

BERKHAMSTED & TRING Gazette

SWIMMING

Tring SC

It was an excellent start to the year for Tring SC at this year's Herts County Championships weekends, with brilliant performances from four swim-

mers in particular – Sam Pyefinch, Isobel Geller, Kiera Wharton and Charlie Mailey, with a string of PB swims and final qualifications hit by other members of the Tring team.

Last year Sam narrowly missed out on a gold medal with a very unlucky disqualification but this year his outstanding training led to his first gold in the 100m backstroke. A 1.5s PB in the heat was followed up an hour later with an even faster time in the final to claim gold, a theme which Sam continued throughout the three weekends. Sam then won gold in three fabulous 50m sprint finals – in backstroke, freestyle and an outstanding 50m butterfly where his 32.33s time won by over two metres and makes him the seventh-fastest butterflyer in the country for his age. With his three silver medals (100 fly, 100 free and 100 IM), three bronzes (200 IM, 200 back and 400 IM) and huge progress in breaststroke (4th in all three events), this bodes well for the future.

The best race of the championships came in the final weekend when Sam battled it out with Watford's Alexander Williams over the first 58 lengths of the gruelling 1,500m freestyle race – two excellent swimmers who were never more than half-a-second apart in the race, until Sam edged ahead in the final 50m to win his fifth gold medal by just over a second.

Tring claimed two other medals with young butterfly swimmers Kiera Wharton and Charlie Mailey standing out as two of the most improved in the county. Charlie won silver in the 100m butterfly while Kiera Wharton swam an outstanding 33.53s for a bronze in the 50m butterfly, and just 0.2seconds away from gold – that swim also qualifying Kiera for the regional championships for the first time.

Perhaps the most consistently excellent Tring swimmer throughout the championships was Isobel Geller, who raced 16 events over the three weekends, claiming three 4th places, three 5th places and three other final places. She swam 18 PBs and made huge progress, culminating in a tough final weekend in which she swam 5.30s in 400m freestyle, 6.08s in 400IM and 11.20s in 800m freestyle – taking 10, 20 and 30s off her PBs respectively.

There were PB swims from Marcia Billingham, Molly Bradley, Oliver Denton-Sparke (all 200 backstroke), an excellent first county swim from Daisy Knight (PB in 200 Breaststroke), Charlie Mailey in a string of events, Brianna Mazey (a great Open final appearance in 100 Backstroke) and good swims from first-timer Amaya Stephenson, a fine 5th place final 50m butterfly from Chloe Woodruff and a strong performance from their relay teams on the final day.



Tring SC county medalists, from left, Charlie Mailey, Sam Pyefinch and Kiera Wharton.