



Halliwick AST

Newsletter

February 2026

**PROMOTING SWIMMING FOR DISABLED PEOPLE
USING THE HALLIWICK CONCEPT**

Message from the Chair ...

by Will Wyatt MBE



Welcome to the February 2026 edition of the Halliwick AST Newsletter.

I do hope that 2026 has begun well for you. With a bit of luck, the rain will stop soon!

We have been as busy as ever here at Halliwick AST, the UK's national Halliwick association.

Just as do the volunteers within clubs and groups that affiliate to us, we all work on a voluntary basis on the committees of Halliwick AST, **and we could always do with more help.** If you are interested in helping on one of our committees, or with something else, **please get in touch.** You can email me at halliwickast.chair@gmail.com.

There is a lot of information in this newsletter for you to read, and I hope you find it interesting and informative. I just want to highlight a few things: Our **Annual General Meeting 2026** is taking place by Zoom on Sunday, 26/04/2026. You can read more about that on [Page 5](#) of this newsletter and I hope that as many as possible will attend. There is also a very interesting 'My Halliwick Story' on the [next page](#) of this newsletter. There is also a full report on our National Championships 2025 on [pages 3 and 4](#) of the newsletter – what a great day we had! Happy reading!

I wish you the very best for the year ahead, which looks to be another exciting year for Halliwick AST and, I am sure, within your clubs and groups!

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My Halliwick Story ...

by Nicole Lawson

As with many grandparents, my life changed forever (and for the better) when my first granddaughter was born in 2004. Erin was born with a global developmental delay and epilepsy. She was fascinated with water as soon as she could walk, and it soon became imperative that she should learn to swim.

Mainstream lessons were not a great fit for Erin, so I put her name down to join our local swimming club for individuals with physical or learning difficulties. The Seahorse Swimming Club was founded in 1956 in my hometown of Crewe. The club had an excellent reputation and we both eagerly awaited admission. We joined the club in 2010.

Erin thrived, progressing from participating in water activities to swimming independently within the larger group, thanks to the care and encouragement of the dedicated volunteers. More recently, my youngest granddaughter has joined and Eva is also thriving in the supportive and safe environment through a combination of positive physical, social and emotional elements, encouraging collaboration and respect. Both girls have participated and have been entered into regional and national galas.

My working life has, and remains dedicated to the care of people with dermatological conditions, in my role as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Dermatology. I enjoy swimming immensely but it is not my particular forte. My strengths are in effective communication (adapting and being sensitive to the audience), motivating individuals to participate and make choices, and in showing compassion and empathy to build trusting relationships. I also have skills in planning and organising. What has that got to do

with supporting a special needs swimming club, you might ask? Every sports club needs dedicated administrative and backroom staff to keep the club running. I was invited to join the Seahorse committee shortly after Erin joined in 2010. I was appointed as Gala Organiser and Vice Chair in quick succession, and quickly became immersed in a variety of tasks, including updating admissions/members and volunteer forms, and with gala preparation and planning.

I have been supported throughout my journey by others on the committee, and by the wider Halliwick Astra 8 committee (the Halliwick region covering Cheshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire, including Sale and Ellesmere Port). I have learnt new skills and made valuable friends.

The Seahorse club enjoys social events (including an annual trip and a Christmas party) as well as sponsored events to raise funds for other charities. Whether we are swimming or socialising, the club members bring great joy into my life. The club was recognized for its long-standing commitment to helping people with disabilities gain water confidence and learn to swim when we were honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2017. It was a tremendously proud day for the whole team.

Supported by the Seahorse team, our regional team from Sale and Ellesmere Port, and the Halliwick National committee, the club hosted their first national gala in 2024 on behalf of Halliwick Astra 8. This was a very special day in our Club's long history.

I [pictured second-from-right below] have represented Halliwick Astra 8 on Halliwick AST's National Executive Committee since 2020. I have been introduced to some wonderful people who are committed to the faithful representation of Halliwick ideals and, most importantly, to providing access to the joy of swimming for all.



National Championships 2025 ...

We had such a great time at the Halliwick AST National Championships 2025, superbly hosted by Halliwick ASTRA 15 in Rhondda, Wales on 25/10/2025.

