



Otter Aquatics Newsletter

No 39. August 2018

Dear swimmers

Welcome to the August 2018 edition of the Otter Aquatics newsletter. Look inside to find:

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- 🦦 Learn-to-swim instruction, stroke correction and swimfit coaching – all levels
- 🦦 Open water swimming instruction and training
- 🦦 Swimming as therapy
- 🦦 Swimming-based tourism – domestic and international

Some new and some amended swimming times

Don't forget to maintain your swimming fitness over the winter. Or, if you have somehow slackened off over the cooler months, it's time to get swimfit again for summer. Remember, it's just around the corner.

Just to remind you what training Otter Aquatics offers, we run adult learn-to-swim, stroke improvement and swimfit sessions every **Sunday** at the **Redcliffe Aquatic Centre** in hour-long sessions at **9am, 10am and 11am**. Bookings are essential – phone me on 0438 652 696 or email at mark@otteraquatics.com.au. On 1st July Redcliffe pool increased its entry fees (as have all other pools) but we have not changed our fees which include pool entry. Why? Because we're special!

We also have a mid-week stroke improvement and swimfit session on **Wednesdays** at **8am** at the **Emily Seebohm Aquatic Centre** in Fitzgibbon. Contact me for details.

Redcliffe pool has offered us a mid-week timeslot for our Swimfit and Technique Advice sessions. The time will be **from 6.30pm to 7.30 pm on Thursdays**. Please let me know if you would like to come along, either instead of or in addition to other sessions. Or perhaps you know swimmers who may be unable to come to our Sunday morning session but would appreciate a mid-week, perhaps after-work fitness and swimming improvement opportunity.

On the subject of our regular pool training sessions, if you would like a video analysis of your stroke, just let me know (perhaps give me overnight notice so I can charge up the camera).

Finally, we continue our open water swims throughout the winter (did you ever doubt that?). We swim at **Queens Beach North, Scarborough**, at **8am every Saturday** and at **Scott's Point Beach, Margate**, at **8am every Tuesday and Thursday**. Just turn up if you want to experience the wonder that is cold water swimming. It really is great! But if you are unsure of how to go about it, contact me and I will take you on a gentle open water swimming instruction session.

Why should we continue swimming over winter?

*'Swimming in cold water gives you a heightened sense of existence; a heightened sense of life'
(elderly Irish open water swimmer).*

We shouldn't stop swimming over the winter. We all know that swimming is absolutely the best form of exercise that one can do. It exercises all the body's major muscle groups, it is perfect to develop cardio-respiratory conditioning, it causes the least number of injuries, the support that the water gives our body is a great psychological boost and helps our mental health and, most importantly, it just feels so good. And you don't want summer to arrive without you being swimfit, do you?

So, if you are a wimp, continue your swimming training in a pool. But, if you are tough (or even if you would like to be tough), swim in the ocean. But isn't it cold, might you say? Of course it is bloody cold but cold water swimming is good and not only when you stop. Check out the newsletters for May and June (all past newsletters are on our website) when we talked about the

physiological advantages of cold water swimming. Normally in our part of the world, the sea water temperature rarely gets below 16°C but, this year it has been colder. At one of our mid week swims, it got down to 15°C. Now it's not such a bad thing to do to swim for short periods in water as cold as this without a wetsuit (provided you enter the water slowly), it clearly is better clad in neoprene because it is more comfortable and you can swim for longer. Last week, with my normal swimming partner, I swam in 15° water for about an hour but with a long wetsuit, a neoprene cap and neoprene gloves and I not only survived, I enjoyed it enormously. Let me know if you want any of these bits of kit and I can order them in for you. Some doubting Thomases reckon that I also had my winter jarmies underneath plus a hot water bottle. Not true!

Stroke trip of the month – propulsive thrust, the body roll and the importance of core strength

If you still think that we need strong arms and legs to propel our bodies through the water as efficiently as possible, then you are living in the swimming world of the 1960s. While we still need our arms and legs of course, modern exercise science now tells us that thrust comes from strong core muscles with the arms and hands acting as a place holder in the water as we move our body forward. And the role of our legs is more about delivering a good body position, preventing drag and driving body rotation.

A strong core allows us to hold a good body profile (i.e. as horizontal as possible) and body alignment for longer. A strong core also allows us to rotate more effectively and so deliver better power transfer from our hips to our arms and legs. So yes, arms and legs are important but their role in swimming is better understood if we think of them as the 'deliverers' of energy to the water, not the generators of that energy. They are like a ship's propellers transferring the energy produced in the engine room to propel the ship through the water.



This pic is largely about the reach/extension but also shows the hip thrust and body roll well

So what does all this mean for swimming?

Our out-of-pool strength conditioning should be directed to our core which includes abdominal muscles, back muscles and the muscles around the pelvis. There are many good core strength exercises including twists, planks (front and both sides), the 'drawing the sword' exercise that we sometimes do on Sunday mornings and 'contraction' exercises such as pelvic floors and simple ones like standing up straight with the belly button pulled in. (Note: all these are in the 'do as I say' category, rather than the 'do as I do' category).



