



HERNE HILL HARRIERS **HIGHLIGHTS**

December 2024

Welcome to your monthly Newsletter – I hope you enjoy it. Athletes, coaches, team managers if you have any photos and achievements you would like include in future issues, please email me: glenkeeganhhh@gmail.com

British Masters title for Super Mum Gaby



Battersea Park has become the venue for many recent road racing events and on a very wet Sunday morning it was the turn of the British Masters Athletics Federation 5km road race championships for the second year in a row.

There were strong entries in several age groups and at the very front of all the female competitors Herne Hill's Gaby Reynolds led the way, leaving younger veteran women in her wake. In being first woman across the line, the 43-year-old claimed the British W40 title with her 17:16 clocking, enjoying a clear winning margin of over 90 seconds over the next finisher in her category.

Reynolds' return to top level racing has been remarkable, having given birth to her third child as recently as April of this year. This is the second national gold medal she has won since making her comeback as she was also a key member of Harriers' historic senior women's team who won the English Road Relay Championship in Sutton Coldfield in October.

To add to her collection, Reynolds also led the Herne Hill W35-44 team to silver medals in conjunction with fellow W40 Susan Grounds (22:07) and W60 Sarah Allen (28:06).

The M45-54 team brought home gold medals with good performances from M50s Simon Coombes (fifth in 16:30) and Ben Paviour (sixth in 16:33) plus M45 Ben Millar (10th in 17:05). Further backup was provided by another M50 Robin Jones (19th in 18:23). Reynolds' husband Bryn was the sole Harriers representative in the M35 age group placing 8th in this category with 17:18.

The M60s field was exceptional, with an unprecedented depth of performance. Despite both running superb times for their age David Taylor and Graeme Moyle found their 17:45 and 17:50 were only sufficient for eighth and 11th respectively around the fast Battersea circuit. **Geoff Jerwood**

Poppy and and Phoebe Q and A





Were you into sports from a young age and was there anything else other than athletics you enjoyed?

Poppy

I enjoyed a range of sports when I was younger, mostly on a national level: running, swimming, triathlon, diving, lacrosse, gymnastics... I kept up the gymnastics until I was 15 and then focused on running!

Phoebe

Due to being from the tennis capital of the UK I was very into tennis and enjoyed playing at the National Tennis Centre growing up! I then got into Squash and Lacrosse at school and had the great opportunity to represent Scotland at lacrosse. I found my love for running from the lacrosse pitch and bleak Monday morning fitness!

Can you tell us how you got involved in athletics, the role of your schools, and the significance of being part of an athletics club?

Poppy

My school allowed me to race and qualify for English Schools but all my training as a junior was supported by Herne Hill. I joined HHH when I was 9 and trained with the group on Streatham Common until I was about 14! Now, I train closer to home but still appreciate all the support from HHH. Athletics clubs make the sport accessible to all ages and allow you to learn about training/racing in a social and supportive group - that's why grassroots sports are so important.

Phoebe

I got involved in athletics through a local club near my school at Windsor Slough Eton & Hounslow (feel free to take this out!) and the coach there noticed my eagerness to improve and make it to English Schools XC! WSEH gave me the opportunity to train on a track and join for hill sessions then I decided to join HHH as it was closer to home and I had the honour of joining a great and supportive training group and coach under Wayne Vinton - and this is how I met Poppy! I'm so grateful for HH for supporting me in so many different ways from their encouragement to helping me get into races!

Were there any inspirations from a young age who motivated you, or in later years?

Poppy

My first inspirational athletics memory has to be Super Saturday at the London Olympics. However, I am more motivated by the other girls around my age running for GB. In particular, Phoebe's steady progression over the last few years, culminating in winning Euro Cross! I've also had the 'you've got potential' talk from all of my coaches which always helps!

Phoebe

From a young age I wasn't particular knowledgeable on the sport.. sadly declining a spot from my parents to watch the Athletics at the London Olympics 😞 but as I got more into it I am always inspired by my friend Megan Keith and

her highland toughness! These euro teams are also always inspiring meeting fellow motivated athletes!

Both of you are academic high flyers as well as international athletes. It would be good to hear how you have juggled your studies with your athletics success.

