

**MIDLAND COUNTIES
AMATEUR ATHLETIC
ASSOCIATION
1880 - 1980**



INTRODUCTION

I have attempted to write this article about the Association during its first 100 years in a manner which I hope will be found interesting. I have not used bibliographic indications, but have included a bibliography as an aid for anyone who might wish to write a more detailed history of the Association.

Principal events in the Association's history, some of them serious, some of them less serious are mentioned. The main primary source material used has been the Minutes of the Association's meetings. Unfortunately the Minutes of the first 20 years and for the period from 1939 until 1954 are missing and therefore I was unable to comment in detail about these periods.

From reading this article you will see that it was the policy of the Association to improve the management of athletic meetings and suppress the abuses which were very prevalent in its early years and to keep the sport within the amateur ranks. From this base the Association is now firmly established,

I have no doubt there will be omissions and the occasional mistake of fact and for these I apologise.

ROY MITCHELL

HON. SECRETARY

Date: March 1980

FOREWORD

This History written to record the first 100 years of the Midland Counties Amateur Athletic Association has not been uneventful, in a sport which covers over 20 disciplines and caters for all. The fat, the thin, the short, the tall, any class, creed, politics or colour, a truly all embracing pastime for all.

This admirable history compiled over many hours of work by Roy Mitchell shows not only the evolution of the sport in the Midlands, but the very beginnings of the Modern Olympic ideals from the observing of the Much Wenlock Olympics which had been running for over 150 years before the advent of modern athletics which we know today.

The Midlands were involved in the forming of the Amateur Athletic Association in 1880 and the history of the AAA and the MCAA have been entwined ever since.

The Midland AAA can be proud of their association with the parent body and not least in their involvement in the development of Indoor athletics as we know it today, which stands alongside the outdoor events as a spectacle full of excitement and surprise, and as I write we look forward to the further development with a new track to be laid this coming summer.

The Midlands can also look forward to the spirit of athletics gaining still further, and who knows maybe athletics as we know it is about to change beyond recognition as an amateur sport within the next few years. Could it be the birth of the New Century will see a new concept of athletics and amateurism.

MICHAEL A. FARRELL

President

March 1980

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The first Olympic Games are reputed to have taken place in 776 BC and were held regularly until AD 261. After that date there is very little information about them until AD 393 when the Games were finally stopped by the Edict of Theodosius I when he ordered all pagan cults and their centres to be closed.

Since this date, men have competed in athletic contests. About the middle of the nineteenth century, modern amateur sport began to develop in the form which we have today.

EARLY SPORTS MEETINGS IN THE MIDLANDS

Our organised sport of athletics is now one hundred years old, but before the Association was formed, many sports meetings were held in the Area. The oldest is probably the Wenlock Olympian Society meeting which began about 1850. The town has an historical connection with the formation of the Modern Olympic Games. Doctor Penny-Brookes, a native of the town, was one of the prime instigators of the Modern Games, but unfortunately he died a few months before the Games began in 1896.

Other meetings staged in this period were Northampton 1867, Loughborough 1868, Birmingham AC 1869, Husbands Bosworth 1873, Hinckley 1873, Wigston 1874, Moseley Harriers 1874, Oadby, Walsall and Pershore 1875. No doubt there were other meetings which were not recorded.

With the coming of industrialization, professional racing in certain parts of the country had become very popular. Previously, the control of pedestrianism (foot races, as it was known in those days) had been in the hands of the rich. Gradually, this control had lessened and public houses in the large cities and towns became the centres for backers and their runners.

The Amateur Athletic Club was already in existence and catered for officers of the Army and Navy, civil servants, members of Universities, and the main clubs in London. Just before 1880, this self-styled gentlemen's pastime began to change. The working class began to take an interest in the sport and it became popular throughout the country, especially in the North and the Midlands.

This rise in the popularity of athletics attracted professionals to compete as bogus amateurs at amateur meetings and entrepreneurs who organised meetings for their own gain. "Value prizes" were given (i.e. cheques drawn on tradesman).

