



HERNE HILL HARRIERS **HIGHLIGHTS**

March 2025

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

Surrey Road record for Snowden at Podium Festival



A chilly Saturday in the grounds of a school in Leicester saw the biggest and fastest edition so far of one of the new wave of road racing events in athletics in the UK, the 2025 Podium Festival 5km. There was a huge entry, many clocking personal best times in twelve races spanning seven hours of action, culminating in the elite races for women and then men.

Generous prize money and the opportunity for high quality races attracted international athletes including an Olympian from the 2021 Tokyo Games in

each of the elite women's and men's races. The women's winner was one of these, Herne Hill Harriers star Katie Snowden with a successful return to racing after having cut short her indoor track campaign a month earlier to build fitness for the summer season.

Snowden delivered a tactical masterclass, staying in the lead pack around the five laps of a flat circuit before asserting authority to use her track speed to good effect in the closing stages with an impressive finishing kick to take the win.

The winning time of 15:18 was a PB and thereby lowered her own Surrey County female road 5km record by five seconds. The 31-year-old was very pleased not only with her race execution, but with an affirmation that for this time of year she is stronger aerobically than previously and expects this to stand her in good stead for her bid for World Championship team selection later this year.

Her club mate Georgie Grgec was also on the podium at Podium, finishing in third place with a PB of 15:23. The New Zealand international was always in the same group at the front and her own strong finish saw her equal Snowden's previous Surrey record to go second on that all-time list. Their times are also unsurprisingly the two fastest Herne Hill Harriers clockings so far in 5km road races.

In the same race two more Harriers clocked even bigger PBs as 20-year-old Poppy Craig-McFeely ran 16:10 for an astonishing 44 second improvement and Sophie Tooley lowered her previous best by 15 seconds with 16:31.

In the men's Elite B race Brandon Dewar was just three seconds shy of his PB with 14:36, while in earlier races Ryan Willmott's 16:14 was also close to his best and Calum Murphy ran an inaugural PB for the distance with 16:51 for a successful day all round.

Geoff Jerwood

Surrey Indoor medals for Herne Hill athletes



Herne Hill Harriers had a clean sweep of the podium places in the U13 girls 60m final at the Surrey Indoor Track & Field Championships at Carshalton's David Weir Centres.

Nylah-Skye McCrobie (8.51), Cymphonique Barrett (8.55) and Rohanna McLeod (8.66) produced excellent runs to collect all the medals.

The long jump events were a rich source of medal success. In the U17 women's contest, gold was claimed by Pyale Wifa (5.36m).

Harriers' U20 men scored a one-two through Sheriff Silly and Maalik Adamson, who had best jumps of 6.59m on the day.

The latter took the gold medal home as his second best effort was further than his club-mate achieved. A further silver medal was picked up by U17 David Omosuyi (5.63m).

Ignatius Abebrese was a clear winner of the senior men's triple jump (14.34m), while Alex Abebrese's 12.34m to win the U20 men's shot put gold made it a golden family double.

A silver medal was won in the U20 men's 60m by Rikaion Smith with a time of 6.94 and a bronze collected in the U15 girls shot Maliyah Boothe with a PB of 9.29m – Nahla Berry was fourth with a PB of 9.12m in the same event.

Geoff Jerwood

**Phoebe wins GB road selection
after excellent run at Pulford 10K**



Eight days on from seeing two female athletes from Herne Hill Harriers on a big road race podium over 5km in Leicester, it was the turn of Phoebe Anderson, another international from the club, to claim third place in an equally high-quality Pulford 10km on Sunday morning in Cheshire.

The European U23 Cross Country champion endured a rough journey after completing an altitude training camp in the USA, losing both baggage and sleep along the way, but was able to deliver in an event used as the British Athletics trial for the European Road Running Championships in Leuven, Belgium next month.

Needing to finish among the first four women and with a time of 32:20 or faster for selection, her third-place finish at Pulford in a chip time of 32:15 should see her officially named in the Great Britain team.

