



## SUSSEX COUNTY ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION

President: Roland Garrad

### Report to the Annual General Meeting on Friday 20th October 2017

'London 2017 has given athletics the opportunity to believe again', was the headline in a broadsheet the day after the World Athletics Championships ended. "What we have witnessed this week will inspire a generation of young people. We have shown that, when we get it right, this sport is unassailable," said Lord Coe.

It is absolutely right that we celebrate the sport we love (and protest about the elements we dislike!) but the reality is that British athletics enjoyed limited success until the final weekend of the World's when Mo Farah added a 5000m silver to his 10000m gold and the relay Men and Women entirely justified their funding by helping Athletics hit its UK Sport target of at least six medals.

It was a great 10 days of athletics but can people stay inspired when facilities are being closed down, cut in half (Horsham's Tube) or are poorly maintained, when decisions are being made that divert money away from the grassroots, when clubs have lengthy waiting lists and little possibility of recruiting/attracting new coaches and when active officials are becoming a rare breed?

In terms of Sussex, two of last year's four Rio Olympians were selected for the World's - Lewes' Rob Mullett and Horsham based Jade Lally. They are both the leading British athletes but neither had the Championships they would have wanted. Mullett was below par in the 3000 metre steeplechase and did not qualify for the final and Lally too, recovering from injury, did not make it through the discus round.

There were many wonderful performances across the year. Sussex has National Champions both in the Masters and the U13 girls cross-country age groups, a European Under 20 sprints Champion, a European Masters Hammer best, a Commonwealth Youth Games double medallist, UK Under 13 pole vault and Masters 400m Hurdles records. There were numerous national and regional track and field and cross country podium places plus an unprecedented number of County records broken, including the 110m hurdles Under 20 best that had stood for half a century.

Stuart Condie and Keith May have continued to represent Sussex's views effectively on the Regional Council. Graham Jessop has been elected to the UKCAU to give us a voice there too.

In the past year Kate Matthews and Shelley Baker took over management of the May County Championships, Caroline Waterworth took on the Under 13 Champs and Under 11 Quadkids competition, Noel Butler and Elise Lovell stepped up to manage the Senior Inter-Counties teams, Tom Ulliott became Under 20 and Senior Women's XC team manager and Bruce Warren and Steve Hardman of Brighton Phoenix answered the call and brought in fresh ideas to ensure the Road Relays went ahead. Sussex AA thanks them and thanks ALL the officials, officers, coaches and

helpers – the volunteers who give up many hours of their time to ensure athletics happens in our county. You are appreciated.

Sussex AA was saddened to report the death of coach and official Irene Parsley from cancer in May. Irene, 67, became an active member of Haywards Heath Harriers in the early 1990's after her two daughters joined the club. She helped coach the junior section and also qualified as a field official. In this role she regularly attended events throughout the county, most recently the 2016-17 Sportshall league at Horsham, in spite of her illness.

Irene was a keen veteran athlete and competed in a range of events from sprints and middle distance to parkruns, jumps and throws. She was a particularly good hammer thrower and was ranked high in her age group until illness forced her to stop competing. We thank Irene for all that she contributed to her club and the county.

Reports of activities within the various areas of the county across the year are presented below.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**PETER MASTERS, CHAIRPERSON**

### **THE CHANGING SCENE**

When the Development Committee reported to the AGM last year, it highlighted the potential future loss of significant income to England Athletics from Sport England. This has been the situation and whilst the Governing Body continued to produce strategies and longer terms plans, the financial resources required to carry them out was severely limited.

In anticipation of this situation the Development Committee continued to undertake activities to ensure that the County Association was in a position to continue to thrive and prosper. Its work to streamline the constitution was approved by the Association. This included the creation of a smaller Executive Committee and the formalisation of four Executive Panels.

The terms of reference of the Executive Panels have been approved. The aim is to bring a more Focused approach to the work of the panels. These cover Track and Field, Road Running, Cross-Country and Race Walking.

To ensure that the County Association is able to make informed decision about its future activities and its budget, new arrangements have been put in place. These involve the presentation of the projected financial situation over a five-year period set against existing and future activities.

### **RUN ENGLAND**

The loss of financial support in March meant that the Run England initiative stopped being promoted through the County. Financial support for bursaries, leaders' workshops and first aid sessions ended. The Committee decided if it was to continue it should be a Sussex Active initiative.

## **ENGLAND ATHLETICS COACH AND CLUB SUPPORT**

The England Athletics loss of finance meant that many staff were made redundant and job descriptions changed. Elspeth Turner the well-respected Coach and Club support officer for this area was a casualty of this change and a new person has been appointed. The area for the new Club Support Manager now covers Berkshire, Hampshire the Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire and Sussex. Elspeth has agreed to be a member of the Sussex Development Committee.

## **COUNTY IMAGE AND WEB SITE**

The new web site has been in operation for some time. It has been widely recognised that the image it projects of the County is very positive however, there still some issues to address. On-line entry for County events has been built into the web site by Open Track a company that specialises in this area.

## **SQUADS AND MASTER CLASSES**

The under 13 Track and Field and Endurance squads were again successfully organised. Currently the squads are being planned to operate on the same way as previously.

Investigations are in hand to again organise master classes in specific events for under 15 and under 17 athletes. Triple jump and hurdles master classes were arranged in March and led by Olympians Tosin Oke and Lorna Booth respectively.

Rick Pilling organised a number of successful 'intro to' pole vault sessions. In view of the ongoing support and success of Rick Pilling and the many top 10 UK ranked pole vaulters from Sussex, a £4,000 grant was made to purchase poles for young athletes.

A session aimed at informing those thinking of continuing their educational and sporting careers in the USA took place in March. More than 50 athletes and parents attended.

## **CROSS-COUNTRY**

### **PHIL BAKER, EXECUTIVE PANEL XC**

The 2016 – 2017 Cross-Country season has seen the Sussex County scene flourish which in turn has resulted in a number of fine individual and team performances in area and National championships for both clubs and schools.

