

**The Reflecting Pool of Society:  
Aquatic Sport, Leisure and Recreation  
in England, c. 1800 -1918**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is an examination of the history of swimming in England between 1800 and 1918. It covers both competitive and recreational swimming, as well as diving, lifesaving, synchronized swimming and water polo. Besides providing an overview of the development of these aquatic disciplines, the thesis also explores the links between swimming and wider English society, and argues that studying the history of swimming illuminates important facets about English society between 1800 and 1918. Little has been written on the history of swimming. Most scholarship on the history of sport only peripherally touches on the topic, while more specific works are either bare chronologies or closely focussed studies on quite narrow topics. No existing study links the history of swimming with that of wider English society. This thesis provides broad coverage on the topic, and it is the contention of this thesis that the swimming world and broader English society were so closely linked that common practices and developments in swimming reflected Victorian and Edwardian society in general. As part of this study such diverse topics as societal gender roles and expectations, the question of class, and the amateur versus professional debate, as it applied to swimming, are covered. The involvement that municipal government authorities had with swimming between 1800 and 1918, the role of swimming within the educational sphere, the links between swimming and humanitarianism, especially the development of the Royal Life Saving Society, and Victorian and Edwardian ideas of health and cleanliness further round out the coverage provided. Altogether this thesis provides an examination of an important but neglected topic in the historiography of Victorian and Edwardian England.

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## Preface

The past three and a quarter years have been interesting, intense, and at times quite frustrating. This thesis aims to lay the foundations for further research on a neglected but important topic; the history of swimming in Victorian and Edwardian England. Although the thesis is my own work, it could not have been completed without the assistance of others (listed elsewhere). Without them this thesis would never have become a reality. As always, any errors or omissions in this work are my responsibility alone.

Christopher Love  
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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Swimming is a ubiquitous activity in England today. Thousands of people go swimming daily in the numerous municipal and private facilities across the country. Many people think nothing of going down to the local swimming pool or water pleasure park for enjoyment. Gone are the days when only a small segment of the population would willingly venture near the water, and an even smaller segment of the population could actually swim. The mass swimming movement in England, however, is relatively recent. As late as the 1870s swimming was just beginning to become popular, as a newspaper column of the day indicated:

The most devoted followers of swimming can hardly fail to be intensely pleased with the rapid progress made of late years in this noble pastime, and the continual addition which we find springing up around us in the shape of clubs and aspirants to swimming honours. It requires a man but little advanced in years to remember when even this mighty metropolis was but scantily supplied with that, in many instances, highly intellectual and extremely necessary adjunct, a swimming club; but time and an innate love for what all men must admire with a delightful remembrance, has at last aroused us from our lethargy, making, in the short space of a few years, through an adherence to good and honest principles, a sport popular which, from its pure, invigorating characteristics, possesses no rival.<sup>1</sup>

Swimming grew in popularity, first among middle and upper class men in the years 1800-1875. But there followed a huge explosion of interest after Captain Webb's cross-Channel swim of 1875. Though plenty of swimmers came from humble origins, the real expansion in working class swimming did not take place until later, in the main after the introduction of suitable swimming pools, with low

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<sup>1</sup> Aquarius (Robert Patrick Watson), "A Retrospect," in *The Swimming, Rowing, and Athletic Record*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 10 May 1873, p. 1.

admission charges, in the major urban centres of the late nineteenth century.

This thesis is a study of that process: of the development of aquatic sport, leisure and recreation in England between 1800 and 1918. This thesis also seeks to explain the deeper social origins of the emergence of swimming in England, in addition to seeking an explanation of the consequences of the new leisure form on English society at large. Equally, it is intended to contribute to (and refine) the broader historiographical debate about the emergence of popular leisure in these years.

The first question that arises is simple enough. What should fall under the broad title of aquatic sport, leisure and recreation? Aquatic activities can be taken to include boating, canoeing, diving, rowing, sailing, surfing, and swimming, among others.<sup>2</sup> This study, however, focuses on activities that can be engaged in with a minimum of equipment, and which involve an individual spending time immersed in the water. Such a study involves coverage of the competitive and recreational forms of swimming, diving, synchronized swimming, water polo, and aquatic lifesaving, along with their closely related sub-fields.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the massive expansion of study about sport and leisure in England

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<sup>2</sup> For the history of rowing, for example, see Eric Halladay, *Rowing in England: a Social History: The Amateur Debate*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> The activity referred to as either “competitive swimming” or “speed swimming” by the layman is actually simply referred to as “swimming” by the *Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur* (F.I.N.A.), the world governing body of swimming, diving, water polo, long distance/marathon swimming and synchronized swimming. For purposes of this thesis, reference to the sporting discipline of swimming will always be explicitly pointed out, while the generic term “swimming” will be used to describe all areas of aquatic sport, leisure and recreation collectively when required.



published since the 1970s, very little has been written about swimming. Attention has generally focussed on those sports, notably cricket, football, horse racing, and rugby, which have large popular followings. They are, primarily, team games, which are seen as inherently more *social*, because of the complex bonding rituals that take place between players and spectators. Swimming has, however (and despite its popularity), been largely ignored. Tony Mason in the introduction to *Sport in Britain: A Social History*, published in 1989, reported,

As late as 1960 the National Council for School Sports was only concerned with athletics, cricket, football, rugby and swimming and all are covered in this book save the latter. Swimming's absence is unfortunate. We would have liked to have found a place for it, in part because in excess of 6 per cent of the population were swimming by 1980 - more if you include the under-sixteens - and also because of its long-standing role in many communities as a competitive sport from the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately not enough work has been done on the subject.<sup>4</sup>

Eleven years later, when Mason and Richard Holt collaborated to produce *Sport in Britain 1945 - 2000*, they could still find very little on the history of swimming, which consequently received scant mention in the text (and no specialist works on the topic were listed in the bibliography).<sup>5</sup>

And yet, as Mason has indicated, swimming was, and remains, an important recreation and competitive activity in England. Nicholas Orme - one of the few historians of swimming - has written, "Social history throws light upon swimming,

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<sup>4</sup> Tony Mason, "Introduction," in Tony Mason (ed.), *Sport in Britain: A Social History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Holt and Tony Mason, *Sport in Britain 1945 - 2000*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2000).

and in turn the history of swimming, once constructed, illuminates the societies which have practised it.”<sup>6</sup> Unlike other physical activities such as cricket, gymnastics, and football, which were appropriated by different social classes to reinforce class identity or status, swimming was never indulged in simply by one class or social group. Swimming was enjoyed by diverse elements of society, and came to reflect English society *at large*, with all of the cultural prejudices, preconceptions, contradictions, and ideals of that culture. At one level, swimming was one part of the great recreational explosion of the 1870s and 1880s. But the progression of swimming also reflected changes in English society at large, notably gender relations and class relations, and did so down to the present.

Of course, modern swimming did not develop in isolation in England alone. Throughout the eighteenth century, in both Europe and North America, swimming began to develop as a leisure activity. It is not the purpose of this thesis to recount the history of swimming in Europe and North America, but it is important to remember that indigenous swimming traditions emerged there independently. As with English swimming, however, very little has been written about the history of swimming in other countries. An introduction to the story of swimming abroad can be found in *The Springboard in the Pond* by Thomas A. P. van Leeuwen.<sup>7</sup> Despite its problems (noted below), this book does provide an entry to the subject. The reader interested in European swimming should start with Thierry Terret’s

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<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Orme, *Early British Swimming 55 BC - AD 1719 with the first swimming treatise in English, 1595*, (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1983), p. x.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas A. P. van Leeuwen, *The Springboard in the Pond: An Intimate History of the Swimming Pool*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998).



*Naissance et diffusion de la natation sportive* (The Birth and Spread of Swimming Sports).<sup>8</sup> A more general study can be found in Alain Corbin's *The Lure of the Sea*, which, although not specifically concerned with swimming, provides important background on the lure of the seaside during the eighteenth century, and the origins of spa and bathing culture.<sup>9</sup>

Of all the work undertaken on the history of swimming and its place within English society, most has been of a cursory nature. General works, such as Richard Holt's *Sport and the British*, and Tony Mason's books, make only passing references to swimming. The most detailed mentions of swimming have been focussed on women in swimming. Allen Guttmann's *Women's Sports* (though concentrated on France and the United States), has useful commentary on women and swimming.<sup>10</sup> He traces swimming's roots back to the earliest historical periods, and presents some interesting evidence to suggest women's swimming in ancient Egypt.<sup>11</sup> Also prominent in the field is Jennifer Hargreaves' survey of women in sport, *Sporting Females*.<sup>12</sup> It is not, however, without its flaws. Errors about chronology, the name of organizations, and confusion about sources reduce its value.

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<sup>8</sup> Thierry Terret, *Naissance et diffusion de la natation sportive*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994). The translation of the title is by this author.

<sup>9</sup> Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World, 1750 -1840*, Jocelyn Phelps, trans.,(Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994), Original Edition: *Le Territoire du vide*, (Paris: Aubier, 1988).

<sup>10</sup> Allen Guttmann, *Women's Sport: A History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Guttmann, *Women's Sport*, pp. 10-11, Pl. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females Critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports*, (London, Routledge, 1994).

Works that cover swimming in general are equally hard to come by. The previously mentioned *The Springboard in the Pond* by Thomas A. P. van Leeuwen, published in 1998, sets up interesting possibilities with its title, but fails to provide much detail on the history of swimming in England. The book is concerned more with the development of the swimming pool, rather than the history of swimming. What historical material on swimming there is, is focussed on the American experience, with additional material devoted to the history of swimming in France and Germany. The few references to England are problematic, with basic data flawed by errors.<sup>13</sup> Yet despite its errors, van Leeuwen's work provides a useful overview of the development of swimming and the swimming pool on a grand scale. His references at least provide the student of American or European swimming with a starting point for further research.

In much the same vein as van Leeuwen's work, but infinitely superior in their style and clarity, are general works on the seaside resort and the seaside holiday. Although none of these works directly pay much attention to swimming, they again provide the reader with a basis for future research. The best of these works are Anthony Hern's *The Seaside Holiday*, John Walton's *The English Seaside Resort*, and James Walvin's *Beside the Seaside*.<sup>14</sup> All of these are older works, however, and the field clearly needs further, revisionary study.

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<sup>13</sup>. van Leeuwen, *The Springboard in the Pond*, p. 44.

<sup>14</sup>. Anthony Hern, *The Seaside Holiday: The History of the English Seaside Resort*, (London: The Cresset Press, 1967); John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History 1750-1914*, (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1983); James Walvin, *Beside the Seaside: A Social History of the Popular Seaside Holiday*, (London: Allen Lane, 1978).

The definitive work on swimming in England prior to the nineteenth century is Nicholas Orme's *Early British Swimming*.<sup>15</sup> Covering the period from 55 BCE to 1719 CE, Orme examines the evidence for swimming *before* the rise of seaside bathing culture, spas and resorts. He also reprints the entire text (with original illustrations) of the first book on swimming printed in English, Everard Digby's *De Arte Natandi*, which dates to 1595. Orme's work provides the essential background for any student investigating swimming from the 1750s onwards.

Orme's monograph remains the only scholarly work that focuses on swimming in England. In recent years, however, several commemorative histories have appeared about various swimming bodies in England, often to celebrate important anniversaries. Two of these, Peter Bilsborough's history of the Scottish Amateur Swimming Association (S.A.S.A.), *One Hundred Years of Scottish Swimming*, and Ian Keil and Don Wix's *In the Swim: The Amateur Swimming Association from 1869 to 1994*, are professionally produced, but lack full academic bibliographies and citations.<sup>16</sup> Both works provide broad outlines of the history of swimming in Scotland and England respectively, and point to areas in need of further research. Bilsborough's work (on Scotland) is the less useful of the two to students of English swimming, obviously, though he does provide some important references. Keil and Wix's book is an excellent starting point for anyone studying the Amateur Swimming Association (A.S.A.) or swimming in England in general.

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<sup>15</sup> See Note 6 above.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Bilsborough, *One Hundred Years of Scottish Swimming*, (Edinburgh, S.A.S.A., 1988); Ian Keil and Don Wix, *In the Swim: The Amateur Swimming Association from 1869 to 1994*, (Loughborough: Swimming Times Ltd., 1996).



Their bibliography is reasonably complete and thus a great research aid, but the lack of citations in the text itself is frustrating. There are, equally, sections where Keil and Wix have misunderstood the historical episode they study. The third recently-published history of a swimming organization in Britain is Ronald Pearsall's, *Lifesaving: The Story of the Royal Life Saving Society*.<sup>17</sup> Although very good at presenting the factual outline of the R.L.S.S., the book is essentially a coffee table book, filled with glossy pictures, and designed for the general reader and not the specialist.

Thus the historical study of swimming in England is distinctly lacking in monographs. Journal articles, on the other hand, are slightly more common. The most notable of these articles is Thierry Terret's "Professional Swimming in England," in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*.<sup>18</sup> Generally a solid and informative piece of writing, the article nonetheless contains suspect references. A more recent piece, Claire Parker's "The Rise of Competitive Swimming," appeared in *The Sports Historian*.<sup>19</sup> A doctoral student at the University of Stirling, Parker's work is important, albeit perhaps too reliant on both Keil and Wix, and Terret. Kathleen McCrone, a pioneer in the field of sports history, has touched on swimming in her articles while studying women's participation in sport in general. The most useful of these is "Emancipation or Recreation? The Development of

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<sup>17</sup> Ronald Pearsall, *Lifesaving The Story of The Royal Life Saving Society The First 100 Years*, (London, David & Charles, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Thierry Terret, "Professional Swimming in England, 1837-75," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1995), 18-32.

<sup>19</sup> Claire Parker, "The Rise of Competitive Swimming 1840 to 1878," in *The Sports Historian*, No. 21 (2) (November 2001), 54-67.



Women's Sport at the University of London" in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*.<sup>20</sup>

Swimming in Britain has attracted several theses and dissertations. Among the earliest of these was T. M. James' University of Leicester Doctoral thesis from 1977.<sup>21</sup> Although mainly focussed on the role played by schools and universities in the growth of English athletics up to 1900, James also provided some basic insight into the history of competitive swimming in England. His survey suffers, for our purpose, however, from being unbalanced in its coverage. Far more attention is paid to athletics than to swimming, and James provides very little about the development of swimming in the state school system, focussing almost exclusively on the Public School system and the universities. Appearing in 2000 was Sarah Batstone's University of Birmingham Doctoral thesis.<sup>22</sup> This was followed in 2001 by Simon Ramsden's University of York Master of Arts dissertation.<sup>23</sup> Both works provide detailed studies by developing their arguments in reference to specific case studies and locations. Batstone's work is more immediately concerned with swimming, while Ramsden's work concentrates on the architecture of the places where people

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<sup>20</sup> Kathleen E. McCrone, "Emancipation or Recreation? The Development of Women's Sport at the University of London" in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1990), 204-229.

<sup>21</sup> T. M. James, *The Contribution of Schools and Universities to the Development of Organized Sport up to 1900 (with special reference to Athletics and Swimming)*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis: University of Leicester, 1977).

<sup>22</sup> Sarah Anne Katherine Batstone, *Health and recreation: issues in the development of bathing and swimming, circa 1800 - 1970, with special reference to Birmingham and Thetford, Norfolk*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis: University of Birmingham, 2000).

<sup>23</sup> Simon Ramsden, *Baths, wash-houses, swimming pools and social history: a case for conservation*, 2 vols., (Unpublished MA Dissertation: University of York, 2001).

swam in Manchester. Both works, however, are of great value to anyone studying swimming in England. In addition, at least four other theses or dissertations are currently being completed in England and Scotland relating to swimming in Britain. David Day at Manchester Metropolitan University, Bettina Doyle at DeMontfort University, Win Hayes at the University of Edinburgh, and Claire Parker at the University of Stirling, are all currently engaged in research that will hopefully expand the understanding of the history of swimming.

The aim of this thesis is straight-forward enough; to explore the history of swimming in England between 1800 and 1918. But it also seeks to explore how swimming reflected different aspects of English culture during this period. The thesis is organized along thematic lines, with seven thematic chapters, prefaced by this introduction, and completed by a general conclusion. In support of the core thematic chapters, nine appendices provide the relevant contemporary documents, abstracts, and compiled data to sustain the argument of the chapters.

Chapter Two presents an historical overview of the development of swimming in England between roughly 1750 and 1918. This chapter is designed as a reference baseline for the rest of the work, while also providing an overview of the main issues to be examined in the remaining thematic chapters. Chapter Three examines “The Question of Gender,” by looking at how gender affected swimming practices, and how both men and women set about swimming along gendered lines during the period under review. This is followed by Chapter Four which examines the role played by class and by the related issue of the amateur/professional debate in swimming.

Chapter Five provides a study of the municipal provision of swimming



facilities, and the municipal promotion of swimming in general, between 1800 - 1918. The role played by both the Public School and State School systems in the promotion of swimming is examined in Chapter Six, highlighting the secondary status of the activity in the Public Schools, compared to the enthusiastic attachment to swimming in state schools. Chapter Seven discusses the role of swimming in the world of humanitarianism, and safety training. This focuses especially on the role played by the R.L.S.S. The link between swimming and concepts of health and cleanliness, especially in the later nineteenth century are discussed in Chapter Eight. Finally, Chapter Nine presents the specific and general conclusions of the thesis and offers suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 2: Context

### Swimming in England, c. 1750 - 1914

Swimming is an activity which people have practised for several thousand years. Recent archaeological and anthropological theories indicate that swimming was common in any number of early human cultures, especially those cultures that developed in regions where travel across large bodies of water was required, or where fishing took place in areas of warm water. The development of swimming was thus probably an early feature in many different cultures around the world, and one which evolved independently of any early contact between cultures. We are uncertain about the techniques that these early swimmers used. Certainly it seems likely that “Breaststroke”, the oldest of the “classical” strokes now used in competitive swimming, has existed in some form for much longer than we have written records. The actual origins and early development of swimming, however, are unknown because it is an activity which does not, of course, leave behind physical artifacts. Nor does it seem to have featured in the art of earlier cultures. Swimming was certainly practised in early Mesopotamia and ancient Greece, and likely in ancient Egypt as well. In the case of Egypt, Allen Guttmann has argued that several artifacts and pieces of art clearly show girls and women swimming.<sup>24</sup> Unambiguous depictions of swimmers can be found in ancient Babylonian and Greek art.<sup>25</sup> Further, a swimming pool was one of the facilities provided for the use

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<sup>24</sup> Guttmann, *Women's Sport*, pp. 10-11, Pl. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Among the stone relief panels housed in the British Museum from the excavations of the Babylonian palace of Nimrud are four that illustrate swimming scenes. Copies of these panels have been made for the Aquatic Hall of Fame and Museum of Canada, located in the Pan Am Pool, Winnipeg, Manitoba.



of athletes at Olympia, in Classical Greece.<sup>26</sup> All of this evidence dates the earliest records of swimming to between 1000 and 2000 years BCE. Various Roman writers, including Cicero, Horace, Ovid, Pliny the Younger, Plutarch, Seneca the Younger, and Suetonius, mention swimming in their works.<sup>27</sup> The ability to swim was highly praised and valued in Roman society, at least among men, and the skill was promoted as a necessary military discipline by Vegetius in the later 380s CE.<sup>28</sup>

In England, the first confirmable swimming exploits can be attributed to the Romans, as Nicholas Orme has pointed out.<sup>29</sup> As with earlier classical references to swimming, these exploits are recorded in conjunction with military actions. No records of civilian swimming, or swimming by the native British inhabitants survive, if they ever existed. According to Orme, Roman baths large enough to be used as swimming pools were built at Bath, Burton, and Wells. It is not, however, known if they were ever used in this manner.<sup>30</sup> Evidently there was a limited amount of swimming from the first arrival of Julius Caesar in England until the beginning of bathing culture in the 1700s. Orme comments, “It cannot be said that swimming was a major activity in Britain between 55 BC and AD 1719. The number of those who could swim must have been a smaller proportion of the population than today, and

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<sup>26</sup> Judith Swaddling, *The Ancient Olympic Games*, 2nd ed., (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), p. 34. For more on classical bathing see Fikret Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, (New York: The Architectural History Foundation, 1992).

<sup>27</sup> Orme, *Early British Swimming*, p. 4-5.

<sup>28</sup> Orme, *Early British Swimming*, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Orme, *Early British Swimming*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>30</sup> Orme, *Early British Swimming*, p. 3.

virtually excluded the whole female sex.”<sup>31</sup> Throughout his work Orme points out that his sources only ever refer to male swimmers. While it cannot be argued that women never swam in these early periods, there is little to no evidence to suggest that female swimming existed in any significant form prior to the 1800s. Even well into the nineteenth century, swimming was viewed for the most part as a male preserve.

In 1801 Joseph Strutt published the first edition of *Glig-Gamena Angel Deod, or, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*.<sup>32</sup> In this work Strutt argued that swimming was a natural English pastime, and that it had been part of English culture since before the Romans arrived on the islands. Indeed, he went so far as to state that the native Britons used swimming as a means to remain fit for the constant warfare they engaged in. Although he believed that no records about swimming existed from between the end of the Roman period and the early 1700s, Strutt was convinced that the activity had been continuously practised in England throughout the intervening years.<sup>33</sup> It is clear today that much of what Strutt wrote about swimming consisted of fanciful invention and wild speculation, especially his views on the swimming exploits of the ancient Britons and the Romans. His examination of swimming in England remains quite long on theory and short on documented historical proof. *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* is

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<sup>31</sup>. Orme, *Early British Swimming*, p. 107.

<sup>32</sup>. Joseph Strutt, *Glig-Gamena Angel Deod, or, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, 1st ed. (London: J. White, 1801). This work was widely reprinted until at least 1910. Copies of at least four different printings/editions are housed in the British Library.

<sup>33</sup>. Strutt, *Glig-Gamena*, pp. ii, xx, 66-67.



important, however, because it confirms that by the late eighteenth century - the period Strutt knew personally - people in England were swimming. Furthermore, swimming was clearly not a major pastime in contemporary England, for Strutt was concerned to promote the activity among his countrymen. Although his word must be accepted with caution, Strutt also claimed that swimming was not as prevalent among the English when he wrote his work as it previously had been.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, swimming, in all of its forms, has become a common, wide spread, and popular activity only recently. In England, swimming, once practised by only a few individuals, nearly always men, developed into an activity engaged in by millions of people from the 1830s onwards. Growing from shallow eighteenth century roots, swimming developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from the simple pursuit of paddling about in the ocean, rivers and lakes, into a range of disciplines that encompassed the recognized competitive sports of swimming, diving, synchronized swimming, and water polo, as well as the humanitarian field of aquatic lifesaving, and swimming for basic leisure and recreation.

Scattered references to pre-nineteenth century swimming pools in England, especially London, appear in swimming literature throughout the period under review, although seldom as more than passing comment.<sup>35</sup> The first verifiable swimming pool in England about which records still survive was an open air bath known as the "Pearless Pool, North London," or "Pearless Head Pool," which was

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<sup>34</sup> Strutt, *Glig-Gamena*, p. 66-67.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Agnes Campbell's reference to the "Duke of York's Bagnio" in London of the late 1700s. Agnes Campbell, *Report on Public Baths and Wash-Houses in the United Kingdom*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1918), p. 2.

purportedly opened in 1743.<sup>36</sup> Ian Keil and Don Wix in their commemorative history of the Amateur Swimming Association (A.S.A.), state that the Peerless Pool was purpose-built for swimming.<sup>37</sup> The pool was located in Baldwin Street, City Road, and was in use for roughly a century. It measured thirty yards wide by fifty yards long, was built of stone, and was surrounded by bathing boxes to allow changing on site. According to R. E. Dudgeon, who surveyed the bathing places of London in the late 1860s, by 1869-1870 the site of the Peerless Pool was to be built over with new buildings.<sup>38</sup> But as late as 1861 the Peerless Pool was listed as a bathing place in a manual produced by some members of the London Swimming Club.<sup>39</sup> Sinclair and Henry could record that little more than twenty five years previous to the writing of their book the “Peerless Pool,” as they termed it, was used by the boys of Christ’s Hospital school.<sup>40</sup> Edwin Chadwick in his famous *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* seems to mention the Peerless Pool, although if he, unlike the other authors here, refers to the same site he is quite clear in stating there were at least *two* pools on the site.

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<sup>36</sup> A.S.A., *Successful Swimming with the A.S.A.: The A.S.A. Handbook for Swimmers*, (Loughborough: A.S.A., 1991), p. 5. Neither this document, nor Keil and Wix’s work, cite a source for this date.

<sup>37</sup> Keil and Wix, *In the Swim*, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> R. E. Dudgeon, *The Swimming Baths of London*, (London: Henry Turner and Co., 1870), p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Anonymous, *A Manual Compiled under the Sanction of The London Swimming Club for the Use of Its Members and Others; with an Account of the Progress of the Art during the last Twenty Years, and a Short Notice of The Swimming Baths of the Metropolis*, (London: W. H. Leverell, 1861), p. 39. Hereafter cited as, *Manual of the London Swimming Club*.

<sup>40</sup> Archibald Sinclair and William Henry, *Swimming. The Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes*, (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1893), p. 25.



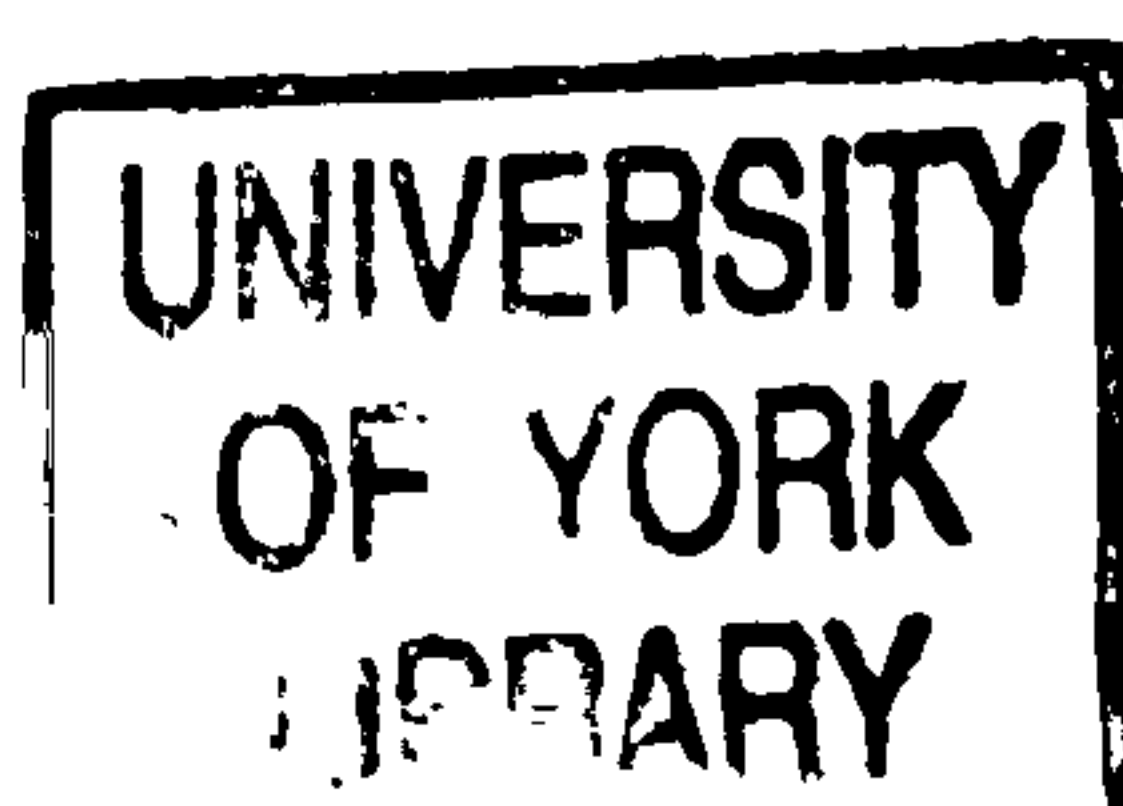
Chadwick informed his readers that an unnamed gentleman, observing hot water running off from a factory, thought that this water source could be used for bathing. The end result was the building of swimming pools in the City Road. The cost for using the higher class pool on the site was 1s, while the more basically equipped pool cost only 6d to use. Chadwick also reported the existence of “tepid” swimming baths in Westminster which had been built at some point after the City Road pools. There was a uniform charge of 3d to enable the working class to use these baths, with an estimated 2000 to 3000 people using them per day.<sup>41</sup> Further light is shed on the running of the Peerless Pool by a reference made to the pool in a parliamentary debate in 1846. In the record made of the proceedings of the House of Lords on 28 July 1846 it was noted, “Lord BROUGHAM presented a petition from William, Joseph and Thomas Watts, proprietors of the cold and swimming baths in the City-road, known as Peerless-pool, ...”<sup>42</sup>

By 1846 then, the Peerless Pool was apparently owned and operated by a trio of men named Watts. It was definitely a private facility, and would seem to have been open to all classes of the public. The charges for entry into the baths, however, would likely have excluded many from the poorer segments of society. Much about the pool or pools remains unknown, however. Indeed, the question of whether the pool was even totally man-made is open to question. Peerless Pool certainly could simply have been a North London pond that was made more amenable for swimming

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<sup>41</sup>. Edwin Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*, ed. M. W. Flinn, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), p. 317. Chadwick’s work was originally published in London in 1842.

<sup>42</sup>. *Parliamentary Debates* (H.L.), Third Series, Vol. 88 (28 July 1846), col. 104.



by the addition of a stone lining and some stairs. Despite the uncertainties, it would appear that the Pearless Pool was one of the few swimming places in London open to the public, or at least that portion that could afford to pay, from the 1740s until the 1860s.

In 1810 or 1811 the first swimming pool was built at a Public School in England.<sup>43</sup> Harrow's "Duck Puddle" may have been little more than a water-filled muddy hole, but it was a sign of things to come. Although it was the middle of the nineteenth century before another school followed Harrow's example, the fact that one of the great English Public Schools possessed a purpose-built place for bathing that was not in a river, the sea, or other natural water site, was an advance over previous practice. By the end of the nineteenth century swimming pools would be seen as *the* way to provide swimming at Public Schools, state schools and in the wider world. Indeed, eventually the possession of a pool almost became requisite for recognition as a top Public School.<sup>44</sup> There were exceptions, of course. Only those Public Schools with enough land on which to build a swimming pool could do so. Schools not well enough funded to purchase land, or located in confined locations had to make other arrangements. Both Merchant Taylors' School and Westminster School, located in central London, could not build their own pools during the nineteenth century. Merchant Taylors' eventually did build a pool, but only after

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<sup>43</sup> *The Harrovian*, Vol. 4, No. 4, (May 19, 1891), p. 38; A. F. Hort, "The School Bathing Place", in Edmund W. Howson and George Townsend Warner (eds.), *Harrow School*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1898), p. 256; Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. 366.

<sup>44</sup> For the dates of construction of swimming pools at sixty-four Public Schools see Table 27.



relocating to the outskirts of London. To this day Westminster School does not have its own swimming pool, utilizing local municipal pools instead.

Although it is not possible to say if Harrow's "Duck Puddle" was the first water-filled pit purposely dug for swimming purposes in England in the nineteenth century, it was perhaps the most influential, for Harrow's reputation ensured that its facilities became well known. Whether or not the "Duck Puddle" was the first purpose-built swimming place constructed since the Pearless Head Pool in 1743, at roughly 500 yards in length it was certainly one of the largest.<sup>45</sup> It is likely that other similar pools had preceded it, but they must have been few and far between and almost certainly for private use. Such pools might have taken the same form as one to be found on the grounds of Burton Constable in East Yorkshire. Next to the pleasure lake on the estate are the remains of a small structure containing a pool of roughly two metres in width and eight metres in length. Fed by pipes from the lake itself, the building is usually described as the "Victorian Ladies Bathing Pool." It does not appear on an 1822 map of the estate, but does appear on the 1851 Ordinance Survey map of the area.<sup>46</sup> Likely the pool was only used for washing, rather than swimming, but if so, why the long and thin rectangular shape rather than a circular, square or oval one? The water from the pleasure lake is quite muddy today, and was likely just as dirty in the 1830s and 1840s. Using that water for bathing would not have resulted in a much cleaner body. Perhaps the ladies of the estate simply took light exercise by paddling from one end of the bath to the other?

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<sup>45</sup>. Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. 366.

<sup>46</sup>. Based upon information given during a tour of the estate as part of the Yorkshire County House Partnership seminar series, 22 May 2002.

The most common form of bathing was, of course, in the sea. Seaside bathing had developed in the eighteenth century and increased in popularity by the end of the century. With the rise of material prosperity and the creation of a professional class, more and more people were able to afford visits to the inland spa towns and the resorts which had grown up on the coast. While mass usage of the spa towns and beaches would have to wait for the expansion of the national railway network later in the century, the trend was established, notably at Brighton, of taking a dip in the waters. It is also clear that by 1800 men and women were bathing together in the sea in some cases. Although there were already trends towards segregation of the sexes in bathing, there was also an acceptance of mixed bathing in some areas and social circles. It is important to note, however, that bathing in the sea was often just that, bathing, and not true swimming. Some people entered the water looking to cure their ailments or as a preventative against future illness, the time spent soaking in the water being seen as beneficial. Sometimes, however, it would have been inadvisable to use the term bathing for what went on at the seaside; dunking or submersion might be better terms to describe the experience for many.<sup>47</sup>

The seaside towns and resorts grew as never before during the nineteenth century, but it was not in these locations that important developments were made in swimming. Indeed, swimming appears to have been most assisted in its development by the creation of municipal swimming pools. In 1828 the civic corporation of Liverpool was the first to open an indoor municipal swimming pool in

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<sup>47</sup> For more about the development of spas and the seaside resort see, Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea*; Hern, *The Seaside Holiday*; Walton, *The English Seaside Resort*; Walvin, *Beside the Seaside*.



England. The St. George's Baths, as they became known, were supplied with water directly from the River Mersey, most likely producing a swimming environment that was only marginally cleaner and safer than swimming in the river itself. Putting aside the question of cleanliness, however, the entrance of municipal bodies into the construction and management of swimming pools was to become a much more common trend in the future, especially after the permissive legislation of *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, came into effect.

Small bathing clubs were also formed by gentlemen who enjoyed going into the water. At Eton College between 1828 and 1857, for example, there existed two clubs dedicated to "bathing," the Philolitic Society and the Psychrolitic Society. The Philolutes were dedicated to general bathing, while the Psychrolutes were specifically dedicated to cold water and/or out of doors winter bathing. All of the members of the Psychrolutes appear to have been Philolutes, but the reverse was not the case. Between 1828 and 1857 the Psychrolutes enrolled a total of 26 men, with the last member being admitted in 1843. The Philolutes enrolled over 200 members between 1832 and 1849, counting three members of the royal family amongst their number.<sup>48</sup> No records of the Philolutes general activities survive, but the Psychrolitic Society kept detailed records of where its members bathed. Places as diverse as the Serpentine in London, various Scottish lochs, many major English rivers and the Hellespont were included in the list.<sup>49</sup> Although limited to Eton and

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<sup>48</sup>. Those being HRH Prince Albert, HRH Prince George of Cambridge & HRH The Duke of Cambridge. Eton College Archives, Eton, MISC/PSY/2/1, Eton Philolitic Society Members Book 1832-1849.

<sup>49</sup>. Eton College Archives, Eton, MISC/PSY/1/1, Psychrolitic Society Book 1828-1857; and MISC/PSY/2/1, Eton Philolitic Society Members Book 1832-1849.



Cambridge students and masters, and excluding women, the formation of clubs such as the Eton Philolotic and Psychrolotic societies was the start of a movement towards more widespread swimming within English Public Schools, and perhaps a sign of increased interest in swimming within England in general.

At the same time that swimming was becoming of interest in Eton there were also attempts to encourage more people to become involved in swimming in London. In the late 1830s and early 1840s several organizations were founded in London to promote swimming among the people. Of all these societies, most of which appeared and disappeared in a single swimming season, the most important was the National Swimming Society (N.S.S.). The N.S.S. seems to have been the originator of the idea of a national body governing swimming in England, although it did not achieve that objective. In 1836 or 1837 a man by the name of John Strachan, a wine merchant in Dean Street, Westminster, founded the N.S.S.<sup>50</sup> This society immediately set about its purpose of promoting swimming by organizing a race in the Serpentine in early August 1837.<sup>51</sup> Strachan seems to have been especially keen to obtain the highest level of patronage for the N.S.S., and in November of 1837 the

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<sup>50</sup>. The first article in the press which references a "Swimming Society" is found in *Bell's Life in London*, 10 September 1837, p. 4c. A later edition of *Bell's Life* lists 1836 as the year of foundation of the N.S.S.; *Bell's Life in London*, 10 September 1843, p. 4c. Keil & Wix give a date of 1836 for the foundation of the N.S.S., evidently following *Bell's Life*, but an illustration of the medal die used by the N.S.S. on the same page of their book indicates a foundation date of 30 June 1837. At no point is a citation given for the source of either the illustration or information given in the text; Keil & Wix, *In the Swim*, p. 8. On Strachan being a wine merchant see *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (March 1915), p. 22. Thierry Terret also claims that Strachan was a wine merchant who attempted to develop swimming as a professional sport, but he does not cite a source for this information; Terret, "Professional Swimming in England," p. 21.

<sup>51</sup>. *The Times*, 15 August 1837, p. 2d.



society made an application to participate in the Coronation parade of Queen Victoria.<sup>52</sup> No response to this request is to be found. It is likely, however, that the National Swimming Society did *not* receive royal patronage, for references to it disappear from the press by the late 1840s, and it seems to have been in existence for approximately a decade. Initially, however, the society was quite active, and it may have been responsible for the placement of placards along both banks of the Thames in the summer of 1838 designed to prevent drownings by teaching readers how to float if suddenly submerged in water.<sup>53</sup> The Society was definitely involved in providing swimming instruction in and around London from 1837 through 1838; *The Times*, for example, reported in September 1838 a race, swum by a mixture of N.S.S. students and other entrants, across the Thames from Cremorne House in Chelsea to Battersea and back. Silver cups and silver snuff boxes were being offered as prizes for this race. It was further stated in *The Times* article that N.S.S. instructors (here dubbed ‘professors’) using the Surrey Canal, the Serpentine, and the Thames, had taught over 2000 students to swim since 1837.<sup>54</sup> Over time the N.S.S. also attempted to expand its influence beyond London. In August 1840, for example, the society provided at least one silver medal to the Glasgow Swimming Society for use as a prize.<sup>55</sup> Later in the same month the society provided three silver medals to be used

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<sup>52</sup> Public Record Office (PRO), London, HO 44/30, Sheets 296 and 297, James Samuel Graham [Secretary, National Swimming Society] to the Lord Chancellor, 2 November 1837.

<sup>53</sup> *The Times*, 29 August 1838, p. 2f.

<sup>54</sup> *The Times*, 21 September 1838, p. 6b.

<sup>55</sup> *Bell's Life*, 16 August 1840, p. 4c.



as prizes by the newly formed Oxford Swimming Society.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, it was the policy of the N.S.S. to provide three silver medals a year to any local or regional swimming society in Britain that applied to the London committee.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, the N.S.S. made no stipulation on the distance to be covered to win the silver medals that it provided to local bodies. The Glasgow race in 1840 was over a distance of roughly 960 yards, while the Oxford race was only over a distance of 400 yards.<sup>58</sup>

In 1841 and 1843 several mentions appeared in the press about a British Swimming Society (B.S.S.). It was said to have been founded in 1841, “to promote health, cleanliness, and the preservation of life by the practice of bathing and by teaching and encouraging the art of swimming.”<sup>59</sup> These references may simply be inaccurate references to the National Swimming Society, or they may refer to another, competing, society that was also trying to promote swimming in London and England at the same time.<sup>60</sup> Whatever the actual case may be, *The Times* article

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<sup>56.</sup> *The Times*, 31 August 1840, p. 6c; *Bell's Life*, 30 August 1840, p. 4d.

<sup>57.</sup> *Bell's Life*, 4 August 1839, p. 4b; 19 July 1840, p. 4e. The latter article lists medals as already having been sent to Aberdeen, Dundee, Hull, Perth and Plymouth.

<sup>58.</sup> *Bell's Life*, 16 August 1840, p. 4c; 30 August 1840, p. 4d.

<sup>59.</sup> *The Times*, 6 September 1843, p. 3f.

<sup>60.</sup> Reference to the “British Swimming Society” is made in *The Times*, 18 September 1841, p. 4f; 6 September 1843, p. 3f; and *Bell's Life in London*, 23 July 1843, p. 4b. Ralph Thomas in his bibliography of swimming writings records that the B.S.S. and the N.S.S. were the same organization, basing his claim upon the [now non-extant] title page of a published series of essays entitled “The Hand-book of Bathing” dating from 1841; Anonymous [Ralph Thomas], *Swimming: A Bibliographical List of Works on Swimming*, (London: John Russell Smith, 1868), p. 7. In 1915 *The Swimming Magazine* printed an article that claimed that John Strachan was the one who had renamed the N.S.S. the B.S.S.; *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (March 1915), p. 22. Terret follows Thomas; Terret, “Professional Swimming in England,” pp. 21, 27. Keil and Wix claim that the B.S.S. was a separate organization from the N.S.S., but that it was founded in 1840.



covering the annual dinner of the B.S.S. in 1843 provides an interesting overview of the society's activities. It was reported that since their previous dinner the organization had run a series of four competitions; a race for youths under 16 years of age, held at the Holborn Baths, for the prize of a single silver medal; a race for the adult members of the society, for three silver medals; the society's annual races, and a fancy swimming competition. The dinner itself was attended by forty gentlemen, a large number who were thought to be under the age of twenty-one according to the report. The Society's program of providing free swimming instruction was reported during the course of the dinner, and it was hoped to continue on a larger scale in future years. The entire affair, taking place at the Freemason's Tavern, was presided over by Mr. Wakely, MP, who proposed many toasts throughout the evening, including the obligatory one to the Queen, as well as one to the Navy and Army, and the B.S.S. itself. Perhaps most interestingly, it was reported to the assembled crowd that many members of the Society had been writing essays on the art of the swimming during the preceding year, and this was toasted by all assembled.<sup>61</sup>

Based upon this report of the annual dinner, it is clear that the B.S.S., if it was indeed a separate organization from the N.S.S., was an all-male organization. It

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not 1841, apparently basing this claim on information gained from an issue of *Bell's Life* which is mentioned, but not cited, and which this author has been unable to trace; Keil & Wix, *In the Swim*, p. 8. Aside from the three newspaper articles cited there appear to be no other contemporary sources which refer to the existence of a "British Swimming Society." Reference to the "National Swimming Society," explicitly by name, is made in *Bell's Life* from 1839 to 1844 with the B.S.S. only reported on once as noted above. It is therefore likely that the N.S.S. and B.S.S. were the same organization, with the use of the B.S.S. title only occurring for a short period between 1841 and 1843.

<sup>61</sup>. *The Times*, 6 September 1843, p. 3f.



is also clear that the N.S.S. was an all-male society. Reports of the races organized by the N.S.S. explicitly state that the competitors were all male. In the case of the annual race in the Serpentine, where the gender of competitors was not always stated, the time of the race, usually between 06:30 and 08:00 in the morning, might suggest that no female competitors were in the race; so early a time was unlikely to attract respectable women.<sup>62</sup>

Whether or not there were one or two organizations purporting to be national bodies promoting swimming across England in the 1840s, and it seems likely that there was only one, the end result was the same. The society or societies were London based and ultimately had little success in their purpose of making swimming more popular in society at large. The N.S.S. was certainly founded by gentlemen of means, and would seem to have been administered by a governing committee of men. As no records survive on the membership of these organizations we will never know for certain if they catered for female swimmers, but it seems highly unlikely.

Although the N.S.S. was short-lived, the fact that it had existed is important. Years later their activities were looked back upon by swimming administrators, for the most part, with admiration. The Society even held two essay competitions, in 1839 and 1840, for which medals were awarded for the best writing on the art of swimming. The prize winning essays for the two years in which the competition was

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<sup>62</sup> For details of various races staged by the B.S.S. & N.S.S., as well as some of their annual dinners see, *Bell's Life in London*, 6 August 1837, p. 2e; 10 September 1837, p. 4c; 4 August 1839, p. 4b; 19 July 1840, p. 4e; 11 July 1841, p. 4d; 12 September 1841, p. 3e; 27 August 1843; 10 September 1843, p. 4c. *The Times*, 21 September 1838, p. 6b; 6 September 1843, p. 3f.



run were still referred to in the writings of authors on swimming in the 1890s.<sup>63</sup>

Along with the Philolotic and Psychrolotic societies at Eton, the N.S.S. represents the first real attempt to organize swimming at any level. In addition, the Society's efforts in promoting swimming by providing lessons was an attempt to broaden the number of people able to swim in England. As has been seen, however, these efforts took place only in the capital, and seem to have been restricted to males only. It would be at least another two decades before swimming began to become a truly widespread activity.

At the same time that the National Swimming Society was attracting attention in the media, there was other activity among swimmers in London. In 1836, only one year before the formation of the N.S.S., it is certain that privately owned and operated swimming baths were being constructed in parts of London. One such establishment, the "National Tepid and Cold Swimming Baths," was located on the Westminster Road in Lambeth.<sup>64</sup> At some later point this facility seems to have fallen out of use, because in 1852 the Lambeth Baths and Wash Houses Company had to convert the "National Baths," of Westminster Road, into baths, swimming pool and a washhouse.<sup>65</sup> Swimming in Serpentine was obviously

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<sup>63</sup> These essays were referenced by Ralph Thomas in 1868 and 1904, and by Sinclair and Henry in 1893. They have not survived to the present day. Thomas names the authors as James Mason, and A. M. Payne. Thomas, 1868, p. 7; Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 21. See the footnotes above about the debate over the exact name of the organization which published these essays.

<sup>64</sup> Lambeth Archives: Minet Library (LAML), London, Newspaper Clippings File 537, Cutting of 18 December 1836. The source of the cutting is unspecified. One of the swimming pools in this building was said to be 210 feet by 60 feet.

<sup>65</sup> George A. Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1854), p. 42. The only surviving copy of this work appears to be held in the Lambeth Archives: Minet Library, London. The British Library does not hold a

commonplace in the 1840s, for by then the Royal Humane Society had taken responsibility for providing boatmen on the Serpentine in order to save those who got into difficulty while swimming there. Just how popular the Serpentine was as a location to go swimming was demonstrated during the summer of 1842 (considered to be a warm one), when the RHS estimated that there were crowds of over 8000 people using the lake on some days. The same was said of one very warm period of the summer of 1843.<sup>66</sup> The construction of private baths facilities, with swimming pools, and the provision of boatmen for safety purposes on the Serpentine likely helped broaden the appeal of swimming slightly. For all these examples, however, swimming remained a marginal, minority pleasure, and it was only after municipal authorities began to provide swimming pools that swimming really became popular.

While there was a clear interest in swimming in the capital, the first opening of a municipal swimming pool was not in London, but in Liverpool, in 1828.<sup>67</sup>

Thereafter, the St. George's Baths in Liverpool seems to have been the only municipal swimming pool in England, until the enactment of *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*.<sup>68</sup> Passed by Parliament in August 1846, this piece of

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<sup>66</sup> Royal Humane Society, *The Sixty-Ninth Annual Report of the Royal Humane Society*, (London: RHS, 1843), pp. 12-13. Royal Humane Society, *The Seventieth Annual Report of the Royal Humane Society*, (London: RHS, 1844), p. 14. These figures must, of course, be treated with extreme caution as to their accuracy. They point more towards a general trend and interest than absolute numbers of swimmers. Copies of these annual reports are housed in the Royal Humane Society's offices in London.

<sup>67</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. 413.

<sup>68</sup> 9 & 10 Vict., c. 74. The complete text of the Act and its various amendments is found in Appendix 9. For a more detailed discussion of municipal involvement in swimming between 1800 and 1918, see Chapter 5.



permissive legislation allowed English local authorities to establish indoor baths and washhouses, laundries, and open bathing places. According to Sir G. Grey, MP, “The object of this Bill was intimately connected with the comfort, and indeed, with the health of a large portion of the working population, particularly those residing in large towns.”<sup>69</sup> Through the baths constructed by authorities operating under the powers given by the Act, cleanliness would be promoted.<sup>70</sup> There seems to have been general agreement about the usefulness of the Act, as it passed through Parliament with almost no debate.

Although indoor swimming pools were not specifically allowed under the Act, local authorities often built what they termed “plunge baths” which were used for swimming. Open bathing places, as we have already seen, were traditionally used for both bathing and swimming, and the Act simply led to the regulation of bathing activity at such sites. An amendment to *The Bath and Washhouses Act, 1846*, in 1878 allowed for the construction of indoor swimming pools. Once local authorities began to build swimming facilities, and provided access to them at reasonable prices, swimming could become much more widespread within English society.

Swimming between the later 1840s, after the introduction of the Baths and Washhouses Act, and the 1870s, when it really began to become widespread, appears to have been a regionalised activity. Even after the creation of a relatively stable national governing body in 1869, the Associated Metropolitan Swimming Clubs

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<sup>69.</sup> *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, Vol. 87 (19 June 1846), col. 762.

<sup>70.</sup> *Parliamentary Debates* (H.L.), Third Series, Vol. 88 (3 August 1846), col. 277.

(A.M.S.C.), that has lasted, with some changes, to the present, strong regional variations were present within England. As has already been noted, there seems to have been a pronounced swimming culture from an early period among at least a portion of the population of London. There also appears to have been an established local swimming tradition in the north of England, utilizing natural bodies of water, especially in Lancashire.<sup>71</sup> Robert Patrick Watson, a sports journalist working during the later nineteenth century, commented in both his professional work and his memoirs on the strength of northern swimmers at least up until the 1880s.<sup>72</sup> That there was a strong swimming tradition in the north seems to be evidenced by the, often problematic, relations between northern swimming clubs and the Amateur Swimming Association, the ultimate successor of the A.M.S.C., and its predecessor organizations prior to 1900. During this initial period of growth in the organization, when the tasks of nationalizing structures for swimming, diving, and water polo were undertaken, there was a constant battle between London-based swimmers and legislators, and those of the provinces, most especially the northern clubs and swimmers, about which laws should be applied, how clubs should be represented, and where races should be staged, amongst other topics. On at least two occasions threats of, or actual, secession from the A.S.A., were made by northern swimmers

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<sup>71</sup> Simply looking at *The Times* uncovers several articles on the strength of northern swimmers. See for example *The Times*, 7 August 1822, p. 3b; 16 July 1827, p. 2e; 20 June 1863, 11e.

<sup>72</sup> Robert Patrick Watson, *Memoirs of Robert Patrick Watson: A Journalist's Experience of Mixed Society*, (London: Smith, Ainslie & Co., 1899), p. 263. See also, *The Swimming, Rowing, and Athletic Record*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 10 May 1873, pp. 1-2; *The Swimming Rowing, and Athletic Record*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 17 May, 1873, pp. 1-2.



and clubs to protest what was seen as unfair treatment. The north of England, especially the industrial heartlands around Liverpool, and Manchester, as well as the towns and cities of Yorkshire and Northumberland, were important centres of swimming activity for much of the nineteenth century.

It was during the later 1850s and into the 1860s that a large number of swimming clubs, many of them quite long-lived, came to be established across England. Initially these clubs were formed in London and sea-side towns, but eventually others were founded in almost every English city or town of significant size. In London, for example, the London Swimming Club was founded in 1859. In 1861 several members of the club published a manual about the club's activities. They wrote that there were then three, or possibly four, swimming clubs in the city, these being the Bloomsbury Amateur Swimming Club, the London Swimming Club and the London Unity Rowing Club. The possible fourth club, the Albion Club, Kingsland, was thought to be defunct.<sup>73</sup> The manual also recorded that prior to 1861 there had existed the Westminster Swimming Society, which seems to have been made up, for the most part, of professional swimmers. This society had a great rivalry with a group of swimmers who used the Holborn Baths, and one F. E. Beckwith, that is Frederick Beckwith, was named as the society's fastest swimmer.<sup>74</sup> After the absence of any major form of organized swimming, following the collapse of the N.S.S. in the late 1840s, the revival of clubs in the late 1850s and the 1860s is

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<sup>73</sup> Anonymous, *Manual of the London Swimming Club*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>74</sup> Anonymous, *Manual of the London Swimming Club*, p. 16-17. The Holborn Baths had been reportedly converted into the Holborn Assembly Rooms by 1861. For more on Frederick Beckwith see below and also Chapter 4.

important. Although none of these specific clubs survived for long, they appear to have reestablished organized swimming on some sort of footing in London.

The London Swimming Club was followed by other, longer-lasting clubs. One of the earliest was the Ilex Swimming Club, founded in 1861.<sup>75</sup> Another early club was the Serpentine Swimming Club, founded in 1864, which survived at least until the 1960s. It was noted for its organization of the annual Christmas Day Handicap race in the Serpentine that also continued until at least the 1960s.<sup>76</sup> In 1869 the Otter Swimming Club was founded. A male-only gentlemen's club as well as a swimming club, the Otter SC similarly survived at least until 1969. It became one of the most important swimming clubs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The "Otters" engaged in regular competitions with Public School and University teams, in diving, swimming and water polo, until at least the First World War, and they also apparently either donated prizes to various youth organizations for use in those organizations' own competitions, or hosted such competitions themselves.<sup>77</sup> The development of such organized swimming clubs that would remain in existence for several years at a time was important, for they provided a stable base of clubs to form a foundation for the establishment of a national swimming body.

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<sup>75</sup> *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sport Events*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 24 May 1873, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> Alan Titmus, General Editor, *Breaking the Ice*, (London: Serpentine Swimming Club, 1964), *passim*. See also Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>77</sup> Otter Swimming Club, *Otter Swimming Club Centenary 1869-1969*, (London, Otter Swimming Club, 1969), p. 24-26 & *passim*. The club, for example, donated the Otter Swimming Club Challenge Shield to the Boy Scouts at some point prior to 1914 for internal competition, see Chapter 7 for more details.



The year 1869 was important not only for the foundation of the Otter Swimming Club, but also for an even more significant organization. In January of that year a “swimming congress” was held at the German Gymnasium in London in order to constitute an association of swimming clubs for the promotion of swimming as a sport and leisure activity. Initially this body called itself the Associated Metropolitan Swimming Clubs (A.M.S.C.), but the name was changed to the London Swimming Association (L.S.A.) in June of 1869.<sup>78</sup> Sometime early in 1870 the L.S.A. became the Metropolitan Swimming Association (M.S.A.), and then on 8 December 1873, the Swimming Association of Great Britain (S.A.G.B.).<sup>79</sup> Eventually, as will be seen, this body became the Amateur Swimming Association (A.S.A.), the present governing body of swimming in England. The development of a national governing body for swimming in the late 1860s and early 1870s was an important event. As in other sports of the period, such as football, formal regulation of traditional activities was beginning to take place.<sup>80</sup> As part of the games explosion in the period, swimming was being brought into the new sporting world

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<sup>78</sup> Keil and Wix had access to the original minute book of the proceedings of the A.M.S.C. and L.S.A. when writing their history of the A.S.A. in 1995-96 (See page 12 of their work for a reproduction of the first page of this manuscript). Every time this author has been to the A.S.A. library this work has been out “on loan,” and thus unavailable for consultation. The recounting of events here is derived from Keil and Wix, *In the Swim*, p. 9-12.

<sup>79</sup> A.S.A. Library (ASAL), Loughborough, *Minute Book No. 2 of the Metropolitan Swimming Association which title was altered to The Swimming Association of Great Britain on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1873*, p. 3, Minutes of 8 December 1873. Hereafter cited as *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*

<sup>80</sup> For the regulation of football, see for example Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863 - 1915*, (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 9-20; and James Walvin, *The People's Game A Social History of British Football*, (London: Allen Lane, 1975), pp. 40-49.

and given a standardised, formal structure.

At first, however, the new governing body, whatever its name, does not seem to have had a great deal of impact on the sports scene, or on public views about swimming in general. Unlike the executives of the Amateur Athletic Association (A.A.A.) or the Football Association (F.A.), for example, the committees of the predecessors of the A.S.A. struggled, for a long time, to expand beyond London. As Table 1 shows, it was not until 1879, a full decade after its formation, that the S.A.G.B. expanded beyond six clubs, and it was only after the S.A.G.B. became the A.S.A. that membership levels really began to increase rapidly and become representative of the entire country. Indeed, until the A.S.A. was constituted in 1886, the effectiveness of the various predecessor bodies of the A.S.A. was often limited to London and very small areas of the provinces, mainly in the south. Perhaps most importantly, the L.S.A. and its successors established the English Men's Mile Amateur Championship race which has been swum from 1869 to the present.<sup>81</sup>

It would be wrong to assume, however, that because there was no effective national governing body that swimming was moribund. In fact, during the period from 1850 to 1880 the opposite was the case. Swimming was becoming more popular, especially within the expanding middle classes. In 1873 a total of 356,813 persons were estimated to have swum in the Serpentine during the periods when

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<sup>81</sup>. ASAL. Various printed programs held loose. Several important changes have occurred to the conditions governing the Mile Championship since its inception, perhaps most importantly the metrification (1500 metres) of the race in 1971.



Royal Humane Society boatmen were in attendance to provide supervision.<sup>82</sup> The Baths and Washhouses Act allowed for the construction of wash baths by municipal authorities under permissive legislation. Increasingly through this period various town and borough councils began to make use of these powers, and some even erected swimming pools within their baths, even though these were not explicitly allowed by the legislation.<sup>83</sup> At the same time various private companies and individuals also began to construct swimming baths as a form of investment from which they expected a profitable return. Board of Trade records cover the dissolution of no fewer than 40 such private swimming bath companies between 1866 and 1935.<sup>84</sup> In terms of the large number of swimming pools now scattered around England, these numbers are small, but they simply represent those companies that were liquidated during the period under review. Other private bath companies, such as the one created in York to build and operate the Marygate, or Manor Shore, swimming bath, were often later bought by private individuals, larger corporations, or municipal bodies. Such pools would not necessarily appear in any form of record kept by the Board of Trade. We can safely assume that the forty bath companies mentioned in the Board of Trade records indicate that there was a healthy interest in providing swimming baths on a commercial basis. This clearly suggests that there

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<sup>82</sup>. Royal Humane Society, *The One Hundredth Annual Report of the Royal Humane Society*, (London: RHS, 1874), p. 25.

<sup>83</sup>. See for example the case of York City Corporation running the Yearsley Baths by the 1850s and looking at supplementing those baths with new baths in the late 1860s. York City Archives, York, BC.96.4, *Bathing Public Bathing Committee 1868-69*, pp. 78-82, Minutes of 28 July 1868 and 29 April 1869. A more complete survey of this issue will be found in Chapter 5.

<sup>84</sup>. PRO, BT 31, various sub-class listings.

was a public interest in swimming, and that private investors were confident enough to invest in such schemes in the hope of a return on their investment.

The government during this period generally avoided all involvement in the promotion of swimming, other than to introduce and amend the Baths and Washhouses Act, whose general purpose, as we have seen, was a sanitary one. It was not originally intended to promote recreational swimming. This is not to say, however, that all departments of the government were against the promotion of swimming. In 1868 the Army introduced, for the first time, regulations related to swimming, gymnastics and other physical exercise. Exactly why these regulations were introduced at this time is not clear, although a concern for the prevention of drowning among the troops is evident. Foremost, however, in the regulations is the statement, “The art of swimming is to be taught as a military duty at all stations where facilities for it exist. During the proper season regular bathing parades are to be formed for the purpose of instruction in swimming. The skilled swimmers in each troop or company are to be ascertained, and so distributed that there may be a sufficient number in each squad to teach the rest.”<sup>85</sup> Obvious concern for the costs involved with training are evident here, and the training was limited to those sites with access to rivers, lakes or the sea, but it was definitely a precedent for other government bodies, and a policy which over time would introduce many new recruits to swimming. In 1897-98 a swimming bath was built at the Army Physical Training Corps headquarters in Aldershot to further promote swimming as a form of

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<sup>85</sup> H.M.S.O., *Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Army*, (London: Horse Guards, 1868), pp. 458-459.



training in the Army.<sup>86</sup> As we shall see, the Royal Navy held a slightly different attitude towards swimming, and it would be over a decade before the navy followed the example set by the army.

Through all this, we need also to consider other developments in Victorian society, notably the impact of the rise in literacy and the expansion of the printed press, on swimming. The last quarter of the nineteenth century was an era when specialty papers and journals dedicated to almost every topic under the sun appeared (and some disappeared with great rapidity). Some of these journals, such as *Punch*, attracted large readerships and survived for long periods of time. Many other publications, however, were short-lived. This extraordinary explosion in printed material was at least partially attributable to the introduction of state elementary education in 1870. Like almost every other sport and leisure activity, swimming received coverage in the largest sporting publications of the day, such as *Sporting Life*, but a specialty press dedicated to the activity also developed. Newspapers and journals with such titles as *The Athletic Field and Swimming World*; *Bicycle*, *Swimming and Athletic Journal*; *Swimming and Lacrosse*; *The Swimming Magazine*; *Swimming Notes*; and the *Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events* appeared between 1873 and 1918. These numerous titles dedicated to swimming indicate the popularity of the activity. The short life of most of these journals, however, suggests not everyone wanted to *read* about swimming. It was not until

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<sup>86</sup> J. D. Campbell, “‘Training for Sport is Training for War’: Sport and the Transformation of the British Army, 1860 - 1914,” in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (December 2000), p. 41; Lieutenant-Colonel E. A. L. Oldfield, *History of the Army Physical Training Corps*, (Aldershot: Gale & Polden Ltd., 1955), pp. 14-16.

the 1920s that a journal dedicated solely to aquatic sports was able to survive for more than four years.<sup>87</sup> Clearly swimming was an activity with a growing level of support, but on nothing like the level of the major national sports, namely cricket and football.

There were, however, journalists who paid close attention to developments in the swimming world. Throughout the period from the 1870s to the 1890s one journalist in particular, Robert Patrick Watson, devoted special attention to swimming as he moved from one journalistic job to another. Watson always remained in touch with swimmers. Besides reporting and editing for the *Bicycle Journal*, the *Daily Independent*, the *Irish Sportsman*, and *Sporting Life*, Watson also tried his hand at publishing his own papers, producing *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events* in 1873-74, and *Swimming Notes* in 1884-85. Neither venture was particularly successful, although the later journal was continued, first as *National Sports* and later as *National Hygiene*, after Watson was bought out as publisher, finally ceasing publication in 1886. Later, in 1899, Watson produced his memoirs, which provided some further interesting details about his career in relation to swimming.<sup>88</sup> While definitely not an independent observer (Watson often held strong views about many of the ongoing debates in the swimming world), his contribution to the literature related to swimming is invaluable. His long association with swimming, especially his reporting on speed swimming and water polo, meant that he could, and did, often provide long backgrounds to his stories on previous

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<sup>87</sup> That magazine was *The Swimming Times*, the current official organ of the A.S.A.

<sup>88</sup> Robert Patrick Watson, *Memoirs of Robert Patrick Watson: A Journalist's Experience of Mixed Society*, (London: Smith, Ainslie & Co., 1899).



developments in the field. He also managed to maintain contact with both the amateur and professional sides of swimming throughout his career. In effect, Watson provides a unique viewpoint not available from other sources. Watson was but one example of a reporter in the press linking the sport of swimming with the reading public at large. As we will see later it was the press coverage, in 1875, of one man's exploits that helped spark a swimming craze.

The 1870s were also notable for the growth of both patronage and commercial support of swimming. Throughout the nineteenth century it was common for aristocrats or other wealthy individuals to provide prizes for swimming competitions. Local public houses or inns might also be involved in such activities. Increasingly by the late nineteenth century, however, commercial businesses were becoming involved in such patronage as well. With the rise of commercial and especially professional sport and recreation, a range of commercial companies were naturally attracted to sport. A range of consumer goods were manufactured to cater for this new leisure activity. Whether it was swimming costumes, soap, or Bovril, all were advertised to swimmers over the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This trend towards commercialization increased especially in the 1890s.<sup>89</sup>

In the early 1870s, however, swimming was still a minority activity, and while the Metropolitan Swimming Association (M.S.A.) sought to expand its influence beyond London, it remained a regional organization. The minutes of a November 1873 meeting of the M.S.A. executive record a committee of seven, plus

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<sup>89</sup>. See for example, *Swimming*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 13 March 1895; *Swimming & Lacrosse*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 20 March 1895. See also, John Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes 1870 - 1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), especially pp. 225-260.

one representative of the press, present to transact business. This set of minutes, and those that follow, are generally concerned with what can be described as inconsequential matters, more important at the time than now. They do, however, provide some interesting glimpses into deeper issues of concern within the world of Victorian swimming.

The committee seemed especially concerned about competitions. For example, in one case brought to the committee's attention, they decided that a boy would be required to return a prize he had recently won in a race, because he had previously won a similar prize in an earlier race, the rules of the latter contest stating that it was only open to boys under 16 who had never won a prize. In essence this was an issue of policing races. It is notable that this issue was raised in one of the first surviving set of minutes we have for the A.S.A., as the problem of policing races and competitors was to plague the M.S.A., S.A.G.B. and A.S.A. throughout the century on a regular basis. Large amounts of time were spent adjudicating cases and hearing appeals to judgments. The decision outlined by the committee to this issue leads into another problem that was topical throughout the later nineteenth century and most of the twentieth. The boy concerned was required to return his prize to Mr. Robert Watson, the journalist attending the meeting. At the time Watson was listed as representing the *Swimming Record*, but as has been noted, he would go on to work for *Sporting Life*, and later founded the paper know as *Swimming Notes*. Throughout his journalistic career Mr. Watson was involved both with professional and amateur swimming. Indeed, he was later the Honorary Secretary of the Professional Swimming Association, founded in 1881. Watson seems to have held a relaxed attitude towards the differentiation between amateurs and professionals, but



somehow he retained the trust of amateur swimming administrators for a long period of time. His continued presence on the swimming scene, at least in London, until the 1890s highlights the longest running and perhaps the most contentious issue in the nineteenth and twentieth century swimming world - indeed in sport in general - namely the question of amateur status.<sup>90</sup> Besides dealing with this racing infraction in November 1873, the committee was concerned with calling a Special General Meeting in December for the purpose of revising the amateur laws.<sup>91</sup>

The minutes of the December committee meeting of the M.S.A., held prior to the Special General Meeting mentioned above, revealed a change of name to the Swimming Association of Great Britain (S.A.G.B.), but most other business was deferred until January. The Special General Meeting on the Amateur laws was also adjourned early and scheduled to be reconvened in January. Only twelve men had attended the general meeting, nine of whom were members of the M.S.A./S.A.G.B. committee.<sup>92</sup> When the adjourned special general meeting reconvened on 19 January 1874, attendance was much higher than it had been in December, and the proposed Amateur Laws were adopted with only minor revisions being made from the floor. This revision of the amateur laws in 1874 appears to have gone quite smoothly, although no text of the revised rules survives, and it is impossible to judge why these rules were accepted with little debate compared to later revisions of the amateur law.

The Financial Report for 1873 appears immediately following the minutes of

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<sup>90</sup>. For more about the gulf between amateur and professionals, see Chapter 4.

<sup>91</sup>. ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, pp. 2-3, Minutes of 11 November 1873.

<sup>92</sup>. ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, pp. 3-4, Committee and Special General Meeting Minutes of 8 December 1873.

the Special General Meeting in the minute book, and this report gives the best indication of the relative lack of power and influence that the S.A.G.B. had beyond London. The finances were meagre; the M.S.A./S.A.G.B. had a total income for 1873 of £8. 8s.1d, with £3. 13s. 0d still outstanding to the organization, and incurring £4. 10s. 1d in expenses for the year. At this point only six swimming clubs were members; the Alliance, Middlesex, Neptune, North London, Regent and St. Pancras swimming clubs (although three of the clubs had still not paid their 1873 subscription to the M.S.A./S.A.G.B.). The S.A.G.B. was clearly a struggling local organization at this time, with a membership confined to the area immediately around London. Moreover, not even all of the Metropolitan London clubs were members. Despite its claim to a national jurisdiction, the M.S.A./S.A.G.B. was obviously unable to act nationally.<sup>93</sup> It was not until the 1880s that the S.A.G.B. began to expand much beyond London, and it was into the 1890s before its successor, the A.S.A., could claim to have expanded beyond all of the large centres of population into almost every area of England, as Table 1 illustrates. This explosion of swimming activity took place, then, in the 1880s and 1890s, mirroring the expansion of other sports during the same period. Athletics, cycling, football, rowing, skating and many other sporting activities expanded greatly during the same period.

Nonetheless, by the mid 1870s, swimming had become an established sport, and some minor forms of technical innovation were starting to appear. On 11 August 1873, for example, a swimmer named Trudgeon raced in one of Professor

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<sup>93</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, pp. 5-10, Special General Meeting Minutes and Financial Statements for 1873, 19 January 1874.



Beckwith's entertainments. He swam the 160 yards of the course using a previously unknown stroke, somewhat similar to a combination of modern sidestroke and butterfly, winning the race and creating a bit of a sensation.<sup>94</sup> That being said, although his stroke was taught to competitive swimmers and remained in racing use until the start of the twentieth century, Trudgeon did not revolutionize swimming technique. The Trudgeon stroke was not much superior to the other swimming strokes of the day, and was never adopted as the main racing stroke.<sup>95</sup>

The swimming world was transformed in 1875, however, by the achievement of another man. On 24 and 25 August 1875, on his second attempt, Captain Matthew Webb swam the Channel. *Bell's Life in London*, wrote of Webb's accomplishment,

Among the many feats of human strength and endurance that have been recorded in the columns of *Bell's Life in London* that performed on Tuesday last - with which all of England is ringing, and of which the whole Anglo-Saxon race should be proud - stands as one of the greatest, Captain Matthew Webb, a brave seaman, having, beyond the possibility of a doubt, accomplished the superhuman task of swimming from Dover Pier to the French shore, unaided by buoyant dress or assistance of any kind except occasional refreshment.<sup>96</sup>

Webb's successful crossing of the Channel was an event which captured the attention

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<sup>94</sup> *Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*, Vol. 1, No. 15, 16 August 1873, p. 2. Trudgeon's name was sometimes spelt as Trudgen.

<sup>95</sup> See, for example, Annette Kellerman, and others, *Swimming. For Health, Exercise, and Pleasure. By Experts*, (London: Gale & Polden, 1906); *The Pauline*, Vol. 20, No. 128 (December 1902), p. 215; Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 68-104; Watson, *Memoirs*, pp. 116-19, 261.

<sup>96</sup> *Bell's Life in London*, 28 August 1875, pp. 3.



and the imagination of the entire nation.<sup>97</sup> Webb's achievement was dramatic - and it had dramatic effects. Boxes of matches with a portrait representing him during his swim were sold, and his image was used for other products.<sup>98</sup> Webb was even the credited author of several books about swimming.<sup>99</sup>

In the same edition of *Bell's Life* (28 August 1875) that reported Webb's swim, there was also a report on the recent Mile Amateur Championship held by the S.A.G.B.,

Swimming at this particular season occupies a prominent position in public estimation, and from the never-equalled performance of the leviathan Captain Webb, in crossing from Dover to Calais, without other assistance than a stout heart and giant strength, to the doings of the juvenile minnows of our metropolitan clubs, though a wide gap exists, the fact may be inferred that this most useful art is cultivated to a greater extent than ever.<sup>100</sup>

It seems clear enough, even allowing for the author's hyperbole, that swimming was given a boost by Captain Webb. Further articles in the same edition of *Bell's Life in London* bear witness to this. One article mentions that a Miss Agnes Beckwith was to swim in the near future from London Bridge to Greenwich. According to the

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<sup>97</sup>. See *The Times*, 14 August 1875, p. 5f; 25 August 1875, p. 3c; 26 August 1875, pp. 3f, 7c&d. *Bell's Life in London*, 28 August 1875, p. 3; *The Illustrated London News*, 21 August 1875, pp. 189-190; 28 August 1875, p. 202.

<sup>98</sup>. Even today in England, Captain Webb is one of the best known swimmers of all time. When this author has mentioned his thesis topic to numerous people in the UK, the inevitable questions asked include variations on, "so, are you talking about Captain Webb?", or "are you covering that Channel swimming guy?"

<sup>99</sup>. It is generally accepted that Webb did not write the books credited to him. Rather, his agent, A. G. Payne, seems to have been the author of the books. See Ralph Thomas, *Swimming*, 2nd ed., (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1904), pp. 57, 63, 334.

<sup>100</sup>. *Bell's Life in London*, 28 August 1875, p. 5.



article, several people had bet against her being able to accomplish this feat. A Miss Emily Parker was also listed as planning to attempt this feat in the future.<sup>101</sup> The summer of 1875 was important for swimming; the amateur mile championship was run by the S.A.G.B., Webb made his dramatic and historic Channel crossing, and he was celebrated across the country, indeed around the world, and several professional women swimmers were planning long distance swims in the Thames for wagers. Perhaps even more importantly, it was *female* professional swimmers, not men, attempting these long-distance swims. They would not have been classified as “ladies”, nor, indeed, amateurs, but Agnes Beckwith and Emily Parker were certainly pushing forward female swimming.

It was in the 1870s then, and especially after Webb’s famous crossing, that swimming began to gain popularity in England. It is impossible, of course, to give exact numbers for the number of people who were swimming during this period. Indirectly, however, it is possible to gain a broad overview of the number of swimmers of the period. Looking at Table 28, for example, we can see that through the 1870s the number of accidental drownings generally increased, with some yearly variations, before declining slightly in the 1880s. In 1870 there were 2,504 accidental drownings, while in 1875 there were 3,199. The number of accidental drownings peaked at 3,659 in 1878, but continued to remain at over 2,400 annually past 1900.<sup>102</sup> Overall, the number of drownings was quite high, and it can be reasonably assumed that many drownings were caused by growing numbers of people

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<sup>101.</sup> *Bell’s Life in London*, 28 August 1875, p. 5.

<sup>102.</sup> See Table 28.

attracted to the water by the general interest in swimming.

Another indication that swimming was becoming more popular was the fact swimming activities became more varied. Some swimmers were looking beyond simple racing and sought to amuse themselves in the water by other means. Various water sports were developed in the 1870s, eventually resulting in what we know today as water polo. Sinclair and Henry record that on 12 May 1870, a committee of the L.S.A. was organized to set up rules for a game similar to football that could be played in the water. This attempt, however, did not come to anything, and Sinclair and Henry actually date the origins of water polo to the later 1870s when versions of the game appeared independently in Aberdeen, Bournemouth, and Glasgow. The Bournemouth Premier Rowing Club appears to have been the first group to organize games, with its “aquatic hand-ball matches” begun on 13 July 1876.<sup>103</sup> The game appears to have spread quite quickly, although many regional variations were developed in those early years. The game seems to have been popular in the Midlands, with teams formed in Birmingham (1877) and Burton-on-Trent (1878). Standardization of the game began as early as 1879 when English clubs agreed to equal teams of nine men a side, and in 1880 or 1881 when Association Football rules were translated to the pool to help govern the new game.<sup>104</sup> Further development in England was hampered, however, by the split in amateur ranks that occurred between 1884 and 1886.

