

THE PUFFER



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Winter's almost over

Even though the weather is still decidedly chilly, the Winter fixtures are almost complete and it's less than a month to the Easter Open Meeting. As well as the Chairman's report from the AGM, this edition also contains reports from various Winter fixtures for those of you who have not been able to access them via the Club website. If you're wondering what it's like to train as an official for the Track season then check out the report from Katie Russell on page 5. Enjoy – Ed.

Chairman's Report for the Year ending 30 September 2009

This Report becomes more difficult to compile as each year passes! It is not because that there is a lack of content (although this year I have tried to condense it somewhat – but failed!) but because there are so many positive achievements from both individuals and teams within the Club. We have reached a level in some competitions where it appears that we have nothing further to win but our ever-competitive Coaches, Team Managers and Athletes never fail to come up with some exceptional performances.

I am not going to report on all the performances as these are regularly, accurately and comprehensively produced in both 'The Puffer' and in the local press and it is not necessary to repeat them all here. However, I list below some notable accolades which I believe are worthy of attention - and I apologise in advance for any that others may also consider should have been included.

Southern Women's League : Last year, I posed the question of 'Another promotion?' without really believing it to be possible but it surely was – and just half a point short of the Championship. Very many congratulations to the Team and its Management. The Ladies' Team also qualified for the final of the British Athletics League 10 in 100 Cup.

Kent Cross-Country League : Last year, we were proud of our six Junior Teams winning their respective age-group competitions. This year, not only did we retain those titles but added the Senior Ladies' and Senior Men's (both 4 and 12 to score) trophies. In fact, apart from the under 20 age group, TAC won all the team titles and all our under 20 athletes ran for the Seniors! Truly amazing.

Kent Cross-Country Championships : after winning six age-groups in 2008, six were won again, albeit some in different categories

Race Walking : The Club retained the National Junior Grand Prix Championship whilst, amongst many excellent achievements, **Diane Bradley** has won international events, **Tom Bosworth** represented Great Britain in the Under 20 European Cup, and several squad members have been invited to regular National Elite Squad Training sessions. With many younger walkers also gaining recognition with selection for representative teams, the future looks very positive. Congratulations to all, and especially to their mentor, coach and manager, Peter Selby.

Under 15 Boys won both the **South of England Cross-Country Championships** and the **English National Championships** while the Under 13 Boys and Under 17 Men won medals at both these championships. The under 13 Boys and under 15 Boys also 'medaled' at the **National Cross-Country Relays**

National Junior League : the Team retained the Medway Division and improved their performance in the National Play-Offs

Whilst not repeating the highest-ever placing in the National Auxiliary Final in 2008, the **National Young Athletes League Team** placed tenth in the Southern Premier League - and that is one huge achievement considering that clubs of the stature of Maidstone & Medway, Aldershot F&D, Cambridge Harriers and Bedford & County were relegated

Kent Young Athletes' League : The Girls placed third overall in Division One whilst the Boys retained their Trophy. Considering that the Team Managers used these matches as an opportunity for younger, less experienced athletes to participate, these were fine performances and augur well for the future

Men's Southern League : 2009 was a year of consolidation as many younger athletes were introduced into the Team, which performed very well to finish in 18th place in the Premier League. The future looks bright indeed provided these younger members are prepared to support their Team as they progress through further education and into full-time employment

Road Running : in October 2008, the under 13 and under 15 Boys both won medals at the **National Road Relay Championships**, while in September this year the under 13 Boys won the **Southern Road Relay Championship** and the under 15 Boys and the under 17 men also won medals. (Although not in the current TAC 'year', it is pleasing to report that the under 13 Boys then went on to win both the 2009 National Road Relay and National Cross-Country Relay Championships - and the under 15 Boys won bronze medals in both events)

Senior Men's Cross-Country : in addition to the events already reported, Tonbridge AC also won the Blackheath Relays and the Kent Clubmans Championships whilst Huw Evans represented Wales in the British and Irish International Match.

Individually, there were superb performances throughout 2008-2009, amongst them World Champion **Ben Reynolds** in the 5000m at the World Masters Championships (not to mention his Kent Veterans Cross-Country title), two bronze medals for **Diane Bradley** for Race Walking at the World Masters, a bronze medal for **Steve Fennell** in the Senior 800m at the UK Championships, **Ben Wiffen** with the Senior 800m title at the Southern Championships, **Tadgh Healy** with gold medals in the Junior / under 15 pole vault at both the England Schools and the English National Championships, **Ben Parsons** (under 15) and **Kelsey Howard** (under 17) as winners of the English Schools 3km walks, **Guy Thomas** ranked as the leading under 13 Race Walker in England, County Cross-Country Championship titles for **Sam Bradley**, **Andy Combs** and **Robbie Farnham-Rose** and Kent Cross-Country League titles for **Deidre McDermott** and **Huw Evans**, the latter also securing a silver medal in the British Masters Road Championships. Our own 'iron man' **Julian Rendall** deserves special mention for winning both the Kent Coastal and the Hastings Marathons and for representing England in the World and European 100km Championships. There were of course numerous other County and Regional medalists in both Club and Schools competitions and we congratulate everyone who competed in any event - we are very proud of you all.

One of the highlights of the year was the visit in August of Dame Kelly Holmes to the Club and track where it all began! It is no exaggeration to say that Kelly was fulsome in her praise of TAC, generous both with her time and the donation of a large quantity of kit, patient in an extreme in answering questions and signing autographs on even the most outrageous surfaces (vests, shorts, spikes etc) and hugely trusting in allowing her gold medals to be circulated for everyone to hold and inspect. She is a fantastic ambassador for the sport and we can be exceptionally proud that she started her career at Tonbridge Athletic Club. Let's hope that her visit has motivated all those athletes who came along to strive to improve their own performances and, for those who come down to training but don't compete, to become more involved in Club fixtures, events and teams.

Those who read last year's Chairman's Report will recall our disappointment with the limited facilities available to us as a result of the development of the Sports Centre at Tonbridge School. I am delighted to report that, in the main and with great assistance from both Tonbridge School and Tonbridge Sports Association, those difficulties have now been overcome and we have excellent facilities both indoors and out. We still await the Trophy Cabinet and the Notice Board Cupboard for the Clubroom, and it is likely that these will have to be outsourced, but we have set a target of Easter 2010 for their installation. We will continue to work with the School for mutual benefit.

There has been great progress in many spheres of our activities during not just the past 12 months but over several years - and some are frequently overlooked. Although not strictly part of the parent Club, the Tonbridge Tornados have gone from strength to strength under the guidance and enthusiasm of Chris Hogwood and his colleagues. Not only are they attracting to athletics large numbers of youngsters (who are too young to join TAC) but they are making money and having fun! The forthcoming Christmas Party sounds as though it will be a hoot! Talking of Christmas, The Christmas Pudding Race on Boxing Day morning, always a tradition for many over a good number of years, has now moved down to Whitby's Pavilion on the Sports Field and opened up a great new course. The Bradley Family has taken over Maurice Marchant (thanks for your many years of organisation, Maurice) and it is great to see so many running off the effects of the previous day's indulgences! I know of one or two who are determined to get their name on the trophy!

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As was seen during the summer, our Open Meetings are returning to their previous high standards with, this year, the innovation of electronic timing which is a feature which attracts better standard athletes. The catering provided at the Bar/Café has proved to be very popular and, while Dawn Hookway still produces refreshments for officials at our Fixtures and Meetings, it is a huge advantage that catering does not have to be arranged for visiting athletes and supporters. The computerised entries and results processes really have made a great difference in the administration of our events and continue to evolve each year. These developments do of course rely on considerable input from Club Officials, particularly Mark and Dawn Hookway, Caroline Tinsley, Bev Keech, John Sanders, Dick Sharp and all those selfless individuals who work tirelessly to make our Club what it is today.

We are of course indebted to this hard core of helpers who continue to devote so much time and effort to our Club. Many cover several roles and I wish to thank them all for their involvement and assistance. Whilst I repeat what I state in virtually every report that it is invidious to single out individuals, this year I wish to record my thanks and those of the Club to Tina Bradford, who has decided to step down from the position of Honorary Treasurer. Tina has had a very difficult year on a personal basis but she has still managed the accounts superbly and delivered exemplary bookwork to the Auditor for the compilation and ratification of the Income & Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet. Happily, Tina has indicated that she would like to continue her involvement with TAC and will be assisting Peter Mason with the Junior Teams.

Hopefully, we will find a replacement for Tina but perhaps the most worrying aspect for our Club is the shortage of assistance in nearly every aspect of its operation and administration. We are now not far short of 600 members and I would have hoped that, with such a large number, there would be sufficient volunteers to share out the workload - but it always seems to be the same hardy few. There are 430 Junior Members and I would have thought that more than a tiny minority of parents would have been willing to give up just a few hours of their time occasionally to assist a Club which clearly provides so much enjoyment for their children. To this end, I have now written to the parents of every junior athlete to ask for assistance. If it is not forthcoming, I fear that those who currently do so much will begin to reduce their involvement and that we will have to impose restrictions on membership numbers, coaching sessions, team involvement and the like. This would be a tragedy as it would curtail the development of the Club and its members. Therefore, I appeal to every member and their friends and families "to think of what you can do to help Tonbridge Athletic Club" and not just what TAC can do for you. Please help, if only very occasionally.

I see that I have run out of space (again!) and I am only too aware that I have overlooked so many positives within our Club, the sponsorship of West Kent College with the use of their mini-buses, the generosity of those who have made donations to our funds, the excellence of our website where Caroline Tinsley has continued Mike Parks' superb development, the Club spirit fostered by larger numbers making trips to more events and, of course, the increasing membership to name just a few. However, I end this Annual Report with thanks to everyone who has done anything to support the Club in the past and previous years and, as stated in the previous paragraph, I just hope that more people will become involved in the months and years ahead. Particularly, I wish to express the thanks of all the Club Members to the General Committee for their commitment, loyalty and devotion to duty. We are indeed very fortunate to have such a core of individuals who strive both as individuals and as a cohesive team to improve so many aspects of our great Club. Thank you all.

Alan J G Bennett : Chairman - Tonbridge A C 9 November 2009



pleased to support Tonbridge Athletic Club

Race Walking Report

Unfortunately, due to adverse weather conditions throughout December and January, certain of the road events had to be cancelled although a good number did take part in the Surrey Walking Club Open Christmas Cup race before the weather turned wintry.

