

## Chairman's Report 2015

Colin Vickery

I am sure that you will all agree that it has been another very successful year for the club brought about by the very hard work of a lot of people and enthusiasm of our members. It was a year that saw us recruit 14 new members and 4 pool helpers. In addition we have received a great number of enquiries through our website.

We achieved great success in our gala's winning 9 Golds 7 Silvers & 6 Bronze medals as well as team awards at Keynsham, came second by just 3 points at Street, won our own gala at Sherborne for the 4<sup>th</sup> year running and against the odds managed to enter a team of ladies for the Gala at Plymouth. We also had a very busy social calendar including the usual Woodlarks camp, at least 3 sailing trips to Poole, 21 of our members went to see Hairspray at the Octagon theatre, there was a trip to Bridgewater carnival and a skittles evening at the Quick Silver Mail and of course our Christmas party and gala as well as attending the Wayfarers carol service at Martock.

We lost just one pool session last year which was at Goldenstones during March due to an unbalance of chemicals in the pool but I have to say that our pool numbers at both Yeovil and Sherborne continue to be lower than ideal. We really need to be seeing between 30 and 40 swimmers at each session rather than the lower twenties which tends to be more the norm certainly at Sherborne. We currently have 111 members but we really need to see more of us swimming regularly particularly in the winter when there is always a drop in numbers at our sessions. At this point in time, we are also rather lean on lifeguard and driver numbers. At the moment, we only have 4 lifeguards which means that, in the cases of sickness and holidays, one of us has to cover consecutive weeks and we have always said that the minimum number of volunteer drivers really needs to be 8, in order to cover all of our swimming, sailing, fundraising and social requirements but last year we lost Owen Reed and Alan Robus so we only have 6 drivers on our books. It doesn't seem possible to recruit qualified Lifeguards for voluntary work but I have recently asked the Volunteer Office if they could try to find us some more Lifeguards and Drivers.

We desperately still need a Secretary. Since Jean Crowdy died there has not been a single person show an interest in performing this duty for the club. If there was anybody interested in joining the Committee in this role we would be delighted and I would be happy to help with the typing etc just as we are having to share it around the Committee at the moment so if you are tempted don't be shy just come and have a chat about it.

We seem to go for several years without having too much of an increase in our expenses such as pool hire but then it all hits us at once. The year before last the cost of hiring the Sherborne pool increased significantly and last year was the turn of

Goldenstones. To be fair they had put a hold on our price increase for several years previously and then hit us initially with what seemed to be an unaffordable rise, at the start of last year, however following very reasonable discussion and a meeting between their management Sheila, Graeme and I a satisfactory compromise was reached but did mean that we had to increase the pool charges to our members at a Special General Meeting in July. I believe that we currently have a very good relationship with the staff of both Goldenstones and Sherborne pools and long may it continue. The increase in pool hire charges over the last couple of years have made us look at where we can save money and when we looked closely we found that we could do without the Tuesday evening taxi altogether.

Last year we were quite active on the fund raising front where we supported both the Lufton Fete and the Steam Fair over the bank holiday weekend at the beginning of May, there was a Swimathon and then we held a table top sale at the end of the year as well as all of the other draws etc which we normally do and Graeme will have the details of all the money raised through all of the various means in his Treasurers report but I would like to mention 3 people well known us who in particular have helped us obtain donations within the past year. They are Paul Allaway who has arranged a very large donation for us through the Yeovil Round Table, Jane Burrell who arranged a very large donation to Apollo through her involvement in the past with the Somerton Horse Show and David March another donation through his work with the Battens Charitable Trust. All 3 are either members or who have had family ties with the club and we cannot thank them enough.

Last year was another very successful sailing season but the takings were still about £150 down on what they were a couple of years ago. After much deliberation, we decided to sell the clubs Wayfarer dingy. Since we have regularly been using the Wessex Water Board Raider on Thursday evenings, our Wayfarer has not been used for general club use for many years and was costing us money just to park it at Sutton Bingham. It was a decision that was not taken lightly but there was some doubt over the Wayfarers suitability for our older disabled members that seem to have been in the majority for many seasons now. I for one am very keen to see club sailing continue indefinitely at Sutton Bingham on Thursday evenings and if we ever found ourselves in a situation where we needed another boat to continue then I think a big concentrated effort to come up with a suitable alternative would be far better than paying to hang on to the wayfarer for ever just in case and then, if we find that if we ever do need it, that we can't use it. Whilst there was somebody interested and a reasonable offer on the table it was elected to let it go.

