



BMC News

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH MILERS' CLUB
VOLUME 11 ISSUE 1 – SPRING 2014

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British Milers' Club



Founded 1963

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All official correspondence to the BMC should be addressed to the National Secretary at the above address. All matters so received will be addressed by the national committee at their next meeting. All other requests should be sent to the BMC Administrator Pat Fitzgerald and will be dealt with as soon as possible. Matters concerning specific areas of the club should be sent to the relevant person from the above list.

The BMC are always looking to expand its network of people and locations that host BMC races. If you feel that you can help or want to get involved then please contact the BMC Administrator Pat Fitzgerald.

Acting Editor's Introduction

BY MATTHEW LONG

Welcome to the Spring 2014 edition of BMC News.

Whilst a tremendous honour to serve as acting editor of this journal it is with equal sadness that I reflect on the untimely passing of our long standing and irreplaceable editor Dave Sunderland.

I first became acquainted with Dave back in 2007 when assisting him in his role as Staffordshire schools cross country team manager at the English schools championships. We were holed up in a hotel just off the M1 near Leeds and spent a long evening trying to keep dozens of youngsters from avoiding the usual kind of high jinks and antics that any group of teenagers would be propelled towards on what was for some their first trip away from home and the bosom of their parents or guardians. Our work being done on the night before the big race, as we settled down in the bar before hitting the proverbial sack I couldn't help remarking to Dave how as a veteran of umpteen major championships and having coached a multitude of internationals that he so obviously retained a genuine and equal passion for his continued involvement at grass roots level. "Why put yourself through all of this?" I asked. "Athletics is athletics is athletics" he typically retorted before disappearing off to bed.

Four years later I would re-acquaint myself with Dave again. Since coming out of hospital after a period of serious ill health, I had no one to coach and no future in the sport as I saw it. "Don't quit! We'll get you sorted and onto the England Athletics local coach development programme in no time Long!" he enthused at some coaching conference at Alexander stadium. He most certainly did "get me sorted", hooking me up with a brilliant mentor in Geoff James. Along with the great support of Peter Thompson and David Lowes, I was able to move forward and eventually secured a position as a volunteer coach at Birmingham University AC, supporting Bud Baldaro, Sally Straw and the late Bob Ashwood.

Whilst I write in extraordinarily sad circumstances, my penning this piece is by way of acknowledging Dave as a coach, coach educator, mentor and human being.

To continue Dave's legacy, you will see that the magazine has been split into thematic sections as follows:



As well as our President Norman Poole leading the tributes to the aforementioned Dave, our 'Obituary' section **Part One** includes recollections of the life and times of three fantastic athletes. The iconic Sir Chris Chataway, whose name will forever be associated with the event which graces our front cover, is remembered by Alastair Aitken. In addition the careers of the late Andy Holden and prodigious 800m talent Mark Sesay are recalled by Chris Holloway from Tipton Harriers and Stephen Green respectively.

Part Two is led by long time BMC servant and internationally respected coach Peter Thompson who reminds us (as does our front cover) that its exactly 60 years since Sir Roger Bannister and Diane Leather elevated middle distance running to another planet with their iconic sub 4 and sub 5 performances over the classic mile distance.

Part Three is themed around BMC past and present, with stalwart David Cocksedge treating us all to some past races, a mind bending quiz as well as an interview with a true legend of our club. Chairman Tim Brennan then whets our appetite about matters present with his preview of the 2014 season before our treasurer Pat Fitzgerald offers up a fantastic centre page spread of forthcoming fixtures which would look great on your bedroom wall!

British Athletics event lead for endurance, Martin Rush and national coach mentor Jenny Harris feature prominently in **Part Four** which is dedicated to coaching conferences, the former giving an overview of last winter's European Endurance conference which was staged alongside the BMC Awards dinner and the latter articulating some of the major findings of the more recent England Athletics Youth Endurance Conference. Sandwiched in between is an account of an

interview conducted by our late editor with the legendary Bud Baldaro and the superb Hannah England, with both being keen to talk about long term athlete development.

We then shift in focus towards an appreciation of two of our BMC Award winners from 2013. **Part Five** is kicked off with a mouth-watering interview by Matt Fraser Moat with the awesome Jess Judd and her coach, former Commonwealth 5,000m champion Rob Denmark. We then pay homage to our coach of the year Phil Townsend as Geoff James unpicks his philosophy of coaching.

Our Academy Chair David Lowes, who has been ably supported by the excellent Rod Lock as administrator for a number of years, reports on last October's BMC Academy in **Part Six**. In retaining a focus on youth development, this section includes an interview with Academy star guest and reigning British 1,500m silver medallist, Emma Jackson and her coach Alan Morris, before David encourages you to sign up for Academy 2014 this October.

Our Secretary David Reader leads **Part Seven** which reports on the progress of a previous winner of the Frank Horwill scholarship for research. David also encourages coaches and researchers to apply for this year's scholarship before we go on to hear from British Athletics new head of endurance and sports science Dr Barry Fudge. Barry gives us an insight into how much he values the role of the BMC and talks about his role with our 2013 athlete of the year, double Olympic and world champion, Mo Farah. We then invite you to get involved in the best of sports science research that our country can offer in terms of the work of the English Institute of Sport.

We look back at a winter on the boards in **Part Eight** as Stephen Green reports on our very own indoor meeting before Brendon Byrne looks at British interest over the middle distances in Sopot at the recent world indoors.

As the magazine rightly starts with Dave Sunderland, it comes full circle in **Part Nine** with one of Dave's most famous athletes Spencer Duval leading us down the home straight. The Atlanta Olympian and former national cross country champion took on a role as national event coach for steeplechase and his coaching corner focuses on negotiating those barriers and facing the chase!

Chairman's Notes

BY TIM BRENNAN BMC CHAIRMAN

I must start this piece on a very sad note following the passing of Dave Sunderland in February.

Dave was the editor of this magazine and over the last few years has developed it and produced an excellent publication greatly valued by BMC members, it is a major part of the BMC aims to spread coaching knowledge. As a much respected coach with an extensive knowledge of middle distance and a wide circle of contacts he was extremely well qualified for the role.

Dave has also been the organiser of our coaching conferences over the last few years. In this role he was able to assemble excellent speaker lists from his numerous coaching contacts. It was also a feature of these conferences that a current or former athlete would be interviewed by Dave and I think these interviews showed Dave at his best well prepared and researched, asking the questions coaches and athletes wanted to hear and above all showing an interest and empathy with his interviewee.

European Endurance Athletic Conference
Most recently Dave facilitated our

involvement in The European Coaching conference in Nottingham. During the conference dinner we presented our annual awards and he was the recipient of our Lifetime Coaching Award, I know he was extremely pleased to receive this in front of his peers – he really deserved it, amongst British coaches he is in limited company having coached World record holders and European Champions as a volunteer coach. I think the award went some small way to compensate for the disappointment he had felt when his most recent European Champion had left his coaching.

In one of our other awards Phil Townsend won coach of the year. Phil has coached a big group of club runners up at Leeds as a volunteer coach and got a good number through to international level including top ranked steeplechaser James Wilkinson. The BMC was very pleased to recognise this achievement and award someone who is maximising the potential of the athletes at his club.

The conference itself contained a lot of interesting sessions which you can read about elsewhere in this magazine. We are grateful to British Athletics and

particularly to Martin Rush and his team for our involvement and for the welcome we were given.

The 2014 Season

In this magazine you also can read about some fresh ideas for our races in 2014. As you will see there are some exciting opportunities coming up. No doubt athletes and coaches have been planning their seasons as well and I am sure you will want to chase fast times in BMC races. We plan the BMC season around the dates of the championships and I hope your planning is around championship success with the BMC races being a means to an end rather than an end in its self.

2014 is a Commonwealth and European championship season. With all the home countries individually represented in the Commonwealth Games and maybe with some deciding to do only one championship, it should open up opportunities for selection. The BMC races will be there to help with pacemaking geared up to the qualifications standards.

Whatever your aims for the season I wish you the best of luck in achieving them.
Tim Brennan



In February this year, Paralympian David Weir, Sir Roger Bannister and Diane Leather-Charles helped promote this summer's Westminster mile.

Cover: Iconic image of Sir Roger Bannister crossing the line at Ifley Road, Oxford, 6th May, 1954. This year sees the 60th anniversary of the 1st 4 minute mile

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BMC IN PICTURES

(page 32, clockwise from top left):
BMC 2013 Coach of the Year, Philip Townsend.
Academy athletes of the year Heidi Davies and Matthew Harris. Oxford 'B' mile race start.
Matt Bergin (207) leads the men's 5000m 'A' race in Solihull last May. Mo Farah under the watchful eye of Barry Fudge. Hannah Nuttall at Oxford last July. Calli Thackery at Solihull last May. Rob Mullett (97) leads the field at Solihull last May in the Men's 1,500m 'A' race. Mike Trees (218) sets a UK V50 mile record in the 'D' race at Oxford last July.

OBITUARIES

In this section we recall the life and times of four very special men in the athletics fraternity.

BMC PRESIDENT DR. NORMAN POOLE LEADS THE TRIBUTES TO OUR LATE EDITOR OF BMC NEWS, DAVE SUNDERLAND:

"It is with great sadness that I write the following tribute to my late friend Dave Sunderland, whose untimely death came as a total shock to all of us at the BMC. There have been many words recently written about Dave the coach, Dave the coach of coaches and Dave the man. I have added a few of my own memories of Dave followed by personal tributes from fellow coaches Peter Stanley, Martin Rush, Bud Baldaro and Jenny Harris, who worked closely with him along with Ian Rawlinson on behalf of Dave's diverse group of personal athletes. All of their individual words help to build a picture and memory of this multi-talented and generous man.

I first met Dave over 30 years ago at a National Squad Training Weekend at Merthyr Mawr. The Head Coach was Harry Wilson and Dave was one of his Junior Event Coaches. Dave's commitment and passion for our Sport was obvious as, at times, was his chippy and slightly abrasive style. Over a period of time, many more meetings and occasional rhetorical jousting sessions I realised that Dave's occasional confrontational approach was carefully designed by him to challenge athlete and/ or coach. His aim always was to educate and motivate and to get the best out of athletes and their coaches. Once I understood his motives I warmed to Dave 'the teacher' and I am proud to have considered him as a friend and ally ever since.

We worked closely together for many years as National Event Coaches and Team Coaches on many National Teams. Throughout all of this time I always found Dave totally professional, highly committed and forever eager to add to his already vast coaching knowledge in all of the endurance events. I also appreciated Dave's formidable wit and sense of humour which helped to light up some of those long overseas trips.

The fire that burnt deeply in Dave did not abate during these 30+ years. This was the measure of the man. He coached his first gold medallist, Jane Colebrook, in 1977 and was operating at the same level in 2012 with Lynsey Sharp. Jenny Harris informs me that he is the only UK coach ever to have coached 2 athletes to individual European 800m Golds. A remarkable achievement.

Dave and I organised the early BMC National Endurance Conferences where he would present at least one lecture and interview a star athlete or coach of the past or present. Most of us are familiar with Dave's confident and professional presentation up-front but it is the behind the scenes hours of research and preparation which gave these results. It was no surprise to me that Dave went on to pen two very successful books on middle distance and endurance training and for many years has been one of the most successful editors of the BMC News. In recent years Dave has been a great servant of the BMC and it was only fitting that he was awarded 'The BMC Lifetime Coaching Achievement' award in 2013. I was very proud to present the award to Dave on the night and as I said at the time any coach would have been proud to have made one third of Dave's coaching achievements in their lifetime.

For all of the years I have coached at a reasonable level Dave has been around. Encouraging, supporting cajoling and telling me to 'get a grip' of any thorny sporting situation which may have arisen. I will greatly miss him at future conferences and race meetings where it seemed within minutes we could sort out any of the problems of the athletics world. This was the 'Dave Sunderland Effect' and as you will see in the words below this was felt and appreciated by many, many people".

BRITISH ATHLETICS HEAD OF COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT PETER STANLEY REFLECTS:

"I have very rarely met any man who was so passionate and unwavering in his belief in coaching generally and more so in the Team of colleagues he was pleased and proud to work with. Dave could be stubborn but this was driven by his unerring certainty that he wanted himself and all he worked with to only be content with excellence. This permeated all aspects of his life. As a friend he was totally reliable and would always be willing to advise and guide with his no-nonsense approach. Material things meant very little to him. He was much more focused on people and their ability to fulfil potential in whatever aspect of life they were challenged by. He was not just a coach of athletes. He was a coach of people.

During our time working together managing and leading our respective



event groups within the National Coach Development Programme we had developed mutual respect for each other, but more importantly a strong bond of friendship and total trust in each other and our common goals. He was easy to confide in and listen as he strategized a problem and then formed an action plan to resolve it.

Whilst we were on Commonwealth England duty in Delhi in 2010 he came into our room for a chat one morning and saw me washing some of my kit in the sink. After observing me for a while he negotiated the conversation around to the subject of my domestic task and asked me if I would add his shorts to my chores as they had a food stain on them. I agreed to give them a wash. He left and returned promptly for me to wash his new red England shorts. At this stage I did not realise how this act of comradeship would lead to a double act which would endure until now. From then on he started to call me 'Jeeves' amongst other things. This innocuous incident grew into a double-act as I assumed the role of 'Jeeves', his manservant, to Dave's 'Lord Bertie Wooster'. He never let an opportunity pass where he could assume the role to which he should have been born and let me know my 'true station in life'. This gave us both great joy which we could share and also amuse our friends and colleagues at many 'official activities'. No role for Dave could have been further from his own natural traits where he would rather assume the

Dave Sunderland with double Olympic champion Seb Coe. 2011 European Endurance Conference



position of helper, supporter and carer where he would genuinely be interested in others lives and the problems they were wrestling with. He was never short of advice which was always given with the very best of intentions and delivered with kindness of thought.

Dave would have been the Track Lead Coach for Team England in Glasgow 2014. This was a role he wanted to make a success, not for himself but for all the athletes and Team Staff he could influence to perform at their very best and impact on the overall performance of the whole team. Sadly he is not now able to complete that duty but I am sure his spirit and enthusiasm and his commitment to this task will be used as a stimulus for all involved to achieve the high standards he would have aspired to.

The breadth and depth of the impact he has had on all he came into contact with is immeasurable. Many in the Sport, and far beyond, have been touched by his deeds and words of wisdom. I count myself very lucky indeed to have been a close friend of such a great man who was always able to make people smile and laugh as well as to deal with the serious side of sport and life generally.

I have been told that no-one is

indispensable but to me Dave is irreplaceable in the Sport and in my life.

Thankyou for all the fun and personal mentoring Dave. R.I.P.

BRITISH ATHLETICS ENDURANCE EVENT LEAD MARTIN RUSH

RECALLS:

"Having just attended Dave's funeral at St Augustine Church in Rugeley, I gained a true sense of just how many people Dave not only influenced and guided but how many people would count him as a close friend and colleague. Just as I did. The hundreds who attended all came with their memories of a man who was an educator, a coach, a teacher, a writer, an administrator and organiser, a colleague and mostly a friend. He was the holder of opinions and clear views, jokes and laughter and possessor of a determination to make changes and get things done.

He warmed to people who were honest, straight forward and open and would go out of his way to support athletes and coaches to achieve the goals they had set but also to get them to challenge and believe in themselves. The National Coach Development Programme was a huge passion for him and I was privileged to have been given the opportunity to work

alongside in the role for over 5 years in England Athletics.

I remember watching him direct the warm up of Lynsey Sharp at the European U23 Champs. A quiet check of the watch, a walk over to the straight of the track and Dave positioned himself at the end of a particular lane to commandeer it for Lynsey. A quiet word here and there but the preparation had been done earlier and Lynsey knew the exact requirements and routine before a quiet walk to final call and out on to the track. You only needed to see this once to know the meticulous preparation and thought that had gone into it and the organised and logical mind that had applied hard earned knowledge to produce a situation where the athlete had control but was being gently steered into the Championship race mindset and a physical state of preparedness. Similarly in his presentation of coaching material at conferences and workshops, and his written work, the attention to detail and organisation were evident.

In addition to this knowledge and skill Dave had an ability to work with people and make life more enjoyable and rewarding. He could be difficult and impatient. How many meetings that stretched beyond the hour mark would finish with Dave in the room? If I did not answer the phone for a few hours he would jokingly accuse me of being on holiday again when we did talk. But when you needed someone to support you, be it a personal issue or a work issue, Dave was always there ready to listen and if necessary suggest, often a simple, route that would work a problem out.

I will miss his 9:05am telephone calls, 'What's up Rushy, what's the news?' I will forever kick myself for not having had that conversation we promised each other to discuss 800m and 1500m training, but most of all I will remember him and the hugely enjoyable afternoons at tracks all over the country, talking athletics and life"

NATIONAL COACH MENTOR FOR ENDURANCE BUD BALDARO

TELLS US:

"I was devastated to hear of the loss of Dave Sunderland. He was an absolute rock in the endurance coaching world. Totally passionate about the sport. He did so much at all levels.

A founder member of Cannock and Stafford AC, he was also an integral part of Staffordshire Schools for more than 3 decades. For the past few years Dave has been the driving force behind the England Athletics Endurance Mentoring Scheme

inspiring coaches across the country. He coached numerous internationals, Games medallists and a world record holder. The most recent medallist being of course Lynsey Sharp who he guided to the European title.

Spencer Duval was one of Dave's success stories and the pair remained inseparable friends.

Dave was a man of strong opinions and forceful views with a great sense of justice and fairness in how athletes and coaches should be treated. He was also a wonderful friend. Beneath his superficially gruff exterior he was a loyal, caring, sensitive friend, or mate – a word he loved to use, nothing was ever too much trouble for him no matter how busy he was.

Dave was a man amongst men. The athletics world mourns your passing. Dave leaves a wife Ailene and daughter Alison to whom he was devoted and literally thousands of friends.

Rest peacefully my old mate".

NATIONAL COACH MENTOR FOR YOUTH ENDURANCE JENNY HARRIS STATES THAT:

Quite simply Dave Sunderland was one of the greatest influences on the coaching of distance running in this country in recent times. He loved all sport, particularly rugby which he played as a young man, and loved seeing excellence in sport – no more than in endurance running.

No amount of words can ever sufficiently honour Dave who was a truly dedicated coach, mentor, coach educator, loyal colleague and cherished friend. We, the coaching fraternity, owe him such a debt of gratitude for the incredible contribution he has made to distance running in this country and abroad through sharing his own coaching experience spanning 40 years working with school age athletes through to over 40 international athletes, including Spencer Duval. Of course he was very proud to have coached Jane Colebrook to European Gold in a time equalling the world record in 1977 and he never lost the dream that one day he could take another athlete to the very top. His dream became a reality when he teamed up with Lynsey Sharp. He took great pride in bringing her back from injury and under his guidance she became European 800m Champion in 2012 the year she also became an Olympian. Dave is the only British coach to have coached two separate female athletes to European 800m Gold medals ever. I know that Dave would have loved to have continued to coach Lynsey.

Dave was in fact overqualified for every role he ever took within the sport and England Athletics, having been UK Athletics National Coach for Middle Distance for 15 years, such was his wisdom and expertise. The men's Cross Country Captain Alex Muir, at Oxford University, where Dave kindly came to do some workshops described him as having a 'brilliant mind' – so true – and he had an encyclopaedic knowledge of endurance running going back to the 60's and devoured books on earlier running legends. Everything helped shape his coaching philosophy of always considering the long term development of an athlete – "hurry slowly" he would say and "no short cuts". If as a coach you have not read his two books "High Performance Middle Distance Running" and "High Performance Long Distance Running" you have missed out on invaluable advice.

It is difficult to gauge how many of us have benefited from lectures, workshops and conference presentations that he has delivered over so many years. He was a consummate presenter who delivered intelligible advice with such ease, often casually sitting on your table in the middle of a talk to answer a question. I first met Dave in 2005 when he was my tutor on my Level 3 course. I had already been a coach for 6 years prior to this but was uncertain as to whether what I was setting to progress the talented youngsters in the group I was coaching was right or not. A couple of years later he came up to the Sheepmount track in Carlisle to help me work on some steeplechase sessions with Charlotte Arter. Dave would think nothing of driving hundreds of miles to help one coach work with one athlete and was just something he did years before the mentoring programme ever began.

Dave was a great communicator and I probably debated some issue regarding youth development with him almost daily after joining the mentoring programme four years ago and as I have read in so many tributes Dave always made time to answer any coach's query – and no question was ever deemed unworthy to have been asked. He had an extraordinary work ethic and desire to help less experienced coaches gain the confidence they needed to develop their athletes.

The mentoring programme was a concept Dave drove with a passion – in fact everything he did was with heartfelt determination and passion and so many of us have benefited from his desire to see coaches sharing knowledge and learning from experts and latterly from

sports scientists. He respected the work of Barry Fudge and Yannis Pitsiladis and encouraged me over the last four years to develop a better understanding of paediatric physiology.

