



# GAZETTE



*Jennie Butler anchoring the ladies in the Kent League at Somerhill Park*

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## From the Editor



Browsing through old copies of this long standing periodical I am aware that at times the editorial team have encountered that all too familiar problem of being behind on the production of issues as was stated by the Editor way back in 1993. We have been encountering similar problems and this issue is most unfortunately delayed but with a new team in place it is hoped that these will be surmounted.

In most issues of the Gazette it is unfortunate that we have to report the passing of those Members who have made invaluable contributions to the Club over many years. Although 'obituarised' in the last issue Gordon Hickey our veteran championship winning shot putter is remembered in a more comprehensive tribute, and also remembered is Brenda Brent, a staunch supporter of the Club through its social activities and one of the first lady members.

With the departure from the editorship team of both Peter Rogers and Ozzie Adams both of whom have given invaluable service and their talents to the production of this magazine for several years, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation and thanks for all they have done in the production of it. Oz has sadly been pre-occupied with work commitments and has had to relinquish the role of graphic designer. Whilst this is unavoidable, he will be missed greatly but I am pleased to say that replacements for both Pete and Oz have been found: Graham Smith whom some of you will know from the track at Norman Park and is also one of the organisers at Bromley parkrun and Bromley junior parkrun. Graham is a graphic designer who has much experience in several publications has taken over from Oz. I am also pleased to say that joining the team in the capacity of assistant editor is Will Ruiz whom you will know from the Senior Men's Team. Both have taken on their roles and will I'm sure prove worthy replacements for my departed colleagues. Will is a keen aspiring writer and will doubt be of great assistance to me in preparing and editing the various reports.

Before signing off I wish to offer grateful thanks to the following for willingly providing articles for this issue: President Nick Brooks, Paul Austridge VP, PP Mike Martineau, PP Tim Souter, PP Brian Stone, David Appleton VP, Will Ruiz, Mike Simms, Barbara Terry.

**The next issue covering the summer 2017 is now in preparation and the deadline for submission of reports is March 2018.**

# This year's President 2017/18 Nick Brooks

*A promising athletics career sadly curtailed through injury and a lifelong involvement in rugby with a local Club are just some of the features of this year's president's life, as well as belonging to a distinguished Club family. This president hopes that he will be accepted as president but should have no concerns on that score.*

So we have yet another president born in 1958 following on from Bill Foster, and this one from an illustrious Blackheath Harrier family. Nick Brooks is perhaps one of the most likely of heathens to assume the ultimate office in the Club. His grandfather George Brooks was Club President in 1972, and he would have been so proud to see his grandson in this role. His father Gordon is a Club member and Vice President and former Club Chairman and his brother Andy was a Club member during his teenage years.

A natural born athlete he had an active childhood playing rugby for Langley Park Boys School, and also basketball where he went on to gain County honours. He was also an all-rounder at athletics until he joined Blackheath in 1973,



talent spotted by Graham Botley on his visits to local schools where he focused on middle distance. Yet despite this he had aPB in the high jump of 1.89m often beating Gordon Hickey to the Club high jump championship, one of many PBs although mainly on the track (800m best of 1.47.01) and many of which were reasonable good distance PBs.

It was on the track therefore that he made his mark. After finishing 8th in the 800m as junior boy he went onto win the intermediate boys 800m in 1975, and then was picked for the home schools international which he also won. The following year he won the senior boys 800m breaking the record at that time ahead of Garry Cook. From this formative period of his athletic career he developed the tactic of running from the back and relying on a good finish, using a 160-yard tight board track indoors.

By 1976 he was attracting a lot of interest from US universities and following the southern 800m race which was shown on TV (where he finished 2nd to Peter Browne and broke 1.50 for the first time), David



*Nick tracking New Zealand's John Walker at the AAAs qualifying round over 800m in 1980 where he ran 1.49.4.*

Hemery called him and got him interested in attending Boston University but he ended up going to Memphis State University in January 1978 on a scholarship instead.

In that year he clipped his best 800m time a little further but the races were mainly local on the college circuit in Tennessee, Florida, Alabama, Kentucky and Mississippi. In 1979 he ran well on the college circuit and further lowered his PB to 1.48.53 and won the conference meeting which is what his scholarship was based on. Then in 1980 with the Olympics in Moscow due that summer he ran well that winter on the country with a large contingent of UK athletes at Memphis like Steve Anders, Geoff Cooper, Tony Blackwell, Gerry Helme, Jim Wise and Garry Nurse.

Back in the UK at domestic level he did run again for the national league team but mainly as a 400m and relay runner. He had competed for the Club in the Southern League from 1975 and had helped them get back into the national league. *"One time I flew back from the US for the Club to compete in a qualifying match which we won to get promotion to the national league".*



*"In 1979 Nick ran well on the U.S college circuit including this race over 400m in Memphis.*

Having won the Tennessee state 800m twice before he won it again for the third consecutive year and after running an indoor PB he made the NCAA Champs indoors finals in Detroit. His tactics had now changed from his early years and after winning his heat with a front run he made the final and finished 2nd behind reigning champion Evans White having led until the final stride. In doing so he beat Agberto Guimaraes who went onto finish 4th in the Moscow Olympic 800m behind Ovett and Coe. Long term this gained him an All American honour when in 1998 the University of Memphis inducted him onto their Hall of Fame. His Memphis University 800m record still stands after 37 years! These performances pushed him into a position of possible contention for international selection and he ran in Knoxville, in an open race with US Olympic athletes lowering his PB to 1.47.01 and more importantly inside the Olympic qualifying standard. That particular day at the Dogwood Relays he also ran a 1.49 800m only 45 minutes

later and another 1.47 relay the following day. His 400m PB had come down noticeably to 48.22 and most weeks he ran on the 4x400m relay team and even ran a 4.10 indoor mile and 4.06.4 outdoor mile that year.

His was a career which promised much and even the opportunity to compete at the highest levels of all although in a highly competitive era the ultimate accolade of Olympic selection did not materialise due to the presence of Ovett, Coe, and many others.

However he had attained some recognition at international level and won two England Schools 800m and had a 2nd place too, schoolboy international, senior international and 4 great years studying, running and travelling in the US. He raced against the likes of Steve Ovett, John Walker, Mike Boit, Harald Schmid, Nick Rose and Garry Cook and his contemporaries from the school days included GB legends like Daley Thomson, Eamonn Martin (who would go on to be the Club guest at the annual dinner in 2017), Tim Hutchings and Olympic bronze medallist Gary Oakes. In the summer before he went to the US despite suffering from glandular fever he did represent GB against France and ran a pb at that time of 1.49.8 as an 18 year old, and a slight improvement from the previous year.

Sadly his athletic career was curtailed due to injury sustained whilst playing rugby for Becceshamians RFC soon after returning from the US having earned a BA in Geography in December 1981. In one ill fated match he broke his ankle and leg. *"After almost 7 weeks in hospital they said I would never walk without a limp after all the pins and plates were put in, and a punctured lung did*



*Steve Overtt (1) powers his way to victory in an 800m heat during the Nationwide AA Championships at Crystal Palace. Blackheath Harrier Nick Brooks (4) fought his way through to finish third.*

*not help, but I proved them wrong and trained hard with Botley that year for the 1983 New York marathon where I limped around in 3.26."*

Once the broken leg had mended he returned to playing rugby for Beccehamians RFC at Sparrows Den as 1983 was their 50th year. He made the first team for the next 19 years and used rugby fitness to run for the Club without training for the track. *"Eventually I could not keep this up with a new job and a girlfriend who went onto to be my wife. I did come out of running retirement to run the 1991 London marathon and won the closing 5 handicap in 1990, having taken a year away from rugby to run half marathons"*. However, he missed the rugby and the Club convinced him to go back and play before retiring in 1994 with a broken arm, to take on coaching mini rugby, writing match reports, coaching the first team and then becoming Chairman in 2005, a role he still holds today.

However despite his rugby activities and work requirements he always maintained his membership at BBHAC and in 1992 was made a vice president by his long time mentor Graham Botley at the end of his presidential year. He held the communications and sponsorship brief for a few years from 2007–2012 and more recently he has taken on the role of writing the reports for the press following the success of our athletes every weekend. *"This is a difficult task as it has to be done on a Sunday night to make press deadlines, often results are not available and with only one or two faithful Club members providing me with any data a lot of good performances probably go unreported."*

Nick acknowledges that the knowledge which experienced athletes pass on to younger Club members is a key factor in the success of athletics and many people at Blackheath gave him good advice in my early years at the Club, including

Bob Taylor, Ian Wilson, John Baldwin, Chris Haines and Graham Botley and a little later Les Roberts who always gave 110%. *"I was also very fortunate to have had two great coaches as a youngster in Charles Elliott and Dennis Watts, and in addition to these Glenn Hayes in Memphis, and of course my best friend Graham Botley as a mentor."*

Summing up his athletics career Nick says:

*"Blackheath and Bromley Harriers AC has been a big part of my life for the last 45 years and will continue to be so and it is an honour to be asked by Bill to be the new Club President. I hope Club members will accept me as President! I'm really keen to do all I can in the coming year to help in the continued success of our great Club and build on the great foundations that have been laid down over the years! I have a tough act to follow after Bill's fantastic year as President."*

*Nick Brooks, ed. Wilf Orton*

# The new Vice Presidents

## 2017

*As is customary at the end of his year in office at the AGM the outgoing president Bill Foster created some new vice presidents, four of them, in recognition of their various contributions over the years. Their various contributions are profiled below.*

**Karen Desborough** became involved with Blackheath and Bromley when her son Thomas joined The Bees Academy in 2005 as he enjoyed running, and he went on to compete as a Young Athlete in cross country events and also track. Her daughter Andi joined the Bees in 2009 as she enjoyed sprinting and has also competed as a young athlete in track events. *“I realised I was destined to spend my evenings at Norman Park and weekends at athletics so I decided to become a Team Manager firstly for the Under 15 boys in 2009 and then managed the Under 13 Girls in 2011 and took on the Under 15 Girls in 2013 & now manage both for my sins”.*

In 2012 she started running herself something she never thought she would do, and joined Mick Jones’ Run England Group. She is just about to complete her 200th parkrun.

**Chris Hilditch** was born and raised in Basildon. He worked in the City until retiring from Goldman Sachs at the age of 47. Since then he has been an active investor in start up companies and currently hold stakes in 10 businesses. Since retiring he has been Chairman of Governors at a local school, is currently on the finance committee and bursary fund at Trinity School in Shirley as well as on the advisory board of the Whitgift Foundation.

*“I Became Chairman of the Norman Park Track Management Company after a spell as team manager of the u15 boys and have been working closely with Tim Souter and David Appleton to move the Clubhouse of Blackheath and Bromley to Norman Park.*

*Apart from the work on the move, I have been active in securing sponsorship with a £10,000 grant from a contact to pay for the trip to Spain where our girls represented the country so well last year.”*

His earliest involvement with the Club was in 1984, when he worked with Bob Taylor. Bob’s wife Ginge is his daughter Isabella’s godmother.

**Mark Steidle** ran 2:09.17 to finish in 6th place in the 2002 London Marathon, which makes him the 9th fastest British athlete of All Time, and he represented GB in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. He was a pioneer of using an oxygen tent in preparation to simulate running in rarefied altitudes when this was new technology.

Mark ran brilliantly through all the age groups and made a very successful transition to the senior ranks. He is also the Club record holder at 10000m, with a time of 28:04. His breakthrough was finishing 2nd in the Hamburg Half Marathon in 1996 and continued to impress finishing 3rd in the Great North Run in 1999. He was winner of the Ciudad de Murcia Half Marathon (2002) with a time of 1:03’32”, and winner of the Leeds Half Marathon in 2007. Other half marathon

victories included the Bewl Water marathon in 2013 and 2014 in times of 2:54.31 and 2:49.27 respectively. Nearer to home he won the Ted Pepper 10km in 2005, 2006 and 2011.

