



# Portishead Open Air Pool

## e NEWSLETTER

Issue 10, May 2012

With the wettest April in 100 years followed by what will probably be the coldest May, we have recently had to revise our opening hours until the weather improves, but we have been heartened by the almost universal support and understanding of pool users and volunteers, who recognise that the Trustees have to do everything they can to make the right decisions, however tough they are, to protect the future viability of the pool. However, we do recognise that the weather may improve and we can rapidly respond and revert to longer hours, as happened on Sunday 13 May. We have a fantastic team of volunteers and if the sun does come out we can get back to normal very quickly. Any changes to the revised hours will be posted on our website [www.portisheadopenairpool.org.uk](http://www.portisheadopenairpool.org.uk) so do check before making your journey—or you can ring the pool on 01275 843454.

**Inside**— memories of our opening day, Lido Kitchen news, visit from other pool campaigners, clubs and training organisations who use the pool, secrets of our sparkling water, lifeguards old and new, H2O magazine event, and more ...

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## Up, up and away— Pool celebrates its 50th birthday with balloons and a cake



**Volunteers and swimmers wish the pool many happy returns**

In spite of the poor weather forecast, 21 April dawned bright and sunny, and although it was cool and breezy and we had to dodge the occasional April showers (very similar to the opening day in 1962 in fact) swimmers and volunteers were not deterred from having a great time.

Celebrations kicked off at 11am with the arrival of a giant inflatable birthday cake, courtesy of Cameron Balloons, a raffle with a draw every hour, children's crafts and a lucky dip. Inside was BBC weather girl Jemma Cooper with her roving mike, chatting to visitors and generally getting everyone in the party mood, while outside Heritage Estate Agents who are fundraising for the pool in their own 10th birthday year, were selling tickets for a balloon race to be launched later in the day.

This was followed by a re-enactment of the original opening ceremony, when Alderman Charles Smith, the Mayor of Bristol declared the pool open by pouring a kettle of hot water into

the pool. This time, the pouring was done by Cllr Terry, current Chairman of Portishead Town Council who have been supportive of the pool since the Trust was formed four years ago.

Cllr Terry, David Coombes, the Trust's Chairman, Trustee Brenda Birkinshaw and local MP Liam Fox all made speeches congratulating the efforts of volunteers in making the pool such a success. As Liam Fox said "Here we have a major public triumph over bureaucracy, a sustainable energy project which everybody nowadays says we should all be trying to achieve, and a sports facility in the open air in an Olympic year—if this doesn't symbolise what the rest of the country ought to be doing now, I don't know what does."

The balloons were released at 4pm and the owner of the one which travelled the furthest will be announced by Heritage later this month. Watch a [video of the day](#) on our YouTube Channel.



**Up, up and away— the balloon race begins**

## Memories of the original Opening Day at the Pool on 21 April 1962

... through the eyes of a small child.

By Pat Gardener

If I close my eyes and think back, it's as vivid in my memory as it was then ...

At the time I had no idea what the date was but it was a sunny day, there was a bit of a breeze and I had a dress and coat on. I think I also had my "Top Cat" hat on, similar to the one worn by the cartoon character of the same name. In any case I was all dressed up in my "Sunday Best" clothes and I was taken out to the car. I was four years old. I am remembering this bit by thinking hard. What comes easily to my mind is the impression I received on arrival, on going through the turnstile and walking through the covered area out towards the terraces.

The covered area was dark but the scene in front of me was extremely bright and shiny. I could see dazzling, way, way up to the sky which was as blue as the sight before me. From that moment as I looked down, I could not take my eyes off the rippling water. I was transfixed.

I can remember some time before, probably the previous year, being lifted up by my father and shown a big hole in the ground. It is strange what is remembered by a very small child ... parents - beware what you show your tiny ones! I remember all the talk about the opening of the pool and we would be going to it. I can remember that a neighbour's daughter was going to be in the opening ceremony and we had to "look out for Carolyn".

We climbed the terraces and found a good viewing spot. I can remember the cheers and vaguely remember someone making a speech and the clapping. But the star of the show was the Pool. I am sure I had no words for it at the time but they come easily now. A rectangle of tantalising azure magic! What happened during the rest of the afternoon is a bit of a teary blur however. I can recall asking if I could go in the water. The answer "No, you are in your best coat" set me off into tears and the more I asked and was told "No, you can't" the whole scene became a tantrum! I expect you can guess what came next. This was 1962. There was no one to say anything about the publicly administered smacked bottom I received and I was ceremonially led out of the premises in disgrace!

I have never forgotten that day and the many many days of fun and pleasure that have come since then. I am still fascinated by swimming pools and when the sun shines on the water the memories of that opening day flood back every time.

I was proud to be one of the small group of people prepared to sign the original Deed in 2008 to form the Trust which wrested the future of the Pool from the hands of those who would have demolished it. Make no mistake, the bulldozers coming in were only one phone call away. I and many others were prepared to stand in front of them if it had been necessary; such is the strength of feeling for OUR pool! Long may it prosper!

