



Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire
Amateur Swimming Association



ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Disciplines and Board Members _____	3
President's Report _____	4
Secretary's Report _____	6
Artistic Swimming Report _____	9
Diving Report _____	11
Masters Swimming _____	14
Performance swimming _____	16
Water Polo _____	17
Treasurer's Report _____	18
Independent Auditor Report _____	19



DISCIPLINES AND BOARD MEMBERS

Disciplines

The County is fortunate to be able to offer everyone the opportunity to participate in a wide range of aquatic pursuits. We have the following disciplines represented;

Artistic Swimming	Robert Blinkhorn
Diving	Emma West
Masters Swimming	Bob Odell
Performance Swimming	Andy Mackay (<i>Interim</i>)
Water Polo	Roger Penfold MBE (<i>Interim</i>)

Board Members 2020 -2021

The Board elected to represent our affiliated members for this season were:

President	Andy Mackay	Chesham SC
Vice President	Peter Button	Chalfont Otters SC
Secretary	Roger Penfold MBE	Reading SC
Treasurer	Jonathan Mills	Tilehurst SC

Robert Blinkhorn - Reading Royals SSC

Diane Cryer - Reading SC

Mr Greg Du Tertre - Wycombe District SC

Stuart Fillingham - Bracknell & Wokingham SC

Janet Hopkins - Newbury District SC

Ms C Jubb - Wycombe District SC

Jason Keeler - Amersham SC

Mr T K Norris - Chalfont Otters SC

Robert Odell - Amersham SC

Roger Prior - Eton College

Ms B Skelton - Reading Royals SSC

Emma West - Albatross DC

FOUR REASONS TO VOLUNTEER



Strengthen your relationship with your local community



Apply old skills and learn new ones



Meet new friends and become a mentor



Be involved in a cause that is important to you or someone you care about



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to start this report by remembering a former Berks and South Bucks County President and serving Board Member, Terry Norris, who sadly passed away in April 2021. Terry, who had only fairly recently served as Berks & South Bucks president for the longest period since wartime, passed away suddenly on Sunday 11 April. Terry had recently served as President of Swim England South East Region since 2019 and had been involved with swimming since 2009 when his daughter joined Chalfont Otters SC and immediately got involved in helping run things - Fixtures Secretary, Treasurer and ultimately Chairman in 2012. During his 3 years as County President, Terry was eager to pass on his support and enthusiasm and had been involved in training many team managers in Berks and South Bucks, as well as being actively involved in many of the County Camps as well as Championships. Terry will be remembered by many throughout the swimming community as a kind, supportive man and will be greatly missed.



My term as County President has been very unique. When I took on the role, I was expecting to be able to attend Camps, Championships, Masters events and learn something new about Diving and Artistic Swimming. However, in what has been a very tough year for Clubs across all disciplines, I have not had much chance to meet many of you. I have however been left really impressed by how Clubs have adapted to these difficult times, and I would like to pass on thanks to all the coaches for finding ways to keep their Club's members active and motivated, whether land-based sessions over zoom, nutrition sessions, cooking lessons and in some cases inter club quiz sessions. Congratulations to you all.

Training has been severely interrupted over the past 12 months, in and out of lockdown and it has been quite frustrating at times, as the rules for our 18 and over swimmers and masters meant they had to wait even longer to get back into the pool. The good news is that everyone is now back in the pool and I would also like to pass on my thanks to all the volunteers who helped with managing swimmers in and out of the pool, adhering to the COVID-19 restrictions put in place.



It is important now for Clubs to get back into a regular training cycle and ultimately back to competition. Level X, provided a good platform for swimmers to compete, and we know that ultimately, meets across all disciplines need to return, both to help get swimmers competing again, as well as help raise much needed funds for Clubs. Running open meets is not going to be easy as we continue to adhere to government COVID-19 restrictions and as much as it seems a long way off, the County Management board needs support in planning for a County Swimming Championships in the 2021 - 2022 season. I would personally ask you once again to reach out to any member of the Management Board if you are able to help plan and run a County Swimming Championships next season.

