



## Gloucester Masters Swim Club Coaching Report 2022

In my 7th year as Head Coach I am happy to report that as a Club we have moved on from the pandemic and national lockdowns, with training and competitions having virtually returned to normal. I should mention that many regional and national volunteers for Masters swimming have not returned to action after the lockdowns, so many competitions and regions are still not running as smoothly as normal. As a Club however, we continue to thrive with 120+ members, with potential new members applying every month. By the end of the year in the pool we finished with an impressive 5 individual national champions, set 2 British, 8 Welsh and 2 Scottish national masters records and an amazing 53 South West Regional masters records.

### Competition Review:

This year's Royal Navy Meet kicked off our competitive season and took place on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February at Millfield School (25m). In total we had 12 swimmers compete in 44 events, winning 21 Gold, 11 Silver, 8 Bronze medals and setting 18 Meet Records and 7 Regional records. Newly aged up **Matt Bailey** (50-54yrs) won 2 Golds and a Silver and set 2 new Regional and Meet records in the 50m (30.58) and 100m (1:07.89) backstroke events. **Jo Seymour** (55-59yrs) also won 2 Golds and one Silver and also set 2 new Regional and Meet records in the 50m (37.83) and 100m 1:24.77 breaststroke events. **Gill Ferris** (65-69yrs) won 2 Golds, 2 Silvers and a Bronze and set 2 Meet records and a Regional record in the 100m backstroke (1:37.98). **Jayne Stephenson** (65-69yrs) had a busy day winning 4 Golds, 3 Silvers and setting 3 Meet records and establishing for the first time a Regional record in the 100m butterfly (1:42.00). **Fergal Cawley** (45-49yrs) won 2 Golds, a Silver and a bronze and set a new Regional record in the 100m backstroke (1:09.81). **Colin Stephenson** (60-64yrs) won 4 Golds in the 50m, 100m, 200m and 400m freestyle and all times also set new Meet records. **Megan Hartery** (18-24yrs) won 3 Golds and a bronze and set 3 Meet records in the 50m butterfly, 50m backstroke and 100m butterfly and finished 2nd best female overall in her age group.

At the annual Welsh Masters and Senior Age Group Meet (50m), which took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of March at the Swansea pool, club swimmers won a total of 17 Golds, 11 Silvers and 1 Bronze medal. **Jess Partridge** (45-49yrs) kicked off the year with 3 Golds in the 200m Back, 1500m freestyle and 800m freestyle (10:04.40), with the last setting and a British and Regional records. **Michaela Morris** (60-64yrs) won 3 Golds in the 50m and 100m backstroke, 100m freestyle and Silvers in the 50m butterfly, freestyle and 200m backstroke. Michaela's 100m and 200m backstroke times of (1:34.92) and (3:27.01) established new Welsh records. **Tom Morrow** (65-69yrs) won 3 Golds in the breaststroke events, setting Scottish and Regional records in the 100m (1:27.11) and 200m (3:10.96) and a Regional record in the 50m (38.87). **Jo Seymour** (55-59yrs) won 2 Golds and 3 Silvers and set 3 Regional records in the 50m (38.40), 100m (1:26.84) and 200m (3:13.66) breaststroke events.

Four Club swimmers competed at this year's Stafford Open Meet (25m), which took place on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April at the Stafford Leisure Centre. **Simon Wintle** (55-59yrs) led the team with 4 Golds, a Bronze and set a Regional record in the 100m breaststroke (1:16.86). **Fergal Cawley** (45-49yrs) had a busy day winning 2 Golds, 4 Silvers and set new Regional records in the 100m backstroke (1:08.14), 50m freestyle (26.77) and 100m freestyle (1:00.78). Long-time club swimmer **Anne Nicholls** (65-69yrs) continues to improve and won 2 Golds, a Silver and set her first Regional record in the 100m breaststroke (1:46.64). **Matt Bailey** (50-54yrs) won a Bronze in the 200m freestyle, with time good enough for a Regional record in (2:18.64).

A small but talented group of 7 Club swimmers took Trains, Planes and Automobiles to make the 469 mile journey to Aberdeen from the 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> June, for this year's 2022 British Masters (50m) Championships. **Nia Westlake** (25-29yrs) had a busy and successful weekend, swimming in 7 events and winning 5 Golds and 2 Silver medals. Nia set Welsh National Masters records in the 400m IM (5:32.47), 200m butterfly (2:51.31) (old record set in 1972) and the 200m IM (2:37.71) (old record set in 1984). Nia also set Regional