Training continued although as most of you would know, on one or two occasions the track looked more like the Antarctic than a running arena, but the continued training eventually resulted in an excellent performance at the London Open Championships. Tonbridge won the overall team competition out of the twenty seven clubs and were somewhat ahead of the second and third place teams, . Enfield and Haringey and Ilford AC.

There were some excellent performances, none more so than by Tom Bosworth who took over a minute and a half off his time in finishing second in the Open 10k with a time of 43 minutes, 55 seconds. Positons are shown below.

Our congratulations also go to Tom who the following week, at an indoor circuit in Belfast notched up a time of 20 minutes, 45 seconds when competing against the Irish elite over 5k. Tom's performance has taken him to all time third place in the UK Under 23 ranking for 5k. He will be looking to take on his first 20k in April at the Commonwealth Trials but prior to that will have an international commitment in Lugano in mid-March.

With the onset of the Kent Under13/Under 15 League this year, I will be holding short training sessions with potential walkers who can secure points for the club, and will be giving Team managers set dates when these sessions are to be held. Valuable points can be scored for the club in the 1200m walk and it is quite surprising what a little bit of coaching can do to help.

The Bill Collins Walk this year will be held on a separate date to the Tonbridge Open meeting – Tuesday 29th June is the proposed date, starting at 7.30pm on the park circuit.

Results - London Open Championships, 31st January 2010, Victoria Park, London**Under 13 Girls 2.5k**

3	Georgia Parsons	17m:03
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Under 15 Boys 2.5k

1	Guy Thomas	15m.09
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Senior Women 5k

1	Kelsey Howard	26m.20
3	Diane Bradley	27m.15
10	Steph Rukin	31m.26
11	Emily Symons	32m
17	Catherine Cotterill	36m.34
7	Katie Funnell (2 nd claim)	29m.10

NB. In this event Tonbridge A & B Teams took 1st and 2nd places in the team event ahead of Enfield, Abingdon and Leicester.

Under 17 Mens 5k

2	Ben Parsons	32m
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Combined Mens & Womens 10k

2	Tom Bosworth	43m.55
14	Liam Baldwin	53m.59
16	Diane Bradley	54m.39
30	James Cotterill	61m.59
36	Steph Rukin	62m.36
43	Ben Parsons	69m.41

The Overall Team Event

4	Tonbridge AC	41 points (ten teams closed in)
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Join Tonbridge Athletic Club and See the World!

Further to Dick Sharp's article in a recent Puffer, encouraging parents of Tonbridge athletes to consider training as Athletics Officials, this is my experience of training to be a Field Judge.

Three of us started together, all mothers of Tonbridge athletes. We had all helped out before, holding the ends of tape measures and retrieving javelins, when we were persuaded to make it official. All we had to do was attend a one day course for new officials, where we watched a presentation which gave general information about being an official and specific information about the duties of an official on each of the eight field events. (The process was the same for those training to be Track Judges.)

We were given a copy of the disk containing the presentation, along with guidance notes on becoming an official and a copy of the current Rule Book. You don't have to learn the Rule Book off by heart; just be familiar with its layout so that you can quickly look things up when necessary.

Also, you do not have to take a written exam or practical test to qualify; you just have to officiate at a certain number of competitions (depending on which level you are aiming for) under the watchful eye of your mentor, complete a log book of your experience and work through a written test which has general questions on the duties of an official and then questions relating to the eight events.

You can complete the questions in your own time, asking for help from others and referring to the Rule Book. Currently, you only have to do four competitions to become a Club Judge and ten to become a County Judge. (You have two seasons in which to do this.) Most of us easily go to that many competitions anyway, to watch our children. And that's it!

Dick kindly agreed to mentor us, which meant overseeing and helping us as we judged events and filling in comments in our log books and signing them off. He is an excellent mentor; knowledgeable, absolutely unflappable no matter what happened, very patient and always good humoured. We would also like to thank the other Tonbridge officials, John Sanders and Vicky Thomas, for their help and advice. With the number of competitions Tonbridge does, you could easily rack up lots of competitions just officiating for the club. (Note: Dawn Hookway provides excellent refreshments for officials at home competitions!) If you want to, however, you can help at other events, such as the County Championships. You will not be thrown in at the deep end and the other officials are friendly and helpful.

As well as officiating, Dick and John are both instrumental in many other areas, including getting out and setting up equipment for competitions, calibrating and measuring it, making sure it works (including in Dick's case last season making and fitting new pins for the winder mechanism on the pole vault), producing the record cards for each event, ensuring health and safety compliance, weighing athletes' own implements and keeping trainee officials in order. They could do with a hand! As Dick said in his article, the more officials Tonbridge has, the lighter the load for each of them, leaving more time for officials' other favourite activities, such as eating cake and chatting. Oh and watching your children's events.

Having started this process to put something back into our children's club, which is run entirely by volunteers, rather than out of a raw lust for power, we found that we enjoyed it. If you are considering becoming an official, persuade someone to do it with you because it's more fun when you've got someone else to play with. Your club needs you!

Katie Russell

National Cross Country Relay Championships at Mansfield, 31st October 2009

The club completed a successful campaign in the Autumn relay championship events, by taking two team medals at the National Cross Country Relays at Mansfield. Held at the traditional venue of Berry Hill Park, the races are over relatively short distances, with three athletes per team, which produces some very close finishes.

We had a 45 athletes and around 30 supporters that travelled up, mostly on the Friday night, for the stop over near Northampton.

An analysis of the times shows that overall conditions were perhaps a bit slower this year and I have also read that the course was fractionally longer, maybe by around 35 metres, with a few extra twists here and there.

The last TAC team to win at these championships was the under 20 men's team of 1991 and prior to that the same age group in 1985. This shows how rare a win is for the club, so again the under 13s created a little bit of their own history. My fingers are crossed that, with a bit of luck, we will be competing for wins next year in a few more age groups, as the teams look potentially even stronger.

Under 15 boys

The first race of the day was the under 15 boys' event and although we had a strong team, they weren't expected to feature amongst the medals. Charlie Joslin-Allen led off for the team and ran an excellent 6-37 for the undulating two kilometre course, bringing the team in to seventh place. His time turned out to be the eleventh quickest of the race, from the 107 teams that started.

Max Nicholls took over for the second leg and with a strong run in 6-53 moved the team up three places into fourth, before handing over to Corey De'Ath, for the anchor leg.. Corey was initially overtaken by three athletes and at the half way mark, on his leg, was in seventh place, although still chasing hard. He seemed to gather momentum, as the race went on and as he entered the final straight with about four hundred metres to go, went passed two runners to move into the bronze medal spot.

I'd have little doubt in saying this was the most impressive run that I have seen from Corey and after a bit on analysis I was told that he was the quickest of all the runners, who have another year in the age group.

As we were missing Tom Devlin, Sean Molloy and Hanro Rossouw, it shows how strong this squad can be.

Under 13 boys

The other medal might have been predicted before the event and came in the under 13 boys' championship. However, a below par Alex Kidd (7-40) came home in 37th place on the first leg and was just behind the B-team of Will Seymour (7-33) and C-team of Miles Weatherseed (7-37), amongst a field of 88 teams. The chances of a team medal looked slim at this stage. Pete Brenchley was one of our supporters who voiced the view that we had no chance after the first leg. However, as I trotted away to carry on supporting, I distinctly remember saying to him "That I couldn't see any fat ladies singing on the course!".

Tim Faes (7-16) took over for the A-team and continuously overtook other athletes to move Tonbridge into 12th place, but still seventeen seconds behind the leaders. Euan Nicholls (7-30) moved the C-team up to 23rd, with the B-team in 27th, through William Whitmore (7-39).

George Duggan was running the anchor leg for the A-team, just as he had in the road relay championships a couple of weeks earlier. Even the most ardent Tonbridge supporter would have doubted his ability to get to the front. However, he started at such a ferocious pace that by halfway around his lap he was right on the tail of the leaders and as he entered the last 400 metres had built up a small lead. His earlier efforts were now telling, but with a great determination he hung on at the front to give the team the win, running the fastest lap of the event, with 6-57. The team came home to win by just six seconds from Tamworth AC.

The strength of the whole under 13 boys' squad was underlined, as the B-team came home in 11th, through Will Roud (7-14) and C-team 12th, through an inspired Stuart Brown (7-20).

There is little doubt that this group of boys is one of the strongest age group squads we have ever had. Selection for relay teams has proved almost impossible and we have invariably got it wrong, as form ebbs and flows. However, when looking a year ahead, if this lot keep going there will be even more headaches at under 15 level.

Under 17 men.

The under 17 men's team, although never really close to a medal position, also produced a terrific result by taking 4th place, over the three kilometre course. Robbie Farnham-Rose took the lead off leg and ran 9-23 to come home in fifth place, with a time that turned out to be the seventh quickest of the race. He handed over to Luca Russo (9-57), who dropped one place, before Josh Bentham (9-32) pulled the team back into fourth.

The B-team this time managed to reverse positions from the recent road relays, where Ipswich had beaten them and like our C-team were first home in their category.

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Under 15 girls

The best of the female results came from the under 15 girls, who took sixth place in their championship, which was over the two kilometre lap. Nicole Taylor (7-35), Alice Wood (7-42) and Pandora Banbury (7-38), showed their strength in a race that featured ninety five teams. For Pandora, in particular, this was an excellent run, as she continues to improve her form, after missing early season training from illness.

Under 17 women

We were worried about Lucy Reid beforehand, who felt sick, but with our 'nurse', Pete Mason, on hand, we got her ready to race. She produced a solid opening leg, before Kelsey Howard and Lucy Blackstone brought the team home in 13th. For Lucy B this was her best run for a few months and it was good to see her recording such a good performance.

Under 13 girls

This was a good effort by our three girls, with Sian Driscoll running an excellent final leg to move from 34th to 17th. Hopefully, Katie Humphrey and Lucy Roud will have gained more confidence from the race, as I suspect like with some other age groups there is more to come.

Under 20 women

When Jess Owen agreed, a couple of weeks ago, to go off on our second leg, claiming "I'm quite happy with that", I don't think she realised what position Grace Nicholls might put her in. At one point, halfway around the first leg, Grace was level in the lead and it was probably just as well that Jess couldn't see this! Nevertheless Grace came home 3rd, recording the 6th fastest lap of the race.