## Season tickets are still a great bargain

Some of our readers have been season ticket holders in the past but have not renewed this year. If it has slipped your mind, we would like to remind you that they offer fantastic value for money, paying for themselves after just over 20 swims during the season. On busy days we allow season ticket holders to alternate with "pay-on-the-day" visitors at the head of the queue. The application forms can be obtained either at the pool reception or from our website, and once you have paid you can enter by showing your receipt whilst waiting for your ticket to be made up.

## Friends of Bristol South Swimming Pool pay a visit



Left to right: Jane Humphreys, Ann Hailwood, Barbara Thatcher, Sara Wex, Toby Thompson, Frances Gard, Andy Thatcher

On Sunday 6 May, we were pleased to welcome three members of the Friends of Bristol South Swimming Pool on a fact finding mission in their quest to save Bristol South Swimming Pool from closure. As they describe themselves on Facebook—"We are a community of keen, happy swimmers and club users of this wonderful friendly 1930's 30 metre pool, revelling in the chance to swim in a piece of history! We love everything about the heritage of this pool; the black and white tiling, the big arched ceiling, terrazzo reception, and aim to work with the council and other organisations in order to keep it preserved and eventually restored to its former glory."

We wish them all the best in their endeavours—you can support them and keep up with their progress by liking their [Facebook page](#).

## Long Room available for hire

The Long Room at the Pool has been refurbished over the winter and is now available for hire as a function room suitable for meetings, classes and parties. For further details, please contact Barbara Waterhouse at [bobwaterhouse@talktalk.net](mailto:bobwaterhouse@talktalk.net)



## Compass Sea School trains at Pool

Compass Sea School Ltd, located at Portishead Marina is an RYA and MCA recognised training centre offering professional tuition in all aspects of water and shorebased powerboat and navigation courses from Level 1 through to Advanced Instructor training. They also offer commercial training and examinations for those involved in the marine industry on a professional basis.

They offer two courses that teach how to survive at sea. The RYA Sea Survival and STCW 95 Personal Survival techniques courses are delivered from their training centre and they use the Pool for the practical elements of the course. The pool drill involves the practical application of personal survival techniques and familiarisation with the vessel's survival equipment including a variety of liferafts. Students are taught how



Students practice righting a life raft



Surviving as a group by linking together

to enter the water from height, minimise the effects of cold shock on entry to the water and how to board a liferaft in various configurations. This provides students with the practical skills, knowledge and confidence if they find themselves in the unfortunate position of abandoning a vessel at sea. Students on these courses literally come from all over the world including professional mariners, ship security personnel and private boat owners who want to be safe. The school have recently been training 40 police officers from Avon and Somerset in preparation for the Olympics.

To watch a video of the students in action at the pool go to our [YouTube Channel](#) or a video of a Compass Sea School [power boat session](#) out of the Marina. Details of all Compass Sea School courses are published on their [website](#)

## Pool bookings

Other regular pool bookings so far this season are:

Tuesdays 6.30-7.30 [Sport & Active Lifestyles](#) (2 lanes)

Wednesdays 7-8pm PACTri Triathlon Training

Fridays 7pm W-s-M Water Polo Club (from 1 June)

Saturdays 9.30-11am Deep water aquarobics (tel Clare on 0780 3020290 for more details)

## Cocktails at the Lido Kitchen



The Lido Kitchen are launching their **Cocktail and Live Music** evenings on Sunday 27th May. A selection of Portishead's finest musicians will be playing acoustic sets from 9pm 'til 11pm, and bar staff will be serving up some fabulous cocktails all evening.

Starting next week **Dip'n'Dine**, a great new offer of a swim plus main course and drink for £10! Swim between 6-7pm Wednesday or Thursday, dine at 7pm. To book, email [info@thelidokitchen.com](mailto:info@thelidokitchen.com) or phone 814114

## Fashion through the decades



As part of our 50th birthday celebrations, we are planning a retro fashion show and themed party at the Pool on Saturday 21 July—more details in our next issue. Have you got any 60s to 90s gear tucked away in your attic or the back of the wardrobe—maybe a vintage Mary Quant, Biba or Foale & Tuffin -or even a pair of loon pants? If you are prepared to lend or donate any item of clothing or accessory, please contact Jane Humphreys at [jane@stone-cottage.org](mailto:jane@stone-cottage.org)

## Free confidential counselling opportunity

I am currently a serving Deputy Head teacher undertaking a professional counselling accreditation. To support my studies, I am offering 6 free hourly sessions for adult volunteers in the Portishead area. Complete confidentiality assured. If you are interested, please email me on [jobarr13@gmail.com](mailto:jobarr13@gmail.com).

## Lifeguards through the decades



Hair and fashion styles may have changed since the 60s, but all these lifeguards look as bronzed, fit and healthy as they ever did, advertising the benefits of an outdoors, sporting lifestyle. Many thanks to Andy Reed for the old photos—he tells us his dad was manager at the Pool for many years but unfortunately we don't know which one is his dad, or who the others are for that matter, although I am sure I recognize a younger Jean and Norman Jelley (below, left). If Andy or any of our other readers are able to identify anyone in the older photographs, we would all love to know. *Contact me on [ppctnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ppctnewsletter@gmail.com) (Ed.)*



**Lifeguards 2011, l to r: Trustee Andrew Butland, Emma Penney, Richard McCabe, Luke Western, Joe Lench and Simeon Hunter**

## Secrets of Sparkling H<sub>2</sub>O



**New pool cleaner**

Lots of swimmers have commented on how clean and clear the pool water is this season: many say that it has a silky quality. So we thought we'd give the inside story.

