

One hundred and eighteen West Suffolk swimmers aged from 8 to 38 congregated at Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centres over the past two weekends for the annual Club Championships. Hundreds of new personal best times and a number of new Suffolk County records were recorded across eighteen different events. Many young swimmers were competing for the first time and established athletes used the event to set new qualifying times for January's Suffolk County Championships.

The fastest six qualifiers in the 14 years and under boys, 14 years and under girls, 15 years and over boys and girls' 15 years and over categories from the 100m Individual Medley event qualified to compete for cash prizes in the showcase medley Skins event. As ever, this event thrilled the spectators with its exciting series of back-to-back, 50m knockout races at three-minute intervals, with strokes picked at random each round by the eliminated swimmer. Congratulations to all the finalists who took part.



In the male 15 years and over category, Matthew Baker reigned, with Luka Page pipped into second place in a thrilling backstroke final. Runner up in the younger age group last year, Kiera Broad triumphed in the female 15 years and over age category, besting training partner (and birthday girl) Becca Brown in a breaststroke sprint.

Last year's 14 years and under boys age group winner Edison Lorejo took second place this year to an on-form Samuel Chamberlain, who was recently selected to participate in the Swim England National Age Group Development Programme. In the younger girls' event, Ella Stewart just beat India Clement in a 50m butterfly head-to-head to claim the Skins title.

Points awarded across a series of pre-selected races will be totalled and the top three girls and boys in each age group awarded prizes at WSSC's presentation evening to be held in January.

The Club was delighted and humbled to have been left a bequest by former coach John Stemp, who died this summer at the age of 85. John was instrumental in the growth and success of Bury Beavers from the mid-1970s, helping swimmers to success at the County and Regional level and higher. Bury Beavers was one of the two founding clubs that formed WSSC when it merged with Haverhill Hurricanes in 1998. John remained passionate about swimming throughout his retirement.

John's widow Felicity and former Bury Beavers swimming star Nigel attended the Club Championships this weekend to present a cheque in John's memory to Vice Chair Alison Blackwell. Current WSSC swimmers, coaches and parents showed their appreciation for John's life and contribution to the Club with a one-minute ovation.



Nigel Stemp, Felicity Stemp and WSSC Vice Chair Alison Blackwell