

# Surrey County Athletic Association

Controlling Amateur Athletics in the Ancient and Geographical County of Surrey under the direction of UK Athletics.



## **ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2023/2024**

First of all a big thank you to the various individuals who have contributed to this year's Annual Report, which I hope has made it far more interesting to read!

The sport of athletics continues to thrive in Surrey. We have 56 clubs affiliated to the County association. All are regularly engaged in a wide variety of leagues and competitions, both national and local in all disciplines of the sport. The County Association itself promotes a range of Championship competitions and Surrey's representative teams remain competitive.

The management committee, led by the Chair Frances Ratchford, continues to manage the affairs of the Association. Zara Hyde Peters has been enthusiastic and supportive in her two-year Presidency which will come to an end at the AGM in March 2024. Most will know that Zara started her athletics with Surrey clubs, but she is now based in the West of England. We can only thank her for her dedication to her duties as President of Surrey Athletics for which has travelled frequently across the country to attend numerous Surrey events.

### **COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS**

#### **TRACK AND FIELD**

SCAA organised five track and field events during the year.

Our Disability Championships held at Kingston, in conjunction with an open throws meeting, attracts athletes from across the South of England and beyond. It is welcomed by many of the athletes as an opportunity to achieve early season performances to attract National selection.

Our Main Championships were held at Kingston in May during which 6 Championship Best Performances were set. Despite revisions to the track timetable, the popularity of the event means that the track events cannot be managed in the time available. Further changes may have to be made in 2024.

As usual Surrey hosted the Inter Counties event for U13 athletes at the end of July. We used the Walton Track for the first time for this event and it proved to be an excellent venue. It was well attended by 12 counties from Suffolk in the east to Dorset in the west. Despite encroaching into summer holidays, this is a popular event giving the youngest athletes their first taste of inter county competition. Over the years some of the best athletes to emerge from the south of England started their representative career at this meeting. Again, there were outstanding performances. Notable was Casielle Murray of Croydon Harriers who won the 100m and 200m in record times for a Surrey athlete. The 100m performance beat a time by Janis Walsh, Mitcham AC in 1972. The 200m time beat that of Donna Fraser, also of Croydon Harriers and later an Olympian, set in 1985. Kent won the girls event and Essex the boys with Surrey in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place respectively.

We held the Combined Events, Relays, Steeplechase and Walks Meeting in early September 2023 at the Sutton track. It is always a 'feel good' meeting that rounds off the summer Track and Field season on a high. This year 1 Championship Best Performance was set. Sussex were unable to join us this year due to a clash of events but several competitors from other counties were welcomed as Guests.

The Indoor Championships were held in March, also at Sutton Arena, and Sussex were able to join us. 2 Championship Best Performances were set.

## **ENDURANCE - ROAD RACING**

The County Association itself organized its annual 6/4/3 Road Relay event in early September in Wimbledon Park. The day dawned with unprecedented temperatures above 30degC and anything more than a 3 mile circuit might have been questionable in these conditions. As it was, the event passed off very successfully. Having said that, especially in fine weather, the paths of Wimbledon Park and its surrounding roads are becoming too busy for us to use safely. We will almost certainly have to reconsider the format and location of this event in 2024.

Most Sundays throughout the year there are several road races somewhere in the County organized by the clubs or other promoters.

The County Association uses three races, organised by affiliated clubs, as County Championship Events at three distances. Like the best road races, they show off the scenery to good advantage. The Half Marathon and 10k, both organized by Ranelagh Harriers, finish by the stylish Ham House with the Half Marathon circling around Hampton Court Palace. The 10 mile race, organised by Dorking and Mole Valley AC, takes us into the heart of rural Surrey with Boxhill in the background.

We use these 3 races and several more for a summer long, grand prix series for affiliated clubs – The Surrey Road League. This also includes races organized by South London Harriers, Sutton Runners, Elmbridge Road Runners and Stragglers. Around 1,000 athletes from 40 clubs took part in the 2023 series.

We owe a special thank you to Mary James of SLH who took over the administration of the Road Championships and Road League for the first time in 2023.

## **ENDURANCE – CROSS COUNTRY**

Cross country is booming in Surrey. The Surrey Cross Country League is owned and managed by our clubs rather than SCAA but benefits from help from County officials. It is probably the most popular County league in the UK.

SCAA itself organised the usual 3 Championship events. The junior cross-country relays (the Bruce Judd relays) returned to the usual venue in Stoke Park, Guildford. The six age group races were closely contested by young athletes from across the county.

The Masters Cross Country Championship is now firmly established at Nonsuch Park, Cheam. For the first time we included the M35 age Category in the races and this was well supported, together with strong fields across all age groups for the two races.

The rotation of our Cross-Country Championship venues saw us at Denbies Vineyard on the first Sunday in January. For those who braved the constant rain at Lloyd Park the year before the contrast could not have been greater. The sunrise over Boxhill into a clear sky was a privileged sight for those who arrived early enough. The racing lived up to the occasion across 8 races for 10 different age categories.