Mark often attends the young athletes' matches with his wife Gemma, who is the team physiotherapist. He has travelled with the U20 girls teams to the European Clubs Championships in recent years, helping out with the administration and supporting the team

**Nic Corry** has done a fantastic job for the Club in recent years. He is the team manager of the U17 Boys team that has performed so well in the past couple of years – largely the result of all Nic's hard work and enthusiasm.

Nic says *"My involvement began with the Club in 2013, when my two sons Coleman and Barnaby were introduced to Club athletics. I took such pleasure in their progress and greatly admired the support they received through their coaches Mick Jones and Keith Liston, but particularly the support from their Team Manager Paul Austridge. Seeing the impact Team Managers have on our athletes progress made me want to learn more about the role, and I made the mistake of expressing interest to Mike Davies."* Quicker than a whirlwind he found himself manager of the Under 15 boys team. By the end of the season working with Paul Austridge, Karen Desborough and Sandra Richer, they took the team to the national finals

only losing out on the title by a mere 6 points.

At the same time he took immense pleasure rediscovering running. A Club 5, and a conversation in the Clubhouse afterwards with Ian Swatton encouraged him to return to running, and he is eternally in Ian's gratitude for that. It rebuilt his confidence, and despite Chris Haines' brutal handicaps he progressed doggedly with the Bennett Cup, managing to come third in 2016, but more importantly shared the podium with the FIRST WOMEN WINNER! He was immensely proud of sharing the podium with Sarah Belaon.

*"Having had experience of team managing our young athletes, I was approached to look after the upper age group. I had my doubts, but Rod Harrington offered to manage the age group with me, and we saw a chance of real success. The boys had struggled for a few years, but there was real potential there, it just needed unlocking. We looked at the lads and set our stall out. Our goal was to take the boys to Europe. At the time the boys had barely made the YDL finals, but in our first season we helped the boys and girls win the National Title, even though they missed out on progressing to Europe. Rod and I could perhaps have left it there, 12 months later our boys matched the phenomenal performance of the BBHAC Junior Ladies and qualified for Europe."*

When he is not managing the Young Athletes Nick still loves to compete in the mob matches. He also encourages our young race walkers. His company chose to sponsor local athlete Tom Bosworth before the Olympics who, together with Olympian Shaun Lightman, have generated a renaissance in Race Walking for Blackheath and Bromley. The fruits of this include the emergence of Isabelle Bridge and Abigail Smith in wining International vests, some great young walkers have been influenced to take the sport to the next level.

Nick also has a great passion for Multievent and is happy to be able to bring the young athletes on in such a great discipline as this, especially sending a number of athletes to the English Schools Finals. He also has, an underlying passion for Athlete Wellbeing and in particular mental health and is proud that the Club is leading the way in Club athletics, with its focus on Athlete Wellbeing.

*Bill Foster, ed. Wilf Orton*

# Senior Men XC 2016/17

*A solid season for the Senior men, with Phil Sesemann and Will Fuller excelling over the country, with a strong supporting cast developing behind them, plus a change in management.*

## Kent League #1

The cabbage patch treated us to the First Kent League of the season, Dan Kennedy brought the Heath home in 16th, closely followed by Danny Brewer in 19th, further down there was a battle between Marco Arcuri and Gareth Evans in 28th and 33rd respectively leaving Blackheath 3rd after the 1st fixture in the 4 to score. The 12 to score team also put us in 3rd with strong runs from Chris Tuck, Jon Vintner and Tom Desborough packing nicely in 35th, 40th and 41st. Next to come in was Fintan Parkinson in 47th and James Crawley running well as a Junior in 58th. The two Richards, Daniel and Byford had a good battle to finish just outside the top 100 in 114th and 119th, Steve Pairman rounded out the scoring 12 in 133rd.

## Kent League #2

Next the men headed to the hilly Somerhill School in

Tonbridge to try and have a go at Tonbridge in their own back yard. Andy Rayner led Blackheath home in a credible 8th, with close back up from Alex Gibbins and junior Richard Webb in 11th and 12th, with Junior Charlie Davis rounding out the team in 20th. This put us 2nd in the 4 to score behind Medway and Maidstone. In the 12 to score we were 3rd with Jon Vintner, Tom Desborough and Chris Tuck finishing near each other again in 31st, 37th and 39th respectively. James Crawley was 67th and Richard Daniel 80th, Richard Byford improving from the last fixture with 108th and Andrew Lawes finishing out the team scoring in 126th.

## ECAA Relays

The Men came a solid 22nd place in the National relays. Phil Sesemann came in 2nd on the opening leg with a storming run handing over to Andy Rayner. With a hard leg to run with the leaders Andy ran well and



*Andy Raynor produced many creditable performances including this in the Kent League at Somerhill School.*



*Nigel Bulmer at Somerhill School in the Kent League.*

passed to Scott Overall who made his way through the field giving over to Dan Kennedy. A strong performance which when considering Will Fuller will be a senior next year shows some promise for this team.

### **Kent League #3**

Our home Kent League and the team responded in force with welcome returns to local cross-country action for Scott Overall and Mike Skinner. Scott won the race, Andy Rayner continuing his good spate of form in 11th, followed by Skinner in 14th and Alex Gibbins again running well in 23rd, 3rd in the 4 to score this time round. Great strength in depth with 12 runners in the top 54 ensured we again finished 2nd in the 12 to score. A whopping 26 Heathens took to the course, a great number of athletes taking part.

### **Liverpool**

A few senior men made the trip up to Liverpool for the

European Cross Country trials. Will Fuller finished 6th in the Junior race leading to a Great Britain vest for the European Cross Country championships in Italy. In the senior race, Phil was our first runner, running well on his least favourite surface, followed by Scott Overall in 34th.

### **Euro Cross**

Will Fuller finished 30th in the Junior race at the European Cross Country Championships in Italy, gaining some useful international experience.

### **Kent Champs**

First home in the Senior Mens race was Andy Rayner in 14th, Alex Gibbins 24th, Dan Kennedy 27th place, Will Ruiz 32nd, and Danny Brewer 35th. The Club finished in 4th place in the team race, complemented by 6 other team runners enabling the Club to finish the in the 12 a side race in 4th place too with Peter Tucker 37th, Jonathan Vintner 70th, Chris

Tuck 72nd, Ian Firth 85th, Richard Byford 108th and Tim Ayres 148th.

### **Southern Champs**

In the senior mens race the team ran well for 20th place with Andy Rayner finishing a highly commendable 40th, with Alex Gibbins just outside the top 100 in 102nd, Dan Kennedy 150th, Danny Brewer 172nd, Fintan Parkinson 407th and Chris Tuck 484th.

### **Kent League #4**

The final Kent League saw a 5th place display in the 4 man team, slightly down on previous races and did not score a 12 man team. The men who did take the plunge were Andy Rayner who finished a fantastic 3rd, Dan Kennedy running well in 11th, Peter Tucker running solidly in 21st and Richard Daniel finishing out the team in 72nd. Richard Byford rounds out a consistent season in 82nd, Ian Taylor snuck into the top 100 with 99th, Scott Bulmer in 104th. Graham Hollingdale in 113th and Nigel Bulmer in 114th finishing off the Kent League endeavours this year.

In the end we finished 3rd in the 4 to score and 5th in the 12 to score.

### **Nationals**

The senior men fielded 14 athletes with the scoring 6 finishing 21st led home by Phil Sesemann in 59th, Andy Rayner 174th, Alex Gibbins 244th, Dan Kennedy 245th, Will Ruiz 263rd and Peter Tucker 402nd.

*Will Ruiz*

# Senior Women 2016/17

*Getting teams together for some events proved to be a real challenge for our senior women although once again a great depth of talent was displayed as new faces joined the long established squad to produce a surprising number of outstanding results at various events.*

## **In the Kent XC League:**

2015/16 had an excellent turnout for the majority of events, however dwindled towards the end. We were fortunate that we had now both Jess Keene and Niamh Bridson-Hubbard as part of our armour as senior women.

We had a fantastic result as we won the 6 to score plus Sarah Belaon also came 3rd overall for Vets ladies.

## **Event 1 – Stanhill Farm**

4th Jessica Keene, 8th Kelsey Fuss, 18th Sarah Belaon, 20th Jenny Neal, 21st Lorna Clowes, 39th Jane Bradshaw, 40th Sara Elmqvist, 45th Jenny Tomei,

47th Danielle Critchley, 86th Donelle Yapp. It was great to have 10 runners which meant excellent backup. For this one we were 2nd in 3 to score and 1st in 6 to score.

## **Event 2 – Somerhill Park**

1st Jessica Keene, 2nd Elaine Rayner, 6th Carole Penlington, 17th Sarah Belaon, 19th Kelsey Fuss, 23rd Jennie Butler, 36th Sara Elmqvist, 40th Samantha Leighton, 41st Jane Bradshaw, 42nd Joanna Clowes, 45th Jenny Tomei. 12 Runners was amazing, again loads of support. At Somerhill Park on 3 to score we were 1st and 6 to score we were 1st.



*Jennie Butler, a stalwart over the years in the Kent League.*

### **Event 3 – Danson Park**

4th Elaine Rayner, 5th Carole Penlington, 11th Kelsey Fuss, 12th Sarah Belaon, 27th Lorna Clowes, 28th Jennie Butler, 36th Sara Elmqvist, 37th Samantha Leighton, 41st Joanna Clowes, 42nd Danielle Critchley, 62nd Jenny Tomei, 65th Donelle Yapp, 66th Shannon Risky. 13 Runners, an improvement again. At Danson Park 3 to score we were 2nd and 6 to score we were 1st.

### **Event 4 – Footscray Meadows**

2nd Jessica Keene, 4th Sarah Belaon, 9th Lorna Clowes, 11th Sophie Kelleher, 19th Sara Emqvist, 38th Donelle Yapp. We were lucky to scrape a team together for this last Kent League event. However, it shows what quality we have when we can still manage to score 1st in the 3 to score and the 6 to score.

### **SEAA Road Relays – Bedford**

We didn't have many running but we had a quality team with Jessica Keene taking the 1st leg in 3rd place, Niamh Bridson-Hubbard holding on to 3rd place on 2nd leg, Sarah Belaon running a credible 3rd leg to come in 9th and Carole Penlington brought it back to 7th out of 42 teams. It was a dream having both Jessica and Niamh in the same relay, and both Sarah and Carole showing, that the vets are so capable on backing up the youngsters. Well done team.

### **National Road 4/6 Stage Relays – Sutton Coldfield**

We scraped a team together for this, and this time we had Elaine Rayner adding to the dream team.

Niamh Bridson-Hubbard took the first leg this time and in a very talented field come in a very credible 17th place, Amber Reed then ran a strong 2nd leg to bring us in in 31st and Elaine Rayner amazingly pulled it back to 23rd, Jessica Keene then brought us home overtaking more senior ladies to finish in a brilliant 16th overall. (62 teams overall). Fantastic result.

### **National Cross Country Relays – Berry Hill, Mansfield**

By now, it was getting harder to get teams together with injuries, uni had started etc. For Berry Hill we didn't do badly, especially with the quality of the field but we did definitely miss the youngsters. Elaine did a superb job coming in in 32nd, Jane Bradshaw then held her own and came in 48th. I then followed (Jenny Neal) and brought it slightly back down to 46th place which is where our team finished. A great effort from all. (124 teams overall)

### **Kent XC Champs – Brands Hatch**

We came 6th in the 3 to score. It was excellent to have Kate Curran to lead us on this race who came an incredible 5th place. Lorna Clowes, Jane Bradshaw and Lisa May also had very strong runs coming in 32nd, 36th and 49th respectively.

