

HERNE HILL HARRIERS GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2007 TO 2008

Club members,

We can celebrate this evening another busy and successful year for the club and its members during which we have enjoyed lots of outstanding team and individual successes through all age groups.

This has been one of our most successful years in recent years. Club members have competed at the Olympic Games in Beijing and won medals at the European Masters Championships and performed with distinction in National, Area, County and English Schools Championships. Individually we can boast AAA outdoor and indoor champions as well as four English Schools champions.

Team successes included our Masters M40 road and cross country team winning national and regional titles whilst our senior men's track & field team consolidated their position in Division Two of the British League. Our senior women's track & field team had their most successful season ever, retaining the BAL Plate by winning the Final and winning promotion to the UK Women's League by winning the qualifying match in September. Our senior men's cross country team did the double of retaining their Surrey County title and winning the Surrey Men's League for the third successive year in thrilling style, our veterans men's track & field team defended their league title and our boys retained the Ebbisham League title.

As well as winning individual titles at the English Schools and National indoor and outdoor championships, athletes won medals throughout the age groups at Surrey County championships over road and cross country. Members won international honours at senior, masters and junior level over track & field and cross country. We again have a large number of athletes listed in the national rankings this year. It is extremely gratifying to everyone associated with the club that we continue to achieve richly deserved honours and high standards especially as many athletes that joined as youngsters are playing such a prominent role in senior teams.

For every athlete's success there are numerous people who contribute their time and efforts to allow the club to function and help the athletes compete and improve. On behalf of all members I would like to thank all the coaches, team managers, parents and officers for their help and support during the year as without them Herne Hill Harriers would not survive, let alone continue to flourish.

Our membership has remained consistently over 550 and we must acknowledge the roles of Stan and Joan Allen, who continue to be involved as joint membership secretaries. Stan has continued to maintain his coaching group as well as selling the clothing stock, successfully promoting us as Press and Publicity Officer, compiling the club magazine and assisting at almost every club event. During this year Stan and Sarah Allen have revived the Sunday mornings breakfast runs which has added to the ambiance of the club and made Sunday mornings alive at the track. Certainly numbers attending road and cross country races have increased this year.

Several club members have been honoured this year for their work in athletics - John Gebbels was elected chairman of the South of England AA, I was nominated at the National UK athletics awards and Ron Gobey was presented with an award to celebrate his 30 years as secretary of the Surrey women's cross country league.

I am sad to report that our oldest member Tommy Jover, an Honours Member, passed away last month and will be sadly missed to everyone who knew him. During the year we also lost Doug Goodman, a Life Member well renowned within the athletics world and Derek Card.

We have again successfully hosted athletic events notably our three open track & field meetings incorporating our club championships which enjoyed increased entries and the Frank Harmer Memorial 10km road race in March. The road race had a difficult year this year due to restrictions resulting from Lambeth Council's lack of facilities in the Park. Despite these difficulties, we were able to put on an enjoyable race and we hope that the race will be restored to its previous year's status in 2009.

A warm thank you to everyone who volunteered to help or organized or officiated at any club event, whether it was simply holding a tape, carrying teas or marshalling. As a voluntary club it is an increasing problem to have enough helpers to run an event such as a cross country or track meeting especially in these times of increased bureaucracy and health and safety and we are increasingly anxious and dependent on attracting more helpers.

Our Executive Committee has met monthly to conduct the club's business. We are indebted to our officers and committee members for their commitment and enthusiasm for the club. Tonight at the close of the meeting 6 new committee members will be elected to sit on the General Committee giving an opportunity for club members to observe and assist in the running of Herne Hill Harriers. We are always looking to identify specialists with expertise and are trying to address obtaining more volunteers and expert assistance. Herne Hill Harriers, like many voluntary groups, are run by a very small number of highly committed people and we must always be on the lookout for more helpers.

Waldy Pauzers has had a busy year as club President, attending lots of meetings and being involved in lots of club issues as well as competing for the vets track & field, road and cross country teams and stepping into the breach as marksman at our final open track & field meeting. On behalf of all members, I would like to thank him for his efforts and hard work during the past year.

Once again, I should also take this opportunity to especially record the continued efforts of Geoff Jerwood and James Ward whose team management throughout the year covering both men's track & field and road and cross country has been responsible for inspiring so much success throughout the year amongst these sections. We must also thank James for his efforts in restoring the club's website www.hernehillharriers.org.uk to ensure it accurately and speedily reflects the news and successes of the club to all.

We are also indebted to Mark White who took over as club Treasurer this year and has brought the club accounts back to a manageable level under difficult circumstances. This has taken a lot of time and we now have a much more accurate record of the financial position of the club, which will benefit us in these difficult economic times.

With the countdown to the 2012 Olympics now underway, athletics has to seize new opportunities and tackle challenges ahead. The club has continued to be involved with issues within athletics and the reputation of Herne Hill Harriers remains high in the sport through our initiatives and performances. We recently won an award at the

London Region England Athletics awards for our partnership work with Wandsworth Council Sports Development Department.

Development in local schools has continued and has contributed to the continued progress and growth of our young athletes section. Supported by Wandsworth and Lambeth Councils, England Athletics, Lambeth Endowed Charities and St Walter St Johns Trust, we have put on a training weeks in school holidays, organised successful Star:Track holiday schemes, organised fun runs, schools' cross country races and supervised school Sportshall competitions as well as linking with local schools to attract new youngsters and increase our identity with the local community.

We have increased our number of active coaches and are currently applying for more funding for larger projects ensuring the steady stream of youngsters joining the club and the reputation of the club continues to grow locally. The club is looking to achieving ClubMark, an important benchmark for obtaining further funding. It is extremely satisfying and a tribute to our structure and coaches to see athletes who joined the club as youngsters making such a contribution to the success of our senior teams.

I am sure that all club members will hope for a continuation of the individual and team successes achieved during this coming year. Next year we celebrate our 120th year with, for the first time in the club's history, two National league track & field teams and with the athletic talent, organisational experience and enthusiasm currently within the Club I am sure we can maintain our progress and I wish all club members every success for the year ahead.

Steve Bosley
General Secretary
27 October 2008