



# BMC News

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH MILERS' CLUB  
VOLUME 14 ISSUE 2 - WINTER 2017

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# BRITISH MILERS' CLUB

Founded 1963

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All official correspondence to the BMC should be addressed to the National Secretary at the above address. All matters so received will be addressed by the national committee at their next meeting. All other requests should be sent to the BMC Administrator Pat Fitzgerald and will be dealt with as soon as possible. Matters concerning specific areas of the club should be sent to the relevant person from the above list.

The BMC are always looking to expand its network of people and locations that host BMC races. If you feel that you can help or want to get involved then please contact the BMC Administrator Pat Fitzgerald.



# EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

On your marks....toes behind the lines.....  
BANG!

As you race out of your pen in the midst of cross country season, BMC News Winter 2017 is up and running at breakneck speed as our Chair Tim Brennan gets you in the driving seat with his notes of encouragement.

You will find our BMC RETRO section to be a blast from the past. 80s superstar Peter Elliott will give your reading a silver lining, before Fabled Founder Frank calls to you from beyond the grave and we flick through

some back copies of this very magazine.

We move on to our BMC AWARD WINNERS section where Horwill Scholarship Winner Russ gives us the Best of his research before Laura Muir (pictured below with the Editor) makes sure our magazine is not Scot free of mouth-watering interviews. Fellow World championship representatives and stalwart club members Jess Judd and Jake Wightman add some BMC STARS quality in Part Three.

In this festive season Part Four wraps up a BMC PRESENT for you. We celebrate the pivotal role of the universally loved Pat

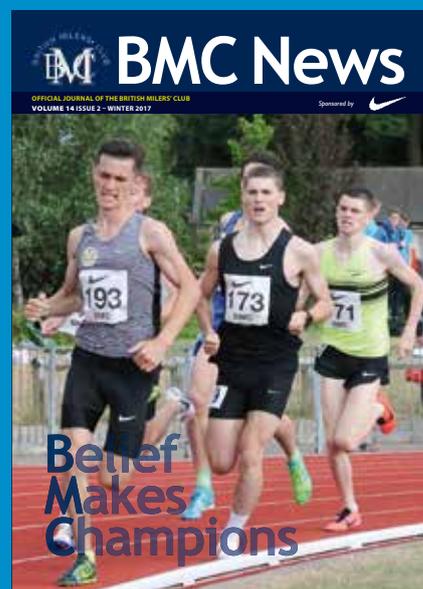
Fitzgerald whose unsung volunteerism for us has spanned no less than six decades before painting you a club in pictures as we cast our eyes back over a summer season in review.

We fix our gaze ahead to the FUTURE in Part Five with coverage of David Lowes' annual Academy plus a 'Jem' of an interview with our Young Athlete of the Year, Miss Reekie. We then jet off to the Mediterranean with a man called Carlo offering us a 'Gripping' tale of his own INTERNATIONAL career in the context of Italian miling.

Don't go playing truant before you read Part seven of our magazine which will school you in terms of COACH EDUCATION AND TRAINING. There are interviews with BMC Coach of the Year, James Thie, and Loughborough legend George Gandy plus cracking Conference coverage from our annual Symposium held in the shadow of the Olympic stadium as battle raged at those August World Championships. The bookish Brendon Byrne tells you what is out there on the market before we take our BMC caps off to pay our respects to Lifetime Services to Coaching Winner, Gordon Surtees, who passed recently.



Annual BMC Awards and British Athletics Writers Dinner- Tower Hotel. London.



**Cover:** Cover photo shows Mens 1500m 'C' race at Watford Grand Prix.  
Photo © David Lowes

**Printed by:**  
Headley Brothers Ltd,  
The Invicta Press, Lower Queens  
Road, Ashford, Kent TN24 8HH.

**Photography:**  
Photographs by Mark Shearman unless  
specified otherwise.  
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# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Looking back on the 2017 season we can safely say that it was one of our best. Our competition structure is intended to provide a pyramid of progression so that all members have the chance to fulfil their potential. You therefore want that pyramid to be both broad and high. In 2017



at the top we had a British Record, five World Championship qualifications and three BMC records. The base is also broadening with over six thousand finishers in our races and our biggest ever meeting at the Milton Keynes PB Classic. You can read more about the season elsewhere in this magazine.

The BMC Grand Prix has now been going 21 years and throughout that time we have had Nike as our sponsors, it must be one of the longest lasting sports sponsorships. We are very grateful for their support over the years. It seems though that Nike's sponsorship is coming to an end. Over the last months we have been in a search to find new backing, but to date have nothing in place for 2018. Given the success of our races and the significant part they have played in the development of nearly all the countries international championship competitors, we hope some form of sponsorship or financial support can still be found. We would appreciate hearing from anyone who is aware of potential BMC partners who could help sustain or ideally develop our activities in providing

a pathway for future medallists and internationals.

2017 has seen the retirement of Mo Farah from track running, going out in style with Gold and Silver medals at the home world championships. His domination of world 5000m and 10,000m over the last seven years has been incredible, making him our most successful ever championship athlete. Amongst all his great times his mile PB remains one from a BMC race, dating from 2005 and Crystal Palace.

## Coaching

This year we have tried to put more emphasis on the coaching side of the club, recognising that it is through excellent coaching that standards will rise. The direction is to both appreciate coaches and to provide value. The BMC coaching awards aim to provide the recognition for current and life time achievements. This year we have a very deserving winner of the Coach of the Year in James Thie. This may be the first time that a winner of this award has also been fit enough to compete in the Grand Prix! Bud Baldaro the winner of the Life Time achievement award could not be a more deserving, or from the reaction on Facebook, a more popular winner.

Our Coaching Seminar at Stratford during the World Championship was an excellent event. The idea was to take advantage of international coaches

being at the World Championship. Lead speaker Nic Bideau, had 24 athletes at the championship, so this was certainly achieved. We also made entry to the Grand Prix meetings free for BMC coaches and held coaching corners at four of the meetings. The corners have proved popular. They are an informal setting to discuss a particular coaching topic with guest speakers. Putting the corners at the start of the meetings hopefully means there is little, or no overhead in time for those attending, as coaches would in any case be there to watch their athletes race.

The BMC has a wealth of coaching talent on the committee, our most recent joiners are George Gandy and Neville Taylor both of whom have coached world level medallists. Having so many active coaches involved means we can understand and react to changing needs in the middle-distance community. When we reflect on the success of the BMC season, it is the success of the athletes and coaches who make up our membership. The flip side of that is that we need the coaches and athletes to own the success of the meetings. All coaches who have athletes running in BMC meetings should want to be members and be prepared to contribute by getting their athletes to commit to races and by helping us find pacemakers.

## Gordon Surtees

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Gordon Surtees. He was someone I looked forward to seeing at our meetings and he would always have some no-nonsense, common sense opinions to pass on. His family have told us how much he valued his award two years ago of the BMC lifetime coaching achievement trophy. He will be greatly missed and we offer our sympathy to his family, friends and athletes. A full tribute appears in this magazine.

## BMC

Our indoor season is now planned out. Hopefully it can benefit those preparing for the Commonwealth Games or the World Indoors in Birmingham.

I hope you enjoy the magazine, my thanks to our editor Matt Long for pulling it all together. It's a big task and any volunteers to help the production would be appreciated.

Enjoy the winter.

Tim Brennan  
BMC Chairman



*Proud As Punch- Coach Andy Young with his BMC Athlete and Young Athlete of the Year.*

# THE SUMMER OF 87

“HE WAS THERE WHEN IT MATTERED” – **PETER ELLIOTT** RECALLS THE SUMMER OF '87 WITH **MATT LONG**.

The date: Tuesday September 1st, 1987.  
The venue: Rome, Italy.  
The gun sets eight men on their way to contest the second running of the World 800m championship final. Red hot favourite is the splendidly talented Kenyan, Billy Konchellah, Britain has high hopes in Tom McKean who has greatly impressed in winning his semi-final in a speedy 1m44.86s. As they fly through the opening 200m in a blistering 24.32s, it is easy to forget that all protagonists are enduring their fourth two lap race in 4 consecutive days. It is not until the pack approaches the bell, that the legendary David Coleman first mentions the prospects of an unassuming 24 four year old Yorkshireman- “Elliott goes through on the inside.... It’s fast”, with the halfway split being 50.59s. Down the back straight for the last time and suddenly, Tom McKean clips a heel and momentarily stumbles. It seems at this point as though British hopes of a medal may have disappeared as the Scot fades fast. With less than 200m to go, Peter Elliott is still in with the proverbial ‘shout’, with the aforementioned Coleman’s comment being to commend “a brave run” being indicative of an expectation that he may fade....But then something special happens. The red head tips back slightly, the arms drive furiously and the knees lift- a startled Coleman is suddenly animated and yells into his microphone- “Elliott coming on the inside!” – as he edges his way along the rail to roll back the stone and overhaul the favoured Brazilian Jose Luiz Barbosa Seconds later, Konchellah is celebrating the expected gold in a championship record of 1m43.06s, with a delirious Coleman waxing lyrical about, “the unexpected silver for Britain”. Elliott’s triumphant fist clenching is underscored by a clocking of 1m43.41 and evidence of Coleman’s observation that, “he likes a strong pace”. It is also testament to the development of his tactical brain- “he didn’t sacrifice himself like he did in the world championships 4 years ago”, continues the popular BBC commentator- a reference to his titanic struggle with that other great Brazilian Joaquim Cruz which seemed to break both men, with the Rotherham man ultimately finishing 4th in those inaugural Helsinki championships.

I begin by asking what are his memories of that fantastic night in Rome when he took that silver exactly 30 years ago. With a typical dose of self-deprecation he says he

memories of the race, “were that I made the final by the skin of my teeth as I got through to the as a fastest loser”. Did he mind being an underdog, I ask? He remembers that, “The two favourites for the title were Kenya’s Billy Konchellah and Britain’s Tom McKean. I was known as a front runner however, on this occasion I had a change of tact. I knew if I was to get on the podium I had to stay in touch and although I had made it through as a fastest loser I have always believed the hardest part of major championship

competition is making the final. Once you are in the final you can concentrate on your own race and the pressure is off.” Was he apprehensive whilst warming up? He concedes that, “There was quite a delay in the race starting for some reason and we were on the start line waiting for quite a while and I think this affected a few of the runners as nerves started to take its toll”.

What was his tactical strategy on the day? With a shrug he continues that, “From what I remember of the race I was in a good



Front runner- Peter Elliott in his prime.

position at the bell aware of what was happening around me. However, going down the back straight – Tom McKean- who was in the pack, got a little too near to me and actually stood on the back of my heel which I recovered from. However, I think it upset Tom's rhythm slightly more and by the time he recovered, the race had moved on so he was always playing catch up". So when did he realise that a medal was on the cards? He continues that, "There was the big move for home as we came off the bend involving Konchellah and Brazil's Barbosa and as usual, in races like these, as athletes start to tire they start to drift which was the case for Barbosa and in doing so left an opening for me to sneak through on the inside much to David Coleman's amazement! When we came off the bend it was a three man race and I just had to maintain the momentum and believe the gap would open on the inside which is brave. However, in most cases it does come off and you can either expend more energy by going wide or be patient and wait for the opening. . I think luck was on my side for this particular race. Even within the last few metres I was expecting a surge from Tom and a few others however, I knew I was finishing fast and strong and 1.43.41 was a pretty decent time for the third race in three days. Konchellah first, me second and Barbosa third".

So was a podium finish on the global stage a catalyst for a hugely successive career? "Oh yes", he asserts, "The silver medal was pivotal to my successes going forward" – with a nod to his Olympic 1500m silver a year later and most treasured Commonwealth gold in 1990.

Conversation then turns to his famous rivalries with the likes of Steve Ovett, Seb Coe and Steve Cram- back in the 'golden era' of the 1980s. I am enthralled to hear his recollections- "I certainly had many rivalries however, as a youngster I had always been more of an Ovett fan and had the pleasure of spending time in his company on training and competitions. Seb not so much but I followed in his footsteps by supporting the Yorkshire championships each year as he had installed in me the importance of grass roots athletics". In reflecting on his encounters with the 'Jarrow Arrow' he says, "Crammie and I had some great races and my favourite would be the head-to-head in Sheffield in 1990 where, for the first time, I was competing on a home track in front of a large crowd and therefore suddenly appreciated the pressure he came under when competing in Gateshead". I ask him to spill the beans on any gossip from training camps in days gone by but with a laugh

he shakes his head before conceding, "I do have stories of trips in Singapore and Jakarta however, what happens abroad stays abroad!" At least I tried!

I reflect that in swimming amongst such illustrious company, it would have been easy to drown in the endless pool of talent we had domestically back then. Offering a philosophical outlook, he reflects that, "Someone asked me recently if I wished I was competing now instead of the halcyon days of Coe, Ovett and Cram and to be honest, the answer is no even though I may have received a little bit more recognition if I was achieving now what I did then. It was a pleasure to be involved in this great era and to be honest when you know if you want to be the best in the world you have to start off by being the best in Britain. You know you have a lot of hard work ahead of you but success breeds success and it did in the 80s and early 90s."

Attention then turns to BMC specific matters. So what have been his experiences of our club as someone which has put much back into the sport in attending our conferences and Academies and so on? Without hesitation he says, "I believe the BMC do a great job in providing the opportunity for young up and coming athletes to race against strong competition. In my day, due to Andy Norman, there was always the opportunity to travel overseas and compete on the international circuit gaining experience and as some say serving your apprenticeship thereby being ready for when the major champs came along. I know it is far more difficult these days as these opportunities do not present themselves as often as the big events want the best athletes taking up the lanes and therefore the importance of the races the BMC stage are critical for the future generation of middle and distance runners".

The fact that the Yorkshireman is so clearly a fan of our sport oozes out of his every pore. I want to know whether he was impressed with our Team GB performances at London this summer and which emerging talent most caught his eye? Enthusiastically he says, "It was great to see we had men in the final of the 800 and 1500 metres and hopefully they will use this platform for next summer and beyond to the Tokyo Olympics. Kyle Langford running a PB in a final was very good and this shows great promise. It would have been interesting to see how the men's 800 would have been run if David Rudisha had been fit and healthy as I think it would have been a completely different race from the gun.". Ever the realist he adds that, "Our men

today have to be consistently running in the 1.44s to be contenders in the major championships".

Three decades ago, Elliott achieved working class cult hero status in managing to combine an illustrious international track and field career with somehow remarkably managing to hold down a full time job in the steel industry. Britain's industrial heritage has changed and I am keen to know if this 55 year old has. He wraps up our conversation by pointing out that, "I am the director of operations at the EIS and have been with the organisation since 2004. My role is to operationally oversee the effective and efficient running of 10 high performance centres where we deliver sport science, medicine and technology to athletes who are on a UK Sport world class programme and will be competing in the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games".

After I finish speaking with this thoroughly likeable man, I cannot help but treat myself to watching that great 800m race from 30 years ago. I have watched it over 100 times in the three decades that have passed. Have a look on You Tube and you will find it. Right at the very end of the clip, the late great David Coleman signs off by saluting Elliott- "He was there when it mattered". How apt. He was there for his country 30 years ago when it mattered. I last bumped into him at a British Athletics Supports Club dinner in 2012- he has always been there when it mattered for the fans. He's supported the BMC at conferences and training weekends when it mattered and his enormous contribution with the English Institute of Sport should continue to matter for us all for a good few years to come.



*Its exactly 30 years since Peter Elliott took silver on the global stage.*

# FRANK'S FABLES

WE DIP OUR TOES IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AS WE POP ACROSS THE POND TO GET THE FOND RECOLLECTIONS OF **WEB LOUDAT**, WHO WAXES LYRICAL ABOUT OUR FABLED FOUNDER – THE INIMITABLE **FRANK HORWILL**.

As a student at the University of New Mexico, Web placed 17th at the National NCAA Cross Country, 4th in National NCAA Indoor Mile and 3rd in National NCAA outdoor Steeplechase. As a Masters athlete, he the won Runners World Milrose Masters Mile (4:20), ahead of all time greats Jim Ryan, Frank Shorter, and Peter Snell.

In his own words, Web shares that:

"I was the graduate assistant/assistant track coach at the University of New Mexico in 1971. I recall that I recruited a 4:02 miler from Frank Horwill's running squad, by the name of Robin Barrett. We became good friends and he invited me to come over to experience British athletics.

When I arrived in the UK, the first thing Robin did was to take me to Crystal Palace to meet Frank Horwill. We became fast friends from the start. I was very interested in how Frank got Robin to run a 4:02 mile while I only got him down to 4:09. It seemed that both of us wanted to learn from each other but I got the better of this deal. Frank was a fountain of information and we spent many an evening at the Prima Vera Restaurant talking about his many theories and observations. All I could really tell Frank was how the American University System operated and all about it's many flaws. I moved in with Frank and began training with his squad. This made my stay in England very exciting, though I spent many a long hour out on the street while he entertained his many girlfriends! In just a month and a half Frank took me from a jogger down to a 4:06 (1500 conversion) which very nearly got me into the AAA National final.

I came back every summer in the 70's to crash with Frank and learn more about his training methods. In 1979, I took a year off teaching to get Frank to train me for the arrival of my Masters running. Again I was in awful shape and Frank was starting from near scratch with me. He was still living in West Hampstead on Sumatra Road in a small bedsit. Frank had just lost his job as market inspector at Portobello Road and I had brought over far too little money to live on for a year. Money was tight and I was having a hard time finding a job as a teacher to help us out. There were a lot of potential teachers out there without jobs, so they were not hiring foreigners. One of Frank's girlfriends, Mary, had a teaching

job at Thomas Colton School in Peckham. She told me they were having a hard time filling a Maths position at her school and she set up an interview for me. It turns out several teachers had been given the job that year but resigned after only a few days! It really was a hard school to teach at. They had the kids no other schools would accept.

All my clothes were jeans and t-shirts so Frank loaned me his British Milers' Club suit and British Milers' tie for the interview. I bumped into the deputy head going up the stairs to the interview. He noticed the BMC suit and tie. It turns out he was a big Frank Horwill and BMC fan! He basically told me that I had no problem - that I had the job! The interview went great with most of the discussion about Frank and the BMC!

Mind you soon after getting the job, the communal shower at Frank's place blew up with me just making it to safety! Frank heard it rumbling and yelled for me to run for it just before it sent pieces of metal flying in all directions!

Luckily another one of Frank's girlfriends invited us to live with her and her beautiful sister. We were both happy about this arrangement as it was a great place with great side benefits! To top it all off

we found out that the great Decathlete Daley Thompson lived two doors down. Unfortunately, after only a few weeks of bliss, we were awoken late at night by the girl's uncle and his two rather nasty bodyguards. It turns out he was a mobster, owning a couple nightclubs in London and this apartment, and wasn't pleased with Frank and I living there! So that was that.

Frank and I were not happy going back to his old place and taking sponge baths each day because it was a very small sink in a very small kitchen.

The phone company hadn't realised that Frank and I were making free phone calls from the pay phone in the hall. Frank had gotten mad one night when he in-putted 10p and had gotten no dial tone. He kicked the phone and out came the money box. From that time on we would open the money box and take out how much we thought the call would cost and put it back in the phone for the call!

One evening the athlete Wayne Tarquini called us on the phone asking if we would like to move in with him at his council flat in Keelson House on the Isle of Dogs. Needless to say, we were overjoyed with the invitation. And, that's how Frank ended up living on the Isle of Dogs."



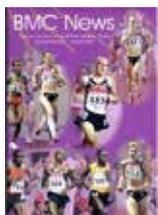
*Web (2nd from left) is flanked by BMC stalwart Peter Thompson (left) and Frank Horwill (right) as they enjoy the company of friends. Image courtesy of Web Loudat.*

# BMC NEWS RETRO

**LIJANA KAZIOW** TAKES A LOOK BACK AT THE AUTUMN BMC NEWS, DECADE BY DECADE, FOR THE LAST 50 YEARS:

## Autumn 2007

This edition featured a commemorative piece on Franz Stampfl who is famous for pioneering the popular scientific system of interval training.



It portrays just what character Stampfl had, as Ralph Doubell, one of Stampfl's Olympic gold medal winning athletes, described him as "determined, non-conformist and confrontational". This was never more apparent when after an accident he became quadriplegic and yet, continued to coach as if nothing happened! To give you a taster of some of his well-known quotes:

- "You can be a Jesus Christ of a coach but you will never produce any performances worth talking about if you have bad organization behind you".

- "You can only have one standard and that is world standard".

Sir Roger Bannister, who acknowledges that Stampfl played a key part in convincing him that he was capable of running under four minutes, also had all but praise for Stampfl's methods and once remarked that, "Stampfl's greatness as a coach rests on his adaptability and his patience. He watches and waits for the moment when the athlete really needs him".

Franz Stampfl clearly was hugely influential on mainly illustrious athlete's careers and will forever be remembered as one of the greats!

## Autumn 1997

On pages 20-21, Ken Maclaren makes reference to some tips on cycling for runners. Low and behold something on this topic was released a decade later in 2007!



Similarly, it mentions that, "It is a great way of getting a good training effect without putting the same stress on your legs". Therefore, it is recommended for those that have certain injury issues to give it a go to ease on the weight bearing. But, remember to aim for fast cadence, otherwise your legs may start to become more fit for cycling than running! And not sure if any of you have experienced it after getting the cadence wrong, but surely it would become a lot more difficult to run with cycling thighs...

## Autumn 1987

It is hard to come across an issue without an interesting section from BMC Founder Frank Horwill. This is no exception, with a piece about Distance Running – Science or Art? Yes, it includes scientific facts, but additionally mentions areas such as the Runner's Personality. Here, Frank talks about the three basic forces being: the Will, the Mind, the Body. Pointing out that out of these the Will is the most important, but also the most commonly neglected. Following on from Frank, ask yourself what you fear and avoid most and decide to conquer it: "Train the will and you train a Champion!"



## Autumn 1977

Comparisons between the mile and the 1500m were made, with Charlie Booth stating that, "it seems to have become established that it is only necessary to add or deduct eighteen seconds to get a fair comparison"... even the youngest of athletes can work out that this wouldn't be fair when it came to their races. The method behind the madness was based on average speed trajectories. Worth a read for any number crunchers out there.



## Autumn 1967

For me, I'm always drawn to a great quote and something that really touches home, is a quote from Tony Ward. It is all about being Athlete Centred – a key component of our coach education system today. "The athlete must be the coach's first and foremost consideration. This especially applies to those who are "Club Coaches". This may well seem a sacrilegious thing to say, but there will be occasions when, to complete for a club just that once too often may do the athlete more harm than good, or the type of race that athlete has been selected for may not fit into his preparations for an important race." Let this be a time to reflect on our own coaching practices to ensure that we are still putting athletes at the heart of everything we do in looking out for their best interests, rather than our own coaching or club egos.



**Lijana Kaziow performs a number of roles in our sport- regional councillor, ESAA T&F organising committee member, National Coach Development Programme for Youth, European Athletics Young Leader Community Coordinator to name a few. She has worked internationally, including Amsterdam's Young Leaders Forum and is making an active contribution to European Athletics' new anti-doping outreach programme, irunclean.**

## ROBERT ASHWOOD MEMORIAL FUND

The Robert Ashwood Memorial Fund (RAMF) was setup after the death of Robert (Bob) Ashwood in August 2013 to continue Bob's prolific work in supporting and developing British Junior and U23 Middle and Long Distance Athletes.

His phenomenal coaching skills lead him to be a coach in various sports including triathlon, various local rugby clubs and was even a member of the coaching staff at Kidderminster Harriers Football Club! But athletics was his favoured sport. He coached all ages and levels and was instrumental in bringing huge success to his local athletics club in Worcestershire with the Senior Mens' Team, along with numerous successes with local junior athletes. He nurtured and developed athletes from the U17 age group into the Senior ranks to become some of the top athletes in Britain, some winning medals nationally and internationally.

