

Gloucestershire County Open Water Report – 2016 Season

(with a couple of early 2017 results!)

ASA/FINA/LEN Events

ASA South West

The Regional Championships were again held at Weymouth on June 25th and once again incorporated the Gloucestershire Open Water Championships. A total of 12 swimmers of all ages from the county braved the elements. The typically relatively low turnout meant that many of the Gloucestershire swimmers were unopposed in their respective county classes and five swimmers also achieved victories in both their county and regional events. For those under 18 this meant qualification for the National Open Water Championships later in the year.

The stand-out swim was from 13yo Olivia Butler, swimming for Severnside Tritons, who not only won her class, but was the fastest swimmer in the 1.5k wave, coming home in a fantastic 19:41 – nearly a minute ahead of her nearest rival. The results for the county are summarised below and the full results can be found at

http://swimwest.org.uk/swim/index.php/results1/cat_view/13-open-water-swimming/47-results

Name	Club	Event	Position SW	Position Glos
William Crofts	Cheltenham	750m Taster, boys	2	1
Olivia Butler	Severnside	1.5k, 13yo girls	1	1
Rosie Allen	Severnside	3k, 16yo girls	6	1
Jessica Wooddisse	Stroud Masters	5k, 40-44yo Ladies	1	1
James Halliwell	Severnside	1.5k, 12yo boys	2	1
Jonah Silk	City of Bristol	1.5k, 13yo boys	1	1
Teilo Crow	City of Bristol	1.5k, 13yo boys	6	2
William Halliwell	Severnside	1.5k, 14yo boys	3	1
Scot Munden	Gloucester City	3k, 15yo boys	3	1
Matthew Munden	Gloucester City	5k, 17/18yo boys	1	1
William Seaman	Severnside	5k, 17/18yo boys	2	2
Mark Partridge	Stroud Masters	5k, 50-54 Men	1	1

Only a handful of Masters (17) and Senior Age Group (4) swimmers from the region competed, with only 2 of these from Gloucestershire. This is undoubtedly a reflection of the travel distance and unpredictability of this event, especially as it is not a required pathway to Nationals as it is with the younger swimmers.

Once again there was nobody from the County Committee present to award medals to the swimmers. At the time, the position of Open Water Manager was uncertain. It is the intention that for 2017 a representative will be in attendance.

It is hoped, however, that the County Championship can be held closer to Gloucestershire in coming years to enable more Masters Swimmers to compete and allow the younger age groups some additional competition to hone their skills.

If there are any comments or suggestions regarding these ideas then please let me know.

ASA Nationals, Rother Valley Country Park

Unusually for Sheffield, it was a very, very, warm and close weekend for the Open Water Nationals. This year there was a slight change to the proceedings as the events were held over the Saturday and Sunday (not the Monday for age group events as in previous years) with an additional 1500m wetsuit taster event being included.

Name	Club	Event	AG Position
Olivia Butler	Sevenside	1.5k, 13yo girls	3 rd =
Scott Munden	Gloucester City	3k, 15yo boy	20 th
Jack White	City of Bristol	3k, 16yo boy	10 th
William Seaman	Sevenside	5k, 17/18yo boy	10 th
Matthew Munden	Gloucester City	5k, 17/18yo boy	13 th
Oliver Webb	Cirencester	1.5k, 18-24yo Men	3 rd
Brian Armstrong	Gloucester Masters	1.5k, 50-54yo Men	5 th
John Coe	Gloucester Masters	1.5k, 60-64yo Men	4 th
Steven Broadway	Cirencester	1.5k, 60-64yo Men	5 th
Jessica Wooddisse	Stroud Masters	3k, 40-44yo Women	1 st
Sean Kinsey	Stroud Masters	3k, 50-54yo Men	1 st
Mark Partridge	Stroud Masters	3k, 50-54yo Men	8 th
John Coe	Gloucester Masters	3k, 60-64yo Men	4 th
Tony Cherrington	Gloucester Masters	3k, 70-74yo Men	1 st

In the age group section Olivia Butler again shone for Sevenside taking the bronze medal in the 13yo girls 1.5k race. William Seaman also swam well, overturning his defeat to Matthew Munden in South West Champs earlier in the year.