One highlight for me was that I was fortunate enough to work with Dave at the London Olympic Games in preparing reports on the middle distance and steeplechase events. You could not fail to admire his unstinting enthusiasm for a sport he had been involved in for so many years. However the happiest I ever saw Dave was when he received the Lifetime Coaching Award from the BMC last November. This together with the medal Steve Ovett had sent over from Australia to go alongside this honour were fitting awards for a man who had done so much for endurance running in this country and he was really moved by such an honour being bestowed on him.

Dave was well known for his excellent sense of humour, and was the master of the witty 'aside' often reducing Bud and I to tears of laughter. He always brought a smile to our faces. For Bud, Martin and I a bright light has gone out in our lives and we miss him.

It was a great privilege to have known Dave who was so respected and admired by his peers. His loss will leave a huge void in the coaching fraternity, but we must remember an extraordinarily brilliant man who would be proud to see his coaching and mentoring legacy continue".



Dave Sunderland on the night he received the Outstanding Services to Coaching Lifetime Award from the BMC. Dave is flanked by Tim Hutchings and Nadeem Shaikh

**TIPTON HARRIER AND
SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL IAN
RAWLINSON** CONSIDERS THAT:

"Dave was a very special person besides being a great coach. He had a great ability to make every athlete feel special by believing in his or her abilities. He cared for each of his athletes not only from an athletics perspective but also from a personal one. In the current group, currently based around Birmingham, he brought athletes together not only from Birmingham but also from Stoke, Derby and Cannock on a weekly basis. This reflected the commitment from Dave and vice versa. Everyone was made to feel equal and even athletes whom Dave did not personally coach were welcome to join in. There was constant good – humoured banter that made even the hardest sessions enjoyable.

It is hard to believe for all who knew him that he will no longer be at the side of the track, however, the group is passionate about maintaining the atmosphere Dave created. He will be much missed for his harsh 10 second recoveries, his one word text replies to two questions, always being available to talk even if you had not been doing as much training as you should, but mainly as a friend.

OTHERS IN OUR GROUP HAVE SAID
THE FOLLOWING:

- "Dave always stood by me and believed in my ability even when I went months without running due to injury. I actually decided to jack in one year, to which his response was to come round to my house and motivate me and inspire me to attempt to get back into training."
- "Before I got introduced to Dave's group I was close to quitting the sport. Nothing was going right and I was just getting injury after injury. Dave took me on board and we had a little chat. That chat was the most influential chat I have ever had and it made me believe in myself again. He has helped me regain what I used to have in the determination and winning spirit and I can never thank him enough for that."
- "Dave would always tell me get a grip, and the way he never gave up on me even when running had gone completely backwards. It meant so much to me when Dave told me last summer how pleased he was with me for not giving up and I deserved to have good times running wise."



*Sir Chris Chataway
rediscovered a love of
running as a veteran*

PROLIFIC AUTHOR **ALASTAIR AITKEN** SHARES MEMORIES OF THE
LEGENDARY **SIR CHRIS CHATAWAY**.

I learnt on afternoon of Sunday 19th January that Chris Chataway had died that morning.

The one thing I would like to say was, when I interviewed him in 1986, when he was Chairman of Crown Communications Group plc in the City and again, after I finished just ahead of him in the Vets AC cross-country Championships at Wimbledon (a few years later), when he was somewhat older than me, that he appeared incredibly modest to talk to, compared to several other middle distance athletes from major Universities in his day. If one considers he had been a famous Television Broadcaster, A Government Minister and an Executive Director in Commerce and Education.

Of course any sports fan living through the 1950's would remember that incredible 'Last gasp' victory over Vladimir Kuts, in a World Record 5000m, in front of a capacity White City Stadium crowd in 1954.

Chris Chataway was educated at Sherborne School and Magdalen College, Oxford. He has been associated with three running clubs over the years – Walton AC, Achilles and in his later veteran years he competed for Thames Hare & Hounds. Although he played hooker for the rugby first team at Sherborne, he ran the quarter mile and then, as a senior ran the mile in 4.42, which was a senior school record in 1947.

However going forward to the end of his international running career, he was the first Newscaster along with Robin Day for Commercial Television. "I threw myself into other activities in 1956 and I was working hard in television", he recalled. That was when running took a back seat for him, certainly for many years till his later veteran racing at a lower standard.

He went on to be a Cabinet Minister in Edward Heath's Government and so on.

I felt to see what he had to say about his athletics and his most significant races through the years would be interesting to relate to all athletics fans, around the World so here we go from my interview of 1987:-

Enter Sir Christopher Chataway:

"I am sure I would have done better if I had trained more. I did honestly take it much more seriously than some of the newspaper articles would imply. In part it was an act, a game. One liked to give the impression of effortless superiority that was rather fashionable at the time. I did smoke, but one did not realise then how bad smoking was for you. I did not smoke all that many cigars. If I had known that, if I had trained much more I would have been much better, I would have done more. I suppose one was frightened of getting stale.

1954 was my best year in athletics simply because I raced. The long season started when I paced Roger Bannister in his first four minute mile; then I had lots of races and by October I did my best 5000m. I am sure now the mistake I made was not to train or race enough, and the fact that I did so badly at the Olympics in 1956 was not that I did not want to do well but that I simply had not raced enough and trained enough."

Olympic 5000m Final in Helsinki 1956 (top 5)

1. Emil Zatopek (CZH) 14:06.6
2. Alain Mimoun (France) 14:07.4
3. Herbert Schade (Germany) 14:08.6
4. Gordon Pirie (GB) 14:18.0
5. Chris Chataway (GB) 14:18.0

He continued, "Zatopek was stronger. I always kicked from the beginning of the back straight, so that was what I did. I overtook Zatopek right at the beginning of the back straight, and led the way up the straight and round the bend. I was pretty tired by then, and I hit my foot against the raised kerb on the inside of the track and fell. By the time I got up, Mimoun, Schade and Pirie had gone past me, but I certainly

would not have won it. If I had left my kick until the home straight, which I probably ought to have done, and had not fallen over, I would certainly have got third and might even have got second, I suppose. But I should not have beaten Zatopek."

Chris Chataway had won the AAA's 3 miles that year in 13:59.6. He joined Chris Brasher and Roger Bannister for training sessions under the watchful eye of coach Franz Stampfl.

On June the 21st, after being a pacemaker in the famous 'First 4 minute mile race' he ran second to John Landy, the Australian who ran a world record at Turku. Domestically, Freddy Green beat him on the tape in the AAA's 3 miles.

In the 1954 Commonwealth Games in Vancouver Chataway obtained a Gold medal in the 3 miles. He told me, "Freddy Green's win over me in the AAA's was quite a shock because I did not remember coming across him before". Chataway won the Commonwealth Gold in 13:35.2, in a New Games record. Green was about 15 yards behind with Frank Sando third.

There was a race where Chris Chataway did his sub- 4 minute mile. At the Whitsun British Games at the White City on 28th of May, 1955. The first three were Laszlo Tabori of Hungary in 3:59.0; 2 Chris Chataway in 3:59.8 and Brian Hewson third also in 3:59.8. Chris did set a World record in the Germany v Great Britain match of 13:23.2 for 3 miles in 1955.

It was in that same year that he also won the AAA's 3 miles from a rising star called Derek Ibbotson, the famous Yorkshire runner.

The 'high point' of Chris Chataway's career is considered by many to have been where he met the European 5,000m champion Vladimir Kuts. He was 2nd at the European championships in Bern (14:08.8) behind the Soviet Kuts (13:56.6) but ahead of Zatopek in 3rd (14:10.2)

In reflecting on that incredible race at the White City, which was part of the Moscow v London Match on 13th of October 1954, Chataway told me, "With five and a half laps left, Kuts put in a devastating burst, slowed then quickened the pace again. I had never come across anybody who has put in sprints like that before, and I don't think anybody else had in those days. I just made up my mind that I would stick with him for as long as I could, and it hurt awfully.

I suppose, because of the small amount of training that we used to do, the races

hurt us much more than they do for people now, who are better trained and tougher. We used to run on our nerves to a much greater extent because we thought we would get stale. We did relatively little training.

To run to one's limit was terrible agony, and those bursts were simply appalling, even years later-- more than three decades - I can remember it very, very vividly. Really, on the last two laps I had more or less given up hope. I was just living second by second. I thought if I can hang on another 10 yards and go on, perhaps, another 10 ... The final lap was terrible until the moment of hope in the last five yards! I don't know whether he did slightly falter or I just discovered some last reserve I can still recall the feeling of madness as I threw myself into that last fifty yards. It might have been that one was seeking oblivion. One really expected to expire. I could not have felt more stretched to the extremity than I did at that moment.

In a way it was a very satisfying experience, but I absolutely know that I could not have drawn out another inch that day, that once in my life I had the experience of knowing that I had tested myself absolutely to my limit. I could have gone faster if we had run it more evenly, if we had not had those appalling bursts. It could have been a faster time, but I could not get anymore out of myself than I did that day".

The time was a World 5000m record of 13:51.6, which was improved upon to 13:51.2 ten days later by Kuts himself and the following year by Sandor Iharos of Hungary who recorded 13:50.8.

In 1955 Sir Christopher Chataway was awarded the British trophy for 'Sports Personality of the Year' for his exploits a year previously. This award has been held every year since.



Sir Chris Chataway hands out medals on the 50th anniversary of the first sub 4 minute mile. Ifley road, Oxford. 2004



Former national 800m champion Mark Sesay

STEPHEN GREEN, FRIEND AND FORMER ATHLETE, LOOKS BACK ON THE CAREER OF BRITISH 800m TALENT MARK SESAY.

The British Athletics world was rocked last November, by the news of the death of former UK Champion 800m champion Mark Sesay after a brave battle with illness. He was only 40 years of age.

One of the most popular athletes in the sport, the Leeds AC man was a prodigious young talent under the tutelage of the late Wilf Paish, then coach to Peter Elliot, from around the age of 12.

One of my earliest memories of Mark was winning a Colts race in Spenborough, whilst being almost a foot taller than the other athletes. With his six foot plus frame, he

was quickly winning English Schools 800m and 1500m titles. His 1:49 for 800m at the age of 16 still ranks second on the UK all-time list, and at the time marked him out as a potential future world star.

Despite qualifying for the World and European Juniors, the talented young athlete took some time to progress as in the senior ranks, injuries were a perennial problem. This is borne out by the fact he only ran two full seasons as a Senior, both of which he qualified for World Championships over 800m. His quest to improve had by now taken him to Loughborough University,

where he was among a prodigious group of athletes such as Paula Radcliffe, Gary Lough, and Ian Grime.

Mark always came across as a restless soul, and always looking for what he could do to become better at 800m running, truly believing if he was fit he could be an international contender. Richard Hepworth, coach to distance star Andrew Pearson, and 1:43 800m man Martin Steele at Longwood, believed this as well.

In 1997, he achieved a breakthrough running 1:46.05 at Loughborough and the manner of that win plus a natural charisma and compelling backstory catapulted him back in the limelight. The National broadsheets, perhaps eager to find a new star, took interest, running half-page stories with the headline, 'The next Seb Coe.' This label, perhaps put instant pressure on his shoulders and although enjoying the instant fame, Mark often remarked that he felt he had not done anything yet to earn that comparison.

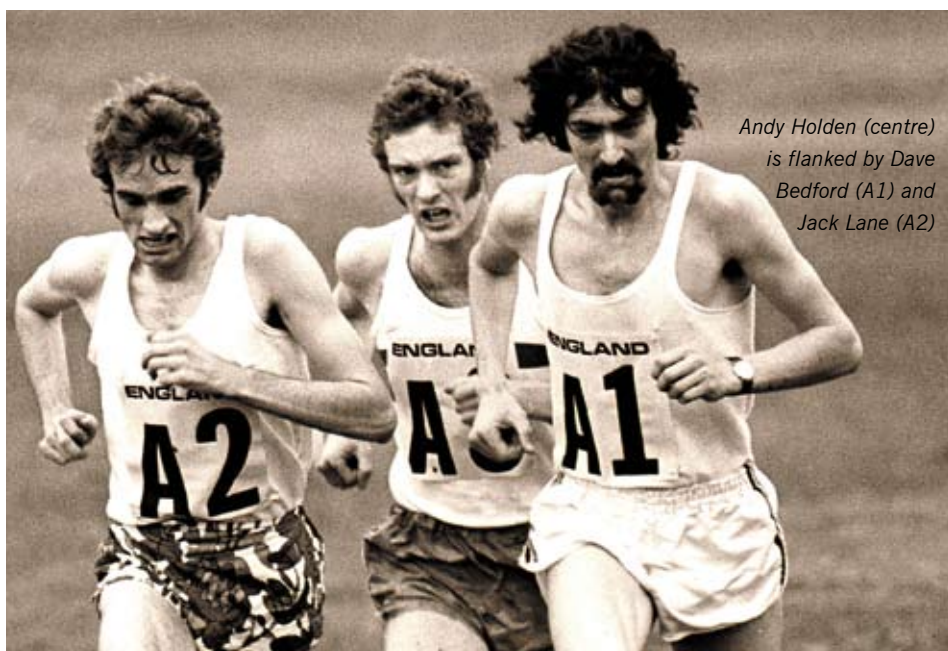
He also ran his best time of 46.22 for 400m, in the following weeks, which underlined his awesome potential over the shorter distance. He also finished a credible third in the European team champs 800m race in Munich. However, disappointment followed with a heat elimination in the World Championships in Athens.

After parting company amicably with Richard Hepworth, he sought the advice of the late Harry Wilson. The partnership worked well, and Sesay responded by winning the 1999 UKA 800m trials, ahead of his long-time friend Jason Lobo, and Curtis Robb.

He underlined his potential by running a best of 1:45.64 at Crystal Palace, a performance which still ranks him 31st on the UK all-time list. His performance in the World Championships in Seville was credible, finishing fourth in a tough heat.

The mark of an athlete and a person is sometimes not measurable by times and performance, but for how other people relate to them. One of Mark's best qualities was to be an elite athlete, but still to have a down to earth quality, and a desire to do 'normal' things like have a couple of beers, and generally enjoy life. Mark's later years, following his retirement from the sport in 2002 saw him settle in the city of Manchester and take on a variety of challenges, working in the Pharmaceutical Industry, and running a successful property business, he even found time for a stint as a successful DJ.

Mark Sesay is survived by his daughter Lily.



*Andy Holden (centre)
is flanked by Dave
Bedford (A1) and
Jack Lane (A2)*

TIPTON HARRIER **CHRIS HOLLOWAY** RECALLS THE LIFE AND TIMES OF OLYMPIAN **ANDY HOLDEN**.

Andy Holden was born on 22nd October 1948.

As a young man, in Leyland, he was a member of Preston Harriers A.C. and became the mainstay of many Lancashire cross country teams during his early racing years. He once said that his simple racing principle was "to beat the guy that beat me last week". Andy dryly noted that the standard in the Lancashire team was so high then, that one almost had to be national class to qualify for it!

Between 1968 and 1972 he averaged well over 30 races per year. He won the National Junior Cross Country Championship in 1969 at Parliament Hill Fields in London ahead of Dave Bedford. Three years later he would set a UK record for 3000m S/C in 1972 of 8m 26.4s.

Andy was a multiple Great Britain international over the roads, cross country, fells and on the track, both indoor and out, during the 1970's and early 80's. He was one of the rare few who competed as an international at junior, senior and veteran level.

He competed at the Commonwealth Games in 1970, European Championships in 1971 and the Olympics in 1972. He won gold with England teams during the 1970's at the World Cross Country Championships.

He would race over any distance from the humble mile up to ultra distance events such as the 36 Mile Two Bridges Race in Scotland where he set a course record.

He was a regular racer abroad with excursions to Bermuda (winning their marathon three times), Ireland, America, Belgium, France and across Europe. He

represented Tipton Harriers with pride and distinction in many European Club's Cross Country Championships.

Andy went to University in Birmingham in 1968 where he studied dentistry and represented that academic institution with distinction. He edited the campus newsletter "Redbrick" in 1969-70. He helped establish the annual "Past vs Present" races where his friendly nature and presence inspired many future generations.

He qualified as a dentist and worked at a number of practices around the Birmingham & Black Country area. As well as pursuing his career, he remained an exemplary loyal "team man" who would race his heart out for whatever club or organisation which he represented.

Andy was a multiple medal winner in the "classic" harrier events such as the National Road Relays & English Cross Country Championships. When he joined Tipton Harriers so began a competitive club record that remains to this day. He was first scorer for Tipton on no less than five occasions between 1975 and 1984, an era which saw him become Midland cross country champion in 1980.

Andy's presence persuaded other top runners to throw their hat in with the club. It was quoted once that Andy's 'commitment to athletics is what earned him an immediate respect'. He enjoyed his sport and enjoyed the company that it brought. He was a regular at the Manx Easter Athletics Festival on the Isle of Man.

Andy could be found racing anywhere from a lowly Midland Track & Field League Meeting at Tipton up to the international

glare of a televised meeting at Crystal Palace. He simply enjoyed the thrill of running and racing. He had a long career, occasionally interrupted with injury, but enjoyed success well into the veteran ranks during the 1990's. As was once said of him "He might not have scaled the heights of athletic success in terms of medals and records, he is at least satisfied that he has done his best and just as importantly has had a damn good time doing it." Many have their own special "Holden" moment that will live with them for a long time.

As well as dentistry he established a running shop in Sparkbrook in Birmingham during the early 1980's as the running boom took off. He coached a number of groups of young athletes over the years down at Tipton and many others in the athletics world enjoyed the benefit of his advice, quiet encouragement and example. He also did much "unsung" work within athletics such as marshalling at many Midland & National Road Relays on the courses he ran so strongly on. In doing so he helped further generations of athletes and raised funds for Tipton Harriers as well. He undertook on many administrative roles over the years within his club and also at area level.

Andy inspired in so many ways. In the early 1980's Andy roped in a young member of Tipton Harriers (who was also a student at Birmingham University) into helping him out one Christmas with his charity work. Over the Christmas holiday the charity always provided a wide range of facilities for the homeless of the Midlands from hot meals and haircuts to medical and dental work at a temporary centre in Birmingham. Why was this inspirational? Well, it showed someone who "had" what some "had not" and gave him a simple lesson in humility and humanity. With others doing their own "family bit" and no public transport available it meant some lateral thinking was needed as to how the Harrier was to get the eight or so miles into Birmingham as, like Andy, he did not drive. How would Andy have done it? Well the answer was obvious. The Harrier organised himself and ran "in" and "out"! The run was beneficial to the Harrier and did not impact on his family, the small "help" that he was able to give others was one lesson in life that never left him.

Many learned from Andy in life and many can still learn from him now. Athletics is about honesty, hard work and enjoyment. Andy exhibited all three. We should all seek to ensure that his work ethic, the projects he engaged in, the causes he espoused and the stories of his life, live on to inspire new generations.

BRITISH MILING HISTORY

HERE WE REFLECT BACK ON TWO EXTRAORDINARY SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH HAVE DEFINED OUR SPORT AND INFLUENCED OUR CLUB. INTERNATIONALLY RESPECTED COACH **PETER THOMPSON** ASSESSES THE MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF SIR ROGER BANNISTER AND DIANE LEATHER.

A Life Defined – The 60th Anniversary of the ‘Four Minute Mile’

What defines truly exceptional achievement? It has been said or written many times that more individuals have climbed Mount Everest than have broken four minutes for the mile. That's a fact, it's a thing we can't deny. More than 3,500 people have successfully summited the 29,029 ft. Himalayan mountain peak, whereas by October 2013, just 1,303 people had broken four minutes for the mile.

There are seven billion people in the world, more or less, and to be one of either group, Everest conquerors or sub-4 minute milers, surely defines ‘exceptional achievement’. The difference is that you cannot buy a guide to take you sub-4. You simply have to have a ‘genetic gift’ that is then individually honed.

And, while we are on the subject of numbers, there are probably considerably more articles on Sir Roger Bannister and his achievements than individuals who have climbed Everest. Let us, then, represent Roger Bannister's life as a play in three Acts with a Monologue interjected. And let us, predominantly, have his words define the script. Who could know the man better during his life?

Act I - *In which a boy discovers his love for running and develops under the influence of the spires of Oxford*

The following is excerpted from ‘The Joy of Running’, a June 20th, 1955, Sports Illustrated autobiographical article:

“I remember a moment when I stood barefoot on firm dry sand by the sea... I looked down at the regular ripples on the sand, and could not absorb so much beauty... In this supreme moment I leapt in sheer joy. I was startled and frightened by the tremendous excitement that so few steps could create...”

I was almost running now, and a fresh rhythm entered my body. No longer conscious of my movement, I discovered a new unity with nature. I had found a new source of power and beauty, a source I never dreamt existed. From intense moments like this, love of running can grow.