The period from 1880 to 1900 saw a steady development of swimming in

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<sup>103</sup>. Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. 281-83.

<sup>104</sup>. Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. 284-85.



England, but it was also marked by dispute and argument. The number of clubs affiliated to the S.A.G.B./A.S.A. continued to grow at a respectable rate year on year, as did the number of amateur championship races run by that body. Despite the increase in the number of swimming baths available across London, thousands still swam in the Serpentine during the summer months. In 1881 the Royal Humane Society estimated the number at 250 000.<sup>105</sup> Professional swimmers banded together in 1881 to form the Professional Swimming Association (PSA), which was mainly a group composed of self-styled swimming ‘professors,’ aquatic showmen, and racers; the Association does not appear to have been very successful, and it folded after only a decade.<sup>106</sup> Its existence parallels the rise of professional sportsmen in other sports, notably cricket, and football. All of these developments reflected the rapid and widespread emergence of popular leisure among the British people. One man who seemed *not* to have benefited by this boom in professional sports was Captain Webb himself. Driven to ever more foolhardy feats (to earn money), Webb endeavoured, in 1883 to swim through the rapids and whirlpools of the Niagara River below Niagara Falls, but he died during the attempt. His death was widely reported, and subscriptions were taken up for his widow and young children. Most commentators chose to ignore Webb’s final swim, and instead focussed on his great Channel achievement, emphasising the great swimming involved there. The *Illustrated*

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<sup>105</sup>. Royal Humane Society, *The One Hundred and Eighth Annual Report of the Royal Humane Society*, (London: RHS, 1882), p. 22.

<sup>106</sup> For the start and the finish of the PSA see *Sporting Life*, 9 July 1881; 14 October 1891. A few records of the PSA can be found in the archives of the A.S.A., mainly in the form of racing and entertainment programs. The vast bulk of PSA records seem to have been lost.

*London News* remonstrated, “Had the Government been wise enough to appoint this gallant Channel swimmer to some useful berth (say, as Swimming Master in the Navy), it is unlikely we should have to deplore his early death in a foolhardy enterprise, the encouragement of which by the railway magnates was most discreditable.”<sup>107</sup> Indeed, this might well have been a possibility, because the Royal Navy had finally followed the Army’s lead and made swimming a requirement for all incoming officer cadets, boys and seamen in 1879.<sup>108</sup> Why there had been such a delay in implementing such a policy in the navy is not adequately answered by any source. Ronald Pearsall has stated that the navy did not want its sailors to be able to swim, lest they deserted, but he cites no evidence for this claim.<sup>109</sup>

As with other sports, the contentious issue of amateur versus professional began to trouble swimming, leading to the great amateur split in swimming in the middle of the 1880s. It was to have long-lasting repercussions on the development of swimming. Between 1884 and 1886 there were actually two governing bodies for amateur swimming in England, when eight clubs broke away from the S.A.G.B. to form the Amateur Swimming Union (A.S.U.) in protest against the S.A.G.B.’s handling of the amateur laws.<sup>110</sup> This heated debate lasted for two years, and saw each organization declare that all of those in the opposing camp were professionals.

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<sup>107.</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 28 July 1883, p. 101.

<sup>108.</sup> PRO, ADM 7/895, Admiralty Fleet Circulars 1878-79, Fleet Circular No. 34 N. See also H.M.S.O., *1880 Addenda to The Queen’s Regulations and Admiralty Instructions of 1879*, (London: Admiralty, 1880), pp. 3-4.

<sup>109.</sup> Pearsall, *Lifesaving*, p. 24.

<sup>110.</sup> The records of the Amateur Swimming Union have not survived, and only the S.A.G.B. side of the debate, along with a few press reports, have been preserved.



At the same time, however, the S.A.G.B., now influential outside London, took control of swimmers in Scotland in 1885. The healing of the rift between the S.A.G.B. and the A.S.U. in 1886 was produced by the formulation of a new set of amateur laws, and a new national governing body for swimming, the Amateur Swimming Association (A.S.A.). This ensured the almost complete dominance of that one body in the governance of competitive swimming and water polo in England, and in 1887 the A.S.A. was recognised by the patronage of Queen Victoria. The later 1880s saw a rapid refinement and growth in the formal organisation of British swimming. By 1888 it had been decided to establish a national water polo championship, and Scottish swimmers had elected to govern themselves through a Scottish Amateur Swimming Association (S.A.S.A.) with the full support of the A.S.A.<sup>111</sup> In 1889-1890 in response to the threat of secession by a large number of clubs in the north of England the A.S.A. adopted a three district system of operation to provide better local governance for regional swimmers.<sup>112</sup> This was changed to a five district system in 1900-1901, after a four year period in which the swimming clubs of Durham, Northumberland, and Yorkshire had created their own body outside of the A.S.A. as a protest against what they saw as a lack of local representation.<sup>113</sup>

Swimming was changing on all fronts in the last years of the century. It was calculated, for example, that 200,000 used the Serpentine in the summer of 1891.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Bilborough, *One Hundred Years of Scottish Swimming*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>112</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 341-347, 348-351.

<sup>113</sup> Amateur Swimming Association, *Handbook for 1901*, (London: A.S.A., 1901), pp. 6-7, 109-114.

<sup>114</sup> Royal Humane Society, *Annual Report for 1891*, (London: RHS, 1892), p. 13.

Not surprisingly perhaps, as more and more people swam, the need arose to safeguard life. In that same year the Life Saving Society (L.S.S.) was founded to promote aquatic lifesaving, and provide training in lifesaving techniques among the people at large. And at much the same time, prompted by A.S.A. lobbying of the Education Department, swimming was finally allowed among pupils in London's elementary schools.<sup>115</sup> Most pupils seem to have taken their lessons in the baths recently built by London's various vestries, though later some schools even built their own swimming pools for their pupils. To promote swimming among school pupils, the London Schools Swimming Association (L.S.S.A.) was formed in 1893; its annual competitions continue to this day. Finally, with the formation of the Amateur Diving Association (ADA) in 1901 in London, a third aquatic sport was organised in England.

By the new century, it was clear enough that swimming was a thriving activity in England, and the evidence is available on all fronts. In the summer of 1901 the Royal Humane Society estimated that 110 000 people had swum in the Serpentine.<sup>116</sup> The Amateur Swimming Association had secured its claim as the organization governing swimming in England and was now struggling not with simple economic survival, as in 1873, but with the problem of how to ensure adequate local representation and control in its various districts. The A.S.A. had also taken control and begun to promote two of the four modern aquatic Olympic sports, competitive swimming, and water polo, while the ADA was promoting the third,

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<sup>115</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 352-353. Interestingly, education records held in the PRO do not mention swimming at all until 1903-1904.

<sup>116</sup> Royal Humane Society. *Annual Report for 1900*, (London: RHS, 1901), p. 12.



diving. Swimming was actively promoted within schools, most notably in London. While the state was still not fully behind the promotion of swimming as a matter of official policy, there was growing recognition of the value of swimming, notably in the Army, Royal Navy, and parts of the Board of Education. By 1901 the A.S.A. had adopted a five district structure which survives to the present day.<sup>117</sup> The promotion of the humanitarian side of swimming, lifesaving, was now being undertaken by the L.S.S., and while it had its growing pains, this new Society was accepted by the swimming world more rapidly, and with less fuss, than the A.S.A. had seen. The L.S.S. received royal patronage in 1904, becoming the Royal Life Saving Society (R.L.S.S.), and under this name it has promoted lifesaving throughout the world ever since.

This dramatic story of swimming in England also had an international dimension. From the 1890s onwards, English competitive swimmers began to involve themselves in competitions against foreign competitors, both at home and abroad. International events, whatever their predecessors, were organized for the purpose of attracting competitors from many countries. In 1890 the first “International” water polo match had been played between England and Scotland, with the Scots coming out on top.<sup>118</sup> This series of games was continued for several years, with the English eventually becoming dominant. But the most important innovation was the formation of the Modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. There were four swimming events in these first games, but no official British team or

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<sup>117</sup> A.S.A. *Handbook for 1901*, pp. 6-7; A.S.A., *Handbook 2001*, (Loughborough: A.S.A., 2001), pp. 2-7.

<sup>118</sup> Sinclair and Henry. *Swimming*, pp. 300-301.

competitors. At the 1900 Olympic Games in Paris the first ever Olympic Men's Water Polo tournament was held, and the British sent both a swimming and a water polo team. Prior to the First World War, British participation in the aquatic sports of the Olympic Games was enthusiastic, and fairly productive in terms of medals. British Men's Water Polo teams were almost assured a medal in the Olympic tournament in each games prior to the war, and the swimmers usually acquitted themselves well. The Olympic Games of 1908 were staged in London, with a one hundred metre long outdoor pool being built in the centre of the Olympic Stadium in Shepherd's Bush erected especially for the Games. The Men's Water Polo team took the gold medal, the men's swimming team took four of six gold medals, as well as two silver medals and a bronze. During the 1908 Games a conference of international swimming nations was held at the Manchester Hotel, London. The conference resulted in the formation of the International Amateur Swimming Federation (F.I.N.A.), with George W. Hearn, an English swimming administrator, named its first general secretary.<sup>119</sup> This period of English swimming development is important, because much of the early rules and policies adopted by *F.I.N.A.* were taken straight from the A.S.A. handbook.<sup>120</sup> In common with many other sports which the British had pioneered, the British rules and regulations were passed around the wider sporting world through their later adoption by international organisations.

This initial spurt of English swimming success and influence in the world of international swimming was not to last, however. Although the summer of 1914

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<sup>119</sup> The International Amateur Swimming Federation is better known under its French title and acronym; F.I.N.A. - *Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur*.

<sup>120</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1910*, (London, A.S.A., 1910), pp. 131-39.



began like any other of the previous twenty to thirty years, it would not end so. As with almost every other facet of English life, swimming was dramatically changed by the First World War. Most importantly for swimmers and swimming clubs, the outbreak of war meant that club memberships were diminished, and many locations used for swimming were taken over for war use or made inaccessible in other ways. In Brighton, the Brighton Swimming Club's clubhouse of the period was located on Brighton beach. Although the clubhouse remained open, and the club active for the duration of the First World War, swimming was continued at a much reduced level. The club was maintained by the most senior members, because many of the younger members were on active duty. The war can be seen as a blow to the health of the club, as in 1913 it had posted its highest ever membership, at 256 men and boys, but the war caused a crash to an unspecified low that was not recovered from for years afterwards.<sup>121</sup>

At the end of the First World War England began to assess her losses. The terrible wartime loss of life and the 1919 Influenza epidemic inevitably had an impact on all social and sporting activities. The A.S.A. could record 1468 affiliated clubs in 1914, and 1423 affiliated clubs in 1915. By 1920, however, when post-war records resume, there were only 875 clubs affiliated to the A.S.A. It was not until 1929, a full decade after the close of the First World War, that the number of affiliated clubs would rise above the 1914 level.<sup>122</sup>

On the eve of the First World War swimming had clearly become a deeply

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<sup>121</sup>. Brighton Swimming Club, *1860-1960 One Hundred Years of Swimming*, (Brighton: Brighton Swimming Club, 1960), pp. 11.

<sup>122</sup>. A.S.A., *Handbook for 1948*, (London: A.S.A., 1948), p. 4-5.

entrenched and widely-popular pastime. When Agnes Campbell surveyed swimming facilities during the early years of the war she found that municipal facilities provided the majority of swimming pools in England, and had in fact almost totally displaced private provision of such facilities.<sup>123</sup> By 1914 there were 101 municipal swimming pools, both indoors and outdoors, spread among 51 locations in the boroughs that made up the London County Council.<sup>124</sup> This was a huge change from 1846 when there were no municipal swimming pools in London.<sup>125</sup> In fact, in every centre of population in England of over 50 000 people, some form of swimming pool was provided by municipal authorities in 1914, except in Hornsey, Swansea and Yarmouth.<sup>126</sup> Even smaller centres had swimming pools by this time.

The transformation in swimming in the years under review was far-reaching and universal. Swimming pools were ubiquitous across the face of urban England. Competitive swimming was highly organised, and had, in recent years, taken on a new international dimension. More important still perhaps, the role of swimming as a pleasurable activity which was both good for the individual and for society as a whole had become widely-accepted. Yet it was an uneven story, nowhere more so than in the obvious divide between men and women.

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<sup>123.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 7. For the growth in the number of municipal baths facilities in England between 1845 and 1915, see Table 4.

<sup>124.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 9.

<sup>125.</sup> See Tables, 2, 3 and 4.

<sup>126.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 8. See also Chapter 5.



## Chapter 3: The Question of Gender

The debate over women's place in society grew ever louder in nineteenth century England. The roles and place of both men and women in society were rigidly defined by a multitude of social conventions, and changes to these conventions proved difficult and time consuming. The acceptance of women into areas of activity outside of the home, at least for women of the middle and upper classes, was a highly contested area in English society throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Kathleen E. McCrone has written about the place of women in the sport and leisure world of that time,

While women of various classes were never completely excluded from England's sporting life, women in sport were a social anomaly for centuries. Sport was considered essentially masculine, requiring physical and psychological attitudes and behaviour unnatural to respectable ladies, and thus beyond their proper sphere. In this as in so many other areas it was the nineteenth century that brought change. Women's entry into modern sport was related directly to the Victorian sporting revolution in which they demanded a share, and to the movement for women's rights which sought women's admission into spheres previously monopolized by men. By 1914, although participation was still limited by definitions of femininity, there was scarcely a sport that women had not tried.<sup>127</sup>

Swimming was one of those activities that women had become involved in, and they continued to participate through to the First World War. Not surprisingly then, as swimming reflected society in so many ways it also reflected the debate about the place of women within sport, and more generally English society, between 1800 and

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<sup>127</sup>. Kathleen E. McCrone, "Emancipation or Recreation?," pp. 204-205.

1918.

Initially, swimming appears to have been a male preserve. Press reports about early swimming associations and societies uniformly refer to the members and participants in their events as being male. Women might sometimes be present for races as spectators, but often they were even absent or excluded from that role by the circumstances under which early races were organized. During the first few years of its existence the National Swimming Society, for example, held many of its races in the Serpentine. These races were usually held quite early in the morning, 06:00 or 06:30 being not uncommon starting times for such events.<sup>128</sup> It is highly unlikely that women were present for any of these races. Indeed, any woman found in the crowd watching such races at that hour would likely have been considered to be of dubious character. This tradition of staging races in the Serpentine, especially for male swimmers, remained a long standing one. In 1864 the Serpentine Swimming Club was founded to provide an organization for those who enjoyed swimming in the lake. From its inception it ran an annual Christmas Day Handicap race in the Serpentine that continued until at least the 1960s. The club was exclusively male throughout the period under review. Women were only allowed access to the lido in Hyde Park, and thus the ability to swim in the Serpentine, in the 1930s.<sup>129</sup> In Sinclair and Henry's textbook on swimming there is an illustration depicting one of the Serpentine Swim Club's Christmas Day Handicaps. The swimmers are all male, as is the assembled

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<sup>128</sup> For the early starting of the various races staged by the N.S.S. see *Bell's Life in London*, 19 July 1840, p. 4e, and 11 July 1841, p. 4d.

<sup>129</sup> Titmus, *Breaking the Ice*, p. 25 & *passim*. See also Sinclair and Henry, pp. 169-170.



crowd watching the start of the race. Only two of the figures in the entire illustration, which shows upwards of forty figures, could be labelled as anything other than “gentlemen” of the period. These two exceptions were younger males who would probably have been termed “youths” at the time.<sup>130</sup>

This general exclusion of women from organized, competitive, forms of swimming continued throughout most of the nineteenth century. To be more precise, ‘respectable’ women were excluded from competitive swimming for most of the century. Starting in the 1870s, and perhaps earlier, some working class women started to break into the ranks of the professional swimming world. Invariably these were young, unmarried women, often the daughters of male swimming professionals. Initially these women acted as swimming instructors and performers in aquatic entertainments.<sup>131</sup>

## A Question of Dress

The issue of gender was at its most obvious in the question of dress in the water. In the 1830s and earlier, when bathing at the seaside was the predominant form of swimming for people, nude bathing was common for men, and sometimes for women, although the wearing of long loose fitting gowns akin to nightdresses by women bathers was also common. Over the course of the nineteenth century, attitudes towards nude bathing changed, and it became much less acceptable, and was ultimately banned outright at many bathing beaches by local authorities. For

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<sup>130</sup>. Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. iv.

<sup>131</sup>. For a listing of professionals in England in 1878, including seven women, see *Bicycle Journal, Swimming and General Athletic & Pedestrian Recorder*, Enlarged Series, Vol. 1, No. 106, 21 August 1878, p. 7. For more on women as professionals, see Chapter 4.

example nude bathing was banned at Margate in 1862.<sup>132</sup> At the same time as nude bathing was condemned, the practice of mixed bathing was also curbed. The exact extent of such mixed bathing at the seaside during the late Georgian and early Victorian periods is impossible to quantify. That mixed bathing was taking place, however, is incontrovertible; Corbin, Hern, and Walvin all make note of the practice taking place.<sup>133</sup> Certainly by the time of the introduction of the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, there was a legislative consensus against the practice, as according to Schedule A of the Act, any local authority implementing the Act had also to enact Bye Laws that ensured people using baths, washhouses or public bathing places had “adequate privacy,” and further that men and boys of over the age of eight bathed separately from women, girls and children under the age of eight.<sup>134</sup> These provisions were further tightened and clarified with the passing of *The Town Police Clauses Act, 1847*.<sup>135</sup> Clause sixty-nine of that Act explicitly required local authorities operating public bathing places to set limits on the areas where both men and women were allowed to bath, with adequate distance between the two areas that there would be no “indecent exposure” of the bathers.<sup>136</sup> In the context of both of these Acts, bathing meant for the most part cleaning oneself in a bath, but would also

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<sup>132.</sup> See Hern, *The Seaside Holiday*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>133.</sup> Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea*, pp. 73-85; Hern, *The Seaside Holiday*, pp. 5, 21-37, and Pl. 1, 2, and 9; Walvin, *Beside the Seaside*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>134</sup> 9 & 10 Vict., c. 74., Schedule A. See Appendix 9 for the complete text of *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*.

<sup>135</sup> 10 & 11 Vict., c. 89.

<sup>136.</sup> 10 & 11 Vict., c. 89., clause 69. See Appendix 9 for the complete text of clause 69.



have included swimming at open air public bathing places. Thus, before the middle of the nineteenth century, mixed bathing was essentially outlawed. Walvin, however, has noted that even as late as 1856 issues of decency at the seaside were still raised. In certain locations both men and women could observe the opposite sex bathing in the sea, sometimes in less than decent attire, from the beach or the promenade. Whether or not mixed bathing ever totally died out, therefore, is unknown, and unknowable. It seems likely that nude bathing continued in some locales, but convention and newly introduced legislation ensured that the practice was outlawed.

The public disapproval, at least among the middle and upper classes, that led to the suppression of mixed bathing was partly due to the rise of a highly-regulated urban society, notably in the new seaside resorts, and the urge of local authorities to regulate local behaviour.<sup>137</sup> By the 1870s there were strict social codes in place, and sometimes legal ones as well, presumably to prevent the possibility of sexual arousal or titillation of any sort taking place when bathers of the opposite sex happened to meet each other on the way to their segregated swimming areas. Such strict enforcement, either through social codes or local regulation, was to continue in some areas until changing social forces in the mid-twentieth century brought about their reform. As shall be seen below, however, in other areas the suppression of mixed swimming was challenged as early as the 1890s, and with increasing success from 1900.

One way to ensure that public decency was preserved, aside from a strict

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<sup>137</sup> See Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea*, passim; Hern, *The Seaside Holiday*, pp. 21-39.

segregation of the sexes while swimming, was the provision of swimming costumes for men and women. As has been noted by the early 1830s, provision had been made for women's attire while in the water, but men still swam in the nude. The Bye Law provisions of the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, left open the possibility of regulations being drawn up for the use of swimming costumes, but this does not appear to have taken place. The various predecessor bodies of the Amateur Swimming Association required the wearing of at least drawers in many of their championship races, but this practice was never made uniform and over arching for all activity promoted by these bodies or their affiliated clubs.<sup>138</sup> Certain facilities also had regulations governing the wearing of costume, but these were again local and not universal. In 1875, for example, some delegates to the S.A.G.B. executive attempted to have the Amateur Championships moved from the Crystal Palace to the Welsh Harp, Hendon, as the former venue required competitors to wear costume while swimming. This issue was considered of vital importance because it was expected that the current holder of the mile amateur championship would complain about having to wear costume.<sup>139</sup>

All of the A.S.A.'s predecessors, despite their claims to be national organizations, had struggled to achieve influence and control of swimming beyond London and the south of England. They also had tended to be rather cash-strapped

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<sup>138.</sup> ASAL, Miscellaneous Competition Programs dating from 1875 to 1882. These items are held loose and unorganized on the shelves of the library. See also, for example, *Minute Book No. 3. The Swimming Association of Great Britain*, p. 58, Minutes of 8 August 1881, Glued in program of the 1881 Mile Amateur Championship. Hereafter cited as *Minute Book No. 3 The S.A.G.B.*

<sup>139.</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, p. 38, Minutes of 20 July 1875.



organisations.<sup>140</sup> Once a stable governing body had been established for competitive swimming it was perhaps inevitable, given prevailing norms, that regulations governing acceptable swimming attire would be created. It was not, however, until after the formation of the Amateur Swimming Association took place in 1886 that overarching regulation of the issue was considered, and the first A.S.A. costume law did not appear until 1890. This law was designed for men only, women not then being allowed to compete in public under A.S.A. laws:

50. That at all meetings where costume is to be worn, all competitors must wear costume (to be known as the 'Amateur Swimming Association Costume'), in accordance with the following regulations:-

- (1) Only black, red, or dark blue costumes, shall be worn.
- (2) Drawers shall be worn *underneath* the costume.
- (3) Trimmings may be used *ad lib*.
- (4) The shoulder straps of costumes shall not be less than two inches wide.
- (5) All costumes shall be buttoned on the shoulder, and the armhole shall be cut no lower than three inches from the armpit.
- (6) In the front the costume shall reach not lower than five inches below the pit of the neck.
- (7) At the back the costume shall be cut straight from the top of shoulder to top of shoulder.
- (8) The costume shall extend not less than four and a-half inches from the crutch (sic) downwards, and shall be cut in a straight line round the circumference of the leg.

N.B. – *It is requested that manufacturers make their costumes in accordance with the above regulations.*<sup>141</sup>

This first regulation issued by the A.S.A. to govern the standard of swimwear provides a great deal of information about current practice in male swimming around

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<sup>140</sup>. See Chapter 2 for a further discussion of the development of the A.S.A. and its predecessors.

<sup>141</sup>. ASAL, *A.S.A. Minute Book No. 2*, fols. 8-9. Italics in the original.

1890. The phrasing of the regulation strongly suggests that nude bathing, presumably among men, still continued. The line “ ... at all meetings where costume is to be worn, ... ” indicates that there were meetings or races where costumes were *not* worn. The fact that it was men, not women, who swam in the nude can be deduced from a number of facts. For a start, in the 1890s the number of swimming races for women was extremely small, and they were almost uniformly private events. In addition, the drive for women covering up their bodies while swimming had been much greater from an earlier date. The tradition of independent, male, swimming clubs hosting local events in their baths during training times, with no audience present, was a tradition reaching back to the 1860s and perhaps before. In private men’s competitions, men often swam in the nude with no concern for modesty or respectability, the matter being an established practice. The concern for propriety and respectability is revealed in section (b), where the requirement for drawers under the costume is noted. Early swimming costumes were notorious for their habit of clinging to the body of swimmers when wet, and, for the predominantly wool costumes of the period from the early 1890s through the 1920s, their tendency to become transparent when wet after a few uses. The final N.B. of the regulation reveals another very important point of information; costumes were manufactured by this time. The A.S.A. was attempting to impose its regulations on an already existing trade, rather than setting up regulation before there was a large established market for the product in question. Manufacturers had already seen a growing market for costumes and produced the garments accordingly.

In 1899 the A.S.A. revised the costume law to take into account female swimmers. For the most part, the regulations framed in 1890 for men were retained,



with minor additions being inserted to ensure that women's costumes were 'decent;'

**61. Regulations.** –That at all meetings where costume is to be worn, and in all Amateur Swimming Association championships, except the Long Distance championship, all competitors must wear costume (to be known as the 'Amateur Swimming Association Costume') in accordance with the following regulations:

(a) Only black, red, or dark blue costumes shall be worn.

(b) Drawers shall be worn underneath the costume.

(c) Trimmings may be used *ad lib.*

(d) The shoulder-straps of costumes shall not be less than two inches wide.

(e) All costumes shall be buttoned on the shoulder, and the armhole shall be cut no lower than three inches from the armpit.

NOTE. - *For LADIES a shaped arm, at least three inches long shall be inserted.*

(f) In the front the costume shall reach not lower than two inches below the pit of the neck.

NOTE. - *For LADIES the costume shall be cut straight round the neck.*

(g) At the back the costume shall be cut straight from the top of shoulder to top of shoulder.

(h) *\*In the leg portion the costume shall extend to within three inches of the knee, and shall be cut in a straight line round the circumference of each leg.*

**N.B. –It is requested that Manufacturers make their Costumes in accordance with all the above Regulations.**

*\*Italicised regulations in this rule only will be enforced on and after 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1900.*<sup>142</sup>

Costume regulations were further refined in May of 1900, when it was decided to allow only costumes that were black or dark blue from that point forward in official competitions.<sup>143</sup> Exactly why this change was made is unclear, but since

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<sup>142.</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1899*, (London: A.S.A., 1899), pp. 42-43. All bold and italics are found in the original.

<sup>143.</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1901*, pp. 42-43, 99.

swimwear manufacturers today still struggle to prevent transparency in red fabrics used for swimwear it is perhaps not hard to surmise. At the same time that the range of colours in approved swimwear was being restricted, the A.S.A. was also instituting policy in regards to how swimming entertainments and galas should be conducted. One rule of the suggested competition code was designed to deal harshly with those infringing the costume regulations,

**18. Costumes.** - The regulation Costumes must be worn when ladies are present at Galas. (Law 61.) The leg portions must not be turned up (Law 61, Section H), and drawers must be worn underneath. (Law 61, Section B.)

Any Competitor who is discovered to have swam without drawers, or with the leg portion turned up is thereby disqualified, and the promoters of the Meeting must report him to the Association.<sup>144</sup>

Public decency was evidently taken quite seriously, and the penalties for breaching the regulations severe. Being referred to the Association could mean suspension as an amateur, the ultimate sanction that the A.S.A. Executive Committee could wield. It is interesting that the regulation cited refers specifically to competitions where “ladies” were present. This would seem to indicate that there was only concern about men swimming in the nude and thus provoking scandal in mixed company. If both men and women were swimming nude as a matter of course in private competitions, it would be expected that the regulation would have read along the lines of “The regulation Costumes must be worn when *mixed* company is present at Galas,” or something similar. Evidently, even as late as 1901, men were still able to swim in the nude, or only in drawers, in competitions where women were not

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<sup>144</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1901*, p. 94. Bold text is present in the original.



present. Further, the phrasing of the rule would seem to indicate that all women by this time were swimming in costume as a matter of course, and there was no need to specify that women need wear costumes when men or “gentlemen” came to view their competitions or entertainments.

By 1909 the A.S.A. costume regulations had been further revised, especially in regards to the provisions for female swimmers. These were the last changes to the law prior to the First World War, and represent the most restrictive set of costume regulations set by the A.S.A.;

**Costumes.** –That at all meetings where Ladies are admitted or costume is to be worn, and in all Amateur Swimming Association championships, all competitors must wear costume (to be known as the ‘Amateur Swimming Association Costume’) in accordance with the following regulations:

(a) Only black or dark blue costumes shall be worn.

(b) Drawers shall be worn underneath the costume.

They must be of triangular pattern, with a minimum width of 2½ inches at the fork; they must meet on each hip, and be not less width than 3 inches on each side when fastened.

(c) Trimmings may be used *ad lib*.

(d) The shoulder-straps of costumes shall not be less than two inches wide.

(e) All costumes shall be buttoned on the shoulder, and the armhole shall be cut no lower than three inches from the armpit.

NOTE. - For LADIES a shaped arm, at least three inches long shall be inserted.

(f) In the front the costume shall reach not lower than two inches below the pit of the neck.

NOTE. - For LADIES the costume shall be cut straight round the neck.

(g) At the back the costume shall be cut straight from the top of shoulder to top of shoulder.

(h) In the leg portion the costume shall extend to within three inches of the knee, and shall be cut in a straight line round the circumference of each leg.

(i) **Ladies’ Races in Public.** - *At all Meetings where both sexes are admitted, lady competitors over 14 years*

*of age must wear on leaving the dressing room, a long coat or bath gown before entering and immediately after leaving the water.*

**N.B. – It is requested that Manufacturers make their Costumes and Swimming Drawers in accordance with all these Regulations.**<sup>145</sup>

It is clear therefore that throughout the period from 1890 to 1918 there was increasing regulation of what swimmers could wear, at least when swimming in competitions sanctioned by the A.S.A. In fact, the restrictions enacted by the A.S.A. were widely disseminated throughout recreational swimming as well. When the Manchester Baths and Washhouses committee decided to trial mixed swimming in the city it adopted the A.S.A. definition of costume as the only type of costume to be allowed during mixed swimming sessions.<sup>146</sup>

Interestingly, while the A.S.A. was attempting to restrict the amount of choice swimmers had in their costumes, particularly for female swimmers, the trend within society at large was beginning to turn in the opposite direction. Throughout the period from the 1870s to the 1930s there was a movement demanding that women be able to dress rationally, and that many societal restrictions on women's dress be relaxed. This debate affected swimming as much as, if not more than, other areas of English sport. Increasingly, the debate focussed more on the style and amount of body coverage provided by women's costumes as opposed to both women's and men's dress in the water. To a degree this was part of the broader

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<sup>145.</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1909*, (London: A.S.A., 1909), pp. 44-45. All bold and italics are present in the original.

<sup>146.</sup> Manchester Local Studies Archives Service (MLSAS), Central Library, Manchester, *Baths and Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol.16, fols. 144-145, Minutes of 8 July 1914.



movement among women's activists for rational dress in general.<sup>147</sup> These debates about gender and dress did not apply solely to women, for male swimmers were also subject to certain restrictions. Initially, as has been noted, the uniform regulations for swimmers set out by the A.S.A. made no distinction about dress between men and women. Both sexes were required to wear costumes that abided by the same regulation, and it was considered just as important for the male body to be hidden from view as much as possible, as it was for the female body to be obscured. Intended to hide as much of the body as possible, approved costumes were designed with public sensibilities in mind, not performance in the water.

Even where there was no explicit regulation or codification of what was considered appropriate dress, underlying social norms were often reflected in actual practice. Female divers around the period 1912 to 1914, for example, often wore tights or stockings in competition. This was not required by A.S.A. regulations of the time, nor does it appear to have been required by A.D.A. costume regulations. Certain segments of the female diving community considered it quite important, however, as either a style or modesty issue. Opinion on wearing tights versus not wearing tights seems to have been evenly split. Diving judges were reported to generally disapprove of the use of tights, while the Ladies' Diving Association was

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<sup>147</sup> On the topic of rational dress, see Kathleen E. McCrone, "Emancipation or Recreation?," 204-229; Kathleen E. McCrone, *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914*, (London, Routledge, 1988); Jihang Park, "Sport, Dress Reform and the Emancipation of Women in Victorian England: A Reappraisal," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1989), 10-30; and Patricia Vertinsky, *The eternally wounded woman: Women, doctors and exercise in the late nineteenth century*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990).

in favour of their use.<sup>148</sup> A correspondent to *The Swimming Magazine*, Miss Nora Pennington, supplied her opinion on the issue in January 1915; “The stocking is surely a relic of the prudery of the dark ages of ladies’ swimming. The wearing of it I know to be a cause of much speculation amongst the audiences at swimming galas.”<sup>149</sup> Exactly what the audience at a gala would speculate about a female diver wearing stockings is unclear. The wearing of stockings was likely seen as a sign of a conservative and prudish attitude on the part of the diver. Those who advocated the wearing of stockings by female divers likely would have been perceived in the same manner.

Just how far this concept of respectability and modesty took precedence over performance is made clear in a column on swimming from 1915. In it the author reveals the interesting fact that English female swimmers were particularly hampered when it came to competition, whether domestic or international, by the fact that A.S.A. costume regulations required a four inch sleeve on all women’s bathing costumes; the only country in the world to impose such a requirement.<sup>150</sup> In fact the costume regulations of the A.S.A. show that the minimum sleeve length was three inches, not four, as the author suggested. But there was clearly a difference between what English women were required to wear and their international rivals.<sup>151</sup> This

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<sup>148.</sup> Lady Dorothy, “The Ladies Section,” in *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (August 1914), p. 13.

<sup>149.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (January 1915), p. 9.

<sup>150.</sup> Lady Dorothy, “The Ladies Section,” in *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (October 1915), p. 89.

<sup>151.</sup> For example see the photographs of female competitive swimmers from the period given in Keil and Wix, *In the Swim*, pp. 36-37, 187; and Kelly Gonsalves and Susan LaMondia, *First to the Wall: 100 Years of Olympic Swimming*, (East



distinction stands as an example of the concern for modesty at the heart of English swimming culture, and even in English society at large. Though tangential to the main area of investigation of this thesis, the question of the development of swimming costume up to the present is one which deserves some attention, most importantly because of the light it throws on Victorian and Edwardian attitudes towards the body.

All began to change after the First World War. The social upheavals of that war - for example, in this case, the impact of women's work on women's dress - saw a swift and almost universal change in women's clothing and styles. During the 1920s and 1930s standards and practice began to diverge in what was allowed for men and women to wear when swimming. In part this was because of the cult of sunbathing, which emerged in the 1920s, and which inevitably led to a change in style, with greater areas of the body exposed to the sun.<sup>152</sup> Increasingly, women wore what they liked when bathing at the various lidos and beaches in England. The A.S.A., however, maintained a strict attitude towards what was acceptable for competitors to wear. It was not until after the Second World War that there was an almost complete break from past practice for swimwear for both men and women and A.S.A. costume law was relaxed somewhat.<sup>153</sup>

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Longmeadow: Freestyle Publications, 1999), pp. 29-30.

<sup>152</sup> For the origins of the sun worship craze see Walvin, *Beside the Seaside*, pp. 120-21.

<sup>153</sup> By 1933 the A.S.A. Costume law had been relaxed from its previous rigorous enforcement of exact leg lengths and widths of shoulder straps, but there was still a requirement for costumes to be of one piece and non-transparent. Drawers or slips still had to be worn under costumes, and female competitors were required to wear bathrobes before and after competing in races. A.S.A., *Handbook for 1933*, (Gloucester: A.S.A., 1933), p. 53.

Since the Second World War there have been dramatic changes in swimwear. These changes reflect not merely changing societal attitudes towards the body, and what is, and is not, acceptable for one to display or view, but it also concerns increasing the efficiency of swimming, as well as the development and availability of new fabrics for the manufacture of costumes. Ironically, in competitive swimming full body costumes are again making a return. Now, however, the desire to cover the whole body with a space-age material is solely for the purpose of a competitive edge rather than for modesty or propriety. The question of modesty and propriety, however, have not totally left swimming. Current A.S.A. regulations still contain a decency clause which covers the standard of swimwear that can be worn by competitors, although it is not nearly as restrictive as the 1899 version of the A.S.A. costume law that first covered both female and male competitors. The costume law in force in 2001 read:

**413 Costumes**

- 413.1** The costumes of all competitors shall be in good moral taste and suitable for the individual sports discipline.
- 413.2** All costumes shall be non-transparent.
- 413.3** The referee of a competition has the authority to exclude any competitor whose costume does not comply with this rule.<sup>154</sup>

Though far removed from its Victorian forebears, these rules continue to reflect the need to respect, or at least not to offend, ‘public taste’.

## **Gender and Competitive Swimming**

Competitive speed swimming has likely always been the form of aquatic sport with the largest number of participants in England. Water polo and lifesaving

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<sup>154</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook 2001*, (Loughborough: A.S.A., 2001), p. 76.



may have approached speed swimming's popularity, but without firm figures this is merely speculation. Certainly diving and synchronized swimming cannot ever have come close to having the same number of participants. As the dominant aquatic sport, speed swimming has also been the discipline with the most overt regulation of men and women. While regulation of the sport dates from the formation of the Associated Metropolitan Swimming Clubs (A.M.S.C.) in 1869, codification of rules and their underlying social conventions really began in earnest in the 1880s after the settlement of the amateur-professional debate in the swimming world. A clear division between men and women is immediately evident here. While swimming championships for men date to 1869 and the foundation of the English amateur men's mile championship, the first official A.S.A. championship for women was not started until 1901. This was despite the fact that women had been engaged in recreational swimming across the country since at least the 1870s, and likely earlier, and may have been hosting their own competitions in the later 1880s and through the 1890s. The first women's championship was much shorter than the men's mile event, being only of 100 yards distance, and the prize for this first women's championship was a silver vase, donated by the Ravensbourne Swimming Club, compared to the traditional silver championship cup used for men's events.<sup>155</sup> By 1904 the A.S.A. recognized thirteen separate events for the purpose of ratifying sporting records; twelve of these, the 100 yards, 150 yards, 220 yards, 300 yards, 440 yards, 500 yards, 880 yards, 1,000 yards, one mile, 150 yards back, 150 yards breast, and plunging, were for men only. The only women's event for which records were

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<sup>155</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1901*, p. 65.

ratified was still the 100 yards.<sup>156</sup> This divergence in the number of championships recognized for each gender continued until after 1918.

Speed swimming today, like athleticism in general, is a highly scientific business, with training programs individually designed for each swimmer so that he or she reaches peak physical condition for major competitions. Most competitive swimmers retire before they enter their thirties due to the stress and strain of constant training. In the period between 1870 and 1918 we can see the origins of the same trend. As in most of the sports and activities that appeared during the explosion of Victorian games, participation in the most demanding activities, at the highest level, was left for males under the age of thirty. Swimming activities for those keen to compete, but not able to maintain the pace at the highest level, became necessary. This led to eventual development in the 1870s and 1880s of diving, synchronized swimming, and water polo as separate and distinct areas of aquatic activity, followed by the development of aquatic lifesaving in the 1890s. Of more specialized form than simple competitive swimming, these activities attracted less interest than the dominant activity, and the development of each of these activities involved restrictions and conventions based upon gender to a greater or lesser extent than had existed in competitive swimming.

Of these disciplines, it is likely that diving had the longest history, for it is probable that for as long as people have been swimming they have been diving into the water in order to begin their swims. Despite this, diving appears to have been,

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<sup>156</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1904*, (London: A.S.A., 1904), p. 118. In modern swimming parlance, all of the listed races not noted as being on back, breast, etc., would be termed "Freestyle" races.



and continues to be, the most marginal of the aquatic sports in England. Being an activity that relies as much, if not more on gymnastic ability than swimming skill, and requiring specialized equipment in the form of spring boards and towers, it can only be properly practised in facilities with the appropriate amenities. Considering the shallow depth of most Victorian and Edwardian swimming facilities, it is unsurprising that diving was not taken more vigorously in England.<sup>157</sup> What diving that did exist was initially a male only sport, just as swimming had been earlier in the century. In 1900 Men's Diving became an Olympic Event at the Paris Games, while women had to wait until 1912 for their own diving event to be initiated.<sup>158</sup>

Synchronized swimming provides an even more interesting study of gender relations and segregation within English society. The modern form of synchronized swimming that we know today is a product of developments in North America during the inter war period of the 1920s and 1930s. The origins of the activity, however, can be traced to nineteenth century England. Originally, synchronized swimming was known as “graceful swimming,” “ornamental swimming,” or “scientific swimming,” and its practitioners were exclusively male. Many of the original techniques of the discipline were created by swimming professionals in the 1850s and 1860s, if not earlier.<sup>159</sup> By the 1880s, however, control of the discipline was passing from professionals to amateurs, as was generally the case for the rest of

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<sup>157</sup> See Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, passim; Dudgeon, *The Swimming Baths of London*, passim; Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 105-137.

<sup>158</sup> Guttman, *Women's Sport*, p. 164.

<sup>159</sup> See; Aquarius (Robert Patrick Watson), “A Retrospect,” in *The Swimming, Rowing, and Athletic Record*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 10 May 1873, pp. 1-2. This was the first issue of the journal that would become *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*. The later title was adopted with the third issue.

the aquatic world. William Henry, a committed member of the A.S.A., and founder and Honorary Secretary of the R.L.S.S. from 1891 until his death in 1928, was considered an expert in the art and was often involved in giving demonstrations of the activity. Scientific swimming contained most of the basic elements now associated with synchronized swimming, along with unique activities which later fell out of fashion. Some typical activities of scientific swimming would include staying in one spot without sinking (treading water), moving while floating (sculling), somersaults in the water, smoking while swimming, smoking underwater (!), etc. Initially, the parlour trick aspects of scientific swimming, such as eating while swimming or eating underwater, were included to impress audiences at swimming galas. These tricks, however, must have become boring after being viewed a couple of times, and this probably explains why they disappeared from the later repertoire of synchronized swimming. The fact that scientific swimming did not rely upon speed or excessive strength for most of its feats made it the ideal activity to be pursued by swimmers who were either older and unable to compete as effectively in races, or for those with no interest in racing. The activity was seen as being a less strenuous one for middle-aged males. By the time William Henry reached the height of his fame for demonstrating lifesaving and scientific swimming principles, he certainly filled that profile.<sup>160</sup> While Henry appears to have maintained an interest in, and practised, scientific swimming for much of his life, his great passion for the activity really appears to have come to the fore in the 1890s, during and after the period in which he helped found the Life Saving Society. By that time Henry was in his thirties and

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<sup>160</sup>. See the biographical material on William Henry in Chapter 7.



perhaps slowing down. Later pictures of him from the period 1900 - 1910 show a rather stout gentleman.<sup>161</sup>

Over time, this reputation as a less strenuous activity, however, made scientific swimming an obvious, and increasingly popular activity for women to take up, privately at first and then, as restrictions loosened, in public. By 1900 women could be seen providing the entertainments and demonstrations of scientific swimming at swimming club galas. By the 1920s and 1930s popular aquatic revues and films coming out of Hollywood had turned scientific swimming into synchronized swimming and into an all female activity. The price for this take over by women, however, was the social marginalization of the activity. While vigorously pursued within a female sphere, synchronized swimming was denied status within a male dominated sporting and leisure world. It was not until the 1980s that the sport gained demonstration and then full medal Olympic status.

At the time women's swimming in England was beginning to be recognized as a competitive activity, the modern Olympic Games had emerged, and the socially codified understandings of the differences between men and women in swimming were internationalized. Although there were influences from the swimming traditions of many different countries in the regulations decided upon at each Olympiad, there certainly appears to have been a dominant English influence in the general trend of framing the rules. The first games, in Athens, included four, all-male, speed swimming events. The number and type of events over the next games,

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<sup>161</sup>. R.L.S.S. UK Archives, Broom, Various scrapbooks dated 1900 - 1920.

in 1900, 1904, 1906, and 1908, were varied, but were also exclusively male.<sup>162</sup> After the International Amateur Swimming Federation, better known as *F.I.N.A.* was founded in London during the 1908 Olympiad, in 1909 it adopted most of the A.S.A.'s regulations as the basis for international swimming regulation.<sup>163</sup> It was at the 1912 Stockholm Games, that women were admitted for the first time as competitors in aquatic events, being eligible to compete in diving and speed swimming. Significantly, in the speed swimming events, however, the men swam seven events, while the women only swam two. Even more importantly, perhaps, the two events women were allowed to participate in were the 100 metre freestyle and the 400 metre freestyle relay (100 metres each for four competitors), equivalent to the 100 yards championship distance recognized in England. Therefore, no one woman competitor swam more than 100 metres at a time in this competition. The men, on the other hand, swam individual distance events of up to 1500 metres and relay distances of up to 200 metres per swimmer. Nowhere was the cultural belief in the greater strength and stamina of the male versus the general weakness and frailty of the female more clearly illustrated.

The subsequent development of women's swimming in the Olympics has a relevance and importance for the main focus of this study. From 1912 women's swimming events were only slowly introduced into the official Olympic programme. Beginning with two in 1912, the number of women's swimming events was

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<sup>162.</sup> Although not officially recognized as an Olympic Games, the intercalary games in Athens in 1906 did receive recognition as a somewhat important sporting event.

<sup>163.</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1910*, pp. 131-39.



extended to three in 1920 and five between 1924 and 1948.<sup>164</sup> By the 1948 London Olympics women were limited to individual distance events of 400 metres or less, while men were still allowed to swim individual distances of up to 1500 metres. Men swam relay distances of 800 metres (200 metres per team member), while the women were still limited to 400 metres (100 metres per team member). As of the 2000 Sydney Olympics there was still inequality in events, with the longest individual distance swum by women being 800 metres, while men still swim individual distances up to the metric mile of 1500 metres. The relay events for men and women were finally made equal in distance and discipline, reaching 800 metres freestyle for both sexes, only as late as the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.<sup>165</sup> Was the slow pace of change on this issue related to a continued belief in notions of male physical and sporting dominance over women among both national and international swimming bureaucrats throughout the twentieth century, or were other forces at work? Whatever the answer, it is clear enough that the origins of these attitudes can be traced to the early days of female English swimming and the strict divisions between the sexes.

Quite early on it seems to have been decided that female swimmers did not require the same amount of space to swim in, or the same amount of swimming time, as male swimmers. In 1873 when the Clapham and Brixton Baths were under construction in London the men's swimming pool was reported to be 150 feet by 60 feet, while the women's swimming pool was only 65 feet by 30 feet, less than a

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<sup>164</sup> Gonsalves and LaMondia, *First to the Wall*, pp. 33-35, 44-46, 56-58, 66-68, 78-80, 88-90, and 98-100.

<sup>165</sup> Gonsalves and LaMondia, *First to the Wall*, pp. 5-6, 11-12, 33-35, 361-367.

quarter of the area.<sup>166</sup> Looking at the case in Manchester, as illustrated in Table 17, where women's pools were provided within baths facilities, they were always smaller than the men's pools in the same facility, usually significantly so.<sup>167</sup> With the sole, and notable, exception of the Leaf Street Baths, it was not until 1906 that women's pools in Manchester began to be constructed with dimensions close to those used for men's swimming pools. The provision of smaller pools for women appears to have been general across England. At the Lambeth Public Baths, for example, opened in 1897, there were three swimming pools. Two were designated as male pools and one was designated a women's pool. The two men's pools were both larger than the women's pool; the first class men's pool was 132 feet by 40 feet, the second class men's pool was 90 feet by 30 feet, and the women's pool was only 56 feet by 25 feet.<sup>168</sup> When it came time to decide if all three pools were to be kept open over the winter season, it was decided to close both men's baths, leaving only the much smaller women's pool open to be used as a first and second class men's pool and a women's pool, in rotation.<sup>169</sup> Exactly what schedule was arranged for use of the women's pool in that winter is not clear. The following winter it was decided that the men's first class swimming pool would become a hall, the men's second

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<sup>166.</sup> *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*, Vol. 1, No. 13, 2 August 1873, p. 2.

<sup>167.</sup> The smallest pool listed for each site in the table is the women's pool. This is confirmed in the minutes related to each pool as cited.

<sup>168.</sup> LAML, P12/80/10 *A Souvenir of the 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1897. From the Clerk to The Chairman*. This is an oversized commemorative volume containing the program of the opening ceremony and various photographs taken on the day.

<sup>169.</sup> LAML, P12/41 *Lambeth Baths & Washhouses Committee Minutes 1891-1897*, p. 216, Minutes of 21 September 1897.



class swimming pool would remain open, and the women's pool would function as a women's first class pool one day a week, as a women's second class pool one day a week, and as the men's first class swimming pool for the other four days a week that it was open.<sup>170</sup> Even by the winter of 1911-12 women were still receiving less pool time than men. For that winter season, women's swimming was restricted to 09:00 to 14:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 14:00 to 21:00 on Wednesdays and Fridays in the first class swimming pool. Men could swim in the first class swimming pool from 08:00 to 21:00 on Mondays and Saturdays, 08:00 to 09:00 and 14:00 to 21:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 08:00 to 14:00 on Wednesdays and Fridays. For this winter, however, the men's second class swimming pool was closed, so the difference in provision was not as great as previously.<sup>171</sup> Looking further afield in London, a review of Table 11 shows the differences in sizes between pools in the city in 1914. Again, women's pools were invariably the smaller ones listed when more than one pool was built on a given site. The difference is shown not only in official printed material, but also in press articles which refer to the contrasts between male and female provision. In September of 1915 "Lady Dorothy," wrote a column in *The Swimming Magazine* complaining about the general lack of consideration shown to women swimmers and women's swimming clubs.<sup>172</sup> She noted that it was still common practice for women's swimming pools

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<sup>170</sup> LAML, P12/38 *Lambeth Baths and Cemetery Committee Minutes 1898 - 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 1899*, p. 101, Minutes of 19 September 1898.

<sup>171</sup> LAML, P12/80/11/1, Winter 1911-12 Bathing Hours and Costs. A small folded card.

<sup>172</sup> "Lady Dorothy" was the pseudonym adopted by an unknown columnist in the second incarnation of *The Swimming Magazine*. She covered women's swimming issues for the first two years of the journal's run (1914-1916).

in recently built baths establishments to be half the size of a men's pool in the same facility. When this was the case, women were also generally charged the same sum for admission as the men for entry to their bath. In facilities where men and women had to share the use of the same bath on a rotating basis, she condemned the practice of men, and men's swimming clubs, receiving preference in the allocation of hours for club and general swimming times.<sup>173</sup> The same complaint was still being made in 1918 in the journal, long after "Lady Dorothy" had stopped contributing.<sup>174</sup>

That there was such a restriction placed upon the provision of swimming facilities for women was ironic considering the generally beneficial role swimming was increasingly believed to play in a woman's health and well being from the 1870s onwards. This came to the fore in the issue of children's well-being. The physical education of children became an important topic in the later half of the nineteenth century, especially after the creation of the state elementary education system. Special attention was paid to the health and physical well-being of girls and young women. Sometimes complex arguments were made about the amount of exercise required by girls and young married and unmarried women, and the exact form that exercise should take. It was generally agreed that swimming was a suitable activity for females to undertake, for many different reasons. Patricia Vertinsky's comments on this subject are insightful;

Although few women could actually swim, swimming came to be extolled as an excellent sport, always provided that the exercise was not too violent and the

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<sup>173</sup> Lady Dorothy, "The Ladies Section," *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (September 1915), p. 65.

<sup>174</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 8 (January 1918), p. 133.



bathing costume was modest. From the health and character points of view, cold bathing was regarded as a particularly good tonic for the circulation. Sea bathing came to be medically recommended to women with menstruation pains and as a means of increasing fertility. With its educative effects of cultivating the willpower, its predicted possibilities of increasing fertility, the opportunity for developing muscular strength and endurance, and the added bonus of cleanliness, recreational swimming epitomized medically appropriate sportive exercise for the modern woman.<sup>175</sup>

Indeed, by 1870 the topic of appropriate physical education activities for girls in the newly created or supported state elementary schools was deemed important enough to be raised at election rallies for the boards created to run the new schools system. In November 1870, Dr. Elizabeth Garrett, M.D., later Dr. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the famous Victorian woman doctor and medical theorist, stood as a candidate for the School Board of St. Marylebone. At an election rally held on 11 November 1870 she was asked a question about physical education and swimming. Dr. Garrett was a prominent supporter of physical education for girls and women, and she is reported to have responded to the question by stating, "... she thought physical education was necessary, especially for girls, and she said so strongly did she think swimming necessary that she had practised for many years to acquire facility in the art."<sup>176</sup>

This belief in the special virtues of swimming for women's fitness and health was prominent from the 1870s until after the end of the First World War. In 1879 Mrs. Hoggan, MD, an early female doctor, made a speech to the Women's Union

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<sup>175</sup> Vertinsky, *The eternally wounded woman*, p. 82.

<sup>176</sup> *The Times*, 12 November 1870, p. 6d.

Swimming Club which was later distributed in pamphlet form. Her arguments illustrate the importance that was attached to swimming as a means of promoting women's health during this period. She opened her speech by stating, "I propose to consider the influence of swimming on the health of women, and I hope to be able to show that, so far from being of less value to women than it is men, it is, if possible, more necessary to them as a counterpoise to their more sedentary employments and physically less active life."<sup>177</sup> Mrs. Hoggan held that swimming was good exercise for the lungs, freed women from the constraints of stays and corset, and allowed women to use their muscles in a natural, much healthier, manner.<sup>178</sup> These general benefits could also to a greater or lesser extent be applied to male swimmers, so Mrs. Hoggan also included a list of special benefits only obtained by female swimmers. In this section of her speech she argued that women in general tended to have weaker muscles than men, so the exercise derived from swimming was of greater benefit. Also, lack of exercise among women was common, especially among those idle during the day, and this promoted "internal congestions" in these women; swimming, therefore, would work against this problem. Further, swimming also allowed the exercise of a wide variety of muscles, while women used but few muscles during their daily routines. In addition, Hoggan argued that women's chests were inferior in volume to men's, and their nervous systems less stable. The general inactivity of most women's lifestyle could increase these problems. The exercise undertaken while swimming increased the chest volume of women, and the water

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<sup>177</sup>. Mrs. Hoggan, *Swimming and its Relation to the Health of Women*, (London: Women's Printing Society Limited, 1879), p. 1.

<sup>178</sup> Mrs. Hoggan, *Swimming*, pp. 2-4.



they swam in acted as a tonic to help restore balance to a woman's nervous system. Finally, Mrs. Hoggan pointed out that swimming allowed a woman to wear sensible dress, freeing her from the general constraints that clothing placed upon a woman of the period. Because of all of these benefits, Mrs. Hoggan argued that swimming should not be limited to men only, but opened up to women who would benefit even more from the activity. In new baths facilities there should be provision for at least one women's swimming pool alongside the men's pool or pools. Where no separate women's pool was provided in a facility time should be set aside daily for women to be able to swim.<sup>179</sup> We cannot tell how widespread such views were, but it is clear enough that the medical and social virtues of swimming for females were publically discussed. They were, in essence, part of the much broader debate about the rights and role of women in contemporary society.

By the 1890s swimming was becoming a widespread activity among women of the middle classes of English society, and Mrs. Hoggan's views appear to have become widespread. Kathleen McCrone has written of the period from 1890 to 1914 as one where middle class English women began to challenge societal expectations and engage in sporting activities in large numbers. She has noted,

Prior to 1914 women and girls from almost all sections of English society took part in various forms of calisthenics and gymnastics. But the female dimension of the sporting revolution was primarily middle-class, for it was women of the middle ranks whose sporting consciousness was awakened first by educational and recreational experiences, who had the free time and financial means participation required, and who, despite numerous impediments related to the patriarchal nature of social relations and restrictive perceptions of

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<sup>179</sup> Mrs. Hoggan, *Swimming*, pp. 7-8.



femininity, began to 'play the game' by the thousands. In comparison women of the working classes were much less involved, because the requisite schooling, money, and time for leisure activities were lacking, and because of their subservient relationships with men of their own class and with women of higher classes.<sup>180</sup>

As late as 1914 opinion was still divided within the general medical community over exactly how much exercise women should indulge in, and what form that exercise should take. Dr. Elizabeth Sloan-Chesser, M.D., another early female medical pioneer was especially active during this period. Although accepting the dominant male medical model of women being disadvantaged because of their sex, compared to many of her fellow female medical practitioners of the time, Dr. Sloan-Chesser also advocated swimming as one of the desirable exercises that would allow women to keep themselves strong and healthy. This would allow English women to bear healthy children and thus help preserve the Empire.<sup>181</sup> In 1915, an article in *The Swimming Magazine* reported,

Women are realising more and more the benefits of the art of swimming. Medical and physical culture authorities regard it as one of the most health-giving, grace-producing and beneficial exercises in which a girl can indulge. One reason why swimming, although the most artificial exercise we take, is of the best is because it puts the body in an entirely different position from the normal one. It offers perfect relaxation to every part and a change of movement for practically all the muscles coming into use, while it brings into action some that are seldom taxed in ordinary daily activities. In addition to these advantages the knowledge of swimming and life saving helps to create confidence and courage, both of which are particularly essential

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<sup>180</sup> Kathleen E. McCrone, "Class, Gender, and English Women's Sport, c. 1890-1914," *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 1991), p. 159.

<sup>181</sup> Vertinsky, *The eternally wounded woman*, pp. 153-55.



during the boating and bathing season or in cases of accident.<sup>182</sup>

Clearly, swimming was seen as a good activity for women to engage in. Overall, however, it was recreational swimming that was encouraged by many medical practitioners, not competitive swimming. As we have seen, this accorded well with the A.S.A.'s view of the issue as well.

The question of mixed bathing and swimming was also a very vexed one throughout our period. As has already been mentioned, prior to 1800 it would appear that mixed bathing, while not common, did take place from time to time. By the time civic corporations began to build baths and swimming pools, following the introduction of the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, however, mixed bathing was not countenanced.

The question of allowing mixed bathing, at least for members of the same family, was reawakened in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Between 1890 and 1918 the calls for the provision of mixed bathing, or family bathing, became increasingly frequent, and were often successful.<sup>183</sup> By this time the enforced segregation of men and women within public swimming facilities was an accepted norm, enforced in law in many locations. At issue was the question of whether a strict segregation of the sexes was required to maintain proper social decency and modesty, or if it was acceptable to allow mixed, or family, bathing so that a father or

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<sup>182.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 12 (May 1915), p. 8.

<sup>183.</sup> Family Bathing was the allowance of males to swim with their female relations, usually limited to wives and daughters. Mixed Bathing was the provision of swimming times where males and females unrelated to each other could swim in a pool at the same time.

husband could engage in recreation with his family and teach his children or wife how to swim. By 1893 only limited success had been achieved by those who advocated mixed bathing, at the very least, for families. Sinclair and Henry could write of provision at the time, “There are a few places in England, such as Sea View, in the Isle of Wight, where whole families bathe together in the sea, but this pleasure is almost totally prohibited, either by beach regulations or custom, throughout Great Britain. Such an absurd veto is an abuse which needs remedying.”<sup>184</sup> Early photographic evidence, however, suggests that families, parents and children, did bathe in the sea together at some seaside resorts.

At the end of the summer of 1898 a short news item in the journal, *The Swimming Magazine* reported that there had been a distinct lack of bathing machines compared to the number of people waiting to swim at Margate during the past swimming season. The author of the article went on to express the opinion that, because mixed bathing was now taking place almost everywhere along the coast, it was time to use tents for changing on the beach, with bathers to wear towels around themselves to the water’s edge. Men should also be required to wear university style costume as opposed to simply drawers.<sup>185</sup> From this article we gain an important insight into the state of mixed bathing at the time. Allowing for exaggeration on the part of the author, it seems clear that at a good number of seaside resorts mixed bathing of some form or other was common. Public decency was still catered for by the fact that bathing machines were used to transport swimmers from the shore out

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<sup>184</sup>. Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. 185.

<sup>185</sup>. *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (September 1, 1898), p. 31. University costume was simply another way of describing A.S.A. regulation costume.



into the surf, but demand for access to swimming was outstripping the supply of machines, at least at Margate. Further, both men and women were wearing costumes when swimming from these bathing machines, but men were still able to offend public decency, as they were only wearing drawers, rather than full costume. This was in stark contrast to the state of affairs existing in indoor swimming facilities, where strict segregation was still the order of the day. Still, it is clear that in some ways a move was being made towards an unsegregated swimming world, at least at the seaside. As Walvin has noted, Bexhill became one of the first resorts to allow mixed bathing in 1901.<sup>186</sup>

It was different in municipal swimming pools. Most local authorities enacted legislation quite early to prevent any undermining of public morals from occurring in their facilities. Indeed, as has already been mentioned, such regulation was required by law.<sup>187</sup> Manchester City Council, for example, instituted a bye law as soon as it established baths in the city to the effect that men and women were to use all parts of the baths buildings separately.<sup>188</sup> Similarly, after Lambeth Borough Council in London finally opened its own baths in 1897 a similar regulation was in force no later than 1900.<sup>189</sup> While these bye laws were required by the various Baths and Washhouses Acts, the standardised form that they took was seemingly based upon the guidelines for such regulations set out by the Local Government Board no later

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<sup>186.</sup> Walvin, *Beside the Seaside*, p. 92.

<sup>187.</sup> See above and the text of the various Baths and Washhouses Acts in Appendix 9.

<sup>188.</sup> MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 131, Minutes of 4 July 1878.

<sup>189.</sup> LAML, P12/80/7, Baths Byelaws, Lambeth Baths Bye-laws for 1900.

than 1895 and likely earlier.<sup>190</sup> All of these rules were designed to ensure that a proper social tone was maintained at all times within the baths establishment. Indeed, breaches of these regulations were dealt with harshly. In April and May of 1898, for example, the Lambeth Baths and Cemetery Committee considered just such an instance. It was alleged that the stoker at the Lambeth Public Baths had been spying on women while they swam in the pool and had invited at least one friend along to also do so. Evidently this friend informed the authorities about what was going on, because the stoker was requested to turn in his resignation, which he did.<sup>191</sup> It is almost certain that the women being spied upon were swimming in costume and any titillation that the stoker may have derived from his voyeurism would be considered unremarkable today. There is a slight chance, however, that the women may have been swimming in the nude. That this possibility existed is suggested by the next set of minutes in the volume. These dealt with the introduction of a regulation requiring the use of swimming drawers by all users of the second class men's swimming pool, indicating that at least some of the users of the facility had previously been swimming in the nude.<sup>192</sup>

By 1910 at the latest the debate over mixed bathing had spread to the London Boroughs. For example, mixed bathing had become an issue at the Dulwich Baths in the Borough of Camberwell. Originally constructed in 1892, the baths were strictly

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<sup>190</sup>. LAML, P12/80/7, Baths Byelaws, Model Byelaws on Public Baths & Washhouses, 1895.

<sup>191</sup>. LAML, P12/38, *Lambeth Baths and Cemetery Committee Minutes, 1898 - 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 1899*, p. 45, Minutes of 2 May 1898.

<sup>192</sup> LAML, P12/38, *Lambeth Baths and Cemetery Committee Minutes, 1898 - 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 1899*, p. 51, Minutes of 1 June, 1898.



segregated, as was the accepted practice, for both bathing and swimming.<sup>193</sup> In 1910 an official motion to allow mixed bathing was brought before the Camberwell Borough Council who operated the baths; it was lost by a single vote.<sup>194</sup> Such debates were likely common across England during the period, as the results of the Manchester Baths and Washhouses Committee survey of mixed bathing undertaken in 1912 reveal. As summarized in Tables 25 to 27, of the 108 Local Authorities who responded to the request from the Manchester Committee for information, only 28 allowed mixed bathing, while 78 had no provision for mixed bathing.<sup>195</sup>

By 1914, debate over mixed bathing in England had become quite widespread. In the first issue of the second incarnation of *The Swimming Magazine* a short article appeared about mixed bathing, comparing the English experience with Australia. The author captured the spirit of the time by writing, “In Australia persons who oppose the pleasures of the people are generally referred to as ‘Wowers,’ and we are informed that surf and mixed bathing are favourite subjects for their attack. If that be so, we must have quite a lot of them in this country, yet mixed bathing is on the increase.”<sup>196</sup> Indeed, an article in a later issue detailed how the practice of mixed and family bathing at the seaside had been growing for roughly

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<sup>193</sup> Polly Bird, *Making A Splash The History of Dulwich Baths*, (London: Spencer Mills, 1993), p. 18.

<sup>194</sup> Bird, *Making a Splash*, p. 22.

<sup>195</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fol. 215, Minutes of 20 November 1912.

<sup>196</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol 1, No. 1 (June 1914), p. 26.

the previous twenty years in England.<sup>197</sup> That growth was not uniform across England, however. In the same issue it was reported that Rotherham Council had recently voted against the introduction of mixed bathing in the town.<sup>198</sup> By June of 1915 Chiswick and Richmond had both introduced mixed bathing, and it was claimed that Chiswick Open Air Swimming Pool had been the first in England to allow mixed bathing.<sup>199</sup> That claim was demonstrably false, as the information in Tables 25 and 26 reveals, but mixed bathing was still not common.

In July of 1915 *The Swimming Magazine* dedicated a fair amount of space to the issue of mixed bathing. Two decisions on allowing mixed bathing, in Finchley and Windsor, had recently been made. The councillors in Finchley had evidently attempted to straddle the fence on the issue of maintaining public decency and morals while allowing mixed bathing, as their decision was mocked;

Mixed and family bathing is to be allowed at the new baths at Finchley, but the mixed bathing will be restricted to members of swimming and athletic clubs officially recognised by the Council, who will be required to present their cards of admission to the bath, and to persons who are members of the same family. We are looking forward to the appointment of a committee of inquiry or inquisition charged with the duty of distributing cards of admission.<sup>200</sup>

In the case of Windsor, the debate over the issue seems to have been quite heated. Here the proposal seems to have been for family bathing, as opposed to full mixed

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<sup>197.</sup> Anonymous, "The Call of the Sea," in *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July 1914), p. 16.

<sup>198.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July 1914), p. 28.

<sup>199.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (June 1915), pp. 6, 10.

<sup>200.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 1915), pp. 37.



bathing. Speakers against the provision focussed squarely on the moral aspects of the change:

In opening the discussion one of the councillors remarked that Family Bathing was only another name for Mixed Bathing. The spirit which animated them now was not pleasure but duty. The nation was foregoing many of its social celebrations and court functions because of the war, and he therefore thought they should deprive themselves of the comparatively small pleasure and excitement of mixed bathing at the present time. He did not think mixed bathing promoted modesty and he therefore moved an amendment that family bathing be not permitted this year. The seconder suggested that this form of bathing was not desirable in such a restricted area as the baths. Another speaker remarked that though it was quite a natural thing when a father took his family to the seaside, in the face of the parade, to teach them to swim, in Windsor it was not necessary nor called for. Someone else agreed, saying that although all possible supervision would be given it would not do away with the moral harm of mixed bathing.<sup>201</sup>

In response, supporters of family and mixed bathing pointed out that the presence of large numbers of troops stationed in the area had been raised by opponents as a argument against allowing family bathing, evidently under the assumption that the troops would take advantage of the new situation, but that the conduct of the troops had been impeccable. The supporters of mixed bathing also complained that letters written against family bathing were directly insulting to the women of Windsor and members of the Windsor Ladies' SC. A compromise of sorts appears to have been proposed at one point in the meeting as, "A lengthy discussion ensued as to whether it would not be advisable to limit the family bathing to season ticket holders only so

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<sup>201</sup>. Lady Dorothy, "The Ladies' Section," in *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 1915), p. 37.

that promiscuous bathers should be eliminated.’<sup>202</sup> In the end the motion to allow mixed bathing was passed by a vote of nine councillors in favour, six against, but it is evident that the council, and likely the community, was deeply divided on the issue.<sup>203</sup> It is not too hard to imagine similar debates taking place across the length and breadth of England between approximately 1895 and 1918. Indeed, as will be examined, in some locations the debate would continue until after the Second World War.

The debate over the provision of family and mixed bathing in municipal swimming facilities continued throughout the First World War and into the inter-war period. By September 1915, for example, the Port of Plymouth Swimming Association was lobbying for mixed bathing in the area, and was hoping to have the Corporation of Plymouth agree to this in the near future.<sup>204</sup> By November of the same year Birmingham was allowing mixed bathing in the Kent Street Baths of the city, and it was generally expected that the provision of the practice would be general throughout the baths of the Corporation in the next swimming season.<sup>205</sup> In April 1916 an anonymous author was happily signalling the demise of segregated swimming, and the coming into its own of mixed bathing, “Wherever mixed bathing has been tried it has been found a great success. When first mooted for baths there was a big outcry, but ‘Mrs. Grundy’ was at last outvoted, and it is rarely that we find

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<sup>202.</sup> Lady Dorothy, “The Ladies’ Section,” in *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol 2, No. 2 (July 1915), p. 37.

<sup>203.</sup> Lady Dorothy, “The Ladies’ Section,” in *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol 2, No. 2 (July 1915), pp. 37-38.

<sup>204.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (September 1915), p. 65.

<sup>205.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (November 1915), p. 108.



objection to it.”<sup>206</sup> The optimism was perhaps misplaced. Only a few issues later the same magazine could report that mixed bathing was allowed in the Borough of Islington in London, but not in Westminster.<sup>207</sup> In October 1916 it was announced that the Lambeth Baths on Kennington Road would be allowing mixed bathing over the winter.<sup>208</sup> Despite all of this progress, some areas with especially conservative councils delayed the introduction of mixed bathing for a long time. For example, although the issue was raised several times after the end of the First World War, it was not until March 1946 that mixed swimming was allowed in the Dulwich Baths, along with every other swimming pool in Camberwell.<sup>209</sup>

By and large, swimming remained a sexually-segregated activity. This was true of all levels of swimming, from municipal pools to competitive swimming. Swimming as a competitive activity, along with the derived activities of diving and water polo, was created for the most part as a male enterprise in England between 1800 and 1918. The participation of women in these activities was neither forbidden nor unknown, but it was effectively marginalised. Competitive swimming appears to have had the greatest number of female participants, but this did not translate into competitive excellence or wide-spread women’s recreational swimming. Excellence and innovation in such competitive swimming was found elsewhere, notably in Australia and the United States of America, rather than in England. Richard Holt has claimed that this was due to the relative lack of class distinctions in swimming,

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<sup>206.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (April 1916), p. 212.

<sup>207.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (June 1916), p. 11.

<sup>208.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (October 1916), p. 96.

<sup>209.</sup> Bird, *Making a Splash*, p. 31.

at least in the case of the United States.<sup>210</sup> This may indeed be the case, but closer study would appear to be necessary. In the field of synchronized swimming, female participation appears to have been more common, but prior to 1918 the activity was a relatively minor one at best in England, for both men and women. Major development of the sport again took place away from England, in North America. It developed into a bastion of female participation, effectively becoming a women only activity, but at the cost of marginalization in the sporting world. As has already been noted, Olympic acceptance of the sport was quite late in coming.

When it came to the field of aquatic lifesaving, women participated on equal terms, taking the same exams and being able to obtain the same awards as their male counterparts.<sup>211</sup> In comparison to the number of male candidates for lifesaving awards, however, the number of female candidates was small. Looking at Table 29, the number of awards issued between 1892 and 1918 increased steadily, but was relatively small. The Life Saving Society/Royal Life Saving Society did not differentiate its award statistics along gender lines, perhaps an interesting observation in itself. The Manchester Baths and Washhouses Committee, however, did. Between at least 1903 and 1911 J. Derbyshire, the General Superintendent of all Manchester Baths and Washhouses, was directed by the Manchester Council Baths and Washhouses Committee to organize the teaching of lifesaving in municipal pools over the winter months. As Tables 19 through 22 show, several hundred people participated annually in the training. In all of the years where detailed figures

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<sup>210.</sup> Richard Holt, *Sport and the British A Modern History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 130.

<sup>211.</sup> For more on lifesaving, see Chapter 7



were retained, with the exception of the 1909 to 1910 season, female candidates made up between roughly six and twenty-five percent of the total number of students in the classes; definitely a minority, but at times a large one.

Recreational swimming was the most common form of swimming for women from the 1870s onwards. Few absolute records of exact numbers of women involved in swimming exist, but Agnes Campbell's survey of municipal baths facilities published in 1918 provides a glimpse of the activity's popularity. As Tables 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16 show, literally tens of thousands of women were using municipal swimming pools by 1913-14. As in the case of lifesaving, the number of women swimming formed a minority of those using municipal swimming pools, but the absolute numbers were large. We also cannot be certain that the published figures do not include repeat visits to the same facilities by a smaller number of women. Even if true, however, the high attendance figures given would seem to indicate that a large number of women were involved.

Clearly, this sexual divide in swimming reflected more fundamental divisions in English society. Societal expectations and taboos restricted and shaped those activities that women could participate in. As will be seen later, popular ideas of health and cleanliness also played their part in what women were allowed to do. Studying how the Victorians and Edwardians established, structured, and maintained these gender divisions provides some further illumination on gender divisions within the wider English society of the period, as well as helping reveal how swimming as an activity fitted into that whole. Gender divisions, however, were not the only divisions created or perpetuated between 1800 and 1918. Social class, and the resulting distinctions made between amateurs and professionals, was also an

important distinction.



## **Chapter 4: Amateurs, Professionals, and Social Class**

While the question of gender, as has already been demonstrated, is much more apparent, the links between swimming and social class are not immediately obvious. Yet Victorian and Edwardian England was a highly stratified society. The English became divided into distinct social classes, each with its own appointed place and duties within the overall social system. To a certain extent these social divisions were based upon older relationships of leaders and followers, masters and servants, rulers and ruled. At the same time, however, they were increasingly defined by newer forces of economic standing, as the process of industrialisation created a growing and rising middle and working class. Class came to affect all features of English life, and sport was no exception. Exactly what forms of sport, recreation and physical training were appropriate for these various classes became an issue in late Victorian England. Most importantly, sport became a forum for issues of social inclusion and exclusion. Like all other Victorian and Edwardian sports and recreational activities, swimming was subject to these social conventions. The manner in which competitive swimming came to be organized, and the ideas underlying the provision of, and the regulations governing, public swimming facilities, are but two of the many areas that illustrate these social codes at work.

The division of the swimming world between amateurs and professionals provides the best illustration of both the confusion and, oddly, the clarity of the situation. Although the amateur/professional sporting division is most commonly thought of as occurring in the 1870s and later (during the great Victorian sporting explosion) this trend was evident in the swimming world from the early nineteenth

century. In 1816, for example, a man named J. Frost published a treatise on swimming instruction, which contained his original plan for teaching swimming to beginners. The work is not especially noteworthy for its instructional system, which advocated the teaching of a form of breaststroke quite different from the modern version.<sup>212</sup> It is, however, important because the author's occupation is given as chimney surveyor. Frost is also credited as being a long time swimming instructor in Nottingham. It would seem, then, that at least part of Frost's living seems to have been derived from giving swimming lessons. Later in the nineteenth century he would have been considered a professional, for accepting money in return for instructing students. At the time, however, no such distinction, between amateurs and professionals, existed.

