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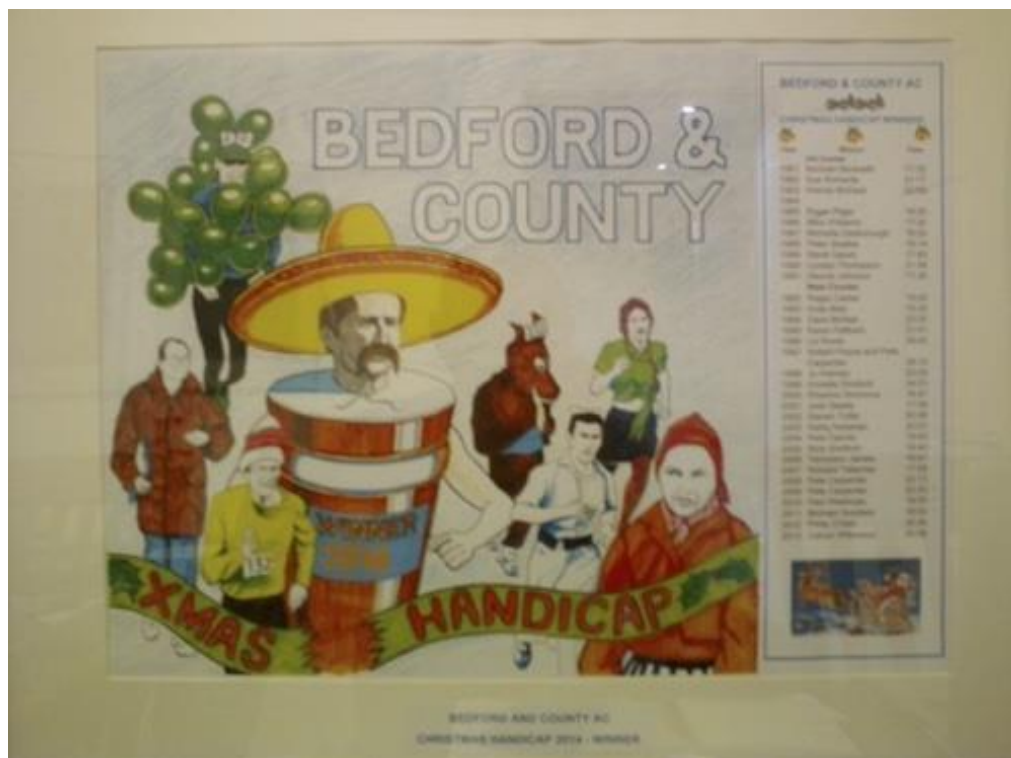
Bedford and County AC Newsletter

December 2023

About the Newsletter

This is the seventh edition of Bedford and County's quarterly 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.

Enter Now for the Annual Bedford and County Christmas Handicap Race



It's that time of year again! Please get your entry in for the 2023 Bedford and County Christmas Handicap which takes place on **Sunday 17th December at 10:30 a.m.**

To enter, contact Tony Forrest:

- **Text or WhatsApp:** 07769 707651,
- **EMAIL:** tony25forrest@virginmedia.com

Registration before the race and prize-giving after the race will both take place in the Sports Hall at Bedford International Athletics Stadium. Please enter soon so that Tony can suitably handicap you.

As well as being a lot of fun, the Handicap is run in memory of late club stalwart, Pete Dancer. Pete made a huge contribution to the club over many years, including as an athlete and a coach. Please make a minimum donation of £7 per person (or more if you like) to the Pancreatic Cancer UK charity in memory of Pete if you intend to run. To do this, go to <https://www.iustgiving.com/page/bedford-and-county-ac-1701624065886?newPage=true>.

There will be some refreshments and prizes after the race. The overall winner takes home the Pete Dancer Memorial trophy, and there are also prizes for the fastest man and woman, the best fancy dress, and of course the much sought-after wooden spoons for the last man and woman to finish. Rumour has it that the Chairman and Treasurer may be battling for these!

The Christmas Handicap poster that you may have seen mentions bringing a wrapped prize with you, but you no longer have to do this as the donation to Pancreatic Cancer UK replaces that requirement.

Please note that all entrants must be 15 or over (this requirement may be waived in certain circumstances).

A Great Opportunity for Jasmine

Sprinter Jasmine Wilkins, presently studying at Birmingham University, has been selected to represent her uni at the prestigious Ivy League series of competitions in America next April.

The trip will involve at least two competitions spread over a two week period, the trip also includes a few days for sight seeing in New York and Boston and visits to the Ivy League Universities.

This selection is almost unprecedented for a fresher student in her first semester.

