



PHOENIX

Brighton Phoenix

Annual Phoenix Phylar 2018





Chair's Message

Welcome to the great big glossy annual Phlyer - packed full of amazing stories, pics, and life! I'm writing this having just read through the final draft... I'm really blown away and to be honest quite emotional! This club of ours is extraordinary, I feel sure we are in many ways unique. You will read reports of high level international competition and performance, of ultra endurance, marathon achievements, success and participation on the track, country and road. We have triathletes and multi sport enthusiasts adding to the diversity, colour, and sheer excitement of it all. We are providing training and racing opportunities for young and old, male and female, fast and slow, through the support and encouragement of a true community of like-minded, open-minded, non-discriminatory, wonderful people. I'm so proud to be a member!



In this edition I would like to draw attention in particular to the success of our women and girls, and the success of the club in managing to grow our female membership. Girls outnumber boys, and while men still outnumber women members the gap is closing, but we can go further. In performance terms, look at the pages that follow! Consider the depth of talent required for our women's team to win the Sussex Road Relay Champs...again. We have a great group of girls, and this is not to ignore the boys - some of who I help coach, but statistics show that across most sports girls are twice as likely as boys to give up at a certain point. PHX girls, we desperately want you to stay in the sport and stay with Phoenix. I really want us to achieve gender equality and balance within 5 years. Very few clubs will be able to claim that. I'm convinced this is a unique and special club, and that's why we can achieve a goal that seems so simple on paper, yet so elusive in the (so called) real world. We have tremendous women leaders, it's tempting to name them here, but it would inevitably be unfair on someone, ... thank you!

Finally, thanks so much to the Board, the coaches, volunteers of every kind, and to the whole PHX community that makes this all so special.

Mike Townley (Club Chairman)



SDWR

As ever the 2018 South Downs Way Relay took place on the first Saturday in June. This unique race sees teams of 6 and a driver complete the entire 100 miles of the South Downs Way. Starting at Beachy Head, the runners complete 3 legs apiece, baton in hand, finishing at Winchester. Phoenix had 3 teams running - Well done to the A Team for finishing second in a thrilling race and the B Team and Women's teams for finishing 3rd.



Women's Team report

This was my first time in twelve years doing the relay without Liz H and it felt like an arm or a parent was missing. Erica and Deb were really good replacement navigators though and we didn't miss any changeovers or take any wrong turnings with the driving - even with the worst fog I've ever seen on the relay. The women ran well, after a neutralised section to start so that no one fell off the cliff in the limited visibility, we were towards the front of our start group and consequently had very little minibus traffic compared to previous years. It was a lovely day out as usual and the new additions to the team were brilliant in their attitudes and it was lovely to be reunited with some runners from previous years. With no bar at the finish we were carrying booze on board and Amelia made the most of it - tucking into a can of Stella immediately after completing Leg 13. I'm sure she will be welcomed back with that approach to recovery (and with beating her predicted time on every leg!) and she is already planning how to take my women's beer mile trophy off me! *Hildi Mitchell*





Men's A Team Report



As Sean ran through the hedge marking the final hundred metres of running on Leg 18, with his team screaming for him to sprint, it became clear that after about eleven hours of racing across the Downs we had managed to come second, by a decisive seventy seconds!

The trip to the finish had been emotional - we had started off on a very foggy Beachy Head, which meant that the start was neutralised for safety reasons, to basically stop people going over the edge. The first few legs were tight with ourselves, Arena 80 and Stubbington Green exchanging the lead between us until eventually we arrived at Leg 6.

We kept plugging away with a strong team spirit and the gap to the other teams reduced as the legs ticked by. Everybody put in a strong effort on their legs, also galvanised by the misconception that only the first two teams would receive a medal! By this stage it was clear Stubbington Green were going to win but the race was still on between us and Arena 80. I can't say that I have ever been involved in a longer or more thrilling race!

A massive thank you also needs to go to our driver Andy Bone who not only ferried us expertly from stop to stop but also brought a calm head and excellent race advice to the team. And thank you Josh, who as team captain organised everything! *Tobias Bremer*

Men's B Team Report

The thick fog at Beachy head made a fitting metaphor for the story of who was in and who was out of this year's B team.

