

History of Tyldesley Swimming and Water Polo Club



RETIREMENT OF RALPH TYLDESELEY

After twenty-one years as baths superintendent, Mr. Ralph Tyldesley retired in 1903. At a special meeting, the committee of Tyldesley Swimming Club decided to present Mr. Tyldesley with a testimonial in recognition of his long service and valuable service to the club. It was resolved that it would be a framed illuminated address, and signed by the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretaries, Captain and the whole committee.

Copy of address:

Mr Ralph Tyldesley:- "On your retirement from the position of superintendent of Tyldesley Baths, a post which you have occupied for twenty one years, we, on behalf of the members of the Tyldesley Swimming Club, beg you to accept our thanks for the efficient and courteous manner in which you have catered for our requirements. We feel that the long continued success and prosperity of the club has been due in a large measure to your valuable assistance and the facilities you have so readily granted. Your superior ability as our swimming instructor is shown by the fact that during the same period you have taught about 1000 persons to swim, several of whom have been instrumental in saving life from drowning, and others have attained championship rank in the sport. We congratulate you that during the seasons 1901 and 1903, eight of your pupils were successful in winning for the club the Flying Squadron Championship. We trust that the interest you have taken in the sport will be maintained in your retirement, and as our members have elected you as Honorary Life Member, we sincerely hope that you may be long spared, and granted health and strength to further encourage the art of swimming".

ECKERSLEY CUP

The Eckersley Cup was donated to the club in 1904, and after long discussion it was decided that the cup would be awarded annually to the swimmer with the best points aggregate from the three races:- 110 yards, 220 yards and 880 yards.

Competitors had to take part in all three races.

Other decisions made at the time were:- the cup could never be won outright, but would always remain the property of the club.

The name of the winner would be put on the stand, but when a person had won it three times in all, the name would go on the cup.

The cup would be positioned with a banking or safe deposit company, in the name of four trustees, who would be responsible for its safe keeping whilst under their control. The trustees to be appointed at each Annual General Meeting of the club. The first trustees were Fred Isherwood, Edward Cousins, Ralph Kay and T. T. Bradshaw.

Before the cup be allowed to leave the custody of the trustees, a guarantee would have to be given for its safe keeping. This was fixed at £20.

The cup was insured in 1905 for £20. The Eckersley Cup is now insured for £3500 and is awarded to the winner of the Gents Open Age 200 m freestyle at the annual Club Championships.

Miss Elsie Dearden became the first lady secretary in 1905, and the following year the ladies took charge of their own affairs.

At the Annual General Meeting of 1906 it was agreed to change the subscriptions as follows:- Seniors 2s6d, Boys fourteen to sixteen 1s6d, Schoolboys 1s0d, same fees for the Ladies section.

In the same year 150 season tickets were sold for water polo, at a cost of 3d for members and 6d for non-members.

Mr R M Whitehead was invited to officiate at the Annual Swimming gala in 1906. He was handicapper and starter at the first gala thirty years earlier.

In 1907 R J Clegg who was President of the Club from 1884 to 1934 presented the Club with the Clegg Shield. This trophy is currently valued at £3000. It was to be competed for by schoolboys attending elementary schools in Tyldesley, Hindsford and Astley. Each team to consist of four boys who had to be on the school register on the 1st September in the year of competition.

The competition would be on the Flying Squadron principle and each swimmer would swim two lengths.

Mr Fred Isherwood was elected President of the Manchester and District Swimming and Water Polo Association in 1907. This was to be the first of the many honours he was to receive in the administrative field of the sport.

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1908 OLYMPIC GAMES



The 1908 GB freestyle team with Addin Tyldesley sitting 1st left

Much interest was aroused in the locality on the 17th July 1908, when Addin Tyldesley swam in the Olympic Games at the White City Stadium in London.

The Tyldesley swimmer had been selected as one of Great Britain's representatives in the 100 m freestyle.