The uni have noted the hard work put in by Jasmine both in training and in coaching the academy kids, Jasmine really excels when talking to and coaching the youngsters both in Birmingham and at the track in Bedford. Jasmine is like a sponge when it comes to sprint talk and information, and she can put things over in a way that many struggle to do.

This news is particularly good because for the last 18 months Jasmine has been struggling with a hip injury which has had to be managed very carefully running at no where near her full potential, hope fully now that is behind her, thanks must go to Mark Buckingham and his knowledge and healing hands and also to Jack Goodwin for his introductions - thanks Jack!

Remaining fit is of course imperative but hopefully the corner has been turned the last 18 months have been awkward to say the least, many would have walked away, but fortunately Jasmine did not, showing great strength of character.

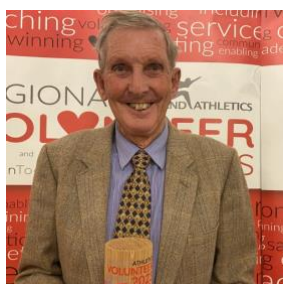
Alan Watts

Award for Howard

Congratulations to Howard Darbon, who won the Contribution to Wheelchair Racing award at England Athletics' East Region Volunteer Award evening.

The citation for the award explains how Howard initially came up with the idea for a wheelchair racing section at Bedford and County after a wheelchair charity race at the stadium, and then inaugurated the section with two coaches and one athlete in 2018. The wheelchair racing group now has eight athletes - all with racing chairs- and a storage shed, and last year Howard obtained further funding for two professional wheelchair racing chairs.

The Wheelchair racing section is one of the only disability sports clubs in the Bedfordshire area, and has given people in the local area a chance to try out wheelchair racing for the first time as well as to experience athletics competitions, progress and make friends.



The award recognizes that Howard's hard work has given athletes from Bedford the chance to represent Great Britain internationally.

See <https://www.englandathletics.org/news/east-region-volunteer-award-evening/> for the full details of Howard's award.

Chairman's Update

Track Update

Since the last newsletter, as many of you will know, the track has undergone its "Track Mark" assessment, which is conducted on England Athletics behalf, and which is essentially a report on the condition of the facilities, to determine if they are fit for training and competition.

To the surprise of some, myself included, it passed in every way, with a few very small caveats which can be readily addressed, and has thus been awarded a further 3 year certificate.

But this merely buys a stay of execution, in terms on the need to resurface the track in due course. I am in regular contact with the borough, and track refurbishment is still very much on their radar. The timescales around this are perhaps a little complicated by the proposals put forward at a recent council meeting for the development of a new Leisure Village complex, which would include full refurbishment of the athletics stadium. I am sure that many of you will have read about this in the local press. It is an exciting proposal, but very much in its infancy, with no timescales quoted, nor definitive funding streams or identified as yet, and there is clearly still much work to do to generate accurate budgets around this, let alone detailed plans. We will strive to ensure that this more long-term, and ambitious aspiration does not detract from a focus on the need to bring the track back up to a standard suitable for national competition, and to a level which will assure its re-certification in three years' time.

You will all know by now the Greenwich Leisure Ltd have been appointed to succeed Fusion as track operator, with effect from 1st February 2024. We have been promised a meeting with them in the next couple of weeks, so until then I cannot confirm what impact, if any, this will have on our relationship with the track operators, albeit I am assured that they seek a "seamless transition," which in the short term is likely to involve rolling-over existing terms and conditions.

Home fixtures 2024

Now that we have certainty around the availability of our track, we have been able to put ourselves forward as a potential host for various league fixtures. As things stand, we are very likely to host the following events at Bedford:

- **Saturday 20th April 2024** Youth Development League (Lower Age Group, U13/U15)
- **Saturday 18th May 2024** Southern Athletic League
- **Sunday 7th July 2024** National Athletics League
- **Sunday 28th July 2024** Eastern Young Athletes League (u13,15,17)

For those of you unfamiliar with these leagues, I would urge you to read Allen's informative article on this subject later in this newsletter.

National league

Our matches in 2024 will be at Trafford on 1st June, Nottingham on 22nd June and Bedford on 7th July.

League Track & Field

Now that the usual round of league AGM's is complete, there is a clear trend towards greater regionalisation, particularly of the lower divisions of each respective league. This seems consistent with the feedback we got from our membership, so we are clearly not alone in

identifying a desire for more local competition. That being said, and to state the obvious, athletes are clearly more willing to travel for a higher level of competition, particularly at senior level.

There is also a secondary focus around reducing the length of the competition day in most leagues.

Paul Gooding

Track and Field Competition In Summer 2024

At this time of year the club and its officials are busy organising the fixtures for next Summer; attending League AGMs, booking facilities, officials and so on.

