



# Horsham Life Saving Club

## Annual Report 2015

### Introduction and General Statements

This year's Annual Report is a bit different from previous year's. It has not been written by David Slade, our Chairman, but by James Cossons and Robin Akers, so a bit of a departure. The reason David hasn't written it is that he is on an extended holiday in Australia. He left just as our open water activities drew to a conclusion at the end of August and won't be back until April 2016. I think it is fair to say that until somebody isn't there you don't know how much they do!

The Club has had another successful year and much of what we have achieved is detailed in this report.

Our Award numbers are down on last year and this is due mainly to our entry class from September 2014 not carrying on that far into 2015. Our Open Water awards still account for 50 of the total but our Medallions, particularly Silver have dropped significantly and Bronze sport has reduced from 12 to 1. However, 7 of our members completed 3 or more Gold awards this year, qualifying them for the highest award the Society offers a Distinction. For David Slade and Robin Akers this was their second Survive & Save Distinction.

We have once again been fortunate enough to be able to use Frances Garrard's house as a base for our beach activities. Our stillwater activities were again at Southwater Lake and thanks must go to Horsham District Council and Adrian Green of Southwater Water Sports for allowing us to use this facility, even if costs for using it this year doubled.

There are concerns regarding our open water activities. At the moment older members take the Emergency Response Activity Supervisors Award which enables them to supervise our open water sessions. This has been discontinued from 31 December 2015 and it is now likely that to enable us to continue our beach and stillwater sessions members will have to qualify under the National Water Safety Management Programme which at least doubles the cost. This excludes the cost of the training required to be able to teach and examine this programme.

Five of the six members that undertook a Survive & Save Instructor Course in 2014 are now qualified and we are looking at the next ones to train up so we can spread the teaching load further.

We have again been fortunate in receiving grants of around £2,000 to help replace some of our older manikins, subsidise Southwater Lake, Pool hire and the first award for members. Thanks must go to David Slade and James Cossons for the applications made.

We had an outstanding Drowning Prevention Week event in Swan Walk, Horsham's Shopping Centre. We were very fortunate to be able to borrow the RLSS Perry the Buoy mascot outfit and Robin Akers was persuaded to wear it on a very hot day and meet the public!

On the competitions front it has been another good year. The internal Club competition went well, first year without David, but Lee Wright, James Cossons and John Stainer staged an excellent competition over four weeks and it was extremely good to see how well our novices did given that they had only started about 8 weeks before. Once again we had competitors in the National Lifesaving Championships. Robin Akers and Kate Hall got through to the finals in Sheffield and Kathryn Otley paired with Jade Hand from Crawley in the Senior girls but didn't manage to get passed the Regional qualifiers. We also entered the Sussex Pairs which we haven't done for a considerable amount of time. Our girls pair consisted of Jenny Fletcher and Kathryn Otley who did extremely well. Also, for the first time for a number of years we entered a team in the European Lifesaving Championships held in Wales in August.

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Horsham Life Saving Club  
is a registered club affiliated to  
'lifesavers' –  
The Royal Life Saving Society  
& RLSS Sussex Branch

They did very well as a junior team and hopefully we can build on it in the future.

Robin Akers was elected President of Sussex Branch and Lee Wright continues as webmaster, James Cossons to support both Club Development and Youth Development and John Stainer as Club Development.

James Cossons and Lee Wright have continued to promote the Club via Facebook and Twitter. The video created by James of "Us in 2015" which was posted on Facebook has had a reach of over 6,000. Even if a small proportion of these view it then we will have managed to get a message across to many people.

## **The Details**

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### **Life Support; Lifesaving Pool; Lifesaving Sport; Lifesaving Stillwater and Lifesaving Beach**

This year we passed 22 Life Support exams 8 of which were at the higher level of Life Support 3.

As a Club we follow the Survive & Save Programme via the Royal Life Saving Society UK. The award scheme is broken down into three levels Bronze, Silver and Gold. This year we have passed 62 Bronze awards, 22 Silver awards and 23 Gold awards. When you pass three gold awards you qualify for your distinction and it is great to see that 7 Distinctions have been awarded to our members this year, two for the second time.

