

## ANNUAL REPORT - 2008

This year began with the inauguration of Tony Ward as President of the Association. Tony is a wonderful ambassador for the sport as he has been involved in so many different aspects since he joined Wolverhampton Swimming Club more than forty years ago! He was delighted to be selected to officiate as a Referee at the Paralympics in Beijing this year and the Association congratulates him on this prestigious appointment.

As usual, during the year Staffordshire has competed in many Inter-County swimming competitions, at Age Group level, Senior/Junior level and Masters. The details and results of all these competitions can be found in the reports from the Secretary of the Swimming Committee and the Secretary of Masters Swimming. Following last year's promotion to Division 1 of the ASA Inter-County Competition at Sheffield, this year Staffordshire finished 18<sup>th</sup> in Division 1 and, therefore, as expected, are relegated back to Division 2 for next year's competition. However, Staffordshire was the highest placed County from the West Midland Region so the regional title is retained.

The Club and Coach Development project as reported last year has moved on apace this year with the appointment of two Coaches. Mick Hepwood has been appointed in the Black Country Partnership, which Worcester County and Staffordshire jointly support, and Nathan Hilton has been appointed in the Staffordshire Partnership. These posts are funded in the main by UK Sport with the Region and the County contributing. These Coaches took up their posts in September and they are spending time at the moment familiarising themselves with the Clubs and swimmers. Their remit is to coach the best of the swimmers in each Partnership and to mentor coaches at grass roots level. It is envisaged that this will help to raise the standard of swimming in the Region. It is hoped that all Clubs will support this project

Several more Clubs have achieved Swim 21 accreditation at various levels and others are still working to get their files ready for submission. Many Clubs are making applications for re-validation. Further details can be found in the report from the Hon. Education Secretary/Swim 21 Liaison Officer.

Jessica Sylvester (Newcastle S.C.) was selected to represent Great Britain in a Freestyle Team at the Olympics in Beijing and Jessica together with Emma Wilkins (Chase S.C.) have been selected to represent Great Britain in the European Short Course Championships in Croatia in December. Congratulations girls!

In the Queen's birthday honours this year P. W. Holmes, a Life Member of the Association, was awarded the M.B.E. for "services to sport in the West Midlands and to the community in Wolverhampton". Peter and Margaret, together with their son and daughter, will be visiting Buckingham Palace to receive his award in December. Congratulations Peter – a well-deserved award!

Towards the end of this year, on October 11<sup>th</sup>, the news of the untimely death of Chris Fox, the Hon. Swimming Secretary, was announced. Chris had been ill for a very short time and his passing came as a devastating blow to everyone. Chris did an inordinate amount of work on behalf of the Association and he will be greatly missed. The Association's thoughts are with Mavis and his family at this time.

May I take this opportunity to ask Club Secretaries to let me know their contact details including email addresses as a lot of information is electronically circulated nowadays.

Finally, I would like to thank Jeff Bagnall, our web-master, for his tireless efforts in keeping the Staffordshire web-site up to date. The web-site has become an invaluable source of information. Also I thank the President and the Members of the Executive for their support and commitment to the Association, and the Blessed William Howard Catholic High School for their co-operation and assistance in providing the facilities for the meetings of the Association throughout the year.

Mrs. Sheila A. Cox  
Hon. General Secretary

November, 2008