

Caithness Diving Club

BSAC Branch 0119

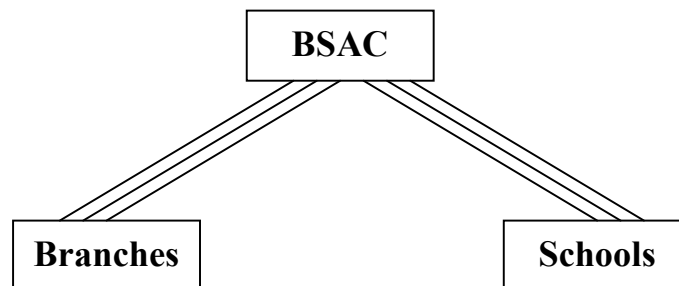


Updated 26th March 2011

Welcome to Caithness Diving Club (CDC), a branch of the British Sub Aqua Club (BSAC). CDC was formerly Thurso Sub Aqua Club and has been around since the 1960's and has always been an active club.

BSAC

CDC is part of BSAC, a club-based organisation made up from branches and BSAC schools both here in the UK and worldwide.



BSAC schools focus on training, often offering training packages and courses that are difficult to organise within the branches. Branches, such as CDC, are non-profit making clubs or groups set up to get people diving by helping share the costs of the sport, bringing like minded people together and giving people the chance to learn to dive.

Each branch sits under a Regional Coaching Team who support and run training events in their region (for CDC, this is the North of Scotland Coaching Team). Obviously training and safety standards need to be established and reviewed by a central group within the organisation and this is undertaken by the 'National Diving Committee', a group of very experienced divers. The overall running of BSAC is also centralised, but under a different, the BSAC Council who are elected by BSAC members. While many of the elements of BSAC hierarchy are made up from volunteers, the day-to-day administration of the club is managed by a fulltime staff at BSAC HQ.



Benefits of diving with BSAC

Comprehensive training schemes : BSAC has been teaching people to dive for decades so has a fairly well organised training scheme. As well as training schemes within branches, the Regional Coaching teams organise training events open to all suitably qualified members.

Internationally recognised qualifications : Maybe not quite as widely recognised as PADI but not far off it. Although your qualifications are recorded in a log book, BSAC also have qualification and membership cards similar to PADI cards.

A range of diving manuals and training materials : BSAC have compiled various accessible manuals covering all levels of training and instruction and all of the training courses are supported by copious student notes.

Dive Magazine : A monthly magazine produced by BSAC covering topical issues, new equipment reviews, courses and updates to diving procedures.

3rd Party Insurance : All BSAC members are covered by 3rd party insurance and will receive support (legal & technical) from the club if something ever does go wrong.

General Support : Help and advice are always available for clubs and individuals from BSAC HQ if you need it. There is a club website at www.bsac.org which has a lot of free resources and an online shop for manuals, deco tables, BSAC clothing etc.

Qualification Structure

BSAC has a well defined qualification structure allowing people to train and build up their experience in appropriately sized steps. This stepwise progression also allows people to train as far as they want and in whatever direction they want eg technical diving, instructor/teaching etc.

Branch Membership

You could go diving without affiliating yourself with any BSAC branch but there are quite a few benefits to joining a branch.

Training : Most clubs have an organised program of training, run and supported from within the branch. What training is given will depend on the instructors that are in the branch but as a minimum, most clubs run the core courses of Ocean Diver, Sports Diver and Dive Leader.

CDC tends to run classroom and pool training through the winter for Ocean and Sport Diver while doing the open water training throughout the year as and when people are available.

Social : You'll meet lots of interesting people in the majority of clubs and they'll all share an interest in floundering around in the sea..... All clubs have committee meetings where folk get together but most also organise other get-togethers.

CDC usually has a couple of general outing (expeditions) each year, regular post-dive outings and every trip away from Caithness has a major social element to it.

Sharing experience, interests and ideas : Probably one of the best aspects of club diving is that you can meet divers with a wide range of interests, different experience levels and slightly different ways of doing things. You can always ask for advice, maybe try out something new or simply get ideas on how to rig up your kit.

In CDC we have wreck divers, photographers, cave divers, folk who just like a nice bit of scenery and others who are just after something for the pot. Experience-wise, we've got everyone from people who only started their training last year through to old hands who have been diving for decades.

Organised trips : Most clubs have regular club trips away from their local scene. This gives less experienced people the opportunity to see interesting new places with relative ease, it can reduce the costs and of course there's the social side....

Equipment : Clubs nearly always have equipment that their members can use. By pulling together as a group, larger, more expensive bits of equipment can be bought and a stock of kit can be made available for trainees and members who are still getting their own kit collected.

CDC has :-

- Multi-function clubhouse in Thurso, built in 2010.
- A 6.5m RIB with 90HP outboard
- 1 static air compressor
- Gas mixing facilities to allow mixing of high oxygen diving gas
- 2 portable compressors
- 2 oxygen sets
- First Aid Kits
- Several sets of cylinders, jackets and regs (SCUBA sets).

CDC Events

Monthly meetings : are currently held on the 2nd Monday evening of every month at 8PM. The meetings are generally held at the Brown Trout, Watten.