Jess ran a very strong leg, before handing over to Catherine Symons, who was returning from a long term injury. Between them they kept the team as high as 13th, which was 14 places better than last year.

Under 20 men

It was quite an achievement to get two complete teams out in this age group, since at least five of our six runners had had injury or illness and sometimes both in the previous couple of weeks. As a result none of them were at their best, but it is possible that, if they were, a top five placing could be achieved.

Summary

Overall this year was slightly better than last, with the big improvement being at under 20 women's level. The teams came away with a 1st and a 3rd, compared to two silvers last year, but I honestly feel that we can expect much more to come at the National Cross Country Championships in February. There, with tougher, longer courses and four runners to score, we should be able to place higher in almost every age group.

NOTICE BOARD

The club has been notified of the following events which may be of interest to members:

Victoria Park Open 5 mile - London Saturday 27th March 2010

Also Kids and junior races. See www.vphthac.org.uk details. Online entries via www.runbritain.com or www.runnersworld.co.uk.

Charity Walk/Run – Cobham, Gravesend, Sunday 16th May 2010

Darnley Trail – 10k multi-terrain circular route. In support of British Porphyria Association. See <http://www.porphyria.org.uk> for details.

Harvel 5 – Harvel, Kent, Saturday 5th June 2010

See www.harvelh3.org for details.

Online entries available via www.runnersworld.co.uk

Somme Poppy Races– Picardie, France, Sunday 12th September 2010

Marathon, half marathon, 5k, 10k plus Children's races. See www.somme-marathon.com for details.

Royal Parks Half Marathon, London Sunday 10th October 2010

Tommy's the baby charity has 100 secured places for runners who can raise a minimum of £350 in sponsorship. To apply contact Jane on 0207 398 3450 or jbrewin@tommys.org. See www.royalparkshalf.com for race details.

Stroud and District Athletic Club 2010 Fixtures

Races throughout the season from May to Oct. See www.stroudathleticclub.co.uk for details. They are trying to cut down on printing flyers by circulating details electronically.

Kent Cross Country League at Swanley Park, Saturday 14th November 2009

Facing atrocious conditions for most of Saturday afternoon, athletes from across the county congregated at Swanley Park, for the third of the season's Kent Cross Country League fixtures.

The extremely strong winds and heavy rain arrived as forecast, but didn't manage to dampen the spirits of the Tonbridge distance runners taking part. At the end of the day, after seven races, Tonbridge came away with five team wins, plus five individual victories.

Under 13 Boys

Close races were the order of the day, producing some exciting action to warm up the drenched spectators. The first such race was the under 13 boys' race, where Will Roud tracked George Duggan for almost the entire three kilometres, only losing out by just five seconds at the end. The team win for Tonbridge was secured by Will Seymour, who almost gave Tonbridge a perfect score, but just missed out on third place in the run in to the finish. Luke Gunter also had a fine run to place 15th.

Under 15 Girls

The under 15 girls' race was an even closer affair, with three Tonbridge girls leading the race at different stages. First Pandora Banbury hit the front at the start and built up a lead that stretched to about thirty metres at one stage. However, she was caught around half way by three other athletes, Alice Wood and Nicole Taylor of Tonbridge, plus Amber Reed of Blackheath. It was Nicole Taylor who had triggered the initial chase of Banbury, but with about eight hundred metres remaining of the 3 kilometres, it was Reed and Alice Wood who hit the front. These two swapped positions all the way to the finish, but it was Alice who managed to take the win by just two seconds, repeating her victory from the last fixture. Taylor placed third, whilst Pandora hung on well for fifth, to give Tonbridge the team win. The whole squad finished well up the field with Amy Ellson 6th, Jemima Sneddon 8th, Jayne Mallyon 9th, Dominique Von Opperl 11th and Stephanie Von Opperl 12th.

Under 15 Boys

Charlie Joslin-Allen has been in dominant form in the under 15 boys' league races all season and this was no exception, as he stormed into an early lead and was never headed. He ran out an easy winner by half a minute, from Luke Dawson of Invicta AC. Corey De'ath took third for Tonbridge, with a fast finishing Sean Molloy fifth. Cameron Knapp had his best cross country result to date to take seventh, as Tonbridge once again took the team win.

It was good to see Ben Chapman (16th) and Alex Norden (20th) have solid runs and hopefully both can put illness and injury behind them.

The race also saw a couple of the fastest finishes of the day, that I spotted. Gavin McKay charged down to the finish in 31st, whilst Anthony O'Dowd did likewise in a dip finish with an athlete from Bexley. Anthony was one of a rare breed who managed to race without spikes, but told me that he was off to buy some straight afterwards!

Under 17 Women

Ellen Holmes has limited her competitive outings so far this Winter, but showed that she is maintaining fitness with a very determined run in the under 17 women's race. The race was combined with the under 20 event and this led to a group of five athletes being close together at the halfway stage. Soon afterwards one of the older athletes, Okoro, from Medway and Maidstone took a slight advantage, but could not get completely away from her pursuers. As the race developed it became a three-way battle between Okoro, Holmes and Megan Hawes from Sevenoaks AC, all of whom looked potential winners as the finish approached. However, it was Okoro who broke away, tracked by Ellen, in the last 400m metres, whilst Holmes shot into the lead on the uphill section with 250 metres to go. Okoro, a track specialist, never gave in and came charging back over the last 100 metres downhill to the finish. Ellen, in typically determined fashion, gave it everything she had and held on for a narrow win, as both athletes were given the same time, with Hawes just another five seconds back. With Kelsey Howard 5th and Lucy Blackstone 7th, Tonbridge once again took the team win.

Under 17 Men

Robbie Farnham-Rose had a similar race to Ellen in the under 17 men's race, but had to take second best to a guest athlete from Essex, running as an under 20. Robbie once again led Tonbridge to an easy team win, with Henry Pearce (3rd) and Luca Russo (4th) also scoring. Tonbridge's dominance in this age group continued as Jamie Bryant (5th), Jack Keywood (6th), Tom Cox (8th) and Ryan Driscoll (10th) all finished amongst the leading group.

Under 20 Men

Our only under 20 man brave enough to race alongside the under 17s was James Pigot, who had a solid race and was third under 20 and eighth in the combined race.

Senior Women

The final race of the day saw another close individual battle, but also a very tight team contest. Deirdre McDermot, of Tonbridge and Beth Carter, from Invicta AC, battled right to the end for individual honours, but it was Carter who finally claimed a seven second win over the five kilometre course. Jess Owen was a revelation for Tonbridge in 10th spot, followed closely home by fast finishing Catherine Symons. This gave Tonbridge 23 points, but was one point shy of Invicta in the team contest. Both Deirdre and Tonbridge, however, head the league standings, going into the final senior women's race, which is in February.

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SE Inter Counties XC Championships, at Parliament Hill, 21st November 2009

Tonbridge Athletic Club provided a significant number of athletes for the Kent teams competing in the South East Inter Counties Cross Country Championships. The races involve ten counties from the region that stretches from Hampshire in the West to Suffolk in the East. With about a hundred county standard competitors in each race, it gives athletes their first indication of the season of where they stand against some of the best runners over a tough cross country course.

Parliament Hill Fields, near Hampstead in North London, always offers a real challenge to competitors although, despite the heavy recent rain, the courses had drained relatively well.

For those who were able to compete, the event offered a dress rehearsal for the South Of England Championships, which take place at Parliament Hill at the end of January.

For me and other supporters seeing TAC athletes in the Kent colours is not quite the same as when they are all battling away for the club, so perhaps this masks a little how good the results were.

TAC athletes had 3 individual silver medals, 2 fourth places and a further 3 top 10 positions, whilst they helped Kent win the u15 and u17 boys' championships, plus placing 3rd in both the u13 boys and u17 women's team events. This is our best showing in this event and compares very favourably with the previous best, a couple of years ago, when TAC had five top 10 individual places.

Under 15 Boys

The first race of the day was for the under 15 boys and Charlie Joslin-Allen was soon amongst the leading group of four athletes, who forged a gap on their pursuers. He managed to stay with the lead group until late on in the race and came home to take 4th position, just seventeen seconds down on the leader in 13-42. Tom Devlin moved through the field to take an excellent 6th place, just nine second further back. Tonbridge athletes completed all four Kent scoring positions with Max Nicholls 11th and Hanro Rossouw 16th, whilst Corey De'Ath's 20th placing out of 107 finishers, was also a fine run. Kent won the team competition. Max, Hanro and Corey I believe were the first three finishers of their year, as all have another season in the under 15s.

Under 17 Men

It was a similar story in the under 17 men's race, where Tonbridge provided three of the four scorers for the county team that took the title. Robbie Farnham-Rose and Josh Bentham both had excellent runs to take 2nd and 4th places overall, whilst Chris Lloyd put in his now customary charge, over the second half of the course, to come through to 8th place at the end, as the third Kent man home. Luca Russo placed 13th and Jamie Bryant 26th. Robbie, Chris, Luca and Jamie all have another year in this age group.

Under 13 Boys

In the under 13 boys' event, Tonbridge provided all but one of Kent's eight man squad. George Duggan fought hard all the way over the three kilometre course with Holden from Surrey and Newnham, from Hampshire, in the end losing out by just five seconds to the former's last half mile push, but taking an excellent silver medal. Tim Faes, was second Kent scorer by taking a fine 9th place, with Will Roud, also scoring, in 18th, helping Kent to a third team place. William Seymour (27th), William Whitmore (32nd), Alex Kidd (37th) and Euan Nicholls (39th) all placed well inside the top half of the field. Alex Kidd had only been called up to the team the night before, whilst George, Will S and Alex had all had to run in the Maidstone Schools Championships the day before!

Under 20 Women

A Tonbridge athlete also took a silver medal in the under 20 women's event, where Grace Nicholls was just six seconds down on the winner over six kilometres. The winner was Sales from Essex, who was 4th in last year's English Schools' senior race, compared to Grace's 12th at the time. Grace has in fact won a South East Inter Counties title before, claiming the under 13 girls' championship, back in 2004. Jess Owen was the fourth Kent scorer in 29th place overall, whilst Vicky Rukin was 33rd.

Under 13 Girls

Sian Driscoll was the lone Tonbridge athlete in the under 13 girls' race and her 30th place was another good result. Georgia Weston had been originally selected, but couldn't run.