MIDLAND COUNTIES AMATEUR ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

1880 - 1980

THE BEGINNING

"The meeting called by the Birmingham Athletic Club, for Monday last, to consider the desirability and necessity of forming a 'Midland Counties Athletic Club Association', was well attended, representatives from the following clubs being in attendance - Messrs. J. Anderton, F. Smith, J. Hubbard, J. Baxter (Birmingham AC), H.H. Wheeler, W. Fowler, J.W. Moore, H.M. Oliver, B. Wareing (Moseley Harriers), W.P. Goode, A. Bennett (Birchfield Harriers), D. Gibson, A.S. Tyler, F. Fowler (Moseley F.C.), J.C. Orr (Calthorpe F.C.), H.C. Jobson, H.C. Brettell (Dudley C & F.C.), J.H. Holden, J. Stone (Edgbaston Harriers), J.H. Taylor, C.F. Flint, J.R. McClelland (Walmley Harriers), A.H. Rawdon, H. Foster (Burton AC), T.A. Davidson, A. Hutchings (North Warwickshire B.C.), W.H. Clarke, F.A. Bennett, S.J. Davies, D. Davis (Sparkhill B.C.), F. Brommage (Handsworth Wood C.C.), W.R. Heaton, S. Addinsell (Edgbaston Crusaders)....."

"Mr. J.W. Moore (Moseley Harriers) then proposed that our association be formed of the athletic clubs in the Midlands, to be called 'The Midland Counties' Association of Amateur Athletic Clubs', was resolved. Mr. F. Smith (B.A.C.) was then elected Hon. Secretary pro tem".

This is an extract from an article which appeared in "The Midland Athlete" magazine, dated 3rd March 1880. The date of the inaugural meeting was 1st March 1880, and it was held in Bingley Hall.

This then was the beginning of the Association we have today.

Clearly then, clubs thought it necessary for some control to be instituted to protect amateur athletes. The Association was formed primarily "to check the gross evils that are insidiously, but surely inserting themselves into amateur athletic sports".

At a meeting held on Monday, March 22nd 1880 it was declared

"That the objects of the Association shall be to improve the management of Athletic Meetings, to promote uniformity of Rules for the guidance of Committees and to deal repressively with the abuses now prevalent in Athletic circles."

On Monday April 5th, 1880, rules were confirmed, Officers and a Committee were elected. Mr. John Anderton (Birmingham A.C.) was elected President, Messrs. F. Smith (B.A.C.) and H.M. Oliver (Moseley H.) Joint Hon. Secretaries and Mr. E.B. Holmes (Moseley F.C.) Hon. Treasurer.

The existing rules and laws of the Association, in some cases,

have changed very little from the rules adopted at this meeting. Member clubs could not give "value prizes" to successful competitors and clubs were asked to use "their best endeavours to suppress betting" at athletic meetings. Each club was bound to prosecute professionals who competed at any of its meetings, provided that upon consideration by the Committee, the legal grounds justified criminal prosecution.

Any member club who contravened the rules was liable to suspension from the Association.

During this meeting a letter from Mr. B.R. Wise (President - Oxford University A.C.) was read. He asked the Association to send representatives to a meeting which was to be held at the Randolph Hotel, Oxford on April 24th 1880. This was the meeting at which the Amateur Athletic Association was formed. Mr. John Anderton was elected a member of the first A.A.A. General Committee.

The first Annual General Meeting of the Association was held in the Midland Hotel, Birmingham, on 24th March, 1881. Fourteen clubs were represented. The income was £14 14s. but expenditure was £16. 18s. 3d. This deficit resulted from the £6 which was paid to the AAA as the Associations share of the loss made on the AAA Championships held in 1880.

Between the years 1881 and 1884 the Association staged two A.A.A. Championships. The first meeting was held at the Aston Lower Grounds on Saturday July 16th 1881. The 10 Miles Championship was held on Monday 18th July. It is reputed that 10,000 spectators watched on the Saturday, and only 1500 on the Monday. G.A. Dunning won the 10 miles races in 54 mins. 34 secs.

It was reported that the "Midland Association had distinguished itself by the excellence of its arrangements and the sporting and financial success of the meeting."

