

Surrey County ASA

2014 ACM - Annual County Report

Age Group Swimming

Logistically, financially and stressfully, the main event of our swimming year is Age Group Championships known to all as “The Surreys”. Surrey has one of the largest County competitive swimming populations in the UK and this presents a massive challenge to our Age Group Committee who usually start planning next year’s meets by the time the last relay swimmers are drying off.

We really value the feedback received via the Coaches Forum and we try to act upon the ideas and suggestions. Planning for 2015 is already underway and for next year we have the added complication of the age-group swimming proposals promulgated by the ASA Technical Swimming Committee. Surrey has made its response via the Coaches and we await further information from the ASA.

There will be an impact on our Age Groups and Development Meet, with the latter likely to extend in scope and number of competitors. We will endeavour to keep clubs updated with information as it becomes available.

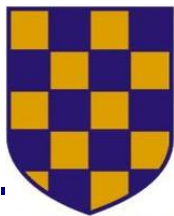
The 2013 County Championships followed our well-established format, starting out at Surrey Sports Park for the distance events, moved down through the 200 and 100m events at Guildford Spectrum and finishing with the Sprints and Relays at Crystal Palace. We again set entry standards to try to match the constraints on pool time, and the ASA-designated “windows” for County Meets, but again we saw an increase in numbers as swimmers continue to excel and improve.

Guildford City retained the Tinlin Trophy for the Top Club setting a new record of 11 successive wins. We were delighted to have Mr Steve Baker (President, London Region) and our own County President, Fran Diaz making the presentations.

In June the Development Meet followed the Age Groups and once again we had a great turn-out from swimmers and officials.

The inter-county competitions take place every year in October and are a great opportunity for swimmers from different clubs to swim as part of one team against other county teams. For 2013 we formalised and clarified the selection criteria, and appointed Martin Jurco as the County Team Coach. Martin summarises the weekend:

“Surrey County looks to field the best team to represent the County at this event every year. Usual rivals become team mates for this competition. We organised a training day at which swimmers got to know each other better. We also used it as an orientation day where both the team manager and I briefed swimmers on what to expect from the meet and what was expected from them. Girl and Boy captains were chosen based on seniority and rankings. Later in the pool we trained together and practiced relay takeovers. In the end we had time left to work on some skills in forms of games so everyone had lots of fun and bonded really well.



Surrey County ASA

The competition day was very fast-paced and the atmosphere was electric. Surrey swimmers swam with their hearts and pride. All swam at their best with many swimming their personal best times. The team came seventh overall being twelfth at the half way mark.

A great team effort from all, the swimmers and the organising committee. We look forward to the 2015 Championships where we hope to improve our position.”

We were superbly represented by our clubs in the Arena National Swimming League Final with Woking taking 7th place in the ‘B’ Final and neighbours Guildford City 4th place in the ‘A’ Final.

Some individuals had fantastic success in the year. Guildford’s Emma Day took two silvers at the European Junior Championships and was selected for the World Junior Championships where she rounded off a magnificent year in the silver medal winning Medley Relay team. Guildford’s two disability superstars were in fine form. Hannah Russell took five medals at the IPC World Championships and Tom Baxter represented GB at the Deaflympics. Tom’s wins in the GB Deaf 50/100 Freestyle saw him selected, along with Polly Saines from Dorking, for the 2014 European Deaf Championships.

The success of our Age Group Meets is due in no small way to your County Age Group Committee and the team of swimming officials and volunteers that has worked tirelessly, almost from the moment we packed up here last year. We are indebted to all of them in particular to the work of Alan Thurlow – management of thousands of entries and hundreds of heats and finals results - and Julie Burvill for once again mobilising so many volunteers

Diving (Fran Diaz)

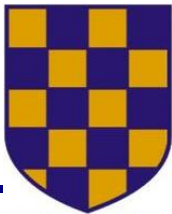
Our year began with the 3m and Platform Championships held at Guildford Spectrum on 21st September, attracting a total of 28 entries. Good planning allowed us to run the Surrey Schools Diving Championships during the same afternoon. Star Diving Club was the dominant county club in both these championships, winning all ‘closed’ titles in both the male/female and junior/senior categories. Guest entries from London clubs Crystal Palace and Waltham Forest also helped boost numbers.

The scrapping last year of the out-of-date Plain and Novice competitions led to the creation of a newly-created Skills competition for 2014. The inaugural meet was held at the Spectrum on 1st February. Aimed at grassroots, this new format involved competitors performing a total of six skills over dry-land and pool. The meet was a huge success with 50 participants. Star Diving Club won all the ‘closed’ events. Guests from outside the county included Amersham, Crystal Palace and Waltham Forest.