### **SEAA XC Champs – Parliament Hill**

Sadly we didn't have enough to score as a team this year as we needed 4 ladies but had 3. The 3 held it together and had great runs. 106th Sarah Belaon – who continued on her very impressive form, 169th Amber Reed, 367th Donelle Yapp. We all know what a tough course Parliament Hill is so really well done to all that ran. (574 senior ladies ran.)

### **National XC Champs – Nottingham**

Again, sadly no full team, partly because of the distance but Amber Reed and Jane Bradshaw represented the senior ladies well with at 195th place for Amber and 287th for Jane in a very large and fully loaded champs. (788 senior ladies ran.)

**London Marathon –** Congratulations to Carole Penlington who got the fastest time this year for the ladies running the London Marathon. Carole gained a personal best finishing in a swift 3hrs 5 minutes and 4 seconds.

Can I say a massive thank you to all the senior ladies who ran at various events. Between us all, you have made it a huge success.

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*Jesse Jones, ed. Will Ruiz*

# The Junior Women & Men Winter 2016/17

## The bridge between young athletes and seniors

*The Under 20 team are in the summer a category unto itself, but in the winter season they form part of the young athletes empire. Nevertheless they are mature enough to compete with the seniors as the following article shows and this age group is often depleted due to university commitments yet despite being at times unable to field a full scoring team they still provide a constant presence in most events unless there are no Under 20 races in others*

In many ways this is a unique group bridging the transition from young athletes to the senior teams. **This is self evident in the number of athletes both male and female who have on several occasions competed in the senior races.**

It's true what they say about distance runners enjoying the pain and to prove this point in the Kent cross county championships U20's Thomas Desborough and Scott Bulmer both decided to do double the distance and do the senior men's race, all 12k of it. Former young athlete Will Ruiz made his comeback competing for the Club after an enforced absence due to injury.

In the First Kent League Match at Stanhill Farm Wilmington the U20 men had the dilemma of running 5.3k with the U17's or 9.8k with the seniors and all chose to run the longer senior event. Team captain Marco Arcuri inspired by his young athletes performances earlier in the day ran superbly placing 28th in a field of 225. Tom Desborough took a day off his university weekend exploits to run for the Club and placed 41st, James Crawley finished well in 56th and it was good to see Scott Bulmer running and finishing 209th.

In the second match of the series at Somerhill School Tonbridge, the Club had no representatives in the U20 races as our U20's chose to race in the longer senior races. Jess Keene extended her run of great form winning her first senior Kent league race looking comfortable all the way around the 5k circuit. In the senior men's race Richard Webb on his study break from Cardiff University performed well finishing high up in 12th, Charlie Davis excelled at the senior distance of 10k and crossed the line in a solid 20th. Thomas Desborough was a great 37th and fellow U20 James Crawley was a good 67th and Scott Bulmer in 182th completed the U20 squad.

In race three at Sparrows Den all our U20 men decided to double the distance they had to run by lining up with the seniors. Olympian Scott Overall was overall winner (no pun intended) but a great showing from the U20s saw Marco Arcuri and Charlie Davis high up the field finishing 25th and 27th only four seconds apart.

In Match 4 at Danson Park, Bexley four U20 girls ran in the senior women's race helping them to win the six to score competition. Kelsey Fuss ran well finishing 11th, Sam Leighton was a great 37th with Joanna Clowes just behind in 41st and it was fantastic to see Shannon Risky back running over the country finishing inside the top half in 66th.

In the National road relays there were no U20 categories so our U20's had to run in the senior ranks and Niamh Bridson Hubbard and Jess Keene held their own with Amber Reed and Elaine Rayner and helped the team to a positive 16th National finish. In the senior mens' race U20 Will Fuller helped the team finish in a reasonable 43rd.

This was repeated in other relay events where there were no U20 categories such as the SE England road-relays. As there are no U20 races at these Championships our U20s chose to race with the seniors and what an impact they made. Jess Keene ran the BBHAC senior leg one and had a superb run finishing a very strong 3rd just behind GB International Jess Judd. Niamh Bridson Hubbard also had a brilliant run holding onto 3rd place in a very competitive field. The seniors will be glad when Jess and Niamh are fully fledged seniors.

The men were not to be out done as U20 Will Fuller brought his Senior BBHAC team home in first place on the second leg having run the 15th quickest time of the day from a field of nearly 400 top class seniors.

**Sometimes however the U20 and U17 races in certain meetings were combined:**

In Match 3 at Sparrows Den, the U20 and U17 combined women's race saw a strong victory from our sole U20 Jess Keene and a season's best run for Amy Leach had her crossing the line in a solid 4th. Millie Smith was 6th, Lottie Weitzel 7th, Grace Scopes 10th, Jess

Sellar 13th and Charlotte Fairies 23rd making her Club debut. It was great to see these girls finding time to run despite other commitments.

With no senior men's race at the Danson Park Kent League fixture two of our U20 men ran in the combined U17 and U20 race and Charlie Davis finished a high 6th place and James Crawley did well crossing the line in 12th despite having had a busy evening the previous day.

**And then again there were meetings where the U20s did actually run in their own category:**

At the Kent Cross Country Championships we were not able to field enough athletes to complete scoring teams in the U20 races but what we lacked in numbers we more than made up with quality by winning both the U20 men and U20 women's race. GB International Will Fuller looked comfortable throughout his 6.5k circuit and pulled away mid race to record a superb victory. Marco Arcuri backed up well in 16th. In the U20 women's race England International Jess Keene ran positively from the gun and was a clear winner nearly a minute ahead of her next rival. Leah Everson also ran well finishing in 9th. Joanna Clowes started well in her race but unfortunately had to pull out mid race.

They were also very much present in the National Cross Country Championships. The U20 women despite only having two runners made a decent impression with Jess Keene running a superb race in a high quality field finishing 11th and it was good to see Sam Leighton running well to finish 130th.

Our U20 men's squad is normally depleted due to university commitments (among other things) but this year we were blessed with seven athletes. Unfortunately GB international Will Fuller had to pull out due to a niggling injury but fortunately Will was still able to join us for the National supper in the evening. The other 6 all ran well and produced a decent 13th place finish. Joss Barber led the team home in a great 82nd and Charlie Davis had his best run of the winter placing 116th. Team captain Marco Arcuri ran a solid race placing 147th and Tom Desborough's up from Brighton University was rewarded with a 168th finish. Also great to see Bertie Harrington from Newcastle University come down to run in his first National (and first time in a BB vest for over a year) running solidly crossing the line in 177th just two places in front of James Crawley in 179th.

In the SE of England championships, Winter team captain Marco Arcuri led the charge in the U20 men's 8k race coming 56th with Thomas Desborough 80th and James Crawley 81st.

## Continued

**One prevailing problem throughout this season and others is the difficulty or perhaps near impossibility of making up a scoring team.**

This was the case in the Kent Cross County Championships although both teams won their races and at the SE England champs. The men were unfortunately one athlete short of a complete scoring team. At the National Cross Country Championships the U20 women only had two running and so couldn't record a scoring team. Perhaps this was a catalyst to the squads entering the senior races where they could distinguish themselves such as in the SE road relays where Jess Keene and Niamh Bridson-Hubbard stood up well to quality opposition.

**The commitment of these athletes should be emphasised against their having other commitments particularly at this stage of their lives.** Grace Scopes ran in the Sparrows Den Kent League fixture having already coached our youngsters in the rain in the morning, and Charlotte Fairies making her Club debut found time to run after also coaching at our young Bees Academy earlier in the day. In the same match Marco Arcuri and Charlie Davis were placed high up the field both having spent the morning coaching our under 11 endurance athletes also in the rain.

Then there are the university undergraduates who still come to compete despite the pressure of their studies. Richard Webb taking part in the Somerhill School Kent League fixture, used his study break from Cardiff University well finishing in a high placing. Tom Desborough took a day off his university weekend exploits to run for the Club in the first Kent league fixture at Wilmington, and Tom Desborough made another journey up from Brighton university to complete in the National Championships. Bertie Harrington travelled down from Newcastle university to run in his first National (and first time in a BB vest for over a year) running solidly in the age category event. Another student taking time off her studies was Sam Leighton

**Finally the efforts of some athletes were rewarded with selection for internationals.**

After the National Cross Country Championships Niamh Bridson-Hubbard and Will Fuller were both selected to run for England in Burgos, Northern Spain the next week in an international cross country event. They finished 10th and 13th in their respective races.

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*Paul Austridge, ed. Wilf Orton*

# Men's Masters 2016/17

*Some illustrious names showed that the older ranks of the Club's athletes could still deliver and after striking silver they finally struck gold.*

Long Eaton in Derbyshire is the home of the British Masters Athletics Federation's cross country relays. In October 2015, a men's 65+ team consisting of Peter Hamilton, Rob Brown and Bob Minting ventured north to show that the older section of the Club's athletes were still up to the job. They were delighted to come away with silver medals being narrowly beaten by Rotherham Harriers.

In November 2016, the same trio once again travelled up the M1 to seek their revenge. The event itself is 3 legs of 3km each. Peter opened our account with a fine performance in what is always the most hotly contested leg of the race. The course itself was reasonably flat and underfoot conditions were good. Peter produced a fine time of 13:03, the 9th fastest leg of the day and handed over to Rob in 4th place. He managed to overtake two of the three in front of him finishing in a time of 12:39, the 5th fastest leg of the day and handed over to Bob in 2nd place. Bob had 13 seconds to make up on the 3rd leg runner for Halesowen AC which he achieved very quickly. Thereafter it was a case of holding off the fast finishing 3rd leg runner from Rotherham Harriers which he managed with ease in a time of 12:50, the 7th fastest of the day.

So the team came away with their first BMAF gold medal and gained their revenge from the previous year with a winning margin of 13 seconds over the defending champions, Rotherham with Bingley Harriers being a further 24 seconds adrift in 3rd place.

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*Will Ruiz*

# Young Athletes

## The Kent League 2016/17

### Match 1: Stanhill Farm 15th October 2016

A record number of runners started this winter's Kent League cross country season at the pleasant surroundings of Stanhill Farm, Dartford. With the weather more suited to the track season Blackheath and Bromley HAC young athletes were out in force with many making the BBHAC debuts and some making their winter debuts.

The course was fairly flat, firm under foot and great for spectators and we had great interest in every race as 75 of our young athletes competed throughout the day.

The U13 age group gave us our biggest turn out and our debutants made a big impact helping the girls to win the team race and the boys to place second in their team race.

The U13 girls are so strong in depth that we had eight BB in the top 14 with new girls Naomi Toft and Annie Thomas finishing a great 1st and 2nd with Ellie Dolby just behind in a solid 4th. Consistent Daniella Harper a great 8th, Amarisa Sibley in her debut league cross country race 9th, Lily Meers also on her debut in 10th, Olivia Berry 12th and Amelia Middleton also on her first Club winter race 14th all well inside the top 20. Ella Smith had a great run in 21st and the ever improving Kelsey Pullin was 27th. Heidi Forsyth was 31st, Hannah Clark 38th and Amelie Willars making her BB debut was 62nd completing a very strong squad.

