

## **BSB MASTERS activities (October 2016 - October 2017)**

October 2016 was a busy month which started with the SER (SC) MASTERS at Guildford when 21 swimmers competed (13 came from Bracknell). Becky O'Brien (27) starred with 4 Golds as did Nigel Salisbury (76) whilst Amanda Heath managed 3. Later in the month 40 swimmers competed in National MASTERS (SC) at Sheffield amassing 36 medals which included Golds for Becky O'Brien, Bridget Bewick (57) and Dave Milburn (54), 2 Golds for Kirsty Johnson (35) and 3 for Nigel Salisbury (76).

In November 2016 the Inter-County event was hosted by Oxford & North Bucks at the new Leys Pool . This was a strong gala and, with a good overall performance across the 68 events, we again came third which translated to ninth overall in the national standings(of 29 districts). Our area winners were Hampshire who came first nationally, and second-placed Middlesex came fourth nationally. Anne Cork on 50 bk was our sole national event winner in her age group.

35 swimmers - almost half from Bracknell - took part in the SER MASTERS (LC) at Crawley in January. The stars were Philippa Collin (55) with 6 Golds and Dave Milburn (55) with 5 Golds. Collin and Milburn were again dominant at the Bracknell MASTERS in March, each coming away with 6 Golds. More than 50 clubs had entered this popular event and whilst Bracknell themselves had a large team (28), the biggest contingent had come from Teddington (42). There must have been something special in the water as 3 new British records were posted in separate 200 br events by Amanda Heath, Gina Heyn and Dave Milburn respectively. On the same day a group of 7 local swimmers had chosen to compete instead at Swim Wales (Swansea) and bagged 13 Golds between them.

About 20 County swimmers made the trek to Aberdeen Sports Village in June for British MASTERS. There were 15 medallists amongst them with Amanda Heath, Richard Stannard and Brenda Bewick being the most prominent. Richard swept the board in 4 freestyle events whilst Amanda dominated in breaststroke and IM. Also Dave Milburn took all 3 individual breaststroke Golds.

Almost as many made it further afield to the 17th FINA ( LC) World MASTERS in Budapest in August. Medals were not so plentiful here but both Amanda Heath and Dave Milburn starred on breaststroke. Also an evergreen Duncan McCreddie collected a bronze at 800m freestyle. Competitors were enthused by the facilities at the 5 competition pools.

The BSB County Open (SC) MASTERS Meet was again held in early September at Maidenhead. There were entries from 47 clubs with 177 swimmers (84 local BSB) due to take part. A good spread of clubs from Truro, Gloucester, Birmingham, Brighton and Basildon were on show. The top 3 ladies came from Birmingham, Teddington and Saxon Crown respectively. The top man and defending overall champion was almost inevitably Dave Milburn, who posted a new British SC record time of 2.40.08min in winning the 200m breaststroke event.

Total entries were up about 20% on last year but we still ran as a 6-lane event at a leisurely pace, ensuring adequate recovery time. We could comfortably accommodate another 30-35% increase in numbers in the available 8 lane pool and then in 2019 when a new 10 lane SC pool is due to come on stream.....(This is still a plan - there has been no discernible work yet). It is intended to run this event again in 2018 but most probably on a different date due to a clash with the European MASTERS at Kranj, Lake Bled, Slovenia.

The day before our County Open MASTERS gala a number of swimmers competed at the GLAMM ( LC) Meet at LAC, Stratford. I think this was essentially to have the experience of a swim in the main pool, which had been denied to many entrants in April 2016 during the shambolic European MASTERS event. Along the way Amanda Heath (3), Terry Wright (2) and Karen Bassett (1) collected Gold Medals.

Also in September a group from Bracknell enjoyed a BEST warm weather training camp in Mallorca. This is becoming an annual adventure.

As last year, October was hectic starting with the SER (SC) MASTERS at Guildford, where 23 swimmers competed. Amanda Heath beat her performance of last year, taking 4 Golds this time. However the star performer was Philippa Collin with 6 Golds. Mention should also be made of Helen Steel who entered these championships for the first time, having returned to competition after more than 2 decades away. In her 3 events she medalled each time (1 Gold, 1 Silver and 1 Bronze). At the end of the month nearly 60 swimmers (up from 40 last year) appeared at National MASTERS SC in Sheffield taking 20 Golds between them. It is to be hoped that all have something left in the tank for the up-coming Inter-County MASTERS at Portsmouth.

Bob Odell - MASTERS Sec.  
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