On another positive note, we saw the opening of the new 10-lane 25 metre swimming pool at Maidenhead, a fantastic facility for Maidenhead SC to train and host open meets. I am also pleased to hear that the new Amersham Leisure Centre, with an 8-lane 25 metre swimming pool and Diving pool is currently due to open on time in late September and be ready for Amersham SC and I also learnt that approval for a new Leisure Centre and pool in Reading, means

we should see Reading SC in a new pool if all goes to plan in early 2023.

Although it was not the year I expected, I am honoured to have served as County President. I am very grateful for the support from the Management Board, especially to Roger Penfold and Jonathan Mills who hold a wealth of knowledge for our sport and the running of this volunteer led organisation and I would also like to wish Peter Button success as he takes on the President role next season.

In conclusion, and talking of volunteering, I would like to encourage you all to support your Clubs, I have learned so much helping at Chesham SC over the years and more recently on the County Management Board and no matter how little time you can spare, I can assure you, the swimmers will be very grateful.

Andy Mackay

June 2021





SECRETARY'S REPORT

I have often made written contributions to the County Annual Report that have read like a “state of the nation” address, covering as many aspects as possible, and mounting my soap box on many occasions. I fondly thought that no one read them, as the reports seemed to have had little effect. I was astounded last year that readers found my printers’ Latin text a disappointment: I hope that no one tried to translate it ...

Anyway, a look back over the 2020/21 year could be brief in the extreme. As the Treasurer has pointed out, he was not really troubled by transactions in the year: nothing happened! Such a short report would, however, belie the activity which did occur.

The theme for the year, for clubs and the Association, was survival. It is great to report that, despite everything that has been thrown at our sports by the pandemic and the Government’s response to it, all the clubs, except 2, assigned to Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire have survived. They may be battered, bruised and diminished in size, but they have survived, and have begun (after the period under review, it is true) to rebuild. Let us hope that the vaccination regime, and individual

and collective care, will consign the recent troubled times to history.

Clubs have dug deep into their reserves of volunteers to keep themselves afloat, given that many of their employees, where they had them, have been on furlough or have been laid off. Let’s pay tribute to those stoic people who have striven to provide sufficient adhesive to ensure clubs kept going, despite there being no water in which to promote aquatic sports for more than half of the 12 months under review.

As I have said, we did lose 2 clubs in the year, Bracknell Synchro and Eton College. Both were relatively small in terms of membership and decided that, reluctantly, Stronger Affiliation was a step too far. Stronger Affiliation is an important standard for clubs to achieve, as they can then demonstrate to their members, and more importantly, the parents and guardians of their non-adult members, that they are safe environments for those children. Again, our County scores well in the next level of good governance - SwimMark. I will not disagree with people who say that achieving and maintaining that standard is hard work. But I believe the discipline it requires of clubs is well worth the effort in the long run.



How has the pandemic affected the County, you ask? The biggest impact is that there will be no swimming Championships, or other County-promoted events, or camps, in 2021. We are hoping to promote the County Swimming Championships in 2022, but more of that later. The Management Board continued to meet, but on a virtual basis, and, it has to be said, enjoyed much higher attendance rates at meetings than has been the norm of recent years. Now, in part this might have been because there was nothing else to do on the evenings in question, but I think it highlights the advantages of Zoom or Teams for meetings.

One the major talking points in the Board over the 12 months arose because Stuart Fillingham and Rob Moore stood down from promoting the Association's performance swimming events. I would like to thank Stuart and Rob, personally and on your behalf, for the countless hours they spent, virtually year round, in organising those events. We knew they would be a difficult act to follow, and so it has proved. The Board has struggled to find volunteers to step into their shoes. I think it only fair to warn you that if we do not find those volunteers, there will be no County Championships in 2022. "The County" is not a remote organisation with oodles of

resources at its disposal. It is a collection of clubs, bound together by geography. Its resources are the members of the assigned clubs ...

