

Friday 5th April 2024 sees us celebrating a decade of South West Swim Coaching

Yes, it was 10 years ago today that we ran our first open water session, how time flies!

We started the process of setting up South West Swim after seeing there were no quality swim training providers specialising in training for open water and triathlon swimming in the area. At the time Open Water Swimming did not look like the booming, popular activity it does now. It was much more of a fringe activity of swimming, the poor relation to pool swimming and something people would commonly do as part of a triathlon or a challenge (and often begrudgingly). We wanted to help change this landscape and start to give swimmers of all levels a safe introduction to the open water and a structured development path to continue their open water swimming safely, alongside building a dedicated fitness and technique pathway to develop technique. Taking this open water passion and mixing it with existing coaching & teaching qualifications, a fine eye for stroke correction and injury prevention, plus our Swim Smooth certification, South West Swim was born.

Head Coach Jason Tait was one of the first fully qualified open water coaches for Swim England and The STA in the UK, literally a couple of handfuls existed with these qualifications at the time. Later Jason took this further and was asked to contribute to the redevelopment of version 2 of the STA coaching qualification working with other industry leaders and notable figures in the UK open water community.

Back then we could never imagine where this journey would take us, but here we are ten years later, having now coached thousands of swimmers, triathletes and learn to swim clients of all ages and abilities.

Our first open water session was held at Lake12 South Cerney Outdoor (as it was known then), that first session was cold and we had just three swimmers on our books. These small numbers did not last long and as the word spread, our reputation grew and our small business started to evolve and grow quickly. We then branched out with our first video analysis sessions at Highworth Recreation centre, then our first squad session at Dorcan, then came our very own Endless pool. A strategic, but organic, build of swim services designed to give our very best to those we coached, and coach to this day.

Fast forward to today and we are now running 6 squad sessions a week in 3 different locations, and still getting requests to deliver more sessions outside of Swindon (if only there were additional hours in the day and helicopter commutes). Our Endless Pool sessions thrive with an offering of 14-16 sessions per week for video analysis, 1-to-1 and learn to swim front crawl which all go alongside our summer passion of open water coaching. We always strive to make our sessions stand out, different from other clubs in both terms of session quality, session content, perks, extras and how we can offer these to you as fairly and as flexible as possible. We didn't do this alone and have had support from lots of individuals, businesses and organisations over the years, I have listed a thank you to all at the footer of this article. I will be eternally grateful to everybody who has played a part in our journey.

We hope we have made a positive impact with the athletes, businesses and organisations we have met, coached and advised over the last decade. We strive to continually develop,

educate and improve ourselves in order to help others, and we never take this job for granted as it is always a pleasure and privilege to coach those who put trust in us. Thank you for allowing me to do my dream job. We promise to give our best to our swimmers and be at the heart of your swim development for many more years to come.

Jason Tait
Head Coach
South West Swim

Big thanks to those who have helped us develop, provide and mature over the past decade.

The list is extensive and sorry if i have forgotten anybody;

Denise 'Mrs SWS' Tait & The Kids for allowing me to do this in the first place

Coach Colin Jones

Coach Stuart Foster

Coach Mark Hopkins

Coach Ashley Cain

Lifeguard Rachael Hanrahan

Lifeguard Kirsten Smith

Lifeguard Helen Hanks

Lifeguard Ben Tait

Clare Holford - RLSS Trainer

(and all our fully trained standby lifeguards)

Lake86 Cotswold Water Park Hire & Tom Bottrill and crew

Lake32 Outdoor Centre & Joanne Pendlebury

Lake12 South Cerney Outdoor & Matt Pritchard

Sean Trussell for giving me my first shot at pool time for our squads

Chris Lennon for introducing me to Open Water Swimming

GLL / Better Link Centre / Dorcan / Milton Road

Highworth Recreation Centre

Lime Kiln Leisure Centre

Millfield School / Millfield Swimming

Marlborough College

Swim Smooth & Paul Newsome

The STA

Swim England

RLSS

Cotswold Water Park Trust

Ohana Coffee

McConks

Zone3

Finis Swimming

Precision Fuel & Hydration

Outdoor Swimmer Magazine

Swim Secure

Performance Cycles

Ddipp Robes

Blue Smooth Wetsuits

Kev Tonner Swindon Injury Clinic

Speedo

Huub

Endless Pools & Andy Cavillire at EP Installer

Daniel James Media

The Henley Swim

113 Events

DBMax

Cotswold Big Swim

Royal Wootton Bassett Triathlon

Lorraine Ferris

The Alstowes

Adam Young

Swindon Dolphin ASC & Louise Oliver

BBC Wiltshire

BBC Television

Swimtayka

This Girl Can

And every single 1-to-1, video analysis, open water and squad swimmer who we have seen, thank you.