

# FALCON SPARTAK GYMNASTICS CLUB

SUMMER NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

SEPTEMBER 2007

## GYMNAESTRADA 2007

### 13<sup>th</sup> World Gymnaestrada Held In Dornbirn, Austria – A Parents Eye View

Around 22,000 people from across the globe, with over 700 representatives from Great Britain descend upon the city of Dornbirn in Austria for a week long festival of Gymnastics, and we're among that number. So what was it like? Here's extracts from my diary.

We start out early in the morning of Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2007, thoughts of a long journey mingled with a sense of anticipation. Arrive at Heathrow for our flight to Zurich. Astonishing how many people stop and talk to us. I guess that's the effect of wearing GB tracksuits. Sort of makes you feel proud, not just all being in our GB gear but that people still do care about their country. The flight was a bit bumpy at the start, quite an experience for those new to air travel, but overall a good journey to Zurich. The coach transfer seems a bit slow, really not helped when the coach driver fails to drop us off at our destination. So we drop the remaining passengers off and return to our destination – or so we thought. Trouble is the coach driver leaves us at the wrong place and we're stranded! Tired, hungry and somewhat fed-up we wait while two very long hours pass whilst another coach picks us up and eventually gets us to our accommodation. After unpacking, setting up the beds we enjoy a nice pizza then back to bed for a well earned sleep. Quite a day! The boys were really good..

The first full day in Austria starts in glorious sunshine. After a short walk to a very enjoyable breakfast of rolls and various meats and cheeses it's off to Dornbirn for the opening ceremony. The gymnast centre is a huge place with any number

of conference halls, one of which is where we have a lunch of pasta and tomato. Lunch is a military precision exercise. And then it happens, the weather takes a dramatic turn for the worse. Thunderstorm, intense humidity and rain just before 22,000 people head-off to the stadium for the opening ceremony. So a walk in the rain following the crowds and we arrive at the stadium. Meet up with the other GB groups and slowly get steadily wetter as we sing our way through the rain. Enjoy a singing contest with the French, do the conga and generally make the best of some rotten weather. Now the time has come to march into the stadium. Lots of clapping and cheering from the vast crowds and then some spontaneous sports acrobatics from the mass of assembled gymnasts. Quite an amazing scene and we're right in the middle of it all on the football pitch. Make our way up to the stands and watch a performance depicting the four elemental forces including a parachutist crash landing into the sound system speakers. After the journey back to Lautrach it's time to get ready for an evening reception with the Major of Lautrach. Did we really pack all that action into one day! No wonder the boys sleep well.

Wake knowing this is the day of the mass display practice. Manage to dodge the persistent rain as we make our way to and from breakfast then head towards the mass display venue in what has now become very heavy rain – surely the practice won't be a full dress rehearsal. It isn't, no point in getting the costumes ruined the day before the first performance. Practice is brief, just to get a sense of positioning on the field – it's just too wet and dangerous. Myself, the



mums and boys head back to Lautrach to give the boys a bit of time to chill out whilst the rest of the group head back into Dornbirn and enjoy the displays of South Africa, Japan and Sweden. Enjoy a nice meal in the evening but still no let up in the rain

So the day of the mass display performance dawns. It's still raining! Will it never stop! Usual routine of the walk to breakfast, back, change and off to our venue for the day. Lustenau, the venue for the mass display. We arrive not knowing whether the weather will curtail the performance. It doesn't, the gymnasts get changed into their James Bond costumes, though we are on later than planned for safety reasons. We get a chance to watch some of the other country performances. Some are a bit dull and the Dutch one, whilst very good, goes on a bit.

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### Special points of interest:

- Gymnaestrada 2007

The boys go down to the entrance ready for their turn—will it be OK? The Czech's having completed their display make their way back to their seats, just behind us. Then quite bizarrely they start to change back into their normal clothes, no modesty here. A large Czech bloke then places a bag on my lap and promptly decides to strip off pulling clothes from the bag as he goes. They could all do with a wash and some deodorant. Anyway this Czech bloke gives me some Czech whiskey which warms the insides nicely. Back to the displays. GB is ready to go; we're all excited albeit a bit nervous. The music starts, they're off! Suddenly the crowd are alive, 10 to 12 thousand people clapping and cheering. What a feeling! It looks great! They all do really well; there are a few tears and lots of emotion. Suddenly the rain doesn't matter any more. It's all been worth it.

A city performance in the afternoon means a relaxed start to the day. Mill about doing nothing very much before heading further down the train line to Hohenems, the venue of our first city performance. Arrive with a short walk up the main street to Hohenems. Heading into town feels like we're the travelling entertainers heading into the next village on our tour. The walk into town is tranquil yet full of expectation. The mountain backdrop makes it a beautiful place with the stage constructed over the local river – quite a picture. We arrive with things still being set-up. The gymnasts get ready and complete a rehearsal in the sports hall. The marquee starts to fill, the seats are being taken and there's standing room only. There's an air of excitement about the place and even a heavy shower doesn't dampen the

spirits. We're third on stage. Here we go again. Wow! That was great. The crowd love it. One whole happy entertained town, a few really proud parents, none more so than me.

A busy day today with a mass display and a city performance. So it's breakfast on the train and on our way. The weather is starting to clear up so no worries this time. They look great in their James Bond gear and wow the crowd again. A few hours free before the city performance so we take the opportunity to travel up in a cable car to see the. From the top we see the snow capped Swiss Alps across the Rhine, Germany across Lake Constance and look down upon the town of Dornbirn. Magnificent. But now off for our final performance. A lovely town and another great show. The crowd really enjoy it again. Stay behind for something to eat before making our way back.

