

Participant Information Sheet

Tracing the Psychoswimographies of England's Largest Lake:

Research exploring open-water swimming and environmental health at Windermere.

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Research Website: www.swindermere.com

Summary: This research explores the different health motivations, responses, and complications of open-water swimming (OWS) at Windermere across a full 12-month season, questioning the bodily, socio-cultural, political, and environmental factors that shape these relational experiences of 'healthy' OWS practice.

I (Taylor) will be based at the **Millerground** and **Rayrigg Meadow** bathing sites at Windermere across the season (September 2022 - September 2023) during daylight hours, recording: **(1)** my own swim responses, alongside observing general swimming/lake activity and water/weather conditions; and **(2)** recording separate one-to-one 'swimalong interviews' with open-water swimmers. Both recordings may include written diaries, photographs, audio, and video.

The research is part of my PhD in Human Geography at the University of Exeter, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the South-West Doctoral Training Partnership. Alongside the PhD, the findings will be used for academic publications, university teaching material, and broader public engagement, including the research website. Please take time to consider the following information carefully and feel free to ask me more questions.

This research has been reviewed/approved by The Geography Research Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter.

There are **2 methods** being undertaken at both bathing sites. You can be involved in just one, or both methods.

(1) Observational Methods - I will be briefly observing user interactions with the lake and making general descriptive written reflections, later analysing the notes at home afterwards. I will often be swimming and I will be audio-video recording my experiences with a GoPro and static camera (on the jetty), but I will not be directly recording user activity. Any user accidentally identifiable in the footage will be deleted. If you consent, there may be an opportunity to share an audio-recorded conversation on-land about your experiences/thoughts at the lake, and your responses will be anonymised with a pseudonym (chosen by you), yet participation is entirely voluntary.

(2) Swimalong Interviews - If you have experience of OWS and are interested in taking part, please approach me in-person or e-mail me at: tb585@exeter.ac.uk. The interviews will take a maximum of 1-hour, recording before, during, and after our swim, inviting open-ended questions about our motivations, what we notice about ourselves and around us, including access, water quality, weather conditions, kit, and anything else we wish to share. There is the option of recording the interview via a GoPro (using a head-strap or tow float mount) and/or a static camera (on the jetty).

You will firstly be asked to complete a 'Demographics and OWS Experience Survey', and then later invited to take part in your 'normal' swim, ensuring we do not push ourselves for the purpose of the interview. You are responsible for

your own swim safety. The use of tow floats during the interview will be mandatory (I have a spare), but you can choose whatever swim kit you feel most comfortable using. We will be in continuous dialogue before/during/after the swim, and if we feel too cold or uncomfortable, we will exit the water and get warm/dry over a cup of tea/coffee. Your responses will be anonymised with a pseudonym (chosen by you), and I will be later analysing the recordings at home.

Potential risks/benefits: Participation requires an investment of your time. OWS, particularly in cold water, can carry some immediate physical risks. There will be extra precautions in place, yet it is reminded that you are responsible for your own swim safety. The swimalong interviews are only open to swimmers with experience in open waters, identified in the 'Demographics and OWS Experience Survey' and tow floats are mandatory. I will also be following and adhering to the University of Exeter's and the UK Government's guidance regarding Covid-19 and in-person research. It is understood that our conversations/interviews may evoke sensitive reflections, potentially affecting personal wellbeing, particularly when discussing motivations for swimming. In the event of distress, I will check-in with you how you are feeling, and if required, signpost you to a list of support services provided by myself and the University. I hope that you find participation in the research interesting and that it brings attention to the different bodily, socio-cultural, political, and environmental factors that can shape our relational experiences of 'healthy' OWS practice. Again, you can withdraw from the research at any time (even after completing a recorded conversation/interview).

Data: All participants will be assigned pseudonyms (chosen by you), and no other person aside from myself will be able to identify individuals. All statements/observations made will be anonymised. The University of Exeter processes personal data for the purposes of carrying out research in the public interest. The University will endeavour to be transparent about its processing of your personal data and this information sheet should provide a clear explanation of this. If you do have any queries about the University's processing of your personal data that cannot be resolved by the research team, further information may be obtained from the University's Data Protection Officer by emailing dataprotection@exeter.ac.uk or visiting: www.exeter.ac.uk/dataprotection. If you give consent, the interviews can be audio/video recorded and transcribed by myself and saved in an electronic form in encrypted folders on a password protected computer with a secure cloud-based backup. Any field notes or printed information will be kept under lock and key. You can be given a copy of the interview transcript, if required, and can change anything that you are not happy with (please email me). No identifiable audio-video footage from your interview will be published, yet the environmental context e.g., showing weather conditions may be extracted and collaged into a feature video. Anonymous quotations from the interviews will be used to inform the project, and may be presented in my PhD thesis, the research website, academic publications, university teaching material, and other public engagement activities.

Withdrawals or problems: You are free to withdraw from the research at any time without needing to give a reason and without any repercussions. If you have any concerns, require more information, or you have any complaints, please initially contact me first via email at: tb585@exeter.ac.uk. However, if you are still unsatisfied or wish to make a more formal complaint, please contact Gail Seymour (Research Ethics and Governance Manager) at g.m.seymour@exeter.ac.uk or email the Research Ethics and Governance Mailbox at: cgr-reg@exeter.ac.uk.