

Tiverton Swimming Club held their 9th Sparkler Open Gala in November at Exe Valley Leisure Centre, with 205 swimmers from 12 clubs from around the South West racing at the hugely successful one day meet.

Thirty nine youngsters from Tiverton Swimming club aged between 9 to 20 years old raced on the day and came away with a raft of new personal best times and took home 74 medals between them. Two club swimmers also set new Sparkler Championship records, with 9 year old Scarlett Joiner racing in a superfast time of 45.67s for the 50m breaststroke and Jack Aldridge racing hard and setting a new 200m breaststroke time of 3:03:28s for the 12 year old boys. Samuel Arrowsmith, also from Tiverton Swimming Club had a fantastic day racin, and took the gala's Top Boy trophy home with him. Exeter Swimming club were successful in keeping the Top visiting club trophy again this year and the Top Girl accolade also went to 15 year old Lily Collins-Board from Exeter Swimming club.

Swimming at her first Sparkler meet, Scarlett Joiner competed brilliantly winning 5 medals, a bronze medal in the 50m freestyle, two silvers in the 50m backstroke and 200m IM and two golds in the 50m and 200m breaststroke, as well as setting a new championship record for 9 year old girls on the day. Nine year old team mates Lauren Baker, Arabella Boyde, Harri Davies and Bethany Moakes all set new personal best times whilst racing at their first Sparkler open meet. Also racing for the younger girls, Gemma Dilks (10) won a trio of medals with gold in 200m backstroke, silver in 200m butterfly and bronze in 200m freestyle. Her sister Jodie raced well to take 2 gold medals for 200m butterfly and breaststroke and 2 silver medals for 200m freestyle and backstroke. Joining them at the medal table, team mate Jessica Swanston also bagged the silver medal in the 50m breaststroke and Lucy Webber shaved over 20 seconds off three of her 200m races on the day.

Continuing the success for the girls, 11 year old Olivia Broom swam strongly and won 2 bronze medals in the 100m backstroke and butterfly and 2 silver medals in 100 and 200m breaststroke, and set six new personal best times on the day for her events. 14 year old Charlotte Baugh was also delighted to take the bronze medal for her 100m breaststroke. Team mate Katie Walton also 14 won 2 silver and a bronze medal in her freestyle events and was thrilled to also win the top raffle prize of the day, a new racing suit plus a pair of goggles. For the older girls, 15 year old Gemma Owen swam well, winning 3 silver medals in 100m and 200m freestyle, 200m butterfly and a bronze for her 200m backstroke. Lauren Aitchison (16) went on to bag herself two silver medals for the 100m breaststroke and 50m freestyle and a bronze medal in the 100m backstroke, and 20 year old Lorna Burston, who also teaches the younger club swimmers took home a gold, two silver and a bronze medal at the end of her races.

Matthew Follett, the only 9 year old boy swimming for the club set a new personal best time in his 50m freestyle, then also competing at his first Sparkler event, Sam Ellis (10) was thrilled to win gold in the 50m butterfly plus 2 silver medals in 50m and 200m freestyle and a bronze in the 50m breaststroke. Also swimming in the 10 year olds category, Peter Smith was delighted to win silver for his 50m breaststroke and team mate Isaac Reaves raced hard and won three medals, a silver for 200m backstroke and two bronze in his 50m butterfly and 200m freestyle races.

The clubs 12 year old boys triumphed with Sam Arrowsmith taking the Top boy trophy for the whole day as well as six gold medals 2 silver and one bronze along the way. Jack Aldridge was also delighted with his winning performance at the Sparkler, winning 4 gold and 2 silver medals and breaking the championship record for the 200m breaststroke for 12 year old boys. Team mate Kai

Clayton was happy to stand on the podium with his silver medal in the 100m freestyle and bronze medals in the 100m backstroke and 200m freestyle. Continuing the boys winning streak, Bradley Follett won silver in the 50m freestyle and Robert Jones bagged the bronze in the 100m freestyle.

Sparkler veteran Finn Stoneman (13) achieved golds in the 100m backstroke and breaststroke and three more silver medals on the day for 100m butterfly and freestyle plus the 200m individual medley. The 14 year age group saw Oliver Bennet take silver for 100m butterfly and bronze for 100m breaststroke, but only gold was good enough for Will Goffey in the 100m and 50m freestyle and 200m Individual medley. Goffey also added 2 silver and a bronze to his medal haul at the end of the day, whilst team mate Jake Stoneman (15) was unbeaten taking gold in the 100m breaststroke.

Speaking after the event, head coach Steve Carder said "I'm delighted with the results achieved by all of the swimmers, I'm extremely proud of their team spirit, and it goes to show that hard work and commitment to training pays dividends when it comes to competitions".

A TSC spokesperson also thanked club Chairman, Ian Jones and all of the parent volunteers and officials who organised and ran the Sparkler for their hard work to showcase our Swimming Club once again this year. If you would like any information about swimming or volunteering opportunities at TSC please email secretary@tiverton-swimming.co.uk Currently the club is urgently looking for a new Head Coach.

Report by Sara Dilks Nov 2015