As a boy I had no clear understanding of why I wanted to run. I just ran anywhere and everywhere... I wonder how much part sheer fright plays in running... I ran for it when

I heard my first air-raid siren. I imagined bombs and machine gun bullets raining on me if I didn't go my fastest. Was this a little of the feeling I have now when I shoot into the lead before the last bend and am afraid of a challenge down the finishing straight? To move into the lead means making an attack requiring fierceness and confidence, but fear must play some part in the last stage, when no relaxation is possible and all discretion is thrown to the winds...

... I went up to Oxford in the autumn of 1946 to study medicine. In Oxford, I had been told, a man without a sport is like a ship without a sail... Of all sports, running seemed to be the only one for which I had any aptitude... Since 1945 when I watched my first international athletic meeting, I had a schoolboy dream of becoming a runner. I had never watched anything more than school sports until my father took me to the White City (where Roger was inspired by the sight of Sydney Wooderson). Perhaps he wanted me to be a runner. He himself had won his school mile and promptly fainted afterward—as many runners did in those days.”

Oxford proved to be the fertile soil that Bannister's love and talent for running begged for, with his rapidly developing speed in the mile and 1500m drawing the attention of the media and athletics authorities. But, he declined an invitation to race in the 1948 Olympics.

By 1951, Bannister had captured the British title in the mile and felt ready for Olympic competition. He finished fourth in the 1500m, breaking the existing Olympic record, but attracted a typically negative and judgemental response from the British sports media.

Bannister's own response to the media's reaction was to take on a new challenge, by setting out to break the world mile record and to take it under the four-minute barrier. He was now studying full-time at St Mary's Hospital Medical School and could commit to train a brief 45 minutes a day. He determined to optimise this time to achieve his goals.

Monologue - *The assault on ‘Everest’*
Roger Bannister was very aware that he was not alone in his pursuit of the four-



Sir Roger Bannister. Peter J L Thompson

minute mile. Around the world, other groups of athletes were preparing for their races. So, Bannister planned an attempt in the A.A.A. vs. Oxford University match on May 6th, 1954. He was to be paced by his training partners, Chris Brasher and Christopher Chataway. On the day, a strong wind threatened to ruin the attempt but it abated somewhat in the late afternoon and Bannister decided it was “now or never”. The athletes assembled for the race. The following is the autobiographical account of the end of the race, excerpted from the *First Four Minutes*.

“Failure is as exciting to watch as success, provided the effort is absolutely genuine and complete. But the spectators fail to understand - and how can they know - the mental agony through which an athlete must pass before he can give his maximum effort. And how rarely, if he is built as I am, he can give it. ...

... My body had long since exhausted all its energy, but it went on running just the same. The physical overdraft came only from greater will power. This was the crucial moment when my legs were strong enough to carry me over the last few yards as they could never have done in previous years. With five yards to go the tape seemed almost to recede. Would I ever reach it?

Those last few seconds seemed never-ending. The faint line of the finishing tape stood ahead as a haven of peace after the struggle. The arms of the world were waiting to receive me if only I reached the tape without slackening my speed. If I faltered, there would be no arms to hold me and the world would be a cold, forbidding place, because I had been so close. I leapt at the tape like a man taking his last spring to save himself from the chasm that threatens to engulf him.

My effort was over and I collapsed almost unconscious, with an arm on either side of me. It was only then that real pain overtook me. I felt like an exploded flashlight with no will to live; I just went on existing in the most passive physical state without being quite unconscious. Blood surged from my muscles and seemed to fell me. It was as if all my limbs were caught in an ever-tightening vice. I knew that I had done it before I even heard the time. I was too close to have failed, unless my legs had played strange tricks at the finish by slowing me down and not telling my tiring brain they had done so."

The stopwatches held the answer. The announcement came, "*Ladies and gentlemen, here is the result of event nine, the one mile: first, number forty one, R. G. Bannister, Amateur Athletic Association and formerly of Exeter and Merton Colleges, Oxford, with a time which is a new meeting and track record, and which - subject to ratification - will be a new English Native, British National, All-Comers, European, British Empire and World Record. The time was three...*".

The roar of the crowd drowned out the rest of the announcement. Bannister's time was 3 min 59.4 sec. The unbreakable record had been broken. At age 25, Roger Bannister had etched his name in history. **Act II** – *Running and competing, after May 6th 1954, in which a racing career concludes.*

The 'floodgates' didn't open for sub-4 minute miles, as predicted, after that day at Iffley Road but within a month, the Australian runner John Landy had broken Roger Bannister's record, running 3:57.9 in Turku, Finland. Global interest was focused on the mile distance and this set the scene for an epic meeting, 'The Mile of the Century', to be conducted in July in the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, Canada. The mile final would be a showdown between the world's two fastest milers, Landy the front-runner against Bannister the fast finisher and it was as publicised and anticipated as Mo Farah's

2012 Olympic appearances. In execution it did not disappoint.

Following Landy's front-running, Roger Bannister recalls his thinking with 200m remaining, "*If Landy did not slacken soon I would be finished. As we entered the last bend I tried to convince myself that he was tiring. With each stride now I attempted to husband a little strength for the moment at the end of the bend when I had decided to pounce. I knew this would be the point where Landy would least expect me, and if I failed to overtake him the race would be his.*

When the moment came my mind would galvanise my body to the greatest effort it had ever known. I knew I was tired. There might be no response, but it was my only chance."

What happened next sealed the legendary status of this race. By pure coincidence, Bannister launched his attack right at the exact moment that Landy looked back inside and to his left. The Englishman passed by unseen and gained the vital few metres to go for victory.

The final result saw both runners go under four minutes but Bannister came in first at 3:58.8 to Landy's 3:59.6. Later that year, Roger Bannister was awarded the Silver Pears Trophy, bestowed annually for the outstanding British achievement in any field. He also secured the European title in the 1500 metres before retiring from competition, aged 25.

Act III - *In which our hero, now retired from athletics' competition, fulfills his professional and personal goals, out of sight of an adoring and respectful public. On stage, the lights dim to almost darkness but the action has continuity and is purposeful for society.*

It is perhaps fitting that the third Act be the shortest of all, in script, despite it covering the longest temporal period, 60 years. This brevity can be regarded as the antithesis of what Sir Roger Bannister perhaps would wish for his own story.

At the end of 1954, Bannister retired from athletics' competition but not running, to pursue his medical studies full-time, becoming a consultant neurologist. He gained closure on his racing career in the well

expressed and, at times, lyrical prose of his autobiography, *First Four Minutes*, published in 1955. It has since been reprinted as, *Four Minute Mile* and Frank Horwill would always insist that this autobiography should be required reading for all BMC boys and girls and women and men.

After completing his medical studies, he combined a career of clinical practice and research as a neurologist. He continued to run for enjoyment and fitness until 1975, when he suffered a serious car accident that, among other injuries, broke his ankle. 1975 was also the year that he gained recognition from the realm for his combined achievements, being knighted. He has maintained a life-long enthusiasm for Athletics that is evidenced by his appearance and interest in previous and current events.

Recently, 'The Bannister Effect' has gained increasing media coverage and is used by many in motivational business, life and sport settings. The argument goes that we humans are subject to believing that all sorts of things that are really only difficult are actually impossible, until it is proven otherwise. Bannister's achievement of the seemingly 'impossible' sub-4 minute mile is the prime example that unless you can believe that something is possible, it is likely to remain improbable.

Our play concludes with the curtain remaining raised, as the lights once again brighten to reveal our hero, central stage.

Roger Bannister has refused steadfastly to be defined or constrained by his '3 minutes, 59.4 seconds of fame'. Instead the eminent neurologist, Knight of this realm, author of a classic medical textbook and former Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, has insisted that his achievements on the Iffley Road' cinders on May 6th, 1954 pale in his comparison to the other achievements in his life. But, for the rest of the world, he exists primarily as a snapshot, an image of supreme determination, relief and achievement frozen forever in, and of, time. Roger Bannister was the first to successfully summit athletics' 'Everest' and shall be always remembered and revered for this achievement.

VIDEO LINKS

These archival video links capture the essence of Roger Bannister's achievements.

The Four Minute Mile (Edited), 1954

www.britishpathe.com/video/four-minute-mile-aka-4minute-mile/query/15607

The Four Minute Mile (Complete race with commentary by Sir Roger Bannister), 1954

www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTXoTnp_5sl

Bannister and Landy – the "Miracle Mile", 1954

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jP_NzZP_LKO

Diane Leather – Britain's Barrier Breaker

Peter Thompson continues:

It was in the late Spring of 1954, in the month of May to be precise, and the world mile record was under assault. But this was not Iffley Road, Oxford. This was the Alexander Stadium, Birmingham and the Midland Championships on May 29th. The runners were assembled on a rain-soaked cinder track at the start of the mile race knowing that one of their number was to attempt to break the world record that day. They were also aware that this athlete had won the Championships 880 yards just 45 minutes earlier, establishing a British Record.

Brought to the start line, the report of the Starter's gun echoed around the stadium like a whip crack, reminding those assembled, athletes and spectators alike, of the purpose for their meeting. As the runners set off, it took only a couple of hundred yards before a tall, elegant runner moved fluidly to the front of the field and assumed an ever-increasing lead, "the game was afoot" and Diane Leather had once again placed the world mile record under threat.

Not for this athlete the company of opponents or pacemakers. Diane Leather was simply miles ahead in terms of her development and potential and raced with the wisdom of that potential. As the laps passed by, her pace carried her far away from the field so that the crowd, through the announcer, became increasingly aware that the 5-minute barrier for the mile was achievable. By the end of the mile, Diane was 160 yards ahead of the second place finisher, and broke the tape in a time of 4:59.6, becoming the first female runner to complete a mile in under 5 minutes. This barrier was broken just 23 days after Roger Bannister had broken the 4-minute barrier in Oxford.

Diane Leather is probably the best British athlete you may never have heard of. And, if you have heard of her, you may not be fully aware of just how great was her talent and achievement over such a range of distances. Her relatively brief career saw her equal the world best for 440 yards and set world best performances for 1500m (twice) and was the first woman to run under 4:30.0 and the Mile (on five occasions). At that time, these performances were all classified as world best performances, rather than world records, as the only women's individual middle distances recognised by the IAAF were the 800m and 880 yards and Diane held the world record for 800m. But, she also won the England National Cross Country Championships for four consecutive years from 1953 to 1956. We can



Diane Leather winning the mile race
© Illustrated London News Ltd/Mary Evans

think of many athletes who have a great range of distances but what other athlete can claim such truly world-record level performances from 400m to Cross Country?

Diane Leather was born in 1933 in Streetly, Staffordshire. She took up running at the relatively late age of 19 after leaving school and being inspired to run by watching the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games. In a BBC Woman's Hour interview in 2004, in response to the question, "Had you always been a very keen runner?" Diane replied, "Not for very long. We didn't run at school. I played Lacrosse and things which involved a lot of running but I suppose my interest came with the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki and watching those and thinking, "Oh, I'd love to have a go at running." So I joined Birchfield Harriers in the autumn of that year (1952) and immediately started training for the winter events, which was cross-country and was successful right through."

At Birchfield Harriers she was coached by Dorette Nelson-Neal and immediately impressed as a versatile runner, winning the Midland Cross Country Championships and then the England National Cross Country Junior and Senior titles in her first winter with the club. In the Spring of 1953, Diane was a 20 year-old newcomer to the track. But her inaugural excursions onto the cinder tracks denied that 'newcomer' tag and produced her first record-breaking exploits. By the end of this year she had developed as a front-running middle distance runner unchallenged in the domestic scene. She contributed towards a world record of 6:49.0 for the 3 x 880 yards relay, following Norah Smalley and

Chris Slemon, to run the anchor leg in an international match against France. She also 'found' the Mile, and in such an emphatic way, running a world best and English native record of 5:02.6 at the end of September. This time represented an almost 6-seconds improvement over the previous best of 5:08.0 by Britain's Anne Oliver.

Diane's time of 5:02.6 didn't survive long, being lowered two months later by Edith Treybal of Romania, who clocked 5:00.3 and the prospect of 1954 becoming a race to be the first woman to break 5 minutes for the mile perhaps became a focus. It didn't have the contemporary or latter day coverage and anticipation encapsulated in the race to break 4 minutes for the mile that Roger Bannister, John Landy and Wes Santee evoked. But, it was a significant barrier and a barrier that had rapidly become approachable for the women of this era.

Through the winter of 1953/54, Diane trained seriously, while working as a micro-analyst in chemistry at Birmingham University, and she recalled the changes in training from then to now in her BBC interview, "It's so different. I worked and trained in the evenings and at weekends and not every day." Despite this potential drawback to improvement, she developed as a runner, winning the second of her National Cross Country titles and prepared for the track.

The summer of 1954 was only her second track season but it was an intensive and memorable time for the young woman from Staffordshire. On May 26th she regained the world best performance by lowering her own British Mile record to 5:00.2. This race was tantalisingly close to breaking the 5-minute barrier and we can still view it today, and appreciate it, in the YouTube replay of the Pathé News footage, 'Almost the sub-5 Minute Mile'. (see panel for video links)

A mere three days later, on May 29th, as we described earlier, she improved this mile mark and won the race for women to break the 5-minute barrier with her 4:59.6, a world best and we must also remember that earlier on the same day she had set the British record for 880 yards. In a radio interview immediately following her sub-5 minute clocking she was asked, "How did you feel today compared with Wednesday's (May 26th) attempt?" Diane replied, "Well, I felt a bit more tired but I had run a half as well. Well my legs felt tired anyway." The interviewer delved deeper, "But did you feel that the conditions were as good today as they were on Wednesday?" The reply this time was a little more hesitant,

"Yes, I think so. The ground was a bit softer but it was alright otherwise." Despite the soft cinders, it definitely produced a result that was "alright otherwise"!

Three weeks later, on June 19th she recorded her only individual world record, officially recognised by the IAAF, an 800m of 2:09.0. In fact she was being timed over 880 yards in this race and this time was accepted by the international governing body for the shorter metric distance, where no separate time-keepers had been provided. On July 17th, she combined again with her 1953 world record 3 x 880 yards relay colleagues, lowering their own world record to 6:46.0 and on August 21st, she recorded British records for 400m and 440 yards, with her 440 yards race time of 56.6 equalling Pamela Bryant's (Australia) world best.

Finally, she capped off the summer in Bern, competing on August 25th in the inaugural European Championships. Running in the 800m, the longest distance available to her, she further improved her British 800m mark to 2:09.8. This performance yielded her the silver medal behind the then 800m world record holder, Russian Nina Otkalenko, who took gold with 2:08.8.

In 1955, Diane improved her world best in the mile twice. In London on May 24th she ran 4:50.8 and then, in the early autumn, achieved a further improvement. This is best described in the manner of the era, by quoting from the caption under her photograph on the cover of the October edition of the 'London Illustrated News', "In an athletics meeting at the White City on September 21, in which representatives from the U.S. and seven Continental countries also competed. Miss Diane Leather, of Birchfield Harriers, won the women's mile by some 100 yards in 4 min. 45 sec. The International Federation

do not recognise this distance in women's athletics events, but Miss Leather's time is likely to remain the best for this distance for some time. While making it she beat her own previous best time by 5.8 seconds, despite the fact that she took the lead at 600 yards and after that was running alone and without any challenger. As a runner Miss Leather is always a pleasure to watch and she finished without a trace of flagging, breathing easily and quite undistressed." Over a two-year time period, Diane Leather had improved the women's world best for the mile on five occasions and by a total of 23 seconds, taking it from 5:08.0 to 4:45.0, a time that remained unbroken for 7 years.

Turning her attention to the 1500m distance in 1957, Diane twice broke the 1500m world best, recording 4:30.0 at Hornchurch on May 16th, and later that summer became the first woman to run under 4:30.0 with her 4:29.7 clocking, set in London on 19th July. The following year, 1958, she narrowly missed out on a gold medal in her second European Championship appearance, running the 800m in Stockholm. In this race the victory margin was even closer than four years previously. She was again beaten by a Russian, Yelizaveta Yermolayeva, who took gold in 2:06.3, while Diane's 2:06.6 time remained her lifetime best and her final British record over the 800m distance.

In the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games the longest distance for women was 200m and, despite Diane's prodigious sprinting capacity, this was too short a distance. Clearly, she would have been a contender at the 800m, 1500m or longer distances had they been available but the 800m was not reinstated until 1960. The women's 800m had been first introduced to the Olympic Games in 1928 but such was the perceived distress

of the finishers in this race, the 800m was discontinued until 1960. And, the women's 1500m was not introduced to the Olympics until 1972.

She finally gained her opportunity to run at the Olympic Games in Rome in 1960, as Mrs Diane Charles, but she was eliminated in the first round, finishing fifth in her heat in 2:14.24. Her glory years had gone, and had records been different, she would have had more 'officially' than most all others in British athletics history. In a more enlightened era, her name would have been prominent among the world record holders and, probably, as an Olympic Gold medallist.

Another author takes the view, "If a man had done such things, his name would be revered." But Diane Charles, herself, revokes this notion. In response to the BBC interviewer's question in 2004, "Have you ever felt that you should have had as much attention paid to you as he (Roger Bannister) has had?" she emphasised, "At the time I did get a lot of attention from people in athletics who knew what it meant and from the press at the time. It was different. I don't know that you could compare it, except that it was a barrier, 5 minutes. Lots of men had been chasing the 4-minute barrier. I don't think it was the same for the women and they also had pacemakers, or people who were equally as well with them."

Yes, it was different for Diane Leather Charles. She set herself goals far beyond the reach and company of her peers and achieved them. Today, the women's world record for the mile stands at 4:12.56 set in 1996 by Russia's Svetlana Masterkova. Who among the women today dares to challenge the 4-minute barrier – it will come to pass, as Diane Leather has already proven, barriers are there to be broken.

VIDEO LINKS

In the 1950s there was no YouTube, Flotrack or Athletics, nor computers even. The television had only recently been invented and few homes were in possession of one of these magical boxes. Most news was obtained from newspapers, combined with the weekly trip to the local cinema to view the Pathé News. The introductory crowing cockerel invoked attention to what was happening in the world, including the world of sport.

The following Pathé News archival video links capture the essence of the era providing an opportunity to view Diane Leather running at her best, on the cinder tracks and gliding effortlessly over the mud and plough of 'true' cross country.

Almost the sub-5 Minute Mile - 1954

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShjDSg5XYd8>

Footage of the oh-so-close attempt - three days before the actual achievement of the sub-5 minute mile.

GB vs Czechoslovakia in Ostrava, Czechoslovakia - 1954

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/athletic-british-girls-beat->

[czechs/query/DIANE](http://www.britishpathe.com/video/czechs-query/DIANE)

Diane front runs to win the 800m.

England National Cross Country Championships - 1955

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/cross-country-championship-query/diane>

Diane Leather wins her 3rd of four consecutive England National Cross Country titles over 2.5 miles. Gordon Pirie dominates the men's race, shoe-less.

Britain vs. Russia - 1957

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/britain-v-russia/query/DIANE>
Diane runs the 800m and beats two favoured Russian athletes. While footage includes Derek Ibbotson, Gordon Pirie, Vladimir Kuts and a barefooted female shot putter.

England vs Poland - 1957

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/england-v-poland/query/DIANE>
Diane beats the Poles in the 800m and Gordon Pirie runs below his best - through over-training and over-racing.

BMC PAST AND PRESENT

DAVID COCKSEGE WHETS THE APPETITE FOR ALL YOU STATS FANS BY LOOKING BACK AT SOME PAST RACE RESULTS.

