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Winter 2018/19

BLACKHEATH & BROMLEY HARRIERS AC

GAZETTE



Luca Ercolani in the Ranelagh mob match on his way to winning the Bennett Cup for 2019

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From the Editor



We're looking back here on the events of the Winter 2018-2019 just before the start of the 150th Anniversary Year, although I might be able to detect in a few readers a hint of suspicion that we are looking back from a slightly later time given the date when this issue finally comes out in print. I can hardly deny the fact but must at this point express some disappointment that material

requested back in the early summer was not immediately forthcoming from certain sources.

One notable exception to this has as always been Paul Austridge who for some years now been an ardent contributor of reports both in summer and winter for the whole range of young athletes from the juniors to the students. There have been recorded some solid performances from various junior teams such as the U13s and U15s in the Kent league and an impressive team effort from the U17s in the National Cross Country Championships in Leeds.

Nevertheless I must state that there are some noticeable lack of contributions in the records from some quarters and it makes for frustration to achieve a complete picture of what the club can do with its immense resources in terms of athletic personnel and official back up. As was pointed out several years ago in my defence, when being criticised for not having enough mention the performances of young athletes I was nevertheless vindicated by an advocate who stated that I could only put into print what material I was given. Never mind.

Meanwhile the 150th Anniversary year is upon us and we have a new President for that year, Julian Goulding, taking office in March this year. He has a distinguished record in competition, up to and including major championships and his story is included in this issue.

Wilf Orton, Summer 2019

Before signing off I wish to offer grateful thanks to the following for willingly providing articles and reports for this issue:

Paul Austridge VP, Steve Pairman VP, President designate Julian Golding, Dan Brewer, Ross Braden, Dan Kennedy, President Paul Byfield.

150th Anniversary Year President 2019/20

Julian Golding

Again we are pleased to welcome another distinguished athlete who has competed at international level, won a Commonwealth title, who has a high profile amongst club members and friends, but who until recently was a relative outsider in club circles. He is the public face of the club as it celebrates its 150th Anniversary year and as such was introduced to the club at the AGM on the 23rd March 2019 which commenced that day. Although slightly somewhat into the year I was able to meet and interview him to find out more about his athletic achievements, his musical talents and his hopes for the club in his year in office.

Paul Byfield proposed you as his successor. Did you have any previous association with him.

None at all. I first met him when he asked me to do a presentation at a Young Athletes meeting in Bromley 2 or 3 years ago and the speech went well. From his first impressions of me Paul thought I might make a good president and then I met him again at Norman Park track where my kids currently trained. When I was asked by him if I would like to be the next president I initially declined as I knew nothing about the club, its inner fabric and how it worked, or for

that matter the Presidency. I came in at the opposite end so to speak, not as someone who intrinsically knew how it works. So when he proposed to me to succeed him I said no at first as I thought I'd be out of my comfort zone, but I was persuaded by my family to change my mind and was quite surprised by what I found of the office.

You originally came from West London. What made you decide to join Blackheath and Bromley?

My coach and mentor was Olympic 200-metre sprinter Mike MacFarlane who recommended me to join a high profile club. He told me that at my developmental stage of my athletic career I ought to compete with class athletes in order to further it and be amongst some of the best junior kids. He encouraged me to contact Pat Calnan and speak to him about joining.... So through Mike Macfarlane I was introduced to the club.

What would you say about Mike Macfarlane's role in developing you as an athlete?

Mike Macfarlane was an integral element in my development as an athlete. I was coached by him for 12 years and the relationship was likened to a marriage, or a father and son relationship. (We still keep in touch even if these days we haven't seen



much of each other). He was the right person for me at that time, age 16. Mike gave me guidance and direction. He was really quite hard on me. He came from the old school, he really worked me hard and trained me hard to get results, and I was able to achieve much through his influence and his own experience. He was fourth in the Olympic 200m final in 1984. I watched that race on tv as a 9 year old and said 'I want to do that'. Later I saw him winning the 1985 Indoor Athletics Championships.

Were you from an athletic family?

No not at all. I was the first person in my family to be seriously involved in athletics. My school suggested that I needed to get down to the track and complete in the Westminster Borough Schools Championships. I was spotted by Mike when competing for my school. He was the Sports Development

Continued

Officer for Westminster. He said I had potential especially after seeing me finish 2nd in the 200m. I didn't even have to finish first, but then there are those who win their races but never progressed from beyond that level.

Mike continued to coach you. What makes for a really effective coach?

You have to be not just a trainer of athletes, but a mentor, counsellor and an all-rounder. Someone who understands their athletes and responds to them. Back in the day it was more one dimensional, you could just be a coach, but now you really do need to know the athletes. Mike certainly knew me!

You were coached to be a sprinter. What makes a great world class sprinter as opposed to more long distance runners?

I once heard a quote I think from Alan Wells who once said that sprinters are born, not made. Anyone can be a long distance runner...but sprinters are endowed with special talents.

It was mentioned that you once beat Michael Johnson in a race. What was that all about?

It was in a grand prix competition at Crystal Palace in August 1997. Michael Johnson had recently won the 400m at the World Championships (He was injured but still ran 44.1secs.). He also ran some 200m races and do we lined up in our

respective lanes and I beat him to the line... He had a bad day, and I had a good day in that 200 metres race. It is a question of fine margins... He might not remember it but for me it's my major claim to fame.

What is your most satisfying athletic achievement?

Winning the Commonwealth Games 1998 200m title and being in the gold medal team in the 4x100m relays, winning the 200m National Title indoors and outdoors. I was disappointed by not being able to compete in the Olympics. Every Olympic year I either underperformed or was injured.

Moving on from that, how did you react to having to retire prematurely from competition due to injury?

I was aged 32 when I retired prematurely. It wasn't intended and my plan was to be selected for the Beijing Olympics 2008. My body was taking longer to recover and a succession of injuries impacted on me mentally. Also it was increasingly difficult for my body to hold out, and I knew that I had to give more time to my young family. When you put those factors together it was time to bow out gracefully.

So then you decided on a change of career. What influenced you to decide to go into teaching?

I never thought I'd ever become a teacher in a million

years. At school although I wasn't naughty as such nor pushed the boundaries. I was something of a pain in the backside: Then an opportunity came to do sports coaching at a school through Clarence Callender a really good multi-sports development coach working at Lee Valley High School. I was offered a part time job in sports development at Brent then a full time job as sports development coach. There my line manager suggested that I do a course in sports psychology. I was told I could do the job as I had practical experience. She said that the kids would give you a totally different perspective. I taught sixth form pupils in psychology and loved it. When I decided to be a teacher it was that lightbulb moment!

So you graduated with a first class degree at age 37. Does this suggest perhaps that more mature students are likelier to achieve better results?

Unlike younger students you are there to do a job, with a goal to accomplish. You've got to get the best out of your education to further your career. You have to transfer your mindset as an athlete to be a student, and put everything into your studies. I wasn't the best student but I worked hard. I had to cover such subjects as biomechanics but I transferred my hard work ethic into my studies. That's why I got a first-class degree.

So now that you're president, what in your presidential year are your aims and objectives?

To steer the club through its 150th year. It's a big achievement for a club like ours to last so long. I didn't have any goals or objectives and have been out of my comfort zone here. However as President I aim to do the club justice, represent the club to the best of my abilities, attend meetings and do the best that I can.

Do you, as did Paul Byfield our first black president, express the same concerns about ethnic minorities being on the fringes of the club?

If you look at the demographic of the club, we have few ethnic minorities. There are discrepancies in the posts filled, which is reflected in other area of sport, for instance there is only one black premiership manager, so always so there is always scope for improvement. It would be nice to have a bigger representation of ethnic minorities.

If you remember that a lot of club members don't actually complete athletically would you say we are more than just an athletic club?

From my experience this year Blackheath and Bromley is a community, not just an athletics club. I've been privileged to attend a lot of dinner functions in that time;

the Wednesday-Nighters is a family. I hadn't heard of the Wednesday-Nighters until I started my presidency but it's a family all right; they meet together to socialise and hear updates about the club. It's not just athletic news but other subjects as well. The family has a common interest, when we meet to socialise. It is a community which is a beautiful thing.

Finally your talents include being an accomplished pianist? Since when, up to what levels and what styles of music do you play?

I've played piano a long time. My Dad had an old dusty, out of tune, crinkly upright piano. I must have been 11 or 12 when I started and of my siblings I was the only one who gravitated towards the piano. I have got two pianos at home and I play at school, at churches, I recently played at an OAPs function at Bromley Court Hotel, and someone's 60th birthday. I started off playing classical but moved into gospel and

pop music and jazz. I came from a church background where from a very young age you were encouraged to give of your talent and develop it. I started playing live music at age 19, and had a good friend who was a professional musician. When he left the church it didn't have a keyboard player. My church pastor knew that I played classical piano and bought me a keyboard and said 'right...learn! I replied that I couldn't play gospel, but then had lessons from a friend who played guitar and through him I learned the basic chords and their various shapes. I got a chord book and learned to play in the 12 major keys.

I would honestly say that athletics is my love, music is my passion.

Well on that note (hah hah) I'd like to say thank you for taking the time for this interview.

Wilf Orton

Conclusion

This has been a fantastic choice for president in this the club's 150th year. With Paul Byfield choosing an outsider with no previous connections to the club, the institution will get a breath of fresh air and hopefully be opened up to new ideas, and new approaches to developing itself as a community. Maybe through Julian Golding new influences will be introduced into a club which takes pride in its traditions yet must always look to reinvent itself.

The Club's 150th year will not only be a celebration of its illustrious history and achievements but the start of a bold new era in that history.

