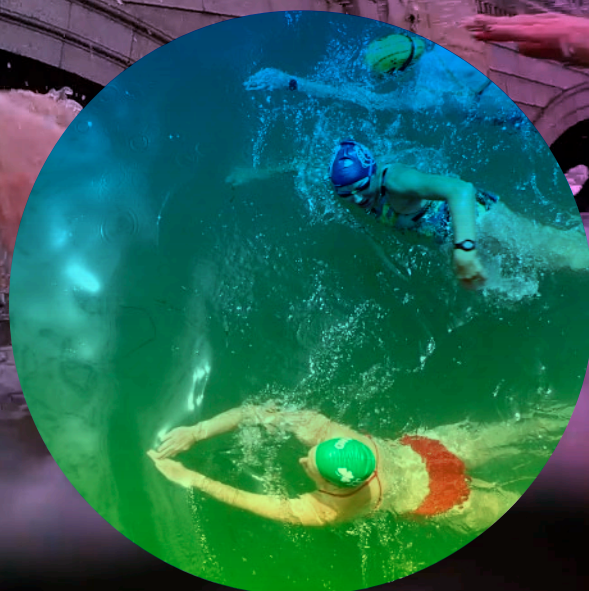


Swimming
a long way
together

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Dublin: Swimposium 21 August 2021



Morning Speaker Presentations and Panel Discussion: Mercedes Gleitze, Swimming Culture and Endurance

Introduction – Clíodhna Shaffrey, Director Temple Bar
Gallery + Studios

Philip Hoare Wilde, swimming

Artists, writers, performers have often expressed their otherness in the sea. After all, it's where the world runs out. Philip Hoare talks about great lovers of the water, from Virginia Woolf to Oscar Wilde, from Mary Shelley to Sylvia Plath, and wonders at their fantastical, sensual and strange love affairs with swimming.

Philip Hoare is the author of nine works of non-fiction, *Leviathan or, The Whale* won the 2009 BBC Samuel Johnson Prize for non-fiction. It was followed in 2013 by *The Sea Inside*, and in 2017 by *RISINGTIDEFALLINGSTAR*. His new book, *Albert & the Whale* led the *New York Times* to call the author a 'forceful weather system' of his own. He is co-curator, with Angela Cockayne, of the digital projects *Moby Dick* Big Read and *Ancient Mariner* Big Read.

Anna Maria Mullally Taking the Plunge: Women Swimming in early 20th Century Ireland

Irish women took to the water from the 1870s on, in increasing numbers. Swimming, with its requirement for form-fitting attire, quickly became associated with questions around morality and decency, as well as around female emancipation and changing feminine ideals. Early twentieth century Irish media reception of women's swimming and bathing activities was largely positive and the visits of such swim celebrities as Annette Kellerman in the 1910s and Mercedes Gleitze in the 1920s were celebrated and positively received, though readers were also reassuringly reminded of the domestic marital context from which these athletes emerged and to which they returned. The emergence of the new Irish state brought with it a more nationalist-conservative attitude to women's sporting and leisure activities, delaying the development of women's swimming at elite levels and prolonging discussions around modesty compared to those in other national contexts.

Anna Maria Mullally is a Lecturer in Media Studies in the Department of Humanities at the Technological University of Dublin. She is currently researching a PhD in the area of women's swimming and bathing practices in early 20th century Ireland as they were reflective of questions of gendered citizenship and of sporting and leisure participation. She is also a swimmer and has completed, as part of a relay team, two successful English Channel crossings and has also completed several other long-distance open water swims.

(contd.)

Rosie Foley
In and Out of the Blue

Growing up in a sports mad house Rosie Foley and her siblings practiced what they saw on the TV: Wimbledon – Tennis, GAA – Hurling, Match of the Day - Soccer, International Rugby and from time to time pretend gun shooting. Even trying to swim in the small river at Barringtons' bridge during hot summer days. Rosie had a shock aged 12 on finding there was a difference between how boys and girls were treated in sport - it was a huge surprise and awakening, a light bulb moment! It didn't stop her, and as she wanted to play and do everything, it definitely took her longer, but then again 'nothing great is easy' as Captain Webb said.

Rosie Foley is an open water swimmer and former rugby player who received 39 international Rugby Caps for Ireland. As an open water swimmer, Rosie was the first person to swim solo in swimming togs 38km of Lough Derg (2014), and the first person to swim from Deer Rock to Killaloe Clare (2011) and Deer Rock across Lough Derg (2016). She has completed solo swims of the English Channel (2014), Strait of Gibraltar (2019) and Galway Bay (2020), and received the Irish Long Distance Swimming Association Performance of the Year in 2014.

Lisa Cummins

Lisa Cummins is an Irish long distance swimmer who has completed a two-way English Channel swim and a double circumnavigation of Manhattan Island along with many other local swims. She will talk about how she first got into open water swimming, how she prepares for and completes these big events and some of the things that she has learned along the way.

