Head Coach – 2020 AGM Report (April 19 – April 20)

**Competitions**

Junior/ Club Swimming

The competition calendar has proven to be very successful with almost all swimmers now attending competitions appropriate to their age, ability, training program and entering a range of events as advised by the coaching team.

Over the last 12 months the club has continued to increase the number of swimmers participating in competitions across the country with between 20-40 swimmers regularly attending each competitions. Swimmers have had great success winning medals, setting PB’s and achieving N&D/NER qualifying times. Importantly alongside this Lindsay Henderson has continue to run the Speed Award Scheme as a motivation tool for swimmers.

Junior League

We have continued to successfully take part in Northumberland & Durham Junior League highlights include:

* Winners of Division 2 final 2019
* Promotion to Division 1 for 2020
* Winners of the Cannon Division 2 final 2019
* Winners of 9 Year old age group Division 2 2019
* Winners of 10 year old age group Division 2 2019
* Successfully competed in in Division 1 rounds 1 & 2 in early 2020 – 4th & 5th place finishes

The 2020 Junior League was cut short due to COVID-19, waiting information on what will happen to the league structure/positions etc.

Morpeth ASC also hosted a round of Junior League for the first time in January 2020, this event raised valuable funds for the club. A big thank must go to Joanne Hartworth who put it all together.

Club Championships

Another successful club championship was held in late 2019 with over 100 swimmers from all squads aged 5-18 taking part. A huge thank you to everyone who helped organize this event and everyone who helped out before, on the day or at the presentation evening.

Morpeth 50th Anniversary Gala

47 Swimmers attended this event from Minnows, Skill Development 1, Skill Development 2 plus a number of swimmers from Riverside Swim School! It was an excellent afternoon with swimmers competing in 4 x 25m race on each stroke plus a board race at the end! A big thank you to all the volunteers who helped organize the event, many of which were parents of swimmers who were not competing or swimmers from other squads! It was great thought to see some new faces helping out as well, we are always looking for help at events like these so please look out for future events. Without volunteers the event wouldn’t happen!

Medals and certificates will be presented at the 50th Anniversary Celebration evening on Saturday 6th July.

**Northumberland & Durham Championships (N&D)**

February 2020

The N&D Championships is the county championships for the best swimmers from Alnwick down to Richmond (North Yorkshire) and swimmers must achieve qualifying times to compete at the championships.

Morpeth ASC had its most successful championships to date finishing an impressive 3rd on the overall medal table with 2 Golds, 20 Silver & 4 Bronze. (0 medals were won in 2017 edition of the N&D Championships)

It is worth highlighting the British Record (13&U) and County Junior record (15&U) set by Libby Freeman during the 2020 N&D Championships I the 50 Backstroke.

A full report from the N&D Championships is attached separate to this report. Congratulations to all qualifiers, finalists & medalists who represented Morpeth ASC exceptionally well.

N&D Team Championships

The N&D Team Championships took place in March 2020 and were one of the final events before COVID lockdown. This is an exciting day of team only events with every club from Alnwick down to Richmond (North Yorkshire) putting their best teams forward.

Morpeth ASC had a very successful day making finals in all events entered and picked up the following medals.

**Gold**

Boys 11-14 4 x 50 Free – Aidan Turner, Jacob Light, Sam Livingstone, George Tweedie Boys 11-12 4 x 50 Free – Aidan Turner, Jacob Light, Jacob Bensley, Declan Tate Girls 13-14 4 x 50 Medley – Libby Freeman, Daisy Cunningham, Naomi Parker, Kate Kennedy

**Silver**

Boys 11-12 4 x 50 Medley – Jacob Light, Aidan Turner Declan Tate, Jacob Bensley Girls 13-14 4 x 50 Free – Libby Freeman, Daisy Cunningham, Naomi Parker, Kate Kennedy Girls 9-10 4 x 50 Medley – Gabrielle Penfold, Charlotte Henderson, Emma Dewhirst, Abigail Potrac

**Bronze**

Open Girls 4 x 100 Medley – Libby Freeman, Niamh Atchison, Rosie Smith, Naomi Parker Mixed 9-12 4 x 50 Medley – Aidan Turner, Emma Dewhirst, Grace Belshaw, Jacob Light Mixed 9-12 4 x 50 Free – Aidan Turner, Emma Dewhirst, Grace Belshaw, Jacob Light

**North East Regional Championships (NERs)**

NER Long Course May 2019

23 Swimmers qualified for the NER Championships in May 2019 from 4 different squads. Highlighting the growing strength in depth across the club and importance of a good club structure. There were a number of finalists and medals achieved by Libby Freeman & Kate Kennedy. Kate also secured a qualifying time for the Swim England Open water Nationals 2019.

