

OPEN SEA COMMITTEE REPORT 2004

This is a short report on the activities undertaken by the Open Sea Committee of the Leinster Region Swim Ireland in 2004.

Thanks to the Committee

I would like to express my thanks to the members of the 2004 Open Sea Committee, listed below, for their much appreciated contribution to making the season so successful and enjoyable.

Carissa Farrell	Brian Mongey	Noel Dunne	Dave Turner
Steve Doyle	Paul Wynne	Bob Bushell	Fiona O'Keefe
Joe Browne	Jimmy Reilly		Ciaran Cassidy

Calendar of Events

Interested clubs were asked to submit entries for inclusion on the calendar and following a consultative meeting in February, the dates for each race were agreed. A total of 20 races were included in this year's calendar, down slightly on the previous year.

The season was generally deemed to be a successful one, notwithstanding the less than perfect weather. I would like to express my gratitude to the many clubs who organised their races and with one or two minor exceptions, the events were very well organised. The 2005 committee will address the issues which emerged from the less well organised races.

Well organised club races do not happen by chance, careful planning and a host of volunteers are necessary to achieve a successful, safe and enjoyable outcome. So again congratulations to the clubs for their efforts during the 2004 season.

I would like to express particular appreciation to the ever-present race management team of Joe Browne, Jimmy Reilly and Robbie Nicholson for their humour and patience during the summer.

One of the major success factors during the summer was the top class results service provided on the Leinster Region Web Site. I would like to acknowledge the superb work and commitment of Tom Roche, sometimes under difficult circumstances, in developing the Web page and in maintaining the flow of information throughout the season.

Dun Laoghaire Harbour Race

The Secretary of the Open Sea Committee, Carissa Farrell, also has the onerous task of organising the Harbour Race. Carissa did a superb job again in 2004. So good, in fact, that we made her do it twice. Due to inclement weather conditions, we were obliged to cancel the first running of the race on August 22nd. The race was successfully staged 2 weeks later on September 5th.

We are very grateful to the Dun Laoghaire Harbour company and also to the Carlisle Pier development company for their generous sponsorship. Staging this prestigious event, in the manner we have become accustomed, would not be feasible without this support.

Organising such an event involves working closely with a wide range of support personnel and interested parties. I would like to acknowledge the help provided by the Harbour Master, Harbour Board, RNLI inshore lifeboat, Civil Defence, Marine co-ordinator Dave Fitzgerald and the many people who supplied and crewed safety boats, and the many volunteers who gave freely of their time.

Dublin City Council Liffey Swim

The Dublin City Council Liffey swim was staged on September 4th, and was as usual an outstanding success. The successful organisation of the event is almost exclusively attributable to the enormous workload committed to the event by Brian Mongey and I would like to place on record my appreciation for his dedication to this prestigious event.

Dublin City Council took over the sponsorship of the race this year and committed direct funds in excess of €25,000 towards the costs of running the event. We are deeply indebted to the City Council for this support and we look forward to many more years of this successful partnership.

There are of course again a host of individuals and groups to thank for their help and advice in staging the Liffey Swim. There were in excess of 80 individuals who volunteered in some way to help with the successful staging of the event, among these in particular, Paul Carolan, the safety officer for the event, he played a significant part in ensuring this year's Liffey Swim was such a success.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of An Garda Siochana, Dublin City Fire Services, Civil Defence and the Dublin City Council officials who provided support and assistance.

Insurance

The issue of insurance generally and specifically as it relates to the running of the open sea races became an issue once again in early 2004. I would like to express my appreciation of the efforts of the officers of Leinster region and Swim Ireland in reaching agreement on the funding from the OSC for this thorny issue in 2004 and indeed for subsequent years. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of our CEO, Sarah Keane, in resolving with our Insurers and Brokers, the many issues and misconceptions surrounding our cover.

Charity Event

This year for the first time, the Open Sea Committee became involved in organising an end of season race and event, where the primary aim was to raise funds for charity. I am delighted to report that the fundraiser was an outstanding success raising in excess of €15,000 for "Orphan Aid Ireland". Special thanks are due to Brian O'Dwyer for his determined and dedicated work in raising funds for this charity.

Swimmer of the Year

This year for the first time also we were able to introduce a new prize category for all our races. The new category was designed to encourage younger swimmers (under 25) into our races. The sponsorship for this innovation was both unexpected and greatly appreciated and was generously donated by John McCarthy.

Finally I would like to thank "C&C Club Orange" for their generous sponsorship of the "Swimmer of the Year" awards which were presented at the Charity function.