

National Swimming Section report 23/24

New Chair

CFO Kathryn Billing of Cornwall FRS kindly agreed to become the National Swimming Section Chair following the retirement of Mark Yates.

Sam and I would officially like to welcome Kath and thank her for all the support we have received, especially in the months running up to last year's championships.

July

Iain Hughes, Crew manager in West Mids, put his heart and soul into training for a charity raising Channel swim and competed in the 2022 Championships. He tragically went missing during his swim and his body was later found in waters off Belgium. Iain's family remain in our thoughts and prayers.

National Swimming Championships (25m)

September 2023

It was another exciting and successful competition at the Royal Grammar School for the National Swimming Championships. It was awesome to see some incredible new swimmers joining us and swimmers who've been coming back and competing for many years. 5 Championship records were broken by Peter Wilmot of Manchester, Chris Aust of Oxfordshire and Sophie Simpson of London, with some close finishes too!

Our overall team competition winners were LONDON taking the Masters team trophy and STAFFORDSHIRE proudly coming through to win the Open team trophy.

This is the 6th year we have awarded the Martin Heron Memorial Shield; Martin sadly passed away in September 2015, to bowel cancer. It is awarded to the fastest (age adjusted) time for the Masters 50m Breaststroke which was Martin's favourite event and is always closely contested. Awards went to 🏆 Peter Wilmot, Manchester, 🏆 Chris Aust, Oxfordshire, 🏆 Aydin Berki, Hertfordshire

Shortly after the championships

Our fellow competitor, colleague and friend Bob Bray, retired ADO/Station Commander of London Fire Brigade and treasurer/chief organiser for LFB swimming team, passed away due to Pulmonary Fibrosis, age 72.

Bob has been a huge part of Fire Service swimming for many years (personally all of my 20 year career), always encouraging and inspiring swimmers to attend the national championships and World firefighter games for LFB and the UK team. Bob competed himself every year winning many medals and helping towards the ongoing success of LFB and the UK swim team.

Bob began his career with Warwickshire County Fire Brigade in 1967 and retired from uniform duties in 2001 but his fire service/safety career and dedication spanned 45 years.

He was a highly respected and much-loved colleague and friend to many, his passion for life, his family, travel, swimming and the fire service is how we will all remember Bob.

We would like to recognise Bob with a memorial award.

Looking forward to September 2024

The next championships will be held on Sunday September 1st as part of Tyne and Wears International Sports tournament which will be celebrating its 50th year!

We are hoping to increase numbers again despite the ongoing issues arising with staffing and support across the UK Fire service in terms of time off, funding, travel expenses etc.

Other achievements

We continue to see our swimmers competing in National and World events and breaking Fire service records in the process which are all available on FSUK website.

AGM 2024

Date to be announced and held remotely over zoom/teams, hopefully prior to Sept 1st.

Media pages

We continue to use and update Facebook and the FSUK website to communicate and promote the sport and competition.

Waterpolo

No waterpolo running at present

Open Water

No open water events for 2023 although a memorial event/award for Iain Hughes is in our thoughts and plans.

Thanks

As always Sam Nicholson and I would like to welcome and thank the current FSUK Chair, CFO Chris Kirby & the National Executive Committee for all support they offer and can give. I would also like to thank Paul Abbott for all his work maintaining the FSUK website. Thank you to Kath Billing for her support in running the National Swimming Section and ACFO Lynsey McVay for her ongoing support in Tyne and Wear.