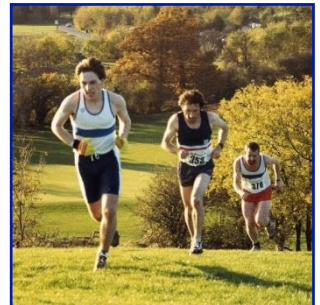




# The 'Athletics' in Leamington Cycling and Athletic Club: 90 Years and Still Running



# Introduction

Leamington Cycling and Athletic Club (Leamington C&AC) was 90 years old in October 2018; created by the amalgamation of the then Leamington Athletic (Harrier) Club and Leamington Cycling Club. When the club was first formed the two parts were closely interwoven – perhaps reflecting the fact that cycling was the main means of transport for people at that time. Whilst the club retains a single identity, of necessity it now operates largely as two autonomous bodies: an Athletic Section and a Cycling Section. This 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication relates only to the history and development of the Athletic Section; the Cycling Section has its own rich and diverse history, sufficient to justify its own separate publication.

In this ‘athletics’ publication we celebrate with a look back at some of the many aspects of our athletic history. As well as highlighting some of the successes and achievements of the Athletic Section of the club, and those of section members, it also records some of the more unusual events in which we have participated.

Whilst the focus is on athletics during the 90 years Leamington C&AC has existed, this publication also takes a brief look at our ‘pre-C&AC’ athletic heritage; in particular, the Leamington Athletic Club. There was significant continuity from Leamington Athletic Club to Leamington C&AC. Members, officers and officials of the former on the whole simply transferred into the new combined cycling and athletic club. However, Leamington C&AC was not the first combined cycling and athletics club in the area; and the Leamington Athletic Club (our immediate predecessor) in its early days had a cycling section.

Over the years Leamington C&AC has developed from initially being primarily a cross country club to one which now has three major strands; cross country, road and track and field. The running boom since the start of the 1980s has seen considerable change in the structure and availability of athletics both nationally and locally. A more complex structure has generated a greater need for volunteers to not only enable our club to operate but also to enable local, regional and national events to happen. As a club we have an enviable reputation for our ability to organise and deliver high quality events. We have gone from a club based at local hostleries to one based at the local athletics track with access to separate sports fields and public common land for our cross country races.

C&AC’s home is the Edmondscote Athletics Track in Leamington Spa. When Edmondscote opened in 1964 Leamington was the main athletic club in the mid-Warwickshire area. Other clubs that existed were linked to companies or organisations which provide athletics facilities for their workers; for example, Lockheed Sports Association had a cycling and athletic club and the Police had its own athletics structure. There was also a thriving inter-school athletics network. Nowadays, however, works athletic clubs have on the whole disappeared but there has been a significant growth in ‘free-standing’ athletic clubs – some of which now compete for space and time at ‘our’ track.

Whilst a key focus of this ‘life history’ is the athletic achievements of those who compete for us and our success in competition, an equally important aspect is that of our many volunteers – those who make our athletics possible. We rely on many people within our club to create the infrastructure and environment that makes club athletics a reality: people who train our athletes, organise club events, time-keep, judge and rake the sand-pit, people who organise teams, provide transport, attend inter-club meetings on our behalf, people who sit on our committee to make sure we operate within England Athletics rules, manage our finances and deal with membership issues. They do all this without expectation of any reward simply because of their love for our club and our sport. We also have many

members who not only support our club organisation but also that of our area, regional and national bodies. And in a few cases our international governing bodies.

This celebration of our first 90 years of athletics is broadly split into decades. At the end of each decade we have included a selection of stories submitted by members for this publication about their time with the club, as well as profiles about some of our longer serving athletics members.

We hope that you enjoy reading about the rich past of the Athletic Section. If you feel there is a gap in the history we have presented, or would like to add your own contribution, please let us know. Whilst this publication has been prepared specifically as a celebration of our first 90 years it will be maintained on the club website and periodically updated ready for our centenary celebrations in 2028!

Dave Potter, Editor

Mary Carter, Sue Harrison and Mary Hodges, Publication Team.

## Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the help and support from current and past members and their friends and relatives who have made compiling this history possible. In particular we would like to thank those who have loaned us their precious scrap books and photographs containing their memories of their time with C&AC, and those who have been prepared to speak to us or send a written contribution about their time with the club.

We have used a number of sources in our research including the club website ([www.leamingtoncandac.org.uk](http://www.leamingtoncandac.org.uk)), Athletics Section Committee minutes, Annual General Meeting minutes and Reports, Club Executive Council minutes, Spikes (the Athletic Section's Newsletter between 1984 and 2015), back issues of the Courier series of newspapers, the Midland Cross Country Association 100 Years publication, the Birmingham and District League Cross-County website (<http://www.birminghamccleague.co.uk/>), the Gloucester Athletic Association website ([https://www.athletics4u.co.uk/cross\\_country/results-archive/](https://www.athletics4u.co.uk/cross_country/results-archive/)), the GBR Athletics website (<http://www.gbrathletics.com/bc/mcaao.htm>) and the British Newspaper Archive (<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>). We are also grateful to the Warwickshire County Records Office which houses a number of our historical documents and for the help of their staff in finding information.

Two organisations that deserve special mention for the on-going help and support they give to Leamington C&AC in general and, as a result, to this publication are Warwick District Council and the Courier series newspaper.

Without Warwick District Council (and its predecessor Leamington Town Corporation) we simply would not be able to operate the way we do. The Council's support over many, many years is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated. From allowing us to use Newbold Comyn since it was created in 1974 for our cross country events, providing an athletics track and facilities at Edmondscote in 1964 and to the numerous occasions where they have enhanced and updated the facilities in both major and minor ways for our benefit. Initially this was all targeted at Leamington C&AC – because we were the only A.A.A. registered athletics club in the area - but increasingly the running boom and associated increase in running clubs has meant that they have had to balance our needs and wishes against those of others.

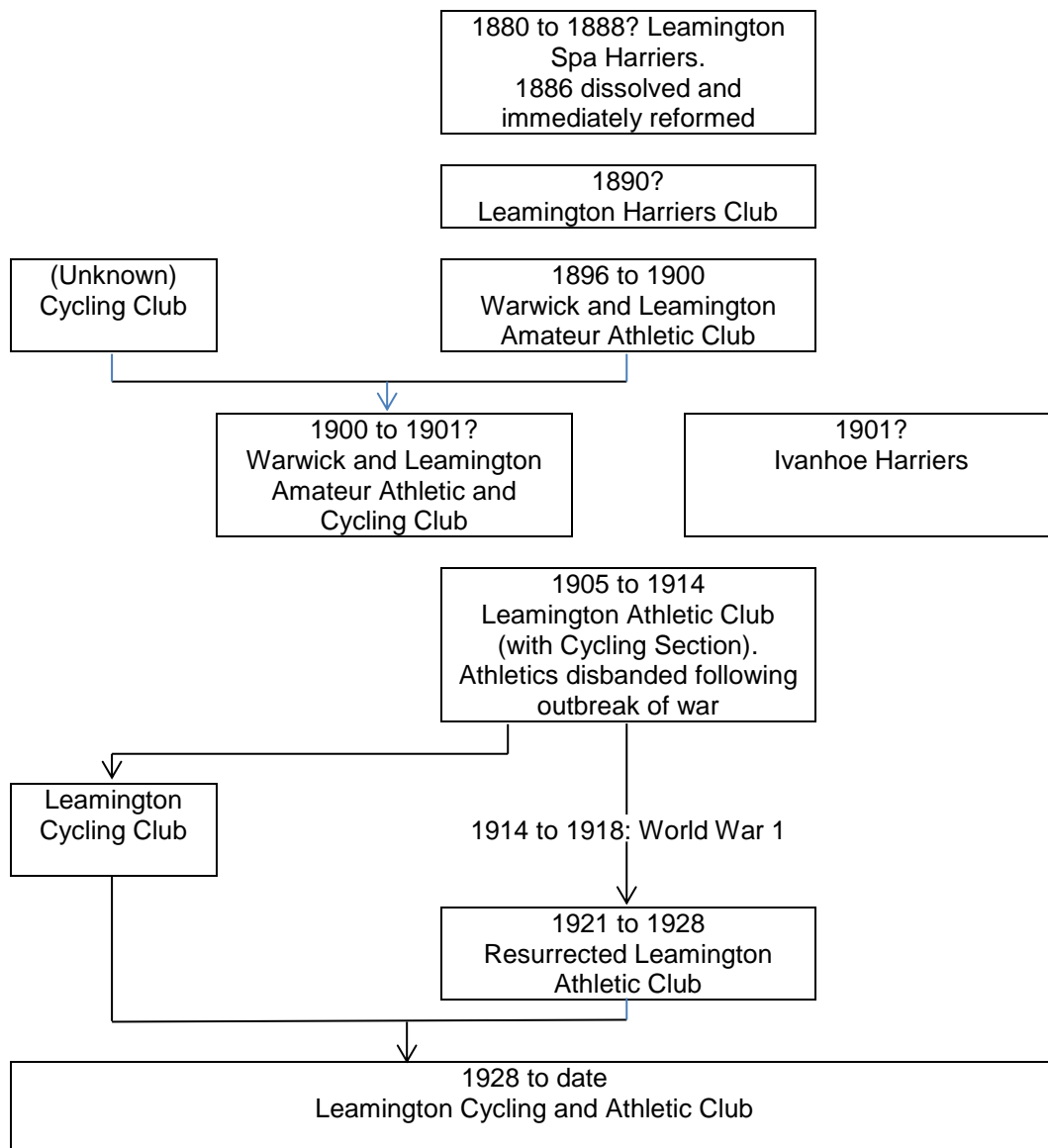
Secondly we must also acknowledge the Courier series newspaper which has reported on our activities in most, if not every, edition of the newspaper since the club was created in 1928. There have been various manifestations of the paper over the years, from the Royal Leamington Spa Courier and Warwickshire Standard back in the late 1800s and early 1900s to the now 'Courier series', with separate Warwick and Leamington editions. This makes back issues of the paper (along with members' own 'Courier' press-cuttings) a unique and invaluable source of information to help inform this publication. We have used numerous extracts – far too many to mention separately – so with their agreement we simply acknowledge the Courier as a key source. For ease, we have taken the liberty of simply using the term 'Courier' when referring to their publication regardless of the exact title of their paper at the time.

# Chapter 1

## Our Early Foundations

This chapter sets out what we have been able to discover about the diversity of athletic clubs in the Leamington area prior to the creation of Leamington C&AC in 1928. The Leamington and District Harriers in the 1880s appears to be the first formal amateur club but was dissolved and reborn in response to the alleged ‘professionalism’ of some club members. It then appears to have ceased to exist, leading to a gap of several years before a small flurry of different clubs came into existence. The Leamington Athletic Club – our immediate predecessor athletic club – was created in 1905 but had a chequered existence and a hiatus as a result of World War 1.

The following diagram sets out what we have been able to establish about the pattern of athletic clubs from 1880, leading to the creation of our Leamington C&AC in 1928. It is interesting to note that we were not the first combined cycling and athletics club in the area!



### **1880 - Leamington and District Harriers created**

The very earliest references we have been able to find to a Leamington Harriers is in 1820 – but in that case it relates to fox-hunting; the ‘harriers’ being the fox-hounds! The first recognised amateur ‘harrier’ running club in Leamington was formed in October 1880. An advertisement by the Leamington and District Harriers in the Courier on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1880 said:

*“The first cross country run of this Club will take place on Wednesday next, October 6<sup>th</sup>, from the Angel Hotel to the Kings Arms, Kenilworth. Start at 3.30 sharp. Visitors are invited. A coach will follow at cheap fares”.*

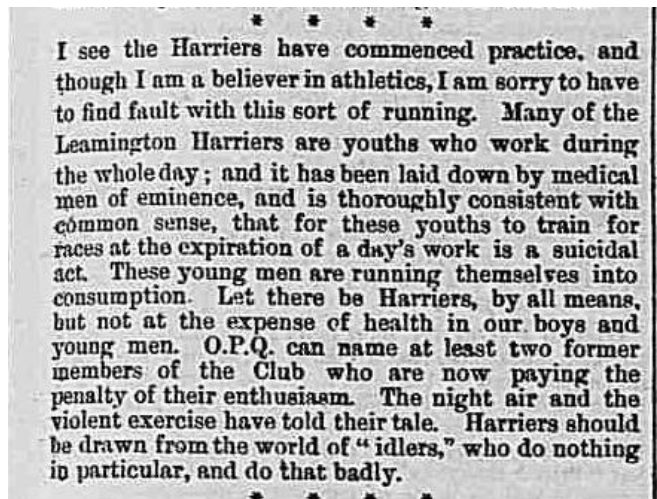
Friendly runs with neighbouring harrier clubs were of the ‘Hares and Hounds’ format rather than the cross country we are familiar with today. The Courier reported on such a run between the Leamington and Moseley Harriers in November 1882,

*“The hares started from the Angel Hotel, and were followed half an hour afterwards by the harriers. The route was up the Lillington Road, across the fields to the Rifle Butts, and on to Guys Cliff Mill. There the osier beds were crossed to Hill Wootton, and the route was then by Blackdown through Lillington back to Leamington. The ground covered was not less than 10 miles and the run was completed in about an hour and a quarter.”*

However, runs were not always plain-sailing. In March 1884 Charles Finch (a local landowner) wrote to the Courier complaining that the Leamington Harriers had run through his Park, “covering the whole place in paper, and worse still, three or four horseman following them galloping through a flock of sheep who were lambing at the time, and also had not the civility to shut the gates after them!”. He also referred to other occasions where runs had “gone through the coverts, disturbing the foxes, which I will not have interfered with, especially at this time of year.” Mr Finch threatened prosecution should there be any future incursions into his park.

In the mid-1880s most Leamington Harrier outings were runs from their headquarters, although their programme did include invitation runs and championship events. In 1884 this included the Midland Counties Cross Country Championships at Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield.

There are a number of references in the Courier newspaper during the 1880s and 1890s to the benefits of exercise, particularly for young people. However, not everyone agreed on who would benefit. We found this interesting view expressed by O.P.Q. a Courier columnist at the time.



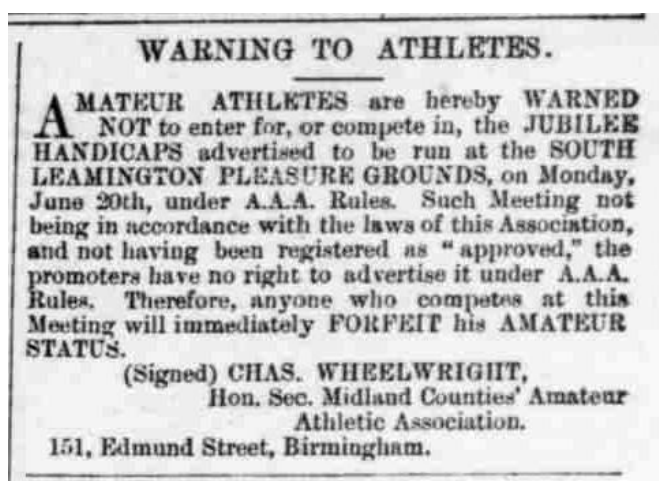
I see the Harriers have commenced practice, and though I am a believer in athletics, I am sorry to have to find fault with this sort of running. Many of the Leamington Harriers are youths who work during the whole day; and it has been laid down by medical men of eminence, and is thoroughly consistent with common sense, that for these youths to train for races at the expiration of a day's work is a suicidal act. These young men are running themselves into consumption. Let there be Harriers, by all means, but not at the expense of health in our boys and young men. O.P.Q. can name at least two former members of the Club who are now paying the penalty of their enthusiasm. The night air and the violent exercise have told their tale. Harriers should be drawn from the world of "idlers," who do nothing in particular, and do that badly.

### **1886 to 1888**

1886 saw festering issues about 'professionalism'. The Courier reported on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1886 that "*The old Leamington Harriers finding that it contained within itself members whose athletic aspirations and ideas were bounded and influenced by the most sordid motives, determined to remodel itself*". A general meeting of the Harriers was called and the club dissolved, "*only to arise in the most Phoenix like fashion from its athletic ashes, and blossom forth as the ' Leamington Spa Harriers.*"

In reforming the club all members had to go through re-election, during which several applications were refused. One of those rejected, named Astill, was holder of The Boultree Challenge Cup and the new Leamington Harriers denied him the right as holder to compete for it again. He appealed to the Midland Counties Amateur Athletic Association which confirmed his right to run; although it could not compel the club to admit him as a member.

The following warning appeared in the Leamington Spa Courier on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1887; it is not clear how far former members or the new Leamington Harriers were involved with this.



In July 1887 J.A. Shorter, Vice-President of Leamington Harriers, undertook to walk six miles within an hour for a silver cup presented by the Angel Hotel. The Courier reported on a large attendance and much speculation for the match which took place on the Stratford Road, Warwick. The walk was marred by heavy showers which made the road "*bad going, and the athlete had chiefly to keep to the side footpath, but he won with 4 minutes 24 and 1/5<sup>th</sup> sec to spare.*"

At the club's AGM in October 1887 references were made back to the "*doubts as to the 'bona fide' running of some members*" and the dissolving of the old club and establishment of a new club "*on an entirely fresh basis*". According to the Courier this change had led to "*a very great reduction of members*" – there now being 26 ordinary members and 10 honorary members on the books. The change was seen as having had the desired effect, and "*materially improved the status of the club throughout the amateur world*". But, as a result, the club's funds "*were not in a very flourishing condition*".

In our research we have not been able to find any press reports about the Leamington Harriers after 1888. This suggests that the new club continued to have problems and folded sometime that year.

### **1890 - Another new Leamington Harriers Club**

In December 1890 the Courier reported that "*A newly formed athletic club adopting the title of the Leamington Harriers Club opened the season, on Thursday, with a match against the Star Harriers. The weather was anything but propitious, but the runners covered the course,*

*from Warwick and back by the Old-road, at a very fast pace.”* Winner was Leamington Harriers Captain T. Lines in 27 minutes. This is the only reference we have been able to find to this club so can only assume that it was short-lived.

Although there being no formal athletic club in existence for several years, athletic and cycling events were popular – often organised by one of the local football clubs on their grounds or in conjunction with flower shows. The following advertisement appeared in the Courier in July 1892:

“ON THURSDAY NEXT.  
TACHBROOK  
**FLOWER SHOW & ATHLETIC SPORTS**  
(Under the rules of the A.A.A.)  
Will be held in the VICARAGE GROUNDS, on  
THURSDAY next, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1892. Prizes for Athletic  
Sports to the value of £20 will be given. Dancing to the  
Strains of the Tachbrook Brass Band. Refreshments will  
be provided. Entries close Thursday next, July 21<sup>st</sup>,  
1892, to Mr W. J. Bradford, Secretary, Tachbrook, Leamington,  
from whom Entry Forms and further information  
may be obtained. Gates open at 2 o'clock; admission,  
from 2 till 5 o'clock, 1s, after 5 o'clock, 6d.”

The reference to “Athletic Sport” almost certainly related to more than just running, jumping and throwing. At this time the term athletics was often used to refer to a range of sporting activity and clubs set up to cater for other sports would include athletics as part of a wider remit. For example, a Warwickshire Athletics Association existed in 1894 which catered for cricket, hockey and athletics!

#### **1896 - The Warwick and Leamington Amateur Athletics Club**

The only reference we have been able to find to this club is a Courier report in November 1900 about the club’s fourth annual general meeting which indicates that this club was formed in 1896. The most important item on the agenda for this AGM was “*To consider a proposition to combine the present Club with a local cycling club*”.

#### **1900 to 1901? - The Warwick and Leamington Amateur Athletic and Cycling Club**

The new club was known as the Warwick and Leamington Amateur Athletic and Cycling Club and was based at the Territorial Hall, Coten End, Warwick.

#### **1901? - Ivanhoe Harriers (Leamington)**

Another club in existence around this time was the Ivanhoe Harriers (Leamington) which was based in Brunswick Street, Leamington. This club held regular friendly runs with the Warwick and Leamington Amateur Athletic and Cycling Club during 1901, with a turnout of about ten from each club for each event.

We have been unable to establish what happened to both the Warwick and Leamington Amateur Athletic Club or the Ivanhoe Harriers and can find no reference to either of them after 1901. We have not been able to establish how, if at all, they became part of a new Leamington Athletic Club formed in 1905.

#### **1905 - Leamington Athletic Club**

This new athletic club, called the Leamington Athletic Club (Leamington AC), was formed “*by a small but enthusiastic body of athletes*” in 1905. The first president of this club was a Gordon Bland, who held the position until his death in 1913. The secretarial role was shared between a Mr H. Grant and Mr F. E. Humphries. The club’s headquarters was initially at the Coach and Horses in Bedford Street, Leamington but in 1907 moved to the Warwick Arms in



Regent Street. The club catered for both cyclists and harriers. Another example of the term “athletic” being used at this time to represent a range of different sports.

The first of a series of cross country runs was promoted in 1905 by Leamington AC from their headquarters at the Coach and Horses. The course of seven miles was via Offchurch and Cubbington; the fastest man was ex-Midland Champion W. B. Law in 40 minutes 32 secs.

### **1907 - Poaching**

During 1907 there were rumbling issues about ‘poaching’. At a meeting of the Midland Cross Country Association on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1907 Mr Johnson from Leamington AC laid charges against Birchfield Harriers and Sparkhill Harriers that they had approached members of Leamington AC (a breach of rule 20). The charges were denied but referred to a sub-committee of the association. The sub-committee substantiated the claim, finding that both clubs had approached a Mr Irons knowing him to be a member of Leamington AC.

### **1910 - Leamington Athletic Club in decline**

The Courier report on the 1910 annual general meeting of the Leamington AC makes sorry reading. Mr Wallsgrove, the Chairman announced to the meeting that due to the present unsatisfactory state of affairs a decision was needed on whether the club continued for another season. He referred to no interest being shown in the club apart from a few committee or active members. Mr Wallsgrove referred to “*a complete lack of enthusiasm showed all round*”, with very few athletes turning out for, or helping at events. Committee meetings had been so badly attended at times that there were not enough present to do business. He decried the fact that “*the club had hitherto been carried out by country members ... a disgrace to Leamington Athletes.*”

It is clear from the debate that Leamington AC at that time already included a cycling section. The meeting referred to the running section being the most important part of the club, although one member pointed out that the club had originally been a cycling club in the first place and that the cycling section had “*kept the club going for one season without any runners at all.*” It is unclear what the original ‘cycling club’ was and how it formed part of the new Leamington AC. The Mr Wallsgrove referred to in the press report is almost certainly Bill Wallsgrove, one of the founding fathers of our own Leamington Cycling and Athletics Club.

### **1914 - Training at Victoria Park**

In May 1914 Leamington AC was given permission by the local council to use the track at Victoria Park for training on two evenings a week.

### **1914-1918 - World War 1**

We know that the Leamington Athletic Club closed during the war years but we have been unable to confirm exactly when. We also know that the cycling element continued. We found one tantalising reference in the Leamington Courier for 10<sup>th</sup> September 1915 to the Leamington Cycling and Athletic Club holding its annual cycling championship and time trial handicap. The best assumption we can make is that this still related to the Leamington Athletic Club, but the inclusion of ‘cycling’ in the title reflected the fact that the athletics element had almost, if not entirely, ceased. Sometime during the war years the cycling element went its own way and became the Leamington Cycling Club.

### **1918 - “Runner who was killed on Somme”<sup>1</sup>**

After the outbreak of the First World War many Leamington AC members would have gone off to serve in the forces. A number of these athletes would have been killed in action

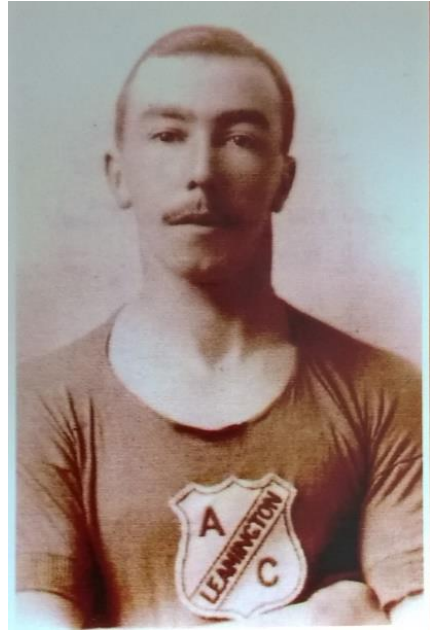
---

<sup>1</sup> Information and picture courtesy Dave Ashbourne.

including John Henry Ashbourne, the great grandfather of current C&AC member, Dave Ashbourne.

John Ashbourne was a cross country runner. He was born in Shrewley in 1887. At the age of 14 he worked as a groom at a local farm and then worked in the engineering department of the Great Western Railway in Warwick. John married Rosetta in 1909 and had four children: Christopher (Dave's grandfather), Florence, Hilda (who died in infancy) and Frederick.

John joined the 213<sup>th</sup> (Leamington) Army Troops Company Royal Engineers on the outbreak of war and was involved in laying a network of miniature railway tracks to transport ammunition and stores to the trenches and front-line guns. He was killed in action in March 1918 defending the important railway junction at Amiens. He is commemorated on the Pozieres Somme Memorial, on the Warwick Town Memorial and the GWR Roll of Honour at Leamington Station.



### **1921 - Resurrection of Leamington Athletic Club**

In May 1921 the Courier reported that at “*an enthusiastic and well-attended meeting ... the old Leamington Athletic Club was “resuscitated”*”. Mr W. Wallsgrove was elected to the Management Committee. A field at the rear of the brewery in Northumberland Road had been lent for training purposes and the headquarters of the club was the Avenue Hotel. An advertisement appeared in the Courier on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1921 announcing that the club had been revived and sought new members.

Chairing the meeting Mr J. Stiles pointed out that Leamington was an admirable centre for athletics, and possessed an excellent park, to which with a little pain could be added a good running track. He believed that Leamington would become a popular centre, not only in the Midlands, but in England.

### **1923 - Leamington AC: review and team picture**

A 1923 Courier report set out some of Leamington AC's achievements during its 18-year history. It referred to the club's “*energetic officials*” and to a number of its members' achievements on the running and cycling track. This suggests that the ‘resurrected’ club had by that time again acquired a cycling element.

However, on a less positive note, the 1923 report also stated:

*“despite the industry of its officials, the Club has had the greatest difficulty in creating any real enthusiasm among the athletes in the town. Today LAC can boast of a larger membership than it has ever enjoyed, and everything possible has been done to induce promising athletes to take advantage of the favourable opportunities the Club can offer for ‘bringing-out’ new men”.*

Getting members to compete is obviously an old problem!

The following team picture was published in the Courier at the same time as this report.



*Leamington Athletic Club 1923*

*Back row: W M Shuff, Chairman; Clem Wharrad, President; Dennis C Kimberley, General Honorary Secretary.*

*Standing: J Hawkins; F Smalley; H Elkington; T Bachelor; F Waters; E Randall; W H Wallsgrove; J Styles; H Reader; J Metherell, T Lunt; F Hawkins, trainer.*

*Seated: A Wright; St John Woodward; J Pearson; M Philpotts; O G Varney; F W Harris; F Smalley; P Lovell; L Dickens; F Spicer; F G Jennings; C Fretwell.*

*Front row: Green; R Jones; A Davis, Vice Captain; P Stone; L Wharrad, A Fretwell, W Spicer, Captain; Collis; W C Rogers.*

It is interesting to note some of the names:

- Two members of the Wharrad family; presumably father and son. We still compete for our Wharrad Trophy which was probably donated by these gentlemen.
- Likewise there are two Smalleys in this picture; and we still compete for our Smalley Trophy, which again was presumably donated by one of them.

In the picture it is also interesting to see our Freeman Hardy and Willis Trophy which is one of several Leamington C&AC trophies inherited from the former Leamington Athletic Club.

**1925 - Joint athletic / cycling events**

Joint athletic and cycling events featured well before the two clubs merged in 1928. For example, the first of an annual athletic and cycling event organised by Leamington Cycling Club was held in Victoria Park on Saturday afternoon on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1925. The full range of running and field events as well as cycling races were included. There was no permanent track at Victoria Park so it is assumed that a grass track was especially marked out for the day.

The event was apparently very successful with a good level of entries, although from the spectators' point of view it is not clear whether the real attraction was the athletics and cycling or a motorcycle rodeo – including motor-cycle football match - by the Coventry Ace Club!

**1928 - Harriers beat cyclists**

Prior to the merger of Leamington AC and Leamington Cycling Club members came together to take part in what the Courier deemed “*an unusual contest ... the cyclists competed with the Harriers over the National Cross Country Championship course*” – a distance of 5 miles. The athletes won gaining the first seven places. W. F. Spicer, the “*veteran skipper*” was first home; four minutes ahead of the leading cyclist.

## Chapter 2

# Amalgamation and the 1930s up to World War 2

### **1928 - Leamington Cycling and Athletic Club is created**

The Courier reported on 28th September 1928 that *“a resolution to amalgamate the Cycling Club and the Athletic Club was discussed and passed at the preceding Friday’s meeting of the Athletic Club held at the Bath Hotel”*. Mr W. H. Wallsgrove, Treasurer, had *“told the meeting that years ago the Athletic Club had embraced both cycling and running but since the War the cyclists had gone one way and the runners another. Being chairman of the CC and treasurer of the AC he thought the time was now ripe for the amalgamation, each Club could appoint a representative committee of older members who would act as a sort of House of Lords, and any ideas for the progress of either section could then be submitted to a joint management committee of experienced members”*. Hence the following motion was passed *“Feeling that it will be to the benefit of both, this annual meeting of the Athletics Club invites the Cycling Club to amalgamate, with a view to bringing local athletics under one organisation”*.

A representative meeting was held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 1928 at the town hall to pass the rules of the new club - with a few amendments. There does, however, appear to have been some discussion about club colours. Rule 6 stated *“The Club colours shall be Royal Blue and White”*. Mr T. Prestige (unsuccessfully) moved an amendment that they should be black and white. Mr Wallsgrove explained that the reason the colours had not been changed was that the committee wanted to save the runners the expense of new jerseys – the majority of them already having blue and white jerseys. Subscriptions for the first year were set at 2/6d for Seniors and 1/- for Juniors (that’s 12½ and 5 pence respectively in decimal currency!).

