Tooting Bec Lido’s artists in full flow

Tooting Bec Lido was awash with drawing and painting talent when South London Swimming Club (SLSC) staged a free art event in September.

Artist and SLSC member Shaun Carey led two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, with more than 45 people of all ages taking part.

The event coincided with the London Open House weekend, so scores of visitors had a chance to see that a lot more than swimming goes on at the Lido.

The conditions were perfect for the budding artists, with the pool bright blue in the sunshine. A selection of the pictures from the day will be featured in the SLSC’s 2010 calendar (see next page).

Our photos of the event were taken by Elizabeth Furth, from the SLSC. You can see more of Elizabeth’s photos at elizabethfurth.com

In this issue
• Lifeguards share their cold water swimming tips
• SLSC open water swims and triathlon successes
• What’s on this winter
• And much more...

All-round successes

Evening aquathlons – there was a record turn-out this year, with more than 250 people rising to the challenge of an 11-length swim (about 1km) followed by a gruelling five-mile run around Tooting Common. The aquathlons are fast becoming a fixture in the triathlon calendar. Euan Lees won the series, with John Horsman winning the veteran’s prize. There was no overall winner for women but Corrine Cunningham and Charlotte Craig both won two of their races.

Relay triathlon – 40 teams took part in this fun event, which was blessed by glorious September sunshine. A ten-length swim (about 900m) was followed by a 6.4km bike ride and 5km run. The Westminster School Staff team won in a time of 42mins 6secs. The race director’s trophy went to Robert Ingamells, six, who completed the run accompanied by his mum.

Want to get involved? The 2010 SLSC aquathlons and triathlon are now being planned. We always need volunteers to help run the events, so if you’d like to be a marshal or race director, contact the organisers at info@slsc.org.uk

Winter opening at Tooting Bec Lido: 1 October to 29 May
7am (or light enough for lifeguards to see) to 2pm (last swim 1.30pm)
Summer reflections

SLSC’s traditional Sunday morning races at the Lido have been as busy as ever, with over 100 members, old and new, from every age group, vying for the weekly trophies. In addition, there are now several other events in the SLSC calendar that are becoming unmissable.

Summer barbecue and races
This year’s July barbecue was the best attended for many years. The evening started off with fiercely competed children’s races, followed by half-mile and mile events. Everyone then enjoyed a hog roast, with music from the Great Gustos and DJ’s Egg and Charlotte. The Dive in Dolly Mixtures performed their synchronised swimming routine to thunderous applause, with more laughter than synchronicity!

The River Thames Swim. Reintroduced in 2003, this one-mile swim from Kingston Bridge to Trowlock Island has become a firm favourite among the SLSC’s more intrepid members. Despite the rain, there were 46 swimmers taking part, with safety cover provided by a record number of canoeists.

There was tough competition among the faster swimmers, but many of the entrants simply enjoyed a chance to see the Thames from an unusual perspective, as they swam past the back gardens, houses and boats along the banks.

As in previous years, the Skiff Club provided the canoes and the post-race barbecue was held at the Royal Canoe Club.

103-length challenge. It was the fourth time this endurance event has been held – the number of lengths goes up by one each year to reflect the age of the Lido. The challenge rounded off the summer season and in the bright autumn sunshine the water was a balmy 16°C.

Eight of the ten swimmers in the individual event managed to swim all 103 lengths – the fastest was Ben Pennington in a record time of 2hrs 16mins. Nine teams took part, ranging from the two-strong Lifeguards Team to the ever-expanding Mid-Morning Millers.

Well done to them all, and to the dozens of people who took part in the two 103 x one-length relays – the youngest, Hector Sullivan, was just five years old. Next year it will be a 104-length challenge!

A number of Lido regulars and SLSC members have completed gruelling open water swimming challenges this year, both at home and abroad. Here are just some of them.

A single day saw solo Channel swims by a Lido trio. Brad Anderson completed the crossing of (at least!) 21 miles in 10hrs 34mins. Harry Barker – the youngest of the three at 19 – finished in 11hrs 37mins. And Carl Richards reached France in 13hrs 5mins.

The next big achievements came from Ben Pennington and Giles Meyer who swam the length of Lake Windermere, there and back overnight. They came in second and third respectively in this tough 21-mile event with times of 10hrs 5mins and 10hrs 23mins. Giles went on to swim the Baltic Sea (Germany to Denmark) in a world record time of 4hrs 51mins.

