



Gloucester Masters Swimming Club Coaching Report 2025

In my 10th year as Head Coach I am incredibly proud to report another successful year for Gloucester Masters Swim Club (GMSC). The headline achievement of 2025 was undoubtedly securing a historic **3rd place** (out of 190 clubs) in the Couper Cup Top Club competition at the British Championships in London. We backed this up with a **9th place** finish (out of 273 clubs) in the Otter Trophy at the English National Championships and we were also nominated for the prestigious 2025 Swim England Swimming Club of the Year. In total we finished the year with 15 British Champions, 14 English Champions and with Club swimmers setting 7 British records, 36 National records, 99 South West records and numerous lifetime and season best times. The South West Regional Records table has not been updated since December 2024 so I can not be accurate on the number previously stated. As you will all be aware all the above was achieved while training in a pool only 0.9m deep and with no starting blocks !!!! As Head Coach I was very proud to see the character our swimmers displayed by continuing to show up for training sessions and working hard despite the obvious adversity.

Competition Highlights

As always results and reports for all events can be found on our Club website www.gloucestermasters.com or our Facebook page Gloucester Masters Swimming Club.

Our home meet on 27th April was another resounding success, attracting 262 swimmers from 54 clubs. The standard was world-class, with 1 World, 2 European, 5 British records and 85 Meet records set on the day. Club swimmers had a great day setting 1 British record, 2 Welsh records, 2 Scottish records, 14 South West records and 19 Meet records. **Don Leatherbarrow** (85yrs+) set a British record in the 200m Breaststroke 4:38.72. **Nia Skinner** set 2 Welsh records in the 400m Freestyle 4:37.11 and 200m Freestyle 2:12.34 and **Vicki Payne** set 2 Scottish records in the 100m Breaststroke 1:14.46 and 100m IM 1:08.18. I would like to thank all club members who helped to make the day a success, especially **Colin Stephenson**, **Pete Smith** and **Matt Bailey** who spent all day in the "Hot Box" producing results and **Brian Armstrong** who was great on the PA all day. Full Open Meet results are available on our website. Please note that next year's event will be back on **Sunday 12th April 2026** and we hope to see you all there !!!

First "Target Meet" of the year was the GB Championships (50m) at the London Olympic Pool from the 13-15th June. We had 15 Club swimmers who competed in 43 events and swam 7 relays. As previously mentioned we finished the weekend a club high 3rd place overall and ended the weekend with 18 individual Golds, 4 relay Golds, 11 Silvers, 7 Bronze and set 1 British, 2 Scottish, 4 Welsh, 19 Regional records and 15 British Champions. Breaststroke specialist **Vicki Payne** (35yrs+) led the Club with 4 individual Golds and set her first British and Scottish record in the 200m Breaststroke 2:45.60 and also broke a Scottish record in the 100m Breaststroke of 1:16.15. Not far behind was all rounder **Nia Skinner** (30yrs+) who won 3 Golds and a Silver and set a Welsh record in the 400m IM 5:24.60. Sprinter **Colin Stephenson** also won 3 Golds and a Silver in the Freestyle events. Other Individual winners were newly aged up distance ace **Jess Partridge** (50yrs+) 800m and 1500m Free, **Simon Wintle** (55yrs+) 200m Breaststroke and 200m IM and **Jayne Stephenson** (70yrs+) 1500m Free. **Micha Morris** (60yrs+) won Gold in the 200m Backstroke and Silver in the 100m Backstroke both in Welsh records of 3:10.21 and 1:28.58. **Sallie Cheung** (70yrs+) win Gold in the 50m Breaststroke and **Theo Cannon** (25yrs+) won Gold in the 50m Butterfly. The Men's 280+ Medley and Free teams of **Colin Stephenson**, **Nick McDowall**, **John Anderson** and **Tony Cherrington** finally struck Gold after years of planning and hopefully will continue to win Golds for many more years. The 240yrs Female 200m Medley relay with **Micha Morris**, **Sallie Cheung**, **Vicki Payne** and **Jayne Stephenson** also won Gold as did the Female

400m Mixed Medley with **Nia Skinner** and first time British champions **Hayley Bird, Rob Rudge** and **Alex Davies**.

