

Chairman's Notes for AGM, 2015.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to act as Chairman of this wonderful association for the past 12 months. As an athlete in the Somerset team many years ago, I perhaps took for granted all the efforts by the association (many of those on the committee were heavily involved even back then!). I have certainly realised through this year, what a tremendous amount of time the members of the association devote to making Somerset one of, or perhaps the best run county association in the country.

I am in awe of the work that Brian Baker does on behalf of all the athletes, so I would want to formally acknowledge that on their behalf with a huge thank you Brian. Pat Gillette retires (again) this year from fixtures secretary. Her good humour and passion for the athletes goes back decades, even through her time with London Schools. Again on behalf of the many hundreds/thousands of athletes that you have helped and inspired, a huge thank you to you Pat; enjoy your proper retirement now.

Pat along with Dick Bowden have attended ESAA meetings at a national level to try and influence change within the national organisation of schools athletics, again showing the desire to achieve the best for the young athletes that pull on the Somerset vest. 2014-15 has proven to be an exceptional year for Somerset athletes, under the guidance of Dick as Senior team manager. Dick is supported by an army of teachers and staff that are always prepared to help with teams, and without their organising, professionalism and efforts the success's the athletes achieve wouldn't be possible.

A number of regional/national titles were won across all areas of the sport; track and field, cross country, combined events and the schools cup. In the national cross country championships, the boys and girls won the team championships. The track and field team had 1 gold (Laurie Dawkins) , 1 silver and 3 bronze medals. The team was very strong, with 19 athletes from Somerset gaining a National Standard performance. A further 25 athletes were competing for the final 10 places on the team, all of whom had achieved national entry standards.

This shows the immense depth at the moment in the county, and is reward for all the hard work of athletes, parents, coaches, officials and the members of the association. A significant achievement perhaps has been made by twins Ollie and Elise Thorner. They have made national championships in ESAA x/c, ESAA schools cup x/c, ESAA T & F champs, ESAA pentathlon champs, ESAA track and field cup! Quite an achievement in a single calendar year.

Once again it has been an absolute pleasure to be Chairman this year, and I hope that the athletes in coming years continue to enjoy their experience of Somerset athletics as I did many years ago, and I think athletes still do today!