

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Chairman's Report 2005/6.

The Somerset Schools' Athletic Association is managed by an enthusiastic, dedicated and hardworking team of people with a wealth of expertise: we are fortunate that they all give their time freely and willingly. This team is headed by our President, Bill Whistlecroft M.B.E., whose wise counsel and wealth of knowledge are invaluable, by our multi-talented and inspiring Secretary, Brian Baker and also by our mathematical genius, our Treasurer, Les Neville.

There are strong links between our Schools' Association and Somerset Athletic Association, whose Secretary, David Cooke, facilitated on-line organisation and photo-finish at our Track and Field Championships.

Our athletes are given every opportunity to do well; there are coaching clinics at grass roots level as well as those for elite athletes. The coaching programme with Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership has been in place for three years and we are reaping the rewards of that work.

The process for selecting teams for South West Schools' and English Schools' Championships is detailed, informed and thorough. Whilst at these events, our athletes are always well prepared and supported by our team managers: this is due to the meticulous planning and leadership of our Senior Team Manager, Dick Bowden.

This year has been an amazing one for our Junior Boys, with THREE WINS at English Schools' Championships. In March they won the Cross Country Event: this was followed by winning the Track and Field and then the Combined Events. For Track and Field, Somerset, as a small county, competes in the 'C' category but for the Cross Country and Combined Events, Somerset competes on a par with all the other counties, some much larger.

It has been a year of great achievement all round as our Senior Girls WON at the English Schools' Track and Field Championships and were third in the English Schools' Combined Events.

I would like to thank all who have contributed to make this a very successful year.

It has been an honour and a privilege for me to be your Chairman.

Pat then added:

- To Bill Whistlecroft MBE. our President, who looks after our coaching courses and whose dulcet tones make compelling listening at any athletics meeting. Bill, when we are at the English Schools' Track and Field Athletics Championships, the sound of your voice makes us feel at home. We are very lucky to have Bill and his wife, Ann, who records and does a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes. Thank you to you both for all the work you do.
- To Les Neville, our Treasurer, who continues to host our selection meetings at Wellington School, where he organises much needed and much enjoyed refreshments. He also officiates and team manages whenever he can as well as looking after our financial affairs so efficiently—sometimes with 'Velcro gloves'!
- To all our officials, who help us so much; they are all highly qualified and generous with their time.
- To all our team managers who do magnificent jobs.
- To Richard Llewellyn-Eaton for all his work— in vast amounts of mud —organising our cross-country course.
- To you all for giving me this honour of being your Chairman for the past year.
- Next ~ a thank you and an apology ~ to Clive Thomas: we apologise that we have not marked your retirement from Millfield Preparatory School, which was, in fact, last year. When I first came to Somerset, Clive organised the Junior Track and Field Championships. For many years he organised the Regional Round of the English Schools' Cross-country Cup Competition and our Junior Cross Country Championships.

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Clive and his wife, Angela have team managed our Cross Country Teams at the English Schools Cross Country Championships on many occasions and we thank them for giving their time and expertise.

In recent years Clive has coached on our courses and has officiated as a starter at Combined Events, Track and Field and the English Schools' Track and Field Cup.

He has also hosted meetings at Millfield Prep. School and organised delicious refreshments; he also inadvertently organised a '**lock in**' after one of our meetings there. It took me back to drinking days in London in the "Commercial" at Herne Hill—although, Clive, I know, will say that, in those days, being such 'a finely tuned athlete', he doesn't remember the famous drinking '**lock ins**' after hours!!!

Anyway, we thank you, Clive, for all you have done for this association and look forward to seeing more of you in the future. I have great pleasure in presenting you with this gift of an engraved decanter.

- Brian Baker, our Secretary, retired from teaching two years ago and again we apologise that we have not marked this occasion formally.

Brian is the stalwart of this association: he is the man who gets things done however busy he is and who does many of the mundane tasks as well as the important ones. He prints certificates and programmes and organises the presentations at our Track and Field and the South West Track and Field Championships. He does all the administration—travel arrangements, accommodation, letters to athletes etc. and is Senior Team Manager for our teams for the English Schools' Cross Country Championships, He organises our Senior Track and Field and our Middle Schools' Championships.

Able supported by his lovely lady, Linda, he does the computer scoring not only for our Somerset Combined Events' Championships but also for the Regional **and** the English Schools' National Finals.

His expertise and workload are second to none, it is impossible to list everything. Above all he retains his enthusiasm and is always inspirational.

We thank you, Brian; for all that you have done and are doing on our behalf.

It gives me great pleasure to make this presentation to you of an engraved decanter.

- I have another presentation to make and this time it goes to someone who has just retired from teaching—to Alan Lerwill who has been with us for the past **eleven** years.

Alan has had an extremely successful career as an International Athlete and an Olympian: he knows what it takes to do well and he has been both a coach and a mentor to our athletes. Alan has helped us with coaching, selection, team management and officiating as well as providing venues and refreshments for events and meetings. He has been a tremendous help and support to me with the English Schools' Track and Field Cup Competition. His vast experience and expertise are, undoubtedly, a great asset to this association.

Alan is a very private person and he is never happier than working at grass roots level.

We were delighted, this year, when he did us the honour of agreeing to be Chief Guest and make presentations both at our Track and Field and the South West Track and Field Championships.

Alan, we wish you a long and happy retirement: we thank you most sincerely for all that you have done for us and look forward to continuing our happy working relationship with you.

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