



HISTORY OF THE
OTTER SWIMMING CLUB

1869 - 1994



Front Cover: *The George Rope Average Trophy*

Club competitions have been run on a handicap basis since 1870 to encourage swimmers of all ages and abilities to take part. The Average Trophy has been awarded annually since 1911 to the swimmer gaining the highest number of place points in the season.



Houseboat 'Dabchick' at Shiplake, probably about 1905
J.W. Cunningham in middle standing top deck. G.H. Rope second from right, lower deck.
T.G. Batt hanging on, lower left.

A HISTORY OF THE OTTER SWIMMING CLUB

FORWARD

This booklet outlines the history of Otter Swimming Club, its activities, and many of its personalities. For the first 100 years the editor is indebted to the late Dr. Carmichael A. Young, who wrote the history for the Centenary in 1969. He collated a massive amount of detail and, although much of it has had to be omitted from this later history for reasons of space, the editor has relied heavily on his pioneering work. This later edition would have been a far more arduous task if it had not been for Young's careful research and editing in the 1960s.

In his foreword, Young wrote that the spirit of the Club was "quite intangible and undefinable" but he hoped the reader would glean some hint of "the fellowship and camaraderie which have cemented the members together over such a long period and enabled the Club to remain in being". Otter has changed dramatically since he wrote those words but this spirit has proved particularly invaluable since 1969. In the last 25 years there has been a decline of the Club in top-class swimming and water-polo. For many years until the 1970s the membership had included a host of current internationals and Olympic competitors. However, this decline has been offset by the success of Masters swimming, which Otter introduced to Britain and in which it has remained amongst the premier clubs in England. There has also been the growth of popularity of multi-sports activities among members, the admission of women, so strengthening the base of the Club, and the high numbers who attend regular training sessions. The difficulties of getting pool time during these 25 years and the fact that Otter has frequently changed its venues, so militating against attracting a regular flow of younger members, have also been surmounted.

Your editor apologises in advance for

inaccuracies, omissions and, inevitably, facts and people have been missed. However, he is indebted to many members and former members who have contributed details of the last 25 years, particularly John Iliffe, the President in our 125th year, and James Stewart, the Club's Honorary Secretary, who have kept the minute books and annual reports. These have formed an accurate document of events. The Club must be particularly grateful not only to its present officers but also to their predecessors, who have earned the gratitude of generations of members for their service to the Club, often in difficult circumstances. This continuity of the Club's traditional activities may arise partly from the remarkable fact that, following three Presidents in 1869-1871, there were only three more elected to the Otter chair over the next eighty years from 1871 to 1951. Many of the sporting and social features of the Club stretch back generations and give the present member a genuine sense of continuity with the past.

FOUNDATION OF THE CLUB

Otter began, like so many English sports clubs, in the late 19th century when many activities began to be codified. Although swimming has been a human accomplishment for thousands of years it did not rank as an organised sport until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Swimming clubs in general are not of great antiquity and one cannot claim that Otter, founded in 1869, is the oldest. In the south, Brighton S.C. (1860) and the Serpentine Club (1864) have well-founded claims to seniority. In the north, the Durham City and Northumberland amateur swimming clubs have records dating back to 1861. It may be that the Cambridge University S.C. was founded in 1855, when the university bathing sheds on the Cam were built, but there are no archives to show whether there was continuous existence. Swimming clubs associated with schools or universities may indeed have existed even earlier.

The names of countless organisations are to be found in the old records of championship races but only a tiny fraction of these names survive. Amongst these survivors is Otter S.C. Names associated with the Swimming

Association of Great Britain (1874-1885) and its predecessor the Metropolitan Swimming Association (1869-1873) were Zephyr, German Gymnasium, North London, South London, South-East London, Regent, St. John's Wood, Alliance, Camden, Putney, National, East London, Albert, Dreadnought, Lancaster, Ilex, Portsmouth, Amateur and Liverpool.

A fairly comprehensive history of the Otter S.C. appeared in the columns of *The Sportsman* on 25th January 1911, just prior to the Club dinner to celebrate the 21 years of George Rope's presidency. This gave a large number of details of Otter members from its foundation, and quotations from this article are set out below, with apologies to the unnamed contributor. The Club's minute book for that era has not, unfortunately, survived.

"It was at a meeting held in the Board Room of the Marylebone Baths on 6th August 1869 that it was decided to form a club, to be known as the 'Leander S.C.'"

Present at that gathering were Messrs. E.S. Foot (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."

At the end of the minutes we find the signature of Walter Terriss. On 5th 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 suggested, but the final selection was left to the general body of members. This matter was settled on 4th February 1870, when 'Otter' was chosen, and the motto altered to *Labor ipse voluptas* - work itself is a pleasure.

The first written report of the Club in municipal records had appeared before the change of name in the St. Marylebone Public Baths and Washhouses Committee minutes for

10th August 1869.

"The Clerk reported that a number of young men using the first-class swimming bath had formed a club to be called the Leander Swimming Club and suggested it would be an encouragement to the club if the Commissioners offered a prize to be swum for by the members. It was resolved that a Cup of the value of Two Guineas be presented to the Leander Swimming Club as a prize to be swum for."

Edward Smith Foot continued to hold office as Superintendent of Marylebone Baths until 1889.

Otter played a significant role in the foundation of the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA). In 1869, the year the Club was founded, a congress was held at the German gymnasium in King's Cross, London. This gymnasium, which still exists and is now a listed building, was the venue in the late 19th century for the founding of many governing bodies of sport, including a forerunner of the British Olympic Association (BOA). 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 subsequently 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. On 7th April 1884 Otter resigned from the SAGB and together with eight or nine other clubs set up the Amateur Swimming Union (ASU). The Badminton Library book on *Swimming* (published in 1893) records the feud between the two organisations - 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 Cygnus Club, both sides met on 3rd March 1886 and they resolved to establish the Amateur Swimming Association 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 for more than 100 years to be the governing body of swimming in England, with Otter being one of its most distinguished members.

The Club has been in continuous operation since its foundation, apart from the periods of the two world wars. The pattern of weekly meetings from May to October on Tuesday evenings was carried on for more than a century. In the early records we find that a handicap race was held on most Tuesdays, in which all attending members were expected to take part. The pattern was varied by open-water races over longer distances at Shiplake, Brighton, Broxbourne, or in the Welsh Harp.

In November 1942, fearful that the Club might dissolve in the disruptions of war, the President placed an advertisement in the personal columns 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.

In the *London Evening News*, Saturday 5th December 1942, appeared the following:

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 St. George's Baths where Service and other members still on the active list meet to exchange news and views. Good hunting to the Otter officials who are trying to trace old members, now scattered throughout the world.

The venue mentioned in the cutting was The Victoria in Buckingham Palace Road, the original meeting-place of members after the swimming meetings at St. George's Baths. In a very short time after the war the Club was carrying out all its usual activities and laying the foundation for success in the ensuing years.

CENTENARY YEAR

1969 was one of the most momentous and demanding years in the history of the Club. It

had been decided several years previously that Otter would mount a series of events to commemorate the occasion and a Centenary committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Norman Fitzsimon, the President. The other members were E.N. Kimber, L.W. Milton, Dr C.A.Young, W.H. Lewis, D. Warnford-Davis, and C. Doxat who, despite his relative youth compared with other members of the committee, was particularly praised by the President in his report. Fitzsimon wrote: "Throughout the year, his energy, enthusiasm and clear anticipation and appreciation of all the problems involved have been a great example to us all".

1969 was a year when everyone had to work for the benefit of the Club because of the frequency of events, both sporting and social. The Centenary Banquet and Ball on 11th April attracted 360 people to the London Hilton Hotel for a memorable evening, which also made a profit of £367.1s.11d.

On 6th May there was the first of the major galas at Shell with Otter drawing the men's match with Stoke Newington, a perennial rival in the 1960s, and Southampton winning the women's event. In the water-polo match Otter was defeated by Sutton and Cheam.

Ten days later, there was a reception and cocktail party at County Hall, arranged by Desmond Plummer, Otter member and the leader of the Greater London Council. There followed the usual series of summer events, such as the inter-club galas, the open-water races and water-polo matches. These built up to the Centenary Gala on 27-28th September at Crystal Palace, where the 50-metre indoor pool, the first in London, had been opened some five years earlier. The competition was of international significance with BBC TV screening the two-day meeting and widespread coverage in the national press. The final points scores were: Otter (England) 53; Warrender (Scotland) 47; Schwimm-club Düsseldorf (West Germany) 35, Zwemclub Scaldis (Belgium) 33, Vlaardingse Zwemclub (Holland) 31, Mulhouse Olympic Natation (France) 21. Otter beat Scaldis in the water-polo match and the ASA water-polo final was included in the gala. The outstanding Otter swimmer was Tony Jarvis, who won both the 110 yards and 440 yards freestyle and swam in both the freestyle and

medley relay victories. A novel race was a one-length handicap between Otters who had represented, or been reserves, for Britain in the Olympic Games. The line-up with the Olympic years was: Roddy Haswell (1948)-the handicap winner, Freddie Milton (1936), Roy Romain (1948), Ron Roberts (1952 and 1956), Athole Still (1952) and Tony Milton (1960).

There was also a centenary dinner, in which Austin Rawlinson, the ASA President, was the Guest of Honour, and a dance at the Dolphin Square Blue Pool Restaurant. Despite all these events, the usual club activity continued with regular training and competition and the series of water-polo matches. The Otter first team had its best water-polo year since it won the National title in 1964. The first team missed promotion to the first division of the Premier Invitation League by one goal in their final match and were beaten semi-finalists in the ASA Championships at Everton. Both the 2nd and 3rd teams, where Dr. David Craig was an inspiring leader, also played consistently.

All Otters could be proud of their efforts in the most exhausting of all years when the Club showed that it was at the forefront of British swimming. In the programme for the centenary gala, Fitzsimon wrote: "However, a youthful sport does not mean that only youth can participate. We believe in encouraging active participation in swimming and water-polo into and well past middle age." No one at Otter was then to know how these words were unknowingly to point out the future emphasis of the Club.

MEMBERSHIP

George Rope, in his speech at the 1911 dinner, stressed that the newly-joined member was told that to be a good Otter he must put the good of amateur swimming first, the Club second and himself last. Although some people may say these attitudes have changed, Otter still attracts people who are not only proficient swimmers but are also prepared to help their fellow members and the sport.

Membership numbers in this century have usually ranged between 200 and 400. They have been boosted from time to time by the presence of juniors and the large numbers who could

purchase life membership after subscribing for a certain length of time, e.g. 10 years. In 1922 there were 160 paying members and 90 'honorarys'. In 1932, there were 241 plus 60 'honorarys'. The peak was probably in 1955, with over 450, a year in which 66 (including 37 juniors) joined Otter. The 1993 total was 263 and rising, with the intake fairly evenly divided between men and women and with a spread of ages from 20-75. The average age of active members is 33.

Membership fees have risen steeply, largely because bath hire has increased dramatically. Competitive tendering of local authority facilities has been a major factor in this escalation of costs. In 1993, it was 58% of income compared with 15% in 1955. Over the same period the annual sub. has grown to £108 from one guinea (£1.05p).

Members have come from a variety of backgrounds and the Club's location in central London has always meant that it has attracted a large number of visitors while they have been staying in the capital. Some, like Murray ('Tich') McLachlan, of South Africa, the 1960 Olympic 400 and 1500 metres finalist, and David Dickson, captain of the Australian Olympic team in 1964, have been world-class competitors. Others may not have had such an eminent pedigree but the Club has gained enormously, in both sporting and social terms, from their presence. It is one of the delights of Otter that the Club has such an international membership.

One of the most controversial and far-reaching events in the history of the Club was the admission of women as members. It seems remarkable, looking back from 1994, that it should have taken the Club 107 years to make this change. When one thinks of the immense contribution females have made over the last 18 years, not only as competitors but also as administrators, it is extraordinary that it should have taken the Club so long to follow the practice of the vast majority, not only in swimming but in other sports.

As Otter gradually lost its dominating position in national swimming after the Centenary year the committee investigated how to arrest the decline. However, the attitude of some members was clear even as late as September 1971 when Norman Fitzsimon,



National Girls' 16-17 Freestyle Championship Team 1976
D. Eva, K. Llewellyn, S. Pheby, C. Fletcher

the President, raised the possibility of admitting women at a committee meeting. The minutes record: "Various members stated most strongly that this should not occur under any circumstances". The truth was that for generations Otter had flourished by being able to attract, through its reputation, a continuing flow of male recruits from schools, universities and even from abroad. When this began to dry up, for reasons explained elsewhere in this history, the Club had to adopt drastic remedies.

Derek Spratt, who took over the coaching in 1974 from Kelvin Juba, was in the forefront of advocating women being allowed to join the Club. He pointed out that to represent the Borough of Westminster in galas Otter needed to be mixed. Women, who were already members of his squad, had already been admitted on Tuesday nights. As Eric Kimber, Fitzsimon's successor as President, pointed out at one committee meeting: "They are not members of the Club but we are treating them as such". Spratt also argued that it was difficult to get boys to join when their sisters belonged elsewhere.

A committee under Charles Doxat examined whether the Club should stay male-only, become fully-mixed or adopt some compromise position. A key piece of research was to circulate other leading clubs that had become mixed to inquire whether they would change back: 85 per cent said they would not. The sub-committee recommended opening the Club to female swimmers under the age of 21. However, at a committee in April 1976, Paul Thorogood proposed that females of any age be admitted and this was carried by the committee and endorsed by the AGM. Doxat regards the decision as the most significant in his six years as President.

