massive commendation to our Regional Coach Stephen Dorricott for organising it and for raising £3,000 for the Northwest Air Ambulance.

What are you looking forward to?

We are hoping to welcome Barbara back when the Gasperados locate the elusive and still to be discovered wreck USS Tampa, the largest naval combatant loss of life for the United States during the First World War. We also have on our agenda arranging a speaker for a talk on seagrass conservation.

Do you encounter any problems delivering training?

We liaise with our Regional Coach when we encounter any training issues. The team at BSAC headquarters is always available for advice and they have provided us with support on many occasions. Our primary contact, Jenny Mooney, offers immeasurable help and patience. We challenge her sometimes, but she seems to be able to deal with whatever we ask of her.



Gino Pulizzi (left)
with Ben Hancock

Trainee Ilsa Hattersley
with Instructor Paul Read



Try dive briefing for Instructor team and Alsager Round Table



Ilsa Hattersley, Alsager's youngest member

For that we are extremely grateful. We have always had support from the membership team, especially during 2025 when trying to get to grips with the new system. They have given invaluable help and advice to our new committee members.

So, where do you go for training?

We visit Capernwray for training, equipment testing and skill refreshment. Dosthill is another favoured location, and we go to Stoney Cove for depth progression. We like the Anglesey area for seawater experience and shore diving. Porth Dafarch is great for beginners. It has a sandy bottom, rocky outcrops, seals and an easy entry. Trearddur Bay has reefs and wrecks: Editor, Missouri and Have are all within a short RIB ride. The Menai Strait is a great scenic dive under the suspension bridge, but it should only be dived in slack water.

And for club dive trips?

Most members enjoy diving in and around the British Isles. For weekend diving, the Isles of Scilly and Scapa Flow are among our top choices. Baltimore on the Wild Atlantic Way coastline in County Cork, Ireland, was a particular favourite some

years ago. Generally, we charter a boat for such diving excursions.

In a different kind of dive in 2025, around 20 of our members participated in a dry dive at the Midland Dive Chamber; an incredible experience. We sincerely hope there will be no further chamber closures, as these facilities are invaluable not only to divers but also to individuals with debilitating health conditions.

Where are you off to this year?

We are planning on diving the lochs of Scotland. We are off to Plymouth in April. We're also hoping to organise a trip to Oban and Scapa Flow, and possibly another trip to the Farne Islands, if time permits. The protected wreck Resurgam, the world's first steam-powered submarine, which sank off Rhyl in Wales, is once again on our list, as our previous two attempts were cancelled due to inclement weather.

And for holiday diving?

We appreciate warm water diving opportunities from time to time. In September 2025, 14 members had a wonderful time diving in Hurghada with Emperor Divers aboard the Emperor

Asmaa. We all felt completely safe and very well cared for, which was particularly appreciated given the current situation with some other operators in Egypt. The Maldives is a favourite for 2026, with a trip to the Galapagos already being organised for 2027.

What else is coming up in 2026?

More try dives. In 2025, we successfully completed try dives for around 20 Army cadets who went on to successfully qualify in Malta. We had around 30 scouts and more than 10 Round Table members. We have four try dive sessions scheduled and planned in 2026, in which we'll be hosting around 40 Cheshire scouts, 30 Haslington scouts and 30 to 40 Alsager scouts. We are also looking forward to a session for the Army cadets again. It is during these occasions that we truly see the club unite to ensure success.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary (our club was established in 1976), we aspire to make it a memorable year for all the right reasons. We wish to see the club continue to thrive and grow stronger. We believe this is our moment. We are so excited for the things to come. 📍



Fundraise at Race Night, DO Roy Johnson on the right



Training Officer Elaine Hassall in a new drysuit