

## **Paul Pearce Disability Award**

### **Mark Evens**

Mark Evens, of Hitchin Swimming Club, has shown great commitment and determination in both his training and competitions, during a year which has seen him become Down Syndrome World Record holder in four different events.

Throughout the year, Mark has competed regularly for his club at open meets, making improvements in his personal best times in all events.

The last two months of 2016 were particularly amazing. At the East Region Winter Short Course Championships at the start of November, Mark took 4½ seconds off his PB to set his first world record in the 200m freestyle. The previous record, set by an Australian swimmer, had stood for more than four years.

Just two weeks later, Mark smashed the 400m freestyle world record after knocking 18 secs off his PB, and then the following week, he took a further 3 secs off his 200m time to break his own record.

A fortnight later he had an amazing night at the Basildon Long Distance event, where he collected two more world records in the 800m and 1500m freestyle events.

Mark's target for 2017 is to work towards breaking the 50m and 100m freestyle records, to make him officially the best Down Syndrome freestyler in the world!

Mark trains with the Great Britain team and has achieved a number of qualifying times for the Down Syndrome European Swimming Championships to be held in Paris in July.