

## CONFERENCE VENUE

RNLI College  
West Quay Road  
Poole, Dorset  
BH15 1HZ  
Tel: +44(0)1202 662261  
[www.rnli.org](http://www.rnli.org)

The International Historical Diving Conference for 2018, organised by the Historical Diving Society, and the Society's Annual Dinner will be held at the RNLI College on Saturday 3rd November. The College has proved to be one of our most popular venues, providing hotel standard accommodation and excellent conference and dining facilities.

Bed and Breakfast rates are £100 for single and £110 for double occupancy.

Accommodation has been reserved for the Society for the Friday and Saturday nights (2/3rd November). Any rooms not booked 28 working days prior to the conference will be released for general sale.

*Please note that all rooms have a double bed and a sofa that converts to a large single bed.*

*The college has limited car parking and non-residents may be charged up to £5 per day. Parking for residents is free up to 11am on the day of departure. Members delaying their departure to attend the Sunday morning AGM will be allowed to extend their stay in the car park.*

Alternative accommodation:  
Travelodge (5 minute walk)  
Lifeboat Quay  
Holes Bay Road  
Poole  
BH15 1LS

Premier Inn  
Holes Bay Road  
Poole  
BH15 2BD

or contact Poole Tourist Office.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's 4th Annual General Meeting as an incorporated company will be held in Room 4 of the RNLI College on Sunday 4th November, commencing at 10am.

All members are encouraged to attend.

## PRESS RELEASE

The 28th Annual International Conference on the History of Diving, sponsored by the Historical Diving Society, will be held at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution College, Poole, on Saturday the 3rd November 2018.

This year's speakers and subjects are:

**Franz Rothbrust - *Peter Kreefte and the design, manufacture and diving of a replica of his apparatus***

Franz led a team that developed, built and dived a replica of Peter Kreefte's apparatus. Kreefte came from the small town of Barth, situated on the north coast of Germany. An 1805 (by when he was an elderly man) description of his diving dress describes and illustrates a partly atmospheric suit, the air supply being provided by bellows. Kreefte was said to have used the dress to salvage a wreck in 1800.

Franz is a self-employed industrial designer. He designed the first housing for the Hans Hass *Decobrain* and an underwater navigation board for military divers. He started diving in 1964 and is still an active diver. Since 2007 he has organised an international vintage divers meeting in Neustadt. He is a founding member of HDS Germany and was chairman from its beginning in 2011, a post from which he stood down this year. During his chairmanship the society set up and published its own magazine *TauchHistorie* (Diving History). Franz's articles have been published in Australia, the United States and Britain.

**Gary Wallace-Potter – ‘Alexander Lambert – A 19th Century Diving Hero’**

The subject of Gary's talk, Alexander Lambert, was employed by the Siebe Company and was perhaps the best known and most celebrated British diver of the nineteenth century. His exploits included the salvage of treasure from the *Alphonso XII* off Grand Canary at a depth of 27 fathoms, two extraordinary dives, one using Fleuss' newly invented rebreathing apparatus, in the Severn Tunnel when it flooded during construction as well as salvage operations around the world and in flooded mines.

Gary started Scuba diving at age 10 and was possibly the youngest BSAC 3rd Class Diver at age 14 (he lied about his age!). When his hopes of studying for a degree in Marine Biology fell through he moved into commercial diving. He is now a Technical Trainer for a Breathing Apparatus & Respiratory Protection Equipment (RPE) Manufacturer; runs his own RPE Training Company, and has diversified into Hyperbaric Chamber Training. He also works part-time as a Hyperbaric Supervisor for London Hyperbaric Medicine, at Whipps Cross Hospital. He is a founder member and an active and enthusiastic member of the Historical Diving Society, having served as the Working Equipment Group Officer amongst other roles. He set up and runs *Divers' Index* and is the society's current Archivist. He actively researches divers and diving history and collects books, ephemera and memorabilia especially relating to nineteenth century divers, with a particular interest in William Walker, Alexander Lambert and the C.E. Heinke Company.

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**Mick Fellows – *An Explosive Life***

Mick Fellows' talk will be based on his 63-year working life, the first 35 years as a Royal Navy Clearance Diver and then in the commercial world where he later set up his own company. Throughout this time he has been responsible for the safe land and subsea management, implementation and logistic support of bomb and mine disposal operations worldwide in the United Kingdom, Asia, Africa, the South Atlantic, Middle and Far East and the South Pacific. His decorations include the DSC and BEM and he is a Fellow of the World Explosive Ordnance Disposal Foundation and the Institute of Explosives Engineers.

**Dr. John Bevan – *John Deane's Crimean War Diving Operations***

In 1854, the French and British allies were besieging Sebastopol. The Russians had sunk numerous block ships across the harbour entrance and an urgent request was sent to the Admiralty for divers to remove them. John Deane was engaged and massive cylinders of explosives were ordered and shipped but it proved impossible to work on the block ships during the hostilities as they were always in range of Russian guns. Later, Deane used the charges to destroy Russian fortifications. Throughout his time in the Crimea, John corresponded with Sarah Ann Browning, who would later become his second wife and acted as his business agent during his absence. Sarah's letters, recording the events and gossip of the peaceful small Kent town of Whitstable are in fascinating contrast to those of John's describing his life and activities in a war.

JOHN BEVAN BSc MSc PhD FSUT FAE FRSA is a diving consultant and diving accidents investigator/expert witness, He is Managing Director of Submex Ltd, Chairman of the SUT Diving and Manned Submersibles Committee, Chairman of the Historical Diving Society, Editor of *Underwater Contractor International* magazine, publisher of *The Professional Diver's Handbook*, Author of *The Infernal Diver*, *Another Whitstable Trade*, *The First Treasure Divers*, *Commander Crabb - What really happened?* and *Operation Tadpole*. RN Ship's Diver Officer, HSE Part I Diver. Past Technical Manager of Comex Diving Ltd (UK), past Head of Environmental Factors Section, Royal Naval Scientific Service, Royal Naval Physiological Laboratory.

*Tickets for the conference are £35 and include morning and afternoon refreshments. Tickets can be purchased on line at [www.thehds.com/annual-conference-and-dinner](http://www.thehds.com/annual-conference-and-dinner) or from: The Secretary, The Historical Diving Society, Little Gatton Lodge, 25 Gatton Road, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 0HB*

*The conference is followed by the society's annual dinner, held at the same venue. Tickets for the dinner are £40.*