

It was an evening of celebration at West Suffolk Swimming Club on Friday (24 January), when Club members gathered for their annual Club Championships presentation event. There was a fabulous turnout at Morton Hall Community Centre where the swimmers from Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds and their families congregated. As well as presenting prizes to the three highest scoring boys and girls in each age category from November's Club Championships, the Club's new John Stemp Memorial Trophies were presented for the first time and Club meet promoter Caroline Wright used the occasion to raise funds for the Little Princess Trust, donating an incredible 60cm of hair to the charity to use to make real hair wigs for children in the process.

The roll of honour for the 2024 Club Championships included Clementine Knights and newcomer Jack Tomic in the 7 and 8 years age group, Caitlyn Chu Yun Ong and Tom Levell (9 years), Thea Rees and Oliver Ellard (10 years), Vanessa Ceponyte and Leo Sims (11 years), India Clement and Isaac Vella (12 years), Poppy Moore and Harry Vidal-Greenwood (13 years), Brooke Copping and Richard Levell (14 years), Ella Stewart and George Everett (15 years), Kiera Broad and Harvey Durham (16 years) and Elizabeth Wright and Myles Turner (*not pictured*) (17 years and over).



The winners of the inaugural John Stemp Memorial Trophies were Thea Pendleton and Oliver Creasy. Former coach John Stemp, who died in 2023 at the age of 85, was instrumental in the growth and success of Bury Beavers, a forerunner club of WSSC. He remained passionate about swimming throughout his retirement and left a bequest to the Club in his will. John's widow Felicity kindly presented these trophies to the boy and girl in the Nemos, Skills 1 and Skills 2 squads with the most improved 100m IM time compared with the 2023 Club Championships. Thea improved on her 2023 time by a massive 23.9 seconds and Oliver by an impressive 16.7 seconds.



The presentation evening seemed the perfect occasion for Caroline Wright to have her fund-raising haircut. Caroline, who lives in Haverhill, had been growing and nurturing her impressive head of hair for some years, with the aim of being able to provide a substantial hirsute donation to the Little Princess Trust. Caroline's hair will be used to make real hair wigs which are provided for free to children who have lost their own due to cancer treatment and other medical conditions. The Little Princess Trust also funds childhood cancer research to find kinder and more effective treatments. Enormous thanks to swimming mum hairdresser Joanna Ellard who was on hand to organise the chop and to style Caroline's new look afterwards. Caroline's Just Giving page is still open if you'd like to see more photos and to donate.