The U13 boys produced the biggest squad of the day with 16 athletes toeing the line to start the 3.3k two lap course. With Tonbridge AC flooding the front end it was great to see Tom Brash hold his own and split them up crossing the line in 3rd backed up by a fast finishing debutant Luca Thurlow, finishing 8th just two seconds ahead of Ben Campbell in a great 9th. With three to score in the team event these results ensured a fine second behind a strong Tonbridge team. BB U13 squad is strong and large and so the black and magenta vests kept crossing the line with a good 11th for Eddie Sellar and 12th for Max Gregson followed by 14th for Thomas Penlington. Matt Smith finished well in 19th with Oliver Robertson a solid 24th. Callum Carlton ran well finishing 31st as did Will Andrews on his debut finishing high up the field in 32nd. Alex Sibley was 36th and Jake Anthony making his debut league appearance was 40th with Adam Parkinson just behind in 42nd. Year 6 Oles Chaban had an impressive debut run in 46th and Nick Paddington 52nd and Josh Buddle Smith 53rd completed our strong squads efforts in a field of over 80 Club runners.

The U15 girls did the clean sweep placing 1st, 2nd and 3rd with Yasmin Marghini winning well on her first winter outing followed by Morgan Squibb running in her normal determined fashion holding on for 2nd and third place was filled by another new girl

making her Club debut Tola Pearce. Zoe White placed a great 13th, Lily Tappenden 15th, Rosie Allan 18th. Emily Davis was 23rd just in front of Niamh Milmo in 24th. Abigail Leeves was 26th and Isabelle Bridge completed the strong squad in 29th.

The U15 boys had the second largest team out with 15 black vests on the start line. Great to see Peter Guy back running over the country, having missed a year through injury and being involved in a very high standard age group. Peter did well finishing 9th backed up well by Rowan Fuss, also niggled recently with injuries, in 13th and Joe Georgiadis in 14th placing 4th in the team race just one point behind third Ben Gardiner ran well in 20th and Oscar Heaney Brufal on his winter BB debut looked strong in 22nd. Keir Lundy was a solid 27th, Cameron Swatton had a good run in 29th as did Justin Strover in 37th. Jake Leng crossed the line in 49th and Matthew Pond, using a park run for a warm up was 52nd and Luke Simpson on his full BBHAC debut was 55th. Leo Braden was 62nd, Seb Large 64th, Ethan Kitteridge 72nd and Charles Winton in 77th made up the BB U15 contingent.

The U17 girls squad of eight packed their number together tightly all finishing inside the top 20 and comfortably winning the team race. Madalina Samoila ran well placing a great 5th followed by Millie Smith who continues her great winter with another strong run in 6th.

Grace Scopes finished well in 8th as did Amy Leach in 9th. Good to see Genny Allan back racing, finished 14th with Jess Sellar just behind in 15th. Stephanie Taylor completed the strong squad finishing 20th.

It is encouraging to have seven U17 boys racing and this is the largest number of U17's we have had for many years and this resulted in a great 2nd place finish behind an as ever strong Tonbridge team. Triathlete Michael Eagling made his winter opening run a solid one pacing 8th with Lewis Mills a strong 13th. Oscar Hussey continues to impress finished 16th with Callum Myatt a good 19th. Charlie Andrews was 31st, Lewis Warren 38th and Chris Swinfen on his BB winter debut was 51st. U20 Charlie Davis started well but had to unfortunately withdraw with a tight chest.

Young athletes girls team captain Jess Keene had the choice to run 3.6K with the U17's or 5.3k with the seniors and chose the later, an inspired decision as she ran a great race finishing 4th. Kelsey Fuss getting back to her old form looked solid finishing an impressive 8th.

## Match 2: Somerhill School 29th October 2016

The magnificent buildings and grounds of Somerhill school, Tonbridge were once again the backdrop for the 2nd fixture of the Kent league cross country series and the perfectly and precisely marked out course witnessed some great racing. The girl's reign supreme, now

sitting at the top of the league in all the age groups that they contest. The boy's numbers are huge and their collected efforts leave them second in the U13 and 17 age-groups and 4th in the U15's behind a very strong Tonbridge AC.

The U13 girls got proceedings off to a winning start with Ellie Dolby dominating and winning comfortably by 14 seconds. Daniella Harper had a superb run finishing 4th and young Lily Meers had her best run to date crossing the line in an impressive 6th to help win the team race. Strong back up from Mayaan Radus in 9th then three in a row with Amelia Middleton 16th, Amarisa Sibley 17th and Olivia Berry 18th. Ella Smith was 20th, Heidi Forsyth 24th, Kelsey Pullin 29th, Hannah Clark 39th, Isabella Louth 41st and Amelie Willars 57th completed the strong squad.

Sam Reardon and Tom Brash then led the BBHAC U13 boy's contingent home with strong runs in 4th and 6th respectively. Ben Campbell continues to impress finishing in a great 12th helping to secure second team position. Tom Penlington was a strong 16th, Max Gregson 20th, Matt Smith 22nd and making a fantastic debut was 11-year-old Jamie Sears looking comfortable finishing 28th. Great back up from Oliver Robertson 31st, Will Andrews 36th, Jake Anthony 39th and Adam Parkinson in 42nd. Barnaby Corry in his first cross-country run of the season was 49th, 11 year old Oles Chaban 53rd and Nick Paddington 58th rounded off an impressive number of U13 boys.

The U15 girls were also victorious with Lia Radus winning, coming out on top of the battle with the Thanet RR girl. Morgan Squibb, (possibly still jet lagged from her USA travels where she competed for Great Britain and finished 5th in the World Biathle (run-swim-run) Championships) did well to finish high up in 5th and Amy Miller had a very strong run finishing 7th to complete the three to score team win. Zoe White continues her great season with a fine 14th place finish, Lily Tappenden 16th, Niamh Milmo 19th, Isabelle Bridge 23rd, Emily Davis 25th and Abigail Leeves 27th completed the strong U15 squad.

Twelve U15 boys toed the line for BB for their 4K race and Rowan Fuss came out on top finishing a great 6th. Peter Guy, despite falling on a tight bend, did well ending up 17th and Ben Gardiner in 23rd completed the three to score result of 4th place. Robert Suckling was 24th and Cameron Swatton was 26th, Keir Lundy 37th, Justin Strover 38th, Luke Simpson 47th, and a great run from Charles Winton in 53rd. Seb Large was 59th with Ethan Kitteridge 61st and Jake Leng 63rd rounded off the large U15 boys squad.

Only four U17 girls made up the BBHAC squad but they were strong enough to win the team race. A strong performance from Millie Smith, despite losing a shoe in warm up, saw her finish an impressive 3rd. A great run from Grace Scopes placing 7th with Yasmin Austridge 8th and Amy Leach 12th completing the squad results.

## Continued

The U17 boys finished a good second in the team competition after a great performance from Lewis Mills finishing 4th.

Callum Myatt was a strong 13th and Oscar Hussey did superbly finishing 15th despite only just making the start line in time after a horrendous journey from France that left him with only minutes to spare! Charlie Andrews was a solid 22nd and Coleman Corry on his first winter outing this season was 35th and Chris Swinfen completed the squad in 43rd.

Kelsey Fuss looked good finishing 19th as did Sam Leighton in 40th and Joanna Clowes in 42nd.

### Match 3: Sparrows Den 12th November 2016

The deaths of two of Britain's bright stars Stacey Burrows and Lucy Pygott both from Aldershot, Farnham & District Athletics Club out on an early evening training run when they lost their lives in a road traffic accident caused great shock in the athletics world. Tributes were paid to them both, at various running events this weekend.

At Sparrows Den, Blackheath and Bromley HAC home Kent league fixture a memorial wreath was laid at the start of the U17 girls race before a well observed, poignant minutes silence. Many of the Clubs' athletes, officials and supporters also wore black ribbons in tribute to the two girls who will be sorely missed.

The sombre mood and a clash of events including county inter counties and regional rounds

of the English schools cup saw fewer numbers braving the rain and the tough hilly, wooded course that Sparrows Den is renowned for.

However, BBHAC had a good degree of success winning five of the nine races contested with an emphatic victory in the senior men's race from BBHAC's Olympian Scott Overall.

Ellie Dolby got winning ways off to an early start by powering her way to victory in the U13 girls race. A strong run from Daniella Harper in 4th and Amarisa Sibley in 5th ensured a good team win. Strength in depth is massive in this age group as a further ten BB's girls finished well. Lily Meers was a strong 8th, Olivia Berry 12th, Heidi Forsyth 13th and Ella Smith 17th. Kelsey Pullin had her highest finish to date in 21st as did Hannah Clark finishing 25th. Zara Aslam made her Club debut finishing well in 29th with Isabella Louth crossing the line in 33rd, Sofia Elliot was 46th and completing the impressive numbers was Amelia Willars in 55th. With one fixture remaining the U13 girls are currently top of their league.

Not to be out done our U13 boys were equally impressive with a victory and large numbers running, finishing with five in the top seven and eight in the top twenty. Great to see the field flooded with Blackheath and Bromley vests. Sam Reardon and Tom Brash battled together all the way around with Sam winning



the sprint but Tom was just a second behind in 2nd. Thomas Penlington finding his old form again finishing a great 4th with first year boys Ben Campbell and Max Gregson running hard to finish 6th and 7th. Matt Smith will be pleased with his highest position of 12th as will Oliver Robertson in 14th. Jamie Sears with two more years in this age group was a strong 20th. Sam Stuart making his full BBHAC debut ran really well crossing the line in 28th just in front of Callum Carlton in 30th and Jake Anthony in 33rd. Like Jamie, Oles Chaban has two more years in the U13s and did well finishing 38th just a head of Nick Paddington running well in 39th. Good to have Josh Buddle Smith back running after a short break in 45th completing a very strong U13 boys squad who currently lie 2nd in the league.

Morgan Squibb continued her fine form finishing a clear winner. Zoe White, not put off by her fall at the start of the last Kent league fixture had her best run of the season finishing a really strong 6th with Lily Tappenden only four seconds behind in 9th. Niamh Milmo had a good run in 17th just ahead of Jess Neal in 18th with Abbie Leeves 22nd, Emily Davis 24th and Issie Bridge

25th, completing the U15 girls squad efforts leaving them top of their league, albeit by only one point.

Eight U15 boys toed the line for their 4.2k course and Peter Guy will be pleased with his great 5th position just seconds behind the leading few. Ben Gardiner had a good run in 16th, Robert Suckling worked hard finishing 20th with Cameron Swatton and Keir Lundy battling down the home straight, finishing 22nd and 23rd respectively, one second apart. Jake Leng was 34th just ahead of Luke Simpson in 35th and Charles Winton having his strongest run of the season finished in a great 37th. The U15 boys are currently 5th in their very strong league.

The U17 boys age group is dominated by Tonbridge AC placing 1-5 but Lewis Mills and Michael Eagling held their own and did well placing 7th and 8th. Oscar Hussey was

a good 14th, Callum Myatt 22nd, Charlie Andrews 29th and Finlay Brannan making his Club debut did well despite falling on a muddy section, to finish 30th with Lewis Warren completing the squad in 37th. The U17 boys are currently second behind the strong Tonbridge team.

This home fixture also doubles up as our young athletes cross country Club championship and so gold, silver and bronze Club champs medals were awarded to

#### **Match 4: Danson Park, Bexley 26th November 2016**

The 2016 Kent league cross country series came to an end this weekend in great style for BBHAC young athletes, with three individual victories, three team gold and two team silver along with six athletes collecting individual league trophies and thirty one athletes completing a full house of racing in all four Kent league races.

