**Skirt Club triumphs**

It was with trepidation that Stadium Masters members Carmen Harrison and Jill Mogyorosy, together with Claremont Masters member Mary McHenry, hatched a plan during 2015 to attempt a Rottnest team crossing in 2016.

With an average age of 64 they wondered if they’d left it too late. First problem was – who to get for a fourth member? After being turned down by a few people, they asked Sally Bell from Claremont if she knew anyone who might want to help out.

After a moment’s thought Sally said – “I’ll do it”! And so the Skirt Club was born.

There was so much unknown ahead for the three Rotto novices, and their nerves were apparent in the 1,000 or so pre-race emails which flew through the ether, resulting in every medical preparation known to man, and enough ham sandwiches and jelly snakes to feed an army, being loaded onto the boat on the day of the swim.

However, with unprecedented fitness levels gained by all three 60+ ladies at the eSwim Rotto Squad over the course of four months, it was with renewed confidence that the team lined up for the start on Saturday 27 February in near-perfect conditions.

With Sally off the beach first, gaining a lead over most of the 200+ teams, the team linked swimmer to paddler, and paddler to boat, in record time. Swimming 15 minute intervals each, it was Jill in the water next, followed by Carmen and lastly Mary.

With Claremont member Kylie Leaman keeping tabs on the time and motivating the Skirts, it seemed like no time at all that they had the 10km Channel 10 buoy in sight.

“This is so amazing, and so much easier than I thought!” said Mary for about the thousandth time – and that’s the clean version – while Carmen and Jill continued to plough through the water with strength and confidence, getting quicker as their 15 minute stints progressed.

Once the team hit 15kms, there was no stopping them. With Sally overtaking a team of 200+ men, not once but three times, in an hilarious Battle of the Sexes, it was against a backdrop of laughter and friendly banter that the team all jumped into the water at the 19km mark to swim down the finishing chute together.

With faces beaming and lurid mermaid bathers on show to the world, Skirt Club crossed the timing pad in 7 hours 51 minutes, securing 3rd place in the Womens 200+ Teams category.

In the words of Carmen, Jill and Mary: “If we can do it, anyone can do it”! In the end, though, they did it easily – more than two hours ahead of cut-off.

It was a day they’ll all remember for a long time.

*Sally Bell*