Most of the competition dates for next Summer have been agreed but a few decisions still have to be made at the various AGMs.

The club thought it would be useful for new parents and athletes to be aware of the competitive opportunities we offer and others that athletes can enter as an individual.

The club is affiliated to the following Leagues:

National Athletics League [NAL]

The NAL is for Senior men and women, including U20s [School years 12 & 13] and talented U17s [School years 10 & 11]. The club is in Regional North [Trafford, Notts AC, City of Liverpool, Marshall Milton Keynes, City of Sheffield]. There are Limited spaces for non-scoring/guest competitors.

NAL Dates

- 1st June
- 22nd June
- 7th July
- 3rd August (Finals)

Southern Athletics League [SAL]

The SAL is a lower standard than the NAL, and is open to Senior Men and Women including U20s and U17s. There are more opportunities for non scoring/guest competitors than in the NAL.

SAL Dates

- 18th May
- 15th June
- 14th July
- 17th August

Eastern Masters Athletic Club [EMAC]

The Eastern Masters Athletic Club is for athletes over 35 years of age. It runs a regional mid-week League through the summer, covering Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire.

EMAC Dates

- 8th May
- 5th June
- 10th July
- 31st July
- 14th September or 15th September (Finals)

National Lower Youth Development League [LYDL]

The Lower YDL is for Under 15 [School years 8 & 9] and U13s [School years 6&7] Boys and Girls. Although the YDL is a National League, it is regionalised. We are in Division 1C South [along with Bracknell, Chiltern Harriers, Oxford City, Vale of Aylesbury, Windsor Slough and Eton AC, and Wycombe Phoenix]. There are Limited spaces for non scoring/guest competitors.

LYDL Dates

- 20th April
- 19th May
- 16th June
- And Possibly 21st July

Eastern Young Athlete League [EYAL]

The EYAL is for U13s, U15s and U17s Boys and Girls. It is for clubs in the East Region. The EYAL is a lower level than the LYDL, but with more opportunities for non scoring/guest competitors.

EYAL Dates

- 14th April
- 5th May
- 2nd June
- Either 21st July 28th July (TBC)

The club appoints managers for all of the above who select the teams and co-ordinates transport to the matches. It will also host a fixture in all the Leagues.

It is worth mentioning that for all club competitions athletes must have an EA licence which is arranged by the club when you become a full member of the club.

In addition there are other competition formats in which athletes can compete, as follows:

Championships

For some of these entry standards may apply:

- Bedfordshire County AA
- Eastern Counties AA
- Southern Counties AA
- England Championships.

Open Meetings

There are several Open Meetings in the region. They are open to anyone of any standard. They are usually held mid-week. Some meetings focus on particular disciplines – for example: middle distance, sprints, throws or jumps

Notable venues are: Watford, Milton Keynes, Kettering, and Lee Valley.

For both Championships and Open Meetings athletes make their own entries. Club coaches will be able to advise on suitable meetings.

Lastly, of course, there are school competitions: Leagues and Championships. Again, club coaches can advise on getting the right balance of the number and standard of competitions.

Allen Adamson

Club Record Breakers

Congratulations to the athletes who have broken club records since the last edition of the newsletter. Here they are:

Athlete	Category	Event	New Club Record
Chloe Kingman	U15 Girls	Pole Vault	2.62 metres
Mia Flynn	U13 Girls	Discus	26.34 metres
Bob Kingman	M50	Pole Vault	3.90 metres
Ellie Garraway	W50	800m	2:28.57
Ellie Garraway	W50	1500m	5:07.05
Will Macgee	M55	100m	11.94 seconds
Will Macgee	M55	200m	24.8 seconds
Tennyson James	M65	300m Hurdles	51.1 seconds
Tennyson James	M65	100m Hurdles	16.04 seconds
Edith Caux	W65	200m	32.17 seconds

News From the Teams

Boys Team Update

We have had a very busy few months since the last newsletter and the boys teams have made a great start to the winter season. It has been great to see new recruits joining us at the Chiltern League fixtures.

Chiltern League

The boys have made a strong impression on the league standings after the first 2 matches at Keysoe and Teardrop Lakes. Positions are:

- U11: 8th place
- U13: 3rd place
- U15: 4th place
- U17: 1st place

Relays

In addition to the Chiltern League, the teams have taken part in with the season opening with the SEAA Road Relays in September. A big thank you to the lads (and their parents!) for travelling for the relays, particularly when the weather wasn't on our side. I'm really proud of all of the teams who went out and represented Bedford and County with such passion! There were plenty of tough races – especially those tense starts! Overall results are:

	U13	U15	U17
SEAA Road Relays	A: 22nd B: 52nd (incomplete team)	A: 24th B: 41st	A: 22nd B: 20th C: 32nd
National Road Relays	A: 28th B: 40th	A: 35th B: 62nd	A: 30th B: 32nd C: 62nd
National XC Championships	A: 28th B: 59th (incomplete team)	A: 45th B: 69th	A: 42nd B: 47th

Squeaky Bone relay	3rd		
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Eastern Championships

This was a technical course, with a water feature that was definitely a must-see for the spectators!

