

2013 AGM report from Junior Ilkley Harriers

It's been a decade since the junior section was established and over that time our membership has grown year on year - we're now at 296. We continue to be a local club catering for a wide range of athletics activities with fantastic support and commitment from everyone involved. In 2013 we extended the previous year's theme of 'raising the bar' on coaching and competition.

In **Cross-Country** after a disappointing West Yorkshire series where each race seemed to clash with school fixtures we picked ourselves up and had more juniors competing in the Championship events than ever before. Snow and difficult racing conditions favoured our juniors and we witnessed some exceptional performances showing true Yorkshire grit and determination.

At the Yorkshire Championships in Ripon Georgia Malir continued her good form (she had won the U17 title at the West Yorkshires) and gained a silver medal and selection for the inter counties and the mini London Marathon. We had five other juniors finish in the top twenty - Bethan Morley (U13 girls - 18th); Euan Brennan (U13 boys - 20th); Sarah Pickering, Lucy Haines and Lucy Jacques (U15 - 11th, 14th and 15th). And with team placings for the U13 girls (11th & 18th); U13 boys (9th) and U15 girls (3rd & 11th) it was a good day out.

16 juniors braved the overnight snowfalls and made it across to Liverpool to compete in the Northern Championships where we saw Georgia Malir win the U17 competition outright and we gained team placings in the U13 and U15 girls (15th and 12th).

The finale to the Cross-Country season was our coach trip to a snowy Sunderland with 23 juniors racing. It was such a tough test - the courses were physical with mud up to your shins and the weather unbearably cold. Every junior who raced should be congratulated - once again Georgia Malir led the way with the first race of the day and a fantastic 13th place. We had three team placings - U13 girls 20th; U15 girls 15th and U13 boys 16th.

The massively popular Wharfedale Primary Schools League which we support is now in its seventh year and has provided the ideal starting point for most of these athletes. Over 450 children from 12 local schools compete in the 5 league races organised by All Saints, Ashlands, Ben Rhydding, Ghyll Royd and Westville House Schools. And as a much needed stepping stone between school and higher level competition the Peco League organises Challenge races for Years 4-12. We had 22 juniors compete and top 10 places were achieved by: Years 4-6 - Emily Elmes (2nd), Ella Shouler-Harris (3rd); Dominic Coy (4th); Poppy Anderson (5th) and Nathan Coy (9th). Harriet Jackson was 8th in the Years 7-9 age group and in Years 10-12 we had Joanne Williamson (2nd), Anna Pickering (3rd) and Lucy Williamson (4th).

Thank you to Sally Malir and Malcolm Pickering for team-managing the juniors throughout the season.

George Elmes is our junior team manager on the **fells** and over the last few years we have seen a lot more juniors competing in both BOFRA and FRA races. Perhaps it's something to do with the 'traditional mass picnic and paddle in the river' at events. Whatever it is it's working. The races at Haworth saw over 20 Junior Harriers racing and we have had our best season in the English Fell Championships. 21 juniors have represented Ilkley and top 20 placings were gained by Emily Elmes (U12 - 14th), Lucy Haines (U14 - 12th), Lucy Jacques (U14 - 17th), Ruaridh Mon-Williams (U16 - 10th); Lucy and Joanne Williamson (U16 - 4th and 13th). And in the club championships we finished 6th out of 70 clubs from all over the country. Other notable performances include Euan Brennan winning the U12 title in the Kendal Winter League by winning almost every race outright against very tough opposition. To bring us bang up to date this weekend another star was born - Lucy Williamson (U17) gained her first England vest and competed in the Junior Mountain Running Home Internationals in Scotland.