In the final few weeks Liz H had to drop out due to an achilles injury, but found a replacement in the form of Lance B just as he was coming back into form. Dave Powell also had to pull out in the final week due to a leg injury - many thanks to Paul W for stepping up - also on form. Also we made a tactical switch of Donald for Milan in the A team. Paul W highlighted we were lucky to avoid the plague of locusts and floods albeit we did suffer a slight hitch on the day (more on that later).



That we came 3rd to Stubbington B who beat us by around 4 minutes left a bitter taste - but the day was still a lot of fun and overall a success. A lot of of laughter, a lot of effort and of course the amazing camaraderie, competition, weather and scenery make this one of, if not the highlight of the running calendar. I'm sure we'll all be back for more. *Richard Thompson*



Sussex Grand Prix

24 Sussex clubs and over 1000 runners took part in this local league competition. Following our win in 2017 we finished as runners-up in 2018 in both of the new-format team competitions, and Amelia Culshaw and Ash Dorrington claimed the individual female and male titles. 9 Phoenix athletes – Amelia, Gill Checkley and 7 of our men - secured top-20 finisher medals. Add to that 13 age-category medals, including 6 golds. And as one of the only two runners to complete all 10 races, Will Russell landed the Ron Grover award, with Amelia claiming the women's award.



"My favourite race is the **Hastings Half**. There's always amazing crowd support and I enjoy the route even if it's hilly!" *Hannah Felton*

Next up in May was the flat and fast **Hastings 5** where 3 of our men and 4 of our women claimed top 20 finishes and we chalked up 3 age category wins.

The scenic woods and country lanes of the **Horsham 10k** on a sunny day later in May proved spectacularly successful for us. Matt Greenall in 11th place overall was our 7th man home whilst Women's Captain Bobby Searle was the 2nd woman finisher.

In June we tackled the steep and scenic country lanes of the **Heathfield Midsummer 10k** and came away with great results, including 6 age-category wins ranging all the way from Junior (Ella Grabsky) to V70 (Andrew Haig).

The tropical heatwave conditions in early July made Max Dumbrell's winning time of 1:31 over the undulating trails of the **Bewl 15** truly outstanding. "Beautiful, bagpipes and beer afterwards - what's not to love!!" *Amelia Culshaw*

In mid-July our own **Phoenix 10k** clashed with England's World Cup semi-final, but unlike England Phoenix managed a hat trick of age-category wins, with Finn McNally overall winner in 31:08.

In September there were 4 Phoenix men and 3 Phoenix age category wins over the undulating country lanes of the **Hellingly 10k**.

The challenging **Lewes Downland 10** was next up in October. "Such a great route and race - with plenty of pacing issues and varied terrain to navigate - and I got up that big hill for the first time without stopping!" *Phil Grabsky*

Later in October at the fast and flat **Hove Prom 10k** race winner Ian Leitch led home another 30(!) Phoenix runners.

Finally the **Crowborough 10k** in November saw us seal second place in both team competitions, and Amelia Culshaw claim the Women's crown by just two points. We celebrated – and dried our wet feet after splashing our way twice through the celebrated Palesgate Lane ford – at a nearby hostelry.

2018 overall winner *Ash Dorrington* sums it all up: "I like the variety of the SGP races as it offers a real test of a runner's range and ability to adapt - from speedy 5 miles along Hasting Prom to the 15-mile undulating trail running of Bewl. I also enjoy the season long battles you get with the same competitors. Last but not least it offers a great opportunity to meet and stay in touch with other PHX runners that are outside your normal training groups."





On the Road

Gold and Silver in 3 age categories in the Sussex 10k Championships in Chichester 10k: Seniors Ross Skelton and Max Dumbrell, V60s Paul Whelpton and Phil Hampshire and V70s Andrew Haig and Malcolm Kemp.

Three Phoenix runners travelled to the prestigious Armagh 5k in Feb. Over 30 runners broke 14:30, including Ross Skelton who finished 34th in 14:29; and Finn McNally, 85th in 14:52, was one of 100 to go sub-15. Sam Wade finished 108th in 15:05 which would have won him most other 5k races.

Around 20 Juniors lined up in the Brighton Half Youth Miles in February, with top 3 finishes for Matthew Noakes, Molly and Mia Edwards, Holly Luscombe, Ravi Clark, Cassius Hebden and Milly Dickinson.

