



Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine

2021 Media Guide

Saturday 18 September

swimserpentine.co.uk

About Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine

Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine is a one-day open water swimming event held in and around the beautiful Serpentine in Hyde Park. It provides the rare opportunity to swim in the Serpentine lake – which is usually closed to the public – the same venue as the London 2012 Marathon Swimming Olympic event.

First held in 2016, Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine returns in 2021 after a one-year absence due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Brought to you by the team behind the Virgin Money London Marathon and RideLondon, the event has become a staple of London's late-summer calendar offering half-mile, one-mile and two-mile distances to cater for a range of ages and abilities. This year will also see the introduction of a women's-only one-mile wave. Endurance swimmers will also take on the Super Six, an impressive six-mile swim which this year must be done as one continuous swim, although participants will be able to rest at a pontoon should they need to.

The two-mile swim also forms part of the London Classics – a fabled sporting challenge comprising the three toughest London endurance events including the London Marathon, Prudential RideLondon 100 and Swim Serpentine. More than 600 swimmers are expected to complete the London Classics at this year's Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine.

The event is one of Children with Cancer UK's biggest annual fundraising opportunities, with funds raised from its swimmers going towards ensuring investment can be made into vital specialist research to save the life of every child with cancer.

Event schedule

Wave Number	Distance	Start Time
1	Half Mile	08:15
2	Womens Only One Mile	08:45
	Super Six	09:05
3	Two Mile	09:20
4	Two Mile	10:20
5	One Mile	11:20
6	Two Mile	11:50
7	Two Mile	12:50
8	One Mile	13:50
9	Two Mile	14:20
10	Two Mile	15:20
11	Two Mile	16:20

Top storylines

LINFORD CHRISTIE

Jamaican-born British sprinting legend and 1992 Olympic 100m gold medallist, Linford Christie will be taking on the half-mile swim. Christie first learned to swim in his late fifties after being cast in Channel 4 reality show *Sink or Swim*. As part of the show he joined a relay to swim the 21 miles across the Channel. He fell in love with open water swimming and now swims regularly at his local lake in Shepperton. He is passionate about encouraging others to learn to swim, particularly those from black and ethnically diverse backgrounds who are statistically less-likely to swim. Sport England statistics show that 95 per cent of black adults and 80 per cent of black children in England do not swim. The World Health Organization also warns that the risk of drowning is higher among minority ethnic communities.

"Knowing how to swim is such an important skill to have, no matter who you are or where you come from. I didn't learn until I was in my late fifties and to begin with, I was terrible. But now I love it and for me to be able to do that is one of my proudest achievements to date," Christie says.

"It's one of those things like riding a bike, you never forget it and it allows you to get so much joy out of life. Open water swimming is so peaceful and tranquil, it's an escape from everyday life and any opportunity I have to get out there I take it. I encourage everyone to give it a go."

MINNIE DRIVER

Hollywood star Minnie Driver, who has appeared in blockbusters such as *Good Will Hunting*, will be doing the one-mile swim in the Serpentine. Driver is also a big advocate of open water swimming, which she says offers a peaceful escape from her everyday commitments.

PAULA CRAIG MBE

A former GB triathlete, elite marathon runner and decorated detective inspector with the Metropolitan Police, Paula Craig MBE will be swimming in the two-mile event at Swim Serpentine. The swim will come just days after she is due to become the first person with a complete spinal cord injury to finish the Channel swim as part of a six-person relay team called the *Aspire Mutts*. The challenge marks the 20th anniversary of the accident that caused her to become paralysed from the waist down. In 2001, Craig was out cycling in training with the GB triathlon team when she collided with a car. Originally from Fishguard, Pembrokeshire in Wales, Craig is now based in Watford where she continues to train and compete as a wheelchair athlete.