He was also part of the Great Britain Athletics coaching staff. Here he was a National Event Coach for Cross Country and spent time travelling the World helping endurance athletes at World and European Championships. Supporting athletes to achieve their potential including some great successes at World level including athletes such as Paula Radcliffe, Mo Farah, Liz Yelling and Jon Brown, amongst others.

This fund will help to continue his work and has only been made possible with the generous donations of his friends and family, something that we must all applaud and be thankful for. Bob was a great man and someone who is sorely missed but will not be forgotten and his legacy will continue.

**For an application form contact [mattvauxharvey@hotmail.com](mailto:mattvauxharvey@hotmail.com)**

# 2018 BMC HORWILL RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP

## Outline

The BMC Horwill Scholarship was established in 2008 and the aim of it is to help the British Milers' Club progress middle distance running. The BMC aims to support coaches who train athletes, and one way in which we do this is to present the latest research to them. In order to be proactive in this area, we have established this scholarship.

**We wish to encourage original and innovative pieces of research into middle distance and endurance running and we are offering a scholarship to help at least one individual pursue a selected topic or area.**

In order to apply for the scholarship you will need to complete the application form and return it to us by 31<sup>st</sup> Dec, 2017. The applications are then assessed by the BMC and shortlisted candidates will be invited to a short interview to discuss their research proposal.

Successful candidates will then be offered a scholarship up to a maximum value of **£2000**. Once the funds are awarded you will be expected to conduct your research and present your findings to us. You will also be expected to write articles for our magazine and website.

## Frank Horwill MBE

The late Frank Horwill MBE was the founding member of the BMC in 1963. As well as working tirelessly for the Club, Frank became extremely well known for his work on research and collating research from around the world on middle-distance and endurance running. In order to safeguard his tradition, this scholarship has been established

"I was greatly surprised and honoured to have this BMC research project linked to my name. Over the past sixty years most of the research conducted into endurance running and its allied subjects has been from Sweden, the Soviet Union, USA and Germany. Much of this has been conducted on PE students and not established runners for convenience sake. These research projects are to be conducted on athletes who have aspirations and this will give the results added credibility. It is hoped that this BMC project will continue in its format and encourage others to join the ranks of Astrand, Gerschler, Costill, Daniels and Noakes."

Frank Horwill MBE, 2008

## The British Milers' Club

The British Milers' Club is a specialist middle-distance running club, which caters for endurance athletes and coaches across the UK. We currently have around 5000 members. To become a member you have to be able to run a qualifying time, therefore membership is selective. We are a performance club and the majority of members are current athletes who are striving to improve their race times and become better racers. The BMC is a major competition provider in the UK. For details of our competition programme visit our website.

As well as competition for athletes, the BMC has also taken the needs of coaches very seriously. We believe that better coaches will make better athletes and we also believe that coaches need to be offered the findings of high quality research.

The BMC is run almost entirely by volunteers.

## The Research Scholarship

The Scholarship Award for 2018 will be up to £2000. The award will be paid in stages – some at the beginning, middle and end. Once the award has been made you will be expected to sign a contract to conduct the research and present the findings to the BMC. The BMC will then part-own the research with the researcher and it will be

made available to all BMC members.

Once the research is complete, the researcher will be expected to present their findings to a BMC seminar/conference. On completion you will be awarded a commemorative medallion.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Paul Hayes on 024 76 464010.

Email Paul for an application form [hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk).

The closing date for applications is 31st Dec, 2017. We look forward to receiving your application.



## BMC AWARDS WINNERS 2017



**ATHLETE OF THE YEAR –  
LAURA MUIR**



**YOUNG ATHLETE OF THE YEAR –  
JEMMA REEKIE**



**COACH OF THE YEAR – JAMES THIE**



**LIFETIME SERVICES TO COACHING WINNER –  
BUD BALDARO**



**FRANK HORWILL AWARD FOR SERVICES TO BMC –  
DAVID ISZATT**

# FINDINGS ON THE EFFECTS OF MENTHOL

WE HEAR FROM **BMC HORWILL SCHOLARSHIP WINNER, RUSS BEST**, ON HOW HIS RESEARCH CAN HELP YOU:

## Background

Menthol is a well-known substance that is found in a wide variety of household products, and for many of us is part of our daily dental routine. It's in many household products including toothpastes, mouthwashes and shower gels. All menthol containing products have one thing in common, they are designed to impart feelings of coolness, and freshness. On the skin, this may evoke a cooling or cold sensation and in some people, may even cause a localised pain response or 'cold burn'. In the mouth, we may feel an ease of breathing, an increase in the 'drive to breathe' and a minty zing. These differences between menthol's external and internal effects are critical when it comes to sports performance. In a recent review article, we found that applying menthol to the skin is unlikely to benefit performance, and can actually cause athletes to store body heat. Using menthol in the mouth however, either as a drink or mouth rinse, has been shown to improve cycling, running and triathlon performance.

## What has been done before?

Swilling solutions around the mouth has become popular in shorter endurance events, where fuel availability and hydration aren't considered limiting factors. This brief exposure tricks the brain into feeling cooler (menthol), less fatigued (caffeine) or better fuelled (carbohydrate) by stimulating sensory neurons in the mouth. The first menthol mouth swill investigation in recreationally fit cyclists showed a number of improvements: 8 of 9 participants cycled for longer, breathed more and felt they were breathing more easily after menthol mouth swilling.

This led to other studies in runners and triathletes. Much of this research used time trials to assess performance, instead of time to exhaustion, making their findings more appealing to athletes and coaches. Menthol mouth swilling has been shown to improve 3000m and 5000m running performance during simulated time trials in the heat. The inclusion of menthol in drinks (water, cold water and ice slushy) of different temperatures has also improved cycling and training (4km cycling + 1.5km running x 5) in trained triathletes. All of this research was conducted in hot temperatures (30°C and above); although the results are exciting and consistent, they are not immediately transferable to British Milers' Club members.

Running economy is the cost of running at a given speed. Running economy has been shown to differentiate between athletes of similar  $VO_{2max}$  levels, most BMC members are well trained athletes competing over 800m-3000m and therefore will have similarly high  $VO_{2max}$  values. 5000m, 10000m and marathon runners may not have this aerobic power but they can chug along, maintaining relatively high speeds for less of a cost. Improving economy improves performance by reducing the cost of running at speed. With respect to racing this means an athlete can run at less of a cost at the same speed, sustain a higher pace for longer, or potentially have more capacity to finish strongly.

Therefore, we aimed to produce a testing protocol that would allow us to assess the effects of menthol mouth swilling on running economy at typical training and racing paces.

## What we did

### The athletes

The athletes were volunteers from New Marske Harriers. Athletes

5km Personal bests were on average  $15:24 \pm 00:39$ , ranging from 14:15 to 16:28.

## $VO_{2max}$ testing

All athletes completed a modified version of a  $VO_{2max}$  test prior to the experimental trials. In this testing athletes were tasked with completing four 4-minute stages, interspersed with 1-minute recoveries. These stages tracked through increasing speeds from 14km/h, 16km/h, 18km/h and 20km/h. After this final 4-minute stage athletes had 2-minutes recovery before the maximal portion of the test. This phase consisted of continuous running for 1-minute at 18km/h, 19km/h and 20km/h, after the minute at 20km/h the gradient of the treadmill was increased by 1% per minute until the athlete was exhausted. This protocol established baseline values of fitness, familiarised athletes with the speeds they would be running at during the testing and accustomed them to running maximally in the lab.

## Running Economy Testing

The athletes completed the four 4-minute stages that are described above four times. Testing was carried out at 15°C and 28°C, with and without menthol mouth swilling in a random order. Menthol was provided in 25ml beakers, and was taken before the testing and during recoveries to replicate a training session. The concentration of the menthol mouth swill was 0.1% menthol.

## The 1km Time Trial

Following the 20km/h stage and 1-minute recovery, athletes ran 1km as fast as possible. Athletes were blind to the speed that they were running at, but controlled the pace of the treadmill by signalling with a 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down'. We gave feedback on distance remaining at 200m intervals and provided encouragement (shouted wildly!) to mimic a race atmosphere and ensure maximal effort. Time taken to complete the kilometre was noted, with heart rate recorded at 30-second intervals throughout. All other measures were taken on completion.

Table 1 Ventilatory responses; Change scores are presented as Mean  $\pm$  SD and expressed in L/min

	Cold vs Cold + M	Cold vs Hot	Hot vs Hot + M
14km/h	-2.7 $\pm$ 6.9	-11.1 $\pm$ 9.6	2.9 $\pm$ 5.8
16km/h	-6 $\pm$ 5.1	-6.5 $\pm$ 8.7	0.9 $\pm$ 2.3
18km/h	-0.7 $\pm$ 15.1	-7.1 $\pm$ 9.4	2.5 $\pm$ 5.6
20km/h	-2.4 $\pm$ 8	-8.5 $\pm$ 7.1	5.7 $\pm$ 14.2

## 1km Time Trial Performance

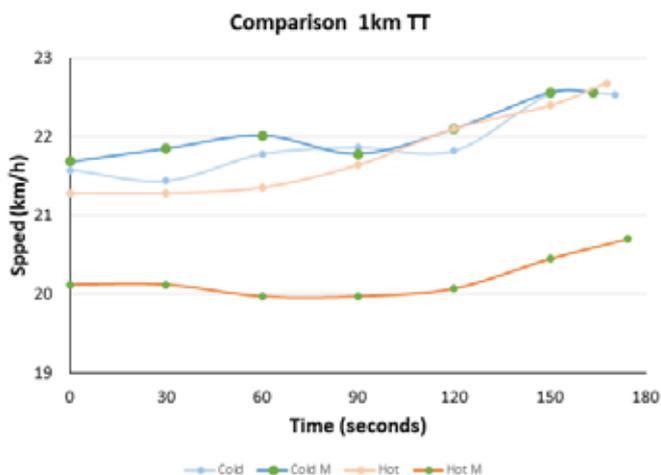
## What we found

### Gas variables

Ventilation decreased in the cold, as a result of menthol mouth swilling – this effect was only pronounced at 16km/h. When hot and cold temperatures were compared, athletes performing in the heat had lower values of ventilation than in the cold, at all speeds. In the heat, the addition of menthol caused a small increase in ventilation at all speeds examined. All  $VO_2$  values were within the variation we would expect between tests, regardless of speed or temperature.

Table 1 Ventilatory responses; Change scores are presented as Mean  $\pm$  SD and expressed in L/min  
 Athletes took less time to complete the 1km time trial when menthol mouth swilling at 15°C (2:50 vs. 2:47; 22.57km/h vs. 22.69km/h. Cold vs. Cold + M respectively). In 28°C participants took longer to complete the time trial with menthol (2:47 vs. 2:54; 22.69km/h vs. 20.7km/h. Hot vs. Hot + M respectively.), although this data is skewed by a small number of athletes completing this trial (n = 4), and one athlete who took 3:27 to complete the 1km time trial.

Figure 1 displays average pace and time to completion between the conditions.



**Rating of perceived exertion (RPE)**

In the cold swilling menthol seemed to increase the athletes' overall, legs and lungs RPE, regardless of intensity with the most notable effect shown at the lungs. When comparing cold and hot temperatures the athletes felt easier at the legs and lungs at lower speeds up to 18km/h. Beyond this there was an increase in RPE due to the heat, however these lower values this was not reflected in overall RPE which was consistently higher in the heat, compared to the cold, from 16km/h upwards. Menthol showed small reductions in overall RPE from 16km/h upwards in the heat, with a similar trend shown in legs but not lungs. The most notable reduction in RPE was seen during the 1km time trial.

**Thirst, Thermal Comfort and Thermal Sensation**

Thirst was measured on a 0-9 scale (Not at all thirsty – Severely thirsty), thermal comfort and sensation were measured on a -4 to +4 scale (very uncomfortable – very comfortable; very cold – very hot). Mean change scores are presented for each scale in figures 2, 3 and 4, respectively.

Figure 1 Mean change scores  $\pm$  SD for athletes' perceived thirst at tested speeds, and temperatures; +M: + menthol

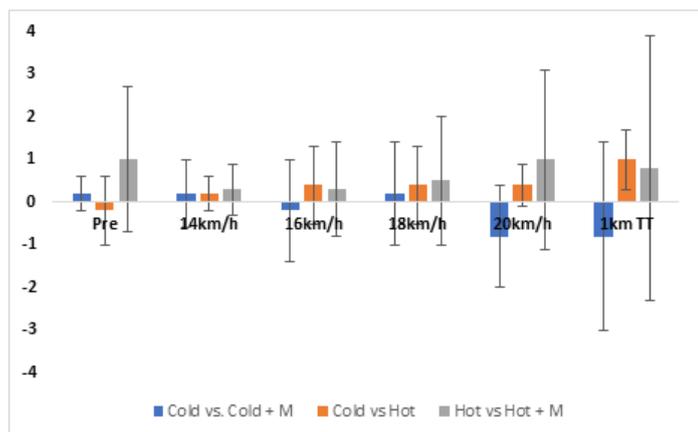


Figure 2 Mean change scores  $\pm$  SD for athletes' perception of thermal comfort

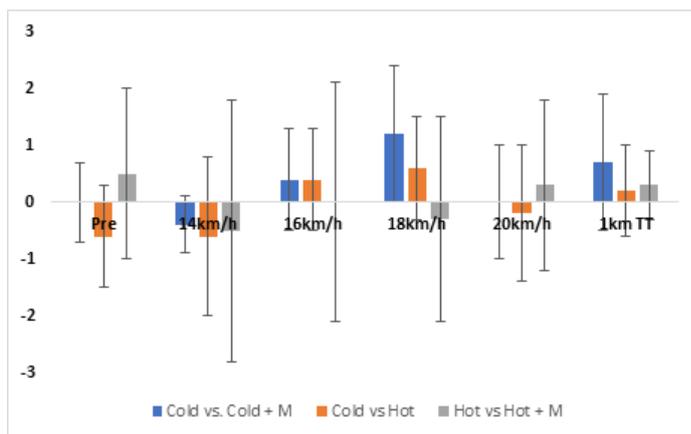
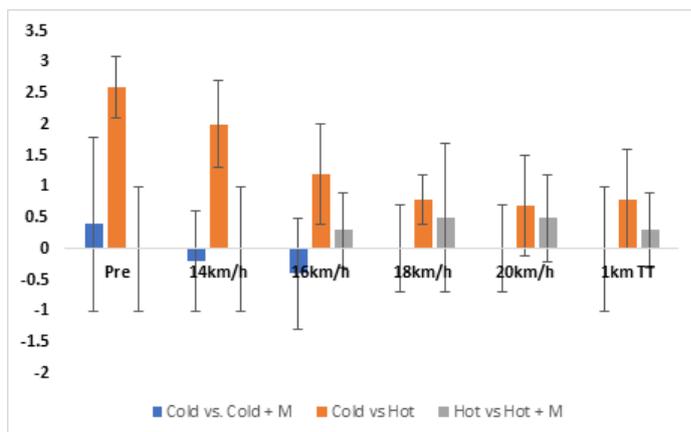


Figure 3 Mean change scores  $\pm$  SD for athletes' perception of thermal sensation



**What we learned and what this means**

Menthol may help with combatting feelings of thirst in lower temperatures, and improve how hot a runner feels in a hot environment, possibly due to effects on ventilation. Despite these changes in ventilation, we saw effects on overall RPE and at the legs, not lungs. We saw quicker 1km times with menthol at 15°C, but the effects of swilling at 28°C were clouded in the current study. Menthol mouth swilling may be particularly useful for those racing on the European circuit, or if a heat wave strikes Watford or Solihull...let's be honest, it's not going to happen at Sports City any time soon!

**Thanks**

A massive thanks to the BMC for the continued support and interest this work. I'd also like to thank the athletes who gave up their time to be part of this work, to Steve Shaw for working this into the athletes' training and to Drs Nicolas Berger and Chris Stevens for their contributions.

**Further reading**

Barnes, K. R., & Kilding, A. E. (2015). Running economy: measurement, norms, and determining factors. *Sports medicine-open*, 1(1), 8. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4555089/>  
 Stevens, C. J., & Best, R. (2017). Menthol: a fresh ergogenic aid for athletic performance. *Sports Medicine*, 47(6), 1035-1042. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40279-016-0652-4>



Image courtesy of Russ Best

# LAURA MUIR

**SIMON TAYLOR** STRIDES OUT WITH OUR BMC ATHLETE OF THE YEAR- **LAURA MUIR:**

Now that the dust has settled on the 2017 season, Laura Muir looks back with enormous pride, tinged with a hint of frustration, on a stellar year that saw her confirm her place in the top echelon of world middle-distance running and culminated in her winning a second successive BMC Athlete of the Year award.

Not that she has much time for reflection, however, as the final throes of a seven-year journey to becoming a qualified Vet take priority over athletics in the next few months, giving the 24-year old barely enough time to draw breath as she juggles studies and farm placements with the demands of winter training.

"I guess there is a bit of a bittersweet feeling when I look back on 2017," she says, whilst still drying out following a particularly wet and muddy Saturday morning grass session on the outskirts of her adopted home city of Glasgow. "Indoors was great. I was able to win my first gold medal and broke lots of records so indoors I couldn't have asked for anything better, that went amazingly well", which is something of an understatement when summing up an indoor campaign that began with a British Indoor 5000m record of 14:49.12 at the BMC/Glasgow AA Metric Miler meeting in early January and culminated in a brilliant double gold medal winning performance over 1500m and 3000m at the European Indoor Championships in Belgrade in March, with a further hat-trick of British Indoor records, over 1000m, 1500m and 3000m, thrown in for good measure.

"That BMC meet in January was a real bonus," she adds, "because you don't see too many 5k's at that time of year so it was very good of the BMC and the meeting organisers to put it on for me. It gave me the opportunity to run a fast time, and a lot other girls ran well at 3k as well."

As a result of that 5000m, the fifth fastest ever by a British athlete, indoors or out, and following a successful training camp at altitude in Potchefstroom, South Africa, Laura's path to the outdoor season began to head in a different direction.

"I don't think we'd really thought too much about doubling in London until that 5000m. It was kind of at the back of our minds, but we wanted to wait and see because I hadn't run a 5k in a long time. In fact, I think my only other one was at a BMC meet in Solihull in 2013 when

Katrina Wootton won and I came fourth (in 15:53.68)."

Some impressive performances in training, however, convinced Coach Andy Young, a useful middle-distance runner himself in his teens and early twenties, that Laura had the ability and conditioning to cope with heats and finals of two events come August, and therefore they decided to test the water by doubling indoors in the Serbian capital. "It's one thing running the times in training," says Laura, "but another thing altogether being able to put it into a race." Luckily, in Belgrade I was able to perform really well over the two events and in a short timeframe, so although we knew the schedule was going to be harder and different in London, we knew I had the physical capabilities to do it. It was a great opportunity as well, because as much as getting into Diamond League races is great, it's very different to championship racing, so we just wanted to get that extra bit of experience for further down the line."

Laura's training continued to focus on the 1500m and remained largely the same as before her exploits at the European Indoors, with the emphasis both on speed and endurance. "The training stayed relatively the same," she confirms, "I didn't really change at all. As part of our 1500m training we do fast stuff and long stuff which prepares us well for doing a good 800 and a good 5k, so we kept everything focused on the 1500 but I knew that off that I would also be fit enough to run a good 5k too."

Speaking to David Cox of *The Independent* in August, Andy Young revealed an insight into what makes his charge so suited to the middle distances. "She's always had a bit of speed about her, and a really good engine, and that combination is what makes her special." He said, "She has kind of a range which I've probably never seen before. She's run 1:58 at the 800m, which is the fifth fastest British time ever, and she can run a world class 10,000m. Normally you're either born with fast twitch fibres and you're a sprinter, or slow twitch fibres and you're a distance runner. It's rare to have someone with enough of both to compete at an elite level over such a range of distances."

Preparations for the biggest challenge of Laura's athletics career, masterminded by Young, continued apace post-Belgrade but her double assault on the World Championships was thrown into turmoil

in May. Following an encouraging season-opening 1500M of 4:00.47 in the Eugene Diamond League, a stress fracture in her left foot brought the London-bound Muir juggernaut juddering to a halt, leading British Athletics chief Neil Black to voice the ultimately inaccurate opinion that she had a "1% chance of doubling in London."

In her own words, "Luckily the injury was already healing when we found it," she recalls, still grimacing at the memory. "I had to take two weeks off running completely, where I was in the pool just sort of working the toe twice a day, and it took maybe a month to six weeks to get back to things fully after that, which we had to do quite quickly because London was so important. We just had to hope everything would hold up, and luckily it did." Hold up it did indeed, and Laura roared back into track action in early July with an 800m personal best of 1:58.69 in Lausanne, followed three days later by another PB, this time 4:18.03 for the mile, at the Anniversary Games in London. She tells me that, "Going into Lausanne, it was one of the most nervous races I've ever done, because it was my first one back after the injury and I was just really worried because I worked so hard in the pool, but you just worry about how much fitness you've lost. But then I ran 1:58 and I was like 'ah, OK, maybe things are alright!'"

Another PB followed, this time over 3000m in Monaco, and then it was all systems go for the World Championships.

The 1500, arguably Laura's stronger event but also one of the most loaded of the entire championships, came first in London, and following a smooth passage through the heats and semis, it was clear she was a genuine medal contender.

And for 1490 metres of the final she confirmed that status. Laura led through a solid opening lap, before slowing around a pedestrian second circuit, with Sifan Hassan then throwing down the gauntlet from 800m onwards. The Dutchwoman continued to lead into the last 100m, with Kenya's Faith Kipyegon breathing down her neck and Laura clinging on to bronze, which she did bravely until 10m before the line, when having edged past the fading Hassan she herself was caught, first by America's Jenny Simpson and then, heartbreakingly, by the South African Caster Semenya, who ran the fastest last 300 of anyone.

Despite being agonisingly close to a first

major outdoor medal, the ever-upbeat Scot refuses to be downhearted. "Yeah, I guess it's frustrating, you know, being such a small margin" she reflects, but with a smile never far from her face she adds, "but I guess if it's going to be a small margin or a big margin it's probably better that it's a small one, because being so close is great. I think it's the closest I've ever been, and just being in contention is great for the future. The 1500m is a very difficult race to judge but I think I did the best I could in the circumstances and unfortunately it was just in that last little bit that everyone else came past. It's the highest position and closest to the front I've ever finished so yeah, I'm looking at the positives."

Unsurprisingly, Laura looked a little 'leggy' in qualifying for the 5000m final having had only three days respite following her metric mile exploits. Her time of 14:59.34 was an outdoor PB nonetheless, and she improved further in the final, on the last day of competition, to 14:52.07 and a hugely creditable sixth place, having covered a mind-boggling total of 14,500m of hard racing over 10 days!

Never one to dwell on the past, however, Laura quickly moved on from the World Championships and began the next chapter of her life, far removed from the glamour of London's Olympic Stadium.

For the next few months Laura has exchanged racing spikes for wellies and stopwatch for notepads, as her primary focus turns to completing her Veterinary studies at Glasgow University. "I've got my final exams next May, and hopefully they'll go well and I'll pass and I'll be a qualified Vet!" she says with pride. "The course is five years but it's taken me seven so I've had a lot of extra time to do it which has been really good. I've been out on placements on farms recently, working with horses, and a lot of the owners have recognised me, which has been funny, but they've all been really nice and I think it's great that sometimes people recognise you for doing well."