Under 17 Women

Tonbridge had three runners in the under 17 women's race, with the Kent team taking the bronze medals. Lucy Reid (15th) and a resurgent Lucy Blackstone (26th), both counted towards the team's position, whilst Kelsey Howard finished 43rd. I was particularly pleased for Lucy Blackstone, who has kept plugging away in training, but been previously disappointed with her race results. Hopefully, the confidence gained from this will give her renewed impetus.

Under 15 Girls

Alice Wood (32nd), Amy Ellson (38th) and Nicola Wilkinson (41st) all placed high up in the under 15 event. Amy, having upped her training by another day a week recently and having been a bit more consistent, seems to already be reaping some reward, as she steadily improves. Pandora Banbury twisted her ankle before the race and was unable to start.

Summary

Overall there were some terrific results here, which show that many of our athletes are competing with the very best. However, an example of what we are up against, come the New Year, is that despite us having 2nd, 4th, 8th and 13th in the under 17 men's race, Aldershot athletes placed 1st, 3rd and 6th and were missing one of their strongest runners. Add a very strong Ipswich squad and others who weren't at this event and it shows how tough medals will be to come by in the major championships.

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Kent Cross Country League at Danson Park, Bexley, 5th December 2009

The league fixture at Danson Park was the fourth and final one for the young athletes, whilst being the third for senior men. The senior men and women have their final fixture at Swanley in February.

Senior Men

The senior men's race was always going to be one of the most interesting of the season from a Tonbridge perspective. Huw Evans was returning to form, since a bout of flu in October had hit him hard, whilst Steve Fennell was making a rare appearance over the cross country. It was also Steve's first race since his successful Summer season over 800 metres. Added to the mix was Andy Combs making his debut in a senior men's Kent League race. Putting these alongside the likes of Will Levett, Sam Bradley, Graeme Saker and James Taylor and it was clear that Medway and Maidstone's dominance in the first two league races could well be broken.

Soon after the start Will Levett broke away with Dean Lacy of Cambridge Harriers, but whilst Lacy pulled away, seemingly back to his best, Will's concerns over a tight hamstring were proved right. Gradually he felt worse and into the second half of the 10km race he started to be overtaken by others. Obviously in some discomfort he was determined to finish, which he did in 20th.

Meanwhile as the race panned out little battles of Tonbridge athletes were taking place. Huw Evans and Andy Combs were following Lacy, whilst Julian Rendall and then Sam Bradley, James Taylor and Graeme Saker, all took turns in trying to hold off Steve Fennell as he gathered momentum. Steve moved through strongly to 4th place, but luckily for Huw and Andy never got quite within striking distance of them.

The team scored extremely well in both the 4 and 12 to score events and have at least made Medway and Maidstone think that the league title might not be quite in their hands just yet.

Young athletes age groups

In the young athletes age groups we took five of the six team titles contested. Invicta AC prevented the clean sweep, by winning the under 13 girls' league title, where Tonbridge placed third. Team and individual positions were based on performances across all four races in the series, which have taken place over the last three months.

Tonbridge dominated the male age group races, providing the individual winners in all three age groups, with significant support offered by others. The under 15s had four placed in the first six athletes, the under 17 seven in the first eight and the under 13s completed a clean sweep of the first six positions.

Under 17 men

Robbie Farnham-Rose bided his time in the under 17 race, which started off as a close tactical affair, with a group of ten athletes jostling for the early lead. Around the halfway point of the five kilometres race, however, three Tonbridge athletes made a break, with Robbie having Henry Pearce and Luca Russo for company. The three of them broke away from Adam Gilbert of Medway and Maidstone, as the pace seemed to increase. Luca was the first to break, as his two team mates started the charge for home, but he hung on determinedly to keep third position. Meanwhile, Henry pushed Robbie hard until the last mile, when the eventual winner pulled away for a nine second win. Jamie Bryant had a sprint finish with Alex King, as they placed fifth and sixth respectively, whilst the constantly improving Tom Cox and Ryan Driscoll filled the next two places. Tom Cox has been one of the good news stories in the league as he has placed 12th, 10th, 8th and now 7th in each of the four races, reflecting the consistency he now puts into his weekly training.

Under 15 boys

The under 15 race was one of the most interesting as the lead changed hands a few times. League leader Charlie Joslin-Allen, had won the previous three races and once again managed to build a small gap on his pursuers. One of these was team mate Max Nicholls, who produced a very strong second half of the race to move through and take the win. Charlie lost some momentum, but still took third place, which was good enough to win the overall league title, whilst Corey De'Ath followed him home in fourth. Cameron Knapp, once again improved on previous races to take a fine sixth place.

Under 13 boys

In the under 13 boys' event, the first six Tonbridge runners were covered by just 23 seconds over the three kilometres course. George Duggan took a narrow win over Tim Faes, with Will Roud, Alex Kidd, William Seymour and Euan Nicholls completing the Tonbridge clean sweep. Making his debut for the club, having completed about three months of consistent training, was Luke Melvin, who finished a very creditable 23rd.

With four runners down in Cornwall representing Judd in the English Schools Cup Final the under 13 boys have a very strong squad in depth.

Under 17/20 women

Abbie Shepherd-Barron could not quite match the final drive of eventual winner Cerys Sanders from Medway and Maidstone in the under 17 women's event, taking second place, just eight seconds behind her rival. Ellen Holmes took third place with Kelsey Howard (5th) and Lucy Blackstone (7th) well up the field.

Catherine Symons was our lone under 20 runner on this occasion, placing 4th in this category, but most importantly showing that she is recovering from a long term calf niggle.

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Under 15 girls

Alice Wood hit the front of the under 15 race soon after the start, but was joined by team mate Nicole Taylor, plus Amber Reed from Blackheath well before the halfway point. The three of them stayed together until well into the final mile, but it was Reed who eventually pulled away to a twelve second victory, with Nicole four seconds ahead of Alice. Tonbridge won the team event, with Pandora Banbury in sixth being the final scorer. Jemima Sneddon (8th), Jayne Mallyon (9th) and Otilie Swift (10th) all had perhaps their best runs of the season so far.

Under 13 girls

One of the best performances by a Tonbridge athlete came in the under 13 girls' race, where Leah Melvin was having just her second race for the club and finished with a superb third place. Katie Humphrey in 10th just outsprinted team mate Lucy Roud to complete the Tonbridge scorers.

Boxing Day Handicap - 2009

Twelve months ago Mario Russo came within 9 seconds of victory in the Boxing Day Handicap but son Giorgio made no mistake in the 2009 edition of the race as he maintained a strong pace throughout to take the winner's trophy. An excellent example of persistence paying off as Giorgio has finished 36th, 28th and 43rd in this race in the last three years. He was chased home this year by 57 athletes across a wide range of ages (under 13s through to over 60s) and abilities all battling hard through the many puddles on Tonbridge School fields.

Robbie Farnham-Rose was fastest athlete of the day with an actual time of 14:24 bringing him from near the back at the start to finish in 4th place. Fastest of the ladies was Nicola Wilkinson with 18:25. Good to see the distance coaches paying attention to their own advice with three of them – Pete Mason, Pete Brenchley and Graeme Saker – finishing in the top ten.

Well done to all those who dragged themselves out of bed after a relaxing Christmas Day to compete or spectate. Thanks to Alan Bennett, John Sanders, Keith Baldwin, Leanne Upchurch, Alex Hookway, Dan, Sam and Louise Bradley for their help with course set-up, officiating, results and clearing up.

Race Organisers – Diane and Cain Bradley

South of England Indoor Championships, Lee Valley - 10th/16th January 2010

Over the past 2 weekends a number of athletes have competed in the South of England indoor championships at the Lee Valley Centre. The Lee Valley indoor track is 200m long and heavily banked and was a new experience for some of the athletes. The snow and ice curtailed training over the past few weeks and prevented athletes carrying out much speed work but the championships provided a welcome break from the cold a good indication of how winter training is progressing.

Results

Athlete	Round 1	Semi Final	Final	Comment
James Wildish U20M 400m	52.78s	54.44s		
Katie White U15W 300m		45.99s		
Rose Hairs U15W 200m	27.59s	27.79s	27.88s	4 th place and new personal best
Katie White U15W 200m	28.39s	28.54s		
Lauren Davies U15W 200m	32.55s			
Rose Hairs U15W 60m	8.47s	8.43s		
Katie White U15W 60m	8.50s	8.54s		
Lauren Davies U15W 60hurdles	11.11s			
George Duggan U15B 1500m			4:37.63	1 st place and new personal best
Tadhg Healy U17M Pole Vault			3.50m	5 th place

The standout results were both achieved by first year U15s - Rose Hairs, who ran 200m indoors for the first time and produced a personal best time to progress to the final, where the winning time 27.42s; and George Duggan who captured the 1500m title in his first competition in this age group.

South of England Cross Country Championships at Parliament Hill , 30th January 2010

Finally, after the Kent Championships and Kent Schools Championships being postponed, our distance runners got the chance for a competitive outing and it came in the form of the second biggest club event of the Winter season.

I must admit that, as we drove through parts of North London at 8am and saw a sprinkling of snow on the ground, I wondered if the Health and Safety team would have been out to cancel the event ! Luckily the sun came out and the initially frozen underfoot conditions turned to mud.

The Tonbridge squad ended up with four team medals, which was just one short of the best ever performance of five medals in 2007. However, on top of that George Duggan and Grace Nicholls won individual medals, the first athletes to do this for TAC since Michael Mason's under 15 silver, again in 2007.

Under 15 Boys

This was the first race of the day and we had a good squad competing. Shaftesbury had won both the National cross country and road relays in the Autumn and duly won this. However, if things go our way we can topple them in the National as, if Charlie Joslin-Allen had finished and run to form we would have won. Also I believe that there is more to come from Tom Devlin (ankle injury recently), Max Nicholls (fractured toe recently) and Sean Molloy (hopefully on the up, now he is training a little more each week).

Charlie had gone with the lead group early on, but dropped out not far into the race, feeling a very tight hamstring. This left us in a position where we could easily have missed out on medals altogether. However, this squad like many that we have, has some depth and they came through with silver medals.

Under 13 Girls

Our four girls all had what I would consider to be good runs, each putting at least 100 athletes behind them. Sian Driscoll led the team home.

