

1869 - 2019

**OTTER**

**SWIMMING CLUB**

150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

# 02

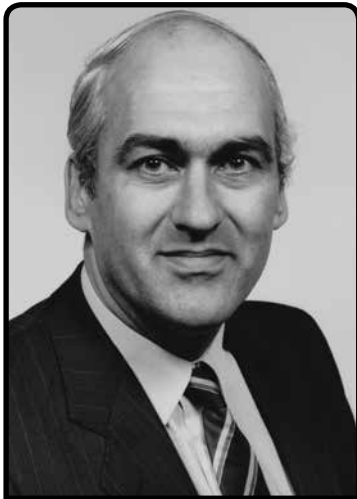
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1869 - 2019

**150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**



James Stewart - Author

In 2019, the Otter Swimming Club celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and this booklet is an attempt to place on record, key events in the Club's history and to try to highlight the activities and personalities involved in the Club during this period. This exercise in bringing the Club's history up to date, owes much to the two histories written previously; namely for our first 100 years written by the late **Dr. Carmichael A. Young** and the later history for our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary as written by **John Goodbody**. This current booklet will have drawn heavily on those two previous works and where the same events are reported on, there will inevitably be similarities with what has been written before and the current author freely acknowledges his huge indebtedness to our two earlier historians.

The author of this work, apologizes in advance for any inaccuracies, omissions and facts misstated. Through the efflux of time, memories fade and records become lost. However, a semblance of continuity has been provided through the Club's Committee Minute Books, so assiduously recording key events recorded for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in laborious handwriting. Additionally

the Club's Annual Reports, Diaries and Handbooks have been an invaluable source and this author acknowledges his debt to those who compiled them and then so helpfully deposited them into the Club's Archives.

Sir Winston Churchill once commented that "a nation that forgets its past has no future". The same concept might reasonably apply to sporting entities; particularly one that is as venerable as Otter Swimming Club and remembering our past may perhaps remain relevant as the Club continues to evolve. What will hopefully come through in this updated history is the ethos, which is imbued within the Club, wherein many have selflessly contributed over so many years. What may also be evident is the Club's continuing ability to regenerate itself, while necessarily adapting to changing circumstances. In 1869, reflecting our Victorian antecedents, the Club was formed as a Men only swimming club. Between 1890 and 1900, water polo became part of the swimming family and our records show that our first Water Polo Hon Secretary was elected for 1892. Thereafter, Water Polo (polo derives from the Balti word for ball, "pulu") became an integral part of the Club's activities. Some peripheral adjuncts to the sport of swimming, such as Diving, Ornamental Swimming and Plunging, came and went within the Club's internal calendar, although a Diving Cup was still competed for internally into the 1960's. In the 1970's, we shook off our Victorian inhibitions and in common with many other swimming clubs, lady members started to join and quickly became influential as both competitors and then taking on the offices of the Club. During the 1960's, a former US naval officer, **Dr. Ransom J Arthur** was based in London and became a member of Otter and he was impressed with the Club's ability to retain members in competition, beyond the ages when swimmers of similar ages at other clubs were retiring believing that they were too old for the sport. **Dr. Arthur**, who died in 1989, returned to the USA and organized the

first Masters swimming competition in Texas in 1970. He stayed in touch with his Otter friends in the UK and in 1972, Otter organized the first Swimming Masters competition in the UK, with an Otter member, **Kelvin Juba**, elder son of our former Club Coach **Bill Juba**, as the primary organizing force. As will be seen in the ensuing pages, on the swimming side Otter have evolved into a Masters only club, participating in county, national and international events, which are tiered in five-year age bands, from 25 to no upper limit. However, on the Water Polo side, the club still competes at the highest levels in national leagues, with the addition in recent years of a squad of highly proficient Lady Water Polo players, who in a few short years have found themselves challenging the best teams in the country. This updated history attempts to trace the evolution of the Club, from its initial inception to where we find ourselves now. On the way, it will attempt to highlight the Club's major achievements along with those members whose contributions in the pool or on the pool-side, were integral to the Club's operation.

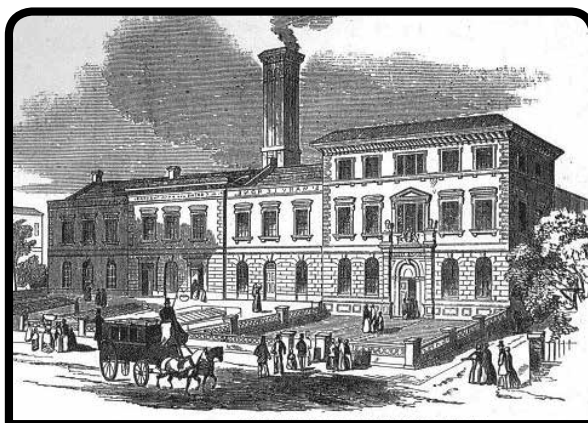
Over its 150 years of history, Otter has changed and will almost certainly continue to change to meet the competitive needs of our members. In addition to swimming and water polo, club members now involve themselves in open-water events and multi-sports events such as triathlons and Iron Man competitions both in UK and abroad. The Club is entitled to take a certain pride in the achievements of past members, but what will hopefully come through is a description of a club that is very much in the present and whose members are worthy successors of those who have gone before. This History necessarily encapsulates major achievements as culled from Annual Reports and what is less easy to convey is the vibrancy and sheer enjoyment, as observed by your scribe, that members obtain from training, competing and then socializing in each other's company. Long may that continue.

# 04

## EARLY YEARS 1869 TO 1900

### EARLY YEARS – 1869 TO 1900

In 2014, a book called "Played in London: Charting the heritage of a city at play", was sponsored by English Heritage and authored by Simon Inglis. The primary focus was on the locations of sporting activity – for swimming, recording first outdoor and then indoor pools and their users. Otter Swimming Club is noted as the second oldest swimming club in London, predated only by The Serpentine SC founded in 1864. Our own previous histories also acknowledge the seniority of Brighton SC (1860) and the Durham City and Northumberland amateur swimming clubs dating back to 1861. Maidstone SC was founded in 1844 operating from a raft in the River Medway, but there is no proof of its continuing existence. It is acknowledged also that Cambridge University SC was founded in 1855 but likewise it is not known whether it has been in continuous existence since that date. Inevitably, other universities and schools would also have formed clubs at around this time, but no records have been located to confirm this.



Marlyebone Baths c. 1869

We know frustratingly little about the men who founded Otter Swimming Club, with one exception. A note in our archives, refers to page 166 of "The Life of William Terriss" by Arthur J. Smythe. William Terriss was a noted stage actor in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The extract reads "A swimming handicap, which created considerable interest, took place on Thursday September 9<sup>th</sup> 1869, at the Marylebone Baths, the prize being a handsome silver cup, which after a spirited contest, was won by Mr. William. Since the race, the gentlemen frequenters of these baths have formed themselves into a club, to be called "The Leander" and which already numbers sixty members."

This account seems to differ slightly from a report in The Sportsman on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1911 which reads "It was at a meeting held in the Board Room of the Marylebone Baths on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1869 that it was decided to form

a club to be known as the Leander SC. – Present at that gathering were Messrs. E.S. Foote (sic) (Superintendent of Marylebone Baths), Walter Terriss (better known in later years as William Terriss, the fine actor who was stabbed to death outside the Adelphi stage-door in December 1897), C.A. Mills, B.E. Green, J.H. Cocks, H. Mitchell, Dr Staples (who subsequently became its President), H. Hand, W.J. Peach, M.A. Smale, L. Pomeroy Dodge and a few others. It decided that the club should be run on the lines of the Ilex – a body of swimmers mainly composed of members of the chief amateur rowing clubs – and that Foot be President, Terriss Hon. Treasurer and Mills Hon. Secretary." Note: An 1877 Ilex SC handbook, with George H Rope's handwritten name inside, remains in our Club archives and seems to testify to the links between these early clubs.

At the end of the above minutes was reportedly the signature of Walter Terriss who changed his name to William Terriss, which hereinafter we will call him. On 5<sup>th</sup> November 1869 it came as a surprise to the members that another Leander Club had been in existence for two years, which necessitated the changing of the Club's name. Otter and Marylebone were the primary suggestions and after a vote by the general body of members, the name "Otter" was chosen on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1870 and the motto altered to "Labor ipse voluptas" – "work itself is a pleasure".

### William Terriss



William Terriss was actually born William Charles James Lewin in 1847. His father was a barrister. He was schooled at Christ's Hospital and then at Bruce Castle School Tottenham, where among other influential friends, he met the famous explorer, hunter and conservationist Frederick Selous. William also studied at Jesus College Oxford, but left without a degree. By 1868, he had embarked upon a stage career, adopting the name William Terriss, although for a while some records seem also to refer to him as Walter Terriss. Perhaps inspired by Frederick Selous, he was reportedly a man with wanderlust in his veins with stints in the merchant navy and as a Bengal tea-planter preceding his acting debut. In 1869, after returning to the London stage, he must have been numbered among those early swimmers frequenting the Marylebone Baths, becoming the inaugural Hon. Treasurer of the new club that was to become Otter Swimming Club. During 1870, he succeeded E.S. Foote as President, resigning this office in 1870, when he won the race to become Club Captain. His swimming prowess seems to have been helpful when he reportedly "gained a lot of glory and a medal for leaping off a steamer in the Thames and rescuing a boy from drowning." In 1871, his wanderlust seems



## EARLY YEARS 1869 TO 1900

to have re-awoken when he left UK with his wife and small child to travel in South America, from where he reached the Falkland Islands. After trying his hand there as a sheep farmer, he returned to London and resumed his stage career, becoming one of the most eminent actors of his generation, taking on numerous heroic and romantic roles – aided by his reported “great gallantry of bearing and young, lithe and shapely figure.” We would like to believe that his membership of the Otter Swimming Club, was a contributory factor in his physique. However, our earliest membership list in an 1890 Club diary, no longer records him in membership. On the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> December 1897 Terriss was stabbed outside the stage door of the Adelphi Theatre in Covent Garden. The perpetrator, who was committed to an asylum, was an out of work paranoid actor called Richard Prince who accused Terriss of “persecuting him” – a seemingly unjust accusation, as Terriss was known to have been supporting him financially. Support of less successful fellow actors, seems to have been quite common within the Victorian acting community.

The fatally wounded William Terriss was carried into the Adelphi Theatre, where reportedly his dying words were “I’ll be back” a phrase latterly associated with Arnold Schwarzenegger’s role in the Terminator film series. In this context Terriss may still remain as a ghostly presence in the nearby Covent Garden underground station. In “Our Haunted Kingdom” (London 1973) Andrew Green writes that an apparition of the murdered actor has been seen on many occasions, first by Jack Hayden, a travelling inspector, in the early 1950’s, when he was making up the daily log in the underground mess room. It was Christmas Eve and on hearing the door rattle he thought it was a late-night reveler. He called out “There’s no way through here” and opened the door to see the figure of a tall man, in a grey suit, with tight trousers and wearing a Homberg hat drifting down the spiral staircase. Then he suddenly vanished. A foreman ticket collector also saw the figure leave the platform by the exit leading to the stairs and a West Indian porter was so terrified at his first sighting that he fainted. The ghost was also seen at night on 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March 1972, by

the station foreman and one of the female staff. Green records “Partly because he has been seen so frequently and the fact that his identity is known, the station staff now fully accept his visits as part of the job” Sightings have not been reported in more recent times and what seems anomalous is that Covent Garden underground station was not completed until ten years after Terriss’s death.

William Terriss is buried in Brompton Cemetery and it is recorded that Queen Victoria sent flowers and condolences to his family with the words “She feels the loss which has robbed the English stage of one of its brightest ornaments”. On 16<sup>th</sup> December 1997, one hundred years after his death, a memorial plaque was unveiled by the late Sir Donald Sinden by the stage door of the Adelphi Theatre. In 1898 a Boathouse was built in Eastbourne, paid for by public donations collected by the Daily Telegraph to commemorate the life of the famous actor. This is now the RNLI William Terriss Memorial Boathouse, which was refurbished in 2011 as a museum and may be found on King Edwards Parade at the western end of Eastbourne Seafront.

With the exception of William Terriss, we know very little about our other founding members. Edward Smith Foote (not Foot as erroneously spelt by the press), continued in office as Superintendent of Marylebone Baths until 1889. He was succeeded as President, by William Terriss, although he remained as Hon Treasurer until 1882, but by 1890 was no longer listed in membership. Indeed, among our founding members, only Dr Staples remained in membership by 1890 and his membership discontinued after 1894. Thereafter, the longest serving member for many years was George H Rope who was elected to the Club in 1871 and elected President in 1890 and subsequently held that office for an amazing 41 years. There will be more details on George Rope in subsequent pages.

In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, swimming in all its various forms, was still an emerging sport and Otter Swimming Club was at the heart of it within UK. An Otter Swimming Club Fixture Card for 1871 lists six fixtures for the year for which members paying a fee of five

shillings would be eligible. These events included a Novice Race over 8 lengths, two 10 length handicaps, an 8 length handicap a “Long Race” over 30 lengths and matches for plunging and diving for eggs. However, structure was already being introduced into the sport. In 1869, after the founding of the Club, a congress was held at the German Gymnasium in Kings Cross, London. This gymnasium, funded by the German community in London was the venue for indoor events at the 1866 Olympic Games, but is now occupied by an up-market restaurant. It was also the venue in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for the founding of many governing bodies of sport, including a forerunner of the British Olympic Association. The meeting under the presidency of E.G. Ravenstein, established an association of London clubs under the name of the Metropolitan Swimming Club. One of the first acts was to stage a mile race in the Thames from Putney to Hammersmith. This was held until 1873 and then moved to an indoor pool. The governing body changed its name, first to the London Swimming Association, then to the Metropolitan Swimming Association and finally in 1874, to the Swimming Association of Great Britain (SAGB), opening membership to the whole country.

The real problem of the early years was whether amateurs and professionals could compete together. Queries were raised as to what constituted professionalism and this became the subject of a Special General Meeting within the Club held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1884 in which the “Definition of an Amateur” was laid down – a definition that was substantively reprinted in the Club’s annual diaries until 1939. This was followed up on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1884 with another Special General Meeting of the Club in which the membership voted, with only two dissentient voices, to resign from the SAGB. Following this, Otter together with another ten clubs, set up the Amateur Swimming Union (ASU). These other ten clubs were Bangor (Co. Down), Cadogan, Croydon, Ilex, Imperial, Kew Bridge, Norwood, Richmond, Surbiton and Tiber and their names come down to us from the printed Otter 1884 Report & Balance Sheet – the only such report to have survived in our archives from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Badminton Library book on “Swimming” (published in 1893) records the feud between the SAGB and the ASU – with an individual risking a warning or suspension if he competed in events under the jurisdiction of the other. Eventually under the presidency of Henry Benjamin of the



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## EARLY YEARS 1869 TO 1900

Cygnus Club, both sides met on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1886 when they resolved to establish the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) with a compromise worked out over the vexed question of professionals. Despite initial problems, particularly in 1889, when there was a revolt of northern swimmers, the ASA has continued ever since to be the governing body of swimming in England; albeit that recently it has rebranded itself as "Swim England". The name of Henry Benjamin continued on the Henry Benjamin Trophy, awarded for many years to the Top Club at the National Championships (won frequently by Otter), but in 2016 this was changed into an award for the winning Men's 4x200m Freestyle Relay Team.

Our records on swimming events up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are regrettably sparse. The first mention of a "Back Race" comes in a report of a 49 yard race held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1885. An Ilex Swimming Club program for Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1898, bills itself as "The Thirty - Ninth Annual Entertainment" implying that this sort of program had been a continuous offering since Otter's inception in 1869 and Otter were well represented among officials and competitors. Otter itself seemed to host its own Annual Entertainment on the first Tuesday every October. Displays of Life-Saving, Diving, Ornamental and Trick Swimming plus a Water Polo Match supplemented a number of Handicap Races over various distances. Handicap events still form part of Otter's modern internal club program and it is interesting to observe how integral Handicap events have been since the inception of the Club. This in turn highlights how essential the role of our Hon Handicapper is in enabling club events to proceed. In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Club seems very indebted to a long serving Hon Handicapper, Frank Sachs, who served for 23 years into the next century. (See later note on Frank Sachs under Club Trophies). In addition to the use of handicaps to balance up the racing abilities of members, there was even an event held into which only those who had previously not won anything, could enter. The prizes seemed to be quite eclectic. Objects in silver seemed to dominate, but there does not seem to have been any consistency among the items awarded. By coincidence, one such award emerged in a box load of oddments purchased by an American in New Jersey USA in 2010. The Club was contacted, as the buyer obviously hoped that he had lit upon an item of

historic significance and he followed up with a photograph, which was reproduced in our 2010 Annual Report.



1892 Trophy

The item appears to be a frog with its left "hand" resting on a barbell and holding another ball on its back and enclosed in a box measuring 4x4x4 inches. It turned out to be a prize for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in a 150 yards race awarded to A.C. Cattle in 1892. A.C. Cattle joined the Club in 1889 and in 1892 and 1893 held the post of Water Polo Hon Secretary (no Water Polo Captain being elected until 1906). In later years, there was for many years an A.P. Cattle who was the oldest paying member on our membership list and has been identified as A.C. Cattle's nephew. See also the comment on A.P. Cattle in 1967.

As noted previously, our knowledge about those involved with Otter in our early years is relatively limited. We have names in the 1890 Club Diary, of those who had joined in the 1870's and 1880's who were still in membership. Earlier than that the only Annual Report that has survived is the aforementioned 1884 three page document, which gives the names of those members who competed in events that year. It also notes the names of three gentlemen who "have not paid their subscriptions", an early example of naming and shaming. The names that should be mentioned from this period are:

**Horace Davenport** - National One Mile Champion from 1874 to 1879 inclusive.. Also National Plunging Champion from 1877 to 1879 inclusive and again from 1884 to 1886 inclusive. Long Distance Champion ("about 5 miles") in 1877 and 1878. This event was swum in the River Thames until 1938. He is also noted in September 1884, as having swum from East Southsea to Ryde Pier (Isle of Wight) and back to

Southsea Clarence Esplanade in 5 hours 25 minutes. He donated the ASA Mile Trophy and also the ASA 440 yards Trophy. Pat Besford in her Encyclopedia of English Swimming published in 1976 writes about Horace Davenport; "This great gentleman of early English swimming was not only a champion in the pool but also out of it. He won the ASA mile championship six times 1874-79 and the Long Distance, as it was then known "The Lords and Commons Race" three times (1877-79). The record he set in winning the mile title in still water in the Welsh Harp in 1877, 29 minutes 25 ½ seconds stood until 1892". Horace Davenport went on to serve as President of the Swimming Association of Great Britain from 1880-83 and of the now renamed Amateur Swimming Association from 1890-94."



Horace Davenport

**H.J. Barron** - Dr Hunter Jackson Barron was Club Captain in 1879 and served as Hon Sec of the SAGB from 1880-1883 and President of SAGB from 1884-1886. When Otter resigned from the SAGB in 1884, Dr Barron was one of the two members who voted against that decision and elected to remain with that organization as a delegate from Portsmouth ASC. Educated first at Charterhouse School, he then studied medicine at St Thomas's Hospital and matriculated at London University, before transferring to Edinburgh, where he received his MB (Bachelor of Medicine, CM (Master of Surgery and MD (Doctor of Medicine) degrees. He remained devoted to the sport of swimming, on which he wrote many articles. He was visiting patients until two days before he died of diabetes at the age of 31 in 1889 and his final end was attributed to his catching cold on his rounds.

**Walter Bethune Blew-Jones** - National 100 Yards Champion and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 220 yards



National Championship in 1883. Was actually proposed for membership in 1883 by Horace Davenport. Became Club Captain in 1885. Remained a member until 1915.



Walter Blew-Jones

**W Allason** - National Plunging Champion in 1896 and 1897.

**F.C. Dudley** - Southern Counties 100 Yards Champion in 1895. His name is on the Club's Mile trophy.

**A.A. Green** - Southern Counties 100 Yards Champion in 1896 and 1897 and also 150 Yards Champion of London in 1894, 1895 and 1896. The 1900 Club Diary notes A.A. Green as holding every Club Record at St George's Baths. He also came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the National Long Distance Championship in 1897. He was Club Captain in 1895 and 1897.

**W.A.H Buller** - came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the National Long distance Championships in 1898. He subsequently served as President of SCASA from 1917-19 and of the ASA in 1928. His name is commemorated on the Inter-Services Championship Cup and on one of the Club's internal trophies.

**Otter S.C.** - Southern Counties Water Polo Champions in 1896 and 1897.

**Professor H.R. Pearce** - Listed in a program of Annual Entertainment on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1889, as "The Club Instructor; he is the first Club Coach known to us. It is not clear when he was first appointed. His event in the program was a solo in "Ornamental Swimming".

**Professor E Francis** - Listed in some of the programs in the 1890's as Instructor to Otter Swimming Club as well as Instructor to the Brigade of Guards and various other clubs. He is the second Club Coach known to us by name. His event within the programs was "Exhibition Swimming". He was to remain as

Club Instructor until 1924.

On an historical note, the 1890 Otter Diary lists the first 100 yards Amateur Champion in 1875 as a man called John Trudgen who represented the Alliance Club. He spent some of his early years working for Fray Bentos in Argentina where he observed the local children using an overarm stroke when swimming. When he returned to England, he developed the famous Trudgen stroke, which comprised an overarm action allied to a scissors kick. This became the forerunner of modern Front Crawl and in recognition of this, John Trudgen was posthumously inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1974.

1890 saw the accession of **George H Rope** as President and perhaps it was through the aegis of George Rope that a new rigour seemed to manifest within the Club's administration. From 1890 an annual club diary was issued - a small hardbound item, measuring 3.5x2.5 inches. The diary years ran from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> April, in accordance with their swimming calendar. The 1890 edition was coloured blue with gold lettering, including the Club crest, but thereafter until 1939, they were coloured black, but with the same gold crest and year date. The 1890 diary, in very used condition, has the handwritten name of **T.G. Batt**, a name that will be familiar to modern Club members, as we compete every year for the Tom Batt trophy in our Quarter Mile open water handicap. From 1891, the diaries bequeathed to us are largely in unused condition and again, perhaps the foresight of George Rope may be detected here.

In 1890, the Club's active membership had grown to 133 members. An article in The Sportsman on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1911, records that in early 1890, Otter moved from the St Marylebone Baths (our headquarters for our first 20 years) to the newly opened St Georges Baths. The Club's 1890 Diary notes the new headquarters as the St George's First Class Bath, Buckingham Palace Road

SW. The Club Colours were stated as black and white quartered with the monogram of the Club in black on white background "and members shall wear the Club drawers". The Annual Subscription was half-a guinea, with a one-off Entrance Fee for new members of one guinea.

### EARLY OPEN WATER RACE

An illustration reprinted from The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News of July 21 1883 is retained in the Club Archives. This illustration is depicted below.

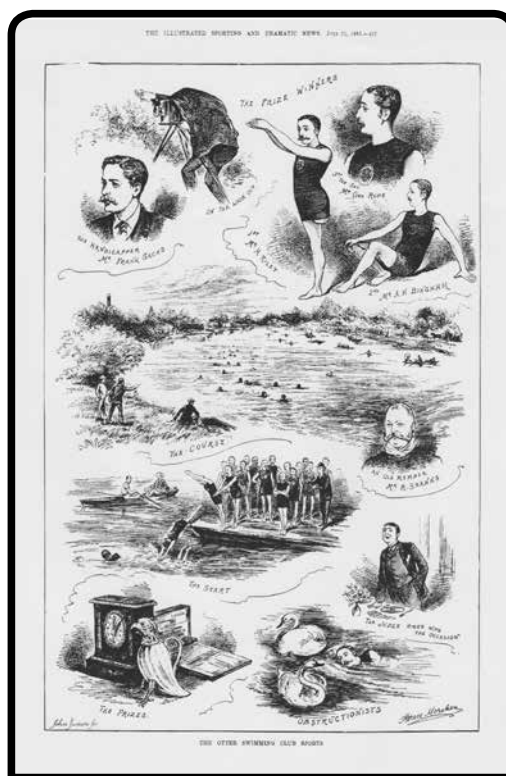


Illustration of early open water race

Modern competitors in our Open Water Events may relate to the scenes depicted - the start, the spread out field of competitors, and the swans noted as "obstructionists". Five individuals are identified namely The Handicapper **Frank Sachs**, who held this office for 23 years from 1879 to 1902, **H. Riley** (joined 1881), **A.H. Bingham**, (joined 1878 and Club Captain in 1887), **George Rope** (joined 1871 and Hon Sec in 1883 and later President) and **R. Shanks** (joined 1878). The 1884 Annual Report notes Messrs. Sachs, Bingham and Shanks as Committee Members, with George Rope listed as Hon Treasurer. R. Shanks also seems to have introduced his son into the Club in 1892.

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## 1900 TO WORLD WAR ONE

## 1900 TO WORLD WAR ONE

### 1900 TO WORLD WAR ONE

Otter entered the new century in apparently very good health. George Rope was in his 11<sup>th</sup> year as President and the Active Membership list had risen to 243. The Fixtures for 1904/05 list 29 days on which internal Club swimming events were held as well as 28 days on which Water Polo matches were to take place. By this time, Challenge Cups had already been donated for competition namely the Thorne-Thorne for the Open Water Averages, the Dudley for the Captaincy Race and the Buller for the best Average in all the scratch contests in any one season. Other Club Trophies at this time included the "Ladies", "Marsh", "Brown", "Macdonald", "Humphreys", "Russell" and "Collis Browne", Notes on most of these together with notes on the various National Trophies donated by the Club and its members may be found under Club Trophies in Appendix 2 of this History.

The 1914 Diary of the P&O Shipping Company shows the size of the British Navy as 574 vessels including 55 Battleships, with another 90 vessels, including 11 Battleships due for launch in 1914. At the same time the British Merchant Navy comprised 20 million tons – four times the size of any other nation. Britain was a major power and in consequence, London was a major world centre. Otter in the heart of London, was a beneficiary of this and international swimmers from other nations, found their way to the Club, when based in London. These included:

**Charles M Daniels** – Elected to Otter in 1905, he was a great Freestyle swimmer. He was the ASA 100 Yards Champion in 1906 and 1907. Representing the USA, he was the Olympic Gold Medalist over 220 Yards and 440 Yards at St Louis in 1904, 100 Metres Gold Medalist at an extra Olympics in Athens in 1906 and Olympic Gold Medalist again over 100 Metres in London in 1908. He was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1965. His name appears on Otter's Dudley Challenge Cup, as he won the Mile in 1905. During his swimming career, he held every Freestyle world record from 25 Yards to 1 Mile.



Charles Daniels





# 1900 TO WORLD WAR ONE

**Theodore B Tartakover** - Elected to Otter in 1908, he was Southern Counties Champion over 100 Yards in 1908, 1909 and 1910 and over 220 Yards and 440 Yards in 1908. He was also in the Otter Southern Counties Championship Team in 1908 and 1910. He represented Australia at the 1908 Olympics in London and again at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm. At both these Games, Australia and New Zealand combined to form an Australasian team. In an example of the stupidity that sometimes emerges among officials in all sports, in October 1911, he found himself suspended from competing in the 150 Yards Championship of London for the 'offence' of giving an exhibition swim at "a meeting of a number of poor boys at Hackney" the suspension seemingly being applied as he took the starting block for the race for the reason that the organisers of the Hackney meet were "not affiliated to the government body".

In 1903, Club Committee Minutes record Otter's successful application to join the Amateur Diving Association and Otter had British born divers at both the 1908 and 1912 Olympics. One was **Herbert Potts** who was elected to Otter in 1906. He was placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the 3 metre Springboard Diving event in 1912 in Stockholm. He was also ASA Diving Champion from 1909 to 1912 inclusive. Other Otter divers, **A.T. Sharp** (elected to Otter in 1906) and **R. Errington** (elected to Otter in 1907) also represented Great Britain at the London Olympics in 1908. R. Errington later presented the Southern Counties Boys Under 14 Diving Cup. Ralph Errington was an architect by profession and designed some of the early diving stages. He was a founder member of the famous Highgate Diving Club.



Herbert Potts



Ralph Errington



Herbert Potts Diving

On the domestic front, Otter had other successes in the 1900-1914 period. The National Plunging Championship was won by **W Allason** in 1902 (distance 73 ft. 10 in), 1908 and 1909 and also by his brother **H.W. Allason** in 1907, 1910, 1911. H.W. Allason was also 2<sup>nd</sup> in this event in 1908. **Morgan Dockrell Jr** (son of **Dr Morgan Dockrell** who donated the Men's 220 Yards Breaststroke Trophy to the ASA), won the London 150 Yards Championship in 1902 and 1903 and also the Southern Counties 100 Yards Championship in 1903. **D.V. Cow**, who was Club Captain in 1901 and 1902, came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the National Long Distance Championship in 1901. In 1912 Southern Counties Championships, **L.J. Haskins** won the Southern Counties 100 Yards and came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 440 Yards and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 150 Yards London Championship. The emergent talent of **H.E. Annison** also became evident in 1912 and this is noted in the separate section covering him. In this period, the Club Water-Polo team had some successes, with **R.G.F. Cohen** being capped for England in 1906, **C.W. Dyer** capped for England in 1913 and also in 1913, the 1<sup>st</sup> Team winning both the Southern Counties and the London Championships.

From 1906 to 1913, Otter swimmers dominated the Southern Counties Team Championship, winning this from 1906 to 1913 inclusive. Members whose names are recorded as participating in these teams were **A.D. Spiers Jun** 1906 to 1910, **P.K. Metcalfe** 1906 to 1910, **H.W. Binns** 1906 & 1907, **R.G.F. Cohen** 1906, 1907 & 1910, **H.L.R. Jacob** 1906, and **B.T. Verry** 1906. In the 1906 preliminary rounds **F.W.G. Fisher-Brown**, **J.W. Cunningham**, **W.H.M. Marx** and **E.S. Martin** also swam. In 1906, a postcard was produced with the title Otter Swimming Club Southern Counties Team Race Championship 1906, which displays the photographs of eight presumably team members. On the back are written seven names being **P.K. Metcalfe**, **J.W. Cunningham**, **F.W.G. Fisher-Brown**, **H.W. Binns**, **H.L.R. Jacob** and **H. Melliar-Smith**. Perhaps the last-named represents someone's misplaced memory, since he is not named as a swimmer in the Annual Report, so we are left to guess from the foregoing names as to whom the eight photographs really represent. Otter Team representatives thereafter were **F.W.G. Fisher-Brown** 1907 to 1913, **A.T. Sharp** 1907 to 1909, **T.B. Tartakover** 1908 & 1910 to 1912, **K.L.**



"Houseboat "Dabchick" at Shiplake August 25 1906: JW Cunningham in middle standing to deck. GH Rope second from right, lower deck and TG Batt hanging on, lower left"

# 10

## 1900 TO WORLD WAR ONE

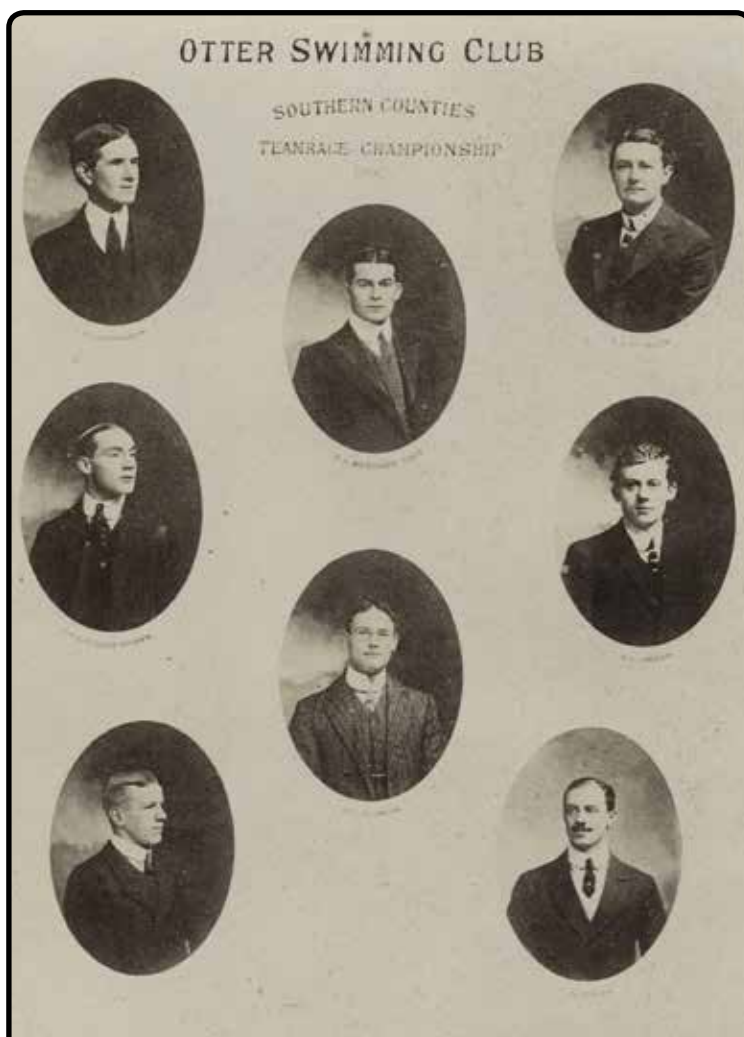
**Waterlow** 1908, **A.H. Barnes** 1909, **F.C. Levey** 1909, **E.S. Martin** 1910 & 1911, **L.J. Haskins** 1910 to 1913, **H.E. Annison** 1911 to 1913, **W.J. Drummond** 1911 to 1913, **E.R. Scholefield** 1911 & 1912, **W.E. Seward** 1911, **A.W. Haskins** 1912 & 1913, **H.K. Bretton** 1913 and **S.G. Grocock** 1913. The Team Championship seems to have been run on a knockout basis with just two teams at a time being matched against each other. Where known, just the names of the finalists are shown, but additional names are shown in the years 1910 to 1913 when our Annual Report makes no differentiation.

tankard awarded to **P.K. Metcalfe** in 1900 for winning the Ladies Challenge Cup (duly bought by the Club President and re-presented). P.K. Metcalfe's name appears on the Otter Mile Trophy (Dudley CC) in the years 1905 and 1907-09 and he served as Club Captain in the years 1905-08. The other approach came in an email from Kim Lindsay in Australia, where he was researching the life of **Morgan Dockrell Jr** who was Club Captain in 1903-04 and whose name appears on the Mile Trophy (Dudley CC) for those years. We were advised that after leaving Otter, Morgan Dockrell Jr enjoyed a distinguished career

his research was published in "Durbar" the journal of the Indian Military Research Society, but to date we have heard no further.

Previously, early documents refer to the Club Colours being Black and White, but according to an article in the British Olympic Journal in March 1931, in 1910 the colours of dark and light blue were added. The article written by a Vice-President of Otter, W.H.M. Marx, does not explain why this happened. The writer of our Centenary history, Dr Car Young, always maintained that these colours were added with the sanction of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, with whom Otter had long-standing relations, but this explanation was not included in his Centenary History. At around this time, Otter Swimming Club was clearly well regarded - at least in the columns of The Sportsman, with references to Otter as "the premier club of England" and sometimes even "of the world". Otter were clearly quite dominant in the south of England, but on a note of realism, most National Champions were coming from other clubs. Perhaps The Sportsman's correspondent was invited also to the Club's Annual Dinners, as reports exist noting how speakers, when they rise to speak, are greeted by "What's the matter with so and so? He's alright, whose alright, why good old so and so". When the unfortunate speaker tries to commence speaking, the irreverence continued with a chorus of "Why was he born so beautiful etc." and this tradition, which may have had its roots in the previous century, continued until the 1980's but latterly has been heard much less frequently. At the 1905 Annual Dinner, it was noted that "Mr. P. K. Metcalfe, the Club Captain proposed "Our Guests" with a brevity that raised him highly in the popularity of the company". This toast and ensuing speech, was until the 1980's, the traditional role of the Club Captain.

History does not always fall into convenient compartmented periods and one such instance of this is when reporting on the contribution of George H Rope, Otter's longest serving President (41 years) - a tenure that brought the Club out of the nineteenth century and through into the post World War One environment. Therefore necessarily his Otter career is encapsulated in the inset below.



1906 Postcard

In 2013, Otter was contacted on two separate occasions in relation to the names in the foregoing paragraph. One approach came from an antique dealer in the UK, offering for sale a silver-plated pint beer

in the Indian Army with a retired rank of Lt-Colonel. He died aged 68 in 1952 in a fall from the window of his London flat, not viewed as suspicious. Kim Lindsay advised that he would let us know when



## George Rope



**George H Rope** joined Otter two years after its inception. He seems to have been a multi-talented sportsman playing rugby at "halfback" for the Harlequins 1<sup>st</sup> XV, winning the Bray Regatta Open Double Sculls, with his brother in law in 1879 and running with the Thames Hare and Hounds. He also served as a private in the Honourable Artillery Company (HAC). The source for this information is an article dated January 30 1908, which is headed "The Doyen of Amateur Swimming" but which then goes on to note that "as a long distance swimmer Mr. Rope was above average, but he never greatly distinguished himself as a sprinter". In truth, his services to swimming came through his heavy involvement in administration. In Otter, he served on Committee from 1874 to 1880, Hon Treasurer from 1884 to 1889 and Hon Secretary in 1881 to 1883 and again in 1889 in conjunction with his

Hon Treasurer role. In 1890, he became President of Otter; a position that he was to hold until his death. In his 21<sup>st</sup> year as Otter President, the Club elected him President for life, marking the occasion by commissioning a portrait in oils by Edward Patry R.B.A. which remains among the Club's archives. At that time also, the very handsome silver trophy, the George Rope Average Trophy (pictured in Appendix 2), was purchased. In the wider swimming world, George Rope was involved in promoting swimming among such diverse organisations as the London Working Boys Federation, Dr Barnado's Homes and the Army, promoting the first entertainment by the Brigade of Guards at St George's Baths in 1898. He was also President of the London Ladies Water Polo Association. His death came unexpectedly while visiting the home of his great friend and successor as President, Jack Cunningham. In addition to his services to Otter, George H Rope also served as President of SCASA in 1895 and President of the ASA in 1897. Various family members also joined the Club. J.J. Rope, who may have been his brother joined in 1870 (no longer listed after 1900) and his father J.W. Rope (commemorated on the "Gold Cup" Half Mile Trophy - see Appendix on Club Trophies) joined in 1874, but died in 1908. Both men were listed as Honorary Members "elected for valuable services and favours rendered to the Club". There was also a W.F. Rope elected in 1881 as an Active Member. He died in 1906.

In the approach to 1914, it was evident that for Otter Swimming Club, circumstances were buoyant, with membership numbers up from 293 at the turn of the century to 389 per the 1914 Club Diary. Actually, by reference to the 1920 Diary, this number may be supplemented by an additional 9 active members who joined in late 1913 and in 1914. Otter won both the Southern Counties Water Polo and the London Water Polo league in 1913, **L.J. Haskins** won the Southern Counties 100 Yards Championship in 1912 and 1913 as well as 220 Yards Championship in 1913, while also in 1913, a new Otter star was emerging with **Harold E Annison** winning the National 100 Yards and the Southern Counties 440 yards Championships as well as the 150 Yards Championship of London. (See Inset on Harold Annison). However, the commencement of hostilities at the end of June 1914 was to change all of that.

# 12

## THE WORLD WAR ONE PERIOD

## THE WORLD WAR ONE PERIOD

It is a sad fact that wars are disruptive; sporting careers are blighted and highly competent competitors in many different sports, relinquish their sporting aspirations. Otter was no exception to this. A slightly sad letter was circulated to Club members after the Annual General Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1915, advising that all of the present Officers would be elected for a further twelve months and that no Club fixtures would be arranged for 1915 and no Club Diary would be issued. In fact, the next Club Diary was to be in 1919 when a very slender issue carried just a schedule of that year's planned fixtures from May onwards. The next full Club Diary was not issued until 1920. In the meantime, Otter seems to have monitored those members on active service. A printed document dated March 1916, lists the "Members Serving in His Majesty's Forces". This shows 110 names including 11 fatalities. A rather larger updated printed document dated June 1917 lists 129 names with 21 fatalities. Finally a 6 inch by 4 inch eight page document was printed headed "Otter Swimming Club - ROLL OF HONOUR". This shows 156 names with 25 fatalities. In an attempt to put this into context, the 1914 Club Diary, as noted above, listed 389 names. Within this membership were 90 Honorary Members, 215 Active Members and another 84 Abroad. Excluding the more elderly Honorary Members, it will be seen that over half of the Club's Active and non-UK based membership saw active service. Among our 25 fatalities were 23 members who between them averaged only 3 years of membership. They were young men whose lives had barely started - all part of what became a "lost generation". Their names are shown in a World War One Roll Of Honour as shown opposite. In addition to those who lost their lives, listed below are those whose contribution was recognized by awards etc., noting for those not mentioned by name, that sometimes valour goes unrecognized when no-one survives to report on it.

Those who survived and who received awards included:

Allason, W. - Major, T/Brigadier General, Bedford Regt. DSO & Bar; Mentioned in Dispatches

Allsop, Ben - Captain R.A.S.C. M.C.

Annison, R.C. - B.Q.M.S., R.F.A. - M.M.

Archer, G.V. - Major, 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Aux. Force Mentioned in Dispatches.

Barnes, R.S - Captain Suffolk Regt. Mentioned in Dispatches.

Bretton, H.K. - 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut., R.H.A. M.M. Mentioned in Dispatches.

Carr, E.N. - Captain, 24<sup>th</sup> County of London. M.C. (Dardanelles) Killed WW2

Cliverd, R.E. - Captain, R.F.A. Croix de Guerre with palmes, M.C. Mentioned in Dispatches.

Dockrell, Morgan. - Acting Major, Captain, 116<sup>th</sup> Mahrattas, Indian Army. Mentioned in Dispatches.

Dodds, Jackson. - Lt.-Col., A.D.O.S., R.A.O.C. Mentioned in Dispatches four times. O.B.E. Military Division.

Dolby, G.N. - Captain, 16<sup>th</sup> County of London Regt, (QW's) M.C.

Duncan, J. Fergus. - Lieut.-Col, R.A. D.S.O. Mentioned in Dispatches three times.

Ellison, C.E.M. - Staff Captain, Grenadier Guards, M.C. Mentioned in Dispatches.

Freeman, R.C. - Staff Captain., R.E. Signalling Co. Belgian Croix de Guerre.

Griffiths, A.G. - Major, Tank Corps. M.C. and Bar.

Gurney, C.H. T/Staff Lt.-Col., 11<sup>th</sup> East Yorkshire Regt. D.S.O. Mtd in Dispatches.

Haskins, L.J. - Lieut., R.F.A. Mentioned in Dispatches.

Heron, G.W. Major, R.A.M.C. D.S.O. and O.B.E.

Howell, O.A. - Major, 3<sup>rd</sup> County of London Yeomanry M.B.E.