The County's Masters Swimmers were, as usual, well placed with Jessica Wooddisse, Sean Kinsey (both Stroud Masters) and Tony Cherrington (GMSC) taking wins in their respective age groups and Oliver Webb (Cirencester) taking a bronze.

European Masters Open Water Champs

The highlight of the 2016 open water season, however, was undoubtedly Jessica Wooddisse's (Stroud Masters) Silver Medal at the European Masters Open Water Championship in Rijeka, Croatia on September 9th.

She completed the 5k sea swim in 1:12:11.62, beating 26 other women in her 40-45yo age group and was one of only 8 British medallists at the event (5 silver and three bronze) which was dominated by the large Italian contingent.

Congratulations also to Sean Kinsey who won a bronze medal in the Mens 50-54yo age group and to Mark Partridge who finished a creditable 24th in the same age group.

Swim Serpentine

Six Gloucestershire open water swimmers participated in the inaugural British Open Water Swimming Championships at the Swim Serpentine event on September 25th – and three came away with some hardware.

The event followed on from the mass participation swim on the Saturday where over 4000 swimmers converged on the centre of London for the first event in the Serpentine since the 2012 Olympic Marathon – thus the facilities and organisation were superb, even if the water, at 17.1°C, was a little chilly and, it has to be said, “green”.

All the Masters swam the 3.3k course and Tony Cherrington of Gloucester Masters was in a class of his own – literally – as he won the 70-74 age group in a time of 00:56:56, beating many younger competitors along the way. Lisa Jones also Gloucester Masters, took the silver in the 45-49 women’s age group despite the cold water and a shoulder niggle. Brian Armstrong (Gloucester Masters) won the bronze medal in the most populous 50-54 age group and John Coe (Gloucester Masters) narrowly missed out on a medal in the men’s 60-64 age group.

In the younger age groups, Mathew Munden of Gloucester City was fourth in the 17-18 Youth Men Age Group 3.3k race in a time of 00:40:54 while sibling Scott Munden was 14th completed the 15-16 Boys Age Group 1.6k race in a time of 00:23:06.



Local and National non-ASA/FINA Swims

Ice Swimming

Gloucester Masters swimmer Jon Coe has joined an elite group of swimmers by becoming one of the 170 worldwide swimmers, and only 44 English swimmers, to have swum the “Ice Mile” under the International Ice Swimming Association rules. That is only regular swim trunks one swim hat and goggles and water temperature at 5 degrees or lower. The swim took place at Lake 32 South Cerney on Saturday morning the 28th February 2016, the lake was a exactly 5 degrees and the wind chill was -2. To be counted as an official swim, there were 3 digital thermometers and two witnesses from the IISA and photographic proof of entry and exit. The swim is not deemed over until you have recovered and according to John, that is the hardest part.

Further to this Jon has also competed in the Big Chill Swim in Windermere this January – part of the International Winter Swimming Association series of events. A small area of Low Wood bay is pontooned off and split into lanes (so really a pool swim!!!) and competitors can race in one of several events pool type events – even fly & relays!!

John won his age group in the British Championship and was 11th overall in the 1000m event and we wish him many congratulations in his success. The event is scheduled again for February 2018 at the same location, for those interested in competing.

To cap of a massively successful year Jon also competed in the World Ice Swimming Championships in Burghausen, Germany in January 2017 where he was crowned Champion in the 1000m event.

Great North Swim

A strong contingent from GMSC were in the Lake District for this year's Great North Swim, with the added bonus (?) of the new 10k event for those who don't easily get bored or who have a Channel Swim to prep for. Friday was apparently warm and sunny, but Saturday saw the more usual Lake District drizzle return as did Sunday.

