

Love Thy Neighbour

It is easy to fall into the trap of seeing neighbouring Athletics Clubs as rivals or, worse still, the enemy. I have known periods in the past when there has been no love lost between West Suffolk and us, for example. However, three small steps have been taken recently that shows greater harmony is possible. The first was the inter-club competition between Braintree, Colchester & Tendring and ourselves focusing purely on the Long Jump for U13 boys and girls. Taking place over three Wednesday evenings with each club playing host once, the very enjoyable competition certainly brought the clubs closer together, promoting the discipline of Long Jumping as one. I am glad to say that our girls' team and our boys' team both won the event overall and, although all our kids were little stars, perhaps Caine Sobers and Jessica Crissell twinkled a little more.

The second step of harmonisation is currently being formulated in terms of the National Junior League. This is an important league for 18 to 20 year-olds, but one in which we have struggled for a number of years to field a team that can provide a challenge. However, it looks as if the league is going to look favourably on a combined team from our region, which will be an amalgam between ourselves, Colchester & Tendring, Braintree, Colchester Harriers and, maybe, West Suffolk. I was at a meeting recently where negotiation advanced significantly. Possibly known as the Saxons, we will be a force that can take on the bigger clubs.

The third step will be when we, and maybe CATS, support the Open Meeting being organised by West Suffolk to raise money for the East Anglian Air Ambulance. This came about because of the tragic death of Ray Wells, a leading light at West Suffolk, who was returning to Bury after officiating at Northgate. The hope is that, if this open meeting is



Winning teams in the U13 Long Jump competition



successful, then the three clubs may share an Open Meeting every year. This year's meeting will be on Sunday 23rd September and, if enough athletes show an interest, then the club will lay on a bus. Let your coaches know that you want to compete.

*John Tunaley,
Chairman*

Harriers Storm to Junior League Win

At Basildon on Sunday May 27th in miserable cold and wet conditions, Ipswich Harriers Under-20 Men and Women secured a first ever League win since the sexes were combined a few years ago. Missing one or two field event athletes on duty at the SEAA Championships at Ashford, a group of 25

Harriers took on the might of Havering Mayesbrook, Basildon, Norwich, Bedford, Colchester and London Heathside with Highgate in the League's second event of the season. A magnificent double first came in the opening track event when Kerry Dixon and Hayley Todd led both 'A' and 'B' string 400m hurdles races to the finish. Good results followed all day with first places being secured by Becky Welbourn in the 100 metre 'A' race and Kerry Dixon, again, with 1.50 metres in the High Jump 'A' competition. In the 'B' events there were first places for Gemma Malster in the 200m, Ella Jennings in the 400m and Kerry Fuller in the sprint hurdles. 'B' string winners in the Field Events were Becky Welbourn in the Hammer, Hayley Todd in the Pole Vault and Ella Jennings in the Triple Jump.

Second places in the 'A' string events were gained by Georgina Malster in the 200 metres and Triple Jump, Becky Welbourn in the 400 metres, Hayley Todd in the sprint hurdles and Kerry Fuller in the Hammer and Shot Putt. A creditable third place went to Jenny Reason in the 'A' String Pole Vault. The women rounded their day with a solid performance in the 4 × 100m Relay followed by a gutsy run in the 4 × 400m Relay, only narrowly missing first place to an outstanding final leg for City of Norwich, by 400m individual winner Rachel Stringer who overtook Becky just yards short of the finishing line.

The Men were not to be outdone by their women's team and 'A' string victories went to Tom Love in the 400m and 1500m, 'B' string firsts were achieved by Mark Robinson in the 400metres, Josh

Entwistle in the 3000m and Graham Pattle in the Hammer. 'A' string runners up were Dan Traynor in the 200m, Eliot Palmer in the 3000m, Jonathan Moore in the High Jump and Paul Smith in the Javelin (no mean achievement as he was against the longest under-17 thrower in UK history). The men's overall highlights came with the relays where both were won by Ipswich Harriers sending the team into raptures and ensuring a happy journey home after some miserable weather.

Others adding valuable points to the total included Alice Simpson, Emma Hales, Clare Welbourn, Jared Holmes, Chris Pattle, Jonathan Ling, Robert Graham, Simon Rose and Daniel Palmer.

No Ipswich Athlete was to be awarded athlete of the match but for the women a stunning first ever 400m in 61.9s by Ella Jennings will live in the spectators' memories for her sheer grit and determination. In the men's match the smile and thumbs up given to the team by Tom Love as he kicked for the finish with 70 metres of the 1500m still to run seemed to be indicative of the team spirit and that we were at last having the fun that this league brings to our junior athletes.

The women still have gaps in middle distance events but at long last we had two women pole vaulters. The men are very short in the technical events of hurdling and Pole Vaulting. If we could fill those gaps we need fear no other club.

A great day out and well done to Rachel and her team, ably supported as always by the best officials in the Division.

	Club	Match Results	League Points
1	Ipswich Harriers	491	8
2	Havering Mayesbrook AC	489	7
3	Basildon AAC	479	6
4	City of Norwich	437	5
5	Bedford & County	363	4
6	London Heathside	167	3
7	Colchester & Tendring AC	126	2



The Northgate Sports Centre and track were opened in 1982 (the track was resurfaced in 1999). In 1987 and 1989, Northgate hosted two junior international events. On 27 June, 1987, Great Britain beat the former Federal Republic of Germany and Poland in a triangular match, with the GB under-20 team scoring 305 points, Germany gaining 284 and Poland totalling 186.

