



**Melbourne's year-round open water swimming group**

**Lead Article – New Member Profile**

**Welcome to New Member - John McSweeney**

**Born:** Brighton Community Hospital

**Early years:** learnt to float on my back. I thought my Dad's hand was supporting me but he took it away and I was floating as a four year old.

**Joined RBYC Icebergers:** came to RBYC in 2020 as a refugee from The Baths where I had swum for 75 years.



**Open water experience:** Brighton Life Saving Club where I was a member of their undefeated U/16 Reel and Line team and Torquay Surf Lifesaving Club.

In 1998 I did my first Lorne Pier To Pub where we had to jump off the pier to start which terrified me but I have swum every year since, winning my age group on five occasions.

**Favourite course at RBYC:** just to Johnnie Dineen Pole and back.

**Interesting factoid:** I ran in 15 Melbourne marathons with a best time of 3 hrs 11 minutes. I also play classic guitar and mod blues guitar, piano, Irish penny whistle, recorder, five-string banjo, didgeridoo and comb /tissue. 🎵 In 1962 I wrote the Drouin Senior's footy club song (played five seasons with The Hawks as a flying wingman) - they still sing it today.

**Swimming goals:** I overcame colon cancer this year but lost too much weight to swim over the winter but was grateful for the support of a few close friends including Ian Serpless.

**First Car:** a red pedal propelled model from Jeffries Toy Shop in Church St. Brighton.

*Above: John being awarded the Pier Duck Award from Ross MacDowell in the Olsen-Hooper Cup 2022.*

**New Icebergers - Ralph O'Shaughnessy, Iceberger Committee**

Congratulations to the following members who were recently inducted as Icebergers

Tony Ryan	Betty Ryan	Andrew McLaughlin	Sally Berryman	Julie McKay
Brigid Cottrill	Phil Harford	Carol Spencer-Gardner	Dee Greenwood	Dorota Sosnowski
Brendon Jukes	Bill Linehan	Marshall Rushford	Sam Lane	Matthew Healy
Clare Jennings	Sue McCarthy	Mariana Michelli	Emma Gronow	Tas Kakkos
Stella Voules	Fionna Flint	Louise Sherborne	Jacqui McCall	John Manning

**Becoming an Iceberger**

Swimmers who are simultaneously financial members of the RBYC and who maintain a minimum of three swims per week in the Bay through two consecutive winters (commencing before 1<sup>st</sup> June) without a wetsuit will become eligible for induction onto the Iceberger Honour Roll. Inductees will thereafter be able to use the personal designation 'Iceberger'.  
*Iceberger Committee*

**Letters to the Editor**

Andy Mulholland - another stellar effort Ria. What a joint is RBYC Icebergers and your record a triumph of the magnificent and minutiae therein.

Alistair Purvey - one of the best [Newsletter 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024] stroke correction, Figgie photographed with the 7-30 squad, everyone happy just being Icebergers.

**The Iceberger Calendar**

Date	Event
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.30pm	Annual Trivia Night in the Bayview Room with Quizmaster Don Warner

**Reader alert:** sensitive material on the following page. Do not read if shark stories frighten or disturb.



*Email from Greg Kemp 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024:*

'Our diagonally opposite neighbour died last week aged 102 years. She was the last surviving witness to the white pointer shark attack at Middle Brighton Pier in 1930 when she was eight years old.

Her name was Jean Monica Gamon. She was sitting on the old timber pier with two of her classmates dangling their feet in the water when a young man jumped off the jetty next to them straight into the mouth of a large white pointer which took the screaming lad out into the Bay, never to be seen again. I think there have been seven confirmed shark fatalities in Port Phillip since colonisation and my neighbour witnessed the second last".

*Abridged extract from the Melbourne Argus Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February 1930:*

**SEIZED BY SHARK  
YOUTH'S TERRIBLE DEATH  
OFF MIDDLE BRIGHTON PIER  
MANY WITNESS TRAGEDY  
HORRIFIED WOMEN FAINT**

Attacked by a shark off the end of the Middle Brighton pier on Saturday afternoon, Norman William Clark, aged 19 years, was mutilated and dragged to his death. So sudden was the attack that few people realised what had happened until they saw the shark grip Clark in its huge jaws. Even then few people realised that a shark had seized him. As he came up, however, the shark could be seen holding on to his leg. Clark appeared to be sitting across its nose, and he was punching it. Witnesses described the shark as being at least 16ft. long. There were many people on the pier at the time, most of them having assembled to watch the interstate dinghy race being held by the Royal Brighton Yacht Club.

Horrified by the sight, many women on the pier fainted. The girl who had been with Clark also fainted. In the meantime, other women and men tried to frighten the shark away with noise, and it suddenly disappeared, dragging Clark down through the water. It carried him round to the south side of the pier. When Clark came up again, he was still trying to beat off the shark, but his strength was fast ebbing. The water for yards around was stained red. The shark, with its fin and tail out of the water, made another rush at Clark, and almost lifted him out of the water as it seized him round the chest in its jaws. That was the last that was seen of Clark. He went down suddenly, several witnesses said, as if the shark had carried him away.

**The International News Service also reported on Norman's last moments:** "...so tenaciously did he resist the persistent attacks of the shark that the struggle continued over seventy yards...with a trail of blood fifty yards long. The battle finally terminated when Clark disappeared under the water for the sixth time".

Norman's tragic death was the first fatal shark attack in the Bay in fifty years. The last verified shark fatality in the Bay was on 30th November 1936 when 46 years-old Charles Frederick Swann failed to return from a fishing trip off Mordialloc. His small dinghy was discovered the next day being circled by a four-metre grey nurse shark. There was a large hole in the dinghy embedded with shark's teeth. Fishermen believed that the shark had followed a snapper that Swann had hooked and attacked the boat throwing him into the water where he was then easy pickings. Charles' body was never recovered.

It is important to keep shark risks in perspective: there have been no such fatal shark attacks in the Bay for 88 years and just two in 140+ years. Whilst shark risks exist and are front-of-mind for some swimmers, the risks are less than other fatal risks such as being struck by lightning or falling tree limbs. These latter fatal-risks are often not considered by many despite their higher rate of occurrence over all time periods