The U13 girls were first off and have had great strength and depth all season resulting in a fine team victory. Ellie Dolby pushed on from the off winning comfortably, completing a hat trick of wins and picking up the league individual overall gold trophy for her efforts. Daniella Harper has been highly consistent all winter and finished high up the field in 4th and was worthy winner of the bronze individual trophy. Amarisa Sibley had a great run finishing 7th (5th individual overall) just in front of Olivia Berry's great 8th place (7th individual overall). Heidi Forsyth had her best run of the year placing 11th (13th individual overall). Kelsey Pullin broke into the top 20 for the first time with a gutsy run finishing 18th (15th individual overall) and Ella Smith completed the series with another top 20 finish placing 19th (12th individual overall). Zara Aslam ran strongly

CATEGORY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
U13 girls	Ellie Dolby	Daniella Harper	Amarisa Sibley
U13 boys	Sam Reardon	Tom Brash	Thomas Penlington
U15 girls	Morgan Squibb	Zoe White	Lily Tappenden
U15 boys	Peter Guy	Ben Gardiner	Robert Suckling
U17 women	Amy Leach	Millie Smith	Lottie Weitzel
U17 men	Lewis Mills	Michael Eagling	Oscar Hussey

## Continued

crossing the line in 25th as did Isabella Louth in a good 30th. Amelie Willars was 39th and having run all four was rewarded with an individual overall placing of 28th. Sofia Elliot completed the strong squad with a 41st finish.

Sam Reardon started the U13 boys race positively and was in a pack of three with a couple of hundred meters remaining. Once out of sight of his parents Sam sprinted to the front and bravely held on to record his second win of the season! A great sprint finish. Ben Campbell had another fine run finishing 13th but more importantly was 4th individual overall. Max Gregson had a strong run finishing 14th (7th individual overall). Matt Smith was a strong 17th (11th individual overall) and Oliver Robertson was 22nd (placing 14th individual overall). Sam Stuart on only his second Club XC race was a good 26th and Will Andrews crossed the line in 29th with Callum Carlton in 33rd. Oles Chaban completed the series in 34th (placing a great 22nd overall) and Jake Anthony in his first year was 40th (a fine 20th overall). Nick Paddington completed the full house finishing 46th and a high 26th overall. Good to see Josh Buddle Smith running and finishing inside the top fifty in 48th. The team was second in the league table but interesting to note most of these boys will still be U13 next year.

Morgan Squibb then made it three wins out of three for BBHAC as she powered her way around the two-lap course

winning by over 20 seconds. Morgan's second victory of the season ensured she picked up the individual overall gold. Zoe White's fine season continues as she finished 4th on the day and an impressive 4th overall for the season. Jess Neal is returning to form and posted a great 5th place performance. Lily Tappenden was a strong 8th (6th individual overall). Niamh Milmo was a good 13th and her seasons efforts saw her finish 10th overall. Abbie Leeves was 15th and Isabelle Bridge 18th and having both raced in all four XC's were highly placed overall with 12th and 13th places respectively. These great U15 results were more than enough to win the team gold.

Peter Guy led the U15 boys home after a brave start attacking the race with the front runners eventually coming home in 8th place but more impressively shooting up the individual table finishing an impressive 2nd. Joe Georgiadis was just behind in a strong 9th and then close packing with a great run from Robert Suckling in 11th, Ben Gardiner a solid 12th and a fantastic overall 4th for the series. Cameron Swatton had his best league run finishing high up in 15th and making the top ten overall in a fine 8th. Justin Strover looked strong crossing the line in 25th and Charles Winton completed his league campaign in style with by far his best run of the season in a pleasing 29th giving him 19th overall for the season. The team as a whole for the season was fourth behind some very strong Kent Clubs.

Millie Smith had another solid race in the U17 girls race and won herself the bronze trophy in the individual overall standing. Lottie Weitzel had her highest finish of the year in a great 6th and Amy Leach's 7th place saw her finish high up the overall individual table in 5th. Great to see Jess Sellar competing over the country and finishing in the top 10 with a solid 9th place and Charlotte Fairies in her second outing for the Club completed our squad in 15th place. The U17 girls winnings ways had them firmly fixed at the top of the league table.

The U17 boys age group has been dominated by Tonbridge AC but the BBHAC lads did well to get amongst them and Lewis Mills' 5th place on the day was good enough to earn him the bronze individual overall trophy. Michael Eagling had a great run in 8th with Oscar Hussey finishing his league season in 14th and 10th overall. Callum Myatt was 16th on the day and 11th overall for the season with Charlie Andrews just behind in 18th and 16th overall for the series. Finlay Brannan, in only his second race for BBHAC ran well crossing the line in 21st and Lewis Warren worked well on the 5k course coming a good 32nd. Overall the U17 boys performance was good enough to secure silver in the team competition.

*Paul Austridge*

# Young Athletes

## At the major cross country championships 2017

### Kent County Cross Country Championships

Thick fog and poor visibility welcomed the athletes to the 2017 Kent Cross Country Championship opener at Brands Hatch. Over 50 BBHAC young athletes kicked off the New Year in some style at the long, tough and hilly circuit winning two individual golds and one team gold. With many athletes affected by seasonal coughs and colds it was still great to see so many black vests high up in all the fields.

The U13 girls got proceedings off in winning ways by picking up team gold with determined runs from Ellie Dolby in a solid 3rd, a fine 4th from Daniella Harper and a great 7th from Lily Meers. Amarisa Sibley continued her fine form finishing 8th and Heidi Forsythe finished well in a high 10th. Amelia Middleton was a great 13th, Olivia Berry 17th and Kelsey Pullin 27th backed up by Amelie Willars in 50th and Sofia Elliot in 55th. A great team performance and worthy of gold.

The U13 boys had the biggest squad on the day and another great run from Tom Brash had him crossing the line in 5th place followed by Thomas Penlington in a strong 9th with Ben Campbell putting in another great performance finishing a fine 12th. Max Gregson had a solid run in 18th and Oliver Robertson and Matthew Smith had their own private battle finishing 24th and 25th. Will Andrews had

a good run placing 29th and Jamie Sears did well finishing 30th despite a last minute footwear change on the start line! Callum Carlton was 44th and Josh Buddle Smith 49th with Oles Chaban in his first County Championships 65th. Sam Stuart started well but took a heavy fall and was unable to finish but will have many more opportunities to race over the country. These collective results were good enough for the U13 boys to win team silver.

The U15 girls were up next and Morgan Squibb showed real guts despite not being 100% well finishing a tough 4th backed up by a great 7th place for Zoe White and good to see Jess Neal back to her best in a pleasing 9th. Lily Tappenden looked strong crossing the line in 13th with Niamh Milmo in 19th and Rosie Allan 22nd. Emily Davis was 29th and completing the squad was Isabelle Bridge in 34th. The team was a worthy winner of the silver medals.

Peter Guy led the U15 boys out in typical determined fashion and was rewarded with a solid 10th place finish in a quality field. Matthew Francis, reigning Kent Champion and making his BBHAC debut did well holding on to 11th place having missed a few weeks training due to illness. However, still a fine debut. Joe Georgiadis had a good run placing 13th and a strong finish from Cameron Swatton had him 20th just ahead of Robert Suckling in 21st. Keir Lundy was a good 25th, Ben Gardiner 29th, Justin



Strover 31st and Jake Leng 34th completed the U15 boys numbers. The team finished 4th but in very strong competition.

Amy Leach had a very strong run and was first BB U17 girl home in an impressive 6th place just ahead of Millie Smith finishing well in 7th. Yasmin Austridge crossed the line in 9th side by side with Lottie Weitzel in 10th. Jess Sellar had a good run finishing 12th. Charlotte Faries had a great run in her first County Championships and should be pleased with her placing of 22nd. The U17 girl's team picked up team silver for their efforts.

The U17 boy's race was dominated by Tonbridge AC with their athletes filling places 1- 4 but great to see Lewis Mills holding his own and finishing well in a strong 7th place with Oscar Hussey just behind in 10th. Callum Myatt had a strong run finishing 12th and Charlie Andrews 27th and Lewis Warren 36th completing

## Continued

the squad. Tonbridge took gold but BBHAC did well in the mix and their efforts were rewarded winning team silver medals.

### Surrey Cross Country Championships

Held in Lloyd Park, Croydon, Blackheath and Bromley athletes put in some great performances. Sophie Hoare won the U15 girls title while Amy Miller ran well finishing 12th. In the U13 girls race Holly Sutton Trot was 18th making her BBHAC cross country debut.

At the Middlesex equivalent in Hillingdon, the U13 girls excelled with Naomi Toft winning, Anwen Thomas placing 2nd and Maayan Radus 4th. Yasmin Marghini comfortably won the U15 girls race and on her BB debut, Lucrezia Polloni ran well finishing a great 4th.

### South of England Cross Country Championships

The weather was unusually mild for this years South of England cross country Championships and racing conditions at Parliament Hill were excellent with some of the ground underfoot, firm! Fifty BBHAC young athletes took on the challenging Hampstead Heath course and all our junior teams finished in the top 10 with the U17 girls being highest placed in 4th. Jess Keene continued her great winter season winning an impressive bronze in the U20 women's 6k race.

Lottie Weitzel and Genny Allan had a great run in at the end of the U17 girl's 5k race placing

35th and 36th respectively, just 1 second apart. Millie Smith was just behind in 43rd with Amy Leach in 50th and a great run from Jess Sellar finishing 54th. Graces Scopes in 87th and Charlotte Fairies in 138th completed the squad and secured a fine 4th in the team race.

The U15 boy's efforts contributed to a respectable 5th team place and Matthew Francis led the attack with a solid top 20 finish coming 19th. Peter Guy had another strong run placing 40th as did Joe Georgiadis finishing 54th and Oscar Heaney Brufal had a good run in 127th. Ben Gardiner lost one of his spikes but was lucky enough to find it, pick it up and carry on home but still finished well in 186th. Jake Leng was 214th and Seb Large 268th rounding off a great team result.

The U13 boy's had the biggest squad on the day and did well finishing 7th overall. Sam Reardon and Tom Brash continued their private battle and ran strongly finishing 34th and 35th but with exactly the same time. Luca Thurlow, in only his second BBHAC race must have seen Sam and Tom in front as he finished with pace just 2 seconds behind them in 37th. Max Gregson was a solid 134th, Oliver Robertson 157th and Jamie Sears 160th. Matt Smith crossed the line in 172nd, Oles Chaban was 206th, Adam Parkinson 257th and Nick Paddington completing the squad in 295th.

The large U13 girls team also placed 7th and saw great runs from Lily Meers in 30th, Heidi Forsyth in 49th and Amarisa Sibley in 61st. Ellie Dolby started the race positively and did well to continue, finishing 69th. Kelsey Pullin had a strong run crossing the line in 102nd, Olivia Berry was 121st, Hannah Clark 156th, Zara Aslam was 169th and Isabella Louth rounded off the team effort in 198th.

Morgan Squibb ran a solid race U15 girls race and rewarded with a 10th place finish, Zoe White had another great run in 47th as did Jess Neal in 57th. Good to see Rosie Allan running well and finishing 129th, follow by Niamh Milmo in 160th and Emily Davis in 220th. The team was 10th.

The U17 boy's squad was also 10th despite Lewis Mills having to pull out during the race with a sore knee. Hopefully no lasting damage done and he can rest up and still compete later this winter. Callum Myatt had a great run finishing 66th, with Oscar Hussey running well in 74th. Michael Eagling was 124th and Finlay Brannan, in only his third race for BBHAC was strong finishing 141st. Charlie Andrews has been running well all winter and was moving along nicely but fell heavily landing on his hip and struggled to complete the course but did so and shouldn't be too disappointed.

*Paul Austridge*

# Relays on the road and over the country

## 2016/17

*With the best Clubs competing from throughout England, competition is always of the highest standard and so all results achieved are hard fought and well deserved. Our athletes were superb and dominated their races fielding strong teams and winning impressive hauls of medals.*

### South of England road relays

Bedford Autodrome was the venue for this year's South of England road relays and despite poor organisation BBHAC young athletes produced some excellent individual and team performances winning two brilliant team silver medals. The race schedule was different this year with the U13 boys first off and five minutes later the U13 girls start. With the boys doing 4 x 3k legs and the girls doing 3 x 3k legs many of the athletes (boys and girls) crossed the line together, making for a rather confusing finish.