The new Vice Presidents for 2019

As is the custom for outgoing presidents at the end of their presidential year PP Paul Byfield has decided to create two new vice presidents, both well known as team managers and coaches. Although relatively recent arrivals on the club scene they have both made significant contributions to club in the last few years during which they have been members.

Nick Swatton

I was honoured to receive a call from Paul Byfield asking me to become a Vice-President of Blackheath and Bromley Harriers, particularly when I was told this was for the contribution I had made to the club. I have been involved in athletics in some form for most of my adult life, initially competing for Herne Hill Harriers and the bank I used to work for. I typically competed in the 'chase and cross country.

I soon realised that my real talents lay elsewhere and became involved in team management where I ran a British Athletics League and then the Southern Athletics League (SAL) team.

As I became older (and more rotund) I became involved with Blackheath and Bromley partly as a result of my youngest two children competing for the club, joining shortly after they did. I soon started to help run the Youth Development

League (YDL) Lower Age group team for three years reaching the final in each of those years but never quite getting to finish at the top. I have since taken over running the SAL team and have enjoyed working with some outstanding athletes, many of whom I know from supporting the YDL teams.

I also try to help support Dave Liston when coaching his middle distance group but can only look at awe at the work and commitment that others in the club give, coaches, officials and athletes. I feel that I have been rewarded in so many ways when making the small contribution I do and would urge other members to think about how they could give something back too.

Nick Swatton

Rod Harrington

The genesis of Rod's involvement with B&B was through his sons' participation in the Bees Academy. Bertie and Angus were members of Mick Jones' "off track" group from around 2009 and Rod and (wife) Isobel joined as members in 2015. After watching (and taking photos) from the side-lines for a number of seasons, Rod decided he wanted to get more involved and volunteered to help manage the junior men's squad the following season.

Rod was useful runner for his school as a teenager, but his first sporting love was for hockey, which he played most weekends for 20 years or so. He is also a VP of Blackheath Hockey Club (which coincidentally celebrated its 150th anniversary a few seasons ago). As a 16 year old Rod ran a 3:20 marathon (back in the 1980s children were allowed to enter marathons) but he was never coached or part of a club and it wasn't until middle aged spread started to take hold that he started running again. He joined Croydon Harriers and spent a number of seasons there before seeing the light and following his sons to Blackheath and Bromley. He continues to run for fitness and will occasionally be seen making up the numbers at club cross-country events.

Together with Nic Corry, over the past four seasons Rod helped unlock the potential in the junior men's team, taking them to consecutive national titles and in the 2019 season to second place in the ECCCJ – the best ever result in Europe by the clubs junior men. Next year Rod will switch over to managing the senior team, taking the baton from Pat Calnan who is retiring from team management after 25 years at the helm.

Paul Byfield

Senior Men's Winter Season

2018/19

From Hayes to Brands Hatch, back to Hayes and into deepest Kent, the Senior Men have toughed it out in all weathers and a variety of conditions, particularly in the National Championships where a Yorkshireman went back to God's own county to take on the best of the North, not single-handedly but as part of a spirited team effort. Dan Brewer reports.

Curtain raisers

The season kicked off with the usual curtain raiser: the Will Bolton Memorial Relays at Sparrows Den as six men's teams and one mixed team took part for the seniors. Some strong runs sadly left all the teams off the podium but comfortably in fourth and fifth. This prepped the team nicely for the SEAA Six Stage Road Relays at Crystal Palace as a milestone was reached with four teams successfully completing the race, as well as one vets team, and the A Team coming home in an impressive 11th. This momentum was carried through to the National Road Relays in Sutton Coldfield as the slightly weakened team produced their best performance in years to finish 24th.

Autumnal excursions

As the temperatures began to drop, the cross country season began with a trip down to deepest Kent at the Beech Grove Academy in Nonington. The team performance was disappointing as we were only fifth in the four to score and couldn't get twelve out to compete in that category. There was no time to dwell on any disappointment as a complete team competed at the SEAA XC Relays at Wormwood Scrubs to place 24th out of 42 teams. This was immediately followed

by the second Kent League at the traditional venue of Somerhill School. There was a substantial return to form with third in the four and 12 to score categories and 13 finishers. The relentless schedule continued for the hardy few in the shape of the National Cross Country Relays in Mansfield where the A Team charged through to 13th in a fine performance, with the B Team finishing 73rd out of 154 teams.

After a welcome break the next challenge was a double header with the London Cross Country Championships taking place on consecutive days in the middle of November. The former saw the four to score



Will Ruiz

Continued

team sneak into the top half in 16th out of 34 teams, and the latter was another defeat to Orion despite an improved turn out. The pace slowed down thereafter with 2 more fixtures in the calendar year in the form of the 3rd Kent League at Footscray Meadows that brought another third place in the four to score category but not enough competitors to score in the 12. The final fixture was the South of the Thames 7.5 mile Cross Country Race at Beckenham Place Park in truly horrible conditions that 10 men toughed out.

Down to business

The business end of the season began with the Kent Cross Country



Tom Desborough

Championships in the perishing Brands Hatch that continued the pattern of the Kent League as we were just short of completing a scoring 12 but placed fourth in the six to score category. Will Ruiz spearheaded the team in a battling 18th.

Major Championships South and North

Another Mob Match against Beckenham and Croydon brought defeat to the former but not the latter, but fortunes were better in the South of England Cross Country Championships as 13 men battled Parliament Hill to come 15th out of 77 teams of six, with Will Ruiz again leading the team home. This started the countdown to

the main event of the cross country season in the shape of the Nationals in Leeds but not before the team's best performance of the season in the final Kent League on home turf: third in both the four and 12 to score categories, in addition to third overall in the former category across all four fixtures. The penultimate Mob Match against SLH brought another defeat, however. This was compensated for at the National as 14 men took on the new course in glorious conditions and a wonderful backdrop. Yorkshireman Josh Schofield led the team home in 94th in his debut senior National and the team climbed to 20th out of 146 teams.

The cross country season concluded with defeat to Ranelagh in the final Mob Match but the team rallied for the final fixture of the season with a seriously impressive 10th place in the SEAA 12 Stage Relays at Milton Keynes highlighted by Will Fuller winning the first leg. Normally this would have meant one more race at the 12 Stage Relays, but it wasn't possible to get another 12 men out, ending the season on a somewhat bittersweet note. It'll only spur us on for next season, though!

*Dan Brewer, Ross Braden
and Dan Kennedy*



Richard Webb

The Junior Men and Women cross country

2018/19

Again this winter as with other winter seasons the Under 20 teams were subject to the restrictions peculiar to that age group such as lack of numbers and little by way of team results from the various events and competitions in which they competed. There were however some notable individual results and in any case they were at times available to compete at the next level, with the seniors (men and ladies). Particular mention should be made of Callum Wyatt who maintained impressive prolific form throughout the season especially in the Kent League with Theo Wood providing sterling support.

Kent League

Match 1: BBHAC had four U20's racing, two male and two female. Lewis Mills won the U20 contest and Theo Wood was 11th but with only two running, no team placing was achieved. Likewise in the girls race no team score was recorded but this didn't stop great runs from Iyata Santos, in her first cross country, winning the U20 contest, racing with the seniors. Mille Smith was an impressive 3rd.

Match 2: Three U20 men made up a scoring trio as Lewis Mills finished 2nd, Callum Myatt 4th and Theo

Wood 8th giving the team victory on the day and are now top of the league.

Match 3: Only two U20's running so no team result but good runs from Callum Myatt in 3rd and Theo Wood in 9th.

Match 4: The U20 men had two running and saw Callum Myatt take a great victory and Theo Wood finish in 8th to leave him fourth overall in the individual table.

National cross country relays

The U20 women won silver at last year's champs and this year's team kept up the high standard finishing a very strong 6th. Yasmin Austridge led off on 1, passing to Millie Smith on 2 handing to Lucy Elms on 3 finishing well in a field full of strong clubs.

The U20 men were one short of the three to make up a complete team but that didn't stop Callum Myatt flying around the undulating, well marked out course handing to the well travelled Marco Arcuri, who had automatically stepped in to team manage some of the younger age groups before his race

South of England cross country championship

Jess Keene was our only U20 lady running and did well finishing 22nd in a strong field. Lewis Mills signed off

his winter season with a solid 16th place finish, moving through the field well. Theo Wood placed 81st and Ifetobi Salako in only his second cross country race for the club finished 112th. Carlos Ohler unfortunately missed the start of the U17 race but didn't waste the opportunity to run by joining in with the U20 race, but inevitable his results didn't show up.

Kent County AA cross country championships

The U20 men had four racing and with four to score recorded a very satisfying team silver behind a strong Tonbridge AC. Lewis Mill's training is definitely paying off as he cruised to a fine silver with Charlie Davis equally impressive in 3rd. It was pleasing to see Angus Harrington back running over the country and finished well in 17th with Callum Myatt a few place back in 20th. Team silver medals for all.

Twenty year old Niamh Bridson Hubbard made a statement in her first senior race winning a brilliant silver medal for her efforts. U20 Jess Keene ran well to secure 22nd with Lorna Clowes finishing in 45th.

Paul Austridge

Cross Country Season Masters Report

2018/9

As always the Masters provided plenty of runners for the different age categories giving a reminder of the longevity of running careers that these stalwarts can maintain and that the quality of a master is reflected not just in their talent but in their capacity to maintain this well into their lifespans.

The main Masters event the Club competes in is the Kent Masters event in Dartford. An enjoyable series of 3 races involves many laps round football pitches and nearby paths. Perhaps a bit repetitive for the runners but makes for an exceptional location to watch races.

Highlights for Blackheath & Bromley were included the M40 where Alex Gibbins took the trophy back with a very close race with Robert Laing of Kent AC. Alex's finishing speed saw him break away and

win by 20 seconds. The VM40 team finished 4th, missing out on 3rd by just 9 points. Gareth Evans (10th), Luca Ercaloni (16th) and Jason Meers (40th) made up the team of 4.