Individual Swims

Name	Race	Time	Age Group	Position			
				Overall	Gender	Age Group	AG/ Gender
Kay Arkinstall	1mile	~27		Lost timing chip ☹			
Brian Armstrong	1mile	24:49	50-54	33 of 3155	30 of 1366	2 of 391	2 of 190
Lara Crewe-Hergest	2mile	58:56	45-49	108 of 593	35 of 249	15 of 127	4 of 53
Becky Harker	2mile	51:54	45-49	29 of 593	15 of 249	3 of 127	2 of 53
Penny Hickson	5k	1:34:42	55-59	231 of 586	74 of 245	6 of 32	3 of 10
Lisa Jones	10k	2:25:44	45-49	8= of 216	1 of 59	3 of 37	1 of 11
Anthony Lloyd	10k	3:10:48	60-64	102 of 216	77 of 157	2 of 6	2 of 5
Jonny Rawlings	5k	1:10:04	45-49	9 of 593	8 of 344	2 of 569	2 of 46
Steve Taylor	10k	2:32:35	50-54	18 of 216	15 of 157	4 of 27	4 of 20
Angela Wadley	10k	3:14:59	50-54	117 of 216	28 of	14 of 27	3 of 7
Caroline Wilson	2mile	1:10:40	45-49	388 of 593	143 of 411	56 of 127	15 of 53

Several excellent performances from Lisa Jones (AG 1st 10k), Angela Wadley (AG 3rd 10k), Steve Taylor (AG 4th 10k), Penny Hickson (AG 2nd 5k), Jonny Rawlings (AG 2nd 5k), Becky Harker (AG 2nd 2mile), Lara Crewe-Hergest (AG 4th 2mile) and Brian Armstrong (AG 2nd 1mile).

However, the pièce-de-résistance was the relay, where GMSC (slightly?) overwhelmed the opposition – as can be seen from the results table. The unusual format of three legs seemed to work very well and even though each leg was advertised as being 535m max., it was more like 1000m as it was essentially the 750m course with another 250m straight added to return to the start.

Team		Overall Time	Position	Splits
Gloucester Masters 1	Brian Armstrong	43:55	1 of 22	14:58
	Lisa Jones			14:40
	Jonny Rawlings			14:17
Gloucester Masters 2	Steve Taylor	49:50	2 of 22	14:53
	Becky Harker			16:45
	Anthony Lloyd			18:12
West Country Tarts (aka GMSC 3?)	Amanda Green	53:56	4 of 22	17:16
	Penny Hickson			19:21
	Kay Arkinstall			17:19

So GMSC1 ended up with a big shiny gold cup – and no clue if we can keep it or if we have to return it for next year.

With 2016 a great success, we are looking forward to 2017's event and the entries are open now. Hopefully more Gloucestershire swimmers will think about taking part in what is undoubtedly the greatest mass participation swim the country – perhaps even worldwide?

There may have been other Gloucestershire swimmers at this event, but unfortunately the results database cannot be easily searched for club affiliation. If you swam – let me know and apologies for not including you in this report.

Big Cotswold Swim 1 & 2

The two open water events hosted at Lake 32 (South Cerney) are held in July & September. Each event consists of two races of 1mile and 2miles.

BCS1 – July

In the 1 mile swim Loraine Bradley from Stroud Masters was the highest placed county swimmer taking the win in the Veteran 40+ category. Rich Smith, also Stroud Masters took bronze in the same age group.

In the 2mile event, Brian Armstrong (GMSC) took the trophy for the Veteran 50+ and Tony Coleby (GMSC) was a creditable 10th in the Veteran 40+ class which he swam without a wetsuit.

BCS2 – September

In the 1mile swim Oliver Jones (CSWPC) came home first to beat all-comers and to win his class (Youth).

The 2 mile once again saw Brian Armstrong (GMSC) take the trophy for the Veteran 50+ and Tony Coleby (GMSC) showed the difference a wetsuit can make by moving up to third in the Veteran 40+ class. Tony Cherrington (GMSC) also won his Veteran 60+ class coming home 19th overall.

Cotswold Swim

Not to be confused with the BCS, this event is run by a different operator and in a different lake (Lake 62). There are four distances – 1.5k, 3.8k, 5k and 10k.