Former Athletic Club members seem to dominate the senior positions in the new Leamington C&AC: Mr W. M. Shuff, was elected President, Mr W. H. Wallsgrove, Chairman, Mr O. G. Varney, Vice Chairman and Mr W. C. Rogers, Honorary Secretary. The new Club also elected a number of officers for each Section; the Athletic Section Officers were:

Section Secretary: W. Rogers;

Athletics Captain: W. Spicer;

Athletics Vice Captain: T. Prestige;

Athletics Sub-committee members: W. Robinson; G. Dadson; E. Ward; T. Prestige; W. Spicer; G. Davies; and B. Ingram.

The first Executive Council Meeting of the new club was held at Bath Hotel on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1928, where it was reported that there were 32 cycling and 79 athletics members; but with the caveat that a great majority of athletes (presumably of the former Leamington Athletic Club) had not paid their subscriptions for the past year! The criteria for five trophies was agreed at this meeting: the Freeman Hardy and Willis Trophy, the Wade Cup, the Harry Crawley Cup, the ‘Commander’ Schoolboy Challenge and the Novice prize. The first three of these are awards that still exist today.

At a further meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1928 the Angel Hotel was agreed as the club headquarters. It was also agreed to appoint three ‘Trainers’ for the cross country season in view of the increased attendance at training runs. A fee of £1 0s 0d was agreed, with only two travelling to away fixtures and travel and tea to be paid for by the club. Club badges were agreed in December 1928 at the cost of 1s 1d each (a fraction over 5p in our decimal currency!).

### 1928 - National Cross Country Championships

The new Leamington C&AC hosted the National Cross Country Championships in 1928 on Newbold Comyn Farm Estate. There were 375 runners and the winning team was Birchfield Harriers. The individual winner was E. Harper of Hallamshire Harriers – his second of a hat-trick of wins.

### 1929 - Social activities

The club had a flourishing social side in its early days. In the 1928/29 financial year, for example, the club held three Children's Dances, a Whist Drive and a Boxing Night Dance which together raised £48 7s 3d for club coffers.

Interestingly, the 1929 prize giving took place as part of a club organised 'smoking concert'.

### 1929 - "On the Verge of Great Things"

This was the Courier headline reporting on the club's annual general meeting in October 1929. At the meeting it was resolved to re-join the Warwickshire County Cross Country Association. The club had resigned from the Warwickshire Association because certain club members were debarred from taking part in Warwickshire runs because they lived outside of the jurisdiction of that association. It was reported that those issues had now been resolved. There were seen to be many benefits to be derived from membership of the Warwickshire Association; the chief one being that members would be guaranteed five runs a season!

It was reported that the amalgamation of the former athletics and cycling clubs had been a great success and that the club was on the verge of great things:

- membership had increased by 30% in 10 months;
- competitive events attracted larger entries;
- the "Club Spirit" was being more strongly fostered;
- there was greater attendance at runs; and
- social events were getting greater support.

Joseph Stiles JP was awarded life membership of the club in recognition of his invaluable service over his life. Given that the new club was only a year old this award reinforces a continuity between the old Leamington Athletics Club and the Leamington Cycling and Athletic Club.

### 1930 - Flower's Ales

The following advertisement regularly appeared in the Leamington Spa Courier in 1929 and 1930. We do not recommend that shot-putters adopt this style!

Business Addresses  
Athletic Feats of Note. No. 2

## FLOWER'S ALES



PUTTING THE WEIGHT  
THIS is an athletic feat requiring perfect balance and great strength, a 16-lb. weight being the standard used. The longest throw on record is that of J. Kautz—52 1/2 ft.—in the Olympic Games, 1928.

British and best is a description which can be aptly applied to Flower's Ales. Good "live" brews, each one perfect of its kind—it's very well worth your while to choose Flower's Ale when you want a cool, refreshing wholesome drink.

Local Address  
**FLOWER & SONS,**  
121,  
**20, RUSSELL STREET,**  
**LEAMINGTON.**

### **1929 - Leamington clubman's Coventry run**

On 13<sup>th</sup> December 1929 the Leamington Spa Courier reported:

*"An interesting local running record was set-up by a member of Leamington C&AC Club on Tuesday night, when J J McBride undertook a journey to Coventry and back. He set-out shortly after seven o'clock, and reached Greyfriars Green, Coventry, 58 minutes later; then returning immediately, in the face of the wind and driving rain, he accomplished the double journey in 2 hours 4 minutes 16 seconds. This is an exceptionally good performance, and McBride challenges anyone to eclipse it. McBride who is an accomplished marathon runner in Ireland, has only recently joined the Leamington Club."*

### **1930 - Club annual general meeting**

'Special Notice' issued with agenda papers for 1930 AGM:

*"The Annual Smoking Concert and prize giving will be held at the Angel Hotel on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October 1930 at 7.30 p.m.. An excellent musical programme has been arranged and we hope to secure the attendance of several men prominent in the world of sport"*

### **1930 - International Cross Country Championships**

The club Executive Council agreed on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1929 to apply to stage the 1930 International Cross Country Championships. This offer was accepted and the event was held on the Newbold Comyn Farm Estate. The Championships included runners from France (the holders), Spain, Belgium, England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. They were treated to a civic reception by the Mayor at Leamington Town Hall.

It was seen as a great civic achievement for the town to host such an event and the formal programme for race day included:

*10.30 am - International Conference, Town Hall  
12 noon - Official reception  
1 pm - Luncheon for international delegates  
3 pm - Parade of teams on the course; each team preceded by its standard bearer; patriotic music to be played  
3.15 - pm race starts  
6.30 - pm Banquet at Town Hall, guests included all runners.  
8 pm - presentation of trophies  
8.30 pm - International Ball*

Tickets were 6d in advance and 1 shilling on the day (that's 2.5p and 5p in decimal money!). Spectators were advised to remain on the main hill to get an uninterrupted view of the race. Following the race, runners were taken to the Pump Rooms for a luxury saline bath which was, according to the Courier, "a unique experience, no such facilities having been afforded at previous meeting places".

### **1931 - Human starting gate<sup>2</sup>**

The name William (Bill) Wallsgrove crops up numerous times when researching our club's history – and he was clearly someone who tried to think innovatively about our sport. In 1931, for the National Cross Country event, he proposed the adoption of a 'Human Starting Gate' to help achieve a fair start in races. However, this scheme was discontinued after a few races as several stewards were knocked to the ground by the rush of eager athletes. Mr Wallsgrove did, however, have some consolation - he was elected President of the Midland Cross Country Association in 1932 and was Midland Official to the English Cross Country Union 1934 to 1936.

---

<sup>2</sup> 100 Years of Cross Country Running 1879 – 1979, MCAA.

### **1931 - Women's Triangular Contest: "Noted Athletic Event again Staged in Leamington"**

Bad weather considerably affected attendance at a women's AAA Triangular contest in Victoria Park. The Courier reported a successful, "*admirably organised*" event despite a number of potential competitors being at Los Angeles taking part in the Olympic Games. The "*Grand Parade of some of England's best women athletes was an imposing spectacle*", although conditions were against record-breaking achievements. The meeting included the full range of running and field events, but in those days running events were in yards rather than our present metres.

### **1932 - Annual general meeting**

It was reported that membership was 200 compared to 165 the previous year and 95 at the time of the amalgamation in 1928.

At the same meeting Dennis Kimberley was elected Life Member. Dennis had joined the former Leamington Athletics Club in 1913; in 1921 had convened the meeting which revived that club after the war and from that time until 1924 had acted as honorary secretary. This represents another example of the continuity between the former Leamington Athletics Club and the new C&AC's Athletics Section.

### **1933 - W. H. Wallsgrove: Midland and national honours**

In addition to the presidency of Leamington C&AC, Bill Wallsgrove, having previously been Chairman, was re-elected President of the Midland Counties Amateur Cross Country Association and was President-Elect of the National Cross Country Union which was due to celebrate its jubilee in 1934.

### **1933 - Membership**

The early 1930s were, financially, a difficult time for the club. It was reported to the 1933 AGM that there was a need for "*strict economy and retrenchment*". The financial loss on the club accounts for the year was £10 5s 10d against an income of £43 1s 1d. Membership fell from 243 to 121 – of whom only 90 had paid their subscription plus 20 new members during the year. Membership included Anthony Eden, a local MP who went on to subsequently become Prime Minister. He wrote from the Foreign Office on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1933 to confirm he was willing to continue as club Patron and enclosed his subscription.

### **1933 - National Cross Country Union jubilee dinner: did cross country running originate in Leamington?**

At the jubilee dinner of the National Cross Country Union held in 1933 – chaired by our Bill Wallsgrove - the question was posed:

*Did cross country running as it is known today, have its origin in Leamington?*

Mr Douglas Lowe, Honorary Secretary of the Amateur Athletics Association said that it was particularly appropriate that the National Cross Country Union should have a Leamington man as its president in its jubilee year because it was in the Midlands that cross country running, in an organised form, was first known. He understood that it was over an old steeplechase course in the Midland Spa (Leamington) that the first recorded cross country race in history took place in 1838. And that runners in that first race took the names of famous Warwickshire racehorses of that time<sup>3</sup>.

Mr Lowe also referred to the great success attained by Leamington in the organisation of the International Championships in 1930 and he appreciated how much the sport owed the Midland town. Our Bill Wallsgrove was behind those successful arrangements.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ed: More generally accepted histories about the origins of cross country running firmly place it with school 'hare and hounds' runs; in particular, the Rugby School Crick run of 1837 or at Shrewsbury.

### **1933 - Team transport**

Nowadays getting to athletic events is relatively easy – we simply jump in our cars and drive. And communication with other team members about the event and getting there is invariably electronic. But back in the 1930s things were not so easy. Private car ownership was minimal so for transport to races – depending on how far away the event was being held – competitors and spectators had to walk, cycle, or go by bus or train. Communication about an event was often by notice board and via the local paper. For example, a short article in the Courier about a cross country in October 1933 included: *“Runners and supporters wishing to go to Rugby should meet at the L.M.S. station at 1.15 p.m.; the train will leave at 1.20”*.

### **1934 - Physical training classes**

In November 1934 the use of a Scout room in Chandos Street on Friday evenings between 7.30 and 9.30 each week, was agreed for club physical training classes at a cost of 3s 6d (17.5p in decimal currency) per week. A representative of the club had to collect the keys from the Scout Master, lock up at the end and return the keys. Messrs G. Yates and R. Bostock agreed to take charge of physical training and to run the classes. They proved to be very popular and in 1935 it was agreed to levy a charge of 3d per attendance (just over 1p in decimal currency) and classes were also opened up to Leamington Police.

### **1934 - Annual general meeting**

By 1934 the cycling section had started to admit ladies as honorary members to enable them to participate in ‘social spins’. There are no indications of lady members of the athletics section at this time. Addressing the 1934 Annual General Meeting Bill Wallsgrove said:

*“Much as we still find opposition to ladies taking part in sport, I think we are all broadminded enough, and have learnt by experience, to appreciate that women should take part in all sports within certain limits. For many years past cycling has been popular with the ladies, and I am glad to see so many taking part in our social runs. We have married couples with us tonight who were cycling ‘pals’ in their single days. I trust that history may be repeated.”*

### **1934 - “Leamington Cycling and Athletic Club’s Hardy Annual”**

The 1934 annual Harriers vs Cyclist cross country race took place in late December and attracted a good field over the 6 ½ mile course. The cyclists were victorious having seven men home before the first athlete arrived. The course included a fair amount of road and footpath which was to the cyclists advantage. We have not been able to identify any of the runners in the following picture – except for Bill Wallsgrove (far right) - but we do know that it includes Don Sullivan one of Leamington’s leading distance runners of the time.





### **1934 - English Cross Country Union**

It was a great honour for our club when Bill Wallsgrove was elected President of the English Cross Country Union in 1934.

### **1935 - Jubilee sports**

Leamington C&AC promoted the 1935 Jubilee Sports at Victoria Park which involved some 6,000 competitors. Victoria Park was a popular venue for sports events, many of which involved running and cycling. Victoria Park, of course, still sees cycle racing and race walking, as well as the Women's Bowls National Championships.

### **1937 - English National Cross Country Championship**

The English National Cross Country Championships were held at Stratford-upon-Avon in March 1937. Bill Wallsgrove was appointed Clerk of the Course and Leamington took responsibility for the course arrangements.

### **1937 - Membership and subscriptions**

Membership had increased to 135 by 1937. Subscriptions increased from 2s 6d to 4s – that's 12½ pence and 20 pence in decimal currency!

### **1938 - Women's English National Cross Country Championships held at Leamington**

The women's national was held at Leamington in 1938.

### **1938/9 - Warwickshire Cross Country League success**

Leamington had team success in two of the races in the 1938 Warwickshire Cross Country League competition. In December 1938 they used their local knowledge over a seven mile course at Campion Hills to gain first team home; a feat which they repeated in the final race of the competition at Coventry in January 1939. These successes helped them to become the overall season's champions and holders of the winners' cup for the following twelve months.

Leading C&AC runner was Vic Morris, second individual in the Leamington race and third in the final race. This placed him third overall and qualified him for the team to represent Warwickshire in the inter-counties races.

### **1939 - Shortage of harriers**

The Courier reported on the annual club dinner in January 1939 where Bill Wallsgrove, as club President, spoke of "*rather mixed days*"; the cycling side doing well but there were difficulties in the harrier section. He referred to the club having had "*dark days and palmy days*" but "*he was proud that the same spirit which started the club in 1905 was that which helped them to carry-on in 1939.*" He regretted that the sport was losing the social side it had formerly and recalled the "*travellers' privileges*" they used to enjoy.

A couple of interesting points here:

1. We are not sure what Bill meant by "travellers' privileges"; perhaps competing athletes travelling to events enjoyed a better standard of travel than the norm?
2. Bills comments about the club starting in 1905 reinforces the continuity between the 1905 Leamington Athletics Club (which had a cycling section) and Leamington C&AC created in 1928. Clearly, in the view of some, it was simply a continuation of the same club.

### **1939 - C&AC's difficulty**

By 1939 there were a number of calls for a sports ground to be provided in which the various sports clubs in Leamington could practice. At a "*small gathering of enthusiasts*" from local sports clubs, organised by the Central Council of Recreative Physical Training, Bill Wallsgrove expressed our club's willingness to "*co-operate in any movement which would*

*provide opportunities of extending the athletic interests in the club [which was] very seriously handicapped by the lack of training ground.”*

### **1939 - Don Sullivan: life membership**

In recognition of his long and loyal service Don Sullivan was made a Life Member of the club in November 1939 at the annual dinner and prize-giving presentations. Bill Wallsgrove said that Don was a “*shining example of a good sportsman*” who “*had never risen to the heights, but had plodded along, and in spite of the fact that he lived several miles from headquarters, had turned out regularly for the past 16 years.*”

Don was born in 1896 in Banbury and joined C&AC when his local club, Banbury Harriers, folded in 1966 (revived in 1970). He regularly travelled to our cross country fixtures by bicycle! He took up road running in the 1920s. Don suffered a mild stroke in the 1970s but recovered to win the bronze medal in the World Vets 10k over-80s Championships.

---

## Members' Stories and Profiles

### **Ted Clifford<sup>4</sup>**

Ted was born in Bourton-on-the-Water on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1909. He moved around the Cotswolds before eventually moving to Leamington to find work. He was one of the founding members of Leamington Cycling and Athletics Club in 1928. Throughout the 72 years until his death on 21st December 2000, a fortnight short of his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday, Ted was a dedicated servant to the club as a whole, as well as to the separate athletics and cycling sections, giving loyal and unflinching service. The respect with which Ted was held was demonstrated by the large gathering of club members, both past and present, at his funeral to pay final respects and to celebrate his life. Many formed a guard of honour as his coffin was carried into the church and again as it left - to the sounds of Chariots of Fire.

Ted originally joined our club as a cyclist but rapidly established a reputation in both our sports. He became a well-known and respected personality within both cycling and athletics circles, locally and nationally, particularly through his serving the two sports for many years as a timekeeper at hundreds of events. His many roles included Athletics Secretary, Warwickshire AAA handicapper, club handicapper, General Club Secretary, Club Vice Chairman, Club President, Warwickshire Cross Country Manager and Warwickshire AAA President. In his later days Ted was probably best known for his timekeeping, covering the full range of running and cycling events. He was always regarded as a first class timekeeper and was always in great demand.

Ted's devotion and services to athletics were recognised in many ways:

- in 1955 he was made a Life Member of Leamington C&AC;
- in 1974 he was presented with a Life Vice President's plaque of the Midland Counties Cross country Association for his long service;
- in 1988 he was honoured with Life Vice President of Midland Counties Amateur Athletics and Midland Counties Cycling Association;
- in recognition of his services he was presented with a unique illuminated certificate by the Warwickshire AAA which read “We the Warwickshire AAA wish to place on record our thanks and appreciation to Edgar (Ted) Clifford, Past President of the Association, for long and meritorious service to the Association”.

---

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from various articles in Spikes and the Club website.

With all the time, effort and commitment Ted gave to athletics and cycling it is difficult to see how he found time to be a part-time fireman for five and a half years in the early 1940s, or to carry out his trade as a painter and decorator.

Ted married Doris in the mid-1930s and she not only supported his dedication to athletics and cycling for over 55 years, but also played a very active role in both sections of the club. She held the position of President of the Warwickshire Women's AAA during the years when the men and women had separate associations.

Both Ted and Doris's memories live on with the club's Ted and Doris Clifford competition held in August each year. In 1992, Ted, being keen to maintain the unity of the club, presented the Clock Trophy for the annual Ted & Doris Duathlon – an event which combines the skills of both sections of our club. Ted encouraged all members of the club to participate in this two part cycling and road running event which was inaugurated to foster and develop contacts between the two sections and give an opportunity for each to appreciate the other's skills.

### **William (Bill) Henry Wallsgrove<sup>5</sup>**

Bill Wallsgrove was a well-known and popular local sportsman during the early 1900s. He was one of the main driving forces behind the merger of the former Leamington Athletic and Leamington Cycling Clubs to create Leamington Cycling and Athletics Club in 1928.



Research indicates that Bill joined the former Leamington Athletics Club in either 1906 or 1907 when he would have been in his early 20s. He was Treasurer and subsequently elected President of that club in 1911. Over time he took on several different roles with the new Leamington C&AC including club Treasurer, Chairman and President. He took an active part in the administrative side of athletics at all levels and was a leading figure at regional and national level as well as at club level. Many of the other positions he held are referred to elsewhere in this publication.

Bill was a distance runner himself but also took an interest in cycling and football. We know that he enjoyed cycling and was also Chairman of the Leamington Cycling Club in 1927 prior to the merger. He always cycled to work where he was a partner in Wallsgrove Bros builders and decorators.

Bill was elected as a Leamington town councillor in 1939, served as mayor in 1949 and was made a JP in 1945. He also became an alderman. It is not clear when his involvement in athletics finished but he was certainly active as club President in 1946. Bill died, we believe, just after Christmas 1972 at the age of 87. The Executive Council agreed to make a donation on behalf of the club to the Scout Association "*in memory of Uncle Bill*" and a one minute silence was held at that year's AGM.

---

<sup>5</sup> Picture courtesy the Courier.

## Chapter 3

# World War 2 and the 1940s

### **World War 2**

The war years, of course, had a major impact on life. This was a time well before the advent of Veteran and Master athletics which meant that many active athletes were of an age where they would be called up for war service. No cross country championship events were held during World War 2, although Youth and Junior races were run. A Junior race was held at Leamington on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1940 and was won by F. Froggatt of Small Heath Harriers.

The Cross Country Union had written urging clubs to carry on during the war so, at C&AC's 1939 AGM, members agreed unanimously to continue their activities. They also agreed to encourage youths between the ages of 15 and 18 who might provide the future mainstay of clubs. The AGM also agreed that members of H.M. Forces would be recognised as full members without having to pay their subscriptions and a fund was established for sending 'comforts' to the men. In November 1939 the Executive Council agreed to provide one pair of socks and one pair of gloves to each of the eight club members then in the Forces, at a cost not exceeding five shillings per member.

In December 1940 the Executive Council agreed to call in all club trophies, to be lodged with three trustees for the duration of the war. Club meetings minute books were lodged with the club president and the secretary also held a copy.

Whilst the club clearly continued, athletics did suffer during the war years. No club AGMs were held during this time because of the time and trouble involved when members were having to engage in other, more important activities. The existing club officials continued in post for the duration of the war giving what they could to preserve the club traditions.

An AGM was held in 1945 following the end of hostilities to elect new officials. Bill Wallsgrove, club President reported on a "welcome revival of the Athletics Section". However, on a more sombre note he added "*The demands of war have been many on our members particularly the Athletics Section, who have at the moment only two or three active members*". As a result there were insufficient athletics members to form an Athletics Sub-Committee. Membership of the club as a whole was about 70.

At the 1945 AGM it was also agreed "*that the Executive Committee should consider the question of admitting female members*".

As with World War 1 it has proved difficult to find details of those club members who served in the forces during this period. Courier reports on wounding or deaths sometimes referred to the person being a keen or talented athlete, but that in itself does not mean they were members of Leamington C&AC. However, we have found the record of one serviceman – a W/Sgt Horace Victor King who was reported missing at sea.

**Reported Missing at Sea**

On Monday, Mrs. King, of 13, Alveston Place, Leamington, received official intimation that her husband, W/Sgt. Horace Victor King, of the Regiment Maritime, R.A., has been posted missing at sea. He is 33 years of age. A member of the Territorials, he joined up immediately on the outbreak of war, and has since served in several theatres of war. He is a native of Leamington, and after leaving the Campion Central School joined the staff of Messrs. Field & Son. He was a keen member of Leamington Cycling and Athletic Club, and a football referee.



### **1942 - Cyclists make up the Leamington team**

In 1942 an inter-club event was held over a five and a half mile course in the Campion Hills district. Leamington was third behind Godiva Harriers and B.T.H. (Rugby) but were nearly all members of the cycling section!

### **1944 - William Martin Shuff: life membership**

William Martin Shuff, one of C&AC's founder members, was granted life membership for his work for the club over a period of 20 years during which he had been Chairman, President and was currently Treasurer. His life membership was presented at the club's annual dinner.

### **1944 - Annual Boxing Night Dance – without music!**

Leamington C&AC's annual Boxing Night Dance took a slightly different format in 1944 – there was no music! Attendance was over 300 people, but due to adverse weather only three members of Billy Monk's Band were able to make the journey from Coventry. The courier reported that *“despite the fact they had no music with them they did their best to make the evening enjoyable, being ably supported by Mr G. Cary, who was an excellent M.C. The dancers accepted the situation with good humour and did their best to enjoy themselves.”*

### **1946 - Annual dinner and prize-giving**

On 1<sup>st</sup> February 1946 a report in the Courier about the club's annual dinner and prize-giving included the following:

*“Over 75 people spent an enjoyable evening on the occasion of the annual dinner and prize giving of the Leamington Cycling and Athletic Club at the Warwick Restaurant on Saturday. With the genial President (Councillor W. H. Wallsgrove, JP) occupying the chair, the occasion, as usual, was a success from the serving of the soup to the singing of “Auld Lang Syne”.*

Amongst the guests was Mr E. C. Cannon, President of the English Cross Country Union who, when proposing a toast to “the Club”

*“voiced both his own and the Union's complete confidence of a successful and record-breaking ‘Victory’ National Cross country Championship under the able auspices of the Leamington C&AC., whose name, he stated, was respected and admired, not only throughout England, but in France and Belgium as well. Happy memories were retained of the International Cross country Championship held in Leamington over ten years ago.”*

During the presentations W. H. Gaston and W.C. Rogers were both made Life Members. Club President Bill Wallsgrove said that this was in recognition of their invaluable work for the club extended over many years. They had both held various official positions and had devoted much time to the club's welfare, from which the club had gained great benefit.

### **1946 - English National Cross Country Championships**

Following the end of hostilities Leamington took a lead in restoring senior athletics by hosting the first post-war English National Cross Country Championships. The event, held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1946, was run over the ‘old steeplechase course’ at Leamington – a 307 acre area of land which subsequently became Newbold Comyn. Locally it was seen as a prestigious project, with the Leamington mayor and other dignitaries getting involved. A ‘General Committee’ was established to organise the event consisting of representatives from the various sporting organisations in the town with our Bill Wallsgrove, Ted Clifford and H. Reader at the helm. The event was supported by Lockheed Sports and Social Club (which had its own Cycling and Athletics Club) and made a profit of £300.

In those days the National was run over 10 miles. 214 runners finished in the senior event (out of 291 entries representing 25 senior teams and 38 individuals) and 140 completed the Three-Mile Youth Championship event (29 Youth teams and five individuals). Race winner was Jack Holden from Tipton Harriers; scoring a hat trick of wins and his fifth National Cross Country title overall. The Courier reported that *“The local clubs are represented by the Lockheed A and CC, who have a team in the Youth race, whilst Leamington C and A.C., whose athletics section has been dormant during the war, have two individual entries in the senior race.”*

Run in ideal weather conditions the Courier reported that the event was a great success – the credit going to the band of enthusiasts who had worked so hard beforehand to ensure a smooth running event. St Johns Ambulance Brigade are reported as having treated six people: two of collapse, four of cuts and abrasion. One case, however, of a suspected fractured ankle occurred at the farthest point of the course; the ambulance men having to stretch him one and a half miles!

#### **1946 - To Banbury and back!**

Don Sullivan ran from Leamington Town Hall to Banbury Cross and back in a time of 5 hours 58 minutes 43 seconds. The October 1946 AGM agreed to award him with a certificate to commemorate this performance.

#### **1946 - Women members**

The October 1946 AGM also agreed to continue to accept ladies into the club as honorary members

*“Welcoming the ladies, Councillor Wallsgrove paid tribute to the ‘cyclist wives’, who make possible the active participation in the sport for their menfolk, besides always being ready with a helping hand in the running of events”.*

#### **1947 - Grand Open Sports Meeting**

Leamington C&AC sponsored a “Grand Open Sports Meeting” as part of the St John’s Horticultural Society’s Annual Show held in Victoria Park in August 1947. Events included horticultural exhibits, fun fair, motor-cycle track racing as well as cycling and athletics. Entry coordinator for the sports meeting was Ted Clifford.

#### **1947 - German Prisoner of War**

It was reported to the Executive Council meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1947 that the secretary had been visited by a German POW who wished to train with the club. It was resolved that he should be admitted as an honorary member.

#### **1947 - The Athletics Section plods along**

The impact of the war on Athletics Section numbers continued into the late 1940s and the ongoing low numbers affected the ability of the section to function as effectively as it should. Ted Clifford, then club Honorary Secretary in his report to the October 1947 AGM, said that *“The Athletics Section, never very strong, continues to plod along with the support of a few loyal members”.*

#### **1948 - Newbold Farm**

The Leamington Town Council purchased the freehold of Newbold Comyn Farm Estate in July 1948. This was to become the Newbold Comyn Park that we know today.

#### **1949 - 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Leamington C&AC**

A free ‘Smoking Concert’ with piano entertainment, open to all past and present members, was held at the town hall on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1949 to celebrate the club’s 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary.

## Chapter 4

# The 1950s

The 1950s was a decade when membership continued to be affected by national conscription. At that time athletics was almost totally the preserve of young men. National conscription introduced during the war years continued and the impact on membership was such that by 1954 the club was down to 15 (it is not clear whether this was 15 in total, i.e. athletes and cyclists, or whether it was just athletes). However, despite this the decade was one of growth as a joint cycling and athletics club; on the athletics side the cross country aspect continued to be strengthened.

### **1950 - Jack Diamond: C&AC's first international athlete**

C&AC's Jack Diamond had a fine performance to finish eighth in the Irish National Cross Country Championships in 1950. This led to his selection to run for Ireland in an international cross country event in Belgium where he finished 32<sup>nd</sup>. He also finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Midland Championships that year. The club presented him with a commemorative plaque in recognition of the fact that he was the first C&AC member to achieve international honours.

### **1952 - Calls for a cycling and running track**

During the 1950s the club was regularly pressing Leamington Town Council to provide a public running and cycling track in the town. In 1952 the club AGM agreed to ask the mayor to receive a deputation to discuss the club having its own permanent cycling and running track. In his report to the AGM, Ted Clifford, who was secretary at the time, merely stated that "*it would be of great benefit to the youth of Leamington if a running and cycling track could be provided by the Corporation*" – perhaps as part of the coronation celebrations? But this was not strong enough for the meeting which agreed that a deputation should press the "*urgent need*".

As a stopgap a temporary grass track at Victoria Park was suggested which would enable interest to be kept alive until a permanent track materialised. A suggested site for a permanent track was Pratts Sandpits, Lillington. The meeting felt that several unofficial and informal approaches in the past had been ineffective and that promises had not been realised. This included one that provision of a track would be included in the development of the Newbold Comyn Estate, but that had eventually been turned down as a sports site because it was all clay!

### **1954 - "Keep Politics out of 'Sport'", say local C. and A.C. members**

At a lively AGM in November 1954 members refused to discuss a proposed resolution on the grounds that "*a sporting organisation should not concern itself with politics*". A Mr Millest had proposed that the following resolution be sent to Sir Antony Eden (then Warwick and Leamington's local MP and Prime Minister):

*"This Club strongly protests at your action at the recent Nine Power Conference, when in an effort to overcome French fears, concerning the re-arming of Germany, you have committed our country to station troops in Europe until 1998.*

*"Already compulsory National Service is creating difficulties to sporting organisations, such as ours, but we had hopes of a cut in the length of National Service training in the near future. This latest commitment will mean that the two-year period becomes a permanent feature of our lives. This we feel is not in the interests of either sport or peace."*

### **1954 - Edmondscote: proposed site for cycling and athletic track**

Following a meeting of club delegates and members of the council's Parks and Gardens Sub-Committee, Edmondscote was 'suggested' as the site for a proposed cycling and

athletics track. This was likely to be a shale or grass athletics track with a cycling track on the outside. It was recognised that there was little chance of a hard, banked cycle track due to cost and insufficient demand.

### **1955 - Leamington joins the Birmingham and District Cross Country League**

The Birmingham and District Cross Country League was created in 1925 - initially with seven clubs – Wednesbury Harriers, Dudley Harriers, Harborne Harriers, Lozells Harriers, Smethwick Harriers, West Bromwich Harriers and Small Heath Harriers. In the early years each club arranged a fixture. Principles which still endure in the league today were established at that time: any number from each club could run, the first six from each club would 'score' and it was limited to first claim membership.

Leamington was not party to the league in these early days but applied to join in 1955; its application being approved at the 1955 league annual general meeting. Leamington's first season in the league was, therefore, 1955/56. By then the league had grown to three divisions and Leamington was placed in Division 3.

