

BRANCH HISTORY

REPORT TO AUSSI TASMANIA COMMITTEE MEETING - 26th OCTOBER 1997

In late September I spent a few days in Launceston in an attempt to discover the origins of AUSSI in Tasmania and to collect material for a couple more personal profiles.

Quite a few people were very generous with their help and I talked to John Pugh, Hector Beveridge, Alwynne McMahon, Jenny Page, Tiina Hawkesford and Peter Goss. Alwynne arranged for Lyn Jetson to deliver a large box of early Launceston files which I sat up late going through.

The earliest recorded Tasmanian representative was in 1979. This was David Gerrard, a New Zealander, who spent a short time in Launceston practising as a doctor. He was a Masters Swimmer in New Zealand but it seems his participation for Tasmania was an isolated event at the time.

However, soon afterwards another visitor arrived in Launceston from Canberra for a short holiday with her mother, Nancy Chester. This was Helen Rees, originally a Launceston resident but later transferred to Canberra. She was swimming at Windmill Hill one day and spoke to Peter Goss about AUSSI Masters. This was the first constructive information about Masters Swimming to reach Tasmania. It fell on fertile ground as Peter, Jenny Page, Tiina MacKenzie (before her marriage) and Keith Moore, who had three daughters swimming were enthusiastic about the idea of forming a Launceston AUSSI Masters Club.

From the National Journals of the time it seems that the group stayed small for some time. Alwynne McMahon joined them as did Barry Larter and Eric Flynn.

In the summer of 1981 a group was swimming one or two nights a week at Windmill Hill and, in the winter, Tiina negotiated with Geoff Fountain to swim at Theogenes. There were more swimmers at this stage including, Chris and Libby Showell, Ken and Edith Pitman, Penny Grove, Victoria Douglas, Leonie Smith and Susan Bower.

In 1983 they financially supported a team of four swimmers to go to the Brisbane Nationals. These were Jenny Page, Peter Goss, Ken Pitman, (and one other) and Eric Flynn as supporter.

Before this, in 1982, Trish Beveridge, from Devonport, had contacted the group and was keen to start a club in Devonport. Meanwhile she travelled to Launceston and met with the Launceston swimmers whenever she could. She liaised with them and actually entered in the 1982 Nationals in Warringah, Sydney, swimming for Tasmania.

I was happy to have found a start of AUSSI TAS and have a lot more information in the form of notes which I hope to commit to computer in the near future. I will check and re-

check the above information and hope to get in touch with Nancy Chester to see if she can help me with a date of her daughter's visit. I also have Trish Beveridge's address and hope also to contact her.

I am still finding out information about Nan Lewis, the most recent being her involvement in the State Committee as Secretary and Publicity Officer, when she produced the Platypus Press, so her profile is not complete. But I did find out a very useful piece of information about her while I was in Launceston.

It seems that Launceston and Devonport made some attempts to start a club or clubs in the South of the State. They came down and visited Glenorchy pool personnel, but nothing seemed to eventuate from this. Later they approached John Brown, Manager of Clarence Pool, and he wasn't personally interested himself, but he told them of a senior swimmer who regularly swam at Clarence and they discovered that this was Nan Lewis.

So Nan was the pivotal person who, together with Perri Brereton, was instrumental in encouraging others to form clubs in the south. I will have to stop gathering information about Nan or, instead of a cameo profile, I will have a book!

I am enjoying the project, although it proceeds slowly, but I understand I have plenty of time. Actually it would be useful to have a time-frame. I believe an Australian AUSSI Anniversary is coming up in a few years and each state is preparing a history. Does anyone know the date of this anniversary? Or, more importantly, a dead-line for the histories?

25th Anniversary

Maureen Shegog
23rd October 1997