

THE LIFESAVING FOUNDATION CLG.

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Why Do Swimmers Drown?

An International Drowning Prevention Research Seminar

WIT ARENA

Waterford City, Ireland

Saturday 15th June 2019



**Attendance by
Invitation Only**

'Why Do Swimmers Drown?'

A Lifesaving Foundation Recognition Award



The Lifesaving Foundation is pleased to present a Recognition Award to As. Professor Robert Kieg Stallman (Em) PhD in recognition of his 25 year plus promotion of the survival concept we now call Swimming Competence.

Evidence based research has established that in High Income Countries the majority of those who die by drowning can swim. Other evidence indicates that the majority of drowning deaths occur within one swimming pool length of safety leading us to the question 'Why could they not save themselves?' It was thought fitting to hold a small specialist swimming seminar to consider some aspects of the

general question 'Why do swimmers drown?' in conjunction with Bob's Recognition Award ceremony. It is also fitting that the ceremony take place in Waterford Institute of Technology as Bob has been to the front in promoting evidence based research into drowning survival. The Foundation recently established a drowning research partnership with Waterford Institute of Technology's School of Health Sciences. The seminar will be opened by Professor Willie Donnelly, President of WIT, who prior to his appointment was Head of Research at WIT. Attendance at the event is free and by invitation only. The layout will be U shaped to facilitate discussion which is considered to be as important as the presentations themselves. The seminar will be audio recorded for research purposes.



Prof. Willie Donnelly

Individuals wishing to attend can apply for an invitation to john@lifesavingfoundation.ie

John Connolly

Foundation Secretary

PROGRAMME

09.15 – 09.45am: **Photos / Refreshments**

09.45 – 09.55am: **Welcome** - Professor Willie Donnelly PhD, President of Waterford Institute of Technology

09.55 – 10. 20am: **Recognition Award Ceremony** – Chaired by Brendan Donohoe, Chair / Lifesaving Foundation
The Recognition Parchment will be presented by Declan Harte, President of Swim Ireland, assisted by Brendan Donohoe who is also President of RLSS IRELAND.

10.20 – 10.25am: **Seminar Introduction** - John Connolly, Seminar Organiser

10.25 – 11.00am: **Declan Harte & Siobhán O'Brien (Ireland)** **'Our swimming careers'**
Swim Ireland President Declan Harte and his partner Siobhán will discuss their open water swimming careers which include participating in most Irish open water swims, taking part in the Alcatraz Swim in California and an ice swim in Latvia.

11.00 – 11.50pm: **John Connolly (Ireland)** **'Why swimmers drown?'**
An overview of some reasons why swimmers get into difficulty in open water and drown. John has published a number of research papers on this question.

11.55 – 12.45pm: **Nuala Moore (Ireland)** **'The proper preparation for extreme swims'**
In addition to being one of the world's leading extreme swimmers Nuala is a faculty member on the Ocean Extreme Medicine course. "We have become completely desensitised to the concept of 'open water' and also the concept of 'cold water'. Both bring with them their own risks." Nuala suggests that there is a new category of swimmer at risk of drowning – the unprepared novice swimmer in extreme events.

12.45 – 01.30pm: **Lunch Break**
Participants can buy lunch in WIT Arena

- 01.30 – 02.20pm: **A. Prof (Em) Robert Stallman (Norway)** **‘I can swim! Can I swim?’**
 Robert will speak on the concept of swimming competence, defining ‘being able to swim’ and consider the skills needed for self-survival in common drowning situations.
- 02.25 - 03.25pm: **A. Prof (Em) Lillan Madsen (Denmark)** **‘The sensing swimmer’**
 Lillan talks about a ‘swimmers dialogue with the water’. She will consider how swimming is taught, how skills are learned, and key topics like balance, breathing and panic.
- 03.25 – 03.40pm: **Break**
- 03.40 – 04.30pm: **A. Prof Hafþór Guðmundsson (Iceland)** **‘The survivor swimmer’**
 Hafþór will discuss how swimming teachers can prepare their pupils for a drowning event.
- 04.30 – 05.00pm: **Open Forum**



Declan Harte



Siobhán O'Brien



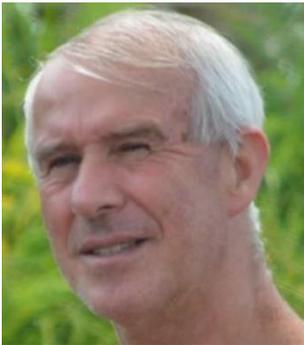
Nuala Moore



Associate Professor (EM) Robert Stallman (Norway & Tanzania)

Dr Robert Stallman PhD is a retired Associate Professor from the Norwegian School of Sports Science's Department of Physical Performance. He has over 50 published research papers in his name as the lead or associate author. He is a member of The International 'Can You Swim?' Project team which is attempting to define 'being able to swim'. The project team published "*From Swimming Skill to Water Competence: Towards a More Inclusive Drowning Prevention Future*" and "*Guiding Principles: Water Competence to Drowning Prevention*". Other papers of his include "*Decrement in Swimming Performance with Added Burden of Outer Clothing*" and "*The Effect of Waves on the Performance of Five Different Swimming Strokes*" and "*Can You Swim: Real and Perceived Water Competency Among Young Adults*". He is a founding member of The Lifesaving Foundation

and of The International Drowning Research Alliance. He divides his time between Norway and Tanzania.



