

## CHRISTMAS GALA – PALATINE POOL, BLACKPOOL 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2007

At the invitation of hosts Blackpool we travelled to the excellent setting of Palatine Leisure Centre to take part in a special Christmas Gala. Other teams competing hosts Blackpool, Preston, Leyland and Kirkham.

A mixed squad of Micro and Sub League ages boarded the coach in good spirits. The programme was a good mixture of individual events, boys, girls and mixed relays. As well as the usual freestyle canon there were also to be breaststroke and butterfly canons.

The strong competition meant wins were few and far between but that is not to under estimate the performances of the squad as a whole. All the swimmers carried on from where they left off at the last gala some months ago. The ethos of Garstang Gators is to compete but have fun and the current squad certainly do just that.

Pride of place on the winners list are:-

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Hadley Price   | Boys 10 and under 25m Butterfly    |
| Liam Roberts, Leah Kirk, James Eccles and Jenny Atkinson | Mixed Open 4 x 25m Freestyle Relay |

Honourable mentions for 2<sup>nd</sup> places :-

|                 |                                     |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Jon Kirk        | Boys 12 and under 50m Breaststroke  |
| Jenny Atkinson  | Open Ladies 50m Butterfly           |
| Jamie Leather   | Boys 14 and under 50m Freestyle     |
| Antonia Price   | Girls 14 and under 50m Freestyle    |
| Laura Chiverton | Girls 12 and under 50m Freestyle    |
| James Eccles    | Open Mens 50m Breaststroke          |
| Catherine Moss  | Girls 14 and under 50m Breaststroke |

We also achieved 24 3<sup>rd</sup> places and finished the gala comfortably in 3<sup>rd</sup> place behind winners Preston and Leyland. Whilst we were, perhaps, not in a position to challenge the aforementioned front runners we were never in danger of finishing lower than 3<sup>rd</sup> which is a testimony to our young swimmers efforts.

It would be easy to get carried away and afford false praise on our squad, but their efforts should be recognised. Our pool training time does not compare with our more illustrious competitors and although it does show in the pool occasionally we compete very favourably in these type of galas. The older swimmers we have competing in the Open events regularly swim against much older and more experienced swimmers and never let the team down. Our younger squad members, on the whole, have much less experience and training time under their belts than their competitors, indeed some of the squad are in their first season !

For the record, the final gala result was:-

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| <b>PRESTON</b>   | <b>283</b> |
| <b>LEYLAND</b>   | <b>275</b> |
| <b>GARSTANG</b>  | <b>189</b> |
| <b>BLACKPOOL</b> | <b>133</b> |
| <b>KIRKHAM</b>   | <b>103</b> |

Finally we would like to thank hosts Blackpool for the invitation and their hospitality, particularly the compere for the evening or constantly reminding everyone who won the Lancashire football derby between Preston and Blackpool. The gala was exciting, fun and light-hearted, a good combination. The final race of the night was a body board race involving 20 swimmers from each team who had to get a bodyboard from one end of the pool to the other 20 times ! In the ensuing chaos Leyland won with Preston 2<sup>nd</sup> and Garstang 3<sup>rd</sup>. Some very dubious techniques on display !