Our **track and field Athletics** programme is as complete as we can make it and we are able to cater for all aspects of the discipline to different degrees. Few juniors actually make the transition from sportshall athletics to track & field but those who do are very talented. This season juniors had the opportunity to compete in the West Yorkshire League but only 3 actually did any events. However it is something that we would like to continue to offer alongside local open events to provide a competitive season stretching from mid February to mid September. The individual who stands out this season is Harry Maslen (U17). He is the current Yorkshire champion at High Jump and runner up in the 100m hurdles. He also gained a Bronze medal in the Northern Championships for 100m Hurdles. He also defended his Yorkshire Combined Events title at Carnegie gaining 8 PB's in the Octathlon. This ranks him 1st in Yorkshire and 3rd in the country. As he now moves up to U20 he has decided to continue training as a multi eventer under the guidance of Wondimu-Keno. Other juniors who are

ranked on the Power of 10 in Yorkshire are: Sarah Pickering (U15) - 14th in 1500m; Roisin Ramage (U15) 15th 60m, 12th shot and 9th discus; Lucy Williamson (U17) 12th 800m.

In 2013 over one hundred and sixty juniors took part in weekly **Sportshall Athletics** sessions. The Regional trials were the highest standard for many years and only two juniors were selected for the West Yorkshire regional teams; Charlie Wilde (U11) and Roisin Ramage (U15).

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

Relays are always a lot of fun and something that we like to encourage at Ilkley. At the Washburn Valley Relays we fielded 7 teams, regained the trophy and had a great picnic afterwards. At the Golden Acre Park relays our junior girls team of Tilly Melechi, Iso Hirst and Joanne Williamson was second with Tilly running a record breaking fastest lap. And the junior and family teams at the Will Ramsbotham Badger Stone Relays continue to give this summer evening event a very special atmosphere.

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

This coming year we will be coaching 13 hours of athletics to juniors each week so our **Coach Education programme**, at all levels has to continue apace. A fantastic achievement was that in March 2013 we had 6 individuals qualify as full coaches: Bernie Gibbons, Sally Judkowski, Kate Lofthouse, Mael Matthews, Amanda Oddie and Sue Williamson. Already most of them are leading and taking responsibility for their own sessions and this has allowed us to extend both our general and specific coaching programme. Suzi Gray also qualified as an Assistant Coach. Five Sports Leaders qualified as Level 2 Community Leaders and they were given the highest praise by an external assessor. We have 14 juniors who attended Sports Leaders courses in February or July and are clocking up volunteering hours and we have 13 juniors who have just started to help out at sessions with a view to starting their Sports Leaders course in 2014. Alongside this we have 3 qualified Sports Leaders half way through their Level 2 Community Leaders Award. The junior section is doing so much more.

On the **Coach Development** side of things we organised three different courses 'Modern Circuits' with Neil Holmes; 'Mini Games' with Richard Taylor and 'Conditioning' with Stephen Wolstenholme. In addition there were BAN courses organised by Bingley AC relevant to junior athletes such as Nutrition and some coaches attended a talk at Carnegie by Jamie French on 'Developing the whole child'.

We introduced the '**Volunteer of the Month**' Award three years ago which is presented to individuals for their commitment to the junior section. For many of our volunteers it is a small amount of recognition and reward for many years of commitment, enthusiasm and support to the junior section. The recipients since September 2012 have been: Natasha Ireton-Bourke, Chloe Tindale, Beth Pugh, Bernie Gibbons, Mael Matthews, Kate Lofthouse, Lynda Hargreaves and Amanda Oddie.

Each week over 60 individuals give up their time to coach athletics and without their commitment and dedication we could not have achieved half as much, so many thanks to everyone who has supported the junior section this year.

Back in 2003 when we had our first one hour of sportshall athletics a week at Clevedon I don't think any of us could ever have imagined what an outstanding success story Junior Ilkley Harriers would become. Personally I enjoy coordinating the juniors as much now as I did when we started and I am constantly amazed by the enthusiasm, support, commitment and motivation that all the coaches, helpers, parents and juniors have given to activities over the years.

So Happy Birthday to the junior section and lets look forward to the next 10 years !!
Onwards and upwards.

Shirley Wood
Junior coaching co-ordinator