

## Founding

### The founding of Somerset County ASA and its first year

On the 22nd February 1902 a meeting of Somerset clubs was held at the Three Queens Hotel in Weston super Mare at which it was agreed to suspend the Somerset County Water Polo Association and found the Somerset County Amateur Swimming Association. It is clear from the minutes of subsequent meetings that the railway network played an important part in the development of the Association. Today our freedom of movement by private car, availability of telephones, fax systems, emails, websites and so on, enable us to communicate by the minute as and when necessary. The difficulties of the formation of a new Association in 1902 can only be imagined.

The first officers of the County were:

- JS Walker, Weston super Mare - President
- WM Bull, Bath YMCA - Hon Treasurer
- M Jones, Weston super Mare - Hon Secretary

These gentlemen were also elected as race handicappers - posts which have only been dropped from our rules in recent years.

Also present was the Hon. Sec. of the recently formed Western Counties ASA - Mr G W Hearn. George Hearn lived at Walliscote Road, Weston super Mare and through his business connections was a member of Ravensbourne Swimming Club in London. He was the Secretary of the ASA from 1903 to 1907 becoming President of the ASA in 1908. He initiated a meeting in London of nations taking part in the 1908 Olympic Games which led to the formation of a new world organisation for swimming now referred to as FINA and was its Secretary until 1928. He was a member of the ASA Committee for several years and died in 1949.

The new committee was made up of members from Bath Dolphins, Bridgwater, Taunton SC, Taunton YMCA and Bath YMCA.

In the first year this committee was busy. It instituted a men's 100yds championship, a boys 2 lengths championship (i.e. two lengths of which ever pool was used) and found trophies and certificates for the winners. Inter county polo matches against Gloucester and Devon were initiated. In all cases Clubs were invited to sponsor the events. The County became responsible for paying third class fares of delegates to the Western Counties meetings.

<http://www.somersetasa.org/sasa/en/about-us/History/Founding?pdfview=1>