

## Tiverton SC at Belgian British and English National Swimming Championships in July & August 2019



Five Tiverton swimmers qualified to race in a variety of events at three National Championships in an exciting end to the swimming season this summer. Emma Declerck (11) kicked off the racing at the Belgian National Championships in Genk racing in the 100m freestyle and 100m backstroke at her first competition overseas towards the end of July. With a brilliant race in her first event, the 100m backstroke, Emma touched the wall in second place in 1:15:07 and won the silver medal. The following day she then went on to race in the 100m freestyle and placed 26<sup>th</sup> in her age group. Emma thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience of competing at her first National swimming Championships and was thrilled to come home with a medal.

Gemma and Jodie Dilks (both 13), and Katie Walton (17) all qualified to compete at the British National Championships held in Glasgow at the end of July, where the 24 fastest swimmers in their age groups in Britain are invited to race. Jodie had a fantastic time at her first British Nationals, racing the heats of six different events and making it through to race in finals for three of them. In her exciting finals races, Jodie demonstrated versatility in her favourite stroke and placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the 100m breaststroke, 7<sup>th</sup> in the 200m breaststroke, with a new best time 2:40:49, and 8<sup>th</sup> in the 50m breaststroke in Britain. Over the six days of the competition in Glasgow, Jodie also competed in the 200m individual medley placing 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the 200m and 100m butterfly placing 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> respectively in the heats for these events. Her twin sister Gemma also had a very exciting time racing at her first British Champs. In the 400m individual medley heats, a tough event on the first day Gemma raced

well, placing 21<sup>st</sup> in the heats. Then with a fast heat swim on day two, Gemma made the final for the 200m breaststroke racing alongside her sister and finished a super 8<sup>th</sup> in Britain with a new best time of 2:42:21. Head Coach Lucy Walton was delighted to watch two young swimmers representing Tiverton walk out on poolside together to race in the finals of the 200m breaststroke at her first time coaching at the British Summer Championships. Later in the week, club captain Katie Walton (17) raced as one of the quartet in the exciting 4 x 200m freestyle relay team alongside three other girls who train at Exeter swimming club. The four girls raced hard in a highly competitive 17 and over age group and finished in a super 16<sup>th</sup> place, moving up the rankings four places and 11 seconds faster than their entry time.

Sam Arrowsmith (15) and Gemma and Jodie also qualified to race in events at the English National Summer championships, held in Sheffield over five days at the beginning of August. Sam raced hard in the heats of the 200m butterfly, setting himself a new best time and then went on to smash this in the finals, touching the wall in 2:11:65 and finishing the race in a superb 5<sup>th</sup> place. Jodie's only event in Sheffield was the gruelling 400m individual medley, held on the first day and she raced hard in the morning heats to secure a place in the finals held later in the afternoon. In a thrilling finals race, Jodie moved up from 9<sup>th</sup> position at the first turn, and using the power of her breaststroke leg to push her way past the other swimmers she touched the wall 5:08:71 to finish second and win the silver medal in a 7 second improvement from her entry time. It was then the turn of Gemma who had four events to race in Sheffield over four days. She race well in the heats of the 100m breaststroke on day one, and made the final, going faster in the afternoon and finished in a super 5<sup>th</sup> place in 1:15:94 to set a new best time. Day two saw her miss out on a place in the finals of the 100m butterfly finishing in 18<sup>th</sup> place in the heats in the morning. In the 200m individual medley on day three, Gemma secured a place in the final with a new best time in the heats and then stepped up with a very gutsy swim in the final and another best time finishing in a fantastic 4<sup>th</sup> place, just missing out on a medal by 0.3s in 2:26:19. On day four she also raced her way into the finals of the 200m butterfly in the morning heats and in a thrilling afternoon final she swam 5 seconds faster than her heat swim and set a new best time of 2:26:14 to finish in 4<sup>th</sup> place once again narrowly missing out on a podium place.

Both the British and English swimming Championships were live-streamed via YouTube, enabling the clubs supporters at home in Devon to watch the events as the races unfolded, and join in the excitement at poolside. Head Coach Lucy Walton was very proud of all five swimmers achievements, following their hard work training and competing this year, she thoroughly enjoyed coaching, cheering and supporting them all in Glasgow and Sheffield as they raced in their different events. She commented "We have been very excited to take swimmers to represent Tiverton at these different National swimming events this season. Earlier this year the club was delighted to receive grant funding from both Tesco Bags of Help and the Ashfords Foundation, which has seen us buy track start diving blocks and MyJukes training headsets. This new equipment will allow more of our swimmers to improve their skills in the pool and achieve their swimming goals too".

The swimmers and their families would also like to thank the Tiverton Recreational Trust for the support they have given this year.

**Sara Dilks Club Chairman August 2019**