

Track & Field 2007

A pleasingly warm start to the season and a change in games timetabling combined to help in the preparation for the friendly fixture between the Dragon, Chandlings Manor and ourselves. Scholarship examination clashes resulted in our Under 14 team being somewhat weakened, but no doubt the same was true for the other competing schools. It was particularly pleasing to see **Kalil Ali** setting a new Under 12 hurdles record (13.54 s) at this early stage of the term and in the same event, at Under 14's level, **Harry Hill** produced a time only just outside the School Record. JASP's tireless work with the long and middle distance runners was already paying off, with **Barnaby Bossom** winning the Under 12 800m and **Tom Falkner** winning the Open 1500m. In the field, congratulations should go to the following event winners: **Sandy MacAulay** (Under 12 Long Jump); **Freddie Thorp** (Under 14 Triple Jump); **Jack Parham** (Under 12 Shot) and **Jasper Henson** (Under 14 Javelin). This relaxed and enjoyable meeting drew to a pleasing end with one lingering shadow of concern – the Dragon had some truly exceptional athletes who we would be coming up against in almost every meeting this season!



No sooner had our first meeting drawn to a close than the summer seemingly did likewise. Continuous heavy rain put pay to any effective training which did not bode well for the *Winchester House School Invitation Athletics Meeting*. My worries were unfounded, since the weather put pay to the meeting as well. This was a huge shame since it is the largest meeting in which we compete and as with any sport, it is competition that most promotes individual development. It was a long and wet wait until the next fixture.

Thursday 07 June marked both the end of the Common Entrance Examinations and the annual *Radley College Athletics Club Meeting*. As with last year, in addition to a competent Under 14 team, a small number of junior athletes also competed, giving them a much needed run prior to the Regional Championships. The Radley fixture always provides tough competition, not least because the Radley team are Under 15's, but also the other seven competing schools always field good athletes. A very close run competition saw the Radley team (as always) win, with Elstree just beating Summer Fields to second place. These results were swayed substantially by the failure of one of our top Under 14 athletes to make it to the competition. These were some commendable individual performances, most notably **Freddie Thorp** who took gold in the Long Jump, silver in the Triple Jump (beaten by **Toby Thorp** who left Summer Fields last year) and bronze in the 200m. **Harry Hill** gained silver in the Hurdles, missing the School Record by 1/100th second. **Sun Phatraprasit** gained silver in the 400m and **Jasper Henson** gained bronze in the Discus.

It is always such a pleasure to compete at Radley and provides a good opportunity to catch up with many old boys, whether competing, spectating or officiating (notable performances in this area by - **Jonathan Quicke, Nick Gill** and **Tom Nelson**).

Following the Radley College meeting, **Max Seely** was appointed Captain of Track Athletics and **Freddie Thorp**, Captain of Field Athletics.

The 10am start to Sports Day came around very quickly – it was just a few hours earlier that so many of us had been evicted from the Summer Ball tent. Sunglasses were very much de rigueur, despite being overcast with intermittent rain. Extraordinarily, the rain stopped just 5 minutes into proceedings and barely impacted the competition. The groundstaff performed miracles in readying the track and field for Sports Day: I cannot remember the rain actually stopping at any point in June. The combination of a restructuring of the programme of events together with the intervention of the H.S.E., necessitating the purchase of a discus cage, helped in making the day more enjoyable for spectators. I was hugely impressed with the overall level of talent exhibited by the boys. Richly deserving praise was **Jack Parham** (Under 12) who gained gold in all three of his events. Additionally, **Frank Faber** (Under 11) gained two gold's and a silver as did **Guy Linzee Gordon** (Under 13), **Freddie Thorp**, **Jasper Henson** and **Luciano Pierre White** (all Under 14's). **Jonathan Leese** (Under 10) should also be commended for gaining two gold's and a bronze.

Track & Field Prize Giving provided an opportunity for Athletics Colours to be awarded. As a result of continuous hard work, dedication and commitment to athletics over a number of years, **Max Seely** and **Freddie Thorp** were re-awarded their colours. The following also gained their colours for the first time: **Charles Courtenay**, **Tom Falkner**, **Jasper Henson**, **Harry Hill**, **Gus Kelly**, **Guy Linzee Gordon**, **Sun Phatraprasit**, **Archie Wells** and **Max Worsley**.

Just five days later it was time for the Regional Championships. Another tactical change in regions saw Summer Fields correctly competing in the Mercia area, which has rightly returned to its' home at Iffley Road, Oxford. The close proximity of the meeting allowed boys to be ferried too and from the stadium without the usual hanging about for up to eight hours. A talented squad of 18 competed at the famous stadium in blustery and wet conditions.

In a promising start to the day, **Harry Hill** qualified for the Under 14 Hurdles finals with a New School Record of 12.47s. This was one of the shortest lived records, since he managed a time of 12.32s in the finals, coming a commendable 5th. At Under 12's level, in a very exciting race, **Barnaby Bossom** and **Frank Faber** both qualified for the National Championships by gaining gold and silver respectively (an impressive

performance from Frank, who is an Under 11). The middle and long distance runners continued to perform well, with **Gus Kelly** gaining silver in the Under 13 800m, although sadly missing qualification for the Nationals. In an outstanding race, **Charles Courtenay** won the Under 13, securing his place at the Nationals. Moments later, **Sandy MacAulay** secured gold in the Under 12 Long Jump, so joining the other three in a place at the Nationals. I was, as always, hugely impressed with the performances of all the boys who had qualified to compete at Iffley Road. It was a genuine pleasure to support such a capable and pleasant squad.

The final Monday of term saw JASP and myself accompany **Barnaby Bossom**, **Charles Courtenay**, **Frank Faber** and **Sandy MacAulay** to the Alexander Stadium in Birmingham for the National Prep Schools Athletics Championships. On yet another blustery and wet day, personal bests seemed unlikely. Barnaby, Charles and Frank all ran well in their respective races but were out-performed. Despite rainfall being sufficiently hard to suspend competition part way through Sandy's long jumping, he still managed to come away with a bronze medal. It is always commendable enough to compete at National Prep Schools level, but to come away with a medal is a fantastic achievement..



The End of Term Prize Giving saw the Senior Victor Ludorum won jointly by **Jasper Henson** and **Freddie Thorp**, and **Jack Parham** won the Junior Victor Ludorum. Particular congratulations must also go to the gold medal Best Athletes: **Jonathan Leese** (U10); **Frank Faber** (U11); and **Guy Linzee Gordon** (U13).

In a season hampered by the weather, I remain hugely impressed by the talent shown by so many of our boys. I am also indebted, as always, to my team of coaches (particularly JASP) for all their time and skill. DCP