

Gloucester Masters Competitions & Events Report 2014/2015

The club had a very successful year in 2014/15 both in the pool and in the open water.

Pool Events

Decathlon 2014

This year saw an excellent performance from the ladies with a creditable 4th overall with 18868pts due to the contributions of Jayne Ball (5250 points and 13th overall), Kate Nimmo (4873 points: 29th overall), Helen Kula-Przewanski (4795 points: 31st overall) & Gill Ferris (3950 points: 70th overall).

The men scraped a top 10 position with 15572 pts with contributions from Tony Cherrington (4640 points and 38th overall); Matt Bailey (4313 points; 54th overall) Brian Armstrong (3474 pts; 138th overall) & Colin Stephenson (3164 pts; 193rd overall).

The 2015 Competition sees the Ladies currently in 6th place and the men in 9th place with only a few more competition results awaiting inclusion into the overall scores.

T30 – December 2014 to January 2015

Another successful year in the National T-30 competition with 28 individual entries (14 men & 14 women) which secured 4 Gold (Helen Kula-Przewanski; Tony Cherrington; Colin Stephenson & Ollie Wilkinson), 5 Silver (Janet Gwilt; Lisa Jones; Kate Nimmo & Clare Turner) & 2 Bronze (Jane Brown & Ollie Barnes).

We also entered 11 teams (3 men; 3 women; 5 mixed) and achieved 6 Gold (**National Age Group Record for Mixed 72yrs+ team**); 3 Silver; 1 Bronze and a 4th place. Overall, for 2014, we managed the same level of domination as we did in 2013 with twice as many gold medals as the next best teams (Camden Swiss Cottage/Birmingham Masters) – 10 out of eleven teams medalled.

The 2015/16 competition has just been announced and we have provisionally scheduled the session on Sunday December 20th for our initial swim, with the potential for another session in the New Year for those who can't make the December swim or who want to try and improve their distance. We are considering the option of competing in the BLDSA 1hr postal swim (Jan 1st to March 31st) and if anyone is interested, please let me know.

British Masters Championships (LC) – Manchester, June 2015

The stand out performance from a GMSC swimmer came from Helen Kula-Przewanski. In her 7 swims she won three golds and four silvers and broke two **British Records** in the process (100 & 200m back; W55-59). Other notable wins came from Colin Stephenson (GMSC; Gold – 50 & 100m free; M55-59), Jayne Ball (GMSC; Gold – 200m free; W60-64) and Gloucester Masters took 4 relay golds including women's 4x100 medley (200-239); mixed 4 x200m free (200-239); men's 4 x 50m free (200-239); and the mixed 4 x 200m free (240-279) in a new **British Record**.

World Masters Championships (LC) – Kazan, Russia August 2015

Following on from last year's substantial GMSC participation at the 2014 World Championships in Montreal, there was, perhaps unsurprisingly, a dearth of entries for this event. Only Tony Cherrington braved the Russian experience in his Spencer alter ego where he was 6th in the 800free; 4th in the 400free and won gold with the Spenser team in 280yr+ mixed freestyle team (see also Open Water section).

Gloucestershire & Somerset Masters (SC) – Horfield, September 2015

Following the retirement of Herbie Adams from the post of County Masters Manager, several GMSC club members stepped into the breach to organise and run this year's County sponsored Masters Meet, which is currently the only other local event for Gloucestershire swimmers. There were 87 swimmers who took part, of which GMSC fielded 16 Cat 1 and Cat 2 members – this was a significant increase from the 57 entrants in 2014 and the largest number that has been recorded since 2007. Hopefully this local, "low level" meet will encourage more of our members to participate next year.

The event will be staged in broadly the same format in 2016 and hopefully the feedback from the competitors and officials this year will help us to improve the event for future years.

I would also like to personally thank **Steve Weston, Pete Smith** and **Brian Jones** for their invaluable assistance in organising and running this event – without your input, we would not have been able to run such a successful event.

ASA National Masters & Senior Age Group Championships (SC) – Sheffield, October 2015

October saw the annual exodus to Sheffield for the ASA National Masters & Senior Age Group Champs. GMSC fielded a squad of nineteen and had a significant level of success – the Gold Medals are detailed in the table below. The highlight was the **European Record** for the Women’s 400 Medley Team (200+).

Individual Events	Gold Medals in	Age Group
Jayne Ball	200m IM; 200m free	W60-64
Tony Cherrington	50, 100, 400 & 800m free	M70-74
Sandy Jones	100m Breast	W50-54
Helen Kula-Przewanski	50m free; 50, 100 & 200 back	W55-59
Colin Stephenson	50 & 100m free	M55-59
Relays		
Helen, Kate, Sandy, Jayne	W 400m Medley team	200+
Kate, Clare, Sandy, Helen	W 200m Medley team	160+
Jo, Sandy, Kate, Clare	W 400m Free team	160+

Additionally, special mention to Gill Ferris who racked up 7 silver and bronze medals. A further 14 medals were won by Colin, Helen, Kate, Sandy, Julie, Tony, W 240+ 200IM Team (Gill; Ann; Julie; Jayne) & Mixed 240+ 200Free Team (Jayne; Tony; Helen; Colin) – a grand total of 37 Medals.