It's not that running has taken a backseat entirely however, and the 2018 campaign is never too far from the thoughts of athlete and coach, albeit the winter training programme may be affected and the summer season somewhat truncated, with the Commonwealth Games unfortunately being one of the casualties. After a disappointing home games in Glasgow in 2014, Laura has unfinished business in the Scotland vest, but unfortunately she won't be toeing the line in the Gold Coast next April, although the World Indoor Championships is still on the agenda. "It's really handy that it's in Birmingham," she

says, her eyes lighting up at the prospect of mixing it with the world's best once again, "so I can just pop down for the weekend and then pop back up again so it doesn't really influence my studies too much."

The long trip to the other side of the world is a journey too far. "I love running for Scotland wherever I can," she told the BBC shortly after the World Championships, "and the Commonwealths are one of the few opportunities you can do it, so I'm gutted I'm going to be missing it...but I have to think about my degree, and that is really important to me." So instead, the rigours of a Scottish winter beckon and already Laura is deep into training and studying. "In terms of the training routine, it's pretty much the same as I've done before, but it's a lot of early mornings and late nights. I'm managing to fit it in at the moment and it's all OK," she says, adding, once again with classic understatement, "I'm just a little tired now and again. I won't be able to go away on as many altitude camps as before because I'll have my studies the whole time apart from Christmas, so we just have to keep plugging away and get the work done in Glasgow. But I've done that before and still had a really good indoor season so I'm just going to keep going as much as I can and stay as fit as I can and hopefully come the indoor season I'll be in really good shape

to make a mark there."

The goals for outdoors in 2018 are the European Championships in Berlin and plenty of racing around the circuit. "I just want to race a lot, really," she says, clearly relishing the prospect. "We didn't race that much this year because the injury kind of limited the number of races I could do, and I finished my season at London so it would be nice to get out and do a few more next year, over different distances and just get back to enjoying it."

Whether her 2018 schedule includes any BMC races remains to be seen, but Laura is in no doubts as to the importance of the organisation to British middle-distance running. "If it wasn't for running the BMC 5k in the indoor season I wouldn't have had the qualifying time to run in London, so I'd like to say a big thanks to them for that, and also for all the volunteers, and coaches and organisers up and down the country for giving athletes the opportunity to run in their races. It opens the door for so many athletes, and has certainly been a help to me as a stepping stone to getting more racing experience and getting times and just getting into bigger races. It's a privilege to be named BMC Athlete of the Year. There have been so many great athletes in the past who have won the award, so I'm really chuffed and really honoured to be given the award again."



# JESS JUDD

**JESS JUDD** REFLECTS ON A REMARKABLE RETURN TO FORM IN 2017, WITH **GEOFF JAMES**:

Having watched this athlete from a distance, over many years, and studied her performances, I have been amazed at her progress and her competition performances. This young talented women, has still a long journey to travel, in her athletic career, but now only seems a short step away, to that major medal podium in a major championships . I met up with her at the BMC National Symposium, during the recent World Championships, and sat in during her interview, with Neville Taylor, and Norman Poole, supported excellently by her father and current coach, Mick.

As the interview unfolds, it becomes clear that she has set up a balanced team around her, to give the support she needs, together with regular medical checks. This has helped her to remain injury free and in good health, both physically and mentally, for some time now.

Having come through the understandably difficult period of adjusting to University life she is undoubtedly now undertaking a disciplined training programme. When asked how she had prepared last winter she replied that her programme included running between 60 to 70 miles a week. She also worked in the gym twice a week in winter. She cited a regular grass based session of 12 x 1 k x short recovery. Her biggest surprise was the moment she won the Womens' National Cross Country at Nottingham, giving her a great indicator of likely form in the summer of 2017.

During the interview she reflected that the summer period had begun well and who can forget her gutsy and committed run in the World Championships where she set that eye catching new PB of 4:03.73 before gaining invaluable experience, in the semi-final.

Since the August symposium, Jess and I caught up again more recently. Given the passage of several months I was keen to ask what were her reflections in looking back at the whole experience of London 2017 and the championships? She responded, "It was amazing. My dad and myself, at the start of the year, set out to get to the trials in the best possible shape and see what happened. After the last couple of years we knew it was going to be tough to get back on the world stage, so to do it at a home championships was just incredible. I learnt so much and think the whole experience helped shape me".

I then pressed her as to how the BMC has aided her development. With genuine enthusiasm she responded, "The BMC been so useful for me. I struggle with University to travel abroad to race and find that doing a BMC meeting is so beneficial. I remember the 1500m on a Wednesday night just aiming to try and win the race and me and Katie Snowdon both went under 4.07 and got qualifying times! It was amazing to be able to achieve something like that at Watford as I've been going there since I was around 13 years old".

I then remind her that she produced the fastest leg this winter at the national road relays and backed that up with a great win over the mud in Cardiff several weeks ago. Why are outings on both tarmac and mud part of the plan? With brutal honesty she told me, "I think cross country works for me because I have to put myself in a place where I hate going! Hills and long reps are really hard and tough and my legs are always aching. It provides a really good base to the summer and allows me to build on drill work and gym work too. I think if I can race over 6 and 8k in the winter then 1500m on the track should feel a lot shorter! I never really like going indoors just because it becomes really time orientated early on and find that running without pressure of times suits me a lot better! Also I'm really tall and struggle on the 200m indoor track".

I sign off by asking her how winter training going to date and what kind of sessions she is doing? She replied, "Winter training is going really well. My sessions have been good and I've been working really well with my boyfriend in Loughborough and I'm lucky that I have him to talk sense to me, I sometimes have a tendency to keep training or wanting to train even when I'm dead on my feet, so I'm lucky he's there to call a session when I'm looking too tired as my dad is still based down in Essex. My gym sessions and drill sessions have built up nicely and I'm gradually getting a little stronger and focusing a bit more on making my technique look better. A general week of training will incorporate easy running, a little speed session to try and keep the legs ticking over, some longer rep sessions to simulate a cross country race, as well as some hill sessions. At the moment it's all working nicely, but we will see what happens".

We wait with great anticipation for a 2018 which will kick off early for this charming young woman who has been selected of course to represent England at the Commonwealth Games in Australia. Roll on next April in Queensland!

**Geoff James has served as a BMC Academy Squad Coach and has had England Athletics Team Management and Mentoring roles.**



# JAKE WIGHTMAN

THE DIAMOND THAT IS **JAKE WIGHTMAN** HAS SHONE THIS SEASON-**STEPHEN GREEN** SHINES A LIGHT:

Oslo, 15th June 2017 - a packed Bislett Stadium, is gripped as a pulsating 1500m race develops on a warm spring evening. Leading the early pace through 800m in a shade over 1:53, were the World Silver Medallist Elijah Manangoi, followed by indoor global champion Mohammed Suleiman. The partisan crowd noise reaches a crescendo coming into the last lap as Filip Ingebrigtsen starts to feature.

However, bolting out of the chasing pack is a green vested young Brit, his raking stride takes him ahead of the sea of blue vests and

into the lead with 150m, as their local hero fades, the crowd rises, Wightman maintains the pace to prevail over Manangoi, with a new PB of 3:34.19.

The young Brit kneels down on the famous tartan, where Steve Cram set his world mile record in 1985 (3:46.32) and takes a deep breath, as if in disbelief. This was indeed new territory, it was the first time a Britain had won a Diamond League 1500m, and a European first in the past decade.

Although not quite a seismic event in the sport, it made enough waves to make

the National news bulletins, which has not happened for some time.

Jake Wightman is the son of British Internationals Geoff and Susan Wightman (nee Tooby)- his start in athletics was steady rather than spectacular. He attended the famous Fettes School in Edinburgh and concentrated on playing football for the school rather than athletics.

Jake's best returns for 1500m were 3:51.74 and 1.51.6 for 800m, not earth shattering, but he showed an early propensity for winning including Scottish National and District titles over 1500m and 800m. Notable in that year of 2012 were several outings over the quarter-mile distance including a 50.7s performance in windy Grangemouth.

"I think being based in Scotland, helped me to develop in my own time, rather than being exposed to the intensity of competition in England", he said.

Two of his alums were Josh Kerr, and Chris O'Hare who he was later to link up with as the trio representing GB in the World Champs in London this year.

Father and son decided that the mecca of Loughborough would be the best place to enhance Jake's abilities in 2012. The move was rewarded with interest as Jake began working with a large group, including the infamous Gandy circuit session. This new approach, combined with a strong cross-country season (17th in the BUCS short race) meant the young Scot gained speed and strength.

His breakthrough run came at the BUCS champs in May 2013, where he improved to 3:43.74 in finishing second to James Shane, an athlete he really looked up to and respected.

If BUCS was a surprise after earning selection to the GB Junior team, he won the European Junior title in Rieti (3:44.14). Wightman showed great maturity in the race to take on the pace with over 300m to go, and then prevail in the straight, after re-taking the lead.

'It was a strange year to be honest, nobody was running super-fast in Europe, and I was able to hold off Bekmezcki of Turkey in a relatively slow race' he said of his win.

Wightman again underlined his breakthrough year with a 1:48.01 800m best, at a BMC Gold Standard Race at Stretford.

2014 presented the added incentive of a berth in the Commonwealth Games in



Wightman's World.

Glasgow. Qualification was realistic with the prospect of having to run sub 3.42.2 twice. The second of these qualifying times he achieved at a frosty Trafford in May 80m clear of the pack (3:42.01). He underlined this run with a stunning 3:35.49 PB at the Hampden Anniversary Games.

Hopes were high, for the Commonwealth Games but a hamstring injury running a 400m meant that Wightman was in no condition to perform at his best and went out at the heat stage 3.43.87. The young Edinburgh man enjoyed the experience but was clearly disappointed with the performance in his home country. Still, to run a 3:35 metric mile, and be selected for a major games at the age of 20 was no mean feat, and the young Brit decided to move it up a notch and experiment with attitude training. The first was in November 2014, in Kenya, followed by a spell in Park City, Utah in the Easter of 2015.

Wightman found that the altitude training didn't exactly work for him and the result was a relatively fallow season over 1500m, his best being 3:40.05. His season was rescued with a 1:47.36 PB over 800 at a BMC race in Solihull in August.

The lessons learnt in sport, are what maketh the athlete. Wightman and father returned, the following year, to their usual regime back in Loughborough. This consisted of longer reps of maximum one mile, and a strong emphasis on hill work in the Outwoods. A typical hill session would consist of 60 -90 secs efforts on a steep hill.

Wightman, also is not a great fan of track training in the winter, and states that he does not start track work until March time, he also has limited XC/road season focusing on shorter races and the odd 5k road race.

Summer sessions may consist of longer intervals such as 10 x 400m, change of pace, with a lap jog; or 1200m reps with full recovery, increasing pace on every lap.

Another staple summer session may be shorter reps, such as 200m with 600m jog recovery, at 24 second pace.

2016 saw the tried and tested routine pay dividends with a 3:36 metric mile, in the States in June, and a 1:47.13 800m best over 800m in Watford highlighting his return to form. Indeed, he is quick to emphasise the role that the BMC has played in terms of developing his racing skills and achieving his best times.

Come 2017 and now settled in the professional set up of a New Balance House among the running scene at Teddington, and Wightman begins to develop apace into an international athlete.

"There are great places to run around

Bushy Park, with my friend and training partner 14.06 5k man, Bradley Goater. My Dad is close by for training now, rather than having to endure a four-hour round trip to Loughborough, and my girlfriend (2.06 800m runner Georgie Hartigan) is also a great support", he enthuses.

Wightman opened the 2017 season with a classy win over Daniel Rowden at a breezy Solihull BMC GP in May with a new 800m best of 1:46.36. There followed the infamous Oslo race where Wightman made history in so many ways. "Winning that race was important for me as it proved I could compete with the Kenyans, and I think it gave a lot of European athletes the belief that they could win races at that level. Seeing Filip (Ingebrigtsen) taking bronze at the worlds is further evidence of the European renaissance", he said.

He moved on to finish third in the UK trials in July behind O'Hare and Kerr, as the Edinburgh trio and friends celebrated GB selection for London. Faced with a possible selection battle with Charlie Grice his 1:45.42 best at the Anniversary Games settled the issue.

Come August and Wightman arrived in the capital, in the shape of his life. He underlined this with a 3:38.50 comfortable heat qualification. The semi-final turned out to be slower and more physical affair with the Scot finishing 8th in 3:41.79. This indeed was a disappointment, but again the 24-year-old, was pragmatic about the experience. "After the heat I was quite confident for the semi and my chances of making the final, and got too worried about my positioning with 700m to go. I learnt that

it a slow race like that nothing happens until the last 200m", he reflected.

The adjustment to racing at championship level, was outlined as Manangoi, second in Oslo, went on to win bronze in London, after returning a stunning 3:28.80 1500m in Monaco. However, it also represents Wightman's new found presence on the world scene, in that he was able to mix with such class.

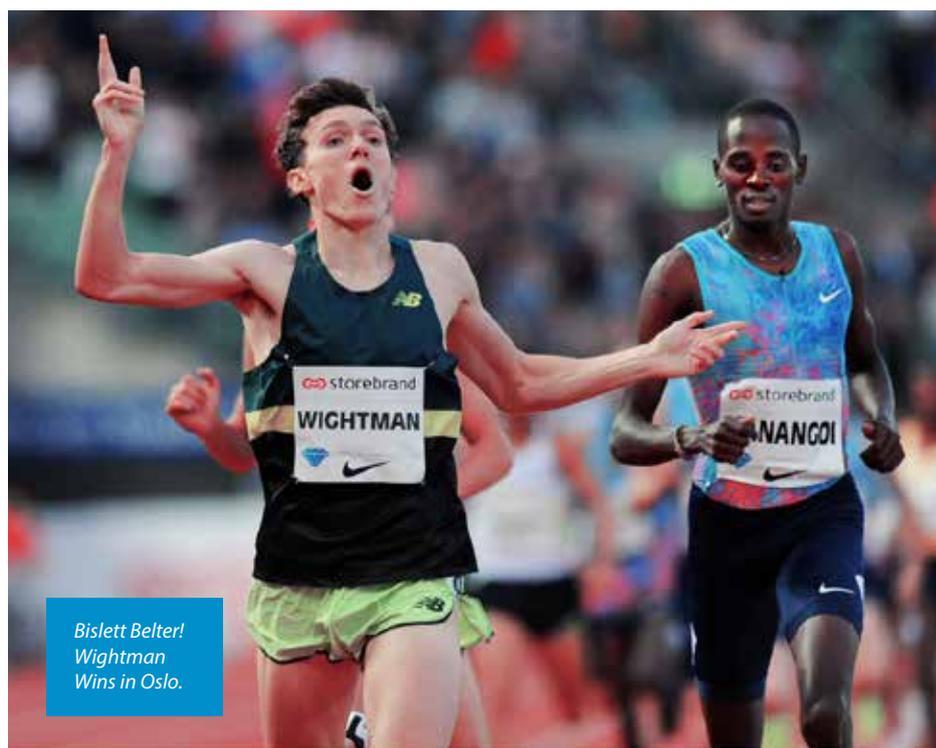
Wightman emphasised the great form he was in, with some stellar late season performances over the mile distance, 3:52.9 for 7th in the New York Mile, plus a mile win in the Birmingham Grand Prix (3:54.92).

Of the future, Wightman who has a 2:1 in Business Administration, aims to continue as a New Balance athlete in Teddington with the relief of a part time job with the power of ten. His long term ambitions are to combine a career in athletics and business after he has given all he can in his ascent to the higher echelons of the sport.

Wightman, who is still only 23, revealed he may also compete indoors this winter, and has qualified for the April Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast, Australia. His daring and swashbuckling style will surely be a factor in the business end of these races, should he qualify.

Jake Wightman's advice for up and coming athletes is simple, and clear:

"Be patient, and keep working hard, athletics is a great sport to be involved in with some genuinely good people involved. I can't think of a better job, personally. Also, you never know when your chance will come, and when it does fully grasp the opportunity".



Bislett Belter!  
Wightman  
Wins in Oslo.

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BMC VOLUNTEER: THE ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTION OF **PAT FITZGERALD** IS CONSIDERED BY **MIKE TAYLOR**:

With over 38 years' service to the BMC, Pat Fitzgerald is one of the unsung heroes of the club. Having held a variety of roles since 1979 including; Treasurer, Administrator and Membership Secretary, Pat has been instrumental in the development of the BMC to where it is today. Here he reflects on his long service, the roles that he's held and his vision for the future.

**Mike Taylor: When and why did you join the BMC?**

**Pat Fitzgerald:** May 1979. I joined after attending an Annual BMC Coaching Weekend and was impressed with how Frank Horwill and the BMC were trying to influence improvement on the countries middle distance standards.

**Mike: You have held various positions within the BMC over the years. Please talk us through some of them.**

**Pat:** I joined the committee in 1980. As a young coach I felt honoured to be on the committee with all the great names associated with the club. I recall the BMC only had £41 in the bank at the time, so were very limited in what it could offer members in terms of activities (subs were only £2 then). Initially I helped Frank Horwill organise races at West London Stadium. I remember the first race I helped out. Frank totted up the entry money after the races and then told me we were £8 short to pay pacemakers travel expenses, so we went halves to cover the shortfall! That was the way things were in those days.

I took over as Treasurer from Janet Cole in the mid 80s. My role as treasurer grew with the club, into an Administrators role in 2005 after I retired early as an accountant to devote the time needed. I also represented BMC as Director of Athletics Data Limited as BMC, who manage the Power of 10 website for British Athletics and provide Athletics Weekly with a results service. This website, owned by BMC and two other partners, evolved from the BMC online entry system which was created to provide up to date information to make BMC better competition providers.

**Mike: What is your current role in the BMC and give us an idea of what you do for the club on a daily basis?**

**Pat:** I am still administrator but at 70 am looking to reduce my areas of responsibility

to that of Membership Secretary. With a database of over 2000 members to maintain and keep up to date records, processing 3/400 new members each year with subs collection and record keeping, storing and management of club kit including spikes distribution it should still keep me busy enough. Currently my Administrators role includes being main point of contact and providing admin office facilities for post, emails, telephone, keeper of records and club kit. I am still a Director of Athletics Data.

**Mike: Your wife also volunteers with the BMC- can you tell us what she does too?**

**Pat:** Maureen really is an unsung helper. Not sure I would be able to function in this role without her help and support. Apart from being part of our events team who travel to our main meetings to assist on the gate, sell club kit or generally help with our meetings, she helps me process new members and takes responsibility for packing and posting membership packs, sending subs letters, Membership Cards, and spikes when required. Visits to our local post office are very frequent!

**Mike: What is your proudest moment with the BMC?**

**Pat:** My proudest must be seeing our founder the inspirational Frank Horwill being awarded an MBE for Services to Athletics which was a direct reflection on his work and influence in the BMC. I also felt very proud when UKA chose Athletics Data (which BMC part own) in 2009 to manage the Power of 10 and to be part of what that means to the sport today. I always feel great when we get 'thank you's' from athletes and coaches after good performances. They make all the hard work from the BMC team feel worthwhile.

**Mike: When has the BMC made you laugh?**

**Pat:** A few years back Frank Horwill was on the gate collecting admission money and a rather self-important coach who did not want to pay said to Frank 'Don't you know who I am?', to which Frank replied 'I don't care if you are Jesus Christ it is still £3 please!'

**Mike: Can you sum up some of the changes you have seen in the BMC over the decades which you have been involved?**

**Pat:** I think the biggest change was in developing competition opportunities for a wider spectrum of athlete by adjusting



*The BMC blood runs through their veins- Pat and Maureen Fitzgerald. Image courtesy of Pat Fitzgerald*

our membership standards some 20 years ago -allowing a clear pathway from club competition through to International level with BMC competition.

Its event specific training weekends and production of our exclusive BMC News have withstood the course of time and been passed down through generations of members. It has tried to work constructively with the various governing bodies created during BMC existence since 1963. What has not changed is the BMC Spirit.

**Mike: What do you think has been the BMCs biggest contribution to U.K. Distance running?**

**Pat:** Our competition pathway encompasses opportunities to run PBs, and achieve qualifying times from English Schools through to Olympic Games. Our flagship Grand Prix series, PB Classics for young athletes and an extensive regional programme covers a wide range of abilities but offers a clear pathway to maximise potential.

**Mike: Who in the club has had the biggest influence on you and why?**

**Pat:** Definitely Frank Horwill. He was a fountain of knowledge and selfless in sharing practical coaching information in a language understood by all and his unstinting belief in the BMC as the way forward, despite all the obstacles the he and the club had to overcome to be where it is today.

**Mike: What is your vision for the BMC in the future?**

**Pat:** We need to aspire to being a world class organisation. This can be achieved by using our reputation and respected BMC brand to become well supported financially with a professional organisation able to deliver what's required. Our meetings should aim to reduce the need for our athletes to continually compete abroad. Whilst we need to stay athlete focused we must seek to include the coaches.

# SEASON'S REVIEW

CHAIR **TIM BRENNAN** OFFERS A REVIEW OF THE 2017 SEASON:

At this time of year, we always produce an analysis of how the season has gone. It looks at the Grand Prix, the BMC season as a whole and the general state of UK endurance running. The thirty-five page statistical report gives us a solid factual base to understand what is going on, and in turn enable us to think about what we could do better. So how does 2017 shape up?

The year could hardly have started better on the 4<sup>th</sup> January when Laura Muir's ran 14:49.12 at the BMC Glasgow Milers' meeting. Not only was this a British Indoor Record it was also a BMC record indoor and out for both members and all-comers. The previous all-comers record was Sara Moreira's 15:08.33 from 2012, and the members record belonged to Jo Pavay at 15:11.42 from 2014.

That set the tone for the year, with what was not only the biggest ever season for the club but also arguably one of the best. It was the:

- First season with over 600 races (623)
- First season with over 6000 finishers (6202)
- First season with over 3000 PB's (3007)
- Highest PB ratio (48%)
- Most finishers ever in the Grand Prix (1542)
- Most finishers ever in a single meeting – Milton Keynes PB Classic (495)

It was only in 2015 that the number of finishers went past the 5000 mark. This growth has come not from more meetings, but from more races in the meetings, and from slightly more people in each race. What is more important though is the quality of the races. The 48% PB ratio was a high and at the top end it was an excellent year for championship qualifications and BMC Records.

#### New BMC records were set by:

- Laura Muir, 5000 (14:49.12)  
Members and all-comers senior record
- Lynsey Sharp, 800 (1:59.33)  
Members and all-comers senior record
- Markhim Lonsdale, 800 (1:46.97)  
Members U20 record

Laura and Lynsey's time were also World Championship qualifying times. Jess Judd and Katie Snowden at 1500 in 4:05.20 and 4:05.29, and Steph Twell at 5000 in 15:16.65 completed the five qualifications.

Six European U23 standards, eleven European U20 standards and thirteen Commonwealth standards were achieved.

Fourteen of the World Championship team competed in BMC events during the year. Outside middle distance it is hard to find many of the UK team competing domestically outside the trials and televised meetings.

#### The Return of the Complete Middle Distance Runner

It is great to see so many of our top runners achieving top rankings in more than one event. To be the complete middle distance runner involves being able to operate at distances shorter and longer than your race distance. Mo Farah has been a great example of this and his range makes him so hard to beat in championships. Accepting that the 400/800 type runner is different from the 800/1500 type (See page 44 for greater debate on this), it is still good to see a few more of the later as was common in the 70s and 80s.

