



G.W.R. Medical Fund Society's Swimming Baths, Swindon

Swimming in Swindon

ANNUAL AQUATIC ENTERTAINMENT

VISIT OF THE COLONIAL SWIMMERS
AND THE WORLD CHAMPION

A CROWDED ATTENDANCE
AND A SPLENDID PROGRAMME

WESTERN COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP

INTERNATIONAL SCRATCH RACE

What was undoubtedly the finest programme of aquatic sports ever witnessed in Swindon - and there have been some good ones in the past was that which was carried out last Wednesday evening at the G.W.R. Medical Fund Society's Swimming Baths, it being the 21st annual swimming entertainment in the connection of the Swindon Amateur Swimming Club. The promoters had succeeded in bringing together the cream of the swimming world, including Joey Nuttall (the undefeated professional champion of the world). D. Billington, of Bacup (holder of the 500 yards world championship, 1000 yards Northern Counties, and 440 yards and 500 yards records). R. Cavill Champion of the New South Wales, Australia (holder of the 550 yards and half-mile world's championships and half-mile record). G. Read (another Australian champion), and T. Wildgoose of the Hyde Seal Swimming Club (1000 yards champion, 1899). As was to be expected some splendid expositions of the art of swimming were given by these champions. Both Nuttall and Read created new records for these baths. Nettle lowered the records for 500 yards made by Jarvis when he was here a year ago, and Cavill established a new record for this bath in the one length handicap, his time being 18 secs. Cavill also won the 440 yards international scratch race, defeating Billington, but his time was five seconds outside the time in which Billington covered the distance last Saturday. Another interesting race, the 100 yards

Western Counties Amateur Championship, which was won by R. V. Webb of Cheltenham. In this event the local champion, H. Harrison swam remarkably well. All the other events were watched with keen interest by a crowded attendance. Indeed, the number of spectators, we should think, beat all previous records, for all available seating accommodation and standing room was occupied, and many had to be reluctantly refused admission. The programme was started soon after seven o'clock and lasted nearly three hours. A band was in attendance, under the direction of Mr. A. Wilks.

The officials responsible for the arrangements which were so satisfactorily carried out, were: For the racing - Starter, Mr. W. H. Lawson: timekeeper, Mr. F. Ifold: Hon. handicapper, Mr. R. B. Veness : judges, Messrs. Charlie Williams, E. O Twitcher and Eddie Thomas, referees, Messrs. E. J. Godfrey and G. W. Hearn: check starter, Mr. G. W. Leavers. For the polo Mr. Hearn was the referee and Mr. Ifold timekeeper, with Messrs J. Oakley and G. Oakley as competitors' stewards. For the 100 yards Western Counties' Championship the officials were: - Starter and timekeeper, Mr. R. B. Veness : referees, Mr. G. W. Hearn: judges, Messrs H. W. Harris (Cheltenham) and W. E. Harris (Bristol).

The secretarial duties were admirably discharged by Mr. R..B. Veness , the esteemed and popular hon. secretary and handicapper of the club, and he received adequate support from the other officials of the Club, viz. Mr. T. J. Rice (captain), Mr. G. W. Leavers (sub-captain). Mr. H. W. Thomas (hon. treasurer), Messrs. H. H. McGill, F. Ifold, G. Oakley, R. Gray, G. A. Plaister, A. W. Baxter, J. Oakley, and F. Hyde (Committee).

Below will be found details of all the events:

One Length Boys' Team Race, for a Perpetual Challenge Cup, presented by Mr. T. Veness, one of the vice-presidents of the Club. There were four school teams entered for this event, viz, Clarence Street Board School, Clifton Street, Higher Grade and Westcott Place. The winners were found in the Clarence Street boys, who won last year, and therefore retain their premier position and the Cup. Their time was 2 min. 47½ secs. The team was comprised of J. Duck, W. Dunn, F. Harries and H. Sawyer.

