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Bedford and County AC Newsletter

June 2023

About the Newsletter

This is the fifth 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.



Alex and Rosemary Stanton Bursary

As part of the club's recognition of Alex and Rosemary's success and contribution to athlete development upon their retirement, it has been decided to award a bursary of £100 for the next 5 years starting in May 2023.

We are pleased to announce that Eleanor Smith is the first recipient of the bursary.

News From the Teams

Southern Athletics League (SAL)

The first fixture of this year's Southern Athletics League took place at Braintree on 20th May. Overall, the club finished fifth, and the full results can be found at <https://www.southernathletics.org.uk/assets/files/results/2023/23sal3N1Braintree.htm>. Standout Bedford and County performances included:

- Hammer - Glen Kerr (M45) 50.92
- Pole Vault - Bob Kingman (M50) 3.70
- Triple Jump - Belinda Sergeant - 11.70
- Long Jump - Belinda Sergeant - 5.50
- 2000mSc - Lyla Danobrega (U17) - 7:34.4

The next SAL fixture is on 18th June at Southend.

National Athletics League (NAL)

The NAL season gets underway on Sunday 11th June at Bedford International Athletics Stadium.

Boys Eastern Young Athletes League (EYAL)

Summer is finally starting to feel like it has arrived! Well done to all of the boys team who competed on Sunday 21st May – your hard work in training is really paying off. In total we saw personal bests in 24 events, with a number of the boys who are starting to move up the performance levels. Please check out this website to see what your personal level is:

<https://www.englandathletics.org/competitions-and-events/pb-awards/>.

Special mention to Quadri, who set PBs in both his 100m and 200m events and has moved up to Level 8 – well done!

We had an exciting 4x100m relay race with the U15s who finished in first place – a great performance which added more points to the boys' total.

As a joint boys and girls team we finished in 2nd place. I'm looking forward to the next event on Saturday 3 June for the YDL match.

Jodi (Boys' Team Manager).

Girls Eastern Young Athletes League (EYAL)

The second EYAL match on 21st May was a lot warmer and drier than our first at Norwich. The girls had a fantastic day, winning the U13s and coming 3rd in both the U15s and U17s. We had 38 PBs and 10 SBs.

All our relays were remarkably close and exciting with the U13s 1st, U15s 3rd and U17s 1st. A special mention must go to our non-scoring U13s who were just piped on the line to finish 3rd.

We had 14 A string wins:

- **U13** – Bronwyn 100m 13.5, 200m 28.7, Lois High Jump 1.30, Eva B Long Jump 3.73, Mia discus 22.06
- **U15** – Holly 75mH 12.4, Chloe Pole Vault 2.10
- **U17** – Thaila-Jade 200m 27.1, 80mH 13.1, Long Jump 5.19, Eva H Triple Jump 10.56, Casey-Mae Shot 7.84, Hammer 22.54

Our 6 B string wins came from

- **U13** – Kymiriah 70mH 13.2, Long Jump 3.46, Lily Discus 17.31
- **U15** – Neva 200m 28.6
- **U17** – Leah 800m 2.37.5, Jessica 1500m 5.16.7

An individual special mention must go to Eva H in the U17 triple jump who improved her PB from 9.53 to 10.56 with each jump being over 10.00m. This now moves her up to a Grade 7.

Thank you to all the parents who help Martyn officiate again at this match.

Full results can be found on PO10

at <https://www.thepowerof10.info/results/results.aspx?meetingid=518104>,

Tina (Girls' Team Manager).

The next EYAL fixture is on 2nd July at Hornchurch.

Boys Youth Development League (YDL)

We had a number of first timers competing on Sunday 7th May at Bedford. A big well done to them - it must have felt very daunting, but everyone tried their best! There have now been lots of personal bests set, so there is now a benchmark to work on for future events.

The competition in the YDL is very tough, but all of the boys worked very hard and should be very proud of getting stuck in. We had a number of personal bests:

- Archie Henderson 800m
- Oliver Coombes 800m and Long Jump
- Oliver Henderson 800m
- Berkley Barnicoat 300m
- Adam Bowtell 100m
- Finn Bent 1500m
- Tyler Lowe Long Jump
- Luka Merriman 100m

Congratulations!