Marks, H.H. - Lieut., Durham Light Infantry. M.C.

May, N.B. - Major, R.A.O.C. O.B.E. Military Division, Mentioned in Dispatches.

Mellows, A.H. - Capt. Huntingdonshire Cyclist Batt. Attd. Observer R.A.F. Mentioned in Dispatches.

Parker, J.A. - Captain, R.E. M.C.

Pascoe, B.C. - Brigade-Major, Acting Captain, Rifle Brigade. M.C. and two Bars.

Preston, H.R. - Lieut-Commander, R.N.V.R. D.S.C.

Riley, C.J.M. Captain, Royal Jersey Militia. M.C.

Scarlett, Hon, H.R. - Acting Lieut-Colonel, R.A. D.S.O.

Scarlett, Hon. P.G. - Bt. Major (T/ Lieut.-Col.), the Buffs. M.C. Chevalier Ordre de Merite Agricole.

Seward, W.E. - Captain, R.A.F. Mentioned in Dispatches.

Spooner, A.D. - Major, R.A.S.C. M.C.

Stones, R.Y., M.D. - Captain, R.A.M.C. M.C.

Watson, S.T. - Lieut.-Colonel Queen's D.S.O.

Winn, L.M. - Captain, Essex Regt. M.C.

Our knowledge on those who saw active service derives from a printed Roll of Honour circulated to Club members by **W.H.M. (Maurice) Marx** who served the Club as Hon Handicapper from 1933 to 1936.



# ROLL OF HONOUR - WORLD WAR ONE - 1914 - 1919



## THE WORLD WAR ONE PERIOD

Bousted, H.A.R. - Lieut, Middlesex Regt, attached RAF.

Fisher-Brown, C.G.C. - 2nd Lieut., 5th Batt, Wilts Regt. Missing Dardanelles. Mentioned in Dispatches.

Clifton, H.N. - 2nd Lieut., Coldstream Guards. Killed in Action, La Bassee.

Cooke, G.P. - Acting Leading Seaman, NB. Killed in Action, Dardanelles.

Craig, Norman, KC, MP. - Lieut.-Commander, RNVR.\*1

Craston, J.A. - 2nd Lieut., Royal West Kents. Died of wounds in France.

Davies, C.J. - 2nd Lieut., 8th Manchester Regt.

Dockrell, Herbert. - Lce-Cpl., Duke of Cornwall's Lt Infantry. Died wounds. 1917.

Ewart, V.A. - Lieut., RN.

Hartley, E. - Lieut., 5th Batt. Lancs. Fusiliers.

Hayden, W.C. - Captain, 1st Bn No 4 Coy HAC. Killed in Action, Hooge Belgium \*2

Heinig, W.H. - Captain, 54th Sikhs, Indian Army. Killed in Action, France 1916.

Killick, C.M. - Driver, RASC.

Knott, R.L. - Lieut., Northumberland Fusiliers. Killed in Action, France.

Legg, S.C. - Private, 5th City of London Rifles. Killed in Action, France.

Norris A. J. Lieut HAC "B" Battery Invalided home 1916 - Died 1917. \*3

Pascoe, B.C. - Brigade-Major, Acting Captain, Rifle Brigade. M.C. and two Bars.

Payne, W.H. Jr. - Lce.-Cpl., 18th Batt. Royal Fusiliers.

Reincke, L.F. - Captain, 10th Duke of Wellington's, attached RAF.

Ridsdale, A.H. - 2nd Lieut., City of London RR. Killed in Action, Dardanelles.

Roberts, F.A. - 2nd Lieut., 7th London Regt.

Sotham, R.C. - Lieut 1st SQDN RFC. Killed in Aerial combat on the Lys. \*4

Vaughan, C.A. - 2nd Lieut., 7th Batt. Seaforth Highlanders. Killed in Action.

Ward, C.G. - Sub-Lieut., RAF. Killed in Action, France.

Webster, C.A. - Private, HAC. Killed in Action, France.

### Notes:

\*1 Norman Craig, King's Counsel elected to the Club in 1895. He became the elected Member of Parliament for the Isle of Thanet in 1910. In April 1912, he was booked on the maiden voyage of the ill-fated RMS Titanic, but urgent parliamentary business caused him to cancel at the last minute. He actually survived the war and both married and gained re-election as an MP in 1918, only to die at the age of 50 in 1919. His inclusion on Otter's Roll of Honour implies that his early demise was related to something that happened to him during the conflict.

\*2 William Clarence Hayden. Occupation - Wholesale Furrier. Joined HAC 1897. Paraded in the coronation of Edward VII in 1902. In 1910 was HAC Regimental Rifle Shooting Champion as a result of which he is commemorated on the WW1 Roll of Honour at NRA Bisley. Joined Otter in 1911. Posted to France with No 4 Coy HAC in August 1914. Wounded at Hooge Belgium June 1915. Killed in action at Hooge on 25th September 1915 aged 35. Buried at Brandhoek Military Cemetery Belgium Grave Ref ID5.

\*3 Arthur James Norris joined Otter in 1892. In addition to swimming, his other sporting interests were cricket and rugby and was he active in the affairs of his former school Marlborough College. He became a respected figure in the wines and spirits trade, becoming Master of the Distillers Company in 1904/5. Before then he had been made a Freeman of the City of London in 1903. Norris's association with the HAC dates from when he was proposed for membership in 1875. Note: The Honourable Artillery Company was formed in 1537 and is the oldest regiment in the British Army. When Norris joined, the HAC consisted of two infantry companies, a field artillery battery and a squadron of light cavalry, which was later converted into a horse artillery battery. Norris joined the Field Battery - an association that would last for 42 years. He received Coronation Medals for taking part in the parades for the Coronation of King Edward VII in 1902 and for King George V in 1911. He received the HAC Long Service Medal in 1907 and signed up at the age of 60 for active service at the start of WW1 and with "B" Battery was almost immediately posted to Egypt to help defend the Suez Canal. After three years of active service, he was invalided back to UK where after several months, he succumbed to a heart condition diagnosed as having been exacerbated

by his military exertions. He died aged 63 in 1917 and was buried with full military honours at St Margaret's Church in Chipstead Surrey. At time of writing, Lieut. A. J. Norris is commemorated by a portrait (by James Collier), which hangs in the HAC's Writing Room at Armoury House off London's City Road.



Portrait of Lieutenant Arthur Norris

\*4 Ralph Clifford Sotham - Lieut 5th Battn, Queens Own (Royal West Kent Regt) transferred as Flying Officer 1st Sqdn RFC. Joined Otter in 1911 immediately after leaving Tonbridge School and after six months in Germany, was articled to a firm of Chartered Accountants and sent to Brussels for a year. At the outbreak of war, he was seriously ill for four months, but signed up when recovered having just passed the Chartered Accountancy Intermediate Exam. He was posted to India with the West Kents, but seeing little chance of fighting there, applied for a transfer to the Royal Flying Corps as a Flying Officer, arriving in France in May 1917. On January 9th 1918, a very misty and cloudy day, while flying Newport Scouts on patrol over Hunland, he and a fellow pilot were both seen to collide at 11000 feet, while diving on a German two-seater and crashed on the north bank of the Lys between Comines and Warvicq. Both pilots were buried in the same grave at Wameton.



Photograph of Lieutenant Ralph Sotham

# 14

## OTTER BETWEEN THE WARS

### OTTER BETWEEN THE WARS

Only one new member joined during the war years and in the immediate aftermath of the war, Otter emerged as a club much diminished in membership down from 398 in 1914 to 262 at the end of 1918. These lost members numbered 77 active members and 58 from those abroad, three of whom are listed among our war casualties. Rebuilding was needed and it seemed to come quite quickly with 26 new active members elected in 1919 and a further 46 in 1920. Four of the successful 1913 Southern Counties Team returned. These included the Haskins brothers L.J and A.W. and H.K Bretton with H.E. Annison joined by his brother R.C. Annison and A.W. Gulliver. However in 1919, they could only come third in the Southern Counties Team Championship. It was important that our pre-war rising star, **Harold Annison**, was able to return to us and around him, a new Otter team emerged. A case may be made to suggest that based on his results, he is the most outstanding British born swimmer ever to have graced the Otter colours – see inset on Harold Annison.

In an enterprising interlude, an Otter Water-Polo tour of Italy was convened in 1922 from 28<sup>th</sup> July until 13<sup>th</sup> August. Managed by W.H.M. Marx and captained by H.E. Annison, the team included R.C. Annison and A.G. Griffiths among those also mentioned elsewhere. A 24 page (8 ½ x 5 ½ inches) printed booklet written in day by day diary format recording this trip complete with a rather indistinct team photograph, exists in the Club archives.

During the war, our headquarters, the St George's Baths, were commandeered by the "Military Authorities" and were only made available again to Otter in July 1919. These remained the Club's headquarters until 1931, when for one year we relocated to Marshall Street. However, due to unspecified constraints imposed on competitive swimming by the council, in 1932, the Club relocated again to Lambeth, which boasted a small "second-class" pool as well as a 40 yard pool which was used for water-polo – at this time also transferring our "après-swim" loyalties to the nearby "Three Stags".

One interesting member, proposed for election in early 1920 by two Otter notables George H Rope and WHM Marx, was **C.S. (Stuart) Chiesman**, who won his 1<sup>st</sup> Team Water Polo colours in 1925. Stuart Chiesman became famous through his ownership of a Kent chain of department stores

bearing his family's name (the chain was bought by House of Fraser in 1976). His daughter Penny married the great England batsman, Colin Cowdrey and gave him two first class cricketing sons, one of whom, Christopher, also captained England like his father. Stuart himself went on to become Chairman of Kent County Cricket Club. In the 1919-39 period, Otter seem to have had members who contributed to swimming officialdom outside the Club, with **W.H.M. Marx** serving as President of SCASA in 1919 (following the tenure of **W.A.H. Buller** in that role in 1917 and 1918) and **G.T. Evershed** and **A.G. Griffiths** following him in that role respectively in 1921 and 1923. **D.D. Milne** served as President of the London Water-Polo League in 1921. **A.W. Creasy** served as Hon Sec, then Treasurer, then President of Surrey County Water-Polo from 1910-1913 and then served the Southern Counties ASA as Hon Treasurer from 1923-1927 and then President in 1929. The longevity of Otter's own officers, seems to have gained wider recognition with an article from the New York Herald in December 1929 stating: "No doubt the Otter Club of London, oldest swimming organization in existence can claim more than one record for longevity. Aside from the fact that it recently celebrated its sixtieth year of activity in the natatorial field, **Mr. George Rope**, its President has been chief executive officer for forty consecutive years – he was admitted to membership in 1871 – and **Mr. A.E. Baldon**, Hon Secretary, has held office unbrokenly for twenty four years. Extraordinary records, in truth. We join the world in congratulations." Note: George Rope died in office in 1930, while A.E. Baldon continued in office as the Club's longest serving Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer until his unexpected demise in 1936, having held both of these offices since 1906.

Harold Edward Annison was born on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1895. Under the banner of Croydon SC, he won the Southern Counties 100 yards Junior Championship in 1910. In March of 1911, he was elected to Otter Swimming Club. In 1912, he came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Southern Counties 100 Yards and 440 Yards as well as 3<sup>rd</sup> in the London 150 Yards Championship.

In 1913 he won the National 100 Yards Championship, beating the great Jack Hatfield, who won all the other National Championship distances in 1913 from 220 Yards to the Long Distance. (See reference to his son Peter Hatfield in 1963). One commentator in 1913 referred to Harold Annison as "the fastest boy swimmer in the world" – he would have still been only 19 at that time. In 1913, he also won the Southern Counties 440 Yards Championship and the London 150 Yards Championship and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Southern Counties 100 Yards. During the war he served as a Rating in the Royal Navy.

In 1920, he won the National Championships for 440 Yards, 500 Yards, Half Mile and One Mile. He also represented Great Britain at the 1920 Olympics in Antwerp, winning a Bronze Medal as a member of the 4x200m relay squad.

In this period, he also won the Southern Counties Championships over 100 Yards in 1919 and 1920, 220 Yards from 1919 to 1921, 440 Yards from 1919 to 1921 and One Mile in 1920. He also won the 150 Yards Championship of London in 1919 and 1920 and came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the National Long Distance Championships in 1921. At the 1920 Annual Dinner, Life Membership was conferred on him in the form of a framed letter signed by the Officers of the Club.

In 1924 he won the National 220 Yards Championship and he came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the National Long distance Championship. He also represented Great Britain at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris where he was 8<sup>th</sup> in the 400m, 9<sup>th</sup> in the 1500m and a member of the 4x200m squad that came 5<sup>th</sup>. He was also in the GB Water Polo team at those Games. In the same period, he also won the Southern Counties Championships over 220 Yards in 1924, the 440 Yards in 1924 and 1925 and the One Mile in 1924 and 1925. He also won

#### Harold Annison



Harold Annison at the 1920 Olympics



# OTTER BETWEEN THE WARS

the 150 Yards Championship of London in 1924. In 1925 and 1926, he represented England in Water-Polo. Within Otter, Harold Annison served as Water Polo Hon Sec from 1920 to 1927 and in 1933 he served as Water Polo Captain. He was awarded his 1<sup>st</sup> Team Swimming Colours in 1911-14 and 1919-30 and his 1<sup>st</sup> Team Water Polo Colours in 1914 and 1919-27 and then 1929,30,32 and 33 and his 2<sup>nd</sup> Team Water Polo Colours in 1931. His name appears on the Club's Dudley Challenge Cup for one mile in open water, in 1913, 1919 to 1923 and again in 1925 and 1926. He was succeeded in this event within Otter by the great Freddie Milton see inset below.

Harold Annison's younger brother, **Reginald C. Annison** also joined Otter winning his 1<sup>st</sup> Team Swimming Colours in 1919-20 and his 1<sup>st</sup> Team Water Polo Colours in 1921 to 26. Reginald Annison had a distinguished war record, being awarded a Military Medal as noted previously.

The 1920's and 1930's were a period of success for Otter, winning the ASA Team Championship in 1933 and 1935 to 1938, the Alfred Hudson Memorial Trophy, for champion club in the Southern Counties, in 1930, 1931 and 1934 and the Henry Benjamin National Memorial Trophy in 1933, 1935, 1937 and 1938. This latter trophy was awarded to the Men's Club, which amassed the most points in combined swimming and water polo every year. In addition to points for those placed in the first three of every event, other members could also gain points for their club by achieving a preset "Standard Time". This trophy is now awarded to the winning club team in the 4x200m freestyle relay. In the Southern Counties, Otter won the Water Polo in 1920 and 1923 as well as the Team Championship from 1927-31 and then in 1933, 1934, 1936 and 1937. During this period, while **Harold Annison** was winding down his swimming career, another Otter "Great" was emerging. This was **Freddie Milton**.

## Freddie Milton

**Freddie Milton** joined Otter in 1923. In 1926 he won the SCASA Backstroke Championship and in 1929 he won the 150 Yards Championship of London. In 1930, in

the Southern Counties, he won the 100, 200 and 440 Yards Championship, coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the London 500 Yards Championship and at the ASA National Championships he won the 500 Yards and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 220 Yards. In 1931, he won the SCASA 440 Yards and the One Mile and at the National Championships, he won the One Mile. He won the National Long Distance from 1931 to 1933, coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1934. Also in 1934 he came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the ASA Half Mile and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the SCASA 100 Yards and 220 Yards Championships. In 1935 he won the SCASA 220 Yards and One Mile. In 1936 he won the SCASA 440 Yards. Among all of these swimming successes, Freddie also maintained an involvement in Water Polo. He played county water polo for Berkshire as a schoolboy and then became part of a Middlesex team that won the county championships three times; twice under his captaincy. He also won a total of 24 international water polo caps - for England and GB in 1931, 1934, 1935, 1936 (including representing GB at the Berlin Olympics), 1937 and 1938. Within Otter, he won the Dudley Challenge Cup for one mile in open water from 1927 to 1938 and won his swimming First Team Colours over 18 years and his First Team Water Polo Colours over 20 years. As with others before him, with World War 2 commencing in 1939, his swimming career went on hold during his active service, but in 1945 he celebrated the end of hostilities in Europe by winning the Central Mediterranean Force 5000 metres Championship in Rome.

In 1930, Freddie Milton had won international honours when he captained the England Men's Team at the first ever Empire Games (now the Commonwealth Games) in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, where he won a silver medal as a member of the GB 4x200m Freestyle relay squad and came 5<sup>th</sup> in the 400m Freestyle. At these Games, he met a lady called Irene Pirie, who represented Canada on backstroke and freestyle. He was to meet her again when they both represented their respective nations in the 1934 Empire Games in London and they married in 1935 - see photo below.



**Irene Pirie and Freddie Milton on a diving board at Marshall Street Baths on 22nd May 1935**

Their eldest son, Hamilton Pirie Milton, joined Otter in 1951 and represented Great Britain at the 1960 Rome Olympics - see under Otter in the post World War 2 period. Freddie gained GB caps for water-polo when the GB team finished 8<sup>th</sup> in the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936. In that year, his employers, Carlsberg, cheerfully provided the sporting press with a headline "Olympic Swimmer Trains On Lager". In business, as in swimming, he proved a success and latterly in UK, was Managing Director of Carlsberg Distributors Ltd. He also gave much back to the sport, as an active SCASA and ASA water-polo referee and he also served as President of Otter from 1957 to 1960. He died in 1991.

In addition to the exploits of Harold Annison and Freddie Milton, detailed separately, other Club members also achieved notable successes as follows:

1919 - **L.J. Haskins** 3<sup>rd</sup> in SCASA 100 Yards and 220 Yards and 2<sup>nd</sup> in London 150 Yards Championship

1920 - **A.R. Knight** 2<sup>nd</sup> in ASA National Diving Championships. **G.A. Wilkinson** International Water Polo cap for Wales.

1921- **A.R. Knight** 1<sup>st</sup> in ASA National Diving Championship. **H.W. Allason** 1<sup>st</sup> in ASA Plunging Championships, **A.W. Haskins** 1<sup>st</sup> in SCASA 100 Yards.



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## OTTER BETWEEN THE WARS

1922 – **H.W. Allason** 1<sup>st</sup> in ASA Plunging Championships.

1924 – At the Olympics, **A. R. Knight** and **M. C. Noakes** represented Great Britain as a diver and hammer-thrower respectively.

1925 – **H.E.K. Sawtell** 1<sup>st</sup> in Western Counties Diving Championships.

1930 – **H.M. (Garry) Wagstaff** joined Freddie Milton in the GB Team at the Empire Games in Hamilton Ontario Canada. H.M. Wagstaff also came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the SCASA 440 Yards Championship.

1932 – **E.K. Miller** International Water Polo Cap for Wales.

1934 – **A.H. Pearman** joined Freddie Milton in representing Great Britain at the Empire Games at Wembley London and also in Representing Great Britain at the European Games at Magdeburg. **E.K. Miller** International Water Polo cap for Wales.

1936 – **F. Dove** 1<sup>st</sup> in ASA 100 Yards Championship and then joined Freddie Milton in representing Great Britain at the Olympic Games in Berlin. **Jack Lovelock** won the 1500m on the track for New Zealand. **E.K. Miller** International Water Polo cap for Wales.

1937 – **F. Dove** 1<sup>st</sup> in ASA 100 Yards Championship. **J.G. Davies** 1<sup>st</sup> in ASA 220 Yards Breaststroke Championship. **F. Dove** and **J.G. Davies** represented England in the Inter-Country Speed contests as well as against Germany. **J.H.R. Haswell** International Water Polo cap for England.

1938 – **F. Dove** 1<sup>st</sup> in ASA 100 Yards Championship and 1<sup>st</sup> in SCASA 220 Yards Championship. **J.G. Davies** 1<sup>st</sup> in ASA 220 Yards Breaststroke Championship and 1<sup>st</sup> in SCASA 220 Yards Breaststroke Championship. **F. Dove** and **J.G. Davies** both represented England at the Empire Games in Sydney Australia as well as Inter-Country Speed Contests and also represented Great Britain in the European Championships. **Freddie Dove** also won Empire Games gold medals in England's 4x220 yards Freestyle and 3x110 yards Medley squads. **J.G. Davies** won gold medals at the Empire Games in the 220 yards Breaststroke and in England's 3x110 yards Medley Relay squad. **F. Dove** also represented Europe against USA in Berlin, Munich and Budapest. **J.H.R Haswell** joined **Freddie Milton** in representing Great Britain in the European Water Polo Championships and they both gained England Water Polo caps.

1939 – **J.G. Davies** 1<sup>st</sup> in ASA 200 Yards Breaststroke Championship. The ASA Team Championship was cancelled in that year.



Freddie Dove on Hignetts cigarette card



John Goldup Davies

The inter-war period saw continuing Team successes for Otter. In 1920 and 1923, the Club won the Southern Counties Water-Polo Championships. The Club also won the ASA Team Championship in 1933 and from 1935 to 1938 having come 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1929, 1930 and 1931. Our 1933 Annual Report gives details on the team composition for this race, noting that **D.H. Hearn** & **G.B. Jones** swam 100 Yards each, **A.H. Pearman** & **H.M. Wagstaff** 200 Yards each and **F.G.M. Milton** & **F.M. Bourne** 300 Yards each. However in 1935, this event seems to have been cut to just four swimmers. Those members who represented the Club in the successful ASA Team Relays were: **H.E. Annison** 1929/30, **L.J. Haskins** 1929/30, **C.E. Jackson** 1930, **F.G.M. Milton** 1929/31, 1933 and 1935/38, **H.M. Wagstaff** 1929/31 and 1933, **S.H. Bean** 1930, **E.G. Brown** 1929, **D. Elcome** 1930/31 and **J.G.A. Gilruth**, **A.C. Jackson**, **A.V. Nunn**, **J.T. Race**, and **A. Wylie** all taking part in 1931. Then after team numbers were reduced to four in 1935, our representatives were **F.M. Bourne** 1935, **F. Dove** 1935/38, **F.G.M. Milton** 1935/38, **A.H. Pearman** 1935, **E.J. Branson** 1936, **D.A. Young** 1936/38, **A.W. Dench** 1937 and **D.J. Gray** in 1938.

**F. M. Bourne**, as mentioned above, was **Frederick Munroe Bourne**, who came to England in 1932 on a Rhodes Scholarship to

Oxford and he joined Otter in that year. By then he had already represented Canada in the 1928 Olympics winning a Bronze medal in the 4x200 metres Freestyle Relay and at the British Empire Games in 1930, had won the 100 Yards Freestyle as well as being a member of the Canadian team that won the 4x200 Yard Freestyle Relay. **Munroe Bourne** was to remain in membership until 1939 and during this period he represented Canada at the 1932 and 1936 Olympics competing in the 100 Yards Freestyle, 100 Yards Backstroke and the 4x200 metres Freestyle Relay. He served in the Canadian Army in World War 2, being honourably discharged with the rank of major. After the war, he pursued a career as a doctor and died in 1992.

In the ASA National Championships the Club also won the Henry Benjamin (overall points) Trophy in 1933, 1935, 1937 and 1938. In the Southern Counties Team Championship the Club came 3<sup>rd</sup> as noted above in 1919 and 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1922 and then won this event from 1927 to 1931, 1933, 1934, 1936 and 1937. During the 1919 to 1938 period, our Annual Reports note a total of 37 individuals who represented the Club in ASA and SCASA relay teams, implying not only a significant strength in depth but also the Club's continuing ability to bring new young talented swimmers into its ranks. In this period, it seems that the award of Club swimming colours recognized those who had swum in these teams. In this period the Club also won the Alfred Hudson Memorial Trophy (for overall Southern Counties points) in 1930, 1931 and 1934.

During the inter-war period, **Professor E. Francis** continued in his role as "Swimming Instructor" and the 1907 Club Diary devotes half a page to advertising his services at 6 lessons for 10/6 and a course for one guinea. In 1925, he was joined as "Swimming Instructor" by **W.J. Howcroft** and this duopoly continued until 1933 marking a 43 year tenure by Professor Francis in this position. Thereafter, from 1934, W.J. Howcroft was the sole appointed "Swimming Instructor" to the Club although the terminology was altered to "Swimming Coach" in 1935. In another significant change, it was decided in 1929 to admit Junior Members (under 18). The 1939 Club Diary records a healthy membership total of 373 members – 64 Honorary/Non Active, 31 Life, 248 Active and 30 Junior. However, once again, war was to intervene.



# OTTER IN WORLD WAR TWO – 1939 TO 1946



## WORLD WAR TWO 1939-1946

Unlike the World War One period, our records for the World War Two period are quite scanty. The Minute Book for the Club's General Purposes Committee records a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1939 to discuss the Club's financial position and on the next page are the minutes for a meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1946. Likewise the Subscriptions Register forlornly records a few half-guinea subscriptions in 1940 and even a few for 1941, but many names simply discontinued while a few were just noted as "Killed". A letter circulated to Club members on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1939, notes that "all fixtures and activities of the Club are cancelled until further notice" and that "meetings should take place on the first Tuesday of each month at The Three Stags Kennington Road S.E. nearly opposite the Lambeth Baths from 6 p.m. onwards". Another circular to members from the Hon Sec **A.W. Creasy** on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1941, notes that the Lambeth Baths were no longer available (having been blitzed in April 1941) and that the Club would now be meeting at St George's Baths Buckingham Palace Road and afterwards at "The Victoria" (opposite Grosvenor Hotel). These notices imply that some attempt was made to continue meeting as a Club, both in the water and at choice hostelries but no other records have come down to us. On 8<sup>th</sup> November 1942 a small advertisement appeared in the personal column of the Times: "Otter S.C. **Jack Cunningham**, 2 Bruntsfield, 9 Roxborough Park, Harrow-on-the-Hill, would like to hear of – or from – members." The London Evening News of Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December 1942, picked up on this theme with the following article:

### "OTTER HUNTING"

"An old member of the well-known Otter Swimming Club, **F.C. Warrington**, tells me that a big effort is being made by the club to keep in touch with members serving in the Forces. The President, Jack Cunningham, holds a sort of reception twice a month at a hotel near the St George's Baths where Service and other members still on the active list meet twice a month to exchange views and news. Good hunting to the Otter officials who are trying to trace old members, now scattered throughout the world."

The pub mentioned in this cutting was "The Victoria" in Buckingham Palace Road, the original meeting place of members after club swimming meetings at St George's Baths.

In WW1, the Club lost 25 primarily young

men on active service and these losses were repeated in WW2, with 25 members losing their lives on active service. Excluding one WW1 veteran who served again in WW2, those who lost their lives averaged just four years of Club membership. Their names are recorded in the following pages – predominantly young men (some team contemporaries of our Centenary historian Car Young) who, had they lived, might have remained in membership into the 1970's or more. It is frustrating that we know so little about them. The words of the poet A.E. Housman, written in the aftermath of WW1, are perhaps appropriate in this context:

"Here dead lie we because we did not choose

To live and shame the land from which we sprung.

Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose;

But young men think it is and we were young."

On a happier note, other Otter members and soon to become members saw active service and survived. Those whom we know of with their years of joining include:

1921 – **Captain A.A. Havers, O.B.E., D.S.C., Royal Navy.**

1923 – **F.G. (Freddie) Milton.** Saw active service from 1939-45 with the Royal Artillery. His career is detailed in the preceding Inset.

1925 – **Brigadier I.L.H. McKillop** – The McKillop Prize was awarded annually for one of our Club handicaps for many years.

1926 – **Brigadier H.B. (Brian) Calvert.** Sappers & Miners Unit in Burma.

1929 – **L.W. (Lionel) Milton.** Gunner officer in the Middle East and Italy. Captained the Eighth Army water-polo side. Served the Club as Water-Polo Hon Sec in 1936-38 and President in 1961-63.

1931 – **C.A (Car) Young.** Served as a full Colonel in the Royal Army Medical Corps and was in charge of a hospital in the Western Desert.

1932 – **Lieutenant Anthony Pearman** (GB representative in 1934) survived the 1939 torpedoing on the battleship *Royal Oak* in Scapa Flow by swimming to shore half a mile away – one of only a "handful of survivors" who successfully made the attempt. He died in a motorbike accident in 1948.

1933 – **A.D.H. (Desmond) Plummer.** Served in the Royal Engineers from 1938-46. Later was Leader of the Greater London Council and became Baron Plummer of St Marylebone.

1935 – **Brigadier J.M. (Mad Mike) Calvert.** Distinguished Chindit leader in Burma. See Inset in the following pages.

1935 – **Wing-Commander J.H. Iremonger** served with the RAF.

1935 – **D.A. (Digger) Young** served in the R.A.F. as a bomber pilot. Shot down in a Hampden over Berlin, he survived five years as a P.o.W. and after recuperation, he back-stroked in the Otter team which won the first National Medley Relay title in 1946.

1937 – **Commander C.G. (Gerry) Forsberg, O.B.E.** Saw war service off Norway, Matapan and in the hotter corners of the Mediterranean and in 1943 commanded five Destroyers. After the war became one of the great open water swimmers of his time. See Inset in 2003.

1946 – **N.E. (Norman) Fitzsimon.** Served through the war in the Royal Navy. After the war he graduated in law from London University and featured for Otter in winning national teams in 1948 and 1950 as well as winning his 1<sup>st</sup> Team Swimming Colours from 1947-1954. He served as Vice Captain from 1954-55, Club Captain from 1956-58 and President from 1968-71.

1947 – **Roy Romain.** Interrupted his swimming career and practice at law to serve in the Army, primarily in North Africa attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His swimming career is covered in more detail under Otter Post 1946.

1951 – **Ron Roberts** was raised in British Guiana before coming over to Britain at the start of World War Two to volunteer to fight for the Allies. After Dunkirk, he was part of a new elite force of "storm" troops and saw service in the Far East as well as in the famous Dieppe Raid – at the time unsuccessful, but which provided many useful insights used in the successful D Day assaults 3 years later. His swimming career is covered in more detail under Otter Post 1946.

Quite a detailed obituary on Lieutenant **Laurence Vezey Strong** was published in the Daily Telegraph on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014. Strong was born in 1918 and on leaving Tonbridge School, he joined his family's lithographic printing business which gave

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## WORLD WAR TWO 1939-1946

him the time to "pursue his love of rowing on the Tideway, swimming and water polo for the Otter Club." He is listed in Club Diaries as having joined in 1935 and was still in membership in 1939. On the outbreak of war, he trained as a signalman and was commissioned in 1940, serving in the destroyer Boadicea on convoy escort duty in the Battle of the Atlantic and on Convoy PQ-15 to Murmansk. He was sent to the Mediterranean in 1943 where he was awarded a DSC as commanding officer of MTB 81 for sinking a U-boat in the Strait of Messina on the night of July 12 1943. He picked up 5 survivors from the U-boat. Later that year, after action off Southern Italy's Adriatic coast, he was mentioned in despatches for helping to rescue servicemen and towing a blazing cargo ship out of Bari harbor following a surprise German bombing in a raid that cost more than 1000 Allied and local civilian lives. After demobilization, he had a long career in the music publishing and printing business and died shortly after his 96<sup>th</sup> birthday. Like so many others who saw active service, he never returned to the Club after the war.

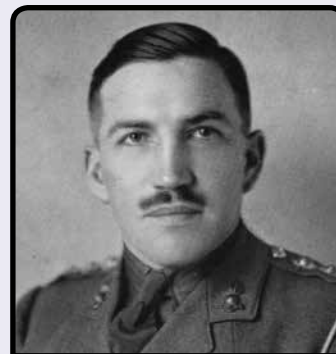
In an interesting historical snippet unearthed by Barbara Woodward, our Editor of the 2011 Annual Report, a former member, **Alan Blumlein** (1903-1942) lost his life when the plane in which he was testing a new radar system, crashed in Herefordshire. He is recognized as the inventor of stereo sound recording and reproduction. His biographer (R.C. Alexander) reports that after Highgate School and Imperial College, "he swam for the Otter Club and even won two cups". Club Diaries show that he joined in 1921 and he was still in membership in 1930. The Club Diaries also record that he was one of the four members who traditionally shared the Ladies Cup in 1926 and as such his name is recorded on the trophy, now held in the Club Archives as there is no more room to inscribe winning names. The other cup that he may have won, has not been identified.



Alan Blumlein

The above members are those whose service during the war, is known about. There are many others regrettably, whose contributions are simply lost to us.

## Mike Calvert



Mike Calvert aged 39



Mike Calvert with Club President Bob Burn at 1987 Dinner

**Brigadier J.M. (Mad Mike) Calvert** M.A. B.Sc. D.S.O. and Bar, U.S. Silver Star, Croix de Guerre. "That Incomparable Fighting Man".

Born in India, **Mike Calvert** was the youngest of four brothers, all of whom entered the Army. He won a scholarship to Bradfield from where in 1933, he went up to St John's College Cambridge to read for Mechanical Sciences Tripos. He won his Blue for swimming and joined Otter in 1935 after successfully completing his Honours Degree course at Cambridge. At that time, he also joined the Army, becoming Army middleweight boxing champion and captaining the Army water-polo team. Early in the war, he led a small demolitions team, trying to slow the German advance into Norway.



Back in England he volunteered to join newly formed Commando units and with his engineering background, became a demolitions expert in training troops in the art of irregular warfare, first in Scotland and then in Australia. Between these assignments, he wrote a significant pamphlet entitled "The Operations of Small Forces Behind the Enemy Lines". Then in 1942, he was posted to Burma where he met the brilliant General Orde Wingate and as Wingate's second-in-command, helped progress the initiative that was to become the famous Chindit force, fighting in Burma behind Japanese lines. The deeds are too numerous to cover in this brief summary but a letter written to the Cambridge Evening News on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1995 from G. Hatchman of Royston, a former private soldier who in 1944 served in the 77<sup>th</sup> Chindit Brigade commanded by Calvert is illuminating. The letter itself is quite long, but observations on Calvert include - "Inspiration to everyone in the Brigade" - "His bravery was outstanding" - "Unlike most other brigadiers in the British Army he did his business from the end of a rifle and bayonet in the same way as we ordinary rank and file" The letter highlights the capture of a key Japanese strongpoint called Mogaung with a brigade reduced from 4000 men to just 2000 men through casualties and sickness. "Through all the bitterness of the fighting in atrocious conditions, our Brigadier stood head and shoulders above the rest" - "Had it been any other theatre of the war, in Europe or Africa, he would have been awarded the highest honour for his actions, which in fact his fellow officers recommended to GHQ Delhi" - "But the small minded staff, who had taken such a dislike to the Chindits' commander Orde Wingate, also chose to carry on a vendetta with anyone associated with him. Consequently, Brigadier Calvert's leadership and

bravery did not receive the full recognition it deserved." Subsequent records show that on three separate occasions, his fellow officers nominated Mike Calvert for the Victoria Cross and each nomination was ignored. They were part of what was rightfully called "The Forgotten Army".

By 1944 Orde Wingate had died and it was one of Calvert's fellow brigade commanders, Brigadier Bernard Ferguson whose full quotation in his book "Beyond The Chindwin", reads "That incomparable fighting man, on whom Wingate's spiritual cloak has fallen". Calvert also inherited Wingate's irreverent streak and when the BBC incorrectly announced that Chinese/American forces had captured Mogaung, he sent a radio signal to US General Stilwell's HQ "Mogaung having been taken by the Chinese, 77 Brigade is proceeding to take Umbrage" - a signal which kept some American staff officers up for a night trying to locate Umbrage on a map. Shortly thereafter, General Stilwell personally awarded Calvert a US Silver Star. After the Burma campaign, Calvert was given command of the Special Air Service (SAS) Brigade, operating across North-West Europe. After the war, Calvert spent six months compiling a report on how to combat the Malaysian Communist insurgency. In his book "Fighting Mad" he describes an incident when he and his driver came under fire on a jungle road and threw themselves out of their jeep. Thereupon a grenade landed neatly beside him in their ditch. The pin had not been detached, but instead there was a scrawled note attached which read "How do you do, Mr. Calvert?" Someone whom he had previously trained, was now fighting for the Communists. At that time, Calvert effectively drew up the "Dawes Plan", viewed as the most successful counter-insurgency doctrine ever and re-founded the SAS, the modern version of which owes more to the Chindits and

to a mixture of Wingate and Calvert's ideas, than it does to the wartime unit of its founder David Stirling.

In addition to his two D.S.O's and his US Silver Star, Calvert finished the war with a number of decorations reflecting his service in Europe. These included the French Croix de Guerre avec Palme and the Legion of Honour (Officer), together with the Belgian Croix de Guerre and Commander of the Order of Leopold II with Palme and King Haakon VII's Cross of Liberty from Norway. According to the Sunday Express on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1997, all of his medals were purchased at auction for £20,700 by the Royal Engineers Museum at Chatham, where they are now displayed. His departure from the Army was clouded by controversy and according to the historian David Rooney in his book "Mad Mike" caused by a massive perpetration of injustice. This soubriquet popularly attached to Mike Calvert is perhaps slightly misleading as in his own words, he never took a risk that he did not think was militarily necessary. In his later years, he could often be met at the Lansdowne Club in Mayfair and frequently he attended Otter's Tuesday evening club nights at Shell Centre, where after a short swim, he seemed happy to sit on the dais at the shallow end of the pool and enjoy the buzz of activity around him. In 1987, he attended the Club's Annual Dinner, as our Guest Speaker and older members commented that it may have been the only occasion that a speaker not only received a standing ovation after speaking, but also one before he even said a word. He was a man who by the time he was thirty, was the youngest Brigadier in the Army with two D.S.O's. Extraordinary achievements by an extraordinary man.

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WORLD WAR TWO 1939-1946

## ROLL OF HONOUR - WORLD WAR TWO - 1939 - 1946

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Brown, W.F. - 1924.

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Carr, E.N. - 1903. (Awarded an M.C. for his active service in WW1)

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Davis, C.C.H. - 1938. R.A.F.  
Killed North Africa 1942

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Ecclestone, G.B. - 1939.

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Frehner, J.R. - 1938 Sgt. W.O  
Killed 18.04.42. \*1

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Havill, C.J. - 1927. Major.

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Houlden, S.J. - 1928. F/Lt R.A.F.

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Jackson, D.H. - 1938 Lt. \*1

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Jones, E.P. - 1939 Capt. 4<sup>th</sup> Queens Own  
Hussars. Killed Libya 1942. \*2

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Kemster, A.G. - 1934. Major.  
Green Howards. G.C. Killed 1944.

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Kiralfy, D.M. - 1935. F/O. R.A.F.

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Ladefoged, T.A.N. - 1937  
R.N.V.R Drowned. \*3

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Locker, W.A.L. - 1935 F/Lt R.A.F.

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Palmer, R.A. - 1939 Lt. R.A.M.C. \*2

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Raw, A.W. - 1939 Sq/Ldr R.A.F. D.F.C. \*1

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Raw, P.E. - 1937 F/Lt R.A.F. \*1

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Robertson, A.W. - 1939 F/O R.A.F. \*2

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Shaw, J.P. - 1931. F/Sgt. R.A.F.

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Skinner, F.E. - 1939 \*1

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Smith, R.A. - 1932. Pilot Officer R.A.F.

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Sutcliffe, C.F. - 1935.

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Teden, D.E. - 1934. Pilot-Officer R.A.F. Killed  
in action in 1941 \*4

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Tolson, J.P. - 1939. F/O. R.A.F.

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Tym, W.E. - 1936. F/Lt R.A.F. V.R.

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Whittingham, J.A. - 1935. Pilot Officer R.A.F.  
Killed 1943.

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Worke, G.L. - 1936. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Queens Royal  
(West Surrey).

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\*1 J.R. Freher, D.H. Jackson, A.W. Raw and F.E Skinner are all listed in the 1939 Club Diary as Junior Members and were therefore still under 18 in 1939.

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\*2 E.P Jones, R.A. Palmer and A.W. Robertson are not listed in our surviving records and must have joined Otter in the latter part of 1939.

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\*3 Thane Arthur Nielsen Ladefoged is recorded in the Tonbridge School Register. He was born in 1919 and schooled at Tonbridge from 1932 to 1935. He joined the RNVR in 1939 and lost his life aged 20, when H.M. Trawler "Sedgefly" was sunk on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1939.

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\*4 D.E. Teden. Won five England Rugby caps as a front row forward in 1939-40. He also won his Otter 2<sup>nd</sup> Team Swimming Colours in 1935 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Water-Polo Team colours in 1935-37 (Captain in 1937-38) playing alongside our Centenary Historian Car Young. Other team contemporaries of Car Young among the above names were S.J. Houlden who won his 2<sup>nd</sup> Team Swimming Colours in 1930-31 and his 2<sup>nd</sup> Team Water-Polo Colours in 1935-37 and P.E Raw who won his 2<sup>nd</sup> Team Swimming Colours in 1938.



# OTTER IN THE POST WAR PERIOD – 1946 TO 1959



As noted previously, the onset of war changes lives massively, with many initial sporting careers never pursued. The Otter 1939 Club Diary – the last of its kind in its faux leather binding, lists 374 members comprising 95 Honorary/Life, 249 Active and 30 Junior. The next time a membership list was produced, was in the 1953 Club Diary in its new paper-bound format. This shows 403 members comprising 81 Honorary/Life, 144 Active and 178 Junior – a major change in the membership profile. In the intervening years, **W.J. Howcroft** had continued as “Swimming Coach until retiring in 1947. He was viewed by some as the leading swimming writer of his day and reportedly for many years, had written a swimming column in the Daily Telegraph in which he had made frequent friendly references to Otter. Our Centenary Historian, Car Young, writes of him that “he sat at the side of the bath, smoking his pipe and talking. He would occasionally tell a new member to swim a length to check some point in his style but usually seemed to be looking the other way as the neophyte sped past down the bath.” An Otter Gold Badge was awarded to him in recognition of his 23 years of service. He was replaced in 1948 by **George Grainger** who Car Young reports was “an enthusiastic and helpful director of Club training” and who many members came to know as a friend”.

In March 1945, a letter was circulated to the Club, advising that “from May, members will meet at St George’s Baths on Tuesdays at 6 p.m.” After the 1945 season, the Club seems to have relocated to using “the Small Bath at Paddington” as noted in the 1946 Annual Report. In 1947, Chelsea Manor Baths started to be used for water-polo and in 1948, these became our established Headquarters, with additional pool-time also taken at both Paddington and Marshall Street. Post-war food difficulties still applied and although in 1946 a “Conversazione with running buffet and cabaret show” replaced the Annual Dinner, this event was cancelled altogether in 1947 due to “Ministry of Food restrictions”. From 1948 onwards, an Annual Dinner was reinstated in the Club’s calendar.

Resumption of Club activities saw Otter pick up from its pre-war successes; albeit with a largely new cast of characters. From among our pre-war stars, only **J.G. Davies** and **D.A. Young** among the swimmers and **J.H.R. Haswell** and **F.G.M. Milton** among the water-polo players, returned to Otter 1<sup>st</sup> Team representation. However the newer members showed every inclination to try to emulate

the successes of previous years. Individual results were as follows:

**1946.** At the ASA National Championships, **J.G. Davies** won the Breaststroke, **D.J. Gray** 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively in the Half Mile and the Mile, **C.H.G. Culver** 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Plunging. In the Southern Counties Championships **J.G. Davies** won the Breaststroke, with **J.H. Keeling** 2<sup>nd</sup> and **D.J. Gray** 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 100 Yards Freestyle. **D.J. Gray** also won the 440 Yards and the Mile.

