

STRATFORD UPON AVON ATHLETIC CLUB



NEWSLETTER

Issue No 23 July 2009

You may or may not be aware it is **Stratford Athletic Club's 30th Birthday** this year and that's ample excuse for a get together. So please come along and join us at:

Stratford Rugby Club Sunday 23rd August 2009 12 noon until . . . we all go home

The **bar** will be open, there will be a **BBQ** and the kind people at the Rugby Club have give us free reign to play around on their rugby pitch.

Sarah and Paddy have happily agreed to bring their **Human Table Football** - for those who missed out last year it this is a real scream and so much fun for both young and old.

In addition, there will be a **Bouncy Castle** and the inaugural **SAC SoftBall competition** - strictly Female's v Male's - so chaps / boys, prepare yourselves to be beaten . . .

This is a real family day out so feel free to bring the children (and Juniors can bring their parents!) - tickets are just £5.00 per head to include the BBQ, for catering purposes I do need to know numbers in advance so let me know if you can join us and I'll chase you for some £'s nearer the time.

It will also be the unveiling of the portable **SAC Museum** with a live model displaying some of our 'historical' kit! Absolutely no prize for anyone guessing who the model will be.

Please, let Victoria Jeffs know if you will be joining in the fun – so that she can organise catering etc

Contact her on 01789 293000 or 07969 094488 or @ victoriajeffs@btinternet.com

Tony Jackson Editor

Visit our website - stratfordac.co.uk – for lots more information on the club and our activities

Contact the Editor - Articles / Feedback Wanted

You can get in touch with me by any of the following

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Tel No 01789 - 209102

Talk to me* @ training on Mondays, Wednesdays or on a Sunday Morning

Stratford upon Avon Athletic Club – Development Plan

In the last newsletter I mentioned that I had taken on the specific role of Development Officer and that one of my first tasks would be to draw up an action plan on how the club could progress or improve – and to restate our commitment to the extensive range of activities and competitions that we organise / participate in. The first draft of that plan has now been completed and has been approved by the Committee. This is very much a plan that is ‘in progress’ and is in four sections covering Financial, Members & Social, Administration & Relationships and Development. I will share details of the plan over the next two Newsletters and in this edition are the sections on Financial and Members & Social.

It is important for every member of the club to be aware of the plan and I would welcome feedback and comments on any aspect as the plan is a working document that will be updated on a regular basis.

The **Development Officer** is responsible for updating and maintaining the Development Plan and for coordinating the Officers / Membership as required to help the club meet the agreed objectives.

Financial

Objective

We will look to maintain / improve our financial position by

- Reviewing annually all our sources of income
- Continually looking to improve those things we currently do,
- Looking for new and additional sources of income

and we will proactively look to reinvest that income to the benefit of the club and its members.

All funds generated by either the Senior or Junior Section can / will be used for both / either section as required.

Measure

Using the previous years audited accounts as the base financial position for assets we have set a minimum level of security for the Club at 75% of that figure.

Our objectives are

- To reinvest 100% of all income generated that that would increase the asset base
- Be prepared to willingly support any additional expenditure that adds value to the Club
- Ensure the minimum level of security is maintained.

Any expenditure request that would reduce the assets below the minimum level of security will be referred to the membership for approval.

The **Treasurer** will be responsible for ensuring good governance of the Club Financials and will report monthly to the **Committee**.

Income

The following are specific actions / tasks that we commit to continue to undertake to generate income for the Club.

- Organise the following as money raising events
 - NTRIX, Summer Six, Welcombe XC

- **Race Directors** will be responsible for the organisation of the event and will report to the **Committee** on any proposed changes that would impact income
- The Hilly 100 is a non profit event – see Administration & Relationships
- No additional races will be considered unless senior membership increases to over 150 (i.e. to ensure sufficient volunteer help is available)
- Obtain grants
 - Standing items to be applied for annually are
 - Stratford Youth Sports
- Collect members subscriptions
 - The annual membership fee will be agreed annually by the Committee
 - The **Membership Secretary** will be responsible for the collection of monies
- Seek opportunities for sponsorship
 - Our primary sponsor is 'Simply Run' and we should respect their position when considering other opportunities

