

Whilst other Manx swimmers were busy competing in the local league match, Sports Aid recipient Laura Kinley put herself up against some very strong competition in the North of England Zonal Championships in Sheffield.

This was fifteen year old Laura's final chance to qualify for the British Olympic trials, to be held at the new Olympic pool in March, and she certainly rose to the occasion.

In the heats of the 100m breaststroke she knocked two seconds off her best time, and the current Senior and Junior Manx Long Course Records, with one minute 11.98, to qualify for the final in second place. Along the way she recorded a 50m split time of 33.55, which also set new Manx Senior and Junior Records by over half a second.

Her swim in the final was slightly slower at one minute 12.40, still inside the Olympic Trials qualifying time, for third place.

The following day she competed in the 200m breaststroke and took three and a half seconds off her Manx Record times with two minutes 40.33, qualifying in tenth place for the final. Unfortunately she had to leave in order to catch her flight back to the island before the final took place.

In addition to her specialist breaststroke events Laura also swam in the 50m and 100m freestyle, recording the very respectable times of 28.36 and one minute 01.51.