## **CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Once again the **Main Championships** were held at Bexhill and the Masters at Lancing Manor and our thanks to Hastings and Worthing Striders for hosting and providing two well organised and competitive meetings.

Our junior individual county champions were Bethany Cook (Bodyworks) and Jack Gardiner (Lewes) for the under 13's, Maya Ramnarine (Hastings) and Leo Brewer (Phoenix) for the under 15's and Almi Nerurkar (Phoenix) and Jess Magorrian (Hastings) for the under 17's. Team wise Brighton &

Hove excelled themselves by winning four of the team races, the exceptions being the under 13 boys which went to Worthing and the under 17 men which went to Chichester.

Kennagh Marsh (Crawley) and Daniel Stidder (Phoenix) won the under 20 age groups while Nicole Taylor (Tonbridge) beat Emma Dixon for the women's crown for her first senior county title while the men's race was won once again by Jon Pepper (Phoenix) ahead of Tom Evans (Lewes).

There was much excitement in the men's team race with Hastings lifting the trophy for the first time in their history just four points clear of Brighton & Hove, which capped a great championships for the host club. Lewes won the women's team race also for the first time.

The **Masters Championships** were again held on the top part of the Lancing Manor course and a fine day greeted the runners with some competitive racing throughout the programme.

Howard Bristow (Brighton & Hove), Paul Cousins (Haywards Heath) and John Lowden (Brighton & Hove) won the over 40, 50 and 60 men's races respectively with Crawley's over 60 men preventing a Brighton & Hove clean sweep for the team awards while Caroline Hoyte (Arena 80) won the over 45 women's race with an outright win over the whole field with Dani Tarleton (Arena 80) first over 35 and Karin Divall (Lewes) first over 55. Arena 80 continued their stranglehold in both team races.

The season started on 1<sup>st</sup> October with the **Cross-country Relay Championships** at Goodwood with a record number of 140 team taking part over the age groups. In the junior races Hastings notched up a double win in both under 15 races while for the seniors Lewes were delighted to win both the men's and women's races for the first time.

## **SUSSEX LEAGUE**

The number of athletes competing in the league fixtures continues to grow with a new record of over 600 in the second fixture at Lancing. The season started well at Goodwood with Chichester hosting and it was good for athletes and spectators alike to return to Stanmer Park in Brighton in December for the first time for a league fixture in several years. The final fixture in February was held again at Hickstead although there was concern from John Gill and his Haywards Heath team after the Hickstead authorities had imposed restrictions at the last minute over which ground was available to the league after recent heavy rain. After negotiation with the authorities, it was decided to go ahead with the fixture over a much reduced course, which in itself was quite challenging but needing the senior men to run multiple laps. Thanks go to all four host clubs for another first-rate league season.

## **AREA, INTER-COUNTY AND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

In the main **CAU championships at Loughborough**, the four Sussex junior teams all finish in the top 10 with the under 13 boys 7<sup>th</sup>, the under 13 girls 8<sup>th</sup>, and both under 15 teams 10<sup>th</sup> each. In addition we had an outstanding individual winner with Bethany Cook romping home clear of her rivals in the under 13 girls race. Both senior teams fared well with the women in 9<sup>th</sup> place led home by Nicole Taylor in 12<sup>th</sup>. The men were just 2 places lower in 11<sup>th</sup>. In the **Southern Inter-Counties in December at Oxford** it was the senior women who were the best placed Sussex team in 2<sup>nd</sup> place with Emma Dixon a fine individual 7<sup>th</sup>. The under 13 girls finished 4<sup>th</sup> and once again Bethany Cook triumphed to win the race. Thanks go to our team managers for all their hard work in getting the county so well represented in both events: Gail Nerurkar, Virginia Fonteyn, Tom Ulliott and Dave Leach.

# **ROAD RUNNING**

## **BOB PAGE, EXECUTIVE PANEL**

Last year saw an increase in the numbers entering road races and this has continued. Several races have closed entries early. This has allowed other events on the same day to increase their normally static numbers. It is debateable whether this is down to the knock on effect of parkrun, with 13 events up and running and several more in the pipeline, and thus athletes requiring a greater challenge. Whatever the reason, road running is very healthy in the County. The large privately run races are very well supported and however you view this, it is improving the health and wellbeing of people.

Brighton Phoenix took over the main role of organising the Sussex Road Relays and used a novel method of a changeover by using a chipped baton supplied by Nice Work race management. It was great to see new ideas coming through and to see Brighton Phoenix, supported by Sussex AA officials, putting on a top class event. Brighton Phoenix also did the double when they retained their senior men's title but also won the senior women's title for what is believed to be the first time.

For the second year running the Sussex 10k Championship was also hosted by Brighton Phoenix as part of their annual event on Hove Seafront. This race was part of the Harvey Curtis Sussex Road Race Challenge. I was once again the race adjudicator and due to the previous years excellent hosting of this event and positive feedback from runners I had no hesitation in using it again. Very smooth organisation combined with a cracker of a race once again showed how healthy racing is in Sussex.

In 2018 the Championships will be hosted as part of the Chichester 10k at Goodwood Motor Racing Circuit and even though Brighton is central across the county it is necessary to offer this race to other areas and I am sure it will be very well organised as always.

The Sussex Half Marathon Champs were incorporated into the Barns Green Half who have a history of hosting first class events and attracting very good numbers. Once again Harvey Curtis used this event as part of their series, which helped bring quality in across the upper levels of competitiveness. No decision has yet been made on 2018 venue.

So many thanks to Brighton Phoenix and Barns Green race teams for enabling Sussex to use their events for the champs. Perhaps we should look at hosting our own 5k/10k and bring in funds to support athletic development. The problem would be finding an organiser, as we all know how hard it is to get people to do these things.