Ranked in the top three at more than one event are:

- Laura Muir – 800m/1500m/5000m

- Eilish McColgan – 1500/5000/10,000
- Mo Farah – 1500/5000/10,000
- Laura Weightman 1500/5000
- Jake Wightman 800 (4<sup>th</sup>) /1500
- Marc Scott 5000/10,000

#### The Season event by event

##### 800m

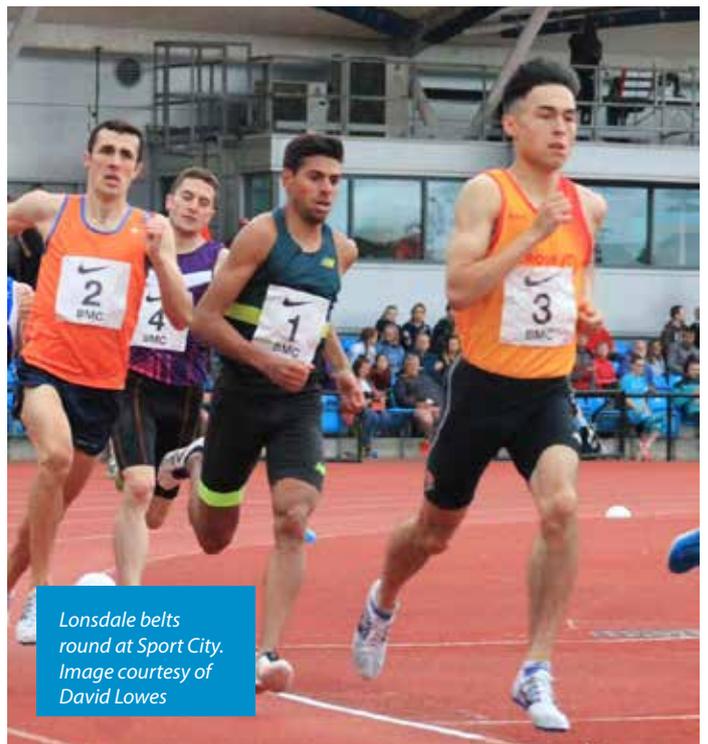
Lynsey Sharp ran the first ever sub two minute women's 800m at the Watford Grand Prix to set a little bit of BMC history and progress her season nicely. The fastest women's race of season was won by Alexandra Bell in 2:00.69 at the Trafford Gold Standard in July. This was the strongest race of the season with four breaking 2:03.

The men's 800m was resurgent this year. It was the third best year ever for the event in the Grand Prix. Leading the BMC rankings for the third year in succession was Jake Wightman. This came in the first Grand Prix of the year with Daniel Rowden following Jake under 1:47. Outstanding in the season was Markhim Lonsdale with three Grand Prix wins, the fastest of which was his 1:46.97 at Sport City for a BMC members U20 record, this broke the fifteen year old members record of Ricky Soos.

##### 1500m

The seasons' outstanding races came at the Watford Gold Standard on 14<sup>th</sup> June. In great conditions Jess Judd and Katie Snowden ran World Championship qualifications in the women's race, whilst in the men's race Tom Marshall led five under 3:40 with his 3:37.62 PB. In fact, the top ten in this race ended up as the top ten in the BMC rankings.

A worry for the club is the men's 1500m in the Grand Prix. The last two years have produced no sub 3:40 times and low standards in depth. The numbers running have grown but a lot of that growth has come from those running outside the entry standard of 3:56. We



Lonsdale belts round at Sport City. Image courtesy of David Lowes



Tom Marshall points the way at Watford. Image courtesy of David Lowes.

believe the races have been well set-up by the pacemakers and are considering making the meetings and A races harder to get in to in the hope that this raises standards. (Table 2)

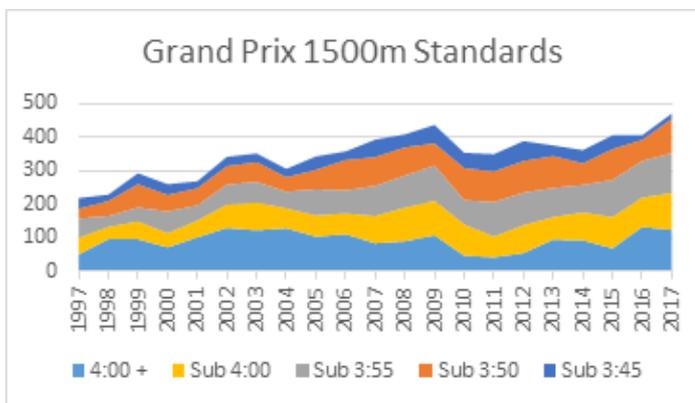


Table 2

### 5000m

There is a contrast between the men and the women in this event. As well as Laura Muir's British Indoor and BMC record, Steph Twell produced an outstanding front run for a 15:16.65 World championship qualification at Watford. The women's 5000m in the Grand Prix has grown substantially over the years in both size and standards.

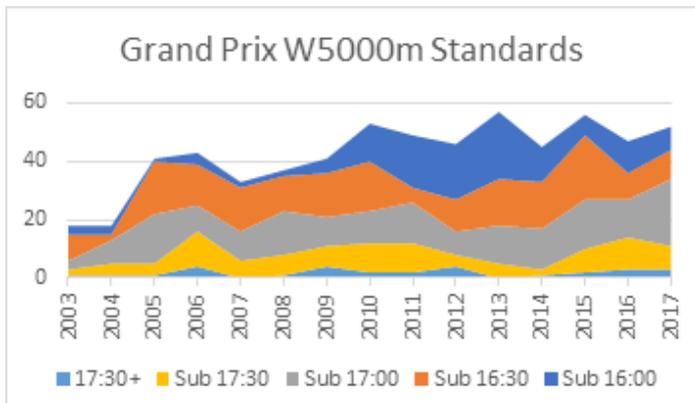


Table 3

In the men's rankings four people broke 14 minutes, led by Sam Stabler on 13:59.12. In general standards are lower than ten years ago. Taking 2005 as a comparison there were 15 performances below 14 minutes in the Grand Prix with 6 of those being below 13:30. The fastest Britain was Mo Farah with a then big PB of 13:30.53.

### 10,000m

The numbers running track 10k races are on the up and the men's

BMC rankings has 81 performers led by Chris Thompson with 28:40.40. Charlotte Arter led the women's rankings with 32:37.52.

### Steeplechase

The 2000m Steeplechase races included in early season Grand Prix for the last two years have proved to be a popular innovation, and at the Milton Keynes PB classic we had enough demand for A and B race steeplechases. The championship distance 3000m races have not been as popular. Australian Stewart McSweyn topped the rankings for the second year in a row with a great 8:34.45. Sadly, we had to cancel the scheduled women's races due to lack of interest. Back in 2006 and 2007 the BMC was helping promote the development of the event and we had two British Records set. It would be great to get that sort of momentum going again but we need to get some help and support in promoting the events.

### Meetings

The Grand Prix series returned to Loughborough for the first time since 2006 and this was a great addition to the venues. We aim to keep innovating and improving the presentations of the meetings where can. This year we had coaching corners before the meetings, track side interviews at some, and a Steel Drum Band to entertain at Trafford!

Some of our best races this year came in Gold Standard or Regional races. It is something we will be looking at to see if a few mid-week opportunities can be flagged as races to target for top times and if we can use social-media to get the word around that hot races are in prospect.

### Thanks

Huge thanks to all the officials, partner clubs and BMC volunteers who helped make the season so successful. BMC races will be back with the indoor season.



Jake Wightman leads at Solihull. Image courtesy of David Lowes.

# SEASON'S REVIEW

**KEVIN FAHEY** ADDS A PERSONAL TOUCH TO A SEASON IN REVIEW:



*Chris Thompson takes the 10,000m plus the English championship at Trafford.*

The stats will show that the 2017 Grand Prix season was one of the most successful ever but if you prefer your athletics to have a more human face then look at the summers enjoyed by Jake Wightman, Jess Judd, Daniel Rowden and Harriet Knowles-Jones. That illustrious quartet of fine middle distance runners all turned up for the opening Grand Prix at Solihull on Saturday May 13th and used the meeting as launchpad for terrific seasons.

Wightman broke the ice for a new campaign by winning the 800m at Solihull in a then personal best of 1 mins 46.36secs. Afterwards he admitted that was just the race he needed to get the season underway and was why he opted for a Grand Prix event rather than head over to Europe. "It is great to finally get a 1:46 to my name," said Wightman. "Being my first race I was as nervous as hell. I was expecting to run around 1:47 so 1:46 was very nice and now I am very hopeful that in the right race I have a 1:45 in me this summer."

Prophetic words indeed as Wightman went on to better his 800m PB three more times, culminating in 1:45.42 at the Muller Anniversary Games. Ultimately for Wightman the Solihull victory was but just the first step in his ultimate goal of winning selection for the World Championships in London where he reached the semi-finals. In addition he made his mark on the Diamond League circuit with magnificent victories in the 1500m at Oslo (a season's best of 3:34.17) and over the mile at Birmingham (3:54.92).

Judd can also look back to Solihull as the starting point of a typically busy season that saw her also earn selection for the World Championships and in a red-hot 1500m field more than made her mark with a lifetime best of 4:03.73 in the heats to reach the semi-finals. She then went on to win the bronze medal at the World Student Games in Tapei over 5000m, the distance at which she made her debut when winning the SportCity Grand Prix in a time of 15:34.82, which for the time being remains her best.

Coincidentally both Rowden and Knowles-Jones finished runners-up behind Wightman and Judd at Solihull but as the BMC intended used the meeting as a pathway to further success in their European age group championships. Rowden also clocked a PB of 1:46.86 behind Wightman and proved that was no fluke as he later went on to win the silver medal at the European U23 Championships in Poland. Likewise Knowles-Jones finished behind Judd in the 1500m at Solihull and then won at SportCity as she ran herself into the GB team for the European U20 Championships in Italy where she won the bronze medal. Then for good measure she ended her season with a PB of 2:07.58 in the 800m B race at the Trafford Grand Prix.

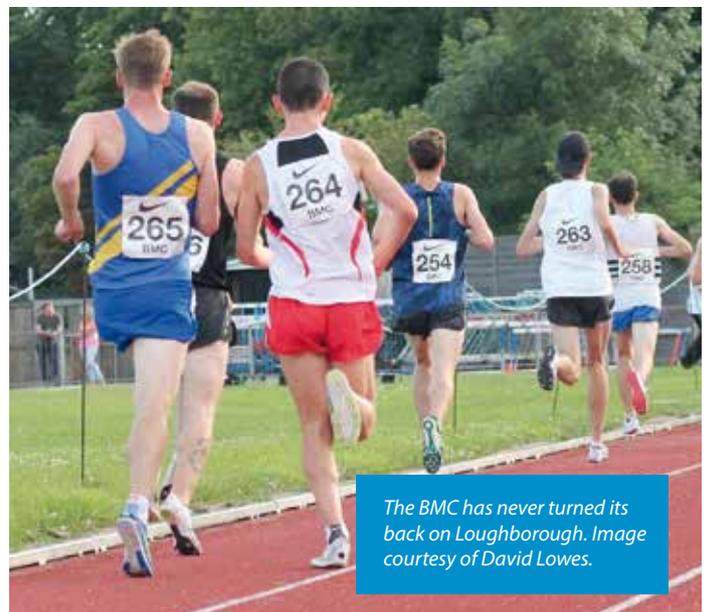
In short a fine example of how some of leading runners and emerging stars use the BMC Grand Prix circuit to fine-tune their preparations and fitness ahead of bigger challenges.

In addition there were many others who did the same from European Championships qualifiers to English Schools' marks, including the amazing Max Burgin who set a UK Age 15 best of 1:50.05 as he raced to victory in the 800m C race at SportCity.

The above being said, arguably some of the most enduring memories of the season come from two athletes who are separated by a quarter of a century in years. Markhim Lonsdale hadn't even been born when Anthony Whiteman was racing in the semi-finals of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, but the final Grand Prix of the season at Trafford saw them both on the start line for 800m A race. Lonsdale went on to clinch his third GP win of the summer, the eighteen year-old having opened with a sparkling PB of 1:46.97 at SportCity as he broke the 15-year-old British Milers' Club Under 20 men's 800m record of 1:47.18 held by Ricky Soos. He followed that up with another win at Loughborough before closing his campaign in Trafford – not forgetting in-between an impressive silver at the European Under 20 Championships in Italy. That sort of form impressed even Whiteman, whose dedication to his sport Lonsdale will need to repeat if he wants to enjoy that level of success.

Remarkably Whiteman still has that hunger and in that same Trafford race he stuck to his own plan to finally realise his ambition of adding the World Masters M45 800m record to his already glittering CV with a time of 1 mins 49.86secs. It was the seventh successive year that Whiteman has run inside 1 mins 50secs for the distance and means he now owns the World Masters M45 records for 800m, 1500m and the mile both indoors and outdoors. "That is what I love about racing in these Grand Prix meetings; battling shoulder to shoulder down the home straight, straining for the finish line and giving it everything," said Whiteman. "That is what I missed most when I was away from the track and what really got me back into it. I just love competing and hate losing!"

The same might be said for runners all the way down to the H & I races and why so many runners love taking part in BMC events.



*The BMC has never turned its back on Loughborough. Image courtesy of David Lowes.*

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# BMC IN PICTURES



*A selection of images from three of our Grand Prix Races during the summer season of 2017- namely Loughborough, Watford and Trafford.*

Images courtesy of David Lowes. But what about the shots we've not taken? What about YOUR pics from not only the Grand Prix events but any BMC event for that matter?

Send them to our British Milers' Club Facebook page or [mattlongcoach@gmail.com](mailto:mattlongcoach@gmail.com) and we will try and get them shared. Remember, it's YOUR club.



# BMC ACADEMY CAMP REPORT

COURSE DIRECTOR **DAVID LOWES** REPORTS FROM THE RECENT **BMC ACADEMY CAMP**:

The Residential weekend at Spinkhill, near Sheffield on October 27-29 was yet another resounding success writes Academy Chair and Course Director, **David Lowes**.

With the courses in their present re-vamped format now approaching the 20-year mark ... where has time gone(?) each year seems to get better than ever. That is a difficult task in itself and the Academy and my team strive for excellence, but never take anything for granted. The reason we know the annual training camps are huge successes is not my or my team's opinions – we go to the coalface and ask the athletes and visiting coaches. Of course, there may be little things that didn't go well or could have gone better and these are addressed with urgency and strategies are put in place for the following year.

With almost 70 attendees this year, including visiting coaches, the weekend began on the Friday evening with a presentation by myself on what athletes expect and don't expect from their coach. The athletes and coaches were put in groups to come up with some answers. Some very astute rationale was given with one group even saying that a coach should be "funny" – so that rules out quite a few! The presentation continued with a look at how to improve and not just at the physiological side, but also at such things as lifestyle, diet, planning and a strong psychology.

As is the tradition, the evening continued with a quiz in the form of a pictorial offering and most groups did very well. Before finishing, the athletes met their staff coach to discuss the Saturday morning session. All athletes received a personalised course tee-shirt – a collector's item! (see pictures).

The highlight of the weekend was the two star guests who arrived early on Saturday morning. BMC legend, Anthony Whiteman, plus runner turned race walker, Gemma Bridge, who filled the void at very



Spinkhill Starlets.

late notice when one of the guests couldn't attend. The Spring issue of BMC News will include their interviews and thoughts and there were some excellent answers too as well as an in-depth look at Whiteman's training diaries from 1996-97. As usual, the attentive youngsters had some good thought provoking questions for the two guests as well!

The usual morning run was done as soon as it became light enough (around 7.40am) and the main session in four separate squads was done mid-morning. A stretching session after lunch and it was down to the track for drills and a short example workout with Whiteman. The weekend was blessed with excellent weather and fairly mild for the

time of the year.

The Saturday evening session was devoted to the now traditional "Your Shout" forum. This is where the athletes break into groups and write and draw their thoughts about a particular subject before being given three minutes to deliver their thoughts in front of everyone. The subject this year was "Race Week Preparation – Do's and Don't's" and all teams were voted on their content and presentation skills by the coaching panel with age taken into account. We finished the evening again with a quiz, but this time with more of an emphasis on general knowledge. There were winners, but definitely no losers!

The Sunday morning run had the benefit



Academy Athletes are show the Wightman Way.



Smiles better at Spinkhill.



*Cross country is integral at our Academy weekend.*



*It's a stretch at the S&C session.*



*Thumbs up to David Lowes and his Academy staff.*

of starting in daylight due to the clocks going back on the Saturday evening and was much appreciated by all. After breakfast a light stretching session to re-cap what had been done previously and also to loosen up tired limbs for the final mid-morning session of 8x1 min with 1min rec.

Always a major difficulty, as most deserve the accolades, the two awards of "Most Deserving Athletes" was given to young Scot, Finlay Ross and Nancy Britton – both who received BMC Caps and other kit, kindly donated by Mark Vile. Most importantly,

they are both now eligible for a free course next year.

With next year's course already provisionally booked for October 26-28, work and thoughts will begin soon, so look out for an advert in the Spring edition of BMC News and also on BMC Facebook – don't miss out! If you are in doubt, have a look at the photographs from the camp – they tell much more than words!

*All images in this Academy article are courtesy of David Lowes.*



*Most Deserving Athletes of the Course – Nancy Britton and Finlay Ross.*



*Athletes washed up whiter than white in their Nike sponsored kit.*

# BMC ACADEMY IN BLOOM



Since its formation in January 2005 the Academy has gone from strength-to-strength and hundreds of athletes have passed through its doors over the past 12 years. As well as our current base at Spinkhill, near Sheffield, our residential, training and educational courses have also been held at venues as diverse as Ardingly in Sussex and Ogmores in South Wales/ All images on this page courtesy of David Lowes.



# BMC YOUNG ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

BMC YOUNG ATHLETE OF THE YEAR, **JEMMA REEKIE** SHARES HER VISION OF THE FUTURE WITH **CHARLES McCONNELL**:

The journey that led to the BMC Young Athlete of 2017 Award for Jemma Reekie, started at school when she found she liked running at the age of 9. Her mother said she could join a club so she joined Kilbarchan as it was easier to get to. Moving straight away into the middle distance group as she wasn't good at anything else, Jemma focused mainly on the 800m. Training under her first coach, Arthur Smith, followed a pattern of reps of 200s and up on the track - sometimes on the road - on Tuesdays and Thursdays with a grass session on Saturday. Mondays was an easy 6 mile road run. "I was not doing very much at all", Jemma confesses. There was good road and xc competition in the winter. By 2014 Jemma had lowered her PB to 2:09.88 for two laps and finished second in the England Athletics 800m. Towards the end of the track season in 2015, when her performances had not progressed she decided she had to move because she felt she had to get pushed more. "I was not running as well as I was the year before", she admits. She was doing sessions by herself as the other girls in the club were more into xc and hill running. She continues, "I was not training as hard as I should have been. I did not really enjoy xc". Jemma saw herself as a track athlete and more specifically an 800m track athlete.

Whilst attending one of a regular series of weekend courses for talented athletes at Loughborough, it was suggested that she join Andy Young's group. On joining, Jemma found that, "the sessions were a lot harder - a shock to the system. I was the slowest in the group by far - so far behind. The sessions were overall harder. It took about a year to adapt and find my place in the group. The biggest change is that now I do every session the fastest I can go - I push myself in all the sessions". She was not coasting as before in familiar sessions. "The sessions had short recoveries or jog recoveries which I had never done before- I found it very hard! It was much more intense." The training now was Monday, Wednesday and Saturday with the group and runs by herself on the distance days; a total of 6 days per week. There were different sessions, at a greater intensity with more training partners. For Jemma, that first year was spent getting used to what was going on, trying to keep up with the people in front.

With her dislike of xc, Jemma had a full indoor season in early 2016. Thinking of herself as an 800m runner when she moved,

she gradually found out that Andy Young did not share that perception. Jemma continues that, "I trusted in him and what distance he told me to do so I felt it easier as he knew what he was doing, so I listened to him. So when he started making me do 1500s, I did not enjoy them at first but I really like them". The longer sessions improved; these were what Jemma was worse at when she first joined the group, so she worked hard to improve and make them her best sessions. "I just started working at it. Sessions such as 7 x 600m or 1k reps, I found hard mentally but in the past year I have overcome that". Now, the Saturday grass session of 1K reps or longer hills are also with short recoveries.

Visits to Manchester have proved both enjoyable and productive - both for the Trafford or the BMC Grand Prix series. A lack of quality races in Scotland has meant that Jemma has had to travel to get fast times. The weather in Scotland is a factor! These BMC races are valued as a chance to get quick times and Trafford is not that far away, c. 3 hours, but driving to Watford has proven too far. The role of mum and dad has proven crucial- something Jemma did not appreciate when younger but she now recognises what they have invested in driving

her to races and training. 2016 was a year to get times down over 800m, as times had stalled in 2015 whilst there had been no races over 1500m since 2014. Following the 2016 track season Grosseto and the European under 20 championships were on the horizon prior to the indoor season when her times continued to improve in early 2017.

First off was her first ever 3K on January 4th 2017 when Jemma ran 9:28.19. "I think my coach was secretly thinking I could double up... He asked me to do it so I thought I will give it a shot", she says. She found it hard mentally going round and round but the reward was a Scottish Junior Record. Later that month she ran 4:21.57 for the 1500m and later her 800m PB dropped to 2:05.52. The advice of her coach was that, "Andy was like.. I think you should go for the 1500 or 3K".

In 2016 Jemma had been to altitude to both Font Romeu and South Africa. After the indoors this year there was more altitude work. Firstly in Font Romeu in March with a new 3K PB of 9:11.20 at Stretford on April 25th before a return to altitude at Flagstaff. She explains the benefits of altitude quite simply as, "I need it sometimes just to go away for a couple of weeks and focus on running" However in America Jemma

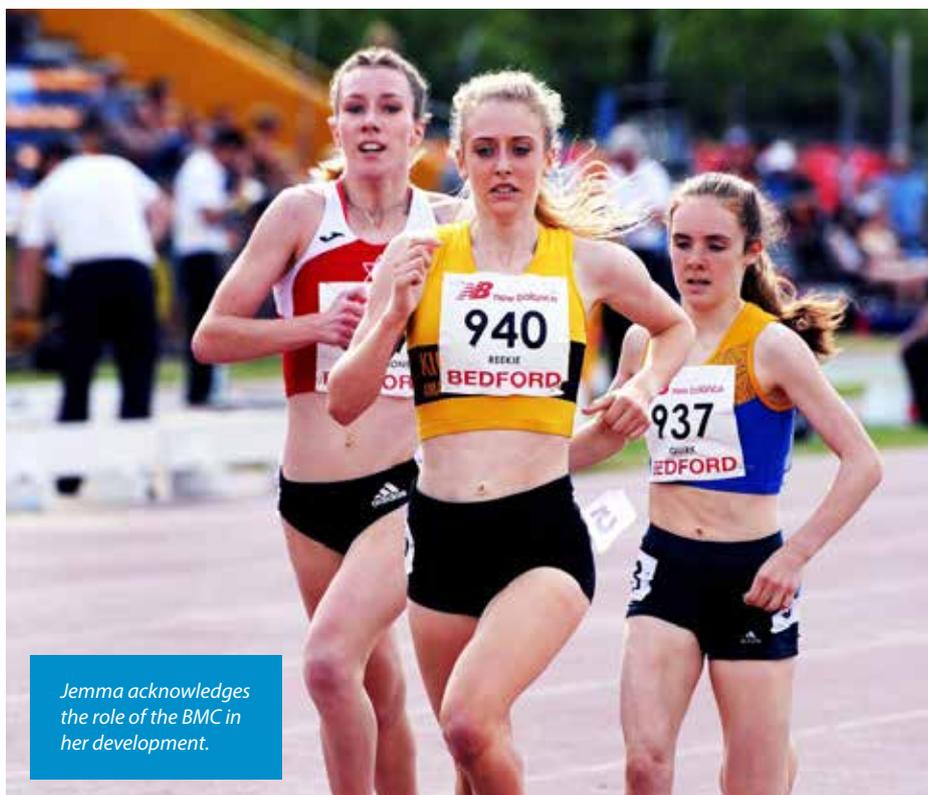


Jemma Reekie has made giant strides in 2017.

struggled with her asthma, and a few days after the 3K at the Loughborough International she spent 4 days in hospital - her asthma out of control. "Hopefully they have got it on top and next year I won't have any problems," she asserts. Her performances over 1500m did not seem to be affected as Jemma produced a series of fast runs in June and July. More international racing experience was gained at the Folksam Challenge in Gothenburg and in the 'B' race in the Lausanne Diamond League. Meanwhile at the British Athletics Championships, Jemma made the final this year in the 1500m, finishing 7th in a new PB of 4:12.28. The last part of the plan was the U20 trial. She recalls that, "At Bedford I could decide what I wanted to do. When we got there, Andy was like, 'I think you should just do both!... I was lucky the 15 went on a Saturday - and on the Sunday I had the 3K. It was very hot that day and I was struggling with the heat on Sunday in the 3K'."