Under 13 Boys

We had more drama in this race, before, during and after ! We lost two potential scorers in Tim Faes and Will Seymour, who pulled out ill a day or so beforehand. We also lost Will Whitmore from the squad, another county standard athlete. On top of this Will Roud was unlikely to be at his best, having not run all week, after a rugby injury.

This was all before the race started and when it did George Duggan managed to lose a spiked shoe in the mud, around the halfway mark ! George bravely continued, near the front of the race and battled all the way to the finish. He only gave way to the eventual winner in the last 50 metres, having also slipped over in the mud. Without his efforts the chance of a team gold would have gone. Not only did he end up with a team medal, but his mates somehow found his lost shoe.

Whilst George headed for the St John's Ambulance tent, his team mates gave great support. The next two scorers, Stuart Brown and Euan Nicholls, will be under 13s next year, whilst Miles Weatherseed closed in the team. Miles was the athlete who took on my request to the whole TAC squad to 'rise to the occasion', in the absence of others. He probably never thought he would win a team gold medal in the days leading up to the event. Of the others I would pick out Peter Laing, who had a stunning run for 55th place and has come on leaps and bounds this Winter.

Under 15 Girls

We witnessed one of the fastest starts by a TAC athlete as Pandora Banbury was in 2nd place at the top of the first hill. I asked her why she started so quick and she said that she "just got a bit excited !". In the circumstances she did well to finish quite strongly in 68th.

Alice Wood had possibly her best race to date for 17th, whilst still qualifying for this race next year. She was backed up by Sussex Schools Champ, Nicole Taylor, whose 24th position was a massive improvement on 75th last year.

Dominique Von Opper had a very good run to be our 4th scorer, having only agreed to race on Thursday evening.

Under 17 Men

This has been one of the most competitive age groups all Winter and it was Richard Goodman from Shaftesbury Barnet that won. He has been in top form all season, even making the GB under 20 team and placing 5th in the European Championships.

Once again there was more stress for the TAC team manager as two of our likely scorers had not arrived 15 minutes before the start. Luckily they did make it, but with a curtailed warm up did well to perform as they did.

As it turned out Aldershot were superb and no matter how well our guys ran, it would have been extremely difficult to change the result from silver to gold. However, Josh Bentham had a superb run for 6th, matching his place in last year's race. Henry Pearce was also excellent, in his first ever race at this level, to take 14th.

The most pleasing aspect was the depth that we had in this group, so much so that our B-team ie athletes 5 to 8 would have placed 4th team. Jamie Bryant somehow produced a storming run in 27th, having been ill in the first half of January, Tom Cox's 34th was well deserved after an excellent Winter's training of regularly doing six days per week and Ryan Driscoll in 42nd was "well pleased" to beat some of his rivals from Sussex.

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Under 20 Women

It was easier for spectators this year to see how the race was developing, since the organisers did not run it with the under 17s. Soon after the start we could see that not many clubs had four scorers and as the event developed I could see that we were in with a shout.

Grace led the way, but thankfully Petra Pavlovic had agreed to race a few days beforehand and it was this that secured the team win. Catherine Symons and Jess Owen both ran strongly and hopefully the team can put in another solid performance in the National and perhaps challenge for a medal.

Under 17 Women

This was another event where we almost didn't have a team. Abblie Shepherd-Barron had been ill all week and couldn't make it and a couple of others had alternative commitments. Somehow we got Maisie Fardon to make up the team and help them to an excellent 6th place.

Ellen Holmes openly admitted that she enjoyed the event, but I am sure has one eye on the track season already. Lucy Reid and Lucy Blackstone had solid runs.

Under 20 Men

Just 8 points separated us from another team medal, which was frustrating. However, Andy Combs and Sam Bradley produced the highest positions by TAC athletes, in this race, for more than 20 years.

Senior Men

We had no senior ladies entered, but Huw Evans took on the men's 9 miles championship and had a good run for 41st, which was one place higher than he achieved a couple of years ago.

Not far behind him, two TAC 2nd claim members, Julian Rendall and Ben Reynolds were performing for Thames Hare and Hounds.

Summary

Overall it was an excellent day and some good results were achieved, thanks to many athletes training so well for the six weeks prior, despite the poor weather and no races.

There is always a hint of 'what might have been' and this was certainly the case at Parliament Hill. Perhaps this is the feeling that keeps us all going, in the hope that one day everything will go perfectly.

A few odd statistics for those that like them –

- George Duggan 2nd – TAC first ever under 13 boys' individual medal.
- Under 13 boys team – 6th year in a row that TAC has won medals.
- Under 15 boys team – 5th year in a row that TAC has won medals.
- Under 17 men's team – 4th year in a row that TAC has won medals.
- Andy Combs 9th in u20s is highest place TAC athlete in this age group since 1987.
- Grace Nicholls – first TAC female medal this century.
- Josh Bentham – under 17, 6th equalled highest placed TAC this century.
- Alice Wood – under 15, 17th was highest placed TAC this century.
- Women's under 20 win – first ever TAC medal in this age group.
- Under 17 men – 10 athletes was the most ever TAC in this race.
- Under 20 women – 4 athletes was the most ever TAC in this race.

Well done to everyone and many thanks to all the coaches who helped with warm ups and race preparation. Hopefully, this was just a dress rehearsal for an even better performance at the National Championships at Leeds on 27th February.

A warm welcome to all recently joined new members

Natasha Carlisle	Thomas Dye	Sophie Whitaker	Martha Simpson
Alexander Priston	James Melvin	Stuart Beech	George West
Lewis Pearce	Melissa Harper	Nicki Combs	Clare Hairs
Lucy Delchar	India Smith	Kathleen Faes	Elliot Abrahams
Isa Cupitt	Jasmine Smith	Leah Harrison	Abigail Crouch
Helen Clay	Oliver Neville	Mark Howard	Rebecca Crouch
Caitlin Henderson	Rebecca O'Hara	Stephen Kidd	Joshua Dean
Leo Broadhead	Helena Papadopolous	Alice Ralph	Ben Devaney
Daniel Bryant	Keira Waters	Toby Ralph	Joseph Devlin
Gabriel Dos Santos	Jack Whitaker	Caroline Russo	Reece Kingham
Robert Lawrence	Daniel Melvin		

Kent Schools Cross Country Championships at Wilmington, Saturday 6th February 2010

Wilmington Grammar School, near Dartford, hosted this year's Kent Schools Cross Country Championships, the event having been originally postponed from mid January, due to the heavy snow.

The courses around the school playing fields, although a little muddy in places, provided very fast going and with possible selection for the Kent teams, for the English Schools Championships, in March, also at stake, many races proved to be extremely competitive. More than six hundred runners finished across the age groups.

It proved to be a very good day for TAC athletes generally, with some good races to keep the spectators entertained. The fact that the age groups are a year different from the club ones, means that we got to see match ups between different runners than we had seen all Winter so far. In some ways the races give us an early look at the age groups that will compete next year, for example the Junior age group is next Winter's under 15 age group and the Inters, the under 17s.

Possibly due to the fact that there were no TAC team performances at stake, a few of us coaches/managers could relax a bit and enjoy the entertainment!

Junior Boys

The closest race of the day was the Junior Boys' event, for school years eight and nine. For much of the 3,800 metres race a group of five athletes were clear at the front and it was only in the last half mile that the group began to split. Four of the runners were members of Tonbridge Athletic Club, but it was the surprise package of the race, Nathan Marsh, of Judd School, who led into the final 400 metres. However, he had track specialist Sean Molloy close at hand and by the time they had hit the home straight Sean had launched into his sprint finish, eventually winning by just two seconds. Marsh secured a fine second place, before being followed home by George Duggan, Hanro Rossouw and Max Nicholls, as just nine seconds covered the first five athletes. Corey De'Ath placed 9th, having suffered from a heel injury in recent weeks, whilst Alex Kidd produced his best form of the Winter to take 11th, as more than one hundred finished.

Kent should have a very good team in this age group at the English Schools, when you consider that Max was 5th here and one of the best in England on his day.

Junior Girls

In the same age group for the girls Ruth Bourne took up the pace from the start and soon built up a good lead on Alice Wood. Ruth has been training regularly with Tonbridge AC and at the time of writing is about to sign up, having been a member of Windsor previously. Alice and her club colleague Leah Melvin, both ran well, Alice hanging on to second place, whilst Leah took a fine 5th, being only in year eight at school. Jemima Sneddon (10th), Dominique Von Opper (11th) and Stephanie Von Opper (16th) all placed high up. Hopefully, a few of these will progress over the next few months to give TAC a very strong team next Winter.

Inter Boys

The Inter Boys age group, for years ten and eleven, is one of the strongest, but Tonbridge AC athletes still managed to fill eight of the first ten positions. Robbie Farnham-Rose looked at his best, always at the front of proceedings. For much of the race, however, he had Henry Pearce, Chris Lloyd and Luca Russo in close company, until he gradually upped the pace. Robbie won by eight seconds over the 5500 metre course, whilst Henry took second from a fast finishing Chris Lloyd. Back to his best in sixth place, was Charlie Joslin-Allen, the first year ten runner to finish, having dropped out of the previous week's 'Southern'. Alex King (8th), Jamie Bryant (9th) and Jack Keywood (10th) all ran well in a field with sixty one finishers. The strength of the age group was borne out by the fact that a week previously Jamie beat Tom Cox who was 3rd in the Senior race here.

Inter Girls

Ellen Holmes managed to hold off Nicola Wilkinson, by just two seconds, for the silver medal in the Inter Girls' race, which was won by Invicta AC athlete Rebecca Weston. Kelsey Howard took 6th and Lucy Blackstone 11th.

For Nicola in particular this was a bit of a breakthrough race and if she can replicate this form in the National it could help TAC's under 15 girls to a high place.

Senior Girls

Grace Nicholls continued her good recent form to convincingly win the senior girls' event, putting almost a minute between her and second placed Lucy Reid. Abbie Shepherd-Barron could not quite hold onto Lucy in the final stages, but took third place, whilst Jess Owen will be hopeful for county selection after her seventh place finish.

Senior Boys

James Pigot, of Tonbridge School and Tonbridge AC almost snatched a win in the Senior Boys' race, having moved in to a twenty metre lead halfway around the third and final lap of the 6870 metre course. However, he could not quite shake off Jason Prickett (Invicta AC), who took the win by just four seconds. Tom Cox in third and Will Mitham in fourth will hopefully be selected for the Kent team, despite two or three good athletes being absent, whilst Dan Bryant placed fifth and Alex Wood seventh.

