

Annual Report 2008

It's been another successful year for the Dolphins. We have been delighted to welcome new members to the Club over the season and have had several members taking part in outdoor swims for the first time. Once again our Members have competed all across England, Scotland, Wales and abroad. The Club has swum 450 miles outside this season with Joe Coy taking the title of the Dolphins who swum the most in the season with 52.4 miles.

Before updating you on details of the Clubs activity over the year, we need to report the deaths of two of our Life Members. Sunny Lowry passed away in February. The Dolphins were formed in 1964 and I believe the formation took place in the front room of her house. She was the first British Lady to swim the English Channel and later in her life became the President of the Channel Swimming Association. Maurice Ferguson passed away in late May. He served the Club in many capacities as Chairman, Pickmere Secretary and Coach. He swam well over a 1000miles all over the country in his swimming career as a Dolphin. He worked tirelessly nationally on the BLDSA Committee as President (Twice), Secretary and Membership Secretary. At his funeral it was splendid to see the respect he justly deserved by how many people attended and particularly past and present Dolphins. He was carried into the chapel by three Dolphin members a very touching tribute to someone who will be sadly missed. A third past member of the Dolphins who passed away this year was Jeff Paley. He swam as a Dolphin in the 1980's.

Budworth Handicap: The weather leading up to the swim didn't look promising. However, following a few days of good weather it meant that the lake was a very pleasant 17.2C. This encouraged a good turn out, which included Judy Brown for her first open water race. The Dolphins hoisted a trail of the new BLDSA electronic timing which was a success. The 24 swimmers taking part this year were fairly accurate in their predictions of their time, helped by the Presidents fairly accurate prediction of 10 circuits being a 1mile long. The winner was guest Dee Llewellyn who narrowly beat Judy Brown. We also enjoyed great support by numerous members helping out.

Budworth Championship

Michaela Richard took over the running of the Championship this year. They were a tremendous success with an entry of 86 swimmers. No one in the club was safe; if they hadn't entered then they were presented with a form or enrolled into helping. As a result it was a great swim and social event. On the day the weather was good, the water temperature was in the mid 60's.

Albert Dock Championships: This was Alan Pomfret's fifth Championship and was yet another excellent event. We had seventeen Dolphins swimming and many more on the side helping out. With the water temperature in the upper 60'sF everyone had a great swim. As usual the presentation was held at the Blue Bar where we were delighted to have the BLDSA President there to make the presentations. Alan has organised the event for 5 years now and has decided to pass over the leadership as he is going to lead the running of the Postal Swim. Dave Bowker has agreed to run the event next year.

Bob Keating/Dick Dickinson Handicaps: We had a much better turnout this year, although all swimmers were seniors. Once again we set the senior distance as 150 lengths so that we could fit the swim into the session. The results were close but Dave Bowker was closest to his submitted time at just 17 seconds out. Following the swim we retired across the road to take on needed refreshment at the local pub.

Masters: At the Cheshire Masters we had four swimmers taking part, Graham Padgett, Judy Brown, Christian Wade and Owen Griffiths. Graham performed to his usual standard and set five new county records.

Marbury Handicap: Despite the prospect of a damp night 21 swimmers took part in three heats and resulted in a broad range of the membership taking part. All those years of experience count for a lot and as a result Stuart Ainsworth's prediction of his time was the most accurate being only 3 seconds out. Once again we retired for the presentation and a buffet to the Cock O' Budworth. At the presentation a Silver Salver was presented to John Glynn to commemorate his election as Life Member earlier in the year. The swim was once again organised by Alan Pomfret and Julie Mainwaring and the buffet his year was organised by Dave Bowker. A great night's swimming and social.

Postal Swim: Dave Feakes has done a splendid job of running this BLDSA national event on behalf of the Dolphins and we all appreciate his efforts. Over the last few years Dave has started to modernise the swim leading it towards a more computer orientated competition. Dave is stepping down from his lead role after three years and is handing the lead to Alan Pomfret.

Training: Attendance levels have been consistent if not slightly high level than last year. At this point I would like to thank all those who have taken sessions this season. All sessions have been interesting and challenging. I would particularly like to thank Jim Nurse and Christian Wade for organising the coaching rota on Fridays and Sundays respectively.

Channel Relay 2010: We thought that it would be a good idea with a fair number of new members in the club to see if any of them were interested in a Channel Relay. Michaela sent out an email on a Tuesday night at about 10:30pm. To our surprise we had a list of 15 by the following evening. So we took the decision to book 2 boats for 2010. However, the list has grown now to 20 and the hiring of a third boat is being considered. Over the winter months plans will be formulated on how we will organise this truly exciting event.

Mark Blewitt – This was a season of big swims. Early in the year Mark attempted to swim the Cook Straits between North and South Islands of New Zealand only to be defeated by the tides. In the summer he had two attempts to swim the Channel for a second time only to be deflected by a technical failure and fatigue. It was a fine seasons swimming unfortunately with little prestige associated with it. Mark is one of the most experience distance swimmers in the country being the only person to have swum Loch Lomond Breaststroke and Windermere 2-ways both on Breaststroke and Freestyle.

This season saw a number of new members take their first open water swim which was a great slight. Sarah Beresford went on the come second in our Albert Dock 2 mile Championship while Courtney and Connor Dean claimed the junior ladies and gents Cheshire Open Water Championships at Bala. Nick Aspey won our Albert Dock 4 mile Championship, but his planned Channel Solo didn't happen because of poor weather at the end of the session.

Ten swimmers from the club took part this year in the Dee Mile of which Richard Walsh and Michaela Richard won the all comers male and female classes. Look out for emails early next year informing you when the swim opens and enter immediately as the swim filled this year in a day.

Once again can I thank all those members this season that have supported others at swims enabling them to participate which otherwise may not have been possible. Thanks for your help and time. Additionally, thanks also to members, their partners, spouses and parents who have supported and helped out at Club events. This has helped make our Club and our events successful and the great club it is.

Budworth Championships 30th May 2009
Albert Dock Championships 1st August 2009

Andy Wright
President