The past year has been very sad in terms of losing loved ones. Unfortunately the following 6 members have all passed away since the last AGM:

Margaret Foley  
Enid Foulkhard  
Dorothy London  
Ron Mitchell  
Carol Jaques  
Margo Dimment

I'm sure that each and every one of us will have our own special memories of them. They were all valued members who will be sadly missed but never forgotten.

Looking at our priorities, as a Committee, for the next year I think that there are 3 main ones. The first priority is to increase our qualified Lifeguard numbers. Against one of the donations that we had last year, there was a commitment for us to train a new Lifeguard. We need to find somebody who wants to be a Lifeguard, put them through the training and then add them to our rota. The second priority is to look at what needs to be done about the condition of the minibus seats. It is now quite a few years since we previously started having them repaired and they have again deteriorated to a point where they will, before very long, become unusable. Do we have all of the seats professionally repaired again, buy some covers as a temporary measure, do we try to find some replacements from a written off vehicle or do we live with them as long as it takes with a view to replacing the minibus as soon as possible. The Third Priority is to slightly improve our fundraising activities again this year. As you will see from the accounts, we did raise quite a bit of money through fundraising last year but it was only about half that of the previous year. I know that it is still extremely difficult and we all made a big effort but I think that we ought to be striving to maintain the same amount or improve it year on year.

In closing, I would like to thank the following organisations and individuals that I know have done so much for the club during the past year:

Sherborne Boys School Leisure Centre, Goldenstones and Sutton Bingham Sailing Club for everything that they have done for us. Also everyone at the Yeovil Volunteer Office.

Graeme Tate our Treasurer. It is Graeme's 10<sup>th</sup> AGM this evening so a very special thank you to him and of course Old Mill Accountants for the free service which they continue to provide us.

Tracey Wilson our Transport Manager. In the past year, Tracey has organised and overseen a whole lot more than just transport in particular many outings and of course the annual Woodlarks Camp. She is also one of our Lifeguards.

Sarah Hull our Publicity Rep. Sarah also does much more than Publicity often helping with the minutes from the meetings and other Secretarial tasks. She is somebody I know I can contact quickly and easily and who will be willing to help with just about anything at short notice.

Gill Allen our Cashiering Rep on the Committee. Gill is unbelievably reliable, will never miss a meeting without good reason and has always been a big part of the club.

Jackie Drake our Swimming Rep. Jackie has now probably organised as many gala's as any other person in the clubs history and they always go off without a hitch. There's never any need to get stressed when we have clubs visiting for our gala's as you know that she's taken care of everything. She also drives the minibus.

Sheila Drake our Membership Rep. She has succeeded in keeping our membership well above 100. Sheila also helps in so many other ways as well as membership issues. On the desk at our sessions, announcements on the poolside. She came along with Graeme and I for a meeting at Goldenstones and of course she has chaired the AGM for the past couple of years.

Paul Wilson our Sailing Rep. I am very grateful to Paul as he takes great responsibility every time he takes a boat load of our members out on the water and on sailing trips to the coast each year. He is nearly always across at Sherborne on Tuesday evenings to offer advice on Sutton Bingham matters and was particularly useful offering impartial advice on the sale of the Wayfarer last year.

Jean Noake our Social Rep. Jean has been involved with the club for more years than most of us and her continued involvement is vital. Understandably, Jean's main attention at the moment has to be her family and we have tried to help her out with some of the social events, hopefully to her satisfaction, but she is still very much involved.

Clive Strickland our Vice Chairman. Clive is another who is very reliable attending the vast majority of Committee meetings and is particularly useful in reporting back to the Committee what is actually happening at our swimming sessions and generally keeping an eye on things.

There are numerous other members who regularly help with whatever is needed like Mary Barker, Daphne Wilson, Edith Roberts, Iris Hoskins, Rebecca Brake, Joan and Bev Owen, Liz Wilson also John Corner and Andy Marsh our Lifeguards, Brian Higgins who does all of our Lifeguard training sessions at Sherborne. Mike Searl who maintains our Website, Our Drivers Ed Breadon, Adam Hawkins, Simon Rowbottom, Lynda Sharp our Club Protection Officer and there are many more. If I

haven't mentioned your name I apologise it does not mean that you are thought any less of it's just an omission on my part.

Finally, can I leave you with the message that we are primarily a swimming club and like all sports the more you put in to it the more you get out of it. For all of us generally speaking, whether physically disabled or not, the more often you swim the more health benefits you will see. I sincerely hope that you will all renew your memberships in April and continue to enjoy the many benefits of this fantastic club.