Team results:

- U13 'A' 2nd
- U13 'B' 3rd
- U15 4th
- U17 'A' 2nd
- U17 'B' 4th

Top 10 performances:

- U15 Archie Henderson 6th and Harry Scott 9th
- U17 MacKenzie Kotrys 8th and Theo Beale 9th

County Representation

Well done to Archie Henderson and Harry Scott, who were presented with their county badges in November. These are presented to athletes who have represented Bedfordshire for 2 separate seasons. With the SEAA XC Inter-counties selections being made for 9 December (well done to those who have been selected), I look forward to seeing more of the team being presented with theirs next year.

Next events

If you haven't done so already, please ensure that you let me know if you're taking part in the SEAA XC Championships at Beckenham Park on 29 January. The deadline is 19 December. The Bedfordshire XC Championships is taking place at Southill Park on Sunday 7 January. This is a self-entry event, please check out the Bedfordshire AAA website for the entry form.

Jodi

Some Highlights from Jim Black's Endurance Group



Seeking warmer weather and a fast half marathon, Charlotte Kent and Emily Bousfield travelled to Fuengirola, Southern Spain, to race in warm conditions on 12th November. The race had over 1000 starters from 23 different countries and they came 2nd and 3rd respectively. Charlotte set a new PB, knocking 2 minutes off her previous best and qualified for a championship start for the London Marathon. With a well-organised event and a large prize purse there could be more heading that way next year.

During the summer Fabio Testa undertook the personal challenge of running a half marathon every day for 50 days, with different groups of athletes keeping him company on different days, he decided to finish the challenge by running a full Marathon on the last day before retiring to the pub to celebrate. This block of 7 weeks training averaging over 90 miles a week has given him a really good base to start tackling a range of races and targeting his current PB's. This culminated in breaking the 3 hour mark at Battersea Marathon on 22nd October in a time of 2hr 53mins. His eyes are now set on improving this at either Paris or Chicago (or both) next year.

Several of the group are competing in the current Chiltern Cross Country League and after 2 events we are leading the Vets League. Charlie Palmer is leading the way closely followed by Henry Taylor and Paul Cooper. Andre Bonadies and Stuart Still have also scored with the top 4 scoring in each event. We have at least 5 other athletes running in this category so hopefully between the squad we will continue to score enough points to do well.

National Cross-Country Relays

There were some good team results at the National Cross Country Road Relays in Mansfield on Saturday 4th November. The Senior Men's A Team finished 11th, and the Senior Women finished 23rd, whilst the Under 17 Women achieved 6th place. There were also some excellent individual performances with Lyla Danobrega and Noah Campion getting the fastest times on their legs, Tia Wilson the third fastest time, and Sam Winters, and Lily Farr both getting in the top ten for their legs.

Chiltern League, Rounds 1 and 2

Round 1

The first round of this season's Chiltern League took place at Keysoe on Saturday 14th October. There was a win for Rebecca Murray in the Women's Race, in which Natasha Peters and Lauren Nichols also featured in the top-ten. And there were also top-ten finishes for Noah Campion, Ed Blythman and James Minter in the Senior Men's race, a second place for Lily Farr in the Under 17 Women's race, and a fourth place for Cameron Barnes in the Under 17 Men's race. Archie Henderson came tenth in the Under 15 Boys' race, and Noah was also the fastest Under 20 man home. The masters also ran well, with Charlie Palmer (M40), Henry Taylor (M40), Stuart Still (M50) and Sue Bosher (W35) all getting in the top ten of their respective age groups.

In the team competition, the club as a whole came a close second overall, with the Senior Men, Under 17 Men and the Veteran Men all winning. There was a second place for the Under 20 Men's team, third place for the Under 20 Women and the Under 13 Boys, fourth for the Senior Women, fifth place finishes for the Under 15 Boys, the Under 15 Girls and the Under 13 Girls, and sixth for the Under 11 Girls.

Well done also to the Bedford and County organisers - in particular Hayley Vinnicombe and Claire Perusko - on an excellently run event.