Four Halliwick ASTRAs (regions) took part: Halliwick ASTRA 1 (Greater London—North of the River Thames); Halliwick ASTRA 2 (Greater London—South of the River Thames, Kent Surrey and Sussex); Halliwick ASTRA 8 (Cheshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire); and Halliwick ASTRA 15 (Wales). The day was made all the more special by the presence of our honoured guests, Councilor Sheryl Evans (the Mayor of Rhondda Cynon Taf), Keith Beer (President of Halliwick ASTRA 15), and William Wyatt MBE (Chair of Halliwick AST). All very kindly presented medals and trophies to our fabulous swimmers.

It was great to see so many people take part and swim so well. Congratulations to all! Results by race are on the following page of this newsletter. Here are some photos.



Results By Race, Showing Place, Name and Region ...

Girls' 1 Length (Di Leonard Trophy)			
1st—Eva Yoxall (8)	2nd—Carys Goddard (15)		
Boys' 1 Length (Swimmers' Trophy)			
1st—Lewis Hudson (15)	2nd—Harry Hartshorn (8)		
Ladies' 1 Length (Beryl Miller Trophy)			
1st—Leanne Benger (15)	2nd—Nicola Evans (2)	3rd—Yasmin Rasheed (8)	4th—Elizabeth Thompson (1)
Men's 1 Length (London Transport Revenue Section Trophy)			
1st—Colin Cushing (2)	2nd—Jordan Davies (15)	3rd—Mark Norman (1)	4th—Zack Beeston (8)
Girls' 2 Lengths (Halliwick ASTRA 15 Trophy)			
1st—Evelyn McFarlane (15)	2nd—Annabelle Marriott (8)		
Boys' 2 Lengths (Keyhaven Trophy)			
1st—Myles Zarina (15)	2nd—Ethan Draper (8)		
Ladies' 2 Lengths (Olive Lee Trophy)			
1st—Nicola Evans (2)	2nd—Emily Coombs (15)	3rd—Ann Crouch (1)	4th—Sinead Dobbin (8)
Men's 2 Lengths (George Lyons Trophy)			
1st—Daniel Pontin (15)	2nd—Darren Crouch (1)	3rd—Neil Jones (8)	
Girls' Championship (Beryl Kelsey Trophy)			
1st—Aneria Roberts (15)	2nd—Hiedi Tomkinson (8)		
Boys' Championship (Phyl McMillan Trophy)			
1st—Iestyn Williams (15)	2nd—Jasper Almond (8)		
Ladies' Championship (Derek Burnand Trophy)			
1st—Holly Willis (15)	2nd—Julie Turner (2)	3rd—Ann Crouch (1)	4th—Bev Stoddart (8)
Men's Championship (Halliwick Penguins SC Celebration Trophy)			
1st—Darren Crouch (1)	2nd—Vincent Taylor (15)	3rd—Derek Evans (2)	4th—Bruce Carson (8)
Junior Relay (Halliwick AST National Trophy)			
1st—Halliwick ASTRA 8	2nd—Halliwick ASTRA 15		
Senior Relay (Nellie Simms Trophy)			
1st—Halliwick ASTRA 15	2nd—Halliwick ASTRA 2	3rd—Halliwick ASTRA 1	4th—Halliwick ASTRA 8
League Final 2025 (Arthur Gunton Trophy)			
1st—Halliwick ASTRA 15	2nd—Halliwick ASTRA 2	3rd—Halliwick ASTRA 1	4th—Halliwick ASTRA 8

Final placing was as follows: **Halliwick ASTRA 1** - 16 points; **Halliwick ASTRA 2** – 19 points; **Halliwick ASTRA 8** – 32 points; and **Halliwick ASTRA 15** – 51 points. That means that this year's national champions are **Halliwick ASTRA 15**, and their team received the **Barnardo Trophy**. Congratulations to Halliwick ASTRA 15 in what was an exciting afternoon of swimming!

Well done everybody!

Details of the [National Championships 2026](https://www.halliwick.org.uk) will be published on our website at www.halliwick.org.uk as soon as possible.

Dates for Your Diary ...

07/03/2026

- **Halliwick AST Education Committee Meeting**, 10:30 am to 2:00 pm GMT, by Zoom.

23/03/2026

- **Halliwick Community Forum**, 7:00 pm GMT, by Zoom. See opposite and <https://halliwick.org.uk/2026/01/31/halliwick-community-forum-23-march-2026/> for details and to register your interest in attending.

30/03/2026-02/04/2026

- **Halliwick AST Foundation Course**, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Wales. See <https://halliwick.org.uk/2025/09/05/halliwick-ast-foundation-course-wales-march-april-2026/> for details.

