



SUSSEX COUNTY ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION

President: Phil Baker

Report to the Annual General Meeting on Friday 18th October 2024

It's late August at a Sussex track and a large group of excited and awe struck young athletes are running a collective lap of honour. In the centre of the group is the reason why – Amber Anning.

Amber Anning – who was once an eager 9-year-old looking to explore an interest in athletics.

Amber Anning – a 12-year-old who took part in everything from cross country, track & field to sportshall.

Amber Anning – someone who, as a teenager, won numerous county, regional and national championship titles.

Amber Anning – now a 23 year old with a collection Olympic and World Championship medals and a 400m British record holder.

On that evening in August, as those young athletes ran around the track, they basked in the magnificent achievements of someone who had once been just like them. Someone who this summer took a step to a new level – a level that perhaps one day all those youngsters are dreaming of for themselves.

As the officials, coaches, parents and organisers, we are tasked with supporting and enabling this dream and helping keep it alive.

Through the tireless hours coaching in the depths of winter through to the endless hours volunteers give up officiating at tracks events through the summer, and let's not forget the mud of cross country, intensity of Sportshall and much, much more. On top of this we have a duty of care to nurture mental wellbeing.

It all starts at the grassroots and we are the grassroots.

So as we gather for the annual general meeting, as well as celebrating the achievements of our athletes, and over the past year we have had quite a lot to cheer about, let's recognise and raise our glasses (or cups of tea) to all our volunteers. Thank you to each and every one of you.

From a personal point of the view, the past year has had its logistical ups and downs. Some completely out of the county's control...

Having to cancel an endurance squad at the very last minute due to flooding, having no pole vault competitions at the U15 track and field leagues because the equipment got broke in April at Withdean and never properly fixed, to name a couple.

Then there's the ever growing problem with the lack of officials with it tending to be the same faces covering all. You know who you are and your support is gold dust.

The positives always feel nicer.....

All our events, both winter and summer, saw solid entries and we had quite a few national successes (read on for more details).

We also staged a World Athletics Event for the first time ever, providing our athletes with extra opportunities, and giving our officials the chance to develop their skills further.

Across the year we staged:

- Four cross country league events.
- Two cross country championships.
- Four Under 13 track & field league matches.
- Four Under 15 track & field league matches.
- Took Sussex teams to every inter county fixture.
- The May Track & Field Champs including the Masters Track Champs.
- The Under 13 Track & Field with Under 11 QuadKid Champs.
- Steeplechase Championships.
- Masters Field Championships.
- An Endurance Squad.
- A Track & Field Under 13 Squad.
- The Arena 80/Sussex Young Athlete Award has now helped 18 athletes who face financial challenges.

The county has also enjoyed lots of successful team and individual achievements. To name a few (and apologies to those not mentioned):

- Brighton Phoenix's Toby Harries celebrated a major achievement winning a bronze medal at the Paris Olympics in the 4x 400m men's relay.
- Alex Riley, Brighton & Hove AC, represented British Athletics in the World Athletics Under 20 Champs in Peru in the 1500m.
- Lewes' Ava James has enjoyed a phenomenal year winning several medals and titles, as well as breaking many records. This included the British Under 17 Steeplechase record at the School Games in August where she clocked 4:49.48.
- Lewes' Beth Boyes took top spot in the Under 15 girls' pole vault at the England Athletics Indoor Champs back in February whilst Grace Tuesday (Lewes) clocked 2:10.75 to win gold in the Under 17 women's 800m at the same event.
- Worthing's Alice Howie continued to flourish in 2024 winning several competitions including the Sussex AA county champs, English Schools Championships as well as SIAB.
- Rae Le Fay (Hastings) was selected to represent England Athletics in at the European Athletics Under 18 Champs.
- Dulcie Yelling (Brighton & Hove AC) took gold in the javelin back in February representing England Athletics at the Vaxjo International in Sweden.

Athletics in the county is doing well and despite sometimes feeling a little tired and broken by the workload, I am so proud and thankful of everyone that contributes towards this.

A couple of special thank yous. After many years, Ron Penfold will be stepping down from the Sussex Executive Panel. Ron's dedication to race walking and county athletics in general has been second to none.