Round 2

The second round of this season's Chiltern League took place at Teardrop Lake, Milton Keynes on Saturday 11th November. There was a win for Rebecca Murray in the Senior Women's Race, 3rd and 4th places in the Senior Men's race for Harry Brodie and James Minter respectively, and second places for Lily Farr in the Under 17 Women's race, Cameron Barnes in the Under 17 Men's race, and Charlie Palmer in the M40 category.

In the team competition, the club as a whole came third, with wins for the Under 17 Men and Veteran Men, a second place for the Under 13 Boys, and third place finishes for the Senior Men, Under 20 Men, Under 15 Boys, and the Under 20 Women.

National Road Relays, 7th October.

Women and Girls

There was a strong showing from Bedford and County's women on Saturday 7th October at the National Road Relays in Sutton Park, Birmingham

The first of the female teams were led out by Eleanor Smith for the U15 Girls A team, on an unseasonably warm October day. Eleanor handed over to Megan Reynolds in 39th, running a swift time of 15:35 over the 3.88km leg. Megan ran another strong leg in 17:03, passing over to Ellie Harper who ran an excellent 16:09 and gained places for the team to finish in 36th place. Sophie Hing also ran a solid first leg as part of an incomplete B team in 18:26.

On the first leg of the U17 race, Lyla Danobrega ran 14:24 for the 28th fastest leg of the day, ending the leg in 15th place, and handing over to Milly Dunger. Milly gained several places on the second leg to take the A team to 11th, running a swift 14:43. Lily Farr gained two more places on the third and final leg to bring the team home in 9th. In doing so, she ran the 16th fastest leg of the day in 14:06. Sarah Percival also ran well on the first leg as part of an incomplete B team, running 15:45.



Tia Wilson ran a storming first leg for the Senior Women's A team, returning in 9th and running a time of 14:37, the 22nd fastest of the day over the 4.33km leg. Emma Smith ran a solid 19:39 on the first leg too for an incomplete Senior Women's B team.

In the A team, Tia handed over to Lauren Nicholls, who ran a solid 16:23 and passed onto Alice Burgin in 23rd. Alice held on to 25th place, returning in 16:31. Natasha Cooper ran an excellent 16:08 to keep the team in 26th place, where they finished overall.

Boys Team

In what was an unseasonably warm day on Saturday 7th October, the Boys team had a great turnout at Sutton Park for the National Road Relays.

The Under 13s fielded two teams. The A team consisted of Fraser, Henry and Oliver, who all had great runs and finished 28th overall. They were followed in by the B team of Harry N, Harry H and Thomas who finished in 40th position.

There were also two Under 15 teams. Archie and Zach, who were both starting out in the 1st leg in the under 15s race managed to get out of the starting pen onto the course unscathed after an eventful start where some of the other boys had tumbled over. The A team (Archie, Finn and Harry) finished in 35th place, followed by the B team (Zach, Isaac and Oliver) who finished in 62nd position.

We had 3 full teams representing the under 17s. The A team consisting of Theo, Isaac and Mackenzie, finished in 30th position. Hot on their heels were the B team (Oliver, Cameron and Luca) who were 32nd. The C team (Willoughby, Jacob and Daniel) finished in 62nd place. Well done to all the boys who raced - you all had great individual runs and many of you have shown massive improvements from last year's relays!

Men's Team victorious at the final of the Eastern Masters Athletic (EMAC) League

BEDFORD & COUNTY AC Men's Team were victorious at The Final of the Eastern Masters Athletic (EMAC) League which took place on Saturday 9th September at Bedford.

The whole team were superb throughout the day, as was the weather, from the very first event the Pole Vault where Bob Kingman and Richard Phelan took first place in both age groups B&C AC were never headed.

The throwing quintet of Darren Kerr M50 (Hammer, shot & discus), Damian Larrington M35 (Hammer, shot & discus), Graeme Packman M60 (Hammer, shot & discus), Simon Eastwood M50 (Javelin) and Roy Chambers M35 (Javelin), must be praised for their achievements as there was little shade to be had all day out in the field.

'The Dynamic Duo' of Tennyson James and Pete Benedickter were constantly involved in the sprints and hurdles ably supported by Roy Chambers, David Olasanyo and Steve Bass.

The middle distance athletes had some tough times with the temperature hitting 30C plus during the day but Simon Coombes, Jim Black, Charlie Palmer and Dave Frampton all stuck to their tasks and all recorded top three finishes. Simon winning the 800m, 1500m at M35 and 3000m at M50. Jim Black M50 provided admirable cover at 800m and 1500m.

In the 2K walk Adam Hills and John Borgas found themselves up against two former Olympic standard walkers but acquitted themselves well to finish second in their respective races.

In the Jumps, Phil Bowers recorded two firsts in the M50 high and Long jumps & a 2nd in the triple, he was well supported by Gav Fordham M35 in the triple & high. Richard Phelan M60 continued his winning form from the Pole Vault by gaining success in both the long and triple.