On a lighter note, we are seeing the re-provision of our facilities across the area. Slough's new pool opened just before the period under review, while the new pool at Braywick is functioning. Amersham's new pool is on schedule to open later this year, and Reading's new pool is due to opened in 2023. It is good that this investment in renewal is happening. To my mind, it is shame that none of the pools is long course, but, in these tight financial times (unless you are fighting a virus), c'est la vie.

Reverting to people, you will, no doubt, applaud our President, Andy Mackay, who has been at the helm in the trying circumstances of the pandemic: it has not been the presidential period he envisaged, I'll be bound! What is more, in the absence of the Public Relations Officer, he has bravely compiled the Association's Annual Report. Well done, Sir. You will welcome Peter Button into the hot seat at the Annual Council Meeting. I sincerely hope Peter has a better year, with a return to some semblance of normality in the pool.



(and lakes and gravel pits, for you brave exponents of open water swimming).

Your Board have worked hard over the year, and there is relatively unseen support from people like Susan Harrison, who checks club constitutions in the County, and Chris Hirst, who has taken from Sue Green as County Swimming Officials' Training Organiser. And there are the discipline managers, although I note that they are all elected Board Members, stepping up to cover a separate role.

In terms of the region, I am proud that Berks & South Bucks punches above its weight. 3 members of the Regional Board are from BSB clubs - Roger Prior (who is responsible for the Region's finances), Sara Todd (who is leading on the revamp of the Region's strategy) and I: I am Chairman of the Regional Board. In addition, Bob Odell is a significant cog in the Region's Masters' machinery, Di Hughes is the Region's Artistic Swimming Manager, and Emma West has an important role with the Region's Diving Group.

It is very sad to recall the sudden passing of Terry Norris, who had been the County President with the longest service since 1945, just as the period under review ended. The President has paid a fine tribute to Terry in his section of this report. Terry will be sorely missed by our sports and this Association.

Finally, and you are probably bored with reading this every year (well, except in 2020), may I pay tribute to the Assistant Secretary, Rosemary Large, and to Sandra, my wife, who many of you will know is hardly a fan of our sports: I don't know how she puts up with them or me!

Roger Penfold MBE
June 2021



ARTISTIC SWIMMING REPORT

Reading Royals Synchronised Swimming Club is now the only club in the Berks & South Bucks County Region providing training for artistic swimming as Bracknell has now closed (I believe the impact of social distancing reduced membership to an unsustainable level). Reading Royals' membership has also been affected by the hiatus in training brought about by pool closure. Although we would anticipate some loss of members around natural break points such as Christmas or summer, this has been considerably higher than usual especially as we have come out of lockdown.

We did manage to provide some training throughout lockdown delivering virtual land sessions when pools were forced to close. These sessions were based on strength training rather than flexibility as there is less risk of injury. With the reduction in training and consequently lower costs (no pool hire or freelance coach costs), club fees were also significantly reduced. With the opening of pools but restrictions on the number of swimmers in pools at any one time, these virtual sessions have continued in order to go some way to provide the volume of training required. Fees are now back to their pre-COVID-19 levels although pool time per

swimmer is reduced given the restrictions noted above.



The only domestic competition swimmers have been able to attend in the last 12 months was the Level X Games which was a land based skills competition. Our entry in the 12 & Under category came 20th; 13-15 entrant was 4th; Junior 5th and Senior entrant 9th. It was a challenge to motivate the older swimmers for this competition although younger swimmers, particularly 12 & Under were willing participants in the pre-competition trials. Coaches also found it challenging to provide training for the event.

Formal assessment of ability has recommenced through 3 virtual grade days taking place in June, July and August organised by the South East Region. These will be followed by a number of physical assessment days in Reading in September, October and December. A number of our swimmers will be required to pass 1 or, in some cases, 2 grades to be able to swim at upcoming competitions.



All domestic competitions for the remainder of this year will be virtual events. In September, the British Championships (otherwise known as Champs) will take place. This is a junior and senior competition for swimmers of 15 years of age and above with the appropriate grade level. In October, there will be the National Age Groups competition which has competitors in various age groups up to 15 years of age. This will be routines only and will be restricted to 3 solos and 3 duets per age group per club. This will restrict our usual submissions in some categories although for 12 & Under we have limited appropriate swimmers as they have not been able to obtain the required grade levels to swim during the lockdown period.

