

POTTED HISTORY

- The Club was formed in 1890 when a meeting was held at the YMCA Rooms in Warwick Street, where 30 people attended, with the intention of forming a swimming club.
- By the end of the first year membership was 41 with F. Parish, a local police surgeon and future Mayor of Worthing, as President.
- In the early days, a 500 yard race was held in the sea to decide who became Club Captain for the year.
- Swimming events were held in the sea and also at the large open air sea water baths, at Heene Road. These were converted into 2 indoor pools in 1907 and remained the Club's headquarters until its closure in 1967.
- During the early years water polo became very popular in the town and had a large following. Regularly home matches were watched by crowds of 500 plus at Heene Baths.
- Inter war years saw the Club pick itself up after the First World War during which 30 members were killed. Ladies water polo was formed and the Club became strong in diving.
- Post war soon saw Worthing return to the forefront of County swimming, particularly amongst the women. In particular, Angela Barnwell, coached by Arthur Barnett, Les Bowley and Arthur Brookes, became National Freestyle champion and was selected for the Olympic Games, in Helsinki, in 1952. At the games, Angela exceeded all expectations to finish 8th in the final of the Ladies 100m Freestyle, having broken the British record, with a time of 1-07.20, in the heats.
- Susan Toltan was National Backstroke champion in 1953. This was a golden era for the Club's competitive squad, which had great strength in depth.
- In the early 1950's a mixed synchronised swimming team was formed, one of the first in the country. With coloured lights and music they gave many displays, including a demonstration at the National Championships in 1952.
- By the mid 1950's membership reached 1000. Although the competitive squad's success was notable, the backbone of the club was the ordinary swimmer, and during this period, under the guidance of Minnie Wingfield, hundreds of children were taught to swim.
- During the 1960's all aspects of the Club were prominent with numerous County swimming titles, a water polo team enjoying a vintage period, diving champions and a strong life saving team that won many events.

- Heene Baths closed in 1967 and the Club moved to the newly built Aquarena in January 1968.
- Swimming progressed and the improved facilities and more space for teaching led to a big rise in membership, that peaked at 2000 in 1972 and a waiting list of 300, making Worthing one of the largest clubs in the country.
- The Club continued to produce national ranked swimmers in Clare Thurgar, Lucy Hilder and Colin Dale. Duncan Goodhew, whilst a pupil at Windlesham House school, received some of his early training at Worthing before moving on to Millfield School and Beckenham SC. Duncan went on to win a gold medal at the Olympic Games in Moscow, in 1980, in the Mens 100m Breaststroke.
- Just when the Club seemed to be going from strength to strength disaster struck when major structural defects were discovered at the Aquarena in December 1977. It took until 1982 for the repairs to be completed, in which time, the Club lost many of its successful swimmers to other clubs. The Club managed to continue using pools at Upper Beeding, Brighton College and a private pool at High Salvington. Membership didn't drop below 700, which was tribute to a very hard working Executive Committee.
- During the 1980's the Club continued its policy of teaching young children to swim and develop those wishing to swim competitively, as well as those wanting to take part in water polo and diving. However, it took the Club almost 10 years to recover competitively from the set back of the closure.
- In 1994, Louise McCallum became the first swimmer, since Lucy Hilder, to qualify for the Nationals, taking part in the 100m Breaststroke, at Coventry. Louise went on to compete in 4 more Nationals. Since then, Charlie Ticehurst, Jessica Lezard and Laura West have competed in the Nationals.
- Water polo continued to flourish under the guidance of Alastair Roberts with both the Junior and Senior teams proving to be the best in the County and a large number of the players achieving recognition at County and District level.
- The new millennium saw the Club continue to promote the objects of the Club, to promote the teaching and practice of swimming, water polo and diving, with membership standing at just over 500.
- In 2005 a junior triathlon club in the town was established with the help of the Club and has continued to train and compete as Worthing Otters under the umbrella of the Club.

- In 2009 the Senior water polo team took the major step of competing in the National Water Polo League and were promoted from Division 4 I 2010.
- In 2012 Ben Alcorn was selected for the Great Britain Olympic water polo squad but missed out on the final selection.
- 2013 saw the Club, which currently has 325 members, move into the new Splashpoint complex .

For a detailed history of the Club, please refer to the Centenary booklet published in January 1990, to mark 100 years of its existence.