The day was rounded off by two solid second places in the relay.

Well done to the whole team for bringing home the Trophy in style after three years of being the 'bridesmaids'



Special mention and a huge thank you from the team to all the Officials on the day, without them the match could not take place, and in particular on this day in those temperatures you were all special.



British Masters Championships

There were some excellent results at the British Masters Championships at Derby in early September. The highlights included three gold medals for Tenny James (M65 100m, 400m and 100m Hurdles), a win for Glen Kerr in the M45 Hammer, and two silver medals for Darren Kerr in the M50 Hammer and M50 Weight (with a new PB of 16.54 metres). A silver and bronze medal for Damian Larrington (in the M40 Shot and the M40 Discus respectively), two bronze medals for Graeme Packman (M65 Discus and M65 Shot), a silver medal for Jemma Eastwood, and a silver medal for Ellie Garraway.

The Wheelchair Racing Section

The 2023 season ended on a high for wheelchair racing. Several members have been competing during the summer months and achieved a string of successes. Varun Bandi ended the season by being ranked no.1 in the country at Under 20 level in his classification for all his track events - 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m and 1500m. Sean Chigumba also topped the rankings in his classification for 100m, 200m, 400m and 800m. Both athletes are now on the England Athletics Youth talent programme for potential future Paralympians, attending up to six sessions a year at Loughborough.

Katie Connolly, whose season was affected by illness, achieved two second place rankings in the 200m and 800m, and two third place rankings in the 100m and 400m. Hugo Cracknell, now at Cardiff University, although managing only the occasional race, ranked second in the 200m and third in the 100m and 400m.

Jade Olulode suffered in a car accident earlier in the season when her mother's car was hit from behind by another and has only recently recovered. However, she has now been fitted for a brand new chair for which she has raised over £5000 and which should be ready in January. She is very much looking forward to starting racing.

Josh, who joined the Club in early summer but is not yet classified, has raced and performed amazingly well, winning races at Stoke Mandeville and taking part in the London Big Half Marathon, finishing in 1 hour 56 minutes.

It is also great to see Rebecca Deans regularly coming to training sessions and, whilst not enjoying racing, Rebecca enjoys the social side of the sport and benefits from the exercise it provides.

Finally, Howard Darbon was, unbeknown to him, nominated by Varun's father for an England Athletics Eastern Region Volunteer Award. The ceremony took place at Bury St Edmunds recently, and Howard was adjudged the winner of the category for Wheelchair Racing. Bedford Wheelchair Racing is certainly on the map! It is a great credit to coaches Zoe Luscombe, Michael Blunt and Sharmila Harman and to all who make the group a friendly, hard working and successful group.

U15 & U17 Southern Inter Counties

On Sunday 10th September 13 Bedford & County athletes swapped their club vests for Bedfordshire vests. For many of these athletes it was the first time they wore the white, black, red and gold of Bedfordshire. They came away with 4 3rd place places for Quardi in the U15B 200m, Dane in the U15B shot, James in the U17M 400m and Archie in the U17M long jump. Lily U17W 800m, Verity U17W Hammer and Theo U17M 1500m all produced PBs.

Results:

U15G

- Eleanor 1500m 9th 5.21.86
- Holly 75m Hurdles Heat 5th 13.12, Final 7th 12.43
- Kiana Long Jump 9th 4.34m

U15B

- Quardi 200m 3rd 23.90
- Archie 1500m 9th 4.37.18
- Dane Shot 3rd 12.00m

U17W

- Lily 800m 5th 2.19.95 PB
- Lyla 1500m 6th 4.49.92
- Verity Hammer 7th 34.36m PB

U17M

- James 400m Heat 3rd 56.05, final 7th 55.68
- Theo 1500m 10th 4.22.51 PB
- Zaphaniah High Jump 4th 1.80m
- Archie Long Jump 3rd 6.04m

Outstanding Individual Performances

Tia Gets International Call

Congratulations to Tia Wilson, who has been selected to run for the Great Britain Under 23 team in the European Cross Country Championships in Brussels on the 10th December. Good luck for the race Tia!

European Masters Gold for Tenny

Congratulations to Tennyson James, who won the M65 100m Hurdles gold Medal at the European Masters Championships in Pescara on 29th September in 16.23 seconds. Tenny also won Gold in the M/W65 mixed relay, and silver in the M65 200m. Edith Caux won Silver in the W65 relay for France. Alex Sczhweicki won silver in the M75 Cross Country. Roy Chambers, who competes 2nd Claim for Bedford as a master and for our NAL team came 6th in the M35 Javelin.