This has been compounded by club missing the swimmer submission deadline for the first virtual grade day in June (the procedure on submission has been clarified). For the Masters competition in November, Reading is unlikely to have any competitors swimming for the club. Finally, in December there is the Combo Cup which has no grade requirement for entry and excludes elite swimmers from entry.

In terms of national squad swimmers Reading has supplied 9 swimmers to the junior and senior teams. 4 swimmers from

Reading (in a squad of 10) were selected to perform at the most recent competition entered by GB which was the Senior GB team swimming at the Senior Europeans in Budapest in May. 6 swimmers from Reading have been selected for the Junior team that will be swimming in Malta in July.

An additional Reading swimmer is training for the mixed duet in the Junior category 3 Reading swimmers make up the quintet of athletes working towards building on the success of Isabelle Thorpe and Kate Shortman in delivering a world class Senior duet pairing. For the Youth programme there are currently 4 Reading swimmers. An additional 2 swimmers have been seconded to the Junior training sessions. The Youth team were due to compete in Croatia recently but the entry was withdrawn due to logistical challenges. An internal competition will be held in Hengrove this weekend instead.

Robert Blinkhorn
June 2021





DIVING REPORT

As in previous years, there remain two Swim England Diving Clubs within the county boundaries:

Amersham Diving Club, who are part of Amersham Swimming Club and are based at the Everyone Active operated Chiltern Pools in Amersham.

Albatross Diving Club who, since the closure of Central Pool in Reading, now operate primarily out of The Abbey School, but also use other pools.

Both Albatross and Amersham are SwimMark accredited clubs with reaccreditation being awarded to Albatross at the last regional board. Amersham currently have 85 divers and Albatross 60.

Amersham run a primarily Skills (novice) level competitive programme and have a flourishing Masters section. In addition to Skills, Albatross also have Age Group, Elite and Senior divers competing at national level and a growing masters programme.

As with all aquatic disciplines the last year has been a challenge with 3 periods of pool and dry facility closures, but both clubs have maintained virtual training programmes with little loss in membership numbers.

Training across both clubs incorporated strength and conditioning programmes, drills, HIIT, and stretching. Newsletters supported communication and quizzes and social media challenges helped with social interaction. Members and parents were briefed through zoom meetings.

Albatross is an entirely volunteer run club so did not have any payroll liabilities whereas Amersham have some paid staff but were assisted financially in their support by members paying a reduced fee.

Competitive Calendar

Clearly, due to the COVID-19-19 crisis the competitive calendar for the past year has been limited but both clubs took part in the recent Level X events with Albatross gaining top 10 positions in both Series 1 and Series 2 videoed dry drills events. Series 3 will be run in the home pool over 3 phases in June, July, and August. We are currently in phase 1 and whilst it has been hard to generate the same level of competition spirit and adrenaline, the series has supported some variation in training programming and provided periods of focus.

Going forward there are plans to hold the English Schools Diving Championships at



the LAC in December and potentially an open event in Southampton in October should licensing permit.

Administration & Coaching

Both clubs remain committed to supporting past divers who wish to remain in the sport. Amersham has a thriving Masters section diving at National, International and World events and Albatross now have a growing group of older girls who will form a novice Masters team when events allow.

Over the past few years 4 divers from Albatross have taken the opportunity of full scholarships to universities in America. 3 have now graduated, with one shortly finishing a Masters degree course whilst coaching the university dive team in Kentucky alongside pursuing a high diving stunt career. This university opportunity affords the diver both a chance to carry on in their chosen sport whilst studying and the gaining of a debt free degree, something the UK cannot yet match. A further diver is going out to Florida in August to start her degree whilst having the opportunity to continue with her diving.

Albatross have also been fortunate to have had elite divers selected for support on the aquatics Diploma in Sporting Excellence Programme (DiSE) for the last few years.

This programme is run through Loughborough College with the support of Swim England. 2 divers are half way through the current programme which, when completed, will support university applications with 64 UCAS points.