The VM 50 team finished 6th, with Len Crowder finishing the highest up the rankings on 20th, closely followed by Nigel Haffendon in 25th with Steve Pairman completing the scoring team in 44th. Also competing were Nick Barber, Nick Swatton and Iain Taylor.

The VM 60 team continued their excellent record at these Championships by finishing 3rd. Con Griffin led the team home with a very impressive run in 5th with Luigi Arcuri (19th) and Rob Brown (24th) completing the team

The VM70 event saw 2 members compete, with Jon Phelan finishing in 6th followed by John Fenwick who finished in 9th.

The women's Vets team saw strong performances

from BBHAC. In the VW35 category Carole Penlington ran a very strong race to finish 3rd.

In the VW45 category Jennie Butler finished 2nd with a tremendous finish overtaking Tina Oldershaw of Tonbridge in the final straight (just after this photo was taken).

The team was 4th with Sally Haffenden finishing just 1 second outside the top 10 in 12th, and Zoe Kingsmill completing the team in 36th.

In the VW 65 event Maz Turner did the Club proud by finishing in 3rd.

The Vets also competed in other races including Kent League, Kent County Championships, South of England Champs, supplying most of team for the South of Thames Champs.

An impressive series of runs over 4 races saw Alex Gibbins win the Kent League Masters, including a first place and two seconds, with Gareth Evans second. A great double for the Club!

In addition, as has become a common theme, Vets made up the main number in the Club Championship's. Only 7 members completed all 3 Mob Matches, with 6 of these beings Vets. The Bennet Cup saw only 2 members complete all 9 events, both Vets: Luca Ercolani and Steve Hough.



Kent Masters team bunching up to ensure that they all fit in the photo

Steve Pairman

Young Athletes at the Kent Cross Country League 2018/19

Match 1 Beechgrove 13th October

The Kent league cross-country season kicked off this weekend in lovely sunshine in the Kent countryside. The Bruderhof community were our hosts, as they opened up their grounds near Canterbury for us to run, over what was a fairly flat but challenging course, with a long uphill drag mid lap.

Blackheath and Bromley vest were out in large numbers as over 70 of our young athletes turned up for the first of the four Kent league races.

The U13's 3k races were first on the timetable and the 16 girls on the start line combined well bringing the team home in second place. India Blakey, on her debut ran with great confidence placing 5th, Megan Slattery went off hard and was rewarded with a fine 8th and Tallulah Ndikanwu's hard work paid off as she finished 10th. The girls team were 2nd.

The U13 boys had 9 warming up but were struck hard as three were unable to finish. Jamie Sears ran hard finishing a solid 10th with Arthur Starvis not far behind in 16th. Josh Healy had a great debut run placing 28th followed by two more making their debuts, Harry Fage in 35th and Nathaniel Brunner

in 38th. Jasper Brooks on his first race for the club completed the squad in 54th. Archie Whitehead warmed up and was keen to go but an existing calf problem flared up and so he rightly didn't run. Oscar Witcombe was going well until a knee injury, picked up during the week, flared up making it impossible to continue. Oles Chaban in his first winter outing also suffered with an existing injury and did well to pull out before doing more damaged. The boys were 5th team

The U15 age group provided our largest numbers with 11 boys and 18 girls making for an impressive line of black vests at the start. The U15 boys teams produced some great results and finished 2nd team overall. Tom Brash, coming back to great form crossed the line in 5th with Sam Reardon 7th, Freddy Georgiou 13th and George Shaw 21st. Matt Smith had a great run placing 24th, Will Andrews was 27th and Thomas Sugden, making his club debut finished with a flourish in a creditable 31st. Good to have Jake Anthony back running for the team and finishing 39th and Ted Marston brought the team home in 45th.

The U15 girls totally dominated their race taking 9 of the top 11 spots, easily

winning the team race. English schools 800m champion Zakia Mossi powered around the 4k course winning in style with Naomi Toft and Anwen Thomas and Hanna Clark looking equally impressive in 2nd and 4th and 5th respectively.

The U17 girls also dominated their age group comfortably winning the team race over the 5k course. Ava White ran well placing 2nd, Sophie Hoare was a strong 3rd, Lucrezia Polloni a solid 4th and Jess Neal ran a gutsy race placing a great 5th.

The boys U17 team had six toe the line for their 5k effort. A great run from Cameron Swatton in 14th followed by Jake Leng in 26th, Alex Davis in 29th, Justin Strover in 33rd. Ever present Bailey Marks ran well finishing 35th and Harvey Blanden completed the squad in 41st. The team placed 5th.

Our hosts produced an interesting well marked out course and provided a BBQ and hot and cold drinks on tap, free of charge all day!

Without a girls team manger we were very fortunate to have many parents happy to help, handing out race numbers and walking the course with the athletes to help prepare them for their races. Many thanks also go

Continued

to our President Paul Byfield (normally only seen in the summer!) and past president Ken Daniel for their help in setting up and taking down the club tent that was well used throughout the blustery day.

Match 2 Somerhill 27th October

Fixture two of the 2018 Kent cross-country league was hosted by Tonbridge AC in the fabulous grounds of the schools at Somerhill. The start and finish to the course were different to previous years but the course was still a proper cross country test with challenging hills both up and down but with going underfoot very good. Great numbers of BBHAC female and male athletes racing, just falling short of the 50 mark, ensured we did well in the team races.

The U15 girls and U17 girls continue to dominate and both currently sit on the top of the table, with the U13 girls performing well, placing 3rd on the day and are now third overall.

Eight U13 boys toed the line for their 3k race and young Alex Middleton had an inspired run placing a fabulous 5th, against boys a year older. Arthur Starvis had another fine run placing

10th with Jamie Sears not far behind in 13th. Josh Healy seems to be improving in every race and finished a pleasing 17th. Franco Hillier making his club debut ran well in 39th and it was great to have Oscar Witcombe back in the squad after a short injury break, but despite still being in some pain managed to finish in 44th with great encouragement from team mate Harry Fage in 45th. Jasper Brooks completed the U13 boys squad in 53rd. The team were third on the day and are now fourth overall in the table.

The U15 boys had a 10 strong squad and were once again led home by Tom Brash crossing the line in a fantastic 4th. Sam Reardon had a solid race placing 13th, Matt Smith had a great run finishing 17th with young George Shaw just behind in 19th. Will Andrews was a great 31st and Ben Campbell was 36th. Good to see Sam Stuart back racing and finishing in 48th place with Jake Anthony 57th, Ben Healey 64th and Thomas Sugden 68th. The U15's were second on the day and remain in second overall.

The U17 boys had an eight man squad and a gutsy run from Oliver Bright on his winter debut was rewarded with a brilliant third place

finish. Peter Guy on his first race this winter also ran well finishing 12th just in front of Ben Gardiner in 13th and Cameron Swatton in 16th. Harry Fisher ran well finishing in 25th, Justin Strover was 37th, Bailey Marks 46th and Harvey Blanden 47th. The team were second on the day but is currently fourth in the table.

Half way through the league and all to play for!

Match 3 Danson Park 10th of November

Danson Park, Bexley was the venue for the third of the Kent cross country league races but unfortunately it clashed with the English schools cup regional finals and so numbers were slightly down. That said it did give others an opportunity to take advantage and produce some great performances.

The U15 boys continue to do well and are a solid 2nd in the table behind a strong Tonbridge squad. Tom Brash ran another brave race finishing well in 4th. Matt Smith and Will Andrews arguably had their best runs of the season (so far) placing 16th and 17th. Ben Campbell was a good 28th, just in front of Max Gregson in 29th. Jake Anthony was 37th, Sam Stuart 45th and Ted Marston

47th. Sam Reardon went off with the pack early on but sensibly pulled up when the ankle he turned in Mansfield the previous weekend, started to hamper him.

The U17 boys squad combined well again to consolidate their 3rd place position in the league. Joe Georgiadis had a fine run in 10th, followed by Harry Fisher, having his highest place finish to date, in 13th and Cameron Swatton, having another solid race in 15th. Justin Strover ran well placing 22nd, Jake Leng was 28th, Alex Davis 34th and ever present Bailey Marks 38th.

Six U13 boys on the start line with Arthur Starvis bringing them home in a great 11th, with Jamie Sears in 15th and Josh Healy in a good 19th. Despite Harry Fage only arriving with minutes to spare, having dashed from the Bromley primary school races at Crystal Palace, he was still able to finish high up in 37th. Nathaniel Brunner had another consistent run in 43rd as did Jasper Brooks in 50th. The team were 4th on the day and currently sit fifth in the table.

More solid runs from the U15 and U17 girls see them continue to dominate the Kent league with the U13 girls third in their league.

Match 4 Footscray 24th November

BBHAC young athletes completed the Kent league cross country season at an overcast Foots Cray Meadows, running the last of the four fixtures. Many prizes, individual and team were on offer, (including our own internal "Club Champs") and our athletes finished the day with two team victories, five teams in the top three and had six athletes finish in the top three individually.

The U15 girls again dominated packing the top end finishers. A great run from Daniella Harper saw her finish in 2nd for her highest place finish of the season and this was good enough to finish fourth in the individual overall table (IOT). Olivia Berry had her highest placing in a great 3rd, finishing fifth IOT. Ellie Dolby continued her great season with a 4th place finish on the day completing the season in third IOT. Hanna Clark was spiked in the foot in last weeks LYG and was slightly hindered at Foots Cray but still managed a respectable 7th and this combined with the three other strong races, placed her second in the individual overall table. Heidi Forsyth, Ella Deighton and Amelie Willars all competed

in all four Kent league races and were rewarded with great overall positions of 8th, 14th and 24th. The squad had a very consistent season with great depth of athletes and were well worthy winners of the Kent league team title.