Thaila takes Silver at Southern Pentathlons

Thaila- Jade Mason took second place at the South of England U17 Pentathlon Championships last Sunday with a score of 3252 points, exceeding her previous personal best by 459 points.

She made an excellent start to her campaign by taking first place in the 60m hurdles, posting 9.01 sec (previous PB 9.16 sec.) and then consolidated her lead with a superb clearance at 1.65 metres – improving her PB by 2 cm.

Following a disappointing shot (8.18M) from a slippery circle, she was still tied for the lead and despite not finding the board was still the best in the Long Jump with 5.46 M and going back into an outright lead.

At this point, the after-effects of a recent bout of tonsillitis and having 15 jumps in the High Jump began to take its toll. She struggled in the 800m losing the lead to her erstwhile rival Estee Norman of Epsom and Ewell.

Noah Claims Second Place in Cross-Country International

Noah Champion had a great run to finish second in the International Under 20 Cross-Country in Seville, Spain on 12th November. Representing England, Noah broke away from the pack with a group of two other English runners, and showed great determination to claim second

place with a lunge for the line after a sprint finish, just a few seconds behind the winner. He completed the 4.4k course in 13:10. Well done to Noah on a fantastic performance.

Liverpool Cross Challenge

There were some excellent performances at the Liverpool Cross Challenge on Saturday 25th November. Tia Wilson came 26th in the Senior Women's race, and was the fifth Under 23 to finish. Noah Campion fought back from a bad fall that saw him spiked in his leg, arm and head and third from last after 300m to finish 22nd in the Junior Men's race, and Ed Bythman kept up his run of good form as the twelfth-placed Under 23 to finish in the Senior Men's race. Lyla Danobrega also finished 24th in the Under 17 Women's race.

10K PB for Ed

Congratulations to Ed Blythman, who set a PB of 31:13 whilst finishing an excellent fifth in the Brighton 10k on Sunday 19th November.

Wolverton 5

There were some excellent results at the Wolverton 5 on Saturday 18th November, with Jack Goodwin finishing second, Sam Winters sixth, Michael Harrison ninth and Stan Willis 10th. Ewan Supple was also the fastest junior in the field.



Cross-Country Inter-Area Match Selection Opportunities for Seniors and Under 20s

The Eastern Athletics Association have been invited to send Senior and U20 teams to compete in an Inter-Area match that is being held at the London International Cross Country at Parliament Hill on 20th Jan. Everyone who competes will be automatically entered into the UK World Trial and UK Cross Challenge.

Athletes must have eligibility to compete for one of the seven counties affiliated to Eastern A.A. (See <https://easternaa.com> for more information). Please note that World Athletics age groups apply (anyone who will be 20 within the year of competition shall compete as a Senior).

Athletes wishing to be considered for selection should email Trevor Bunch by Sunday 17th Dec on roadrunsecretary@easternaa.com.

Club Development Plan

Good progress has been made on the Development Plan targets for 2022-23. A revised Development Plan for 2024 will be posted on the website shortly.

Governance and Articles of Association

- Club Articles of association have been reviewed and updated – changes to be adopted at 2024 AGM and registered with Companies House.
- All Club policies are in place, on the website and regularly reviewed and updated by the Executive Committee as outlined in the timetable for review.
- The following positions have been appointed – membership secretary (post permanently filled from 01/11/2023), social media coordinator and front-of-house welcomer.
- Role descriptions are in place for club officers.
- GDPR compliance achieved.
- Risk Register in place and regularly reviewed.
- Club ethos written and adopted.

Performance and Participation / Athlete Recruitment and Development

- Four new or returning coaches have been recruited.
- Successful recruitment of athletes of all ages and abilities.
- Regular coaches meeting now being held.
- Coaching requirements regularly reviewed.
- Event management and range of technical support for home matches in place.

Volunteer recruitment, development and retention

- Role descriptions for all club officers in place and regularly reviewed.
- Recruitment sessions for parents held.
- Incentive scheme for officials implemented.

Communication - website, social media and social activity

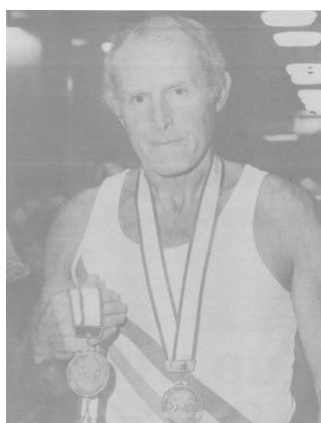
- Website regularly updated.
- Regular Quarterly Newsletter published for members.
- Social media co-ordinator appointed, regular posts on Instagram and Facebook.
- Annual Membership Surveys undertaken
- 2 coaches meeting held with reasonable attendance.