It was the year that Virginia Wade won the ladies single title at Wimbledon. If you were active with us during the Queen's Silver Jubilee year of **1977** and if can spot yourself, let us know:

BMC 2000m, Crystal Palace, 9 February 1977

1, Paul Williams 5:23.2; 2, Kevin Glastonbury (Junior) 5:26.4

3, Tim Hutchings (Junior) 5:28.6

BMC Women's 600m, West London Stadium, 2 March 1977

1, Jo White 1:33.3; 2, Marion Barrett 1:34.2; 3, Sally Ludlam 1:35.8

BMC Junior 1000m, Crystal Palace, 9 March 1977

1, Neil Leach 2:29.0; 2, Tim Hutchings 2:29.1; 3, David Palmer 2:32.2; 4, G Long 2:32.6 'B' Race: 1, David Black (Youth) 2:34.3; 2, Nick Brooks (Youth) 2:36.0; 3, David Agnew 2:37.3

BMC Mile, Aldershot, 6 April 1977

1, Walter Wilkinson 4:07.7; 2, Paul Williams 4:08.7; 3, Gary Nurse 4:09.9; 4, Graham Jackson 4:10.8

BMC Women's 800m: 1, Caroline Falla-Hext 2:08.6; 2, Christine Brace 2:11.9; 3, Sharon Harvey 2:12.4 'B' Race: 1, Bernadette Madigan 2:16.7; 2, S Tuffnell 2:17.5; 3, S Brown 2:17.5

BMC Mile, Stretford, 3 May 1977

1, Ian Gilmour 4:06.3; 2, Laurie Reilly 4:06.5; 3, David Brennan 4:07.1; 4, Karl Harrison 4:07.9

BMC Women's 1500m, West London Stadium, 4 May 1977

1, Glynis Goodburn-Penny 4:23.0; 2, Wendy Smith 4:23.1; 3, Sharon Harvey 4:26.7; 4, Ann Yeoman-Ford 4:28.9

BMC Bannister Mile, Oxford, 4 May 1977

1, Ari Pauonnen (FIN) 4:00.2; 2, Mike Kearns 4:00.7; 3, Francis Gonzales (FRA) 4:00.7; 4, Malcolm Prince 4:02.4; 5, Terry Colton 4:02.6; 6, Tony Simmons 4:02.8

BMC 1200m, Aldershot, 11 May 1977

1, Tim Hutchings 2:58.9; 2, Graham Jackson 3:03.9; 3, G Long 3:05.6

BMC 800m, Stretford, 24 May 1977

1, Alan Mottershead 1:51.1; 2, Graham Cooper 1:51.9; 3, D Karlston 1:52.6

BMC 1500m, Loughborough, 2 June 1977

1, Alan Mottershead 3:48.0; 2, Terry Colton 3:48.1; 3, Andy Armitage 3:48.4; 4, Ian Gilmour 3:48.9

BMC Mile, Stretford, 14 June 1977

1, Steve Brennan 4:06.3; 2, Karl Harrison

4:06.6; 3, M Flint 4:07.0; 4, David Nicholl 4:07.2

BMC Mile, New Eltham, 3 July 1977

1, Walter Wilkinson 4:09.0; 2, Kevin Steere 4:11.0

BMC Mile, Stretford, 5 July 1977

1, Stan Markley 4:03.5; 2, David Brennan 4:03.9; 3, David Nicholl 4:04.0; 4, D Gee 4:06.0 'B' Race: 1, Kim McDonald 4:10.0; 2, B Maule 4:10.9; 3, J Ashton 4:13.5

BMC Women's 1500m: 1, Janet Lawrence 4:17.0; 2, Val Rowe 4:37.3; 3, C Readdy 4:37.4

BMC Mile, West London Stadium, 6 July 1977

1, Malcolm Plant 4:07.1; 2, Paul Williams 4:08.3; 3, J Kople 4:09.1

BMC City Mile, West London Stadium, 20 July 1977

1, Walter Wilkinson 4:04.9; 2, Martin Wilson 4:06.4; 3, Charles Monk 4:07.4; 4, C Blackwell 4:09.0 B Race: 1, T Baker 4:13.3; 2, P Lee 4:14.7; 3, Mike Gratton 4:15.0

BMC 1500m, Stretford, 16 July 1977

1, Alan Mottershead 3:43.6; 2, Stan Markley 3:44.2; 3, D Gee 3:47.3; 4, P Harker 3:48.3

BMC Women's 800m: 1, Janet Lawrence 2:04.6; 2, Christine Tranter-Benning 2:07.1; 3, Sylvia Parker 2:08.6

BMC Junior 1500m, Crystal Palace, 10 August 1977

1, Tim Hutchings 3:50.2; 2, Aden Constable 3:57.5; 3, J Moses 3:57.8

BMC 3000m, Kennington Oval, 14 August 1977 (grass)

(A field of 14 runners was assembled, but as rain stopped play, Surrey Cricket Club would not allow the race to proceed)

BMC Women's 1500m, West London Stadium, 7 September 1977

1, J Shepherd 4:26.5; 2, C Gould 4:27.9

BMC 800m, Woodford, 11 September 1977

1, Walter Wilkinson 1:50.6; 2, Alan Mottershead 1:51.6

BMC Junior 3000m, Crystal Palace, 14 September 1977

1, Lee Benjamin 8:33.8; 2, Chris Sly 8:39.4; 3, Andy Bristow 8:40.4

BMC Mile, Harlow, 16 September 1977

1, Walter Wilkinson 4:05.5; 2, Martin Knowles 4:07.0; 3, Keith Irvine 4:09.1

BMC 1500m, Crystal Palace, 12 October 1977

1, Paul Williams 3:52.7; 2, Graham Jackson 3:52.8; 3, Mike Gratton 3:53.9

BMC Junior 1200m, Crystal Palace, 9 November 1977

1, Tim Hutchings 3:00.7; 2, Neil Leach 3:01.7; 3, Wayne Tarquini 3:03.3; 4, David Black (Youth) 3:04.7

BMC Women's 3000m, West London Stadium, 7 December 1977

1, Jo White (On her 17th birthday) 9:26.4; 2, Penny Yule 9:29.6; 3, Monica Joyce 9:41.8; 4, 3, D Bent 1:52.4; 4, P Burnett 1:52.6; 5, J Mills 1:52.8

NOTICE

BMC/Trafford 10k Track Festival/ Northern 10K Champs – Saturday 6th Sept 2014

Trafford AC is proud to host BMC 10k track festival to be held on the 6th September 2014.

The races will take place at Longford Park's famously fast track. The event will also be held in conjunction with the Northern Athletics 10k champs.

The all day program of races will cater for elite to recreational runner, and is part of the Run Britain Grand Prix Series.

Tim Brennan Chairman of the BMC says, "This meeting fits in with our commitment to enhancing opportunities for elite distance athletes, and those who just want to go out there and run a 10k track time."

Race Organiser Steve Green says of the inaugural event "This meet aims to expand those opportunities for 10k athletes; and provide an innovative approach to track meetings. We are looking for over 400 entries and six hours of racing it should be an exciting day"

The men's and women's A races will be paced.

All athletes will receive a commemorative medal and a chip recorded time.

The action begins at 1.00pm.

Entry details www.race-results.co.uk

BMC NEWS QUIZ

DAVID COCKSEGE POSES YOU SOME REAL ATHLETICS TEASERS. ANSWERS ON PAGE 34.

- Who was the first man to run negative splits in a world record over 800 metres or 880 yards?
- Who set 1500 metres world records in heat, semi-final and final in the Olympic Games?
- British athletes won European 1500 metres titles in 1938 (Paris), 1954 (Berne), 1958 (Stockholm), 1969 (Athens), 1978 (Prague), 1982 (Athens) and 1986 (Stuttgart). Can you name these men?
- Who is the only man to win Commonwealth Games titles at both 1500 metres and One Mile?
- Which married couple, born on the same day, both won Olympic gold medals on the same day?
- Who was the last Briton to set a world record at 5000 metres?
- Which man has run the most sub-four minute miles in history and also popularised the modern sport of 'Speed Golf'?
- Which marathon runner holds the UK record at 3000 metres?
- Which British athlete was the first woman in sporting history to run a sub five minute mile?
- Who set a world record in his debut race at 3000 metres?
- Who was the last man to set world records at both 1500 metres and one mile in the same race?
- Can you name Italy's two Olympic Champions at 1500 metres?
- Which Briton has won an Olympic title at 800 metres, a European title at 1500 metres and a Commonwealth Games title at 5000 metres?
- Which two men have won European titles at 1500 metres and 5000 metres in successive championships?
- Which British woman set the first IAAF-ratified world records at both 1500 metres and One Mile?
- When Mary Slaney and Zola Budd famously clashed in the 1984 Olympic 3000 metres final, who won the race and which British woman went on to take the silver medal?
- How many world records (including indoor marks) did Seb Coe set during his active career?
- Which British Olympic silver medallist at 1500 metres was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize during his political career?
- When did British middle-distance runners take all three medals in one race at the European Championships?
- Who was the first woman in history to run inside 4 minutes for 1500 metres?

WE TAKE A STEP BACK IN TIME TO THE SWINGING SIXTIES. **DAVID COCKSEGE** ASKS IF YOU ARE LISTED IN THESE **CITY MILE RESULTS**.

For the Chubb Trophy at City Charities Meeting

(The BMC organised this event from 1964 onwards)

City Mile, Motspur Park, 24 July 1963

1, Rayfel Roseman 4:01.6; 2, Tony Milner 4:02.7; 3, Nat Fisher 4:04.5; 4, Dick Jones 4:06.5; 5, Peter Milner 4:07.4; 6, Allen Cowen 4:16.7

BMC City Mile, Motspur Park, 22 July 1964

1, Bill McKim 3:59.4 (*first sub 4 in a race organised by BMC*); 2, Tony Harris 4:01.0; 3, Neil Duggan 4:01.5; 4, Peter Keeling 4:02.1; 5, John Thresher 4:02.1; 6, Ray Roseman 4:02.1; 7, Ian Wheeler (AUS) 4:02.7; 8, Mick Gowan 4:02.8; 9, Tony Milner 4:05.7; 10, Derek Haith 4:06.0; 11, Fred Stebbings 4:11.0; 12, Geoff North 4:12.0; 13, Nat Fisher 4:19.0

Motspur Park, 21 July 1965

1, Bill McKim 3:59.5 (3:43.4 at 1500m); 2, Andy Green 3:59.9; 3, Tony Harris 4:00.4; 4, John Whetton 4:00.6; 5, Mick Gowan 4:01.0; 6, Ken Ballantyne 4:01.1; 7, Ray Roseman 4:01.4; 8, Malcolm Browne 4:02.0; 9, John Thresher 4:02.9

Motspur Park, 20 July 1966

(Torrential rain; flooded track) 1, John Whetton 4:09.4; 2, Ray Roseman 4:11.4; 3, Mike Billington 4:11.8; 4, Malcolm

Browne 4:12.7; 5, Bill McKim 4:14.2; 6, Andy Green 4:14.8; 7, Tony Maxwell 4:16.0; 8, Mick Gowan 4:18.5; 9, Geoff North 4:20.2

Motspur Park, 19 July 1967

1, Mike Billington 4:02.9; 2, Tony Simmons 4:03.1; 3, Mike Tagg 4:03.4; 4, Hugh Barrow 4:03.5; 5, Geoff Biscoe 4:05.5; 6, John Kirbride 4:06.1; 7, Fred Bell 4:07.0; 8, John Rix 4:08.0; 9, Tony Harris 4:10.5; 10, David Wright 4:10.6; 11, Allen Cowen 4:11.4

Motspur Park, 24 July 1968

1, John Boulter 3:58.6; 2, John Whetton 3:59.5; 3, Ray Roseman 4:00.9; 4, Gwynn Davis 4:03.8; 5, Chris Stewart 4:03.2; 6, John Rix 4:03.5; 7, Andy Green 4:04.0; 8, Malcolm Absolom 4:04.0; 9, Geoff Biscoe 4:04.0; 10, Mike Tagg 4:06.3; 11, Jon Bednarski 4:06.5; 12, Ken Riley 4:16.9

Motspur Park, 23 July 1969

1, John Kirkbride 3:58.0 (3:42.0 at 1500m); 2, Jim Douglas 3:58.5 (3:42.3 at 1500m); 3, John Boulter 3:59.2; 4, Ray Roseman 3:59.8; 5, Mike Beevor 4:01.6; 6, Andy Green 4:02.8; 7, David Bedford 4:02.9; 8, Phil Banning 4:02.9 (UK Junior record); 9, Bill McKim 4:03.5; 10, Paul Dennis 4:05.7; 11, Maurice Wands 4:05.8



Sophie Tooley (249) tracks Gemma Shepherd (248) in the Frank Horwill mile at Oxford last July

NOTICE

Text messages

We would like to remind all members, that you should not use text messages to contact race organisers. You should not attempt to enter or withdraw races using text messages. Entry and withdrawal should in the first instance be done via the BMC website. For other messages, most race organisers who display their email address prefer this method to relay messages.

BMC FOUNDER MEMBER **JOHN THRESHER** IS INTERVIEWED BY **DAVID COCKSEGE**.

David: What are your memories of July 1963 and that first BMC Committee Meeting in London?

John: I first met Frank Horwill at Motspur Park just before that date when John Le Masurier asked me to be the 'guinea pig' athlete during Frank's final AAA Coaching Certification examination. I was impressed with Frank and we discussed his idea concerning the formation of the British Milers' Club. So, I attended the subsequent inaugural committee meeting at Alf Wilkins' office in London for that purpose. The rest is history and I proudly hold BMC membership card number 0009 to this day.

David: You were a regular at several BMC Mile races after the formation of the club. What can you recall of those early days, and who was your coach at the time?

John: In the City Charities (Chubb Trophy) mile in 1963 I was the designated pacemaker up to the bell - 1,320 yards (3 laps) which I duly hit in the pre-determined time of 3 minutes exactly as requested. I stepped off the track still feeling pretty fresh and discovered the rest of the field bunched 15 yards behind....I still kick myself to this day for not pressing on for another lap! Frank was busily engaged blasting his whistle every 30 seconds to keep us on pace as we reached each half lap (220 yards).

(Note: Ray Roseman won the race in 4:01.6, improving from 4:05.8. It was a big breakthrough for him, having just returned from three months of intense training in Israel)

My other memory was in 1968 when on a soggy track at Paddington I took out the third lap in 59 seconds to try to get the pace back on schedule. I held the lead until 220 yards to go when Chris Stewart, Mike Tagg and Mike Beever all blew by me at once. I recovered to chase them in the final straight but accidentally nudged Beever into a muddy patch, and turned him around with 50 yards to go! Stewart, Tagg and I finished in that order in around 4:03 with 0.1 sec separating us. Poor Mike B had to right himself and finished close behind, and I survived an angry protest to the Track Referee!

I very much regret never having a coach - I just read books and coaching manuals to get me through. I had a very demanding job as an accountant and my running just had to be squeezed in somehow. I often wonder how much I could have improved if I had

asked Frank Horwill to be my coach, as he would certainly have got the best out of me.

David: What was the most personally satisfying performance of your track career?

John: On 1st June in Paris in 1968; winning the 5000 metres in a personal best of 13:49.0, clocking 56 seconds for my last lap - I couldn't run any faster for the last lap of a mile race. This was at Stade Charlety where they shot some scenes for the *Chariots of Fire* movie in 1980, and many top class American athletes were preparing for the Mexico City Olympics later that year - men such as Lee Evans (who won the 400m in Mexico in a world record of 43.86) and John Carlos (bronze medallist in the 200m) for example.

This beat the Olympic Qualifying Standard (13:50) and I was first British athlete to achieve it that year. I rank this performance above being selected for England in 1969 in the British Isles Cup in Grangemouth, Scotland, as I only finished a close up fifth in the 5,000m having been sick the day before.

I remember that in Paris Juan Martinez finished fourth as he did later in Mexico City in both the 5000 and 10,000m, beating the great Ron Clarke, world record holder at both distances. (Clarke collapsed and was carried off on a stretcher after the 5,000m final). So much for altitude!

David: What can you tell us of your racing experiences in Canada, and your career in administration there after leaving the UK?

John: I only competed rarely at local level initially as I was basically retired, and still had a very demanding career. I did some coaching and with my track background and Chartered Accountancy qualifications this

JOHN THRESHER FACT FILE

- English International track athlete, 5000 metres in British Isles Cup (1969) and Olympic Qualifier 1968, first G.B. athlete to achieve the Olympic Standard.
- Ranked #20- 5000 metres in the World by Track and Field News August 1968.
- Member of Belgrave Harriers since 1957.
- Founding Member of British Milers Club 1963.
- President and CEO of Athletics Canada from 1997 to 2000. Chairman of IFTA Canada (George Bunner's Sportshall Athletics) 2002 to 2012 and Trustee of IFTA U.K. (Sportshall Athletics).

ultimately helped in securing the position of President and CEO of Athletics Canada in 1997 when I left business for good. It was an alternatively extremely rewarding and also very frustrating experience as I was far from being a bureaucrat. There was almost no interest in Track & Field in Canada except for Olympic and World gold medals won by Donovan Bailey and the 4x100m sprint relay team. The vast majority of athletes were really poverty stricken and I was far too outspoken on the matter.

My contract lasted 3.5 years and was not renewed. I had to clean up the mess left in the wake of the Ben Johnson fiasco from the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, where he was stripped of the 100m gold medal and world record (9.79) when he tested positive for the anabolic steroid Stanozolol. Canadian



authorities kept reinstating him as the IAAF were disbaring him.

David: Was your move up to the Marathon distance a natural progression, and how well did you adapt to the 42.2km road distance?

John: I had retired from serious racing when in 1979 I moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, where I was encouraged to race 10km on the road and the marathon - now I knew I could set personal bests as I had never competed at those distances before. I ran 32:16 for 10km aged 43 and had a good first marathon, aged 39, when I finished one in 2:39. I was hooked. So I reproduced my 1960s training methods and got down to 2:32:21 in Vancouver, aged 42, and then finished second in the Canadian masters in 1983, (aged 43) in 2:33:11. We ran steady mileage through the winter in temperatures down to - 28 deg. C and I got frostbite every winter!

David: Tell us about your experiences leading the Canadian Track & Field Team at the 1998 Commonwealth Games in KL, Malaysia.

John: The 1998 Commonwealth Games were my first exposure to being responsible for a team. I stayed in the Athlete's Village and this was a very rewarding experience, although the weather was incredibly hot: around 100 deg. F and with almost 95% humidity. I tried to run there myself and just melted in the extreme heat!

Now Canada had a very useful middle distance runner named Jeff Scheibler who had bests of 7:43 for 3000m, 13:14 for 5,000m and 27:30 for 10,000m, and he tried to run in that heat and also melted! The big throwers like Jason Tunks (finalist in the 2000 Sydney Olympics) were okay, but we all had to re-hydrate later in the bar! I must say that I was not impressed with Malaysia, but perhaps it was just the oppressive heat that put me off the place.

David: What are the problems facing the sport currently as you see it?

John: I am concerned that too many young people in the western, first world democracies live in a 'virtual' world, spending too much time in front of computers, or in a sedentary environment.

This means the hard-working East Africans, deprived of the material advantages we take for granted, will continue to grab all the medals at major championships. Where will the next Coe, Ovett, Cram, Radcliffe, Ron Clarke or Derek Clayton come from? I am not sure that pure professionalism will help now. The motivation is not there.

In Canada the total domination of the professional sports, complete with obscene salaries, is the norm. Nobody over here even understands the assisted athlete scenario, and the press are not interested unless there is a drug-related angle to stories about track and field.

David: How aware are you of the BMC's current range of activities, and how do you view the future for the club?

John: I read the BMC NEWS regularly with great interest so I am up to date on current events. I think the future continues to look very promising as the club has a niche position and promotes much needed events whilst also encouraging and challenging young athletes.

BMC CHAIRMAN **TIM BRENNAN** PREVIEWS THE 2014 SEASON AND INVITES YOU TO GRASP NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

The BMC 2013 season produced many top class performances that figured prominently in UK, European and World rankings. We have come to expect such performances in our events and want and expect this to continue.

During the close season we examine all the statistics for the year and also chat with as many coaches and athletes as possible. From this we can best formulate plans for the next season in order to meet the needs of members.

We have decided to add some new features to our fixtures calendar and innovations to the existing program without taking away any of the popular races series that we have in place. **The Grand Prix** series, the **Gold Standard** races, **The PB Classics** and the **Regional races** will all continue as before.

The new race series to look out for are:

THE BEST OF BRITISH SERIES

One feature of 2013 was that our mid-week **Gold Standard** meetings had some of the best results of the year. The **Best of British** series will be mid-week invitation events aimed at top level performers with prize money available. Acceptance of an invitation

will be taken as a commitment to be at the race and to race hard. No shows will face a ban from future races.

These races will be held at the venues where we have had most success: Watford and Trafford. They will consist of a men's mile race on May 7th (which is the day after the 60th Anniversary of the running of the first 4 minute mile) and 800m and 1500m races in June. The series will have equal status with the **Grand Prix** and the **Grand Prix** prize structure will apply to these races.

Why the 'Best of British'? This is aimed at getting our fastest members racing against each other to set personal bests and qualification times. Entry to overseas athletes will be strictly limited and a £200 prize will be won by the first British finisher. This same prize will also apply in the **Grand Prix**.

CITY OF LONDON ROAD MILE

We are very pleased to have been asked to be a part of a major new event in the **City of London mile** festival. This will take place in the heart of the city on 22nd June and should be a memorable event for those men and women invited to take part in the BMC miles. A prize structure will apply.

10,000 METRE FESTIVAL

It would be great to see more road runners who compete in 10k races also racing

10,000m on the track. By strengthening the rankings in depth we can try and up standards. The BMC will be organising a **10,000m festival** at Trafford on September 6th as part of the **Run Britain Grand Prix Series**. It will be the only track event which is part of the series. We are aiming to see 400 plus athletes taking part in this event and hope that it will encourage as many road runners as possible off the road and onto the track.

OVERSEAS INVITATIONS

The BMC has a great reputation overseas and we are often asked to find athletes to send to some very attractive meetings where prize money and travel expenses are available. This year we already have invitations to races in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Germany. Matthew Fraser Moat will be in charge of Invitations to these events which will be for members only and based on performances in BMC races including the attitude to racing and record of support of BMC races. Please see the BMC web-site for more details and to get an idea of the standards required.

