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Bedford and County AC Newsletter

December 2022

About the Newsletter

This is the third edition of a new quarterly Bedford and County newsletter. If you have something you'd like to contribute to the next edition, please email webmaster@bedfordandcountyac.org.uk. This could be an outstanding individual or team performance, a write up of a favourite training session, a memorable performance from years gone by (see the 'Blast from the Past' section), or something else that might be interesting or informative.

Alex and Rosemary Stanton



50 Years of Coaching Success

Alex and Rosemary are stepping back after fifty years of coaching at Bedford and County. **Dennis Johnson writes,** "Alex and Rosemary Stanton only came down to the track because their daughters wanted to run – and then stayed for 50 years notching up one success after another.

From small acorns do great oaks grow!

Learning their trade, not only on the track, but also on the cold, wet, windy, muddy fields and hills of cross country, they built squad after squad of middle distance athletes, instilling such a love of running in them, that many return decades later not only to run themselves but also with their children following in their footsteps.

Alex and Rosemary are respected across the world for their coaching of Paula Radcliffe, whom they nurtured from an 11 year old novice finishing 299th in the U13 National XC Championships to a world star whose stellar career encompassed multiple world championship titles and medals and multiple world records, leading her to be described on the Power of Ten website as “arguably the best distance runner the world has ever seen.”

But Paula was only the cherry on top of the icing of a very large cake.

Under their guidance, more than a dozen different individuals became internationals, national champions and medallists and English Schools Champions and medallists. The pick of these was Liz Yelling (nee Talbot), who was crowned National Senior Cross Country Champion on no less than four occasions and ran in two Olympic Marathons.

If they were the icing, then beneath it was a very, very large cake consisting of several thousand athletes over the years.

Together with the expert team management of Paula’s mum, Pat, Alex and Rosemary forged the Bedford Girls teams into a formidable force winning 25 National team titles and many more podium places. Bedford and County was a club to be feared.

Alex and Rosemary took on all comers, only demanding that the girls worked hard and got on well with each other. Such were the friendships forged that, years after they have retired and moved away, many still meet up to reminisce and catch up on their now separate lives.

Alex and Rosemary are held in high esteem, not only locally but also nationally where their coaching prowess has been recognised with a number of awards:

- Bedford Borough Sports Coach of the Year 1999,2003,2009
- British Milers Club “Coach of the Year” 1999.
- Sam Mussabini Medal for Athletics Coaching in 2001
- UK Sports Coach of the Year 2001, 2002

Alex and Rosemary exemplify the principles of integrity and loyalty – loyalty to all athletes - and to the club; and they are modest in the extreme. Whenever they are congratulated on success, they deflect the praise straight back on to the athlete replying “Didn’t they do well.”

Now in their mid-eighties, they have decided to call time on their coaching career and hand over the reins to a group of coaches they have been mentoring.

Their impact on the club has been immense. They will be missed, but they will never be forgotten.”

41st Bedford and County Annual Christmas Handicap

It's nearly time for the 41st Annual Christmas Handicap, which will take place at 11am on Sunday 18th December. This year the handicap will be reverting to the pre-covid format for the first time since 2019.

All entrants must be 15 or over (this requirement may be waived in certain circumstances), and must bring a prize (preferably wrapped) to the value of at least £7.00. Everyone will take home a prize!

The presentation will take place in the lounge (Bar will not be open, so bring your own beer). If any of you are uncomfortable being in a crowd indoors, then let Tony Forrest know, and you can take your prize before the presentation, or he will collect it for you, and arrange to get it to you.



*It's almost time for the
Christmas Handicap*

The Christmas Handicap will again be raising money for the Pancreatic Cancer Charity in memory of Pete Dancer, so please give generously.

The overall winner will get a Limited Edition Print of the Steve Herring masterpiece known as "The Christmas Handicap", plus the "PETE DANCER MEMORIAL TROPHY" to hold for one year.

Enter on one of the entry forms on the notice board at the stadium, or Text Tony Forrest on 07769 707651, or email him at tony25forrest@virginmedia.com.

Welfare and Safeguarding Officer

The club would like to welcome Ian Roberts to the role of Welfare and Safeguarding Officer.



You can contact Ian by email at welfare.bedfordandcounty.ac@gmail.com or by phone on 01480-379077. For more information about welfare and safeguarding, please go to the Bedford and County website:

<https://www.bedfordandcountyac.org.uk/index.php/governance/safeguarding-and-welfare>.

