

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



2013

**Cross Country
Report & Results**



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England Captain

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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2013 Cross-Country Report

Rain, Floods, Mud and Red Noses!

In order to compile this report I first read my report of last year and I would encourage all to read it in calmness after a twelve month gap. I would never have imagined that one year later I would be saying ***“the 2013 cross-country season was the most difficult!”***

The greatest difficulty surrounded the senior championships; however this report starts with –

Junior Championships –

Thanks, as always, must be expressed to Richard Llewellyn-Eaton for setting up the course (slightly different to previous years), orchestrating the event on the day, providing refreshments for all participants, ensuring the pupils felt secure running across unknown territory by providing ‘hares’ and thus making the championships, hopefully, the catalyst to future competition for the young athletes. The weather was kind, being dry and clear, but as the afternoon progressed so the temperature dropped.

The number of athletes, from 15 schools, was good and the champions were:

	Finishers/Teams		Individual	Team
Under 13 Girls	54	10	Sophie Jones (Queen’s College)	Queen’s College
Under 13 Boys	48	10	George Tester (Taunton Preparatory)	Queen’s College
Under 14 Girls	40	5	Amelia Vance (Queen’s College)	Queen’s College
Under 14 Boys	50	7	Oscar Rogers (Hugh Sexkeys)	Wellington

Through previous association activities Sophie, Amelia and Oscar are ‘known’ athletes but George showed himself to be a very promising newcomer!

The event was though marred by schools’ ‘incompetence’ at following the instructions and deadlines as clearly stated in the documentation – one school simply ‘turned up on the day’!

County Championships –

Prior to last year’s AGM much preparation had taken place for the championships to be staged at Cannington College. All was going well until the severe wet weather which engulfed the whole country was particularly prevalent along the north Somerset coast. The course, laid on low lying farmland, was quite simply submerged with no hope of it draining. Neighbouring higher land was also exceptionally

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wet and thus the late decision was taken to move the championships to RNAS Meerrryfield. Thankfully the airbase, being on a high plateau, drains well and a course, using much of the nationals' course, was devised for a county championships.

As was the case with previous championships much paperwork had to be completed in order to hire the facility; this was rushed through the system after the initial enquiry and risk assessment. All the local officials for the nationals were contacted so that officials and marshals, in sufficient numbers, were available for the championships. In very quick time it was 'all systems GO' again.

Well, NO! In the days leading up to the championships the weather turned again: this time - snow! The conclusion from the course inspection two days before the championships was that although the first (two?) races could have been completed the latter races would have been dangerous. The easy decision in terms of safety, but a difficult decision in terms of administration, was therefore taken to postpone the event. This meant that the South-West Championships would be held BEFORE the county championships!!!

Other counties within the region obviously had similar problems; initially it was felt that we could not enter the South-West (and other counties would not either) but after consideration and support from many colleagues it was decided to select teams from known data. This was done and full teams in all age groups entered for the championships to be held in Bristol the next weekend! The athletes, having not competed and not meeting team managers were unaware of their selection! Thankfully the contact information for many cross-country representatives is readily available from previous championships and a mass emailing to individuals and schools along with the full use of website facilities meant that confirmation of selection was almost complete by the usual Thursday evening! Staggering! What would the situation have been without modern technology?

The rescheduled county championships took place three weeks after the South-West championships and also three weeks before the ESAA Championships consequently, through misfortune, the major events became equally spaced probably to the advantage of many athletes.

For the revised county championships the previous planning was rolled out again. However, with so much rescheduling it became obvious that numerous athletes were not available for the championships and it was therefore decided that any athlete who had been selected or reserve for their area would be allowed to compete. This meant unequal teams and thus no team completion. The event took place in dry, slightly chilly conditions with good competition for this run was now the final selection criteria for the national championships.

