



# Portishead Open Air Pool

## e NEWSLETTER

Issue 4 , June 2011

The wonderful April weather gave us a great start to the Season, with 3344 visitors coming through the turnstiles in 10 days. Unfortunately, we were back to cool cloudy weather in May with the unwelcome addition of a chilly north-easterly breeze, which kept the sunbathers away. The new biomass boiler ensured the water was lovely and warm though, so regular swimmers were there as usual and May numbers were a respectable 3013.

An additional attraction was the eagerly awaited opening on 23 May of the new Café/Bistro, Five Poolside, with a party that week to introduce the new tenants, Alan and Mary Freeman to Trust members and volunteers. We cover the event in this issue, together with an interview with Mary and her family, our regular Meet the Team feature and more.

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## Meet the Team at Five Poolside



Mary Freeman with her Mum and Dad,  
Peter and Maggie Payton

Mary and Alan Freeman are the couple behind the successful Café and Bistro **Five the Beach** on Clevedon sea front, but in bringing **Five Poolside** to Portishead they are returning to their roots, as they both come from old established Portishead families. Alan, a local builder, is the son of Cliff Freeman who founded Freemans TV and Audio Visual shop in the High Street, while Mary is a Payton, also well known in Portishead from the Fifties to Nineties where family businesses included a butcher's, a bookmaker's and another popular café, the Scandal Parlour. This month I chatted to Mary and her parents, Maggie and Peter Payton about their Portishead connections.

Maggie moved to Portishead in the late Fifties and after leaving school became a wages clerk at Albright & Wilson, on the site of the present Village Quarter. Aged 17, she won a beauty contest run by the Winter Gardens in Weston to become Miss Top Hat, and then a national competition, Miss Albright and Wilson. The photo (below) hung proudly by Mary in the lobby of Five Poolside shows her mother posing for the newspapers on Battery Point. On the strength of this, Maggie was offered a modelling contract which her mother quickly vetoed as she did not want her daughter exposed to the wicked big city life. The *Albright and Wil-*

*son News* stated at the time that "Margaret Muir has refused to take up the contract as she prefers the quiet life in Portishead where she enjoys skittles and knitting". Maggie is quick to point out that this was far from the truth, as she preferred fags and gin!

Peter's family moved their successful butchery business from Bedminster, Bristol, in 1944 and set up their smallholding and shop in the middle of the High Street. The beautiful Victorian farmhouse was demolished in the Sixties to make way for the shops from the PDSA to Essensuals. Peter also ran Payton's the Bookmakers (now the Children's Hospice SW Shop), while Maggie opened The Scandal Parlour next door which became well known for its delicious cakes and lunches in the Eighties and Nineties. It was while helping out at weekends, and living above the café, that Mary looked across the road and first saw her future husband Alan arriving home from his travels in Africa, heavily bearded and with an assegai spear sticking out of his backpack!

For seven years from the late Nineties, Mary and her mother also ran The Food Hut at Golden Acres Nursery in Tickenham, where its reputation spread as a lunch venue in its own right, with delicious fresh ingredients and tempting menus. This continued at Five the Beach, which is still one of Clevedon's most popular eateries, in an



Maggie at 17 as Miss Albright & Wilson

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idyllic location looking out on the Victorian Pier and some of the best sunsets in the world.

Now they have brought their special expertise to Portishead Pool, another great sunset location, so that we can all enjoy their great food and service. Plenty of you have already been doing just that, according to Mary, and business has been brisk since the bistro opened on 23 May. Full English breakfast is served every day, followed by snacks, lunches and afternoon teas. To be sure of your table for lunch, you can **book on 01275 814114**.

Mary would also like to add that she is still looking for experienced chefs/cooks so that Five Poolside can extend its hours to offer Sunset Suppers. If you fit the bill, **please contact her on 07774940348**.

#### Portishead in Bloom

Peter and Maggie Payton are also keen supporters and contributors to **Portishead in Bloom** and on Open Gardens Weekend, 11/12 June, they are opening their own garden to visitors at Stoke Cottage, 35 Clevedon Road.

## Donating by Text

[Vodafone](#) and online donations service [JustGiving](#) have launched a free texted donation programme, JustTextGiving, to help charities in the UK raise more money.