No pressure on anyone to perform now so people do their own thing. Water parks, scenic excursions, trips to Liechtenstein, top quality gymnastics shows and much swapping of clothes and bags with other countries before the closing ceremony and the journey home. As ever it's always good to get back home this time with amazing memories of eight days being part of the



### SUMMER HOLIDAY ACTIVITY WEEKS

The first two activity weeks were free to participants and we had a really good response, many of the children deciding to come for the second week and much to our surprise also came to the third week which they had to pay for. We are hopeful that we had several new members from the activity weeks and that is the main reason for holding the courses.

## Forthcoming Events



Dates for your diary

**Sunday 30 September 2007**

**Craig Martin**

Craig is taking part in the **Windsor Great Park Half Marathon** to raise funds for the gym. Lets make the effort and go and support him.

Craig is trying hard to raise funds for the club so please do sponsor him once again.

**Saturday 1st December 2007**

2007 Club Competition, Display. Annual General Meeting and our Presentation of Awards and Certificates.

Further details to follow

## Thank you for your help

As you will know from the previous newsletter we applied to Norwich Union for funding and asked that you vote on line to support the venture. We are still waiting to hear the results but think we might have £1,000 although we had hoped to secure more votes to assist with the application. Our grateful thanks to those parents that did make the effort and vote.

Fund raising/sponsorship is the only way the club can survive with the amount of rent we have to pay and the number of members we currently have. We urgently need to replace some of the safety mats to please try and help us to obtain these.

## Club Uniform

Our track suits are made by a local firm in Orpington and can be ordered via the club.

Leotards and short need to be ordered and we need a minimum of 6 to place an order. All members should be in club kit if they take part in displays or competitions. British Gymnastics also recommend wearing the correct clothing for those taking part in gymnastics.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 1st December after the Club Competition. This should have been held in September but proved impossible to arrange giving notice to all members in accordance with the Club Constitution. Please remember that in order to vote at the AGM you need to have paid the £10.00 membership to the club fee.

The present **Officers of the Club and Committee Members are as follows:**

Chairman//Senior Coach	Kay Salter
Treasurer	Craig Martin
Secretary	Lisa Pullen

**Committee Members are:** Steve Clifford, Craig Martin, Jacqui Mercer, Rose Ricks, Liz Slater with Frances Dugdale and Jennifer Francis co-opted to help with the clubs administration.

If you are interested in working with the Club Committee please speak to one of the Officers as soon as possible.

### FUNDRAISING UPDATE

#### Foyer Sales Group

We have been providing tea/coffee/cakes in the 'Foyer' for some time now. Thanks to your support this has been hugely successful and to date we have raised over £1,200 for the club.

A **HUGE** thanks to Frances Dugdale and Jennifer Francis who have made 1000's of cakes/sausage rolls/cups of tea and coffee. Thank you also to all parents and gymnasts who have made a donation.

You may have noticed a selection of greetings cards for sale on Saturday morning. We have relaunched this successful venture – for every sale 10% will go to the club. In the last year £30.00 has been given to the club from proceeds here and elsewhere. So...if you need a birthday card, remember to buy one at Falcon Spartak. Orders for special occasion cards also taken.

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**TREASURER'S HALF MARATHON**

On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007 Craig has volunteered (he must be mad!) run a half-marathon in Windsor Great Park. There are plans to go and cheer him on....catch him as he falls over the finish line....mop his fevered brow....whatever! He will be bringing sponsor forms into the gym....please please sponsor him again....he hopes to raise much needed funds for us.

PS he has promised not to wear lycra!!

**IDEAS WANTED**

Fundraising can be hardwork and fun....but the more money we raise the better the club will be. However, we are concerned that

- We are running out of ideas
- We are always going to parents for more and more money

SO....new ideas would be welcomed, particularly if they involve looking for support outside the gym.

We currently need to replace some of the safety needs so fundraising is urgently needed to pay for this.

**FEES**

**Some July fees are still outstanding, can these be paid as quickly as possible please.**

**October Fees**—Insurance payments are due in October together with the quarterly fees. British Gymnastics have increased the insurance this year and you will need to add £17.50 to the fees to cover this and also £10 for club membership. (Remember only families that have paid £10 membership are eligible to vote at any Annual General Meetings.). If you wish to make payments over a period of weeks for this quarter please do talk to Craig Martin

October fees due for payment on Saturday 13 October 2007.

**We're on the web  
[www.falconspartak.com](http://www.falconspartak.com)**

**Final View on the 2007 Gymnaestrada**

As a coach I have now been involved in 3 World Gymnaestrada's, Sweden, Portugal and recently Austria. In fact some of the gymnasts have also been involved in the same three but for some this was their first encounter with the World stage of Gymnastics. As Senior Coach at the club I have always been proud of my gymnasts and I must say they didn't let me, the club or you their parents down as their behaviour throughout the whole week was absolutely great, the way they coped with the huge number of people around, the weather, the early starts, the waiting, nothing seemed to throw them at all and as parents you should be really proud of them all. They showed a most professional approach to their performances — they were fantastic.

My thanks must go to Frances Westerman for being the Welfare Officer for the trip, to the parents Steve Clifford, Chris Hill, June Biggs, Brenda Tennant, Jennifer Francis, Frances Dugdale for their invaluable help throughout the week and of course the other coaches that accompanied the group, Jacqui Mercer and Paul Dudley. It was a great week.

The 14th World Gymnaestrada is being held in Lausanne, Switzerland 2011 and I am told that British Gymnastics will be placing a bid to host the 15th World Gymnaestrada in Birmingham in 2015.