



BMC News

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH MILERS' CLUB
VOLUME 13 ISSUE 1 – SPRING 2016

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BRITISH MILERS' CLUB

Founded 1963

BMC Officers and Roles

President	Dr. Norman Poole 23 Burnside, Hale Barns, Altrincham, WA15 0SG
Chairman	Tim Brennan Cannon Platt, Moorlands Drive, Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead, Berks. SL6 6 QG Tel 01628 415748 Email timbrennan@britishmilersclub.com
Vice Chairman	Steve Mosley 95 Beale Close, Danescourt, Cardiff, CF5 2RU Tel 029 224 11440 Email steve.mosley@lineone.net
Secretary	David Lowes 2 Eggleston Close, Newton Hall, Durham, DH1 5XR Tel 07930 318651 Email coachlowes@aol.com
Treasurer & Administrator	Pat Fitzgerald 47 Station Road, Cowley, Uxbridge Middlesex, UB8 3AB Tel 01895 811822 Email patfitzgerald@britishmilersclub.com
BMC News Editor	Dr Matthew Long 262 Rolleston Road, Burton on Trent, Staffs. DE13 0AY Tel 07983 864114 Email: matt@mattlong.wanadoo.co.uk
Statistician & Webmaster	Dr Tim Grose 17 Old Claygate Lane, Claygate, Esher, Surrey, KT10 0ER Email timgrose@britishmilersclub.com

Academy Contacts

Academy Chairman	David Lowes 2 Eggleston Close, Newton Hall, Durham, DH1 5XR Tel 07930 318651 Email coachlowes@aol.com
Courses	Samantha Hodges Tel: 01482 867978 Email: samantha@schodges.karoo.co.uk

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.



EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

BY **MATTHEW LONG**

Welcome as ever to Spring 2016 BMC News! We have no less than seven stonking sections of a magazine which is fizzier than your average bottle of pop! So take off your trainers, pull up a chair, rest those blistered feet and take a gulp of what's on offer in this edition!

We glance over our shoulders in our RETRO section and hear from the man whose achievement on a windy May afternoon in Oxford way back in 1954 inspired the very formation of our club – the living legend that is Sir Roger Bannister. After recalling the career of former European indoor champion Helen Clitheroe, we pay homage once again to our fabled founder before conditions underfoot get a little more testing as we consider cinder surfaces of

decades gone by.

After paying respects to our coaching and coach education AWARD WINNERS who were honoured at the recent symposium which we shared with England Athletics, we put in a quick alactic surge to come up to the shoulder of the PRESENT in looking at an indoor season on the boards and whetting your appetite with a summer season preview.

Cover star and Young Athlete of the Year, Bobby Clay, is indeed our shooting BMC STAR whose interview will send you into orbit before we indulge in some crystal ball gazing with a BMC FUTURE section which previews the illustrious Academy in October and gives a word of encouragement to two of tomorrow's stars – namely Jake Wightman and James Gormley.

We then reach for our passports and board our BMC INTERNATIONAL jet in setting off to fly over the land of Finnish miling with seventies star, Ari Paunonen. A transatlantic trip is then in order with Lisa Dobriskey and Ricky Soos offering you a guided tour of Altis- the World Athletics Centre, in Arizona.

England Athletics National Coach Mentor Lead for Endurance, Spencer Duval, then welcomes you back home to the land of COACH EDUCATION in offering an upbeat appraisal of the role of our club in securing a revival of British middle distance running. As we run our final lap, we open our arms wide to embrace the diversity of experience offered by esteemed coach, Joyce Hogg, who was deservedly shortlisted for BMC Coach of the Year- with this interview challenging us all to look in the mirror and assess whether we have enough women in endurance coaching in the year 2016. Two belting book reviews are banged out as we head for the finishing tape before we take off our BMC caps to pause and pay our respects to three monumental figures of our sport who are recently dearly departed.

Keep running and keep reading too!

Matt Long



The Editor receives his Horwill Research Award Trophy from his England Athletics mentor, Geoff James (left) and Bud Baldaro (right), whose coaching and support team he is part of at Birmingham University AC.



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Young Athlete of the Year Bobby Clay at Sport City.

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES - SPRING 2016

Welcome to the Spring 2016 edition of the BMC news. My thanks to our ever enthusiastic and hardworking editor Matt Long and to all those who have contributed to the magazine. The BMC news is a key vehicle for sharing knowledge and wisdom, it is something I know many coaches value greatly. It really is in the spirit and tradition of the club to share ideas and approaches so that collectively we can fulfil the clubs aim to improve the standard of British middle distance running. Just think of tapping the volume of experience and success we have amongst BMC coaches to make us even better. Most coaches would agree that you never stop learning; the logic of this is that you need to give something yourself in the hope that you will gain from others. I would challenge coach members and athletes to think what they can contribute and to contact Matt. You do not have to be the greatest ever writer to offer something useful. I know sometimes coaches and athletes believe they have to keep secret their training schedules secret in case they give an advantage to their competitors. This is shame and something that seems to have crept in lately, as you can find in old issues of BMC News and Athletics Weekly some very detailed training information on the top runners of the past.

A good or bad time for the sport?

If you read the national press you would learn about a sport in turmoil as the latest drug or corruption scandal is announced as bad news for the sport. Personally I can't see that catching drugs cheats can be a bad thing. Let's face it we knew the cheating was going on and it has to be good news that the countries with high rates of positive tests are at last being taken to task. If a gang responsible for a crime wave was rounded up the police it would certainly be celebrated and we should do the same when the cheating countries are found out.

Of course for most of us who have spent our winters with club training groups, and at the cross-country and indoor meetings the vision of the sport in crisis seems remote and not related to the wonderful sport we enjoy. All of us came into the sport for the love of it and the sheer joy of running. It is important to not loose site of that even if for the best of us it has become a living rather than a hobby. For some of our top achieving members it must be hugely dispiriting to know that they have been deprived of deserved medals by cheats impacting their livelihood. Amongst the gloom in the press there were fantastic articles by members Hannah England and

Jenny Meadows explaining the impact on them, but putting over their love of the sport as well.

I think one of the attraction of BMC meetings for our many experienced and successful GB internationals who run in them, is that they can compete in something that keeps them in touch with the truly amateur domestic sport. We are very proud of our Grand Prix meetings which whilst offering top class competition put the internationals on the same track as the aspiring youngster. The meetings are there to be enjoyed by all and we strive to do that with the conditions that enable PBs, and by the enthusiasm of our officials and commentators.

The Indoor Season

Our indoor season will never be as big as the outdoor season but the quality was high. We had meetings in Glasgow, Sheffield and Lee Valley. These produced some great performances including three men under 1:50 in the Lee Valley 800m (Spencer Thomas, Dale Clutterbuck and under twenty Archie Davis) and a sub 9 minute 3000m by Josephine Moultrie at Glasgow.

Award Winners

Congratulations to our 2015 award winners. The awards are voted for by the BMC committee with no strict guideline other than you are only eligible if you are a BMC member. A feature of the voting this time was that it was extremely tight with more than one strong case in many categories. The athlete of the year was Shelayna Oskan-Clarke. Shelayna has a long history going back to 2008 of running and progressing in BMC races. It is even longer than that in helping with the pace making. This year she made her International Championship debut at the age of 25, having achieved the second B standard in the Oxford BMC Grand Prix. Another great candidate was Laura Muir with a BMC 3000m record run indoors at the start of the year, and some fantastic front running in the IAAF Grand Prix.

The young athlete of the year was Bobby Clay, another great front runner who set her European U20 qualifying standard in the Sport City Grand Prix before going on to win the championship in Sweden. Unlucky to lose out in this category was last year's winner Kyle Langford who also won in Sweden.

The coaching awards went to Aaron Thomas as coach of the year working with Charlene and Alexandra Bell in particular and the life time award went jointly to Alex and Rosemary Stanton for their fantastic



BMC Chairman
Tim Brennan.

work with so many athletes at Bedford. A special award is the Frank Horwill award for the services to the BMC to qualify you must have been a member for 10 years. This year John Knowles was the recipient. John Joined in 2005 as a coach and, apart from his coaching activities, has been heavily involved with the BMC committee virtually since joining. He developed the now popular regional races at Exeter which provides very meaningful competition for the South West regions middle distance runners. He is a regular member of our Grand Prix organising team and current member of our national committee.

I hope you enjoy the magazine and I wish you all good fortune for the coming season

Committee Changes

A big vote of thanks is due to David Reader who has stepped down from the position of secretary after making a large contribution over his years of tenure. The good news is that David continues his involvement with the club through the popular Eltham meeting and the Frank Horwill scholarship. Taking up the reins is David Lowes who will combine this role with the chairmanship of the academy. We also welcome to the committee Tim Egerton and Paul Gooding.

Tim Brennan
Chairman

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EARLIER THIS YEAR, BMC CHAIR **TIM BRENNAN** WAS PART OF AN AUDIENCE WITH THE LEGENDARY **SIR ROGER BANNISTER**:

The Iffley Road track, 6th May 1954:

The crowd waits in anticipation as the men's mile lines up. The occasion is a match between the British Amateur Athletic Association and Oxford University. Roger Bannister has targeted this race for an attempt to become the first ever person to run a sub four-minute mile. It is a quest that has captured the imagination of the world in the post war period as the world's best milers vie for the historic honour.

Fast forward to 18th January 2016 and another crowd waits in anticipation. This time it is a rare opportunity to hear first-hand from Sir Roger about the 3 minutes 59.4 seconds it took for history to be made that day in 1954. We are in the impressive setting of the Concert Hall in Reading Town Hall for 'An Audience with Sir Roger Bannister'; Steve Rider acts as a well-researched question master but his questions are mere prompts as Sir Roger's answers are full and eloquent.

With Sir Roger's permission I am pleased to share with you a report of the interview as follows:

Discovering his talent

Sir Roger's school days coincided with the Second World War when the family had been evacuated from London to Bath. Tension between locals and evacuees sometimes ran high and Sir Roger faced bullying from one much larger boy. The teacher's solution to this was to take the boys to the gym to fight it out with boxing gloves in front of the rest of the school! The smaller Roger ended up being knocked out by the larger boy. Fortunately, soon after Sir Roger discovered his more natural sport, when winning the school cross country. Once recognised for his sporting ability he was never bullied again. 'The person who is good at sport is able to get away with other things', advised Sir Roger.

His route to school took him from one side of hilly Bath to the other and it came naturally to him that he should run the route, down Landsdown Road to the city centre, then up Combe Hill, finally sprinting up the steps of Beechen Cliff. Sir Roger credited this with helping build his condition and stamina.

'Genes are important,' Sir Roger declared. His father was from a small village in Lancashire and had won a mile race.

The final element was the inspiration to want to be a serious runner and that came from his father taking him to a famous race at the White City in London. After six years of tough war time days there was a huge appetite in the summer of 1945 for sporting events. The big attraction was the mile race

between Sydney Wooderson of Britain and Arne Andersson of Sweden. Wooderson had set a World Record in 1937 and would have been favourite in the cancelled 1940 Tokyo Olympics. Unlike Wooderson who served in the British Army, Andersson, being from a neutral country had been able to continue competing during the war years, lowering the world record to 4:01.6. Such was the enthusiasm for this race, a crowd of 45,000 packed into White City. Roger and his father only gained entry when the surging crowd pushed down a barrier. The race lived up to expectation with the crowd cheering Wooderson on to the line only for Andersson to overhaul him at the last. The watching Bannister decided there and then he wanted to be a runner.

Becoming an International Runner

Sir Roger went up to Oxford in 1946 and at an early opportunity took part in the freshman's sports winning the mile in 4:52 and competing in spikes for the first time. Sir Roger's rangy style did not please all, with the watching University coach commenting, 'If you stopped leaping along like a kangaroo you'd knock 20 seconds off!'

It was a good enough performance to earn selection for the University as a third string. The winter of 1947 was one of the severest ever and Sir Roger reflected that his selection was probably because of his energy in shovelling snow. As it was he got to the last 270 yards of the race with the realisation that he could go faster. He overhauled the other Oxford runners to win by 10 yards in 4:25, prompting Harold Abrahams (of Chariots of Fire fame) to comment in 'The Times' newspaper that he was someone to watch out for.

By 1948, Sir Roger was marked as a possible for the London Olympics. One thing that meant was that he would receive extra rations. This would have been very welcome as post-war rationing was, if anything, worse than that of wartime. However, he was advised that over training as a younger athlete would strain his body. This was a popular theory at the time but one which Sir Roger now describes as 'Nonsense'. In fact, by 1948 they were aware of the sort of training the great Emil Zatopek was doing with his huge number of reps and training in army boots.

The 1952 Helsinki Olympics, though, were very much a serious attempt at success. Winter preparation contained many cross-country runs of around 7 miles distance. Then two months before the Games this switched



Prior to the start of the audience athletes from the local Reading AC club under the guidance of BMC coach Rob McKim were personally introduced to Sir Roger. Amongst them was Peter Cook seen here receiving the Peter Coe trophy for U17 athletes at the Iffley Road track in 2015. Pictured with Peter are 2nd and 3rd placers Joseph Tuffin and Lewis Sternkopf. In the background is the church tower which on May the 6th 1954 was flying the union flag. Sir Roger spent the hours before his four-minute mile looking up at this flag in the hope that he would see it still, indicating the high winds of the day had died.

to more track. A key indicator session for Sir Roger was a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile time-trial, where he believed that in race conditions he could maintain the same time-trial speed for the full mile race distance. The time-trial was timed by Norris McWhirter (of Guinness book of Records fame) in 2:52 indicating low 3:50s shape. However, he received a psychological blow when it was announced that the event would have a heat, semi-final and final in 3 days. Sir Roger knew that his training was 'slender' for such an intense race sequence. He went into the final tired and when the time came to 'order his legs' to kick it was not there for him and he finished fourth. Reflecting on that performance Sir Roger commented that he would have retired to concentrate on his medical studies if he had won gold. Instead he determined to remain in the sport for the 1954 Commonwealth Games. Sir Roger believes, 'Titles are much more important than records', but it was a career extension that also meant the elusive four-minute mile could be a target.

Build up to the Four Minute Mile

Sir Roger saw his main rivals for the first 4-minute mile as being John Landy of Australia and Wes Santee of the USA. This gave a great time pressure to make the attempt as soon as possible hence the early season date in May was targeted. Teamwork would be vital if the attempt was to succeed and Sir Roger turned to two friends. Chris Brasher - 'a true friend', with an interest in climbing as well as running could be relied

on to pace on target for a 1:58 half mile. Chris Chataway with a background at 5000m and more speed would be the man to take it on from Brasher with the aim of hitting the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile in 3:00-3:01. Together they trained for the attempt, often on the track at Chelsea Barracks, but five days out all track training ceased so that he would be fresh on race day.

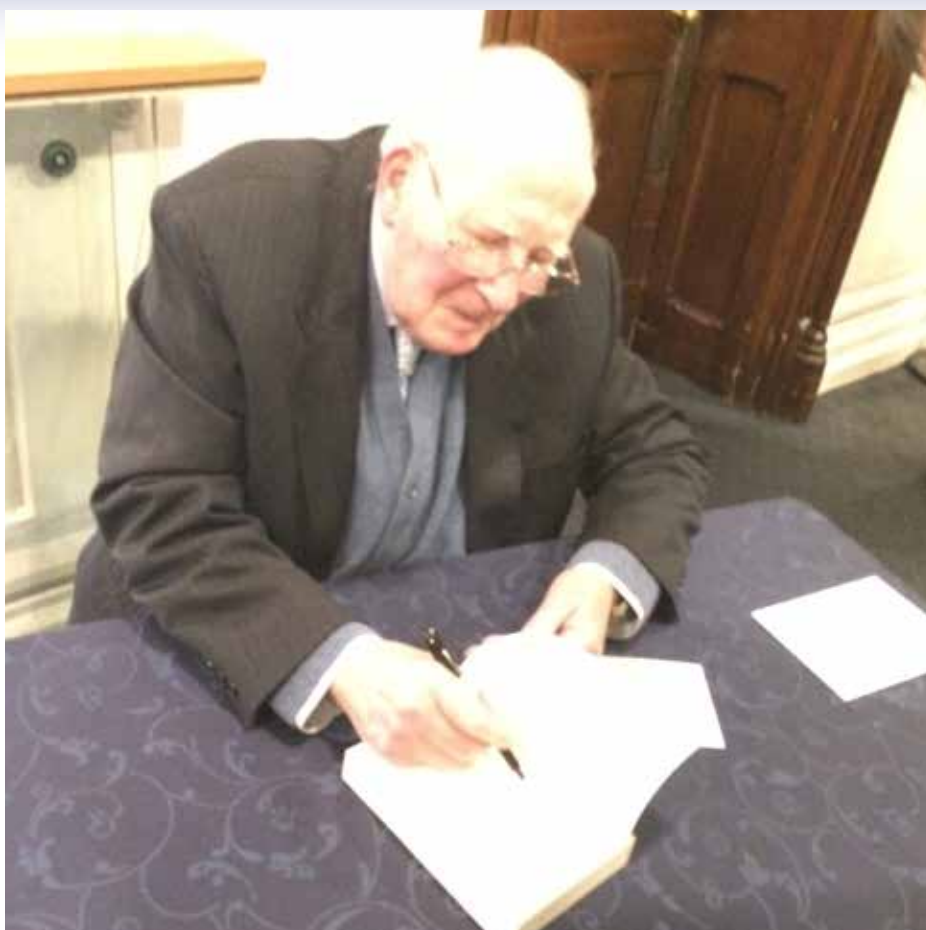
On the day of the attempt Sir Roger went into his hospital's laboratory which had a grindstone. In those days the spikes were fixed to the running shoe and the aim was to give a sharp finish. As a finishing touch Sir Roger rubbed graphite into the spikes so that the cinders from the track would not stick to the shoe. Travel to Oxford was by train and on arrival Sir Roger visited a friend for his pre-race lunch.

However, Sir Roger was still in doubt as to whether the attempt should go ahead. Weather conditions were windy and the thought was that conserving energies for more favourable conditions could be the right choice. This internal debate continued to within 20-25 minutes of the race with his close team trying to influence his decision. Coach Franz Stampf was an exuberant and confident character who told him, 'If you have a chance and don't take it because of conditions you may never forgive yourself'. Sir Roger described his pacemakers growing irritation at his 'vacillating'. Eventually as he stared up from the changing room at the flag flying from the nearby church tower he felt that the wind was reducing and announced that the attempt was on.

The four-minute mile

After such a build up the tension was high as they went to the start. To add to it all, Chris Brasher made a false start. 'He was that kind of person, and I loved him for it,' said Sir Roger. As they went through the first lap Bannister felt, 'So easy'. 'Faster, Faster,' he called to Brasher who had the good sense to ignore him as they hit the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile at 58 seconds. The pre-race target was sustained through the half mile at 1:58 before Chataway took it on and played his part hitting $\frac{3}{4}$ mile in 3:01. With 260 yards to go Bannister strode out. It was painful and he forced himself through the remaining yards down the home straight feeling that the 'tape was receding'.

Once over the line he had no idea if the attempt had been successful as he collapsed into the arms of his coach. In the pre-electronic timing days, stopwatches had to be compared and a wait ensued. The announcer was Norris McWhirter who milked the moment. 'The result of event ten the one mile.' ... pause ... 'Is won by Roger Bannister of Merton and Exeter colleges' ... pause.... 'In a time which subject to ratification is' ... pause



Sir Roger signs his autobiography 'Twin Tracks,' which was first published in 2014 and relates first-hand the story of four minute mile and Sir Roger's life and career. Courtesy of Tim Brennan.

... 'A new track, British, Commonwealth, European and World record' ... pause... 'Of three.....' The rest was lost in the noise and excitement of the crowd but the important digit was known. At long last a mile had been won in three minutes something.

Sir Roger's feeling was of team successes: 'We did it, the three of us, when and where we wanted'.

Aftermath of the Record

1954 was the infancy of television and of outside sports broadcasting. Historic footage exist of the BBC Sport Coverage from the one camera, hand held and situated on top of a van in the centre of the track. The cameraman swivelled round to follow the action. They were there at all only because Norris McWhirter had tipped the BBC off that, 'I think you should be there,' whereas Sir Roger had not wanted to make a promise he might not be able to keep. After the race, Bannister headed back to London to appear on Sports View hosted by Peter Dimmock. This was the first regular BBC sports program and had begun less than a month before.

Sir Roger's 3:59.4 world record lasted 46 days as on June 21st 1954 in Turku, Finland, John Landy hit 3:58.0. 'Après moi, le déluge,' said Sir Roger, meaning that once the 'impossible' barrier was broken many

would follow.

Landy's record set the scene for a historic confrontation at the Commonwealth Games in Vancouver with the two milers set to go head to head over the classic distance. Sir Roger felt the strain of the world's interest in the build-up but had his strategy clear. 'Landy was stronger than me and I had to have him take the pace, knowing I had the stronger finish'. In the final, Landy was 10 yards up at the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile point, a gap that Bannister slowly closed coming up to his shoulder on the last bend. The crowd noise was immense disguising the noise of feet on the cinder track, Landy looked over his left shoulder in the hope of seeing Bannister dropped. At that point Sir Roger, 'seized the advantage,' passing on the outside to take the race and title.

Later Years

Sir Roger continued to run for pleasure enjoying runs with his children as well as orienteering; 'the thinking man's sport'. He expressed his love of cross country runs as the 'best basis for training'.

Sir Roger became involved with the Sports Council, first as an advisor and then as the first chairman of a properly independent body. He noted the expansion of recreational sport as an activity, with

this first growth being seen in the USA, as a blue collar workforce no longer laboured and had time and energy for sport. This was a trend also observed by his friend Chris Brasher who went on to found the London Marathon having seen the success of the New York event. However he recognised that running was not for everyone and one of his achievements was to expand the number of Sports Centres in the country. He followed a strategy of encouraging a new sports centre in every alternate town, relying on neighbourly jealousy to fill the gaps.

How should we compare Sir Roger's historic achievement on a cinder track against the performance of today on synthetic tracks?

Sir Roger's running career finished before the advent of synthetic tracks so he turned to the advice of fellow mile world record holders Coe, Ovett and Cram whose running careers spanned the two eras. Their advice was a four second difference. This led to the question as to whether a finite limit to the record would be reached. Sir Roger noted that Hicham El Guerrouj's 3:43.13 record had now lasted sixteen years. He concluded that, 'the margins to lower the record are less than sixty years ago, but that someone will still do it'.

Sir Roger's career in medicine specialised in Neurology leading to the question as to whether understanding and influencing neurology could make someone run faster?

Sir Roger felt it was the other way round, that a trained body would adjust its neurology.

Interest in the great achievement has not diminished. Last year the spikes Sir Roger wore for the record fetched £266,500 at auction. Some of the proceeds going to the Autonomic Charitable Trust, as it, "encourages the area of neurological research to which I have devoted most of my life".