We fielded two strong U13 boys teams. The A team saw Sam Reardon open up on leg one with a very strong run (6th fastest of the day) passing to Tom Brash who had an equally strong run. Next up were two first year in the age group boys Max Gregson and Ben Campbell and they more than held their own in stiff winds and even stiffer competition helping the team to a great 6th place finish. The B team of Alex Sibley, Matt Smith, Barnaby Corry and Oliver Robertson all had positive runs and collectively finished a good 27th.

The U13 girls A team of Daniella Harper, Mayaan Radus and Ellie Dolby ran superbly, winning fantastic silver team medals. The U13 B team had to make a quick, late number change (clerical error by SEAA) on the start line but the three girls Sophia Elliot, Lily Meers and Olivia Berry did

well finishing 40th. The U13 girls squad is strong enough to have a C team and Ella Smith, Amarisa Sibley and Hanna Clark combined well to finish in 33rd and Amelia Middleton made a great debut running a fast first leg, completed the U13 girls squad.

The U15 boys fielded two strong teams and the A team of Joe Georgiadis (running the 9th fastest leg of the day), Robert Suckling, Ben Gardiner and Peter Guy just missed out on bronze crossing the line in an impressive 4th place. The B team of Cameron Swatton, Keir Lundy, Justin Strover and Jake Leng were equally impressive finishing high up in 25th position.

The U15 girls had large numbers running and the A team matched the U13 girls, winning a brilliant team silver. Great runs from Amy Miller, Morgan Squibb (4th fastest leg of the day) and Lia Radus (3rd fastest leg of the day). The B team of Lily Tappenden, Zoe White and Jess Neal ran well finishing inside the top twenty in 18th place. The C team crossed the line in 45th with Emily Davis leading off passing over to English school bronze medalist Isabelle Bridge and Abigail Leeves on the last leg. Niamh Milmo had a good lead off leg run completing the U15 girls squad.

A strong quartet of U17 boys finished high up in 14th place after a great opening leg by Callum Myatt, passing to a strong running Oscar Hussey

## Continued

who passed to Charlie Andrews supported by his whole family. Anchor leg was taken by “Club man” Coleman Corry (despite a recent heavy competition schedule and a planned rest that was rudely interrupted) when “called to arms” and duly took up the challenge enabling the team to record this solid result.

Mille Smith, Amy Leach and Stephanie Taylor were the line up for the U17 girls who finished a respectable 11th while Lottie Wietzel ran a solid opening leg to complete the U17 girls squad.

### National Road Relay Championships

The venue was the same and the distance ran was the same but this years National Road Relays at Sutton Park, Birmingham, had a very different feel as all races, senior and young athletes, were squeezed into one day. Blackheath and Bromley’s young athletes have done well at these championships over the last few years and so expectations were high and our youngsters didn’t disappoint.

First off were the U13 boys and five minutes later the U13 girls race also started making for very different racing conditions and slightly confusing for the spectators as the races developed.

Sam Reardon had a strong run on leg 1 (clocking a time nearly 30 seconds faster than last year) in one of the fastest U13 legs of the day and handed over to young Ben Campbell on leg 2. Ben competing in his 1st National Road Relays showed

great determination and looked comfortable handing over to Tom Brash in a great 9th place. Tom clawed back the field and brought the team home in an impressive 6th place. The U13 boys are so strong we were able to field two further teams and they finished 21st and 45th. Thomas Penlington had a great opening leg in the B team handing to Max Gregson who overtook 8 teams to pass over to Matt Smith who continued to pass another 3 teams finishing in 21st. The C team was led out by Alex Sibley who had a strong first leg (running 30 seconds quicker than last year) passing over to Nick Paddington on leg 2. Nick’s good run left Callum Carlton to bring the team home having run a strong final leg as well.

The U13 boys were involved in the first of two running shorts incidents when one boy discovered (to his horror!) that he had forgotten to put his shorts on under his tracksuit. A quick dash to the sports clothing tent soon corrected the decision and got us wondering whether that was the young athletes intention all along!

The U13 girls also have a strong squad and the trio of Daniella Harper, Maayan Ratus and Ellie Dolby combined well to finish a high 6th place. Daniella did well finishing 21st on leg one despite being knocked about badly on leg one. Maayan made up a further 10 places handing over to Ellie in 11th. Ellie gave chase and caught 5 other teams crossing the line in 6th, having run the 6th

fastest leg of the day. The B team had to make last minute order changes and Amaris Sibley, to her credit, took it all in her stride as she took on the opening leg handing over to Ella Smith who ran well passing over to Olivai Berry bringing the team home in 32nd. Kelsey Pullin, cheered on by her travelling supporters Club, ran well on leg 1 passing over to the versatile Sofia Elliot but unfortunately they didn’t have a third runner to complete their team.

Next up were the U15s boys first then five minutes later the girls. Joe Georgiadis continued his great form with a blistering opening leg (and 10th fastest of the day) handing over to Oscar Heaney Brufal who had an equally strong leg passing three teams and giving third leg runner Peter Guy an outside chance of getting among the medals. Peter set off in his usual gutsy fashion and clawed back one of his opponents and had his eyes set on Tonbridge in third. Unfortunately, Tonbridge gave nothing away and left Peter and his team with a still fantastic 4th place finish.

The B team opened up with Cameron Swatton on leg 1 working hard on the 3.8k circuit, passing to Ben Gardiner on leg 2 who had a brilliant run swallowing up a massive 17 places and handing over to Robert Suckling. Robert continued the momentum moving up another 8 places and crossing the line in 24th place as an impressive 3rd B team. Keir Lundy set off on leg 1 of

the C team clocking a fast time and handing the reigns to Jake Leng who passed 6 Clubs on his way to a fast leg but like the U13 girls we were one short of completing the scoring team.

The second shorts incident occurred with U15 boys as another pair went missing. On hand to sort this one was our very own president who kindly donated his own pair. I'm not sure if these were hastily removed from the President's body or kit bag! President Bill Foster's kit is used to running fast and yesterday was no exception as they flew around the Sutton Coldfield course albeit on a far younger model.

BB U15 girls are strong and plentiful and were tremendous despite having to compete alongside the busy boys race. The A team of Lia Ratus, Morgan Squibb and Sophie Hoare were brilliant as they battled their way to a marvellous silver. Lia led off well despite not feeling 100% and handed over to Morgan who battled well taking seven places passing to Sophie who had the 3rd fastest run of the day overtaking two teams and just missing gold by the smallest of margins. A great team effort. The B team of Lily Tappenden, Amy Miller and Zoe White combined brilliantly to be the first B team home. On the 1st leg Lily had a strong run before handing to Amy Miller who carved through the field jumping 30 places during her leg then passing to Zoe to bring the team home in 16th place but importantly as 1st B team. The C team all ran well, with a

recent international to her name Isabelle Bridge leading them off followed by a good leg from Gracie Horton consolidating their position and Emily Davis gaining 9 places crossing the line in 53rd position. Niamh Milmo had a great run as our only representative in the D team. The U15 girls are a large and strong squad.

Without time to draw breath the U17 boys and five minutes later the U17 girls were off. Callum Myatt started out with a positive leg on one passing to Oscar Hussey who made up 8 places with a great leg before passing to Charlie Andrews who also made up places and brought the team home in a satisfactory 26th place. Lewis Mills lead an incomplete team off on leg one and recorded the quickest U17 time of the day.

The U17 girls all ran well finishing an impressive 7th with Millie Smith having a great opening leg run passing to Lottie Weitzel holding her own, then Amy Leach gained three positions finishing strongly in 7th.

Stephanie Taylor on leg 1 and Grace Scopes gaining 7 places on leg 2 had strong runs in the incomplete B team.

Athletics aside the highlight of the day must be hearing the news that past president and Norman Park track manager offered and bought someone a cup of tea!

### **National Cross Country Relay Championships**

Fifty two of BBHAC young athletes competed in this

year's National Cross Country Relay Championships, held for the 29th year in Berry Hill Park, Mansfield and these championships are a great opportunity for Clubs to compete in a team format, in an otherwise individual sport. BBHAC's great team spirit and talent was fully on show and the Club was rewarded with a fantastic set of results. Two team gold medals, one team silver and three teams in the top ten.

With the best Clubs competing from throughout England, competition is always of the highest standard and so all results achieved are hard fought and well deserved. Our U15 girls were superb and dominated their race fielding three strong teams and winning gold and silver. One medal is special but to win two medals in one race is very impressive.

Tola Pearce, running the 5th fastest time of the day, Amy Miller and Yasmin Marghini, running the fastest leg of the day were worthy winners and the trio of Morgan Squibb, running the 7th fastest time, Lia Ratus and Sophie Hoare were just behind in second winning a great team silver, a fantastic BBHAC sight. The C team of Lily Tappenden, Zoe White and Jess Neal were 57th in a field of over 90 teams and is also a great result.

The U13 girls were equally impressive fielding three teams with the A winning a brilliant gold. Annie Thomas lead off on leg 1 running the 4th fastest

## Continued



time, handing over to Ellie Dolby who brought the team home in 1st place handing to Naomi Toft who held 1st place all the way collecting a fine team gold. Daniella Harper had a strong first leg for the B team handing over to Amarisa Sibley and then Mayaan Radus securing a solid 21st place, but the 3rd B team home. The C team was led out with a strong opening leg from Amelia Middleton handing to Olivia Berry and Lily Meers combining well finishing 71st.

The U17 girls had two complete teams running and Yasmin Austridge, Madolina Samoila and Millie Smith combined well finishing 17th as did Lottie Weitzel, Grace Scopes and Stephanie Taylor finishing 33rd. The U15 boys had two solid teams running and the A team were set off with a fast opening

leg from Peter Guy, running one of the fastest legs of the day. Joe Georgiadis continued the good work handing over in 7th before Oscar Heaney Brufal, complete with a new pair of spikes stormed around the 2k course finishing a brilliant team 4th. The B team of Robert Suckling, Ben Gardiner and Cameron Swatton all had strong runs and were rewarded by being the 3rd B team home and were 23rd overall.

Nine U13 boys made up three strong teams and Sam Reardon, running one of the fastest legs of the day, handed over to Ben Campbell who ran a strong leg passing to Tom Brash who brought the team home in a very creditable 10th place. The B team of Thomas Penlington, Max Gregson and Matt Smith all ran great legs and were 2nd B team to finish crossing the line

in 24th. Showing our strength and depth the C team of Oliver Robertson, Will Andrews and Barnaby Corry finished 3rd C team and 58th overall.

Callum Myatt led the U17 boys charge handing over to Oscar Hussey who had a great leg passing 21 teams and handing over to Lewis Mills who clawed back a further 12 teams to finish a good 31st. Charlie Andrews and Coleman Cory both had good runs but without a third runner were unable to finish as a complete team.

Charlie Davis had a great opening leg and passed to James Crawley who powered around the course, but similar to the U17's they were unable to field a third runner and so could not complete the team race.

*Paul Austridge*

# National Cross Country Championships 2017

*Blackbeath and Bromley HAC young athletes had their most successful National at this year's classic cross country course in Nottingham, winning three team medals and seven athletes placed in the top 20. Nearly sixty BB youngsters spent the weekend together in Nottingham and brought the curtain down on the Club winter season in superb fashion with all our athletes excelling, reinforcing our position as one of the strongest athletics Clubs in the country.*

After a good coach journey up, a gentle training run, a splash in the lovely hotel swimming pool, dinner and a good nights sleep it was down to business at Wollaton Park. The 16th century Wollaton Hall was an impressive back drop to a traditional cross country course made up of grass sections, wooded areas, lakes, streams and tons / gallons of liquid mud. Those who managed to stay on their feet still finished looking like they had fallen!

