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# Orpington Ojays News

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## *From the committee ...*

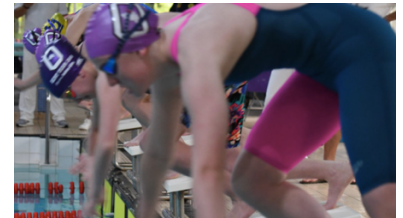
So, here we are in lockdown again. After a successful summer and a fantastic return to the Walnuts, swimming has been paused. The good news is we don't have to negotiate with the Walnuts for pool time. As long as the government allows pools to reopen when lockdown ends on December 3, we can pick up where we left off. We want you to know that even when we are not swimming, the committee carries on working. We've been having regular meetings with Swim England about our return to pools, making sure our venues are Covid compliant, and designing a scheme that recognises volunteers. Swim England has asked the London region to launch the three new initiatives mentioned below and we'd love to get as much support from OOJSC as we can so please get involved.

## **Swim England London: Unsung Heroes Award**

Orpington Ojays is built on the goodwill of parents, swimmers and volunteers, who devote time and energy to making the club a success. Often the hard work these volunteers put in is taken for granted or not noticed. But not anymore! Swim England London has introduced an Unsung Heroes Award to recognise the efforts of these volunteers and thank them for all the work they do. The committee will be asking for nominations for these new awards three times a year, which we'll then submit to Swim England London. Winners will go forward to the Swim England National Awards. So, get thinking about who you'd like to nominate and email [clubsecretary@orpingtonojays.com](mailto:clubsecretary@orpingtonojays.com) for more info.

## **Swim England Young Volunteers Programme**

This new programme aims to engage young people aged 13+ in a wider range of volunteering experiences in their club and at events, by providing training and helping them develop transferable skills. The aim is to improve the volunteering experience and make it something young people want to get involved in. The programme is built around modules linking all aquatic disciplines. Each module will include a Zoom session with tasks to be completed at your club. An interactive electronic log book will help the Young Volunteers track their progress. To find out more, or to volunteer, please contact [clubsecretary@orpingtonojays.com](mailto:clubsecretary@orpingtonojays.com).



## **Returning to swimming**

The staff at Mytime Active have been furloughed, but we're told the organisation is working to reopen its leisure centres on December 3. We'll pass on any information about the reopening as soon as we have it. Swim England has updated the health declaration all swimmers need to complete before they get back in the pool. Therefore, we'll need this new version to be filled in and returned before swimmers return. An email will be sent soon with the relevant info, so please keep an eye out.

## **Head coach update**

After successful face-to-face interviews with candidates, one of the short-listed applicants visited the Walnuts before lockdown. Now the rest of the visits have been put on hold until we know what's happening. As soon as we have news on our return to swimming, we will rearrange the remaining visits to training sessions. Our aim is to have a new head coach in place by the start of 2021.

## **National Youth Volunteers Programme**

The Swim England London region is looking for volunteers aged 15-20 to share ideas about swimming, and chat about issues facing the sport. The aim is to bring together young people from different aquatic disciplines and backgrounds to provide a youth voice for the London region. To find out more or volunteer, please contact [clubsecretary@orpingtonojays.com](mailto:clubsecretary@orpingtonojays.com).

## 2020 heroes

Thank you so much to everyone who took the time to tell us about what our Ojays family have been up to since lockdown began in March. We're so proud of all of you! Here's a brief round-up of how everyone's been spending their time. Look out for the notice boards at the Walnuts, to see more lockdown stories and pictures.

### Open water swimming

With the weather glorious for most of the first lockdown – lots of the Ojays swapped the pool for the lake. **Blythe Jolley Ellis** managed to swim all season, despite her dislike of the freezing water. She competed in a 3.2km swim and raising more than £300 for the Samaritans and Chipstead Sailing Club. **Samantha Jackson** took on the geese and the pond weed and won! And **Lauren Bond** proved to be just at home in the lake as in the pool. She took part in the Dock2Dock swim and smashed it, coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the u21 category, even though she is just 13.



### Fitness

Some Ojays swimmers turned to other ways to keep fit. Big congratulations to the **Davey** family – including **Emma** from gold squad and **Jack** from silver – who ran a marathon over 10 days and raised an impressive £400 for local bereavement charity Living On. **Nola Barker** got on her bike and spent the summer cycling for her club Bigfoot Youth – and grew so much over lockdown that she needed a new set of wheels. While **Caitlin Tinker** wore out her trainers taking part in Rat Race Runstock, running and walking an impressive 45km in one day – and then another 25km the next!



### Learning new skills

**Emily Boyd** taught herself to sew using YouTube videos and made herself a dress. **Hannah Strover** took up sewing and knitting, tackling a dress, a skirt, and scarves. She even made bunting for her street's VE Day celebrations. Hannah also headed to the kitchen and created her own version of the champion swimmer's breakfast – the Egg McMuffin. Meanwhile **Carys Bond** tried her hand at baking, making cakes and cookies, and her fork biscuits were so popular she ended up baking batches of 100 at a time! **Jack Davey** stopped running for long enough to take grade one on the acoustic guitar.



### Digging deep

Some of the challenges taken on by Ojays this summer saw them really digging in and pushing through mental and physical barriers. **Grace O'Gorman** had been through a difficult time in the pool after a shoulder injury stopped her swimming altogether. She'd just got back into training when lockdown happened. But determined not to lose fitness, Grace got in a temporary pool in her garden and kept training. She's now back in gold squad.



Meanwhile, **Tom Barrett** swapped his fins for hiking boots when he climbed Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis, earning another medal for his collection.

### Grown ups

Our Ojays family includes all the adults that are part of the team. So many of you have done amazing things since the pandemic hit and you all deserve a round of applause. **Dr Sancho Rodriguez Villar**, dad to Mateo and Tobias, is an intensive care consultant in the NHS, so he was on the frontline throughout. **Bernie** and **Andre Magcanan**, parents to Andrew and Aaron, were also saving lives as senior staff nurse in the Covid ward and as operating department practitioner: team leader in anaesthetics and scrub, at the PRUH. In the early days of lockdown, Ojays parents **Myra Brown**, **Wendy Peel** and **Mandy Jackson** all responded to a plea from the PRUH for PPE, collected safety goggles, plastic visors and gloves and delivered them to the hospital. Coach **Sarah Jolley** kept her nurse friend, and another friend who is having cancer treatment, relaxed with DIY – socially distanced – pedicures. And did her bit to keep everyone fed by collecting all the abandoned shopping trolleys around Bromley and pushing them back to Sainsbury's – a workout too! And of course, our fabulous committee all swung into action to keep the swimmers fit and happy. Masters swimmer and expert open-water swimmer **Steve Morris** was on hand to help with any enquiries at the lake. **Karen Giannini** took land-training sessions in Goddington Park for the older swimmers – organised by **Paul Leng**. **Karen** also created videos for home workouts, ably assisted by son **Louis**. All the committee worked hard on getting pool time over the summer, and making the venues Covid secure. And the club captains kept us all entertained with Zoom quizzes and bingo, and produced some videos to help the swimmers on their return to the water.