## **SPORTSHALL**

Our 3 Sportshall meetings at Guildford Spectrum provide indoor competition for young athletes from middle September until April at events that provide fitness for the summer track and field season. Surrey continues to be very successful at both Regional and National level. At the time of writing this report our 6 teams – U11, U13 and U15, both male and female – have just competed in the southeast regional finals at Burgess Hill. Again, we swept the board with 5 first places and one second. The national finals at Stoke on Trent in April only cover the U13 and U15 age groups. We will definitely have three teams, and probably all four, competing in Stoke. Let's hope they can at least equal last year's performances where our 4 teams finished 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> in their age groups.

## **RACE WALKING**

The 3km Track Race Walking Championships were held at The David Weir Leisure Centre on 3 September. The Senior Women's race was won by Herne Hill Harrier Penelope Cummings, in a season's best time of 17:35.82. Surrey WC's Ian Statter won the Men's championship. Penelope also won the 10km Track Championships held at Coulsdon on 30 September in a new best time of 60:44.8. Paul Garston of Surrey WC won the Men's championship. Penelope also won silver at the British Masters indoor championship, recording a fast 18:50.77 at Sheffield on Feb 19th.

One of Surrey's top International Race Walkers and coach Ray Hall passed away aged 90 in April after a long illness. He coached county record holders Mark Easton and Alex Wright to international success.

Mark is now trying to set up a Race-Walking development scheme in Surrey to encourage younger athletes to take up race walking and will now be included for discussion in the forthcoming Development Sub-Committee Meetings. Currently our top British race walkers have all come from endurance running backgrounds.

## **INTER-COUNTY MEETINGS**

### **TRACK & FIELD**

In addition to the U13 track and field meeting that we hosted, Surrey teams competed in intercounty events in Track and Field and Cross Country around the south of England.

On 2 July the Senior and U20 Teams represented Surrey at Horspath, Oxford. The Senior Women were victorious with the U20W 3<sup>rd</sup>, the SM 6<sup>th</sup> and the U20M 4<sup>th</sup>.

Horspath, Oxford was again the venue for the U15/U17 Inter-Counties on 10 September where both the U15 Girls and U17 Women were victorious and the U17Men 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unfortunately, there are still no results available for the U15 Boys.

## **CROSS COUNTRY**

2023-24 has been mixed for all sorts of reasons.

The 2023 CAU National Inter Counties took place in March at Loughborough. Always well organized, so it is not surprising that competitors and supporters enjoy the event. The senior women's team won gold led by Georgie Brunivels, with Nancy Scott, Niamh Brown and Dominique Corradi. The U13 boys led by Caspian Holmes who won individual silver, won team championships bronze and the U13 girls led by Kitty Scott won team silver.

In December the Southern Inter counties was scheduled to take place in Oxford. "Rain stopped play" is usually a statement that is used for cricket but in this case, it applied to the cross-country championships which were stopped minutes before the first race due to the excessive muddy conditions.

In 2023 we said a reluctant goodbye to Sue Goode who has managed the younger cross-country teams for a long time, and even when she moved to Devon she still came up to look after the boys team. She will be missed by the young athletes and by her fellow team managers as she was always encouraging and energetic.

This is an opportunity to thank all the Surrey coaches for all their hard work. The reason we do so well at XC competitions is that the athletes are well prepared. It is difficult to choose teams as there are so many strong performances and that is because of excellent coaching in the County.

Many thanks also to the team managers who work hard and are so supportive of their teams on the day of competition.

## **OFFICIALS AND VOLUNTEERS**

The sport as a whole and the County Association could not function without an army of technical officials, coaches, team managers and volunteers who make it happen.

Currently Surrey has more than 300 licensed technical officials. Some are content to officiate at local events but many, more experienced, officials work at regional events and some of our most distinguished officials are invited to national and international events.

Athletes whose track and field event or cross-country race lasts half an hour or so in the middle of the day may be unaware that some officials were at the venue a day or two before the event to check things out. Then again at day-break on the day of the event to get everything ready. They might still be there at 5pm and beyond putting away the equipment. They give freely huge amounts of their time, and we cannot thank them enough.

It is not only the licensed technical officials. Many events also rely on other volunteers to do everything from stadium announcing to standing at marshal points on cross country courses. For the latter we should probably give special thanks to members of the clubs local to our cross-country championship and road relay venues who supplement County officials with enthusiastic local volunteers. We can mention Guildford and Godalming AC at Stoke Park, Hercules Wimbledon for the road relays at Wimbledon Park, Epsom and Ewell Harriers at Nonsuch Park, Dorking and Mole Valley AC at Denbies, and Croydon Harriers at Lloyd Park. But not to ignore the many individual volunteers from other clubs who regularly respond to requests for help.

