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# **Annual Report of County Activities 2023-24**

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## 1. President

I am honoured to present my report as the President of Surrey ASA. My tenure began a few days after the elections in June last year, and it has been an exciting and fulfilling journey. I am delighted to share the key highlights and achievements from the past year.

The Surrey Masters Swimming Championships marked the beginning of my presidency. The event was a resounding success. We saw numerous Surrey, British, and European records being set, including an equal World record, showcasing the incredible talent in our county. I had the honour of presenting the overall trophy to Woking Swimming Club and congratulating Michelle Ware and Michael Hodgson for their outstanding achievements.

My summer culminated with the British Summer Championships and the Swim England National Summer Meet, which I attended as a parent and official, not in my official capacity as Surrey ASA President. Nonetheless, it was a pleasure to witness numerous Surrey swimmers making it to the finals and standing on the podium.

Before the National County Team Championships in October in Sheffield, our team participated in a team bonding afternoon, playing drums. The activity was filled with fun, laughter, and synchronisation, helping to build a strong team spirit.

I travelled to Sheffield with the Surrey team. The atmosphere was electric, and everyone had an enjoyable time. Under the excellent leadership of Team Manager Hannah Davies and Surrey Coach Stuart McCrea, the Surrey team delivered an exceptional performance, securing our best-ever placement by coming third.

In Hannah's words: "This was the best result that Surrey has placed in more than two decades, and we think even going as far back as the 1970s." I am incredibly proud and honoured to be part of this achievement.



In November, the final of the Tom Dwyer Handicap Water Polo Cup took place at the Surrey Sports Park between Guildford and Blue Marlins. Guildford emerged victorious after an exciting game.

In January, I had the privilege of handing out awards at the Surrey Swimming Age Group Championships. The event featured remarkable swims with numerous national qualifying times, Surrey records, and national records.

On January 20th, I had to quickly transition from the swimming championships at SSP to Spectrum, where the Surrey Diving Skills Competition was taking place. It was inspiring to see divers giving their best, although it was concerning to observe the low number of participants in the diving discipline.

This year I was pleased to present diplomas to Aidan Orpin and Max Morgan for national records achieved at the World School Sport Games in Brazil, in August 2023. Their impressive streak continued as they broke national records at almost every major competition they participated in.

It has been an amazing year, full of events, records, and good times. My only regret is not being able to attend any artistic swimming competitions.

Finally, I would like to congratulate everyone who participated in competitions and extend my heartfelt thanks to all the officials and volunteers who dedicated their time to make these events possible. Thank you to everyone who supported me throughout the year.

I wish all the best to the new President and look forward to seeing Surrey ASA continue to thrive.

Carmen Georgescu-Spiers



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## 2. Swimming

We moved the relays out of the County Championships in 2023 and held them as a short course meet at the beginning of the 2023/24 season. This was done to enable us to reduce the County Championships to two weekends at Surrey Sports Park (SSP) and to find a location to accommodate the large number of swimmers and spectators at the relay sessions.

We used K2 for the gala in 2023. While this accommodated the number of spectators it proved difficult to manage the warm-up in the K2 short course configuration. This was the first meet we had run with the full implementation of the Swim England guidelines on Team Manager and Coaching ratios which limited several clubs from entering teams.

Nevertheless, we had 23 clubs, 1,079 athletes and 577 teams. This was up from 2022 when we had 21 clubs and 516 teams. Feedback was mixed concerning the heat of the facility, lack of warm-up capacity and the ability to get 1,000 swimmers around the pool. We hired the athletic stadium to provide a safe area for swimmers to congregate and do land-based warm-up routines. Many then came into the pool to watch their colleagues and cheer on their teams.

We have hired the London Aquatics Centre for 2024 where we can run short course and have 50m of water to manage the warm-up. We can also handle over 1,000 swimmers and spectators. It will be held on Sunday, 8 September.

The Age Group County Championships in 2024 was the second year of the programme without the relays and with adjusted qualifying times from 2023 the programme was more balanced and ran much better. We had 28 teams, 805 athletes and 3,778 entries. This was up from the 27 teams, 733 swimmers and 3,388 entries in 2023. We adjusted the sign-in times to accommodate the long distance as the first event which, once swimmers and parents had understood the schedule, proved more effective.



