

BERKSHIRE ATHLETICS NEWS

EDITION 4 OCTOBER 2026

Welcome to our fourth edition of the Berkshire Athletics newsletter. In this bumper edition we have a report on race three of the road running champs. We hear from some Berkshire officials who had roles at the Commonwealth Games and European Championships. There's also a report from the inter-counties up and down mountain race! For all the latest information please always refer to our website.

BERKSHIREATHLETICS.ORG.UK

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Cross Country



Berkshire Cross Country Secretary Role by Sam Whalley

I absolutely love XC, the muddier and hillier the better! When an opportunity arose to become the XC Secretary for Berkshire, it made sense to put myself forward.
The XC Sec's year really runs from September to March, and revolves around two main events – the County and Inter-Counties XC Champs.
Each year a different club hosts the County XC Champs held in December, so it is the Sec's role to oversee the organisation. This basically means giving the club a list of things to do and then checking in with them every now and again to see how they're getting on! In October the Sec fills in a short online form to apply for the event licence, in November the entries system is set up by the committee, and in December it's all systems go.

If you've ever run or supported at the XC Champs you may well have seen me in my bobble hat, probably a different one each time (I have lots!), handing out letters to the top finishers in each age group. This is to invite them to be part of the Berkshire team for the Inter-Counties XC Champs in March of the following year. In recent years this has been held in Nottingham, and I've tended to go up the night before to be ready for the day. The day itself is a joy! Putting faces to the names of all the athletes and parents I've been communicating with is always really nice, and for those travelling solo it's great to be able to be their support crew. I also appeal for a rota of helpers for the day, which gives me a chance to watch some of the races, and attend any presentations the county might feature in. This is always a proud moment!

In advance of the Inter-Counties, the Sec needs to confirm and enter the teams, find out who needs kit and who wants to buy a hoodie, and make sure everyone knows where they need to be. Sometimes there are late dropouts and a flurry of activity to find a replacement, but it always works out OK in the end.
Why am I telling you all this? Well, I'm stepping down at the AGM in November, and I need to find a replacement. Could this be you?
Nothing I've mentioned is particularly arduous, and fits in around my usual job. My reason for stepping down is just that I think five years is a good innings, and my own children are now in their twenties and living in the north, so I am less involved in clubs, age groups and the like than I used to be. I do still run XC though!
There is plenty of guidance and existing templates/examples for everything I've mentioned above, so my successor should be able to slide into the role quite smoothly. It would be lovely to hear from you if you're interested. Just drop me an email: **xc@berkshireathletics.org.uk**

Road Running

Road Running Championships

Report courtesy of Sarah Gee



Newbury Half Marathon - August 9th 2026
High stakes at Newbury racecourse!

Two fast legs, not four, was the requirement for the county Half Marathon [HM] championship on Sunday 9th August. Plus, a good tolerance for sunshine and heat, as the temperature was over 23 degrees at the 10am start of this looped course comprising 4 laps. While the race involved 261 finishers, only ten entrants were listed on the race card for the Berkshire Champs (one woman and eight men). Chip (personal) times of all ten are given below.

They are under Starter's orders..they're off!

The first man home was Matthew Kimpton (W&T, MSEN) in 1:18:55, clear by nearly 4 minutes: he also wins the MSEN HM County Gold medal. Joining him on the podium, in second place overall, was Laurence Manning (T&W, MV40) in 1:22:48, who wins gold in the MV40 county category. Mitchell Green (FC,1:42:24) was 5th in the V45 race age group and takes silver in the MV40 county AG category.

Meanwhile, Peter Totays (DD,1:35:34) took first place in race (V55) and championship AG categories (V50) nudging John Boddington (BJ) 1:36:40 into second place in the county AG category; John was first in the race AG (V50-54). Shaun Watson (RAC) ran 1:48.49, and James Martin (TVT) recorded 3:13:39, so Shaun wins gold in the county MV60 category with James taking silver.

Dennis Bonnie (DD) took silver in the MV70 race AG category, plus gold in the county category in 2:37:45. Dave Waterman (MAC) was the only competitor in his MV80 AG, finishing in 3.28.59, and took the gold in both race and county AG categories.

For the ladies, Dawn Godwin was the only Berks entrant. Dawn (MAC,WV50) was 4th lady home, and first (1:30:35) in both her AG race and county categories.