Max Dumbrell clocked an impressive 69:12 in finishing 24th in a star-studded field (led home by Mo Farah) at the British Half Marathon Championships (Big Half Greenwich March 4th). Also that month, Dan Stidder clocked just over 75 minutes to win his debut Half Marathon at Eastbourne.

A successful day for our efficient organisers at the Sussex Road Relay Championships at Christ's Hospital (7th April); and for our Senior Men and Senior Women who both chalked up another victory.

In May, Ross Skelton and Robbie Fitzgibbon finished 4th and 5th in 14:16 and 14:18 respectively at the England 5k Championships in Cheshire. Steve Atkinson clocked an impressive 4:55 to place 4th in his V50 category in the British Masters One Mile Championship later in the month.

Our Juniors posted some good times in the Brighton Marathon Mini Mile Races in April, with U11 Corbin Bailey's 6:01 and U15 Cassius Hebden's 5:22 catching the eye. In the Marathon itself our first finisher, in 4th place, was V40 Ian Leitch. Ian's superb time of 2:25 was less than half that of some of our 28 finishers – a great example of how there is a place for every standard of runner in our club! Alex Cruttenden also continued a superb year with 2:41. In the 10k race another fine run from Ross Skelton - 6th in a pb of 30:27.

The heatwave conditions at the London Marathon put target times out of reach for many of our runners – though excellent times for V45 Dave Powell (2:57) and Rachel Gorman (3:21).

Charlie Da'Vall Grice got the better of familiar rival Jake Wightman at the Westminster Mile in May, but had to settle for second place despite finishing in the same time (4:03) as winner Chris O'Hare. Other Phoenix stars to feature were Robbie Fitzgibbon in 6th place and Beth Kidger - 9th woman in a PB of 4:48.

Andrew Haig, Malcolm Kemp and Paul Whelpton all made it into the England team for the Age Group International 10k in Birmingham. Paul followed a V65 win in Birmingham with gold in the British Masters Half Marathon Championships in July.

Amongst our most dedicated competitors was Eddie Harrison, who ran around 20 races in all formats over the course of 2018, including helping himself to a win at the Eastbourne Junior Golden Mile in July.

Ross Skelton produced another superb performance in September, with a 69 minute Great North Run to secure 20th place in a stacked field. 10 Phoenix runners travelled to Bristol for another Half Marathon, where they were welcomed by Bitton Runners as part of our new twinning arrangement (set up by our Women's Captain Bobby Searle and her Bristol-based mum). The highlight was a 75 minute finish for Milan Watson, with Alex Cruttenden hot on his heels.

Finally, Amelia Culshaw has an eye for big name events, and travelled to Boston in April and Chicago in October for their marathons, helping herself to a PB on both occasions. Apologies to the hundreds of our athletes we've had no space here to mention!



Awards

Awards night moved to a new venue this year, and it proved a popular choice. Members of all ages packed into the Boundary Room overlooking the Sussex Cricket Club ground. The (vegan) food was pretty damned good and we kept the bespoke bar pretty busy. What with music, visual displays, dancing and animated conversations (often about running!) the evening could be judged an undeniable success.

Our ex- Chairman Paul Collicutt (whose Phoenix membership goes back to 1981) declared "The awards night was the best awards night in the club's history....and I've been to all of them!"

Male and Female Awards

Award	Male	Female
Burchell Award	Reiss Bernard	Yuuna Barra
Sportshall Award	Freddie Castillo	Isabel Siddle
U11 Athlete of the Year	Alex Kavouras	Jahnvi Choksi
U13 Athlete of the Year	Matthew Noakes	Amelia Kortens
U15 Athlete of the Year	Cassius Hebden	Anna Court
U17 Athlete of the Year	Leo Brewer	Milly Dickinson
U20 Athlete of the Year	George Mills	Louisa Saunders
U23 Athlete of the Year	Spencer Thomas	Tara Bage
Senior Athlete of the Year	Ross Skelton	Rachel Gorman
Multisport Athlete of the Year	Mark Cossey	Erica Martin
Triclub Champions	Malcolm Hughes	Hannah Felton
Blackcap Handicap Fastest Leg	Alex Cruttenden	Cat Bounds
Track & Field Best Performance	Charlie Da'vall Grice	Beth Kidger
Road/XC Best Performance	Paul Whelpton	Almi Nerurkar