LES SLINN

Les Slinn is one of around 600 swimmers aiming to complete the London Classics with the two-mile event at this year's Swim Serpentine. The achievement will be extra special for the Swindon personal trainer as it will be his first mass participation sports event since he was diagnosed with tongue cancer in 2018 forcing him to defer his entry. After a long journey back to health supported by the cancer treatment team at Oxford, Slinn is proud to say he is now in the clear and back to what he loves most – endurance sport! His other impressive achievements include the Marathon Des Sables, a six-day ultra-marathon over 400 miles of the Sahara Desert, two Iron Mans, 10 Half Iron Mans and two London Marathons dressed as both a rhinoceros and a Roman soldier.

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Every day in the UK, 12 children and young people will receive the devastating news that they have cancer. Of those 12, two will not survive. Of those lucky enough to survive, many will have long-term side-effects that may significantly impact their lives forever. This Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, Children with Cancer UK is asking for help to give every child the chance to grow up and fulfil their dreams.

THE RISE IN POPULARITY OF OUTDOOR SWIMMING

A report from *Outdoor Swimmer* magazine released in February this year shows that, in the UK alone, participation in outdoor swimming is estimated to have risen by up to three times since 2019, with 45 per cent of swimmers saying they've increased the amount they swim outside in 2020. Female participation in particular has increased from 50 per cent in 2017 to 65 per cent in 2020 and many say outdoor swimming is essential to their mental health.