## **INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION**

A number of Surrey qualified athletes were chosen to represent GB & NI at international events. Our congratulations to the following:

### **European Indoor Championships, 2 - 5 March 2023, Istanbul, Turkey**

Senior Women High Jump - Morgan Lake (Windsor, Slough, Eton & Hounslow AC), Senior Women 1500 Katie Snowden (Herne Hill Harriers), Senior Men 3000 Jack Rowe (Aldershot, Farnham & District AC), Senior Women 4 X 400M Relay Nicole Kendall (Leg 3) (Thames Valley Harriers), Senior Women 4 X 400 M Mary Abichi (Leg 4)(Enfield & Haringey AC).

### **European U23 Championships, 12-16 July 2023, Espoo, Finland**

Men 5000m Will Barnicoat(Aldershot, Farnham & District AC), Men 200M James Hanson(Woking AC)

### **European U20 Championships, 7-10 August 2023, Jerusalem, Israel**

Women 100M Hurdles Kira Holt (Kingston AC & Polytechnic Harriers), Men 200M Brook Cronin (Walton AC), Men 5000M James Dargan (Aldershot, Farnham & District AC)

### **World Championships, 19-27 August 2023 Budapest, Hungary**

Men Discus Lawrence Okoye (Croydon Harriers), Women 1500M Katie Snowden (Herne Hill Harriers), Women 1500M Adelle Tracey (Guildford & Godalming AC), Women 100M Imani Lansiquot (Sutton & District AC), 400M Hurdles Jessie Knight (Windsor, Slough, Eton & Hounslow AC), Women 800M Adelle Tracey (Guildford & Godalming AC), Women 4 X 100M Relay Imani Lansiquot (Leg 2)(Sutton & District AC), Women High Jump Morgan Lake(Windsor, Slough, Eton & Hounslow AC)

Congratulations also to our Surrey Officials who were chosen to officiate in various roles at International Competitions:

Oslo Diamond League: Mark Purser & Sam Purser

London Diamond League: Mark Purser, Philip Martin, Sam Purser, Ashley Burrige, Ben Kennard

World Champs, Glasgow: Mark Purser & Barbara Abbott

## **OBITUARIES**

Sadly, several people who made an important contribution to Surrey Athletics, either as athletes or organisers, passed away during the year.

Valerie Winn (nee Ball) – Spartan Ladies AC. Valerie broke the Women's world record for 880yds in 1952 and was several times national champion at 400m or 440yds. Sadly, the longest distance allowed for women at the Olympics at this time was 200m so she had no opportunity for higher representative honours.

Maurice Joyce – Surrey AC and Kingston AC and Polytechnic Harriers. Maurice was a long-time organizer of the County Masters Track and Field Championship.

Don Webb – Croydon Harriers. Don was President of the Association 2008/09. As an experienced field judge he was a regular at County events for at least 40 years.

Doris Dean – Surrey AC and Kingston AC and Polytechnic Harriers. Doris was president of Surrey Women's AAA in 1974 at a time when administration of the sport for men and women remained separate.

A number of other long-standing members of Surrey Clubs also passed away during the year. Short obituaries were published on the SCAA website at the time and can still be found in the News archive. We are grateful to all of them for their contribution to our sport in Surrey.

## **SCAA WEBSITE**

The County website ([surreyathletics.uk](http://surreyathletics.uk)) was moved to a new host in December 2023 and continues to provide notification of forthcoming County events and has an extensive database of the results of past events including International Championships where Surrey athletes have participated. The database contains full results of County Track & Field Championships back to 1976 – we have not gone further back simply because we have not found any copies of the results prior to that date. We do have partial results which we have found in newspapers and magazines. At present we have 47,000+ female and 58,000+ male results from County Track & Field Championships plus 12,000+ female and 33,000+ male performances from endurance (Cross-Country, Road Running and Race Walking) County Championships. For those performances we do have, we have been able to link the performances of many athletes to create an individual Athlete Profile. We currently have profiles for 4400+ female athletes and 6000+ male athletes. We currently have annual ranking lists going back to the 1900's and, for purposes of comparison, we have attempted to reflect the age group an athlete would have been in if the current UKA age groups were in effect historically. This allows us to generate all-time listings for each of the 10 (5 male + 5 female) current UKA age groups. The forthcoming changes to the UKA Age Groups are likely to be a challenge in this regard and with there being 46,000+ female performances and 68,000+ male performances we shall need to decide how we will address this. The 2023 rankings were maintained by Jess Wilson, Sirkka Kirkby, Sarah Pye, Ashley Burrige and Keith Burchell and our thanks go to them for keeping the listings updated.

Our thanks to Keith Burchell, our Communications Officer and Archivist, for all his work on the website and the speed with which results and other vital information is posted.

A special thanks to Keith this year for managing the huge task of migrating the website to a new host.

*Lynne Reed  
SCAA Hon. Secretary  
March 2024*