### **Other qualifications**

Other Qualifications include those that lay outside of the Survive & Save Scheme. This year we have passed 4 Emergency Response Activity Supervisors which allow us to train at open water events. Separate to this we have passed 8 National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches. Ed Baker, Natasha Mays and Megan Holms have also achieved the v100 award which means they have completed 100 hours of volunteering, fantastic achievements all round

### **Finance**

Once again we have been fortunate in receiving grants and donations which has enable us to purchase additional equipment, subsidise the pool and lake hire as well as reduce award costs for both first and second award for new members and first award in 2015 for current members.

We have also continued with raising funds via beating our EasyFundraising target, having a team in the Lions Swimathon and hosting a street collection as part of Drowning Prevention week.

### **Sussex Branch Honours**

President for 2015: Robin Akers

### **National Honours**

These presentations took place at the Guildhall London in October:

Young Life Saver of the Year – James Cossons  
Certificate of Thanks – James Cossons, Robin Akers, Alex Mays and Ciaran Fitzgerald  
Certificate of Merit – James Cossons, Robin Akers, Emily Heather, Jon Borley and Lee Wright

The following is presented at our Annual Presentation Evening:

Friends of the Society Certificate - Caroline Wright

### **Endeavour Cup**

This cup is not necessarily awarded for any specific achievement. It is made to someone who, during the year or longer, has shown exceptional commitment. This could be what they have achieved through sheer hard work, determination to improve or succeed, consistently 'being there' to act as a casualty or simply having improved greatly and thus merits recognition.



This year the Endeavour Cup goes to a member who has been with the Club since September 2014 and over this period of time joined the Club's Committee, taken part in competitions and worked towards her awards with tremendous effort. This member took over writing our monthly newsletter in September and has already perfected the art. However, overall since joining the Club the Committee feel that this member has come out of her shell and has taken different challenges head on and for that this year the Endeavour Cup goes to Jenny Fletcher.

## Club Member of the Year

Voting to elect the 2015 Club Member of the Year will take place at the Presentation Evening. Those members present were given a slip with three Nominations who were Natasha Mays, Megan Holms and Ed Baker. This year votes proved in favour of Natasha Mays and her Citation read:

Natasha has taken part in most of the outreach the Club has carried out this year. For the previous five years Natasha has taught many members of the Club and regularly attends our training sessions. As well as this Natasha is the Club's designated SLUG (Southwater Lake Users Group) representative and through her volunteering has achieved her v100 award. Natasha has created a Life Support booklet for use by our members at the Club in the New Year. This year Natasha has also achieved her Survive & Save Distinction award.

## Outreach

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Last year our events had a great effect on the Club, not only did we gain 14 new members but we highlighted the Drowning Prevention message to over 13,000 people. Drowning is still a tragedy that affects around 400 people each year in the UK. The events in this report would not have been able to happen without the dedication of our strong team of volunteers and I would like to thank them all for another great year of work.

## Swan Walk

This year we were lucky enough to secure a Street Collection Licence which generated £415 in donations for the Club, £100 of which was donated back to The Royal Life Saving Society for the use of their Mascot Perry the Buoy.

We had Perry walking around the town centre which generated lots of interest. Again, we had an area within the shopping centre to display Life Saving materials as well as a CPR teaching zone.



## School Presentations

This year is the first time we have visited any primary schools in the area. We were lucky enough to attend St John's, Greenway and Kingslea. The presentations lasted for around 15 minutes and focussed on teaching the children the SAFE code. To reinforce the message James played the RLSS UK Safe Code cartoon.

A SAFE pack was left with each school which contained various posters, stickers including a certificate to highlight that they have learnt about water safety. The photos show James presenting certificates to some of the schools.

We returned again this year to Millais to conduct full school assemblies and these carried a similar message to last year and focussed on the affects water has on the body and how that can be a danger to us. James also played the RLSS UK 'Beneath the Surface' video. This was a new resource from the RLSS UK this year and showed family members of drowning victims telling their stories.



Although we were unable to secure full assemblies at Tanbridge and Forest we were lucky enough to be able to promote Life Saving as a GCSE PE option to around 200 young people and hope following the presentation they will consider Life Saving as one of their sport options for GCSE PE.

At Forest James, John, Jon and Joe led four Life Saving taster sessions for 120 boys whereby all of the students learnt the recovery position, what to do if someone is choking as well as having a go at various water rescues outside.

We also attended Sparks in the Park and assisted the Pavilions in running a free Drowning Prevention week session for young people which saw 60 children all learning about Water Safety and Basic CPR.

