

2010 AGM report from Junior Ilkley Harriers

We have had an incredibly busy and successful seventh year with membership reaching 274. More juniors are training and racing, more parents and older juniors are becoming involved with coaching and all our sessions are well attended. Many sessions are oversubscribed and as a result an additional general Sportshall Athletics session has been introduced on a Wednesday at Ghyll Royd School to cater for the 10 to 13 year old age range this coming September. We have various junior coaching sessions on 5 days a week involving just over 30 coaches and older junior helpers. Five more sixteen year olds will be moving into the senior section this autumn which brings our total since we were set up to 41.

In competitions we are going from strength to strength as we continue to encourage children to participate in a wide range of athletic activities.

In Sportshall Athletics we repeated our 2009 feat of having 13 juniors selected for the West Yorkshire regional teams, four at U11 level, seven at U13 level and two at U15 level. This has arguably got to be our best year to date as the U11 'City of Bradford' trials were replaced by West Yorkshire trials which provides much tougher competition for places.

As an initiative by the Bradford Athletics Network there were low level Sportshall Athletics competitions for 8 to 16 year olds. For younger children this was the first time that they had been able to compete so it has been particularly pleasing to see an exceptional number of children (and parents) from Ilkley supporting this and providing a vital stepping stone to bigger events such as regional trials. At our own annual Sportshall Athletics awards presentation evenings we gave an impressive number of gold medals as well as the presentation of cloth 'colours' for Sportshall Athletics, Track & Field Athletics, Cross-Country, Fell Running and Road Running (including Terrain) to juniors for achievement and commitment to training and competing for the club.

In Cross-Country we had more juniors competing in the Complete Runner League and we gained our best team placing to date with an outstanding 1st place from the U11 girls, 4th for the U13 boys and 6th for the U13 girls. This we are sure is as a direct result of the massively popular Wharfedale Primary Schools League that we have now been organising for the past four years. Over 450 children from 12 local schools have competed in the 6 league races organised by All Saints, Ashlands, Ben Rhydding, Ghyll Royd and Westville House Schools. As a result of the success of the Wharfedale XC League model two further XC leagues have been set up by the Bradford Athletics Network across the district. As a much needed stepping stone between school and higher level competition the Peco XC league organised junior races for the first time in 2008. In 2009 a one mile race for 8 to 10 year olds was added to the 2 mile race for 11 to 16 year olds. This friendly league caters for all abilities and is an excellent way to bring newcomers into low level club competition. Overall 100 children from several different clubs competed last year and almost half were from Ilkley.

On the fells we have witnessed some fine performances with individuals competing in both BOFRA and FRA races. Not so many juniors compete just for the fells but when they do they excel. We continue to encourage participation in local events and particularly those held on Ilkley Moor where we always see a massive club turnout and the 'Woodentop' races at Haworth (particularly the Bunnies) are always popular. The inclusion of junior and family teams at the Will Ramsbotham Badger Stone Relays gave a very special element to this summer evening event.

Track and Field Athletics is the natural progression for Sportshall Athletics and this year we broke away from the national league format to follow our own programme of local open events. As a result we are all much happier and have had more children from 8 to 18 competing with some fantastic individual results. The specific coaching that we are able to offer at Ghyll Royd really is making a huge difference to our juniors who wish to concentrate on their athletics and compete. Fiona Jordan continues to impress by gaining a silver medal at the Yorkshire Championships in the U20 400m hurdles. And not to be outdone Daniel Judkowski gained 3 bronze medals in the same championships at U15 level for long jump, shot

and javelin. There are others who over the next few years will be ready to compete at this level.

Coach Education has been a little on hold this year as uk:athletics change all the courses. Unfortunately it is now more difficult and more costly to get individuals qualified to coach athletics. Sometimes you wonder whose side the governing body is actually on. Before the 'old' courses ceased to exist we did manage to get 6 coaches qualified to level 1 status. In addition 10 coaches attended a risk assessment course which we organised on behalf of England Athletics at ILT&SC. One of the key initiatives that we started last year was to encourage 14 to 18 year olds to help with the sessions and 9 did just that. They have been an invaluable help during our Sportshall Athletics sessions.

We have organised 7 events this year – Peco Junior XC races, Wharfedale Primary School's XC relay event, Junior Fell races, Badger Stone Relays, Junior Trail races, Sprint fell relays and the IGS Year 6 induction day activities. In addition Malcolm and Sally Pickering took on the role of social secretaries and organised two events which were absolutely brilliant. The first a bowling trip to Skipton in March and the second a visit to the Aviva Grand Prix event in Gateshead in July. A good time was had by all.

For many years we have been sadly lacking in athletics facilities in Wharfedale and the likelihood of us ever having a track is non-existent. However we have had a very good relationship with Ghyll Royd School for several years now and as a result we have been fortunate to be able to develop the athletics facilities for our and the school's use. This year we have had built an outdoor covered jumps pit, which with low level lighting (hopefully this side of Christmas) we will be able to use throughout the winter months. We must thank the Bradford Athletics Network for helping us to fund our jumps pit as well as subsidise our coach education programme.

The most important ingredient to our success since we started has been the enthusiasm, support, commitment and motivation that all the coaches, helpers, parents and juniors have given to the activities that we organise. We introduced the 'Volunteer of the Month' Award this year which is presented to individuals for their commitment to the junior section. For many of our volunteers it is a small amount of recognition and reward for many years of commitment, enthusiasm and support to the junior section. The 5 recipients so far have been Ros Blackburn, Emily Wood, Neil Chapman, Malcolm Pickering and Rachel Websdale. Without the volunteers who give their time freely to 'make things happen' we could not have achieved half as much, so many thanks to everyone who has supported the junior section this year.

... and what for the future? Firstly I guess it's more of the same. We will continue to support our juniors at all competitive levels throughout all athletic disciplines. Additionally we would like to put together a 14 to 18 volunteer helper package which is well structured and includes more than just helping at sessions.

Shirley Wood
Junior coaching co-ordinator