

The Warwickshire County Tack & Field championships were held in atrocious conditions but, judging by their impressive medal haul, it still proved to be a terrific competition for the contingent of Stratford-upon-Avon AC juniors who competed. The event was held in Leicester this year, since it was a combined meet with the Leicestershire and Northamptonshire equivalents (saving on duplication of officials, etc).

Andrew Pozzi has consistently won medals in these championships in previous years, and this time round proved to be no different with convincing gold medals in the U17 100m hurdles (14:2), the long jump (6:28m) and the triple jump (12:64m). Charlie Burn had a superb win in the U17 400m, recording 50:9 seconds in a tremendous front-running performance, and also won a surprise silver medal in the 400m hurdles.

Chris Bartlett competed in the worst of the weather as driving rain battered the competitors, but he still managed to produce a terrific series in the U20 triple jump to finish the competition wet and soggy but with a gold medal round his neck and a season's best performance of 14:13m. Competing at the same time was Amanda Evans, who won a silver medal in the U17 women's triple jump with a best round of 10:31m.

Other medallists amongst the boys were Oliver Snow, who won silver in the U13 javelin, Henry Warrender with silver in the U15 80m hurdles, Bryn Stretton with silver in the U15 400m, and James Warrender with bronze in the U15 shot.

There were plenty of other Stratford athletes who finished just outside the medals but with good performances, including Adam Snow, James Johnston, Jack Allison and Sam Taylor, who had a busy weekend and was rewarded with a massive personal best of 4 minutes 59:7 seconds in the U15's 1500m, which knocked 37seconds off his previous best.

The girls had a double gold medallist in Eleanor Johnston who won the U13 100m in a time of 13:7 seconds, finishing just a vest thickness ahead of her rivals in a blanket finish, and then was a convincing winner in the long jump with a best of 4:32m.

Georgie Evans had to contend with heavy rain in her high jump competition, but still managed to jump 1:45m which secured her the gold medal, and she also won bronze in the 75m hurdles. Jemma Lane joined Georgie on the rostrum for the high jump when she won bronze with a jump of 1:35m, and also claimed third place in the shot, while Isobel Burn collected silver in the 300m and bronze in the 100m. Katie Taylor is one of the most committed athletes in the club and she competed in several events over the weekend, finishing just outside the medal positions despite her usual gritty performances. Rebecca Pozzi, Alice Burn and Hannah Taylor all put in some spirited performances into their events, which helped to emphasise the current strength in depth of the clubs' juniors.

Paul Hawkins was the club's only senior athlete on show, but he ran well to win the veteran men's 5000m in a time of 20 minutes 7:30 seconds, and in the process take home a well deserved title.

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A few of the missing Stratford seniors were to be found down in Tewkesbury, taking part in their half-marathon, and of the five competing four of them came back with

momentous PBs. This is a traditional half-marathon run from the pretty market town with the first few miles through suburban areas and a rather dull industrial estate towards the M5, before it heads out through pleasant countryside and pretty villages prior to returning through the historic high street. With a new promoter this year (2:09 Events) there were a few organisational issues, but despite this and the wet weather the 929 finishers appreciated the good atmosphere and the reasonably flat and fast course.

Kate Wright (1 hour 26:56 minutes, 44<sup>th</sup>) certainly appreciated the event as she smashed her previous PB and just continues to get faster all the time, although she was slightly unlucky to come up against some quality opposition and finish 'only' 5<sup>th</sup> lady and 2<sup>nd</sup> in her F40-44 category. Emerson Mayes (1:29:33, 70<sup>th</sup>) also produced a terrific run to cap a tremendous year by dipping under that 1:30 mark for the first time with a beautifully paced race, whilst another who has seen great improvements in 2007 from dedicated training – Darren License (1:36:20, 144<sup>th</sup>) – also continues to reap the well earned benefits. The fourth of the PB performances came from David Maudrell (1:42:59, 282<sup>nd</sup>) who is showing that consistent, rather than harder, training can be just as effective for distance running, with the final Stratford member – John Butler (2:17:55, 869<sup>th</sup>) – unfortunately getting the more torrential part of the weather late on in his run.