NER Short Course Championships November 2019

Successful competition held at Ponds Forge Sheffield, with pool split into 2 x 25m Pools. Age Group swimmers (11-13) competing at one end and the Open swimmers (14+) in the other. Morpeth ASC was represented by over 20 swimmers from Performance, Junior Performance (now Competitive 3) and Competitive 2 (now Competitive Youth).

The club won 22 medals (the most it has done at this level!).

Libby Freeman became NER Champion in 50 BK, 50 FLY, 100 FLY, 100 IM, 200 IM, 400 IM & 200 BRST while taking a Silvers in 200 BK, 50 FS, 100 FS & Bronze in 200 FLY.

Jacob Light won his first medals at this level becoming NER Champion in 200 BK & 100 IM. Jacob also took home Silver in 50 FS, 100 FS, 100 BK and a Bronze in 50 BK & 200 FS.

Kate Kennedy swam some excellent PB’s over the 2 days of competition on her way to 4 NER Medals. Kate took Silver in 50 FS, 400 IM and Bronze in 100 IM & 100 FS.

As well our medallists producing some fantastic PB’s there were plenty more PB times for Niamh Atchison, Sam Tate, Jack Livingstone, Robert Cross, Dominic Anderson, Jacob Bensley, Ben Hewitt, Daisy Cunningham, Gabi Freeman, Jake Hewitt, Richard Butterworth, Declan Tate, Finlay Hartworth and Rosie Smith. The club was also represented by Millie Fenton, Sam Livingstone, Jessie Swinney & George Turner who, while just outside their PB times, swam well over the weekend.

NER Open Water 2019

Sam Tate & George Turner also took part in the NER Open Water Championships in Salford Quays 2019. Sam swam to 1st place in NER & N&D in the boys 15 year 3000m, this result qualified Sam for the 2019 Swim England Open Water Nationals.

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**National Level**

British Summer Championships 2019

Morpeth ASC swimmer Libby Freeman represented Morpeth with a busy week at the championships in the 13-14 years age group (still just 12 years old!). She qualified for the 50m, 100m & 200m Backstroke, along with the 200m & 400m IM. Some great swims by Libby in the heats meant she made finals in all individual events which is such a fabulous achievement. An amazing highlight of the week though was Libby’s 200m Backstroke. She swam a 3 second PB in the morning heats and then improved that PB by another 2 seconds in the final with a new PB of 2:16.94 and became British Champion!!!

English Summer Championships 2019

Another busy week at the pool for Morpeth ASC at the English Summer Championships. Richard Butterworth qualified for the 15yrs 100m Backstroke. This was Richard’s first experience at National level. He swam a PB in his heat only just missing out on the final. This was invaluable experience for Richard going forward to next season. Libby Freeman qualified for the 12/13yrs 200m Freestyle, 200m Butterfly and 800m Freestyle. Some great swims over the week! Libby’s highlight was when she managed almost a 3 second PB in her 200m Butterfly heat, putting her as fastest qualifier for the final. The final saw Libby swim a fantastic race with great underwaters and gutsy finish meaning a further 3 second PB in 2:23.52 and English Champion! Well done to both Libby and Richard!

Swim England Open Water Nationals

Morpeth had 3 qualifiers for this event. Libby Freeman & Kate Kennedy competing on the day and Sam Tate, who unfortunatley was unable to compete.

Both Libby and Kate were competing in their first Open Water event, after both had qualified via pool times. They both had to deal with the water being warm enough not to allow wetsuits to be warn and so ended up swimming in their pool costumes.

Kate Kennedy finished 6th in 12 yrs 2km race in 00:28:11

Libby Freeman finished 9th in 13 yrs 2km race in 00:26:05

Short course Nationals 2019 (English & Scottish)

Libby Freeman (13) made 3 x Youth Finals (18 & Under) at Swim England Winter Nationals swimming best times in 100 IM & 50 Back. Libby gained valuable experience competing under the ‘lights’ during finals sessions and learnt lessons around preparation watching senior athletes prepare for finals.

