

Nigel Maris



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

I have no conflict of interest. I am developing an underwater navigation aid through my company.

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

BSAC faces challenges at both the macroeconomic level and as a function of demographics. The demographic timebomb is that the average age of divers is increasing. Younger members are required to sustain the sport. The younger generations have shorter attention spans and other distractions that compete for time. The cost of participation in the sport is also a challenge particularly for the younger participants where cash is tight.

In terms of macro-economics, it is becoming expensive to dive in UK waters when short flights can open up the Mediterranean and other, warmer climates.

Traditional locations such as the Red Sea are also affected by global security concerns. Some eastern European destinations are now listed as areas of concern by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

For those inspired to try diving, there are other regimes that allow prospective divers to rapidly attain a level in which they are allowed to try open water diving during short holiday breaks. We have seen BSAC clubs being used for try-dives and initial training only to lose the trainees either to the other regimes or to overseas student placements where we have accelerated their training for no gain.

Where BSAC performs well is in the provision of the positive, club environment where the camaraderie and social aspects are valued as much as the actual training. Since Covid-19, we have seen an influx of new members in both clubs that I instruct in. The numbers remain modest, but they are at least increasing whilst some of the more mature members either cease diving or cease UK, cold-water diving.

In my opinion, BSAC should continue to build on the positive messages promoted during this year's National Diving Conference. The emphasis on fun, safety and inclusivity that, together with diving themed events, help to differentiate BSAC from other, commercially based regimes.

A closer proximity with the media in the promotion of elements such as ecology, sustainability and environmental care within the sea and estuaries is a positive step that could go further. However, there is also more that could be done for the existing members. I have a personal interest in revisiting the type of diving that I experienced years ago with wreck exploration and the more interesting dive locations. There are several things that could be done to build on this and to reengage with the existing, experienced divers whom, I feel, are somewhat neglected.

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

I am an experienced CEO and Board Level Executive, having worked in both private and listed companies. I have recently stepped down, after twenty-six years, from the University of Warwick Science Park companies. I have been on the management board of Aston University's Industry Club. In my professional life, I have worked both in the UK and extensively overseas. I am a qualified engineer and have media experience, both in television and radio.

I have raised £20000 for the Stratford upon Avon BSAC that led to an increase in the number of club instructors and funded capital equipment and training materials. As group CEO, of a Midlands industrial group, I led strategic marketing and investment initiatives. I have undertaken both business turnarounds and new company start ups that encompassed all aspects of management within a commercial and industrial environment. I have lobbied at political level and been actively involved in seeking to improve the business environment for SME sized businesses. I have a Linked-in following in excess of 1600 followers, primarily at board or senior academic level.

On a personal level, I have managed and participated in fund raising, sporting events, that have raised significant sums for the local hospices and charitable bodies.

I am currently leading a consortia of engineering firms that are seeking to raise £4m for off-grid installations intended for central African markets. Whilst this is progressing well, we are some way off completion, but we have attracted interest from funders who are establishing government level, Green Bonds.

I am technically savvy and passionate about change management and strategic thinking. I have a track record in combining seemingly diverse entities and skill sets to create novel solutions to achieve specific goals. I am actively involved in changing the culture of the Stratford BSAC club in line with vision that was presented at the NDC this year. My goal is to reintroduce the "fun" element into the

club which has matured and lost some of its core values. The Committee has been significantly extended and new faces have been included to shake up the somewhat tired and traditional approach to UK club diving and training. Time will tell and we will be accountable at the end of 2025 when the key performance indicators will speak for themselves.

Personal statement

My journey with BSAC began in 1979 as a student. I gained my Advanced Diver and Open Water Instructor qualifications with BSAC and also joined the dark side, where I became an Advanced Diver and Instructor with the Sub Aqua Association. The instructor course was at regional level at Fort Bovisand.

I gained various qualifications including boat handling, international ski boat driver, compressor operator and radio operator. In my professional career I have worked and travelled extensively in the offshore petrochemical, industrial, automotive and fire industry sectors. I was in the offshore sector during the Piper Alpha period and was involved in the development and marketing of fire and blast barrier systems for offshore rigs.

I held CEO, Group Managing Director and Sales and Marketing Director level roles before leaving to finance and start my own journey as an owner and manager.

I was head hunted to effect the turnaround of Amdac Carmichael Ltd, a major manufacturer of "8x8" airport fire tenders.

I recently stepped down, after twenty-six years, as a Non-Executive Director of the University of Warwick Science Park. During my tenure, I worked with six Vice-Chancellors, academics and three City Councils that were shareholders in one or more of the university's companies. I have developed and promoted products and services that have led to a number of public speaking and media appearances. A very young version of me still circulates on Tomorrow's World and the Discovery Channel. I secured £20,000 for the Stratford BSAC club that funded an increase in qualified instructors and subsequently enabled the purchase of a diving compressor and training kit for junior try-divers.

As a public speaker, I have delivered both paid and unfunded presentations as an after-dinner speaker and on various stages including the QEII Building, London, Local Councils and the NEC in the UK.

On the international stage, I conducted a three-week lecture tour in Canada covering the major cities from east to west coast. In my current role, I have presented on diverse topics from change management to industry 4.0 and the Internet of Things.

I took on the elected role of Chairman for the Stratford club and I remain an active member of Studley BSAC. Different clubs with different cultures and objectives. My motivation is to bring the fun and engagement back for the experienced divers as well as supporting the new membership.