This is a great way to support your favourite charity. Next time you're using your mobile, think about giving a couple of quid to the Pool. All you have to do is text POOL11 £2 (or any amount between £1 and £10).

It's quick and easy and everything you donate goes straight into Pool funds. What's not to like?

## School Holiday Opening

**23 July-31 Aug**

Weekends, Bank Holidays 8.30am-7.00pm

Weekdays 8.30am-7.00pm

Early morning swimming will be as usual (season tickets and 12 for 10 tickets only) :

Mon, Wed, Fri 7am-8.30am

## Members and Volunteers Celebrate Café Opening

On 25 May, Trust Members and volunteers gathered to celebrate the re-opening of the café as Five Poolside and meet the new tenants Mary and Alan Freeman. Mary took the opportunity to showcase her culinary style with a delicious buffet, prepared from fresh ingredients by her and her staff. On behalf of the Trust, Sally Chorton welcomed the Freemans, thanked them for taking over a difficult situation and hoped that we would all work together to make a good venue for the Pool and the Café.



**Clockwise from top left: Members and Volunteers get in the party mood; Kerri McArdle and Ann Skelhorne; Nikki Faulkes and Andy Thatcher; Trustees enjoy the sunset from the terrace with Alan and Mary Freeman.**

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**Clockwise from top left: Jane Humphreys; Barbara Thatcher and Colin Baser; Dot Lewis and Martine Hawley; Ann Hailwood**

*(photos courtesy of Bryan Farrell)*

## Long Distance Swimmer



We all know that the Pool is a popular attraction for visitors from miles around, including Bristol, Cardiff and Gloucestershire, but one man can probably claim the record for the furthest commute for his daily swim - 114 miles!

Nigel Davies lives in Worthing, West Sussex, but last September joined Sensoptics, the world-leading manufacturer of

fibre optic acoustic sensors based at Gordano Court Business Park, where he works during the week. He discovered the Pool while strolling round the area, just before the close of last year's Season and this year became a season ticket holder so that he could enjoy a regular lunchtime swim.

*Do you travel further for your swim, or do you know anyone who does? If so, we would love to hear from you.*

## Raft Race on 10 July 2011

**Portishead Raft Race** and Waterside Picnic is held every year at the Lake Grounds and has traditionally been a really fun day out. In 2010, the event raised about £10,000 for local charities, one of which was the Pool Trust, with a generous



donation of £500 to our funds which went towards the refurbishment of the toddler pool.

This year we intend to be part of the action as well. During the next few weeks, the

Premises Team will be designing and building our raft, and the motley crew will be our stalwart lifeguards and duty managers. Anyone willing to help out with the raft building would be very welcome, and we are also looking for sponsors—companies and individuals—for any amount, large or small. **Contact Andy Thatcher on 07899927710 or [andythatcher55@gmail.com](mailto:andythatcher55@gmail.com)**

We hope as many of you as possible will be there to cheer them on, but don't forget to come and have a swim afterwards followed by a cream tea at Five Poolside!

## Meet the Team

### Martine Hawley—Volunteer

I was born and brought up in Strasbourg, the capital of the French region of Alsace, until I left home at the age of 25 in 1975 to become a volunteer (even then I was at it!) on the Kibbutz Revadim near Tel Aviv in Israel. My duties varied from looking after children in the nursery to picking cotton, and it was here I met my English husband Donovan. We married on the kibbutz (and later had an official ceremony in France) and it was in Israel that our daughter Dalia was born.

In 1983 we decided to settle in England, initially for a year to see how we liked it, and Donovan found a job with an engineering company in Nailsea where he has worked for the last 25 years. We bought a house in Portishead and our son Sebastien was born here in 1986. When the children were growing up, I became a playgroup assistant and a child minder, and later started teaching French to adults at Weston College and also privately. Since the College no longer offers adult education, I have continued to teach privately.

I have always loved outdoor swimming and have been a regular at the Pool for 25 years. My husband learned to swim there and the children spent all their spare time there, only coming home when they were hungry. So of course, I became involved in the Save the Pool Campaign and got stuck in during the Makeover in 2009. Since then, I have been part of the closed season maintenance team, turning my hand to anything from mixing cement to making tea, and when we are open I work in Reception and the Tuck Shop, and even clean the toilets when the occasion demands. I really enjoy being part of such a great team and have made lots of friends – I can thoroughly recommend it!



