

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE2217

Kerr, Beatrice Maude

(1887 - 1971)

Born	30 November, 1887, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Died	3 August, 1971, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Aquatic performer, Diver, Swimmer

Summary

Raised at Albert Park, Melbourne, Beatrice Kerr and her four siblings were taught to swim by their mother, Eliza Sophia. Kerr began her competitive swimming career in Geelong and in Melbourne, at Brighton and Albert Park. In 1905 she won the Australasian amateur championship, and the 100 yards and 120 yards in the Victorian championships, and completed 366 swimming and diving performances at Princes Court, Melbourne. The following year she won forty-three swimming prizes in Western Australia. Kerr's fastest time for the 100 yards was 1 minute, 21.4 seconds, and for the mile, 27.5 minutes, but she did not hold world records nor did she compete in the Olympic Games.

Following her rival, Annette Kellermann, Kerr travelled to the United Kingdom in 1906. She issued a public challenge to Kellerman that year, but did not receive a response. Kerr began a busy season of performances, appearing in theatrical swimming events. According to Judy Nelson, Kerr was renowned for swimming techniques including the revolving waterwheel, and for her diving displays, as well as for her daring, spangled swimming costumes. She returned to Australia in 1911 and retired from professional swimming the following year when she married Griffith Ellis Williams. The pair had one son and lived at Bondi, Sydney.

Published resources

Site Exhibition

She's Game: Women Making Australian Sporting History, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2007, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/sg/sport-home.html>

Resource Section

Kerr, Beatrice Maude (1887 - 1971), Nelson, Judy, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10266b.htm>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Author Details

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