Individual and Team Awards

Award	Winner
Most Committed Team	SGP Women
Outstanding Team	Mens 6-Stage Relay
Shield for Commitment & Enthusiasm	Daniel Simpkin
Tough of the Track	Declan Neary
Bruce Faulkner Award	Ash Dorrington
Volunteer of the Year	Nicola Swinson & Ginette Read
Best Newcomer	Rosie Howie
Comeback of the Year	Mark Cossey
Coach of the Year	Phil Savage
Chairman's Award	Liz Halliday
Multisport Outstanding Achievement	Sam Wade
Male Vet V40	Ian Leitch
Male Vet V50	Steve Atkinson
Male Vet V60	Phil Hampshire
Female Vet V35	Amelia Culshaw
Female Vet V50	Jude Matthews
Blackcap Handicap Winner	Andy Pumphrey



Coach's Corner - Andy Bone

When did you begin coaching at Phoenix and why?

Andy Bone: About 12 years ago when my kids started at Phoenix training with Kim Hards (our Club secretary's dad) I was sat in the stand watching and thought perhaps I could help out. I was a parent helper at my kids school running club whilst the teacher had her lunch! I thought I ought to get a qualification so I did the UKA coaching course. I'd only taken up running more seriously since I'd stopped commuting to London and realised I now had three more hours in the day. Running is such a natural thing to do and something most kids love doing so I wanted to get them running efficiently, effortlessly and enjoying it. Seeing athletes getting faster and progressing up through the groups and meeting lots of new motivated people are some of the key reasons why I coach. Some of the athletes I coached when they first joined the club are now representing Sussex and GB. Also, I coach older athletes who are training for half and full marathons. I've done a few marathons in my time and as well as helping with their training plans; it is usually being around to offer advice or encouragement.



What are your favourite sessions?

AB: I like all sessions, either setting the session or taking part in it. Can't beat hill reps or the classic 400x12 (60).

What thing did you learn in 2018 that has improved you as a coach?

AB: That it is ok to adapt a session midway through as you discover athletes are either finding it too easy or too hard. This is especially true with the younger athletes. Also, don't forget to ask other coaches for their thoughts. There is still some much more to learn when putting one foot in front of another.

What would a perfect 2019 look like as a coach?

AB: The younger athletes continue to enjoy their running and compete in the odd race, picking up a PB or two on the way, and then carry on into 2020. My two youth groups I coach on Wednesday evenings are great and I can see a lot of potential. It's my aim to keep them interested and together and racing as a strong group. I can see a group emerging similar to that of our current older group (Robbie, Spence, Archie, George and Beth). Watch this space. Finally, the older athletes who I've written plans for all run PBs.

Which coaches from athletics or other sports inspire you and why?

AB: Harry Wilson, Steve Ovett's coach obviously. It's great to think of that when training at Withdean Park or Stadium or Preston Park - that's where Steve was coached by Harry. Brother Colm O'Connell coached many athletes including David Rudisha. He's known as "the Godfather of Kenyan running".



Elite Senior Interviews - Beth Kidger & Charlie Grice

What was your personal highlight of 2018 and why?

Beth: My personal highlight of 2018 I would have to say is getting to the final of the British champs in the 1500m. Last season was my first proper season on the track after 6 years out of the sport. I wanted to make a real comeback with the aim to qualify for the British Champs. So, to get to the finals exceeded my expectations and gave me a huge confidence going into the next year!



Charlie: After a disappointing 2017, Jon Dan and I went back to the drawing board and agreed something needed to change. I relocated back to Brighton permanently and we also took a different approach to training that we knew worked for me.

So I would say that my personal highlight was getting back into championship finals and actually influencing the races at the business end. I haven't been strong enough to do that before.

What are your targets this year?

BK: This year, I would say my aims would be mainly breaking new pbs across 1500m 800m and 3k too. It would be great to achieve around 4:12 for 1500 and reach 2:06 for 800m as having that speed would be very useful. With the 3k, a top 10 ranking would be a really decent target too.

CG: 2019 we have the World championships in Doha in October so that is the main focus for me. I am under no illusions that I am entering the peak of my athletic career and am expecting myself to run a big one there.

What's your favourite session to do and why?