It is also time for someone new to become President of Sussex AA, but for the past two years I have had Phil Baker by my side. I would like to say it has always been so smooth and easy working with Phil, but...Joking aside Phil has been a brilliant president and as a county we have nothing but praise and thanks for all he has done.

Before concluding this section of the report I would like to take the time to reflect on those who have recently passed away. A particular sadness over the loss of Robbie Fitzgibbon – a much loved young athlete with so much talent who started athletics in Sussex at a young age. Our sympathies to Robbie's family, friends, to all at Brighton Phoenix and in the Sussex Athletics community.

Kate

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

The Development Committee

By Kate Matthews

Track Facilities

Lewes applied for £5000 towards renovations to the pole vault run up. The Sussex Exec agreed to this fund and it was paid out in June 2024.

An application is currently being put in by Chichester towards their new track.

A80 Grants

A total of 18 athletes have been helped through this project since 2021. Applications for the latest wave have just closed and successful recipients are currently being informed.

Squads

The 2023/24 endurance squads successfully took place across 4 locations – Camber, Goodwood, Stanmer and Lewes. The first Camber fixture in October had to be cancelled due to flooding but was rearranged in Feb so all good in the end. Numbers were reduced to increase focus and 110 took

part. A similar number have been selected for 2024/25, and the first session will kick off this weekend. This year we have changed the format slightly by reducing the length of each session but introducing a fifth session which will focus on strength and conditioning and educational areas.

Myself and Rhiannon Rowe became determined to resurrect the Track & Field Squad, and we were successful. Yay. Four sessions were held across January to April at the Horsham Track. Thanks to Sue Keen, Bob Willows, Eric Davison, Mike West, Pat Apantaku and Matt Overall for running the sessions themselves. We are hoping to do the same again in 2025.

Sportshall athletics

Sportshall athletics successfully took place at Worthing. Again a huge thank you to Gavin Stephens, his team and all the officials for enabling this to go ahead.

Regionally, thanks to Andy Hall, Amanda Godfrey and Sean Dunford for team managing as well as Rhiannon Rowe for huge support with this.

Officials

By Christel Shaw

I would like to give a huge shout out to all the officials that have helped this year as without them we wouldn't be able to hold any events at all.

I know it's hard to believe but we currently have 147 officials registered with EA some of which are second claim to Sussex, to break it down into categories:

- Endurance 34
- Field 86
- Track 37
- Photo finish 9
- Race walking 1
- Starter and starter assistant role 13
- Starters assistant 4
- Time keeping 24
-

Some officials are qualified in more than one event which is why those sitting there quickly doing the maths, no it will not add up!

While we have this many officials listed which is great on paper, we still need more, and the reasons for this?

Some are not available to officiate, of those listed above 15 need to complete certain courses for their qualifications to be valid, a further 5 have yet to accept the new terms and conditions, and finally and I am not being rude - but the average age is getting higher! So we are in desperate need of new and upcoming officials in order that Sussex Athletics can continue to host the number of great events that we do for these athletes.

I would say that I, along with many people have struggled to get officials and feel that the task has become really quite tireless this year with many hours reworking and rejigging officials, even though

we have 147. It has been hard on occasions to get officials to commit this year, at times we have nearly had to cancel events with a last desperate plea of numerous emails asking for help. Sorry to all those that had to endure these, which were many!

Many clubs have parent volunteers that come along to the league matches which is great, but we need to get these volunteers started on their officiating journey which has never been easier to do.

On a positive note and there are many of them, we have officials who want to progress through the levels which is great, and officials that will turn up at the events to help out where they can. I have to say most positively of all you are cheerful, helpful and dependable so thank you for your dedication, let's hope for a more plentiful year of officials coming forward.

Cross Country

By Phil Baker

With the first two fixtures in the 2024/25 season already held, it is good to look back and remind ourselves on what happened last season. Overall I think it is safe to say that the county's cross country scene is in excellent health both in our own leagues and championships and further afield in National competition. Once again we have to thank the host clubs for putting on our Sussex events, HY for the main championships under the guidance of Terry Skelton and the team who organised the Masters at Coombe Farm. Goodwood, Ardingly and Stanmer Park once again hosted the first three league matches while we were delighted to have the use of Glyndebourne as a new venue for the 4th fixture thanks to Peter Masters and his Lewes team - a nice touch being the operatic arias which greeted the athletes on arrival. Thanks go to Kate Matthews for the speedy results service and for the many officials who have ensured that the events run smoothly.

