

Commonwealth Youth Games swimmers, and sports aid recipients, Grant Halsall and Charlotte Atkinson, along with fourteen year old James Hansford, finished off 2011 in fine style with a flurry of medal winning and record breaking swims.

Halsall is currently in heavy training for the British Olympic Trials, to be held in the new Olympic venue in March, but competed in the backstroke and butterfly events at the South West Regional Short Course Championships and the Plymouth Leander Long Course Meet in December. His focus for the trials will be the backstroke events, for which he won his three Commonwealth Youth Games medals, and as expected he was not quite up to race pace in these events. But just to emphasise the calibre of his swimming, he still came away with two golds and a silver at the short course event, and a one gold and one silver at the long course meet on his favoured stroke.

At both meets it was the 100m butterfly that saw him updating the record chart again, with times of 55.40 for short course and 56.00 for long course, to take the silver medal on both occasions.

Whilst Halsall was busy in Plymouth Atkinson and Hansford were competing in the City of Leeds Christmas Cracker Long Course Meet. Competing in his last event for the Island before emigrating to Australia, Hansford was in the medals with a second place in his age group 200m backstroke, in two min 23.11, and third in the 50m on the same stroke in 31.39.

Atkinson had a busy two days, competing in eight races, covering over 1500m at race pace. She finished outside of the medals, and outside of her best in most events, after a very busy and successful year, but she did manage to shave a fifth of a second of her own junior island record, and five hundredths off the senior, with a time of 32.60 for 50m backstroke.