

# Horsham Life Saving Club

## CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2017



### Introduction and General Statements

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I have a sense of deja vu as I begin this year's Report as looking at my 2016 Report my opening words were:

*"This year has been mixed, good if not excellent in parts but not so good in others.*

*There have been some considerable pluses in our achievements during 2016 and details are in this report.*

*A big downside has been the lack of new members. We usually have a large intake in September but there was no one on the waiting list this year"*

Well, I regret to say that nothing has changed much, apart from needing to read 2017 for 2016!

We had no new members as we returned from the summer break at the pool and only a small number of very young joiners since, but thank goodness for their involvement because although small in number, they gave us a new sense of achieving something useful in our main task of teaching young people to stay safe in and around water by practical training and testing. In addition, they have whole-heartedly pitched in with everything.

This year the modest number of members taking on the courses has put great strain upon our finances. We've always tried to make our hire of pool and lake facilities self-financing leaving other fund raising and donations to further our outreach activities. In 2017 our income from pool fees exceeded hiring to the tune of about £500 a quarter and thus other income and reserves had to be used to balance the books. Whilst we still have a sound financial base, unless new members come forward in early 2018 then we will have to address the level of quarterly fees.

However, I make no apology for restating what I finished the introduction to last year's report by saying. *"Our members have all done extremely well and have achieved much to be proud of on a personal level as well as in the community at large, so well done everyone. Where else could you find such a small group achieving so much?"*

### The Details

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

One of the main pointers to what we have achieved is the number of successful candidates passing all or part of the range of examinations. Our primary function as a Life Saving Club is to teach people in a practical environment, how to look after themselves and assist others without endangering themselves in the process, when in and around water.

The total exam passes in 2017 numbered 75. This compares with 166 in 2016 and is a clear indication of the trend over the last couple of years. But despite this, those who have taken part have done well across a wide range of qualifications as is evident.

Attached to this report you will find a summary of the exams passed during the year.

Our Stillwater and Beach training and exam programme was modest this year as the lack of candidates at the Silver and Gold levels narrowed the opportunities and the post September intake youngsters were not on the scene through the summer. However, we still managed to secure four Distinction qualifications albeit two of these were re-cycled bi-annual updates by 'oldies' who really ought to know better! We were also able to include some members of Worthing Lifesaving Club in our open water sessions and exams as they were unable to progress these with Worthing.

The weather was exceptionally kind throughout all our open water days which always encourages attendance! However, two sessions at the lake were cancelled as we had no member needing to take new awards there and one beach session was likewise scrubbed but due to uncooperative sea conditions. Southwater water temperature at no time was below 20C and twice reached 26C. The downside was that this encouraged more weed that had to be negotiated. One beach session was re-located from Lancing beach to the more sheltered waters in Shoreham Harbour and this I'm sure gave the skipper of the outward-bound coaster something

different to see through his binoculars. Many thanks again to Frances Garrard for providing a base, changing facilities and hot drinks at Lancing. Experience in open water is a very important part of the learning experience and brings it home in no uncertain terms what a real-time scenario might be like and thus teaches those vitally important lessons about one's own limitations.

Sussex Branch have again not run a Survive & Save Instructors Course this year due to lack of applications. We had 5 keen to participate and qualify and these will nearly all now be lost as most move into preparation for school A-Level exams or have already gone off to University. So, for the second year running we, and indeed the Society, have probably lost the chance of retaining the continued involvement of these young people either locally or where they then move to.

## **Other qualifications**

Three people took their Automated External Defibrillator course and one person gained their National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches. A Community Instructors Course proved very worthwhile with 8 of the 9 candidates completing the course successfully and 7 of those have gained experience by assisting at our monthly Outreach 'Save a Baby's Life' Courses.

Although the Club does not run NPLQ courses two members became qualified and one is now working at both Billingham and Horsham. We were also able to host through November an NPLQ course mainly for members of Crawley Town LSC.

## **Finance**

As in previous years we have been fortunate to secure donations from a number of sources which have enabled us to subsidise the pool and lake hire and reduce the cost of the first award for new members. Unfortunately, the gap between what our members pay each quarter and the pool and lake hire is widening and although we are holding quarterly fees for the first quarter of 2018 we may have to increase depending on the number of new members joining. We had a successful street collection for Drowning Prevention week but had to buy new publicity materials which reduced the "profit" we made. In addition, we were unable to secure a free unit in the centre so paid for an outside gazebo. We gained from being seen and being able to promote the drowning prevention message but lost due to the cost of doing this.

We secured a £420 donation from Merdon Freemasons Lodge which enabled us to purchase a sea-going kayak to better provide safety cover when we are at the beach. We also had donations from Waitrose green disc scheme, the Chairman of HDC, North West Sussex Seagulls (£400) and from EasyFundraising.