Cross Country Relays at Goodwood

We were able to get the season off to its usual start with the Relays at Goodwood but only after negotiations with the Goodwood Estate who had double booked us with a commercial event. This resulted in having a slightly shorter lap on the top field so 2023 times cannot be included in the overall rankings. The racing was as competitive as ever with many athletes using their summer rack speed to good effect. In the junior races there were two wins each for Eastbourne and Brighton & Hove with Crawley and HY AC taking the other two. Brighton & Hove took the mens' and womens' senior titles from Brighton Phoenix and Chichester respectively while the masters age group titles were shared between Brighton & Hove, Haywards Heath, Horsham Joggers, Arena 80 and Chichester.

Main Championships at Bexhill

Another excellent day's racing saw Brighton & Hove winning both senior titles although it was Horsham's Jacob Cann and Beth Kidger from Brighton Phoenix who took the individual honours. Henry Yelling and Jess Corbett brought both under 20 titles to Brighton & Hove. For the under 17's Ava James and Esme Stephenson led Lewes to a low team score of 9 points in the women's race while a win for Owen Wallek of Phoenix could not prevent a team win for Brighton & Hove. Eastbourne Rovers dominated the under 15 girls with a near perfect score of 8 points including a win for Freda Pearce while the boys team race saw a win for Jacob Trotman from Lewes and a thrilling team race with Eastbourne's third scorer edging out the Brighton runner to give Eastbourne a win by a single point. Isabella Buchanan led her HY AC team to individual and team honours in the under girls race while Oliver Goodman did the same for Brighton & Hove in the boys race. Names for the

future may be the winners of the two under 11 races, Xander Wagjiani of Crawley and Skye Widdows from Brighton & Hove.

Masters Championships at Coombe Farm, Lancing

On a bracing day over its sweeping Downland course, the Masters championships were as well contested as ever. Individual honours went to Alice Robinson (v35 WDH); Linda Schofield (v45 B&H); Caroline Wood (v55 B&H) and Yvonne Patrick (v65 A80). Brighton Phoenix came away with a pair of team titles with Arena 80 the third. In the men's races there was a feat which no-one can remember having been done before with Brighton & Hove having the first 4 home in the over 40 race with Craig Halsey leading them home. It is at times like this where we miss the wisdom, experience and knowledge of Reg Hook who would surely have had a definitive answer. In the older men's age groups James Skinner led Haywards Heath to individual and team victories while Jonathan Burrell gained the individual honours with Brighton & Hove winning the team race.

Sussex Cross Country League

All four venues were well supported and provided a good variety of challenges to the athletes. There were dominant winners in the two senior categories with Brighton & Hove well clear in the men's standings while Lewes had a huge margin of 150 points in the womens races. Horsham Blue star's men and Chichester's women were worthy winners of the Division 2 titles. Brighton & Hove's men and Lewes AC's women won the under 17 titles while Eastbourne swept the board for the under 15's to cap a fine all round season. HY AC's girls and Brighton & Hove's boys came out on top for the under 13's.

Inter-Counties at Nottingham

Following the disappointment of the last minute cancellation of the South East Inter-Counties at Oxford in December, when athletes were literally lining up for the first race, there was a sense of relief that the National event in Nottingham went ahead as planned. Sussex once again stepped up to the plate and much thanks goes to Kate Matthews and Gill Gasson for masterminding the county's teams and to the host of supportive parents who kept things running smoothly on the day. With over 45 counties and area teams in action, Sussex had the distinction of all its 10 teams finishing in the top 20 including a top 10 placing for all 5 women's teams. Highest individual placing came from Ava James from Lewes with an outstanding 3rd place in the under 17 women's race. Team wise, special mention must go to the under 13 boys who came away with team silver, only beaten by Surrey, thanks to fine runs from Luca di Giovanni in 12th, Byron Roberts 14th, Taylor Thom-Watts 19th and Oliver Goodman 37th.