### Andrew Butland—Trustee



a triathlete. This calls for a spot of swimming, so the pool ticked that box.

Long before all this, I spent my early childhood in South Africa, and later years growing up across the south coast of England. I trained in Southampton as a chartered accountant, and later met Gerry. Gerry too is a keen supporter of the pool and proudly wears orange. It was Gerry who took me along to a 'Save the Pool, Town March', and when a fellow triathlete asked me about putting together a finance business case for the Trust, the rest became history.

I am a Trustee and have the official role as Finance Director. I am married to Gerry and we moved to Portishead 3 years ago. Somehow we got involved in the pool...

Prior to that, we lived in Sydney, Australia for 6 years, but found the sun, sea and good life just a bit too much, so we made plans to come back to the UK.

One of the main attractions of Portishead, when we were looking at a map of the UK, was its proximity to the seaside (must admit, Severn Beach sounded promising...). Upon not actually finding a real seaside, stumbling upon the open air pool filled us with great anticipation.

After Australia, we had got used to being spoilt for choice with 50m open air swimming pools in nearly every town. (We spent our penultimate year travelling in a camper van around the country and swam in most of them). We were looking forward to continuing our outdoor life living by the water so news of the pool closing was therefore somewhat disappointing!

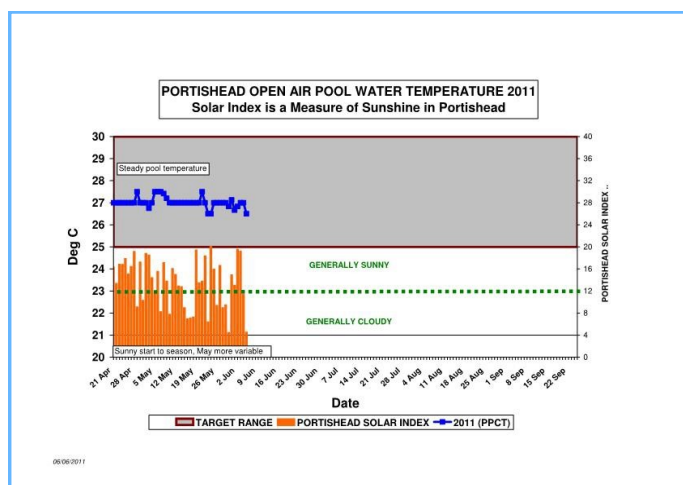
When not working, DIY-ing around the home, or doing the Pool accounts, I wear lycra and call myself

## Pool 50th Anniversary

If you are interested in helping with the planning for the Pool's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, please come to the **Royal Inn at 7.30pm on 23 June**. To make this a Pool and community success, we need lots of help now. Hope to see you there.  
**Brenda Birkinshaw**

## Pool Temperatures

The chart (latest version at <http://www.williamhunter.co.uk/POOL/2011pooltempsetc.pdf>) shows that our new pellet boiler has been maintaining our pool at a steady temperature around 27 deg C in spite of variable weather which has often been cool and windy. In this early part of the season the boiler has to work hard and uses a lot of fuel, up to one tonne of pellets per day and the cost can be up to £1000 per week. Our boiler expert, Duncan Faulkes, advises that, if we were still using oil, the present high oil price would have meant costs of £1600 per week, so we should all be grateful that Duncan master-minded its implementation with such good timing.



## Private Hire

Why not hire the Pool for your private functions—parties, clubs, school gala?

During the next four weeks, the following bookings have been made:

- ✚ *Hazel's Swimfit Masters Swimming*  
Mondays 6.30 – 7.30pm
- ✚ *Bristol and District Triathlon Club*  
Tuesdays 7 – 8pm
- ✚ *Portishead and Clevedon Triathlon Club*  
Wednesdays 7 – 8pm
- ✚ *Crazy Octopus Scuba*  
Thursdays 7–8pm
- ✚ *Water Polo*  
Fridays 7–8pm from 3 July
- ✚ *Aquarobics and children's lessons*  
Saturday mornings

For pool bookings, phone **01275 843454** or email us at :

[poolmanager@portisheadopenairpool.org.uk](mailto:poolmanager@portisheadopenairpool.org.uk)