Albatross have funded 1 diver achieve their Assistant Coach theory (old Level 1) qualification this year and 2 divers their Diving Coach (old Level 2) theory qualification. The pool practical is still unavailable with the IOS. Sadly, the club lost a Diving Coach to illness during the year and a second coach is currently also unable to coach. This has put a strain on programme coverage with all volunteers taking on additional sessions. Both clubs operate a Young Leaders scheme which encourages divers to assist qualified coaches from age 14 to maintain low coach to diver ratios. These Young Leaders are then encouraged to complete the Assistant Coach qualification at 16. The lockdowns and unavailability of courses will, however, mean a void period in young coaches coming forward.

One Albatross older diver qualified as a regional judge on the inaugural virtual Judge 1 course.



Those Albatross coaches with Safeguarding training renewals this year have all completed the virtual course available during lockdown and the club renewed their life saving certificates as soon as pools reopened last summer.

Facility Development and Growth

Despite Swim England funding not being available to clubs over the past year both county clubs continue to enjoy growth and a regular stream of new enquiries. Both clubs are non-selective in their Learn to Dive programmes and will look to their new pools to grow the clubs further and introduce Talent Identification progression (TID). Amersham pool is on track to open this year and will include dry training which will significantly enhance the offer to club members and support the competitive programme. Reading is due to open in 2023. Diving will remain with the club at Amersham so outside the Operator (Everyone Active) lesson programme. There are no current plans for public sessions. Programming pool time challenges exist with diving wanting more pool time currently being used by Operator sessions.

Early programme discussions have taken place with GLL at Reading, but efforts are currently being focused on maximising the board configuration and dry capacity now planning permission has been awarded.

Albatross continue to train locally at the Abbey School during the week and travel at weekends to Hemel Hempstead and Southampton. Session sizes are smaller with bubbles supporting social distancing and diver segregation. This has led to some strain on finances which is being covered by reserves.

Coach development will still be led through Regional SEEDS and ACE programmes which, it is hoped, will start back in the Autumn.

Emma West

June 2021





MASTERS SWIMMING

2020

There were 31 BSB competitors in the SER (LC) at Crawley in January 2020. Both Pip Williams and Amanda Heath caught the eye with 5 Gold medals each. Also noteworthy the victories of Claire and Holly Moore (mother and daughter) as well as Caroline and Charlie Madden (mother and son) in their respective age-groups. At this event and others, Bracknell were very well represented, clearly gearing up for their 25th anniversary Masters later in the year.

In February 5 Bracknell swimmers competed in the Swim Wales Open Masters (LC) at Swansea, amassing 19 medals between them of which 5 were Gold. Beccy O'Brien as the lone entrant from Wycombe took 5 Golds at the same event and then went on to compete at Royal Navy Masters at Millfield (SC) winning 3 events. Whilst all this was going on, Jean Petit was ploughing a lone furrow through Etwall Masters, Staffordshire Masters and Dutch Masters (SC) at Rotterdam gaining medals at each one.

There were nearly 100 local (BSB) competitors supporting the Bracknell Masters in March and, as usual, there was much interest in the unique fly relay event swum in honour of the late Mike Daniell.

It was also good to see our retiring County Officials Co-ordinator Sue Green actually IN the water and winning her 50fs event. The leading performer was Bridget Bewick who won 6 individual events.

Just prior to lockdown 2 Bracknell swimmers James Blaby and Emily Goodwin claimed 9 and 3 medals respectively at the Lifesaving Nationals in Sheffield.

With the cancellation of Regional and National events there has been no official competition since March. The County Open Masters scheduled for 13th September and the Inter-County Masters due to take place on 1st November were cancelled.

2021

With the exception of a small number of elite events indoor competition/training has been minimal for all swimmers. In April our Regional President, Terry Norris, suddenly passed away. He was always a real supporter of Masters - making a special trip in 2019 to Horsham for example in order to present awards to the winners. He will be very sorely missed by all.

There was some innovative use of outdoor facilities in May/June when Wycombe District SC promoted the use of Wycombe

Rye lido for their Masters sessions and invited other local clubs to participate. Also the River Thames and local lakes saw much extra 'open water' usage.