The evening concluded with Sir Roger spending a considerable time signing his book and chatting with just about every member of the audience. One had to admire and be inspired by the energy and passion still evident in the man responsible for an iconic moment in our sport.

STEVE GREEN LOOKS BACK AT THE CAREER OF ONE OF BRITAIN'S MOST VERSATILE AND CONSISTENT RACE RUNNERS IN HELEN CLITHEROE:

Paris : the 6th of March 2011 and the European Indoor Championship 3000m final was unfolding. British athletics fans could be forgiven for having a double take as they witnessed the raven headed Lancastrian, Helen Clitheroe, heading the field with four laps to run. Known as a redoubtable front runner rather than a fast finisher, she would surely be overhauled in the final stages?

Former champion, Lidia Chojeka, of Poland passed the Briton at the bell, However Clitheroe's fluid style held true to prevail over Russia's Syreya by three hundredths with 8:56.66. Athletics Weekly lauded the new champion on their front cover together with the memorable headline 'True Grit.'

At the age of 37, she had become European champion, her win made even more remarkable, as it was achieved during an era later tainted by doping scandals.

Helen Clitheroe's career had begun as many a young harrier does in the cross country leagues at primary school. When she joined Preston Harriers she came under the supervision of long-time coach, Jeremy Harries, aged 11. She recalls that her best at English Schools Cross Country was a modest 57th and didn't qualify for the final at her chosen 800m event at on the track.

She was a regular at the Stretford Open meetings and racing at various BMC events seemingly by her own admission recording 4:20 every time she stepped on the track over 1500m. The breakthrough for the young Preston runner came in 1996 when she qualified for the final of the Olympic Trials whilst reducing her best to 4:16.

Success followed in 1998 with selection for World short course 4k cross; the first of eight consecutive appearances at that event. At the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala



Helen hits the roads.

Lumpur, she finished ninth in the final. Clitheroe recalls of that experience:

"Everything around the games I loved, the village, the stadium and wearing the England vest, it just made me want more of the same."

More of the same came at the turn of the millennium, where Helen donned the

British vest again at the world cross. A win in the AAA champs and European Cup 1500m followed, plus selection for the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. She made the semi-final stage, which was an encouraging result. However Clitheroe learnt from the Olympic experience, pointing out that, "Hayley (Tullett) had a winning mind-set;

she was convinced she would make the final. It was here that I learnt how you had to approach these events in order to be successful."

In 2001, the Preston starlet finished 11th in the World Championships 1500m in Edmonton, where she admits she struggled slightly with the conditions.

2002 saw the Commonwealth Games arrive in Manchester and this would be a rare opportunity to win a medal in front of an expectant local crowd. A 4:01.10 metric mile clocking leading up to the Games, (still her best return) made her the fastest in the field going into the final. However she would have Kelly Holmes plus Tullett to contend with.

A passionate crowd of 40,000 rocked the City of Manchester Stadium, as three Brits were in contention with two laps to go. The young Lancastrian took on the challenge with characteristic bravado; taking the race on from early leader Kenyan Mugo, with over 600m to run, and only being passed by Holmes and then Tullett in the final stages of the race. "I don't remember that much about that final," she recalls. "Apart from Kelly sprinting away in the last 200m; then Hayley passing me in the straight, I was really waiting for the line to come. I would have been devastated had I not won a medal in Manchester. It was great to have three Brits on the podium, and was a really emotional experience."

After this breakthrough, 'sub-four' and possible world recognition beckoned. However although she had some superb returns, including tenth in the World Championships in 2003, injuries hampered her ascent up the 1500m rankings.

In 2005, Helen finished fourth at the European Indoor Championships, whilst the three athletes ahead of her went on to test positive. Frustrated by her inability to make an international podium, she was, by her own admission 'persuaded' by new coach, John Nuttall, to try the steeplechase. This move was also driven by the prospect of losing UKA lottery funding unless she made the change to this discipline.

There was a slight increase in mileage to around 80-90 miles per week. This was supplemented by her staple distance sessions such as 5 x 1 mile repeats, hill sessions, and longer track sessions between 16 and 20 x 400m.

"I'd learnt a lot from Jeremy Harries and he and he took me really far from a young age it was a natural move to John Nuttall as he had also been coached by Jerry at Preston Harriers, so when he decided to take a break from coaching it worked perfectly", she says of the coaching and event change.

Although initially a poor hurdler and new to the event, she excelled in her new discipline. In 2008 she qualified for the Olympics and missed the final by the narrowest of margins. Her reward was a UK record by seven seconds with 9:29.14 – a time which is still second on the all-time list.

Her ability to reach the highest world level at her new event was hampered by a succession of setbacks such as twisting her ankle in the warm up to the 2010 Commonwealth Games trials, where she admits she shouldn't have started and eventually pulled out of the race.

Preston's 'finest' ironically ended up at the Delhi games at 1500m, finishing a credible eighth plus 4th in the steeplechase. She had still had not made an impact at international level since the heights of 2002.

In 2009 and now with Trevor Painter, she moved back towards the flat event and her preferred 1500m with an eye on moving up the distances. "Trevor helped me to get my speed back, which I had lost a little during my chase period; this was something that helped me to extend my career."

In 2010 she decided to move up the distances and she again turned to John Nuttall for assistance. A great

turning point was the London Marathon sponsored trip to Iten, Kenya, where she was able to train at altitude and have an opportunity to do two UKA sponsored camps in November and January of 2011. "I just started to feel everything click out in Kenya." She recalls, "I really enjoyed the Spartan Lifestyle, and being able to focus on training for several weeks. Some of my runs and sessions told me I was in great shape." She recalls one particular workout on the red gravel of Iten:

"I ran 20 x 400m off 90 seconds in 67/8 seconds, this was the session that really stood out, plus I was also putting in 80 to 90 miles a week, which gave me massive strength."

An early season 4:06 indoors was also an indication that the Preston Harrier was back on an upward trajectory. This was followed by an 8:39 3000m best at Birmingham, and a sparking win the Glasgow International in February. She would arrive at Paris in March, ready to run, and at the peak of her form. "John had just told me to be smart, and wait, rather than take the race out, as I usually would; he made me believe I was fast enough to win in a sprint finish. In the end I was able to hold off the challengers, it was an amazing moment for me."



Helen now serves in a team management capacity and is pictured here along European junior 1500m gold and silver medallists Bobby Clay and Amy Griffiths. Photo courtesy of Helen Clitheroe.

This win personified poetic justice and a reward for patience for an athlete cruelly denied her golden moment in previous championships. By her own admission she only stayed in the sport due to the constant encouragement, and support of her husband, Neil. "My only regret, looking back, was that my great friend Jenny Meadows, finished second (it later emerged the winner was disqualified for doping violations). Our moment to celebrate together was denied by what later transpired". (Russian second placer Syreya from the 3000m was also later found guilty of doping, and her result annulled).

At 37 Clitheroe had become Britain's first female European indoor champion over 3000m. One would have forgiven her for sprinting down the Champs Elysees, and announcing her retirement that Sunday evening, having achieved and endured so much over the last ten years!

Her appetite whetted, however, meant she had justifiable designs on the London 2012 Olympics, this time over 5000m. Another great season was to follow lowering her

10k road time to 31:45. She also returned a 5000m best of 15:06.75; coupled with yet another World Championships appearance, finishing 12th in Daegu. However after a solid year at the distance, plantar fasciitis put paid to her Olympic ambitions. She said of missing her first games since 2000, and her opportunity to again compete in front of a home crowd, "I'm very much an athletics fan, and I had tickets for most of the athletics in London 2012, so enjoyed spectating and supporting my fellow Brits. I didn't feel sad or envious of those who made the team, as has I've had so many opportunities, every one of which I am grateful for; and have never taken putting on the national vest for granted".

Despite this setback Clitheroe had one more championship to target, the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. An early season road 10k (32:44) was an indicator of good distance shape. She fittingly qualified for Glasgow in the shadow of the Manchester 2002 stadium, returning 15:24.40 for 5k, in winning the BMC at Sportcity. Whilst was an under par 11th in

Glasgow but this was very much for the Preston Harrier a personal battle to see if she could make the rarefied heights of a major champs yet again.

She has no intention of stopping running, and still is a force on the roads with some impressive performances over the 10k distance. Although Helen candidly admits her international ambitions are more or less over. She also is giving back to the sport with a blossoming distance group at her local Preston track who are now the focus of her attentions.

The story of Helen Clitheroe's international career is one of determination, overcoming adversity, to maximise her gift for running. It also speaks of an athlete who was prepared to take a risk in taking up the steeplechase, racing road and country, and moving up distances. Thus, she produced her best at opposite ends of her career, achieving her crowning glory at an age where many others may not have considered the pain and sacrifice worthwhile.

BMC MEMBER **JAMES MILLER** RECALLS A MEMORABLE MEETING WITH **FRANK HORWILL** SEVEN YEARS AGO

In his own words, the Cheltenham County Harrier recalls that:

I had heard of Frank Horwill through via my BMC membership but the first time I met him was at a training camp in April 2009. Almost all the athletes were Horwill Harriers but there were a few of us who were not part of his usual group. I don't think I will forget meeting him!

It was a mid-afternoon when I walked into the wooden cabin reception area. One of the senior athletes, Bernadine Pritchett, welcomed me to the Easter weekend training camp on the outskirts of London. I knew I was one of the only non-Horwill Harriers in attendance but she settled my nerves and reassured me I would get on well with the group.

She showed me where most of the athletes were congregated and I tentatively took a seat amongst a busy room full of athletes. I immediately noticed Frank sat in the corner wearing a white t-shirt and blue baseball cap. He had not acknowledged my arrival so I assumed he had not seen me enter the room. He was perched forwards on his chair, quiet but intently listening to all the conversations going on around him as the minutes passed.

Some time had passed before a lull in conversations gave way to our first dialogue. "AND YOU" Frank said in a

commanding voice as he pointed in my direction "I DON'T THINK WE'VE MET, WHO MAY YOU BE? I sat up straight and gave him my name. I told him I was from Cheltenham but I was looking forward to the opportunity to train with his group for the Easter weekend. "AND WHAT EVENT DO YOU DO?" "800m" I replied. "AND WHAT TIME DO YOU RUN FOR THAT?" "1.53" I said, looking around the room wondering if that was an acceptable time in present company or whether I was out of my depth. "THAT'S A GOOD TIME. AND WHAT DO YOU RUN FOR THE 400 AND THE 1500?" he quickly enquired. "51.1 AND 4mins02... but I don't run those as often", hesitating as I spoke in knowing those times were not as good.

Frank looked a little concerned: he paused for a few moments, before reflecting without fear "YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO RUN 3 MINUTES AND 45!" He spoke very deliberately as he explained how his '4 second rule' related to my 400m speed. I felt a little embarrassed but it did make sense.

Despite being surrounded by 30 other athletes, he made time to speak to me several other times over the weekend and made me feel part of the group. One of his 'comrades' as he would call me and everyone else present! A brief encounter but a memorable one!

And if you wondered, I still have not ran



Frank Horwill. MBE. BMC Founder.

anywhere close to 3.45 in the subsequent six years but the joy is in the journey.

Note: Have you got a favourite recollection of Frank? If so email matt@mattlong.wanadoo.co.uk and we'll get your name in print. The BMC is committed to honouring the legend and the legacy of our founder. Without your tales, we cannot keep the memory of this man alive for a new generation in our club.

BMC NEWS PAST

In this brand new feature in the RETRO section of our magazine, we take a look back in time at some of the news which hit the BMC headlines in previous magazines, 10, 20, 30, 40 and up to 50 years ago!

Spring 2006:

Ironically both Lisa Dobriskey and Helen Clitheroe, who are featured elsewhere in these very pages, were two of our front cover stars exactly a decade ago, which adds credence to the theory that athletics, like life, always comes full circle! The stand out feature appears to have been that on Peter Elliott, who of course achieved the lofty heights of an Olympic silver medal in Seoul in 1988, followed by a Commonwealth gold two years later in Auckland, both over 1500m. Mel Watman's piece affectionately recalled how at the peak of his formidable powers, "Fans of the fictitious athletics hero Alf Tupper were regarding Elliott as the new 'tough of the track'".



Spring 1996:

The cover promised to entice our readership with the prospect of a mouth-watering interview with Loughborough University based guru, George Gandy. The piece did not disappoint with a rigorous unpicking of the philosophy which had influenced the likes of some very famous alumni, such as Seb Coe, Dave Moorcroft, Wendy Sly and Christina Boxer, ensuing. Elsewhere there was a thought provoking piece by the late, great Harry Wilson, coach of course to Steve Ovett, whose 'Lest We Forget' implored our membership to not to forget the original aims of the BMC in terms of restoring our nation to greatness in middle distance terms, on the global stage.



Spring 1986:

An image of the aforementioned Coe, wired up for physiological testing at the Loughborough University laboratory, which will

have been massively enhanced through scientific progress and considerable investment over the last three decades, would adorn the front cover of this issue. Later that year in the summer of Stuttgart, Seb would go on to win his last major international title in bagging the European 800m gold ahead of fellow British rivals Tom McKean and Steve Cram. Elsewhere, in introducing a fascinating piece by Dr Craig Sharp of the Human Motor Performance Laboratory at the University of Birmingham, then editor Peter Coe demanded of our readership that, "Today's standards of performance leave no room for the old casual approach. No small stone should be left unturned".



Spring 1976:

The pre-Montreal Olympic excitement leaps of these pages, with there being a meaty profile of Dave Moorcroft, who six years later would experience his finest hour in breaking the world 5000m record. Having dreamed the Olympian ideal of 'Citius, Altius and Fortius', treasurer Ray Williams brought our readership back down to earth with a proverbial 'bump' with the strongly worded message "HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBS? IF NOT, DO SO NOW" - mind you in was only £1.50 back in those days!



Spring 1966:

The front cover simply oozed the Corinthian spirit of "Forward and United", together with a promise of "How to achieve sub 4 min miles". Elsewhere, there was coverage of the views of the well-respected coach and administrator, Tony Ward, who had asserted in his recent book, 'Modern Distance Training', that "Perhaps the greatest problem in interval training concerns the rest period or the interval jog between the fast runs". The late, great Tony, who passed in 2010 at the age of 79, would no doubt be tickled that the debate which he framed exactly 50 years ago is still no nearer to definitive resolution half a century since he put pen to paper!



THE "CINDER-ELLA" MEN!:

Editor's note: Those of you who now compete in our races may never have seen a cinder track in your life. Indeed a surface is composed of cinders is ordinarily associated with the historical tradition of horse racing – but it's got a long history in our sport as David Cocksedge will tell you below.

Way back in the nineteenth century, grass, dirt and some cinder tracks, which believe it or not consisted of burned wood or coal, were the norm. Indeed it wasn't until the development of synthetically based tracks in the late 1960s, that the end of 'cinder age' was signalled with the 1964 Olympics being the proverbial swansong for the long serving surface. Four years later at the 1968 Mexico Olympics, competition was held on a synthetic track which would begin to

resemble the one which you lace your spikes up on in 2016.

Indeed, the achievement of the great Sir Roger Bannister in recording the first ever sub four minute mile (featured on pages 5-7 of this magazine) has led to many a heated debate about just how fast his cinder based achievement, run in 1954, would have been had it been orchestrated on a synthetic surface. Many believe it would have been considerably faster than 3:59.4. This being said all athletes are a product of the era which spawns them and its worth remembering that some very notable performances were achieved on a surface which is now largely bankrupt, certainly in this country if not globally.



Former mile world record holder Derek Ibbotson (left) was no stranger to cinder tracks.

BRITAIN'S BEST MILE MARKS ON CINDER TRACKS

COMPILED BY **DAVID COCKSEGE**

Current 1500m men have only ever raced on all-weather surfaces, and if they are even aware of cinder tracks, it's only as a footnote in sports history. Here is my list of Britain's best **Mile** marks run on cinder tracks, led by Alan Simpson's UK record of 3:55.68 (ratified as 3:55.7) at London's famous White City stadium over 50 years ago. Note that the 3:57.2 by Derek Ibbotson at the same venue in 1957 was a world record, beating Aussie John Landy's time of 3:57.9 at Turku, Finland, in 1954.

When 17-year-old Steve Ovett ran 4 minutes flat at Motspur Park in 1973 it was his first ever race at the Imperial distance. The event was the BMC City Mile for the Chubb Trophy, which was won by Bristol's Nick Rose in 3:58.4, thought to be the last-ever sub four minute mile by a British athlete on a cinder track.

Bruce Tulloh's 3:59.3 in 1962 is reckoned to be the fastest mile run on a grass track by a British athlete. This was the 352 yards (5 laps to a mile) track at Wanganui, New Zealand, where Peter Snell set his first of two world mile records at 3:54.4.

The list:

3:55.68	Alan Simpson	White City	30 Aug 1965
3:56.8	Ian McCafferty	Reading	11 Jun 1969
3:57.2	Derek Ibbotson	White City	19 Jul 1957
3:57.3	Ian Stewart	Reading	11 Jun 1969
3:57.5	Mike Wiggs	Dublin, IRE	5 Jul 1965
3:57.68	John Whetton	White City	3 Jul 1965
3:57.74	Andy Green	White City	3 Jul 1965
3:58.0	John Kirkbride*	Motspur Park	23 Jul 1969
3:58.01	Stan Taylor	White City	18 Aug 1962
3:58.4	Nick Rose*	Motspur Park	25 Jul 1973
3:58.5	Jim Douglas*	Motspur Park	23 Jul 1969
3:58.6	John Boulter	Motspur Park	24 Jul 1968
3:58.7	Allan Rushmer	Northampton	26 Aug 1967
3:58.7	Peter Stewart*	Reading	11 Jun 1969
3:58.8	Roger Bannister	Vancouver, CAN	7 Aug 1954
3:58.9	Brian Hewson	White City	3 Sep 1958
3:58.96	Tony Harris	White City	3 Jul 1965
3:59.2	Derek Graham	White City	20 Aug 1966
3:59.2	Walter Wilkinson*	Stretford	28 May 1968
3:59.24	Mike Berisford	White City	18 Aug 1962
3:59.3	Ken Wood	White City	19 Jul 1957
3:59.4	Bill McKim	Motspur Park	22 Jul 1964
3:59.4	Roy Young	Motspur Park	14 Jul 1971
3:59.80	Maurice Benn	White City	3 Jun 1968

3:59.8	Chris Chataway	White City	28 May 1955
3:59.8	Rayfel Roseman	Motspur Park	23 Jul 1969
3:59.9	Gordon Pirie	Dublin, IRE	23 Sep 1960
4:00.0	Mike Blagrove	White City	3 Sep 1958
4:00.0	Steve Ovett*	Motspur Park	25 Jul 1973
4:00.1	Brian Hall	Blackburn	6 Jun 1962
4:00.4	Phil Banning*	Motspur Park	25 Jul 1973
4:00.5	Bill Cornell	Eugene, USA	16 Jun 1962
4:00.5	John McGrow	Brighton	21 Aug 1966
4:00.5	Chris Stewart	Motspur Park	14 Jul 1971
4:00.6	John Cadman	Motspur Park	25 Jul 1973
4:00.7	Peter Keeling	White City	3 Aug 1964
4:00.9	Chris Barber	Motspur Park	24 Jul 1974
4:01.0	Mick Gowan	Motspur Park	21 Jul 1965
4:01.0	Andy Carter*	Motspur Park	8 Jul 1970
4:01.1	Ken Ballantyne	Motspur Park	21 Jul 1965
4:01.3	Derek Haith	White City	29 May 1961
4:01.3	Alan Mottershead*	Motspur Park	15 Jul 1981
4:01.5	Neil Duggan	Motspur Park	22 Jul 1964
4:01.5	Dick Callan*	Motspur Park	15 Jul 1981
4:01.5	Jack Buckner*	Motspur Park	30 Jun 1982
4:01.6	Mike Beevor	Motspur Park	23 Jul 1969
4:01.6	Steve Flint*	Motspur Park	30 Jun 1982
4:01.7	Clive Thomas*	Motspur Park	27 Jul 1974
4:01.8	Laurie Reed	Motspur Park	25 Jun 1960
4:01.8	Craig Douglas	Motspur Park	8 Jul 1970

Grass (5 laps to a mile/352 yards track)

3:59.3	Bruce Tulloh	Wanganui, NZL	27 Jan 1962
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Notes:

* This athlete ran faster on an all-weather surface

Editor adds: Who knows in 25 years time when most of you have perhaps long since hung up your spikes and may be looking to feature in this nostalgic RETRO section of our magazine, what surfaces the athletes of the year 2041 will be competing on. The moral of the story is clear- whatever the track you run on don't make excuses and believe you can run a fast time as some of the above men did decades before you!

AARON THOMAS WAS A POPULAR WINNER OF THE BMC COACH OF THE YEAR OF THE AWARD AND **MATT LONG** INTERVIEWED HIM AT OUR AWARDS CEREMONY IN MARCH:

When one wins one of the most coveted BMC awards which are up for grabs annually, I guess one is entitled to a sense of disbelief. So when he got the phone call, our 2015 Coach of the Year, Aaron Thomas, found himself, "Just in total shock". He pauses and one can still sense it sinking in, before he genuinely adds, "It was the last thing I expected".

Leeds Beckett University based Thomas, clearly has a deep and long held passion for the British Milers' Club. With reference to the work of two legends of our club (the latter of whom is sadly no longer with us), he is categorical about how past versions of this very publication which you have your hands on right now, have shaped his own philosophy of coaching. He confides in me that, "When I first started coaching, my first port of call for coach education was this very publication- BMC News magazine. I used to make a point of attending what used to be called the BMC Conferences a few years ago and vividly recall the lectures of the likes of Norman Poole and Dave Sunderland". As well as coach education, Thomas is keen to spell out in practical terms just what the BMC can offer the athletes amongst you, stating that, "The BMC has a phenomenal reputation for putting on races where athletes can run fast times".

I am keen to turn the clock back a decade or two and ask about his own athletic background and at this point he appears typically modest, to the point of shyness. A former sprinter, he tells me, "I was a 200m and 400m runner and did a bit of hurdles too. None of it was too well I hasten to add!" The man who competed originally for Buxton AC before moving on to Stockport Harriers is clearly far more at home in talking about his fantastic contribution as a coach

in our sport. So how did he come to get involved? He points to the involvement of his now wife, Charlene Thomas, who famously bagged a 1500m victory at the European Team championships in Stockholm back in 2011. "Charlene was being coached by Wilf Paish at the time", he explains. "I had got a sports science degree and had done a masters. I started off by simply doing some S and C work with Charlene and I guess I gradually took on more and more of the coaching as Wilf got older. It was 2007 that was the first year I coached Charlene full time." Charlene now sports a cracking 1500 PB of 4m03.74s, set at our very own Watford BMC Gold Standard races back in September 2013. With reference to the man who spent most of his career at what was then Leeds Carnegie college and who guided the likes of Tessa Sanderson and Peter Elliott to Olympics gold and silver in 1984 and 1988 respectively, Thomas tells me that, "Wilf Paish was my biggest influence in terms of early support and guidance, especially in relation to 800m running".

