



**CLARENCE HOUSE  
LONDON SW1A 1BA**

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**PRINCE WILLIAM BECOMES PATRON OF ENGLISH SCHOOLS'  
SWIMMING ASSOCIATION AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE**

Prince William has been appointed Patron of two organisations he had links with at school and also after University: the English Schools' Swimming Association (ESSA) and Mountain Rescue in England and Wales.

The Prince, who takes up the new positions today, has in the past competed in ESSA competitions, notably the Water Polo Championships whilst at Eton. Prince William continued playing water polo with Scottish Universities, representing St. Andrews University.

In December 2005, Prince William spent a fortnight with an RAF Mountain Rescue Team in North Wales during a programme of work experience. During his placement, The Prince learned helicopter rescue techniques including basic rope work and abseiling, mountaineering and sea drills.

Prince William said today:

"I feel extremely honoured to be asked to become Patron of both the English Schools' Swimming Association and Mountain Rescue in England and Wales. I have seen and experienced at first hand the important work of these organisations.

Having swum and played water polo throughout my days at school and university, I am well aware of the great benefits and pleasure that can be derived from them. ESSA enables children all over the country to share in these benefits, teaching them to swim - and swim to the highest standards - and generally to enjoy their time in the water. As Patron, therefore, I look forward to doing whatever I can to help children and young people in England become more physically active and healthy through fostering their enjoyment of swimming, diving and water polo; activities from which everyone can get great satisfaction all through life.

Mountain Rescue is an amazing organisation, full of unsung heroes. Most are volunteers, who do a fantastic job saving literally hundreds of lives every year. I want publicly to highlight and celebrate the vital, selfless and courageous work of our

mountain rescue organisations. I have wanted to do this ever since I spent an inspiring fortnight working with a team in North Wales eighteen months ago.”

The ESSA was founded in 1949, and exists to encourage school children to learn to swim and compete at several levels, for their school, their district and their country. It is recognized as the prime organization for Schools’ Swimming, working closely with the Amateur Swimming Association. Swimming, diving and water polo are included in ESSA programmes, and cover both secondary and primary school age children. All schools in England are invited to participate in a comprehensive programme of local and national events run by volunteers, all of whom are experienced teachers with expertise in the various swimming disciplines.

John Stiven, General Secretary English Schools’ Swimming Association said:

“We are honoured that Prince William has accepted our invitation to become Patron of the English Schools’ Swimming Association. It underlines his support of Youth Sport, and his personal interest in swimming. We hope that his presence will encourage even greater participation by the youth of the country in swimming, diving and water polo.”

Mountain Rescue England & Wales provides a land based search and rescue service in support of the statutory emergency services, all year round, all weathers, 24 hours a day. Around 55 teams cover the upland and moorland areas of England and Wales, staffed by approximately 3,000 volunteers. Not only do teams attend mountain and remote accidents and searches, but they are also called to help at major incidents such as air crashes, both civilian and military, train crashes and floods. An increasing amount of teams’ time is also spent conducting searches for vulnerable missing persons, such as children or the elderly, both in remote and semi-urban areas, where their search management skills can often bring a speedy and satisfactory conclusion to a potentially dangerous situation.

David Allan, Chairman Mountain Rescue England and Wales said:

“It is with great delight and pride that we are able to announce that Prince William has taken on the role of our Patron. We believe that, apart from the honour bestowed, there will be very tangible benefits to mountain rescue. We also sincerely hope that Prince William will gain from his association with our organisation. He has expressed a desire to be involved and to meet the people who deliver the service on the hill and we look forward to that.”

## **Contacts**

Patrick Harrison or Ben Overlander, Clarence House Press Office: 020 7024 5508

John Stiven, General Secretary, ESSA, 01932 345011, <http://www.essa-schoolswimming.com/>

Andy Simpson, Press Officer, Mountain Rescue - England & Wales: 07836 717021, <http://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/>