The time was eight seconds inside her PB set in Valencia last month and also inside the qualification standard laid out for consideration.

In contention for a top-four position, the 22-year-old pushed on at eight kilometres to ensure the time target was achievable and produced a strong sprint finish to relegate Welsh international Jenny Nesbitt into fourth place and hopefully guarantee her selection. **Geoff Jerwood**

Awards Presentation Evening



We held our annual presentation evening at St Boniface Social Club on 22nd March where award winners were recognized for their achievements during 2024 both individually and within teams.

During 2024 club members performed at the World Cross Country Championships, World Masters Championships as well as National Championships & English Schools. The standard of the winners was very high in all age categories. We also celebrated a number of club records, high national rankings & long standing memberships including Paul Fitton, a Club Member for over 56 years.

Our guest of honour was Lorna Boothe MBE who represented GB at the

Olympics and was actually a Herne Hill Harrier as a youngster being one of the first female members when the womens section was introduced in 1976. Next year we celebrate 50 years of the women's section in Herne Hill Harriers.

Steve Bosley

Top relay results for Herne Hill women & men

The South of England Road Relay Championships were held in Milton Keynes on Sunday with club teams from across the region vying for women's and men's titles and medals and qualification for the National equivalent in Sutton Coldfield on 12th April.

Herne Hill Harriers fielded one women's team of six and two men's teams of twelve and enjoyed another special day at this event. The women's team placed an excellent fifth, while the improving depth in the men's squad was more evident than ever with the A team finishing eighth and for the second time in the club's history the B team, third in this category and 21st overall joined the A team in securing National qualification.

The women's squad depth was also tested with what had appeared to be a crippling list of absences due to injury issues and outside commitments and only an eleventh-hour emergency call to team captain Julia Wedmore saved the day and ensured a complete team would race.

Wedmore has endured a long injury rehab battle of her own following a cycling accident last summer and heroically stepped into the breach for her first race since the London Marathon almost a year ago to run the fifth stage maintain the strong position the team was holding.

Sarah Grover had kicked things off with a strong first leg start, clocking 17:48 for her 5km stint for the 12th fastest female short stage overall. She handed over to Rowen Hughes in seventh. Hughes, feeling the effects of big marathon preparation completed her longer 8.6km leg in 13th place with 33:03. W40 Leonie Biemolt moved up three positions on the next 5km leg, running a good 18:17 to lift the team back into the top ten at the halfway stage.

Next was an 8.6km stage with another W40 Gaby Reynolds storming through into fourth place with the seventh quickest long stage overall, a rapid 30:53. Her time was only beaten on this actual leg by National cross country champion Jess Gibbon who led her Reading team to the overall win. Next up was Wedmore's superb comeback with 5km in 19:58 before recent recruit Bryony

Proctor brought the team home in fifth place with a good 18:11.

The men's A team finished eighth for the third successive year, but each year's overall team time improves to maintain this position as the aggregate of the twelve men on Sunday was two minutes faster than last year. This race alternates the long stage with the shorter one and can see team positions swing throughout a long afternoon of racing.

Andrew Clarke ran a solid 28:03 for 25th at the end of the first leg. U20 Durham University student Harry Bell moved through to 20th with 15:30, the fastest short stage time from among the Harriers men. Australian Brandon Dewar then produced a superb 26:47 for the fastest long leg in the team to move up to 12th. Sam Brashaw's 15:46 gained another place to 11th, then team captain Daniel Shaw up to ninth with his 27:49.

The team reached their eventual eighth position by halfway courtesy of Ronan Tanguy clocking 15:42, but an exciting second half battle was then to ensue with the Ladywell based Kent AC A team. Tom Austin made a strong debut with 27:17, then Max Rose was seventh with 16:02 after eight stages. Morgan Roberts ran a quick 27:07 on a strong ninth leg to hold eighth.