Special mention to Dane Robertshaw who won the Shot Put A string Under 15's, Daniel Powell 2nd place 100m non scoring Under 15's, Harry Scott 3rd place 1500m B string, Henry Pyecroft 1200m B string Under 13's.

Jodi (Boys' Team Manager).

Girls Youth Development League (YDL)

It was a tough competition at Bedford on 7th May for the youngest members of our club as we were up against very strong U13 & U15 teams from Brighton, Cambridge Harriers, Crawley, Herne Hill and Woodford Green. To their credit the athletes battled very hard in every event they took part in.

The girls had 6 first time athletes, 31 personal bests and 5 season's bests. Our only A string win came from Serena in the U13 800m in 2.27.89, who was nearly 5 seconds clear of second - not bad for a debutant race!

Under 15s Top 3 A string placings

- Holly 75m Hurdles - 3rd 12.28s, and long jump - 3rd 4.35m.

Under 13s Top 3 A string placings

- Mia 75m - 3rd 10.61s, 150m 3rd 20.88s, and 70mH 3rd 12.38s
- Lois high jump - 3rd 1.30m.

Under 15s Top 3 B string placings

- Ellie S 3rd 800m - 2.38.57
- Kiana 3rd 75mH - 13.93s

Under 13s Top 3 B string placings

- Etta 3rd 75m - 11.03s
- Molly 3rd Shot Put - 5.04m.

I am really pleased and proud with how the girls have performed so far this season. Again, a big thank you to all the parents who helped officiate and made sure the athletes were at the track on time for their events.

Tina (Girls' Team Manager).

The next YDL match is at Woodford Green on Saturday 3rd June, and the match after that is at Hornchurch on Sunday 2nd July.

Road Relays

The Southern 6 / 12 Stage Road Relays took place at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London on Sunday 2nd April.

The Senior Men's A team finished seventh. There were alternating long and short legs of 7.2 km and 4.8 km respectively. Results were as follows:

LEG		LEG TIME	POSITION	TOTAL TIME	OVERALL POSITION
Leg 1	Ben Davies	00:21:51	8	00:21:51	8
Leg 2	Sam Winters	00:14:46	5	00:36:38	6
Leg 3	Harry Brodie	00:22:17	10	00:58:55	6
Leg 4	Alfie Yabsley	00:15:00	6	01:13:56	7
Leg5	Noah Champion	00:22:29	11	01:36:25	6
Leg 6	Tom Powell	00:16:25	28	01:52:51	7



Leg 7	John Eves	00:23:02	16	02:15:54	8
Leg 8	Paul Mizon	00:15:23.	10	02:31:18	7
Leg 9	Andrew Headley	00:23:38	20	02:54:56	8
Leg 10	Jamie Webster	00:15:22	7	03:10:19	7
Leg 11	Craig Emmerson	00:22:40	8	03:32:59	6
Leg 12	Joe Strange	00:15:34	13	03:48:34	7

The Senior Women's team came 20th at the Southern Road Relays:

LEG		LEG TIME	POSITION	TOTAL TIME	OVERALL POSITION
Leg1	Ellie Garraway	00:18:20	18	00:18:20	18
Leg2	Alice Burgin	00:27:08	14	00:45:29	14
Leg3	Josie Smith	00:20:45	26	01:06:14	18
Leg4	Charlotte Kent	00:28:06	23	01:34:21	18
Leg5	Emma Coombes	00:23:46	30	01:58:07	23
Leg6	Rebecca Murray	00:16:53	3	02:15:01	20



The National 6 and 12 Stage Road Relays took place at Sutton Park near Birmingham on Saturday 15th April. The long legs were 5.38 miles, and the short legs were 3.16 miles.

The Senior Men were hampered by illness and injury, but briefly rose to 3rd place in the middle of the race before falling back to finish tenth, in a time of 4:18:03 (they were the eighth English team). Noah Champion's storming 15:09 short leg, which gained Bedford 15 places, made him the fastest runner on leg 2, and was also the second fastest short-leg of the day overall. Ben Alcock's 25:51 gained 3 places, and made him the second fastest on leg 5. Jack Goodwin, who gained 7 places on his leg, Harry Brodie and Craig Emmerson were also in the top ten for their legs.