Jemma arrived Grosseto on the Tuesday and to avoid the heat (over 33 degrees) stayed indoors as much as possible. The 1500m heat on the Friday presented few problems, though her legs felt a bit tired and she qualified easily. Next day was the 3K. With honesty she says, "I was really up for it but I was really nervous but I normally don't get that nervous... I think I put too much pressure on myself". The race was front run by the 16 year old Swiss Delia Sclabas, who did the 1500/3k double last year in the European u18 Championships in Tbilisi where it was much hotter! Jemma struggled with the heat after halfway, felt tired and could not run any quicker. She was with Sclabas until dropped with 500m to go, leaving the winner to produce kilometre splits of 3:05.74, 3:08.74 and 2:56.17 for a winning time of 9:10.13. Jemma struggled through a final 200m in about 40 seconds and was just pipped by an inspired performance by the host's Nadia Battocletti who improved her PB by over 10 seconds to finish third in 9:24.01 with Jemma less than a second behind.

The initial 30 minutes recovery was spent taking in replacement electrolytes and cooling her body temperature. Then a short jog, followed by a massage so that by that night Jemma felt recovered physically. Mentally she realised that she had still finished fourth in Europe in her first year at 3K, and although it was regarded as a bad race it was only against the backdrop of high expectations. In the evening Jemma phoned her parents, then Andy and Laura Muir who was very motivating, saying, "your time will come, your time will come". And I was like - "It's got to be tomorrow!" About the 3K



*Jemma acknowledges the role of the BMC in her development.*

Jemma thinks that 'a couple of years ago,' I would have been quite upset but being with Andy I just have to think about the 15. Forget about the 3K."

On the start line for the 1500m, her legs were hurting, but mentally she felt fine and Jemma was determined to get a medal. Amelia Quirke took the lead at 300m and led through 400m in 66.33 and 800m in 2:15.50. A leading group of seven had broken away after 500m and at the bell the Bulgarian, Liliana Georgieva made her move. "I was using it like a training session: I was just sat on the back of them. That's what I try to do with the guys in training - hold onto them for as long as I can", she acknowledges. Swinging wide around the bend, Jemma made her move at 250m and with her arms pumping furiously completed the final 400 in 66 seconds to win in 4:13.25. Harriet Knowles-Jones finished third in 4:17.53 behind Georgieva's National Record of 4:16.73.

It took three weeks for Jemma to recover physically and mentally after her return. Before her season ended there were still a few more races, including a pleasing Mile at the Manchester International and her PB 800m run at Stretford in 2:04.25. Her season finished with the road mile at the Great North City Games before an end of season break of two weeks.

Jemma attended college after school to obtain her Level 2 Fitness Instructor award and is now planning to do the Level 3 Personal Trainer; but she has to earn the money to pay for that. Now she is just running, doing a little coaching in

schools and working here and there. At the time of our chat, her immediate aim is Liverpool, aiming for the European u20s xc trial race. Plans are not set yet for 2018 apart from trying to improve her times in the indoor season.

Training has now returned to its usual pattern. Track on Monday, two runs on Tuesday plus circuit training, track on Wednesday, two runs on Thursday, a rest on Friday, with a grass session Saturday and 9-10 miles on a Sunday. She is now enjoying the longer runs and xc more now with her improved aerobic base. The track sessions could be anything as the group do not know until it starts. They are held at the Emirates Indoor Arena in the winter - "we hide from the cold!" - but Jemma prefers the 1K sessions on the grass or road. In the summer there is a choice of tracks but often the Emirates is still used as the sessions are not compromised by bad weather. She freely admits that, "It's a bit more motivating when you don't need to go out in the pouring rain".

In 2018 Jemma wants to get more racing experience by competing abroad, but other possible future goals in 2019 could involve the European Indoors in Glasgow and the European u23s Championships in July in Sweden, and then there are the Commonwealth Games possibly in Birmingham in 2022. With passion in her eyes she asserts, "I really want to go to Tokyo in 2020". She says there is no interest in going to an American University on a scholarship, "Now that I have Andy as a coach, I have a perfect set up here so I would rather stay at home. I like training in Scotland".

# ITALIAN MILING

**CARLO GRIPPO** GRABS **ITALIAN MILING** BY THE SCRUFF OF THE NECK AND DRAGS **MATT LONG** ALONG WITH HIM:

I start by reminding the distinguished middle-aged Italian that he is best remembered in England for his appearance in the 1980 Moscow Olympics 800m. In asking what his memories of those Games in Russia are, one is reminded just how political they were. With a heavy sigh, Carlo tells that, "The Moscow Olympics were very different. As I remember the Athlete's Village was far away from the City. There was no fun and no participation from the local population". I press him as to whether he feels the American led boycott spoiled the Games. With sadness, he affirms that, "The boycott was from way too many countries, starting with the USA. They should have been considered a "B-level Olympics" for a large group of events. My participation was meaningless as I was completely out of shape as I could not train for 4 months until February 1980". So did he take any positives from 1980 at all? At this point his mood lightens a little and he points out that, "On the good side, the week before Moscow I won the 800m at the Bislett Games and finished ahead of a young Johnny Gray" (Gray would go on to take Olympic 800m bronze in Barcelona 12 years later).

Talk of those infamous Moscow Olympics, gives me an excuse to slip the great rivalry between Steve Ovett (800m gold and 1500m bronze) and Seb Coe (800m silver and 1500m gold) into the conversation. What did he make of them? With a smile he acknowledges that, "I have a lot of respect for both of them- two living legends. It was easier to get along with Steve, as we are both from 1955 and I first met him in 1973 at the European Juniors in Duisburg, where he won the gold. I did not make the final that included Wülbeck, Ivo Van Damme and José Marajo. In those days, Steve appeared as more spontaneous and Seb more reserved".



Carlo, Cram and Radcliffe.

Both images courtesy of Carlo Grippo

Having brought back some painful memories of one Olympics, I feel as I am treading on the proverbial egg shells when bringing up the subject of Carlo's participation in the 1976 Montreal Olympics. I needn't have worried. With his eyes lighting up, he tells that, "The City of Montreal responded with enthusiasm and they made us athletes feel great. Walking the streets, using the subway: when people noticed the lanyard, many started asking questions about the country, the sport, the event"

In putting the matter of both Olympics to one side, I then move on to ask what he was most pleased with about his running career? With a laugh he shares that, "I started running in Brussels where I lived in my childhood. I had some fierce competitors in the local cross-countries races, and of course my nickname was "the Italian". At the age of 16, I started traveling back-and-forth to Italy for 3-4 races every year, and obviously my nickname there was "the Belgian"! In terms of my best career memories there was making the Montreal Olympic 800m Semi-Final. I set a world indoor record for 800m a year later in 1977. This being said I will always treasure my junior "golden week" with 3 Italian age group records: 1m48.1 for 800m – 3m46.4 for 1500m and 2m20.5 for 1000m, which is still standing after 43 years!

He is clearly aware of the existence and role of the BMC, so I turn this on its head by asking whether Italy has an equivalent of the British Milers' After a thoughtful pause, he responds, "Not that I know. It's a great idea and we should replicate it elsewhere. I would be happy to contribute too"- it's an answer which should surely make us all grateful for our club here in Britain.

We are in danger of burying our heads in the sands of the past, so moving on from the 70s and 80s, I attempt to come up to full speed by asking him which emerging Italian talent should we watch out for. Without hesitation he answers, "Definitely Filippo Tortu, the most talented sprinter I have seen in years". But what about middle distance I want to know? Who are the most impressive middle distance runners in Italy today? He is keen to tell me about, "A couple of Juniors in the 800m, Simone Barontini and Andrea Romani: both ran 1m48 in 2017 and they should make progress in the next 2-3 years. I keep an eye on both of them".

As our interview rounds the top bend



Carlo Grippo in his prime back in the 1970s.

and enters the home straight, I am keen to put athletics into perspective, by asking about Carlo Grippo, the man. Has life been kind to him since he hung up his spikes? He discloses that, "I had an extremely fascinating business career as an executive for Global Brands in Sport (Nike, Benetton, Fila) and fashion (Zegna) and also living in 4 different Countries - France, Austria, Germany and...England!" A proud and humble family man he continues that, "I have been married for a long time with a former distance runner from Rome, whom I met when commuting from Brussels for racing. We have two boys, none of whom opted for athletics – one plays tennis and the other rugby. Just recently we became grandparents". So what challenges lie ahead for this cultured and industrious 62 year old? Clearly not one to rest on his laurels he draws proceedings to a conclusion by elaborating upon the fact that, "I have now my own consulting firm for marketing and sales projects and have been out of the athletics world for a long while. From January 2018 I will work on a project called "Italian Track & Field Academy" that the Association will launch next year to support the very best "young guns" aged 16-18. My focus is non-technical, but related to the education, motivation and lead to their post-athletic life".

On that note, a glance ahead to the future of Italian athletics may well be informed by a nod to the past and a former world record holder in the form of the likeable Carlo Grippo.

**Check out Grippo Consulting [www.grippoconsulting.com](http://www.grippoconsulting.com) and [carlo.grippo@grippoconsulting.com](mailto:carlo.grippo@grippoconsulting.com)**

# BMC COACH OF THE YEAR

BMC COACH OF THE YEAR **JAMES THIE** TELLS **PAUL HAYES** WHY HE WILL 'NEVER STOP LEARNING':

To become a great teacher, or coach, one must be happy to learn from ones pupils. Not the easiest thing to admit for some of us but certainly a truism if we are aiming to help others achieve maximum potential, which must surely be the aim of every coach, in whatever level they work. For James Thie, BMC Coach of the year, this maxim began as he was encouraged to run at school then at Clevedon AC, upon joining Tom Watsons' training group. Here he learnt the basis of what real training was all about and was encouraged to learn from a whole variety of people and sources (AW and BMC News being very much to the fore here). Both from Tom, and Mark Rowland, he learnt a very key part of our sport, that there are no short cuts to success at the top. Hard work, determination and positive thinking became the watch words as James spent time travelling and coaching himself at the highest levels. Chief among these are national titles and a world indoor 4<sup>th</sup> place. Now he is transferring that to the success of his own training group including athletes such as Ieuan Thomas (3rd UK Champs & World Champs 3000m SC qualifier), Tom Marshall (Multiple Welsh Champion & 3:37.5 1500m in 2017), Steve Morris (Double Paralympian, 4th London 2017), Charlotte Taylor-Green (3000m SC Silver UK & England Champs) and Jade Williams (Welsh records in 2000m SC & 3000m SC in debut races in 2017) to name but a few. Their achievements are over a wide variety

of distances and surfaces.

When asked who has influenced him in his quest to improve his skills, some familiar names arise. Harry Wilson, coach to the great Steve Ovett and many other international achieving athletes. Peter Coe, father and coach to our IAAF president and double Olympic gold medallist (plus a few world records on the way) Seb Coe. Frank Horwill, founding father of the British Milers' Club and another coach to a wide range of International performing athletes. Phil Banning, Mark Rowland, Bill Bowerman and Arch Jelly are also names that arise in the conversation. All coaches who inspired athletes to reach the highest possible levels through dedication, hard work and time given freely for the benefit of others. What many of them have in common is the BMC, an organisation that James values very much, both as a huge factor in his own athletic development but one which he is now using to help his squad move ever up the levels of achievement. As James sees it, there is the twofold benefit of great opportunities to run in fast races coupled with the opportunity to develop as a coach through BMC seminars and the BMC News.

As a coach, James firmly believes that the athlete is at the heart of the group. To achieve this takes a large degree of trust but using the work of the other members of the group to inspire you to improve and push on to that treasured goal. There is a great deal of reflection included at all times so that no



stone is left unturned in the quest for that success. James firmly believes that "every athlete is different and is never in the same physical and mental place at one time". There is a positive attitude to the current times in British athletics in his outlook, seeing that there are the support structures in place for athletes to achieve if they want to. "It's also important to understand that with the right advice and with the right motivation, it can be possible to create your own groups, team and structure which can lead to producing champions". James sees that the key thing about support is that of keeping an athlete healthy so it is the backup structure from UKA and Welsh Athletics that he sees as most key to helping his squad train and improve as time progresses.

The key elements of this working environment are, "Trust, respect and honesty. Plus, a bucket load of patience. Things don't come quickly or easily. Plus it also important to say thank you to those athletes you coached in the early years, as you learn so much in trial and error". Coupled with this is, "A good communicator and someone who can relate and understand their group. Not afraid to adapt and change, as well as ask people's advice and use other experts to help. Plus above all, I would like the group to know I do care, and it's the ones who are injured or having a tough time that I want to make sure are supported to come back stronger". As to the future, "I've only been coaching for 9 years, so would like to think I've still got a lot to learn and growing to do. I'd like to see our group continuing to do well on the international stage - and who knows what success that could bring". A clear emphasis that you need to keep learning all the time and keep taking the lessons that your athletes give you as you strive to help them reach their potential. This being through hard work and clear goals as well as the help of a variety of support structures not least of which is your training group.

Both images courtesy of James Thie



# FINAL COUNTDOWN

ATHLETES TRAIN TO RACE AND GETTING IT RIGHT ON THE DAY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING THEY CAN DO, WRITES **DAVID LOWES**:

ALTHOUGH there are some runners who have a passion for training only, these are in the minority. The reason we train as middle distance athletes is to get fit initially and eventually use that fitness in a more specific way that will ensure good performances in competition. When it comes to race day two factors are usually top of the agenda, a personal best performance or to finish as high up the field as possible which means beating your rivals.

In the confines of a 400m track, athletes can become obsessed with PB's with the art of racing becoming forgotten. After all, in a hypothetical sense, what would you rather do, win the men's Olympic 1500m title in 3min 50sec or fail to make the final running 3min 36sec in the heat? It's a 'no brainer'. We all must become racers and race day should be given the utmost attention to detail to ensure that you are on top form.

There are many top athletes who begin to focus to some degree on their intended target race(s) as much as four years hence. A more realistic bunch will have a one-year window where everything is put in place on the training track, in the gym and also as well as necessary lifestyle changes. For this short article I will be looking at the countdown to race day over a meagre seven-day period. A look at what can go wrong and how to make adjustments to guarantee being in the right mind-set and shape to be able to deliver the goods.

If you go to any race, whether track or cross country, I'm sure you will hear someone saying, "I haven't tapered for today". There is nothing wrong with this muttering if it doesn't impede on racing performance. Indeed if every athlete 'eased down' in training before every race, the training would become diluted and eventually ineffective. In my experience, the athletes who let everyone know about not easing back are the ones making excuses before they race!

Cross country does offer the opportunity of maintaining a fairly normal training week without much disruption to the training plan with league events being excellent races to have a 'fast training run' in a competitive scenario. However, the brevity of a track season and the high intensity of training and competitiveness mean that every race is in effect high priority at any given time. Ample opportunities arise in club events and leagues to practise tactics and perhaps run above or below an athlete's specific racing distance.

In essence, to run well requires a body and legs that are fresh and ready to give their all. Younger athletes will invariably always ease back their workloads before competition day to ensure a quality run. More mature athletes may be able to maintain heavier workloads until much nearer to race day. It is something that can only be found out by trial and error and what works for one athlete, will certainly spell disaster for another. Whatever strategy you choose, energy levels should increase, not fall as race day approaches.

There can be phenomena with some athletes who feel that they can be too rested before a race and need to feel some work in their legs to perform well. Although difficult to understand, and this may be indeed be a psychological issue, I can testify from past experiences that this is somewhat true. Some of my indifferent races have come when I have felt incredibly good on race day in warm-up and yet some of my best runs have come when feeling mediocre pre-race. In a nutshell, try differing preparations and be ready for anything – don't expect to feel 100% in warm-up, but be ready to perform at 100% by doing whatever it takes once the gun goes!

## RACE PREP

- A race is what you train for – give it total respect
- Focus on the upcoming race (visualise outcomes with an increasing intensity in the days before)
- Find out what you can handle in terms of workload and how much recovery you need
- Doing speed-work two days before a competition serves only as a psychological need and not a physical requirement
- A race is a very hard session, so allow for that in your programme
- Make adjustments to training if it is a Saturday or a Sunday race or even in mid-week
- Prepare well including sleep, nutrition and hydration
- Make prior arrangements if travelling a long distance to race and allow for imponderables
- Pay attention to shoes and kit and ensure there is nothing that will cause a blister or chafing
- Check time of race, it could be early or late in the evening – try training at those times
- Don't pay too much attention to your competitors, concentrate on what you can do best
- If your race is on a Saturday, your normal Sunday run might need reduced in length or intensity and if it is the day before a club night then easy/steady running is recommended to enhance the recovery process
- Don't do anything that you normally wouldn't do three days before a race, including lifestyle changes
- Don't be a "I'm flying in training" athlete, be a top performer in races – you'll be remembered for one of those, if not both, for differing reasons!



Laura Riches making a splash whilst leading the chase at Solihull.

Image courtesy of David Lowes

**David Lowes is BMC Secretary and Academy Chair and a UKA Level 4 Coach as well as a former GB runner on track, cross-country and roads.**

# RACING AND TRAINING PACES

RACING AND TRAINING PACES – HOW THEY PROGRESS. **CHARLES MCCONNELL** OFFERS A GUIDE FOR ATHLETES.

This table (next page) brings together a number of ideas to help runners work out what paces they should be aiming for in certain sessions and in their easy and steady training paces. The tables in Daniels' book *Running Formula* (2005) indicate heart rate and % of vo2 maximum of racing distances and training associated with them. Examples of how to use the table are: Tempo or Onset of Blood Lactate Accumulation sessions should be run at 90% of both maximum heart rate and vo2max and take a minimum of 20 minutes up to a maximum of 60 minutes. Cruise Intervals are the same but broken up with short recoveries e.g. 4 x 6 minutes with 60 seconds recovery. A vo2 max session of 6 – 8 x 3 minutes with equal recovery would develop aerobic power.

The table is also useful for athletes trying a new racing distance if they have not attempted that distance before. On the

right side of the table, there are a number of columns - marked A to H. The first two columns, A and B are the performances of Mo Farah and Kenenisa Bekele. Here, you can see that as the distance of the race increases, there is a corresponding decrease in the pace of running – shown in 400m times. The downward progression of the times is not uniform, which would indicate either that the athlete probably did not explore each of the race distances fully or the athlete's performance bias. Thus Bekele's times in the 3k, 5k and 10k would indicate he could/ should have achieved a faster time over 1500m whilst it would seem that Farah did not race the 3k, 5k and 10k to his maximum based on his fast 1500m time. However it must be realised that you have to take into account the athlete's motivation. Perhaps running a very fast 1500m was not a priority for Bekele or it never fitted into

his racing priorities when aiming for 5 and 10k races. It could be that Farah never had to run a flat out 5k or 10k as he prioritised championship performances over world record attempts. In addition, the difference in the marathon times of the two athletes would indicate that Farah has the potential to improve by more than a few minutes. Both the worked through examples of Farah and Bekele show that this 16 seconds per mile may not always apply, either for the club athlete or the world best as you move from 1500m to 5k to 10k and up to half marathon and the full marathon distance.

Also shown below the marathon paces are indicative paces for steady and easy training paces as suggested by Daniels' progressions – athletes should realise that they are generic suggestions – they may not be what you are doing or may feel comfortable with. A number of other progressions are worked out in columns C to H with 10 seconds between 800m personal bests. These are not to be taken literally! Column C uses the 4 second rule whilst the rest are based on a simpler 5 second rule – for younger and beginning athletes this was thought to be more realistic.

Younger athletes are also more likely to have a more restricted range of events until they are older and have developed the endurance for these longer events and thus they may have a differential of 6 or 7 seconds rather than the suggested 5 seconds. Athletes tend to favour a narrow range; some 1500m runners struggle over league xc distances, whilst some 800/1500 runners find 5k beyond them – either for physiological or mental reasons. It is also noticeable how specialised some athletes can be in their racing in the summer: some 800m athletes hardly varying from 2 laps, whilst some elite 3K chasers find running the same distance without barriers produces almost the same finishing time.



Jack Meijer will hold off his rivals to take the Peter Coe mile at Trafford. Both images courtesy of David Lowes.



Kirsten Stilwell is on her way to winning the Fank Horwill mile at Trafford.

## RACING AND TRAINING PACES – HOW THEY PROGRESS

(these are approximations – do not take literally!) How does your progression compare with these?

Daniels' Training Zones							
	Dist-ance	%Vo2 Max	Max HR %	Efforts/ Rec	Develops	Training Effects	Lact Levels
	100- 400					Sprint Resources Anaer Energy Anaer Power	6-18+
Repetitions	800	130%		>2 mins / Full	Economy + Speed	Anaer Capacity Lact Tolerance Anaer Energy	15-18+
	1500	112%				Aerobic capacity training	
	S/C					Aerobic- Anaerobic Endurance	
	3K	102%				Max Vo2	8-12
						Buffering of Lactic Acid Production	
Intervals 95- 100%		100%	98-100 Vo2max intervals	>5 mins Equal/ less rec	Aerobic Power		
	5K	97%		¼ Race Distance	Improves Endurance		6-10
	10K	92%					4-8
		90%	90% Tempo	20-60 mins			
Threshold 83- 88%	10 Mile					Anaerobic Threshold	
	Half Mar	88%	88-92% Cruise Intervals	>15 min 1:5 rec			
Marathon 75- 84%		>84%	80-87%			CHO oxidation	2-4
Steady/ Easy 60-74%					Promotes cell changes Builds CV system	Aerobic Threshold Fat oxidation	1-1.5
		>74%	65-80%				0.5-1

References: Daniels J (2005) Daniels' Running Formula, Human Kinetics, Champaign  
Hirvonen J (1991) Background Factors in Endurance Running, Athletics Coach, 25 (1) 3-4

		Progressions in Training and Racing Paces								
Fuel	Comments	With 400m split below (These are approximations)								
Cr Phos	^	A) Mo Farah	B) Ken Bekele	C	D	E	F	G	H	
CHO	Anaerobic Speed Reserve	1.48.7		1.50	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.30	2.40	
		54.4		55	60	65	70	75	80	
		3.28.8	3.32.4	3.45	4.00	4.20	4.40	5.00	5.20	
		v	55.7	56.63	60	65	70	75	80	85
			7.32.7	7.25.79	8.00	8.45	9.22	10.00	10.40	11.15
			60.4	59.44	64	70	75	80	85	90
	VO2 Max									
	Critical Speed- Min Velocity that elicits VO2 max	12.53.1	12.37.35	14.10	15.37	16.40	17.42	18.45	19.47	
		61.85	60.59	68	75	80	85	90	95	
		26.46.6	26.17.53	30.00	33.20	35.25	37.30	39.35	41.40	
		64.26	63.10	72	80	85	90	95	1.40	
	Lactate Turnpoint at 85+%	46.25		50.40	56.40	60.00	63.20	66.40	70.00	
		69.6		76	85	90	95	1.40	1.45	
CHO		59.22	60.09							
		67.53	68.43							
CHO + Fats		2.08.21 (4.52.5/ mile)	2.03.03 (4.40 / mile)	2.20.40 5.20	2.37.20 6.00	2.47.0 6.20	2.56.0 6.40	3.04.3 7.00	3.13.3 7.20	
		73.2	70	80	90	95	1.40	1.45	1.50	
CHO Fats	Lactate Threshold @ 65% and above	5.20		5.40	6.20	6.40	7.00	7.20	7.40	
		80		85	95	1.40	1.45	1.50	1.55	
		5.40		6.00	6.40	7.00	7.20	7.40	8.00	
		85		90	1.40	1.45	1.50	1.55	2.00	

# LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

JENNY MEADOWS' INSIGHT INTO LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT IS UNPICKED BY MATT LONG.