That summer an Otter quartet of Christine Fletcher, Dawn Eva, Sonia Pheby and Kim Llewellyn won the National 16/17 age group women's freestyle relay. Pat Besford, *The Daily Telegraph's* swimming correspondent, summed up the decision: "Their victory demonstrated that the decision of the Club to admit the fairer sex was more than justified." That was just the start. In 1982, Sonia Pheby became the first woman to be elected to the committee of the Club. Sonia is not only

celebrated in Otter history for this reason. On one occasion, she, her sister and two brothers formed an entire relay squad against Eton. Over the last 18 years, women have become so much part of the Club that it seems amazing that for 107 years they were allowed to attend social activities only out of condescension and were not allowed to become members.

The presence of women has also added to the popularity of the social events. For instance, more people have attended the annual dinner in the early 1990s than for many years and this is partly because of the interest that women have shown in coming to the function.

HEADQUARTERS

St Marylebone	1869-1889
St George's	1890-1930
Marshall Street	1931
Lambeth	1932-1939
Paddington	1946-1947
Chelsea	1948-1963
Shell Centre, Waterloo	1963-1975
Seymour Place Baths	1975-1981
Queen Mother Centre	1981-

By all accounts the old St Marylebone Baths were very small, but the Club obviously had a strong district following and flourished greatly. When a new bath was opened in Buckingham Palace Road, Otter moved there, although in 1903 the Committee asked the bath superintendent to fill the water-level above the rail so that a decent game of water-polo could be enjoyed. In 1914-1919 the Army took the bath over and the Club made urgent representations to get it back. Meetings were held at Fulham for a few months but members were relieved when they were again back at St. George's. The Club spent only one year at Marshall Street (1931) and then moved to Lambeth. Here there was a small second-class bath and a 40-yard bath for water-polo. The after-swim arrangements were nearby at The Three Stags and again the Club flourished for a decade. Lambeth Baths were destroyed by bombing in World War II and, after 1945, Otter established itself at Paddington, where again there were two baths, the handicaps being held in the smaller pool and swimming and water-polo matches in the larger.

The Club's social headquarters were in

Great Portland Street, some distance away, and in May 1948 a move was made to Chelsea. The winter operations had to be at Marshall Street and this continued in 1949.

In 1950 summer and winter meetings were at Chelsea, and a friendly atmosphere was established in The Beehive in Chelsea Manor Street. Towards the end of the decade 1950-1960 the water-polo team was growing in strength and the opinion was expressed that playing in a narrow bath, such as Chelsea, was preventing our teams from gaining higher honours. In 1960, the year in which Otter reached the final rounds of both the National and SCASA Water-Polo competitions, many of the games were played at Nine Elms, a larger pool.

A search was made for an alternative headquarters, but no satisfactory solution could be proposed until new baths were built. In 1963, as a result of successful negotiations between A.D.H. Plummer and others, Shell International agreed to rent the Club their magnificent new bath near Waterloo on one night of the week. Much of the socialising was then transferred to the Ordnance Arms, later the Jubilee Tavern.

The use of Shell was extended to two nights of the week in 1972 but, two years later, the Club began using the Seymour Hall on other nights of the week. In 1975, in an attempt to get support from Westminster Council, the Club moved its registered address to Seymour Place, although its physical headquarters remained at Shell. The Club used several other venues, both for swimming and water-polo, such as Marshall Street, St.Mary's Hospital, and Porchester Baths while it waited for the Queen Mother Centre to be opened. This occurred in May 1981 and Otter celebrated the event by staging a gala at the new pool. The Club also officially moved its headquarters there although Seymour Hall was still used for water-polo. In December 1984, the Club lost the use of Shell but this was regained four years later. Therefore in the Club's 125th year we have the use of two pools for a total of three nights a week, both conveniently close to railway and underground stations and with few problems for parking.



1967 National Freestyle Championship Team
D. Dickson, T. Jarvis, J. Stewart, J. Gordon

SWIMMING

COMPETITIVE SWIMMING SINCE 1945

For many years Otter was the premier club in Britain. Even when it was not at the forefront, it was, at least, always among the leading clubs. It is curious that it had probably reached its greatest eminence in British sport in 1960s, immediately before the period when its flow of internationals and Olympic competitors began to dry up. Although Otter won the Henry Benjamin National memorial trophy, awarded to the most successful club in the ASA championships, four times in the 1930s, the Club was at its peak between 1945 and the centenary year of 1969. The Henry Benjamin Trophy was won in 1946 (a tie), 1947-50, 1953, 1955, 1962, 1964 and 1965. There were also a cluster of successes in both the freestyle and medley relay events.

Roy Romain took ASA breaststroke titles in 1947 and 1948 and a European gold medal in 1947. A.D. (Bert) Kinnear set a British 110 yards backstroke record in December 1947 with 61.1 seconds, a prelude to his becoming

National Technical Officer of the ASA, where he worked with common sense and diligence, despite the presence of many obstacles. Roger Franks, another distinguished backstroker, also competed in the Bologna Trophy, between the four home countries. This was followed by further successes during the 1950s when Otter, led by Ron Roberts, a member of the 1952 and 1956 Olympic teams, continued winning several medals.

However, the Club probably was at its strongest in the early 1960s when a member had to be an international or very close to that level to be selected for the first team. On freestyle, there were competitors like Painton Cowan, who recorded 57.1 seconds for 100 metres freestyle, Tony Milton, a member of the British 4 x 200 metres relay squad which finished fourth at the 1960 Olympics, Jim Kennedy, who captained the British team at the 1963 World Student Games, and Murray McLachlan, double Olympic finalist for South Africa in 1960, Oxford University President and ASA 220 yards freestyle champion. On breaststroke, the Club had George Hill, David Hawkes, Pong

Pin Seah, who represented Singapore at the Commonwealth Games, and Malcolm Tucker, a bronze medalist at the 1966 Commonwealth Games in Jamaica.

The best backstroke swimmer of this era, but also an individual medley finalist at the 1966 Commonwealth Games, was John Gordon. He was a member of the last Otter squad to win the ASA freestyle title, alongside James Stewart, David Dickson and Tony Jarvis. With the addition of specialists like Neil Oldridge from South Africa and Roger Lloyd-Mostyn on butterfly, Otter made a consistent impact not just on national, but on European swimming.

For many years, Otter took part in the annual Van Scaldis trophy event in Antwerp, a competition, which was for the unofficial European club championship. Fifteen clubs were invited. The times of each club's swimmers in all the events were aggregated to make the total. The events were: 100 and 200 metres freestyle, 200 metres breaststroke, 100 metres backstroke, 100 metres butterfly and two relays. Otter was second in 1960 and then won for three years in a row, so earning outright possession of the cup. However, Otter gave back the cup to the Antwerp club to be used as perpetual trophy. Otter promptly won it again in 1964. The Club never did as well again, although it continued competing for many years.

The change in the Club's domination of British swimming occurred during the 1960s. In this decade several local councils built new pools, sometimes of Olympic length, and then appointed qualified coaches, giving local clubs subsidised water-time to develop local talent. Otter had always relied on a maximum of two club sessions a week, with individual swimmers training by themselves or at other clubs to supplement these formal work-outs. Many had to swim on other days during public sessions in pools which, until the 1980s, rarely had lanes for serious swimmers.

However, with the growing volume of exercise required for national success squads of swimmers training every day and frequently twice a day became commonplace. As ever in sport, success breeds success and prospective international swimmers began gravitating to where other leading competitors were training and where the facilities and coaching were

available.

In September 1971, Kelvin Juba, then the Club coach, wrote to the committee, saying: "If we do not expand our club evenings from one [at that time Otter was using Shell only on Tuesdays] to at least three evenings a week we will not recruit swimmers either of the potential or the calibre we have been used to. Quite simply we do not have the facilities. Training in pools during public time is fast becoming a thing of the past."

He pointed out: "The outstanding ability of Tony Jarvis has only covered up the fact that in the last few years we have not had the number of top swimmers that we had..."

Juba proposed that the Club approach Shell to see if it would sponsor a full-time coach for Otter and its own employees. Shell could not do this, although it could offer a second club night on Thursday from 1972. However, a late start of 8.15 p.m. meant that this did not prove popular.

In retrospect, it was remarkable that Otter continued to keep as many leading swimmers as it did, an indication both of the affection and loyalty it generated in many members and the support Otter gave them. In 1971, Raymond Harris, a freestyle sprinter, and John Blake, 100 metres freestyle represented Britain and Downie Brown (100 metres freestyle) was picked for Scotland. In 1972, Lennie Norris, formerly with Barracuda, just failed to make the British team for the Olympics while Steve Bunce was fifth in the National 100 metres backstroke. The men's freestyle relay team was fourth in the final, despite the absence of two of its fastest members. In the Van Scaldis trophy, Otter finished sixth after lying second throughout the contest, only to be disqualified in the final medley. Dave Hembrow, an Olympian in 1968, was second in the 100 metres freestyle and Mike Foskett second in the individual medley.

In 1973 Neil Dexter, runner-up in the ASA 1500 metres, represented Britain at the World Student Games and Hembrow captained England against Wales. The following year Mike Saunders was third in the ASA 1500 metres. However, Bunce moved to Cardiff towards the end of the season, making his opportunities to compete for the Club less

frequent. Several swimmers were also past their best and Juba resigned to take up a coaching job at Bishops Stortford. A new look had to be adopted.

Juba's replacement was Derek Spratt, a prime mover in bringing women into the Club. Spratt built up a squad of talented younger swimmers. In 1975, he, Charles Doxat and Martin Flash, in one of Martin's final acts before resigning from his first spell as club Treasurer, presented a paper to the committee to transform the training. The plan was to use Seymour Hall on three nights of the week with swimming still continuing at Shell on Tuesdays. One advantage of using Seymour Place was that support from Westminster City Council might be forthcoming only if Otter were using borough facilities. Flash pointed out to the committee that the scheme would generate numbers, create a competitive element in the junior section and reestablish Otter as a competitive force.

With women being admitted to the Club in 1976, Otter began impressively. The Club finished first in the ASA 16/17 year-old women's freestyle relay and three Otter members, Mike Saunders, Dave Skepper and Steve Bunce, took part in the final Olympic trials. There was also a clutch of talented youngsters. In both 1976 and 1977, the squad went to the Hall of Fame pool at Fort Lauderdale to attend the U.S. Swim Coaches forum. In 1977, with George Dudley helping Spratt, the girls came second in the National age-group championships while Barry Porter came second in the 14/15 years 100 metres freestyle and James Darrah was third in the 16/17 years 100 metres breaststroke.

However, a series of events in 1978 led to the break-up of the squad. Roger Sharpley, who was captain of Cambridge University in 1974 and then became the hard-working club Captain from 1976 to 1980, had expressed his distress the previous September that a number of the squad were not available to swim first-claim for Otter. There was a feeling among the swimmers that they were more members of Spratt's squad than members of Otter. In the change-over from winter to summer schedules, there was a discontinuity in pool-time bookings during the spring break. The Club promptly lost a number of its better swimmers to the

Barnet Copthall scheme that had just started. Out of an original group of 30 only 10 remained, and Spratt said he would not be continuing with the squad.

The Club's 1978 annual report said: "The Club has not recovered from this blow and indeed it seems unlikely that Westminster can expect to sustain a top competitive swimming team without substantial changes in policy in regard to utilisation of both pools and coaches".

Since then there have been several outstanding National swimmers but it would be idle to pretend that the depth of strength has been what it was for so many years. Otter was sixth out of 13 teams in the Van Scaldis trophy in 1982, the year when Julian Plumley finished first in two Southern Counties age-group freestyle races. The following year, he was first in the Van Scaldis 100 metres freestyle while in 1984 the men came fourth in the medley team and sixth in the freestyle relay at the Southern Counties Championships.

The Otter members recognised the inevitability of the situation. At a meeting in 1984 members unanimously agreed with the statement: "The present system allowed a reasonable competitive standard at a senior and masters level, and that any move towards a competitive coaching programme would entail recruiting a full complement of age-group swimmers to help finance such a programme, and this might change the spirit of Otter Swimming Club."

The competitive emphasis has therefore been firstly on Masters swimming and on the multi-sports disciplines. However, there are some members who hope that one day, given the right circumstances, the flourishing Masters and recreational programmes can co-exist with junior and senior swimming development schemes that will allow Otter once again to have its representatives in Olympic Games and international championships.



Lisbon, Portugal, saying that he had "felt honoured to be one of your members". Professor emeritus of psychiatry at the University of California, Los Angeles, Arthur graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, and Harvard Medical School before undertaking paediatrics and family medicine in Hawaii for several years. The journal of the American Medical Association said he was "perhaps best known for his studies of psychiatric disorders among naval personnel, particularly on the relationships of life change and physical stress to performance, health and disease".

Arthur was a founder and chairman of the Masters Swimming Program of the Amateur Athletic Union, the governing body for amateur sport in the United States, and was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in May 1990.

MASTERS SWIMMING

Otters can be deservedly proud of their central role in the invention, promotion and development of Masters Swimming. Not only is an Otter credited with having started Masters swimming at Amarillo, Texas, in 1970 but Otter ran the first event in the United Kingdom in 1972 and at the time of the Club's 125th anniversary can still claim to be one of the foremost Masters clubs in the country. Members of the Club are world, European and British champions and record-holders and the Club possesses a depth of ability that in 1993 resulted in almost 40 members attending the GB championships. As the Club enters its 125th year the ASA has 4007 registered competitive Masters swimmers, showing just how far this area of the sport has come in just over 20 years. In 1993 the ASA made the inaugural Cherriman award, for services to Masters swimming, to Otter.