Ben Davies (32) 27:24
 Noah Champion (15) 15:09
 Jack Goodwin (8) 26:14
 Sam Winters (7) 15:53
 Ben Alcock (4) 25:51
 Alfred Yabsley (3) 15:58
 Harry Brodie (4) 26:53
 Craig Emmerson (4) 15:58
 Darren Deed (6) 27:21
 Paul Mizon (7) 16:27
 John Eves (9) 28:17
 Jamie Webster (10) 16:38

Bedford Wheelchair Racing

The competition season commenced in May and several athletes competed at Stoke Mandeville. Katie Connolly set a new personal best in the 400m whilst Rebecca Deans also achieved a massive PB in the 200m knocking some 6 seconds off her previous best time.

On Sunday 28th May the section held an Open Day to thank sponsors and also to invite new comers to try out the sport. Unfortunately no potential new wheelchair racers came along in spite of wide publicity and so we will have to investigate other means of getting to speak to them.

However, Rotary clubs in the area supported the event and we were also very pleased to welcome the newly elected Mayor of Bedford, Tom Wootton, to the event.

Unfortunately Jade Olulode, who had been in a car accident when another car hit her mother's from behind was suffering from whiplash, and was unable to participate, but nevertheless attended the session. Equally, Varun Bandi in the middle of a training session on the same day, hit some starting blocks and his chair rolled over. Luckily he suffered only a



couple of grazes, but his chair was damaged and will be taken to the manufacturers for repair.

The morning concluded with a presentation to Varun of a certificate from Rotary in England for being a nominee in the competition to find the Rotary Young Sportsman of the Year.

Howard Darbon (Manager, Wheelchair Racing).

Jim Black's Endurance Group

Three members of the group recently competed in the London Marathon. Molly Betmead, in her marathon debut, finished in 3 hours, 2 minutes, smashing her target of 3.15 and qualifying for the championship start next year. Henry Taylor and Adam Harris were close to each other around 2.55 mark.

A group went to the Silverstone 10k in May and enjoyed a successful run. The evening was warm and still and with a fast course all were pleased with their times. Andre led the team home in 36.16, Sean next in 36.31 (both pbs), Adam was slightly disappointed with 36.50, Jim delighted with 38.10 and Ellie coming in 8th female overall (and winning her age group) in 40.30.

Attention will move to track races with the squad using the SAL events to get some experience and score points for the team. Watch this space for future results!

Masters

The first EMAC League match took place at Milton Keynes on Wednesday 10 May, and everyone travelling over through the torrential rain was, I'm sure, ready for a thoroughly wet evening, but the clouds broke and the sun shone.

For Bedford and County AC the evening started well with 'new Masters' Darren Kerr (M50) and Glen Kerr (M45) taking first place in the hammer, and on the track Adam winning the 1 mile walk.

Roy Chambers and Dave Folgate continued the winning start in the triple jump, and these early successes were followed with further wins for Roy and David Olusanya in the 100m, Tenny James at 400m, Andrew Leach at 3000m, Damian Larrington, another Newbie, in the M35 Shot, Darren also in the shot, Roy again in the high jump and the winning ways were completed with a win for the M50 relay team of Tenny, David Steve Bass & Simon Coombes.

During the evening there was great support from Graeme Packman in the M60 Hammer & Shot, Charlie Palmer (3000m), Pete Benedickter (400m & Relay), Simon Coombes (400m), and Phil Bowers in High Jump, Triple Jump and relay.

At the end of the evening B&C AC ran out winners with a total of 163 points with MMKAC in second place on 133 points.

Final Match Team Positions & Scores :-

Pos	Team	Pts
1	Bedford & County AC	163
2	Marshall Milton Keynes AC	133
3	Wellingborough AC	107
4	Cambridge & Coleridge AC	67
5	Fairlands Valley Spartans AC	66
6	Biggleswade/Luton AC	40
7	Newmarket Joggers AC	38

Also, a special mention to the Bedford & County Ladies who competed at Milton Keynes :-

Event	Age Group	Athlete	Pos	Time / Distance
100 m	W 35	Amy Frith	1	14.4 s
	W 50	Salena Blackman	1	16.7 s
400 m	W35	Amy Frith	2	79.0 s *
Shot	W50	Salena Blackman	3	6.68 metres

Sadly Amy suffered a calf injury in the last 30 metres whilst leading her 400m race but managed to hobble across the finish line.