It's the 19th August 2009 and a diminutive 28 year old from Wigan has her head in her hands as a frenzied spectator in the Berlin Olympic stadium hurriedly passes her a red, white and blue flag. A late surge has seen her overhaul the Ukrainian -Yuliya Krevsun- to bag a brilliant 800m bronze medal in the World Championships. It's taken her more than 20 years to be able to scale the podium on this global stage. Whatever podium you wish to climb onto in terms of your goal, like Jenny, you first need to climb work your way up a pyramid- you need to mountaineer your way up the following model of long term athlete development, step by step. Reach too far, too soon and you risk falling from a great height to end up on the floor with your athletics career in a heap on the floor.



The 'Pocket Rocket' herself was on hand at a recent England Athletics workshop to help attendees gain a firm footing in ascending this pyramid. Here are her thoughts...

**Stage 1: Fundamentals** – As the name suggests the emphasis is on 'fun' and in developing generic movement patterns in terms of Agility, Balance and Co-ordination. Jenny remembers that when she first joined Wigan and District, "I had a go at long jump and throwing too even though I was pretty rubbish at that!". 'Rubbish' or not, the attention to fundamentals paid off long term as she discloses that, "People remember I missed out on London 2012 through injury but for 23 years of my career I never had an injury which is unbelievable, the more and more I think about it. A lot of people have said that I was a 'natural' but I'm not so sure about that. I had the fundamentals ingrained into me when I was 7, 8 and 9 years old".

**Stage 2: Foundation** – this is ordinarily where athletes learn to train, still working on foundational movement skills across running, jumping and throwing. Remember that Jenny spent much of her teenage years in the sprint event group as a 300m and then 400m runner. This emphasis on speed would have helped to reinforce

biomechanically efficient fundamental and foundational movement patterns developed in Stages 1 and 2. Jenny recalls being an energetic 13 year old who was itching to train three times a week rather than just twice but it was her mother who was instrumental in sensibly urging her to hold back by telling her, "I still want you to be doing athletics when you are aged 20".

With regards to the above two stages, in her own words Jenny stresses, "Definitely concentrate on technique and mechanics and this is far more beneficial long term than just throwing in another endurance session at a young age, the latter of which may give you quick results". The fact that Jenny represented her country in both sprint and 4 x 400m relays before many of the successes achieved in the latter part of her career, points to solid foundations.

**Stage 3: Event Group** – this is where athletes focus on disciplines associated with speed, endurance, throwing or jumping for example. Jenny warns that even when moving to this stage that, "It's very easy to get sucked into comparing your performances with other youngsters on Power of 10. It's really important to focus on your own maturation and development. I mean there's girls running up to 6 seconds faster than I did at the same age as me when I won the English schools 800m more than two decades ago." Remember that despite her 1995 English schools win over two laps, Jenny only made a concerted attempt to commit to middle distance running in 2005, a year after being inspired by Dame Kelly Holmes' legendary 'double' at the Athens Olympics. Even at this stage, there was the odd 400m and 1500m thrown into her competition schedule. Jenny and coach Trevor Painter followed the kind of multi-paced ethos to training as advocated by British Milers' Club founder Frank Horwill and Peter Coe, asserting that, "If I could run 52 for 400m I knew I could go through the bell in 57/58s and be relatively relaxed on an 800m".

**Stage 4: Event Specialism** – A year later in 2006 saw Jenny compete in no less than 12 800 metre races- indoor and out with her 2005 season's best of 2:02.05 being substantially reduced to an eye catching 2:00.16, achieved in placing 5th at the British Grand Prix in Gateshead. That same year saw her represent Team GB in reaching the semi-finals of the World Indoor championships in Moscow.

**Stage 5: Performance** – In 2007, Jenny began to make her mark on the international

stage in placing 5th over two laps at the European indoor championships on home soil in Birmingham and in reaching the semi-finals of the World championships in Osaka. Significantly as a performance athlete she broke 2 minutes for the first time both indoors and out, clocking 1:59.39 in Osaka. A creditable semi-final placing at the Beijing Olympics in 2008, was followed a year later by her confirmation as a truly world class athlete with her magnificent bronze at the Berlin world championships with a lifetime best of 1:57.93. This would be complemented a world indoor silver in Doha in 2010 and the breaking of the aforementioned Holmes' British indoor record in front of a rapturous home crowd at the National Indoor Arena. Bronze in the outdoor heat of Barcelona European championships in 2010 would give way to gold on the boards of the French capital for the European indoors in 2011.

With reference to the model of long term athlete development articulated above, it would be a mistake to assume that athletes mechanistically progress through stages 1-5, according to their chronological age. Performance athletes like Jenny need to constantly go back to the Fundamental and Foundational stages as part of their daily training routines. One way of retuning to those fundamentals and ensuring solid foundations in through the regular effecting of drills as part of your periodised programme of training. Jenny performed drills on a daily basis both before and after sessions and spends around 30 minutes each day on static stretching to extend range of movement. Jenny conveys that, "I've seen Laura Muir do drills like a lot of sprinters would. I've seen Mo Farah box jumping and his plyometric ability is amazing. He can jump on to a box which just about comes up to my chin! I had to see it to believe it". Indeed one may argue that athletes of a higher chronological and training age need to return to the base of the above pyramid ever more frequently in order to ensure longevity of their careers and maintenance of performance levels.

If you are reading this as a sprinter, throwing or jumper, it's likely that the effecting of drills are the norm in terms of your weekly sessions. Historically, some would suggest that drills have proved more of a challenge for members of the endurance community. But times have changed. Let's remember that Jenny's favoured event – the 800m, requires

significant aerobic as well as anaerobic demands. On 9th February, the article *How Much Does Mileage Matter?* debated two polar schools of thought in endurance running. One camp asserts that training is about undergoing a high volume of work designed to overload the system. The other camp tends to convey the message that 'less is more' – that the quality of what you do is far more important than the quantity of what you do. Jenny's message to the endurance community is categorical in that, "It's just as important for middle and long distance runners to focus on running economy and efficiency and get those mechanics right". Jenny maintains that athletes of a younger chronological and biological age need to gravitate towards the latter school of thinking. She asserts that, "You have to remember that unlike most of you reading this, Mo Farah is a full time athlete – he has all the time in the world to train however he likes. I would say for most people - be prepared to sacrifice an extra endurance session to focus on technique at a younger age. Things have moved on in the last 30 years."

**Here Jenny both shares and unpicks three of her favourite drills:**

### 1. Walking lunge rotations:

Jenny says: "Step out a stride length with one leg and plant foot facing forwards. Check that the toes and knee are facing forwards. Lunge to hip height and then rotate the upper body round to the same side as the forward knee in order to work into the oblique muscles. Engage the core and gluteus muscles to achieve a strong balanced posture. Hold for a couple of seconds then return the upper body to face forwards before then stepping through with the opposite leg to repeat the movement. This exercise should be performed over a 15-20m distance and



can also be performed going backwards for extra stability work or with a small dumbbell or medicine ball held in the arms and then stretched out in front of the body on the rotation phase".

### 2. Caterpillar walks:

Jenny says: "Start with the body in a plank position and then challenge yourself by moving your hands further out above your head in order to really work the abdominals and whole body chain. Once stretched out, walk the feet in towards the hands by small movements forwards bending the knees. Aim to get the feet as close to the hands as you can whilst keeping the abdominals and core muscles engaged throughout. Check for no gluteus sideways drift whilst completing the exercise. Once the toes reach the hands repeat the exercise by dropping back into the original plank position with hands stretched out above the head".



### 3. Sideways Spider-Man:

Jenny says: "Adopt a plank position and then challenge yourself by moving the hands out



further above your head. Engage the core and gluteus muscles for a strong position. The back should be horizontal so watch out for any sagging/arched backs or bums raised too high. The hands should be placed side by side whilst the feet are slightly wider than shoulder width apart. The movement should then progress sideways (right or left) with the hands separating and the feet coming together and then changing alternatively. The athlete should perform this exercise over a set distance (15-20m) and then in the opposite direction".

The drills presented above have worked for Jenny given a number of factors which are specific to her own athlete-centred needs. You may wish to attempt to correctly model some as well as work on developing a wider package which your coach and you find useful to your developmental needs. Critically your coach and yourself need to decide which drills work for you in terms of helping to achieve a potentiation effect prior to the fitness component of a training session or competition and which serve more as a generic strength and conditioning exercise and are best left till after the fitness component of a session or indeed as part of a 'stand-alone' session.

If your event has a significant endurance component, the habituation of these drills over months and indeed years is designed to make you operate according to the technical template offered by British Athletics, which is as follows:

1. Tall posture with high hips.
2. Relaxed shoulders with efficient backwards driving arm action.
3. Rhythm guides optimal speed and efficiency.
4. Foot lands naturally underneath the centre of mass, moving down and backwards.

So where is the correlation between the effecting of drills and performance on the track? Jenny maintains that, "It's the last 25% of a race which comes down to posture but at the same time you need the volume in your training to make sure you are in a position to use it in that last quarter because 'speed kills' at the end of the day".

So that in a nutshell is the ethos of the affectionately dubbed 'Pocket Rocket'. 'Where did the nickname come from?', I ask. 'Small but strong!' she responds without hesitation. We'd all do well to remember that her well measured approach to scaling that pyramid of long term athlete development, which we started with, is underpinned by the safety harness of having spent more than 3 decades in the sport. Small but strong indeed!

**For more on Jenny Meadows' workshops visit [www.jennymeadows.co.uk](http://www.jennymeadows.co.uk)**

# GEORGE GANDY INTERVIEW

THE REMARKABLE COACHING CAREER OF **GEORGE GANDY** IS PAID TRIBUTE TO BY BMC PRESIDENT **NORMAN POOLE**:

## Norman Poole:

"George Gandy has long been one of the UK's highest achieving endurance coaches. With a coaching career extending over 50 years, and most of these based at the famous Loughborough Centre of Athletics Excellence, George has coached some of the Sport's Greats. Sebastian Coe, Lisa Dobrisky, Graham Williamson and Jack Buckner are names that readily spring to mind as are the many medals his athletes have consistently won at major Games. Although I admire George's great track record I also look forward to seeing the new stars that inevitably will spring from George's squad in the near future"

Staggeringly George has experience at no less than 9 Olympics, numerous World & European Championships, 12 World University Games, and African Games (in his capacity as National Event Coach and/or Team Coach and/or Personal Coach). With modesty he emphasises that, "Thanks to national 'head honchos' including Frank Dick, Max Jones, Malcolm Arnold, and Charles Van Commenee for giving me the opportunity for such great experience".

## Question 1: Which coaching greats and perhaps significant others such as physiologists, have most influenced your own coaching philosophy?

a) Coaching Greats:

- Woldemar Gerschler (coach to Zatopek, Pirie, credited with 'inventing' interval training)
- Franz Stampfl (coach to Roger Bannister)
- Arthur Lydiard (coach to Peter Snell, Murray Halberg)
- Mihaly Igloi (coach of men's world record holders at 1500m, 3000m, 5000m and 10,000m simultaneously)
- Bill Bowerman (prolifically successful 'system coach')
- Frank Horwill (mutual enterprises with the inspirational leading light of the BMC)
- Wilf Paish (mutual enterprises with this exceptional coach).

b) Significant Others:

In terms of personal academic/practical study I've been influenced by John Kane, Joe Jagger, Bernard Hopper, on the PE Specialist Teachers' course at St Mary's College where as Athletics and Cross-Country Captain I began to develop leadership and organisational skills, At

Loughborough University I've been guided by Drs Hamley, John Atha, Peter Jones on MSc (Human Biology) program. The likes of Geoff Dyson, Tom McNab, James Hay, Peter Cavanagh, John Atha, Bill Nicholson, Martyn Shorten have influenced my thinking on biomechanics, In terms of Physiology/ Nutrition, there've been Per-Olaf Astrand, Bengt Saltin, Andy Jones, Damian Bailey, Rob Robergs, Anita Bean, Ron Maughan, Clyde Williams, and of course Barry Fudge. Applied Psychology underpins everything in coaching of course and I've learned much from Clive Bond, Alma Thomas, Andy Cale, Austin Swain, and others

When I've sought medical or therapeutic advice, there've been great sources, old and new. such as Bill Donnelly, Mike Garmston, Dr Brian English, Dr Bruce Hamilton, Dr David Lee, Alison Rose, Terry Moule, Mark Buckingham, Neil Black, Dr Rob Chakraverty and Dr John Rogers.

In the context of Strength & Conditioning, there's been close contact with international throwers or weight lifters in Bill Tancred, Jim Whitehead, Meg Ritchie (and husband), Mac Wilkins, and Tommy Yule, plus coaches Art Venegas, John Trower, Max Jones, Tommy Yule, and David Parker.

I must credit other Inspirational athletes, ex-athletes, and closely associated coaching colleagues – Roger Bannister, Peter Snell, Bruce Tulloh, Brendan Foster, David Bedford, Ian Stewart, Steve Jones, Mike Boit, Peter Coe, Liz McColgan, John Nuttall, Alan Storey, Gordon Surtees, Norman Poole, Malcolm Brown, James Li, Phil O'Dell, Alasdair Donaldson, Bill Foster, and David Howe.

## Question 2: List some of the athletes you have been privileged to work with over the years:

Since the first senior international selection for one of my personally coached athletes, way back in 1978, I have been privileged to coach and advance the careers of over 80 athletes to senior international status, the following being possibly the most significant:

- Terry Colton (20 yrs from 5.23 mile via 1500m World Age Record, ESAA XC 1st, 4.02 mile, 2.14 marathon, 15th Nat XC. Was placed in charge of Athletics Program at London Olympics and now heads the British Athletics Events Team)
- Sveve Scutt (from 51.7s in 1975 to UK 400m number one with 45.97s in 1979,

6th in World Unis and Comm Relay bronze)

- Danny Nightingale (Individual 1st in running event and winning team gold in Modern Pentathlon at 1976 Olympics)
- Vilmundur Vilhjalmsson (3 yrs to 10.2w, 10.3, and 10.46 for 100m, and Euro Champs participation)
- Sebastian Coe (1976-82 as his strength/conditioning/drills coach, and general mentor through to World Records at 800m, 1000m, 1500m, and Mile and Olympic gold and silver medals)
- Malcolm Prince (4 yrs from 14.45 to 13.28 for 5k, ranked in world top 30)
- Omer Khalifa (3yrs from 1.48/3.38 to to 1.44/3.33, 2nd, 2nd, 3rd in African Games, 2nd World Cup 800m, 7th Olympic 1500m)
- Chris McGeorge (8yrs including 3rd Euro U20 and Comm Games 800m, 1st World Uni Games 1500m. with pb's of 1.45.14 and 3.39)
- Graham Williamson (4 yrs to 2nd World Unis 800m, 4th Comm Games 1500m, semi World Champs, 1.45.6 and 3:34.01)
- Jack Buckner (12 yrs, twice World No 2 at 5k, 3rd Comm, 1st Euro Chps, 6th Olympics, 3rd World Chps, 3.35/8.39/13.10)
- Adrian Royle (4 yrs – 13.35 and 27.47 for 5k and 10k respectively)
- Gary Lough (5 yrs, 3rd Euro Cup, 3rd World Unis, 13th Euro Chps, 9th World Chps, North Ire 1500m rec 3:34.8)
- John Nuttall (7yrs, 4th UK a-t 3000m, 5th Euro Chps, Olympic semi 5k, 1st National XC, 2x top 30 World XC, 3:40/7.36/13.16)
- Jon Brown (14yrs, 1st, 3rd 4th Euro XC, 8th, 14th, 16th, 19th World XC, 10th, 4th, 4th Olympics, UK 10k rec 27.18 )
- Matt Smith (4 yrs to 1st Nat XC and 2.14 marathon)
- Ricky Soos (4 yrs to 1.45.70, beat world champion in Olympics heat, 6th Olympic semi, 5th Euro U23, GB team World Chps)
- Guy Learmonth (4yrs to 1.46.70/3.45, 6th Com Games, the only UK endurance athlete to produce a PB at those Games)
- Michelle Scutt (4 yrs to 11.4, 22.7 & Comm record 50.6, 2nd Comm Games, 7th fastest overall in Olympic semis)
- Jill Clarke (1st World Unis XC Champs)
- Sonia McGeorge (10 yrs to 8th Euro Chps, 4th Comm 3k, Olympic 5k hts, plus 1st & 2nd scorer for GB at World XC)
- Angela Newport (10yrs to Euro Ind & out

chps, World Unis 8th, Nat XC 1st, 4 times World XC with best 19th, 4.09/15.46)

- Sonya Bowyer (3 yrs to 2.01/4.11, GB team Euro Champs, Eng team at Com Games, 4th Euro (Teams) Cup)
- Amy Whitehead nee Waterlow (18 yrs from 14th World XC 4k '99 to 1st UK Finisher London Mara & 8th Com Games 2016)
- Sonia Samuels (10 yrs – to 15.46/32.52/2hrs 30mins, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Nat XC, GB teams at World XC, Euro 10k Challenge etc)
- Laura Whittle nee Kenney (8yrs - 4.09/8.51/15.20, Nat U20 XC 1st, 13th Eur XC, 1st Eur U23 5k, 7th IAAF Final 3k, 6th Com 5k)
- Charlotte Best (6 yrs to 2.01/4.12, 5th Euro U23, 3rd World Unis 800m, plus World Indoor Champs 1500m)
- Lisa Dobriskey (8 yrs – 2.00/3:59, 2 times 2nd in annual world rankings, 3rd UK all-time, Com Games 1st, Olympics 4th, World Chps 2nd, Eur Chps 4th)
- Stevie Stockton (8 yrs – 2nd Eur U23 5k, 4th World Unis, 2nd Nat XC, 35th World XC (7th European))
- Abby Westley (2 yrs to unbeaten 1987 season until World Chps 1500, 1st Euro Cup, 1st Euro U23, 2.03/4.08)

### Question 3: Which other high profile athletes and their personal coaches have you worked with?

- Wendy Sly (Olympics 2nd) – directed her strength and conditioning (whilst at Loughborough University)
- Kirsty Wade (UK Rec/Comm Gold) planned her preparation program to World University Games 800m and subsequently (when she had began coaching relationship with Harry Wilson) I provided Weight Training program
- Paula Radcliffe (World Marathon Rec, World XC 1st) I led the University Sports Scholarship program of which she was an inaugural member, and organised and directed the pre-season camp which was the first experience of altitude training for Paula and her coach Alex Stanton).
- Christine Boxer (4th Olympics 1500m) – I directed her strength and conditioning at Loughborough
- David Moorcroft (World Rec 5k, Comm gold, Euro silver) – coached and overseen through his career by John Anderson but spent 1972-73 on my Loughborough program
- Tim Hutchings (twice 2nd World XC/4th Olympics 5k) – coached and overseen through his career by Frank Horwill but spent two years living with meesrs

McGeorge and Williamson on my Loughborough program (with fine-tuning from Frank)

- Rebecca Lyne (former European 800m medallist, 1.58pb).- coached in late stage of career in an unsuccessful attempt to restore her to previous performance
- Jessica Judd (former World U20 800m silver and 1500m 5th) – coached to 2nd place in Euro XC and to 1500m persona best, but unsuccessful in quest to qualify for 2016 Olympic Games.

### Question 4: You are well known and widely respected in our sport for coaching diverse groups of university based athletes. How do you manage to balance inclusivity with the principle of being athlete centred in your approach?

Training programs are planned with best interests of leading athletes as a priority and top athletes (especially the relatively small number for whom I am the personal lead coach) are offered regular one-to-ones discussion meetings, *but* all group runs and sessions, as well as circuit training sessions are organised to be inclusive, beneficial, and open to all standards. Note that we had 51 male athletes involved in our endurance program from April to August in 2016 and these collectively registered 119 personal bests (James West 8, Will Fuller 7, Pat Dever 6, Joe Bull 6),, and summer 2017 was similarly productive.. Periodised plans and ongoing program details are communicated regularly to all on my lboro-endurance list by email, supported intermittently with associated rationale and other observations

There is further training input in terms of weights/conditioning/posture and technique drills in smaller groups as well as university support services (physio/massage/physiological testing and monitoring/nutritional and psychology talks, workshops and consultations, biomechanical monitoring/testing) are made available somewhat selectively, but nevertheless with substantial numbers benefitting, according to performance status"e.g. World-Class Plan athletes (via British Athletics), plus Talent ID group, University Sports Scholars, First-team Squad Members, and other LSAC Members, according to best use of the available budget.

There is virtually a daily availability of myself and other coaching staff on Campus – backed by my own prioritising of club workouts and competitions to the extent of turning down invitations to Buckingham Palace and 10 Downing Street and foregoing many family holiday opportunities because of clashes! Note that from 1977 until 1993 I had no family holiday

other than as an add-on an athletes training trip!

In 46 years of coaching at Loughborough, I personally have never, to my knowledge) turned away any athlete seeking help or advice. Also, while I am not particularly prod to admit it, but to facilitate this enterprise I don't do any routine gardening, decorating, or shopping!

### Question 5: In what ways is the BMC as relevant today as it was when you began your coaching career several decades ago?

I feel that specialist event(s) clubs have had great relevance going back to the 1950's and 60's and the inception of the BMC of which I became a member as an active athlete in 1964. They fulfil roles which then, and right through to today, go broader and deeper than provided through the remit, personnel and capabilities of the various national and regional athletics governing bodies, hence still adding greatly to the number and quality of track competition opportunities in UK, and productive of huge numbers of personal best performances. Additionally, there is the organising of training days/weekends linked with educational input providing great motivation and encouraging aspiration to high standards. The club has an additional impact via production of informative and educational journal and annual conference.

### Question 6 – Who are your most successful 'current' athletes up to end of the 2017 season?:

- James West 1:49/3.39/7.38 plus 3:58 mile, former Nat Indoor U20 1500m 1st, 6th in World Chps 1500m Trial 2017, represented GB at Euro U23 Champs
- Jamie Williamson 1:50/3.45, 2nd in BUCS 'B'; XC
- Will Fuller 3.44/8.14/14.10, 5th in Nat U20 XC, 2nd in Inter CosU20 XC, 30th Euro U20 XC.
- Frank Baddick (1.49/3.42/8.05/14.01, formerly 3rd Nat Ind 1500m. 6th in Olympic Trials
- Jayme Rossiter (Ireland) 3.49/8.11/14.20 and 7.59 S'chase and 12th in BUCS XC
- Rosie Johnson formerly 4.16 for 1500m, seeking return to top form (did 2.09/4.29 in 2017
- Claire Tarplee (Ireland) (2.03/4.11 with me) 1st English Nat Ind 800m, 6th in World Uni Games, also competed in World Indoor 1500m
- Amy Whitehead – formerly 15th in World XC 4k, and 8th in Comm Games Marathon, pb 2.33

# COACHING PHILOSOPHY

**NIC BIDEAU** OFFERED A KEYNOTE MESSAGE AT OUR ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM THIS SUMMER AND **BRENDON BYRNE** WAS THERE TO HEAR HIS MESSAGE:

The Australian coach and runner's agent was a key speaker at the BMC Symposium on the last day of the World Athletics Championships in London. It was clear that over the years he has helped and encouraged a number of British athletes including Andy Baddeley and Julia Bleasdale as well as being responsible for a great number of Australian athletes. He currently coaches British athletes Charlotte Purdue and Andy Vernon. In fact he was responsible for thirteen Australian athletes who competed in London as well as a Swedish and Dutch athlete Susan Kruminis- (8th 5,000m at London). In former years he managed Cathy Freeman and coached Craig Mottram and Benita Johnson (pictured)- See the footnote at the end for further details. He is also regarded by some as a bit of a maverick and has no official Australian position at major championships. Most of his activities are conducted through the Melbourne Athletics Club. He coaches and advises athletes from 800m through to the marathon. It is interesting too that he is married to the Irish runner Sonia O' Sullivan.