As we look back on our second promotional summer, it is clear how much effort has been put in organising these events and I would to thank everyone again for their assistance. I must make a special thank you to Joe Burke who was a great help during the week 6th July. To see the final result of a new class of 11 members joining makes it all worthwhile but, more important we reached out to well over 15,000 people and warned them of the dangers that water can present. You can read more about our Outreach in the Summer Events Report 2015 which is available on our website.

## **Membership/Class Numbers/Instructors**

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Currently we have 26 active Club members and 7 Instructors who attend our training sessions on a regular basis.

This year saw the sign off of 5 brand new Life Saving Instructors for the Club who completed the initial course last year but completed the 10 hours of on the Job training this year. These new Instructors are James Cossons, Natasha Mays, Megan Holms, Elish Edwards and Ciaran Fitzgerald.

Our Instructors provided 456 hours of voluntary tuition across 52 training sessions at the pool, lake and beach.

## **Club, Branch, SE Region and National Competitions.**

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### **Club Competitions – Results**

Full details to be announced at our Presentation Evening.

### **National Lifesaving Competition Branch Qualifiers for SE Region**

60+ Age Group Men – Robin Akers, 40 to 49 Age Group Ladies – Kate Hall, Senior Girls – Kathryn Otley with Jade Hand from Crawley.

### **SE Region Qualifiers for National Finals**

60+ Age Group Men – Robin Akers, 40 to 49 Age Group Ladies – Kate Hall

### **National Finals**

60+ Age Group Men – Robin Akers, 40 to 49 Age Group Ladies – Kate Hall



### **European Lifesaving Championships**

Martin Schofield, Joe Orbell, Oba Waiykai, Jacob Reeve and Callum Sadberry

### **Sussex Pairs**

Kathryn Otley and Jenny Fletcher

## **Annual Presentation Evening**

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The Annual Presentation Evening took place at the Normandy Centre, Denne Road on Thursday 7th January 2016. The event was well attended by our members and we were very pleased to welcome the CEO of The Royal Life Saving Society, Di Steer and the Chair of Horsham District Council, Cllr. Tricia Youtan.

Cllr. Tricia Youtan presented some of the 148 Survive & Save Awards which had been achieved during the year. Di Steer presented seven Distinction Awards which is the highest award offered by the RLSS UK. Our Instructors who are on hand during the year to teach and assess were also recognised for their service. All the Volunteers which helped during our outreach detailed above were thanked for their time and effort.

Certificates, Trophies and Medals from the Club Competition and other presentations were carried out by different guests and Di Steer commented: "if every Life Saving Club across the Country was like Horsham Life Saving Club then my job would be done. It's fantastic to see both the achievement in terms of Survive & Save awards but also in terms of the Outreach in to the Community."

## General Communication and Social Activities

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As usual, most of our social activity is conducted prior to starting on a Thursday night whilst we are trying to read notices out! Despite all of this Jenny Fletcher has recently taken over the role of Chief Newsletter Editor and continues to send regular newsletters to our mailing list.

This year the Club has increased its presence on Social Media through Facebook advertising and this year alone we have reached a total number of 26,101 people within Horsham and the local area, a fantastic number and something we will be looking to push even more in 2016.

The annual Christmas fun night returned and so did the tradition of Pictionary. This year teams of five had to draw things ranging from an AED to Robin Akers, our Club Treasurer! During our pool time we had a game of desert island, a rope throw relay and a game of water polo.

Unfortunately, we didn't get the chance to have our Annual BBQ's at Southwater Lake or the Beach due to the times we were meeting and other events that we had running. Despite this the Teachers and Committee had their traditional Easter and Christmas meal and were invited to attend the Chairman's home in August for a Summer BBQ after one of our beach sessions.

Many of our outreach events could also be classed as social events as they were all very much enjoyed by our volunteers and also by those who crossed our path!

## Conclusion

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To conclude this year a special thanks has to go to all of those who have helped the club achieve another successful year. Especially those who have helped with our Outreach as well as those instructors, who without their commitment, we simply cannot achieve our goals.

With the Royal Life Saving Society celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary next year we hope that we will be able to report our best year to date.

We never know if one day the things we teach will help save someone's life but we feel our members are equipped with skills that could make that all importance difference.

James Cossons & Robin Akers

January 2016