The 1m Age Groups and 1m Championships took place at Guildford Spectrum on 5th April. There were 38 entries in the age groups and 18 in the championships. County divers were joined by guests Albatross (Reading), Waltham Forest and Haringey Aquatics (London).

The JPods, which the county bought in 2011, continue to ensure all our meets run ever smoother. The purchase of a multi-media projector late last year for use as a scoreboard now enhances the spectator experience. The County has continued to support coach education over the past 12 months by part-funding a number of former county divers’ Level 1 and Level 2 teacher courses.

Nationally, there have been some notable county diver successes in the last year:



Surrey County ASA

- At the 2013 National Age Groups (Level 3) in Sheffield in July, swimmer-turned-diver Lucy Maurer won silver on 1m and bronze on 3m in Group B (14/15 years).
- At the same meet, Alfie Brown won silver on 1m and platform and bronze on 3m in Group D (10/11 years). This year he became the second county diver ever to move up to 'Level 4' and compete at the Elite Junior Championships in Plymouth in May, winning two gold (synchro and platform) and two bronze (1m and 3m) in Group C (12/13 years).
- Following these excellent results Alfie has been selected to represent Great Britain at Bimbingamba, a junior international in Italy in July. We wish him and coach Stephen Hewat, Star's head coach, the best of luck there. To be competing here is a tremendous achievement as the majority of divers at this level train at high-performance clubs.
- At the National Skills in Sheffield in May (Level 2), Star had their most successful results ever – winning a total of six medals.
- Freya Kelly and Tilly Brown won gold in Group E (8/9 years), Patrick Hanlon and Wilfred Johnson won silver in Group E (8/9 years), Georgia Adams won bronze in Group D (10/11 years), and Ethan Clark won bronze in Group B+ (14/16 years).

On behalf of our discipline I would like to thank the county for their continued support and look forward to another exciting year.

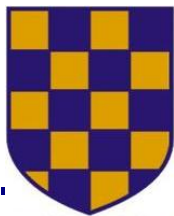
Masters (Jim Boucher)

With the Masters returning to June in 2013, the first Surrey event was the annual Inter-Counties Masters Competition. We ended up 6 of 7 SER Counties at Horsham in what we know is the toughest heat of the competition. We got a higher turn-out and Mike Hodgson and Michelle Ware of Guildford were brilliant winners on the night, with Mike winning nationally too. As always, we had a mix of regulars and new faces on the team. A big thanks to Pippa Oakey and (Mr) Chris Goodair for Judging and Timekeeping respectively, and it was great to see Ann van Beukelen tirelessly helping out the main body of Officials too.

Our own Surrey Masters competition, and indeed all of 2014, was shamelessly dedicated to GB's oldest Master, Godalming's John Harrison who entered the 100-104 age-group with a bang, setting five new world records. None who saw him take the first at Godalming will ever forget the atmosphere and the smile on John's face when he finished.

I was privileged to be able to host, with the kind support of the County, a lunch to celebrate John's centenary year at his favorite restaurant in Godalming. With representatives from SER, Royal Navy SC and our own Masters and Officials, we toasted John's health and success and he replied in his usual way "If I can do it you can too!"

In June, over 160 competitors took on the 14-event programme at SSP, a pool many other Masters are so envious of. Croydon came well prepared, in quantity and quality of swimmers and took all team trophies, except for the Ladies Points where Godalming took back the trophy they conceded in 2013. We were honoured to have John Harrison and Shelley Robinson (President SER) conduct the trophy presentations.



Surrey County ASA

On the national stage, Surrey continues to have great successes. Jane Asher remains steadfastly and elegantly on top of the world stage for her age group. Mike Hodgson has continued to set British Records in a very competitive age group. Mike and Jane will be the first to salute other Masters who have joined them on to the top of the podium, including Matthew Breckon (Epsom) , Sam Chadwick (Godalming) , Nicky Bindler, Emma Kelly, Anna Page (all Kings Cormorants), Paul Goudie (Cranleigh) and Michelle Ware (Guildford), not to mention winning teams from Cormorants and Guildford.

In conclusion, may I warmly thank all the Surrey Masters swimmers for making it yet another enjoyable year. I congratulate you all on your performances and join with you in a big thank you to all the Officials and Volunteers who support our meets.

Open Water (Phil Sears)

A welcome change in organisation at SER saw the SER OW Championship held at Westhampnett Lake near Chichester. As we observed last year the number of entries for Regional and National ASA OW events remains low and is starkly at variance with the upsurge in participation seen nationally in non-ASA OW events. We used the SER event for our own Surrey Open and Masters Championships, again with disappointingly low participation in what is a great venue for OW swimmers, particularly newcomers.

