

"Burnside"
15, Viewlands Mount,
West Chevin Rd.,
Menston in Wharfedale.

15th January, 1956.

Dear Captain Cummins,

Correspondence in the December
issue of the "Swimming Times".

I read with interest the letter from Mr. F.C. Oldman of Huddersfield, and he gives vent to the feelings not only of himself but of numerous other distance swimmers and their supporters.

It is a fact that little A.S.A. publicity is given to our long distance swimmers, who have as much right to recognition as any sprinters polo players or divers, the majority of the latter being teenagers, most of them here to-day and gone tomorrow. Compare them with men like Oldman and Pickering who have spent some 20 or 30 years in the sport. Surely such men deserve some recognition from the A.S.A. not for what benefit they have obtained from swimming, but for what they have given to it.

I do not consider the Editor's note to the letter was at all fair; surely all the news in the "Swimming Times" (if judged by the same standard) is stale by the time it is printed, and it should hardly be necessary for the individual concerned to give details to the local correspondent of an achievement which has received national and often world wide publicity.

It could be said that a Channel conqueror may not be in a position to invite anyone to a civic reception.

Club, County and District sprints, diving and water polo activities are all covered by your excellent publication, but Channel swimmers, Windermere record breakers and Morecambe Bay Champions after all their efforts are very lucky to receive a brief mention, although congratulations and write-ups are given to many others for lesser efforts.

Our long distance swimmers do not seek vainly for praise, but it would be appreciated if a few lines per month could be spared to give news on marathon swimming.

Yours faithfully,

John K. Slater.

Captain W.B. Cummins,
The Editor,
"The Swimming Times"
Croyden.
Surrey.

20th January, 1956.

Dear Mr. Oldman,

Many thanks for your interesting letter of the 18th instant and the enclosures contained therewith. I quite agree with all you say. I think the copy of my letter to "The Swimming Times", which I sent to you, covers many of the points you raise, but it does seem that your local Association is lacking in courtesy and sportsmanship by their indifferent attitude. A local Association can gain a great deal from a sympathetic Bath Superintendent, especially from one who is still actively participating. There is no doubt that many Bath Superintendents are often solely responsible for the success of many Clubs.

I have given considerable thought to the problems surrounding long distance swimming, and have come to the conclusion that as the A.S.A. and swimming publications do not appear to take any interest on their own volition, then our branch of swimming would be better served by some other organisation which would be responsible for supplying information to the A.S.A. and publications.

Such an organisation could collect information regarding all Open Long Distance Championships and Swims and be in a position to give, for instance, details of the cost and requirements for swimming Lake Windermere. Before my first visit to Windermere I had been told it was a £15 swim. When I got there I was told I could not do the swim without a motor launch (£9). I decided that this seemed rather an excessive amount for a Lake swim, and found that a rowing boat could be hired for 25/-, which could be left at the other end of the Lake and picked up later by launch. It only needed two people with a little rowing experience. We had a map of the Lake, settled which points to head for, and off we went.

There are many examples I am sure, of a similar nature which would make distance swimming more popular and less expensive. If a list could be obtained of long distance Championships and Swims, together with the names and addresses of local people who would assist, I am sure this would be of great service once the word got round and the organisation was there.

What I would like to see is a British Long Distance Swimming Association, recognised as a select organisation specialising in assisting, publicising and organising long distance swimmers and swims. It may be that such an organisation should have (a) a distinctive badge, (b) a certificate for a successful swim (otherwise unrecognised) or (c) a medal. I should be glad if you would give me the benefit of your experience in long distance swimming and let me know if you think there are any possibilities in my suggestion. If you approve the idea I should undertake to set my suggestions into action this year. I have the time and equipment, and some secretarial, legal, editorial and swimming experience, and if you could find the time to assist in this venture I think we should have a good chance of establishing something constructive in our particular branch of swimming. I appreciate that the financial aspect has to be considered, but in the first instance that is merely notepaper and stamps which can be easily secured.