Tom O'Mahoney's 16:19, Oliver Mills 27:52 and Harry Roberts 16:02 then maintained this through to the finish despite the close attentions of the chasing Kent squad.

The B team's 21st place finish guaranteed an entry for two Herne Hill men's team in the midlands for the year in a row, having never previously been able to do so. They were 3rd of all B teams ahead of strong clubs including Cambridge & Coleridge (24th overall), whose A team had finished second, Kent AC (26th) and Hercules Wimbledon (28th).

The dozen men who achieved this feat were, in running order, Matt Cartwright 28:53, M50 Ben Paviour 16:43, Alex Russell 28:10, Tom Patterson 15:49, Jack Brotchie 28:54, Seve Loudon 17:16, Andrew Warburton 28:58, Bryn Reynolds 16:50, M45 Ben Millar 30:35, Fintan Kearney 16:46, M40 Jeff Cunningham 29:38 and Stephen McLeod 17:18.

The club will now hope to mount a strong challenge for medals in the women's race and highest ever men's A and B team positions at the National Road Relays. **Geoff Jerwood**

Extraordinary General Meeting

2nd April 2025

There will be an EGM on Wed 2nd April 2025 to confirm rule changes related to membership and EA fees.

It will be held online and/or please email Stev Bosley for Zoom link if you wish to attend: steve@envoy-freight.co.uk

There is no price change, just a refinement of timing. HHH membership fees will be charged on the anniversary of a member's joining (election) date. England Athletics registration fees will continue to be charged on 1 April each year. Club Rule 7.2 will be amended from "by 1st April in each year without demand" to "at the anniversary of joining date in each year". Rule 7.3 already treats the EA fee as separate and chargeable "where applicable", and 1st April remains the applicable date, so no changes are needed. Implementation plan: Members with Direct Debit already setup: £19 EA fee will be charged via DD on 1st April. HHH membership fee will be charged on the anniversary of their election date (£62 for seniors, £45 for full-time students/U25s, £35 for U11s, £45 for second claim members). Members without DD (still paying via bank transfer): Membership and EA subs will continue to lapse on 1st April each year unless manually renewed. Members can continue paying via bank transfer, but will be encouraged to set up DD.

Meet a HHH stalwart who is an international discus thrower, and a bobsleigh Olympian. Life Member Gary Power, former BAL team captain and now a coach to some top throwers, is a hugely respected member of the athletics community.



Can you say a bit about your background, whether sporty as a youngster and what sports/activities you engaged in?

I played football at school in winter and did athletics in the summer. I loved playing all kinds of sport but my school concentrated on just two. I had good basic fitness as I cycled 4 miles to school each day and ran around a lot too. I broke my leg playing football aged 15, took up basketball, and dropped football. I did play football (just prior to the leg fracture) and basketball at county level. Both teams were full of people from athletics.

How, and at what age, did you get into athletics and were there any athletes that you particularly admired/took inspiration from?

I was introduced to athletics at school aged 11 and then joined my local club - Horsham Blue Star Harriers. I took part in a variety of athletics events including sprints, 400m hurdles, jumping and throwing; I really like high jump and discus. Before the age of the internet the athletes I read about in books were an inspiration. Al Oerter the American discus thrower 4 x Olympic champion was my idol. Books were the only source of information and I taught myself to throw discus from a book by John Le Masurier. This had a very long effect on my athletics career both good and bad.

You were part of a strong Sussex Schools squad, with some very good athletes. Can you comment on your experience at the English Schools, and the buzz that there must have been having so many talented athletes

alongside you?

Being a young athlete in Sussex was amazing. I was in teams with Olympic medalists like Mark Rowlands, Commonwealth Champions like Mick Jones, internationals like Debbie Woolgar, the Bristows. My longest standing friend is not from school but from Sussex Schools Athletics - John Challis - he went on to achieve greatness in the field of biomechanics (Professor of Biomechanics Penn State University). There were other great people whom I still see regularly such as Vince Golding and Richard Carter both of who coach to a high level these days.