Intercounties – Hutton Moor, November 2015.

As with the G&SM event, Herbie’s retirement meant that Simon and Brian took over the organisation and running of the County’s Masters Team.

Gloucestershire fielded a full team including many swimmers from GMSC and, with some remarkable swims in the relays and individual events, we achieved **FIRST PLACE** in the South West Region winning the Sun Life Trophy by beating Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Wiltshire and Somerset. This is the first time the county has won this event since 1997, breaking a long run of wins by Devon.

The results were then entered into the National Competition where Gloucestershire came 10th of 28 counties compared to 8th place in 2014. On a more sobering note, we were actually beaten by Devon and Dorset in the National Competition due to the relative time/placings of the other counties with respect to our swimmers.

Many thanks to **Simon** who masterminded the team selections and to all those who swam their hearts out to make this the best result for the county in eighteen years.

The South West Region will hold the competition on November 20th in Dorchester for 2016 and in Tiverton on November 19th in 2017.

Open Water Events

Many GMSC members are involved in open water swimming, with most doing their additional outdoor training in the lakes around South Cerney. Swimmers enter a range of events including fun swims, wetsuit races, FINA regulated competitions and Channel crossings. This is only a selection of the achievements of the club members this year, and apologies if I have missed you out.

Channel Crossings – CSA Rules

After narrowly failing to reach France last year, Tony Cherrington finally managed to complete his “over 70’s” Channel Relay crossing in a fast time of just under 12hrs.

Ollie Wilkinson also completed another Channel Crossing this year as part of his Arch to Arc achievement with his wife completing the run stage from Marble Arch to Dover and both then cycling to Paris.

South West Championships, July 2015 – FINA Rules

The Gloucestershire Open Water Championships (inc. Masters) was again held in conjunction with the ASA South West Championships at Weymouth. Only Sandy Jones entered from GMSC in the 50+ 1.5k event, which she duly won (Senior and age group), despite the rough conditions. Three other Gloucestershire swimmers took part in what is a very poorly attended County/Regional event.

An alternative venue/organisation is being investigated for Masters swimmers and the County is currently looking at the potential to hold the competition closer to home in 2016, with a possibility of running a joint event with Wiltshire at South Cerney (Lake 32).

Midland Championships, July 2015– FINA Rules

Three Masters Swimmers from Gloucestershire participated the 3k events – Jessica Wooddisse and Mark Partridge from Stroud Masters (who are regulars at our lido session) and Brian Armstrong from Gloucester Masters. Jessica (Women’s 40-49 age group) and Brian (Men’s 50-59 age group) won their categories, with Mark coming 3rd in the Men’s 50-59 age group.

National Championships, August 2015– FINA Rules

The annual National Championships were, as usual, held at the central location of Rother Valley Country Park near Sheffield. This year there was a slight change to the event with the inclusion of an additional 1500m race for men and women in the morning and the traditional 3k race in the afternoon. The morning’s events saw Brian Armstrong (Gloucester Masters) take his first national title with a win in the men’s 1500m race for the 50-54yr age group.

Gloucestershire based swimmers were better represented in the afternoons 3k event. Jessica Wooddisse (Stroud Masters) comfortably won her age group (women’s 40-44yr) and came second overall. In the men’s 50-54yrs age group, Richard Searle (Stroud Masters) collected a well-deserved Bronze medal with Brian Armstrong (Gloucester Masters) and Mark Partridge (Stroud Masters) coming 4th and 6th respectively.

FINA World Championships, August 2015, Kazan, Russia – FINA rules

A mention goes to Tony Cherrington who, despite swimming for Spencer at the time, achieved a magnificent 2nd place in the 70-74 men’s 3k open water race.

Other popular OW events – wetsuits allowed

Eton Dorney – The late Spring Bank Holiday at the end of May sees what is usually regarded as the inaugural open water event of the new season, the Human Race Eton Dorney Swim. In 2015, GMSC had a strong presence with six swimmers, generating three age group category wins and two 2nd places, with all swimmers also being well placed with regard to their overall race position. The hardy Dave Granger was the only club member who competed without a wetsuit.

