



# BABBLE

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The Bishop's Stortford Swimming Club Newsletter

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## 2022/23 SEASON WINTER EDITION

Anybody know where the past few months since September have disappeared to?

If you're anything like us, you are not quite sure how we're in 2023 already. We hope you had a healthy and happy Christmas and New Year break and have started 2023 with a bang! It's an exciting part of the season ahead for our swimmers and it kicks off with the Swim England Hertfordshire County Championships starting on 21st Jan. We wish our 39 qualifiers the best of luck! For many of our older swimmers they are also chasing times for the upcoming East Region Championships, British Championships, British Masters Championships and the British/English Summer Championships and we are looking forward to reporting on all their successes in future editions and on our social media channels.

Although 2022 has not been a great year for so many reasons, our swimmers have continued to excel at what they love. This edition is packed full of the fabulous action from Sept-Dec 2022, introduces in more detail our two new club captains, celebrates our County qualifiers and looks ahead in this season. We are so pleased that one of our Masters swimmers has also shared an article with us on her preparations for her amazing 2-way swim of Lake Windermere last summer. Whilst waiting for us to publish our next newsletter (we've had quite a gap between editions!), Rachael's article has been published in full in the Outdoor Swimmer magazine, but we think it's such a great read that we're publishing it too. Please take time to read it in full as it's thought provoking and perfect for those making (and already breaking?!) New Years resolutions! We wish you all a great start to 2023.

# "IF YOU'VE STARTED, YOU'RE ALREADY ACHIEVING"

By Rachael Hunt, BSSC Masters

**When I was asked to consider writing something for the illustrious Babble, I was unsure where to start. What could I possibly write that would be of interest to the super speedy swimmers I see every week flying up and down the pool?**

It was then that it occurred to me that the real value in what I have learnt while training for my swimming adventures is that it's okay to not be the one of the super swimmers. There are other targets in swimming to aim for, not just being the fastest, and these can be every bit as satisfying when you reach them. **In fact, the real achievement is not even in the distance of the swim but in the belief and the willingness to try.**

When I first started swimming five years ago, I was a size 24 and weighed in at 148 Kg (that's just over 23 Stone for those who think in 'old money') and could manage only two lengths of front crawl without a break. This July I completed the double Windermere crossing – that's 21 miles from Ambleside to Fellfoot and back again.

This was all front crawl and with no break apart from the occasional treading water and munching mini baby bel and a trek bar. **The swim took me 13 hours and 40 minutes and (apart from the last hour) I can genuinely say I loved each minute.** So how did I get from not being able to swim for more than e.g., TWO MINUTES AT A TIME, to happily keeping going for nearly 14 hours?

First, I'd say its down to getting going, just getting in the water each day and swimming. I realised that I am always capable of finding a reason to justify not swimming or exercising. **Like all of us I have a whole library of justifiable excuses to not train.** I was too busy at work, had a cough, a cold, a sore leg, family demands, an invite to a party, period pain, forgot my swimsuit/trainers/socks, the times of the class did not suit, I had to prepare for a meeting, my outfit was wrong, I was too fat, I needed to tidy the house bake a cake or do the shopping.

There are literally hundreds of reasonable and perfectly justifiable reasons to not swim, train or run. Its getting past all of these and accepting that they will always be there. That is the real barrier, until I switched my mindset I could always justify not changing and not training; **the only person who could override all these reasonable excuses was me.**



# "IF YOU'VE STARTED, YOU'RE ALREADY ACHIEVING"



The big change for me was my mindset and becoming determined in the rest of my priorities and in adjusting my perception to recognise this as a treat to myself rather than a chore. I certainly had to pretend this was the case but somewhere along the journey I noticed that **in pretending to make my training the priority and an enjoyable treat it really did morph from a chore into my favourite part of the day.**

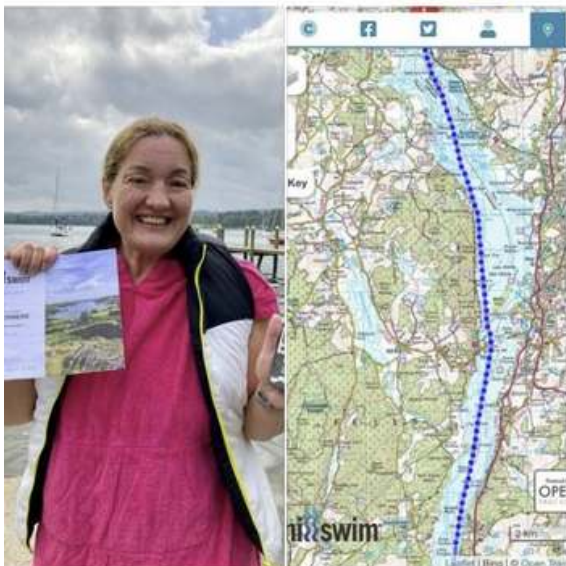
When it came to open water swimming, I started in Manchester with a one-mile swim in Salford Keys in 2018. The following year I went back and did 5km. I then ventured for the Super6 at Swim Serpentine which was a 10 km event involving 3 sets of 2 laps of the 1-mile serpentine loop - and then the **one-way Windermere crossing last September.**

I enjoyed it so much I immediately started to think about a longer distance. The pilot for the boat had mentioned to me when I finished that I looked like I could turn round and go back. I guess this planted a seed! He also mentioned he had been very worried when I arrived at the dock with a couple of mini Babybel and some fizzy water, with no feeding schedule and no support crew, that I was not well prepared, but that within a few hours of watching me swim he was reassured I would make it.



