

Chairman's Report 2009

Somerset Schools Athletic Association

This Association has the most dedicated and knowledgeable people at the helm: this team is ably supported by other volunteers and their combined expertise, enthusiasm and commitment are second to none and the envy of many other counties.

Our President, Bill Whistlecroft M.B.E. is not just a figure head. He runs our coaching courses and announces at all our meetings as well as at The English Schools' Track and Field Championships; his wife, Ann supports and helps him at these events and their dedication is unequalled.

Our Secretary, Brian Baker does such a variety of jobs that it is **impossible** to list them all but here are **some**. In addition to his general secretarial duties, which are extremely time consuming, he organises and team manages our Cross Country Teams including booking accommodation. He collates and prints our programmes, prints certificates for our athletes and organises the presentations at our Championships and the South West Schools' Track and Field Championships. He organises our Senior Track and Field and Middle Schools' Championships. Together with his partner, Linda, he is responsible for the computer scoring at our Combined Events' Championships as well as at Regional and National Championships. Additionally he is the Schools Portfolio Holder on the England Athletics Southwest Regional Council. Brian is always cheerful and retains his enthusiasm despite his workload.

Our Treasurer, Les Neville looks after our finances with great care and attention to detail. He also acts as a Team Manager at South West and English Schools' events and officiates at our events.

As Senior Team Manager, Richard Bowden's detailed planning and written information that is given to team managers and athletes means that athletes representing this association are always well prepared and confident with every opportunity to give of their best. Due to this excellent preparation, team managers find it a pleasure to be with our teams. Richard also organises our Junior Track and Field and Combined Events' Championships; we are all well aware of his passion for the multi events and last year he co-ordinated the Combined Events National Championships whilst Roger Blades was on Olympic duties.

This year, it was our turn to organise the South West Schools' Cross Country Championships and whilst Brian did all the paperwork, it was Richard Llewellyn-Eaton who organised and marked the course as well as sourcing and briefing all the officials. The results service, organised and managed by Ian Humphries was exceptionally efficient and speedy on the day but I suspect that he had spent many hours setting it up. This event was held at The Taunton Racecourse. Richard also organised the junior cross country championships and one of the two rounds of the ESAA Track and Field Cup at his school, King's College, Taunton.

We have continued to enjoy good relations with Somerset A.A. and their Secretary, Dr. David Cooke not only provides the photo-finish at most of our events but also receives the entries and this is much appreciated by athletes and this association. Their Officials' Secretary, Mike Eastmond, has liaised with me and has provided some newly qualified officials for our events. He has also officiated at our events.

Our ex-Chairman, Jane Yandell, as always has been a great support both as an official and as a very experienced and knowledgeable team manager. She is always willing to tackle any job and is always enthusiastic and a pleasure to be with. She very kindly visited me in hospital earlier in the year and has been a great help since. Jane has organised the refreshments for

some of our meetings and these have been delicious as, amongst her many talents, she is a brilliant cook.

We have been fortunate to have the support and help of many officials who work tirelessly at our events but none more so than Sally and Nick Higman, both International Field Officials. They have also attended our A.G.M. and Executive meetings. They have given many hours and this has been appreciated.

Once again the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership has supported our coaching courses and Fests and these were appreciated by our athletes.

The appointment of Stuart Richards as Community Athletics Coach was a popular choice. In his role to find and develop new talent, he has organised after school training sessions at the Yeovil track. As an athlete and a very enthusiastic person, he is definitely making a difference and we would hope to reap the rewards of his considerable efforts as his role is utilised to the full.

We are grateful for the support from Millfield School in allowing us to use their track for our Combined Events. For events held at Yeovil we have financial support from the Local Authority. We are also fortunate in being able to use a variety of venues for our meetings at no cost to this Association.

As South West Regional Secretary for the ESAA Track and Field Schools' Cup, with ten counties in my region, I would like to record my thanks to the staff at Millfield, especially to Gary Jennings and Rob Furlong for organising a first round competition and the Regional 'A' Final at their track.

Although all our results this year have not been as good as we would have liked, we have had many successes.

At the ESAA Cross Country Championships our Senior Girls' team was second overall and our Girls **won** the Group C trophy.

We won two trophies, Field Events and Senior Girls and shared a third with Devon at the South West Schools' Track and Field Championships. We were unlucky at the National Track and Field Championships to lose the Intermediate Boys' Trophy by only half a point to Dorset.

At the Regional Combined Events at Exeter, we **won** four categories, Junior Boys, Intermediate Boys, Senior Boys and Senior Girls. At National level, James Lelliott **won** the individual title.

Congratulations to James Lelliott together with Liam Biddlecombe and Izzy Jeffs who were selected to represent the English Schools at the World Schools' Track and Field International in Estonia.

Finally it remains for me to thank all those who have helped our Association this year. It has been my privilege and pleasure to have been your Chairman this past year.

Now it is my great pleasure to hand over to Larry Tulett BEM. As you all know Larry is a stalwart supporter of this Association and officiates at our events as Track Referee. Larry's pleasant but firm manner will be an asset as Chairman and I wish him well. Enjoy your year Larry.

Pat Gillett 2009