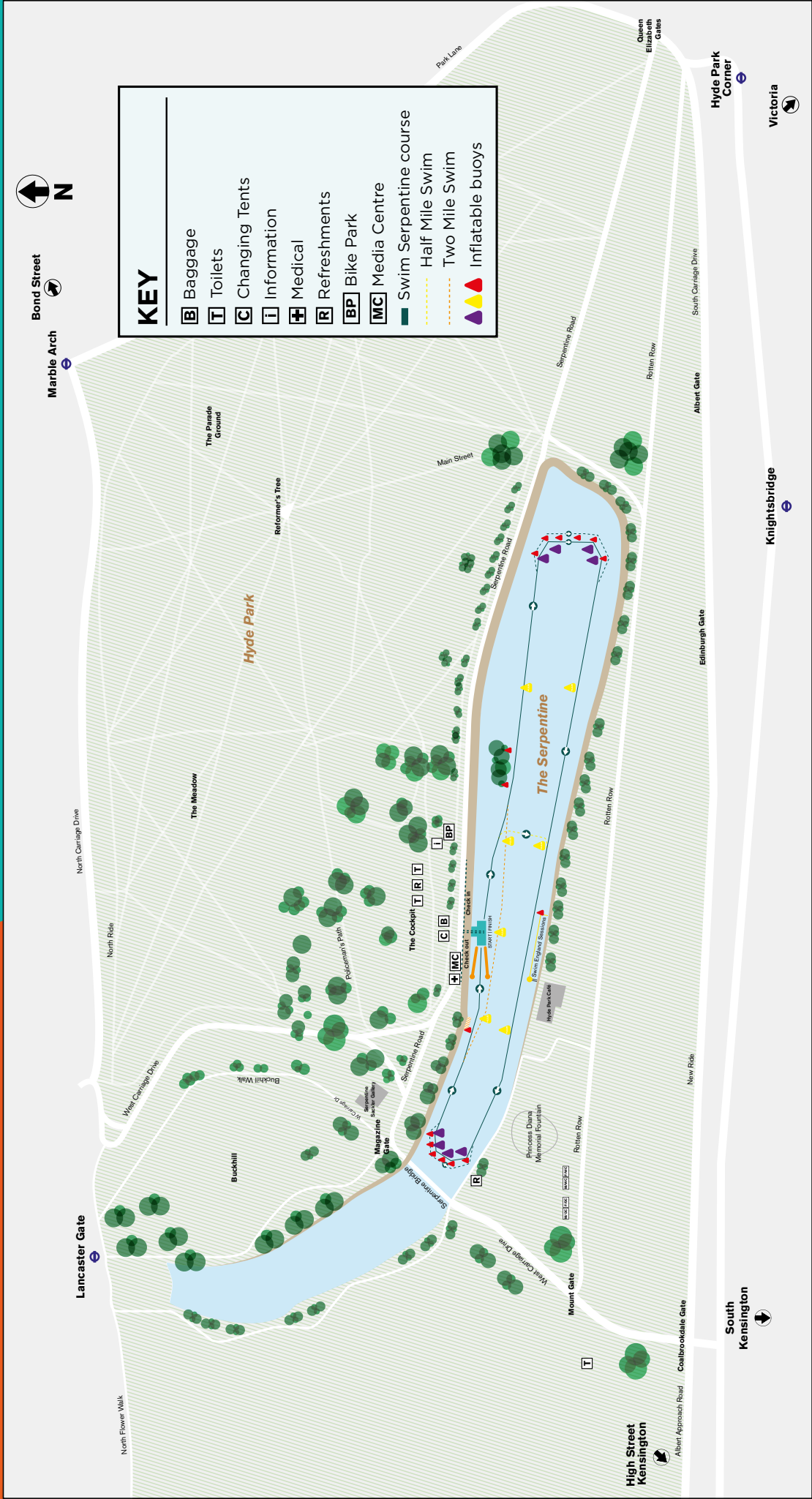
Covid-19 protocols

We have put various measures in place to help make Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine Covid secure, including:

- **Reducing dwell time for participants before and after the event, ensuring they only turn up when required and reducing contact with other participants**
- **Limiting capacity at our venues to ensure there is lots of space for everyone**
- **Ensuring touchpoints, such as kit bags, are as limited as possible**
- **Providing hand sanitiser stations throughout our venues**

Please note, all media intending to be on site will be required to show proof of a negative lateral flow test within 48 hours of the event. This can be done by reporting your result to the NHS via the app or website. Please bring evidence via the email or NHS app with you to retrieve your media accreditation pass.

The Course



MEDIA INFORMATION

The Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine Media Centre is located close to the Start/Finish Area of Swim Serpentine, on the north bank of the Serpentine, between the Serpentine Gallery and the boathouses.

OPENING HOURS: 07:15-17:30

Facilities include work desks, free WiFi, and power outlets. There will be interview opportunities with celebrity and community swimmers. For media unable to attend on site there will also be the chance to request video footage and photographs after the event.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Please direct all media enquiries to:

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SOCIAL MEDIA

For all the latest news and updates follow us on:

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ABOUT LONDON MARATHON EVENTS LTD.

The Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine has been created by London Marathon Events Ltd, the world's leading organiser of mass participation sports events, in partnership with Children with Cancer UK, the UK's leading national cancer charity dedicated to the fight against cancer in children and young people.

The LME team organises world-class mass participation events including the Virgin Money London Marathon, the Vitality London 10,000 and The Big Half.

London Marathon Events is a world leader in maximising revenue for charities through mass participation sports events. Since the London Marathon was founded in 1981, participants have raised more than £1 billion for charities.

London Marathon Events Ltd is itself not for profit and every year gifts its surplus to The London Marathon Charitable Trust, which awards grants to recreational projects. Since 1981, it has awarded more than £93 million to 1,490 projects that inspire activity. Read more at lmct.org.uk

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

CHILDREN WITH CANCER UK

The charity Children with Cancer UK has been the title sponsor of Swim Serpentine since 2019. The charity is the UK's leading national cancer charity dedicated to fighting the injustice of cancer in children and young people. Founded in 1988, it actively raises and invests money for vital specialist research to improve survival rates and the quality of life in young cancer patients and to find ways to prevent cancer in the future. Every year it invests more than £4 million in research into childhood cancers, as well as raising awareness and providing funding for practical support for young cancer patients and their families.

HUUB

HUUB Design, the multiple award-winning wetsuit and triathlon apparel manufacturers, is an official partner of Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine.

SWIM SECURE

Swim Secure is the supplier of open water dry-bags and tow-floats.

OUTDOOR SWIMMER MAGAZINE

The only magazine in the world dedicated to open water swimming.

VIRGIN MONEY GIVING

Virgin Money Giving is the official fundraising platform of Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine.

AWOL

AWOL is the official photography partner for Children with Cancer UK Swim Serpentine. In association with the European Space Agency, AWOL provides a world-first live event photography experience for participants.