His sports science background is betrayed by his comment that, "I have also been heavily influenced by the work of Veronique Billat (one of the world's most cited exercise physiologists) in terms of V02 max and aerobic conditioning". He then eulogises about our late founder Frank Horwill and Peter Coe, in stressing that, "Their work on multi-paced theory was of massive value and I tried to blend this with what Wilf had engendered in me in terms of his approach to anaerobic work". It's clear also that whilst a theorist, Thomas has learned much from the process of empirical observation of coaching practice. He recalls that, "In terms of practice I also observed a lot at Stockport



Aaron with the coveted BMC Coach of the Year Trophy.

Harriers through watching the likes of Steve Vernon and Dave Turnbull". Vernon is of course a winner of a staggering 8 national cross country medals of varying colour, whereas Turnbull has a reputation as a prolific coach as well as an England Athletics area coach mentor.

I then press him as to how he marries his love of theory with his practice as a 'hands on' coach. He acknowledges that, "As a sports scientist I try and bring an evidence based approach to the sport but it's not healthy to have a philosophy which is set in stone. You have to look at the athlete and what they need in terms of evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses".

His diverse group based at Leeds Beckett, contains athletes of varying abilities from a plethora of different clubs, including Birchfield Harriers, Wakefield, Scunthorpe and City of York. He is keen to make it clear that, "There are a variety of people in what really is a diverse group. Some are elite athletes and others are recreational runners. Everyone takes it seriously and is expected to train hard and I like to think I give them all equal attention and input on the key sessions where everyone attends". He manages to balance his coaching with a demanding day job as a Senior Learning Officer in biomechanics at Leeds Beckett, which involves a technical role which combines supporting both teaching and research. "I've been doing it for about 8-10 years, some of it being consultancy based", he explains with animation. His work has an application well beyond track and field



Strength and Conditioning work at Leeds Beckett University.



Team Thomas clearly on track as Aaron looks on (right). All images in this piece are courtesy of Charlene Thomas.

athletics and he discloses that, "I've recently been doing some work which has an application on changing direction in football but hopefully next summer will be working on a running kinematics related project".

It's clear he is passionate about the institution which employs him. "Leeds Beckett has got everything an endurance athlete could wish to have", he states. With typical humility he is keen to credit the contribution of others who make an invaluable contribution to our sport in the North West. He reminds me that, "There are a range of good coaches who operate in the area- Andy Henderson, Andy Drake, Malcolm Brown and Mike Baxter- to name but a few". He is a busy man and like the aforementioned Dave Turnbull, who he credits with his development, Thomas too has served as an area coach mentor for England Athletics. The mentoring hat is clearly one he has worn with pride, as he enthuses that, "I like working with coaches who are keen to improve".

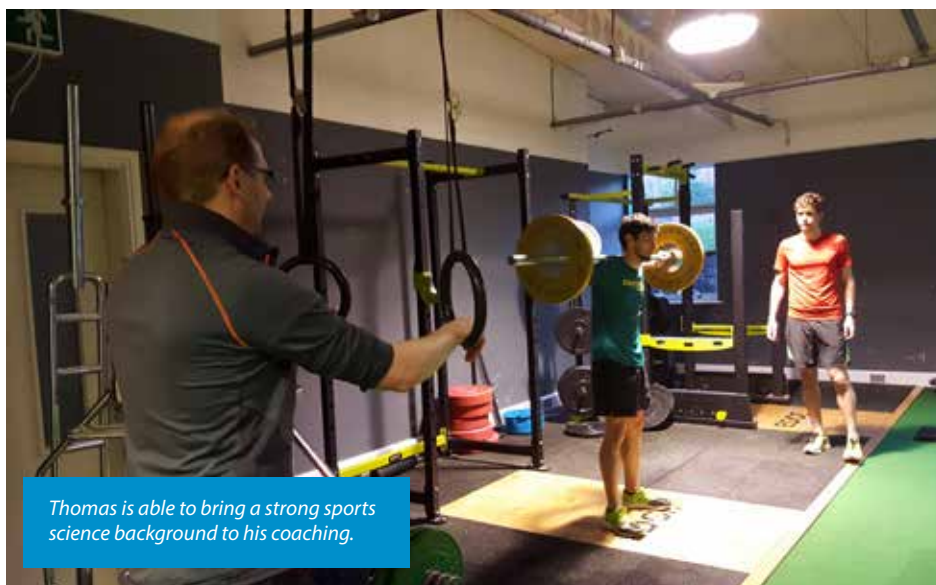
Our conversation then turns to his perceptions of the state of British middle distance running more generically. Clearly an optimist he emphasises that, "Across the board, you have to remember that there are not many nations who are as good as we are in Britain". He clearly believes that success breeds a virtuous circle of more success. He continues that, "The women have undoubtedly benefitted from having role models like Kelly Holmes and Paula Radcliffe. Certainly the women's side is strong and don't forget we have some good

young men coming through the ranks too". He thinks we have every reason for future optimism, not just because of those being recruited into our sport. Significantly he believes that much good work has been undertaken in terms of retaining those we have recruited. Perceptively he points out that, "Retention rates in our sport seem to be improving, meaning that the depth of 800m and 1500m running is good and we are filling teams now".

My final question revolves around the role which the BMC should play in the bright future, a picture of which he has just painted. He is clearly a fan of our club, believing it can help bridge the gap between high performance athletes and those seeking representation of

their country in major international championships. His parting shot is to encourage us to remember that, "Some of our elite athletes may miss out on Diamond league races and have to go round Europe to chase qualifying times. I want to see qualifying times being recorded on British soil and this may mean trying to get a few more overseas athletes running in BMC Grand Prix races, which would surely give our own athletes even more of an opportunity to attain those qualifying times".

As he raises his well-earned trophy and once again takes his rightful plaudits from an engrossed audience of some of the most well respected names in our sport, it's clear that Aaron Thomas is a worthy winner of this most prestigious of our awards.



Thomas is able to bring a strong sports science background to his coaching.

ALEX AND ROSEMARY STANTON WERE THE RECIPIENTS OF OUR LIFETIME SERVICES TO COACHING AWARD AND **PAUL GOODING** JOINED THEM TO CELEBRATE THEIR ACHIEVEMENT:

Typically many of those that achieve success in the coaching world have a strong background in the sport which develops into a coaching role - perhaps at the time that they feel that their days as a competitive athlete may be numbered. This is very far from the case with Alex and Rosemary Stanton, as I found when I opened our conversation by asking how they first got started as coaches.

Rosemary opens her heart out to me and said, "Our original involvement in coaching days back to 1978, I think. Alex went to the local club (Bedford & County) with our daughter, who had been sent there by her school PE teacher. He went in out of parental curiosity to see what was happening. He'd hardly got through the door when he was asked to help out! Someone approached him and said 'We're in a bit of a state tonight. Could you run along at the back?' And that's really where it all started". She continued that, "Only a matter of a few weeks later the lead coach of this group wanted to specialise more in sprints coaching, and Alex was asked to take on his middle distance group - a group of under 13 and under 15 girls. As the group was all girls, he asked me to join him. Neither of us had any athletic background whatsoever!", she says with a laugh.

At the time Alex was working shifts at Vauxhall, which sometimes conflicted with training times. Consequently, it was very much a joint venture from the outset, with Rosemary thus able to cover those times when Alex's work commitments prohibited his attendance. Indeed this 'joint' element has always been significant - much later when Paula Radcliffe, Liz Yelling (nee Talbot) and others were training and racing abroad there were times when it was desirable for Alex to travel with them, and Rosemary was able to maintain continuity in the group back at home. The story continues with Alex in that, "We really did have no coaching or athletic background at all. We looked at all the books, plus we went on courses and attended lectures. Most of the books were targeted at senior athletes - we just applied what we regarded as common sense to 'dilute' the sessions to an appropriate level for the under 13 girls. Not long after we started, Harry Wilson made two visits to the club. He was inspirational. He encouraged us to take our own view of what we read, and discard what we felt didn't apply. He also encouraged us to try new ideas. He said to us all 'If anyone has any new ideas, no matter how absurd they may seem, give them a try - you might make the next big coaching discovery or

breakthrough!"

Within two years, a team drawn entirely from Alex and Rosemary's group finished 2nd under 13 Girls team at the National Cross Country Championships. Despite their frequent references to how lucky they'd been, it is very clear that there is very much more to their success than mere good fortune! Rosemary adds "The under 13's and U15's grew with us. Once they started to move into the U17 age group, the dynamic of the group inevitably changed". The way they adapted to this was to encourage the older girls to look after the younger ones - almost a 'family' ethos. "We were criticised for this by many alleged experts". Indeed they were refused the British Senior Coaches badge after a few years coaching, as 'they had no seniors' (this was a gap that was later resoundingly plugged!) and treated it 'too much like a family'.

Further success followed very quickly, according to Alex, "Very soon our U13 and U15 teams both won gold at the National. Paula Radcliffe was soon part of two national medalling teams. We were fortunate in that Paula and Liz Yelling were one academic year part. This allowed more continuity in building teams around one or the other of them every year, covering the top year of one age group and the bottom year of the next." Over the next few years their teams medalled regularly - this was absolutely not about just 2 or 3 stars. Clearly the environment they created and the training regime suited a broad range of athletes.

Coaching Ethos

Alex and Rosemary are passionate about the need to keep the sense of fun in their training groups - especially so for the younger age groups. Rosemary stresses that, "We have always sought to keep the 'family' feel, and a group ethos. From early on the girls were seeing each other socially a lot aside from their training - they'd be visiting each other's houses all the time, and going to parties together. The cohort that included Paula and Liz are still very much in touch with each other, and still get together as a group annually. Other generations of training groups have also retained strong and enduring links". During our discussions they both made repeated references to the desire to make their charges love the sport; "We always told them to relax and enjoy their running", Rosemary adds. The bonds formed by this approach clearly endured, with Alex recalling that, "I remember when Paula was running a 3k at the Bislett Games.

I had to keep ringing her regularly - there were no mobiles then - to update her on how some of the other girls were doing at the English Schools. I'd rush off to a phone box with a stock of 10p's and ring her hotel. So Paula's room-mate, Yvonne Murray, who was obviously nearest to the phone, had her pre-race relaxation disturbed at regular intervals so we could inform Paula that Michelle had won the 800m, and then that Liz had overturned a 40metre deficit at one stage to beat Jeina Mitchell, and so on. We were on a bit of a roll that day - Paula then went out and ran a 6 second PB!"

They offered a pertinent insight into the notion of athlete-centredness, with Alex emphasizing that, "Another thing you always need to remember is that no two athletes are the same, or react the same way to any particular training. So there's a need for constant experimentation and adjusting schedules. And a true connection between coach and athlete is absolutely vital. Our objective has always been to keep them in the sport long term, help them develop long terms friendships, and to enjoy all the healthy side-effects of sport. It's very pleasing that



Centre stage. Alex and Rosemary Stanton with Paula Radcliffe.

many of our girls have been successful in their careers and life outside athletics. If they enjoy their running and find it rewarding this often helps them to achieve in other areas of life. We just want them to explore and fulfil their potential, and realise that there are rewards for consistent hard work."

We discussed the issue of parental involvement in training and with candour they responded that, "We never coached our own daughter. We've had varying experiences over the years with parents – sometimes a parent's input can be quite destructive. Whereas in the case of Paula and many others, the balance was perfect – strong parental support without any pressure whatsoever, and no interference where it wasn't wanted! They enjoyed their daughter's successes, were always encouraging, and never expressed disappointment. Therefore we were able to develop the likes of Paula and Liz gradually. Over the years, more of the parents have become more impatient, wanting instant success."

Essentially Alex and Rosemary have always developed their own athletes from a young age. Alex points out that, "Most of our girls have generally just come from local schools. As the group became more established and successful, from time to time a few perhaps

more established athletes from further afield have asked to join. They've always been welcome provided this in no way conflicted with previous or existing coaching arrangements." But the overwhelming majority of the athletes they have coached over the years have come to them as young athletic novices. It was clear from what they said that they have striven to maintain a personalised approach, and there is much evidence of attention to detail in this regard. When any of the girls go away to University, Alex wants to know their lecture timetables and details of other commitments, so he can help to fit the training around this.

Training specifics

"In reality we have three key sessions", Alex explained and he did detail these, but reiterated that the pace, recovery and indeed some of the content would be tailored to the needs of that particular athlete or group at any particular time. These sessions are very obviously specific towards the end target race(s) in terms of both pace and duration of intervals. They are also very clearly progressive. There is a relatively straightforward but very logical structure to the sessions and the weekly progression. Very often the interval work is done as measured

road efforts, rather than on the track, as this often proves psychologically easier.

I asked about altitude training and it's clear they were driven by their own guided discovery in this regard. "Again we experimented to see at what point the best results were achieved. This differs somewhat from athlete to athlete, but for the most part the best results came around 3 weeks after we came down from altitude". But how do they manage the demands of a diverse group yet still remain athlete-centred? Alex continues that, "We've had some fairly big groups over the years, but obviously as with most coaching groups these readily break down into sub-groups for key sessions. It's important to keep the team ethic in training. All the athletes share common goals."

It's clear that event specificity is at the heart of their ethos of coaching. The long runs are also related quite directly to the end objective. "If you want to run a marathon you need to have run for long enough to know that you needn't be scared of the distance. But Paula never ran more than 2hrs 15 as she maintained that this was unnecessary as she didn't intend to be running for much longer than that in a race!" Did they have any advice for you young up and coming BMC prospects? Alex asserts



that, "To get the best out of yourself, you have to work hard. When you're running well, there's often a very fine line between being really fit and breaking down with injury or illness".

Those who influenced their coaching philosophy

They both readily acknowledge that, "We never had the remotest idea of where coaching might lead us and no real ambitions at any stage, other than to do the best by the girls we coached, and help them to enjoy the sport fully".

The aforementioned Harry Wilson's input at those early club visits was clearly, "hugely inspirational" in their early coaching days. But despite this link they were relative strangers to the athletic and running hierarchy, but they quickly found themselves mixing with what some might regard as the 'athletic aristocracy'. Rosemary recalls that, "Quite early on, we had a phone call from Bryan Smith, asking Alex to participate in a 'think tank' over 5 weekends. One of his fellow panellists was Peter Coe! This was a great opportunity to pick the brains of some really top level coaches."

The fact that they had no previous background in coaching gave them a very objective view of the various coaching methods they observed, and their approach to developing their own schedules was to keep things relevant to the end goal and based on a straight forward logic. This has then been constantly refined over the years, "We have always taken any chance to talk informally to other coaches, and get new ideas. The bar at Fort Romeu has been a particularly fruitful source of this sort of research over the years!", they add with a giggle and a raise of the eyebrows.

Coaching Paula Radcliffe

Although they have coached a huge number of girls over the years – and many to a very high level – the name most frequently mentioned during our conversations was almost inevitably that of Paula Radcliffe. They both concur that, "We knew fairly soon we were sitting on an athletic gold mine with Paula. In the younger age groups, she was training once a day, not every day, with no weights or ancillary training, and finishing 2nd or 3rd at national level. Actually with hindsight it was good that she wasn't winning at this stage – it reduced any pressure."

I wondered when they first realised her marathon potential. Alex picks up the story: "As a junior she had a bad race up north once – we couldn't explain why. Bud Baldaro helped arrange for some sports science

testing at Brighton University, which was undertaken by Andy Jones. He was clearly impressed by some of the results – the VO2 reading was apparently 'off the chart' for someone of her age. He said that he'd love to see what she could do for a marathon in a few years time!" The cause of Paula's loss of form on this occasion was identified as an iron deficiency, and was quickly resolved. The possible consequences of iron deficiency are something they're always very aware of with all their athletes.

Could they recall the time when they realised she could be a world beater? "The breakthrough race really was Boston" (World XC Junior 1992). The previous year Paula had been about 13th at the World Junior in Belgium. In the car on the way back we were working out how quick the winner had run, and what we needed to do for each km. We planned her Boston win for the whole year, and got her really familiar with running the pace that was necessary. What we forgot was that the Boston course would have a big hill in it, as so many World Cross courses are flat! But Paula just dealt with it – obviously she ran some hills anyway. We weren't going to go to Boston ourselves – we thought 'we can't afford that'. But Peter Radcliffe persuaded us that we should, and we thought 'Let's go for it', and we were very pleased we did! We were only there for a couple of days – Friday to Sunday – but it was a wonderful experience".

Paula's famed tough mental attitude was already apparent to Alex. "Three weeks before the Boston she ran the English Schools. Her team manager asked her how she was going to approach the race. Paula unhesitatingly said 'I'm going out hard'. 'Is that wise?' was the response. 'Well you tell the Chinese to run slow in 3 weeks time! I need this as a test!'", Paula had asserted.

After Boston, there was a further demonstration of the strength of the group ethic. Rosemary adds, "When we got back the girls had decorated the house with balloons and world maps and all sorts – it was absolutely amazing".

After this success the race invitations started to come thick and fast. "We particularly remember Paula being asked to do a race over in Ireland. It didn't fit our plans at all really, but Andy Norman persuaded us that she should do it 'as a favour'. It was a favour that he subsequently repaid many times over, as he was hugely supportive after that. She also always enjoyed a very warm welcome in Ireland, as they appreciated her supporting their races".

Paula's success exposed Alex and Rosemary to a completely different world, something they demonstrated with a wealth

of anecdotes! Alex stressed that, "We've been really lucky. I'm just an ordinary bloke who worked at Vauxhalls". I asked about the marathon records, and in particular London 2003. "She was so focussed, and so strong and determined. When we saw her at The Tower she still looked so strong, and we knew then that the time might be a bit special", Rosemary recalls.

Their view of the BMC

They want you to know that, "This award really is a great honour. Look at all the names that have not only won it before, but have been nominated. The other nominees have done so much for the sport, it's an honour to be even mentioned alongside them". Kind and modest sentiments indeed. But how has the BMC helped their own athletes in more pragmatic terms? "Many of our girls have used BMC over the years. Not just the Grand Prix meetings, but the Gold Standards – particularly at Watford. There's nothing better than a Wednesday night at Watford with the Open Meeting and BMC races – that's what it's all about. It's a really good night out!"

There is one word of caution from Alex, which indicates quite rightly that BMC races should be used as one part of a healthy and varied diet of racing: "Sometimes we need to be wary of the pacemaking upsetting the true dynamic of a race, or only really helping a few athletes and being counterproductive for the others. But obviously there's a need and a demand amongst the athletes for fast, paced races, and the BMC has done an enormous amount to help develop middle distance running over the years".

Looking to the future

They draw our fascinating conversation to a close on a note which offers a wake-up call for those who love our sport, telling that, "Running nowadays is becoming more of the poor relation for youngsters compared to other sports – it seems to be seen as less of a main sport. Multi-talented youngsters more inclined to pursue swimming, or other sports, where before they'd have chosen running. I'm not really sure why this is, as running is still very accessible in terms of costs and logistics. But swimming in particular does give a wonderful aerobic base without the pounding of running, so it's a very good background for any athlete". Do they still get the same buzz out of coaching as they first did all those decades ago? You bet they do! "The reward for us is the same as it ever was – to see them do the best they can, and enjoying the sport".

These are certainly not just empty words, but summarise everything that Alex and Rosemary are about.

2013 HORWILL RESEARCH SCHOLARS **MATT LONG** AND **JAMIE FRENCH**, WERE HONOURED AT THE RECENT BMC AWARDS AND SYMPOSIUM. HERE THEY PRESENT THEIR FINDINGS ON THE POTENTIATION EFFECT OF HIGH INTENSITY WARM UPS IN A MIDDLE DISTANCE CONTEXT.

Framing the research. The context of British middle distance and endurance running

Back in 2013, at the European Endurance Conference and BMC Awards Dinner, held at the University of Nottingham Conference Centre, former two-time world cross country silver medallist Tim Hutchings gave an entertaining and insightful after dinner speech. He posed the following memorable rhetorical question: "Is the battle against the African domination of endurance running one which is now lost? Sadly many believe so."

Well respected tv commentator Tim gave the audience food for thought and encouraged these authors to think about guarding against undue pessimism. We feel that to give primacy to the *physiological* superiority of African endurance runners overlooks the *subcultural* factors which made Britain great back in the 1980s back in the golden era of Ovet, Coe and Cram, for surely it was no coincidence that all came along in the same era? Surely subcultural processes mean that success breeds success.

Now we are not suffering from the delusion that the effecting of high intensity warm ups can change the fate of British middle distance running overnight so no, touching your toes that bit quicker won't immediately herald a new golden age for us on the track! This being said if we think about short, medium and long term interventions which can effect cultural change in British middle distance running, potentially changing the way in which one warms up is a short term intervention which can be effected quickly. So by focusing on short term interventions, what we are proposing is not dissimilar to Dave Brailsford, who with Team Sky, used the notion of 'marginal gains' to articulate in the cycling world, how making even what on paper appear to be the tiniest of changes, like making sure the dust in the bike shed is swept regularly to keep the wheels clean, can when added up produce a cumulative effect which breeds a culture of success and world class performance.

The principles of warming up

The model offered by Jeffreys (2007) below is presently being used to guide much of the coach education literature and practice in the contemporary UK:

- **Raise:** Temperature/ heart rate/ joint fluid viscosity.
- **Activate:** Key muscle groups.
- **Mobilize:** Key joints and ranges of motion.



Double Olympic champion Hicham El Guerrouj utilised high intensity warm ups.

- **Potential:** Increasing intensity of event specific activity. Our study, whilst incorporating all four of the above principles, pays particular attention to the potentiation effect which any mode of warm up can offer.

Building on existing research

As we have previously acknowledged (Long and French, 2013) in Volume 10, Issue 3 (p.26-27) of this very journal, our study owes an intellectual debt to the previous experimental research of Ingram et al. (2013), where a predominantly English Institute of Sport led team of researchers, including Dr. Barry Fudge (who works of course with Mo Farah) conducted experimental research with 11 highly trained adult (national and international level) athletes. These athletes ran two

800m time trials during the 'competition' phase of the periodisation cycle. One pre-trial condition involved using what could be described as a conventional warm up including steady state jogging, mobility drills and strides, whereas the other condition included all these elements but added the additional component of a 200m 'long stride' effected at intended 800m time trial pace. Between completion of the warm up and commencement of the time trial, an appropriate recovery period was set to be aligned with regular call room time, which in this study was set at 20 minutes. Interestingly, the results pointed to an enhanced performance over 800m for 7 out of 11 (64%) athletes with there being an average improvement of 1.2s when using high intensity warm up pre time trial.

What is V02 Kinetics?