June also saw the Selkie Henley Classic take place over the Henley Royal Regatta Course covering 2.1km endurance upstream swimming.

Well done to the team from Reading SC Masters who came home after some top placings with the Top Team Trophy and to the WDSC who also competed at this annual event.



With the continuing and fluctuating pandemic restrictions in mind, the County Open Masters will regrettably not run.

However, the Inter-County Masters event is in the schedule, planned to be held at High Wycombe on Sunday 14th November. It will be our third attempt to host the event.

Bob Odell

June 2021



PERFORMANCE SWIMMING

With no County competitions in the 2020-21 season and with the post of Swimming Events Manager currently vacant, I have taken the opportunity to share a few thoughts on the Performance Swimming discipline.

It was good to see many of the County associated Clubs running Level X sessions to support swimmers return to some sort of competition and lay down times onto rankings. These sessions have provided swimmers a good platform as they return to open meets as well as future County Meets and Championships. I was also impressed to see many swimmers taking to the lake for some open water swimming to keep their arms and legs ticking over.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pass on congratulations on behalf of the County Management Board to the following swimmers:

- Former Maidenhead SC swimmer Tom Dean for an excellent European Championships and qualifying himself for the GB Olympic team heading to Tokyo this summer.
- Former WDSC swimmer James McFadzen for competing at the European Championships in Budapest.

- WDSC swimmer Ella Dyson for her selection on the European Juniors GB Team as well as European Junior Open Water Team.
- Also from WDSC, Alex Cooper, Lucy Fox and Joshua Weston for their selection for the European Junior Open Water GB Team, as well as WDSC Head Coach Kevin Brooks for selection onto the coaching team for the Open Water Championships.

Good luck to you all this summer!

As mentioned in my President's report, we are still looking for a Promoter to help with managing the County Champs and Dev meet. Please reach out if you can support the County in planning and running these important events for the swimmers in our County.

Andy Mackay

June 2021





WATER POLO

Nationally, water polo probably suffered more than any of the other aquatic sports during the year to 31 March 2021. It stopped in March 2020 and is only now really emerging from the impact of the various restrictions imposed by Government in response to the COVID-19-19 pandemic.

Only one club in the County actively promotes water polo, and has a polo section and team - Reading SC. In normal circumstances Reading has a men's team which competes in the London League. It is keen to foster junior polo, too, when circumstances permit this.

However, it could be argued that water polo in Reading has suffered from the pandemic less than many other clubs. Its home for many years, Central Pool, Reading, was demolished. It spent some time at the military pool at Minley, but that was not really satisfactory for a variety of reasons. It moved to Eton College before the lockdown, but that pool is now closed, and is due to be replaced.

Better times are promised. The new competition pool at Rivermead, Reading, for which contracts have been let, will have (certainly, at the time writing) a moveable floor, thus lending itself to water polo. It is to be hoped that this will lead to burgeoning take up of polo in the greater Reading area and the County, particularly if this is linked with the growth in the water polo coaching workforce promised by Swim England and the Institute of Swimming.

Roger Penfold MBE

June 2021



TREASURER'S REPORT

Right before the start of the (financial) year which started in April 2020 the restrictions came in and as we know most swimming activities came to a grinding halt. As a result the financial tale for 2020-2021 is very sparse. We put a scheme in place for a back drop for clubs; we had to cancel our training camps (including the 11-year old camp which we had run one of the series of 3, but had no chance to run the others). As a result the management board took the decision to refund the entire programme fees for that series.

As a result we had no income generating events - like the masters, development or 2021 county championships, but similarly we have no outgoings - national county team championships, training camps or any of the meets just mentioned.

So the financial picture was stable, with major items in the accounts being the depreciations of the county's diving boards and electronic timing assets, and the refund of the courses mentioned above.

Jonathan Mills

June 2021



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire ASA Accounts

Basis of report

My examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the association and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items in the accounts and seeking explanations from the treasurer concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records have not been met
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Barbara Garden
DipPFS

20 May 2021