

On 15th January 28 swimmers travelled to Ballymena to compete in the third Swim Ulster Development gala. The purpose of these galas is to allow us to compete against other swimmers of the same age and to progress to the Swim Ulster graded galas by improving their times and confidence. For many of the younger swimmers, this is the first chance for them to swim 100 and 200 m events in a competitive setting. All the swimmers had a super day with the medal tally adding up to 6 gold, 10 silver and 5 bronze. In addition there were 23 top 10 finishes with 27 pb's being achieved and 37 new events swam.

Kate Allenby had great day of swimming winning a silver medal in 200 free in 3.08.88 and also achieving 7th place in 100 breaststroke and 4th place in 100 free. It is great to see Kate doing so well and moving rapidly up the squads. Lauren Armstrong also did herself proud. This was the first time Lauren had been to an open gala and she was a little bit nervous. She had no need to be- she won a gold medal in 100 free in a time of 1.28.54 and silver in 200 free with a time of 3.11.39. A 6th place finish in 100 fly gave a Lauren a day to be proud of. It was also a first time out for Lauren's brother Ryan and he achieved 2 top ten places coming 4th in backstroke in a time of 3.38.46 and 8th in 100 free in 1.35.13.

Charlotte Campbell took a break from revision for her exams and competed in 200 free, 100 breast and 100 free. She won a bronze medal in the 200 free with a time of 3.12.27 and achieved 5th place in both other events. William Pinkerton and his sister Becky also had a fabulous day of swimming, with William winning 2 silver medals for 200 back and 100 breaststroke in times of 3.23.80 and 1.42.75 respectively, and Becky achieving silver in 50 fly in 52.10 and a 6th place finish in 100 breast. William's time for back crawl was also an Ulster Qualifying Time. Jessica Robinson also did well in the 100m breaststroke in this age group gaining a bronze medal.

Ryan Porter was also a medallist in 100m breaststroke winning silver with a time of 1.46.46. In 100 and 200 free he finished in the top 10 in the 11 year old boys group. In this age group Josh McAdam put in a fantastic performance. He won a bronze medal in his 200 back in a time of 3.32.95 and also finished 4th in 100 fly. In the 200 back 10 year old Rory McNiff came 7th in a time of 3.40.11. Daniel Kilpatrick, who is also 10, competed in 3 events and achieved a top 10 place in all 3, the highlight being a 3rd place in 200 free in a time of 2.57.78, which was an 11 second pb. and an Ulster Qualifying time. Sophie Mount swam really well at the gala also. She came 4th in 50 fly and came 2nd in 200im in a time of 3.31.69. Three top ten places were also secured by 9 year old Caitlin Kearney. She came 5th in the 200 free and 200 back, and finished 4th in 100 breaststroke with a time of 1.56.81.

Harry Farson had an outstanding day at Ballymena. The junior performance squad member won 2 gold medals for 200 free and 100 fly in times of 2.53.16 and 1.31.98 respectively. A hat trick of medals was completed with silver in 100 free with a time of 1.19.30. Harry was also successful in achieving Ulster Qualifying Times in 100 and 200 free, and a Division 2 time for 100 fly. Another star

performer was 8 year old Julia Knox who won the 9 year old and under 200 free in an amazing time of 3.07. She also won bronze in 200 back with a time of 3.29.92.

Julia was the youngest medallist but at the other end of the spectrum was 15 year old Conor Morgan who won 2 gold and silver medals .He won gold for his 100 fly and 50 backstroke in times of 1.18.77 and 34.17 and silver for 50 fly and 100 free.

By any club's standards Banbridge had a tremendous day. All the swimmers learned a great deal and had a great time bonding with their teammates, and this will help them as they go forward with the club. Performances like these only come with hard work and commitment to training from the swimmers, support of the parents and with the dedication and patience of the coaches. Many thanks to all those involved.