

Healing

Outdoor Swimming:

Events so far and planned

We have held 5 swim intro events so far, and more are planned in 2022. These aim to introduce people of all ages to enjoying swimming in outdoor water safely and with care for the environment, to allay their fears and misunderstandings and those of parents and authorities, and to equip people to do their own risk assessments and mitigate risks, and to show how they can safely have fun.



Swim intro session September 2020, Thorpe Woodlands

All events were headed: *Introduction to outdoor swimming: have a go, learn how to be safe and have fun.* Some events were for adults and young people aged 13 and above, and others were for families and children of any age, with everyone getting in the water.

Waters

project events & activities

SWIM INTRO EVENTS

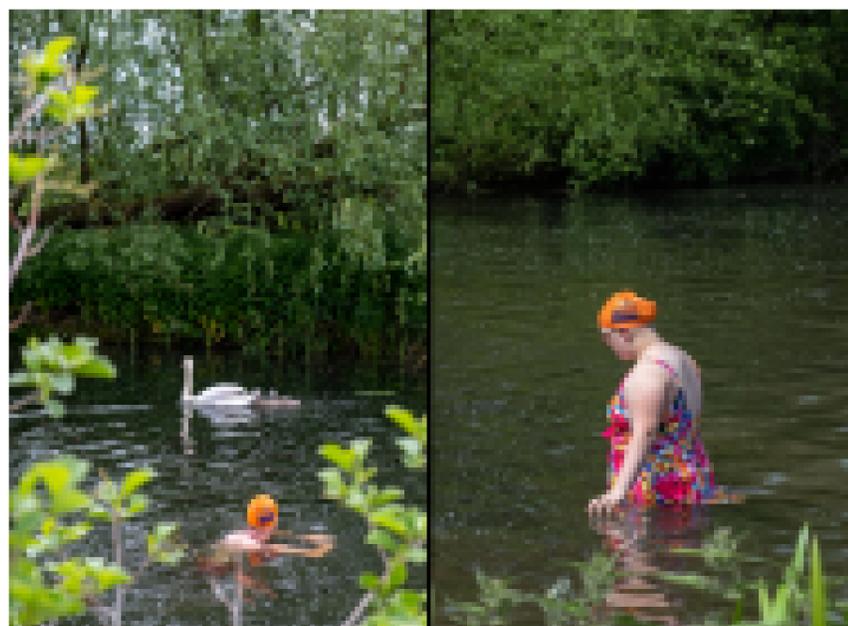
13 September 2020. The first of these training events was very popular and successful. Qualified trainers and lifeguards, supported by volunteers, introduced 48 people in the Brecks area to swimming outdoors. It was held at the private Thorpe Woodlands adventure centre in the river Thet. Entry into the cool water was down a ladder – or once acclimatised, by jumping off the jetty!



Swim intro events September 2020, June 2021, August 2021, September 2021, photos ©BFER, except for photo with two stewards credit Morz Marlow, photo of starfish shapes on sand and of swim intro event May 2022 at Mildenhall credit Imogen Radford



6 June 2021. At our first visit to Mildenhall Jubilee Fields, thanks to agreement from the Mildenhall High Town Council, and with a warm welcome from councillors and the mayor, Jane and deputy, Ian, nearly 100 people in the Brecks had an intro to swimming in a river, the Lark, kept safe by lifeguards, assisted by volunteers.



15 August 2021. This event was our first one for families and children. It involved over 70 people, from age 3 upwards, with parents getting into the water with their children partly for safety and partly so that they all learnt about cool water, safety and how to have fun. Held at Lynford Water public lake (approved Forestry England).



12 September 2021. Event for families and children in the morning and adults and 13+ in the afternoon. Over 80 people in four sessions, including 20 children aged 3-13, had great fun in glorious weather, at Lynford Water public lake; Forestry England authorised event. Volunteers and lifeguards gave an interactive briefing on safety and environmental issues, everyone practice their starfish shapes to Float to Live before they got in the warm water.



29 May 2022. At Mildenhall Jubilee Fields again, 60 people introduced to outdoor swimming in sunshine and showers, with smiles from all despite the unseasonably cool water. Many of the 20 invaluable volunteers were local and new to the team. Another great welcome from Mildenhall High Town Council, mayor Ian and deputy mayor Russell.

The Healing Waters (Outdoor Swimming) project is part of The Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme (<https://brecks.org/bfer/>), supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. See also <https://tinyurl.com/OSBprojHW>

You can read more detailed reports of these events, with photos, from the @OSBrecks website, <https://tinyurl.com/BFERprojTR>, and in updates on the BFER website.

Each event was lifeguarded by a team organised and led by David Ebbs, including lifeguards he trained for the project – to qualify as OWLs and with top up and refresher training – and many volunteers played an essential role in administration, supporting participants, delivering interactive briefings and getting into the water first.

FUTURE EVENTS

3 July 2022 – Coaching for outdoor swimming: tips to develop your swimming am and early pm (priority booking for participants who attended swim intro sessions in 2020-2022). **Outdoor Swimming Intro afternoon**, for families and children. Lynford Water, Event authorised by Forestry England.

13 August 2022 – Introduction to outdoor swimming: have a go, learn how to be safe and have fun (**for youth groups with their leaders**), Lynford Water, Event authorised by Forestry England. Details for group leaders through @OSBrecks website.

21 August 2022 – Introduction to outdoor swimming: have a go, learn how to be safe and have fun (**for a small group of young people with additional needs with their carers**), venue to be confirmed.

4 September 2022 – Swim event: races and fun events (priority booking for participants in swim intro sessions in 2020-2022). **Outdoor Swimming Intro afternoon**, adults and 13+. Venue to be confirmed.

CONTACT US TO HEAR ABOUT FUTURE EVENTS or see @thebreckslp or @OSBrecks



A key purpose of the Healing Waters project and all of the BFER projects is to promote and to study the benefits of engaging with nature and outdoor activity, so we ask people to complete surveys before and after events. These are partly to make sure the content tackles people's fears and meets their aims, and we also use a simplified version of questions used in the Swim England Value of Swimming survey on life satisfaction and other factors.



Purpose and aims of swim events

- To introduce people of all ages to enjoying water safely and with care for the environment, to allay fears and misunderstandings, and to equip them to do their own risk assessments and mitigate risks
- To give an opportunity to participate in an open water swim event and to receive some coaching tips to help improve their swimming