Chillswim is at Waterhead Pier.  
6 September 2021 · Ambleside · 🌐

Huge Congratulations to Rachael Hunt on successfully completing the 10.5mile Windermere End to End  
Swim in a fantastic time of 6h 32m - ave. water temp 18.9 degs 🥳👏👏



It was over the Christmas of 2021 while moping in bed with a third bout of Covid I quietly logged on and signed up to the Windermere double crossing. I recognised that I would need a goal to get me back into a training schedule and the seed that had been planted in the summer began to grow!

Come the new year I started training and explained to Joe (the masters coach) and Teddy (my personal trainer) that I wanted to swim 21 miles. I started to gradually up my running swimming and strength training.

# "IF YOU'VE STARTED, YOU'RE ALREADY ACHIEVING"



I had also signed up to the Brighton marathon in April so for the first few months of the year I focused on running 3-4 times a week as well as swimming 5 times a week and 3 strength sessions. Unfortunately, after a little while (2/3 months) ignoring niggles in my right knee, **my leg froze up in March after a half marathon run around Stortford with friends.** The physio recommended rest and then started rehab but suggested I would need to make a choice between marathon and a long period of rest, or continue training, miss the marathon, and avoid further harm and focus on the swim. There was no contest in my mind, running is never going to get in the way of swimming!! So, after a bit of a mope about failing to start the marathon I got on with building up swimming.

I went to a master's swim camp in Lanzarote in May where I swam for 4 hours a day for 10 days. I am not sure I have ever been so tired as the day I arrived home and ate a whole large Domino's pizza and drank half a bottle of wine before sleeping for 8 hours.

From May, in addition to my strength training (3-4 hours a week) I was now doing 2 hours flex training and up to 14 hours swimming a week, 3-4-hours of yoga and a few random classes such as hit, core and circuits. **Just like when I started out, no excuses.** Even when I was tired and grumpy there was no swim that did not leave me getting out happier than getting in (not always sure I can say the same for a core class, but you can't have it all).



The hardest part of the preparation was not the training or even the swim itself but dealing with the responses of others. I found that if I mentioned the challenge, it was like opening a flood gate of opinion on not just the feat ahead but on my training schedule, my diet and even my social life! **Suddenly, everyone became an expert on endurance swimming.** I was told I was over training, that I was under training. I was told I was too fat, too thin, that my stroke was poor, and that other people could do it quicker. The onslaught of opinion was at times utterly overwhelming. You may (not) be surprised to learn that this advice was almost exclusively coming from people who I did not know well and who often had no experience of endurance training.

# "IF YOU'VE STARTED, YOU'RE ALREADY ACHIEVING"



Meanwhile, the few people I told from the gym, swimming club, or running buddies were at times bemused but they were cautious about giving advice and mainly offered support and encouragement.

This was truly motivating and helped keep me going on some of the 6am starts where, having swum, run and weight trained the previous day, **it could feel like swimming through treacle**. Coach Joe and my personal trainer Teddy were also hugely supportive, telling me that it would be possible, and I could do it. I found that amongst all the noise of opinion and advice I just kept returning to the little voice that I heard in my head when I first spied the 21-mile challenge – ‘yep, I think I can do that.’

Thankfully, my husband and son were equally committed to my success, allowing me to be out the house for hours jumping in lakes, going to classes, training in the gym and swimming for hours at a time! A couple of friends accompanied me on trips to the beach so I could train in open water when local lakes schedules were not accommodating. On one occasion I was in Lowestoft, swimming 4km against the current, climbing out and running back to the start before grabbing a baby bel (my secret energy weapon) and going again. After the fourth time my loyal friend was just starting to get very worried that I had not returned when **I appeared, sauntering along the beach wet suit over my shoulder, beer in hand (donated by a group of local lads who had been watching my antics with much amusement from their beach hut)**. I explained to my friend that the beer was for much needed calories and hydration and had been the only reason I had managed to swim that far on the last lap, having spied it on the way back on the previous lap.

## Having swum 21 miles, what am I most proud of?

In one word: starting. Every day I get in the pool, or begin a run or a fitness class, I am pleased I have started. **It doesn't matter if you are at the back of the lane, if you have started you are already achieving something and that's a reason to be proud.** And if you want to start something big, no matter how daunting it seems or what other people say, trust that little voice in you that says, ‘I think I can do that’. As for my next challenge...



# "IF YOU'VE STARTED, YOU'RE ALREADY ACHIEVING"

I have so many ideas, maybe a mud run with an obstacle course, maybe just do it again, some days I even consider a few sprints with all the incredible swimmers in Stortford masters. The one challenge I was always determined to do was Neptune's steps, google it- it's a red bull challenge that I signed up for prior to the pandemic but it was cancelled. **I feel like it's the one that got away** as I would love to do something a bit different: watch this space!



On a final note, I just want to share the impact of being so readily accepted by the masters on my journey. I have noticed that people who train whether it be run, swim or in the gym are supportive of those around them trying their best. I think outcomes are important in our head but **getting on with it regardless of the barriers you face makes the real difference and those people training along side you understand this.** Afterall, they each had as many very good reasons not to get started as you did this morning and here they are next to you.

