

**SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC
ASSOCIATION**

Cross Country 2016



Report & Results



Senior Boys Team National Championships Presentation

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Secretary

Mr. B. Baker
16 Holly Court
Frome
BA11 2SQ
Tel. 01373 464766
Mobile. 07855749543
Email. brianssaa@blueyonder.co.uk



Treasurer

Mr. L. Neville
Fosse House
Burlescombe
Devon
EX16 7JH
Tel. 01823 674111
Email. LCNEVILLE@aol.com

www.somersetschoolsathletics.org.uk

2016 Cross-County Report

"MUD, LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN!"

At the end of my last report I stated that I would no longer attend the ESAA championships; as South-West Schools AA Chairman I had duties relating to that position at the regional championships and thus could not be a team manager; further as organiser of the county championships and 'out on the course' I would not have any contact with athletes as they finished and therefore would not have any 'handle' on individuals or possible team make-up.

This report, therefore, is written at a distance from the action but I hope does give an overview on the season.

Junior Championships –

This now (re)established championships took place as usual at King's College with Richard at the helm of the day's organisation. Entry numbers (164) and consequently finishers (156) from 18 schools were substantially lower (213; 182 & 20) to the previous year but all who participated enjoyed the experience in dry conditions. As is now traditional the young runners were ably led by SSAA/King's College senior athletes acting as 'hares' and after each race light refreshments were available and appreciated.

The number of participating schools and athletes has fallen over the past two years which is worrying. The event is publicized in the SSAA Diary and Handbook whilst event information is sent to schools allowing ample time for team selection and preparation. It is such a shame that more young budding distance runners do not get the chance to take part for we know there is a wealth of enthusiasm and talent in the primary schools with a great many taking part in their cross-country leagues.

The champions and finishers were:

	Individual	Finishers	Team
Year 7 Girls	Anya Evans (Hazlegrove)	40	Hazlegrove
Year 7 Boys	Jo Ponter (Bishop Fox's)	56	Hazlegrove
Year 8 Girls	Holly Bigger (Huish Academy)	20	Queen's College
Year 8 Boys	Tom Loader (Hugh Sexey's)	40	Hugh Sexey's

County Championships –

The championships took place at what seems to be becoming the home of SSAA Cross-Country: Aldon Hill.

Through probably circumstance rather than fault I, as SSAA secretary, found that after areas had selected their 15 competitors a number of good quality athletes had not competed at their area championships and were now being put forward as wanting to compete at the county championships. To ease what was

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

becoming a tense situation I decided that if these athletes were added to the area list of 25 (for results admin) they could run if they turned up on the day.

I visited the course a week before to firm up the day's organisation with George Smith (Groundsman) and to view the improvements to the area and how they would impact upon the event.

On the morning of the championships the course was laid out - being essentially identical to the previous year as were the positions of the start and finish areas, administration area and car park.

Officials were contacted in late 2015 with many more than happy to help again as were some new faces. Now that so many know the event and the venue many arrived quite early and helped put the finishing touches to the course set-up. My thanks to all officials for without you this event simply cannot be the success it is.

The championships were again blessed with dry and sunny weather with the winter afternoon sun falling below the horizon.



The champions and finishers were:

	Individual	Finishers	
Minor Girls	Anya Evans (Hazlegrove School)	42	(+9)
Junior Girls	Amelia Wills (Millfield School)	43	(+4)
Inter Girls	Sophie Jones (Queen's College)	30	(+5)
Senior Girls	Issy Morris (Millfield School)	14	(-4)
Minor Boys	Fred Fisher (Hazlegrove School)	50	(+13)
Junior Boys	Matthew Howard (Wells Cathedral)	47	(+12)
Inter Boys	Ben Lloyd (Preston School)	36	(-3)
Senior Boys	Sam Sommerville (Strode College)	23	(+2)

Most pleasing the number of competitors on the day and thus finishers increased (overall) as shown by the figures in brackets. I do not know how many athletes 'turned up on the day' but I would have thought far far fewer than the number of additional athletes to 2015.

Again the intermediate girls' and senior girls' races were combined and this race produced the highlight of the day for me. I positioned myself as a marshal on the 'back straight' and thus not only had the enjoyment of seeing the silhouettes of all the day's runners but also saw in physical terms the knowledge and enthusiasm of our supports! The intermediate and senior girls' race was on paper the showpiece event with many talented athletes in both age groups. It turned out to be a fast, bunched, competitive battle and

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

to witness this fully many spectators streamed down the steep slope from the admin area to vociferously support and encourage the athletes through the 'valley' before bounding back up the slope to view the finish.

My thanks to ALL involved during the day, particularly those helpers who made their first visit to Aldon and who, like their predecessors, were in awe of the event and its venue.