It was an American, Ransom J. Arthur MD, who conceived the idea while swimming with Otter during a posting to London in 1967. His widow, Frances, wrote to the Club after her husband's death on 28th October 1989, in

If Arthur instigated Masters' Swimming in the United States, then it was the suggestion in February 1972, of another Otter, Kelvin Juba, the then club coach, that the Club should hold a Masters' gala. Kelvin, who in the words of Eric Kimber, the President at that time, had "unbounded enthusiasm for the project", was also at that time editing *The Swimming Times*, the official magazine of the Amateur Swimming Association. The ASA's Secretary was Norman Sarsfield, who swam with Otter in the early 1970s, when the ASA was based in Gray's Inn Road before buying property in Loughborough. He too was keen for a club to try a pilot scheme. The Otter committee generally thought the plan "excellent" but recognised that "it may be possible that the ASA has us running a pilot scheme and then, if successful, takes it from us". They were prophetic words.

The first Masters event in Britain was held at the City University pool in 1972. Four hundred clubs were circulated but there were still complaints from some swimmers that they had not known the event was being held. There were 80 competitors, ranging from 25 years-old to 68. By special permission of the ASA

amateurs and professionals were allowed to swim together in the initial championships, although this dispensation was to prove controversial in subsequent years.

Otter, which had a total membership of 343 in that year, provided not only the officials but also the financial support - the Club actually made a small profit on the event, which everyone regarded as a success. The ambition was clearly stated in the official programme: "The Masters Championships in America have now become an annual national event with a following of many thousands of swimmers and it is our hope that it will develop along similar lines in this country".

This was splendidly fulfilled in subsequent years with Otter members being primarily responsible for the growth. They were helped by many people and organisations. One was John Lovesey, the Sports Editor of *The Sunday Times*, whose newspaper gave regular editorial coverage of the event and also provided sponsorship. John was so enthusiastic about the project that he even wrote a book *Swimming - a lifelong activity*, using physiological testing on several Otters including Charles Doxat, Bob Burn, James Stewart and Gerry Forsberg, to demonstrate the benefits of regular swimming. Allied Bakeries sponsored the event in 1980, Sun Life from 1982 to 1986 and the City of Westminster gave valuable administrative and financial help prior to the introduction of competitive tendering for leisure facilities.

The event grew and grew. Relays were added in 1975, when the championships were held at Marshall Street Baths, and the ASA, as had been anticipated 10 years previously, finally saw how successful Masters Swimming was and incidentally how much money it was missing from registration fees. It started its own championships at York in 1982 and these led to the British Masters, the European Masters and World Masters. At the first World Masters in Brisbane in 1988 Roy Romain took



DAVID SKIDMORE

David Skidmore joined Otter in 1960 after gaining a Swimming Blue at Cambridge. He has been a moving spirit in the formation of the Howard Beale Club (named after an Otter Vice-President 1921-1926) of former Oxford and Cambridge swimmers and water-polo players.

Skidmore received an OBE in the 1985 Birthday Honours List for his work in the Brighton hotel bombing in 1984. David, a consultant surgeon, was staying in a nearby hotel when a bomb planted by the IRA exploded at the Grand Hotel during the Conservative Party Conference. Hearing the blast, he grabbed his track-suit and running shoes that he had laid out for jogging in the morning and ran to the hotel. Amid the chaos of that morning, he was lowered with two firemen down a void in the hotel caused by the blast to help Sir Donald MacLean, the chairman of the Scottish Conservatives, who was wounded. With water cascading down from the hoses and a fog of dust enveloping the front of the hotel, the trio worked for 2 hours to free Sir Donald. Skidmore also went to help John Wakeham, the Party's Chief Whip, and tended Norman Tebbit, giving him an intravenous drip before the politician was taken to hospital. He also found the dead body of Sir Anthony Berry, the MP for Enfield Southgate, and spoke to Eric Taylor, the chairman of the Conservative Party's North-West Area, before Taylor died from injuries received in the explosion. When Skidmore attended the Otter Masters the following Saturday no one was aware what service he had given.

two gold and three silver medals in the 70-75 age-group. His victories came in the 50 and 100 metres breaststroke.

Otter, interestingly for a club that, 100 years earlier, had led the campaign to exclude professionals from competing alongside amateurs, adopted the reverse policy in Masters swimming. The Club was the leading proponent in eventually persuading the ASA that professionals should not be barred from Masters Championships. For the first two years of the event amateurs and professionals swam alongside each other, but, in 1974, the ASA reversed its decision to the vexation of Otter. It was only after constant campaigning over many years that the ASA finally relented. However, it was not until 1985 that



Masters' 200-year plus men's Medley Relay: GB Record 1992
C. Doxat, R. Thomas, R. Lloyd-Mostyn, J. Stewart

professionals were allowed to enter the ASA Masters Championships and it should be stressed that Otter's campaigning had not been altruistic, since the admission of professionals led to a much more competitive event.

With the growth of regional Masters' competitions the Otter event no longer attracts entries from across the country. Nevertheless, it is felt that there is a place for a compact event timed as a warm-up for the ASA National Masters, and under Roger Sharpley's energetic management the Otter Masters has been geared to that rôle in recent years.

Otter probably entered its 125th year as strong as ever in this department of swimming. In 1993, the Club sent 21 members to the GB Masters in Cardiff and 22 to the ASA Masters at Ponds Forge, Sheffield. Roy Romain (75-79 age group) took six golds in Cardiff and seven in Sheffield including a world record in 50 metres butterfly and European records in 200 metres and 50 metres breaststroke and Tony Cherrington (50-54), five golds each in Cardiff and Sheffield, including a European record in 50 metres. Other gold medal winners among the men were four by Lloyd-Mostyn (50-54), two

each by Charles Doxat (50-54) and by Derek Parr (45-49) and one by Peter Kirk (35-39). In the relays, Otter dominated the older age groups, collecting all four gold medals in 240 plus and 280 plus freestyle and medley teams. The 280 plus squad of Ron Roberts, Roy Romain, Leon Walkden and Dennis Warnford-Davis set European records for both events. The women were also prominent. They were led by Elizabeth Redpath (50-54), who took two gold medals, and the female team collected a host of other medals.

It would be invidious to start detailing all the individual feats of those who have been successful in Masters swimming since 1972. They have been too prolific. Instead, there follows a list of most of those members who have won gold medals representing the Club in National championships, either the GB or ASA Masters, or both. Many of the following have won individual and relay medals over several years and over several age groups: Gerry Forsberg; Ron Roberts; James Stewart; David Miller; Steve Hirst; Chuck Van Fossan; Guy Davies; Roger Lloyd-Mostyn; Paul Goudie; Bill Oakes; Charles Doxat; Nancy Kirkendall;



SERPENTINE: MUSTERING FOR THE QUARTER-MILE
Has been compared with starting the Grand National

Rita Shepherd; Bob Thomas; Lucinda Spicer; Roy Romain; Tim Fraser; Derek Parr; Peter Kirk; Bill Grey; John Prowting; Tony Cherrington; Larry Hart; Elizabeth Redpath; Leon Walkden; and Dennis Warnford-Davis.

OPEN-WATER RACES

The importance of racing in the early days of the Club is evident because for 37 years the office of Captain was not filled at the election in October but was decided by a race over 1000 yards in still water at the Welsh Harp and later (after 1886) over one mile at Surbiton. Since the best long-distance man was not necessarily a good captain this practice was abandoned in 1905. The mile race in open water was traditionally known as the Club Championship.

Three longer distance races over quarter, half and one mile have always been part of the Otter summer programme. Each race is traditionally followed by a supper at which the prizewinner must make a speech.

The 'quarter' was originally held at Shiplake, later at the Henley Sailing Club at Wargrave (1947-1950), Tagg's Island, Hampton Court (1951-1952), Sunbury-on-Thames (1953-

1955), Windsor Swimming Club (1956-63), Burway R.C., Laleham (1964) and, since 1965, largely in the Serpentine, London.

There is a mournful comment in the Annual Report for 1884 that the five hundred yards Serpentine handicap no longer appears in the fixtures: "The loss of the old Club fixture is due to the difficulties placed in our way by the Hyde Park authorities". This is in contrast to what has occurred in recent years with Otter regularly using the Serpentine both for the 440 yard open water swim and sometimes for other events when the Thames has been polluted.

There are reports from 1888 of the quarter-mile being held from Leggatt's house-boat 'Otter' at Shiplake. However, in 1893 the race was swum from Shiplake Ferry to the 'Dabchick', Tom Batt's house-boat, and this pattern was continued for the next forty-three years, with the Visitors' Book from the house-boat now in the Otter archives. From the pages one can imagine the Otter stalwarts in their straw hats with Club ribbon, striped blazers and flannels, enjoying the swimming, sunbathing, boating, clock-golf and Tom Batt's renowned hospitality. Tom's services to the Club were recognised in December 1947 through an appeal by Jack Cunningham which produced the **T.G. BATT CHALLENGE CUP**, which was

swum for annually over 440 yards in open water until the cup itself disappeared in the early 1980s. However, the race has continued.

The half-mile race was originally swum between the piers at Brighton from 1884 to 1914, but from 1894 to 1898 was certainly swum at Shiplake, the records being noted in *The Dabchick book*, in which Batt recorded performances. From 1921 the half-mile was held at Walton-on-Thames, hospitality being extended by W.H.M. Marx. In the early days prizes and entertainment were provided by J.J. Rope, George Rope's father. In 1921, as his memorial, the handsome **J.J. ROPE CUP** was subscribed for by members and now stands as the half-mile trophy. This gold cup is the most valuable of all the Otter trophies. The event has been swum since 1969 at Henley Sailing Club and sometimes in fine conditions, including 1990 when the race was staged on the hottest day of the century. Otters have been eternally grateful for the excellent hospitality provided in the Henley S.C. headquarters at Wargrave.

In recent years the mile has usually been staged at Windsor, followed by a barbecue. However, there have been occasions, such as 1990, when it was held in Eton College's open-air pool, when the event has had to be moved from the Thames because of the insanitary condition of the river water. Windsor Swimming Club has frequently been host to the Club but, after it ran into difficulties in 1993 with its riverside premises, Otters moved to the nearby sports centre for changing and socialising.

The trophy for this event was presented by Dr. John Gardner Dudley of Worthing in memory of his son, Frederick Consett Dudley, who joined Otter in 1893 and died in South Africa in 1897. F.C. Dudley was Captain in 1896, 100 yards Southern Champion in 1895, a medical student and an outstanding swimmer. The **DUDLEY CHALLENGE CUP** records show that H.E. Annison won eight times between 1913 and 1926, while F.G. Milton succeeded in winning every year from 1927 to 1947, except for war years. The **JACK CUNNINGHAM SALVER** is competed for as a closed handicap simultaneously with the scratch race. The trophy commemorates the extremely popular President who succeeded George Rope.

The overall trophy for the most consistent scorer of points in the open-water races is the **THORNE-THORNE** cup. This was the gift of Dr. Leslie Thorne-Thorne, a Bart's man (1893). He presented the cup in 1896, won it himself in 1898 and succeeded again in 1924, when he must have been over fifty years old.

LONG DISTANCE SWIMMING

Otter swimmers showed little inclination to cover distances greater than the half-mile or one mile open-water races during the period up to the Club's diamond jubilee in 1929, although Horace Davenport is reported to have swum from Southsea to Ryde (IOW) and back in 5hrs 25 mins on 2nd September 1884.

Alfred Jonas initiated the subscription fund to erect a fitting memorial at Dover to Captain Matthew Webb after his tragic death while trying to swim across the Niagara below the falls. Jonas' name also appears in the Otter archives on a luncheon menu when he was to propose the toast to Thomas Burgess, who in September 1911 became the second man to conquer the Channel.

The names of the winners of ASA Long-Distance Championship, originally held in the Thames from Kew to Putney, include F.G.M. (Freddie) Milton, Otter S.C. in 1932 and 1933. It is an honourable list, including J.A. Jarvis, P. Radmilovic, Jack Hatfield, E.P. Peter and C.T. Deane, the two latter members of Penguin S.C. Milton later made an unsuccessful attempt at the Channel.

During the 1960s the race was held in the River Ouse in Yorkshire and Trentham Park Lake and H.P. Milton won 1963-5-6. He also scored a notable victory in the International Long-Distance Race in the River Scheldt over three and a half miles against a strong European field.

In the Club's 88th year, however, an Otter member really made the headlines. For those with an eye to thoroughbred form the evidence was there to see. In 1952 Commander Charles Gerald Forsberg R.N. won the Morecambe Cross-Bay swim of nine miles, the only swimmer from the south ever to do so. To quote Forsberg himself: "This Bay has been a breeding-ground for celebrity swimmers".

A CHANNEL RECORD

- AND NOT A SOUL TO SEE IT

People on the beach at St Margaret's Bay, near Dover, hardly noticed the short, stocky man setting out to swim to France. This was just what record-breaking Forsberg, had planned. He broke Florence Chadwick's 1955 time by 22 minutes. "I chose the day of the cross-Channel swimming race to make my solo attempt," he said later, "because I knew that I should be able to slip past unnoticed in the crush".

Everything about the shy Commander's swim was in true Silent Service tradition - even his address. "I lived in Glenwood Road, Hendon, until recently," he said. "However, now we're in North Lancs. Can't be more precise. Don't want the neighbours pointing to me as the man who beat the Channel record, you know."