Photos:
(Fig 1: John Boddington; Fig 2. Dawn Godwin)

Abbreviations: BJ Burnham Joggers/ LNR Llisnerry Runners/MAC Maidenhead AC/ MS Marlow Striders /NAC Newbury AC/ RAC Reading AC/ RJ Reading Joggers /RRR Reading Roadrunners/ W&T Wargrave & Twyford AC /TVT Thames Valley Triathletes/ WVR Windle Valley Runners/

Road Running

Berkshire Champs Standings

The Berks Champs is hotting up....

In summary, after three races, Matthew Kimpton (T&W) now leads Daniel Knape (NAC) among the senior men, while Laurence Manning (T&W) is galloping away in the MV40s with three golds. John Boddington (BJ) and Shaun Watson (RAC) remain leaders of the MV50 and MV60 groups respectively, Dennis Bonnie (DD) leads the MV70 category, and David Waterman extends his lead over Ed Thorpe in the MV80 group.

For the ladies there has only been one change to the leaderboard: Dawn Godwin now takes the lead in the V50 category. All other age groups remain as before with Luci Roberson (NAC)/Niki Parker (RJ) jointly leading senior ladies; Corinne Callaway(RJ)/Gemma Jones (LNR) at the top of the FV40 group, while Sarah Gee (WVR; FV60), Margaret Hussein, (RJ;FV70) and Pauline Siddons (MAC;FV80) remain leading their cohorts, respectively. The updated Medal Table is available on our website:

Championship Standings

The Final Straight:

As Tadley Tens are cancelled, there is now only one race left to run: Henley 5k on October 18th. However, please don't forget to submit any marathon times that you have, which fall within the permitted date range. See website for full details.

Good Luck!

We are excited to announce next year's championship races as:
Bramley 10
Reading Half Marathon
Marlow 5
Wargrave 10k
Henley 5k

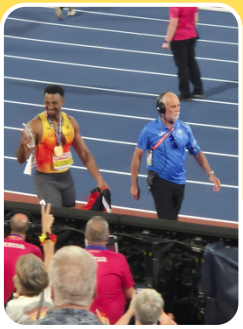




Fig 1. Dennis Bonnie;
Fig 2. David Waterman;



Officiating at the Commonwealth Games and European Championships



Chris Apsey

Helen and I left Reading on the 24/7/26 for Glasgow for the Commonwealth Games (CWG) and returned home on 2nd Aug. This was my 3rd CWG's in the UK as a NTO (National Technical Official) working in the field of play. The first 2 days were spent helping to get the event ready and then meeting our team members and preparing ourselves for day 1 of competition. Each team of officials discussed their individual roles daily for the events on the timetable of that day. The chief was the lead of each event we all worked on making sure the athletes had the best experience of competition they had ever competed in.

What were my CWG highlights?

The highlight from my personal point of view was having Morgan Lake (HJ) and Charlotte Payne (Hammer) competing at the same time within metres of where I was officiating. During the Women's HJ and Hammer finals the weather changed dramatically and both officials and athletes endured awful conditions making the events very challenging for all. My duty was computer input on the HJ final but the rain was horrendous that night. Not just for the athletes but for everyone spectating and officiating as well. Every time I raised my arm a flood of water just cascaded out of my sleeve flooding the computer! After eventually coming off from the HJ final, I was wetter than I have ever been in my life with water pouring out from my clothing and shoes!!!

In Birmingham I had the honour of being selected as The Decathlon Referee looking after 26 male athletes. With my fellow Heptathlon Referee I spent 3 days setting up the Combined events rest area ready for both competitions, as well as overseeing all 10 Dec and 7 Hept events the athletes competed in during the week.
The conditions were very different from Glasgow with temperatures at 36 degrees daily, 7 consecutive hours on one day out in the sun!
The amount of work needed to run the 2 events of competition was fierce by the athletes and very enjoyable to officiate but also very stressful, tiring, emotional, yet very rewarding with all the athletes enjoying their competition.

When we arrived home on 17th August, Helen and myself were both exhausted after 21 days away at both the CWG - EC but overwhelmed by our selection of representing our country with fellow officials.