South-West Championships –

The selection for this championship took place immediately after the county championships and was held at The Park School; many thanks to Larry for the facility. With all the county's athletes participating selection was quite straight forward.

As is now customary the website was utilised fully to enable those selected to confirm their availability and as now is becoming quite common the bulk of the team confirmed almost immediately. Postal information was also sent to schools.

As SWSchAA Chairman I had duties leading up to the event and also on the day and thus all the administration for the event was handed over to Dick. I believe his duties were quite straightforward as very few athletes subsequently dropped out emphasising the desire within the cross-country fraternity to represent the County.

The championships were hosted by Gloucestershire and took place on Pittville Park attached to the leisure centre in Cheltenham. As again is now common place athletes were asked to make their own travel arrangements to the event.

I travelled, very early in the morning, direct to the course, taking with me some 150 stakes to help mark the course, with the intention of setting up the event shelter as a base for the team. Quite simply at that early time the wind was quite strong and overnight rain had made the whole area sodden. Having set up the shelter in what I deemed to be a 'quiet' area I then started to help set out the course. Struggling against the wind to erect posts and tape I noticed that our event shelter was flapping in the wind only to soon disappear completely. On my return it had collapsed and buckled making it futile to salvage. As a result the Association has bought a much improved blow-up shelter.

The wind's strength continued throughout the day and was joined by rain. Needless to say with some 500 athletes and at least that number of spectators the start and finish areas AND the whole 'track' of the course soon turned into a quagmire of ankle deep 'slurry'.



SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Thankfully with my Chairman's hat to the fore I could spend the afternoon in the presentation marquee rushing through presentations. I have great admiration for our team managers who, with no team shelter, battled, like our athletes, through the most atrocious conditions. I would also like to express my immense gratitude to the many parents and supporters who helped in whatever capacity during a day that will be ever remembered.

The champions were:

	Individual	Team	Somerset Ind / Team
Minor Girls	P Clarke (Gloucester)	Dorset	9 th / 3 rd
Junior Girls	A Wills (Somerset)	Gloucestershire	1st / 5th
Inter Girls	G Copeland (Dorset)	Avon	6 th / 2 nd
Senior Girls	P Tank (Devon)	Dorset	12 th / 5 th
Minor Boys	R Thmas (Avon)	Devon	8 th / 3 rd
Junior Boys	H Mier (Cornwall)	Devon	2 nd / 5 th
Inter Boys	A Kent (Cornwall)	Dorset	20 th / 6 th
Senior Boys	W Battershill (Devon)	Somerset	2nd / 1st

From the above the highlights are quite obvious: Amelia Wills overcoming the appalling conditions and the Senior Boys' team showing real camaraderie and grit by packing to gain the following positions: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, (12, 23, 24, 39) to win the team championship with the lowest team score by far: less than half of other age group winners.

I have always maintained that team togetherness is an important element for at national level this form of cross-country is very much a whole team event and experience. The conditions met at Pittville Park could only enhance the 'we'll support each other' attitude within the team.

National Championships –

Again as is now becoming usual, selection for the national championships took place more than two weeks after the south-west championships and just before the entry deadline set by ESAA. This enabled all athletes to overcome coughs, colds and minor injuries, to declare themselves fit and for some to post an improved performance in non-school events.

With the south-west teams being made up of core athletes the teams of now eight athletes practically selected themselves. The website was again used to notify individuals quickly, to pass on all the information and to receive confirmation of selection.

The national championships returned to Wollaton Park, Nottingham and the team again utilised the Premier Inn a short distance from the venue.

All team members travelled with the team and were accompanied by nine team managers with the Association welcoming Abi Tickner to the team having already team managed in Cheltenham.

Thanks to Jason the traditional team photographs were taken and these were subsequently placed on the website for athletes to download.

Given the often 5th place team positions at the south-west championships expectations were not as high as in previous years but certainly our south-west 'highlights' would hopefully be to the fore. Needless to say the power of 'the nats' proved inspiring to our teams:

In the Junior Boys Rory Nicholson (Queen's College), second in the County champs, again turned the tables on Matthew Howard by not only beating him at Pittville but also at the Nationals. Rory coming in 7th and Matthew 15th. Both highly creditable performances with Rory gaining an England vest for the SIAB

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

International. The team was the first of the SW and 'C' group teams – a tremendous improvement and achievement.

Ben Lloyd, in the Intermediate Boys, proved he was the most consistent performer finishing in 37th position but the team fell one SW position.