The champions and finishers were:

	Individual	Finishers
Minor Boys	Dylan Dukes (The Blue School)	25
Junior Boys	Dan Wilde (Queen's College)	35
Inter Boys	Oliver Fox (King's College)	29
Senior Boys	Joe Walton (Richard Huish College)	22
Minor Girls *	Sophie Hamilton (Hazlegrove)	26
Junior Girls	Ella Sykes (Millfield Preparatory)	40
Inter Girls	Holly Brown (Queen's College)	15
Senior Girls	Harriet Rogers (Taunton School)	7

* Race winner – Elena Sidman (underage)

With so much too-ing and fro-ing this report simply cannot do justice to the many who changed their plans again and again but were still willing to support the event in whatever capacity. **'THANK YOU'** for making the day such a great success, with many athletes and adults enjoying the trip down memory

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lane. [Of note between county championship days Richard fractured his leg and thus his usual 'whirling dervish' manner was restricted but he still managed to help erect parts of the course!]

South-West Championships –

As explained the selection process for these championships was a 'paper exercise' also involving club officials so that all previous race results could be considered enabling age group rankings to be created. Selected athletes were informed immediately and positive confirmations of selection were received quickly.

The decision was also made not to travel to Bristol in team coaches. Two main reasons for this were:

- a) The cost to individual athletes could be kept to a minimum, and
- b) Travelling time for individual athletes would also be at a minimum and thus more convenient.
- and c) The venue, Blaise Castle, is not the easiest to get to with a coach.

Parking at Blaise Castle is also quite limited but a space was 'conveniently' reserved to allow the distribution of bought vests whilst an event shelter was set up as a team base at which athletes checked in, met their respective team managers and team spirit built. I would like to state how impressed I was with the behaviour and organisation from the athletes within the team base – the groundsheet of the event shelter was kept spotlessly clean (allowing for ease of changing footwear) and there was no litter.

The weather was sunny; the course was laid out over the side of sloping parkland and into the adjacent woodland and thus underfoot the going was 'good to soft' with only mud appearing at frequently used or pinch points.

The question on everyone's mind was, 'Would our selections prove correct?'

We should not have feared for the championships were a great success with only the minor boys and senior boys not producing a Somerset 'champion':

	Individual	Team	Somerset
Minor Boys	J Skilton (Dorset)	Cornwall	Sixth
Junior Boys	Ben Jones (Somerset)	Somerset	First
Inter Boys	Oliver Fox (Somerset)	Devon	Second
Senior Boys	B Westhenry (Dorset)	Dorset	Second
Minor Girls	Sophie Jones (Somerset)	Avon	Fourth
Junior Girls	Amelia Vance (Somerset)	Avon	Second
Inter Girls	Holly Brown (Somerset)	Devon	Fifth
Senior Girls	Victoria Kenny (Avon)	Somerset	First

Behind these headlines were other interesting details:

- Ben and Sophie are brother and sister
- We had gold, silver and bronze in the junior boys
- We had four finishers in the senior boys' top seven, yet no team trophy!
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It was more than just a team of champions and thus at the end of the meeting the usual Somerset team spirit was most apparent and we could begin to see the formation of county teams for the nationals, but this would be after the postponed county championships.

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National Championships –

With the ESAA championships three weeks after the county championships and the deadline for entry four days after the county championships our focus for team selection was firmly based on current form with an overlay of south-west success.

A number of athletes did not participate in the county championships due to previously arranged commitments clashing with the rearranged date; but all things considered selection was straightforward.

The usual accommodation and travel arrangements were put in place with the team staying in the Premiere Inn at Tamworth some 9 miles from the course in Catton Park, Derbyshire.

Specific travel directions had been received from the Police, through ESAA organisers, for our route to Catton Park due to numerous low bridges on the most direct route. Little did we know that our route was opposite to all other coaches, making their way to parking having dropped off their teams at the course! Consequently our journey along quite narrow country lanes was delayed by the congestion and subsequent frustration of other drivers; on more than one occasion Richard and myself had to disembark and direct the reversing of coaches!!

This would not have been unusual in itself had the weekend not coincided with Red Nose Day and through the 'insistence' of a number of athletes (strangely the very youngest and oldest!) the whole team was made up in red and black along with red noses!

