



Bec Chat Lines from the Lido April 2022

Lido Doors / Hannah Petch

Letter from the Editor

By Hannah Petch: hannahpetch1@gmail.com

Hello! I am so excited to take over the role of Editor for Bec Chat – as a freelance writer and an SLSC member this is a dreamy job for me! As the Lido heads towards closure and refurbishment, Bec Chat is going to be more important than ever for keeping us connected to the place we all love so much. We will be bringing you monthly editions on the first Sunday of every month which you can find on the SLSC website and in the newsletters sent straight to your inbox.

As always, this newsletter is driven by all you lovely members – if you have a story, article, poem, painting – anything you'd like to be featured in upcoming editions please send them my way to the email address above.

Just a short introduction from me today, I'm off for a swim now!

See you poolside,

HPetch

Water Temperatures

By Hannah Petch

Those of you who are now regulars at the Lido will know all about David Dunham and his 'Davidometer'! David dutifully takes the water's temperature every day – it always tends to be slightly lower than the lifeguards' – I tend to follow the 'Davidometer' as it gives me more reason to brag to my mates about how cold the pool is!

Latest temperatures for March 2022 on the 'Davidometer':

7th March – 5°C / 41°F
8th March – 4.5°C / 40.1°F
13th March – 7.0°C / 44.6°F
17th March – 7.0°C / 44.6°F
19th March – 8.0°C / 46.4°F
23rd March – 9.0°C / 48.2°F

It's warming up!

The Chris Stanton “Roll of the Dice” memorial race and trophy

This is taken from the speech Chris’ widow, Erica Allason-Jones, delivered following the races on Sunday 20th March.

Many club members will remember Chris Stanton who sadly died of cancer two years ago. You may have swum with him, raced against him, chatted and joked in the sauna with him, played handball, made (and eaten) lots of toast in the cafe, even been to see him in pantomime.

Chris had a particularly elaborate way of getting into cold water that became known as the Stanton Cross. Many of you took part in a mass Stanton Cross at the Lido a few days after he died, a gesture which was much appreciated by his widow Erica Allason-Jones.

Chris was very much a creature of habit. He swam at the Lido every weekday morning at 8.30 sharp with his swim buddies. These included Sue Rentoul, Ian Clark, Chris Alexander and Mick Hinde but others would join in from time to time. They would usually agree between themselves how far to swim depending on conditions.

Then Chris came up with the suggestion that, once a week, they should let the dice decide. During the summer they used three dice, so worst-case scenario was 18 lengths. When it got colder they went down to two dice and eventually one. They would be swimming lengths in those pre-Covid days so even a single six could be challenging. Sometimes one of them threw the dice, sometimes a passing club member would be invited to do the honours, and the result would be greeted with groans of horror or squeals of relief depending on the outcome.

Chris died two weeks before lockdown and thereafter Sue Rentoul made a point of collecting Erica for a weekly bike ride. Whilst cycling round Hyde Park one day they came up with the idea of The Chris Stanton “Roll Of The Dice” Memorial Race which the SLSC committee readily agreed to. The idea was that it should be held in March, the month Chris died, when club members would be racing widths not lengths, and just one die (or die, to be correct) would be used so that the event would be do-able by any club member who wanted to join in.

The inaugural event was delayed until 2022 by Covid and will take place on Sunday 27th March. Remember that clocks spring forward on Saturday night so if you don’t reset your alarm you might miss the whole thing.

The official die (one of Chris’s original dice) was thrown by Sue Rentoul following the race on Sunday 20th March in order to give the handicappers time to work out an appropriate handicap for everyone.

It’s a six!

NB The “official die” is housed in the custom-made base of the trophy. Designed and made by Matthew Pare, a furniture-maker based in Sussex, the base is made of English oak with six sides to reflect the six faces of a dice. Dice markings are picked out in walnut. Under the single dice mark is a secret panel where the official die resides, waiting to be thrown again next year.



Erica with Chris’ trophy / Clare McRobbie



It’s a six! / Clare McRobbie



Chris Stanton poolside / Sue Rentoul



Mick Hinde – The First Winner of the Roll of the Dice Cup / Margy Sullivan

Unsung Hero Award

By Margaret Lipsey

Just a quick recap about why we have this cup:

In 2009 Doreen Fitch won a National award for the voluntary work she had done and continued to do for the Club. It was a well deserved award. We are sorry Doreen can't be with us today but she was then, and remains now, the inspiration for this cup. Her award got me thinking about how we could recognise the huge voluntary contribution made by club members.

We have an amazing swimming club, the largest membership in the UK, and we have an amazing pool to enjoy. What has kept the pool going over many years and considerable ups and downs is the South London Swimming Club and the talented, committed and determined members giving of their time, energy and skills. Many people could receive this award and each year it's difficult to decide. But an important criterion is to choose someone amongst those nominated by club members who may not have had their contribution fully recognised. I believe that the recipient this year is very much of that ilk and that person is Sue Manning.

Finance is not the sexiest part of a club or organisation but it is vital to the smooth running and transparent safeguarding of the present and future of an organisation. When Sue joined the committee as treasurer in 2004, a few years after becoming a member, she put in place many of the financial processes that we still use today. The membership was much smaller. Finbar Martin was President (four presidents ago!) and we were delighted to have her as an experienced accountant to put things in order. After six years as a peerless treasurer she became the Club's auditor, a post she held for ten years, recruiting and helping three subsequent treasurers to keep the Club's finances in order.