Meanwhile Tom Hudson and Simon Murie swam the Gibraltar Straits from Europe to Africa, accompanied by their very own pod of pilot whales, in 3hrs 34mins.

Another swim from one continent to another was the Hellespont race in Turkey, from Asia to Europe. SLSC’s Margy “Pocket Rocket” Sullivan won her age group and her husband Egg finished successfully too.

Giles and Ben have also taken on the challenge of swimming 1,000km (a million metres) in one year. As 100 yards went to print they still had two months left to reach their total, so we wish them luck!

Lido art for calendar

The SLSC calendar for 2010 features some of the gorgeous pictures created by children at the Lido during the free art event in September (see front page).

As well as enjoying the bright and imaginative pictures, you’ll be able to use the calendar to find details of SLSC events and Sunday races.

The calendars measure 297mm by 297mm and will be available from late November for £9. You can get your copy from the lifeguards or order one at www.slsc.org.uk (add £2.50 p&p).

Cold comfort

Four of our lovely winter lifeguards give us their tips on swimming in cold water.

“Wear two swimming hats to keep your head warm – most heat is lost through the head.” Brian

“Keep near the edge of the pool or in the shallow end and don’t stay in too long.” Bob
The next UK cold water swimming championships are on 22 January 2011 at Tooting Bec Lido. Put the date in your diary!

The SLSC is currently looking for a sponsor for the championships. If you own a company or know of someone who would be interested in sponsoring this unique swimming event, please let us know.

The UK cold water swimming championships have been held at the Lido since 2006. They provide competition, cold, fun and bravery in an historic and picturesque setting.

In 2009 the championships were enormously successful in generating press, radio, web and TV coverage on a local, national and international level.

Contact: info@slsc.org.uk 07985 141 532

Race directors set the standard

The masterminds behind the SLSC aquathlon and triathlon series (see front page) have been fighting the good fight against middle age in a series of sporting challenges around the world.

The action started close to home in January with the 10km Box Hill Fell Race. Running in deep mud, Paul Leddington proved that fatherhood hasn’t slowed him down at all.

Tim Thomas finished third in his age group in May’s Eton Super Sprints triathlon, which included a 400m swim in Dorney Lake. Two months later he faced more challenges racing over Olympic distances in the European Triathlon Championships in Holten, Holland. The 42km cycle race seemed to take in the country’s only hills and it was too warm for the competitors to wear wetsuits for the swim.

Mat Record took on the half-ironman Vitruvian Challenge at Rutland Water in August, posting a brilliant time of 5hrs 17mins for the 2km swim, 75km bike ride and 19km run. He now says he’s ready for the 2010 Ironman Hawaii.

Mark Thomas had a fantastic 2009. He won gold in his age group in both the Eton Super Sprints and the Hyde Park Dextro Ultra World Series. His other highlights included a bronze medal at the National Sprint Championships in Milton Keynes and an impressive tenth place in the World Championships on Australia’s Gold Coast.

Mark is now taking a well earned break but plans to abandon his wetsuit for the Christmas Day race at the Lido.

Steve Hodnett
SLSC members may be aware that Stephen Hodnett (Hod) died in May. Many will have known him from his regular attendance at the Lido and participation in various cold water swimming competitions, both here and in Finland. Stephen was hit by a truck while riding his bike on holiday in New York with his great friend Gavin White, another familiar face at the pool before his move to Newfoundland.

Members of Stephen’s family and many of his friends will be in Tooting on 28 November to scatter his ashes on the common. The gathering point is Tooting Bec Lido carpark at noon. There will then be a short swim, followed by refreshments from 2pm at the King’s Head on Upper Tooting Road – please let Hilary know if you are coming hilary.jennings@gmail.com

Fishing for leaves

The SLSC has given an enormous fishing net to Tooting Bec Lido, to help the lifeguards remove fallen leaves from the water during the autumn. The net is as wide as the pool and was made to order by Coastal Nets Ltd of Dorset.

SLSC President Naomi Branston says, “Those of us who swim all year round at the Lido know how difficult it is to keep the pool clear during autumn. The net seems a good way for the Club to support the lifeguards, DC Leisure and Wandsworth Council in maintaining the Lido and its long tradition of winter swimming.”