We will continually review each action / task to ensure it delivers the maximum benefit to the Club without jeopardising the income stream. In addition the **Fund Raising and Sponsor Liaison Officer** will continue to seek New Opportunities for funding

Expenditure

The following are agreed standing items of expenditure

- Pay entry fees to specific competitions
 - League subscriptions applicable to any competition that we agree to support.
 - Individual entry fees to the Warwickshire, Midland and National XC Championships
 - 50% of the entry fee to the BTF National Club Relay Champs
- Pay fees for any member attending an approved coaching or officials course
 - Courses must be approved in advance by the Committee

Members will be regularly canvassed on ideas for expenditure that would benefit the Club. Individual **Committee Members** may authorise expenditure up to £50 without prior referral to the **Committee**. Expenditure above £50 will be approved by **Committee** (or a quorum where appropriate)

Editors Note

The Financials of the club are in a healthy state at the moment and a massive thank you must go to the Club Treasurer – Malcolm Higham – for all his hard work over the past 4 years.

Unfortunately other commitments have led to Malcolm giving notice that he will have to stand down from this position and the search is on for a replacement. If you have a background knowledge of the subject of accountancy please think about how you might be able to help the club and put your name forward. The Committee can offer lots of support and guidance but lack the resource and expertise to absorb this extra role.

And whilst we are on the subject of money can I remind everybody that membership fees have been due for a couple of months now. If you haven't yet renewed / paid can you do so as soon as possible - Thanks

Members / Social

Objective

We will look to provide a safe, friendly and happy environment to encourage the active participation of existing and new members, irrespective of ability, in all aspects of athletics.

Measures

- Increase membership
 - Current senior membership is 130
 - Current junior membership is 166
 - Our target is net growth of 5% per year.
- Increase membership renewals
 - Our annual target is for a minimum of 90% of members to renew.
- We will undertake a survey of members views at least biannually
- The **Membership Secretary** will be responsible for organising renewal of membership, maintaining details of members and coordinating new recruitment activities.

Activities

The following are specific activities that we commit to continue to support to generate and maintain a positive Club atmosphere

- Ensure a positive experience at organised training sessions
 - Chaperone to be available each Wednesday for slower / new runners
- Organise Shakespeare Competition
 - The **Shakespeare Competition Secretary** will coordinate the race programme and coordinate the results
 - Divisional winners will receive a Trophy and the Club will celebrate their success.
- Arrange social events
 - Identification of opportunities and the organisation of events to be delegated to the **Social Secretary**
- Organise Grand Prix competition
 - The **GP Secretary** will select the competition races and coordinate the results
 - The GP winner(s) will receive a Trophy and the Club will celebrate their success.
- We will continue to advertise and promote the success and achievements of individuals and the Club as a whole through the appropriate communication channels
- The **Press Officer, Website Owner and Newsletter Editor** will be responsible for publicising the club through their respective mediums

As a Club we will continually

- Proactively seek new members and every existing member will be encouraged to promote the club to potential new members at every opportunity.
- Build good and ongoing relationships with other activity based clubs e.g. Rowing and Cycling that may be a source for potential new members.
- Encourage members to compete in competitions and races and celebrate their performances. A folder is available at Club Nights containing entry forms for local, challenging and interesting races.

UK Rankings

Whilst one might not imagine that Stratford AC members feature too prominently in the UK Ranking lists the truth is somewhat different. Covering the full range of age groups and events we have a number of athletes who make an appearance – some more surprising than others. Full details can be found at

<http://www.thepowerof10.info/rankings/rankinglist>.

Can I suggest that you start looking by selecting the V50 category for the 2000 M Steeplechase where the club has the athletes ranked 1 & 2 in the UK for 2009!

Orienteering Run so popular yet again!

A HUGE HUGE thank you to Sarah Bland and Paddy Davies for once again organising the annual Orienteering Run in June, almost without exception everyone who took part ended up running further and faster than they would have done otherwise - surely that's a great reason to take part! There is a lot of hard work that goes into setting up this event - did you ever wonder how all those little stickers got to so many different places? It's all down to Sarah and Paddy's organisation and legwork . . . I wonder how many miles they actually covered themselves to get the course set up!