***In my view everyone that starts every time is special***

**Remember you can keep in touch with the club and learn more about us through many different platforms:**

**Website:** [bsswimclub.org.uk](http://bsswimclub.org.uk)

**Facebook:** BSSwimClub1 or BSSC Members Only

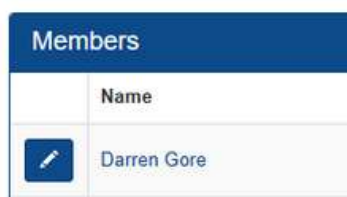
**Twitter:** @BSSwimClub1

**Instagram:** [bsscswimmingclub](https://www.instagram.com/bsscswimmingclub)

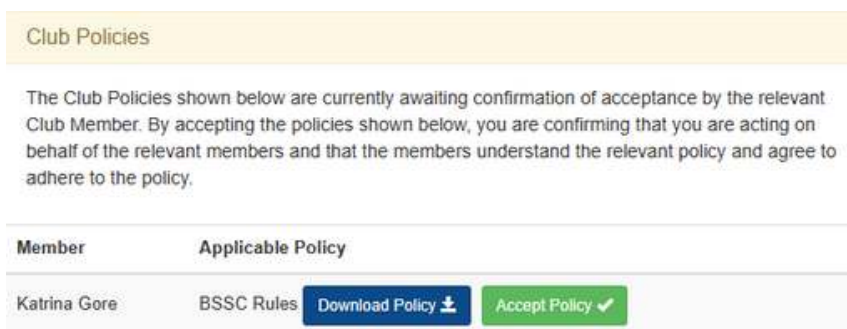
**YouTube Channel:** Bishop's Stortford Swimming Club

## Membership Renewal

Just a quick reminder that as part of the annual BSSC membership renewal process for 2023, you need to go into Swim Manager (website version not the app) and check your emergency contact details are still correct. Also check your permissions on photo consent (please do consider letting us have consent so we can celebrate your swimmer's successes) and your family medical information. Updates can be done using the pencil button next to the name of each family member.



Finally, please read and accept the updated BSSC Rules.



## BSSC LTS POOL HELPER VACANCIES

Did you know that many of our teenage swimmers are working each week at our Learn to Swim school?



Our LTS school runs at the College pool on Fridays at 5.15-6.15pm and Sundays 3-6pm and we will have a couple of vacancies for pool helpers over the coming month. Pool helpers are in the water with the children during their lessons, helping them follow the directions being given by our fully qualified instructors. To be a pool helper you must be over 14 years old and have an interest in helping children who are at the earliest stages of learning how to swim. Please contact [learntoswim@bsswimclub.org.uk](mailto:learntoswim@bsswimclub.org.uk) for more information.

Many of our current instructors are swimmers who started out as pool helpers. Once a helper is 16, they can attend the Swim England training courses to first become a Level 1 Assistant Swim Teacher and then a fully qualified Level 2 Swim Teacher. They are intensive and quite costly courses, but once qualified, they will have a skill for life that they can use where ever they are. Currently there's a national shortage of swim teachers.

# CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS AWARDS NIGHT

competitions@bsswimclub.org.uk

BSSC came together in November to celebrate the achievements of our swimmers during the 2021/22 season and their recent Club Championships performances, where they got to compete against each other to be part of BSSC history. This was the first full uninterrupted season since 2018/19 and the first Club Championships and awards night since late 2019, so it was lovely to celebrate together.



Sally Winter, our club President and European record holding Masters swimmer welcomed the swimmers, many of whom had never been to a Club Awards evening and went on to highlight their fantastic achievements over the past season. Coach Romesh then inspired the swimmers with his story of transitioning from a non-swimming 9 year old to representing Sri Lanka in the National Diving team aged 13.

The medals and trophies from Club Championships were handed out by BSSC Senior Club Captain Callum Davis, who was ably aided by the two newly appointed Club Captains Freya Reilly and Jakey Hayes. Coach Joe Collins presented the 2021/22 Coaches Awards to:

- The Most Improved Girl: Yana Patel
- The Most Improved Boy: Benjamin Palmer
- Award for Endeavour Girls: Isabelle Earley
- Award for Endeavour Boys: Zacky Haslett Fossey
- Sportsmanship Award: Noah Conroy

See our [website article](#) for more photos from the night

Some of the trophies date back to the 1950s and provide a fascinating history of each age group and event within the club, for example the Langley Swimming Challenge Cup for most improved boy awarded to 11 year old Benjamin Palmer was first presented in 1955 to a J. Burrows and in 2011 was awarded to an 11 year old who became senior club captain Callum Davis.

Twelve year olds Molly Greatbatch and Elliot Hall accepted the Hertfordshire Peanuts League banner on behalf of the BSSC Peanuts team who had come 6th in the top division of the league during the 2021/22 season.





# BSSC CLUB CAPTAINS

We are so pleased to have the opportunity to introduce our two new club captains for the 2022/23 season. You've probably met them already, but here some more about them ...

## Freya Reilly

I've been at the club for longer than Benoit but not as long as Coach Joe! I joined BSSC at age 9 almost 9 years ago, starting off in the rookies squad and my first ever competition was Peanuts at Potters Bar. I remember being really, really nervous but being looked after and encouraged by the club captains and then being excited to compete as part of my club in round 2. Over the years I've represented our club at Peanuts, Major league and Arena league as well as competing at lots of Open Meets.

To me, a club captain is involved, positive, a cheerleader and a role model. I would love the opportunity to take on the job of club captain and keep the spirit of the club high. I believe that you don't have to be the fastest to be a valued member of the club and I want to encourage how hard work and dedication pays off. I have helped out at Peanuts meets and loved supporting our youngest swimmers. As this will be my last full year at the club before leaving for Uni I want to be the club captain that I looked up to when I was 9.