In June 1884 the A.A.A. Championships were again held on the Aston Lower Grounds. At this meeting W.G. George (who was a well known runner of that time) won the half mile, the one mile and 4 miles on the Saturday. He went on to win the 10 Miles on the Monday! He won the mile in the world record time of 4:18.4s.

The Association was very busy in the early years in its endeavour to govern the sport and to maintain the popularity of athletic meetings. Prevalent during this period was the practice of impersonation in men's and boys events. Entries were made without fees being paid and under value prizes were awarded. Handicapping was a great problem.

To help the Association with its work, District Officials were appointed throughout its Area.

QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE

A lively monthly meeting in May, 1886, revealed that all was not well within the Association. Two incidents reflected this

situation.

The status of the Melborne Harriers sports meetings was questioned. It was alleged that a publican had promoted the meeting, contrary to the rules of the Association, but the Harriers said the meeting was promoted by the Club and the free use of the grounds had been given by the owner.

Mr. W.W. Alexander commented that his name had been used as a handicapper without his approval and he thought the "affair had a very fishy appearance"! The Secretary of the Club was requested to attend the next meeting of the Association, to give his explanation.

A discussion took place concerning Small Heath Athletic Society "the bona fide existence of which had been called into question by Mr. Oliver" (Honorary Secretary of the Association). The Society had staged a sports meeting but apparently officers had not been elected before the sports meeting took place. Mr. Oliver maintained that the Society was merely a private undertaking, arranged by a small group of people who "officiated as directors and promoters of the meeting". He thought they had no right to do this and suggested that any member of the Association might arrange a similar meeting and "put the money in his pocket". Mr. Alexander objected strongly to the fact that the Society had been brought before the Association in this manner. He stated that if the Sports meeting had been a failure, nothing more would have been heard of it. He said the matter originated from the jealousy of Mr. Oliver, "by whom he had been vilified in a most unjustifiable manner".

It would appear that the whole dispute revolved around the question of personal ill-feeling towards Mr. Alexander. Mr. Oliver had written an abrasive article about Mr. Alexander in the 'Athlete'. It was considered unfair that Mr. Oliver, a member of the Association should have expressed his personal feelings in a manner damaging to Mr. Alexander's character. Mr. Oliver also stated that he thought the SHAS sports meeting was a private spectacular and was contrary to the Association rules.

Mr. Oliver was asked that, if he had "the purity of the sport so much at heart", why, some years ago, had he assisted at sports meetings which everyone knew were private spectaculars.

Mr. Alexander expressed surprise that Mr. Oliver should make a "vituperative attack" against him and thought it inconsistent for Mr. Oliver to behave in this way when he himself was founder of one of the worst phases of pseudo amateurism in the Midlands that of exhibition running for gate receipts.

The Chairman expressed concern that so much personal feeling had been 'infused into the meeting'.

Various speakers put forward their views and eventually a proposition to investigate the formation of the Club was carried, but with several members not voting. At the following Committee Meeting the "hatchet was buried", and any antagonism and animosity dividing the two men was broken down.

"Sport and Play" reported, "Now that these long outstanding differences have been overcome and peace proclaimed, let us hope that the gentlemen constituting the Committee of the MCAAA will endeavour to work together in unison for the better protection and purification of amateur sport in the Midlands, rather than making the Association an institution for the ventilation of personal grievances amongst its members, such as it has been obviously used for in the past".

SWIMMING UNDER ASSOCIATION RULES!

At a swimming meeting staged by the Leander Swimming Club, held under the MCAAA rules, Mr. T.W. Pope had won the 'Midland Athlete' Swimming Championship Cup. The second man lodged an objection that Pope had competed against J. Bates, a professional, for a medal, contrary to the rules of the MCAAA.

Mr. Pope said that he swam under the rules of the Swimming Association of Great Britain which, prior to 31st July 1880, allowed a professional to compete for an amateur prize, but since that date the amateur definition had been altered and was the same as that adopted by the MCAAA.

Justice prevailed and Mr. Pope was allowed to keep the cup, for the MCAAA Committee was of the opinion that Mr. Pope swam under the Swimming Association rules which had, at that time, entitled him to compete against professionals.

