

# RIPPLES IN THE POOL

## EASTER 2007

Yes, it is that time of year when we issue an update of what the Club has been doing and what it is going to do.

In January, we embarked on quite a journey – we entered the Herts. Major League for the first time in the history of the Club. It turned out quite a journey.

For the first round we travelled to Biggleswade and swam against teams from Letchworth ; Royston ; Bushey & Tring. Due to the absence of several key members, the Club actually swam 3 Dads and 2 Mums in the team, and they all did brilliantly. The youngsters also did very well, amassing a total of 20 personal best times. We finished in second place behind Letchworth.

In February we travelled much closer to home when we went to Stevenage. Everybody swam really well against teams from Welwyn ; Kings Langley ; Cheshunt & Bushey. We again finished in second place, this time behind Welwyn. Another 14 personal best times were recorded. The final round was the ‘Top Six’ teams swimming off to see who got the promotion places. We were actually lying in 4<sup>th</sup> place at the start of the evening. As it happened, we just failed to get into the top two places and remained in 4<sup>th</sup> place when the competition finished. The promoted Clubs were from Letchworth & Welwyn, who had beaten us in the first 2 rounds.

Everybody connected with the Club were very proud of the efforts put in by all of the swimmers. We had used 47 different children [and adults !!] during the 3 rounds which was, to a large extent, by design, because we wanted to introduce as many swimmers as possible to competition. By securing our place in the final round, we had that opportunity.

In between the different rounds of the Major League, we entered 2 other galas. The first one was a Hertford SC gala, and we did very well to finish in 5<sup>th</sup> place only 3 points behind the team from St. Albans. We again used a total of 15 swimmers who had never competed before, and collected another 22 personal best times.

We entered a team for the Ware SC Novice Gala and we actually **won** the event. Where was the Club Coach ? **ON HOLIDAY !!!!** – so he missed the landmark event. We had never won a gala before. By all accounts, it was a smashing gala with the lead changing on 7 occasions. We finally

finished just 6 points in front of Bushey, with teams from Ware ; Bishops Stortford & Letchworth further back. Another 12 personal best times were recorded at the event.

Bringing you right up to date, we entered the Stevenage Sprint Gala last Sunday [15th April] and finished in 4<sup>th</sup> place. Apart from Stevenage, who had put in a strong team and won the gala easily by about 70 points, all the other Clubs used a lot of swimmers who were very inexperienced or new to competition. There was only 18 points between the 2<sup>nd</sup>.Club and the 5<sup>th</sup> Club. We actually finished in 4<sup>th</sup> position, in spite of tears on the pool side, etc. We used a lot of children who came into the category mentioned above, and we therefore had a lot of personal best times – 29 in all. We are now looking towards the Peanut League in May ; June & July, when we will be calling on our younger swimmers to swim their hearts out once again. This is quite a hard competition for us because we are against much larger Clubs, who have a lot more water time than we do. We managed to swim hard enough last year to remain in the 2<sup>nd</sup> division and I am sure that we will do that again this year.

## **NEW MEMBERS**

We thought it would be rather nice to welcome and acknowledge those swimmers who have joined the Club since the beginning of the year. Looking to the future of the Club, we carried out a recruiting drive for younger children and this has been very successful. We now have 2 lanes for our new 'Rookie' swimmers, and we are looking at different ways of dealing with the influx of children that has taken place. More about that as it develops in the future. **WELCOME TO.....**

Georgina Bush ; Lucy Pickering ; Jasmine Mitcham ; Ellie Hawkins ; Danielle Close ; Megan Eustace ; Georgie Palmer ; Jessica Paxman ; Harriet Dearman ; Megan Smith ; Sisha Dulson ; Katie-Louise Foster ; Philippa Watkins ; Sophie Peddlet ; Saffron Thomas ; Georgia Hay ; Kieron Watkins ; Hugh Wrigley ; Conor O'Hara ; Louis Ganellin ; James Adams ; Matthew Adams ; Oliver Dulson ; Isaac Perry ; Henry Rollerston ; Jacob Asquith-Fox ; Charlie Dearman ; William Dearman.