Prior to the formation of the Amalgamated Metropolitan Swimming Clubs in January 1869, there seems to have been little or no distinction made between amateurs and professionals in swimming circles. Previously, swimming was simply an unregulated traditional leisure activity that shared many similarities with other traditional pastimes and sports. Betting, for example, was commonplace.<sup>213</sup> As with pedestrianism, the professionalized and semi-traditional form of athletics, betting on swimming contests prior to 1869 was accepted as a normal part of the event. The

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<sup>212</sup> J. Frost, *Scientific Swimming*, (London: Darton, Harvey and Darton, 1816).

<sup>213</sup> For more on the history of betting see, Carl Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller: Bookmaking, Betting and the British Working Class, 1750 - 1990*, (Brighton, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991); Mark Clapson, *A Bit of a Flutter: Popular gambling and English Society, c. 1823 - 1961*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992); David Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation Bookmaking, Anti-Gambling, and the Law*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Roger Munting, *An Economic and Social History of Gambling in Britain and the USA*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996).



swimmers themselves would often place wagers on the outcome, and large purses were not uncommon. That being said, betting occupied a twilight world in Victorian society. Betting at racecourses was legal throughout the period 1800 to 1918, as it has remained to this day. Street betting also appears to have been common, and remained legal until 1906, when Parliament passed an Act outlawing it. Off-course betting, however, was a matter of concern. Although legal for the first half of the nineteenth century, betting houses run by bookmakers were fundamentally viewed with suspicion. Concern over betting houses was largely a matter of class. It appears to have been thought that the presence of betting houses corrupted the working classes, distracting them from work, and contributing towards poverty. In 1853 Parliament made illegal all off course betting in betting shops. The government of the day took the view, according to Carl Chinn, that, "... while off-course betting with professional bookmakers needed to be prohibited, amateur wagering between individuals was legitimate and ought to be allowed."<sup>214</sup> In essence then, the propertied classes were allowed to gamble, but the working classes were not.

As early as May 1791, *The Times* recorded a swimming race held in the Thames for a wager of eight guineas. The race was noteworthy, not because of the prize involved, or the swimming feat, but rather because the winner drank himself to death immediately after winning the race.<sup>215</sup> Similar, peculiar swimming stories appeared in the press between 1791 and the 1830s, covering such diverse events as a

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<sup>214</sup>. Chinn, *Better Betting*, p. 71.

<sup>215</sup>. *The Times*, 19 May 1791, p. 3b.

soldier swimming from Deal to Ramsgate in 1805, and a sailor swimming across Portsmouth Harbour in 1810.<sup>216</sup> Such contests began to be organized by self-promoting showmen who often dubbed themselves ‘professors.’

Such ‘professors,’ were often involved in early attempts to organize swimming in a more formal manner. When the National Swimming Society was formed in the late 1830s it immediately acquired the services of several ‘professors,’ who provided swimming lessons in the Serpentine, the Surrey Canal, and the Thames.<sup>217</sup> The efforts of such teachers, sometimes described as ‘professors,’ and other times simply as instructors, were highly praised in the press through the late 1830s and the 1840s.<sup>218</sup> By 1844 professional swimmers were viewed as a distinct group from amateur swimmers, although the concept of professionalism contained none of the pejorative sense it would later acquire.<sup>219</sup> Initially, all of these ‘professors’ were simply unknown individuals, relegated to passing notice in the press, but by 1840 there was sufficient interest in swimming for such ‘professors’ to be working at their trade full time, and some were acquiring personal reputations for their activity. One such professional to receive notice in the press was a Captain Stevens, the resident professional at the “National Baths,” Westminster Road, in Lambeth, in the early 1840s.<sup>220</sup> In 1842 a notice appeared in the press about a benefit

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<sup>216.</sup> *The Times*, 24 September 1805, p. 3d; *The Times*, 7 September 1810, p. 4c.

<sup>217.</sup> *The Times*, 21 September 1838, p. 6b.

<sup>218.</sup> See *Bell's Life in London*, 10 September 1837, p. 4c; 4 August 1839, p. 4b; and 19 July 1840, p. 4e.

<sup>219.</sup> *The Times*, 18 September 1844, p. 5d.

<sup>220.</sup> *Bell's Life in London*, 20 June 1841, p. 4b.



being held for and by Captain Stevens in the National Baths.<sup>221</sup> This seems to be the earliest appearance of the use of the term “benefit” to describe a swimming contest or, more usually, an entertainment, with the financial proceeds given to the designated beneficiary. Such benefits were often designed to supplement the income of a swimming ‘professor,’ which was generally seasonal and irregular. By the late nineteenth century the tradition had developed of holding an annual benefit for the professional resident at a bath, or in the employ of a swimming club. At this early date, however, it would appear such benefits were organized by a professional whenever he felt the need to hold one. Captain Stevens clearly needed the extra money from a benefit; less than a year later he was imprisoned in debtor’s prison, allegedly for financially over-extending himself while promoting swimming.<sup>222</sup> He was eventually freed, perhaps because of an appeal for donations towards his release that appeared in *Bell’s Life*.<sup>223</sup> Whatever the case, he went on in 1844 to create the grandly titled “Royal Universal Swimming Society,” which only seems to have hosted one swimming competition.<sup>224</sup> Professional status, and publicity in the press did not, however, guarantee success. Up to the middle of the 1840s the press coverage of swimming was overwhelmingly concerned with events where wagers were placed or of races promoted by showmen such as Captain Stevens. Organized swimming, therefore, could best be described as being in the hands of the professionals, and it would appear as if those involved in swimming as a sport were

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<sup>221.</sup> *Bell’s Life in London*, 2 October 1842, p. 4d.

<sup>222.</sup> *Bell’s Life in London*, 27 August, 1843, p. 4c.

<sup>223.</sup> *Bell’s Life in London*, 27 August 1843, p. 4c; 3 September 1843, p. 4f.

<sup>224.</sup> *Bell’s Life in London*, 14 July 1844, p. 4e.

not overly concerned with distinctions between amateurs and professionals. It was more a form of commercial entertainment.

John Lowerson has noted that it was not long before the great sporting boom of the 1870s and 1880s that the idea of the amateur athlete, as distinct from the professional athlete, was formed.<sup>225</sup> Swimming follows this trend, with the amateur governing body not formed until 1869.<sup>226</sup> There were precursors to this development, however, and it seems likely that it was during the 1850s that an early, explicit distinction began to emerge between amateurs and professionals. As we have seen, by the late 1840s these swimming professionals, many originally oarsmen or boatmen, organized grand swimming entertainments which attracted a great deal of betting. Some professionals were extremely fast swimmers and clearly made a good living from winnings; others were only adequate swimmers but much better as showmen and promoters. Various allegations were later made about race fixing and other less than honourable activities at these meetings, but contemporary accounts rarely mention any hint of such deeds. News about betting, however, was common until well after the division of swimmers into amateur and professional ranks occurred from the late 1860s onwards.

A number of these men, 'Dr.' Isaac Bedale, (Manchester), Harry Gurr (Manchester), Frederick Beckwith (Margate, eventually London), Frederick Cavill (London, then Australia), Harry Parker (London), and J. B. Johnson (Manchester, later Leeds), set themselves up as swimming professionals around the country.

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<sup>225</sup> Lowerson, *Sport and the English*, p. 155.

<sup>226</sup> For the history of organized swimming officialdom, see Chapter 2.



Frederick Beckwith, better known as Professor Beckwith, was arguably the most prolific of these professionals. According to some reports Beckwith was the foremost swimmer of his era, while according to others he was not the fastest of swimmers.<sup>227</sup> Whatever his level of swimming ability and speed, however, he definitely had a keen grasp of showmanship and promotion. He also seems to have been shrewd in the swimming challenges he accepted during his racing career. In 1861, for example, he arranged a swimming match against Deerfoot, a Native American running champion, which eventually was forfeited by Deerfoot before the race was swum.<sup>228</sup> Over time he included all four of his children, Agnes, Charles, Jessie, and William in his spectacular shows. William was an active professional racer for a time, and both Charles and Agnes later became well known swimmers in their own right.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>227.</sup> See Watson, *Memoirs*, pp. 116-19; *The Times*, 12 August 1863, p. 9a; Anonymous, *London Swimming Club Manual*, p. 16.

<sup>228.</sup> *The Times*, 18 October 1861, p. 10a.

<sup>229.</sup> Dating the ages of the Beckwith children is difficult. Jessie appears to have been the eldest; her age, although not her birth date, are given in various sources. She was likely born sometime between 1853 and 1855. References to her participation in the family business cease in the 1870s. The order of birth of Beckwith's two sons is quite unclear. The eldest appears to have been born c. 1856, reported as being four in 1860. Other sources, however indicate that William seems to have been born c. 1858 and that Charles died in 1898, aged 33, and thus was likely born in 1865. All of these dates are problematic, however, as in 1863 a swimming entertainment was run by Beckwith in the Lambeth Baths in which Jessie and both of the boys performed. Only Jessie was named as performing at this event, the boys were simply referred to as Beckwith's sons. The younger of the boys at this event was stated to be "... about five years of age ..." Agnes appears to have been the youngest of the children, with her career lasting into the twentieth century. She cannot have been born much later than 1860, however, as in 1875 she swam from London Bridge to Greenwich in the Thames and was depicted as a woman in her twenties or thirties on the cover of *Notes*, No. 2, in 1884. The issue of the magazine in question is no longer extant, but a reproduction of the cover is presented in Keil & Wix. See *The Times*, 7 October 1863, p. 12b; Anonymous, *London Swimming Club Manual*, pp.



Frederick Beckwith's career is important in a number of respects, because it spans the main period of massive growth that occurred in sport in general and swimming in particular in the 1870s and 1880s. Beckwith also remained in the public eye throughout the entire period, eventually presenting aquatic entertainments to the British Royal Family.<sup>230</sup> An advertisement for one of his entertainments would usually read much like this one from May 1873;

PROFESSOR BECKWITH, LAMBETH BATHS,  
WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD. THIS Celebrated  
Ex-Champion Swimming Teacher begs to inform the  
nobility and gentry that he is constantly in attendance at  
the above magnificent Establishment. Beckwith wishes  
it known that he has given considerably over 300 prizes  
towards furthering the interests of this art, and to prove  
the excellency of his teaching, points to the many  
celebrated swimmers brought out by him, both amateur  
and professional. N.B. - there will shortly be a great  
gala on the Thames, and races (open to the world) for  
all classes.<sup>231</sup>

This advertisement again reveals the division between amateurs and professionals in swimming by the 1870s. It also reveals the place of swimming professionals within the wider world of swimming. A 'professor' such as Beckwith was perfectly able to provide instruction to those who considered themselves, and who were viewed as, amateurs. Such a professional could hope for, and even expect, patronage from the nobility, provided he conducted himself in an appropriate fashion. Beckwith also positioned himself as an upright and trustworthy individual by emphasising his

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24, 28, 34; Keil & Wix, *In the Swim*, p. 185; *Illustrated London News*, Vol. 67, No. 1882, 4 September 1875, p. 227; *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1 August 1898, p. 24.

<sup>230</sup> Watson, *Memoirs*, p. 122.

<sup>231</sup> *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 31 May 1873, p. 1.



generosity through the award of a number of prizes in promotion of swimming. Throughout, however, Beckwith kept an eye on his finances. Swimming was his business, and he attempted to be as shrewd as possible while conducting that business. Whether it was managing his children's careers, or promoting an entertainment, Beckwith always sought to enhance his name and image, and profit from the venture. Note, for example, an advertisement Beckwith placed in the press in July 1873;

THE LATE CHALLENGE FROM THE BOY  
BECKWITH TO J. B. JOHNSON, AND THOSE  
WHO SWAM IN THE SERPENTINE RACE.

Professor Beckwith acknowledges having, by some means, made a great mistake. His son possesses no chance with 20 yards start in 1,000 yards, from J. B. Johnson, but he will take 100 yards in that distance for any fair stake. W. Beckwith is under 15 years of age, and his father sends this second challenge, not wishing to run down Johnson's swimming powers. The challenge is correct as regards the other men who contended, and Beckwith will swim H. Parker 400 yards with 30 seconds start. First come, first served.<sup>232</sup>

Clearly, with the challenge contained in this advertisement Beckwith was attempting to ensure that his son would have the best possible chance of beating J. B. Johnson in a race, which Beckwith *père* would then presumably profit from. The theory that Beckwith was quite canny when organizing races, and always attempted to ensure that the conditions of any particular race were to his advantage, is further confirmed by a comment that Robert Watson wrote about Beckwith in *Swimming Notes and Record* on 10 May 1884; “ ... I mean the gentleman who has given about 4,999 prizes, including a stop watch, for the promotion of swimming. Good luck to you,

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<sup>232</sup> *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*, Vol. 1, No. 11, 19 July 1873, p. 4.

old man, and may you live to give another 4,999 prizes for swimming, minus that bit of string at the end of them.”<sup>233</sup> Clearly the last part of this comment, about the bit of string, was Watson’s way of implying that Beckwith was sometimes a bit of a shady character. Both Beckwith’s advertisement of July 1873 and Watson’s article of May 1884 reveal the less savoury side of swimming in the nineteenth century. When professionals arranged races against each other they always attempted to gain maximum advantage for themselves. This could be achieved in many ways, including by asking for head starts of a set distance, or a certain amount of time, from their opponent. Similarly, strict race conditions would often be drawn up in contracts before such races, and thus the results of races could often be challenged on technicalities. Frederick Beckwith was a major figure in this world. Long after his retirement from competitive swimming himself he managed his children’s careers and organized swimming entertainments and competitions. For many years the Beckwith family were the top bill in the English aquatic world, performing at swimming pool openings across the country, as in Isleworth in 1873, and Lambeth in 1897.<sup>234</sup> Frederick Beckwith died in early 1898, at the age of 79.<sup>235</sup> His son, Charles, died in July 1898 at the age of 33.<sup>236</sup>

As has been noted, Robert Patrick Watson, the sports journalist, had a keen interest in swimming, and he chronicled much about the swimming world between

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<sup>233</sup> *Swimming Notes and Record*, No. 13, 10 May 1884, p. 2.

<sup>234</sup> *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*, Vol. 1, No. 15, 16 August 1873, p. 3; LAML, P12/80/10, *A Souvenir of the 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1897. From the Clerk to The Chairman.*

<sup>235</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1 June 1898, p. 10.

<sup>236</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1 August 1898, p. 24.



the late 1860s and the 1890s. He associated with both amateurs and professionals, and seems to have retained the trust of both groups throughout his career.<sup>237</sup>

Utilizing the pen name “Aquarius,” Watson provided a series of glimpses of the early division of swimmers into amateurs and professionals in the 1860s entitled ‘A Retrospect’ in his 1873 publication *The Swimming, Rowing, and Athletic Record*, which later became *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*. In these columns Watson was distinctly friendly in tone towards both professionals and professionalism, while at the same time providing coverage of amateur matters. As we have already seen, in his first column he celebrated the recent rise of swimming’s popularity,

The most devoted followers of swimming can hardly fail to be intensely pleased with the rapid progress made of late years in this noble pastime, and the continual addition which we find springing up around us in the shape of clubs and aspirants to swimming honours. It requires a man but little advanced in years to remember when even this mighty metropolis was but scantily supplied with that, in many instances, highly intellectual and extremely necessary adjunct, a swimming club; but time and an innate love for what all men must admire with a delightful remembrance, has at last aroused us from our lethargy, making, in the short space of a few years, through an adherence to good and honest principles, a sport popular which, from its pure, invigorating characteristics, possesses no rival.<sup>238</sup>

Watson’s comments here would seem to confirm that swimming was one of the sports that experienced increased popularity during the Victorian sporting boom that began in the 1870s.

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<sup>237</sup> For more on Watson’s career in the print media, see Chapter 2.

<sup>238</sup> Aquarius (Robert Patrick Watson), “A Retrospect,” in *The Swimming, Rowing, and Athletic Record*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 10 May 1873, p. 1.

Watson also noted the improvement in the *technical* practices of swimming, with a consequent increase in speed, both among amateur and professional swimmers;

Apart from our undoubted prosperity the greatest tyro must be acutely sensible of the improvement effected in point of speed; for if such celebrated exponents as E. B. Mather (ex-champion, Manchester), H. Gardner (ex-500 yards champion), Peter Johnson (equally celebrated, though singularly unfortunate), David Meaken (Manchester), Aspinall (Manchester), David Pamplin, Harry Coulter, Harry Gurr, H. Leverell, and others, were considered wonders, what can be said of J. B. Johnson (champion of England), E. T. Jones (Leeds), Harry Parker (London), H. G. Dunlop (Manchester), Perry (Leeds), W. Cole, &c. They of course live in a new era, establishing, as they have, a style peculiar to themselves, foreign to that of old, and remarkable for its propulsive powers.<sup>239</sup>

The people mentioned by Watson were a mixture of amateurs and professionals, though, of course, all began life as amateurs. Harry Gurr, for example, raced as an amateur before becoming a celebrated professional. This list of names also highlights the geographical distribution of swimmers and swimming at the time. Quite a few of those named were from the north of England. The debate over amateur and professional standing was not limited to London and the south.

Watson also highlighted the fact that swimming attracted betting. Indeed, he argued that, at least in his opinion, there had previously been *more* gambling in the swimming world than was currently the case. Important events would attract a great deal of attention, and large sums of money were wagered:

Still with all our reforms how pleasant it is to remember

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<sup>239</sup>Aquarius (Robert Patrick Watson), "A Retrospect," in *The Swimming, Rowing, and Athletic Record*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 10 May 1873, p. 1.



a few years back an important match for a big stake, which, by the bye, occurred far oftener than now-a-days. No better illustration could be possibly given, if I refer my readers to H. Gardner and Dave Meaken's race for the 500 yards championship, with which was associated a magnificent silver cup and £25 a side. Gardner had won it twice previously, and only required to be again successful ere the trophy became his own property. The event was decided in the Leaf-street Baths, Manchester, which I well remember were crowded to excess. A rope stretched lengthways prevented fouling, and a pistol sent them away, amidst a silence at first only broken by the dive. I fancy I see Fred. Beckwith - at one time the greatest swimmer of his day, as though it were only a month back - in his shirt-sleeves, looking after Gardner, whom he trained, whilst George Poulton's quiet demeanour would hardly have told a stranger what an intense interest he had in Meaken, his pupil, who at half-way (ten lengths) was undoubtedly a beaten man - Gardner winning by about twelve yards.<sup>240</sup>

A further comment on betting is worth quoting at length.

One would almost imagine that of late years swimming had become a sport into which the betting element has not entered (many look upon this as a test of purity), particularly when I remember a few years ago matches being made for £10 and contested eight hours afterwards; instanced in Mather and Peter Johnson's 500 yards race (Leaf-street Baths, Manchester), in conjunction with many others I could mention. Still, although we may deplore the non-existence of big stakes - with which no one was better acquainted than Fred. Beckwith - events do occur, only seldom, I acknowledge, forcibly reminding us of old times: we allude to a recent event, wherein Harry Parker, a most unassuming and well-behaved young fellow, opposed H. G. Dunlop, another swimmer held in high esteem. It would be useless for me to recapitulate any one salient feature in connection with this encounter, which was so ably dealt with by *the* greatest authority on matters pertaining to sport, *Bell's Life*. I not only allude to it

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<sup>240</sup> Aquarius (Robert Patrick Watson), "A Retrospect," in *The Swimming, Rowing, and Athletic Record*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 10 May 1873, pp. 1-2.



for previously explained reasons, but to express my admiration of the friendly though business-like manner which characterised every negotiation [sic].<sup>241</sup>

This text is rich in information about the early divide between amateurs and professionals. Watson reveals that swimming was formerly more noted for its associated betting than it was for the swimming times themselves. Frederick Beckwith was clearly connected with large bets, with the hint that Beckwith ensured he retained those large stakes. Watson's list of swimmers included many from the north of England, indicating a flourishing swimming culture, at least in Leeds and Manchester. Yet at this time both Leeds and Manchester only possessed private swimming facilities or natural outdoor swimming areas. Neither local authority had yet made use of the provisions of the Baths and Washhouses Act to provide municipal swimming pools.<sup>242</sup> Beckwith's role as swimming master at the Lambeth Baths, (the private baths on the Westminster Road) confirms that such a position was commonly reserved for older professionals who were no longer competitive swimmers.

Most importantly, however, Watson noted that the lack of betting was considered "a test of purity" in the amateur world; an indication of the early division in the swimming world, between amateurs and professionals. Watson pointed to the continued existence of betting and staking, albeit at a greatly reduced scale, within the professional swimming world. But such practice was clearly becoming marginalised, the likely cause being the increased control that amateurs were

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<sup>241.</sup> Aquarius (Robert Patrick Watson), "A Retrospect," in *The Swimming, Rowing, and Athletic Record*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 10 May 1873, p. 2.

<sup>242</sup> For more information see Chapter 5.



assuming over the swimming world, and the consequent decline in influence of the professionals.

Later in the same issue of the journal, Watson noted that the Metropolitan Swimming Association had recently run a series of races at the City of London Baths, Barbican, during which no fewer than eighteen heats were run for a 108 yards handicap race.<sup>243</sup> In his survey of baths, Dudgeon recorded the size of the First Class swimming pool in the City of London Baths as being thirty yards by eleven yards.<sup>244</sup> This is approximately the same width as a modern four lane twenty-five metre swimming pool. Assuming either four or five competitors per heat then, and also that all of the heats mentioned were first preliminary heats, rather than preliminaries, quarter finals and semi-finals, it is evident that between eighty and one hundred swimmers were involved in the event. Even if some of the races were quarter and semi final heats, the number of initial swimmers in the races would still have been in the order of fifty to sixty. Such figures confirm that amateur swimming events were quite popular at the time.

In August 1873 Watson wrote an editorial in his paper advocating more competition and greater public exposure for professionals,

BUT for a few more months will elapse ere the swimming season of 1873 will have become a thing of the past. With respect to sport, competition, &c., we may indeed consider it a most eventful year; nevertheless, before its close, I should be glad to see a race amongst some of our first, second, and third rate professional men. Professionals are as a rule seen too seldom in our events, and in fact we have hardly

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<sup>243</sup> *The Swimming, Rowing, and Athletic Record*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 10 May 1873, p. 2.

<sup>244</sup> Dudgeon, *The Swimming Baths of London*, pp. 14-15.

enough of them. For myself I am positive that were they to compete oftener for stakes, the outside world would think more of swimming. By this means betting would be more largely introduced, and through it the art exalted. This statement may indeed sound strange; still swimming, despite what may be said to the contrary, wants a powerful incentive, and although betting may justly be considered anything but a religious pursuit, still many of our noble sports owe their prosperity to its influence.<sup>245</sup>

Among the amateur ranks Watson's call here might well have provoked outrage. It was yet another indication of links between the professional swimming world and betting, and with other underhand dealings that clashed with the dominant notion of amateurism and fair play. He later reinforced his call for increased betting,

Our professional brethren are but ill-provided for, more so in London than elsewhere; they receive little or no encouragement, and are almost debarred from competition, owing to the immense number of amateur events. An alteration in this mode of procedure towards our professionals would, I am sure, greatly benefit swimming; and whilst courting more largely the public's general attention would be received by amateurs with great pleasure. An infusion of the betting element contributes to a very great degree in improving a sport's status, and if our professionals were better provided for I am sure swimming would become far more popular amongst this sport-loving community.<sup>246</sup>

These various articles and editorials by Watson confirm that amateurism was the prevailing ideology in the organized swimming world, and that amateurs were in control of competitive swimming during the 1870s.

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<sup>245.</sup> *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*, Vol. 1 No. 14, 9 August 1873, p. 1.

<sup>246.</sup> *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*, Vol. 1, No. 16, 23 August 1873, p. 2.



By the early 1870s then, a distinct division between amateurs and professional swimmers was visible to contemporary commentators. Several of Watson's comments hint at a class dimension behind this separation. Wray Vamplew's comments on the subject of amateurs and professionals, notably in team sports, are relevant to swimming as well.

Social prejudice permeated all the major criticisms of sports professionalism. Often this masqueraded as sporting idealism, though some opponents openly admitted to class bias, believing that professionalism lowered sport to the level of a trade and that merely to play alongside players was sufficient for some gentlemen to 'hazard their self-respect' and that it was 'degrading for respectable men to play with professionals.' Others felt that professionals did not play the game, that they had turned play into work, consumption into production, and made winning so important that in order to secure victory they would resort to foul play and sharp practice. Their lack of education meant that they had not 'the same sense of honour as the public school boy'.<sup>247</sup>

Further, Vamplew has also noted,

Gentlemen amateurs objected to the development of professionalism as it damaged their self-interest. They did not criticise professionals outside the leisure sector; few of them would have preferred to consult an amateur solicitor or surgeon. Nor did they castigate professional artists or entertainers, who were not seen as a threat to amateur painters or singers. However, professional sportsmen, equally artists and entertainers, were condemned. Most amateurs could not hope to beat the professionals and this fear of the loss of their traditional sporting mastery led to actions designed to keep a sport, or a section of it, exclusive to amateur participation or, where this failed, to keep the professional element

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<sup>247</sup> Wray Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain 1875-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). p. 196-97.

under strict control.<sup>248</sup>

Although organized competitive swimming was not primarily a product of the Public School world (as will be examined in Chapter Five), the condemnation and prejudice noted by Vamplew was clearly present within the swimming world by the later 1870s. In time, organized swimming sought to become one of the most ethically “pure” amateur sports.

But what precisely *was* the conception of amateurism in the swimming world in 1869 when the Associated Metropolitan Swimming Clubs (A.M.S.C.) was founded? The A.M.S.C. drafted the first set of laws that clearly outlined the difference between what constituted an amateur as opposed to a professional (as reproduced in Appendix 3). At this early stage, the amateur law was quite simple. Anyone accepting money for a swimming performance or race was deemed a professional. Amateurs could race against professionals provided that they either accepted no prize or other inducement for taking part in the race, or they donated any prize won in such a contest to the A.M.S.C.. These rules were clear and, in theory, easy to enforce, but there was a grey area around what constituted a professional. It is easy to see how an amateur racing against a professional could publicly state that he was not going to accept any prize for the race, but then secretly pocket an inducement for taking part in the race either before or after the event.

Such considerations obviously passed through the minds of contemporary swimming administrators as well, for by 1873 the Metropolitan Swimming Association (M.S.A.) had revised the amateur law such that any competition against

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<sup>248</sup> Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play the Game*, p. 198-99.



a professional by an amateur rendered that amateur ineligible to compete as an amateur again;

1. - Persons who have competed for money prizes, for wagers, for public or admission money, or who have otherwise made the art of swimming a means of pecuniary profit, shall not be allowed to compete as amateurs.

2. - Any amateur competing against a professional swimmer shall be disqualified from all future amateur contests.<sup>249</sup>

These revised rules were simple but quite strict, dividing the swimming world into amateurs and professionals, with no grey area between them. The penalty for breaching law number one was clear and severe. Such certainty and severity did not last, however. The rules were, in effect, eroded by rapidly-changing practice and conventions in sport at large. Indeed, by 1878 the M.S.A. had changed its name to the Swimming Association of Great Britain (S.A.G.B.) and the laws of swimming had again been revised. The first two laws still outlined the distinction between an amateur and a professional, but were now somewhat more lenient,

I. - A person who has competed for money, for a wager, for public or admission money, or who has otherwise made the art of swimming a means of pecuniary profit, shall not be allowed to compete as an amateur.

II. - An amateur shall be allowed to compete with a professional for a prize or honour only.<sup>250</sup>

In fact, the 1878 revisions to the amateur law can be seen as a near return to the original amateur laws of 1869. If one is to take the minutes of the S.A.G.B. and

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<sup>249</sup> "Laws of Amateur Swimming," in *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*, Vol. 1, No. 29, 22 November 1873, p. 4.

<sup>250</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, p. 104, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 14 January 1878.

memoirs of swimmers of the era as any indication, however, in many ways this law was noted more in its breach than its observance.

From December 1873 to around the start of 1880 the breaching of the amateur law appears to have been a recurring problem, with the executive committee of the S.A.G.B. considering at least one infraction of the amateur laws each season. Throughout the same period there were regular proposals to create a committee of vigilance to be proactive in tracking down those who were infringing the laws of swimming.<sup>251</sup> It is clear that the M.S.A./S.A.G.B. was wracked with argument in these years, and at the centre of those arguments was the issue of amateurism/professionalism. In his memoirs, Robert Watson wrote about the M.S.A., “Round this old tempest-tossed Institution, might be written a remarkable story. It has passed through an immense number of precarious stages, never seems to be on good terms with itself, and is now known by another name.”<sup>252</sup> While Watson aimed his comments at the M.S.A., he would have been more accurate had he referred to the S.A.G.B. Certainly the banning of all competition against professionals by the M.S.A. appears to have been the root of later dissension within amateur ranks, but it was revisions to the amateur laws in 1878, 1881 and 1884 by the S.A.G.B. that eventually created a schism in the amateur swimming world.

The ostensible cause of the split in amateur swimming ranks in 1884 was yet another revision of the amateur laws, but one that many clubs could not agree with.

Tensions had been building in the clubs that made up the S.A.G.B. for some time

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<sup>251</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, passim; *Minute Book No. 3 The S.A.G.B.*, passim.

<sup>252</sup> Watson, *Memoirs*, p. 121.



prior to this open breach, however. Two short case studies will help illustrate how fraught the debate over the distinction between amateurs and professional had become prior to the split.

In June 1882 the S.A.G.B. held two public meetings about the revision of the amateur laws and the organization of swimming. At the second of these, on 19 June 1882, it was announced that at the next meeting of the S.A.G.B. Committee the status of the St. Pancras S.C. as it related to the amateur law would be reviewed.<sup>253</sup>

At the 10 July 1882 meeting of the committee, it was decided to suspend all members of the St. Pancras SC from amateur competition for three months.

Although this was not a unanimous decision, it was strongly supported. Apparently the S.A.G.B. committee believed that four members of the St. Pancras SC had swum against a professional, and had then been allowed to swim against other members of the club in club races. Under the prevailing amateur law this was interpreted as tainting the entire club with professionalism. It was further announced that a motion would be presented at the next meeting declaring the four offending members of the St. Pancras SC (the St. Pancras Four) as professionals themselves.<sup>254</sup> Strangely, however, the matter was then dropped for several months, with no further action being taken. In November 1882, however, it was raised again, with notice being given that in December a motion to suspend the St. Pancras swimmers for racing against a professional would be presented.<sup>255</sup> At the December 1882 meeting Mr. H.

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<sup>253</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 3 The S.A.G.B.*, p. 95, Minutes of Special General Meeting of 19 June 1882.

<sup>254</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 3 The S.A.G.B.*, pp. 98-101, Minutes of 10 July 1882.

<sup>255</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 3 The S.A.G.B.*, pp. 112-15, Minutes of 13 November 1882.

H. Griffiths presented the motion to name the St. Pancras Four professionals for their race against a Mr. Bray, a swimming professional. An amendment to the motion was introduced, to the effect that the St. Pancras Four would only be suspended from amateur competition for a period of twelve months. Upon a vote, the amendment was carried fourteen to seven. Mr. Griffiths promptly resigned from the S.A.G.B.<sup>256</sup> Clearly, at least some of the delegates to the S.A.G.B. felt quite strongly about the purity of swimming as a sport.

The suspension of the St. Pancras Four on 11 December 1882 was not the end of the issue, however. A second committee meeting was held on 18 December 1882, when a motion to overturn the decision made on the St. Pancras Four was received and tabled. This was followed, at the January 1883 meeting of the committee, by official protests from the delegates of the Amateur and Imperial Swimming Clubs over the suspension of the St. Pancras Four. These delegates believed that the four should have been declared professionals. A motion to have the decision overturned, however, failed to obtain majority support.<sup>257</sup> The issue finally seemed to blow itself out when the Amateur S.C. resigned from the S.A.G.B. in February 1883.<sup>258</sup> This affair clearly produced dissension within the S.A.G.B., and likely paved the way to the later split in amateur ranks.

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<sup>256.</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 3 The S.A.G.B.*, pp. 117-20, Minutes of 11 December 1882.

<sup>257.</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 3 The S.A.G.B.*, pp. 126, 129-135, Minutes of 18 December 1882, 8 January 1883.

<sup>258.</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 3 The S.A.G.B.*, pp. 137-142, Minutes of 12 February 1883, 12 March 1883. See also reports in *Sporting Life*, 15 January 1883; 22 January 1883; 1 February 1883; 6 February 1883; 14 February 1883; 27 February 1883; 6 March 1883.



In November 1883, however, another scandal broke over amateur status. Mr. Walter Blew-Jones, a delegate of the Otter SC to the S.A.G.B. and recent second place finisher in the 220 yards amateur championship, charged that the winner of the 220 yards amateur championship, Thomas Cairns, was a professional because he was a bath attendant. In support of his case Mr. Blew-Jones also presented unspecified evidence that Cairns had competed in at least six races for cash prizes in the past. Indeed, Cairns had previously been brought before the S.A.G.B. committee on similar charges, and had been suspended from amateur competition until 1 August 1883.<sup>259</sup> The S.A.G.B. decided to investigate the charges, and reserved judgment until its December meeting. At that meeting it was decided that Cairns had been an amateur when he raced for the 220 yards championship, and Blew-Jones' case was dismissed. Mr. Blew-Jones, after his case had been dismissed, informed the meeting that legal proceedings were to be expected.<sup>260</sup>

This second case, perhaps even more so than the first, was a trigger to the amateur split. At the 11 February 1884 meeting of the S.A.G.B. committee Mr. Blew-Jones returned his second place medal from the 1883 220 yards amateur championship race and demanded the first place medal which he felt was his by right. Again the S.A.G.B. committee considered the issue closed, and a further attempt to reopen the Cairns case in March 1884 also failed. In April 1884 Mr.

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<sup>259</sup>. ASAL, *Minute Book No. 3 The S.A.G.B.*, pp. 104-110, Minutes of 14 September 1882, 9 October 1882; *Minute Book No. 4 The Swimming Association of Great Britain*, p. 207-211, Minutes of 12 November 1883. Hereafter cited as *Minute Book No. 4 The S.A.G.B.*

<sup>260</sup>. ASAL, *Minute Book No. 4 The S.A.G.B.*, pp. 212-14, Minutes of 10 December 1883. See also, *Sporting Life*, 11 December 1883.

Blew-Jones' club, the Otter SC, was one of the clubs which split from the S.A.G.B. over the revision of the amateur laws.<sup>261</sup> Such small, apparently trivial matters, were basic to the fundamental arguments about amateurism and professionalism. Grand principles clashed in small committee meetings, and inspired swimmers to adopt principled stands about the rankings in competitions and the receipt of medals.

By the 1880s and the 1890s, despite the division between the amateur and professional ranks, most amateurs paid scant attention to the 'true' professionals. In fact, the 1880s saw the start of a terminal decline in the fortunes of professional swimmers as an organized and recognized group. Increasingly it appears that being declared a professional was seen as something to be avoided at all costs. Very few people appear to have been able to make a living as a professional during this period without recourse to other employment. Professor Beckwith, for example, during the 1880s was variously the proprietor of a cigar shop on Westminster Road, and also of a hotel, with attached wash baths and a billiards room.<sup>262</sup>

The decline of the fortunes of swimming professionals can be at least partially linked with the rise of other, more popular, professional sports. The most obvious example of a professional sport that was massively popular during the period was football. As *the* mass spectator sport of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, football catered to the need of the urban worker for sporting entertainment. The new football grounds that were built during the 1880s and 1890s

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<sup>261</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 4 The S.A.G.B.*, pp. 219-27, 231-33, Minutes of 11 February 1884, 10 March 1884; Minutes of S.A.G.B. AGM 7 April 1884.

<sup>262</sup> *Notes*, No. 3, 1 March 1884, p. 7; *Swimming Notes and Record*, No. 13, 10 May 1884, p. 2.



were designed to accommodate thousands of spectators. Football, and to a lesser extent cricket, became the great spectator sports of the age.<sup>263</sup> Most swimming pools of the period, on the other hand, would have been fortunate to be able to accommodate two to three hundred spectators. The facilities available to swimming professionals were not on the scale required to attract a large audience. In addition, it would seem likely that the predictable (and perhaps less exciting) nature of most swimming races or entertainments did not hold the same attraction to punters as the weekly football or cricket match. Thus, sidelined by the amateurs who controlled swimming, and denied audiences by the size of their facilities, and facing competition from other, more popular spectator sports, the swimming professionals of the 1880s and 1890s found themselves with little to do besides teaching people to swim.

It was during this same period of time that the S.A.G.B. executive committee established a vigilance committee and maintained a black book for listing offenders against amateurism.<sup>264</sup> When the amateur swimming community split into two factions in 1884 over the precise definition of an amateur, the provisions for the suspension of swimmers for infractions of amateur regulations were used by both sides. The S.A.G.B. and the Amateur Swimming Union (A.S.U.) excommunicated all those swimmers who participated in the events organized by the opposite amateur body.<sup>265</sup> The professionals were for the most part ignored, as the arguments were

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<sup>263.</sup> For the history of football as a popular entertainment see, Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 281-86; Mason, *Association Football*, pp. 138-74; Walvin, *The People's Game*, p. 75.

<sup>264.</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 3 The S.A.G.B.*, passim.

<sup>265.</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 4 The S.A.G.B.*, passim.

now between amateurs.

When the two amateur camps were reconciled in 1886 with the formation of the Amateur Swimming Association (A.S.A.), much of the former attention devoted to preserving the purity of the amateur ranks appears to have been lost. Exactly why this was the case is not entirely clear, although perhaps contemporary swimming administrators were more accepting of professionalism because of the existence of professionals in football and cricket. Although the amateur laws do not seem to have been weakened in any way, prosecution of those who breached the laws of amateurism appears to have taken place only in the most extreme cases. Robert Watson, as an inside observer of the swimming world throughout the period, noted during the split that many in the A.S.U. could have been termed professionals by any strict standard.<sup>266</sup> By the time he published his memoirs in 1899 he was of the opinion that in the 1870s there had been a distinct difference between amateurs and professionals, while by 1899 various professional amateurs or “shamateurs” were in actual fact full professionals, but they still managed to maintain their amateur status under A.S.A. rules.<sup>267</sup>

The question of the status of the amateur versus professional did not change after 1899. If anything, the debate over what exactly constituted an amateur became even more confused. The hypocrisy involved in excluding some from the definition, while including others, became more and more openly based upon ideas of class and respectability. Any conception of the division between amateurs and professionals

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<sup>266.</sup> *Swimming Notes and Record*, No. 17, 7 June 1884, p. 1.

<sup>267.</sup> Watson, *Memoirs*, p. 282.



based upon simply a recognition of those who made their living from the activity, as compared to those who simply participated for the love of sport, was effectively eliminated. This was most clearly expressed by continued changes to the A.S.A. definition of an amateur, but it also became an issue debated in the swimming print media.

In common with other sports, notably football, by July 1898 a major debate had erupted in the swimming world over the question of what eventually would be termed “broken time.”<sup>268</sup> At issue was the question of whether or not those who were allowed time off from work, without pay, during the day by their employers to teach swimming to school children or similar groups should be allowed to receive financial compensation for the hours spent away from work. Many within the swimming world thought that the provision of compensation was fair, because those providing instruction were not earning any more money by their actions than they would have done at work, and they were also providing a useful and necessary public service. An article in *The Swimming Magazine* of July 1898 set forth the current debate over the issue by examining the response of the A.S.A. to a recent case in Swindon of swimmers receiving “broken time” payments for instructing swimming to school children;

It is to be presumed that the Swimming Association through its district organizations really means what it says when it states that the objects of its existence are: (a) ‘To promote and encourage the art of swimming,’ and (b) ‘To stimulate public opinion in favour of providing public facilities for acquiring the art of swimming.’ Public opinion, as represented by the Swindon School Board, *has been* stimulated in this

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<sup>268</sup> See, for example, Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 98-117.

direction, and that body has decided that Swindon school children shall be taught swimming. One would have thought that such a decision would have called forth expressions of approval and appreciation. Not so, however. Officialism - bound up in narrow red tape - more observant of the letter than the spirit - and not *very* observant of the letter - practically forbids it, and, on a *misreading* of the laws, the members of the Swindon S.C. who had offered to undertake the instruction of the children, are to be penalised, if they carry out their offer, by being dubbed 'professional.'<sup>269</sup>

The author of the article, presumably William Henry the editor of the journal and Chief Secretary of the R.L.S.S., went on to argue against the decision of the Southern Counties Amateur Swimming Association (S.C.A.S.A.) that the Swindon swimmers would be professionals for accepting "broken time" payments. Key to his argument was the question of what constituted financial benefit or gain from swimming;

But why? Because, forsooth, an amateur may not teach swimming *as a means of pecuniary gain*. As the children must be taught in school hours, when the members of the Swindon S.C. would otherwise be at their daily work, the public spirit of the Great Western Railway Company has been stimulated so far as to allow the men the necessary time away from office or workshop, pay for the time so lost to be stopped. The School Board agree to an arrangement by which this loss of time shall not entail loss of salary. We cannot see where the 'pecuniary gain' comes in. It is simply a *guarantee against pecuniary loss*, and we cannot find any law that will professionalise a man under such circumstances.<sup>270</sup>

To further support his argument, the author noted that amateurs were allowed

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<sup>269.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1 July 1898, pp. 16. Italics are in the original.

<sup>270.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1 July 1898, pp. 16. Italics are in the original



to collect expenses for travelling, to avoid being out of pocket. How then was this circumstance any different?

We do find, however, that Law 2 (*c*) allows amateurs to accept third class railway fares. Again, why? Surely to insure them against pecuniary loss - a wise and considerate allowance. Then, again, school teachers are allowed (Law 2, Note *b*) to teach swimming to their children as part of their ordinary school duties, for which they are paid, and yet do not lose their amateur status. The two points just quoted prove that the Association has admitted the principle that in promoting objects (*a*) and (*b*) no swimmer is to be penalised for accepting conditions which insure him against pecuniary loss. We cannot strain 'insurance against pecuniary loss' to mean 'pecuniary gain.' We submit that in the Swindon case an error has been committed. One could understand, and possibly forgive, a free rendering of a law if it tended to bring about a realisation of the objects quoted, but in this case the decision errs by going outside and beyond the letter of the law, and the result is to stultify a public-spirited attempt to achieve object (*b*).<sup>271</sup>

The issue of broken time was to remain an open point of dispute within organized English swimming until long after 1918. Indeed, in the period prior to the Amsterdam Olympic Games of 1928 there was serious talk within swimming circles about boycotting the games because other countries allowed "broken time" payments to their athletes.<sup>272</sup> The argument presented in the article from *The Swimming Magazine* would seem to be rational and a common sense interpretation of the situation, and one which seemingly satisfied the current definitions of what constituted an amateur. Or did it? What were the aims of the A.S.A. in 1898, and

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<sup>271.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1 July 1898, pp. 16-17. Italics are in the original.

<sup>272</sup> *The Swimming Times*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (February 1928), p. 14

what was the definition of an amateur? In the official A.S.A. Rules for 1898, the second covered the aims of the Association;

- (a) To promote and encourage the Art of Swimming and the game of Water-Polo amongst both sexes. N.B. - The Rules and Laws of the A.S.A. apply to persons of either sex, whether so stated or not.
- (b) To stimulate public opinion in favour of providing proper accommodation and facilities for acquiring and practising the art of swimming.
- (c) To promote and hold Amateur Championships.
- (d) To promote the uniformity of rules for the control and regulation of amateur Swimming and Water-Polo, and the management of all competitions therein.
- (e) To enforce the observance of the laws and rules of the Association, and to deal with any infringement thereof.<sup>273</sup>

In the same handbook, in the section dedicated to the laws of competitive swimming and water polo, the first two laws detailed the official definitions of an amateur and a professional (reproduced in Appendix 3). Notably, amateur swimmers could be school teachers and teach their students how to swim, while being paid, and they could also instruct lifesaving classes and be paid, without losing their amateur status. They could also compete against professional footballers without penalty in most cases. Reviewing these sections of A.S.A. policy, it is clear that the article in *The Swimming Magazine* was correct in its details, and also its interpretation. Understanding A.S.A. policy there should have been no question of the members of the Swindon S.C. *not* being able to receive reimbursement for the time lost from work. Why then was there such a stand against such a policy? The only reasonable explanation would seem to be one based upon class. The exception made in A.S.A. law for school teachers, so that they did not become professionals for teaching

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<sup>273</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1898*, (London: A.S.A., 1898), p. 12.



swimming while being paid, can be seen in the same light. School teachers were likely seen as professional people. The cult of amateurism was very much a middle class creation, and could not easily exclude teachers from the amateur ranks, simply for undertaking their professional obligations. Based upon the evidence given in *The Swimming Magazine* article, however, the members of the Swindon S.C. appear to have been of a humbler rank. They were mentioned as being given time off from offices and workshops. Thus, they were probably clerks and mechanics or technicians.

John Lowerson has written that during the period between 1870 and 1914, the idea of the amateur athlete became the middle class ideal. Further, a certain tension existed *within* this idea, however, as the middle classes were increasingly made up of the members of the new professional classes of the period, who were in essence opposed to professional practice within their sport and recreation.<sup>274</sup>

Similarly, under clause (d) of the professional definition discussed above, the issue of class is central to the allowance of a bath manager being an amateur, not a professional. By not being a direct attendant on patrons within his facility, a bath manager occupied a supervisory or professional position. Such a position most obviously would have been a middle class position. In contrast, a bath attendant provided direct service to a patron; a more menial, and thus a working class occupation.

This change of the amateur definition in 1898 also reveals another trend in swimming legislation that would become an increasingly contentious issue, that of

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<sup>274</sup>. Lowerson, *Sport and the English*, p. 155.

the payment of expenses or salaries for some amateurs. Wray Vamplew has written that when the payment of expenses began to appear in sports, it was the death of true amateurism.<sup>275</sup> Robert Watson had commented on the rise of the “shamateur” earlier in the 1880s and 1890s, but by 1898 the status was perhaps almost confirmed with the institution of policy by the A.S.A. on the subject of expenses for amateurs. Between 1898 and 1918 the A.S.A. regulations that governed the definitions of amateurs and professionals were continually changed, it would appear, to preserve class divisions in the competitive swimming world. It is important to note that as the A.S.A. was the sporting body in control of water polo, and diving up to 1901, the A.S.A. definition of what constituted an amateur applied equally to that discipline.<sup>276</sup> Lifesaving also fell under the amateur definition issued by the A.S.A., as noted in article 2 (c), of the 1898 laws. By 1901 a further amendment to the amateur laws had been made to strengthen the exemption that allowed instructors of lifesaving to be paid or reimbursed for their efforts, while at the same time regular instructors of swimming were still deemed professionals for their activities. Of course, class was not mentioned *explicitly* in the notice issued about the change, but it can be seen to be implicit in the statement;

**SPECIAL NOTICE.**

*LIFE SAVING AND PROFESSIONALISM.*

*None of the standing laws of Amateurism laid down by the A.S.A., A.A.A., N.C.U. and N.S.A., apply to Life Saving, either in the matter of learning, teaching, exhibiting, competing, prizes, payment, or any other*

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<sup>275.</sup> Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play the Game*, p. 199.

<sup>276.</sup> Although in theory the A.S.A. controlled diving at this time, little to nothing was done to organize or promote the activity as either a recreational pursuit or a sport by the executives of the day.



*branch, the A.S.A. being of opinion that the Life Saving land and water drills (including resuscitation) form a higher and combined development of gymnastic exercise, swimming ability and medical knowledge for the benefit of the race, and as such cannot be classified as 'Sport,' or be considered to come within the term 'Athletic Exercises,' specified in Laws 1 and 2 of the A.S.A.*<sup>277</sup>

The mention of 'race' here is interesting, and will be examined in further detail later.

By 1898, school teachers and lifesaving instructors were exempted from some aspects of the amateur provisions legislated by the A.S.A., and these exceptions were reinforced in 1901. Further, joint suspensions were in force between the A.S.A., the A.A.A., the National Cycling Union (N.C.U.), and the National Skating Association (N.S.A.). That is, an amateur suspended or declared a professional by one of these bodies was suspended or declared a professional by all of them. Further change of the amateur definition was necessary, however, because it became harder to exclude those of 'undesirable' class from the swimming world. Starting in 1902 the amateur law was amended to allow the acceptance of expense money in certain circumstances by swimmers or swimming officials.<sup>278</sup> These provisions became more and more detailed, and by 1906 had become quite complex.<sup>279</sup> Several new regulations had been added. It had been decided, for example, that school teachers could teach swimming to their pupils outside of school hours and still remain amateurs, compared to the previous requirement for such instruction to take place during school hours. Further, a large section on the

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<sup>277.</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1901*, p. 26. Italics in the original.

<sup>278.</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1902*, (London: A.S.A., 1902), pp. 20-21.

<sup>279.</sup> See Appendix 3 for the complete text of the 1906 amateur law.

acceptance of expenses had now been added. Amateurs were now able to accept expense payments in a bewildering number of circumstances.

Clearly, although these regulatory changes were ostensibly designed to curb any possible abuses of the amateur regulations, they owed more to a wish to separate the desirable from the undesirable than to any other factor. The limitation of expenses to relatively low amounts, especially in cases where long distances had to be travelled, meant that only those financially better off could take advantage of the expense provisions. This is most evident in Rule 51, exception (f) where the provision is made that only the cheapest forms of travel would be reimbursed for, and hotel expenses were capped at 7s. 6d. a night. Most working class participants in swimming activities were unlikely to be able to travel far from their home towns because of a lack of finances and time. Further, the restrictions on payment of travel expenses only for return tickets on the day of, or following the competition meant that working class competitors were likely more disadvantaged than their middle class counterparts. Travelling the day after a competition would likely have been impossible for a working class competitor, as he could ill afford to miss work, while his better-off colleague likely had more flexibility in his work schedule. Travelling the same day as a competition might be more likely for working men. This could also pose problems, however, for if a competition were run late in the evening a working man might find travelling home a problem.

Further major revisions were made to the A.S.A. amateur laws by 1910, with an even larger number of exceptions to the basic law being required to support this



continued social division.<sup>280</sup> Where once the amateur definition had only filled a paragraph on a page, it now filled several pages in the A.S.A. annual handbook. The change in length alone indicates that the amateur laws were becoming increasingly complex. That this was actually the case is evident from a review of the new laws. Military personnel were now exempt from the amateur laws, according to Law 21, exception (f), even though they could win monetary prizes in many different military competitions. Further, even though the A.D.A. controlled diving, the A.S.A. made mention, in Rule 21, exception (g)(3) of the fact that amateur swimmers involved in diving competitions fell under the A.S.A. amateur law. Souvenirs of any type could also not be accepted without the prior approval of the A.S.A. committee. All of these changes were likely made in order to ensure that swimming remained free of the taint of the wrong kind of individuals, and therefore finer and finer distinctions needed to be made. Further changes in 1911 specified that those attending the Olympic Games did not endanger their amateur status, a reminder of the international debate over “broken time.”<sup>281</sup> In 1912 the exception for military personnel was further revised with the addition of, “*The acceptance of money prizes by Sailors and Marines for purely naval competitions, consisting of firing, boat sailing, and boat pulling, and which are essential to naval training, shall not necessitate the loss of amateur status.*”<sup>282</sup>

Whatever the social divide along the lines of amateur/professional, swimming provision *also* illustrated divisions within the swimming world. From

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<sup>280</sup>. See Appendix 3 for the complete text of the 1910 amateur law.

<sup>281</sup>. A.S.A., *Handbook for 1911*, (London: A.S.A., 1911), p. 19.

<sup>282</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1912*, (London: A.S.A., 1912), p. 19.

before the introduction of the first Baths and Washhouses Act in 1846 there had been differences in the level of provision of swimming facilities. Early private baths facilities inevitably catered for the more prosperous. The Baths and Washhouses Act of 1846 reinforced these divisions by authorising local authorities to provide three or more separate classes of baths within facilities they built.<sup>283</sup>

Looking at early, privately run swimming pools, it is clear that the separation of swimmers by class was not a new concept when the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, formalised it. In his survey of the sanitary conditions in London, published in 1842, Edwin Chadwick noted that in the City Road there were a pair of swimming pools open to the public at a charge. One of these pools was more expensively appointed, charging a shilling for entry. The other pool was not so well provided for and cost only six pence for entry. In addition to these two baths, Chadwick also mentioned that there was a private establishment in Westminster which contained an unspecified number of swimming pools. These pools had been specifically constructed for the use of the working class. A charge of three pence was made for their use.<sup>284</sup> Later, in 1854, George Cape, the secretary of the Lambeth Baths and Wash-House Company, a private company, issued a small book on the subject of baths and washhouses. He noted that the Lambeth Baths contained two swimming pools, one designated as first class, and the other as second class. Even in the language used - class - the issue of social class was evident.<sup>285</sup> The first class bath

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<sup>283.</sup> See Appendix 9 for the text of the Baths and Washhouses Act.

<sup>284.</sup> Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population*, p. 317.

<sup>285.</sup> See Asa Briggs, "The Language of 'Class' in Early Nineteenth-Century England," Asa Briggs, *The Collected Essays of Asa Briggs*, Vol.1 (Brighton: The



had a fountain in its centre, and was considered to be the more opulent of the two pools.<sup>286</sup> Thus, even *after* the introduction of the Baths and Washhouses Act, there was a continued division of swimmers in those pools not covered by the provisions of the Act.

This division of swimmers into different classifications of swimming pools continued throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. In those areas where larger baths establishments could be built, multiple swimming pools were constructed on the same site, as was the case in Islington, Marylebone, Paddington, and St. Pancras in London, and also in Manchester and other provincial cities.<sup>287</sup> After accounting for the fact that facilities with multiple swimming pools often set one aside for use by women, the remaining pools were divided into first, second and sometimes third class swimming pools. The lower the class of the pool, the cheaper the entry charge made for its use, and thus the lower the social tone of the experience for swimmers. In places where it was either physically or financially not possible to build multiple pools at a location, then a rotating schedule of use of the pool was drawn up, specifying when each class of swimmers could use the pool.<sup>288</sup>

It is also important to note that the level of technology available for keeping a pool clean affected when certain classes of people could use a swimming pool.

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Harvester Press Limited, 1985), 3-33.

<sup>286.</sup> Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, pp. 48 and frontispiece.

<sup>287.</sup> For the exact distribution of swimming pools in the named locations see Appendices 4 and 5.

<sup>288.</sup> See for example the hours of the Moss Side Baths in Manchester for 1906; MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 12, fols. 98-99. Glued in report on hours of operation of Victoria Baths and Moss Side Baths

Generally speaking, there was no filtration of swimming pool water between 1800 and 1918. This meant that the water remained dirty until the pool was either partially or completely refilled with fresh water. Clean water days, therefore, were generally reserved for use by higher class patrons.<sup>289</sup>

Over time, as architects became more adept at building swimming pools and baths buildings, the distinctions between the various classes of baths became somewhat standardized. By 1894 Robert Owen Allsop, an architect known for building several civic baths establishments, produced a textbook on the subject of designing and constructing a bath and washhouse. Very early on in his work he states, “The question of *class* naturally requires consideration at an early stage. Much in this way depends upon the place and position, and the neighbourhood where the baths are erected.”<sup>290</sup> This concentration on class was a continuous theme in swimming pool design manuals up to the First World War. In 1906 Alfred W. S. Cross, a noted architect of the period, produced his own handbook on the design of public baths and washhouses.<sup>291</sup> He was later, in conjunction with his son, to produce an official manual on the construction of baths, washhouses, and swimming pools for the A.S.A. in 1930.<sup>292</sup> In his 1906 work he recommended that there should be at least two swimming pools in any public bath facility, one for first class use and

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<sup>289</sup>. For more on this topic, see Chapter 8.

<sup>290</sup>. Robert Owen Allsop, *Public Baths and Wash-Houses*, (London: E. & F. N. Spon, 1894), p. 8.

<sup>291</sup>. Alfred W. S. Cross, *Public Baths and Wash-Houses*, (London: B. T. Batsford, 1906). Hereafter cited as Cross, 1906.

<sup>292</sup>. Alfred W. S. Cross and Kenneth M. B. Cross, *Modern Public Baths and Wash-Houses*, (London: Amateur Swimming Association, 1930).



one for second class use. If no provision could be made for a women's bath, then time should be set aside for women's use of the other baths as appropriate. He recommended that the first class swimming pool should measure 100 feet by 40 feet to best conform to standard racing distances. The second class and women's baths, should they exist, need not be this size. He suggested that a second class bath need only be 75 feet by 35 feet, and a women's bath 60 feet by 30 feet.<sup>293</sup> Clearly Cross was suggesting here that users of the first class pool took priority over the users of all other swimming pools within a baths facility. By the start of the twentieth century there was clearly a market for the books being produced by Allsop and Cross.

Increasingly from 1878 onwards, when amendments to the Baths and Washhouses Act allowed municipalities to construct and operate indoor swimming pools, the number of municipal swimming pools had grown at a great rate. Ready-made plans for swimming pools, with all of the considerations surrounding social regulation already addressed, were in demand. Clearly, organized swimming came heavily-laden with various forms of social division and regulation. Though not unique to swimming, these forms of social regulation remained present and obvious in the swimming world for much longer than in other areas of sport and recreation, notably cricket, football, and rugby.

The divide between amateur and professional swimmers was most strongly observed in 1918, but had been developing since 1869. The laws implemented to enforce the amateur and professional division became increasingly complex between 1869 and 1918, the better to maintain the class divide in organized swimming. In

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<sup>293</sup> Cross, 1906, pp. 46, 58.

theory anyone who made money from swimming was deemed a professional.

Certain groups of amateur swimmers, however, had little trouble in securing payments (prizes and expenses), especially after 1898. Behind the entire issue lay the ubiquitous issue of social class. When swimming became hugely popular in the later nineteenth century, class became important even in the new municipal pools built across the country.



## Chapter 5: Municipal Authorities and Swimming

The provision of plunge or swimming baths, as swimming pools were familiarly known to the Victorians and Edwardians, was initially a matter of private investment. Right up to the end of the nineteenth century the building of swimming pools was funded by local public subscriptions, joint stock companies, or non-profit bodies. The first swimming pool in York, for example, was opened in 1837 as a privately funded bath on the Manor Shore of the River Ouse. Over time, however, Victorian cities came to be characterized by the lavish provision of public facilities and buildings. Town halls, libraries, railway stations, schools, even the construction of sewers, all became features of the distinctive Victorian urban landscape.

Swimming pools were a late addition to this list.<sup>294</sup> After the introduction of the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, privately-financed pools soon gave way to municipal involvement in swimming provision.<sup>295</sup> In 1828 the Corporation of Liverpool opened the first municipal swimming pool in England, the ‘St. George’s Baths,’ on the banks of the River Mersey. This was an example which other towns wished to copy. Throughout the century civically-built public baths, funded by local authorities from their rates, came to form the great bulk of swimming pool provision

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<sup>294</sup> For more on the development of the Victorian city see, for example, Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, (London: Odhams Press Limited, 1963); or H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, 2 vols, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973).

<sup>295</sup> 9 & 10 Vict., c. 74. For purposes of this chapter the term “municipal” will be used generally to refer to all local governmental bodies in England, whether they be civic corporations, parish councils, or urban district councils. In cases where only one single type of local governmental authority is referred to, the appropriate term will be used.

in England. Baths appeared particularly rapidly in major areas of population, especially in many northern towns where swimming was a common activity in the natural environment.

Municipal provision was accelerated by the passing of the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, which provided an impetus for cities and towns to build their own baths. The Act was of course only one of many pieces of legislation from that period concerned with the sanitary condition of towns, and the living conditions of the urban poor. Although the Act itself was not championed by the great sanitary reformer of the period, Edwin Chadwick, it was clearly consistent with his views on improving the sanitary environment of cities and towns. In his famous 1842 *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*, Chadwick had made passing reference to swimming pools by noting that there existed at least two pools on a site in the City Road, as well as an unspecified number in Westminster.<sup>296</sup> Overall, however, he was more concerned with the provision of water and the proper construction of sewers, the provision of which were necessary for the proper provision of wash and swimming baths, and laundries to the populace at large.

The *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, was concerned only with the provision of wash baths for individuals, and washing facilities for clothing and house linen.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population*, p. 317. For more on Chadwick and the debate over sanitation and cleanliness from the period see S. E. Finer, *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1952); and Christopher Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain, 1800-1854*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>297</sup> See Appendix 9 for the complete text of *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*.



This was obviously intended to address the shortages and inadequacies in housing facilities. Urban people had few (and inadequate) places at home in which to wash themselves or their possessions. The Act also made provision for the regulation of public bathing places, in essence large open-air pools. While the wording of the Act seems to indicate that its authors were thinking of providing such facilities simply for their sanitary function, they could also be seen as authorizing the setting up and regulation of open air swimming areas.<sup>298</sup> Early amendments to the initial Act were made by the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1847*, which allowed for charges to be made at what were termed “open bathing places,” in essence outdoor swimming pools.<sup>299</sup> Other amendments and additions to the act were contained in the *Towns Improvement Clauses Act, 1847*, and the *Towns Police Clauses Act, 1847*.<sup>300</sup> By the end of 1847 then, municipal authorities with responsibility for collecting the poor law rate were empowered to set up boards of commissioners to provide baths and washhouses in their district. These facilities could include wash baths, laundries and outdoor swimming areas. Provision was made that if these establishments proved too expensive to maintain they could be sold off. Most importantly, however, these facilities were to be supported by contributions from the local rates, and had a maximum charge set for the various services they provided. For the period immediately following 1846, the only charge of concern to swimmers was the ½ d. maximum charge for use of “open bathing places.” *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, and the amendments made to it in 1847, did not include explicit provision for

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<sup>298.</sup> See, *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, Schedule B, in Appendix 9.

<sup>299.</sup> 10 & 11 Vict., c. 61.

<sup>300.</sup> 10 & 11 Vict., c. 34; 10 & 11 Vict., c. 89.

indoor or covered swimming pools. The provision of such pools, however, seems to have figured in the early plans of most of the larger centres, and will be revealed by several case studies set out later in this chapter. It would appear that municipal authorities circumvented the wording of the Baths and Washhouses Act by terming these swimming pools, “plunge baths,” and justified their construction on the grounds that they were meant to bathe large numbers of people at cheaper costs and in less time than individual wash baths. Victorian city-fathers were, as ever, anxious to get the best deal for their money. In this case, more people could be cleaned communally than by individual baths.

Adoption of the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, and its various amendments was not a uniform practice amongst English urban authorities, i.e., provincial town councils and urban district councils, London vestries and then, later, London boroughs. As a piece of permissive as opposed to mandatory legislation, municipal authorities had to decide to adopt the Act for their area of authority, rather than having it automatically put into force. Furthermore, as the Act was concerned with baths, washhouses and also laundries, even those authorities which *did* adopt the Act did not have to erect the *full* range of facilities allowed by the Act. This led to a widely varied patchwork of arrangements in civic provision of swimming facilities throughout England. For example, in 1847 when the Corporation of Leeds Council adopted the Baths and Washhouses Acts they immediately sent off a sub-committee of investigation to Liverpool and Manchester, to view the baths there before deciding to build baths in Leeds.<sup>301</sup> Assuming that this committee of

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<sup>301</sup>. West Yorkshire Archives Service (W.Y.A.S.), Sheepscar, Leeds, LC/TC1/2, *Leeds Borough Council Municipal Report Book*, Vol. 2, Report of the Baths and



investigation visited the St. George's Baths, they would have been viewing public (i.e. municipal) baths in Liverpool. In Manchester, however, they would have been viewing private facilities, as that Corporation was not to adopt the Baths and Washhouses Acts until 1876.<sup>302</sup> Further, in Liverpool they would likely have seen the swimming pool at the St. George's Baths, while no swimming pools are known to have existed in Manchester at this time. The Leeds committee, therefore, were faced by two rather different models of provision of baths to the populace. This might partially explain why Leeds, although it adopted the Baths and Washhouses Act in 1847, did not actually erect any swimming pools or baths facilities, and therefore make use of the powers of the Act, until the 1890s.<sup>303</sup>

Most of the surveys of bathing facilities in the nineteenth century date from the 1850s and 1860s, and provide an informative illustration of the provision of swimming pools during that period. The surveys concentrate most of their attention on the state of affairs in London. Enough provincial evidence exists, however, to provide an outline of bathing and swimming provision outside of the capital. In 1854, George A. Cape produced his general survey on baths and washhouses, in which he also included some information on swimming and swimming pools. Cape was the secretary of the Lambeth Baths and Wash-House Company, a private

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Washhouses Committee, 26 October 1847.

<sup>302</sup>. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 1, Minutes of 17 August 1876.

<sup>303</sup>. See Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, pp. A164-175, where she reports on the construction dates of civic baths in Leeds. The first bath was not built by the council until 1895. Note that the page references in Campbell given above refer to the appendix of her work, hence the 'A' designator, as the appendix is numbered separately from the main text of her study.

business running the “National Baths” in Lambeth at this time, and he claimed to have been moved to write the work to provide information to the public on a subject for which information was lacking.<sup>304</sup> He reported that when *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, was passed there were two private baths establishments in London, neither of which contained a swimming pool.<sup>305</sup> He also recorded which London parishes had constructed swimming pools up until the time he had published his work (see Table 2). Cape also provided a less detailed survey of baths provision in the provinces. He noted that in 1854 there were bath facilities in Bilston, Birmingham, Coventry, Hereford, Hull, Liverpool (three baths sites), Maidstone, Nottingham, Plymouth, Preston, Sunderland, and Wolverhampton. Almost all of these locations also had at least one, and sometimes more than one swimming pool available for general use. Cape recorded the distribution of swimming pools as Bilston (one pool), Birmingham (two pools), Coventry (one pool), Hull (one pool), Liverpool (three baths sites, five pools), Maidstone (one pool), Nottingham (two pools), Preston (one pool), and Wolverhampton (one pool).<sup>306</sup> He did not, however, specify if these baths and swimming pools were municipally owned and operated, or privately run. The Liverpool examples were almost certainly civic baths, as the city had possessed a municipal swimming pool from 1828. We also know that the list is incomplete if it is supposed to contain both municipal and private bath facilities. It does not, for example, include the Manor Shore, or Marygate Baths, in York, which dated from 1837, nor does it include the Peerless Pool.

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<sup>304</sup> Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, pp. 3, 5-6.

<sup>305</sup> Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, p. 39.

<sup>306</sup> Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, p. 48.



Cape's survey of baths was followed in 1861 by the previously mentioned study produced by members of the London Swimming Club.<sup>307</sup> This work dealt only with London swimming locations, and does not differentiate between municipal and private ventures. It lists a total of six open air swimming locations and nine establishments in London that had covered swimming baths by 1861. Of the outdoor swimming locations, four could be considered to be municipal (although only in the broadest sense), these being the Serpentine, the bathing pond in Sion Park, the Thames, and the Victoria Park bathing lake. Of the nine indoor swimming pools listed, only three are definitely municipal facilities, the Bloomsbury; the Marylebone; and the St. George's Baths, Davies Street. A fourth facility might possibly have been municipal, the St. George's Baths, Pimlico, Upper Belgrave Place. The remaining five facilities were most certainly private.<sup>308</sup>

In 1870 Dr. R. E. Dudgeon, MD, conducted his own survey of London swimming pools. A proponent of swimming as an exercise that promoted health, Dudgeon seems to have undertaken his survey in order to provide his readers with the best possible advice on which baths were healthy to swim in, and which were substandard, unhealthy, and thus to be avoided. Altogether, Dudgeon surveyed twenty-two bathing facilities in London that possessed swimming pools. For the most part he does not differentiate between municipal and private facilities in his survey. However, he makes the occasional comment about a certain bath being more

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<sup>307.</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>308.</sup> Anonymous, *Manual of the London Swimming Club*, pp. 39-41. The private facilities were the Albion Bath, the Lambeth Baths, the Metropolitan Baths, the North London Baths, and the "Wenlock."

‘select,’ or another being of ‘inferior quality,’ which might indicate a difference between municipal and private provision.<sup>309</sup>

Dr. Dudgeon was the first author to provide extended information about the actual extent of swimming provision within the new facilities that London vestries were building. He reported, for example, that although the combined vestries of St. Giles and St. George, Bloomsbury had two swimming pools, in the Endell Street Baths, these pools were both extremely small and hardly suited for swimming at all. Both were irregularly shaped, oblong pools of twelve yards length and ten yards width at one end, eight yards width at the other.<sup>310</sup> Some of the other baths were not much better. Dr. Dudgeon’s survey included measurements for almost all of the metropolitan baths, whether publicly or privately owned. He recorded the Bermondsey Bath as being thirteen yards by nine yards, the First Class swimming pool in the Marylebone Swimming Baths as fifteen yards by eight yards, both swimming pools in the Poplar Baths (All Saints parish) as being fifteen yards by nine yards, and the St. James’ Swimming Bath as thirteen yards by nine yards.<sup>311</sup> With the exception of the Paddington Baths, which were built after the publication of his work, Dudgeon provided comment and measurements for all of the baths that would later be mentioned in the printed material distributed by the vestry of Lambeth, in preparation for a vote on the adoption of the Baths and Washhouses Act in that

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<sup>309.</sup> Dudgeon, *The Swimming Baths of London*, pp.12-22. For specific examples of Dudgeon’s rating of baths for their “class” see his description of the Kensington Baths on page 17, and his description of the Wenlock Baths on page 18.

<sup>310.</sup> Dudgeon, *The Swimming Baths of London*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>311.</sup> Dudgeon, *The Swimming Baths of London*, pp. 14, 17, 19, 21. Dudgeon’s text seems to indicate only one bath in operation at the Bermondsey site, the second bath of the 1876 Lambeth survey cited below may therefore be a later addition.



parish.<sup>312</sup> Only the St. George's Swimming Baths, Buckingham Palace Road, at twenty yards by eight yards, and the St. Pancras Swimming Baths, at nineteen yards by eight yards for both swimming pools, came close to the measurements of standard twenty-five metre swimming pools of the later twentieth century. There was no standard format or agreement about the size a swimming pool should be at this time. Indeed, the standardization of pools came much later, and was a function of the need to be able to compare distances and times in competitive swimming.<sup>313</sup> As Dudgeon commented, "With few exceptions the London swimming baths are too small. When any considerable number of bathers are in the water, then there is hardly room for the swimmers, who are consequently continually butting against, or kicking, or even scratching one another in a manner anything but favorable [sic] for the preservation of good temper - a most essential requisite in a hygienic point of view."<sup>314</sup> He goes on to point out that the majority of baths in the capital, both public and private, were ill provided with lighting of any sort, making them quite dark. They also suffered from a lack of proper air circulation, making them humid

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<sup>312.</sup> For more about this issue, see Table 3 and below.

<sup>313.</sup> Dudgeon, *The Swimming Baths of London*, pp. 20-21. The standardization of competitive swimming course distances at 25 metres and 50 metres, thus making 25 metre and 50 metre swimming pools the standard sizes of pool built, was a development of the internationalization of swimming competition begun with the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, and based upon a need to be able to compare times, and thus records, over set distances. It was eventually mandated by *F.I.N.A.*, the international governing body of swimming, after the Second World War. Prior to 1918, however, swimming competitions were generally held in whatever sized body of water was available and the standardization of course distances was barely an issue, and thus forms no part of this study.

<sup>314.</sup> Dudgeon, *The Swimming Baths of London*, p. 25.

and stuffy.<sup>315</sup>

It seems clear, therefore, that up until the early 1870s at least, while London had swimming pools, the provision of swimming facilities within the capital were not built with serious swimmers in mind. The sizes of most public baths of this period suggest that London parish councils focussed more on the wash baths and laundry aspect of the facilities, allocating more space and resources for these functions. There was very good reason for this, of course, notably growing contemporary concerns about personal and communal hygiene. There were, however, exceptions to this rule, notably the cases of the Parish of Marylebone, the Parish of St. George, Hanover Square, and the Parish of Paddington. Either through the provision of a larger than average number of swimming pools, or through the provision of larger swimming pools, these facilities were of greater use to swimmers of the time.

Bathing and swimming was, like most aspects of Victorian urban life, periodically transformed by new Parliamentary legislation. The great *Public Health Act, 1875*, produced critical change.<sup>316</sup> It was a sweeping Act that regulated many areas of life not previously touched by the hand of government. Importantly, the Act also included clauses that specifically referred to swimming, and to the provision of swimming facilities. The Act allowed new urban local authorities (other than parishes and vestries) to adopt the provisions of the Baths and Washhouses Act. It further allowed local authorities to supply water to baths and washhouses on terms to

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<sup>315</sup> Dudgeon, *The Swimming Baths of London*, p. 25.

<sup>316</sup> 38 & 39 Vict., c. 55.



be negotiated by the authority involved. These authorities were also empowered to provide water, free of charge, to baths and washhouses that were not run as private profit-making ventures, or were not already supported by the local poor or borough rates. Finally, the Act incorporated all of the clauses related to public out-of-doors bathing from the *Towns Police Clauses Act, 1847*.

Three years later further legislative changes were made to the laws governing Baths and Washhouses with the enactment of *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1878*.<sup>317</sup> It was this set of amendments that finally set out in law the ability of local authorities to construct or purchase covered (i.e. indoor) swimming baths. It also decreed that the authority controlling a facility containing covered swimming baths could close the pools for a period not exceeding five months, between 1 November and 30 March. During this time the closed pool could be turned into a gymnasium, or other type of facility designed to provide a means of “healthful recreation.” The closed swimming baths were explicitly *not* allowed to be used for music performances or dancing. The schedule of charges attached to the Act allowed for a maximum charge of 8d. per person for use of a first class bath, 4d. per person for use of a second class bath, and 2d. per person for use of a third or any lower class of bath. This Act, allowing both swimming and gymnastics under the same municipally-financed roof, was clearly intended to tackle the broader problems of the physical well being of the urban population. Swimming had clearly come of age; being viewed as an important element in the development of the masses’ physical condition. That this legislation was passed less than three years after Captain

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<sup>317</sup> 41 & 42 Vict., c. 14.

Webb's famous cross channel swim may also indicate that the government was responding to the swimming craze created by that event.

Three further sets of amendments to *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, were passed during the nineteenth century. The amendments of 1882 were concerned with clarifying some of the language introduced in the 1878 amendments, and they did not introduce any new powers.<sup>318</sup> Amendments in 1896 specifically repealed, for the County of London only, the restriction on not using pools closed for the winter months for music or dancing (provided that the required licence was applied for and granted).<sup>319</sup> The amendments of 1899 repealed the same restriction for the rest of England.<sup>320</sup> After this time, no further changes to Act were made prior to 1918.