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The dates for 2025 have been confirmed as 18/19 January and 1/2 February. The closing date will be brought a week earlier to 8 January as this year's gap of 2 days between the closing date and the first race was too short for clubs to get ready.

Alan Thurlow

### 3. Team Manager

After changes to the 2022-23 programme, Swim England changed it again. This time the development pathway started at County level for 12-year-olds (age as at end of year) and the age was also split in two, born Jan-June and born July-Dec.

Upping the age to 12 allowed a little more maturity in the swimmers but also gave the younger ones a chance to partake, after much research by Swim England.

More than half the athletes were 'returnees' from the previous year's camps which were for 11-year-olds.

The programme saw 35 swimmers selected from 11 Surrey clubs.

Stuart McCrea, our county coach, led the programme and we had four skills coaches. Ideally we would have liked six.



The in-person camps took place in December and June and concentrated on stroke skill development and turns, especially for the individual medley. Having two pool sessions in a day and land training certainly tested a few swimmers.

In March, a Zoom evening was held which focused on health, diet and mental attitude.

At the end of the last camp the Jules Burvill award was presented for the second time. This award is given to the swimmer, chosen by the coaches and team manager, who engages with the programme. The award went to Emma Hill of Kingston Royals.



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I would like to thank Stuart, as he has come to the end of his tenure, for being an amazing Surrey County Coach. Your wisdom and humour will be big boots to fill. I would also like to thank Justine Ryan and Amanda Partridge who have both assisted me in the role of Team Manager, which has allowed the County to run these events.

My report from the 2023 National County Team Championships, which was posted previously on the website, can be found [here](#).

Hannah Davies



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## 4. Masters

We had a huge, record-beating turnout for our Surrey Masters on 24th June 2023. 187 athletes generated 1187 splashes, and after a hard day's swimming and officiating, Woking were annointed as County team champions. Croydon took the Men's points, holding off the mighty Woking, but the latter's dominance of the Ladies and Relays saw the latter romp home.

We had 4 record claims that eventually got ratified thanks to great work by Diane Gamble as Referee and resulted in Mike Hodgson equalling the 100 IM World Record. Gary Scott Thomas set a new European Record for 50 free and Michelle Ware set a new 50 Fly British Record.

In November we had our best result in years in the Inter County Masters Team Competition. Thanks to Laura Kerrigan, supported by Connor Brunt, our finest were mobilised and we took 2nd place behind regular winners Hampshire. We now have them in our sights. Hampshire topped the national standings and our 5th place was, again, as good as it's been for years.

The Masters Decathlon is always the best gauge of individual performance and this year Surrey went one better than in earlier years. Woking's Mike Hodgson was invincible in the Men's event with clubmates Georgina Heyn and Michelle Ware making it a Woking/Surrey one-two for the Ladies.

It was a quiet year on the international front and the World Masters in Doha may not have been everyone's cup of tea. However Christina Victor, Guildford City, medalled in the 50m and 100m Breaststroke with two gutsy swims.

Thanks to all who entered our Championships and turned out for the Inter County event. We would be nowhere without the efforts of Laura Kerrigan and her team management. An equally big thank you to all the officials and volunteers who make our Masters Meet the best around. It will be even better this year!

Jim Boucher





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## 5. Schools

Our first event of the season was last September with the Secondary Relays Qualifying Round held at Guildford Spectrum. A number of Surrey schools were subsequently selected to swim at the ESSA national event at Sandwell Aquatics Centre, Birmingham on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November.

None of the selected boys' Surrey school teams reached the finals, sadly. Although predominantly dominated by Mount Kelly, Millfield and Repton, Guildford High School were placed 2<sup>nd</sup> to them in the girls' junior freestyle and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the medley event. In the intermediate girls' freestyle event, George Abbot were placed 6<sup>th</sup> and St Teresa's 8<sup>th</sup>. In the medley St Teresa's were placed 6<sup>th</sup> with George Abbot unfortunately getting a disqualification. In the senior girls' freestyle Guildford High School were placed 4<sup>th</sup> and were 5<sup>th</sup> in the medley.