The U17 girls were equally as impressive dominating the season and picking up the Kent league title and team trophy. Ellie Osmond added another great 2nd on the day to see her lift the individual title. Jess Neal, despite stumbling early on, recovered well to finish strong, placing 3rd and securing second in IOT. Zoe White was rewarded for her consistency with third overall after placing a fine 5th on the day.

The U15 boys had good numbers running, despite some of them being up late the night before, representing our young athletes at the annual Club dinner. They were led home by the focused Tom Brash, pushing hard from the gun but tired towards the finish but still crossing the line in a solid 5th place and impressively placing him 4th in the IOT. Sam Reardon is clearly back fit and in form after a recent ankle injury and ran well closing in on Tom at the finish, placing 6th on the day. Matt Smith completed his fourth Kent

Continued

league placing a strong 19th and tenth overall. Year young George Shaw ran a sensible, determined race finishing well just behind Matt in 21st. Returning to form after an injury break, Max Gregson is firmly getting back to business with a solid run in 23rd and just behind was the consistent and ever reliable Will Andrews finishing 25th but placing very high up in 11th individually. Another regular Jake Anthony completed the series in 32nd and this was good enough to see him placed a fine 17th overall in the IOT. Ted Marston had a great run in 35th and good to see Sam Stuart cross the line, placing 40th. The fantastic squad of U15 boys combined well to secure second place in the Kent team challenge, a great result against a very strong Tonbridge side and many strong Kent clubs.

The U17 boys went into the last fixture in 3rd place overall but were good enough on the day to jump up to second, again behind a strong Tonbridge but in front of rivals Invicta East Kent AC. Matthew Francis, in his first Kent league race looked strong placing a fabulous 5th. Cameron Swatton finished well to claim 12th on the day and seventh individual, rewarded for competing in all

four KL races. Joe Georgiadis was a good 13th, and just behind in 15th Justin Strover had his best run of the winter and saw him end up 15th in the IOT, an impressive result. Alex Davis was 16th and Jake Ieng 20th. Bailey Marks completed the series with a 34th finish but pleasing 18th in the IOT.

The U13 girls finished the series with a third team placing. Amie Gould had her best run of the season finish well in 6th, just in front of Carys Firth in 7th but having done all four races was high up the individual table in a great 4th. Cara Gould, Aime's sister kept the BBHAC pressure on placing 8th and a strong starting Emily Deveney finished 9th, her best finish of the year. SP Maher matched her best run of the season crossing the line in 22nd and placing a good 17th in the IOT. Olivia Magee Brown was rewarded for her consistent season placing 25th on the day and 15th overall.

The U13 boys were led home by Arthur Starvis in 14th giving him a fine 7th in the IOT. Josh Healy was a great 17th on the day placing him 12th overall and Jamie Sears completed his series in 26th despite struggling with his breathing mid race, but did well to recover and finish the season in a fine 10th overall. Nathaniel Brunner started off strong and finished well in 34th. Archie Whitehead was keen and ready to run but made the decision not to race due to sickness - cross country is hard enough without feeling ill before the race. The team placed 5th team against some very strong Kent clubs.

Within this final Kent League race we incorporated our own "BBHAC Club Championships" and so all our athletes placing BBHAC 1, 2 and 3 were presented with club Gold, Silver and Bronze medals.

Paul Austridge

	Gold	Silver	Bronze
U13 boys	Arthur Starvis	Josh Healy	Jamie Sears
U13 girls	Amie Gould	Carys Firth	Cara Gould
U15 boys	Tom Brash	Sam Reardon	Matt Smith
U15 girls	Daniella Harper	Olivia Berry	Ellie Dolby
U17 boys	Matthew Francis	Cameron Swatton	Joe Georgiadis
U17 girls	Ellie Osmond	Jess Neal	Zoe White

The Schools Cross Country Championships

2018/19

Kent Schools Cross Country Championship 19th January 2019

The keenly awaited Kent schools XC Championship was once again held at the Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover but this year the weather was sunny and very cold replacing last year's constant rain and cold! The reward for running well at the "schools" is a county vest and possible selection for the prestigious English School XC Champs. The top 4 finishers at Dover would automatically guarantee their ESAA team spot, so competition was always going to be fierce.

Teams of eight will ultimately be selected to represent Kent in the English Schools XC Champs (ESAA) but in the mean time many of the top finishers will be invited to race in the up coming schools inter counties match, where the top two Kent finishers (not already qualified) will guarantee their ESAA team place. The course was a well marked out grass circuit with a challenging up hill drag and a few undulations, excellent for spectators!

Over 100 athletes toed the line in the junior girls (school years 8-9) 3.1k race with eleven being Blackheath and Bromley HAC athletes. Hanna Clark had a great run finishing 7th as did year 8 Carys Firth closing in a great 10th. Cameron Kelly Gordon was 18th, Isabella Louth a solid 20th and Olivia Wauters 25th. International race Walker Abigail Smith was 31st, Olivia Magee Brown

37th and SP Maher 41st. Next home for the Bromley team was Amelie Willars in 48th followed by Libby Whyte in 61st and Sian Smith in 67th.

Nine BBHAC boys lined up for the junior boys 4k race. Matt Smith showed early form as a talented U13 before suffering a nasty ankle injury, but has persevered with his rehab and was rewarded for his efforts with a stunning run placing 3rd in a talented field, securing automatic selection for the ESAA. George Shaw was equally impressive working hard right through the finish line placing a pleasing 6th and must be in with a great chance of selection. Arthur Starvis continues to perform well and finished 35th, with Ted Marston in 54th just in front of Thomas Sugden in 55th. Harry Burgess crossed the line in 69th, Nathaniel Brunner was 73rd whilst club sprinter Adam Islam Medeaux, not quite used to the distance looked comfortable in 100th. Race walker and club hurdler Jonny Ellerton finished in 107th completing the Bromley schools squad.

BBHAC Inter girls (yrs 10-11) are a very strong age group so no surprise to see 6 in the top 14. Morgan Squibb in 3rd and Jess Neal in 4th both ran well enough to secure automatic selection and Ellie Dolby in 6th and Daniella Harper in 8th must be in with a great chance having both performed well. Zoe White was a strong 13th with Olivia Berry just behind in 14th. Ella Deighton finished

in 21st, Emily Davis 29th and Kelsey Pullin 31st completing the strong squad.

Next up were the Inter boys and Tom Brash ran sensibly over the 6k course timing his efforts well, finishing strong in 5th, knocking on the Kent team's door. Jake Leng ran well crossing the line in 27th and it was good to see Will Andrews running well again finishing with pace in 34th.

We had no senior girls racing and only two senior boys venturing out over the 7k course with Joe Georgiadis placing 23rd and Cameron Swatton 28th.

The KSAA gives an opportunity for year 7 athletes to race but although they are too young to compete at the ESAA they do get an early opportunity of representing Kent. The top 15 or so being rewarded with a Kent call up, competition was going to be tough, in fields of well over 100 athletes. In the girls 2.5k race Tallulah Ndikanwu ran really well pacing 6th as did Amber Cockburn finishing high up in 10th and Islay Pearson was 51st. In the boys 3k race Josh Healy led the boys home with a great run in 18th, Jasper Brooks was 20th, Harry Fage had a determined run and finished 38th and club pole vault record holder Finn Kitteridge used the opportunity to put in a hard training run, placed 112th.

Some of our athletes go to school in neighbouring counties and so contest their respective titles.

Continued

English Schools Cross Country Championships 16th March 2019

The 2019 English Schools' Cross Country Championships returned to the historic estate of Temple Newsam, Leeds, West Yorkshire one year on from the successful 2018 championships. Last year's bitterly cold wind and snow showers were replaced by constant rain but once again the course was interesting and well marked out.

All forty-six English Counties select their best eight athletes (junior, inter, senior boys and girls) for the honour of being the best in the country, so the competition is always fierce and the fields large. Blackheath and Bromley Harriers had nineteen athletes selected for their counties.

First race of the day was the inter girls running 3.7k. Naomi Toft (coach Phil Kissi) led the BB athletes in with a fantastic run, placing 15th in her first year in the age group. Annie Thomas (Phil Kissi), also in her first year and fresh for winning team gold at the National XC ran really well finishing 37th. National indoor 800m champion Zakia Mossi (Phil Kissi) and also a year young placed a fine 56th running for Middlesex. Morgan Squibb (Andy Frankish) put recent injury troubles behind her as she placed a solid 75th. Ellie Dolby (Andy Frankish) another National XC team gold medallist and first year, placed 172nd. Daniella Harper (Jay

Galley) making her English schools debut finished just inside the top 200 in 197th and Jess Neal (Andy Frankish) running for Kent placed 235th.

The junior boys running over a 4.1k course were next up and BBHAC had two athletes making their English Schools debuts representing Kent. Matthew Smith (Jay Galley) had a strong run placing 97th and George Shaw (Mick Jones) ran a solid race placing 123rd.

The junior girls had to tackle a 3.7k circuit and with England vests up for grabs, competition was fierce. This year all top ten athletes (in juniors and inters races) were rewarded with an England call up and Lara Mannes (Phil Kissi) already a National team winner, ran superbly from gun to finish, crossing the line in 9th, securing her international call up. Then followed a visit to the international tent to collect the England running kit to wear next weekend in the Home International against Wales, Scotland and Ireland schools in Dublin. Well done Lara. Hannah Clark (Andy Frankish) continued her great winter season, including National XC team gold, posted her highest English schools placing, in a great 52nd. Carys Firth (Andy Frankish) ran well at the Kent schools to get selected for the Kent team despite being a first year and she would have enjoyed her first experience of a English schools champs and did well finishing 225th.