**Squad:** Juniors

**Favourite event:** 50 Backstroke

**Best thing about being a swimmer:** What I love about swimming is how it allows you to push yourself to the best of your ability with the supportive and uplifting community of both your friends and your coaches.

**Hat and Goggles etiquette:** I always keep my club hat and race goggles with me as well as a spare hat just in case!

**Best poolside snack:**  
Flapjacks and jaffa cakes



**Best swim hack:** I always make sure whenever at a competition I remember my fluffy socks to keep warm between races

**Proudest swimming achievement:** I was overjoyed when I qualified for regionals as I just missed the time the year before and last year at counties I came first in my main event at counties

**What does being club captain involve?**  
To me, it is continually providing motivation and encouragement to all members of the club and especially being a friendly role model to the younger swimmers.

**Do you have any advice for the younger members of the club?**

Remember the reason why you swim is because it's what you love and don't ever put too much pressure on yourself that you forget that.

**Best quote:**  
Just keep swimming- Dory

# BSSC CLUB CAPTAINS

Hi, my name's **Jakey Hayes** and I'd love the opportunity to become your Club Captain! I'm sure you've already seen me cheering you on at meets and coaching many of you while I did my DofE award. (If you haven't seen me, you will have definitely heard me bellowing from poolside!). I really enjoy the atmosphere at Meets, particularly at team events such as Peanuts and Arena league.

I believe I would be a great Club Captain because of how well I relate to every single one of you. I, like many of you, have had my fair share of ups and downs and am a good example of where perseverance can take you. For example, at my first Meet aged 9, I felt so ill with nerves that I could only manage to race one event. Now I love competing. And I even used to hate going to training, like I'm sure some of you do from time to time, but now I cherish the opportunity to train and see my fellow swimmers.

I believe that only good things would come if I gained the position of your Club Captain. I really enjoy our swim club and I hope I can help everyone grow and have fun

**Squad:** Elites

**Proudest swimming achievement:**

getting sub 2:30 in 200 backstroke in October 2021 which meant that I then had 2 Elite times and was able to move to Elites

**Do you have a highlight from last year?**

Coming back from Covid restrictions fitter, faster and stronger than before. This has pushed me on to train a lot more than I did pre-Covid

**What does being Club Captain involve?**

Being a good role model and being able to motivate and push other swimmers to be at their best.

**What's your ambition for BSSC this coming year?**

For BSSC to win Division 1 Arena League and involve as many swimmers in this as possible.

**Do you have any advice for younger members of the club?**

Instead of setting yourself big goals, set yourself smaller goals that you can achieve to keep you motivated. E.g 0.5 sec off a pb rather than 5sec. Never give up in a race because you'll kick yourself if you just miss a pb because if it!

**Best quote/piece advice:**

Always try your best in training because you will be rewarded for your hard work.

**Favourite stroke/event:**

100 backstroke and 200 freestyle

**Best thing about being a swimmer:**

The feeling of having a community around you as there's always someone around to talk to. Some of my best mates are swimmers at BSSC.

**Best poolside snack:**

BBQ Graze, closely followed by jelly.

**Hat and goggle etiquette:**

Goggles underneath one hat - it's the only correct way!

**Hero:**

Luke Greenbank because I feel he has motivated me to keep going because I know he plateaued and got faster at a later age.

**Best swim hack:**

Never wear your competition trunks for warm-up, if you can help, it because it will cause extra wear and tear.

# UPCOMING EVENTS JAN-MAY 23

[competitions@bsswimclub.org.uk](mailto:competitions@bsswimclub.org.uk)

Benoit has already shared an event calendar for Jan-May23, but here's a reminder of the key events. Remember, not all squads attend every event and changes may happen. The [Events Calendar](#) on our website contains more details, including host club links, schedules, accepted entries etc.

- 21/22/28/29 Jan, 4/5 Feb** **Swim England Hertfordshire County Championships 2023**  
Qualifying swimmers
- 26 Feb** **BSSC No Frills Level 4 Meet, College Pool**  
All squads
- 11/12 March** **PSC Spring Long Course (L1) National Qualifier, Luton**  
Nationals, Elites, Minimes, Juniors, Benjamins A
- 11/12 March** **CoStA Spring Short Course (L3) Open Meet, St Albans**  
Poussins, Benjamins B, Cadets, Seniors
- 25/26 March** **Guildford City Level 1 Long Course Open Meet, Guildford**  
Nationals, Elites, Minimes, Juniors, Benjamins A
- 4-9 April** **British Championships, Sheffield**  
Qualifying swimmers (QTs can be found [here](#))
- 7-9 April** **CONSC Level 1 Easter Open Meet, Norwich**  
Nationals, Elites, Minimes, Juniors, Benjamins A
- 16 April** **Halstead Annual Short Course Open Meet, Braintree**  
Poussins, Benjamins A&B, Cadets, Seniors, Minimes, Juniors
- 22 April** **Swim England East Region LC (50m) Championships, Norwich**  
Qualifying swimmers - 1500m all ages
- 23 April** **Swim England East Region LC (50m) Championships, Norwich**  
Qualifying swimmers - certain events 14/under (see schedule)
- 29/30 April, 1 May** **Swim England East Region LC (50m) Championships, Norwich**  
Qualifying swimmers - 15/over (except 800/1500m, see schedule)
- 12 May** **Swim England East Region LC (50m) Championships, Luton**  
Qualifying swimmers - 800m all ages
- 13/14 May** **Swim England East Region LC (50m) Championships, Luton**  
Qualifying swimmers - certain events 14/under (see schedule)

If you are new to this whole world of competitions, don't forget to check out our [BSSC Guide to Competitions](#). It will talk you through the key points you need to know.