Officiating at the Commonwealth Games and European Championships

Helen Apsey



When spectators watch a national athletics championship, their attention is naturally drawn to the athletes, coaches, and officials visible on the field of play. Yet before a sprinter settles into the blocks or a thrower steps into the circle, every athlete has already passed through one of the most important checkpoints in the competition process: the call room. The call room is where athletes gather before competition. Here, officials check every single uniform, shoe, bib and competition equipment, ensuring everything complies with the rules before athletes are escorted to the field of play. A good call room ensures the correct athlete arrives at the right place at the right time, and determines the success of the whole event.

Once the family and pets had been organised we set off in July flying to Glasgow for ten days of international athletics. Scotstoun stadium only allowed us all in 2 days before the opening ceremony - normally the transformation takes 5-7 days, so to say it was a stressful situation is an understatement. The call room was set over 2 sites 6 minutes apart, each of which had to be manned by teams of officials, plus the athletes had to be escorted from the “gathering” area (first call) into the second call room, through the crowd of fans.
The main call room was somewhat limited for space, and required us to be flexible, moving the bays to fit the number of athletes. As the assistant chief call room manager I faced challenges of the timing equipment, and personnel being within the call room, a film crew, 2 televisions and no tannoy system to call the athletes. At one point we had a group of 12 discus throwers with all their large bags to check at the same time as 8 relay teams to check and pin their country bibs all within 10 minutes.
Most athletes are helpful but there were many towels, bags and umbrellas with advertising to be covered, religious headbands turned over. Lost bibs needing reprinting and spikes changing (needle spikes were banned) Ear pods and phones confiscated.

At both the Commonwealth Games and the European champs the call room team worked long hard days, we all had to catch the bus from the hotel at 7am each morning and even though we weren’t in the call room all afternoon, the bus back to the hotel was 10.30 - 11pm, with our main meal of the day served in the hotel after 11pm at night.
The call room in Birmingham was so different as there was more space with athletes only coming to the one call room, so it felt less stressful even in the extreme heat.
It has been an honour to represent our country at 2 huge athletic events this summer. To be there and in call room was a privilege nothing can beat.

Officiating at the European Championships





Richard Whybrow

It was a real pleasure to be selected as one of the two Meeting Managers for the European Championships in Birmingham. I've done the role at major events before, but never for such a long stretch — it's quite different from the usual one- or two-day meeting. Thankfully, with the event running for so many days, I had brilliant support from my colleague, Sian Thomas, who shared the role throughout.

The Meeting Manager's job is mainly about looking after and coordinating all the National Technical Officials (NTOs), while also keeping an eye on the competition as a whole. At any moment we might hear something in our earpiece that needs attention, so there's never a dull moment.

At Birmingham Stadium, the officials' rest room is tucked away deep in the bowels of the building. It's a decent space — somewhere to sit, recharge, and grab refreshments — but this particular week was ridiculously hot. I spent the better part of the week on a quest to locate a fan (or ideally several) to stop everyone melting. It took far longer than I'd hoped, but eventually one was found and installed. Whether people liked it or not, I couldn't tell I couldn't hear any complaints over the noise.

Part of the role involved regular trips around all the NTO work areas to make sure everything was running smoothly and that everyone had what they needed. This included visits to post-event control, which was packed with athletes fresh off the track — a place where the best strategy was to stay out of the way. I discovered that the safest spot was directly in front of one of the enormous air-conditioning units!

It was a fantastic event, even if the days were long — 12 or 14 hours, depending on how generous the schedule felt. Sharing the workload with Sian made it great fun, even if occasionally a little stressful. One of the highlights was meeting and working with the next generation of officials. They've worked hard to reach the level required for this competition, and I'd encourage anyone considering officiating to get involved. If you're worried it's all "old people", I can assure you it's not — there's a brilliant group of younger officials coming through behind us. The photo on the right was taken by one of those young officials during the Friday afternoon media race — a bit of light-hearted fun — and sent to me with the comment: "This was the most relaxed I saw Richard all week." They may have had a point.



Officiating at the Commonwealth Games and European Championships



Julie Dew

As a team of officials, we all know how privileged we are to have the opportunity to work with, and take care of, the best athletes, as well as their coaching staff, in the world. I have to pinch myself to remind myself how lucky we all are to be asked to officiate at the very best events that this sport has. I have to say, I am so proud to be a part of our amazing team, and I really enjoy our task of continually improving what we do, and how we do it.