Many thanks go to Harvey Curtis for once again sponsoring the Sussex Road Race Challenge, which has seen year on year greater commitment from clubs and a marked increase in quality, which is where it is pitched. Harvey Curtis will also sponsor the series into 2018, which can only be very good for continuity and Sussex Road Running as a whole. A special mention to Matt and David Bradford for ensuring this commitment from Harvey Curtis continues and also for all their hard work behind the scenes in promoting the series by many social media, top work chaps!

A fabulous new initiative has come late in the year created by Elspeth Turner who has put a vast amount of work into creating a Sussex Road Running forum with its first meeting throwing up great

ideas and educating clubs about what is available in the County for road running. At the meeting we had representatives from Harvey Curtis, Sussex Grand Prix, West Sussex Fun Run League and many years of experience from club members across the county who are involved in parkruns and the East Sussex XC League. So as you can see a marvellous initiative and all credit to Elspeth for putting it together.

Some would say road running has far too many races, parkruns, leagues and outside corporate type events muscling in but from a road runners point of view it is a wonderful time to be able to pick and choose events which suit your ability, time and social needs. The forum is key to tying all this together and I hope Sussex clubs can find the time to support this great initiative, which will ultimately benefit their own clubs and give athletes across Sussex developmental opportunities.

## **SUSSEX SPORTSHALL LEAGUE**

### **JOHN LINFIELD, LEAGUE MANAGER**

The two Sportshall leagues at Horsham and Worthing have continued successfully. There are five clubs in the Horsham league with fixtures held at Tanbridge House School and four clubs in the Worthing league with fixtures held at the Lancing Leisure Centre. The Horsham League includes events for Under 15's whereas the Worthing League caters more for the younger age groups.

Sussex competed in the Regional Inter County fixtures held at Burgess Hill, with teams selected based on individual performances at the league matches. The results were superb. The Under 13 Girls, Under 15 Boys and Under 15 Girls teams all finished 3rd and the Under 13 Boys came 4th out of seven competing counties. A special thanks to team manager, Kim Milnthorpe, for organising the teams.

Seb Wallace and Cleo Tomlinson, both from Horsham, qualified to compete as individuals in the National Finals at Manchester. Both had been selected for being the leading competitors in Standing Triple Jump from the eight Regional Sportshall finals. They had tremendous performances in the Finals with Seb becoming the Under 13 Boys Standing Triple Jump champion and Cleo finishing a close 2nd in the Under 13 Girls event.

Amber Anning of Brighton, last year's UK All Rounder Champion, was at the National Finals to encourage athletes and award medals in her final outing as the UK Sportshall Ambassador.

## **SUSSEX INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS**

### **MARTIN ETCHELLS, MEETING MANAGER**

The Sussex Indoor championships, which were held as usual in conjunction with Surrey Championships at Sutton, produced five Championship Best Performances despite slightly lower entries than the previous year.

The records however were well spread between the age groups with Veteran Clayton Turner (Crawley) setting a new mark in the Senior Men's shot putt with 11.60m. His club mate George Turner set a CBP of 4.30m in the U20 pole vault and another Crawley member; Lillie Franks took the Senior Women's HJ mark to 1.73m.

Two Horsham athletes gained CBP's. They were Alex Wadley (U17 triple jump - 12.26m) and Edward Crossman (4.34m in the u13 long jump).

In the U15 high jump Tom Ridley from Worthing equalled the CBP with a leap of 1.70m.

## **RACE WALKING**

### **RON PENFOLD, EXECUTIVE PANEL**

It has been another good year for the Sussex walking section, with more athletes joining our ranks, both in the younger age groups, and at Senior/Masters levels. We now have about 25 walkers who have raced at some point throughout the year.

Three new walkers joined Lewes AC this year and the club now has a larger number of walkers than Steyning AC, who have, for a long time, been the dominant walking club in Sussex. This is almost entirely down to Peter Selby, who holds coaching courses at Lewes on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. However, Steyning AC is still the top club for walking results both nationally and internationally.

Results wise, the top walker again has been Ian Richards M65 (Steyning AC), who placed 2nd in both the 5K and 10K in Perth Australia in the World Masters Track & Field Championship. He repeated this feat in the 5K and 20K at the Indoor WMA Championships in Korea, and again in Aarhus at the European T&F Championships. Richards also won most of the BMAF Championships.

Ron Penfold M75 (Steyning AC) won three BMAF Titles, with Ian and Ron setting Sussex Age Records along the way.

Ollie Hopkins has been our best youngster and has had some good results: 2nd in the RWA Inter Area U20M 5K, 2nd Home Counties Inter County 3K and winning the SEAA U20M 5K. Again due to fixture clashes Ollie was our only entrant in the Main Inter Counties T&F Championships. This could be better supported. We can only encourage walkers to enter but sometimes there are just too many races about, most of which involve travelling.

We had three walkers at the English Schools Race Walking Championships, which has not happened for a long time There were sixth places for Lewes walkers Lauren Morse, in the Junior girls 3000m in 19:41.58s and Eva Payton-White in the Intermediate (U17) 3,000m in 17:58.34s. There were high hopes for Ollie Hopkins in the senior boys 5,000m event but unfortunately he was disqualified when challenging for a medal.

Some of the athletes take part in the parkrun events, which I think is a good advert for our sport and hopefully might inspire a few more people to try race walking.

We look forward to continuing our improving fortunes in the following 12 months.

# **TRACK & FIELD**

## **MAY CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Former Brighton and Hove AC athletes Shelley Baker and Kate Matthews successfully took over the organisation of the main Sussex County Track and Field Championships, which returned to K2, Crawley after a sojourn to Withdean in 2016. Over an exciting weekend several records came crashing down.

Ben Hawkes (WDH) launched a massive effort in the U17 hammer to add 10 metres to the five-year-old mark with 71.97m. Later Hawkes attacked a 35-year-old discus CBP and became the first to top the fifty-metre mark with 50.49m.