Two Lengths' Club Handicap. - First prize, pair of bronzes, presented by Messrs. Adams Bros. 2nd. hanging clock, presented by Mr. H. J. Deacon, third, case of silver-mounted carvers, presented by Messrs. Edwards Bays and Rye. The heats in this event were swam off on the 3rd turn, and only the final had now to be contested. It resulted as follows: 1. H. Harrison (scratch): 2. T. C. Wheel (18 secs), 3. S. Nash (14 secs), time. 1 min. 9.3-5 secs. Harrison swam splendidly, and, overtaking the others in the second length, he won with comparative ease.

Two Lengths Club Handicap (comic race). - First prize, portmanteau, presented by Mr. Richards second, pair of boots, presented by Mr. Haskins: third, one dozen cabinet photos, presented by Mr. Hood. The conditions of this race were that competitors had to appear on the starting-board with night-shirt and cap: on their number being called they had to get into their light attire and swim to the other end of the bath where they had to light a candle (which was already fixed in a candle-stick for them) and swim back, keeping the candle alight. The first to undress and dive into the water was declared the winner. There were 17 entries, necessitating two heats, and the event naturally caused much merriment. First heat -1. H. Andrews, scratch: 2. W. Adams. 14 sec. 3. G. F. Rose, 2 secs: time, 2½ minutes. Andrews soon obtained a lead and won with ease. Second heat - 1, J. Lawrence, 8 secs:, 2. S. Nash 8 secs: 3. B. Tomkins: 18 secs. time 2 min. 28secs. A very close race, it being almost a dead heat for first place. Final - 1. Tomkins: 2. Adams: 3. Andrews. The number of competitors in the final was limited, as Nash did not turn out, and Rose was disqualified for not complying with the whole of the conditions. Andrews was not so successful as in his heat, and had to be content with third place. Time 2 min. 25 secs.

100 Yards Championship of the Western Counties A.S.A. - (1901 holder, F. J. Bush, of Bristol Dolphin Club: 2. T. Davey, Weston-Super-Mare. Time 1min 14 secs. A splendid race and very close finish. H. Harrison (Swindon) and A. J. Alcock (Bristol) also competed and the former only lost by the touch being second. Second heat - This was simply a swim over, there being only

two competitors turning out. viz., W. J. Rowe (Teignmouth), and R. V. Webb (Cheltenham). Final - 1. Webb: 2. Crisp. 3. Davey. Time, 1min. 11 2-5 secs. Crisp led slightly for a considerable distance, but Webb got on terms and won a very close race.

410 Yards International Scratch Race (nearly 12 lengths of the bathes to be exact, 11 lengths 35 yards). - First prize, Alabaster clock: second, travelling bag: third, combination clock and a barometer: fourth, smokers cabinet: 5th, breakfast cruets (presented by Messrs. Limmex and Co. - 1. R. Cavill, Australia. 2. L. D. Billington, Bacup. 3. G. Read, Australia: 4. T. Wildgoose, Hyde Seal Club. Time 5 mins. 40 secs or 5secs outside the English Amateur record of 5 Mins. 35 secs, made by Billington at Radcliffe last Saturday. The world's record is also 5 mins. 35 secs. and is held by J. Nuttall. As regards the race which was splendidly contested. Cavil led slightly from Billington for the first four lengths then drew level. At the sixth length Billington held a slight advantage. Wildgoose being half a length behind, whilst Read was not far behind the first and second men. At the finish of the tenth and eleventh lengths, Billington still held the lead, but on starting the last 35 yards both drew up level and an exciting race was witnessed. The finish appeared to many to be a dead heat, but the judge's decision was that the Australian had won. Billington being the second. It was a grand finish, and the crowd cheered the competitors tremendously.