On arrival at the course the designated parking position for our coach was not accessible, eventually appropriate space was found and we had the only team coach located at the venue! This proved invaluable for our athletes had a base and, most desirably, could change before starting the journey home.

It was rumoured that on the day before the championships the organisers had spent a most pleasant time staking out the course. Extremely heavy overnight rain had turned the entire area into a mud bath. It is difficult to describe the amount and depth of liquid mud that greeted us as the last team to arrive! It was everywhere and all consuming!

The team base of an event shelter on top of the large ground sheet was set up far away from other teams on a very slight mound which looked grassier! To everyone's credit the groundsheet remained relatively dry and clean as team members used it wisely and sensibly to keep at least one change of clothing mud free.

The conditions for all races, therefore, were most difficult and on one severe incline it really was two steps up and one slide back! But as is always the case the spirit within the team simply did not waver with all being proud of their achievements and seeing the funny side of their endeavours.

It was not just a championships to remember for mud:

- Oliver Fox finished fifth securing a place in the international team
- Amelia Vance finished a very creditable twelfth
- Many finished on the first page of results

At the very end a muffled loudspeaker announced a Somerset win, but which trophy? It was the 'C' Group Girls, gaining the equivalent trophy won by the boys in the previous year.

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At the end of a most difficult season thanks must be profusely expressed to all the team managers who make the championships so enjoyable, rewarding and successful:

Brian Baker	Jane Yandell
Richard Llewellyn-Eaton	Charlotte Fisher
Richard Bowden	
Larry Tulett	
Allister Steele	
Adrian Palmer	
Jason Allen	

AND to the many, many parents and teachers who not only come to the championships to support but lend a hand towards the overall organisation.

The concluding effect is 'something special'.

SIAB International –

This took place on the Saturday following the national championships at Dinefwr Park, Llandeilo, located at the very west of the Brecon Beacons. The course was laid out over exposed and undulating parkland which felt the full force of a biting cold wind.

Oliver Fox was made England captain for the event and carried out his duties with great aplomb. He finished sixth behind an exceptionally talented Welsh champion and improved his England standing by one place.

(Also at the multi-championship event were two ex-Somerset athletes: Rachel Langbein and Catherine Blew, the latter winning whilst representing England for the first time.)

Finally I will repeat the last paragraph of last year's report, *"Finally with the Merryfield championships clearly being "the pinnacle of my achievements within the Association" I feel others should take over the reins of the cross-country section, particularly the senior team management role on the ground."*

BB

2013 Cross-Country Teams

Minor Girls		SW Pos.	SSAA Pos.
Sophie Hamilton	Hazlegrove		1
Flora Keeling	King's Hall	15	2
Elise Thorner	Huish Episcopi	21	3
Victoria McCabe	All Hallows		4
Constance Little	Huish Episcopi	39	5
Harriet Fox	King's Hall	22	6
Olivia Hamilton	Hazlegrove		7
Jessica Cooksey	Fairlands	48	8
Elizabeth Tolley	King Alfred	35	9
Alice Gray	Millfield Prep School		10
Sophie Jones	Queen's College	1	dns
Freya Cavender	Hazlegrove	50	
Megan Baker	Bishop Fox's	54	
Lauren Ashurst	Hugh Sexey	58	

Junior Girls		SW Pos.	SSAA Pos.	ESAA Pos.
Amelia Vance	Queen's College	1	dns	12
Alice Davies	Hugh Sexey	4	dns	26
Ella Sykes	Millfield Prep School		1	100
Lucy Baldwin	Millfield	26	2	121
India Cooper	Wells Cathedral	34	4	122
Kizzy Price	Taunton Prep Sch	32	5	158
Imogen Keeling	King's College	18	3	174
Lydia Lavallin	Huish Episcopi		6	318
Mollie Smith	Fairlands		7	
Caitlin Carnegie	Sexey's		8	
Mildred Maybury	Downside		9	
Cordelia Sheridan	Downside		10	
Jessica Brown	Queen's College	14		
Jessica Morris	Preston	53		
Amy D Arcy	Stanchester	54		