## **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 member joined the Club in 2015 and I don't think they really knew what to expect! Quite unsure of what Lifesaving was all about but wanted to know and get involved. Since then they have developed into a confident lifesaver, always willing to help, as a casualty, as a competitor, at an outreach event or anything that was going on.

This year, although they had completed all awards to Gold level and gained a Distinction they turned up at open water events to be there and help.

Last year they had the opportunity to compete in their age group at the Regional Life Saving Championships and then qualified to go to the Finals in Sheffield. John Stainer did have a bit of a problem meeting up with him to travel back home the next day. Apparently there are some good night clubs in Sheffield, but that is another story. This year he again qualified for the Finals and came third in their Masters category.

He has qualified as a Lifeguard, a Community Instructor and passed his AED award this year.

This member has developed considerably since they first joined, showing much more confidence in everything they do.

The 2017 award goes to Julian Lee

## Club Member of the Year

Voting to elect the 2017 Club Member of the Year took place at the Presentation Evening. Those members present were given a slip with three nominations. These were Ed Baker, Julian Lee and Josie Simmons. This year the votes were in favour of Josie Simmonds and her citation reads:

Josie has always been an enthusiastic member, joining the committee to provide a Youth voice, helping with Outreach events, Tesco bucket collection, Save a Baby's Life, she's been there. She supported the Swimathon team, keeping track of the lengths and encouraging the swimmers. She has qualified as a Community Instructor and helps with teaching Life Support and Water Skills on Thursdays.

## National Honours

Club members were delighted to be included in the Honours awarded in the 2017 Presentation of Honours Ceremony at The London Guildhall in September. Not all were able to attend on the day due to clashes in commitments, but these will be formally presented at The Club Presentation Evening.

Those in receipt of honours were:

- Recognition of Service: John Stainer
- Certificates of Merit: Ed Baker, Natasha Mays, Kathryn Otley.
- Certificate of Thanks: Natasha Mays

## Membership/Class Numbers/Instructors

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This has been partly referred to above and unfortunately total membership is down on previous years. Many of those who remain 'regular' attendees have now secured the Survive & Save range of qualifications so we now have many chiefs but not enough Indians. It follows that we must look to other avenues of related interest to bolster numbers as well as retain the involvement of older ones. To this end, and to lay foundations for future senior qualifications, we're introducing the RLSS 'Rookie Lifeguard' course on club nights with a reduced dry and water time to enable the youngsters to get home at a reasonable hour. Clearly finishing at 10.00pm for under 13 year olds isn't realistic. We get no feed from The Pavilions, Christs Hospital or Billingshurst Rookie sessions so we've nothing to lose by targeting this age group ourselves.

It's a pity that the pool time from 8.00pm – 9.00pm, which was vacated by the Aqua-aerobic class and public swimming, was quickly swallowed up by Atlantis Swimming Club. If we'd have known, then potentially we could have introduced and run an earlier session. But hindsight is a wonderful thing!

Quite why there was such a dismal take up again in September is something of a mystery. In recent years most of our intake came from those in secondary education who were looking to fulfil the criteria for some of their Duke of Edinburgh Award challenges or as part of their GCSE PE. We understand that the schools didn't make their 'pitch' for D of E until later in the year and many have cut back on the numbers they are taking on for this, and the GCSE Criteria has also now changed. A little further back in time, many new members came to us on recommendation and family connections. This latter has helped us this autumn with the new younger group joining as these all came via family or friends of family connections.

Unless there's a significant take-up in January 2018 the continued reduced membership numbers means it will almost certainly be necessary to increase the quarterly pool hire fees in 2018 as we are simply not able to pay our way – see the separate comments under 'Finance'. We continue to look for grants and sponsorships to subsidise exam fees, courses and outreach but we must aim to break even on pool hire.

### Pool & Open Water Attendances & Volunteer Instructors Commitment

Average attendance at the pool throughout the year was 14 (21 in 2016) whilst the instructors have delivered some 360 hours of tuition between them (365 in 2016). Open Water activities over the 8 sessions (17 in 2016) at Southwater Lake, Lancing and Shoreham Beaches, had an average attendance of 7 (11 in 2016). Instructors delivered a further 52 (56 in 2016) hours tuition at the 3 sites.

Without the commitment of our Instructors working enthusiastically with modest numbers this year little would have been achieved so a considerable vote of thanks is due to them and my own sincere thanks is added for their continued support and that of the Club Committee and especially Kate Hall who hosted all our Committee Meetings.

A number of our other long serving members also received Honours for voluntary services rendered in the 2017 National Honours Awards. – See separate paragraph above.