10 Reasons to Come to Core Stability

1. You can spend all day Friday & Saturday locating muscles in your torso you never realised you had.
2. Listening to the thumps and grunts as we all fall off our fit balls is hilarious (and no doubt all part of the stomach muscle conditioning)
3. Developing an intimate relationship with a 65cm pink round plastic ball can only be life enhancing
4. You too can monitor the progress of the KES School Orchestra in the next room
5. It's a great excuse to go to the pub afterwards, drink beer, eat crisps and play darts
6. Balancing on one leg and 3 square centimetres of your ball whilst touching your nose with your little finger must surely also be life enhancing
7. Where else can you tell inspiring stories to each other whilst trying to survive 3 minutes of the Plank.
8. Practicing the Kama Sutra under the guise of Assisted Stretching is a whole lot of fun.
9. You will get a six pack to be proud of (but you still have to get rid of the fat layer that covers it from too much drinking beer, eating crisps and playing darts)
10. Your running will improve. Really it will....

Core stability sessions are on Thursdays at 7.00pm at King Edwards School (but not the 16th July).

If you are interested in attending and would like more information speak to Rob Minton.

Every year 'Runners World' hold a competition to find the UK's Best Running Club. For the first time we decided to enter and whilst we didn't win we were so proud of our achievements and entry that I have included a number of extracts from our entry in the newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading it and if you have any ideas how we could improve for next year please let me know.

Name of club STRATFORD UPON AVON ATHLETIC CLUB

Website address www.stratfordac.co.uk **Year club established** 1979

No. of full members 134 Seniors 167 Juniors = 301 in total

Age and sex breakdown of members Seniors: 87 male/47 female

Seniors: 87 male U40 – 32 V40 – 10 V45 – 16 V50 – 10 V55 – 5 V60 – 4 V65 – 7 V70 – 2 V75 – 1

Seniors: 47 female U35 – 12 V35 – 9 V40 – 8 V45 – 9 V50 – 5 V55 – 2 V60 – 2

Juniors: U11 – 21 male/20 female U13 – 23 male/30 female U15 – 28 male/21 female

U17 – 10 male/ 7 female U20 – 5 male/ 2 female

Senior membership has grown steadily from 80 Senior members in 2004 to 134 today.

Junior membership was 130 members in 2004, now stands at 167 today.

What percentage of the membership has attended a club activity in the last month?

84% of senior members have attended a club activity in the past month.

56% of senior members attend the weekly club run.

Members also attend weekly coaching sessions held at the track, the membership is split into 3 groups with attendance at 48% for group 1, 43% for group 2 and 74% for group 3.

Circa 89% of the juniors have regularly trained in the various weekly training groups.

58% of eligible athletes competed in the Tom Pink Athletic Festival at the NIA in February.

What efforts have you made to recruit new members to your club?

We regularly hold an open evening inviting new members to try us out, we advertise this in the local press as well as inviting people in the area who have previously raced in any of our open races.

Frequently new members come to us on the recommendation of one of our current membership.

We also get a lot of traffic on our website and potential new members will often check this out prior to making contact.

New members are encouraged to try us out for several weeks before committing to joining the club.

2008 saw the introduction of a chaperone scheme for road running, which involves a rota of a dozen members and is mainly to ensure that the slower group runners (where the biggest pacing discrepancies often are) don't have to worry about leaving people behind.

What has been the club's greatest competitive success over the past two years?

1. Promotion from Div 3 of the Birmingham X Country League – the club has achieved consecutive promotions in this league for the past 2 years, we regularly have in excess of 20 of the clubs senior males taking part in these races.
2. Andrew Pozzi breaking 110m hurdles UK U20 record.
3. Kate Wright qualifying for the Elite start at London Marathon 2009.
4. Debbie Cooper and Pete Evans making the World Triathlon Championships in Vancouver 2008 (with one getting a medal).
5. Rob Minton and Patrick Taylor were part of the team who were placed 3rd in the 2008 3 Peaks Yacht race winning the Tilman Trophy.
5. Keith Hawkes voted as Journalist of the Year 2007 at Stratford District Council Sports Awards.
6. Paul Bearman voted Coach of the Year 2008 at Stratford District Council Sports Awards.
7. Andrew Pozzi voted Young Athlete of the Year 2008 at Stratford District Council Sports Awards.
8. Nine junior athletes selected for Indoor Schools Track and Field meeting.
9. Five athletes selected for National Schools X Country.
10. Conor Guest UK Under 15 Indoor Shot Champion.
11. Warwickshire Sports Hall League (Champions 4 years running).
12. Heart of England League Div 2 Champions 2008.