These innovations will add a fresh and exciting look to our fixture calendar and provide some great opportunities. You will find further details on the fixtures page of this magazine and should check the BMC website for updates.

GRAND PRIX, BEST OF BRITISH AND OTHER ELITE RACES 2014

See www.britishmilersclub.com for Entries, Timetables, Seedings, Information and Results

DATE	VENUE	EVENTS	TIME	CONTACT	CONTACT DETAILS	STANDARD
Tues 6 May	Mary Peters Track, Belfast	Bannister Festival of Miles M & W	7.00pm	John Glover	Johnt.glover441@gmail.com	Special
Wed 7 May	Watford	Best of British Anniversary Mile	7.30pm	Phil O'Dell	pjodell_2000@yahoo.co.uk	Elite
Sat 17 May	Watford	800/1500/5000/3000s/c Men	5.30pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Grand Prix
Sat 17 May	Watford	800/1500/5000/3000s/c Women	5.30pm	Tim Brennan	01628 415748	Grand Prix
Sat 31 May	Sports City	800 Men	5.00pm	Mike Deegan	01457 765416	Grand Prix
Sat 31 May	Sports City	1500 Men	5.00pm	Jon Wild	07947 157785	Grand Prix
Sat 31 May	Sports City	800/1500 Women	5.00pm	John Davies	07967 651131	Grand Prix
Sat 31 May	Sports City	5000 M & W inc JM & JW UK trials	5.00pm	Dave Norman	07868 783818	Grand Prix
Sat 31 May	Sports City	3000 s/c M & W *	5.00pm	Spencer Duval	spencer@spencerduval.net	Grand Prix
Tues 10 Jun	Trafford	Best of British 1500 M & W .	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Elite
Wed 18 Jun	Watford	Best of British 800 M & W	7.30pm	Phil O'Dell	pjodell_2000@yahoo.co.uk	Elite
Sun 22 Jun	City of London Road Miles	BMC 1 Mile Races. M/W	11.00am	Matthew Fraser Moat	07802 501895	Special
Sat 12 Jul	Trafford	800/1500/3000 M&W. Plus 3000s/c Men	5.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Grand Prix
Sat 19 Jul	Iffley Road, Oxford	800/1 Miles/5000 M&W	4.00pm	Rose Penfold	rose.penfold@gtc.ox.ac.uk	Grand Prix
Sat 16 Aug	Solihull	800/1500/3000 M&W	5.00pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Grand Prix
Sat 6 Sep	Trafford Run Britain Grand Prix	Festival of 10,000 races	1.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Special

*Selection events email entry only

GRAND PRIX SERIES ENTRIES

Entry to Grand Prix races will be guaranteed for paid up BMC members entering at least 14 days in advance of the meeting provided they have achieved the following qualifying times.

	800m	1500m	3000m	5000m	3K Chase
Men	01:55.0	03:55.0	8:30	14:50	9:15
Women	02:15.0	04:40.0	10:00	16:45	10:45

Members who have not achieved the senior qualifying standard in the year of competition should enter 7 or more days in advance and will be able to run if space is available.

Non members should enter as much in advance as possible and will be able to run if space is available after all members and invited athletes have been catered for.

Final seeding and entry acceptance will be between 7 and 2 days before the competition date.

NEW *** BEST OF BRITISH SERIES ENTRIES ***NEW

The Best of British is a mid-week race series for BMC members who have achieved the BMC elite standard

Entry will be by invitation and expenses will be paid at 20p per mile to those with the elite standard.

Date	Venue	Organiser	Event	Standard (BMC Elite)
7th May	Watford	Rupert Walters	Mens mile	3:43 (1500)
		Phil O'Dell		
10th June	Trafford	Steve Green	W1500m	Sub 4:20
			M1500m	Sub 3:43
18th June	Watford	Rupert Walters	W800m	Sub 2:05
		Phil O'Dell	M800m	Sub 1:49

PRIZES

NEW FOR 2014 A new prize of £200 is introduced for the first British finisher in each Grand Prix and Best of British event who does not win a higher sum in the time related prizes.

A prize of £1,000 applies at each of the Grand Prix and Best of British fixtures over 800m, 1500m, 3000m, 5000m, and 3000m Steeplechase. The prize money is determined by finishing position and time.

This means a potential total prize fund of over £50,000. See website for full information.

PACEMAKERS

The BMC is looking for pacemakers for its 2014 race series. The BMC is able to pay fees for pacemakers.

Those interested should contact Tim Brennan on 01628 415748 or via the BMC website.

OVERSEAS ATHLETES

The BMC welcomes overseas entries in its Grand Prix races particularly those of an international standard.

Contact Tim Brennan on 01628 415748 or enter via the website.

WE EXPECT FROM ATHLETES THAT THEY WILL:-

- Enter the races by the deadlines set.
- Be truthful about their current form and fitness.
- Turn up for races that they have been invited to or entered.
- Inform the organiser in good time if for any reason they cannot compete and the reason why they can't compete.
- Run at the pace stated for their race and not attempt to slow a race.
- Be prepared to take the initiative if a pacemaker is running too slowly.

PB CLASSICS, GOLD STANDARD, ACADEMY AND REGIONAL FIXTURES 2014

All entries should be made on our website www.britishmilersclub.com (Text entries will not be accepted)

BMC ACADEMY YOUNG ATHLETES PB CLASSICS (Age groups U13, U15, U17 & U20)						
Entry Fee BMC Members £3, Non Members £5.						
MAY	Mon 5	Millfield	800/1500 M & W. 3000 Mixed	5.45pm	Steve Mosley	029 222 18240
	Sat 10	Corby	800/1500/3000	5.00pm	Pat Fitzgerald	patfitzgerald@britishmilersclub.com
JUNE	Sat 7	Milton Keynes	800/1500/3000/ U17 1500s/c/U20 2000s/c	4.00pm	Jim Bennett	jim_bennett@btinternet.com
JULY	Sat 19	Iffley Road, Oxford	Frank Horwill & Peter Coe Miles	4.00pm	David Lowes	Invitation Only
AUGUST	Sat 23	Coventry	800/1500/3000	2.00pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk
Fastest of U15 & U17 PB Classic 800 & 1500 from Millfield, Corby & Milton Keynes will be invited to Frank Horwill & Peter Coe Mile Races at Oxford on 19 July.						
Most regional races are suitable for BMC Academy Members						

OTHER BMC RACES

MONTH	DATE	VENUE	EVENTS	TIME	CONTACT	CONTACT DETAILS	STANDARD
APR	Mon 21	Trafford	1500 Men	12.15pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold Standard
	Fri 25	Hutchesons Grammar , Glasgow	10,000	6.30pm	Norrie Hay	07545 762966	Regional
	Wed 30	Coventry	600/1200	7.30pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
MAY	Mon 5	Millfield	800/1500/3000	5.45pm	John Knowles	07850 812229	Regional
	Wed 7	Watford	800 M & W, 1500 W	7.30pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Gold Standard
	Mon 12	Durham	800	7.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Regional
	Wed 14	Brighton	800/ 1 Mile	7.30pm	Paul Collicutt	paul@paulcollicutt.com	Regional
	Sat 17	Hutchesons Grammar, Glasgow	1500/5000	7.00pm	Norrie Hay	07545 762966	Regional
	Tue 20	Trafford	800/1500 Men	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold Standard
	wed 21	Coventry	800/1500	7.30pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
	Tues 27	Tavistock	800/1500	8.00pm	John Knowles	07850 812229	Regional
	Wed 28	Eltham	800/1500/3000	8.00pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Regional
JUN	Mon 2	Durham	1500	7.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Regional
	Tues 10	Trafford	800 Men	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold Standard
	Wed 11	Linford Christie Track West London	800/3000	7.45pm	Pat Fitzgerald	patfitzgerald@britishmilersclub.com	Regional
	Wed 11	Coventry	800/1500	7.30pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
	Wed 18	Watford	1500	7.30pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Gold Standard
	Tues 24	Braunton	800/1500	8.00pm	John Knowles	07850 812229	Regional
	Wed 25	Coventry	800/1500	7.30pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
	Wed 25	Eltham	800/1500/5000	8.00pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Regional
	Mon 30	Durham	800	7.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Regional
JUL	Mon 7	Durham	1500	7.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Regional
	Wed 9	Perivale	1500/3000	7.45pm	Pat Fitzgerald	patfitzgerald@britishmilersclub.com	Regional
	Wed 16	Watford	800/1500	7.30pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Gold Standard
	Tue 22	Trafford	800/1500 Men	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold Standard
	Wed 23	Coventry	800/1500	7.30pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
	Wed 23	Eltham	800/1500/3000	8.00pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Regional
	Mon 28	Durham	800	7.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Regional
	Tue 29	Tavistock	800/1500	8.00pm	John Knowles	07850 812229	Regional
AUG	Sat 9	Hutchesons Grammar, Glasgow	800/3000	7.00pm	Norrie Hay	07545 762966	Regional
	Tues 12	Trafford	800/1500 Men	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold Standard
	Wed 13	Watford	800/1500	7.30pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Gold Standard
	Wed 20	Eltham	800/1 Mile/5000 inc Wooderson 800s	7.00pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Regional
	Sat 23	Coventry	800/1500/5000	2.00pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
	Tues 26	Braunton	800/1500	8.00pm	John Knowles	07850 812229	Regional
SEPT	Wed 10	Watford	800/1500	7.30pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Gold Standard

Additional races may be arranged at other venues. Check website for more details

Please enter at the latest 5 days before meeting. No entries on the day..

THE BEST OF BRITISH FROM THE BMC

www.britishmilersclub.com

CONFERENCES

BRITISH ATHLETICS ENDURANCE EVENT LEAD **MARTIN RUSH** REPORTS ON THE **EUROPEAN ENDURANCE COACHING CONFERENCE**. 9TH/10TH NOVEMBER 2013, NOTTINGHAM ENGLAND.

Conference in Numbers

- 169 delegates
- 13 European Countries represented
- 14 presenters
 - 6 World Class Coaches
 - 6 World Class sports scientists
 - 1 World Class athlete
 - 1 Commentator and Marathon Event Organiser

Satisfaction ratings (Strongly agree, agree, disagree)

- 86% strongly agreed conference was worthwhile and valuable
- 92% strongly agreed logistics were suitable and well organised i.e. hotel, staff
- 72% strongly agreed the presentations were valuable and worthwhile (range 45 to 94%)

Feedback comments included; Always enjoy attending these events. Keep challenging the coaches with new and diverse ideas. It is always good to hear opinions & thoughts of more experienced coaches. Dave Sunderland very engaging & commonsense approach. Dave Rowland strongly agree with this philosophy. Jenni Banks, something new and very interesting. Yannis very good at making his case for sports science helping coaches develop training. Hotel venue/staff organisation excellent. Learnt a great deal looking forward to putting into practice. Well balanced & informative. Very enjoyable. Looking forward to seeing presentations on UCoach. Thought provoking. Great to see Neil Black presenting. Outstanding organisation. Great opportunity for networking with like minded people. Would have been good to have practical workshops. Would like Q&A format. Excellent science education from Yannis. Great value for money. Dave Sunderland, great that it was based at club level. Staff very helpful, brilliant. Excellent variety of speakers.

Overview

A very successful European Endurance Conference was held in Nottingham England over the weekend of 9th and 10th November 2013. At a busy time of the year with coaches coming off the back of the IAAF Moscow World Championships and

preparations well underway for the EAA Cross Country Championships in Belgrade it was pleasing to see so many coaches committed to development and sharing experiences.

Martin Rush, Endurance Event Lead, British Athletics opened the conference with an explanation of the two themes incorporated into the timetable.

Firstly coach and athlete journeys with World Class Coaches presenting on the detail behind their work with a single athlete through a particular time in their career. Secondly applied sports science with leading scientists and practitioners delivering on their latest research, thoughts and how they work with coaches to push performance. He closed with the metaphor of applying electricity to individual neurons and watching them make connections to grow into a 'brain'.

The opening keynote was presented by **Professor Yannis Pitsiladis** of Brighton University. Yannis spoke passionately, about the application of sports science to training practice. He emphasized how sports science was playing a bigger role in endurance running and encouraged coaches to accept this. His research of working with athletes in Kenya and Ethiopia enforced the benefits of training at altitude

A programme of workshops followed; **Chris Jones** talked about how he had worked with Fionualla Britton to redress

power and speed issues and create a team approach around her to enable the careful monitoring of progress. He explained how both athlete and coach had learnt to trust in the team and methods they were employing.

This work was picked up by **Charlie Pedlar and Nathan Lewis of Orrecco.com** in their presentation on biometrics and the way Orrecco work with coaches and athletes to optimise recovery strategies and the use of biometric data to inform and direct coaching practice. Chris, Nathan and Charlie did a further presentation on how they integrated the support into the coaching practice.

Neil Cronin gave a detailed account of the structure and functioning of muscles and tendons. He also related these structures to the mechanics of endurance movement and then in both his workshop and keynote he offered ways in which coaches could use the information to tailor training practice to produce effective results.

Norman Poole gave a well received account on his experiences of working with a number of athletes and taking them from novice to Championship level and medals. The individual nature of his work and the common needs were detailed as well as some of his work with Michael Rimmer.

Bud Baldaro and Hannah England were interviewed by **David Sunderland** with their experiences of taking Hannah through the US college system to preparing for major Championships brought out and discussed. (See pages 23-24).

Tomasz Lewandowski presented a detailed workshop on the progression of his brother Marcin Lewandowski through to major Championships medals. His thoughtful, progressive plans and emphasis



James Shane (2) gets the nod in the men's 'A' 800m in Solihull last May

on long term development were clear and very well structured. Tomasz gave a keynote presentation on day two looking at the holistic approach of training middle distance runners with lifestyle and understanding of the individual a key component of his presentation.

Yannis Pitsiladis returned to the dias to talk through the question as to whether endurance coaches should consider lactate production a positive or negative. With a quiz based structure he stimulated a lot of thought in coaches and presented clear ways for adapting training methodology as well as posing some unanswered questions.

Dave Sunderland gave a hugely detailed talk on the preparations of Lynsey Sharp before the London 2012 Olympics, dealing with the challenges facing the coach and athlete as they get ready for the biggest competition of the athlete's life.

Jenni Banks gave a highly interesting talk covering the specifics of coaching wheelchair athletes and in particular the successes enjoyed by Hannah Cockcroft. She described the variety of chairs that are used. She highlighted the training and racing tactics and the difference in track and road events. Great store was placed on the positional requirements in the track.

Neil Black gave the closing keynote describing the team approach that surrounded Mo Farah's final preparations leading into the 2012 London Olympics and detailing Mo's ability to control the important variables and focus on what he knew would make him a successful athlete.

Martin Rush closed the conference with a short speech recognising the challenges that European endurance coaches and athletes face in a highly competitive world where access to endurance running is very easy. But he clearly outlined his belief in Europe's ability to be successful at a world level through continued sharing of knowledge and development of coaching networks through events like the 2013 European Endurance Conference.

Conference material can be downloaded from www.europeanenduranceconference.co.uk

Martin Rush, Endurance Event Group Lead, British Athletics is available at mrush@britishathletics.org.uk

Thanks are extended to the organising team of; Zena Weeks, David Sunderland, Sharon Morris, Andi Drake, Neville Taylor, Jenni Harris, Bud Baldaro, Holly Rush, Leonie Lightfoot.

Martin Rush would like to thank the European Athletics Association, British Athletics, England Athletics and Polar.

HANNAH ENGLAND AND BUD BALDARO WERE INTERVIEWED AT THE EUROPEAN ENDURANCE CONFERENCE. **MATT LONG** REPORTS.

BMC Lifetime services award winner Dave Sunderland interviewed the Moscow world championship 1,500m 4th placer and her coach Bud Baldaro at last November's European Endurance Conference, sponsored by European and British Athletics along with the governing bodies of the 4 home nations and the British Milers Club.

Both coach and athlete felt last summer's performance was possibly better than the silver she achieved in Daegu two years ago because of the "sheer quality of the world class field" assembled at the Luzhniki stadium in the Soviet capital.

Long Term Athlete Development

Hannah was originally a Ballerina who took up running after placing 3rd in a Year 8 local schools race. Originally she trained as a sprint hurdler and only twice per week. She was coached by Birmingham University head endurance coach Baldaro from the age of 15 after beginning to make weekly visits to him in Birmingham. "She looked older than she was" said Baldaro. (See Bayli et al. 2013). Whilst the frequency of her training was increased at this age as she focussed more specifically on endurance running, she reported enjoying the "playfulness" of performing Oregon circuit training (exercises interspersed by short bursts of running) in her back garden back in Oxford (see Long and Lowes, 2013). "She trained hard but didn't overtrain", according to the man who has coached an estimated 60 GB internationals including two time Chicago marathon winner Marian Sutton.

Nurturing Talent

Sunderland was keen to point out that Hannah's performances whilst promising, were far from spectacular as a developing athlete. As an under 15 athlete she ran 2m16 and 4m48 for 8,00 and 1,500m respectively and this had progressed to 2m09 and 4m28 two years later. (See Orlick and Botterill, 1975). During this time she admitted to a phase of dropping out of races because "my times were not significantly improving".

Balancing sport and academia

"I was very academically driven too" said the Birmingham University graduate, who also took out the option in her course to spend time at Florida State University. In balancing elite level sport and academic prowess Baldaro stressed that, "Time management has to be key

from the word go".

Team coaching

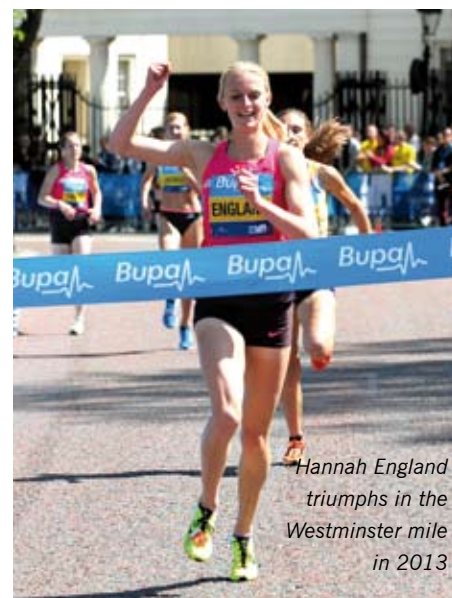
As well as crediting his team of coaches at Birmingham University, including head coach Mike Bull and Sally Straw, Baldaro alluded to the team coaching approach which he had to embrace during Hannah's time in America, in liaising with coach Karen Harvey. The national coach mentor spoke of the "open dialogue" between Harvey and himself which was facilitated by regular email exchanges and the sharing of best practices. Due to the volume of work she undertook in both training and competition in the States, Baldaro thought this, "was good for her aerobic development". England herself added, "I learned to win big races in the States".

Support team

After her 4th (1,500m) and 5th (800m) placings in the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games, Hannah agreed to work systematically with a sports psychologist. "She is fundamentally open to new ideas" emphasised Baldaro. As well as consulting Mo Farah's coach Alberto Salazar, she took trips to Lee Valley in London to work with Dan Pfaff on improving her execution of drills. "I was working on making adjustments to my heel strike and tendency to lean back" she said, adding that, "as a result my speed and power increased".

Injuries

Prior to London 2012, Hannah was hospitalised after being spiked in a race in Hengelo. "Whenever she is injured she cross trains", Baldaro enthused. Pool and bike work played their role in helping her to the Olympic semi-final with both



Hannah England triumphs in the Westminster mile in 2013

applauding UKA for their attempts at her rehabilitation (see Dowser, 1999).

Diet

Refreshingly England stressed, “You need a healthy attitude towards food. If your body craves it then you need it” she giggled before confessing to a “love of cakes” (see Bean, 1993). After adding that she could still eat fully and healthy and lose weight she said that when she has lost too much weight in the past that Baldaro has offered appropriate interventions. I have challenged her, “Are you aware you are very lean right now Hannah?”, stressing that the coach should avoid negative judgements where possible (Long, 2013).

Tactics

Famed for hogging the inside kerb and often moving through with a late challenge on the inside, England joked that “Bud and my husband Luke Gunn tear their hair out”. When Sunderland pressed her she clarified, “There’s lots of pushing and shoving. By holding the inside for as long as possible she said, “it takes one side of the pushing out of the equation and it’s the best place to avoid trips and falls” (see Sunderland, 2006).

Periodisation of training

During the winter, England runs no more than 70 miles per week. Future training progression is geared towards improving the quality of this work rather than increasing further quantity. During the summer this volume may drop to 60 miles per week and further still to 35-40 miles per week during the competition phase of the periodization cycle. Volume is dropped to a further minimum during global championships

with the tapering process occurring 10 days before competition (see Paladin, 2005).

Hannah’s winter training 2013:

Aerobic endurance work includes a combination of ‘steady’, ‘recovery’ and ‘long’ runs plus tempo runs. Repetitions are longer than in the summer with relatively short recoveries. Baldaro is an advocate of active rather than passive recoveries during interval training. Strength endurance work consists of weights which are prescribed by Rudy Farquharson and hill work. The technical aspect of her training is underpinned with drills and “the need to keep close to speed” with track sprints being performed at all phases in the periodization cycle.

