

Divers' underwater mile

A SPORT Relief Mile with a difference is taking place in Helston tonight (Wednesday) as a group of freedivers swim the distance underwater without breathing.

Members of Saltfree Divers hope to raise at least £1,000 for Sport Relief, which is part of the Comic Relief charity that raises money for disadvantaged people in the UK and abroad.

Between four and six divers are expected to take part in the challenge at Helston Sports Centre, including the former UK record holder Hannah Stacey.

They will take it in turns to swim one or two lengths, depending on their expertise, for two hours.

The aim is to swim at least one mile, probably two. One mile is the equivalent of 65 lengths.

Their fundraising efforts have already been given the approval of Radio 1 DJ Jo Whitley on her Saturday afternoon show.

One of the divers, Sam Kirby from Constantine, emailed her after the DJ asked listeners for details of their unusual Sport Relief challenges. Ms Whitley said she was "impressed" by the freedivers.

■ To donate money to Sport Relief, log on to www.mysportrelief.com/saltfree.



■ Left to right - Saltfree freedivers Sam Kirby, Toby Jones, Miles Hoskin, Dave Thomasson and Hannah Stacey poolside at Helston Sports Centre

Picture: ALLAN McLAREN

Divers go extra mile

TO run five miles is hard enough, but to swim that distance while holding your breath is near impossible - yet this is the feat managed by five freedivers from Helston and Falmouth.

As thousands of people pounded the pavements at the weekend to run miles for the Sport Relief charity, members of the SaltFree Divers group set themselves a slightly different challenge.

They took it in turns to swim lengths of Helston Sports Centre's 25m swimming pool, three at a time, until each member had swum one mile.

With each mile the equivalent of 65 lengths, this amounted to 343 lengths in total - and each freediver spending around 45 minutes holding their breath over the hour and a quarter the feat took to achieve.

The freedivers were Sam Kirby from Constantine, who swam 80 lengths, Hannah Stacey from Helston (80 lengths), Miles Hoskin from Falmouth (65 lengths), and Dave Thomasson from Bodmin (76 lengths).

The group's newest member - Toby Jones from Sennen - has only been freediving for a few weeks, but

still managed an impressive 42 lengths, with the remainder of his mile being swum by his team-mates.

Sam told the Packet: "It was quite hard and left everybody with wobbly legs. We weren't sure how long it would take and how long we would have, so we tried to go fast. I think we went a bit too fast! But it went really well."

The group is aiming to raise £1,000 for Sport Relief and has currently reached around half of that total. To donate money and help them reach their target, log on to www.mysportrelief.com/saltfree.

Online at thepacket.co.uk

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