I recall you sharing stories of training with various Olympians. It would be good to hear about that and the inspiration drawn from training with top athletes.

I used to travel to Crawley to train with my first coach Janet Thompson - she was a UK international discus thrower and in that training group was Richard Slaney, Olympic athlete and British record holder, (I met his then girlfriend – now wife - Mary Decker in Crawley Sports Centre when she was one of the most famous athletes on Earth). By far the biggest name training at Crawley was Daley Thompson (coached by Bruce Longden at the time). He would often be throwing discus with our group in spite of already being an Olympic Champion. Daley could do anything. He was so talented and had an amazing work ethic too – still has. I would see Steve Ovett regularly at Withdean Stadium or at County Championships. HHH has a few ex-Sussex athletes in Geoff Jerwood and Keith Newton who were very successful in their day.

When I was in my twenties, I spent a lot of time with my great friend Terry McHugh (HHH record holder in the javelin, Irish Record Holder and 21 times Irish Champion, 4 time summer Olympian and 2 times winter Olympian). He trained with Steve Backley and Mick Hill and my teaching holidays would be spent in their company. They were coached by another Sussex great – John Trower.

The great joy of athletics is that you can train with some of the greatest athletes on this planet because they have to use the same facilities as they are doing the same thing as you (only better). You also see that greatness is earned through hard work, dedication and attention to detail.

Can you share what being part of a Club has meant to you. Your membership of Herne Hill Harriers stretches back over several decades, and you were captain of our British Athletics League team for many years. It would be good to hear about the impact of this on your athletics career.

I joined HHH when I was at the University of London (Goldsmiths). I wrote to Kevin Kelly, then secretary of the club and asked if they needed a discus

thrower. He wrote back and I joined. It was one of the best things I did in my life. What a club. A huge richness in athletic talent, ethnicity and social class. It was totally integrated. Sprinters, jumpers, distance runners and throwers all friends. A club steeped in history but still creating its own history now. I was captain of the British Athletics League Team for quite a while; I used to love competing in the British League and only missed one competition over about 20 years. Representing HHH was always a priority for me. I look back with great fondness on the teams we had. Back in the day, you could only compete for Southern League Team if you had not represented your club in the British League. My first ever competition for HHH was at Parliament Hill in a Southern League match, I remember Jon Solly (Club Record Holder for 10 000 and Marathon) doing the 1500m and 5000m and winning both. I competed in about six events and was flaked by the time discus came around and threw only about 40m – I think Kevin Kelly thought I had lied about my ability to throw. To be honest I am little surprised that you did not ask about my cross-country exploits too. I ran in the HHH Centenary cross-country in Richmond Park – I think about 7 miles but felt like 15. I ran Mickey Boyle close - as he was warming down I was completing my first lap of two! I have been honoured by the Club by being Club President and also being granted life membership.

The discus has always struck me as an extremely dynamic event, requiring strength, speed, co-ordination and many other attributes. Can you tell us about the event, and what makes a top-level thrower?

I love all athletics, I love throws the most, and discus is my favourite event. Discus throwing has one of the world's most famous statues in Discobolus sculptured by Myron in the 4th century BC. The discus thrower was considered the ultimate in sporting disciplines and symbolised the best all-rounder. The same holds true today. To be a good discus thrower you need to be able to sprint, jump and throw. You need the strength of a weight-lifter and the grace and poise of a ballet dancer. We are very lucky these days to have superb technical models like Valarie Allman to emulate. We also saw the longest standing track & field world record broken last year in the men's discus.

It would be good to hear about a typical training for a discus thrower, and how this varies over the different phases including fine-tuning for the summer months.

For an athlete who is young training would be more broad and hopefully involve other athletics disciplines and other sports too. As an athlete reaches late teens they may begin to specialise, more training would be broken down into blocks.