Inter Girls		SW Pos.	SSAA Pos.	ESAA Pos.
Holly Brown	Queens's College	1	1	27
Harriet Lord	Millfield	14	3	156
Jemma Jones	Sexey's		2	165
Grace Smalley	The Castle	34	5	172
Kate Drew	Taunton School	20	dns	206
Elen Falkingham	Queens's College	31	6	213
Francesca Fitzgerald	Downside	48	4	226
Charlotte Rogers	Taunton School		7	293
India Bannister	King's College	44	8	
Beth Wilson Brown	King's School		9	
Lucy Longbottom	Queens's College		10	
Alex Sheehan	Chilton Trinity	51		

Senior Girls		SW Pos.	SSAA Pos.	ESAA Pos.
Emily Smith	Wells Cathedral	3	dns	19
Rebecca Carver	Strode College	19	2	78
Harriet Rogers	Taunton School	4	1	89
Hermione Toomey	Downside	10	3	134
Penny Guess	King's College	11	dns	138
Lilly Hawkins	Strode College	9	dns	158
Esme Sheridan	The Blue School	15		236
Laura Coppard	Huish Episcopi		7	279
Ellen Cheetham	Richard Huish		4	
Olivia Barder	Millfield		5	
Abi Abrahams	Huish Episcopi		6	



2013 Cross-Country Teams

Minor Boys		SW Pos.	SSAA Pos.
Dylan Dukes	Wells Blue School		1
Chris Ellis	Ansford	28	2
Matthew Green	Castle School		3
Oliver Thorner	Huish Episcopi	33	4
Harry Dray	Kings Hall		5
Daniel Yeoman	Chilton Trinity		6
Chris Routley	Fairlands		7
Kameron Riddler	Huish Episcopi		8
Louis Coggins	Millfield Prep School		9
Charlie Hobbs	Downside		10
Henry Scott	Kingsmead	43	
Julian Wheeler	Haygrove	45	
Max James Hinds	Preston	47	
Matthew Green	The Castle	48	
Hamish Clark	Hugh Sexey	49	

Junior Boys		SW Pos.	SSAA Pos.	ESAA Pos.
Ben Jones	Queens' College	1	dns	55
Oliver Dickinson	King Alfreds	3	dns	148
James Bridge	The Park	7	2	154
Bradley Seager	Huish Episcopi	35	4	206
Patrick Free	Queens' College	13	dns	207
Oscar Rogers	Hugh Sexey		3	248
Dan Wilde	Queens' College	2	1	270
Jamie Price	Taunton School	41	5	302
Finnian Day	Downside		6	
James Ask	King's School		7	
Alex Williams	Wells Blue	50	8	
Sam Edwards	Wellington		9	
Charlie Samouelle	Millfield Prep School		10	
Jonny Ellis	Ansford	52	12	

Inter Boys		SW Pos.	SSAA Pos.	ESAA Pos.
Oliver Fox	King's College	1	1	5
Luke Prior	King Alfred	13	4	75
Charlie Martin	Millfield	12	3	138
William Peppercorn	Millfield	dnf	5	142
Tom Parkinson	Millfield		8	177
Felix Rusby	Downside	32	7	224
Archie Walton	The Castle	28	6	238
Sam Sommerville	Stanchester	4	2	dnf
Charlie Fraser	Wells Cathedral	37	9	
Sam White	Brymore		10	
Charlie Beake	Taunton School	36		
Jamie Williams	Wells Blue	40		

Senior Boys		SW Pos.	SSAA Pos.	ESAA Pos.
Matthew Dickinson	Bridgwater College	4	dns	31
Joe Walton	Richard Huish	3	1	34
Jamie Coles	Richard Huish	7	2	42
Isaac Taschimowitz	Kings of Wessex	35	4	140
Henry Willis	King's College		8	199
Max Travers	Downside	39	9	222
Tom Bielich	Millfield		7	224
Philip Bridge	The Park	27	5	280
Rowan Preece	Richard Huish	5	3	
Seb Harris	Downside	24	6	
Youcef Koudri	Kings of Wessex		10	
Ben Miller	Millfield	40		