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Year 7

For the year seven runners there is no English Schools Championship, but both races help the selectors for an inter counties race in March. Stuart Brown, of Judd School and Tonbridge AC front ran to a win over Euan Nicholls, by fifteen seconds, whilst Toby Ralph (12th) and Jordan Muir (14th), both recent recruits to the club, ran very well, as 85 boys finished. In the year seven Girls' race Hannah Czarnowski had her best cross country run to date to take a fine fourth place.

Summary

TAC athletes took five of the eight individual championships, if you count Ruth Bourne, plus had just over 50% of the top eight finishers in the Junior, Inter and Senior races. This should mean that by the time the selectors make up their Kent teams, TAC athletes should be well represented at this year's English Schools Championships, at Heaton Park Manchester on 20th March.

The big surprise of the day was Nathan Marsh of Judd in the Junior race, but as you can imagine we are doing as much as we can to get him signed up for TAC!

Kent Cross Country Championships at Detling Showground, 13th February 2010

Including the senior men's team title, TAC came away from the Kent Cross Country Championships at Detling, with wins in eight of the ten championships available. In addition to these team awards, individuals won five of the races and gained nineteen medals of the possible thirty available across the races.

A freezing day on the exposed Detling Showground venue, provided a tough test for the runners, although the courses were generally dry and fast, with a few gradual inclines. In four of the races Tonbridge runners provided a clean sweep of the medals, with the under 17 women's race being the closest contest.

Senior Men

After a very strong performance in the Kent Cross Country League fixture before Christmas hopes were high that a county senior men's title could be won, if all our athletes ran.

As things turned out it seemed that only veteran runners Ben Reynolds (ill) and Graeme Saker (ankle injury) were missing, whilst Sam Bradley moved up from under 20 to contest this race.

The race up front was very competitive and Will Levett was on or almost on terms with leaders Dean Lacy and Mike Coleman for the entire race. Lacy and Coleman completed the closest finish that I can ever remember, as only half a stride separated them at the line, whilst Will came home for the bronze, which must have been very pleasing after a few difficult races recently.

TAC packed all six scorers in the first 12 to win the team title convincingly and it was just a shame that Medway and Maidstone won the 12 to score title by 289 to 302 or 13 positions across 12 athletes.

Under 17 Women

Ellen Holmes, Abblie Shepherd-Barron and Lucy Reid all worked together to build a gap on pre-race favourite, Rebecca Weston of Invicta AC and as they entered the last 800 metres of the 4100 metres course all three were within a few strides of each other. It was Ellen who was forcing the pace, as she had been for much of the second half of the race and as she approached the finish she had managed to shake off the attentions of her two team mates, winning by just three seconds from Abblie, with Lucy third.

In the other three races, featuring Tonbridge clean sweeps, the tactics, however, followed a different pattern, as George Duggan, in the under 13s, Charlie Joslin-Allen in the under 15s and Robbie Farnham-Rose in the under 17s all took the pace on from the start. All three were convincing winners.

Under 13 Boys

Stuart Brown and a resurgent Alex Kidd followed George Duggan home in the youngest age group, whilst the club recorded the perfect score as Tim Faes placed fourth. Euan Nicholls (6th) and Will Roud (8th) both ran well to give themselves a chance of county selection.

Luke Gunter told me that he felt his 22nd place represented his best run to date.

Under 15 Boys

As expected Tom Devlin took silver behind Charlie Joslin-Allen in the under 15 boys' race, but the surprise came from Chad Bryce-Borthwick, who took the bronze medal, looking very strong throughout. In-form Sean Molloy completed another perfect score for the club in taking fourth, by outsprinting Jake Rogers of Invicta AC. Hanro Rossouw (6th) and Max Nicholls (8th) were also high up the field.

Under 17 Men

Perhaps the best run of the day from a Tonbridge perspective came from Tom Cox, who claimed the bronze medal, behind Farnham-Rose and Luca Russo in the under 17 men's race over 6,300 metres. He had a race long battle with Adam Gilbert of Medway and Maidstone, but put in a determined last three minutes of running to take the medal. Tom has been one of the biggest improvers this year at the club, having been injured twelve months ago and his medal was just reward for a Winter of consistent training. Jamie Bryant (6th) and Jack Keywood (9th) also took top ten placings.

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Under 20 Men

The fifth individual gold medal came from Andy Combs in the under 20 men's race, where he led all the way to win by almost a minute from team mate James Taylor. With three to score in this event a close contest was secured by Alex Hookway, more of a track specialist, taking a fine 12th place, to put Tonbridge just ahead of Invicta AC and Cambridge Harriers.

Under 20 Women

Tonbridge's win in the under 20 women's event was secured by Catherine Symons (2nd), Jess Owen (3rd) and Vicky Rukin (6th). Jess pushed Catherine hard for the first half of the race and hung on well for one of her best cross country races to date.

Under 15 Girls

In the under 15 girls' race the club also took gold, led home by Alice Wood (4th), Nicola Wilkinson (5th) and Dominique Von Oppel (8th).

Under 13 Girls

The Tonbridge under 13 girls' squad all ran well and took bronze medals behind Invicta AC and Blackheath. Leah Melvin had her best run to date, to take the individual silver medal, pushing the winner Bobby Clay of Invicta all the way.

Senior Women

Deirdre McDermot won the bronze medal in the senior women's race, which was won by international Natalie Gray of Medway and Maidstone AC. Pippa Blackstone also had a strong run to place 18th, four places higher than last year.

Some of the statistics

Over all the races TAC had 72 competitors, which was down on last year's record of 81.

The senior men with 15, equalled the record number from 2008.

TAC had a scoring team in the under 20 women's event for the first time.

TAC's longest winning sequence is in the under 15 boys with five titles in five years.

It was the first time ever that TAC had won all five male team titles.

Charlie Joslin-Allen's win was the fifth in a row by a TAC under 15. The last 4 were Kurt Wolfe, Michael Mason, Josh Bentham and Robbie Farnham-Rose.

Will Levett's bronze was TAC's first senior men's medal since 2003, when Huw Evans took silver.

Ellen Holmes' under 17 win was the first for TAC in this category this century.

English National Cross Country Championships, Roundhay Park, Leeds, 27th February 2010

About five thousand athletes and a similar number of supporters descended on Roundhay Park, Leeds, for the English National Cross Country Championships. Amongst them was a contingent of one hundred and sixty from Tonbridge Athletic Club, hoping to compete with the best clubs in England.

Roundhay Park had been subject to heavy rain in the days leading up to the championships, becoming very wet in places, but generally provided firm going over very tough courses. A hill known locally as 'Hill 60' provided the toughest test near the finish of each race, but long steady climbs and short sharp hills came at regular intervals.

Tonbridge AC had full teams in nine of the ten events, only being unable to complete a senior women's team. However, we came away from the championships with our best ever medal haul, that included two team wins, two team silver medals, an individual championship win and an individual bronze medal. With a couple of team fourth places, it was quite an extraordinary day in the club's history.

Summary of team positions

Under 13 girls 22nd

Under 15 girls 4th

Under 17 women 2nd (silver medals)

Under 20 women 4th

Senior women - incomplete team

Under 13 boys 1st (gold medals)

Under 15 boys 2nd (silver medals)

Under 17 men 1st (gold medals)

Under 20 men 7th

Senior men 86th

Individual top 10s

Under 20 women - Grace Nicholls 7th

Under 13 boys - George Duggan 1st

Under 15 boys - Charlie Joslin-Allen 8th

Under 17 men - Robbie Farnham-Rose 3rd

Under 15 boys

This was the first race of the day, where our strong, but young team was up against the pre-race favourites Shaftesbury, who had won both the National road and cross country relays in the Autumn. However, I knew we had a chance of upsetting the form book, if only everyone ran well.

Charlie Joslin-Allen was always amongst the lead pack and secured a fine 8th place, just 27 seconds away from the winner McMurray, from St Albans. He had remained at the very front of the race for three quarters of the distance, only losing ground towards the end.

Tom Devlin (26th) started much quicker than usual and was slightly disappointed not to finish a bit higher. Just five seconds quicker would have seen Tom eight places higher. Max Nicholls (31st) saved his best form of the season once again for the Big One, having placed 2nd in the under 13 race last year, wearing the vest of Ashford. Now as TAC he moved through very strongly, always overtaking other athletes to the end. Hanro Rossouw (36th) made up the team score, having an excellent run, although at halfway I had thought he looked really tired. It was a great effort by Hanro and I was told he was the 4th finisher who is bottom of the age group, whilst Max was 3rd.

Giorgio Russo was maybe the pick of our other runners, finishing well above expectations in the top half of the field of 387 finishers.

There was a long wait for the team results to come out, but at no time did I think that we had won, as Shaftesbury had had their first two athletes home in 2nd and 4th. In the end we were just 8 points short, which really was down to a handful of seconds, since Hanro had seven runners within 5 seconds of him, in a similar way to Tom.

The u15 boys' silver medals extended our sequence of medal winning years in that age group to 5 years in a row.

Under 20 women

Having won the Southern title I had hoped that we might sneak a medal in this event, but it was not to be.

Grace Nicholls had another fine run in the under 20 women's race, overcoming a slight calf strain in the days leading up to the race, to take 7th place. She gave it a real go and was in the top 4 for most of the race.

In the end we missed out on the bronze medals by just 3 points and if all had gone our way the team championship was within grasp, as Aldershot scored 154 to our 186 ie a win by 32 points. With Lowri Richards and Megan Brickell both sidelined through injury, it was a frustrating result. Aldershot can make a similar claim with injuries though.

Despite all this, it was the first time ever that TAC has completed a team in this age group.

After the first two races I was beginning to think that this just might not be our day, but things were about to change in dramatic fashion....

Under 17 women

It is always difficult to assess how the team is doing overall in such big fields, but I don't think any of us felt that there was a medal chance here, when watching the race. Our girls were running well, but with nobody at the sharp end it is difficult to get a team medal.

When the scores were finally announced Aldershot had won by a massive amount, but a lot of other teams were extremely close. We totalled 205, with another three of the 38 teams within 73 points. Apart from Aldershot we were the only club who had all four scorers in the top 100, which was quite unusual.

