

Mount Wise. Being married to a member of the Royal Navy meant I was able to train and swim with the club while remaining with Plymouth Leander SC. In January the following year, the club was formed as The Royal Marine Barracks Stonehouse Swimming Club.

Swimming took place at the old Ballards Centre in Plymouth, courtesy of Plymouth Leander, where Chris had also coached. This was until water time was secured at HMS Raleigh and then HMS Drake, which then became its home pool. The club consisted of just 20 members.

### Refurbishment

The Drake pool reopened in 1991 after a refurbishment. The pool became deck-level, the ceiling was cleared, and the deep-end balcony with the diving platform was removed. I was lucky enough to complete a synchronised swimming display at the opening ceremony and we had a 30-second spot on BBC TV's *Spotlight*. Despite the pool turning green overnight, it remained a great training pool, as it was cold and deep.

By 1995, the club was well established within the armed forces as well as the ASA and it was decided to change its name to the Plymouth Royal Navy Royal Marine Swimming Club, the name it still uses today - RN/RM for short. At the start of 1996, it was decided to add a junior section for dependents of serving members. It consisted of 24 children.

Although the tri-services are members of the ASA, Plymouth RN/RM is, at present, the only ASA swimming club made up of serving and past-serving members and their families. It does have its disadvantages in that the facilities are within the Navy Dockyard, which is also a nuclear establishment and so security clearance must be obtained before anyone can become a member. Added to this, the club must be made up of over 50 per cent serving members to continue to use the facilities.

In 2002, the pool was once again shut for refurbishment and, unfortunately, did not open for another year and even then was closed for a further five months in the following year, as it was dogged by problems. Due to its age, HMS Drake pool has suffered continuously ever since but managed to survive until the opening of the new pool.

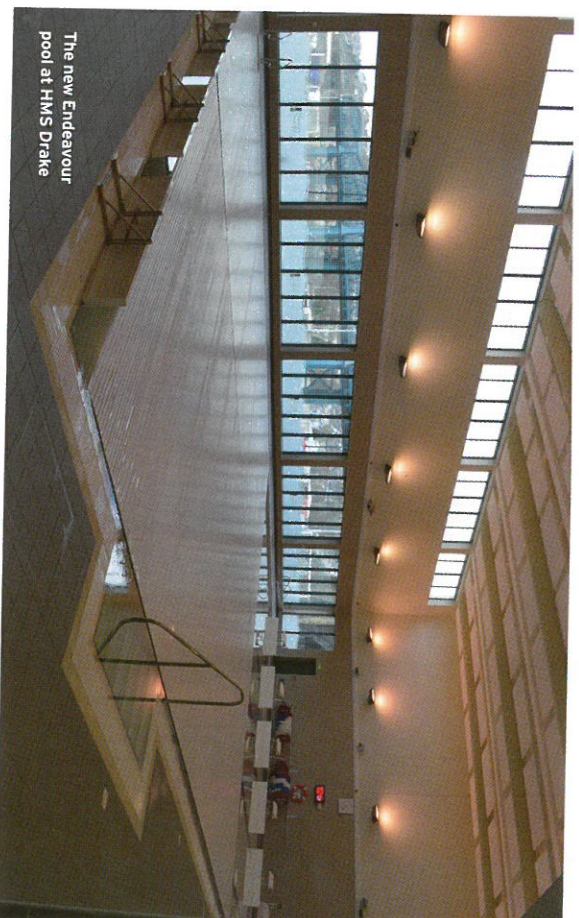
### Swim21

After much hard work over many years, Plymouth RN/RM SC was awarded swim21 accreditation in October 2008 and has faithfully renewed ever since. To achieve this the first time, I needed to complete my level 3 development coaching qualification, which was one of the criteria at the time. The club is made up of volunteers - both teaching and committee members, most being part of both. But as serving members of the armed forces, they are often away and so were unable to commit to the level 3 course.

I gave up my swimming to take on the teaching and coaching, which I must say is



Last swim in the old pool  
June Porter in pale blue



The new Endeavour  
pool at HMS Drake

enjoyable and rewarding in our small, friendly club. Our chairman, Diego 'Whiskey' Walker, kindly nominated me for the 2010 regional ASA awards. I won the South West Development Coach of the Year award and the Volunteer Coach of the Year.

The Plymouth RN/RM SC juniors continue to take part in local competitions, county and development galas, while our serving members and masters take part in higher competitions further afield. The link between the club and Royal Navy swimming remains strong and, with the move to the Endeavour pool, could offer new adventures.

### Hydro-pool

The HMS Drake Endeavour pool has been built with money raised from the charity Help for Heroes and is still inside Devonport Dockyard and Naval Base.

It has been purposely built for injured servicemen and includes a six-lane 25m pool with adjustable floor at the deep end, a great hydro-pool to help with physiotherapy and recuperation, a gym and a café as well as numerous physio rooms and offices.

Our club is lucky enough to be able to use most of the facilities and to have had some say in equipment we would like, such as anti-wave lane ropes, blocks and splash boards. In the old pool, we had to have the diving blocks specially made to fit the pool but these are provided in the new pool.

There is a slight hiccup with the backstroke flags, as they were not incorporated when the pool was built, but it is amazing what can be achieved with large suction caps.

With these new facilities, the club will be able to provide better membership for injured and disabled servicemen and their families and, who knows, perhaps we will have some future Paralympians.

Although it was sad to have our last session and say goodbye to the old HMS Drake pool, the Plymouth Royal Navy Royal Marine Swimming Club has settled into the new Endeavour pool. And despite being a small club, it is keen to continue to make its mark as a thriving one with a big heart that looks after and supports all its members, wherever they may be.

• **Website:** [www.rnrmswimming.co.uk](http://www.rnrmswimming.co.uk)