BK: My favourite session is probably one of the sessions I do in the peak of the track season. For example 1k, 600m, 400m, 200m. It's quite a speedy session for me but something like this is a really good indicator of the kind of pace I'll be able to run at race pace.

CG: My favourite session is probably a 600 breakdown e.g. 600,400,300,200 x2 at race pace or 6x300s with 3 min rest. I much prefer the quality training to the long mileage.

Which pieces of kit or apparel do you absolutely swear by?

BK: With regards to clothing it doesn't make too much of a difference to me. However with trainers, I definitely tend to stick to Nike. Nike Odyssey and Vomero trainers have always worked well for me as my main running shoes as they give me a good amount of support.



CG: In the winter my essentials are thin base layers that keep me warm and absorb sweat. I'm fussy with my socks as well I like the thin Nike ones as I wear my shoes quite tight.

Who's your all-time sporting hero?

BK: For me, growing up I would say Kelly Holmes was my sporting hero. I was lucky enough to witness her achieve her incredible double gold in the Athens Olympics, 2004. It was during family holiday when I was 10 and watching this moment in sporting history is a memory I will never forget! She is someone that achieved her main goals quite late in her sporting career with a lot of hiccups on the way, so this is inspiring for me.

CG: I don't have one stand-out but the main idols of mine are Steve Ovett & Mo Farah.

Who are your favourite training partners?

BK: I am lucky to be able to train with quite a range of athletes who help me in different ways. On the weekends I often train with Gemma Kersey who comes down from Essex every now and then and races similar distances to me as well as Tara Bage who is strong at the longer distances too. I also find it very useful training with some of the Phoenix Track girls such as Ellie Baker and Shona Richards. They are very speedy which is very beneficial for me to work on. In the week, I also have some of the younger athletes to train with on club nights such as Leo Brewer who is always a very strong athlete to work with in sessions :)

CG: Someone that can help take a rep but doesn't hammer you into the ground and race you in training. In my opinion you should rarely be pressing 100% in training...save that for the racing.

Which Phoenix athletes are you tipping for a breakthrough year in 2019?

BK: This is a hard one to predict. Looking at some of the younger athletes, a few of them are coming through very well. It could also be a good year for Spencer Thomas and Archie Davis to make big jumps especially with the European U23s ahead!

CG: I would say Archie Davis as long as he stays healthy because I don't think he has reached his potential yet. Also, George Mills is due a breakthrough because he has a good work ethic and has had a tough time with injuries so far.

What's the best piece of advice you can give to aspiring athletes?

BK: The best advice I would give young athletes is mainly to remember to enjoy the sport! Don't put too much pressure on yourself but always have self belief. Understand that not every day will be a good day and that's all part of the process. Trust your coaches and the people advising you too. This is key. One of the most important things is being able to believe your coach and vice versa too.

CG: No athlete likes to be told it as we are all impatient but you must be patient and consistent. That will bring great results. Staying healthy.



Elite Junior - Milly Dickinson

What was your personal highlight of 2018 and why?

Milly: For me, it was probably reaching the English Schools championships in track and cross country, as this has been my dream since I was about 12! It was such a fun experience, not just the race but going up on the coach with Sussex as well.

What are your targets this year?

MD: My main aim is to get the English schools qualifying time again, and hopefully make the final this year. Also just to keep chipping away at my PB, and run a decent 1500m time. Above all though, just keep enjoying it and stay injury free.

What's your favourite session to do and why?

MD: Definitely anything in the summer down the track. I love speed sessions such as 300,200 x3 or a mile tempo followed by some 150s. Anything with short reps in really!

Who are your favourite training partners?

MD: There's a big group of us who always run together. Mia Edwards is a brilliant partner, but the whole group is what makes it the best. Flora, Madelaine, Alice, Saoirse, Ben, Cassius, Naomi, Maia... it differs every session! Also Rachel Berry - the best partner anyone can ever ask for even if she isn't running at the moment.

Which Phoenix athletes are you tipping for a breakthrough year in 2019?

MD: 100% Flora Davis! She has already taken a good 3 seconds of her 800m PB since last year, indoors in January! She is also absolutely smashing all the training sessions at the moment.

What's the best piece of advice you can give to aspiring athletes?