There was a thrilling one lap when the senior and under 20 women's 400 metres were combined. As the runners entered the final straight, two seniors, Mandy Gault (Portsmouth) and Crawley's Holly Turner were neck and neck with 16-year-old Amber Anning (Brighton & Hove), who was running up an age group to get the standard for the Commonwealth Youth Games later in the season. It was Anning who proved the stronger over the final 100 metres and she flashed across the line in a personal best of 54.88s, a qualifying standard and more than one second inside club mate Gaby Howell's 56.07s seventeen year old CBP. Gault was also inside the nine-year-old CBP in 55.31s.

In the U15 girl's 300m, Molly Swingler (EBR) clocked 42.28s in the final for a new record. Cleo Tomlinson (HBS) leapt 5.30m to equal Brighton & Hove's Lucy Ramsay's sixteen-year-old record Long Jump record.

Millie Noyce (CRA) broke the year old shot putt CBP with a fine effort of 11.69m while Scott Staples (LEW) bettered the U20 Javelin CBP with 58.35m. In the U17 Women's Pole Vault Natasha Purchas (CRA) soared over 3.52m to add one centimetre to the previous record.

Cameron Fillery (B&H), who had recently set a new U20M 110m hurdles record beating Andy Todd's 50-year-old record, took a cleaver to the 32-year-old 14.5s CBP of Crawley's James Mason's. Fillery battled into a strong headwind to win in 14.01s.

## **SUSSEX MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

There was a European and two British records at the Sussex Masters Championships at Ewell held in conjunction with Surrey AA.

Former Commonwealth Games champion Mick Jones from Crawley hurled the 6kg hammer 69.04m to break not only the M50 British but also the European record while in the W45 age group Brighton & Hove's Julia Machin, a former Commonwealth Games high jumper, set a British record when winning the 400m hurdles in 64.56s.

## **U13 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

In near perfect weather conditions, there was just one record breaking performance at the Sussex Under 13 Championships, which took place at Brighton's Withdean stadium in early July. Hastings Kyrell Wilson took the 800m title in 2:16.35, taking almost a second from the previous championship best and winning by a margin of more than five seconds.

With a fine display of front-running in the 1200m, Crawley's Nicolas Hollan-Ellidge ignored the fact that he was in the slower seeded race. He won by 23 seconds and took the overall title with a time 3:40.56, which was the UK lead this season.

Meanwhile in the javelin the UK's fourth ranked athlete, Tonbridge's Caitlin Milborne had a great series of throws and took the title with 32.45m.

## **3000M CHAMPIONSHIPS UNDER 15 BOYS**

Competing at the distance in which his older brother Aaron holds the Championship record, Crawley's Callum Stone was a stand out winner of the under 15 Boys 3000m. His winning time of 9:34.65 was 18 seconds ahead of the silver medallist.

## **QUADKIDS UNDER 11 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

In both the boys and girls competitions strong performances in the throws were the game changers. For the boys Brighton's Louis Opoku launched the Vortex Neuf out to 41.20 metres. This was an outstanding distance helped secure the young athlete the top spot on the podium.

Louis club mate Dulcie Yelling's throw of 37.10m was in a class apart and this too propelled her to victory in the girls' competition.

## **WHEELCHAIR OPEN**

Sussex AA was delighted to again welcome three athletes to the open wheel chair races over 100m and 800m. Nathan Freeman, Michelle (Mic) Riddy and Martin Leppard all from Worthing, competed in both races.

## **COMBINED EVENTS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

In September while the youngsters provided the numbers of competitors but it was 60-year-old Brian Slaughter who provided the records at the Sussex Combined Events championships at Sutton. Slaughter from Eastbourne Rovers has been a fixture of the Sussex athletics scene for the past forty years and he has always been a force in whatever age group he is.

Slaughter, had won the National M60 Decathlon title at Sheffield the previous weekend with 7,075 points, where he also beat American opponent in the Biannual UK/USA match.

## **INTER-COUNTIES TEAMS**

### **SENIOR**

It was very much a skeleton team that struggled into sixth place of the eight competing Counties at the annual event South-East Inter-Counties at Kingsmeadow in early July, but there were some outstanding performances by Sussex athletes.

A highlight was a personal best high jump by U20 performer Harry Baker who topped the two-metre barrier for the first time and then soared over 2.05m to win the competition and move into seventh place on the Sussex All-Time list.

Returning from a back injury Chris Scott from Loxwood, made his Sussex debut and moved into fourth place on the Sussex All Time discus list by placing second in that event with a throw of 53.84m.

### **CAU/ ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS**

A superb gold medal for Kimbeley Baptiste was one of just two medals for Sussex at the combined England and CAU championships at Bedford on the last weekend of July. The Crawley sprinter dominated the race from the start to retain her title in 23.54s.

A second medal came in the 3,000m walk where Emily Ghose from Crowborough, who is in the U20 age group and competes for Tonbridge, took the silver medal in 15:34.69s.

### **UNDER 13**

Worthing's Bailey Smith and Burgess Hill/Lewes athlete Adam Lawson were two of the stars of the County's team at the annual fixture at Kingston. Despite cross winds and increasingly wet and dreary weather Bailey won his individual 'A' 100m race in 12.7s and was second fastest overall in the event before running a swift 25.58s for another second place in the 'A' 200m. This was a personal best and took him to twelfth in the UK rankings. Adam won the 'B' string 200m in 26.35s, a PB and also set a best in the 100m.

The South-East is the strongest region in the UK and this was reflected in Sussex's final position in both competitions. Out of the 13 counties participating the boys came eighth and the girls' team was ninth.

### **UNDER 15/UNDER 20**

There were five Sussex winners on a rain and windswept day at Horspath, Oxford, in the Southern U15 and U20 Inter-county match on 9<sup>th</sup> September Holiday's played havoc with most County teams but the Sussex Under 15s excelled themselves with a fantastic second team spot scoring 123.5 points to the winning Kent team's 124.5 while the decimated Under 20 squad, ably supplemented by some U17 athletes did exceptionally well to finish in sixth team place.