What races does your club organise or host?

Not the Roman IX – January 700 limit, full in 2007, 2008, 2009. (Voted as a Runners World Top 50 event).

Cotswold Hilly 100 – Charity Relay Race – May – 230 entries (23 teams of 10).

Stratford Summer Six – July – 263 in 2008 (also part of the Warwickshire Road Race League).

Welcombe Wobbler/Trembler and Fun Run – Oct – 124 entries in 2008.

Junior and senior track and field league matches.

What charity or community initiatives has the club been involved in over the last 12 months?

Hilly 100 is a charity race – in 2008 the money was split between – Shipston League of Friends, Warwickshire Air Ambulance Appeal and Gracie (Wright) Appeal.

Juniors - Bag packing for Ian Botham Leukaemia fund raising.

Please add any extra comments explaining why you consider your club worthy of the title of UK's Best Running Club.

Stratford Athletic Club is truly a club for ALL runners and welcomes runners of any standard from complete beginners to four-minute milers, and works on the principle that if someone is interested in running, then SAC is interested in them. Our youngest members start from 8 and the oldest is currently 79 with no upper age limit.

In January 2009, we introduced a new coaching structure on the endurance running side in order to provide a flexible environment for athletes to improve.

We endeavour to provide a wide range of activities throughout the week to suit everyone.

Monday – senior track/hill work (and often 'throws' training).

Tuesday - circuit training class, junior track work.

Wednesday – main social/long run night.

Thursday - core stability class, junior track work.

Friday – no organised activity to allow members to prepare for weekend competition/races.

Saturday - often a competitive fixture and/or coached swim sessions for the triathletes.

Sunday - often a road race or triathlon, otherwise a weekly long run or coached cycle ride for the triathletes takes place.

We have a strong ethic for developing athletes abilities whatever their starting point. Within the club we have qualified coaches who specialise in running, cycling, swimming and track and field, thus providing a stable platform for every athlete to have the opportunity to perform at their very best.

We have a popular senior Triathlon section and are in the process of setting up a junior triathlon section.

The junior section also has its own weekly coached track sessions and enjoy an annual warm weather training trip to Wales or Devon.

For senior members the club also holds the 'Shakespeare Competition', a series of monthly runs organised by different members of the club at different locations around the local area. We also have a Grand Prix competition with athletes competing in a range of open races throughout the year.

Our club prides itself on its team spirit and support of our fellow runners – we recently sent a 50 seater coach to the National Cross Country championships in London with competitors and supporters from both the senior and junior sections.

We have a strong and active calendar of social events with members regularly staying for a drink/food and social chit chat each week after the main club run.

220 people attended the Annual awards evening in November.

In addition to these we organise a club quiz – almost as competitive as our races(!!!), a party at Christmas, BBQ's in the summer, orienteering runs in the springtime as well as smaller social outings.

Our club will this year celebrate its 30th anniversary

Intrepid explorers take to the water!

Eight club members are taking part in this years 'Pubs and Clubs Rowing Competition' organised by Stratford Boat Club, viewed as an alternative source of training and something akin to rather good fun the two teams are looking for a good result on Saturday 12th September.

The mens team, consisting of Andy List, Phil Marshall, Steve Kirk and Tony Jackson are keen to get stuck in but only the training will decide if they've got what it takes. Whilst the mixed team, consisting of Henry Lowry, Dave Knight, Emma Bexson and Victoria Jeffs are determined not to be outdone in their class.

Training starts with avengence in July and all advice from more experienced rowers would be much appreciated.

On the day of the event the team expect a ready group of supporters cheering on from the riverbank, so if you are around on that day please do come down and support your club.

Look out for a full report in the next newsletter.

Wednesday Coaching Sessions

After a successful pilot of the Wednesday Coaching Sessions these will now continue indefinitely. There is a slight change to the format in that we have moved to just two groups to ensure that there is not too long a gap between sessions. To give you advanced warning Rob has produced a provisional timetable as below. Hopefully you will all know which group you are in (any queries to Rob please) but there is no problem in you attending sessions that fit your own availability or training schedule. (and for the Track 'junkies' you can attend every session if you want!)