After the introduction of the 1878 amendments to the Baths and Washhouses Act, one further survey of the baths of London survives. Published in 1885, William Smith's *The Swimming Club Directory* detailed not only indoor and outdoor swimming pools across London, but also listed swimming clubs in London and the provinces.<sup>321</sup> Smith was the secretary of the Llandudno Swimming Club, and appears to have been attempting to provide a service to swimmers who were looking

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<sup>318</sup>. 45 & 46 Vict., c. 30.

<sup>319</sup>. 59 & 60 Vict., c. 59.

<sup>320</sup> 62 & 63 Vict., c. 29.

<sup>321</sup>. William Smith, *The Swimming Club Directory 1885, For the United Kingdom*, (Llandudno: William Smith, 1885). The title would appear to indicate that this was intended to be one in a series of works, but it seems to have been a one off production. A copy is held in the British Library.



for baths while travelling across the country.<sup>322</sup> He may also have been trying to break into the world of sports publishing (a growing publishing industry at the time). Like Dudgeon, Smith did not specify whether the baths he was reporting on were municipally or privately owned. In total he names forty-three swimming pools, indoor and outdoor, plus the Thames, that were either then open for use in London or soon to be completed.<sup>323</sup>

It is clear that after the introduction of *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, local authorities began to enter into the construction of baths facilities. Between 1846 and 1885, the provision of municipal baths facilities increased, at least in London. By 1854 there was also provincial provision of bathing facilities, at least some of which was municipal, and likely a result of the Act. One way of illustrating the similarities and differences in development between local authorities in the provision of swimming facilities is to offer a series of case studies. The London Boroughs of Holborn and Lambeth, and the city of Manchester provide contrasting examples of municipal development, in areas that differed in the size of their populations, and their public policies towards the provision of swimming pools.

Prior to the reorganization of London into boroughs in 1900-01, the majority of what became Holborn consisted of the parishes of St. Giles in the Fields and St. George, Bloomsbury, which for purposes of enacting the Baths and Washhouses Act had formed a joint vestry.<sup>324</sup> The joint vestry adopted the Act early in 1850 and the

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<sup>322</sup> Smith, *The Swimming Club Directory*, p. 3.

<sup>323</sup> Smith, *The Swimming Club Directory*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>324</sup> Holborn Borough Council destroyed the majority of its committee minutes, including the Baths and Washhouses papers, prior to amalgamating with the Borough of Camden in the 1960s. The surviving papers, however, provide an



commissioners were appointed, and held their first meeting in March of that year.<sup>325</sup>

In contrast to the experience in Lambeth, detailed below, the commissioners of the joint vestry formed in Bloomsbury very quickly set about their work and arranged for the provision of a baths establishment for the people in their district. Initially, the commissioners considered purchasing the existing “National Baths,” a private concern that existed in Holborn. This idea was not pursued, however, and by December of 1851 tenders were being issued for the construction of a municipal bath establishment on Endell Street, near Lascelles Court.<sup>326</sup> Provision was made for the inclusion of two plunge baths, basically swimming pools but so named, perhaps, to conform to the letter of the *Baths and Washhouse Act, 1846*. The construction of the two swimming pools may have been the most problematic aspect of the project, as they were the last areas of the baths establishment to be completed. Eventually, however, the facility opened to the public at the end of June 1853.<sup>327</sup> The two swimming pools were, however, quite small; Dr. Dudgeon reported on their small size and irregular shape in his survey of 1870.<sup>328</sup> Their primary use, initially, seems

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insight into developments in the provision of swimming in the area that became the borough from 1850 to 1897. Electronic mail from Aiden Flood, Archivist, Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre, 1 November 2001.

<sup>325</sup> Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre (CLSAC), London, CO/GG/BA/2/1 (B/7C23), *St. Giles & Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Rough Minutes March 1850*, fols. 2-3, Minutes of 15 March 1850.

<sup>326</sup> CLSAC, CO/GG/BA/2/1 (B/7C23) *St. Giles & Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Rough Minutes March 1850*, fols. 2-3, 60, Minutes of 15 March 1850 and Minutes of 12 December 1851.

<sup>327</sup> CLSAC, CO/GG/BA/2/1 (B/7C23) *St. Giles & Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Rough Minutes March 1850*, fols. 118-119, 127, Minutes of 10 June 1853 and 1 July 1853.

<sup>328</sup> Dudgeon, *The Swimming Baths of London*, pp. 20-21.



to have been as large multi-person baths, rather than as swimming spaces. Almost immediately after the opening of the baths establishment, for example, the commissioners resolved that boys of the Ragged School be allowed half price entrance to the second class plunge bath on Wednesdays from 09:00 to 11:00. There were to be no concessions, however, on the charge for individual wash baths. Charges were on the higher end of the scale for the time, with the normal admission charge to the second class plunge bath being 2d.<sup>329</sup>

Although the baths commissioners for the joint vestry of St. Giles and St. George had been quite active in the rapid provision of baths for the district, they were also quite conservative when it came to any innovation in the use of the establishment. It appears that the commissioners saw the provision of the Endell Street Baths as essentially a hygienic enterprise. In 1890 the Metropolitan Police "E" Division Rowing and Swimming Club, based at the Bow Street Station, wrote to the commissioners asking if it was possible to obtain a concessionary rate to the baths for members, understanding that a minimum number of tickets might have to be purchased. This request was refused by the commissioners because they felt granting such a request would be against the objects on which the baths were established. A similar request was received in 1891 in regards to the students of Vere Street Board School, Drury Lane. Again, the commissioners declined to grant the request, citing the fact that such an undertaking would be against the objects of

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<sup>329</sup>. CLSAC, CO/GG/BA/2/1 (B/7C23) *St. Giles & Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Rough Minutes March 1850*, fol. 143, Minutes of 29 July 1853.

the baths.<sup>330</sup> After a long series of negotiations students from the School Board for London were admitted to the swimming pools, beginning in late 1891, at a reduced charge of 1d., but only on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 09:00 to 11:00.<sup>331</sup>

Starting in January of 1892 the baths commissioners began to close the swimming pools for various periods of time over the winter. Initially, the closure was only for a period of two months, from the start of January to 1 March 1892.<sup>332</sup> By 1894, however, the winter closure was running until the end of March, and by 1895 the closure was starting at the beginning of November and continuing until the end of March.<sup>333</sup> These closures were consistent with the powers of closure granted by the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1878*. At no point, however, was the establishment of a gymnasium or other facility as authorized by those same amendments considered by the baths commissioners. It seems likely that the Commissioners were either not prepared to spend the money required to convert the swimming pools into gymnasiums over the winter months, thereby simply saving money by closing the pools, or considered that there were already enough local

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<sup>330</sup> CLSAC, London, CO/GG/BA/1/1 (B/7D1) *St. Giles Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Minutes*, pp. 3-4, 74-5, Minutes of 5 June 1890 and 30 April 1891.

<sup>331</sup> CLSAC, London, CO/GG/BA/1/1 (B/7D1) *St. Giles Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Minutes*, pp. 80-81, 133, 215-17, 312, Minutes of 14 May 1891, 27 November 1891, 28 July 1892, and 27 April 1893.

<sup>332</sup> CLSAC, London, CO/GG/BA/1/1 (B/7D1) *St. Giles Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Minutes*, p. 139, Minutes of 31 December 1891.

<sup>333</sup> CLSAC, London, CO/GG/BA/1/2 (B/7D2) *St. Giles Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Minutes*, pp. 16-17, 109, 166, 220-21, 272-73, 327, 380, Minutes of 27 March 1894, 21 March 1895, 17 October 1895, 19 March 1896, 15 October 1896, 18 March 1897, and 21 October 1897.



facilities that allowed for the practice of gymnastics.

It is apparent that the baths commissioners for the joint vestries of St. Giles in the Fields and St. George, Bloomsbury, were inherently conservative in their approach to managing the baths establishment. Although they were early adopters of the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, they adhered to the strict letter of the law when it came to operating the baths. Swimming pools may have been included as part of the original design of the baths, but they were termed “plunge baths” and seem to have been regarded by the commissioners as large pools for the washing of large numbers of people, rather than as places to swim. Even after 1878, when amendments to the Act allowed for covered swimming pools to be supported by local rates, there was little change. The commissioners may have used the term “swimming baths” rather than plunge baths, but the continued emphasis seems to have been on cleanliness, rather than swimming. In 1892, when structural improvements had to be made to the baths (in order to prevent part of the building from collapsing), the suggestion was made that the existing pools should be renovated, making them either larger, or combining them into a single pool. Nothing came of this.<sup>334</sup> The suggestion was evidently kept in mind, however, because in 1918 Agnes Campbell could record that the Endell Street Baths, still the only municipal baths facility in what had then become Holborn, had been extended in 1902. The measurements of the swimming baths after this extension were 90 feet by 28 feet and 50 feet by 40 feet. These were significantly changed from the

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<sup>334</sup> CLSAC, CO/GG/BA/1/1 (B/7D1), *St. Giles Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Minutes*, pp. 215-17, 236, Minutes of 28 July 1892 and 29 September 1892.

measurements given by Dr. Dudgeon in 1870.<sup>335</sup>

A great deal of the conservatism among the commissioners was likely due to financial concerns. The commissioners, it would seem, wanted to provide minimal facilities, at the cheapest cost to the ratepayers, while levying high admission charges, and spending as little as possible on operations at the baths. For example, when the commissioners finally decided to implement a by-law requiring all swimmers using the pools to wear swimming drawers or dresses, they decided that such costumes would be available from the baths to ensure compliance. The commissioners approved the expenditure of a maximum sum of £10 by the baths superintendent on costumes or the materials to make the same. The superintendent, seemingly well aware of the need for a strict controlling of costs managed the task while only spending a total of £5. 0s. and 9d.<sup>336</sup> The late adoption of such a costume by-law by the commissioners is one of the rare cases when they were at odds with generally accepted practice. The S.A.G.B. and later the A.S.A. had been promoting the wearing of costumes since the later 1870s, at least in public contests, and the first A.S.A. costume law had been introduced in 1890.<sup>337</sup> Even in this area of regulation of social values and “modesty,” financial concerns intrude. Originally a charge was to be made for the use of the drawers and dresses provided by the Endell Baths to bathers who did not own their own, but after much debate the commissioners

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<sup>335.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, pp. A86-91. For Dudgeon’s measurements, see above.

<sup>336.</sup> CLSAC, CO/GG/BA/1/2 (B/7D2), *St. Giles Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Minutes*, p. 220-21, Minutes of 19 March 1896.

<sup>337.</sup> See the discussion on swimming costume in Chapter 3 for more information.



decided that costumes should be made available at no charge to swimmers.<sup>338</sup> Prior to the implementation of the by-law requiring the wearing of costume it is unclear exactly what the practice was at the baths. Likely there was a combination of swimmers who provided their own swimming costumes while others swam in the nude, at least during male swimming times. Female swimmers likely were wearing costumes whenever they went swimming at the Endell Baths, as pressure to cover up had been greater on women for a longer period of time. In 1913 the admission charges for the Endell Street Baths were still quite high, at 6d. for adult entry into the first class swimming pool, although only 2d. for entry into the second class pool.<sup>339</sup> There was clearly a concern for both the financial stability of the baths, and for social exclusion between the classes. Very few of the working class would be able to afford the 6d. fee for swimming in the first class swimming pool on a regular basis.

In contrast to the other districts surveyed, in the vestry, later the Borough, of Lambeth in London, there was long standing opposition to the implementation of the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*. Exactly *why* there was opposition is not made clear. After the first attempt to introduce the Act was blocked by ratepayers in a parish council meeting in 1876, a period of almost fifteen years was to pass before the Act was actually adopted in 1891. This suggests that the process for the adoption of the Act faced stiff opposition. It seems likely that opposition to the adoption of

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<sup>338</sup> CLSAC, CO/GG/BA/1/2 (B/7D2), *St. Giles Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Minutes*, p. 220-21, 227-29, 238, 272-73, 278-80, Minutes of 19 March 1896, 16 April 1896, 21 May 1896, 15 October 1896, 19 November 1896.

<sup>339</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, pp. A86-91.



the Act was based upon the possibility of an increase of several pennies to be added to the vestry rates, upon the Act's adoption, in order to pay for the construction allowed under the Act. The first attempt to have the legislation implemented by the vestry council was made in March 1876, when a group of ratepayers in the parish petitioned the vestry to hold a vote on whether or not the Act should be adopted.<sup>340</sup> However, it was not until another vote was held in November 1890 for the purpose of adopting the Baths and Washhouses Act and its various amendments, that the Act was finally adopted.<sup>341</sup> But, as part of the preparations for the 1876 vote on adopting the Act, the vestry prepared and circulated an agenda for the meeting which offers a vital account about the provision of baths facilities across London. The agenda included descriptions of those vestries within London who had *already* adopted the Act, as well as the baths erected by these vestries. A total of eleven vestries or joint vestries had adopted the Baths and Washhouses Act by 1876. Ten of these vestries or joint vestries had included swimming pools in the baths built under the powers granted by the Act (see Table 3). Only a minority, therefore, of London vestries and governmental districts had adopted the Baths and Washhouses Act by 1876.<sup>342</sup> The

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<sup>340.</sup> LAML, P12/80/1/2, Petition by Ratepayers to the Vestry on the issue of the Baths and Washhouses Act.

<sup>341.</sup> LAML, P12/41, *Lambeth Baths & Washhouses Committee Minutes 1891-1897*, p. 1, Minutes of 5 February 1891.

<sup>342.</sup> Prior to 1855 London consisted of 78 metropolitan parishes and 8 non-parochial districts, plus the Corporation of London proper. In 1855 the Metropolis Local Management Act changed this to 23 self-governing parishes, 15 District Boards of Works and the Corporation of London. These arrangements were changed yet again in 1899 by the London Government Act which created 28 Metropolitan Boroughs, including the City of Westminster, and again recognized the independence of the Corporation of London. John Davis, *Reforming London The London Government Problem 1855 - 1900*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 12-13, 244, 276-77.



inclusion of swimming facilities is interesting, however, because the original Baths and Washhouses Act, and the 1847 amendments to that Act did not specifically allow for indoor swimming pools to be constructed. It was only the 1878 amendments to the Act that authorized covered swimming pools to be constructed. Be that as it may, swimming pools, usually titled “plunge baths,” were included in many of these establishments, although in many cases the facilities provided had decided limitations, as we have already seen.

On 20 November 1890, the vestry of Lambeth finally adopted the Baths and Washhouses Act.<sup>343</sup> Appointed on 29 January 1891, the new Baths Commissioners set about their task rather slowly.<sup>344</sup> It was not until 17 November 1892 that they produced their first proposal to provide municipal baths for Lambeth. These plans, however, were quickly abandoned after it was discovered that there would be many legal problems in securing the manorial rights to the land being considered for construction. Instead, attention was turned to purchasing the site of the Lambeth Polytechnic on Ferndale Road in Brixton. This site already had a private swimming pool on the site, in addition to a well to supply water to the bath. It seemed an ideal solution to the provision issue. In actual fact, however, the bath on this site was never to be opened under the management of the vestry. The purchase of the Polytechnic took place, but within three months of the purchase, the vestrymen and

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<sup>343</sup>. LAML, P12/80/3, Baths Committee Reports 1890-1901, Report of 20 November 1890. This entire file box consists of various copies of the printed reports of the Baths Committee clipped from the printed minutes of the vestry and then simply boxed. Some excerpts still retain their binding, while others are loose or pinned together.

<sup>344</sup>. LAML, P12/41, *Lambeth Baths & Washhouses Committee Minutes 1891-1897*, p. 1, Minutes of 5 February 1891.

ratepayers of the parish were questioning the wisdom of the transaction, especially the cost of it.<sup>345</sup>

For the next year the purchase of the Polytechnic seems to have been the subject of quite vigorous debate within the vestry. The full extent of the ensuing debate about the baths is revealed in the next surviving report of the commissioners from 26 July 1894. The terse report detailed that, after extensive legal opinion had been sought, it had been determined that the site of the Lambeth Polytechnic could be sold, provided the proceeds of the sale were used for the provision of equivalent baths elsewhere in the parish. A piece of land at the corner of the Lambeth and Kennington Roads was proposed as the site for vestry baths, and this was approved in principle, provided the Lambeth Polytechnic was sold off to provide the funding for purchase.<sup>346</sup> Debate over the purchase of this piece of land also dragged on for nearly a year. At a contentious vestry meeting in April 1895 final approval was given to the plan to purchase the land at the intersection of the Lambeth and Kennington Roads, and to sell the Polytechnic site. As negotiations for the sale of the Polytechnic were still ongoing, a loan application to the Local Government Board was to be made to cover the cost of purchasing the Lambeth and Kennington Road site.<sup>347</sup> Although not explicit in the minutes, it seems likely that this loan request was part of the reason there was opposition to the entire plan. Local ratepayers would have been concerned about having to pay higher rates to cover the

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<sup>345</sup> LAML, P12/80/3, Baths Committee Reports 1890-1901, Reports of 17 November 1892, 30 March 1893, and 24 June 1893.

<sup>346</sup> LAML, P12/80/3, Baths Committee Reports 1890-1901, Report of 26 July 1894.

<sup>347</sup> LAML, P12/80/3, Baths Committee Reports 1890-1901, Report of 4 April 1895.



repayment of the loan. Nevertheless, construction of the vestry baths was begun at some point in 1896, but the sale of the Polytechnic site continued to be delayed. By September 1897 it had been resolved by the vestry that the Baths Commissioners were to sell the Polytechnic site at a loss, if necessary, to the Technical Education Board. A technical school on the site would clearly be of benefit to the district, and would make up for any immediate financial loss suffered from the sale.<sup>348</sup>

After all of the arguments over money and property sales, the long-proposed baths were finally opened. On 9 July 1897 the new Lambeth Public Baths were opened at the corner of the Lambeth and Kennington Roads, in a ceremony presided over by the Prince and Princess of Wales. A large swimming entertainment was arranged by Professor Beckwith to amuse the other dignitaries after the royal couple had departed.<sup>349</sup> The new facility contained three swimming pools; a 132 foot by 40 foot first class men's pool, a 90 foot by 30 foot second class men's pool, and a 56 foot by 25 foot women's pool.<sup>350</sup> Although the construction of the baths had been dogged by political arguments, mainly about expense, once erected, support for the baths seems to have increased. A continued concern for the cost of operating the baths is evident in the decision to close both men's baths over the winter months, leaving only the much smaller women's bath open, but the decision to provide

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<sup>348</sup> LAML, P12/80/3, Baths Committee Reports 1890-1901, Reports of 9 July 1896, 8 July 1897, and 16 September 1897.

<sup>349</sup> For more about Professor Beckwith, see Chapters 2 and 4.

<sup>350</sup> LAML, P12/80/10, *A Souvenir of the 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1897. From the Clerk to The Chairman.*

electric lighting in the baths must have been a costly one, at least initially.<sup>351</sup> The Lambeth Public Baths were clearly a major addition to the local civic amenities in Lambeth. The swimming pools were among the largest then available in London, and were also larger than pools built around the same time in Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and York.<sup>352</sup> Despite the cost of construction and operation, the facility was a testimony to what could be provided at the municipal level.

Surprisingly for the period, the baths did not originally require male bathers in the second class men's swimming pool to wear swimming drawers. When the commissioners decided that this policy should be changed, they drafted the bye-law such that implementation would only take place a year after its enactment. The baths would rent drawers to swimmers who did not own their own for a charge of ½ d. per visit.<sup>353</sup> The initial charge for access to the first class swimming pools for both men and women was 6d. Debate over whether this should be reduced to 4d. occurred in September 1898, but the decision was taken to leave the charges at the original level.<sup>354</sup> Evidently there was concern among some members of the committee that the pricing structure of the baths was excluding some potential users. The entry charges to the baths were finally changed, and by the winter of 1911 the charge for adult entry to the men's and women's first class swimming pools was 4d, and to the

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<sup>351.</sup> LAML, P12/41, *Lambeth Baths & Washhouses Committee Minutes 1891-1897*, pp. 216, 253-54, Minutes of 21 September 1897 and 28 December 1897.

<sup>352.</sup> For comparison, see Tables 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15.

<sup>353.</sup> LAML, P12/38, *Lambeth Baths and Cemetery Committee Minutes 1898 - 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 1899*, p. 51, Minutes of 1 June 1898.

<sup>354.</sup> LAML, P12/38, *Lambeth Baths and Cemetery Committee Minutes 1898 - 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 1899*, p. 98, Minutes of 19 September 1898.



men's second class swimming pool, 2d.<sup>355</sup>

The provision of municipal swimming facilities in Lambeth was quite late when compared to many other local authorities, both in London and in the provinces. This seems to have stemmed from several causes. The fact that private facilities already existed within the Lambeth area, most notably the Lambeth Baths, likely reduced popular agitation in the vestry for such facilities. Also, there seems to have been an underlying conservatism in the ratepayers of the vestry, as registered in the minutes noted above, towards any innovation or expenditure that might necessitate an increase in the rates paid towards local government. This theory is reinforced by the use of the smaller women's swimming pool during the winter season as a pool for all classes of swimmers. The decision to close the two larger pools meant a reduction in costs, with smaller inputs of water, and fuel for heating the water. In addition fewer attendants were required to watch the pools. The later decision to maintain a 6d. admission charge to the first class swimming pools until some point after 1900 also points to financial caution. Higher user charges, especially for the more exclusive areas of the facility, meant less needed to be paid by ratepayers to maintain those facilities.

London was, of course, a special case. But what was the situation in England's rapidly expanding industrial cities? Perhaps the most famous of these was Manchester. There, links to swimming went back to the early nineteenth century, and it is perhaps no surprise that once the building of swimming pools was undertaken on a large scale across England, Manchester was part of the trend.

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<sup>355</sup> LAML, P12/80/11/1, Winter 1911-12 Bathing Hours and Costs. This item is a small folded card detailing the winter arrangements for the use of the baths.



Manchester is also a useful case to study because the development of swimming provision within the city was markedly different from that in London. It is clear, however, that some of the same trends witnessed in other locations held true here as well. Initially, private bath companies provided washing, laundry and swimming facilities to the populace of the surrounding urban districts.<sup>356</sup> It was not until 2 August 1876 that Manchester City Council began to consider adopting the Baths and Washhouse Act.<sup>357</sup> A Baths and Washhouses committee was formed and immediately set about determining the current provision of baths and washhouses within Manchester and the surrounding districts and what, if any, new provision the committee would need to offer. By September, it had been determined that there were at least two swimming pools within Manchester, one on Mayfield Street and the other on Leaf Street. Both were privately owned by the same company. There was a third bathing and laundry building in Salford, owned and operated by the Salford Baths and Laundries Company, but it is not clear if this building also had a

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<sup>356.</sup> An unnamed company owned and operated two baths and washhouses in Manchester prior to 1876 on Leaf Street and Mayfield Street, while the Salford Baths and Laundries Company operated a facility in Salford. The information available about these companies is derived from the minutes of the Baths and Washhouses Committee when it entered into negotiations to purchase the properties in Manchester in 1876-77. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, pp. 4, 12-13, Minutes of 27 September 1876 and 16 January 1877. According to Campbell, the Leaf Street baths had been opened in 1860, and the Mayfield Street baths in 1856. Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, pp. A50-63.

<sup>357.</sup> MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 1, Minutes of 17 August 1876. For an examination of the architecture of the various municipal and privately-owned baths built in Manchester between 1845 and 1932 and the need for the conservation of surviving examples see Simon Ramsden, *Baths, wash-houses, swimming pools and social history: a case for conservation*, 2 vols., (Unpublished MA Dissertation: University of York, 2001).



swimming pool on the premises or not.<sup>358</sup> By January 1877 the committee had determined that Manchester required a minimum of four baths buildings (including swimming and wash baths). The company that owned the private facilities on Mayfield and Leaf Streets was willing to sell the properties to the committee for a price of £19 000.<sup>359</sup> This price seems to have been deemed too high at the time, for by the end of January the committee was no longer seeking to negotiate the purchase of the two existing baths, and instead was looking for land that could be purchased for the construction of civic baths buildings.<sup>360</sup> By April 1877 the committee had changed its position on the purchase of existing private baths buildings, and had resumed negotiations with the private company that owned the Leaf Street and Mayfield Baths. In June the committee recommended to the council to purchase these properties at the previously rejected price of £19 000. From February 1877 onwards the committee also continued to look for suitable sites for baths within Manchester, and eventually recommended the purchase of a site on Henry Street, New Islington. By July of 1877, plans were being drawn up for the construction of a baths building including two swimming pools on the New Islington site.<sup>361</sup> With all of this work taking place on baths and washhouses within Manchester, the council decided that it was necessary to ensure that everything was done legally, and on 1

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<sup>358</sup>. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 4, Minutes of 27 September 1876.

<sup>359</sup>. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, pp. 12-13, Minutes of 16 January 1877.

<sup>360</sup>. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 16, Minutes of 30 January 1877.

<sup>361</sup>. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, pp. 20, 23-24, 31, 34, Minutes of 27 February, 10 April, 5 June, and 3 July, 1877.



August 1877, *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, and its various amendments was adopted by the council. With these legal powers then in place, the corporation would take possession of the private baths it was purchasing on 29 September 1877.<sup>362</sup>

It is clear then that, after a somewhat hesitant start, Manchester Council very quickly became committed to the large scale provision of baths facilities within its area of jurisdiction. The large initial payment for the purchase of the private baths, even after a six-month period of indecision, was a precursor of the council's continuing commitment, until well after 1918, to provide bathing, and especially swimming, facilities within the city. In order to ensure that the newly purchased Manchester baths compared favourably to others in the country, a sub-committee of the Baths and Washhouses Committee toured various baths and washhouses in Eastbourne and London in December 1877.<sup>363</sup> It is unclear whether or not councillors were deliberately attempting to equal or surpass the programs already undertaken by other councils, but between the current and planned projects in Manchester, the result would be the provision of more baths, especially swimming pools, than any single parish in London and likely most other provincial cities and towns.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>362.</sup> MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, pp. 47-48, Minutes of 28 August 1877.

<sup>363.</sup> MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 73, Minutes of 3 January 1878. Baths and washhouses in the parishes of Brixton, Clapham, Kennington, Marylebone, Paddington, Pimlico and St. George's were toured during the visit to London.

<sup>364.</sup> See Table 3 for comparisons to the state of construction of swimming pools and baths buildings in London parishes in 1876. By January 1878 Manchester possessed four swimming pools in the formerly private baths and was planning on building



By 1878, the first year that the council would be operating swimming pools through the Baths and Washhouses Committee, local innovations in the use of the baths were well underway. In May it was decided to reserve the second class swimming pool at Leaf Street for an hour every Thursday afternoon for the use of males aged 12 and under, at a charge of 1d. The water in the pool was to be specially lowered for the use of these customers, and the new policy was to be advertised in local newspapers and circulated to Manchester School Board schools and local Public School heads. In addition, parties of 12 juveniles accompanied by a teacher or other responsible person were to be admitted to both the Leaf Street and Mayfield Baths at the price of a half penny.<sup>365</sup> This innovation is important, because it was voluntarily proposed and adopted by the baths committee roughly a decade *prior* to the extension of similar privileges for students being available in London after prolonged campaigning by the A.S.A. and School Board for London authorities.<sup>366</sup>

The Manchester authorities were clearly innovative in certain areas, but they were also concerned with the maintenance of good behaviour and acceptable social decorum in their new facilities. In July of 1878 the Baths and Washhouses

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three more on the New Islington site.

<sup>365</sup> MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, pp. 102-106, Minutes of 2 May 1878.

<sup>366</sup> For information on the campaigns undertaken by the School Board for London and the A.S.A., through S.C.A.S.A., to have swimming allowed as an activity of official instruction for students see the following; ASAL, *A.S.A. Minute Book No. 2*, fol. 33, Minutes of the A.S.A. Annual General Meeting, 23 April 1892; LAML, P12/80/2/2, School Board for London, Report of the Physical Education Sub-Committee on Bathing Accommodation and Swimming Classes (Public Elementary Schools), pp.1-12; Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 352-53.

Committee began to enact a series of bye-laws that regulated behaviour within the baths. In the first group of bye-laws passed, two immediately stand out. The first required all persons over the age of 12 years using the swimming pools to wear bathing drawers, a supply of which was to be obtained by the corporation to be provided to bathers. The second required all men and boys over the age of eight years to swim or bathe separately from all women, girls, and children under eight years of age.<sup>367</sup> The first bye-law is interesting, as it seems to imply that either only men swam naked at this time and had to be provided with drawers (women wore what were properly known as ‘bathing dresses’, bathing costumes or swimming costumes), or that women were not using the swimming pools at this time. The latter explanation seems more likely, for although no schedules of pool use survive from this early date, showing whether times were set aside for women’s swimming, the minutes repeatedly refer to the “men’s” first and second class swimming or plunge baths. The second bye-law was a requirement of the Baths and Washhouses Act, and should be seen as part of the statutory requirements imposed upon the Manchester Baths and Washhouses Committee. That having been said, it is quite likely that the members of the committee would have agreed with the rule and the reasons behind its required implementation; those being the maintenance of public decency in the facility.

The swimming pools in Manchester seem, from the evidence, to have been effectively a male preserve at this time, based upon the text of the bye-laws alone. This view is further reinforced by a minute of 26 June 1879, about the need for a

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<sup>367</sup>. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, pp. 121-131, Minutes of 4 July 1878.



women's swimming pool to be established in Manchester.<sup>368</sup> At that same meeting the bye-laws to be enforced within the corporation's baths were revised, and several more regulations were enacted that were aimed at ensuring a proper social tone was maintained within the baths. Notable amongst these new regulations were those prohibiting any bather from using a bath of a higher class than he had paid for, and a prohibition against using any bath, including the swimming pools, for more than 30 minutes at a time without paying for a second admission.<sup>369</sup> Clearly, these regulations were aimed, in part, at keeping the social classes apart, with the working classes pretty much relegated to the cheaper second class facilities, while the wealthier middle and upper classes used the first class facilities. In the extraordinary case that a working man managed to save enough money to be able to afford access to the first class facilities, he would not be able to enjoy them for long, more than likely not being able to come up with a second admission fee after 30 minutes.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s the number of baths containing swimming pools in Manchester continued to increase as the Baths and Washhouses Committee continued to support wide-spread access to such facilities for its citizens. The historical construction of every municipal swimming pool in Manchester from 1856 to 1918, along with selected other local authorities in England, is listed in Appendix Four, which also presents other important statistics obtained by Agnes Campbell while undertaking her survey of public baths. More detailed information specifically

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<sup>368</sup>. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 252, Minutes of 26 June 1879.

<sup>369</sup>. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, pp. 253-54, Minutes of 26 June 1879.

about swimming in Manchester can be found in Appendix Five. As can be clearly seen, throughout this period the corporation was undertaking a building program that was greater than any single borough in London and which rivalled most of the other large cities in England of the period. By 1918, Manchester had the largest number of swimming pools of any city in England, excluding the combined total for all of the boroughs of London.

Besides being a large provider of swimming facilities to its population, and the populations of surrounding districts, Manchester was also in the forefront of other developments in the swimming world. In 1880 the Baths and Washhouses Committee appointed two swimming masters, at a salary of 20 shillings per week, to provide free instruction in swimming in the baths of the corporation from 13:00 to 20:30 daily. These instructors would be allowed to take on private students from the opening of the pools in the morning until 13:00.<sup>370</sup> By 1881 professional swimmers, such as J. B. Johnson of Leeds, were running swimming entertainments in the corporation baths that could attract up to 1 100 spectators.<sup>371</sup> While professionals usually had to hire the baths for their entertainments, on occasion the Baths and Washhouses Committee engaged noted professionals to give displays. In July of 1881, for example, Captain Matthew Webb, the first man to swim the English Channel, was engaged for six performances in Manchester. He performed twice at each of the three baths facilities with swimming pools at the time between 13 July

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<sup>370</sup>. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 391, Minutes of 29 April 1880.

<sup>371</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Washhouses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 2, p. 38, Minutes of 26 May 1881. For Johnson's entertainment on 19 May 1881 a total of 1,156 tickets were sold.



and 16 July 1881, and was paid £18. 18s. 0d. and his return rail fare from London.<sup>372</sup> After Webb's death in July of 1883, during his misguided attempt to swim the rapids below Niagara Falls, the corporation allowed another professional, James Finney, to use the civic baths free of charge for the purpose of running a series of four swimming exhibitions or entertainments as benefits in aid of Mrs Webb and her children.<sup>373</sup> Besides being places to clean one's body or engage in some physical activity, from an early period the Manchester swimming pools were also places of entertainment, where people could witness the abilities of superior and professional swimmers.

The Baths and Washhouses Committee in Manchester was also interested in promoting swimming as a recreational activity. Obviously, the more swimmers using their facilities, the better the financial situation of the baths would be. But there seems to have been even more than a simple financial motive behind the committee's promotion of swimming. In 1886 the Baths and Washhouses Committee set the charges for use of its swimming baths at 4d. for the use of the first class baths, and 2d. for the use of the second class baths. Youths aged between 12 and 15 years of age were admitted at half price prior to 13:00 each day.<sup>374</sup> By 1888 the committee had authorized the sale of lots of 250 tickets at the price of 1d. per

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<sup>372</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 2, p. 61, Minutes of 30 June 1881.

<sup>373</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 2, p. 344, Minutes of 26 September 1883.

<sup>374</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 3, fol. 97, Minutes of 31 March 1886.

ticket to girls' schools, mill girls and other similar groups.<sup>375</sup> This was half the usual price for use of the second class swimming pools in the city. In the same year the committee also decided that members of recognized swimming clubs were to be admitted to first class swimming pools on club practice nights at a charge of 2d., rather than the usual 4d.<sup>376</sup> Perhaps most interestingly, however, in 1890 the Baths and Washhouses Committee proposed that at each of the establishments in the city housing swimming pools there should be free admittance to a designated pool after 16:00, Monday and Saturday, between 1 October 1890 and 1 March 1891. This proposal was rejected by the city council when it was brought forward to that body for approval.<sup>377</sup> The original proposal is the clearest evidence that a significant portion of the Manchester Baths and Washhouses Committee was interested in promoting swimming in the corporation's baths for the broader social good.

That the members of Manchester's Baths and Washhouses Committee were committed to the promotion of swimming, often without great concern over the financial cost of such promotion, was further reinforced by their actions through most of the 1890s. It has already been noted how the committee made provision for reduced charges to school swimmers starting in 1878, and club swimmers starting in 1888. These provisions were further developed and supported over time. By 1893 lots of 250 tickets were being provided to schools, allowing entry to the swimming pools at reduced rates. First class tickets were to be sold for 1d., while second class

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<sup>375</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 4, fol. 18.

<sup>376</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 4, fol. 32, Minutes of 29 August 1888.

<sup>377</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 4, fol. 178-179, Minutes of 21 May 1890.



tickets were to be sold for a half penny. There were restrictions on exactly when these tickets could be used, but the terms were fairly generous, being two mornings or afternoons a week, plus Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings.<sup>378</sup> In the following year, all members of the Manchester Police Swimming Club were allowed to swim at the club rate in any Manchester swimming pool upon production of their club membership card. The usual practice of the time was for club members only to receive the club membership rate on club nights at the swimming pool their club was based at.<sup>379</sup> Also by 1894 the Manchester Baths and Washhouses Committee was providing a dedicated women's swimming pool, or designated women's swimming times, at all of its facilities.<sup>380</sup> It is clear enough that there were numerous swimming groups in the city (schools, police, private clubs) keen to use the local municipal facilities. How far these clubs have been encouraged to form and become active *because* of the existence of local municipal facilities is, of course, hard to tell. Yet it seems reasonable to claim that by the 1890s the City of Manchester's authorities had supervised and encouraged a marked expansion of swimming in that city.

In 1898 Manchester Council adopted a resolution calling for the Baths and Washhouses Committee to examine the possibility of offering free second class wash bath and swimming bath facilities to the citizens of the city, an interesting

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<sup>378</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 6, fols. 11-12, Glued in Handbills dated 22 March 1893.

<sup>379</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 6, fols. 186-187, Secretary of the Manchester Police Swimming Club to Manchester Baths and Washhouses Committee, n.d. The letter is interpolated between minutes of June and July 1894.

<sup>380</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 6, fol. 140, Glued in Handbill of 31 March 1894.

development considering the Council had blocked a similar idea on a smaller scale in 1891. The committee responded to the Council's resolution with a pamphlet dated 17 May 1898. The committee had to argue that such a plan was not feasible, notably on the question of public order. It was considered that if such a course were adopted, there would be a crush of people wanting to enter the baths at very restricted periods of time, such as early morning and early evening. The baths would not be able to handle that crush. The safeguarding of property and the maintenance of public decency would also become quite difficult.<sup>381</sup> In the same year, however, the committee extended free bathing privileges to school students, as long as they were accompanied by a teacher, between 06:00 and 16:30 daily from 1 April to 30 September, and between 09:00 and 16:30 daily from 1 October to 31 March.<sup>382</sup>

Clearly, the members of the Baths and Washhouses Committee were more concerned with the maintenance of order, rather than being dead set against the idea of providing free swimming sessions. There is also more than a hint here that the baths might be overwhelmed by popularity. There was no guarantee that the staff and facilities could cope with the potential demand. Those closest to the swimming world in Manchester clearly knew that there was a very large constituency of swimmers keen to gain access to their facilities - if they were free.

This commitment to the provision of free swimming in Manchester was further demonstrated in 1900, when the Baths and Washhouses Committee instituted

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<sup>381</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 9, fol. 15, Glued in Pamphlet of 17 May 1898.

<sup>382</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 9, fols. 32-33, Glued in Undated Typescript . These sheets are placed between minutes for May and August 1898.



a programme of free swimming for students in the corporation's pools, during the summer vacation. During the restricted period of the programme, a total of 136,174 students were allowed to swim for free. The vast majority of these were boys, constituting 117,355 of the total.<sup>383</sup> This was the first year that the programme was run, but not the last. In fact, the programme was to run through to at least the start of the First World War, although due to other more pressing concerns, returns of bathers were not always presented in the minutes.<sup>384</sup> Starting in 1903 free season's tickets to the swimming baths were awarded to all school swimming competition winners, all students at Manchester schools possessing a Life Saving Society proficiency certificate, and all members of the Manchester Police swimming club who possessed a Life Saving Society proficiency certificate.<sup>385</sup> These concessions were followed by the implementation of a plan to introduce free instruction in lifesaving techniques at corporation pools.<sup>386</sup> This programme ran until at least 1911, although at no point prior to the end of the First World War is there any official notice of its being discontinued.

In 1912 the question of mixed bathing in the swimming pools of the corporation was raised for discussion in the Baths and Washhouses Committee. A

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<sup>383.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 10, fol. 74, Minutes of 19 February, 1901.

<sup>384.</sup> The last recorded set of returns prior to 1918 for student swimmers dates to October 1915. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 17, fols. 24-25, Minutes of 20 October 1915.

<sup>385.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 11, fols. 35-36, Minutes of 15 April 1903.

<sup>386.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 11, fols. 45-51, 70, 95, 125, Minutes of 19 May 1903, 17 June 1903, 19 August 1903, 18 November 1903, and 17 February 1904.

petition in favour of mixed bathing, consisting of 287 signatures, was presented to the committee on 18 September 1912. From this the General Superintendent of the Baths was requested to gather more information about the subject.<sup>387</sup> The resulting report reveals a great deal not only about Manchester's attitude towards mixed bathing, but also the state of mixed bathing across England at the time. According to the General Superintendent's report a total of 121 requests for information on mixed bathing were sent out and 108 replies were received. Out of the responses received it was determined that 28 local authorities allowed mixed bathing of some sort, while 78 did not. Interestingly, where mixed bathing took place it did so in first class swimming pools. One authority replied that it had no swimming baths, while a second authority replied that it only had outdoor swimming baths. Of baths superintendents who expressed an opinion about the general desirability of mixed bathing, 18 were in favour of mixed bathing, while 26 were opposed to it. Those local authorities which allowed mixed bathing are reproduced in Table 26.<sup>388</sup> The end result of all of this study was the eventual introduction of mixed bathing, on a trial basis, at the Withington Baths one day per week. That the issue was considered to be contentious is illustrated by the fact that a vote had to be held to determine the committee's course of action. Votes almost never appeared in the committee minutes, but this time the resultant vote was split 8-7 in favour of mixed bathing.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>387</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fols. 195-196, Minutes of 18 September 1912.

<sup>388</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fols. 215-216, Minutes of 20 November 1912.

<sup>389</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 16, fols. 141, 172, Minutes of 15 June 1914 and 16 September 1914.



By 1915 the experiment in mixed bathing was considered to have been a success, but implementation of the innovation across the corporation's facilities was delayed due to the war.<sup>390</sup>

Manchester Corporation, then, was a great promoter of swimming from its adoption of *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, in 1877 until the First World War. While restrained by concern for public order and decency from being too innovative, the Baths and Washhouses committee of the city was in the forefront of providing enterprising programs to promote the use of the civic swimming pools, and the adoption of swimming in the population at large. In particular, its relatively generous provision of facilities for women's swimming, and its early experimentation in the provision of mixed bathing, were ahead of much of the rest of England.

Clearly, municipal swimming had become a notable feature of life in English cities on the eve of the First World War. This had emerged for a complexity of reasons; including physical recreation, education provision and concerns about cleanliness. But we need to know how *extensive* such provision was. Perhaps the most comprehensive survey of municipal provision of swimming facilities in England was the report compiled by Agnes Campbell during the First World War for the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. Part of the deed establishing the Trust recommended the provision or support of public baths, and this survey was therefore undertaken to determine the current provision of baths facilities across the United

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<sup>390</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fols. 222-223, Minutes of 21 April 1915.

Kingdom.<sup>391</sup> It was a massive survey of over 300 pages, and provides unprecedented detail about swimming pool provision within the United Kingdom, and especially England. It also includes a cursory, and very generalized, history of swimming since ancient times, and a review of the history of baths and washhouses legislation since 1846.

Most importantly, however, Campbell's work reveals that by 1914 almost *all* swimming pool provision within England was offered by municipal governments. As the author herself noted, this was a vast change from the recent past when there had been a much larger amount of voluntary or private provision.<sup>392</sup> According to her own analysis of the data she had collected, Campbell observed a tendency for industrial and shipping (port) centres to adopt the Act much more readily than mining areas. The most densely populated areas of Lancashire and Yorkshire, therefore, had larger numbers of baths than other areas. In London all of the boroughs, except for Finsbury, had provided baths of some sort by 1914, and in every English population centre of over 100,000 inhabitants there was *some* form of bathing provision. In centres of population of 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants every city or town, again, had bathing facilities, with the exceptions of Hornsey and Yarmouth, although Oxford's facilities were singled out as being rather "minor".<sup>393</sup> For the large number of population centres with between 20,000 and 50,000 inhabitants, a total of 108 were recorded as providing some form of bathing

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<sup>391</sup>. Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. iii.

<sup>392</sup>. Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 7.

<sup>393</sup>. Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, pp. 7-8. Campbell admitted, however, that when it came to population centres of over 100 000, Willesden provided only open-air baths.



establishment. The other 40 such centres of population had no municipal provision. The majority of the smaller towns providing baths establishments only provided outdoor baths.<sup>394</sup>

As part of her survey, Campbell provided a graph that charted the building of municipal baths buildings in England from just prior to the introduction of *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, until 1915, reproduced as Table 4. It is clear after reviewing this table that, after an initial period of low interest between roughly 1845 and 1850, the response of local authorities to the Baths and Washhouses Act was to begin building baths and washhouses. This was followed by a second period of low interest in building, from roughly 1860 to 1875. The period after 1875 was one of continuing, sustained, and increasing, interest in building new baths. These two periods of building may be attributed to the introduction of the initial Baths and Washhouses Act of 1846 and the amended Act of 1878 which specifically allowed covered swimming pools to be built as part of baths establishments. The introduction of further amendments in the 1890s which allowed swimming pools to be turned into dance halls or other places of entertainment over the winter months, subject to certain conditions, also likely helped spur on later growth.

The importance of the increase in number of municipal baths establishments, and the change from privately owned and operated baths to publicly owned and operated baths should not be underestimated. Campbell's study is almost totally concerned with municipal provision, as she herself points out in her foreword, and

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<sup>394</sup>. Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 8. These numbers were based upon total UK returns, so of the 148 population centres of 20 000 to 50 000 inhabitants, some were in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, as well as England.

depended a great deal on provision of information from local authorities themselves, thereby potentially influencing her conclusions.<sup>395</sup> Even treating Campbell's results with due caution it seems clear that the scale of change from one extreme of provision to the other was great. As one example, she records that by 1915 over two million pounds had been spent by local authorities of over 200,000 inhabitants, excluding London, on the provision of baths establishments. The conclusion that the number of private baths establishment providers was declining seems to be at least partially backed up by Board of Trade papers which record the dissolution of no fewer than forty private swimming and wash bath companies between 1866 and 1935, with the majority of these companies going out of business in the period between 1870 and 1900.<sup>396</sup> This period does not exactly coincide with the explosion of local authority provision of baths, as illustrated above, and clearly other economic factors were involved to a greater or lesser extent. Nevertheless, this decline in private baths companies must have been at least partially affected by the ability of public baths to levy part of their costs on the local rates, and by the cap on admittance charges to the public baths that was part of *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, and its various amendments. Here is an unmistakable example of municipal provision pushing aside, or taking over from, private provision. Town and city authorities now had economic (and social) clout and muscle and could provide for their inhabitants - especially the poorer sort - in ways not thought

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<sup>395.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, pp. v-vi.

<sup>396.</sup> PRO, BT 31, various sub-class listings. Of the sample of 42 private baths companies wound up by the Board of Trade between 1846 and 1945 traced in the Public Record Office only one went out of business prior to 1870 (in 1866) and eight were wound up after 1900.



possible or suitable by private enterprise. It was an important example of the emergent success of municipal enterprise for the benefit of local citizens.

The period between 1800 and 1918 saw a complete reversal in the role that municipal authorities fulfilled in the promotion of swimming and the provision of swimming facilities. In 1800 there was no municipal involvement in the promotion of swimming or the provision of facilities. By 1918 municipal authorities were the largest providers of swimming facilities in England, and generally also great supporters of swimming as an activity. Of course there were regional variations in the exact levels of provision made and the amount of support that local swimmers could expect from their municipal authorities. Be that as it may, the overwhelming trend was for greater and greater municipal provision of baths facilities, and a relative decline in the private provision of swimming pools. The extent of this change should not be underestimated, as the repercussions from it influenced the development of school swimming, at least in the state school sector.

Indeed, the development of municipal swimming facilities with low entry charges allowed access to swimming facilities by numerous groups that previously would have found it difficult. As has been noted, the original Baths and Washhouses Act and its various amendments capped the charges that could be made for admittance to municipally provided facilities. This certainly allowed the working classes greater access than ever before to the chance to swim. The provision by certain municipalities of special admittance prices for selected groups meant that, over time, many facilities were opened up for use by local state schools so that pupils could be taught how to swim.

## Chapter 6: Education and Physical Training

Prior to the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was no mass educational system in England. A formal education was limited to a quite small minority of the population who attended private institutions, mostly termed “Public Schools,” up and down the country. Within these institutions sports, games and physical activities became increasingly important over the course of the nineteenth century. When a state educational system for the mass of the population was set up in the last quarter of the nineteenth century it was organized by men who were products of the Public School system, and there was, therefore, a transfer of many ideas from one system to the other.<sup>397</sup>

The role played by schools and by the educational system in the development of aquatic activities in England is complex. As T. M. James pointed out in 1977, “It is interesting to note that the Amateur Athletic Association never had to argue a case for inclusion: this was for the simple reason that the Amateur Athletic Association had its origins within the educational sphere whereas the Amateur Swimming Association did not. This demonstrates the substantial difference which existed between the two sports and their contribution to nineteenth-century education, in that the one emanated from within the educational world whilst the other was the product of the wider society.”<sup>398</sup> The major Public Schools were prime movers in the

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<sup>397</sup>. See for example, J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian public school: The emergence and consolidation of an educational ideology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>398</sup>. James, *The Contribution of Schools and Universities to the Development of Organized Sport up to 1900*, p. 158



development of many of today's games and recreations. But this was not the case with swimming. Indeed, swimming was often a very minor activity at most Public Schools, and even when it was recognized it received a great deal less support than other sports and recreations. Similarly, and by extension, the great universities of Cambridge, London, and Oxford, whose sporting trends followed those of the Public Schools, also did not adopt swimming as a sporting activity until late in the nineteenth century. As James points out, however, swimming was of interest within larger Victorian society. Eventually, between 1890 and 1910, swimming was introduced into the state educational curriculum as an optional subject linked to the need for drill and physical education.

While we must bear James' statement in mind, it is important to reconsider the contribution of the Public Schools to the development of swimming. As J. A. Mangan and others have pointed out, the Public Schools were responsible for fostering Victorian sporting activity in general.<sup>399</sup> Sinclair and Henry in 1893 could record that a large number of Public Schools were engaged in some form of swimming; "At Winchester, Cheltenham, Sherborne, Tonbridge, Shrewsbury, Merchant Taylors [sic], Highgate, Charterhouse, Dulwich, Royal Naval School, Marlborough, Wellington, Clifton, Royal Military College, Oundle, Weymouth, Surrey County, Newton, &c., &c., swimming competitions are carried out and the pastime is encouraged."<sup>400</sup> This list is in addition to the detailed surveys that Sinclair

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<sup>399</sup> J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian public school: The emergence and consolidation of an educational ideology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>400</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. 377.

and Henry made of swimming at Eton, Harrow, Rossall, Rugby, and Uppingham.<sup>401</sup>

Swimming was also developing in other Public Schools during the 1890s.<sup>402</sup> Despite James' caution, important developments in swimming were made at some of the Public Schools.

In 1861 Parliament established the Public Schools and Colleges Commission, more commonly known as the Clarendon Commission. In the same year the Commission began its survey of Charterhouse School, Eton College, Harrow School, Merchant Taylors' School, Rugby College, St. Paul's School, Shrewsbury School, Westminster School and Winchester College. Although primarily set out as an examination into the financial affairs and management of the schools, the commissioners also inquired into the manner and content of teaching within the schools, and the sport and recreational provision for students. It submitted its report to Parliament in 1864. Questions number 35 to 41 of Part Three of the written survey circulated by the commissioners were concerned with play, games and exercise within each of the schools. Swimming was mentioned specifically in question 41 as part of a query if any activities or games were compulsory within the school, such as a swimming requirement for being allowed to row.<sup>403</sup> From the responses the commissioners noted,

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<sup>401.</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 366-376.

<sup>402.</sup> For the development of swimming in a Public School outside of the ranks of those surveyed by the Clarendon Commission and Sinclair & Henry, see A. E. Douglas-Smith, *City of London School*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), pp. 135, 208, 225, 239, 320. The first swimming team at City of London School was formed in 1895, but only lasted for one season. It was 1905 before another team, on a more stable footing, was established.

<sup>403.</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, Parliamentary Papers (PP) 1864 XX, vol. II, p. 92.



Swimming is taught at Eton and Westminster. It is taught also at Shrewsbury. The desire to go on the river, which no boy is allowed to do till he has shown himself able to swim, operates at these schools, especially at the two former, as a sufficient inducement with a large number of boys; and we believe that at Eton almost every boy learns to swim, even if he does not row. At Winchester, indeed, where boating is not found practicable, it appears that a very large majority of the upper boys can swim; and this is probably the case at other schools having good bathing-places. It is much to be wished that every boy who goes to school should, if possible, learn to swim.<sup>404</sup>

By surveying the schools examined by the Clarendon Commission, an attempt can be made to determine the effect they had, if any, on the dissemination of swimming into the wider world of English society. In addition, depending on when swimming became organized in a specific school, it may become clear whether the schools were responding to outside pressure, or were creating a new trend of their own, and then exporting it outwards.

Although its claim may be open to challenge by Rugby, Harrow School seems to have been the first educational establishment of any type to have a dedicated swimming pool, with the construction of what was known as the “Duck Puddle” or “Ducker” sometime in 1810 or 1811.<sup>405</sup> This pool was the successor of an earlier “Duck Puddle,” a local natural pond, which had been in use by the boys of the school for bathing and swimming from at least the late 1780s or early 1790s.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. I, p. 41.

<sup>405</sup> For Rugby, see below.

<sup>406</sup> *The Harrovian*, Vol. 4, No. 4, (May 19, 1891), p. 38; A. F. Hort, “The School Bathing Place,” Edmund W. Howson and George Townsend Warner, eds., *Harrow School*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1898), p. 256; Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. 366.

Although only a muddy hole dug in the ground and subject to being filled with frogs, ducks, and other wildlife, the “Duck Puddle” was a step removed from the previous English tradition, chronicled by Nicholas Orme, of only natural bodies of water such as rivers, lakes and the sea being used for swimming.<sup>407</sup> By the 1870s and 1880s, however, the existence of a swimming pool within a Public School was becoming much more common, and by the mid twentieth century, any of the larger Public Schools which did *not* have a swimming pool was an unusual school indeed. Public Schools may not have created a cult of swimming, but they helped promote the activity. In the 1870s and 1880s most schools seem to have viewed swimming as a valuable skill that should be encouraged as a precaution against the danger of drowning when students were out on the river with the boating club, or otherwise playing around the various natural bodies of water in the vicinity of many of the Public Schools of the time. Exact records of the numbers of students able to swim at Public Schools are usually scattered and incomplete, but it seems likely that a large percentage of students at Public Schools were able to swim by the time they left their schools.

A school swimming test was instituted at Eton in 1836, apparently in response to various drowning incidents, and has continued in one form or another until the present. The same report which records the decision to institute the swimming test also reveals that there were attempts to establish a series of swimming prizes around 1853, but due to poor weather conditions these efforts had been suspended. No details about what this early swimming test entailed, or of the

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<sup>407</sup>. Orme, *Early British Swimming*, passim.



proposed swimming prizes survive.<sup>408</sup> The Clarendon Commission recorded that 350 boys in the school could swim in 1862, and that the swimming test was then roughly 100 yards in distance.<sup>409</sup> The Reverend Francis E. Dumford, one of the Classical Assistant Masters at Eton, in his written submission to the Commission, claimed that the swimming test had been established by Bishop Selwyn when he had been at Eton prior to taking up his current position as Bishop of New Zealand.<sup>410</sup> The existence of a test indicates that swimming was not wholly ignored at Eton, although it was not a major sporting activity. What swimming there was prior to 1853 seems to have been the continuation of a longstanding school tradition of using the Thames and other local bodies of water for recreation purposes. In his history of Eton College, Sir H. C. Maxwell Lyte claimed that as early as 1727 there were at least seven locations along the Thames where boys went to bathe, and by 1840 official school bathing places had been established at 'Athens', Upper Hope, and Cuckoo Weir.<sup>411</sup>

Two school clubs, known as the Philolitic Society (1832) and the Psychrolitic Society (1828), were also formed at Eton.<sup>412</sup> Both were designed as

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<sup>408.</sup> Eton College Archives, Eton, SCH/SP/SW/2/1, Eton School Swimming 1853. This is a typed sheet inserted in the back of the first volume of alphabetical listings of boys who had passed the swimming test. The volume was begun in 1842.

<sup>409.</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. III, p. 185.

<sup>410.</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. II, p. 125. Selwyn seems to have had quite an influence on swimming at Eton, see below.

<sup>411.</sup> H. C. Maxwell Lyte, *A History of Eton College (1440-1910)*, 4th ed., (London: Macmillan and Co., 1911), pp. 323, 484.

<sup>412.</sup> George Augustus Selwyn, the then Anglican Bishop of New Zealand, is credited as one of the founders of the Psychrolitic Society. His departure in 1841 for New



clubs for Eton and Cambridge students and masters who enjoyed bathing. It appears that the Cambridge members of the two societies were all old Etonians, though this is not explicitly stated in the records. While it is not clear whether bathing in this instance included swimming, it seems plausible that it did. The Philolutes had been organized to promote general bathing, while the Psychrolutes were dedicated to cold water and out-of-doors bathing in winter. By 1832 in order to be a Psychrolute one also had to be a Philolute. While no record of the Philolutes' activities has survived, it is possible to sketch a broad picture of the Psychrolutes activities. The club book contains a list of all of the places where club members bathed, including the Serpentine, various Scottish Lochs, most of the major English rivers, various Continental rivers, and the Hellespont. It seems likely that the members of these clubs were following, at least in part, the example set by Lord Byron when he swam the Hellespont in 1810.<sup>413</sup> It is also quite likely, though impossible to prove, that these two groups based at Eton were the first organized swimming clubs in England in the nineteenth century. Though it is doubtful that anyone copied the idea of forming a swimming club from the existence of the Philolutic and Psychrolutic Societies at Eton, it is just possible that the men who joined with John Strachan in 1837 to form the National Swimming Society in London may have heard of these

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Zealand was said to have been a key factor in the group's decline. Eton College Archives, Eton, MISC/PSY/1/1, Psychrolutic Society Book 1828-1857.

<sup>413</sup> Eton College Archives, Eton, MISC/PSY/1/1, Psychrolutic Society Book 1828-1857; and MISC/PSY/2/1, Eton Philolutic Society Members Book 1832-1849. Byron's feat was widely referenced in swimming literature right up to the end of the nineteenth century. See for example, Anonymous, *Manual of the London Swimming Club*, p. 1; *The Times*, August 26, 1875, p. 7c&d; Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. 8.



groups or even had been ex-members or old Etonians.

At Harrow, swimming was not organized on the same scale as other sports. Internal contests in the school only began in 1857, 46 years after the construction of the school pool, when competition began for the ‘Elvington Prize.’<sup>414</sup> The Clarendon Commission noted that there were prizes for swimming at Harrow, and there was systematic teaching of swimming at the school, though it was not compulsory to learn to swim.<sup>415</sup> The Headmaster, the Reverend H. M. Butler, was of the opinion that swimming races “... excite considerable interest among the boys.”<sup>416</sup> The first surviving edition of the Harrow Almanack from 1865 is slightly more specific about the form these races took, listing swimming as one of the activities that were part of the house competitions. As early as 1853, when the Harrow Philathletic Club had been founded, its objects included the promotion of “... all manly Sports and Exercises ...,” of which swimming was a part.<sup>417</sup> A school swimming test was instituted in 1876, and became known as the “Pass in Swimming.” School procedure was to print the names of all boys who could not swim at the beginning of each July, and their names were removed from this list as

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<sup>414.</sup> Harrow School Archives, Harrow, 48C, Major R. O. Bridgeman, *Harrow Records Vols. 1 & 2*, c. 1976. The title of this item is misleading, it is actually a one volume handwritten compilation of school sporting records drawn from a variety of sources, including the school magazines and actual trophies. It is inaccurate in places, but seems to be correct on swimming matters for the period up until the start of the First World War.

<sup>415.</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. I, p. 223.

<sup>416.</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. II, p. 282.

<sup>417.</sup> *The Harrow Almanack 1865*, p. 40 & passim.

students passed the test.<sup>418</sup> The actual content of the test, as in the Eton case, is not recorded for the early years, although by 1898 it consisted of a swim of 70 yards. Those who wished to excel in swimming, and gain the privilege of bathing in the “Duck Puddle” more than once per day could become “Dolphins” by completing a special swim test. This consisted of swimming roughly a half mile in distance, and included back, breast and side swimming, a running dive, swimming under a hurdle, and climbing out and diving back into the pond, all while being timed. On a separate day, a candidate also had to rescue a submerged wooden dummy from the bath.<sup>419</sup> However, coverage of swimming at Harrow in the various school magazines was sporadic at best, and often completely absent; but when the magazine mentioned swimming, it provided a snapshot of what was clearly considered an important activity. For example, in 1903 *The Harrovian* recorded that a swimming committee of the Philathletic Club had been formed in 1902, that races were now organized by this committee and were held in 1903. A swimming match was also held against Charterhouse; Charterhouse won.<sup>420</sup>

When the Clarendon Commission surveyed Charterhouse, however, there was evidently little swimming activity at the school. The commissioners made a single comment about the situation at the school; “We would suggest to the Governors the propriety of considering whether some arrangement cannot be made

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<sup>418</sup> *The Harrow Almanack 1876-77*, p. 84.

<sup>419</sup> Hort, “The School Bathing Place,” pp. 261-262. Hort recorded that in 1898 the time allowed for the completion of the “Dolphin” test was 19 minutes, previously, however, it had been 22 minutes.

<sup>420</sup> *The Harrovian*, Vol. 16, No. 7, October 8, 1903, pp. 97-98.



for teaching swimming.”<sup>421</sup> The first mention of swimming as an organized activity at Charterhouse, indeed the first mention of swimming at the school at all after the Clarendon Commission report, occurs in 1873. At that time a system of ranking the swimming ability of students was instituted, and an annual series of swimming races in the River Wey were begun.<sup>422</sup> Beyond that scant information, however, virtually nothing was mentioned about swimming in the school for another decade, until in 1883 the school swimming baths were built.<sup>423</sup> Even after this time, photos in school albums reveal that swimming for many school contests still took place in the River Wey.<sup>424</sup>

The details about swimming at Shrewsbury School in the Clarendon Commission was, like the report on swimming at Charterhouse, quite sparse. It simply records that rowing was allowed to those who could swim, and that swimming was taught by a “bathing master” at the school.<sup>425</sup> The Headmaster in his submission to the Commission indicated that there were bathing men (professional watermen) on the river at certain times, evidently to supervise the boys while swimming, and that there was a bath where swimming could be learnt. He felt that

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<sup>421</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. I, p. 183.

<sup>422</sup> Charterhouse School Archives, Godalming, 98/4 (ACC 10502/1), *Charterhouse Bathing 1872 to 1881*, fols. 4, 9, 10-12.

<sup>423</sup> *The Carthusian*, Vol.3, No. 97, (June 1883), p. 248.

<sup>424</sup> Charterhouse School Archives, Godalming, “The Roskill Album/The Leighton Album”. This album contains two photographs of the school river bathing site, one of which pictures the 1906 competition for the Royal Humane Society’s lifesaving medal.

<sup>425</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. I, pp. 320-321.

the boys could teach each other how to swim, and none of the teaching staff were assigned to supervise or otherwise involve themselves with swimming.<sup>426</sup> The link between the need to swim and rowing, indicated by the Clarendon Commission, is reinforced by the Shrewsbury School Boat Club rules of 1866. These rules outline a swimming test of forty yards that students had to undertake for entry into the rowing club.<sup>427</sup> The first mention of swimming as a sport in its own right in school records occurs in an article in *The Salopian* of November 1880. This article records the presentation to the school of a cup for junior swimming earlier that year. Clearly this implies that there was a pre-existing tradition of swimming races within the school, and that senior swimming in some form had been taking place prior to the 1880 swimming season. Whatever the exact year that swimming was established as a separate sport at Shrewsbury, all swimming was taking place in the River Severn at this time.<sup>428</sup> A school swimming bath was built in the late 1880s and was in operation by July 1887.<sup>429</sup> As was the case at Charterhouse, however, swimming in

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<sup>426</sup>. Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. II, p. 327.

<sup>427</sup>. Shrewsbury School Archives, Shrewsbury, GB5/18, Shrewsbury School Boat Club Rules 1866. Rule VI of the code.

<sup>428</sup>. *The Salopian*, Vol. 4, No. 1, (November 1880), No. 23, p. 151. *The Salopian* is the official school magazine of Shrewsbury School. A complete run of the magazine is housed in the school archives.

<sup>429</sup>. Shrewsbury School Archives, Shrewsbury, Minutes of the Governing Body 1882-1900, pp. 92, 99. Interestingly, the bath was paid for by the then Headmaster, the Reverend H. W. Moss, as a gift to the school, but was not accepted by the governing body until 9 February 1888, even though its completion is recorded in the minutes of 14 July 1887. See also *The Salopian*, Vol. 10, No. 5, (June 1887), No. 63, p. 1052.



the river continued long after the school swimming bath had been opened.<sup>430</sup>

No mention of swimming is made at all in the Clarendon Commission's discussion of St. Paul's School, London. The first mention of swimming there is to be found in the first issue of *The Pauline* from July 1882 which records the existence of a swimming club in the school. When this club had been founded, and exactly what sort of activities it pursued, however, are not recorded, although a later issue of the magazine hints that the club was formed in 1877.<sup>431</sup> Indeed, the only reason swimming seems to have been mentioned at all in this article was because the author was attempting to promote a sense of school spirit and encourage participation in school teams and clubs. The case of St. Paul's was somewhat different from other Public Schools. It was, for example, a day-school, and attempts to drum up school and sporting spirit must be seen in that light.<sup>432</sup> The second issue of the magazine, from October 1882, dealt more fully with swimming. The results of the annual swimming races were recorded, and it was noted that the school used the Charing Cross Baths for practices and competitions.<sup>433</sup> In 1883, membership fees for the club stood at one shilling, while anyone wishing to learn to swim had to pay ten shillings, although after that they could have as many lessons as required to learn how to swim. Membership in the swimming club also allowed boys half priced admission

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<sup>430</sup> Swimming in the Severn continued until after the Second World War. See Shrewsbury School Archives, Shrewsbury, "School Swimming Records 1932-1939," and "School Swimming Records 1940-1948."

<sup>431</sup> *The Pauline*, Vol. 7, No. 36 (June 1889), p. 189. *The Pauline* is the official magazine of St. Paul's School. A complete run of the magazine is housed in the school library.

<sup>432</sup> *The Pauline*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July 1882), p. 2.

<sup>433</sup> *The Pauline*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (October 1882), pp. 44-45.



to the Charing Cross Baths.<sup>434</sup> As at other schools, entry to the rowing club also required a swimming test to be completed. In the case of St. Paul's it was a distance of forty-five yards, which was the length of the Charing Cross Baths.<sup>435</sup> When the school moved to new premises in south-west London in 1884, the swimming club had to switch to more convenient baths, but still continued to operate. Occasional races were held against other schools or organizations, but for the most part swimming appears to have been internal to the school.<sup>436</sup> The biggest boost to the swimming club seems to have occurred in 1900 when the school's own swimming pool was opened. This also seems to have sparked an interest in water polo. In October of that year, at a gala between St. Paul's and the St. Mary's Swimming Club, a water polo match was included as one of the two events.<sup>437</sup> From the opening of the swimming baths at St. Paul's School, swimming against outside teams increased, although the organization of fixtures never reached the same level as the main school sports, notably cricket and football. The most regular fixture on the swimming calendar seems to have been a series of races held against Charterhouse, beginning in 1903 and continuing, with only occasional lapses, until

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<sup>434.</sup> *The Pauline*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (April 1883), p. 106. Whether these were actual baths in the Charing Cross area or the floating swimming bath moored at Charing Cross bridge that existed at the time is not made clear in the magazine.

<sup>435.</sup> *The Pauline*, Vol. 2, No. 9 (March 1884), p. 210.

<sup>436.</sup> For example, races were held against University College Hospital in 1896 and in the Thames against other public schools in 1899. In the latter case the other schools competing were not specified, and the races were organized by an unspecified outside body and billed as a "Thames Swimming Meet." See *The Pauline*, Vol. 14, No. 83 (July 1896), p. 126. *The Pauline*, Vol. 17, No. 105 (July 21, 1899), p. 130.

<sup>437.</sup> *The Pauline*, Vol. 18, No. 114 (December 1900), p. 219. Interestingly, the author of the article claimed that this was the first time a school team had swum against another club.



after the First World War. Matches against Bedford Grammar School and Dulwich College were also started at the same time.<sup>438</sup>

We also catch an important early glimpse of swimming at Merchant Taylors' School in the Clarendon Commission's report. The Headmaster, the Reverend J. A. Hessey, told the Commission that in some past years a swimming club had been formed.<sup>439</sup> Evidently the fact that the club had not been in *continuous* existence is a strong indication that swimming was treated indifferently at best during this period at the school. There is no mention of any official policies towards swimming being in place at the school. Organized swimming here seems to have originated at some time in, or just prior to, 1879 when races were first swum at the Charing Cross Baths.<sup>440</sup> Because Merchant Taylors' was a day school within London until the 1930s, its swimming club changed its home pool on a regular basis, just as had been the case at St. Paul's prior to the building of their own baths. No competitions outside Merchant Taylors' were undertaken until 1910, when boys from the school participated in the first ever "Bath Cup" competition for Public Schools.<sup>441</sup> The school did not acquire its own swimming pool until 1933, after it had moved to its

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<sup>438.</sup> *The Pauline*, Vol. 21, Nos. 132-133 (July 1903), pp. 104-105.

<sup>439.</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. II, p. 264.

<sup>440.</sup> *The Taylorian*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (October 1879), p. 32. *The Taylorian*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (December 1879), pp. 53-54. *The Taylorian* is the official school magazine for Merchant Taylors' School. A complete run of the magazine is housed in the school archives.

<sup>441.</sup> *The Taylorian*, Vol. 32, No. 6 (July 1910), p. 227. The Bath Cup competition was organized by the Bath Club, one of London's important social clubs of the period. The races for the Cup were swum in the club's own pool. Most of the other major Public Schools participated in the event, and St. Paul's School was especially successful in winning the Cup on multiple occasions.



present site in Sandy Lodge on the outskirts of London. By then, swimming was seen as being an important part of the physical education curriculum of the school, and in society at large.<sup>442</sup>

Rugby School could perhaps lay claim to being the first Public School to possess a school bath, except for the fact that the bath in question does not seem to have been used for swimming. Two early chroniclers of the history of the school, the Reverend W. H. Payne Smith and W. H. D. Rouse, provide dates of 1779 and 1777 respectively for the construction of a small plunge bath dug into the turf of “The Close,” the famous field where rugby football was later claimed to be invented.<sup>443</sup> Both authors note that the pool was quite small. Rouse further recorded that in 1784 a movable bathing shed was built on the banks of the Avon for the use of boys of the school, and that “bathing men” were assigned to watch over the pupils while they were swimming.<sup>444</sup> In 1900 H. C. Bradby stated that the first school bath on “The Close” had been dug out as early as 1754. He also provides the information that the bath was fed by springs, originally used by the monks who first owned the land.<sup>445</sup> Evidently, therefore, the bath was fed from natural sources, and

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<sup>442.</sup> *Supplement to The Taylorian: The Swimming Bath* (July 1934), passim.

<sup>443.</sup> Rouse bases his claim for construction of the bath in 1777 upon documents detailing the transfer of the school to its present site in that year and the opening of the bath on September 6, 1777. W. H. D. Rouse, *A History of Rugby School*, (London: Duckworth & Co., 1898), p. 119. Payne Smith does not link his claim for construction of the bath in 1779 to any documentation. Rev. W. H. Payne Smith, *Rugby: The School and Neighbourhood*, (London: Whittaker & Co., 1889), p. 3.

<sup>444.</sup> Rouse, *A History of Rugby School*, pp. 135-36.

<sup>445.</sup> H. D. Bradby, *Rugby*, (London: George Bell & Sons, 1900), p. 137. Bradby is almost certainly wrong about the date of construction of the bath, the school not then occupying its current grounds.



must also have drained naturally in some manner. No measurements of this early bath survive, but it would appear likely that it was only used as a bath, and not as a place to swim. Both books by Bradby and Rouse include references to swimming, and all of those references indicate that boys from the school swam in the River Avon at locations known as “Aganippe,” “Sleath’s,” and “Swift’s.”<sup>446</sup> The earliest issues of the school magazine, *The Meteor*, also record that swimming took place in the Avon, and go on further to state that the school bath in The Close was small, and dirty.<sup>447</sup> The Clarendon Commission also commented on the presence of this pond on the school grounds, calling it a “cold bath.” The Report of the Commission specifies two locations in the River Avon used by boys from Rugby for swimming. One of these was a shallow water location for the small boys and non-swimmers to practice in, under the watchful eyes of watermen, while the other was at the confluence of the Avon and the Swift, used by the experienced swimmers. Further, the Commissioners reported, “... the swimmers have full opportunity of perfecting themselves in this art, the possession of which is almost universal in the highest forms of the School.”<sup>448</sup>

Organized swimming at Rugby dates from a relatively early period but, as with the other great Public Schools, it was not one of the main sports or physical

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<sup>446</sup>. Bradby, *Rugby*, pp. 137-38. Rouse, *Rugby*, pp. 135-36. Rouse only mentions “Sleath’s” or “Sleet’s”, all three are mentioned by Bradby. “Swift’s” is mentioned in *The Meteor*, No. 30, July 19, 1869, pp. 7-8.

<sup>447</sup>. See *The Meteor*, No. 7, July 4, 1867, p. 6; No. 20, October 8, 1868, pp. 7-8; No. 30, July 19, 1869, pp. 7-8; No. 42, July 27, 1870. *The Meteor* was first published on February 7, 1867, it has been the school’s official magazine ever since. A complete run is housed in the school library.

<sup>448</sup>. Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. I, pp. 245-55.

exercises of the school. The first record of an organized swimming competition at Rugby dates to October 1868 when a letter appeared in *The Meteor* complaining that members of the lower forms in the school, even those who had done well in the school competitions, were not allowed the privilege of going down to the Avon to swim, unless accompanied by a member of the Sixth Form.<sup>449</sup> The first recorded swimming competition at Rugby dates from 1870, when *The Meteor* reported on the “School Swimming and Diving,” which consisted of two events, a swimming race and a diving for eggs contest. There were only about a dozen competitors for the swimming race, divided into two heats, and even fewer for the diving for eggs.<sup>450</sup> In 1871 there was an even smaller group of competitors, with only eight boys turning out for the swimming race. The reporter on the races in 1871 was moved to comment on this decline, stating that in the past, four or more heats for the swimming race were common.<sup>451</sup> It seems clear enough then, that the school swimming events were an established tradition in the school that likely dated back to the early to mid 1860s. Compared to other activities within the school, especially cricket, rugby football, and shooting, they were clearly not a major part of school life. Indeed, in 1872 the report on the swimming events for that year indicated that there were few competitors because of a clash of events; a shooting competition, and a “match” in “The Close” were taking place on the same day.<sup>452</sup> Swimming at

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<sup>449.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 20, October 8, 1868, pp. 7-8.

<sup>450.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 42, July 27, 1870, pp. inside front cover. No distance is given for the swimming race.

<sup>451.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 54, October 12, 1871, p. 186.

<sup>452.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 63, July 25, 1872, p. 62.