Three of the winners came in the U20 match and each one was an U17 athlete. Anning won the U20 100m in her one and only race over this distance this season. Her time into driving rain was an outstanding 11.79s, which equalled the longstanding former Sussex senior record held by Carley

Wenham. The time was also the second fastest by a British Under 17 this season. Also in the U20 group Rafe Brooks, the Southern Champion, again improved his personal best when winning with a leap of 6.68m a leap that is just two centimetres shy of the best leap by a Sussex senior athlete this season. The third U20 victory came from Natasha Purchas who, in very difficult conditions won the pole vault clearing 3.30m. The other two victories came in the jumping events in the U15 group with William Snashall clearing 3.40m to win the pole vault and Ruby Jerges who leapt 5.16m to win the long jump.

## **SUSSEX TRACK & FIELD LEAGUES**

### **VETERANS LEAGUE**

There were four fixtures this summer over the course of the League, which is now in its fourth successful year. They were shared between Eastbourne and Lewes with Brighton hosting one fixture. The final result in July gave the Men's title to Eastbourne Rovers and the Women's title to Brighton & Hove.

### **UNDER 13/UNDER 15 LEAGUES**

Many records were broken throughout the season – the U15 girls 800m and javelin changed hands on a match-by-match basis. Crawley won the West League and Brighton the East, before all the teams met for the League Finals in early September.

Crawley collected their sixth team victory in the Sussex U15 League final at Brighton's Withdean Stadium on Friday 1st September. However, the following Sunday at the Under 13 League Final on a damp, murky day at Crawley's K2 stadium, a neck and neck battle for the League crown went to the wire before Brighton and Hove got the better of the home team.

## **SUSSEX SCHOOLS**

### **CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPS, ENGLISH SCHOOLS & SIAB**

Once again the **County schools championships** were held at Waterhall north of Brighton with the midweek date continuing to prove popular with schools and resulting in another record turnout. As a result, the County was able to send strong teams to Norwich for the **English Schools Championships** with the boys finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in the top Division with only Essex, Kent, Hants and Surrey narrowly ahead on aggregate. Both junior and senior boys were 9<sup>th</sup> but it was the Inter boys led home by Brighton & Hove's Tom Eames in 10<sup>th</sup>, who finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> overall also won the trophy as the first team to close in their eight runners in the process.

Topping this placing were the junior girls who excelled themselves with a runners-up second place to London with an inspired Bethany Cook in second place overall in spite of running against second year under 15's. With the inter girls in 5<sup>th</sup>; it was only an incomplete five runners for the seniors which

prevented the girls from matching the boys in a top aggregate placing. However this must rank as one of the best overall results in the county's history.

12-year-old Cook gained automatic selection for the Home Countries Schools' International the following weekend at Port Talbot, where despite being the youngest athlete in the race, she ran brilliantly to come fourth.

### **SOUTH-EAST SCHOOLS XC INTER-COUNTIES**

A sparkling run from Daniel Stidder was the highlight of the Sussex performances at the South East Schools Inter-counties match at Brands Hatch.

Over a flat and fast course Stidder, the County Schools champion, was always at the head of the senior (U19) boy's field and drew clear towards the finish for a convincing victory against some strong Home Counties competition.

### **TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Five Championships Best Performances were set at the 84<sup>th</sup> Sussex Schools Track and Field Championships in June.

Worthing's U17M Ben Hawkes launched the hammer to 68.86m and improved the previous record by eight metres. Anouska Fairhurst from Lewes set a CBP in the U15G javelin with a throw of 37.84m. Crawley's Abigail Packham broke the year old U15G 75m hurdles CBP with a run of 11.19s - also a county record.

The fourth CBP came in the junior boy's long jump where Crawley's Adam Lindo removed a mark that was set nearly 40 years ago, jumping 6.12m into a head wind. The final record was in the U17 3000m where all the races were merged and Brighton Phoenix's Almi Nerurkar chopped 40 seconds off the 1996 CBP with 9:44.1s.

### **SCHOOLS INTER-COUNTIES**

The Junior girls squad excelled themselves in the annual South East Schools Inter-county match at Basingstoke despite travel problems. Road conditions on the A3 were so bad in the scorching sun that the Team Coach arrived more than an hour later than planned and some athletes, who came direct, got out of their cars and went straight to the start line while several did not make it in time. The yearly match again against, Hampshire, Surrey and Kent is always a tough one for Sussex but the junior girls were inspired and finished second to Hampshire though overall the Sussex team placed fourth.

### **WORLD SCHOOLS ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Competing for the England Schools team in the 15th Jean Humbert Memorial ISF World Schools Athletics Championships at Nancy, France Amber Anning (Brighton & Hove) coasted to a convincing victory in the U17 400 metres. Run as a straight final Anning smashed the Sussex U17 and U20 records with 54.23s beating the 13-year-old record set by fellow Brighton & Hove athlete Gaby Howell of 54.7s. Anning was the first ever Sussex winner at these championships. She later came

second in the Triple Jump and was the 300m-leg runner in the England record breaking medley relay team, which set a World Schools Championship Record.

### **SOUTH-EAST SCHOOLS COMBINED EVENTS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

The Sussex Schools junior Boy's team were outstanding at the South-East Schools Combined Events championships at Kingsmeadow. With a series of fine performances Crawley's Adam Lindo and Eastbourne's Spike Gleave filled the first two places in the Pentathlon and with Seb Wallace and Worthing's Tom Ridley placing eighth and ninth. The Sussex team trounced Hampshire by nearly three hundred points for victory. The win gained then an automatic place in the England Schools Final in September.

In the junior girl's pentathlon, where Sussex lost one of their quartet, they put up a good fight but were squeezed into fourth team place with 7747 points. Horsham's Ruby Jerges finished 11<sup>th</sup> and her clubmates Cleo Tomlinson and Isabelle Humphrey's were 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

In the senior Girls Heptathlon Crawley's April Hanslow had two terrific days of competition to finish fifth overall and gained a place in the Schools Finals in September as did Brighton & Hove's Matt Smith in the Senior Boys Decathlon and Ruby Jerges.