records in these events, as well as in the 1500m (19:33.54), 400m (4:53.69) and 800m (10:07.94) freestyle. Distance ace **Jess Partridge** (45-49yrs) won Golds in the 1500m freestyle (19:16.16), 400m freestyle 4:58.13 and 200m butterfly 2:45.01, with the 400m freestyle event setting a new Regional record. Sprinter **Jo Seymour** (55-59yrs) won Gold in the 50m (38.41) and 100m breaststroke (1:27.35), in addition to a Silver in the 50m freestyle (31.03). All times were new Regional records. Newly aged up **Tony Cherrington** (80-84yrs) had a golden weekend, winning the 50m (36.87), 100m (1:26.90) and 200m freestyle (3:20.37). **Jayne Stephenson** (65-69yrs) had a busy weekend herself, winning Silvers in the 200m (2:54.18), 400m (6:05.90) and 800m (12:24.35) freestyle events, as well as Bronze in the 100m freestyle (1:18.37) and 200m IM (3:25.87). **Colin Stephenson** (60-64yrs) had a solid weekend winning all 3 coloured medals, with Gold in the 100m freestyle (1:03.43), Silver in the 200m freestyle (2:25.00), Bronze in the 50m freestyle (28.57), and finishing 4<sup>th</sup> in the 400m freestyle (5:15.52). **Mark Partridge** (55-59yrs) made top 8 finishes in the 100m breaststroke (1:32.49) and 50m backstroke (39.71) and swam a 50m Free (30.75).

**Tony Cherrington** (80-84yrs) made the trip to Barnet, North London (25m), on the 9<sup>th</sup> July for their annual Distance Meet, and was rewarded with a Gold and new Regional record in the 800m freestyle (14:01.98).

I am happy to report that after more than three years, we were finally able to hold our Open Meet on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August. Although we had slightly fewer entries than last time, we still had plenty of support and received thank you messages from people who really enjoyed the day, some of whom had not competed in a Masters event before and others who were grateful to be able to return to friendly competition. In total 202 swimmers competed from 54 Clubs, and set 2 British records, 38 Meet records and many Regional records. Our own **Matt Bailey** (50-54yrs) won Gold and set a new Meet record in the 50m backstroke (30.82), and Club newcomer **Alex Morris** (18-24yrs) also won Gold in the 100m butterfly, setting a new Meet record of (57.58). Regional records were set on the day by Club swimmers **Nia Westlake** (25-29yrs) 400m freestyle (4:40.48), **Vicky Payne** (30-34yrs) 100m IM (1:11.92), **Anne Nicholls** (65-69yrs) 50m breaststroke (46.31) and **Gill Ferris** (65-69yrs) 100m breaststroke (1:46.00). **Tony Cherrington** (80-84yrs) also set 3 new regional records in the 50m (35.80), 100m (1:21.61) and 200m (3:08.27) freestyle. I would like to thank all who helped out on the day, especially Colin Stephenson and Pete Smith who spent all day in the "Sweat Box" producing results, and to Jayne Stephenson, Brian Armstrong and Jo Seymour who were on the PA all day. Full Open Meet results are available on our website. Please note next year's event will be back at our normal slot on Sunday 23 April 2023.

Internationally, the highlight of the season was the LEN European Championships (50m) which were held from 28<sup>th</sup> August to 4<sup>th</sup> September at the world famous outdoor Stadio del Nuoto, Rome. In the heat of the Italian summer, **Tony Cherrington** (80-84yrs) led the Team with 3 Silvers in the 50m (36.94), 100m (1:26.30) and 3K Open water swim (57:05.30), alongside a Bronze in the 200m (3:26.45). **Jayne Stephenson** (65-69yrs) almost equalled Tony, winning 3 Silvers in the 200m (2:53.19), 400m (6:04.29) and 800m (12:19.10 freestyle). **Jess Partridge** (45-49yrs) won a Bronze in the 3K Open water (41:46.10) and just missed a medal in the 800m freestyle (10:08.96) finishing in 4<sup>th</sup> place.

This years Devon County Masters (25m) Championships took place on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September at the Life Centre, Plymouth. **Don Leatherbarrow** (80-84yrs) had a great swim, competing in the 400m IM for the first time and unexpectedly set a new British and Regional record (8:24.70). Don also won Golds in the 200m IM (3:51.97) (also a new Regional record) and 100m Back in (1:57.12). Backstroker **Bethan Bell** (45-49yrs) won Gold in the 200m (2:44.72), which was also a new Regional record, and Silver in the 50m (36.08). Brother and sister duo **Leigh** (45-49yrs) and **Penny Nelms** (50-54yrs) also made the long trip to Plymouth. Leigh swam lifetime bests and won Gold in the 200m freestyle (2:54.52), as well as Silvers in the 50m (35.31), 100m (1:18.56) and 400m (6:16.19) freestyle. Penny improved on her time from our Open Meet and won a Bronze in the 50m freestyle in a lifetime best of (48.44).