News From the Teams

Road Relays

Aldershot Road Relays

The autumn saw road relay action for the club. First up were the Aldershot six-stage road relays, which effectively became the Southern Road Relays in all but name with virtually all of the top 20 clubs in the South of England competing. The Senior Men's A team just missed out on a bronze medal, whilst the Senior Men's B team's 1h 54m 4s was quicker than any previous Bedford B team. For the A team, Harry Brodie had a terrific run, hanging tenaciously onto the leading group and finishing strongly to finish 4th with a great time of 18:00. Meanwhile Ed Blythman for the B team was also having a great run working his way steadily through the field to come home in 15th with 18:34. A team runner Ben Davies slipped back slightly on leg 2, finishing in 8th place with a 18:52 whilst James Minter posted 18:46 moving the B team up to 13th. Ben Alcock on leg 3 wasted no time in charging through the field moving the A team up to 4th with a fine 17:55. Craig Emmerson kept the B team advancing forward as he brought them home in 11th (leading B team) with 18:59. A team veteran Darren Deed who first raced on the course 20 years ago, performed as expected, gaining one place to 3rd with his 18:21 effort. Jack Goodwin running cautiously due to injury held the B team in 11th with his 18:54. Sam Winters posted 18:26 on leg 5 but slipped one place to 4th. John Eves for the B produced an excellent 18:36 moving up to 8th. Matt Bergin set off on leg 6 with the unenviable task of closing the 6 sec gap to Cambridge & Coleridge AC's sub-4 minute miler Seb Anthony, in order secure the bronze medals. Matt managed to close the gap but was unable to get clear and the finishing kick of Anthony was



The Senior Men just missed out on the bronze at Aldershot

just too strong as he took bronze by 2 secs. It was still a great effort by Matt and he was rewarded with a time of 18:18. Meanwhile super sub Joe Strange, again brought into the squad at the last minute, battled round last leg for the B team finishing 14th overall and 3rd B team and posting a solid 20:14. The A team time of 1h 49m 51s was 30 secs quicker than Bedford had run in their 28 previous races on this course.

Due to the available runners, both men's masters teams were in the V40 category, but were at a disadvantage due to individuals' ages. Steve Horton and Ewan Wilson led the teams out in the mass start with the seniors, setting up Andre Bonadies and Andy Blair to stabilise the teams' positions. Steve Herring and Pete Dearden carried on the good work before handing on the virtual baton to Alan Turnbull and Jim Black, bringing the teams home in 5th and 11th place.

The Senior Women finished 34th, whilst the Under 13 Boys team of Berkeley Barnicoat, Finley Bent and Oliver Coombes managed an excellent 4th place.

National Six-Stage Road Relays

With the club having qualified 2 Senior Men's teams for the 6 x 5.9k relay hopes were high that both teams would be finish well up the field, with the A team possibly making the podium.



The Senior Men's A team got off to a solid start on leg 1 with Harry Brodie running an excellent 17:35, bringing the team home in 16th place of the 81 starters. Ed Blythman, running for the B team was close behind in 33rd place with 17:59. Despite being far from fully fit, Dan Jarvis gained 5 places to 11th with his time of 17:43. Ben Davies had a fine run moving the B team up to 30th place with 18:01. On leg 3, Matt Bergin continued his return to form, from injury and illness, moving up to 10th with 17:50. Meanwhile, John Eves blasted the B team up 10 places to 20th with his fine 18:02. On leg 4, veteran athlete Darren Deed showed that he can still compete with those half his age, with another fine run of 17:52, although he slipped back one place to 11th. James Minter kept the B team moving forward with a very solid 18:12 for 19th place. Sam Winters had another fine run on leg 5 easing the A team up to 8th place with his 17:55. The improving Craig Emmerson with a run of 18:22 gained another 4 places moving in to 15th place and more importantly, the leading B team position. Bedford's final leg runner Ben Alcock, who lost a shoe doing this same leg last year, set off chasing hard, but despite running an excellent 17:23 was only able to move the A team up one place to 7th with a total time of 1:46:18, the 4th best time ever by a Bedford team on this course. Super sub Joe Strange again brought into the team at the last minute had another fine run recording 19:01. Despite fighting hard he was unable to hold on to the leading B team position, slipping to what was still a great 17th overall and 2nd B team. The team time of 1:49:38 representing sub-5 minute miling for 22.0 undulating miles!



*The boys team at the
National Road Relays*

The U13 Boys started the day with Finley Bent (14:09) posting a quick time on the first leg handing over to Harry Henderson (18:32), admirably stepping in as a late substitute. The experienced Oliver Coombes (15:48) brought the team home in 39th place.

The club was able to field 3 competitive teams in the U15 Boys. Theo Beale (13:48), Oliver Wilson (13:25) and Barnabe Faysse (15:40) led the teams out on the 3.88km course. Harry Scott (13:51), Issac Mitchell (13:57) and Zach Danobrega (15:08) all made up places on the second leg before handing over to Sam Boshier (14:02), Isaac Raddon (14:16) and Archie Henderson (14:36). A very close finish saw Bedford's B and A teams in 27th and 28th places, with the B team second fastest B team on the day, demonstrating the emerging strength in depth of the squad. The C team, comprising all year 1 athletes, completed the course in 60th, gaining valuable race experience.