One Length Open Handicap - First prize, ornamental eight day striking clock (presented by Messrs. Cottell Bros.), second combination aneroid barometer and thermometer (presented by Mr. Gose: third, brief bag (presented by Mr. F. Budding). - There were no less than 96 entries for this event, necessitating eight heats, and a second round. The winners of the heats in the first round were 1st, H. Plaister, 11 secs., time 33 2-5 secs, 2nd. E. J. Churchill, 14secs, time 34.2 secs, 3rd. H. Harrison, 4 secs, time 34secs. 4th. C. Williams (Bath) 6secs, time 34secs., 5th. J. C. Richardson (Bath), 8 secs., time 31 4-5secs., 6th, G. Dibsall, 8 secs., time, 30 2-5 secs: 7th. D. Billington, 2 secs, time, 34 2.5secs. The only other competitor in this heat was J. Lawrence, who had 10 secs. start, and it was a close finish); 8th. T. C. Phillips, 8 secs., time, 31 4-5 secs) F. Thorpe (Newbury and formerly of Swindon) and R. Cavill (Australia) also competed in this heat, and although Cavill, who started from scratch, did not get a place, he swam in great style, and made a record for this bath, covering the length in 18secs. He was loudly cheered as he left the water. Second round - First heat - 1 Harrison, 2 Plaister, 3 Williams: time, 31 2-5secs. Second heat - 1 Richards, 2.Dibsall, 3 Phillips, time. 31 2-5 secs. Final - 1 Dibsall 2 Richardson 3 Harrison: time. 31 secs. A splendid race. Harrison collided with Williams, or he might have obtained a better position.

To vary the programme and amuse the audience, a grand display of swimming was given by the two Australians. Messrs. Cavill and Read and it was a truly marvelous performance, eliciting loud and frequent applause. A feature of their unique performance was the high dive and the fancy swimming, particularly imitations of a porpoise and a Chinaman.

The next swim was a great event. Nettle, the undefeated professional champion of the world, made a successful attempt to lower the record for 500 yards, viz. 6 min., 3 secs, made by J. A. Jarvis at Swindon a year ago. Mr. Nuttall, though suffering from a cold, swam in grand style, he had a very easy style, with a good strong over-hand stroke. Nettle never appeared to exert himself, and he covered the distance in 6 min. 25secs, thus beating Jarvis' record by 9 secs. Nuttall's own time for the distance is 6 min. 24 1-5 secs. Needless to say, he was loudly cheered for his smart performance on the present occasion.

Three Lengths Novelty Clothes Race Club Handicap. - First prize, kit bag (presented by Mr. S..H. Coley: second, smoker's companion (presented by Mr. S. J. Gilbert): third, silver mounted umbrella (presented by Mr. J. James; - There were six entries, and the race caused great amusement. It was contested under the usual conditions - competitors had to dress in a suit of woollen material, after swimming one length, and the first to undress was declared the winner. - 1. H. H. McGill; 2. G. F. Rose; 3. J. Wade.

The concluding item on the programme was a polo match between the Captain's and Sub-Captain's teams, which resulted in a win for the former by 4 goals to 2. At half-time the score was 2 to 1. The teams were: Captain's - Tranter, goal, Harrison and Gray, backs, Rose, half-back,

Rice, Billington and Dibsall, forwards. Sub-Captain's team - Fox, goal; Leavers and McGill, backs: Wildgoose, half-back: Harrison, Rowe and Wrench, forwards. The goals were scored by Billington (2), Harris (2) Rowe and Harrison.

After the entertainment the visitors were entertained to a cold collation at the head-quarters of the Swindon Club, the Eagle Hotel, and a splendid repast was provided by Host H. W. Thomas, to which full justice was done by a large company.

Mr. W..H. Lawson made a capital Chairman, and he was supported by the Colonial and other visitors who had been competing at the sports; also by Mr. T. Veness, Mr. F. Ifold, Mr. G. W. Hearn, etc.

Complimentary speeches were made, and the visitors received with unbounded enthusiasm.

Mr. Lawson afterwards made a few suitable remarks and presented the prizes to the successful competitors.

The Chairman mentioned in the course of the evening that the two Australian swimmers intended returning home on the 26th inst. He was sure they would carry with them to their home across the seas pleasant recollections of their visit to the Mother Country, and of that evening's entertainment. (applause). Mr. Nuttall, too, had given them an eye-opener, by his splendid performance. (applause). Mr. Lawson concluded by speaking in praiseworthy terms of the work done by the Secretary and Committee.

A musical programme was provided, Mr. T. Morgan presiding at the piano.

The Australians and Billington afterwards left to catch the midnight mails to Glasgow, where they had an engagement the following day.

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