Declan Harte (Ireland)

Declan learned to swim at a young age and has competed in swimming, water-polo, lifesaving, masters and open water events. He is currently President of Swim Ireland and is a member of NAC Masters Swimming club. He is the club coach. The club has 100 members including many Irish Master's record holders, Channel swimmers, Liffey Swim and Dun Laoghaire Harbour Swim winners. The club takes part in the Leinster Open Sea programme every year, approximately 30 swims between May and September. NAC Masters has won the Men's Team of the Year title for 10 consecutive years. He has also taken part in open water events abroad e.g. World Masters in Riccione, Escape from Alcatraz swim and the World Winter Masters in Latvia. He has

been a member of The Royal Life Saving Society in Ireland for over 50 years, holding many offices including that of RLSS IRELAND Branch President. He is a founding member of The Lifesaving Foundation.

Siobhán O'Brien (Ireland)

Siobhan learned to swim at a young age but only started training and competing later in life in master's and open water events. She is a most experienced member of NAC Masters Swimming Club. She regularly competes in open water races and is a former winner of the Dun Laoghaire Harbour swim and has also taken part in open water events abroad e.g. World Masters in Riccione, Escape from Alcatraz swim, the World Winter Masters in Latvia and the Gozo to Malta swim



Associate Professor (EM) Lillian Madsen (Denmark)

Lillian Madsen is an associate professor emeritus (retired) in the Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sports, Sport, Individual & Society, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Lillian is a member of a research cluster studying Embodiment, Learning and Change - in movement settings and educational contexts. For several years their focus has been centred on the "**Sensing Swimmer**", analysing hundreds of students fighting with the water, exhausted, and fighting sudden fear in simple water activities.



Associate Professor Hafþór Gudmundsson (Iceland)

Hafþór (Haffi) Gudmundsson works as an Assistant Professor at the University of Iceland. He is currently Assistant Department Head for Health and Sport Studies, His work is mainly involved in training swimming teachers and coaches. He is also responsible for Sport's Sociology teaching. He has been working with the Nordic lifesaving group through his work at the University and with the Red Cross. He also works with many swimming pools as a lifeguard trainer and takes care of rules and regulations at those pools. His main research involves swimming teaching and drowning prevention work. In cooperation with University of Copenhagen and Nord University in Norway.

“The survivor swimmer”

Hafþór will discuss how swimming teachers try to prepare their pupils for a drowning event. The curriculum of Icelandic swimming will be looked at in relation to what survival skills are taught to pupils. Also some time will be spent on discussion on water readiness and more.



Nuala Moore (Ireland)

Nuala is an Irish swimmer known for open water swimming and ice swimming. In 2006, she was one of six swimmers to swim around the coast of Ireland in a relay, the first-ever swim of over 1300 km around the coast. Then in 2008 she did a double relay crossing of the English Channel. She won several medals in the first-ever World Ice Swimming Championship (2013, Murmansk, Russia). In 2013, she swam the Bering Strait in a relay from Russia to the US. She was one of only

four women, in March 2013 to "[complete] a 1000 metre swim at 0 degrees in Murmansk north of the Arctic Circle [sic]". In total, only seven women have swum a kilometre at 0 degrees Celsius at the Arctic Circle. After her Bering Strait swim, she was nominated for World Open Water Swimming Woman of the Year in 2013 and chosen as one of the "People of the Year" by Irish adventure magazine Outsider. In 2015, she competed in the first Ice Swimming World Championships in Russia. Also in 2015 she won an age group record for swimming 1000 metres in below-5 degree Celsius water. She was featured in a Science Gallery exhibit in 2014 on fat. In 2019 Nuala was appointed a faculty member on the Ocean Extreme Medicine Course designed to give medical professionals a highly practical and immersive training experience for ocean-going events and expeditions.



John Connolly (Ireland)

John Connolly is a retired Primary School Head Teacher. Joining the Royal Life Saving Society in Ireland between 1977 and 2004 he served as Branch Technical Officer, Chief Examiner, Branch Secretary and Branch President. He established lifeguard services at Dunmore East and Bonmahon in Co. Waterford. He worked as a pool and surf lifeguard for 30 years during which time he rescued over 100 persons from drowning. As a swimming teacher he taught over 2000 persons to swim. He was a founding member of The Lifesaving Foundation charity in 2003 and has served as its Company Secretary since then.

Why Swimmers Drown

John has studied the question of why swimmers drown publishing papers on two possible reasons – The First Time Problem and The Exit Problem. He has investigated the tragic problem of suicide by drowning for over 20 years publishing papers and presenting at conferences on the topic. He is currently researching personal survival and self-rescue strategies for common drowning situations proposing that most people drown because they don't know how not to drown. This is called the I Am Not Drowning Project.

