

# *Halesowen Athletics Club*

# **Newsround**

## ***Review of the Year 2021***

2021 was a year in which COVID-19 had a significant impact during the spring months but by early summer there were the first signs of something approaching normality returning to the club.

The summer months saw track leagues, a school holiday track camp and a somewhat rainy return to Hagg Farm before the year came to a close with a pleasingly full programme of cross country races, parkruns and Christmas social events.

### ***JANUARY - MARCH***

A third national lockdown meant all significant activity at the club in all forms ceased until the end of March.



*Sophie Cook flying high in the old gold at Loughborough*  
in her debut appearance in a Halesowen vest finished second at the European indoor trials in Loughborough.

The qualifying round for the England Athletics Virtual Road Relays saw our club finish 62<sup>nd</sup> and claim the unofficial title as Worcestershire champions!

We also welcomed GB international pole vaulter Sophie Cook to the club who

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Adam Cross was quickest in the British Masters 1 mile virtual challenge, finishing in 258th place with a time of 5:30.

And in a spot of international virtual competition, Matt Allen and four other Halesowen athletes helped the Impalas team to a 39<sup>th</sup> place finish at the virtual Dutch relay event, the Batevarien.

***APRIL - JUNE***

Full club activity resumed on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April with initial outdoor drinking followed in mid-May by the welcome reopening of the clubhouse and bar.

The Easter weekend saw two virtual competitions, with Peter Dear winning the chairman's 2 mile Easter challenge and James Robinson seeing off all challengers in the thirteen event Ultimate Halesowen-athlon.

Andrew Carruthers won the 15 mile Wuthering Heights Wander race in Yorkshire and octogenarian Barry Griffiths was the star turn at the club track time trials event, with his epic 20 second 100 metres sprint!

Sophie Cook took bronze in the pole vault at the British Championships in Manchester and Joe Rogers broke the club 800 metres record twice in the space of two months.

***JULY - SEPTEMBER***

All significant COVID restrictions were lifted in July, and the summer track leagues returned, albeit in limited form.

Euro 2020 fever swept the club with enjoyable nights at the club for the England matches whilst the changeable summer weather did little to dampen the spirits at the summer training weekend at Hagg Farm.

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James Hault and his team of coaches ran two successful school holiday athletics camps for local children and our hammer and discus throwing cage facility was fully upgraded thanks to support from England Athletics and Alex Morgan.



*A pre-penalty heartbreak picture from the Euro 2020 final at the club*

James Robinson and Mel Hepke won BMAF Pole Vault titles, and Maddy Down won the England Athletics Under 20 T38 100 metres title.

The club put Team GB's athletes to shame with a haul of twenty medals including seven golds at the Worcestershire Country Track Championships.

Max Parker and Mel Hepke won the club 5k championships and on the same weekend, Simone Jones stormed to finish first female at the Black Country 10k whilst Alex Taylor won the Family Fun Run.

There was a bronze medal for our men's Masters team at the Midland Road Relays at Sutton Park and Andy Yapp won the off-road Battle of the Borders Half Marathon.

The return of the Saturday morning parkruns saw triumphs for Andy Butler at Glossop, Simone Jones at Walsall Arboretum and for Michelle Dale at our new local event at Woodgate Valley Country Park.

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Harry Daniels also notched an impressive run of first finishes at the Stevens Park Wollescote junior parkrun.

And there was a memorable send off for Mick Mielczarek, whose retirement from coaching was marked by current and former members of all ages joining Mick for one last Wednesday night run followed by a big celebration back in the club.

### ***OCTOBER – DECEMBER***

Andy Butler stormed to victory at the Shrewsbury Half Marathon, finishing over two minutes ahead of his nearest rival, and Mark Hadley finally donned his England Masters vest at the Richmond RunFest Half Marathon.

In one of the first major cross country races after an 18 month break, our men's masters team won silver and our women's masters team won bronze at the Midland Cross Country relays in Wolverhampton.



*The 2021 Christmas run, seconds after a shot of mid-run refreshment!*

And there was more vets success as Paul Allen won M75 gold and John Hill took M70 bronze at the British Masters 5k in Lancashire.

The social events were back in full swing with the training weekend back at Ty Carreg and a busy programme of Christmas social events.

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Sam Morton lead the party games at the club Christmas party, Steve Horton posed the questions at the Christmas quiz and runners of all ages turned out for the Christmas run over the fields and trails of Bromsgrove.

And Roger Mallard was the winner of the traditional Boxing Day handicap race, with Peter Dear and Lily Higgins recording the fastest times.

Kian Hazelwood was the winner of the junior race.

***2022 PREVIEW***

The club's centenary celebrations are the main highlight over the next twelve months.

Numerous events are planned, starting with a launch run on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January from the Jack Price plaque in Halesowen Town Centre and culminating in the Boxing Day Handicap, which is being held 100 years to the day when the club was first formed.

Keep up to date with latest news in the monthly Newsround newsletters as well as via Twitter, Facebook and the HACCentral WhatsApp group.

Sending best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year to all club members.

Up Owen!

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