On the 8th October, **Matt Bailey** (50-55yrs) won Gold set a new Regional record in the 200m freestyle (2:15.33) at "The West Midlands Championships", which took place in the Alan Higgs Centre, Coventry. **Luke Pearson** (30-34yrs) won Gold in the 50m (24.58) and 100m freestyle (54.20), and a Silver in the 50m butterfly (27.72). **Tom Morrow** (65-69yrs) swam well, winning Golds in the 100m (1:26.85) and 200m breaststroke (3:07.15), the 2<sup>nd</sup> of these setting a new Regional record.

On the following day, 9<sup>th</sup> October, this years South West Masters Meet (25m) took place at Millfield, and from what I understand was not very well attended. However, we still had 8 swimmers attend, winning all together 21 Gold medals, 5 Silvers and 1 Bronze. **Simon Wintle** (55-59yrs) was our top swimmer, winning

5 Golds, in addition to setting Regional records in the 200m breaststroke (2:45.50) and 200m backstroke (2:34.38). **Jane Brown** (70-74yrs) had a good Meet, winning gold in the 50m backstroke (59.31) and 100m freestyle (2:00.48), and silver in the 50m freestyle (50.02).

This year's English National Masters Championships (25m) were again held in Sheffield from the 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October. **Jess Partridge** (45-49yrs) continued her winning ways by winning Gold in the 200m butterfly and winning gold and setting new regional records in the 400m freestyle (4:55.00), 1500m freestyle (19:01.58) and 400m IM (5:38.70). **Tony Cherrington** (80-84yrs) swam well, winning Golds in the 50m freestyle (34.84) and 400 freestyle (6:58.38), as well as Silver in the 100m freestyle (1:20.05) and 200m freestyle (3:11.13); the 50m, 100m and 400m all setting new Regional records. **Michaela Morris** (60-64yrs) won a Silver, 2 Bronzes and set new Welsh records in the 100m backstroke (1:30.51) and 200m Backstroke (3:16.58). **Nia Westlake** (25-29yrs) won 2 Bronzes in the 200m butterfly (2:35.17) and 200m breaststroke (2:54.40), while **Vicky Payne** (30-34yrs), returning to Sheffield for the first time in several years, won a Silver in the 50m backstroke (33.26). Highlight of the weekend for the Club was the Ladies 160yrs+ 400m Medley relay with Michaela, Nia, **Ceris Westlake** and Jess winning a Silver medal in (5:18.73).

The Inter-County Masters regional meet took place on 13<sup>th</sup> November at Millfield (25m) and was as competitive as ever with many best times swam and GMSC accounting for 26 swimmers out of a total 33 County swimmers. Club swimmers won a total of 12 individual events and played a major part in 4 relay victories. **Simon Wintle** (55yrs+) won the 50m backstroke (31.59) and set a new regional record with a win in the 50m breaststroke (34.08). **Fergal Cawley** (45yrs+) also had 2 individual wins on the day, these being the 50m backstroke 31.17 and 50m freestyle (26.37), with the last setting a new regional record. GCASA came 2<sup>nd</sup> on the day to a strong Devon Team. **Alex Morris** (18-24yrs) set a Welsh record in the 50m Free (23.75), and lead off in the men's 72yrs + freestyle relay which finished 2<sup>nd</sup> on the day to the eventual national champions Devon. When the national virtual event was run, it was great to see **Simon Wintle** and **Jo Seymour** (55yrs+) both ranked #1 nationally in the 50m backstroke and 50m breaststroke events, respectively. Congratulations to Devon who were actually crowned national champions for the first time with 1972 points, while we came away with a creditable 9<sup>th</sup> with 1680 points.

Last event of the season, and I would argue the best, was the Swim Wales Open Masters and Seniors (25m) at Newport on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. We had a total of 17 swimmers compete on the day, winning 32 Golds, 10 Silvers and 4 Bronzes, in addition to setting many seasons/lifetime best times. **Simon Wintle** (55-59yrs) was again in dominant form, winning 2 Golds and setting 2 new Regional records in the 100m IM (1:07.76) and 200m IM. **Matt Munden** (18-24yrs), **Vicky Payne** (30-34yrs) **Ceris Westlake** (30-34yrs), **John Anderson** (60-64yrs) and **Nick McDowall** (70-74yrs) all raced well, each of which winning at least 3 Golds. **Alex Morris** (18-24yrs) won 2 Golds and set another Welsh record, this time in the 50m butterfly (25.69). It was good to see **Dan Nelms** (40-44yrs) compete in his first ever competition, where he won a Gold in the 25m breaststroke (21.68), and it was also great to see **Kevin Morris** (55-59yrs) return to competition, winning 2 Golds, a Silver and a Bronze in the sprint events. Highlight for the Club was no doubt having **Luke Pearson**, **Alex Morris**, **Simon Wintle** and **John Anderson** all qualifying for the Skins event, with Simon coming out on top and Alex finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the over 50yrs and under 50yrs events, respectively.