Club Diving : takes place regularly on Sunday mornings all through the year and on Tuesday & Thursday evenings through the summer. People meet up on Sundays between 9 & 9:30 (usually at the club hut) and on Tuesday/Thursdays between 6 & 6:30PM.

Ad hoc diving : runs all through the year with people organising outings when it best suits them. Generally these dives are advertised on the CDC Facebook pages or there will be a phone-around.

Diving trips : outside Caithness tend to be organised weeks or months in advance. These are advertised on the CDC Facebook pages and brought up at the monthly meetings.

Try Dive : usually held once per year to allow people to come along and have a go in a swimming pool to find out if they would like to join the club and learn to dive.

Training : is typically run throughout the year with lectures and pool training taking place in winter months with open water training generally taking place through the spring

and summer. All courses will be advertised well in advance and will be run according to demand. Training night is usually on a Tuesday, depending on trainee needs.

Annual General Meeting : usually held on second Monday evening in March of each year.

Christmas Party : is normally held early in the new year as it can be difficult getting people together before Christmas.

Costs

BSAC is a club so nobody is trying to make money, everything we pay goes back into the running of BSAC and its branches.

You will have to pay **BSAC Membership** through your branch Membership Secretary on a yearly basis. This gives you your 3rd party insurance, covers BSAC running costs (eg developing training programmes, admin staff at HQ etc) and covers the cost of the Dive magazine you receive each month.

You also have to pay **Branch Membership** on a yearly basis. This is the main source of funding for the club and covers boat insurance, major repairs and maintenance for the club kit, the purchase of new equipment and the upkeep of the clubhouse.

While branches do not charge for training, you will have to pay for **training materials** such as manuals, qualification books etc. The initial training bundle costs in the region of £30 but this includes a manual, qualification record book and student notes for the particular grade you are training for. Subsequent training materials are generally made up from supplemental student notes which are simply added to those in your initial training pack and cost a lot less. In addition to your own training materials you will be expected to cover your share of any **training overheads** such as pool hire but we make every effort to keep costs down and give advance notice of the costs associated with any training.

Skill Development courses run outside individual branches are accessible to all BSAC members. Costs will vary depending on the type of course and the overheads involved.

As a club member, you have access to the club compressors for your **air fills**. Currently each fill is charged at £3.00. Members buy 'prepay' airfill vouchers from committee members and use these as each fill is made.

Boat dives have a fixed cost of £5 per journey/dive to cover wear and tear on the boat. This charge is limited to a maximum of £10/day. Additionally you also pay your share of the fuel costs which are divided up (at cost) between everyone on the boat. In addition, you may be asked to contribute to towing costs if someone has had to tow the boat a considerable distance.

The costs for trips outside Caithness are usually a share of the boat costs, accommodation and then your own costs for meals, drinks, extras.

Communications

Information on most of the club activities plus the general banter appears on our Facebook pages. You should contact the Membership Secretary to have your Facebook 'name' linked to the Diving Club pages.

The club website is at : www.caithnessdivingclub.co.uk or www.caithnessdiving.co.uk. The website carries a significant amount of up-to-date information about dive sites, costs and contact names.

General Points About Diving with CDC

If you feel you are being left out or don't know who to talk to about something just accost a committee member – they won't bite and will point you in the right direction.

The Diving Officer is responsible for overseeing safety in any branch so if you have any safety issues, please speak to them even if you're only looking for a bit of advice.

If you have an accident or a problem you should contact the Diving Officer as soon as it is practical to do so afterwards and let them know what has happened. They should be able to provide help if required and if there are lessons to be learnt, circulate the information in an appropriate manner.

You should notify the DO if you are planning to go diving (if someone else is organising the dive, they should do this), particularly if you are new to the area. They can offer advice and point out potential hazards as they are typically experienced divers and may even be able to make suggestions that will enhance your plan. It is also BSAC policy that Diving Officers should be aware of all the diving that is going on in a branch so it is wise to speak to your DO to cover your back if something does go wrong.