Rugby continued in this sporadic manner until a proper school swimming bath was constructed in 1875-76, opening for use in June 1876. At the same time that the bath was opened, a swimming club was also founded to promote swimming in the school and to run the school swimming competitions.<sup>453</sup>

This new school swimming bath, a gift of the Headmaster, the Reverend T. W. Jex-Blake, transformed swimming at Rugby.<sup>454</sup> The school swimming races were now competed for in the new venue, and were also modified and added to. Four events were henceforth included in the school competitions, comprising a dive and swimming underwater (known as “Long Diving”), diving for pence, an open race and a race for boys under 16.<sup>455</sup> In 1883 two lifesaving events were added to the swimming calendar at Rugby, when competition for the Royal Humane Society medal and Dukes’ Cup for Resuscitation first took place.<sup>456</sup> These six events became the core of the school swimming competitions until 1893, when the long diving event was replaced by a springboard diving event.<sup>457</sup> Despite the new bath and the changes to the competitions, swimming does not appear to have been hugely popular at Rugby. Throughout the 1880s complaints regularly appeared in *The Meteor* about the swimming club being remiss in its duties, noting that the swimming events were routinely ignored by the majority of the school. Indeed, the results of the lifesaving

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<sup>453.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 102, June 28, 1876, pp. 493-94.

<sup>454.</sup> Bradby, *Rugby*, p. 137.

<sup>455.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 127, July 31, 1878, p. 113. This is the earliest reference to the new swimming events in the swimming bath. There are no records for swimming races in 1876 or 1877.

<sup>456.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 193, October 6, 1883, pp. 111-12.

<sup>457.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 320, August 1, 1893, p. 95.

competitions from this period routinely record only three or four competitors per year. In 1886 a total of only three boys competed in the two lifesaving competitions.<sup>458</sup>

It was not until after 1900 that swimming began to attract more widespread attention and support within Rugby. Starting in 1906 a further series of changes and additions were made to the swimming competitions. Silver medals were substituted for cash prizes in all swimming races, and a house team relay race was instituted. At the same time water polo was introduced to the school as a team sport to be competed for between houses.<sup>459</sup> The addition of a team dimension to swimming, and a link to the school's houses, may have helped expand swimming's popularity. It was, after all, team games which characterized Public School recreational life and which forged such fierce attachments among the students. In 1907 the school swimming competitions were expanded to eight events, plus the lifesaving competitions, and the first outside matches were organized, with Rugby competing in matches against Old Rugbeians and King Edward's School, Birmingham.<sup>460</sup> The following year saw the first match between Harrow and Rugby, the most regular of the external matches organized by Rugby prior to 1919.<sup>461</sup> Such inter-school swimming competitions, however, came *many* years after traditional sporting

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<sup>458.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 218, July 9, 1885, pp. 97-98; No. 219, July 28, 1885, p. 102; No. 231, July 13, 1886, p. 90. In 1886 the actual division was two competitors for the RHS medal and a single competitor for the Dukes' Cup for Resuscitation.

<sup>459.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 476, June 30, 1906; No. 478, July 31, 1906, pp. 126-27.

<sup>460</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 490, July 22, 1907, pp. 89-90; No. 491, July 30, 1907, pp. 110-12.

<sup>461.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 502, June 27, 1908, pp. 97-98.



rivalries had already been formed, and indicate very clearly how swimming lagged behind the major team sports. Various other external matches were organized over the following decade, and water polo continued to develop in the school. Perhaps the best gauge of the improvement of swimming in the school during this period was the change in entrance requirements to the swimming club. In 1906 the requirement was for a candidate to swim 220 yards in five and a quarter minutes or less. By 1908 the entry test was a 220 yards swim in four and a half minutes or less.<sup>462</sup>

The story of swimming at Westminster School followed a similar pattern. As previously noted, the Clarendon Commission recorded that swimming was being taught there prior to 1864. According to the evidence gathered by the Commissioners at the school, swimming was under the control of the Head Boy of the school. The school had no swimming pool of its own, so boys went out for general swimming and lessons. According to reports, the school, "... had many boys who could swim very well."<sup>463</sup> The Headmaster, the Reverend C. B. Scott, reported that boys from the school were taught to swim in the Great Peter Street Baths. He also informed the Commission that those boys who wished to go boating, first had to learn to swim.<sup>464</sup> But after the Commission's Report, the trail runs out. A combination of time, neglect and lack of interest seem to have come together to prevent any further serious research on school swimming at Westminster. No swimming records survive at the school from before the end of the Second World

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<sup>462.</sup> *The Meteor*, No. 476, July 31, 1906, pp. 93-94; No. 504, July 28, 1908, pp. 122-23.

<sup>463.</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. III, p. 441.

<sup>464.</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. II, p. 205.

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What the Clarendon Commission uncovered at Winchester College was quite different. There swimming was fairly widespread, despite the fact the school had no real boating activities. Although swimming was not systematically taught at the school, the commissioners revealed that 36 out of 41 boys in the Sixth Form could swim, and 149 out of 216 boys in the school as a whole could swim.<sup>466</sup> As with Westminster, almost no records of swimming survive at the school today.<sup>467</sup>

What then can be said about swimming at that small grouping, the elite of the nineteenth century English Public Schools? No one doubts their overall attachment to sporting activity, and few scholars dispute the increasing importance which most schools came to attach to team games. Yet their interest in swimming was curiously weak. The most elite of the boys Public Schools while not great promoters of swimming, did not *ignore* it as a sporting activity either. Indeed, the fact that swimming could be a competitive sport likely ensured that it was not ignored. But, at best, it was viewed as a second or third class sport in all of these schools. Its role as a *leisure* activity, however, is much harder to trace. Anecdotal comments in all of the sources cited indicate that, beyond the competitive events, recreational swimming normally took place at the schools. The extent of this is left unrecorded,

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<sup>465</sup> E-mail from Mr. E. A. Smith, Archivist of Westminster School, 12 March 2000. Mr. Smith indicated that all records of early swimming at the school have been lost or destroyed.

<sup>466</sup> Royal Commission on Public Schools and Colleges, PP 1864 XX, vol. I, pp. 41, 152.

<sup>467</sup> Letter from Mr. R. Custance, Archivist of Winchester College, 24 January 2000. Mr. Custance indicated that there were few records in the school archives on swimming.



however, and beyond the fact that it clearly took place, it is impossible to be sure about the number of boys involved, or the exact form of swimming they engaged in.

Another approach might be to investigate swimming in a *regional* context; to explore how schools in relatively close proximity to each other turned to swimming. Did they influence their neighbours in the development of school swimming? A regional study of Public School swimming might also provide different results from those of the elite Public Schools. Looking at the experiences of the four Public Schools in York and its hinterland, Ampleforth College, Bootham School, The Mount School, and St. Peter's School, provides a regional illustration of what swimming activities were undertaken in Public Schools *outside* the country's elite institutions. In fact, even in such a restricted area as that around York, the differences in swimming experiences between the four schools is quite marked. Although similar in most respects to the trend revealed by surveying the Clarendon Commission schools, there are also some unique aspects to be found in swimming at Yorkshire schools.

Ampleforth College, located alongside Ampleforth Abbey in the hills to the northwest of York, was begun as a Catholic boarding school in 1802. As a result of the suspicion of and discrimination against Catholics that existed in England well in to the 1800s the school was established in a remote location. This isolation arguably served its purpose of protecting the school from the worst anti-Catholic elements within English society, but also had the effect of delaying the introduction of positive developments that arose in wider English society. Among such developments, swimming came late to the school. The first swimming "pool" of any type at Ampleforth was the pond that supplied the school's drinking water supply.



Recreational swimming was taking place in this pond by the 1870s. The school's first purpose built pool, in the 1880s, caved in immediately after construction due to faulty workmanship. A second pool, of extremely small size and barely usable for swimming, was built just after the collapse of the first pool and still exists inside the school theatre. The school's third pool was an outdoor pool, located near the cricket and rugby grounds, which opened in the 1890s and remained in use until it was filled with earth in the 1970s. A fourth, indoor, swimming pool was constructed in the 1970s.<sup>468</sup> Swimming competitions took place with other boy's public schools in York, but the earliest recorded match was not until 1928.<sup>469</sup>

In the City of York itself stand the two Society of Friends schools, Bootham and The Mount. Looking at these two establishments, it is quickly revealed that there were distinct differences in the approach to swimming between boys' and girls' schools. Bootham School, the Quaker boys' school in York, used various local pools for swimming until the school's own swimming pool was dedicated on 1 June 1914.<sup>470</sup> Prior to this date the pre-existing tradition was for the boys to use the

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<sup>468</sup>. Conversation with the Librarian and Archivist, Fr. Anselm Cramer, OSB, 20 June 2000. Almost no records survive on swimming at Ampleforth, and the dates given are derived from an oral tradition passed down amongst the lay and religious staff, and old boys of the school, as well as the librarian's familiarity with Ordnance Survey maps of the school grounds.

<sup>469</sup>. A regular series of fixtures was arranged with Bootham starting in 1928. Only the Bootham record of events have survived, however. See *Bootham*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (December 1928), p. 91. A complete run of *Bootham* is stored in the Bootham School archives.

<sup>470</sup>. Bootham School Archives, York, B.14.9, "Aquatic Results - Bootham School, York" covers internal swimming matches in the school from 1914 to 1973; Bootham School Archives, York, QM.9.6, A poem entitled "The Building of the Bath"; Bootham School Archives, York, 2.8, Photographs of the baths, including the opening ceremony; *Bootham*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (December 1914), pp. 4-5.



Marygate Baths in York, only about one hundred yards across the street from the school, and hence an easy trip for pupils.<sup>471</sup> The earliest records of swimming at Bootham, however, relate to the building of the new baths at the school. Once completed, the baths immediately served as a focal point for a great deal of activity at the school. Internal competitions were quickly set up, and over time matches were arranged with Ampleforth College and St. Peter's School, the two closest Public Schools for boys. Eventually, matches were also set up with other Quaker institutions further afield, such as Ackworth School.<sup>472</sup> In line with Quaker principles, the bath was opened up for the use of the girls at The Mount, the Quaker girls' school, and early photographs show the girls using the facility.<sup>473</sup>

Among male students swimming was used as a recreational activity, but the best swimmers were also expected to compete for their school against others in the district. This was, after all, the pattern that had been developed with team sports. At Bootham the number of students using the pool was very large in the first few years

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<sup>471.</sup> Various editions of *Bootham*, the official magazine of the school, discuss swimming in the Marygate Baths prior to the building of the Baths at Bootham itself, the earliest reference being in *Bootham* Vol. 1, No. 3. (Feb 1903), pp. 286, 318. This volume also contains one passing reference to swimming events organized in 1862. A fire at Bootham School in 1899 destroyed most of the school archives. Also, in conversation with Ms. Margaret Ainscough, School Archivist, on 29 November 2000, she passed on to me the discussions with various past pupils that had taken place over the years which reflected a swimming tradition prior to the building of the baths.

<sup>472</sup> Bootham School Archives, York, B.14.1 - B.14.8 - Hardbound manuscript volumes that detail the external swimming matches undertaken by the school; Bootham School Archives, York, B.14.9, "Aquatic Results - Bootham School, York." The earliest matches against Ackworth School date to the inter-war years.

<sup>473.</sup> The Mount School Archives, York, V82. The file contains many photographs dating between 1965 and the 1990s, but there are two black and white prints in the file, which are dated "c.1920's" on the back, which clearly show girls using Bootham School's pool.



after construction, at least according to anecdotal comments in various school sources. While the pool regulations preserved in the Bootham archives indicate that swimming was closely controlled by the masters, it is clear that swimming was promoted as the summer competitive sport for the brief period available during term time.<sup>474</sup>

Physical recreation for girls had traditionally presented problems for the Victorians (educationalists and others) whose ideas of femininity were challenged by robust games and recreations. Swimming offered an ideal alternative. Within girls' Public Schools, swimming was seen as a form of exercise and leisure which was not as taxing as other pursuits, and thus ideal for the "weaker" female constitution.<sup>475</sup> Swimming competition against other schools was rare in the nineteenth century, and not well established until the middle of the twentieth. The Mount School, for example, did not open its own swimming bath until 1965. The earliest recorded swimming activities, however, date to 1891 and seem to build upon an already established tradition. None of the school's sports journals from the nineteenth century reveal which swimming pool in York was being used by the girls of the school at the time, but it seems likely that the Marygate Baths would have been used, these being the closest ones to the school.

The Mount staged internal swimming competitions from 1891 onwards, with the emphasis in the early years being upon the acquisition of skill rather than all out

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<sup>474</sup> Bootham School Archives, York, B.14.9, "Aquatic Results - Bootham School, York;" Bootham School Archives, York, QM.9.6, A poem entitled "The Building of the Bath;" *Bootham*, vol 2, no. 5 (October 1905), p. 268; *Bootham*, vol. 7, no. 2 (December 1914), pp. 4-5.

<sup>475</sup> For more on the issues of Gender and Health, see Chapters 3 and 8.



competition. Monetary prizes were awarded for first and second place finishes in races, but at first there were also cash prizes for the completion of half mile swims.<sup>476</sup> In 1891 the school was already in possession of a silver brooch that was awarded to the swimmer winning the most races in the annual competition. This would indicate that the tradition of swimming being promoted in the school went back to the 1880s at the very least.<sup>477</sup> The early records of The Mount lay special emphasis on the numbers of girls who participated in swimming and who were able to swim. The entry for the swimming activities of 1892 indicates that the average number of girls who went to the baths during that year was 24, and that 19 girls were learning how to swim.<sup>478</sup> The report for 1897 lists 23 girls taking part in the annual swimming competition, as opposed to 32 the year before. In that same year a total of 48 girls within the school could swim as opposed to 46 the previous year. An average of eleven girls frequented the swimming sessions at the cold baths, while an average of twenty girls frequented the sessions at the warm baths. Only five beginners are recorded as having progressed enough to complete a width of the baths, and there is no listing on the total number of beginners that year.<sup>479</sup> Sixty-two

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<sup>476.</sup> The Mount Schools Archives, York, Untitled Sports Register 1896 - 1905. The events listed for the 1897 competition were: Swimming One Width - First Year, Swimming One Length - Second Year, One Length Race, Three Lengths Race, Race on Back, Race in Clothes, Best Breaststroke, Best Sidestroke, Neatest Dive, Neatest Dive - Beginners, Longest Dive without Stroke, Longest Dive with Stroke, Dive for Rings, Length in Fewest Strokes, Swimming Ten Lengths, Swimming a Half Mile.

<sup>477.</sup> The Mount School Archives, York, *Sports, Swimming, Cricket, Tennis, etc.*, 1891-1896; Untitled Sports Register 1896-1905.

<sup>478.</sup> The Mount School Archives, York, *Sports, Swimming, Cricket, Tennis, etc.*, 1891-1896, fol. 5.

<sup>479.</sup> The Mount School Archives, York, Untitled Sports Register 1896-1905, fols. 6-7. The difference between the cold and warm baths is unclear, but it seems likely

girls were enrolled at The Mount in 1887, and sixty in 1897.<sup>480</sup> It is therefore safe to assume that through the 1890s the average number of girls attending the school was sixty. Comparing this total with the figures for the number of girls swimming indicates that roughly eighty percent (80%) of the girls in the school could swim. Swimming obviously played a regular and important role in the recreational lives of the girls of The Mount.

St. Peter's School, York, is the oldest of the city's Public Schools, being linked with the Minster for much of its existence, and an affiliation to the Church of England is maintained to this day. It is likely, as at the Clarendon Commission Schools, that boys from St. Peter's were involved in recreational swimming in various bodies of water around York for much longer than we have records for. The first organized swimming within the school, however, seems to have been a series of "School House Swimming Races," referring to one of the school's boarding houses, that occurred in 1885, and which were swum in the Marygate swimming baths.<sup>481</sup> This early swimming seems to have been linked in some student's minds with rowing, as less than a year later a writer in *The Peterite* could state, "There is no excuse whatever for a boy who has reached the age of 12 or even 11, and is able to

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that the cold bath was the swimming bath, while the warm baths were individual wash baths.

<sup>480</sup>. Mary Smith and Elizabeth Walker, *The Mount School, York 1857 - 1957*, (York: William Sessions Ltd., n.d. [c. 1957]), p. 36.

<sup>481</sup>. *The Peterite*, Vol. 7, No. 53 (July 1885), pp. 48-49. A complete run of *The Peterite* is found in the school archives. The events undertaken in this competition were: 100 Yards (Open), 50 Yards (Under 15), Diving - "Best Header" (Open), Diving - "Best Header" (Under 15), 50 Yards (Open), Diving for Plates, Handicap 250 Yards (Open).



swim, and cannot pull at all.”<sup>482</sup>

By 1892, according to one correspondent, who signed himself “Aquaticus,” to the school magazine, swimming was barely practised within the school, at least as a organized activity. The decline seems to have been perceived as a grave one, “Dear Sirs, May I take advantage of your periodical to call attention to the collapse of all public regard for school swimming? A few years ago we had regular Peterite races including Senior and Junior events, which excited considerable interest and competition.”<sup>483</sup> This letter clearly indicates that besides the “School House Swimming Races” in the 1880s there were also a series of races in which the entire school participated, or at least which were open to the entire school. Almost predictably, however, “Aquaticus” goes on to argue that the decline in swimming has had an effect on school rowing, and if swimming is encouraged within the school again, the effect on the rowing team will be a salutary one.<sup>484</sup>

In August of 1892 T. H. Bingham, a St. Peter’s student, was drowned while attempting to save a small girl from drowning in Nottinghamshire.<sup>485</sup> This incident did not spark an immediate interest in improving swimming within the school, but over time it became a rallying cry for those interested in the activity. By 1894 it is clear that swimming events took place, but were evidently not very popular, as another letter to *The Peterite* illustrates,

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<sup>482</sup> *The Peterite*, Vol. 8, No. 58 (February 1886), p. 8.

<sup>483</sup> *The Peterite*, Vol. 12, No. 98, (June 1892), pp. 235-236.

<sup>484</sup> *The Peterite*, Vol. 12, No. 98, (June 1892), p. 236.

<sup>485</sup> *The Peterite*, Vol. 12, No. 100 (September 1892), p. 273. According to the article Bingham drowned near Eastwood, close to Nottingham.

“Respected Editor,  
 on referring to former numbers of the *Peterite* I find it was the custom for Peterites to indulge in swimming sports; and considering the number of drowning accidents that occur, notably one sad case within our own recollection, it would seem a pity that these were discontinued; of course it is perfectly possible to swim without having races, but still as in all other things competition gives a stimulus to boys to excel in the art. Mr. Hill would willingly close the baths for an afternoon, if necessary, for that purpose, and prizes of some sort could be got by entrance fees and other ways; I think, therefore, that it is certainly worth our while to take up the matter. Hoping that something will be done towards arranging for sports of this nature, and thereby encouraging a most important exercise.  
 Yours truly, Natator”<sup>486</sup>

In 1895 further attention was focussed on the importance of swimming and the dangers of being unable to swim when two St. Peter’s students, in separate incidents, saved people from drowning.<sup>487</sup> This was followed in 1896 with the institution of the Royal Humane Society’s lifesaving medal competition at the school, and in 1897 with the unveiling of a memorial plaque to T. H. Bingham.<sup>488</sup> From this date, annual competitions for swimming within the school seem to have been the rule, although the actual recording of race results in *The Peterite* was irregular, with several gaps in the results occurring between 1897 and 1918. The lifesaving competition, in memoriam of Bingham, appears to have disappeared sometime after 1901, when it is

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<sup>486.</sup> *The Peterite*, Vol. 12, No. 110, (June 1894), pp. 502-503.

<sup>487.</sup> *The Peterite*, Vol. 12, No. 115, (April 1895), p. 121.

<sup>488.</sup> *The Peterite*, Vol. 13, No. 126, (March 1897), pp. 393-394. The medal for the 1896 lifesaving competition was presented immediately following the unveiling of the T. H. Bingham memorial plaque.



last mentioned as being competed for.<sup>489</sup> A lifesaving competition of some sort, however, was revived in 1913.<sup>490</sup>

It took a long time before swimming at St. Peter's developed into competitions outside the school. As was the case for the great Public Schools surveyed by the Clarendon Commission, when racing outside of the school eventually developed it was, at first, against local opposition or traditional opponents. A single race between Bootham and St. Peter's is recorded as taking place in 1905 under the auspices of Mr. Rowntree of the chocolate factory family.<sup>491</sup> It was to be almost forty years before further competitions took place; after this date, the next recorded outside swimming match for St. Peter's was in 1941, again against Bootham.<sup>492</sup> Overall, this delay until the 1940s for serious competition against outside opponents is atypical of the schools surveyed. The sources housed in the school archives shed no light on why this may have been the case. It may indicate an unusual attitude within St. Peter's towards swimming; a feeling that swimming was not a suitable competitive sport, or it may speak to other issues, such as feelings of religious or social distance from the neighbouring local opponents. The schools are separated by a mere few hundred metres on the same road; the one (Bootham) is

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<sup>489.</sup> *The Peterite*, Vol. 13., No 130, (November 1897), pp. 463; Vol. 17, No. 153 (October 1901), p. 47. From 1897 onwards swimming results, when they appear, are usually to be found in either the October or November editions of the magazine.

<sup>490.</sup> *The Peterite*, Vol 21, No. 212, (November 1913), pp. 878-880. This may have been for the Royal Humane Society medal, which was still being offered by the RHS at the time, but the reference is simply to a lifesaving competition.

<sup>491.</sup> *Bootham*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (October 1905), p. 368. No mention of this race is made in *The Peterite* or any other archival records housed in St. Peter's School.

<sup>492.</sup> *The Peterite*, Vol. 33, No. 298, (September 1941), p. 71. *Bootham*, Vol 20, No. 5, (December 1941), pp. 507-508.

Quaker, the other (St. Peter's) Anglican. It does, however, seem odd that although the first school swimming pool was opened at St. Peter's in 1922, further outside competition was delayed for so long.<sup>493</sup> Of course, St. Peter's students competed in a range of other sports, and the school was located on ample land allowing various field sports, and bordered the River Ouse, with the natural possibility for rowing. Swimming perhaps had to compete for pupils in such a rich sporting environment.

Swimming pools were, of course, costly to build and operate. Maintaining sports fields on the other hand was relatively cheap. Only the better-off Public Schools, therefore, could afford the cost of installing and running a swimming pool. Indeed, they were often the only schools which had the *space* for such a luxury. Westminster School, in the centre of London, has never had a swimming pool and likely never will due to its location. It is worth speculating about how swimming may have grown in less prestigious Public Schools. It would be expected that in places where there were local bodies of water that could be used for swimming, a local and informal tradition of swimming was established at some point in the nineteenth century. Over time this would develop into a more formal system, perhaps requiring a swimming test, especially if rowing was undertaken as a sport at the school. In locations where there was no nearby natural body of water in which to swim, it would be expected that there was little to no tradition of swimming. Over time as swimming pools were built at these Public Schools, it would be expected that swimming would become a more important activity, as a sport, a recreation, and as part of physical education.

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<sup>493</sup>. For the opening of the swimming bath see, *The Peterite*, Vol. 23, No.241 (July 1922), pp. 639, 664-65.



Clearly, Public Schools for girls were nothing like as numerous or as influential as their more famous male counterparts. The sports they offered their pupils were also different, not least, as we have seen, because the more vigorous activities undertaken at boys' schools clashed with prevailing ideals of femininity and the raising of girls/young women. Moreover, much less is known about the history of girls' Public Schools and their sports. Even the standard author, Kathleen McCrone, in several excellent studies on women's sports in the period, makes only passing reference to swimming in girls' schools. For our purposes, the discussion of female swimming is concentrated in Chapter 3.

Public Schools, of course, catered to the smallest of minorities. Even the largest schools seldom had more than five hundred students enrolled at any one time. The state educational system, on the other hand, was designed to provide mass education for millions of students. But the emergence of state and locally-financed schooling for all, did not fully emerge until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Those various schools were clearly influenced by the ideals of and by personnel from Public School backgrounds. It was inevitable that many features of Public School athleticism would find their way into these new schools, and the same was true of swimming.

In order to understand the difference in experience between the Public Schools and the various state schools which began to appear in the late nineteenth century it is first necessary to understand the broad outline of state involvement in education in England from the early 1800s until 1918. Beginning in 1833 Parliament began to make sums of money available to voluntary and secular schools that were providing elementary education in both England and Wales. This was

followed in 1839 by the formation of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education which became responsible for distributing such funds. In 1856 an Education Department was set up to assist the Committee of the Privy Council. This new department also incorporated the former Science and Art Department of the Board of Trade. Throughout this early period the number of schools supported by the funds voted by Parliament was limited. This changed in 1870 with the passing of the 1870 Elementary Education Act which authorized municipal authorities to construct and support schools out of local rates, increased the level of grants provided by Parliament for educational purposes, and set out how school boards were to be set up across England to carry out the purposes of the Act. The Education Department continued to be the main instrument of state involvement and control over local school boards until 1899 when the Board of Education was created as the single authority with responsibility for all aspects of Education in England.<sup>494</sup> It was therefore, first under the Education Department, and then under the Board of Education, that state schools negotiated their involvement with swimming between the 1870s and 1918.

From the 1840s onwards an increasing number of privately owned and operated baths opened across England. Later, after the enactment of the permissive

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<sup>494</sup> The best source for a recounting of the administrative history of the various governmental bodies responsible for Education in England is located on the Public Record Office's website. The PRO catalogue website uses "frames" and as such does not give direct web addresses to all of its pages; the citation in question can be found by searching under the "ED" class mark. Anonymous, 'Administrative History of Records created or inherited by the Department of Education and Science, and of related bodies 1818-2000,' *Public Record Office Online Catalogue*, <<http://catalogue.pro.gov.uk/>> (13 November 2002). See also, Anonymous, 'Education Departments: Administrative History,' *National Digital Archive of Datasets*, <<http://ndad.ulcc.ac.uk/datasets/AH/13.htm>> (13 November 2002).



legislation of the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*, and its various amendments, many municipal baths were also built. The increase in the number of facilities with swimming pools allowed the newly-established state schools to start thinking about sending their students out for instruction in swimming. For a long time, however, the ability of state schools to send students to a pool for instruction in swimming was limited. Contemporary education rules prevented state schools from spending money on swimming, as it was not listed as an activity on which education grants could be expended. Starting in 1890, however, that situation began to change. Schools under the jurisdiction of the School Board for London were the first to be allowed to include swimming as part of their curriculum. In December 1890 the Education Department granted permission to London Board schools to add swimming to their school timetables and to count student attendance at swimming lessons as being school attendance. A School Board for London circular memorandum to parish councils from May 1892 summarizes the decision as part of a review of school swimming within the London parishes and boroughs.<sup>495</sup> By the 1891 summer season then, swimming was an activity that had official approval, within London at least, and educators wasted no time in spending part of their education grants on providing swimming for their students. The provinces, however, would have to wait some time longer to be able to do the same.

This development of swimming in London schools did not come out of a vacuum, however. For many years prior to the official recognition of swimming by the Board of Education, various efforts had been made to promote swimming within

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<sup>495</sup>. LAML, P12/80/2/3, School Board for London circular to Lambeth Vestry, 19 May 1892.

London schools. In May of 1890 the School Board for London printed and circulated a report on the current and historical status of swimming within its area of responsibility. The authors of this document traced interest in swimming in the School Board for London back to 1872. The Works Committee of the School Board for London had in that year asked about obtaining time in local swimming pools for lessons for students. They also enquired about the position of the Education Department on the matter of providing swimming instruction for students. Because the Elementary Education Act of 1873 was being prepared, the School Board for London lobbied to have a clause included that would allow school boards to spend education funds either on the teaching of swimming at local baths, or to erect swimming pools attached to schools for the purpose of teaching swimming. Such a clause was not, however, included in the final legislation, and swimming was not included as an activity upon which education funds could be expended.<sup>496</sup>

This failure to secure recognition of swimming through official means was followed by an attempt to promote swimming through a voluntary organization linked to schools, but not restricted by Education Department regulations. In 1875 the London Schools Swimming Club (L.S.S.C.) was founded. Its purpose was the promotion of swimming for both male and female students. This was to be achieved through assisting the formation of clubs, securing permission for clubs to use the various lakes in parks around London, negotiating favourable entry fees to local bathing facilities, arranging voluntary instruction by Board School teachers, and

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<sup>496</sup> LAML, P12/80/2/2, School Board for London, Report of the Physical Education Sub-Committee on Bathing Accommodation and Swimming Classes (Public Elementary Schools), pp. 1-2.



obtaining and awarding prizes to both teachers and children. This club managed to survive for nearly a decade, finally folding in 1884. It does not appear to have been very successful, however, as its entire existence was plagued by funding difficulties. It seems to have survived through the extraordinary efforts of a core of very dedicated volunteer organizers. An attempt was made to revive the club in 1887, but this soon failed. The School Board blamed the failure of the London Schools Swimming Club on a lack of funding; most people apparently believed the club was supported out of Board funding and therefore declined to make voluntary donations to it.<sup>497</sup>

The task of providing school swimming thus returned to the School Board for London, which, between 1887 and 1890, continued to press for the inclusion of swimming in a revised Education Code. With this in mind it commissioned several surveys of either specific swimming provision within the areas around London schools, or more general surveys of physical training or physical education provision within London schools. During this three year period the School Board for London placed continued emphasis on the sanitary nature of bathing, and the fact that swimming was a physical exercise that was the equal of military drill for promoting students' fitness. The School Board also consistently argued that taking students to the swimming baths not only taught them a useful skill, but also exposed them to habits of cleanliness and sanitation that would last long after their time at school. These were, after all, years which saw an increased concern about the "condition of England"; about fears of sickness and physical problems - all apparently related to

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<sup>497</sup> LAML, P12/80/2/2, School Board for London, Report of the Physical Education Sub-Committee, p. 2.

the broader issue of individual and communal hygiene and cleanliness. Swimming, it was argued, contributed to the important development of personal hygiene.<sup>498</sup>

However, throughout the same period, the Education Department was firm in its opposition to education funds being allocated to swimming provision, or for the building of baths, even when an Inspector of Schools complained, for example, of the continued dirtiness among some girl students in the Orange Street School, Southwark, where he had recommended bathing facilities some years before.<sup>499</sup>

By early 1890 then, swimming was being actively promoted within London, but it was not officially approved as a subject of instruction within schools. According to information collected by the School Board for London, a total of 16 parishes in the capital had adopted the Baths and Washhouses Act of 1846 and its various amendments, and provided swimming pools for public use. Three of these, Lewisham, St. Pancras, and St. George's, Hanover Square, had two separate bath sites within their parishes. The total number of swimming pools within these 19 baths buildings was 41. In addition, there were 25 private bath companies operating in London, providing a total of 36 swimming pools. Charges for admittance of school students, usually taken to the baths after school hours by an enthusiastic teacher, varied from 1d to 3d, sometimes including a towel and bathing costume, other times not. In certain areas, notably Battersea, Bermondsey, Lambeth, Peckham and Poplar, local funds to support swimming instruction had been set up. These districts were overwhelmingly poor, working-class communities, with their own mix

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<sup>498</sup>. For more on the linking of swimming, health and cleanliness, see Chapter 8.

<sup>499</sup>. LAML, P12/80/2/2, School Board for London, Report of the Physical Education Sub-Committee, pp. 2-10.



of serious social, urban problems. They were, in effect, the kind of city communities whose children were most likely in need of access both to physical recreation and to the hygienic lessons which swimming encouraged.<sup>500</sup> The Serpentine was technically available for student use as a swimming site, but its hours of availability were such that it was considered unsuitable. The bathing ponds in Victoria Park, however, were thought to be much more useful for the provision of swimming instruction for both boys and girls. Overall, however, by early 1890 swimming was not well supported throughout London, and even where it was, provision for male students vastly outstripped provision for female students.<sup>501</sup> This was, again, a reflection of the different attitudes towards physical education for boys and girls.

In 1893 the London Schools Swimming Association (L.S.S.A.) was founded as the first schools swimming association in England. In many ways the new association was a continuation of the London Schools Swimming Club, though it seems not to have identified in any way with the previous organizational body. It was definitely more successful than the L.S.S.C., running a series of London Schools Championships in 1893 and every year thereafter to the present, even through both World Wars, with a few minor problems here and there. It is clear from the long term survival of the L.S.S.A. that the organization very quickly surmounted the issue

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<sup>500.</sup> It is likely that such support funds were contributed to by local citizens, and interested local patrons, of both the working and other classes, but there is no firm evidence for this.

<sup>501.</sup> LAML, P12/80/2/2, School Board for London, Report of the Physical Education Sub-Committee, p. 8. In the appendices attached to this report, where figures are given for the number of student attending the baths for swimming instruction, there are always more male students listed as attending than female students.



of funding that had crippled the L.S.S.C. throughout its existence.<sup>502</sup> It is unclear, however, whether the existence of the L.S.S.A. acted as some sort of catalyst for swimming activity within London Schools, but the years following its formation seem to have been ones of great swimming activity in schools in the capital. The December 1890 decision of the Education Department to allow schools to spend money on swimming likely helped, but the organizational assistance of the L.S.S.A. to individual schools was also likely important. By the end of 1905 the L.S.S.A. had 924 schools affiliated to it, and roughly 7000 certificates of proficiency in swimming were issued by the association in that year.<sup>503</sup> The involvement of a third organization, the Life Saving Society, in promoting swimming assisted all of the other efforts taking place. It is certain that lifesaving instruction was being offered by 1897 in at least some of the schools covered by the London School Board. This is demonstrated by the Life Saving Society Annual Report issued in 1897 for 1895-96, which contained printed photographs of massed groups of London Board schoolgirls demonstrating the Society's lifesaving techniques.<sup>504</sup> Life Saving Society records indicate that official discussions to legitimize the teaching of lifesaving to students in School Board for London schools took place in 1898, and in that year a total of

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<sup>502.</sup> London School Swimming Association, *Report For the year ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1923*, (London: L.S.S.A., 1924), p. 6 & Front Cover. See also, L.S.S.A. Archives, London, *Programme of Championship Races and Entertainment*, 30 September 1911. The L.S.S.A. Archives consist of a large plastic storage box filled with old reports and championship programs in the possession of the current secretary of the L.S.S.A., Ms. B. Sullivan, 5 April 2001. The earliest Championship Program dates from 1911, and the earliest Annual Report from 1923.

<sup>503.</sup> Royal Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee for 1905 and Prospectus for 1906*, (London: R.L.S.S., 1906), p. 19.

<sup>504.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1895-96 and Prospectus for 1897*, (London: L.S.S., 1897), pp. 10, 40, 66.



216 students were awarded certificates of proficiency by the Society.<sup>505</sup>

At around the same time the question of the provision of swimming pools *solely* for the use of students was being raised in London. In 1897 or 1898 the School Board for London was investigating the possibility of building a swimming pool in the Dalston area of London. In March of 1899 a letter was received at the offices of the Board of Education in London about this topic:

In a letter dated the 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1898, their Lordships approved the proposal of the Board to provide a swimming bath in the neighbourhood of Dalston for the use of the Day and Evening Schools named therein, viz, Enfield Road, Haggerston Road, Sigdon Road, Queen's Road and Tottenham Road. An opportunity has now occurred of purchasing, by private treaty, the leasehold premises known as the Albion Hall and Swimming Baths, situated in Albion Square, Dalston, lying to the west of the Board's School in Queen's Road, and containing an area of about 11, 325 square feet, as shown coloured pink on the accompanying plan.

The Board are of opinion that [these premises should be acquired for the purpose of a swimming bath, under the sanction already given by their Lordships;] and I am accordingly instructed to ask for the Department's sanction to this proposal.<sup>506</sup>

The correspondence between the School Board for London and the Board of Education reveals that the School Board for London took possession of the Albion Hall and Swimming Baths, and ran them for the use of Board schools. Final refurbishment of the premises was still taking place in 1903, and it does not appear

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<sup>505.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1897-98 and Prospectus for 1899*, (London: L.S.S., 1899), p. 10.

<sup>506.</sup> PRO, ED 21/11971, Dalston: Albion Square Swimming Baths. The square brackets are in the original. The plan mentioned as accompanying the letter is not appended to the file.

that they were in use prior to that year.<sup>507</sup> Despite these delays, this represents a shift in policy by the Board of Education. Only a decade before the Board was forbidding any expenditure of money at all on swimming instruction for students. Officially, however, there was still no authorization for the instruction of students within the Education Acts of the period. The *Education Act* of 1901 was criticized by the Life Saving Society for the fact that it did not recognize swimming as a subject of instruction. Despite that, however, with the permission they had received for their area the School Board for London was offering both swimming and lifesaving instruction. In 1901, 12,555 students in evening continuation classes offered by the Board took part in such lessons.<sup>508</sup> Interestingly, Agnes Campbell in her survey of baths and washhouses in the United Kingdom claimed that local educational authorities gained the right to expend funds on the instruction of swimming to students in 1898.<sup>509</sup> The discrepancy between this statement and the other, confused, evidence collected would bear further investigation.

By 1904 there was still no official authorisation for swimming in the current education legislation of the day. School Boards outside of London were prevented from spending education funds on the teaching of swimming, or the provision of swimming baths, even though London Board Schools had been able to do so for over a decade. However, swimming was widely viewed as a useful skill to be learned. In addition there were health arguments raised in support of the principle of allowing

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<sup>507.</sup> PRO, ED 21/11971, Dalston: Albion Square Swimming Baths.

<sup>508.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1900-1901 and Prospectus for 1902*, (London: L.S.S., 1902), p. 12.

<sup>509.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 5.



students to go swimming as part of their education.<sup>510</sup> In June of 1904 the Borough of Newark Education Committee asked the Board of Education if it was legal under the 1902 Education Act for the Committee to pay out education funds to the Newark Swimming Association in order to provide the students of the district with swimming instruction. The Local Government Board, which had evidently also been consulted on the matter, felt that this was *not* an acceptable use of funding, feeling that this expenditure was against any statutory authority granted by the law. The ultimate decision of the Board of Education, however, was that the funding arrangement *could* be undertaken. The funding was subject to the provision that the swimming lessons were included on the timetables of the schools concerned. This decision, in July of 1904, was referred to as the ‘Newark precedent’ in later internal memoranda of the Board of Education.<sup>511</sup> Later in the same year, on 22 November 1904, the Hastings Education Committee submitted a similar query to the Board of Education, asking if it was within the Committee’s authority to pay for swimming lessons on one or two evenings a week for students. Confidential minutes from the Board of Education, dated 29 and 30 November 1904, indicate that the Board of Education felt that under Article 44 (1) and the provisions for physical exercise in the 1902 Education Act, and based upon the Newark precedent, these payments

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<sup>510.</sup> See Chapter 8 for further details.

<sup>511.</sup> PRO, ED 111/126, “Donation to a Swimming Association,” Borough of Newark Education Committee to Board of Education 10 June 1904; also, Local Government Board to Board of Education 18 July 1904; also, attached minutes 12 July 1904 and 13 July 1904. This file contains an unnumbered bundle of documents, attached together, on assorted Board of Education topics. Roughly a third of the file refers to the Borough of Newark and swimming. Exactly why the Local Government Board was involved in the matter is not made clear by any of the minutes and correspondence in the file.

*could* be made, again provided the swimming instruction was placed on the school timetable.<sup>512</sup>

Gradually then, the regulations governing the expenditure of education grants were being interpreted to allow for the provision of school swimming. This change emerged not so much as a policy, but on the back of a series of small, *ad-hoc* changes and requests, from a number of different education authorities, all anxious to know the legality of spending educational funds on the provision of swimming. And gradually, the point was conceded; swimming *could* be incorporated into the school curriculum. By 1904 the first authorized expenditure of education funding on swimming lessons for elementary school students was taking place outside of London. This authorization, however, seems to have been given on a case by case basis, and the ability of local educational authorities to spend money on this subject of instruction does not seem to have been widely broadcast by the Board of Education.

Indeed, the whole state of affairs over permission for swimming instruction in schools was a confused one. According to a near contemporary press account by Harold E. Fern, then the Honorary Secretary of the Southern Counties Amateur Swimming Association (S.C.A.S.A.), but later to become the Honorary Secretary of the A.S.A., the A.S.A. had sent a deputation to the Board of Education in 1907 on the topic of swimming as part of the education of English children. According to

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<sup>512</sup> PRO, ED 111/213, Hastings Swimming Question, Attached Minutes of 29 November 1904 and 30 November 1904. This file contains an unnumbered sheaf of memos, attached together, on assorted Board of Education topics. Roughly in the centre of the bundle are to be found the papers dealing with the Hastings swimming question. No copy of a final letter from the Board of Education authorizing the expenditure of funds by Hastings is appended to the file.



Fern this deputation had secured recognition of swimming as a permissive subject to be allowed in the school curriculum, and he argued that the effect of the change, "... gave a great impetus to the teaching of swimming in the schools."<sup>513</sup> As has been stated, however, this change of policy was not widely publicised. Throughout 1907 and into 1908 further questions about the legality and propriety of spending education funds on the provision of swimming instruction to students were received by the Board of Education in London. In March of 1907 the clerk of the Borough of Chelmsford Education Committee sent the Board of Education a letter which read, in part,

I am directed by the above Education Committee to enquire whether it would be legal for the Committee to pay out of the Education funds:

- 1 A sum of £20 to the Corporation for the exclusive use of the swimming Bath for one hour each day for 4 days a week during 3 months of the year, for the purpose of teaching swimming to the older boys and girls attending the Elementary schools: and,
- 2 The salary of an efficient Instructor in Swimming for the above purpose.<sup>514</sup>

Again, internal confidential minute papers from the Board of Education reveal the thinking of what we can only assume were the most important or influential senior civil servants in the Board of Education on this issue. One of the minutes in the file, initialled "GNR" and dated 12 March 1907, reads,

Please see this letter and the two attached precedents. I propose to reply as in the Hastings precedent, slightly altered -

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<sup>513</sup> Harold E. Fern, "The Amateur Swimming Association, Its Aims and Work," *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1914), p. 15.

<sup>514</sup> PRO, ED 111/41, Exclusive Use of the Pool, Letter from Borough of Chelmsford Education Committee to the Board of Education, 8 March 1907.

× Note that if arrangements for the instruction of scholars in swimming are shown on the approved timetables of the schools affected, such instruction would be recognised as part of the ordinary school curriculum (Art. 44 of the Code,) and any expense incurred in respect of it would properly be included in the expenditure required for maintaining the schools. × The difference in wording is due to the fact that in Hastings swimming lessons were to be given in the evenings, those proposed at Chelmsford are presumably to be in the day time, during school hours.<sup>515</sup>

The principle of paying out education funds for swimming instruction for students continued to be a live one. In April of 1908 the Local Government Board sent a request for advice to the Board of Education on another issue related to swimming and schools. In March of that year the Heston and Isleworth Urban District Education Committee had requested approval from the Local Government Board in the matter of the expenditure of £50, payable to the Schools Athletic Association of the same district, for the provision of swimming instruction to local students. In support of this payment it was estimated by the Education Committee that roughly 800 - 900 students would be trained in the coming year. The circulated minute papers from the Board of Education reveal concern that the proposed swimming lessons were scheduled outside of school hours, and were not included on the school timetable. Overall, however, there was sympathy from the members of the Board of Education who commented on the matter, and they agreed that the proposed payment could be made, subject to the swimming lessons being placed on the school

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<sup>515</sup> PRO, ED 111/41, Exclusive Use of the Pool, Attached minute of 12 March 1907. The minute paper and the letter referred to above are the first items in this unnumbered collection of files. The “×” marks are in the original.



timetable.<sup>516</sup> Lying behind all this bureaucratic coming-and-going was an interesting social change. It is clear that more and more students were keen, or at least willing, to take swimming instruction. Ever more schools, and the authorities controlling them, were equally anxious to make provision for swimming in their school system. What they needed was clarification from the appropriate government department of the *legality* of their actions.

The Newark decision of July 1904 was the first official recorded instance of swimming being allowed as a subject of instruction in a state funded school outside of London. In essence, government legislation had been interpreted by those responsible for the implementation of the legislation to allow funding to be allocated to an activity not *explicitly* set out by law, but which was considered to be acceptable for inclusion. This decision hinged on notions of what was socially beneficial and acceptable. The written comments made by the civil servants reviewing the applications for funding permission in all of these cases are powerful illustrations of social attitudes of the period. Although not specifically referred to as an activity for which schools could claim funding, civil servants reviewing the requests for funding were inclined to interpret physical education funding guidelines so as to include swimming as an activity that could receive funding. As an activity in general, swimming was viewed favourably by *all* of the civil servants writing minutes on forms attached to the requests for funding. Perhaps most revealing is a comment made in relation to the Heston and Isleworth case. One of the senior civil servants,

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<sup>516</sup> PRO, ED 111/111, "Expenditure on Swimming Instruction, Isleworth." This entire file pertains to the Heston and Isleworth Urban District Education Committee in general. There is no numbering of parts or pages in the file, although the files are organized somewhat chronologically.

as he must have been to be commenting on such an application, especially a referral from the Local Government Board, although unidentifiable because of his illegible initials on the minute paper, wrote of the application, “I cannot see how I can officially approve of any subject outside the ordinary school time, Tho’, of course, I will gladly do anything possible to encourage such a useful & practical subject as swimming.”<sup>517</sup>

Swimming had clearly established itself as a useful form of healthy physical education for England’s school-children. Interest in swimming now began to extend to include senior civil servants and also Members of Parliament. In 1908 a series of short letters were exchanged between T. J. MacNamara, MP, and Sir Robert L. Morant, the then Permanent Secretary of the Board of Education. MacNamara began the correspondence with the following request,

Dear Morant,

I am going down to Plymouth the middle of next week to distribute the prizes for a Swimming Association.

Have you got any figures in the Office showing the increase in the teaching of swimming throughout England and Wales, say, during the last 10 years? If so, I shall be obliged if you will let me have them.<sup>518</sup>

Morant’s response to MacNamara’s request is very complete and shows a desire to encourage swimming in schools. He begins,

Dear Macnamara, [sic]

I am sorry that we have no figures in the Office

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<sup>517</sup> PRO, ED 111/111, “Expenditure on Swimming Instruction, Isleworth,” Undated minute on attached minute sheet. The underlining is present in the original.

<sup>518</sup> PRO, ED 24/411, “Morant to MacNamara concerning Swim Instruction,” Letter from MacNamara to Morant 14 October 1908.



showing the increase in the teaching of swimming throughout England and Wales during the last ten years. So far, no statistics on this point have been collected.<sup>519</sup>

Morant continued by pointing out that Article 2 (9) of the Education Code of the day authorized swimming as a subject, and his personal belief was that many schools had included swimming in their timetables. Further, Article 32 of Division VI of the regulations, which covered physical training in Technical schools also authorized swimming. He believed that there had been an increase in the use of this regulation, although he was not sure of the exact extent of usage. He concluded his letter by stating, “The particular question of instruction in swimming is being very carefully considered by the persons responsible for the administration of these Regulations at the present time, and I have hopes that there will be a considerable development within the next few years.”<sup>520</sup>

The progress Morant hoped for was clearly underway, because in January of 1909 a memorandum was issued to Board of Education inspectors on the subject of swimming and lifesaving. The memorandum is marked “Confidential” and was ostensibly issued because technical schools had been reporting difficulties in arranging swimming courses of the required length (a minimum of twenty hours) to obtain Board of Education funding to cover the cost of the courses. The Board of Education was of the opinion that the difficulties expressed were without merit or inconsequential, and could be easily overcome. But the main aspect is that the

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<sup>519</sup> PRO, ED 24/411, “Morant to MacNamara concerning Swim Instruction,” Letter from Morant to MacNamara 15 October 1908.

<sup>520</sup> PRO, ED 24/411, “Morant to MacNamara concerning Swim Instruction,” Letter from Morant to MacNamara 15 October 1908.

document signalled a strong belief in the usefulness of swimming and lifesaving. At one point the memorandum reads, “It is desirable to disseminate a practical familiarity with the theory and practice of life-saving and resuscitation, but it need hardly be said that it is useless to proceed to instruction in life-saving, except with students who are already tolerable swimmers.”<sup>521</sup> The text of the memorandum goes on to recommend a two year course of swimming instruction for students. Once lifesaving is mastered, “[F]urther lessons in plunging and diving from the surface will now be particularly valuable, while there is no reason why fancy swimming should not also be taught. Such instruction is valuable not so much for the utility of fancy swimming as for the confidence which the learner insensibly acquires.”<sup>522</sup> At the same time the Board of Education Welsh Department was inquiring into the provision of swimming facilities within Wales and the number of schools taking advantage of these.<sup>523</sup>

By 1910 there was solid support behind the promotion of swimming in schools within the Board of Education, and an increasing number of Local Education Authorities seem to have been sending their students to local swimming pools for instruction. Certainly, by this time the provision of swimming instruction by civic baths and washhouses committees within municipal baths was widespread in England. This is revealed in a report commissioned by the Manchester Baths and

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<sup>521.</sup> PRO, ED 22/52, Grants Related to Swimming, Memo to Inspectors T. No. 19, January 1909.

<sup>522.</sup> PRO, ED 22/52, Grants Related to Swimming, Memo to Inspectors T. No. 19, January 1909.

<sup>523.</sup> PRO, ED 22/83, Swimming, Boating & Navigation, Untitled Memorandum of 10 June 1909. This file consists of unsorted memoranda from the Board of Education Welsh Department.



Washhouses Committee in 1911. The Manchester Committee had asked its General Superintendent of Baths, J. Derbyshire, to survey a selection of boroughs, cities and towns across the United Kingdom to see what financial contributions were made by various Education Committees towards the teaching of swimming to students. At that time the local Baths and Washhouses Committee was attempting to persuade the Manchester Education Committee to provide funding for student swimming lessons; the Baths and Washhouses Committee was then covering all of the costs related to instruction.<sup>524</sup> Surveys were sent to a total of 46 boroughs, cities and towns and 41 replies were received. In all 41 cases there was some provision of funding for student swimming lessons within the authority concerned, but in only 26 cases was the funding provided by the Education Committee of the jurisdiction involved.<sup>525</sup> In the remainder of cases funding for student swimming lessons was provided by the Baths Committee or by payments derived from the students.<sup>526</sup> The superintendent noted in his report that between April 1, 1910 and March 31, 1911 a total of 464,963 students bathed for free in Manchester baths under the various regulations of the Baths and Washhouses Committee. A total of 337,179 students bathed for free after being brought to the baths by their schools during school hours, while a further 127,784 students bathed for free during special free bathing days arranged during the

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<sup>524.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Washhouses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fol. 9, Minutes of 17 May 17, 1911; fol. 27, Minutes of July 13, 1911; fol. 36, Minutes of 16 August 1911. The Manchester Education Committee seems to have been dead set against granting any funding for swimming instruction, considering the current funding arrangement as entirely appropriate. This attitude appears not to have changed prior to the end of the First World War.

<sup>525.</sup> For results from the survey, see Table 23.

<sup>526.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Washhouses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fol. 9, Minutes of 17 May 1911.

school summer holiday period. The use of the term bathing here is deliberate, and important. Consistent with the idea of swimming as an activity that promoted cleanliness and hygiene, and with the idea of baths establishments being centres of the promotion of the public good, in Manchester all those students who attended the swimming pools during the free period were first bathed thoroughly before being allowed in for their free swim. The routine of the enjoyable activity of swimming (at least more so than school for the majority one suspects) was explicitly linked with being clean. In all likelihood the baths that some of the students were given prior to their free swimming session was the first, or one of the first they had ever been subjected to, and most likely the most thorough they had experienced as well.

The majority of the civic authorities who provided responses to the survey also provided information about total student swimmer numbers for a similar period of time to that covered by the latest Manchester figures, and Manchester had by far the largest total of student bathers. The next six largest providers of student swimming, in descending order of provision, were Liverpool (207,640); Islington, London (164,069); Bradford, Yorkshire (137,544); Leeds (123,064); Blackburn (95,000); and Bristol (83,975). While these figures are far from definitive, (we do not know for example if they count total individual students bathed or simply total student visits to the baths, nor do we know how the figures were collected) they do give a general overview of the extent of student swimming across England.

Provision for student swimming instruction was therefore in place in at least the localities listed in Table 23. Although how long such provision had been extended in the other locations described in the survey is unknown, in Manchester free bathing



for students, in the manner described above, had been in place since 1900.<sup>527</sup> Over 130,000 students were given a bath and allowed to swim on an annual basis for free.

It is clear that, much more so than Public Schools, the newly established state schools of the last quarter of the nineteenth century were great promoters of the use of public baths and swimming, especially in London and Manchester. The amount of attention paid to the subject by the Manchester Baths and Washhouses Committee, the School Board for London, and other educational authorities, indicates that a great deal of importance was placed by local educationalists on being able to take their students to the local swimming pool to learn to swim or practice swimming. To some, swimming would be a welcome substitute to the drill commonly used for physical education purposes in schools of the time, while others had visions of the activity promoting health and cleanliness. There was, however, more to this than mere aquatic recreation. We need to place this development in a broader context, more especially in the context of an imperial society concerned about the nation's ability to maintain its global role. An imperial people needed to be fit to rule and manage the empire and by the 1890s many school teachers were likely caught up in the discussion that British youth needed to be strengthened up to expand and preserve the Empire. The next two chapters will explore the possible impact of all of these ideas within English society.

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<sup>527</sup> See Table 17.

## Chapter 7: Humanitarianism, Safety and Swimming

The connection between swimming and humanitarian values is a long standing one. When the Royal Humane Society was founded in 1776, it was dedicated, among other things, to the resuscitation of the apparently drowned.<sup>528</sup> This did not imply, however, that the person skilled in resuscitation also needed to be able to swim. Rather, as boatmen or others could recover the bodies of the apparently drowned, it simply implied that a person with resuscitation skills should work or be stationed near areas of water in case of accident. From this early concern to save life, a link was forged between humanitarianism and water.

But what is humanitarianism? A humanitarian is “a person who seeks to promote human welfare,” or alternatively, “a person who advocates or practices humane action; a philanthropist.”<sup>529</sup> Certainly during the Victorian and Edwardian periods broadly-based humanitarian ideas became widespread in English society. By the middle of the nineteenth century, as Edward Royle has pointed out, large amounts of money were being spent on voluntary philanthropic ventures, and the amount of money available for such ventures continued to increase to the end of the century. Exact figures on charitable expenditure are hard to determine, but by the 1860s amounted to between £5.5 million and £7 million for London alone.<sup>530</sup> Most of the historical research on humanitarianism and philanthropy has focussed on the

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<sup>528</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 215-232.

<sup>529</sup> R. E. Allen (ed.), “humanitarian,” *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 8th ed., (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 575.

<sup>530</sup> Edward Royle, *Modern Britain A Social History 1750 - 1997*, 2nd ed., (London, Arnold, 1997), pp. 186-88.



obvious topics, notably voluntary efforts to relieve the plight of the poor through the provision of almshouses, educational foundations, hospitals, and similar institutions, as well as on the campaign to eliminate cruelty to children.<sup>531</sup> Scant attention has been paid to the humanitarianism expressed by those among the Victorians and Edwardians who provided first aid and lifesaving treatment to people in need. It was concern over the high number of annual drownings in England, for example, which persuaded a group of gentlemen to found the Life Saving Society in 1891.<sup>532</sup>

Parallel to the rise of humanitarian ideas and ideals there emerged the concept of service to others, to England, and to the Empire. From roughly the 1870s onwards, the idea of service to others became an increasingly powerful theme in English society, or at least among certain social groups. The ‘condition of England Question,’ for example, and the determination to help raise the working classes out of their misery and poverty, was prompted by a score of important social investigations into English life. But, there was also a desire to export civilized values of Christianity to the “heathen” peoples of the Empire. This sense of duty at home and abroad became an important and striking feature of Victorian life, and influenced growing numbers of Britons. The commitment to pursuing a humanitarian crusade had major consequences. By the late Victorian, and through

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<sup>531</sup> For more about such topics see, B. Harrison, ‘Philanthropy and the Victorians’, in *Peaceable Kingdom. Stability and Change in Modern Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 217-59; D. Owen, *English Philanthropy, 1660 - 1960*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1965); F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); F. K. Prochaska, ‘Philanthropy’ in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*, vol. 3, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 357-93.

<sup>532</sup> For more on the Life Saving Society, see below.

the Edwardian, period the need to instil a sense of duty towards the Imperial, civilizing and humanitarian mission, and towards Britain's place of leadership in the world, was ever-present in a broadly-based educational system - at all social levels. Although only an apparently minor theme, swimming came to be adopted as one of the issues in this wide spectrum of humanitarian activities.

One of the strongest and earliest reasons advanced by proponents of swimming was its importance as a humanitarian skill. A person able to swim was one who could save his own life as well as potentially that of someone else. The origins of this idea are unknown, but it was present in the eighteenth century, when the Royal Humane Society had first linked humanitarianism and water with its resuscitation methods. In 1816 it took its earliest and clearest expression in the work of one of England's first professional swimmers, J. Frost of Nottingham, who published an instructional handbook entitled *Scientific Swimming*.<sup>533</sup> Frost believed that being able to swim imparted the ability to save life, and wrote, "The satisfaction that will arise from having it our power [sic] to assist a fellow-creature in case of distress\*; and the importance of being at all times prepared to meet events, which human prudence can neither prevent nor anticipate, is certainly no trifling reflection."<sup>534</sup> To support his claim, Frost recorded that he had once saved his brother from drowning, and that some of the students he had taught to swim had also rescued people in danger of drowning.<sup>535</sup>

By 1837 the idea that swimming was a humanitarian skill had certainly

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<sup>533</sup> J. Frost, *Scientific Swimming*, (London: Darton, Harvey and Darton, 1816).

<sup>534</sup> Frost, *Scientific Swimming*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>535</sup> Frost, *Scientific Swimming*, pp. 2-3. The asterisk is in the original.



gained currency. When the National Swimming Society (N.S.S.) was founded in that year, it sought to promote swimming, and provided lessons for boys who wanted to learn. It was greeted by the press as providing a useful service. *Bell's Life*, for example, noted that, "A society, we hear, is proposed to be established for the teaching of youths the *necessary* art of swimming."<sup>536</sup> At around the same time, the British Swimming Society aimed, "to promote health, cleanliness, and the preservation of life by the practice of bathing and by teaching and encouraging the art of swimming."<sup>537</sup> We know that as early as 1843 the Royal Humane Society was providing boatmen to supervise swimmers in the Serpentine during the summer months, and to rescue swimmers in trouble. There was, clearly, an increased sense that swimming should be taught for humanitarian and safety reasons.<sup>538</sup>

However, between the late 1840s, when the N.S.S. appears to have disbanded, and 1873 little formal progress seems to have occurred in terms of promoting swimming for humanitarian reasons. During the period, notices about drownings, or rescues of people from drowning, appeared in *The Times*.<sup>539</sup> Until 1869, however, there was no organized body that promoted swimming either as a sport, or recreational activity, in the same manner that the N.S.S. had operated in

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<sup>536.</sup> *Bell's Life in London*, 6 August 1837, p. 2e. See also *Bell's Life in London*, 10 September 1837, p. 4c; and *The Times*, 21 September 1838, p. 6b; for information about the NS's early teaching of swimming. Italics mine.

<sup>537.</sup> *The Times*, 6 September 1843, p. 3f. If the B.S.S. and the N.S.S. were one and the same organization, as is considered in Chapter 2, then these aims may be the original or revised aims of the N.S.S.

<sup>538.</sup> Royal Humane Society, *The Sixty-Ninth Annual Report of the Royal Humane Society*, (London: RHS, 1843), pp. 12-13.

<sup>539.</sup> See for example, *The Times*, 9 September 1847, p. 6b; 16 February 1856, p. 10c; 26 July 1859, p. 10d.



the 1830s and 1840s. Even when the Amalgamated Metropolitan Swimming Clubs, later the London Swimming Association, was founded in 1869 it did not include lifesaving among the activities that it promoted.<sup>540</sup>

All of this changed from 1873 onwards when the Royal Humane Society instituted the Stanhope Medal which was to be awarded to the person who performed the most gallant rescue of someone drowning during the previous year. The first recipient was Captain Matthew Webb, later to be famous as the first man to swim the English Channel in 1875.<sup>541</sup> The medal has continued to be awarded to the present day. This first award specifically dedicated to the saving of life from the water was followed in 1882 by the introduction of what became known as the Royal Humane Society Swimming Medal. Instituted to encourage swimming, and therefore reduce the number of drownings, the medal was to be awarded, “[F]or Proficiency in Swimming Exercises at Public Schools with reference to Saving Life From Drowning.”<sup>542</sup> The medal was to be gained through a competition open to all of the boys at a participating school. It consisted of three tests, all involving the retrieval of a wooden dummy under varying conditions. Among the schools that ran competitions for the medal in the first year of its existence were Charterhouse School, Marlborough College, Royal Naval School, Rugby School, and Winchester

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<sup>540</sup>. See Chapter 2 for a review of the history of the various governing bodies of swimming in England.

<sup>541</sup>. For the origins and first awarding of the Stanhope Medal see the 99<sup>th</sup> (1872) and 100<sup>th</sup> (1873) *Annual Reports* of the Royal Humane Society, housed in the Royal Humane Society Library, and a short but quite informative work, Craig Barclay, *The Medals of the Royal Humane Society*, (London: Royal Humane Society, 1998), p. 23.

<sup>542</sup> Royal Humane Society, *The One Hundred and Ninth Annual Report of the Royal Humane Society*, (London: RHS, 1883), pp. 9-10, 77. The RHS committee to select which schools would be allowed to compete for the medals.



College.<sup>543</sup> The number of schools selected to compete for these medals was always a very tiny minority of the number of English schools, both State and Public. Participation in the competition peaked during the period immediately prior to the First World War, when around forty schools and training ships were involved annually.<sup>544</sup>

The Royal Humane Society has maintained the awarding of medals and certificates for the saving of life from drowning to the present day. In 1905 ten students from schools involved with the London Schools Swimming Association (L.S.S.A.) were honoured by the RHS with awards for saving or attempting to save the drowning.<sup>545</sup> In order to make such awards, the Society had to examine and assess a huge number of incidents. In 1909, for example, a total of 700 cases of rescue and attempted rescue from drowning were examined by the RHS and 800 people were recognized for their efforts in saving or attempting to save life.<sup>546</sup> Efforts to promote lifesaving had from the 1880s, become nationwide. In 1888, for example, the Humane Society for the Hundred of Salford donated the sum of £5 (to the Manchester Baths and Washhouses Committee), to be used for prizes in an annual competition for youths under 18 who showed proficiency in swimming and

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<sup>543</sup> Royal Humane Society, *The One Hundred and Ninth Annual Report of the Royal Humane Society*, (London: RHS, 1883), pp. 77-82.

<sup>544</sup> Royal Humane Society, *Annual Report for 1902*, (London: RHS, 1903), pp. 10, 12-13.

<sup>545</sup> Royal Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee for 1905 and Prospectus for 1906*. (London: R.L.S.S., 1906), p. 19.

<sup>546</sup> Anonymous, "Brevities" in *First Aid*, Vol. 16, No. 188, (February 1910), p. 120.

lifesaving in Manchester.<sup>547</sup> The Salford Humane Society appears to have continued to make this donation to the committee into the early 1890s. It is likely that similar efforts were taking place in many other locations across England. By then, however, or perhaps slightly earlier, this and similar local efforts at promoting lifesaving were superseded when the Life Saving Society (L.S.S.) began to expand its activities across England. The L.S.S. established a branch and began to provide lifesaving instruction and greater assistance to the promotion of lifesaving in Manchester from 1894 onwards.<sup>548</sup> At the same time, as will be seen, the L.S.S. was creating a national network of representatives to promote its work across Britain.

The Royal Humane Society had, by then, created an explicit link between the ability to swim and swimming's humanitarian value as a skill that could save the lives of others. In practice, however, the efforts undertaken by the RHS to promote swimming and lifesaving were targeted at a limited audience. It was not until the 1890s that an organization dedicated to the saving of life from drowning, and of teaching lifesaving to the general public, was created. In 1891 the Swimmers' Life Saving Society, which later became the Life Saving Society, and finally, in 1904, the Royal Life Saving Society, was founded. Such an organization dedicated specifically to training people to save the lives of the drowning was sorely needed. Statistics collected by the Royal Humane Society, reproduced as Table 28, show that

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<sup>547</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 4, fol. 61, Minutes of 19 December 1888.

<sup>548</sup>. See for example: Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1893-94 and Prospectus for 1895*. (London, Life Saving Society, 1895), p. 9; MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 8, fol. 114, Minutes of 21 April 1897.



between 1860 and 1900 there were never fewer than 2,200 drownings each year in England and Wales. If we include suicide by drowning, the level was no fewer than 2,400 drownings per year. In 1878, the worst year on record during this period, 3,659 people drowned in England and Wales, 4,028 when suicide by drowning numbers are included.<sup>549</sup>

There was, then, a high incidence of drowning during the late Victorian period, and there is no reason to think that comparable figures did not exist earlier. By the mid-to-late-nineteenth century, however, there was growing *concern* about the figures (and, of course, about the human tragedies that lay behind them). To contemporaries who worried about the fate of their fellow human beings, these figures revealed a large scale problem. One man in particular, William Henry, made it his task to tackle this problem. Born in London on 28 June 1859, Henry spent his youth in Russia, returning to London in 1877, already able to swim. We know of no particular reason for his love of swimming and his specific interest in lifesaving. Almost immediately upon his arrival back in the United Kingdom in 1877 he became involved in swimming and swimming officialdom. Henry was clearly an accomplished swimmer; he won over 600 prizes during his swimming career, and in later years used his awards to decorate his office. He was particularly interested in lifesaving and 'scientific' swimming. In fact, he was perhaps the foremost practitioner of both of these aspects of swimming between 1891 and 1918. Henry was the outright winner of the National Graceful Swimming Shield of the Bath Club in 1891, and between 1899 and 1901 he was the champion of Scientific Swimming

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<sup>549</sup> Royal Humane Society, *Annual Report for 1902*, (London: RHS, 1903), p. 226.

for England, winning the competition trophy outright with his third victory. He also attended the International Congress on Life Saving held in conjunction with the Paris Exhibition in 1900 where he competed in, and won, the International Life Saving Competition run as part of the congress.<sup>550</sup> Like competitive swimming, lifesaving was becoming internationalized. The exact extent of contact between different national organizations, however, is unclear. The Life Saving Society had by 1901, for example, organized and undertaken lifesaving demonstration tours of Sweden and Italy, and was planning a further tour of Germany in 1902.<sup>551</sup> Henry was a tireless organizer, and his dedication to the R.L.S.S. was well noted by contemporaries.<sup>552</sup> From its inception in 1891 until his death in 1928 he remained the Society's Honorary (later Chief) Secretary.

For whatever reason William Henry became interested in lifesaving, and his interest and enthusiasm proved invaluable. Lifesaving in the swimming world had previously been seen as a worthy goal, but one which was often given little attention by swimming authorities who were busy with other matters. Archibald Sinclair and William Henry were the first joint Honorary Secretaries of the Life Saving Society,

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<sup>550.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1899-1900 and Prospectus for 1901*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1901), pp. 7, 9; Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1900-1901 and Prospectus for 1902*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1902), p. 17; Archibald Sinclair, "William Henry and the R.L.S.S." in *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 8, (January 1917), pp. 142-144. During his life William Henry published and edited two magazines entitled *The Swimming Magazine*. The first ran from June 1898 to May 1899, while the second ran from June 1914 to May 1918. For more on these magazines, see below.

<sup>551.</sup> L.S.S., *Annual Report for 1897-98*, p. 53; L.S.S., *Annual Report for 1900-1901*, p. 20.

<sup>552</sup> Archibald Sinclair, "William Henry and the R.L.S.S.," pp. 142-144.



and their book on swimming, published in 1893, only two years after the foundation of the Life Saving Society, provides a wealth of information on the history of aquatic lifesaving. They traced the origins of lifesaving to the foundation of the Royal Humane Society and to its work on resuscitation, especially of near-drowning victims. The authors also saw a certain influence deriving from the work of lifeboat and coastguard organizations both in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America; both of those bodies were committed to the saving of life at sea. They noted, however, that these organizations were not prepared to take on the instruction of swimmers in lifesaving techniques. A request to the Royal Humane Society to oversee such work in 1887 produced no response.<sup>553</sup> Sinclair and Henry, among others, then sought to have the A.S.A. take up the work of lifesaving instruction in 1889. They recounted the efforts made to convince the A.S.A. to undertake the provision of lifesaving instruction in their book on swimming. Indeed, they reproduced in full the original report submitted to the A.S.A. Executive about how the work would be undertaken. It is worth examining this report because it reveals a large number of critical issues. It is clear enough from the detailed nature of the report that considerable thought had gone into arranging the programme of instruction. For example, close attention was paid to the arrangements required to begin such training,

2. That classes be held in different districts at such times as the central committee shall arrange; the local arrangements to be made by the swimming clubs in the district where the class is to be held. The lecturers to be provided by the central committee. Each lecture to be complete in itself. A demonstration of the method of

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<sup>553</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 215-232. See especially pp. 230-232.

restoring the apparently drowned to be given during the meeting. The district clubs to arrange for the attendance of societies and schools in their neighbourhood.

3. That all demonstrations and lectures be arranged by the central committee, but that the management of each individual lecture or demonstration shall, as stated in clause 2, be in the hands of the local swimming clubs.<sup>554</sup>

These two clauses show that there was an awareness of the careful organisation required for the success of any lifesaving program, and that local involvement, encouraging local participants, was also critical. Further along in the document it is stated;

4. That clubs shall be requested to print life-saving rules in club books of fixtures, &c., and give demonstrations of rescue and restoration from drowning at their entertainments.

We further recommend the following arrangements for starting classes:

*a.* That a preliminary meeting be held at a good bath, in as central a position as possible, with a demonstration of rescue work by swimmers, and a restoration of the apparently drowned by a qualified medical man, followed by a social meeting to discuss the matter.

*b.* That a circular embodying the above scheme be sent to all affiliated clubs.

*c.* That application for assistance be made to the Royal Humane Society, St. John's [sic] Ambulance Association, and the Corporation of London.

*d.* That the expense of the life-saving classes be met by arrangement between the promoting clubs and the central committee, and by special subscriptions, and by grants from the Amateur Swimming Association if necessary.'

There the matter ended, for although this report was unanimously passed, no further action was taken.<sup>555</sup>

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<sup>554</sup>. Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 232-33.

<sup>555</sup>. Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 233.



The organizers clearly wanted to enhance the respectability and authority of their venture by involving the medical profession in their work. To spread their message they hoped to convene public meetings and appeal to a wide constituency. Exactly *why* the work was never undertaken by the A.S.A. is unknown, but it appears there was a lack of finance and a shortage of sustained executive interest in the project. As part of the plan the assistance of the Royal Humane Society, St. John Ambulance Association and the Corporation of London was to be solicited; almost certainly with an eye to raising money. There were, however, good, internal reasons why the swimming world could not accept these ideas. At the same time as the A.S.A. was being asked to consider setting up lifesaving classes, it was also still undergoing internal reorganization after being created by the merger of the Amateur Swimming Union and the Swimming Association of Great Britain in 1886. As part of this process the Association was struggling with the question of how best to organize itself on a regional level.<sup>556</sup> Simply put, the A.S.A. executive seems to have decided to place its energies on projects deemed more immediately important.

The end result of all of these efforts was the calling of a public meeting in January of 1891 to form a society to address the much-needed work, which was being ignored by the R.H.S. and the A.S.A. The meeting duly formed the “Swimmer’s Life-saving Society.” By December 1891 the Society had changed its name to the “Life Saving Society.”<sup>557</sup> The “seven gentlemen” who called and organized the public meeting included Sinclair and Henry, with William Henry

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<sup>556</sup> For more about the development of the A.S.A. see Chapter 2 and also Keil & Wix, *In The Swim*.

<sup>557</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 233-34.

generally regarded as the main driving force behind the new society. The Society spent most of its first year of existence trying to determine the best forms of drill to be used for rescuing the drowning, and how to teach this to the public at large. The aim of the society was to develop a rescue system that would be effective, attractive and simple to understand. Any audience watching a lifesaving drill display, it was therefore believed, would be rivetted to the display and yet not miss a single movement. They initially adopted a modified form of the drill used by the British Army, although this was quickly replaced by a system developed by William Wilson, an early Scottish swimming pioneer.<sup>558</sup> The Society's first year was an interesting experience, as Sinclair and Henry's observations make clear. They note, about the origins of the Society, that

... it is evident that about this time there was a general idea among the more thoughtful to raise swimming above the mere level of a competitive sport, and to make its practice of use and benefit to the nation at large. It had hitherto been imagined that the holding of races was sufficient to encourage the art, and that a man who could swim was naturally able to save life. That this idea was erroneous has been abundantly proved, inasmuch as many speed swimmers have found that in life-saving practice their knowledge availed them very little; indeed, in many cases they have actually failed to carry a passive subject in the water. Those who doubted this were soon convinced when they came to make actual trials, and were bound to admit that the fast methods of propulsion were not much service when bringing a man to shore. To this may probably be attributed the desire for the foundation of some authoritative body for the promotion of those swimming arts which would be useful in saving life.<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>558</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 234-36.

<sup>559</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, p. 235.



The chief organizers of the Society clearly believed that swimming was the basis for a great humanitarian exercise which should, ideally, involve as many people as possible.

From this point onwards the Life Saving Society began to flourish. The first handbook of the Society, published in late 1891, listed the objects of the new organization,

1. - The main object of this Society is to promote and encourage the knowledge of the principles of life-saving and resuscitation of the apparently drowned in accordance with the systems recommended principally by the Royal Humane Society, St. John Ambulance Association and the Amateur Swimming Association.
2. - To arrange as far as possible for Public Lectures and Demonstrations of the Life-Saving Art.
3. - To encourage Plunging, Diving and Ornamental Swimming, and promote competitions therein, as a means of perfecting a knowledge of the art of saving life.<sup>560</sup>

The zeal which fired these early lifesavers was confirmed in the foreword written by the Honorary Secretaries,

This manual has been prepared at the request of the Executive Committee of the Swimmers' Life-Saving Society, with the object of imparting to swimmers the knowledge of the noble art of life-saving. Swimmers will readily recognise how desirable it is that all of them should acquire the art, and we also trust that the time will come, and that shortly, when every boy and girl will receive instruction in the subject, as well as be taught to swim. This can only be brought about by combined action throughout the country, and it is to be hoped that every person who takes an interest in natation will give us his or her hearty support and either become a subscriber or a member.  
Between 2,000 and 3,000 lives are annually lost by

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<sup>560</sup> Swimmers' Life Saving Society, *Illustrated Handbook*, 1st ed., (London: Langley & Son, 1891), p. 3.

drowning in England and Wales in *inland* waters *alone*. Many of these lives might be saved if only the proper treatment were observed on the recovery of the bodies, and it is therefore incumbent upon every citizen to do everything possible to mitigate this sad loss of life.<sup>561</sup>

This drive towards safety in swimming was clearly viewed as a noble one, but one which the new Society hoped to connect to *existing* traditions within English society. On the back cover of that first manual appeared the following, “‘England expects that every man this day will do his duty.’ *Lord Nelson. It is the duty of every citizen to see that Swimming forms part of his children’s education, and it cannot be too widely known that **TEACHING THE ART** forms an important part of the programme of every Swimming Club affiliated to this Society.*”<sup>562</sup> The Society took as its motto the Latin phrase “*Quemcunque miserum videris, hominem scias*” (“Whomsoever you see in distress, recognize in him a fellow man”).<sup>563</sup> The aim was to convey the sense that the Society was in the mould of the “Good Samaritan,” and by adopting or appropriating such language and imagery, the founders hoped to enhance the stature of the Society.