Group 1

8th July
29th July
9th September
21st October
11th November
9th December

Group 2

22nd July
19th August
16th September
28th October
18th November
16th December

Quote of the Month

"I am not involved in tennis, I am committed. Do you know the difference between involvement and commitment? Think of ham and eggs. The chicken is involved, the pig is committed" -
Martina Navratilova

A Different Challenge - Away from it all!

Martin Todman

Having battled our way through the preparations for and participation in, a family wedding, Alison and I sought rest and rejuvenation with an easy paced, away from it all, holiday up in the Outer Hebrides. For those who are geographically challenged, that's Lewis, Harris, North & South Uist, Benbecula, Barra and other islands out on the North West fringes of the UK – on the way to Iceland.

Fearing the loss of the masochistic pleasure of running on the excuse of a 'holiday', I took the opportunity to check the net for any races in the vicinity while we were visiting. Oh delight, the Stornoway Half Marathon was on, so the application was soon in the post and our itinerary adjusted to incorporate Stornoway on the appropriate day. Following leads from the Stornoway Running and Athletic Club (SRAC) site a further intrigue unfolded, The Hebridean Challenge!

This challenge consists of 5 half marathons organised on the Hebrides each year, Lewis, Benbecula, Skye, Barra and Harris. The idea is to complete at least 3 of them in one year. Prizes are awarded for different categories and a team prize for the fastest three runners from any one club – oh, and everyone who completes the challenge receives a *'quality running t-shirt with the HEB3 logo designed by Iain Bom Mackay of SRAC'*.

These islands offer a very different experience:-

- Stornoway is the only real centre of population with about 6,000 residents (Stratford has about 24,000) in an island chain that stretches for 130 miles.
- The Northwest Coast of Lewis boasts the most densely populated rural area in the UK (ask a geographer to explain that!).
- All races are on a Saturday as The Lords Day Observance Society remains strong in the islands.
- A 'fast' road might be described as a single-track road where passing places are more than once every half mile!
- There are endless beautiful, deserted sandy beaches.
- Dramatic mountains and coasts, especially on Harris.
- Historic sites abound, when water was the main means of transport an island chain was alongside a highway and therefore there were many settlements!
- Barra claims to be the only airport in the world offering scheduled flights using a beach runway (schedule dictated by the tides!).
- There is a seemingly ever present, strong Southwesterly breeze, remember this when planning any training runs.
- If the wind stops the midges come out.
- SRAC runners wear very fetching tartan shorts (not kilts) for running.

I assume the challenge is all part of encouraging visitors to the islands and contributing to the local economy, but these islands are not Ibiza with endless hotels! The Barra half (known as the Barrathon) is limited to 150 entrants, the island it seems could not cope with more. The course is basically once round the island but is sufficiently popular that it is usually booked up months in advance. Speaking to a regular participant from Brighton, it appeared that last year the Benbecula half only had 76 finishers, but was still a big event for the island! Harris had some 98 finishers, while Skye, the most accessible of the islands being in the Inner Hebrides, listed 250 finishers.

As for my efforts in The Stornoway Half 2009? There was a strong breeze, it did rain, I was overtaken by a runner pushing a buggy on an uphill stretch - very demoralising (at least Mick 'n Phil have the good grace to overtake on the flat - or downhill)! But I achieved my highest placement in any half marathon and finished 32nd out of(I'll leave you to check for yourself if you really want to) and shaved a few more seconds off my PB, a creditable performance I thought for an 'easy paced, away from it all, holiday up in the Outer Hebrides'. The rest of the holiday was good too, a very different way of life up there with different priorities and room for some quite qwerky inhabitants. Scenery was magnificent and the beaches really were stunning. There was sun and rain every day in varying proportions, but while we were there, no midges.

So if you are fed up with jostling with 30,000 others at the start of a race, want to improve the odds of your winning a race category, how about one of the Hebridean halves? Or what about The Hebridean 3 Race Challenge? Maybe we could persuade the committee to subsidise a team entry – what do you think Paul?

Track and Field – Fun for all!!