Club was represented by Finlay Hartworth, Robert Cross, Sam Tate, Richard Butterworth, Daniel Dixon, Jack Livingstone, Niamh Atchison & Rosie Smith at Scottish Short Course Nationals. After a steady start on Day 1 with some good swims and best times from Robert, Richard, Niamh & Rosie, Morpeth ASC had an excellent competition over days 2 & 3 with swimmers producing best times in all but 1 swim showing some big improvements from earlier in training cycle. It is important to note that part of transitioning from Age Group to Youth Swimmer is understanding and learning that swimmers won’t always swim a best times during ‘in season’ meets but should focus on ‘performing when it matters’ and being accountable for this. It was pleasing to see swimmers really step up at the Winter National Meets.

National Inter County Teams – October 2019

Libby Freeman was selected to represent the N&D team at National Inter Counties. Swimmers compete against other counties (20 teams in Division 1) for points (think Junior League but for older swimmers!). Libby had a successful meet, swimming personal bests in both her events, picking up maximum points in 12/13 Years 100 Back & helping Girls 12/13 Years Medley Team finish 3rd (swimming the fastest 50 Back split). The N&D team finished an outstanding 2nd place overall behind Devon!

English Schools Championships – March 2020

Libby Freeman was selected to represent North East Team at English school swimming championships. Libby had a successful meet becoming 3 x English School Champion in 400 IM for the 2nd year running, 200 BK (breaking the English schools Junior record) and 400 Medley Team.

2020 British Championships (Olympic Trials)

Libby Freeman qualified for the 50/100/200 Backstroke events at the 2020 Olympic Trials, due to be held in April 2020.

National Inter County Teams – October 2019

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**Trials**

We have successfully started running official trials for new swimmers looking to join the club following completion of their lessons. This has been possible by creating links with Morpeth Riverside lessons, 121 Collingwood & Little Swimming Co who have all recommended swimmers to the club trials. Trials will continue every 1-2 (space permitting) which will help to keep our membership healthy.

**Links with other clubs**

Portobello - Morpeth continued its strong tradition of working with Scottish club Portobello by attending the annual Morpeth Vs Portobello event. In September 2019 it was Portobellos turn to visit Morpeth. After enjoying a couple of hours of head to head racing Morpeth secured another victory.

**Northumberland Hub**

Morpeth swimmers have participated in the Northumberland Hub sessions this year and I have led the sessions at Sunderland pool.

**Increased pool time**

With the support of Active Northumberland we have successfully continued to secure additional pool time over the last 12 months. The additional pool time has allowed the club to improve the service it offers to members and gives swimmers at Morpeth ASC the chance to progress further through the Athlete Development support Pathway. As a club we are aiming to provide for all swimmers at every competitive level up until the age of 18/19. We are well on our way to providing this, but additional time, space & resoirces will still be needed to achieve this.

**Thanks to coaches**

I won’t name everyone (because someone will be missed!) but a big thank you must go to all the coaches who turn up morning and evening to deliver the sessions I have prepared for each squad. The coaches have truly formed some excellent relationships with the swimmers they coach, and the consistency of their commitment has played a huge role in the clubs success and swimmer development. As a coach I had always coached on my own and working alongside others has definitely been one of the plus points working at Morpeth!

**Thanks to Officials**

Often forgotten (by me, sorry!) but important a huge thank you to Mel Anderson, David Tate, Gillian Law and Erin Atchison who have officiated on behalf of Morpeth ASC at a number of events over the last 12 months. As a club affiliated to Northumberland & Durham we need to provide officials at certain events, please get in contact with myself for Mel Anderson if you are interested.

**Thanks to Club Captains**

Thank you to Niamh and Dom for being our club captains. Both embraced their roles, offering support to their peers and younger swimmers both ‘officially’ but also quietly in training or competition when it was needed. Both are an setting and outstanding example to the rest of the club.

I joined Morpeth ASC on the clear understanding that the club was committed to moving forwards, I think the improvements in results and training speak for themselves. The club is now catering for a wider range of swimmer than before, this has only been possible through an improved club and training structure. As a club we have continued to provide for swimmers who do not wish to fully commit to a training programme, play multi sport etc. but now provides for many swimmers who wish to progress and achieve their full potential. It is important the committee continues to recognize their responsibility to swimmers to reach their full potential at the club by supporting the coaching team, programme and the swimmers themselves 100%.

Becki McGuire - Morpeth ASC – Head Coach