One of the many methods of performing a core twist



There are many versions of the plank; these are just a couple

In our daily swimming, we should concentrate on developing a good body roll. We should roll up to 45 degrees on either side. Remember, we should roll on both sides, not just on the side that we are inhaling on. The best way to achieve a good body roll is to work on the effectiveness of our kick. It doesn't have to be particularly hard or fast but it has to produce sufficient force to roll our body. Developing a better body roll produces amazingly good results for every swimmer as measured in the Strokes-Per-Length (SPL) stroke diagnostic tool that we sometimes employ in our training sessions.

Down Syndrome World Swimming Championships, Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada

While I don't have all the results as yet – and none specifically for our Ross Hughes – I can provide the contents of a Facebook page entry for the last day of competition.

"The final day of competition resulted in a world record, 13 PBs, 2 gold, 3 silver and one bronze medal collection and culminated in Team Australia winning the DSISO Team Award and Aran Miller being named as Top T21 Male Swimmer of the DSISO Championships...congratulations to Aran and Team Australia...we now turn our sights to the INAS Global Games in Brisbane in 2019!



The Australian team - Ross is standing on the left

Quiz of the month – who are we? Part 2

This month's question/s.

In between court sessions defending myself on slander charges resulting from last month's stories on our swimmers' idiosyncrasies, I have found time for some more foible-matching. Match the swimmer with their idiosyncrasies.

Swimmers No 11, No 12 & No 13. A multiple swimmer family, this group gets the multicultural award. The first of the group joined us in the 2012-13 season as a non-swimmer. He now rockets down the lane scattering all aside. He hails from Roma (the one in Italy that was named after the one in western Queensland) but sounds like a Brit. His *frau*, despite coming from the other side of the ditch (and sounding like it), is a very good swimmer indeed (don't worry, she gives as good as she gets on the accent front). The third and youngest family member came as a total beginner about four years ago but is now quite an accomplished swimmer – actually, he has probably shown the most significant progress of all of us but I still can't get those fins off his feet!. They all are, quite seriously, examples of how one can achieve the high level of recreational swimming competence that comes with consistency. They still haven't made the transition to 'real' swimming though.

Swimmer No 14. Another one from a long long time ago. He or she began in early 2014 unable to swim, unfit, with a host of health problems and quite overweight (I know he/she wouldn't mind my saying that – read on). Now, while not exactly breaking any records, he/she is a very competent swimmer (in fact, it's hard to fault his/her stroke, except perhaps the kick) and he/she extends his/her distance every week. He/she has lost 14 kilograms and he/she never misses a week.

Swimmer No 15. A very competent swimmer who leaves most of the rest of us in her wake but he/she is one who has difficulty in breathing to the 'other' side. He/she doesn't like OWS because he/she says he/she is on a salt-free diet. He/she once rode her/his bike the 17 kilometres from Petrie to the Redcliffe pool, but he/she hasn't repeated the effort, perhaps because it rained on the return leg. And he/she thought he/she was better than he/she is at one stage by trying to crash in on the Commonwealth Games 100m medley by pretending to be an official.

Swimmers Nos 15 & 16. This couple have been coming to our happy little group since 2014. One was a complete beginner and the other, while having reasonably good swimming technique, has shoulders belying his past as a top GPS rower. Having demonstrated his prowess, the ex-rower then stopped progressing, mainly because he doesn't accept the need to kick. So, Mrs ex-rower proceeded to improve to the extent that she can now outswim him. They used to be very regular attendees at Sunday sessions but then a penchant for overseas travel, house moving and cold weather got in the way. We long to see them back.

Swimmers Nos 17 & 18. This lot are relative newcomers with the female partner admitting to being a beginner and the male content to just sit on the side. That is until he saw just how bloody good it was. Now they both swim (in between a break because of the snow, ice and sleet outside) and, with just a little coaching, intend to go for their Bronze Medallion qualifications sometime soon.

Swimmer No 19. The latest of our complete beginners, this one astonished herself, her instructor and everybody else in the pool at the time by floating on her back and front in her first lesson,

then progressing very quickly to not-too-bad backstroke and passable freestyle after only five lessons. The rest of us will have to watch out!

Swimmer No 20. This one also impressed everyone observing her by how quickly she picked up freestyle having told us (hmmmm) that she has no idea how to do it. But, just as we were all congratulating her on her very rapid progress, she stopped. She said it was too far to go to make the transition from Murrumbidgee Downs to Redcliffe, but I think she was too modest to beat the rest of us.

What about the rest? There are many others, including the one who likes to show off her butterfly (even though it is never on our training agenda), sometimes comes with her daughter and sometimes with a friend who she once described as 'a piece of flotsam'. Maybe those two are still recovering from their battle scars inflicted in a girls' change room stoush. And there are plenty more – so please ignore our comments about your homeland, Paul, and do come back. Same applies to you Vincent, Gail, Pushpinder and Rachel. You may all appear in future editions anyway.