Rearranged National Championships at Weston Park in September

Causing not a little inconvenience due to the lateness of the decision, the "Nationals" were called off at the last minute due to heavy and persistent rainfall meaning that traffic and logistical vehicles could not be safely brought onto the Shropshire site at Weston Park. A decision was made to offer a September alternative with the same age groups as for the earlier spring date. By no means all clubs decided to make the rearranged date resulting in smaller fields but mention must be made of those Sussex athletes who decided to run. Isabella Buchanan from HY AC was a fine runner-up in the under 13 girls race, a feat matched by Eastbourne's Byron Roberts in the under 13 boys race and club mate Eleanor Strevens in the under 20 women's race. Added to this Eastbourne had 3 of their junior teams in the top 10th with the Under 15 boys 10th, the under 13 boys 4th and the under 15 girls

gaining a fine team bronze with Daisy Connor 6th, Raya Petrova 9th, Freda Pearce 16th and Katherine Brown an all-important 70th.

And Finally the English Schools ... what a day for Sussex

I am sure that the success of all 6 teams at Pontefract will be highlighted in the Schools report but as your outgoing President with a Cross Country background, I cannot remember a better day for Sussex in my nearly 60 years in the sport.. All 6 teams finished in the top 7 out of the 45 Counties competing: Inter Boys were 7th with Finlay Goodman 7th and Lucas Gorrill 13th; Senior Girls 5th with Eleanor Strevens 11th; Junior Girls 4th thanks to great packing; Senior boys 4th with Miles Waterworth 4th and Alex Riley 8th.

But not 1 but 2 winning teams!!!

Junior Boys total 196 to runners-up Hertfordshire 218: Fin Lumber-Fry 12th, George Gilbert 17th, Ben Stewart 19th, Michael O'Connor 36th, Jonah Messer 53rd and Byron Roberts 59th.

Inter Girls total 164 to runners-up Surrey 210: Freda Pearce 14th, Ava James 15th, Esme Stephenson 19th, Daisy Connor 31st, Eva Winton 41st and Julieanna Walsh 44th.

Well done to team managers coaches and athletes alike – you have made your county of Sussex very proud.

Road Running

By Kate Matthews

There were some green shoots in the hunt to find someone to resurrect the road running panel, when members of the Sussex Grand Prix approached to collaborate. However, this seems to have hit a wall so a year later and we still do not have a county road running panel. This then has the knock on effect of meaning no county 10k, half marathon or marathon championship. What is the answer?!?!

We do have thankfully have Tom Ulliot who organises an inter county 10K fixture within the Brighton 10K in November as well as takes a team to the Essex 20 in March.

Also, Gavin Stephens who meeting managed another brilliant road relay championships at Preston park in April.

A huge thank you to both of these for all their efforts.

Sussex Indoor Championships

The Sussex AA Indoor Championships took place at the David Weir Leisure Centre in Carshalton at the beginning of March. to Mike Bale, Trevor Simcox, Lucy Kirby stepped up to meeting manage for the county with support from Pat Apantaku. A huge thank you to all of these and the officials who turned out for the event.

There were eight record-breaking performances.

Crawley's Adeline Preston shattered a 14-year-old Championship Best Performance (CBP) in the Senior Women's 60m sprint, crossing the finish line in 7.68 seconds, eclipsing the previous record of 7.88s. Meanwhile, Eastbourne's Nathan Burge made his mark in the Under 15 Boys 60m, clocking a swift 7.46 seconds. Burge's performance not only secured him the title but also saw him break a decade-old CBP by one-tenth of a second.

Worthing's Hope Yelling leapt to victory in the Under 20 Women's Long Jump, setting a new CBP and personal best (PB) mark of 5.45m.

Brighton Under 20 Jessica Bliss continued the record-setting trend with a CBP of 9.11 seconds in the 60m hurdles event, breaking the previous record of 9.24s, held for 14 years by Crawley's Amy Barclay.

Brighton's Jaiten Best claimed her third consecutive Triple Jump CBP, this time in the Under 17 Women's competition. Best jumped 11.24m, surpassing the previous record jointly held by Worthing's Kayley Acorn (2005) and Brighton's Amber Anning (2016).