# SWIM ENGLAND HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The first rung in the Swim England competition ladder are County Championships. In Hertfordshire these are short course (25m) championships as we don't have access to a 50m pool and are they run over three weekends during Jan & Feb in The Venue pool at Borehamwood.

For every event, Qualification and Consideration Times were published early in the 2022/23 season by Swim England Hertfordshire. Separate times were given for each age group and sex and if a swimmer bettered the Qualification Time at a meet in the stated window of 29th April 2022 (2nd April for distance events) to 11th December 2022, they were automatically accepted to swim. If they reached the Consideration Time, they were invited to apply and the fastest swimmers were selected based on published caps on the number of swimmers in each event. For more details of how it has worked in the past see our [BSSC Guide to Counties](#).

As we write this article, the accepted swimmers for the 2023 event have been notified, the programmes for each day have been published and excitement is mounting amongst those who will be swimming. We would like to wish HUGE congratulations to our 39 qualifiers:

## **10/11 years age group:**

Adeline (Yin Hei) Chan, Guy Spearman-Baines, Noah Conroy

## **12 years age group:**

Benjamin Palmer, Eddy (Ting Hei) Cheng, Lois Fields

## **13 years age group:**

Elliot Hall, Molly Greatbatch

## **14 years age group:**

Dylan Davenport, Ethan David-Tostevin, Felice (Kwan Yi) Chan, Zoe Opiyo

## **15 years age group:**

Beau Reilly, Bobbie Macdonald-Williams, Brandon Macdonald-Williams, Ella Greatbatch, Freya Hadnutt, Robert Gor

## **16 years+ age group:**

- 16 yrs: Alice Longman, George Grimwood, George Taylor, Imogen Tang, Jakey Hayes, Kirsty Neill
- 17 yrs: Callum Cox, Emma Fields, Grace Mason, Jago Derrington, Laura Burgess, Lauren Gore, Lilian Opiyo, Meisha Trend-Evans, Miriam Moukdad
- 18 yrs: Bella Parkus, Freya Reilly
- 18+ yrs: Daniel Chada, Niamh James, Lucy Wheeler, Jake Lloyd

Swimmers will compete for individual age group medals and Junior Championship (15 years under) and Open Championship medals. The overall top swimmers in each age-group are also awarded (swimmers must have entered events across a number of specified groups) and various top club awards are also handed out (fingers crossed!). There are also relays!

**All the events are live streamed via YouTube** and are well worth a watch even if you're not competing. Keep an eye on our social media channels for more details and check out this [page](#)

# SWIM ENGLAND EAST REGION SHORT COURSE CHAMPS

Kicking off the 2022/23 short course championship season was the Swim England East Region SC Championships, **aka Winter Regionals**. Fifteen BSSC swimmers headed to Luton early November 2022 to compete against the best swimmers that the six Eastern counties of England could offer. Qualification had been split into three age groups to ensure the most talented younger swimmers could enter, but the event itself was an open race, so young qualifiers like 14 year old Ella Greatbatch battled against seasoned competitors in their twenties. Reaching a final meant you were in the top eight swimmers in the East Region for that event, irrespective of age.



**Full list of swimmers can be found in the complete [article](#) on the News page of our website**

The first full day of competition kicked off in style with Niamh qualifying for the 50m Backstroke final with a personal best time (PB, 29.76), and finishing 6th in the final (30.05). Later that day as returning champion in the 200m Backstroke, she fought off a strong challenge from a Team Ipswich 16 year old to take Gold by 0.23 seconds in 2:14.75. In the 50m Freestyle, Callum Cox, Callum Davis and Jake Lloyd all swam PBs (23.57, 24.45, 25.96). Sixteen year old Callum Cox's time secured him a place in the final where he came 4th (23.82) in an event won by an eighteen year old. Emma Fields was on form in the 100m Freestyle with a PB in the heats of 59.17 and she knocked 0.01 seconds off that new PB to come 7th in the final. Callum Cox swam a great heat in 50m Butterfly with a PB of 25.40 and was straight into the final, whilst Callum Davis was joint 8th (25.77) and had to swim off for a final place. Incredibly, both swimmers achieved identical results for the second time in the swim off, but the officials deemed the other swimmer had broken a technical rule and should be disqualified, moving Callum Davis into the final. Both performed well in the final, with Callum Davis coming 5th (25.63), and Callum Cox 7th (25.99, 1st under 18 year old).

The excitement continued on the Sunday, with Niamh coming 4th in the 200m IM final (2:22.21) and 5th in the 100m Backstroke (1:04.17). Kirsty Neill and Ella Greatbatch swam strong times to secure places in the 200m Breaststroke final (2:37.08 and 2:39.54 PB), where they came 6th and 7th (2:39.71 and 2:40.29) and were the 1st and 2nd under 16 year old competitors. Callum Davis and Callum Cox both qualified for the 100m Butterfly final (57.44 & 57.71 PB), where Callum Davis came 6th (57.86) and Callum Cox came 8th (1:01.21), the 2nd swimmer under 18 in a field dominated by 22 year olds. Lauren Gore secured her place in the 50m Breaststroke final with a PB (33.43) and came 6th in the final (33.53), the 2nd under 18. Fourteen year old Ella was 12th in the event with a PB (33.85) and a 14/15 year BSSC Short Course club record. In July 2021, Kirsty Neill broke the 14/15 year 50m Breaststroke record (35.1) with a time of 34.85, that had stood since 2007 (Bernice Edgeworth). Since then she dropped it multiple times down to 34.37, but 14 year old Ella smashed that record with a 33.85.