### **ENGLISH SCHOOLS TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

A superb two days in Birmingham saw the Sussex Schools team record one of their best ever English Schools results adding one to last year's tally of five gold medals and overall equalling the 2016 total of 10 medals.

An excellent series of throws from Lizzie Korczak, culminating in a 41.26m javelin PB, in the Junior Girls competition and a splendid Long Jump PB of 6.35m from Adam Lindo gave Sussex a great start at the 2017 English Schools Track and Field championships at Birmingham as they gained Gold medals on the first day. On Day two hurdlers Orla Brothers and Cameron Fillery both dominated their events. Brothers unbeaten by British opposition this season, took the win in Senior Girls 400m Hurdles in 59.46s. In the Senior 110m hurdles final Fillery's power over the second half of the race saw him shake off his rivals for a convincing gold medal in 13.76s.

Ben Hawkes, in the intermediate (U17) hammer, won with 68.23m. This effort earned the Worthing thrower a place in the English Schools' team for the Home Countries International match the following weekend. The final gold medal came from the UK fourth ranked U20 high jumper, Lillie Franks, who secured her first national title with 1.72m.

In total 20 Sussex athletes placed in the top six of their events.

### **SIAB SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL**

Ben Hawkes from Worthing continued his unbeaten record with the U17 hammer in Dublin representing England in the Schools International. Hawkes was the only Sussex athlete to make the English Schools team and he was a convincing winner with 63.86m.

Sussex athletes won two events at the Schools Games at Loughborough in early September, one of which was a Sussex record. Racing for the last time, as an U17 over 300 metres, Amber Anning won by more than ten metres in 37.79s. This clocking was not only well inside the Sussex record she had set earlier in the season but was a Championship record and the fourth fastest time ever by a British U17 athlete and the world youth lead. Anning collected another gold medal when she anchored the England South 4 x 300m relay team to a clear victory and another CBP. The other individual victory fell to Ben Hawkes. His winning throw of 68.21m was nine metres above his nearest rival.

In the pole vault Crawley's Natasha Purchas, who had broken her own Sussex record when she cleared 3.82m at the Crawley Bank Holiday Monday meeting, took second place with 3.61m. There was a fourth placing for Eastbourne sprinter Bailey Wright who clocked a splendid 11.10 into a head wind in the 100m.

### **ESAA COMBINED EVENTS FINAL**

The Sussex Junior (U15) boys' team won the England Schools team championship at Boston in mid September, after a tremendous battle with Essex

The Sussex quartet took the title with a total of 8276 points to 8224 with Somerset in third place with 7752. Adam Lindo just missed out on winning an individual medal but gained selection for his first International match.

Lindo, who triumphed at the English Schools in the long jump in July, has had a tremendous season and was fourth overall with 2906. Spike Gleave finished a magnificent seventh; Tom Ridley placed an excellent 13th while Seb Wallace, who has another year in the age group, finished in 17<sup>th</sup>. All the boys posted Personal Best scores.

Although Sussex had won several team titles at these championships in recent years this was the first time they had won the Junior Boys title.

## NOTABLE PERFORMANCES

*(NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE IN THE REPORT)*

### **OCTOBER 2016**

Brighton's Dan Lawson is the World's top "24 hour" runner after winning the European 24 hour event at Albi, France covering 261.84 km, which is approximately 163 miles. This is the third longest distance ever achieved by a British runner.

Kevin Rojas (Brighton & Hove) had an ideal race to take the bronze medal in the British Half-marathon championship in a personal best of 66.38. Later in the month Rojas made an impressive international debut for England at the Scotiabank Waterfront Toronto Marathon finishing ninth in 2:24.53.

Haywards Heath Harriers make history as their Senior Men's team won the opening Sussex Cross-Country League match for the first time.

### **NOVEMBER**

At the World Masters Championships in Perth Phil Spivey (EGR) a 1986 a Commonwealth Bronze medallist in the hammer competed in the M55 11.34k and the 6kg hammer competitions winning both titles with 20.68m and 60.08m respectively.

**BRITISH AND IRISH MASTERS INTERNATIONAL CROSS-COUNTRY MATCH AT GLASGOW:** There were triple triumphs for Sussex athletes this event. Howard Bristow achieved double gold in the M40 age taking the individual title and leading the England team to victory. In the W35 Worthing's Emma Macready was a convincing winner of her event and also collected a silver medal in the team event. Making his international debut Brighton & Hove's John Lowden won the M60 and is a bronze medallist for England in the team event.

### **JANUARY 2017**

**NATIONAL INDOOR COMBINED EVENTS CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Elise Lovell from Hastings secured Silver in the Senior Women's pentathlon at Sheffield with 3778 points. Meanwhile Brighton & Hove's Katie Garland won bronze in the U23 Women's competition with 3599 points. Lovell's success earns her GB selection for the Indoor Pentathlon at Prague later in the month.

**SOUTH OF ENGLAND U17/U15 INDOOR CHAMPS:** Natasha Purchas won gold in the U17 Pole vault with a 3.40m clearance and Brighton Phoenix's Alex Brothwell was the gold medallist in the U15 1500m in 4:59.36s.

**SOUTH OF ENGLAND SENIOR U20 CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Sussex athletes scooped up a hat trick of gold medals. Elise Lovell dominated the senior long jump leaping to 5.87m. The other gold medals came in the U20 age group with Brighton & Hove's Cameron Fillery showing excellent form in the

60m hurdles to win in 7.92s whilst George Turner (Crawley) clearing 4.30m for the gold in the pole vault.

**INTERNATIONAL COMBINED EVENTS:** Elise Lovell was in action for Great Britain in Prague and she strung together a fine series of performance to place 11th in the Pentathlon with a total of 3892 points - two hundred points more than her previous best effort.

In Vienna Seb Rodger from Eastbourne, took second place in the 400m Hurdles in 46.98s.

At Bratislava Brighton & Hove's Ian Crowe-Wright, making his England debut, finished third in the 1,500m in 3:52.90s while Finley Bigg (Phoenix) placed fourth in the 800 metres in 1:56.29s.