26/04/2026

- **Halliwick AST Annual General Meeting followed by Executive Committee Meeting**, by Zoom. See below for further details.

Dates are regularly added and updated on our website at <https://halliwick.org.uk/upcoming-dates/> so remember to keep checking.

HALLIWICK COMMUNITY FORUM

**23/03/2026 at 7:00 pm
GMT by Zoom**

We will be discussing
**AGE-APPROPRIATE POOL
GAMES AND ACTIVITIES
FOR TEENS AND YOUNG
ADULTS**

Register your place, get involved by joining us, and share your ideas.

Halliwick AST Annual General Meeting 2026 ...

This is the opportunity for members of Halliwick AST to have their say in how the association is run and by whom. We would like to see as many members attend as possible, therefore, whether you are from an affiliated club or group, and whether you are a swimmer, helper or instructor.

The meeting will take place on Sunday, 26/04/2026, beginning at 11:00 am BST, and will held via Zoom.

If you would like further details, please contact halliwickast.chair@gmail.com.

'Nil By Mouth' ...



Oxford Swans Swimming Club has a 9-year-old swimmer, Thomas (not his real name), with movement and balance problems and who must not have water enter his mouth.

He first came to the club back in 2014, and worked in the water with his father or mother and a Halliwick Instructor. He has been following the usual Halliwick practices, including:

1. Blowing and humming activities with face clear of the water.
2. Activities in the vertical, including kangaroo jumps, motorbikes, etc.
3. Lying back with support and then performing a forward recovery.
4. Performing combined rotations, to learn, if falling forwards, how to roll with a combined rotation into a safe breathing position.

Thomas especially enjoys circle work with the other swimmers, which we always finish with before the end of the session.

One activity that Thomas was very keen to try was being on his front but his blowing or humming was not coordinated enough to allow this to happen. His father then came to a club session with a SUBEA snorkel mask for Thomas, and this has allowed Thomas to have fun on his front.

Thomas and his parents have agreed for Oxford Swans SC and Halliwick AST to share this information and picture to help any other swimmers who, like Thomas, are 'nil by mouth' and keen to go on their front, but who haven't yet achieved the necessary breath control.

For details of the mask go to:

<https://www.decathlon.co.uk/p/kids-easybreath-snorkelling-surface-mask-xs-ages-6-10-no-bag-aquamarine-green/338566/c180c192m8735981>

(Halliwick AST is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily condone the content of external websites.)

Congratulations ...

Many congratulations and thanks to Leigh Evans, Pat Finch BEM, Sue Woodward BEM, Graeme Knowles, Kim Knowles, Joyce Evans, Wendy Walsh, Hazel Beaver, and John Kirchoff.

All have recently been recognised for their services to Halliwick, whether in their club or region, and have received Halliwick AST's **Certificate of Distinguished Service**. If you would like to nominate someone in your club or region for an award from Halliwick AST, please see the top of the next page.

If you would like to nominate someone in your Halliwick club or group for an award from Halliwick AST ...

We have created a number of awards to recognise the work that people do up and down the UK – take a look at

www.halliwick.org.uk/affiliation/halliwick-ast-awards/

We Will Miss You

We were so sorry to hear of the passing of Patrick Hastings on 04/08/2025. We know that this was very sad news to anyone who knew and worked with Patrick.

He passed away peacefully with his two daughters, Stebbie and Mandy, present.

Patrick first became involved with Halliwick in 1965 when he joined Halliwick Penguins Swimming Club as a swimmer. He swam in galas but also trained as an instructor, later also becoming their treasurer. He then became this association's treasurer from 1972 to 1978, still continuing to swim in club, regional and national galas until 1992. He was also (along with his late wife, Marjorie, who sadly passed away in 2010) a co-founder of Barracuda Swimming Club. In 1999, Patrick became this association's chair, a position he held until 2014. Aside from all of that, he was heavily involved in this association's competitions committee and helped develop and then, some years later, revise Halliwick AST's Gala Organisation Pack. **We will miss Patrick enormously and remember him for all that he did for us, with thanks and great affection.**



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Contact Us ...



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- Follow us on X at [@HalliwickUK](https://twitter.com/HalliwickUK)
- Visit us at www.halliwick.org.uk

The Halliwick Association of Swimming Therapy is a registered charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, charity number **250008**.