For the past two years, Sue has been part of the membership team, and with membership growing year on year, it's a never-ending task. She researched and installed the entry system on the Winter gate. This transfer to electronic cards was no mean feat, requiring an understanding of the necessary computer programme. Her knowledge of IT systems has proved invaluable on many occasions. Pop into the SLSC office and Sue is likely to be there sorting another batch of applications, week after week after week with patience and good humour – necessary attributes. She has been known to print cards and sort out problems whilst drying and dressing after a swim, it's no wonder she needs an occasional holiday to take a break.

Recently Sue has spent many hours with Margy dealing with the new club website and again her technical and IT skills have been invaluable in helping the webmaster get the website to work the way it needs to.

Apart from her work on finance and membership, Sue has been the race starter and timekeeper at many Cold Water Swimming Championships, first volunteering in 2006 and often since – always a safe pair of hands.

Her quiet, steady and constant support to the Club over two decades and her modest manner have rendered her invisible to many. That makes her truly an "unsung hero". Congratulations Sue on receiving this very well deserved honour.



Sue Manning with the Lipsey Cup / Margy Sullivan

Interview with SLSC member Louize Petch

By Hannah Petch

Swimming at the Lido runs in the family, or at least it does in ours. I sat down with my mother to talk to her about her love of the Lido.

What drew you to the Lido and cold water swimming?

I discovered it by accident really. I'd always been an indoor swimmer and I was always of the opinion that the Lido was too cold for me. It was a positive product of the pandemic period, the lido opened before indoor pools, I was so desperate to swim after a prolonged period of not being able to and the first time I went I absolutely loved it! I felt really sad that I went so long without it, but I've found it now and that's the important thing.

What impact has the Lido had on you?

It's hard to explain just how positive the impact has been, it truly is my happy place and it's had a hugely positive impact on my mental health. At times I've had difficulty with anxiety and depression and the only place I've felt truly level is when I'm in that pool. It makes me feel very physically alive. Having lived with cancer, feeling physically connected and in the moment is very important for me, the sun on my face and the coldness of the water really makes me feel like I'm truly present and living.

I like the social aspect of it and the structure and routine of going. It's particularly useful on working days if I need to clear my head and think things through. Sometimes I go for thinking time, other times it's purely meditative. If I've been at my screen all day, I go in the evenings in summer and it helps me untangle and unwind from the working day. I like the ritual of it all, getting into my costume, my hot drink afterwards, the regular rituals that come with it. As you can tell, I like it...a lot!

How are you feeling as we move towards warmer water temperatures – excited for the summer months or will you miss the adrenaline rush that comes with the cold?

I'm excited for the summer months. I do swim all year round but I don't go as often in the winter months. I find it hard in the coldest temperatures – I can't stay in the water for too long. Whereas in summer, I can stay in for much longer periods of time, I can properly exercise in the summer and I can ditch my neoprene; everything gets lighter and easier. Nothing is better than lido swims in the summer!

How are you feeling about the upcoming refurbishment and temporary closure of the Lido?

I intellectually understand that it's necessary and will secure the Lido's future, I think it's going to be amazing in the long run, but I feel sad that it won't be there for us in those months that it's closed. I'll miss it terribly. I'll move to swimming indoors during that time but it won't be the same. I can only hope that they get the refurbishments done on schedule and we'll be able to enjoy the pool in all its summer glory in 2023. But I think we should be grateful that this work is being done. The Lido really is a family affair, my daughter swims there and is the editor of this publication, my husband swims here occasionally, my son is a lifeguard, a lot of my friends and neighbours swim here, it's the beating heart of our interactions. I feel very passionate about its survival and keeping its legacy alive so that it can be enjoyed by many people for generations to come.



Louize and Hannah post swim / Hannah Petch



A hot drink after a cold swim / Hannah Petch

It's Behind You!

By Sue Brearley

Spring is springing, summer will be here before we know it, and that can mean only one thing – it's pantomime time! Oh yes it is!

More mature members may remember the glorious madness that was 2014's Swimderella. If not, you can get a flavour of it here: <https://www.slsc.org.uk/news/lido-panto-swimderella/>

This year the SLSC Players' production of Dick Whittington and his Amazing Goose is coming to a legendary lido near you – and YOU can be part of it. Oh yes you can! There will be three evening performances on 17th, 18th and 19th June 2022.

We need performers – actors, musicians, and synchronised swimmers – and a production team. If you would like to perform or if you are interested in helping with production – project co-ordination, scenery and set building, lights and sound, costume, props and makeup, stage management, choreography, musical direction, finance, press/PR, front of house and refreshments – we want to hear from you. Enthusiasm is all that is required, but if you have an area of expertise and are willing to take on a task or lead a team, that would be very welcome.

Contact Sue Brearley <sue@suebrearley.com> saying whether you would like an on- or offstage role (or both), or just to find out more.

If you are under sixteen please ask a parent or carer to contact us on your behalf, because we'll need their permission.

As the Lido's going to be closed for a while, we'd like the SLSC community to come together for some joyful silliness to celebrate our club and the myriad talents of its members. Come and be part of the celebration!

Bertha Breaststroke
c/o Bertie Fitzallsorts' Channel Swimmers' Emporium, Old London Town

and Freestyle Jack
c/o the Budgie Smugglers Arms, Tooting Bec Lido



The Dame and the Dive-In Belles / Miki Yamanouchi



*Nando Cuca as the Dame
and Chris Stanton / Miki
Yamanouchi*