Mention should also be made of Reigate Grammar, St Catherine's, Reed's, Notre Dame, Royal Grammar, Woking High and St John's, all of whom had qualifying teams attending and American Community School who had a team selected as reserves.

The Secondary Individual Galas were held at Guildford Spectrum in January, with a South East Division team (comprising swimmers from Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, the Channel Isles, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Sussex, Surrey and Kent, excluding London Boroughs) selected to swim at the ESSA 73<sup>rd</sup> Inter-Divisional Championships at the Alan Higgs Centre in Coventry on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

The Division had another excellent year of fantastic swims and finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> for the second consecutive year. They secured 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place in all age groups, both for boys and girls, except for intermediate girls (5<sup>th</sup>), the intermediate boys (5<sup>th</sup>) and the senior girls (6<sup>th</sup>). Special mention must go to Max Morgan who was placed 2<sup>nd</sup> (Open 50m breaststroke) and 3<sup>rd</sup> (Boys' 100m breaststroke) for the highest World Aquatics points, 765 and 762 respectively.



In March the annual lifesaving competition, It's a Fish Out, for primary schools was held at Dorking Sports Centre with all 24 places for teams taken up. It is the first time since Covid that this has happened and I hope schools will continue to support this fun, skills based competition.

Our next event was the Primary Relays held at Guildford Spectrum in March, with selected teams taking part in the South East Division round in May. The ESSA national event is to be held on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June at Ponds Forge in Sheffield and will be attended by several winning Surrey primary schools.

The results of last year's national primary competition – not fully reported last year as they weren't available – are [here](#) on the ESSA website.

Finally huge thanks must go to the Surrey officials who regularly support us, for without them, none of our schools' galas would take place. Thank you also to the technical volunteers who help us with the electronics at Guildford, something we still struggle with unfortunately, as there are only a few volunteers who know how to operate the system.

All dates for next season will be found [here](#) in the Schools section of the Surrey County ASA website.

Carole Chaplin



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## **6. Disability / Para**

I am pleased to report that the South East Region organised two para training days during our 2023-24 year.

The first took place at ACS International School in Cobham on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

Another was held in January with two Surrey swimmers taking part: Isabelle Walker (Redhill & Reigate) and Annabelle Midgley (Elmbridge Phoenix / Great Britain Deaf Swimming Club).

A further para training day will take place at Eastwood Leisure Centre in Woking on 15<sup>th</sup> June, where I will be attending as Team Manager.

Three Surrey swimmers have been invited but only one of them – India Milne from Godalming – can attend. She has approached me requesting some funding from Surrey County ASA.

The two swimmers who cannot attend are Aimee Horn (Godalming) and Thomas Harvey (Epsom District).

The South East Region is also looking to hold another para training day near the end of the year.

Paul Finch



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## 7. Artistic Swimming

2023-2024 has been a fantastic year for Artistic Swimming. Despite only having one artistic swimming club affiliated to Surrey (Kingston Synchro) the club continues to go from strength to strength with membership remaining high, and a constant stream of new members wishing to try out the sport.

The year commenced with the club attending the National Combo Cup competition. With the club entering 3 team entries, we were delighted to place silver in the Division 1, 13-15yr age group, with another team placing 8th in this category. Our Division 1, 15-18yr age group team also placed silver. Our best results to date at a Junior National competition.

Next came the Masters National Championships. Our soloists Carys Bruce-Caddick placed 18th in the 18-24 age group and Rachael Stevens placed 5th in the 30-39 age group. Next were our duetists, Danielle Holland and Jessica McEachron who placed 10th in the 18-24 age group, followed by Louise Chambers and Laura Gee who placed silver in the 30-39 age group. Our dedicated Masters Team placed 5th in the Combination Team 25-39 age group, silver in the Technical Team 25-34 age group and bronze in the Free Team 25-34 age group. Fantastic results!

For a majority of the year, our swimmers have focused on improving their technical ability resulting in a huge increase in Grade qualifications. These are vital as higher grades act as entry levels for higher competitions.