Hope to see you back soon Amy!

If there are any athletes reading this who are over 35 and would like to compete please let Jim Keech know - just ask at the track and someone will point him out!

Jim Keech, Masters Team Manager - Mens

Outstanding Individual Performances

Club Records

Congratulations to the following athletes who have broken club records since the last edition of the newsletter:

- John Eves, who set a new club M40 road best for 20 miles at the Hillingdon 20 on Sunday 26th March 2023. His time of 1:50:09 beat the previous record of 1:55 held by Pete Dancer.
- Glen Kerr, who set a new M45 Hammer Club Record of 51.44 Metres at Milton Keynes on 15th April. This beats Glen's own mark from last year.
- Lyla Danobrega, who broke her own club Under 17 and Senior Women's 1500m Steeplechase record on Saturday 3r June at the British Milers Club PB Classic in Oxford with a time of 5:11.06.
- Bob Kingman who broke Tony Mackay's 33 year old M50 Pole Vault club record with a vault of 3.70m in the SAL match at Braintree on 20th May.

Multi-Event Wins for Thaila and Stephen

Thaila Mason won the Boston Pentathlon with a score of 2794 points in her first outing as an U17 on 30th April. She set a PB of 7.84m in the shot and cleared 1.56m in the high jump - only 2 cm shy of the lifetime best. Her long jump of 5.21m was also a standout performance. Meanwhile on the other side of the country, Stephen Simmons was winning the Somerset Senior Decathlon – his first foray into the senior ranks. Using it as preparation for the England Championships at the end of May he scored 6317 points, his highlights being a PB of 50.90sec in the 400m, an equal PB of 1.80 in the high Jump and a vault of 4.10m - only 10 cm shy of his recent personal best.

Early Season Track and Field Performances

Raph Bouju, who spent most of his teenage years at Bedford and County and has now moved to the Netherlands, has enjoyed a blazing start to the track season. At the Challenger meeting in Belgium on Saturday 27th May Raph claimed PBs over 100m and 200m. Raph's new 100m PB of 10.20 seconds currently ranks him sixth in Europe, whilst his 200m PB was a very speedy 20.65 seconds. At the same meeting, Aston Lockwood clocked 22.57 seconds for 200m, and Jack Goodwin was close to his 5000m PB with a fast 13:54.33.

Meanwhile at the British Milers Club Grand Prix in Manchester on the same day, Tia Wilson claimed a 5000m PB of 16:30.22, finishing strongly to come second in her race. This result currently puts Tia in the Under 23 UK top 10 for both 5000m and 3000m (she ran 9:27.08 at



Watford on 31st May). Jamie Webster won the 800m G race in 1:53.88. Jamie also ran a 3:55.77 1500m at Loughborough on 17th May.

Another outstanding performance came from Rebecca Murray, who claimed a 10,000m PB at Parliament Hill on 20th May with a 32:36.32 clocking. This currently ranks her eighth in the UK.



Ben Davies has enjoyed an encouraging start to the season with wins at the Watford Open Graded Meeting over 3000m on 31st May in 8:18.70 (Under 20, Noah Champion, ran an 8:31.66 PB in the same race), and 1500m on 1st May (3:57.12). Euan Supple (U20) improved his 1500m PB to 4:02.61 at Watford on 31st May, and Sam Knee-Robinson PBd over 5000m at Battersea on 28th April in 14:41.28.

In the sprints, Ben Moseray (Under 20) reduced his 100m PB to 10.99 seconds at Lee Valley on 10th May, and Etienne Maughan claimed a 100m Hurdles PB of 14.54 seconds at Watford on 13th May.

Lyla Danobrega (U17) and Euan Supple (U20) both turned in excellent performances at the Steeplechase Festival at Bury at Edmunds on Saturday 29th April, with both athletes well inside the English schools qualifying times. Lyla broke her PB for the 1500m Steeplechase with a time of 5:21.0, which is a new club U17 and overall record. Euan front ran his 2000m steeplechase from gun to tape to win by over 4 seconds in a time of 6:14.7. Lyla and Euan's excellent early season form put them both in the top 5 in the UK rankings for their age groups. Lyla later ran even faster, breaking her own club record for 1500m Steeplechase with a 5:11.06 performance whilst winning at the British Milers Club PB Classic in Oxford on 3rd June.