**1947.** At the ASA National Championships **A.D. Kinnear** won the 100 Yards Backstroke with **R.G.E. Franks** 3<sup>rd</sup> while **J.G. Davies** was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 200 Yards Breaststroke. In its last year before abolition by the ASA as a competitive event, **Cdr. C.G. Forsberg** came 4<sup>th</sup> in the Plunging. In the Southern Counties Championships, **R.G.E. Franks** won the 150 Yards Backstroke, with **J.G. Davies** 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 200 Yards Breaststroke, **A.D. Kinnear** 2<sup>nd</sup> 220 Yards Freestyle, **N.E. Fitzsimon** 3<sup>rd</sup> in 220 Yards Freestyle and 2<sup>nd</sup> in 440 Yards and Mile, while **F.G.M. Milton** was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Mile. **R. Romain** won gold in the 200 metres Breaststroke at each of the World Universities and European Championships. In the latter event, his time of 2.40.10 was 5.7 seconds faster than the winning time in the 1938 European Championships. At the European Championships, **A.D. Kinnear** was 4<sup>th</sup> in the 100m Backstroke. On the Water-Polo side Otter were runners-up in both the National and the Southern Counties Championships with **J.H.R. Haswell** and **R. Potter** capped for England. **R. Potter** also represented Great Britain at the European Games.

**1948.** At the ASA National Championships, **R. Romain** won the 200 Yards Breaststroke with **J.G. Davies** 3<sup>rd</sup> and **A.D. Kinnear** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in 100 Yards Backstroke. At the Southern Counties Championships, **R. Romain** won with **J.G. Davies** 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 200 Yards Breaststroke. On the Water-Polo side, Otter were runners-up in the Southern Counties Championships. At the 1948 Olympic Games, **R. Romain** captained the Great Britain Swimming team and was joined in the Breaststroke by **J.G. Davies** (At age 34 the oldest swimmer in the competition) while **A.D. Kinnear** was also selected and was a finalist in the 100 metres Backstroke. **R. Romain** was a semi-finalist in the 200 Yards Breaststroke and afterwards admitted that he had mistimed his training, which was necessarily fitted around his work in a legal practice. At these Games, **R. Potter** was selected as captain of the Great Britain

Water-Polo Team in which **P. Hardie** was also selected. It seems that around this period, **P. Hardie** was also selected for a number of Scottish Rugby Trials.

**1949.** At the ASA National Championships **R. Romain** won with **J.G. Davies** 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 200 Yards Breaststroke with **A.D. Kinnear** 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 100 Yards Backstroke. At the Southern Counties Championships, **J.G. Davies, R. Romain** and **A.D. Kinnear** respectively won the 200 Yards Breaststroke, 100 Yards Breaststroke and 100 Yards Backstroke. On the Water-Polo side, a team under the leadership of **F.G.M. Milton** toured in Luxembourg, Alsace Lorraine and French Occupied Germany, with 3 wins, 3 losses and 2 draws while the swimmers won 90% of their races. However, in an incident not reported in our 1949 Annual Report, one of our team members reportedly “died from eating a surfeit of hard-boiled eggs which were readily available on the railway station platforms”, while “at home we were still deprived of such luxuries” The report which comes from **Paul Thorogood**, who knew most of the tour members, goes on to note “that the Otter team brought the man’s body back to UK on the train”. Regrettably the name of the unfortunate tour member is not recorded, but he does not seem to have been one of the members of the Water-Polo 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Teams, since all those awarded their Club Colours in 1949, were also awarded them in 1950.

**1950.** **J.G. Davies** 2<sup>nd</sup> in the ASA National 200 Yards Breaststroke while **R.G.E. Franks** was capped for England on Backstroke. On the Water-Polo side, **P. Hardie** and **G. Worsell** were capped for England. At the Empire Games in New Zealand, **A.D. Kinnear**, representing Scotland, took the Bronze medal in the 100 metres Backstroke.

**1951.** At the ASA National Championships **J.G. Davies** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 220 Yards Breaststroke and **A.D. Kinnear** 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 100 Yards Backstroke. **J.G. Davies** won both the 100 Yards and 200 Yards Breaststroke at the Southern Counties Championships. In Open Water events **Cdr. C.G. Forsberg** became the first swimmer from the south to win the Morecambe Cross Bay (9 mile) Race and was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Ryde to Southsea (5 ½ mile) Race. On the Water-Polo side, **P. Hardie** and **G. Worsell** were capped for England.

**1952.** **R. Roberts** came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the ASA National 100 Yards and won the Southern Counties 100 Yards Freestyle. He represented Great Britain at the Olympic Games in

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Helsinki, where he reached the semi-final of the 100 Metres Freestyle with a time of 59.1 seconds. **G. Worsell** was also selected for Great Britain in the Water-Polo team. Nearer to home, in other Southern Counties Championships results, **D.B. Payne** won the 440 Yards and was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Mile while **D.J. Cripps** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 200 Yards Breaststroke. On the Water-Polo side, a restructuring process was underway, with many new players being coached by **J.H.R. Haswell** and **F.G.M. Milton** initially and then with the help of the Belgian National Water-Polo coach Gerard Blitz – himself a silver medalist at the 1920 and 1924 Olympics. See comment on Gerard Blitz under Van Scaldis Trophy in the 1960's.

**1953.** At the ASA National Championships, **R. Roberts** won the 110 Yards and 220 Yards Freestyle, **A.B. Richards** was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 220 Yards Breaststroke while **P.T. Penny** was a finalist in the 440 Yards Freestyle. In the Southern Counties Championships, **R. Roberts** won the 100 Yards Freestyle. He was also capped for England.

**1954.** At the ASA National Championships, **R. Roberts** had a shoulder injury, which inhibited him from swimming more than one event. Sportingly, he elected not to defend his 110 and 220 Yards titles but instead to anchor the Otter squad to win the National Medley Team Championship – all team results are summarized below. **A. B. Richards** came 4<sup>th</sup> in the ASA 220 Yards Breaststroke Championship. **R. Roberts** won the Southern Counties 100 Yards Freestyle Championship and represented England in the 110 Yards Freestyle at the British Empire Games in Vancouver and also at an Inter-European contest in Brussels.

**1955.** At the ASA National Championships, **R. Roberts** won the 110 Yards Freestyle in a new English record of 58 seconds, while **A.B. Richards** came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 220 Yards Breaststroke. At the Southern Counties Championships, **R. Roberts** won the 110 Yards Freestyle, **J.D.R. Burn** won the Individual Medley, **R.G.M. Burn** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 110 Yards Backstroke and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the "Butterfly Breaststroke", while **A.B. Richards** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the "Orthodox Breaststroke". **R. Roberts** was capped many times for England. An Otter Water-Polo team – see Team Photo below, toured the South of France with 5 wins, 1 draw and 2 losses and occasioned interest from the local press with full page articles and photos.



**Otter Water-Polo Tour to France - 1955** Back Row L-R - C. King, D.B. Payne, K. Ranger, J.R. Millner. Middle Row L-R - P. Thorogood, D. Glasenbury, F.G.M. Milton, B. Clare, C. Miles. Front Row L-R - D.M. Warnford-Davis, N. Watt, N.J. Trusty.

**1956.** At the ASA National Championships, **R. Roberts** came 2<sup>nd</sup> by 0.1 seconds in the 110 Yards Freestyle. In the Southern Counties Championships, **R. Roberts** won the 110 Yards Freestyle, **J.D.R. Burn** won the Individual Medley, **D.G. Glasenbury** came 3<sup>rd</sup> in both the 110 and 220 Yards Freestyle, while **A.B. Richards** and **C.A. Stossel** came respectively 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 220 Yards Breaststroke. **R. Roberts** represented England on many occasions and also represented Great Britain at the Olympic Games in Melbourne, where he reached the semi-finals of the 100 metres Freestyle and was in the 4x200 metre Freestyle Relay team which reached the final. Domestically, a swimming and water-polo tour of Denmark, Sweden and Germany was arranged by **F.G.M. Milton**. 6 out of 9 games were won and most swimming contests were also won. Those who joined that tour are not recorded but **Paul Thorogood**, **Denis Warnford-Davis**, **Alistair Crawford**, **John Burn**, **Tony Milton** and **R.H. Hewitt** are noted in the local press articles as being part of that tour party. In those days, sporting visits were relatively rare and therefore matters of public interest. During the year, our Club Swimming Coach, **G.A.F. Grainger** sadly died and **W.J. (Bill) Juba** was welcomed into that role.

**1957.** No individual places this year at the ASA National Championships. At the Southern Counties Championships, **R. Roberts** won the 100 Yards Freestyle,

**R.G.M. Burn** won the 220 Yards Butterfly and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 100 Yards Backstroke, **D.C. Kemp** 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 220 Yards Butterfly, **C.A. Stossel** 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 220 Yards Breaststroke, **A. Still** 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Individual Medley and **H.P.M. Milton** 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Mile. **Commander C.G. Forsberg** became the first Otter to swim the Channel achieving a new World Record time of 13 hours 33 minutes swimming from England to France. – see Inset on Cdr. Gerry Forsberg. **J.H.R. Haswell** was elected President of the London Water Polo League.

**1958.** There were no individual successes at the ASA National Championships. In a club match, **H.P.M. Milton** with a time of 4. 57, became the first Otter to swim 440 yards in less than five minutes. At the Southern Counties Championships, **J.D.R. Burn** won the Individual Medley, with **D.C. Kemp** 2<sup>nd</sup>. **R. Furlong** was 2<sup>nd</sup> and **C. Doxat** 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Breaststroke. **R.G.M. Burn** was 4<sup>th</sup> in the 100 metre Backstroke trial for the Empire Games in Cardiff, where **B. Curtis** was selected for England in the 220 Yards Butterfly. Also at the Cardiff Games, in the 4x200 metres Freestyle Relay, **D.G. Glasenbury** represented Wales and **A. Still** represented Scotland. Later this year, **L. Krogh** represented Norway at the European Games in Budapest. In open water events, **Cdr. C.G. Forsberg** beat the record for the two-way swim of Lake Windermere with a time of 12 hours 58 minutes. The new Club Coach, **Bill Juba**, is recorded as having "revolutionized swimming training in the



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Club". On the Water-Polo side, **H.P.M. Milton** represented Great Britain at an International Tournament in Berlin

**1959. R. Furlong** was 5<sup>th</sup> in the ASA National 220 Yards Breaststroke Championship, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Southern Counties 220 Yards Championship Championships and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the London Counties 110 Yards Breaststroke Championship. **C.A. Stossel** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the British Universities 220 Yards Breaststroke and **C. Doxat** was 4<sup>th</sup> in the English Schools 110 Yards Breaststroke Championship. To complete a year of Breaststroke success, an overseas member, **J. Deacon** broke the Canadian National 100 Yards Breaststroke Record in a time of 65.6 seconds.

Additionally, **A. Still** represented Great Britain against Holland in the Men's Freestyle Relay team. On the Water-Polo side **D.C. Kemp** represented Great Britain versus Holland and West Germany, while **H.P.M. Milton** captained the Great Britain Junior team on a Continental tour. Outside the pool, **Cdr. C.G. Forsberg** won the Loch Lomond Championship in a time of 15 hours 31 minutes 9.8 seconds and with a time of 6 hours 15 minutes, became the first swimmer to cross Morecambe Bay both ways. At the Annual Dinner, our principal Guest was the England cricketer Colin Cowdrey, whose father-in-law, **Stuart Chiesman**, as noted previously, won his Otter 1<sup>st</sup> Team Water-Polo colours in 1925.

The immediate post-war period through to the end of the 1950's saw significant success for the Club. At the ASA National Championships, Otter won the ASA Team Championship in 1947-1949, 1955 and 1956, coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1950 and 1957. No names are reported for 1947 and 1950, while in 1955 in what was clearly a four member squad, six names are reported recognizing earlier heats. Those members who represented the Club in this event were: **N.E. Fitzsimon** 1948, **R.S.T. Luget** 1948, **P. Mostyn** 1948, **R. Romain** 1948 & 1949, **R.G.E. Franks** 1949, **D.J. Gray** 1949, **A.D. Kinnear** 1949, **M.J. Absolon** 1955, **J.D.R. Burn** 1955 & 1957, **R.G.M. Burn** 1955, **A.B. Richards** 1955, **R. Roberts** 1955 - 1957, **N.J. Trusty** 1955 & 1956, **D.G. Glasenbury** 1956, **H.P.M. Milton** 1956 & 1957, and **C. Browning** 1957. Otter also won the ASA Medley Team Championship from its inception in 1946 through to 1950, then 1953-1955 and 1957, coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1951 and 3<sup>rd</sup> with squads whose names are unknown, in 1952 and 1959. Members who represented the Club in this event were **D.A. Young** (Ba) 1946, **J.G. Davies** (Br) 1946, 1947, 1949-1951, **J.H. Keeling** (Fr) 1946 & 1947, **A.D. Kinnear**

(Ba) 1947 & 1950, **D.J. Gray** (Fr) 1947-1949, **R.G.E. Franks** (Ba) 1948 and (Fr) in 1950, **R. Romain** (Br) 1948, **P. Mostyn** (Fr) 1948, 1949 & 1951, **F.G.M. Milton** (Fr) 1951, **A.B. Richards** (Br) 1953, **D.B. Payne** (Ba) 1949, 1951 and 1953, **N.E. Fitzsimon** (Fr) 1950 & 1953, **R. Roberts** (Fr) 1953-1957, **N.J. Trusty** (Fr) 1953 & 1955, **M.J. Absolon** 1955, **J.D.R. Burn** 1955, **R.G.M. Burn** (Ba) 1955 & 1957, **A.B. Richards** (Br) 1955, **P.T. Penny**, **C.A. Stossel** (Br) 1957, **D.C. Kemp** (Fly) 1957, **H.P.M. Milton** (Fr) 1957. In this period Otter won the Henry Benjamin National Memorial Trophy (for overall club points) in 1946, 1947 (tie), 1948-1950, 1953 and 1955.

recorded in 1946, 1947, 1956 and 1957.

Those members recorded as representing the Club in this event were: **A.D. Kinnear** (Ba) 1948, **R.S.T. Luget**, (Br) 1948, **P. Mostyn** (Fr) 1948, **R.G.E. Franks** (Ba) 1949, **J.G. Davies** (Br) 1949, **R. Romain** (Fr) 1949, **D.J. Cripps** 1953, **A.B. Richards** 1953 & 1954, **M.D. Revell** 1953, **R. Roberts** 1953 & 1955, **N.J. Trusty** 1953, **R.G.M. Burn** 1955, **D.G. Glasenbury** 1955 and **A.B. Richards** 1955. In this period, Otter won the Alfred Hudson Memorial Trophy (for overall club points) in 1947-1950, 1952 and 1955-1957.



**1955 National Medley Relay Champions. (L to R) A.B. Richards, P.T. Penny, R. Roberts, N.J. Trusty.**

In the Southern Counties Championships, The Club won the Team Championship in 1946-1949, 1952 & 1953, 1955 & 1956 and 1959, coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1950 and 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1957. No names are recorded for 1946, 1947, 1950, 1957 and 1959. Those members recorded as representing the Club in this event were: **A.D. Kinnear** 1948 & 1949, **P. Mostyn** 1948 & 1949, **R.S.T. Luget** 1948, **D.B. Payne** 1948, 1952 & 1953, **R. Romain** 1948, **N Rushton** 1948, **J.G. Davies** 1949, **N.E. Fitzsimon** 1949, 1952 & 1953, **D.J. Gray** 1949, **E.N. Kimber** 1949, **D.J. Cripps** 1952, **M.D. Revell** 1952, **R. Roberts** 1952, 1953, 1955 & 1956, **E. Todd** 1952, **J.S. Easton** 1953, **F.M. Low** 1953, **M.J. Absolon** 1955, **J.D.R. Burn** 1955 & 1956, **R.G.M. Burn** 1955 & 1956, **D.G. Glasenbury** 1955 & 1956, **N.J. Trusty** 1955 & 1956, **R.H. Hewitt** 1956, **T.J. Fyftche** and **A.B. Richards**, 1956. Otter also won the Medley Team Championship in 1946-1949, 1953, 1955 and 1956, coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1956. No names are

Few photographs exist of these stars of yesteryear, but one that has come down to us is of the 1955 National Medley Relay Champions. This squad as shown above comprised **Norman Trusty** on backstroke, **A.B. Richards** on breaststroke, **Phil Penny** on butterfly and **Ron Roberts** on freestyle and these names feature in quite a number of successful relay squads as well as gaining individual honours. It may also be interesting to note that the results noted above in the 14 year period 1946-1959 include 44 different names who gained individual honours in swimming and water-polo plus those who contributed to relay successes for the club. This reflects an impressive ability by Otter to regenerate itself, with older competitors stepping aside and newer names coming to the fore - names that in many cases will be seen to recur in the ensuing decade. As is to be expected, some who reached the end of



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their competitive swimming careers, simply moved away from the Club and we duly lost touch with them. Those we know about however include:

**A.D. Kinnear.** Bert Kinnear laid the foundations of success in British swimming by transforming the teaching of technique and the system of educating coaches, when he was appointed the country's first National Technical Officer in 1960 and he was coach to the British team at the 1960 and 1964 Olympics. He resigned from this position on a point of principle in 1967 and after commentating for ITV at the 1968 and 1972 Olympics, retired with his wife to France and then Spain. He died in 2011.

**Sir Pyers Mostyn** Bart. In an incident reminiscent of a P.G. Wodehouse novel, in 1953 a London paper carried a banner head-line – Paris, "Sir Pyers Fights 15 Waiters at Once". An official of the New Eve

night-club said "I have never seen such a strong one as that Englishman. It took five of us to hold him and we all got hurt". In court later Sir Pyers admitted "I'm afraid I had a bit too much of that vodka". It was his last night out before returning to his farm in Kenya. In 1955, he died when his Land-Rover overturned. He was the Kenya 100 Yards champion at the time and viewed as certain to represent Kenya at the 1956 Olympics. His mother Lady Mostyn, gave a silver challenge cup in his memory and this was used for the 100 metres handicap prize.

**Peter Hardie.** Joined Otter in 1946 and became a Life Member in 1958. On his way for a swim in the sea in the early hours of 5<sup>th</sup> May 1960, he fell 40 ft. over a cliff at Caswell Bay Swansea and was killed. At the time, he was still a regular member of Otter's 1<sup>st</sup> Team Water-Polo squad and his premature death was a big loss to the Club.

**Athole Still.** Joined Otter in 1955, having already gained international honours with Scotland and Great Britain and he remained in membership until 1983. After stepping back from competitive swimming, he served as a commentator for ITV on every Olympics from 1964 until 1984 and extended his commentating role to the world of dance, sharing the microphone with Peter West on a TV show called "Come Dancing" the forerunner of "Strictly". For a while, he served as swimming correspondent for the Times and Sunday Times, before his fine tenor voice was discovered, leading to a stage career as Principal Tenor with Scottish Opera and Glyndebourne. He then moved into personal management, initially with swimmers such as Duncan Goodhew and Sharron Davies and then opera singers and footballers. His most famous client was the former England football manager, Sven-Goran Eriksson.



# OTTER IN THE 1960'S



## THE 1960'S

In the aftermath of World War 2, our 1953 Diary recorded 403 members with a heavy accent towards Junior Members. Seven years later, 464 members are recorded in the 1960 Diary and the profile compared with 1953 in brackets was Life Members 66 (81), Active Members 300 (144) and Junior Members 98 (178). Clearly the Club entered the new decade in robust shape. As previously, some former stars continued in competition, with new names forcing their way into contention. Key individual successes were as follows:

**1960.** **Tony Milton** represented Great Britain at the Rome Olympics in the 4x200 metres Freestyle Relay team, which came 4<sup>th</sup> in the final, after setting a new European record in the heats.



Tony Milton

During the year, **Tony Milton** and **Jim Kennedy** represented Great Britain in individual events in matches versus Russia, East Germany and Sweden. In this year, **Alistair Crawford** won the Scottish 200 Yards Breaststroke Championship. At the ASA National Championships, Otter came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Freestyle Relay in a time of 4 mins 6.4 secs. The team with their splits comprised

**Ron Roberts** 61.0 secs, **Duncan Kemp** 61.5 secs, **Jim Kennedy** 61.8 secs and **Tony Milton** 62.0 secs in that order with **Peter Waddell** 61.8 secs, swimming the heats in place of Duncan Kemp.

The Medley squad of **Norman Trusty** 74.3 secs, **Cliff Stossel** 84.3 secs, **Terry May**

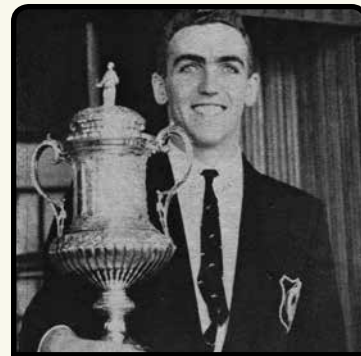
73.4 secs and **Tony Milton** 60.8 secs in that order came 8<sup>th</sup> and Otter were runners-up in the National Club points competition for the Henry Benjamin Trophy. At the Southern Counties Championships, **Brian Curtis** 3<sup>rd</sup> in 220 Yards Butterfly, **Charles Doxat** 3<sup>rd</sup> 220 Yards Breaststroke, **Roger Harford** 1<sup>st</sup> Individual Medley, **Jim Kennedy** 1<sup>st</sup> 440 Yards Freestyle and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Mile and **Peter Waddell** 3<sup>rd</sup> 220 Yards Freestyle, while Otter came 2<sup>nd</sup> in both the Freestyle and Medley Relays. Unfortunately the names of those in the National and Southern Counties Relay squads are not recorded. In the Midland Counties Championships, **David Hawkes** won the 200 Yards Breaststroke. In the London Counties, **Ken Broome** 3<sup>rd</sup> in 133 Yards Backstroke. **Alistair Crawford** 2<sup>nd</sup> with **Charles Doxat** 3<sup>rd</sup> in 133 Yards Breaststroke, **Jim Kennedy** 3<sup>rd</sup> in 133 Yards Freestyle, **John Towers** 2<sup>nd</sup> in 110 Yards Breaststroke and **Norman Trusty** 1<sup>st</sup> in 110 Yards Backstroke and 2<sup>nd</sup> on 133 Yards Backstroke. On the Water-Polo side, the Club reached the finals of both the National; and Southern Counties Championships, while **Duncan Kemp** was selected for the Great Britain team in the Olympic preliminary rounds and also successfully captained Surrey in winning the National Water-Polo County Championships. Outside the pool, **Cdr. Gerry Forsberg** won the inaugural Morecambe Bay Twenty Mile Championship in 6 hours 3 minutes.

Freestyle Team Championships. The Medley team with their 110 yards splits were **Bev Hinkley** 72.9, **Pin Seah** 76.0, **Brian Curtis** 65.7 and **Tony Milton** 59.9 posted a time of 4 mins 34.5 secs. The Freestyle team was **Jim Kennedy** 61.0, **John Burn** 62.0, **Duncan Kemp** 60.0 and **Tony Milton** 60.4 posting a total time of 4 mins 3.4 secs. In the Scottish Championships, **Athole Still** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 110 Yards Freestyle and **Alistair Crawford** 4<sup>th</sup> in the 220 Yards Breaststroke while at the World Student Games, **David Hawkes** 5<sup>th</sup> 200m Breaststroke, **Murray McLachlan** 1<sup>st</sup> in One Mile and 2<sup>nd</sup> in 400m Freestyle. **Murray McLachlan** also returned to his native South Africa where in their National Championships, he won the 220 Yards, 440 Yards and 1650 Yards Freestyle, as well as the 440 Yards Individual Medley and came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 110 Yards Backstroke. In the Southern Counties Championships, **Charles Doxat** and **Alistair Crawford** were respectively 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in the 200 Yards Breaststroke, **Brian Curtis** 2<sup>nd</sup> 220 Yards Butterfly, **Jim Kennedy** 2<sup>nd</sup> 440 Yards Freestyle and 3<sup>rd</sup> in One Mile, **Duncan Kemp** 2<sup>nd</sup> 100 Yards Freestyle, **Tony Milton** 4<sup>th</sup> in One Mile, **Pin Seah** 3<sup>rd</sup> 220 Yards Breaststroke, **Norman Trusty** 2<sup>nd</sup> 220 Yards Backstroke, **Peter Waddell** 5<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively in the 220 Yards, 440 Yards and One Mile Freestyle. Otter won the Freestyle Relay, but the names of the swimmers are not recorded. **Charles Doxat** won the London Counties 110 yards Breaststroke and **Pin Seah** came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the English Schools 100 Yards Breaststroke. On the Water-Polo side, **Duncan Kemp** represented Great Britain and England and the Club reached the Quarter Finals and Semi Finals respectively in the National and Southern Counties Championships. Outside the pool, **Jim Kennedy** won the Southsea Pier to Pier race.



1960 National Freestyle Relay Team. (L to R) Jim Kennedy, Ron Roberts, Tony Milton, Duncan Kemp

**1961.** At the ASA National Championships, **David Hawkes** 3<sup>rd</sup> 220 Yards Breaststroke, **Jim Kennedy** 1<sup>st</sup> in 880 Yards, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the One Mile and 4<sup>th</sup> 440 Yards Freestyle, **Tony Milton** 3<sup>rd</sup> 220 Yards Freestyle and 6<sup>th</sup> 440 Yards Freestyle, and **Pin Seah** 6<sup>th</sup> 220 Yards Breaststroke. The Club also came 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively in the National Medley and



Murray McLachlan with 220 yards trophy

**1962.** At the ASA National Championships, **David Hawkes** 4<sup>th</sup> 220 Yards Breaststroke, **Jim Kennedy** 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respectively

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in the Half Mile, One Mile and 440 Yards Freestyle, **Murray McLachlan** 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respectively in 220 Yards Freestyle, One Mile, Half Mile and 110 Yards Freestyle and **Tony Milton** 4<sup>th</sup> in the One Mile and 5<sup>th</sup> in both the 220 and 440 Yards Freestyle. Otter also came 2<sup>nd</sup> in both the Freestyle and the Medley Relays. The teams were **Jim Kennedy, Duncan Kemp, Tony Milton** and **Murray McLachlan** for the Freestyle Relay with **Peter Waddell** swimming the heats for **Murray McLachlan** and **Bob Burn, David Hawkes, Murray McLachlan** and **Tony Milton** in that order, in the Medley Relay, with **Pin Seah** swimming the heats for David Hawkes.

In the Southern Counties Championships, **Charles Doxat** came 4<sup>th</sup> in the 400 yards IM. At the British Universities Championships, **David Hawkes** 2<sup>nd</sup> 220 Yards Breaststroke, **Jim Kennedy** 2<sup>nd</sup> in both the 110 and 440 Yards Freestyle and **Murray McLachlan** won both the 110 and 440 Yards Freestyle. Outside the pool, at the National Long Distance Championship **Jim Kennedy** was 1<sup>st</sup> with **Tony Milton** 2<sup>nd</sup>, **John Rogers** 6<sup>th</sup>, **Kelvin Juba** 7<sup>th</sup> and **Cdr. Gerry Forsberg** 8<sup>th</sup>. At the Southern Counties Championships, no individual results are recorded but the Club won the Freestyle Relay. **Cdr. Gerry Forsberg** also came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Torbay Championship and 7<sup>th</sup> in the Welsh Long Distance Championship. A swimming team travelled to Dunkirk where they won a triangular match with a Dunkirk district side and the Cercle des Nageurs de Marseilles. On the Water-Polo side, the 1<sup>st</sup> Team drew with a composite French Team in Dunkirk and a "Castaways" tour of the West Country won all its 6 matches under the leadership of **Dennis Warnford-Davis**.

**1963.** In a momentous move for the Club and through an introduction brokered by our politician member, **Desmond Plummer**, the Club transferred its headquarters from Chelsea Manor Baths to the newly opened 36 2/3 Yards pool at Shell Centre on the South Bank near City Hall. At that time, this beautiful six lane facility was the best pool that the Club had ever enjoyed. During the year, **Jim Kennedy, Tony Milton, Painton Cowan** and **Pin Seah** were capped for Great Britain. **Jim Kennedy** captained the Great Britain Team at the World Universities Games in Brazil where he was accompanied by **Murray McLachlan**, who was 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively in the 400 and 1500 metres Freestyle. At the ASA National Championships, **Jim Kennedy** won the

Half Mile with **Tony Milton** 2<sup>nd</sup> in both the Half Mile and the Mile while **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** was 4<sup>th</sup> in the 220 Yards Butterfly. Our entries for the National Championships were impacted adversely by the loss of our representatives at the World Universities Games. Slightly scratch teams of **Bob Burn, Pin Seah, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** and **Tony Milton** contested the Medley Relay and **John Burn, John Rogers, James Stewart** and **Tony Milton** contested the Freestyle Relay, making the finals in each event but well outside the places. At the Southern Counties Championships, **Charles Doxat** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 400 Yards Individual Medley and **James Stewart** was 5<sup>th</sup> in the 100 Yards Freestyle with a time of 55.0 secs while the Club was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Freestyle Relay. Your scribe was one of the six member team in this event, which was swum at Greenwich Baths The names of the other team members are not recorded but

reserve goal-keeper for the England and Great Britain senior sides, before being selected to represent Great Britain in the Western European Tournament, starting a reign of five years in which John was Great Britain's first choice water polo goalkeeper. **Eric Kimber** was elected Chairman of the newly formed National Water-Polo League. Outside the pool, **Kelvin Juba** won the Welsh Long Distance Championship in Lake Bala and was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Midlands Long Distance Championship. **Norman Trusty** was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Welsh six miles and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Windermere ten miles. **Cdr. Gerry Forsberg** was elected President of the Channel Swimming Association.

**1964.** At the ASA National Championships, **Murray McLachlan** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 220 Yards, and 440 Yards Freestyle, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the One Mile and 4<sup>th</sup> in the Individual Medley, **Painton Cowan** 8<sup>th</sup> 110 Yards Freestyle, **Roddy Jones** 6<sup>th</sup> and **John Gordon** 7<sup>th</sup> in the



Otter Team at Mulhouse (L to R) Roger Harford, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn, Charles Doxat, Tony Milton, Bob Burn, Alistair Crawford, James Stewart, Jim Kennedy, Painton Cowan

included **Tony Milton, Jim Kennedy** and **Bob** and **John Burn**. On the weekend of 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> June a swimming team travelled by invitation to contest an eight-sided gala to celebrate the opening of a new 50m pool in the French city of Mulhouse, coming 3<sup>rd</sup> behind the host club and the French Army but beating teams from Spain, Germany and for the first time the Marseilles Club. Otter were represented by the team shown above with Pin Seah as cameraman not shown. In the two day gala, each team contributed two swimmers to each event concluding with 8x50m Medley and Freestyle relays.

On the Water-Polo side, **Duncan Kemp** was capped for both England and Great Britain, while **John Towers** was capped in England's under 21 side and was the

110 Yards Backstroke with **John Gordon** also 5<sup>th</sup> in the 220 Yards Backstroke and **Tony Milton** 1<sup>st</sup> in the 880 Yards and 8<sup>th</sup> in the 220 Yards Freestyle. Otter won the Medley Relay in a best-ever time of 4 mins 25.3 secs and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Freestyle Relay. The Medley team (with times) comprised **John Gordon** (Ba 66), **George Hill** (Br 75), **Murray McLachlan** (Fly 64) and **Tony Milton** (Free 60). Combined with the superb Water-Polo result as below, Otter won the Henry Benjamin Club points trophy. In the Southern Counties Championships, **Roddy Jones** set a new record in winning the 220 Yards Backstroke and Otter won the Medley Relay. A little bit of history was also created when in the first known club versus country match in England, Otter hosted a



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visiting South African National team at Shell Centre, losing the match despite including six international swimmers in our team. During the year, **John Gordon** was capped several times on backstroke for GB. On the Water-Polo side, the Club had its most outstanding season, winning the National Club Water-Polo Championship for the first time.



John Towers



1964 National Water-Polo Champions. (L to R Back) - Norman Griffin, Murray McLachlan, Len Elsom, Eric Kimber, Neil Paine, John Towers. George Hill (L to R Seated) Peter Stevens, Bob Hunt, Duncan Kemp, Bob Burn, Tony Milton

The Club also won the Southern Counties Water-Polo Championship and tied at the top of the table in the Premier Invitation Water-Polo League losing in the play-off at Crystal Palace. **Duncan Kemp** and **John Towers** were capped for England and Great Britain and **Dennis Warnford-Davis** led an unbeaten "Castaways" team on a West Country tour.

In 1964, book called "A Guide to Water Polo" was published - authored by David Barr, who was then coach to the Great Britain Water Polo Team. Several photographs in that book, featured Otter's own two international stars and two are shown below with Duncan Kemp in process of "a rotational straight shot" and John Towers in goal, preparing to repel a shot.



Duncan Kemp

1965. In April it was determined that the traditional Otter Slips no longer conformed to ASA regulations, because they showed too much Otter and not enough Slip. The Club therefore adopted a new Speedo costume patterned in black and white stripes. During the year, our very well connected Club Coach, **Bill Juba**, visited the USA taking with him some Club mementoes including an Otter silver spoon, for permanent exhibition in the International Swimming Hall of Fame at Fort Lauderdale - Otter being the first British club to be so represented. At the ASA National Championships, **Neil Oldridge** was 6<sup>th</sup> in the 110 Yards Butterfly, while Otter represented by **Tony Milton**, **George Hill**, **Neil Oldridge** and **James Stewart** in that order came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Medley Relay in a time of 4 mins 27.7 secs, only 1.3 secs behind the winners. This may be viewed as a potential win that through unfortunate circumstances, eluded us. Our star backstroker, John Gordon, was on bath-side and ready to swim, when the results of a blood test came through apparently disclosing that he had glandular fever. Accordingly, he stood down and it was only a day later when the diagnosis was reassigned to a Mrs Joan Gordon and John

was freed up to swim his individual events, setting an English record in the heats and coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the final of the 220 yards IM, the Freestyle Team of **Gerry Stevens**, **Tony Milton**, **James Stewart** and **Graham Burden** were unplaced. However, the large number of individual members obtaining standard points, enabled Otter to win the Henry Benjamin Trophy for the last time in the Club's history; noting that this award is no longer used as an aggregate points trophy. At the Southern Counties Championships, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 220 Yards Butterfly and the Otter team of **John Gordon**, **Bill Price**, **Neil Oldridge** and **Gerry Stevens** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Medley Relay in a time of 4 mins 29.6 secs. In the London Championships **John Gordon** won the 110 and 220 Yards Backstroke and also the Individual Medley, with **Charles Doxat** 4<sup>th</sup> in the Individual Medley. Our very fine Club Captain, **Alistair Crawford** organized a gala at the Shell pool to host the visiting South African National Team, with their men matched against Barracuda, Royal Tunbridge Wells Monson, Stoke Newington and Otter, with their ladies matched against Hampstead Ladies, Beckenham Ladies, Royal Tunbridge Wells Monson and Stoke Newington. South Africa won both matches with Otter 3<sup>rd</sup> in the men's match and our traditional partners for mixed matches, Hampstead Ladies, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the ladies match. During the year, **John Gordon** was capped for GB on the 400m IM. On the Water-Polo side, the team suffered from the loss of our Club Coach **Eric Kimber**, to a posting abroad, **Duncan Kemp** into retirement and **Murray McLachlan** returning to South Africa. Despite these losses, Otter reached the semi-finals of the National Championship and were runners-up in the Southern Counties Championship, while **John Towers** was capped for both England and Great Britain. Outside the pool, **Tony Milton** won the ASA National Long Distance (5 miles) and the Midlands Championship, while **Norman Trusty** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in two British Long Distance Swimming events at Torbay (8 miles) and Windermere (10 miles). **Cdr. Gerry Forsberg** carried out an individual 20 mile swim in the Bristol Channel, from Weston-super-Mare to Watchet.

1966. This year, was dominated by the Commonwealth Games in Jamaica and the European Games at which Otter were represented by:

**Tony Jarvis** - a finalist in the 440 and 1650 Yards Freestyle and a Bronze medal winner in both Freestyle relays, while at the



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European Games he was a finalist in both Freestyle relays.

**John Gordon** - a finalist in 440 Yards Individual Medley at the Commonwealth Games and was also the 2<sup>nd</sup> reserve for the 220 yards Breaststroke and a European Games representative.

**Malcolm Tucker** - at the Commonwealth Games won a Bronze medal in the 110 Yards Breaststroke and a Silver medal in the Medley relay, while at the European Games he won a Bronze medal in the 110 Yards Breaststroke and was a finalist in the 220 Yards Breaststroke.

**Pin Seah** represented Singapore at the Commonwealth Games.

At the ASA National Championships, **Tony Jarvis** was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 110 Yards Freestyle and a finalist in the 220, 880 and 1650 Yards Freestyle. **John Gordon** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in both the 220 and 440 Yards Individual Medley.

**Graham Kane** was a finalist in the 110 Yards Breaststroke while **Nick Juba** was a finalist in the Boys Breaststroke. In the Freestyle relay the Club represented by **John Gordon, Gerry Stevens, James Stewart** and **Tony Jarvis** were 2<sup>nd</sup> (0.6 secs behind York City), with **Tony Milton** swimming the heats in place of James Stewart. In the Medley relay, the Club represented by **John Gordon, Nick Juba, Tony Jarvis** and **James Stewart**, in that order, were 4<sup>th</sup>. In the Southern Counties Championships, **Nick Juba** was a finalist in the Boys Breaststroke and Otter were 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Freestyle relay. The names of the full squad are not recorded but **Tony Jarvis** and **James Stewart** were two members of it. During the year, John Gordon was capped for GB on the 400IM. On the Water-Polo side, **John Towers** was capped for both England and Great Britain, while **Kelvin Juba** was capped for Great Britain in the under 21 team. **Dennis Warnford-Davis** organized a Water-Polo tour to Malta. Outside the pool, **Tony Milton** won the ASA National Long Distance Championship (5 ¾ miles) and also became the first Englishman since World War 2 to win the 3 mile International River Scheldte Championship exceeding his father **Freddie Milton** who was 2<sup>nd</sup> just prior to the War. Additionally, **Cdr. Gerry Forsberg** was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Morecambe Cross-Bay, **Tony Morey** was 4<sup>th</sup> in the inaugural Lulworth to Weymouth race and **Norman Trusty** was 6<sup>th</sup> in the Windermere International.

1967. At the ASA National Championships,

**Tony Jarvis** in the Freestyle events won the 220 Yards in a time of 2 mins 3.04 secs, was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 110, 440 and 880 Yards and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 1650 Yards. **Dave Dickson** was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 110 Yards Freestyle and 4<sup>th</sup> in the 220 Yards Freestyle, while **Malcolm Tucker** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 110 Yards Breaststroke. In the relays, Otter won the National Freestyle Team Championship in a British Long Course Record time of 3 mins 49.5 secs. The Club were represented by **Dave Dickson, John Gordon, James Stewart** and **Tony Jarvis** in that order (see photo) with **Murray McLachlan** and one other Otter swimming the heats to allow Dave Dickson and James Stewart to dive in fresh for the final. In the Medley Relay, Otter represented by **John Gordon, Malcolm Tucker, Tony Jarvis** and **Dave Dickson** in that order came 3<sup>rd</sup>.

because one of the Warrender team took an outrageous flying takeover, which could not be ignored and so Otter were duly able to claim victory. It was an event that gained some considerable publicity in Scotland at the time, with Scotland's Bobby McGregor (silver medallist in the 100 metres Freestyle at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics) coming over from Glasgow especially for the event and in a nice touch, Otter's oldest member **A.P. Cattle** who lived in Edinburgh coming into the changing room before the swim especially to wish us well. **A.P. Cattle**, as mentioned earlier, was the nephew of **A.C. Cattle** - Otter's first Water-Polo Hon Sec in 1892. Several letters from **Alfred P. Cattle** exist in the Club archives, one of which refers to him coming to support "four fine young members" and noting the flying



1967 National Freestyle Relay Championship Team (L to R) Dave Dickson, Tony Jarvis, James Stewart, John Gordon

At the World Student Games in Tokyo, **Tony Jarvis** won a Bronze medal in the individual 400m freestyle in a time of 4.21.1 and Silver medals in both the 4x200m and 4x100m freestyle relays. He was capped for Great Britain and in a special competition clocked 49.7 secs to set a new English 100 Yards Freestyle record. Results for the Southern Counties Championships are not recorded except that **Nick Juba** came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 110 Yards Breaststroke. In a follow-up to Otter's winning the English Club Freestyle Relay, a challenge was issued by the champion Scottish club Warrender whose long serving President Frank Thomas, was always a friend to Otter. With John Gordon and Dave Dickson unable to travel, the Club were represented by **Painton Cowen, Dave Ellison, James Stewart** and **Tony Jarvis**. Otter actually lost by a touch, but only

takeover that got Warrender disqualified. This renewal of contact with the Club, seem to have prompted **A.P. Cattle** to donate some memorabilia from his uncle including a silver diary case and the 1906 photo at Shiplake that he noted includes A.P.F. Chapman who subsequently captained England at cricket, albeit that he never seems to have joined Otter. Another Otter, **Graham Burden** now back swimming with Warrender also came to wish us well. The hospitality received by the team from our host's President Frank Thomas was very generous.

On the Water-Polo side all teams had reasonable seasons, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Team winning the Elkington Shield for winning the London League 3<sup>rd</sup> Division and the 1<sup>st</sup> Team losing in the quarter-final of the





National Club Water-Polo Championship. An otherwise enjoyable tour to Malta was marred by a serious injury to our Captain **Neil Paine** – the result of poor refereeing in the face of very rough play. Outside the pool, Otter was represented at various Championships including Exmouth where **Norman Trusty** was 2<sup>nd</sup>, Morecambe Cross-Bay where **Cdr. Gerry Forsberg** was 3<sup>rd</sup> and the ASA Long Distance where **Tony Milton** was 4<sup>th</sup>. However, the peak achievement of the year was **Norman Trusty's** France-England Channel Swim in a time of 12 hours 5 minutes. Later, he admitted that to condition himself for the cold water, he had commenced open water training in January, frequently breaking ice on the water surface.