Last year the rules for the Midland League T&F competition were changed so that instead of separate Mens and Ladies meetings we now compete as a combined team. From a club perspective this has been a big success as it has enabled an integration of the sexes that one could not previously have imagined. With every point vital (especially in what is a very tight division) team spirit is the order of the day as athletes sometimes compete in strange events for the overall good of the team – especially when team numbers are low because of fixture clashes and injury / illness / unavailability. To give you a flavour of the team spirit here is a copy of Sarah's Thank You to all the Lady team members for their efforts at Burton.....

I must add a massive thank you to everyone for Saturday's efforts at Burton. Whilst we may not have won, with just seven of us we managed to get points in every single event which is unbelievable!.

I must add my special thanks too –

Annabel for great solid performances in the throws as always – sorry you missed your favourite one!

Vanessa particularly as she was heading for a day of catching up at home, getting a bike ride in, waxing her legs and all those things that you really look forward to having time to do. And at 6.30pm on Friday she got called up! Without hesitation then or all day on Saturday she got lumbered with extra event after extra event and she ended up doing the 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, the Shot and both relays!!

Zoe – I am really sorry you had to come all that way to end up being disqualified through no fault of your own and having run your socks off. It was worth it for us though as it got your Mum

out – and she won us good points! I am looking forward to you being with us next year and whupping Leamington's arse in the 3000m!

Tash – being thrown right in the deep end never having been to anything like it before. For stepping into the Javelin at the very last minute with a smile and chucking it over 15m, for recording some great times in the sprints, and then having to do the High Jump too and coming third! (I hear afterwards that you used to skive off school on the days that you had to do high jump!) For those that didn't know, Tash had to go and do the 100m in the middle of the High Jump, and she came back afterwards and gave it a go at 1m.45!

Katie for running and jumping brilliantly in a lot of pain, sorry you had to run the last relay leg on your own at the back!! And to Karen for letting her run when you must have been worried!

Emma for doing seven events plus a relay, with a smile on her face and always doing well at it. I We have had some laughs together over the last two years learning on the job. Thanks to you all once again. Please keep the 2nd August free – Paul and I will try our very best to get some additional help!

Unfortunately we had many people missing due to injury, illness & holidays so overall the result wasn't too good and we've dropped into 3rd place. (see League Table below)
There's one match to go on 2 August at Leamington so not only is it local but it is also our first opportunity to host / organise a meeting in this league. Big thanks to Paul H for getting things in place (I am sure that Michael Lane – see separate article - and he can share experiences!!)
If we win we can still get second place and promotion so please let's have everyone available for that last one – and if your not competing but can spare some time please come along and support the team.

Cannock & Stafford	18	1122
Broms & Redditch	13	1062
Stratford	10.5	1005.5
Leamington	10.5	954
Newport	8	942
Burton AC	3	738.5

Club Championships

The Club Champs this year will be held on Saturday 12th September. At the time of writing the final running order for the day had not been finalised but this doesn't stop you putting this date in your diary and using the next few weeks to get in some last minute T&F training. In addition to the athletes this request extends to all the helpers and officials out there – without your help the day wouldn't be the success it has been in the past. Full details of the day will follow

Junior section club records 2009 to June Lucy Titcomb, PB and Club Record recorder

I've had a very busy season to date updating the junior section's personal bests and club records. No sooner have I caught up with one competition's successes than I receive the next and club records have been falling like nine pins.

However, before I start on this season, I must report on a record broken last year but not recognized at the time. **Molly White (under 13)** ran 1200m in 4.14.1 not once but twice in 2007. A belated congratulations to Molly on this achievement.

Andrew Pozzi (under 20) started the ball rolling this season with an under 20 record in the 110m hurdles in April when he ran 14.52s. He has been shaving further time off since with a run of 14.1s in early May and a magnificent 13.78s later that month.

At the other end of the junior's age range **Ben Taylor (under 11)** met his sister Katie and the other 'not so warm weather training' athletes returning from their trip to Saunton Sands sporting two medals won at Tipton. Ben now shares the club record for 75m (11.4s) and is the under 11 record holder at 150m (23.00s) and is the fourth member of the Taylor clan in the junior section.

