



SURREY COUNTY ASA

1891-2019

Robert Cox – Honorary Life Vice-President

According to the Surrey County ASA handbook, an honorary life vice-presidency is awarded to someone who has ‘given outstanding service to the county’. No problem there, then, for Bob Cox, a Surrey veteran who fulfils the benchmark beyond reproach.

Having racked up more than four decades of service to swimming in the county, it seems fitting for this humble and unassuming man to be acknowledged in this year’s honours. An unsung hero, the kind all our disciplines rely so heavily upon, his commitment and dedication personify the heart and soul of community volunteer.

A member of Godalming Swimming Club for many years, he later transferred to Wey Valley Swimming Club. At one point, when the two clubs shared the old pool in Godalming, he even spent time coaching at both. Jeni Colbourne, a former chair at Wey Valley, described him as “salt of the earth.”

Dr Colbourne said: “When I was chairman of Wey Valley, Bob used to coach at Godalming but he would always help us out as well. We made him an honorary vice-president of Wey Valley about 15 years ago.

“Bob has been in swimming for ever; he is passionate about the swimmers. He is there for them and has always been. He is one of those people who have turned up and given their time willingly. First, in the behind-the-scenes jobs that are so critical to everything that goes on. He comes and does marshalling – that’s his key thing for the county.”

She added: “Just imagine the thousands and thousands of children nervously standing on poolside, terrified, not a clue of what they are about to do, and there was a friendly face to help them go in the right direction.”

Swimming official Stuart Angus, a former treasurer and chairman of Farnham SC, who now chairs Wey Valley, has known him for around 30 years. He said Bob was a constant at the club, acting as a poolside helper and using his many years’ experience in supporting the coaching staff. He is also a starter at meets the club host.

“Bob is conscientious and irreplaceable, always looking to ensure the swimmers are being supported as best they can be,” said Stuart. “He is knowledgeable with vast history from the various clubs he has been associated with. He is happy to impart to others in a supportive way. He is one of the old school of swimming club supporters and activists.”

On receiving his award from the new president, Michael Holden, at the annual council meeting, Bob said: “It seems strange to me that being in it for 43 years, doing what I enjoy doing, I should receive this. Thank you very much”.