**1968.** The dominant event of the year was the Olympic Games in Mexico City. **Tony Jarvis** was selected as Captain of the Great Britain swimming team and joined by **Dave Hembrow**, both of them were members of the 4x100 metres Freestyle Relay team which finished 4<sup>th</sup> in a time of 3 mins 38.4 secs with flying start splits of 54.2 secs for **Tony Jarvis** and 55.4secs for **Dave Hembrow**. Earlier in the year, at the ASA National Championships, **Tony Jarvis** won the 220 Yards Freestyle in a time of 2 mins 00.1 secs and also the 440 Yards Freestyle in a time of 4 mins 22.0 secs, both of which were British and English records. Perhaps **Tony Jarvis's** most outstanding swim was actually in the 110 Yards Freestyle, in which he came 2<sup>nd</sup> by a touch in a new English record of 54.3 secs, behind the great Bobby McGregor who had dominated this event for a number of years. In the last 15 yards, **Jarvis** seemed to find something extra and with every stroke was clawing back McGregor's lead and if the race had been just one yard longer, **Jarvis** would surely have won. In that race, **Dave Hembrow** came 4<sup>th</sup> in a time of 56.4 secs and thereby swam himself into Olympic selection. At the National Championships, **John Gordon** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 220 Yards Individual Medley with a time of 2 mins 22.8 secs and 4<sup>th</sup> in the 440 Yards Individual Medley with a time of 5 mins 11.9 secs. The Club was 3<sup>rd</sup> in both relays. In the Freestyle Relay, **John Gordon, Dave Ellison, James Stewart** and **Tony Jarvis** put up a time of 3 mins 56.5 secs and in the Medley Relay **John Gordon, Malcolm Tucker, Tony Jarvis** and **James Stewart** recorded a time of 4 mins 24.2 secs. In other events, at the Southern Counties Championships, Otter came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Medley Relay (team not recorded) but won the County of London Freestyle Relay in a new championship record time with a team that

included **Tony Jarvis** and **James Stewart**. During the year, **John Gordon** was capped for GB in the IM. On the water-polo side, our captain **Neil Paine** emigrated to South Africa and results were muted. **John Towers** was capped for Great Britain and also represented London; **John Fox** also represented London, while **Bob Palmer** represented British Universities.

**1969.** This was our Centenary Year and it was commemorated in a number of ways. These included the issuance of **Car Young's** Club History 1869-1969; this being the first time that anyone had tried to encapsulate this period. Some memorabilia were issued including rather attractive China Otters. A full program of matches against Oxford, Cambridge, London and Sussex Universities plus other major clubs. The highlight was a "Six-Nations Centenary Gala held at Crystal Palace and involving Otter for England, Warrender for Scotland, Mulhouse for France, Dusseldorf for Germany, Vlaardingen for Holland and Scaldis for Belgium. This gala held over two days (Friday 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September) was covered by BBC Television and transmitted during its Saturday afternoon "Grandstand" program. This event also received coverage from Pat Besford in the Daily Telegraph as well as from **Athole Still**, writing for the Sunday Times. Otter won, with Warrender 2<sup>nd</sup> and Dusseldorf 3<sup>rd</sup>. At the ASA National Championships as well as the Southern Counties Championships, our relay teams missed Tony Jarvis, Dave Hembrow and James Stewart all absent abroad. At the Nationals, our Medley team comprising **John Gordon, Nick Juba, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** and **Dave Alred** came 10<sup>th</sup>, while our Freestyle team comprising **John Gordon, Dave Ellison, Dave Hibbins** and **Dave Alred** came 8<sup>th</sup>. At the Southern Counties, our Medley team comprising **John Gordon, Charles Doxat, Tony Jarvis** and **Dave Alred** came 5<sup>th</sup> while our Freestyle team of **John Gordon, Dave Ellison, Dave Hibbins** and **Dave Alred** came 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Tony Jarvis** however, won both the 110 and 220 Yards Freestyle. On the Water-Polo side, this was our best season since our Championship year in 1964 and this was put down to the excellent efforts of our Honorary Coach **Dave Last**. We lost in the semi-finals of the ASA Championships and missed promotion to the 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the Premier Invitation League by a solitary goal in our final match. Outside the pool, **Cdr. Gerry Forsberg** was the sole bearer of the Club colours in a variety of grueling races, while our Annual Report records that in our open water races, the

famous Chindit, **Brig. J.M. Calvert** came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the One Mile sealed handicap race. See previously for details on J.M. Calvert.

#### 1000 METRE VAN SCALDIS TROPHY.

As noted previously, in 1952, Gerard Blitz, the National Water-Polo Coach of Belgium, helped out for a while in London, coaching the Otter Water-Polo squad. His principal claim to fame however, was as the founder in 1950 of the famous Club Mediterranee group of initially low cost holiday resort destinations – now slightly more up-market. Gerard Blitz was also heavily involved in the administration of the Belgian Zwemclub Scaldis in Antwerp. Here an inter-club competition had evolved in 1954 and this event, became accepted as the unofficial club championship of Europe, held every year in Antwerp at the Scaldis club's home pool. The results were determined by the lowest aggregate time (each 0.1 second equaled one point) by each club for which six different swimmers need to compete in six individual events – 100m Freestyle, 100m Backstroke, 100m Butterfly, 4x25m Individual Medley, 200m Breaststroke, 200m Freestyle plus a 4x50m Medley Relay, making 1000 metres in total. It will be noted that the key events were the two 200m races wherein the opportunity to gain or lose significant points could occur. Otter were first invited to this competition in 1960. The following results were achieved.

**1960.** The event seems to have been swum in open water with a report noting the water "being very stormy". Vienna won on 6955 points with Otter 2<sup>nd</sup> with 7016 points (6.1 seconds behind). The team was **Jim Kennedy** 100m Freestyle, **Brian Curtis** 100m Butterfly, **Bob Burn** 100m Backstroke, **Tony Milton** 200m Freestyle, **Alistair Crawford** 200m Breaststroke, **John Burn** 100m Individual Medley with **Bob Burn, Crawford, Curtis** and **Milton** in the relay. 18 clubs from 6 countries competed.

**1961.** Otter won the trophy with an aggregate points total of 6862 against 14 European clubs. The team names are not recorded.

**1962.** Otter won the trophy with a record total of 6798 points, out of a field of 22 clubs from 9 West European countries. The team names, times and (places) were: 100m Freestyle **Duncan Kemp** 59.6s (3<sup>rd</sup>), 100m Butterfly **Murray McLachlan** 1.05.1 (2<sup>nd</sup>), 100m Backstroke **Bob Burn** 1.09.4 (4<sup>th</sup>), 200m Breaststroke **Pin Seah** 2.45.1 (1<sup>st</sup>), 100m Individual Medley **Roger Harford** 1.09.6 (4<sup>th</sup>), 200m Freestyle **Tony Milton** 2.12.2 (1<sup>st</sup>),

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4x50m Medley Relay Otter 1.58.8 (1<sup>st</sup>)

**1963.** Otter won the trophy for the third year running, with a record total of 6770 points, and this gave us the right to retain the cup. However, we preferred to re-donate it to the Scaldis Swimming Club, as a perpetual trophy. The team members and their results were: 100m Freestyle **Duncan Kemp** 59.5s (1<sup>st</sup>), 100m Butterfly **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** 1.06.3 (3<sup>rd</sup>), 100m Backstroke **Murray McLachlan** 1.06.8 (2<sup>nd</sup>), 200m Breaststroke **Pin Seah** 2.47.0 (3<sup>rd</sup>), 100m Individual Medley **Charles Doxat** 1.10.0 (4<sup>th</sup>), 200m Freestyle **Tony Milton** 2.10.4 (1<sup>st</sup>), 4x50m Medley Relay Otter 1.57.0 (2<sup>nd</sup>).

**1964.** Otter won the trophy with a new record total of 6634 points. The team was **Duncan Kemp** on 100m Freestyle, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** on 100m Butterfly, **John Gordon** on 100m Backstroke, **George Hill** on 200m Breaststroke **Murray McLachlan** 100m Individual Medley and **Tony Milton** on 200m Freestyle.

**1965.** Otter came 3<sup>rd</sup> out of a field of 15 clubs, with a points total only 27 points (2.7 secs) more than their winning total of 1964. The team with only partial results recorded were: 100m Freestyle **James Stewart** 57.9 secs (4<sup>th</sup>), 100m Butterfly **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn**, 100m Backstroke **Tony Milton**,

200m Breaststroke **Malcolm Tucker**, 100m IM **John Gordon** 65.2 secs. (1<sup>st</sup>) – New Record, 200m Freestyle **Tony Jarvis**. The Medley team, which came 3<sup>rd</sup>, were **Gordon, Tucker, Jarvis** and **Stewart**. **Alistair Crawford** as Club Captain also travelled with the party.

**1966.** Otter came 4<sup>th</sup> out of 14 teams competing. **Tony Jarvis** won the 200m Freestyle in a new record time of 2 mins 3.9 secs and **John Gordon** won the 100m Individual Medley in a new record time of 64.5 secs.

**1967.** Otter came 7<sup>th</sup> out of 15 clubs with 6673 points, only 3.9 secs slower than our 1964 winning total. The team were: 100m Freestyle **Painton Cowen** (a late substitute for Dave Dickson) 60.2 secs (8<sup>th</sup>) 100m Butterfly **Neil Oldridge** 63.1 secs (5<sup>th</sup>), 100m Backstroke **Bob Burn** (a very late substitute for John Gordon) 1.12.7 (14<sup>th</sup>) 200m Breaststroke **George Hill** (a late substitute for Malcolm Tucker) 2.44.3 (9<sup>th</sup>), 100m Individual Medley **James Stewart** 1-08.9 (7<sup>th</sup>) and 200m Freestyle **Tony Jarvis** 2-01.8 (2<sup>nd</sup>), 4x50m Medley team of **Stewart, Hill, Oldridge** and **Jarvis** 1.56.3 (4<sup>th</sup>). It may be viewed as an example of how the Club regenerates itself, in that the team pictured below, only include one survivor, George Hill, from the triumphant

1964 team. **Painton Cowen** nearly missed the event as he elected to drive and at one point while in Antwerp, got his car wheels stuck in tramlines and instead of going straight on, as he had wished, found himself turning right and thereby getting hopelessly lost. Painton had combined the trip with indulging his great interest in medieval stained glass windows – an interest that seems more recently to have burgeoned into a full-time occupation as in 2017, he is noted as “one of the world’s foremost photographers of and writers on stained glass, having authored books on the subject and he is an Honorary Research Associate at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York.”

**1968.** Otter came 6<sup>th</sup> out of 15 clubs. The team comprised **Dave Hembrow** 3<sup>rd</sup> in 56.4 secs 100m Freestyle, **Dave Dickson** 4<sup>th</sup> in 62.3 secs 100 Butterfly, **John Gordon** 4<sup>th</sup> 64.5 secs 100m Backstroke, **Nick Juba** disqualified on 200m Breaststroke, **James Stewart** 8<sup>th</sup> in 67.9 secs 100m Individual Medley and **Tony Jarvis** 1<sup>st</sup> in 2 mins 00.7 secs 200m Freestyle. The Medley Relay squad of **Gordon, Juba, Jarvis** and **Dickson** came 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**1969.** No team sent by Otter because of unavailability of members.



**1964 SCALDIS TEAM** Back Row, Left to Right. **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn, Duncan Kemp, Alistair Crawford** (Club Captain) **Murray McLachlan** and **Tony Milton**. Front Row. Left to Right. **John Gordon** and **George Hill**.



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1967 SCALDIS TEAM] *Left to Right.* Painton Cowen, Neil Oldridge, George Hill, Bob Burn, James Stewart and Tony Jarvis.

### A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE OF OTTER IN THE 1960'S

Questions are sometimes asked of older members "What was Otter like when you joined?" This brief summary will try to answer that. Firstly, your scribe nearly never joined at all. I knew of Otter by representing Tonbridge School in the Annual Schools Relays at Seymour Hall Baths, where elderly representatives of Otter in their multi-coloured blazers served as the officials, usually in an event that was combined with the Oxford & Cambridge Varsity Swimming and Water-Polo Matches. In my last year at Tonbridge, I even resurrected a fixture with Otter that had been dormant for 30 years and several Otter notables such as **Cliff Stossell**, **Mark Grundy** and **Ian Dussek O.B.E.** were part of the Otter team that visited Tonbridge. Having left school a few months later and in my own mind, retired from swimming, my late mother had different thoughts. Unknown to me, she wrote off to Otter c/o Marshall Street Baths, from where some helpful soul forwarded it to our then Hon Sec R.L. (Ron) Stead. The

first I knew of these machinations was when a "Dear Stewart" letter arrived from Ron Stead, instructing me to present myself at Chelsea Manor Baths on a Tuesday evening. There I was greeted by the kindly persona of our then Hon Treasurer, Lt. Col. L.T.G. (Tom) Ricketts, who in time was to relieve me of a cheque for two guineas covering the annual subscription and another two pounds for an annual swimming pass to Otter Club nights – then Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Here I must pause to offer a tribute to what I have always thought of as "**The Men in Suits**". This was a group of older members, often no longer even swimming themselves, but who provided a corps of officers, administering the affairs of the Club. These included some like **H.M. (Garry) Wagstaff**, **F.G.M. (Freddie) Milton** and **J.H.R. (Roddy) Haswell**, with distinguished international swimming pedigrees of their own; some like **E.N. (Eric) Kimber**, **N.E. (Norman) Fitzsimon**, **L.W. (Lionel) Milton** (Freddie's cousin) and **C.A. (Car) Young**, who had been part of Club teams in their time and then others, whose competitive contribution

in the water, was not writ large, but whose contribution on the bath-side was enormous. Such men included the aforementioned **Ron Stead** who served as Hon Secretary for 16 years and **Tom Ricketts**, our Hon Treasurer for 12 years, who was succeeded in that role for 6 years until 1969 by **P.J. (Pip) Turner**, **R.A.A. (Bill) Willens** who held the important office of Hon Handicapper from 1936 to 1960 and again in 1972; a period interspersed from 1960 to 1967 while **P. (Peter) Hodge** held that role, terminated only by his unexpected death. At that time all Past Presidents and Past Vice-Presidents, were automatically ex-officio members of the Club Committee and such men included **Sir Harold Parker** KCB, KBE, MC who outside the Club served as President of SCASA from 1939-1945 and President of the ASA in 1957 and whose genial presence was often found wielding a stopwatch at SCASA events in the 1960's. As a young incoming attender on Committee, I was particularly grateful for the courtesy with which I was treated by **Dr Car Young**, President 1964-67 (then Senior Consultant at St Mary's Hospital) and **Norman Fitzsimon**



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President 1968-71, a practicing solicitor whose incisive ability to focus talkative committees onto key issues, set for me the benchmark against which all subsequent Presidents have been measured.



Dr. Car Young

Hon Sec, an unelected role, often held by the Vice Captain. This individual had the responsibility of coordinating Club entries for the ASA National, Southern Counties and London Championships – both individual and relay entries. The swimming goal each year was the Henry Benjamin Trophy based on points earned by the Club in National events including the National Water-Polo Championship. Individual swimmers earned a point for each standard time achieved at the National Championships and the goal therefore was to enter any member who might prospectively achieve the requisite time. However, to limit the number of entries, the ASA also imposed a qualifying time and if the Club could not certify that a swimmer had achieved the qualifying time, that individual could not go. In an example of how the Otter stars were willing to help

a Southern Counties final”.

It was also in 1963 that I was dispatched with **Jim Kennedy** and **Tony Milton** to swim the National Half Mile in Tynemouth on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July. This was largely pre-motorways and so we set off on the Friday in Tony’s Morris 1000; Tony at the wheel, Jim navigating alongside him and your scribe in the back. We stopped on Friday evening in Middlesborough, where we were kindly received into the home of Peter Hatfield – the son of the great pre WW1 swimming star, Jack Hatfield, mentioned previously in this history. That evening we found a Chinese restaurant where a very urbane Chinese head-waiter took our order. Having consumed this with great rapidity, Jim sat back and said “I wonder what he would say if we said “Same Again”. Unnoticed by Jim,



Half-mile at Henley Sailing Club (L to R) Norman Fitzsimon, Eric Kimber, Joy Stead, Ron Stead, Tom Ricketts, Jim Ricketts

Club nights were busy affairs, with swimming sessions taken by our very motivational Club Coach, **Bill Juba**, at which most of the Otter international swimmers attended. On normal nights, this was followed by water-polo training. Frequently there were internal handicap events or matches against other London clubs or the principal universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London and such contests usually involved water-polo matches also. For those swimmers outside the Club’s 1<sup>st</sup> Team, there were matches most Saturdays through the summer against schools in or reasonably close to London. These events were important in recruiting new members for Otter. On the swimming side, one of the most important offices was that of the Championships

new members, it was **Duncan Kemp** in 1962, who volunteered to pace your scribe in achieving the entry time for his entered event of 220 yards backstroke. Other instances of help from established Otter stars include **Tony Milton** inviting me to join him on weekend training sessions in the RAC pool; **Painton Cowen** teaching me a freestyle tumble turn in the Lansdowne Club pool and in 1963 **Jim Kennedy** ceding a place in the Southern Counties 100 Yards Freestyle Final. Jim and I actually tied for 5<sup>th</sup> in the heats and a swim-off was announced. Jim suggested that it was stupid for us to tire ourselves out before the final and therefore proposed we should toss for it. Jim duly won the toss and then noting my obvious disappointment, sportingly offered me the place on the grounds that it would be “good experience for me to swim

the urbane individual was standing right behind him and he said “Certainly Sir” and so we worked our way another complete meal – an example of “Carbohydrate Loading” sixties style. The following day we arrived at our destination, the Tynemouth Bathing Pool, an open-air pool on the edge of the North Sea and our goal, according to the program, was to swim half a mile, which comprised 14 lengths and 132 feet 10 inches. There were only 15 swimmers entered, including 3 Otters, 5 internationals from York City (our perennial competitors for the Henry Benjamin Trophy) and Peter Hatfield. The water was bitterly cold – probably around 50 degrees Fahrenheit and no-one warmed up. This was the last time the National Half Mile was swum outside the main ASA Championships. **Jim Kennedy** won in a time of 9 mins 57 secs





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after 10 mins 18 secs in the heats, while **Tony Milton** came 2<sup>nd</sup> in a time of 10 mins 9 secs after 10 mins 21 secs in the heats. It was interesting to observe the contrasting styles of these two great Otter middle distance freestylers. Tony had a slightly languid, almost lazy style that lent itself to longer distances and derived significant input from the work he did in his training on his kick. Conversely Jim's freestyle seemed to derive little benefit from his kick, while his slightly slinky round arm action drew tuts of disapproval from some quarters - that is until someone filmed him underwater and concluded that the positioning of his hands and arms underwater was "almost perfect". Reverting to the 1963 Half Mile, your scribe placed 10<sup>th</sup> with a time of 11 mins 15 secs - 30 secs outside the Standard Time. One interesting fellow competitor in that race, was a slightly precocious 12 year old youth called Graham White from Norwich Swan SC, who announced to anyone who would listen that he would be an Olympic swimmer one day. To give him credit, he achieved this aim - unfortunately for Australia not GB. At the 1968 Mexico Olympics, he gained a silver medal in the 4x200m Freestyle Relay and came respectively 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in the 400m and One Mile Freestyle. For good measure he won gold in the 400m Freestyle at the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh and also swam in the 1972 Olympics.

As may be noted above, we were amateurs competing in a very amateur environment. In the National Championships, Otter paid travel and overnight hotel costs for relay swimmers and any who achieved standard times. The ASA was rigorous in applying its amateur code and one year, an unfortunate youth was barred from competing when it became known that he had won a 5 shilling postal order in a swimming competition at a Butlins holiday camp. The National Championships were swum over a six day Monday to Saturday period in August, at the Derby Baths Blackpool; a structure that was pulled down in 1990. For a novice competitor, this was a slightly intimidating place. The six lane 55 yard pool was quite dark at the diving boards end and it was difficult to spot your turn at evening sessions. The spectator galleries were at the start and on the north side of the pool. There was an open space, where competitors gathered on the south side of the pool and this was partially filled with two four tiered scaffolds on which many competitors sat, with swimmers from the north on one and swimmers from the south on the other. There was a constant ebb and

flow of people leaving or arriving at this temporary seating accommodation. Above all, the noise was cacophonous with chants such as "Who beats the North? South, South, South" being met with counter cries of "Who beats the South? North, North, North" all the time accompanied with synchronized stamping of feet on the wood scaffold in time to the chant, which erupted at the end of every heat. Outside the pool, Otter tended to favour the Crescent Hotel, which fronted onto the promenade and the hotel bar became a meeting place for swimmers. It was a cheerfully amateur age and I recall one year, the great Bobby McGregor downing two bottles of beer the night before breaking the World 110 yards freestyle record the next day.

It was also Bobby McGregor who good-naturedly accepted a challenge on one final night of competition - after he had duly won the 110 yards freestyle championship. There was a gap in the program when the bright lights for television had been turned off and not much was happening. On this occasion, a mystery challenger wanted to race over one length of the bath. The event was announced and the "Peoples' Champion" in the diminutive form of **Derek Spratt** of the Ilford club advanced to the blocks. In the 1970's, Derek was to become a highly effective coach to Otter. On this night, as Derek took his mark alongside McGregor, he reached down and picked up the end of a looped rope. The starter's gun went and the contestants dived in. McGregor took an immediate lead, while the "Peoples' Champion" disappeared beneath the water surface. Then the rope tightened and could be seen to run down the length of the pool and round the stanchions of the diving boards. At the other end of the rope were about eight strapping youths pulling hard, eventually at a run. At this point, the "Peoples' Champion" erupted through the water surface. He passed a seemingly motionless McGregor by the halfway mark and at this stage was literally planing on the surface and if he hadn't let go ten yards before the end, he would have been badly crunched on the unyielding concrete of the Derby Baths. Victory to the "Peoples' Champion" and a light interlude during a cheerfully amateur age.

If I emphasize the amateurism of the 1960's, it is because the difference in support for international swimmers then versus now (2017 at time of writing), could not be more marked. This piece is written just after the British swimmer Adam Peaty has set new

World Breaststroke records at the 2017 World Swimming Championships. The Times report of 29<sup>th</sup> July 2017 by Craig Lord notes Peaty's daily schedule which "begins with half an hour of stretching, two hours in the pool, then an hour and a half lifting weights before a lunchtime nap, which is followed by two more hours in the pool and then discussions with his physio and nutritionist. In all Peaty swims between 10 and 12km on most days and covers the equivalent of London to New York in a year. In between sessions Peaty said "I go home for three or four hours during which I rest, sleep, watch a film, chill, let my mind and body recover and get ready for the next push." Contrast this with **Roy Romain**, Captain of GB's 1948 Olympic Swimming team, arriving at the Olympic Pool a bit undercooked because of his commitment to his legal practice. Even in the 1960's, it is no surprise that those who competed for international honours with Otter, needed special circumstances either **Tony Milton** in the Army's designated unit for swimmers during National Service or those at university such as **David Hawkes** and **Murray McLachlan** at Oxford, **Painton Cowen** at Cambridge and **Jim Kennedy** and **Pin Seah** at London where they could fit regular training around their studies. Others needed understanding and supportive employers like Carlsberg under the chairmanship of **Freddie Milton** in UK giving time off to stars such as **Duncan Kemp** and again **Tony Milton**, but even they were holding down substantive jobs.

In an interesting recent reflection, **Duncan Kemp**, already a talented swimmer and water polo player, notes that in 1957, he and his first (late) wife were poised to emigrate to Australia as "£10 pommies" taking advantage of the transport deal then offered. When Tony Milton heard of this he advised his father, Freddie Milton who immediately invited Duncan to lunch at Wilton's in London, where over a plate of oysters, it was suggested that Duncan should come and work at Carlsberg, subject to becoming a member of Otter. Duncan notes that this wonderful offer was to change the life paths of himself and his late first wife, for which he has been "forever grateful to the Milton family." Duncan also cites an incident, which highlights the amateurism that prevailed through the ASA's administration in that era. In July 1962 Duncan was captain of the whole GB squad (swimming, diving and water polo) in an away match against Hungary. As such, Duncan was appointed to lead out the GB team - see photo below. He was instructed

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to buy his own GB tracksuit and matching white shoes, which he could not afford and so, as seen in the photograph, he duly led out the team in his England tracksuit with bare feet. At that same match, he was invited to swim the IM for GB but declined because he needed all his reserves to compete against the powerful Hungarians in the water polo match. What a far cry from the support that modern international swimmers receive.



Duncan Kemp in Hungary

None of the GB internationals either with Otter or at other clubs, benefitted from the excellence of support that has helped our country compete so well in recent years in world events. Some Otters found their own solutions through extra training with specialist coaches outside of any club schedule. Some found time at a pool like the Oasis in Holborn where the Pool Manager roped off training lanes at certain times. Your scribe serving articles for chartered accountancy, if not posted on audit outside London, managed at most two 1500m sessions a week at the Lansdowne Club in Mayfair which added to two Otter sessions of say 2000m each made a weekly maximum of 7000m plus some weekend work in my parents' garage at home on weights purchased from **Peter Waddell**. In this humble history, I have quoted times achieved in earlier years because I hope readers will find them interesting. I also hope that modern readers will put these times into the context of how they were achieved. In the 1960's, pool access was even more difficult than it is now and there

were less than ten Olympic Size 50m pools in the UK compared with say over 1000 in Australia and even Seymour Hall's 44 yard pool was pressed into service for London based international fixtures. Other changes have also impacted on the improvement in swimming times. Swimwear was an eclectic choice until Speedo launched their campaign in UK with the slogan "The only swimwear speedier than Speedo is your skin". Pools were not always optimum with indistinct lane markings, lane ropes that did not have the calming effect provided by modern ones and pools like Scaldis with sides and ends off which swimmers' wash was thrown back at them. More importantly the rules on turning have changed with freestylers no longer needing to touch with a hand and backstrokers permitted to roll off their backs and put in one freestyle stroke, again without a hand-touch, in executing modern turns. Allied to this, the whole science surrounding the sport has advanced immeasurably with more sophisticated coaching guiding the training, conditioning and even the diet of competitors.

In recording significant results achieved by Club members, I have focused on just National, Southern County and London Championships as these were events in which the whole of the Club competed under the Otter name. Our Annual Reports in many years, record results achieved in specific counties, for which, apart from Middlesex, members would have needed to qualify by joining a "2<sup>nd</sup> claim club". Most counties seemed to require a birth or residential qualification alongside membership of a club registered within that county. In my case, being Kent born and residing there, I found myself approached by Bob Burn who explained that a few Otters had found an elegant solution. This was an organization called Club Omega, with no constitution, no rules, no subscription but run by a Kent diver called Frank Mercer (still alive as I write) with **Bob** and **John Burn**, **Pin Seah** and **Norman Trusty** comprising the whole of the membership – needed by all of us to compete in and if selected to represent Kent County. In those days there were two dominant clubs in Kent; namely Beckenham and Royal Tunbridge Wells Monson, but in 1963 their joint hegemony was broken when the whole of the swimming membership of Club Omega turned up at the Eardley Road Baths in Sevenoaks – now pulled down – and won the Medley Relay with

**Norman Trusty** (back) **Pin Seah** (Breast) **Bob Burn** (Fly) and **John Burn** (Free) in the heat with your scribe replacing John Burn in the final. We never competed again in any Kent relays and perhaps later winners of the Kent Medley Relay Shield may wonder who this mysterious Club Omega might have been.

In 1962, the Club handbook lists the Club Captain as the previously long-serving Hon Handicapper, **Bill Willens**. However, in my memory, the de facto Club Captain, in the pool or on the bath-side at every session, was his Vice-Captain **Alistair Crawford**, who succeeded to the Captaincy for the years of 1963 to 1965. For me, Alistair remains the benchmark against which all subsequent Club Captains have been measured. I was given a direct introduction to Alistair via his former Stowe School friend Donough O'Brian, a former Otter who taught me the Backstroke tumble turn in the Lansdowne Club pool and I came to know him quite well. He seemed to speak fluent French, possibly like his English, with the faintest of Scottish accents and this made him an ideal ambassador for Otter in dealings with European clubs. He was a former Scottish international breaststroker and won his Otter 1<sup>st</sup> Team swimming Colours in 1955-56 and again in 1960-62 before stepping back from competition to devote himself to the administration of the Club. In January 1960 he inaugurated a monthly printed Club Diary called "The Otter". The 1960 and 1961 Diaries until May 1961 are in the Club archives, kindly donated by the late **Cdr. Gerry Forsberg**, supplemented by a January to March 1962 edition, a 1962 Annual Supplement filled with times and statistics and a March 1964 edition, which included similar data for 1963. The effort put into this must have been very significant. Alistair's "ambassadorial" skills would have been needed in the 1962 contest in Dunkirk reported above and were evident in 1963 at Mulhouse, also reported above, when he wrote pen-portraits in French on each of the Otter team, organized all of the travel arrangements, flying to Paris, across Paris by Metro and train to Mulhouse. In order to make the early morning Heathrow flight, I was Alistair's overnight guest at his Kingston-on-Thames home where his Scottish mother was a kindly and hospitable host. Alistair always dealt with the Scaldis administration and it was through his friendship with Gerard Blitz (founder of the Club Mediterannee) that Alistair arranged in 1965 for us both to stay



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for two weeks at their Cadaques resort in Northern Spain, driving down through France in Alastair's new TR4 sports car and staying with big **John Burn** and his wife in Lyon, where John was serving as Her Majesty's Consul. This was to be the last time I met **John Burn** who was to lose his life after years in a coma having been involved in what was claimed to be a boating accident in a subsequent posting in the West Indies.

It was a matter of huge regret through the Club, when **Alistair Crawford**, stood down quite precipitately; seemingly burnt out with all the effort that he had put into Otter. Alistair only reappeared once – about 15 years later at a Club Annual Dinner, looking rather unwell and he died not long after. At the time of his leaving, there was only one person with the necessary attributes to take on the Captaincy role and that was **Charles Doxat** who served from 1966 to 1969, taking the Club through its important 1969 Centenary milestone. Charles never found the time to build on his early schoolboy promise mainly because of his burgeoning career in the world of advertising in which he became quite eminent. Additionally, during his competitive years, the Club benefitted from an influx of international class breaststrokers, such as **David Hawkes**, **Pin Seah**, **George Hill** and **Malcolm Tucker**. Charles was very instrumental in achieving television coverage for our Centenary gala at Crystal Palace in 1969 and his services to the Club will also be covered in the history of the 1970's. It bears mentioning, that this was still the period in the Club's history, when in effect the Captain was Captain of the whole club, not just the swimming section and after the President, this was the most important officer in the Club. It was always the Captain's responsibility to address the Annual Dinner while introducing our principal guest and Charles, like Alistair before him, was particularly effective as an after-dinner speaker.

A feature of Otter in the 1960's was the closeness of the swimming and water-polo sections – a closeness derived from the earlier starting times for Club swimming training sessions, which were immediately followed by water-polo training or matches. Regretfully, due to lack of pool time, this is something that may no longer happen. The result of this structure was that swimmers invariably remained either to cheer on our Club water-polo teams, or even to take part in water-polo practice on an exploratory basis. Using the 1964 Club team that

became National Water-Polo Champions as an example, **Murray McLachlan**, while representing South Africa had reached the Final of the 200m Freestyle at the 1960 Rome Olympics, before he came to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar from where he joined Otter. **Tony Milton** also at the Rome Olympics representing Great Britain seems to have participated in both swimming and water-polo for most of his competitive career. **Bob Burn** and **George Hill** were very close to international honours respectively on backstroke and breaststroke, **Duncan Kemp** was a magnificent sprint freestyler as was **Peter Stevens** who was devastatingly quick over 50m, **Bob Hunt**, an Australian national who like others of us, used the Club Omega name to swim in Kent County competitions where he won places in the 220 yards and 440 yards freestyle events and even our star international goalkeeper **John Towers**, as noted in 1960, was a competent competitive Breaststroker having at junior level been London Counties title holder for three consecutive years and then Southern Counties 200 yards record holder.

In concluding my personal remarks, may I note the ethos throughout the Club, wherein even our top international stars swam for the club and not for themselves and always made themselves available when they could. An example of swimming for the club, was **Murray McLachlan**, whose best event was clearly the 200m Freestyle but in his three years at Scaldis, he swam three different events; butterfly, backstroke and Individual Medley. Another example was **Bob Burn** dropping everything to join the 1967 Scaldis team, at less than 24 hours notice. **Tony Jarvis** who was probably the most outstanding British swimmer in Otter during the 1960's was also an outstanding club member; passionate about the Club succeeding and always willing to make himself available for relays, when in Medleys, he more often swam the Fly leg rather than his specialist Freestyle. I believe that this ethos will be seen to have continued to prevail through to modern times.

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### OTTER IN THE 1970'S

The 1970 Club Diary lists 358 members with a profile compared with 1960 in brackets that showed 54 (66) Life Members, 261 (300) Active Members and 43 (98) Junior Members. Our Club Headquarters remained Shell Centre, where we trained every Tuesday evening and the Ordnance Arms in York Road was the Club's hostelry of choice. The Chelsea Baths were also used for Water Polo training and matches for three months during the summer. All was outwardly well with the Club, but the swimming environment was changing – in a way that was desirable for the development of British swimming but which would impact adversely on Otter's previous dominance within the sport. These changes had been increasingly evident through the 1960's with perhaps the emergence of Southampton as a major centre of swimming excellence being the forerunner of what was to come. Local councils were becoming involved in supporting competitive swimming, with new swimming pools being constructed and more importantly, sessions made available for club training, backed by financial support. The competitive advantage gained by Otter from its Central London location, was to become gradually eroded, with negligible financial support available and more limited access to pools for club training, in comparison with other major clubs. However, competitive successes continued as follows:

**1970.** Early in the year, the Club suffered a devastating loss, with the sudden death of our world famous swimming coach **W.J. (Bill) Juba**. Bill had been a wonderful mentor to the many swimmers who had trained under him during his 13 years in the role and was held in massive esteem and affection by all active members. Whether he had ever been an active swimmer himself is not known but he did once divulge that he had a Rugby Pedigree" having been capped for the Barbarians. The Juba family was very much a swimming family with his wife Josie having coached a number of international swimmers and it seemed a logical progression when Bill's elder son **Kelvin Juba** put his hand up to take on the role of Club Coach – a move that was received enthusiastically by all those who knew him. To round out the picture, Bill's younger son Nick, when he retired from competitive swimming, also became an eminent and successful swimming coach. As head coach to the Danish Olympic team between 2012 and 2016 and

at the Rio Olympics Nick coached them to one gold and one bronze medal; their best results since 1952.

At the ASA National Championships, **Tony Jarvis** came 2nd in the 110 Yards Freestyle in a time of 55.7 secs and won the 220 yards Freestyle, while the Club represented by **Heng Tan, James Stewart, Dave Hembrow** and **Tony Jarvis** finished 2nd in the 4x110 Yards Freestyle Relay in a time of 3mins 43.3secs – over 6 seconds faster than the Club's winning time of 3mins 49.5secs in 1967. No individual results were recorded for Southern Counties events, but **James Stewart** won the London Counties 110 Yards Freestyle Championship. An Otter team came 7th out of 15 clubs at the 1000m Van Scaldis Trophy with **Dave Hembrow** 100m Free (58.3 secs), **Nick Juba** 100m Breast (74.3 secs), **James Stewart** 100m Back (71.1 secs), **Tony Jarvis** 100m Fly (65.1 secs) and **Mike Foskett** 4x50m Individual Medley (2 mins 23.1 secs). 8 swimming matches took place at Shell Centre against clubs and universities including a visiting New Zealand Commonwealth Games Team. At the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, Tony Jarvis was selected within the England team, winning Bronze medals in both the 4x200m and 4x100m freestyle relays. Also During the year, Tony represented GB at the World Student Games in Turin, winning Bronze medals on both the 4x200m and 4x100m freestyle relays with a split of 52.7 secs on the anchor leg of the latter. Outside the pool, members distinguished themselves in Long Distance swimming events, with **Tony Morey** and **Gerry Forsberg** 5th and 8th in the British Long Distance Swimming Association Windermere (10.5 miles) and other events such as Torbay (8miles) Lake Bala (6 miles) and the ASA Long Distance, with **Gerry Forsberg** winning the Senior Trophy at the BLDSEA Veterans Championship in Coniston (3.5 miles) – almost a sprint for Gerry. Outside of competition, a blind member, **Roland Straker**, swam 116 miles to raise money for Cancer Research.

**1971.** This year, our competitive results suffered from the non-availability of several key swimmers. The Club came 3rd and 4th respectively in the SCASA and ASA Freestyle team relays. **Ray Harris** and **John Blake** represented Great Britain, **Downie Brown** represented Scotland and **Roger Pontefract** won the National Biathlon and represented Great Britain in the Modern Pentathlon. Otter came 4th out of 15 clubs at

the Van Scaldis Trophy. On the Water Polo side the 1st Team reached the semi-final of the ASA Championship and our reserve goal keeper **P. Stephens**, won his first under 21 International Cap for Wales. Outside the pool, **Norman Trusty** swam twice from France to England, the second crossing in 12 hours 24 minutes. He commented later that in order to acclimatize himself to the cold water, he had commenced training in open water in January; on occasions breaking ice with each arm stroke.

**1972.** This was an Olympic year, so competition was fierce. **Lennie Norris** just failed to be selected for the GB Olympic Team. Our talented junior, **Steve Bunce** was 5th in the Senior Men's 100m Backstroke and the Club won both the Medley and Freestyle relays at the Southern Counties Championships. At the Van Scaldis Trophy, Otter came 6th out of 14 clubs – a disqualification in the final relay costing us 2nd place overall. However, this was the year that saw the birth of **Masters Swimming** in the UK designed to keep older swimmers in the sport, with age groups from 25-29, 30-34 etc., 80 swimmers ranging from 25 to 68 contested in Otter's two day gala on 17th and 18th of November at the City University Pool in Islington. As noted in the Foreword, Masters Swimming was the brainchild of **Dr Ransom Arthur** and the UK initiative was fostered by our club coach **Kelvin Juba**, with the approval of the ASA. The advertisement placed in the Swimming Times as shown in retrospect announced the birth of Masters Swimming in UK. The "Masters Secretary" mentioned in the advertisement was Kelvin Juba himself.

**1972 MASTERS' MEET**  
(Under ASA Laws)  
ORGANISED BY THE  
OTTER SWIMMING CLUB  
AND OPEN TO BOTH  
AMATEURS and PROFESSIONALS

The first ever contest for older age groupers will be held at the CITY UNIVERSITY POOL on NOVEMBER 17th at 8 p.m. and the 18th at 10 a.m.

A meet open to age groupers from 25 years upwards: send entries to Hon. Masters' Secretary, 180 Balmoral Road, North Watford, Herts. (Tel. Watford 29331)

Afterwards a Buffet Supper to be held as a Social on the 18th, tickets priced £1.25 each. Please state number of tickets required with entry.

HURRY WITH ENTRIES —  
closing date, NOV. 10th

**Advert for 1st Masters Competition in UK 1972**





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On the Water Polo side the 1<sup>st</sup> Team welcomed the return of **Murray McLachlan**, taking on the role of Water Polo Hon Sec and they reached the final of the Southern Counties Championship. Outside the pool **Gerry Forsberg** represented the Club in 9 open water events, placing 9<sup>th</sup> out of 31 in the inaugural British LDSA Open Championship.

**1973.** The year commenced on a sad note with the unexpected death of **Bill Willens**, who had stepped back into the role of Hon Handicapper in 1972, after previously serving in the role from 1936-1960. Club Captain **Bernard Thornton** added this to his portfolio of other duties. On the swimming side, **Neil Dexter** represented Great Britain at the World Championships in Belgrade and England at the Commonwealth Games in Christchurch. He also came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the ASA National 1500m Freestyle and gained 3 firsts, 2 seconds and a third in the SCASA Championships.

**Steve Bunce** represented GB on several occasions and set a new British Junior 100m short course record of 63.2 secs. At the ASA National Championships he came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Men's 100m Backstroke short course and won the Junior 100m Backstroke (Long & Short course). At the SCASA Championships he was 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively in the Men's 100m and 200m Backstroke and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Junior 100m Freestyle. He held records for the British and English Junior 100m Backstroke (Long and Short course) as well as the SCASA Junior 100m and 200m Backstroke. **Mike Saunders** came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the SCASA Men's 1500m Freestyle as well as 2<sup>nd</sup> in each of the Junior 800m Freestyle and 200m Breaststroke. **Steve Norman** came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the SCASA Men's 100m Breaststroke. **Mike Foskett** represented GB at the World University Games and **Dave Hembrow** captained England versus Wales. Otter came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the ASA Men's National Medley Team Championship and at the SCASA Championships came 3<sup>rd</sup> in both the Men's Freestyle and Junior Freestyle Championships. A team comprising **Steve Bunce, Mike Foskett, Dave Hembrow, Steve Norman** and **T. Sims** came 4<sup>th</sup> out of 14 clubs at the Van Scaldis Trophy. A team comprising **Mike Foskett, S. Groves, Dave Hembrow, Steve Norman** and **Mike Saunders** won an international gala at Dunkirk - the event being held to celebrate Britain's entry into the EEC. The inaugural Otter Masters Swimming Championship held in 1972, changed its name to Otter Masters Swimming Tournament in 1973, attended by 180 competitors and 300 spectators from all over Britain. With administrative and financial support from

Westminster City Council, the event was held in one day at Marshall Street Baths and after 59 events, Otter won the Men's Club Cup for the second year running. On the water polo side, an almost completely new 1<sup>st</sup> Team, together with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Teams played 50 matches with varying results. Outside the pool, **Gerry Forsberg** and **Norman Trusty** swam a number of events, the former coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the BLDSA Veterans Championship. In news from overseas, **James Stewart** became the first non-Japanese to win an event at the Tokyo Metropolitan Games, winning both the 100m and 50m Freestyle. At the end of the year, **Kelvin Juba** regretfully needed to relinquish his role as Club Coach and he was replaced by **Derek Spratt**, whose 55 yards sprint versus Bobby MacGregor was noted in the 1960's.

**1974.** In recognition that Otter was falling behind other clubs in the number of training sessions offered to members, further sessions were arranged at Seymour Hall, St Mary's Hospital and City of London University, in addition to our normal Tuesday club night at Shell Centre. With the Water Polo squad using St Mary's also as well as Shell Centre on Thursdays. The 1974 Annual Report lamented the "serious reduction of top level competitive swimmers". Several individuals met with success, most notably **Steve Bunce** who was capped for GB and England on nine listed occasions, coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Men's National Short Course 100m backstroke and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the National Age Group 100m and 200m backstroke. He also won the 100m backstroke at the SCASA and English Schools Championships. Regretfully he moved to Cardiff at the end of the year and left the Club. Competing in the 1500m Freestyle, **Mike Saunders** came 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively in the ASA National and SCASA Championships. **R. Bunny** came 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively in the SCASA Boys 200m and 100m Breaststroke.

The Club do not seem to have sent a team to the Van Scaldis Trophy. At Otter's Masters Swimming Tournament, the ASA reversed its decision of the previous two years and refused to allow professional to compete. At the all-amateur meet at Marshall Street, 122 swimmers registered 330 entries in 65 events. Otter won the Men's Club Trophy and **Car Young** won the Oldest Male Swimmer Trophy. On the Water Polo side, under the captaincy of **Tony Milton**, a "new young team ranging in age from 16 to 21" were runners up at a Tournament in Holland, won the Referees Cup and promotion to Division 1 of the London League. Outside the pool, **Gerry Forsberg** and **Norman Trusty** competed in numerous open water events.