# REPRESENTING HERTFORDSHIRE AGED 15 TO 65+

Superb performances during the first part of 2022 resulted in five Bishop's Stortford Swimming Club members being selected to join a team of swimmers representing Hertfordshire at the **Swim England National County Team Championships** at Ponds Forge in Sheffield early November 2022. The 28-strong team of swimmers chosen from nine Hertfordshire swimming clubs would normally only compete against each other, but they came together as team mates in Sheffield to compete against 32 Counties of England and four regional teams from Scotland and Wales.



Emma Fields, Kirsty Neill & Lauren Gore had previously competed at National events at Ponds Forge, the home of British Swimming, but none of the BSSC swimmers had been part of the unique thrill that is the National County Team Championships. In this fun and colourful event, the 37 teams are split into two Divisions and both compete at once in different halves of the 50m pool. Based on 2019 results, Hertfordshire were in Division 2 and by the end of the November event, they had secured a very respectable mid-table 11th place in Division 2 [Full article is [here](#)]

Lauren Gore came 4th in the individual 16/17 Yrs 100m Breaststroke (1:13.74 PB) & Kirsty Neill 6th in the individual 14/15 Yrs 100m Breaststroke (1:15.84). The 14/15 Yrs 200m Medley Relay Team with Kirsty on Breaststroke leg were 5th; the 16/17 Yrs 200m Medley Relay Team with Lauren Gore on Breaststroke, Emma Fields on Butterfly and Meisha Trend-Evans on Freestyle came 9th; and the Mixed Open 300m Freestyle Relay Team with Alice Longman & Emma Fields on legs 3 & 5 came 13th.

Ten members of BSSC's Masters squad were also selected to represent Hertfordshire in November at the **Swim England National Masters Inter-County Competition**. Held across six nationwide events with all 33 English Counties competing for the first time in the 22 year history of the event, the results were then amalgamated into a National league table. The BSSC swimmers attended the East Region event held in Newmarket and Hertfordshire came a very respectable 14th in the nationwide event that was won by Devon.



All swimmers contributed to the great final position of Hertfordshire and the full results are in the [News article](#) on our website, but the achievements of Alyson Fordham swimming in the 65 plus age group are definite highlights. Alyson dominated the field in two of her events, coming 1st across England in the 50m freestyle (32.32) and 50m backstroke (39.37) and she also came 4th in the amalgamated results in the 50m breaststroke (44.39) and 50m butterfly (37.66). Youngsters Callum Davis and Niamh James achieved top ten English finishes in their 18 plus races too: Niamh 6th in the 50m backstroke (32.22) and Callum 7th in 50m butterfly (26.74)

# NATIONAL ARENA SWIMMING LEAGUE (NASL)

**Our Arena League team had promotion in their sights this season!** The annual National Arena Swimming League (NASL) is the premier swimming league in England and Wales, with nearly 400 teams and over 16,000 swimmers racing in individual and relay events across three rounds of fast and noisy competition. Pre-covid, we competed in the Premier Division of the London league and in 2019 had maintained our position finishing 12th. The 2020 league was cancelled due to Covid and in 2021 we did not have the capacity to compete so had to withdraw from the league, meaning a re-entry into Division 2 in 2022 and a desire to battle back up to the Premier Division!

**Round 1** was at the Hertfordshire Sports Village and we raced against Harpenden, Hertford, Hillingdon C, Hoddesdon and Saxon Crown clubs across thirty four individual events and eight relays in four separate age categories. The team rose to the promotion challenge with top 3 finishes in 31 of the 34 individual events (16 victories!) and six 1st & two 2nd placed relay teams. The swimmers in the 16/Over category dominated the field winning all of their events and the BSSC team won round 1 with 217 gala points, 44 points ahead of their nearest rivals.



**Round 2** saw us head back at the Hertfordshire Sports Village for a rematch against Hertford and Hoddesdon along with new clubs Broomfield Park, Verulam and Ware. The team won the gala with 212 gala points (5 short of the round 1 total) and were 54 points ahead of Broomfield Park in second place. They had top 3 finishes in 28 of the 34 individual events (15 victories!) and five 1st and three 2nd placed relay teams.



**Round 3** was in Enfield and our swimmers went head to head with Enfield Swim Squad in an attempt to win the league and gain promotion. Like us, Enfield had won round 1 & 2 and had dominated the field. Every race was hard fought and many came down to fingertip finishes, but we were second on the night with 187 gala points to Enfield's 212, whilst nearest rivals Saxon Crown and Broomfield Park tied on 124 gala points each. This secured us a 2nd place finish in the league which should result in promotion to Division 1 for the 2023/24 season.



Congratulations to all our swimmers who were part of our successful NASL team. Please do visit the individual news articles on our website (links above) to learn more about the achievements at each round. Thanks to all those who supported the team across the nights, in particular coaches Benoit Grattepanche, Laure Grattepanche & Joe Collins, Team Managers Sarah Neill, Darren Gore & Kat Gore, officials Claire Fields & Steve Burgess and Club Captains Freya Reilly & Jakey Hayes.