MIDNIGHT LANDING

Was his wife waiting to congratulate him on his return to Dover?

"Gracious no, we did not want any fuss. But I phoned through later to tell her that I had made it." It was 42 minutes to midnight when the Commander slipped quietly ashore two miles from Cap Gris Nez. "Not a soul about, and fortunately pitch-black."

His companions on the swim were his pilot, Ben Bailey, a Deal boatman, and a Dover policeman who acted as official timekeeper. "I didn't bother with trainers and a lot of paraphernalia," the Commander explained.

London Evening News, 22nd August 1957



*Cdr C.G. Forsberg O.B.E., R.N.
after his record swim*

However, five years went by before the release of the next piece of advance publicity. A well-written, interesting and instructive book on *Long-Distance Swimming* was published in 1957, full of wisdom, technical advice and careful research from the pen of Commander Forsberg. During the interim period he had acquired an O.B.E. in 1955 for valuable work in command of a Royal Navy Salvage Squadron which was given the important duty of finding various bits and pieces of a Comet aircraft scattered over a wide area in one hundred fathoms of water.

In August 1957, as befits the Silent Service, Gerry Forsberg, without any attendant publicity, set out to swim the Channel from England to France and succeeded in setting up a record time for that direction of 13hrs. 33mins.

Some unkind wits among his fellow-

members at the time murmured that only two people, Adolf Hitler and Gerry Forsberg, had fully described their aims in a book and then proceeded to carry them out. Another rumour was that the intrepid mariner had given up beer and cigarettes for training and had switched to gin and cheroots. Not least extraordinary about his feat was that he was 45 years old at the time.

There are many tales told of him, one of the best of which came out of the eight-mile championship in Torbay in 1962. Famed for his expertise on navigational subjects, Gerry, before plunging into the water for the start, sniffed the air, turned to his boatman, a man who knew the local coastline better than most, and said: "If it gets foggy, you had better follow me".

Since 1957 the saga of his long-distance swimming accomplishments has extended.

Winner of the British Long Distance Championship 1957-8-9; the first person to swim across Lough Neagh and Loch Lomond 1959; Bristol Channel crossing in record time, 1964. Sandwiched in between these exploits and his regular duties were two more books on swimming and a vastly enlarged and up-to-date book on the original subject *Modern Long Distance Swimming* in 1963. No-one could now doubt that here was a veritable master of the subject.

He was made President of the Channel Swimming Association in 1975, the centenary of the year that Captain Matthew Webb first accomplished the feat and even in the 1990s was still officiating and even competing in events run by the British Long Distance Swimming Association, who elected him 'Veteran of the Year' in 1992. During all this time he has written regular columns for *The Swimming Times*.

Norman Trusty was the second Otter to defeat the Channel. He accomplished the feat in 1967, swimming from France to England in the good time of 12 hours 5 minutes. Otters in the 1950s who remember Norman Trusty battling in many backstroke races, and particularly in the medley relay championship teams (he was in the ASA winning team in 1955), would clearly recognise his ability and determination. Trusty had put in many sturdy swims in other long-distance races before swimming the Channel, which he repeated twice in 1971.

The outstanding British male ultra-long-distance swimmer over the last 25 years has been Kevin Murphy, who was the guest speaker at the 1985 Otter Dinner and subsequently trained frequently with the Club during his dinner breaks from his job as Parliamentary reporter in the House of Commons. Even in 1994, Kevin remains the only British man to have completed a two-way crossing of the English Channel - a feat he accomplished twice during the 1970s - and was once 52 hours in the water in an unavailing attempt to become the first person to complete a three-way crossing. He also became the first Briton to swim round the Isle of Wight and also to cross the Irish Channel, which involved his swimming for six hours in the middle of a shoal of jelly fish. His unyielding determination has

been an inspiration for many.

All these three Otters, in different ways, combined to help a fourth member, John Goodbody, to swim from England to France in 1991. Murphy was regular training partner, Forsberg gave advice by phone and Trusty was the official observer when Goodbody failed in his first attempt, being pulled out of the water suffering from hypothermia on a particularly cold night when he was three miles off the French coast. However, Goodbody was told by Forsberg: "Treat it as a dress rehearsal". He achieved his target two weeks later, so becoming, at the age of 48, the oldest Briton for 12 years to complete the crossing. Five days later Goodbody was the seventh man home (and the first veteran) in the annual 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ mile Lake Windermere swim in 5 hours 20 minutes. The week was the climax of his swimming career that had begun as a member of Junior Otter 31 years earlier.

The Torbay Championship is another popular race held under rather more pleasant conditions than the Channel or colder northern waters. Norman Trusty won in 1964 and was runner-up in 1965. Gerald Forsberg won in 1958 and was runner-up in 1964.

W.J. (Jim) Kennedy never figured as a marathon swimmer, but he took the National Long-Distance title in 1962 and also the Southsea Pier-to-Pier race in 1961. Douglas Payne was Otter water-polo Captain in 1954 and winner of a number of SCASA titles at 440 yards. He triumphed in the Ryde (I.o.W.) to Southsea race in the Solent over what Forsberg termed "a complicated and confusing tidal situation" of four and a half miles in 1952 and 1954. A.J. Moorey, another member, held the Southsea-Ryde (4.5 miles) record up to August 1965 with a time of 1 hour 54 minutes 42 seconds.

CLUB COACHES

In many of the faded snapshots of the 1880-1890 era, at the side of the swimmers stands a rather stout, fully-dressed figure with a luxuriant moustache. This was the Club Professional Coach, Professor H.R. Pierce, who gave an exhibition of ornamental swimming during the Club Gala. In the ASA Handbook for 1993 Irene Williams notes: "Amateur

displays were given a few years later [than 1890] at St. George's Baths, London, and members of the Otter Swimming Club originated the Otter Wheel, a prototype of figure formations". In 1895 the annual entertainment included a 'Back Dive and Water Wheel' in the Display of Diving, Ornamental and Trick Swimming by Professor Francis and his pupils. Included in this exhibition were 'Dive from Balcony without arms' and 'Torpedo from Roof' which, with even more reason that the Club's earlier efforts (in 1871) at 'Diving for Eggs' failed to gain Olympic recognition.

The honorarium for the instructor appears to have been one guinea in 1884, but there was a rise in store, and in 1904 we find Professor Francis receiving four guineas. Presumably the professors gave private tuition to members and others, otherwise they must have had a lean time. Francis became Instructor in 1890 and continued in office until 1925 when the Diary shows two instructors, Professor E. Francis and W.J. Howcroft.

Howcroft is well remembered. 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 swimmer sped down the bath. Howcroft wrote a swimming column in *The Daily Telegraph* for many years and gave Otter many free advertisements in his writings.

An entertaining review of swimming prospects for the London Olympics came from his pen in *The Sports Book* in 1948. In this article he tipped Roy Romain as a prospect for the 200 metres breaststroke title and Bert Kinnear as likely to do well in the backstroke. He thought John Davies, British Empire Champion in 1938, was past his peak and playing too much water-polo. It would probably have surprised Howcroft if he had



MIKE CALVERT

Guest speaker at the Otter Dinner
1987

Brigadier J.D. ('Mad Mike') Calvert, M.A., B.Sc, D.S.O. and Bar, Croix de Guerre became a member of Otter in 1935, before he became celebrated as a leader in the Second World War. He was commissioned in the Royal Engineers and in the early part of the war was involved in demolition work in Norway, Burma and China.

He then commanded a bush warfare school and raised a company called 'Calvert's Commandos', drawn from men in detention centres and infirmaries. In 1943, when he was commanding a gurkha force of 400, which travelled on mules or elephants, he met General Wingate.

This force marched 1500 miles through Japanese-held territory and blew a hole in the rail link on more than 70 occasions. He was then put in charge of 4500 men, some of whom infiltrated the Japanese lines by glider. Although the operation had many successes, it had a high cost. Fewer than 1000 men came out alive and General Wingate was among the casualties. On his return he was given command of the Special Air Service (SAS) Brigade, which operated across North-West Europe.

known then that John Davies was to be breast-stroke champion of New Zealand many years later. In 1948, on his retirement after twenty-three years as coach, Howcroft was presented with an Otter Gold Badge in recognition of his service.

George Grainger was appointed in his stead and proved an enthusiastic and helpful director of Club training. Many members came to know him as a friend and his death in 1956 was a great blow to the Club. Mrs Grainger most kindly presented a Silver Challenge Cup to her husband's memory, which was used for the 110 yards Junior Handicap.

W.J. (Bill) Juba, an assistant editor of *The Swimming Times* and swimming correspondent of *The Sunday Telegraph*, brought a wealth of experience to the Club. He helped guide many youngsters at the Junior club sessions on Saturday evenings at Chelsea Baths. He also provided a focus of interest for Club members to whom he introduced interval training, a novelty in British swimming in the 1950s, and led the Club through one of its most successful periods. He insisted on members becoming

proficient at the whole range of strokes, rather than concentrating exclusively on their favourite. His wife, Josie, was also an outstanding coach and so were their two sons, Kelvin and Nick, who both represented the Club and competed with distinction.

Bill died in May 1970, after coaching for 14 years, during which time Otter had often been the premier club in Britain. His name was included on the Otter Memorial Fund, a cheque for £100 was given to his widow and the W.J. Juba Trophy was put up by the Club. The first winner was a New Zealand team, which was in Britain for the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh and won a relay at a gala at Shell.

It was appropriate that Kelvin should succeed his father, although he took over just at the time when the opposition from other leading clubs, both in London and elsewhere, was becoming more intense. This is covered elsewhere in this booklet. Kelvin had a solid background in the sport and a love of the Club, which he had joined as a junior. Apart from competing regularly as a sprint swimmer, he won the Welsh and Midland long-distance titles and was a member of the British water-polo squad in 1968. He was Editor of *The Swimming Times* and the author of five books on the sport, did television commentaries and worked on the Channel 4 learn-to-swim series *Splash*. He later went into public relations and promotional work. He resigned as coach in 1974 because of his frustration in being unable to train the Club more than once, or at best twice a week, to become coach at Bishops Stortford.

He was followed by Derek Spratt, who for several years looked like reviving the Club's fortunes. A highly enthusiastic man, he excelled at coaching youngsters and frequently developed the ability of some competitors who had languished at other clubs. He placed great reliance on correct technique and, as explained in an earlier section, actually started to nurture a group of youngsters as members of the Club. Roger Sharpley, the Club Captain from 1976 to 1980, said: "Derek put in an enormous amount of time and effort. He was frequently on the phone to me for an hour at a time every day and at weekends there would be a group of 20-30 taking part in

championships all over the country". Although the squad lost many members to Barnet Copthall, the area in which many of them lived, it was hoped that Spratt would get the job as pool manager at the Queen Mother Sports Centre when it opened in 1981. However, negotiations broke down and Spratt went to Potters Bar, to run the pool there. It was an experiment that sadly had failed.

However, the opening of the Queen Mother Sports Centre in May 1981 made it essential for Otter to acquire a new coach. After advertising, the Club appointed Arthur Batt, a former assistant coach to St.James's and someone who had also been assistant to John Hogg and Maurice Sly at the Southern Counties ASA winter courses.

Charles Doxat, the President at the time, stressed two things to Batt on his appointment: to halt the decline in membership and attendance by imaginative schedules and to retain the loyalty of the older members by continuing to provide facilities for their more leisurely activities. It was accepted that the Club's main role in the immediate future was at the forefront of Masters Swimming. Batt recalls: "On my first night there were about four members present and these mainly water-polo players. This clearly was a challenge and one that I have never taken lightly".

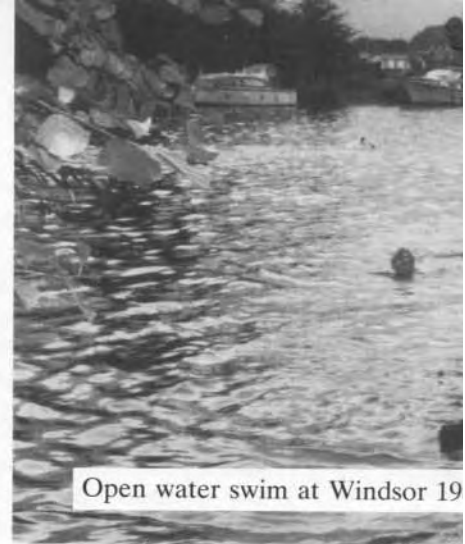
Over the years, Batt encouraged the existing polo-orientated members to train more regularly to increase their fitness, welcomed members from other clubs, who worked in the area and wanted to be associated with the Otter programme, and helped senior members to train as often as possible. A snowball effect occurred with more and more people attending sessions. Batt has always accepted that there was a wide range of ability - from recreational fitness to World Masters level - and tailored his schedules to suit this range, always with the "aim of encouraging improvement to higher attainments".

While hoping that youngsters will enter 'open' meets, the emphasis has continued to be on Masters events. Batt has been gratified both by the continued success of the senior Otters but also by the high turn-out for his training sessions. Sometimes lanes have been so crowded that it has proved difficult to find room to swim - a testament to the popularity of his



▲ Water Polo tour to Holland 1982

▼ Paul Goudie. Marcus Plumley. Mark Courtney. Julian Plumley. Receiving Medals from the ASA President



Open water swim at Windsor 19



▲ Swimming and Water Polo tour of South Africa 1971



▶ Otter squad at Crystal Palace 1992



Ladies Swimming Squad
1992

Left to right
Janice Stewart
Christine Willetts
Martha Feeley
Lesley Davies
Wendy Collier
Barbara Woodward
Natasha Payne
Ann Fuller



▲ Masters Swimming Squad 1992

▼ Roy Romain. Leon Walkden. Dennis Warnford-Davis. Ron Roberts. Sheffield 1991



sessions and a far cry from the first work-out he conducted.

