



CS&PF Honorary Secretary | Kevin Murphy
21 Spiel Place, Lye Lane
Bricket Wood, St Albans
Hertfordshire AL2 3TD
secretary@cspf.co.uk
+44 (0) 1923 671 849

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT 1400 ON SATURDAY 2nd MARCH 2013 AT DOVER TOWN HALL

Hon. Secretary's report on the 2012 season

How low can we go.

I mean, of course, how much faster can anybody get across the Channel. We used to think seven hours was impossible. Petr Stoychev proved it wasn't. Now we have Trent Grimsey with 6hrs 55mins - Mike Oram once again at the helm. Surely Stoychev will be back to try to take it lower still.

The weather wasn't kind in 2012 – in fact it was horrible at times - but somehow our pilots found the gaps for CS&PF swimmers to achieve one two-way solo and 52 one-way solos. That takes the tally of successful CS&PF solo swims to well over 500.

Some swimmers had to go home without having an opportunity to achieve the dream because of the weather. It's good to see that they are treating it as unfinished business and are coming back to make 2013 their year.

In 2012 there were also three two-way standard (six person) relays; the first ever two-way three person relay; one two-way four person relay; 25 one-way standard relays; four one-way two person relays; four one-way three person relays; seven one-way four person relays; two one-way five person relays; and three one-way seven person relays.

Forty-three swims were unsuccessful including a three-way attempt – but Stuart Johnson made the turn for the third leg before calling it a day. The unsuccessful swims were 32 solo one-ways; two two-way standard relays; two one-way standard relays; one one-way two person relay; one one-way three person relay ; and one one-way three person relay.

The unluckiest swimmers must be Lucinda Bayliss, Colm Breathnach and Fionnuala Walsh who were only a few hundred metres from the French beach but had to abort because the fog was so thick it was too dangerous for them to land. Fionnuala came back and succeeded. Colm is back this year. The Bayliss household had plenty to celebrate anyway with Mark's incredible Arch to Arc record.

Congratulations to all who succeeded. For those who didn't succeed, I know what that feels like. It was a good training swim and success is all the sweeter next time around.

From my point of view I take considerable pleasure in knowing that every swimmer and team who wanted to register to swim the Channel, did actually get themselves registered – even the team that said: "We're swimming tonight. Can we register three new swimmers."

Our finances are healthy. The number of swimmers registering with the CS&PF increased again in 2012 and looks like it will be up again in 2013 and could top 200. Compare that with the CS&PF's first swim year in 2000 when it had six swims.

It would seem the only limit on numbers is a self-imposed one requested by the marine authorities.

There were 250 people at our dinner in 2012 – a record for Dover Town Hall. This year it is up again to a shade under 275. It's a case of: How high can we go.

I outsourced the certificates in 2012. I like to think that the end product looked better. All the effort that goes into a swim deserves to be remembered and celebrated. Unfortunately the firm printing them made far too many errors which had to be corrected and that caused delays for which I apologise. It is still work in progress.

A lot of the CS&PF's success is, of course, due to the hard work of volunteers in the background. Sometimes our chairman, Mike Oram, doesn't see eye to eye with me but you'd expect that. The CS&PF was his baby which he nurtured until it got too big to run alongside his other businesses. His knowledge is invaluable - and he's lovable with it.

We should be particularly grateful to Boris Mavra and Nick Adams for their work on the website, new forms and new logo; and to Nick for writing to every swimmer after their swims.

We have benefited greatly from Ian Down and Sakura Hingley's professional expertise helping us on the committee; and for Tanya Harding's efforts in finding and organising the observers.

Cathie Slevin has made sense of my book-keeping and kept our finances in order. Pressure of work and family commitments mean that she would now like to step back. That did identify a constitutional problem which could arise in our rules because officers serve for two years and can only be replaced from within the ranks of committee members – hence some of the motions for changes to the rules which are being put forward.

Cathie has agreed to stay on and fortunately we have two members, Kathy Batts and Jim Boucher who have expertise in the treasurer's role and have volunteered to be co-opted on to the committee to assist. We thank them for that and thank Cathie Slevin for all the work she has done on our behalf.

Thanks also to Julian Critchlow for putting together all the records of past swims which you now see on our website; Mike Ball, Michelle Toptalo, Eddie Spelling and Lance Oram for their work on the committee; the pilots and their crews who help the swimmers achieve their dreams; and the observers who record what goes on out in the Channel.

Also - who can forget on this day of all days, the huge amount of work by Michelle and Emma France who organise and make such a success of the dinner. Here a special thanks to Cliff Golding who has helped make our dinners such a pleasure but has now handed the baton on to Kevin Blick and Rob Ouldcott so that he can actually eat something at the dinner.

Not our baby of course but all swimmers who train in Dover have reason to be grateful to Freda Streeter, Barrie and Irene Wakeham, Michelle and Emma on the beach. To Barrie and Irene thanks also for selling our regalia.

New regalia with our new logo will be on sale this year. Take my word for it – it's good.

For every swimmer there's nearly always a wife, husband, partner, mum, dad or friend in the background. My personal thanks go to my wife, Jane, and daughter Joanne who help when help is needed and often share the lounge with the CS&PF paperwork. From so many people I've had so much help over the years to achieve my dreams, it's my turn to give something back. It's a passion and I love it.

Congratulations to all those who succeeded in 2012. Commiserations to those who didn't – believe in yourselves and come back stronger.

We go into the 2013 season with a new logo, a new website, new regalia, ever increasing numbers of swimmers and a healthy bank balance.

Good luck to the class of 2013.