## Outreach

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### Drowning Prevention Week

Lee Wright organised another extremely successful street collection with 14 members and 'pressed' family members, supported as previously by 'Perry' (this time housing a heavily disguised Ed Baker), in Swan Walk and Horsham town centre. The new open air stand and base in the Carfax proved a great success and of course the proliferation of DPW balloons all round the town were testament to the persistence of us getting passing children to take one or more on their travels. Thank goodness for the power socket used for the pump to blow these up! In the midst of GCSE exam time, the turn out by members was fantastic. We collected £324 in the buckets, which allowed some to be passed to RLSS UK, some paid for all the handouts (and more balloons than you can imagine), and some went to club funds. We had a really good flow of 'visitors' to the stand including Jeremy Quinn the local MP - twice! CPR was demonstrated and lots of PR material was handed out. A terrific effort by everyone – well done!

### Save a Baby's Life

This year we scheduled Save a Baby's Life courses every first Sunday of the month which Lee Wright organised. These were held at the Horsham 1<sup>st</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Scout HQ which we hired for the purpose. These were tutored between them by Lee Wright, David Slade and Kate Hall with assistance from Josie Simmons, Ellen McRae, Ed Baker, Sophie Lee, Kathryn Otley, Julian Lee and John Stainer. We had a total of 37 attendees which raised £210 in donations against expenses of £180 and a modest donation from the difference was passed to RLSS UK. A new venue needs to be sought for 2018 as the Scout HQ is to be sold off. David Slade also ran an Adult First Aid Session at a local church attended by 20 adults and this generated a further £20 in donations. Members provided another 40 hours of free tuition at these workshops to add to those given at the pool and in open water.

### School Presentations

David Slade ran a Water Safety Workshop at Summerlea Junior School in Rustington during DPW. SAFE Code and other Water Safety material was left with each pupil in the 2 Year 5 classes that participated and large posters left for the rest of the school. Unfortunately, no other primary school in Rustington, or any of the Secondary Schools in Horsham took up the offer of presentations.

### Other Water Safety Presentations

David Slade ran a Water Safety workshop / teach-in for 1<sup>st</sup> Southwater Cub Group with 40 boys and girls, as well as Leaders, taking part. Kate Hall also ran three Water Safety Workshops for 2<sup>nd</sup> Southwater Beavers with 20 Beavers in each session.

### Other Events

Tesco Supermarket bucket collections and to hand out PR material at three different Tesco sites were made by David Slade, Lee Wright, John Stainer, Robin Akers, Julian Lee, Ed Baker and Josie Simmons with the donations collected all being banked directly to RLSS UK.

Members provided safety cover for the Annual Southwater Triathlon Relay Competition where 113 teams of three each swim 400m, cycle 12 miles then run 2 miles. It covers all abilities and this year the first team was finishing before the last competitor had started their swim!

We fielded a team for Horsham Lions Club Swimathon and, as in previous years, instead of just swimming lengths we towed a person using a rescue tube! In the 55 minutes allocated the team of Robin Akers, Ed Baker, Jenny Fletcher, Julian Lee, Sophie Lee and Ellen MacRae supported by Josie Simmons, David Slade, Lee Wright and John Stainer, completed 117 lengths, a record for us. This exposed the Club to many members of the public, both as members of other teams and those supporting them. £595.20 was raised by members in sponsorship. Of this £297.35 was donated by Horsham Lions to their Chestnut Tree House appeal and the balance retained by the club to help towards pool hire costs. Wow! What a tremendous effort by the club with almost all members participating either on the day or by seeking donors.

### 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the formation of Sussex Branch of the Royal Life Saving Society

The club has participated in the celebrations of the anniversary which have been running throughout the year and Lee Wright, John Stainer and Robin Akers, along with Sue Akers, were heavily involved in organising the splendid 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner in Lewes. Our club had the largest number of attendees at this.

A challenge was set by the Branch to swim 60 lengths of a 25m pool within a single session and seek sponsors for the branch. The following completed the challenge, some received suitable certificates at the 60<sup>th</sup>

Dinner, others will be presented at the Presentation Evening: Robin Akers, Ed Baker, Ciaran Fitzgerald, Kate Hall, Sophie Lee, Kathryn Otley, David Slade, John Stainer and Lee Wright.

Not to be outdone and to build upon her D of E Challenge of 2016, Kate Hall has swum a mile on 150 occasions throughout this calendar year. Nearly to John O'Groats now Kate!

### William Henry Reward Program

Certificates are awarded to members who achieve 125 points for Volunteer activities, with 5 points being awarded for each event that has been undertaken, award achieved, or award examined as well as other activities. We are waiting for confirmation from RLSS HQ as to those members that have achieved this number of points this year.

