

Our Swim Challenge: Oxford to Carlisle

An Epic Swim Trek

On Friday, 6th April at 6.00 pm, our first squad of relay swimmers prepared to dive in to the crystal clear waters at Carterton Leisure Centre to begin our mammoth swim trek by swimming the equivalent distance of Oxford to Carlisle within 24 hours. This was a fantastic opportunity to combine fitness with fun and fundraising.

Throughout the 24 hours, we had a great selection of music, regularly topped up in between swims by our 'DJs' – Matt Whiteley and Kieran Foggett.

The leisure facility itself was donated for our use by Carterton Leisure Centre, with support throughout the night by Lou Cable. Our welcome 'watering hole' was donated by Nestle Pow Wow – and very much appreciated by everyone. And thanks to Swim Therapy for their kind donation of the raffle prizes.

By 8.00 pm, just two hours into the swim, we were on the verge of reaching Cadbury World!!! There were some strong pace swims by Graham Cable,

Mike Adair, Piers Cardon, Ashley Moss, Conor Taylor, Izzie Macdonald, Simon Possee, Scott Webster, Harry Blackford and Yolanda Speare. But, temptation aside, the trek continued with our sights set on Stafford, a mere 130 kilometres from Oxford - easy said the swimmers! The energy and excitement levels were still running high at 10.00 pm, helped along the way with some BBQ'd burgers - our sights were firmly set on reaching Liverpool by 11.00 pm. Having passed Jodrell Bank Observatory the 11.00 pm milestone was easily reached. By midnight, we'd safely passed Chorley and Preston, with the illuminations of Carterton shining brighter than Blackpool. The midnight hour was a magical swim with many swimmers clocking up yet more kilometres. Boosted by the Masters arriving at 2.00 am, this provided a much needed break for our senior squad swimmers. Spurred on at 3.00 am by the home of the famous mint cake – Kendall, an incredible 310 kilometers from home. Leaving Kendall to continue the trek to the Lake District before reaching

Penrith in the early hours of Saturday morning. Amazingly, our target distance of Oxford to Carlisle, was achieved sometime between 6.00 am and 7.00 am. A BIG hooray, and well done. But, our swim challenge was in two parts: swim the equivalent distance of Oxford to Carlisle and swim continuously in a relay team for 24 hours. Our swimmers easily achieved the distance – a credit to their personal commitment, enthusiasm, fitness and stamina. Next, our sights were firmly on the Scottish borders, how far could we go with the time we had? But, not before enjoying a well-earned breakfast bacon buttie cooked by Chefs' Roger Taylor & Pete Webster. By 8.00 am, the team had swum a remarkable 402 kilometres – we were just on the outskirts of Lockerbie. As the morning rolled by, the swims got tougher and tougher, but still the determination of the swimmers came through with Masters Alex Foggett, Marc Colling and George Kendall setting a stiff pace. With a renewed sense of purpose and energy, our next port of

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call was Glasgow. Reaching this central city by 3.00 pm, and with a further 3 hours remaining, I had roughly anticipated our final destination to be Stirling. With less than an hour of the swim challenge to go, we hadn't quite reached Stirling and despite the efforts of everyone involved, it didn't seem possible that Perth could be reached. But, during the last hour all the swimmers gave one final burst, and achieved a combined total of 2,200 lengths of the pool. As we neared the 6.00 pm marker a final countdown from 10 to 1 signalled the end of our journey to a rapturous cheer. Not only had we succeeded with our continuous relay swim for 24 hours, we'd smashed our original target to Carlisle, and easily made it to Perth and beyond – a remarkable 588 kilometres from Oxford. We have one

final leg to finish, and that's to collect our pledges from our donors. Our financial target was to raise funds for swim skills workshops for Club swimmers and to raise funds for **Cancer Research UK**. At Cancer Research UK, their world-class doctors and scientists are finding new and effective treatments for cancer quicker than ever before. Their groundbreaking work, funded by donations from events such as these, delivers medical advances that save thousands of lives.

A great many thanks to all of the swimmers, poolside volunteers and parents who made this event such a success. There were many, many memorable moments throughout the 24 hours, and they will I hope, be fondly remembered by everyone who participated. An official photoboard will be

posted on the Club noticeboard and photographs will be posted on the website where permission has been granted.

There were some inspired swims which included Katie Bennett, of our Water Babies swimming an incredible 30 lengths during the morning session with a further 14 lengths in the afternoon; Bob Tivey who set himself from the outset a personal goal of swimming one mile non-stop – but as with many other swimmers throughout the 24 hours, Bob continued beyond the mile and went onto swim two miles. And to Bob Whiteley, challenged by his colleagues in the Water Polo team to swim 500 lengths of the pool – Bob went onto beat this challenge.

Special thanks to Bob & Jacquie Whiteley, Bob & Linda Possee, Jo Blackford, Di Moore, Andrew and Angela Colling, Ian and Annie Foggett, Pete Webster, Lyn and Emily Hemming, Roger Taylor, Lou Cable, Rachel & Nick Hill, Julie Bennett, Jan Whitehill, Catherine Kendall and Angela Gwatkin for their help poolside.

One final note, congratulations and well done everyone once again for yet again a tremendous show of strength of team spirit by members of the Witney & District Swimming Club. This is an event that I hope that will bring back happy memories in years to come, whilst not forgetting the lives of individuals that will be saved by our fundraising.

If anyone has any photos they would like to include within the official photoboard, please let me know.

Karen Taylor
Fun & Fundraising Co-ordinator

11th April 2007

Roll Call of Swimmers

- *Adair, Mike*
- *Ashton, Teale*
- *Barden, Sue*
- *Barrett, Hannah*
- *Barrett, Sally*
- *Beaney, Alice*
- *Bennett, Katie*
- *Bennett, Philip*
- *Bennett, Stephen*
- *Blackford, Harry*
- *Blackford, Jo*
- *Blackford, Dan*
- *Cable, Graham*
- *Cardon, Piers*
- *Clavaud, Francois*
- *Cockroft, Jake*
- *Colling, Adam*
- *Colling, Andrew*
- *Colling, Angela*
- *Colling, Marc*
- *Cooper, James*
- *Felstead, Aimee*
- *Foggett, Alex*
- *Foggett, Annie*
- *Foggett, Hannah*
- *Foggett, Kieran*
- *Hall, Harry*
- *Hall, Jane*
- *Harkin, Daniel*
- *Harkin, Fiona*
- *Harkin, Nathan*
- *Hill, Chris*
- *Horan, Martha*
- *Kendall, George*
- *Kendall, Jack*
- *Kendall, Peter*
- *Macdonald, Isobel*
- *McLean, Callum*
- *McLean, Tom*
- *Moore, Ellen*
- *Moore, Naomi*
- *Moss, Ashley*
- *Moss, Callum*
- *Owen, Rosie*
- *Possee, Dan*
- *Possee, Jack*
- *Possee, Simon*
- *Speare, Yolanda*
- *Tanner, Skye*
- *Tanner, Graham*
- *Tanner, Lynn*
- *Taylor, Conor*
- *Taylor, Roger*
- *Tivey, Andrew*
- *Tivey, Ann*
- *Tivey, Bob*
- *Webster, Scott*
- *Whitehill, Lauren*
- *Whiteley, Anneliese*
- *Whiteley, Bob*
- *Whiteley, Matt*
- *Wilmshurst, Melissa*
- *Wolf, Tanja*