When the announcement was made there was huge excitement in our camp, since by then we also knew unofficially that we had done so well in one of the next races as well.

The girls were jumping up and down hugging each other and everyone in sight and it proved to be one of the most emotional moments of the weekend. All four of them have had some tough setbacks to deal with over the Winter and this showed in the reaction to their medals.

Just when I thought it was emotional enough Ryan Driscoll bravely admitted that he had a tear in his eye himself, as he was so pleased for them and this pretty much set a few of us off !

Kelsey Howard and especially Hope Simpson also had terrific races, being unlucky not to score.

The under 17 women's silver medal was the best TAC female team performance since an under 13 win in 1985.

Lucy Reid, our first scorer home, underlined her intentions for next year by going for an hour's run, on Sunday, after the long coach journey home.

Under 13 Girls

This is quite an inexperienced group that we have and therefore a field of over 400 finishers is quite a daunting prospect anyway. So for someone, who has never raced in an official race for TAC it must be even more nerve wracking.

Alessia Russo had just turned 11 years old and so had been unable to contest any other under 13 races so far this Winter. She is a good footballer by all accounts (so not sure why she plays for Charlton juniors!) and has been coming along to the club for some time with her brothers.

The week before a very nervous Alessia had completed a training session of 2 x 10 minutes steady running with a group of our older athletes and had been quite tentative. However, when it came to the National she was transformed and really attacked the race, ending up as our second scorer in 86th place, with still two more years in the age group.

Sian Driscoll improved massively on her position of a year ago to finish 60th.

Under 17 Men

I don't think that I have ever witnessed such an exciting team race as this, from our point of view. We have great strength in depth in this age group, as demonstrated by having 15 in the squad.

The race went like a dream. In the Autumn our three-man teams had finished 7th in the National Road Relays and 4th in the National Cross Country Relays, however, a 2nd place in the Southern Cross Country Championships showed that we were in with a shout.

Aldershot were probably the outstanding favourites, but with a few things going our way we could get close.

In the end not everything did go our way, as Josh Bentham jarred his back early in the race, on a steep downhill, having been with the leaders. This effectively ended Josh's chances of helping the team. However, the others rose to the occasion and ran incredible races.

Robbie Farnham-Rose was always near the front and although Richard Goodman (5th in European under 20s) pulled away Robbie stayed with the others. In fact as the finish approached he moved into second place for a few strides but was pipped right on the line by GB youth international Tom Curr, who won last year's English Schools' 3000 metres championship. Robbie is a year younger than the two who beat him and like all three of our other scorers is still in this age group for 2011.

Henry Pearce (15th), Luca Russo (21st) and Chris Lloyd (22nd) gave Tonbridge a 24 point cushion over pre-race favourites Aldershot. Tom Cox, so impressive with his training all Winter, underlined his massive improvement with a superb 36th position, with Jamie Bryant in 50th also having an excellent run. Ryan Driscoll in 71st was also really pleased with his performance

The under 17 men's team win was the first TAC victory in an age group older than u13 or u15 since 1986, when the under 20s won and all 4 scorers are still in this age group next year!

Under 15 Girls

Just eleven places in more than 200 points separated us from yet another team medal, as the team finished 4th of 38 teams.

Nicole Taylor had a superb run to lead the team home and second scorer, Pandora Banbury, dug out her best race for a long time, from somewhere.

The girls' training partner, Ruth Bourne, who is at Sevenoaks School, had a terrific run to place 6th, running for Windsor, whilst having another year in this age group. Ruth intends transferring to TAC, so if we took her position into consideration we would have picked up the silver medals !

Under 20 Men

Andy Combs was always to the fore, in his first year in this age group and had a very solid race for 16th, whilst Sam Bradley, having felt sick all week, had a respectable run for 44th.

James Taylor gathered momentum throughout to move through the field, whilst James Pigot, by his own admission started very quickly and tired over the very tough 10km course. Nevertheless the team's 7th place was the best TAC position in this age group since 1993.

Under 13 Boys

In Championships like these it is quite easy for the favourites to come unstuck and our team would have been most people's tip to win, having won both the Autumn relay championships and also the Southern. Also George Duggan would have been considered as a potential winner, which put added pressure on his young shoulders.

As things turned out George was soon in the lead pack of four athletes and I can remember shouting across to him to be patient, as he was about to hit the front after just 600 metres. However, he did look good and in control.

George ran strongly to a six second victory to become the club's first individual 'National' cross country champion since ex-Olympian, Andy Graffin's win, in the under 20 race, back in 1998. I found myself shouting at George in the home straight, as he spent most of the last 150 metres looking around to see where his pursuers were.

Next in was Stuart Brown with an excellent 17th, whilst still in the age group next year. Tim Faes bounced back from illness in January to help take the team gold medal and Euan Nicholls continued his habit of sneaking in to the scoring team to wrap up the win. Euan, like Stuart, will hopefully be in this race in 2011.

Miles Weatherseed was the 'unlucky' fifth man home, but still with a fine 65th, whilst perhaps the best run of all came from Luke Gunter, who performed far beyond any predictions in 137th.

The under 17 men, under 17 women and under 15 boys all had to go to their medal presentation when the under 13 boys' race was on, but came out just as it was finishing. By all accounts George Duggan was mobbed by everyone, just as he was about to be interviewed by an Athletics Weekly reporter. A great example of team spirit.

Senior Women

Once again TAC, for the third year in a row had three women competing, although this time they were all mums of young athletes.

Pippa Blackstone led the other two home, whilst Liz Farndon and Helen Cohen 'fought' a battle all the way around the 8km course, seemingly joined at the hip. It was so close that I had to delay getting involved in any celebrations after the under 13 boys' race and headed, with my camera and video to the mud in the home straight. There I saw Liz appear, with what looked like a vital ten metre lead on Helen. However, stride by stride Helen closed and as they approached the line they were level. The chip timing system gave them the same time, but Liz was declared the 'winner' in 430th to Helen's 431st. Helen still disputes this fact!

Well done ladies on providing the race of the day.

Senior Men

In a similar way to the women the team was mainly made up of dads, who have joined the club. However, it was Dan Bradley who was first home, improving significantly on his position of last year, with a fine run.

All of the others got around, despite various aches and pains and after the odd tippie in the evening, somehow managed to hit the dance floor in most cases !

The team finished 86th overall, but it was good to complete one.

Awards

These were the awards that we presented at the Saturday night's dinner –

5th 'man' home in winning squad (where 4 score) – Miles Weatherseed (u13) and Tom Cox (u17)

Highest placed male athlete – George Duggan 1st

Highest placed female athlete – Grace Nicholls 7th

Best National debut, male – Henry Pearce 15th

Best National debut, female – Alessia Russo 86th

Best male performance, above predictions – Giorgio Russo

Best female performance, above predictions – Pandora Banbury

Most improved male from previous years – Luke Gunter

Most improved female from previous years – Sian Driscoll

Summary

The set of team results were the best at the 'National' in TAC history.

We had a record number of TAC competitors finishing in the following races –

Under 13 boys – 13

Under 17 men – 15

Under 20 women – 6

Senior women – 3 (equals record)

Total male – 50

Total women – 33

Overall – 83 (highest previously 67 in 2009)

Senior Men – 7 (most this century)

This trip was the biggest that we have yet put on, with more people attending than at the UK Young Athletes final, at Manchester, in 2008.

For those of you who came on the trip I would like to thank you for making it perhaps the best weekend in my athletics memory. Not only was this the biggest trip in our history, with around 160 people attending, but it was also perhaps the least stressful. Everyone was at bus pick ups on time, followed the schedules and supported others. I cannot remember a Saturday night dinner and party with so many clearly having such a great time and getting on with each other. The hotel staff remarked on what a terrific bunch of people you all are.

One of the aspects that stood out for me was that a number of very good athletes, who did not quite score for medal winning teams, seemingly shrugged off any disappointment that they might have had and were just pleased for their team mates.

I have received a number of stories about people from other clubs recognising not only how well TAC teams performed, but also how we were out in force supporting each other.

Finally, when I arrived home and fired up my computer I found an email from John Sanders, who had completed an analysis of the team results in the younger age groups. I have shown this below. If we did add the seniors in, it wouldn't look so great, but hopefully one day we can put that right. Well done to everyone!

Mark Hookway, Team Manager

English National Cross Country Championships 2010
Analysis of under 13 to under 20 races, by John Sanders (1st = 12 points, 2nd = 11, etc)

Rank	Club	U13 G	U15 G	U17 W	U20 W	U13 B	U15 B	U17 B	U20 M	Tot
1	Tonbridge AC		9	11	9	12	11	12	6	70
2	Aldershot Fanham & D AC	5	12	12	12			11	10	62
3	Shaftesbury Barnet Harriers				10		12	10	9	41
4	Bedford & County AC		11	10			6	8	5	40
5	Leicester Coritanian	9	8	8		8	5			38
6	Warrington AC	7				4		4	12	27
7	Lincoln Wellington AC			5	11			9		25
=8	Chelmsford AC	11	10							21
=8	Chiltern Harriers AC	10				11				21
10	Charnwood AC	8		1		10				19
=11	Bracknell AC	12	6							18
=11	Leeds City AC							7	11	18
13	Windsor Slough E & H AC	1	7			7	2			17
14	Vale Royal AC		5	6		5				16
15	Liverpool Harriers & AC	2	2				9			13
=16	Halesowen AC					6	4			10
=16	Trafford AC						10			10
=18	East Cheshire Harriers &			9						9
=18	Mansfield Harriers & AC					9				9
=20	Bristol & West AC						8			8
=20	Notts AC								8	8
=22	Birchfield Harriers			7						7
=22	Coventry Godiva Harriers						7			7
=22	Woodford Green & Essex Ladies								7	7
=25	Invicta East Kent AC	6								6
=25	Ipswich Harriers							6		6
27	Liverpool Pembroke & S AC							5		5
=28	City of Stoke AC	4								4
=28	Gosforth Harriers & AC			4						4
=28	Leigh Harriers & AC		4							4
=31	Corby AC	3								3
=31	Herne Hill Harriers			3						3
=31	Preston Harriers					3				3
=31	Reading AC			2			1			3
=31	Rotherham Harriers & AC		3							3
=31	Wakefield District Harriers AC						3			3
=31	Gateshead Harriers							3		3
=38	Tamworth AC					2				2
=38	Cannock & Stafford AC							2		2
=40	Royal Sutton Coldfield AC		1							1
=40	West Suffolk AC					1				1
=40	Blackheath & Bromley H AC							1		1