Two Leamington athletes clearly made an early impression in the league: Tom Buckingham coming 2<sup>nd</sup> and G. Howells 4<sup>th</sup> in the first race of our first season helping the team to 3<sup>rd</sup> position on the day. Further individual success in the other three races of the season gave G. Howells a 7<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> placing whilst Tom Buckingham scored 8<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. As a result Leamington gained promotion to Division 2 for the following season.

1956/57 was a fairly mediocre affair with Leamington hovering around 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> position (out of 9 teams) in the individual races and 6<sup>th</sup> overall at the end of the season. 1957/58 saw stronger team performance with a team second and three firsts for a final placing of 2<sup>nd</sup> overall and promotion to Division 1. Our only runner to finish in the top ten in a race during the season was D. Gill with 7<sup>th</sup> in race one. 1958/9 – and our first taste of Division 1 - was not, however, very positive. The team finished 9<sup>th</sup> (out of 9) in all four races relegating us back to Division 2.

1959/60 – the final season of the decade was very much a consolidation year with team placings in the individual races of 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Fred Woodward was our only athlete to achieve a top-ten individual position with two 7<sup>ths</sup> and an 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **1956 - English County Cross Country Championships at Warwick**

The English Cross Country Championships were held at Warwick Racecourse on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1956 with Leamington C&AC and Coventry Godiva Harriers joining forces as joint organisers. It was reported to be a very successful day with a profit of £400.

### **1956 - Lady athletes admitted as competitive members**

We have earlier referred to the fact that ladies were admitted as honorary members of the club from 1946. The October 1956 AGM agreed that "*lady members be admitted to the Athletics Section as competitive members*". In 1957 it was reported to the Executive Committee that the admission of ladies had, so far, been disappointing but that the Athletics Section would "*persevere*". To encourage ladies it was agreed to hold four ladies' track events in 1958

However, some members clearly saw problems about the ladies sharing facilities with the men. The club's headquarters was at the Angel Hotel in Leamington and, several years before the use of a room as a clubroom and access to bathroom facilities had been agreed, subject to a small consideration with the brewery that owned the hotel. The following letter was sent by the athletics secretary to all members:



*“At a meeting of the Athletic Section of the Club on 11th November 1957 it was pointed out that it was not possible for male and female members to attend the Clubroom for training on the same nights.*

*The Committee instructed me to write and inform you that on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evening, and Sunday morning, the Clubroom (and the bathroom) is only to be used by the male members.*

*Wednesday and Friday evening will be available for the use of female members. ...”*

The letter also informed members that a member of the female section would be invited to attend future committee meetings and asked the ladies to decide a process for establishing who it should be.

---

## Members' Stories and Profiles

### **Brian Olive: by Les Barnett<sup>6</sup>**

Brian joined the club as a young man in June 1959 and gave more than 50 years of his life to it. Starting as a runner Brian soon developed skills as a thrower and for many years could be relied on to gain valuable league points in his favourite disciplines, the discus and hammer. During his time he served on the Athletics Section Committee and was a successful Midlands Men's League team manager for some time. A qualified field judge, Brian was always available to help the club in this role.



Brian's greatest contribution to the club was as a Qualified Coach. He was equally happy coaching youngsters as he was seniors and was a skilled motivator across all events on the track and field as well as road and cross country. He produced many Warwickshire and Midland Champions and such was the diversity of his knowledge and skills that he is the only club coach to have produced no fewer than three English Schools Champions in three different events, the 800m, long jump and javelin. Many club records set by Brian's athletes still stand today. For his immense support of the club he was made a Life Member in 1984.

Brian passed away in July 2013. To commemorate Brian a bench was purchased solely by his grateful athletes. This is situated on the back straight at the Edmondscote Track and will be a permanent reminder of a great club man.

### **Dai Vaughan**

Dai Vaughan joined the club in 1958. The 100m event at the Midlands Masters Track and Field League event on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 marked his 60<sup>th</sup> year competing for the Club (see page 93).

Athletics and C&AC in particular has been a family affair in the Vaughan household, with his wife Chris and eldest son Steven competing at a high standard; and his younger children Ben (Warwickshire pole vault Colts winner) and Tammy (100m sprinter) also competing for C&AC. Dai has many fond memories of his time with Leamington but perhaps his favourite

---

<sup>6</sup> Picture from Club Notice Board at Edmondscote Track.

is when his son Steven represented Warwickshire Schools in the inter-counties decathlon in 1985 and won the title.

Being part of the club for so long Dai has witnessed many achievements by club members. His top 3 are:

- Cavin Woodward's world records as an ultra-distance runner;
- his wife's indoor world records in 1983 as a Masters athlete in the 60m and 200m; when RAF Cosford had an indoor athlete track; and
- the Masters 40 men breaking the M40 4x200m world record in 1984.

On a personal note Dai's favourite achievements include:

- coming first and achieving a World Best at the first ever British Masters Indoor Octathlon at R.A.F. Cosford in 1985; and
- coming second when competing for the Welsh Masters in a home countries international in Sheffield in 1986

Dai is one of those people who always seems to be at the track – and at times only appears to leave it to sleep and eat! In the earlier years when he was building his own bungalow he always managed to take time out to make sure he competed for his beloved club. His commitment has continued throughout his 60-year reign with the club, despite some illnesses in recent years.

The following extracts are from a tribute to “The Athletic Family Vaughan” which appeared in the Leamington Courier in January 1985.

*“Most local sports clubs have at least one combined competing family amongst its membership. Leamington C&AC is no exception.*

*The Vaughans of Warwick are rarely seen out of the team lists, men, ladies or boys. And in the not too distant future it is highly probable that 9-year old Tammy Vaughan will be seeking girls' section points for the club.*

*The athletic tradition in the family goes back to the schooldays of Dai and Christine, who were both born and bred in Warwick – Dai's mother being Welsh, hence his popularly known Christian name.*

*His interest in the sport really took-off in 1953 when he won almost everything that could be won in athletics events organised in conjunction with local celebrations marking the coronation. Dai subsequently joined Leamington C&AC, has been a member ever since, and graduated through sprint and long jump to eventually specialise in the toughest of all events – the decathlon.*

*Christine's membership of the Leamington club is approaching 25 years, during which she has been a very consistent team member, with sprinting her forte.*

*Both Christine and Dai have benefitted in recent years from the upsurge in organised meetings and championships for 'veteran' athletes' – a bit of a misnomer in that ladies are classed as 'vets' at 35, and men at 40.*

*And both have grasped the sort of opportunity to compete beyond club level, which rarely arose during their younger athletic years.*

*Christine is the current ladies' indoor 60 metres world record holder, ... (and) ... towards the end of the '84 track and field season, she was a member of England's 4x4 100 metres silver medal team in the European Vets Championships at Brighton.*

*Dai can also boast a world record, having been a member of a Leamington 4x200 metres indoor relay squad in 1983. Their record is thought to still stand.”*

## Chapter 5 The 1960s

The 1960s pre-date the running boom when road running became a popular sport. The proliferation of road races that we now have had yet to come, so inter-club matches were an important part of the race calendar in the 1960s. The winter season saw cross country races almost every weekend; there were four Birmingham League races for the men and other weekends were filled with local inter-club events. Similarly, in the summer season track and field athletics consisted of Midland League matches and a number of local inter-club events. On the road, whilst road races were around, they were much fewer in number. Road relays were popular, with the club competing in a number of open events during the 'spring' season.

### ***Birmingham and District Cross Country League***

A very positive start to the decade for Leamington in the Birmingham Cross Country League. Four wins in four races meant that we won Division 2 in the 1960/61 season and gained promotion to Division 1. The first race of the season set the scene with Leamington runners filling four of the top ten places: M. Turner (3<sup>rd</sup>), C. Haden (7<sup>th</sup>), Fred Woodward (9<sup>th</sup>), and T. Bach (10<sup>th</sup>). This gave a points score for the match of just 66, against 150 points for our nearest rival. This lead was consolidated in the next three races of the season.

However, our return to Division 1 for the 1962/63 season was short-lived with team positions in the four matches of 8<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> – out of eight teams. Two seasons in Division 2 were followed by further relegation to Division 3 at the end of the 1964/65 season. 1965/66 and 1966/67 seasons were more positive with the team finishing just outside of the promotion zone. Our most consistent runner during these two years was F. Bates who achieved top-ten placings in three of the league races in 1965/66. Also hitting the top ten in 1966/67 were George Pirie with a first in race one of the season, George Phipps with a 10<sup>th</sup> and J. Mullis with a 10<sup>th</sup>.

1967/68 – a season affected by an outbreak of foot and mouth disease (see page 29) - saw a successful concerted team effort to gain promotion back to Division 2. Race one saw the team finish 3<sup>rd</sup>; with F. Bates achieving a 7<sup>th</sup> placing. Leamington finished in 1<sup>st</sup> in the remaining three races of the season. In race two Cavin Woodward was 7<sup>th</sup> and Henry Mortimer 9<sup>th</sup>. Leamington took race three by storm with all of our six counting athletes coming home in the top 14 and opened a 71 point lead ahead of their nearest rivals. According to the Leamington Spa Courier “a magnificent display of team running ... over the snowbound lanes of Mid-Warwickshire” (the race was run on the road due to the foot and mouth outbreak). Our finishers in the top ten were Tony Carr, who had given up boxing for running in 1966 (3<sup>rd</sup>), F. Bates (4<sup>th</sup>), Cavin Woodward (8<sup>th</sup>), Dave Bendy (9<sup>th</sup>), and J. Mullis (10<sup>th</sup>). In the final race more top-ten success for F. Bates (4<sup>th</sup>), Alan Rowling 5<sup>th</sup>), Cavin Woodward (8<sup>th</sup>), and J. Mullis (9<sup>th</sup>).



*A fresh-faced Paul Muddeman tackles the mud in the late 1960s*

For the remainder of the decade Leamington remained firmly in the middle of Division 2, but bright spots included top-ten placings for S. Rowley (a 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1968/69 and a 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in

1969/70), Pete Guppy (9<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 1969/70) and Tony Carr (8<sup>th</sup>). The up-and-down pattern of the 1960s led the Leamington Spa Courier to tag us as the 'yo-yo team', with relegation regularly following promotion.

The third Birmingham League race of the 1969/70 season was rather challenging. The Leamington Spa Courier reported on the race with the headline "*Mud-battling – the ultimate sport!*" The race being one that "... could lay strong claim to being the ultimate test of amateur sporting endeavour". "*The weather was fowl – pelting rain and biting wind*". "*The course was a piquant mixture of ankle deep mud and cow pats. And still 100 odd runners, ranging from fresh-faced youngsters to craggy veterans, trudged round the stamina sapping circuit. Several of the older hands ... considered conditions to be the worst they could remember. "the small band of spectators who watched the race from the rough shelter of various bushes around the course were in no mood to disagree."* Four of the fourteen C&AC finishers in that race are still C&AC members: George Phipps (who was 11<sup>th</sup>), Chris Donovan (43<sup>rd</sup>), Henry Mortimer (71<sup>st</sup>) and Dai Vaughan (82<sup>nd</sup>). We also had three runners in the Youth's event<sup>7</sup>.

### **1961 - Lady members**

By the early 1960s there were the signs of improvements in the number of female members. It was reported to the Executive Council in 1961 that there was "*a good nucleus for a ladies section*" - there being, by then, 15 female members of the Athletic Section. In March 1962 the Executive Council noted regular attendance by the ladies at Friday evening keep-fit classes but with not much running activity, although it was expected that this would improve once the track opened.

### **1963 - 50 mile walk**

C&AC were associated with a 50 mile walk organised by the Mayor of Leamington in aid of the Red Cross Centenary Year Fund. The event involved five laps of a ten mile course and was open to persons aged 18 to 55. It is not clear why there was this upper age limit – perhaps it was considered that 50 miles was too far for someone over this age!

### **1964 - Opening of Edmondscote Athletics Track**

The formal opening of Edmondscote running track, along with its associated facilities, in 1964 was the culmination of many years work by both club officials and Leamington Town Council councillors and officers. As already noted there were calls for a running and cycling track as early as 1952, and Edmondscote was being suggested as the possible site in 1954. Unfortunately the inclusion of a cycling track fell by the wayside and we can, consequently, only speculate on how our club might have developed had cycling facilities been included at Edmondscote.

Planning and building the new track and facilities were well under way by 1961. The club was given access and use of the new pavilion from 14<sup>th</sup> November 1961 and use of the track from 1<sup>st</sup> May 1962. An initial list of proposed equipment for the athletics track included a 105 foot long 4 inch circumference rope for tug of war!

The initial agreement between the council and the club for use of Edmondscote included the following:

- that the club would have sole use of the track and facilities on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings for 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> May 1962 at a fee of £40 for the year;
- that the club would have use of the track on a minimum of six Saturday afternoons at a fee to be agreed;

---

<sup>7</sup> Picture courtesy Paul Muddeman.

- that exclusive use by the club at other times would be subject to separate fee;
- that the club would take responsibility for administration of the track and ensure it was open for seven days a week for 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> May 1962;
- that persons using the track outside of club times would pay a fee of 1/- for an evening or 30/- for a season ticket (5p and £1.50 in decimal currency);
- that public use of the track on club nights could only take place with the club's agreement, for which the club could charge a fee;
- applications to use the track by outside bodies would be passed to the club for consideration;
- a slot meter was provided to pay for electricity at 1/- (5p) a time; and
- the council provided a Park Superintendent to look after the site.

This agreement was initially for 12 months and, of course, it changed and developed over time although some elements can still be seen in current practice. Even before the Edmondscote project was completed there were aspirations for further development of the site. The club Executive Council at a meeting at the Angel Hotel in Leamington noted "*the distinct possibility of developing the pavilion to accommodate a restaurant etc at some time in the future*". Discussions were also starting to be had about the need for a club room.

The Executive Committee set the season ticket fee for members at 10/- for Seniors and 5/- for Juniors (50p and 25p).

The new track was granted an Amateur Athletic Association Running Track and Field Certificate in 1964 and the formal opening ceremony itself took place that same year. Arthur Godfrey Kilner Brown, a former Olympian who won an individual silver 400m medal and helped Britain to win gold in the 4x400m relay at the 1926 Berlin Olympics, performed the opening ceremony. A plaque recording this is on the outside wall of the pavilion at Edmondscote and reads:

THIS SPORTS TRACK  
WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED BY  
A. G. K. BROWN Esq., M.A.  
ON THE 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 1964,  
IN THE PRESENCE OF  
HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR  
COUNCILLOR N. SLATER

The ceremony was held at 2.00 pm with a programme of athletic events starting at 2.10 pm. Ten club members were invited to sit in a roped-off 'Officials Enclosure'. Entry to the event was free but there was a parking charge of 1/- (5p). Ted and Doris Clifford represented the club at a formal dinner held by the Mayor of Leamington that evening.



This photograph of the 1965 club 880 yard Championships shows the then cinder track and, in the background, the changing rooms building are without the 'club room' that we now have. Behind the building the view is also much more open than we see today.

*From the left, the runners are:  
D Vaughan, F Powers, F Woodward, H  
Mortimer, M Harris, J Mullis, D Bendy, F Bates  
(Result: 1 Mullis, 2 Mortimer, 3 Vaughan)<sup>8</sup>*

<sup>8</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Bendy.

### **1965 - Midland Cross Country Championships: where was Leamington?**

In February Leamington C&AC failed to field a team in any of the three Midland Cross Country Championship events at Rugby.

### **1966 - Warwickshire Road Relay Championships: Cubbington**

In the 1960s, the Warwickshire Road Relay Championships were held at Cubbington, on a course starting and finishing in Kenilworth Road and going via the B4453 and A445. It would certainly be considered too dangerous these days.

Dick Taylor (Coventry Godiva) held the record for the 3.8 mile lap with 17 minutes 17 seconds. He went on to set several UK records, including 8:30.2 for 2 miles on the Leamington track and 28:6.6 seconds for 10,000m at Crystal Palace.

This picture<sup>9</sup> of the relays from 1966 shows George Phipps handing over to Cavin Woodward.



### **1966 - Club Christmas cards**

A new fund raising initiative in 1966 was the club selling Christmas cards. This seems to have been a successful activity for several years. In 1966 a profit of £18 5s 4d was made and in 1974 £28.49.

### **1967-68 - Foot and mouth disease**

The 1967/68 cross country season took an unusual format – with several races taking place on the roads! An outbreak of foot and mouth disease led to the suspension of all running over fields and on farmland. However, that did not stop cross country races from going ahead: races were held on the road along country lanes where neighbouring fields were free of livestock.

The second Birmingham League Cross Country race was switched from Shrewsbury to Stourbridge for a mainly road course of two three-mile laps. The Courier reported that the third Birmingham League race of the season on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1968 was held over the “snowbound lanes of mid-Warwickshire” a course that ran from Oken Secondary Modern School (now part of Myton School), along the Banbury Road, up Gallows Hill, along Heathcote Lane, Tachbrook Road and back to Oken School. C&AC opened a 71 point lead at the top of Division 3. Prior to the race they were in 2<sup>nd</sup> position; 6 points behind Burton, but excellent packing at the front of the field saw our top 6 runners home in 14 places.

In addition the club's Christmas cross country handicap was held on the roads around Campion.

It is interesting to compare the approach in 1967/8 to the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak where events were completely cancelled, including most of those that took place on parkland. Back in 1967 more efforts seemed to be made to keep events going although in 1967 the roads were a lot quieter than they are now, especially the country roads.

### **1960s - Club Cross Country Championships**

In the 1960s the Club Cross Country Championships started and finished on the road in Holly Walk. This ‘road’ start gave extra distance to bring the length up to 6.5 miles. Those

---

<sup>9</sup> Courtesy Dave Bendy.

wearing spikes usually chose to start on the grass verge.



*From the left, the runners are: H Mortimer, J Mullis, D Vaughan, M Turner, T Buckingham, K Sawyer, S Feasey, F Bates, C Woodward, P Makepeace, F Woodward, N Hiorns, D Bendy (Result: 1 Mullis 2 Bates 3 Bendy)<sup>10</sup>*

*Officials included Ted Clifford (next to the lamp post) and George Phipps - injured and unable to run but unmistakable despite his (then) dark hair!*

### **1969 - Midland Track and Field League**

In the summer the club competed in the Midland Track and Field League. Joining the league in Division 3 in 1969 the club made an immediate impact. Following a 'home' meeting at Edmondscote in August that year the Courier commented that "*cock-a-hoop Leamington C&AC, for years a powerful cross country outfit, are beginning to make quite a name for themselves in track and field athletics*". At this, the third meeting of the season, C&AC tied for first match place with Bromsgrove and Redditch which placed them at the top of the league, needing only to finish third in the final meeting to clinch the title and gain promotion to Division 2.

### **1966 - Club 4 mile race**

We used to have two Club 4 mile races which ran on Saturday afternoons, starting at the top of River Close, along Princes Drive, onto and along Myton Road, turning round at Castle Bridge to return along the same route. First run in October 1966; the autumn event was a club championship race, whilst a spring race was a handicap race.

Both were always popular runs but eventually they had to be abandoned because of increased traffic from cars visiting the waste disposal facilities and the development of retail outlets on the corner of Myton Road/Princes Drive and the Shires Retail Park. Races were very competitive; as at 11<sup>th</sup> October 1969 the top 5 performances were:

|                                    |       |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Pete Birks (2 <sup>nd</sup> Claim) | 19.43 |
| Alan Rowling                       | 19.45 |
| Tony Carr                          | 19.52 |

---

<sup>10</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Bendy.

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| George Pirie | 20.03 |
| Pete Guppy   | 20.11 |

By April 1987 the top five times were all under 19.30.

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Trevor Jeffries | 19.13 |
| Alan Rowling    | 19.21 |
| Eddie Twohig    | 19.22 |
| Pete Guppy      | 19.27 |
| Paul Varney     | 19.28 |

The Club 4 mile race continues to be run as part of the Ted and Doris Duathlon, but from a course that now starts halfway along the Myton Road and takes in three laps of the path inside St Nicholas Park.

### **1967 - The first Stratford 9**

The start of the first Stratford 9 race in 1967 included several C&AC vests: Pete Hart, Tom Buckingham, Richard Morris, Cavin Woodward and, we believe, Tony Carr<sup>11</sup>.



### **1967 - Club 10 mile race**

A Club 10 mile road championship started in 1967 along a route which took in Princes Drive, Myton Road, Banbury Road, Bishops Tachbrook and Whitnash. The event ran for a number of years but, along with other club road races, suffered from the increasing traffic in the 1990s and had to cease as an Edmondscote-based race. It was later merged into the Rugby 10. We also had a Hampton 10 handicap 10 mile event which went through Hampton Magna, which was also subsequently merged into the Rugby 10.

In 1969 the top five performances since 1967 were recorded as:

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Tony Carr      | 50.40 |
| George Pirie   | 51.50 |
| Frank Bates    | 52.15 |
| Dave Bendy     | 52.19 |
| Cavin Woodward | 52.21 |

### **1969 - Lost shoes!**

Over the years a number of our cross country runners have lost their shoes in the mud but perhaps not as frequently as happened in 1969. On 4<sup>th</sup> January 1969 Tony Carr – the leading C&AC runner in the Warwickshire Cross Country Championships at Solihull - was 23<sup>rd</sup> despite losing his shoe about 3 miles from the finish. Two weeks later in the third

<sup>11</sup> Picture courtesy Chris Morris.



Birmingham League Cross Country event Frank Powers lost his shoe at one stage but stopped to replace it. His brother-in-law Frank Bates lost both his shoes at 3 miles but decided to carry on without them, completing the race bare-footed.

---

## Members' Stories and Profiles

### **Les Barnett<sup>12</sup>**

Les Barnett joined the club in 1967 as a 100m and 200m sprinter who occasionally high jumped or put the shot. On his first Sunday morning as a club member, on the old cinder track, he won the Club 100m Championship. It was the first time he had ever used blocks. He was hooked and is still with the club more than 50 years later.

Les joined a sprint group coached by Brian Olive who guided him throughout his time as an athlete. Never learning how to use blocks correctly Les still managed to run 11.0 for the 100 and 22.2 for the 200, but that was never good enough to win a Warwickshire AAA medal. Les moved up to the 400m in 1971 and in his first season ran 52.2. The following year saw his breakthrough winning the first of his three Warwickshire titles in 50.1. Finishing 4<sup>th</sup> in the MCAA's at Leicester in 49.8 he then went on to win the National Police title at Durham in 49.0 setting a new championship and C&AC club record. Les went on to win four more Police titles and three silver medals in an 11-year span.



He twice represented the British Police in European Championships and the highlight was winning 400m bronze in the Berlin Olympic Stadium in front of a 42,000 crowd. In the last event of the day he ran his best ever 400m relay split of 47.6 when anchoring the GB Police team to a silver medal in the relay.

Of all his 400m races Les views one of his best performances as being in the Warwickshire Championships at Edmondscote one evening in June 1973, when he finished a distant 3<sup>rd</sup> behind two Olympic 400m runners from Birchfield, Phil Brown and Ainsley Bennett. Les rarely raced beyond 400m but did clock 1.59.9 for an 800m and promptly declared that was his last. They hurt too much!

As a member of the Athletic Committee for over 20 years Les's roles included section Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. As section Chairman he worked closely with Warwick District Council and was instrumental in having the old cinder track replaced by the new all-weather track. Working with other committee members the club made a donation to the council to help build the club room. For his services to the club Les was made a Life Member in 1990.

As well as competing in the Midland League for many years Les took on the role of team captain and then team manager. He also team managed the Young Athletes boys team and had a close relationship with the Courier Sports Editor becoming the club press secretary for track and field. Outside his club activities Les became the team manager for the British Police Athletics Team and as an athlete, coach, selector and manager, over a period of 17 years, attended some 13 European Police Championships.

In 1977 Les was proud to be elected as Warwickshire AA County President and after his two years of office was made a Life Vice President. During his term of office the groundwork

---

<sup>12</sup> Submitted by Les Barnett.

was done to amalgamate the separate men's and women's County Associations into a single body.

In 1976 Les qualified as a field judge and after seven years moving up through the grades was invited to take the 'advanced exam' and was appointed a Level One Judge. Two years later he was appointed to the 'Referee' grade. He went on to officiate at over 1500 meetings at all levels from Young Athletes to European Championships. He was field referee at the AAA 100<sup>th</sup> Championships and judged at many televised events through the 1980's and 90's. He became the first Chairman of the Midland Field Event Officials Committee and on retiring from judging in 2016 was made a Life Member.

In 2012 his services to judging were recognised by England Athletics when he won the Midland Region Award for Services to the Sport. In 2016 British Athletics gave him its 'Long Service Award' after 40 years of judging. In the same year Les was made a Life Member of the Midland Counties. At local level Les's services to sport were recognised in 2013 by Warwick District Council when he was presented with the "Club Volunteer / Unsung Hero" award.



Whilst undertaking these various roles Les continued to compete at 400m and at the age of 37 eventually won a MCAA silver medal in the 4x400m relay, having missed out in a dip finish for the bronze in the individual event, in a time of 49.0. His career came to a close when, after his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, he took silver in the British Masters Indoor Championships at RAF Cosford. His final event was the European Masters Championships in Strasbourg in 1982. After four rounds of the individual 400m Les finally took the silver medal in the final, in 51.03. He was then asked to run the final leg of the 4x400 relay and it was fitting that in his last serious race he brought GB Masters home to a gold medal.

In the mid-1980's Les started to coach a group of sprinters and middle distance runners. Over the years his athletes have won medals at all levels and on all surfaces up to, and including, European and World Championships. Under Les's guidance Sue Harrison became the first club athlete to run for Great Britain at senior level. Les continues to coach his Tuesday night group affectionately called "Team Les" where up to 30 runners of all abilities enjoy a great athletic and social experience.

### **Annette Buckingham - Athletics in the Sixties**

During the 1960s one of our leading lady athletes was Annette Buckingham (Annette Fathers as she was then). Annette's name appears on a number of our club trophies, in particular the Freeman, Hardy and Willis Cup which Annette won for several successive years. She still holds two of our longest held club records: the Senior ladies long-jump of 5.65m in June 1964 and the Senior ladies pentathlon of 3764 points in June 1966. Annette was still playing an active part in the club helping at track meetings in the late 1990s.

The following is based on an article Annette wrote for Spikes in July 1998.

*The Ladies Section Secretary when I joined was Mavis Turner. I went to the Club Training Ground, then the Playing Fields of Leamington College for Boys in Lillington Avenue, with Sally Hauxwell who, like me, was a member of Warwick St Johns Ambulance. We joined a few nurses from Warnford College and trained on the grass. After I had been there a short while, Mavis produced entry forms for the Warwickshire Ladies Championships at Birmingham and encouraged us to join. I went along not expecting much but imagine my surprise when I won both long and*

high jumps. Sally also competed and was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the long-jump. We then competed, helped by Mavis and Club members, in inter-Club meetings and in winter were encouraged to do cross country.

The following year Sally and I represented Warwickshire in an inter-county meeting at Nottingham; Sally in the long-jump and me in the high jump. I wonder what our current high-jumpers would think of landing on a pile of cigarette packets (the Inter-Counties was sponsored by Players and the only sand pit was used for the long-jump)! Although we were still using the Boys College grounds the ladies section grew; and its members successfully ventured into Midland Championships and we achieved many successes there.

In 1964 the Edmonscote Sports Track hosted the National Women's Pentathlon as a major event. Mrs Nelson-Neal asked me if I would compete! She thought I would do reasonably well, and although I had never hurdled or put the shot she knew I could jump, having by then won the Midland High and Long jump championships, and I was in the Warwickshire relay team. However, there was a small problem, the hurdles had not arrived at the track and did not do so until the morning of the event. Having obtained both hurdling and shot-putt coaching manuals from the WAAA a friend and I took three sweet pea canes and two clothes pegs to the land at Newbold Beeches to make a hurdle and placed my starting blocks at the right distance from the hurdle. It was a bit amateurish but it seemed to work!!

The morning of the Championships arrived. Mary Peters, who was to later win the Olympic pentathlon in 1972, was favourite, but there were quite a few experienced pentathletes. I did not do too badly in the 200m and long jump but in the next event – the hurdles - I caught my toe on the top of the second hurdle and kissed the cinder track; I got up and finished the event as quickly as possible, and then came the shot-putt. Mary Peters, as well as being a pentathlete was also the British shot-putt champion. Her first putt was over twice the distance of mine, but it showed what a super athlete she was. But she then took me up onto the grassy bank at the side of the track and spent every spare minute between her putts coaching me. The last event was the high jump, and I was glad to finish that with only two very badly grazed and bleeding legs.

Over the years Mary and I met up quite regularly at pentathlon events, and I was very pleased to compete in the National event when it came back to the Midlands – this time to Birmingham, and I was delighted to finish third behind Mary. It just shows if you persevere you can improve.

I was privileged to meet many fine athletes over the years. Sally Hauxwell and I became members of the Kangaroo Club, which was formed for those long jumpers and high jumpers attaining a certain standard. Not many people can claim to be a kangaroo and have a badge to prove it!! We both attended training/coaching courses at Loughborough University and Mary Rand (long jump gold medallist at the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games) and Lynn Davies (British men's long jump holder for many years) attended these. I also met and competed against Mary at the national championships at White City (before the days of Crystal Palace) and was able to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> British competitor for three years – international jumpers were invited to give Mary better competition before/after the Olympics.

I have enjoyed my time and although I was able to win quite a few medals and become Captain and Team Manager of the Midland Pentathlon Team, to me the most satisfying moment(s) were when the youngsters themselves won. Good luck to you all at future events and most of all enjoy yourselves.

### **Tom Buckingham**

Tom Buckingham joined Leamington C&AC as a cyclist in 1933 and became a true and loyal clubman. He took up running in 1946 and started to hit the headlines in the 1950s making a name for himself as one of our top long distance runners in the 1960s and early 1970s. His support was not limited to distance events and he was frequently seen running in club colours at shorter distances and in cross country.

In his first marathon in 1956 he finished second in 2:36:21 and gained national prominence being placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the AAA Championships in 2:27:39. Tom's best marathon time of 2:25:37 (as a veteran) at Windsor-Chiswick still places him 5<sup>th</sup> on the club's all-time marathon rankings. At the time it also ranked him 7<sup>th</sup> in the entire commonwealth that year. In 1959 he came 13<sup>th</sup> in the classic London to Brighton ultra-race and the following year at the age of 42, was 4<sup>th</sup> in 5:44:51. In 1962 he was second which earned him the distinction of captaining the Road Runners Club of England in the South African Comrades Marathon (double the 26.2 mile length of the standard marathon) – coming 4<sup>th</sup> in 6:08:26.