Just as Batt himself has been rewarded by seeing the results from his training and also enjoying the social trips, so the Club in turn has been rewarded by his sessions, which have been demanding but not over-zealous. He has expressed his gratitude to all members past and present but the Club owes him an enormous debt it can never satisfactorily repay for helping it reach the healthy state it enjoys after 125 years.

WATER-POLO

Although no one could claim that Britain invented water-polo, there is no doubt that the first games of water-polo (or aquatic football as it was then called) took place in Bournemouth (13th July, 1876), Aberdeen (1877), Birmingham (1877) and Burton-on-Trent (1878).

Otter, as always in aquatic sports, was one of the pioneers, reaching the final of the first championship at Lambeth Baths in 1888, where the Club lost to Burton-on-Trent ASC. The following year a meeting was held to set up a 'League for London and District'. However, the event was held in a knock-out format and again Otter lost the final, this time to Nautilus 2-0.

The following year the ASA rules were standardised for England, although the Scottish Association had a different set of regulations. By 1891 Otter was playing water-polo fixtures against Oxford and Cambridge. The following year friendly matches were again arranged against the two universities and also St.Thomas's Hospital, St.Bartholemew's Hospital, Tadpole S.C. and Nautilus S.C. plus a full programme of London League fixtures. By 1897 Otter was fielding both first and second teams and, the following year, there was a home match against Brussels with a return tour match to Belgium. In 1903 the growth of the sport in the Club meant that a water-polo captain had to be added to the list of officers. Colours were awarded for swimming and water-polo for the first time in 1907. Second team water-polo colours were not awarded until 1927.

Otter also began playing schools at polo. A fixture in 1907 was held against St.Paul's School, where a leading player (and swimming captain) of that era was B.L. Montgomery, later to become one of Britain's most famous generals.

Tours abroad began in the early 20th century and have proved a popular feature ever since. Among the first to individual countries were those to Italy (1922), France (1922), Yugoslavia (1961), Malta (1966) and Denmark, Sweden and Germany (1956) and South Africa (1971). The Italian and French visit in 1922 was described in an amusing booklet, which includes details of how the entire team's luggage was lost in Paris en route but caught up with the team a day later. The hospitality was generous and of a high standard but the refereeing was not. An exhibition of 'fancy' swimming led by Harold Annison - a forerunner perhaps of synchronised swimming but this time performed by males - was highly appreciated by the crowd.

Many Otters distinguished themselves at polo in the first 90 years of the Club. Jack Cunningham, later to be President, was awarded colours from 1907 to 1912. W.H.M. Marx played for the Otter first team 1905-25. Annison played continuously for the Otter first team 1914-1933 and played Olympic water-polo for Britain in 1920-24. Pat Malone, later a prominent Harley Street dentist, appeared in Olympic, National and county sides. Roddy Haswell played for the Club from 1933 to 1958 as a first team goalkeeper and represented Britain, England and Middlesex before and after World War II. He was a reserve for the 1936 Games and was close to selection for the 1948 Olympics in London. R.P. Potter, Otter Captain in 1948, was also the British team captain in the 1948 Olympic Games.

The Club finished first in the SCASA water-polo championship in 1896, 1897, 1913, 1920, 1923, 1948, 1949 and 1964. In the National competition the Club reached the final, after the inaugural year (1888), in 1938, 1947 and 1960 before finally achieving victory in 1964, defeating Walsall in the final staged in the Midland club's own bath. It was a distinguished Otter side, with Duncan Kemp, a British international 1959-64, directing the flow of the game from the centre of the bath;



1964 National Water-Polo Champions

(Back) N. Griffin, M. McLachlan, L. Elsom, E. Kimber, N. Paine, J. Towers, G. Hill
 (Seated) P. Stevens, R. Hunt, D. Kemp, R. Burn, H.P. Milton

Peter Stevens, a Middlesex player, being a prolific scorer, Bob Burn, Neil Paine and John Towers, an international goalkeeper, forming a dense defence with two Olympic swimming finalists in McLachlan and Milton. It was a superbly balanced Otter team, coached by Eric Kimber and almost certainly the finest the Club has ever fielded. It had both fine teamwork, a number of talented players and formidable reserves. Many members were to continue giving valuable service for years afterwards, together with people like Kelvin Juba, a member of Britain's under 21-team in the late 1960s.

During the following decade Otter had problems, as it did with competitive swimming, in getting sufficient time for training.

This was further complicated by the polo players often being forced to practise in different pools from the swimmers. This was unsatisfactory because separating the two activities damaged the Club's spirit and did not allow players to train with the swimmers and then practise water-polo in the same evening. Despite these handicaps the Club continued to enjoy successes. In 1971, Otter beat every major club in the country at least once with the exception of Polytechnic, winner of the ASA title, and finally finished seventh in the first division. The popularity of the sport at the Club resulted in three teams entering the London League the following year, when the first squad lost in the quarter-finals of the ASA championships. The match was played at Birkenhead in an outdoor pool, where the

temperature was 57 degrees. The annual report states: "We were frozen out". Both the second and third teams achieved second place in their sections of the London League and were rewarded by being promoted "much to the consternation of the third team".

The loss of several established figures resulted in Otter losing its status as one of the leading clubs in the country. The losses included McLachlan, who returned to South Africa in 1973; Milton, who resigned as water-polo Captain in 1975 after being with the Club for 24 years; and two successive coaches, Dave Last and Ivan Goodwin. Although Otter was still running three sides in the London League in 1976, no replacement for Goodwin as Club coach was found during that year. An additional burden fell on Barry Stotter, the Club water-polo Captain, and Tony Stanton, the section's Secretary. The first team finished eighth (out of nine) in Division two of the London League. However, the Club won the Netchells and Bedford tournaments and Steve Christmas was picked for the GB Under 20s and Mark Winters for the SCASA squad. That year, after ten years organising the third team, which often included such stalwarts as Mark Grundy and Dennis Warnford-Davis, David and Jean Craig retired from their post, a loss to the efficiency and camaraderie of the squad.

The Queen Mother Sports Centre has never been suitable for water-polo, since it is possible to stand not just at one but at both ends of the pool and the depth of the shallow end makes a mockery of the game. Although the facility was welcomed by the Club's swimmers the polo section continued in the early 1980s to train and play National events at Shell, which is probably the best venue for the game in London, apart from Crystal Palace. With people like Christmas, and also Greg Edmunds and Gary Canning, who came from Isleworth, Jim McKenzie, and Neil Musgrove, the Captain 1981-86, and coaches like Mick Leask and Nigel Foley, the Club maintained a strong presence in division two of the National League.

In 1982, 1983 and 1984, the first team went to Uden in Holland, winning the international tournament in the first two years. In another continental trip in this period, Otter visited

Paris and played an outstandingly powerful representative team. John Towers stopped them from scoring by pulling the goals over his head and the whole team managed to stop the *periphérique*, the road encircling Paris, when eight cars in convoy did a U-turn on the way to the evening entertainment.

Bob Burn continued to give unstinting support to the section and was also appointed assistant manager to the British team. During this period another Otter member, Andy Morton, was manager of the National water-polo and swimming teams for 13 years and also organised aquatic sports at the 1991 World Student Games in Sheffield.

Although Otter recruited a number of players from St.James' in 1983-84 the loss of Shell meant that the swimming and water-polo sections were again separated, with the polo often taking place at four different pools. Despite the efforts of Musgrove and Geoff Scammell, his successor as Captain, this diffusion had a harmful effect on the regularity of training attendances.

The Club went down to the third division of the National league in 1986, the year when Musgrove gave up the captaincy after five years. Neil later moved north and, in 1994, was still playing for a local side in Warrington, while his son, an Otter member from his birth in 1984, had also started playing the game.

Although there was some infusion of new players after 1986, including a trio from Cambridge University, Nigel Burnham, John Martin and Steve Hirst, a goalkeeper and GB Masters freestyle champion, the Club eventually drifted down to the fourth division. Eventually, it became clear that Otter could not keep a team going at this level.

As we enter the 125th year, Otter still has a team in the London and Middlesex Leagues, although it would be false to claim the distinction in the sport it once enjoyed. Hugh Turner, who has been a cornerstone of the section in recent years and has paid tribute to the help he received from people like Paul Hindle and Martin Hackett, believes there are four main reasons for the decline. These are: increased pressure from exams and work commitments, which have particularly affect-

ted the traditional Otter membership; the competitive tendering of pools, which began in Westminster and which has militated against polo; several leading players moving abroad; and, as in so many sports, success breeding success. It is perfectly possible that if an upward momentum is achieved, and acceptable facilities can be found, the Club can return to its former position in water-polo as it might also do in swimming.

MULTI-SPORT DISCIPLINES

Many Otters have participated in the growing popularity of the multi-sport disciplines, such as the modern pentathlon, modern triathlon, biathlon, tetrathlon and triathlon.

Otters use their proficiency at swimming as a basis and then acquire other disciplines. One outstanding swimmer in the early 1970s was Roger Pontefract, an international breaststroke swimmer in his own right, who then competed in the modern pentathlon (4000 metres cross-country running, 300 metres freestyle swimming, pistol shooting, épée fencing and horse-riding). He won the National biathlon title (swimming/running) and first represented Britain in the modern pentathlon in 1971. He later became a leading official of the Sports Council.

Britain's reputation in the sport was sustained in the 1970s and 1980s, winning the team title at the 1976 Olympics. In 1988 Britain took the bronze medal at the Seoul Olympics with a three-man team, which included Dominic Mahony, who trained with the Club in his preparation for the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, where Britain finished sixth.

Otter success in other multi-sports was notable in the 1980s and 1990s. Among the victories of the women were the National biathlon titles in 1988, 1990, 1991 and National modern triathlon championships in 1988. In 1992, Kate Houston took the British women's modern pentathlon title while Vicky Rowe finished first in the 1992 Australian championships and in the British championships the following year. Both women swam regularly with Otter. In 1993 the Otter women's team, consisting of Houston, Ann

Fuller and Barbara Woodward, brought the Club victory in the National tetrathlon championships.

The men also competed with distinction in the same period, frequently finishing in the top half-dozen in National and regional biathlon and modern triathlon championships. Among the leading Otter competitors in many of these multi-sports disciplines were David Miller, Chris Owens, Mark Courtney, Dave Pedder, Iain Gerrard, Martin Foster and Guy Davis.

The triathlon of swimming, cycling and running attracted many followers in the 1980s. The sport developed from the Hawaii Ironman competition, consisting of a 2½ mile surf swim, a 112 miles bike ride and then a marathon. In an attempt to appear on the Olympic programme, and also to attract more people into the event, an Olympic distance was established of 1500 metres swimming, 40 kms cycling and 10,000 metres running. Otter can take some small credit for the sport's development because a former member, Ian Pettit, was the liaison officer for the British Triathlon Association in the early 1990s.

Charles Doxat's versatile physical ability and competitive instinct meant that he was particularly well suited to the event. He was introduced to the triathlon by Martin Flash, the Club Treasurer. Charles, a British Masters record-holder on breaststroke and keen long-distance runner with a best marathon time at the age of 50 of 3 hours 22 minutes, was quickly impressive in the event. In 1993 he won the British sprint title (750 metres swimming, 20 kms cycling and 5000 metres running) and subsequently was picked for the World Championships in Manchester where he was the first Briton home in the over-50 age-group, finishing eighth overall. This was a spectacular achievement even in the long sporting career of Doxat, who joined the Club in 1956.

OLYMPIC HONOURS

In the 1905 Annual Report appears for the first time the name of Charles M. Daniels, an American swimmer destined to develop into the fastest sprint swimmer of his generation. Daniels was a member of the Otter from 1905-1909. In 1905 he won the scratch mile (Dudley

C.C.) and beat the four lengths (120 yard) bath record by 4.2 seconds, his time being 1 minute 15.8 seconds. The Committee presented him with a Club Gold Medal. In 1906-1907 the Report records Daniels winning the 100 yards Championship of England and the World Championship in 1906 at an extra Olympic Games in Athens. In 1908 Daniels won the 100 metre Gold Medal at the Olympic Games in London with a time of 65.2 seconds, a remarkable time for those days.

George H. Rope, Otter President, was a Judge for the swimming events at these Games and again in 1924 (Antwerp). H.E. Pott, an Otter, the National High Diving Champion, also competed in the 1908 Games, together with R. Errington and A.T. Sharp.

The 1908 Report states that the Club entertained the foreign competitors and officers of the Olympic Games at a banquet.

In the 1912 Games at Stockholm, H.E. Pott of Otter again represented Great Britain at Diving, and T.B. Tartakover represented Australia at Swimming.

At Antwerp in 1920, Harold Annison was in the Great Britain team. Up to that date, Annison was probably the outstanding swimmer the Club had seen over all distances. He won all the ASA Championships from quarter-mile to one mile. For this achievement Life Membership was conferred on him at the Annual Dinner.

Annison again competed in the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, representing Great Britain at Swimming and Water-Polo. A.R. Knight competed as a Diver, and yet another Otter, M.C. Nokes, as a Hammer-thrower.

In 1936 F. Dove won the ASA 100 yards Championship and went on to represent Great Britain at Berlin in the Olympics. Another Otter, the Oxford Blue, Jack Lovelock, won the 1500 metres on the track for New Zealand. Fred Milton, who had already appeared in two Empire Games, in 1936 was also present at Berlin in the Great Britain Water-Polo side.