Non League Results**Maidstone Half Marathon, 18th October 2009**

Position	Name	Age	Performance
11	Jon Undy	SM	1:22.40
112	Alistair Banfield	M40	1:37.46

New York Marathon, 1st November 2009

Position	Name	Age	Performance
9731	Alistair Banfield	SM	3:46.22

Norwich Half Marathon, 29th November 2009

Position	Name	Age	Performance
736	Simon Tinsley	U20M	1:48.58

South of Thames 5 miles – West Wickham, 28th November 2009

Athlete	Position	Performance
Will Levett	3	27.22
Julian Rendall	8	28.35
Dan Bradley	18	29.30
Adam Styles	50	31.48

Kent Vets Cross Country Championships – Rose Hill School, Tunbridge Wells, 12th December 2009**Women 35+ (4.5km)**

Athlete	Position	Performance

Women 45+ (4.5km)

Athlete	Position	Performance
Pippa Blackstone	2	21.38

Men 40+ (9.5km)

Athlete	Position	Performance
Stuart Smith	55	41.45

Men 60+ (4.8km)

Athlete	Position	Performance
Maurice Marchant	10	22.21
Peter Brenchley	25	25.13

South of Thames 7.5 miles – Wimbledon Common, 19th December 2009

Athlete	Position	Performance
Huw Evans	7	42.28
Julian Rendall	11	42.51

Harrietsham 10k – 27th December 2009

Athlete	Position	Performance
Sam Bradley	1	32.07
Will Levett	2	32.13
Julian Rendall	4	33.06
Dan Bradley	5	33.50
Scott Richardson	11	35.32
Cain Bradley	27	39.12
Sally Musson	44 (1 W55)	41.13
Brenda Nash	200	54.03
Mike Hardy	216	54.58

Sussex Cross Country Championships – Stanmer Park, 2nd January 2010**Under 15 Girls (4k)**

Athlete	Position	Performance
Nicole Taylor	3	18.10

Under 17 Men (5k)

Athlete	Position	Performance
Ryan Driscoll	7	19.17

Les Witton Dartford 10 mile Road Race – Dartford, 17th January 2010

Athlete	Position	Performance
Maurice Marchant	385 (M60 - 10 th)	1:19.53
Alistair Banfield	438 (M40 – 116 th)	1:21.12

920 finishers

Kent Indoor Championships – Lee Valley Athletic Centre - Saturday/Sunday 6th/7th February 2010

Under 15 Girls		Position	Heat	Final
60m	Rose Hairs	1	8.32	8.30
60m	Katie White	2=	8.40	8.49
60m	Lauren Davies		9.58	
200m	Rose Hairs	1	27.54	27.27
200m	Katie White	4	28.44	28.74
200m	Lauren Davies		31.74	
300m	Katie White	2	46.54	45.48
60m H	Lauren Davies	5		11.26

Under 17 Women		Position	Heat	Final
300m	Nicky Dobra		51.89	
LJ	Nicky Dobra	8		4.29
TJ	Ruth Woodfine	2		9.72

Under 20 Women		Position	Heat	Final
400m	Vikki Bradford	4		63.52
60m H	Megan Southwart (2 nd claim)	1		9.10 =CBP
60m	Megan Southwart (2 nd claim)	3		8.14

Under 15 Boys		Position	Performance
HJ	Harry Kendall	2	1.50
LJ	Harry Kendall	4	3.97
SP	Harry Kendall	6	7.26

Under 17 Men		Position	Heat	Performance
400m	Samual Button	3	54.76	53.93
200m	Edward Hall	2	24.40	24.49
200m	Craig Morten	4	24.52	24.53
60m H	Craig Morten	1		8.72
60m H	Tadgh Healy	3		8.91
PV	Tadgh Healy	1		3.30
TJ	Tadgh Healy	3		11.67

Under 20 Men		Position	Heat	Performance
400m	James Wildish	1		52.21

Senior Men		Position	Heat	Performance
400m	Steve Tester	2		51.89
400m	Aaron Waterman	4		54.65

FIXTURES**MARCH**

Sat 6 th March	SE Schools Inter Counties, Years 7 & 8	Eastleigh	Select
Sun 7 th March	TAC under 11 and 13, 1 mile cross country races	Somerhill School	u11, u13
Sat 13 th March	UK Inter Counties Cross Country Champs & World Trials	Birmingham	Select
Sat 20 th March	English Schools Championships	Manchester	Select
Sun 21 st March	Southern 12 stage road relay	Milton Keynes	SM
Sat 27 th March	Schools International	Truro	Select

APRIL

Mon 5th April	Norman Fowler Easter Open Meeting	Tonbridge	All
Wed 7 th April	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Sat 10 th April	Lee Valley Open Meeting	Lee Valley	All
Sun 11 th April	Paddock Wood Half Marathon	Paddock Wood	Seniors
Sat 17 th April	National 6 & 12 stage road relays	Sutton Park	Seniors
Sun 18 th April	National Junior League	Sutcliffe Park	u17, u20
Wed 21 st April	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Sat 24 th April	Southern Women's League	Ipswich (tbc)	All female
Sun 25 th April	London Marathon	London	Seniors

MAY

Sat 1 st May	Southern Men's League	Ashford (tbc)	u17/20 and SM
Sun 2nd May	UK Young Athletes League	Tonbridge	u13, u15, u17
Tues 4th May	Tonbridge AC Evening Open Meeting	Tonbridge	All
Wed 5 th May	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Sat 8 th & Sun 9 th May	Kent Championships	Ashford tbc	All
Sat 15 th May	Southern Men's League	Erith (tbc)	u17/20 and SM
Sun 16 th May	UK Young Athletes League	Guildford	u13, u15, u17
Wed 19 th May	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Thurs 20th May	TAC under 11 open meeting	Tonbridge	u11
Sat 22 nd May	Southern Women's League	Guildford (tbc)	All female
Sun 23 rd May	National Junior League	Dartford	u17, u20
Sat 29 th & Sun 30 th May	South of England Championships	Ashford	u15, u17

JUNE

Tues 1st June	Tonbridge AC Evening Open Meeting	Tonbridge	All
Wed 2 nd June	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Sat 5 th June	Southern Men's League	Mile End (tbc)	u17/20 and SM
Sat 12 th June	Kent Schools Championships	tba	School Yr 7-11
Sat 12 th & Sun 13 th June	South of England Championships	Crystal Palace tbc	u20 & Senior
Wed 16 th June	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Thurs 17th June	TAC under 11 open meeting	Tonbridge	u11
Sat 19 th June	SE Schools Inter Counties	tba	Select
Sat 19 th & Sun 20 th June	England u20 and u23 Championships	Bedford	u20, u23
Sun 20 th June	UK Young Athletes League	Harrow	u13, u15, u17
Sat 26th June	Southern Women's League	Tonbridge (tbc)	All female
Sat 26 th June	Southern Men's League	Harrow (tbc)	u17/20 and SM
Sat 26 th & Sun 27 th June	English Schools Regional Combined Events	Ashford	Schools
Sun 27 th June	National Junior League	Sutton Valence	u17, u20
Wed 30 th June	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All

JULY

Tues 6th July	Tonbridge AC Evening Open Meeting	Tonbridge	All
Fri 9 th & Sat 10 th July	English Schools Championships (TBC)	Birmingham	Select
Sat 10 th July	Southern Men's League	Highgate (tbc)	u17/20 and SM
Wed 14 th July	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Thurs 15th July	TAC under 11 open meeting	Tonbridge	u11
Sat 17 th & Sun 18 th July	England Senior Championships	Gateshead tbc	Seniors
Sun 18 th July	UK Young Athletes League	Cophall	u13, u15, u17
19 th July to 25 th July	World Junior Champs	Canada	u20 select
Sat 24 th & Sun 25 th July	South of England Combined Events Championships	Cophall	All
27 th July to 1 st Aug	European Championships	Barcelona	Select
Sun 25 th July	National Junior League	Ashford (tbc)	u17, u20
Wed 28 th July	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Sat 31st July	Southern Men's League	Tonbridge (tbc)	u17/20 & SM

AUGUST

Sun 1 st August	UK Young Athletes League, area final	tba	u13, u15, u17
Tues 3rd August	Tonbridge AC Evening Open Meeting	Tonbridge	All
Sat 7 th August	Southern Women's League	Abingdon (tbc)	All female
Wed 11 th August	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Sat 21 st & Sun 22 nd Aug	England Athletics u17 Championships	Bedford	u17
Wed 25 th August	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Sun 29 th August	National Junior League Promotion Match	Copthall	u17, u20

SEPTEMBER

Sat 4 th September	Southern Women's League	Hemel Hemstead (tbc)	All female
Sat 4 th September	UK Young Athletes League Auxiliary Final	Manchester	u13, u15, u17
Sat 5 th September	UK Young Athletes League Final	Manchester	u13, u15, u17
Wed 8 th Sept	Watford Open Meeting	Watford	All
Sat 18 th & Sun 19 th Sept	English Schools Combined Events & Race Walking ChampsStoke	Select	

KEY CONTACTS - TEAM MANAGERS

Ladies Southern League	Richard Owen	01732 360568
	Kay Saker	01634 813097
Men's Southern (Summer – Track)	Mark Hookway	01732 838211
League (Winter – Cross-country)	Julian Rendall	01732 773950
Young Athletes League	Pete Mason	01732 363129
National Junior League / Junior Cross-country	Mark Hookway	01732 838211
Walking	Pete Selby	01825 764726
Kent Young Athletes League	Pete Mason	01732 363129

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

President	Mike Rowbottom	01892 521673
Secretary	Vicky Thomas	01732 359669
Chairman	Alan Bennett	07767 228972
Membership Secretary	Beverley Keech	01732 362465
Coaching	Dave Hull	07702 620234
	Mark Hookway	01732 838211
Club Clothing	Dawn Hookway	01732 838211
'Puffer' Newsletter	Caroline Tinsley	01892 541296
Treasurer	Pippa Blackstone	

PUFFED OUT

That's the Winter issue done! Please send your stories to caroline@tonbridgeac.co.uk. or 2 Hollyshaw, Camden Park, Tunbridge Wells TN2 5AD. See you next edition. Ed.