### Training Review:

Our post pandemic training times from January on at GL1 were Sundays 1:15-2:30pm, Tuesdays 8:30-9:45pm and Thursdays 8:00-9:15pm. Although not ideal, it is still valuable pool time and we are lucky as many Clubs around the country are struggling post-pandemic and as a result of the energy crisis with many pools either closed, or facing closure. Unfortunately, we did lose several Sunday sessions during the year to various Open Meets and we did try to move our session to its old time of 7:30pm but the management at GL1 could not oblige. However, I would like to thank the Management at GL1 for their assistance during the year, and also the staff for their help with lifeguarding and setting the pool up for us during the year.

As usual we were all very happy to return to the Lido on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, and it was great as always to swim outside in a 50m pool. This year we returned to our pre-pandemic ways by only hiring half the pool, which I feel did not negatively affect our sessions in anyway. I do feel that, as a Club, we tend to swim better every year following April due to getting fitter and stronger with the weekly 50m session. Plus, it is always good to see many Club members who are also season ticket holders swim regularly on their own just for enjoyment of the sport. Our last session at the Lido was on 24<sup>th</sup> September, but I am sure we would all

have happily swam for another month if we could have. As always a big thank you to the Trustees and Staff at the Lido for making us feel very welcome; we look forward to being back in April 2023.

The twice cancelled 2020 training trip to The Best Center in Majorca finally took place on the 4-11 April 2022. Unfortunately, not all of the swimmers who wanted to attend could go on the revised date, but some 17 swimmers managed to make the trip, with a productive and good time had by all.

### **2022 Award Winners:**

It gives me great pleasure to announce this year's Club award winners are:

- **GMSC Male Swimmer of the Year – Matt Bailey** – Matt joined our Club in 2014 and has consistently trained well, regularly competed and wins this award for the first time in his career. During the year Matt has set a GMSC Open Meet record, 4 Regional records and by late November Matt was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> nationally in his age group for both the 50m and 100m backstroke short course events.
- **GMSC Female Swimmer of the Year – Jess Partridge** - Jess joined us in 2015 and despite a challenging work schedule Jess swims and competes with us whenever possible. During the year Jess won a Silver medal at the Europeans in August, 3 National titles at the British Championships in June, 3 National titles at the English Championships in October, set 1 British record, as well as 3 Regional records. Jess was part of the GMSC Ladies 160+ Medley Relay that won a Silver medal in Sheffield and by late November Jess was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> nationally in her age group in 6 events, spanning both the short and long course pools.
- **GMSC Improver of the Year – Alex Davies** - Alex joined us in March 2021 and has trained regularly, all the while being a popular member of the Club. At the 2022 Navy Meet, Alex swam lifetime bests in the 400m freestyle (5:03) and 200m freestyle (2:19), then just 4 months later at our Open Meet improved those times to (4:56) and (2:17). Alex again represented the County Team at Millfield in November. Alex comes from a swimming family as both his parents Tony and Mary swam with our Club in the 1990's with Coach Mike Phelps.
- **GMSC Terry Ward Trophy – Colin Stephenson** – Colin has had a busy year not only in his role as Membership Secretary, but he was also point man for the timing system at this year's Open Meet. For younger and newer members of the Club, Terry Ward was a loyal member of the club from its founding in 1988 and served on the committee in the early days. After his death in 2005 his daughter, Angela Hawken, donated the trophy, which is usually presented at the end of May, around the time of Terry's birthday. The trophy is awarded to a club member who has made a significant contribution to the running/success of the Club other than as a swimmer.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Coaches **Craig Skinner** and **Morgan Davies** who attended sessions regularly this year and made a positive impact on swimmers during training sessions.

I would also like to thank, as always, our Committee for meeting regularly throughout the year and taking the many actions necessary to ensure the Clubs smooth running. Special thanks to Club Secretary **Tony Coleby**, Membership Secretary **Colin Stephenson**, Fixtures Secretary **Brian Armstrong** and Social Secretaries **Penny Hickson** and **Jo Duberley** who organised various events during the year. I would also like to thank Club Treasurer **Kieran Vickers** who did a sterling job paying bills and keeping our finances in check during the year, and recently spent many hours producing various projections for next years fee structure.

Finally it is with sadness I need to report the passing of **Karen Hilton** (née Taylor), known to many as "KT", who has not swam with us for a while but who played a massive part in the club over the years, especially during the 90's and 2000's. Karen was a lovely, generous, fun person who will be missed by the many friends she has at the Club.

**Simon K. Cooper,**  
**Head Coach GMSC,**  
**December 2022**