

Not many people know that Maidstone is home to the oldest swimming club in the world. The Maidstone Swimming Club was formed in 1844 when there was concern over drownings in the river. These were often double fatalities as the rescuers were often not strong enough to swim to safety.

The club used to swim in the river and would hold races, diving competitions and polo matches in the Medway.

SE Gazette July 1844 reported an aquatic breakfast party. Coffee and biscuits were served on a floating raft in the river, the coffee was kept hot over a fire and club members had to tread water and drink coffee at the same time. The last swimmers managed to overturn the raft to the amusement of the 150 spectators!

(courtesy of medwayvalleyheritage.co.uk)