In the U17 Men's race, Euan Supple (12:12) held his position in the stampede down the hill away from the start before working his way up through the field to hand over to Daniel Smith (14:13) on the second leg. Cameron Barnes (13:56) anchored the team, finishing 42nd overall.

Jim Black's Endurance Group

Three of the group had places in Marathon's postponed from previous years due to COVID and set about new training programs over the summer months. Long runs in 30+ degrees weren't quite what they expected, but all followed the coach's plan with a few tweaks for injury and illness. Incorporated into this plan were a few races to measure progress been made and to enjoy the process. Several PBs were set along the way with Henry Bambridge getting quicker every week in local Park Runs and then capped this off with a 5 min PB at the Great North Run. The following week he completed the Berlin Marathon also with a 40 min pb, but was disappointed to just miss going sub 3 hours. This surprised the rest of the group with predictions coming in around the 2.50 mark. I'm sure that will come soon.

Charlotte Kent was convinced to aim for a Good For Age (GFA) time at London and comfortably achieved this with a very even paced time of 3.14. She now has the difficult decision of using it in 2023 or saving for the following year.

Ben Munns was unfortunate to have a very interrupted build up to running the London Marathon in October. He caught COVID just before the Big Half 4 weeks and then had IT band issues between that and race day. He was unsure of whether running was the right decision, even when he picked his number up, was determined to use the training he had managed to complete. After a steady start he finished in 3.27 and thoroughly enjoyed the day.

Josh Jones decided shorter distances were more for him and had targeted the Big half in London as his main race of the summer. Building the distance in training his pace dramatically increased and showed great improvements in his 5K time. In the 12 months he has been training with the group he's gone from 20min 5k to sub 17.30 min. His race went well in London setting a big pb with a time of 83 mins.

On Oct 2nd Charlie Palmer completed his hat trick of wins at the Grewlthorpe 13k race held near Masham in Yorkshire. This is a trail race advertised by the slogan "some of the toughest climbs and best views in the area" and many of the Northern clubs use it as the end of their summer racing season. Dave and Jackie Cheshire moved to Masham a few years ago and have convinced Charlie to make the pilgrimage there each year with the promise of Theakstons Beer, a great night out and a nice run to clear his head. The fact he keeps winning it, with a cash prize for 1st place, only makes it even more appealing. Club legend Mick Shotbolt decided against running this year but hasn't ruled out another appearance in future years. Jim Black acted as chauffeur this year to make sure Charlie got to the start line in the best shape and having made the effort to get there thought it would be rude not to run. He was very happy with 8th place and promised to go back next year.

During the Autumn Andy Blair has competed in a series of races culminating in the St Neots Half Marathon in November. His finishing time of 1hr24.29 gave him a finishing position of 86th overall and 8th Veteran

Boys Endurance Squad

The boys endurance squad has enjoyed a good start to the winter season with large numbers turning out to represent the club. The reinstated Aldershot Road Relays gave many of the young athletes their first taste of the cut and thrust of this race format with the most notable performance coming from the U13 boys who finished in fourth place overall. Carrying this experience through to the National Road Relays at Sutton Park, the squad was able to field 5 full teams across the age groups. Under blue skies, despite it being mid-October, the racing was intense. In particular, the U15 boys A & B teams enjoyed a closely fought battle for training night bragging rights which went all the way to the finish line.



*Charlotte Kent got a
GFA at London*



*Charlie Palmer
ascending a proper
Yorkshire hill*



The Junior Boys were in action at Mansfield

Attention then focused on cross country with the opening fixture of the Chiltern League at Shotover Hill, Oxford. Another good turnout resulted in some solid team scores leaving the age groups well placed in their respective leagues after the first round. Round 2 was closer to home at Teardrop Lakes, Milton Keynes. Again the boys ran well, with large competitive fields swelled by the national Cross Challenge athletes. Harry Scott followed up his division 1 third place at Oxford with a win in Milton Keynes, closely followed by Oliver Wilson for a Bedford & County one two. With 4 athletes in the top 10 and strong team running from the whole squad, the U15 boys top the table after 2 rounds.

In between the Chiltern League fixtures, the boys competed at the National Cross Country Relays in Mansfield before ending the first part of the season at the Eastern Counties Cross Country Championships, held locally at Southill Park, where both the U13 and U15 teams took home silver medals – a fitting reward for the effort put in by all the athletes throughout the autumn.

Outstanding Individual Performances

Cross Country

There have been some excellent cross-country performances.