No Olympic competitions were held then until 1948 when London was the venue. Great Britain and Otter were on this occasion represented by John Davies and Roy Romain in the 200 metre Breast-stroke event. R. Potter



Tony Jarvis
GB Olympic Swimming Captain 1968

captained the GB water-polo team.

In 1952 at Helsinki Ron Roberts made his first Olympic appearance, reaching the semi-final of the 100 metres in 59.1 seconds. G.A. Worsell was a member of the Great Britain Water-Polo team.

In the 1952 Olympic trials, Athole Still, later to become a member of Otter and also the swimming correspondent of *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, had become the first Briton to break one minute for the 110 yards (100 metres) in a long-course pool with 59.2 seconds. He was selected for the 4 x 200 metres freestyle relay but did not actually swim in Helsinki. In 1956 and 1960, he was third in the 100 metres in both Olympic Trials but only the first two swimmers went to the Games. While an Otter, he was a member of the Scottish 4 x 220 yards relay squad which came second in the 1958 Empire Games in Cardiff.

In 1956 Roberts reached the semi-final of the Olympic 100 metres in Melbourne and was also a member of the Great Britain Relay squad who reached the final.

In 1960 H.P.M. (Tony) Milton was the Otter representative in the British 4 x 200 metre freestyle relay team which gained fourth place in a European record time of 8 minutes 26 seconds. Milton's time was 2 minutes 8.5

seconds.

In 1968, Tony Jarvis won both the 220 and 440 yards freestyle at the ASA championships and in a tremendous finish to the 110 yards nearly defeated Bobby McGregor, the 1964 Olympic silver medalist and Britain's outstanding sprinter of the decade. Jarvis was trailing by more than a body-length at 50 metres but accelerated down the second length and was just out-touched by the Scot. Jarvis was made captain of the Olympic team for Mexico.

David Hembrow, who was also a member of the Club, was selected to swim in the 4 by 100 metres men's freestyle relay at the Games. The British squad of McGregor, Jarvis, Turner and Hembrow finished fourth behind U.S.A., Australia and U.S.S.R. in 3 minutes 38.3 seconds.

Jarvis and Hembrow are the last swimmers to have competed at the Games while members of the Club, although Dominic Mahony, a member of Britain's modern pentathlon team who won a bronze medal in 1988, trained at Otter in his preparation for the 1992 Games.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

From the early days of the Club there have been matches with the schools which provide many Otter recruits. The annual reports do not mention schools matches until 1907 when visits were paid to Lancing College, Harrow, Bishops Stortford and St Paul's School. Other schools were added gradually to the list, Rugby (1908), Felsted (1910), Haileybury and Tonbridge in 1911, Dulwich (1913), Berkhamstead and Christ's Hospital in 1914.

School matches did not recommence after the War until 1920 when Lancing, Dulwich, St. Paul's and Bishops Stortford were again visited. By 1927, Otter teams were visiting eleven schools. New names in this decade are Ardingly, Aldenham, Bedford Modern, Brighton College, Charterhouse, Hurstpierpoint, Mill Hill, Marlborough and Stowe. In 1931 eighteen schools were visited, new opponents being St. John's Leatherhead, Epsom, Malvern, Bedford and Bradfield.

Otter had a fixture with Oundle in 1932, and since World War II keen matches have

taken place, among others, with City of London, Eastbourne, Haberdashers, Highgate, Reading, St. Dunstan's, St. Lawrence, Trinity School, University College School and Whitgift.

The events have remained popular because they give the opportunity for club members to enjoy competition and hospitality, often in historic and pleasant surroundings. In 1993 school matches were held against Dulwich, Tonbridge, Harrow, St. Paul's, Eton, Lord Wandsworth College and Charterhouse.

THE BATH CLUB CUP

and

OTTER MEDLEY RACE FOR SCHOOLS

In 1910 the Bath Club invited a number of Public Schools to take part in an annual freestyle relay race for a Challenge Cup. This contest was held at the Bath Club until 1939. From 1945 to 1955 it was held in the Lansdowne Club and then moved to the Seymour Hall. It remained there until 1989 except for 1976 when the roof fell in and Marshall Street Baths were used. In 1990 Otter's home at the Queen Mother Sports Centre was used but, since then, the event has settled at Crystal Palace, with the advantage of staging the relays in a 50-metre pool. Otter has been responsible for organising the event since 1949 under the flag of the Bath Cup and Otter Medley Schools' Swimming Association.

The competition has grown in popularity over the years, with more than 120 schools having taken part. The record number in a single year is 68, with 58 entering in 1994.

Different schools have dominated different eras. From 1910 to 1949 Bishops Stortford College and St. Paul's School shared the honours with ten wins each, but from 1950 until the centenary year (1969) the race was dominated by one English and one Scottish school, Barnard Castle School and Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen. Bishops Stortford has been the most successful school in the last 25 years, with 11 wins.

In 1948, as a means of increasing the meagre attendances at the inter-Varsity match, W.R. Edgar proposed that a medley relay race for

schools be added to the programme. This occurred in 1951. This proved extremely popular with the schools, and the juxtaposition of the two races, freestyle on Thursday afternoon, and the medley race on Saturday evening at the Varsity match, meant there was less travel for schools and also an increased number of entries.

Although the two events have become separated from the Varsity Match, they are now held on the same day so that, even in the summer term with exams close, more schools can take part.

In 1982 the Aldenham Cup was put up for the smaller and weaker schools in a freestyle relay. This has fulfilled the ambition of giving more swimmers a taste of victory, because for the first nine years no school won the event more than twice.

Similarly, Otter established a 'B' medley trophy in 1985. To date no school has won it more than twice.

The Club owes a debt to Ron Stead, who organised the event for 30 years until 1979, and subsequently to John Nalson, who has marshalled the entries and officials with good humour and efficiency.

NATIONAL and COUNTY TROPHIES

A study of the list of Championship trophies competed for at the National Championships of the Amateur Swimming Association will reveal a number of Otter connections.

The Otter Club presented the Men's 100 yards (later 110 yards and 100 metres) Freestyle Cup in 1895. Outstanding in the 1930s in the National sprint over 100 yards for the Otter Trophy was Freddie Dove, who won in 1935, 1936 and 1937.

The 220 yards Men's Freestyle Trophy, won in 1968 by an Otter, Tony Jarvis, was presented by George Rope, President ASA 1897 and Otter 1890-1930.

The Men's 220 yards Breast-stroke Trophy was presented by Dr. Morgan Dockrell, an Otter member, whose son, Morgan Dockrell, Junior, was Captain of the Club in 1903-1904.

The Inter-Services Championship Trophy was presented by W.A.H. Buller, an Otter Vice-President from 1912 to 1921 and ASA President 1928.

More recently, the trophy for the Men's 220 yards Butterfly-stroke Championship of England is the Otter Centenary Trophy, a handsome cup presented by the Club in 1969 to celebrate 100 years of success and constant endeavour to promote the popularity and well-being of amateur swimming and water-polo.

ASA trophies could be won outright by a swimmer who registered three wins in a row, until a change of rules in 1895 stopped this practice. J.H. Tyers, the outstanding swimmer from 1893-1896 over distances from 100 yards to one mile, took the Otter Trophy for the 500 yards Championship outright and this cup is now the prize for the Boys' 220 yards Championship. The 500-yard race was discontinued in 1935. F.G.M. Milton was first in the event in 1930 with a time of 6 minutes 34 seconds.

The ASA Mile Trophy was presented by Horace Davenport, a member of Otter in 1880-1886, and one of the three Otter delegates to the SAGB before the Club's controversial withdrawal in 1884. This (one-mile) trophy was also won by F.G.M. Milton in 1931 and 1932. Davenport himself was victorious in the mile six times from 1874 to 1879.

The ASA 440 yards Trophy was also the gift of Horace Davenport. This cup was held in 1968 by Tony Jarvis, 1968 British Olympic Swimming Captain.

Among SCASA Trophies one finds a cup for the Boys' 110 yards backstroke presented by Ronald Edgar, Otter Captain 1926-1929 and Vice-President 1931-1938.

Major D.D. Milne, Otter water-Polo Captain in 1912 and 1919, presented cups for Women's 440 yards Freestyle and Boys' 110 yards breast-stroke.

In 1896-7-8, A.A. Green, a leading Otter sprint swimmer of his day, won outright the 150 yards championship of London. He presented this cup in 1899 to SCASA and the competitions continued up to 1939, since which date it has become the Green Cup for the Girls' 110 yards backstroke Championship.

PYERS MOSTYN

In 1948 Otter won the ASA Medley Team Championship at Scarborough, and the ASA Freestyle Team Championship at Smethwick. The teams were: Medley - R. Romain, R.G.E. Franks, D.J. Gray, Sir Pyers Mostyn. Freestyle - N.E. Fitzsimon, R.S.T. Luget, Sir Pyers Mostyn, R. Romain. Mostyn was also a member of the Otter teams which won the Southern Freestyle and Medley Team Championships. In 1949 he won the Humphreys Cup, the Sprint Championship of the Club and the Middlesex 100 yards title. Pyers was a splendidly rugged young man with an engaging grin and a host of friends. In 1953 a London paper carried a banner headline - *Paris, Thursday*: "Sir Pyers Fights Fifteen Waiters at once". An official of the New Eve nightclub 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". Sir Pyers, his face cut and bruised, told the court "I'm afraid I had a bit too much of that vodka". This was his last night out before returning to his thousand-acre farm in Kenya. It was a sad ending to a brilliant swimming career when his Land-Rover overturned and killed him in 1955. He was the Kenya 100 yards champion at the time, President of the Kenyan ASA and regarded as certain to represent the country in the 1956 Olympics. His mother, Lady Mostyn, gave a silver challenge cup to his memory, which is now the 100 metres handicap prize.

The SCASA Inter-County Senior Competition is for the Marx Cup. Maurice Marx, a much-respected Otter, was the Honorary Handicapper to the Club in 1933-1936, Vice-President 1909-1938, and his hospitality for the open-water races was proverbial and highly appreciated.

Diving does not figure in these days as a major Otter accomplishment but the records show that in 1909-1912 H.E. Pott won the National High Diving Championship. He represented Great Britain at the Olympics in 1908 and 1912. Pott's name is commemorated in the cup for the SCASA Girls' Under 16 Diving Championship. R. Errington, another diving Otter and Olympic representative in London in 1908, presented the SCASA Boys' Under 14 Diving Cup.

CLUB TROPHIES and ARCHIVES

The Club Diaries, Annual Reports, Dinner menus and Trophies, many of considerable age, provide an invaluable supplement to the reports of activities recorded in the Minute books.

An Annual General Meeting was held early each year at which a printed report on

the previous year's activities was presented. There is a file of Annual Reports in order back to 1903 but there the sequence is lost. The earliest Report in the Club's possession is that for 1884. Highlights of this report are the institution of a quarter-mile handicap at Brighton and a half-mile handicap at Sunbury.

CLUB DIARY. A Club Diary was published almost annually until 1947 when increased printing costs prohibited the practice. The winners of all National championships were recorded together with a list of 'Fastest times on Record and Remarkable Performances'. Against most of these names appears the title 'amateur', but one or two, e.g. J. Nuttall, were not so denoted and must have been professionals.

Nuttall's time of 2mins. 21secs for 200 yards, set up in 1893, still stood in 1914 and was twenty seconds faster than the then amateur record. The outstanding time in this list is the 100 yard record of 55-2/5 secs. set up by Charles M. Daniels in September 1907 at Manchester. Daniels was entered under the aegis of the New York A.C. but was an Otter member from 1905 to 1908. Since the diary ceased to be published details and events have been recorded in the Club's annual fixture list.

CLUB SUPPERS. Otters have always made a feature of social events. At the end of the first successful season a Club supper was held at Rudkin's Salutation Hotel in Chapel Street, Marylebone, for which tickets were 3/6d (17.5p). including beer. Very early on, the Committee decided that to be successful a Club should have a strong social side. The first Club ball was held in 1874, and for many years at St. George's Baths the Club held an 'At Home' before a large gathering. The open-water races, referred to elsewhere in this booklet, were further opportunities for socialising. Following the races, in the early days at Brighton, supper and entertainment were held at the Royal York or Royal Albion Hotels, where Harry Preston (later Sir Harry) was a genial host. Preston, who joined the Club in 1908, was uncrowned 'king' of Brighton for

many years.

The ANNUAL DINNER has been a particularly important social occasion for Club members and it is noticeable that, in recent years under the management of Richard Jones, the numbers have steadily increased with regular attendances of more than 100 people. The guest of honour has usually been a sportsman of national repute. Originally the individual was someone who had made his name in some other sport than swimming. The first exception was for Commander Gerald Forsberg in the year when he set up the cross-channel record. Since World War II Messrs. Christopher Chataway, Roger Bannister, Colin Cowdrey, Colin Moynihan, Cliff Morgan and Duncan Goodhew have spoken at the dinner. Goodhew, 1980 Olympic 100 metres breaststroke champion, accepted the invitation for 1993 and then asked whether he could also join the Club. As we enter our 125th year, he has been a welcome addition to our training sessions.

OTTER SPOONS. The keen Otter who enters for all handicaps and open-water races eventually acquires a modest collection of sterling-silver tea-spoons, in which the upper part of the handle is a miniature otter with a fish in its mouth. These spoons have been given as prizes at least since 1910. An Otter spoon is exhibited in the Swimming Hall of Fame at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, U.S.A.