# SWIM ENGLAND WINTER SHORT COURSE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The [Swim England National Winter Championships](#) is the biggest English swimming meet of the winter months and always promises some exciting racing with the fastest swimmers in England competing across three days of action at Sheffield's Ponds Forge pool. Qualification is tough, but outstanding short course (25m) swims during Sept-Nov secured spots for six BSSC members to compete across 14 events.



- Ella Greatbatch (14 yrs) – 50m/200m Breast
- Kirsty Neill (15 yrs) – 50m/100m/200m Breast
- Callum Cox (16 yrs) – 50m/100m Free, 50m/100m Fly
- Laura Burgess (16 yrs) – 50m Free
- Lauren Gore (16 yrs) – 50m Breast
- Niamh James (18 Over) – 100m/200m Back, 200m IM

All swimmers stepped up to the occasion and swam superbly, but two swimmers deserve particular mention. Kirsty Neill was 27th overall in the 200m Breaststroke (18th in the 17/Under summary) and her time of 2:36.02 was only 0.04 seconds away from qualifying for the Junior final. The time also improved both the 14/15 year & Open BSSC SC club records that she has held since summer 2021. Prior to Kirsty achieving them, the 14/15 year record had been held since 2007 by Bernice Edgeworth (2:44.9) and the Open record since 1993 by Clare Burrows (2:40.0). Niamh James recorded a new PB in the 200m IM (2:20.96) coming 30th overall, which also gave her the BSSC Open club record that had been held since 2015 by Amy Young (2:21.6). Niamh was also the club's top performer over the weekend, coming 19th in the 200m Backstroke (2:14.97) and 36th in the 100m Backstroke (1:03.55).

**We checked if any of our National level swimmers were ranked in the top 25 in Britain for their event (Long Course or Short Course) by the end of 2022** and the results were so fabulous (especially for Callum Cox & Kirsty Neill) we just had to share the positions:

## Event Rankings (Last 12 Months)

Male - Long Course - 50m Butterfly - British - 17 Years Age Group - At 31st December 2023

Rank	Name	Ranked Club	YoB	Meet Name	Venue	Level	Date	Time	FINA
1	Callum Cox	Bishop Stort	06	Swim England National Summer Meet 2022	Sheffield	1	09/08/22	25.47	668
2	Stefan Krawiec	Tranent	06	Glasgow International Swim Meet	Glasgow	1	29/05/22	25.52	664

## Callum Cox (2006)

**1st LC** & 7th SC 50m Fly  
8th SC 50m Free  
17th SC 100m Fly  
21st SC 100m Free

## Event Rankings (Last 12 Months)

Female - Long Course - 200m Breaststroke - British - 16 Years Age Group - At 31st December 2023

Rank	Name	Ranked Club	YoB	Meet Name	Venue	Level	Date	Time	FINA
1	Charlotte Hardy	Millfield	07	British Summer Championships	Sheffield	1	24/07/22	2:37.83	682
2	Kirsty Neill	Bishop Stort	07	British Summer Championships	Sheffield	1	24/07/22	2:38.00	680
3	Charlotte Cope	Gullofod Ct	07	British Summer Championships	Sheffield	1	24/07/22	2:38.45	674

## Kirsty Neill (2007)

**2nd LC** & 6th SC 200m Breast  
8th LC 100m Breaststroke  
13th LC 50m Breaststroke

## Ella Greatbatch (2008)

7th LC & 12th SC 200m Breaststroke  
8th LC & 14th SC 100m Breaststroke  
10th SC & 19th LC 50m Breaststroke

## Lauren Gore (2006)

11th SC 50m Breaststroke

## Laura Burgess (2006)

14th SC 50m Free



# OTHER COMPETITION NEWS SEP-DEC 2022

Some of the events below did get written up on our website, but we include them all in our newsletter in case you've missed them and to continue the celebration of all the great achievements (click on the [links](#) to view more).

## East & South East Secondary School Team Relay Championships 2022

Early October, fifteen BSSC swimmers were selected to represent their schools at the East & South East Division Relay Championships. Over 2300 medley and freestyle relay teams from over 400 English schools participate in separate divisional galas across the country and compete for places in the National Finals. Check out the [website article](#) for more details on our superb swimmers.



## Cambridge L2 Regional & National Short Course Qualifier

Mid October 21 swimmers headed to Cambridge for their first open meet of the 22/23 season. It was a fast meet, offering lots of quality competition and a heats & championship final (15/Over) format.

Eleven Age Group medals were won

- 4 Gold: Ella Greatbatch (2), Laura Burgess, Lauren Gore
- 4 Silver: Molly (2) & Ella Greatbatch, Lauren Gore
- 3 Bronze: Molly Greatbatch, Kirsty Neill, Callum Cox

Five medals were won in the 15/Over Final:

- 1 Gold: Lauren Gore (100m Breaststroke)
- 1 Silver: Ella Greatbatch (50m Breaststroke)
- 3 Bronze: Callum Cox & Laura Burgess (50m Freestyle), Lauren Gore (50m Breaststroke)



Well done to everyone, but especially Elliot Hall who achieved personal best times in all 6 of his races and Molly Greatbatch who PB'd all 4 of her races!

## Swim England Masters Short Course Championships

Thanks again to Stu Clarke (ex BSSC Masters Coach, current Head Coach BSM Marlins, Oman) for his daily Facebook updates on the progress of our BSSC Masters at the Swim England Masters Short Course championships, held at the Ponds Forge pool in Sheffield late Oct. We loved the updates so much, that we posted them as an [article](#) on the website.

