

2014 AGM report from Junior Ilkley Harriers

The junior section has a truly inspiring and committed group of volunteers and athletes who are all constantly 'raising the bar' in coaching and competition. We have a junior section that we can all be proud of and one which doesn't plan to stand still. Over the next few years we will see more of our juniors competing at the highest level across a number of disciplines as a result of forward thinking and a desire to continually push the boundaries.

Our membership has grown year on year and in 2014 it went over 300 for the first time (323 in total). Our general programme is for all abilities and provides a good basic foundation for all the athletics disciplines. However over the last few years we have gained the coaching expertise to take those who are more committed to the next level of training and competition. The first ten years was about putting structures into place - it's the next ten years that will see JIH become a force to be reckoned with way beyond Wharfedale and Yorkshire.

In **Cross-Country** we had our best ever West Yorkshire League series with 4 podium places (U11 boys and girls gained silver medals and U13 boys and U15 girls gained bronze medals). In addition our U13 girls gained a 4th place overall and of the 45 juniors who competed in the series 39 gained individual placings for racing in 3 or more of the events. Team podiums are achieved by having strength in depth and having the majority of runners finishing in the top half of the field. Our results were massively impressive and show fantastic ability, dedication and commitment by all our junior athletes. Well done to everyone who competed at this level. Top 10 individual placings were achieved by: Catherine Westhead (4th U11), Emily Kenneth (9th U11), Max Bradley (2nd U11), Bethan Morley (7th U13), Euan Brennan (3rd U13), Sarah Pickering (4th U15), Lucy Williamson (2nd U17) and Joanne Williamson (8th U17).

25 juniors competed at the Yorkshire Championships in Ripon and we had 5 team placings : U15 girls were 3rd and 8th; U13 boys 4th and 14th and U13 girls 9th. Top 20 placings were achieved by Bethan Morley (11th U13), Matthew Kenneth (9th U13), Euan Brennan (11th U13), Sarah Pickering (10th U15), Tilly Melechi (17th U15), Jemima Elgood (20th U15), Lucy Williamson (11th U17).

On to the Northern Championships at Liverpool with 2 team placings (5th U15 girls and 19th U13 girls) and top 50 placings by: Bethan Morley (25th U13), Euan Brennan (20th U13), Matthew Kenneth (38th U13), Jemima Elgood (30th U15), Sarah Pickering (35th U15), Lucy Haines (44th U15), Tilly Melechi (48th U15).

The finale to the Cross-Country season was the National Championships at Nottingham where there were record fields of finishers and over 10,000 spectators. Special mention to George Hardesty who has flown the U15 boy flag solo throughout the season and just kept getting better at every race. The U13 girls team came 47th with Bethan Morley, Emily Elmes, Eva Jeffels, Ella Shouler Harris and Allesandra Ricci competing. The U15 girls team finished in 25th place with Lucy Haines, Tilly Melechi, Jemima Elgood, Georgia Flaxman, Molly Jeffels and Elizabeth Westhead competing. The U13 boys were represented by Euan Brennan and Dominic Coy.

The massively popular Wharfedale Primary Schools League which we support is now in its eighth year and has provided the ideal starting point for most of these athletes. Over 450 children from 12 local schools competed in 4 league races organised by All Saints, Ashlands, Ben Rhydding and Ghyll Royd Schools. And as a much needed stepping stone between school and higher level competition the Peco League organises Challenge races for Years 4-12. We had 25 juniors compete and top 20 places were achieved by: Years 4-6 - Poppy Anderson (4th), Molly Pearson (14th), Nathan Coy (10th). Years 7-9 - Emily Elmes (10th), Bethan Morley (17th), George Hardesty (2nd), Dom Coy (3rd), Robbie Matthews (14th), Harry Barker (17th), Years 10-12 - Lucy Williamson (1st), Joanne Williamson (2nd), Lucy Haines & Jemima Elgood (5th equal), Rebecca Newell (7th), Elizabeth Westhead (9th).

Thank you to Sally Malir, Malcolm Pickering, Gaenor and Steve Coy for team managing and supporting the juniors throughout the Cross-Country season.

The number of juniors competing on the **fells** continues to rise under the guidance and enthusiasm of George Elmes our junior team manager. The success of individuals over the last few years is having a most fantastic knock on affect down through the age categories. It started with Georgia Malir (and it has been great to see Georgia helping to coach the 'next generation' over the summer holidays), last year it was Lucy Williamson and this year we have two juniors who have gained their England vests and they are Lucy Haines and Ruaridh Mon-

Williams who has been selected to run in the Junior Mountain Running Home Internationals in Ireland. Both Lucy's gained their Yorkshire vests and competed in the inter counties where Jemima Elgood was a reserve. At the Yorkshire Championships Lewis Carr (U12) gained Bronze, Lucy Haines silver and Jemima bronze (U16's) with Lucy Williamson gaining silver in the U18's. The races at Haworth are seeing closer to 30 Junior Harriers racing and we have had our best season in the English Fell Championships. This is a part of George's summary of the FRA Championship season...

'At the club awards presentation night in April when I gave an overview of last year's championship I stated that we had our best result ever where we had finished joint 6th out of 70 competing clubs. A performance for all to be proud of but I challenged ourselves to go one better in 2014. It's fair to say the objective was smashed. With 21 juniors competing we improved by a massive 190 points to finish 4th! Final club positions were: 1st Helm Hill (1005), 2nd Eden Runners (1000), 3rd Holmfirth (984), 4th Ilkley Harriers (981), 5th Wharfedale Harriers (938). I think all our juniors deserve huge credit for putting on an Ilkley vest and mixing it with the very best juniors in the country'.