We grew our squad to 19 swimmers for the second Target Meet of the year the English National Championships (25m) which were held as always in Sheffield at the end of October. At the end of the weekend we had 14 National Champions and Club swimmers won 18 individual Gold medals, 5 relays Gold medals and a total of 11 Silvers, 5 Bronzes and set 4 Welsh records, 3 Scottish records and 17 Regional records. I was pleased to see that in the Otter Team Trophy we moved up 5 places from last year to finish 9th out of 273 Clubs with 194 points, compared with 158 points in 2024. **Nia Skinner** (30yrs+) won 3 Golds in 400m IM, 200m Butterfly and 800m Freestyle and set welsh records in 400m IM 5:10.84, 200m IM 2:32.67, 200m Butterfly 2:32.67 and 800m Freestyle 9:44.90. Newly aged up distance supremo **Ollie Wilkinson** (50yrs+) joined us for the weekend and won 3 Golds in the 1500m, 800m and 400m Free. Freestyler **Jayne Stephenson** (70yrs+) keeps winning with Golds in the 1500m Freestyle, 100m Freestyle and 200m IM and **Theo Cannon** (25yrs+) also won 3 Golds in the 50m Breaststroke, 100m IM and 200m IM. **Vicki Payne** (35yrs+) won Gold in the 100m Breaststroke 1:11.90 and 200m Breaststroke 2:36.60 both new Scottish records. Also **Jess Partridge** (50yrs+) won the 400m and 1500m Freestyle and **Colin Stephenson** (65yrs+) won the 50m and 100m Freestyle. Carrying on from their Summer success our Men's 280yrs relays again won Gold in the 200m Free and 200m Medley relays. The Men were then joined by **Sandy Jones, Jayne Stephenson** and **Tom Morrow** to win more Gold in the 280yrs mixed 200m Free and 200m Medley relays. The men's 160yrs 800m freestyle also won Gold with **Theo Cannon, Ollie Wilkinson, Luke Pearson** and first time National Champion **Sean Kinsey**.

The 2025 National Masters Inter-County (25m) South West regional Meet took place on the 9th November at Millfield and was as fun and competitive as ever with many best times swam and Club swimmers accounting for 19 out of the 39 swimmers on the Gloucestershire County Team. Individual Club winners were **Theo Cannon** (3 wins), **Vicki Payne** (2 wins), **Colin Stephenson, Tony Cherrington** and **Tom Morrow**. On the day, Gloucestershire again came up short finishing runners-up with 344 points to winners Devon 398 points. After the National Virtual Meet was run GMSC had 3 individual National Champions. **Theo Cannon** was top in 2 events 50m Breaststroke (18yrs+) 27.90 (the first South West masters swimmer under 28.00 seconds) and 50m Butterfly (25yrs+) 24.77, **Colin Stephenson** (65yrs+) 50m Freestyle 28.34 and **Vicki Payne** (35yrs+) 50m Breaststroke 33.80. Overall the Team scored 1778.0 points to finish a County high 4th place, up 5 places from last year, to eventual winners Surrey who had 2105 points. Congratulations to Coach **Lily Lowe** and Team Manager **Nia Skinner** on a great result and for getting more buy in from County Clubs than the previous Coach. Also thanks to **Brian Armstrong** who ran the Meet on the day.

International & Multi-Discipline Success

- **Jessica Partridge** made the long trip to Singapore in August for the World Championships (50m) and was rewarded with a silver in the 800m Free at the World Champs.
- **Sallie Cheung** and **Jon Coe** competed in the International Ice Swimming Association (IISA) World Championships in Molveno, Italy in January. Sallie won 4 Gold and 2 Silver and set 2 new world records in the 50m and 100m Breaststroke and Jon won a Silver in the 500m Freestyle. Unfortunately, as we are all aware, Jon has had some health issues recently but we look forward to seeing him back in the pool in the future.
- **Don Leatherbarrow** set 4 British records in the 50m, 200m, 400m Free and 200m Breaststroke in March at the Welsh Open in Swansea.
- 12 Club swimmers and 3 relays were ranked in the top 10 Short Course European 2024 Rankings and 9 Club Swimmers and 2 relays were ranked in the top 10 Long Course European 2024 Rankings. **Rob Guy, Jayne** and **Colin Stephenson** both had 1st place rankings in 12 events.

- 8 Club swimmers and 2 Club relays were ranked in the top 10 World Long Course rankings 2024. **Don Leatherbarrow, Jayne** and **Colin Stephenson** were ranked in the top 3 in 6 events.
- **James Lamb** won Gold in the 200m Free, Silver in the 200m Medley and Bronze in the 1500m and 400m Free at the Euro Games in Lyon.
- The Regional Open Water Championships was a big success this year. Organised by **Brian Armstrong** at Lake 32 Club swimmers **Hayley Bird** won age group Gold in the 3K swim and **Tony Coleby** won age group Silver in the 2K swim.
- **Ollie Wilkinson** had a busy July finishing 3rd in the sun baked 36km Capri to Napoli swim in 8:32:20 and winning the Menai Straights swim in a record time of 2hrs 37mins 50secs
- **Tony and Sarah Coleby** competed in the Nevis to St Kitts Cross Channel 4km race in March and the Swim the Arctic 3km race from Finland to Sweden in July.
- **Tony Cherrington** and **Tony Coleby** both won age group Golds in the 1.9K Cotswold Big Swim in September
- Multi-Discipline aquatic athlete **Steve Merrett** coached and competed in the National Masters Artistic Swimming Championships in July at Sheffield finishing 6th in the Team event.
- In October at the Lido Distance event **Penny Hickson** won Gold in the 1K Swim, **Tony Cherrington** won Gold but in the 2K, **Ollie Wilkinson** won Silver in the 10k and **Alison Millward** was 8th in the 2k.