Conor Guest (under 15) has had a magnificent season and his name appears on the 2009 club records sheet no less than nine times. Conor excels in shot, hammer and discus and has broken the club record in shot twice this season (currently 13.49m); hammer three times (38.25m) and discus four times (37.8m). These distances are all above English Schools' standards and puts Conor 5th, 21st and 12th respectively in the UK at present.

Mid April saw the start of the **under 15's Lucy McDermott's** onslaught on middle distance club records with a record of 5.05.3 in the 1500m. Since then Lucy has broken the 1500m record again and the 800m record three times and is currently not only the under 15 but also the senior record holder of the 800m with an English Schools' qualifying time of 2.18.3.

(Juniors can hold senior records in running and jumping events but only in hurdles and throwing events where the height of the hurdles or weight of the implements is as used in the senior class).

Lucy's running mate in these events is **Zoe Chandler (under 15)**. Zoe currently holds five club records. Her one mile record was achieved last season and her 4 mile road race in Edinburgh on New Year's Day in 25.27 put her 34th in all age groups in the UK. She followed this up with a magnificent time of 19.02.0 for the 3 mile run at the London mini-marathon. She competes with Lucy McDermott over 1500m and now holds that record at 5.03.5 and has the 3000m record at 11.01.72. The latter time is also a senior club record. Lucy and Zoe are certainly a pair to watch.

A younger girl excelling in the 1500m is club newcomer **Cara Williams (under 13)** who set a record of 5.28.6 in that event in June.

A combined events competition at Nuneaton at the end of April saw a host of club records smashed with **under 13s Jeniva Chambers** gaining two records, 80m in 11.1s and total quadrathlon points of 1832; **Chloe Connor** running 600m in a new record time of 2.00.9 and **Jo Noble** setting the boys' 80m record at 11.6 and quadrathlon record of 1340.

Another under 13 achieving a club record in June is **Rory Dwyer** who ran the 75m hurdles in 14.0s. equalling the record set by Conor Lawson Evans last year. Rory is not far off the u.13 club record of 1.45m for the high jump, only two more centimeters to equal that one.

The same competition saw **Eleanor Johnston (under 15)** break three club records in the pentathlon, running 12.1s in the 75m hurdles, jumping not only an under 15 but senior club record 5.03m in the long jump and achieving a total score of 2531 in the five events. In addition to these records Eleanor has achieved English Schools' standards in 100m (12.77s) and 200m (26.26s) although under 15 club records in these events currently stay with Emma Seccombe's times of 12.7 and 25.9 achieved in 2003.

The final under 15 record goes to **Jackson Goodrum** who, in his first year in this age group, threw the javelin 37.01m. Jackson set an under 13 record in this event last year and obviously means to continue this trend.

The under 17 high jump record is held jointly by **Georgie Evans** and **Imogen Green** who have both jumped 1.55m this year and are not far off the senior club record of 1.57m. Imogen continues to chase the under 17 javelin record of 33.56m set by Lindsey Gittus in 2001. She is creeping ever closer with a throw of 31.08m in mid June.

Another athlete chasing club records in the under 15 age group is Adriano Ritchie. His PBs for the 100m, 200m and 400m stand at 11.81s, 24.6s and 54.06s. The latter time reaches the English Schools' standard and the others are not far off but club records for the age group are 11.57s, 23.9s and 52.79s. We're sure you'll achieve at least one of these by the end of the season Adriano.

Both **Amanda Evans** and **Emma Titcomb** (under 20s) have continued to set new records in that age group. Amanda has broken the triple jump record three times, most recently with a wind-assisted but superb jump of 11.01m (previous record 10.89m) and holds the 100m record for this age group with a run of 13.3s in June. Emma holds under 20 and senior records in 100m hurdles at 16.0s and 400m hurdles (68.3s), in which she has broken her own record twice this season. Finally four juniors were members of the 4 x 400m senior relay teams who have set senior club records this year. At the April meeting of the Men's and Women's league **Katie Taylor (under 17)**, **Nienke Verwer (under 17)**, **Emma Titcomb (under 20)** joined Emma Bexson (senior) to run a new club record time of 4.30.5. This record was broken a month later at the May meeting of the same league with Katie and Emma being joined by **Shaunie Warner (under 17)** and Sarah Bland (senior) to run the relay in 4.28.8.