Tom Buckingham died in 1976 at the age of 58. The following eulogy, written by George Phipps, appeared in Athletics Weekly on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1976.

#### ***“Tom Buckingham***

*Many athletes all over the world will be saddened by the death of Tom Buckingham, who died from cancer after a 4 month illness.*

*Tom was a most prolific racer, always ready to have a go at any distance from 5000 metres to the ultra-distance events.*

*On seeing such a frail figure, one wondered how he could run, but he really was a most remarkable competitor, always displaying superb judgement, irrespective of his state of fitness. To enumerate his many successes and performances would require a book, but like the occasion when at 55 years of age, he reduced the over-50 years American marathon record by 10 minutes, he never ceased to amaze.*

*No doubt many of his fellow athletes will remember Tom by his unique running style, peaked cap pulled down well over his glasses, and his driving force apparently coming from his hips; but many more people will remember him for a long, long time for his quiet unassuming manner and his quick wit.*

*Bucko, as he was affectionately known, has been an inspiration to many long distance runners, both old and young, but none more than to his Leamington C&AC colleagues.*

*Tom had been married for only 11 months and our sympathy goes to his wife Annette, who brought so much love and happiness to Tom in his 58<sup>th</sup> year.*

One of our trophies, the Tom Buckingham Shield, was presented by his wife Annette in memory of Tom and is awarded annually to the athlete with the best relative performance over 20 miles.

#### **George Phipps - An appreciation by Dave Bendy**

George Phipps was 92 in April 2018 and he's still running, just as he has done for over 80 years. Few members have made a greater contribution to the club and his election as a Life Member in 1985 was thoroughly deserved and welcomed by all - and he has done so much since!

George was born in south Wales and moved to Cambridge while still at school. He joined Cambridge and Coleridge AC and soon became a regular winner of the county cross country championships. Representative honours followed and he ran for Wales several times in the International Cross Country Championships, the forerunner of the World Championships.

In 1964 George moved to Warwick to take up a post of lecturer at the Mid-Warwickshire College. He joined Leamington C&AC and was soon making his mark - not just in races, but also with his 'take no prisoners' approach to club training nights! His many administrative roles over the following years included organising club handicaps and bringing in new club events, such as the 4 and 10 mile championships, to which he applied his meticulous organisational ability.

At the same time he was a driving force in the creation of an organised veteran athletics structure in the UK where none had previously existed. The formation of the British Veterans Athletics Federation and the Midland Vets owe much to his efforts.

As a competitor George was determined, hard to beat and always realistic about his own performances which, if not up to his own high standard, he would dismiss as 'pathetic'! He has however always been most encouraging and appreciative of the efforts of others.

Many of George's best performances came when he was in his 40s and running a higher weekly training mileage than he had ever done before. Examples are 32.33 for 10,000m when he was 45 and 2.32.55 in his debut marathon at the same age. He was still able to run 2.56 at the age of 59! Over the years he became a multiple British veterans champion in all age groups and over all surfaces and he was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the World Over 70 10K road championships. He has also set a number of British age bests in the club's one hour track race. These include running over 10 miles (16306m) at 54 which is still the British best performance 38 years later!

Although successful on the track and road, George has always been happiest when running over the country, whether in training or races. As far as he was concerned, the harder the course the better! They don't come much tougher than the Ben Nevis fell race, run up and down Britain's highest mountain and they don't come much longer than the South Downs Way (SDW) 80 mile trail race.

George tackled both on a number of occasions and reveled in fearless descents of the stony slopes of the Ben. He left the SDW until he was 64, which proved no hindrance as he achieved perhaps his finest ever run, covering the very hilly 80 miles in an astonishing 12 hours 55 minutes.

Ever willing to pass on his vast knowledge and experience of the sport, George remains an inspiration to all in the club and much further afield.

### ***Cavin Woodward***

Cavin joined Leamington C&AC in 1963 at the age of 16 and was a staunch member until his untimely death in early 2010 at the age of 63. He was Club and Athletics Section Treasurer for many years and club President for ten years. He was made a Life Member in 1979 for his services to the club and for his athletic achievements.

Cavin was ever-present representing the club – road, track and cross country. He ran and was in the scoring six in over 100 Birmingham and District Cross Country League matches. He ran in over 200 marathon races; the vast majority being completed in under 3 hours. His fastest was 2 hours 19 minutes 50 seconds in the Manchester Marathon in 1973 where he gained a AAA Silver Medal for breaking 2 hours 20 minutes. That marathon time is still a club record.

Cavin is probably best known for his track running. In 1975, at a now famous 100 mile race at Tipton, he broke the world track records at 30 miles (2 hours 43 minutes 52 seconds); 50 miles (4 hours 58 minutes 53 seconds); 100 km (6 hours 25 minutes 28 seconds); 150 km (10 hours 44 minutes 55 seconds); and 100 miles (11 hours 38 minutes 54 seconds).



Cavin, taken shortly before his death<sup>13</sup>.

The following is an extract of a tribute to Cavin (written by George Phipps) which appeared in the Easter 2010 edition of Spikes, Club newsletter.

*“Cavin joined Leamington C&AC in September 1963 and developed into an inspiring athlete; arguably Leamington’s best. Ron Hill, Bob Wilson and others rightly hailed Cavin as one of the greatest Ultra Distance runners in the world, in their publication “Complete Guide to Running”. This is one of the many testaments to Cavin’s impact on the sport and I can assure you that the quotes below are part of an extremely exhaustive list.*

*As well as a loyal club runner, Cavin was awarded Life Membership in recognition of his exceptional and invaluable services to the Club, including recognition of his services as a Club Officer. He was always willing to compete for the team in road and cross country events and could be relied on to finish in the scoring six for many of his 47 years of membership.*

*Darren, one of Cavin’s sons, remembers the Sandbach marathon where, “in an age when you couldn’t give money as prizes and Argos vouchers did not exist, the organisers saw fit to give a full bathroom set as first prize in the vets category. Dad won it and then had to get the whole thing, toilet, bath and basin into George Morris’s company Sierra with George, himself and my mum for the journey back”.*

*Dave Wright, a 2.21 marathoner who raced Cavin a number of times viewed him with the utmost respect. On his blog, “Wrighty” remembers Cavin’s running prestige: “He had the unique gift of going off at an apparently suicidal pace in even the longest races and holding on to win them. His opponents were usually dumbfounded – especially quality foreigners brought across to race the big ultras – and they didn’t know what to do: follow and blow-up or be patient and watch victory disappear into the distance.*

*Martin Thompson is a former Australian ultra distance record holder and yet another of Cavin’s opponents. In a letter home, Thompson wrote of his experience of coming 4<sup>th</sup> in the Tipton 100 mile event:*

*“Woodward lined up as the fastest marathon runner in the field, 2:19:50 (Maxol 1972) and holder of the world 30 miles record, 2:43:52 (1975) – only 5 weeks previously he had won the London to Brighton (52 miles) in 5:12:07. ... As expected Cavin Woodward raced into the lead setting a blistering pace, covering the first mile in 5 mins 19 secs, and reaching 10 miles in 56.2 ... (he) went on to break the world 100k best with a time of 6:25:28 and the 100 mile record was a definite possibility provided he didn’t cave in from the scorching first 50 miles. ..Cavin had a great day and ended-up with four world records – 50 miles in 4:58:53; 100k in 6:25:28; 150k in 10:44:55; 100 miles in 11:38:54.”*

*It is obvious that practically everything Cavin turned his mind to was performed efficiently and willingly and with a passion that left no effort spared. He will remain in the memory of the*

---

<sup>13</sup> Picture courtesy Jon Such.

*many who had the pleasure of his company, or indeed of just making his acquaintance, for a very long time."*

Writing for Spikes in 1997 Cavin recalled that his proudest achievement was having a road named after him in Whitnash (Woodward Close) in recognition of his world records. He never received monetary rewards for his running but did receive many prizes. His best prizes included a video recorder, three televisions, vast quantities of crystal and over 600 trophies and medals.

### **Ladies Cross Country Leagues**

The Women's AAA was formed in 1922 and in 1927 the first National Women's Cross Country Championship was held. In 1950 the Women's Cross Country and Race Walking Association was formed in order to better administer women's cross country and race walking. In the early 1950s there was an international match held at the end of the cross country season between Scotland and England.

In those early days women's cross country competition consisted of the county cross country championship, in some areas an area inter-counties, the area cross country championship and the national cross country championships. There was also a Junior championships by qualification (those who had performed well in area or previous national championships were barred from competing). In order to run cross country in those days you had to be 16 years and over. There was the occasional inter-club match.

In the late 1950's and early 60's men's cross country clubs were forming leagues that provided regular competition for male clubs. The first women's league formed was the Greater London Women's Cross Country League in 1963 and the first race held in Totteridge, north London included for the first time competition for under 14 and under 16 runners. Winner of the under 14 race at that first league fixture was Margaret MacSherry (now Margaret Baldwin) who went on to compete in 800m in the 1972 Olympics. Winner of the under 16 race was Joan Page (now Joan Allison) who competed in the 1968 (800m) and 1972 Olympics (1500m).

The idea of league cross country for women proved popular and the following year athletes from northern and midland clubs came to London to compete. In order to cater for the demand for more cross country for women a Northern Women's Cross Country League was formed as was a Midland Women's Cross Country League and an Inter-League competition came about. The demand from clubs to compete in the Greater London Cross Country League resulted in the league changing to the Southern Women's Cross Country League. Eventually local cross country leagues were formed and the reduction in travel resulted in the demise of the Southern Women's Cross Country League - it had served its purpose well. In 1967 the first women's multi country international was held in Barry, Wales in conjunction with the Men's International Cross Country. The women's cross country teams were Wales, England, Ireland, Scotland and USA.

Although nationally ladies cross country dates from the 1920s Leamington ladies do not appear to have run in such events on a regular basis until the early 1960s. The WCAA results for the area cross country championships are incomplete but we do know that we had ladies competing at cross country in 1975 – the results show E. Raven (15<sup>th</sup>), G. Goyner (20<sup>th</sup>) and D. Powell (28<sup>th</sup>) in the Junior race; J. Hemming (13<sup>th</sup>), Alison Crutchley (17<sup>th</sup>) and J. Redman (18<sup>th</sup>) in the Girls; Jane Dancer in the Intermediate (5<sup>th</sup>) and Julie Hitchman (4<sup>th</sup>) and Mary Hodges (5<sup>th</sup>) running for the Baston Liones Trophy. Val Davy was 5<sup>th</sup> in the Senior ladies event.

## Chapter 6

# The 1970s

The 1970s, whilst still pre-dating the 'running boom', was a time of growth and innovation for C&AC's Athletic Section. It was the decade when Cavin Woodward made his mark as a world champion ultra-distance runner and the club had individual and team success at distance running events. A number of new races that started during the decade included the local annual Christmas Morning run, the club's Hour Track Race and the Midland 4x4 Cross Country Relay Championships.

### ***Birmingham and District Cross Country League***

The 1970s was a decade of mixed fortunes for C&AC in the Birmingham Cross Country League.

We started the decade in Division 2 where our runners continued to have a number of prestigious top-ten placings in individual races. In the 1970/71 season: Tony Carr on three occasions (a 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and a 10<sup>th</sup>); A. Rowling two 4<sup>th</sup>s and a 6<sup>th</sup>; Pete Guppy a 2<sup>nd</sup> and a 3<sup>rd</sup>, and George Pirie a 10<sup>th</sup>. In race 2 our runners really started with a 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>. Overall our team placings were two 1<sup>st</sup> and two 2<sup>nd</sup> giving us promotion back to Division 1 for the first time in 10 years.

The return to Division 1 in 1971/72 did not, however, last for long with three overall match placings of 7<sup>th</sup> and an 8<sup>th</sup> (out of 8) leading to immediate relegation back to Division 2. That fall from grace inspired the team to repeat its performance of two years previous. Top-ten placings for Cavin Woodward with two 5<sup>th</sup> and a 4<sup>th</sup>; George Pirie a 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and a 1<sup>st</sup>; Pete Guppy with a 9<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Three second and one third team placings gained us promotion back to Division 1. However, replicating the pattern of two years earlier, overall positions in 1973/4 of two 8<sup>th</sup> a 7<sup>th</sup> and a 6<sup>th</sup> meant the team was immediately back down to Division 2 – as the Leamington Spa Courier put it; "*Leamington C&AC's on-off romance with Division 1 ... has suffered another separation*".

A mediocre 1974/5 kept the team in Division 2. The highlights being a 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> by Paul Varney; a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> by Cavin Woodward, and a 6<sup>th</sup> by Pete Guppy. Fewer top-ten positions in 1975/6 (Cavin Woodward 10<sup>th</sup>; Paul Muddeman 7<sup>th</sup> and Richard Morris 9<sup>th</sup>), but two team seconds and two thirds was sufficient to again gain promotion back to Division 1. However, C&AC again found Division 1 tough going with overall team placings in each race of 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> (out of 8 teams) seeing us back down into Division 2 for the following season. The Courier termed us "*the yo-yo team*".

The final three years of the decade saw us middling in Division 2, but new runner Tim Redman made an impact during this period with two 4<sup>th</sup>, a 10<sup>th</sup>, a 8<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and two 1<sup>st</sup> placings. Other top-ten placings during these three years were Paul Varney with a 3<sup>rd</sup> and Pete Barnes with a 4<sup>th</sup>.

### ***1970 - Christmas Morning Run***

25<sup>th</sup> December 1970 saw the introduction of what has become a local Christmas morning tradition – the Christmas Morning Run. The driving force behind the race in its early days was, we understand, a gentleman by the name of Bernard Carpenter, a road runner and walker with Coventry Godiva AC. The Emscote Tavern (the original venue for the event) was his local pub. Bernard's daughter Gabrielle and her husband John Taplin, who were both C&AC members in the late 1980s, subsequently took on the organisation of the event. When they retired from the role the run formerly became organised by C&AC with Steve



Roberts and then Alan Edwards, Paul Muddeman and Dave Potter sharing responsibility. In recent years it has become a joint venture with Kenilworth AC.

In its early days the run started outside the now demolished Emscote Tavern which was next to the canal bridge in Emscote road. It headed down Emscote Road to Coten End, along St Nicholas Church Street, Banbury Road, Myton Road, Princes Drive and back to finish outside of the Tavern. In the late 1980s/early 1990s the Tavern became the American Bar. Following the demolition of the Tavern/American Bar to make way for Tesco the event has had several homes and course variations.

After the closure of the American Bar HQ for the run became the Avon Tavern and the start was moved to within St Nicholas Park and the Do-It-All (now Homepage) car park became the race finish area. Further moves took place after the closure of the Avon Tavern with race HQ moving to the Millwright Arms, then the Bowling Green before finding its new home at the Roebuck where we are well looked after. The run is now held completely within the boundary of St Nicholas Park.

The event attracts a regular band of followers from C&AC and other clubs but the most frequent competitor is Dave Potter who has now done every run since Christmas 1984 – 35 consecutive events!

### **Early 1970s**

This picture<sup>14</sup> was probably taken in the early 1970s and features Pete Hart, Paul Muddeman, Cavin Woodward and Trevor Hughes.



### **1971 - C&AC join the Midland Counties 12 Stage Road Relays**

According to the GB Athletics Website <http://www.gbrathletics.com/bc/mcaao.htm> the Midland 12 Stage Road Relays were first held in Lilleshall. In 1968 and 1969 they were held in Wordsley before moving to their present site, Sutton Park, in 1970. In 1971 the Courier reported that Leamington made its first attempt at this event, finishing tenth in an overall time of four hours and eight minutes. The event consists of 12 stages; four at 5.6 miles and eight at 3.1 miles.

---

<sup>14</sup> Courtesy Paul Muddeman.

The C&AC team were:

1. Tony Carr (5.6m) 28m 3s
2. John Hancock (3.1m) 16m 15s
3. Chris Donovan (3.1m) 16m 15s
4. Alan Rowling (5.6m) 27m 56s
5. Dave Bendy (3.1m) 16m 58s
6. Bob Taylor (3.1m) 17m 56s
7. George Pirie (5.6m) 28m 48s
8. Paul Muddeman (3.1m) 17m 21s
9. Cavin Woodward (3.1m) 16m 10s
10. Frank Bates (5.6m) 29m 23s
11. Pete Guppy (3.1m) 16m 10s
12. George Phipps (3.1m) 16m 51s

### **1971 - Athletes in protest rumpus**

*"Athletes in Protest Rumpus"*- reported the Courier – as C&AC engaged in a behind the scenes battle at Derby in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Midland Track and Field Division 3 event. C&AC officials demanded the disqualification of certain athletes for infringement of league rules. There is no indication as to how successful this challenge was, but C&AC did gain promotion to Division 2 at the end of the season.

### **1971 - County javelin champion**

C&AC's Phil Reddall became the new Warwickshire javelin champion in June 1970. Having been county Junior champion the previous year Phil showed little sign of nerves in his first crack at the Senior title and won with a throw of 54.42 metres (178 yards 6 inches), setting a new club record.

### **1972 - Cavin Woodward: a star of the future**

By 1972 Cavin Woodward was starting to make a name for himself and prophetically the Courier foresaw his rise to international stardom when it reported in August 1972:

*"Cavin Woodward thrust himself into the ranks of the world's top long distance runners on Sunday when he finished 3rd in the London to Brighton classic. It was a glorious effort by the C&AC star, who must now be considered a serious candidate for Britain's marathon squad in the Montreal Olympics. Cavin, 25, is a comparative youngster in distance running and should be approaching his peak in 1976. He is already within 14 minutes of British number 1 Ron Hill and if he can maintain this season's brilliant progress he is certain to come into the international reckoning. He ran the race of his life on Sunday to cover the 53 mile course in 5 hours 34 minutes 47 seconds. It carved 36 minutes 11 seconds off last years' time – his first attempt at the distance and shattered Tom Buckingham's Club record by 10 minutes".*

### **1973 - London Marathon winner!**

Well before the London Marathon as we know it today was first run there was another London Marathon, one which was won by C&AC's Cavin Woodward in 1973. Fellow Leamington runners Tom Buckingham and Pete Hart shared 8<sup>th</sup> position giving Leamington first team placing. Cavin, in his usual style, opened up a one minute gap by 5 miles and over the tough hilly course finished two minutes clear of the field in 2 hours 34 minutes 19 seconds.

### **1974 - Leamington ladies: Warwickshire Road Relay champions**

Leamington ladies scored a splendid victory in the Warwickshire Road Relay Championships at Salford Park to secure the Rose Fenn Memorial Cup. The team were Lynda Robson (14.00), Chris Vaughan (15.04) and Val Davey (14.24).

### **1974 - Newspaper recycling**

The club was at the forefront of paper recycling in the 1970s. It was reported to the Athletics Section committee in December 1974 that as a result of paper collection about three tons was being stored. It was agreed to start selling when the price reached £12 per ton, subject to Dai Vaughan's father continuing to be able to store it. In recognition of the work sorting and bundling newspapers delivered to the track it was agreed that Jack Stanley be given £1.

### **1975 - National Cross Country Championships**



*National cross country – Luton 1975<sup>15</sup>.*

*Back row: Dave Pinkard, Pete Guppy, Dave Bendy, Richard Morris, Bob Taylor  
Front row: George Phipps, Paul Varney, Paul Muddeman.*

### **1975 - Newsletter: Spokes and Spikes**

1975 saw the launch of a club newsletter, Spokes and Spikes, covering matters for both the cycling and athletic sections of the club. We have not been able to fully establish how long it lasted. The only two editions we have been able to see are Issue No. 2 dated January 1976 and an edition dated February 1977. From references in club Executive Minutes it is clear that there were problems getting sufficient contributions and finding members willing to take on responsibility for compiling and distributing this newsletter. It appears to have lasted less than a year but the 'Spikes' part did subsequently live on as the title of an athletic section only newsletter from the early 1980s and the cyclists had their own 'Spokes' newsletter during the 2000s.

The January 1976 edition of Spokes and Spikes focussed very much on practical issues such as celebrating successes, a reminder of when club subs were due and fixture dates. At the time we had a 'Club 100 Draw' whereby members committed to paying 20p a month into a draw, with two monthly prizes of £5 and £1.50 and six-monthly prizes of £25 and £5.

The February 1977 edition of Spokes and Spikes again focussed on practical issues but also contained profiles of some of our longest serving members. At the time the club ran a

---

<sup>15</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Bendy and Paul Muddeman.

monthly social at the Warwick Working Men's Club in Warwick. Activities included traditional pub games such as darts and dominoes.

### **1975 - Midland County Cross Country Relays**

The first annual Midland 4 by 4 mile Cross Country Relay Championships was held in November 1975 at Abbey Stadium, Redditch with 43 teams competing. Redditch was home to the event for at least the next five (and possibly 10) years. Newbold Comyn has hosted the event on numerous occasions: 1985 to 1993; 1995 to 1997; 1999 to 2000; and most recently in 2002.

### **1976 - The Leamington One Hour Track Race**

In 1976 C&AC held its first One Hour Track Race. Dave Bendy, organizer of the race between 1976 and 2006, recalls the history of our event.

*“Running for an hour to cover as much distance as possible was one of the earliest athletic challenges, dating back to the 1690s. It became particularly popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with betting on the top runners, in front of large crowds, being the main motivation. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century however, it became more of an afterthought for athletes who'd already achieved top honours and were looking for one final test. Thus the world record has been held by runners near the end of their careers, such as Paavo Nurmi, Emil Zatopek, Ron Clarke and the current holder Haile Gebrselassie. Superb performances but ones that haven't attracted great attention. For lesser mortals there have been even fewer opportunities to test themselves and that remains true today. And so to Leamington's own One Hour track race.*

*The first race was held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 1976, a few weeks before the start of the 'Long Hot Summer'. This attracted a small but select field and Ken Bartlett of Coventry Godiva was soon in the lead. However he then caused a surprise by suddenly dashing off the track and into the changing rooms with a more urgent need than running! He was soon back, eventually winning by half a lap from Paul Muddeman. Cavin Woodward was unable to run for the best possible of reasons: he was representing Great Britain in the Two Oceans 56km road race in South Africa where he finished a fine 4<sup>th</sup>.*

*Cavin was running the following year and after a great battle with an inspired Richard Morris, he won by just 38 metres. The race was held in September - a bad move as the track did not then have floodlights! Although the race ended in near darkness, the recorders did a great job to ensure an accurate final distance for every runner.*

*Since then the race has continued every year apart from 2003 when the track was being resurfaced. Sadly however the standard has dropped in recent years and support from the club, apart from a few dedicated individuals, has declined. After a turnout of just 3 runners for the 2017 race, the future is in considerable doubt. This is the same in the few other hour races held elsewhere in the country. Perhaps it needs Mo Farah to attack Gebrselassie's world record to recreate some interest in the event. It may have its own organisational challenges but at least everyone finishes at the same time!”*

Some highlights 1976 to 2017:

- *In 1980 Eddie Twohig, at 17, was not old enough to compete officially. Running as a guest he recorded a very impressive 17736 metres. The following year he improved to 18221m, winning the race and setting a UK junior record. Eddie still holds the race record with 18971m in 1988.*

- *Jayne Mumford, aged 18, set an inaugural UK women's best performance of 14506m in 1981. This was surpassed by Hilary Johnson (Harborough RC), the mother of rugby hero Martin, with 15034m in 1987. This is still the women's race record.*
- *The 1986 race was the final event held on the cinder track before the all-weather surface was laid. Those who ran that day will have memories of throats dried after 2 or 3 laps by clouds of dust. However when it was well maintained, it was one of the best cinder tracks in the country.*
- *Simon Kinson has won the race 9 times, while Bob Gittus-Smith has the most appearances with 32. The oldest runners are Bob Emmerson (83), George Phipps (82) and Brian Ashwell (81). All three are among the many runners who have set British Master age bests at Leamington.*
- *A highly unlikely coincidence occurred in 1991 when Mike Hawkins of Bromsgrove & Redditch AC recorded exactly the same distance - 17284 metres - as he had done the previous year. In doing so he also set a British M50 best which is still standing.*
- *Also worthy of mention is Dave Potter's feat of winning the race 3 times - as an over 40, over 50 and over 60!*

*Whether or not the race continues, it has provided a lot of fine performances and memorable moments. A special appreciation is due to all the officials and lap recorders who have given their time to keep the race going. Some have been involved from the very first race. Many thanks to you all."*



*The Hour Track Race sets-off on the old cinders track<sup>16</sup>.  
Left to right: Toby Benn; Cavin Woodward; unknown (guest); John Whitely; Bob Gittus-Smith;  
Paul Muddeman; Pete Hart; Mick Botterill; Dave Bendy.*

### **1976 - Gloucester Cross Country League**

In addition to the Birmingham and District Cross Country League and the Midland Women's Cross Country League the club also competes in the Gloucester League. We are not sure when the league started but it was certainly in existence in November 1962 when 51 runners from four clubs took part. Club Executive Council minutes indicate that C&AC joined the

<sup>16</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Bendy.

Gloucester League in 1976; our first race being on 23<sup>rd</sup> October that year. Four C&AC athletes competed.

The Gloucester League race archive ([https://www.athletics4u.co.uk/cross\\_country/results-archive/](https://www.athletics4u.co.uk/cross_country/results-archive/)) is currently incomplete so we are not able to confirm details of how frequently our athletes competed in those early years. The Gloucester League covers both ladies and men's races and all age groups; although for some of the younger ages the numbers taking part are small.

### **1977 - Midland Marathon team champions**

In 1977 a team from Leamington won the team event at the Midland Marathon Championships on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1977. Here Cavin Woodward, Paul Muddeman and Dave Bendy receive the cup<sup>17</sup>. Leamington organised the championship for several years during the 1960s.



The race was held over an undulating course in Rugby – one which was used on a regular basis during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. It was also used for the AAA marathon championship on several occasions.

### **1978 - Rotherham Marathon: team success**

C&AC distance athletes with their prizes at the Rotherham Marathon in 1978<sup>18</sup>.



*Cavin Woodward, Richard Morris (about to be sick), Linda and Martin Thompson, Brian Jones*

### **1979 - 24 Hour sponsored run**

Six Leamington athletes staged a 24-hour sponsored run in aid of the Gunnar Neilsson Cancer Fund in August 1979. Gunnar was a Formula 1 Grand Prix star who won the 1977 German Grand Prix. When 29-year old Gunnar knew that he would not recover from cancer he devoted the rest of his life to launching a campaign to fight the disease.

<sup>17</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Bendy.

<sup>18</sup> Picture courtesy Chris Morris.

The sponsored run started at noon on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August and finished at noon the following day. The team of Simon Dawson, Chris Donovan, Andy Raven, Tony Halsall, Paul Muddeman and Mick Botterill completed 212 miles around the Edmonscote track.

### **1979 - Injury ruins Pete's remarkable effort**

Another ultra-distance man running in the 1970s was Pete Hart who joined the club in 1971. In October 1979 the Courier reported on how "*The amazing Pete Hart was dogged by ill-luck when he made his bid to capture the 24 hour track race title at Crystal Palace at the weekend*".

Of the 17 starters, Pete finished 13<sup>th</sup>, covering a distance of 108 miles after suffering hamstring trouble that caused a swelling on the back of his knee. The injury was a bitter disappointment to Pete because up to that point things had been going so well. The Edgehill farmer had worked his way up to sixth place and was feeling comfortable.

Then, with eight hours remaining, Pete hit trouble. In what would have proved his strongest part of the race, he was reduced to virtually walking pace as the injury worsened. "*Things were going better than I'd expected*" claimed Pete "*I reckon I was on for 150 at that time, I was going really well*".

Yet when Pete hit trouble he was still determined to carry on, despite the pain. "*I managed to limp round the rest. Anyway it was as good as of watching the race*".

The race finally finished at 3.00 pm on the Sunday afternoon, but despite his injury Pete was back at work on his Edgehill farm by 9.00am on the Monday morning. "*The doctor told me to wait until the pain clears up and then I should be running again. With a bit of luck I should be back in three or four days' time*".

### **1979 - Cavin Woodward: life membership**

Cavin Woodward was made a Life Member of the club in 1979 in recognition of his services to the club and his athletics achievements. A profile of Cavin is included on page 36.

### **1979 - Joint Leamington C&AC and Banbury Harriers 20 Mile Road Race**

In November 1979 Leamington C&AC joined forces with Banbury Harriers to promote a very successful 20 mile race from Leamington to Banbury. The event, which became known as the AP 20 and was subsequently organised by Banbury Harriers, was a regular feature on the race calendar for several years.

The race started in the entrance to the Automotive Products Factory in Tachbrook Road, Leamington and finished outside of the Banbury AP factory. C&AC competitors in that first race were Cavin Woodward (6<sup>th</sup> - 1.54.09), Chris Donovan (8<sup>th</sup> - 1.56.58), Dave Bendy (15<sup>th</sup> - 2.1.51), Paul Muddeman (22<sup>nd</sup> - 2.7.4), Guido Reynolds (25<sup>th</sup> - 2.8.45), Steve Mann (30<sup>th</sup> - 2.10.52), Tony Halsall (31<sup>st</sup> - 2.11.17), Pete Hart (42<sup>nd</sup> - 2.10.27) and Trevor Hughes (64<sup>th</sup> - 3.25.00).

### **Late 1970s - Club cross country**

The picture on the following page shows the start of the ladies race in a club cross country championship race – probably late 1970s<sup>19</sup>.

---

<sup>19</sup> Picture courtesy Mary Hodges.



*Ted Clifford; Mary Hodges; Val Brant; Lynda Robson; Julie Hitchman;  
Jane Dancer; Brian Olive.*

### **Late 1970's / early 1980s - Three Towns Road Race**

In the late 1970s/early 1980s there was a Three Towns 12.5 mile road race. Starting outside Leamington Town Hall it linked the three towns of Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth and attracted fields of around 100 athletes – including a number from C&AC. There was a cash prize of £50 for anyone breaking the 60 minute barrier – a barrier which was still unbroken in 1980. As far as we can establish the race was last held in the early 1980s.

---

## **Members' Stories and Profiles**

### ***Jonathan Such: Memories of Leamington Cycling and Athletic Club***

I started running relatively late at the age of 27 when my wife Carol gave me the news that I was to become a father. I was a heavy smoker and a predilection for beer meant I was overweight. I decided that to be a good father I needed to be healthy with an improved chance of longevity. So I stopped smoking and started a daily routine of running around the canal paths and lanes of Kingswinford, Staffordshire. My enjoyment of an ale or two has never diminished.

