

Disability is not inability

Mike O'Leary

We end another year with very sad news of Mike O'Leary's recent passing. Many of you have sent kind words and condolences to his wife, Rosemary and she has kindly provided a tribute to a person who over so many years has been dedicated to the work of NASCH and is support for disabled adults and children throughout the country.

He will be greatly missed as evident from the condolences the NASCH committee have received.

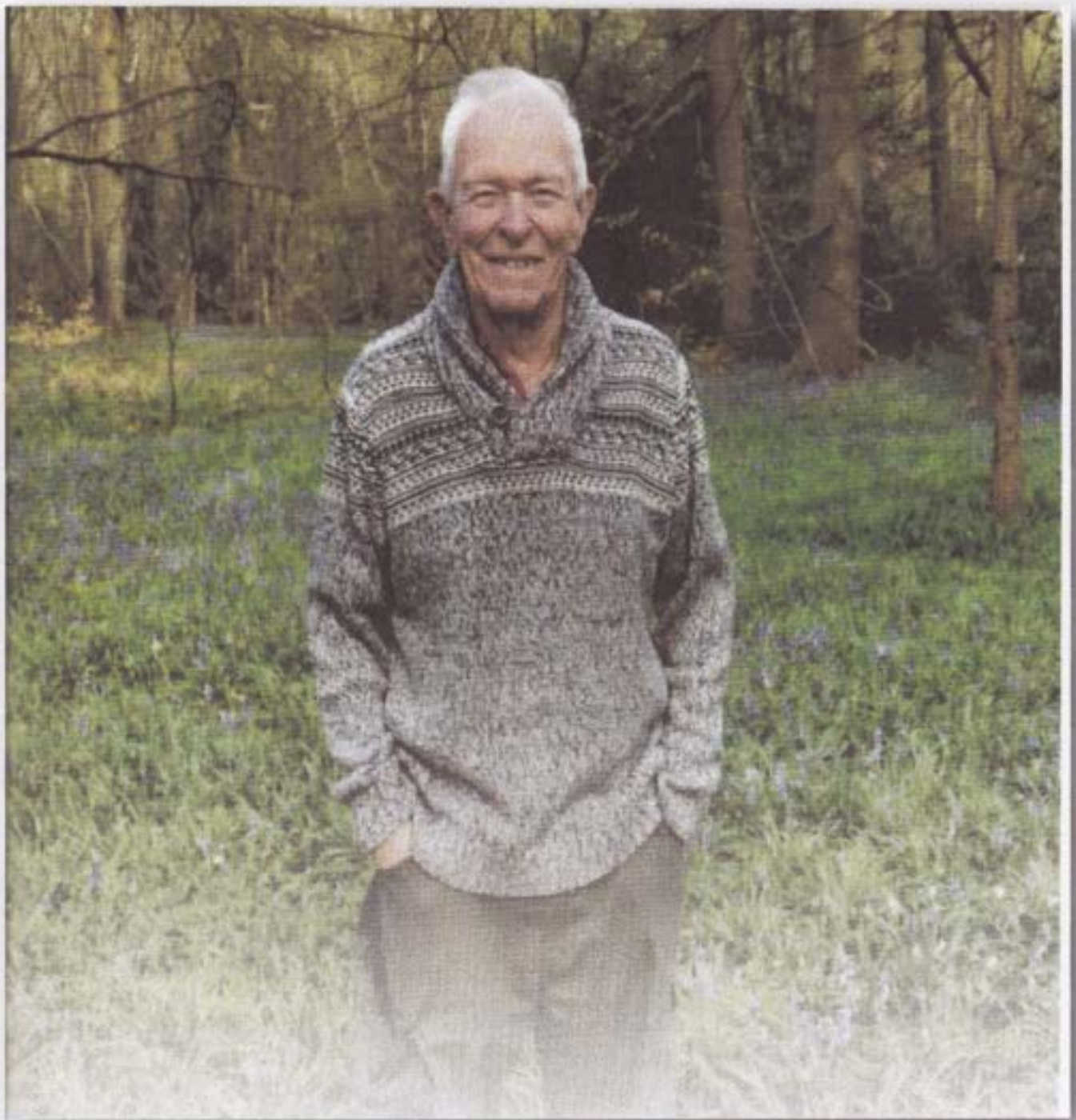
I have many happy memories of sharing a week at Woodlarks from 1990 into the 2000s with him and Rosemary.

His name has been synonymous with NASCH for as long as I can remember.

I remember speaking to Mike on the telephone a number of years ago and he sounded such a lovely man.

Although some of our senior members had only met him once or twice his name appeared on many occasions on NASCH newsletters and correspondence - he was well known to us all.





MICHAEL ROBERT O'LEARY

"MIKE"

1st June 1940—19th October 2023

One of the most memorable and devoted NASCH characters – Mike O’Leary – has recently died, at the age of 83.