There were some well-known athletes taking part. Marcus Adam won the 100 metres in 10.48 seconds and Tony Jarrett was second in the 200 metres. Steve Backley won the javelin with a throw of 75.98 metres and our own Nigel Bevan, who is still coaching at Northgate, was second with 72.60. Kelly Holmes won the women's 1,500 metres, Fiona May triumphed in the long jump and the high jump was won by West Suffolk athlete Jo Jennings, who frequently trained at Northgate.

On 1 July, 1989, Germany, along with Sweden, were the visitors when Great Britain won a much closer match with 270.5 points to Germany's 265 and Sweden's 225.5. John Mayock won the 3,000metres for Britain and 14-year-old Katharine Merry was second in the women's 100 metre in 11.72 seconds. Other well-known athletes taking part were Donna Fraser and Ashia Hansen.

On both occasions, the banners and flags of the competing nations were carried in the opening ceremony by four members of Ipswich Harriers and the Northgate Junior Athletics Club (NJAC), which I ran for 21 years. Bethany Cooke, Claire Topple, Jo Davey and Karen Bradford were the girls involved. Members of the NJAC were also involved in carrying baskets with the athletes' clothes and operating the field event scoreboards. We still have the scoreboards but they are rarely used now. There was also a giant clock on the finishing line and timing was fully electronic.

Medals and Finals At The South Of England Championships

A small group of athletes and supporters made the two-hour plus trek to Crystal Palace National Sports Center over the weekend of 16th and 17th June 2007.

Ipswich Harrier club member Mark Leitch competing in the colours of the Army struck gold in the senior men's shot putt with a solid throw of **14.33m** on the Saturday. In fact any of Mark's legal throws would have been good enough to secure the gold medal as such was his dominance in this event winning by over a metre and a half.

Tom Love took part in the junior men's 800m which was scheduled for three rounds over both the Saturday and the Sunday. After reaching last years final Tom's hopes were high for this years championships. Tom's first race on Saturday was the opening heat, were he used his new found tactical awareness to judge the race to perfection to come home first in his heat in a time of **1m57.11s** to qualify for the semi-final. The semi-final took place on Saturday afternoon where Tom needed to finish in the top three or be one of two fastest losers. Tom again achieved this by securing third place in the first semi-final in a comfortable time of **1m58.55s**. This meant Tom returned on the Sunday for the final with high hopes of going for a medal. In a very physical race in which he used all his strength to stay on his feet and out of trouble, Tom came into the home straight with a very strong chance of a medal. After a hard dash to the line Tom was just edged out of the gold medal position but did win the silver medal in a new lifetime best of **1m53.74s** putting him into the top 30 junior 800m runners in the UK.

Next up to compete was Becky Welbourn taking part in the junior women's 400m where she was trying to reach the final for the second year in a row. Becky's first race was on the Saturday and was the final of three heats. An unfortunate lane draw saw Becky get lane eight making the task ahead more challenging. After a conservative first 250m a strong kick off the bend and good home straight brought Becky home in second place in a time of **58.31s** to secure a place in the final.



Harriers at the South of England Championships

- Top left: Becky Welbourn*
- Top Right: Chris Pattle*
- Left: Tom Love*

I then shocked my training buddies and myself by storming to victory in the 100 and taking second in the 200. My performance was dubbed “the best of the night” and it was a great moment for me and all the Chris Pattle fans out there.

The following weekend I had a National Junior League at Bedford, one of my most hated tracks in the world, where I ran quite well yet still felt as if I was under achieving in terms of the times. The confidence was there but the times were yet to come.

My next competition was a Southern Men’s at home where I became a member of the prestigious 23 club for sub 24 second runners in the 200 with 23.9. Then the next day I had the audacity to go and get two more PBs in the 100 and 200 with times of 11.6 and 23.8 respectively. Next training session I felt like a different athlete I was up on my toes, the wind in my hair and not a care in the world. Of course the Dan Scurrells of the world tried their best to somehow take those times away from me yet he knew in his heart I was now a superior athlete.

I then backed up these performances at the county championships by taking the gold in the 100m and 200m to show people that, not only could I churn out the fast times, I could also perform under pressure. In the weeks after the county champs I got my 200m time down to 23.7 at Woodford Green and then to 23.5 at Battersea Park. It really has just been a great year and the stuff that dreams are made of yet I still feel that there is a low 23 second 200m in the bag come the end of the season and maybe at the EAL final with the crowd behind me I will produce something special.

This, as for Tom, meant a return on the Sunday for a final. In what was an incredibly quick race with the winner running a new championship best performance and European Junior Qualifying time, Becky came home in fourth place just one position shy of the medals in a season’s best time of **57.90s** putting her in to the top 30 junior 400m runners in the UK.

The fourth and final member of Ipswich Harriers to take part in the championships was junior man Chris Pattle in the 200m that took place on the Saturday. Chris was drawn in a competitive heat and ran well into a slight head wind to achieve a time of **23.73s** to take sixth place just missing out of fifth place by a mere 2 hundredths of a second.

This proved to be a rather successful championship for Ipswich Harriers having three finalists, two medallists, some very fine performances and even the rain held off!

My Summer Training So Far...

In my last article I was coming to the end of a difficult winter and making the transition into summer training. The last of the 500m tests really renewed my motivation and the next 5 weeks afterwards I put in a great block of training where I just kept grinding out good sessions.

The season was now about to start, yet I was still a bit skeptical about how well I was going to perform. Just before the start of the season we had some time trials for 100 and 200m. I remember that in the run up to the time trials my calves were quite tight and I was worried that I wouldn’t be able to race and would just have to be a spectator from the stand. When I was warming up for the 100m my calves were still tight and it was a case of my heart said run but my head said don’t. I followed the former and decided to run with the aim purely to get a race under my belt.