Below I have shown a very simplistic training plan for a discus thrower

MONTH	THEME	STRENGTH	SPEED - RUNNING	JUMPS	THROWS
September	Getting fit to train	Circuit Training	150m reps short recovery	Multi directional jumps	Medballs mostly
October	Getting fit to train	Circuit Training	150m reps short recovery	Multi directional jumps	Medballs mostly
November	Strength 1	Lifting Weights for Strength & Power	80m reps towing tyre	Multi directional jumps	Multiple weighted discus / heavier discus
December	Strength 1	Lifting Weights for Strength & Power	80m reps towing tyre	Multi directional jumps	Multiple weighted discus / heavier discus
January	Strength 1	Lifting Weights for Strength & Power	80m reps towing tyre	Multi directional jumps	Multiple weighted discus / heavier discus
February	Strength 2	Lifting Weights for Strength & Power	Run to top speed hold 2 secs	Multi directional jumps	Multiple weighted discus
March	Strength 2	Lifting Weights for Strength & Power	Run to top speed hold 2 secs	Multi directional jumps	Only comp weight discus or lighter
April	Strength 2 / Specifics	Lifting Weights for Strength & Power	Run to top speed hold 2 secs	Multi directional jumps	Only comp weight discus or lighter
May	Competition	Lifting Weights for Speed	Short sharp sprints < 60m	Multi directional jumps	Only comp weight discus or lighter
June	Competition	Lifting Weights for Speed	Short sharp sprints < 60m	Concentric jumps	Only comp weight discus or lighter
July	Competition	Lifting Weights for Speed	Short sharp sprints < 60m	Concentric jumps	Only comp weight discus or lighter
August	Competition	Lifting Weights for Speed	Short sharp sprints < 60m	Concentric jumps	Only comp weight discus or lighter

HHH is blessed with some great coaches and Anthony Soalla-Bell is someone who coaches at Tooting who can offer great expertise in this area.

Can you say a bit about coaching and mentorship? I am interested to hear about any coaches who have played a significant part in your own progression as an athlete, but also your own experience as a coach.

Competing is brilliant but it is very hard to be a good athlete without a coach. Thank your coach today! I was foolish enough to teach myself to throw from a book and by the time I got good coaching it was hard to change old bad habits. I was lucky to be coached by Janet Thompson, Bruce Longden and Mike Winch – all great coaches. Ultimately, I could have been a better athlete if I had had a better start to throwing by being coached correctly rather than self-taught. That experience informs my work as a coach today. I was very fortunate to be involved in the National Coach Development Programme as part of the Olympic 2012 legacy. I was immersed in a programme that brought in people like Vesteyn Hafsteinsson – coach to two Olympic champions (Kanter and Stahl) and Derek Evely (Planning expert) I spent days trying to absorb everything they had to say to develop me as a coach. Every day is a school day. As a coach, you must always try to learn more and keep improving. On a more personal level, I have learned a lot from two former HHH athletes. Terry McHugh (Swiss National Throws Lead) and David Sweeney (Ireland Lead for Field Events). I speak to Terry about 6 times a week about throwing.

I have coached at European Team Championships, European Winter Throwing Championships, European Youth Olympic Festival and World Youth Olympics. I regularly coach at training camps for the Swiss National Team and teach World Athletics courses in Ireland.

Reflecting on your own career as a discus thrower, what do you consider to be your greatest achievements? And can you also highlight some of the successes of the athletes you have/do coach?

The highest level I competed internationally was the European Team Championships. Ireland competed in the middle divisions where the likes of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Bulgaria compete – all brilliant throwing nations. It was an amazing experience and although I was well beaten I never finished last in any of my international competitions. (Thank you Luxembourg!) I won multiple medals at the Irish Championships and won British Universities three times. I think getting my first international and a trip to Norway probably stands out as the most memorable – I competed against Knut Hjeltnes who was ranked World number 2 at the time. They flew him back from Rome and rearranged the timetable so he could compete – all six competitors had all six throws shown live on Norwegian TV.

