



# THE HALLIWICK ASSOCIATION OF SWIMMING THERAPY

Updated November 2005

The aim of the Association is to further and to foster the use of the Halliwick Concept (formally 'Method'), as a means of teaching swimming to people with disabilities.

The Halliwick Association of Swimming Therapy has clubs throughout the United Kingdom and in other countries around the world. All officers and members of the Halliwick AST work in a voluntary capacity. The National Executive Committee, made up of elected officers and representatives from regional committees, manages the Halliwick AST. Regional Associations - Halliwick ASTRAs - are made up of representatives from clubs and groups in each region. The National Executive is supported by the following sub-committees: Education; Publications; Competitions; and Schools, Hospitals and Training Establishments.

## The Halliwick Concept

James McMillan ('Mac') devised the Halliwick Concept of teaching swimming in 1949, whilst working with 12 girls from the Halliwick School for Crippled Girls in Enfield, North London. It is from this school that the Concept takes its name.

The Concept is based on known scientific principles of hydrostatics, hydrodynamics and body mechanics. It has proved to be safely applicable to people of all ages, both those with disabilities and those without.

Swimmers are taught on a one-to-one ratio of instructor to swimmer, until the time when complete independence is achieved. The swimmer instructor pair becomes a unit within a group activity, so that the swimmer gains the advantages of social interaction with his/her peers, whilst, at the same time, enjoying the unobtrusive but constant attention of an individual instructor. Through the medium of games appropriate to age and ability, groups are made aware of the properties of water and of how to control their own balance. No floatation aids are used.

The giving of correct support by the instructor enables the swimmer to experience mobility that maybe impossible on land. After the initial mental adjustments to water are made and balance control principles are learned, the swimmers reach a stage where they are prepared to disengage from instructor contact. Now, often for the first time, they experience complete independence of movement.

Swimmers are taught how to maintain a safe breathing position; how to regain such a position from any other position; and how to control exhalation whenever the face is immersed in water. They are made familiar with all conceivable body rotations and learn how to initiate, control and inhibit such rotations at will.

Water properties of upthrust, turbulence and impedance to movement are studied, together with metacentric effects. The end product is a secure swimmer whose confidence is based upon sound knowledge of water and the ability to control his/her own movements in water.

## Training

The basic training consists of the Foundation Course, lasting four days. Instruction given is both theoretical and practical. Courses may be four consecutive days or over two weekends, and are arranged throughout the country. They can also be arranged in any club/establishment as long as the requirements can be met. Costs and expenses are kept to a minimum. A handbook detailing these requirements and giving information on course content etc. is available.

When the basic training has been completed and experience gained, other courses are available.

## Badge tests and awards

The Halliwick AST has its own system of tests and awards, designed to test skills learnt via the Halliwick Concept.

## Further reading

1) 'Swimming for People with Disabilities' 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

This book is the handbook of the Halliwick Association of Swimming Therapy. It describes the Halliwick Method and gives other information about the Halliwick AST. The book, in paperback, costs £10. (incl p & p). Cheques should be made payable to 'Halliwick Association of Swimming Therapy'.

2) A range of other publications and videos is also available.  
(see the Publications Order Form on our website)

## Affiliation

This can be made by a club or organisation or by an individual. Details are available from the address below.

## Further information

Further information can be obtained from the:

Halliwick Association of Swimming Therapy,  
C/o The ADKC Centre  
Whitstable House  
Silchester Road  
London  
W10 6SB

or visit our web site: [www.halliwick.org.uk](http://www.halliwick.org.uk)