Other notable results included Eastbourne's Bryn Smith narrowly missing the Senior Men's CBP in the 60m, finishing with an impressive time of 6.95 seconds.

Lewes's Emilie Oakden won the Senior Women's Pole Vault with a season's best of 3.65m, and Joy Russell (B&H) was the victor in the Under 15 Girls 60m sprint in a PB of 8.28.

Under-13 athletes competed in two events—the Long Jump and the 60m. Brighton's Klara Novak-Wightman triumphed in the U13 girls' Long Jump, with a jump of 4.07m edging out Crawley's Ivy Barbary by just two centimetres. Ivy won another silver medal in the 60m sprint in another very close finish, clocking 8.85 to her clubmate Isabella Carroll's winning time of 8.84.

Eastbourne's Zachary Soan won the U13 boys' 60m race in 8.72 seconds and was the silver medallist in the Long Jump, where Brighton's Isaac Machin secured the gold medal with a leap of 4.32m.

Race Walking

By Ron Penfold

It has been an encouraging year for Race Walking in Sussex, with some of our local fixtures being better supported than in recent years, and it's nice to see some youngsters and walkers from the past returning.

The Boxing Day races in Preston Park were a success on the new revised course within the park, 11 finished.

The Steyning 10K+5K road races in October and the 15K+10K+5K in January were well supported with 13 and 18 finishers respectively. It's nice to still have road races, we will try and keep these going.

Individually it's been a quieter year for Sussex walkers in National and International Championships, with Ian Richards being our top International walker yet again in the M75 age group. He started off at the WMA Indoor Championships winning the 3000M in 17:52.25 and road 5K in 29:37. He followed that up with 1st in the EMA Non Stadia 10K in 61:19 and finished with the WMA T&F winning the 5000M in 30:25.35 and 10K in 61:45. He also won the BMAF Outdoor 3000M in 17:55.19.

Also good races in the BMAF 10000M Championships from Trevor Jones winning the M65 in 62:49.96 with Ian Torode 3rd in 74:52.72.

I fully endorse what Peter Selby has said in his report below about the return of the Sussex 2000M YAG, 3000M Senior and Masters Championships to Sussex. As long as the entries warrant it we will keep them here in Sussex. We had an encouraging 15 finishers.

Sussex Race Walking has had something of a boost recently with the juniors at Lewes AC continuing to improve. In April they recorded good performances at Leicester in the RWA National Championships which were not generally well supported. Carrie Ellis and Seth Muddle respectively winning the Under 13 s Girls and Boys events.

Just recently five members represented Sussex Schools at Stoke on Trent with a fine win again by Seth Muddle in the Under 13s Development Race. The other Sussex competitors recorded PBs or near PBs.

For the first time in many years the County Race Walks Championships returned to Crawley in May and combined all ages. It is hoped that this will now become a permanent feature of the County programme, numbers were certainly encouraging.

Lewes Ac took part , over the Winter, in the newly formed Ray Hall Memorial League which included four events in the south at venues in Aldershot, Sidcup, Tonbridge and Lewes. Ray Hall competed in the 1962 European Championships (Belgrade) 50 Kilometre walk and one of the few Race Walkers to have completed the London to Brighton Event in under 8 hours. When he retired he became a top level Coach.

Preliminary plans are in place for the organisation on 16/17 August 2025 of the UK National 100 Miles/24 Hours Race Walk Championship at Lewes track (Start proposed Noon on the 16th). There is keen interest from abroad in this event. Progress reports will be provided to the Sussex AA Committee, further detail can be obtained from Peter Selby, e mail selbypw@outlook.com or mobile 07721747999

Regular coaching continues at Lewes at 9 am on Saturday mornings and it is hoped to get more clubs to

encourage juniors to partake in the Sussex Schools in 2025. For Under 13 s the distance is only 1500metres.

Track and Field

By Kate Matthews

Summer 2024 was a busy and vibrant season with several successful events and performances.

These included:

May Track & Field Championships

There were over 900 entries to the annual event held at the K2, Crawley across two days, with five Championship records and two county records, as well as an array of PBs.