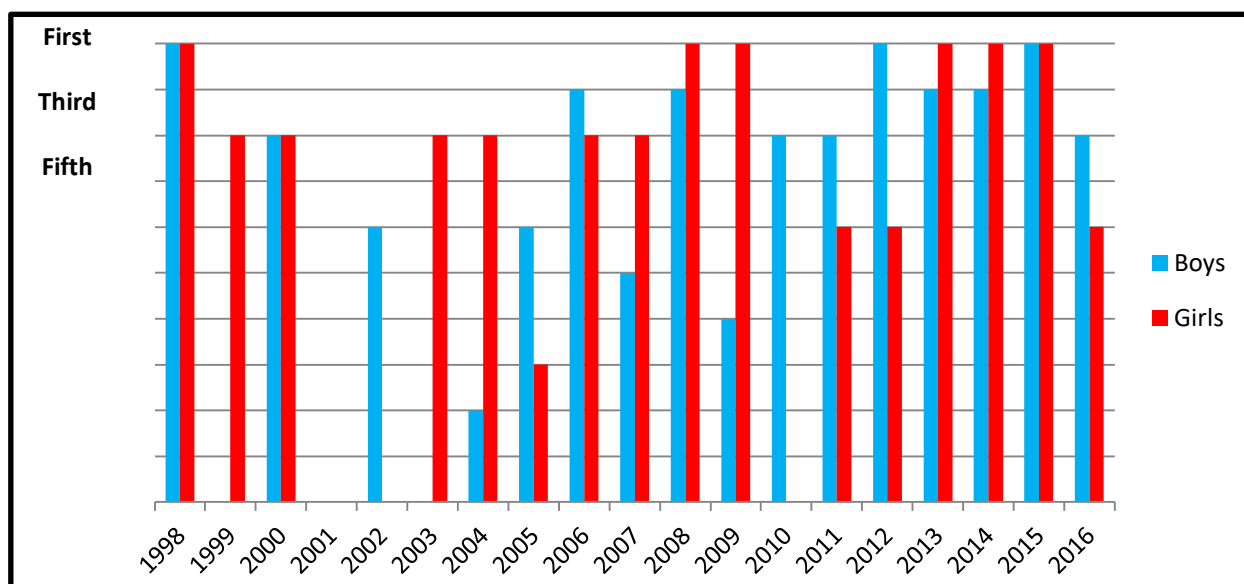
The Senior Boys' team again packed well with Luke Prior just leading the team home from Sam Somerville. The team were third overall and quite naturally, then, the first 'C' group and SW team. Another tremendous achievement.

Amelia Wills finished in eighth position and, like Rory, gained an England vest for the international in Scotland. Congratulations to both these junior athletes. The Junior Girls' team retained their fifth SW position.

Sophie Hamilton, who has represented England in the SIAB, lead the Intermediate Girls' team home with its members well spaced they securing their SW position and were first 'C' group county.

Likewise the Senior Girls, with many not able to compete in events after the county championships, could only consolidate their SW team position.

Within the 'C' group counties the boys finished in third place and the girls in fifth as catalogued in the historical chart:



- There are 15 counties in 'C' Group
- 2001 championships did not take place due to foot-and-mouth restrictions

Finally my thanks to those team managers who worked for the athletes and the Association during the season. Thank you to:

Richard Bowden
Richard Llewellyn-Eaton
Adrian Palmer
Jason Allen
Frank Tickner
Larry Tulett
Jon Leonard

Jane Yandell
Katie Cobb
Jo Pike
Abi Tickner

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Finance –

Only those close to the financial ramifications of a SSAA season will fully appreciate the projections that take place to make, in my case, the cross-county season break even: meaning not a loss for the Association and not excessive fees from athletes. This year I can report that my season's account showed a profit of £12.78. (A failure by that amount but a quarter of last season's failure!)

(The season's account within the full treasurer's report may be different as other small credits or debits may have been included into these accounts.)

SIAB International –

This took place in Callender Park, midway between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Amealia Wills coming eighth at Wollaton remained in that position within the England team finishing in 15th position.



Rory Nicholson, seventh in the ESAA championships, improved to fourth within the England team finishing in 5th position after leading the race in the early stages.



Our two athletes were not the only Somerset representatives at this international for Adrian Palmer was asked by ESAA to team manage. Wholehearted and well deserved congratulations to Adrian along with special congratulations to the Association's latest international athletes.

2016 Cross-Country Teams

MINOR GIRLS		County Position	SW Position
Anya Evans	Hazlegrove School	1	9
Kai Snell	Hazlegrove School	2	13
Ruby Owen	Fairlands Middle School	3	18
Sophie Wilson	Taunton Preparatory School	DNS	35
Lara Chapple	King's Hall School	6	39
Grace Ashurst	Hugh Sexey Middle school	5	43
Amelia Cordeaux	Queen's College	7	48
Hetty James	Taunton Preparatory School	9	52
Jemima Stillwell	The Blue School	10	58
Olivia Earthy	The King Alfred School	4	DNS
Tilly Lund	Hazlegrove School	8	DNS
	SW Team		3