The First Two Chiltern League matches saw individual Bedford victories

In the first round of this season's Chiltern League at Shotover Hill, Oxford on Saturday 15th October, there was a win for Harry Brodie in the Senior Men's race, with Ben Davies third. Lyla Danobrega finished 3rd in the Under 17 women's race, Imogen Tregenza finished 2nd in the Under 20 Women's race, and Harry Scott finished 3rd in the Under 15 Boy's race.

In the second round of the Chiltern League at Teardrop Lakes, Milton Keynes on 12 November, there were Division 1 wins for Ben Alcock in the Senior Men's race, Rebecca Murray in the Senior Women's race, and Harry Scott in the Under 15 Boys race, and second places for Harry Brodie (Senior Men), and Oliver Wilson (Under 15 boys).

In the Eastern AA Cross Country Championships at Southill Park estate on 19th November, inclement weather combined and an uneven tussocky course made the races a genuine cross country challenge. Lily Farr won individual bronze in the girl's U15 race. Lyla Danobrega was a strong contender for performance of the day, the U17 athlete winning the combined U17W/U20W/Senior Women 6km race outright. Moving into the lead after the initial charge downhill away from the start, Lyla set the pace all the way to the finish to take the Eastern Counties U17 title. Emma Coombes came 12th in the women's race. Craig Emmerson also took the senior men's win in convincing style. Setting a fast early pace that few could stay with, Craig led a small front group through the opening laps of the 12km race. Putting in a fast lap with around half of the distance still to go, the remaining challengers were dropped and Craig soloed to the finish to win the Eastern Counties title in 37:17. Simon Coombes, 6th overall, won the MV50 honours in 41:04 with Charlie Palmer (42:26) taking MV40 silver. There was also success for Imogen Chesterton who won the Eastern U20 women's title.

On the international scene, two Bedford & County masters athletes, Andrew Leach (M55) and Simon Coombes (M50), represented England at the British and Irish Open International Cross Country Event held on Saturday 12 November in Dublin. Both athletes were members of their respective gold medal winning teams. Andrew finished 3rd in his event, and was the second English athlete home, and Simon finished 9th in his race and was the fifth English athlete.

Used Trainers for Kenya

Rob Simmons will be travelling to Naivasha, Kenya for a research project between 8th-14th of Jan 2023 and again in March 2023. He will have spare luggage allowance.

Having been to Naivasha several times now he would like to take the opportunity to take some used, but still good trainers and sports clothes to the local Children's



There were excellent performances at the Eastern Cross Country Championships

Shelter <https://shelteryetu.org/>, which has around forty boys, aged between 10 and 15. If you have any used but still good spikes, or football boots that would also be great.

If you are able to donate, the children would be very grateful. A collection box will be set up in reception at the stadium on club training nights (Tuesday/Thursday) starting from 6 December.

Social Media Coordinator Wanted!

Are you a club member who enjoys posting to Social Media such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook? Would you like to help build anticipation about upcoming events (for example, track and field league fixtures, cross country races, road running races), and celebrate participation and success?

If that's you, Bedford and County AC are looking for somebody to fill a new social media coordinator role. You will set-up and run the club's social media accounts, which are currently either non-existent or dormant.

What does the Social Media Coordinator do?

- Sets up, monitors and controls the club's Social Media accounts.
- Helps to build awareness and enthusiasm about upcoming fixtures, and celebrates successes through Social Media posts.
- Posts other club news to the social media accounts.
- Ensures that the Social Media accounts are aligned with the club's Online Safety and Social Media policy.
- Helps to shape the Online Safety and Social Media policy going forward.

What knowledge and skills do you need?

- An interest in Social Media.
- Energy and enthusiasm.
- Good interpersonal and organisational skills.

If you would like to apply or find out more, please contact the Club secretary by emailing honsecretary@bedfordandcountyac.org.uk no later than Friday 23rd December.



*A young Paul Radcliffe
won the World Junior
Cross Country
Championships in 1992*

Blast from the Past

World Cross Country Championships, 1992

Paula Radcliffe declared herself as a future star when she won the women's junior race in the 1992 world cross country championships on a snow-covered course at Boston's Franklin Park. Although she was aged just 18 at the time, she defeated a quality field of competitors which included the future 3000m and 10,000m world record holder Wang Junxia of China and Gete Wami of Ethiopia, a future world 10,000m champion and her long-time rival.

Upcoming Fixtures

League Matches and Championships

No matter what age you are, there are opportunities to compete for the club in league matches, and county, area and national championships over the next few months – there are Chiltern League cross-country matches coming up, as well as regional and national cross-country championships, and there are also indoor regional and national championships. For details, see the fixture list on the Bedford and County AC website:

<https://www.bedfordandcountyac.org.uk/index.php/fixtures>.

And finally....Happy Christmas!