The first CBP was in the under 15 boys' 300m where Eastbourne Rovers' Nathan Burge clocked 37.04 to take the accolade from the previous 38.00 by Moyo Daramola. This was also enough to take Moyo's county record of 37.20. Over the weekend, Nathan won a total of 3 individual golds.

Also on day 2, Ava James (Lewes AC), equalled Rae Le Fay's (Hastings) under 17 women's 800m CBP of 2:11.45, set last year.

This was followed by a very impressive run by Eleanor Strevens (Eastbourne Rovers) in the under 20 women's 800m. The previous record was 2:12.40 set by A Bevan in 2002. Eleanor smashed this clocking 2:09.38. Silver medallist in this race, Stephanie Shaw (Crawley), ran 2:11.28, which would also have broken the previous record.

Stephanie didn't have to wait long for her own record though. On Day 2 she took 5 seconds off the previous under 20 women's 1500m record (set by G Baker in 2015) to take the gold in 4:32.94.

No surprises for the athlete who scooped the 5th CBP of the weekend. Worthing's Alice Howie broke her own under 17 women's hammer record throwing 59.60 (beating the previous 57.01 set last year). Alice has broken records at every Sussex Championships she has competed in.

As the sun shone across the weekend, there were plenty of other impressive performances.

A chunk of these came from the pole vault. Under 15 girl Beth Boyes (Lewes) jumped 2.90m, under 17 male Braimoh Busari (Crawley) 4.25m, under 13 boy Charlie Carman (Worthing) 2.50m and under 13 girl Florence Matten (Brighton & Hove) 2.90m.

Florence also took gold in the under 13 girls' minithon competition with 70 points.

In the boys' minithon, Isaac Machin (Brighton & Hove) was the clear winner totalling 84 points. Isaac started his competition with a phenomenal high jump of 1.57m, a 7cm PB which equalled the county record and marked a jump higher than his own height.

There were also plenty of top performances in the javelin contests with Crawley's Harry Long (U17M) throwing 53.20m, Brighton & Hove's Sophie Bliss 32.54m (U15G) and club mate Dulcie Yelling (U20W) 39.48m.

Brighton & Hove George Gilbert's 1500m winning time of 4.17.62 also ranks him high in the under 15 boys, as did HY AC's Isabella Buchanan's 4.39.56 in the under 15 girls' 1500m.

Under 13 Track & Field Championships with Under 11 Quadkids

It was a different story at this event weather wise compared to the May Champs with howling winds and torrential downpours.

This didn't stop some top performances, including Brighton & Hove's Ada Greenaway smashing the Under 11 Quadkids championship record.

With stunning performances in all 4 of the disciplines, Ada scored a magnificent 282 points – beating the previous record of 262 set last year.

There were joint winners in the boys' competition with Jack Matten (Brighton & Hove) and Luca De Wolf (East Grinstead) both taking gold with 240 points.

Jack's older sister, Florence Matten, also enjoyed a successful day taking golds in the Under 13 75m hurdles (11.76) and high jump (1.35m) as well as silver in the 800m.

Also collecting a hat trick of medals was Isaac Machin (Brighton & Hove) winning the 75m hurdles (12.98), the high jump (1.50) and javelin (39.60).

Crawley AC dominated the girls' sprint races with Isabella Carroll winning the 75m (clocking a PB of 10.67 in the heat) and the 150m in 21.20.

Skye Widdows (Brighton & Hove) stormed ahead to take a fantastic 1500m win in 4:53.72.

More than 240 athletes competed in over 700 events across the day, and the event was well supported by parents and spectators.

Steeplechase Championships

These were held in June. We made it into a World Athletics Event, in support of some athletes targeting European selection times, including Ava James and Rae Le Fay who both went on to be selected.

For a first time event it was very positive, and steeplechase is definitely proving to be an event as a county we are developing athletes nationally. A fact proven by the successes of Ava James, Rae Le Fay, Henry Yelling and Xander Sprostron as well as several making it to English Schools (with Julieana Walsh medalling) and others being selected on to the England Athletics Youth Talent Programme Thomas Matthews and Alice Cox).