Single lane hire (during normal swimming session)	£25.00
Club pool hire per hour	£70.00
Club ½ pool per hour	£40.00
1 <sup>st</sup> hour—parties for up to 25	£90.00
Per additional hour	£70.00
1 <sup>st</sup> hour for parties for 26–80	£140.00
Per additional hour	£115.00

## Hazel's Intensive Swim and Landfit Classes for the School Holidays

**Revised Dates: 11-13 August 9–11am**

If your child needs to improve skills, fitness and confidence, and wants to have fun, this is a summer must. We offer a mix of RNLI and Army based fun and games with rookie swimming and stroke improvement:

- £16 per session or £45 for full 3 days (price includes T-Shirt and distance badge)
- Book one day, or all three, or just the swimming session 10-11am (£12)
- Children must be water confident (ask if unsure)
- You provide drinks/snacks

Limited places, so book today on 07980905296 or [fitimerun@googlemail.com](mailto:fitimerun@googlemail.com). Once payment has been received, then place is booked. Please complete and detach the slip (right) and return by 28 June to Mrs H Fulker, 6 Linnet Gardens, Portishead BS20 7NB.

(Please circle dates required)

Aug 11 12 13 TOTAL COST £

DECLARATION:

I give permission for my child..... To attend the Active Sports Camp and consent to any emergency medical treatment where necessary

Name (Please print).....

Signature.....

Date.....

No refunds of course fee. If course cancelled, full refund will be given. We cannot be responsible for loss/damage of personal items. Please ensure your child has correct clothing—bring them with swimwear under sports clothes. You will be responsible for drying and changing them at 11am.

## Hazel's Adult FitBoot Camp 11-13 August from the Pool

**E**x-Forces instructors are offering this 4-day land and water based fitness course. If you want to boost your health and fitness, get motivated, and improve performance—this is for you.

- Includes a mix of cardio-vascular work, aquafit, swimming, weights, tone, working on injury/weak parts
- We train hard, gain results and laugh loads. By the end of the course you will be much fitter, gain skills and enhance your training for your needs
- This course can be 6-7am, or 6.30-8pm, or both for the very game (for good results, you must train once a day within the times offered).

To book or for further information, phone Hazel on 07980905296

## Outdoor Swimming Society

**W**e are finally on the map—of the [Outdoor Swimming Society](#) that is! To see the map and subscribe to their newsletter, Ctrl+click on the links above and below.

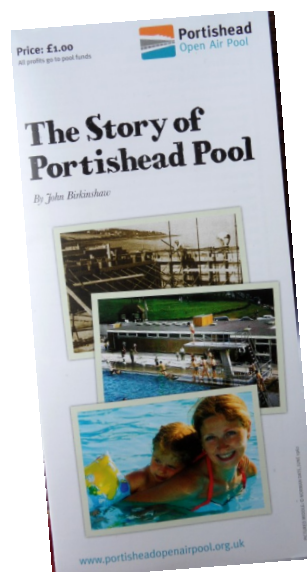
According to its website, the Outdoor Swimming Society believes "that it's time British swimmers had more fun. In the early 1900s there were river swimming clubs and lidos all over the country, but outdoor swimming died out as indoor pools came in.

We believe it's time to get back to the joy of swimming under an open sky. Water needs no roof! Our manifesto:

- We believe swimmers have too long been held in chlorinated captivity! Everyone with a set of bathers should be set free to immerse themselves in nature
- We support all those keeping lidos open and lakes and rivers clean
- We promise to enlarge and celebrate the beauty of every day we can by going for a nice outdoor swim
- We pledge to take our friends with us so they can join
- We embrace the rejuvenating effects of cold water and undertake to strip and dip wherever we can

To be part of our community, sign up to our monthly newsletters and [Jump in and join us!](#)"

## History of the Pool



**A** brief history of the pool produced by John Birkinshaw is now on sale at Reception, the Tuck Shop and Five Poolside, price £1. All profits go to Pool funds,

We are planning to produce a more detailed illustrated history in time for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its opening, in April 2012. If you have any information, documents, photographs or stories about the pool you think may be of interest, please contact John at 4 Como Court, Kilkenny Place, Portishead, Bristol, BS20 6JB

Tel: 01275 817158

email: [johnbirkinshaw@mackintoshrose.com](mailto:johnbirkinshaw@mackintoshrose.com)

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