The **TROPHIES**, which include cups and salvers, are competed for in handicap and scratch races throughout the year. Many of them are valuable and have long histories. Those associated with open-water events have been mentioned in an earlier section. Three trophies, the Annison, Baldon and Batt, are missing and the Club would be most grateful to anyone who knows of their whereabouts.

LADIES' CUP. The oldest cup is the Ladies' Challenge Cup, presented by lady friends of members in 1874, and up to 1959 this cup was competed for over six lengths of the bath on four occasions each year. Consequently the cup, not of a very great size, no longer had space for winners' names. The problem was overcome with some ingenuity by fashioning in silver an outer hinged replica of the original cup, which is enclosed within it. Since 1960 the event has been an annual one and is now over five lengths

handicap.

HASKINS CUP. In 1896 Walter Russell presented a cup for a 90 yards Handicap, which was won outright by Adrian Haskins in 1921. Haskins showed himself to be a keen and generous Club member by presenting a cup in 1922 for a Sealed Handicap over a similar distance. When the Club moved to Shell the distance was fixed at 110 yards and subsequently at 100 metres. The Russell Cup was returned to the Club by Haskins' son in 1994 after over seventy years in the family's care.

MACDONALD CUP. The MacDonal C.C. Handicap over two lengths, originally 60 yards, subsequently 73.3 yards and now over 50 metres, was presented in 1893 and has been competed for annually ever since.

HUMPHREYS CUP. The next challenge cup in order of seniority is the Humphreys C.C. presented by J.D. Humphreys for a Scratch Race over 100 yards in 1895. The first cup was won outright by A.A. Green, who has been mentioned elsewhere as the outright winner of the 150 yards cup for the Championship of London. A second cup presented by Jack Humphreys was won outright by R.G.F. Cohen; a third cup from the same donor was won outright by T.B. Tartakover in 1908-1910, and the fourth cup, also given by Jack Humphreys, was in continuous annual competition from 1911 to 1966. The fourth cup was a very large and fragile ornament of Indian silver, which eventually collapsed and no winner ever saw it after 1939. With the recent rise in the price of silver it saw the light of day at last and has been melted down, to be replaced by the fifth Jack Humphreys cup. Needless to say, the cup is now for perpetual competition and is held over 100 metres. Since 1911 it has been won four times by Leonard J. Haskins, six times by Harold Annison, six times by Freddie Milton, twice by H.M. Wagstaff, four times by Fred Dove, three times by Norman Fitzsimon, twice by Sir Piers Mostyn, four times by H.P.M. Milton, and twice by Duncan Kemp. Other winners include such Olympians as Ron Roberts, Murray McLachlan, Tony Jarvis and F. Munroe Bourne.

SACHS DIVING CUP. In 1923 the Report included a short obituary on Frank Sachs, a member since 1875, Honorary Handicapper from 1879 to 1902, a Vice-President and

Delegate to the ASA. Mrs. Sachs presented a Challenge Cup in his memory which was to be for an annual Diving Competition. Surprisingly, the Club supplied Olympic representatives at Diving in 1908 (H.E. Pott and R. Errington), 1912 (H.E. Pott) and in 1924 (A.R. Knight). H.E.K. Sawtell, well-known as a founder of Dorset ASA and a keen diver, won this trophy in 1926, 1927, 1929 and 1947. Dennis Elcome and Adrian Haskins also won on more than one occasion. Since 1947 the winners have included such unlikely names as E.N. Kimber (the Club water-polo coach), M.D. Goldberg, M.J. Harford (1958-1961), and R. Feast. With the decline of interest in diving the cup was used for an Individual Medley Race for Juniors but is currently unallocated.

EDGAR SALVER. With the growth of interest in the individual medley, W. Ronald Edgar presented an attractive silver salver for a four-length Individual Medley Handicap in 1952. This is now held over 100 metres.

SYNGE-HUTCHISON CUP. Members who are serving in the Armed Services are far fewer than they were. One colourful figure, who joined in 1930, was Colonel E.D.B. Syngé-Hutchison, V.C.. At the time, he was commanding the 14th Hussars. He won his V.C. at Gulek, South Africa, on 13th October 1900, when his name was Edgar Donald Brown. Keen to encourage competition for older members he presented a cup for the Veterans' Handicap (aged over 45 years) over one length. With the development of Masters Swimming this annual event, now over 50 metres, has been increasingly popular.

The BULLER and JACKSON CUPS. These cups are awarded to the swimmer (male and female respectively) who receives the highest number of points in the Club championships. The Buller was presented originally by W.A.H. Buller in 1902. The second Buller Trophy was initiated in 1905 and is now an annual trophy. Harold Annison showed his outstanding form by winning this cup continuously from 1919 to 1926. The competition was incomplete in 1939 and not held again until 1947. However, it has subsequently been held annually. The Jackson Cup was presented to the Club by Richard Jackson in 1993.

JONAS CUP. In 1870 J.J. Rope, brother of George Rope, won a silver cup in a Club

handicap at Marylebone Baths. Mr Alfred Jonas returned the cup to the Club for competition in 1935 and for many years the Jonas Cup was the prize 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.



The George Rope Memorial trophy, "The Gold Cup," was presented to the club by the members. It is competed for yearly over a half-mile open water.

WHO'S WHO ON THE POOLSIDE

It is to the hard work and self-sacrifice of many club officers that Otter owes not only its continued existence for the past 125 years, but also the gradual expansion of its activities. The long list of Vice-Presidents, Captains, Water-Polo Captains, Water-Polo Secretaries, Honorary Handicappers, Schools Secretaries, Honorary Treasurers and Honorary Secretaries are set out in every member's Annual Handbook and Fixture Card (up to 1947 in the Club Diary). The Honorary Secretaries come last in this list but certainly not least.

The current section records some of the vital contributions of the Club administrators, many of whom have been mentioned elsewhere for their distinction in the water, on the poolside and in the wider field of organised swimming.

A.E. BALDON

A.E. Baldon is commemorated by the trophy marking his splendid tour of twenty-nine years as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. In December 1929 the *New York Herald* commented: "No doubt the Otter Club of London, oldest swimming organisation in existence (*sic*), can claim more than one record for longevity. Aside from the fact that it recently celebrated its 60th year of activity in the natatorial field, Mr George Rope, its President, has been chief executive officer for 40 consecutive years and Mr. A.E. Baldon, Honorary Secretary, has held the office unbrokenly for 24 years. Extraordinary records in truth. We join the world in congratulations."

H.J. BARRON

Dr. Hunter J. Barron was Captain of Otter, Hon. Secretary of the SAGB 1880-1883 and President of SAGB 1884-1886. When Otter resigned from the SAGB in 1884 Barron elected to remain with that organisation and continued as a delegate from Portsmouth ASC. The breach between SAGB and the ASU was healed in 1886, but the swimming world suffered a severe loss when Barron died of diabetes at the age of 31 in 1889.

W.A.H. BULLER

Buller joined Otter in 1893 and was President of SCASA 1917-1919 and of ASA 1928. His name is commemorated by the Otter Mile trophy and

the Inter-Services Championship cup. He was vice-President of Otter 1912-1921.

A.E. CREASY

Baldon was succeeded by Arthur Creasy, who was a cheerful and efficient Secretary from 1934 to 1945. Creasy also held office in the Club as Honorary Handicapper from 1912 to 1922 and was President of SCASA in 1929, after five years as Honorary Treasurer of that body.

R.G.M. BURN

Bob Burn joined the Club in 1954 and won his first team swimming colours from 1955 to 1965. He was swimming vice-Captain 1963-65. A solid backstroker and butterfly swimmer, he represented Kent, Southern Counties, the ASA and RAF. He was even more successful as a water-polo player, being awarded his first team club colours in 1958 and then again every year from 1960 to 1974. He captained Kent for many years and represented London and the Southern Counties and had several England trials during this period. He was a member of the Otter team which won the ASA title in 1964, captained the side two years later, and was water-polo Secretary 1968-70. He also served as assistant manager of the British water polo team. When he was appointed President, his predecessor Charles Doxat said he was the member "who unequivocally has made the greatest contribution to all aspects of club life: swimming, water polo and social".

J.W. CUNNINGHAM

George Rope died, much mourned by all members, in March 1930, and was succeeded as President by Jack Cunningham. Cunningham proved an ideal successor. An Old Pauline, in his younger days he had been a keen rugby union player. From 1906 to 1912 he swam for winning Otter teams in the SCASA Free-Style Relay Championship. Cunningham served through the 1914-1918 war as an officer in the Devon regiment. Urbane and good-looking, with a charming personality, Jack made a perfect host, entertaining young and old members at luncheon at the Bath Club or the International Sportsman's Club.

On his retirement after twenty-one years in office his wife Marjorie was at the Otter Dinner when members presented her with a silver tea-service and Jack with a gold

cigarette-case in recognition of their services to the Club. Cunningham died in 1958. His daughter is still in touch with the Club.

L.S. DAVIES

In 1992 Lesley Davies became the first woman to be elected Captain of the Club, after being vice-Captain for the two previous years. Her common sense and capacity for hard work have fully justified the appointment. She has the ideal background for the post since she works as a sports administrator for Price Waterhouse. A versatile sportswoman, she was a member of the Club teams which won British women's titles in the biathlon and modern triathlon. She also swam the breaststroke leg in the club 120-years plus medley team, which took the silver medal at the British Masters Championships in 1992.

C. DOXAT

Charles Doxat joined Otter in 1956, when he was at Westminster School. A fine breaststroke swimmer, he held several London and Middlesex titles and records and also finished second in the Southern Counties individual medley, an event which he adopted perhaps too late to have even more successes than he enjoyed as a young man. A highly successful Masters swimmer, he set several British age-group records. In recent years he has achieved distinction in multi-sport activities. He was a diligent and resourceful administrator for the Club, while continuing his competitive career. He was club Captain 1966-69, served on the Club's Centenary committee in 1969 and was club President from 1976 to 1982.

N.E. FITZSIMON

Educated at the City of London School, Norman Fitzsimon's wartime career was in the Royal Navy, after which he graduated in law from London University. He had a fine swimming career which included Royal Navy and Middlesex County representation and wins in all the Otter scratch events. He featured in National winning teams in 1948 and 1950.

One of the youngest Presidents to be elected in the Club's history, Norman held the post from 1968 until 1972. He had previously proved a capable administrator as vice-Captain and Captain. He brought to tasks in Committee a

clear legal brain, which picked out the fundamentals of many problems. He proved a sound leader of the Club in the Centenary of 1969, when he effectively welded together the disparate areas of the Club to ensure such a successful year.

M.H. FLASH

Martin Flash has had two spells as Hon. Treasurer, the most thankless of tasks for a club official. Both periods have marked important moments in the development of Otter and been crucial for the Club as it struggled to adjust to rising costs. Martin joined the Club in 1962 while he was studying at Imperial College, London University, which he represented at water-polo. He subsequently was awarded a half-blue for water-polo whilst at Cambridge University. After working for three years in South Africa as a civil engineer he returned to Britain and became Treasurer in 1974-75, during which he helped Doxat and Spratt in the proposed restructuring of the Club. He then spent ten years in France and helped organise two fondly-remembered trips across the Channel of the third water-polo team. His second term of office has been marked by increasing use of computers in club affairs: he has invested much time and ingenuity in automating procedures with the aim of easing the burden on future administrators.

J.H.R. HASWELL.

Roddy Haswell has had a remarkable career in water-polo ever since he joined the Club in 1930. He overcame the early handicap of suffering from diphtheria, which stopped him from participating in most sports as a boy. While at St.Paul's School his exercise was initially restricted to walking. However, he learnt to swim in Egypt and later became a fine water-polo player. He won his Middlesex cap at the age of 18 and was reserve goalkeeper for Britain at the 1936 Olympic Games. He made his international debut in 1937 and was still representing Britain 12 years later. He took part in both the British Empire Games and the European Championships. He was awarded his first team colours over a span of 26 years (1933-58). He played for the Middlesex Masters team in 1991 in a tournament against other County sides. Roddy had a long career as an administrator, being the Club's water-polo Captain 1938-46 and 1952-53 and Secretary in

1946. He was the first person to be elected President of the London Water-Polo League twice (1957 and 1989).

J.K. ILIFFE

John Iliffe is the second club President to come from the City of London School, where he was introduced to competitive swimming by the former Otter coach Bill Howcroft. He played water-polo and swam for both Cambridge University and the Royal Navy. He played rugby union for Devonport Services and Saracens. He joined Otter in 1953, and after a spell abroad rejoined in 1966, since when he has kept what he has termed a "none-too-lonely" vigil in the goal mouth of one or other of the water polo teams. A mathematician by training and computer engineer by profession, his ability in mental arithmetic was tested to the limit by service as Honorary Handicapper from 1976 to 1981 and 1983-87.

C.E. JACKSON

Cyril Jackson joined Otter in 1925 and Captained the Club in 1931. He was joint founder-member of Hertfordshire ASA. A keen all-round sportsman, he was a member of the winning British entry in the Admiral's Cup Ocean Race in 1963 and gained representative honours in rifle shooting.

E.N.KIMBER

Eric joined Otter in 1947 and was Captain and coach to the water-polo team and club President 1972-75. He was one of the instigators of the National Water-Polo League and its first President. He is perhaps known by Otters for having coached the team which won the ASA club water-polo championship in 1964 for the only time in the Club's history. He organised the water-polo tour to Yugoslavia in 1961 and the swimming and water-polo tour to South Africa in 1971, the year before he became President. He contracted rheumatoid osteo-arthritis, which gradually crippled him. He died in October 1989, much mourned by the many Otters who knew him.