Sauna

The SLSC sauna is fired up and already warming cold water swimmers. It is hot by 8am every day and goes off at 1pm. The sauna was a present from Honkarakenne, Finnish sauna specialists, for the World Winter Swimming Championships in 2008.
CLUB EVENTS COMING UP

For details of all events, watch the Tooting Bec Lido noticeboard or visit www.slsc.org.uk

Races every Sunday, 9.30am
All races are handicapped so all ages and abilities can compete and win. Then warm up with coffee, cake and a chat.

Past Presidents’ Cup, 15 Nov
Autumn points, 4 Oct–20 Dec
Winter points, 24 Dec–28 Feb

Christmas Day races, 10.30am
Jenny Kinnaird Cup for women and the Burton Cup for men

Boxing Day race, 10.00am
Ice Breaker Bucket trophy

New Year’s Day race, 10.00am
Willis Cup

Swimmers can only win trophies in festive season races if they have competed in at least three autumn races.

SLSC v Serpentine SC Gala
Sunday 8 Nov 9.30am
Doug Smith Memorial trophy – great races and delicious food provided by Rene, Doug’s widow.

Lido crawl, 21 Nov 7.30am
A great morning travelling between London’s outdoor swimming venues: Tooting Bec Lido then the Serpentine, Parliament Hill Lido and finally the ponds on Hampstead Heath – rounded off with lunch at Kenwood House.

Bring dry swimwear for each venue, lots of warm clothes and sensible shoes for walking across the Heath.

Contact the SLSC at info@slsc.org.uk or phone 07985 141 532
If you’d like to volunteer to help at any of our many events please email volunteer@slsc.org.uk

100 yards team
Editor: Andrew Ingamells
Sub-editor: Margy Sullivan
Design: Sue Rentoul
Photo credits: Elizabeth Furth, David Spencer and Lucy Petrie

TUBBY CHADWICK

The rotund figure of a man breaking the ice at Tooting Bec Lido has featured on many of our winter-swimming posters.

Thanks to two of his grandchildren, we now know that he is Robert “Tubby” Chadwick. He was a founder member of the SLSC in 1906 and took part in the first Christmas Day race that year. He went on to win the race in 1910, 1914 and 1922.

One of the aims of the SLSC was to promote lifesaving and in 1936 Tubby received a Royal Life Saving Society award for rescuing a child from the Thames.

Tubby and his wife lived in Avoca Road, Tooting. They had eight children. According to a family tradition, when the boys – five in all – were old enough, he would walk them to Brighton and back!

After the Second World War, when he was in his 60s, Tubby became Vice President of the SLSC. He died in 1960 at the age of 86. Now who, I wonder, is the other man in the picture? Janet Smith

WATERWORDS

Edited by Melanie Mauthner and Hyilda Sims
BLU (Brockwell Lido Users), 2008

Brockwell Lido has a long tradition of innovations, such as yoga classes and a resident education officer. Waterwords, a collection of poems, mostly written by children, is the latest venture from the ever-enterprising BLU.

The book came about as a result of poetry workshops held as part of Brockwell Lido’s 70th anniversary celebrations in 2007.

“You enter the walls/And the outside world stops,” says Michael in the opening poem, Lido. “If the water was a taste,” writes eight-year-old Mario, “It would be chocolate ice-cream.” “I swim/Therefore I am,” muses Mary in A Meaning to Life. “I don’t dry between my toes/But nobody knows.”

There’s a humorous twist to many of the poems. In Lido Rap, 11-year-olds Joshua and Oscar reflect on the coldness of the water: “This water is so chilly/ The opposite of hot, hot chilli/The water’s really freezing/When you leave it/You’ll be sneeze, sneeze, sneezing.” And in Swimming, Yes Please! seven-year-old Fernanda captures the anticipation of a swim: “I put on my goggles/I put on my snorkel/I put on my swimming cap/And that’s just at the bus stop.”

If you’re looking for rhyme, how about Fan by Daniel: “I’m a water fan/Aged twelve/Not quite a man/But I still like girls in bikinis/That’s why the Lido is where my scene is.”

There are contributions from adults, too, including both the editors. The agony of lost love is caught by Dawn in Dido, which ends: “Aeneas/in his Speedos/And Dido/at the Lido”.

The children’s pictures add to the charm of Waterwords, which is available for £6.95 from brockwelllido.com

Janet Smith

If you’d like to join the South London Swimming Club, visit www.slsc.org.uk or ask the lifeguards for an application form.