Farnham turned out in great numbers to take a number of medals with Molly Webster winning her age group and thus gaining entry to the National event held at the end of July, where she did Club and County proud with a win in the 12yo group. Tim Robinson (Wandsworth) and Kate Alexander (Guildford) took 3rd places in the 17/18 yo group.

Our Masters were represented by Sam Chadwick who took 3rd in the ASA OW Masters 3km.

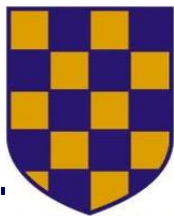
Beyond the reach of the ASA OW events, Surrey once again ruled the World at the World Winter Swimming Championships held in Rovaniemi, Finland. Lucy Scott-Petrie (Haslemere) and Ellery McGowan (Godalming) defended their titles in water so cold it froze over between the "heats".

Water Polo

Along with Synchro, National level Water Polo continues to experience what many consider a "raw deal" from the National Governing Body. Headlines imply great depression in the ranks yet, as in recent, years Surrey Water Polo continues and this year has more reasons to be optimistic about the future. We continue to have representation in the GB Mens' Team through Matt Holland (Sutton & Cheam) and Sutton & Cheam and Croydon Amphibians maintain their traditional places high in the National Leagues.

We are a County of two halves, with the stronghold of the London clubs a stark contrast to the wasteland that is rural Surrey, but, in the case of the latter, the attention of the SER has been attracted and implementation of a water polo club network may be the start of the recovery.

However, it is the junior side of Water Polo that makes the top-level cutbacks so unwarranted. Croydon Amphibians U17 and U19 boys teams reached the national finals with the former taking the national title in superb style. Matty Helps continues to be a member of the GB junior squad.



Surrey County ASA

Synchro (Harriet Mutlow)

No report

Officials (Diane Gamble)

We continue to provide many training opportunities throughout the year. Ann van Beukelen and myself in Surrey(London), and Christina Victor (Surrey Rural) have offered courses to over 50 Judge 1 trainees, several Judge 2's and a small number of Judge 2 (Starter)'s. If any club wishes to hold its own training course, please contact one of us to arrange a date. Otherwise please check the Surrey web site for any ad hoc courses which are run throughout the year. Thanks must once again go to those officials who are happy to mentor trainee officials at swimming meets. We also run Contemporary Issues sessions as required to fulfill the mandatory section of relicensing.

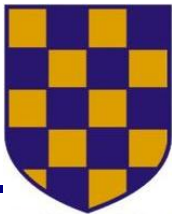
Towards the end of last year we were running numerous FINA Update sessions following the changes to the rules which occurred following the World Championships. Despite a shaky start due to the interpretation of the meaning of the word 'separated' the ASA finally gave us guidance to the fact that 'separated' actually means 'not stacked'! Perhaps the OED needs to heed this guidance also!

Once again this year's Surrey Age Group Championships ran very smoothly thanks in no small part to the Officials who once again gave hours of their time for the benefit of the swimmers of Surrey. However, sad to say, of the 275+ licensed and qualified officials in the County, only 75 of them volunteered to officiate over the 16 sessions of swimming. I thank those 75 officials for their help, but the question remains as to what has happened to the remaining 200+ officials!

Five clubs who had swimmers in the Championships did not manage to enlist any officials. The largest clubs in the County did not manage to enlist numbers in proportion to the number of swimmers they entered. This is a problem which has to be addressed by the clubs or we will find that times achieved by the swimmers will not be eligible for inclusion in the ASA Rankings as the terms of the Level 2 license will not have been met. Unless more officials volunteer, this is what will happen.

I would like to thank all those officials who regularly support my requests for volunteers at Surrey events – please continue to endure my seemingly never ending requests to volunteer, it really is appreciated! To those of you who have yet to officiate at a Surrey event, please volunteer to do so - we really are a friendly bunch and love to see those we have trained appear on the poolside at Surrey events.

Although this is an Officials Report, I cannot fail to mention the hardworking group that is the 'Non-Techs'. Jules Burvill and her team of helpers provide all the support that the organising committee needs to run all the swimming competitions we hold in Surrey. Whilst they may not wear white, they are every bit as important to the success of the events as the Technical Officials. Thanks Jules for all your hard work.



Surrey County ASA

Special thanks must go to Ann van Beukelen for the unstinting support given to both Christina and myself, and also to the Management Committee and Age Group Subcommittee for all their efforts for swimming in the County.