**Chair’s Report 2017**

We came, we saw, we conquered – well we are the Beetroot Army!

One highlight moment among many this year: Three of the top five finishers in the final Cross Country league fixture last month were Haywards Heath Harriers! That has never happened before.

It has been a great year with many exciting things happening across the club.

* We have smart new kit
* There is a development plan taking shape
* The junior waiting list is being tackled, though we still cannot cope with junior demand
* Membership is growing steadily
* There have been notable achievements in all sections of the club.

We are making steady progress in moving the club forward with the goal of a training track just about in view.

I would like to thank all the committee members for their work over the last year. Many others also work quietly behind the scenes making things happen smoothly. Our coaches give their time willingly for free, supporting their athletes in all sorts of weather. Thanks also to all our team managers for their continued commitment during the past year. We could not manage without you all.

The number of junior members continues to grow. Many contributed enthusiastically in the sports hall league and cross country events. Mae Robinson, Millie Somerville, Charlie and George Bonwick-Adams, Thomas Pearce, Jack Twibell and Alex Booth were selected to represent Sussex in the Sports Hall league inter counties Championship. Well done to them. Charlie also truly impressed us all with his first place in the U11 race at the Sussex XC Championships in January.

Ethan Lambert equalled the Sports Hall league speed bounce record of an incredible ninety bounces in one minute. In the highly competitive Southern Counties XC Champs, Darja Knotkova-Hanley and Adam Dray both placed in the top 100. Darja was also a creditable third in the Sussex Schools XC Championships. In fact, Darja and Joseph Martin have been selected to represent Sussex in the English schools at Leeds in March. Congratulations!

There were medals galore for the club in the Sussex Vets Track and Field Championships in June with five golds for Jenny Denyer, four golds for Mike Bale, three golds for Michelle Holdstock, a gold and a bronze for Paul Cousins, a gold triple jump medal for Helen Diack and a silver medal for Barry Tullett in the 5K. In the Sussex County Championships, Darja came 3rd in Under 17 girls 3000m and Lucie Venables came 1st in Senior Women's 400m hurdles. Great results all.

In the Track & Field leagues, there were club records for Jenny Denyer, Christian Lambert and Mike Bale. All five of our league teams performed well during 2017, but more support is needed across the age groups.

Also, at the Southern Counties Veteran Athletics Champs, Mike Bale won a gold, silver and bronze medal in the hammer, discus and shot respectively. There was further success for Mike in the British Masters Athletic Federation indoor champs where Ben Radcliffe also won bronze in the triple jump. In the BMAF outdoor champs, Mike gained a silver medal in the discus and Jenny Denyer was awarded a silver in the throws pentathlon, which is also a club record.

In the Sussex Grand Prix Road Racing Championship, the club was fourth with a second place for the Women’s Vet team. There were many individual age category awards for Amy Mitchell, Darja Knotkova-Hanley, Emma Navesey, Amanda Soper, Carole Walters, Marion Hemsworth, Russ Mullen and Peter Cobbett, plus a participation award for Matt Quinton, but top of the tree was James Skinner, taking the overall title. Well done, James.

In the Sussex Road Relay Championship, the Men’s O40 (Marcus Kimmins, James Skinner, Paul Tomlinson and Rob Watts) took the gold medal. During 2017 there were club records broken by Kim Lo, Naomi Cikalo, Marion Hemsworth, Paul Cousins and Paul Tomlinson. Congratulations all.

There were bronze County medals for Sam Ridley and James Skinner in the Sussex Half Marathon Championship in September and the Men’s team (James Skinner, Marcus Kimmins and Matt Cook) took the silver. In the recent Sussex 10k Championship James was awarded another medal, this time gold as first male over 40, and HHH men (James Skinner, James Collins and Russ Mullen) were 1st team (these results are currently provisional).

But it was cross country that proved to be the focus for our achievements this year. There was participation from so many of our athletes. This is so important for team efforts. In the XC league the Men’s team gained second place, narrowly missing out on top spot, with the Vet Men first. Emma Navesey was third Senior Woman, James Skinner was first O40 and Paul Cousins second O50. These are amazing results in such competitive company.

In the County XC Championship the Men’s O40 team (Marcus Kimmins, Rob Watts, Julian Boyer and Andy Hind) was third. In the County XC relays in September, the Women’s team (Shiv Amer, Katie Morgan and Emma Navesey) were awarded silver medals. All such impressive results.

The Southern Counties Champs James Skinner was 1st V45 and third in the joint O40 race by a whisker, in a race won by second claim Harrier, Chris Smith. Chris also won the final XC at Stanmer and Chris really put the seal on Harriers attaining second Senior Men’s team for the League. Thanks Chris!

In addition, there were many individual achievements. Carl Bicknell was awarded the Centurion Grand Slam completing four 50 mile races in 2017. Russ Mullen won both the Haywards Heath 10 mile race in April and the Bexhill 5k race in July. James Skinner won the Newick 10k in August where Katie Morgan came fourth. Katie also came third in the Crowborough 10k. Phil Payne, Kim Lo and Michael Burke continue to tackle races far and wide, always placing well.

The club hosted a number of events during the year – our Open Track and Field competition at K2 in April, the Mid-Summer Relays in June, Wakehurst Willow in July and Hickstead (WSFRL) in October. Thank you to all who helped at these events and we are very grateful to those who took a lead role in organising.

John Gill is standing down as President at the AGM and Mark Sykes is taking on the role. The club is immensely grateful for John’s support for the club over many years. We intend to show our appreciation at the Awards Evening following the AGM. Watch this space!

Very sadly, during 2017, Steve Horn and Irene Parsley passed away. They were both great supporters of the club and are still very much missed.

Lastly, as ever, help is needed in running the club. If more members take on small, manageable roles then there is less for the committee to do! We do need someone to look at all our communication from Facebook to Tuesday evening notices – is anyone willing to help?

Here’s to more enjoyment and club success in 2018. Can’t wait.

Kind regards

Marion, HHH Chair March 2018