MD: Hard one to answer, as I am an aspiring athlete! However, I would just say to stick with it through the ups and downs. Consistency is key- keep turning up to training. However make sure you keep fuelling yourself and don't overtrain. Listen to your coach always! Especially Bruce Warren.





Sportshall 2018/19 Season Phoenix U11 & U13 Team

The three winter indoor Sportshall League fixtures are always well-supported by our younger athletes and their parents. In 2018/19 we fielded a relatively new team in the first event and in fact, there were a few youngsters that were competing for the very first time. The structure this year is slightly different with fewer non scoring events available for the less experienced to compete in, therefore we made sure that every athlete that turned up was given at least one scoring event. There has also been a mixed relay introduced for both age groups. There were some fantastic performances ensuring that Phoenix came second overall behind Worthing.



In the second round the teams did even better and came away with an overall win. There were a couple of great races to watch, in particular the mixed relay where we were just pipped to the post. Another good turnout and some great performances in the third event on 2nd February, though we had to settle for 2nd place behind Worthing in this match and in the final overall league table. And in terms of generating enthusiasm and commitment which is our number one objective we can be more than happy with this year's results!



XC

Phoenix began 2018 in style by regaining the senior men's title at the Sussex County Cross-Country Championships in Bexhill. A strong team featuring Ross Skelton (individual bronze), Sam Wade, Max Pickard, Ian Leitch, Max Dumbrell and five-time former champion Jon Pepper ensured the club finished comfortably ahead of their rivals, and their victory was matched in the u20 event thanks to excellent runs by Dan Stidder (individual silver), Oliver Johnson and Reuben Hoyte. The u17 men won a team bronze while the u15 girls narrowly missed out, finishing just three points off third place. Best individual result of the day went to Almi Nerurkar, who dominated the u17 women's race to bring home an individual gold medal. Elsewhere in the junior events there were top ten finishes for Matthew Noakes (7th – u11 boys); Imogen Read and Rosa Howie (7th and 8th – u11 girls); Benjamin Connolly (8th – u13 boys); Aoife Edwards (9th – u13 girls); Will Carey (9th – u15 boys); Alice Wright (7th – u15 girls); Leo Brewer and Ben Martin (5th and 10th – u17 men); and Naomi Fonteyn (6th – u17 women).

Success continued at the Sussex Masters Championships in Lancing. Tough conditions didn't stop Dave Carter claiming an excellent individual gold in the VM40 event, capping a fine team performance which saw Donald Maclellan, Austen Hunter and Paul Lawrence scoop first place. Paul Whelpton's commanding victory helped the VM60 team, also comprising Malcolm Kemp and Robert Weaver, to a bronze medal.



The Southern Championships returned to Stanmer Park for the first time since 2015 and Almi Nerurkar made the most of the home advantage to win a silver medal in the u17 women's event. Weather conditions declined towards the end of the day but not before some other notable performances in the younger age groups. Naomi Fonteyn (30th – u17 women); Alice Wright (51st – u15 girls); Leo Brewer (21st – u17 men); and Daniel Stidder (26th – u20 men) all deserve a mention for their strong performances.

And it was back to Stanmer Park a couple of weeks later to round off the league season. This was the final race in the series after meets at Goodwood, Bexhill and Lancing in 2017. With final league positions to sort out the u15 girls' third place on the day ensured they finished second overall for the season. The men's vets team also gained silver medals while the senior men claimed bronze. There was individual success as well as Max Dumbrell (SM) and Dave Carter (VM) secured silver medals and Alice Wright (u15 girls) came away with a bronze.

Almi Nerurkar's excellent winter continued as she put in the stand-out performance among a small contingent of Phoenix runners at the National Championships at Parliament Hill: an excellent bronze



medal in the u17 women's event. And after being selected to represent Sussex in the English Schools Championship, Milly Dickinson came back with team bronze medal in the Intermediate girls event. Leo Brewer scored an impressive 36th in the Intermediate boys event.

Phoenix brought two medals back from the Sussex relay championships at Goodwood in October. Mia Edwards, Maia Hardman and Milly Dickinson scored a very narrow victory over local rivals Brighton and Hove in the u17 event, while Steve Atkinson, Andy Bone, Steve Selby and Paul Wishart secured silver in the v50 event.