## **FEBRUARY**

**BUCS:** On the final day of the BUCS Indoor championships at Sheffield Elise Lovell struck gold in the Long Jump with 5.88m

**U15/U17 NATIONAL INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Gold for Millie Noyce in the U15G shot putt with 12.47m, Silver for U17 Amber Anning over 200m and Bronzes for Cameron Fillery in the U20 60mH and Tom Eames in the U17 1500m.

## **MARCH**

**INTER-COUNTY 20-MILE:** Sussex runners gained two team and one individual bronze medals in the Inter-county 20-mile event, which was incorporated into the Essex Championships at Langham. This was the county's first venture into the invitation-only event. In foul conditions at the start the men and women's teams both secured bronze medals and with an in-form Helen Buller winning an individual bronze as well.

## **APRIL**

Having lost 2016 to injury, racing in Torremolinos, Crawley's Orla Brothers broke the Sussex U20 400mH record with a time of 60.5s.

Crawley U15 Abigail Packham tops the National Rankings in the 75m hurdles after a cracking 11.3s at her home track.

**BUCS:** Elise Lovell wins the first medal for Sussex with a bronze in the Long Jump (5.62m). Livvy Connor adds a second bronze in the Pole Vault clearing 3.70m

**MARATHON SABLES:** Sussex Cross-Country silver medallist Tom Evans of Lewes becomes the first European runner to achieve a podium place in the 32-year history of the notorious Marathon Sables in Morocco. This is an extremely tough event consisting of five marathons and one double marathon, a total of 250km in temperatures of up to 50 degrees in successive day.

**LONDON MARATHON:** Horsham's Elspeth Turner wins W50 at London Marathon with a nippy personal best of 2:57:52s

## MAY

One of the oldest Sussex records tumbled when Brighton & Hove's Cameron Fillery smashed club mate Andy Todd's **50-year-old** Under 20 110m Hurdles record of 14.2s. Competing at the Newham Open Fillery became the first Sussex athlete to break the 14 second barrier and he did it twice. In his first race he recorded 13.84s and then improved to 13.71s but unfortunately the 13.71s mark was wind assisted so the Sussex record is 13.84s.

Lewes Steeplechaser Rob Mullett zoomed to the top of the British steeplechase rankings with a World Championships qualifying time of 8:30.06s in Los Angeles.

**LOUGHBOROUGH INTERNATIONAL MEETING:** Two Sussex hurdlers broke their own records. Cameron Fillery finished seventh in a senior 110m hurdles over 3' 6" hurdles in 14.23s which lifted him to third position on the Sussex All-Time lists. He then lined up in his proper age group for the British Junior team and was second in 13.69s over the 3' 3" barriers to improve the County record he set earlier in the month. Meanwhile, in the 400m hurdles Orla Brothers finished fourth in the Match race in 60.30s, to improve her own Sussex U20 record.

**ENGLAND COMBINED EVENTS CHAMPIONSHIPS:** There were great results for Sussex including podium places and a Sussex record at Bedford. Peter Moreno is Windsor based but retains his Sussex qualification. He came second overall and smashed Seb Rodgers five-year-old County Decathlon record of 6922 points with a massive total of 7252. Moreno's effort also improved the Nigerian National record.

Elise Lovell finished fourth with 5330 points but competing for Brighton University she won a silver medal in the BUCS championship, which was held in conjunction. Katie Garland finished seventh overall topping 5000 points for the first time with 5076 points, which earned her third place in the U23 championship. In the process she added six centimetres to her previous high jump best when clearing 1.76m. With a PB of 5076 Garland became only the fourth Sussex Woman to top 5,000 points for the Heptathlon.

Will Gray removed more than ten seconds off his previous to clock 8:33.0s in a 3000 metres steeplechase in Brussels to rise to third on the Sussex All-time List.

**800:** Spencer Thomas (Brighton Phoenix) 1:47.83s took him to seventh on the Sussex All-time list.

**1500:** Archie Davis (Brighton Phoenix) 3:43.98s achieved the European U20 qualifying standard.

## JUNE

**UK POLE VAULT RECORD:** Lewes AC's Gemma Tutton broke the UK under 13 pole vault record for a third time this season with a leap of 3.46m.

**SOUTHERN COUNTIES TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Sussex athletes scooped a handful of medals at Crystal Palace including three gold medals and a Sussex record in the U20

events. This came in the javelin throw where Lewes's Scott Staples, launched the spear 59.68m, which added 10 centimetres to the 15-year-old County record.

The other two titles went to U17 athletes who were competing up an age group. Amber Anning dominated the 400m race finishing seven metres clear of her nearest rival in 55.05s. The third title came from pole vaulter Natasha Purchas, who notched up a clear victory when clearing 3.60m.

**ENGLAND U20 AND SENIOR CHAMPS:** One gold, two silver and a county record highlighted Sussex participation in the England U23 and U20 championships in windy conditions at Bedford. In the 400mH Orla Brothers led all the way to the finish to break the sixty seconds barrier for the first time with 59.46s, the first Sussex U20 to crack sixty second and her time places her second on the Sussex All Time List.

Toby Harries (Brighton Phoenix) battled with Croydon's Romell Glave before being squeezed into second place in 21.18s to the winner's 21.08s. Sussex silver came in the U20 110m hurdles where Brighton & Hove's Cameron Fillery won his heat in 13.74s but lost out in the final clocking 13.89s for second place.

George Turner set his best ever outdoor clearance of 4.55m in the pole vault for a bronze. The other two bronze medallists came in the U23 events with Brighton Phoenix athletes Spencer Thomas being squeezed into third place in a tactical 800 metres in 1:48.48s and Robbie Fitzgibbon with 3:44.42s over 1500m

## JULY

**BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS AT BIRMINGHAM:** Lewes's Rob Mullett dominated the 3000msteeple chase striding clear to a convincing victory in 8:41.43.

