



Bec Chat Lines from the Lido June 2022

Summer at the Lido / Hannah Petch

Letter from the Editor

By Hannah Petch – hannahpetch1@gmail.com

This is my last Bec Chat as Editor as I am heading off for a big adventure in a couple of weeks! I'm going to miss swimming at the Lido throughout summer, but I'm sure the tropical waves of the South Pacific will suit me just fine!

There's lots of exciting things on the horizon, rehearsals for this year's panto are in full swing, and as the weather (hopefully) gets warmer again, I'm sure lots of people will be heading on down to the Lido for a cool refreshing dip.

If you would like to take over as Editor of Bec Chat – it's a fun role (!) – then please get in touch with Margy or email membership@slsc.org.uk

Keep an eye on your inbox for upcoming announcements.

Keep Swimming,

H Petch

Water temperatures

David took a well-deserved holiday, however, this meant we had to stick with the lifeguards', always slightly optimistic, readings. As a rule, I tend to calculate the temperature as a degree off whatever it says at reception!

The weather has been very variable which means the temperature is going up and down a lot. Over the last few weeks it has been anywhere between 14° and 18°C !

First dip in the Lido

By Emily Blake

I had a great first visit to Tooting Bec Lido on the 17 and 18 May this year.

A perfect day enjoying the London heatwave and what a pool! Despite in the past living in London, I had never ventured to this wonderful lido on my doorstep. Inconspicuously tucked away, the colourful huts, huge pool, retro feel and so clean and welcoming.

I live in North Cornwall and booked a mini trip to London, which turned into a swimming tour: Tooting Bec, Parliament Hill, and the Oasis in Central London. Lots of swimming, lots of sunbathing and a lovely friendly atmosphere.

My local pool in Cornwall is the Bude Sea Pool, a tidal pool 91m long and well worth a visit. I just completed my Penguin Challenge of winter swimming for the first time and have caught the cold water swimming habit!

Very envious of you all enjoying Tooting Bec year round and I cannot wait to visit again!

Emily

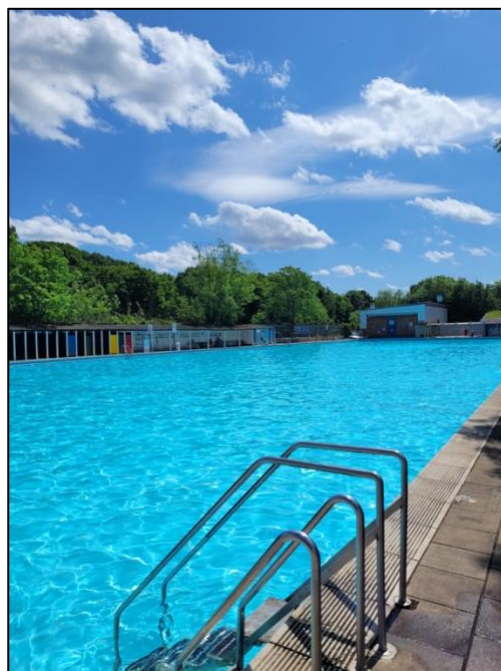
Follow my daily swims on IG @sandysaltyadventures



