



The original HMS Drake pool was refurbished in 1991

# New pool for old

A pool built for the Navy more than 100 years ago has finally been scuttled – but the Plymouth Royal Navy Royal Marine SC has a brand new pool in its place. **June Porter** reports from amidstships

**F**ebbruary 1 last year brought the end of an era when the HMS Drake swimming pool shut forever. My swimming history ties in with this pool – from swimming in it as a child with Port of Plymouth up to today as the head coach of the Plymouth Royal Navy, Royal Marine club. The home pool of the Plymouth Royal Navy Royal Marines Swimming Club moved to the new HMS Drake Endeavour two days later.

The old pool was commissioned in 1889 with the stipulation it had to be an indoor heated pool. It was a solidly built structure inside Devonport naval base and finally opened in 1906. Although I don't go back that far, I still remember the pool having many of its original features, such as a diving platform at the deep

end (not allowed today due to the water depth) and the arches on the poolside, which were the changing cubicles. There were trapezes and rings hanging over the pool. As a child of about eight, the scariest thing was having to swim underneath the heavy wooden water polo goals, which were also suspended above the pool. Although I did get to use those goals when I trained and played water polo with Plymouth Leander, this is also where I met my husband, a submariner and a swimmer.

## Silver anniversary

Last year, we celebrated 25 years of being a swimming club. It was formed in 1989 by Corporal Chris Fairley with a few keen swimmers from Royal Marines Barracks Stonehouse and HO Commando Forces at Hamoaze House



June Porter receives her ASA regional awards from South West president John Bird in 2010



Chris Fairley, who founded the club in 1989