**COMMONWEALTH YOUTH GAMES:** Determined running from Amber Anning won her a bronze medal in the Bahamas in 53.68s a new Sussex senior record and the fastest British 16 year 400 metre time for 33 years.

**EURO U20 CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Sussex record holder Toby Harries triumphed in the European U20 Championships at Grosseto, Italy. It was earlier this year that the Phoenix sprinter returned from more than a year sidelined through injury. He won his 200 metres heat in 21.20s, then in the semi-final broke his own Sussex senior record by one hundredth of a second in 20.89s and then in the final surpassed himself once more as he steamed to victory clocking 20.81s.

Clubmate Archie Davis snatched fifth place in the final of the 1500m in 3:57.65s.

In the 110m hurdles Cameron Fillery took second place in his heat in 14.17s but he was unlucky in his semi-final as he faced a 4m headwind and although clocking 14.11s he did not make the final. Orla Brothers did well finishing fourth in her heat of the 400m hurdles in 59.81s to take herself through to the semi-finals where she finished 7th in 59.59s missing a place in the Final.

**SOUTH OF ENGLAND COMBINED EVENTS CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Brighton & Hove's Becky Owen struck bronze competing in the senior Heptathlon, with a total of 4317 points.

**EUROPEAN MASTER'S TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Crawley's David Beattie glided to gold at Aarhus in Denmark. The former winner of the London to Brighton Road Race in 1990 and many times Sussex Masters Cross-country champion, tackled the M70 10,000m crossed the winning line some ten seconds ahead of his nearest rival in 43:32.69s.

There was a silver medal for Longhill Schoolteacher Leanne Buxton in the W35 heptathlon and one too for Eastbourne's Brian Slaughter in the M60 Decathlon.

## AUGUST

**SOUTHERN U15/U17 CHAMPS:** There were eight titles and several silver and bronze medals for Sussex athletes at the South of England U15/17 track and field championships at the Crystal Palace with Worthing's Ben Hawkes completing a hat trick in the U17 throwing events winning the hammer, shot putt and discus.

Bailey Wright from Eastbourne, Rafe Brooks (Brighton & Hove) and Natasha Purchas also tasted victory in the U17 age group with Wright clocking 10.97s, Brooks leaping a personal best of 6.43m to win the long jump and Purchas clearing 3.50m in the pole vault.

In the U15 age group Kelsey Sutherland from Worthing, snatched the girl's Triple jump title from club-mate and silver medallist Eloise Longhurst with 10.57 to 10.49m. Lizzie Korczak won the javelin title with 39.40m with Horsham's Peanut Meekings throwing 35.52m for the bronze medal.

There were further silver medals for William Snashall when he cleared 3.40m in the pole vault and fellow U15 Crawley athlete Millie Noyce put the shot 11.65m and she also finished fifth in the discus throw with 28.48m.

Ruby Jerges collected a bronze medal in the U15 long jump with 5.12m while there were a trio of U17 bronzes with Louisa Saunders (Brighton Phoenix) running a PB of 57.77s in the 400m, Leo Stallard (Chichester) clocking a PB of 4:42.29s in the 1500m steeplechase and Harry Reinecker-Found clearing 1.90m in the high jump.

**ENGLISH U15/17 TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS AT BEDFORD:** There was more glory and medals for Sussex youngsters including two titles plus three Sussex records. Ben Hawkes retained his unbeaten Hammer record this season with another crushing victory with 71.91m but he also added a silver medal in the discus throw with a personal effort of 52.70m, which was also a new Sussex record. The second title went to Amber Anning who took the U17 200 metre crown when she trounced the opposition by more than half a second in a personal best of 23.76s.

There were four other silver medals to go with Hawkes discus silver. In the U15 high jump Tom Ridley from Worthing soared over 1.86m for silver and a Sussex record while Lizzie Korczak broke her own U15 javelin record by three metres after a great battle with Scotland's Kirsty Costello who threw 43.70m to the Sussex girl's 43.62m. Also in the U15 age group Ivo Pitts (Crawley) struck silver in the Boys javelin throw with a personal best of 54.47m and club mate Abigail Packham cleared 1.61m in the high jump for a silver.

Still with the U15s Seb Wallace took the bronze medal in the long jump leaping 6.12m and William Snashall cleared 3.41m for a bronze in the pole vault. The third bronze medal came in the U17 1500m where Tom Eames clocked 3:55.09s after a great battle.

# OFFICIALS

**JOHN GILL COFSEC**

The year began most encouragingly when we had a very good and encouraging take up for the Level One Officials course in March.

More than over 30 people signed up for the session at Haywards Heath, all apparently keen and raring to go. Most of these people have been seen subsequently at various fixtures and we have to hope that at least some have now completed the required experiences to apply for a formal licence. Time will tell.

The turn out for the various County and Schools Championships was sufficient without being overwhelming and a number of new faces were able to gain some experience with the "old hands".

A message to anyone thinking about becoming an official is, 'Don't be frightened off.' You will be ushered in alongside experienced people and there is every reason to say you will enjoy being part of the athletics family.

One of the disappointments of this job has been the very low 'conversion rate' from attending the course to completing the formal qualification. It is not a difficult process and we can only hope that it will improve in the coming years. Certainly the county needs more officials and it is a sobering observation that only one or two clubs in the whole of Sussex can boast a full hand of qualified track and field officials. There will be another course next Spring and it is hoped that all clubs involved in track and field leagues will canvas and encourage their members to take up this most important, highly enjoyable and very rewarding part of athletics.

Perhaps the best piece of local officials news is that our long serving starter **TONY ROBERTS** has been recognised by England Athletics with a Services to Athletics award, which will be presented to him shortly. Hearty congratulations to Tony - it would be hard to find a more deserving recipient.

## **AND FINALLY**

Without the officials and helpers who volunteer we would not have the thriving athletics scene that exists in Sussex. At present a few people are very stretched to ensure athletics events happen. We urgently need the next generation of **TONY ROBERTS** to support Sussex AA to ensure we are able to continue to develop athletics in the county and beyond.