I have been very fortunate as a coach to work with some brilliant people. I have taken absolute beginners all the way to compete in the Schools International. I have has a number of English Schools medalists. I have coached a couple of British Universities Champions (shot & Canadian and England International too) I am currently coaching a discus thrower (ranked number 1 in UK last year) and a number of multi-eventers for throws (European U23 competitors, 4th World Indoors etc.). I enjoy working alongside other coaches and being part of a team for the multi eventers.

Underlining your versatility, you competed in the 1998 Olympics in the bobsleigh for Ireland (I believe the four man team was 50% Herne Hill Harriers!). How did that come about, and can you tell us about your training for the event and your Olympic experience?

I was invited to a physical test trial in Dublin as an open invitation. I did quite well and then got selected to try bobsleigh for real. I started bobsleigh in 1989. The training and physical attributes are very similar to those for throwing. Lifting weights (cleans, squats, snatch etc.), sprinting and having agility. Terry McHugh was also doing bobsleigh. I competed at European and World Championships on a number of occasions. I travelled to the 1992 Olympics in Albertville as an alternate – basically, a crash test dummy for the qualifying runs at the Games – the training runs have to be completed safely before being allowed in the competition. Terry was better and was selected to push the two-man in the Olympics for real. I continued to compete in bobsleigh – school responsibilities permitting – all the way up to 1998 in Nagano. Ireland qualified in 1994 in Lillehammer but the Irish Olympic President (Patrick Hickey – Google him for further details as to his character) withdrew our team. I then had to wait for another four years before being an alternate in the two-man but a competitor in the four-man bobsleigh in Japan. The team were all from Ireland's track and

field – driver was 60m indoor record holder, number two was a hammer thrower; I sat at number 3 and Terry at number 4. There was also another HHH competing as driver of Ireland 2 – Peter Donohoe, a hurdler, who competed for HHH briefly.

The training is very similar to training for throws but the seasons are reversed. You do all the heavy work in summer and the quicker work in winter. One of the most difficult things to accomplish is over-speed work. I used to train regularly (at night) running down the ramps in a multi-story carpark pushing a shopping trolley.

The Winter Olympics was an amazing experience when you are completely immersed in sport for around five weeks, you have all your meals provided and everything is free. It is most definitely not the same as a Summer Olympics but it is a good second best.

Finally, I am aware that you balanced your successful athletics and coaching commitments with a senior role within a secondary School. Can you say a bit about that and any current interests and projects you are engaged in, and your perspective on how athletics can evolve over the coming years?

I started teaching at Ernest Bevin in Tooting in 1985, then Hammersmith and then in Watford. I was a deputy head teacher for about 27 years. Coaching and teaching are very similar. In both you are just trying to get the best out of those people around you. In school that is your fellow teachers and the learners; in athletics that is your fellow coaches and the athletes. In both spheres, there are many commonalities – the learner /athlete is most important and the teacher / coach must always be eager to be better.

I retired from teaching a few years ago and coach a lot more now. I am lucky to have a great breadth to my coaching. I work with many great individuals. I coach at Brunel University, a college and a school in London; I am involved in coach education for England Athletics and Athletics Ireland and with the Youth Talent Programme in England; I coach at national squads in Switzerland and have led a few England Teams. The vast majority of my work is still as a volunteer coach working with athletes trying to improve their throws.

The field events are often marginalised in our magnificent sport (lack of TV coverage, loss of infields of tracks to football, increased standards by UKA to compete in major championships). We need more people in field events. I would like to see fundamental changes in the younger years of athletics where it reflects the European model more. The emphasis is on run, jump, throw. In some European countries, you cannot enter your national U18 championships unless you have two events from two different groups e.g. run & throw, jump

and throw or jump & run; this means that people do not specialise too early and talent is retained in the sport.