I was elated when I was asked to judge both the Commonwealth Games (24th July – 2nd August) & the European Championships (7th August – 10th August). With only four days separating these events, we needed to ensure that we were 'up to the task' put in front of us, and despite how challenging it was, of course we were!

Having had a huge heatwave and a hosepipe ban, low and behold, we had to endure the only rain spells that we've had in the last 6 months. Whilst we can handle all types of weather and we are kitted out to do so, it was wet most days at the Commonwealth Games, and we had to make sure we never let that affect our performance and service levels. I loved the fact that in both of these events, I was fortunate to be in a team with some officials I've not worked with before. I was not surprised whatsoever, that we all got on so very well.

Our very long days meant that we were leaving our accommodation at 07.30, returning at around 10.00pm, and finally relaxing for Dinner and a well deserved libation at 11.00pm. Then its quickly time to get our heads down, and ensure we are ready to go again the next day. Whilst this is difficult, we wouldn't change this for the world! Personally, I had a really enjoyable mix of duties, which was focused on Pole Vault. For those of you that know me, this is my happy place. I have managed to build a lovely rapport with the athletes and their coaches, and my new task of 'Perimeter Control' for the event, showed me some interesting behaviour to say the least. It made me appreciate that the athletes and coaches are so focused on their performance and the task in hand, that they need help to understand what they could/could not do, and where they were allowed/not allowed to populate and move into.

We all have athletes that impress us the most. We will of course remain impartial and professional, but my very favourite memory was working on the men's Pole Vault final, with my two favourite, top-flight athletes; Armand Duplantis and Emmanouil Karalis.

After admitting to letting you know the athletes who I enjoy officiating the most, I have to also admit that it took me a week to recover from this leg of our season; but I would not have missed it for the world.

Officiating at European Championships

John Wright & Emily Whybrow

John Wright

I had a great time officiating at the European Championships this summer. I was in the field team that was mainly doing the javelin events. The men's javelin final was dramatic, with the lead changing 2 or 3 times in the final stages. My duty was implement control, which meant that I was close enough to the athletes to experience their tension!

Earlier in the week I was allocated to a duty involving entering data into a tablet computer, which managed the link between distance measurements/no throws, scoreboard display and results record, with no assistance or backup. Knowing my limited computing ability, I quickly asked to change to a different duty. It would have probably been chaotic if they had let me loose on that technology!



Emily with her dad Richard

Emily Whybrow

The European Championships was my first major International competition that I officiated at. I felt incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to be involved in such a successful competition, and I have some great memories from it. It was so different to any competition I had been to before, with the noise from the crowd, navigating camera men and cables, and making sure we looked smart on TV! It was also lovely to be a part of an amazing team, and to see some impressive athletics - one moment that stood out for me was being at the finish line for the mixed 4x100 relay final, when Amy Hunt won her 4th gold, and the atmosphere was phenomenal. It was a great week spent with great people!

British Intercounties
Up and Down Mountain Race by Mark Apsey



As you get older, and your sharper racing days begin to feel behind you, your racing brain tricks you into attempting different challenges. For many, it's the marathon, others go further and do ultras, 24 hour races, the list could go on. For me, I thought I'd turn my hand to fell racing. Not the most obvious choice in Berkshire, where even our biggest hills are small in comparison to the northern regions of our wonderful island.

I had always enjoyed the mountains recreationally, and whilst working away in Scotland in January this year, on one particularly steep run, I had the brainwave to target a few fell races this year.

Now, fell racing is unlike most other races. The conditions can be unpredictable, and vastly different on the ground to the top. Therefore, you have various different kit requirements based on the category of the climb. As a bare minimum you are required to carry a waterproof jacket and trousers, often a compass, map, hat, gloves and whistle. Not just because you could have an accident up on the top of a mountain, but you could also come across someone else in need of assistance. On top of all this, the use of GPS is strictly prohibited, and anyone using it to plot their routes can be instantly disqualified. It doesn't always work perfectly on the top of a mountain and if fog/cloud cover descends, you could blindly run yourself over a ledge.

