



# BLDSA

## British Long Distance Swimming Association

### Report for BLDSA Committee on Torbay Swim, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2019

This is the first time Helen and myself have run this event, it feels very strange not to be swimming as I have swum it for many many years. We had no information handed over to us from the previous Secretary which was not very helpful, however we feel we rose to the challenge admirably!

We had under estimated the amount of work involved in bringing this all together but we were very keen for Torbay to continue in the BLDSA calendar as this is our premier sea swim.

This year was particularly difficult as two major sailing championships were taking place on the same day from Paignton and Torbay Yacht Clubs. They had the date firmly booked and were very keen to stop our event taking place. I would like to say a big Thank You to Simon Pinder, the Torbay/Paignton Harbour Master for allowing us to put a swim on. He was extremely helpful and allowed us to use a new course and also put marker buoys out for us which enabled us to keep the Torbay swim operational for this year.

We have booked the date for next year, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020, and are planning to improve the course by using the Brixham Breakwater and turn at the Breakwater end of the beach.

#### **Day of the swim**

We were very fortunate with the weather, we had a beautiful sunny day with fairly light winds which only increased later in the day.

We were very keen to re-introduce the numbered tabards for each Kayaker and this proved very successful as we could identify Kayakers with their Swimmers from a long distance using binoculars. We had an entrant of 30 swimmers but on the day we had 26 swimmers as we had a few drop out at the last minute due to injuries and family commitments. The water temperature was patchy 15 degrees to 17 degrees but the quality was extremely good with high visibility which is fortunate as there was plenty of jelly fish around as seems to be the case on most of the South coast at the moment. We are glad to say most of the jelly fish are barrel jelly fish, this is the best one to be stung by, if there is such a thing, as this is the lesser of the painful stings.

When I have swum in the past I have noted the difficulty which can occur with a shortage of Kayakers, we ended up with 34 kayakers on the water with the intention of 4 of them being

spare but as we had some swimmers drop out we had more spare kayakers. We do not want to repeat the situation of swimmers unable to swim due to lack of kayakers. We would like to say a big thank you to the Kayakers for their professionalism and support on the day, they were a great bunch and very much appreciated.

We had a mixture of swimming experience in the Race from swimmers attempting it for the first time and some very experienced swimmers who had swum it many times before.

The new course was slightly longer than the previous course, however interestingly when I plotted the old course I found this to be shorter than the stated distance of 8 miles.

As you can see from the Results there was some very good times swum on the day. Congratulations to Alex Begg and Anita Goyos, first male and first female. Also some very good performances from the Veterans. This can be a surprisingly tough swim and is a great stepping stone to those that are wishing to do the English Channel.

This time we re-introduced the Public Address System which allowed us to announce the swimmers as they arrived on the beach. Many of the people on the beach showed their appreciation and astonishment of the swimmers accomplishment with hearty applause guided by myself on the microphone. We had many people from the beach come up to us and say how much better things were with the announcements on the microphone than previous years. It is very interesting that you see lots of the regular faces in and around the beach huts and beach that week in July in Torbay and it was very interesting to talk about previous years with some of the holiday makers who had fond memories of Owen and Murial Christie.

We hope that next year we can make it a bigger, better event with up to 40 swimmers. We have had some fantastic feedback from the Kayakers and some swimmers, and will constantly strive to improve the day paying close attention to the safety of everyone on and off the water.

We particularly like to thank everyone on the day that helped make this a success, Brenda and Steven Sweet on the turn buoy, our safety crews on the ribs, Janet Wilson on First Aid, good to say that Janet had little to do, this is how we like it but it is reassuring knowing that Janet is there ready, willing and able.

Thanks to Richard and Michelle who helped us with many an e mail regarding various questions that occurred during the process.

We look forward to taking it on in 2020, this is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the swim, so we should do something special!!

Steve & Helen Price  
Swim Secretary 2019