

President's Review 2017

Road Running/Cross Country 2016/17: Ian Graham

It was a successful end to 2016 for BAC in the Dorset Road Race League, with both men's and ladies' teams winning their respective Division 1s. This year is proving a little more difficult, and, at present, with two races to go, it's likely the men's team will have slipped to second or even third at the end of the year. Considering the ladies won promotion to Division 1 only a couple of years ago, they are doing very well.

On the topic of road running, many thanks to Ian White and his team for once again organising the very successful Bournemouth 10 mile road race which took place in February – a race which is so popular it fills up well before the closing date for entries, and makes a significant contribution to the club's finances.

At the end of the Hampshire Cross Country League in March, our senior men finished 3rd in Division 1 in one of the toughest Cross Country Leagues in the country and really demonstrated how strong we can be. The veteran men also performed well, finishing 3rd in Division 2 of their competition. Unfortunately, BAC's ladies were unable to field a team in the re-arranged last fixture of the season, which meant that they dropped out of the final results. There has been a solid start to the present season and after two fixtures the senior men are lying 2nd of ten teams in Division 1 of the League, and the masters ladies are also 2nd out of 20 teams.

There have been some remarkable individual performances throughout the year, more than it's possible to mention here but here are some incredible ultra runners:

In August, Anthony Clark was part of the England team in the Anglo-Celtic 100k plate and he had an exceptional run to finish 2nd and to earn a silver medal, and to be part of the England winning team. Anthony also won the Dorset Invader Marathon, a tough off-road race over the Purbeck hills.

In July, Pat Robbins was selected, not for the first time, to for the GB team in the IAU 24 hour championships held in Belfast. Although Pat suffered quad and stomach problems during the race he was part of a GB team which finished a creditable 8th of 28 teams from around the globe.

In June, Steve Way competed in the famous Comrades Marathon in South Africa a hilly - mostly uphill - 56 mile course from Durban to Pietermaritzburg. Despite injuries during his build-up, Steve finished 9th (about 20,000 start this race); just amazing. Steve was the first European to finish, and won himself a gold medal for being amongst the top ten.

Jez Bragg tackled the Berghaus Dragon's back in May, which is regarded as the world's toughest 5 day mountain running race. Jez finished fifth after five days, and the fact that only 127 of the 223 who started actually completed the course is testament to how tough this race is.

A newcomer to extreme events is Tom Paskins and, in August, Tom took part in the Extreme North Quadrathlon, in Ireland, which involves running 4 half marathons in four days. Tom won every half marathon, every day, so there was no-one to contest his title of overall winner!

Yet another of our ultra runners is Jacek Cieluszecki who, once again, competed in the Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc, a 56k race over the Alps, taking in three countries, Italy, Switzerland and France, with an elevation gain of 3,500 metres. Jacek showed his class by finishing an astonishing 23rd of 1565 competitors. In July, Jacek had another success, finishing an amazing 5th of 600 or so in the Eiger Ultra Trail, a race of 51k with an elevation gain of 3,100 metres. Oh, and, by the way, Jacek also won the Red Bulls Wings for Life race, the Poole 10k, the Portland 10k and the Bournemouth Marathon!

But maybe one of the most incredible feats of the year was achieved by our guest this evening, Peter Thompson. Peter has been a member of BAC for some years and a valuable asset to the club, often being a vital part of team victories. However, I'm sure you'll agree that what he did this year is beyond comprehension. However, what he failed to mention that he was nominated for an award in the Pride of Britain and Peter won Fundraiser of the Year in the Meridian area.

Special thanks should go our road and cross country captain, Richard Nelson. Richard works very hard on our behalf, sometimes swimming against the tide trying to get teams out for the races which are important to the club, but he always seems to succeed, and the training schedules he produces are effective, and also popular judging by the numbers who turn out, even on a cold, horrible Tuesday evening!

SAL: Andrew Sheerin & Jemma Bates

The 2017 SAL season started with a long journey to Plymouth, but we saw the resurgent spirit in the team. Athletes stepping up to ensure every event was filled, cheering on every team mate from U17 to Masters regardless of position. We narrowly missed victory at Plymouth coming second by only 6 points... but the fire was lit.

After Plymouth there was no stopping Bournemouth as we won every other match; at home, at Swindon, at Salisbury and in the final match at Portsmouth which saw us win the league and get promotion to Div 2.

