Swimming: V

IAN COSTER

From Ian Coster, *Friends in Aspic* (London: John Miles, 1939) pp. 130–1. Ian Coster, a young journalist from New Zealand who wanted to meet Shaw, sought him out at the Royal Automobile Club, where for years he regularly swam before breakfast, only giving up the practice in the late 1930s. Elsewhere Coster makes it clear that his report on Shaw's routine must be dated after the Shaws had exchanged their Adelphi Terrace flat for one in Whitehall Court in 1927.

George Bernard Shaw stepped up to the weighing machine and jauntily checked his loss or gain. Then he took off from the five-feet springboard at the deep end in a passable dive, legs straight, feet together. A neat enough header needing a trifle more lift. He came up slowly and went into a leisurely breaststroke, his head well up, his beard dragging. He swam four lengths, changing over to an overarm stroke but carrying his legs too deep. This natatorial display could easily have been surpassed by Byron or George Borrow, but it gave the swimmer a deep, placid enjoyment. He looked a contented Neptune forgetful of turbulent seas and mermaid minxes.

Photography: I

From Helmut Gernsheim, 'GBS and Photography', *Photographic Journal*, January 1951. Helmut Erich Robert Gernsheim (b. 1913), German-born photo-historian and author, who had settled in England in 1937, approached Shaw for information in 1949 and finally secured written answers to his questions on 19 September.

What, or who, led you to take up photography, and about what date?

I always wanted to draw and paint. I had no literary ambition: I aspired to be a Michael Angelo, not a Shakespear [sic]. But I could not draw well enough to satisfy myself; and the instruction I could get was worse than useless. So, when dry plates and push buttons came into the