**1975.** During this and subsequent years, the Club benefitted hugely from the tireless efforts of our Club Coach, **Derek Spratt**, supervising much of the swimming administration. Additionally, in an innovative move, he was bringing in squad members by minibus from their primarily North London homes. Three members of this squad were ladies who trained with the squad without full club membership. Two of these, **Kim Llewellyn** and **Dawn Eva** were to be among the first ladies to join the Club. Among that original squad, only **David Miller** seems to have remained in membership at time of writing. However, they were all young and only one member, **Mike Saunders**, represented the Club at the ASA National Championships - a major change from Otter's "glory days" when we challenged to be the top men's club. Interest in Masters swimming continued with 197 swimmers accounting for 530 entries in our fourth Annual Masters Tournament. On the water polo side all three teams achieved respectable results. Outside the pool, **Gerry Forsberg** and **Norman Trusty** represented Otter in numerous swims.



National Girls 16-17 Freestyle Championship Team 1976  
L-R Dawn Eva, Kim Llewellyn, Sonia Pheby, Christine Fletcher

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## THE 1970'S

**1976.** This was the year when the Club embraced modernity and opened its doors to lady members. The aforementioned **Kim Llewellyn** and **Dawn Eva** were joined in early membership by **Christine Fletcher** and **Sonia Pheby** and this talented quartet, under the Otter banner, won National 16/17 age group Women's Freestyle Team Championship prompting an approving Pat Besford writing in the Daily Telegraph to comment that "this demonstrated that the decision of the Club to admit the fairer sex was more than justified".

The Club were not represented in the GB Olympic team for Montreal, but three members, **Mike Saunders**, **Dave Skepper** and **Steve Bunce**, all swam in the final Olympics Trial, while **Dimitrius Theodoropoulos** represented Greece having won five of their National titles. Our fifth Annual Masters Tournament was opened by the Lord Mayor of Westminster and 175 swimmers participated, with full reports in the Sunday Times and the Swimming Times. On the water polo side, our three teams all achieved middle of table results with **Steve Christmas** representing the GB under 20 team and both **Steve Christmas** and **Mark Winters** representing the SCASA under 20 team. Outside the pool, **Kim Llewellyn** became the first ever lady member to compete in our One Mile open water race.

**1977, 1978 & 1979.** At time of writing, these Annual Reports are missing from the Club Archives. Review of other Club records give the following insights:

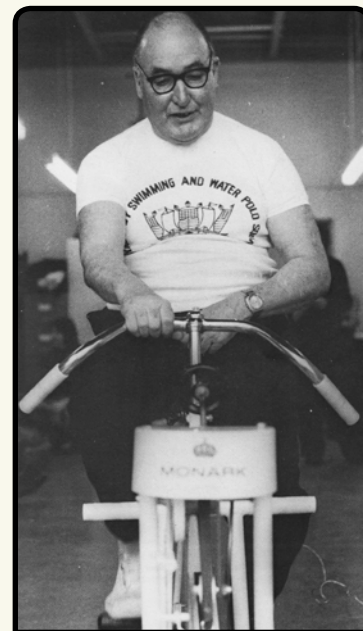
**1977.** On the swimming side, no results are available for ASA or SCASA Championships. However, the squad under the guidance of the tireless **Derek Spratt**, continued to thrive. The highlight of the year was the 20 strong Otter contingent that competed in the Intercollegiate swimming meeting at Fort Lauderdale, USA in December. Our sixth Masters Tournament was held at Marshall Street and the Swimming Times reported a record entry of almost 200 swimmers in around 500 entries, with competitors coming from Canada, West Germany, Eire and USA adding to the British entrants. **Lt. Col. Andy Morton** (in membership since 1954) had been appointed Manager of the Great Britain Water Polo Team for 1977. Outside the pool, **Dawn Eva** became the first lady to win our One Mile open water race and the Dudley CC. This is now likely

to remain a unique achievement as more recently, the Dudley CC has become the award for the winning man, with a new trophy awarded to the winning lady.

**1978.** At the beginning of the year, a problem came to a head that had been simmering for some time; namely the lack of quality pool time for top competitive swimmers. Regrettably, we could offer no immediate solution, until the promised new pool in Pimlico could be opened. Accordingly around 20 out of our 30 strong swimming squad, resigned and joined the emergent Barnet Copthall Swimming Club. Our Club Coach, **Derek Spratt**, nobly stayed on as did one of our star ladies, **Sonia Pheby** but completing fixtures with such a diminished pool of swimmers was a real challenge for our Club Captain, **Roger Sharpley**.

During the year, The Sunday Times published a book, authored by its Sports Editor John Lovesey, called "Swimming – A Lifelong Activity". This covered a series of tests conducted on a group of Masters swimmers selected from those who won events at the 1977 Otter Masters Tournament. With the exception of John Lovesey himself, the men featured were all Otter members and in age seniority, they were: Commander **Gerry Forsberg** (65), **Ron Roberts** (56), **Doug Payne** (47), **Bob Burn** (40), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (36), **Charles Doxat** (35) and **James Stewart** (34) all joining John Lovesey (45). Among the women tested, was Vivienne Cherriman (70), who together with her husband Leonard, became doyens of the older age groups in Masters Swimming – see the Cherriman Award in 1993. The tests on this day recorded height, weight, RPI Fatness (higher = better), Grip strength in each hand, Flexibility (below toes), Simple Reaction Time, Haemoglobin, Vital Capacity (Lung exhalation) and Forced Expiratory Volume, Exercise Heart Rate (on bike) and VO<sub>2</sub> (oxygen uptake in millilitres per kilogram of weight). A synopsis of these results was published in a full page spread with photographs in the Sunday Times of 15<sup>th</sup> October 1978. Among the Otters singled out were **Ron Roberts** and **Bob Burn** who were recorded on the bike, "pedaling at levels some of Great Britain's national rowing squad were working at later the same day". The Sunday Times had generously become a co-sponsor of some of the early Otter Masters Tournaments

and the article concluded that swimming provided an excellent route to fitness and noted that the next Otter Masters swimming Tournament was due to be held at Marshall Street Baths one week later with over 200 entrants scheduled to compete.



COMMANDER GERRY FORSBERG ON BIKE

**1979.** With a diminished first-claim swim squad, no results were recorded but on the water polo side a full program of matches was completed with mid-table results achieved. Under the captaincy of Paul Hindle, 14 members competed in a Water Polo Tournament in Holland coming 9<sup>th</sup> out of 97 clubs. In another "first-ever" event in the club, two members married namely our hard-working Water Polo Hon Sec Tony Stanton and one of our talented 1976 Ladies relay squad, Kim Llewellyn. The eighth Masters Tournament had a record number of entrants (270) in a new location at Swiss Cottage. Press coverage noted the return to competition of a number of former Olympians, including Otter's **Roy Romain**, **Athole Still** and **Ron Roberts**.

# OTTER IN THE 1980'S



The 1980 Club Diary lists 287 members with a profile compared with 1970 in brackets that showed 40 (54) Life Members, 172 (261) Active Members and 75 (43) Junior Members. However, these numbers masked a serious concern for the Club, which was that having lost so many of our 1<sup>st</sup> Team swimmers in 1978 and 1979, the competitive swimming side of the Club was simply dying. Training was limited to one night per week at Shell Centre, with the Club essentially marking time awaiting the opening of the long-promised Queen Mother Sports Centre, which had been delayed yet again. Fortunately, the water polo side of the Club remained healthy.

**1980.** Swimming competition, even with the team buoyed by helpful water polo players, was limited to two matches each against the RAF and Cambridge University, with a full program of Schools matches, half of which were lost. The Ninth Annual Masters Competition was successfully run at Swiss Cottage, with over 200 participants and Otter maintained its unbroken run in winning the overall men's team event. The Sunday Times covered the event on 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October. Unsurprisingly, with so little competitive swimming activity, our Club Coach **Derek Spratt**, not unreasonably resigned. Our water polo squad kept the Club's competitive banner flying with respectable mid-table results in the National (Div2) and London (Div1) Leagues. After a 30 Year stint, **Ron Stead** and his wife **Joy**, stepped back from running the Schools Relays, which had become and continues to be a major event among schools across the country. **John Nalson** took up the reins on this and was to continue to run this competition for another 40 years – see separate notes on Schools Relays. Two Otter notables died during the year – **Garry Wagstaff** (President 1952-56 and England representative in the 1930 Empire Games) and **Sir Harold Parker** (Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Defence 1948-56 and President of the ASA in 1958). Sir Harold's seated portrait now resides in the National Portrait Gallery.

**1981.** The beginning of 1981 was possibly the low point in the Club's swimming history. Otter lacked a viable 1<sup>st</sup> Team swimming squad, we were down to one training night per week, we lacked a swimming coach and with member numbers falling, our operating expenses significantly exceeded our income. Members sometimes query why the Club holds significant reserves on its Balance Sheet, but this period demonstrated why this is done. A plan was devised which was to

appoint a new high quality swimming coach, invest in the Club's future growth by buying extra pool training time paying for this out of Club reserves, filling the training sessions somehow with participating swimmers and most importantly to make ourselves visible again as a serious swimming club by entering Club relay squads in Southern Counties and London Counties events and to maintain our annual program of matches against schools and leading universities. A popular expression of unknown origin states "Cometh the hour, cometh the man" and for Otter that man was **Arthur Batt**, who was easily the best qualified of all the coaching candidates we interviewed. He had been coach to our respected competitor, St James SC and had known and regarded Otter highly for many years. In addition, club nights were tripled to three times a week; and a small group of swimmers being trained elsewhere by a member, **Elizabeth Redpath**, were bussed in to supplement numbers in the water; one of these, **Andrew Ground** earned his club colours in 1983. Our reemergence as a competitive club was greeted on bath-side at Crystal Palace by several officials commenting that "it was nice to see Otter back in the water again" The long-awaited opening of the Queen Mother Sports Centre on 6<sup>th</sup> May enabled new pool time to be taken on. **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother** attended in person for this event and was very gracious both in meeting the local VIP's including several senior Otters and in the interest that she took in the whole proceedings, which had been organized by Otter on behalf of Westminster City Council.

In the match against Eton College, a unique event occurred in the Club's history wherein we were represented in one relay by four members of the same family; namely our 1975 relay star, **Sonia Pheby**, her younger sister **Anita** and her brothers **Ian** and **Roger**.

In Masters swimming, our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Tournament was held in October followed on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November when the ASA held its inaugural National Masters Championship in York. A small 9 member Otter squad competed in 26 events with **Ron Roberts** and **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** winning gold medals, **James Stewart** winning silver and **Charles Doxat** winning bronze in four events. Included in the Otter squad was **Alasdair Asher** (the son of well known Masters record holder **Jane Asher**) who later was to become senior partner of the major London law firm Allen & Overy. At this stage no relays were included in the program.

On the water-polo side, the team lost their coach in mid-season and results drifted despite 5 members, **Gary Canning**, **Nigel Folley**, **Peter Kirk**, **Mark Raymond** and **Alan Bailey** all being capped by their respective counties. A friendly tour in France organized by **Martin Flash** and **Bob Burn**, met with mixed results. **Nigel Folley** was awarded the British Empire Medal during the year.

**1982.** The year started with two ladies being elected officers of the Club for the first time in our history. They were **Cindy Spicer** who became Swimming Vice Captain and our 1976 Ladies relay star, **Sonia Pheby** (later **Sonia Druce**), joining the Committee. Outside the Club, **Gerry Forsberg** was elected President of the British Long Distance Swimming Association and the Channel Swimming Association. On the swimming side, the Club's renaissance continued under the energetic guidance of our club coach **Arthur Batt**. Matches were won against Oxford University, the RAF and St James but lost to Cambridge and London Universities. A team competed in the 1000m van Scaldis trophy coming 6<sup>th</sup> out of 13 clubs. **Julian Plumley** won the Southern Counties 16/17 titles at 100m and 200m freestyle also breaking **Tony Jarvis's** excellent club records at these distances during the year. The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Otter Masters tournament benefitted from sponsorship by Sun Life Assurance, with results featured in the Sunday Telegraph, Sunday Times and Observer. The second ASA National Masters Championships were held at the Derby Baths in Blackpool with relays introduced for the first time. Otter won the men's 45+ 4x50m freestyle relay and **Bob Burn**, **Charles Doxat**, **Chuck van Fossan**, **Ron Roberts**, **James Stewart** and **Norman Trusty** shared a total of 15 medals. On the water-polo side the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> teams won promotion within the London League, but elsewhere the results were mixed. However a strong team competed in Holland winning a 14 club, 4 nation tournament

**1983.** The highlight of the year on the swimming side was our team's excellent performance at the 1000m van Scaldis Trophy. The team comprising **S. Kinsey**, **Steve Allen**, **Dave Pedder**, **Marcus** and **Julian Plumley** came 3<sup>rd</sup> overall against 18 clubs from France, Holland, Germany and Belgium with **Julian Plumley** winning the 100m Freestyle. At the SCASA Championships, our men's team came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 4x50m Medley Relay. Both the Otter Masters at QMSC and the ASA Masters at Nuneaton were the best attended ever. At the ASA Masters, 14 members entered 49 events,

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with 16 medals shared between **Chuck van Fossan, David Miller, Elizabeth Redpath and Bob Thomas**, with **Elizabeth Redpath** becoming the first Otter lady member to win medals at this level. In addition the 45-54 men's freestyle team won silver. Unlike the summation of team member ages as is currently applied, in those days the team member ages all needed to fall within specified bands. Outside the pool at the Brighton Pier to Pier **Steve Allen** came 11<sup>th</sup> out of 150 competitors, with **James Stewart** in 16<sup>th</sup> place in a time of 17 mins 44 secs, winning the Veterans (over 40) Cup. The water polo squad was buoyed by an influx of new members and came 3<sup>rd</sup> in National League Division II and won a knock out tournament in Holland against teams from Germany, France, Belgium and Holland. This was also the year in which "multi-sports" entered the Club's fixture calendar with team entries into the National Biathlon Championships, wherein our men's team came 6<sup>th</sup> and our ladies team came 2<sup>nd</sup> with **Loretta Sollars** placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the Individual Ladies Championship.

**1984.** On the swimming side, we began the year by competing in a new event (to Otter), the British Long Distance Swimming Association (BLDSA) one hour postal swim. With three member teams entered, our Ladies won the 16+ age category with our team all in the 20-24 age group in which **Deborah Hill** won with 4675 yards with **Mary Chamberlain** 3<sup>rd</sup> with 4249 yards and **Barbara Woodward** 4<sup>th</sup> with 4238 yards. Our men came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 16+ age group with **James Stewart** coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 40-44 age group with 4471 yards, **Ian Gerrard** 4<sup>th</sup> in the 35-29 age group with 4402 yards and **Dave Pedder** 7<sup>th</sup> in the 20-24 age group with 4374 yards. Our swimmers continued their progress in regional events, with a number reaching the finals of individual SCASA events. The Otter Masters event, now named the Otter Sun Life Masters in recognition of our kind sponsors, was held again successfully at QMSC on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October. During the competition, one of the Otter team, **David Skidmore** sat down next to your scribe and quietly mentioned that he had been in Brighton on the day before, to attend the Conservative Party Conference and had been close to events in the immediate aftermath of what is now known as the "Brighton Bombing" in which an attempt was made on the life of our then Prime Minister. Quite how close David had been only came out subsequently - see

Inset on **David Skidmore**, but as a loyal club member, he still turned up the next day to swim. The ASA National Masters Championships were held in Weymouth and a team of 16 Otters attended with **Bob Burn, Guy Davis, Charles Doxat, Paul Goudie, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn, David Miller, James Stewart and Bob Thomas** sharing 22 medals between them in addition to 4 gold and 2 bronze relay medals. The swimmers also continued their advance into "multi-sports" by entering the South-East Region Triathlon Championship in which our ladies team came 3<sup>rd</sup> and our men's team came 6<sup>th</sup>. We bettered this in the National Biathlon Championships. In the ladies individual event **Loretta Sollars** came 1<sup>st</sup>, **Debbie Hawkins** 4<sup>th</sup> and **Cindy Spicer** 10<sup>th</sup> - combining to win the Ladies Team Championship, while our men's team came a respectable 5<sup>th</sup> in their team event. On the water polo side, once again the team suffered from an unexpected coaching change and the loss of the Shell pool for deep water training purposes but managed a respectable mid-table finish in National League II.

**David Skidmore** joined Otter in 1960 after gaining a Swimming Blue at Cambridge University and was awarded his Otter 2<sup>nd</sup> Team swimming colours in 1962. After entering the medical profession, he became an eminent London based consultant surgeon. However the event that was to precipitate David into the public eye occurred in the early hours of Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October 1984, when an IRA bomb was detonated in the Grand Hotel Brighton, during the Conservative Party Conference. David was staying at the nearby Old Ship Hotel and on hearing the blast quickly put on his tracksuit and running shoes and ran to the hotel and thereby became the first qualified medical help to reach the stricken building. Knowing that injured survivors could become even more injured in their process of rescue and despite the risk of the building imminently collapsing, David bravely demanded to be lowered into the void created by the blast. With water cascading down from the fire hoses and amidst a fog of dust enveloping the front of the hotel, David spent several hours freeing first Sir Donald Maclean (Chairman of the Scottish Conservatives) and his wife Muriel (who died a month later from her injuries). Sir Donald was found completely covered by rubble and four firemen plus David, all wearing safety ropes, needed to fix a canvas sling round his chest before his slow and painful extrication. In company with fire crew, David then worked his way to where the shattered fifth-floor corridor suddenly ended in a sheer drop and where they found Harvey Thomas (technical coordinator of the conference) who could only be approached via a precarious sloping ledge that could only bear the weight of one man lest it collapsed into the 60-foot abyss below. David's questions elicited that there was no spinal injury and after the sagging sixth-floor above had been shored up, Harvey Thomas was extricated safely. David became the last person to speak to Eric Taylor (Chairman of the Conservative Party's North West Area), but he was so buried in rubble that he could not be extricated before he died. David then supervised the extrication of Norman

### David Skidmore OBE







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Tebbit (who was going into shock) and his wife Margaret (who never walked again). David then joined in the race against time to free John Wakeham (the Party's Chief Whip), whose wife Roberta died in the blast. David needed to crawl into a tunnel excavated in the rubble to examine Wakeham whose blood pressure was becoming dangerously low before joining in his successful extrication, a full 7 hours and 22 minutes after the bomb had exploded. David then left Brighton, to complete a full afternoon of operations in London before on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October, joining his Otter team-mates at the Otters Masters event. In the 1985 Queen's June Birthday Honours, David was awarded an OBE. Also honoured with an MBE was Fred Bishop who led the heroic 9 member Green Watch from the East Sussex Fire Brigade based in Lewes. These men, joined by other firemen from around the county all risked their own lives in successfully saving many others. The incident was described in detail in the Readers Digest October 1985 issue in a 14 page article headed "Heroes of the Brighton Bombing" At the subsequent trial at the Old Bailey in May 1986, David found himself giving details to the prosecuting counsel, Roy Amlot, (a fellow member of the Lansdowne Club) on how it took two and a half hours to free Sir Donald Maclean, working by the light of hand held torches together with two firemen, Bill Osmore and David Norris and suspended on ropes held by other firemen. At the trial, David was described as having "played a crucial part" in freeing the trapped and injured.

**1985.** Our swimmers started the year again by entering the BLDSA national one hour postal swim competition. Our ladies came 4<sup>th</sup> in the open age group with members all in the 20-24 age group, won by **Deborah Hill** with 4538 yards with **Mary Chamberlain** 4<sup>th</sup> with 4333 yards and **Barbara Woodward** 5<sup>th</sup> with 4155 yards. Our men came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 25+ age group with **James Stewart** winning the 40-44 age group with 4582 yards and in the 25-29 age group, **Paul Goudie** coming 4<sup>th</sup> with 4511 yards and **Mark Courtney** 7<sup>th</sup> with 4237 yards. It was during this year, that discussions started to emerge on Committee as to what our

swimming targets should be. Outwardly we were still a club that accepted swimmers of all ages, but increasingly, limits on coaching and pool time constrained us to focus on new members of university age with limitations on age group qualified members. Many of those younger members previously bussed in following **Elizabeth Redpath's** initiative in 1981, were now dropping out. In a helpful proposal, **Pam Miller**, a member who was a local primary school teacher, set up one lane on Wednesday evenings for the exclusive use of a new junior squad – a squad that also used the children's shallow training pool. This squad continued under the Otter name for about one or two years before local politics intervened and they needed to be hived off into a separate entity. From this point onwards, the Club made no attempt to garner new junior members, other than those related to existing senior members. Due to the unavailability of some key members, our swimming results were mixed, with a weakened team sent to Scaldis, but our new Club Captain **Paul Goudie** did slip away to win the Surrey 200m freestyle championship and our men came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the GLC freestyle Team championship. The Otter Masters Tournament was again successfully held at QMSC and 19 members contested the ASA National Masters Championships at Barnet Copthall. Individual results included 14 medals shared between **Steve Allen, Charles Doxat, Paul Goudie, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn, Bill Oakes, Peter Pollard** and **James Stewart**, with a further gold, silver and two bronze medals won in relays. Even more such successes were gained in the inaugural Southern Counties ASA Sun Life Masters – our early commercial sponsor having transferred their commitment away from us to the ASA. On the water polo side our teams maintained respectable mid-table results in difficult pool availability circumstances. Outside the pool, in the National Biathlon Team Championships, our Ladies came 5<sup>th</sup> and our Men came 10<sup>th</sup>. In the Brighton Pier to Pier, **James Stewart** won the Veterans Cup in a time of 25 mins 2 secs, coming 7<sup>th</sup> overall out of the 150 strong field, with tidal flow inevitably impacting on overall times.

**1986.** The Annual Report notes the falling off of traditional swimming fixtures with other clubs although matches against Universities and Armed Forces were maintained, as were Schools matches. We began the year with the British Long Distance Swimming Association (BLDSA) one hour postal swim.

Our men won the 25+ team event with **John Prowting** coming 3<sup>rd</sup> and our men's team came 3<sup>rd</sup> with **James Stewart** 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 40+ age group. Through the year the Club sent 25 members to compete in the SCASA Masters at Brentwood winning 16 individual medals plus 2 team medals. Our own Otter Masters was successfully held at QMSC and a small 12 strong team competed in the ASA Masters in Scarborough with **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (2 Golds), **Steve Allen** (1 Silver) and **Paul Goudie** (1 Bronze) being our best individual achievements with the 35+ squad of **Bob Burn, Charles Doxat, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** and **James Stewart** taking Silver. This was the first year in which the ASA announced some of the winning times as world records and these included **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn's** winning time of 1.09.13 in the 100m butterfly. Our water polo results were impacted adversely by lack of pool time and our 1<sup>st</sup> team slipped down into the 3<sup>rd</sup> division of the National League. Out of the pool, a small band of swimmers won the Out of Sussex team prize in the Brighton Pier to Pier with **James Stewart** winning the Veterans Cup – 16<sup>th</sup> in 22mins 28 secs. Several teams entered the South East Region Biathlon with a team comprising **Mike Foster, Iain Gerrard** and **David Miller** coming 1<sup>st</sup>, the **Kirk brothers Peter and Judd** plus **Tim Fraser** coming 2<sup>nd</sup>. This latter team also came 4<sup>th</sup> in the National Biathlon. Our ladies team of **Loretta Sollars, Mary Chamberlain** and **Cindy Miller** (nee Spicer) came 1<sup>st</sup> in the South East Region and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the National Biathlon. In Triathlon, an un-named men's team came 1<sup>st</sup> in the South East Region and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the National while our ladies won the South East Region and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the National. On a sad note, our Centenary Historian, **Dr Car Young** died during the year.

**1987 & 1988.** The report for this period was necessarily combined due to pressure on our President **Bob Burn**, who added Water Polo Coach to his Presidential responsibilities, in addition to running his own printing company which at that time handled all of the Otter club printing requirements. However, this combined report also added another "first" in that on the front was the first photograph ever used in an Annual Report. This was of **Bob Burn** with our 1988 Principal Dinner Guest, **Colin Moynihan** who was then Sports Minister.

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## THE 1980'S



COLIN MOYNIHAN AND BOB BURN

Now **Lord Moynihan**, he was unusual in the role as he had a genuine sporting pedigree - double blue for Oxford (cox to the 1977 winning Boat Race Crew and boxing at Bantamweight); going on to win gold and silver respectively coxing the British Lightweight VIII at the 1978 World Rowing Championships and then the GB VIII at the 1980 Moscow Olympics. He was the second of two very distinguished Principal Dinner Guests in that period, as in 1987 we enjoyed the presence of the famous Chindit, **Brigadier Mike Calvert** profiled earlier in the WW2 section of this History. Our swimming year started with our men's team winning the BLDSA 25+ age group one hour swim with **John Prowting** 4175m and **Paul Goudie** 4070m both in the 25-29 age group respectively 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and **James Stewart** 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 40-44 age group with 4040m. Once again we were represented in the Southern Counties Championships - albeit without any individual medals. At Masters level, our own Masters Tournament was well attended and Otter maintained its unbeaten record as the winning men's team but now being joined by our victorious ladies team also. Masters events around the country were starting to proliferate but the Club focused primarily on the SCASA, ASA and GB Championships. The 1987 event was held in Liverpool, where Individual winners included **Bob Burn**, **Paul Goudie**, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** and **James Stewart** plus a Team win in the 35+ men's medley relay. The 1987 GB Masters were held in Port Talbot where our 25+ and 35+ men's squads gained a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place each. Individual winners there included **Marcus Plumley**, **Nigel Burnham**, **Steve Allen**, **Charles Doxat** and **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn**. A small number of swimmers attended the inaugural European Masters Championships in the Derby Baths,

Blackpool, where **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** won gold and **Steve Allen** won silver and bronze. Outside the pool, at the Brighton Pier to Pier, a four member Otter squad won the Team Prize for teams outside Sussex with **James Stewart** in 11<sup>th</sup> place winning the Veterans Cup in a time of 19 mins 55 secs. The 1988 ASA Masters was held at Oxford where 19 Otters competed in 73 individual events, winning 9 golds, 10 silvers and 9 bronzes. The 1988 GB Masters were held in Dundee where just 5 members made the trek. **David Miller** won 1 silver and 2 bronzes in the 30-34 age group while **Charles Doxat**, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn**, **Bob Thomas** and **James Stewart** shared 7 golds, 7 silvers and 4 bronzes in the 45-49 age group where **Charles Doxat** broke the age group British record in the 100m breaststroke and **James Stewart** with 3 golds and 3 silvers won the award for the best overall performance in the age group. These latter four swimmers also established new British record times for the age group in winning both the Medley and Freestyle relays in the 45+ age group.

At the World Masters in Brisbane Australia, in the 70-74 age group, **Roy Romain** won two golds in the 50m and 100m breaststroke and three silver medals in the 200m breaststroke, 200m butterfly and 200m individual medley. On the water polo side our mixed results reflected a period of intensive rebuilding coupled with lack of a permanent home base.

**1989.** The swimming year again started with the BLDSA One Hour swim which needed to be completed by the end of January. Our lone lady swimmer, **Karen Davis** came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 35-39 age group, with 3275m. In the 25-29 age group, our men's team comprising **Robert Barker** 3<sup>rd</sup> with 4600m, **John Prowting** 4<sup>th</sup> with 4485m and **Garry Willetts** 7<sup>th</sup> with 4250m came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 25+ team contest while our senior men's team won the 35+ team contest with **James Stewart** winning the 40-44 age group with 4140m, **Kent Atkins** winning the 50-54 age group with 4015m and **Bob Husson** coming 11<sup>th</sup> in the 40-44 age group with 3625m It bears



43 - 45+ Age Group Team Record Holders L-R Charles Doxat, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn, James Stewart, Bob Thomas



## THE 1980'S

mentioning that the BLDSA event was becoming quite international; in particular attracting entries from right across the USA. Kent Atkins, a senior US banker who divided his time between London and the US East Coast and Bob Husson, based in London for several years were both US nationals. Elsewhere on the swimming side, with the exception of two matches, both lost, versus the RAF and Cambridge University, the Club continued its competitive drift towards becoming a specialist Masters club, sending squads to compete in seven major Masters events. 3 members attended the Europeans with **David Miller** and **Cindy Spicer** together winning 3 silvers and 3 bronzes while **Roy Romain** set new GB records in the 70-74 age group, winning the 50m breaststroke, 50m butterfly and 200m IM. In the Southern Counties, 8 individual swimmers won 6 gold, 3 silver and 6 bronze plus 2 relay silvers in the Long Course event, while in the Short Course event, 11 swimmers won 2 gold, 5 silvers and 5 bronzes, with men's teams winning 25+ and 45+ freestyle relays and a silver in the 45+ medley relay. In the Otter Masters, our men's team maintained its monopoly on the team trophy. At the English Masters, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** won the 50m and 100m in the 45-49 age group, with 9 other members sharing 2 silver and 4 bronze plus one silver and two bronze in the relays. At the GB Masters, 12 swimmers entered 42 events, winning 5 gold, 6 silver and 10 bronze. Gold medal winners were **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn**, **Cindy Spicer** and **Charles Doxat**. The winning 45+ freestyle squad of **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn**, **Charles Doxat**, **Nigel Salsbury** and **James Stewart** set a new GB record, while the same squad, with **Bob Burn** replacing **Nigel Salsbury**, taking the silver in the 45+ medley relay. In January, the Club also entered teams in the BLDSA One Hour Postal Swim. Our 25+ squad came 2<sup>nd</sup> with a combined distance of 13335m - **Robert Barker** (25) 3<sup>rd</sup> in 25+ individual event with 4600m, supported by **John Prowting** (27) 4485m and **Garry Willetts** (25) 4250m. Our 35+ squad came 1<sup>st</sup> with a combined distance of 11780m - **James Stewart** (45) 4140m 1<sup>st</sup> in 45+ age group, **Kent Atkins** (50) 4015m 1<sup>st</sup> in 50+ age group and **Bob Husson** (43) 3625m. Our sole Ladies entrant, **Karen Davis** (36) came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 35+ age group, with a distance of 3275m.

On the water polo side, results improved with more matches won in the National League than in the previous 3 years put together. **Nigel Burnham** (also a classy Masters breaststroker) was our top scorer, with notable contributions from **Steve Hirst** (a very quick freestyler at Masters level), **Matt Milton** a third generation Otter son of **Tony Milton** and grandson of **Freddie Milton** plus our 1979 Water Polo Captain **Paul Hindle** who took on a captaincy role in the water. In addition **Roddy Haswell** was elected President of the London Water Polo League for the second time, becoming the first person to have held this post on two occasions. The year and decade ended on a happy note with access to the Shell Centre Pool resuming in October but tempered with the sad news of the death of our former President (1972-75) **Eric Kimber** after a painful illness. Your scribe recalls Eric, resplendent in his Otter blazer, as one of the small band of notables being presented to the Queen Mother at the 1981 opening of QMSC and also recalls his unfailing courtesy to younger members on Committee and his courage when quite debilitated in attending his last Annual Dinner in 1988. He was an instigator and first President of the National Water Polo League and a wonderful ambassador for Otter.



# 44

## THE 1990'S

### OTTER IN THE 1990'S

With no Club Handbook issued in 1990, the membership comparison with 1980 must necessarily be made using the 1991 Handbook. This showed a decline from 287 to 243 members with a profile that compared with 1980 in brackets that listed 44 (40) Life Members, 166 (172) Active Members and 33 (75) Junior Members. The residual Junior Membership was confined almost entirely to younger relatives of existing Active and Life Members and the Club had given up all pretensions to offering facilities to age group swimmers.

**1990.** Reflecting the changing membership profile of the Club, swimming activity largely focused on Masters. Two men's teams entered the BLDSA One Hour swim. Otter "A", all in the 25-29 age group, comprised **John Prowting** 3<sup>rd</sup> with 4275m, **Garry Willetts** 5<sup>th</sup> with 4190m and **Patrick O'Donnell** 25<sup>th</sup> with 3660m and came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 25+ contest. The Otter "B" team set a new record in the 45+ age group and this team comprised **Kent Atkins** 3987m winning the 50-54 age group and in the 45-49 age group, **James Stewart** winning with 3990m and **Andrew Fawcett** 3<sup>rd</sup> with 3550m. At the ASA Masters held at Barnet Copthall, **Roy Romain** won 7 events in the 70-74 age group, of which 6 were in new British record times. At that time Roy also held European records in his age group for 50/100/200 Breaststroke, 50/100 Fly and 200m Individual Medley plus a World record for 50m Breaststroke. Other medal winners at the ASA Masters were **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (1g, 2s), **Bob Thomas** (1g) **Charles Doxat** and **James Stewart** (1s, 1b each), **John Prowting** (1s) and **Derek Parr** (2b), while in relays, Otter men's teams won the 200 year Medley and the 45+ Medley and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 45+ Freestyle. At the GB Masters in Cardiff 10 members swam in 53 individual and team events. Successes included **Tim Fraser** (1g, 2s, 1b), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (1g, 2s), **James Stewart** (2s) **Nigel Salsbury** (1s, 2b), **Andrew Fawcett** (1s, 1b), and **Bob Thomas** (1s). In the relays, Otter men's teams won the 200+ Medley, 200+ Freestyle and 160+ Freestyle coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 160+ Medley. At the World Masters in Rio, our only representative, **Tim Fraser**, was placed in the top 10 in all his events including 4<sup>th</sup> in the 50m Fly. At the Otter Masters, our men retained the overall points trophy. Outside of Masters, there was just a single match against Cambridge University and a continuing program of Schools matches. The water polo side suffered badly from lack of a coach and

loss of Seymour Hall for training and the results largely reflected this situation. Outside the pool, our Ladies biathlon team of **Lesley Davies**, **Vicky Rowe** and **Barbara Woodward** regained the English title. The news also came through of the death in 1989 of **Dr Ransom J. Arthur**, a former member from the 1960's who became founder and chairman of the US National Amateur Athletic Union Masters Swimming Program and very influential in introducing Masters Swimming to UK. In 1990 he was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame as an Honor Contributor.

**1991.** The achievement of the year was unquestionably that of **John Goodbody** in completing a Channel swim from England to France in 15 hours 40 minutes, only two weeks after being hauled out of the water with hypothermia on an earlier attempt. At the time, he was only the fourth Otter to have recorded this achievement. He followed this up five days later, by coming 7<sup>th</sup> in the BLDSA Lake Windermere swim. Continuing this Open Water theme, **Paul Goudie** won the Dover Harbour swim and 12 members competed in the Brighton Pier to Pier race. Adding in a dry land component, a Ladies team of **Christine Hindle** (now Willetts), **Vicky Rowe** and **Cindy Spicer** retained Otter's English and Southern Counties Biathlon titles and **Vicky Rowe** placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the National individual event. In the pool, there were matches against the RAF and Oxford and Cambridge, but the majority of the Club's indoor activities centred on Masters events. In addition to our own Master Tournament, other events in Middlesex and long and short course Southern Counties events, filled the Club's calendar together with the premier events – the ASA and GB Masters. At the GB Masters in Leeds, 16 members swam in 43 events winning 10 gold, 5 silver and 8 bronzes. **Roy Romain** won the 70/74 100m Fly in a new British record, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** won the 50/55 50 Fly in a new British record and 100m Fly in a new British and European record. Individual gold medalists were **Roy Romain** (5), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (3) and **James Stewart** and **Derek Parr** one each. In the Men's relays 4 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze were won out of a possible 10 events. The ASA Masters was held for the first time at the newly opened Ponds Forge facility in Sheffield and this attracted the largest entry to date. For Otter, 21 members swam in 82 events winning 5 gold, 5 silver and 5 bronze medals. Individual gold medalists were

**Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (2), **Peter Kirk** (2) and **Bob Thomas** (1). **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** also established a new 50/55 age group British record in the 100m Fly. In the Men's relays 2 gold, 5 silver and 2 bronzes were won out of a possible 10 events. For the first time also, the Club was able to enter Ladies relay teams – in both the 100+ freestyle and medley relays. The Club also entered a strong team in the BLDSA one-hour swim with **Kent Atkins**, **Peter Williamson** and **John Prowting** taking individual medals and the men's 45+ team winning their event (based on combined distances within the hour) in a new record distance. On the water polo side, our members continued to suffer from a shortage of pool availability. The Annual Report also noted that **Dick Tate** continues to serve on the ASA Water Polo Committee, **James Stewart** continues as a Special Adviser on the ASA Masters Technical Committee (having been invited to join at its inauguration several years previously) and **Gerald Forsberg** continues as President of the Channel Swimmers Association and also as UK Advisor to the Swimming Hall of Fame in Fort Lauderdale.

**1992.** Among the many successes achieved by the Club in this year, it should be noted that it was a year, which marked the advance of our Lady members. Two new ladies joined the Committee – **Barbara Woodward** and **Christine Hindle** (who won the Average Trophy and also married fellow club member **Gary Willetts** that year). In another "first" **Lesley Davies** became the first lady ever to be elected to the position of Club Captain. Writing at a time when the club captaincy now has been divided into men's and lady's captains for both swimming and water polo, the position then was as Captain of the whole club – an office second in importance only to the President. At the time and over many years since and right up to the present day, Lesley has shown herself to be supremely well organized in the Club's administration and she was a very worthy first lady holder of the Club Captaincy.

Outside the pool, our multi-sports competitors thrived. **Vicky Rowe** won the Australian Ladies National Modern Pentathlon; **Kate Houston** won the GB Ladies National Modern Pentathlon, **Charles Doxat** joined the GB Veteran's Triathlon Team and **Dominic Mahony** became the Club's first Olympic representative for many years, by competing in GB's Modern Pentathlon Team





## THE 1990'S

in Barcelona. The BLDSA awarded Gerry Forsberg their Veteran of the Year trophy for 1992.

In the pool, our Water Polo teams went through difficult times due to shortages of both pool time and depth of reserves. For the first time the Club was unrepresented in the National League and only one team competed in the London League. On the administrative side, **Roddy Haswell** was elected an Honorary Life Member of the London Water Polo League having served two terms as President, while **Lt. Col. Andy Morton**, a member since 1954, stepped down after 13 years as water-polo and swimming manager for the Great Britain team, having in 1991 coordinated and ran the Water Polo for the World Student Games in Sheffield. On the swimming side, matches were swum against Oxford and Cambridge Universities perpetuating fixtures that had commenced in 1891 for Oxford and 1892 for Cambridge. Our own Masters tournament received 658 entries from 183 swimmers. The GB Masters at Crystal Palace in June, yielded multiple individual medals (14G, 14S, 8B) with **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** setting GB and European records in the 100m butterfly and in the relays our men gained 3G, 4S and 3B winning places in all groups while our ladies won two silvers, being the first time this had been achieved at National Level. At the English Masters in Sheffield, 33 members won 15G, 11S, 13B with the relay squads affected by illness only winning 2G and 1S. Special mention should be made of members winning Gold medals at these two events – **Tony Cherrington** (9), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn**, **Derek Parr** and **Charles Doxat** (4 each) **Bill Grey**, **Roy Romain** and **Larry Hart** (2 each) and **Peter Kirk** and **John Prowting** (1 each). Additionally at the English Masters we had two ladies winning individual medals – namely **Elizabeth Redpath** (3S, 3B) and **Margaret Askew** (3B). In our Schools matches, we won all six matches, including at Charterhouse fielding a ladies team for the first time. In news from abroad, **Murray (Tich) McLachlan**, based in California, competed in the South African National Masters freestyle events, winning the 400m and taking second place in the 100m, 200m, and 800m in his age group.

**1993.** Outside the pool, our ladies team of **Kate Houston**, **Anne Fuller** and **Barbara Woodward** won the National Tetrathlon competition – a variant of modern pentathlon without the fencing element, while in the National Triathlon, our ladies team were

runners-up in the South-East region. **Charles Doxat** represented Great Britain in the Super-Veteran age group coming first amongst UK competitors and 8<sup>th</sup> overall in the World Triathlon Championships in Manchester. Charles Doxat also won the British Sprint title. In the pool, our Water Polo teams achieved mid-table results with wins over the league winners implying unfulfilled potential. On the swimming side, except for a lone fixture versus Cambridge University in which both our men's and ladies teams lost, our efforts concentrated on Masters. Here alongside our own Masters tournament, our twin focal points were the GB Masters in Cardiff where 21 members competed and the ASA Masters in Sheffield where 22 members made the trip. Highlights were **Roy Romain** 6G in Cardiff, 7G in Sheffield in the 75-79 age group including a World Record in the 50m Butterfly and European records in the 200m and 50m Breaststroke and **Tony Cherrington** in the 50-54 age group winning 5G each in Cardiff and Sheffield including a European record in the 50m freestyle. Other age group gold medal winners among our men included **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** 4 (50-54), **Charles Doxat** 2 (50-54) and one each by **Derek Parr** (45-49) and **Peter Kirk** (35-39) with **James Stewart** the most consistent amongst the other competitors with 5 silvers each at Cardiff and Sheffield. Otter dominated the older age group relays taking all 4 golds in Sheffield in the 240+ and 280+ freestyle and medley teams. The 280+ squad of **Ron Roberts**, **Roy Romain**, **Leon Walkden** and **Dennis Warnford-Davis** set new British and European records for both events.

Olympians – “did you see who just walked by? That was Ron Roberts and Roy Romain.” Roy's image subsequently became a “poster image” on the issued brochure for the ASA Masters in subsequent years – an accolade also paid later on to Derek Parr. However, with an eye on the future, the emergence of our ladies at national level, was encouraging. Our 100+ Medley squad won Bronze in Cardiff and individual successes in Cardiff and Sheffield included **Elizabeth Redpath** 2G (50-54), **Margaret Walinda** nee Askew 1S, 2B (40-44), **Barbara Woodward** 1S (30-34) and **Martha Feeley** 1B (25-29). In a rare foray abroad organized by **Bob Thomas**, 15 members with our coach **Arthur Batt** plus 2 members from Street SC visited Moscow at the invitation of the Chaika Masters Club and returned with 24 medals (11G, 5S, 8B) from their meet. Regretfully, due to political tensions, the return visit saw only 7 swimmers from Chaika attend our Otter Masters tournament.

**Vivienne and Leonard Cherriman Award.** This award derives from a bequest from the charming named elderly couple, who were both regular Masters swimmers in the early days of the sport (as was their son David) – first with the Otter Masters Tournament and then in National events. They died within a very short while of each other in 1992 and their bequest was to fund an annual award to the Individual or Club deemed to have done most to further the cause of Masters swimming. The inaugural award was made in 1993 to **The Otter Swimming Club** by the unanimous decision of the ASA Masters



L-R Roy Romain, Leon Walkden, Dennis Warnford-Davis, Ron Roberts

This seems to have been the first occasion on which such an elderly team had been assembled and as your scribe escorted them down the bath-side towards the starting blocks, it was interesting to hear the whispered spectator comments on our two

Technical Committee (your scribe absented himself from the room for that debate) and the immediate subsequent winners were **Tony Warn** in 1994 (our Dinner guest in that year) and **Jane Asher** in 1995 (mother of former Club member **Alastair Asher**).