But where does all this lead? It is clear that initially the Life Saving Society was supported by a small core of dedicated members. The high number of drownings in coastal and inland waters in England, revealed by the collection of

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<sup>561</sup> Swimmers’ Life Saving Society, *Illustrated Handbook*, 1st ed., p. 5. Italics are in the original.

<sup>562</sup> Swimmers’ Life Saving Society, *Illustrated Handbook*, 1st ed., Outside Back Cover. Bold and Italics are in the original.

<sup>563</sup> The translation is by the author, but it is also the standard translation used by the R.L.S.S. The earliest known use of the motto in its Latin form is found on a preserved letter in the Commonwealth Offices of the R.L.S.S. R.L.S.S. Commonwealth Secretariat, Stratford-upon-Avon, Framed Letter from R.L.S.S. Office to Mr. William Wilson, 8 September 1892.



statistics in the nineteenth century (reproduced in Table 28), highlighted an obvious need for lifesaving instruction. It is also clear by the 1890s, that there was broad support, in society at large, for a range of humanitarian ventures. Whether it be helping the poor in the industrial centres of Britain, or promoting Christianity abroad, some sections of the Victorian middle classes were willing to contribute time and money to these, and a myriad of other, causes. The Life Saving Society, although perhaps on the periphery of what the Victorians would have considered the field of philanthropic work, should be considered part of that world. With the formation of the Life Saving Society, the world of Victorian swimming and Victorian humanitarian ideals were drawn together. From 1891 the Life Saving Society stood as a concrete example of the connection between swimming and contemporary humanitarianism.

From this, and related factors, there emerged the final, official structure of the Life Saving Society, and the formalising of lifesaving training. By the end of the nineteenth century, lifesaving had become a well-organised, widespread and national phenomenon. Early returns of awards for lifesaving (reproduced in Table 29), show that by the end of 1896 a total of 2,058 people had undertaken training offered by the Society and had passed one of its proficiency tests. Between 1897 and 1913 there was almost continuous growth in the annual number of awards issued. Not until 1914, and the impact of the war, was there a significant drop in the number of awards issued. Military needs quickly saw many lifesaving instructors serving in various military capacities, while many swimming baths were closed or used for other purposes. In addition, numbers in need of instruction declined. This trend was reversed after the war, however, and award statistics show a steady increase between

1921 and 1931.<sup>564</sup> In fact, the influence of the Life Saving Society was much greater than these award statistics would suggest. For example, both the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides recommended the Society's training methods before 1914.<sup>565</sup> And although the Society's numbers could not match the massive membership quickly acquired by Baden Powell's Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements, the Society clearly influenced those movements. In effect, the ideals and aims of the Society were disseminated widely, both by their own efforts and by the influence they exercised on other organizations. Lifesaving was by 1914 widely accepted, by a range of other organizations, as a vital instruction for the nation's youth. In schools, in physical recreation, in swimming clubs, in the Scout and Guide movements, lifesaving was now an unquestioned individual and social virtue.

The interest in lifesaving was, as with swimming itself, stimulated by competition. In 1892 the Life Saving Society ran its first National Life Saving Competition. Lever Brothers, the famous soap manufacturer, presented the Society with the "Sunlight Challenge Shield" for use as the perpetual trophy of the competition. In that first competition a total of 24 teams, consisting of four men each, took part. After being drawn into a series of heats based upon geographical location, the teams faced off against each other, being marked on their accuracy and speed of performance of the various rescue and resuscitation drills taught by the Society. A team from Nottingham eventually emerged victorious.<sup>566</sup> This

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<sup>564.</sup> For full information refer to Table 29. These figures show a general upwards trend in the annual number of awards issued in the United Kingdom.

<sup>565.</sup> For more information on Scout and Guide promotion of lifesaving, see below.

<sup>566.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1891-92 and Prospectus for 1893*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1893), pp. 25, 30-32.



competition continued to increase in size through the 1890s, attracting 31 teams in 1893 and 44 teams in 1894.<sup>567</sup> Lever's donation of the trophy for the event is important; another sign of the increasing commercialization of sport and leisure during this period.<sup>568</sup> A soap manufacturer such as Lever could particularly benefit from an association with lifesaving, swimming, water and cleanliness.

Interest in the Society was also raised at numerous public lectures, and by the end of 1892 more than ninety public lectures and demonstrations had been held. The Society sought to reinforce the importance of their own work by producing a series of case studies on rescues of the drowning reported during 1892. Out of a total of thirty cases, sixteen were attributed to members of the Society, or to people who had witnessed a demonstration of lifesaving skills given by the Society.<sup>569</sup> These lectures were further supported by the production of several sets of lantern slides, so that speakers could more easily illustrate their topic.<sup>570</sup> Crucially, the new developing visual technologies of the late Victorian period, such as lantern slides and photography, alongside the printed press, allowed the Society's methods to be spread further than would have been possible in earlier periods.

London had been the birthplace and main centre of activity of the Society, but there was clearly a need to spread the Society's methods nationwide. To

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<sup>567.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1893-94 and Prospectus for 1895*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1895), p. 17

<sup>568.</sup> For more information on the commercialization of swimming see the discussion in Chapter 2.

<sup>569.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report 1891-92*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>570.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1896-97 and Prospectus for 1898*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1898), pp. 6-7.

disseminate the Society's message, and to ensure that people in the provinces interested in lifesaving had a local point of contact, "Honorary District Representatives" were appointed by the Central Executive of the Life Saving Society beginning in 1892. By the end of that year there were a total of eighteen such district representatives; in Bristol, Birmingham, Brighton, Eastbourne, Exeter, Glasgow, Harlesden, Jersey, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Newport (Monmouthshire), Norwich, Nottingham, Reading, Sunderland, and Stockport.<sup>571</sup> Half of these locations were coastal and port cities, but it is notable that many inland towns and cities appear as well. A year later, at the end of 1893, the number of district representatives had risen to twenty-five; Stockport had lost its representative, but new districts were established in Coventry, Hastings, Ipswich, North Shields, Sheerness, Swindon, Worcestershire and Worthing.<sup>572</sup> The numbers rose to thirty-three in 1894, with the addition of Dublin, Guildford, Hove, Hull, Macclesfield, Margate, Shrewsbury, and Tunbridge Wells.<sup>573</sup> By then, the Society effectively covered the whole country with a network of local organizations, although filling in small gaps of coverage would continue for several more years.

This national growth of lifesaving activity necessitated a change in the organizational structure of the Society by 1897. Certain areas had become particularly keen on lifesaving instruction, and required more attention and support than could be provided by a District Representative or by the central London office.

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<sup>571</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report 1891-92*, p. 4.

<sup>572</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1892-93 and Prospectus for 1894*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1894), p. 3.

<sup>573</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1893-94 and Prospectus for 1895*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1895), p. 4.



The answer was to create regional branches with their own “Honorary Secretaries” and officers. The first such branches were created for Guildford and for Manchester and District, in 1894.<sup>574</sup> More striking still, the Society began to develop branches in distant corners of the Empire, notably New South Wales (Australia), Toronto (Canada), and the Western Province (South Africa). Although some district representatives fell away, the overall number continued to increase. In 1897 thirty-eight men held posts as district representatives, with new representatives in place in Batley, Bedford, Belfast, Dovercourt, Leinster District, Lowestoft, Perth, Southport, West Hartlepool, Weston-super-Mare, and York.<sup>575</sup> Thereafter, the growth was even more dramatic. Indeed, the period between 1897 and 1914 saw the largest number of district representatives appointed. At the same time the parallel development of areas already represented by a district representative gaining Branch status continued. After the First World War, the formation of individual branches across the United Kingdom and the Empire really became important, because, by then, the number of people trained by the Society across a vast geographical area had increased to the point that central control over all services was impossible.<sup>576</sup> Tight management of the issuing of awards was retained at the centre for a long time, but after 1914 the Society began to move towards becoming a commonwealth of societies, much as the British Empire became a Commonwealth of Nations. Such a transition, however, was not completed until the 1960s.

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<sup>574.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report for 1893-94*, p. 9.

<sup>575.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1895-96 and Prospectus for 1897*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1897), p. 9.

<sup>576.</sup> See any of the R.L.S.S. Annual Reports between 1900 and 1918 for the start of the change from District Representative to Branch status in many areas.

Having influential or noted individuals as patrons was an important distinction for many organizations during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Much depended on the nature of activity a society or association pursued, though aristocrats and Members of Parliament were common choices as patrons. Such individuals brought to the association their status and public position, with the ambition of influencing public opinion towards the group they patronized. The hope was to persuade the public at large that the organization in question was of social value, and hence was worthy of support. The ultimate mark of favour, of course, was (and remains) for a society or association to obtain royal patronage. It is also true that prominent contemporaries *wanted* to become patrons because they believed in the aims, or shared a passion for the activities, of an organization. From its very inception, the Life Saving Society had attracted important patronage because of its attention to humanitarian issues. Its initial list of patrons included Andrew Clark, Esq., FRCS, Dr. W. Collingridge, Medical Officer of Health for the Port of London, and H. L. W. Lawson, Esq., MP.<sup>577</sup> Thereafter the Society could always boast a sprinkling of Royals and aristocrats among its patrons. By 1893 the Honorary President of the Society was HRH The Duke of York, the Acting President was Lord Ampthill, and among the Vice Presidents was the Duke of Teck.<sup>578</sup> In 1897 the Society held a grand swimming gala at the West India Docks as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. This event was attended by the Duke and Duchess of York in the Duke's role as President of the Society. In 1902 King Edward VII became the

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<sup>577.</sup> Swimmers' Life Saving Society, *Illustrated Handbook*, 1st ed., (London: Langley & Son, 1891), p. 4.

<sup>578.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report 1891-92*, p. 3.



patron of the Society, and the Prince of Wales became the Society's President.<sup>579</sup>

That same year the King presented the "King's Cup" to the Life Saving Society to be used for one of the Society's competitions. At the ceremony to present the cup to the Society, the King stated that the Society could designate itself as "Royal."<sup>580</sup>

Understandably, the Society made much of its royal links. The Seventh Edition of the Society's *Handbook*, added that, "The signal marks of Royal favour at the hands of our Most Gracious Majesty the King, and our President, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, are also most encouraging ..."<sup>581</sup> Royal status was fully confirmed by charter in 1904.<sup>582</sup>

In the space of little over a decade, then, the Society had gone from being a newly founded and unknown organization to one which had the patronage of the two most senior members of the Royal Family. Clearly, the Society had secured the highest form of official approval.<sup>583</sup> Compare this to the rejection of 1837; the National Swimming Society had applied for permission for members to join Queen Victoria's Coronation Procession, but had been refused. Now, the Life Saving

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<sup>579.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1901-1902 and Prospectus for 1903*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1903), p. 3.

<sup>580.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 8 (January 1917), pp. 144, 150.

<sup>581.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Handbook of Instruction*, 7th ed., (London: Life Saving Society, 1903), p. 4.

<sup>582.</sup> Royal Life Saving Society, *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee for 1904 and Prospectus for 1905*, (London: Royal Life Saving Society, 1905), p. 2. The official state papers relating to the designation of the Life Saving Society as a "Royal" society are housed in the PRO, but are closed under a 100 year rule until 2005. PRO, HO 144/22504, Royal Title & Royal Arms: Royal Life Saving Society.

<sup>583.</sup> Queen Elizabeth II is the current patron of the R.L.S.S., and the Commonwealth President of the Society is Prince Michael of Kent. In the 1930s both Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret earned the Bronze Medallion of the R.L.S.S.

Society had royal patrons.<sup>584</sup> This may seem insignificant, but in an English society where royal favour (or indifference) reflected both private and public approval, the granting or refusing of royal patronage was much more than mere symbolism. It spoke to, and reflected, the *status* of the organisation. In a sense, royal patronage confirmed both the importance, and the coming of age, of the L.S.S.. It also confirmed that the Society's activities were officially deemed good and worthwhile.

Right from its origin the Life Saving Society utilized the medium of the greatly expanded print media of the day to spread its message about safety, and to promote interest in swimming. In its first two years of existence the Society's message was spread far and wide in the press. The first *Annual Report* of the Society reproduced many of the press reports that had mentioned its work during the previous two years. A great variety of publications ran stories on the L.S.S. in 1891 and 1892; *Athletic News*, *Commercial Transport World*, *English Sports*, *The Family Doctor*, *The Fish Trade Gazette*, *Hearth and Home*, *The Lancet*, *The Lock-to-Lock Times*, *The Million*, *the Penny Illustrated Paper*, *The Referee*, *Stage*, and *the Timber Trades Journal*. In addition, many local and national papers across England, including the *Birmingham Daily Post*, the *Brighton Guardian*, the *Cambridge Daily News*, the *Derby Mercury*, the *Exeter Evening Post*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Sunderland Daily Echo*, the *Sussex Coast Mercury*, the *Tunbridge Wells Gazette*, and the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, also covered the new organization. In total, forty-eight different journals or newspapers covered the Society. Some of

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<sup>584</sup> For the N.S.S.'s application see Chapter 2.



the papers ran articles about the Society on numerous occasions.<sup>585</sup>

Providing interviews and information about the Society to various newspapers and magazines was not the only way the L.S.S. sought to bring its humanitarian mission to the attention of the reading public. Then, as now, one of the best ways to spread one's message was to have a close working relationship with a particular journal or newspaper, in the hope that it would give space in its pages to support the Society's interests. Many different organizations often either adopted an existing publication as their official press organ (St. John Ambulance Association), or started their own in-house journals or newspapers to spread their message (Scout Association, Rowntree Chocolate Works); some organizations did both in turn (Guide Association). Such publications might only be available to members or they might be sold to the public at large. When selecting an existing journal to be the official paper of an organization, most associations approached publications that shared a similar political or social viewpoint to that espoused by the group. Similarly, the same tactics were employed when organizations developed a relationship with a certain journalist or journalists, and provided them with information on the understanding that it would be published in return for the initial advanced notice or "scoop". Before the First World War the L.S.S. successively employed two main approaches to get its message out. Initially, the Society sought to cultivate a relationship with an existing journal, and in late 1896 adopted the journal *First Aid* as its main regular magazine outlet. Coverage of the Society was at

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<sup>585</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report 1891-92*, pp. 44-47. See also, for example, *Lancet*, 28 May 1892; *Manchester Guardian*, 26 May 1892; *The Sunday Times*, 29 May 1892; 12 February 1893; *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 16 May 1892.

first provided by a sympathetic staff journalist who went by the pseudonym “Neptune.” After a very short period of time, however, the essays to be printed in *First Aid* were provided direct from the Society’s central office.<sup>586</sup> *First Aid* was, at that time, the unofficial journal of the St. John Ambulance Association, another major humanitarian organization of the day. How far there was a shared membership between the two societies remains unknown, but they clearly shared aims and tactics in common.

Perhaps sensing that the audience targeted by using *First Aid* as a print vehicle had been either too narrow or the wrong one, the Society then decided to change tactics. The Society needed its own journal. Less than six months after links had been broken with *First Aid*, the first incarnation of *The Swimming Magazine* was published in May 1898. Although ostensibly a general magazine about the events in the English swimming world, the publication was in spirit, if not in name, the new official journal of the Life Saving Society. The editorial offices of the magazine were listed as 8 Bayley Street, Bedford Square, London.<sup>587</sup> This was also the same address given for the Honorary Secretary of the Life Saving Society in almost every single publication issued by the Society between 1891 and 1918. It was, in fact, William Henry’s residence. This journal lasted for only a single year, and ceased publication with the May 1899 issue, though the idea of *The Swimming Magazine*

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<sup>586</sup> Neptune, “Life Saving Notes,” in *First Aid*, Vol. II, No. 30 (Dec. 1896), p. 139; *First Aid*, Vol. II, No. 32 (February 1897). Neptune provided coverage of the Life Saving Society for two issues, in December 1896 and January 1897. A nearly complete run of the magazine can be obtained in the St. John Ambulance Museum and Archives, London.

<sup>587</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1, 1898), p. 6. A complete run of the magazine is housed in the British Library’s St. Pancras location.



was resurrected by William Henry in 1914, when it was launched for a second time, this time as the official journal of the Royal Life Saving Society.<sup>588</sup> Despite being launched only two months prior to the outbreak of the First World War, this second attempt at in-house publishing was much more successful than its predecessor. Despite wartime difficulties, it ran for a full four years, only ceasing publication in May 1918. This second run of the magazine is important, however, for it provides an informative look at swimming in England, and is an invaluable source of information about swimming during the war years. Indeed, it was one of the few contemporary sources related to swimming that continued to publish throughout the First World War.<sup>589</sup>

Perhaps most importantly of all, the Life Saving Society, almost from its foundation, sought to have lifesaving instruction taught in schools, both in Public Schools and state schools.<sup>590</sup> The greatest emphasis, however, was placed on lifesaving lessons within the state educational system. The first official school classes were run in 1892 in London Board schools.<sup>591</sup> By 1897 there had been substantial success in promoting lifesaving drill throughout schools in London. The

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<sup>588.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1914). The only complete run of the magazine is housed in the British Library's St. Pancras location. The A.S.A. Library, Loughborough, houses a nearly complete run. The R.L.S.S. Commonwealth Office, Stratford-upon-Avon, has several framed pages from the first two issues, but no complete copies. The R.L.S.S. UK Archives, Broom, does not contain any copies of the journal.

<sup>589.</sup> No other swimming magazines or newspapers were published during this period; most major newspapers covered little swimming during the period, and even the A.S.A. suspended publication of most of its material during the war due to paper rationing/paper shortages.

<sup>590.</sup> For more information on swimming and the educational system, see Chapter 6.

<sup>591.</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report 1891-92*, p. 25.



Society's *Annual Report* for 1895-96 was illustrated with photographs of massed female students from School Board for London schools demonstrating lifesaving drill.<sup>592</sup> It is clear enough that members of the L.S.S. strongly believed that everyone should become familiar with their methods, and the most effective way of instructing the young in lifesaving was by using the state educational system. This would, in effect, ensure that nearly the entire population of the country would eventually undergo lifesaving training.

Parallel to, though slightly later than, the development of school instruction, was the influence of the Scouting movement. The formation and early growth of Scouting was intimately linked to the contemporary debate about the British Empire. The Edwardian period is traditionally seen as the height of British imperialism. Whatever the hidden problems, among the people at large there was a general belief that Britain was the greatest imperial power in the world.<sup>593</sup> These years of imperial grandeur spawned a host of organisations which found inspiration and purpose in the imperial ethos and theme. Perhaps one of the most durable of these was the Scouting movement begun by Robert Baden-Powell, then a Lieutenant-General in the army and a hero of the Boer War, later to be Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell for his work.<sup>594</sup> The work that launched the movement, *Scouting for Boys*, was first

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<sup>592</sup> Life Saving Society, *Annual Report 1895-96*, pp. 10, 40, 66.

<sup>593</sup> For more about this belief see, for example, Donald Leinster-Mackay, "The nineteenth-century English preparatory school: cradle and crèche of Empire," in J. A. Mangan (ed.), *'Benefits bestowed'? Education and British Imperialism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 56-75; Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share. A Short History of British Imperialism 1850-1995*, 3rd ed., (London: Longman, 1996).

<sup>594</sup> For a general history of the Scout Association see: Henry Collis, Fred Hurl and Rex Hazlewood, *B-P's Scouts: An Official History of The Boy Scouts Association*,



published in 1908 and was subtitled “A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship.”<sup>595</sup> This textbook was very influential at the time and went through numerous printings in its early years.<sup>596</sup> From the start, Baden-Powell was keen to encourage swimming among those skills he believed that Scouts should possess in order to do their duty. In his characteristic assertive and positive attitude he wrote, “It is very necessary for a scout to be able to swim, for he never knows when he may have to cross a river, to swim for his life, or to plunge in to save someone from drowning, so those of you that cannot swim should make it your business to begin at once and learn; it is not very difficult.”<sup>597</sup> The first edition contained a section on lifesaving, and although this was not specifically centred around aquatic lifesaving, the ability of a Scout to save life was considered a high virtue by Baden-Powell. Indeed, it was part of the core ideal of the movement; service to others and to the Empire.<sup>598</sup> Indirectly, such beliefs furthered the cause and efforts of the R.L.S.S. The Scout Association expanded rapidly. The first census of Scouts, in 1910,

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(London, Collins, 1961). More critical analysis of the Scout Association’s role can be found in: John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940*, (London: Croom Hel Ltd., 1977); Allen Warren, “Citizens of the Empire: Baden-Powell, Scouts and Guides, and an imperial ideal,” in John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 232-56. All of the sources cited for the Scout Association can be found in the Scout Association Archives (SAA), Gilwell Park, Chingford, London.

<sup>595</sup> Robert S. S. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship*, (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1908).

<sup>596</sup> The earliest surviving copy of this work in the Scout Association archives collection is a third impression copy, stated to be completely revised and illustrated from 1908.

<sup>597</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 138.

<sup>598</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, pp. 214-219.



recorded 100,298 boys as members of the movement. For a movement begun only two years previously this was dramatic growth. The movement continued to grow at a rapid pace, reaching a membership of 137,776 boys in 1913 and 153,376 in 1919.<sup>599</sup>

By 1911 a book of regulations to control the movement was in print, and it records the requirements for the badges which Scouts could earn. The test for the category of First Class Scout, the standard every boy was supposed to aspire to, required all candidates to complete a fifty yard swim. Three of the proficiency badges awarded by the Boy Scouts at the time also required swimming ability. The “Coast Guard” badge required an undefined knowledge of swimming, and the ability to perform lifesaving, as well as resuscitation of the drowned. The “Seaman” badge required that the candidate be able to swim fifty yards while clothed (trousers, socks, and shirt), and the “Swimmer and Life Saver” badge required candidates to execute a dive entry into the water, and swim 50 yards while clothed, demonstrate how to throw a lifeline or ring buoy, and perform two methods of rescuing the drowning, and the Schäfer method of resuscitation.<sup>600</sup> A companion book to the regulations

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<sup>599.</sup> Collis, et. al., *B.P. 's Scouts*, pp. 259-264. The figures given refer to the UK as a whole and only to the number of Scouts and Sea Scouts enrolled, not Scout Leaders or Wolf Cubs. The full membership figures between 1910 and 1919 were: 1910 - 100,298; 1911 - 113,909; 1912 - 128,397; 1913 - 137,776; 1917 - 152 175; 1918 - 145,880; 1919 - 153,376. John Springhall also presented membership totals in his book, agreeing in all particulars except for 1917 where he recorded 154,774 Scouts and Sea Scouts; Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 134.

<sup>600.</sup> Boy Scout Association, *Boy Scout Regulations*, (London: Boy Scout Association, September 1911), pp. 16, 18, 23, 24. The first set of regulations for the Scout Association seems to have been produced in 1910, but the only surviving copy of this work in the Scout Association archives is in fragments and many pages are missing. None of the surviving sections refer to swimming.



explained how one should go about earning the proficiency badges, advising that lifesaving instruction should be obtained from the Royal Life Saving Society;

The art of swimming is so very useful, not only as a bracing summer exercise, but as a means of preserving and saving life, that it should be acquired by everyone. Considering the numerous risks run by all human beings of being accidentally plunged into the water, and how greatly the chances of being saved are increased by the power of keeping afloat for even five minutes, it is surprising that the art of swimming is not made compulsory.<sup>601</sup>

In the January 1912 revisions to the Scout regulations, many concerned swimming. The fifty yard swimming test for the First Class Scout award was to be waived as a requirement for Scouts with health problems. This was a sensible adjustment for an organization that wanted to reach the widest possible constituency. In addition, two gallantry awards were introduced; the Bronze Cross on red ribbon for a rescue entailing risk to the life of the rescuer, and the Silver Cross on blue ribbon for a rescue entailing no risk to the rescuer.<sup>602</sup> Finally, and for the first time, this set of regulations detailed many of the sporting championships that Boy Scouts were eligible to compete in. Swimming races were specifically mentioned, including three established championships; the Otter Swimming Club Challenge Shield, the Boy Scout Team Swimming Championship of London, and the Darnell Challenge

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<sup>601.</sup> Anonymous, *Boy Scout Test and How to Pass Them*, (Glasgow: James Brown & Son, 1911), p. 437. The author of this work was likely Robert E. Young who was credited as the author of two revised editions of the work in 1915 and 1930.

<sup>602.</sup> No illustrations of the awards are contained in the regulations. The Girls Guides introduced an almost identical system when they were founded, explained further below, and their Silver and Bronze Cross for Gallantry both appear to have been modelled on the Victoria Cross. It is likely that the Girl Guide awards were modelled on the Boy Scout ones, which in turn would have been based upon Baden-Powell's military experience.



Cup for Swimming and Life Saving.<sup>603</sup>

The revisions to the Scout regulations in July 1912 seem to have been prompted by the incorporation of the association by royal charter. In honour of the royal patronage the King's Scout award was created. Even more prestigious and harder to obtain than the First Class Scout award, the King's Scout award required prospective candidates to earn the "Pathfinder" badge as well as four of six from a list of other badges; "Ambulance," "Cyclist," "Fireman," "Marksman," "Rescuer," and "Signaller" badges. All of these six awards obviously had a humanitarian emphasis, and three, the "Ambulance," "Fireman" and "Rescuer" badges, were directly concerned with the preservation or saving of life. The overall effect of the creation of the King's Scout award, was a series of major changes to the proficiency badges awarded by the Scout Association. The previous "Coast Guard," "Seaman," and "Swimmer and Life Saver" badges were discontinued, and were replaced by two new badges related to aquatics and swimming, the previously mentioned "Rescuer" badge, and a new "Swimmer" badge. The requirements for the new "Rescuer" badge seem to have been almost totally based upon the then current teaching practices of the R.L.S.S., with candidates required to demonstrate four methods of rescue, and three methods of release, as well as resuscitation and follow up care. The requirements for the new "Swimmer" badge were more comprehensive than they had been previously. A candidate was required to swim fifty yards while clothed (in

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<sup>603</sup> Boy Scout Association, *Boy Scout Regulations*, (London: Boy Scout Association, January 1912), pp. 17, 27, 32. The Otter Swimming Club was a famous London club of the period, dating back to 1869. See Chapter 2 for more information. The Darnell Challenge Cup was offered by the R.L.S.S.. The Boy Scout Team Swimming Championship is otherwise unknown.



shirt, trousers and socks) and then undress in the water; to swim one hundred yards on the breast without clothes; to swim fifty yards on the back without using his arms; and to be able to dive and recover small objects from the bottom. Interestingly, in addition to all of the other changes to the award structure, the wording of the requirements for the First Class Scout award were also changed, making the fifty yards swim mandatory, except where a Doctor's orders prevailed.<sup>604</sup> Perhaps too many candidates were claiming health problems to avoid the test?<sup>605</sup>

By the start of the First World War the Scout movement was still expanding and developing a framework for its great variety of programs, and swimming continued to have a major role. By October 1914 it was decided, in another sensible policy devised for safety, that no Scout would be allowed to take part in any boating training until he could swim at least fifty yards. The same set of regulations also contained a revised set of conditions for the "Rescuer" badge, which henceforth would require a Scout to retake the test for the badge annually in order to continue to hold it.<sup>606</sup> This second change reveals a concern, or perhaps a realization, that lifesaving skills required constant practice in order to be of any real practical use in an emergency. The timing of this change of regulation, just after the outbreak of the First World War, is of interest, and perhaps illustrates a belief common among Baden-Powell and his closest assistants that lifesaving skills would be in wide

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<sup>604.</sup> The Boy Scouts Association, *Regulations*, (London: Boy Scouts Association, July 1912), pp. 19, 20, 29, 36, 37.

<sup>605.</sup> Such behaviour would be explicitly against the requirement for a Scout to be truthful and trustworthy at all times, but the question is an intriguing one.

<sup>606.</sup> The Boy Scouts Association, *Policy, Organisation and Rules*, (London: Boy Scouts Association, October 1914), pp. 34, 39.

demand or use during the course of the war. With the two navies, German and British, pitched against each other, and with millions of men regularly shipped great distances, safety at sea, and the threat of drowning, had become a major danger. The ability to swim, and to rescue others (or oneself), had never been more important.

It was calculated that there had been 152,000 Scouts in Great Britain at the start of 1914, and that a further 6,000 boys had joined the organization by January 1915.<sup>607</sup> Swimming was still included as part of the requirements for several badges, as illustrated by the revised instructional book on how to pass the tests.<sup>608</sup> In October 1915 the first bathing regulations for the Scout Association were introduced. They stated,

Bathing will only be permitted *under strict supervision* to prevent non-swimmers getting into dangerous water. A picquet of two good swimmers should be on duty (undressed) with great coats on, in a boat or on shore as the circumstances may demand, ready to help any boy in distress. The picquet itself may not bathe until the others have left the water.<sup>609</sup>

At about the same time all Scout sporting competitions, including swimming, were suspended for the duration of the war.<sup>610</sup> This was part of the broader campaign against formal sports and pleasures in wartime which affected all British popular

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<sup>607.</sup> The Boy Scouts Association, *Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the Council. January, 1915*, (London: The Boy Scouts Association, 1915), p. 3.

<sup>608.</sup> Robert E. Young, *Boy Scout Test and How to Pass Them*, Revised Edition, (Glasgow: James Brown & Son, 1915), pp. 484, 591.

<sup>609.</sup> The Boy Scouts Association, *Policy, Organisation and Rules*, (London: Boy Scouts Association, October 1915), p. 43.

<sup>610.</sup> Boy Scouts, *Policy, Organisation and Rules*, October 1915, p. 46.



activities.<sup>611</sup>

The Scouting movement continued to grow during the war years, maintaining its work preparing boys for service to the nation and humanitarian work. By January of 1917 the requirements for the “Rescuer” badge had been further tightened, now requiring the candidates to complete all elements of the test while wearing a shirt and trousers. The completion of four rescue methods, including a ten yard tow with each, and three releases from a grasp remained, as did the resuscitation and follow-on care requirements. Newly introduced were requirements for a dive from the surface to a depth of five feet to recover a five pound weight, and a swim of fifty yards, clothed, before removing those clothes and touching the bottom of the testing area. As before, the badge was required to be renewed annually. At the same time the Scouting movement expanded with the introduction of Wolf Cubs, a junior branch of the Scouting movement for boys aged eight to twelve years of age. There was no equivalent to the rescuer badge in the awards open to Cubs, but there was a badge for swimming which can be seen as preparatory for those going on to take the Scout “Swimmer” badge later.<sup>612</sup>

The Scouting movement expanded rapidly in the years immediately following its foundation in 1908. The first available census of members after the First World War lists a total of 133,504 Scouts across England, slightly lower than the estimated total for the United Kingdom as a whole in 1914-15, but still a

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<sup>611</sup>. See for example, Mason, *Association Football*, pp. 251-55; Walvin, *The People's Game*, 1st ed., pp. 88-90.

<sup>612</sup>. The Boy Scouts Association, *Policy, Organisation and Rules*, (London: Boy Scouts Association, January 1917), pp. 44, 53.

significant number.<sup>613</sup> It is also apparent that the movement greatly valued the ability to swim, and to be able to rescue a person from the water. This was illustrated by the continued introduction, revision and attention to regulations relating to awards for saving life and swimming. There was, throughout, a keen appreciation of the usefulness of such training. Swimming was seen as an activity that had humanitarian application, and was thus socially valuable, a view reinforced by looking at the sister organization to the Scouts, the Girl Guides.

Initially, Robert Baden-Powell had made no provision for girls and young women in his plans for a youth organization designed to promote good citizenship. A product of Charterhouse School and the army, he was used to a man's world. Initially, therefore, it must have shocked him somewhat when girls wished to join the Boy Scouts whenever troops were set up around the United Kingdom.<sup>614</sup> Whatever shock or misgivings he may have had, however, were eventually overcome. He recruited his sister, Agnes Baden-Powell, to oversee the work with girls, and in 1910 they launched the Girl Guides.<sup>615</sup> At first the new organization was modelled closely on the Scouts, and by extension on the army that Robert Baden-Powell had used as a

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<sup>613</sup>. The Boy Scouts Association, *Twelfth Annual Report of the Committee of the Council*, (London: Boy Scouts Association, 1921), p. 37. These figures refer to the year ending 30 September 1920.

<sup>614</sup>. For girls wanting to be Scouts, see, Warren, "Citizens of the Empire", pp. 244-46.

<sup>615</sup>. Agnes Baden-Powell and Robert S. S. Baden-Powell, *GIRL GUIDES. A Suggestion for Character Training for Girls*, Pamphlets A & B, (London: 1912). These were reprints of the original pamphlets produced in 1910, and they provide the first outline of the division of girls from boys in the two organizations. The history of the Guide Association is very poorly documented. See for example, Rose Kerr, *The Story of the Girl Guides* (London: Girl Guide Association, 1932). All sources cited for the Guide Association can be located in the Guide Association Archives, (GAA) London.



model for the Scouts. Surviving Guide badges from 1910 are almost identical to Scout badges of the same era, except for the “Girl Guides” name embroidered where “Boy Scout” would be expected to appear. Among the first badges issued was a swimming badge.<sup>616</sup> The requirements for this swimming badge included the ability of the Guide to swim fifty yards in her uniform and demonstrate some lifesaving skill in the water.<sup>617</sup>

Despite this early reliance on already established models of organization and regulation provided by the Scouts, Agnes Baden-Powell was of the distinct opinion that the Guides were to be a different organization from the Scouts. In 1910 she wrote, “I would first like to state that it is a feminine movement - a womanly scheme in the best sense of the word. There is no militarism in it - no idea of making girls into poor imitations of Boy Scouts. Education will be on such lines only as will make the girls better housewives, more capable in all womanly arts, from cooking, washing, and sick-nursing to the training and management of children.”<sup>618</sup> In the area of humanitarianism and service, however, the Scouts and Guides maintained more similarities than differences.

Just like the Scout Association, the Guide Association issued awards for the saving of life. The Guide Regulations for 1916 made provision for these awards; the

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<sup>616</sup>. GAA, Preserved selection of badges from 1910 including a “Swimmer” badge.

<sup>617</sup>. Agnes Baden-Powell and Robert S. S. Baden-Powell, *GIRL GUIDES. A Suggestion for Character Training for Girls*, Pamphlet A, p. 9.

<sup>618</sup>. *Home Notes*, 25 August 1910, p. 406. Agnes Baden-Powell wrote a regular column, that appeared in almost every issue, for the Guide pages in *Home Notes* while it served as the official paper of the Guide Association in 1910 and 1911. It is not clear whether she wrote all of the material included in the two page spread allocated to the Association, as all of the other articles are unattributed.

Bronze Cross with red ribbon, the Silver Cross with blue ribbon and the Badge of Merit. Of these, the Bronze Cross was the highest award. Each was for the saving of life, not necessarily in aquatic circumstances, with varying degrees of risk to the rescuer.<sup>619</sup> In fact, these awards had been in existence from 1910, as is evidenced by various stories in *Home Notes* from the period. In August 1910, for example, it was reported that two Guides from Newcastle, while fully clothed, had rescued a young man from drowning. The anonymous author of the article concluded the description by saying, “I think all our Patrols will agree that these young Newcastle girls thoroughly deserve the Silver Crosses for their brave and valorous conduct, and that it is a good example of how useful it is to have learnt to swim in their clothes.”<sup>620</sup> In October of the same year a further two Guides were reported to have earned the Silver Cross for saving a man from drowning.<sup>621</sup> In November another Guide received an unspecified award for saving two young children from drowning.<sup>622</sup> In 1912 the new paper of the Guides, *The Golden Rule*, reported, “Scarcely a week passed last summer without some record of scouts [sic] saving life, so Guides ‘be prepared’ to show what you can do.”<sup>623</sup> There was, clearly, an appreciation that Guides, like Scouts, needed to maintain and practice their lifesaving skills.

This concern for the learning and retention of lifesaving skills, especially in

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<sup>619</sup> Guide Association, *Rules, Policy and Organisation 1916*, (London: Guide Association, 1916), p. 18. As a side note, both the Bronze and Silver Crosses appear to have been modelled on the Victoria Cross.

<sup>620</sup> *Home Notes*, 18 August 1910, p. 353.

<sup>621</sup> *Home Notes*, 27 October 1910, p. 246.

<sup>622</sup> *Home Notes*, 24 November 1910, p. 438.

<sup>623</sup> *The Golden Rule*, March 1912, p. 70.



swimming, was derived right from the top of the Guide establishment. Agnes and Robert Baden-Powell wrote in 1912, “To learn swimming is a most necessary requirement - one might almost say a duty - for every one, man or woman, besides being a healthy exercise.”<sup>624</sup> This official pronouncement followed on from several articles in *Home Notes* which promoted the value of swimming through emulation of the achievements of others. In August 1910 it was reported that the champion girl swimmer of England, who had won the championship cup for two years in a row, was a Guide in the Manchester and District Guide Association, and she was also a patrol leader.<sup>625</sup> Early in November 1910 the paper felt that it was important to report that a group of Guides had gone to Lancing-on-Sea for a week of swimming training in the sea.<sup>626</sup> Later in the same month it was considered important enough to note that there were now “... two Champion Swimmers amongst our Guides.”<sup>627</sup> In August 1911 it was noted that swimming was a valuable skill to learn, especially considering the large number of drownings during that time of year.<sup>628</sup>

While there was a concern to promote swimming and lifesaving as necessary skills that should be obtained by every Guide, it is evident that at times such skills were not always popular with the Guides. In October 1911, for example it was reported,

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<sup>624.</sup> Agnes Baden-Powell and Sir Robert Baden-Powell, *The Handbook for Girl Guides, or How Girls Can Help Build the Empire*, (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1912), p. 270.

<sup>625</sup> *Home Notes*, 25 August 1910, p. 407.

<sup>626.</sup> *Home Notes*, 3 November 1910, p. 295.

<sup>627.</sup> *Home Notes*, 24 November 1910, p. 438.

<sup>628</sup> *Home Notes*, 24 August 1911, p. 358.

**Swimming Badge.**

There is a large demand for every badge issued by the Headquarters except the Swimming badge. Every encouragement should be given to girls (except, of course, when it is prohibited by a doctor) to learn this useful art. All over the country there are swimming baths, and in many places the Guides are taken at a reduced rate, receiving a few minutes' private instruction and a few minutes' practice. It is not advisable that any 'playing' should be allowed, and the Guides who can swim should not take advantage of those who cannot by such tricks as ducking. Many girls are likely to lose their nerve by such practice.<sup>629</sup>

Evidently, this apparent lack of interest in the award was of concern to Agnes and Robert Baden-Powell. By March 1912, and perhaps even earlier, the requirements for the First Class Guide badge included a requirement that the candidate be able to swim fifty yards, a direct mirror of the First Class Scout badge requirement.<sup>630</sup>

The 1916 Rule Book for the Guide Association provides a much clearer view of the values held to be important by the executive of the organization. The aims of the Association at the time read in part,

The Girl Guides movement has been constituted under a Charter of Incorporation for the purpose of developing good citizenship among girls by forming their character; training them in habits of observation, obedience, and self-reliance; inculcating loyalty and thoughtfulness for others; *teaching them services useful to the public* and handicrafts useful to themselves; *promoting their physical development*; making them capable of keeping good homes and of bringing up good children.<sup>631</sup>

As has already been noted, this manual was the first to explicitly outline the

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<sup>629</sup> *Home Notes*, 19 October 1911, p. 166.

<sup>630</sup> *The Golden Rule*, March 1912, p. 70.

<sup>631</sup> Guide Association, *Rules, Policy and Organisation 1916*, p. 4. Emphasis added by this author.



requirements for the various lifesaving awards offered by the Association. In addition, it set out revised criteria for earning the First Class Guide badge. Whereas previously candidates had to swim fifty yards in uniform, the new requirement was to either swim fifty yards or earn the “Child Nurse” badge.<sup>632</sup> The requirements for the “Swimmer” badge had also been revised. Under the new standard a Guide had to either complete a swim of 200 yards distance or a swim of fifty yards while clothed (including skirt and boots) and the demonstration of a series of tasks including resuscitation, diving, throwing a life line, and four methods of rescuing the drowning.<sup>633</sup> Finally, like the Scouts, the Guides had developed a series of rules about boating and bathing to ensure the safety of members of the Association. These included a requirement that a Guide be able to swim fifty yards before taking part in any boating training, and supervision was required for any swimming or bathing period.<sup>634</sup>

Like the Scout Association, the Guide Association continued to grow in numbers, even through the years of the First World War. The annual report of the movement for 1917 was the first to provide a census of membership numbers in the United Kingdom. The total number of girls and officers in the association for that year was 40,350.<sup>635</sup> The same report also included statistics for the numbers of proficiency badges issued during the year. A total of 2,244 “Swimmer” badges had

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<sup>632.</sup> Guide Association, *Rules, Policy and Organisation 1916*, p. 21.

<sup>633.</sup> Guide Association, *Rules, Policy and Organisation 1916*, p. 33.

<sup>634.</sup> Guide Association, *Rules, Policy and Organisation 1916*, p. 35.

<sup>635.</sup> The Girl Guides, *Girl Guides Annual Report 1917*, (London: Girl Guides, 1918), p. 5.

been issued and 972 girls had become First Class Guides.<sup>636</sup> In the same year the Brownies, a junior division of Guides analogous to the Wolf Cubs for Scouts, were founded. Like their male counterparts, the Brownies could earn a swimming badge that was easier to earn than its Guide equivalent, but which can be seen as being a precursor to the more senior award.<sup>637</sup> Towards the end of the First World War, Sir Robert Baden-Powell produced another handbook about the training of Guides, devoting a great deal of space (more than six full pages) to matters related to swimming. It formed his clearest statement on the usefulness and necessity of learning to swim, “*Swimming*. - Every 1<sup>st</sup> Class Guide ought to be able to swim. It is not only for her own amusement that she should do so, but so that she will not cause other people to risk their lives in rescuing her when she gets into difficulties in the water, and that she may be able to help those in distress. British girls are behindhand in learning to swim - it is very different in Norway and Sweden, where nearly every girl can swim.”<sup>638</sup>

Whether or not Robert Baden-Powell’s claim that nearly the entire young female populations of Norway and Sweden could swim at this time was true or not is impossible to confirm. Certainly, organised swimming was popular and widespread in Europe by this time, as evidenced by the participation of many European teams in the swimming events at the Olympic Games, and by the previously noted tours of several European countries by representatives of the Royal Life Saving Society prior

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<sup>636</sup>. The Girl Guides, *Girl Guides Annual Report 1917*, p. 15.

<sup>637</sup>. Guide Association, *Rules, Policy, and Organisation 1917*, (London: Guide Association, 1917), p. 37.

<sup>638</sup>. Sir Robert Baden-Powell, *Girl Guiding: A Handbook for Guidelets, Guides, Senior Guides, and Guiders*, (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1918), p. 157.



to the First World War. Thomas A. P. van Leeuwen in his history of the swimming pool looks at the swimming which took place in such pools. It seems certain that by the later nineteenth century swimming was widespread in Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, The Netherlands, and Sweden, as well as the United Kingdom.<sup>639</sup>

In the Edwardian period, the proliferation of associations saw swimming promoted as never before. In the Scouts, Guides, Boys Brigade, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and other groups, swimming and lifesaving became part of the core curriculum. Tens of thousands of young people were expected to be able to swim and were given various inducements to practise both swimming and lifesaving. When we recall the parallel growth of swimming through the school system, through the provision of municipal baths, and via the proliferation of private associations, it becomes clear that swimming had entered a new phase in its development in England.

There were a number of factors which underpinned the growing commitment to swimming. First, of course, was the general issue of health and physical well-being (which will be examined next). But of growing importance was the sense that swimming had a powerful humanitarian dimension. It was useful in providing the swimmer with the ability to save life (and that was increasingly important in wartime and in the dangerous adventures on the imperial frontiers).

Swimming in 1918 was viewed as a skill which had humanitarian and safety value. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, swimming was actively pursued for such reasons. Though small scale by comparison to other major humanitarian

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<sup>639</sup> van Leeuwen, *The Springboard in the Pond*, pp. 4, 20-45.

activities, swimming had entered the fabric of late Victorian social life. There were, however, other critical factors. In an age increasingly concerned about health/ill-health and cleanliness, swimming seemed to have an important role to play.



## Chapter 8: Health and Cleanliness

In both the classical Greek and Roman worlds, bathing for health and cleanliness was widespread. No major town or city was without its baths complex. Places of social interaction and recreation, the baths were often the centre of a community, sometimes even attached to a library, and the Greeks and Romans spread their bathing habit wherever they settled. The Romans' arrival in Britain was soon followed by the construction of baths, as Nicholas Orme has recorded.<sup>640</sup> Indeed, Orme shows that the Romans built baths large enough to be classified, and used as, swimming pools at Bath, Burton, and Wells.<sup>641</sup> From an early date then, there was a link, between cleanliness, health, and swimming. With the departure of the Romans, however, that link lapsed for many centuries. Not until the eighteenth century, with the rise of a spa culture and seaside resorts, was the connection between bathing and health re-established. From the mid-eighteenth century to the present, however, there has been an explicit link between water and health. Bathing at the seaside or taking the waters at a spa for health reasons became increasingly popular from around 1750. Much of this was, of course, a deliberate harkening back to classical models of life and the bathing culture of the Greeks and Romans. Some of it, however, was also linked to new ideas about cleanliness and health. Initially, the sea and the seaside, especially at places such as Brighton and Scarborough, was the focus of such activity. Over time, swimming came to be one of the pleasurable

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<sup>640.</sup> Orme, *Early British Swimming*, pp. 1-9.

<sup>641.</sup> Orme, *Early British Swimming*, p. 3.

and healthy activities undertaken at these resorts, although it does not appear to have been fully a major popular activity prior to the later nineteenth century.<sup>642</sup>

Once the link between water and cleanliness had been reestablished, at least in contemporary literature, it is unsurprising that swimming came to be associated quite early with the question of cleanliness and health. There was, in addition, the parallel and related question of physical well-being, and the emergence of interest in the body.<sup>643</sup> All these factors came together to provide a totally new context for the development of swimming. Although not absolute proof of actual practice during the early nineteenth century, contemporary authors began to write about bathing and swimming initially in natural bodies of water. Throughout the period between 1800 and 1918 reference was made to the bathing culture of the Greeks and Romans. Whatever the historical evidence, it was accepted that Greeks and Romans had been swimmers. The allure of being able to trace a link between the past and the present was a long lasting one. As late as 1915 the anonymous author of an article in *The Swimming Magazine* looked back to the Classical age to advocate the building of more swimming pools across England in order to promote cleanliness, which he argued was still not a universal concern.<sup>644</sup> The Classical period, however, did not provide the basic reference point for those promoting swimming. Simply promoting the idea of cleanliness and health was often enough in itself. In 1816, for example, J. Frost wrote *Scientific Swimming*, and commented, “It promotes cleanliness, and

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<sup>642.</sup> See Chapter 2 for a listing of works that cover the history of bathing at the seaside and the seaside resort.

<sup>643.</sup> See for example, Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1978).

<sup>644.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (January 1915), pp. 23-24.



consequently health, inasmuch as it encourages the practice of bathing, by adding greatly to its pleasures.”<sup>645</sup> Similar arguments were made throughout the early part of the nineteenth century. A tract issued in 1834, for example, made the connection directly in the title, *The Constant Use of the Cold or Swimming Bath of Great Importance in the Prevention of Disease and the Preservation of Health*.<sup>646</sup> The general argument of this essay, as one might expect, was that bathing was generally good for people, and that for those who were healthy (or weak, but not ill) swimming was the best form of bathing of all, because it provided exercise at the same time as washing the body.<sup>647</sup> An undated work, *The Bather's & Swimmer's Pocket Companion* (but dated from around this period), also suggested that swimming was a good healthy activity to undertake.<sup>648</sup>

The early nineteenth century was of course the era of growing concern about filth and its social and personal consequences. The simple accumulation of rubbish and dirt in the expanding cities of Britain, along with the pollution of local water systems, set cleanliness, and clean water, in stark relief. To bathe, wash or swim, in

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<sup>645</sup>. Frost, *Scientific Swimming*, p. 1.

<sup>646</sup>. Anonymous, *The Constant Use of the Cold or Swimming Bath of Great Importance in the Prevention of Disease and the Preservation of Health, As Shown in the Opinions of Several Professional Men of Eminence*, (London: J. Haddon, 1834).

<sup>647</sup>. Anonymous, *The Constant Use of the Cold or Swimming Bath*, *passim*.

<sup>648</sup>. Anonymous, *The Bather's & Swimmer's Pocket Companion*, (London: W. M. Clark, nd), *passim*. Although undated, it is likely that this work was produced at some point between the 1830s and the 1860s. The one piece of evidence that most suggests that probability is the reference in the text to the folk tradition of a drowning man always rising or surfacing three times before going under for the final time. This was a commonly repeated fallacy in early literature on swimming, but it began to fall out of usage by the start of the 1870s and for all intents had vanished from swimming literature by 1900.



clean water, was an obvious antidote to contact with the dirt of contemporary urban life. And it was obvious, when examining the condition of the poor, that health (or rather ill-health) stemmed directly from the filthy circumstances of urban life.

Edwin Chadwick and other sanitary reformers sought to move as much of the dirt and filth away from urban areas as possible, through such means as modern sewage systems.<sup>649</sup> Others, however, sought to bring the means of obtaining cleanliness to the working classes. This was chiefly through the provision of public baths houses and laundries, which were first authorized by the voluntary legislation of the *Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846*.<sup>650</sup>

By the 1850s, after the passing of the Baths and Washhouses Act, it became much more common for authors to link cleanliness and morality in their works. In 1850, for example, the “Committee for Promoting the Establishment of Baths and Wash-Houses for the Labouring Classes,” produced a report entitled, *Suggestions for Building and Fitting Up Parochial or Borough Establishments*. Although this report was generally concerned with “bathing” in the sense of washing, rather than swimming, it is an important document, both for its contents and for what it reveals about the group behind the report. The “Committee for Promoting the Establishment of Baths and Wash-Houses for the Labouring Classes,” was a band of social reformers, who included in their ranks the Anglican Bishop of London. This group existed for the purpose of encouraging local governmental authorities in the London area to build baths and washhouses, as allowed for under the Baths and Washhouses

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<sup>649</sup>. For more on Chadwick and sanitation in cities see the first section of Chapter 5.

<sup>650</sup>. For more on the Baths and Washhouses Act, see Chapters 2 and 5. For the complete text of the Act and its various amendments, see Appendix 9.



Act. It was believed that the general cleanliness of the populace that would result from such schemes would also aid in the development of an elevated moral character among members of the working classes.<sup>651</sup> Although no explicit mention was made of swimming or swimming pools in the report, attention focussed on ensuring that the maximum number of individuals would be provided with the facilities to bathe. As will become clear, that often meant the inclusion of a swimming pool in a facility, to enable large numbers of people to wash themselves in a shorter time than was possible using individual bathtubs. The use of a swimming pool for this purpose also meant a reduction in the amount of water used by a baths facility, with consequent financial savings for the managing body. Such arguments were essential for convincing local parish councils to adopt the Baths and Washhouses Act, not least because local ratepayers were often concerned about increases in the parish rates.<sup>652</sup>

Only four years after the “Committee for Promoting the Establishment of Baths and Wash-Houses for the Labouring Classes,” released their pamphlet, George A. Cape, secretary of the Lambeth Baths and Wash-House Company, published *Baths and Wash Houses*. He made explicit the link between cleanliness and morality on the cover of the work, by including a quotation attributed to Bishop Taylor, “‘There is a natural analogy between the ablution of the body and the purification of

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<sup>651</sup>. Committee for Promoting the Establishment of Baths and Wash-Houses for the Labouring Classes, *Suggestions for Building and Fitting Up Parochial or Borough Establishments*, (London: Rivington & Co., 1850), pp. 5-6.

<sup>652</sup>. For more on local ratepayers having concerns about the level of local rates in relation to baths and washhouses, see the section of Chapter 5 related to the Borough of Lambeth.

the soul.’ ”<sup>653</sup> This association between bodily and spiritual purity was to become common throughout the relevant literature in the nineteenth century. The longer form of the title also reinforced this point, “Baths and Wash Houses; The History of Their Rise and Progress: Showing Their Utility and their effect upon the moral and physical condition of the people;”<sup>654</sup> Throughout the entire work Cape focussed on the health benefits obtained from regular washing, but referred especially to the Biblical and Classical periods, in the hope that the practice of the classical world would be emulated during the author’s lifetime.<sup>655</sup> Further on in his work, Cape argued that swimming pools were one of the best ways of cleaning large numbers of people,

As a matter of profit, the use of Swimming Baths should be encouraged; if a number of persons use them, the expense will be much less than if the same number of persons used private baths; the quantity of water used and wasted being much less, added to which, one attendant can look after a Swimming Bath, that will accommodate three or four hundred persons at once, while 10 or 12 private baths are quite as much as one attendant can see to when in constant use.<sup>656</sup>

Cape went on to state that swimming pools should also be used for swimming instruction purposes, to increase the health-giving value of the experience, and that larger swimming pools should be made available for women, again for health and cleanliness.<sup>657</sup> It is hard to know how influential these works were, except we might

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<sup>653.</sup> Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, front cover.

<sup>654.</sup> Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, p. 1.

<sup>655.</sup> Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, pp. 7-30.

<sup>656.</sup> Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, p. 58.

<sup>657.</sup> Cape, *Baths and Wash Houses*, pp. 59-60.



note that, as Table 4 shows, there was a pronounced increase in the number of municipal baths buildings constructed between 1850 and 1860.

Between 1860 and 1875, however, there was a decline in the number of baths facilities built by municipal authorities. With fewer facilities being built, there also appears to have been a related decline in the amount of attention paid to the link between cleanliness, health and swimming. When a new wave of construction of municipal baths facilities, which often included swimming pools, began in the later 1870s, the link was again made between such facilities and public sanitary measures. In August of 1873 the Lord Mayor of London was present at the laying of the ceremonial foundation stone of the Clapham and Brixton Baths. As part of his speech on the occasion he is said to have spoken at length on the lack of swimming pools in London, compared to continental Europe. Despite this lack of swimming pools, he commended the strength of English swimming, and is further said to have remarked that the baths now under construction, including two swimming pools, were quite important for the sanitary provision they would provide.<sup>658</sup> These comments made in the 1870s were a precursor of the much broader debates over public health and cleanliness that were to take place from the 1880s, through to the First World War. During this later period, the beneficial effects to be derived from swimming were discussed in a wide variety of publications. Indeed, by then, it was widely accepted that there was an unchallenged connection between clean water, swimming, personal cleanliness - and health.

Of course the interest in health and physical well-being had deep intellectual

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<sup>658</sup>. *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*, Vol. 1, No. 13, 2 August 1873, p. 1.

and social roots in England. From the early nineteenth century there had been a widely-accepted view, that total health was important. In the words of Bruce Haley, “Total health or wholeness - *mens sana in corpore sano* - was a dominant concept for the Victorians, ...”.<sup>659</sup> It was an interest which was promoted by the rapid development of modern professional medicine which became a characteristic of universities throughout western Europe and North America in the early and mid-nineteenth century, with the consequent growth in the number of medical students.<sup>660</sup> Popular interest in health (and ill-health) stemmed from other factors too, however, especially the impact of widespread diseases and epidemics, particularly between the 1820s and the 1840s. Previously such threats as diphtheria, influenza, scarlet fever, typhus, and typhoid had often been simply grouped under the title of “fever.”<sup>661</sup> With the newly invigorated field of medicine making such strides, Haley argues that, “The British public followed with keen interest these developments which seemed to promise a healthy nation.”<sup>662</sup> In many cases, however, medicine was better at detecting, describing and categorizing certain diseases, than it was in treating them. Nevertheless, continued attention was paid to how to ensure good health, although the methods use varied greatly. The vast majority of Victorian medical theorists held that physical health and spiritual health were linked, and were equally important for the health of the whole person.<sup>663</sup> By the later nineteenth century many had come to

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<sup>659</sup>. Haley, *The Healthy Body*, p. 4.

<sup>660</sup>. Haley, *The Healthy Body*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>661</sup>. Haley, *The Healthy Body*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>662</sup>. Haley, *The Healthy Body*, p. 5.

<sup>663</sup>. Haley, *The Healthy Body*, pp. 252-261.



accept that the epitome of health was encapsulated in/represented by the idea of the gentleman, with his “healthy” frame and commitment to duty. This was the type of man who had been to a public school, and who was then dispatched to the borders of the Empire to fight and die if necessary, as expressed by the poem “Vitali Lampada.”<sup>664</sup>

Haley’s concern is with the overarching theory behind what the Victorians themselves thought about the healthy body, and he spends a great deal of time examining the various theories which underpinned these ideas. He does not, however, mention swimming at all as part of his study, but that activity was demonstrably connected with notions of cleanliness and health. Early links between cleanliness, health and swimming have already been demonstrated. Such links were, if anything, even more common during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the very period when those theories Haley has examined were at their most popular point with the public. Water, swimming, cleanliness, and health were clearly linked, certainly in the minds of the main proponents of swimming.

In 1883 the *Book of Health* was published, a compendium of essays on the topic of getting and staying healthy. Included in the tome was an essay entitled “Health at School,” by Clement Dukes, M.D., the physician of Rugby School.<sup>665</sup> Dr. Dukes was a great proponent of mandatory games for school boys, claiming that they combatted idleness, promoted health, and instilled good habits rather than “evil”

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<sup>664</sup>. Haley, *The Healthy Body*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>665</sup>. Clement Dukes, M.D., “Health at School,” *The Book of Health*, Malcolm Morris, ed., (London: Cassell & Company Limited, 1883), pp. 677-726. Hereafter cited as Dukes, 1883.

ones.<sup>666</sup> According to Dukes, access to a swimming pool was important for any Public School, and he advised that each school should endeavour to provide one on the site of the school.<sup>667</sup> He did not view swimming as a competitive activity within a school, but rather an activity more important for its health-giving qualities.

Summing up his section on swimming and bathing he wrote

I would lay special stress upon the value of the swimming-bath [sic] and bathing. Every school that can possibly manage it should have a place in which the boys can learn and practise the healthy and useful enjoyment of swimming. If there be a river, it may be utilised, with advantage, for summer bathing; but it is not as good as a swimming-bath [sic] under cover, the water of which can be warmed, and so used all the year round. Swimming should be taught, if necessary, though as a rule nearly every boy will learn by himself from his school-fellows.<sup>668</sup>

Dukes' essay seems to have been popular, because he later substantially expanded it and published it as a separate work. By 1905 the fourth edition (accepting the original appearance of the essay in *The Book of Health* as the first) was in print. The section on swimming was one of those augmented during the revision of the original article. To understand fully the meaning behind some of Dukes' changes to his section on swimming, it is necessary to consider other areas of his writing.

According to Dukes, "Regular bodily exercise is the greatest preservative of health, and the condition of mental, moral, and physical soundness. It is by this means that the natural functions of the body are normally performed, disease prevented, and life

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<sup>666</sup>. Dukes, 1883, pp. 705-708.

<sup>667</sup>. Dukes, 1883, p. 707.

<sup>668</sup>. Dukes, 1883, p. 708.



prolonged.”<sup>669</sup> Dukes reviewed current scientific theory about the building of strong bodies and continued,

“Further, exercise is of supreme value in relation of *character*, as well as to *health*. All boys’ games tend to develop good temper, sometimes under very trying circumstances, with self-reliance, self-control, endurance, and courage under difficulties, quick action, and rapid judgement. They are thus educated in a habit which will help to make them excel in the battle of life. How many men learn in their games at school, in spite of many failings, to ‘play the game’ of life with fairness! The future is almost hopeless for a boy who at school practised dishonesty in his sports.”<sup>670</sup>

According to Dukes those who did not participate in mandatory school games were “loafers”, and such loafers were the root of all social evil. Boys therefore had to be kept busy at all times. Swimming, of course, was one way to keep boys occupied. Rephrasing his first statement on the subject back in 1883, Dukes added further emphasis to his opinion, “I lay special stress upon the value of the swimming-bath and bathing. Every school that can possibly manage it should have a place in which the boys can learn and practice **swimming**.”<sup>671</sup> Intriguingly, Dukes claimed credit in this section of his work for the suggestion that led the Royal Humane Society to establish its lifesaving competition for Public Schools and Training Ships.<sup>672</sup> To sum up his section on swimming within schools, Dukes wrote, “The great

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<sup>669</sup>. Clement Dukes, M.D., *Health at School Considered in its Mental, Moral, and Physical Aspects*, 4th ed., (London: Rivingtons, 1905), p. 327. Hereafter cited as Dukes, 1905.

<sup>670</sup>. Dukes, 1905, p. 327.

<sup>671</sup>. Dukes, 1905, p. 378. Bold is present in the original.

<sup>672</sup>. Dukes, 1905, p. 381. For more on the competition, and also about the resuscitation competition Dukes began at Rugby, see Chapters 6 and 7.

importance of learning to swim; of being able to resuscitate a drowning school-fellow; and the benefit that can thus be disseminated by hundreds of boys from public schools, must be my apology for dwelling at such length upon the subject in a treatise on 'School Health'."<sup>673</sup>

Dukes' belief in swimming as an activity that promoted health and cleanliness was shared by many of his contemporaries. A decade after Dukes first wrote his treatise Sinclair and Henry echoed many of his arguments, claiming of swimming,

It is generally admitted that the pastime has great advantages over all others, that it is a most pleasant and suitable form of bodily exercise - especially for the young, who are able to maintain their bodily heat - and most important for the preservation and promotion of health. It has a beneficial influence on the blood and its circulation. Bodily exercise, when taken judiciously, is indisputably good, and many of the disturbances in the digestive organs to which mankind is now so prone would be avoided if swimming and bathing were more generally practised.

Swimming also results in very marked effects on the respiratory organs, because the simple backward and forward movements of the arms opens up the cavity of the chest and promotes powerful respiration, by means of which plenty of oxygen is inhaled and much waste matter given off. Deep and calm breathing is promoted in place of short and superficial gasps. Good respiration also facilitates the circulation and purification of the blood, and accelerates the process of renewal and exchange of material in all parts of the body. The strengthening of the digestive organs tends to increase the muscular and mental capacities of men, thereby proving the truth of the old adage, '*Mens sana in corpore sano.*' But in spite of all this, swimming has not, up to the present, been systematically taught, and the legislature does not seem to have recognised that,

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<sup>673</sup>. Dukes, 1905, p. 390.



apart from the consideration that a knowledge of it is invaluable to any man from a life-preserving and life-saving point of view, swimming, from a hygienic standpoint, is essentially the pastime which should be indulged in by the young.<sup>674</sup>

Although they had drafted this argument in the context of advocating that swimming be included in the national curriculum taught to state school pupils, it is clear that Sinclair and Henry believed that swimming in general was an activity that promoted health and cleanliness. Further, it was an activity that should be engaged in by the entire populace.

Journals dedicated to cleanliness and healthy living also wrote on the positive benefits to be derived from swimming. *The Sanitary Record*, for example, was a late Victorian journal that focussed on maintaining clean cities and a healthy lifestyle. This often meant the journal printed articles examining how best to construct sewer and water supply systems. But the importance of swimming as an exercise was also the subject of analysis. In August 1887 an article was published in the journal that reinforced the message that swimming was a healthy form of exercise and recreation. The anonymous author also suggested that, contrary to popular belief, it was possible for even the least well off in society, and women, to learn how to swim, and gain the health benefits of the activity.<sup>675</sup> In a similar vein, in 1898 and 1899 Eugen Sandow, a noted late Victorian fitness promoter and sometime strongman (according to his own claims in his magazine), published a journal variously entitled *Physical Culture*

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<sup>674</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 33-34. Italics are present in the original.

<sup>675</sup> "A School Manager," 'Swimming For Schoolgirls,' in *The Sanitary Record*, Vol. 9, New Series, 15 August 1887, p. 60.

and *Sandow's Magazine of Physical Culture*.<sup>676</sup> Swimming was one of the physical activities written about in the magazine, with a great deal of emphasis placed on its place in promoting health and fitness. Also like many writers of the period, Sandow and his contributors were concerned with improving the English "race."

The issue of race became a dominant social and political concern by the late nineteenth century, partly via the rise of modern eugenics and the first impact of modern anthropology. However specious the debate may seem today, to contemporaries it was a critical matter. There was, it was thought, a number of factors which were undermining the dominance of the English 'race', among them issues of health and cleanliness. As Bernard Porter has illustrated, by the later 1880s and through the 1890s there was great concern over Britain's place in the world.<sup>677</sup> The period from the 1880s to the First World War can be described as a period of near panic over the state of the "English race." During this period, misadventures in the Sudan, the initial reverses of the Boer War, and the rising naval might of Germany seemed to indicate that Britain was losing its dominant place in the world. The case of the Boer War was especially troubling, confirmed by well-publicised

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<sup>676.</sup> The title *Physical Culture* was used for the first two volumes of the magazine, which appeared between July 1898 and March 1899. The title *Sandow's Magazine of Physical Culture* appeared with the July 1899 issue. No complete run of the magazine appears to exist, with the British Library housing the only copies known to this author. Confusingly, the British Library holds two copies each of Volume 1, issues No. 1 and No. 2, that are completely different from each other, including the month of issue. The "correct" copies of issues No. 1 and No. 2 are dated July 1898 and August 1898 respectively, while the duplicate copies (with covers identical to the "correct" copies, except for the date) are dated April and May 1898. The duplicate copies each contain only a single short story not related to the content of the later issues of the magazine. All further references, unless otherwise noted, are to the copies of issues No. 1 and No. 2 from July and August 1898.

<sup>677.</sup> Porter, *The Lion's Share*, pp. 115- 118, 180.



accounts of the unsuitability of many recruits to the military on health grounds. A desperate improvement in the character and health of the nation's population, especially of the working classes, seemed to be necessary to preserve the greatness of the country and the Empire. It was within this context that Sandow's magazine was published, and some of the articles printed related to swimming reflected the national debate over health and race.

Archibald Sinclair, one of the founders of the Life Saving Society along with William Henry, contributed several articles to the magazine. In August 1898 one of his contributions was entitled "Swimming as a National Exercise."<sup>678</sup> Sinclair argued that swimming had only really blossomed in England in the previous twenty years, and it was still not as widespread as it should be. One great limitation to its spread were the various restrictions placed upon open air swimming. Fortunately this problem had been somewhat mitigated by the spread of indoor swimming. He claimed swimming was beneficial because it rid the body of so much dirt, and that thoughtful people recognized the great mental and physical benefits to be derived from swimming.<sup>679</sup> Sinclair concluded that the Life Saving Society was doing great work to promote swimming across the country, especially with its public displays: "And so a great race of swimmers is gradually being built up. What a beneficial effect this will have upon subsequent generations. Swimming is a capital form of exercise for the young, for it develops powerful respiration; deep, calm breathing is promoted instead of short gasps, circulation of the blood is aided, the digestive

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<sup>678</sup>. Archibald Sinclair, "Swimming as a National Exercise," in *Physical Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (August 1898), 137-139.

<sup>679</sup> Sinclair, "Swimming as a National Exercise," p. 137.

organs strengthened, and the body generally is purified.”<sup>680</sup>

In the November issue of *Physical Culture* an article on “The Physical Education of Girls” appeared. The author, C. Holland, argued that during the previous decade there had been a great advance in the physical education provided for girls. Whereas, previously, attaining a slim waist was the preeminent beauty concern for a woman, now the idea of an all round developed and healthy figure was promoted by many. There was still opposition to such ideas, but progress was being made. Swimming was one of the activities that had aided the improvement in women’s health.<sup>681</sup> This same argument was further developed in a later issue by an author with the pseudonym of “Neptune.” He argued that swimming was one of the best exercises for women because, in addition to its hygienic function, it was also very good for a woman’s figure, allowing those who were thin to grow, and those of larger frame to slim down. He counselled that medical advice should be taken by all women before starting swimming, however, to ensure that they had the constitution for it.<sup>682</sup>

As has already been noted, from the 1870s the belief that women specifically could benefit from the health-giving aspects of swimming was common within English society.<sup>683</sup> Physical activity and sport in general were seen as promoting health in the population, at least among the middle classes, throughout the period

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<sup>680</sup>. Sinclair, “Swimming as a National Exercise,” p. 139.

<sup>681</sup>. C. Holland, “The Physical Education of Girls,” *Physical Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (November 1898), p. 329.

<sup>682</sup> ‘Neptune’, “Swimming as a Pastime for Women,” *Physical Culture*, Vol. 3, No. 13 (July 1899), p. 50.

<sup>683</sup> See Chapter 3 for more on this issue.



from 1870 to 1914. The issue had been the subject of much debate during the period of the Boer War. As Neil Tranter has written, by the Edwardian period the practice of sport was held to be necessary by many for “the continued success of the Anglo-Saxon civilisation.”<sup>684</sup> When the Girl Guides were established in 1910 swimming was constantly promoted by the national organizers. In publication after publication, swimming was urged as a healthy activity to be undertaken by as many guides as possible, as well as by the general population.<sup>685</sup> By the start of the First World War the debate about eugenics had influenced the debate about sport, with the health of the ‘race’ being added to the individual. This was especially true of women’s participation in sport.<sup>686</sup> By the end of the nineteenth-century and for the first few decades of the twentieth-century, the question of the health and fitness of the national population was an ongoing debate. The “science” of eugenics was now openly and widely discussed. Ultimately, of course, it reached its extreme form in the fascist ideologies of the inter-war years. Within this context swimming was put forward as an activity that would promote cleanliness among the lower classes of society, and increase the levels of physical fitness and health across society. When combined with the pre-existing connection between cleanliness and morality, this proved a potent mix of ideas.

Even as late as 1917, the argument that physical cleanliness equated with

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<sup>684.</sup> Neil Tranter, *Sport, economy and society in Britain 1750 - 1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 2.

<sup>685.</sup> See for example, Agnes Baden-Powell and Sir Robert Baden-Powell, *The Handbook for Girl Guides*, p. 270; Guide Association, *Rules, Policy and Organisation 1916*, (London: Guide Association, 1916), pp. 33, 35; *Home Notes*, 19 October 1911, p. 166.

<sup>686.</sup> Lowerson, *Sport and the English*, pp. 18-19.

moral cleanliness, and that swimming was a way to achieve both, was current in certain sections of English society. Arguing against the closure of baths and washhouses across England due to the war, a columnist could write, “Moral and physical cleanliness go hand in hand, and without one you do not get the other. The curtailment of facilities renders disinclination to regular swimming and bathing and this contagion spreads in a remarkable manner, leading in the long run to a form of moral hydrophobia.”<sup>687</sup> This article was followed up by a second one the following month entitled “National Physical Training. Swimming Coming to Its Own.”<sup>688</sup> The general theme of the article was that the war had shown that national physical training was needed in England, and that swimming was a way to achieve this training. Of swimming the author argued,

Its general teaching will lead to the building up of a cleanly race, the first factor, as we have previously said, in the development of physical fitness and one which should inure the body to many hardships as well as tend to avoid disease.<sup>689</sup>

The author of this article was anonymous, but likely the editor of *The Swimming Magazine*, William Henry. As the Chief Secretary of the Royal Life Saving Society, Henry was the main organizer of that body and in contact with many influential members of society. His views were likely shared by many within the Edwardian establishment, perhaps not directly in how important swimming was, but definitely in terms of how important cleanliness was in relation to health. His views were echoed by Agnes Campbell, as she also argued that the state of cleanliness which

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<sup>687.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (June 1917), p. 11.

<sup>688.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (July 1917), pp. 25-6.

<sup>689.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (July 1917), p. 27.



had been achieved through the provision of baths and washhouses should not be undermined by closing such facilities in a search for wartime economies.<sup>690</sup>

To fully understand the context in which the debate over cleanliness, health and swimming took place, it is also necessary to consider the technology of swimming pool construction and operation in the later nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Much of that debate would have been wasted, and to no avail, had it not been practical to construct suitable bathing/swimming facilities. Take for instance the simple question of clean water. For almost the entire period between 1800 and 1918 there was no concern about, or conception of, filtering the water used in swimming pools. Whatever water was present at a natural swimming site, or which came out of the well or water main supplying a man-made site, was used to fill the pool. Compared to a modern swimming pool, a swimming pool in the 1870s or 1880s would have looked incredibly dirty, even immediately after being filled and before any swimmers entered the water. This is not to say that those operating pools at the time were not concerned about the cleanliness of their swimming pools, rather it seems to have been accepted as the natural order of things. The Endell Street Baths in London run by the joint vestry of St. Giles in the Fields and St. George, Bloomsbury, seems to have been particularly prone to water problems. In June of 1868, for example, a complaint was received about the dirty colouration of the pool water. This was blamed upon heavy rains the day previous to the complaint being made, which had consequently clouded the pool's water

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<sup>690</sup>. Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 133.

supply.<sup>691</sup> Steps were taken to ensure that swimming pools remained as clean as possible. This was undertaken by what might best be described as the “dump and fill” method. Every three to four days the operator of a typical swimming pool in an urban area would either partially or completely drain the pool, have staff clean out the remaining sludge, and then refill the basin. Depending on the size of the pool this would take a greater or lesser amount of time. The larger the pool, the longer it could go before looking too dirty.

Initially, therefore, the ‘first class’ days in those pools which were used for both first and second class swimmers, were the days when fresh water was added, and perhaps the day immediately following the filling. The second or third days of use after filling would become second class days, and were sometimes known as “dirty water” days. At the Endell Street baths the two small swimming pools on the site were emptied at least once a week, on Sundays. If this was the only day of the week when the pools were emptied, then they must have been quite filthy by Saturday afternoon.<sup>692</sup> In Manchester, filtration systems were gradually introduced to municipal pools starting in 1908.<sup>693</sup> Prior to this date filling and emptying of the various municipal pools generally took place on Sunday and Wednesday of each week.<sup>694</sup> As most municipal baths facilities in Manchester were built providing more

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<sup>691.</sup> CLSAC, CO/GG/BA/2/2 (B/7C24), *Baths & Washhouses Rough Minutes 1863 to 1870*, Minutes of 5 June 1868.

<sup>692.</sup> CLSAC, CO/GG/BA/1/1 (B/7D1), *St. Giles Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Minutes*, p. 199, Minutes of 26 May 1892.

<sup>693.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 13, fol. 73, Minutes of 19 February 1908.