First we have to thank Richard Nuell for his dedication to duty and many hours spent sweeping the accumulated winter muck from the pool bottom so that the filters could do their work (see April issue). Once the pool was clean, we were able to keep it that way by regularly using our new robot Hexagone chrono cleaner which was purchased from the proceeds of our fantastically successful October weekend last year.

Testing the water every two hours that the pool is operational

to see if the quality is as good as it looks is another important process and here again the latest technology comes into play. We are now the proud owners of a [Palintest Pooltest 9](#) testing kit which electronically measures free and total chlorine and pH and takes out the guesswork associated with shaking a test tube and holding it up against coloured strips of paper.

You can see videos of the [Hexagone cleaner](#) and the [Palintest](#) equipment in action on our YouTube channel.



**Palintest Pooltest 9**



# H2Open Magazine Seminar, Awards and Mass Swim

By our roving reporter, Richard Nuell

In February 2011 a new magazine was created aimed at the ever increasing number of open water swimmers and those who would like to give it a try. Appropriately called [H2Open](#), it was launched at the annual Triathlon show in London. Chatting to the editor, Simon Griffiths, we agreed that it fills a gap in the market and I signed up for a subscription on the spot!

It has proved a success and on April 29, 2012, I attended an open day and seminar promoted by the magazine at a hotel near Reading. The lectures covered topics such as how to swim faster in open water, nutrition, the forthcoming Olympic 10k swim event, becoming a long distance swimmer and some stroke tips by the creators of [Swim Smooth](#). Each lecture was given in a fluent and inspirational manner by leading experts in the field, most of whom have regular columns in magazines. For just a few minutes I found myself sitting next to former Olympic medallist Cassandra Patten who was there to present the awards later!

After an outdoor demonstration by leading coach Rick Kiddle in the lake adjoining the hotel, 64 of us took part in a mass 750m swim. A few people preparing for a forthcoming Channel swim took part in just a cozzie without batting an eyelid,

despite it being 12C. Most of us, however, covered up in wet-suit, gloves and bootees. I was 60th out of 63 finishers but the organisers stressed it wasn't a race (oh yes it was!), just a timed swim. I was quite happy with that although it seemed a lot further than the equivalent of 23 lengths of Portishead pool.

Quick change, then back to the conference centre for the inaugural H2Open awards ceremony, presented by Cassie Patten. Readers, including me, had previously submitted nominations under various headings from which a shortlist was compiled by the judges including Cassie, Duncan Goodhew and Kate Rew. The Great Swim series won the Best Event in UK category, the open water ambassador of the year was Colin Hill (the creator of the Great Swim Series), Inspirational Swim of the Year went to Roger Alsopp - the oldest person to swim the Channel, and the Charity Swim of the Year went to David Walliams.

I hope this will become an annual event and would certainly recommend it to lovers of open water swimming, whether it's lake, river, sea or lido.

## EnergyShare—helping Community Groups gain access to funding

As a community trust, we are ever conscious of the need to conserve energy and operate in an environmentally friendly way wherever possible. Thanks to a grant from Good Energy, the pool is now heated by a biomass boiler, with the original oil-fired boiler only used for occasional backup, which not only saves money but keeps the burning of fossil fuels to a minimum and cuts down on harmful CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Of course we would eventually like to add solar photovoltaic and hot water panels to our system but these are very expensive and we are always looking out for grant funding opportunities. The latest grant we have applied for from EnergyShare is the relatively small amount of £2500 to replace the fluorescent fittings in the changing rooms and storeroom with more efficient and cost effective LEDs with motion and light sensors, so that they only come on when needed.

EnergyShare is a group sponsored by British Gas to inspire, support and help thousands of community projects gain access to funding. According to their [Facebook page](#), "Across the country, people are getting together and setting up their own renewable energy projects: ensuring the future of the local swimming pool with a biomass boiler, using solar power to light an urban bmx track, harnessing the outflow from a reservoir to generate electricity. And this is just the start."

Join our Energy Saving Group and help us attract more funding by going to our [group page](#) and clicking Support.

## Open meeting at the Royal

Our next Open Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 19 July at the Royal, start 7.30 p.m., a chance for members, supporters and volunteers to catch up on the summer news so far, to find out about pool plans for the summer holidays, developments and news, from trustees and members of the five management subgroups.

## Kids—get ready for some summer fun!



Following the success of our bouncy pirate ship last year, we are planning some more inflatable summer fun this summer, from 7 to 19 July. This will be dependent on the weather and lifeguard cover, so check our website before you come for the latest details or ring the pool on 01275 843454.

Why not like our Page on Facebook or follow us on Twitter and keep up with Pool events online? Just click on the links to [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)