His approach to Olympic and World success is based on five steps:

1. Get the qualifying standard
2. Get selected
3. Get to the line
4. Compete well
5. React well to your result

Bideau thinks that with the right preparation it is quite possible for English speaking athletes to take on and beat the Kenyans and Ethiopians, even in the steeplechase. He has a point here with Evan Jagger and the female American steeplechasers winning more medals at London in the steeplechase than the Kenyans for once! You may remember that he certainly did this with Australian athlete Craig Mottram a few years ago.

He acknowledged that Australia has reverse seasons from the European and North American track summer season and this brings its own unique problems.

For six months of the year his athletes spend time in training camps and these are critical to success. He did consider places such as Font Romeu, Flagstaff, Boulder and St Moritz but thought that high altitude wasn't so important. So a basic plan is that the athletes will spend three weeks at Falls Creek in Australia and then after Christmas,

another four weeks at Falls Creek. They are tested on their fitness before the world cross country trials. The group moves across to America to stay at Mount Laguna near San Diego in California. It was an interesting point about why Mount Laguna was chosen over all of the other possible venues. Quite simply, Bideau was shown the area and liked it because of all of the running trails that were available and there were no other distractions. In a nutshell, it works well. Flagstaff has been used in the past. Races at Stanford in California are available. This emphasises the importance of the endurance base work. He asserted that strength and conditioning work must also be included in the plan.

He did make the point that training must go hand in hand with all of the other things including wider lifestyle choices. Sessions on the camps are usually at 9.30 and 5.30. Drinking some alcohol is OK as long as it doesn't affect performance. The trails at Laguna are good and there aren't many distractions. Running very fast here isn't really possible. "Athletes have to have the right fit. You've got to have the right attitude and to be able to add something to the structure we've got", he told a captivated audience.

In June they typically move on to Nijmegen in Holland and start to race in Europe. After that they might spend time in Spain and for the rest of the summer they will be based at Teddington. Nearby Bushy park becomes a training area too. Interestingly, although Bideau has coached and helped a number of British athletes he doesn't hold a UKA coaching licence.

He moved on to comment on finding the right race to qualify for championships. Here again there was nothing too revolutionary:-

- Find the right venue
- Have the optimal pacemakers for the correct pace
- Have the optimal weather conditions
- Have the right emotional energy around the race

Bideau did say that finding good pace makers was a problem, particularly in women's races. He agreed that Jenny Meadows did as good job on the European circuit this summer in this respect.

As regards selection for important events it is important to know what the criteria are. He stressed the need to be able race

and beat the opposition. It is one thing to be able to run a fast time but that doesn't guarantee racing success.

He emphasised how important it was to remain injury free. "The one area where we are much more advanced than athletes in the past is in recovery and the control of workouts. Today athletes employ a host of techniques including ice baths, sports recovery drinks, regular massage and physiotherapy that allow the athlete to recover from bouts of hard work and to allow them to maintain a consistent high volume of good training for longer periods."

Who does he credit with the development of his own coaching philosophy? It's clear that Bideau has been influenced in the past by many athletes including Brendan Foster, John Walker and his coach Arch Jelly and of course Arthur Lydiard. He gave particular recognition to Alan Storey who he regarded as "the world's best fitness coach". This was at a time when Storey was coaching Sonia O' Sullivan. Harry Wilson was also included as a coach he learned from.

He went on to say that, "Hard running on the track or fast long distance runs are now controlled to achieve very specific aims with the use of heart rate monitors and stop watches. This helps us to enforce the principles that Lydiard was teaching all those years ago. Training should be mostly at levels of intensity that are aerobic and to limit or accurately control the amount of anaerobic activity in training".

In fact there is nothing very revolutionary in his approach. He believes in a solid aerobic base for training. This may come from running but it could also come from a foundation on other sports such as swimming or cycling in the past. A revealing comment was, "The training I use to coach athletes does not actually involve anything that hasn't been done before". The endurance work under him will consist of runs of 90 minutes to two hours once or twice a week as well as recovery runs. The athletes must never be far away from speed, even during the endurance build up. One example is that athletes will run 3-4 x 120 metres at a good speed. For distance runners, sessions will take place at 5,000m and 10,000m pace over a volume of 6-8 kilometres. Recovery is important and heart rate monitors will be used. He believes that athletes can reach peak racing performances

with a relatively short build up. He quoted the case of Andy Baddeley running a 3 mins 38sec 1500m under these conditions when he was training with him, he later that season went on to run 3 mins 34. He also cited the case of Sonia O` Sullivan, when she was being coached by Alan Storey, running a session of 4 x 1200m and then 12 x 400m on the Wednesday before a race on the Saturday. He firmly believes that sessions during the race preparation period should be individualised. Another session mentioned for 10,000m runners was 7 x 1k at 10k pace and then 4 x 300m in 42 seconds (46-47 seconds for women). In essence he maintained that training isn` t all that complicated but of course managing athletes well is another matter. He also mentioned the importance of the belief that he has in athletes to run well.

Bideau asserted that an important part is being able to get to the start line of races while remaining injury free. To compete well the athlete needs to relax beforehand and switch on when it counts. The athlete should always be prepared to make a best effort, show no weaknesses and be prepared to take risks. They should show intent and race with integrity. He used examples to emphasise a point here. He mentioned

Elaine Thompson in the women`s 100m at London wasn` t well but didn` t complain. Sally Pearson in the hurdles won and celebrated but also congratulated the other athletes in the final.

Bideau made some revealing comments about his role as an agent for athletes. He does act as an agent for athletes that he doesn` t coach too. Apparently many deals are done in the bar! This is where shoe contracts are sorted out and races on the circuit are booked. Not surprisingly medallists in major championships get paid more. He did say that many of the agents have been around since the 1990s. He felt that the athletes need to win prize money to stay in Europe as they don` t receive money from their federation. He was clear that TV coverage was vital for publicity to help the athletes cause. He acknowledged that there are good and bad agents as well as good and bad coaches.

In essence Nic Bideau uses what seem to be fairly ordinary methods (to running coaches and athletes) to achieve extraordinary results.

*Footnote – Here are a few comments about people mentioned above which may give an understanding of the level at which he and*

*they are operating:-*

Alan Storey – Coached Mick McCloud to a silver medal in the 10,000 meters at the 1984 Olympics. He also coached Sonia O` Sullivan and Mo Farah in his earlier days.

Mo Farah – no explanation necessary!

Craig Mottram – Only non- African to win a medal over 5,000m in modern times. PBs include a 3 48.98 mile, 7 32.19 for 3,000m and 12 55.76 for 5,000m.

Charlotte Purdue – 2 hours 29. 42 for 13th place in the World championships marathon. Not on lottery funding at present.

Andy Vernon- 13.11.50 for 5,000m and 27mins 42.62 for 10,000m.

Cathy Freeman – the poster girl for Australian athletics at the Sydney Olympics in 2000. She won the 400m and had a PB of 48.5.

Benita Johnson (Willis) – Won the world cross country in 2004, one of the few to break up the Ethiopian and Kenyan dominance of the event. Has a marathon PB of 2 hours 22.

John Walker – first athlete to break 3 mins 50 secs for the mile.

Sonia O` Sullivan – silver medal in the 5,000m at Sydney, gold medal in world championships 5,000m in 1995 and world cross country champion in 1998.



*Nick Bideau is flanked by former world championship bronze medallist Craig Mottram and former world cross country champion Benita Johnson.*

# DOCTORS ORDERS

**DR JOHN ROGERS** OFFERED A MEDICALLY INFORMED PERSPECTIVE AT OUR SUMMER SYMPOSIUM. **JOHN KNOWLES** GIVES HIS MESSAGE A CHECK UP:

As you have heard elsewhere in this magazine, The British Milers' Club annual symposium was held in Stratford, London to coincide with the World Athletics Championships. We were delighted to welcome Dr John Rogers as a guest speaker.

John's interest in Sport and Exercise Medicine developed during his own athletics career when he competed as a middle distance runner for Sale Harriers, Manchester and Northern Ireland. He initially trained as a GP in Manchester before entering higher specialist training as a registrar in Sport and Exercise Medicine in London.



Figure 1

From 2008 to 2013 he worked as Endurance and then Institute Medical Officer to British Athletics at their National Performance Institute in Loughborough, UK. He worked closely with Team GB's leading endurance athletes in the 3 years preceding the London

Olympics at altitude training camps in Font Romeu, France and Iten, Kenya.

John outlined the various aspects in sports medicine required to be successful as a middle distance runner. His quote to the attendees was that there is "a fine line". This fine line is critical to success!

Figure 1 shows some of the professional specialist required by the likes of Mo Farah and other World class athletes to help them perform at the highest level and win that elusive Olympic or World athletics medal.

## **UNDERPERFORMANCE/FATIGUE/OVERTRAINING**

An athlete striving for success at a critical time within their training programme often known as 'the peak' performance. The athlete performance and illness / injury including training and lifestyle factors which facilitate Adaptation (A) and that which results in Maladaptation (M). Figure 2 shows how the difference between these two binaries can be summarised.

John elaborated that there is no single marker to detect the early signs of Over Training Syndrome (OTS). It's a combination of assessing performance, physiology, biochemical, immunology and psychological markers. Some of the work involves addressing nutritional deficiencies amongst athletes and typical culprits include relative energy deficiency in sport (RED-S), Iron, Vitamin D, Magnesium and Protein deficiencies.

## **Common training errors**

John explained several common training errors and you may wish to consider the following four questions to help you self-reflect on this issue.

1. Has the volume of my training suddenly increased by more than 5% from one week to the next?
2. Has the intensity of my training dramatically increased rather than it being effected incrementally?
3. Is my training too monotonous and at risk of not helping me to achieve the progressive overload associated with improved performance?
4. Am I in danger of over-competing and risking a decline in my long term performance?

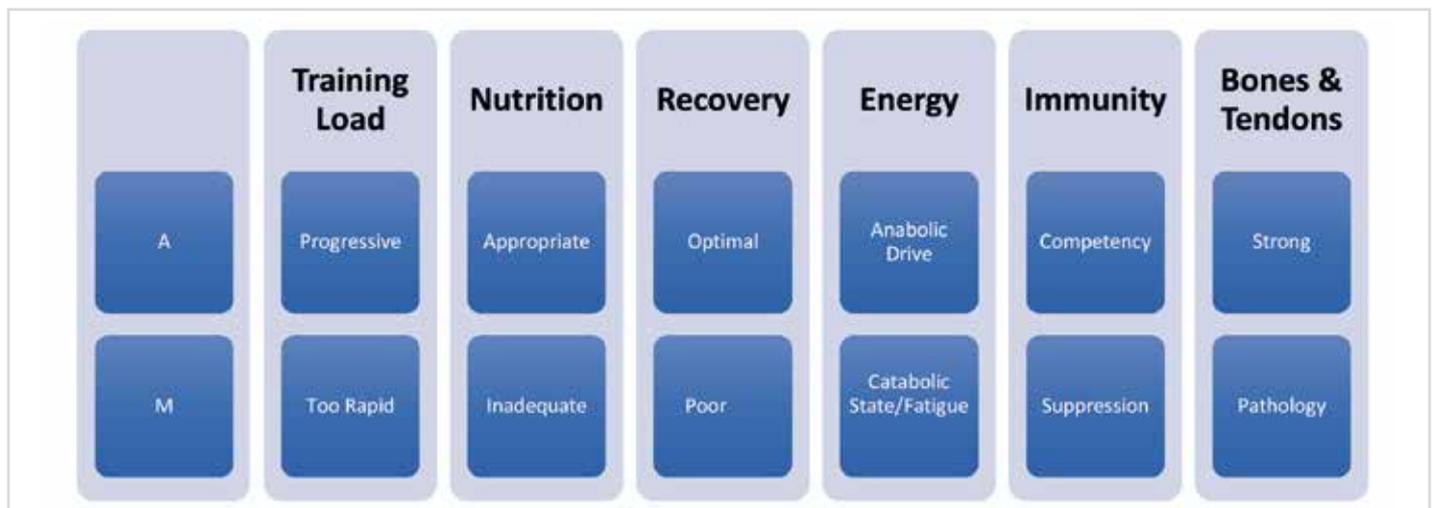


Figure 2

### Biomechanical Overload Syndromes

Often biomechanical assessment is needed during rehabilitation to prevent recurrence of injuries. John articulated his work in addressing the common prevalence of biomechanical overload syndromes. He explained, "Common problems we are confronted with runners include, Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome, Medial Tibial Stress Syndrome, Iliotibial Band Syndrome and less commonly Chronic Exertional Compartmental Syndrome and Athletic Groin Pain".

Female athlete triad – causes problems for some female athletes. The Female Athlete Triad is a syndrome of three interrelated conditions that exist on a continuum of severity, including:

1. Energy Deficiency with or without Disordered Eating.
2. Menstrual Disturbances/Amenorrhea.
3. Bone Loss/Osteoporosis.

1 - Energy deficiency is the main *cause* of the Triad. An energy deficiency is an imbalance between the amount of energy consumed and the amount of energy expended during exercise. The primary cause of the Female Athlete Triad is energy deficiency. Often, this can involve a conscious restriction of food intake, problems with body image and a high drive for thinness. Sometimes, these conditions can lead to disordered eating, or more serious eating problems, like anorexia or bulimia.

2 - The most serious menstrual problem associated with the Triad is amenorrhea, defined as no menstrual period for 3 months or more. However, athletes who have irregular menstrual cycles are also susceptible to the effects of the Triad.

3 - Athletes with the Triad are at higher risk for low bone mass leading to weakened bones, called osteoporosis in its severe form. This type of bone loss can cause an increased risk of fractures, including stress fractures.

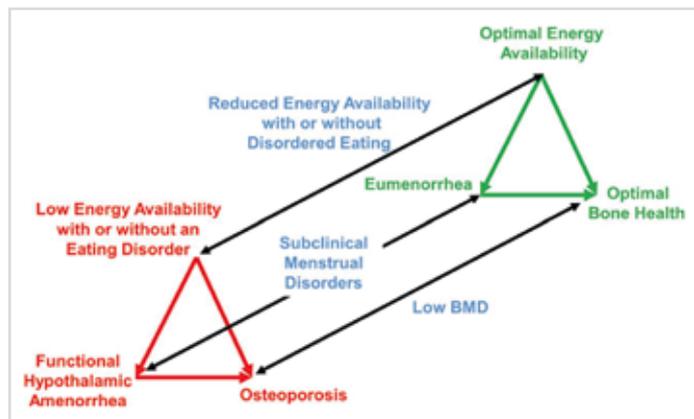


Figure 3

### Breathing Problems

John moved on to speak about breathing problems experienced by athletes. There are many challenges encountered by the athlete such as...

- High Prevalence
- Wrong diagnosis
- Suboptimal Management
- Anti-Doping
- Performance

Not all symptoms experienced by the athlete are related to asthma. The "wheezes" as John called it can be symptoms felt by the athlete relating to other minor medical conditions, namely...

- Various Allergies i.e. food
- Eczema & or
- Other family inherited conditions

Dealing with these minor ailments requires management by the athlete under medical advice and in some circumstance under the supervision of a medical practitioner (see figures 3 and 4). It is clear that the athlete must seek advice and allow investigations into the symptoms presented. I myself, for instance, coach athletes who have suffered from asthma and have found, certainly in the summer the change of geographical environment can cause an athlete to suffer real problems.

Another athlete reacted to an unknown food substance and suffered Anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a life threatening severe allergic reaction. Symptoms of Anaphylaxis can be similar to asthmatic signs of distress such as wheeze or persistent cough. Asthma and Anaphylaxis results in breathing difficulties and under medical supervision 'Peak flows', which in essence is a lung function test, testing how narrow an athlete airways are. An athlete's 'Peak flow' will require monitoring. Failing to monitor 'this will cause under-performance by the athlete and can lead to other problems developing.

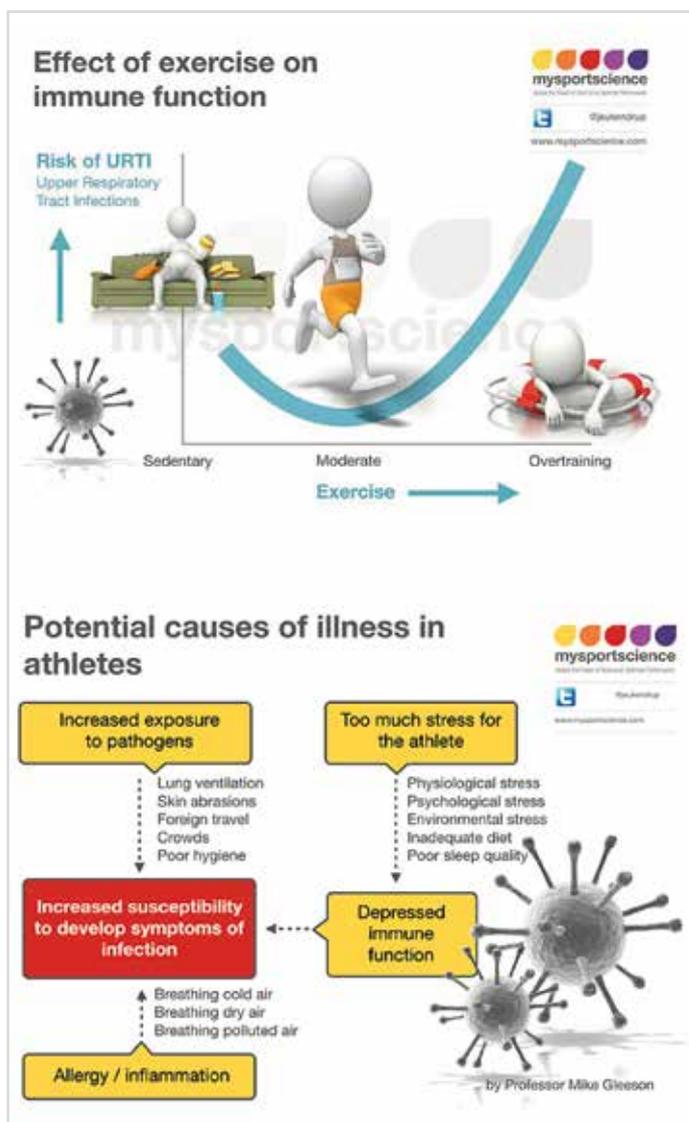


Figure 4

The advice offered was that if an athlete is suffering from upper respiratory tract infection or flu symptoms below the neck with a fever, fast heart rate, muscular pain and lethargy, they should refrain from training and rest.

**John Knowles is a BMC Committee member, Regional BMC organizer and a previous winner of the Horwill Award for services to the BMC.**

# CONFERENCE TALK

**BMC LIFETIME SERVICES TO COACHING AWARD WINNER DAVID LOWES**, GAVE THE OPENING ADDRESS AT THE BMC SYMPOSIUM. **FRANCIS MARSH** WAS THERE TO HEAR HIS MESSAGE ABOUT THE **REALITIES OF COACHING**:

Following Tim Brennan's welcome and introduction to the BMC National Symposium, it fell to BMC Secretary and Academy Director David Lowes to deliver the first (speaker) presentation of the day. With a wealth of coaching and coach mentoring experience - and long-term contributions to the sport, not least recognised through his BMC Life Service Award - David 'kicked-off' with his thoughts on the definition of a coach.

When writing for *The Coach* magazine some years ago, David had described the coach as an "arbiter" and someone attempting to control all the variables in their influence to the maximum benefit of the athlete. He felt that to fulfil a successful coaching role required many generic attributes, including being a good: teacher; advisor; motivator; communicator; mentor and role model. Importantly, although a coach might have obtained excellent technical knowledge this can be rendered ineffective without sufficient communication skills.

More recently he had distilled these attributes down to the ability, "to help an athlete to reach a level that they thought was unattainable", which applies to whatever level of athlete is being coached. For a male club athlete of modest talent, it could be helping them achieve sub-2minutes for 800m that once seemed too distant or - for an international standard athlete - it could be achieving the pinnacle of elite success: it's all relative to the individual athlete and about reaching their true potential. He recognised that most coaches would like to coach an Olympic champion (very few ever will!) and that, unfortunately, coaching excellence is often judged just on the level of the athlete coached relative to elite.

David described his experiences as an athlete; successes, failures and injuries that have no doubt influenced his coaching and his appreciation that, "you will never stop learning". Coaches starting out may think they "know it all", but may make mistakes like prescribing sessions they did as an athlete, which will be inappropriate for many athletes. Learn from mistakes and become more receptive to aspects that may help your coaching knowledge and expertise.

In comparing aspects of coaching in the

elite athlete set-up with that of club athletes, he portrayed the differences and challenges for club coaching, for example:

- A volunteer coach, with other (work) commitments (versus paid elite coach).
- Large groups (versus smaller elite group usually).
- Minimal access to S&C coach/nutritionist/ physio/masseur/ psychologist/ physiological testing (usually incorporated in to the elite athlete's support team).

He drew attention to the limits of effective coaching under certain coach-to-athlete ratios. Ideally, the group size and coaching practice should allow at least the minimum time for some one-to-one / coach-to-athlete and (vice-versa) conversations around key aspects, but he recognised that some club groups in endurance may operate in very large groups that don't permit that level of coaching input.

David suggested some physiological testing that a club coach could employ without sophisticated equipment. Whilst elite athletes may have periodic VO<sub>2</sub> max and lactate testing, the club athlete and coach (with less resources) can still use approximate benchmark tests without the need for testing equipment other than heart rate (HR) monitoring. The Balke (15 minute) test or simply a 15min-20mins park circuit - with intermediate HR readings - can be correlated to (speed at) VO<sub>2</sub> max status. The athlete would attempt to maintain a target HR for this run and show progress overtime by running further at the same HR.

Club level 'in the field' lactate-induced testing could entail such approximations as measuring how far an athlete can run at a pre-determined (lactate-inducing) speed or, say, a demanding 4x300m at 100% with 6min rec (for reasonably developed athletes). However, he highlighted that interpreting just split times doesn't tell the whole story and what the coach sees and senses about the athlete gives a fuller picture for evaluation. For example, he experienced an athlete running 10x400 (60s rec) session in 59s average compared with a seemingly inferior 60/61s average for the same session later in the season. But the latter session - run slightly slower on a slightly windier day - caused much less distress and fatigue, so indicating a superior race fitness attained than the former session



David Lowes – Lifetime Services to Coaching Winner.

that required maximum effort. The lesson here was don't rely just on what the stopwatch tells you!

Club training may typically follow a weekly cycle of 3 sessions per week (on set days: Tues/Thurs/Sat) which David considered does not give the necessary 2 days recovery between hard sessions, whereas full time athletes are more likely to (or have more freedom to) rotate their weekly session schedule to provide optimum recovery between their hardest sessions. Another factor adversely affecting recovery, which David has learned from personal experience as an athlete, is the problem of running too hard on planned 'easy' days. The mantra of "no pain, no gain" can put the athlete too close to the "red-line" of injury and "smarter training is the way forward": "get the best out of an athlete with the least amount of work".