I am delighted to report that in April, four of our Junior swimmers attended the club's first entry to a junior international competition – the Artistic Swimming Malta Open National Championships. Our soloists Emily O'Neill and Zia Davies placed 12th and 13th respectively whilst our duetists Bianca Mocanu & Greta Pousti placed 18th – well done!



For the first time, 4 of our Junior swimmers were selected to compete on behalf of the London Region at the Artistic Swimming Regional Games. The team placed 5th overall with one of our swimmers Bianca Mocanu winning gold in the land segment. An amazing opportunity – well done Lillia Camilleri, Amy Kukula, Bianca Mocanu and Greta Pousti.

In June, a majority of the club entered the London Regional Championships. With the largest club entry by far, we were delighted to receive many individual gold, silver and bronze medals in the individual figure sections. We entered our largest ever team entry with 5 teams competing over various age group categories and received 3 gold medals, one silver and one bronze, whilst our three duet entries all placed 1st. This was our most successful London Regional comp to date with Kingston being awarded the overall Level 1-2 Trophy and Masters Trophy.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the region continues to thrive and grow in volunteer support with an increase of Judging officials and new level 1 and Level 2 Coaches. This is fantastic for the future as it means we will finally have enough officials to potentially support holding a county competition next year.

Collette Crow



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## 8. Diving

The tenth edition of the Surrey Diving Skills competition took place at Guildford Spectrum on Saturday 20 January. Not only had this year's event reached its tenth anniversary but it also coincided with the meet promoter's birthday. Happily there was no fanfare, no fuss and no cake.

For the second year running we held the meet a week earlier than usual, running parallel during the afternoon of the first day of the county swimming championships on the other side of Guildford.

Holding our event near to the start of the new year did not prove problematic, with the entry closing date set generously for clubs just a week beforehand. There was an increase in the overall number of entries on the previous year, but with fewer clubs. The downside is that when you rely on them to provide officials it can get tricky finding enough.

Our meet runs in a circuit-style format, with groups of divers competing simultaneously on poolside, 1m and 3m. The divers perform two rounds at each station and then rotate around the pool until all three stations are completed. A minimum of nine judges are needed for this (3 x three-judge panels).

However, the configuration was changed from circuits to mixed-height events which meant single, five-judge panels could be used instead. On the upside, it allowed scores to be 'topped and tailed' but the drawback was that events took longer with extra pool time factored in.

Unfortunately, only divers from one of Surrey's two 'active' diving clubs took part this year. The others were 'guests' from outside the county: Amersham Swimming Club, Havering Cormorants Diving Club, Luton Diving Club, Maidstone Diving Team and Tunbridge Wells Diving Club. They helped to boost numbers and made for a better competition.



Medals were awarded to the top three county female and open competitors in each age category and to any 'guests' who ranked in the top three overall. My thanks to Carmen for joining us in the second half of the competition to present medals once she had finished officiating at the swimming championships at SSP.

There have been some noteworthy county divers' successes at national level over the past 12 months.

At the Swim England National Age Group Championships in Sheffield last June, five Surrey divers ranked top six in at least one of their events. On the podium, Leo Robinett took the bronze in the boys' Group C (12/13) platform. He also partnered with Joshua Saxton from Dive London to win the boys' Group D/C (9/13) 1m synchro. Eva O'Reilly claimed bronze in the girls' Group A (16/18) 1m and 3m events, and Alex Cookson took silver and bronze respectively in the boys' Group A (16/18) 1m and 3m. All were from Star Diving Club Guildford.

At the Swim England National Skills Finals, hosted by the North East Region at the John Charles Centre for Sport in Leeds last July, Star Diving Club Guildford's Libby Edelson and Lily Houzego came first and second respectively in the girls' Group D1 (10) event. At the same meet South West London Diving Club's Cai Tobin took the bronze in the boys' D1 (10).

Libby Edelson, Lily Houzego and Florence Brindley competed at the Swim England Talent Games in Leeds last November. This two-day competition involves dry-land skills on day one and pool-based skills on day two. Florence came fourth overall in her age group and was subsequently selected on to the Swim England Talent Z Squad.

On which note, it only leaves me on behalf of our discipline to thank county members for their continued support and I look forward to another dive-tastic year.

Francisco Diaz Romero