First up were the U17 girls and solid runs from all our girls ended with the team tied on points with London rivals Herne Hill Harriers, but victory was ours (on count back) as all our four scoring girls finished ahead of all the HHH girls. A tight result but a well deserved gold. Katy Ann McDonald led the team home in a fine 16th place with Madalina Samoila a strong 26th and Yasmin Austridge and Millie Smith ran well placing 37th and 49th. Great runs also from Lottie Weitzel in 69th, Genny Allan in 87th and Grace Scopes in 120th.

The U13 girls continued in winning ways comfortably securing the gold medals with two inside the top 10. Fabulous runs from Anwen Thomas in 4th and just 3 second behind in 6th Naomi Toft. Ellie Dolby was a strong 25th and Maayan Radus a great 43rd. Heidi Forsyth continues to improve and placed a high 63rd. Lily Meers was a solid 77th, Daniella Harper on the come back trail was 113th and Olivia Berry placed 146th. Ever improving Kelsey Pullin crossed the line in 164th a second in front of her room mate Holly Sutton Trot in 167th and who was making her winter debut for BB and great to see Sofia Elliot completing a very strong squad.

It was to be three medals from three races as the U15 girls competed strongly to claim the team bronze. Another gutsy performance saw Morgan Squibb earn a well deserved top 20 spot placing 16th. Yasmin Marghini was a fine 28th, Lia Radus ran well to finish 67th and Amy Miller had another fantastic run and powered through the field on the second lap to finish 70th. Another athlete making her BBHAC debut was Lucrezia Polloni finishing well inside the top 100 in 89th. Zoe White was a strong 113th, Jess Neal was 122nd and Niamh Milmo placed 217th. Abbie Leeves crossed the line in 241st with Issy Bridge in 270th, Lily Tappenden recently back from illness and injury was 280th and completing the squad was Emily Davis in 288th.

## Continued

Twenty six boys made up the BBHAC contingent over the four boys age group races and recorded their best set of collective team results.

Highest placed of them was the U15 boys team finishing an fabulous 5th. Matthew Francis running in his first National for BB ran a sensibly paced race and look strong in the closing stages of the race and crossed the line in an impressive 17th place. The ever determined Peter Guy fought his way to a solid 37th and Joe Georgiadis ran well finishing 125th. Cameron Swatton looked good throughout and scored his highest ever National finish in 148th. Jake Leng ran well finishing in 221st with Justin Strover 236th and the unrecognisable Ben Gardiner, after a fall in a particularly muddy section, placing 250th.

The large U13 boys squad combined well to finish a respectable 8th led home by Tom Brash having had a brilliant run in an impressive 15th. Sam Reardon backed up well in 43rd and Thomas Penlington recorded a great run at 103rd despite not being at his fittest. Proving we have strength in depth three seconds separated our next three athletes. Max Gregson was a solid 172nd and Matt Smith was 177th. Matt entertained the BB supporters producing a perfect dab as he ran past the team tent. Ben Campbell also ran well in 179th. Great to see three black vests bunching together well. Jamie Sears had a great National debut and with two more years as an U13 his 240th was impressive as was Oliver Robertson 273rd who still has another year in this age group. Nick Paddington worked well throughout the two lap course and completed the strong U13 squad.

The U17 boys only had four runners and with four to score we had no room for errors or injury and our boys didn't disappoint combining well to place 13th in a very tough age group, won by local Kent rivals Tonbridge AC. Lewis Mills ran hard to finish a pleasing 82nd, Angus Harrington on his way back to fitness will be happy with a 106th finish. Tri athlete Michael Eagling put his running to good cause placing well up in 155th and consistent Oscar Hussey ran well crossing the line in 157th.

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*Paul Austridge*

# The Bennett Cup Season

## 2016/17

*This season's Bennett Cup was won by Mike Simms in a solid performance which was a model of consistency and tenacity, a patient waiting game of taking the chance of winning at the most vital moment in season of nine events spread out over six months.*

The initial lead was taken by Oscar Hussey and then passed to Ian Swatton who held it for a couple of events even opening up a comfortable lead of nearly 30 points after the Christmas yacht handicap from eventual winner Mike Simms. The lead pack settled down to a regular group of contenders who usually occupied the top ten positions over the remaining course of the season, often exchanging positions on the leader board. At this stage the leading pack consisted of newcomers and familiar faces such as Steve Pairman, Chris Pike and Glen Read, as well as Jessica Keene and Austin Adams who after having won the Parris Shield in the summer may well have fancied his chances in the winter handicap. He did in fact stay with the leading pack for the first four events before falling away due to injury and other matters but most of the others stayed consistent and in reach of the leader, who by the new year was Luca Ercolini.

Luca and Mike Simms assumed first and second places respectively and held these positions until the last event, Luca seeming to consolidate his lead especially when in the seventh event, the Orion Mob match when he won the Club 7 ½ mile championship. However Mike Simms maintained a constant presence behind him in the chase and managed to keep in contention. In the Club 10 mile championships when his navigation skills deserted him he ended up running an

extra 3 miles finding the start line a mere 20 minutes after everyone else had departed. But he said *"I was just about able to catch the back of the race by the end and, by the grace of the handicapper, I stayed in contention for the cup."*

He was able to close the points gap down to four in the penultimate event, the Ranelagh mob match, thus setting up a potentially close finish in the Closing 5.

In the Closing 5 Luca sought to continue his great form which had inspired him all season. Mike Sims remarked *"Come the Closing 5, I knew I had to stay ahead of Luca Ercolani to win the competition. From the handicaps it looked doable but Luca had been on wonderful form all through the competition so I knew I'd have to give everything"*.

Luca ran the fastest time of the day but finished in 18th place, whilst Mike running an impressive 34.59 clock time finished 10 places above him, enough to overhaul his lead and secure the Bennett Cup.

He continued *"Thanks to my favourite downhill I did it – just. The difference between first and second came down to 15 seconds from memory. Glad I put double knots in my laces."*

Commenting on his winning this trophy Mike further remarked: *"I've always enjoyed running in Bennett Cup events. It's almost too good to be true having such great races just a short jog from my house in Coney Hall."* Coming into the 2016/17 competition he had participated in 17 events on the trot and intended to do all 9 events.

## Continued

*"I felt I was in good form and got off to a really good start at the Relays, spurred on to a good time by a great first competition with Jenny Neal, Andy Lawes and Paul Kerekgyarto. The Club 5 and Christmas Yacht also went well – though it's a shame to lose the traditional route I think the new course suits me - I just love the fast downhill."*

The competition was for him an opportunity for improvement of his times, as it is with many runners who rise to the challenge of the handicap. *"The three 7.5m mob matches went really well. For the two home runs I broke my PB twice and had a great competition with 3 SLH runners (beating them)"*

He even paid tribute to the weather as a contributory factor in his success it was a feature for the whole season *"nowhere near as much mud as usual."*

His total of 394 points was made up of a consistent range of scores ranging from 32 points to 53, the score he attained in the Closing 5 and one which secured for him the Bennett Cup.

During the course of the season the fastest times for various distances were for 10 miles 1.01' for the men, run by Peter Tucker, and 1.08.42 for the women by Carol Penlington; for 7 ½ miles 49.24 Luca Ercolini (men) 58.00 Jessica Keene (women); 10km 42.55 Joss Barber (men) 44.52 Jessica Keene (women); 5 miles 28.31 Joss Barber, and 31.05 Jessica Keene.

The season included the major cross country Club championships which for the men were won by Joss Barber in the 5 mile and 10km, Dan Kennedy in the 7 ½ miles and Peter Tucker in the 10 miles. In the ladies championships the winners were Jessica Keene in the 5 mile, 10km and 7 ½ miles, and Carol Penlington in the 10 miles, so a highly distinguished season for Jessica Keene.

As to the statistics of the competition, 97 athletes took part (75 men and boys and 22 women and girls with 332 total performances. The ages of the runners ranged from the oldest 69 (John Fenwick) to the youngest 11 (Amarisa Sibley). The biggest turnout of Blackheath Harriers of any event was 51 for the Will Bolton Relays with the smallest being 22 for the SLH Mob Match.

Of those 97 taking part in at least one race 42 were under 40 years old (43% of competitors). Of these runners 23 were under 20 years old, that is about a quarter of all competitors. However it could be argued that of these most, 14 out of 23, ran in only one or two events mainly the shorter ones (either at the start or the end of the season) so perhaps cross country is still not attractive enough amongst the younger members and even less so in the 20s and 30s. It seems that it is particularly competed for by those in their 40s which was the age range with most participants. (24).

If you run all nine you get a special medal for doing so, one of distinctive quality but in order to attain that medal you need to run a total of 56¼ miles. 6 runners did all events over six months, more than last year with a further 3 completing 8 events although more than half the total sum of runners completed no more than 2.

As to his other performances in different competitions Mike went on to say

*"My form in other competitions was really strong – I strung together 3 sub-20s at parkrun and did really well in Potts Wood 10k and Knole Park Kent Fitness League. But I had a setback in the Club 10k. I just didn't have the legs to keep up with my usual target runners and I lost 3 or 4 more places in the final kilometre back around the farm. Still I was in contention in the points table so I wasn't downbeated."*

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*Wilf Orton*

# Gordon Hickey

## 1932–2016

*Last issue we included a short obituary for Gordon Hickey who died last year. As promised here is a more extensive tribute to him including personal memories from friends.*

Gordon Hickey will always be remembered as the veteran shot putter who dominated his event over many years, performing at an age when most athletes had hung up their shoes and not just to turn up but to compete seriously at different levels apart though from international, gaining a host of titles including British Record holder for the M70's shot, and setting plenty of records in the process.

It is therefore quite hard believe that he was once the Southern Counties high jump champion. The highlight of his career as a high jumper was winning the Southern title. "I must have jumped 6 foot 2 inches over 30 times but then towards the end of my career I cleared 6 foot 3 on a grass run up." He would wonder what he would have jumped using a tartan runway.

People have written and said much of Gordon as a veteran athlete—mainly on his high jumping and throws, but there are memories are of a younger man who if necessary could produce a passable long or triple jump. His ability in the High Jump was limited technically to the Western Roll. He could never master the Fosbury Flop, largely due to his bulk. He persevered with his old style as long as he competed, sometimes

against 'Floppers' and cleared good heights.

However in order to improve his technique Gordon was coached by Sir Arthur Gold and trained with the Royal Ballet. He used to travel across London to train at Parliament Hill under the guidance of Sir Arthur and his assistant Ron Murray. It was Gold who arranged for a number of jumpers including Mary Rand to work with the Royal Ballet. "That was tough training" recalled Gordon; "we were doing all the exercises for a couple of hours and you could hardly walk afterwards".

Specific event training for the high jump was not a year round cycle. Jump training was done in the winter and athletes would just play football to fill in the time and then around March "started to think about Athletics".

One meeting he enjoyed was at the White City in 1958 two weeks before the Empire Games. "I was ranked 2nd in England" he said, "4th Briton, but couldn't get in because all the jumpers from around the Commonwealth were competing. After many protests he was eventually allowed to compete and was number 31 on the programme." He qualified for the Final on the Friday night, but then had to go off to work all night before returning to compete without sleep the next day. He finished in 7th place.

Perhaps it was unfortunate that work commitments prevented him from going higher or

training specifically for the event but the other factor militating against his jumping was his job as a film and tape editor with ITN. Nightshifts every other weekend and travel could intrude. He recalled an assignment in Belfast in 1970 where the only thing that didn't seem to get bombed was his hotel.

Therefore despite being one of the top jumpers in the country he never gained an International vest. The only times he competed abroad was with the Club on tours to Switzerland and Northern Italy. He fondly recalled the Italy trip where races were held on the promenade. "The shot took place on the beach and then they went up to the town square for the jumps and somewhat surprisingly the discus."

