

Over 770 swimmers and 2,000 spectators set to attend the UK's biggest cold-water swimming competition



26 January 2019, Tooting Bec Lido, London
8th Cold Water Swimming Championships 2019

Over 770 swimmers and 'dippers' will be cheered on by 2,000 spectators at the **8th UK Cold Water Swimming Championships 2019** on the 26 January at Tooting Bec Lido. Hosted by the South London Swimming Club (SLSC) and sponsored by GIBC Digital, the competition sees fast and slow, young and old, as well as the silly and the serious brave freezing waters to take part in this hugely popular winter swimming competition.

Water temperatures are expected to be 2-3 degrees at Tooting Bec Lido which is the UK's largest freshwater open air swimming pool and recently featured in the BBC drama Luther. Opened in 1906 and measuring 30 x 100 yards, it holds a million gallons of unheated water. With plenty of quirky photographic moments, previous championships have attracted national media and TV coverage <https://www.slsc.org.uk/cwsc-gallery/>

Swimmers will compete in a variety of races including: 30-yards traditional 'head-up' breaststroke, 30m Ice fly, 90m freestyle dash and the 'Big Splash' Crisis charity jump-in with over 70 hardy dippers. To help competitors recover there is a sauna, hot tubs, mulled wine and cider, as well as food stalls and entertainment throughout the day.

Key information:

- There will be 688 swimmers, 117 races, 150 volunteers, 800 spectators, over 70 dippers and 500 cupcakes eaten during the event.
- Events range from 30-yards "head-up" breaststroke (complete with fancy-dress hats) to the Big Splash group jump-in.
- There's a widely acclaimed hat competition for the 'head up' breaststroker with the most outlandish and imaginative swimming cap.
- It's a fun, exhilarating and visually spectacular event that generates national and international media coverage.
- The UK Cold Water Swimming Championships started in 2006 at Tooting Bec Lido and is now held every two years.
- 18 stalls will be offering hog roast, pizza, coffee, swimming holidays and local crafts.

The 2019 Championships has a strong focus on charitable causes and starts with the mass jump in for Crisis to raise money to help end homelessness. A range of social enterprises are supporting the event including Change Please (the on-site coffee van), training homeless people to become Baristas and Well Kneaded Pizza, a company that provides internships to help marginalised young people into employment.

The Championships organiser Margy Sullivan explains the drive behind the event: “SLSC enjoys bringing together swimmers of all abilities to experience and enjoy cold water swimming at the UK’s oldest and largest fresh water lido. With an expected 770 swimmers competing in over 100 races, a sauna, hot tub and over 18 stalls, and definitely no wetsuits, this event really will be a festival of swimming. Go on everyone, be brave enough to be a sprinter this winter!”

GIBC Digital’s CEO Greg Wood says: “There is no better physical reflection of the drive and tenacity needed by business today than to take part in the Cold Water Swimming Championships! GIBC Digital is proud to sponsor this year’s SLSC UK Cold Water Swimming Championships and help raise money for Crisis, an organisation that offers year-round services helping people take their first steps out of homelessness.”

The Championships also has plenty on offer for all the family. Spectators can keep warm with a hog roast, pizza, coffee and hot drinks, or visit the pop-up pub featuring two local drinks companies Graveney Gin and By The Horns Brewery. There is also a heated ‘North Pole’ marquee that will include stalls offering swimming holidays, the latest swim gear and local crafts. Entry for spectators is only £3 per person, payable on the day.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Website <https://www.slsc.org.uk/cwsc/>

Twitter: @slsclido #ukcwsc2019

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CWSC2017/>

Instagram: @slsclido #ukcwsc2019

Photos of the 2017 championships www.slsc.org.uk/cwsc-gallery/

Crisis sponsored mass jump in www.crisis.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise/events/swim/icebreaker-tooting/

PRESS INFORMATION

Media participation: If you would like to attend to cover the event please register your interest in advance at press@slsc.org.uk. If you wish to send a photographer or film crew you will also require a licence from Wandsworth Council, available at www.filmapp.org/wandsworth. We are restricted in the number of media at the event so please let us know as early as possible.

PRESS ENQUIRIES: email press@slsc.org.uk or you can reach us on 07711 578938.

Spokespeople: There will be a number of swimmers available for interview, from cold water swimming veterans to our youngest competitor, aged 13. Interviews can be arranged in advance of the event and on the day, but let us know before so we can arrange this for you.

Parking: Parking on the day is restricted but there are a number of roads nearby which allow easy access and do not require permits. We recommend you do not try and park in the car park but instead use the residential roads opposite the Lido (eg, North Drive, Aldrington Road). For more information on getting to the lido see www.slsc.org.uk/getting-there/

Event schedule:

07.30 - Registration opens
09.00 - Opening ceremony and jump-in for Crisis
09.15 - First race 90m freestyle
10.20 - 30m ice fly
11.10 - 30m freestyle
12.05 - Head up breaststroke and best hat competition
13.15 - Jump in again for Crisis
13.20 - Medal ceremony
14.00 - Team relays
15.30 - Award ceremony
16.15 - Raffle draw
16.30 - Close

Race schedule at: <https://www.slsc.org.uk/race-schedule/>

NOTES TO EDITORS:**Tooting Bec Lido**

Tooting Bec Lido is one of Britain's oldest lidos: it was built in four months in the spring of 1906. Originally known as Tooting Bathing Lake it became a 'lido' in the thirties, when the café and fountain were added. Measuring 100 x 33 yards, Tooting Bec Lido holds a million gallons of unheated water. It was modernised in the 1930s with the installation of the aerator or fountain, a café, showers and toilets. More recent additions include the children's paddling pool in 1999, a new entrance in 2002 and the Lido Pavilion in 2017, funded by the South London Swimming Club, Sports England and Wandsworth Council.

South London Swimming Club

South London Swimming Club (SLSC) was established within weeks of the Tooting Bec Lido opening in 1906 and has been heavily involved with the Lido ever since. The Club holds races on Sundays throughout the year, as well as Christmas and New Year's Day. With over 1,500 members it is the largest amateur swimming club in the country with many members swimming 365 days a year, come sun, rain or snow.

Crisis Jump In

The Crisis Jump in at Tooting Bec Lido is to fundraise to help end homelessness. The £25 registration contributes to Crisis' healthcare and counselling services. The jump-in at 9am will kick off the [Cold Water Swimming Championships](#). Crisis will be at the Lido throughout, with information about its work.

Championships sponsor GIBC Digital – www.gibcdigital.com

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