The inter boys had a 5.2k circuit to negotiate and London's Joel Rooney (Phil Kissi) ran well placing 145th. Oliver Bright (Nigel Stickings) placed 7th two years ago earning himself an England vest and would have been looking to be in the mix again this year but didn't seem to run with his normal freedom and his 169th suggested he wasn't able to run on full throttle.

The senior girls ran over a challenging 4.1k course and two of the London schools team were BBHAC girls. Sophie Hoare (coach Phil Kissi), in her first year in the senior age group went off in normal determined fashion and held on well to secure a brilliant top ten finish placing an impressive 9th. Millie Smith (coach Andy Frankish) in her fifth and final English schools cross country champs ran well placing a fine 56th.

Last race of the day was the senior boys running a 6.7k circuit on a muddy, well trodden course. First BB home was Theo Wood (coach Dave Liston) placing over twenty higher than last year crossing the line in 117th. Matthew Francis (coach Nigel Stickings) back running after a short injury enforced break ran solidly finishing 153rd and Harry Fisher (coach Dave Liston) running in the gold colours of Surrey placed a good 178th in his first English schools and running a year young.

Paul Austridge

South of England Cross Country Championships 2019...

The Young Athletes

The South of England Cross Country Championships were back at Parliament Hill, Hampstead Heath for 2019, after last seasons difficult fixture at Stanmer Park, Brighton, where a few clubs boycotted the event for various reasons.

This once highly regarded meeting is slowly finding its feet again with a now first class results service and having the benefit of one of the finest cross country courses available.

Blackheath and Bromley HAC numbers were down and this reflected in the results with five age groups unable to field enough athletes to score in the team competition. However, we did have three boys and three girls make the top 20 with Oliver Bright and Tom Brash posting fine top 10 performances.

The U13 girls had good numbers running and a great run from Megan Slattery saw her cross the line in 59th with Carys Firth in 65th and Gabby Martin just behind in 69th. Emily Deveney was 149th, Amber Cockburn 173rd and SP Maher 187th. Libby Whyte finished in 246th, with Katie Brash 256th and Madeleine Marston rounding off in 300th. The girl's team was 12th out of 39 complete teams.

Disappointingly the U13 boys only had two brave souls racing but the tough two of Nathaniel Brunner and Oles Chaban coped well over the tough course finishing 227th and 269th in a field of 330 young athletes.

The U15 girls finished the day with the highest team placing, securing 7th from the 34 complete club teams. Annie Thomas had a great run and looked strong in the run in, crossing the line in 17th with Naomi Toft just a few seconds behind and a great 20th place. Lily Meers ran well finishing in 70th with Hannah Clark in 87th, Cameron Kelly Gordon was 123rd, Olivia Wauters 159th and Isabella Louth in 167th. Abigail Smith was 229th and completing the squad was Amelie Willars in 250th.

The U15 boys had the biggest turn out on the day with 10 athletes on the starting line and were led home by Tom Brash having another great race finishing in 10th. Freddy Georgiou was second BBHAC home in 89th with Matt Smith 97th, George Shaw 121st and Will Andrews 142nd. Jake Anthony was 185th, Thomas Sugden 195th and Ted Marston 209th. Sam Reardon was going well but had to pull out with a recurring leg problem, as did Sam Stuart, unfortunately for both the problem occurred at the furthest point of the course and so meant a slow, cold walk back to the BB tent. The team's effort were worthy of an 11th place team finish with 33 teams fielding complete squad.

The U17 women had a team of four start the race with Sophie Hoare having a great run placing 11th. Zoe White paced 56th and Ellie Osmond, despite falling three times in the difficult ground conditions,

did well placing 67th. Jess Neal is having a great season but will be disappointed to have had to pull out with a tight hamstring mid race, but this was a wise decision as continuing would surely have caused more damage.

The U17 boys 6K race was meant to be made up of a small lap and a large lap but unfortunately the first small lap was bypassed and somehow the field meandered their way around a long loop, bringing themselves back on track to complete the small loop at the end of the race! Not ideal, but as all were running the same course the result stood. This must have been unsettling for the leading group but they did well to continue racing and we saw an exciting finish with just seconds separating the top 7 athletes. Great to see our own Ollie Bright up with the pack battling it out securing a fine 7th place finish. Next up for BBHAC were Joel Rooney placing 64th and Alex Davis 138th. Only three runners meant no team result.

Lewis Mills signed off his winter season with a solid 16th place finish, moving through the field well. Theo Wood placed 81st and Ifetobi Salako in only his second cross country race for the club finished 112th. Carlos Ohler unfortunately missed the start of the U17 race but didn't waste the opportunity to run by joining in with the U20 race, but inevitably his results didn't show up.

Paul Austridge

National Road Relay Championships, Sutton Park 6th October 2018...

The Young Athletes

Over 30 Blackheath and Bromley HAC young athletes braved the weather and long journey time to take part in the 2018 version of the National Road Relay Championship. Sutton Park, Birmingham is a fantastic setting for this annual event but the rain and mist took the edge of this lovely part of Britain. Over the years the English Road Running Association has tinkered with this event for various reasons with some good result and others not so popular, such as both boys and girls racing simultaneously. This can often be difficult to follow but this year's initiative was to stream live footage of the races including a big screen near the finish and four cameras at various points throughout the course. Unfortunately only two cameras were working, possibly due to the poor weather conditions but it is a great addition to these National champs.

First up were the U13 boys and the team battled well to finish a respectable 22nd in a field of 66 teams. Arthur Starvis brought the team home in 29th on the first leg handing over to Josh Healey, making his National Championship, who managed to claw back 6 places passing to Jamie Sears running well, taking a further place. Archie Whitehead ran a strong leg in the B team despite pulling his calf slightly. The U13 girls team were 24th in a field of 47.

The U15 boys trio running the three 3.8k legs were exactly the same three from the 2017 team and they made a massive improvement on last year's performance placing a fantastic 6th in a very strong age group. Sam Reardon on leg 1 ran a 30 second personal best in finishing 12th, handing to Tom Brash, who improved his best by 45 seconds racing the team into a superb 4th. Freddy Georgiou then had the tough last leg to take on and smashed his best time, slicing nearly 1minute 30 seconds off and crossing the line in a very impressive 6th place. The B team also enjoyed success and big PBs from George Shaw on leg one, Matthew Smith on two and Alessio Tutt on three combining well to finish a creditable 30th place, higher than the A team finished the previous year. Will Andrew set off on leg 1 for the C team and ran a fast time on the most competitive leg.

The U15 girls had two full teams racing and did well crossing the line in 14th and 59th.

Four U17 boys ran making up one full team that finished 35th and were led out by Joe Georgiadis on 1 running a big PB, Cameron Swatton on 2 also posting a great new PB and brought home by National debutant Harry Fisher. Bailey Marks improved his best by exactly a minute running a fast leg in the incomplete B team.

The U17 girls have a strong squad this year and had two teams finish in the top twenty, with the A team a brilliant 5th place and the B team an impressive 17th.

Birmingham is a good 2½ to 3 hour drive (traffic permitting) so to have so many young athletes and parents there is fantastic and many thanks go to Paul and Laura Shaw who once again borrowed and drove the minibus up, taking most of the boys squad with them. The day was made a lot more comfortable having the large BBHAC tent on site and this is due to huge efforts from PP Cordell and coach and VP Andy Frankish. Also good to see past presidents Bill Foster and Ian Wilson there supporting the event. Thanks also to Paul Brash for his help in team managing all the boys.

Paul Austridge

The 2018 National Cross Country Relays

Berry Hill Park, Mansfield was once again the perfect setting for 2018 National Cross Country Relays and having won many age group titles over the last few years year, BB's hopes were high. These relays offer a great opportunity for clubs to compete in a team format, in an otherwise individual sport. Clubs are restricted to a maximum of three teams per age group and in some age groups we could easily field up to five teams if allowed, so competition is fierce, however in others age groups we fail to have one team on the starting line!

Our U15 girls is the largest and most competitive squad which has dominated the age group winning gold and silver in 2016 and 2017, and so it was no surprise to see all three of our teams feature high up the field. Unfortunately no medals this year but the A team of Annie Thomas, Naomi Toft and Zakia Mossi were a high 5, the B team of Lara Mannes, Hannah Clark and Kate Price 10th and impressively the C team of Ellie Dolby, Daniella Harper and Olivia Berry were 19th in front of all the other B teams. To put that into perspective 96 teams were competing. A very large and talented age group indeed.

The U15 boys made a great team effort with Sam Reardon powering off on leg 1, passing to the in-form Tom Brash knocking 30 seconds off last years time, giving Freddy Georgiou the job of bringing the team home in a very solid 7th place. The B team of Will Andrews running 50 seconds quicker than 2017, George Shaw and Matt Smith placed 47th and Jake Anthony had a great leg in the incomplete C team. 93 teams finished.

The U13 girls trio of India Blakey, Biancamaria Polloni and Gabby Martin were a good 14th. The B team three of Carys Firth and sisters Cara and Amie Gould

were 40th and making up an incomplete C team were Alexia Araujo and Olivia Magee-Brown. The U13 boys have been unlucky with a few injury problems lately and were unable to field a team.

The U17 girls made up for last year's disappointment of not recording a time, by storming around the 2.5ks route and crossing the line in second place winning a fabulous silver medal. Newly crowned World Biathle relay champion Morgan Squibb on 1, Sophie Hoare on 2 and Ava White on 3 made up the A team while the B team featured Jess Neal on 1, Amy Miller on 2 and Lucrezia Polloni on 3 combined fantastically finishing an impressive 8th. The C team of Ellie Osmond, Emily Davis and Zoe White were 35th.