Altitude training

Despite making trips to a number of locations above sea level including Font Romea and Iten, England insisted that “clinically, I’m a non responder to altitude” (see Fudge, 2013). This being said she was keen to emphasise the positive subcultural value of group training in terms of its ability to engender motivation and a positive mental attitude.

Now what?

The above prompts club coaches and athletes to reflect on the following questions:

- 1. Long term athlete development:** Are we working on developing a range of FUNdamental skills involving running, twisting and throwing as did Hannah in her formative years as a Ballerina and then hurdler?
- 2. Nurturing and developing talent:** If

we are not enjoying success at English schools level can we accept like Hannah did that some athletes are simply more biologically mature than others of the same chronological age?

- 3. Balancing work and academia:** Can we accept that very few athletes are as fortunate as Hannah in being full time funded athletes and that academic development is paramount to life chances?
- 4. Team coaching and support:** Do we look beyond the immediate athlete-coach relationship and seek advice from a wider support team including other coaches, dieticians and physiotherapists?
- 5. Injuries:** Do we explore ways in which to keep active like Hannah does when injured?
- 6. Diet:** Athlete- Am I eating healthily like role model Hannah? Coach- Am I challenging my athlete about diet in a supportive way?
- 7. Tactics:** Whilst coach can advise ultimately it’s the athlete doing what ‘feels’ right like Hannah does in the heat of battle.
- 8. Periodisation:** Do we work at achieving progressive overload in terms of frequency, intensity and duration of training?

Bud and Matt dedicate this article to the memory of the late Bob Ashwood, former GB xc team manager and endurance coach at Birmingham University AC. Those wishing to donate to the Robert Ashwood Memorial Fund for young athletes can do so via branch sort code 40-35-09; account number 74019938.



Caption. Hannah England wins the national 1,500m title in 2013



Bud Baldaro

NATIONAL COACH MENTOR FOR YOUTH ENDURANCE **JENNY HARRIS**
REPORTS FROM THE RECENT **ENGLAND ATHLETICS YOUTH ENDURANCE**
CONFERENCE.

100 coaches attended the Youth Endurance Conference held on the 9th March where the event was opened by Jenny Harris, National Coach Mentor for Youth Endurance. She began with a tribute to Dave Sunderland who had always wanted to see coaches gain a better understanding of paediatric physiology to help reduce the number of athletes dropping out of the sport through injury or burnout at a young age.

Note: Full conference presentations will be appearing on the uCoach section of the British Athletics website.

The keynote speaker was **Dr. Melitta McNarry** from Swansea University who was presenting a talk on behalf of Dr. Alan Barker, a lecturer in Paediatric Exercise and Health at the Children's Health and Exercise Research Centre, University of Exeter on '**Aerobic Fitness in Children and Adolescents: Developmental & Training Adaptations**' to provide an insight into the minimum requirements to improve fitness in children and adolescents.

The talk focused on:-

- Determinants of endurance performance and the impact of growth and maturation
- Training young people (considerations and application to developing athletic potential)
- Discussing whether young people benefit from endurance training
- Training recommendations

Research shows that with regard to the development of VO₂ max in relation to age and sex, boys are able to increase this with age after puberty at a higher rate than females who can appear to plateau in this area at around the age of puberty due to differences in areas such as body shape, mass, and hormonal responses. There appears to be no such difference between the sexes in the development of the blood lactate threshold but there does appear to be a higher anaerobic contribution for both following puberty. Dr. McNarry did stress that whilst younger athletes' anaerobic capacity is not fully developed they are able to easily tolerate high intensity sessions – they will just use a higher aerobic contribution. Other research findings are summarised in the chart below:-

With regard to whether young people benefit from endurance training Dr. McNarry highlighted that training will increase the rate of development but maturation can also bring young athletes to the same state at maturity unless the training is effective

training and this is very individualistic. Children however are equally trainable as adults, but for the training to be effective it has to be at a higher intensity (approx. 85% max heart rate). This has led to training recommendations for improving fitness levels being summarised as shown below. This exercise does not necessarily have to be in the form of running but could be any of the main sports such as swimming, hockey, football, rugby, cycling etc.,:-

The theme of the conference then turned to looking at how a successful Junior U20 athlete trained and this took the form of an interview between **Martin Rush and Jake and Geoff Wightman** - Jake was GB's European Junior 1500m Champion in 2012 (p.b.'s 1:48.01 800m – 3:43.74 1500m – 4:00.62 mile) and Jake's coach and father Geoff's C.V includes CEO Scottish Athletics; London 2012 Stadium announcer and Run Britain Managing Director - 8th Commonwealth Games Marathon and 6th European Championships Marathon (p.b.'s 4:00.60 mile – 13:42 5000m – 2:13:17 Marathon).

Martin highlighted a point made by Dr. McNarry that athletes who possessed 'genetic potential' could develop really well as athletes and Jake's mother Susan (nee Tooby) was also a Marathon Olympian (Seoul).

Jake did not actually start formal training on an athletics track until he was about 14. His background in sport had been



Steph Twell (270) leads the women's 5000m in Solihull last May with Laura Muir

really just school sport at the school his mother worked at where he played plenty of football, hockey and rugby – sports he felt had helped his fitness and speed and conditioned him well for say example a situation where you might have to step sideways to overtake an athlete. He had developed quite late and both parents felt he did not need to be pushed as a child. However, Geoff suggested there had been a master plan behind Jake's development, not communicated to Jake, with general sport being replaced with a gradual build of volume of running.

Jake is now a second year student at Loughborough University and he discussed how running fitted in with studies – Jake said this was hard in the first year of starting University but that it was important



Summary of the effect of growth and maturation



Determinant	Effect of growth and maturation
VO ₂ max	↑ ~ 20% in boys to early adulthood ↑ by ~ 10% in girls to adolescence then stabilize
Blood lactate threshold	↓ % VO ₂ max
Running economy	↓ or ↔ (↓ as a % VO ₂ max)
MLSS	↔ as a % VO ₂ max
VO ₂ kinetics O ₂ deficit	Slower ↑
Aerobic endurance performance	↑ ↑ is greater in boys vs. girls
Habitual physical activity	↓ declines with age from ~ 10 yrs in girls and ~ 12 yrs in boys

- **Mode:** Continuous or interval training using large muscle groups
- **Frequency:** Minimum of 3-4 sessions per week
- **Duration and intensity**
 - 40-60 min at 80-85% HRmax for continuous training
 - 30-60 min at > 90% HR max using training intervals of 1-3 min duration with appropriate recovery
 - < 30 min of 'all-out' sprints using training intervals of < 30 s duration with appropriate recovery
- **Length:** Above 12 weeks

IOC consensus statement (2008). *Br J Sports Med.* 42: 163-164
Armstrong and Barker (2011). *Med Sport Sci.* 56: 59-83

to make time for training as well and to immerse yourself in both the social and academic sides of university to feel fully integrated. He and Geoff spoke about how during the winter Jake would be more likely to join in the group sessions to build up a good base, but at the end of the XC season (he confessed he didn't really enjoy running through mud but understood the importance of XC) he would take 7 days off and then follow a personalised plan. Geoff felt this was important to get the best out of Jake because it is difficult to gauge in large groups whether an athlete is working at the right intensity with the right recovery needed for that individual athlete. At this time of year Jake's weekly training will probably include 2 higher intensity sessions, one being a speed endurance session and one speed session, one strength and conditioning session and one circuit session, interspersed with easy/steady running with a weekly mileage of approx. 60 miles. He will probably work towards a maximum of 80 miles a week as a middle distance athlete.

Geoff discussed how he followed the Alan Storey philosophy of never really repeating the same sessions, but did mention that he liked to set Jake a session of 15 x 100m of running the straights hard and jogging the bends so that the body was used to surging and developing a change of pace and to see what shape he was in. Change of pace was also worked on through 'drills' where Jake was asked to feel the acceleration off one strike, and then two and then three in the middle of a fast stride. However, Geoff felt very strongly about taking care with an athlete and revealed that his advice to

athletes would be to never wear spikes in training because of the injury risk.

Geoff also pointed out that he did not feel that enough was known about cross training within an endurance athlete's training programme, especially as triathlon training had been so effective in developing the Brownlee brothers' running. Geoff did use a regular 6 minute cycle test for Jake at a heart rate of 190 which he knew would take Jake to absolute exhaustion and

therefore produce a good training effect. Another area Geoff wanted to develop with Jake was the importance of sleep as a part of recovery.

Jake also discussed the experience he had in Rieti in the summer at the European Championships, how this was his first competition at this level and first abroad and the pressures that went with it, for example coping with the call-up where officials only spoke in Italian. Geoff explained how the season had started well with the BUCS 1500m races when Jake had actually achieved the qualifying standard in the final where James Shane had set a hard pace. Geoff had planned the year so that the European Championships were the main aim and therefore the aim would be for this to be his 8th race (Frank Horwill advocated that the 8th race was often where athletes produced their best performance in middle distance races). Now that Jake is on Futures Funding, Geoff has to produce this kind of training and race plan for the 2014 track season for British Athletics but that there was also a 10 year development plan in place.

Note: There's more from the conference in the next edition of BMC News with Dr. Jessica Leitch on 'The Biomechanics of Running Related Injuries' and Dr. Rhodri Lloyd, asking 'How young is too young to start training?'



Jake Wightman

BMC AWARD WINNERS 2013

OUR CLUB YOUNG ATHLETE OF THE YEAR, **JESSICA JUDD** AND HER COACH **ROB DENMARK**, SPEND TIME WITH **MATTHEW FRASER MOAT**.

Over the years the BMC has had many great races but one milestone has always eluded, that of a woman running a sub 2 minute 800m in a BMC race, despite several attempts over the years from fine athletes such as Shireen Bailey, Ann Griffiths, Diane Modahl and Jenny Meadows.

Then in May 2013, 18 year old Jessica Judd got closer to this milestone than anyone else in BMC's 50 year history with a stunning 2:00.37 in her 800m season opener in a Gold Standard meeting at Watford. This performance helped Jessica gain GB selection and just five weeks later she won the 800m European Athletics Team Championships at Gateshead in 2:00.82. Jess of course is no stranger to BMC races, having run more than 20 of them since 2007.



Jessica Judd wins the 800m at last year's European Team Championships

Matthew: So how did you get started in running, Jess?

Jess: I started with my dad who used to do a lot of marathons – I used to go along and do the occasional fun run, and it went from there.

Matthew: In the early days you ran a lot of races?

Jess: When I was younger I used to do many Young Athletes Leagues meetings and Southern Women's Leagues meetings. It got me used to running and racing against other runners and travelling all around the country. I did quite a few cross country

races as well, I really enjoy the atmosphere at those events.

Matthew: You seemed to win most of them?

Jess: Yes they all went really well – I certainly didn't realise that I would end up going this far!

Matthew: What sort of sessions were you doing in those days? Or were you just racing?

Jess: I wasn't doing too much – I trained maybe three times a week. I kept telling people that I was doing 10 miles a week but I probably wasn't even doing that.

Matthew: When did you first get a coach?

Jess: When I first started I was coached by my dad, and then I went to Thurrock and was coached there, then I was coached by Jeremy Freeman at Chelmsford and now I am coached by Rob. I've been coached by Rob for about year and a half now.

Matthew: What sort of sessions are you doing now?

Jess: Probably training six days a week. I am trying to get mileage up, now doing about 40 miles a week.

Matthew: How does it feel to be the fastest ever women in a BMC race over 800m?

Jess: Really strange, I didn't realise the race was going to be that fast. I just wanted to see what sort of shape I was in and I just turned up. It was a real surprise and a nice feeling. It was paced to 500m, and at 600m it felt quite fast, and I tried to hang on and did. I wasn't really trying very much and it was so nice afterwards. I really like racing at Watford, it's a nice track, never too windy, and always a good atmosphere.

Matthew: What are your plans for the 2014 season? After all, you are still a Junior?

Jess: Yes I am hoping to go to Watford and do some early season races, then I am aiming to do the Commonwealth and European Championships.

ENTER COACH ROB DENMARK:

Matthew: Rob, well it is 20 years this year that you were the cover star of the BMC News – it was black and white in those days!

Rob: Yes but I look no different - I still look the same!

Matthew: You are one of the very few top class athletes to have made it as a Coach, what's it like being a coach?



Jessica and Rob during a training session

Rob: It is very different to being an athlete. I am enjoying it – I didn't think it would be something I would get into as I used to be very selfish, but you can't be that as a coach as you always have to look at the bigger picture. When people started asking me to coach them, I was able to carry over my meticulous planning from my time as an athlete and I think that helped, and I have learnt how to be patient. I am enjoying it, and if you can't run then being a coach is the next best thing. I got more of a buzz from Jess winning the European Team Championship than anything I ever did as a runner.

Matthew: How much were you influenced by the way in which your father coached you?

Rob: Quite a lot. I don't think you ever get away from how you were coached. When I started coaching Jess, I began to realise that she responded in a very different way to the way I was coached, and indeed I have never referred to my own training diary. You need to take a unique approach for each athlete.

Matthew: Have you got a key session for Jess that indicates her current form?

Rob: No not yet, we are still developing things. A few 400s with short recovery at the height of the summer can indicate that she is in a good place, but you just can't do those sort of sessions too often.

Matthew: What is Jess' best time for 400m?

Here we track the progression of Jess in listed BMC races:

Year	Date	Venue	Distance	Time	Position
2007	13 June	Watford	800m	2:20.99	3 'B'
2007	25 Aug	C Palace	1500m	4:45.53	6 'C'
2007	5 Sep	Watford	1500m	4:46.70	9
2008	23 July	Eltham	1500m	4:35.08	10 'B'
2008	30 July	Watford	1500m	4:30.79	9
2009	26 Aug	Watford	800m	2:08.89	4 'A'
2010	9 May	Watford	800m	2:06.95	2 'A'
2010	28 July	Watford	1500m	4:17.44	1 'A'
2010	11 Aug	Watford	800m	2:05.81	2 'A'
2010	18 Aug	Eltham	800m	2:05.58	7 'A'
2010	8 Sep	Watford	1500m	4:19.06	1
2011	18 May	Watford	800m	2:03.17	1 'A'
2011	28 May	Sportcity	1500m	4:14.21	1 'A'
2011	15 June	Watford	800m	2:02.70	1 'A'
2011	10 Aug	Watford	800m	2:03.18	1 'A'
2011	17 Aug	Eltham	800m	2:03.7	2 'A'
2011	7 Sep	Watford	1500m	4:17.81	1 'A'
2012	16 May	Watford	800m	2:04.55	1 'A'
2012	19 May	Sportcity	1500m	4:15.12	2 'A'
2012	9 June	Watford	800m	2:01.09	1 'A'
2012	15 Aug	Eltham	800m	2:01.3	1 'A'
2013	15 May	Watford	800m	2:00.37	1 'A'
2013	12 June	Watford	800m	2:01.59	1 'A'

Rob: 56 in a race.

Matthew: She must be able to do faster than that?!

Rob: Yes!

Jess: I don't think so!

Matthew: How many years ahead are you planning for Jess?

Rob: We want to be thinking about Rio in two years time – putting Jess into a good enough position to give her the best possible chance of getting into the final - that would be a good aim. But we don't like predicting what she will actually do or that she will indeed do that as, as we have found out with a recent injury, athletics can be a very cruel sport. We are not going to be complacent about anything so I am not going to make any bold predictions or put any pressure on Jess. Jess will be 21 in Rio, that's no age – she's got plenty of time and we are in no rush.

Matthew: Thank you both for your time today!

Rob: Thank you for showing interest – we just want to thank the BMC for all the support and opportunities that they have given to Jess and other athletes, at a time when overseas races are very hard to come by. The BMC does a marvellous job!

THE BMC 2013 COACH OF THE YEAR PHILIP TOWNSEND IS INTERVIEWED BY ENGLAND ATHLETICS AREA COACH MENTOR, GEOFF JAMES.

Coaching is the cement that helps to bind the building blocks in the structure of our sport. Without it the club or athlete cannot operate in today's modern athletic structure. It is therefore refreshing to see that BMC continue to promote this excellent award for services to coaching. With a very strong shortlist which included the likes of George Gandy, Peter Mullervy and James Thie, the worthy recipient of the 2013 award was Philip Townsend of Leeds City (pictured on p.32), with many years of service. Here I unpick his coaching philosophy and encourage both coach and athlete to learn from his wealth of experience.

Geoff: "What part does the BMC play in your own coaching philosophy?"

Phil: I have always encouraged my Athletes to use BMC races in order to try and achieve qualifying times and personal bests, as well as getting used to running in faster paced races and experimenting with different race tactics. With the gradual deterioration of league athletics for all but the top Clubs, the BMC provides another opportunity for regular racing.

Geoff: How has your coaching development

improved over the years?

Phil: I believe my coach development has been greatly helped by attending BMC conferences, newsletters and being given greater opportunities for networking.

Geoff: Talk us through your guiding principles:

Phil: My principles are fairly simple. I like to encourage a good group ethic in the training squad, both in terms of training and mutual support. I would like to think I have developed strong lasting friendships with many of the athletes I have coached and that they get on well together. I think it's fair to say that although we train hard, we have a good deal of fun usually at each other's expense!

Geoff: What kind of theories have informed your coaching practice?

Phil: I prefer to build a strong aerobic base and gradually build the specific elements from that, for example I like the Lewandowski fundamentals approach but try to adopt a mixture of traditional British endurance training with some of the more modern scientific approaches along with testing and the use of Heart Rate Monitors

where appropriate for athletes who find them helpful.

Geoff: So which British Coaches have influenced you over the years?

Phil: I have been influenced and helped over the years by Bud Baldaro, Alan Storey, George Gandy, Alwyn Dewhirst, and many others.

Geoff: In what ways do you adopt an athlete-centred approach?

Phil: Although we generally have group sessions I try not to have a one size fits all approach to schedules or sessions. I am happy to work with athletes who propose their own schedules and we then discuss and tweak as necessary or where need be take a more prescriptive approach. Whilst I prefer to see athletes regularly I have adapted to give support to those I see less often."

So the above is an affirmation that coaching is a great art form which is practised up and down the length of our country. The coaching fraternity will continue to meet new challenges everyday. Born out of hard work and reflecting on experience, over many hours of voluntary service, Phil's shining example to us all evidences that he is a worthy winner of this coveted award which he received from the BMC at our annual awards dinner last November.

BMC ACADEMY

'ON COURSE FOR SUCCESS' WRITES ACADEMY CHAIRMAN **DAVID LOWES.**



*The traditional
7am morning run*

THE British Milers' Club Residential Course held at Mount St. Mary's, Spinkhill, near Sheffield from October 26-28, 2013 was yet again another resounding success. With 61 athletes and coaches in attendance, the weekend provided its usual eclectic mix of hard work, learning and plenty of fun! Above all, the motivational gains by athlete and coach alike were there for all to see.

The course which was open to all abilities from national champions to those on the first rung of the running ladder saw unprecedented levels of enthusiasm and determination. From the running sessions to the gym work to the evening activities where fun and games in a competitive environment were the name of the game – no quarter was taken and none was given! For those not familiar with our Academy courses, I can say without any reservation that if you come and don't enjoy them, then you're not really interested in running! They are without doubt the best courses anywhere – if you're in doubt then ask the athletes and coaches – that's how confident we are!

Early morning runs are part of our tradition and these are done with fervour with many coaches trudging around too! At this point, let me explain that any athlete coming to our courses will do around double their normal workload – don't be alarmed though – we encourage at least two to three day's rest once the course has finished! To prove a point, three future national champions and record breakers ground out some impressive sessions over the weekend and all said that they would be back for more of the same!

As is usual, the athletes are separated into groups based upon ability so that everyone is working as a unit and benefiting from closely-matched athletes. As an example, the 'top-rated' group did 6x3 minutes on undulating grass at pre-determined paces with two minutes recovery. The last repetition saw those at the front trying to impose themselves and have the bragging rights – such is the exuberance of youth and we don't try nullify that at all!

With talks ranging from 'How to use and gain knowledge to perform better' through to 'High intensity warm-ups' and a 'Physiotherapy perspective' these were deliberately done in a practical way so that the athletes could understand and also use some of the information on the training track. These were interjected with quizzes – always a fun element to any BMC course.

Saturday afternoon saw GB international, Emma Jackson, attending as our star guest and she took the athletes for a drills session before a very impressive and emotional interview was conducted.

For the first time on the Saturday evening we had a 'Superstars'/'Cube' competition and this was keenly contested with some impressive team-work with a never-say-die attitude by the teams! This was a resounding success and will no doubt be repeated again this autumn when our course takes place from October 24-26.