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## THE 1990'S

**1994.** This was the year of our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The handsome booklet covering the Club's History, written by our distinguished Sports Correspondent from The Times, **John Goodbody**, was well received by past and present members. Other events included a Junior Clubs Gala for local London clubs, a Summer Ball at the Hurlingham Club a Birthday Gala to mark the foundation of the Club on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1869 which included a revival of The Plunge (won by **Bob Thomas** and **Frances Ham**) and an Annual Dinner at the Langham Hotel at which The Russell Trophy for the National Men's 50m Freestyle Championship was presented to the ASA - received by President of the ASA, Roy George. Also present as our guest, was SCASA Past President Tony Warn, whose involvement as Hon Sec of the inaugural National Masters Technical Committee, had played such an influential role in the ASA's involvement in Masters Swimming. Outside the pool, in multi-sports, **Charles Doxat** was unbeaten in all over-50's events, which included wins in the British Triathlon Championships (both Olympic and Sprint distances) and the British Duathlon Championships. On 29<sup>th</sup> July, a team comprising **Peter Grace, Tim Kendall, Tim Fraser, Garry Willetts, Mark Gunning** and **Barbara Woodward** completed the first Team Channel relay crossing (10 hours 14 minutes) in the Club's history, followed three days later by a team comprising **Margaret Walinda, John Prowting** and **Frances Ham** and three other non-Otters, which echoed the feat in 10 hours 34 minutes.

In the pool, on the Water polo side the return of **Nigel Burnham** and **Tim Kendall**, together with new recruits, saw a welcome uplift in the Club's fortunes, winning London League Division 5, runners-up in Middlesex League Division 3 and losing by a single goal in the final of the Referees' Cup. An Over-50's Water Polo team of older members descended on Penzance in a trip organized by **Paul Thorogood**. On the swimming side, we were joined by **Marc Woods**, who won silver medals in the 100m Backstroke and GB's Medley Relay squad in the World Paralympics in Malta and became an integral member of our Masters relay squads. A reduced squad of 8 members entered 34 events and 5 relays at the GB Masters in June. The medal winners were **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (3G, 1S, 1B), **James Stewart** (2G, 2S, 1B) **Bob Thomas** (1G), **Leon Walkden** (1G), **Derek Parr** (4S 1B) and **N Sinclair** (1S), with relay results

of 1G and 2S. A larger squad of 25 members entered 116 events at the ASA Masters in Sheffield. Medal winners were **Derek Parr** (2G, 1S), **Charles Doxat** (1G, 1B), **Elizabeth Redpath** (1G, 1B), **James Stewart** (4S), **Tim Fraser** (2S, 1B), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (1S, 1B), and **David Skidmore** (1B), plus relays (2G,1S). Our team retained the Men's Club Trophy in our own Masters Tournament. At the younger end of the Club, your scribe's daughter, **Alison Stewart**, followed up the freestyle potential she showed in winning the John Millner 100m Ladies Freestyle event (having won the JW Rope Half Mile trophy in 1992), by coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Surrey School's under-15 age group, 5<sup>th</sup> in the Kent County ASA and 9<sup>th</sup> in the Southern Counties 100m freestyle.

**1995.** In the pool, on the Water Polo side, results improved. Buoyed by an influx of new regular team members, Otter won both Middlesex League Division 3 and London League Division 4 with consequent promotions to higher Divisions in prospect for 1996. The 1994 Over-50's trip to Penzance was repeated under the aegis of **Paul Thorogood** with **Phil Penney** reinforcing the squad. This heightened interest triggered plans to enter the World Masters Water Polo scheduled for 1996 in Sheffield. On the swimming side, 19 members entered 68 events at the GB Masters in June, winning 8G, 9S, 7B and in 16 relay entries won 1G, 6S, 3B. Individual medal winners were **Mike Amos** (2S), **Martha Feeley** (2B), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (2G, 1S), **Derek Parr** (2G, 1S, 1B), **Roy Romain** (4G, 1S), **James Stewart** (2S, 3B), **Leon Walkden** (1S, 1B) and **Dennis Warnford-Davis** (1S). At the ASA Masters in Sheffield in October, 27 members entered 104 individual events, winning 4G, 6S, 6B. In the relays Otter won 3B including one in the 160+ Mixed Freestyle Relay- this being the first national event in the UK to include mixed relays. Individual medal winners were **Charles Doxat** (1G, 1S, 1B), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (2G, 1S, 1B), **Derek Parr** (1G, 2S, 1B), **Elizabeth Redpath** (2S, 2B) and **Leon Walkden** (1B). Our Men's team continued their unbroken run of success by winning the club competition at our own Otter Masters Tournament.

In June 1995, FINA published their 1994 World Masters Top 10 Short Course Rankings derived from major Masters events held in 24 countries. Club members included in the rankings were **Tony Cherrington** (5 events), **James Stewart** (3

events), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (2 events), **Derek Parr** (2 events) **Elizabeth Redpath** (1 event) and **Leon Verhage** (1 event). Otter's Men's relay squads also ranked in the 200+ Medley Relay and the 160+ and 240+ Freestyle Relays.

At the younger end of the Club, **Alison Stewart** (now Wain) swimming in the girls 15/16 age group, came 4<sup>th</sup> in the Southern Counties 50m Freestyle, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in the Kent County 50m and 100m Freestyle. She won the Surrey Schools 16+ 4x25m Individual Medley and was selected for the Kent County Senior squad for their 1995 tour to Canada.

**1996.** The major swimming event was the World Masters held at Sheffield, where 21 swimmers entered 43 events. Major successes were **Roy Romain** winning the 50m Breast and gaining 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 100m and 200m Breast; **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** winning the 100m and 200m Fly, coming 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respectively in the 50m Fly and the 100m Free, **Bill Grey** 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Open Water and 6<sup>th</sup> in the 200m Breast. Other Top 10 finishes included **E Rutherford** (4), **Charles Doxat** (1), **Derek Parr** (1), **C Barrett** (1), **Tim Fraser** (1), **Mike Amos** (1) and **Peter Rae** (1).

The GB Masters saw a total of 26 individual and relay medals won by Otter with an emergent Ladies squad that included **Martha Feeley** and **Janice Steuart** winning the silver in the 100+ Freestyle Relay. Major contributions came from **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (4G, 2S) with European record times in both the 100m and 200m Fly. Other contributions came from **Derek Parr** (1G, 1S, 3B), **Bill Grey** (1G, 2S, 2B), **G Kelly** (1S, 1B), **Mike Amos** (2B) and a Bronze each for **Caitriona Barrett**, **Alex Ferguson**, and **James Stewart**, capped with 1S and 1B in the Men's relays. The ASA Masters, split between two venues (Ipswich and Barnet) saw a derisory turnout from Otter with successes confined to **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (4G, 1S), **E Rutherford** (3G, 1S), **Derek Parr** (2G, 1S), **J Ferguson** (1B) and **Charles Doxat** (1B). Our own Otter Masters was swum with our usual success and in the annual BLDSA one hour swim, the Men's 25+ team of **Mike Amos**, **John Prowting** and **N. Sinclair** won gold missing the National record by two metres.

On the Water Polo side, having just been promoted, Otter buoyed by new recruits, achieved good mid-table results. A tour to Dublin was the highlight of the year,



set up by **Fergus Cooney**, a former Otter resident there. An Otter over-50 squad (with an average age of 55) entered the World Championships in July at Sheffield. Disappointingly they were the only team in their age group and instead found themselves drawn in the over-45 division against regional teams from South Africa and California who proved too strong. The team consisting entirely of past and present members were - **Colin Ball, Bob Burn, Neil Chapman, John Fox, Derek Gore, Norman Griffin, Roger Harford, Conrad King, Tony Milton, Neil Paine, Bob Palmer, Tony Pearce, Bob Thomas and John Towers.**

The end of the year saw the retirement of our very successful Club Coach, **Arthur Batt**. In the course of his 16 year tenure, he had resurrected the Club's swimming fortunes and laid the foundations for the highly influential part that Otter continues to play in British Masters swimming. The Club owes him a huge debt of gratitude.

**1997.** On the swimming side, having lost the services of **Arthur Batt** in 1996, the Club was fortunate in attracting **Mike Wake** (a quality Masters swimmer in his own right) as both new member and Club Coach. A very small team swam the GB Masters at the Commonwealth Pool (the last event to be held there) with medals won by **Grant Pearce, Jim MacKenzie, Mike Wake, Derek Parr and Roger Lloyd-Mostyn**. A rather larger squad of 35 members competed in the ASA Masters at Sheffield with successful contributions from **Charles Doxat (3G, 1B), Roger Lloyd-Mostyn (2G, 3S, 1B), Derek Parr (1G, 1S, 1B), Bill Gray (1G, 1S, 1B), Mike Wake (5S), Elizabeth Redpath (2S, 3B) and Jim MacKenzie (2B)**. However, after 25 successful years in running the Masters event that launched Masters Swimming in UK, the Club's officers decided in view of there now being so many other National and Regional Masters events in the swimming calendar, that our own Masters Tournament was superfluous. It bears noting that throughout its 25 year history, our Men's team won the overall Club trophy every year.

On the Water Polo side, our 1st Team finished high in their league but our 2nd Team suffered from lack of organization but was viewed as helpful since it gave match-time for 1st Team reserves and veterans.

Outside the pool, **Charles Doxat** continued to dominate his age group in Triathlon winning the British Age Group Championship in

Ellesmere for the 7th time and also completed a four year unbeaten run, by winning his age group in the first such London event.



**Charles Doxat at London Triathlon**

**1998.** After **Alex Ferguson** succeeded **Lesley Davies** as Club Captain in 1996, this year the Club Captaincy devolved to **Wendy Collier** - our second Lady Club Captain and an indication of the growing involvement of our Lady members. National results are relatively brief on the swimming side, as only the ASA Masters results in Sheffield were reported. The medal winners there were **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn (2G, 1S, 1B), Elizabeth Redpath (2G), James Stewart (2G, 2S), Mike Amos (1G, 1S), Derek Parr (1G, 1S), Mike Wake (1G, 2S, 1B), Charles Doxat (1S), Melissa Hanson (1S, 3B), Jim MacKenzie (1S), Peter Rae (1S) and Lucy Clarke (2B)** with just 1S and 1B in the relays. Outside the pool, **John Iliffe** came 8th in the 3/4 miles Conniston Veterans race.

On the water polo side our two teams recorded solid mid-table results despite the classy contribution from a visiting American **Jason Vance**, mainly due to some games being forfeited through lack of a full squad. Interestingly, the largest turnout came at the match against Eton College with 14 bona fide water polo team members in attendance - for the novel experience of playing in a match against our potential future monarch, **Prince William** who was representing Eton.

On a sad note we lost two long-standing members namely **Mike Calvert** one of

the finest fighting soldiers produced by the British Army in the Second World War" (profiled earlier in this History). Our other loss was **George Lean** who was instrumental in inviting Otter to use the premises of Henley Sailing Club during our centenary year in 1969 - a venue that has remained highly popular right up to the present day.

**1999.** Amateur clubs, like Otter, rely on the goodwill of members to put themselves forward to fill the administrative positions that are essential to the effective running of the club. However, it may sometimes happen that complacency sets in and a long-serving officer may reluctantly remain in post because no-one else was willing to volunteer. Your scribe's tenure as Hon Secretary was such an instance, having held the post for 20 years, in two spells broken by a short posting abroad. The notice that the Honorary Secretary's position had been notified as being potentially vacant had been circulated for several previous years. At the same time, younger members were not putting their names forward, as the apparently bloated administration did not appear to require this. The 1999 Handbook lists 10 officers to which must be added the 20 other Past Presidents and Past Vice-Presidents who were all designated ex-officio members of the Committee. The Handbook lists no names for the proposed Committee. This had created a situation wherein many of those attending Committee tended to make decisions based on what the Club had been instead of what it had now become. This situation changed as a result of the much delayed AGM ultimately held in June, when Barbara Woodward put her hand up to succeed your scribe with immediate effect - too late for the 1999 Handbook which pessimistically had included the name of C.J. Stewart as Honorary Secretary. Barbara made two important stipulations as a condition for accepting office (1) that some younger active members should support her by putting their names forward to serve on Committee and (2) more importantly that all Past Presidents and Past Vice-Presidents should no longer attend Committee as ex-officio members. Following this very positive step forward, your very relieved scribe was further able at the end of the year, to step back from his involvement with the ASA Masters Technical Committee and the Southern Counties Technical Committee. Regretfully, in the absence in the Club archives, of an Annual Report covering 1999, no results are available to report.



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## OTTER IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Membership numbers as the Club entered the new millennium were almost the same as one decade earlier – 244 versus 243 at the start of 1990. However, the composition had changed with losses among our Life members and declines in our Junior membership, partly brought about by Junior members moving into Senior ranks. The numbers versus 1990 in brackets were Life Members 30 (44), Active Members 202 (166) and Junior Members 12 (33). As noted in 1999, the new millennium brought with it our dynamic new young Honorary Secretary, and an administrative structure involving more younger and active members, with a Committee that grew from two members in 2000 to eleven young and active members in 2003; the year in which Barbara Woodward stepped down as Honorary Secretary, to be replaced by Hugh Turner. Regretfully, following the absence of the 1999 Annual Report in the Club Archives, a further absence must be noted of the 2000, 2001 and 2002 Annual Reports.

**2003.** The Annual Report for this year, as edited by **Lizzie Attwood, Martin Flash** and **Spencer Thursfield** emerged through members' letterboxes in landscape rather than portrait format and with extensive reports for the first time on the various competitive events in which members had participated. The intervening years had seen the Club's swimming coaches, **Mike Wake** and **Claire Kirkbride** step down to be replaced by **Ted Valder, Martin Harris, Alex Bobrinsky, Hayley Attwood, Ruth Morrison** and **Peter Carpenter**.

The increased number reflected not only increasingly stringent requirements for life-saving expertise on the bath-side but also the increased number of training sessions in different locations. Unfortunately, at the end of the year, Ted Valder, who had coached the Club for several years, found the travel too much on top of his day job and stood down. In his time at Royal Tunbridge Wells Monson SC, Ted had brought through a number of international swimmers and his expertise had been much appreciated at Otter. In the years to follow, he discovered that he had so enjoyed coaching adult swimmers (not least because they understood his wit), that he returned to Tunbridge Wells to set up his own Masters squad RTW Masters that at time of writing have just won the Kent ASA Masters Club Championship for the 10<sup>th</sup> year running. Among the coaches also, the name of Martin Harris needed no introduction following his glittering international

swimming career that included a gold medal in the 50m Backstroke at the 1994 Commonwealth Games. With this expertise allied to the dedication of the Club's other swimming coaches, it seems unsurprising that the previous flood of medal successes became a veritable deluge and simply too many to record. This seems to have been the year in which new "go faster" body suits were sanctioned and used successfully by most of our medal winners. The 2003 Otter Medal Table shows Women 71G, 49S and 41B and Men 62G, 58S and 50B. 26 individual swimmers represented the Club at the ASA and the GB Masters, among whom the following gold medalists should be noted:

**Sue Hill** 6, **Peter Rae** 5, **Lucy Clarke** 4, **Derek Parr** 4, **Leon Walkden** 3, **Gareth Earl** 1, **Jane McMenemy** and **Ben Martin** 2 each and one each for **Gareth Earl, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn, Roger Phillips, Elizabeth Redpath** and **Liz Shaw**. Record breakers included **Sue Hill** in freestyle events – GB Record in 100m long course, European Record equaled in winning the 50m at the European Championships and broke the European short course 50m record in her 30-34 age group with a time of 26.5 in leading off an Otter Ladies squad including **Fiona Marshall, Gina Hobson** and **Jane McMenemy**, that itself broke the European Record for the 4x50m 120+ Years Freestyle Relay. **Sue Hill**, at 33 years old, also entered the GB National Championships coming 7<sup>th</sup> in the final of the 50m against the best female sprinters in the country. At the ASA Masters in Sheffield, Sue swam within 0.04 seconds of the World Record in the 50m Freestyle, in the 30-34 Age Group and added GB Records in the 100m and 200m Freestyle also.

This was a year, slightly marred by tragedy, while also seeming to be a year of renaissance. The tragedy came in our own Club Half Mile Open Water Race at Henley, when in circumstances still not fully understood, one of the contestants, **Dr David Craig**, lost his life.

As the Annual Report comments, "David hardly looked ready to leave us". David had been a member for 55 years and was known for his water polo expertise and deadly left-handed "in the hole" shooting. He played for all the Otter teams, most gloriously for the third team in the mid-1970s, when it won its London League division twice. In the year we also lost our legendary long distance swimmer **Commander Gerry Forsberg** – see Inset on Gerry Forsberg. However in the context of "renaissance" the intake of 65 new members included names who will feature prominently later in this History; notably our current Hon Treasurer **Chris Eden**, our record breaking Masters swimmer, **Gina Hobson**, our Ironman star **Rachel Joyce** and our two-way channel swimmer **Deirdre Ward**. Our future channel swimmer **Katie Hope**, entered her first ever open water event, winning a silver medal in the 4.5 km Southern Counties Open Water Championships and followed this with a silver medal in the 30-34 age group at the ASA National Open Water Championships. At these Championships, **Lizzie Attwood** and **Lucie Butterworth** won Gold and Silver respectively in the 25-29 age group. Other open water successes include **Isabelle Kenning** (8<sup>th</sup>), **Gina Hobson** (12<sup>th</sup>), **Fiona Marshall** (15<sup>th</sup>) and **Lucie Butterworth** (20<sup>th</sup>) winning the Ladies Team title at the annual Brighton Pier to Pier. **Barbara Woodward**, 14<sup>th</sup> overall just missed retaining her veterans' trophy – a far cry from the 1980's when ladies were not officially allowed to compete in this event, but **Barbara Woodward** and **Mary Chamberlain** swam it anyway. Other members who competed successfully in open water events across the country, included **Lesley Davies, Katherine Mearman, Hayley Attwood** (sister of Lizzie), **Richard Gillman, John Iliffe, Peter Grace, John Goodbody, Stuart Witney** and **Laura Lopez-Bonilla**, our successful English Channel swimmer from 2002.



DAVID CRAIG JUST BEFORE THE RACE, FLANKED BY HUGH TURNER (HON SEC) ON HIS RIGHT AND DAVID SKIDMORE ON HIS LEFT.]



## Gerry Forsberg

The London Evening News on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1957, published an article headed "A Channel Record – and not a soul to see it". This was a report on a successful swim on the preceding day in which at 42 minutes to midnight, Commander C.G. Forsberg O.B.E., R.N. had quietly slipped ashore two miles from Cape Gris Nez having just swum from Deal in 13 hours 33 minutes – later ratified as a new English Channel Record. He was accompanied on the swim by his pilot Ben Bailey, a Deal Boatman and a Dover policeman who acted as official timekeeper. He was the 13<sup>th</sup> Englishman to succeed in the crossing. Two weeks later he won the British Long Distance Swimming Association (BLDSA) Windermere Championship even though he was the oldest competitor in the event.



**GERRY FORSBERG AFTER HIS SWIM. Note: Older members will recognize the badge on his swimsuit as the Otter 1st Team Colours which he won in 1951 and again in 1957 to 1964 inclusive.**

In truth, it has been difficult to know where best to fit these details on Gerry Forsberg, as his involvement with swimming spans so many decades. He joined Otter in 1937 and had a distinguished active service record in WW2. As also noted earlier in this History, Gerry came 4<sup>th</sup> in the National Plunging Championships in its last year before abolition by the ASA as a competitive event. Curiously, this feat neither qualified him for his 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Team swimming colours and nor even his Club plunging colours – they were stern men on Committee in those days, but as noted in 1951, his win of the Morecambe Cross Bay (9 mile) Race clearly brought his name to their attention. Thereafter, Gerry continued on a path that was to make him a legend in the field of long distance swimming both in the UK and overseas. While still in active service, he acquired an O.B.E for valuable work in command of a Royal Navy Salvage Squadron, finding the remains of a Comet aircraft that had scattered over a wide area in 100 fathoms of water. In 1957 his book on "Long Distance Swimming" was published and he completed his Channel record-breaking swim. Some of the swims recorded in that period include 1958 Windermere 2 Way (21 miles) Gents record in 12-58.00 and 1959 Loch Lomond (21.6 miles) Gents record in 15-31.09. In 1960 his article "Navigation in Channel Swimming" was published by the Institute of Navigation of the Royal Geographical Society and in support of that, the story is told of his entry into the Torbay 8 Mile Championship in 1962, in which he advised his boatman who knew the coastline better than most that "If it

gets foggy, you had better follow me". Subsequently as a correspondent with the Swimming Times, Gerry reported on championships run by the BLDSA and its affiliated clubs for over 40 years. In 1965, he was elected to the Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame; later becoming chair of the selection committee for other such elections. In 1998, he was inducted as a Pioneer Contributor into the International Swimming Hall of Fame. BLDSA records show that Gerry won all their major championships and completed 219 swims in championships and as an individual. He served as President of the BLDSA in 1982 and on their Executive Committee for 20 years. In 1962, he became President of the Channel Swimming Association and remained so for the ensuing 38 years of his life. His last open water swim was at the age of 83 in the 1.25 mile section of the 1996 Champion of Champions event. He died on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2000 and in the years immediately preceding that, your scribe had been the regular recipient of summarized long distance swimming results, all penned in small neat writing. I hope that Otter members who continue to compete so effectively in open water events, will read these words and in them recognize a true kindred spirit and an outstanding pioneer of their sport.

In 2003, the Water Polo side also saw "renaissance". The Men's first team moved into the top 15 clubs in the country. They reached the final of the Southern Counties Championship, having won it in 2002, returned to the premier division of the London League coming third overall and placed among the top five teams in Division 2 of the National League. Numbers were also sufficient to enable strong second and third teams to be fielded. Alongside the Men, for the first time in the Club's history, a Ladies Water Polo team took to the water.

A core of six players in 2002, grew into a viable squad of 25 players – some who "grew up" together at Oxford and Cambridge, supplemented by members from such diverse countries as Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, Italy and Ireland as well as the UK. This disparate group was expertly melded by the Club's specialist Ladies coach, **Grant Monk** and captained by **Ruth Dunkerly** and for an embryonic team, achieved highly respectable results.

Multi-Sports made a return to the Club's

competitive calendar with participation by **Guy Powdrill, Gareth Earl, Katie Hope, Claire Browse, Katie Price, Lisa Galloway, Barbara Woodward, Scott Darling, James Deane, Ed Buckley, Matt Agar, Peter Clearkin, Andy Craig and Paul Marshall** who all represented the Club with distinction.

**2004.** The 2003 Annual Report listed 65 new members and another 71 new members were listed in the 2004 Report. As a central London club, we benefit from people passing

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through, albeit that many seem only to stay for a few years, as the overall membership numbers do not seem to grow massively. In the 2004 intake, those with memories of the 1960's might have noticed the name of **Nikki Ludgrove**, who represented Otter with distinction for several years. Nikki was referred to us by our former coach Ted Valder and she is the niece of Linda Ludgrove who won Commonwealth Gold medals in the 110 and 220 yards backstroke in 1962 and 1966.

The swimming side of the Club saw another plethora of medal successes. However at this point your scribe would like to sound a warning to all editors of future Annual Reports. When members are referred to by just their first names, it becomes very difficult, over ten years later, to identify everyone with accuracy and if individual successes have been inadvertently omitted, then this will be the reason. Gold medal winners at the GB and ASA Masters included **Derek Parr** (6),

**Cristina Teuscher** (4), and one each for **Scott Darling**, **Fiona Marshall**, **Ben Martin** and **Peter Rae**. In addition, **Tim Fraser** and **Leon Walkden** won in British Record times in their age groups for the 50m and 100m Fly respectively, while **Derek Parr** won the 200m Fly at the ASA Masters in a new European Record time for his age group. A squad comprising **Ross Croasdell**, **Kevin Steele**, **Cristina Teuscher** and **Jane McMenemy** also set a new European record in the Mixed 120+ Freestyle Relay at the GB Masters. A small but perfectly formed Otter squad also contested the World Masters at Riccione in Italy. **Cristina Teuscher** won Gold in the 400m freestyle and the 200m Breaststroke. **Derek Parr** won Gold in the 200m Fly with a new European age group record and Silver in the 100m Fly in a new British age group record. **Leon Walkden** won Bronze in the 100m Fly. Other members of that elite squad included **Fiona Marshall**, **Gina Hobson**, **Jane McMenemy**, **Ross Croasdell**, **Steve Marks** and **Peter Rae**. Outside the pool, **Katherine Mearman** became the fastest British swimmer in 2004 to cross the English Channel in 12 hours 54 minutes. **Laura Lopez Bonilla**, who swam the English Channel in 2002, followed this by becoming the first Spanish swimmer to complete a round Jersey Island swim in a time of 10 hours 38 minutes – the 11<sup>th</sup> fastest time among 47 solo swims completed as at that date. **Guy Powdrill** and **Scott Darling**

entered the Brighton Pier to Pier coming 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respectively. In the British National Aquathlon Championships (750m swim, 5km run), **Charles Doxat** won his age group.

On the water polo side the Men's First Team had a superlative year winning the London Premier League without loss as well as the National League Division Two title with only one loss. Club stalwarts **Andy Piller**, **Doug Woo**, **Greg Moore**, **Paddy Doris**, **Rob Gray**, **Pierre Cerri**, vice-captain **Ben Tausig** and captain **Todd Sunderman** found themselves boosted by the influx of local newcomers **Eric Boldon**, **Alex Starling**, **Owen Job** and **Dan Maxwell** and a international element comprising New Zealanders **Carl Ainsley** and **Rob Tindall**, Italians **Filippo Minuto** and **Alessandro Galbusera** and Canadian **Alex Kovatchev**. The First Team's successes provided a boost throughout the other teams with the Men's Second Team winning London League Division Three and the Third Team under the captaincy of **Paul Hindle** winning many matches, despite the need to provide players for the Second Team when required. The inspirational coaching of **Tim Kendall** was a major factor in these results. In their second competitive year, the emergent Otter Ladies coached by **Grant Monk**, won the Winter League without loss; won every game in the London League with just one draw and came third in their division in the National Women's Water Polo League. Led from the front by captain **Sue Pearce**, organized efficiently and effectively by **Debbie Paynter**, new stars were born such as Player of the Year, **Tracy Pitcher** and newcomers **Bronwen Bew** and **Liz Gibson**, supported by the experience of **Lindsay McFarlane** and **Nicole Mahoney**. **Tracy Pitcher** also showed her versatility by winning the Club's internal open water points trophy.

**2005.** The Annual Report brought belated news of the early demise of **Alistair Mackenzie Crawford**. Against some formidable comparisons, he was possibly the finest Club Captain that Otter has ever had. In other news, **Mel Goldberg** was elected Chairman of the ASA and **Lt Col Andy Morton** became President of the ASA East Region (covering 6 East Anglia Counties), having for many years contributed to the Swimming Times as their water polo correspondent. On the swimming side at the GB Masters, Gold Medals were won by **Jimmy Kerton** in the

200m Breaststroke, **Dan Mikulskis** in the 200 IM with multiple wins for **Ted Evans**. At the European Masters in Stockholm, **Derek Parr** won Gold and Silver respectively in the 200m and 100m Fly while **Fiona Marshall** won Bronze in the 100m Breaststroke. At the ASA Masters, many of the Otter Team sported new fastskin swimwear (since banned) and their times reflected this. Medalists included **Mike Wake** (2G), **Fiona Marshall** (1G), **Jane McMenemy** (1G), **Derek Parr** (1G), **Rhiannon Guy** (1G, 1S), **Rachel Joyce** (2S), **Dan Mikulskis** (1S, 1B), one Silver each for **Katherine Mearman**, **Ruth Morrison** and **Tony Ray** with a Bronze medal for **Katie White**, taking time out from the Ladies Water Polo squad. Perhaps the star among all of these was **Derek Parr** who was profiled in the Saturday London Times newspaper for not only setting a new 200m Fly British and European Record in the 60-64 age group, but also beating his own lifetime best time by 5 seconds. Relays produced 6 Golds and 6 Silvers with **Tony Ray**, **Mike Wake**, **Derek Parr** and **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** representing the older men, **Katie White**, **Ruth Morrison**, **Isabelle Kenning** and **Lauren Edwards** winning the 100+ and **Gina Hobson**, **Fiona Marshall**, **Jane McMenemy** and **Rachel Joyce** winning the 120+ Medley Relays. Outside the pool, our emerging multi sports star, **Rachel Joyce** took part in her first Ironman event – the Gatorade Big Half Triathlon, winning the women's race by 10 minutes and coming 7<sup>th</sup> overall. She followed this in the Half Ironman UK in Longleat, winning her age group and taking 10<sup>th</sup> place in the elite category, thereby qualifying for the first Half Ironman World Championships in Clearwater Florida. Separately, **Rhiannon Guy** and **Katie Goodall** won first and second in the Masters event in the Southsea Pier to Pier, coming 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> overall. Meanwhile thousands of miles away, **Barbara Woodward** took time out from diplomacy to come 4<sup>th</sup> in the Beijing Mountain Bikers Kayak and Running Race and with her partner coming 2<sup>nd</sup>, became part of the winning pair. Capping everyone in terms of distance swum, **Peter Thompson** swam the English Channel, at his second attempt, in a time of 17 hours.

**2006.** The swimmers had another good year in competition, with individual Gold Medal successes at the GB and the ASA Masters spread right across the age spectrum as follows: 25-29, 3 each for **Fiona Marshall**, **Ruth Morrison** and **Michelle Senecal**; 2 for **Katherine Mearman** and





1 each for **Lauren Edwards** and **Gina Hobson**. 35-39 **Jane McMenemy** (2), 45-49 **Rob Alderton** (1), 55-59 **Catherine Couquet** (1), 60-64 **Philip Harper** (1), **Derek Parr** (6), 65-69 **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (1), **Mike Wake** (2) and 70-74 **Ted Evans** (2). In addition to the foregoing, many of whom added place medals to their wins, the following were also among those who gained place and relay medals: **Liz Shaw, Roger Sharpley, Tony Ray, Sue Hill, Matt Staines, Ben Thomas** and **Alex Freelove**. At the GB Masters, **Derek Parr** broke the GB and European Record for the 200m Fly and added a GB Record in the 50m Fly at the ASA Masters where **Gina Hobson, Fiona Marshall, Lauren Edwards** and **Ruth Morrison** teamed up to break the GB Record in the 100+ 4x50m Freestyle Relay. An 8 member team travelled to the World Masters Championships at Stanford, California where **Derek Parr** won the 200m Fly in the 60-64 age group while setting a new GB and European record. The Mixed Medley Relay team of **Ross Croasdell, Fiona Marshall, Michelle Senecal** and **Matt Staines** in that order won the Silver medal in the 100+ relay. The other members who travelled to the event were **Lesley Davies, Alex Freelove** and **Frank Pardo**.

On the water polo side, it was also a very good year. The 1<sup>st</sup> Team captained by **Eric Bolden**, won National League Division 2, despite some losses of members moving abroad, with Kiwi **Jacques Venter** posting 38 goals as the season's top scorer. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Team led by **Paul McCann** and **Ed Buckley**, came second in London League Division 1 and won National League Division 4. All these results were a massive testament to the coaching skills of **Tim Kendall**. Outside the pool, there were some major achievements. **Rhian Martin** completed the Longest Day Ironman in 12 hours 39 minutes. With **Lydia Kan** as their support team, **Jane McMenemy, Rachel Joyce** competed in the Scottish Middle Distance Championships, a half ironman distance of 1900m swim in the 14 degree waters of Loch Tay, 90 km bike and half marathon run. **Rachel Joyce** was the first woman home by 8 minutes with Jane 11<sup>th</sup>. This event was a "warm up" for Rachel whose 2005 age group win at Longleat profiled above, had qualified her to enter the inaugural holding of the World 70.3 Ironman World Championships in Clearwater Florida. The 70.3 is the distance covered in the event being a 1.2 mile swim, 56.0 mile bike and 13.1 mile run, a distance Rachel had also covered earlier in the year in winning her

age group at the Monaco event. In the World Championships, Rachel won the 25-29 age group and her time of 4 hours 24 minutes placed her 12<sup>th</sup> in the entire women's field including the professionals. The other major achievement by an Otter member, was **Katie Hope's** successful swim across the English Channel. Here, if your scribe may digress, it is a feature in conversations about swimming outside of swimming circles that a common question asked of a competitive swimmer is "Have you ever swum the Channel?" to which this scribe always replies "No, I was never good enough". In my salute to those who do achieve this feat it bears mentioning what a lonely endeavor it is. Massive acclimatization in very cold water swimming conditions is essential. To this must be added the timing and planning of diet before and during the swim; the need for an experienced accompanying boat crew and above all massive luck in the weather conditions on the day and this latter factor is a principal reason why time comparisons between different crossings may be slightly irrelevant. Katie was inspired in her ambition by a meeting with the Channel King and former Otter, Kevin Murphy and conditioned herself in a variety of open water swims in this and previous years. She booked her first attempt at a Channel crossing in 2004 but despite training until September that year, the weather conditions were never right. In 2005, she made her first attempt but her boat crew plucked her out of the water after 12 hours, when it became obvious to them, but not Katie, that she had salt water in her lungs; duly rectified by a night on oxygen in hospital. Three weeks later Katie was back in the Channel and after 15 hours was within a mile of France when exhaustion set in so totally that she could no longer complete a proper swimming stroke and she was duly pulled from the water. However in the summer of 2006, it was third time lucky for Katie. After a 7.30 am start, the water turned choppy causing her to be violently sick on her third feed, Katie finally walked ashore on French land in the setting sun. Your scribe salutes her and, in saluting Katie, also salutes all those other Otters who have undertaken this lonely and arduous endeavor and have mostly succeeded.

Early in the year, we lost **Roy Smith** our former Hon Secretary from 1970-76 and a member since 1962. We also lost **Dr Leon Walkden** (member since 1961) part of Otter's 4 member squad that won the 280+ Freestyle and Medley relays in 1993 and in

2004 set a new GB record in his age group as well as at the age of 81 competing in The Otter Mile at Windsor – perhaps the oldest member to have ever competed in that race. However, older members might remember with nostalgia, the grainy figure of Leon on our black and white and early colour televisions, when he ran onto the pitch at international matches at Twickenham to repair injured players, in his capacity as Chief Medical Officer of the Rugby Football Union. Leon was sufficiently well regarded by modern professional rugby players, that well after he had formally retired, he was habitually consulted on injury problems by some very well known international players.

**2007.** After the 2005 and 2006 Annual Reports reverting to portrait format, the 2007 and 2008 Annual Reports were back to landscape again – albeit numbered with Latin page numerals indicating a classicist among the editorial team. The 2007 report was also illustrated with colour photographs for the first time in the Club's history. The swimming side racked up another year of success. A squad of 22 competed at the GB Masters in Manchester. Gold medalists in various age groups, included 19-24 **Stuart Ventham** (1), 25-29 **Jane Leighton** (2), 30-34 **Dan Cotton** (4), **Gina Hobson** (3) and **Michelle Senecal** (1), 40-44 **Liz Shaw** (1), 60-64 **Derek Parr** (4) and 65-69 **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (1). Other medalists included **Jason Parish** (1S), **Catherine Couquet** (1B), and **Jane McMenemy** and **Neil McMahon** (unspecified). In the relays, Otter won the 120+ Mixed Freestyle and Medley and the Ladies 120+ Medley. Buoyed by these results, a 20 strong team competed in the European Masters in Kranj, Slovenia. Successes in their respective age groups included **Gina Hobson** (2G) in the 200m Freestyle and Backstroke, **Fiona Marshall** (1G & 1B) in the 50m and 100m Breaststroke, **Ruth Morrison** (1G) in the 50m Breaststroke, **Michelle Senecal** (2S) in the 200m Fly and 400m Freestyle, **Derek Parr** (1B) in the 200m Fly and **Jane Leighton** (1B) in the 400m Freestyle. In the relays **Ross Croasdell, Matt Staines, Fiona Marshall** and **Gina Hobson** won Silver in the Mixed 120+ Freestyle, **Michelle Senecal, Katherine Mearman, Katie Goodall** and **Lauren Edwards** teamed up to win the Ladies 100+ Freestyle and also the 100+ Medley while **Gina Hobson, Fiona Marshall, Jane McMenemy** and **Ruth Morrison** won the 120+ Freestyle in a new GB record time.



**WINNING LADIES TEAMS AT KRANJ 2007** Left to Right Back Row - **Jane McMenemy, Fiona Marshall, Michelle Senecal, Gina Hobson, Katherine Mearman** Front Row - **Lauren Edwards, Ruth Morrison, Katie Goodall.**

At the ASA Masters in Sheffield, Gold Medalists included **Derek Parr** (5), **Gina Hobson** (4), **Fiona Marshall, Rachel Joyce** and **Jane Leighton** (2 each) and **Jane McMenemy** and **Michelle Senecal** (1 each). Other medalists included new member **Catherine (Cat) Dobson** (1S), **Roger Phillips** (1S, 1B), **Dan Mikulskis** (1B) and **Jane McMenemy**, who was the poster girl on the front of the event program, added another Silver. Interestingly, **Rachel Joyce** (our future Ironman Queen) whose medals came in freestyle middle distance events, was also the fastest 100m freestyle lady Otter at the event.

On the water polo side, the Men's 1st Team under captain **Carl Ainley**, should have recorded solid middle table results in the National League, and should have won the London League Premier Division but an administrative error saw substantial numbers of points deducted from our results for playing an "unregistered" player. The Men's 2<sup>nd</sup> Team achieved second place in London League Division 1 and won National League Division 4 at the first attempt. The Men's Teams benefited from the dedicated coaching of **Tim Kendall** assisted by **Paul McCann**. The Ladies Team, coached by **Nick Buller**, were bolstered by newcomers including **Marie Mulligan, Emily Viskovic** (from New Zealand), **Alice Rogers** (age 15) and **Anthanasia Tympanari** (from Greece). Newly promoted to Division 2 of the National League, they achieved a respectable 5<sup>th</sup> place out of 8. Regrettably, before the start of the National League program, the team lost the services of **Sue Pearce** due to work commitments. Sue had served as captain for the last five years and had been one of the founding

members of the Otter Ladies Water Polo squad. She was replaced by **Tracy Wheeler** with **Lindsey Williams (nee McFarlane)** replacing **Cat Cassidy** as Vice Captain with Cat taking on the role of Ladies Secretary.

Outside the pool, **Katie Hope** and **Deirdre Ward** braved 16 degree sea water at Weymouth to gain Gold and Silver respectively in the 10 km ASA Open Water Championship. The following day, **Katie Hope** added a second Gold by winning the ASA 5 km swim. In another "first" for the Club, three members successfully swam across the English Channel. They all swam from England to France and were **Sandy Wilson** (12 hours 38 minutes) **Rob Deakin** (12 hours 36 minutes) having covered in excess of 30 miles and **Ian Stewart** (13 hours 14 minutes).

**2008.** The swimmers got off to a good start with entries to the World Masters in Perth Australia. **Gina Hobson, Michelle Senecal, Ruth Morrison** and **Lisa Wujec** won the 120+ Freestyle Relay and Gina, Ruth with new member **Lizzie Bellinger** and Michelle combining to win Silver in the 120-160 Medley Relay. Individual successes included **Lizzie Bellinger** (2S) in the 50m and 100m Fly. **Michelle Senecal** (1S) in the 200m Fly and **Gina Hobson** (1B) in the 100m Fly. At the GB Masters at Manchester, 21 members represented the Club and won the overall top club trophy. Our Ladies relay squads were the stars with **Cat Dobson, Fiona Marshall, Lizzie Bellinger** and **Gina Hobson** smashing the GB and European record by over 3 seconds in the 100+ Medley Relay. In the 120+ Freestyle Relay, **Fiona Marshall, Gina Hobson, Jane McMenemy** and **Lisa Wujec** won in another GB record time. Individual

successes included **Jane McMenemy** (2G) **Fiona Marshall** (1G, 1S, 1B), **Gina Hobson** (1G, 2S), **Michelle Senecal** (1G), **Catherine Couquet** (1S), **Derek Parr** (1G), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (1G), **Dave Roberts** (1B), **Lizzie Bellinger** (2G), **Enrico Hahn** (1B), **Jane Leighton** (1G) and **Cat Dobson** (1S). In addition to the names mentioned above, **Tony Ray, Ted Evans**, Coach **Steve Bratt** and **Peter Rae** contributed to two Men's relay wins, while **Anna Ochocinska** contributed to other Ladies relay wins. At the ASA Masters in Sheffield, there were individual GB records for **Jane McMenemy** winning the 200m Freestyle in the 40-44 age group, **Dan Bullock** winning the 800m Freestyle in the 35-39 age group and **Lizzie Bellinger** winning the 50m Fly in the 30-34 age group. In the relays, **Dan Cotton, Fiona Marshall, Gina Hobson** and **Dave Roberts** in that order won the Mixed Medley and also combined to win the Mixed Freestyle in the 120-159 age group - both in new GB and European record times. In the 120-159 Ladies relays, the Club's team of **Fiona Marshall, Gina Hobson, Cat Dobson** and **Jane McMenemy** won both the Medley and Freestyle Relays in new GB and European record times.

On the water polo side, early results were impacted by un-replenished losses of 2007 regular 1<sup>st</sup> Team players, but under the captaincy of **Spencer Corrigan**, the team recovered to record 9 wins, 1 draw and 4 losses, eventually coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in National League Division 2. **Tim Grace** with 45 goals was the third most prolific scorer in the league. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Team also suffered personnel losses but replenished with new arrivals **Oleg Zubritsky** from Russia and **Thibault Williams** from South Africa. They gained 2<sup>nd</sup> place in their division of the London League and achieved some good results in the National League and it was a testament to the health of Otter Water Polo that a 3rd Team was able to compete in the Middlesex League Division 3, the Referees Cup and the Thameside Water Polo League Division 1. The whole of the water polo section had cause to be grateful for the coaching expertise of **Tim Kendall**. The Ladies Team under the captaincy of **Tracy Wheeler**, were bolstered by an influx of new players in sufficient numbers to support the 1<sup>st</sup> Team in National League Division 2 and a B Team in the newly formed National League Division 4. They hardened themselves on a tour to Belgium, where out of 30 teams, both Otter teams finished in the top 10. Under coach **Nick Buller**,



the team "gave up their precious Saturday nights" in training matches around the South East and allied to some hard training on land and in water, results started to come their way. The 1st Team won all their 14 matches scoring 180 goals and conceding only 44. The B Team experienced similar success by winning all but 2 games in the season, winning one game by 33-2 in only 28 minutes of playing time. In total they scored 134 goals and conceded only 57 and they duly won National League Division 4. Two of the early star ladies, **Cat Cassidy** and the multi-hyphenated **Katie Falkner-Corbett-Corcutt** retired at the end of the season.

