British Club Active Living Section

Lunch Presentation: "Tham Luang Cave Rescue: Hear from the Hero Himself"

Chairperson's Introduction of the Speaker:

Before I introduce today's speaker, I should perhaps say that this is very much a case of **"third** time lucky!" We have tried twice before to welcome Vern to the Active Living Section, but fate had other ideas. I am therefore absolutely delighted that, at long last, he is with us today.

It is now my great pleasure to introduce our distinguished guest, Vern Unsworth MBE – a man whose courage, expertise and determination captured the attention of the world.

Vern, as he prefers to be known, grew up in Nottinghamshire in the United Kingdom and began his working life in the insurance industry before moving into financial services. Alongside his professional career, he developed a lifelong passion for caving, becoming a highly respected member of Britain's cave rescue community. Over many years he took part in numerous expeditions, earning a reputation for remaining calm under pressure and for being someone others could depend upon when conditions were at their most challenging.

More than a decade ago, Thailand became Vern's second home. He settled in Chiang Rai Province, close to the Tham Luang cave system, where he continued exploring, mapping and sharing his extensive knowledge of the caves with local communities. It was knowledge that would prove invaluable.

Then, in June 2018, the world watched as twelve young members of the Wild Boars football team and their coach became trapped deep inside the flooded Tham Luang cave. Vern was one of the first to appreciate the enormity of the situation. He immediately helped bring together international cave rescue specialists, advised the Thai authorities, and guided the divers whose remarkable efforts ultimately led to one of the most extraordinary rescue operations in modern history.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution, Vern was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. His role in the rescue also brought intense international media attention and some very public challenges, all of which he has met with characteristic humility, dignity and quiet strength.

Today, we have the privilege of hearing directly from the man who was at the heart of that extraordinary story. He will share not only the dramatic events surrounding the Tham Luang rescue, but also his life in Thailand and the experiences that have followed.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in giving a very warm Active Living Section welcome to Vern Unsworth MBE.