Masters Track & Field Championships

The track events were held within the May Champs whilst the field were held at the K2 alongside the Steeplechase Champs. It was positive to be staging a full selection of events again for this age category but the panel needs to continue working on building numbers and momentum.

Under 13 League

Horsham, Eastbourne, Crawley, Worthing, Lewes and Brighton played host to the six east and west division fixtures with the final being held at the K2.

Crawley AC were west winners and Brighton & Hove AC east. Both clubs pushed each other to the wire at the in the final with Crawley coming out champions. Chichester placed third overall.

No league records this season but high standards none the less.

Under 15 League

All four fixtures were held at Withdean. A real negative was the lack of pole vault due to equipment breakage.

Brighton and Hove AC were clear winners all the way through and at the end with Eastbourne in second and Crawley AC third.

There were three league records - Crawley's Archie Oates 13.49 in the shot put breaking the previous 12.83 record, Harry Dunne (Chichester) broke a nine year record clocking 2.03.6 in the 800m, and Chichester 4x300m relay team ran 2.41.0 – faster than the previous record of 2.42.80.

3K Champs

This was held during the Under 13 League Final. Entries were solid. A boiling hot day affected times with no CBPs and in race drop outs.

Inter County Events

Sussex sent teams to every inter county fixture across the summer. Big thank yous to the following who managed the teams on day:

- Alex Widdows and Lara Tozer Under 13s at Walton.
- Lucy Kirby Under 20s and Seniors at Oxford.
- Rhianon Rowe and Christel Shaw Under 15s and Under 17s at Oxford.

Sussex Schools

By Judy Lasis

It has been a very successful year for SSAA teams and individuals. The biggest achievement was having 2 of our past team members competing in the Paris Olympic Games. Amber Anning and Toby Harries both doing brilliantly especially Amber with 2 Bronze medals, we feel like proud parents!

Back to our future Olympic Athletes: We started our season with a great SSAA XC Championship at Waterhall in January which then enabled us to select 6 Teams of 20 to represent SSAA at the SE Schools XC event at Ardingly first Saturday in February, we must thank all the club officials and helpers who made this event so successful. We have the honour of the ESAA Cross Country Championships being held at the Ardingly Show ground in March 2025, next year!

Later in February we had our annual year 7 & 8 XC at Christ Hospital School and as always, we had huge numbers competing in the 4 races, more than 200 in each race. Christ Hospital staff and students put on this event for us every year.

On the 16th of March we sent 6 teams each with 8 athletes to Pontefract Race course, to run at the English Schools Cross Country Championships, the pinnacle of our XC teams events each year.

We started the day with the Intermediate Girls winning the trophy for the lowest score for all 8 runners finishing. Junior boys team came 11th with several runners a year young in the team it bodes well for next year. The best team performance of the day came from the Junior Girls, who finished second overall behind Surrey. Unfortunately, the Intermediate boys suffered an illness just before the race so had to run with one short. The Senior teams – both girls and boys finished in 4th place in their respective events, which were excellent results. In the girls' race, Yasmin Kashdan produced the best performance of the day by finishing in 6th place.

We moved seamlessly into the Track & Field season where things only really start in the summer half term with the Combined Events at K2 followed quickly by the SSAA T&F Championships 2nd Saturday in June. At the T&F Championships we had a number of records broken and a good turn out in the Junior and Intermediate age groups. Again we had big teams selected for the Cunliffe Cup, the SES T&F championships in Basingstoke, where it was the last chance for our athletes to gain ESAA Qualifying Standards. At the ESAA T&F Championships in Birmingham we took very nearly a full team, 68 travelled in the end and they all acquitted themselves very well, for many it was the first time staying away from home as part of a team without their families. They were all brilliant in their behaviour and their attitude and all the team managers praised them. I will not name individuals but suffice to say we had many outstanding performances, medals, County records and most importantly PBs and happy athletes.

Without the clubs and the club coaches we know we wouldn't have such successful Sussex Schools Athletics teams and so we thank all those people who are involved in bringing these young athletes through the ranks.

I would also like to thank the rather small band of SSAA Committee members, organisers and team managers who give up their time to make it possible for these young athletes to compete on the biggest schools stage and maybe we will have some more Olympic athletes in the future.

Kate Matthews 2024