I was encouraged by my neighbour to join his club at Tipton which I did for a while. But my job moved me to the Warwick area and we moved to Hampton Magna. One of my old Tipton buddies advised me to contact Cavin Woodward who was a “good runner” and belonged to a club called Leamington C&AC. I met up with Cavin, Carol and the twin boys soon after moving and we became firm friends. Cavin inspired me to consider running longer and longer distances. He, at that time, was preparing for the London to Brighton and the 100 mile track race at Tipton.

To encourage him I would run from Hampton Magna to Whitnash, meet up, run around Leamington and then run back to Hampton Magna. I was in fact running a half marathon every night for many weeks and was really not doing myself any favours. I eventually developed stress fractures in both lower legs and any ambition I had of joining Cavin at the Tipton 100 miles evaporated. But I was able to be at the trackside to assist and witness his superb world record run.

During my time at Leamington I met and became friends with some great characters. George Phipps with whom I raced my first Marathon in Huddersfield where he, approaching



50 years of age, produced a fantastic 2h 30 something. I also ran a lot with club members Peter Hart, Dave Bendy, Paul Varney and Paul Muddeman - what a great crowd of dedicated runners.

I used to do long training runs with Tom Buckingham and Cavin around the country lanes. We would run a regular 20 miler on Sundays and thought nothing of a 2h 20 pace. I ran a couple of ultras on the track with Cavin at Epsom and Ewell and did the track 30 and 40 miles and we travelled twice to Edinburgh to run the Two Bridges Ultra. We also went to the Isle of Man 40 where on a horrible cold day I ran a 4h 30m 40-miler. Cavin, Peter Hart and I went to the Woodford to Southend ultra and won the team prize. Pete had this huge blister under his foot at the finish.....I remember him saying in his Banbury Brogue...."if I had known it were thaaat big I would have stopped, popped it and drunk it...."

One year Cavin and family camped in my tent on my mother-in-law's back garden in Portsmouth prior to running the very arduous Isle of Wight marathon. Cavin won it in a 2h 30ish time and I did 2h 50. Fast forward to now where the runners today can't break three hours on the course and it is won in 3h 05.

In 1984, on a business trip from South Africa to England, I met up with Cavin and Martin Thomson and we ran the London to Brighton. We won the team trophy for the only time in C&AC history. It was a fabulous moment but now, sadly, I am the last man standing as both Cavin and Martin have been lost to us.

All in all I ran 25 marathons in my two years with C&AC prior to emigrating to South Africa. I lowered my time from 3h 01 to 2h 44 but knew I could do better. I eventually dropped my PB to 2h 30' 27" in a race at 6000 ft altitude near Johannesburg in mid-summer, with a pit stop using a loo roll kindly provided by Bruce Fordyce's girl friend of the time. Bruce was ever the tactician using the opportunity to pass me. He came third and I fourth.



Just before we left for South Africa, Cavin and family went over to Comrades in 1976 and he came second in a great tussle with Alan Robb. Cavin's efforts at Comrades encouraged me to run Comrades myself and I did 21 of them with 10 silver medals before I stopped at the age of 50 and concentrated on half marathons. Picture right: Jon receives his Green Number from Wally Hayward in 1987 (when a runner completes their 10th Comrades - or achieves either 5 gold medals or 3 wins - they receive their green race number which they



keep for life, the number effectively being 'retired' only for use by that athlete).

I now live with Carol in Chepstow but like to keep in contact with C&AC and when possible run the 1 hour track race in September. In the 70's I had a company car and would often take a crowd to races. People always insisted on helping out with petrol which was unnecessary. So I used to put the money in a jar in my lounge and when I emigrated it had amounted to a good sum, so I bought a silver cup and donated it to the club. The Jon Such Trophy was to be awarded on a handicap basis for the Hampton Magna 10 miler one of my old training routes.

Pictured: Jonathan training in Hampton Magna with Ron Hill Union Jack shorts, LCAC vest and Onitsuka Tiger thin-soled shoes of the day.

## Chapter 7

# The 1980s

The 1980s was the decade of the 'running boom' – when running increasingly became a mass-participation sport. The first London Marathon as we now know it was held in 1981 and the success of that and other marathon events reinforced the change that was already underway. Road running took over from cross country as the most popular running activity, although cross country running also benefitted as the new breed of runners joined running clubs, opening the opportunity for them to experience other forms of running. It was also a time when new clubs were created to cater for the increased number of runners.

### ***Birmingham and District Cross Country League***

The 1980s saw mixed fortunes for our cross country team in the Birmingham and District Cross Country League. We spent the whole of the decade in Division 2; the first three years were reasonably positive with overall positions of 4<sup>th</sup> in 1980/81 and 1981/82 and 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1982/83. During those three years Tim Redman had three top-ten placings (8<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>), Paul Muddeman two (7<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>), and Eddie Twohig two (8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>). In 1983/84 our team slipped to overall 7<sup>th</sup> place sustained by a further three top places by Eddie (5<sup>th</sup> and two 6<sup>ths</sup>) and a 10<sup>th</sup> by Ken McClaren.

A disastrous start to the 1984/85 season: "*Shell-shocked*" is how the Courier described the feeling in C&AC's dressing room after one of its worst team performances in years, finishing last in the opening race of the season held at Telford.

*"No excuses can be offered for a disastrous showing which now sees the club facing a struggle in the remaining three fixtures in order to avoid relegation to Division 3 for the first time in over 16 years. With several key runners missing Spa were under pressure before the start, but they failed to cope with the heavy going and surrendered without much of a fight, ultimately totalling a mammoth score of 416 points."*

The team staged a comeback in the second league race of the 1984/85 season at Alderman Callow School, Coventry "*with a splendid all-round team display in which all 21 competing athletes played a part*". Our score of 201 points was less than half our tally in the previous event. There was another good turnout for the third race – this time on home 'Newbold' turf – with Adri Hartveld of C&AC winning the event in 34.40. That season, alongside the 1<sup>st</sup> place, Adri also had a 5<sup>th</sup> and Eddie Twohig a 6<sup>th</sup> top-ten placing. Our team finished overall 7<sup>th</sup> in the third and 9<sup>th</sup> in the final race of the season which kept us above the relegation zone ending the season in 9<sup>th</sup> position out of 12 teams.

The next two seasons were 'middling' with C&AC finishing in 6<sup>th</sup> place each year. The only top-ten highlights were from Eddie Twohig and Stuart McMorran. In 1985/6 Eddie had an 8<sup>th</sup> and a 9<sup>th</sup> and a 6<sup>th</sup> in 1986/87; Stuart a 7<sup>th</sup> and an 8<sup>th</sup> in 1985/6 and a 6<sup>th</sup> in 1986/87.

The final match of the 1985/86 season held at Halesowen was controversial. The Leamington Spa Courier reported that

*"discretion rather than valour was the order of the day". "The course ... would have been unsuitable for such a large field on a normal day. In the current prevailing conditions it became positively dangerous, producing five miles of rutted tracks on which ice hockey players rather than runners might have fared better. Protests from several teams were ignored by the organisers, and it was fortunate that the athletes ran with good sense and judgement in surviving without there being any severe injuries".<sup>20</sup>*

---

<sup>20</sup> In my running diary I recorded the following "Very cold, very frosty – ground solid. Course 95% rutted or sheet ice. Dangerous. Only prepared to jog round. Did not even bother to time!" (Ed).

The final three years of the decade saw us languishing in the bottom half of the league finishing overall in 8<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> in 1987/88, 1988/89 and 1989/90 respectively. Our top cross country runner during these three years was Eddie Twohig with seven top-ten placings (two 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>). Stuart McMorran supported with one tenth position.

### **1981 - The Great Leamington Fun Run**

In response to the running boom a number of organisations started 'fun runs' during the 1980s. The first Great Leamington Fun Run – organised by the Leamington and District Round Table in aid of Myton Hospice - was held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1981. C&AC had three winners in the event: overall winner was Paul Muddeman in a time of 15 minutes 35 seconds; Gordon Hemming was first over 40 and Paul Griffin first schoolboy. The Leamington Spa Courier reported that a breathless Paul commented:

*"It was tough up until two miles and then I managed to pull away from the pack. There was a tremendous atmosphere with crowds cheering the runners every step of the way. Fortunately, I am at the peak of my form and I am as fit as I have ever been".*

The second running of the Leamington Fun Run, held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1982, also featured C&AC winners. First, in 19 minutes 34 seconds, was Mike Smith – better known as a race walker. Paul Griffin again won the Junior age category – and the day before he had won the Mid-Warwickshire Middle School League race. His head teacher at Telford Middle School commented that *"Paul is a very good runner, and works hard at it. He trains most lunchtimes and we hope his interest and talents continue."*

C&AC winners again featured in the third Leamington Fun Run held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1983. Winner in 18 minutes 3 seconds was Adri Hartveld who had recently moved from Holland to Leamington. Paul Griffin failed to make it three in a row, only managing to finish third in the Junior age category. Adri also won the 1984 event.

### **1983 - Edmonscote: a new home for AP Football Club?**

During the early 1980s there were discussions about the possibility of AP Football Club – which played at 'The Windmill' ground in Tachbrook Road, Leamington - moving to Edmonscote. Warwick District Council had discussed the possibility and meetings between members of our club committee, AP Football Club and the district council had taken place. Common ground was that football and athletics could only co-exist at Edmonscote if an all-weather track were to be laid to replace the aged cinders track. However, the project was abandoned because the dimensions of the central grassed area and flood-lighting provisions did not meet Football Association requirements.

### **1983 - Two Castles Run**

The first Two Castles Run, organised by the Rotary Club of Kenilworth, was held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1983. The first running of this now annual event was run over a six mile course between the historic castles of Warwick and Kenilworth. Winner was C&AC's Tim Redman. Over the years the Two Castles Race has developed into one of the top races in the area attracting nearly 4,000 runners over a slightly longer 10k route. Leamington C&AC has regularly supported the event and is now a joint organiser.

### **1983 - Women's National Cross Country Championships at Warwick**

The Women's National Cross Country Championships were held at Warwick Racecourse in 1983.

### **1984 - Road relay milestones**

C&AC finished three teams in the Midland Counties Road Relay Championships at Sutton Park in April 1984 – that's 36 runners turning out for the club at the same event. Unfortunately, nowadays we struggle to fill a single 12 man team!

### **1984 - Spikes newsletter born**

October 1984 saw the launch of Spikes – a new Athletic Section newsletter. Editor at the time was John Whitley who saw the publication through the first five years of its life. Initially its focus was on distance runners but over time it developed in to a wider ‘whole-section’ newsletter. In January 1989 Dave Potter took over responsibility for its publication and development into a bi-monthly publication and a key source of information. In later years Mike Kinson and Charlie Eastaugh also took responsibility for its publication.

When it was first published Spikes was simply a typed and photocopied publication, but the advent of PCs and publication software made it an increasingly more readable and visually attractive publication. But by the early 2010s it was starting to be taken over by web-based news and information. The final edition of Spikes was issued in 2012.

### **1984 - Heart of England Young Athletes League**

In 1984 Leamington became champions of the Heart of England Young Athletes League for the first time since the competition was created five years previously.

### **1984 - Track and field: a year of mixed fortunes**

A mixed year for the men and ladies track and field teams in 1984. As the Courier put it, in their respective leagues the “*Ladies were so close to promotion*” and the “*Men were so far from promotion*”.

The ladies hosted all three fixtures in their league because none of the other five teams were prepared – or capable – of putting on a meeting. The ladies missed promotion by less than 20 points. Nonetheless it was their best showing for a number of years. The men’s team started the year in Division 3 of the Midland League but finished sixth and were relegated to Division 4.

Over the years C&AC has had many successes in the Warwickshire AAA Championships; in 1984, for example, our athletes gained eight county golds. Steve Vaughan in the 100m, 200m and high jump; Lawrence Boyle Boys’ javelin and discuss; Mark Stringer Youths’ javelin and Adrian Thomas Youths’ 1500m steeplechase. In addition Simon Nathan took silver (Juniors’ shot and discus) and bronze (Juniors’ hammer), Steve Barnett silver (javelin) and Alan Hill bronze (100m). For the ladies Judith Fletcher took Junior ladies’ discus gold.

In the Midland Track and Field Championships that year there were gold successes for Craig Knowles (Boys’ high jump) and Adrian Cleaver the 400m hurdles bronze.

### **1984 - London-Brighton ultra-running success**

In October 1984 the Courier reported:

*“The London-Brighton road race team prize has been captured for Leamington for the first time” ...“Cavin Woodward, Martin Thompson and Jon Such clinched the coveted Len Hurt Belt by two points...” ... “Woodward, who is amongst the princes of the world’s ultra distance men, was fourth in 5 hours 42 minutes 55 seconds”.*

Martin, an Australian, had run for the club on each of his three visits to England and this time finished in 23<sup>rd</sup> place with a time of 6 hours 30 minutes 41 seconds. Jon, who emigrated to South Africa in 1975 but had maintained his club subscription, finished in 34<sup>th</sup> place in a time of 6 hours 45 minutes 30 seconds (see page 48 for Jon’s recollections of his time with the club).



Pictured left to right: Cavin, Jon and Martin with the Len Hurst belt which is awarded to the winners<sup>21</sup>. This belt is the actual championship belt awarded to Len Hurst (a renowned British professional long-distance runner) for winning the 1903 London to Brighton race.

A month after team success at the London-Brighton Cavin Woodward was back in ultra-action winning a 100k race in Geneva against an international field in 6 hours 46 minutes 20 seconds – just 22 seconds ahead of Germany's Gerd Boldhaus who was second.

#### **1984 - Coventry Marathon**

On the same day as the London-Brighton John Whitley also achieved success. The Leamington Spa Courier reported that he "... *ran the race of his life to score a brilliant victory in Sunday's Coventry Marathon*". Club colleague Chris Donovan led the race for the first 18 miles but 'hit the wall' and struggled to finish 86<sup>th</sup> in 3 hours 9 minutes 30 seconds. When Chris started to tire at 18 miles John seized the initiative and quickly pulled out a lead he was never to lose, winning the race in a personal best of 2 hours 31 minutes 35 seconds. Other C&AC finishers were Paul Turner, Bill Waine and Alan Edwards.

#### **1984 - Spokes and Spikes race**

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1984 saw the revival of an event last held in 1968 – 'Spokes and Spikes' - when Leamington C&AC's athletes and cyclists met in a cross country challenge race at a misty Newbold Comyn; the athletes running and the cyclists cycling. Held at Newbold Comyn, the conditions were sufficiently muddy to allow the athletes to come out in front.

Overall race winner – completely out-pacing the rest of the field – was Eddie Twohig in a time of 17.57. Leading for the cyclists were Julian Chronicle and Phil Cook who crossed the line together in 18.27.

#### **1985 - Club Autumn Cross Country Handicap**

The Courier reported unusual happenings at the 1985 Club Autumn Cross Country Handicap.

*"The American Civil War put a shot across the bows of Leamington C&AC's autumn cross country at Newbold on Saturday. Those 'damned Yankees' were members of an organisation which re-enacts the war's battles and Saturday's engagement caused the C&AC had to make last minute adjustments to their course."*

---

<sup>21</sup> Picture courtesy Jon Such

### **1985 - Warwickshire County Cross Country Championships**

C&AC's Mark Juba starred in the Colts race at the Warwickshire County Cross Country Championships held at Princethorpe College on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1985. Mark dominated the race, went straight into the lead and held it, completing the 2 mile race, on a concrete hard course, in 13.20. Juzar Kandola finished a superb second in the Youths' race having broken away from the leading bunch with eventual race winner Jamie Hussey from Sutton Coldfield AC. They matched each other stride for stride over the last lap before Juzar fell back in the final half mile to finish five seconds behind in 22.01.

### **1985 - National Cross Country Championships**

The 1985 National Cross Country Championships at Milton Keynes is an infamous event amongst runners of the 1980s; one where anyone who took part talks with pride about having finished the Milton Keynes 'gluepot'. The Courier reported that 'gluepot' conditions greeted the runners but that the C&AC competitors survived them well. For once the event provided a really testing course – *"the already waterlogged parkland circuit resembled a paddy field after the 9-mile senior race"*.

C&AC had a disappointing turnout with only Dave Wright and Surjit Singh competing in the Youths race and Andy Davis in the Junior event. C&AC's Senior finishers were Paul Muddeman, Cavin Woodward, Paul Turner, Graham Williams, Ian Juba, Dave Potter, Bob Gittus-Smith and Pete Hart.

### **1985 - Bruhl 700 Minute Race**

In 1985 we were invited to Bruhl, one of Leamington's twin towns, to help celebrate its 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The event, which took place on 11<sup>th</sup> August, was a 700 minute relay race for teams of 5 runners. Held over a two kilometre course, the race circuit started with half a lap of the athletics track before going out into the adjoining park for the main part of the run on gravel footpaths. The course then returned via a gap in the hedge at the back of the track to complete the lap. It was for individual teams to decide whether their runners would do single or multi-laps. Our team opted mainly for single laps although John and Paul did complete a few 'double' laps. C&AC came second in their race category.

The event was such a success that Bruhl AC organised it as an annual event for the next ten years – but instead of a 700 minute race it became a 12 hour relay race. We entered a team on several occasions. In 1991 interest amongst C&AC runners had waned and for the next three years only Paul Muddeman and Dave Potter from Leamington made the trip, joining with Bruhl runners to make a combined team in 1991 and 1993. However, in 1992 as a two-man quintet they still managed to complete 151kms 300m (about 47 miles each) in their allotted 12 hours, for 48<sup>th</sup> team place – ahead of 16 five-man teams!



Pictured: Our team for the Bruhl 700 minute race in 1985. Back row: Dave Potter; Bill-Dearing Webb; John Whitley; front row: Mick Botterill; Paul Muddeman<sup>22</sup>.

---

<sup>22</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Potter.

### **1985 - Cavin Woodward: 100 marathons**

Cavin Woodward finished his 100<sup>th</sup> marathon at Redditch at the beginning of September 1985. He aimed for a six-minute mile pace in order to build up for a forthcoming 100k event in Holland and finished sixth in 2 hours 36 minutes 37 seconds. A special presentation of a crystal decanter was made to Cavin in recognition of his 100<sup>th</sup> standard marathon (he had also completed 62 races in excess of the standard marathon distance). Also in the event, which incorporated the Midland Counties AAA Championships, was Paul Muddeman, who was second in 2.33.01, Steve Turvey 8<sup>th</sup> in 2.43.02, John Whitley 9<sup>th</sup> in 2.43.24 and John Slinn 3.13.00.

### **1985 - George Phipps: life membership**



*This picture, which appeared in the Courier, shows Club President Ted Clifford presenting George Phipps (middle right) with his life membership certificate at Newbold Comyn following the club's annual Christmas cross country handicap.*

### **1986 - National Cross Country Championships**

The 1986 National Cross Country Championships held at Newcastle was another memorable event. The Courier reported

*"The huge, bleak and snow-covered expanse of Tyneside's Town Moor was the distant destination of a hard group of Leamington C&AC cross country men..." "Their dedication ensured that the club was amongst 253 teams contesting the National Championships, in which 1,800 of England's top cross country exponents set-out in pursuit of the coveted senior title." ... "The race covered three three mile laps, and the course quickly became a quagmire in places – though nothing to compare with the mud at Milton Keynes in 1985. The conditions nonetheless tested the skills and endurance of the field, while powdered snow on the long hill made the course even more arduous."*

For Leamington Mick Botterill was 583<sup>rd</sup>, Paul Muddeman 857<sup>th</sup>, Ian Juba 1,132<sup>nd</sup>, John Whitley 1,153<sup>rd</sup>, Dave Potter 1,167<sup>th</sup>, Bob Gittus Smith 1,242<sup>nd</sup> and Graham Roberts 1,426<sup>th</sup>. Andy Davis was 285<sup>th</sup> in the Junior event.

### **1986 - Club 10 mile record**

"Nearly a ticking-off for the timekeepers" was the Leamington Courier headline when Eddie Twohig broke the club 10 mile record in 1986.

*“Eddie Twohig justified his odds-on favourite rating with vengeance in Leamington C&AC’s annual 10-mile road race on Saturday – and he almost went faster than the clock itself!*

*Or at least a lot faster than the mobile timekeepers who carried the watches. Fresh from his brilliant second place in the Solihull 10 a week earlier, Twohig raced away from the leading bunch, reached the first mile in a shade over five minutes, and relentlessly increased his lead – at an alarming rate. The timekeepers realised that the club record was on the way to be broken, and they had to make a bee-line for the Princes Drive finish, and only got there narrowly ahead of the tearaway Twohig.*

*He had passed the three mile mark in 14-52, five in 25-25, and covered the last five even quicker than that– 24-47, for an overall 50-12 smashing Cavin Woodward’s 11-year old record of 50-37 by 21 seconds. A superb run even by Twohig’s own consistently high standards.”*

### **1986 - Isle of Man 40**

The Isle of Man 40 mile race, which followed the same route as the famous Isle of Man TT Bike Race, was one of the classic ultra-distance events and one in which Cavin Woodward and other club colleagues have done well. In 1986 John Finch completed a personal triumph finishing 24<sup>th</sup> in 6.41.50 – having previously competed over the same course in the 1960s – but riding in the TT. According to the Courier *“surely one of very few sportsmen to tackle, and complete, the renowned Isle of Man TT circuit on two wheels and two legs.”*

Also in his first venture into ultra-distance running was Dave Potter who finished, ahead of John, in 6<sup>th</sup> place in 4 hours 58 minutes 19 seconds.

### **1986 - Improved facilities at Edmondscote**

As a club we have excellent relationships with officers and councillors from Warwick District Council and over the years the council has regularly updated facilities at Edmondscote. A major upgrade took place in 1986 with the replacement of the cinders track with a new ‘state of the art’ tartan track.

Although ours was a good cinders track it still left its mark when wet, as Frank Bates (9) shows in this 1972 picture<sup>23</sup> taken in the 3000m race at an inter-town competition between Leamington and Redditch. The 1986 improvements also included upgrades to the changing facilities, floodlighting and the addition of a ‘club room’. The club made a contribution towards the cost of the club room.



The following is from an article written by Dave Bendy for Spikes in 1986.

*The Edmondscote Cinders: first and last*

*The last event on the cinders track was the Club’s one-hour track race on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1986. Including officials and spectators, there were only a couple of dozen people present.*

*This was in considerable contrast to the official opening of the track on May 30<sup>th</sup> 1964. The opening ceremony took place during a top class Warwickshire Championship and was performed by AGK Brown, winner of five medals in Olympic and European championships in the 1930s. A press report in the now defunct Coventry Express described the track as a “big asset to local athletes” and commented on the many County records which were set-up.*

*Among the competitors were two who went on to become Olympic medallists in Tokyo that year. Ken Matthews using the 2 mile walk as part of his Olympic 20km preparations, an event*

<sup>23</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Bendy.



which he duly won. Maurice Herriott, second in the Tokyo steeplechase in the still very respectable time of 8-32.4, took the County title in 9-04.6, after finishing runner-up in the mile in 4-08.6.

Two European champions of different eras were also entered, Mike Rawson (European 800m champion in 1958) won the 880yards in 1-54.3, while Ian Stewart (5000m, 1969) was down for the youths 880 yards but did not compete.

The best event for quality however was the three miles. Coventry Godiva internationals filled the first four places. Surprisingly Juan Taylor (a 2.15 marathon runner) was first, his time of 13-43.7 putting him 2½ seconds in front of Bill Adcocks. John Hammond, better known now as the proprietor of Warwick Sports, was 3<sup>rd</sup> in 14-51.1 and Dick Taylor 4<sup>th</sup> in 14-21.7. Dick, Juans younger brother, later went on to set several UK records, including one at Leamington. This was a two mile time of 8-30.2 during the 1967 Ashby Trophy meeting.

At the opening meeting our own Ted Clifford was one of the timekeepers. Local competitors included Dai Vaughan (senior 440 and 880 yards) and Henry Mortimer (youths 880 and long jump!).

Dave Bendy, along with at least Cavin Woodward, Dai Vaughan and Henry Mortimer are thought to have competed on the cinders track during each of the 22 years it was in use.

### **1986 - Christening the new track**

The new tartan track at Edmondscote was christened competitively by a Midland Men's League Division 4 meeting and the Courier reported that "*the home club wetted the new infant's head with a superb match victory*". In the match C&AC amassed 201 points – 17 ahead of their nearest rival, Shrewsbury.

### **1986 - Club standards scheme**

In 1986 the club introduced standards awards for performances over the 10 mile, half-marathon and marathon distances. Standards were at three levels, covered the calendar year and could only be awarded once at each distance. The grades were first class, second class and club class plus a separate category for Vets. Allowance was also made for the severity of the course.

The standards were:

|               | 1st    | 2nd    | Club   | Vets     |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|----------|
| 10 miles      | 54 m   | 59 m   | 1h 4m  | 1h 2m    |
| Half-marathon | 1h 12m | 1h 18m | 1h 25m | 1h 22.5m |
| Marathon      | 2h 33m | 2h 49m | 3h 10m | 3h 0m    |

For some reason the scheme did not really take off and quietly died after a few years. It is not clear how many standards certificates were awarded.

### **1986 - Warwickshire AAA and WAAA Track and Field Championships, Coventry**

Seven gold medals – out of a total haul of 23 medals - for C&AC athletes at the May 1986 Warwickshire AAA and WAAA Track and Field Championships:

- Rachel Bowen; Junior ladies 800m in 2.28.2 and Junior ladies 1500m 5.16.5.
- Gareth Evans; 100m 11.7.
- Ayesha Everton; Junior discus 27.28.
- Jason Stringer; Boys javelin 35.82.
- Steve Vaughan; 200m 23.9s
- Craig Knowles; Youth high jump 1.80m.

### **1986 - Hitachi 5 Mile Race**

In November 1986 the club organised a five mile road race, which was sponsored by Hitachi, at the NAC, Stoneleigh. The course was entirely within the NAC grounds and, therefore, traffic-free and flat. There was also a two mile fun run. As well as putting out a full organisation team, 21 C&AC athletes competed in the event.

### **1986 - Steve Turvey: Midland Marathon Champion**

Steve Turvey - one of our distance runners in the 1980s - won the Redditch Marathon and the Midland Marathon Championships in a time of 2h35m.

### **1987 - Club Christmas Cross Country Handicap**

The Club Christmas Cross Country Handicap Race takes on the spirit of Christmas with a practice whereby those taking part are asked to bring a small gift (worth about £1 in the 1970's). Gifts are pooled and everyone then takes a prize, selecting in handicap time order.

In 1987 the Athletics Section committee agreed that prizes should be wrapped, adding a surprise element. It was also agreed that the event should be run on a yachting handicap basis rather than the previous 'mass-start' basis. These changes were well received and continue to this date. Back in the 1970s the event took place at Newbold Comyn and after the run refreshments (beer/cider/peanuts/crisps) were available in the changing rooms. Alan Edwards was also known to bring his keyboard along and play carols.

### **1988 - Club diamond jubilee**

In February 1988 members celebrated the club's diamond jubilee at an anniversary dinner held at the Regent Hotel in Leamington. Amongst the 80 members who attended there were several who had competed for both Sections of the club (Athletic and Cycling). Of particular note were Ted Clifford and Fred Dale who were original members when the club formed in 1928.

### **1988 - Peugeot Young Athletes Open Meeting**

Peugeot Talbot donated £1,000 sponsorship to the club which allowed us to stage a Young Athletes Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1988. The concept was that each competitor would compete in three events: one track, one field and one other. Scoring was on a decathlon type basis.

### **1988 - Cotswold Hilly 100**

The Cotswold Hilly 100 is a relay race which starts and finishes in Stratford-upon-Avon and meanders in approximate ten-mile legs down through the Cotswolds through Snowhill, Northleach and Moreton-in-the-Marsh before returning to finish in Stratford. The course is marked but runners are responsible for ensuring they take the correct route – and have a map and description to help them. The race was first held in the mid-1980s and Leamington's first attempt was in 1988 when C&AC came first in a then course record of 9h 38m 17s, knocking 27 minutes off the previous best.

Leamington has fielded at least one team every year since (apart from 2001 when the event was cancelled due to restrictions following an outbreak of foot and mouth disease) taking home the men's winner's trophy in 2000 (9h 59m 6s), 2002 (10h 15m 40s), 2003 (10h 30m 30s), 2006 (10h 8m 53s) and, most recently, in 2017 (10h 15m 22s). In 2018 we won the ladies cup for the first time.

Over the 30 years in which we have been competing in this relay event there have been many heroic runs and the occasional disaster when our runners have inadvertently gone off course. But perhaps the most heroic was Bill Waine in 1991. When he got to the end of his allotted 10 mile leg he discovered the next leg runner was not there (and didn't turn up at all) so Bill simply carried on running, completing two legs in the very respectable time of 2 hours 5 minutes 38 seconds.

### **1988 - Track and field league success**

A strong ladies track and field team brought league glory to the club gaining promotion from Division 4 to Division 3 in the Midland Women's Track and Field League 1988.



*The 1988 Ladies team.<sup>24</sup>*

*Team manager, Gordon Hemmings at the right on the back:*

*Heather Muir, Janet Steele, Dymna Hopkins, Ayshea Everton, Sue Harrison, Alex Green, Julie Hood, Judith Fletcher, Tina Fletcher, ??, Marcia Barnes, Jenny Harrison, Gill Walker, Emma Nash, Helen Hopkins, Susie Tawney (Captain), Jessica Ford, Mandy Hemming, Helen Cartwright, Katherine Gunderson, Zoe Wall.*

In contrast, the men's team finished fourth in their league leading to their demotion from Division 3 to Division 4. This meant that in 1989 for the first time in the club's history, the ladies held a higher league status than the men.

### **1988 - Paul Muddeman: life membership**

Paul Muddeman was made a Life Member of the club in September 1988 for his loyal and dedicated service over many years – from both competitive and administrative viewpoints. Paul joined the club back in August 1969 and during his now 50 year association with the club, his many roles have included Athletics Section committee member, club Executive Council member and (for over 10 years) Men's Cross Country Secretary.

Paul was a distance runner until 'carpet-fitters knee' forced him to give up running in the early 2000's. However, he can still be seen regularly supporting events and other club activities. As an athlete his favourite was cross country running, competing for C&AC in over 80 Birmingham and District Cross Country League matches (his best being a 4<sup>th</sup> place in Division 2 in 1981) and over 50 Gloucester League Cross Country races.

