



Melbourne's year-round open water swimming group

Lead Article – Swimmer Profile

Welcome to Our New Member – Millie Hosie



Started swimming with Icebergers: 29th March 2026

Early years: Born and raised in Sydney, originally the Eastern Suburbs but (thankfully) have called the Northern Beaches home since primary school, until moving to Melbourne 2 months ago.

Learnt to swim: Had my first swimming lesson at Carlile Swimming at 18 months old (and have never really stopped).

Open water experience: From July 2020 until relocating to Melbourne, as long as I was in Sydney you'd find me on the ramp outside Manly SLSC every morning at 6:30am (or earlier - it's not so dark there!) ready to swim with the "Drinks Express" to Shelly Beach and back or some version thereof. I also dabbled in surf lifesaving back in Sydney, but am yet to try an off-season through Melbourne winter...

Best swimming experience: Being out in the water as the sun rises - whether reflecting off the cliffs of Shelly Beach headland, over San Sebastián's old town on a holiday last year, or more recently lighting up the Melbourne city skyline on a cloudless windless morning.

How did you find us: Online before my move to Melbourne - a more sensible person might have looked up local swimming after finding a place to live, but for me swimming was always the top priority! A big thank you to all the Icebergers for already making RBYC feel like home 😊

Swims with: 3186 Dreaming.

Favourite route at RBYC: I loved our 2026 ANZAC Day swim, but you'll normally find me somewhere along Nick's "Desira Special" (Red Pole around the back - back to the start of the rocks - back to Starter's Hut - home).

Swimming goals: Make it through my first Melbourne winter!

Interesting factoid about yourself: I was born in Sydney during the Sydney Olympics and went to the Olympic water polo at five days old - might have something to do with all this swimming (and being a little competitive!).

An Iceberger went for a yoga swim...

"Yes - I should swim tomorrow. I will just do a short yoga swim:

Civil Dawn is at 6:39 am and sunrise is at 7:07 am. I will probably go in at 6:45 am - just when daylight is breaking, clothes hooks aren't scarce and the changing room floor isn't soaked.

My triangle swim will include a stretch, freestyle, bobbing, watching clouds shape, breaststroke, a float and observations from the triangle pole, backstroke and freestyle rolls, a little observation of the sea grass, then the invasive starfish, followed by dolphin diving (with bottom hand and foot touches), upright toe running on the beach, smiles and hellos (to other humans), a hose-off and finally some wee push ups. I'll let the body warm up without a sauna, unless it's a real cold blast and I'm feeling it or when I need some slow moves on the way home.

It is not a tea bag or a swim workout, just a good morning wake-up. :-)"

Date	Event
Saturday 20 th June 2026 at 5pm	Winter Solstice evening swim and dinner at RBYC - Sheree Reynolds
Sunday 9 th August 2026	Winter Classic swims. Details to follow - Greg Wallace / Rupert Hugh-Jones
Sunday 13 th December 2026	Olsen Hooper Classic. Details to follow - Ross MacDowell



The first human *Homo erectus* emerged 1.8million years ago and there is strong evidence that they could swim and cross waterways which provide some support to proponents of the 'aquatic ape hypothesis'. The later ancient civilisations of the eastern Mediterranean also had a positive relationship with water and swimming as evidenced by a range of aquatic gods, nymphs and tritons.

But by the medieval period (circa 450CE to 1450CE) the ability of Western Europeans to swim had hugely decreased. Some historians postulate that Roman baths in the fifth century CE were designed more for soaking and sitting than for swimming and there was a general retreat from swimming. Bodies of water, instead, became sinister 'otherworlds' populated by mermaids and sea monsters.



In the 16th century German universities had a total ban on swimming as a measure against drownings which, in some towns, was punishable by whipping the drowned offender before burial. On the River Cam in Cambridge in 1571, swimming was punishable by two public whippings, a fine of ten shillings and a day in the stocks for a first offence.

But in 1587 Everard Digby (c.1550-1605) published *De arte natandi* (The Art of Swimming - pictured left) - which was the first illustrated How-To book in the English language - and changed attitudes towards swimming.

The swimming breakthrough occurred at Scarborough in 1667 when Dr Robert Wittie recommended bathing in seawater for a wide range of ailments. Harrow and Eton universities encouraged their students to learn to swim to prevent drowning and designated specific bathing spots as early as 1727.

Napoleon I (1769-1821) spurred the development of swimming when the French opened military floating pools to train both men and horses in aquatic warfare as a response to repeated defeats by the Prussian and Austrian armies.

Mass-participation swimming took off in the 19th century in Western Europe with the advent of rail transport and increased access to seaside resorts such that today, swimming is arguably the world's greatest participant sporting activity.

Source: Eric Chalinevis, *History Today*, 16 July 2018.

More Thong Art by Peter Maddison

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