



by STEVEN DONN

BEFORE the glitz and glamour, the applause and adulation, Hannah Miley sat at an empty table in the makeshift ballroom at the Glasgow Science Centre and pondered what was to follow.

That night, she would receive the Nancy Riach Memorial Medal at the Scottish Swimming Awards, primarily in respect of her three medals at the European Short-Course Championships and her first 400 individual medley World Short-Course Championships gold in Istanbul last December.

However, as the evening's gregarious host, former Olympic bronze medalist Steve Parry, would point out, the 24-year-old Scot was being recognised not just for her performances in the pool.

Miley remains our country's standout female swimmer, and one of our most respected. Hard working and humble, yet fiercely competitive, there are echoes of our greatest Olympian Sir Chris Hoy in the way she conducts herself, although she would undoubtedly shy away from such comparisons.

Injury and illness are rarely, if at all, mentioned and any performances that should fall short are not explained away by either. After her fifth-place finish in the 400 IM at the World Championships in Barcelona this summer, the diligent Miley simply stated that she needed to work harder in the pool.

As for her award, she accepted it in some style on Friday night dressed in a dazzling kilted ensemble and, after some gentle banter with Parry, finished with an enthusiastic 'Scotland rocks' in reference to her country's chances at next year's Commonwealth Games.

Earlier in the day, after having braved the Glasgow rain and cold to pose for a photoshoot with her long-time backers Scottish Gas, she remained untroubled amidst the usual scurrying and worrying as the organisers put the finishing touches to the impressive venue in time for the festivities.

It has been a year worth recording for Miley and swimming in general in this country.

The talent pool has proved itself deep, with Ross Murdoch joining Craig Benson and Michael Jamieson in posting world-class breaststroke times, while Robbie Renwick (200 and 400 metres freestyle), Dan Wallace (400 IM) and Craig McNally (200m backstroke) are doing likewise in their favoured events.

We have never had it so good — at least in terms of the men. But is it fair to label them a golden generation? Miley, possibly happier talking up her team-mates rather than herself, agrees.

'I think that's actually a good

Scottish swimming's poster girl Miley sets sights on next year as part of...

# The GOLDEN generation

call,' she says. 'I think for a while the girls were really dominant. This time around, it's the guys' time to shine.

'Every generation of swimmers coming through — it makes me sound really old to say that — is going to be different.

'For a while, it was all about the girls and girl power. Now we definitely have a good lot of strong Scottish lads, especially breaststrokers, and it's quite exciting.

'It's great for the lads to be set up as role models for the younger ones coming through.'

Miley, of course, is an old hand in the poster-girl role. A gold medalist in Delhi 2010, her cheerful smile has lit up many promotional campaigns since.

The latest finds her on the side of 120 Scottish Gas vans across the country and it's an experience that she admits to finding 'strange'.

However, given that she is normally presented to the nation following an energy-sapping race, red-cheeked, exhausted and occasionally emotional, the

Garioch girl is at least pleased that she looks somewhat more composed than usual.

'I have dry hair in that picture — the public might not recognise me without my cap and goggles on,' she says. 'It's nice, though, because I was able to do the picture out of the pool.'

'I had my swimsuit on but I was allowed to do it with dry hair and a little bit of make-up on. You know, actually be me — an actual girl instead of being covered in chlorine and plastered with goggle and cap marks.

'It is kind of strange, knowing my face is on the side of a van. It's quite nice, as well. It's a chance to get swimming out there. And hopefully inspire people.'

With such a high profile, there is no place to hide for Miley. But she has dealt with pressure like this before and, whether it has ended in triumph or disaster, the Scot has always strived to remain positive.

As a team, the Scottish swimmers came back with six medals from Delhi. Anything less from Glasgow, Miley believes,

would rightly or wrongly be viewed as failure.

With Tollcross heading for a sellout, the expectation levels will be raised. So, will the medals fall on Scottish shoulders to ensure next year's Awards Night is another one to remember?

'I think it's definitely feasible for us to beat the haul from Delhi,' insists Miley. 'We've certainly got a lot of new talent coming through, plus there's quite a few from the Delhi team that will be trying to make Glasgow, too.'

'So I think we certainly have a good chance of doing it. I know quite a lot of people said we didn't match our tally from Melbourne (in Delhi) but swimming always moves on and it's pretty hard to predict.

'What you get at one Games will, of course, be different compared to another one. It will always be better or worse than the last result, so you just have to roll with the punches.

'This year has been a great year for Scottish swimming — hopefully, there's more to come.'

The stage is set. The next year will determine if a standing ovation is required.

On your mark: Miley at the Glasgow Science Centre on Friday



## London call for Bekele and Farah

ATHLETICS  
By LAURA WILLIAMSON

SEE you in London, said Mo Farah after Kenenisa Bekele held off the double Olympic champion to win the Great North Run yesterday.

A rivalry on the roads between these two great runners, the only athletes to have won back-to-back world and Olympic titles at 5,000m and 10,000m, would be one to savour. And it emerged last night that the London Marathon organisers are in talks with Bekele to set up a rematch over 26.2 miles in the capital next April, when Farah will make his debut over the distance.

Haile Gebrselassie, now 40, set a Masters world record in finishing third in 1hr 41sec yesterday, but had mostly played the role of pacemaker. However, Bekele made a decisive break with a mile to go and built a five-second lead that proved insurmountable, winning in 1hr 0min 9sec.

Kenya's Priscah Jeptoo beat Ethiopian favourite Meseret Defar to win the women's race in 1hr 5min 45sec.

David Weir won the men's wheelchair race in 43min 6sec, with fellow Briton Shelly Woods victorious in the women's event in 54min 28sec.

## World's end for Jonny

TRIATHLON

JONNY BROWNLEE was upset he could not keep the family name on the world championship trophy as Spain's Javier Gomez clinched a dramatic victory at the World Triathlon Grand Final in London's Hyde Park yesterday.

It came down to a sprint finish, but the Spaniard was the stronger in the final metres. Jonny, 23, said: 'I'm a bit gutted because it was so close.'

The world title is decided over a series of races and Olympic champion, Brownlee's brother, Alistair, led the way in the standings after three victories, before an ankle injury put him out of contention.

Going into the start of the 10 kilometre run, the 25-year-old was grimacing in pain.

He eventually trailed in 52nd at the same venue where he won gold last summer.

Meanwhile, Scotland's David McNamee finished 25th yesterday to take a respectable 16th place overall.

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Table with 3 columns: Song Name, Artist, Price. Includes songs like 'Aye Aye Skipper', 'Burning Dawn', 'Crucis Abbey', etc.