So how can we explain the above results which underpinned the framing of our own study? The answer lies in an understanding of V02 kinetics. In simple terms this is how quickly you can get the right amount of oxygen to where it needs to be at the start of exercise. This is of particular relevance to the 800m and 1500m because the quicker you can increase your oxygen uptake the less you need to tap into your anaerobic or lactate energy pool, thus saving it until much later in your race.

The physiology of high intensity warm ups

When you next line up in a BMC race, it's worth remembering that energy turn over

in muscles and metabolic rates increases up to 10 fold within the first few seconds of the gun being fired. The problem, however, is that the speed at which the O₂ consumed is effectively used as a fuel in the production of ATP can take up to 2 – 3 mins to reach a constant steady state. For the duration of this period, there is a deficit of oxygen and the body produces energy anaerobically which is inefficient and has the potential detrimental effect of interfering with the energy production later in the same race.

Who has used a high intensity warm up?

It has been established that Hicham El Guerrouj, who famously took 1500m and 5000m gold at the Athens Olympics back in

2004 was an advocate of the use of a high intensity warm up 'long stride' reportedly between 200m-300m in duration. So if it's good enough for the current world record holder at both 1500m (3:26.00s) and the mile (3:43.13s), we thought it was worthy of taking research into this field a little further.

Our research strategy

We went for a process of data triangulation through a three pronged methodology, involving (1) an experimental study; (2) a focus on athlete psychology and (3) enhanced coaching ethnography. In particular it was felt that (2) and (3) offered us a chance to move beyond the parameters set by the Ingram et al. (2013) study.

*Well respected coach Alan Thomas is an advocate of high intensity warm ups and is pictured with his group at Bath University.
Photo courtesy of Alan Thomas.*



Phase 1: Experimental research.

An element of replication of Ingram et al. (2013) was present as we utilised randomised control trials with a cross-over involving one condition of 'intervention' and one 'control' group. We aimed for an adult sample over the age of 18 years in order that they could provide informed consent, with ethical approval being gained through Leeds Beckett University. In helping us to generate the sample, our 'gatekeeping' coaches were both Andy Henderson and Aaron Thomas (with thanks also to Andi Drake).

All testing took place on the 400m running track at Leeds Beckett University,



between April and July 2014. As with the Ingram et al. (2013) study, the two warm up conditions involved a self-paced jog, mobility drills and short strides of 50-60m in duration but critically the high intensity warm up condition involved an extended stride of 200m run at intended 800m time trial pace.

The variables of (1) Blood Lactate, (2) Race readiness and (3) Time for completion of 800m time trial at maximal effort were used as independent variables. Whilst Ingram et al. (2013) measured V02 max, we thought wanted to conduct tests within a "real" environment. We wanted to test blood lactate as some authors e.g. Anderson et al, 2014 and Zois et al, 2015, have argued that blood lactate accumulation needs to be increased as part of a warm up in order to prime the system. Lactate was collected by Matt Barlow, using the finger-tip or ear lobe prick mode of extraction for subsequent analysis in the laboratory and collected (a) Immediately prior to warm up, (b) Immediately post warm up and (c) Immediately post time trial. The recovery period between warm up and time trial, was set at 10 minutes or less. Whilst other studies have suggested that an interval of between 20 – 40 mins between completion of warm up and commencement of time trial or race, it was felt that as these time trials were to be set outdoors, the need to maintain a raised core temperature necessitated a slightly shorter recovery period and we felt that this extended time period was too long for any potentiation effect to remain without reactivation. In total 17 athletes undertook 2 time trials between April 2014 and July 2014, with each participant completing all 2 tests within 21 days in order to attempt to minimise both the effects of ambient temperature and variability of being at different points in the periodisation cycle.

Phase 2: 'Race readiness'

We felt that an attempt to incorporate athlete self-perceptions of their own psychological state was of considerable value as cognition is an inherent part of performance in our sport. To this end, an inventory was administered to all athletes post time-trial completion with short closed quantitative and open-ended qualitative questions recorded on a questionnaire.

Phase 3: Coaching ethnography

With a background in Sociology, the lead author was well aware that an exploration

of the difference between what people say they do and what they do in practice, would be of huge significance. Both telephone and electronic interviews were conducted with snowball sample high profile coaches/ coach educators, with the original target number of 12 being exceeded in terms of there being 14 participants in total. Secondly, observations of coaching practice took place at four locations where performance athletes are based- namely, Loughborough University; the University of Birmingham; Leeds Beckett University and Birchfield Harriers.

Results

In terms of the experimentation, seventeen athletes (Male n =4, Female n =13 (35% increase in sample size compared to Ingram et al. 2013) took part in the study but whilst the high intensity warm up condition produced a significant increase in blood lactate accumulation, critically there was no significant difference in the time taken for the time trials with the high intensity warm up compared to those effected with the lower intensity warm up. What we found interesting, however, was that in terms of psychology, more than half in the sample (59%) reported a preference towards a high intensity warm up following the trials, with only 18% stating that they did not prefer that mode of warming up. Significantly, the coaching ethnography raised a diverse number of illuminating perceptions and practices which were fed back into the presentation of these findings at the recent awards ceremony and symposium that we shared with England Athletics.

The impact of our research: Encouraging coaches to self-reflect

The symposium on 20th March 2016 gave the lead author the opportunity to unpick some pertinent issues with a group of some very high profile coaches and mentors in our sport. In terms of the issue of guided discovery as a mode of coaching practice, one of our original interviewees had told us that, "Some of it is trial and error and it is possible to overcook it". This feeling was endorsed by the symposium audience with the sentiment being expressed that coaches should indeed encourage their athletes to experiment through a process or trial and error but they should only change one thing at a time.

With regards to the observational findings one of our original sample had told us that, "(T)he thing to look at is the extent to which athletes mirror their pre-competition warm up with the one

in which they effect in training. There is often a difference and warm ups before training sessions tend to be less intense than the ones which athletes conduct prior to competition". The symposium attendees felt that the opportunity to practice high intensity warm ups pre-training as well as pre-competition was pivotal in moving athletes towards a greater degree of self-reliance for competition and additionally their habituation in training would be instrumental in learning race pace specificity, especially for younger and perhaps less experienced athletes.

In terms of athlete psychology, one coach we interviewed bemoaned the fact that, "The problem is persuading the athletes to do it pre-race. They are fixated on the idea that it will detract from their performance in competition". This was something which those at the symposium felt needed to be challenged and links in directly with the importance of a pre-training high intensity warm up being so important for the confidence engendered by habituation.

Finally, the perception of the challenges of the competitive arena invoking a degree of 'loss of control' for both coach and athlete was raised by the audience at the Aston Conference centre. One coach with Team GB managerial experience had told us, "The major challenge is still in the competitive arena at championship level competition. In Zurich for example at the 2014 European championships, we found the warm up track was a drive away from the main stadium, so the 1st call for warm up was 50 minutes before the race. You have to learn to adapt and to change to these kind of circumstances which are beyond your immediate control". The coaches at the symposium felt that these kind of sentiments made knowledge of race day schedule and logistics and awareness of protocol for the differences between BMC, club, regional, national and international competition, all the more pertinent.

The impact of our research: Changing coaching practices

As recently as March 31st, we received not only a very generous tribute but also some real testimony as to the power of this research to change coaching practices from a well-respected coach based at Yate and District AC. Level 3 Middle distance performance coach, Alan Thomas, was accepted onto the prestigious National Coach Development Programme in 2013 and is receiving excellent mentoring from our very own Neville Taylor. The man who was named England Athletics South

West Development Coach of the Year back in 2007 and whose own group were accorded the status of British Milers Club Development Group of the Year just two years later sent us the following:

"Hi Matt and Jamie.

I found both your presentation and Horwill research report illuminating and wish to share a change I made to the warm up undertaken by my group of athletes which may be of interest... Up until a year ago the warm up for the track session had evolved to 3 steady jog laps, followed by exercises such as alternate walking on tip toe and heels, lunges and upper body stretching interspersed with 50 metre strides along the straight and around the bends. The athletes then moved into the 'session proper' and invariably struggled to achieve the target time set for the first rep. Subsequent target rep times were met and the athletes running technique was much smoother than on the first rep.

Over the years I discussed track warm ups with a number of coaching colleagues and discovered that most had encountered the same issue as I had, a 'cranky' first rep (my athletes description) but despite tweaking their established warm ups they had been unable to solve it... The question now was how to address this?...

I decided to make the following amendments to the established track warm up:

1) Each 50 metre stride was performed at a slightly faster pace than the previous one so that the final 50 metre stride was at 90% of max speed.

2) After the final 50 metre stride and a 2 min recovery, I added a 'pre session' rep of 400 metres at an athlete's 1500 race pace. The result was that the 'cranky' first rep of the session proper has been eliminated and the athletes go into the 'session proper' more focused than before the 'pre rep' was introduced....I'm now going to experiment with the 2 x 200 metre 'pre session rep', note its effects and if successful I'll incorporate it into the athletes pre competition warm up.

Thank you both for producing such a useful and informative Horwill scholarship report"

Recommendations for Action

In light of the testimony of the above and from those who attended the symposium, we therefore challenge the coaches amongst you to:

1. Continue to use guided discovery in order to attempt to ascertain:
 - a. the optimum timing between the conducting of a high intensity warm up stride and competition.

- a. the optimum distance of high intensity warm up stride.
 - a. the optimum intensity of high intensity warm up strides.
2. Promote the psychological as well as the physiological benefits of high intensity warm ups in terms of the priming effect that they can exert mentally.
3. Utilise High Intensity Warm Ups during training in order to help build awareness of pace making and race pace specificity.
4. Remember the principle of event specificity.
5. Coaches should retain faithfulness to the golden principle of 'athlete-centredness'.

Be inspired to make that change

Back in 2012 the lead author received a guided tour of the English Institute of sport facilities at Loughborough University. With humility he was told by Dr. Barry Fudge that, "Whilst physiology has provided some big breakthroughs which have undoubtedly contributed to endurance running in our country, in many ways the coaches are the original innovators and then the sports science catches up with them. Don't forget that there's things coaches were doing a decade or so ago which produced results and which are only just being understood by the physiologists of today". If these sentiments are good enough for the British Athletics Head of Endurance, then if this doesn't make YOU believe in yourself then nothing will!

Anyone wishing for a copy of the full report sent by these authors to the BMC committee or indeed the slides used for the presentation at the recent symposium should contact matt@mattlong.wanandoo.co.uk

Note: The authors wish to acknowledge the considerable contribution of Dr Matt Barlow, a Senior Lecturer in exercise Physiology at Leeds Beckett University who assisted both in the collection of blood lactate, athlete perception and athlete time trial data. Additionally Dr Barlow assisted in helping support the writing of subsections of earlier drafts of this work. Secondly, we wish to acknowledge the massive contributions of both Andy Henderson and Aaron Thomas also of Leeds Beckett University who were an invaluable source of support in helping to recruit and organise athletes for testing in the experimental side of the research. In addition, the work of Andi Drake (Leeds Beckett University), Paul Moseley (England Athletics) and Oregon based Peter Thompson, in their capacity as independent reviewers is gratefully acknowledged.

BMC INDOOR REVIEW

NORRIE HAY, MATT LONG AND STEVE GREEN, REPORT FROM THE BOARDS OF **GLASGOW, LEE VALLEY AND SHEFFIELD**, RESPECTIVELY:

BMC / Glasgow AA Metric Miler Meeting (Inc. Scottish 3000m Championships). 3rd January 2016. Emirates Arena.

This meeting saw 3000m heats and two invitation 600m heats. The idea behind the 600's is to give athletes who are targeting indoor qualifying performances the opportunity to get a fast paced race, with the winner of the men's heat, Jamie Webb, going on to win the UK title in Sheffield.

We had a record entry for our 3000m races and we had to close entries early. This is now becoming a common occurrence, so if you are interested in competing in Glasgow this summer get your entries in early. The pick of the 3000m performances were undoubtedly both female. Firstly Jo Moultrie who ran sub 9 minutes for the very first time and inside the World Indoor qualifying. Unfortunately this wasn't ratified as it was a mixed race. However, having spoken to Jo she indicated that that performance both gave her the confidence that she could do it and also got her into the type of race where she could get the time and ultimately she produced it in the UK indoor final to secure her spot on the plane to Portland.

The other great performance came from another young Scottish female athlete, Erin Wallace, who ran the fastest time ever for a Scottish u17 woman.

We are running three meets this summer, in Glasgow, all based at Crownpoint Stadium, recently relayed with the Commonwealth Games warm up track surface. A 10k track meet on 29th April, a 3k/800 meeting on 3rd June and 1500/5000m on 29th July. We are looking to attract more athletes from England this year. Our PB percentage at our meetings has always been north of 65%, and we look forward to seeing you there.

BMC Lee Valley Open. 3rd January 2016.

Credit to Matt Fraser Moat and the team for a meeting of exclusive 800m races which saw a thrilling blanket finish in the men's 'A' 800m, with Brighton Phoenix's Spencer Thomas (1.49.52) just holding off the challenge of Dale King-Clutterbuck and Archie Davis, who recorded 1.49.72 and 1.49.74 respectively. Much to the

amusement of some, Clutterbuck would return in the 'C' race to go on to actually continue and win a very race in which he was tasked with pace making duties! In the women's 'A' race, Luton and St. Mary's prospect, Reeve Walcott-Nolan (2.06.12) put a little more daylight between herself and runner up Julia Cooke (2.07.07), than had occurred in the men's race, with Katy Ann McDonald (2.08.68) grabbing 3rd.

BMC Indoor Grand Prix. 10th January 2016. English Institute of Sport in Sheffield.

The BMC indoor meeting is now into its fifth year and is now established as the curtain raiser to the indoor season for the middle-distance fraternity. The meeting held in conjunction with England Athletics has continued to grow in popularity since its inception in 2012.

Emma Jackson continued her rehabilitation with an impressive 800m win. Jackson, who had not run over her specialist distance for over two years, before the meeting, was at the head of affairs after the first lap. The 2010 Commonwealth Games fourth placer stretched away for a 2:05.91 return, almost four seconds ahead of Alex Turner.

Jamie Webb demonstrated his growing stature to his rivals with a 25 second last 200m to win over the half mile distance, with 1:51.86, ahead of a fast finishing Dominic Walton. Webb was also prepared to assist his fellow BMC comrades by pacing the first six laps of the 3000m later on.

It was heartening to see former junior standout, Jordan Bransberg take his 800m heat in a decent 1:53.62, after a hiatus from the sport. Robbie Fitzgibbon took on the early pace and was duly rewarded with a solid 3:48.08, ahead of fellow Brighton man Archie Davis in the metric mile. He later went on to record a superb 3:43 and bits clocking whilst racing in Vienna.

Sarah McDonald edged out Julia Cooke in another club battle, this time over 1500m in the colours of the famous Birchfield Stags; her winning time a decent 4:22.01. McDonald improved throughout the season, winning in Bratislava, then taking the British Students Title in late February (4:15.82).

Elinor Kirk was a class apart in the women's 3000m leading from gun to tape to finish over 200m clear of the field, with a return of 9:15.09. Special mention to Helen Clitheroe (featured elsewhere in the RETRO section of this magazine) who was prepared to help out the small field with pacing duties.

Another athlete on the comeback trail, Nick Goolab, edged out Richard Weir in a thrilling 15 lap dual with 8:08.01.

Several other athletes including Goolab went on to represent England as a reward for winning their events, performing with distinction in the Bratislava and/or Vienna indoor meetings.

BMC regular Jamie Webb won his event in Vienna (1:48.28) as he worked towards a UK 800m champs victory in late February. Emma Jackson went under 2:05, as her rehabilitation back towards the top level continued.

The BMC is grateful to England Athletics for their continued support of this fixture, as we continue to provide more opportunities for athletes to run fast times indoors.



Sarah McDonald won the 1500m at Sheffield.

2016 SEASON PREVIEW

BMC CHAIR **TIM BRENNAN** IS CLEARLY EXCITED ABOUT THE NEW SEASON:

This year we welcome England Athletics as a supporter of our Grand Prix programme across 2016 and 2017. Our planning reflects the importance of the early season races to qualification in the age groups. In support of this the BMC will be adding the 2000m STC to the events in the first Grand Prix at Sport City. Sport City and Watford will be key events for U20 World and U18 European qualification.

Spencer Duval for England Athletics commented that, "This is a great opportunity for EA and the BMC to work together to provide key events for endurance athletes in the lead up to the 2018 Commonwealth Games. EA and the BMC have agreed key events that athletes can target to chase qualifying standards and experience top quality races."

We also have support again this season from UKA and from our long term kit sponsors Nike. We are grateful to all our supporters.

The season's fixture list is nearing completion. A full list appears elsewhere in this magazine and will be updated online. Fixture dates are decided at a fixture conference of all competition providers and we were disappointed not to get a June date. To compensate we have negotiated an extended slot for the June Gold Standard at Watford and will run a men's 5000m in that as well as some hopefully high standard men and women's 800m and 1500m races. The popular Milton Keynes PB Classic on June 2nd will also provide an opportunity for age group qualifications.

Payment for Grand Prix Races

This year non-members will be expected to pay for Grand Prix entry at the time of entry



Cameron Boyek leads the mile at historic Oxford.

and not on the day. Non-members include those who have let their membership lapse so please be sure to keep your membership up to date.

Grand Prix Race Terms

The British Milers Club is a voluntary organisation aiming to improve the standards of British middle distance running.

Key Grand Prix and Qualification Dates

Date	Venue	Selection Dates/Trial	Events
14th May	Sport City Grand Prix	W3000m EA Key	800m, 1500m, W3000m, 5000m 2000m SC
28th May	Watford Grand Prix	5000m U20 Trial	800m, 1500m, 5000m 3000m SC
2nd June	Milton Keynes PB classic		800m, 1500m, 3000m, 1500m SC 2000m SC
15th June	Watford Elite	20th June European 26th June Euro Youth 3rd July World Junior	800m, 1500m, M5000m
9th July	Solihull Grand Prix	11th July Olympics	800m, 1500m, 5000m 3000m SC
23rd July	Oxford Grand Prix		800m, W1500m, M Mile, 5000m 1500m SC
20th August	Trafford Grand Prix		800m, 1500m, 3000m 10,000m

N.B Solihull and Oxford need their steeplechases to be confirmed

The BMC aims to put on athlete friendly meetings and create the conditions in which athletes have the best possible chance of achieving fast times.

To do this it is our aim that:-

- All races are seeded appropriately
- All races are paced appropriately (The pacemaker will be asked to run at the pace stated irrespective of whether the field follow them)
- All meetings run to time
- Results are produced quickly, completely and accurately
- Athletes are treated with courtesy and understanding
- Race venues are chosen for their suitability for fast times

We will always strive to achieve the above but our success is dependent on the goodwill of athletes and officials, and sometimes on events outside our control. The BMC does not attempt to provide opportunities for slow tactical races. Athletes seeking this kind of race to prepare themselves for a championship should look elsewhere.

We expect from athletes that they will:-

- Enter the races by the deadlines set.
- Be truthful about their season and personal best times.
- Be truthful about their current form.
- Turn up for races that they have entered.
- Enter only one race per meeting unless intending to run more than one.

Top Ten Tips for Entering BMC Races

1. Our race entry system uses the power of ten database so all personal and season bests are visible to the race organiser and will be used by them for seeding.
2. If you put a target time a lot faster than your best, then in the comments it needs to be justified, why you think you will run significantly quicker than you have before.
3. There is no advantage to entering late and it risks the race filling up and entries closing early.
4. The closing date is there for a reason, you need to enter before it comes round.
5. As long as your season's bests are in power of ten the race organiser will see them, even if the performance comes after your entry.
6. It is worth pointing out if you have run a good time at a distance other than the one you are entering, as the race organiser may not automatically spot this.
7. At the start of the season last year's form counts a lot towards the final seeding, but as the season gets older this year's form carries more weight. The best thing is to have some sort of competitive form to point to in the current season before you enter a Grand Prix.
8. In the Grand Prix, 'B' race winners will be given an 'A' race place but in the next Grand Prix only.
9. We will account for attitude to racing in the seeding and try and reward people who contribute to the pace of the races after the pacemaker drops out.
10. We will occasionally make mistakes in the seeding and will listen to politely put and well-reasoned requests. You should consider if an often marginal difference between two races justifies the energy spent on the appeal.

... and as a bonus the top tip!

11. We do keep records of people who no show for races and those who drop out late. You may be banned from BMC races if you do not let us know in good time that you are not running.

- 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.

We expect of all athletes, coaches and parents who attend our meetings that they will be polite and considerate to the volunteers organising the meeting.

BRITISH MILERS CLUB COVERAGE

The British Milers Club (BMC) and athletics coverage specialists Vinco | RunJumpThrow are pleased to announce that they will continue their partnership to provide live and on demand coverage of BMC Grand Prix meetings in 2016.

The renewal of the deal ensures the athletes and fans alike will be able to watch the events unfold as they happen live and free of charge via www.runjumpthrow.com.

Last year's fixtures saw over 2,500 personal bests get broken with star British athletes taking part on a regular basis including 2012 European 800m champion Lynsey Sharp, former World Junior 800m silver medalist Jessica Judd, and London 2012 Olympian Ross Murray.

Vinco Sport Ltd's Managing Director

Matthew Quine said: "we're delighted to be able to renew our partnership with the prestigious British Milers Club."

"The Grand Prix meetings are always a compelling watch and packed with some of the best talent that British middle distance running can offer."

The live broadcast will include a DVR feature that will allow users who tune in after the event's start time to rewind back to the first race, ensuring you won't miss a minute.

After the conclusion of each meeting on demand highlights will be available to view and watch back through the runjumpthrow.com video player, where athletes can also be tagged to build up their own personal bank of



Jess Judd featured at the ever popular Solihull Grand Prix. Photo courtesy of David Lowes.

online race videos.

For more information on all of Vinco | RunJumpThrow's upcoming coverage including the BMC Grand Prix meetings please visit www.runjumpthrow.com/broadcast.

GRAND PRIX AND OTHER ELITE RACES 2016

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

DATE	VENUE	EVENTS	TIME	CONTACT	CONTACT DETAILS	STANDARD
Sat 14 May	Sports City	800 Men	5.00pm	Mike Deegan	07887 781913	Grand Prix
Sat 14 May	Sports City	1500 Men	5.00pm	Jon Wild	07947 157785	Grand Prix
Sat 14 May	Sports City	800/1500 Women	5.00pm	John Davies	07967 651131	Grand Prix
Sat 14 May	Sports City	3000W/2000sc M & W EA Key Events	5.00pm	Dave Norman	07868 783818	Grand Prix
Sat 14 May	Sports City	5000 M & W inc JW UK trials	5.00pm	Dave Norman	07868 783818	Grand Prix
Sat 28 May	Watford	800/1500/5000/3000sc Men inc 5000 U20M Trial*	5.30pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Grand Prix
Sat 28 May	Watford	800/1500/5000/3000sc Women inc 5000 U20W Trial*	5.30pm	Tim Brennan	01628 415748	Grand Prix
Wed 15 Jun	Watford	800/1500/5000	7.15pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Special Gold Races
Wed 22 Jun	Eltham	City Mile	8.20pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Special
Wed 9 Jul	Solihull	800/1500/5000/3000sc Men & Women	4.00pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Grand Prix
Sat 23 Jul	Iffley Road, Oxford	800/5000 M&W /1500W/1 Mile Men /1500sc M & W *	3.30pm	Archie Jones	archie.jones@hertford.ox.ac.uk	Grand Prix
Wed 17 Aug	Eltham	Wooderson 800 Men, 800 Challenge Women	8.00pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Special
Sat 20 Aug	Trafford	800/1500/3000/10000 Men & Women	1.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Grand Prix

*EA Key Event

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.