As the season developed so did the performances. Notable were Phoebe Dowson, Danielle Broom and Izzy dominating the women's throwing.

With Danny Marshall, Harriet Slade, Joy Wright, Janet Dickinson and Nicki Sandell being a force to be reckoned with on the track – senior woman's athletics is strong at Bournemouth.

Many athletes competed in events that were not their main discipline. Dan Brunsden, Adam Nicholas and Andrew Sheerin were veritable points machines on both track and field, sometimes competing in as many as 10 events. Dan and Andrew's performances in the pole vault literally

left people speechless. Notable mentions also of stunning high jump performances from Jasmine Cooke and James Glynn. Plus, the unforgettable race between Dave Parsons and Tom Cochrane.

There are too many other people to mention but the SAL is a true club event, with the majority of athletes who train at the club competing for the SAL team at some point in the season. The SAL epitomises the best in team athletics: fun, participation, a great team atmosphere and, of course, winning. Many of the teams we were up against last year commented on how much fun we were having.

Jemma and Andrew look forward to building on last year's success with an even stronger team for the coming season.

YDL Upper: William Kearsey & Paula Broom

The composite team comprising of BAC and New Forest Juniors in the Youth Development League Upper Age Group unfortunately did not have a very successful 2017 season. The sole reason for this being a lack of available athletes even though plenty are training regularly. As a result of the overall team performances over the four matches the team will remain in the lower level of the league for 2018 season. The YDL organisers have reduced the number of matches from 4 to 3 for next year so hopefully more athletes will want to compete.

The club would like to thank Paula Broom for yet again acting as manager for the team in difficult circumstances. Having said that we didn't have enough athletes there was still a strong cohort of BAC members that we must thank for making the effort to turn up - Jack Davies, Jazmin Cooke, Holly Collier, Madeleine Smith, Amelia Dobson, Danielle Broom, Isabella Shepherd, Fraser Spall, Joseph Heywood, Izzy Wedderburn, Olivia Galloway, Keelan Abley, Daniel Kirby, Lewis Sainval and Angel Kerin.

There were no pbs as far as I could see but Danielle was outstanding as always, competing despite many other competitions along with Olivia, Holly & Isabella.

YDL Lower: Caroline Batchellier

Firstly, we would like to thank all the athletes who came to the events with us, sorry if we have left anyone out. We joined forces with New Forest to compete in the YDL so we are unable to take as many athletes as we would have liked. However, our athletes were amazing, several pbs were achieved and our athletes gained a wealth of experience into the competitive world of athletics. The morale of our team was exceptional with many athletes stepping in at the last minute to compete in events that they do not specialise in, so an enormous thank you to them.

Our U13 boys were Samuel Farwell, Adam Gulliver and William Batchellier, who gained pbs in 800m and javelin. Our U15 boys were Thomas Farwell, Samuel Adams, Morgan Sommerseth who gained a PB in High Jump and Lewis Wykes who also gained a PB in Javelin. Our U13 girls were Mia Wilkinson who gained a PB in 75m and 150m and Leah Sullivan who also gained a PB in 75m. Finally, our U15 girls were Yasmin Bridet who gained a PB in 100m and Shot Put, Amelia Verney gained a PB in 200m, Sian Meadows gained a PB in Long Jump and 100m, Tamika Douch gained PB in 100m, Isabelle Franklin gained a PB in 200m and Louise Galloway who is our amazing Multi Eventer!

Thank you all so very much for being fabulous and it won't be long before we call on you again!!

Wessex League: Tom Cochrane

This season has seen an increase in those competing in the age ranges U11yrs, U13yrs and U15yrs going up from 13 in 2016/7 to 22 in 2017/18. It is hoped that the numbers competing will steadily grow as the young athletes filter through from the Wednesday Development and we recruit new middle distance /cross country coaches.

Sportshall & Quadkids: Louise Broderick

Three Sportshall league matches took place just before Christmas last year and in all three we had full teams of both Boys and Girls U11s which shows what a brilliant, enthusiastic and committed group of athletes we have at the JDL on Wednesday evenings. We had fantastic results and are continuing with great if not even better results this year. Sportshall is a great fun, multi skilled introduction to indoor athletics,

Quadkids is equally exciting taking the athletes to other athletics tracks where they are competing against other talented youngsters in the athletics world. BAC again had great teams of Boys and Girls with fantastic results including a No.1 position for one of our boys.