County Masters swimmers dominated both the 5k and 10k swims. Oliver Wilkinson (GMSC) demolished the field in the 10k swim, finishing 25mins ahead of the second placed swimmer in a fantastic 2:04:12. In the 5km event Sean Kinsey came home first with Jessica Wooddise (both Stroud Masters) winning the women's event and coming in third overall (without wetsuit). Brian Armstrong (GMSC) placed 5th overall and won the Veteran class. William Lee placed second in the Open class and Partridge was 6th in the Veterans class, but was first man home without a wetsuit (both Stroud Masters). Tony Cherrington (GMSC) also won his Super Veteran class coming home 12th overall. Penny Hickson (10th female Veteran) and Alison Millward (17th female Veteran) also represented Gloucester Masters.

Channel Swims

The only Gloucestershire swimmer that we are aware of that completed a channel swim this year was Angela Wadley from Gloucester Masters. Angela's first attempt was as a relay with two other GMSC swimmers (Steve Taylor and John Coe), but with less than a mile to go to reach France, their boat's engine failed – which meant that under the safety rules, frustratingly, the swim had to be abandoned.

However, Angela refused to be beaten and teamed up with Howard James to try again. This time she made it on Sept 15th. Many congratulations to one of the strongest and most persistent open water swimmers we know.

World Master Games – May 2017

On another pleasing note, Tony Cherrington (GMSC) has just won the 2.5k Championships at this event in the 75-79yr age group. Many congratulations to Tony who also won the 50m freestyle race in the same age group in the pool meet – from the sublime to the ridiculous (I won't say which is which!!)

Regional interactions and Regulations Changes

ASA South West Open Water Committee Meetings – 14/09/16 & 14/3/17

BA attended the South West Open Water Committee meeting September 14th. The main items discussed were the initial preparations for the 2017 South West Open Water Championships and a list of dates for the regional and national championships is shown below.

Championship	Date	Location
ASA Wiltshire	June 18 th	Lake 32
ASA South West	June 24 th	Weymouth
ASA North West/North East	June 24 th	Salford Quays
Swim Wales	July 1 st	Parc Bryn Bach
ASA Midland	July 1 st	Bosworth Water
ASA London	July 1 st	Surrey Quays
ASA South East	July 8 th	Westhampnett Lake
ASA East	July 16 th	Whitlingham Country Park
ASA National	August 15 th & 16 th	Rother Valley Park

There was a brief discussion regarding the possibility of running an ASA event in parallel to an existing swim, similar to the 2016 British Championships, but as this was a fairly new concept no significant progress was made. It would be entirely feasible to run lower level events (say a County Champs) in conjunction with the commercial events, but I think the regional events would still need to be ASA only. For Masters, it would be easy because this is where they mainly compete anyway.

As there are very few (in relative terms) ASA open water events, the younger age groupers do not get to practice or race other than at their regional event or nationals, which limits their development of racing skills and experience.

The new FINA wetsuit specification was briefly discussed. These important changes will be put into place in September 2016 are purported to protect (elite) athletes from cold water during open water swims and are listed below:

- The lowest possible temperature of the water should remain at 16°C
- Between 16°C and 18°C wetsuits + bathing cap are mandatory
- Between 18°C and 20°C, wetsuits are optional
- Over 20°C, wetsuits are not allowed

Given that many UK swims take place in water temperatures below 16°C, it is not clear how such a limit could be applied and/or enforced as it would result in the cancellation of many events – including the SW Regional Competition. It was noted that the Scottish ASA frequently have events that have lower water temperatures, so it will be interesting to see the ASA take on this and see if there are any riders that are imposed on the rules for UK swims! SW will be looking at how this specifically applies to the Weymouth event as the slot that we normally have means that it is more likely than not to be below the 16°C limit.

The new FINA requirements for swimwear approval (FRSA) have been released with effect from January 1, 2017. The section that applies to wetsuits is reproduced below.

“4.2. Wetsuits for open water swimming competitions with water temperature below 20 C.

Subject to the specifications below, wetsuits are subject to the provisions applicable to swimsuits set forth above under.

4.2.1. Design (shape)

Wetsuits shall completely cover torso, back, shoulders and knees. They shall not extend beyond the neck, wrists and ankles.

4.2.2. Composition

Wetsuits for both men and women shall be in one piece.