Many congratulations to all athletes for achieving personal bests too numerous to mention and these superb club records.

Organise a Young Athletes League meeting! How difficult can that be?

It all started back in November when Stratford AC re-entered the Young Athletes League. It was decided that we should host a meeting as it had been a few years since the last time.

As I was to be Team Manager, somehow the organising of our meeting was to become my responsibility. Where should I start? Its February loads of time.

Track! Leamington was the obvious choice because it had full facilities and an 8 lane track and it is the nearest to Stratford. I contacted Warwick District Council who confirmed that we could

use the Edmondscote Track. 'That was easy enough' this should be plain sailing. Ha, I should have known better!!

Officials, Track Ref, Field Ref, Chief Timekeeper, Starter. All these are highly qualified positions with many years of experience and at Stratford we don't have any officials at that level. Without these the event cannot go ahead....and finding them is like hens teeth...very rare.

Our event was on the same day as the Midland seniors & U20 Champs in Birmingham. I'd been given quite a few names to fill these important roles by Midland Counties, surely they couldn't all be in Birmingham on the same day can they? Oh yes they can.

It was the middle of March no need to panic, I have loads of time. How wrong could I have been? Many phone calls were made, lots of e-mails sent and received. It was now the beginning of May, seven weeks to go I had filled most of these positions. I was still short of a Track Ref. It was time to contact the other competing teams to see if they could help. Thankfully the last position was filled at the end of May.

Whilst I was trying to sort out senior officials I was also trying to drum up volunteers from within the club to help. We have a solid group of qualified officials who are always willing to do there bit at competitions. But this was a good opportunity to get new people on board who have not helped before. There would be lots of things to do on the day. After all we were hosts, it was vital that we had the support from everyone.

Part of the day was to provide refreshments. As far as I was concerned I had got enough to do without thinking about this as well. We had plenty of people willing to help on the day. But no one was willing to organise the refreshments. So whilst many were talking about what was needed for the tuck shop it was left to me to sort it out.

Two weeks before the event I sent letters to the other seven teams who would be competing on the day, with start times, events that they will be officiating, map and directions. Letters were also sent to Senior Officials with similar info and timetable.

The weekend before Helen and I purchased all the refreshments (sweets, drinks, crisps, tea, coffee etc) Officials needed to be provided with a packed lunch. These were done by Helen and Carolyne Johnston the night before.

Whilst rolls were being buttered and filled, Kim Johnston and I were going through the software that was needed for the results. 'Oh my word' there were loads of spreadsheets. It looked very complicated to me (I'm not IT savvy) Thankfully Kim works with computers and after a couple of phone calls and a few hours trawling through the results sheets and putting in some fictional results, I was confident that Kim would be O.K.

9.00am 21st June. I arrived at the track. Warwick District Council had provided a couple of groundsmen to help move things around. Equipment was sorted, high jump and pole vault uprights calibrated, 80 hurdles were dispatched all around the track. The water jump took about three hours to fill.

People started to arrive setting up camp all around the track. First aiders arrived, they needed to be out of the way in case they needed to treat a patient. The Ice cream man turned up, he needed a hot day.

All officials signed in. Declaration sheets were given to Kim to input onto the software. The Kettle was on. It was now 11.00am and time to start the first event. Everyone knew what was expected of them. Before I knew it, it was 4.30pm and the relays were about to start. The meeting was nearing its conclusion. Everything had passed off without a hitch. Will I do it again????

I would like to thank everyone who helped either officiating or in the tuck shop making the event an enjoyable day for all that attended. Thanks to Clare Guest for sorting the refreshments rota, Carolyne for helping with the lunches, Kim for doing the scoring. Big thanks to Chris Connor who stepped into the role of Starters Assistant at the very last minute and did a fantastic job and my lovely wife Helen who kept the crowd entertained on the PA system.

I have been told that there are very few people willing to organise this kind of events. It is hard work but when it comes together it is well worth it.

Michael Lane

U15 Coach, YAL team manager, Event organiser, general dogsbody

The club owes Michael a big debt of thanks for spending literally hours organising the YAL match...he still hasn't answered if he would do it again....but when everyone steps up and helps it makes it worthwhile.

Thank you to everyone who helped and in particular to Michael
Paul B