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

Entries should be made through online

entry system on our website. Race Entries from paid up BMC members are £5 payable at gate on the day and £15 for non current BMC Members of which £5 (non refundable) is payable when entering.

PRIZES

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

Best of British - A prize of £200 is available for the fastest British BMC finisher in each Grand Prix event (excluding EA Key Events) who does not win a higher sum in the time related prizes.

For full details of the prizes available see www.britishmilersclub.com

PACEMAKERS

The BMC is looking for pacemakers for its 2016 race series. The BMC is able to pay fees for pacemakers.

Those interested should contact Tim Brennan at timbrennan@britishmilersclub.com 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 at timbrennan@britishmilersclub.com or enter via the website.

INTERNATIONAL RACE OPPORTUNITIES

The BMC is invited by other race promoters to send representatives to overseas opportunities. Selection for these races will be based on performance in BMC events.

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 2016

All entries should be made on our website www.britishmilersclub.com

BMC ACADEMY YOUNG ATHLETES PB CLASSICS (Age Groups U13, U15, U17, U20)					
2-May	Millfield	800/1500 M&W 3000 Mixed	5.45pm	Steve Mosley	029 2241 1440
7-May	Corby	800/1500/3000	5.00pm	Paul Gooding	paulgooding@bedfordandcounty.com
4-Jun	Milton Keynes	800/1500/3000/1500sc/2000sc	4.00pm	Jim Bennett	jim_bennett@btinternet.com
23-Jul	Oxford	Peter Coe & Frank Horwill Miles	3.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651
Fastest of U15 & U17 PB Classics to be invited to Frank Horwill & Peter Coe Miles at Oxford 23 July.					
RACES FOR YOUNG ATHLETES ARE ALSO INCLUDED IN REGIONAL RACES					

OTHER BMC RACES

	DATE	VENUE	EVENTS	TIME	CONTACT	CONTACT DETAILS	STANDARD
APRIL	Sun 17	Alexander Stadium	800/1500	12.15pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
	Tue 26	Exeter	800/1500	8.00pm	John Knowles	07850 812229	Regional
	Fri 29	Glasgow	10000	6.00pm	Norrie Hay	07545 762966	Regional
MAY	Mon 2	Millfield	800/1500 M & W 3000 Mixed	5.45pm	Steve Mosley	029 2241 1440	Regional
	Tue 3	Trafford	800/1500 Men only	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold
	Sat 7	Corby	800/1500/3000	5.00pm	Paul Gooding	paulgooding@bedfordandcounty.com	Regional
	Mon 9	Chester le Street	800	7.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Regional
	Wed 11	Brighton	800/1500	7.30pm	Paul Collicutt	paul@paulcollicutt.com	Regional
	Tue 17	Trafford	800/1500 Men only	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold
	Wed 18	Watford	800/1500	7.30pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Gold
	Tue 24	Tipton	800/1 Mile/3000	7.30pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
	Wed 25	Eltham	800/1500	8.00pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Regional
	Tue 31	Exeter	800/1500	8.00pm	John Knowles	07850 812229	Regional
JUNE	Fri 3	Glasgow	800/3000	6.00pm	Norrie Hay	07545 762966	Regional
	Mon 6	Chester le Street	1500	7.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Regional
	Tue 7	Trafford	800/1500 Men only	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold
	Wed 9	Sheffield Hallam	800	7.30pm	Thomas Grantham	thomasgrantham945@hotmail.com	Regional
	Wed 15	Watford	800/1500/5000	7.15pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Gold
	Mon 20	Chester le Street	800	7.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Regional
	Tue 21	Tipton	800/1500/5000	7.30pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
	Wed 22	Eltham	800/City Mile/5000	7.50pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Regional
	Tue 28	Trafford	800/1500 Men only	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold
	Tue 28	Exeter	800/1500	8.00pm	John Knowles	07850 812229	Regional
	Mon 4	Chester le Street	1500	7.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Regional
	Wed 13	Sheffield Hallam	1500	7.50pm	Thomas Grantham	thomasgrantham945@hotmail.com	Regional
	Wed 13	Watford	800/1500	7.30pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Gold
JULY	Tue 19	Tipton	800/1500/3000	7.30pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
	Tue 19	Trafford	800/1500 Men only	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold
	Wed 20	Eltham	800/1500/5000	7.00pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Regional
	Mon 25	Chester le Street	800	7.30pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Regional
	Tue 26	Exeter	800/1500	8.00pm	John Knowles	07850 812229	Regional
	Fri 29	Glasgow	1500/5000	6.00pm	Norrie Hay	07545 762966	Regional
	Tue 9	Trafford	800/1500 Men only	8.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Gold
	Wed 10	Sheffield Hallam	800	7.30pm	Thomas Grantham	thomasgrantham945@hotmail.com	Regional
	Wed 17	Eltham	800/1500 inc Wooderson 800s	7.00pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Regional
	Sun 21	Grimsby	Mens Mile		Micheal Jagger	runjagger@googlemail.com	Regional
AUGUST	Wed 24	Watford	800/1500	7.30pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Gold
	Sat 27	Tipton	800/1500	7.30pm	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk	Regional
	Tue 30	Exeter	800/1500	8.00pm	John Knowles	07850 812229	Regional

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

Entries - priority will be given to paid up members who have achieved the meeting standard.

Please enter at least 5 days before meeting. No entries on the day. (text entries will not be accepted).

THE BEST OF BRITISH FROM THE BMC

www.britishmilersclub.com

BMC IN PICTURES



Laura Weightman at the Watford grand prix.



Chasing hard at the Young Athletes Grand Prix in Milton Keynes. Photo courtesy of David Lowes.



Rebecca Croft leads from Lucy James in the 800m 'C' race at Sport City. Photo courtesy of Adrian Royle.



Chris Warburton smiles ruefully as Tomas Cotter screams his way to victory in last year's Watford GP.

AW: 187mm x 63mm

BMC YOUNG ATHLETE OF THE YEAR: BOBBY CLAY

AT LAST AUTUMN'S BMC ACADEMY RESIDENTIAL COURSE THE INVICTA EAST KENT ATHLETE WAS INTERVIEWED BY DAVID LOWES:

Congratulations on winning the European Junior championship 1500m last year in Sweden. Before going there, did you think you had a chance of winning?

"Thanks! Yes, I'd run some decent times and performed well before going out to Eskilstuna and I was confident in my ability. I had the European lead before going out and although that kind of makes you the favourite, championship racing is all about getting it right on the day."

At 1.49m and a bit (4'11") Clay is one of the smallest athletes in any race, but what she lacks in stature is made up by a dogged determination and self-belief that allows her to fear no-one even they may literally tower above her. So what is her view on her petite anthropometry?

"I don't know what it's like to be any taller

and the only time I worry is when the girl's elbows come at my face because that can really hurt! I don't feel I'm at any disadvantage because of my lack of inches ... or centimetres. I certainly don't think it's a hindrance, it's what I am and I make the best out of what I've got and there are many positives – my little legs are easier to move than those with long legs! I think my stride length is as long as some of the taller girls and with a fast cadence I can compete without any loss of efficiency."

So how exactly did you get started in running?

"My mum used to run and she took me along to my local club (Invicta East Kent) at the age of seven or eight and it was just about fun. It was when I was an under-15 (2010) that I started to take it more

seriously and although my first English Schools cross country in Manchester wasn't very good (108th), I ran really well at the English National at Leeds finishing sixth. I used to do modern pentathlon which is running, riding, fencing, shooting and swimming. However, it got to a point where I was questioning myself why I was doing all these events when the one that I enjoyed was running. I was always in my mind going to be an international show jumper but the running bug just grabbed me and I enjoyed the effort that was required to be successful in a race. My philosophy has always been 'if it's not hurting in a race, then you're doing it wrong!' My parents never pushed me and just let me decide if I wanted to do it."

What is your favourite surface?

"Without a doubt, it's the track, I just love



Bobby Clay is crowned European Junior 1500m champion.

the feel of running hard and the burn it produces and also the challenges that it gives you."

What is your favourite type of session and least favourite?

"I love 600m reps and 1000m on the track, even if I'm feeling rubbish. I don't really have a one that I don't like. It's all hard work and that's what helps to make you race well – so everything is good!"

Going back to those European Junior championships, what was the whole experience like and how did you handle the pressures?

"Championships are always different in many ways to races such as the BMC and club events. There are call-up procedures and timing your warm-up right so that you're ready to go when called. I just make sure I'm always on time for whatever as I'm quite a 'late' person. I ensure I set myself time targets which get me to where I need to be either slightly early or on time! The English Schools' track and England age-group championships give you a good grounding for the bigger races and the whole process of warming-up, call-ups and preparing to be at your best is all part of race-day preparation and maybe those that handle these better than others have a good chance of success."

What do you think is your best race to date or perhaps one that has given great satisfaction?

"That's a really hard question! It's probably between my 4:12.20 at the BMC Sports City Grand Prix and the European Junior victory. I'd been focussing for so long on the Euro's so yeah, I'd probably go for that one!"

If you can cast your mind back, what do



Clay on Mud. Cross country has helped facilitate Bobby's success. Photo courtesy of Peter Mullervy.

you think was maybe a breakthrough race that made you think you could make an impression at the highest level?

"You ask difficult questions! It could have been a Kent County championship race when I was younger. I was always finishing way down the field, but I remember I came fourth and I thought that 'maybe

I could become a runner.' I nearly got a medal and it made me think I could maybe win a County title at some stage. My first England vest in 2011 was also memorable and that was in the Schools' cross country international in Antrim. Sometimes it's not all about winning, but making improvements that move you up the ladder to bigger and better things."

What does a typical week look like?

"I'm looking to run around 60 miles a week this winter and maybe a little more. This is my first year university (Loughborough) and I'll be doing some double days too. There will probably be two track sessions a week plus one weight session and hopefully come the summer I'll be in shape to go quicker than before."

Let's talk about short and long-term goals. There is a fairly big event in Rio in the summer, does that figure in your plans?

"Well, that would be tough, but I would never, say never. Realistically though I will be looking to revise all my PB's and then I'll see where that takes me. I would love to run

A delighted Booby Clay receives her award from former coach Peter Mullervy, who has been instrumental in her success.



a World championship on home soil (2017) and that would be unbelievable. My short-term plans involve European cross country trial at Liverpool (1st) and then the European cross country championship (5th). Beyond that (2016) I have no plans just yet (finished 4th at British indoors 3000m in 9:11.42 after winning Great Edinburgh 4km cross country)."

You have a sister who is also an international. What it's like to race and train with her?

"Alex is a year older than me and although she is long-term injured at the moment, she has always given me a hard-time in training and vice-versa! I miss her at the moment out on the training ground as I've never ran alone."

Are there any plans to move up in racing distance?

"My heart is at 1500m at the moment and I think I have much more to give. I want to run more at 3000m and maybe the odd 5000m, but for now I want to keep it shorter."

FACTFILE

BOBBY CLAY

Date of birth: May 19, 1997

Club: Invicta East Kent

Coach: Rob Denmark

PB's: 800m 2:05.98 (2014); 1500m 4:12.20 (2015); 3000m 8:59.12 (2015)

Achievements

- 2016 Inter-Counties Cross gold; British indoor 3000m 4th; BUCS indoor 1500m bronze
- 2015 European Junior 1500m gold; England U20 1500m gold; European Cross 5th
- 2014 IAAF World Junior 1500m 8th; England U20 1500m silver; English Schools' 1500m silver; English Cross silver; Inter-Counties Cross gold; English Schools' 6th
- 2013 IAAF World Youth 1500m 4th; World School 1500m gold; England U17 1500m gold; UK School Games 1500m gold; IAAF World Cross 27th; European Cross 8th; Inter-Counties Cross silver
- 2012 England U17 800m gold; English Schools' 1500m gold; UK Schools Games 3000m silver; World Schools' Cross gold; English Cross gold; English Schools' Cross gold; Inter-Counties Cross gold
- 2011 England U15 800m gold; English Schools' 800m gold; English National Cross 5th; Inter-Counties Cross 4th; English Schools' Cross 4th; Schools International Cross 4th
- 2010 English Schools' Cross 108th; English Cross 6th



Bobby continues to fly the flag for the BMC.

ON COURSE FOR AUTUMN



You could be part of this line up in October! All photos in this section courtesy of David Lowes.

The next BMC Residential Training and Educational weekend is to be held from Friday 28 October until Sunday 30 October at St Mary's Mount, Spinkhill near Sheffield.

For those who come back time-after-time, the usual ingredients will be there - hard work, learning and fun. However, David Lowes, the Academy Chair and Course Director is already working to ensure that there will be some surprises and also the addition of new staff to make the course even better.

With the course advert stating that it's "A weekend that lasts a lifetime", this is no false claim with athletes such as Hannah England, Lisa Dobriskey, Ricky Soos, Peter Elliott, Susan Scott, Steve Cram, Bobby Clay, Jake Wightman, Anita Henriksdottir, Becky Lynn, Charlotte Moore, James Thie and Nick McCormick who have attended to name but a few! Indeed in more recent years we've had both 2011 Daegu world championship athlete Emma Jackson and 2014 European championship representative Alison



The Academy has a strong educative component.

Leonard, also attended. We, at the BMC, have no doubt whatsoever that the weekend is the best there is with no other such course being able to offer what we do. As well as these illustrious names, coaches have come from afar as Iceland and Japan just to see and learn the BMC way.

The BMC respects coaches and offers any coach who brings six athletes or more a free place and additionally it also offers two free places for athletes courtesy of the "Most Deserving Male and Female Athlete of the Weekend" award.

With a blend of morning runs and a mid-morning session plus gym and drill work, the course is always complemented with talks that are relevant and also understandable for athlete and coach alike. It is also a course where new acquaintances are made and where fun is integrated into the weekend.

So all you have to do now is get signed up and we will make sure that you not only have a great time, but also a beneficial one that will set you up for the rest of your athletic life.



Fartlek Fun at the Academy.



A weekend that lasts a lifetime

RESIDENTIAL TRAINING COURSE

Mount St Mary's, Spinkhill, Sheffield

Friday 28th-Sunday 30th October 2016

Open to all male and female athletes aged 13 and under-20 PLUS coaches

WEEKEND INCLUDES: TRAINING, MEALS, LECTURES, ADVICE, PRINT-OUTS, TOP QUALITY COACHING AND MUCH MUCH MORE

COST: £85 BMC MEMBERS, £105 NON-BMC MEMBERS

£75 BMC COACHES, £90 NON-MEMBER COACHES

£70 BMC ATHLETES TRAVELLING MORE THAN 200 MILES ONE WAY

Any COACH bringing six or more athletes will be eligible for a FREE place

Cheques should be made payable to: **BRITISH MILERS' CLUB.**

Application forms **MUST** state age, personal best times and include a **STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE** to:

David Lowes, 2 Eggleston Close, Newton Hall, Durham DH1 5XR. Tel: 0793 031 8651.

BOOK NOW OR BE DISAPPOINTED! (APPLICATIONS CLOSE SEPTEMBER 11th, 2016)

REGISTRATION & BOOKING FORM Mount St Mary's 28th-30th October 2016

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: _____

E-Mail: _____

Academy Member: Yes No _____

Membership Number: _____

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

Emergency contact details

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Emergency Contact No: _____

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

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

ATHLETE INTERVIEWS

JAKE WIGHTMAN

MATT LONG AND **DAVID LOWES** SPOKE WITH JAKE WIGHTMAN WHO SUPPORTED LAST AUTUMN'S BMC ACADEMY RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND

THE modest, unassuming 21-year-old, immediately engaged an engrossed audience of young BMC Academy athletes at Spinkhill last October with his frank admission that, "I didn't really achieve in the sport until I was at least 16 years old."

Originally from Scotland, the Edinburgh AC athlete acknowledged that living north of the border meant that he was at least in athletic terms, "absorbed in a bubble." It was only when he became a Loughborough University student in 2013 that he became "far more aware of English athletes who I would rub shoulders with in competition."

With a famed commentator father, Geoff Wightman, being a former Team GB marathoner and mother Susan (née Tooby) making the 1988 Seoul Olympics at the classic distance, running was always going to be in the blood of Wightman junior. He said, "I started when I was 9-years-old and was hooked due to the experiences of my parents I guess."

The aspiring middle distance star has clearly come a long way since his

4min 45.66sec clocking over 1500m at the Scottish Schools championships in Grangemouth back in June 2007. The BMC has played a massive role in his own long-term athletic development. Having already competed in 16 BMC races thus far in his fledgling career, this figure should multiply many times over as he seeks top British competition as well as seeking some quick races abroad. His BMC debut race was in a North-East Regional 800m 'B' race at Hexham in 2011 which he won in his first run under two minutes with a 1min 59.58sec clocking.

His big breakthrough as a junior came in 2013 when he knocked a staggering eight seconds off his PB improving from a decent 3min 51.74sec 2012 PB down to an eye-catching 3min 43.74sec 12 months later in the BUCS final. He explained, "This gave me the confidence I needed. I knew I could handle a tough last lap from that point onwards." Just two months later he would go on to bag a brilliant European U20 1500m title in Rieti. He attributes that gold medal to the BUCS where it was nip and tuck between

FACTFILE

JAKE WIGHTMAN

Date of birth: July 11, 1994

Club: Edinburgh AC/Loughborough Students

Coach: Geoff Wightman

PB's: 400m 48.74 (2015); 800m 1:47.36 (2015); 1500m 3:35.49 (2014); Mile 3:57.80 (2015) 3000m 8:13.6 (2015)

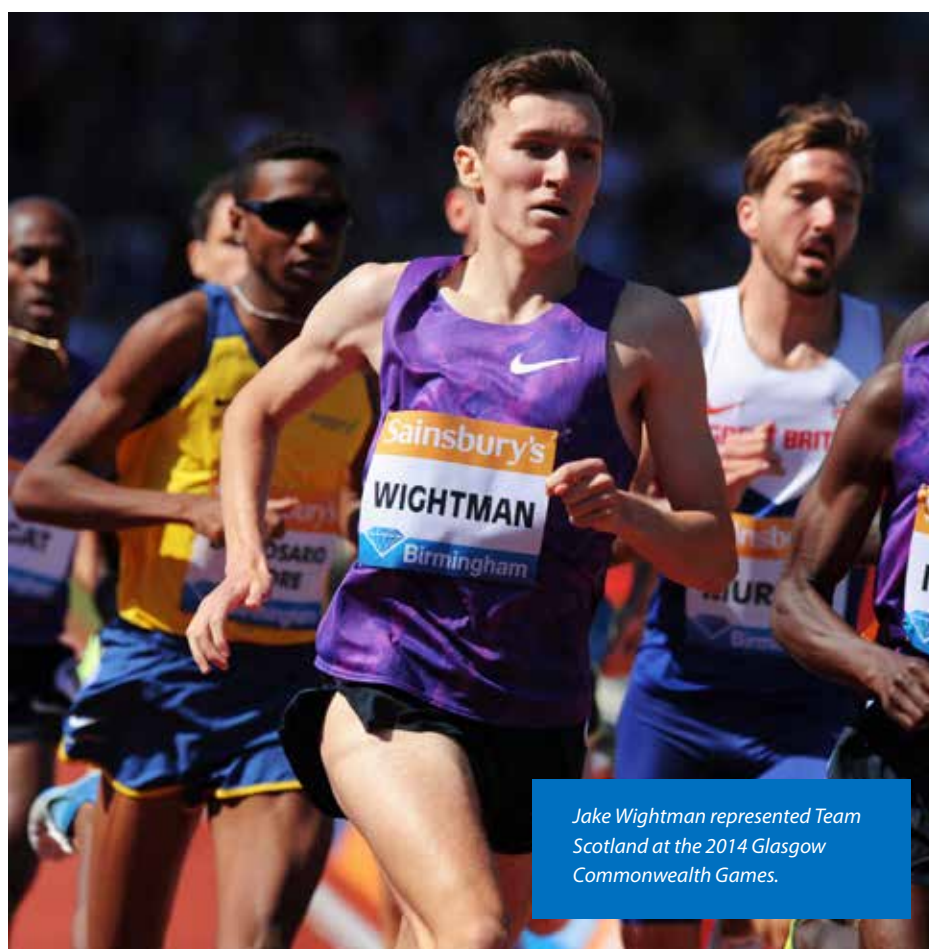
Achievements

- 2016 BUCS Cross 11th
- 2015 British 1500m 4th; Scottish 800m gold; BUCS Cross 60th
- 2014 Commonwealth 1500m 8th ht; BUCS 800m gold; Scottish Cross 4k gold; Scottish Cross gold; BUCS Cross 32nd
- 2013 European Junior 1500m gold; England U20 1500m silver; Scottish 800m silver; BUCS 1500m silver; Inter-Counties Cross 45th; Scottish Cross 5th
- 2012 Scottish U20 1500m gold; Scottish Schools' 800m bronze; England U20 1500m 11th; Scottish Cross 9th
- 2011 Scottish Schools' 1500m gold; Scottish Schools' 5000m bronze; Scottish U18 1500m gold; Scottish Cross 17th
- 2010 Scottish U17 Closed 1500m silver; Scottish Schools' 1500m 6th; Scottish U17 1500m 7th; Scottish Schools' Cross 6th; SIAB Cross 22nd; Scottish Cross 28th
- 2009 Scottish Schools' 1500m 8th; Scottish Cross 4th; Inter-Counties Cross 31st; Scottish Schools' Cross 11th

himself and eventual winner, James Shane, all the way down the windy Bedford home straight. Wightman enthused, "This got me a place to run on my home patch at the Loughborough International", where he placed third in that race behind Tom Marshall and the evergreen Tony Whiteman.

He made the Scotland team for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow a year later with a fantastic 3min 35.49sec at the Sainsbury's Glasgow Prix in sixth place. In reflecting on that superb PB over the metric mile he confessed, "I was lucky to get into the starting line-up for the race and I knew something special was happening when people started to come back to me down the home straight."

At the Commonwealth Games he failed to progress from his heat, placing eighth



Jake Wightman represented Team Scotland at the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

behind Kiwi star, Nick Willis, in a formidable field which also included Kenya's James Kiplagat Magut. However, the experience of a major championship is something which he will clearly cherish for some time to come. He pointed out, "I got star-struck when I sat down in the athletes' village to have a bite to eat and when I looked up David Rudisha of all people was sat opposite to me!"

