

PRESIDENTS REPORT – 2023

The past year has just flown by. It only seems like yesterday that I took on the honour of County President for 2023.

I would like to start by mentioning Dave Robinson who sadly passed away during the year. Dave was one of the first swimming officials who helped me a lot when I first started officiating in the sport. Dave was always a fixture in my time and greatly missed.

During the year aimed to visit several of the pools that I haven't been to since my own daughters swimming days and register my first visit to Ponds Forge in Sheffield.

In January I made the trip up the A140 to the UEA Norwich for the County 800m and 1500m events. I've always admired the young swimmers tackling the long distance events and the County Long Distance Championships was no exception.

The County Championships at Crown Pools is always a highlight in the swimming calendar, and this year, as all previous years, provided excellent competitive swimming. This was the first year with the new pool layout which provided a few challenges but, as always, a great three weekends of swimming.

The Swimability Gala at Lowestoft in April was a fantastic opportunity for swimmers with disability challenges and I enjoyed the evening so much I plan to attend future galas. A special mention for Ann Byrne for the fantastic work she puts into running the gala. The gala was also attended by a GB para swimmer who was in great demand for photos.

It was an absolute pleasure to attend the Dave Robinson Memorial Gala in June to present a County Award to Gemma Garry. The gala was very well attended at the Mildenhall Hub, a venue which was a first time visit for me. It was nice to see teams from clubs outside our normal catchment which again reminded me of galas I used to attend many years ago.

I attended the Regional Masters at Newmarket in September and had the pleasure of handing out all the medals during day. It dawned on me just how long I've been involved in swimming when I'm handing a medal to my own daughter for masters swimming!

The highlight of my year must go to the National County Team Championships. My very first visit to Ponds Forge. Unfortunately it clashed with the County Development meet at Crown Pools, but I'm thankful to Mark from Newmarket for coming over to Ipswich which enabled me to travel to Sheffield on the Sunday. I thoroughly enjoyed the day and although Suffolk were disappointed in being relegated from Division 1 at the end of the competition, the competition was tough with the swimming of an extremely high standard. The team can be very proud of themselves.

I also attended several galas at Crown Pools and an Open Meet at the UEA Norwich during the year, and was asked by Team Ipswich to present an award to Dave Champion to mark 35 years as Head Coach at the club.

I think that's it, it just remains for me to wish the 2024 President, Peter Elmer best wishes for the coming year and hope he enjoys the year as much as I have done in the past year.

John North
President – Swim England Suffolk

