

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY MASTERS SWIMMING ANNUAL REPORT 2008-9

September 2008 saw the first event of the season the **SouthEast Region Short Course Championships at Guildford Spectrum**. This event and the **Long Course Regional Championships** held early in 2009 at K2 Crawley, were both ably managed by Geoff Stokes, Rushmoor SC. whose help with County events is also invaluable.

Both he and Diane Ford –Rushmoor Royals, have achieved short and long course Masters' records this year in their new age groups 70-74 and 65-69 respectively.

In the same month, "**The Master**", a newsletter for Masters, was launched and is now available to all clubs and swimmers via the website and direct mailing. Pippa Anderson, Hart SC, was so inspired by Masters' swimming when announcing for the first time at the County Championships, she offered to edit the very colourful newsletter. Four editions have now been published.

A team, mainly from the City of Southampton club, competed in the **Centenary event** at the Quays. They thoroughly enjoyed the gala and were delighted to receive winners' commemorative trophies as part of the winning Hampshire team.

County swimmers always enjoy success at the **National ASA Masters** at Ponds Forge and then later at the **National Intercounty competition in November**. The team were placed **second** to Sussex in the SouthEast regional event and **fifth** nationally and were totally committed to the competition, especially in the relays. Travelling to Crook Log pool in Kent on a cold, wet Sunday afternoon in November is not an attractive proposition but team spirit was, as always, very strong. Fourteen swimmers represented Hampshire for their first time.

Masters swimmers were very pleased that previous Masters' secretary and competitor, **Pauline Hogg, Guernsey and Havant and Waterlooville became County President for 2009**.

Masters Open meets have been held on the Isle of Wight and Guernsey.

Website training for county discipline representatives was welcomed in the New Year, when Geoff Stokes undertook to keep the Masters section up to date.

The Hampshire County Masters Championships will be held for the third year running, at Waterlooville pool on Sunday June 7th. Entries have been increasing over the last three years which is most encouraging, there being a record 150 swimmers this year from 115 in 2008 This is in line with the ASA's Life Long Participation strategy. Although this year's date clearly agrees with the competitors, it has been very difficult to find officials due to the very busy swimming calendar.

We are now anticipating the **British Gas Masters and Seniors Championships** at Cardiff's new 50 metre pool at the end of June as well as looking forward to a better Open Water season for 2009.

Finally, having thoroughly enjoyed five years as **County Masters secretary**, I am standing down so that a successor can be found to continue the development of Masters swimming in the county. The task of co-ordinating the swimming event at the NatWest International Island Games, hosted by the Isle of Wight, will be a very exacting one, when the Games take place at the end of June 2011. Almost 4,000 athletes and officials from 25 islands worldwide, will compete in 14 sports in the week long event. A surprising amount of work is already being generated. **Jenny Ball**