

# Centurions Post

Regular Updates for Swimmers, Lifesavers and Parents

## Remember, Remember, No Rest in November Packed Schedule for the Centurions

Centurions' swimmers squeezed in four competitive events during November, battling the first winter snow along the way.

### Arena League

First up was round two of the Arena League, and the swimmers battled hard against competition which included the league's top two teams. Great team spirit saw a fourth place finish which was enough to secure a spot in the 'A' final for Division 2. A top three finish here would see a promotion to Division 1.

### Club Sprints

The annual club sprints took place the following week and it was a fast paced, enjoyable day that enabled many of our younger and newer members to experience competition for the first time. A whopping 80% of swims resulted in PBs, and seven of our Bronze squad secured their first North Mids. times: Tyler, Olivia, Aimee, Jessica, Edward M, Bertie and JJ. Elsewhere, twelve more Cheshire times were achieved, with April getting her first County time.



### Cheshire Juniors

The following day involved a jaunt to, what seems to be the Centurions' second home, Macclesfield. Yet more fabulous swimming resulted in lots of medals and speeding tickets aplenty. This was a competition that could allow some of our future stars to shine and they certainly didn't disappoint.

### Sheffield Snow Frills Gala

Many of you will have missed the first snowfall of this winter, tucked up in bed but a group of Silver, Transition, Gold and Platinum swimmers got an early taste of winter as they made their way to Sheffield for the Snow Frills gala. Snow on the high-level roads made for an interesting drive but a very rewarding one for swimmers and coach alike.

Competing in a 50m pool presents a different sort of challenge, backstrokers wonder where the flags have gone, fly swimmers wonder if the far end is getting closer or further away, breaststrokers wonder why their legs feel so tired and freestylers, well who knows what they think. Add to those challenges the thought of competing against some of the top clubs in the country (all start with City of ...) and you can understand what the swimmers faced. Despite all that, Northwich still did very well. Plenty of PBs in addition to medals at regular intervals. All the swimmers did well with medals going to the following: Chloe B: Gold 50m & 100m Back, Bronze 100m Free. George, Silver 50m & 200m Back, Bronze 50m Free, 100m & 50m Fly. Laila: Silver 200m & 100m Back, Bronze 100m Fly. Madeline: Bronze 50m Free, and Harvey: Bronze 50m Fly.

### DATES

16 Dec - Wirral  
Metro Xmas Gala

17 Dec - Wirral  
Metro Xmas Gala

13 Jan - Peaks and  
Plain League

20, 21 Jan -  
Cheshire County  
Champs

27, 28 Jan -  
Cheshire County  
Champs

8 Apr 2018 - Swim  
Camp, Moreton  
Hall

"I Swim, therefore IM"



# WHITE OUT

## The Road to Becoming a Swimming Official

Being a swimming official isn't just about donning some of the fashion industry's best kept secrets. It isn't even about the myriad items suspended around your neck, bouncing off your torso every time you so much as breathe. Nope; it is so much more, and something that I would encourage you all to think about pursuing.



There are many reasons to consider becoming an official, not least of which is the fact that, as a parent, you are probably going to be at the gala anyway. Rather than sit on a bench or plastic seat for upwards of eight hours, in searing heat, why not be up and about? Most times you get a free lunch and your petrol expenses paid too!

There are two entry points on your journey to officialdom. You could start by qualifying as a time-keeper. Much the better option, in my opinion, should you be keen on being an official, is to jump straight into your J1 training.

Officials work their way up the ladder by starting as a J1, progressing to a J2, then a J2S (the 'S' denoting 'Starter') and finally finishing as a Referee. Becoming a J1 means you are able to be a Timekeeper, a Chief Timekeeper and an Inspector of Turns.

Qualifying as a J1 is a simple and relatively speedy process, depending on how much time you can commit. You will undertake a theory session and follow this up with practical experience, working with a mentor on poolside during registered galas. Once you have enough experience under your belt, you will have a final assessment and be good to go.

That's all there is to it. If you are tempted (and come on – let's face it, how could you not want to have a reason to wear a shiny new whistle around your neck) and you want more details, catch either myself or Jeff Pratt and we'd be happy to chat to you about it.