Name	Race	Time	Age Group Position	Gender Position	Overall Position
Lisa Jones	10K	2:24:57	1 of 11	1 of 46	6 of 205
Brian Armstrong	5k	1:17:19	1 of 31	9 of 176	11 of 258
Tony Cherrington	5k	1:25:07	1 of 1	34 of 176	41 of 258
Dave Granger	5k (skins)	1:41:21	6 of 11 (2 nd skins)	99 of 76 (7 th skins)	133 of 258 (12 th skins)
Penny Hickson	5k	1:46:55	2 of 2	42 of 82	154 of 258
Becky Harker	1.5k	26:51	2 of 10	9 of 91	34 of 201

Note – in a break from tradition this event will be held on Sat Sept 3rd in 2016

Great North Swim – This event is becoming a mecca for the ever increasing open water swimming fraternity as many Masters Club ‘indoor’ swimmers are beginning to dip a toe into the odd lake or river. Either through bravery or madness, Penny Hickson and Alison Millward opted for the 5k this year with Kay Arkinstall entering the 2 mile event for her first ever open water competition. All were pleased with their times: Alison: 1hr.42.20 – overall place 315/463 Penny: 1hr.32.36 – overall place 212/463 Kay: 58mins.02 – overall place 147/950. Although it often clashes with British Nationals it would be great to get a bigger group from GMSC to come up next year as this will not be an issue in 2016 (due to early Nationals as prep for the Euros). Dates have been published on GMSC website & entries are open now!

Note – We are currently looking at the possibility of GMSC teams for the Relay Option on June 11th 2016. Anyone interested can contact Brian or Penny.

Bosphorus Swim – Three Gloucestershire ladies, Jessica Wooddisse (Stroud Masters), Kate Nimmo and Sandy Jones (GMSC), took on the challenge of the **Samsung Bosphorus Cross-Continental Swimming Race** in July 2015. A record 1870 swimmers from 49 countries participated in the 6.5 km Race from Kanlıca on the Asian side to Kuruçeşme Cemil Topuzlu Park on the European side of Istanbul. Jessica finished 3rd overall in the women’s competition and won her age group convincingly; Kate and Sandy also had podium appearances with Kate winning her age group and Sandy finishing 2nd in hers.

Dart 10k – Despite expanding to a 2 day event, this massively popular swim was once again sold out in a matter of days. Matt Bailey (2:09) – swimming way out of his comfort zone – Penny Hickson and Angela Wadley (both 2:35) all completed the course.

GMSC in the Lakes – September 2015 – Saturday September 5th saw over 600 people converge on the Lake District for the second “Coniston End to End” swim. This 5.25 mile event, in what is arguably the most beautiful lake in the Lake District, is a test of endurance for most swimmers and saw the fastest complete the course in a fraction over 2hrs and the slowest take 7½ hrs. There were two entrant from Gloucester Masters this year, Jayne Ball and Brian Armstrong and both were successful in winning their respective age-groups (W60-64; M50-54). Overall Jayne completed the course in 2:40.07 and was 53rd overall and 12th woman finisher; Brian managed 2:16.08 and was 11th overall and 9th man.

Meanwhile in Windermere a week later Rhian Andrews was going one better by undertaking her second One-Way Swim down England’s longest lake. She completed the 10.5miles in 5:23.14, coming 22nd overall and 10th woman finisher and smashing her time from last year.

Last, but by no means least, Lisa Jones also made a foray into the lakes with a 10k swim in Buttermere on September 20th. With a stunning 2:23.54, and even managing a negative split for the second 5k!, Lisa was the fastest of all the 68 competitors and rounded off her open water season with a great victory.

Events to look forward to in 2016/17 and even 2018

There are several big events that are on the radar for 2016 – both open water and pool based – as well as the usual National and Regional/Club meets.

Please note that, for 2016, many clubs and organisations will be changing their usual event dates because of the European Champs in London 25th – 29th May – including the GMSC meet (May 8th)

Keep your eyes on the website, Facebook and the notice board for updates

- British Championships (LC) – confirmed as April 1st to 3rd in Sheffield.
- GMSC Open Meet – to be held on May 8th to provide a final ‘tune-up’ for the Europeans – expect crowds and book early!!
- LEN European Championships (LC) – London May 25th to 29th – **the big one!!!** If you haven’t sorted out accommodation yet, prompt action is strongly recommended.
- Great North Swim Relay – possible GMSC team(s)? June 11th – anybody interested?
- ASA Masters National Open Water Champs – to include a (non-Championship) wetsuit event for the first time!!
- LEN European Championship (5k) Open Water – September 10th 2016, Rijeka, Croatia.

As for 2017/18, there are a few big meets on the horizon featuring both pool and open water events

- 2017 - World Masters Games – New Zealand, 21st – 30th April
- 2017 - FINA World Masters Swimming Champs – Budapest, July/August (dates TBC)
- 2018 - LEN European Masters Championships – Kranj/Bled, Slovenia (Swimming – Kranj – Sept 3rd-7th; Open Water – Lake Bled – Sept 8th)

All the relevant details will be, as usual, published on our website as well as the Facebook page and the notice board will, of course, be kept up to date – typically on a monthly basis.

Apologies if I have left anybody’s achievements out of the report. I will certainly do better next year by recording things “as they happen” and providing regular reports for inclusion on the website – although anyone can write a report of their event and send it in and it will be uploaded.

**Brian Armstrong,
Fixtures Sec.,
November 2015**