Athletes with Disability / Wheelchair Section

Number of participants increased.

- wheelchairs purchased and 2 renovated.
- The following funding has been secured: £5K Rotary Club grant, £1K GoFund Me, £4.6K for replacement equipment
- Open Day held and attended by Bedford Borough Mayor.
- In addition, Howard Darbon won the Contribution to Wheelchair Racing Award at the England Athletics' East Region Volunteer Awards.

Blast from the Past – Pinnacle of Success



It was 28 years ago this October that Tony MacKay reached the pinnacle of his athletics career winning a bronze medal in the M55 decathlon at the World Masters Championships in Japan.

Until his early forties, Tony's main sport had been rugby where he played as a centre for Bedford Rugby Club, but then increasingly turned his attention to athletics and specifically the ultimate challenge of the decathlon "as there was always something new to learn and improve". He achieved 6th and 7th places at the World Masters Championships as an M50, but that did not satisfy his ambitions. His best opportunity for a world medal would come in his first year in the M55 age group in Japan 1995.

Never one to do things by halves, he spurned the opportunity to stay in a hotel and instead spent the year prior to the championships learning the Japanese language so that he could live with a non-English speaking family in order to immerse himself in the culture of the country.

Tony was in the best condition of his life, but on the first day of the decathlon one of Japan's frequent typhoons hit the stadium with high winds and torrential rain, flooding the high jump fan to a depth of two inches. Undeterred, he said to himself "Great! This is just my weather! – I am going to do well!" and well he did: of the 10 performances, six were personal bests for that year, in some cases for several years, and two others were equal to them – outstanding performances given the conditions.

Although only in 7th position at the end of day one, Tony went to bed satisfied that he had enjoyed an excellent start and knowing that he had a stronger second day relative to most of his rivals.

Having safely negotiated the hurdles (always a likely pitfall for decathletes) by a planned transition to 4 strides between hurdles in the latter part of the race, he looked forward to his strong events - discus, javelin and pole vault. – and so they proved to be, taking him into a big lead for 3rd place. With just one event to go, he held an advantage over his great American friend and rival Ed Oleata which equated to 22 seconds in the 1500m. However, Ed was a much faster runner with a PB more than 35 seconds quicker than Tony's. On paper a medal looked out of the question, but races are not run on paper and two days of exhausting competition take their toll. Running to a pre-determined schedule Tony kept his rival within sight. "Down the back straight I could hear in my head the voice of my coach, "Drive on! Drive on!" he was shouting. I thrashed my way round the final 200m and finished not knowing whether I had done enough. Eventually the result came through, I had made it by a single second – a mere 5 points over the whole competition."

Later that week Tony vaulted 3.40m to win the silver medal in the pole vault, but it was the decathlon bronze that he treasured most "That was the one I had worked so hard for."

Tony continued in athletics for another six years before being forced to retire with a series of injuries.

Outside athletics Tony is an internationally known architect designing buildings (including an airport) in five different countries and being involved in the planning of Milton Keynes as well as the re-design of the Bedford Track. In addition, he is an accomplished artist having mounted exhibitions in Copenhagen as well as cities across the UK. He also the author and artist of a series of three books of pen and ink drawings for each of the counties of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire. He is still very much alive, if not kicking.

Tony Mackay World Masters (M55) decathlon result:

100m 13.33s; LJ 4.82M; Shot (6k)11.01M; HJ 1.43M; 400m 64.79s

100hur 17.79s; Discus (1.5k) 37.38M; PV 3.50M; Javelin (700gm) 40.30M;1500m 5m45.61

Total score 7350 points (Age related) British Record by 600 points.

Dennis Johnson

Social Media

The club is building its social media presence, making more use of the Facebook and Instagram accounts. Social media is a great way for members of the club to keep up with news, club success and information about upcoming fixtures. It would be great to get as many people behind this as possible, athletes and parents alike, so please do give us a follow:

- Facebook: Bedford & County Athletic Club
- Instagram: @bedfordandcounty

We will also need help from you, if you have any photos or news from any event that you would like to share, provided you have the athlete in the photo's permission, please send them via a direct message on Instagram/Facebook or send an email to socialmedi@bedfordandcountyac.org.uk.

Upcoming Fixtures

- 17 December 2023 Club Christmas Handicap
- 13 Jan 2024 Chiltern Cross Country League
- 27 Jan 2024 South of England Cross Country Championships
- 10 Feb 2024 Chiltern League Cross Country
- 24 Feb 2024 ECCA National Cross Country Championships

For the full fixture list, see the [Bedford and County AC website](http://www.bedfordandcountyac.org.uk).