**2009.** A new year and a new report format back to portrait under our new Editor **Barbara Woodward**. It was another good year for the swimmers and your scribe is running out of ways to say "lots" of medals won. The combined results of the GB and ASA Masters show for individuals 43 Golds, 35 Silvers, 31 Bronze and for relays 8 Gold, 7 Silver and 6 Bronze. **Derek Parr** set Long Course GB records in the 50m and 100m Fly plus another in the 400m IM and a World Record in the 200m Fly, while **Fiona Marshall** set a new GB Record in the 50m breaststroke. At the Short Course event, **Derek Parr** in the 65-69 age group set new GB Records for 400m IM, 200m IM, 50m and 100m Fly while in the 25-29 age group, new GB Records were set by **Natalie Effemy** in the 200m IM and **Gina Hobson** in the 100m Freestyle. Medal winners included **Derek Parr** (8G, 1S), **Fiona Marshall** (4G), **Natalie Effemy** (3G, 1S), **Gina Hobson** (5G, 4S), **Michelle Senecal** (5G, 3S, 2B), **Catherine Dobson** (3B), **Bob Palmer** (2G, 1S, 2B), **Enrico Hahn** (1S, 2B), **Liz Shaw** (2B), **Phil Harper** (1G, 1S, 1B), **Dan Bullock** (2G, 3S, 1B), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (6S, 4B), **Jane McMenemy** (6G, 2B), **Peter Rae** (2G, 1S, 2B), **John Talbot** (2G), **Melissa Perks** (2G), **Tomasso Tufarelli** (1S, 1B), **Catherine Couquet** (1G, 2B), **Lee Kelleher** (2G, 2S), **Lesley Cook** (1B), **Helen Prentice** (1S), **Courtney Campbell** (3S), **Jane Leighton** (1S), **Ben Thomas** (1B), **Matt Burgham** (1G) and **Roger Phillips** (2S, 1B).

At the World Masters Games in Sydney Australia, our sole representative **Enrico Hahn** entered 5 events winning Gold in the 400m IM and taking 4th places in the 100m Fly and 200m Breaststroke.



Enrico Hahn in Sydney

In a new annual competition called the Decathlon in which Masters swimmers accumulate points for up to 10 out of a possible 18 events, Otter represented by **Gina Hobson, Jane McMenemy, Fiona Marshall** and **Michelle Senecal**, won the Ladies competition while our men came third. In the year, we were also joined by a Paralympian swimmer, **Susie Rodgers** who won 3 Golds in the National Short Course Championships competing in the S7 category.

On the water polo side, the 1st Team captained by **Leon Estrella**, gained 3rd place in the National League Division 2. In the final match of the season, **Richard Chambers** scored 9 goals in a 14-9 win. The Otter 2nd Team (styled Otter 1869), captained by **Thibault Williams** came 10th in National League Division 4. The most valuable and most improved players were respectively voted as **Chris Hodgkinson** and **Chris Eden**. Both teams were coached by **Tim Kendall** whose proven coaching skills were recognized at the end of the year by being appointed coach to the GB Junior Squad. The Ladies Otter A Team captained by **Tracy Wheeler** came 6th in National League Division 1 and Otter B captained by **Sarah Holcombe** came 6th in National League Division 3. Player of the Year was voted as the A Team goal keeper, **Zuzana Ratveiska**. Both Ladies teams were expertly coached by **Nick Buller**.

Away from the cosseted comfort of indoor pool training, hardy members continued to venture forth. In January, at the UK Cold Water Swimming Championships at Tooting Lido, **Tim Fraser** came first followed by our water polo coach **Tim Kendall** in third place and **Mark Courtney** fourth. Elsewhere **Tim Fraser** and his son **Alex** together with **Lucy Deacon, Deirdre Ward, Jinny McDonald** and **Barbara Woodward** completed a number of coastal races in Eastbourne, Brighton

and Dover. Two Otter teams contested the Lake Zurich swim where the Ladies team of **Jane McMenemy, Sheryl Slater** and **Rachel Joyce** won the team event with the Men's team of **Scott Darling, James Kerton** and **Gareth Earl** in second place. In the Round Manhattan Island race, **Rob Deakin** placed 11th with a time of 8 hours 19 minutes. Inevitably however, pride of place went to **Alison Lievesley** who swam from Dover to France in 13 hours 14 minutes.

During the year, two individuals left us who had made major contributions in earlier years. **Arthur Batt** was our Club Coach from 1979 to 1996 and the current strength of the Club's swimming side derives directly from the skill and enthusiasm, which Arthur brought with him in effectively rejuvenating Otter from a very low point in our History. We also lost **Sir Desmond Plummer**, Baron Plummer of St Marylebone who joined Otter in 1933 and as Leader of the Greater London Council was key to securing our 50 year access to the Shell Centre, which had served as the Club's headquarters prior to the opening of the Queen Mother's Sports Centre. On a happier note, may your scribe emphasize that Otter has a very strong social side in which partnerships often develop. The first example of this was when two members married each other in the early 1980's and this has been followed by many other "unions". One that took place in 2009 was the marriage in the OBE Chapel of St Paul's Cathedral of **Fiona Marshall** (joined 2001) Club Captain from 2004-2006 and **Matt Staines** (joined 2002).



Fiona and Matt at St Paul's



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## THE NEW MILLENNIUM

At our 140<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner, Charles Doxat presented an Otter Gold Pin to our outgoing President Roger Sharpley in recognition of his long, distinguished and successful service to the Club.

Seen at that dinner were:



Riger Sharpley on left and Charles Doxat on right



Older members - Mark Grundy past Captain, David Skidmore OBE and John Iliffe past President



Younger members - Fiona Marshall, Jane McMenemy, Barbara Woodward (annual report editor) Michelle Senecal, Gina Hobson and New joiner Dave Warren

# OTTER IN THE CURRENT DECADE



A new decade ushered in a new Club President, with your scribe being invited to take over from **Roger Sharpley**, whose admirable leadership in his 12 year tenure, was a hard act to follow. At the turn of the millennium, membership numbers were 244, made up of 30 Life, 202 Active, Non Active and Country and 12 Juniors. By the end of 2010, membership numbers had escalated to 432, without any breakdown available but nearing the present day, by the end of 2017, membership numbers had grown still further to 473, made up of 42 Life Members, 359 Active, Non-Active and Country Members 359 and Junior Members 72. The growth in Junior membership has come about entirely through the development of the Ladies Water-Polo section.

**2010.** The swimming side, coached by **Steve Bratt** (Head Coach), **Lesley Davies**, **Dan Moulson**, and **Eric Chilane**, repaid their coaches with a deluge of competitive success. **Amar Shah**, representing Kenya, became the first Otter at the Commonwealth Games, since Tony Jarvis in 1970 and reached the semi-final in the 50m breaststroke. He was also part of a number of winning relay squads at the ASA Masters. In Disability events, **Susie Rodgers** gained 1 European and 5 British records in the S7 group. At the World Masters at Gothenburg, **Derek Parr** in the Fly took gold in the 200m and Silver in the 100m. At the GB and ASA Masters 48 Golds were won as follows: **Derek Parr** 12, **Dave Warren** 11, **John Talbot** and **Peter Rae** 4 each, **Natalie Effemy** and **Dan Bullock** 3 each, **Gina Hobson**, **Brian Evans** and **Ben Thomas** 2 each and one each by **Andy Aitken**, **Tony Ray**, **David Roberts**, **Bob Palmer** and **Helen Prentice**. In the relays 34 Golds were won. In total in relays and individual events, 62 Silver and 37 Bronze were also won. New relay configurations gave the opportunity to set new benchmarks and the Otter teams responded with 12 World, 7 European and 5 British records at the GB long course event. At the ASA short course masters 6 World, 13 European and 11 British records set. In individual events, **Natalie Effemy** in the 25-29 age group, set a new European record in the 200m IM, while **Dave Warren** in the 35-39 age group, set new GB records in the 400m IM, and 200m Fly. In the relays, 6 World records were set and those members involved were among the men, **David Roberts**, **Amar Shah**, **John Talbot**, **Robert Williams**, **Dave Warren** and **Matt Burgham** and among the ladies were **Lee Kelleher**, **Natalie Effemy**, **Michelle Senecal**, **Gina Hobson**, **Laure Bacher-Fuentes**, and **Cat Dobson**. In the Decathlon, both the

Ladies and Men won. The Ladies were **Gina Hobson** (4<sup>th</sup> overall), **Laure Bacher-Fuentes**, **Cat Dobson** and **Michelle Senecal** while the Men were **Dave Warren** (1<sup>st</sup>), **Derek Parr**, **Matt Burgham** and **Enrico Hahn**. Outside the pool, **Tullio Salvatore** and **Matt Williams** swam the English Channel in respectively 12.08 and 15.15 and Tullio's swim raised £14000 for Multiple Sclerosis. In the across Hellepont swim, **Peter Rae** came 2<sup>nd</sup>, **David Skidmore** 3<sup>rd</sup> and **Rob Deakin** 9<sup>th</sup> in respectively the 50-54, 70-74 and 30-34 age groups. Additionally, **Deirdre Ward** competed in the Lake Zurich Marathon (26.4km in 8.33 while **Barbara Woodward** swimming in the Sydney Harbour Classic was 9<sup>th</sup> woman home and 2<sup>nd</sup> in her age group.

On the water polo side, the 1<sup>st</sup> Team suffered through the loss of their coach and also several members who were not replaceable from other teams. Then due to bad weather in December, members could not attend matches rescheduled in January and the forfeited points led to automatic demotion. Perhaps this just highlights that almost all of our Club members are true amateurs with responsible day jobs and therefore sometimes need to put work commitments ahead of sporting aspiration. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Teams both completed their match programs, but only the 3<sup>rd</sup> Team was consistently able to field a full team of 13 players among whom **Toshio Tashikawa** and **Ivor Sokolic** were voted respectively the most valuable and the most improved players.

The two Ladies teams both made progress, with the A Team captained by **Lindsey Williams** finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in National League Division 1 and the B Team (styled Otter Lutra) 3<sup>rd</sup> in National League Division 3. The voted most valuable players were **Emily Viskovic** in the A Team and **Emma Shkurka** in the B Team.



Gina Hobson 2009 Ladies Club Swimming Champion



Toshio Tashikawa



Ivor Sokolic



Dave Warren 2009 Men's Club Swimming Champion

## THE CURRENT DECADE

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## THE CURRENT DECADE



3 Club Officers; Hannah Brown Hon Sec, Cat Dobson, Hon Handicapper and Jane Leighton Committee Member



3 Senior Members; Pete Kirk, Lesley Davies Vice President and Tim Fraser

Out of the pool, **Rachel Joyce** overcame early season injury problems to come 5<sup>th</sup> in the Hawaii Ironman, which was also the World Ironman Championship. Away from swimming, **Margaret (Meg) Stewart** (joined 1985) became the first lady member to win the Otter Golf Trophy. On a sad note, we lost two of our 1948 Olympians **Bert Kinnear** who left the Club and moved to France and **Roy Romain** who retained his membership. Details of both are covered in the 1946-1951 period. Roy returned to Masters swimming and according to his wife had already sent off his necessary "registrations" in order to compete in 2011.

2011. The most outstanding achievement in this year was attained outside of any sporting arena. This occurred in the June Birthday Honours when **Barbara Woodward** O.B.E. was made a C.M.G. (Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George). This award reflects service overseas or in connection with foreign or Commonwealth affairs and within Great Britain's Orders of Chivalry ranks fifth behind The Garter, The Thistle, Bath and Order of Merit.



Barbara Woodward

It was another good year for the swimmers. At the GB Long Course at Leeds, 26 competitors won individual medals - 25G, 24S and 19B and in the relays 12G, 6S and 1B. Gold medal winners included **Dave Warren** (5), Club Captain **Gina Hobson** and **Ted Evans** (4 each), **Derek Parr** (3) and others won by Vice Captain **Ben Thomas**, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn**, **Natalie Effemy**, **Dave Roberts**, **Phil Harper** and **Peter Kirk**. **Dave Warren** also set new British Records in the 40-44 age group in the 50m and 100m Fly and the 200m IM. In the relays, the Mixed Teams of **David Roberts**, **Dave Warren**, **Gina Hobson** and **Natalie Effemy** in the 120+ 4x100m Freestyle and **Laure Bacher-Fuentes**, **Dave Warren**, **David Roberts** and

**Gina Hobson**, both broke World Records, while the Mixed 120+ team of **David Roberts**, **Natalie Effemy**, **Gina Hobson** and **Dave Warren** broke the GB record in the 4x200m Freestyle. At the ASA Short Course Nationals, 45 swimmers won 28G, 47S and 23B with **Dave Warren** breaking 5GB records and a further 10G, 16S and 4B were won in the relays. New GB and European records were set in the Men's 240+ 4x100 Medley relay by **Pete Kirk**, **Roger Sharpley**, **Derek Parr** and **Peter Rae** and by **Katie Kerr**, **Dave Warren**, **David Roberts** and **Gina Hobson** in the 120+ 4x100m Medley Relay. Our Men's team won the Decathlon with **Dave Warren** (1<sup>st</sup> overall for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year), **David Roberts**, **Derek Parr** and **Ben Thomas** while our Ladies came 2<sup>nd</sup> with **Gina Hobson** (5<sup>th</sup> overall), **Laure Bacher-Fuentes**, **Cat Hasnain (nee Dobson)** and **Michelle Senecal**. In the European Disability Championships, **Susie Rodgers** won 5G and 1S with S7 European Records for 50m Fly and 400m Freestyle. In chronicling these successes, tribute must be paid to our dedicated coaches, **Steve Bratt** (Head Coach), long-standing member **Lesley Davies**, ex-Scottish international **Mark Grainge** and **Anna Ochocinska**.



Steve Bratt



Anna Ochocinska





# THE CURRENT DECADE



**The Winning Men's Decathlon Team**  
 Left to right - Derek Parr, Dave Warren, Ben Thomas, and David Roberts



**Lex Higlett**

There were mixed fortunes on the water polo side. The 1<sup>st</sup> Team, captained by **Leon Estrella**, came 7<sup>th</sup> in National League Division 3 and were relegated. They also came 7<sup>th</sup> in the London league Premier Division. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Team, captained by **Ed Buckley**, came 6<sup>th</sup> in London League Division 2. Both teams were coached by **Thibault Williams**. The most valuable player was voted as **Leon Estrella** with **Tom Gaunt** voted as most improved player. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Team, captained by **Paul Hindle** with vice-captain **Grant Monk** competed in both the Thameside and Middlesex Leagues, with mid-table results. Conversely our Ladies, captained by **Lindsey Williams**, had another

successful year at the end of which, our 1<sup>st</sup> Team could rightfully claim to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> best ladies water polo team in Britain, having come 2<sup>nd</sup> in the British Water Polo Championships albeit they came 3<sup>rd</sup> in National League Division 1. They also qualified to compete in the European Champion's League, which involved trips to Patras in Greece and Imperia in Italy. As the only team in the competition who did not have any professional players in their squad, they can be immensely proud of their efforts, ultimately losing to teams that went on to the semi-finals of the competition. The Ladies 2<sup>nd</sup> Team, Otter Lutra, came 1<sup>st</sup> in National League Division 3. The most valuable player was voted as **Lex Higlett**

Absolutely pivotal in the success of the Ladies teams was their highly skilled and motivational coach, **Nick Buller** who was balancing his commitment to Otter with his responsibilities as Assistant Coach to the youth and junior national squads and also Head Water Polo Coach of the Regional Beacon Programme at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre. There was a photo taken at hen-dos for **Nicole Freeman** and **Laura Gallop** which is reproduced below, as it somehow seems to encapsulate the exuberance that these Ladies bring to their sport and (may your scribe observe) also to the Otter Annual Dinner.



Left to Right - bottom to top. Lizzie Dunn, Lindsey Williams, Sarah Tollefson, Vera Gielen, Louise Bampton, Nicky ....., Jo Alden, Peggy Etiebet, Sarah Bennett, Thania Tympanari, Vivi Castagna, Laura Stocker (nee Gallop), Nicole Womack (nee Freeman), Tracy Wheeler, Emma Shkurka, Roxy Hargreaves, Lee Kelleher, Alice Rogers, Sarah Holcombe, Annabelle Gourlay, Marie Mulligan, Bronwen Bew and Emily Viskovic

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## THE CURRENT DECADE

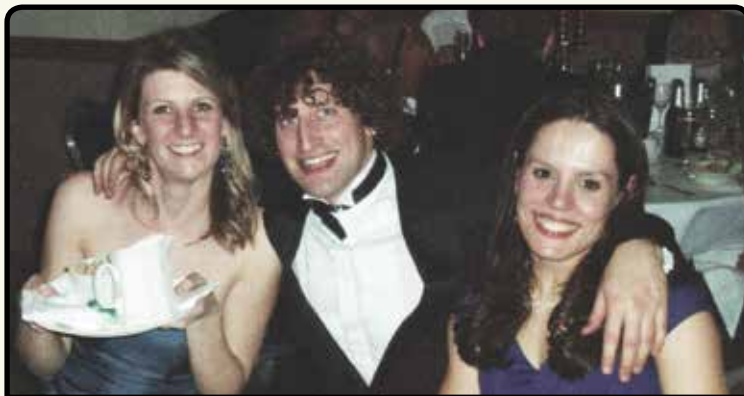
Outside the pool, our own Ironman super-star **Rachel Joyce** turned professional this year. She won the Lanzarote Ironman in her first professional outing, knocking 3 minutes 30 seconds off the record for the run component and then came 4<sup>th</sup> in the Hawaii Ironman - World Ironman Championships. She also won the International Triathlon Union (ITU) Long Distance World Championships in Las Vegas - reduced to just bike and run after the 17 degree water was deemed too cold for competition.



Rachel Joyce

**Chris Owens** won the inaugural English Triathlon title in the 55-59 age group and thereby qualified to compete in the ITU "sprint" World Championships held at the Ming Tombs Reservoir (used for the 2008 Beijing Games), where he came 4<sup>th</sup> in the 55-59 age group.

As always, the Annual Dinner was a successful event, with 90 members attending this year.



Three Swimmers: John Talbot (Architect of the Club's website and DJ for successive Annual Dinners) sandwiched between Katie Kerr and Cat Hasnain (nee Dobson, 2013 - 15, Captain of Swimming)]

2012. The dominant event of the year was the London Olympics, immediately followed by the Paralympics. As primarily a Masters Club, unsurprisingly Otter were not represented in the main Olympics but the Club was very proud when our Paralympian member **Susie Rodgers** won a Bronze medal in the 400m Freestyle in her S7 class.



Susie Rodgers on the Victory Posium

Elsewhere at these events, several members made their own contribution. They included **Anne Jones**, in a volunteer role away from her Home Office day job, had a key role in preparations addressing such issues as terrorism, public order, organized crime etc. **Hannah Brown** stepped away from her Club role as Hon Sec to be Venue Transport Manager ensuring easy access to the Games by competitors and spectators but also integrating this into wider public needs. She did such a good job that she was necessarily seconded to Glasgow to perform the same role in the Commonwealth Games two years later. **Alex Fraser** was selected by Lloyds TSB as one of their sponsored Olympic Relay Torch carriers because of the funding he receives for his Modern Pentathlon training with the GB Under 19 Team. **John Talbot** was the Olympic Venue Results Manager for Water Polo, responsible for all Water Polo results and statistics during the Games. **Sarah Benett** was a volunteer Games Maker at the water polo arena. **Bob Isherwood** was the Electrical Engineering Adjudicator on the Olympic Delivery Authority's Dispute Adjudication Panel. **Charles Doxat** was a volunteer marshall at six events and **John Goodbody** attended his 12<sup>th</sup> Summer Olympics reporting for the Sunday Times. The late Dame Tessa Jowell who as Culture Secretary led London's bid to host the 2012 Olympics and remained on the three member Organising Committee, once on Sky Television's late night Press Preview, referred to John Goodbody as her favourite sports correspondent.

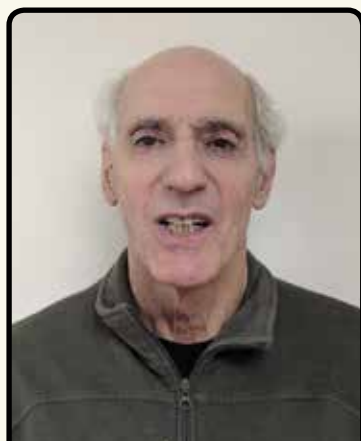


Four Lady Office Holders: Katherine Mearman (Former Hon Sec), Lauren Edwards (Former Hon Handicapper), Gina Hobson (Captain of Swimming), Michelle Senecal (Organiser of the Club Championships)





# THE CURRENT DECADE



John Goodbody

Away from Olympic fever, other normal annual events took place. On the swimming side the GB Long Course Masters was switched at a late stage from an uncompleted Plymouth facility to Sheffield, at which only a depleted Otter squad attended. Despite this Otter shared the top club trophy with Birmingham. Our star for the weekend was **Gina Hobson** with three British records in the 50m Fly, 50m and 100m Freestyle in her new age group, breaking her 50m Freestyle record twice more as lead off swimmer in relays. Top three places were gained by **Jessica Trelvellick**, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (including gold in the 100m Fly), **Andrew Louw**, **Enrico Hahn**, **Bob Thomas**, **James Stewart**, **Tony Ray**, **Ted Evans** (with gold in the 50m Backstroke), **Peter Rae**, **Laure Bacher-Fuentes**, **Michelle Senecal**, **Cat Hasnain** and two golds for **Derek Parr** in the 50m and 100m Fly. Gold medal winning relay teams included all of the above named swimmers plus **Nicolas Barber**, **Paul Goudie**, **Roger Sharpley**, **Steve Bratt**, **Lesley Davies** and **Liz Shaw**. A larger team of 38 Otters journeyed to Sheffield again for the ASA Short Course Masters. Gold medalists included **Dave Warren** (3) in the 100m Fly, 400m Freestyle and 200m Breaststroke all in new GB records, **Laure Kearns** (3), **Sarah Westwood**, **Cat Hasnain**, **Charles Doxat**, **Derek Parr**, **Gina Hobson**, **Pete Kirk**, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** and **Ted Evans**. Other medalists included **Tommaso Tufarelli** (1B) and **Ollie Caldwell** "multiple" unspecified medal wins. In the relays, gold medals were won by the 280+ Medley quartet of **Ted Evans**, **Charles Doxat**, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** and **James Stewart** and the 100+ Freestyle quartet of **Ian Bond**, **Ben Thomas**, **Victor Estella Perez** and **Tommaso Tufarelli**. A squad of 12 Otters also contested the World Masters in Riccione Italy. Swimmer of the meet was **Dave Warren** with three silver

(100m and 200m Fly, 3km open water), two Bronze (200m and 400m IM) and GB records in 1100m, 200m Fly and 200m and 400m IM

On the water polo side, the 1<sup>st</sup> Team were strengthened by the return of **Jason Eckert** returning after five years in his home country, the US. New arrivals, **Benny Whitnall** and **Mate Nyaka** also helped make up for the loss of **Pierre Cerri**, a core member for the last decade, now departed for Geneva. Captained by **Leon Estrella** and coached by **Brian Whitlock**, the 1st Team achieved solid mid-table results in their leagues with **Eric Boldon** voted Player of the Season. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Teams both had winning seasons with a combined 21-13 win-loss record and were represented by 35 truly international players, with those from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland being joined by others from France, Spain, Italy, Japan, Croatia, Sweden, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Hungary, Guatemala, Portugal, Greece and Brazil. The Ladies Teams had another successful year. The 1<sup>st</sup> Team, captained by **Lex Higlett**, were bolstered by new arrivals, GB Captain **Fran Leighton**, GB international **Vicky Bowen** and Japanese international **Yoko Kimura**, eventually finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the British Water Polo League's (BWPL) top division with **Lex Higlett** top scorer. The 1<sup>st</sup> Team competed in the Ligue Europeenne de Natation (LEN) Trophy achieving creditable results against six of the best professional teams in Europe and came second in the BWPL Super 5's, finishing the season as the best ladies water polo club in London for the second season. The Ladies 2<sup>nd</sup> Team, Otter Lutra facing a new challenge having won promotion into Division 2 of BWPL, welcomed new team members **Emily Grant**, **Juliet Edey**, **Hannah Pratchett** and season's top scorer **Matilda Williams**. They won Championship 2 with a game to spare, but just missed out on promotion to Championship 1.

Out of the pool, **Deirdre Ward** swam the English Channel in 14 hours 38 minutes, after battling force-five winds, gusting at 30 knots and tides taking her away from the French shore for hours.



Deirdre Ward with her husband Mike

**Tory Thorpe** also swam the English Channel in calmer conditions in 12 hours 14 minutes. **Peter Rae** swam the Gibraltar Strait in 3 hours 35 minutes, **Lesley Davies** swam Lake Coniston, **Gail Glennie** swam the Human Race "Marathon" 10km at Eton Dorney in under 3 hours and **Tulio Salvatore** swam the 25<sup>th</sup> International swim from Rapperswil to Zurich (26.4 km) in 8 hours 15 minutes. Our triathletes were also busy. Our super-star **Rachel Joyce** competed in Ironman Melbourne, Kansas 70.3, Challenge Roth and Muskoka 70.3 - winning three of them.



Rachel Joyce Winning Challenge Roth

**Charles Doxat** won the V70 National Title. **Becky Glover** won her age group at the Ironman 70.3 Wimbleball, **Tom Burkinshaw** won his age group in an Ironman distance at Challenge Henley and **Chris Owens** won his age group for the second year running at the English Triathlon Championships.

2013. This was a year of change. At the AGM, one of the great servants of the Club, **Martin Flash** (joined 1962) stood down from his role as Hon Treasurer - concluding a stint of 24 years in two spells. This length of service is only exceeded in the Club's history by **A.E. Baldon** who held the combined role of Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer from 1906 to 1934. It is fair to note that the financial affairs are significantly more complicated than in the 1930's. Member numbers have increased by 60% while annual expenditure and commensurate income as well as the Club's net worth have all increased ten-fold. Martin automated the Club's finances in the context



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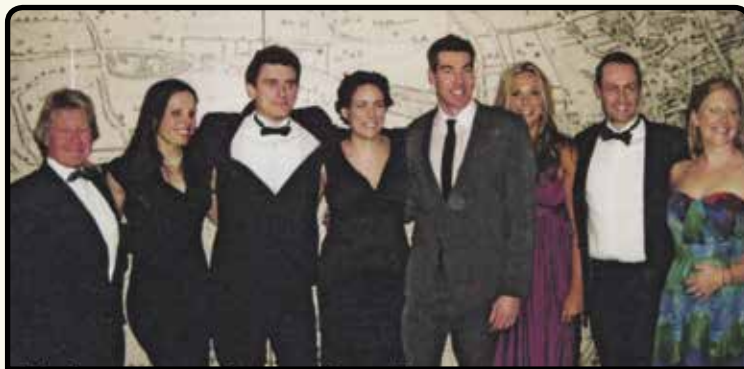
## THE CURRENT DECADE

of which, he also took over the membership functions previously handled by the Hon Secretary. The Otter Club owes Martin a huge debt of gratitude for his sound guidance through some previously difficult financial periods. He is succeeded by one of our water polo stalwarts, **Chris Eden**. Another change was on 19<sup>th</sup> August when a 50 year relationship with Shell Oil Company came to an end – something that was initiated on our behalf by Otter member then **Sir Desmond Plummer** but latterly **Baron Plummer of St Marylebone** who was Leader of the Greater London Council. The pool had become quite historic with many swimming and water polo matches hosted there by Otter including contests with visiting squads from South Africa (twice), New Zealand and Australia. The change was brought about by redevelopment of the site but the Club is enormously grateful to Shell for allowing our use for so many years.

On the swimming side 22 Otters competed at the GB Masters at the newly opened pool at Plymouth. Our Men's 200+ relay squad, **Pete Kirk, Peter Rae, Dan Bullock** and **Dave Warren** broke GB records in the 4x100m and 200m Freestyle relays as well as the 4x200m Medley relay. Our Ladies team of **Cat Hasnain, Sarah Westwood, Michelle Senecal** and **Gina Hobson** broke the GB record in the 120+ 4x50m Medley relay (Michelle's first relay record since switching her Canadian citizenship to become a Brit). Our Mixed team of **Dave Warren, Ian Bond, Gina Hobson** and **Sarah Westwood** broke the GB record for 120+ 4x50 Freestyle relay, while our Mixed team of **Ben Thomas, Dave Warren, Sarah Westwood** and **Gina Hobson** broke the GB record in the 120+ 4x50m Medley relay. Individual results were dominated by **Dave Warren's** 8 golds including 3 individual GB records and by **Sarah Westwood** who dominated the ladies sprint events in the 25-29 age group, winning the 50m and 100m Fly and the 50m Backstroke. **James Stewart** added a gold in the 70-74 400m IM. At the ASA Short Course Masters in Sheffield gold medals were won by **Nico Barber** (25-29) 400m and 800m Freestyle, **Gina Hobson** (35-39) 5 national titles, **Ted Evans** (75-79) 100m Breaststroke plus multiple other place medals, **Mike Wake** (75-79) 200m Breaststroke, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (75-79) 100m Fly, **James Stewart** (70-74) 200m Backstroke, 200m IM and 400m IM, **Derek Parr** (65-69) 50m, 100m and 200m Fly, **Katie Kerr** (30-34) 200m Backstroke, **Michelle Senecal** (30-34) 200m Fly,

**Dave Roberts** (30-34) 100m, 200m, 400m Freestyle and 200m IM and **Dave Warren** (40-44) won six national titles breaking GB records in the 200m Freestyle and 100m IM. Otter ladies in the 120+ age group won the 4x100m Freestyle with **Lex Higlett, Helen Prentice, Jess Trevellick** and **Jane McMenemy** and the 4x50m Freestyle with **Gina Hobson, Lex Higlett, Olivia Reynolds** and **Cat Hasnain**. It was good to see **Lex Higlett** (Captain of Otter Ladies Water Polo and **Olivia Reynolds**, make their Masters debuts. At the other end of the age spectrum, **Derek Parr, James Stewart, Mike Wake, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn, Roger Phillips** and **Tony Ray** combined variously to win multiple relay titles in the 280+ age group. Two Otters entered the European Championships in Eindhoven, where **Helen Prentice** won Bronze in the 200m Backstroke and **Matt Davis** had three top-ten finishes. Both our men and our ladies retained their National Decathlon titles. The Ladies team was **Gina Hobson** (9<sup>th</sup> overall), **Laure Kearns, Michelle Senecal** and **Helen Prentice** and our Men's team was **Dave Warren** (1<sup>st</sup> overall), **Dave Roberts, Derek Parr** and **Matt Davis** – see photo of the Ladies and Men's teams

records in order. **Paul Hindle's** overall management role in the Men's polo administration was acknowledged as very helpful. The Men's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Teams ended the season with a 20/1/8 win/draw/lose record Otter 2 finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in London League Division 3, and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Thameside Division 1 while Otter 3 won Division 2 of the Middlesex League with a 100% win record. Our Ladies water polo 1<sup>st</sup> Team, captained by **Lex Higlett**, had a stellar season winning the Super 5's and with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Team Otter Lutra winning Championship 1, established themselves as unarguably the best ladies water polo club in England. Lex herself, led from the front with a total of 63 goals in Division 1 and the Super5's, while **Michelle Krejci** and **Lizi Dunn** made significant scoring contributions. The return of **Sammy Owen** and new recruit **Tracey Allen** brought strength to the goal-keeping. Ex GB captain **Fran Leighton** and **Sarah Benett** supplied penetration in attack while **Sarah (Yedden) Tollefson, Viviana Castanga** and **Vic Bowen** were solid in defence. They also were the losing finalists in the British Gas Water Polo Championships. Competing in the LEN Euro League, they also travelled to Nijveral in the Netherlands to take on the three best



2013 Winning Decathlon Teams

Elsewhere, our Paralympian star **Susie Rodgers** was in the GB team at International Paralympic Committee (IPC) World Championships where she won four individual silvers and one relay gold.

On the water polo side the 1<sup>st</sup> Team, captained by **Leon Estrella** and competing in the London League and National League Division 4, won promotion to Division 3. Player-coach **Brian Whitlock** was a consistent goal scorer throughout the season, **Tom Gaunt** and **Nikos Roussos** also scored heavily and **Ivor Sokolic** in goal pulled off some outstanding saves in addition to keeping the team's essential registration

professional teams in Europe, which gave our goalkeepers **Sammy Owen** and **Tracey Allen** an opportunity to show just how good they are. Otter Lutra's winning of Championship 1 meant that Otter in 2014 would be the only club with two teams in the top division of the British Water Polo league. Seven Otters were selected to represent GB. **Peggy Etiebet** had been persuaded to set aside her career as a qualified barrister to turn professional and was lost to Otter for the season, as she was playing for Szentes Hungary. Water Polo is one of Hungary's main sports. Peggy was selected for GB's senior squad. Additionally, **Brooke Tafazoli**



was selected for the GB under 20's team, **Emily Grant, Hannah Patchett and Tilda Williams** all represented GB under 17's while **Isabelle Dean and Mhairi Nurthern** were selected for the GB under 15's squad. Coach **Nick Buller** deserves huge thanks from the Club and all of the Ladies teams in the way he has nurtured and developed this very talented group of lady members.

in a time of 8:57:28. **Tom Burkinshaw** also competed in that event, finishing in a time of 10:04:00. **Anne Jones** competed in the Ironman 70.3 World Championships in Las Vegas, being placed third female athlete in the UK in her age group. **Chris Owens** competed in the ITU World Triathlon Series Grand Final in London, becoming World Champion in the 60-64 age group, with a time of 2:09:34.



L-R Gina Hobson, Lex Higlet, Olivia Reynolds, Laure Kearns



Otter Ladies National Champions

Outside the pool, many members participated in open water events. At the ASA National Championships, **Will Wall** and **Pip Bennett** became National Champions in the 25-29 and 34-39 categories respectively.



Will Wall and PIP Bennett

At the European Masters Swimming Championships in Eindhoven, Lesley Cook came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 55-59 age group. An Otter relay team comprising **John Talbot, Daniel Worsley** and **Katie Kerr** raised £4000 for Cancer Research, the RNLI and St Elizabeth Hospice by swimming the English Channel in 11 hours 47 minutes. In the Lake Coniston End to End Swim, **Deirdre Ward** and **Tory Thorpe** came respectively 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> in the female non-wetsuit category. In Triathlon, **Rachel Joyce** reached the podium for the first time in her professional career, finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> overall in the Ironman World Championships in Kona

Two pieces of memorabilia came the Club's way during the year. A tankard inscribed with the name of **P.K. Metcalfe** (Otter Club Captain in 1905-08) emerged and was presented to **Lesley Davies**, Otter's first female Club Captain, in thanks for her running the Annual Dinner for 25 years. The second piece was sent to us from Australia, where unknown to us, **Marie Young**, the wife of our Centenary Historian **Dr Car Young** had just died. This was a silver otter brooch (one of just two commissioned by Car Young) and now resides in the Club's Archives. Your scribe's personal ambition is that this be presented to the first lady member to be elected President of the Club.

**2014.** The swimming side had another good year. 24 members competed in the GB Long Course Masters in Swansea winning 34G, 28S, 10B. Our Swimming Queen for the weekend was our Ladies Water Polo Captain, **Lex Higlett**, who became 25-29 age group national champion in the 50m, 100m, 200m and 400m Freestyle and then joined with team-mates **Olivia Reynolds, Laure Kearns** and **Gina Hobson** to win the 120+ age group 4x100m Freestyle Relay in a new European Record Time.

These performances were matched on the men's side by **Dave Warren** who won all of his nine races in the 40-44 age group, setting a new GB record in the 200m IM. Another standout winner was **Derek Parr** in all six of his events. Other wins came from **Gina Hobson, Paul Goudie, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** and the Men's 240+ relay squad (2 each) **Pip Bennett, Cat Hasnain, James Stewart, Laure Kearns, Mike Wake** and the Ladies 120+ relay squad (1 each). At the ASA Short Course Masters in Sheffield, so many medals were won that even the 2014 Annual Report did not list them all. The Club showed strength across the age groups in the relays in particular Otter debutant **Celia Marcadal** joining **Lex Higlett, Olivia Reynolds** and **Gina Hobson** to break the European record in the Ladies 120+ 4x100m Freestyle. Other winning relay squads were **Hannah Brown, Craig Gillespie, Felicity Hannon** and **Nico Barber** in the 100+ age group 4x100m Medley, **Cat Hasnain, Kat Hedley, Gina Hobson** and **Lex Higlett** in the 120+ 4x50m Medley and also in the 120+ age group, **Gina Hobson, Dave Warren, Dave Roberts** and **Lex Higlett** the 4x100 Medley as well as in the 280+ age group, **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn, Bob Palmer, Tony Ray** and **Roger Phillips** in the 4x50m Freestyle. Individual medalists included **Dave Warren** with a new 40-44 age group record in the 200m Fly plus new GB records in the 200m and 400m Freestyle. Others were **Paul Goudie, Roger Lloyd-Mostyn, Bob Palmer, Liz Redpath, Roger Phillips, Gina Hobson, Matt Davis, Lex Higlett** and **Oli Wilson**, Otter debutants **Craig Gillespie, Celia Marcadal, David Jones** and **Adam Brown** also made contributions. In the Decathlon, our Ladies team of **Gina Hobson, Laure Kearns, Helen Prentice** and **Michelle Senecal**, won for the second year running, but regrettably our Men's team came 2<sup>nd</sup> although **Dave Warren** won the individual men's title for the fifth year running. At the World Masters Swimming Championships in

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Montreal, **Gina Hobson** won Bronze in the 200m Backstroke with top 5 finishes in four other events. **Michelle Senecal, Liz Shaw, Matt Davis** and **Pip Bennett** all swam well but outside the places. The squad under the captaincy of **Dave Roberts** and **Cat Hasnain**, all acknowledge their debt to our coaching team, led by Head Coach **Steve Bratt** and in recognition of the Otter successes, **Steve Bratt** was invited to speak at the inaugural ASA Masters conference in Loughborough.

On the water polo side, outside the pool, there was a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion was convened of all of those able to attend from the Otter team that won the 1964 National Club Water Polo Championship. Those who met at The Lord Tredegar (owned by Otter Bob Thomas) were **Norman Griffin, Murray McLachlan, John Towers, George Hill, Bob Burn** (since deceased), **Duncan Kemp**, with apologies from **Neil Paine** living in South Africa. Their modern counterparts comprising our current 1<sup>st</sup> Team captained by **Leon Estrella** and coached by **Chris Edén**, came joint top of Championship 3 with 94 goals scored and only 62 conceded, due to some fine goalkeeping by **Matteo Marpillero** and **Ed Buckley**. **Nikos Roussos** was voted Men's Player of the Year. The Men's 2<sup>nd</sup> Team, captained by **Paul Hindle**, came 3<sup>rd</sup> in London League Division 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Middlesex League and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Thameside League. However, the major result was in Otter II winning the London League Referees Cup Handicap Knock-out competition for the first time since 1974 and in the final beating a team two divisions higher in the league.

Our Ladies teams had another stellar year. The 1<sup>st</sup> Team captained by **Lex Higlett** and reinforced by the return of **Peggy Etiebet** from her year playing professionally in Hungary, cemented their position as the best team in London, finishing in the top 5 in the top division for the fifth consecutive year.

The Otter 2<sup>nd</sup> Team, Otter Lutra, under the captaincy of centre back/goalie **Viviana Castagna** made their debut in Division 1 of the British Water Polo League and were also the undefeated champions of Championship 1. In addition, the Otter Junior Ladies also coached by **Nick Buller**, had a stellar year with the Under 17 Team becoming National Age Group Champions while the Otter Under 19 Team were the National Group Junior Bronze medalists. Otter Lutra player **Izzy Dean**, who played in both the Under 17's and Under 19's was voted Most Valuable Player.



Otter II Team



Ladies 1st Team for 2014/15

L to R: Emma Hamilton Foster, Rox Hargreaves, Holly Campbell, Lex Higlett, Liz Dunn, Brooke Tafazelli, Sarah Tollefson, Peggy Etiebet, Sammy Owen, Anna Persch. One other team member Tilda Williams and Coach Nick Buller, missed the photocall



Otter under 17 team

Among the ladies, nine players were selected to represent their country. **Peggy Etiebet** represented Great Britain and also won London Swimming Water Polo athlete of the Year 2014.



Peggy Etiebet





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**Holly Campbell** represented Scotland. **Brooke Tafazolli, Tilda Williams, Hannah Patchett** and **Kathy Rogers** represented GB Under 19's. **Izzy Dean, Mhairi Nurthen, Anna Szysko** and **Kathy Rogers** represented GB Under 17's and a further 6 Otters were in GB squads - **Helena Phillips, Sacha Tinkler-Davies, Heather Keith, Isobel Keith, Lydia Toth** and **Drew Goold**. Coach **Nick Buller** clearly deserves utmost plaudits for his developmental abilities.

Outside the pool, **Dave Warren, Maddie Parra, Pip Bennett, Tim Fraser, Peter Rae** and **Alex Stoyel** competed in a variety of open water events around UK and Continental Europe. **Anne Jones**, competed in several sprint, standard and 70.3 Ironman events. **Jane McMenemy** entered Ironman Sweden, completing the course in around 13 hours. However, pride of place goes to our Ironman superstar, **Rachel Joyce** who came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Kona Ironman World Championship in Hawaii in a time of 9:04:23.

2015. The beginning of the year saw a new "first" in the world of diplomacy, when our own **Barbara Woodward** arrived in Beijing as Her Majesty's newly appointed UK Ambassador to the Peoples Republic of China. Alert news hounds would have spotted Barbara in early action, featured in television newscasts, greeting Britain's future monarch, Prince William on his first visit to China. Nearer to home, the swimming side had another productive year. 26 members competed at the GB Long Course Masters at Manchester, winning 23G, 10S, 13B. The 200+ relay team of **Mike Reys, Paul Goudie, Pete Kirk** and **Dave Warren** broke the European record in the 4x100m and the 4x200m Freestyle events.

(1S, 3B), **Lex Higlett** (2G), **Gina Hobson** (2G), newcomer **Wade Rimbach** in the 30-34 age group (1G, 2B) and in the 18-24 age group, **Oliver Wilson** (2G) with a GB record in the 50m Freestyle and **Neal Thompson** (1B). At the ASA Short Course Masters in Sheffield, 42 Otters competed. In the youngest age group, we had entries from **Dontony Gill-Nasadi** and **Alex Fraser** (son of long-standing member Tim) and new faces included **Catherine Demont** and **Jessica Saffir**. Results came from **Nico Barber** (1G,1B), **Craig Gillespie** in the 24-29 age group (1B), **Lex Higlett** in the 30-34 age group (1G, 1B), **Dave Warren** (7G + 3 others), **Gina Hobson** (1G + plus 8 others), **Ted Evans** (4G), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (1G, 3S), **Mike Wake** (1S, 4B) and **Derek Parr** (6G, 3S) including GB records in the 50m and 200m Fly. In the 240+ relays (4G, 1B) and in the 280+ relays (3G, 2S). Coaches **Steve Bratt** and **Aeron Brown** were there monitoring results, with Aeron contributing some speedy individual swims of her own.