*Simon*

## HEAD COACH HUB

Consistency is a vital part of training and coaching yet we rarely mention it (although some of the gold squad may tell you I say it too much). So why is it so important? In very simple terms, doing something repeatedly becomes a habit; once it becomes a habit it is easy to do it in competition. Some habits are good, such as keeping the head down at the end of a race, while others lead to disqualifications, such as touching with one hand at the end of a length of breaststroke. So, as head coach, I look for consistency in the teachers and coaches to make sure they are repeating the messages regularly and I look for consistency in the swimmers so that the little details about technique become automatic in a race.

The next time you find your teacher or coach repeating a message, pay attention. They are just as frustrated at saying something over and over as you are at hearing the message. We do these things because they make you a better swimmer and all these little details add up. It is the swimmers who are consistent, in almost all the things they do, that get into the top squad.

**Wishing You A  
Swimmingly  
Happy  
Holiday Season!**

The Committee would like to wish Swimmers, Lifesavers, Parents, Coaches, Teachers, Volunteers and everyone else associated with The Centurions a very happy holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year.

## CLUB CAPTAIN'S CORNER

### Coping with exams and swimming

At some point in your swimming career, you will find yourself in the run up to an exam. Immediately, the first thing you start to do is panic. You start to ask yourself, "do I revise now or do I revise later?", "Do I stop swimming to focus on the exam, or do I swim too much and not be prepared for it at all?" However, stay calm, don't panic, and start to think about the exams ahead of you way before you can even begin to worry. Now, the next thing you should do is make a revision timetable. It sounds boring but by setting aside 30 minute slots per subject, you don't have to cram as much when you get into the weeks before your exam.

Don't forget, however, to factor in some free time because you can't take in all the information you need to just by revising in one go. You need breaks, and that's where swimming comes in. If you prepare early, you don't actually have to do as much later. This means you are still able to go to swim training, even if sometimes you do have to prioritise your revision. I have found as well, that swimming is quite relaxing when exams are on, as your mind isn't focused on revision too much which means that you don't stress as much. Remember too, that it is important to talk. If you are feeling stressed and unable to juggle it all, talk to someone about it!

# LIFESAVER'S LOG

## Tea towels, Tows and Tantalisingly Close

Where can you combine a cool, calm head in a crisis, a knowledge of tea towels and rope skills, swimming technique and fitness, an ability armed with a lilo to rescue three people whilst simultaneously marshalling four others to safety and calling the emergency services, and still be capable of a crowd-pleasing performance of the Macarena amongst other things? Not a question often asked perhaps, but since you did...

On 26<sup>th</sup> November, two of Northwich LSC's finest, Lucy H. and Sophie M., battled in the Junior girls (12-14y) section of the National Lifesaving Championships, representing the North West Region. This was a long day of tough competition with 15 teams involved in this age group, including Regional champions from across England and strong teams from All Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Across four challenges, the top positions were decided each time by very narrow margins and our team scored a superb **third equal**, only to finish 4<sup>th</sup> overall on countback. Despite competing against older, larger and more experienced competitors, this fantastic pair, flagbearers for the North West, were consistently high performers across all disciplines. Highlights included a third place in the life support initiative test, a bronze medal any other year, (RLSS take note), and Sophie's line throw being third fastest of the day! A superb performance from a multi-talented pair, rounded off with some excellent friendship-building with fellow competitors and some outstanding choreography while waiting for the final results.

The Nationals are the premier lifesaving competition in the UK, held this year at the John Charles Centre for Sport in Leeds. The competition showcases the technical skills, knowledge and decision making abilities of lifesavers and consists of four elements to challenge competitors:

**Life Support Initiative Test** (3<sup>rd</sup>) – 90 seconds to respond to an unseen dry-land emergency situation, to demonstrate first aid and casualty care skills.

**Aquatic Initiative Test** (5<sup>th</sup>) – 90 seconds to respond to an unseen 'wet' emergency scenario, to test assessment of the situation, lifesaving skills and after-rescue treatment. This year's scenario was particularly challenging with 7 people in the water to be rescued, a multitude of potential rescue aids available, and an additional dry land casualty appearing part way through the test. The fact that most teams dealt with all those casualties shows how tough the competition was. (And there was even a 'wet incident' between races to deal with, when one competitor collapsed, fell into the pool, and had to be rescued for real.)