On the final day after another early morning run, it was gym work and please believe me when I say that I have never seen so many athletes work so hard in

such a small area! Without reservation it was the girls who showed the boys the way home with some astounding feats. Our three national champions proved that having excellent elastic strength and endurance is the one of the mainstays of performance. Markhim Lonsdale's hopping ability was the best I have seen in a long time, Sabrina Sinha's step-ups were a sight to behold (74 in 60 seconds) while Heidi Davies' all-round exercise capability was unbelievable. Well done to all! In what is now a tradition for the last session of the course, the fartlek workout always proves that the athletes have far more energy than even we as coaches think they have. Enthusiasm, doggedness and just sheer pride always exude from each and every athlete.

The final act of the course is the awards for the best male and female athlete. This is not necessarily for the best ability athlete's and indeed if it were, Markhim Lonsdale and Sabrina Sinha would have taken the plaudits without any doubt. Nevertheless, we try to look at perceived effort, behaviour (never an issue), integration in talks and sessions and perhaps some mitigating evidence that comes to light. The male athlete was adjudged to be Matthew Harris and the female Heidi Davies (pictured on page 32). They both received prizes and a free place on a future course. As BMC Course Director if I had a choice then each and every athlete would get an award!

So there you have it. Come and see for yourself. One thing I can guarantee is that not only will you have a great time, but your running and knowledge will benefit also! The courses are run by athletes for athletes. Don't miss it - see you October 24!



Indoor circuit training

BRITISH 1,500m SILVER MEDALLIST **EMMA JACKSON** ENTHUSES ABOUT HER ACADEMY VISIT TO SPINKHILL.

"I had a fantastic time at the BMC camp and it was great seeing young athletes looking to improve their skills and learn new things. Everyone was so enthusiastic and there was no moaning from anybody, even when I did make them do lots of drills! I also did a Q&A session with the athletes and coaches and I was so impressed with the questions that David Lowes and the coaches and athletes asked me. Some really got me thinking and it made me realise that it was a real benefit to me to consider why I do things the way I do. It's very easy to just do something because you've always done it that way. To step back and see it from their perspective helped me and hopefully my answers were of some benefit to them!

For any young athletes attending such training camps in the future the benefits are many. I'd say just take in all the information that you're given and then go back and think about what you want to use from it. For example, I saw some of the athletes trying High Intensity Warm-Ups. Some athletes may have loved it and may want to do that for every session, others may have decided that it wasn't for them. At the end of the day it's an individual sport and you do what suits you, but access to as much information as possible allows you to make more informed decisions. I'd also say that discussing what you learnt with your coach is important. Don't just drastically change something behind the scenes because you've heard about it on a camp and not tell your coach. An example of this may be your nutrition, a change in this may affect your training quite drastically, but it's something that a coach usually has minimal input on. Talking to your coach is so important! David Lowes told me that on these camps no-one tells anyone that they must do things in a certain way, only that certain sessions at a particular time may have more benefit and that they must discuss anything with their individual coaches.

When you first start out nobody teaches you about how to get over injuries and what to eat before races. Most people have to learn these things from experience, so the information in camps such as the BMC Academy can be priceless. As long as they fit in around school and training they are very beneficial.

For me the BMC has been key to moving forward as an athlete, especially when making the transition from junior to senior ranks. It's a great opportunity for younger athletes to run with older athletes under no

pressure. BMC races are also so important for gaining qualifying times for major championships - without a qualifying time you can't go no matter how well you do at the trials. Races that are paced correctly are hard to find so the BMC races are perfect - however, as a female athlete I do find it very frustrating that times in mixed races don't count - I'm still running fast no matter who else is in the race!

Of course, the only real drawback with BMC races is that championship races are often not run at even pace and they're not a true reflection of how 'real' races are run. As long as everyone is aware of that, then there's no problem".

EMMA'S LONG-TIME COACH, **ALAN MORRIS** ADDS:

"BMC competitions have been part of Emma's development and likewise for all those athletes in my training group who wished to take part for many years. Many personal best performances have been achieved in these races. The race dynamics provide an ideal opportunity for athletes to race at their target times and gain confidence in their ability to achieve their desired goals. The combination of paced races, good track venues, races at all performance levels and strong fields have provided the ideal opportunities throughout the track and field season for athletes to test themselves at appropriate performance

levels. This has been particularly important as Emma has progressed from Club athlete to senior international athlete and the experiences she has had competing over the years have helped shape the athlete she is today. One big advantage of these races for Emma at her current stage of development is the opportunity to utilise good quality male athletes as pace makers. Male pacemakers permit pacing to continue much further into the race than it would do if female pacemakers were used and therefore provides a much higher probability of a successful outcome for those taking part.

However, I feel I must stress that in my opinion, a total reliance on paced races as competition should be avoided and competition programmes should include opportunities for athletes to practice their race craft as championship races, whether they be National or International, rarely follow the BMC race format. Athletes and coaches should therefore consider how and where they are going to access suitable races to test and improve the athlete's race craft thus resulting in a balanced competition schedule which provides opportunities for fast paced races and opportunities to enhance the learning process.

This being said, for the vast majority of young athletes taking part in BMC races, the opportunity to race quickly and improve their personal bests for the season is the main attraction of BMC competitions and are certainly well met by the breadth of BMC race opportunities which spans a wide range of performance levels".



Star guest Emma Jackson with selected Academy athletes



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REGISTRATION & BOOKING FORM Mount St Mary's 24th-26th October 2014

The British Milers' Club coaching courses are for the benefit of athletes and coaches and we try to ensure the following:

- ▶ All young people are as safe as possible. ▶ Provide information on further opportunities available.
- ▶ Provide top-class coaching and advice where required. ▶ Ensure that all BMC activities are open to all communities (equal opportunities).

First Name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Date of Birth/Age: _____

Gender: _____

Telephone/Mobile: _____

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Membership Number: _____

Emergency contact details

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Emergency Contact No: _____

Who is authorised to take and collect your child at
this activity?: _____

Does your child suffer from any of the following?

☐ Asthma ☐ Skin Problems ☐ Diabetes ☐ Epilepsy

☐ Fainting ☐ Heart Problems ☐ Migraines ☐ Allergies

Other: _____

Is your child currently on medication or have any injuries?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please specify: _____

Do you consider your child to have a disability?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please specify: _____

What is your child's Ethnic origin?

☐ White ☐ Mixed Race ☐ Asian ☐ Black ☐ Chinese

☐ Other

Do you object to photographs of your child being taken for
publicity purposes? (NSPCC guidelines)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Club: _____

Special Dietary requirements (please state): _____

Please state pb's (for squad allocation):

800m _____ 1500m _____ 3000m _____

For Coaches Only:

What is your current UKA coaching level? _____

Please enclose photocopy of licence.

Do you have a UKA CRB certificate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please enclose photocopy of certificate.

(If no, please contact administrator (contact details above).

For Parents: BMC courses involve vigorous, but beneficial athletic training, to a high standard. Please confirm that your child is physically fit and capable of participation in this training over the duration of the course. Please note a physio/masseur (if available) will only treat a person under the age of 18 if a chaperone is present. Do you give permission for your child to be treated? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I confirm that consent is given for my child to attend the BMC activity and I agree to the conditions laid out below*. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed _____ Date _____

The BMC cannot be held responsible for any improper use of mobile phones including photography. Please note that inappropriate language or actions will not be tolerated.

*Information used in this form will be used to monitor and evaluate BMC activities. All information will remain confidential and no reference to individuals will be made in written or verbal reports. It is your right to decline for your child to be excluded from this evaluation. I have read and understood the above information and agree for my child or myself to participate further in this study, if so requested.

www.britishmilersclub.com/academy

RUN

BMC IN PICTURES

Refer back to p.4 for image captions



BMC HORWILL SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH

BMC SECRETARY **DAVID READER** EXPLAINS THE HISTORY AND VALUE OF THE HORWILL SCHOLARSHIP.

The BMC has awarded the Frank Horwill Scholarship for research since 2008. When the scholarship was launched six years ago Frank Horwill, MBE, said that the award was to, "encourage others to join the ranks of Astrand, Gerschler, Costill, Daniels and Noakes", men regarded as all time great coaches or coach educators. So if that doesn't inspire you then nothing will!

If you are a coach, coach educator or researcher and think you might have something to contribute, you can find details of how to apply over the next few pages. One of the requirements if you are awarded a scholarship is that we encourage you to disseminate your findings so others can learn from your research into middle distance running. Here we catch up with our 2012 winners **Martin I Jones and John K Parker**, from the University of Gloucestershire describe their research findings which provide a fascinating insight into the psychology of endurance running.

MINDFULNESS AND PAIN CATASTROPHIZING IN MIDDLE DISTANCE RUNNERS

Pain can occur for a variety of reasons during sport participation. For example, investigations amongst elite athletes demonstrate that physical discomfort associated with continued energy-expenditure is a potential limiter upon athletic performance in endurance sports. The importance of athletes inflicting exertion induced pain upon themselves during training has been likened to an investment, where increased deposits are linked to developing desirable performance outcomes (e.g., speed). Of the cognitive factors that can influence pain perception (e.g., appraisal, fear-avoidance beliefs, perceived control, self-efficacy) pain catastrophizing has demonstrated a reliable association in mediating responses to pain in both clinical and non-clinical populations. Pain catastrophizing is an exaggerated negative mental set brought to bear during actual or anticipated painful



*Martin Jones (top)
and John Parker*

experience. Broadly, individuals who catastrophize appear to adopt a negative orientation towards pain that leads to deleterious changes in pain perception (e.g., heightened pain response). However, there are an increasing number of studies of mindfulness and acceptance in relation to pain experiences that suggest these deleterious changes could be attenuated.

Mindfulness has been defined as the nonjudgmental focus of one's attention on the experience that occurs in the present moment and comprises a self-directed, nonreactive awareness of present experience. Researchers have suggested that mindfulness and acceptance of pain may

be important for reducing perceived pain (e.g., pain intensity) and may help attenuate catastrophizing cognitions. An emerging body of literature has demonstrated that a beneficial relationship between mindfulness and pain (i.e., more mindful, less pain); however, the majority of studies have focused on clinical populations and chronic pain rather than athletes' acute (e.g. training) pain. Thus, the purpose of the 2012 Frank Horwill Research Scholarship was to examine the size of the relationships between pain catastrophizing and mindfulness, and to see whether these psychological variables were associated with improved 800m, and 1,500m personal best times. Based upon the current evidence, we proposed that runners high in mindfulness could have lower pain catastrophizing. In addition, high mindful and low catastrophic participants could report quicker personal best times.

We collected measures of mindfulness and pain catastrophizing and personal best times from 130 runners and subjected the data to a series of statistical tests. Given the differences in personal best times between male and female athletes we controlled for gender and found that runners high in mindfulness had lower pain catastrophizing. We also found that runners higher in catastrophizing had slower personal best times but runners high in mindfulness

had quicker personal best times. It is important to point out the size of these relationships between psychological variables and performance were small, probably because athletes derive improvements in personal best times by training, better nutrition, avoiding injury and psychological preparation. Psychology alone is unlikely to provide large improvements in personal best times. That said, improving many things by 1% could ultimately produce a visible improvement.

From a coaching perspective, current results suggest that mindfulness training may be a tool runners and coaches consider. By accepting training pain, athletes may be able to reduce catastrophic thinking and continue to push harder, therefore reaping benefits of high intensity interval training (and similar training modalities). It is important that coaches and athletes recognize that pain can be an indication of damage to tissue or similar physiological processes and therefore coaches should not encourage athletes to accept pain and push through extreme discomfort when doing so could cause long term damage. Catastrophizing is similar to a false alarm based on exaggerated perceptions of potentially benign stimuli. It is possible that athletes are not exaggerating the pain they are experiencing and coaches must therefore allow athletes to behave accordingly. Coaches and practitioners may wish to examine mindfulness training, as it is unlikely there are risks associated with becoming more mindful.

In conclusion, the results of the 2012 Frank Horwill Research Scholarship revealed that in the sample of athletes we surveyed more mindful athletes reported lower pain catastrophizing and more mindful athletes report quicker personal best times over 800m and 1500m. Coaches and athletes may benefit from working with sport psychologists to improve mindfulness skills and researchers may wish to take our results and design experiments where mindfulness skills are manipulated at different times during a competitive season. We hope that the current study provides food for thought and stimulates debate. Also, we would like to thank the British Miler's Club for funding the research and David Reader and other volunteers at the British Miler's club for supporting our research and facilitating data collection.



www.britishmilersclub.com

2014 Horwill Research Scholarship

- Are you interested in research?
- Do you know of someone who is involved in exercise research?
- Can you help progress middle-distance running?

Background

The BMC is looking for individuals to help us progress middle-distance running by conducting a creative and innovative piece of research. We believe that one way in which we can support this aim is to offer a scholarship of up to **£2000** to help at least one individual pursue a selected topic. The scholarship has been in place now since 2008 and we are currently funding active research.

Coaches, research students, or lecturers may be interested and are welcome to apply. The Scholarship is open to all BMC members, but we are also opening the application process to non-members so that we can cast the net far and wide.



Frank Horwill, MBE. Founder BMC.

Peter J L Thompson

How to apply?

The application process is a simple two stage exercise. The first step is to complete an application form which is available from the BMC website. This is to be submitted to the BMC by the closing date. The second stage will involve short-listing the best applications and then holding short interviews. After this we will inform the successful candidate of our decision and support them to conduct the research in the months and years ahead. The findings will be widely distributed to all BMC members and if appropriate, beyond.

Why the Frank Horwill Scholarship?

The late Frank Horwill MBE was the founding member of the BMC in 1963. As well as working tirelessly for the Club, Frank became extremely well known for his work on research and collating research from around the world on middle-distance and endurance running. In order to safeguard his tradition, this scholarship has been established.

How do I apply?

Application forms and more information can be downloaded from the BMC website. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact David Reader at davidreader@britishmilersclub.com

The closing date for completed applications is 1st May, 2014.

BMC QUIZ ANSWERS

(questions on page 17)

- 1) Jim Ryun (USA, aged 19) set a world 880 yards record of 1:44.9 at Terre Haute, Indiana on 10 June 1966, clocking successive laps of 53.3 and 51.6. Unfortunately he was not timed at 800 metres en route, so he was denied a world record at that distance also.
- 2) Lyudmila Bragina (USSR) at the Munich Olympics in 1972 (4:06.50 heat on 4 September; 4:05.07 semi-final on 7 September; and 4:01.38 final on 9 September).
- 3) Sydney Wooderson (1938), Roger Bannister (1954), Brian Hewson (1958), John Whetton (1969), Steve Ovett (1978), and Steve Cram (1982 and 1986)
- 4) Kip Keino (Kenya). He won the mile (3:55.34) at Kingston in 1966, and the 1500 metres (3:36.68) at Edinburgh in 1970. He also won the 3 miles (12:57.4) at Kingston and was bronze medallist in the 5000 metres (13:27.6) in Edinburgh
- 5) Emil Zatopek and Dana Zatopkova. On 24 July 1952, Dana won the Women's Javelin and Emil the 5000 metres final in the Olympic Games at Helsinki. Emil and Dana were both born on 19 September 1922
- 6) David Moorcroft with 13:00.41 at Oslo on 7 July 1982
- 7) Steve Scott (USA) ran 136 sub four minute miles between 1977 and 1985. At the Miller Golf Course at Anaheim, Florida, on 2 December 1982 Scott completed 18 holes in 92 strokes, covering the 7km course in 29 minutes, 33 seconds (29:33)
- 8) Paula Radcliffe. UK record of 8:22.20 for 3000 metres at Oslo on 19 July 2002 and world record marathon holder with 2:15:25 at London on 13 April 2003
- 9) Diane Leather-Charles ran a mile in 4:59.6 at Birmingham on 29 May 1954; 23 days after Roger Bannister's historic 3:59.4 mile at Oxford
- 10) Kip Keino again. He set a world record of 7:39.6 for 3000 metres at Helsingborg, Sweden on 27 August 1965. He had never raced the distance before!
- 11) John Landy (Australia) at Turku, Finland on 21 June, 1954, with times of 3:41.8 (1500m) and 3:57.9 (Mile)
- 12) Luigi Beccali in 1932, and Gabriella Dorio in 1984 - oddly enough both at Los Angeles, USA
- 13) Steve Ovett - 800 metres at Moscow in 1980; 1500 metres at Prague in 1978, and 5000 metres at Edinburgh in 1986
- 14) Sydney Wooderson (GBR) in 1938 (1500m) and 1946 (5000m) and Michel Jazy (FRA) in 1962 (1500m) and 1966 (5000m)
- 15) Anne Smith, who ran a mile in 4:39.2 at Wimbledon Park on 13 May 1967, and then 4:37.0 at Chiswick on 3 June 1967, passing 1500 metres in 4:17.3 en route
- 16) Maricica Puica (Romania) won in 8:35.96 from Wendy Sly (GBR), who ran 8:39.47
- 17) Eleven (11): Two at 800 metres; two at 1000 metres; one at 1500 metres; and three at the mile. Indoors he set two at 800 metres, and one at 1000 metres
- 18) Philip Noel-Baker; silver medallist in 1920 at Antwerp and recipient of a Nobel Peace Prize as a Labour MP in 1959
- 19) At Stuttgart on 28 August 1986, when Seb Coe won the European 800 metres title in 1:44.50 from Tom McKean (1:44.61) and Steve Cram (1:44.88)
- 20) Tatyana Kazankina (USSR) with 3:56.0 at Podolsk on 28th June 1976

Dr. Barry Fudge praises the BMC

BRITISH ATHLETICS HEAD OF ENDURANCE AND SPORTS SCIENCE, **DR BARRY FUDGE** SPEAKS TO **DAVID LOWES** AND **MATT LONG** ABOUT THE BMC AND OUR 2013 ATHLETE OF THE YEAR **MO FARAH**

The man who took up the dual roles of head of endurance and sports science for British Athletics offers unreserved praise for our club.

The invaluable role of the BMC

He enthuses, "The BMC is fundamental to the development of the sport and in helping our top runners gain the racing opportunities that they require to propel them on to the global and European stage". As well as commenting on the role of the BMC in terms of long term athlete development, he is keen to allude to the BMC Horwill Research Scholarship and wider coach educational role of our club. He adds "The club funds research in to the sport, provides coaching courses, literature and a large number of very experienced coaches who are more than willing to pass on their knowledge to up and coming coaches ensuring that the sport continues to move forward". As well as praising the strong ethos of volunteerism which saw our club develop so incredibly since the early 1960s he is keen to stress that British Athletics is well aware of the value of the BMC in the context of the wider sport. He reflects that, "From my own personal observations I am always blown away by the time and energy that volunteer coaches, administrators and officials put in to the sport and it is these people who are the life blood of athletics and the BMC is a huge part of that. From a British Athletics perspective, we recognise this and will look to work with the BMC even closer than we do now in the coming years."

Dr Barry Fudge and his dual roles

The man who was formerly a senior physiologist at the English Institute of Sport is keen to tell us that "It's a challenge balancing the demands of the two roles as both are fundamentally trying to achieve the same result which helps in many ways to mesh the pair together. In general terms that is to ensure our best runners stand on the start line and are the best prepared in the world." With enthusiasm the Scot adds, "Both roles have areas that I focus on to try and make that happen, however in endurance terms it includes working with athletes and coaches on a day-to-day basis to sitting in meetings, planning, looking at the overarching strategy and reviewing progress. I have spent the last three months listening, learning and reviewing our current

endurance set-up in the UK". In describing his approach as 'evolutionary' rather than 'revolutionary' he is keen to credit the work of those before him and points specifically to Ian Stewart and Spencer Barden for their "fantastic job in laying the foundations for years to come".

He sees his biggest challenge as, "Trying to support the layer of athletes and coaches just below the World Class Performance Programme (UK Sport funded athletes) given that the development of endurance runners is generally a slow burner". Investment in the future is part of the package which he is keen to develop and he explains that, "Fortunately, Virgin London Marathon along with British Athletics and the home nation countries invest significantly in the pathway as a whole. We are working hard at the moment to pull together a budget that will allow us to work towards our new vision which is for British endurance runners to be successful on the global and European stage in order to inspire and motivate runners of all abilities. All the plans are finalised and over the coming months we will communicate out what they are. However, we are also planning an endurance meeting in the Autumn where we will invite a large number of endurance runners, coaches and people who have a vested interest in endurance to attend so that we can talk through our longer-term plans and look for some constructive feedback and suggestions."

Work with BMC Athlete of the 2013, Mo Farah

Many of you who watched Mo Farah's recent debut marathon in London may be aware



that Barry was the man who our double Olympic champion credited after both his gold medal runs two summers ago. Some of you will be less familiar with the detail of what Barry's work entails. He explains that, "In October and December last year I travelled to Portland to complete a series of tests with Mo on the treadmill and to work with his coach Alberto Salazar on a plan". He returned to Kenya earlier this year in January and February to support track and marathon athletes, including Farah, with their altitude training. The man who obtained a physiology doctorate from Glasgow University in 2007 is keen to credit the wider support team and points out that, "In addition to myself, there was an additional physiologist, nutritionist, strength and conditioning coach and physio's. There were also a number of coaches in attendance all pulling together in the best interests of the athletes on camp. As always with these things, it is a team effort". This being said, the role of both Dr. Fudge and the BMC has undoubtedly aided the man many believe is our greatest ever endurance athlete.

