

With a few more experienced swimmers in attendance, many of West Suffolk Swimming Club's youngest athletes competed in their first ever external gala, the City of Cambridge Swimming Club Spring Open, from 22-24 March. This event awarded medals for the top three swimmers in each age group based on heat results (no finals), with the team coming away with 58 medals in total; thirteen golds, nineteen silvers and twenty-six bronzes.

The gold rush started early, with WSSC's three entrants for Friday evening's gruelling 400m IM – India Clement (12 years), George Everett (14 years) and Kiera Broad (16/over) – all posting the fastest times in their age groups. There was more IM success in the 200m event too, with Thea Pendleton (9) winning gold and namesake Thea Rees (10) just missing a medal, finishing in a creditable fourth place in her age class. India Clement took silver and Elizabeth Wright (16/over) claimed gold in their respective categories.

In the 50m backstroke, the team scored two silver medals and a bronze, courtesy of India Clement, Edison Lorejo (14) and Thea Pendleton. Nine year old Tom Levell and ten year old Holly Shepperson were just pipped, settling for fourth place in their respective age groups. The 100m backstroke brought a silver and two bronzes (for Tom Levell and India Clement and Samuel Everett (16/over) respectively) and the 200m backstroke a bronze and three silvers for Thea Pendleton, Emiel Korstanje (15) and again, India Clement and Samuel Everett. Albert Widdicks (10) took fourth place amongst his peers.

Competition was fierce in the butterfly events, with the team taking a gold (India Clement) and four bronzes (Rosie Perry (12), Edison Lorejo, Kiera Broad and Harry Smart (16/over)) in the 50m event, three more bronzes in the 100m (India Clement, Kiera Broad and Thomas Williams (15)) and a further bronze in the 200m (Jason Dalope (13)).

The Spring Meet included a 400m freestyle event, which saw the team win another seven medals. Triathlete Isabel Moore (15) set an impressive pace to win gold in her class, with sister Poppy (12), also a talented triathlete, claiming the silver in her age group, just ahead of India Clement, who took bronze. Ella Stewart (14) was off her entry time but still claimed the bronze medal, just ahead of team-mate Brooke Copping in fourth. Brooke's sister Mia Copping (11) set a great time to take silver in her age class, with another sibling pair, Matthew (11) and Samuel Blackwell (15) winning silver and bronze respectively. David Lupsa (13) was unlucky to be pushed into fourth place after a great swim which saw him take nearly ten seconds off his entry time.

The 200m freestyle brought four more medals – a brilliant bronze for ten year old Thea Rees and silver for Elizabeth Wright. In the twelve years female category Poppy Moore finished just ahead of team-mate India Clement, with the pair taking silver and bronze. Elizabeth Wright claimed gold in the 100m freestyle, with bronze medals going to Edith Covey (9) and India Clement. Edison Lorejo and George Everett took silver and bronze in the ferociously fast 14 years male/open 50m freestyle, with India Clement just outside her entry time to take silver.

The breaststroke events saw many great performances from the Club's swimmers, with a number finishing just out of medal places. In the 50m event, Thea Rees won bronze in her age group, with India Clement taking silver and Elizabeth Wright winning gold; Jason Dalope and Harry Ibbotson (15) claimed bronze and George Everett won silver. It was another bronze/silver/gold haul for the girls in the 100m breaststroke, for Thea Pendleton, Kiera Broad and India Clement respectively, with George Everett taking the gold in his age class by over four seconds and Harry Ibbotson claiming bronze in a finger-tip finish. There was more team success in the 200m race; gold for India Clement and Kiera Broad, silver for Samuel Everett and Coco Palfrey (12) and bronze for nine-year old Thea Pendleton.



Some of Team WSSC at the Cambridge Spring Open



Tom Levell with his 100m backstroke silver medal



Coco Palfrey, Thea Pendleton, Kiera Broad and India Clement

Senior swimmers Myles Turner, Jake Thomas-Mansfield and Ben Wilkinson spent the past weekend at Sportspark, University of East Anglia where they competed in the City of Norwich Swimming Club's annual Easter meet. Backstroke-specialist Myles dominated in the 100m and 200m events,

posting the fastest qualifying times for the finals and claiming resounding golds in both events. Myles also claimed silver in a strong swim in the 50m backstroke and in the 200m IM. He qualified for the finals of the 50m and 100m freestyle races but withdrew to focus his energies on his other finals.

Meanwhile Jack Thomas-Mansfield dominated his favoured butterfly sprint races, winning the 100m butterfly final by nearly two seconds and also claiming a glorious gold in the 50m event. Jake was the second-fastest qualifier in the 100m freestyle and also qualified for the final of 50m breaststroke in a season's best time but, with these finals taking place within a few minutes of his butterfly finals, he withdrew.

Ben Wilkinson competed in the 50m and 100m freestyle events as well as the 50m and 100m backstroke races. He posted season's best times in all but the 50m freestyle, making the final in the 100m backstroke with a nearly two-second personal best in heat.