### Social Activities

The annual summer gathering for members and families took place in David & Christine Slade's garden in Littlehampton in August and thankfully the weather was fine for the al fresco meal. The usual Christmas meal, along with a noisy, cut-throat, 9 pin skittles competition were enjoyed at The Bull Inn at Henfield in December.

## Competitions

### Club Competitions – Results

Participants this year were down on our usual numbers for reasons stated above but those who did participate made a real competition of each section and the very young new members pitched in with great enthusiasm.

		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Speed Events	Ladies	Sophie Lee	Kathryn Otley	Jenny Fletcher
	Men	David Slade	Ed Baker	Julian Lee
Set Pieces	Novices	Emily Dorman	Dan Smith	Emilee Nash
	Ladies	Josie Simmons	Emily Dorman	Emilee Nash
	Men	Dan Smith	Tom Baker	George Hall
	Instructors/ Distinction Holders	David Slade	Robin Akers	Sophie Lee
Novices Rope Throw		Dan Smith	Emily Dorman	Megan Chapman
SERC Wet & Dry	Novices	Dan Smith	Tom Baker	Megan Chapman
	Ladies	Josie Simmons	Megan Chapman	Rosie Alderson
	Men	Dan Smith	Tom Baker	George Hall
	Instructors/ Distinction Holders	David Slade	Robin Akers	Kate Hall
Best Novice Competitor		Dan Smith	1 <sup>st</sup> Only	
Overall Champion		David Slade	Sophie Lee	Jenny Fletcher

### National Lifesaving Championships

#### Sussex Branch Qualifiers to Region and SE Region Eliminators

Robin Akers, Kate Hall and Julian Lee all qualified in their respective Masters age groups to represent the Region in the Finals.

#### National Finals

Robin Akers: Masters 60 + 1<sup>st</sup> Life Support Initiative; 3<sup>rd</sup> Aquatic Initiative; 2<sup>nd</sup> Swim & Tow; 3<sup>rd</sup> Line throw: 3<sup>rd</sup> Overall

Kate Hall: Masters 40-49 3<sup>rd</sup> Life Support Initiative: 5<sup>th</sup> Overall.

Julian Lee: Masters 40 – 49 3<sup>rd</sup> Life Support Initiative: 3<sup>rd</sup> Aquatic Initiative; 3<sup>rd</sup> Swim & Tow; 3<sup>rd</sup> Line throw: 3<sup>rd</sup> Overall

Well done everyone.

## **Annual Presentation Evening**

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The 2017 Presentation Evening took place at Horsham URC on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The Club was delighted to welcome their Guests of Honour, Ian Hutchings, the Royal Life Saving Society's UK President, who had travelled up from Devon to be with them, and Cllr Peter Burgess, Deputy Chairman of Horsham DC who was standing in for the Chairman who was incapacitated.

Other guests were Doug Simmonds, Chairman of RLSS Sussex Branch, Tim Bolton, Contracts Manager at The Pavilions and David Trowbridge from Horsham Lions Club.

Club Members were presented with various proficiency awards and vocational qualifications they had secured for throughout 2017 and these included 4 Distinctions, the highest award the RLSS offers. That there have only been 229 such awards in the whole UK since the new Survive and Save syllabus was introduced in 2012 and the club has produced 25 of these, speaks volumes for the standard of teaching and commitment at the club.

Certificates were also presented to every member who had been involved in the Club's considerable 'Outreach Programme' which ranged from delivering it's popular free to attend 'Save A Baby's Life' workshops, to providing safety cover for the Annual Triathlon Relay held at Southwater Lake and running Water Safety Workshops in local schools and for cub/scout groups.

Ian Hutchings re-presented club members, John Stainer and Ed Baker, with their National Honours along with those to Natasha Mays and Kathryn Otley, who could not attend the National Honours Ceremony in the London Guildhall held in September.

## **Conclusion**

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I wish to conclude by thanking everyone who has given their time and considerable effort to make this another memorable, if somewhat different, year for the club. Without the commitment and enthusiasm of the many voluntary instructors, the support of their families, and the wholehearted involvement of those under instruction in everything the club has been involved with, well there'd be nothing to write a report about.

We've been most fortunate throughout the year in being able to obtain a good flow of press reports into the West Sussex County Times and we greatly appreciate their support. It's never clear if this generates any new members but it is an excellent way of keeping the club and indeed water safety issues in the public face.

I finish by reminding everyone that we need to work hard to see us through this lean period of new members coming to join us, and each of us can do something towards this, by telling school friends and indeed those who have left school (some many years ago) that there's something worthwhile learning. It's a good way of improving fitness and who knows one day it may save a life or two, maybe yours.

David Slade  
Chairman  
Horsham Life Saving Club  
December 2017