4.2.3. Material (Type)

Material used for wetsuits must have thermal insulation properties⁹ (for example foam of polychloroprene (Neoprene) or of polyurethane or other material with similar insulating properties). The material can be multilayered, with non-water permeable layers. The material cannot contain injected gas.

Material without insulating properties cannot be used.

4.2.4. Material (measured values - layers)

Thickness: The thickness of material/s used shall be minimum 3mm and maximum 5mm. Provided the insulating functions are not prejudiced, the Applicant may apply for lowering of the minimum thickness value in limited specific areas, if such is functionally justified to allow free swimmer’s movements. A decision in this respect is made at SAC’s discretion and cannot be challenged.

Permeability and buoyancy are not measured.

4.2.5. Construction

Zippers or other fastening systems are allowed without specific limitations. They must be functional.”

Most modern wetsuits have a range of thicknesses and are especially thin across the shoulders – typically 1/1.5mm and thus would need discretionary approval.

Any news regarding the new rules will be communicated through the usual channels.

It looks like the SW Championship will be the first event this year to be run under the new regulations and will be the test platform – I will keep everybody informed as to the outcome and the issues that will relate to interpretation and implementation.

With this in mind, alternate locations for the SW event have been investigated and contingency plans considered should the Weymouth location prove to be too cold to allow consistent running of the Championships.

Upcoming for 2017

There are two things that I am trying to expand on for 2017:

1. Training – there are a number of options for clubs in Gloucestershire to train in open water within the county
 - Henleaze in Bristol <http://www.henleazeswimmingclub.org/>
 - Bristol Open Water <http://bristolopenwater.co.uk/>
 - South Cerney
 - ◇ Waterland (Lake 32) <http://www.ukwatersports.co.uk/>
 - ◇ SouthCerney Outdoor Centre (Lake 12) <http://www.southcerneyoutdoor.co.uk/Play/Open-Water-Swimming>
 - ◇ Cotswold Country Park and Beach (Lake 31) <http://cotswoldcountrypark.co.uk/open-water-swimming/>
 - ◇ Lake 86 <http://www.cotswoldwaterparkhire.com/>

Whilst the Masters usually 'do their own thing' as regards training, I would like to hear from age-group coaches as to their thoughts on how their club members would like to approach open water training within the county and how the county can help to enhance and increase the participation of age groupers in open water swimming.

Talking to a couple of coaches, the main issue seems to be bringing the lower age groups (typically under 14) into these venues

Howard Jones (Cirencester) and Daisy Bond (Glos) are looking to start a joint training program based around Lake 12 in the first instance. The first session is scheduled for May 12th.

2. Events

There are many open water swimming events around the country during the summer season that are open to older swimmers (typically 16 and over, but sometimes younger swimmers are permitted).

There are also several open water events within Gloucestershire and these are listed below. Whilst not ASA governed swims, these local events provide an opportunity to gain race experience – particularly mass starts, both in the water and out.

Open Water Swim Events in Gloucestershire				
Event	Date – approx.	Distances	Location	Promotor
Big Cotswold Swim	First Saturday in July	1 mile, 2 mile	Waterland. Lake 32, Spratsgate Lane, Cirencester GL7 6DF	Tri Ferris Promotions http://www.triferris.com/
Big Cotswold Swim - September	Middle Saturday in September	1 mile, 2 mile		
Cotswold Swim	Middle Sunday in August	1.5km, 3.8km, 5km, 10km	Lake 62, Cotswold Water Park, Ashton Keynes, SN6 6QX	Events Logic http://www.eventslogicsw.co.uk/
Bristol Open Water Swim Series	One per month, first Saturday, May to September	650m, 1.3km, 2.6km, 3.9km	The Lake, Trench Lane, Bradley Stoke, Bristol, BS36 1RY	Create Swim Series http://www.createswim.com/

If any of the clubs coaches would like further info, then please have a look at the websites and don't hesitate to get in touch with me directly if there is anything I can help with.

Thus to summarise, the county's Masters swimmers have had a good year in the open water with some significant victories and achievements. The age group swimmers swan very well in the regional events and showed noteworthy promise in the National competitions.

Brian Armstrong
Hon. Masters Manager
&
Hon. Open Water Manager