World Gold, Silver and Bronze for Tenny

Tennyson James picked up gold, silver and bronze medals in the World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships in Torun in late March. First came a bronze in the M65 400m on 28th March in a time of 60.29 seconds. This is a new M65 club record, and also a British M65 Indoor record. Tenny then won silver medal in the M65 60m Hurdles in a time of 9.78 seconds, and rounded off the championships by taking gold in the 4x200m mixed relay.

Reading Half-Marathon

Rebecca Murray finished second in the Reading Half-Marathon on Sunday 2nd April in a time of 01:12:39, and Ben Alcock came third in the men's race, in a time of 1:05:08. These results put both Rebecca and Ben in the top-ten of the UK rankings for this year.

10K Victory for Craig

Craig Emmerson was victorious in the Turing 10k at Milton Keynes on 30th April - Craig's time was 32.13.

Bedfordshire County Championships

The 1500m Championships were held separately from the main championships, on 1st May, and there was a win for Imogen Chesterton in the Under 20 Women's event, and medals for Harry Scott (Under 15 Boys), Eleanor Smith (Under 15 Girls), and Lily Farr (Under 17 Women).

In the main championships on 13th and 14th May, Bedford and County athletes won no less than 26 events! The winners were:

Age Group	Event	Athlete	Performance	Level	Record
U13 Girls	100	Bronwyn Phillips	13.9	L8	
	200	Bronwyn Phillips	29.18	L8	
	PV	Lois Fordham	2	N/A	CBP
U13 Boys	PV	Oskar Eastwood	1.8	N/A	CBP
U15 Girls	800	Eleanor Smith	2:36	L2	
	1500	Eleanor Smith	5.14	L4	

	75H	Holly Vaughan	13.09	L3	
U15 Boys	1500	Harry Scott	4.54.64	L4	
	Shot	Dane Robertshaw	10.74	L6	
	800	Archie Henderson	2.24	L2	
U17 Women	80H	Thaila-Jade Mason	12.74	L5	
	LJ	Thaila-Jade Mason	5.32	L8	
U17 Men	100	Dan Toner	11.65	L6	
	HJ	Zaphiniah Bryan	1.75	L7	
U20 Women	100H	Etienne Maughan	14.54	L9	CBP
	1500	Imogen Chesterton	5.00.8	L4	
	TJ	Jessica Frost	9.88	L2	
	HJ	Gracie Wall	1.65	L9	
U20 Men	400	Daniel Harding-Forbes	51.19	L7	
	LJ	Jerome Bossman-Ceasar	5.55	L4	
Senior Women	PV	Jemma Eastwood	2.2	L2	
Senior Men	100	Riley Johnson	11.96		
	200	Aston Lockwood	22.53	L5	
	Discus	Darrian Larrington	31.83	L1	
	Shot	Darrian Larrington	10.81	L1	
	Hammer	Glen Kerr	44.62	L2	
	Pole Vault	Gavin Fordham	3.40	L2	

Incidentally, the new performance level tables can be found at:

Field

<https://england-athletics-prod-assets-bucket.s3.amazonaws.com/2023/02/PB-Awards-Field-Events-Version-2-Feb-2023.pdf>

Track

<https://www.englandathletics.org/athletics-and-running/england-competitions/pb-awards/>

Among those to excel were high jumpers Gracie Wall , Nathan Cant and Zaphaniah Bryan . Gracie won the Under 20 Women's competition and Nathan and Zaphaniah both cleared 1.75m, which was a PB for Zaphaniah, Zaphaniah winning the Under 17 Men's competition on countback.

English Schools Cross-Country Championships

The 2023 English Schools Cross-Country Championships took place at Wollaton Park, Nottingham on Saturday 18th March.

On a testing course with intermittent showers at Nottingham's Wollaton Park all members of the Bedfordshire team gave of their best, but the undoubted stars of the show for Bedford and County were Noah Campion and Lyla Danobrega.

In the Inter Girls race over 3900 metres, Lyla Danobrega ran the race of her life. With half the race gone, she had worked her way up into the top twenty, steadily picking off other runners to be in 15th approaching the finish, where she gained another place to complete the course



in 14th place in a time of 12 minutes 42 Seconds. Disappointed at not making the top ten and getting an international vest, but nevertheless happy with an exceptional run in such a prestigious race.

