



Warrington Dolphins Long Distance Swimming Club

Annual Report 2004

What a lot has happened in this our 40th year. The beginning of year started somewhat difficultly trying to come to terms with the passing away of John Heapy just before New Year. A couple of days before at the Boxing Day dip, John was in typical form running the event dressed as a Viking. Who would have guessed what the next days would hold for John. At John's funeral it was very clear to see by the numbers present that he was very well respected. Those present were or are still associated with swimming. He has been missed.

We held our AGM at Sankey Pool. At the AGM Wendy closed off a chapter in her life after servicing on the committee for many years. She retired as Treasurer, the office she held for 15 years, but before that she held the position of Secretary. I'm sure that all Dolphins past and present appreciate her effort over the years. Our new Treasurer is John Watkin who re-joined the committee after a number of years break. We wish John great success and thank him for filling the position.

At the BLDSA Annual dinner at Barrow in March, several Dolphins received awards, for the previous season. They included Nicola Wright who received the Elise Brook Trophy, for several successful swims as a junior, Andy Wright for winning the veteran grand prix event, Maurice Ferguson the Harry Moffat Memorial Trophy, for his services as a pilot life saver and Lesley Feakes for her 2 way Windermere breaststroke swim. The Dolphins also presented Lesley with an engraved Crystal Bowl to mark this record-braking swim.

Talking about recognition Maurice received the most prestigious acknowledgement for all his service to long distance swimming by being elected to the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame in Fort Lauderdale. He travelled to America to personally receive his award. Well done Maurice.

We finished our winter training with our annual Bob Keating & Dick Dickenson Handicaps. The Bob Keating handicap was shortened to 100 lengths as we were unable to get Sankey pool for more than an hour. The winners were Jim Nurse for the Bob Keating Trophy and Sam Reynolds for the Dick Dickenson Trophy. Following the race swimmers repeated the previous years post swim breakfast at the 'Lets Eat Café'.

The outdoor season started with the Budworth Handicap where we had an excellent turn out on a fine day. The good thing about this handicap is that it is difficult to cheat since there are two variables. The first is the time it will take you and more importantly the unknown length of the swim. This year the nominal distance of 1mile turned out to be nearer 1.5miles, which threw a 'curved ball' at many of the swimmers guesses. The winner was Anna Barker who additionally complicated the race by swimming without the navigation aid of looking where she was going because she swam backstroke.

At the start of the season once again we held our Budworth Championships. Again Lesley organised a tremendous event even if she didn't swim due to her new head cut. We again had a good turn out of Dolphins. The evening of the Championships saw our first celebration

of our 40th year with a Buffet, which was held at Budworth Sailing Club. It was a great success. It was pleasing to see some old faces and Steven Dockery was nearly tempted back into swimming and to join the Channel Relay team. A point of discussion was the photos on show and the swim data that had been collated together for the event. Everyone who attended was given a commemorative mug and a booklet detailing the history of the Club. Thanks should be extended to those who helped make the event a success.

Dave Feakes had decided to have a quite season, but he was unable to resist a filming opportunity, where he would stand in for Peter Mullan in 'A Clear Day'. His quite season turned out to be spent (2.5 weeks) in the Irish Sea of the Isle of Man and a morning at Dover. However, it was the fringe benefits that he enjoyed the most, like the rub down by 3 beauties. We won't say too much about them having to shaving off his hair and beard for the filming.

The other major 40th celebration was a Channel Relay attempt. The 6 swimmers of Joe Coy, Phil Taylor, Nicola Wright, Alan Pomfret, Claire Dickinson and Andy Wright successfully completed the crossing. They were professionally managed by Chris Carter would really wanted to swim but a 'bureaucrat' at the CSA wouldn't let him. The crossing took place on 20th July, starting at 9:30am and took 14hours exactly. The conditions were excellent.

In August we held our Albert Dock Championships. What a great success they were thanks to Alan Pomfret who did an outstanding job. Alan stood in as Secretary early in the year, but you would have thought that this was his 20th Championships not his 1st. Thanks should also go to the many others who helped Alan. It was very nice to see Tony Johnson watching on the quayside once again.

Members have been swimming all around the country again this year. We have had some pleasing results with Natalie Jones winning a few events in her first season as a senior lady. Graham Padgett added another victory to his tally by winning the 1st Cheshire Championship. Christian Wade and Andrew Byrne both competed in their first open water swims this season. However, once again the mileage chart encouraged our swimmers. I won't believe anyone who tells me that no body takes any notice of it. Most swimmers are very quick to point out when I haven't added one of their swims to the chart. At the end of the season 4 swimmers were all within 8 miles of each other, with Henry Lowther taking the title with 57 miles.

This year the Club launched a new Web-site (www.warrington-dolphins.co.uk) and thanks must be extended to John Lydon who has done an excellent job in putting together the web-site, which hopefully contains all you need to know, including the famous mileage chart.

At training members of the Club have shared the coaching on Sunday's, with a number of juniors also taking sessions. There have been an excellent variety of sessions. Attendance at the sessions has held up, with numbers generally constant at Sunday sessions even in the summer. We have at long last negotiated a 2 hour training session. From Sunday 24th October 2004, Sunday training switched to Fordton Leisure Centre from 6pm to 8pm. We believe that Fordton will be available for the winter months to April. The one-hour training will continue after that throughout the summer, venue could possibly be back at Sankey.

The Marbury Handicap this year was the same format as it has been for the last two years. Thanks must go to Claire Dickinson for organising the swimming side and John Glynn for organising the buffet at the Cock o' Budworth afterwards. The Lydon sisters dominated the winning rostrum by coming first and second. A good turn out made the event successful.

Chris Byrne has now finished his 5 year 'sentence' in his single handed running of the postal swim. Next year Dave Feakes will run the event on behalf of the Club. He's looking for volunteers to help out at key stages.

Four members of the Club (Judy Brown, Claire Dickinson, Graham Padgett and Billy Dutton) have competed in a number of Masters competitions this year. Judy and Claire are in the same age group as each other and have taken 12 titles between them. Judy took 4 titles in the GB Masters and was only half a second off setting at British record in another race this year. Graham took five titles in the Northern Counties Championships. In true Billy's form, he couldn't resist the temptation to enter the 200m fly, which he finished 3rd in, well done Billy. However, he claimed after completing it that it was 'the hardest swim I've ever done'. What another hardest swim Billy!

It is with great sadness that Lesley has decided to resign as Club Secretary. Lesley has done an absolutely excellent job over the last 6 years. Not only as Club Secretary but also running the Budworth Handicap and Championships. We wish her well in her new ventures (which could include marathon running). Joe Coy has volunteered to become our new Club Secretary as well as the organisation of the Budworth Championship. Many thanks to Joe we wish him every success.

Andy Wright
Warrington Dolphins LDSC
Publicity Officer