

Chairman's report 2016 – 2017

The quote by Pele and many others since:

“Success is not an accident.....”

is truly at the heart of this association. The success of this association is down to so many and the passion and enthusiasm that they exude, along with both an unfaltering commitment and true dedication.

It has been a true pleasure to be chairman this year, an association that I first had the pleasure of being involved with back when I was just 12 years old, at my first English Schools Cross Country Championships in Wadebridge and continued to benefit from throughout my entire school life. I knew then what a great set up Somerset had, but this was totally reinforced when I took my first teaching job in Kent and volunteered to join the Kent Schools Association and travelled as a team manager to the 1998 English Schools Championships at Cheltenham racecourse - when I managed Lisa Dobriskey as a junior girl. They didn't compare on any level to Somerset and the fabulous association that we have, both back then and now today. I was only too delighted to come back to teach in Somerset in 1999 and come along and join this committee.

This year we have certainly had both highs and lows and the old saying blood, sweat and tears has definitely come in to play. But we can all be so very proud of the associations achievements both at a grassroots level, with the fabulous coaching courses that Brian and Dick have continued to offer but also at the very highest level with a significant number of our Somerset athletes gaining international recognition; not just as athletes but in many other sports. The children here in Somerset are so lucky to have the support and benefit from the huge passion that those around this room have for the sports of athletics and cross country and the willingness that you all show to helping children develop and reach their own personal goals. It is truly humbling to see the dedication that so many of you show towards this and I can only thank you for this and hope that we as an association will benefit from this for many years to come. Dick and Brain for your incredible work ethic and the many many hours that you dedicate not only to Somerset but also to the South West; I was delighted that Brain received his award in Boston to recognise this. Nick and Sally for your unfailing patience and commitment to officiating and sorting us all out when we turn to you with a blank face. Les for keeping us in the black and looking after our accounts so meticulously, I now know how hard it is to get you to part with our money! To Richard for his enthusiasm and ability to fit so much into his white van; the Aldon course, marques and even the tables and chairs all seem to fit into that small space! To Pat, Jo and Jayne for your fabulous support and professionalism and to all the others that have helped our 2016/17 year be so productive, team managers, officials, area secretaries, marshals and helpers. We have such a great group of parents and friends who all want to help because in some way they have been touched by the hard work and endeavours of the association.

Somerset as a county has achieved so much this year – hearing and reading through the annual reports just confirms this. I have not been able to get to every event this year but will not forget the two extremes of weather for the two South West Championships - another very wet South West Cross Country Champs, this time in Truro, and the truly melting day in Exeter when we all witnessed some unforgettable magical athletics moments. Norfolk was a super day and watching Dick having his red and black face paint applied will remain a highlight for me.

It is no accident that Somerset is so successful and I thank you wholeheartedly all for your input, help and support this year.

Katie Cobb