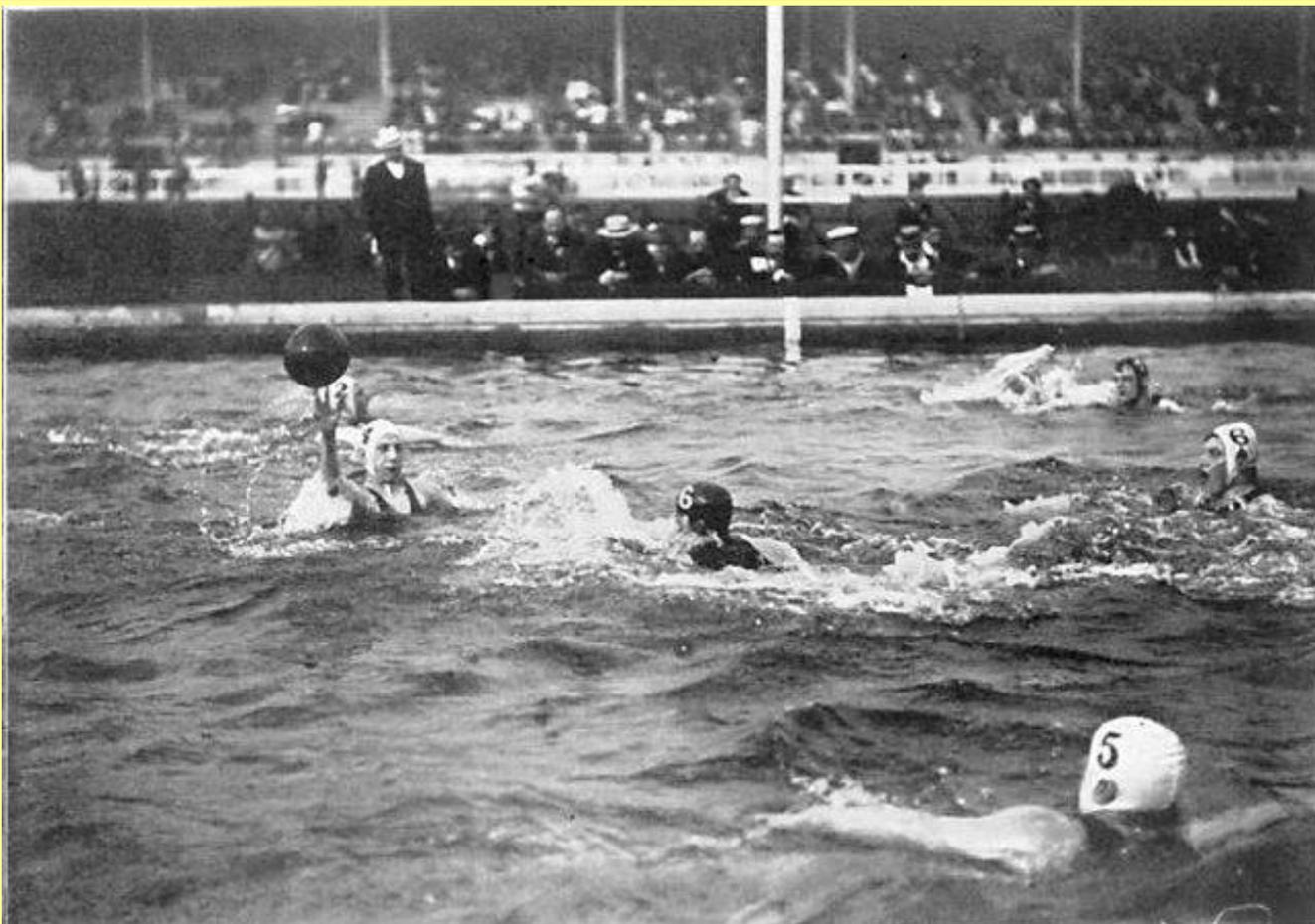
In his heats Addin swam in fine style, and he was only beaten by a touch by O. Shiff of Austria. Along with P Radmilovic, who had the same time, he qualified for the semi-final as the fastest loser. Addin Tyldesley's time of one minute twelve seconds in this round was the best English time recorded.

His chances of reaching the final were however very remote, as in the semi-final he met such top class foreign opposition as C M Daniels of USA and A W Persson of Sweden. This stage saw him exit from the competition. Daniels winning the race in one minute ten point two seconds which was a new World Record. The present Club record for boys under 15 years 100 metre freestyle is 58.25secs. (The Club does not have a gents 100 metre Open event at the Club Championships).



1908 White City Stadium

The swimming at the 1908 Olympics was held in a 100 m pool dug into the centre of the athletics track, with no filtration or chlorination, effectively being a muddy pond.



Water polo final

The final of the water polo was between Belgium and Great Britain and was one by Great Britain.



Winning team

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WORLD CHAMPION AT TYLDESLEY

Frank E Beaurepaire of Australia, the world amateur champion at all distances up to one mile, came to Tyldesley on 14th October 1910. At the time he was the holder of the Australian, English, Swedish, German, Belgium and French Championship.



Sir Francis ("Frank") Joseph Edmund Beaurepaire (May 13, 1891 – May 29, 1956) was an Australian distance freestyle swimmer from the 1900s to the 1920s, who won three silver and three bronze medals, from the 1908 Summer Olympics in London to the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris, setting 15 world records. He was also a decorated politician and businessman, serving for ten years in the Victorian Legislative Council and as Lord Mayor of Melbourne and building a multi-million dollar tyre business empire, Beaurepaire's and Olympic Tyres.

Beaurepaire made an attempt to beat the quarter mile record, being accompanied on his swim by Kenneth Tyldesley, the Tyldesley Swimming Club Champion.