Our fabulous Masters team of Alex Catton, Alyson Fordham, Callum Davis, Dan Chada, Jake Lloyd, Joe Collins, Niamh James and Sally Winter came 49th out of 271 clubs and between them, brought home eight Gold, one Silver medal and 12 top ten finishes.



Alyson was in record breaking style and broke her GB age group record in the 100m Freestyle and three GB AND European records in the 50m Freestyle, 200m Freestyle and 100m IM!!! Wow!

# OTHER COMPETITION NEWS SEP-DEC 2022

## Cheshunt 17th Autumn Open

Late October saw thirteen BSSC members aged 9 to 17 make the short journey to Harlow Leisurezone for Cheshunt Swimming Club's 17th Annual Autumn Open Meet. Over the two days, the thirteen swimmers took part in 48 swims, with more than half of swims resulting in personal best times. Seven swimmers brought home 18 medals between them (10 Gold, 7 Silver and 1 Bronze). Read the full write up and medal results [here](#).



## Putteridge Swimming Club (PSC) L3 Winter Short Course Open & County Qualifier

November kicked off with a trip to Luton, where thirty Stortford swimmers took part in 113 swims and a massive 59% of swims resulted in personal best times. 37 medals were taken home over the two days: 17 Golds (Guy Spearman-Baines, Noah Conroy, Elliot Hall, Brandon MacDonald-Williams, Callum Cox, Emma Fields, Jago Derrington), 11 Silvers (Adeline Chan, Guy, Noah, Elliot, Beau Reilly, Brandon, Robert Gor, Jago, Laura Burgess) & 9 Bronze (Ellyse Harvey, Yana Patel, Benjamin Palmer, Elliot, Felice Chan, Beau, Brandon).

Special mention goes to: Callum & Emma, who won gold in every race they entered (six and three, respectively); Guy, who PB'd and won medals in all five of his races; Brandon and Freya, who achieved PBs in all their races; and to Jakey Hayes, who achieved six PBs. Our very youngest swimmers did us proud, with every 9- and 10-year-old BSSC swimmer jingling home with a medal!

## City of St Albans (CoStA) L3 Winter Open Meet

Early December saw sixteen swimmers head to St Albans. They took part in 71 swims, 45% resulted in PBs and 63% resulted in top three places. In total, 45 medals were secured: 14 Gold (Alice Longman, Bella Parkus, Brandon MacDonald-Williams, Dylan Davenport, Emma Fields, Felice Chan, Freya Reilly, George Grimwood, George Taylor, Grace Mason, Miriam Moukdad), 21 Silver (Brandon, Dylan, Elliot Hall, Felice, George G, George T, Grace, Miriam) & 10 Bronze (Beau Reilly, Bella, Brandon, Dylan, Elliot, George T, Grace, Zoe Opiyo).

Our youngest BSSC swimmer Elliot Hall won medals in all 7 events he entered, Dylan Davenport entered 11 events and got 10 medals and 7 PBs, Brandon entered 6 events and got 5 medals and 4 PBs & George G entered 4 events and got 4 medals and 4 PBs. Freya Hadnutt was on great form too, achieving 5 PBs from 7 events.

## HSC FINIS Last chance

The final meet of 2022 saw 11 BSSC swimmers head to Westminster Lodge, St Albans for Harpenden Swimming Club's Last Chance County Qualifier. Swimmers were determined to beat their PBs, with 74% of the 34 swims resulting in personal best times!

This was a "no frills" meet so no actual medals were taken home, but half of the 34 swims resulted in top three places: 5 Golds (Noah Conroy, Molly Greatbatch, Ella Greatbatch, Callum Cox), 5 Silvers (Guy Spearman-Baines, Noah, Molly, Samuel Bird) & 7 Bronze (Adeline Chan, Guy, Isabella Crotty, Anna Grimwood). Congratulations to Noah Conroy, Isabella Crotty, Meha Petal, Molly Greatbatch, Ella Greatbatch, Keira Shaw and Callum Cox who achieved PBs in all of the races they entered.

## WELFARE OFFICER

Just a reminder that **Brian Neill** is our Welfare Officer and actively supporting the club. If you have any welfare concerns please do contact him on **welfare@bsswimclub.org.uk**

## FINAL FUNDRAISING NOTES

**Thank you** to all our members who continue to support us through the **East Herts Lottery**. **In the past 2 years they have won over £1100 in return!** For just £1 per week (less than the cost of 1/2 a cup of coffee!) you can fund us and other local causes AND win prizes of up to £25,000 AND right now you could also **win a year of Hello Fresh meals!** 50% of tickets sold from our page goes to us, and 10% to other great local causes.



## EASY FUNDRAISING

Don't forget to raise funds for our club every time you make purchases online.

Just register once with **EasyFundraising.org.uk** and choose BSSC as your cause, then raise donations every time you shop online through their App or this link:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/bsswimclub/>



## PRO SWIMWEAR

We have a ProSwimwear club specific website page and any purchases made through this page raises money for the club:

[www.proswimwear.co.uk](http://www.proswimwear.co.uk)



## STORTFORD SPORTS SUPPLIES

<http://stortfordsportssupplies.co.uk>

Stortford Sports Supplies is the place to pick up your club swim hats, tops, onesies, hoodies, rucksacks, towels etc. as well as other swimming kit supplies. As a club we benefit from your purchases.