

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Chairman's Report 2003/4

At the beginning of my year of office I made it known that I wanted to do something to encourage more schools, and therefore more pupils, to participate in athletics in Somerset. I wrote a letter to every headteacher trying to make them aware of the advantages of their school becoming more involved. I received some responses of appreciation for my letter and hoped to see good results. The results have been mediocre although there is some indication of schools entering pupils for the first time in some events. Certainly the numbers of entries at County Championship level this year was up in events that had previously been quite poor. I am so pleased that my successor, Ian Bradbury, is keen to carry on the campaign – I am sure that we will hear more from him in the coming months as he has already organised a steering committee meeting in November to look at the problem of participation.

Perhaps one of the factors that has made our past year a successful one has been the continuation of the coaching scheme and the development squads. May I take this opportunity to thank all those who have been involved with the great amount of work that has gone into this, particularly Jane Knowles. I am sure that this is the way forward for us to break through to the talent that would otherwise lie dormant.

The post of chairman is not generally speaking an onerous one. It requires attendance at events and meetings and trying to keep meetings running to time and on the subject – perhaps the most difficult task of all! But we as a committee, I am sure make no apology for the length of time and trouble that is taken at the selection meetings to decide which athletes will represent the County in their various events. Literally hours are spent making sure that those valued spaces are fairly filled and I would commend that practise to continue.

Finally I must pay tribute to those on the committee who take the lion's share of the work upon their shoulders. Our secretary, Brian Baker works tirelessly for schools athletics – we are fortunate to have such a stalwart. Les Neville is, as treasurers should be, meticulous in his guardianship of our funds and Richard Bowden, with his endless enthusiasm and organisation as Team Manager and organiser of multi-events in particular, is nationally recognised. The county would be much the poorer without them and I give them, on everyone's behalf, a large vote of thanks.

My two years of office have been a great pleasure for me and I hand over the position to my successor knowing that Somerset athletics has a strong future ahead of it.

David Metherell.