The U17 boys had three great teams and the A team of former National XC relay champion Peter Guy on the first leg, Matthew Francis on two and Oliver Bright on three combining well to finish 11th. The B team of Ben Gardiner on 1, Cameron Swatton running 25 seconds quicker than last year on 2 and another former Nation XC relay champion Joe Georgiadis on 3 ran well finishing 32nd. The C team were 54th and saw Harry Fisher lead them off with

Continued

National Cross Country Championships

2019

Robert Suckling taking leg 2 and Bailey Marks bringing the team home on the glory leg. Harvey Blanden made up an incomplete team but ran hard at his second Nation XC champs.

Many thanks must go to all the parents who travelled many miles to get to Mansfield and especially to Paul Brash who drove a minibus full of teenage boys listening to teenage music, a real joy! Thanks also go to Nick Swatton, Nigel Stickings, Paul Brash, Andy Frankish, Richard White, Tony Dolby and Marco for team managing on the day, ensuring correct numbers and timing chips were issued and that athletes arrived at the start on time.

Our president, Paul Byfield is having a great presidential year and spent another long day on club duty arriving on site before 9am putting up the tent along with ever present Dave Cordell and Ken Daniel. Track and field based President Paul must be having a culture shock but has thrown himself into the deep end, getting full stuck in. Well done Mr President.

Paul Austridge

The 2019 National Cross Country Championships were held in the magnificent grounds of Harewood House, Leeds, West Yorkshire. "The National" is the highlight of the winter season and this year entries were in the region of 9000 athletes. The well marked out course ensured proper cross country running over undulations, up steep hills, down sharp descents and all run over the 'Capability Brown' landscaped grounds below the imposing Harewood House.

Having spent the previous evening locally in Garforth, relaxing, swimming and eating our 60 plus young athletes and supporters headed to Harewood House where we were greeted by low mist but relatively mild weather, before the sun broke through to produce a lovely spring / summer like day. PP's Dave Cordell and Ken Daniel were first on site and chose a perfect spot to pitch the club tent. We were all set for a fantastic days racing.

First race of the day was the U17 girls running 5k and Sophie Hoare rose to the challenge producing another fine run placing high up in 13th. Amy Miller had a strong run finishing 56th, with Jess Neal working hard in 74th and Zoe White completing

the four to score squad in 179th. Niamh Milmo was part of the team support as they finished tenth team overall.

This year BBHAC awarded "performance of the day" National commemorative T-shirts in each age group, not necessarily to the highest placing athlete but recognising great individual performances. Sophie collected the U17 girl T-shirt.

The next race saw the U15 boys race over a 4k course. Tom Brash continued his fine season, posting another top 20 National finish, crossing the line in an impressive 16th, despite turning his ankle during the race. Freddy Georgiou had his best run of the winter to finish high up in 38th, winning himself the "performance of the day" t-shirt. It was great to see Sam Reardon back running injury free again and finishing well in 74th along with a strong run from Matt Smith in 92nd completing the scoring team, placing a fantastic 4th out of 35th complete teams. The U15's were backed up well by George Shaw running strong in 138th, Will Andrews looked good for 201st just in front of Alessio Tutt, who had pushed on from the gun and finished 203rd. Nick Paddington had a good run placing 228th and Jake Anthony completed the strong squad crossing the line in 260th.



The U15 girls receiving their medals and trophy

The U13 girls had a tough 3k to contend with and they were led home by another great run from Carys Firth in 87th, Gabriella Martin looked good in 114th closely followed by Emily Deveney in 116th having her best run of the winter, earning her “the T shirt”. Olivia Magee Brown ran well for 221st, with SP Maher placing 264th and Katie Brash looking strong at the finish in 366th. The team was 17th in a field of 41 teams.

BBHAC's biggest squad of the day was the U17 boys and they combined well to finish 7th team overall. Ollie Bright committed from the start and went with a breakaway pack full of quality athletes and ran superbly to finish a high 12th. Joel Rooney had a very strong run finishing an impressive 70th and Joe Georgiadis showed great form placing well in 83rd earning him “performance of the day”.

Matthew Francis' presence was a welcome sight as he returns from injury and should be satisfied with a top 100 finish placing 98th. Harry Fisher proved his talent finishing exactly 100th. A great run from Alex Davis in 132nd just in front of Cameron Swatton in 135th followed by a shoeless Ben Gardiner in 160th

and Jake Leng running well in 162nd. Justin Strover ran hard to dip under 200, placing 195th and Bailey Marks recorded a quarter of a century finishing bang on 250th. Harvey Blanden nursing a sore heel did well to complete the squad's effort with a 262nd finish.

Only three U13 boys toed the line for their 3k run out, but with four to score weren't able to record a team position. However, Ryen Rennie in a double debut, looked good finishing 264th in not only his first National but also his first race for Blackheath and Bromley. It was interesting to note that Ryen at 11yrs still has two more years in this age group. Oles Chaban in his second National crossed the line in 350th. Archie



The U17 boys team. It's 11 of the 12 that ran, Joel Rooney was missing from photo but had a fantastic run

Continued

Whitehead, just back from injury went off well but was unfortunately struck down again at the furthest point of the course, making for a long slow return to the club tent, but I'm sure Archie will return stronger.

Our under 15 girls had a big squad and this ultimately proved decisive as they won team gold ahead of 38 other clubs. Annie Thomas ran superbly placing an impressive 19th with Lara Mannes just behind having an equally impressive run in 21st. Hannah Clark continued her fine season placing 57th and ever present Ellie Dolby completed the scoring four in 65th making it Ellie's third Team National gold medal. Lily Meers had her best run of the winter earning her the prize T-shirt, placing 72nd. Isabella Louth ran well in 188th, Olivia Wauters worked well finishing 193rd and Amelie Willars looked strong at the finish placing 263rd. Kelsey Pullin just dipped under 300 in 299th and Abbie Smith was 307th.

Daniella Harper was going well but worryingly collapsed at a fairly remote part of the course. Fortunately for all, PP Chris Haines was nearby and saw Daniella fall. Chris was able to quickly call for assist and this arrived fairly swiftly. Luckily, also on hand were PP Steve Cluney and our

own former GB hurdler Sue Cluney, who kindly jumped in the medical car and stayed with Daniella until she had recovered. Heidi Forsyth, recovering from a recent injury was also present giving her teammates support.

Two laps of the circuits making up 6k was the task ahead for the U20 women. All National fields are packed with quality and this one was no exception as the junior women powered over the course and first home for the club was Yasmin Austridge finishing well in 26th, followed by University teammate Jess Keene in 34th. Mille smith had a great run placing 69th and it was good to have Amy Leach back in the team finishing a high 79th. Collectively these team results were good enough to secure fourth only a few points off collecting bronze. Yasmin's run earned her the commemorative T-shirt.

Back at the hotel we had arranged a video link for a message from the president but a technical difficulty let us down. However, at dinner we were joined by many Past Presidents, Vice Presidents and senior members of the club who have all, without exception been quality athletes (back in the day!). Present were PP John Baldwin - GB international and top 20

National finisher, PP Margaret Baldwin - Olympian (Munich 1972 - 800m) and National winner, PP Bill Foster - GB international and 2:15 marathon, PP Chris Haines - 2:24 marathon and now club handicapper, PP Tim Soutar-Hong Kong International, 2:24 marathon, team manager and driver of club house redevelopment among many other jobs, Ken Daniel - GB International (so he tells me and currently the fourth fastest in his family), PP Mike Peel - multi London marathon racer with best of 2:40 and our web master. PP Mike Mahoney - 400m runner and coach and Jan Mahoney - former Welsh senior 400m champion), PP Steve Cluney - huge talent range from 2min 800m to 2:40 marathon and club hurdle coach. Sue Cluney (coached by Steve) - GB internationals hurdler (best time of 57.79 over the 400m hurdles) and PP Dave Cordell who once again transported the tent from Bromley to Leeds, then 1mile over bumpy heavy going grass and back again. Dave has finally and rightly hung up his trolley for the last time as the pain endured through his toughest marathon was slightly less than putting the tent up this year! (Any offers to help with the tent will be greatly appreciated).

Paul Austridge

The Bennett Cup Season

2018/19

This season's Bennett Cup was won by Luca Ercolani in stealthy and convincing fashion, maintaining a leading position in the handicap over the rest of the field. Although this was not a one horse race the eventual winner effectively had a clear run towards winning the Bennett Cup, maintaining good form and strengthening his position over the nearest challengers from one event to the next.

The early running was made by Joseph Georgiades who then dropped back and a pack of runners then vied for position in the next few events. Two of these Steve Evenden and Paul Kerekgyarto emerged as front runners and rivals, exchanging places and by the end of 6 events looking likely to pull clear of the rest of the leading

pack. Paul indeed was staging a spirited defence of his title as cup-holder and was potentially heading for the distinction of being the first Bennett Cup holder to retain the trophy in the year after winning it.

Other possible contenders included Bailey Marks (leader after four events), Tom Desborough and for now the dark horse Luca Ercolani who though not yet in one of the top places was still in touch with them and slowly working his way up the leader-board, moving into third place just 11 points behind the leader after the seventh event, the SLH mob match who was by now Steve Evenden.

Luca's timing thereafter was perfect. An impressive finish of 6th place against Ranelagh Harriers' finest in March (being the first BH runner to finish) and an impressive haul of 57 points in the handicap

hoisted him into first place overall with a comfortable 15 point margin over Steve Hough.

Paul Kerekgyarto's and Steve Evenden's challenges receded after missing crucial events, and both of them missed the closing event and with it the chance to mount their own final challenge for the cup. However they did not lose much ground as others in the leading pack were also absent from the Closing 5 at which only 9 runners finished. With such names from the leading pack also absent the way was open for Luca to push home his advantage and he duly did so, again turning in a strong performance and maintaining his lead over the only remaining challenger Steve Hough. So the cup went this season to Luca.