<sup>694.</sup> See for example, MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 6, fol. 20, Minutes of 29 March 1893.



than one pool, the distinction of clean and dirty water days for determining when higher class patrons would use the pool was less of a concern. In many other places, however, this was not the case. Agnes Campbell pointed out in her survey, “In cases where the water is filtered and always in precisely the same condition, the distinction between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class may be a purely social one, decided by arranging higher fees for certain hours and days. Where this arrangement obtains the bather does not pay for a superior bath or for cleaner water, but for freedom from overcrowding.”<sup>695</sup> Indeed, one can deduce that in many cases second class pools, or pools on second class swimming days, were often crowded due to the cheaper cost of admission. This distinction between first and second class facilities would appear to go back a long time. If Edwin Chadwick’s account of the two swimming pools on the City Road in London is accurate, then the division of swimming facilities into more expensive, better appointed and theoretically cleaner first class facilities and cheaper, and plainer second class facilities goes back to at least 1843 and possibly to the building of those pools in the 1740s.<sup>696</sup> Sinclair and Henry in their work on swimming recommended that second class swimming pools should be built as large as possible, at least 120 feet by 40 feet, to accommodate as many swimmers as possible.<sup>697</sup>

Of course, while “dumping and filling” and then, later, filtration dealt with

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<sup>695.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 64.

<sup>696.</sup> See the debate over the “Pearless” or “Peerless” Pool in Chapter 2.

<sup>697.</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 415. 417.

the visible signs of dirt in a swimming pool, that was only one level of cleanliness.<sup>698</sup>

As we now know, but the late Victorians and Edwardians were only starting to understand, much ill-health and disease was and is brought about by bacterial infection, especially by bacteria thriving in water. In England it was only after the First World War, in 1920, that the threat of micro-organism infection of swimming pool water began to be addressed, with the installation of a water chlorination plant in the Victoria Baths, Manchester. It was claimed at the time that Manchester was the first British city to test out a chlorination system for a swimming pool, and the first British city to utilize chlorinated water in general.<sup>699</sup>

It is perhaps best to give the last word on the topic of cleanliness, health and swimming to Agnes Campbell, whose report on the state of public baths and washhouses in the United Kingdom was researched during 1914-15, written in 1916-17, and published in 1918, at the end of the period under review. Although her work was ostensibly a survey of the state of provision of baths and washhouses in the United Kingdom, Campbell was most definitely not a neutral observer. She was an advocate for public baths, claiming that bathing (washing) and swimming were healthy pursuits, and that physical fitness could be achieved by swimming.<sup>700</sup>

Further, she argued that swimming instruction promoted cleanliness amongst children, as they needed to be clean prior to entering the swimming pool. The habit

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<sup>698.</sup> As previously noted, filtration systems were introduced to Manchester pools beginning in 1908. Other pool operators likely adopted the technology around the same time.

<sup>699.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 18, fol. 190, Minutes of 14 April 1920.

<sup>700.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 2.



of cleaning oneself before swimming could be introduced to children, thus helping spread the activity to the child's daily life.<sup>701</sup> But besides this immediate cleansing effect of bathing/swimming, and the associated health benefits to be obtained from it, Campbell also appears to have believed in the moral cleanliness to be obtained by swimming. Indeed, she stated,

ONE of the most serious problems which face those who labour for the social betterment of our great cities, is that of providing wholesome recreation for young people who have left school, and become wage earners while the instincts for play are still strong and require direction into suitable channels. Generally speaking, wherever self-activity is developed as the result of recreation, foundations of future happiness are being laid; where, on the contrary, play resolves itself into a passive dependence on 'amusements' the appetite for enjoyment increases, as the capacity for it grows less.<sup>702</sup>

Based upon this idea, Campbell then went on to argue that the provision of swimming pools would help alleviate problems, for;

Among the forms of recreation which are possible under cramped conditions, swimming necessarily occupies a very high place. It is recognised as a first-rate physical exercise owing to the muscular training it affords, and the tonic effect of contact with cold water. It calls for a certain amount of pluck and endurance, and, where water-polo is possible, it possesses the further advantages claimed for organised games.<sup>703</sup>

This intertwining of the themes of moral and physical cleanliness in Campbell's work is important. The ideals of securing cleanliness among the people at large had been at the forefront of social concern throughout the last two decades of the

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<sup>701.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 76.

<sup>702.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 54.

<sup>703.</sup> Campbell, *Report on Public Baths*, p. 54.

nineteenth century. More than that, the continuing preoccupation with the broader issue of poverty, especially in urban life, ensured that attention remained focussed on the question of cleanliness and its impact on the health of the nation. Indeed the struggle for civic cleanliness continued throughout the war and into the post-war years.

Throughout the period 1800-1918 the belief remained strong that there was a link between cleanliness and the health-giving properties of swimming. Swimming was thought to deliver both moral and physical benefits to the swimmer. Although initially this idea had been a minority belief, by the end of the nineteenth century it had become embedded as a more broadly-based article of faith among a larger number of people. It was especially important in supporting imperial ideals, and helping towards the reinvigoration of the English 'race'. By 1900, cleanliness and health were prime social and political concerns, and swimming was viewed as a means to secure both. It would also help towards preparing an imperial people to undertake their imperial tasks in all corners of the globe. On the eve of the First World War, swimming had reached an unprecedented position in English life; more popular, more useful, and more thoroughly-supported than at any time in its previous history.



## Chapter 9: Conclusion

Swimming was clearly not a widespread activity in England at the start of the nineteenth century, but it had certainly become widespread by the start of the twentieth. Indeed, it is an open question as to how much the further development of swimming within English society was constrained by the upheavals of the First World War. Whereas in 1800 only a tiny minority of the population of England likely knew how to swim, the number of people able to swim was many times larger by 1918. Any absolute and accurate count of the number of the people able to swim in England, either in 1800 or 1918, is, of course, impossible to obtain. The evidence examined in this thesis, however, leaves little doubt a major transformation in numbers *did* take place. Indeed it is clear that not only did the absolute number of swimmers in England increase, but the *proportion* of the population able to swim also increased. Swimming had changed. It had gone from being a relatively minor pursuit to being an ubiquitous pastime, and its status as an enjoyable, mass leisure activity was widely recognized.

The increase in numbers of swimmers was not the only change to take place. Whereas in 1800 there had been few man-made places in which to swim, by 1918 swimming pools were common, with no major centre of population being without one. Moreover, whereas those few swimming pools that did exist in 1800 were invariably privately-owned facilities, not all of which were open to the public, by 1918 the vast majority of swimming pools in England were municipally-owned and operated. These pools were ‘public’ in more than one way. They were owned by local governmental organisations supported by the public purse, and they were also

open to all classes of people, with provision made under the Baths and Washhouses legislation of the day for cheap admission charges to be levied in the lowest classes of swimming pools.

During the same period, competitive swimming also became organized. In the early 1800s swimming competitions could be organized by any interested party, and under whatever rules or conditions the organizer thought would prove popular. In these early races the distances swum in races invariably conformed to the size of the place of competition, the length of the pool being raced in for example, rather than any accepted idea of a standard distance, such as a twenty-five metre or fifty metre distance. By 1918, however, the Amateur Swimming Association was the universally recognized governing body of the sport. The A.S.A. and its predecessors from 1869 onwards had set down laws governing the sport, and had established a regularly growing number of standardized distance national championships.

For all the changes in swimming before 1918, there was still a clear sexual divide in the swimming world by 1918. This clearly reflected more fundamental divisions within English society itself. While women could participate in swimming, indeed were positively encouraged to by many authorities, they generally did so separated from men. Although there was a movement towards allowing mixed bathing in swimming pools and at the seaside from the 1890s onwards, in many places strict sexual separation of swimmers was enforced. Wash bath and swimming pool facilities were physically designed and constructed to prevent any chance of interaction between the sexes in most places. Similarly, the laws governing swimming costumes, enacted and enforced by the A.S.A. for competitions, were slightly stricter for women than for men by 1912; female



competitors were required to wear dressing gowns over their costumes both prior to and following a race. Finally, it was during the period immediately prior to the First World War that scientific swimming, sometimes also called 'fancy swimming' or 'ornamental swimming' and a precursor of synchronized swimming, began to fall out of favour among male practitioners and became fundamentally a female-only pursuit.

Mirroring this sexual divide in the swimming world was the class divide. While all classes of English society participated in swimming, making it perhaps one of the most socially open activities, there were strict social codes and rules that governed how such participation could take place. Different classes of pools within baths facilities ensured a continued social distance between the better-off and workers in recreational swimming. There were also important divisions among swimmers between amateurs and professionals. Definitions of what constituted an amateur or a professional served to segregate the world of swimming as a sport. This amateur/professional question was very important. Although professionals were allowed to teach or coach amateur swimmers from quite early on, there was never the sort of integration of professionalism in swimming that took place in both cricket and football. Amateurs were not allowed to compete against professionals. By 1880 at the latest, such an idea was unthinkable. Many believed that the segregation of professionals from amateurs was a mark of the purity of swimming. In theory a strict divide separated the two camps, with every swimmer falling on one side or the other. In practice, however, this was not the case. Between 1880 and 1911 amateur swimming administrators were constantly revising the definition of what constituted an amateur. This appears to have been in order to maintain amateur

swimming as a bastion of middle and upper class “gentlemanly” sport. Of special concern for swimmers was the issue of ‘broken time,’ whereby a swimmer might be compensated for time away from work by payment of a fee to make up the wages he had lost. Up to 1918 those in charge of amateur swimming staunchly opposed broken time payments for amateur swimmers. Indeed, this opposition was maintained through the inter-war period as well. The barring of broken time payments while allowing travel expense payments to most other amateurs, and even the claiming of money prizes by members of the military services, effectively excluded working class practitioners from the amateur swimming ranks.

By 1914 municipal authorities in England formed the vast majority of operators of swimming facilities. The provision of municipal swimming pools accessible at low entry charges, as required by law, helped popularize swimming among the lower classes. The great expansion of swimming among English people after 1870 needs to be seen in this context. Once municipal authorities had built swimming pools, they had to fill them with swimmers and keep them filled as much as possible. Swimming pools are and were notoriously expensive to build and maintain. Because of this need to maximize the usage of their facilities, municipal authorities in many jurisdictions began to provide special admittance prices for groups such as swimming clubs and students from state schools. By 1918 swimming appears to have been a widespread activity amongst state school pupils. In some cases swimming was used as a substitute for the drill prescribed for physical education purposes. In other cases it appears to have been provided by educational authorities promoting ideas of health and cleanliness. Ideas of preparing students for service to the Nation and the Empire were especially popular between roughly 1880



and 1914. Yet swimming never received the prominent acceptance and promotion of, say, athletics and team sports. T. M. James argued, “that the Amateur Athletic Association never had to argue a case for inclusion: this was for the simple reason that the Amateur Athletic Association had its origins within the educational sphere whereas the Amateur Swimming Association did not. This demonstrates the substantial difference which existed between the two sports and their contribution to nineteenth-century education, in that the one emanated from within the educational world whilst the other was the product of the wider society.”<sup>704</sup> Clearly, however, James’ statement was only partially true. Swimming certainly never achieved the same status as athletics and team sports in the Public School system. Nonetheless, two main points argued in this thesis must be emphasised. Firstly, while swimming was not a major competitive activity in Public Schools compared to other sports, it was certainly a commonplace recreational activity at most Public Schools. Many Public Schools, Eton and Harrow for example, required students to pass swimming tests while at school. Secondly, swimming was a major activity within the state school system pretty much from the establishment of that system. Although there were some administrative barriers to be overcome, right from the start many within the state educational system viewed swimming as being an important component of physical education and training. Certainly by 1900 it was almost universally accepted that swimming should be part of the school curriculum. Finally, it must be noted that certain local authorities in England paid greater attention to swimming instruction within their educational system than others. Both London and

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<sup>704</sup>. James, *The Contribution of Schools and Universities to the Development of Organized Sport up to 1900*, p. 158

Manchester were important centres of innovation in this regard.

One previously neglected area of the history of swimming is the story of the humanitarian and safety aspects of swimming. Certainly by the end of the First World War it was widely accepted that swimming had a humanitarian dimension. Indeed, among important segments of society, training in swimming and lifesaving was viewed as beneficial for the nation. While this humanitarian potential had always been inherent in swimming, and had been recognized by the early 1800s, it was not until the 1880s and 1890s that the idea was widely supported. The formation of the Life Saving Society in 1891 created an organization around which further development of the ideal could occur. From 1891 onwards there was an organized body promoting swimming as a humanitarian activity. This belief in the usefulness of swimming was further reinforced by the promotion of swimming and lifesaving within the Scout and Guide Associations created by Lord Robert S. S. Baden-Powell in 1908 and 1910 respectively. These movements also viewed swimming as an activity which helped to promote cleanliness.

Throughout the period 1800-1918 there was a strong belief in the link between cleanliness and the health-giving properties of swimming. Swimming was thought to deliver both moral and physical benefits to the swimmer. Although initially this idea had been a minority belief, by the end of the nineteenth century it had become embedded as a more broadly-based article of faith among large numbers of people. It was especially important in supporting imperial ideals, and in helping towards the reinvigoration of the English 'race.' By 1900, for example, cleanliness and health had become major social and political concerns, and swimming was viewed as a means to secure both. Women especially were encouraged to take up



swimming in order to strengthen themselves and any offspring they would bear. It was believed that swimming would also help towards preparing an imperial people to undertake their imperial tasks in all corners of the globe.

Clearly then, swimming as both a sport and recreational activity was inter-linked with many aspects of contemporary English culture between 1800 and 1918. An examination of the social history of swimming during this period also sheds greater light on English society itself. Importantly, the intricate nature of Victorian and Edwardian gender and class relations are illuminated in a number of ways; by the complex arrangements devised by organized swimming officialdom after 1869, and in the construction and operation of swimming pools throughout the period. Likewise, a greater understanding of Victorian ideas about what constituted a proper education, philanthropy and humanitarianism, health and cleanliness can be detected in the debates about swimming and those issues between 1800 and 1918. The study of the history of swimming allows, then, not only greater understanding of the development of swimming itself, but opens a window into Victorian society itself.

Where, then, does this study leave the scholarship of swimming? Certainly there are many aspects of the activity that require further attention. There is a need for a more comprehensive history of swimming. For example, the first efforts at organizing swimming in the 1830s and 1840s under the N.S.S. and/or the B.S.S. requires further scrutiny. Similarly, this thesis has focussed for the most part on male swimming. As has been demonstrated, however, swimming became increasingly popular among women, and was promoted as a healthy and important activity for women during the later Victorian period. Further research on female swimming would be enlightening.

For the most part this thesis has concentrated on the development of competitive and recreational swimming, because these disciplines of swimming are the best documented in both contemporary and modern sources. Yet we also need further research into the lesser studied disciplines of diving, lifesaving, water polo and synchronized swimming. Of particular interest to students of the social history of the Victorian period should be the development of synchronized swimming. It was an activity originally developed as a male-only pursuit and was widely demonstrated at swimming entertainments, yet it later became a *female*-only activity and was virtually ignored by the rest of the sporting world for a long period of time.

Running throughout the history of swimming has been the link between swimming and cleanliness. How far the classical (Greek and Roman) ideal of cleanliness influenced the Victorian model still remains to be investigated. This would require further research on the history of swimming in the ancient world, and additional research on the intellectual foundations of the Victorian drive for cleanliness.

There are, then, further areas of investigation. Nonetheless, this thesis provides a starting point for the history of swimming. Too often ignored as not being as glamorous, and not as popular as athletics, cricket, football, or rugby, swimming was, and remains, an important human activity. It stands as one of the most popular recreational activities in modern Britain and is currently part of the National Curriculum. As an ubiquitous activity it often simply passes notice, because it is considered so unremarkable a pastime. Yet swimming's ubiquity and popularity is exactly why its history requires close study. Moreover, unlike cricket and football (which have traditional forms dating back several hundred years),



modern swimming is little more than a century and a half old. The story of swimming in that period is, as this thesis has sought to illustrate, a reflection of important social trends and changes in English life itself.

## Appendix 1: A Chronology of English Swimming, 1747 - 1918

1747	The Peerless Head Pool is opened in London as a privately-owned, outdoor public pool.
1811	Harrow School's "Duck Puddle" (outdoor swimming pool) is in use by this time.
1828	The St. George's Baths are opened in Liverpool; the first (indoor) municipal swimming pool in England.
1828	Eton College's Psychrolutic Society is founded.
1832	Eton College's Philolutic Society is founded.
1837	The first, privately-owned, open air swimming bath is built in York on the Manor Shore.
30 June 1837	The National Swimming Society (N.S.S.) is founded.
02 November 1837	The N.S.S. requests permission to join the Coronation Procession of Queen Victoria from the Lord Chancellor.
c. 1845	The N.S.S. is disbanded.
26 August 1846	<i>The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846</i> , enacted.
21 June 1847	<i>The Towns Improvement Clauses Act, 1847</i> , enacted.
02 July 1847	<i>The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1847</i> , enacted.
22 July 1847	<i>The Towns Police Clauses Act, 1847</i> , enacted.
1859	The London Swimming Club is founded.
1861	Members of the London Swimming Club produce a pamphlet on the state of swimming in the capital and its previous history.
1861	The Ilex S.C. is founded.
1864	The Serpentine S.C. is founded.
1868	The Queen's Regulations for the British Army are amended in this year; instruction in swimming is now required as a "military duty" for all troops.
1869	The Otter S.C. is founded.
07 January 1869	A "Swimming Congress" is held in the German Gymnasium, London. This is the official founding of the Associated Metropolitan Swimming Clubs (A.M.S.C.).
11 February 1869	The rules of the A.M.S.C. are formally adopted at a public meeting.
24 June 1869	The A.M.S.C. is renamed the London Swimming Association (L.S.A.).
c. July-August 1869	First swimming of the Mile Amateur Championship.
1870	The L.S.A. is renamed the Metropolitan Swimming Association (M.S.A.).
12 May 1870	First, unsuccessful, attempt to create a game of "aquatic football" by the L.S.A. recorded.
11 August 1873	First appearance of Trudgeon and his unique stroke on the



- London swimming scene.
- 08 December 1873 The M.S.A. is renamed the Swimming Association of Great Britain (S.A.G.B.).
- 1873 The Royal Humane Society establishes the Stanhope Medal. Captain Matthew Webb is the first recipient.
- 11 August 1875 *The Public Health Act, 1875*, enacted.
- 12 August 1875 Captain Matthew Webb sets out on his first, unsuccessful, attempt to swim the English Channel.
- 13 August 1875 Captain Webb forced to end his attempt at crossing the Channel in the early hours of the morning.
- 24 August 1875 Captain Webb sets out from Dover for his second attempt to swim the English Channel
- 25 August 1875 Captain Webb completes the first swimming of the English Channel in roughly 22 hours and 30 minutes.
- 13 July 1876 Bournemouth Premier Rowing Club holds the first of a series of “aquatic hand-ball matches.”
- 27 May 1878 *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1878*, enacted.
- 1879 Queen’s Regulations for the Royal Navy are amended in this year; all ratings and officers are now required to take a swim test or learn how to swim.
- 12 July 1880 The S.A.G.B. revises the Laws of Amateur Swimming.
- 24 April 1881 Public meeting held by the S.A.G.B. in Goswell Hall, London, to discuss revision of the Amateur Laws. The meeting is adjourned until May.
- 23 May 1881 The public meeting adjourned in April at Goswell Hall is continued. Changes are suggested for the Amateur Laws.
- 30 May 1881 The S.A.G.B. Committee approves a new set of Amateur Laws.
- c. June/July 1881 The Professional Swimming Association (P.S.A.) is formed.
- 11 July 1881 William Henry becomes a delegate to the S.A.G.B. Committee for the Zephyr S.C.
- 12 June 1882 The S.A.G.B. revises the Laws of Amateur Swimming.
- 10 July 1882 The S.A.G.B. Committee suspends all members of the St. Pancras S.C. from amateur competition for a period of three months. Consideration of declaring four members of the St. Pancras S.C. (the St. Pancras Four) professionals is tabled.
- 24 July 1882 *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1882*, enacted.
- 12 October 1882 The Bicycle Union adopts a reciprocal suspension and disqualification agreement with the S.A.G.B.; a man proclaimed a professional in one sport to be automatically considered a professional in the other.
- c. October 1882 C. Depau of the Zephyr S.C. complains in the press about the medal he received for the 220 yds Amateur Championship run by the S.A.G.B. not being of the value and quality advertised.
- 13 November 1882 Notice given at the monthly S.A.G.B. Committee meeting that a motion declaring the St. Pancras Four professionals will be presented at the December meeting. The S.A.G.B. Committee



- decides to investigate C. Depau over his comments in the press.
- 11 December 1882 The St. Pancras Four are suspended from amateur competition for a period of twelve months. This reduced punishment causes concern among certain segments of the S.A.G.B. Committee.
- 18 December 1882 A special S.A.G.B. Committee meeting is given over to consideration of the investigation of C. Depau. No action, except for a response to his charges in the press, is taken. Notice is given at this meeting that a motion will be presented at the January meeting to overturn the recent decision in the St. Pancras Four case.
- 8 January 1883 Meeting of the S.A.G.B. Committee held. Reported that the Zephyr S.C. had resigned from the S.A.G.B.. Delegates of the Amateur S.C. and the Imperial S.C. protest the S.A.G.B. Committee's decision in December to only suspend the St. Pancras Four rather than declaring them professionals. A motion to rescind the December decision and declare the St. Pancras Four professionals was defeated.
- 12 February 1883 Meeting of the S.A.G.B. Committee held. Reported that the Amateur S.C. had resigned from the S.A.G.B..
- 10 March 1883 The Amateur Athletic Association adopts a reciprocal suspension and disqualification agreement with the S.A.G.B.; a man proclaimed a professional in one sport to be automatically considered a professional in the other.
- 21 May 1883 The Otter S.C. donates 30 guineas to the S.A.G.B. for the purchase of a Mile Amateur Championship Cup.
- 24 July 1883 Captain Matthew Webb dies trying to swim through the rapids below Niagara Falls.
- 01 October 1883 First S.A.G.B. Plunge Championships held.
- 12 November 1883 Meeting of the S.A.G.B. Committee held. Members of the Amateur S.C. were present at this meeting despite the club having resigned in February. Claimed that Thomas Cairns, the winner of the 220 yards amateur championship, was actually a professional; the S.A.G.B. Committee to investigate.
- 10 December 1883 Meeting of the S.A.G.B. Committee held. Cairns case raised again; Mr. Walter Blew-Jones, delegate of the Otter S.C. and second place finisher in the 220 yards amateur championship, stated that legal proceedings were to be entered into over the issue. S.A.G.B. Committee appears to have considered the case closed.
- 11 February 1884 Meeting of the S.A.G.B. Committee held. Mr. Blew-Jones returned his second place medal from the 1883 220 yards amateur championship, claiming he was entitled to the first place medal. This claim was denied by the S.A.G.B. Committee, and deliberation on the Cairns case was not



- reopened.
- 07 April 1884 At the AGM of the S.A.G.B. the Laws of Amateur Swimming are revised. This provokes the Cygnus S.C. and the Otter S.C. to resign from the S.A.G.B.. Over the next several months a total of eight clubs break from the S.A.G.B. and form the Amateur Swimming Union (A.S.U.).
- 20 May 1884 Formation of the Midland Counties Swimming and Aquatic Football Association. This organization frames its own set of water polo rules.
- 13 April 1885 The S.A.G.B. recognizes water polo as being under its control and produces its own set of rules for the game.
- 1886 The S.A.G.B. and the A.S.U. reconcile and agree to form the Amateur Swimming Association (A.S.A.).
- 7 June 1886 Final meeting of the S.A.G.B.; decided to accept the formation of a new swimming body combining the A.S.U. and the S.A.G.B..
- 21 June 1886 First meeting of the newly created A.S.A. Executive.
- 1887 Queen Victoria becomes the patron of the A.S.A..
- 25 June 1887 Meeting held in Scotland to discuss the formation of a Scottish Amateur Swimming Association.
- 1888 A.S.A. National Water Polo championships begun.
- 28 January 1888 Official founding of the Scottish Amateur Swimming Association (S.A.S.A.) takes place in Edinburgh.
- 1888 A definitive set of water polo rules is approved by the A.S.A., and the first A.S.A. Water Polo Championships are held.
- 1889 First Diving Championships held in Scotland.
- 1889 London Water Polo League founded by Archibald Sinclair.
- 23 November 1889 Official division of the A.S.A. into three districts, the Midland Counties A.S.A. (M.C.A.S.A.), the Northern Counties A.S.A. (N.C.A.S.A.), and the Southern Counties A.S.A. (S.C.A.S.A.).
- 1890 Kent County Water Polo Association founded.
- 1890 Manchester Water Polo League founded.
- 03 January 1891 First meeting held to discuss the formation of a society dedicated to aquatic lifesaving. This is the official founding of the Swimmer's Life Saving Society. A committee was formed to draft the rules of the organization.
- 07 February 1891 First set of rules of the Swimmer's Life Saving Society adopted at a public meeting.
- 22 May 1891 Oxford University Swimming Club founded.
- 25 May 1891 First public lecture on lifesaving held by the Swimmer's Life Saving Society at the Polytechnic Institute, London.
- c. October 1891 The P.S.A. folds.
- c. November 1891 The Swimmer's Life Saving Society changes its name to simply the Life Saving Society (L.S.S.).
- 1891 A.S.A. receives limited recognition for swimming as a physical activity from the Education Department. One hundred honorary instructors are provided to the School Board



- for London to teach pupils in Board Schools.
- 1891 Sussex County Water Polo Association founded and folds in the same year. Middlesex County Water Polo Association founded. Hampshire County Water Polo Association founded.
- 1892 The L.S.S. holds close to one hundred public lectures and demonstrations about lifesaving and its rescue methods during the year. The Bronze Medallion is instituted as the Society's first lifesaving award. The first National Life Saving Competition is held.
- 1893 Publication of the first edition of Sinclair and Henry's *Swimming* volume of the Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes.
- 1893 The London Schools Swimming Association (L.S.S.A.) is founded.
- 14 August 1896 *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1896*, enacted.
- 1896 The first Modern Olympic Games are held in Athens, Greece. Four swimming races are held, all for men. No swimmers represent Britain.
- 1897 The L.S.S. institutes their Diploma award.
- 01 June 1898 First issue of *The Swimming Magazine* (1898-99) published.
- 01 May 1899 Final issue of *The Swimming Magazine* (1898-99) published.
- 09 August 1899 *The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1899*, enacted.
- 1900 The second Olympic Games are held in Paris, France. The first Olympic men's water polo tournament is held.
- 01 January 1901 Official Division of the A.S.A. into five districts, the Midland Counties A.S.A. (M.C.A.S.A.), the North-Eastern Counties A.S.A. (N.E.C.A.S.A.), the Northern Counties A.S.A. (N.C.A.S.A.), the Southern Counties A.S.A. (S.C.A.S.A.), and the Western Counties A.S.A. (W.C.A.S.A.).
- 1901 Amateur Diving Association (A.D.A.) founded.
- 1902 L.S.S. allowed to use the title Royal by King Edward VII, but no formal title conferred via Royal Charter
- 1904 The third Olympic Games are held in St. Louis, USA. The first Olympic men's diving event is held.
- 1904 The L.S.S. is formally granted a Royal Charter and becomes the Royal Life Saving Society (R.L.S.S.).
- 1906 Intercalary Olympic Games held in Athens, Greece.
- 1907 The first A.S.A. High Diving Championships are held.
- 1908 The fourth Olympic Games are held in London, United Kingdom. The *Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur* (F.I.N.A.) is founded in the Manchester Hotel, London, during the Games. The first Honorary Secretary of F.I.N.A. is George W. Hearn, an Englishman.
- 1912 The fifth Olympic Games are held in Stockholm, Sweden. The first Olympic women's swimming and diving events are held.



- 01 June 1914 First issue of *The Swimming Magazine* (1914-18) published.
- 04 August 1914 Britain enters the First World War.
- 1918 Publication of Agnes Campbell's *Report on Public Baths and Wash-Houses in the United Kingdom*.
- 01 May 1918 Final issue of *The Swimming Magazine* (1914-18) published.
- 11 November 1918 Armistice ends the First World War.
- 1928 The ninth Olympic Summer Games are held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Controversy in English Swimming over the issue of "Broken Time."
- 1935 The A.D.A. folds and its operations are taken over by the A.S.A..
- 1948 The fourteenth Olympic Summer Games are held in London, United Kingdom.
- 1949 The English Schools Swimming Association (E.S.S.A.) is founded.
- 1996 The twenty-sixth Olympic Summer Games are held in Atlanta, USA. Parity between men and women in swimming relay events is achieved.

## Appendix 2: The Growth of Amateur Swimming, 1869 - 1948

**Clubs Affiliated to the A.S.A. and its predecessors, 1869 - 1948<sup>705</sup>**

Year	Number of Affiliated Clubs	Names of Known Affiliated Clubs
1869	6	Alliance, National, North London, St. Pancras, Serpentine, and West London. <sup>706</sup>
1870	-	-
1871	-	-
1872	-	-
1873	6	Alliance, Middlesex, Neptune, North London, Regent, and St. Pancras. <sup>707</sup>
1874	c. 6	Alliance, Neptune, North London, Regent, St. Pancras, and Victoria Park. <sup>708</sup>
1875	c. 4	Alliance, North London, Regent, and St. Pancras. <sup>709</sup>
1876	-	-

**Table 1: Number of Clubs affiliated to the A.S.A. and its predecessors, 1869-1948.**

<sup>705</sup>. This table runs until 1948 to allow comparison between the effects of both the First and Second World Wars upon A.S.A. membership levels.

<sup>706</sup>. Keil & Wix, p. 9.

<sup>707</sup>. ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, p. 2-3, Minutes of 11 November 1873 and 8 December 1873.

<sup>708</sup>. The Neptune SC was dissolved in 1874 and struck from the membership of the S.A.G.B. on 20 April 1874. The Victoria Park SC affiliated to the S.A.G.B. on 13 July 1874, but had not paid its affiliation fee by 1875. ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, pp. 18-19, 25, 33-34, Minutes of 20 April 1874, 13 July 1874, Financial Statements for 1874.

<sup>709</sup>. The North London SC may or may not have resigned from the S.A.G.B. in May of 1875, as the minutes for the meeting at which the resignation was tendered were not adopted as accurate by the S.A.G.B. Executive Committee. Whatever the case, the North London SC was again a member of the S.A.G.B. by late 1875 or early 1876. ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, pp. 37, 59, Minutes of May 1875. List of outstanding money owed the S.A.G.B. as of 21 November 1876.



Year	Number of Affiliated Clubs	Names of Affiliated Clubs
1877	6	Albert, Alliance, Dreadnought, North London, Regent, and West London. <sup>710</sup>
1879	19	<b>London Clubs:</b> Albert, Alliance, Camden, Dreadnought, North London, Regent, South-East London, West London, Zephyr. <b>Provincial Clubs:</b> Birmingham Amateur, Brighton, Dewsbury, Eastbourne, Hastings & St. Leonard's, Huddersfield, Jersey, Lyldesly, Newcastle, Portsmouth. <sup>711</sup>
1880	20	<b>London Clubs:</b> Alliance, Amateur, North London, Otter, Regent, South London, South-East London, Surrey, West London. <b>Provincial Clubs:</b> Bangor, Birmingham, Brighton, Burton-on-Trent, Dewsbury, Eastbourne, Huddersfield, Jersey, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Portsmouth, Southampton. <sup>712</sup>
1881	25	<b>London Clubs:</b> Alliance, Amateur, Cygnus, Enterprise, North London, Otter, Regent, South London, South-East London, West London, Zephyr. <b>Provincial Clubs:</b> Bangor, Birmingham, Brighton, Burton-on-Trent, Dewsbury, Dublin, Eastbourne, Huddersfield, Jersey, Liverpool, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Southampton. <sup>713</sup>
1882	34 <sup>714</sup>	-

**Table 1: Number of Clubs affiliated to the A.S.A. and its predecessors, 1869-1948 (Cont').**

<sup>710</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, p. 67, List of Club Delegates for 1877.

<sup>711</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, pp. 127-128, 131, 133, Minutes of 13 January 1879, 10 February 1879, 21 April 1879 and 12 May 1879.

<sup>712</sup> ASAL, "S.A.G.B. Annual Report for 1880", *Minute Book No. 3: The S.A.G.B.*, p. 20.

<sup>713</sup> ASAL, "S.A.G.B. Annual Report for 1881", *Minute Book No. 3: The S.A.G.B.*, p. 75.

<sup>714</sup> ASAL, "S.A.G.B. Annual Report for 1882", *Minute Book No. 3: The S.A.G.B.*, p. 147.

Year	Number of Affiliated Clubs	Names of Affiliated Clubs
1883	-	-
1884	37	<b>London Clubs:</b> Alliance, Amateur, Camden, Cygnus, Greenwich, Holloway, North London, Pacific, Regent, South-East London, St. Leonard's, Torpedo, Unity. <b>Provincial Clubs:</b> Ashton-under-Lyne, Birmingham, Birmingham Leander, Blackburn, Blackpool, Bristol Leander, Burton-on-Trent, Dublin, Dudley, Everton (Liverpool), Jersey, Kingston Institute, Liverpool, Llandudno, Longton, Nottingham, Penrith, Portsmouth, Rochdale Dolphin, Sheffield, Southampton, St. Mary's Institute (Nottingham), Swindon, City of York. <sup>715</sup>
1885	-	-
1886	-	-
1887	-	-
1888	-	-
1889	96 <sup>716</sup>	-
1890 <sup>717</sup>	135	-
1891	182	-
1892	207	-
1893	240	-
1894	265	-
1895	404	-
1896	387	-

**Table 1: Number of Clubs affiliated to the A.S.A. and its predecessors, 1869-1948 (Cont').**

<sup>715</sup> ASAL, "S.A.G.B. Annual Report for 1884," *Minute Book No. 4: The S.A.G.B.*, p. 279.

<sup>716</sup> ASAL, "A.S.A. Annual Report for 1889," *A.S.A. Minute Book No. 2*, fol. 1.

<sup>717</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1948*, (London: A.S.A., 1948), p. 4-5. All references for 1890 and subsequent years are drawn from this handbook.



Year	Number of Affiliated Clubs	Names of Affiliated Clubs
1897	428	-
1898	432	-
1899	447	-
1900	469	-
1901	537	-
1902	595	-
1903	624	-
1904	675	-
1905	741	-
1906	805	-
1907	963	-
1908	1073	-
1909	1169	-
1910	1276	-
1911	1324	-
1912	1369	-
1913	1409	-
1914	1468	-
1915	1423	-
1916/ 1918	-	-
1919	-	-
1920	875	-
1921	1210	-
1922	1289	-
1923	1331	-

**Table 1: Number of Clubs affiliated to the A.S.A. and its predecessors, 1869-1948 (Cont').**

Year	Number of Affiliated Clubs	Names of Affiliated Clubs
1924	1313	-
1925	1318	-
1926	1363	-
1927	1375	-
1928	1380	-
1929	1505	-
1930	1561	-
1931	1625	-
1932	1720	-
1933	1729	-
1934	1805	-
1935	1856	-
1936	1969	-
1937	1939	-
1938	1976	-
1939/ 1945	1981	-
1946	305	-
1947	1070	-
1948	1261	-

**Table 1: Number of Clubs affiliated to the A.S.A. and its predecessors, 1869-1948 (Cont').**



## Appendix 3: The Amateur Law, 1869 - 1918

### The 1869 Amateur Law

- “1. Persons who have competed for money prizes, for wagers, for public or admission money, or who have otherwise made the art of swimming a means of pecuniary profit, shall not be allowed to compete as amateurs.
2. The fact of having competed with a professional for honour or for money (if intention is announced before starting to hand the amount of the prize, if successful, to the objects of the association) shall not disqualify in competitions confined to amateurs.”<sup>718</sup>

### The 1873 Amateur Law

- “1. - Persons who have competed for money prizes, for wagers, for public or admission money, or who have otherwise made the art of swimming a means of pecuniary profit, shall not be allowed to compete as amateurs.
2. - Any amateur competing against a professional swimmer shall be disqualified from all future amateur contests.”<sup>719</sup>

### The 1878 Amateur Law

- “I. - A person who has competed for money, for a wager, for public or admission money, or who has otherwise made the art of swimming a means of pecuniary profit, shall not be allowed to compete as an amateur.
- II. - An amateur shall be allowed to compete with a professional for a prize or honour only.”<sup>720</sup>

### The 1881 Amateur Law

- “1. - That all Competitions shall be confined to Amateurs.
2. - An Amateur is one who has never taught, pursued, or assisted in the practice of Swimming, or any other Athletic Exercise, as a means of pecuniary gain, and who has never competed for a money prize.
- An Amateur Swimmer forfeits his right to that title if he shall -
- (a.) Knowingly and without protest take part in any Competition with anyone who is not an Amateur.

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<sup>718.</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 335-36.

<sup>719.</sup> “Laws of Amateur Swimming,” *The Swimming Record and Chronicle of Sporting Events*, Vol. 1, No. 29, 22 November 1873, p. 4.

<sup>720.</sup> ASAL, *Minute Book No. 2 of the M.S.A.*, p. 104, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 14 January 1878.



- (b.) Sell, ~~pledge~~, or make any pecuniary profit, either directly or indirectly out of a Prize.
- (c.) Compete in any Competition described as an ‘All England Handicap,’ ‘Open to all Comers,’ ‘Open to all London,’ &c., (as such are Professional Competitions, no matter what the Prizes are) or in any Competition not professedly confined to Amateurs.
- (d.) Compete for a declared wager or staked bet.
- (e.) Wilfully lose any Competition.
- (f.) Receive money or any equivalent, beyond the actual entrance fee, and Railway fare paid, for representing any Club in a Swimming Competition.
- That any Competitor being in all other respects qualified to rank as an Amateur, SHALL NOT *by reason of his having in the past* lawfully competed against a professional under the Association Laws of Amateur Swimming, the Rules of the Bicycle Union, or the Laws governing Amateur Rowing or other recognized Branch of Amateur sport, then respectively in force, forfeit his right to compete as an Amateur.
- That this Law shall not prevent a Club refusing entry to its own Competitions.”<sup>721</sup>

### **The Amateur Law and the 1884 - 1886 Amateur Split**

The Amateur Law appears to have been revised annually between 1880 and 1884. The revision of the Amateur Law on 7 April 1884 at the AGM of the S.A.G.B. caused a break in amateur ranks which resulted in the formation of the Amateur Swimming Union (A.S.U.) in opposition to the S.A.G.B.. Each organization had its own definition of what constituted an amateur and considered members of the opposing body to have breached such law. No copies of these laws have survived to the present day.

### **The 1890 Amateur Law**

“1. All amateur races held under the Amateur Swimming Association rules must be confined to amateurs according to the definition of the Amateur Swimming Association, which is as follows: An amateur is one who has never competed for a money prize, declared wager, or staked bet; who has never taught, pursued, or assisted in the practice of swimming, or any other athletic exercise, as a means of pecuniary gain; and who has not, knowingly, or without protest, taken part in any competition or exhibition with any one who is not an amateur.

¶ The following exception shall be made to this law, viz.:- Amateur swimmers shall

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<sup>721</sup>. ASAL, *Minute Book No. 3: The S.A.G.B.*, p. 47, Minutes of an Open Meeting of Swimmers at Goswell Hall, 23 May 1881. The original is a typed sheet glued into the minute book. “Pledge” in clause 2 (b) is crossed out in black ink in the original typed version. Although it is certain that this definition of an amateur was adopted by the open meeting, it is less than clear that the S.A.G.B. included the revised definition in the next draft of its laws, as no copies of the 1881 or 1882 S.A.G.B. Laws of Swimming survive. All italics appear in the original.



not lose their amateur status by competing with or against professional football players in ordinary club matches for which no prizes are given, or in cup competitions permitted by the National Football Associations or Rugby Unions of England, Ireland, Scotland, or Wales.

2. A swimmer ceases to be an amateur, and becomes a professional, by-

- (a) Engaging in swimming or any other athletic exercise - or personally teaching, training, or coaching any other person therein - for pecuniary gain.
- (b) Selling, realising upon, or otherwise turning into cash, any prize won by him.
- (c) Accepting remuneration for swimming in public, or by being employed for money or wages in a swimming bath or elsewhere as an attendant on swimmers.”<sup>722</sup>

### **The 1893 Amateur Law**

“1. *Definition of an amateur.* – All amateur races held under the A.S.A. rules must be confined to amateurs according to the definition of the A.S.A., which is as follows: - An amateur is one who has never competed for a money prize, declared wager, or staked bet; who had never taught, pursued, or assisted in the practice of swimming, or any other athletic exercise, as a means of pecuniary gain; and who has not, knowingly, or without protest, taken part in any competition or exhibition with anyone who is not an amateur.

The following exceptions shall be made to this law, viz.: - Amateur swimmers shall not lose their amateur status by competing with or against professional football players in ordinary club matches for which no prizes are given, or in cup competitions permitted by the National Football Associations or Rugby Unions of England, Ireland, Scotland, or Wales.

2. *What constitutes a professional.* – A swimmer ceases to be an amateur, and becomes a professional, by –

- (a) Engaging in swimming or any other athletic exercise - or personally teaching, training, or coaching any other person therein - for pecuniary gain.
- (b) Selling, realising upon, or otherwise turning into cash, any prize won by him.
- (c) Accepting remuneration by way of expenses or otherwise over and above the third-class railway fare, for swimming in public, or by being employed for money or wages in a swimming bath or elsewhere as an attendant on swimmers.”<sup>723</sup>

### **The 1898 Amateur Law**

“1. **An Amateur.** – That all amateur competitions held under the Amateur Swimming Association Laws shall be confined to amateurs of either sex, according to the definition of the Amateur Swimming Association, which is as follows: ‘An amateur is one who has never competed for a money prize, declared wager, or staked bet; who had never taught, pursued or assisted in the practice of swimming, or any

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<sup>722</sup> ASAL, *A.S.A. Minute Book No. 2*, fol. 4, AGM Minutes of 12 April 1890, Glued in typed fine copy of laws from the 1890 Handbook.

<sup>723</sup> Sinclair and Henry, *Swimming*, pp. 434-35. Italics present in the original.



other athletic exercise, as a means of pecuniary gain; and who has not, knowingly, or without protest, taken part in any competition or exhibition with anyone who is not an amateur.’

**2. A Professional.** –That a swimmer shall cease to be an amateur, and becomes a professional by –

(a) Engaging in swimming or any other athletic exercise - or personally teaching, training, or coaching any other person therein - for pecuniary gain.

(b) Selling, realising upon, or otherwise turning into cash, any prize won by him or her.

(c) Accepting remuneration by way of expenses over and above the third-class railway fare or otherwise.

(d) Accepting remuneration for swimming in public, or by being employed for money or wages in a swimming bath or elsewhere as an attendant on swimmers.

*No professional can make an amateur handicap or represent or hold any office in the A.S.A. or in any district thereof or in any affiliated club.*

NOTE. –The following EXCEPTIONS shall be made to the foregoing laws, but the A.S.A. reserves full powers to prevent any abuse of these:–

(a) Amateur swimmers shall not lose their amateur status by competing with or against professional football players in ordinary club matches for which no prizes are given, or in cup competitions permitted by the National Football Associations or Rugby Unions of England, Ireland, Scotland, or Wales.

(b) Schoolmasters or school teachers giving instruction in swimming to their school pupils, and as part of their school duties, and receiving no extra remuneration therefor, shall not thereby endanger their amateur status.

(c) The fact of any payment being made to an instructor of life-saving shall not endanger the instructor’s status as an amateur, but no such instructor can receive any fee or expenses for any meeting at which he competes for a prize of any description.

(d) A bath manager who is not a personal attendant on swimmers in a swimming bath (or otherwise ineligible to compete as an Amateur under A.S.A. Laws) does not, as such, endanger his amateur status.”<sup>724</sup>

### **The 1906 Amateur Law**

“**50. An Amateur.** That all amateur competitions held under the Amateur Swimming Association Laws shall be confined to amateurs of either sex, according to the definition of the Amateur Swimming Association, which is as follows: ‘An amateur is one who has never competed for a money prize, declared wager, or staked bet; who had never taught, pursued or assisted in the practice of swimming, or any other athletic exercise, as a means of pecuniary gain; and who has not, knowingly, or without protest, taken part in any competition or exhibition with anyone who is not an amateur.’

**51. A Professional.** That a swimmer shall cease to be an amateur, and becomes a professional by –

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<sup>724</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1898*, pp. 33-34. All bold and italics appear in the original.



- (a) Engaging in swimming or any other athletic exercise - or personally teaching, training, or coaching any other person therein - for pecuniary gain.
- (b) Selling, realising upon, or otherwise turning into cash, any prize won by him or her.
- (c) Accepting remuneration *or expenses except under the conditions set out in exception F*. No Amateur Swimmer may ask for or receive his railway fare for the whole or part of any journey from more than one individual or promoting body.
- (d) Accepting remuneration for swimming in public, or by being employed for money or wages in a swimming bath or elsewhere as an attendant on swimmers.
- (e) Asking for, offering, or accepting any consideration by way of employment or otherwise for becoming a member of a Club, except in cases where clubs or associations give scholarships or free membership of clubs to children at or leaving school, the holders of such scholarships not to exceed 15 years of age.

No professional can make an amateur handicap or represent or hold any office in the A.S.A. or in any district thereof, and no amateur is allowed to take a fee or expenses for attending and acting as an official at any competition held under A.S.A. Laws beyond third class railway boat and tram fares, or cab fares when no trams or trains are available, and reasonable out of pocket expenses or hotel expenses when necessary and away from home (limited to 7/6 per man), handicappers only excepted.

NOTE. - The following EXCEPTIONS shall be made to the foregoing laws, but the A.S.A. reserves full powers to prevent any abuse of these:-

- (a) Amateur swimmers shall not lose their amateur status by competing with or against professional football players in ordinary club friendly matches or in cup competitions permitted by the National Football Associations or Rugby Unions of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.
- (b) *Schoolmasters or School Teachers giving instruction in swimming to their school pupils, or at evening schools organised by the Education Authority, shall not thereby endanger their amateur status.*
- (c) The fact of any payment being made for instruction in life-saving shall not endanger the instructor's status as an amateur, but no such instructor can receive any fee or expenses for any meeting at which he competes for a prize of any description.
- (d) A bath manager who is not a personal attendant on swimmers in a swimming bath (or otherwise ineligible to compete as an Amateur under A.S.A. Laws) does not, as such, endanger his amateur status.
- (e) None of the standing laws of Amateurism laid down by the A.S.A., A.A.A., N.C.U. and N.S.A. apply to Life Saving, either in the matter of learning, teaching, or exhibiting, the A.S.A. being of opinion that the Life Saving land and water drills (including resuscitation) form a combined development of gymnastic exercise, swimming ability and medical knowledge for the benefit of the race, and as such cannot be classified as 'Sport,' or be considered to come within the term 'Athletic Exercises,' specified in Laws 49 and 50 of the A.S.A.
- (f) *An amateur swimmer may accept his third-class railway, boat, or tram fare (or cab fare when no trains or trams are available), but not exceeding the actual cost of his journey; and, when his return on the same day is impossible, hotel expenses (limited to 7s. 6d. in any period of twenty-four hours), under the following conditions:- (1) When competing in any International (controlled by the A.S.A.).*



*National, District or County Championship. (2) When taking part in the King's Cup or National Diving Competition. (3) When engaged as a member of a team of swimmers in any water polo, life-saving, diving, or squadron competition or exhibition, provided no prizes are offered to individual members of the team, except in any bonâ fide unlimited open handicap in which no fast time or other special prize is offered. (4) When attending an entertainment to give an exhibition, provided that no prize is offered for such attendance or exhibition, and that he does not compete for a prize at the same gala. In no case may any expenses be paid to any individual to secure his attendance at any gala (except to give an unremunerated exhibition as provided for in clause 4) or to any members of a team who take part in any events at the gala at which they attend under the provisions of this exception (other than as provided for in clause 3 above), other than those in which the team competes as a whole and for which no prizes are offered. No amateur swimmer may ask for or receive his railway fare or expenses for the whole or part of any journey from more than one individual or promoting body, and railway fares can only be paid from the actual point of departure, for attendance at the event for which the fare is accepted. Return fare can only be accepted when the return journey is made on the day of, or the day immediately following the event (week-end tickets excepted). Individuals, promoting bodies, or clubs taking advantage of this exception, must satisfy themselves that any expenses paid are actually incurred.*"<sup>725</sup>

### **The 1910 Amateur Law**

**20. An Amateur.** All amateur competitions held under A.S.A. Laws shall be confined to amateurs, according to the following definition: 'An amateur is one who has never competed for a money prize, declared wager, or staked bet; who had never taught, pursued or assisted in the practice of swimming, or any other athletic exercise, as a means of pecuniary gain; and who has not, knowingly, or without protest, taken part in any competition or exhibition with anyone who is not an amateur.'

**21. A Professional.** A swimmer shall cease to be an amateur, and becomes a professional by –

- (a) Engaging in swimming or any other athletic exercise - or personally teaching, training, or coaching any other person therein - for pecuniary gain.
- (b) Selling, realising upon, or otherwise turning into cash, any prize won.
- (c) Asking for, offering, or accepting remuneration or expenses except under the conditions set out in exception G.
- (d) Accepting remuneration for swimming in public, or for employment in a swimming bath or elsewhere as an attendant on swimmers.
- (e) Asking for, offering, or accepting any consideration by way of employment or otherwise for becoming a member of a Club, except in cases where clubs or associations give scholarships or free membership of clubs to children at or leaving school, the holders of such scholarships not to exceed 15 years of age.

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<sup>725</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1906*, (London, A.S.A., 1906), pp. 20-23. All bold and italics appear in the original.



The following EXCEPTIONS shall be made to the foregoing Law:-

- (a) Amateur swimmers shall not lose their amateur status by competing with or against professional football players in ordinary club friendly matches or in cup competitions permitted by the National Football Associations or Rugby Unions of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.
- (b) Schoolmasters or School Teachers giving instruction in swimming to their school pupils, or at evening schools organised by the Education Authority, shall not thereby endanger their amateur status.
- (c) The fact of any payment being made for instruction in life-saving shall not endanger the instructor's status as an amateur, but no such instructor may receive any fee or expenses for any meeting at which he competes for a prize.
- (d) A bath manager who is not a personal attendant on swimmers does not, as such, endanger his amateur status.
- (e) The standing laws of Amateurism laid down by this or any Association recognised under Law 16, Clause B., do not apply to Life Saving, either in the matter of learning, teaching, or exhibiting, the A.S.A. being of opinion that the Life Saving land and water drills (including resuscitation) form a combined development of gymnastic exercise, swimming ability and medical knowledge, and cannot be considered to come within the term 'Athletic Exercises,' specified in Laws 20 and 21.
- (f) Sailors and Soldiers of His Majesty's Forces (including the Territorial Army) who do not individually accept money prizes, are exempt from the loss of their amateur status by reason of competing in Naval and Military competitions confined to Sailors and Soldiers.
- (g) Travelling and Hotel Expenses may only be paid or accepted under the following conditions, and in accordance with and not exceeding the amounts stated below:-
  - (1) When competing in any International (controlled by the A.S.A.), National District or County Championship.
  - (2) When taking part in the King's Cup or National Diving Competition.
  - (3) When engaged as a member of a team of swimmers in any Water Polo, Life Saving, Diving, or Squadron competition or exhibition, provided no prizes are offered to individual members of the team, except in any bona fide unlimited open Handicap in which no fast time or other special prize is offered. Souvenirs cannot be accepted unless submitted to and approved by the District or the A.S.A. Committee. (See Law 48, Clause C.)
  - (4) When attending an entertainment to give an exhibition provided that no prize is offered for such attendance and that he does not compete for a prize at the same Gala.

Expenses may be paid on the following scale: 3<sup>rd</sup> class rail, boat or tram fares (or cab fares when no cheaper means of transit are available). In all cases the least expensive mode of travelling must be adopted: fares must only be paid from the actual point of departure for attendance at the event for which the fare is accepted. Return fares may only be accepted when the return is made on the same or the following day (week-end tickets excepted). When travelling abroad (outside the British Isles) amateurs may receive 2<sup>nd</sup> class rail and 1<sup>st</sup> class boat fare. No payment shall be made or claimed from more than one promoting body for any part of a journey or Hotel expenses.

In no case may payment be made or received beyond the actual cost of the journey. When return on the same day is impossible, Hotel Expenses may be paid, limited to 7s. 6d. in any period of 24 hours.

Individuals, promoting bodies, or clubs taking advantage of this exception, must satisfy themselves that any expenses paid are actually incurred.”<sup>726</sup>

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<sup>726</sup> A.S.A., *Handbook for 1910*, (London: A.S.A., 1910), pp. 17-21. All bold text appears in the original.



## Appendix 4: Municipal Pool Provision in England, 1846-1918

### London Parishes with Swimming Pools, 1854.

Parish	Year Baths Erected	Number of Swimming Pools
St. Martin in the Fields	1848	0
St. Marylebone	1849	2
St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster	1851	2
St. James, Westminster	1851	1
Greenwich	1851	2
Poplar	1852	2
St. Giles in the Fields and St. George, Bloomsbury	1853	2

**Table 2: London Parishes with Swimming Pools, 1854.**<sup>727</sup>

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<sup>727</sup>. Cape, p. 47.

### Adoption of the Baths and Washhouses Act in London to 1876.

Parish	Year B & WH Act Adopted	Year Baths Opened	Address or Location of Baths	Number of Swimming Pools
Marylebone	1846	1849	Marylebone Road	4
St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster	1847	1851	Great Smith Street	2
St. Martin in the Fields	1847	1848	Orange Street, Leicester Square	0
St. James, Westminster	1847	1852	Marshall Street	1
St. Giles in the Fields and St. George, Bloomsbury	1850	1853	Endell Street	2
All Saints, Poplar	1850	1851	East India Road	2
Greenwich	1850	1851	London Street, Greenwich	2
St. George, Hanover Square	1852	Not Given	Two Bath Locations - Davies Street, and Buckingham Palace Road	2
Bermondsey	1852	1854	Spa Road	2
St. Pancras	1865	1868	King Street, Camden Town	2
Paddington	1871	1874	Queen's Road, Bayswater	4

**Table 3: London Parish Councils adopting the Baths and Washhouses Act up to 1876.**<sup>728</sup>

<sup>728</sup>. LAML, P12/80/1/1, Agenda for Lambeth Vestry Meeting, 22 March 1876.



**Number of Municipal Baths Buildings in England, 1845-1915.**

Year	Number of Municipal Baths Establishments	Increase in Establishments over Previous 5 Years
1845	1	N/A
1850	8	7
1855	33	25
1860	43	10
1865	50	7
1870	57	7
1875	63	6
1880	83	20
1885	102	19
1890	127	25
1895	166	39
1900	206	40
1905	249	43
1910	297	48
1915	343	46

**Table 4: Number of Municipal Bath Buildings in England at Five Year Intervals, 1845-1915.**<sup>729</sup>

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<sup>729</sup>. Campbell, facing p. 6. Unlike much of the rest of Campbell's work, which refers to the UK as a whole, the graph this table is derived from is specifically noted as referring to English facilities only.

### Municipal Swimming Pools in Local Authorities, 1913-14.

Borough, City, Town or Parish	1911 Census Population	Number of Swimming Pools, 1913-14		
		Male Only <sup>730</sup>	Female Only	Total
Holborn	49,357	-	0	2
Islington	327,403	-	4	10
Lambeth	298,058	-	1	3
Leeds	445,550	-	0	13
Liverpool	746,421	1	1	26
Manchester	714,333	-	8	33
St. Marylebone	118,160	-	1	4
St. Pancras	218,387	-	2	8
Westminster	160,261	-	0	6
York	82,282	-	0	4

**Table 5: Number of Municipal Swimming Pools in Local Authorities, 1913-14.**<sup>731</sup>

<sup>730</sup> Generally speaking, in those locations that had separate women's swimming pools all other pools were male only, but a figure has only been entered in this column where the source material specifically indicates a male only pool existed.

<sup>731</sup> Campbell, pp. A44-A181. The "A" preface on page references from Campbell indicates pages from Campbell's appendices, which are numbered separately from the main text of her work.



**Number of Swimmers using Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**

Borough, City, Town or Parish	1911 Census Population	Numbers of Swimmers, 1913-14		
		Male	Female	Total
Holborn	49,357	-	-	138,230
Islington	327,403	271,792	122,076	393,868
Lambeth	298,058	97,464	42,577	140,041
Leeds	445,550	-	-	334,833 <sup>732</sup>
Liverpool	746,421	1,206,237	121,141	1,327,378
Manchester	714,333	1,126,708	283,896	1,410,604
St. Marylebone	118,160	66,919	23,297	126,102 <sup>733</sup>
St. Pancras	218,387	206,930	75,366	282,296
Westminster	160,261	228,145	42,122	270,267
York	82,282	-	-	-

**Table 6: Number of Swimmers using Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**<sup>734</sup>

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<sup>732</sup> Reported to include an unspecified number of school children who attended the swimming pools.

<sup>733</sup> Reported to include 35 886 school children who attended the swimming pools.

<sup>734</sup> Campbell, pp. A44-A181.

### Survey of Liverpool Municipal Pools, 1913-14.

Bath Name & Location	Year Baths Opened	Number of Swimming Pools			Pool Dimensions
		Male Only	Female Only	Total	
Cornwallis Street	1851	1 <sup>735</sup>	1	3	57' x 40' 42' x 27' 39' x 27'
Margaret Street	1863	-	-	2	67' x 34' 67' x 34'
Steble Street	1874	-	-	2	52' x 38' 51' x 38'
Westminster Road	1877	-	-	2	62' x 33' 100' x 33'
Lodge Lane	1878	-	-	2	75' x 32' 64' x 30'
Burroughs Gardens <sup>736</sup>	1879	-	-	2	59' x 28' 31' x 13'
Lister Drive	1904	-	-	2	60' x 30' 75' x 35'
Picton Place	1906	-	-	2	50' x 27' 75' x 35'
Speke Road	1907	-	-	2	57' x 27' 75' x 35'
Queen's Drive <sup>737</sup>	1909	-	-	3	67' x 30' 75' x 35' 75' x 35'
Woolton Baths <sup>738</sup>	1893	-	-	1	60' x 25'

**Table 7: Survey of Liverpool Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**<sup>739</sup>

<sup>735</sup>. This was the First Class Pool of the facility.

<sup>736</sup>. Reported that the small pool was for children only.

<sup>737</sup>. One of the large pools (75' x 35') was open air.

<sup>738</sup> Reported not to lie within Liverpool Corporation's boundaries in 1914.

<sup>739</sup>. Campbell, pp. A44-A50.



**Number of Swimmers using Liverpool Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**

Bath Name & Location	Number of Swimmers		
	Male	Female	Total
Cornwallis Street	89,810	23,496	113,306
Margaret Street	82,700	7,655	90,355
Steble Street	85,697	6,595	92,292
Westminster Road	105,524	10,941	116,465
Lodge Lane	73,478	10,122	83,600
Burroughs Gardens	64,219	3,268	67,487
Lister Drive	73,170	10,122	83,292
Picton Place	47,734	22,693	70,427
Speke Road	34,843	10,067	44,910
Queen's Drive	80,615	21,255	101,870
Woolton Baths	-	-	-

**Table 8: Number of Swimmers using Liverpool Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**<sup>740</sup>

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<sup>740</sup>. Campbell, pp. A44-A50.

### Survey of London Municipal Pools, 1913-14.

Bath Name & Location	Year Baths Opened	Number of Swimming Pools			Pool Dimensions
		Male Only	Female Only	Total	
<b>Borough of Holborn</b>					
Holborn Baths, Endell Street	1853 <sup>741</sup>	-	0	2	90' x 28' 50' x 40'
<b>Borough of Islington</b>					
Hornsey Road	1892 <sup>742</sup>	-	2	4	132' x 40' 100' x 35' 75' x 25' 75' x 25'
Essex Road	1895	-	1	3	90' x 30' 95' x 30' 50' x 20'
Caledonian Road	1892 <sup>743</sup>	-	1	3	90' x 30' 75' x 25' 66' x 18'
<b>LCC Lambeth</b>					
Lambeth Public Baths <sup>744</sup>	1897	-	1	3	132' x 40' 90' x 30' 56' x 25'
<b>LCC St. Marylebone</b>					
St. Marylebone	1849 <sup>745</sup>	-	1	4	-

**Table 9: Survey of London Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**<sup>746</sup>

<sup>741</sup>. Baths extended in 1902.

<sup>742</sup>. Baths reported to have been extended in 1900.

<sup>743</sup>. Baths reported to have been extended in 1899.

<sup>744</sup>. Pool dimensions derived from: LAML, P12/80/10, *A Souvenir of the 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1897. From the Clerk to the Chairman.*

<sup>745</sup>. Baths reported to have been totally rebuilt in 1897.

<sup>746</sup>. Campbell, pp. A80-A103.



Bath Name & Location	Year Baths Opened	Number of Swimming Pools			Pool Dimensions
		Male Only	Female Only	Total	
<b>Borough of St. Pancras</b>					
King Street	1868 <sup>747</sup>	-	-	2	57' x 21' 57' x 21'
Whitfield Street	1878	-	-	2	90' x 30' 57' x 21'
Prince of Wales Road	1901	-	2	4	100' x 30' 100' x 30' 87' x 40' 50' x 20'
<b>Borough of Westminster</b>					
Marshall Street	1852 <sup>748</sup>	-	-	2	60' x 22' 40' x 36'
Buckingham Palace Road	1890	-	-	2	90' x 30' 60' x 32'
Great Smith Street	1851 <sup>749</sup>	-	-	2	132' x 31' 74' x 24'

**Table 9: Survey of London Municipal Pools, 1913-14 (Cont').**

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<sup>747</sup>. Baths reported to have been expanded in 1898.

<sup>748</sup>. Baths reported to have been added to in 1904

<sup>749</sup>. Baths reported to have been rebuilt in 1893.

**Number of Swimmers using London Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**

Bath Name & Location	Number of Swimmers		
	Male	Female	Total
<b>Borough of Holborn</b>			
Holborn Baths, Endell Street	-	-	138,230
<b>Borough of Islington</b>			
Hornsey Road	114,103	59,073	173,176
Essex Road	90,013	32,959	122,972
Caledonian Road	67,676	30,044	97,720
<b>LCC Lambeth</b>			
Lambeth Public Baths	97,464	42,577	140,041
<b>LCC St. Marylebone</b>			
St. Marylebone	66,919	23,297	126,102 <sup>750</sup>
<b>Borough of St. Pancras</b>			
King Street	30,695	16,782	47,477
Whitfield Street	54,164	10,326	64,490
Prince of Wales Road	122,071	48,258	170,329
<b>Borough of Westminster</b>			
Marshall Street	26,443	6,848	33,291
Buckingham Palace Road	91,474	22,217	113,691
Great Smith Street	110,228	13,057	123,285

**Table 10: Number of Swimmers using London Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**<sup>751</sup>

<sup>750</sup>. Includes 35,886 school children attending the swimming pools.

<sup>751</sup>. Campbell, pp. A80-A103.



### Survey of Leeds Municipal Pools, 1913-14.

Bath Name & Location	Year Baths Opened	Number of Swimming Pools			Pool Dimensions
		Male Only	Female Only	Total	
Cookridge Street	1866 <sup>752</sup>	-	-	2	75' x 36' 50' x 24'
Kirkstall Street	1895	-	-	2	75' x 24' 60' x 20'
Union Street	1895	1	0	1	75' x 30'
Holbeck	1898	-	-	2	75' x 30' 60' x 24'
Hunslet	1898	-	-	2	75' x 30' 62' x 24'
Meanwood Road	1899	-	-	2	75' x 30' 62' x 24'
Bramley	-	-	-	1	75' x 30'
York Road	-	-	-	1	75' x 30'
School Baths <sup>753</sup>	-	-	-	3	-

**Table 11: Survey of Leeds Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**<sup>754</sup>

<sup>752.</sup> Acquired by Leeds Corporation in 1898.

<sup>753.</sup> These were owned and operated by the Local Education Authority, but included in Leeds returns to Campbell's survey.

<sup>754.</sup> Campbell, pp. A164-A175.

**Number of Swimmers using Leeds Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**

Bath Name & Location	Number of Swimmers		
	Male	Female	Total
Cookridge Street	9,476	6,686	16,162
Kirkstall Street	-	-	53,434
Union Street	32,442	0	32,442
Holbeck	-	-	42,307
Hunslet	46,877	486	47,363
Meanwood Road	-	-	45,941
Bramley	-	-	28,062
York Road	-	-	33,446
School Baths	-	-	35,676

**Table 12: Number of Swimmers using Leeds Municipal Pools, 1913-14.<sup>755</sup>**

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<sup>755</sup>. Campbell, pp. A164-A175.



### Survey of York Swimming Pools, 1913-14.

Bath Name & Location	Year Baths Opened	Number of Swimming Pools			Pool Dimensions
		Male Only	Female Only	Total	
Yearsley (Old) Baths	1860	1	-	1	300' x 20'
St. George's Baths	1880 <sup>756</sup>	-	-	2	75' x 25' 69' x 25'
Yearsley (New) Baths	1909	-	-	1	150' x 50'
Rowntree Factory Baths <sup>757</sup>	-	2	-	2	33' x 12' 22' x 12'
Marygate Swimming Baths <sup>758</sup>	-	-	-	-	-

**Table 13: Survey of York Swimming Pools, 1913-14.**<sup>759</sup>

### Number of Swimmers using York Swimming Pools, 1913-14.

Bath Name & Location	Number of Swimmers		
	Male	Female	Total
Yearsley (Old) Baths	-	N/A	-
St. George's Baths	33,469	20,512	53,981
Yearsley (New) Baths	78,250	23,920	102,170
Rowntree Factory Baths	-	N/A	-
Marygate Swimming Bath	-	-	-

**Table 14: Number of Swimmers using York Swimming Pools, 1913-14.**<sup>760</sup>

<sup>756.</sup> Reported that the facility was extended in 1883.

<sup>757.</sup> Private facility; in addition to the two pools for which dimensions were given Campbell also recorded that three smaller pools existed on the site.

<sup>758.</sup> Private facility; owned and operated by the Yorkshire Philosophical Society.

<sup>759.</sup> Campbell, pp. A176-A181.

<sup>760.</sup> Campbell, pp. A176-A181.

## Appendix 5: Swimming in Manchester, c. 1850-1918

**Municipal Swimming Pools in Manchester, 1856-1918**

Bath Name & Location	Date Baths Opened	Number of Swimming Pools			Pool Dimensions <sup>761</sup>
		Male Only <sup>762</sup>	Female Only	Total	
Mayfield Baths; Mayfield Street <sup>763</sup>	1856 <sup>764</sup>	-	1 <sup>765</sup>	3	63' x 24' 55' x 30' '? x ?' <sup>766</sup>
Leaf Street Baths; Leaf Street <sup>767</sup>	1860 <sup>768</sup>	-	1 <sup>769</sup>	3	75' x 25' 75' x 25' 70' x 28'

**Table 15: Municipal Swimming Pools in Manchester, 1856-1918.**

<sup>761.</sup> All pool dimensions derived from Campbell, pp. A50-A63, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>762.</sup> Swimming pools not designated female only were usually male only by default, but unless explicitly marked out as male only by the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee they have not been included in this column.

<sup>763.</sup> Purchased by Manchester Council, 29 September 1877; MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 48, Minutes of 28 August 1877.

<sup>764.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 11, fol.184, Minutes of 21 September 1904.

<sup>765.</sup> The women's pool was erected after Manchester Corporation purchased the baths and was opened at some point between 1 June 1881 and 1 January 1883.

<sup>766.</sup> Campbell only provides dimensions for two pools in the Mayfield Baths.

<sup>767.</sup> Purchased by Manchester Council, 29 September 1877; MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 48, Minutes of 28 August 1877.

<sup>768.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 11, fol.184, Minutes of 21 September 1904.

<sup>769.</sup> The women's pool was erected after Manchester Corporation purchased the baths and was opened at some point between 1 June 1881 and 1 January 1883.



Bath Name & Location	Date Baths Opened	Number of Swimming Pools			Pool Dimensions
		Male Only	Female Only	Total	
New Islington Baths; Henry Street, New Islington	30 April 1880 <sup>770</sup>	-	1 <sup>771</sup>	3	91' x 30' 108' x 30' 44' x 14'
Newton Heath Baths <sup>772</sup>	1881 <sup>773</sup>	-	-	2	45' x 24' 75' x 24'
Osborne Street; Osborne Street, Rochdale Road	14 June 1883 <sup>774</sup>	-	1	3	100' x 25' 117' x 28' 57' x 22'
Gorton Baths <sup>775</sup>	1890 <sup>776</sup>	-	-	2	75' x 25' 60' x 25'

**Table 15: Municipal Swimming Pools in Manchester, 1856-1918 (Cont').**

<sup>770</sup>. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 396, Minutes of 30 April 1880.

<sup>771</sup>. The women's pool at the site was not opened until 11 December 1880. MLSAS, *Proceedings of the Baths & Wash Houses Committee*, Vol. 1, p. 478, Minutes of 30 December 1880.

<sup>772</sup>. These baths were under the control of the Manchester Baths and Washhouses Committee at the latest by 25 March 1891. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 5, fol. 19, Leaflet of 1891 Bathing Season Prices.

<sup>773</sup>. Acquired by amalgamation with Newton Heath UDC. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 11, fol. 184, Minutes of 21 September 1904.

<sup>774</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 2, p. 302, Minutes of 14 June 1883.

<sup>775</sup>. These baths were under the control of the Manchester Baths and Washhouses Committee at the latest by 25 March 1891. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 5, fol. 19, Handbill of Hours of Entry and Charges for 1891, 25 March 1891.

<sup>776</sup>. Acquired by amalgamation with Gorton UDC in 1891. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 11, fol. 184, Minutes of 21 September 1904.

Bath Name & Location	Date Baths Opened	Number of Swimming Pools			Pool Dimensions
		Male Only	Female Only	Total	
Whitworth Baths; Openshaw	1890 <sup>777</sup>	-	-	2	59' x 24' 75' x 30'
Cheetham Baths; Cheetham Street	1894 <sup>778</sup>	-	-	2	51' x 26' 75' x 24'
Red Bank Baths	24 March 1896 <sup>779</sup>	-	-	1	35' x 17'
Moss Side Baths	1906 <sup>780</sup>	-	-	1	75' x 30'
Victoria Baths; High Street	1906 <sup>781</sup>	-	1	3	75' x 40' 75' x 35' 75' x 30'
Bradford Baths	26 August 1909 <sup>782</sup>	-	1	3	75' x 25' 75' x 30' 66' x 25'

**Table 15: Municipal Swimming Pools in Manchester, 1856-1918 (Cont').**

<sup>777</sup>. Acquired by amalgamation with Openshaw UDC. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 4, fols. 194-95, Minutes of 27 August 1890; and Vol. 11, fol. 184, Minutes of 21 September 1904.

<sup>778</sup>. Cheetham Baths were opened at the latest by 31 March 1894. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 6, fol. 140, Handbill of Hours of Entry and Charges for 1894, 31 March 1894; and Vol. 11, fol. 184, Minutes of 21 September 1904. Strangely, Campbell lists these baths as having been opened in 1904. Campbell, p. A50-A63.

<sup>779</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash-Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 7, fols. 186-87, Minutes of 19 March 1896.

<sup>780</sup>. These baths were operating under the control of the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee no later than 19 September 1906. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 12, fol. 152, Minutes of 19 September 1906.

<sup>781</sup>. These baths were opened no later than 19 September 1906. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 12, fol. 152, Minutes of 19 September 1906.

<sup>782</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 14, fol. 36, Minutes of 15 September 1909.



Bath Name & Location	Date Baths Opened	Number of Swimming Pools			Pool Dimensions
		Male Only	Female Only	Total	
Harpurhey Baths	27 October 1910 <sup>783</sup>	-	1	3	75' x 25' 75' x 30' 66' x 25'
Withington Baths	1913 <sup>784</sup>	-	1	2	75' x 25' 75' x 21'
Philip Park <sup>785</sup>	-	1	-	1	200' x 70'

**Table 15: Municipal Swimming Pools in Manchester, 1856-1918 (Cont').**

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<sup>783</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 14, fol. 166, Minutes of 21 September 1910.

<sup>784</sup> These baths were opened no later than 18 June 1913. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 16, fol. 43, Minutes of 18 June 1913.

<sup>785</sup>. All statistics related to the Philip Park Open Air Pool derived from Campbell, pp. A50-A63.

**Number of Swimmers using Manchester Pools, 1913-14.**

Bath Name & Location	Number of Swimmers		
	Male	Female	Total
Mayfield	74,099	8,958	83,057
Leaf Street	148,131	24,999	173,130
New Islington	70,082	21,700	91,782
Osborne Street	111,641	28,888	140,529
Gorton	82,901	13,447	96,348
Whitworth	67,394	13,702	81,096
Newton Heath	65,607	15,555	81,162
Red Bank	20,842	5,177	26,019
Cheetham	55,420	15,552	70,972
Moss Side	48,511	9,722	58,233
Victoria Baths	123,462	40,435	163,897
Bradford Baths	85,127	33,736	118,863
Harpurhey	83,765	32,733	116,498
Withington <sup>786</sup>	44,726	19,292	64,018
Philip Park <sup>787</sup>	45,000	0	45,000

**Table 16: Number of Swimmers using Manchester Municipal Pools, 1913-14.**<sup>788</sup>


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<sup>786.</sup> Reported to have been open for only 11 months during the 1913-14 season.

<sup>787.</sup> Open Air Bath, only open for the summer season to the end of September.

<sup>788.</sup> Campbell, pp. A50-A63.



### Students Swimming for Free in Manchester Pools, 1900-1918.

Year	Numbers of Students Swimming for Free		
	Male	Female	Total
1900 <sup>789</sup>	117,355	18,819	136,174
1901	-	-	-
1902	-	-	-
1903 <sup>790</sup>	-	-	72,327
1904 <sup>791</sup>	95,993 (98,232)	39,713 (39,713)	135,706 (137,945)
1905 <sup>792</sup>	108,578 (110,005)	50,889 (50,809)	159,467 (160,814)
1906 <sup>793</sup>	117,335	66,968	184,303
1907 <sup>794</sup>	94,459	44,562	139,021
1908 <sup>795</sup>	87,958	43,287	131,245

**Table 17: Overview of Students Swimming for Free in Manchester Pools, 1900-1918.**

<sup>789</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 10, fol. 74, Minutes of 19 February 1901.

<sup>790</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 11, fol. 176, Minutes of 17 August 1904.

<sup>791</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 12, fol. 46, Minutes of 20 September 1905. Alternate totals in round brackets derived from MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 13, fol. 19, Minutes of 21 August 1907.