David encouraged coaches to obtain a wide breadth and variation in knowledge through reading, attending conferences and seminars, but particularly through talking to other coaches. Whilst it's important to search for increasing knowledge to impact positively on athletes coached, he stressed not to overcomplicate things and lose sight of the basic principles and reasoning for sessions. Develop analytical thinking that relies on common sense and be flexible to alter plans and sessions to the prevailing weather, conditions and most importantly to the status of the individual athlete. All

athletes are different, they will respond in different ways. Some athletes in a group may be close in their responses to the same training, while others may be “poles apart”.

He emphasised that when coaching young athletes, then a (longer-term) development approach should be the priority; setting training loads that are appropriate to their maturation and physiology. Progress takes time and rarely runs smoothly, so challenging coaches to deal with, and react positively to, set-backs. *“Development is a journey with the destination unknown at a young age”* and it may take until mid-20s or even later to reach peak performances.

David touched on the need for a sense of “harmony” in any training group - where there are mutual benefits and understanding between the coach and athlete (and the rest of the group) - for things to work at their best. Sometimes the coach may need to intervene to eradicate negative or disruptive friction, which could mean the departure of a problem athlete. However, if the coach-athlete-group dynamic can build positively through mutual respect and admiration then this feel-good aura can sustain the right motivations for all in the group, even when performances are *“not tremendous”*.

One of the lessons (from trial and error) that David expressed - around training planning - was that replicating a previous successful season schedules for a particular athlete doesn't guarantee repeat success for the same athlete. Instead the coach should evaluate what may have worked in the past in the context of the athlete's current physiological status and progression: *“coaching was never meant to be easy!”* That said, he considers there are no real secrets but rather a complexity of how all the elements of training and coaching come together, some fall in to place easily while others take longer to find, assemble, sequence and refine.

Some of the changes that David has made to his session planning over the years include the introduction of multi-pace work covering 5k, 1500 & 800m pace that historically were individually in separate sessions over a full week. This variation in one session has been extended to surfaces too, where the sequence might be: grass tempo to faster track reps to hill running; and perhaps back to grass or track to finish for the final efforts. On a similar theme of variation, he cited experiences of athletes becoming stale in mid-track season, where a successful solution was often to return to a dose of (off-track) pre-season spring type work to re-energise the athlete.

David noted changes to some training habits compared with previous eras that may or may not be beneficial, which coaches should consider:

- The extent of warm-up and drills versus the priority (adaptation inducing) core session content.
- Drinking between reps versus preparing for race circumstances.
- Avoiding head-winds!...you can't in a race!
- Recoveries not jogged.
- Increasing S&C emphasis versus the right proportion and emphasis to the event.

With the symposium held just before the last session of the World Championships and merely ‘a stone's throw’ from the stadium, David made two related coaching points - that should be valuable to young athletes - that were evident from how some of Championship races had played out. The first point being never to give up, referring to Mo Farah's gutsy ‘digging deep’ finish in the previous night's 5000m final to take silver, where some lesser mortals may have not found such reserves and ended up 3rd or 4th. The second point being how

often athletes drift out from lane 1 in the final home straight leaving opportunity for athletes to pass on the inside.

David concluded his speech by reiterating some key general points for coaches: you are never too old to learn; be receptive to change; and just be helpful to others, with a final humorous but poignant quote of *“Coaching is not just for Christmas, it's for life!”*

**The writer, Francis Marsh, is a volunteer middle-distance and endurance coach based in Bangor, Northern Ireland. His first club athletics experiences were with Herne Hill Harriers as an U13 in 1978 and in the mid-1980s he attended one of the famed (and personally influential) BMC youth endurance weekends, led by his former school teacher Mike Dunphy (still coaching!) and the late Frank Horwill. Francis is passionate about youth development through to senior performance and researched youth drop-out and retention in athletics for his recently awarded degree in sports coaching.**



*Like Clockwork – David in Coaching mode. Both images in this piece courtesy of David Lowes.*

# SPEED RESERVE

THE NOTION OF '**SPEED RESERVE**' WAS EXPLAINED BY **GARETH SANDFORD** AT OUR ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM- **CHRIS HOLLINSHEAD** ELABORATES:

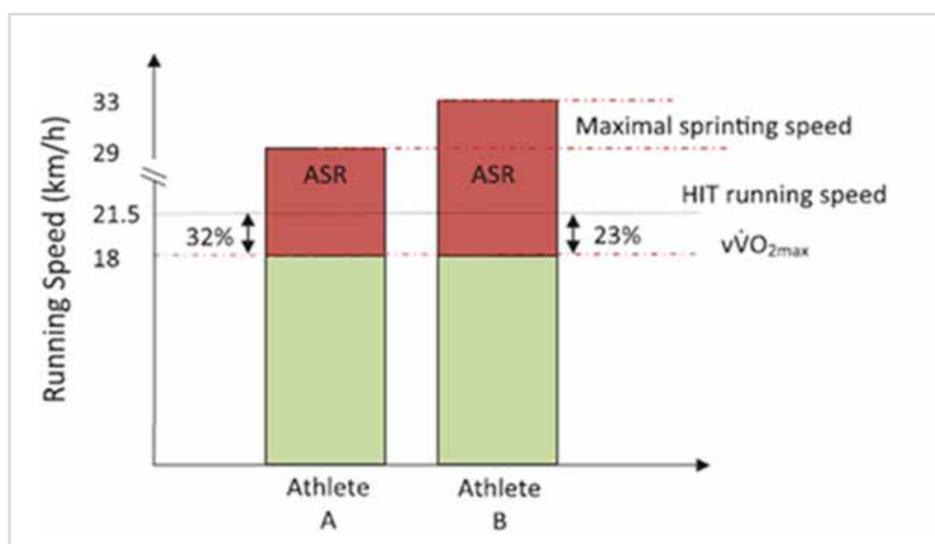
At the recent British Milers' Conference, Gareth Sandford - a Performance Physiologist with Athletics New Zealand - gave a presentation in which he outlined an ongoing study to determine the significance of training the anaerobic speed reserve for 800 metres runners. The anaerobic speed reserve is the difference between a maximal sprinting speed and maximal aerobic speed and is used by coaches as part of high intensity interval training (see Buchheit and Laursen, 2013).

In a recent article for Athletics Weekly\*, BMC News editor Matt Long noted the significance for the coach in that the development of such speed may be an indicator in helping to identify and train 800 metre athletes to meet the demands of the event.

A recent study by Sandford et al (2017) into the tactical behaviour of medallists in the men's 800m Olympic and World Championships from 2000 to 2016, reported that in all but one of the five Championships



Gareth Sandford at the BMC Conference.



from 2011 the medallists ran a faster first lap by approximately 2.2 seconds. This 'positive pacing' strategy is in contrast to the period 2000-2009 which indicated a faster second lap. This trend of 'positive pacing' was again seen in the 800 metre final at IAAF World Championships in London where gold medallist Pierre-Ambroise Bosse ran a first lap of 51.39 before a second lap of 53.28 (IAAF, 2017).

Sandford et al's (2017) research also pointed towards a recent trend of the fastest 100 metre segment of the 800 metres being between the 100 and 200 mark.

So what is this alluding to for the coach? As John Skevington discussed in the Spring Edition of the BMC magazine and Matt Long referred to in Athletics Weekly, as a coach we need to ensure that the athlete's training is sufficiently specific to match the needs of both the individual and requirement of the event.

As Sandford notes, in the period up until 2009 the trend was run to the second lap faster through winding up the pace using a 'sit and kick' tactic for a fast spurt for up to 200 metres. These tactics may have assisted athletes with a slower high velocity running speed but a higher anaerobic capacity for faster paced running to the line (Jones and Whipp, 2002). Now however, athletes have to train to sustain a high velocity running pace without fatiguing in a 'gun to tape' strategy. In doing so it will be interesting to see if this heralds the demise of the 'sit and kick' tactic in major Championship finals.

\*Long, M. (2017) Two-Lap Runners Of The Future. Athletics Weekly. September 7th, p.36-37.

**For more information on speed reserve follow these links:**

[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23539308](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23539308)  
[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28488905](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28488905)



The Mens 'B' 800m at the Watford Grand Prix.

# COACHING AND ATHLETE CORNERS

OUR **BMC COACHING AND ATHLETE CORNERS** EXPLAINED BY **NEVILLE TAYLOR AND MATT LONG:**

You might recall that our Coaching and Athlete Corners were kicked off at the Trafford Grand Prix in the summer of 2016, courtesy of a distinguished panel which included Leeds based Andy Henderson, the well-respected Scot, Bill Parker and of course our very own BMC President himself, Manchester based Norman Poole. This proverbial 'trial-run' was deemed such a success that the committee agreed to roll it out and formalise it more in the 2017 season – so we ran with no less than four such events during the course of 2017.

At the **Sport City** Grand Prix in May, a captivated audience were treated to a seminar entitled, 'The development of 800m and 1500m athletes'. Neville Taylor facilitated a lively discussion led by Andy Carter and Stan Taylor. Andy was himself a 1.45.12 800m runner who came 6th in the Munich Olympics and a 3m59s miler for good measure. A coach of wide ranging experience, Stan Taylor ran a 3.58.01 mile on the cinders of White City no less.

At **Solihull**, the steeplechase themed event was supported by Bashir Hussain, Geoff James and Stella Bandu, who joined Irish international Sara Treacy, who of course excelled in reaching the Rio Olympic chase final back in 2016. Treacy revealed that her own long terms athlete development embraced a multi-sports ethos, with an emphasis on the Tetrathlon (shooting, swimming, riding and running) in her formative years. As an athlete, former GB international, Hussain, was AAA's 3000m champion back in 1994 and Manchester Marathon Winner in 1996, 1997 and 1998, not to mention a world silver medal at mountain running! Now a well-respected England Athletics Coach Education Tutor, he has worked for the governing body in raising

steeplechase standards in recent years. He emphasised the need for S and C work in order for athletes to get "robust" at the chase and from a technical point of view, stressed the importance of being able to hurdle off either leg. James guided Mary Stewart to a world indoor 1500m record, European indoor gold (1977) and Commonwealth Games gold (1978) and has worked with two legends of the chase – namely the much loved Andy Holden (former British record holder) and Welsh champion and GB international, Peter Griffiths. He was keen to emphasise the importance of flat speed (being as close to 8 minutes as possible over 3000m for males) and also said that working in sand rather than water itself was a good way of preparing for those very water jumps. Bandu was instrumental in supporting the delivery of the National Steeplechase Squad, led by Seoul Olympic bronze medallist, Mark Rowland and her own Steeplechase Centre in Ashford, Kent, is doing great work in our sport. Stella was keen to talk about the principle of 'adaptation' in exploring how athletes make the transition from both flat racing to the chase and then from 2k to 3k chases.

The **Watford** seminar was supported by the illustrious George Gandy, whose career is featured on pages 36-37 of this magazine. The Loughborough based guru appeared alongside 1984 Olympic 3000m silver medallist Wendy Sly and together this pair supported a facilitated discussion led by Neville Taylor, offering both coaching and athlete insight into 'Altitude and Attitude'.

At **Loughborough**, Bill Foster and Rob McKim were the stars of the show. As a 2hr15 marathon man, Foster represented Team GB at the 1994 European Championships and 1995 World Cup Marathon and continued his success in later years winning an array of world masters medals. Having coached at Loughborough University since 2001, the last 16 years have seen him coach no less than 26 International athletes. He fielded questions about the transition from middle to longer distance running and offered the observation that athletes who appeared to excel over 10k between the ages of 17-19 years often had relatively short careers.

Based at Reading AC, McKim has coached athletes from the age of 16 to senior level, many of whom have achieved international



Bill Foster (centre) and Rob McKim (right) shone in the Loughborough sunshine with Matt Long.

representative honours. He has recently been appointed as England Athletics Regional coach lead for Endurance in the Midlands. As an 8:53 3000m chaser he bagged a range of Scottish national titles in his own youth and represented his country on numerous occasions before injury curtailed his career at a young age. He used these experiences to inform his message to the audience before highlighting how his speed endurance sessions with athletes tend to often include a tactical component so athletes are "ebbing and flowing" as they learn to operate at differential paces.

Look out for our announcing next season's seminars in the new year and make sure you get yourself along to them. They are absolutely FREE for our coaching and athlete members and rather than sitting in the stands whilst you nervously wait to warm up, are a great way of learning while you relax a little. Dip in and then disappear as you please- that's our philosophy!



Stan Taylor (pictured alongside Andy Carter) looks for inspiration as Neville Taylor introduces him at Sport City.



Steeplechase at Solihull. Left to right- Left side- Bashir Hussain and Sara Tracey and right side- Stella Bandu and Geoff James.

# BOOK REVIEW

**BRENDON BYRNE** TURNS THE PAGE ON THE BOOK 'RUNNING SCIENCE' (IVY PRESS). CONSULTANT EDITOR, **JOHN BREWER:**

*Running Science* aims to bring the latest empirical evidence concerning running to an audience of both coaches and athletes. The approach throughout the book is to ask a series of questions related to running and then answer them backed with scientific evidence. The aim of the book is to engender, "optimizing training and performance – the science to improve your technique". There are a number of chapters on a whole range of topics by a plethora of experts in sport science. Their aim is to make a sometimes complex subject easy to understand and it does.

There is a list of references at the back of the book that can be checked if you want to go to original sources. The subjects covered are in answer to questions that any athlete may ask such as: What is lactic acid? What affects recovery rate after intensive exercise? What is DOMS and can it be beneficial?

There is an interesting section on high intensity training (HIT) and how it may be an effective way of increasing VO2 max. An example of this is 30 seconds of intense work with 30 seconds of recovery repeated a number of times. There is also an assessment of different running surfaces and it comes to the conclusion that a good grass surface is almost as effective as an all-weather track. Coaches wishing to reduce the injury risk to their athletes will find that helpful.

Nutrition is dealt with and one of the contemporary answers is some distance away from the old system of depleting energy stores and then carbo loading. It seems that topping up glycogen stores regularly is an effective way to maintain top performances. Dehydration is covered too and a good point is that if dehydration rises to above 2% then it is difficult to maintain running pace. For a 140lb runner, for instance, that would mean a 3lb reduction on bodily fluids.

An important point is that the material in each chapter is covered in an attractive and informative way. The illustrations are very helpful. In fact any topic related to middle distance running is covered in an easily assimilated way.

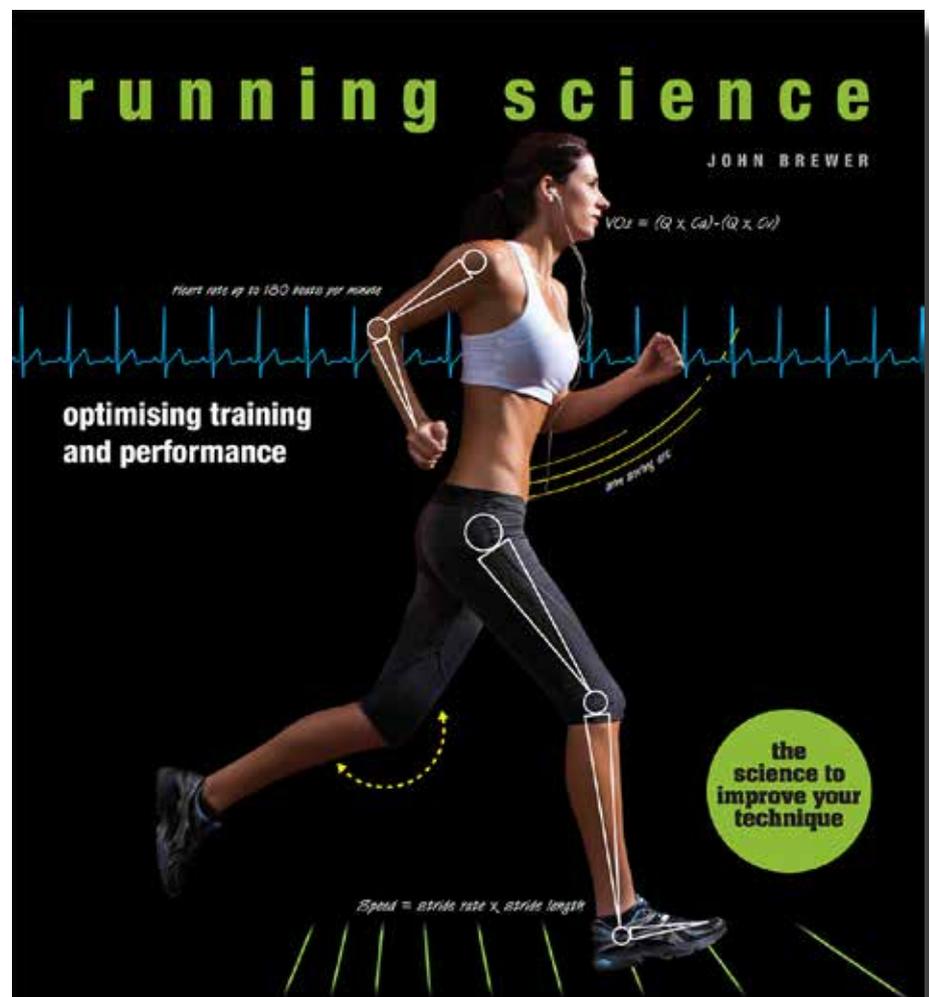
There is a good section on techniques for hill running and many other topics. A very good question posed is "Will core strength and stability training keep me injury free?"

The answer is that the exercises should be functional and to some extent mimic the running action. Pleasingly, matters of Physiology aside, Psychology is dealt with in some depth.

The key question is will the book be of use to BMC members, both coaches and athletes? The answer is without doubt yes!

For readers with a longer memory, in many ways this serves as a follow on from Tim Noakes classic book *Lore of Running* which was last updated in 2003. Another book with same title - *Running Science* - by

Owen Anderson was reviewed in 2013 in this magazine and could be described as being more 'hard core', but still excellent as among other things it provides a number of relevant session for the various events. If you want further information about functional training, as mentioned above, then I can recommend *New Functional training for Sports*, by Michael Boyle, as a good source. All of these are published by Human Kinetics. 'Running Science' by John Brewer. Book Publication Date: 18th May, 2017. ISBN-10: 1782404732



# GORDON SURTESS

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE INIMITABLE **GORDON SURTESS (9/9/32- 1/9/17)** ARE RECALLED BY **ALASTAIR AITKEN:**

Gordon was brought up and lived at Billingham, Durham in the North East. Right up to when he died at 84, his passing brought together enough tributes from athletes and coaches that could easily fill a book. One of those who lends weight to that was a man who is a current International- Jonathan Taylor – who said, “He cared deeply about the sport and his athletes, not only on the track but as people. For me, he was more than a coach, but a role model. He was straight down the middle, wasn’t afraid to say what he thought but, always had the sport and his athletes in mind”.

This reminded me of sentiments expressed by others over four decades ago. Dennis Coates, for instance, who achieved a British record for the 3000 steeplechase at the Montreal Olympics in 1976, told me at the time, He had this to say when I interviewed him with his coach Gordon Surtees at Crystal Palace, after the Games, where he made the final in Montreal. “I would say Gordon’s greatest quality apart from his knowledge is that he is a tremendous motivator. When you are down he can really pick you up and get you motivated. We tend to find Gordon is like a relation as; you can discuss everything with him”.

Gordon’s proven passion for the sport was indicated by the fact he was a Great Britain Team coach at more than 30 major Championships as well as 44 other international events from 1967 to 2003. He was named as British Milers’ Club Coach of the Year in 1989 and only two years ago received the British Milers’ Club Coaching Lifetime Achievement Award.

Club runners from 800m to the marathon were advised by Gordon and, to name a few of those Dennis Coates, Ikem Billy, Tony Morrell, Tom Hanlon, Colin Walker and Steve Kenyon and, many others of course. To sum it up, 1991 World 10,000m champion, Liz McColgan said, “He was a Great guy. A passionate, dedicated coach.”

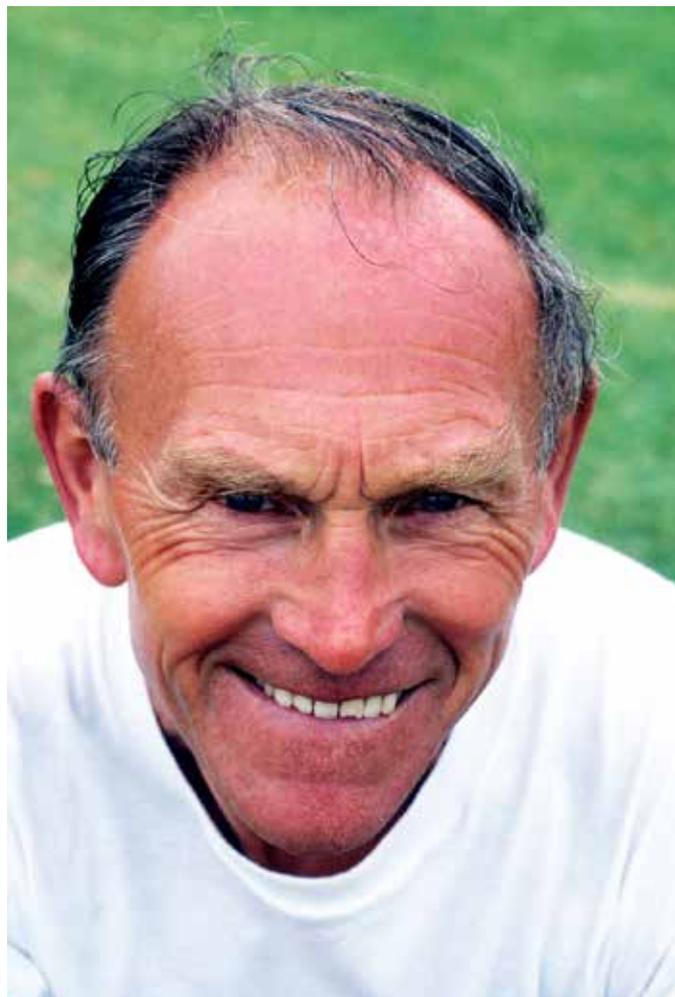
**BMC CHAIR, TIM BRENNAN,** RECALLS A POWERFUL SPEECH DELIVERED BY GORDON UPON RECEIPT OF HIS LIFETIME SERVICES TO COACHING AWARD A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO:

“He used the occasion of his award to present his analysis of the state of athletics in an inspiring speech full of common sense and wisdom. In it Gordon related his own career as an engineering apprentice to the needs of an athlete to learn the sport. He was an ever present at our Grand Prix meetings. His knowledge and original thinking will be greatly missed.

The BMC would like to express our deep sympathy to his family, friends, and athletes past and present”.



*Gordon proudly shows off his BMC Lifetime Services to Coaching Award.*



**BMC PRESIDENT NORMAN POOLE** ADDS:

“It was a great shock to hear of the very sad loss of Gordon who I first came to know in the early eighties at BMC Meets in the North West.

It was as fellow GB Team Coaches at the Major Games that I got to know Gordon far better and he gave me some insight to his coaching philosophy. He told me, “We might be coaching at the Olympic Games but remember we are here for one thing and that is the care of the athletes and to help them to be in the best possible shape on the Start Line. And nothing else matters”.

This dedication to the athletes occasionally caused the ruffling of officialdom feathers but Gordon would be unrepentant. He was a man of principle and for this he was much respected.

Gordon’s sense of self-deprecating humour is also legendary. Occasionally when kit is handed out to the Teams, mistakes will have been made oversize/under size items. On one occasion as kit was being offered Gordon gleefully announced, ‘Look this tracksuit top fits me’. One arm of the top was longer than the other and amazingly it suited Gordon’s needs, he had one under developed arm from birth. Needless to say, that Gordon was rewarded with much laughter from the Team, which is an asset very much needed in successful Teams.

The legend that is Gordon will be very much missed by his athletes, friends and coaching colleagues within our Sport”.



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