Experiencing a heavy shower and a much churned up course previously pounded by over 1600 runners, Noah Campion matched his seventh place finish at the Inter-Counties Championships with another magnificent run in the Senior Boys race. Always in the large bunch at the front of the field, he moved through into the top ten after about a quarter of the race. With a group of four making a break with almost half the distance still to run. Noah maintained his position in the top ten. A strong finish saw him prevail over a group nine runners who were within 7 seconds of his time of 19 minutes 41 seconds. Although there is no international for seniors, he was delighted to have rounded off his best ever season in such superb style.

Other top 100 performances came from Lily Farr - 53rd in Inter Girls; and Imogen Chesterton - 88th in Senior Girls.

Blast from the Past

If 1992 was Queen Elizabeth's "Annus Horribilis", then 1993, was, for Bedfordshire Schools, "Annus Mirabilis"

If the three previous years had been outstanding with 27 medals (including 11 gold) over both Cross country and Track & Field, then the summer Championships held in Blackpool in 1993 were indeed miraculous. The weather may have been wet and windy but the performances shone through the heavy cloud of overcast skies.

The team of 30 athletes come home with an astonishing seven gold medals, which did not include Danny Joyce (silver) who later that year claimed the European U20 100m title.

The seven gold medals constituted a record for a minor county, whilst the overall points total of 94 was also a record which might still stand today but for the fact that the scoring system was later changed from 6 points for 1st place to 1 for 6th place to 8 for 1st down to 1 for 8th. To top it all, Bedfordshire Schools won five of the possible seven trophies on offer, a feat which has since been equaled but never exceeded.

Blackpool 1993 – What a Year! – will we ever see it's like again?

Bedford & County Medalists

Gold	SG 800m	Michelle Mathews
	SG 1500m	Liz Yelling (nee Talbot)
	JB Hammer	Adam Devonshire
	IB Hammer	Nick Steinmetz
	JB Relay Rob Lewis & Leroy Knowles were B&C AC members	
Silver	SB 100m	Danny Joyce
Bronze	JB TJ	Leroy Knowles

A full list of Bedfordshire ESAA medalists dating back to 1925 can be found on the Beds Schools Website www.beactivebeds.co.uk/athletics-association1

Dennis Johnson

Who is the Longest Standing Club Member?

In the last newsletter, we posed the question, who is the club's longest standing member, and in this newsletter we can reveal that the longest standing member is... ...Phil Odell.

Whilst it was disappointing to receive only two responses to our quest for the longest continuous serving members, the two which we did receive were spot on.

Tony Forrest correctly identified Phil Odell in the top spot. Gavin Reynolds thought it was Dennis Johnson, who joined as a coach in 1974. Neither named Dawn Daley-James who started as an athlete in 1972 and now serves as an announcer at home meetings. Husband Tennyson is fourth on the list joining in 1975. The top four have clocked up over 200 years between them; whilst Dawn and Tennyson will pass the century next summer – surely something worth celebrating 😊

Phil joined the club as a 13-year-old in June 1968, so he will chalk up 55 years this month. He was a very successful middle-distance runner excelling on the road and cross county as well as on the track. He set numerous club records most of which have now been superseded except for those he set as an M40 (4min 0.65 for 1500m, and 8 min49.6 for 3000m). By then Phil had turned his attention to coaching and is now an elite coach, with a number of highly ranked individuals in his care. He is the middle-distance coach for Cambridge University and has received a coveted award from the British Milers Club for services to the BMC.

Phil writes:

“When I went to the track for the first time there were only 4 people training. I spoke to great chap called Bill Drown a police inspector who had run close to 50 secs (for 440 yards) in his day. My first race was the Beds/ Northants Sunday league. I think the whole of the team went in Norman Carter’s car - an old Morris something, which started to rattle when it went over 40 miles per hour.

For many years I held the Club Senior Men’s records for 1500m and 3K, running a time of 8 minutes 18 seconds for the latter – beating Simon Goodwin who ran 8 min 24 sec (but he was only 16 at the time!). My 10K road best was 30 minutes 15 seconds.