**Line Throw** (6<sup>th</sup>) – Against the clock, each competitor has 45s to coil a rope, throw it 10m to a team mate and pull them in, to generate a combined time. Sophie's throw and tow took just 14.30s; awesome!

**Swim and Tow** (10<sup>th</sup>) – Each competitor swims 25m to their team mate who is then a deadweight they tow 25m to the finishing point. This is a non-contact tow using a regulation Olympic Standard tea towel (honest) to represent an item of clothing. The combined time again decides positions; this year 1 second covered 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> again showing just how tight the competition is.



**4<sup>th</sup> overall, nationally:** an excellent but agonisingly close result, a good day all round, and with a year's more training and experience perhaps a place or three higher next time? They're still champions in our eyes....

## MEET THE COACH

His name is Lewis, **Geoff Lewis**, and he is not only a world champion but the focus, for this month, of our on-going series in which we learn a little more about our coaching team.

Geoff's outward demeanour would suggest a quiet, unpretentious gentleman. However, outward appearances can often belie that which lurks beneath.

Geoff arrived for our interview on a motorbike he has owned since the swimming 60s (see what I did there?), and while I waited for him to engage the kick-stand, I couldn't help but admire the bandana, the mirrored sunglasses, the metal-studded leather jacket and the alligator hide boots.



Settling down for our chat, Geoff summoned the waitress and ordered his favourite food, a rare steak. Odd, I thought, for nine in the morning. Also odd, as we were in the local library. He eyed me suspiciously as he patiently waited for me to stop making things up and ask the first of many probing questions.

*Tell us a little about your background:* "Well, I hail from Liverpool and moved to Mid-Wales when I was 7 years old. I've never had a swimming lesson in my life and am totally self-taught. That may have something to do with the fact that the nearest pool was 14 miles away and there was only a couple of buses a day. The only place to swim was a pool in the local river above a weir."

*So how did you get into swimming?:* "It was through taking my daughters to a swimming club and getting swept into helping out with teaching back in 1983." He continued, "Again, because of my daughters, I took part in a run/swim event in 1987 and, having only taught myself breaststroke when I was 12, had to swim this in a freestyle race. For the next 3 months I taught myself well enough to enter the National Biathlon Finals. I learnt the other strokes after that and began entering Masters competitions from 1990. My highlight though, has to be winning the 60+ class of the Biathle (a sprint/run/swim/run event) World Championships in Monaco in 2007."

*How long have you been with Northwich ASC?:* "I moved into the area in 1993 and joined the club then. I last represented the club in a Medley Relay when the total age of the four team members was 165! I started teaching and coaching for NASC in 2000."

*Give us a quick claim to fame:* "I was a technical official in the 2012 Olympics and held one end of the tape at the finish of the last event of the Games."

*What do you get out of being involved with the Centurions?:* "I have had a lot of enjoyment & help from the Centurions & now it keeps me active (mind & body) and in touch with a wide range of people."

With that, Geoff stood up, spat out the last bit of gristle from his half-eaten steak, popped a toothpick into the corner of his mouth, which he toyed with in a casual, off-hand manner and growled, "Are we done then, son?"

Before I had chance to answer, he was out of the door without so much as a backwards glance. And, as he swung his leg over the old hog and kicked the beast into life, I had to wonder what other mysteries this unassuming fellow, from a quiet corner of Cheshire, was keeping under his fabricated bandana.

You can find the Centurions on Facebook and Twitter by clicking the buttons below or by searching Twitter for @NorthwichASC and Facebook for Northwich Centurions Swimming Club.



### Procrastination Awards 2017

As the year draws to a close, it is time to announce our annual awards for 'stalling tactics in training'. This year's top 5 excuses are:

1. "My goggles have broken"
2. "My goggles are too loose"
3. "My goggles are too tight"
4. "I've left my goggles in the locker"
5. "I need the loo. Oh, and my goggle strap came off"