Gordon had always putt the shot in Club matches but in his 40's as his spring deserted him he began to take this event more seriously. "I cleared 1.81 as an over 40, 1.75 as an over 45 and 1.70 as an over 50 but then my hips just went."

In the 2001 season he also competed in the British Athletics League Division One. The match at Eton saw the British Over 65's Record holder going head to head with the USA's Olympic Silver Medallist from Sydney 2000 Adam Nelson who was competing for Birchfield. Nelson won. "The only time I've been in a competition where someone has thrown over twice as far as me" commented Gordon who didn't enjoy the experience.

## Continued

What he enjoyed was the wide variety of throws competition available. He has set a British record for the throws decathlon and was a dab hand at the Greek discus which is basically doing a standing throw with an overweight implement. "If I do a spin in the Southern League with the 2kg" he remarked "it goes about 25.10. When I do the standing throw it goes about 25.00 which shows how good my turn is!"

In one of his last events he had just returned from the European Masters in Denmark. He enjoyed the trip with his Danish wife but the shot competition was a disaster. He'd checked with the organisers that they had large diameter shots but when he got to his competition he found they were all at the other pool. "I had a lot of problems with the smaller shots and the wet conditions" He threw 11.28 but did further in the throws pentathlon with 11.82. "I got home and threw over 13 in training."

Gordon was an all round sportsman. Athletics aside, he loved football and played in goal for I.T.N, a position from which he frequently gave unwarranted advice to the rest of his team during their matches. His voice could be clearly heard in the opposition goalmouth. His other favoured sport was golf, and this probably contributed to his hip problems as he got older.

As time went on he did a couple of training sessions a week but still competed very regularly. He could still be seen in action in the Southern Men's League

either in Division One and Three often beating athletes who were 50 years younger. He even competed to up to the age of 80 but as Barbara Terry remembers "with his diabetes, he couldn't feel his feet and would often get called for 'no throw' as his toe was over the rim of the circle. However he had one competition as an 80 year old and was disappointed to miss out on the Throws Pentathlon record by only a few points." His competition days ended here.

Having joined the Club on 2nd May 1955 he was made a Vice President in 1975, and attained his 50 years membership in 2005 Gordon would undoubtedly be summed up as a perfect 'Club man' and it was this that made him so revered by his friends and fellow athletes. "He was always willing to give advice to anyone whether they asked for it or not" recalled Barbara Terry.

"When I took up the post of Wine Secretary" recalled Brian Stone, "the first thing I wanted to do was re-decorate the Clubroom. We had a damp problem with photographs on the rear wall getting damaged. When I mentioned it to a few of my contemporaries Gordon reacted with "when do we start?".

As he lived close to the Clubhouse, and worked shifts, he was ready at any times to pitch in. With the help of a few other members we completed the task ready for the winter season. "As a result of out work", continued Brian, "Gordon and I were invited to become Directors on the board of B.H.H.Q Ltd, a wise move because there were many other tasks ahead. We revamped the Clubroom twice more; he oversaw the re-wiring of the Clubroom once and did a lot of work on the outside around the Clubhouse."

Gordon served on the Wine Committee and was ready at any time to go to the Club to put beer deliveries away, order or collect food for suppers and carry out any task asked of him. In committee or at A.G.Ms he would be the first to query any contentious items on the agenda.

Brain Stone again: "He became a great friend. Above all, we socialised and for many years Saturday Suppers once a month saw members and their wives and friends eat, drink and dance into the early hours to our in-house disco."

To Barbara Terry he was "a lovely man with a big heart". Perhaps Brian Stone should have the last word "My late friend was a live-wire in Club life-and he is greatly missed. We won't see his like again."

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*Mike Martineau, Brian Stone &  
Barbara Terry (ed. Wilf Orton)*

# Brenda Brent

## 1920–2017

*Before the Club went open in 1992 the ladies who backed up the male members played a vital role behind the scenes in the social life of the club and fundraising for many important projects.*

Brenda Brent, wife of Past President Alan Brent will be well remembered for her many talents, and organizational abilities.

Her work with the Social Club was of course legendary and a great source of income to the main Club. In 1973 the Blackheath Social Club was formed and this was chaired by Brenda. Ladies competed in their table tennis team using the Blackheath Harriers name. With barn dances, raffles, jumble sales and tombolas the Social Club, including the likes of Maggie Haines, raised an awful lot of money that enabled much needed work to be done in the Clubhouse and at the Track. Such items raised for the Club included Clubhouse furniture and crockery, and equipment such as a glass-washer for the bar.

In 1980 she and Alan provided kitchenware for the Steward's flat, together with the Jubilee Kitchen; and in 1982 they bought and equipped the garage for the newly opened Norman Park Track which was for a time a shelter for the results officials, and for Brenda to dispense the refreshments for which she is best remembered.

In 1995 as a result of the Club's new open policy Brenda finally gained Club membership, and as a reward for her services was made an Honorary Life Member at the same time.

In time a changing climate, brought about by the move by Blackheath Harriers to becoming an open Club, meant that the Social Club no longer served the same purpose as it had previously done. Brenda was however still involved as its secretary when it was disbanded in March 1996.

Mike Martineau was in 1997 the first President to elect ladies as Vice Presidents. His first choice for this honour was, of course, Brenda. However, when he was told that she already had a superior position as Honorary Life Member and that the role of VP was inferior, he decided not to proceed down that path. Ironically however she was later made a VP, in 2001, and if anyone should have been the first, then it should have been Brenda.

Husband Alan, was of course the President in 1966/67. As his first lady she was always of course smiling by his side at many events such as the Belgrave Annual Dinner when as ECCU President Alan and she were guests of honour; and in 1973 they both kindly accommodated some French or German young athletes at an international meeting. Twenty or so years ago, Club Dinners were more frequent and he and Brenda sat with others of their age group. Brenda ran the raffles bringing her 'old bag' which was eventually replaced by a 'new old bag'.

As for her legendary baking one past President recalls. *"I have so many great memories of her. A great baker of lovely cakes, I always felt extremely deprived if she had sold out at the Track before I got around to trying to buy some. And one piece was never enough! Brenda and Vi did such a wonderful job at all the home meetings for so many years"*

The Angels will now be very well catered for and I'm sure are greatly enjoying Brenda's very special talents and her wonderful intelligent company.

*Michael Orton*

**Executive Committee 2016/17****President:**

Bill Foster

**Immediate Past President:**

David Cordell IPP

**Chairman of Committee:**

John Baldwin PP

**Hon Secretary:**

Hanna Cordell VP

**Hon Treasurer:**

David Appleton VP

**Chairmen of Active Athletics:**

Summer – Tim Soutar PP

Winter – Robert Cliff PP

**Chair of Finance:**

Stephen Hollingdale PP

**Chair of Communications:**

Wilf Orton VP

**Three Ordinary Members:**

Adrian Stocks VP

Daniel Ryan

Maz Turner VP

**Chair of Development:**

Paul Byfield VP

**Sponsorship/Fund Raising:**

Vacant

**House and Social:**

David Cordell

**Membership Secretary:**

Rob Brown VP

**Track & Field Secretary:**

Wendy Daniels

**Cross Country Secretary:**

Vacant

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The Sydney Wooderson Centre

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Bromley, Kent BR2 7EY

**Past Presidents****Existing Past Presidents of Blackheath Harriers AC:**

Alan J Brent (1966/7), Peter J G Baigent (1971/2), John R Baldwin (1975/6), Colin M Brand (1978/9), Brian G Stone (1979/80), Ian C Wilson (1981/2), Derek L Gregory (1986/7), Alan M Pickering (1992/3), Steve H Cluney (1994/5), David White (1995/6), Mike J Mahoney (1997/8), Chris R Haines (1998/9), Richard J Coles (1999/2000), Mike Davies (2000/1), Mike Peel (2001/2), Pat Calnan (2002/3).

**Existing Past Presidents of Bromley AC:** (to 2003)

Daphne Reed, Joyce Hepher, Junior Field, Paul Jearum, Maureen Miller.

**Past Presidents of Blackheath & Bromley Harriers AC:** John Robinson

(2003/4), Margaret Baldwin (2004/5), Anne Cilia (2005/6), Ken Daniel (2006/7), Les Roberts (2007/8), Tim Soutar (2008/9), Alison Brand (2009/10), Richard Coe (2010/11), Denis Lawrie (2011/12), Steve Hollingdale (2012/13), Robert Cliff (2013/14), Dick Griffin (2014/15).

David Cordell (2015/16)

**Vice Presidents****Existing Vice Presidents of Blackheath Harriers AC:**

George H Smith (1960), John E Lindblom (1962), Derek F E Hogg (1964), Tony V Hayday (1968), Richard J Edmonds (1969), Robert Richardson (1969), John Lissaman (1972), Barry M Shapcott (1973), Geoff R Last (1974), Frank C Rogers (1976), Frank J Dyter (1977), Jerry C W Friend (1977), Andy W Frankish (1979), Peter E Shephard (1979), Peter C Hannell (1980), Mike A Winch (1981), Ian K Young (1982), Gordon Brooks (1986), Simon Parsons (1990), Jim Phelan (1990), Nigel Keogh (1991), Trevor Llewelyn (1991), Mark I L Watling (1993), Steve J Freemantle (1995), R Colin Poole (1995), Alan R Stevens (1995), Peter A Long (1996), Nick Nuttall (1997), John E Turner (1997), Peter Lester (1998), Garry F P Spencer (1998), Bill Clapham (1999-2013), Mike J Cronin (1999), David Liston (2000), Roger A Michell (2000), Paul Byfield (2001), Roger Counter (2002), Len Dalmon (2002), Roy Smith (2002).

**Existing Vice President of Bromley AC:** David Green.**Vice Presidents of Blackheath & Bromley Harriers AC:**

John Blackie (2003 ex BAC), Willem Buttinger (2003 ex BH), Ian Dibbens (2003 ex BAC), Hilary Gibbs (2003 ex BAC), David Taylor (2003 ex BH), Simon Tolson (2003 ex BH), Myrtle Augee (2004), Julian Golding (2004), Helen Godsell (2004), Simon Lloyd (2004), Anthony Pontifex (2004), Brian Power (2004), Nick Gasson (2005), Brendan McShane (2005), Brian Hartley (2006), Paul Patten (2006), Kate Pratten (2006), Michael Skinner (2006), Ray Gibson (2007), Richard Holt (2007), Mark Purser (2007), Rob Brown (2007), Bob Minting (2007), Costas Karageorghis (2008), Tom Phillips (2008), Terri Shotton (2008), Andy Tucker (2009), Roy Watkins (2009), Allan Williams (2009), David Appleton (2010), Peter Lovell (2010), Steve Pairman (2010), Colin Rowe (2010), Paul Austridge (2011), Con Griffin (2011), Deniz Mehmed (2011), Wilf Orton (2012), Hanna Cordell (2013), Mick Jones (2013), Mike Sheppard (2013), Dave McKinlay (2014), Alex Gibbins (2014), Richard Hall (2014), Jane Bradshaw (2014), Julie Asher-Smith (2014), Marion (Maz) Turner (2015), Sheila Griffin (2015), Jackie Montgomery (2015), Adrian Stocks (2015), Tim Ayres (2015). Claire Austridge (2016), Shaunagh Brown (2016), Andy Rayner (2016), Steve Timmins (2016).

### **Photographs**

Nick Brooks and Rod Harrington.

The editing team wish to express their thanks for all those who contributed articles and photographs for this issue. The editorial team make every effort to correctly identify and credit all the photographers but occasionally this is not possible. If you took a photograph but haven't been credited please let us know and we will publish the details in the next Gazette.