I was fortunate to run with a great squad of lads including Mike and Simon Goodwin, Mike Shot bolt, Pete Dancer and Harold Quince. Colin McNeillage was our coach. We never went to the National Cross Country or Road Relays until Frank Jackson encouraged us to enter and managed the team. Later Tony Forrest took over the mantel (more than 40 years ago and still going!) and the team enjoyed a sustained spell of success, culminating eventually in winning The National in 2014.

We enjoyed many great days on the track and field in the 1980s when Dave Goodwin managed the team. He was the driving force behind our successes in both the Southern League and National League where we rose to be among the top 24 clubs in the UK. This was some achievement as in those days the competition was really fierce with many clubs fielding their international athletes. Travelling together in a full coach, the team spirit was sky high, even mores so when we stayed away for the long distance fixtures. With characters such as Tony Mackay and the Kerr brothers it was a lot of fun. Everyone supported each other in each other’s events. We were joined up. What days!

The original colour of the vest was maroon, with narrow white and purple stripes. Classic!”

John Milward

The Club’s Greatest and Most Loyal Servant

1954 – 2011

So reads the plaque on the wall: but what kind of man was he? What did he do to deserve such an accolade? How did he serve the club? Why should we be so grateful to him?

John was a humble man, devoting thousands of hours a year working selflessly for the club he loved.



He first joined Bedford and County as an athlete in 1954, representing the club for many years in cross country and middle and long distance running. Whilst never a star, he was always a reliable and valuable member of the scoring team.

John was the first person I met when I came to the track in the spring of 1974. He asked me if I was a coach. I replied "Middle distance and also High Jump." He answered. "We have middle distance coaches, but no-one to coach high jump." At that time, John was conducting six-week introduction courses for new comers. He introduced a 14-year-old girl to me saying "I think she might make a decent high jumper." How right he was! Her name was Ann-Marie Devalley who became the club's first ever Great Britain international and set a British Indoor record of 1.91m.

As someone who worked in the Accounts Department at George Fischer Castings, John was a natural choice for the onerous post of club treasurer, which he held for many decades until his death in 2011.

But one job was never enough.

At the same time, he took on the role of fixtures secretary, which included compiling two small booklets (one for XC and Road and another for T & F) with details of all club matches, area and national championships, and much other useful information – an invaluable document distributed to all members.

In addition to this he was the club's Officials Secretary and also the Meeting Manager for our home matches, as well as recording all results and keeping the club records. Each of these jobs was enormously time consuming, but he did them all, ensuring that everything ran smoothly. And he was a regular official for away matches.

As if this wasn't enough, John adjudicated and prepared the Club Awards (both XC and T & F). In the later years, when he asked for my advice, I was able to witness the meticulous care he took, examining every performance. He was scrupulously fair, always concerned that he might have left an athlete out or not given them the credit they deserved.

It is difficult to imagine that one person could undertake all this work, especially since he did it all without the aid of a computer. One of my abiding memories is of him on a clackety old typewriter, with carbon paper between the sheets to produce two or three copies. (Do younger members even know what carbon paper is? – ask your grandparents) Any mistake meant using tippex or re-typing the whole page

Athlete, coach, treasurer, official, meeting manager, official's secretary, statistician, awards, and probably team manager at some time, this quiet unassuming man was the backbone of the club - thoroughly deserving of the accolade its' "Greatest and Most Loyal Servant"

Dennis Johnson

Older Members Reunite

Following the funeral of former member and veteran athlete, Brian Webb, a group of former athletes agreed that it would be a good idea to enjoy a reunion. Consequently, some 20 athletes and some wives gathered at Santaniella's in Bedford for a most enjoyable occasion. It was unanimous that this should be an annual gathering. So if anybody has the contact details of other 'aged athletes' or would like to attend then please send them to Howard Darbon (hdarbon@ntlworld.com). The next gathering will take place in May 2024.

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.

Some team highlights include:

- For Seniors:
 - NAL matches on 11th June, 15th July and 5th August.
 - SAL matches 18th June, 9th July and 19th August.
- For Juniors
 - EYAL matches on 2nd July, 16th July, 6th August and 10th September.
 - YDL matches on 3rd June, 8th July and 22nd July.
- For Masters
 - EMAC matches on 7th June, 5th July and 2nd August.

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