If you think that this idea is too grandiose to start with, what would you think of a "Windermere Swimming Club", on similar lines, with an Annual Championship. There are many details in my mind which are too lengthy to put down here, but if you think the idea feasible I can set it all out on paper for you.

I enclose reply from Captain Cummins which is interesting but a little vague in parts.

Yours sincerely,

F.C. Oldman, Esq.,
Bath Superintendent,
Cambridge Road Bath,
HUDDERSFIELD.

John K. Slater.

23th June, 1956.

John K.Slater,
'Burnside'
15, Viewlands Mount,
West Chevin Road,
Menston in Wharfedale/Yorks.

Telephone: Guiseley 1028.

Dear

BRITISH LONG DISTANCE SWIMMING ASSOCIATION

At an informal meeting held on the 21st June, 1956, present at which were Mr. F.Oldman, Huddersfield Baths Superintendent (Channel Swimmer) Miss E.Fenton, A.S.A.Coach (Channel Swimmer) Mr. P.Mickman (Channel Swimmer) Mr. J.K.Slater (Lake Windermere Record Holder) and Mr. G.T.Smith (former Morecambe Bay Champion) it was suggested that a British Long Distance Swimming Association be formed.

It was pointed out at this meeting that there is now no English A.S.A. Long Distance Swimming Championship, nor is there a National or International Long Distance Championship in this country, and that in view of the increasing popularity of long distance swimming the time had now come for such an Association to be formed (not under the control of the A.S.A. but possibly affiliated thereto).

Such an Association would promote long distance swimming and competitions and provide suitable recognition for those taking part; keep a register giving details of the various long distance swims together with the names and addresses of local people who were willing to assist. Keep a register of long distance swims held under the auspices of other organisations, including overseas long distance swims and publicise the sport whenever possible.

It was felt that there are many swimmers in various parts of the country who would compete in long distance swims, but due to lack of knowledge of local conditions, expense etc., were deterred from so doing. It may be as in the case of Lake Windermere for example, that because there is no organising body to give information and assist, only those swimmers who live within a certain radius can visit the lake to make the necessary enquiries and arrangements before hand.

Naturally, such an organisation should be headed by people who have practical experience of the sport, and with this in mind I am writing on behalf of the above named, to ask if you would be prepared to give the benefit of your knowledge and experience to this undertaking by joining us in furthering the aims outlined above.

A meeting will be held at Cambridge Road Baths, Huddersfield on the 15th July, 1956, at 3 p.m. and suggestions will be sought as to the framework of the organisation.

We do hope that you will be able to attend this meeting, but if you are unable to do so, perhaps you will let me know if you will allow your name to go forward for nomination as a Regional Representative.

You will appreciate that at this early stage there are many points to settle, and it would be most helpful if you would let me have your observations on the whole subject.

Yours sincerely,

John K.Slater.

The Proposed
BRITISH LONG DISTANCE SWIMMING ASSOCIATION

Chairman (pro tem)—FRED OLDMAN

Hon. Secretary (pro tem)—JOHN K. SLATER,
 "Burnside," Viewlands Mount,
 West Chevin Road, Menston in Wharfedale.
 'Phone—Guiseley 1028

September, 1956.

Dear Sir/Madam,

At an informal meeting held on the 15th July, 1956, present at which were Messrs F. Oldman (Huddersfield Baths Superintendent and Channel Swimmer), P. Rising (Channel Swimmer), Miss E. Fenton (A.S.A. Coach and Channel Swimmer), Messrs J. K. Slater (Lake Windermere Record Holder), J. Brennan (Yorks. River Race Record Holder), G. T. Smith (former Morecambe Cross-Bay Champion) L. Craven (Morecambe Cross-Bay Swimmer), Miss P. J. Aldam (Morecambe Cross-Bay Swimmer), Messrs J. Brown (Morecambe Bay S.C. Secretary), A. Aldam, C. Metcalfe, Mesdames J. Brown, C. Metcalfe and F. Oldman, it was suggested that a Long Distance Swimming Association be formed.

