

## MIDDLESBROUGH ASC CHRISTMAS GALA

What a turn out, 17 clubs and four hundred and thirty one competitors.

Clubs ranged from Barrow in Cumbria and Ellesmere in North Shropshire to Alnwick and Scarborough, a great cross section of the North West and North East. The packed ranks of spectators were treated to some extremely close and exciting swimming with Middlesbrough swimmers competing admirably against very strong opposition from Ellesmere Titans and Newcastle.

Eighty one swimmers from Middlesbrough were competing and didn't they all swim well winning 42 gold medals, 54 silver medals and 65 bronze medals. 319 Personal best times (PBs) were achieved, must be a record. What do you say about one of the young swimmers, Evie Dilley, she broke the long standing 100m backstroke club record (previously held by Aimee Wilmott 2004) together with lowering her 50m and 200m backstroke club records – three outstanding swims, keep up the hard work!

As you will appreciate with so many Middlesbrough swimmers there were many more fine performances as well as some extremely tight finishes.

### 9 year old girls

It was great to see so many girls swimming in this age group. Abigail Blundell Stephenson swam a great race in the 100m backstroke to win gold with Isobel Keetley winning bronze, with a roles reversal in the 200m backstroke Isobel claiming gold and Abigail silver. Isobel also swam a controlled race in the 400m freestyle to win gold by 13 seconds.

Abigail won a further gold in the 50m backstroke.

In the 100m butterfly Angie Zhu had a thrilling race with Rachel Harrison from Ellesmere to be pipped on the line by 0.1seconds. Great racing!!

Other Middlesbrough medallists were Elisha Rhodes, Jessica Scott, Katie Pink and Libbi Upton.

### 9 year old boys

Isaac Buchan and Harry Bell both had personal best performances with Isaac winning 3 silver and 3 bronze and Harry a bronze.

### 10 year old girls

Apart from her 3 gold medals and club records in the backstroke events Evie won gold in the 50m freestyle and 200m freestyle. Millie Bozbayir had two fine swims to win gold in the 50m butterfly and the 100m breaststroke.

Other medallists were Hannah Redshaw, Marissa Grieves and Violet Hearfield.

### 10 year old boys

Thomas McDermott was again outstanding dominating this age group with 8 gold medals. In the 400m Individual Medley, probably the most gruelling and technically demanding event, William Morris swam a superb race to win gold.

### 11 year old girls

Gold medals were hard to come by in this age group even though all our girls competed admirably with all posting PBs. Megan Cairns swam a great race in the 200m butterfly to win gold with other medallists, Bethan Palfreeman and Louise Emma Williams.

### 11 year old boys

Similarly in this age group gold medals were elusive. However, Toma Saha swam really well with winning three silver and two bronze medals.

### 12 year old girls

The gala got off to a great start for the Middlesbrough swimmers with Ellie Baister having a fine swim in the 400 IM to win gold and followed up later in the meet with a gold medal in the 200m backstroke. This was later emulated by Ellie Tibbett winning gold in the 100m backstroke. Emma Bell and Rebecca Keetley were also Middlesbrough medallists.

### 12 year old boys

Probably the most exciting race of the meet was the 400 IM. The spectators were enthralled with the ever fluctuating state of the race. Finally, James Woods managed to get up on the line to win gold with, at the end, less than a second covering the first three places. Great racing!! James followed up later in the meet with gold in the 50m butterfly and 200m butterfly. Well done young man. Chase Darby won a great gold in

the 100m backstroke clinching the race on the line by 0.32seconds. A great swim!!

#### 13 year old girls

Rachel Bradley swam a disciplined race in the 200m freestyle leading from the start to win gold in the 200m freestyle and then followed up with a gold in the 50m backstroke. Molly Dorsi continued her fine winning streak with gold medals in the 50m freestyle and breaststroke and the 100m butterfly and freestyle. Superb!! Rachel Maguire and Sadie Dickinson were other medallists.

#### 13 year old boys

In a very tough age group Jack Turnbull clinched a gold in the 50m backstroke with Oliver Hall our other medallist.

#### 14 year old girls

Georgia Stockdale in the 200m butterfly had a comprehensive win from two strong Ellesmere swimmers and a further gold in the 50m backstroke with Robyn Dickinson another medallist.

#### 14 year old boys

In a particularly tough section Cade Darby was a multi silver medallist and Joseph Micklewright a silver medallist.

#### 15 years and over girls

Rebekah Worthy won gold in the 50m butterfly with Lucy Turnbull, Emma Muirhead and Flora Finlay other Middlesbrough medallists.

#### 15 years and over boys

In the final heat of the 200m breaststroke George Crawford fought out a desperate finish to get up on the line and win by 0.36 seconds – truly great race, George also had close races in winning the 400IM and 50m backstroke. Adam Williams was also a medallist in this age group.

Overall, at a gala with many strong competitors, Middlesbrough swimmers did extremely well. It was also a great gala for many of our younger swimmers to gain considerable experience which will certainly help with their future development. To have 319 PBs is testament to progress and you should ALL be very proud of yourselves.

I would like to wish all the swimmers, coaches, supporters and parents a VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A HEALTHY (and for the swimmers) WINNING NEW YEAR.

I would also like to congratulate James Blott for his gold medal performance at the recently held Manchester Parameet and Joshua Grob for claiming 3 Medals at the same meet