The club sent a team to the Southern relay championships at Wormwood Scrubs and the young quartet of Max Pickard, Declan Neary, Oliver Johnson and Archie Davis achieved a strong fifth place finish: the best-ever result by a Sussex team.

Two athletes represented the club at the British Athletics Cross Challenge in Liverpool in November. Almi Nerurkar finished 24th overall and 17th u17 while Declan Neary crept inside the top 100 in the men's event.

The 2018/19 cross country league season was both curtailed (by the cancellation of the first event at Goodwood) and rejigged (following the enforced rescheduling of the Lancing event) meaning the two meetings in 2018 both took place at Stanmer Park. Phoenix had a particularly impressive showing at the first of these as a hugely impressive 83 athletes took part in the different events. As so often this year Almi Nerurkar led the way with a fine victory in the senior women's event while the senior men took an early lead in the league as the six A team scorers Ian Leitch, Robbie Fitzgibbon, Max Dumbrell, Declan Neary, Todd Leckie and Spencer Thomas all came home in the top 15. Elsewhere there were top ten finishes for Corbin Bailey and Vincent Pegley (6th and 8th – u11 boys); and Ben Connolly (6th – u15 boys). The second meeting was less well attended by Phoenix athletes but saw Corbin (6th) and Vincent (9th) almost exactly match their results from the first meeting. Max Dumbrell and Todd Leckie both finished in the top ten for the senior men.

The year was rounded off with the SEAA Masters and Inter-Counties events at Horspath in Oxfordshire. In the Masters event the standout performance saw Paul Whelpton claim second place in the V65 event. Alex Bonzi was the highest Phoenix finisher in the overall results, finishing 32nd out of 225 runners in the men's event. In the Inter-Counties match our Sussex representatives were Jaymes Fonteyn (111th – u13 boys); Ben Connolly (88th – u15 boys), Maia Hardman and Milly Dickinson (27th and 57th – u17 girls) and Naomi Fonteyn (15th – u20 women).

Some excellent results across the age groups with plenty to be excited about in 2019!



Track and Field

2018 was a big year for Phoenix's track athletes, with the challenge of peaking early for the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast of Australia before refining form and conditioning for the European Championships later in the year. In addition to this a large contingent of Masters athletes tested themselves against the world in Malaga, whilst an incredibly busy calendar of domestic races up and down the country was tackled by top-class talent throughout the club.

Charlie Grice is the obvious individual to highlight, finishing an agonising 4th place in the 1500m final before executing an incredibly brave run in the final of the European 1500m final, securing 5th place in a nail-biting, blanket finish. Mixing it in such elite competition after a number of injury problems indicates that Charlie is poised for a big year in 2019.



Domestically, Beth Kidger (1500m) and Finn Bigg (800m) had breakthrough years, qualifying for their first domestic finals at the British Championships. Robbie Fitzgibbon cemented his status as one of the most consistent and talented milers in the country by also reaching the 1500m final, whilst Spencer Thomas, Archie Davis, Declan Neary and Billy White enjoyed BMC success in numerous events.

It's also reiterating just how high the pedigree is of Phoenix athletes on a National stage. Last year we had no less than 4 athletes in the top 25 men over 1500m and Beth 13th female in the same event.

Steve Atkinson rolled back the years in a big way, setting a new British record for the V50 4x800m relay, as well as securing medals in both the County and South of England championships over 800m and 1500m. 2019 promises to be a huge year as Steve focuses on goals on both a National and International stage.

At the World Masters in Malaga, 8 Phoenix athletes with an average age of 60ish competed in a number of track and road races. The highlights were a full set of medals for Paul Whelpton (Individual silver in the 10k road race plus Individual bronze and Team gold in the Half Marathon), whilst Malcolm Kemp secured a bronze in the team Half Marathon.



Ultra and Off-Road Racing

In the Beachy Head marathon, 8 Phoenix athletes completed the iconic course with the highlights being a heartbreaking silver for Todd Leckie who performed superbly in a brutal battle with the eventual winner. In 3rd place, Milan Watson ran his first-ever sub-3 marathon to record an absolutely stunning podium finish. Dave Powell, whose form just got better and better as the year went on, also deserves a mention for an excellent 11th place after only signing-up for the race a few weeks before race day.