Training & Facilities Review

GL1 continued to be our main training base during the year and we regularly swam on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays evenings. However, due to problems with the Main Pool floor we were restricted to swimming at a depth of 0.9m with no starting blocks for most of the year which obviously was not ideal. We did give up our Thursday Twyver Pool sessions to help out the local Scuba Club, in exchange for access to the whole Main Pool on that night which was beneficial to us in that fewer coaches were needed during the quieter Summer months. Thanks to **Joe Whitelow** Chairman of the North Glos. BSAC Club for all his help during the year. I would also like to thank the Management and Staff of Freedom Leisure who have been keen to react positively to any pool time requests made by the Club during the year.

Our usual Summer Saturday Lido sessions started this year, on 5th April, and as always it was great to swim outside in a 50m pool and we also added some Sunday night Lido sessions but we never did seem to get a warm sunny night ? Again we only hired half the pool which I feel did not negatively affect our sessions in anyway. Our last session at the Lido was on 27th September, and **Penny Hickson** and **Jo Duberley** organised a great end of season picnic which unfortunately was not blessed with the sun as last year. I would like to thank all for the card and cake received on the day to mark my 10th anniversary as Club Coach and they were much appreciated. As always a big thank you to the Trustees and Staff at the Lido for making us feel very welcome and we look forward to returning to the Lido on Saturday 4th April 2026.

A big thank you also goes to Coaches **John Anderson, Lily Lowe, Tom Howells** and **Tony Davies** who have offered their time to help coaching during the year and I am sure their efforts helped us get the results we did this season.

2025 Club Award Winners:

It gives me great pleasure to announce this year's Club award winners (as always trophies are not awarded to previous winners):

- **GMSC Male Swimmer of the Year – Theo Cannon** – Theo joined us in 2023 and has competed and trained regularly since then. In 2024 Theo represented GMSC at the GB Olympic Trials in

London. This year Theo won 50m Butterfly at British Championships in July and recently won the 50m Breaststroke, 100m and 200m IM at the English Championships. Theo has also set numerous South West records and has won many events for the County every year at the Inter-County Championships.

- **GMSC Female Swimmer of the Year – Mica Morris** – Micha re-joined us in 2021 after relocating with husband and Club swimmer Kevin Morris and has represented the Club at many National and International events during that time. At this years British Nationals in London Mica won a Gold and Silver and set 2 Welsh records in the 100m and 200m Backstroke and was part of the Gold medal winning 200m Female Medley relay 240yrs +. In recent years Mica has set many Welsh records in Backstroke and has also represented the County since joining us at the Inter-County Championships.
- **GMSC Improver of the Year – Kezia Lietzau** – Kezia joined us in January 2025 and has trained and competed regularly since that time. Kezia currently has 6 times registered on the Swim England rankings attained at Gloucester and Millfield Meets respectively. We look forward to seeing Kezia get faster in the future and attempting many more events during the coming seasons.

GMSC Committee

As always, I would also like to thank all our Committee members 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 and County and District Club representative **Brian Armstrong** and Social Secretaries **Penny Hickson** and **Jo Duberley** who organised various events during the year. **John Shephard** has been doing a great job as Treasurer paying all invoices and keeping our finances in a healthy position during the year. Also thanks to **Matt Bailey** who joined us as Media Secretary and been doing great job publishing Meet results on our Face Book site. We always need new members on our Committee so if you are interested and would like to donate a few hours to the Club please let me know.

In Memoriam

Finally, it is with much sadness that I have to report the passing of 2 former Club members in August 2025. **Julie Britton** trained with and represented our Club in many National events from 2003 and unfortunately had to leave our Club due to ill health in 2022. Julie told me she suffered from back trouble due to an injury as a teenage swimmer years before but was still a great competitor and to this day has many friends at the Club. **Patrick Allen** left our Club in 2012 after relocating back to his hometown of Guildford. During his time with our Club Patrick competed in many national and international events and was our Male Swimmer of the Year in 2009. Patrick was also a member of our 2012 British Record setting 800m relay along with **Colin Stephenson**, **Pete Smith** and **Steve Weston**. Several Club members attending his funeral at Guildford Lido and had a swim in his name. Our condolences got out to both families.

Simon K. Cooper,
Head Coach GMSC
November 2025