Paul also competed in over 40 Midland Track and Field League meetings – his first being in August 1969 (100m hurdles) and his last at the Midland Masters League Finals Day in 2010 (pole-vault). His best track times included 800m 1:58.7; 1500m 4:01.0 and 10,000m 31:31.0. On the road his best times included 10k 31.31; half-marathon 1.10.59 and marathon 2.33.01. Paul also ventured into ultra-distance events including the Barry 40 mile track race (4.23.34) and London to Brighton (5.57.24).

---

<sup>24</sup> Picture courtesy the Courier

### **1988 - Nos Galan: running-in the New Year**

Eight Leamington C&AC runners ran themselves out of 1987 and into 1988 in South Wales when they travelled to Mountain Ash for the famous Nos Galan midnight New Year's Eve Road Race. Despite its timing (midnight on New Year's Eve) it was a highly competitive 6km race of about 400 runners. The C&AC team held a post-race New Year breakfast (late old year supper) in the Mountain Ash Sports Centre after the race before returning to Leamington in the early hours.

The team, comprising Paul Muddeman (51<sup>st</sup>; 18.58), Nick Tawney (78<sup>th</sup>; 19.37), Toby Benn (91<sup>st</sup>; 20.01), Alex Montgomery (107<sup>th</sup>; 20.17), Dave Potter (131<sup>st</sup>; 20.45), Graham Roberts (221; ??) and ladies Helen Hopkins (224; 22.20) and Susie Tawney (225<sup>th</sup>; 22.22) travelled by minibus. As they drove down the hill into Mountain Ash they were greeted by a lad 'mooning' at the traffic from his upstairs bedroom window!

### **1989 - Awards presentation evening**

Some of the trophies and award winners at our 1989 presentation evening<sup>25</sup>.



*Jan Raciborski, Leamington town's only representative in the 1988 Seoul Olympics presents the Chandler Cross country Cup to Cavin Woodward. Behind them is Les Barnett, 1988 winner of the President's Trophy. The other faces we can identify are: Val Brant, Alan Edwards, Katherine Gunderson, Sue and Jenny Harrison, Mary Hodges, Simon Kinson Mike Leigh, Lucy Maxwell, George Morris, Dai Vaughan Ross and Darren Woodward.*

### **Late 1980s - Social activities**

In the late 1980s the club had a thriving social side thanks largely to the work of Alex Montgomery. For example, activities in 1988/9 included skittles evenings, pre-Christmas Italian meal, quiz and cheese and wine evenings, bowls match, treasure hunt and a mediaeval banquet at Warwick Castle.

### **Late 1980s - C&AC open track and field meetings**

In the second part of the 1980s the club promoted an annual open track and field meeting at Edmonscote, sponsored by local builders merchants, Ballingers.

---

<sup>25</sup> Picture courtesy the Courier

### **Late 1980s - Club cross country at Newbold**

A photograph taken from the top of Observation Hill.



*From the left: Paul Varney, Simon Kinson, Paul Muddeman, Paul Turner, Mick Botterill<sup>26</sup>*

---

## Members' Stories and Profiles

### **Sue Harrison**

I joined Leamington C&AC in September 1986, just after my 15<sup>th</sup> birthday and was introduced to club coach Les Barnett; 32 years later I'm still training with him!

My first race for the club was in October 1986, when I finished 19<sup>th</sup> (out of 42) in the intermediate girls Midland Women's League cross country at Newbold Common. From that beginning my hard work, dedication and determination have seen me progress to winning four Senior Warwickshire Cross Country titles and in 2004 becoming the first C&AC member to win a Senior Midland Cross Country Championship gold medal.

At national level I progressed from 202<sup>nd</sup> in my first Senior National Cross Country Championships in 1989, to a best placing of 10<sup>th</sup> in the 2005 'National'. I have represented Warwickshire County AA on numerous occasions and in 1992 was part of the Warwickshire Senior women's team that took the silver medal in the Inter-Counties Cross Country Championships at St. Helens. At the 2004 Inter-Counties at Wollaton Park, Nottingham I achieved my best placing of 11<sup>th</sup>.



In 1993 I earned my first England vest in a cross country race against the Combined Services and Civil Service in Plymouth, where I finished 5<sup>th</sup> in a race won by a then little-

---

<sup>26</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Potter.

known Kelly Holmes! This was followed three weeks later with a second England selection – a home countries international cross country (England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales) in Carmarthen – where I finished 4<sup>th</sup>, and part of the winning England team.

On the track I started as an 800m / 1500m runner before moving up to 3000m and then 5000m. I have won Warwickshire titles at 800m, 1500m, 3000m and 5000m, and Midland Counties AA titles at 3000m and 5000m. I have also contested twelve AAA / UK Championship races on the track, winning bronze in the AAA indoor championships 3000m in 1998 and setting a 5000m PB of 16:32.73 in the AAA Championships / Olympic Trials in 2000. In 1991 I won the silver medal in the British Students 3000m in Sheffield and ten years later, in 2001, bronze in the Inter-Counties 5000m. In 2000, running for the Midlands, I won a 3000m in Ghent, Belgium.

Since 2000 I have concentrated on road running and in 2001 ran my first marathon in Odense, Denmark, where I was 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2:48:53. I set my marathon PB of 2:36:13 in Hamburg in 2006. In 2004 I gained the first of my six Great Britain international representative vests at the Kosice Peace Marathon in Slovakia, where I finished 2<sup>nd</sup>. I feel very privileged to have been invited to run in the elite field in marathons in many countries, including the first International Marathon in Beirut in 2003. In 2005 I finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Amsterdam Marathon and got to stand on the podium in the 1928 Olympic stadium to receive my award! Over the half-marathon distance my PB of 73:43 came in the 2002 Great North Run, where I finished 10<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> British runner) and even got a mention by Steve Cram and Brendan Foster on the TV commentary!



In 2010 I was selected to run for England in the IAU 50km World Trophy Final in Galway, Ireland – my first venture into the world of ultra-running. Although a little daunted at the prospect, I relished this new challenge – and not only won the gold medal, but also set a new British Record and World Masters Record of 3:15:43, both of which still stand (at the time of writing). This launched my ultra-distance career during which my achievements have included 13<sup>th</sup> in the highly prestigious Comrades Marathon (87km) in South Africa; 21<sup>st</sup> in the 2011 IAU World & European 100km Championships in Winschoten, Holland; bronze at the 2013 IAU European 100km Championships in Belves, France; 10<sup>th</sup> in the 2015 IAU World 100km Championships (and World Masters silver) and 51<sup>st</sup> in

the 2018 IAU World 100km Championships in Croatia. My PB of 7:39:50 ranks me 5<sup>th</sup> on the UK All-Time 100km Rankings. It wasn't until 2017 though, at the age of 46, that I finally won my first national title: running for England in the British 100km Championships and leading England to victory in the Anglo-Celtic Plate Home Countries International.

I am indebted to Les who is still there to support, guide, advise and encourage me after 32 years. From very modest beginnings I have been fortunate enough to have had some amazing opportunities. I've represented my club, county, area and country in over 680 races, winning 70 Warwickshire AA medals, 19 Midland Counties AA medals and 5 international championship medals. I never imagined any of this would be possible when I joined C&AC all those years ago, but hard work, dedication, patience and perseverance all pay off in the end. To me, running is about racing and performing to the best of my ability, and being a member of C&AC has certainly enabled me to do this.

### ***Simon Nathan<sup>27</sup>***

Simon joined the club in 1980 and, despite being quite fleet of foot, soon found his mark as a discus thrower. His record over the years is quite impressive and the distances he threw still stand as club records more than 30 years later.

As an U15 his best was 36.52 set in 1981. In 1983 as an U17 he became the first club thrower to exceed a distance of 40m with the discus throwing a best of 43.90. One of his best performances was at Cleckheaton in 1985 when he won the AAA U20 Bronze medal with a best throw of 43.94. Then as a Senior he completed his set of club records with a best ever 43.54.

Those who competed with him knew he had a strong sense of humour and when 'filling in' as a javelin thrower at a men's league meeting in Leamington his first two throws were ruled as a 'foul'. Knowing he needed to record a valid throw for points, for his third trial Simon walked down the runway, stopped, and as close to the end of the runway as possible he stuck the javelin into the grass. His throw was recorded as 72cm; possibly the shortest throw ever recorded in club colours. But he had a valid throw in and points for his club.

With numerous Warwickshire and MCAA medals to his collection Simon left the district and the club after gaining his B.Sc at Birmingham University and worked in the computer software and systems industry for several years until 2001. He then started his professional career in athletics and he was appointed High Performance Manager for the Northern Ireland Athletics Federation and was Head Coach to their Commonwealth Games Team in 2002.

Simon moved to British Athletics in 2003 as the North West England Senior Performance Coach and then added the Midlands area as well in 2005. In 2007 he was appointed the UK Athletics Performance Programme Manager. He was GB Athletics Team Manager to the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and again in 2012 at London. During the period 2010 to 2013 his many roles included being responsible for logistics at all UKA major championships and camps. He was also Chairman of the GB & NI Athletics Team Selection Committee.

From March 2013 Simon moved to Australia where he was appointed Leader of Athletics Australia Olympic and Paralympic High Performance Programmes.

Then in September 2017 he moved to Canada where he was appointed, and still remains, as the High Performance Director of Athletics Canada.

---

<sup>27</sup> Submitted by Les Barnett.

## Chapter 8 The 1990s

The running boom of the 1980s, and influx of new members it generated, seemed to have abated somewhat by the early 1990s leading to discussions about how to attract and retain new senior members. However, despite this stall in growth, our existing membership continued to be strong and athletes were involved in a number of new and different events. Our young athletes section continued to strengthen although limited numbers took the full journey through from junior to senior ranks.

### ***Birmingham and District Cross Country League***

The decade as a whole was a much more positive period for our cross country runners. Starting the decade in Division 2, our team immediately dropped back to Division 3 for three years of consolidation. The second half of the decade saw us gain promotion back to Division 2 and then on to Division 1 for two seasons, before slipping back to finish the decade in Division 2.

A very poor 1990/91 season posted team results in the four races of 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> out of 12 teams in Division 2; with the inevitable consequence of relegation to Division 3. Our placings over the next three years in Division 3 were poor, hovering in the second half of the division and at times in the lower quarter. The main bright spot during this time was Simon Kinson who had six top-ten placings during these years including two firsts in the 1993/4 season.

Some of the cross country team from the mid-1990s<sup>28</sup>.



*Back row: Graham Roberts; Tony Jackson; Roland Hancock; Phil Zanella; Russ Burrows; John Dagnan; Alan Edwards; Colin Edwards; Alex Montgomery; Noel Edwards; Colin Reading.  
Front row: Eddies Bowen; Cavin Woodward; Simon Kinson; Simon Wurr; Pete Hart; Gordon Stewart;  
Darryl Churchill; Steve Roberts.*

---

<sup>28</sup> Picture courtesy Simon Kinson



A much more positive 1994/95 season with team results of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> in the four matches saw the club finish 2<sup>nd</sup> overall and gain promotion back to Division 2. There was a cluster of top ten performances during this season; Simon Kinson (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>), Noel Edwards (4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) and Eddie Bowen (5<sup>th</sup>).

1995/96 was a consolidating season back in Division 2 with Simon Kinson making the top ten in all four races (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>); supported by Phil Zanella with a 5<sup>th</sup>. Final team placing was a promising 4<sup>th</sup>. Building on that promise the team took the division by storm in 1996/97 finishing team 1<sup>st</sup> in three of the races plus a 3<sup>rd</sup>. Simon Kinson (7<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>) and Phil Zanella (5<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>) were our leading top-scorers, supported by a 5<sup>th</sup> from Noel Edwards.

Winning the Division 2 in 1995/96 we were back in Division 1 for the 1996/97 season. But Division 1 proved too strong with C&AC finishing in overall 5<sup>th</sup> place in 1997/98 and 11<sup>th</sup> (out of 12) in 1998/99, leading to relegation back to Division 2. The final season of the decade gave very inconsistent results with team positions in the four races of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> – for 5<sup>th</sup> place overall. Top-ten positions came from Simon Wurr (7<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) and Noel Edwards (4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>).

### **1990 - Les Barnett: life membership**

Les Barnett was made a Life Member in recognition of his services to the club as an athletics official and coach. A profile of Les is included on page 33 of this publication.

### **1990 - Warwickshire County Athletic Association formed**

The inaugural meeting of the Warwickshire County Athletics Association (WCAA) was held in February 1990 and since that time a number of individuals from our club have been elected to official positions of the association (elections are held in November each year).

Honorary President: Mary Hodges elected in 2000 and 2001;  
Alan Edwards elected in 2002 and 2003;  
Ray Morgan elected in 2016.

Honorary Chairman: Alan Edwards elected in 2003 and 2004.  
Ray Morgan elected in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010;

Honorary Secretary: Alan Edwards (Acting) in 2002;  
Ray Morgan (Acting) in 2008.

Honorary Treasurer: Jeremy Estaugh – elected in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

### **1990 - 80 Mile South Downs Way**

More top class ultra-running by C&AC athletes was reported in the Courier in June 1990:

*“George Phipps knocked an astonishing three hours off a running record last weekend. The veteran Leamington distance man was in the 600 strong field which contested the eighth world trail championship, which covered 80 miles of the South Downs Way from Petersfield in Hampshire to Eastbourne in Sussex”.*

The terrain included difficult, flint-splattered steep downhill sections and over 8,000 feet of climbing in an event which is considered the toughest race of its kind in the world. A maximum time of 27 hours is allowed to complete it. George's fell running experience stood him in good stead; crossing the line in an outstanding 12h 55m 3s – 2 hours 59 minutes quicker than the previous 60-plus age category runner in the eight years of the event.

The Courier reported that George gave much credit to C&AC colleague John Finch; *“John was instrumental in controlling the pace over the first 26 miles”* which coupled with *“superb*

*support from our back-up team” enabled George to settle into a relaxed and comfortable pace and able to steadily improve his position.*

John also ran smoothly although darkness restricted his pace over the last 15 miles, which included the most difficult sections of the course. He finished strongly in 15 hours 41 minutes 10 seconds.

### **1990 - Elizabeth Cullum Cross Country Marathon**

Another out-of-the-ordinary event for C&AC runners in June 1990 was the Elizabeth Cullum Cross Country Marathon. A marathon with a difference – cross country on very tough hilly terrain, the course was not marked and runners had to find their own way by following a tightly typed five page route description. Not easy when you’re trying to run over uneven ground at race pace!

This now defunct race was up and down the Chiltern Hills. Competition was for teams of two runners – with combined times counting for team placings. Teams started at two-minute intervals and ten check points made sure runners followed the correct course.

An example of the route description:

*Leave checkpoint and turn left along tarmac drive to end. Pass through iron gate. Bear diagonally right downhill to aim for (when visible) Lodge Hill Farm. Cross white wood stile in bottom right hand corner to left of farm. Continue along field edge with hedge close on right to cross stile to broad track. Turn left in 70 yards. Turn right along dirt track.*

In 1990 Paul Muddeman and Dave Potter were a respectable third – but on competing again in 1993 they got utterly and completely lost – and gave up. They blamed the route description!

### **1990 - County Cross Country Championships**

“*Newbold new era*” was the Courier headline.

*“Newbold Comyn was the stage, and Leamington C&AC the host club, heralding a new era in Warwickshire athletics on Saturday (15<sup>th</sup> December). It was the first time the county cross-county championships were completed as a whole; that is the eight events on the same day.”*

C&AC’s only winner was Eddie Bowen in the Boys’ event. Eddie also won the Midland Counties Cross Country Boys’ event that same season.

### **1992 - Inaugural Ted and Doris Clifford Biathlon**

The following extracts from an article written by Alan Edwards for Spikes in November 2003 outlined the origins of the Ted and Doris Clifford Trophy:

*The Ted and Doris Clifford event is a two part cycling and running road race, with the two events held 6 to 8 days apart to give those used to participating in one of the disciplines sufficient time to recover and give their best in both.*

*All members of the Club are encouraged to participate in this combined event which was inaugurated to foster and develop contacts between the two sections and give an opportunity for each to appreciate the other’s skills.*

*The Ted and Doris Clifford Trophy was first presented in 1992 to commemorate and applaud the invaluable service given to the Leamington C&AC in particular, and the two sports in general, by Ted Clifford and his wife Doris. Both Ted and Doris were keen to maintain the bond between the two sections to retain the one united Club.*

...

*Ted became well-known and well respected personally within both cycling and athletics circles throughout the country, particularly through serving the two sports for many years as Timekeeper at hundreds of events. It was, therefore, entirely appropriate when Ted, being keen to maintain the unity of the Club, presented the Clock Trophy as an award for the event which combined the skills of both sections, was open to members of both sections and helped maintain closer links between the two. Latterly, as more women have participated, Roger and Liz Gardner felt it appropriate to complement the gesture by presenting a Silver Salver awarded to the first woman, with the trophy becoming the award for the men's' competition.*

### **1992 - Club rankings**

Back in the early 1990s annual rankings for the 5 mile, 10k, 10 mile, half marathon and marathon distances were compiled and published in our athletics newsletter, Spikes. It is interesting to compare the leading times in 1992 with present day (2018). Although, as a club we no longer produce such listings they are readily available via the Power of 10 website for the 10k, half marathon and marathon distances.

|                      | <u>1992</u>              |         | <u>2018</u>         |         |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| <b><u>Men</u></b>    |                          |         |                     |         |
| 5 mile               | 1. Simon Kinson          | 25.03   |                     |         |
|                      | 2. Noel Edwards          | 25.45   |                     |         |
|                      | 3. Gordon Stewart        | 25.47   |                     |         |
| 10k                  | 1. Simon Kinson          | 31.17   | 1. Callum Hanlon    | 31.58   |
|                      | 2. Gordon Stewart        | 32.29   | 2. Andy Savery      | 32.40   |
|                      | 3. C McClean             | 32.46   | 3. Paul Andrews     | 33.57   |
| 10 mile              | 1. Gordon Stewart        | 53.09   |                     |         |
|                      | 2. Simon Kinson          | 54.19   |                     |         |
|                      | 3. Ross Woodward         | 54.45   |                     |         |
| Half marathon        | 1. Simon Kinson          | 1:10:12 | 1. Andy Savery      | 1:12:51 |
|                      | 2. Gordon Stewart        | 1:11:58 | 2. Paul Andrews     | 1:17:25 |
|                      | 3. Ross Woodward         | 1:13:45 | 3. Richard Merrell  | 1:20:15 |
| Marathon             | 1. Roland Hancock        | 2:36:36 | 1. Andy Savery      | 2:26:48 |
|                      | 2. Dave Potter           | 2:42:13 | 2. Richard Merrell  | 2:49:30 |
|                      | 3. Cavin Woodward        | 2:44:0  | 3. Ben Rajan        | 2:58.18 |
| <b><u>Ladies</u></b> |                          |         |                     |         |
| 5 mile               | 1. Kay Murphy            | 30.12   |                     |         |
|                      | 2. Helen Hopkins         | 30.24   |                     |         |
|                      | 3. Susie Tawney          | 31.38   |                     |         |
| 10k                  | 1. Kay Murphy            | 37.41   | 1. Kelly Edwards    | 38.44   |
|                      | 2. Susie Tawney          | 37.41   | 2. Natalie Bhangal  | 38.46   |
|                      | 3. Helen Hopkins         | 38.08   | 3. Wendy Daniels    | 39.18   |
| 10 mile              | 1. Kelly Walton          | 81.05   |                     |         |
|                      | (no other ladies listed) |         |                     |         |
| Half marathon        | (no ladies listed)       |         | 1. Kelly Edwards    | 1:21:04 |
|                      |                          |         | 2. Natalie Bhangal  | 1:26:14 |
|                      |                          |         | 3. Jenny Jeeves     | 1:29.46 |
| Marathon             | (no ladies listed)       |         | 1. Natalie Bangal   | 3:16:09 |
|                      |                          |         | 2. Wendy Daniels    | 3:25:10 |
|                      |                          |         | 3. Saffia Del Torre | 3:30:34 |

### **1993 - Team Flamingo Triathlon**

Our club has always been a mixture of athletics and cycling. Whilst many members stick to one of these sports, others take opportunities to try the other and a few compete for both sections on a regular basis. In March 1993 we added a further discipline – swimming – when we formed a third section of the club – Team Flamingo Triathlon. The triathletes' club colours were pink vests with white side panels and pink trunks/shorts with white side panels. Whilst we had several members who crossed all three disciplines, it was relatively short-lived and within a couple of years we were back to two sections – cycling and athletics.

### **1993 - The Paul Muddeman Trophy: Leamington C&AC Grand Prix**

In 1993 the club introduced a new trophy aimed at rewarding consistency at distance running over the course of a year: 'The Paul Muddeman Trophy', donated by Paul Muddeman. Qualifying events included cross country, road and track races. The grand prix series still operates although the qualifying events have varied over the years to reflect changes in race availability and club race priorities.

### **1993 - Cavin Woodward - 200 marathons**

Cavin completed his 200<sup>th</sup> race at marathon or greater distance at Poole on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1993.

### **1993 - Club multi-terrain event**

A new venture on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1993 was the club's multi-terrain race at Newbold Comyn. Heavy rain overnight and during the morning thankfully cleared leaving dry sunny weather by the time the race started. We had a respectable 50 competitors on a course that was well received – even though it contained numerous trips up Observation Hill! Race winner was our own Simon Kinson. It was agreed by all that it had been a great event but, whilst it was held for a second year in 1994, it did not become a regular feature of the club calendar.

### **1995 - World Cup Marathon, Athens**

Dave Bendy, one of our distance runners, was an IAAF Road Race Course Measurer and, in March 1995, he was asked to do the official measurement of the World Cup Marathon course over the traditional Marathon to Athens route. He found it to be 200m short which apparently did not go down well with the Greeks! He was also asked to go back as an observer for the race itself (all expenses paid) and travelled in the lead vehicle for the men's race. Although nothing much was made of it in this country, and both British teams were weak, it was a big event over there so quite an experience for Dave.

### **1995 - Club invited to join winter Sportshall league**

Leamington C&AC were invited to join Sportshall, an indoor winter league for young athletes. Jackie Maull recalls:

*When Leamington was invited to join the Winter Sportshall League in 1995 it had already been going on for a number of years, having been established by George Bunner in 1976. Our Warwickshire meetings are run by Eddie and Zoe Parsons. Until recently meetings were held at the Coventry Sport and Leisure Centre but in 2018 they moved to Sports Connexion in Ryton-on-Dunsmore. Competition is against athletes from Coventry, Rugby, Stratford, North Warwickshire and Leamington Athletics Academy.*

*Sportshall is for athletes between the ages of 6 and 15. It is fun, encourages multi skills development and children learn most effectively through play. Athletes are only permitted to compete in their own age group or one age up, but only in one age group in one meeting. They can compete in a maximum of five events with at least one being a relay. There are a variety of running distances from short sprints to longer distances of 8 laps. Non-running events include choices of chest push, shot put, foam javelin, standing long jump, standing triple jump and vertical jump. Results*

are compiled on an individual basis and also totalled to give an overall team result. Season performances are awarded at the end of the year.

At the end of the season each club nominates two athletes (one male one female) to receive an "Athlete of the Year" award. These are based on commitment, attendance and a noticeable improvement within athletics at Sportshall in general.

If an athlete shows an outstanding performance during the season they may be selected for the County team. Ian Aghoghogbe, George Browne, Honey Kerby, Georgina Barkway, Amber Ballard, Lauren Ashbourne, Sophie Hunt, Ben Hawkes, Charlie Barkway, Freddie Brooker, Fin William-Stein, Fin Prince, Callum French, Freya Dalrymple, Ella Bower, Isla Prince, James Ward, Drew Sinnott, Jack Bower, Matthew Ashbourne, Robin Greenwood, Cameron William-Stein have all represented Leamington C& AC at Warwickshire County Sportshall. Cameron gained an individual medal at the Inter Counties and then went on to the National finals where he gained 2 bronzes (4 lap and 8 lap paarlauf) and team Gold. Drew Sinnott has taken awards for vertical jump, shot put and standing long jump and gone on to the UK Final in Manchester, gaining bronze in the shot put.

### **1996 - Inter-Counties 20 Mile Championships**

C&AC's Simon Kinson won the Inter-Counties 20 Mile title at Gloucester in a time of 1h 44m 7s – just six seconds ahead of his nearest rival. Team-mate Phil Zanella was fourth in 1h 46m 22s. See page 71 of this publication for Simon's reflections on the race.

### **1996 - London-Birmingham Canal Race**

A new venture for the club in early 1996 was the 140 mile London to Birmingham Canal Race. This event, which was first held in 1992, was effectively three races in one. There were two separate 'starts' – London Little Venice Canal Basin and Birmingham Gas Street Canal Basin. Both races went along the Grand Union Canal and finished in Milton Keynes. The times of the two 'starts' were then combined to determine the overall winning team.

Teams comprised seven runners running the London north-bound start and seven from the Birmingham south-bound start. The length of individual legs varied between 8 and 13 miles. The Birmingham start included the canal towpath on our home turf through Warwick and Leamington and included sections where we regularly trained.

At our first outing in 1996 C&AC were 2<sup>nd</sup> at both starts and 2<sup>nd</sup> overall. However, in both 1997 and 1998 we took the overall winners slot.

### **1998 - McDonald's Girls' League**

The Leamington C&AC girls' team performed exceptionally well to come top of Midland West Division One in 1998 and gained promotion to the McDonald's Premier League. They won all three matches held at Bristol, Telford and Yeovil. There were many outstanding individual performances with four athletes achieving AAA Grade 1 standards (Jenny Christie U13 75m and 70m hurdles), Natalie Bass (U13 1500m), Alice Glenn (U15 75m hurdles) and Becky Guthrie (U17 100m).

### **1998 - Midland Membership Scheme**

1998 saw the introduction of the Midland AAA Membership Scheme – an early form of what is now the England Athletics Registration Scheme. A key driver for this was the unpredictability of financing for all athletics organisations and, in particular, the Midland AAA (as well as the other regions) no longer enjoying funding from the British Athletics Federation (which went into receivership in 1997).

For £3 the benefits the scheme attracted were continued support to clubs and athletes with competition, coaching and development. This included regional leagues, regional championships, road races, permits and insurance. Also it enabled the Midland AAA to work with clubs in developing the sport at grassroots level and provide a clear pathway for athletes to develop their full potential.

### **1999 - Ted Clifford's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday**

Ted Clifford, one of our founding fathers, reached his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 1999 having devoted seven of his nine decades to Leamington C&AC. The club honoured Ted with a pre-birthday party held immediately after the club's annual Christmas cross country event. Many club members – past and present – joined the celebrations, including cyclist Freddie Dale another of our founding fathers.

### **1999 - Football: distance runners vs sprinters<sup>29</sup>**

20<sup>th</sup> November 1999 saw the first of a series of football matches between the sprinters and the long-distance runners. Playing for the sprinters were Ian Maull, Will Dee, Steve Potter, Andrew Reeves, Dave Prior and Andrew Cooknell. For the distance runners were Tom Parkinson, Paul Dable, Matt Holt, John Muddeman, Steve Hindmarsh and Darren Betts. Referee was Ian Potter and the sole supporter was Jackie Maull.

Playing on the muddiest pitch that could be found the two teams did battle for 60 minutes. At half time the sprinters led 2-1 with goals from Andrew Reeves and Steve Potter, and the reply from Tom Parkinson in a closely fought half. The second half took a different shape with the long distance team dominating. With a minute left to play the distance runners had pulled the score back to 2-2 with a John Muddeman goal. Then in the dying minutes Steve Hindmarsh hammered his shot home to give the distance runners a 2-3 victory.

Man of the match was Matt Holt for his "*punishing tackles and hard work*".

---

## Members' Stories and Profiles

### **Back on Home Ground – Sara Wills**

I first came to Leamington when I was ten. My older brother and sister trained at the club and it seemed a natural step for me to join too. I'd always been an active child – my mum tells me I never sat down – and I'd been competing in biathlons and triathlons from a very young age. I loved running and even in those early days I loved the competitive feeling, situations that put me under pressure and allowed me to show what I could do. I'd been competing in school cross country and so I joined Della Simpson and John Pryor's distance sessions on Tuesday and Thursday nights. I also trained in long jump with John Miles. The distance training soon paid off and in the 1994 Warwickshire Schools cross country race I even overtook the hare! That year, I trained hard at the club, developed under guidance from my coaches and won all the cross country events that I took part in.

I first tried the hurdles in 1995 when I was thirteen. In the Club Championships I had the choice of discus or hurdles. Not being a keen thrower, I chose hurdles and that decision changed my life. I flew down the track, clearing the hurdles and discovered a new love. My first hurdles coach was Ken Friar. I joined him in August 1995 and took to the event like a duck to water. I loved the group, and Ken and I just clicked. I have fond memories of him rooting around in the rubbish bins for the polystyrene cups which he'd tear in half and place on the hurdles telling me to kick them off with my trail leg as I leapt over.

---

<sup>29</sup> Based on an article by John Muddeman for Spikes, December 1999.

In 1995 I won the Lex Volvo Cross Country League and the following year qualified for the English Schools Cross Country championships in Weymouth. I also qualified for the 75mH and the pentathlon. I came 96<sup>th</sup> in the XC but 6<sup>th</sup> in hurdles and pentathlon. It was time to make a decision: I didn't want to come 6<sup>th</sup> – and certainly not 96<sup>th</sup> – I wanted to come first and I also wanted to get the club records at Leamington. The club was so important to me; I loved the setting – the trees, the coaches, the track, the environment – I'd come to all my primary school competitions at Edmondscote too. I felt a very special affinity to Leamington and I wanted to excel there. So although I had a longer history in XC, I'd lost my love for the longer distances and I decided to focus on hurdles.

In 1997, I moved to the sprint group run by Derek Rose and my mother, Lin. It was an inspirational group and my fellow athlete Dawn Rose ran for GB in the sprints. That year I got the McDonalds League National Championship record for sprint hurdles and went to the English Schools where I won. I got my first cap for England in the Schools International competition in February 1998. Another fellow athlete, Rebecca Guthrie, also qualified for the England match in the 200m, having won the silver medal at ESAA. My 11.08 time was a new club record and still stands today.

In 1997 Dai Vaughan started coaching me in pentathlon. He came to the indoor U15 National Championships and in December that year I was one of the top four pentathletes chosen to represent England in international pentathlon. I also broke the club record for U15 pentathlon.

Now I was competing at a high level, I had to ensure that each race result was recorded using electronic timing equipment so, as Leamington wasn't in a league that guaranteed this, I had to move club. I was studying Geography with Sport and Leisure Management at Loughborough University and joined Sale Harriers. It was hard to wear a different vest, but I would still pop into the club and run at the track, sometimes joining in the training sessions with Dave Hoare and my mum and getting a chance to say hi to Andy Cooknell. Mum still runs the sprint squad today and Andy's still around hammering out the sprints in the Masters League.