A killer question that was put to Wightman was, "which session did he absolutely hate the most?" With a smirk and a lightning fast response, the Loughborough University man muttered a monosyllabic "Hills!" The youngster asked the interviewer, David Lowes, "Now ask me what my favourite session is?" The answer was an unequivocal "track-based 200m reps with relatively long recoveries." In coach education speak, he is clearly a fan of speed endurance work while having a tendency to not look forward to the strength endurance mode of his periodised programme.

The message to the young athletes in the audience was that although he covers a healthy 70-odd miles per week, in terms of volume, not to get obsessed with chasing mileage. His winter work is underpinned by utilising grass-based sessions and he and his coach/father Geoff are clearly advocates of

the physiological benefits of tempo running. During the summer and in leading up to the competition phase of the periodisation cycle, he will undertake two key sessions a week, one of which has a predominantly aerobic endurance component (he sports a 3000m best of 8:13.6 set at the BMC Regional at Tipton last summer) and the other of which is designed to engender speed endurance through development of the lactate (linking) energy system. The young man with a best mile clocking of 3:57.80, set at the Sainsbury's Anniversary Games in 2015, stressed that his running was supplemented by both circuit training and the appropriate use of weights and his undertaking of regular swimming sessions suggests he is indeed a fan of cross-training.

He was then asked the question on everyone's lips: "Can he make the Rio Olympic team? He responded realistically, "Of course I'm going to give it a try." Then with both diplomacy and no false modesty he encouraged those present to reflect on the fact that, "There's at least six or seven of us in with a shout of making the Rio Olympics, but I'm not getting carried away. My priority is keeping it together and staying in one piece." He appears to have wintered well with solid performances in both the Great Edinburgh cross country



Jake Wightman inspired the audience at last October's BMC Academy.

relay clocking one of the fastest times in January and at the Armagh international 5k road race a month later where he clocked 14min 26sec.

JAMES GORMLEY

AT THE BMC ACADEMY RESIDENTIAL COURSE LAST OCTOBER, **DAVID LOWES** INVITED RISING STAR **JAMES GORMLEY** AS ONE OF HIS STAR GUESTS AND HERE WE FIND OUT WHAT MAKES HIM TICK

Summer 2015 was a massive one for you in terms of two major track championships at venues on the other side of the globe, can you tell me more about those?

"It's not often you get the chance to run races in Colombia and Samoa and both the World Youth and Commonwealth Youth championships have opened my eyes to many things. For a start, I had to miss the English Schools' and England U20's because they clashed with them – two races you would never miss. To get to Cali (Colombia) and Apia (Samoa) it was almost simply who was the fastest as there were trial races – so it was pressure every time I raced. At the start of the season both events were on my radar and everything else revolved around them. The BMC races provided the platform to reach the standards I needed with Watford and Trafford giving the perfect competition to attain the times."

Was your preparation any different for these races?

"For Colombia, with a six-hour time difference, we were given instructions by British Athletics to go to bed at home progressively later to get our body clocks in synch with South America – I was staying up until around 3am. However, that wasn't working very well with school and exams. It was very hot in Colombia (around 36-39C) and I decided to do most of my runs here at midday – nothing prepares you for that heat though. Samoa was even worse – there is a 12-hour time difference and the whole journey took around 36 hours with flights to Hong Kong, Auckland and then Samoa."

Which one did you enjoy the most?

"Samoa without a doubt! Colombia was very strict with a lot of security and we weren't allowed out, while Samoa it was relaxed and more friendly and we could do basically

what we wanted after our races."

Can you explain how the call-room and preparation at these events differs from say an English Schools'?

"Completely different. You are in the call-room around an hour before your race and no-one talked to anyone – they just stared at you! At the Yorkshire Schools' and even English Schools' nearly everyone talks to each other."

At the World Youths you qualified as the slowest fastest loser, but finished in a creditable fifth place in the final against a couple of super Kenyan runners. Can you explain what happened?

"The final was won in 3:36 by a supposedly 16-year-old Kenyan, so there wasn't a lot I could do about that! When I run BMC races I like to run from the back and come through towards the end. In Colombia I adopted the



James Gormley is a huge fan of the BMC.

same tactics and went straight to the back of the field from the gun hoping that people would get dragged along at too fast a pace and that I would be able to pick some of them off when they tired."

In Samoa you ran the 800m and didn't perform as well as you could. Was there any particular reason?

"My coach, John Wood, decided that because of a very long season that the 800m would be a better target to focus on. It was a very long and tough season and to be honest it was simply one race too many. It was also 36C and I'm fair-skinned with ginger hair, so it wasn't easy to deal with. Both races have given me so much experience and hopefully will put me in an even better place next season."



James Gormley is coached by John Wood.

Going back to 2014 you had PB's of 1:55 and 3:54 yet this year as a 17-year-old you have revised those considerably to 1:50 and 3:46. How has this come about?

"It was really simply down to developing physically and knowing how to push myself in training. I've only been running since 2013, so I'm learning and getting stronger all the time. I hope to run 1:48 and 3:42 in the summer although I do realise that I won't make huge improvements every year. The World Juniors in Russia are the main focus."

So how and why did you start running, was it a matter of being good or that you just liked it or a bit of both?

"I did some running in primary school but was always far too nervous before any race and so stopped for four years. When I was 15-years-old I ran 2:10 at a school sports day and my PE teacher who was in the City of Sheffield running club asked me if I wanted to come along. I was only good from a county perspective to begin with and I never really thought I would get to where I am right now. I ran 2:06 two-weeks after starting at the club and my present coach asked me if I wanted to train properly."

Which surface, track, cross country, road do you prefer?

"Definitely track! I won the Liverpool trial race at Sefton Park (cross country) in 2014 and that was quite firm underfoot. I enjoy all surfaces, but track is my main focus."

FACTFILE

JAMES GORMLEY

Date of birth: April 3, 1998

Club: Sheffield & Dearne

Coach: John Wood

PB's: 800m 1:50.06 (2015); 1500m 3:46.58 (2015)

Achievements

- 2015 IAAF World Youth 1500m 5th;
Commonwealth Youth Games
800m 7th; English National Cross
2nd
- 2014 England U17 1500m 5th;
English Schools' 1500m 4th;
English National Cross 13th;
Inter-Counties Cross 11th;
English Schools' Cross 7th; SIAB
International 6th

What is your ultimate target?

"Like everyone else, I want to be an international at senior level and run at an Olympic Games."

What are some of your key sessions in a normal track training week (2015)?

"A Sunday would be a long run of 8-10 miles and on Saturday it would be my big track session of something like 1000m, 800m, 600m, 400m, 200m with long recoveries of around eight minutes."

Have you a favourite session and a session you just don't like?

"One of my favourite sessions is 5x1000m. However, for some reason I just don't like 300m reps! In the winter I like hills but the long run is probably my least favourite."

A biased question! How do you value the BMC races?

"All my PB's have come in BMC races – so no BMC, no PB's!"

Since he supported our Academy last October, unfortunately, the youngster has had an injury wrecked winter which has not only curtailed his training, but his racing plans also. Gormley recently pointed out: "I got injured back in late October just after the BMC Residential Course, with a peroneal muscle strain while doing a session. I was out for two months, but managed to cross-train (cycling, swimming and core work). I then began small amounts of running again in early January and so in reality, I've been building up my training volume since then. My goals for the summer still remain the same, so fingers crossed that I have no more setbacks".

ENGLAND ROAD RUNNING TEAM MANAGER AND FORMER BMC ACADEMY COACH **GEOFF JAMES** TRAVELS TO FINLAND AND WAS HOT ON THE HEELS OF **ARI PAUNONEN**:

On a recent visit to Finland, I attended the European Coaching Conference on behalf of England Athletics. I was fortunate enough to be able to meet some athletic friends, from decades gone by at the time when Finnish athletes seemed to rule the world of endurance running. Indeed during this golden era, it felt that if your name did not begin with a 'V' or 'P' you had little or no chance of succeeding on the world stage. Four time Olympic champion Lasse Viren had made a surprise visit, the week before, to the Finnish centre of excellence, in Pajulahti, to talk with and inspire a future generation of around 80 youngsters. He spoke for 50 minutes, and received no less than an 8 minute standing ovation from those whom he was hoping to pass the proverbial baton of revival onto. Such is the awe with which he is still held over in his native land.

I took my own opportunity to spend some time with another great Finnish pretender to the throne. Many of our readership of more senior years will remember with great affection the exceptionally talented Ari Paunonen, who had great ability and burst onto the scene as an awesome teenager as he blistered his way through the junior ranks. Here I allow you to pull up a bar side chair with me and listen to what Ari tells me as it happened:

I ask Ari what makes him think that athletics would be the sport of his choice at an early age. He enthusiastically tells me that, "My family was very keen on athletics, so it was natural to start doing sport. My father was leading a local sport club, and my two older brothers were involved in sport". He recalls that, "We lived in the quiet countryside, in a farmhouse, in what was a very small village. We had little choice as Nordic skiing and athletics were the only sports which were possible! Team sports were impossible because there were no other kids to make a team with. Of course we played in small numbers games like football, ice hockey and Finnish baseball". With specific regard to track and field he remembers that, "My first competition was as a six year old. I think I was the only participant! It was a 60 metre sprint on a sandy road! Then we also did some field events like long jump, shot put, high jump and so on. Soon I noticed I did very well in local competitions and in school sport but especially so in running".

I press him as to his early involvement in club level athletics and he tells me, "I was living in a small village, Sulkava, in the eastern



part of Finland. My local club was very active with there being a lot of competitions in athletics, cross-country and skiing, but in those days organised training sessions were quite rare. Back in the 1960s it was just natural activities and outdoor living, and then competitions almost every weekend". He tells me that his first 'coach' happened to be a 'significant other' in his life. He laughs that, "My older brother was six years older than me and my first coach! When I was between the ages of 10–12 years he made me some schedules for running for me. When I got a little older - say 12-13 years old - I did some longer runs with him". He feels that at this stage his best 'coach' was a process rather than a person. He jokes that, "Nordic skiing was our best coach back in those days. In wintertime we lived and played with the skis the whole day. Natural aerobic work, and

some downhill pleasure also, many hours a day". Significantly he believes that the development of the aerobic energy system engendered by the demands of his sport was instrumental in his own success and that of his fellow compatriots. He says, "I believe that one reason for Finnish great success in distance running history was just skiing as a child. But everything changes and it is history as now it is difficult to find snow in the southern part of Finland!"

So when did he first realise he could actually become an athlete who could achieve things of note in our sport? Ari tells me this was all about goal setting. "I set my first goals when I was 13 years. I wanted to run 1000 metres under 3 minutes and a year later 2:42, which was a Finnish age group record. I was very close to the 3 min barrier in many races, but then suddenly

I did 2:52. Then I thought I may have something special in running. Next year I broke that 2:42 barrier". This being said his experience of continuing in other sports at this age says much about the foundational and fundamental movement skills needed for long term athletic development. He continues that, "At this stage I was good also in skiing. As a 14 year old I seem to remember that I was second in a big national competition". With honesty he says that, "It is possible that I would have had even better possibilities as a skier than as a runner (because of my body), but I was more interested in running. It was years 1971-72, and one reason was such stars like Juha Väättäinen, Lasse Viren and Pekka Vasala and those men influenced my thinking."

We move on to talk about his early successes at national level and how this quickly progressed to selection for international competition. "It was some unofficial national championships and as an under 15 athlete I won 1000m and 2000m titles. After this point I finished skiing and

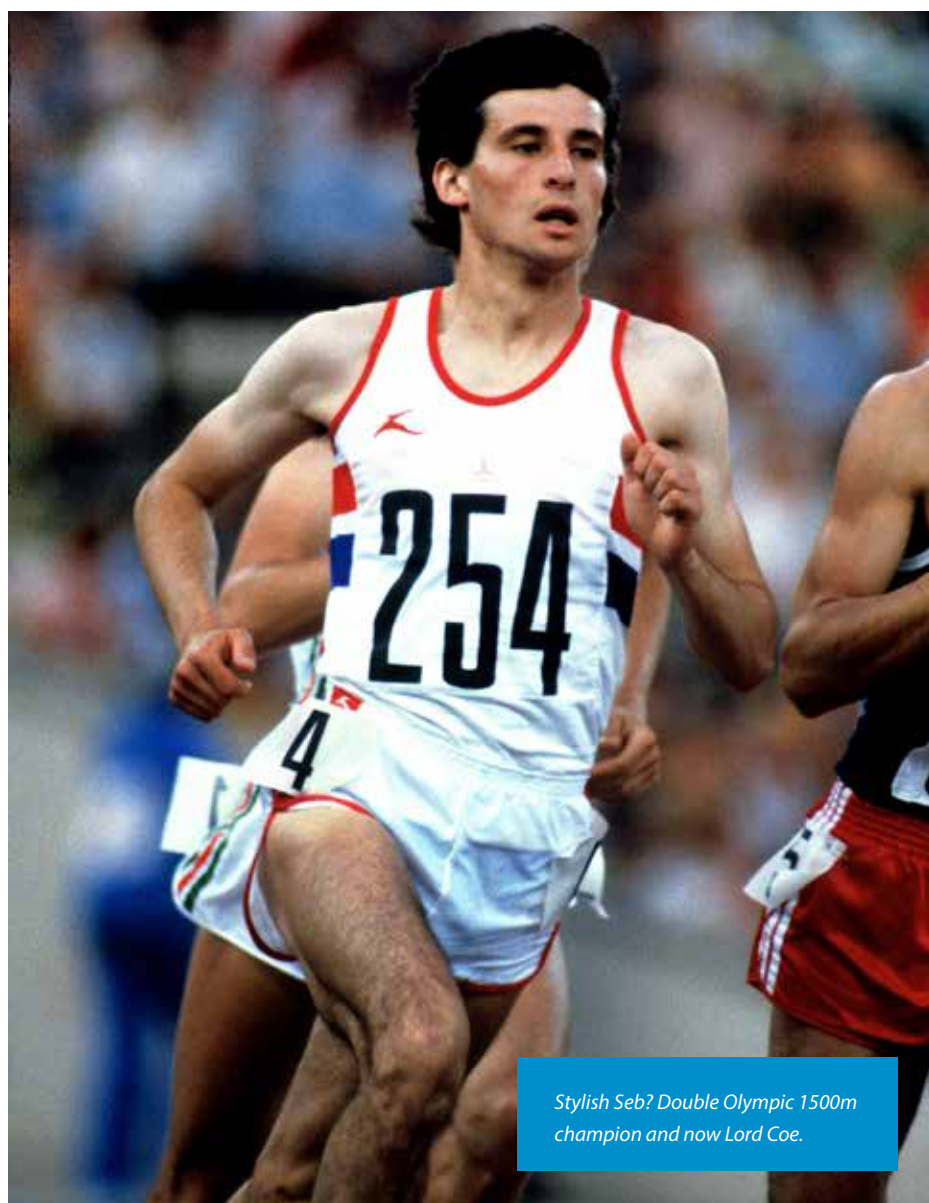
started systematically training in running, and won a lot of Finnish junior titles". He says with obvious pride, "My first international competition was in Florence, Italy. It was some kind of school championships, in which Finland took part. I ran in the Under 17 boys 3000m. "I was third and the winner was José Luís González from Spain who went on to achieve great things. A year later I won that race".

As a junior the year 1975 would see Ari make a massive breakthrough on the international stage. With an affectionate smile he says that, "I won the 1500m at the European junior (under 20) championships in Athens, and it was really big thing for me. In this race I met your English athlete Sebastian Coe for the first time. Seb was third that day and I think the Russian, Dimitri Dimitriev, got the silver". He is clearly enthused in recalling the finer points of the detail of these championships and discloses that, "In the heats I noticed one small British runner. His running style was a little bit funny, his arms were wide and stride like

'sitting'. He wanted to lead the race, and he was running the curves on the second lane, leaving first lane empty. I put this guy in my mind, and checked his name after the race, which sounded funny and short- Seb Coe! So before the final I planned my tactics and thought to myself, 'This guy Coe will lead and then I will utilize the free curve, which Seb allowed to happen and start my kick.' And that happened perfectly!"

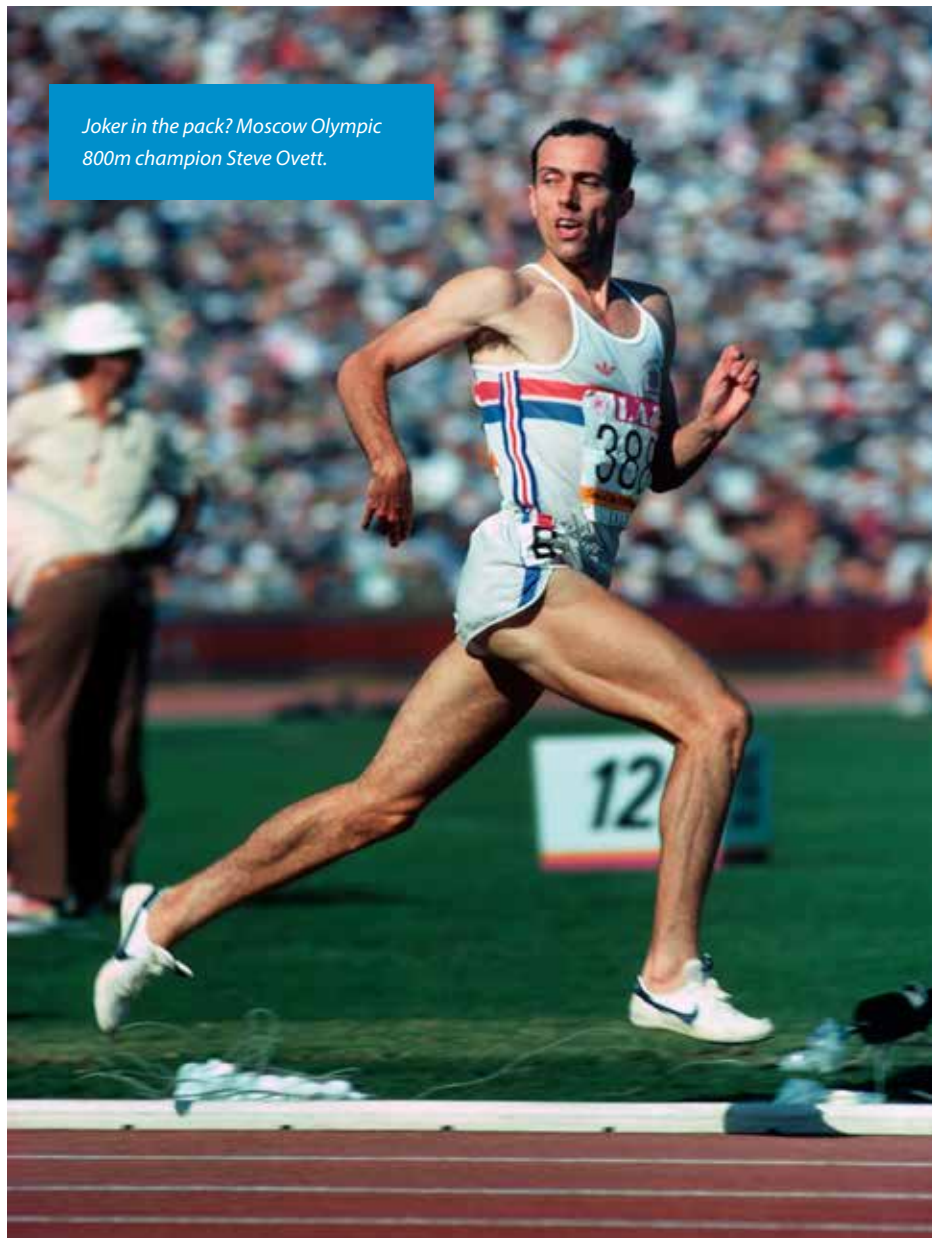
While we are on the subject of Coe, inevitably it is impossible for me not to ask about his arch rival and a man whose name Sebastian will be forever intertwined with, namely Steve Ovett of course. Ari tells me that, "Seb is a lord or nobleman as we say but Steve was a humourist – a very funny man. I forget which year exactly but do clearly remember being on a training camp in the Algarve, Portugal. There were a group of British international runners staying there at the same time as us. I can picture Steve Ovett being sat in a pool side bar recounting funny stories to dozens of other runners who had congregated around him as his jokes went on into the evening". The Ovett humour would continue on a 1976 trip to race in Finland. Ari laughs that, "It was an 800m race and before the start there was very heavy rain, and we were cold and waiting for the starter's gun. We were trying to concentrate on the race and all I could hear was Ovett yelling, 'Could someone close the faucet', as he looked up to the sky!" The one time rivals became friends re-united some 11 years ago, with Steve Ovett having a media role when Helsinki, of course hosted the 2005 World championships.

Coe and Ovett aside, I am keen to get Ari's thoughts on the fact that during the 1970s, Finland had some of the greatest endurance athletes in the world, including of course the great four time Olympic champion Lasse Viren. Did he feel after his breakthrough in 1975 that he could become as great as them? He concurs that, "Finnish success was of course a very big motivator for us as younger runners. We learned how to train hard, we had good local races, and the atmosphere was very positive and competitive". I ask him who in particular he idolised as a junior athlete. He points out that, "Finland is quite a small country, so our best runners were competing in the same races as each other. In particular, Lasse Viren raced a lot in local races with club runners, and people forget that he was often beaten by them". With a nod to a nostalgic past, he tells me that, "Back in the 1970's the best athletics games were sometimes held in Finland, so all top international runners raced here at some point. Many world records were achieved in Helsinki in the



Stylish Seb? Double Olympic 1500m champion and now Lord Coe.

Joker in the pack? Moscow Olympic 800m champion Steve Ovett.



1970's. When I was just 17, it was amazing to race together with such famous names as Mike Boit and the New Zealanders John Walker and Rod Dixon".

I encourage him to open up about the difficult transition from junior to senior athlete and candidly he professes, "I was very good as a junior, but did not manage so well as a senior. Maybe my best performance on paper was my 3000m (7:43.20) achieved as a 19-year old in 1977). I think it stood as a world junior record until 1989, before the African period of domination and is a still European junior record and Finnish record, together with what Lasse Viren achieved". He adds with candour, "If I'm honest, I had problems finding a suitable training programme as a senior athlete. Hard mileage with steady pace was a very common training system in Finland during that era and did not work so well for me. When I look back with the benefit of hindsight, I was more a fartlek man".

So when and why did he choose to hang

his spikes up? He was relatively young compared to some and tells that, "I retired 1988, when I was 30 years old, just after I ran my best times over 5000m and 10,000m (13:31 and 28:25 respectively). If I am honest it was difficult to find motivation for hard training because by this time in my life I was a family man and young father".