Extending the distance somewhat, resident Ultra-machine Andy Pumphrey took on another ridiculous challenge by competing in the iconic Tor Des Geants Ultra. In his own words:

“Being a little competitive, I had to look into this race and when I looked at the distance and height gain I wondered if it was possible to run/march over 200 miles up and down the side of many of the largest mountains in Europe in such a short time. When I read about the race I discovered that the Tor des Géants is one of the premier endurance trail running races in the world. It is a non-stop 340K ultra-trail race covering an entire region; from the 4,000m Italian Alps to the Gran Paradiso Natural Park and the Aosta Valley. The race crosses 34 municipalities, 25 mountain passes, 30 alpine lakes, and 2 national parks. It has a mountain elevation of 24,000m and actual climbing of around 30,000m. On top of this, on average only 50% normally finish the race due to fatigue, illness, weather or injury.

The race took me 132 hours, I came 260th out of 900, I was extremely pleased with my race and how it all went, and other than my broken nose I only had one small blister. To put the height and terrain into some prospective, Ben Nevis is 1,345M whereas most of these mountains are over 2,500M. In addition the terrain destroys your kit. During the event I wrecked a brand new pair of trainers, destroyed 2 pairs of socks, destroyed a Gore-Tex pair of trousers, snapped a running pole and broke the handle on the other running pole.

The race is so strange in that, there is no end to it, you finish one day and it just rolls into the next day and then the next night and so on, it just seems to go on and on. When I got to Courmayeur and the finish was a few hundred yards away I knew then I had done it. I didn't care who was in bed at 12.20am I was going to celebrate. I was not shy about my finish and let the whole town know that Andy from the UK had arrived. Luckily for me a few hundred late drinkers were still up and more than happy to cheer me in. At the finish you run up a large platform and celebrate. I celebrated the hardest thing I have ever done in my life.

In summary, this was the best race of my life in so many ways and I would recommend it to anyone who is mad enough to enter.”





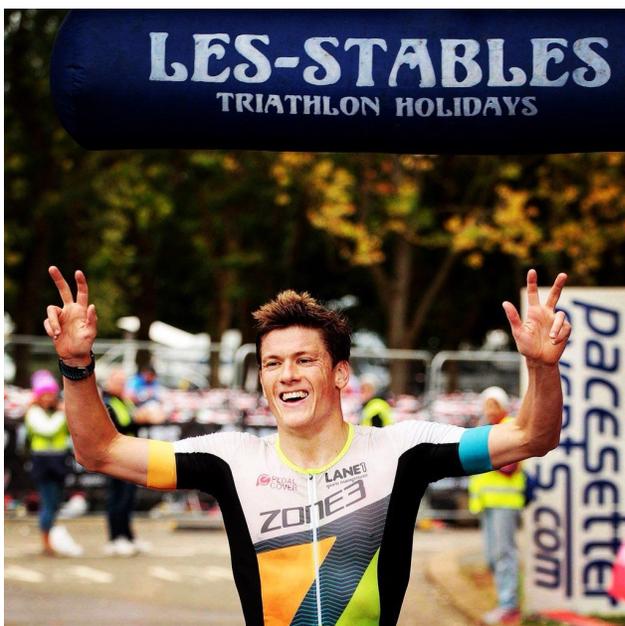
Multisport/Triathlon

Phoenix provides training for seniors in swim, bike and run and we have members that compete in multisport events on a regular basis. We are affiliated to the British Triathlon Federation and we have coaches qualified by that body. The sessions have also been valuable to our runners for cross training and injury rehabilitation.

This year's notable performances saw Sam Wade win Gold (m25-29) in the British Triathlon Age Group Championships in Leeds whilst also amassing 3 professional races, a further 3 titles, and 8 podium finishes.

Malcolm Hughes secured a Silver in the (m55-59) Triathlon England Champs in Southport.

Jess Prior won a brilliant Silver in the European Aquathlon champs (f20-24), whilst, continuing the International success, multisport stalwart Erica Martin smashed it again, finishing 3rd GB athlete and 6th in her group overall in the ITU Duathlon World Championships.



In local races, Mark Cossey made a seamless transition from road racing to multisport, recovering from a horrible bike accident and securing Comeback of the Year at the Club Awards in the process. There were also age group podium finishes in various Triathlon races for Barry Blackwell, Izzy Anderson, Tom Sanderson and Emma Wrightman.





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