If I have spelt any names incorrectly - Sorry.

If I have missed anybody - Sorry, you will be on next time!!

We all hope that you improve greatly and enjoy your time with us.

We are **always** looking for swimmers, especially those round about 7 or 8 years of age. Remember - the future of the Club depends on us getting a

regular intake of younger people. If you know of anybody who might be interested, tell them to get in touch.

## TRIATHLON

This years Triathlon will, once again, be held in July. This year we have invited 4 other Clubs to enter the competition, because we will be having a team competition as well as trophies for the first 3 in each age group... We are expecting entries from Ware ; Royston ; Hertford and Broxbourne Swimming Clubs. As in previous years, all those taking part who finish, will receive a medal as they cross the finishing line.

We hope to have the following age groups ....

under 9 ; 9/10 ; 11/12 ; 13/14 ; 15/16 ; over 16 .

Final details are still being sorted out but, if the event is anywhere near as good as our previous ones, it will be a great day once again.

If there is anybody who might be interested in sponsoring the event, we will be only too pleased to hear from you.

Entry forms will be available very shortly and any information you might require can be obtained from **DAVE CARR**.

## THIS AND THAT

We are looking at the possibility of arranging a trip to Crystal Palace swimming pool for a couple of hours training one Sunday, If it goes ahead, it will be **by invitation only**, seeing as the pool is 50 metres long!! It is still in the 'maybe' stage at the moment but, if it does come about, it should be great for those who go.

There is another possibility that we might arrange a trip to 'Aquasplash' at Hemel Hempstead. We have been before, and it was great fun.

We now have 2 more qualified County Officials in our midst.

Gillie passed both her theory and practical for the timekeeper and official exams, and Steve has passed both parts for the timekeeper. Both 'officiated' at County Championship events this year, which I believe was a bit of an eye opener for both of them !!!! They found that watching 9 year olds doing 200 metres fly quite fascinating.

Training at the St Edmunds College pool has re-started and the times are the same - £2 per person per week, payable on the night.

As you have no doubt seen, the Club has spent a considerable amount of money over the last few months on equipment such as..... training clocks ; hand paddles ; swimming fins ; etc To enable us to get that equipment, we applied for and received grants during 2005 & 2006 from the 'School Lets Fund' (run by the County Council). This fund was set up years ago, to help Clubs of all sorts get extra funding to help them throughout the year, providing they were using school premises as the main centre for their activity. It was meant to help towards the 'costs' involved of hiring 'whatever'- swimming pool ; gym ; school hall ; etc. The long application forms took hours to complete but, in the end we were highly praised for the way all the questions had been answered. We went through the process again this year, but unfortunately this time around our application was rejected. It transpires that 8 other swimming clubs who also applied were also turned down aswell, along with other local organisations (eg Rainbows; cubs etc).

We have investigated further and have ascertained that this years equivalent of the school lets fund (now called the targeted services fund) has different allocation criteria and, put simply, our application failed to meet sufficient of the qualifying criteria.

Although our funding historically has been relatively modest (a few thousand pounds each year), other clubs have relied heavily on its support to offset the commercial rates we all have to pay for pool hire. In fact we estimate that this year's rejections represent a total reduction in funding of approximately £40000 for swimming clubs in the area!

The vast majority of the money collected from the fees you pay, goes towards the hiring of the pool at Freman College on Thursday evenings, together with any other special times we need to hire the pool. We hope to continue with the hiring of St. Edmunds College pool on a Tuesday evening for additional training, but this year's rejection means that we will have to be a little more careful with this year's budget.

We have written to publicise our plight to the local Town Council, our local district councillors, the County Council aswell as the targeted services fund administrators, who have reiterated our failure to meet the required criteria and suggested alternative funding opportunities that we might explore. Rest assured that the committee are actively pursuing these other options such that membership fees can be maintained at their current low levels.

**WATCH THIS SPACE FOR ANY FURTHER INFORMATION.**