AREA BOUNDARY - CONTROVERSY

It was recommended at the 1886 AGM that a conference of the NCAA, the SCAAA and the Association be called to decide the limits of each District (now called area). The NCAA included Staffordshire in its District and the MCAAA ridiculed the idea of Staffordshire being a Northern County.

The MCAAA said that because the North had lost its claim to govern cyclists, mainly through the representations of Midland clubs, the NCAA "evidently wanted to revenge itself by encroaching upon the rights of the Midlands".

At the proposed conference it was hoped that the Southern delegates would support the Midlands claim that Staffordshire was a Midland county in every sense of the word.

Whether the conference took place or not, could not be established. One can only assume that it did, but that a decision was not reached. "Sport and Play", later in the year, reported that at a AAA meeting, it was declared, "that the MCAAA District for all registrations and future affiliations consists of that part of England contained between the lines of 52 and 53 North latitude".

BETTING

In the early years of the Association, betting at sports meetings was rife. Competitors were tempted by the odds offered by the bookmaker to stake money on themselves or friends. This practice grew until it became almost of

matter of course.

The Association received complaints about competitors not running fairly in their events and was urged to deal, "with the professional betting man - the source of all the evil, rather than be content merely with punishing his dupes".

HANDICAPPING BOARD OF CONTROL

In the early years, handicapping was carried out by club officials, but the Association, because of the inconsistencies which existed, thought it necessary to take control and at a Special General Meeting held on 4th January, 1901, it was resolved that a Handicapping Board of Control be formed "to remedy the evils which exist". Areas still exercise control and appoint handicappers.

It was agreed that 85% of the handicapping fees were to be paid to the official handicappers and the remaining 15% to be retained by the Association. The Handicapper's annual licence was fixed at £3. 3s. Od. The Board was appointed to act as an emergency committee.

During the year ending 31st December 1902, the Board met 27 times and 137 sports meetings had been held. 15 appeals against alleged inconsistency of handicapping were heard and in all but two of the cases the Board justified the return of the fees to the appellants. 16 charges of false, incomplete and misleading entries were also investigated,

The Board reported its satisfaction with the "continued advancement of Athletics in the Midlands with the elimination of much that is undesirable in the elements of amateur sport".

At the AAA General Committee in May, 1906, the Association successfully proposed that a conference of handicappers be convened to consider the unsatisfactory conditions of handicaps from the standpoint of uniformity and the matter of excessive limits which prevailed in certain districts.

At the 1910 AGM, the Board reported that good progress had been made towards securing uniformity of handicaps. The results on the whole had been proved satisfactory and the quality of the sport had generally advanced.

The Association was keen to improve handicapping and organised, from time to time, conferences to consider the uniformity of handicapping. Representatives from the North and South were invited to attend with a view to trying to adopt a general policy.

Handicap races remained popular until, the early 1950's. Some, like the Lichfield Greenhill Bower Sports, are still held.

A minute in 1965, illustrates this decline in the popularity. It was recorded that it had been the worst season for handicap races and even those which were held were very badly supported. A nominal fee of 2s. 6d. was allocated to the Handicapper as his fee!

SPORTS MEETINGS

A new byelaw was introduced in 1902 instructing "all affiliated clubs, as well as bodies holding sports under permit, to submit to the Association, the printers proof of the prospectus of events and entry forms in order -that possible irregularities may be set right".

The Association had by this time, compiled authorised lists of official Referees, Judges, Starters and Timekeepers. The Association hoped that promoters of sports meetings would use these qualified officials and thereby improve the standard of meetings.

Referees were required to have a thorough knowledge of the rules of the Association and Laws of Competition. Judges needed to be familiar only with the laws of competition. It was necessary for a Timekeeper to have a reliable watch and be experienced in the timing of races. Starters also needed to be experienced and know the laws of competition.

In the early days the Association was keen to ensure that athletic meetings were advertised as being held under A.A.A. laws. Attention was drawn to press advertisements of many sports promoting bodies which did not say the meetings were to be held under A.A.A. laws. The hope was expressed that now the attention of meeting secretaries had been drawn to this irregularity, no such omission would in future occur.