His total of 449 points was made up of a consistent range



Continued

of scores ranging from 35 points to 57 and whilst not picking up any awards over the course of the season he scored over 50 points in 6 of the 9 events most of which were attained in the second half of the season. Second place overall went to Steve Hough who like Luca moved steadily up the leader board in the second half of the season and a late burst in the Closing 5 gave Jason Short third place, a reward for being one of the few turning up for that event.

One of the worrying features of this season was the noticeably small fields competing in events. In the second two mob matches (SLH and Ranelagh) the numbers running for Blackheath were 14 and 15 respectively. As said before only 9 competed in the Closing 5, and it seemed as if the field had collapsed to allow Luca a clear home run to the finish. It seemed in Grand National terms a bit like Becher's Brook in the 1967 race.

More worrying though was the apparent lack of depth in the top of the field against the opposition. In the Orion match that was noticeably a solid block of the opposition who finished in places 11-16 although there was enough of a Blackheath presence in the top 20 places; however things got considerably worse against Ranelagh where only one Heathen finished in the

top 10, and then against SLH with only 6 out of the top 20, only two of whom were not vets so there was a dearth of youth here. Perhaps the pull of the Marathon had something to do with this, claiming the attention of runners elsewhere.

Not surprisingly all three mob matches were lost: Orion by a relatively tight margin of 381 to 439, SLH by 90 to 211 and Ranelagh by a far more overwhelming 90 to 310.

During the course of the season the fastest times for various distances were for 10 miles 1.00.02 for the men, run by Dan Kennedy, and 1.13.42 for the women by Amy Leach; for 7 ½ miles 46.06 Dan Kennedy (men) 56.44 Jane Bradshaw (women); 10km 39.05 Alex Gibbins (men) 44.22 Jennie Butler (women); 5 miles 25.01 Dan Marks, and 32.55 Jennie Butler.

The season included the major cross country club championships which for the men were won by Callum Myatt in the 5 miles (both senior and Junior Men), Alex Gibbins in the 10km, Peter Tucker in the 7½ miles and Luca Ercolani in the 10 miles. In the ladies' championships the winners were Jane Bradshaw in the 5 mile, 10km and 7 ½ miles, and Jennie Butler in the 10 miles. It was another memorable season for Jane Bradshaw who followed up on her performance of last winter even being in the lead pack for the Bennett Cup

despite missing the last three events.

As to the statistics of the competition, 85 athletes took part (75 men and boys and 10 women and girls with 266 total performances. The ages of the runners ranged from the oldest 70 (Jim Phelan) to the youngest 15 (Bailey Marks, Harvey Blandon Oliver Bright, Tom Brash, Jake Leng, Morgan Squib and Bethany Pantan). The biggest turnout of Blackheath Harriers of any event was 48 for the Will Bolton Relays with the smallest being 9 for the Closing 5.

Of those 85 taking part in at least one race 32 were under 40 years old (37% of competitors). Of these runners 18 were under 20 years old, that is less than a fifth of all competitors. However it could be argued that of these most, 16 out of 18, ran in only one or two events so perhaps cross country is still not attractive enough amongst the younger members and even less so in the 20s and 30s. Reflecting the age of the cup winner the age range with most participants was the 40-49s.

Of the 85 competitors taking part this season only 2 runners did all 9 events and 56¼ miles over six months, with only one completing 8 events. Only 13 completed 5 events or more and nearly 70% of all runners completed no more than 2.

Wilf Orton

Robert Burns and the theme of equality

Burns Night Supper January 2019

This reflection was given as a comment on two poems of Robert Burns read by myself at the club's annual Burns Night on 25th January 2019 in which the theme of equality was explored together with Burns's attitude towards it.

"Kind hearts are more than coronets, and simple faith than Norman blood...". Well not actually Robert Burns is it, but (does anyone know?) Alfred Lord Tennyson in his poem "Lady Clara Vere de Vere", extolling the supremacy of good human qualities over privilege and title.

For those who don't know the film for which that line gave its name (Kind hearts and Coronets, the famous Ealing studios black comedy), it concerns a young man's quest for revenge against the family who deprived him of his birth right, the title to a dukedom, by murdering all those who stand between him and the title. A black comedy if ever there was one!

In the course of achieving this he meets one of his intended victims and through him is introduced his wife, a graceful and noble lady, who, only related to the family by marriage, does not have their mindset or arrogance, and quotes these lines to emphasise what true nobility should be and how far short of the mark her new family is. So with Robert Burns who throughout his poetic career was quick

to expound the principles of equality and the rights of man. He would as Andrew Marr wrote consistently show sympathy for the poor and humble, and contempt for those with unmerited privileges, or whose personalities reflected arrogance and contempt.

Take for instance, some lines which are worth hearing to emphasise the points made... (from "A man's a man for all that")

*Is there for honest Poverty, That
hings his head, an' a' that; The
coward slave-we pass him by, We
dare be poor for a' that!*

*Gie fools their silks, and knaves
their wine; A Man's a Man for a'
that: The honest man, tho' e'er sae
poor, Is king o' men for a' that.*

*Ye see yon fledgling, ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his
word, He's but a fool for a' that:*

*A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that; But
an honest man's aboon his might,
Gude faith, he maunna fa' that!*

From this we see that Burns has no time for ceremony and is no deferential crony sucking up to a golden idol which has feet of clay. What seems beyond doubt is that Burns was influenced by Thomas Paine's The Rights of Man, both of them dealing with idea of liberty, equality and universal human rights. This was the song chosen to be sung at the opening of the devolved Scottish Parliament in 1999.

But it would be a mistake to assume that what Burns was

advocating was the downfall of the social order, the undermining of the dignity of class, or the propensity to 'cock a snook' at nobility, without suggesting a better way of living. Burns could easily have joined the ranks of the mindless iconoclasts, the scoffers and sixpenny unlearned demagogues who only want to smash the system.

And what would there be in its place? Are all to be lifted up at the expense of the privileged few, or are we all to be brought low so that all is mediocracy, ignorance and savagery? And is that new order to be dominated by the male sex with its gothic coarseness, free of a former yoke and yet a slave to darkness and destruction like the vandals of old set on a course of bringing down civilisation?

No, somewhere along the road Burns seems to have experienced an alteration in his life's path from compulsive revolutionary to pragmatic visionary by the simple course of taking a lesson in gentleness from the fairer sex, and of noble compassion from certain unorthodox members of the Scottish aristocracy.

This shift in direction is actually well emphasised in one of Burns's more famous poems 'To a Louse', about the infiltrations of a small parasitic insect into the hair and bonnet worn by a young woman in church. In this poem Burns would seem to be having a laugh at the young lady's expense as the louse invades

Continued

her carefully coiffured hair and tries to undermine her dignity, a real dig at the vanity of the fairer sex and the narcissism which prizes outward appearance over inward integrity. Any radical would be having a field day over deflated pride here.

The poem is known for its most famous line, "*O wad some power the giftie gie us to see oursels as ithers see us*" (Oh, would some Power give us the gift to see ourselves as others see us! It would from many a blunder free us, And foolish notion.). From this is derived the most obvious meaning that we are all equal prey, and that we would be disabused of our pretensions if we were to see ourselves through each other's eyes, and so be humbled by reality.

However it can be open to a variety of interpretations, for as we read down the lines Burns is actually condemning the louse for being a nuisance, for invading the dignity of a perfectly decent and innocent woman who for all we know is merely out of honourable intentions attending divine service and wants to make the effort to look her best for her maker. He blasts the louse and reduces it to a low vile form of life, having no values or sense of sense of dignity, as if he were reprimanding a mindless vandal who has no sense of decency and is quite naturally beneath contempt.

He is probably though administering a harmless reprimand to the louse, whilst

making his statement that we should be aware that we are all none of us above criticism, a form of equality if ever there was! But he still wants to protect the lady from a loss of dignity, for fortunately his love of women and his somewhat enlightened understanding of what women could offer is somewhat visionary and seems to strike a blow for their eventual emancipation.

Amongst his many amours Burns was very taken by Miss Louisa Fontenelle, a London actress who is known to have performed in both Edinburgh and Dumfries and in November 1792 he penned a letter offering her this verse, to be performed at a benefit night. It is 'The Rights of Women'

Here was read the Rights of Women.....

In this poem Burns communicates the idea that the ruling class would benefit from turning their attention to the female sex to generate humanity, as opposed to crippling civilisation with war. 'The Rights of Women' also refers to the role of the female in eighteenth-century society. The rights of which Burns speaks are 'protection', 'decorum' (or good manners) and 'admiration'. The eighteenth-century notion of sentiment propagated by enlightenment thinkers did place women in what was considered to be a crucial role within society.

However, woman's contribution was measured

in terms of the positive, more passive, sympathetic effect that they supposedly had upon their husbands. Society must protect and respect the delicacy of the female sex, and so Burns can also be seen to assume a stance typical of his time. The hope is that as society becomes more enlightened, so will there be an improvement in good breeding, wit and manners.

This emphasis on manners could also be applied to another section of society which would seem a natural target for Burns' poems but one for which he had growing interest, the aristocracy. He would not resort to mindless ranting or demagoguery as many had done in the past for the second half of the 18th Century was the period of the Enlightenment, and a time when many young scots of talent were moving up the social scale and aspiring to better themselves. The Scotland of the clans, and religious disputes was giving way to a Scotland of reason and prosperity and one linked with the growing new world.