Lisa Cummins lives in Cobh in Cork, Ireland. She began open water swimming in 2008 and was the first swimmer from Ireland to complete an over and back English Channel swim in 2009 in 35 hours.

Following that swim, Lisa completed a number of other marathon swims including the River Lee Dam to County Hall (12.5km), Rosscarbery to Redstrand (11.3km), Rottnest (19.75km), around Key West (20.1km), Bestfest Spain (10km). In 2018 she became the 11th swimmer to complete a double circumnavigation of Manhattan Island in New York (92km) in 21 hours. Lisa also holds the local Sandycove Island record with a 20-lap (30km) training swim in 2018.



Mercedes in the North Channel on 26 July 1928 during her second attempt to cross from Donaghadee, N.I. to Portstewart in Scotland. (Northern Whig & Belfast Post/British Library/Gleitze Archive.)

Q&A and panel discussion
Chaired by **Kari Furre**

Kari Furre is a Devon based artist, swimmer and swimming teacher, with a particular love of a peaceful swimming stroke and long distance swimming. Kari helped to research 'Wild Swim', the iconic book by Kate Rew and was a founder member of the Outdoor Swimming Society, becoming a director for many years. In May 2016 she swam the ten and a half mile length of Windermere in celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. She continues to be inspired by her natural surroundings, particularly when it comes to water. Kari makes leather and parchment from Fish Skin, which celebrates the spirit of the creatures and the sea. She has shown her work at 'Collect' at the Saatchi gallery in London. Kari recently returned from an artist residency with KNOCKvologan on the Isle of Mull, swimming and researching Seaweed with Miek Swamborn, who wrote 'The Seaweed collector's Handbook'. Kari and Miek ran a fish tanning workshop, and made an artist book 'Fish Tanning, A Manual'.

Afternoon Speaker Presentations and Panel Discussion: Swimming as a Practice of Wellbeing

Ronan Foley Swimming as a source of therapeutic accretion

Ronan Foley will focus on swimming places and the immersive elements of being a swimmer. In particular the idea of therapeutic accretion, how one builds resilience through swimming across the lifecourse, shows that where, when and who we swim with is always a relational geographical act that enables health and wellbeing over time.

Ronan Foley is a health geographer based in the Geography Department at Maynooth University. He has published articles in academic journals and books on swimming based on interviews with swimmers and auto-ethnographic work. He has also written for RTE Brainstorm and has moved recently to a new home within 500m of Killiney Beach where he swims regularly.

Hannah Denton Determining the mental health benefits of open water swimming; navigating different perspectives

There is increasing recognition that open water swimming has a beneficial impact on mental health and wellbeing. Following many anecdotal reports, there is now a growing research interest. The mental health benefits of open water swimming are of interest to researchers from a range of different backgrounds, including geographers, sociologists, physiologists, psychologists, psychiatrists. Each bring their own ideas about what the benefits might be, along with their preferred approaches and methods for researching them. Hannah Denton will outline the projects she has been involved in, the outcomes, challenges encountered and dilemmas about possible future directions.

Although she has always swum pretty regularly, Hannah Denton's relationship to sea swimming changed dramatically ten years ago when she joined the Brighton Swimming Club. Finding a group of like-minded people encouraged her to go pretty much every day and to swim throughout the year. Following discussions with fellow swimmers, she decided to try to combine her passion for sea swimming with her job as a Counselling Psychologist in Adult Mental Health. As a result of this, she has been involved in running some courses for people with mental health problems and has set up a CIC with some friends to further increase access for people who might otherwise not benefit. She has also been involved in research exploring the mental health and wellbeing benefits of open water swimming.



Mercedes swimming trudgeon stroke, on her side. (Northern Whig & Belfast Post/British Newspaper Library/Gleitze Archives.)

Easkey Britton The Blue Wave

Translating lessons learned from immersions in the sea into how we can live with greater resilience, creativity and care. Dr Britton draws on case studies from Ireland to Iran to illustrate the power of water to heal and connect. Dr Easkey Britton is a renowned Irish surfer and marine social scientist with a PhD specialising in Human Wellbeing and Coastal Resilience. Her work explores the relationship between people and nature, especially water environments. A life-long swimmer and surfer, her parents taught her to surf when she was four years old, she channels her passion for the sea into social change. Her work is deeply influenced by the ocean and the lessons learned pioneering women's big-wave surfing in Ireland. Her ground-breaking journey to Iran in 2013 introduced the sport of surfing to women and local communities and is featured in the award-winning documentary film, Into the Sea.

Easkey contributes her expertise in blue space, health and social wellbeing on national and international research projects, including the Erasmus+ funded INCLUSEA project fostering greater inclusion for people with disabilities in surfing in Europe. Easkey is the author of 'Saltwater in the Blood', and '50 Things to Do By the Sea', has published numerous peer reviewed journal articles, and is a regular columnist with Oceanographic magazine.

Q&A and panel discussion Chaired by Kari Furre