In 2000, aged 17, I won my first GB vest at the World Junior Championships along with Jeff Christie (400mH), who also hailed from the Leamington sprint group, and I showcased the Leamington vest in my first ever live television GP meeting in Gateshead. But club records and awards mean a lot to young athletes and when, that year, I was awarded the Leamington 'Silver Award' in recognition of performances for the club, I balled my eyes out. I might have a GB vest, but it still meant so much to me that my home club was recognising my achievement and contribution. It was a poignant night that I will never forget.



I went on to run for GB over the next eleven years and when I retired in 2011 due to injury, I knew I would come back home to Leamington. I'd been popping in and out of club sessions, coaching some of the girls and giving out awards and, in my heart, I'd never really left. When, in 2012, I walked into the Edmondscote club house, handed over my £15 and bought my new club vest, I knew I was home.

I'm not competing much now – I've got young children and I'm involved with the UKA mentoring scheme, so time is limited – but I'm embarking on a coaching qualification and I'm back at sprint squad helping mum train the next generation of Leamington athletes. I'm also

organising the Leamington Club Champs, hoping that the event will continue to inspire athletes young and old to strive for new records and try new disciplines, because for me that's where it all started.

### ***The Art of Fell Running***

Fell running has never been a major discipline for C&AC athletes although many of our distance runners have tried the occasional fell event or trail events such as the Milford 21 mile, Clewewold 14 mile, Mortimer Forrest 10 mile and the Offas Dyke 15 mile which have some of the characteristics of fell events. One athlete, however, who did a wider range of true fell races was Bill Waine, a C&AC member during the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000's. The following is based on an article Bill wrote for Spikes in February 2000.

*Basically fell running involves running from point to point over open mountain and moor. The fun and freedom of this is that you have some route choice and races take place in some of the finest countryside in the country. Compared to a road race numbers are quite small, last year I was in a national championship race with about 250 runners. Often numbers can be as low as 60 but don't think small means no competition; every race is very competitive at all levels and some of the fun is the sense of having completed the course, particularly in the long races. With small fields the pre- and post-race atmosphere is very friendly, usually in the local pub!*

*In terms of technical details all races are given two grades to help you decide what you are letting yourself in for; a distance grade and a severity grade. A very important point to remember is always turn up for any fell race with full waterproof body cover even in the middle of summer. If there is any chance of poor weather the organisers will insist all competitors carry this gear and will not allow anyone without it to run. In many races you also have to carry a compass, whistle and map, so a good bum-bag is standard equipment. The right footwear is important and studded fell shoes are essential for anyone who competes regularly. Fell shoes can also be used for cross country and can be as good as spikes. Fell races can be run in flat racers but the descents can be a bit wild!*

*Running technique is a bit different from road racing, rather than getting into a pace that you try to maintain, fell running involves you continually varying pace rather like fartlek training. On the climbs, a steady rhythm; on the steepest parts even walking; and into a good pace on the level ridges; followed by a wild descent. Good descending is something to practice as it involves nerve and a lot of concentration. I find this change of pace one of the most enjoyable parts of fell racing; using judgement of strength and fitness of how to pace yourself.*

*Fell races are held all over the country with top quality venues being not too far away in Shropshire, South Wales, the Peak District and North Wales. There are also many further away in northern England and Scotland. The Fell Runners Association supports the more serious fell runner.*

### ***Simon Kinson – Inter-Counties 20 1996***

Simon Kinson reflects on how the London Marathon shaped his finest hour in running:

A year of total dedication to the marathon in 1995 saw me debut with a painful 2.25.17 (still my PB) in the historic Uncle Ben Polytechnic Marathon from Windsor to Chiswick. Despite the cold rain and post-race sickness, all roads lead to London in 1996.

A full winters training and the prospect of sub 2-20 seemed realistic. Part of the preparation had been 100 miles per week throughout the previous year, this continued around a full cross country season with Leamington and Warwickshire. A best Inter Counties finish of 53<sup>rd</sup> in a mud bath near Luton airport showed I was on track for London.

Marathon preparation included shorter road races; a gut wrenchingly fast early few miles in the Woking 10 mile holding onto Mark Flint and Welsh & GB Olympic marathon runner Steve



Brace. Another PB 49-36 for 6<sup>th</sup>. Two weeks later a renewed rivalry with Brace and his Bridgend colleagues at the AAA Half Marathon on an undulating course. Feeling strong another PB 64-54 for 8<sup>th</sup>. I had eyes on a bigger prize, so another thirteen miles followed when I got home on tired legs. London was calling.

So, to the Inter Counties 20. A last true test before London. I knew I was in great form, so eased up slightly for the race. It was a typical March early morning, a nip in the air but perfect for long distance running. The race progressed as expected, a large lead group through 10 miles in 52 minutes with nobody prepared to make a move. David Bond (Barnsley) the winner from the last two years was there, my local rivals Dennis Walmsley (Bourton RR), Steve Robinson (Cheltenham) and club mate Philip Zanella (Leamington). As the race progressed the group slowly whittled down, my confidence started to grow further.

It was one of those days when your legs felt great, and I was floating over the tarmac. I remember looking around and not seeing Dennis. Suddenly it was down to three. Thoughts starting rushing through my head. I have at least got a medal. The diminutive African athlete Amin Koikai was a threat. Unknown quantity, but soon he was gone. It was down to two.

It was at this point running side to side next to Nathan Vengdaslem (Liverpool P) with an open winding Gloucestershire road ahead, that thoughts of previous winners I had studied appeared into my head. It was at this point I resolved to win the race. I so wanted to be on the list of winners. I was prepared to die. I galvanised my thoughts. This was it. Neck and neck, stride for stride, there was only one chance. Who would blink first? As the finish approached, we were both on the limit. With less than half a mile to go a small incline approach.

My mind just went go. A sharp burst got the desired gap, but the finish line could not come fast enough, would he come back at me? Had I gone too soon? I couldn't look behind for fear of showing signs of fatigue. The pain was immense, but the relief and elation soon followed. I was National 20-mile road champion at 25.

The presentation seemed to take for ages, but the warm afterglow of victory was there. Warwickshire also picked up a team silver medal. I had just run the race of my life 1-44-07 for 20 Miles. The fittest I had ever been, but the hobble back to the car on stiff legs might have been the indicator of things to come.

A few weeks later after the Midland relays my knee swelled up, literally weeks before the London Marathon. Despite rest I never made the start line. Although I ran the London Marathon five times subsequently with a 2-25 in 1997, the reality of working took over. I never did nail the big one but have my name on the Inter Counties 20 Mile winner list alongside my former training partner and London marathon winner Mike Gratton.

### ***Steve Roberts - The OMM (Original Mountain Marathon)***

The KIMM, now called the OMM (Original Mountain Marathon) is a two-day mountain navigation race usually held on the last weekend of October in a different (exposed, wild and mountainous) area every year. The event is always over-subscribed, and you don't get to know precisely where it starts until a month before the event and you don't get to know the course until after you have started! There are different classes with different degrees of difficulty. You have to carry a minimum set of equipment: clothes, tent, sleeping bag, stove and food for 36 hours and have an enforced overnight camp in an exposed location. You need to be pretty good at reading a map and using a compass and capable of surviving a night out in the mountains without any help or support.

I first heard about the OMM ten years before doing the event. I had always fancied my chances, but not had any success in persuading anyone to join me (you have to compete in teams of two). Then, in summer 1995, John Clarkson agreed to take part. Our only concern was that we weren't certain of the symptoms and treatment for hypothermia, which the entry form was quite insistent we should be familiar with. Even then we weren't that concerned as the KIMM is always over-subscribed and we didn't expect to get accepted. BUT WE DID.

Last minute training plans were put into action, equipment lists drawn up and flexible friends made frequent use of. No expense was spared, every last detail considered. Did we eat Smash or noodles? One or two pairs of leggings? Five or six energy bars? A rucksack became obligatory for long Sunday runs.

Forced to withdraw at the last minute in 1995 due to illness, we got accepted again in 1996. So, on Friday 25 October 1996 we packed our rucksacks and set off for Scotland and the Galloway Hills. As we drove it became obvious the weather was not going to be good for the weekend (it was p..ing down). Fortunately we were booked into a B&B for the night before and after (the real hard men camp).

We had entered the 'C' class event (the easiest, with about 20 km straight-line distance and 1000 m of climb each day) and had been allocated a late start time of 10:49. It continued to rain overnight and was still raining in the morning. We took our position on the start line, the whistle blew and we were off - a 1 km run along a gravel track to pick up the course description.

We headed for the first checkpoint - an obvious route choice, no problem! It was still raining. Two teams had been setting off every minute from 08:00 onwards, so by the time we started over 600 runners had already gone before us and the path was now a quagmire. With every other step we were up to our knees in peat bog, the extra weight of our packs made it worse. It was difficult to walk, impossible to run. Minor streams were now raging torrents. It was hell and we hadn't even got to the first checkpoint, this was about survival.

We found the first checkpoint, we found the second, we began to get a bit more confident (big mistake) and headed for the third, climbing all the time. We got to a third check point, then realised it was the wrong one! We'd overshot by about a mile but which direction? Floundered around. Found it!

Four hours gone and only half way. Where's the next checkpoint? Regroup, eat, drink, study the map. Still raining. Off we go, drop down off the top, stumble across a bog, passing people all the time - much worse state than us - climb a few hundred metres, along the top, look for the boulder, got it.

Five hours gone, cold, wet, and tired, one more check point, difficult route choice - climb 300m into the mist then drop down or stay low. We stayed low (big mistake). No one else did. Perhaps the name was a clue - The Range of the Awful Hand. The stream was a river, it took ages to wade across. We hear the rescue helicopter above. It's getting dark, we are alone, we've not seen anyone for hours. Will we make it? The cut off time is 8 pm, do we abandon now and pitch camp where we are? It's dark - head torches on. Finally, the wall we've been aiming for, but is it up or down to the path? Torch lights in the distance - it's up. The last checkpoint - nearly made it. Now 'just' follow the path to the finish, but which is the path and which is the stream? We picked the wrong one, panic sets in, we're not going to make it. Keep calm. Go back? Carry on? We carried on, following the stream downhill. The forest grew thicker, the gully became a gorge. We held on to pine branches to avoid falling, faces scratched, hands stinging from the embedded pine needles. We hit a track, people, the finish, we've made it.....to the end of day one....with 20 minutes to spare.

With hardly any space left at the 'campsite' we stumbled around in the dark to the furthest edge. Still raining. The ground was squelchy, we pitched the tent, put on everything we had, and got into our sleeping bags to get warm. Everyone else was already zipping up for the night; we still had to cook our dinner, depressing. Our day one position: 287 out of 296 finishers, already over forty teams had dropped out!

We hardly slept, the rain got worse and it was blowing a gale. We lay listening to the rain and wind beating on the fabric of the tent. Our tent stayed up, many didn't. We stayed in the tent as long as possible to keep warm and dry, then packed with just a few minutes to spare before our start time of 08:15.

Within 200 m of the start we had to wade across a swollen river up to our waists, not a pleasant way to start the day. Still raining, we were cold and wet. Climb 200 m, down the other side, cross another waist-deep burn, climb 150 m and then the first checkpoint. We were moving, able to run at times, no problems with route choice - straight across a bog then climb a couple of hundred metres to the next checkpoint. Drop down, eat, wade another 'stream' and onto a track. We're running now, passing lots of people. We go quicker by running down the middle of streams instead of the boggy paths. Tempers are fraying in some of the other teams we pass. We are going well, checkpoint three, two to go, downhill most of the way from now on. John is tiring, I try and encourage him to stride out on the downhill sections, we are passing loads of people all the time. I'm feeling good. Checkpoint 4, then as we descend into the forest, the path becomes a quagmire, just like day one. There is now a continuous stream of people to slow us up. Checkpoint 5, 800 m to go, last effort, we've made it. I have never felt so emotional upon finishing a race as I did then.

A cup of hot tea, hot soup, sandwich and hot shower awaited us at the finish. It had finally stopped raining. Final position 217 out of 250 finishers, 80 teams dropped out. Our times: 08:47:09, day one; 04:44:22, day two; 13:31:31 total. The winners: 03:52:54, day one; 03:20:59, day two; 07:13:53 total.

### **1999 – Susie Tawney: Life (better known as running!) begins at 40!**

They say life begins at 40. For me, I celebrated my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday by entering the World Veterans track championships to be held at Gateshead in the summer of 1999. That was the start of a whole new focus for my running, something which had been lacking for a few years. Running for me started way back at Benson Primary School near Croydon, and continued when I went to study Sports Science at Loughborough University. There I shared a room with an international 800/1500m runner who introduced me to the athletics club and serious training! Fast forward to 1999. I am now married with three little children and run my own small business. Running and competing had taken a backseat for a while so I



wanted a new focus to my training. Gateshead was the motivation I needed. I didn't get past the heats of the 1500m but it showed me I wasn't far off the pace and with some serious training I might become competitive. The World championships at Gateshead gave me a whole new insight into the world of Masters athletics and I wanted to be part of it!



From Gateshead I went to Jyvaskyla, Finland to the European outdoor championships where I was 5<sup>th</sup> in the 1500m. I came back and trained really hard and at the European indoor championships

in Bordeaux, France the following year I won a silver medal in the 3000m in a time of 10:43:72. I was thrilled! That was all the motivation I needed. Since then I have been to 16 major World and European championships, medalling at most, either individually or as part of the relay or cross country teams. I have picked up three individual world titles and I am currently the reigning world W55 3000m holder. I have also represented Warwickshire and Midland teams as well as being selected to compete for England on the track and cross country. I have travelled the world from Kamloops in Canada to Daegu in South Korea. My running has been a chance to meet new, like-minded people who understand the effort, focus and commitment involved. It has enabled me to visit new places and experience different cultures.

The act of running is so simple but there are no shortcuts to success. My fellow athletes will agree. The more you put in the greater the rewards. I have put a lot in but what I have taken out has been immeasurable.

## Chapter 9

# The 2000s

The 2000s were a decade of mixed fortunes. We continued to have many individual and team successes but often struggled to field sufficient members to compete to our full potential.

In 2000 it was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Ted Clifford. Ted was a founding member of Leamington Cycling and Athletic Club back in 1928 and throughout his 72 years as a member was a staunch supporter and dedicated servant of the club. A tribute to Ted appears on page 17 of this publication.

In 2003 we celebrated 75 years of our club and in 2004 benefitted from a substantial investment by Warwick District Council in the facilities at the track.

### **Birmingham and District Cross Country League**

The 2000s was another decade of up-and-down for C&AC in the Birmingham and District Cross Country League. For the first six years we yo-yoed between Division 2 and Division 1 before three years in Division 2 and then slipping to Division 3 in the last year of the decade.

A solid performance in Division 2 in the 2000/01 season saw us finish third overall, which was just sufficient to gain promotion up to Division 1. Simon Wurr had three individual top-ten placings during the season (7<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) and Noel Edwards supported with a 3<sup>rd</sup>. The third fixture at Leek was particularly tough; Dave Wurr wrote the following report for Spikes:

#### ***Leek – a challenging cross country venue***

*In the 2000/2001 cross country season the third fixture was something different; it involved a two hour drive to Leek in Staffordshire for a race organised by Staffordshire Moorlands. Having never run there before no one was sure what to expect: the instructions for getting to the course simply saying “around an undulating field”!*

*It was an amazing setting. Weather-wise it was a glorious sunny day, with barely a puff of wind, giving wonderful views of the Peak District National Park.*

*We set off to walk the course, trundling around the usual sports pitches on the early loop before heading into the ‘undulating field’. And what a field it was! Three laps of looping up and down steep hillside, in places frozen hard, finishing each lap with a long drag up ‘Dead Man’s Gully’ and going round the pond before plunging downwards again. It made Dursley (another tough course we ran in those days) and Beacon Hill at Newbold seem positively tame. Staffordshire Moorlands area strong fell running club and what they had here was something rather special and certainly more akin to fell running. But it did provide a lovely contrast to those dreary flat courses round playing fields at Coventry and Gloucester.*

*Runners arriving saying the usual “I’ll just jog round the course” were generally advised by those who had already seen it to “walk if I was you”. Even race referee Stewart Harris was moved to warn runners at the start that they had probably never run a course like this before. Even spectating was spectacular because by moving about 100m in a straight line one could support in a couple of places and see runners in half a dozen. One sensed that runners really got a buzz from a course that they would never forget.*

The team found the return to Division 1 in 2001/02 hard going and finished all four races that season in the bottom three; giving a final overall position of 12<sup>th</sup> (out of 13 clubs) and in relegation position. A concerted effort back in Division 2 in 2002/03 saw C&AC finish top in the first, second and fourth races plus second in race 3. James Walsh made the individual top ten in three races (6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>) and Noel Edwards came home with a 6<sup>th</sup>. Such fine

performances left us top of the Division and promotion back to Division 1. Once again that hard fought promotion did not last, with Leamington only achieving two 12<sup>th</sup> and two 13<sup>th</sup> team placings (out of 13 teams) the following year and relegation back to Division 2. One highlight of the season was James Walsh coming home fourth in the first race of the season – a very creditable achievement for a Division 1 event.

The next two years saw the same pattern; a concerted effort in Division 2 in 2004/05 with team placings of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> for 2<sup>nd</sup> overall at the end of the season and promotion back to Division 1. A number of individual top-ten performances in the individual races for James Walsh (1<sup>st</sup>), Noel Edwards (9<sup>th</sup>), Johnny Ayres (8<sup>th</sup>) and John Muddeman who made the top ten in all four races (6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>). Our return to Division 1 was again short-lived, finishing back in the relegation zone in 11<sup>th</sup> overall team position out of 13.

The next three years we stayed in Division 2 but gradually edged downwards so that by the end of the 2008/09 season our team finished 17<sup>th</sup> out of 18 teams – and relegation down to Division 3. There were only three individual top-ten placings across all three of the seasons we were in Division 2 with John Muddeman (8<sup>th</sup>) and Richard Harper (5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) being the only ones to show.

The 2009/10 season in Division 3 was much more positive with the team coming first in all four races and promotion back to Division 2 as division champions. A number of individual top-ten performances were achieved by C&AC athletes across the four races: Jack Mee (3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>), Jamie Langley (10<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>), Richard Harper three 1<sup>st</sup> placings, and Steve Cornfield with a 7<sup>th</sup>.



*Some of our cross country runners taken at the Birmingham and District Cross country League meeting held at Senneleys Park November 2002<sup>30</sup>.*

*Back row: Tony Foster, Jeff Capps, Andy Geen, Mick Moore, Phil Galpin, Roland Hancock, G. Hambridge, Simon Kinson, Dave Potter, Colin Reading, James Walsh, Graham Roberts, John Stather.*

*Front row: Steve Roberts, Paul Griffin, John Muddeman, Jonny Ayres, Russ Burrows, Bert Payne, Steve Hundal.*

---

<sup>30</sup> Picture source unknown.



*Another picture from Senneleys Park – October 2004<sup>31</sup>*

*Back row: Dave Potter; Noel Edwards; Andy Geen; Brian Miller; Mick Aston; Matt Butler; Bert Payne; Tony Foster; R. Gostick; Mick Moore; John Stather,  
Front row: James Walsh, Simon Kinson; Paul Griffin; Jonny Ayres; John Muddeman.*



*And one from Senneleys Park in 2008<sup>32</sup>.*

*Back row: Alex Montgomery; Matt Butler; Colin Edwards; Bert Payne; Craig Bower; Simon Kinson; Brian Green; Brian Miller; Phil Galpin.  
Front row: Mick Aston; Russ Burrows; John Muddeman; Chawan Coulsting; Jamie Langley; Steve Allen.*

<sup>31</sup> Picture courtesy Simon Kinson

<sup>32</sup> Picture courtesy Simon Kinson

### **2001 - Foot and mouth disease**

The early part of 2001 saw another outbreak of foot and mouth disease which prevented events from being held on or close to farmland. It also prevented athletes from training runs across fields. The 2001 outbreak was during June, which meant that the cross country season was not affected. The main cancellation that affected Leamington was of the annual Cotswold Hilly 100 mile race – which we had won the previous year.

### **2002 - Alan Edwards: life membership**

At the November 2002 presentation evening Alan Edwards was awarded life membership of the club for his services as a committee member, organising events and, for a number of years, serving as Athletics Chairman as well as a spell as overall Club Chairman.

The following is extracted from an article about Alan “The Alan Edwards Story” which appeared in Spikes in January 2002.

*You may recognise him as a timekeeper, usually the Club's Chief Timekeeper, or as a general organiser of events when we agree to put on such as the Warks T&F Champs, or in past years the Warks XC Champs on the Comyn, a job which Alan says he's pleased to have recently had taken from him by Colin Reading, particularly for this January's Warks and Midland events.”*

*“as a schoolboy he represented Bucks four times at the National Schools Champs in the 100yds (yes yards!), and as an U19 twice for the AAA (pb 9.9 – yards not metres!) training on occasions with Anne Packer and Robbie Brightwell. Moving from Aylesbury to the Midlands in 1963 to follow his career in Electronics and Telecoms Engineering he represented Birmingham University against Harvard-Yale and Cambridge, as have other C&AC athletes much more recently.”*

*“...he had played for Bucks schools as a rugby winger and on returning to Coventry to earn a living, spent most weekends playing 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class rugby for Newbold-on-Avon....”*

*“Work for GEC has taken Alan to many countries but notably extended periods to Taiwan and Zimbabwe. In Taiwan as an alien resident he became a Taiwan international, playing against visiting Hong Kong and Japanese national rugby teams. He also started his long distance running career, running the first of his 30 plus marathons as a member of Taipei's Hash House Harriers Club in 32 degrees heat and 85% humidity. In Zimbabwe he saw sense – declined to play for Bulawayo RFC, grounds like concrete – and found himself in 1981 as Club Captain of Bulawayo's Raylton Road Runners Club. There his running developed considerably with numerous half and full marathons, and four ultras – 50k plus”.*

*Mid '83 saw Alan back in Warwickshire, a full member of C&AC, still travelling but only for short periods to India, China and southern Africa.*

### **2003 - Club 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations**

In 2003 the club celebrated its 75th anniversary. A dinner was held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December at The Pump Rooms, attended by many local dignitaries. The dinner was the climax of an interesting day which included a cycle ride and an afternoon of reminiscing, with refreshments and a Palm Court Quartet, at the new Jephson Gardens Restaurant. Many past and long standing members of our club were present at the afternoon tea, with its extensive photograph montage of cycling and athletic sporting events which we had held within the community over the years.

The dinner was also an opportunity to acknowledge the improvements to the Edmondscote track and facilities put in place that year by Warwick District Council. One of the more remarkable guests at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner was 92-year-old Freddie Dale who, with late President Ted Clifford, was there at the founding of our club in 1928.



### **2003 - Henry Mortimer: life membership**

During the annual presentation of club trophies which took place after the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner, Henry Mortimer was made a Life Member of the club in recognition of his services to athletics over 40 years.

### **2004 - 100k charity run**

On a sunny and warm Good Friday 2004 C&AC clubman Mal Hazel ran 100k - 132 laps around Victoria Park in Leamington - in aid of Warwickshire Air Ambulance. Mal had the support from many C&AC runners who accompanied him for short spells throughout the day and he looked in good form at the finish even after 10 hours 38 minutes of running. Even though this was a charity run it was a notable C&AC ultra performance.

### **2004 - Refurbishments at Edmondscote**

Warwick District Council continued its support of our club and athletics with a £500,000 investment to refurbish and expand facilities at Edmondscote. This included a new track, 17 years after the first all-weather surface was laid. A plaque at the track to commemorate this reads:

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL  
Following the Refurbishment of Edmondscote  
Athletic Track during 2003/4 the track was  
Officially Re-Opened on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2004  
By Chairman of Warwick District Council  
CLLR MICHAEL DOODY.  
The project was mainly financed by the District Council  
With grant aid from UK Athletics

The first event on the new track was a Midland Ladies League match on 2nd May, but the official reopening did not happen until a week later on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2004. Councillor Doody, outgoing Chairman of WDC, and Councillor Flanagan held the tape for the first race of the day – an under 17 age group ladies 3000m. The meeting was a great success and the track and its surrounds looked superb, as always.

### **2006 - Hilly Hundred success**

Some of the winning C&AC men's 'A' team at the 2006 Cotswold Hilly Hundred race<sup>33</sup>.



*Ryan Kenny; Dave Potter; Andy Geen; Brian Green; Steve Cornfield; John Muddeman;  
Simon Kinson.*

*Also in the team but not pictured were: Matt Butler, Paul Harwood and John Stather.*

<sup>33</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Potter.

### **2006 - 30 years of the Leamington One-Hour Track Race**

September 2006 saw the 30<sup>th</sup> running of the Leamington One-Hour Track Race – then, one of only four such tests in the country. Veterans Andy Geen (16,458m) and Dave Potter (15,552m) made it a one-two for Leamington, with third and fourth places taken by West End Runners duo Chris Smith and Brian Ashwell. There were 16 finishers.

The Leamington Spa Courier reported “*Stalwart event organiser Dave Bendy stepped down from the role after the anniversary staging. His efforts despite living in Northampton, Somerset and Northumberland during the last three decades were warmly praised by C&AC members*”. Dave was presented with a memento by Athletics Section Chairman Alan Edwards. One hour regular George Phipps praised Dave’s “*terrific commitment*”.

### **2008 - Leamington join the Midland Track and Field League**

The Midland Track and Field League was created in 2008 by the coming together of the previously separate senior men’s and women’s competitions. Leamington C&AC joined the new league in that year and were placed in Division 4 only to be relegated to Division 5 in that same season. But our athletes did not go down without a fight – with our men’s 4x100m team (Nick Frodsham, Steven Dealtry, Andy Jukes, Husain Al Ali) winning their race in a new Midland League record of 43.2 seconds. That record still exists but is now shared with Abingdon AC.

We remained in Division 5 for the next 5 years – a highlight being Cosima Berry in 2010 breaking the league high jump record which still stands.

In 2014 we had our best season yet by winning the league and promotion to Division 4. This was followed by two years of further promotion finishing in Division 3 in 2015 and then Division 2 in 2016. We had a hard fought season in Division 2 in 2017 which ended up in our relegation back down to Division 3, and then further relegation in 2018. This means that for the 2019 season we are back where we started in 2008.

As well as C&AC athletes achieving league records during our time in the league there have also been a number of club Senior age group records that have been broken within league matches:

- Lucy Miszkowska – women’s triple jump in 2015;
- Shelley Went, Lucy Miszkowska, Amber Bayliss, Danielle Georgiou - women’s 4x100m in 2013;
- Mary Donaldson – women’s javelin in 2018;
- Rebecca Kitching – women’s pole vault in 2017;
- Husain Al Ali – men’s 100m in 2008; and
- Nick Frodsham, Steven Dealtry, Andy Jukes, Husain Al Ali – men’s 4x100m relay in 2008.

### **2009 - CRB checks**

During the 2000s issues around child protection came more to the fore and, like other sports clubs which catered for younger age groups, Leamington took its responsibilities seriously. We adopted UK Athletics recommended policies and practice to protect young people taking part in athletics with the club. In order to meet our obligations we introduced mandatory Criminal Record Bureau checks from October 2009 for all of our club coaches and volunteers who were involved in supporting our under-18s.

---

## Members' stories and profiles

### ***Monica Williamson - The Journey of a Master's Athlete.***

One summer's evening as I watched my daughter compete in the annual club championships, a woman approached me and said, "You look like you should be running yourself." That woman was Susie Tawney, an inspiration and support to me throughout my running career with Leamington C & AC.

At the time, I was active with a young family and jogged once or twice a week. The words resonated and after months of spectating, I was tempted to give it a go. With the encouragement of my brother John, a long standing member of the club and Susie's group, I joined them on a Tuesday and gradually got involved in competition. In 2005, with the encouragement of Noel Butler, I did the Warwickshire's for the first time. I struggled up Beacon Hill but wasn't put off. I got a taste for competition as I witnessed Susie and Sue Harrison (whose achievements I'd often read about) win county medals.

It wasn't long before C & AC became central to my family's life; we all ran and enjoyed many a Saturday competing in the Gloucester league. Jim, my husband, became a coach and meal times would circulate around discussions about intervals, fartlek and progression runs; we had the bug! As a new runner, there was never a lack of support from past and current athletes, such was the supportive culture of the club (Dai always on hand to pass on pearls of wisdom).



Most weeks now involved donning the blue and white vest and red shorts and heading off to XC, road or track races. And there were many successes; memorable is a team gold at Burbage Common in 2006 when we trudged through mud up to our knees; and we are still winning medals on a freezing cold Saturday in January 2018 when we took gold.

A personal memory was competing in the 1500m and 5000m at Alexander stadium in the British Masters Championships (2007), after a season of good training, and running 4:57 and 18:52 - times that I didn't know were possible - such was the standard and motivation of the big occasion. Those moments when everything comes together at the right time is the dream we work to - something has to make you want to push through those hard sessions on a cold, dark, wet winter's evening!

Running has also been fun and has taken me to new places. 12 years ago, a very enthusiastic Mick Aston organised a trip to the Gower to do the Swansea 10k. Myself, Jim, Mick, Heather and the Blowers spent a lovely weekend there and a new masters opportunity was opened up for me. I was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the W45 category and an athlete from Bristol and West A.C. suggested that I apply for England selection for the annual XC international. That year I was a reserve, but since then I have competed 12 times and did so again last November in Swansea for the ninth consecutive year. Wearing my England vest and meeting athletes from around Britain and Ireland has been both a pleasure and a motivator at the same time. When I turned 50 I won individual gold as well as team gold and had the honour



of receiving a medal from Mary Peters! I now realise how special that was - I think I was stunned at the time! One of those rare moments when everything just went right.

No article on running would be complete without reference to the dread of every athlete - injury. It's at this time you need the warm words of other athletes to keep your spirits up. There is always someone in the club who knows about ITB and piriformis syndrome, plantar fasciitis and many more. Of course we come through, the goal is never in doubt: making it back to what we do - run!



There have been so many highlights and in August 2018 I added to that when I went to the World Masters Championships in Malaga. Lining up for the 5k amongst an array of vests from over the world was terrifying but so exciting. It felt an honour to be part of a race that was won in 17:46, a time most seniors would be proud of. Yet more inspiration to train hard and want to improve.

So that's what I do, train and find motivation from wherever so that I can stay at a competitive level. Joining 'Team Les' last year and running with my grown up children this year have added new dimensions to my ever evolving journey, helping me to be the best that I can be.