Last month's answer:

Here is the matching to the first ten of our foible-matching quiz:

- 1 Therese Puffett
- 2 Marieta Hanaghan
- 3 Tracy Lloyd
- 4 Noel Fraser
- 5 John Dixon
- 6 Don Pezet
- 7 and 8 Les and Jenny Stumer
- 9 John Foster
- 10 Sydney-based cousin, Peter Munro (who remains unknown to most of our Brisbane-based swimmers, but is very well known to our swim trippers).

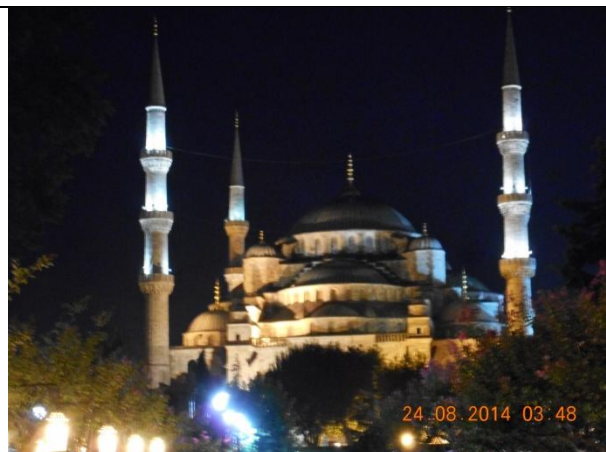
And the winner is ... (name deleted as I only include winners' names if they are swimmers. If she decides to return to swimming, I will consider giving her her prize.) This quiz segment is not an exclusive club, by the way. Show Marieta that you also read the newsletter.

Quote of the month

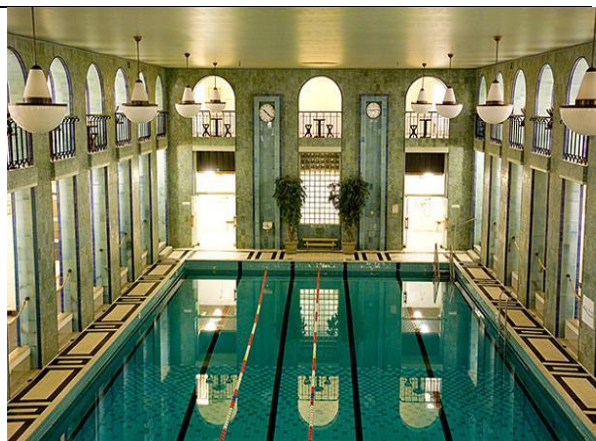
'Water is life
Life is water
Be fluid like water'
(Seen on a coffee shop wall)

Pics of the month.

Here is a collage of some of the exotic places we have swum in over the past five years of swim-touring. They are in no particular order but comprise Turkey (2014), Finland (many times enroute to other places), Italy (2015 and 2017), Croatia (2015 and 2016), Montenegro (2016), Slovenia (2017), Switzerland (2016 and 2017), Germany (2016 and 2017) and Sydney (2016 and 2017).



Hagia Sophia (aka Aya Sofia), Istanbul, Turkey. 2014, enroute to the ill-fated Hellespont/Dardanelles swim from Europe to Asia



The stunning beautiful, historic Yrjonkatu swimming hall, Helsinki, Finland. 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2016



The team from the Slovenia swimming trip. September 2017. Lake Bled in the background. World famous Big River Man, Martin Strel, is third from the right standing



Where we swam – and stayed - in Dubrovnik, Croatia, viewed from the UNESCO-listed old city walls. 2016



Gail, John, Noel, Peter and me along with the rest of the team. Kotor Bay, Montenegro. 2016



Robyn, Noel (obscured), Chris, Therese, me and Marieta. Half-way across Lake Orta, Italy. 2015



Therese, Robyn, Noel and Marcelle. Lake Mergozzo, Italy. 2015



Our new-found Irish swimming friends, our boat and the deep, blue, warm, shark and stinger-free water in Croatia. 2015



Cyclist/swimmers John#1, Gail, John#2, Helen, Noel and me on the Austrian/Swiss border. Lake Constance. 2016



Lindau, Lake Constance, Germany. 2017



**Cycling around Lake Constance/Bodensee, Germany.
2017**



**The very fast flowing River Limmat. Zürich,
Switzerland. 2017**



Wylie's Baths, Coogee, Sydney, March 2016



**Bronte Baths, Sydney, where freestyle swimming was
'invented' in the 1890s. March 2016**

Unsubscribe

As scintillating as this newsletter no doubt is to everyone, I have no wish to clog up people's inboxes if they have lost interest. If this is the case, please reply to this email with the word UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line or body and I will unsubscribe you.