How will we remember Mike in NASCH? Mainly, I expect, as Camp Leader every May at Woodlarks Camp, a position he held for 25 years. As a nature lover and a committed volunteer with Disabled activities, the Woodlarks camps combined Mike’s passions, and held a special place in his heart. On the Friday night before camp, Mike would travel to Woodlarks to supervise the Odiham Scouts who every year pitched some 15 to 20 canvas patrol tents. Using his Scouting background, Mike would make sure that every tent was put up properly and in the right place, to ensure that they remained dry and upright and could withstand the traditional Summer weather. This ensured that the camp started in the best possible shape and allowed Mike to welcome new Campers and to greet old friends. I’m sure many of you will fondly remember his mealtime addresses to the campers during the week, and his firm, but fair (!) direction of the fantastic volunteers.

As a young man, Mike initially volunteered with Riding for the Disabled, where he found that some members also went swimming. Being Mike, he followed this up and became a member of Portsmouth Penguins Swimming Club for the Disabled. This led him to attend a NASCH Conference at Stoke Mandeville in 1987 and the following year was elected onto the NASCH Committee.

The NASCH Conferences were held for many years at Stoke Mandeville, then in Derbyshire and finally in Hertfordshire and were enjoyed by all those who attended. At their peak, this was an opportunity for over 120 NASCH members to gather and receive updates about the charity, and for broader Disabled Sport discussions. Mike was responsible for booking the venue and the Speakers (many and varied). They were good times but sadly numbers attending declined and the Conferences were discontinued.

Aside from the Woodlarks camps and the Conferences, the other major annual fixture in the NASCH calendar was the Finals Galas. Again, Mike was an active presence by coordinating the many medals and trophies before they were presented to the Swimmers. He was meticulous in arranging them carefully on the Trophy table, so that they could be presented to the right people, for the right event, at the right time. In order to do this he had the unenviable task of ordering the medals and reminding Clubs to bring back the Trophies from the previous year.

Mike was a good friend to many in NASCH. His passionate commitment ensured that thousands of handicapped people across the UK benefited from Swimming, over decades. He always spoke passionately about NASCH and was a compelling advocate of Disabled Sport. We hope that you have warm memories of him, whether at camp, by the pool, or as part of the Committee; he will be sadly missed.

Rosemary O’Leary



National Championships:

Saturday, 4th November saw us back at Leamington Spa for our yearly national swimming gala. It was a great success, the swimmers worked so hard and were well deserving of their medals and trophies.

Thank you to Newbold Comyn Leisure Centre in for hosting us and for making all of us feel so at home.

We were lucky to have our medals and trophies presented to our worthy winners by the Mayor Councillor Alan Boad from Leamington Spa Town Council. The results will be published on our website shortly along with photographs and a video of the event. In the meantime I've included some wonderful photos overleaf showing examples of our swimmer's passion and hard work.



Club News

It is always lovely to hear news from our wonderful clubs throughout the country. Here are two helpers from Arun Dolphins in Littlehampton at the town show on what was a very hot day in September.

If you would like to share Club news with the NASCH community, please contact Lydia at the NASCH office.



Water Skills Badges

I am pleased to announce that the Water Skills badges are now available. Should you wish to purchase any beginners award badges, please contact Lydia at the NASCH office. More information on the badges are also available in the NASCH Yearbook.



National Championships:



Check out the NASCH Championships Swimming Gala 2023 video and photos on our website at:

<https://www.naschswim.org/gala-news/nasch-championships-gala-2023-photos-and-video/>



Please remember to use easyfundraising when you do your Christmas online shopping this year. So far you have helped to raise £14 just by purchasing your normal shop online.

Over 7,500 brands including eBay, John Lewis & Partners, Argos and M&S will donate to NASCH for **FREE** when you use easyfundraising to shop with them. This means you can raise donations for us when you buy anything from decorations and festive food shopping to gifts like toys, jewellery, technology, experiences and more! These donations really help us and all you have to do is use easyfundraising when you're ordering the things you'll be buying anyway.

Every Christmas present you buy is a present for us!



Scan the QR code to make a difference every time you shop online



How it works

- 1 Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk or download the easyfundraising app
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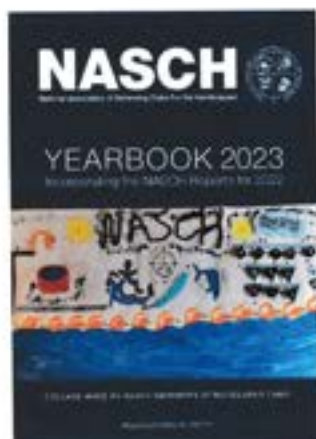


Thank you:

We at NASCH are immensely grateful to The Sobell Foundation and The Hadley Trust who donated mostly generously to our appeal, allowing us to continue supporting our swimmers throughout the UK achieve their goals and express their talents through sport.

*thank
you*

*If you feel able to donate to NASCH please visit our website at:
www.naschswim.uk or alternatively contact the NASCH office at
naschswim@hotmail.com.*



NASCH Yearbook 2023

The 2023 NASCH Yearbook including reports from NASCH member clubs and NASCH committee members is still available. If you would like a copy, please contact Lydia at the NASCH office: naschswim@hotmail.com or 01329 833689.