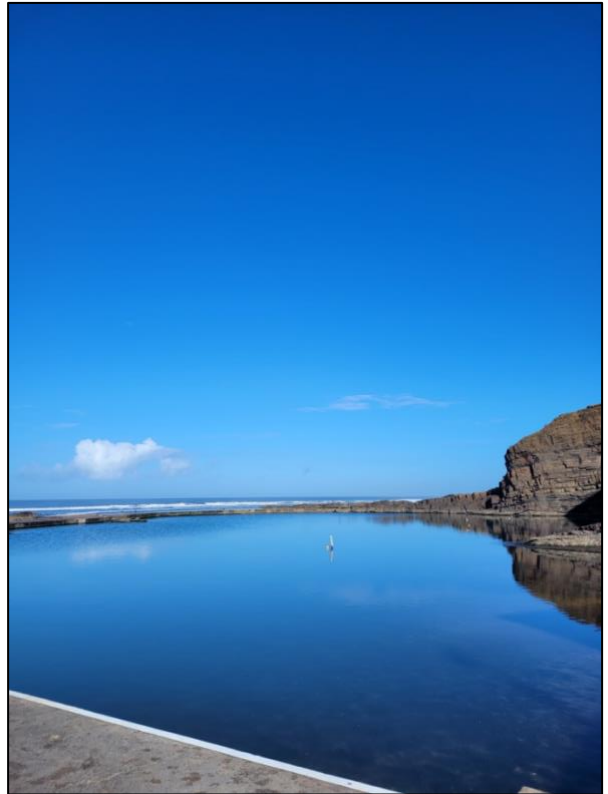
Emily by the pool / Emily Blake



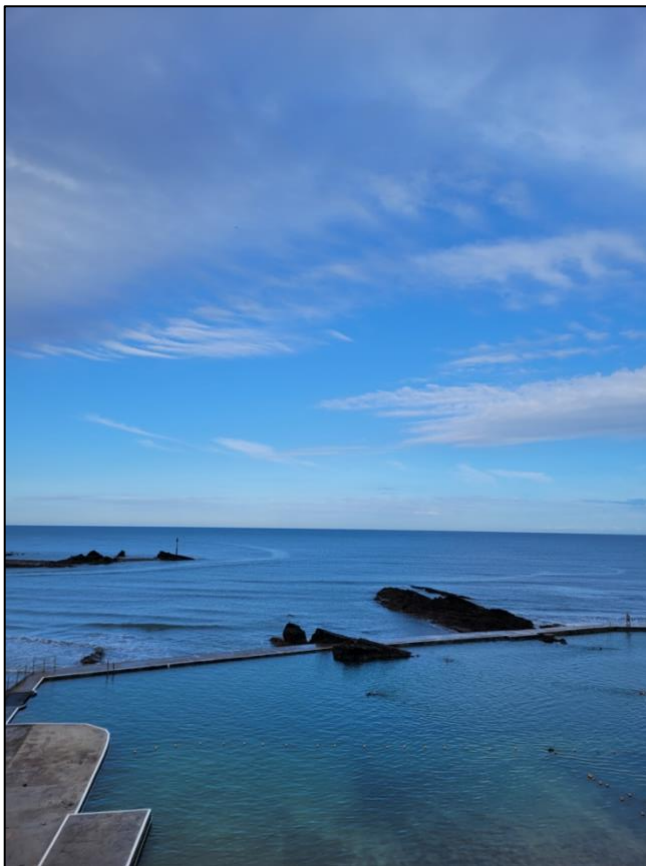
Relaxing poolside / Emily Blake



Emily Blake



Bude Sea Pool / Emily Blake



Emily's usual spot / Emily Blake

Bec Chat – Lines from the Lido

Royal Life Saving Society UK

By Jamila Amina

I was born in a country dominated by water. Bangladesh is on a delta: rivers criss-cross the land. Yet tragically, drowning is one of the leading causes of death of children there. Village kids will play in rivers and ponds, but in general, swimming simply isn't part of the culture, even less so if you're a girl. My family moved to the UK when I was little and – what a contrast – swimming was taught at school as a life-skill. But more than that, it was fun, as it meant time out of other lessons – it was simply part of the sport curriculum. I loved it.

My dad was a great swimmer and we joined him when he was out working in Egypt for a couple of years. He took us swimming in the Red Sea and got us membership at the local sports club. Once at school in Cairo I made the mistake of trying to help a classmate who was panicking during a swimming lesson; I swam to them and they inadvertently kept pushing me under, causing me to lose consciousness. I don't know what happened next, but I remember waking up in the arms of a lifeguard. I was eight or nine. The headteacher talked about it in assembly the next day, sternly warning us to never approach anyone who was struggling in the water, but to call the lifeguard instead. The fact that I almost drowned didn't put me off swimming – not one bit.

Then came puberty. Back in the UK, I no longer had a swimming costume, my secondary school stopped offering lessons anyway, and in fact all extra-curricular sport was out of bounds. My parents were strict Muslims and, in our culture, girls in particular are expected to be modest and covered up. In my family, any kind of activity beyond studying for exams was seen as unnecessary. It coincided with a difficult part of my life because I was quite rebellious. But I couldn't do what I wanted until I left home for university. Thank goodness for women-only swimming nights at ULU (University of London Union). I began to dip my toe back in the water and realised I remembered the basics. Once I got back into it, I never wanted to give it up again. I became more confident and went with friends who were better swimmers than me, who helped improve my technique. At one point I even began lifeguard training. By my early twenties I was living in Germany and swimming a kilometre of front crawl every other day.

One of the first things I did when I had my own kids was take them swimming. I tried to teach them myself, but their school was much better than me. In fact I think I almost put them off – probably because I was so zealous! I realise though that not all schools are able to offer swimming lessons – especially with the global pandemic – but they made such a huge difference to me, and could represent the lifeline that any child of whatever background might need, as well as being a vital part of education.

I now swim at my local lido (I'm very lucky), and I find that the great thing about cold-water swimming is that it's very inclusive. Not being particularly religious myself, I wear what I want, but that's the beauty of the activity: you can be as covered up as much or as little as you like, if that's your choice or part of your beliefs, and still enjoy it – no one cares. It's accessible compared to many other sports because you don't have to fork out for expensive equipment. Swimming gives me back that glorious feeling of freedom I had as a little girl. But it also symbolises my self-determination, gives me appreciation for, and autonomy over my body and is good for the soul. There's some positive news too from Bangladesh: since 2015 swimming lessons are now compulsory in schools. There aren't many pools and cultural barriers remain – but it's a start.