Burns was as much an aspirational man as any and as an ambitious poet he would do well to get into favour with the aristocracy whose influence and patronage would give him a wider audience, rather than remain on the fringes of society by supporting anarchy and revolution. So when he did come into contact with the quality and nobility, he would do well to pay attention to them, especially when

they were enlightened and intelligent. A prime example of this was Lord Daer, or Douglas-Hamilton, Basil William, Lord Daer, the second son of the fourth Earl of Selkirk who had attended Edinburgh University and lived with Professor Dugald Stewart, a great enlightenment moral philosopher. Lord Daer was liberal minded and a convert to reform of society and politics.

Here was read From Lines from meeting with Lord Daer.

So being far from a typical Scottish aristocrat and having visited France at the start of the Revolution Lord Daer became a warm admirer of it, and was a member of 'The Friends of the People' and an advocate of Parliamentary reform joining corresponding societies which did encouraged him to do just that. He was in many ways a forerunner of those radical gents who helped generate the reforms in the 19th Century which would create change by peaceful means and in doing so steered Burns on a more balanced and considered path towards equality.

He was wrote biographer Hugh Douglas in 'The Tinder Heart' the "first member of the real aristocracy Burns had ever met on equal terms". Even so there was a wider meaning to this poem, that Burns was being accepted as someone who had climbed some way up the social ladder.

So what do I like about these poems? Well with the first one it reminds us of the

importance of making use of the qualities and strengths of the fairer sex when the males seem to show their frailties and limitations. Having been brought up in a family where the women were by and large the stronger personalities, where a mother would be the support of an ageing and increasingly decrepit father, and a sister who would take on the burden of responsibility in place of a stricken husband. I can honestly say that this strength has made the family more whole and organic and has helped in harmony and understanding.

In fact the mark of a civilised society is that which values and encourages its womenfolk to aspire and play a pro-active role within it.

If this were not so then society would be backward, fractious and would stagnate.

Around this time there were many images in the arts, this being the Romantic Period of Art which show women as exuding immense feats of inner strength. Take for example the famous allegorical painting of French romanticist Jacques-Louis David who in 1805 painted a scene from ancient Roman history, legendary rather than factual, of a conflict where the early Romans were in battle against their rivals the Sabines, who were seeking revenge for the violent rape and abduction of their women some years before. In the scene in question, the action

is dominated by the figure of Hersilia, a Sabine woman who is married to Romulus Rome's founder and first king, and who stands in the midst of the warring armies and with outstretched arms shows "the courage to throw themselves amid the flying weapons, (as stated by Livy) and making a rush across, to part the incensed armies, and assuage their fury;" implores their fathers on the one side, their husbands on the other, "that as fathers-in-law and sons-in-law they would not contaminate each other with impious blood, nor stain their offspring with parricide".

After years of revolutionary terror and then revolutionary war on the continent of Europe, and then Imperialistic conquest by a megalomaniac dictator, the painting was seen as a plea for the people of Napoleonic France to reunite after the bloodshed of these turbulent years, and that now there was stability and order, the nation should devote itself to the arts of peace. It also portrayed a definite theme of love prevailing over conflict and the protection of the young and innocent.

Another image of womanly values prevailing over male martial fury was one from a previous age although popularly revived on the 18th century stage... that of Shakespeare's Roman tragedy play Coriolanus. The central scene of this tragical drama concerned the efforts

Continued

of Roman women to prevent a cruel and unnecessary war between rival tribes, the Romans and the Volsci in early Republican Rome.

In this play the semi legendary Roman general Gaius Marcius Coriolanus has achieved renown for his military exploits against rivals the Volsci, in one of Rome's many wars to achieve dominance of the whole of Italy. Victory on the battlefield leads to political advancement as Coriolanus is encouraged by the Patrician nobility to seek election as Consul, the highest office in Republican Rome, but his inability to connect or empathise with the common people ('the Plebeians') and his consummate arrogance means that he will not be accepted for this office in their eyes and as a result he is banished from Rome and branded a traitor.

Consumed with revenge, he departs and flees to the enemy, ingratiating himself with his former adversary, Volscian General Tullus Aufidius, and offering his services to the Volsci in a bid to conquer and destroy Rome in an act of revenge. When news of his invasion and intended war reaches Rome several attempts are made to parley with him from its leading citizens but are summarily rebuked.

It is eventually a delegation of women who finally have the desired affect of impeaching his vengeance. On the eve of his proposed attack on Rome Coriolanus is visited by his mother, his wife, their child and another lady who between them, appealing to his sense of family, nobility and that the

attack he proposes is little more than unadulterated revenge, cause him to withdraw his warlike intentions.

It is their qualities which prevail over his martial spirit and result in Coriolanus backing down and undertaking to make an honourable treaty which saves Rome and its people. The ladies return to Rome in triumph and are feted by patricians and plebeians alike, and Volumnia, mother of the chastened exile, is invested with the very oaken crown of victory which was awarded to her son after his military triumphs. Coriolanus however meets a totally different end, returning to his employers as a traitor and summarily put to death.

As for Lord Daer, a lord who did dare to go against the grain, this shows what happened when someone is able to project an aura of true nobility which in turn can influence others for good and virtue. It was in fact said of Lord Daer that

"He could descend from the dignity of his rank, without impairing the dignity of his character. In every social and domestic relation, his private virtues shone with a mild and attractive lustre. Nothing could discompose the tranquillity of his temper, or sour the natural sweetness of his manners.

In his intercourse with the world he was modest, courteous, and easy."

He was praised for having an active mind, zeal and fidelity and a willingness to be involved in the expansion of knowledge and promotion of the interests

of mankind. He preferred to work within the existing system rather than destroy it and this may well have influenced Burns who would develop a patriotic love of his country as well as a desire to further its progress in the world where it operated.

For Burns the meeting with Lord Daer set off a new understanding of equality, that of equality of opportunity which allows those who can easily be tarred with an undeserved brush to show themselves in a more positive light and gain the respect of future generations.

Finally to return to the original subject of kindness and simplicity, Burns's appreciation of people who are of a different background, means we ought to accept that their inner qualities are more important than the outward show of rank and privilege, or of worldly wisdom and make us truly whole and properly human and create a better world. In the final verse of the anthem 'A man's a man for all that'

Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a' that),
That Sense and Worth, o'er a'
the earth,
Shall bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's coming yet for a' that,
That Man to Man, the
world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

Wilf Orton

The Rights of Women

While Europe's eye is fix'd on mighty things,
The fate of Empires and the fall of Kings;
While quacks of State must each produce his plan,
And even children lisp the Rights of Man;
Amid this mighty fuss just let me mention,
The Rights of Woman merit some attention.

First, in the Sexes' intermix'd connection,
One sacred Right of Woman is, protection. –
The tender flower that lifts its head, elate,
Helpless, must fall before the blasts of Fate,
Sunk on the earth, defac'd its lovely form,
Unless your shelter ward th' impending storm.

Our second Right – but needless here is caution,
To keep that right inviolate's the fashion;
Each man of sense has it so full before him,
He'd die before he'd wrong it – 'tis decorum. –
There was, indeed, in far less polish'd days,
A time, when rough rude man had naughty ways,
Would swagger, swear, get drunk, kick up a riot,
Nay even thus invade a Lady's quiet.

Now, thank our stars! those Gothic times are fled;
Now, well-bred men – and you are all well-bred –
Most justly think (and we are much the gainers)
Such conduct neither spirit, wit, nor manners.

For Right the third, our last, our best, our dearest,
That right to fluttering female hearts the nearest;
Which even the Rights of Kings, in low prostration,
Most humbly own – 'tis dear, dear admiration!
In that blest sphere alone we live and move;
There taste that life of life – immortal love.
Smiles, glances, sighs, tears, fits, flirtations, airs;
'Gainst such an host what flinty savage dares,
When awful Beauty joins with all her charms –
Who is so rash as rise in rebel arms?

But truce with kings, and truce with constitutions,
With bloody armaments and revolutions;
Let Majesty your first attention summon,
Ah! ca ira! The Majesty Of Woman!

Lines from meeting with Lord Daer

THIS 1 wot ye all whom it concerns,
I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
October twenty-third,
A ne'er-to-be-forgotten day,
Sae far I sprackl'd up the brae,
I dinner'd wi' a Lord.

I've been at drucken writers' feasts,
Nay, been bitch-fou 'mang godly priests –
Wi' rev'rence be it spoken! –
I've even join'd the honour'd jorum,
When mighty Squireships of the quorum,
Their hydra drouth did sloken.

But wi' a Lord! – stand out my shin,
A Lord – a Peer – an Earl's son!
Up higher yet, my bonnet
An' sic a Lord! – lang Scoth ells twa,
Our Peerage he o'erlooks them a',
As I look o'er my sonnet.

But O for Hogarth's magic pow'r!
To show Sir Bardie's willyart glow'r,
An' how he star'd and stammer'd,
When, goavin, as if led wi' branks,
An' stumpin on his ploughman shanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd.

I sidying shelter'd in a nook,
An' at his Lordship steal't a look,
Like some portentous omen;
Except good sense and social glee,
An' (what surpris'd me) modesty,
I markèd nought uncommon.

I watch'd the symptoms o' the Great,
The gentle pride, the lordly state,
The arrogant assuming;
The fient a pride, nae pride had he,
Nor sauce, nor state, that I could see,
Mair than an honest ploughman.

Then from his Lordship I shall learn,
Henceforth to meet with unconcern
One rank as weel's another;
Nae honest, worthy man need care
To meet with noble youthful Daer,
For he but meets a brother.

Robert Burns

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Photographs

The editing team wish to express their thanks for all those who contributed articles and photographs for this issue. We have made every effort to correctly identify all the photographers but sometimes this is not possible. If you took a photograph but haven't been credited please let us know and we will publish the details in the next Gazette.

Thanks for photographs to all who took them.

