

Edinburgh Leisure would like to teach you to swim!

✘ Edinburgh Leisure has discovered that almost 40% of adults in Scotland do not feel confident in the water, and it plans to do something about it.

They would like to show you that swimming is a fun activity for all, whether you want to strengthen and tone or relax and revive.

The survey results, which examine national levels of water confidence (either swimming or taking part in other water-based activities), reveal a gap in ability in this potentially life-saving skill.

Another key finding is that around a quarter of those surveyed said that they had either a holiday, outdoor activity or time swimming with family negatively affected by lack of water confidence.

However, Edinburgh Leisure has a range of options designed to make swimming suit you. As well as lane swimming, they offer fitness classes in the water like Aquafit and Hydrospin, which are great for managing weight, as well as Skills and Drills and Powerswim for those looking to improve muscle tone.

Edinburgh residents can also relax and revive after a swim at one of our poolside saunas or even the Turkish Baths at Portobello.

Edinburgh Leisure Chief Executive June Peebles said: "We have pools throughout the city offering Edinburgh Leisure an exceptional range of water-based activities. There is something for everyone – whatever your age and stage. If you are already a regular 'pool' user, great – please continue being active with us. If you have not taken a 'dip' for a

while, why not pay us a visit? The activities on offer can help improve your health and leave you feeling good – please come see us soon.”

Bette Belle takes part in Edinburgh Leisure’s Swimming Buddies initiative as a volunteer within the ‘Ageing Well’ programme.

Bette learnt to swim when she was 63 and, until she had a stroke in 2009, swam every week. After her stroke Bette lost confidence in the water and really missed swimming.

When she heard about the Swimming Buddies programme at the Royal Commonwealth Pool she decided to go along.

The Buddies do not teach swimming but offer help and encouragement. Bette has been going along to the pool and have enjoyed the experience. She found that after a few weeks she could actually swim a little.

Bette said: “I can swim better now and am always encouraged by the buddies. I enjoy being in the pool and feel a sense of achievement that I can actually swim a little. I also enjoy meeting and chatting with the people who come along. I am glad I attend the Swimming Buddies.”

✘ Sheila Currie first started adult swimming lessons at Drumbrae Leisure Centre 12 years ago as a complete non-swimmer. Sheila absolutely loved being in the pool and learned to swim, progressing to our ‘Masters’ class which she continues to attend.

For the past eight years, Sheila has now been volunteering in assisting the teaching of other adult beginners to swim, some of whom are terrified to even go down the pool steps. Swim Teacher Karen Robertson who she assists said: “Sheila is absolutely brilliant with nervous adults as she totally understands their fears and phobias. We also have had “special needs” adults with whom Sheila has achieved far more in the water than I ever could have from poolside.”

Sheila has passed her Level 1 Teacher qualification and hopes to do her Level 2 at some point in the future, possibly once she retires.

This year Sheila completed the Individual 2.5k (100 lengths) at a recent Swimathon, coming 22nd nationally in her age group. Most of the swimmers she teaches and the regular Thursday morning swimmers sponsored her as she is an inspiration to them all.

More information on the Edinburgh Leisure campaign, 'Swimming Suits You' can be found on www.edinburghleisure.co.uk throughout June.