Sports officials were also asked to insist that correct dress for competition should be worn. It was recommended that a notice quoting the rule should appear in all programmes, together with an intimation that the rule will be enforced i.e. "Every competitor shall wear a sleeved jersey and loose drawers to the knees and any competitor shall be excluded unless properly attired."

It was reported at the Annual General Meeting in 1904 that 182 sports meetings were held that year and that aggregate number of entries received were 19,471, showing an average entry for each meeting of 147 or thereabouts. Clearly an indication of the popularity of the sport.

Moves were made early in 1906 which clearly indicated that the Association was trying to improve the management of sports meetings, when it recommended to all sports promoting bodies to appoint officials who were on the Association's list (on this list appeared Professional and Amateur Starters!).

District officials were asked to report to the Association whether the general conduct of the meetings was satisfactory, or otherwise, having particular regard to the condition of the track, whether events were run at the stated time, dressing accommodation and any breach of the Laws. Sports Committees were also asked to ensure that tracks were properly marked out and correctly measured.

At this time many meetings were held on grass. Lanes for the straight sprint events were marked out with string raised about twelve inches from the ground. The methods of laying down a

quarter mile track were crude and very doubtful in distance.

During 1906 131 sports meetings were held and the aggregate number of entries was 20,462. The average number of entries at meetings was 156.

The Association at this time tried to secure concessions from the railway companies for athletes travelling to and from sports meetings.

RULES

A recommendation from a Court Judge, arising out of an incident which occurred during a race in March, 1905, may have been instrumental in the framing of a rule of competition which exists to this present day.

A man who had won a mile race had already won the race on two previous occasions. Only two competitors finished. The judges were convinced that the second man allowed the first man to win and were so disgusted with the proceedings, that they declared the race void. The winner then sued the sports committee. In giving judgment, the Court judge said, "it was important that in all sport, the decisions of the judges or umpires should be final in the absence of fraud. Referring to the rules of the A.A.A. he hoped that the Association Honorary Secretary would ask the AAA to state that in all races run at meetings affiliated to the AAA it should be an absolute rule that the decision of two or more judges should be final".

CORRECT DRESS FOR COMPETITION

The question of correct dress to be worn when competing was to the fore in the early years. In 1913 affiliated clubs were asked to register their colours with the Honorary Secretary and clubs were instructed that competitors must run in club colours and such colours be printed in the programme.

Unattached athletes had to run in white jerseys and black trunks.

PRIZES

If it was proved that "under value" prizes had been awarded, promoters were asked to make up the value of the articles in dispute. In one case a promoter had to make up the following additional amounts: Gold watch 13s. 6d., Tea Service 10s., Diamond ring 15s.

Coronation coins had been awarded in 1936 to winning competitors at sports meetings held in the South. The Association expressed its concern that the giving of these coins as prizes at Midland meetings might infringe the amateur definition. The SCAAA sent a letter explaining the situation. "It was noted that although 'money prizes' in the form of the new Coronation coins had been awarded to the successful competitors, it was intended that the coins should be souvenirs and not regarded as a money gift. The Southern Counties Committee therefore ruled that none of the competitors

infringed the amateur definition by competing for these particular prizes and that their amateur status had not been impaired."

MISDEMEANOURS

The Annual report in 1904 commented that false and incomplete or misleading entries were still causing a problem. Listed in the Minutes there are many cases of suspensions being imposed for incorrect statements made on entry forms.

For example

"In view of the number of cases of false statements as to the height of boys entered in boys' races, it was strongly felt that additional measures were necessary with the object of stamping out these fraudulent practices" (Boys were brought in front of the Committee because they gave their heights as, for example, 4 ft Instead of 4ft 2 ins and 4ft 4ins instead of 4ft 7 ins).

"Mr. C. Wheelwright proposed that at the next meeting he would move the adoption for a new byelaw to make it compulsory for the age and height of each boy entered to be printed in the programme, that all sports meetings at which boys' races are run, the sports committee" shall provide themselves with a measuring stick and that the boys be measured before the heats are run". The byelaw was adopted at the next meeting.