So, this all led me to the start line in the British Inter-Counties up and down mountain championships in Sedbergh, Cumbria. 14.7km, 1070m of elevation. There I was, in a beautiful part of the country on a particularly windy day. The sole Berkshire representative. It's always been a pleasure to wear the county vest with pride having first done so probably nearly 25 years ago (before running was fashionable), and for the first time since 2019.
Fortunately the forecast of rain had blown over with the wind, and it was dry throughout. But the wind, was about as strong as I have ever raced in by the time you were half way up the first fell, which only got stronger as you climbed higher.

There was a vetting process to enter the race, so I already knew it was going to be a stacked field and it was humbling to see those who live and train in the fells disappear so early into the race. But I went into the race with no expectations, just telling myself don't come last. The climbs were most definitely hard, and looking at my splits, I was much better at the descents than I was the climbs. Averaging low 60s (place) in the descents, but in the high 80s for the climbs. But taking 23 minutes to go up and 11 to come down is absolutely exhilarating, and the grassy slopes definitely helped with this, allowing me to extend my stride and let gravity do the rest (and hope to the running gods my ankles stay in one piece). Fortunately this wasn't too much of a technical fell race.
I finished 78th overall, 1st (and only) Berkshire home, in 1:30:01. And whilst my legs are utterly spent whilst writing this, I will definitely be on the start line of other fell races. It would be great to get some other Berkshire runners on the start line with me at next year's iteration of this race?

Track and Field

Have you met our Berkshire mascot? It doesn't have a name so we're open to suggestions! It was recently in Kingston supporting our athletes at the U16/18 SEAA Inter County competition



Thank you so much to all the athletes for accepting their invitation to compete for Berkshire, we had representation from every track and field club which was fantastic. Everyone performed to their very best on the day and gave everything for the team which is all we ever ask. We even had some pbs this late in the season too so well done! The standard across the day was very high as you would expect at an regional inter county competition but Berkshire athletes were in the top 3 in a number of events.

Thank you to those athletes who stepped up last minute to cover an extra event that was appreciated.

The final team positions were:

U16 girls 9th U16 boys 6th

U18 girls 8th U18 boys 7th

Congratulations to these Berkshire athletes who represented their countries at the Commonwealth Games and/or European Championships

Commonwealth Games - Glasgow 2026



Sammy Ball	Decathlon	Reading AC
Izzy Fry	10,000m	Newbury AC
Charlotte Payne	Hammer	Newbury AC
Jake Norris	Hammer	Windsor, Slough, Eton & Hounslow
Ben East	Javelin	Team Kennet Triathlon & AC
Morgan Lake	High Jump	Windsor, Slough, Eton & Hounslow

European Championships - Birmingham 2026



Zac Seddon	3000m SC	Bracknell AC
Charlotte Payne	Hammer	Newbury AC
Jake Norris	Hammer	Windsor, Slough, Eton & Hounslow
Ben East	Javelin	Team Kennet Triathlon & AC
Morgan Lake	High Jump	Windsor, Slough, Eton & Hounslow

Dates for your diaries

- **Sportshall Trials:**

Sunday 18th October 2026 : track events only
Sunday 15th November 2026 : track and field events
Sunday 29th November 2026 : track and field events
Saturday 19th December 2026 : field events only



- **Sunday 18th October:**

Henley 5k
Road Running Champs race 4

- **Monday 23rd November:**

Berkshire Athletics AGM 7:30pm Bracknell AC Clubhouse

- **Saturday 12th December:**

County Cross Country Championships
Hosted by Maidenhead AC at Braywick Park, Maidenhead

- **Sunday 17th January 2027:**

Sportshall County Championships

- **Sunday 14th February 2027:**

Bramley 10 mile
Road Running Champs race 1

Reading Roadrunners' Bramley 10 Mile returns, with a new accurately measured 10-mile course through the country lanes around Bramley and Stratfield Saye. Starting at 10.00am from Bramley Primary School, the race is fully licensed by England Athletics and offers chip timing, age-group prizes and plenty of PB potential, alongside a welcoming club-run atmosphere, with all profits going to our nominated club charity. Entries open in October, with early-bird prices of £30 for EA-affiliated runners and £33 for non-affiliated runners for the first 100 places, before standard prices of £33 and £35. Full race details and entry updates can be found at readingroadrunners.org/races/bramley/