

RLSS Surrey Branch

Chair's Report 2014-2015

Firstly, can I say thank you to Katie Rabone of Nile Swimmers for coming along to the AGM this year and expanding on the problem of global drowning and the work that her charity is doing to make practical in-roads into reducing the massive numbers of deaths that are happening each year, especially in low-income countries.

I need to offer an apology for the lack of an AGM last year. A couple of you noticed, which is wonderful! Unfortunately, both Darren and I lost our parents in late 2013 and 2014. This meant that we were both seriously distracted from the Branch admin and didn't get papers prepared, notices sent out, and so on. The activities of the Branch continued unabated but the governance side didn't. As a result, and as I explained in the notice to the AGM, the Executive Committee agreed that the best course of action was to put ourselves all up for re-election and to get back to a rolling plan for succession to make the appointments of the Chair, Administrator and Safeguarding Officer for one year only.

All the officers offered themselves for re-election. There was only one additional nomination for a role of Branch Officer received (thank you Ben Horne) and as we have vacancies for this role, there is therefore no need for elections and all are duly appointed.

The Branch Constitution, which is a nationally generated document, has been under review for some time. There are roles for which we have less need today; there are others that would make a huge difference, and yet which many Branches struggle to find suitably qualified holders for (esp. PRO). Similarly, the activities of Branches have changed over the last 20 or so years. This year, we have decided to make a simple change to the participation at the Executive level, which we hope will have a big impact in the future. This is to invite each active club or approved centre to have at least one participant on the Committee. So far, we have representatives from Woking, Tandridge, Yateley, Dorking, and Aquarius. We hope that this will grow, that it will improve the sharing of ideas and information, and that it will mean that the Branch can better engage with anyone who is delivering our awards on a regular basis.

Governance is obviously important, and after the appointment of officers, the next key area is the financial management of the Branch. I'd therefore like to quickly reassure you that this has not been allowed to slip over the last two years. As you may recall, all day-to-day financial administration was transferred three or four years ago to Headquarters.

TABLE - A summary of our financial health as a Branch

	2013	2014
Income	£ 6791	£ 4642
Expenditure	£ 4096	£ 2438
Gross I/C	£ 2695	£ 2204
Accumulative Funds	£ 24,097	£ 26,197

The drop in income was largely due to three factors; a small fall in membership and reduced numbers of cricket coaches first-aid training. These were partly offset by increases in awards income and bank interest. You will see that our accumulated funds have therefore grown again by about £2000.

For more than a decade, we have said to members that we are always keen to support new initiatives in the Branch that are in-line with the Society's objectives. The most obvious would be the establishment of new clubs, participation in competitions, and public awareness raising campaigns, but anything will be considered. If you have an idea PLEASE let us know.

Back in 2012, we went through the transition from the old RLSS awards to the *Survive and Save* structure. At the AGM in early 2013, I reported on the success of this and some of the impacts on the Branch. On the positive side, we have much less administrative activity, many more instructors, and far more encouragement for participants to experience the wider aspects of life-saving, especially competitive life-saving and open-water activities. This does mean that the organisation of these activities is more demanding and that tends to fall on a few shoulders. I would like to single out a few stalwarts who have made a big difference this year;

- As BLC, **Alison Angiolini** receives the vast majority of enquiries from instructors and the public, typically one or two every day, and she makes all the arrangements for many of our activities, meetings and so on.
- Although the processing of S&S awards is handled centrally, there are still many awards that are handled by the Branch. This year, alone, there have been LS3 (25), NRASTC¹ (262), NRASTC renewals (138), and RTTDS² (103). For several years now, **Gail Moore** has managed all of our awards and as these are now largely 'vocational' her efforts are especially important today.
- When we reintroduced the Branch Competition five or six years ago, we were delighted with the emerging interest shown by our members. In the past, the link between the Branch and the Regional, National, and International events seemed a little mysterious to many people. Through the efforts of **Rowena Moore** and **Jacky Arnold**, I am delighted that this is being

¹ NRASTC – National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches

² RTTDS – Rescue Test for Teachers of Disabled Swimmers

broken down, that more adventurous and national standard elements are being incorporated, and that as a result we are getting enquiries from enthusiastic youngsters keen to take part regionally and nationally.

In 2014, we held two Branch beach weekends, two open-water ones, a S&S Instructors course, and two Open Water Instructors endorsement courses. There was also one other beach weekend organised by one of the clubs. This year's calendar is being finalised and all the details will appear on the Branch website (www.life-saving.net) in the next few weeks. However, we do know that there will be; two open-water weekends (at Southwater Park), and we are hoping that a third may be arranged in the west of the county, three beach weekends (two in Eastbourne and one in Bournemouth), courses for open water instructor endorsement can be held at any of the beach or lake weekends. The competition is planned for late Autumn. And, we are hoping to organise a special day for Instructors to help them get to grips with competitive life-saving and hopefully feel more confident preparing teams for our own and the higher level events.

Three years ago, we formed a Youth Committee to try to stimulate participation of younger members in the running of the Branch. Of those members that were involved, one has left the country, and four have now gone over the age threshold but are members of the Executive anyway. We are therefore going to be looking at ways of, again, involving younger members in the running of the Branch and Region. If you know of someone who might be interested, please let us know!

There is always scope for members to get involved more widely locally and nationally. I'd like to highlight the possibility in the hope that one or two of you will decide to engage with these aspects of the Society. To begin with, there's national drowning prevention week, which is primarily a public awareness and fund-raising opportunity. The Society is keen to focus its work on drowning prevention, which goes well beyond teaching young people to survive and save, and they have just appointed community drowning prevention officers, who will be encouraging members to work with them on local initiatives. The Annual Branch Conference is held in June and is a fantastic opportunity to network and be inspired by the work that people are doing all over the country. There are national project teams working on all kinds of ideas and you generally only have to express an interest in something to be involved by HQ in one of these. Finally, there are plenty of developments internationally, through the RLSS Commonwealth and other partner organisations, where volunteers are very much needed. So, PLEASE, if you have even a vague idea, or don't know in what way but are prepared to give a little more time to the RLSS, DO say. Then we can put you in touch with the right people.

Thank you, Graham Wilson (Dr)

Appendix – RLSS Surrey Branch Executive Committee

ROLE	HOLDER	UNTIL
President (Executive-appointment)	Lucy Haines	2016
Chair	Graham Wilson	2016
Administrator	Darren Taylor	2016
Life-Saving Coordinator	Alison Angiolini	2017
Awards Officer	Gail Moore	2017
Safeguarding	Lucy Haines	2016
Press Relations Officer		2017
Lifeguard Liaison	Carol Jull (asst by Ben Horne)	2017
Competitions	Rowena Moore (asst by Jacky Arnold)	2017
Outreach - Cricket Coaches	Tina Marley	2017
Outreach - SABL	Dee Gladden	2017
Branch Officer - Clubs - Woking	Clive Stevens and Jacky Arnold	2017
Branch Officer - Clubs - Tandridge	Rowena Moore and Gail Moore	2017
Branch Officer - Clubs - Aquarius	Charlotte Harmer, Cathy Atkins, and Kate Doyle	2017
Branch Officer - Clubs - Dorking	Jessica Constable, Jack Constable and Esther Purdy	2017
Branch Officer - Clubs - Yateley	Pat Brewer, Tom Traylor	2017
Branch Officer - Youth Participation	Tom Traylor, Jessica Constable, and Jack Constable	2017