Individual placings were achieved by U12B: Joe Bramham Butts (43rd); U12G: Poppy Anderson (10th), Emily Elmes (11th); U14B: Euan Brennan (4th), Robbie Matthews (31st); U14G: Nea Weston (23rd); U16G: Lucy Haines (2nd), Jemima Elgood (6th), Lucy Jacques (7th), Tilly Melechi (24th); U18G Lucy Williamson (3rd), Joanne Williamson (6th).

Other notable performances in the BOFRA series have come from Euan Brennan (U14) who has competed in 7 races finishing 2nd in most to a talented Joshua Boyle from Hyndburn. Currently Euan is in 5th place but there are a few more races to count. Lewis and Dylan Carr have also been racing most weekends in the U12 and U9 categories respectively with some exceptional results.

I think every junior who has competed in a fell race this year would like to say thank you to George. Throughout the season he has been out in all weathers, usually at the tops of hills cheering on everyone.

Our **Track and Field Athletics** programme is sound and this year more juniors have started to compete. The York summer League is a great starting point for most of our athletes (we have had 10 + on some meets) and this season 4 have attended the West Yorkshire League meets. Lucy Williamson and Cameron Reilly competed in the season finale West Yorkshire Championships where Lucy gained two gold medals for 1500 and 800m and a bronze for 300m. Cameron gained a bronze for 800m. My own mission over the next few years is to get more of our juniors competing because we could also be seriously good at Track & Field too.

The individual who stands out again this season is Harry Maslen. Having broken his leg playing rugby in November he has come back fitter and more conditioned to take on the rigours of the Decathlon. At every competition he has gained PB's in one event or another and this weekend became the U20 Yorkshire Combined Events Decathlon Champion achieving 7 PB's and his own target of breaking the 6000 point barrier. His 6110 points smashed the championship record and ranks him 3rd in Yorkshire and 11th in the UK on the Power of 10. The ESSA Combined Events championships in two weeks time will be very interesting. Other juniors who are ranked on the Power of 10 in Yorkshire are: U17's: Zoe Judkowski (16th Triple Jump and silver medallist at the Yorkshire Championships); Jemima Elgood (9th 1500m); Sarah Pickering (14th 1500m); Lucy Williamson (20th 1500m and 7th 3000m); Lucy Haines (12th 3000m). U15 's: Roisin Ramage (6th shot and 15th discus); Joe Gardner (16th High Jump). U13's: Robbie Matthews (37th 800m); Max Bradley (30th 1500m and 24th High Jump), Emily Dover (52nd 150m).

In 2014 over one hundred and sixty juniors took part in weekly **Sportshall Athletics** sessions. The Regional trials were of the highest standard and attended by 14 of our juniors with 6 being selected for West Yorkshire regional teams: Tom Jackson & Reuben Foster (U11) , Sam McKinnon-Evans, Robbie Matthews and Bethan Morley (U13) and Roisin Ramage (U15). Sam, Robbie, Bethan and Roisin helped their teams through to the national finals in Manchester where they all did West Yorkshire proud.

And at our own annual Sportshall Athletics awards presentation evenings we gave an impressive number of Gold awards as well as the presentation of cloth 'Colours' for Sportshall Athletics, Track & Field Athletics, Cross-Country, Fell Running and Road Running (including Terrain) to juniors for achievement and commitment to training and competing for the club.

We have organised 4 events this year - Wharfedale Primary Schools' XC relay event, junior fell races, junior trail races and the sprint fell relays.

This coming year we will be coaching over 12 hours of athletics to juniors each week - that's pure contact time

and not the preparation that goes into each session/setting up/packing away. Our **Coach Education programme** is very sound with new parent helpers coming into it all the time. Four Sports Leaders qualified as Level 2 Community Leaders with 5 starting their Community Award this month; 15 juniors qualified as Level 2 Sports Leaders in December 2013 after volunteering for 15 months; 14 juniors who have done their level 2 Sports Leaders course will qualify in December 2014; 7 juniors are just starting to help at sessions this month who will do their courses and volunteering in 2015.

We introduced the '**Volunteer of the Month**' Award in 2010 which is presented to individuals for their commitment to the junior section. For many of our volunteers it is a small amount of recognition and reward for many years of commitment, enthusiasm and support to the junior section. The recipients in autumn 2013 were Gaenor Coy (Sept), Anna Tench (Oct) and Anna Pickering (Nov). The 2014 'winners' will be unveiled at the junior presentation evening in the spring. Each week over 60 individuals give up their time to coach athletics and without their commitment and dedication we could not have achieved half as much, so many thanks to everyone who has supported the junior section this year. On a personal note I would like to say a special thanks to all those who helped me through my own 'annus horribilis'.

I enjoy coordinating the juniors as much now as I did when we started and I am constantly amazed by the enthusiasm, support, commitment and motivation that all the coaches, helpers, parents and juniors. However it is now the time for me to start handing over the running of parts of the junior section to others. As from September 2014 Gaenor Coy and Sally Westlake will be coordinating the endurance programme and taking responsibility for everything to do with Cross-Country and Fell Running. They will be working closely with me, the discipline captains and the coaches who deliver the endurance programmes. I will be channelling my energy towards the Track & Field Athletics programme and Coach Development. Sharing the workload, bringing in new ideas and continuing to strive forward will lead to even more success for the junior section. It is an amazingly exciting time. Onwards and upwards.

Shirley Wood
Junior co-ordinator