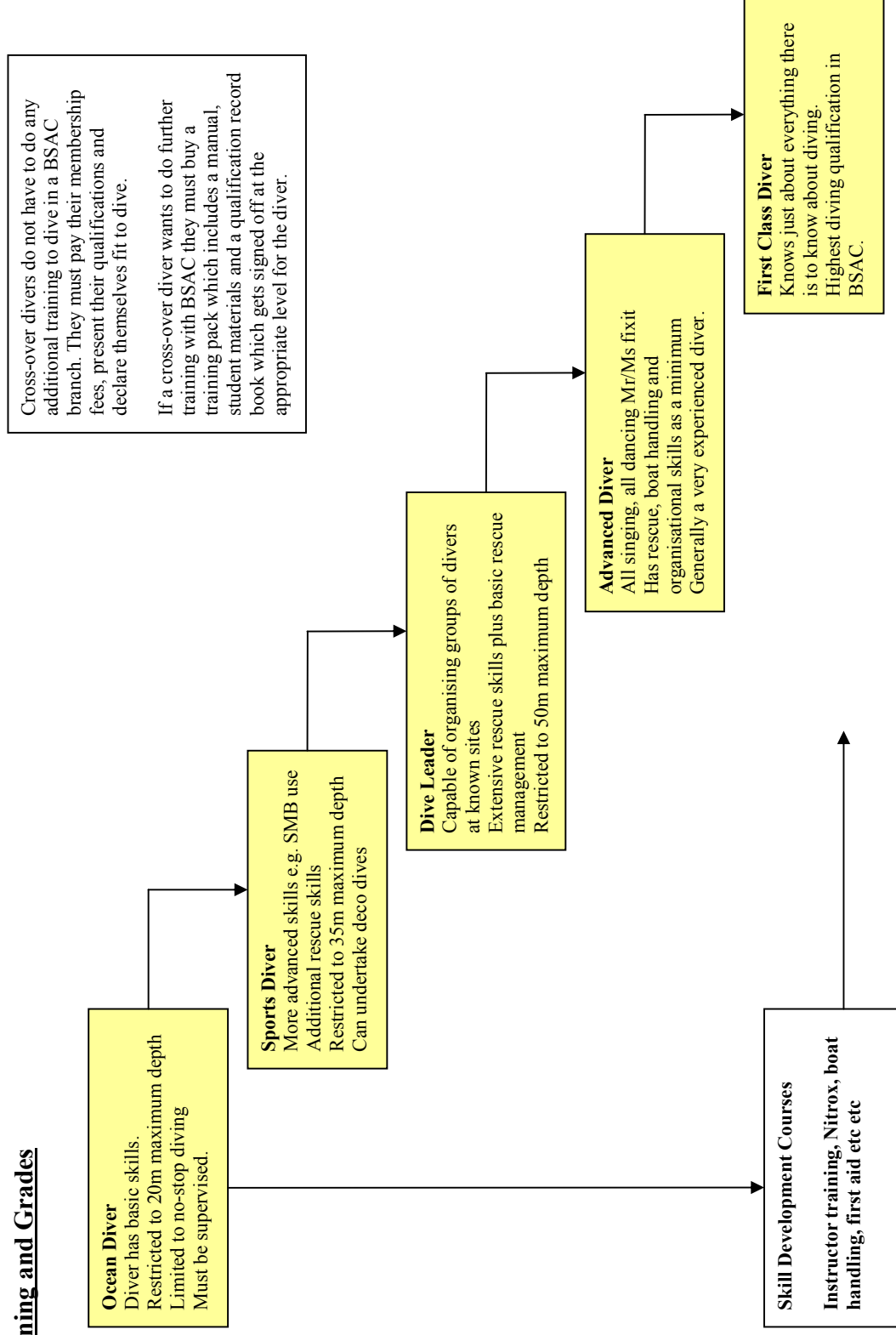
Cross-Overs

BSAC has drawn up a comparison table linking its diver grades to non-BSAC qualifications. This means that when you join a branch you can cross-over at a particular level and go diving at that level without having to re-qualify under the BSAC system. If you want to continue training under the BSAC system you will need to buy a cross-over pack which includes all the training materials that someone who started their training with BSAC will already have received when they first joined. This will include a qualification record book which will be signed up to your current level and will then be used to record all your future training.

Cross-over levels :

Non-BSAC qualification	BSAC Cross-over Grade
CMAS 1 Star Diver	Ocean Diver
NASDS Open Water and Advanced Open Water Diver	
PADI Open Water Diver	
PADI Advanced Open Water Diver and AOWD Plus	
Royal Navy Ships Diver	
SAA Open Water Diver	
SSI Open Water Diver	
SSI Advanced Open Water Diver	
CMAS 2 Star Diver	Sports Diver
HSE Commercial Diver: HSE Scuba Diver / HSE Surface Supply Diver / HSE Surface Supply (top Up) Diver/ HSE Closed Bell Diver	
NASDS SCUBA Rescue Diver	
PADI Rescue Diver	
SAA Club Diver	
SSAC Third Class Diver	
SSI Advanced Open Water Diver with 'Stress & Rescue' Speciality	
Army Compressed Air Diver	Dive Leader
NASDS Dive Supervisor	
NAUI Divemaster	
PADI Divemaster	
SAA Dive Leader	
SSAC Second Class Diver / Master Diver	
SSI Dive Control Specialist	Advanced Diver
CMAS 3 Star Diver	
SAA Dive Supervisor	
Because of the variation allowed in training which leads to higher diving qualifications awarded by US diver training organisations, BSAC is unable to accept them as being of a similar standard to BSAC Advanced Diver. However, branch Diving Officers can judge additional experience and training on a case by case basis.	

Training and Grades



The Branch Committee

The committee is responsible for the smooth running of the club including administration, training, equipment maintenance and ensuring the club is diving safely.

Every BSAC club has a committee and this must include a chairman, a diving Officer, a treasurer and a membership secretary. Each branch can create additional posts and sub committees as required to support the running of the club. In CDC these include a training officer, equipment officer and their associated assistants. Other clubs also have fundraisers, social convenors, expedition officers etc.

The committee is elected by the club members at the Annual General Meeting held in March.