The "practice of impersonation" was very prevalent, the following being a typical case. "A report from the Police that John Smith who appeared in front of the Association Committee was in reality Harry Smith. No John Smith lived at the address given".

The Association was keen to stamp out malpractice.

"Horace Taylor from Northampton was requested to attend before the Committee to explain his running".

The Chief Constable of Northampton was notified. As a result of Police enquiries at Northampton in connection with Horace Taylor, the Association's Solicitor expressed the opinion, "that the case was clearly one of fraud and conspiracy". The Solicitor was instructed to take the necessary steps.

False entries were still causing problems. To give an example; the father and the uncle of a boy appeared in connection with the charge of false entry in May 1903 to the Wolverhampton C. & A.C. Sports. The evidence of the father and uncle was of a very unsatisfactory nature. The Association, was, however, satisfied as to the false nature of the entry and the complicity of the father. It was resolved "that the boy be suspended until he attains the age of fifteen".

During the year ending 1907, out of 20,308 entries for competitions, only 15 cases of false or misleading entries were investigated, compared with 42 the previous year. The Handicapping Board of Control considered this as evidence that athletes were taking greater care in carrying out the

requirements of the Association.

Competitors were also suspended for a period of time from competition if they were found guilty of using insulting language to officials I

At the Birmingham Police Sports meeting on August 2nd 1910, the Leicester Borough Police were disqualified in the tug-of-war competition for wearing (ironically) incorrect boots. An Inspector from the Leicester Police reported to the Committee that in his opinion the boots objected to were in order. It was reported that after the meeting the boots were examined and were found to have inverted tips which did not comply with the A.A.A. rule.

The opinion of the committee was that the judges' disqualification under the circumstances was justified.

Subsequently, the rule regarding boots to be worn in the tug-of-war competitions was revised.

Tug-of-war was then just a A.A.A. event judged by AAA officials and it was not until 1958 that it became a separate body drawing up its own rules, but still under the umbrella of the A.A.A.

At the 1910 November monthly meeting the Hon. Secretary read a newspaper report of proceedings at Banbury Police Court against an athlete who entered and competed at the Banbury Sports in the name of another athlete and on a false entry. The prosecution, which was undertaken by and at the expense of the A.A.A. through Banbury Harriers resulted in the man being sent to prison for a month with hard labour.

About this time an athlete in the North had been sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour, for obtaining prizes under false pretences.

AN UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE

At a meeting in 1965, certain athletes had refused to compete in a race unless the Referee allowed an athlete to run who was not named in the programme. Contrary to the Referee's ruling the athlete ran in the race. The Executive Committee heard the evidence and upheld the Referee's decision. The competitors who had refused to run, were reprimanded and the athlete who ran contrary to the Referee's ruling was requested to surrender his prize and forfeit his paid expenses. A very mild "sentence" compared with the ones recorded in the early days of the Association.

DISTRICT COMMITTEES

In December 1910 the Powers and Duties of District Committees were adopted. Part of a District Committee's work was to deal with registration of clubs, registration of clubs wishing to hold sports meetings and to supervise athletic meetings.

This was an important development in the work of the

Association. District Committees put forward many interesting matters which suggested that careful thought had been given to our sport and its development.

In 1916, South Derbyshire and South Nottingham Committee recommended to the Association that a petition should be sent to the Education Committee of Derby and Nottingham to include "track athletics" in the schools curriculum as an organised game in the same way that cricket, football and gymnastics already were.

This was taken up by the Association and the AAA agreed to ask County Education Committees throughout the country.

It is not evident from the minutes whether this request was generally successful. It did not meet with the approval of the Birmingham Education Committee for it could not see its way clear to agree with the suggestion "re inclusion of track athletics in the schools curriculum".

Parks Committees were also asked if training facilities could be allowed (London County Council had already agreed to this).

AREA CHAMPIONSHIPS

During its early years, the Association did not hold Area Championships on specified dates. Individual events were allocated to various sports meetings.