Poppy

It's definitely not easy and I found it hard to continue running during my final year of school, as my priority was achieving my Cambridge offer for Natural Sciences. My degree has very high contact hours so I've learnt to use time blocking and become less of a perfectionist. Also, I take running easier during exam season or after a long race weekend, so I can catch up on work - your body can only handle so much stress at once! But training with friends allows me to have a good chat and take a break from my academics, which I always appreciate.

Phoebe

Thank you! I wouldn't say academics come naturally to me. I think a big part of balancing the two is learning how to compartmentalise. It is helpful for me to have scheduled practice with friends so that I can switch off from my studies, and when my academics are going badly I can get endorphins and self confidence from what I can do out on the field/track! It's also important to understand that you may have to sacrifice some time working for travelling, racing, recovering so just ensuring the time you are studying is quality!

Can you tell us about the transition from school to university, in the UK/USA. Is there any particular advice that you'd give to school-age athletes making this transition?

Poppy

It's definitely a learning curve and I have so much advice to give! The main ones are to increase mileage gradually and do the basics well i.e. eat and sleep enough. There are multiple ways to run fast; some people can achieve all their mileage through running whereas most of the girls at Cambridge reduce impact through cross training. Work out what is best for you and stick with it!

Phoebe

(USA): this certainly was a large transition but was certainly the best decision for me. Coming from a background where I was trying to squeeze my training in after school and work, it was a joy to schedule my classes and life around my running schedule so it could become more of a priority. Also I enjoyed turning up to practice each day to spend time with friends which made the load of the hard work feel a lot lighter! My biggest advice is to not be afraid to set lofty goals because that will be what drives you on in training. Also make sure you have a plan with you coach for how you plan to peak for the championship races because that's something I struggled with coming from a background where we race very little!

It would be good to hear about your training at university, what a typical week comprises, including cross/strength training etc.

Poppy

After my tibial stress fracture, I switched most of my easy running mileage for the wattbike. My training volume varies depending on racing and how tired I'm feeling, but this is my typical week:

Poppy

Monday - easy run

Tuesday - interval grass session

Wednesday - easy bike + gym

Thursday - easy/steady run

Friday - rest day
Saturday - interval grass/hill session
Sunday - longer bike + gym

Phoebe

A typical week for me at uni is very conventional with:

Monday - easy run + strides, circuit
Tuesday - track threshold
Wednesday- medium long run
Thursday - easy run + strides, circuit
Friday - tempo and speed
Saturday - cross train
Sunday - long run
With core sprinkled in there!

Can you tell us about the competition set up at university, what this entails including main targets over the year.

Poppy

I'm the Club Captain at Cambridge and we focus on two races during the cross country season: Varsity and BUCS. Our Varsity Match against Oxford is held on the first Saturday in December. It is a very unique and special race - each team has 8 runners, we wear all white kit and there is even a river crossing! BUCS is the big race for all the universities at the start of February. Cambridge has developed into a team that consistently wins BUCS medals, and we are aiming to do the same this year.

Phoebe

For each of the three seasons we would start with smaller meets where you could get an honest race effort out. In track season this is the opportunity to run distances that are shorter than my favourite (5k!) so I would often enjoy running a mile or 800! Then as the season gears up we have our Ivy League champs where I would often double in events to support my team, then you move to the NCAA season where you compete in regionals then hopefully onto Nationals! In Indoor there is no regionals round (for now..) and is selected on the top 16 times in the country per distance. My target following a disappointing 2022-3 season was to be an All-American at every NCAAs I've competed in which I hope to keep alive going into my 5th year in the NCAA in 2025-6!

You have both been selected to run for GB U23 in the European Cross Country Championships, an amazing achievement. It would be good to hear about your journey to selection, how you prepared etc.

Poppy

I'm in my first year of U23s so racing at Trials wasn't my plan at the start of the season. However, I was in good shape after six weeks of consistent training on the grass and hills. My friends and coach encouraged me to race at Liverpool and I surprised myself by making my first GB team!