<sup>792</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 12, fol. 46, Minutes of 20 September 1905. Alternate totals in round brackets derived from MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 13, fol. 19, Minutes of 21 August 1907.

<sup>793</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 13, fol. 19, Minutes of 21 August 1907.

<sup>794</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 13, fol. 19, Minutes of 21 August 1907.

<sup>795</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 13, fol. 147, Minutes of 19 August 1908.

1909 <sup>796</sup>	90,422	40,397	130,819
1910 <sup>797</sup>	83,407	44,377	127,784
1911 <sup>798</sup>	104,328	57,114	161,442
1912	-	-	-
1913	-	-	-
1914	-	-	-
1915 <sup>799</sup>	-	-	514,449
1916	-	-	-
1917	-	-	-
1918	-	-	-

**Table 17: Overview of Students Swimming for Free in Manchester Pools, 1900-1918 (Cont').**

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<sup>796.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 14, fol. 35, Minutes of 19 September 1909.

<sup>797.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 14, fol. 156, Minutes of 17 August 1910.

<sup>798.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fol. 36, Minutes of 16 August 1911.

<sup>799.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 17, fols. 24-25, Minutes of 20 October 1915. These figures are suspect, both because their method of presentation in the minutes is quite different from that used between 1900 and 1911, and because of the massive increase from the 1911 figures.



**Students Swimming for Free in Manchester Pools, 1900.**

Bath	Numbers of Students Swimming for Free		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Cheetham Baths	3,615	1,868	5,483
Gorton Baths	9,599	933	10,532
Leaf Street Baths <sup>800</sup>	20,205	0	20,205
Mayfield Baths	20 362	1,333	21,695
New Islington Baths	21,977	4,792	26,769
Newton Heath Baths	14,059	3,607	17,666
Osborne Street Baths	20,083	5,068	25,151
Red Bank Baths	930	305	1,235
Whitworth Baths	6,525	913	7,438

**Table 18: Number of Students Swimming for Free in Manchester Pools, 1900.**<sup>801</sup>

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<sup>800.</sup> Noted in the source that boys were using the women's pool for lessons, as the men's pool was under renovation.

<sup>801.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 10, fol. 74, Minutes of 19 February 1901.

### The Manchester Municipal Lifesaving Program, 1903-1911.

Year	Number of Successful Candidates			Number of Unsuccessful Candidates		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1903 - 1904 <sup>802</sup>	-	-	282	-	-	3
1904 - 1905	-	-	-	-	-	-
1905 - 1906 <sup>803</sup>	432	40	472	2	5	7
1906 - 1907 <sup>804</sup>	430	76	506	1	2	3
1907 - 1908 <sup>805</sup>	361	98	459	4	1	5
1908 - 1909	-	-	-	-	-	-
1909 - 1910 <sup>806</sup>	296	0	296	4	0	4
1910 - 1911 <sup>807</sup>	337	47	384	-	-	5

**Table 19: Overview of Candidate Outcomes for the Manchester Municipal Lifesaving Training Program, 1903-1911 Winter Seasons.**

<sup>802</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 11, fol. 125, Minutes of 17 February 1904.

<sup>803</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 12, fols. 129-130, Minutes of 20 June 1906.

<sup>804</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 12, fol. 242, Minutes of 18 June 1907.

<sup>805</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 13, fols. 113-14, Minutes of 20 May, 1908.

<sup>806</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fol. 37, Minutes of 16 August 1911.

<sup>807</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fol. 37. Minutes of 16 August 1911.



**The Manchester Municipal Lifesaving Training Program, 1905 -06.**

	Bronze Medallion	Proficiency Certificate	Elementary Certificate	Failure	<i>Candidate Total</i>
Male Adult	164	36	0	1	201
Male Youth	0	0	230	1	231
Female Adult	2	33	0	5	40
Female Youth	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Awards Total</i>	166	69	230	7	472

**Table 20: Detailed R.L.S.S. Award Statistics for Manchester Municipal Lifesaving Training Program, 1905-06 Winter Season.**<sup>808</sup>

**The Manchester Municipal Lifesaving Training Program, 1906-07.**

	Bronze Medallion	Proficiency Certificate	Elementary Certificate	Failure	<i>Candidate Total</i>
Male Adult	100	12	0	1	113
Male Youth	0	259	0	0	259
Female Adult	7	1	0	0	8
Female Youth	0	68	0	2	70
Police Class	12	0	0	0	12
School Pupils <sup>809</sup>	0	39	0	0	39
Telegraph <sup>810</sup>	7	1	0	0	8
<i>Awards Total</i>	126	380	0	3	509

**Table 21: Detailed R.L.S.S. Award Statistics for Manchester Municipal Lifesaving Training Program, 1906-07 Winter Season.**<sup>811</sup>

<sup>808.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 12, fols. 129-130, Minutes of 20 June 1906.

<sup>809.</sup> The gender of the students is unspecified in the minutes.

<sup>810.</sup> Boys of the Post Office Telegraph Messenger Service.

<sup>811.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 12, fol. 242. Minutes of 18 June 1907.

**The Manchester Municipal Lifesaving Training Program, 1907-08.**

	Bronze Medallion	Proficiency Certificate	Elementary Certificate	Failure	<i>Candidate Total</i>
Male Adult	76	16	0	0	92
Male Youth	0	238	0	4	242
Female Adult	44	28	0	1	73
Female Youth	0	26	0	0	26
Police Class	23	0	0	0	23
Telegraph <sup>812</sup>	8	0	0	0	8
<i>Awards Total</i>	151	308	0	5	464

**Table 22: Detailed R.L.S.S. Award Statistics for Manchester Municipal Lifesaving Training Program, 1907-08 Winter Season.**<sup>813</sup>

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<sup>812</sup> Boys of the Post Office Telegraph Messenger Service.

<sup>813</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 13, fols. 113-14. Minutes of 20 May, 1908.



**The Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee Survey of Swimming Instruction for Students, 1911.**

District	Free Student Swimming? <sup>814</sup>	Swimming Lessons? <sup>815</sup>	Additional Notes	Students Bathed; Amount of Funding? <sup>816</sup>
Birmingham	No	No	Education Committee pays ½ d per student and provides teachers.	64,375 students
Blackburn	Yes	No	Education Committee pay 10s per day for male and female teachers.	95,000 students
Bolton	Yes	No	Education Committee provides teachers.	Not in effect for 1910, in previous years 27,326 students.
Bradford	Yes	Yes	-	137,544 students
Bristol	No	No	Education Committee pays ½d per student and finds instructors.	83,975 students

**Table 23: Results from the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee Survey of Swimming Instruction for Students, 1911.**<sup>817</sup>

<sup>814</sup>. That is, does the Baths Committee of the district make provision for allowing students to swim for free?

<sup>815</sup>. That is, does the Baths Committee pay for swimming lessons for students?

<sup>816</sup>. That is, how many students swam in district pools in the previous year, and how much money was spent on the provision of swimming lessons either by the Baths Committee or another agency (usually the local Education Committee)?

<sup>817</sup>. MLSAS, *Baths and Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fol. 9, Minutes of 17 May 1911.

Burnley	Yes	No	Education Committee pays £200 per year.	43,152 students
Chester	Yes	No	Education Committee pays £50.00 to Baths Committee for instructors.	15,290 students
Derby	No	No	Education Committee pays half admission, students pay the other half.	-
Dunfermline	All costs paid by the Carnegie Trust			
Ealing	No	No	Education Committee pays 10s per week for instructors and 8s per 100 students.	-
Glasgow	Yes	No	Education Committee provides teachers.	55,046 students
Kettering	Yes	No	Education Committee provides teachers for female students.	-
Kings Norton	No	No	Education Committee pays 1d per student and finds instructors.	12,914 students
Leeds	No	No	Education Committee pays 1d per student for pool and instruction.	123,064 students £525

**Table 23: Results from the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee Survey of Swimming Instruction for Students, 1911. (Cont')**



Leicester	Yes	No	Education Committee pays an amount to help wash towels and provides teachers.	16,500 students
Liverpool	Yes	No	-	207,640 students
London - Camberwell	No	No	Education Committee pays 1d per student and provides teachers.	-
London - Fulham	No	No	Education Committee pays for bathing and teaching.	84,506 students £456 6s 5d.
London - Hackney	No	No	Education Committee pays.	£274 14s 11d
London - Hammersmith	No	No	Education Committee pays 1d per student and provides teachers.	33,839 students
London - Islington	No	No	Education Committee pays 1d per student.	164,069 students £683 12s 5d
London - Kensington	No	No	Education Committee pays 1d per student and provides teachers.	43,575 students

**Table 23: Results from the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee Survey of Swimming Instruction for Students, 1911. (Cont')**

London - Lambeth	No	No	Education Committee pay 1d per student during the day and 2d per student in the evenings.	51,494 students £218 4s 0d
London - Paddington	No	No	Education Committee provides teachers and pays 1d per student.	38,802 students £169 15s 7d
London - Southwark	Yes	No	Education Committee pay admission and provide teachers.	77,169 students £330 4s 5½d
London - Westminster	No	No	Education Committee finds teachers and pays 1d per student.	72,855 students £303 11s 3d
Manchester	Yes	Yes	Baths Committee pays for everything.	337,179 students by Educ Comm regulations. A total of 464 963 including school holiday provision.
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	No	No	Education Committee pays £300, plus the salaries of instructors; 30s for male teachers, 21s for female teachers.	78,917 students £300

**Table 23: Results from the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee Survey of Swimming Instruction for Students, 1911. (Cont')**



Nottingham	No	Yes	Education Committee pays the Baths Committee 5s for each female student taught how to swim. Male instructors receive 1s for each male student taught to swim. Education Committee also pays £2 1s 8d per thousand students swimming.	54,734 students £162 5s 7d
Salford	Yes	No	Education Committee pays for female and male teachers.	57,282 students
Westham	No	No	Education Committee pays 1d per student and pays for teachers.	76,650 students £319 7s 6d
Wandsworth	No	No	Female instructors paid by the Education Committee, 1d paid per student.	£246 18s 9d

**Table 23: Results from the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee Survey of Swimming Instruction for Students, 1911. (Cont')**

### Overview of the Manchester Survey on Mixed Bathing, 1912.

	Total
Number of Authorities Surveyed	121
Number of Authorities who Replied	108
Number of Authorities Allowing Mixed or Family Bathing <sup>818</sup>	28
Number of Authorities <u>Not</u> Allowing Mixed or Family Bathing	78
Number of Authorities with no swimming pool	1
Number of Authorities with only an open air swimming pool	1
Number of Baths Superintendents in favour of Mixed Bathing <sup>819</sup>	18
Number of Baths Superintendents opposed to Mixed Bathing <sup>820</sup>	26

**Table 24: Overview of the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee Survey on Mixed Bathing, 1912.**<sup>821</sup>

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<sup>818.</sup> Note, the figure given here, as derived from the minutes cited below, does not match with the number of authorities listed in Table 26, also taken directly from the official proceedings of the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee.

<sup>819.</sup> Of those who expressed an opinion.

<sup>820.</sup> Of those who expressed an opinion.

<sup>821.</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fol. 215. Minutes of 20 November 1912.



**Districts allowing Mixed or Family Bathing, 1912.**

Districts allowing Mixed Bathing	Districts allowing Family Bathing	Districts allowing "Club Only" Mixed Bathing	Districts with Private Pools allowing Mixed Bathing
Acton Battersea Birkenhead Cardiff Croydon Dover Ealing Hackney Hammersmith Holborn Hull Islington Kensington Leicester Paddington St. Pancras Sheffield Shoreditch Tunbridge Wells West Ham Wimbledon	Cheltenham Croydon Hammersmith Kensington Leicester Paddington Shoreditch Tunbridge Wells West Ham	Wallasey Wandsworth Woolwich	Blackpool Nottingham

**Table 25: Districts allowing Mixed or Family Bathing from the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee Survey on Mixed Bathing, 1912.**<sup>822</sup>

<sup>822</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fols. 215-16, Minutes of 20 November 1912.

Aberdeen	Edinburgh	Perth
Acton	Exeter	Polar
Altrincham	Forfar	Portsmouth
Ashton-in-Makerfield	Fulham	Preston
Atherton	Gateshead	Richmond
Bacup	Glasgow	Rochdale
Barnsley	Gloucester	Romford
Bath	Greenwich	Rugby
Batley	Hackney	Salford
Battersea	Halifax	Sheffield
Belfast	Hamilton	Shoreditch
Bermondsey	Hammersmith	Shrewsbury
Bethnal	Hampstead	South Shields
Birkenhead	Harrogate	Southampton
Birmingham	Holborn	Southport
Blackburn	Huddersfield	St. Helen's (Lancashire)
Blackpool	Hull	St. Marylebone
Bolton	Hyde	St. Pancras
Bootle	Ilford	Stafford
Bradford	Islington	Stepney
Brentford	Keighley	Stockport
Brighton	Kendal	Stretford
Bristol	Kensington	Sunderland
Burnley	Kingston-upon-Thames	Tunbridge Wells
Burslem	Lancaster	Wallasey
Camberwell	Leamington	Walsall
Cardiff	Leeds	Walthamstow
Carlisle	Leicester	Wandsworth
Chadderton	Lewisham	Warrington
Cheltenham	Leyton	West Ham
Chester	Liverpool	West Bromwich
Coventry	Luton	Westminster
Croydon	Maidstone	Weston-super-Mare
Deptford	Middlesborough	Wigan
Derby	Newcastle-under-Lyne	Wimbledon
Douglas	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Wolverhampton
Dover	Newport (Mon.)	Woolwich
Dublin	Nottingham	Worthing
Dundee	Oldham	York
Ealing	Paddington	
Eastbourne	Paisley	

**Table 26: Districts contacted by the Baths Superintendent for the Manchester Baths & Washhouses Committee Survey on Mixed Bathing, 1912.**<sup>823</sup>

<sup>823</sup> MLSAS, *Baths & Wash Houses Committee Minutes*, Vol. 15, fols. 215-16, Minutes of 20 November 1912.



## Appendix 6: Swimming Pools at Public Schools, c.1810 - 2001

School Name	Location	Year Pool Opened
Aldenham School	Elstree	1878
Ampleforth College	Ampleforth	c.1875
Bedford School	Bedford	c. 1930s
Berkhamsted Collegiate School	Berkhamsted	1892
Blundell's School	Tiverton	c. 1850
Bolton Boy's School	Bolton	1920
Bolton Girl's School	Bolton	c. 1933
Bootham School	York	1914
Bradford Grammar School	Bradford	1948
Brentwood School	Brentwood	1863-64
Bristol Grammar School	Bristol	No Pool
Charterhouse School	Godalming	1883
Cheltenham College	Cheltenham	1880
Chigwell School	Chigwell	1885
Christ's Hospital School	Horsham	Unknown
City of London School	London	1937
Clifton College	Clifton	1867
Douai School	Reading	1936
Durham School	Durham	1883
Eton College	Eton	c. 1950s

**Table 27: The provision of swimming pools at Public Schools, c. 1810 - 2001.**<sup>824</sup>

<sup>824</sup> Visits to the archives of the following schools were undertaken; Ampleforth, Bootham, Charterhouse, Eton, Harrow, Merchant Taylors', The Mount, Rugby, St. Paul's, St. Peter's, and Shrewsbury. All other information for this table was derived from correspondence with the archivists or librarians of the schools concerned. Access to the correspondence from these schools is available upon request.

School Name	Location	Year Pool Opened
Forest School	Snaresbrook	c. 1860s
George Watson's College	Edinburgh	1930
Giggleswick School	Settle	1877
Glenalmond	Perth	c. 1960s
Haileybury	Haileybury	1863-64
Harrow School	Harrow	1810-11
Highgate School	London	1952
Hulme Grammar School	Oldham	1972-73
Hurstpierpoint School	Hassocks	1858
Ipswich School	Ipswich	1884
King Edward VI School	Birmingham	1956
King's College School	London	Unknown
King's School	Canterbury	Unknown
King's School	Rochester	1928
Kingston Grammar School	Kingston-upon-Thames	No Pool
Leeds Grammar School	Leeds	1928
Liverpool College	Liverpool	c. 1920s
Loughborough Grammar School	Loughborough	1929
Magdalen College School	Oxford	No Pool
Malvern Girls' College	Great Malvern	1919
Manchester Grammar School	Manchester	c. 1900s
Marlborough College	Marlborough	c. 1990
Merchant Taylors' School	Northwood	1933
Merchiston Castle School	Edinburgh	1961
Mount School	York	1965
Nottingham High School	Nottingham	1963

**Table 27: The provision of swimming pools at Public Schools, c. 1810 - 2001 (Cont').**



School Name	Location	Year Pool Opened
Oakham School	Oakham	1884
Oratory School	Reading	1961
Perse School	Cambridge	No Pool
Portsmouth Grammar School	Portsmouth	1965
Radley College	Abingdon	1961
Repton School	Repton	Unknown
Royal Grammar School	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Unknown
Rugby School	Rugby	1876
Sedbergh School	Sedbergh	1885
Sherborne School	Sherborne	1873
Shrewsbury School	Shrewsbury	1886
St. Paul's School	London	1900
St. Peter's School	York	1922
Stonyhurst	Stonyhurst	1880
Tonbridge School	Tonbridge	1897
Westminster School	London	No Pool
Winchester College	Winchester	1969
Wolverhampton Grammar School	Wolverhampton	No Pool

**Table 27: The provision of swimming pools at Public Schools, c. 1810 - 2001 (Cont').**

## Appendix 7: Drowning Statistics for England and Wales, 1860 - 1900

**Drowning Statistics for England and Wales, 1860-1900.**

Year	Total Accidental Drownings	Total Suicide Drownings	Male Drownings		Female Drownings	
			Accidental	Suicide	Accidental	Suicide
1860	2,264	219	1,908	128	356	91
1861	2,351	225	1,994	115	357	110
1862	2,463	204	2,051	112	412	92
1863	2,488	245	2,088	132	400	113
1864	2,714	205	2,250	123	464	82
1865	2,823	230	2,427	121	396	109
1866	2,786	207	2,386	128	400	79
1867	2,676	228	2,259	134	417	94
1868	2,924	291	2,498	169	426	122
1869	2,696	292	2,302	160	394	132
1870	2,504	297	2,113	182	391	115
1871	2,605	317	2,175	173	430	144
1872	3,010	335	2,569	186	441	149
1873	2,695	330	2,235	192	460	138
1874	2,611	280	2,197	179	414	101
1875	3,199	333	2,692	186	507	147
1876	2,987	383	2,556	226	431	157
1877	3,012	374	2,509	224	503	150
1878	3,659	369	2,833	209	826	160
1879	2,806	405	2,368	258	438	147
1880	2,997	406	2,485	261	512	145
1881	2,979	443	2,485	271	494	172

**Table 28: Drowning Statistics for England and Wales, 1860-1900.**



Year	Total Accidental Drownings	Total Suicide Drownings	Male Drownings		Female Drownings	
			Accidental	Suicide	Accidental	Suicide
1882	2,862	419	2,379	240	483	179
1883	2,782	447	2,326	261	456	186
1884	2,602	446	2,190	289	412	157
1885	2,449	382	2,018	239	431	143
1886	2,805	514	2,395	309	410	205
1887	2,666	500	2,231	311	435	189
1888	2,388	453	1,959	293	429	160
1889	2,560	503	2,168	392	309	194
1890	2,494	504	2,074	304	420	200
1891	2,708	559	2,273	348	435	211
1892	2,637	584	2,231	343	406	241
1893	2,747	581	2,343	363	404	218
1894	2,589	603	2,172	385	417	218
1895	2,797	566	2,384	355	413	211
1896	2,415	554	2,015	347	400	207
1897	2,750	625	2,277	396	473	229
1898	2,548	661	2,119	433	429	228
1899	2,850	559	2,389	346	461	213
1900	2,652	695	2,231	425	421	270

**Table 28: Drowning Statistics for England and Wales, 1860-1900 (Cont').**<sup>825</sup>

<sup>825</sup> Royal Humane Society, *Annual Report for 1902*, (London, RHS, 1903), p. 226.

## Appendix 8: R.L.S.S. Awards Statistics, 1892 - 1931

### Annual Summary of R.L.S.S. Awards Issued, 1892 - 1931.

Year	Total Number of Lifesaving Awards Issued <sup>826</sup>
1892	86
1893	207
1894	334
1895	629
1896	802
1897	1,174 <sup>827</sup>
1898	1,615 <sup>828</sup> (1,435) <sup>829</sup>
1899	1,689 <sup>830</sup> (1,615) <sup>831</sup>
1900	1,431 <sup>832</sup> (1,689) <sup>833</sup>

**Table 29: Annual Summary of R.L.S.S. Awards Issued, 1892 - 1931.**

<sup>826</sup>. In order to receive a certificate or medallion from the Society each candidate had to undertake an examination. As each examination included a swimming component these figures can be taken to represent, at least in a rough format, broad swimming ability.

<sup>827</sup>. All of the figures for 1892 to 1897 inclusive are derived from: L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1896-97 and Prospectus for 1898*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1898), p. 14.

<sup>828</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1897-98 and Prospectus for 1899*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1899), p. 15.

<sup>829</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee, 1902-1903 and Prospectus for 1904*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1904), p. 14.

<sup>830</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1898-99 and Prospectus for 1900*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1900), p. 7.

<sup>831</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report 1902-03*, p. 14.

<sup>832</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1899-1900 and Prospectus for 1901*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1901), p. 7.

<sup>833</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report 1902-03*, p. 14.



1901	2,205 <sup>834</sup> (2,029) <sup>835</sup>
1902	1,993 <sup>836</sup> (2,205) <sup>837</sup>
1903	3,519 <sup>838</sup>
1904	4,177 <sup>839</sup>
1905	5,140 <sup>840</sup>
1906	6,226 <sup>841</sup>
1907	7,169 <sup>842</sup>
1908	-
1909	-
1910	-
1911	12,753 <sup>843</sup>
1912	-

**Table 29: Annual Summary of R.L.S.S. Awards Issued, 1892 - 1931 (Cont').**

<sup>834</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1900-1901 and Prospectus for 1902*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1902), pp. 13-14.

<sup>835</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report 1902-03*, p. 14.

<sup>836</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee 1901-1902 and Prospectus for 1903*, (London: Life Saving Society, 1903), p. 12.

<sup>837</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report 1902-03*, p. 14.

<sup>838</sup>. L.S.S., *Annual Report 1902-03*, p. 14.

<sup>839</sup>. R.L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee for 1904 and Prospectus for 1905*, (London: Royal Life Saving Society, 1905), p. 15.

<sup>840</sup>. R.L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee for 1905 and Prospectus for 1906*, (London: Royal Life Saving Society, 1906), p. 17.

<sup>841</sup>. R.L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee for 1906 and Prospectus for 1907*, (London: Royal Life Saving Society, 1907), pp. 15-16.

<sup>842</sup>. R.L.S.S., *Annual Report of the Central Executive Committee for 1907 and Prospectus for 1908*, (London: Royal Life Saving Society, 1908), pp. 13-14.

<sup>843</sup>. R.L.S.S., *Handbook of Instruction*, 19th ed., (London: Royal Life Saving Society, 1932), p. 164.

1913	17,590 <sup>+844</sup>
1914	15,557 <sup>845</sup>
1915	-
1916	11,074 <sup>846</sup>
1917	-
1918	-
1919	-
1920	-
1921	20,689 <sup>847</sup>
1922	-
1923	-
1924	-
1925	-
1926	37,985 <sup>848</sup>
1927	-
1928	-
1929	-
1930	-
1931	74,325 <sup>849</sup>

**Table 29: Annual Summary of R.L.S.S. Awards Issued, 1892 - 1931 (Cont').**

<sup>844.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1914), p. 13. The report on awards indicated that the number of awards issued during 1913 was “over” 17 590.

<sup>845.</sup> *The Swimming Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 9 (February 1915), p. 2.

<sup>846.</sup> R.L.S.S., *Handbook of Instruction*, 19th ed., p. 164.

<sup>847.</sup> R.L.S.S., *Handbook of Instruction*, 19th ed., p. 164

<sup>848.</sup> R.L.S.S., *Handbook of Instruction*, 19th ed., p. 164.

<sup>849.</sup> R.L.S.S., *Handbook of Instruction*, 19th ed., p. 164.



## Appendix 9: Baths and Washhouse Legislation, 1846 - 1918

### The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846.<sup>850</sup>

“An Act to encourage the Establishment of public Baths and Wash-houses. [26th August 1846.]

WHEREAS it is desirable for the Health, Comfort, and Welfare of the Inhabitants of Towns and populous Districts to encourage the Establishment therein of public Baths and Wash-houses and ‘open Bathing Places:’ Be it enacted by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That this Act may be adopted for any incorporated Borough in *England* which is regulated under an Act passed in the Sixth Year of the Reign of His late Majesty, to provide for the Regulation of Municipal Corporations, or any Charter granted in pursuance of the said Act, or any Act passed for the Amendment thereof, and also, with the Approval of One of Her Majesty’s Principal Secretaries of State, for any Parish in *England* not within any such incorporated Borough.

II. And be it enacted, That in this Act the following words and Expressions shall have the several Meanings hereby assigned to them, unless there be something in the Subject or Context repugnant to such Construction; that is to say,  
‘Parish’ shall mean every Place having separate Overseers of the Poor, and separately maintaining its own Poor:

‘Borough’ shall mean City, Borough, Port, Cinque Port, or Town Corporate:

‘Rate-payers’ shall mean such of the Persons for the Time being assessed to and paying Rates for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish as for the Time being shall be duly qualified to vote for the Election of Overseers for the Parish:

‘Churchwardens’ shall mean also Chapelwardens, or other Persons discharging the Duties of Churchwardens:

‘Overseers’ shall mean also any Persons authorized and required to make and collect or cause to be collected the Rate for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish, and acting instead of Overseers of the Poor:

‘Vestry’ shall mean the Inhabitants of the Parish lawfully assembled in Vestry, or for any of the Purposes for which Vestries are holden [sic], except in those Parishes in which there is a Select Vestry elected under an Act passed in the Fifty-ninth Year of the Reign of King *George* the Third, intituled [sic] *An Act to amend the Laws for the Relief of the Poor*, or elected under an Act passed in the Second Year of the Reign of His late Majesty, intituled [sic] *An Act for the better Regulation of Vestries, and for the Appointment of Auditors of Accounts, in certain Parishes of England and Wales*, or elected under the Provisions of any local Act of Parliament for the Government of any Parish by Vestries, in which Parishes it shall mean such Select Vestry:

‘Commissioners’ shall mean the Commissioners appointed in accordance with this

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<sup>850</sup>. 9 & 10 Vict., c. 74. All italics in the original.



Act for any Parish, and for the Time being in Office and acting as such Commissioners:

‘Clerk’ shall mean, as regards an incorporated Borough, the Town Clerk of such Borough; and, as regards a Parish, the Clerk appointed pursuant to this Act by the Commissioners:

‘Justice’ shall mean Justice of the Peace for the County, Riding, Division, Liberty, Borough, or Place where the Matter requiring the Cognizance of Justices shall arise: ‘Lands’ shall mean Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments, of whatsoever Nature or Tenure:

Words importing the Masculine Gender shall include the Feminine:

Words of the Plural Number shall include the Singular, and Words of the Singular Number shall include the Plural.

III. And be it enacted, That the Council of any such Borough as aforesaid may, if they think fit, determine that this Act shall be adopted for such Borough, and then and in such Case such of the Provisions of this Act as are applicable in that Behalf shall henceforth take effect and come into operation in such Borough, and this Act shall be carried into execution in such Borough in accordance with such Provisions and the Laws for the Time being in force relating to the Municipal Corporation of such Borough.

IV. And be it enacted, That the Expences [sic] of carrying this Act into execution in any such Borough in which the Council shall have resolved to adopt this Act for their Borough shall be chargeable upon and paid out of the Borough Fund, and for that Purpose the Council may levy with and as Part of the Borough Rate, or by a separate Rate to be assessed, levied, paid, and recovered in like Manner and with like Powers and Remedies in all respects as the Borough Rate, such Sums of Money as shall be from Time to Time necessary for defraying such Expences [sic], and shall apply the same accordingly as if the Expence [sic] of carrying this Act into execution were an Expence [sic] necessarily incurred in carrying into effect the Provisions of the said Act of the Sixth Year of the Reign of His late Majesty; and the Income arising from the Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places in any Borough shall be paid to the Credit of the Borough Fund thereof, and the Council shall keep distinct Accounts of their Receipts, Payments, Credits, and Liabilities, with reference to the Execution of this Act, to be called ‘The public Baths and Wash-houses Account.’

V. And be it enacted, That upon the Requisition in Writing of Ten or more Rate-payers of any such Parish as aforesaid, not being within any such incorporated Borough, the Churchwardens or other Persons to whom it belongs to convene Meetings of the Vestry in such Parish shall convene a Meeting of the Vestry for the special Purpose of determining whether this Act shall be adopted for the Parish, after public Notice of such Vestry, and the Place and Hour of holding the same, and the special Purpose thereof, given in the usual Manner in which Notice of the Meetings of the Vestry is given at least Seven Days before the Day to be appointed for holding such Vestry; and if thereupon it shall be resolved by the Vestry that this Act ought to be adopted for the Parish, a Copy of such Resolution extracted from the Minutes of the Vestry, and signed by the Chairman, shall be sent to One of Her Majesty’s Principal Secretaries of State for his Approval, and as soon as such Approval shall have been signified in Writing under the Hand of any such Secretary of State, such



of the Provisions of this Act as are applicable in that Behalf shall henceforth take effect and come into operation in the Parish: Provided always, that no such Resolution of the Vestry shall be deemed to be carried unless at least Two Thirds of the Number of Votes given on the Question according to the usual Manner of voting at such Vestry shall have been given for such Resolution.

VI. And be it enacted, That in such Case the Vestry shall appoint not less than Three nor more than Seven Persons, being Rate-payers of the Parish, Commissioners for carrying this Act into execution in the Parish, of whom One Third, or as nearly as may be One Third (to be determined among themselves), shall go out of Office yearly, but shall be eligible for immediate Re-appointment.

VII. And be it enacted, That any Commissioner may at any Time resign his Office as a Commissioner on giving Seven Days Notice in Writing of his Intention to resign to the Clerk, and also to the Churchwardens.

VIII. And be it enacted, That any Vacancies in the Commissionership may be filled up by the Vestry when and as the Vestry shall think fit.

IX. And be it enacted, That the Commissioners shall meet at least once in every Calender Month at their Office, or some other convenient Place previously publicly notified.

X. And be it enacted, That the Commissioners may meet at such other Time as at any previous Meeting shall be determined upon, and it shall be at all Times competent for any One Commissioner, by Writing under his Hand, to summon, with at least Forty-eight Hours Notice, the Commissioners for any special Purpose, therein named, and to meet at such Times as shall be therein named.

XI. And be it enacted, That at all Meetings of the Commissioners any Number not less than One Third of the whole Number when more than Three Commissioners shall have been appointed, and when only Three Commissioners shall have been appointed then any Number not less than Two Commissioners, shall be a sufficient Number for transacting Business, and for exercising all the Powers of the Commissioners.

XII. And be it enacted, That the Commissioners shall appoint, and may remove at Pleasure, a Clerk and such other Officers and Servants as shall be necessary for effecting the Purposes of this Act, and, with the Approval of the Vestry, may appoint reasonable Salaries, Wages, and Allowances for such Clerks, Officers, and Servants, and, when necessary, may hire and rent a sufficient Office for holding their Meetings and transacting their Business, and may agree for and pay a reasonable Rent for such Office.

XIII. And be it enacted, That all Orders and Proceedings of the Commissioners shall be entered in Books to be kept by them for that Purpose, and shall be signed by the Commissioners, or any Two of them; and all such Orders and Proceedings so entered and purporting to be so signed, shall be deemed to be original Orders and Proceedings; and such Books may be produced and read as Evidence of all such Orders and Proceedings, upon any Appeal, Trial, Information, or other Proceedings, civil or criminal, and in any Court of Law or Equity whatsoever.

XIV. And be it enacted, That the Commissioners shall provide and keep Books in which shall be entered true and regular Accounts of all Sums of Money received and paid for or on account of the Purposes of this Act in the Parish, and of all Liabilities incurred by them for such Purposes, and of the several Purposes for which such



Sums of Money shall have been paid and such Liabilities shall have been incurred; and such Books shall at all reasonable Times be open to the Examination of every Commissioner, Churchwarden, Overseer, and Rate-payer, without Fee or Reward, and they respectively may take Copies of or Extracts from such Books or any Part thereof, without paying for the same; and in case the Commissioners, or any one of them, or any of their Officers or Servants having the Custody of the said Books, being thereunto [sic] reasonably requested, shall refuse to permit or shall not permit any Churchwarden, Overseer, or Rate-payer to examine the same, or take any such Copy or Extract, every Commissioner, Officer, or Servant so offending shall for every such Offence [sic] forfeit any Sum not exceeding Five Pounds.

XV. And be it enacted, That the Vestry shall yearly appoint Two Persons, not being Commissioners, to be Auditors of the Accounts of the Commissioners, and at such Time in the Month of *March* in every Year after the Adoption of this Act for the Parish as the Vestry shall appoint the Commissioners shall produce to the Auditors their Accounts, with sufficient Vouchers for all Monies received and paid, and the Auditors shall examine such Accounts and Vouchers, and report thereon to the Vestry.

XVI. And be it enacted, That the Expenses of carrying this Act into execution in any Parish not within any such incorporated Borough to such Amount as shall be from Time to Time sanctioned by the Vestry shall be chargeable upon and paid out of the Monies to be raised or applicable for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish.

XVII. And be it enacted, That for defraying the Expenses which shall have been or shall be incurred in carrying this Act into execution in the Parish the Vestry may and shall from Time to Time order the Overseers to levy with and as Part of the Rate for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish such Sums as the Vestry shall deem necessary, and the Amount thereof shall accordingly be assessed, levied, paid, and recovered in like Manner, and with the like Powers and Remedies in all respects, as such Rate, and shall be paid by the Overseers, according to the Order of the Vestry, to such Person as shall be appointed by the Commissioners to receive the same, and his Receipt shall be a sufficient Discharge to the Overseers for the same, and shall be allowed accordingly in passing their Accounts.

XVIII. And be it enacted, That the Money raised for defraying the Expences [sic] of carrying this Act into execution, and the Income arising from the Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places in the Parish, shall be applied by the Commissioners in or toward defraying the Expences [sic] of carrying this Act into execution in the Parish; and whenever, after Repayment of all Monies borrowed for the Purpose of carrying this Act into execution in the Parish, and the Interest thereof, and after satisfying all the Liabilities of the Commissioners with reference to the Execution of this Act in the Parish, and providing such a Balance as shall be deemed by the Commissioners sufficient to meet their probable Liabilities during the next Year, there shall be at the Time if holding the Meeting of the Vestry at which the yearly Report of the Auditors shall be produced any surplus Money at the Disposal of the Commissioners, they shall pay the same to the Overseers in aid of the Rate for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish.

XIX. And be it enacted, That the Vestries of any Two or more neighbouring Parishes which shall have respectively adopted this Act may concur in carrying this Act into execution in such Parishes in such Manner not inconsistent with the Provisions of



this Act, and for such Time, as they shall mutually agree; and for that Purpose it may, with the Approval of such Secretary of State, be agreed on between such Vestries that any public Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places shall be erected and made in any One of such Parishes, to be vested in the Commissioners thereof, and that the Expences [sic] of carrying this Act into execution with reference to the same shall be borne by such Parishes in such Proportions as such Vestries shall mutually agree, and the Proportion for each of such Parishes of such Expences [sic] shall be chargeable upon and paid out of the Monies to be raised for the Relief of the Poor of the same respective Parish accordingly; and, according and subject to the Terms which shall have been so agreed on, the Commissioners appointed for each of such Parishes shall, in the Management of the said Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places, form One Body of Commissioners, and shall act accordingly in the Execution of this Act, and the Accounts and Vouchers of such Commissioners shall be examined and reported on by the Auditors of each of such Parishes; and the surplus Money at the Disposal as aforesaid of such Commissioners shall be paid to the Overseers of such Parishes respectively in the same Proportions as those in which such Parishes shall be liable to such Expences [sic].

XX. And for the more easy Execution of the Purposes of this Act, be it enacted, That the Commissioners of every such Parish shall be a Body Corporate, with perpetual Successions, which shall not be deemed to be interrupted by any partial or total Vacancy from Time to Time in their Office, by the Name of ‘The Commissioners for public Baths and Wash-houses in the Parish of (        ) in the County of (        ),’ and by that Name may sue and be sued in all Courts, and before all Justices and others, and may have and use a Common Seal, and by that Name may take, hold, and convey any Lands vested in them for the Purposes of this Act.

XXI. And be it enacted, That for carrying this Act into execution in any Borough or Parish respectively, the Council, with the Approval of the Commissioners of Her Majesty’s Treasury, and the Commissioners, with the Sanction of the Vestry, and also with the Approval of the Commissioners of Her Majesty’s Treasury, may from Time to Time borrow at Interest, on the Security of a Mortgage, as the Case may be, of the Borough Fund, or of the Rates for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish, the Money which may be by them respectively required, and shall apply the Monies so borrowed accordingly.

XXII. And be it enacted, That the Commissioners for carrying into execution an Act passed in the Second Session of the Fifth Year of the Reign of Her Majesty, intituled [sic] *An Act to authorize the Advance of Money out of the Consolidated Fund to a limited Amount for carrying on Public Works and Fisheries and Employment of the Poor, and to amend the Acts authorizing the Issue of Exchequer Bills for the like Purposes*, may from Time to Time make to the Council of any such Borough, or Commissioners of any such Parish respectively, for the Purposes of this Act, any Loan under the Provisions of the recited Act or the several Acts therein recited or referred to, upon Security of the Borough Fund, or the Rates for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish, as the Case may be.

XXIII. And be it enacted, That the Provisions of the Companies Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845, with respect to the borrowing of Money by any Company on Mortgage, and the Provisions of the same Act with respect to the Accountability of the Officers of the Company, and the Provisions of the same Act with respect to



the making of Bye Laws, subject to the Provision herein-after contained, and the Provisions of the same Act with respect to the Recovery of Damages not specially provided for, and Penalties, so far as such Provisions may respectively be applicable to the Purposes of this Act, shall be respectively incorporated with this Act; and the Expressions in such Provisions applicable to the Company and the Directors shall apply as regards a Borough to the Council, and as regards a Parish to the Commissioners; and all Deeds and Writings which under such Provisions are required or directed to be made or executed under the Common Seal of the Company shall in the Application of such Provisions to this Act be deemed to be required or directed to be made or executed as regards a Borough under the Common Seal of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, and as regards a Parish under the Common Seal of the Commissioners; and so much of such Provisions as are applicable to the 'Secretary of the Company' shall apply to the Clerk; and in such of the said Provisions as relate to the Inspection of Accounts as regards a Borough the Burgesses, and as regards a Parish the Rate-payers, shall have the Privileges of Shareholders.

XXIV. And be it enacted, That in any such Borough the Council, with the Approval of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, may from Time to Time appropriate for the Purposes of this Act in the Borough any Lands vested in the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses; and in any such Parish the Commissioners appointed under this Act, with the Approval of the Vestry and of the Guardians of the Poor of the Parish (if any), and of the Poor Law Commissioners for *England* and *Wales*, may from Time to Time appropriate for the Purposes of this Act in the Parish any Lands vested in such Guardians, or in the Churchwardens, or in the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Parish, or in any Feoffees [sic], Trustees, or others, for the general Benefit of the Parish; and in any such Parish the Commissioners, with the Approval of the Vestry, and in any such Borough the Council, may from Time to Time contract for the purchasing or renting of any Lands necessary for the Purposes of this Act, and the Property therein shall be vested in the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses in the Case of a Borough, or in the Commissioners in the Case of a Parish.

XXV. And be it enacted, That the Council and Commissioners respectively may from Time to Time, on any Lands so appropriated, purchased, or rented, or contracted so to be respectively, erect any Buildings suitable for public Baths and Wash-houses, and as to such Wash-houses either with or without open Drying Grounds, and make any open Bathing Places, and convert any Buildings into public Baths and Wash-houses, and may from Time to Time alter, enlarge, repair, and improve the same respectively, and fit up, furnish, and supply the same respectively with all requisite Furniture, Fittings, and Conveniences.

XXVI. And be it enacted, That the Council and Commissioners respectively may from Time to Time enter into any Contract with any Persons or Companies for building and making, and for altering, enlarging, repairing, and improving, such public Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places, and for supplying the same respectively with Water, and for lighting the same respectively, and for fitting up the same respectively, and for furnishing any Materials and Things, and for executing and doing any other Works and Things necessary for the Purposes of this Act; which Contracts respectively shall specify the several Works and Things to be executed,



furnished, and done, and the Prices to be paid for the same, and the Times when the Works and Things are to be executed, furnished, and done, and the Penalties to be suffered in Cases of Nonperformance; and all such Contracts, or true Copies thereof, shall be entered in Books to be kept for that Purpose: Provided always, that no Contract above the Value or Sum of One hundred Pounds shall be entered into by the Council or the Commissioners, for the Purposes of this Act, unless previous to the making thereof Fourteen Days Notice shall be given in One or more of the public Newspapers published in the County in which the Borough or Parish shall be situated, expressing the Intention of entering into such Contract, in order that any Person willing to undertake the same may make Proposals for that Purpose, to be offered to the Council or Commissioners at a certain Time and Place in such Notice to be mentioned, but it shall not be incumbent on the Council or Commissioners to contract with the Person offering the lowest Price.

XXVII. And be it enacted, That the Council of any Borough, and the Commissioners, with the Approval of the Vestry of any such Parish, may, if they shall think fit, contract for the Purchase or Lease of any Baths and Wash-houses already or hereafter to be built and provided in any such Borough or Parish, and appropriate the same to the Purposes of this Act, with such Additions or Alterations as they shall respectively deem necessary; and the Trustees of any public Baths and Wash-houses which have been already or may hereafter be built or provided in any such Borough or Parish by private Subscriptions or otherwise may, with the Consent of the Council of any such Borough, or with the Consent of the Commissioners, and the Approval of the Vestry of any such Parish, and with the Consent of a Majority of the Committee or other Persons by whom they were appointed Trustees, sell or lease the said Baths and Wash-houses to the said Council or Commissioners respectively, or make over to them the Management of such Baths and Wash-houses; and in all such Cases the Baths and Wash-houses so purchase or leased, or of which the Management has been so made over, shall be deemed to be within the Provisions of this Act as fully as if they had been built or provided by the said Council or Commissioners; and the Property therein shall be vested in the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses in the Case of a Borough, or in the Commissioners in the Case of a Parish.

XXVIII. And be it enacted, That any Commissioners of Waterworks, Trustees of Waterworks, Water Companies, Canal Companies, Gas Companies, and other Corporations, Bodies, and Persons having the Management of any Waterworks, Canals, Reservoirs, Wells, Springs, and Streams of Water, and Gas Works respectively, may in their Discretion grant and furnish Supplies of Water or Gas for such public Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places either without Charge or on such other favourable Terms as they shall think fit.

XXIX. And be it enacted, That nothing in this Act contained shall render any Member of the Council of any Borough, or any Commissioner, personally, or any of their Lands, Goods, Chattels, or Monies (other than such Lands, Goods, Chattels, or Monies as may be vested in or under the Management or Control of the Council or Commissioners respectively in pursuance of this Act), liable to the Payment of any Sum of Money as or by way of Compensation or Satisfaction for or in respect of any thing done or suffered in due pursuance of this Act.

XXX. And be it enacted, That every Person who shall feel aggrieved by any Bye



Law, Order, Direction, or Appointment of or by the Council or Commissioners shall have the like Power of Appeal to the General Quarter Sessions as under the Provisions of the Companies Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845, incorporated with this Act, he might have if feeling aggrieved by any Determination of any Justice with respect to any Penalty.

XXXI. And be it enacted, That the Council, with the Approval of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, and the Commissioners appointed under this Act, with the Approval of the Vestry, and of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury respectively, may from Time to Time make Sale and dispose of any Lands vested in the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, or in the Commissioners respectively for the Purposes of this Act, and apply the Proceeds in or towards the Purchase of other Lands better adapted for such Purposes, and may, with the like Approval, exchange any Lands so vested, and either with or without paying or receiving any Money for Equality of Exchange, for any other Lands better adapted for such Purposes, and the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, or the Commissioners, may convey the Lands so sold or exchanged accordingly.

XXXII. And be it enacted, That whenever any public baths or Wash-houses or open Bathing Places which shall have been for Seven Years or upwards established under the Authority of this Act shall be determined by the Council or by the Vestry, in accordance with a previous Recommendation of the Commissioners, to be unnecessary or too expensive to be kept up, the Council or Commissioners, with the Approval of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, may sell the same for the best Price that can reasonably be obtained for the same, and the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, or the Commissioners, shall convey the same accordingly; and the Purchase Money shall be paid to such Person as the Council or Commissioners shall appoint, and his Receipt shall be a sufficient Discharge for the same; and the net Proceeds of such Sale shall be paid to the Credit of the Borough Fund, or of the Rate for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish.

XXXIII. And be it enacted, That the general Management, Regulation, and Control of the public Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places established under this Act shall, subject to the Provisions of this Act, be as to any Borough vested in and exercised by the Council, and as to any Parish vested in and exercised by the Commissioners.

XXXIV. And be it enacted, That the Bye Laws which the Council and Commissioners respectively may from Time to Time make, alter, repeal, and enforce shall include such Bye Laws for the Management, Use, and Regulation of the public Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places, and of the Persons resorting thereto respectively, and for determining from Time to Time the Charges for the Use of such Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places respectively, as the Council and Commissioners respectively shall think fit, and they respectively may appoint any Penalty not exceeding Five Pounds for any and every Breach, whether by their Officers or Servants, or by other Persons, of any Bye Law made by them respectively; and such Bye Laws shall make sufficient Provision for the several Purposes respectively expressed in the Schedule (A.) to this Act: Provided always, that no Bye Law made under the Authority of this Act shall be of any legal Force until the same shall have received the Approval of One of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.



XXXV. And be it enacted, That a printed Copy or sufficient Abstract of the Bye Laws relating to the Use of the Baths and open Bathing Places respectively shall be put up in every Bath Room and open Bathing Place respectively; and a printed Copy or sufficient Abstract of the Bye Laws relating to the Use of the Wash-houses shall be put up in some convenient Place near every Washing Tub or Trough, or every Pair of Washing Tubs or Troughs, in every Wash-house.

XXXVI. And be it enacted, That the Number of Baths for the labouring Classes in any Building or Buildings under the Management of the same Council or Commissioners shall not be less than Twice the Number of the Baths of any higher Class if but One, or of all the baths of any higher Classes if more than One in the same Building or Buildings.

XXXVII. And be it enacted, That the Council and the Commissioners respectively may from Time to Time make such reasonable Charges for the Use of the Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places respectively provided under this Act as they shall think fit, but not exceeding such Charges as are mentioned in the Schedule (B.) annexed to this Act, unless for the Use of any Washing Tub or Trough for more than Two Hours in any one Day, for which any Charges may be made which the Council or Commissioners respectively shall deem reasonable.

XXXVIII. And be it enacted, That for the Recovery of the Charges at such Wash-houses the Officers, Servants, and others having the Management thereof may detain the Clothes brought to be washed or other Goods and Chattels of any Person refusing to pay the Charge to which such Person may be liable, or any Part thereof, till full Payment thereof be made, and in case such Payment be not made within Seven Days may sell such Clothes, Goods, and Chattels, or any of them, returning the surplus Proceeds of such Sale, after deducting the unpaid Charge and the Expences [sic] of such Detention and Sale, and the unsold Articles, if any, on demand, to such Person.

XXXIX. And be it enacted, That if any Clerk or other Officer, or any Servant who shall be in anywise [sic] employed by any Council or Commissioners in pursuance of this Act, shall exact or accept any Fee or Reward for or on account of any thing done or forborne or to be done or forborne in pursuance of this Act, or on any account whatsoever relative to putting this Act into execution, other than such Salaries, Wages, or Allowances as shall have been appointed by the Council or Commissioners, or shall in anywise [sic] be concerned or interested in any Bargain or Contract made by the Council or Commissioners for or on any account whatsoever relative to the putting of this Act into execution, or if any Person during the Time he holds the Office of Member of the Council or Commissioner shall exact or accept any such Fee or Reward, or shall accept or hold any Office or Place of Trust created by Virtue of this Act, or be concerned directly or indirectly in any such Bargain or Contract, every such Person so offending shall be incapable of ever serving or being employed under this Act, and shall for every such Offence also forfeit the Sum of Fifty Pounds.

XL. And be it enacted, That such Part of any Penalty recovered under this Act as shall not be awarded to the Informer shall be paid to the Credit as regards a Borough of the Borough Fund, and as regards a Parish of the Rate for the Relief of the Poor thereof.

XLI. And be it enacted, That this Act may be amended or repealed by any Act to be passed in this Session of Parliament.



SCHEDULES referred to by the foregoing Act.

SCHEDULE (A.)

*Bye Laws to be made in all Cases.*

For securing that the Baths and Wash-houses and open Public Bathing Places shall be under the due Management and Control of the Officers, Servants, or others appointed or employed in that Behalf by the Council or Commissioners.

For securing adequate Privacy to Persons using the Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places and Security against Accidents to Persons using the open Bathing Places.

For securing that Men and Boys above Eight Years old shall bathe separately from Women and Girls and Children under Eight Years old.

For preventing Damage, Disturbance, Interruption, and indecent and offensive Language and Behaviour, and Nuisances.

For determining the Duties of the Officers, Servants, and others appointed by the Council or Commissioners.

In Parishes. For regulating the Procedure of the Commissioners.

SCHEDULE (B.)

*Maximum Charges during the First Seven Years after the Establishments are opened for public Use; and after such Seven Years, except only so long after such Seven Years as higher Charges may be necessary for defraying the current Expences [sic] of the Establishments.*

Baths for the labouring Classes, supplied with clean Water for every Bather, or for several Children bathing together:

For One Person above Eight Years old, including the Use of One clean Towel:

Cold Bath - One Penny.

Warm Bath - Two-pence.

For several Children, not exceeding Four, including the Use of One clean Towel for every Child:

Cold bath - Two-pence.

Warm Bath - Four-pence.

Wash-houses for the labouring Classes, supplied with Conveniences for washing and drying Clothes and other Articles:

For the Use by One Person of One Washing Tub or Trough, or One Pair of Washing Tubs or Troughs:

For One Hour only in any One Day - One Penny.

For Two consecutive Hours only in any One Day - Three-pence.

Such Charges to include the Use of the drying Apparatus for drying all the Articles washed. The Time occupied in drying not to be included in the Hour or Two Hours.

A Fraction of an Hour, exceeding Five Minutes, to be reckoned One Hour.

Open Bathing Places, where several Persons bathe in the same Water:



For One Person - One Halfpenny.”

**The Towns Improvement Clauses Act, 1847.**<sup>851</sup>

“An Act for consolidating in One Act certain Provisions usually contained in Acts for paving, draining, cleansing, lighting, and improving Towns. [21st *June* 1847.]”

“CXXXVI. The Commissioners may from Time to Time by special Order as herein defined, but not otherwise, purchase, rent, or otherwise provide, either within the Limits of the special Act, or at a reasonable Distance therefrom, suitable and convenient Land and Buildings in a Situation and according to Plans to be approved of by the Inspector, to be used for public Baths and Wash-houses, and public open Bathing Places and public Drying Grounds, and for the Use and Accommodation of the Inhabitants within the Limits of the special Act, in washing and drying Clothes and other Articles, and may fit up the same respectively with all requisite and proper Conveniences, and from Time to Time enlarge, renew, and repair the same respectively, and afford the Use thereof respectively to such Inhabitants at such reasonable Charges, and under and subject to such Regulations, as the Commissioners may deem expedient; and every Person who offends against any such Regulations shall be liable to a Penalty not exceeding Forty Shillings for every Offence.

CXXXVII. Provided always, That the Number of Baths for the Use of the Working Classes in any Building provided by the Commissioners shall not be less than twice the Number of the other Baths of any higher Class.

CXXXVIII. The Commissioners may from Time to Time make such reasonable Charges for the Use of such Baths, Bathing Places, Wash-houses, and Drying Grounds as they think fit, but as regards the Working Classes, not exceeding the Charges, if any, mentioned in the special Act, unless for the Use of any Washing Tub or Trough for more than Two Hours in any One Day, in which Case any Charge may be made which the Commissioners deem reasonable.

CXXXIX. For the Recovery of the Charges at such Wash-houses and Drying Grounds the Officers, Servants, and others having the Management thereof may, at the Period of using the same, or at any subsequent Time, detain the Clothes or other Goods and Chattels in or upon any such Wash-house or Drying Ground of any Person refusing to pay the Charge to which such Person may be liable, or any Part thereof, till full Payment thereof be made; and in case such Payment be not made within Seven Days, the Commissioners may sell such Clothes, Goods, and Chattels, or any of them, returning the surplus Proceeds of such Sale, after deducting the unpaid Charge, and the Expences [sic] of such Detention and Sale, and the unsold Articles, if any, on Demand, to such Person.

CXL. A printed Copy or sufficient Abstract of the Bye Laws made by the Commissioners relating to the Use of such Baths, Bathing Places, and Wash-houses, so far as regards every such Bath, Bathing Place, or Wash-house, shall be put up in such Bath Room, Bathing Place, and Wash-house.

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<sup>851</sup> 10 & 11 Vict., c. 34.



CXLI. Whenever any such public Baths, Bathing Places, Wash-houses, or Drying Grounds are deemed by the Commissioners to be unnecessary or too expensive to be kept up, the Commissioners may, by special Order as herein defined, but not otherwise, discontinue the same, and sell the Lands, Buildings, and Materials for the best Price that can reasonably be obtained, and convey the same accordingly; and the Purchase Money shall be paid to the Treasurer of the Commissioners, and may be disposed of as the Commissioners direct.”

**The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1847.**<sup>852</sup>

“An Act to amend the Act for the Establishment of Public Baths and Wash-houses. [2d July 1847.]

‘WHEREAS an Act was passed in the last Session of Parliament, intituled [sic] *An Act to encourage the Establishment of Public Baths and Wash-houses*: And whereas it is expedient to afford additional Facilities for the Establishment of Public Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places;’ be it enacted, by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That the recited Act, as amended by this Act, and this Act shall be construed and be carried into execution as One Act.

II. And be it enacted and declared, That the following words and Expressions in the recited Act shall have in the said Act and this Act the several Meanings hereby assigned to them, unless there be something in the Subject or Context repugnant to such Construction; (that is to say,)

‘Parish’ shall mean not only every Place having separate Overseers of the Pool and separately maintaining its own Poor, but also every Place maintaining its own Poor and having a Vestry:

‘Rate-payers’ shall mean all Persons for the Time being assessed to and paying Rates for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish:

‘Vestry’ shall mean not only a Vestry as defined in the said Act, but also any Body of Persons, by whatever name distinguished, acting by virtue of any Act of Parliament, Prescription, Custom, or otherwise as or instead of a Vestry or Select Vestry.

III. And be it enacted, That when any Person shall have been appointed to the Office of Commissioners of Public Baths and Wash-houses for any Parish before the passing of this Act, the recited Act shall be deemed to have been duly adopted for such Parish notwithstanding that there may have been any Defect or Irregularity in or in any way concerning such Adoption; and all Acts and Proceedings of any Person in possession of the Office of such Commissioner, and acting in good Faith as such Commissioner, whether appointed before or after the passing of this Act, shall, notwithstanding his Disqualification or Want of Qualification for or any Defect or Irregularity in or in any way concerning his Appointment to such Office, be as valid and effectual as if he were duly qualified or there had not been any such Defect or Irregularity.

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<sup>852</sup> 10 & 11 Vict., c. 61. All italics in the original.



IV. And be it enacted, That the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845, shall be incorporated with the recited Act and this Act: Provided always, that the Council and Commissioners respectively shall not purchase or take any Lands otherwise than by Agreement.

V. And be it enacted, That the Number of Washing Tubs or Troughs for the Labouring Classes in any Building or Buildings under the Management of the same Council or Commissioners shall not be less than Twice the Number of the Washing Tubs or Troughs of any higher Class, if but One, or of all the higher Classes if more than One, in the same Building or Buildings.

VI. And be it enacted, That so much of the recited Act as enacts that the Council and Commissioners respectively may make such reasonable Charges for the Use of the Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places as they think fit, not exceeding such Charges as are mentioned in the Schedule (B.) to that Act, shall be repealed.

VII. And be it enacted, That the Council and the Commissioners respectively may from Time to Time make such reasonable Charges for the Use of the Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places provided under the recited Act and this Act respectively as they think fit, not exceeding the Charges mentioned in the Schedule annexed to this Act.

VIII. And be it enacted, That this Act may be amended or repealed by any Act to be passed in this Session of Parliament.

SCHEDULE to which this Act refers.

*Charges for the Baths and Wash-houses and open Bathing Places.*

1. BATHS FOR THE LABOURING CLASSES.

Every Bath to be supplied with clean Water for every Person bathing alone, or for several Children bathing together, and in either Case with One clean Towel for every Bather.

For One Person above Eight Years old:

Cold Bath, or cold Shower Bath, any Sum not exceeding - One Penny.

Warm Bath, or warm Shower Bath, or Vapour Bath, any sum not exceeding - Two-pence.

For several Children, not above Eight Years old, nor exceeding Four, bathing together:

Cold Bath, or cold Shower Bath, any Sum not exceeding - Two-pence.

Warm Bath, or warm Shower Bath, or Vapour Bath, any Sum not exceeding - Four-pence.

2. BATHS OF ANY HIGHER CLASS.

Such Charges as the Council and the Commissioners respectively think fit, not exceeding in any Case Three Times the Charges above mentioned for the several Kinds of Baths for the Labouring Classes.

3. WASH-HOUSES FOR THE LABOURING CLASSES.

Every Wash-house to be supplied with Conveniences for washing and drying Clothes and other Articles.

For the Use by One Person of One Washing Tub or Trough, and of a Copper or Boiler (if any), or, where One of the Washing Tubs or Troughs shall be used as a Copper or Boiler, for the Use of One Pair of Washing Tubs or Troughs, and for the



Use of the Conveniences for drying:

For One Hour only in One Day, any Sum not exceeding - One Penny.

For Two Hours together, in any One Day, any Sum not exceeding - Three-pence.

Any Time over the Hour or Two Hours respectively, if not exceeding Five Minutes, not to be reckoned.

For Two Hours not together, or for more than Two Hours in any One Day, such Charges as the Council and the Commissioners respectively think fit.

For the Use of the washing Conveniences alone, or of the drying Conveniences alone, such Charges as the Council and the Commissioners respectively think fit, but not exceeding in either Case the Charges for the Use for the same Time of both the washing and the drying Conveniences.

#### 4. WASH-HOUSES OF ANY HIGHER CLASS

Such Charges as the Council and the Commissioners respectively think fit.

5. OPEN BATHING PLACES, where several Persons bathe in the same Water, for One Person One Halfpenny.

#### **The Towns Police Clauses Act, 1847.**<sup>853</sup>

“An Act for consolidating in One Act certain Provisions usually contained in Act for regulating the Police of Towns. [22d *July* 1847.]”

“And with respect to public Bathing, be it enacted as follows:

LXIX. Where any Part of the Sea-shore or Strand of any River used as a public Bathing-place is within the Limits of the special Act the Commissioners may make Bye Laws for the following Purposes; (that is to say,)

For fixing the Stands of Bathing Machines on the Sea-shore or Strand, and the Limits within which Persons of each Sex shall be set down for bathing, and within which Persons shall bathe:

For preventing any indecent Exposure of the Persons of the Bathers:

For regulating the Manner in which the Bathing Machines shall be used, and the Charges to be made for the same:

For regulating the Distance at which Boats and Vessels let to hire for the Purpose of sailing or rowing for Pleasure shall be kept from Persons bathing within the prescribed Limits.”

#### **The Public Health Act, 1875.**<sup>854</sup>

“An Act for consolidating and amending the Acts relating to Public Health in England. [11th August 1875.]”

“10. ... Where the Baths and Wash-houses Acts and the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, or any of them, are in force within the district of any urban authority,

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<sup>853</sup> 10 & 11 Vict., c. 89. All italics in the original.

<sup>854</sup> 38 & 39 Vict., c. 55. All bold in the original.



such authority shall have all powers rights duties capacities liabilities and obligations in relation to such Acts exerciseable [sic] by or attaching to the council incorporated commissioners local board improvement commissioners and other commissioners or persons acting in the execution of the said Acts or any of them.

Where the Baths and Wash-houses Acts are not in force within the district of any urban authority, such authority may adopt such Acts; and where the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts are not in force within the district of any urban authority, such authority may adopt such Acts.”

“65. Any local authority may, if they think fit, supply water from any waterworks purchased or constructed by them to any public baths or wash-houses, or for trading or manufacturing purposes, on such terms and conditions as may be agreed on between the local authority and the persons desirous of being so supplied; moreover, any local authority may, if they think fit, construct any works for the gratuitous supply of any public baths or wash-houses established otherwise than for private profit or supported out of any poor or borough rates.”

“171. The provisions of the Towns Police Clauses Act, 1847, with respect to the following matters, (namely,)

- (1.) With respect to obstructions and nuisances in the streets; and
- (2.) With respect to fires; and
- (3.) With respect to places of public resort; and
- (4.) With respect to hackney carriages; and
- (5.) With respect to public bathing;

shall, for the purpose of regulating such matters in urban districts, be incorporated with this Act.”

### **The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1878.**<sup>855</sup>

“An Act to amend the Law relating to Public Baths and Washhouses. [27th May 1878.]

WHEREAS the Act passed in the session held in the ninth and tenth years of the reign of Her present Majesty, chapter seventy-four, intituled [sic] ‘An Act to encourage the establishment of Public Baths and Washhouses,’ was amended by the Act passed in the session held in the tenth and eleventh years of the reign of Her present Majesty, chapter sixty-one, intituled ‘An Act to amend the Act for the establishment of Public Baths and Washhouses,’ and it is expedient further to amend the said first-recited Act, and to provide for the establishment of covered swimming baths and other purposes:

Be it therefore enacted by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. This Act may be cited for all purposes as the Baths and Washhouses Act, 1878.

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<sup>855.</sup> 41 & 42 Vict., c. 14. All bold and italics in the original.



The words 'covered swimming bath' in this Act shall mean a swimming bath protected by a roof or other covering from the weather.

2. This Act and the recited Acts, as amended by the Statute Law Revision Act, 1875, and the Public Health Act, 1875, and by this Act, shall be construed and carried into execution as one Act; and the words 'the council and the commissioners' when used in this Act shall include the urban authority mentioned in the tenth section of the Public Health Act, 1875.

3. All the provisions of the recited Acts respectively shall be construed to extend and to have extended from the passing of such Acts respectively to covered swimming baths as well as to baths, washhouses, and open bathing places.

4. The council and the commissioners respectively may from time to time provide covered swimming baths, and make such reasonable charges for the use thereof as they shall think fit, not exceeding the charges mentioned in the schedule annexed to this Act.

5. The council and the commissioners respectively may during such period, not exceeding five months in any one year, as they shall think fit, from the beginning of the month of November to the end of the month of March, close any covered swimming bath or open swimming bath, and may either keep the same closed or may establish therein a gymnasium or such other means of healthful recreation as they shall think fit, or may during such period allow any covered or open swimming bath to be used as an empty building for such purposes of healthful recreation or exercise as they shall think fit during such period as aforesaid, and may at any time allow any portion of the public baths not required by the commissioners to be used for holding vestry meetings or other parochial purposes: Provided always, that no covered or open swimming bath when closed may be used for music or dancing.

6. The council and the commissioners respectively may make byelaws [sic] for the regulation, management, and use of the open or swimming baths when used for any of the purposes mentioned in the fifth section of this Act; and all the provisions in the principal Act relating to byelaws [sic] shall extend and apply to byelaws [sic] made under this section.

7. The council and the commissioners respectively may appoint and remove at pleasure such officers and servants as shall be necessary for the management and superintendence of any gymnasium or other means of recreation established under this Act, and may appoint reasonable salaries, wages, and allowances for such officers and servants.

8. The council and the commissioners respectively may from time to time make such reasonable charges for the use of the gymnasium or other means of recreation established under this Act, or for the use of any covered swimming bath as an empty room, as they shall think fit.

9. The provision in the twenty-first, twenty-second, and twenty-third sections of the principal Act authorising the borrowing and advancement of money for the purposes of that Act, shall be taken to authorise the borrowing and advancement of money in like manner for the purposes of this Act; and the approval of the Local Government Board shall be substituted for that of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury in all cases where money is borrowed for the purposes of the principal Act or this Act.

10. The council and the commissioners respectively, and their respective servants



and agents, may remove any person offending against any of the byelaws [sic] made under this Act and the recited Acts, or any of them; and any bath or washhouse, or open bathing place, or covered swimming bath, established under this Act and the recited Acts, or any of them, shall be taken to be a public and open place, so as to make offences against decency therein criminal offences.

**11.** The council and the commissioners respectively, and their respective officers and servants, may refuse admittance to any bath, washhouse, open bathing place, or covered swimming bath, or any of them, to any person (1) who shall have been convicted of wilfully disobeying any of the byelaws [sic] in such bath, washhouse, open bathing place, or covered swimming bath; (2) who shall have been convicted of any offence against public decency in any of such baths, washhouses, open bathing places, or covered swimming baths as aforesaid.

**12.** The provisions of an Act passed in the session held in the twenty-ninth year of the reign of Her present Majesty, chapter thirty-one, intituled [sic] ‘An Act to provide for superannuation allowances to officers of vestries and other boards within the area of the Metropolis Local Management Act,’ shall extend to and include officers and servants employed in and about any baths, washhouses, open bathing places, or covered swimming baths established under this Act and the recited Acts, or any of them, by the council or the commissioners within the area of the Metropolis Local Management Act.

**13.** The expense of carrying this Act into execution shall be defrayed, and the income arising from the use in any manner of any covered swimming bath established under the provisions of this Act and the recited Acts, or any of them, shall be applied, in the same manner as that in which the expenses of the principal Act are thereby directed to be defrayed, and the income arising from baths, and washhouses, and open bathing places, is thereby directed to be applied.

**14.** The charge of one halfpenny, fixed by the tenth and eleventh Victoria, chapter sixty-one, section seven, and part five of the schedule of that Act, shall be increased to one penny.

The SCHEDULE above referred to.

#### CHARGES FOR COVERED SWIMMING BATHS

1ST CLASS. - Any sum not exceeding eightpence for each person.

2ND CLASS. - Any sum not exceeding fourpence for each person.

3RD CLASS. - Any sum not exceeding twopence for each person.”

#### **The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1882.**<sup>856</sup>

“An Act to amend the Baths and Wash Houses Acts. [24th July 1882.]

WHEREAS it is desirable to give increased facilities to local authorities for providing baths and wash houses within easy and convenient reach:

Be it therefore enacted by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this

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<sup>856</sup> 45 & 46 Vict., c. 30. All bold and italics in the original.



present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. This Act may be cited for all purposes as the Baths and Wash Houses Act, 1882, and shall be read as one with the Act of the ninth and tenth years of the reign of Her present Majesty, chapter seventy-four, in this Act called ‘the principal Act.’
2. Section twenty-seven of the principal Act shall be amended by the addition of the words ‘or in the immediate neighbourhood of such borough or parish’ to the words ‘in such borough or parish’ wherever such last-mentioned words occur in the said section.
3. The power conferred by section twenty-four of the principal Act to purchase or rent lands for the purposes of that Act shall extend to lands in the immediate neighbourhood of such borough or parish as is therein referred to.”

**The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1896.**<sup>857</sup>

“An Act to amend the Baths and Washhouses Acts. [14th August 1896.]

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the provisions of the Baths and Washhouses Act, 1878, with respect to the use which may be made of baths provided under the Baths and Washhouses Acts, 1846 to 1882:

Be it therefore enacted by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. This Act may be cited for all purposes as the Baths and Washhouses Act, 1896, and this Act and the Baths and Washhouses Acts, 1846 to 1882, may be cited together for all purposes as the Baths and Washhouses Acts, 1846 to 1896.
2. From and after the passing of this Act the following proviso to section five of the Baths and Washhouses, 1878, viz.: ‘Provided always that no covered or open swimming bath when closed may be used for music or dancing,’ shall be repealed, so far as the administrative county of London is concerned.

Provided always -

- (a.) That the Commissioners appointed under the Baths and Washhouses Acts, 1846 to 1896, or any sanitary authority or other representative body to whom the powers of the said Commissioners shall have been transferred by any order of the Local Government Board made under the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1894, which Commissioners, sanitary authority, or representative body, are herein-after referred to as ‘such Commissioners,’ shall before any such bath is used for music or dancing obtain a licence from the London County Council in the manner herein-after prescribed;
- (b.) That no portion of the premises in respect of which the licence is granted be let otherwise than occasionally to any person or persons corporate or otherwise, and that no money for admission be taken at the doors;
- (c.) That such Commissioners be responsible for any breach of the conditions on which the licence is granted which may occur during any entertainment given on such premises by their permission.

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<sup>857</sup>. 59 & 60 Vict., c. 59. All bold and italics in the original.



3. At any annual licensing meeting, or at any other meeting duly convened with fourteen days previous notice, the London County Council may grant a licence for music or dancing, or for both purposes, to such Commissioners, subject to the provisions of the Disorderly Houses Act, 1751, as amended by the Local Government Act, 1888.”

**The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1899.**<sup>858</sup>

“An Act to amend the Baths and Washhouses Acts. [9th August 1899.]

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the provisions of the Baths and Washhouses Act, 1878, with respect to the use which may be made of baths provided under the Baths and Washhouses Acts, 1846 to 1896:

Be it therefore enacted by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. This Act may be cited for all purposes as the Baths and Washhouses Act, 1899, and this Act and the Baths and Washhouses Acts, 1846 to 1896, may be cited together for all purposes as the Baths and Washhouses Acts, 1846 to 1899.
2. From and after the passing of this Act the following proviso to section five of the Baths and Washhouses, 1878, viz., - ‘Provided always that no covered or open swimming bath, when closed, may be used for music or dancing,’ shall be repealed. Provided always -
  - (a.) That the Commissioners appointed under the Baths and Washhouses Acts, 1846 to 1899, or any other body for the time being acting in the execution of those Acts, which Commissioners or other body are herein-after referred to as ‘such commissioners,’ shall before any such bath is used for music or dancing, obtain such licence as may be required for the use of a place for that purpose under any enactment in force in the area for which such commissioners act, or, if no such enactment is in force, obtains a licence from the county council of the county in which the district of such commissioners is situate:
  - (b.) That no portion of the premises in respect of which the licence is granted be let otherwise than occasionally to any person or persons, corporate or otherwise, and that no money for admission be taken at the doors:
  - (c.) That such Commissioners be responsible for any breach of the conditions on which the licence is granted, which may occur during any entertainment given on such premises by their permission.
3. In places in which the Disorderly Houses Act, 1751, is in force, a licence under that Act for music and dancing, or for both purposes, may be granted to such commissioners at any annual licensing meeting of the council authorised to grant such a licence, or at any other meeting of such council duly convened with fourteen days previous notice.
4. This Act shall not apply to the administrative county of London.

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<sup>858</sup> 62 & 63 Vict., c. 29.

## Glossary

£ s. d.	Pounds, shillings and pence in English currency prior to decimalisation.
A.D.A.	Amateur Diving Association
A.M.S.C.	Associated Metropolitan Swimming Clubs
A.P.T.C.	Army Physical Training Corps
A.S.A.	Amateur Swimming Association
ASAL	Amateur Swimming Association Library, Harold Fern House, Loughborough
A.S.U.	Amateur Swimming Union
B.C.E.	Before the Common Era
B.S.S.	British Swimming Society
C.E.	Common Era
CLSAC	Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre, Theobald's Road, London
E.S.S.A.	English Schools Swimming Association
F.I.N.A.	Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur
GAA	Guide Association Archives, Commonwealth Headquarters, Buckingham Palace Road, London
LAML	Lambeth Archives: Minet Library, Lambeth, London
L.S.A.	London Swimming Association
L.S.S.	Life Saving Society
L.S.S.A.	London Schools Swimming Association
L.S.S.C.	London Schools Swimming Club
M.C.A.S.A.	Midland Counties Amateur Swimming Association



MLSAS	Manchester Local Studies Archives Service, Central Library, Manchester
M.S.A.	Metropolitan Swimming Association
N.C.A.S.A.	Northern Counties Amateur Swimming Association
N.E.C.A.S.A.	North Eastern Counties Amateur Swimming Association
N.S.S.	National Swimming Society
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew, London
P.S.A.	Professional Swimming Association
R.H.S.	Royal Humane Society
R.L.S.S.	Royal Life Saving Society
R.L.S.S. Commonwealth	Royal Life Saving Society Commonwealth Secretariat
R.L.S.S. UK	Royal Life Saving Society United Kingdom
R.N.L.I.	Royal National Lifeboat Institute
SAA	Scout Association Archives, Gilwell Park, Chingford, London
S.A.G.B.	Swimming Association of Great Britain
S.A.S.A.	Scottish Amateur Swimming Association
S.C.	Swimming Club
S.C.A.S.A.	Southern Counties Amateur Swimming Association
W.A.S.A.	Welsh Amateur Swimming Association
W.C.A.S.A.	Western Counties Amateur Swimming Association
Y.M.C.A.	Young Men's Christian Association
Y.W.C.A.	Young Women's Christian Association

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 Minute Book No. 4: The Swimming Association of Great Britain  
 Various Loose and Unsorted Championship Programs c. 1870s - 1880s

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2.8, Photographs of the baths, including the opening ceremony.  
 B.14.1 - B.14.8, Untitled notebooks recording external swimming matches  
 B.14.9, "Aquatic Results - Bootham School, York"  
 QM.2.8, File on the construction of the School Baths, including plans.  
 QM.9.6, A poem entitled "The Building of the Bath"

#### **Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre, Theobald's Road, London**

CO/GG/BA/1/1 (B/7D1), St. Giles Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Minutes  
 CO/GG/BA/1/2 (B/7D2), St. Giles Bloomsbury Baths & Washhouses Minutes  
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 20<sup>th</sup> December to 1897 8<sup>th</sup> December

#### **Charterhouse School Archives, Godalming**

98/4 (ACC 10502/1), Charterhouse Bathing 1872-1881  
 98/5/1 (ACC 10502/2), Charterhouse Swimming 1945-1953  
 Photo Album - The Roskill Album/The Leighton Album (c. 1906)  
 Photo Volume 3 (January 1883 - August 1884)



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 SCH/SP/SW/1/1-11, Swimming Passing Books, 1863-1975 (11 vols.)  
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