So what is he up to nowadays and does sport play any part in his life? Ironically, given his welcome contribution in this edition of BMC News he professes that, I am working as an editor (and part owner in our publishing company) for a Finnish running magazine, named Juoksija. And by the way your BMC News photographer, Mark Shearman, happens to be my freelancer associate!", he laughs. He has been involved in coaching on a voluntary basis and says of his own obviously talented daughters, "I coach my own Venla Paunonen 400 hurdles which she has run in 57 seconds, and Aino Paunonen, who has achieved 2:06 for 800m". There is perhaps something in the genetic

make-up of his children as Ari's wife Aila boasts impressive personal bests of 2.04 and 4.15 for 800m and 1500m respectively.

Is he optimistic about his native Finland ever returning to those glory days of which he himself was an inherent part of? Sadly and with a shake of the head, he says that, "We are in very deep trouble, especially with male runners. We have less and less good level club runners, and the results have gone downhill in almost every distance. The lack of depth in talent is very deep. It is difficult to understand why", he asks himself almost rhetorically. He perceives a definitive gender divide in this context and offers the insight that, "With girls and female runners we have some very talented individuals. In local athletics clubs we have a lot of girls but team sports seem to be more interesting for boys".

So is he a fan of our British Milers' Club and can Finland learn anything from us? He signs off by saying enthusiastically, "We know the reputation of the BMC and its races very well over here in Finland. Many Finnish runners have taken part in your races, even my own daughter and we hope to come over to have her race in BMC events this summer! BMC races are very important for us, because as I have explained, it is difficult to find good races here in Finland nowadays".

FACTFILE

ARI PAUNONEN:

Born: March 10, 1958

Education: Commercial college

Current occupation: Editor of running magazine

Personal bests:

800m 1.47.76 (1977)

1500m 3.38.07 (1977)

Mile 3.55.63 (1977)

3000m 7.43.20 (1977)

5000m 13.31.56 (1987)

10,000m 28.25.16 (1987)

Notable achievements:

3000m and one mile are Finnish Records still today!

3000m was a junior under 20 world record 1977-1989 and is still the European junior record.

Winner of the European under 20 titles over 1500m in both 1975 and 1977.

Bronze medallist in under 20s at World Cross-Country championships in 1977. 5th place in the European indoor championships 3000 m 1983.

LISA DOBRISKEY AND **RICKY SOOS** ARE BMC STALWARTS WHO HAVE RECENTLY RE-LOCATED STATESIDE. **MATT LONG** CHECKS OUT THE STORY FROM ALTIS- THE WORLD ATHLETICS CENTER:

Former world silver medalist and Commonwealth 1500m champion, Lisa Dobriskey, is ranked at an exalted 3rd on the UKA all-time 1500m list behind only the great double Olympic champion Kelly Holmes (3:57.90) and the brilliant Andy Young coached Scot, Laura Muir. Along with Hayley Tullett and Zola Budd, she is one of only 5 British female athletes to ever have dipped under four minutes for the metric mile. She has, to date, competed in no less than 17 listed BMC races. Partner and coach Ricky Soos, most impressively made an Olympic semi-final over 800m. His first recorded BMC race was as an under 17 year old where he placed 7th in the Watford BMC Grand Prix 'F' race in 4:10.65 on 23rd June 1999. Twelve years later and after representing Team GB in a world championships he would make his last recorded victory with 1:52.61 on 26th July 2011 in the Stretford BMC Gold Standard 'B' race. He ran in a staggering 33 BMC races during his own illustrious career. Both are now based Stateside at Altis – the World Athletics Center – in Phoenix, Arizona- which is home to esteemed head coach Dan Pfaff, who was instrumental in Greg Rutherford's London 2012 success and Kevin Tyler, who helped re-shape coach education in our country in a former role with UKA.

I begin by pointing out the apparent coincidence of both having made their BMC debuts at Watford (Lisa in 1998 and Ricky a year later in 1999). I press them on their recollections of these early BMC races which were instrumental in their fledgling careers. Ricky is quick to respond, telling that, "Ironically Lisa and I differ on our favourite venues. I love Watford as I've almost never run there in poor conditions and have run lots of PBs there. The first race I remember was tracking Steve Ablitt for most of it but I ran a big PB which set the tone for my future Watford visits. I think I made 7 PBs the following year in BMCs at everything ranging from 800m-2km 'chase; Looking back I just loved the competition, atmosphere and quick fire racing". Lisa, whose first recorded race was 8th in the 'B' 1500m at the BMC Grand Prix in Watford as an under 15 year old, where she recorded 4:39.6 in Aug 98, has a different perspective in adding that, "I love racing at Stretford. I've run some pretty fast times in mixed races there and it's always such a relaxed atmosphere. I really enjoyed running BMC races when I was younger. I remember running a World Junior Qualifying time at Solihull and being in the same race as Sonia O'Sullivan. She signed my number and had

a photo with me after the race. I was so star struck!"

At this point my attention remains focused on Lisa and I remind her that perhaps her most famous performances have come in Berlin in 2009 and in Melbourne three years previously. I cut to the chase by asking her point blank, which means more to her – taking a silver on the global stage or becoming a Commonwealth champion and bagging a first major gold? She pauses for thought and acknowledges, "That's a tricky one actually. The Commonwealth Games was my 1st major champs as a senior, I was so surprised to win and it was such a magical feeling. Crossing the finish line 1st was one of the happiest moments of my life and it

felt like I was dreaming. After finishing 4th in the Beijing Olympics in 2008 I knew I had to medal in Berlin so that was more a feeling of relief rather than elation. I'd had a difficult build up with injury so it had been quite a stressful summer. I guess the experience and memories from Melbourne mean more to me but I consider the world champs a greater achievement."

I turn to Ricky, who needs no reminder that he himself took part in a very special Olympics back in Athens in 2004. I ask him for his abiding memories of the experience where he made the 800m semi-final (after having run a 1:45.70 PB in his heat) in such an historic city for our sport. With a deep breath he says, "The stadium and



atmosphere surrounding it was fantastic, walking out under the Olympic flame in Athens was very special. I was also very fortunate to have a Greek athlete in my heat so the crowd was extra loud as we lined up! I just wish I could have seen more of the city during my time there", he adds ruefully.

We then turn to matters more specific to the BMC. I acknowledge that both have been massive supporters of the BMC over the years. I remind Ricky that he ran in 3 BMC races (grand prix victories Grand in Wythenshaw, Watford and Eton) just prior to his AAAs win over 800m back in 2003 and ask him if his success was owed in part to this preparation. The man who beat James McIlroy to that very title says without hesitation that, "I think everyone is aware that if you want to run fast times in the UK then the BMC is invariably where it will happen. The frequency of events is also great and most weeks of the summer there is a fast BMC race to be found. These days, as a coach I like to keep up with the continuing educational resources through the magazine and symposia".

Lisa's last BMC race was in 2011 where she recorded 4:05.23 in a Stretford Gold Standard race on 12th July, which significantly was well after establishing herself at world class level. The woman who sports a lifetime best over the metric mile of 3:59.50 set back in 2010 when finishing 3rd at the famous Weltklasse in Zurich, enthuses that, "I just love turning up with the aim to run fast. Everyone's trying to do the same thing. I remember in 2008 we just wanted to see what would happen if I got to 800m in 2.07/08. The BMC provided the perfect opportunity for me to do this. It's a great way to test yourself". Lisa ran 2008 ran 4:00.64 at the BMC Gold Standard in Stretford. 29th July 2008, a year before her Berlin world silver and recalls with affection that, "I loved running BMC's when I was younger as I used to front run most of my races and I put a lot of pressure on myself throughout the age groups so turning up and just hanging on was a lot less stressful. The BMC offers the chance to just have a go."

I move on to matters of the present and ask the 2012 London Olympic finalist how she is finding being based Stateside and what the future holds for her as an athlete in terms of goals. She is keen to emphasise process rather than outcome and her contentment is evident as she discloses that, "I love being outdoors so I absolutely love the lifestyle here. I have a wonderful group of people around me at Altis (formerly the World Athletics Center) and my training partners are so inspiring and understanding. I just want to get back to being the best athlete I can be".



Lisa Dobriskey. 2006 Commonwealth Games 1500m champion.

Ricky's days on the track are now well behind him and I want to know how he is finding the transition to coach at such an esteemed world class facility. Interestingly as well as working with elite athletes he is keen to work with a diverse group of all abilities. "I am the Middle/Long Distance coach here at Altis. I'm also responsible for starting a running club for more recreational runners and races too and we've already staged a road mile". I press him on what we can specifically learn from the experience of the USA in terms of track and field. With insight, the former Mansfield

Harrier, who also represented Team GB at the IAAF world championships in 2003, reflects that, "I think we could learn a couple of things from the collegiate system: From the athlete's point of view they race often and race to win rather than time-trialling. Obviously there is a very important place for both. I think racing so often, many times multiple races on the same day and back-to-back days, offers a very specific training adaptation whilst also developing tactical skills and mental resiliency specific to championship racing". At this point he stops himself and acknowledges



Lisa won world silver over 1500m in 2009.

that, "The flipside to that is that they can over-race and be burnt out by the big races during the summer but it's important to strike a balance depending on the individual's development curve".

He feels there are key cultural differences between coaching in the UK and America, in feeling already that, "The competitiveness of the collegiate system is also very important as it leads to a very broad base of excellent coaches. They either continue to develop and improve or they get left behind. Obviously it helps that there are so many paid positions here in contrast to the UK". Again he misses no opportunity in crediting the BMC by stressing that the above social processes, "Do bring into focus the importance of coach education, something the BMC has been at the forefront of in the UK for many years". His experiences of another coaching culture have already clearly had an impact on his own philosophy of athlete development. He is adamant that, "Specifically being here at Altis I have learnt the importance of environment. Everything from the sun being out everyday to the way coaches and athletes behave towards one and other everyday, it's always a positive and happy place to be. I have learnt to worry far less about the training I set and much more about how it is framed and how the athlete reacts to and recovers from it". With a smile he adds that, "I realise that may sound very 'new age' but more and more research emerges that our mind and body are inextricably linked, so we cannot effect one without the other".

I sign off by asking both as to what advice they would give to those of you who are now reading this piece as aspiring BMC athletes who will inevitably see them as role models. Ricky is keen to emphasise a philosophy of progressing incrementally. He counsels you, "To listen to your body and progress at the rate it's ready to. Too often we worry about what we "should" be doing rather than what we are ready for. Patience is key, attaching too much significance to age group times and titles is the downfall of many. In the grand scheme of things having a long career is far more important". With moral courage he signs off by encouraging you not to repeat some of the mistakes which he made. He asks you to remember that, "Doing slightly too

much for my body, which was still far less than most, and rushing back from injuries ended my career far too early". Lisa nods in agreement and offers the following pearls of wisdom, exhorting you to, "Make sure you enjoy what you do and the processes along the way. Focus on yourself and what you're doing, don't waste time and energy stressing about other people and their performances".

With three Olympic Games, four IAAF world championships and a phenomenal half century of BMC races under their belt, Lisa and Ricky are clearly great international ambassadors for our club and we can continue to learn from the experience of both athlete and coach.



Ricky Soos. Athens Olympian in 2004.

AS ENGLAND ATHLETICS NATIONAL COACH MENTOR LEAD FOR ENDURANCE, **SPENCER DUVAL**, IS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE, AS **SIMON TAYLOR** RECENTLY FOUND OUT:

The future of British middle distance running is bright, and the BMC has a pivotal role to play in its development, according to Spencer Duval, the England Athletics National Coach Mentor Lead for Endurance.

"We've got some good youngsters coming through," he says. "In five to ten years I think we could have some really top class 800 and 1500m runners, and it's my job to help our coaches get them there."

Duval took up his post in March last year, and is well-qualified for the role, having experienced competition at the highest level in his own career as an Olympic steeplechaser and top-flight cross-country runner, although coaching was not the path he initially envisaged for himself when he retired from competition in 2000.

"When I was running, I was running, and that was the end of it," he says. "I finished, and I was out of the sport for a while then. I needed the break and had four or five years away from it. I came back in as GB Steeplechase Event Coach, and after a couple of years doing that I moved into working with England Athletics and looked after Road Running before I got this job."

His remit is wide and varied, covering everything related to Endurance running, from outdoor and indoor track, to country, to road, to trail, with a bit of ultra, universities, walks and some junior teams thrown in. This being said, Duval stresses that the main element of the role is Coach Mentoring. "I lead the National Coach Development Programme," he explains, "which is essentially 'coaching the coaches'. We try to help them by getting as much relevant information out there as we can, with the latest information filtering down through the system so it's no surprise to new coaches."

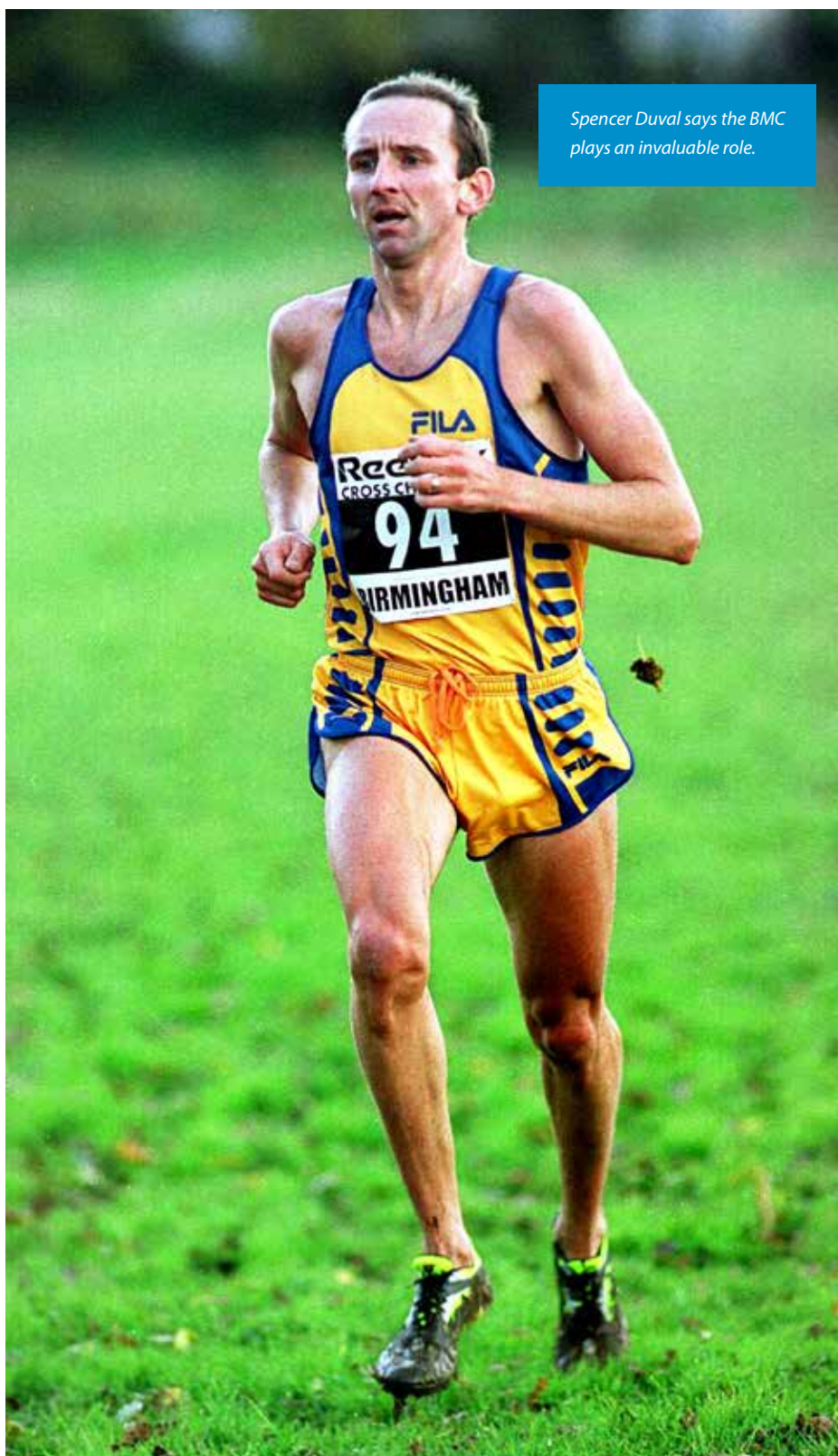
Working with every level from the newest recruits to top international coaches, the National Coach Development Programme for England Athletics is, somewhat encouragingly, in good health with a current roster of around 150 coaches. The pyramid under Duval comprises National Coaches, Area Coaches, and at the local level Club and Coach Support Officers, or CCSO's, who are locally based and connect into the Area Coach Mentors. "People always want to get onto the programme and come through the system," says Duval, "but we're pretty much at full capacity at the moment. The idea is that you start with the Club Certificate, and come onto the system then work your way up until the sub-elite level, which would be

Commonwealth Games and small teams standard, and from there you go onto the Olympic and World Championships programme which is the British Athletics side of things."

Working closely with British Athletics has closed the yawning gap which once existed between the two governing bodies, and there is now a clear continuum whereby

coaches can be guided all the way through to the pinnacle of the sport- the Olympic Games.

Whilst still two years away, and with an Olympic Games and World Championships in the interim, the 2018 Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast is nevertheless beginning to loom large on Duval's horizon, and planning from an



Spencer Duval says the BMC plays an invaluable role.

England Athletics perspective is already underway, with the BMC very much part of the process.

Through its programme of Regional, Gold Standard, Academy PB Classics, Grand Prix and Elite events, the BMC provides the ideal pathway to take athletes through the ranks to championship level and its fixtures will prove crucial in helping athletes hit the requisite qualifying times. "The BMC has a seal of quality," Duval says "athletes know if they're going to race at a BMC meeting it's going to be top quality."

With the Gold Coast Games being held in early April 2018, Duval intends to work strategically with the BMC in the build up to ensure there are fast races scheduled at the right times. "It's quite rare to run qualifying times in trials races nowadays," he adds, "which is a shame because it was the case at one time, but now athletes tend to back off and rely on their kick. Maybe that's smart running, if they've got the qualifier, but it amazes me that others in the pack don't have a go more often. What's stopping them?"

BMC meetings give runners the chance, not only to run fast, but also to experiment with different racing tactics which they might then employ in championships or trial races. "Sometimes in a BMC meet you get dragged round," says Duval, "it's a bit like a time trial, and if you know that beforehand that's great. But coaches should be saying to their athletes 'Right, we're going to do a BMC race this weekend, but we're going to *race* it. We're not just going to sit and try and hang on, we're going to try something completely different'. It may be that you sit off the back and just go for the last 600m, or maybe go to the front with the pacemaker and see what happens. The wheels might fall off, but that's the only way you learn, isn't it?"

The coach's role in helping athletes develop a rounded approach racing technique is critical, in Duval's opinion.

"New coaches come into it assuming there's a certain way to run," he says, "but on the National Coach Development Programme we're trying to change that way of thinking, to show coaches there are different ways, that you don't just have to do it in this regimented manner."

In some events, notably the 1500m, there are no shortages of athletes attaining the qualifying standards for major championships, however at those distances that don't feature as readily on meet programmes, for example Duval's first love, the steeplechase, the BMC is a key outlet for providing opportunities to run fast. "The 'chase is a bit odd," he says, "in that it's difficult to get pacemakers, and then you're never quite sure what the quality is going

to be like, but BMC meetings are a great opportunity. At 800m or 1500m we can pretty much guarantee we'll get qualifying times in some races, but for events like the steeplechase we just need a few more races where people can step up a bit and have a real go."

I then press him harder to open up about the event which saw him make the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. He readily acknowledges that, "The steeplechase is close to my heart and it frustrates me that we don't send athletes on teams because they don't try it. They'll train super hard all year to try and get in the 5000m trial, but they're never going to make the Olympic Games or World Championships at that distance, but they *could* make the team in the steeplechase. It would be nice to see one or two have a go as the qualifying times aren't that difficult. You've got to take the chance when you can." He adds weight to these sentiments by continuing that, "I coached a couple of girls in the last Olympic cycle and they got down to 9:42 and 9:46 (the Olympic qualifying time is 9:45.00) and you think 'a lot of people could do it.'" He is clearly a fan of the way in which the BMC has embraced such diversity. "I like it when the BMC puts on Steeplechase races, it might only be a few times a year, but at least they're putting them on and they're providing the opportunities."

As we exit the winter season and turn our attention towards the track, the 1995 National Cross-Country Champion, who finished as high as 11th in the World Championships on the country as a Junior, believes cross-country should be an integral part of any middle-distance runner's preparation. "I can't see why you wouldn't do it." He says, "Yes, the world is changing, and you've got to be faster, but cross-country

is great, it builds strength, it breaks up the training and helps you see where you're at. You might not like it, although I did, the muddier the better! - but it's good for endurance running. Some people think they've got to do track all the time, which is not necessarily true".

Overall, Duval is excited at the level of middle distance talent coming through the ranks in the UK. "I never single out individuals," he says, "as it's not fair on them, but I do see some good groups of younger athletes who do have good chances to excel, as long as we help them out, from both an England and a Great Britain point of view, and offer them the opportunities to go and learn."

England Athletics will continue to work closely with the BMC, an excellent example of which is the England Athletics/BMC Endurance Symposium held in Birmingham in March this year, with the goal of maximising the potential of this blossoming generation of middle-distance runners. "The BMC has a key role in this," says Duval, "it's so well-known for a start, and is nationwide which helps massively. Club runners can go to BMC events and experience racing, and try different events and different tactics and get pulled to fast times, and when we move up a notch to really good county level, coming up to International, the BMC is still catering for that too". Spencer signs off by saying, "From my point of view, I need to look at how I can work with the BMC to make sure that England Athletics, or anybody running for England, will benefit moving towards the Commonwealth Games in 2018."

Editorial note: Long may the working relationship between England Athletics and the BMC continue to flourish.



THE HORWILL SCHOLARSHIP

It may not be too late to apply for this year's Horwill Research Scholarship which has a deadline of May 1st. The BMC continues to look for individuals to help us progress middle-distance running by conducting a creative and innovative piece of research. We have supported this since 2008 by offering a scholarship of up to £2000 to help at least one individual pursue a selected topic. Coaches, research students, or lecturers are encouraged to apply regardless of BMC membership status. The application form can be downloaded from the BMC website

Note: For fixtures, notification of the AGM and general updates keep abreast of both BMC Facebook and Twitter".

THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE RECENT ENGLAND ATHLETICS AND BMC ENDURANCE SYMPOSIUM AT THE ASTON CONFERENCE CENTRE WAS **TONY STRUDWICK**- MANCHESTER UNITED'S HEAD OF PERFORMANCE. **SIMON TAYLOR** FINDS OUT WHAT LESSONS WE, IN ATHLETICS, CAN LEARN FROM 'THE MANCHESTER UNITED WAY':

Strip away the glitz and the glamour of the Champions League, the Premiership titles, the multi-millionaire international line-up and you will find Manchester United faces exactly the same issues as thousands of athletics coaches up and down the country when it comes to preparing athletes for competition.