It was pointed out at this meeting that there is now no English Long Distance Swimming Championship, nor is there a National or International Distance Championship in this country and that in view of the increasing interest in long distance swimming the time has now come for a Long Distance Swimming Association to be formed (not under the control of the A.S.A. but possibly affiliated thereto) to further long distance swimming in the British Isles.

It was decided to hold a public meeting to discuss the formation of such an Association at Armley Baths, Leeds, on Sunday, 30th September, 1956 at 3 p.m. and you are invited by the above named to attend this meeting.

If you know of any person who may be interested in the formation of this suggested Association I should be glad if you would pass this information to them.

Yours faithfully,

John K. Slater.

Hon. Secretary (pro tem)
 For and on behalf of the above named.

BRITISH LONG DISTANCE SWIMMING ASSOCIATION.

At an inaugural meeting at Leeds on Sunday 30th September, 1956, it was decided to form a British Long Distance Swimming Association. It was proposed that the Association hold its Annual Championship over the 10 1/2 mile length of Lake Windermere on the 1st Saturday in September next year. The race to be open to all amateur swimmers. Separate races for men and women. Ten entries for the proposed Championships were handed in during the meeting.

Election of Officers:-

President:- Mr. Philip Rising of Rotherham, (After his election Mr. Rising kindly offered a trophy for competition in the proposed Championships.) who has himself swum the Channel in both directions.

Chairman:- Mr. Fred Oldman, Huddersfield Baths Superintendent (Channel Swimmer)

Hon. Sec:- Mr. John K. Slater of Otley (Lake Windermere Record Holder)

Hon. Treasurer:- Mr. G. Trevor Smith of Huddersfield (former Morecambe Bay Champion)

Press Relations Officer:- Mr. Lewis Craven of Derby Dale, (Morecambe Bay Swimmer)

Executive:-

Miss Eileen Penton, of Dewsbury, (Channel Swimmer & A.S.A. Coach)

Mr. James Braman of Rotherham, (Yks River Race Record Holder)

Mr. Lewis Craven of Derby Dale, (Morecambe Bay Swimmer)

Mr. Fred Slater of Otley, (Long Distance Trainer & former President of the Bradford & District A.S.A.)

Mr. A. J. Allan of Rotherham, (former President of the Rotherham Neptunus S.C.)

Mr. Frank Broadhurst of Wakefield, (Morecambe Bay Swimmer & Sec. of the Yks A.S.A. Water Polo Referees Association.)

Mr. J. H. Brown of Morecambe, (Morecambe Bay Swimmer & Sec. of Morecambe Bay S.A.)

Mr. Wilfred Toulcher of Huddersfield, (Long Distance Trainer)

Mr. S. Metcalfe of Morecambe.

Miss E. Sanford of Huddersfield.

Mr. George Foote of Keighley (Morecambe Bay Swimmer)

Mrs. J. H. Brown of Morecambe (Sec. of Morecambe S.C.)

Miss Margaret Sugden of Huddersfield.

Channel Swimmers, Miss Brenda Fisher of Grimsby, who also holds the record for Lake Ontario, Canada, and Mrs M. Dixon, Chelmsford (formerly Miss Margaret Feather of Brighton) were elected as regional representatives.

Mr. George Barraclough, President of the Y.A.S.A. was present and gave his personal support to the endeavours of the Association.

It was decided to seek affiliation to the Yorkshire Amateur Swimming Association.

It was also decided to contact Secretaries of Clubs or Organisations who already hold long distance swims with a view to their free affiliation to the Association in order that long distance swimming in the British Isles may be better integrated.

At sometime in the not too distant future it was suggested that the Association invite outstanding continental long distance swimmers to compete in an International Amateur Long Distance Championship, possibly in Lake Windermere or one of the Scottish Lochs or any other venue where conditions are suitable.

It was decided that the membership fee of the Association be 5/- per annum.