



Bryan Finlay, PhD, Honor Administrator, Canada, 2020



Platinum Patron



[Personal Website](#)

Videos: [Interview 1](#) [Interview 2](#) [Documentary 1 at 0:30](#) [IMSHOF 2020 at 53:52](#)

Bryan Finlay started as a teenaged administrator in the late 1950s as the secretary of the Coventry Water Polo Club, UK. In 1961, he helped start the Warwickshire Long Distance Swimming Association (WLDSA) and the next year was elected to the IMSHOF Honor Organization British Long Distance Swimming Association (BLDSA) committee and served on their board until 1968. He was an active supporter of their newly formed Pilot Life Saver (PLS) scheme. In 1964, Bryan guided 15-year-old IMSHOF Honoree Kevin Murphy on his Windermere marathon entrance to the sport.

1965, after several years on the board of the BLDSA, he was elected as custos rotulorum to compile a list of as many of the British historical open-water accomplishments as possible, as well as those in other countries. This assignment was at a time prior to digital databases – so these were punched tapes (holes in a tape to be read by a computer reader). Later, he used a university-based Algol computer system to create lists that were typed on paper. At the same time, Bryan introduced a series of woven “flashes” for use on tracksuits etc. and they were extended to cover all of the recognized BLDSA courses.

From his latter teens, Bryan always had an interest in the measurement and interpretation of data on core-body temperatures. In the 1990s he made ingestible temperature-telemetry pills (biomedical telemetry) and worked with marathon swimmers to obtain realistic readings during marathon swims. He published two papers (1995 and 1996) describing the instrumentation and results of recordings on swims up to 12 hours, with a special note on the “initial”, one-to-two-hour, responses of trained swimmers after their entry into a swim. He continues these studies with Solo Swims of Ontario and worked with HQ Inc on the development of their systems that are based around the use of a user-friendly, mobile-phone app.

Bryan joined the board of Solo Swims of Ontario in 1990; he served as its treasurer from 1991 to 2015, and webmaster 1998 to 2024 (and beyond). He is a qualified swim master (safety officer and swim monitor) and has acted in that role on several marathon swims up to 25 hours. He acted in a ground support role for IMSHOF Honoree Liz Fry's 2018, 20 hours and 54 minutes, crossing of Lake Huron.

During his long marathon career, Bryan worked with more than 30 IMSHOF Honorees including: Marilyn Bell; Lynne Cox; Maurice Ferguson; Commander Gerald Forsberg, OBE, Master Mariner, FNI, Royal Navy (Retired); Harry Huffaker; Dr Vicki Keith, CM; Sunny Lowry, MBE; Cynthia Nicholas, CM; Michael P. Read, MBE; Willy van Rysel; Greg Streppel; Montserrat Tresserras; and Christof Wandratsch.

Apart from his administrative activities in marathon swimming, Bryan was also a marathon swimmer, especially in breaststroke events. Several of his speed records still stand in 2024 (and beyond): 1966 Fleetwood-Morecambe 19.3 km, 1983 Coniston 2-way 16.9 km, 1999 Lake Simcoe 35 km and 2001 Lake Erie 22.1 km.

[Expanded Biography \(Openwaterpedia\)](#)

[Long Swims Database \(Marathon Swimmers Federation\)](#)