Despite what some cynics might think, these players *are* athletes, and extremely highly conditioned ones at that. "Wayne Rooney covers around 11.5 kilometres in every game he plays," says Tony Strudwick, Head of Performance at possibly the biggest football club of them all, "and that's for 60 to 70 games per season, or a 90 minute effort every three or four days."

Speaking at the England Athletics/BMC Endurance Symposium in Birmingham, the man who has been with Manchester United since 2007 and who was a member of the England backroom staff for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, outlined some of the conditioning and preparation the players undertake to get them into shape and maintain it for a full Premiership season. This is not to mention the myriad cup competitions and international matches that clog the football calendar for 12 months of the year nowadays, and, just as importantly, how they approach the physical as well

as football development and nurturing of young, emerging talent, often from ages as young as 9 or 10.

Football is a short duration, high intensity sport; the players train at high speeds largely over nine-second maximal bursts with minimal breaks to help execute specific skills under pressure in the critical moments of a match, but the principle of delivering players to the field in the best possible shape when the referee's whistle blows, is very much akin to that of delivering an athlete to the start-line of a race, and starts with the Coach-Athlete dyad. Just as in athletics, the fitness experts at Manchester United are dealing with individuals, not the entire 35-man squad as a collective entity. "We work with athletes, not spreadsheets," says Strudwick, who asserts that, "too many young Sports Scientists coming out of university today are obsessed with numbers."

The above being said, the Sports Science staff at United collect over 10,000 data points on the players per week, covering, amongst other things, GPS, wellness, nutrition and sleep, and the key is to be able to sift through that data, establish what is important and what is superfluous and then assimilate the findings back to the coaching team in order to drive effective coaching

decisions. "Sports Science should assist the coach," he says, whilst urging that, "if it's measurable, measure it; if it's controllable, control it; and if it's both, record it. Advances in technology are very important, but they're not a substitute for our craft, merely a compliment."

He acknowledges the class based nature of the game and points out that, "We deal with working-class kids from all over the world." He says, "Fantastic athletes but with various degrees of learning ability who have been plucked from the inner-cities of countries like Argentina and Brazil and within this environment they have difficulty adapting to sports science." So in order to establish the athlete's readiness to train, the coaches at United make the process athlete-centred, just as in athletics: they simply ask their players three questions: How are your energy levels? How well did you sleep? Is there any soreness? "From that we can determine their RPE and we can do a lot with that," says the man with a Phd in Sports Science.

"No matter where you are in the world, no matter what generation, ask an athlete how hard the training was, and working on the time at which they trained, it is the most failsafe way of quantifying load."

Armed with the player's own RPE



feedback, the fitness staff at the club then develop risk profiles for each athlete, based on four or five key parameters, including: a) Age, which is highly significant as obviously older players are more susceptible to injury; b) Training Load, the high-intensity output of the training can lead to breakdown; c) Position (in the team i.e. wing, midfield or defence); d) Vitamin D levels, interestingly there is always a spike in injuries around November each year, when the weather around Manchester tends to be cloudy and dark; and e) changing surfaces or environment.

If the aim of the Development Team at United's sumptuous Carrington training base is to create a first team squad replete with athletes, who are able to perform physically and think clearly under pressure in order to produce 'winning moments' at the highest echelons of the game, the approach to junior athlete development offers a very different, but no less complicated challenge. "The challenge for Manchester United is to re-ignite the culture that was so prominent 25 years ago," he says with a nod to the club's glorious past. In looking to the future, he is convinced that, "We need to create a young generation of players that will all come through together and will push each other through."

In the early 90's, when Giggs, Beckham, Scholes, Butt and the Neville brothers shot to prominence, the biggest problem facing then Youth-team Coach, Eric Harrison, was keeping the players off the training field! This generation did not enjoy the luxury training facilities of the 21st century, having learned their trade at The Cliff, a very much more basic set-up than the lavish surroundings of Carrington. "They pulled each other up by the boot laces", Harrison once adding that in terms of their famed fighting spirit, "They were fiercely competitive with one another."

For 'The Class of 92' in football read the Ovett, Coe and Cram triumvirate in athletics, three athletes whose desire, competitiveness and ultimate success spurred them and each other to the very pinnacle of their sport, and inspired a golden generation of British Middle-Distance runners that has sadly proven impossible to match in recent times.

Setting aside the cultural influences such as the working-class mentality and work ethic that existed at United towards the end of the last century, one of the key factors identified by Strudwick and his team is how younger athletes deal with stress, how they be put under greater stress without overtraining, and how they translate that to the competitive arena.

As in our own sport, the search in football is ongoing for those players with the 'X-Factor' or TCAP as Strudwick calls it: Talent, 'Coachability', Ambition, Personality. "You can't always put your finger on it," he says, before adding something every coach will identify with to some degree - "We have players with incredible talent, but they're not coachable, they're not ambitious and they haven't got the personality to cope with pressure."

United is going 'Back to the Future' in order to mould the next wave of potential first team players. "Over one fifth of the youngest children in certain areas of the country are starting Primary School obese or overweight," says Strudwick with a concerned look, before a sharp intake of breath and the addition of, "that's a big challenge for our next generation."

In terms of the specifics of long term athlete development, he stresses that, "It's all about gymnastic movement. Moving away from classic strength and conditioning exercises and using gymnastics and sports like running and swimming to build fundamental movement skills." Once again there is something of transferable value in terms of building foundational and fundamental movement patterns, which we in athletics, can learn from that.

Strudwick feels the modern crop of Academy players over-compete and under-train, and that general motor skills are not being sufficiently acquired before the age of 12. As a result the club has established a programme of multi-sport camps in the summer, when the training ground traditionally closes down until pre-season, where, in the absence of any football coaches, players can enjoy sports like gymnastics, boxing, running and swimming. "It's about quality practice," says Strudwick, These sentiments re-affirm the kind of messages of best practice in current coach education circles with Strudwick agreeing with his audience that, "Academy players should all engage in multi-sport preparation."

Ever the realist, he admits that unlike in Athletics, however, the coaches remain an obstacle to implementing the multi-sport approach. "All they want is football, football, football," he admits. "We know from research that young athletes who only play one sport, such as football, are 30% more likely to sustain soft tissue injuries when they're older, because they've developed poor exercise patterns, and gone on to repeat those poor exercise patterns over time."

Athletics can learn a lot from the way a top club like Manchester United prepares its

elite level athletes for the cauldron of World Class competition. The high performance culture, with a relentless drive for success instilled in the club by the great Sir Alex Ferguson is an approach all sports can learn from. Ferguson instilled a work ethic and hunger for success that drove Manchester United to the top of the world game, and demanded buy-in from everyone involved, not just the 11 players on the pitch. "There was a clear behavioural framework in order to improve performance," says Strudwick, who spoke of the Scot in reverential terms.

No one was allowed to indulge in success; after one summit was reached, the next one loomed on the horizon. "There was no end to the relentless charge year after year. There was never a feeling that 'we've done it'," were the famous words once spoken by former captain Gary Neville.

A similar commitment to excellence could easily yield a return to former glories on the track, however Football can also take a leaf from Athletics' coaching manual, particularly when it comes to developing young athletes. Visit any athletics club training night and an athlete-centred multi-sport approach should be there for all to see, as has been the case for many years. Young athletes are encouraged to develop the fundamentals (with an emphasis on the fun) of balance and coordination through running, jumping and throwing and are encouraged to try every aspect of the sport before choosing where to specialise in their teenage years.

This is an approach that finds favour with the former head of fitness and conditioning at both Blackburn Rovers and West Ham United, who said wisely, "Money, facilities and equipment alone aren't the answer," he says, "Bricks and Mortar never made an athlete. It's about good coaching and a systematic approach, and always putting the athlete at the centre of the plan."

In the not too distant future, the footballer and the track athlete may well be very similar animals. "We live in the age of ideas," laughs Strudwick. "We can't get away from it. Tomorrow's athlete will be very confident, and very technology savvy. They will be independent thinkers. Coaches need to embrace and engage athletes differently. Ten years ago if you had asked Paul Scholes to run round a field he would have done it. Now, if you ask a young player to run round a field they will ask you 'why?' They will expect results fast; they want times, they want GPS data, and they will be able to communicate in terms of metrics and numbers. They'll be very different to the Class of 92." And very different to the class of Ovett, Coe and Cram!

JOYCE HOGG WAS SHORTLISTED FOR BMC COACH OF THE YEAR AS **MATT LONG** FOUND OUT:

You'll be well aware from reading Section Two of this magazine that Aaron Thomas was both a popular and well deserved winner of our annual BMC Coach of the Year Award. In addition the list of other nominees who came close reads like a 'Who's Who' of established performance coaches in our country – Loughborough based Bill Foster and George Gandy made the cut, along with our Academy Director and Secretary David Lowes; then there was Peter Mullervy and Geoff Wightman whose work with Bobby Clay and Jake Wightman respectively, also feature on the pages of this very publication. One name stands out from this list – that of the well-respected Joyce Hogg. She is indeed conspicuous in this exalted line up by the very nature of her gender.

The British Milers' Club takes issues of diversity seriously – indeed David Lowes is delighted to have recruited two female members of staff to consolidate his growing coaching and support team for this October's training weekend in Spinkhill. So on this most pertinent issue of gender, we thought an exclusive interview with this likeable Scot was most appropriate both to celebrate her achievement of being shortlisted for a hugely prestigious award and to unpick some of the thorny issues around gender and women in coaching.

I start by asking Aberdeen based Joyce to remind our readership just how long she has been involved in coaching and what motivated her to do so. She responds eagerly, "I was always interested in athletics, having competed at school and maintained a level of fitness playing badminton and road running". Aside from her own sporting endeavours she continues that, "In 1986 when Aberdeen AAC were looking for coaches I thought that I would like to be involved". I press her more specifically as to why middle distance and endurance running was so appealing in a coaching context and she responds with candour. "My main interest in track and field was distance running and as I was now a masters athlete, I returned to competitive athletics to experience the events I wanted to coach". She has clearly had a great career and a lot of fun on the way, adding that, "Looking back, I am glad that I did this and became a coach as it has given me so many years of pleasure".

In encouraging her to temporarily abandon her natural inclination towards modesty, I implore her to share the feeling of the moment when she was informed she had made such an illustrious shortlist. With a deep breath she says, "I was very

surprised when I saw the nomination in BMC News magazine itself and felt it was such a great honour". Whilst her Power of 10 entry lists some 18 athletes, one name stands out and Joyce is the first to acknowledge that she will be forever linked to the name of the prodigious Rhona Auckland. So what is the European U23 10,000m silver medallist and reigning BUCS 5000m champion like to work with I ask? The animated coach explains that, "It has been so exciting to see Rhona progress over the years, with her tremendous performance winning the European U23 Cross Country Championships at the end of 2014 and continuing this success into 2015. I feel very privileged to have coached such a hardworking and committed athlete."

Aside from crediting her own coaching prowess, I am keen to explore what role the BMC plays in terms of developing some of the other athletes that she works with. She is clearly a fan believing our club has an inherent role in the sport. "I see BMC races as an essential part of the development of athletes where they can get well paced races at an appropriate level. I have always encouraged athletes to enter BMC races in order to get the experience they need". With a laugh she concedes that, "Although being in Aberdeen does mean travelling a fair bit!" Again as a stalwart of our sport, Joyce has that benefit of being able to offer historical insight. She asserts that our club has, "Over the years proved its worth for many athletes, with countless PBs in BMC races".

I then turn to the more sensitive but hugely important issue of gender. I cut to the chase by asking her what barriers she perceives that women in middle distance and endurance coaching face. Clearly an

optimist she starts on an upbeat note, pointing out that, "I think that there are more female coaches now compared with when I started". This is good news, but what is stopping more women getting involved I demand to know? She responds with insight offering the perception that, "Women may fear that they are likely to be gauged and feel the criticism more". Again we have featured the husband and wife duo and coaching partnership of Alex and Rosemary Stanton elsewhere in this issue and this is something which Joyce can clearly relate to. She continues that, "I spend a lot of time coaching and supporting athletes and if my husband was not also a coach it would have been much more difficult to devote the time". She is the first to acknowledge that, "I am not aware of barriers but this may be because we now coach as a team".

So how would she articulate her own philosophy of coaching? She is clearly committed to a model of deferred rather than instant success with her athletes and says firmly, "My philosophy is one of long term athlete development". But does she favour large amounts of work with a big aerobic volume or does she feel this compromises the need for both speed and speed endurance? "Speed is so important", she wisely responds before again re-asserting her athlete centred rather than coach driven mantra that, "Speed is different for each athlete. You have to remember that all athletes have different strengths and weaknesses which need to be understood and identified by the coach". She signs off by offering the counsel to you who similarly aspire to winning the award for which she was shortlisted by emphasising that, "I believe a coach needs to look at the athlete



Photo courtesy of Joyce Hogg, seen here with her training group.

as a whole person and help them achieve a lifestyle balance for them to reach their potential and hopefully be successful".

As I bid my farewells to this approachable woman I look down and see her name listed in the Winter 2015 edition of BMC News

magazine. If you look you will see that on paper it's a tiny blue box at the bottom of p.10 entitled 'BMC Awards Winners 2015'. Make no mistake, Joyce Hogg leads the way in inspiring a new generation of female endurance coaches so vital for the future

health of a sport dependent on the golden thread of diversity running rich through its veins. Go back to Volume 12 Issue 2 and look at how what appears to be a small footnote on paper is in fact a massive statement for our club and indeed the sport we all love.

'SPORTS PSYCHIATRY' (Oxford University Press) IS REVIEWED BY MATT LONG.

This fascinating Oxford University Press publication is led by two men with formidable reputations in their field. Dr Alan Currie serves as a Consultant Psychiatrist through Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, with Dr. Bruce Owen being both a psychiatrist and Director of Medical Education for the same trust. The fact that both men are Honorary Clinical Lecturers at Newcastle University gives you a clue as to the academic as well as practitioner underpinnings of this work which receives a glowing endorsement from no less than the famed Professor Steve Peters.

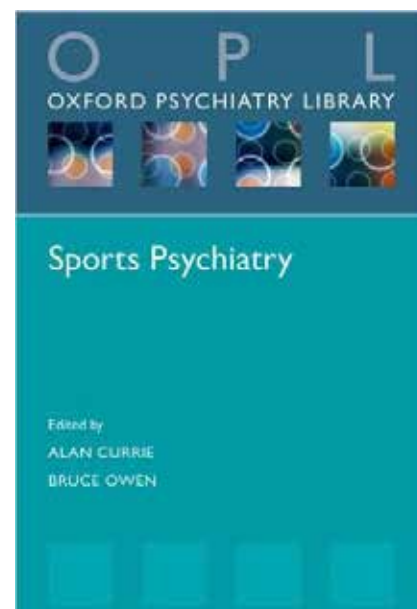
This edited collation sees work from 14 contributors and with the likes of Professor Valentin Z. Markser from the Institute for Sport Psychiatry, Cologne, Germany and Professor David R. McDuff from the University of Maryland in the States, the writing team provide the reader with a truly international perspective.

In a late modern world where we all lead increasingly busy lives, the real strength of this 148 page volume, which successfully charts the steady development of sports psychiatry in more recent years, is that it

can be proverbially dipped into and out of in just minutes – it is a handbook in the truest sense of the word and therein lies its inherent practical utility.

Using the umbrella term of 'mental health', one is struck by the sheer diversity of topics covered which range from anxiety and mood disorders through to eating disorders and substance misuse and reach out even further still to explore exercise participation and mental health plus psychotropic drug prescribing- to name but a few! Content aside, in terms of style, you will find that the chapters leap to life off the page through the use of pertinent anonymised case studies and this together with signposts for further reading and useful websites is indicative of the constant intertwining of the theoretical and the empirical.

"But is this relevant to our sport?" I hear you cry...Most certainly so if one takes a look at Chapter 9 entitled 'The Sports Arena'. Kate Goodger and Sarah Broadhead of Chimp Management Limited provide the kind of specificity which make this a 'must read' for coaches, athletes, psychologists, GPs, S&C coaches and nutritionists and other relevant parties who embrace our great sport.



'STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING FOR ENDURANCE RUNNING' (Crowood books) IS REVIEWED BY BRENDON BYRNE:

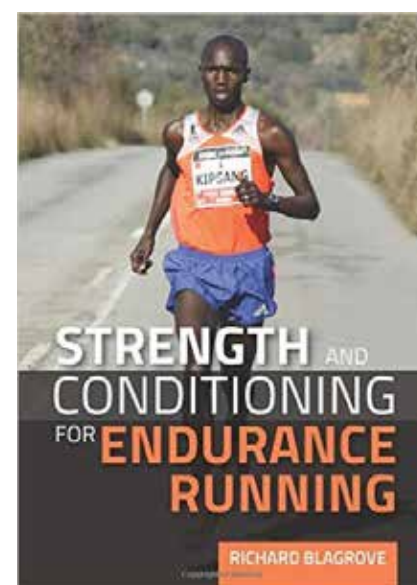
This important book, by our latest recipient of the Horwill scholarship award, Richard Blagrove, starts by defining what strength and conditioning actually is and its relevance to endurance running. An analysis of running technique is considered and this is illustrated by some very useful photographs.

An interesting approach is that the strengths and weaknesses of athletes are considered. The myths about strength training are dealt with and a comprehensive list of strengthening exercises is included. A very helpful aspect is that errors of technique are comprehensively dealt with too. Technical running drills are well illustrated as are plyometric exercises relevant to the running action.

There is also a very useful section on

organising and periodising a programme for athletes. Some of the material has been covered in other books but this one deals with the material in a very well organised and comprehensive way. Some coaches fight shy of this aspect of training but there is no need to with this guide. It is also possible to put together a programme without using a great deal of equipment. A point to make here is that running is both a very simple activity but it is also a technical one too.

Blagrove currently works at St Marys University in London and has extensive experience of working with middle and long distance runners. This book will be of great use to runners and their coaches. It will be a great addition to the library of perceptive and progressive coaches.



ALASTAIR AITKEN PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE LATE JOHN DISLEY (1928-2016):

John Disley CBE was born in Corris, Wales, was educated at Oswestry Boys School and Loughborough Colleges before becoming a teacher. Maybe, he will always be remembered more for helping Chris Brasher, put on the first London Marathon.

It was Disley's impressive build and winning smile, which could be seen, as he hurdled the jumps as a steeplechaser. That certainly caught the imagination of the crowds that flocked to the White City Stadium. He set 18 Welsh records and was the BBC Wales Sports Personality of the year in 1955.

He came 3rd in the 1952 Olympic 3000m steeplechase in Helsinki, Finland, and it

is worth remembering that John set a UK record of 8:44.2 in 1955. Then in 1956 he finished a creditable 6th behind gold medallist Chris Brasher, in a final also made by our own Eric Shirley. Disley would say, "I had pneumonia six weeks before...I was quite lucky to get to the final. Even if I had won in Melbourne, which would have been nice to do, at the back of my mind—the best steeplechaser in the world at that particular time was the Hungarian Roznyoi."

John once told me, "Life for me is all about Challenges" - how true that was, as he was a successful mountaineer, setting a record for the 'Three Peaks' in Snowdonia. He was Vice Chairman of the UK Sports Council from



John Disley (left) with old rival and friend Chris Brasher.

1974 to 1982 and one should not forget the likeable man was the first British runner to break 9 minutes for a steeplechase.

IN HIS OWN INIMITABLE WAY, BMC COMMENTATOR PETER SCOTT CELEBRATES THE LIFE OF AYO FALOLA:

It all started a few years ago
aside the track
And from day one this dude
has always had my back
Never a dull moment and
through times of laughter and
fire

As Ayo a man who always
aimed for better and higher

We shared similar music
tastes and shared many other
passions

But when it came to dress sense I could not
compete with his fashion!

He's Competitive in everything he
seemed to take part in
I once had played ping pong at his house
till 2am.... till he was able to win ! But that's
ok as I'm like that too
And I just thought hey don't worry next
time I'm sure to beat u.



But he accepted me into his
circle and family
just as important this man, he
accepted me for being me!

Some peeps try to change you
and just expect you let them be
your guide
But he did better than that as he
always saw my best side.
Even If I didn't always show it he
knew I had more potential in me

At times I wish I had his 20/20 Vision to see
what he saw in me

As well as to many others he threw out a
welcome rope
When things got tough he could pull out
when you thought you couldn't cope

To his athletes he coached and I
witnessed a few
He treated them all the same way
regardless if they was old or new ! Be it

club standard or international he gave you
his best

And they be days he gave you that and
much more ,... if you add up all the
interest!!!

When it came to being Real
He was the REAL DEAL
and despite him being unwell that's still
how he wanted you to feel
Making up training sessions even from his
sick bed
when he could be watching West Ham's
golden years on dvd instead

Everyone who knew you will have at
least one magical moment to tell
As Ayo Falola You had us all under your
loving spell

Thanks for the loving memories no
matter how short .
You lived life to the full and look what's it's
brought.

JOHN GLOVER RECALLS THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SEAN KYLE, WHO PASSED LAST NOVEMBER:

Athletics lost one of its coaching legends with the death of Sean Kyle who passed away aged 88. The attendance at the funeral of two Olympic Champions, a Commonwealth Champion and a host of Northern Irish and Irish champions was testament to the immeasurable impact that the man has had on the sport of athletics for over six decades.

Known primarily as a middle coach he built up an encyclopaedic knowledge of every discipline in our sport. He played a leading role in organisations like NUTS and the British Milers Club of which he had been a Life Member for over 25 years. His funeral oration was led by John Glover the

NI BMC Secretary and by Irish Olympic Team Manager Patsy McGonigle.

Within hours of his death the tributes would begin to flow from athletes, coaches and administrators throughout the world. Liz Lynch-Nuttall was one of the first among the first to express her sadness on hearing the news, with Commonwealth Games athlete Mark Kirk paying a moving tribute to his former coach. Mark was just one of host of athletes who benefited from Sean's coaching since he and Maeve founded the Ballymena club in 1955. Over the next half century there were a host of champions coming off the Kyle conveyer belt. Names like CJ Kirkpatrick, Johnny Kilpatrick, Sean O'Neill, Sharon

McPeake, Pauline Quinn, Eddie King, James McIlroy, John McAdorey, Anna Boyle and countless others, including hurdlers like CJ Kirkpatrick and throwers like Gay Porter.

As a result of his efforts Sean was twice named Northern Ireland Coach of the Year, then UK Coach of the year and was granted the rare accolade of Master Coach. He was also one of only six Northern Ireland recipients of the Torch Trophy Award, set up in 1963 to recognise and celebrate volunteers in local communities who have shown outstanding work and dedication to sport throughout the UK.

Sean leaves behind his wife Maeve, daughter Shauna and grand-daughter Indy.

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