Two Otters competed in the World Masters Swimming Championships in Kazan Russia - **Pip Bennett** with 3 top ten and **Wade Rimbach** 2 top ten finishes respectively.

On the water polo side, our Men's 1<sup>st</sup> Team captained by **Leon Estrella**, just missed out on promotion to British Water Polo League Division 3 and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in London League Division 1. The Otter 2<sup>nd</sup> Team gained solid mid-table results in London League Division 3 and Middlesex and Thameside leagues. Our Ladies teams continued their outstanding results of previous years. The 1<sup>st</sup> Team, comprised **Lex Higlett Tracey Allen, Holly Campbell, Liz Dunn, Claudia Ferrone, Izzy Dean, Mhairi Nurthen, Brooke Tafazolli** (vice-captain), **Emma-Louise Hamilton-Foster, Peggy Etiebet** (captain), **Kathy Rogers, Hannah Patchett** and **Kate O'Brian**. **Lex Higlett** served as titular captain for Club administration purposes. They came 4<sup>th</sup> in the 2015 British Championships, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the British Water Polo League (BWPL) Division 1 and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2016 BWPL Super 5's. Note: the water polo competitive season runs from the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of each year into the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of each succeeding year and it is for this reason that the Otter Annual Club Dinner is now held in around the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of each year. The Ladies 1<sup>st</sup> Team also travelled to Portuguese in Portugal to take on some of the best teams in Europe and thanks are due to "their brilliant sponsors Physio in the City" whose generosity helped the team compete. Player of the Year was voted as **Kathy Rogers**.



Aeron Brown and Steve Bratt at Sheffield

The Otter Lutra (2<sup>nd</sup> Team) comprised **Alex Hill, Anna Szysko, Bronwen Bew, Catherine Freeman, Ella Wyrwas, Ellie Danielson, Emma Shkurka** (captain), **Heather Keith, Helena Phillips, Isobel Keith, Lindsay Williams** (vice-captain), **Rebecca Mulchay, Sarah Benett, Sarah Tollefson, Sasha Tinkler-Davies**. They maintained their position in the BWPL top flight with **Rebecca Mulchay** 3<sup>rd</sup> on the Championships Hot Shot list with 22 goals. It was another brilliant year for Otter female juniors, who won both the Under 15 and Under 17 National titles and finished runners up in the Under 19 age group. **Izzy Dean, Kathy Rogers, Mhairi Nurthen, Dani Brazier** and Coach **Nick Buller** were all selected to represent GB Under 17's at the 2015 European Games in Baku, with **Anna Szysko** named as reserve. **Brooke Tafazolli** and **Kathy Rogers** were both selected in the GB Under 20 squad. **Holly Campbell** was selected for Scotland while **Isobel Keith** and **Heather Keith** were both selected for Scotland's Under 18 squad. **Hannah Patchett**



200+ Relay Team L to R Dave Warren, Paul Goudie, Pete Kirk, and Mike Reys

Among individual swims, **Pip Bennett** (2S), **Dave Warren** (4G) broke GB records in the 100 and 200m Freestyle and the 200m IM. **Derek Parr** (5G, 1S, 1B), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn**

The Decathlon was disappointing by our previous high standards with our Ladies 4<sup>th</sup> and our Men 3<sup>rd</sup>, although **Dave Warren** won the individual Men's title for the 6<sup>th</sup> year running.

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was awarded the 2015 Athlete Apprentice of the Year; designed to help young people 16-18 age group to combine education and sport. **Izzy Dean** was awarded the Middlesex ASA A. Van Beets Memorial Trophy for outstanding achievement in water polo and the Middlesex ASA Ron Turner Memorial Trophy for the most improved junior water polo player - the first girl ever to receive this award.

Outside the pool, four Otters competed in the Open Water Masters National Championships in the Rother Valley. **Pip Bennett** (30-34 age group) and **Dan Bullock** (45-49) both finished as national champions in their age groups, while **Jess Trelvellick** (25-29) and **Michelle Senecal** (35-39) finished 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in their age groups.

Two nice photographs emerged from the Annual Dinner:



2014 Club Champions as they received their awards at the 2015 Dinner.

The photograph of club champions Dave Warren and Gina Hobson seems very emblematic as Dave and Gina who with their outstanding individual results over so many years, have become quite iconic on the swimming side of the Club. It therefore seems very appropriate that in 2016, Dave and Gina were to become man and wife.



Ladies 1st Team



L to R Michelle Senecal, Dan Bullock, Pip Bennett, Jess Trelvellick



2014 Winners of Handicap Trophy at the 2015 Dinner. (L to R) Felicity Hannon, Paul Hindle (President) and Pip Bennett.

2016. This was an Olympic year, about which more later, but for Otter the most momentous event in the year was the honour bestowed on **Barbara Woodward**. Barbara had probably most reluctantly found herself being named in the British press, when at Lancaster House, Chinese officials walked out of a meeting with Barbara, in her ca-

capacity as the British Ambassador to China. In a display of support for her diplomat, our Queen was subsequently quoted as saying "They were very rude to the Ambassador" and this support was subsequently emphasized with the award to Barbara of a Damehood in the Queen's Birthday Honours of 2016. This minor contretemps





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is now well forgotten but the quality of the award remains and Barbara is now a **Dame Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George** - the equivalent of being knighted. At time of writing, Barbara still remains in her Beijing post. While active within Otter, she was a very successful competitive swimmer and an outstanding Hon Secretary as well as setting new and higher standards as Editor of our Annual report. When she has time, she still turns up - anonymous in her tracksuit to swim events such as our Open Water Half Mile, fitting swimming pursuits around her vital role in representing our nation with one of the world's great powers. On 8<sup>th</sup> November, Barbara made a fleeting visit to London for her investiture by the Queen at Buckingham and then found time for a celebratory lunch with a few friends at Bob Thomas's Royal Inn on the Park in East London.



**Dame Barbara Woodward**

The 2016 Olympic Games was staged in Rio, immediately followed by the Paralympic Games, where our own **Susie Rodgers** was selected for the GB team in her S7 category in which she won Gold in the 50m Fly. Elsewhere on the swimming side, a milestone was reached with **Steve Bratt** celebrating his 10<sup>th</sup> year as Head Coach of Otter (swimming). In this time, Otter has won the Middlesex Masters every year, the top club trophy at the long course GB championships three times with the Decathlon teams posting 9 wins (Ladies 5, Men 4). At the GB Long Course Masters Championships our relay results included GB records in the 240+ age group in both the 4x200m and 4x100m Freestyle by **Steve Braine, Peter Rae, Pete Kirk and Paul Goudie**.

Another relay record was obtained when **Lex Higlett, Olivia Reynolds, Gina Hobson**



**240+ Record Breaking Relay Team - Braine, Rae, Kirk, Goudie**



**Otter Team at Long Course Masters**



**OTTER 1ST TEAM** L-R Istvan Tar, Gergely Bosci, Adan Dodkins (Coach), Alex Bion, Chris George, Nikos Roussos, Andrew Couper, Pier Luigi Spagna, Brian Barone, Daniel Shunn (Captain), Ivor Sokolic, Nuno Cerqueira.]

and **Catherine Demont** beat the GB record by a clear six seconds in the 120+ 4x100m Freestyle relay. Individual medalists included **Mike Wake, Derek Parr, Abi Hucker, Gina Hobson, Dontony Gill-Nasadi, Wade Rimbach, Enrico Hahn, Liz Shaw, Ollie Caldwell, Pete Kirk, Lex Higlett, Alex Fraser and Pip Bennett**. Otter won the overall points trophy.

At the European Masters Championships at the London Aquatic Centre, where the organization was not very competitor friendly, Otter members won 13 medals.

These included three medals each by **Dave Warren, Roger Lloyd- Mostyn and Derek Parr**. **Dave Warren** won gold in the 200m Fly and silver in the 200m Freestyle and 200m IM all in new GB records. **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** won gold in the 100m Fly, silver in the 100m Freestyle and bronze in the 50m Fly. **Derek Parr** won gold in the 100m Fly, and bronze in each of the 200m and 50m Fly. **Pete Kirk** and **Hayley Davis** won bronze medals in the 100m and 800m Freestyle respectively. In the relays, our ladies team of **Lex Higlett, Olivia Reynolds, Laure Kearns and Catherine Demont** won gold in the 120+ age group



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while **Gina Hobson, Emma Shkurka, Jane McMenemy** and **Fiona (Marshall) Staines** won silver in the 160+ age group in a GB record time.

On the water polo side, the Men's 1<sup>st</sup> Team, helped by the focus provided by new coach **Adam Dodkins**, under the captaincy of **Daniel Shunn**, had a successful season winning promotion back to London Water Polo League's (LWPL) Premier Division and qualifying for the British Water Polo League's (BWPL) Championship 3. **Andrew Couper, Daniel Shunn** and **Nikolaos Roussos** were among the top goal scorers. The team also went on a successful tour to Zagreb Croatia for the second successive year.

The Otter 2<sup>nd</sup> Team won the 2016 LWPL Men's Division 3 with an unbeaten 100% record, thereby winning promotion to Division 2. They also competed in the Middlesex League and the Thameside League and were losing finalists in the Thameside Handicap Knock-Out competition. In an initiative started by Club President **Paul Hindle**, a collaborative venture has been established with the Chelsea and Westminster SC to develop a junior water polo group (**girls and boys**) 2017 competition. A long-term project that hopefully may produce a flow of younger players into Otter's ranks.

The Otter Ladies 1<sup>st</sup> Team suffered a major loss when former captain **Lex Higlett** announced that she was making a career move to the US. With the excellence of results so often achieved across all of the Club's different arms, it easy to forget that they are mostly true amateurs who have day jobs that must often take precedence over their chosen sports. These kinds of losses happen regularly in a club like Otter but nevertheless when an individual has been as involved as Lex has been, this kind of move leaves a gap not only among the polo ladies but among the swimmers also. Lex has been among several of the talented ladies and men water polo players, who has participated in both swimming and water polo, including the open water events as shown in the photograph below of Lex with her successor as Ladies 1<sup>st</sup> Team captain **Tracey Allen** on her right, in the boat taking them to the start of the 2014 Half Mile.



L-R Tracey Allen and Lex Higlett



Under 19 Champions



Under 15 Champions

The Ladies 1<sup>st</sup> Team finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2016 BWPL Super 5's and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the British Championships. The team, coached by **Nick Buller**, comprised **Tracey Allen, Holly Campbell, Liz Dunn, Claudia Ferrone, Izzy Dean, Mhairi Nurthen, Brooke Tafazolli** (c), **Emma Hamilton-Foster, Peggy Etiebet** (vc), **Kathy Rogers, Hannah Patchett, Danica Brazier, Fabiana Asastasio, and Rebecca Mulcahy**. At the LEN Women's Euro League in Padova Italy in December, they took on some of the best European club teams and as an amateur team, they

find it very helpful to play against these top professional sides. The support of their sponsor "Physio in the City" was again acknowledged with gratitude. The strength of a 1<sup>st</sup> team often derives from the strength of any 2<sup>nd</sup> team behind them and in this context, Otter Lutra completed their 2016/17 season with a 100% undefeated record. They welcomed into their ranks, "international" signings **Nahn Van Wyk, Sarah Connolly** and **El Lazat** together with junior players **Drew Goold, Poppy Mayall, Meg Wall-Peters, Katy Cutler** and sisters **Bob**



and **Lidia Toth**. In the National Age Group Competitions, Otter cemented its position as the best junior girls development program in the country. For the first time, they won the Under 19 competition, successfully defended their title in the Under 15 competition and they came fourth in the Under 17 competition.

A number of Otter ladies gained international honours including, **Holly Campbell** who was selected for Scotland.



**Holly Campbell** in action for Scotland

At junior level six Otters were selected to represent Great Britain in the Under 19's.



L-R **Katy Cutler, Izzy Dean, Hannah Patchett, Kathy Rogers, Lily Turner**

Outside the pool, pride of place in terms of achievement, must go to **Deirdre Ward**. Keen-eyed readers of this History might note Deirdre's journey into open water swimming, which, leaving out her early swims in Otter's own open water events, seems to have started around 2007 with her entry into the ASA Open Water National Championships and then in succeeding years to have involved increasingly arduous events. This year Deirdre Ward surpassed herself and every other Otter with English Channel crossing aspirations, by completing the first **Two-Way**

**Crossing** ever accomplished by a member of Otter Swimming Club. On 23<sup>rd</sup> August, Deirdre set off from Dover at 2.30 am. She reached Cap Gris Nez in France in 13 hours 15 minutes (beating her previous crossing time) and after two minutes with no time to think, she was back in the water and finally reached the cliffs at St Margaret's near Dover as the sun was dawning on 24<sup>th</sup> August. She reports that finding a landing spot was tricky as the rules provide that her boat could not precede her and nor could she be touched until she had cleared the water. Her total time was 27 hours, 52 minutes, 53 seconds. She is the 29<sup>th</sup> person and 17<sup>th</sup> female to have completed the 2-way swim. An awesome achievement.



**Deirdre** with husband **Mike** at Dawn on the Dover Beach

Elsewhere, four Otters entered the ASA Open Water National Championships at Rother Valley Country Park near Sheffield. **Dave Warren** (45-49 age group) won both the 1.5km and 3km events **Pip Bennett** won the 3km in the 35-39 age group, while **Tim Kendall** was third in the 55-59 age group and **Jess Trelvellick** was 4<sup>th</sup> within a large field in the 25-29 age group.



L-R **Tim Kendall, Dave Warren, Jess Trelvellick, Pip Bennett**

In the European Masters Open Water Championships in Croatia, within the 35-39 age group, **Michelle Senecal** was 7<sup>th</sup> and **Pip Bennett** 8<sup>th</sup>. In the British Open Water Championships (Open and Masters) at the Serpentine in London's Hyde Park, **Pip Bennett** won the 35-39 age group and in the 30-34 age group **Nico Barber** won silver and **John Talbot** bronze with **Jess Thorpe** winning the Ladies event.



L-R **John Talbot, Pip Bennett, Nico Barber and Jess Thorpe** at the Serpentine

A relatively new event called a Swimrun has gained popularity in UK. Unlike traditional aquathons which combine swimming and running in a two stage race, this version involves transitioning seamlessly between running stages and swimming stages in

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pairs, carrying all your kit with you, thereby running in a wetsuit and swimming in trainers. **Felicity Hannon** with her partner Ben Bussmann completed the Breca Buttermere race comprising 42km running across rough terrain, 1900m vertical ascent and swimming 6km through choppy waters. They came first in the mixed category in 6 hours 47 minutes, setting a new course record by over one hour and were 10<sup>th</sup> overall out of 79 teams.

**2017.** The first major competition on the swimming side was the GB Long Course Masters in Aberdeen. Among those who won medals were **Catherine Demont** (2G), **Abi Hucker** (1S), **Hayley Davis** (2G, 1S, 1B), **Derek Parr** (4G), **Wade Rimbach** (2G, 2S), **Craig Gillespie** (1G, 1S, 1B), **Emma Shkurka** (1G, 1S), **Martin Sartorius** (1S), **Michael Jennings** (1S), **Tony Ray** (1S), **Matt Wan** (1S), **Enrico Hahn** (1G), **Camille Vrain** (1B), **Liz Shaw** (1B), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (2G), **Stephen Braine** (1S), and **Fraser Peh** (1B). The above were joined in gold medal winning relay squads by **Graham Webster**, **Dontony Gill-Nasadi**, **Olivier Geleoc**, **Nico Barber** and **Mike Reys**. Among the many relay medals, special mention should be made of the new GB record set in the 100-119 4x100 Medley in a winning time of 4:30.14 by **Wade Rimbach**, **Catherine Demont**, **Abi Hucker** and **Craig Gillespie**.

At the World Masters Championships in Budapest 24 Otters made the journey. With medals awarded for the first six places, Otter medal winners were **Dave Adamson** 4<sup>th</sup> in the 50m Fly and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 100m Fly (in 56.56 seconds) and **Maddie Parra** 4<sup>th</sup> in the 2.4km open water event on Lake Balaton.



Felicity Hannon and Ben Bussmann



Maddie Parra

40 Otters competed in the ASA Short Course Masters in Sheffield, racking up 194 swims, 65 medal-winning performances and two GB relay records. Individual gold medalists included **Derek Parr** (6), **Wade Rimbach** (1), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (1) and **Hayley Davis** (2). **Abi Hucker** and **Camille Vrain** won their first ever national championship medals and we welcomed new competing team members **Enrique Ruiz**, **Liz Goad** and **Sophie Clarke**. Other members who contributed to gold medal winning teams were **Roger Phillips**, **Tony Ray**, **Bob Thomas**, **Etienne Gambier**, **Dave Adamson**, **Graham Webster**, **Stephen Braine**, **Roger Sharpley**, **Matt Wan**, **Fraser Peh**, **Sarah Jane Law** and **Alice Dinsdale-Young**. However our stars for the weekend were the Ladies in the 160-199 relays breaking GB records in the 4x100m Freestyle with **Emma Shkurka**, **Fiona Marshall-Staines**, **Jane McMenemy** and **Gina Hobson** and in the 4x100m Medley with **Hayley Davis**, **Fiona Marshall-Staines**, **Gina Hobson** and **Jane McMenemy**.

It was nice also to hear from ex-Otter **Jo Breare** (now Godwin) resident in New Zealand who attended the World Masters Games in Auckland and among multiple swims in the 55-59 age group, came 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> in the 50m 100m and 200m Breaststroke respectively all with times inside the New Zealand ladies national age group records.

On the water polo side, the Men's 1<sup>st</sup> Team finished mid-table in its return to the London Water Polo League's (LWPL) Premier Division and by finishing 4<sup>th</sup> out of 8 in phase 1 of British Water Polo League season, won the right to compete in the Championship



L-R Wade Rimbach, Catherine Demont, Steve Bratt (Head Coach), Abi Hucker, Craig Gillespie





3 play-off for promotion to Division 3 next season. Captained by **Leon Estrella** and coached by **Chris Eden, Daniel Shunn** was a tower of strength in the water and the ambidextrous and multiple goal scorer **Nicholas Corjon** and most improved player **Orion Ganase**, deserve special mention. Away from league commitments, for the third year running, an enjoyable tour to Croatia (Dubrovnik and Cavtat) was undertaken. The Men's 2<sup>nd</sup> Team had another successful year finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Thameside League and winning the Thameside Water Polo Association Cup competition. The Otter Junior Water Polo Group initiative, started last year, has continued to grow and for the first time in the Club's history we entered a junior team (a mix of boys and girls) in the LWPL Under 15 Division 2 coming 3<sup>rd</sup> overall.

The Ladies water polo teams had another good year, with the 1<sup>st</sup> Team progressing to the British Championships, where they qualified for the finals and finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the country. Regrettably a sad goodbye was said to **Mhairi Nurthen** and **Kathy Rogers** who will be progressing their water polo careers respectively at Hawaii University and Michigan University. The 1<sup>st</sup> Team for 2017/18 comprises **Tracey Allen, Holly Campbell, Katy Cutler, Izzy Dean, Peggy Etiebet, Robyn Greenslade, Carly Jackson-Clark, Isobel Keith, Rebecca Mulcahy, Brooke Tafazolli** (c) **Sasha Tinkler-Davis, Lidia Toth** and **Cecily Turner**. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Team, Otter Lutra, after a disappointing start to the season, came back strongly and secured their place in Championship 1. **Katy Cutler** was the top scorer, with **Emily Campbell-Lamerton, Erin Andrew** and **Tuesday Birmingham** all contributing also. In representative selection away from Otter, **Brooke Tafazolli** and **Carly Jackson-Clark** competed in the World University Games in Taipei and both were joined by **Kathy Rogers** in the Senior EU Nations competition in Prague where **Holly Campbell** represented Scotland. **Cecily Turner, Katy Cutler** and **Robyn Greenslade** helped GB qualify for the Junior World Championships in 2018 and were in the England team at the Junior EU Nations competition where **Sarah Rogers** represented Wales.

**2018.** With the year uncompleted and the need to meet print deadlines, this is not a full year's report. The water-polo season has hardly started and the swimming program is not completed, so just a few highlights



**Barbara Woodward with Winners Medal**

will be noted here, with greater details in an Annual Report expected early in 2019 in the normal way. As always with an active organization, activities continue and there is no easy point of cut-off. On the swimming side, 21 members travelled to Plymouth in June to contest the GB Long-Course Masters and came away with the cup for Top Club. In summary, the team won 28G, 23S, 11B individual medals and in the relays, 10G, 4S and 1B. Individuals who won medals were **Abi Hucker** (4S), **Hayley Davis** (3G, 2S, 1B), **Enrique Ruiz** (2G, 2S, 1B), **Pip Bennett** (3G, 1S, 1B), **Martin Sartorius** (3B), **Craig Gillespie** (3G, 2S, 1B), **Matt Wan** (1G, 2S), **Peter Rae** (2G, 2S), **Roger Lloyd-Mostyn** (3G, 1S, 1B), **Utku Bozkurt** (1S, 1B), **Derek Parr** ( 5G, 1S), **Catherine Demont** ( 2G, 1S, 1B), **Sophie Clarke** (2G, 1S), **Jane McMenemy** (1G, 2S), and **Fraser Peh** (1G, 1S). In addition to these members, **Dontony Gil-Nasadi, Bob Thomas, Liz Shaw, Lesley Davies** and **Wade Rimbach** all participated in medal winning relay squads. In the relays, special mention should be made to two won in new GB records namely the Men's 4x100m Medley 100+ squad of **Wade Rimbach, Craig Gillespie, Fraser Peh** and **Martin Sartorius** with a time of 4.09.00 and Women's 4x100m Medley squad of **Sophie Clarke, Hayley Davis, Abi Hucker** and **Catherine Demont** with a time of 4.54.09. As we approach the Club's 7<sup>th</sup> Quarter Century, Otter clearly remain very competitive.

Outside the pool in August, "our star in the East" **Barbara Woodward**, took time away from Beijing based diplomacy to compete in a swim across the Hellespont. Among 700 competitors overall in all age groups, Barbara won the Women's 55-59 age group, covering the 3.5 miles in 57 minutes 40 seconds. The swim was from Europe to Asia and the

photograph shows Barbara at the finish on the Asian side at Canakkale near the ancient city of Troy. Earlier in the year on a flying visit to London, Barbara had warmed up for this by competing in the Club's annual Half Mile Open Water race at Henley.

On a sadder note, Otter lost one of its most eminent members **R.G.M. (Bob) Burn**, who joined in 1954 and whose name features frequently in this history in the 1950's and 1960's before serving as President from 1983-1989. At his appointment, his predecessor as President, Charles Doxat noted that Bob was the member "who unequivocally has made the greatest contribution to all aspects of club life: swimming, water polo and social." It was a tribute to Bob that at his funeral service, there was standing room only and among the mourners, were three of his former team-mates from the Club's 1964 National Water-Polo Championship winning side. They were Dr. John Fox, Tony Milton who made the five-hour drive from his Cirencester home and John Towers who gave the Eulogy.

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## OTTER IN THE FUTURE

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Both previous historians have addressed the future, which this historian will not attempt. It is hoped that the multi-faceted activities of the Club as embodied in the pages of this History will continue alongside an ongoing strong social element as exemplified by the Annual Dinner, monthly after-training drinks, Open Water events, annual training camps and other swimming and water-polo competitions when members come together as a team. As a Central London club, we benefit from members working in London including many from overseas but the down-side of this is that there may often be a high turnover of members.

In simple terms, Otter draws its members from all different parts of society and what brings us together is an ambition to compete as well as we are able and it is hoped that members will use their swimming training to compete in swimming and water-polo competitions as well as multi-sports types of activities and perhaps

this History will have highlighted the considerable levels of success achieved. The Club aims to provide the means in terms of pool-time, coaching and administrative infrastructure and is run by its members with the aim of breaking even financially every year. In this context, the constant challenge is to find within our membership, those who are willing to make a contribution on the administrative side.

The current Committee under our President Paul Hindle – himself still active on the water-polo side – includes another active water-polo member, Chris Eden, who has taken over the Hon Treasurer role with quiet aplomb, Lesley Davies whose expertise on Health & Safety issues is essential to ensuring the Club's compliance with modern regulations and Dave Warren our hard working Hon Handicapper who for so many years in Masters Swimming, has set records and competitive standards that are widely admired. Their involvement is highly appreciated by our members.

It is said that if you want a job done well, then give it to a busy person. In that context, may I pay tribute also to those who have helped me in the publication of this History. They include Catherine Hasnain, Gina Hobson – for many years our top lady swimmer who has edited the last few Annual Reports, John Goodbody, still reporting for the Sunday Times and Joana Sandrin Gauer who has contributed her photographic expertise. All are finding time outside their day-jobs and alongside their other Club involvement to assist in this exercise and I am truly grateful for their help and guidance. As a final accolade, may I thank two non-members namely Dr. Ian Gordon that doyen among swimming historians, who has kindly made available details and photographs on a number of our early members and also former member and Club Coach, Kelvin Juba, who has helped verify some of the historical accuracy.

# SCHOOLS RELAYS ORGANISED BY OTTER SC MEMBERS



## APPENDIX 1: SCHOOLS

At time of writing, an annual schools swimming relay competition takes place at The London Aquatic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford, London E20. In 2018, 146 boys and girls schools across the UK were circulated and most of these attended. The Boys Schools compete for the Bath Cup (4x100m Freestyle) and the Otter Medley (4x50m Medley) with trophies for smaller Boys Schools being the Aldenham Cup and Dunhelm Cup respectively for freestyle and medley. There are similar permanent trophies for the Girl Schools events, which only commenced in 1995 and like the boys events, also feature equivalent events for smaller schools.

The Bath Cup has its origins in a "freestyle swimming relay" inaugurated in 1910 by the Bath Club – a sport's focused London "gentlemen's" club and was held at their premises at 34 Dover Street in Mayfair until 1939. The initial six competing schools were Bishops Stortford College, Harrow School, Lancing College, St Paul's School, Whitgift School and Merchant Taylors School. The event has been held every year since, with the exception of the war years of 1915 to 1919 and 1940 to 1946 as well as 1928 for unknown reasons that may have been associated with Bath Club members' involvement with the 1928 Olympics. In 1941, the Bath Club received a direct hit during an air raid. This destroyed the club and its swimming pool and so when the event resumed in 1946, it transferred to the nearby Lansdowne Club whose members included a number of Otter members, who thereby took over the competition. In 1948, the Bath Club concluded that they could no longer effectively run the competition that they had set up and Otter Swimming Club were invited to take over the organization. Accordingly, Ron Stead (Hon Sec of Otter 1952-66 & 1970) took over the running with his wife Joy. After a 30 year stint, Ron passed over this responsibility to John Nalson (Otter member since 1966) and in 2018, John completed his 40<sup>th</sup> year as the organizer of the Schools Relays. At time of writing, John Nalson is planning to step down after another year, with the schools themselves planning to take over the running of this very successful event and it redounds enormously to the credit of John Nalson that the event has developed so well under his aegis.

As the number of competing schools grew, so did the problem become more acute of finding a suitable pool. The venues used were Bath Club (25 yards) 1910 to 1939, Lansdowne Club (26 2/3 yards) 1946 to 1955, Seymour Hall (44 yards) 1956 to 1975 excluding 1968 Swiss Cottage and 1976 Marshall Street (both 33 1/3 yards). Then the event resumed at Seymour Hall from 1977 to 1989, then in 1990 Queen Mother Sports Centre in Pimlico (25m), then 1991 to 2003 Crystal Palace (50m), 2004 & 2005 Trinity School Croydon (25m), 2006-2009 Whitgift School Croydon (25m), 2010 to 2013 Crystal Palace and then since 2014 The London Aquatic Centre (50m). It is hoped that the iconic Aquatic Centre might become a permanent venue for this increasingly popular event in schools' calendars across the nation, with contestants coming from Ireland, Scotland, and Channel Islands as well as around England. Initially the Medley events shared the same venue as the Freestyle events, albeit on different days. The Otter Medley was first swum in 1951 as a program filler during the Oxford/ Cambridge Varsity swimming match, but when this started to restrict the number of school entrants, it broke away from the Varsity swimming event which itself became incorporated into the Varsity Games in the early 1970's. In recent years, both the Bath Cup and the Otter Medley have been swum on the same day.



John Nalson

It was perhaps appropriate that the Club was invited to take over the running of these schools relays as for many years, Otter had swum matches against individual schools. The earliest record is in 1907 when visits were paid to Lancing College, Harrow, Bishop's Stortford and St Paul's School. Other schools were added gradually to the list; Rugby in 1908, Felsted in 1910, Haileybury and Tonbridge in 1911, Dulwich in 1913 with Berkhamstead and Christ's Hospital in 1914.

The criterion was schools that had their own pool and which were accessible by car or train out of London on a Saturday afternoon. Every year, some schools dropped out of our calendar, while others were added. In 1927, eleven schools were visited, with new names listed as Ardingly, Aldenham, Bedford Modern, Brighton College, Charterhouse, Hurstpierpoint, Mill Hill, Marlborough and Stowe. In 1931, eighteen schools were visited including new names St John's Leatherhead, Epsom, Malvern, Bedford and Bradford. Oundle were visited in 1932 and after WW2 matches took place with City of London, Eastbourne, Haberdashers, Highgate, Reading, St Dunstan's, St Lawrence, Trinity School, University College School, Whitgift, Lord Wandsworth College and in a three-way match at Eton, also with Bristol Grammar where a four member Otter team comprising **Guy Davis**, **Paul Goudie**, and **James Stewart** sharing a full program of individual events with the veteran **Brian Wiggington** (saved for the two relays) won the match. These matches were not only an excellent way in which new members could make their mark by recording times, but also an excellent recruitment vehicle for the Club. One of the most important officers of the Club during this period was the School's Secretary whose role was to maintain contact with the various schools and coordinate matches with them, usually in the summer months. In addition to swimming events, which the Club usually managed to win, there was diving until the 1960's and water-polo which the schools often won as the Otter team usually included at best just a few 3<sup>rd</sup> team players with swimmers who did not normally play, filling in the gaps. The Club acknowledges with gratitude, the kind hospitality received from the schools, with nice teas provided after the match. It was a matter of great regret within Otter when it was decided to abandon this long-standing series of matches, as with the increasing numbers of Masters swimming contests around the country, it was becoming impossible to send credible teams



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## OTTER TROPHIES

### APPENDIX 2: OTTER TROPHIES

Outside the club, there are a number of trophies that may be associated with Otter. At National level in England these include:

**Otter SC Trophy** – Fastest male senior swimmer in the 100m Freestyle in the ASA National Winter Championships. Originally presented by Otter SC for the Men's 100 yards Freestyle in 1895. It has been won by club members Charles Daniels in 1906 and 1907, Harold Annison in 1913, Freddie Dove in 1935, 1936, 1937 and Ron Roberts in 1953 and 1955.

**G.H. Rope Trophy** – Fastest male senior swimmer in the 200m Freestyle at the ASA National Winter Championships. Originally presented by George Rope, President ASA in 1897, it has been won by club members Harold Annison in 1924, Ron Roberts in 1953, Murray McLachlan in 1962 and Tony Jarvis in 1967 and 1968.

**J.A. Tyers Otter SC Trophy** – Originally presented by Otter SC for the National 500 yards championship, this was won outright (three times in a row) by J.H. Tyers between 1893 and 1896 and re-presented by him. When still awarded for 500 yards, it was won by club members Harold Annison in 1920 and Freddie Milton in 1930. It is now awarded to the highest ranked male junior swimmer in the 200m Freestyle in the ASA National Winter Championships.

**Dr Morgan Dockrell Trophy** – Originally presented for the National 220 yards Breaststroke Championship by Dr Morgan Dockrell, an Otter member, whose son Morgan Dockrell Jr was Captain of the Club in 1903 and 1904. It was won by club members John Davies in 1937, 1938 and 1946 and Roy Romain in 1947, 1948 and 1949. It is now awarded to the fastest male senior swimmer for 200m Breaststroke at the ASA National Winter Championships.

**Horace Davenport Cup -1500m Freestyle and Horace Davenport Cup – 400m Freestyle.** Both of these trophies were the gift of Horace Davenport, a member of Otter from 1880 to 1886 "this great gentlemen of early English swimming" as described by Pat Besford (see under Early Years) and President of the Swimming Association of Great Britain from 1880 to 1883 and of the now renamed Amateur Swimming Association from 1890 to 1894.

The 1500m trophy, when still awarded for the ASA National One Mile was won by club members Harold Annison in 1920 and Freddie Milton in 1931 and 1932. The 400m trophy when still awarded for the ASA 440 yards, was won by club members Harold Annison in 1920 and more recently by Tony Jarvis in 1968. Both of these trophies are now awarded at the ASA National Winter Championships.

**Otter SC Centenary Trophy** – Originally presented by Otter SC in their centenary year of 1969 for the National 220 yards Butterfly. It is now awarded to the fastest senior male senior swimmer for 200m Butterfly at the ASA National Winter Championships.

Outside of the national arena, further trophies were generously donated. The **Inter Services Championship Trophy** was presented by **W.A.H Buller**, an Otter Vice President from 1912 to 1921 and ASA President in 1928. In 1896, 1897 and 1898, **A.A. Green**, a leading Otter sprinter, won outright the 150 yards championship of London and in 1899 he presented this trophy to the Southern Counties ASA (SCASA) who since 1939, have used it as the **Green Cup for the Girls' 100m Backstroke**. Other trophies were donated to SCASA for the **Boys 100m Backstroke** by **Ronald Edgar**, Otter Captain 1926 to 1929; the **Women's 400m Freestyle** and **Boys 100m Breaststroke** by **Major D.D. Milne** Otter Water-Polo Captain in 1912 and 1919; the **Marx Cup for Inter-County Senior Competition**, by **Maurice Marx** Honorary Handicapper to Otter from 1933 to 1936 and Vice-President 1909 to 1938; the **Potts Cup** for the **SCASA Girls' Under 16 Diving Championship** by **H.E. Potts** an Otter member who won the National High Diving Championship and represented GB at the 1908 and 1912 Olympics while **R. Errington** another Otter diver who represented GB at the 1908 Olympics and presented the **SCASA Boys Under 14 Diving Cup**.

Otter Swimming Club itself remains the custodian and regular user of some very venerable trophies.

**Ladies Challenge Cup** - Presented in 1874 by Lady Friends of Members, this was originally for a Handicap distance of

approximately 180 yards to be contested four times a year. In 1874, there were only three names including H. J. Barron (see his profile under Early Years and J.J. Rope, the father of long-serving President George H Rope. Needing to inscribe four names each year resulted in every available space becoming filled. An imaginative solution was found in 1911, by encasing the venerable trophy with a silver wrapping. In 1959, this reverted to a contest swum just annually with the last name engraved in 1994. Its name is given to an annual 5 Lengths Handicap race. The now retired trophy sits in the Club archives.

**Brown Challenge Cup** – Presented in 1889 by Mr. G.S. Brown, this was originally for a Handicap distance of approximately 120 yards and contested twice annually. It is now an annually awarded trophy for a Men's 100m Backstroke.

**Macdonald Challenge Cup** – Presented by A.R. Macdonald Esq. in 1893, this was originally for an annual Handicap race of approximately 60 yards. This is now awarded annually for a two length Handicap race.

**5<sup>th</sup> Humphreys Challenge Cup** – presented by Mr. J.D. Humphreys, who seems to have been both a patient and generous man. It was originally presented for a scratch race over 100 yards. The 1<sup>st</sup> cup was won outright by A.A. Green in 1895-6-7. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cup was won outright by R.G.F. Cohen in 1898 – 99 – 1900 – 01. The 3<sup>rd</sup> cup was won outright by T.B. Tartakover in 1908-9-10. The 4<sup>th</sup> cup, like the previous three, was presented by the generous Mr. J.D. Humphries. Being both large and made of fragile silver, it eventually collapsed and was melted down to become the 5<sup>th</sup> Humphries Challenge Cup and is now awarded annually to the winning man in a 100m scratch race.

**Thorne-Thorne Challenge Cup** – presented by Dr. L.C. Thorne-Thorne in 1896, this was originally for the member "securing the best average" in Club Open Water Handicaps in any one season. The last name inscribed on it was in 2005, at which point there was no room for any more inscriptions and the seemingly "retired" trophy now resides in the Club archives, being replaced in its purpose by The Sachs Challenge Cup.



## APPENDIX 2: OTTER TROPHIES

**Collis Brown Challenge Cup** – presented by Major Collis Brown in 1899 for a Handicap distance of approximately 360 yards. It is now awarded to the winning man in the Club's annual 400m scratch race.

**George H Rope Challenge Trophy** – A photograph of this iconic trophy has graced the front cover of the two previous Club Histories. Presented in 1913 by past and present members in commemoration of 21 years Presidency of George H Rope. Awarded ever since to the member "securing the best Average in Club Competitions. For many years the winner was awarded a silver replica of the trophy.

supporter of the Club, who for 44 years (1870 to 1913) presented prizes and entertained members and friends." This is probably the prettiest of all of the Club's trophies. It was and still is awarded to the winner of an Open Water Handicap distance of 880 yards. The first winner in 1921 was the great Harold Annon. J.W. Rope was the father of long-serving President George H Rope.

**Sachs Challenge Cup** – presented in 1923 by the wife of Frank Sachs to commemorate the life of her husband Frank Sachs (whose pen portrait appears in the press etching of an Otter Open Water race in the Early Years). Frank Sachs joined in 1875, was Honorary

a choice of jumping in off the highest board, with their knees tucked under their chins and entering the water bottom first with the aim of maximum water displacement. This manoeuvre, familiar to most of the swimming youth of the period, occasioned great hilarity among neutral onlookers. However the judges were made of sterner stuff and awarded "nil points" to all such contributions, on the grounds that dives needed to enter the water headfirst. Accordingly, Robert Feast, who undertook diving duties at some schools matches and who performed a normal dive, duly wrote himself into Otter history by becoming the last winner of the Diving Cup. Recognising the frivolity during that last competition, it was no surprise when the event was dropped from the Club's calendar. The cup is now awarded annually to the individual earning the most Open Water Handicap points.

**George H Rope Golf Challenge Cup** – Presented by George H Rope in 1923 for a contest "over 18 holes medal play under handicap (limit 24); a handicap limit that has been waived in recent years. At time of writing this cup has only been won once by a lady member, namely Mrs Margaret (Meg) Stewart, member since 1985 who won it in 2010 by just playing to her handicap.

**Synge-Hutchinson Challenge Cup** – presented in 1931 by Col. E.D.B. Synge-Hutchinson VC. CB originally for a Handicap distance of approximately 30 yards and open to members not under 45 years of age who have been in membership for 10 years. Honorary and non-active members were "eligible to compete". This cup is still contested under these terms, but now over 50 metres. Col. Synge-Hutchinson came to Otter late in life, joining in 1930 in his 70<sup>th</sup> year and dying in 1940. He was born Edward Douglas Browne in India and in 1904, took the name but not the title of his maternal uncle Sir Edward Synge-Hutchinson. He was the last officer of the British Regular Army to win the Victoria Cross in the lifetime of Queen Victoria. His citation refers to an "Act Of Bravery" on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1900 at Geluk in South Africa, with the enemy 400 yards away, helping a Sergeant who had lost his mount, onto the back of his own horse carrying him to a place of safety three quarters of a mile away under heavy fire. He then helped a fellow officer to mount by holding his horse,



George H Rope Challenge Trophy

**Annon Challenge Cup** – presented in 1914 by F.E Annon (perhaps the father of the Annon brothers) it was originally to be for a Handicap Breaststroke race over approximately 120 yards. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annon CC is now awarded annually on a shared basis to the male and female winners of a 100 metres Breaststroke scratch race.

**J.W. Rope Memorial Trophy** – Pre-WW2 Club Diaries note this as "presented by Members in memory of an old Otter and generous

Handicapper from 1879 to 2002 and a Vice-President of the Club. This was originally for the winner of "the Scratch Diving Contest" and was competed for until the 1960's. Your scribe, late from the office, arrived in time to witness the closing stage of what must have been the last such contest. This was the culminating "Voluntary" dive, with marks given for "degree of difficulty". Most of the contestants were Otter 1<sup>st</sup> team swimmers, with distinguished county and international swimming pedigrees. To a man, they elected

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which was restive under heavy fire and finally he carried a Lance-Corporal out of the action. For a period of seven months he commanded the 14<sup>th</sup> Hussars during the Second Boer War. Among other honours, in 1911 he was made a Freeman of the City of London and also under his birth name he became a CB (Companion of the Order of the Bath). His Victoria Cross is displayed at the 14<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> King's Hussars Museum, Preston, Lancashire, England.

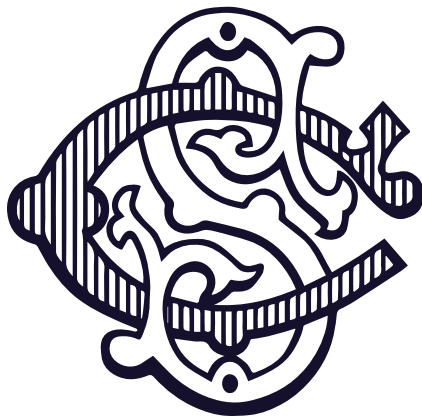
**Baldon Challenge Cup** – presented by the Club in 1934 in memory of A.E. Baldon who served jointly as Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary from 1906 to 1934; the longest holder of both such offices in the Club's history. Originally awarded for a Handicap distance of approximately 240 yards, it is now awarded annually for a 150m Handicap.

**Jonas Cup** – In 1870 J.J. Rope, brother of George H. Rope won a silver cup in a Club handicap at Marylebone Baths. Mr Alfred Jonas returned the cup to the Club in 1935. For many years it was awarded for the best aggregate gained by a swimmer in a series of handicaps held during the winter months. It is now the 200 metres handicap trophy.

This listing of Club trophies has focused on those presented prior to WW2 for the simple reason that their history is helpfully summarized in the pre-war Club Diaries. Since the war there have been a number of newer trophies presented through the generosity of members. Names commemorated thereon include Alex Ferguson, Club Captain in 1996, who lost his life in a mountaineering accident, Arthur Batt, our Club Coach for 16 highly successful

years, C.G. Forsberg, our famous open water swimmer, Peter Hodge our former Hon Handicapper from 1960-1967, Sir Pyers Mostyn, who lost his life in 1955 while still in his prime, J.H.R. (Roddy) Haswell, our former international water-polo star and 1938 Olympian, Jack Cunningham, President for 21 years, John Millner, member since 1949, Ronald Edgar, Vice President for 15 years and Dr. David Craig our skilled and popular 3<sup>rd</sup> Team water-polo captain who lost his life in the Thames. The Club is grateful for all these kindly presented trophies that are competed for every year.



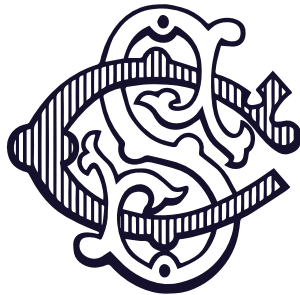


1869 - 2019

**150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

# OTTER SWIMMING CLUB

FOUNDED 1869



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