F.G.M. MILTON

1957 saw the election of F.G.M. Milton to the principal office of the Club. Freddie, as he was known affectionately by the whole Club, began swimming at the age of six. In 1922 he joined the Serpentine S.C. and a year later

Otter; thus, he was elected President after thirty-five years' service and had brought much honour to the Club in international, National and county events in that period. He gained his first County cap for Berkshire in 1924. He was awarded his First Team Colours for water-polo no less than twenty times and for swimming eighteen times. Captain of Middlesex at water-polo, he led the county to the National title in 1932. From 1939 to 1945 he was on active service with the Royal Artillery and in 1945 he celebrated the end of hostilities in Europe by winning the Central Mediterranean Force 5000 metre championship in Rome.

In 1930 he had won international honours when he captained the England men's team at the Empire Games in Canada. In 1934 the Empire Games were held in London and again Freddie was selected. In 1930 and 1934 he met Miss Irene Pirie, who represented Canada in the backstroke and freestyle, and in 1935 they married. Their eldest son, Hamilton (Tony) Pirie Milton swam at the Rome Olympics in the 4x200 metres freestyle relay, when Britain finished fourth. Freddie gained an Olympic cap for water-polo in the Berlin Games of 1936. In business, as in swimming, he proved a success and was Managing Director of Carlsberg Distributors Ltd. Milton gave back a great deal to sport, as an active SCASA and ASA water-polo referee eligible to referee county and ASA championship matches.

He set a high standard as President and his tour of office was marked by many successful dances and most enjoyable tours of Southern France in 1955, Scandinavia (1956) and Alsace-Lorraine (1949). He died in 1991.

L.W.MILTON

Second cousin to F.G.M., Lionel was educated at Gresham's School, Holt, and joined Otter at the age of nineteen. He took up water-polo with keen interest and became a most proficient goalkeeper, though somewhat overshadowed by Roddy Haswell. However, he played for the first team on many occasions and won medals in both the National and Southern Counties championships. He served as a gunner officer in the Middle East and Italy and towards the end of the campaigns he captained the Eighth Army water-polo side. Elected to the Committee at an early age, he proved

himself a hard worker and a willing volunteer for any task. He was in turn Assistant Water-Polo Secretary, then Water-Polo Secretary, Vice-Captain and Captain. He died in January 1994.

Sir HAROLD PARKER

Sir Harold Parker KCB, KBE, MC was Otter vice-President 1937-47, President of SCASA 1939-1945 and President of ASA 1957. Water-polo colours 1920, Club Captain 1932-34. Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Defence 1948-1956.

The LORD PLUMMER of ST. MARYLEBONE

In 1939, we find A.D.H. Plummer as Joint Water-Polo Honorary Secretary with C.W. (now Professor Sir Charles) Oatley of King's College, Cambridge. Plummer also appears in the records as Public Schools Honorary Secretary (1947), Vice-Captain (1951) and Captain (1952-53). He later became, as Alderman Plummer, T.D., J.P., an energetic leader of the Conservative party in the Greater London Council (GLC). He was created a life peer in 1981.

L.T.G. RICKETTS

In 1952, Lt. Col. L.T.G. Ricketts R.E. took on the post of Honorary Treasurer and undertook an effective reorganisation of the accounts and investments of the Club to the considerable relief of the auditors. Tom Ricketts held this office until 1963 and he received a suitable parting gift in recognition of his valuable work as Treasurer at the annual dinner that year. He died in 1991.

G.H. ROPE

George Rope served as President for forty-one years from 1890 till his death in office in 1930. He was President of SCASA in 1895 and of ASA in 1897.

Rope was a much-loved and respected figure. On his twenty-first anniversary in the Chair he was elected Life President. At the 42nd Annual Dinner held at the Trocadero on 4th January 1911 a record number of over 200 members and guests was present. Rope was presented with the Club Gold badge and an inscribed Vellum. From donations by over three hundred members his portrait in oils was presented to the Club and a handsome silver

trophy, the George Rope Average Trophy, was purchased. The Average prizes have been competed for annually over the subsequent 83 years. It is said that Rope never missed a Tuesday meeting of Otters except on the occasion of a family visit to U.S.A. An appreciation of George Rope entitled 'The Doyen of Amateur Swimming' appeared in *Amateur Sports Illustrated*, 30th January 1908. Rope was a true all-round sportsman. He played for Harlequins 1st XV at half-back, played lacrosse for the old London Club, ran with the Thames Hare and Hounds and was a life member of Thames Rowing Club.

R.H. SMITH

Roy Smith was Honorary Secretary 1971-1976, a period which saw the admission of women to full membership, change of allegiance from Surrey to Middlesex Counties resulting from the move to Queen Mother Sports Centre, and the start of Masters competition. Roy provided a much-needed feeling of continuity under three club Presidents. He was an enthusiastic Schools Secretary, ensuring a strong turnout for the Club at these flag-showing events.

R.L. STEAD

For fifteen years, from 1952 to 1966 and, again in 1970, Ronald Stead earned the gratitude and affection of all members by the quiet, effective and far-sighted manner in which he administered the Club's affairs. He was the Club's representative on the London Committee which controlled the Oxford and Cambridge University Swimming match and was responsible for providing a full cadre of Otter officials for that match. In addition, he had responsibility for organising the school invitations, entries and prizes for the Bath Cup and Otter Medley Relay, and the administration of those events on behalf of the Otter Club.

C.J. STEWART

As we enter the 125th year, James is the third-longest-serving Secretary in the Club's history, having held office 1977-78 and then again without a break since 1981. He joined the Club in 1962 and was an outstanding sprinter for many years, being a member of the 4 x 110 yards freestyle relay team which won the ASA title in 1967. His best 110 yards time (57.9 seconds) came the following year at the ASA



George Rope
President 1890-1930

championships when he was the seventh-fastest Englishman over the distance. His last National championship was in 1970, the year he took the GLC 100 metres title. During a spell working in Japan for Mobil Oil, he took two gold and three silver medals at the Tokyo Open swimming championships. Vice-Captain of the Club 1967-69, he was Captain in 1970. An outstanding Master Swimmer, he has been a member of the ASA Masters Committee since its foundation.

W. TERRISS

In 1869 the Club's first Treasurer was William Terriss, a handsome and athletic young man. After a short while Foot resigned the presidency in favour of Terriss. Terriss, whose career lasted from 1868 to 1898, was perhaps the most successful actor in heroic and romantic roles on the London stage of this era. His two best-known parts were Squire Thornhill and William in *Black-Eyed Susan*. He had "great gallantry of bearing" and "kept till the close of life a young, lithe and shapely figure", doubtless due to his fitness acquired with Otter.

On the evening of 16th December 1897 Terriss was stabbed and killed by an out-of-work paranoid actor, Richard Prince, who had accused Terriss of "persecuting him". The attack occurred at the private door to the Adelphi Theatre, where Terriss was performing. Condolences were sent to his family from Windsor Castle. At the trial Prince was found guilty but insane and died in Broadmoor.

However, Terriss remains a ghostly presence at the neighbouring 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 1950s, 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 reveller. 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 Homburg hat drifting down the spiral staircase. Then he suddenly vanished.

A foreman ticket collector 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 seen late at night on 24th and 27th 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".

H.M. WAGSTAFF

'Garry' Wagstaff succeeded Jack Cunningham as President. Wagstaff joined the Club as a boy champion from Bishops Stortford College in 1926. He was awarded First Team Colours in 1927-1935, and represented England as a freestyle sprinter at the first Empire Games held in Hamilton, Ontario, in 1930. He was Honorary Secretary from 1946 to 1951 and did a great deal in the post-war reconstruction of the Club. A great sprinter in his day, he still swam keenly when time allowed, and on his retirement, after five years in the chair, he was presented at the Annual Dinner with an inscribed stop-watch given by the members.

D.M. WARNFORD-DAVIS

Dennis Warnford-Davis has served the Club in one capacity or another for over 45 years and in so doing has made a lasting contribution to its social and sporting well-being. He was Honorary Secretary in 1968-69 and again in 1979-80, water-polo Captain 1978, Schools Hon. Secretary 1953-54, vice-President 1970-86. A more than capable water-polo player, Dennis has been on and organised many Otter tours under the banner of the 'Otter Castaways'. He was the prime mover in the first Otter tour to Malta in 1966 which was a very successful visit, much appreciated by the swimmers in the island. In his younger days he represented Otter at breaststroke and won many prizes in Club races. A qualified water-



William Terriss
President 1870-1871

polo referee, he was President of the London Water-Polo League in 1976.

R.A.A. WILLENS

The Honorary Handicapper plays a vital part in Otter competitions. He is, of course, the starter and to him all members report before a handicap, championship or open-water race. A strong personality, a stentorian voice, a refusal to be influenced by the pleas of his fellow members, and a mathematical brain (plus a slide-rule) is the ideal combination and this was well exemplified by R.A.A. Willens, an Oxford Blue and later a senior statistical expert with Shell-Mex. Bill Willens was known with respect and affection by all swimmers. He carried out his duties without a break from 1936 to 1960 and resigned only when he was posted to The Hague.

He left in the archives his notebooks which contain, in his own hieroglyphics, each and every member's time for an event swum in that period.

Dr. C.A. YOUNG

'Car' Young followed Lionel Milton as President after seventeen years on the committee, including spells as vice-Captain, Captain and Captain of 2nd and 3rd water-polo teams. From 1942 to 1946 he was in the Middle East as a medical specialist and latterly commanded the 43rd General Hospital at Beirut. In Tobruk, he played water-polo amongst the bombed ships in the harbour and, in Cyprus, he was Army swimming champion. He represented Hertfordshire at water-polo and Middlesex, United Hospitals, St. Mary's Hospital and Saracens at rugby union. In 1940 he was a member of the winning side in the Middlesex seven-a-sides. After the war he worked as a senior consultant at St.Mary's Hospital.

Young was invited by the President, Norman Fitzsimon, to make the official presentation of the Otter Centenary Trophy to the Amateur Swimming Association. He also spent years compiling and writing the Centenary History of the Club. He died in August 1986.



Dr Carmichael A. Young
President 1964-1967
Author of the Centenary History



Photograph taken during the centenary year with the Club's President, Officers and a few members.

OTTER S.C. - THE FUTURE

The nightmare scenario is one of stagnant waters, polluted seas and public baths in the form of kidney-shaped leisure centres. At times it seems fearfully close to realisation: the last 25 years have seen the closure of many of the lidos in and around London, in which one could swim in relaxed and spacious surroundings. The large Seymour Pool, one of the last in central London able to host first-class water-polo, seems destined to join Olympia and Wembley in the list of casualties of commercial expedience. As has been noted already in this History, there has been a drift of competitive swimmers from the centre to more accessible facilities in the outer suburbs and new towns.

Indeed, the last decade has seen the implementation of funding policies by local authorities that have changed the shape and to some extent the goals of the Club. Although the officers of Westminster Council and of City Centre Leisure, the facilities managers, have at all times been helpful in accommodating our club nights and special events within the bounds dictated by Council policy the fact remains that there is a woeful shortage of space for club swimming in central London.

Despite these difficulties, with the use of both the Queen Mother Sports Centre and the Shell pool the Club probably enjoys better swimming facilities than at any time, and it is to be hoped that this state of affairs will provide the base for solid achievement in the Masters programme for many years to come. Nevertheless, to break back into National competition a higher level of activity, with input from properly coached junior squads, must be supported. Many attempts have been made to bring this point home but so far without reaching the political level at which such decisions are taken in Westminster.

Water-polo remains a source of concern. Apart from the damaging shortage of pools already noted, it appears at times that modern lifestyles simply do not adapt to a predominantly men's team game played at night or weekends over the huge geographical areas of the London and National Leagues. Whilst the Club will continue to give all the support it can to this splendid game, if the traditional sources of supply - the hospitals, universities and schools - dry up, and older members cannot find time to support it, the outlook will be poor not only for Otter but for other clubs.

With regard to the rivers and sea, we share the pleasure of our namesakes in the success of the National Rivers Authority and European Commission in monitoring and reducing unnatural hazards. To be sure, we exercise caution in using the river, but there is probably more than one Otter who harbours the idea of returning to the tideway for a repeat of the great races of Victorian and Edwardian times. That would well happen by the time the next history is written.

In recording the events of the last 125 years we have taken pleasure and pride in the achievements of many of our fellow members. It should not be forgotten, however, that at any time no more than a handful of them are writing the the pages of the next history. The health of the Club depends above all on meeting the aspirations of the majority. It could be argued that, in pursuing that aim for the last 125 years, Otter has made its greatest contribution to swimming. In almost every branch of the sport our members have contributed to the birth of an organised and accessible discipline. It is hoped that the Club will continue to play its part in new developments for many years to come, to the benefit both of its members and of the sport as a whole.



◀ The Hon.
Colin B Moynihan MP,
Minister of Sport with
Otter President
Bob Burn 1988

Mark Grundy ▶

Below left
John Iliffe with Joan and
George Lean.
▲ Half-Mile at Henley



Below right
Roger Sharpley, Duncan Goodhew,
John Iliffe with Lesley Davies. ▶
▲ Otter Dinner 1993



▼ David Craig and Hugh
Turner. Half-mile at Henley



▼ Half-mile at Henley Sailing Club.
Left to right
Norman Fitzsimon, Eric Kimber,
Joy Stead, Ron Stead,
Tom Ricketts and Jim Ricketts

▼ Hugh Turner and Bob Millington.
Quarter-mile at the Serpentine