He defeated Tyldesley by two lengths of the baths, and his time of five minutes twenty-seven seconds was only two-fifths of a second outside the record.

Kenneth Tyldesley won the Eckersley Cup in the same evening. He won the 110 yards scratch race for the Club Championship, which was also the last of three races at varying distances for the Eckersley Cup. His time was one minute fourteen seconds, J Smith was second and A Carlton third.

WATER POLO & SQUADRON CHAMPIONSHIP – BOLTON AND DISTRICT LEAGUE



Tyldesley Senior Water Polo Team, 1908
(Wigan Archives Service, WLCT)

The Bolton and District Swimming and Water Polo Association was founded in 1909, and Tyldesley won both the Water Polo and Squadron Championships in the first season. They did so without dropping a single point in either league, and went on to do exactly the same thing in the following season.

The team at the time was selected from the following: JR Blears, Carlton, Alf Tyldesley, Frank Isherwood, Cotton, Bainbridge, Hilton, Joseph Darlington and Tisconia.

Joseph Darlington also captained the Atherton Water Polo Team in the Manchester & District League. He was killed in the Pretoria Mine disaster on 21st December 1910, aged 28.

Tyldesley Swimming Club were the Bolton and District Champions every year from 1909 right up to the First World War in 1914. The nearest they came to losing a championship during that six year run, was when they tied with Blackburn at the top of the squadron League. It is of special interest that they swam off for the championship, after the war, at Farnworth Baths – Tyldesley won.

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The early post war years proved to be just as successful as they had prior to 1914. When the Bolton League re-started in 1920 Tyldesley Swimming Club again won both Water Polo and Squadron Championship.

Water Polo & Squadron Championship
Bolton and District League

TYLDESLEY v BLACKBURN

Played at Farnworth, Tuesday, Oct 19th 1920

They came in smiling did the Blackburn team,
And thought Tyldesley's chances somewhat lean;
There was Morris, Brown and speedy Horne,
The "Bongsmen's" chances seemed forlorn.

They pranced into the Baths all smiles,
With cheers which could be heard for miles;
The game was started with some Blackburn cheers
But we fancy they had had too many beers.

Before the match Harry Bainbridge said
"It won't take long to put them all to bed";
And into the bath he led his merry band,
To cheers which echoed through the land.

The Blackburn men thought they had an easy thing,
But the Bongs lads soon around them made a ring:
They tackled high, they tackled low,
And Joe Lewis on his nose received a blow.

Carlton got the ball and went like mad,
Hodgson said "This really is too bad,"
As down he swam, the cheers they were rousers,
"Carly" wiped the bath with him, but not in these here trousers.

The game went on with a beautiful swing,
And the Tyldesley lads about the ball did fling;
Until "Kenny" got the ball and down the Bath did fly,
The Blackburn goalie exclaimed "What chance have I!

To his hand he put the ball, which was quite right,
For he had seen Bill Lewis on his right;
"On side" he shouted, and Bill soon had the ball,
And before poor Kay knew he had passed them all.

Into the net: "A Goal!" t'was a beauty;
Blackburn's chances seemed none to juicy;
"Carly" sent another, right o'er the bar,
And Hodgson said to Horne "Let's catch a Car"!

The Collier lads were soon masters of them all;
And Blackburn never hardly saw the ball;
Alf Tyldesley was always on it, and made them look quite silly



Especially so when they saw the saves of "Sunny Jimmy".

To record all the match would take some time,
So I will conclude with one more line;
The result was, as you will see, -
An easy Victory – 7 goals to 3.

OTHER SUCCESSES

Alf Carlton represented the Manchester League as full-back against the London League at London in 1910.

Kenneth Tyldesley won the Bolton and District 100 yards Championship in 1913.

Jack Howarth won the Bolton and District 100 yards championship in 1920, and Kenneth Tyldesley became the Northern Counties quarter mile champion the same year. The following year Jack Howarth repeated his success, but Kenneth Tyldesley was narrowly beaten into second place.

In 1922 Kenneth Tyldesley regained the quarter mile championship, and he also won the half-mile event. During that year the subscriptions were half of what they had been nearly fifty years earlier. They were seniors 2s.6d. boys under fifteen 1s0d.

NON ADMISSION OF GERMANY TO THE OLYMPIC GAMES

At the Annual General Meeting of the ASA in 1924 a decision was made not to admit the Germans to the Olympic Games.

The committee of Tyldesley Swimming Club were so incensed by this decision that they wrote a letter to the ASA. The letter read as follows:- "The members of Tyldesley Swimming Club disassociate themselves entirely from the resolution that was passed by the ASA re the non admission of the Germans at the Olympic Games. We believe it is just an expression of your own views on the matter, and does not interpret the feelings of the majority of swimmers in this country. In view of the efforts that are being made by eminent statesmen to bring about a better spirit and understanding between the people of the world, we think the resolution was arrogant and deserving of condemnation.