We have a fantastic team spirit, amazing young athletes and superb support from our parents cheering all the events and helping with officiating where asked.

We look forward to equally excellent results and performances in both Sportshall and Quadkids this year. Sportshall has got off to a fantastic start already for the U11s.

Louise adds - how brilliant it is to see BAC JDL kids at all the local school sporting events representing their schools mainly leading the field in cross country, Quadkids and Sportshall with incredible good sportsmanship and making for exciting viewing for the supporting parents.

What is obvious from these reports is the togetherness and spirit within each team. This has to come from the top so, Team Managers, please stand up and take a bow.

Some more athletes need to be mentioned for their exceptional performances during the year

Many of you will remember our inspirational Special Guest at our Presentation Evening two years ago. Luke Sinnot described how he lost both his legs to an IED in Afghanistan but with his blades he is now a successful para-athlete and following his 4th place in long jump in the World Championships, he competed for Team GB in the Invictus Games that took place in Toronto in September. There was an emotional piece on Luke on BBC about his desire to win gold in the 200m in memory of his colleague who lost a life in the same explosion. I can't imagine the euphoric feelings he must have experienced when crossing the line first in 27.99 secs but I was moved immensely when watching. To top that gold, Luke also won silver in the 100m final in 14.32 and gold in the 400m in 1.03.94.

It seems like we are in a new era. There have been fantastic performances from many athletes but there also seems to be a resurgence in the atmosphere of BAC. Road running is very strong

and the senior men and women are on a high and the juniors are starting to make their mark.

JDG night is a fantastic although we have become victims of our own success with a waiting list much bigger than the participation list – and that has gone up to 140! Better still, each year more of them are encouraged to compete as has been demonstrated by the successes of Sportshall, Quadkids, Wessex and YDL Lower and this bodes well for the future.

Many new coaches have been recruited thanks to the sterling efforts of Tom Cochrane but what I love to see are the young athletes who are involved. For example, there is one young woman who wasn't always engaged when she trained on Wednesday nights but now she is now poacher turned gamekeeper and is an assistant coach and doing very well to manage young, energetic kids.

All this makes me feel very proud to be associated with BAC and I feel very optimistic about the future.

This year our Special Olympics group celebrated 20 years in existence and I can't believe how I failed to thank the club at our celebration event in September. This was a massive oversight. You have been fantastic supporters of our group all those years and the amount of officials and young athletes helping to ensure our home competition is a complete success is overwhelming. We are often told by the competing clubs that our competition is the best in the season and that is explained by what BAC brings to the event. Thank you so much.

There has been lots of excitement and speculation on a new facility. Will we get one? Almost certainly but it won't happen anytime soon. In Kings Park? Ideally, but the orientation of the track is so important and there aren't many parts of KP where it would sit. There is a chain of events that AFCB have go through starting with planning for their proposed training complex and each step entails lengthy processes so we are in their hands. However, following a focus group meeting in October of 14 club members a report has come out from that consultation. Robin, Tim and I met with the council and the P&DM for AFCB to look at that report on Wednesday and the discussions were really encouraging. The council has issued a press release and to view the full report go to <https://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/News/Articles/article-docs/kings-park-athletics-stadium-redevelopment-consultation-and-engagement-workshop-oct-2017.pdf>

There will be further, wider consultations to take place before any site location is considered. The football club is only obliged to replace like for like so the prospect of a proper indoor training facility is not going to happen but it appears they might not be adverse to an indoor area of some description. We also have a meeting coming up with England athletics to carry out a sustainability exercise as we will need a sound business plan going forward

Finally, we come to the President's Award. I've considered probably 20 people, all exceptional people who have given so much time and energy to our club. I've looked at the roles they do, their longevity, the hours they commit and it is so hard to pick just one person from so many.

However, this person does stand out and is the very fabric of this club and if they were a stick of rock they would have BAC written along their length. This person is here week in, week out during training sessions and competitions. This person serves on different committees and officiates, not only at our competitions but much further afield. This person also competes, team manages and coaches. This person organises so much of our competitions beforehand and few people realise the amount of work that goes into this. This is the go to person if you want to know anything about the club.

Actually, I lied as this not one person but two and I want to break with tradition and make this a joint award so I hope this is allowed. They come as a package and I couldn't award one without the other so this year's award goes to Hazel and Jemma Bates.