

Chairman's Report 2019



It has been an honour to have been the chairman for a second year. It is evident from the chairman's reports over the years, and the associations close links and representation on various committees at ESAA level, that the athletes within Somerset are privileged to have an association at the heart of the schools athletics movement and all of the developments within it. Inevitably, this relies heavily on the stalwarts of the Association continuing to keep the machine running smoothly and for this we are all very grateful.

With such comprehensive reports from Dick, I am sure you will all agree that once again it has been an incredibly successful year for Somerset, despite the weather doing its best to beat us!

This year we faced the prospect of having to find a new venue for our very successful county cross country championships due to the sale of Aldon Hill. Thankfully due to much hard work from Brian we were given permission for both the 2019 and 2020 championships to take place and Brian continues to work with the new owners in the hope of securing the venue for future years. Following our successful county championships it was with great disappointment that the South –West Championships was cancelled due to the snow. Thankfully it did not cause us too many issues when selecting our teams for the National Championships.

The weather caused yet more problems at the county combined events championships in April, but with such an experienced team of organisers and officials the adjustments and safety precautions were handled efficiently and effectively. Thankfully with the bad weather behind us, the track season got under way, although it was with a somewhat slow start. However, once under way the standards just kept coming. There were some brilliant performances at both County and South-West level, with several records broken. This gave us high hopes for the ESAA championships in Birmingham and as always our athletes did not disappoint as Dick highlights in his report.

Somerset continues to be one of the strongest performing counties at all the major championships, with medallists at all of them, both individual and team. At national level several athletes once again gained England Honours.

As an Association we remain influential at a National level, with Dick leading the change in the structure of teams for the track and field championships, allowing a more fluid movement between the groupings every three years. The ultimate aim being of benefiting athletes across the country so that the championships are a true reflection of the talent within England.

SSAA remains financial stable thanks to the careful handling of the accounts from Les, but it is with great sadness that we acknowledge that this will be his last year in the role. However, we are enormously grateful that Les has kindly given us a year to find a suitable replacement. Not an easy task and he will inevitably leave a big hole in the association.

My eternal gratitude as always to Brian, Dick and Les, but equally to those who give of their time so freely to enable our athletes to compete. To Richard for his never ending supply of poles, tape, mallets, and anything and everything else we could ever need to survive in the worst weather conditions imaginable. Somerset's answer to Bear Grylls! To Jane and Katie for their endless energy, professionalism, humour. To Nick and Sally for their invaluable contribution in organising and managing the Officials. To Pat for her never ending support and guidance and to the countless teachers and parents who have helped along the way, team managing, officiating, providing transport and food! Whatever role you have played, Thank you.

It is therefore with great pride that I am able to hand over knowing that the Association is as strong as it has ever been and we look forward to even more success in 2020.

To Pike