Farah raced in no less than 12 BMC races between 2000 as a 17 year old and 2006, when he had turned 23 years of age. The table below charts his progression in our club races.

Mo Farah: Progression in BMC Races

Year	Date	Venue	Distance	Time	Position
2000	19 Aug	Solihull	5000m	14:05.72	8th
2000	16 Sep	Bath	3000m	8:14.87	1st
2001	23 Jun	Solihill	5000m	13:56.31	12th
2001	29 Aug	Watford	1500m	3:46.1	1st
2002	14 Aug	Watford	5000m	14:00.3	3rd 'A'
2002	28 Aug	Watford	1500m	3:47.78	9th 'A'
2003	14 Jun	Eton	1500m	3:43.17	2nd 'A'
2004	6 May	Oxford	1 mile	4:00.07	2nd 'A'
2005	11 Jun	Watford	1500m	3:42.73	11th 'A'
2005	25 Jun	Solihull	5000m	13:30.53	3rd 'A'
2005	6 Aug	C. Palace	1 mile	3:56.49	1st 'A'
2006	24 Jun	Solihull	1500m	3:39.27	1st 'A'

Running Economy and VO2 Kinetics

AN AWARENESS OF THE KEY PHYSIOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF ENDURANCE RUNNING CAN HELP YOU IN BMC RACES, ARGUES **MATT LONG**.

Check out this UKA uCoach video resource for athletes and coaches by Andy Shaw, Kate Spilsbury and Gareth Turner of the English Institute of Sport:

<http://ucoach.com/share/view/Physiological-Determinants-of-Distance-Running/from-filter/>

The confirms above highlights the significance of: (a) VO2max, and highlights the significance of (b) fractional utilisation of VO2max; (c) VO2 kinetics and (d) running economy, as contributors to athletic performance in the kind of middle distance and endurance events which some of you will be competing in this summer.

Here we deconstruct some of the definitional terms which are made explicit in the video link.

VO2max

This signifies your maximum aerobic potential in terms of the highest rate at which oxygen can be extracted, transported and consumed in the process of energy production. World-class male endurance athletes tend to have a VO2max in the range of 77-85ml/kg/min compared to a range of 67-75ml/kg/min for females.

Fractional utilisation of VO2max

Fractional utilisation of VO2 max is a useful measure of your physiological capabilities because it equates to how much of your VO2max you can sustain at a given pace. It is capability rather than capacity and is associated with the accumulation of lactate in the blood.

VO2 kinetics

This measure corresponds to how quickly you can accelerate oxygen uptake from start of you running to the requisite level. This is very important in the 800m and 1500m as the quicker you can increase your oxygen uptake, the less you need to tap into your anaerobic or lactate energy pool until much later in your race.

Running economy

This measure equates to how oxygen uptake is transformed into running speed. The less oxygen you use at a given running speed, the more economical you are. Your body composition, biomechanical factors and muscular properties affect this variable.

What does this mean for me?

VO2max tends to be highest in athletes who specialise in events that are run close to VO2max (3000m and 5000m).

Other factors may be more important at shorter and longer distances. Fractional utilisation of VO2max and running economy increase in importance as an athlete moves up in competition distance from 10km to the marathon.

Velocity at VO2max (vVO2max) is a strong predictor of performance at 3000m. Speed at lactate threshold is the first increase in blood lactate above baseline and this is known to be a good predictor of marathon pace. Speed at lactate turn-point is a sudden and sustained increase in blood lactate which tends to occur over 1-2 km/h above lactate threshold and this is strongly

correlated with 10km performance.

Now what should I do?

Remember that systematic and progressive training matters as VO2max can be increased by 5%-30%. Through adaptation, the athlete can learn to use aerobic capacity to the full before the accumulation of lactate occurs at 75-90% of VO2max.

The role of the coach is to develop an athlete-centred training schedule, which means that lactate threshold and lactate turn-point will occur at higher speeds.

Rather than seeking immediate short-term gains and risking the proverbial 'burn-out' coaches should work at long-term athlete development which requires progressive overload in terms of frequency, intensity and duration of work over a number of years.

Note. For more on this subject see Long, M. (2013) Craving Oxygen. Athletics Weekly. 22nd August, p.61.

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THE ENGLISH INSTITUTE OF SPORT'S ANDY SHAW INVITES YOU TO TAKE PART IN SOME GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH WHICH DRAWS ON SOME OF THE ABOVE PRINCIPLES:

Are you a distance runner? Are you looking to enhance your performance? The English Institute of Sport, in conjunction with Loughborough University, are providing a unique opportunity for talented male and female distance runners (competing in race distances of 800m up to the marathon) to take part in specific, individualised training, with the sole aim to enhance performance.

In recent years, the English Institute of Sport and Loughborough University have joined forces to explore how elite endurance athletes actually train, and how the key physiological determinants of endurance performance respond to this training. More recently, the focus has been directed towards highly trained endurance runners, and specifically how to enhance the running economy of these individuals.

Running economy is a primary determinant of endurance running performance, and involves the translation of chemical energy within the body into linear running velocity. As the importance of running economy for endurance running performance is well established, increasing an individuals running economy is highly likely to enhance their performance come race day in race distances of 800m and above. However, achieving improvements

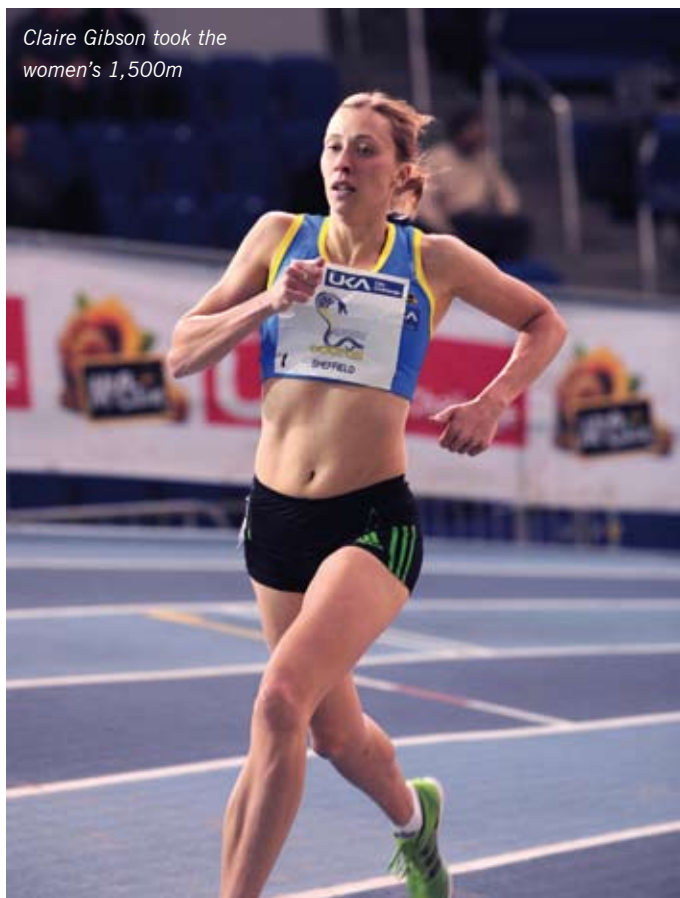
in running economy is often very difficult, as knowledge of specific training interventions to enhance running economy is limited. The English Institute of Sport and Loughborough University are therefore providing an tailored training sessions to be included into athletes training programmes for 8 weeks, with the aim to enhance the running economy of already highly trained individuals. These sessions will be completed bi-weekly at the English Institute of Sport's high performance laboratory, based on the Loughborough University campus.

In addition to completing sessions that are specifically designed to complement and enhance the performance gains from an existing training programme, athletes will receive detailed feedback on their aerobic physiology, including assessments of their VO2max, lactate profile and running economy. Moreover, athletes will be provided with guidance regarding how their results can be used to infer appropriate training paces and intensities within their current programme.

If you would be interested in taking advantage of such an opportunity, please contact Andy Shaw by email (andrew.shaw@eis2win.co.uk).

THE INDOOR SEASON

Claire Gibson took the women's 1,500m



BMC Indoor Meeting

ENGLISH INSTITUTE OF SPORT, 5TH JANUARY 2014. REPORT BY **STEPHEN GREEN.**

The BMC Indoor Meeting, now in its third year has become a regular starting point for athletes wishing to focus on the boards in the winter.

Claire Gibson produced her quickest ever opener of 4:19.29 after an exciting 1500m race in Sheffield.

Rose-Anne Galligan took on the early pace, with the Scottish International always close by. In the final 150m Gibson looked strong and pushed for home and was able to see off the attentions of fast finishing 800m specialist Rowena Cole.

Niall Brooks was pretty much unchallenged on his debut on the boards over 1500m, cruising to a 3:47.48 victory. The 3:38 man was paced through 800m in 1:58, before taking the pace on with Ben Coldray a distant second. In the B race Harry Harper looked composed in returning an encouraging 3:53 on his way back from Injury.

Jamie Webb, showed how committed front running can reap rewards in the 800m. Cruising through splits of 27 and 55 secs, the Liverpool Harrier looked imperious in recording a lifetime best of 1:51.34.

Second placed Tony Whiteman, twice the age of the winner, continues to amaze and intrigue in equal measure, with a 1:53 clocking.

Adelle Tracey was another impressive winner of the two lap event in 2:08.96. The former Junior International, on her way back to form, followed the early pace of Montana Jones, before pulling clear on the final lap.

Richard Weir was untroubled in a virtually solo 8:10 win in the 3000m; leaving Stephen Lisgo and Eliot Buckner 60 metres in arrears. Buckner was superb in recording an 8:21 PB.

Many of the athletes who competed in this meeting went on to gain selection for the England Athletics European races in Bratislava and Vienna in February. The BMC is grateful for the help of England athletics in continuing to support this meeting. www.thepowerof10.info/results/results.aspx?meetingid=96635

800m winner Adelle Tracey



Richard Weir dominated the men's 3000m

IAAF World Indoor Championships

SOPOT, POLAND, MARCH 7th-9th. **BRENDON BYRNE** REPORTS.

We have six events to report on, spanning British men's and women's fortunes in distances between 800m and 3000m.

Women's 800m

Going into the championships Laura Muir was, on paper, the 3rd fastest with her 2:00.94 clocking. Muir ran in the first of three heats with only the winner of each heat guaranteed a place in the final of six. Muir was bumped soon after the start and never really recovered. The winner was Angelina Cichocka (Poland) in 2:00.37. Muir ran determinedly and finished second in 2:02.55. The brutal truth for the 20 year old Scot was that it wasn't good enough to qualify for the final. Two qualified from heat 2 and three from heat 3. 2:01.25 was quick enough to make the final. There is little margin for error in events like this and Laura Muir will surely learn from the experience. It will be very interesting to see how she develops over 1500m in the summer season.

Medals:

1. Chanelle Price (USA) 2:00.09
 2. Angelina Cichocka (Poland) 2:00.45
 3. Mariana Arzamasova (Belarus) 2:00.79
- Splits 27.88, 57.73 and 1:28.91

Seb Coe's classic comment about decision making during the middle distance races being "like high speed chess" was never more appropriate.

Men's 800m

Again the qualifying conditions were very harsh with only the winner of each heat guaranteed a place in the final along with 3 fastest losers. Mukhtar Mohammed was in heat 1 along with the favourite for the event Mohammed Aman. Aman won in 1:46.73 with Mukhtar 4th in 1:47.59. He didn't qualify for the final but he had run a seasons best which is creditable. A further improvement of his basic 400m speed may help the promising Mukhtar in these tactical situations.

Andrew Osagie ran well in heat 2 to finish 2nd to the eventual silver medallist Adam Kszczot. Kszczot recorded 1:45.76 and Osagie 1:45.88.

Medals:

1. Mohammed Aman (Ethiopia) 1:46.4
 2. Adam Kszczot (Poland) 1:46.76
 3. Andrew Osagie (GB) 1:47.1
- Splits: 200m 24.96, 400m 53.29 and 600m 1:20.57

Osagie was promoted to the bronze



Andrew Osagie. Men's 800m bronze medallist

medal position after Marcin Lewandowski was judged to have stepped off the track on the final bend and was disqualified. This shouldn't detract from a fine performance from Osagie whose bronze was a repeat of his performance in the 2012 championships in Istanbul.

Going into the championships Osagie was 4th fastest on times and Mohammed Mukhtar was listed in the first 10.

Women's 1500m

Jemma Simpson was Britain's sole representative. The first two from each heat qualified for the final with three fastest losers also qualifying. Simpson finished 5th in heat 1 with 4:11.93, just outside a season's best. There were 5 qualifiers from heat 2 and 2 from heat 3.

Abeba Aregami was a clear favourite for the final and realistically the rest were running for second place after she upped the pace in the last few laps.

Medals:

1. Abeba Aregami (Sweden) 4:00.61
 2. Axumawit Embaye (Ethiopia) 4:07.12
 3. Nicola Fuentes (Canada) 4:07.61
- Splits: 400m 67.5, 800m 2:09.44 and 1200m 3:13.37

Men's 1500m

GB's representatives were Lee Emanuel and Chris O'Hare. Qualification for the

final was for the first two in each heat and three fastest losers. Emanuel finished 5th in heat 1 in 3:48.09. It was won by Homiyu Tesfaye in 3:47.07. Heat 2 was won by the eventual winner, Ayanleh Souleiman in 3:38.94 with O'Hare 4th in 3:40.06. Aman Wote won heat 3 in the fastest time of 3:36.75 with 5 qualifying from that heat.

Medals:

1. Ayanleh Souleiman (Djibouti) 3:37.52
 2. Aman Wote (Ethiopia) 3:38.08
 3. Abdolaati Iguiden (Morocco) 3:38.2
- Splits: 400m 59.21, 800m 1:58.96, 1200m 2:58.23

As Chris O'Hare said "It's all very well running fast times but you have to put the races together". Certainly he had extensive experience on the US indoor circuit. Lee Emanuel's comment was "I just didn't have it today".

Women's 3000m

There was no British representative and the overwhelming favourite was Genzebe Dibaba. Qualifying from the heats was for the first 4 and four fastest losers. In the final when the multiple world record holder Dibaba made her move and the rest were running for second place.

Medals:

1. Genzebe Dibaba (Ethiopia) 8:55.04
 2. Helen Osando Obiri (Kenya) 8:57.72
 3. Maryan Jamal (Bahrain) 8:58.16
- Splits: 1000m 3:24.15, 2000m 6:16.10

Men's 3000m

Great Britain's representatives were Andy Vernon and Jonathan Mellor. In the heat, first Vernon was towards the back of the pack but ran sensibly and brilliantly to finish 4th in 7:45.49. This was a personal best and qualified him for the final. As he was seven seconds slower than the fastest 10 in the world going in to the championship, this was a superb result.

Mellor was 9th in his heat in 8:03.17.

In a very high class field Vernon finished 11th in the final but he was in very illustrious company. Even Galen Rupp, Hagos Gebrhiwet (the fastest in the world this year) and Augustine Choge didn't get a look in for the medals.

Medals:

1. Caleb Ndiku (Kenya) 7:54.94
 2. Bernard Lagat (USA) 7:55.22
 3. Djen Gebremeskel (Ethiopia) 7:55.39
11. Andy Vernon (GB) 7:58.25
- Splits: 1000m 2:48.03 2000m 5:32.36

COACHING CORNER

DAVE SUNDERLAND COACHED OLYMPIAN AND FORMER UK NATIONAL CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPION **SPENCER DUVAL** EXPLORES **STEEPLECHASE** SPECIFICS.

Why switch events to the steeplechase? Answer: It is the easiest event to make a team in and will be for the next decade. If I was starting out or mid way through my running career again I would definitely opt for the steeplechase. The other events have moved on to such an extent that it seems unbelievable that most athletes could even achieve the qualifying standards let alone being competitive in say the 5000m or 10000m. But the steeplechase has for quite a while now remained a little stagnant.



*Spencer Duval.
The Atlanta Olympian
makes a splash*

simulate the tiredness that an athlete will face in the latter stages of a race. The move up from 2k to 3k steeplechase is daunting and very hard to do. Coaches need to plan ahead and adapt the training to accommodate this 50% increase in distance. It's not just the distance element that is hard it's the extra hurdling on already fatigued legs that catches most people out.

Technical

The gathering of the proverbial baying crowd at the water jump at any club meeting is testament to the

fear factor that this event holds but if practiced well then the water jump should be nothing more than an opportunity to gain ground on others who can't do it as well. However before mastery of the water jump and the one footed landing can be achieved you should learn the water jump stage from the ground take off level with no barrier whatsoever – I remember using twigs or stones on the ground on my park runs to trigger my practising of jumps in front of bemused dog walkers who would see me leap into the air for no apparent reason! It's about coordination and practice, practice, practice.

To progress and achieve technical efficiency over the conventional wooden barriers it is wise to try walking hurdle drills of the kind utilised by both sprint and one lap hurdlers in order to increase balance, agility and co-ordination before moving onto actually hurdling them. Once you have the basic slow speed technique then move to low level hurdles (not barriers to start with) to try running and jumping. It will feel difficult to start with and your technique will be all over the place but your coach should be able to quickly pick up any major flaws and start ironing them out. Technique is not the be all and end all though so long as you can get over *efficiently*. A lot of the Africans don't have a great technique they just rely on basic endurance.

I was coached from my early teens by Dave Sunderland (national coach mentor for middle distance and steeplechase) and he always pointed to the need to "control acceleration into the barriers whilst being energy efficient". It's the being efficient that is the key to success.

When training, coaches can move hurdles into different lanes, place cones in front of barriers and even consider using their own bodies as mild obstructions by moving in front

of hurdles during training. This obviously has to be appropriately risk assessed by the coach so as to avoid athlete injury but if done so appropriately the inherent physicality and unpredictability of racing can be simulated. Be creative and make the session fun. Mixed groups can be incorporated so steeplechasers can train with flat runners by adding the hurdles in lane three. This way the group can set off together and the chaser can run wide at hurdles to go over them then get back in the group again. Virtually any flat session can be incorporated into a chase session, it's not rocket science or a totally exclusive event that most coaches seem to feel it is.

Tactical

Many novice runners have an overwhelming desire to go the front of races in an attempt to "keep out of trouble". But as you learn the event this should change to normal tactical running, whilst you can't blindly trail the runner in front of you as you can in a flat race, you simply must learn to run in the pack as a steeplechaser. Tactics play a major part of the chase as the pack does split up often around the water jump and hurdles. If you are tactically aware you can take advantage of others in the race with little extra physical effort often making up 5 or more metres per barrier!

Recently the Africans have over the last 5 years turned the last 400m of the race into a sprint, but for the club and regional runner this is far from likely to be the case. Even at the top level, athletes mess up on the last lap as their stride pattern changes but for the club / regional runner it is more about who slows down the least in the latter stages as fatigue sets in.

Conclusions

Having explored the basic endurance, technical and tactical pre-requisites for the steeplechaser, the core components of a steeplechaser's philosophy can be summarised as:

- Adaptation for progressive technical mastery
- Simulation for race specificity
- Efficiency over barriers
- Tactical awareness
- High endurance ability
- Strength

Anyone can run. Anyone can jump. Anyone can be a chaser!

Athletes and coaches interested in forthcoming steeplechase workshops as part of the England Athletics Mentoring Scheme should contact Area Coach Mentor for the Midlands, Geoff James, at geoffjamesathletics1@gmail.com or Spencer himself at spencer@spencerduval.net

This is great news for British athletes, both women and men. There are real opportunities for athletes to not only make school, club, regional or national teams but to be competitive as well. What would you rather do: train and not get in the team or switch events and make teams and progress more?

There are three fundamental components to the steeplechase – (1) Endurance; (2) Technical; (3) Tactical.

All endurance athletes have these abilities to one degree or another. The technical side of hurdling and water jump can be learned but fundamentally you have to be an endurance athlete who can run, think and race. It's just running with a few jumps in!

Endurance

It is fundamentally an endurance event which is broken up every so often by some jumps. In coaching a session suitable for both men and women, you ideally need once weekly sessions for the novice run over hurdles rather than the more intimidating wooden barriers. A fundamental session to try for senior athletes is 3 x 1k over hurdles with 60 seconds and then 30 seconds recovery which as well as a fitness component working both aerobic and lactate energy systems serves as a key predictor of forthcoming race times.

The key endurance demand of the event lies in the transition between 2k and 3k and thus junior athletes who race the shorter distance (as well as the 1,500m distance) can modify their sessions to include much shorter repetitions over 400m with hurdles placed in conventional steeplechase positions. In certain instances you should try active recoveries during repetitions with jumping squats being thrown in deliberately to induce the kind of "super-fatigue" in the quadriceps muscles in an attempt to



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