Phoebe

I have been preparing for this race throughout the past year and across the NCAA XC season. This season I have done a lot more track work specifically threshold k's to ensure I get a solid base of fitness without beating my body up. It has allowed me to feel more fresh later on in the season. Following, last year's disappointment of non-selection I wanted to ensure I did everything I could to prepare for a consistent and strong season to be selected so I'm proud for turning that disappointment into motivation.

Please tell us about your experience in Antalya, the days leading up to the race etc.

Poppy

It was my first GB vest so I really focused on soaking up the experience! I've travelled to Belgium and Japan for races previously so I'm used to unfamiliar environments now, but it was definitely nice to know Phoebe beforehand. The rest of the team were very welcoming, and I enjoyed the course walk and pre race meeting.

Phoebe

It was a bit of a whirlwind coming off of NCAAs then back to NY for my final exams and then I flew over to Europe on Thursday. It was a busy time but I made sure to compartmentalise and put the books away the day before the race so I could focus on the job at hand!

And the day itself. You would have been very proud to be on the start line. How did your race go? Did you run it to a pre race plan or did you respond to the race as it unfolded? It would be good to hear about the course, your competitors, team and overall feelings about the race.

Poppy

I had planned to have a percentage run and move through the field in the second half. However, I got badly spiked in the first 600m, so the aim quickly changed to finishing as gracefully as possible! My performance wasn't what I had hoped but I am still incredibly proud to have made the start line and the grit I showed during the race. The course was similar to other European races outside the UK. Lots of laps, logs, hay bales, sand, short sharp hills... it was an exciting course, but I'm definitely more suited to the mud!

Phoebe

The opening field was wide which allowed everyone to choose their own line to the first left bend.. the Brits started out on the right but a lot of people funnelled to the left. So it was important for us to hold our own line. We had 3 Brits out at the front which was encouraging and I found it was easy to clear the barriers if I had a clearer view. I also wanted to make sure I stayed as relaxed as possible until the last lap. I knew there would be a move made by Forero or Mondenen at some point so I just tried to relax and stay alert. I think Mondenen made her move in the 3rd lap so I went with it and it was much easier navigating the corners in a smaller group. Then on the final lap with 1km I could feel myself fading and thinking ahh I'll settle for a bronze that's great I'm a medalist but going over the last barrier I thought why not give it a go! If I blow up then hopefully I can still hold onto 3rd.

Finally, following your trip, it would be great to hear any final reflections on your journey and the competition, and to also hear about targets for the remainder of the season.

Poppy

I'm now targeting BUCS XC in February, where we are hoping to upgrade our team bronze from last year. After that, I've got my eye on making the U23 GB team for Euro Cross again in 2025 and 2026!

Phoebe

It was an incredible experience and an honour to learn from all of the team managers who have run many of these champs. Our manager Hayley Yelling had won 2 euro champs! It was great to hear her mindset and learn about her training style, preparation and execution. It's also great to hear about everyone's different journeys to get there and how despite our different set ups we all worked incredibly hard to get there! My XC season is now over so I plan to get a solid base to run a few 10k road races and to improve on my 5k and 10k times outdoor. Questions from **Keith Newton**

Another Southern Indoor Pentathlon Title for Jasmine



At 15 Jasmine Nkoso is this season one of the youngest in her age group but is already well used to winning area and national titles. On Saturday she was crowned South of England Under 17 women's indoor pentathlon champion at their Combined Events meet with a PB 3,503 points.

Her strong series of performances kicked off in the best way with a win in the 60m hurdles with a PB of 9.23. She then cleared 1.51m for the fifth best high jump and threw the shot further than her competitors with 13.24m.

Another win in the long jump with a PB 5.54m saw her leading with the 800m remaining, for which she clocked 2:41.70 as the fifth fastest. This was more than enough to see her claim the gold medal with a clear overall winning margin of 147 points. A fitting way for the England Schools international to end a very successful year. **Geoff Jerwood**

SAVE THE DATE
Presentation Evening –

St Boniface Church Hall – 22nd March 2025

Club Welfare Officer



Please remember that if you are concerned about a fellow athlete or you yourself feel uncomfortable in any way during training or competing with the club, you should report this concern to the lead Club Welfare Officer, Sarah Guest, or a known adult who can also report this concern to the CWO and welfare team.

All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and thoroughly.

welfarehh@gmail.com