JUNIOR GIRLS		County Position	SW Position	ESAA Position
Amelia Wills	Millfield School	1	1	8
Connie Hickman	Queen's College	2	22	79
Harriet Tuson	Hazlegrove School	3		178
Abbie White	The Park School	4	26	205
Holly Bigger	Huish Episcopi Academy	6	37	249
Lucy Crossman	Minehead Middle School	9	49	280
Lizzy Ingram	Ansford Academy	5	61	286
Ella Leonard	Wellington School	8	51	294
Becky Brown	Queen's College	7	43	
Kirstin Hill	Queen's College	10	62	
	SW Team		5	5
	C' Group Team		3	7
	National Team			29



INTERMEDIATE GIRLS		County Position	SW position	ESAA Position
Sophie Hamilton	King's School	2	6	50
Elise Thorner	Millfield School	4	7	68
Alice Davies	Kings of Wessex Academy	3	15	100
Sophie Jones	Queen's College	1	dnf	110
Caitlin Carnegie	Sexey's School	8	30	120
Sophie Bray	Taunton School	6	8	146
Cecily Turner	Millfield School	9	28	154
Jess Brown	Queen's College	5	32	181
Katie Lloyd	Preston School	7	49	
Molly Smith	King's College	10	59	
	SW Team		2	2
	C' Group Team		1	1
	National Team			12



SENIOR GIRLS		County Position	SW position	ESAA Position
Lucy Baldwin	Downside School	4	33	175
Amy D'Arcy	Strode College	6	43	187
Megan Chiffers	Strode College	7	42	204
Alice Hannan	Millfield School	5	28	217
Beth Wilson-Brown	King's School	9	32	233
India Cooper	Wells Cathedral School	10	25	243
Megan Rusca	The Blue School	8	36	246
Lydia Lavallin	Taunton School	11	50	271
Harriet Lord	Millfield School	3	12	dns
Erica Hawley	Millfield School	2	15	dns
Issy Morris	Millfield School	1	dns	dns
	SW Team		5	5
	C' Group Team		3	8
	National Team			34



2016 Cross-Country Teams

MINOR BOYS		County Position	SW position
Fred Fisher	Hazlegrove School	1	8
Tom Houghton-King	Taunton Preparatory School	6	11
Dylan Leonard	Wellington School	10	16
Aled Downes	Hazlegrove School	11	24
Tom Heal	Kingsmead School	5	26
Joe Ponter	Bishop Fox's School	2	29
Toby Watson	The Blue School	7	31
Carlos Arrate	Hazlegrove School	4	33
Piran Little	Huish Episcopi Academy	12	60
Oscar Hallet	Robert Blake Science College	3	
Jamie Nicholson	Bishop Fox's School	8	
Barnaby Dietz	Taunton Preparatory School	9	
	SW Team		3

JUNIOR BOYS		County Position	SW position	ESAA Position
Rory Nicholson	Queen's College	2	2	7
Matthew Howard	Wells Cathedral School	1	5	15
Luke MacPherson	Preston School	3	9	88
Sam Cobb	Hazlegrove School	4	27	99
Will Aitken	Millfield Prep School	7	56	162
Ollie Haines-Francis	Millfield School	5	36	186
Sam Ponter	Bishop Fox's School	8	55	247
Lewis Pocock	Court Fields School	9	60	296
Innes Davidson	Huish Episcopi Academy	6	65	
Jarvis Lumb	Wellington School	10		
	SW Team		5	1
	C' Group Team		3	1
	National Team			8



INTERMEDIATE BOYS		County Position	SW position	ESAA Position
Ben Lloyd	Preston School	1	25	37
Dylan Dukes	The Blue School	6	44	215
Bradley Seager	Huish Episcopi Academy	8	49	223
Henry-James Cowie	Millfield School	3	20	228
Harry Durrant	Heathfield School	2	65	229
Charlie MacNeice	Queen's College	4	26	244
Nikolaos-Gerasimos Maridis	Millfield School	9	39	308
Harry Taylor Page	Brymore Academy	5	53	322
Matthew Keogan	Queen's College	10	50	
Alex Williams	The Blue School	7	54	
	SW Team		6	7
	C' Group Team		4	11
	National Team			37



SENIOR BOYS		County Position	SW position	ESAA Position
Luke Prior	The King Alfred School	3	2	18
Sam Sommerville	Strode College	1	5	19
Robbie Brown	Millfield School	2	4	28
Ben Jones	Queen's College	4	6	34
Oliver Dickinson	The King Alfred School	5	8	91
Felix Rusby	Downside School	7	7	118
Theo Mathew	Downside School	10	24	172
Harry Travers	Downside School	11	dns	206
James Bridge	The Park School	8	12	dns
Dan Wilde	Queen's College	6	23	dns
Jonny Birkett	Downside School	13	39	
Ben Tull	Richard Huish College	9	dns	
	SW Team		1	1
	C' Group Team		1	1
	National Team			3