Running is essentially an individual sport and many masters athletes spend a lot of time running alone, but the support and camaraderie of other club members and great physios like Michael McBride and Paul Andrew there in the background should never be underestimated. I'm very grateful for that.

Leamington C&AC has been part of my life for 14 years and as I look forward to turning 60 (as masters runners know, there are benefits of getting older!) I hope to continue competing for the club for many more years to come.

### ***Hosting Cross Country Events – Changes over the Past 20 Years: by Noel Butler***

The requirements for hosting cross country fixtures have changed considerably since I joined the club 20 years ago. Courses were minimally marked with tape tied to bamboo sticks which tended to break when being forced into a hard ground. There was no ditch in the course. No written instructions for marshals who wore a plastic 'bib' which made them look like they were encased in cling film. Very basic course maps and just one or two people organising the event. Today's events are very different with Leamington now one of the best hosting clubs and Newbold one of the best courses in the country.

My first experience organising a cross country fixture was the West Midland Young Athletes League. I had volunteered to be team manager – which I then found out meant I was responsible for organising the home fixture!! It proved to be a real struggle with no written instructions and few people with the knowledge of how it was done. Still with help from Paul Muddeman and Dave Potter I muddled through. But I decided that any future fixture I put on would be far more organised. For the next few years I checked out the organisation of races I ran in, or was a spectator at, to see how different clubs organised fixtures.

The first changes were to use strong plastic stakes with a metal spike to mark out the course and taped far more of it using strong tape that didn't stretch in the wind and/or was easily broken by spectators. My aim was that apart from intersections, athletes could follow the course without requiring marshals, although we still needed marshals for safety purposes. We also introduced proper marshal's bibs bearing the club name to reflect the importance of marshals and to give a more professional look.

One big change was the organising committee concept. I never wanted to be in a situation where we were relying on one or two people. Minutes were taken at meetings and circulated to all the committee so everyone was aware of what decisions had been made and what work was required. On race day responsibilities were split between the Race Director and Chief Marshal.

The races we hosted were mainly league fixtures and the occasional county championship. The big change came in 2004 when the club hosted the Midland Championships - previously only hosted by cities such as Nottingham and Bristol. Warwick District Council were very supportive of bringing the championships to the District and we went ahead.

We accommodated the increased car park requirements by using Campion Hills for the first time. The size of the fields meant that for some races we had to do a full lap of the main football field to thin out the field before going onto the usual course. Colin Reading, as Race Director, brought the ditch into the course and it has become a major feature of the course. To do this we had to clear the path through the trees which was heavily overgrown



We hosted a Gloucester league fixture earlier that season to use as a dress rehearsal. This proved to be a success and we learnt a number of lessons that would prove valuable for the championships. The main one was that the Race Director should not be responsible for the entire venue. Just minutes before the start of the first race Colin was called into the pavilion because a drain had blocked and was not available for the race referee. As a result, we split the role between the Race Director, responsible for the course and liaison with the Referee and a Site Manager who looked after everything else. It has remained the same ever since.

The day went off brilliantly and C&AC were on the map. Since then we have hosted the Midlands on 4 other occasions and when the Birmingham league wanted to retain a joint race for all divisions to start the season when the Reebok Challenge closed down, Leamington were asked to host. It has about 700 runners and only the National Championships are larger. In addition, we hosted the Ladies league on the same day with over 400 runners. It went very well and we hosted it for a number of years until the league went back to individual races.

I think it is fair to say that as a result of the quality of the fixtures we put on, the club had a good reputation and this was shown in 2005 when the Midland Counties AA was hosting the National Championships at Cofton Park. Tragically the Race Director, Cliff Franks, died and I was asked to take over at relatively short notice. I accepted provided I was allowed to organise it as I wanted. This was a step up from what I had done previously as I had to work with Birmingham City Council and the English Cross Country Association and the scale of the event was enormous.

The event was a great success and the clubs in the Midlands really supported us. A request for volunteers was met with a great response including many from Leamington. If you have ever tried to mark out a finish line you will understand why I have a great memory of the day when our own duo of Alan Edwards and Dave Wurr, both engineers, marked out a perfectly straight 100 metre start line. Another example of the club's attention to detail.

Dave, incidentally, was an excellent marshal and I always put him and his wife Sue on the most important point on the course. It was he that had the idea of marshals using whistles to warn spectators that the runners were approaching. An idea that many clubs have copied.

So in 7 years I had gone from my first involvement in a cross country race to Race Director of the National Championships.

I thought I had reached the pinnacle with the Nationals but in 2010 the UK Inter-counties Championships & World Cross Country Trials came to Cofton Park and late on it was realised that as a result of a misunderstanding no one had organised the marshals. What did they do? They asked Leamington to help!! As with the Nationals I said I would take on the role of Course Director / Clerk of Course provided I could do it my way and that the marshals were treated the same as the technical officials. This meant they had their own registration tent with refreshments, were offered travelling expenses and had specially designed marshal's jackets. My aim was to raise their profile and treat them as professionals. They responded positively to this and the vast majority of them came back year after year. Another new departure was I split the course into three sections and had a manager for each, this meant that queries went to them first and were only passed onto me if they couldn't deal with it

The biggest challenges for this event were working with a live TV timetable and controlling spectator crossings of the course. One year the course was so heavy that races were taking longer than expected so we had to shorten the senior races only 30 minutes prior to their start to fit them into the TV schedule.

One big problem - at the last moment – was that I had requested 10k of tape and somehow this was translated into 10 rolls of tape. With 500m per roll it meant that the day before the race I had only 50% of the tape required. Fortunately, one of the marshals from Tipton got the shortfall from their club stock but it meant we had to use it on parts of the course where there were no cameras as the tape supplied had the sponsor's name on and that had to be seen on TV. Also, you had to ensure the tape was the correct way up so the sponsor's name could be read - another issue we don't face with smaller races.

Still we managed it and it went off well and I was asked to stay on the team for the following year. I did it for six years and when I finally stopped one of the section managers took over and I handed over to him documented procedures and a project template.

This club has a great heritage in cross country and new people are coming into the team each year so I am confident it will continue for years to come. I have always said that I have done a good job if, when I stop, no one notices and things continue seamlessly. I think this has happened here.

As you will see there have been many improvements and innovations over the years, I have been involved but do not think they were all mine. What I did was to encourage suggestions and ideas by all the team which were considered and, if thought appropriate, introduced.

It has been hard work but the pleasure and satisfaction of an event going off well more than makes up for it.

## Chapter 10

# The 2010s

The current decade – the 2010s - has been one of increasing success and revitalising of the club. Both our ladies and men's teams have been strengthened and met with increased success in their respective leagues. In 2018 our road runners dominated the local race league and our older athletes have enjoyed considerable track and field success. However, the decade has been tinged with three untimely deaths.

It was with great sadness that we heard Cavin Woodward had passed away on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010. Cavin loved Leamington C&AC and had been a member for many decades. He had served it wonderfully as a world-record breaking athlete, a cyclist and as an administrator. Many club members joined the congregation at his funeral to show their respects. A memorial bench was unveiled on the top of the mound next to the start at Edmondscote in his memory on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011. A tribute to Cavin is included on page 36 of this publication.

It was also with great sadness in February 2012 that we heard of the death of Sandra Butler, a much loved and loyal member of C&AC. Many club members joined the congregation at her funeral to show their respects. Sandra willingly and enthusiastically gave countless hours to our club: she was Athletics Section Secretary for a number of years, was one of our coaches and was frequently seen at events acting in some sort of official capacity. A tribute to Sandra is included on page 93.

We were also sad in 2018 to hear of the death of para-athlete Bob Matthews at the age of 56, from a brain tumour. Bob, a blind runner who competed for Leamington for a short period in the early 2000s, gained a national profile for his contribution to blind athletics, representing Great Britain at several Paralympic games. A profile of Bob is included on page 94.

### ***The Birmingham and District Cross Country League***

1998/99 season had seen an innovation whereby all Divisions in the league came together for the first race of the season. Between the 1998/99 and 2009/10 seasons this was held at Senneleys Park in Birmingham – a tough course with a couple of infamous water jumps. In 2010/11 this 'combined' event transferred to Leamington and for six years was held at our own Newbold Comyn and organised by our club.

For the first seven years of the 2010s decade C&AC were in Division 2, initially finishing each year 'middling' in the table. From the 2014/15 season the team gradually climbed the league so that by 2016/17 they finished 2<sup>nd</sup> overall and gained promotion back to Division 1 for the first time in 11 years. A number of C&AC athletes achieved individual top-ten placings in races during these seven years in Division 2: Richard Harper (a 1<sup>st</sup>, four 2<sup>nds</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>), Jamie Langley (a 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>), Chris Bull (a 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>), Guy Allen (two 3<sup>rds</sup>, and an 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>), Andy Savery (a 2<sup>nd</sup>, four 4<sup>ths</sup>, two 5<sup>th</sup>, two 6<sup>ths</sup>, a 9<sup>th</sup>), Jake Watson (a 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>), Callum Hanlon (a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>), and Phil Gould (an 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>).

The 2017/18 season in Division 1 saw a solid performance with the team finishing individual races at, or just below, mid-table. This gave us a final overall team 7<sup>th</sup> (out of 16 teams).



*Some of our Birmingham League Cross country Team at Wyken, Coventry 2012<sup>34</sup>*

*Left to right: Graham Roberts; Nick Tawney; Steve Roberts; Eoin O'Flynn; Craig Bower; Pete Taylor; ?? ; Russ Burrows; Adrian Manley; Bert Payne; Michael Denny; Chris Bull; John Latham.*

### **2010 to 2017 - Sports performance awards**

In 2010 Sue Harrison won the Warwick District Sports Personality Award in recognition of her win in the IAU 50km World Trophy Final. In 2013 she was voted Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull Sportswoman of the Year for her bronze medal in the IAU European 100km Championships. In 2017 Sue won the Coventry and Warwickshire Amateur Sportswoman of the Year Award after becoming British 100km Champion. In 2010 and 2013 she won the Ellis Trophy, presented by Warwickshire County Athletics Association to "The Warwickshire athlete who has achieved the best athletic performance anywhere in the world during the year".

### **2011 - Leamington Parkrun**

Leamington Parkrun was first run on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2011 and consists of a free 5 km run around Newbold Comyn. It is run at 9.00 am every Saturday.

### **2012 - London Olympic and Paralympic Games**

Many C&AC members travelled to London to watch the Olympic or Paralympic Games in 2012, but several had the honour of a more direct involvement. Mary Hodges and Paul Nash (see pages 94 and 95) officiated at both events, whilst Marion Childs had the honour of carrying the Olympic torch in Leamington.

---

<sup>34</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Potter.



### **2013 - Cotswold Hilly 100**



*Mike Denny crosses the finish line to bring our A Team home in 2nd place<sup>35</sup>  
Cheered on by club colleagues Brian Miller; Chris Hitchman; Paul Muddeman and John Muddeman.*

### **2014 - Possible relocation of athletics track**

All local housing authorities were required to publish a 'Local Plan' setting out how they would meet the housing needs of their areas. The Warwick District Council Plan raised the prospect of a re-location of the athletics track to the Myton Road / Europa Way area – perhaps linked to a wider sports complex with the football club. There have been mixed feelings about this amongst members – a dilemma between a love for where we are now and the prospect of improved facilities. There was been considerable controversy about the Warwick District Plan but, at the time of writing, house building is well under way. Plans for a move for C&AC with improved facilities are still being proposed.

### **2015 - Midland League track and field team<sup>36</sup>**



<sup>35</sup> Picture courtesy Dave Potter.

<sup>36</sup> Picture courtesy Mary Carter.

Previous page:

Some of our 2015 Midland League track and field team.

*Back row:* Chris Melbourne, Callum Hanlon, Drew Sinnott, James Sinnott, James Harris, Makun Madar, Rory Sinnott, Morgan Reeves, Oliver Holmes, Callum Sinnott and Marion Childs.

*Front row:* Phoebe Naismith-White, Asha Chakrabarti, Issy Davis, Becca Lord, Stephanie Childs, Mary Carter (nee Donaldson), Shelley Went, Sara Wills.

### **2015 - Midland Masters Track and Field League champions**



*Some of the 2015 Midland Masters League team pictured at Edmonscote Athletics Track<sup>37</sup>*

*Standing from left: Dai Vaughan; Dave Hoare (Official); Pete Brown; Mark Wise; Dave Potter; Carol Blower; Phil Gould; Liz Ibbs ; Phil Clayton; Judith Hanlon; Steve Webb; Jusar Kandola; Paul Caruana; Dominic Browne; Craig Bower.*

*Kneeling: Jim Sinnott; Mark McAleenan; Sarah Habib; Tony Foster; Christiane Parker ; Christine Taylor; Delia Caruana.*

### **2016 - The Monty 5**

It had long been the ambition of some of our club officers, in particular Ray Morgan, to host a race in the Warwickshire Road Race League – a series of road races held over the summer months. The problem was finding a suitable road course in our area with easy access to car parking and changing facilities and which did not involve road closures and associated (expensive) policing. Inspiration came from Alex Montgomery for a course which starts and finishes at our own track and utilises foot-underpasses and tarmac paths in a nearby park to create a largely traffic free route. The event was named the Monty 5 in recognition of Alex's contribution.

The first running took place in 2016 with 290 finishers. The latest race in 2018 had 236 finishers with C&AC athletes gaining first Senior man and Senior lady places and first Senior men's team.

---

<sup>37</sup> Picture courtesy Richard Burrows.

### **2017 - A new club website**

How the club communicates with and between members has changed considerably over the years in line with changing life styles and technological developments. Back in the 1920s, when the club was formed, communication was almost entirely by word of mouth or notices in the local Courier newspaper. Telephones (landline – not mobiles!) did not really become common in private houses until the 1960s. Hence much use was made of advertisements and articles in the local press to promote meetings and events; the Courier regularly reported in some detail on the outcome of important club meetings such as annual general meetings and well as athletic events themselves.

An interesting ‘advertisement’ in December 1944 by Ted Clifford on behalf of C&AC apologised for the entertainment at the club’s Boxing Night Dance:

*“I wish to offer our patrons at the Boxing Night Dance sincere apologies for the entertainment offered on this occasion, which was due to the fact that, owing to the weather conditions, only three of the Band were able to make the journey from Coventry. Our thanks are due to these and the public who attended for their acceptance of the situation with very good humour. Assuring our patrons that we shall offer them a higher standard of entertainment on future occasions.”*

Prior to the opening of Edmonscote in 1964 the club had arrangements with the Angel Hotel in Leamington for the use of a ‘club room’ which would have facilitated word-of-mouth and, presumably, ‘noticeboard’ communication. When Edmonscote opened the club had use of a fairly small noticeboard – at that time in the changing rooms rather than in a more public space. The noticeboard became a key means of providing information about races and where athletes could ‘sign up’ for team events. The creation of the ‘club room’ as part of the 1986 upgrade at Edmonscote meant that there was now plenty of space in a public area for such notices – and this space continues to be widely used today.

2003 saw our first real step in using technology to improve and enhance our communication. John Clarkson, a member of the cycling section, created a club website, although this focused mainly on the activities of the cycling section. Richard Burrows and John Muddeman took on the job of developing the athletics side and jointly maintained it for a number of years. Over the years the website was developed further primarily through the work of first Chris Hitchman and then Dave Ashbourne, with the latest version being launched in 2017.

The increased use of email and social media and the almost universal ownership of mobile phones means that much of our communication is now electronic, although the club noticeboard, telephone and word of mouth continue to play an important part.

### **2017 - World Marathon Majors Six Star medal<sup>38</sup>**

Chris Hitchman was awarded the prized World Marathon Majors Six Star medal at the end of his New York marathon run in 2017, finishing in 3:30:25. Although a disappointing time for Chris, who struggled in the later stages of the race, the medal is a significant milestone in his running career, with less than 5000 runners worldwide holding the medal.

With three times under 3 hours, his best in Berlin 02:55:03 (2012), Chris’s cumulative time of 18hrs 42 mins places him in the top 250 of medal holders. With other qualifying races Boston 02:58:23 (2013), Chicago 02:58:37 (2013), London 03:06:02 (2010) and Tokyo 03:13:59 (2014).



<sup>38</sup> Picture from club website.

## 2017 - Cotswold Hilly 100 champions<sup>39</sup>



Left: Phil Gould carries the C&AC banner across the finish line.

Right: Alex Montgomery, Phil Gould, Zara Blower, Nick Tawney and Carol Blower with the men's and women's trophies.

## 2018 - Warwickshire Cross Country Championships

C&AC Masters ladies team (Kelly Edwards, Monica Williamson, Jenny Jeeves) won gold in the 2018 Warwickshire Cross Country Championships. Our Senior ladies team finished in bronze position. Our C&AC Masters men (Phil Gould, Paul Andrew, Tom Foulerton and Richard Merrell) also took team gold.



Our ladies team<sup>40</sup>:

Lorraine Woodwiss; Jenny Jeeves; Kelly Edwards; Megan McDonald; Monica Williamson; Shamira Naidu-Young; Safia del Torres; Carol Blower; Tara Fagge; Caroline Coward; Laura Gould; Courtney Thornbury; Eve Walpole; Louise Marsh.

<sup>39</sup> Pictures from the club website.

<sup>40</sup> Picture courtesy Sue Harrison

### **2018 - Midland Masters Track and Field League finals**

C&AC's older athletes achieved team success at the 2018 Midland Masters Track and Field League 'B' finals day. Our veteran men came first to win the Men's Finals Cup finishing with an impressive 230.5 points against the 174 of our nearest rival. Our ladies came second with 127 points; just 5 points behind the winners. These two fine performances meant that Leamington were clear winners in the 'Combined Trophy' with 357.5 points, well clear of our rivals, none of whom were able to break the 300 points barrier.

In the men's finals Phil Gould showed real team spirit competing in a total of eight running and jumping events; Tony Foster's tally was five events (running, jumping and throwing), whilst Jim Sinnott did four throwing events plus the pole vault. Several of our other athletes also did more than one event. For the ladies, highlights of the day were the relay events which were both dominated by C&AC.

### **2018 - Dai's 60<sup>th</sup> year<sup>41</sup>**

Dai Vaughan competed in the 100m event at the Midlands Masters Track and Field League event on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 making it the 60<sup>th</sup> year he has competed and scored points for Leamington C&AC in track and field events. Dai, now 76, started competing when he was just 16 and is regularly seen at Leamington C&AC's home of Edmondscote track giving advice to fellow athletes as well as training himself.



### **2018 - Warwickshire Road Race League**

The Warwickshire Road Race League operates under the oversight of the Warwickshire County Athletic Association with an aim of fostering and encouraging the quality, spread and diversity of road races and encouraging competition. There are a number of races in the league and points are awarded on the basis of finishing positions to determine individual and team winners. The series has operated since the early 2000's and the races which form the series have changed over the years. In 2018 they were the Massey Tractor 10k; Monty 5k; Ryton 5m; Two Castles 10k; Sphinx 5m; Arden 9m Northbrook 10k; Stratford 6m; Kenilworth Half Marathon and Rugby 10m.

In 2018 C&AC's men and ladies both won their respective leagues. They were also both second Masters team. Individually, there were several C&AC runners in the top three of their age category:

Jenny Jeeves 1<sup>st</sup> FV45,  
Gregory West 1<sup>st</sup> MU20,  
Dean Mawby 2<sup>nd</sup> MU20,  
Paul Andrew 2<sup>nd</sup> MV35,  
Richard Merrell 1<sup>st</sup> MV45,  
Jason Hill 2<sup>nd</sup> MV45.

C&AC had winners in eight of the ten races: Callum Hanlon winning the Massey Tractor 10k, the Monty 5k, the Ryton 5m, the Two Castles 10k and the Rugby 10m, whilst Andy Savery had success in the Sphinx 5m, the Stratford 6m, and the Kenilworth Half Marathon. We also had a number of Master category winners in the individual events.

---

<sup>41</sup> Picture from Club website.

## **2019 - Continued success in our 91<sup>st</sup> year**

2019 is our club's 91<sup>st</sup> year and it has already got off to a flying start:

- At the Warwickshire Cross Country Championships our athletes took three gold team prizes, an individual gold, two silvers and a bronze with a total of 57 athletes representing our club. Jai Sispal took silver in the under 15 boys race; team gold for the Under 20's men with Baljeev Kandola gaining individual bronze, gold for our ladies Masters team with Jenny Jeeves retaining her individual Masters silver, and gold for our men's Masters team
- At the Midland Cross Country Championships – held on 'home' Newbold territory - our ladies showed their strength in depth finishing second overall to claim the silver medal. Kelly Edwards was 8<sup>th</sup>, Megan McDonald 17<sup>th</sup>, Natalie Bhangal 30<sup>th</sup> and Zara Blower 31<sup>st</sup>. The men's team finished 9<sup>th</sup> on the day.

---

## Members' Stories and Profiles

### ***Sandra Butler: by Noel Butler***

Sandra first became involved with the club when she moved to Warwick in 1995 and son Matthew (Matt), then 9 years old joined the athletics section. Her first volunteering role was when Matt competed in the club's Track & Field team and Sandra was asked to be a track judge. She enjoyed it but felt she did not understand the duties properly. She was a person that if she was to do a job, she wanted to do it properly so enrolled on an officials' course and became a qualified track judge.

She really enjoyed officiating and moved on to officiate at championships and was quickly promoted. She was very proud to be appointed as Track Referee at a number of County Championships.



As much as she liked Track and Field the two events she loved were the National Cross Country Championships and the Road Relay Championships and she officiated at both for many years. For over a decade she would be seen officiating at all club races; track, road or cross country (Pictured: Sandra officiating at Newbold Comyn).

Her husband Noel coached the junior endurance squad for 14 years and Sandra qualified as a coach to help him and ran the group for a couple of years when he worked away from home.

Sandra was Secretary of the club and Athletics Section for a number of years and her favourite story was that when reviewing some old minutes she found that some of the subjects being discussed at that time were still on the agenda 20 years later!!.

Whenever help was needed Sandra would volunteer often making rolls for refreshments until late in the night before a home fixture. Sandra was awarded the club's President's trophy in 1999.

Sandra died suddenly in her sleep in 2012; a sad loss to her family, friends and the club. One of the tributes sent to her family after her death captures perfectly Sandra's contribution to the club specifically and athletics generally:-

*“Over the years I have known Sandra I have appreciated and valued her work for athletics and cross country. She has been a willing and knowledgeable official, a hard-working Club Secretary and organiser. She has worked tirelessly in the background and will be missed by many.”*

### **Bob Matthews**

Bob Matthews was only a member of C&AC for a comparatively short period (mid 1990s / early 2000s) but he became a ‘running legend’ as a blind athlete and Paralympian.

Bob, who was visually impaired, was one of the most successful Paralympic athletes of all time. He won a total of 13 Paralympic athletics medals between 1984 and 2004, including eight gold, four silver and one bronze. He broke 22 world records at distances ranging from 800m to the marathon. In 1986 he became the first blind runner to run the 800m in under two minutes. He was the first Paralympian to be appointed an MBE, receiving his award from Princess Diana.

Tragedy struck Bob in 2003 when his first wife Kath, whom he had married in 1994, died suddenly of a brain haemorrhage. Bob met his second wife in 2006 and emigrated to Auckland, New Zealand where he worked as a sports massage therapist and motivational speaker. He went on to represent New Zealand in the triathlon from 2009 and in cycling at the 2012 London Paralympics. Bob published his autobiography “Paralympics: The blind runner with a crystal-clear vision” in 2009.

Bob was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumour in 2017 and sadly he died on 11th April 2018 at the age of 56. His death was marked with a half page obituary in The Times newspaper on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

Bob came to Leamington in 1993 and several C&AC members acted as guide in those early days when he was out on the road training – although few of us were able to keep up with his pace – he clearly needed faster runners to train with!. Club members Tim Redman and then Paul Harwood filled that role.



One of Bob’s most inspirational runs for the club was a Birmingham League cross country race at Newbold – the way he took the muddy, water ditch, which filled many fully-sighted athletes with dread - was remarkable<sup>42</sup>.

### **Mary Hodges - London 2012**

Little did I think that when Les and Thelma Barnett recruited me to be a field judge for the club that one day I would be putting on the uniform for the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

What an amazing honour to receive an email inviting me to officiate at the Men's and Women's Marathon and both the Men's and Women's 20K and 50K Race Walks at the Olympics. Then a few weeks later to be invited to work in the Technical Information Centre for the Paralympics, based at the Olympic Stadium and the Olympic Village. (Perhaps it had been worth standing out in all weathers and travelling up and down the country for a sport

---

<sup>42</sup> Picture from Club website.

which I love).

For the Olympic Games I was part of the Out of Stadium Team who worked on The Mall and one of our jobs was to ensure that all runners and athletes were escorted onto the start line on time and in the right order for the television cameras (no pressure, when you have the eyes of the world on you).

The Paralympics was possibly the best experience of my life, especially as we lived in the Olympic Village and our apartment had been home to some of the Jamaican team during the Olympic Games. The dining hall was an experience in itself, so much choice of food, but you had to watch out for the wheelchair athletes, I learnt very quickly not to get in the way of an athlete and their food.

My role for the Paralympics was in the Technical Information Centre which involved answering questions from team managers, team coaches etc. about qualifications for next rounds, transport arrangements, general enquiries and lots of walking between the main stadium and the warm up track. Prior to the marathon I quickly became the go to person to answer any questions regarding the marathon.

A couple of the highlights of the Games were going to the Closing Ceremony for the Olympic Games, the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Paralympic Games and queuing behind the gold medals for the wheelchair tennis to collect my washing (what a great service we were offered).

For anyone thinking about taking up officiating give it go, you never know where you will end up - Club Championships, Warwickshire Track and Cross Country Championships, Midland Track, Road Relay and Cross Championships, England Track, Road Relay and Cross Championships, European Cross Country and Indoor Track Championships, Commonwealth Games, World Cross Country and Half Marathon Championships, Olympic and Paralympic Games at all these events I have proudly stated that I am member of Leamington C & A C.



### ***Paul Nash - From Young Athlete to Officiating at London 2012***

LC&AC will always hold a special place for me and, upon reflection, really has shaped large parts of my life. From starting at age 9 with Ray Morgan and Jean Miles through to judging at the London 2012 Olympics, Leamington has always been the driving force. As an athlete I was nurtured through 5 star, club and McDonald's league competitions. I was even known to partake in the odd cross country, though as a thrower this was met with much protestation and limited success.

With questionable track abilities, but a keen throwing ability, I was steered towards the hammer where I really found my forte. Quickly I was nurtured in my chosen niche, competing at and above my age group with bigger and heavier implements. As my confidence grew, as did my ability and I was chosen for 6 consecutive years to compete for Warwickshire in the English Schools Athletic Association (ESAA) Championships. Competing at that level, surrounded by so many spectators and athletes from around England was huge and massively intimidating, however, as I would later find out, great preparation for other events that C&AC would prepare me for. At ESAA a really diverse team was put out at each championship and although being a small club, Leamington was



represented punching well above its weight on a regional and national level. We were there to support each other and those from other clubs making up the Warwickshire contingent. For me, that was and is what athletics is about.

The Hammer is usually at the start of the day to get it out of the way due to safety concerns. While that is great for my nerves, it did leave me with a long day ahead with only a smattering of activity. Teams are always short on providing judges and can lead to 'points forfeits'. So, with a largely free afternoon, I started helping out; raking the pit, changing boards, anything really that nobody wanted to do. Weirdly I really enjoyed it. Les and Thelma Barnett pounced on this enthusiasm and encouraged me to try it further, seeing the variety that officiating had to offer. Mentoring me in the early days and then encouraging me to take the exams. Make it official. So I did. Then, from the age of 15, not only had the poacher become the game keeper but I was also (unratified) the youngest qualified official.

Travelling the length and breadth of the UK with different teams from Leamington gave me a great understanding of officiating, encouraging me to take the exams and progress up the grading system (totally different to how it is now) until I was invited to take the Grade 1 exam making me a national level judge. Thanks to the experience from Leamington, I nailed it! From there I never looked back. I went back to the ESAA champs but this time as a judge which was certainly a weird experience especially with the growing crowds and again being at the centre. But that was only the start. Because of the foothold that Leamington provided, I was invited to judge at, and be part of, both the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Now those really were crowds. My first event was the High Jump, judging for Jess Ennis and I was on the uprights. Great job, up close to the action but it did mean that in my first outing at the Olympics, I had to 'red flag' our nation's sweetheart. But what a place to do it, that stadium, those crowds and my Olympic Judging Family.

I have taken a lot from athletics and hope that I have been able to give a lot back too. 19 years of judging and 25 years of being in Athletics. Not bad by the age of 34. I have friends who I met at the start who are with me now. Friends who I know I have made for life, sharing in both the highs and the lows, the successes and the hurdles (yes that pun was intentional). Recently I have moved a little further from Leamington, to Los Angeles, and maybe, just maybe, we will see if Leamington plays a part in the Games of the XXXIV Olympiad, LA2028.

## Our Next 10 Years?

And, in conclusion, some final thoughts from our Chair:

*“What I cherish about LC&AC is that it is a club that welcomes all from under 10s to over 70s. We have a wide age group participating and competing in athletics. We have vastly experienced coaches to train and to get the best out of our athletes, young and old. We are always on the lookout for coaches to cover the range of disciplines in which we compete and recently we have encouraged some of our juniors to join our coaching team. A strong sprinting set up is now being backed up by dedicated jumps and throws coaching.*

*Recent success for senior and masters teams on the road and cross country is also the result of motivated and experienced coaches and team managers. We have individuals who compete nationally and internationally. As well as the exciting prospect of Jai Sispal at 800m in the juniors we have the consistently excellent Monica Williamson with her impressive record of representing England in masters cross country. Meanwhile Sue Harrison represents GB and continues the club’s ultra-distance legacy started by the legendary Cavin Woodward.*

*The financial stability of the club does not make the headlines but is the bedrock on which we build and is the result of diligent administration. Several of our members make a significant administrative contribution to local and regional leagues and in terms of hosting events we continue to punch above our weight. Mary Hodges, Alan Edwards, Chris Hitchman, Ray Morgan and Noel Butler cannot go unmentioned here.*

*As we look forward to the last decade of our first century the challenge of a new home awaits us. There are challenges from other clubs and other competing activities. How we respond to these will depend on the skills and commitment of the members we attract. Bring on the next ten years!*

*Nick Tawney  
Athletic Section Chair  
Leamington Cycling and Athletics Club”*