In 1911, the Association decided to stage all its events at Villa Park on two days, Saturday 17th and Monday evening 19th June. The Committee thought the meeting would have many advantages and would be particularly acceptable to athletes and attractive to the sporting public.

Entrance fees were 1s. 6d. for one event and 1s. each additional event.

The Annual Report commented that the success of the Championships was marred by the "unfavourable meteorological conditions, but from a sports point of view the venture was a distinct success".

For the 1912 Championships, the Association agreed that advertisements should be placed in the Sporting Mail, Sports Argus and Sport and Play. Ten sandwich board men were to be employed on the day from 11.00a.m. to 3.00p.m.!

It was left to the Honorary Secretary to arrange suitable insurance against accidents to competitors.

In 1929, the Association was in favour of holding Junior Championships, with an age limit of 21 years, as well as Senior Championships and so began the format of the Area Championships which we have today:

OLYMPIC GAMES

In February, 1910 the Association commented on the fact that the 1908 Olympic Games had shown that in field events the UK was particularly weak. The Association stated

"that other countries catered for and diligently encouraged the practice of field events, whereas in this country more attention was paid to track events". The AAA keen to remedy this state of affairs (the next Olympics were only two years away) decided in a practical and substantial manner to encourage areas to include field events in sports programmes. As far as the Midlands was concerned, the encouragement was a grant of £20 towards the provision of prizes for field events.

Twenty three athletes from the Area were selected for the Olympic Games Trials in 1912. A training fund was launched but it was reported later that only £100 of the £500 needed was to hand. Trainers were paid a honorarium of £5.

South Derbyshire and South Nottingham District Committee appeared to be a go ahead committee for in July, 1916, it suggested that the inferior showing of most of the English runners in Stockholm was thought to be caused by the scarcity of scratch races and that a larger number of such events may bring about an increase in the number of athletes of ability high enough to represent their country in International competitions.

Later the AAA offered sets of medals for ten scratch novice races in the Midlands in furtherance of the Berlin Olympic scheme.

Distances had to be measured in metres.

In 1936, the National Workers 'Sports Association' attempted to make what appeared to be a political issue of the AAA participation in the Berlin Olympics. The AAA had asked the Areas to consider the NVSA proposal, "that the spirit which prompted the organisation of the Olympic Games cannot be forwarded by participation in the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin and instructs the Association to withdraw its support and withhold the necessary permission to any of its members who make an application for a permit to compete.

The Midlands resolved unanimously to vote against this proposition which was to be put forward at the Special General Meeting called by the AAA to discuss it. The NWSA proposition was lost.

DISPUTES BETWEEN THE AAA AND NCU

A dispute arose between the AAA and the National Cyclists Union in 1906. The NCU had permitted professional runners to compete at their meetings and the AAA Committee thought that this was a breach of their Agreement.

This became a protracted affair and in April, 1909 the Association called a Special General Meeting to consider the proposition of the AAA with regard to the threatened termination by the NCU of the AAA and NCU Agreement. This agreement had been in existence since 1886. It was not necessary for cycling clubs to obtain a permit to stage

athletic events and similarly athletic clubs were not required to obtain a permit to stage cycling events.

In April, 1910, the agreement with the NCU was terminated because the AAA "could not submit to Interference by the NCU to clubs affiliated to the Association". Clubs who were affiliated to both the AAA and NCU had to decide to which body they would remain affiliated.

Later in 1910, an important notice to all educational establishments was published warning school boys about the danger of competing in sports meetings held by the NCU and the newly formed body called the National Athletics Union. These bodies were actively encouraging "professional pedestrianism" (foot races) and the Association was concerned that school boys should be kept from all contact with this so called "sport". It was hoped that even at this early age boys would recognise the AAA and retain their amateur principles in sport as they grew up.

During the dispute, the AAA promoted amateur cycling races and the NCU promoted amateur foot races as well as professional cycling and foot races. This unsatisfactory stage of affairs continued until the two bodies resolved their difficulties in 1912. The NCU and AAA were each to have control of their own clubs, but the NCU were responsible for cycling. Any foot races held at cycle meetings were to be under the control of the AAA. There were to be no professional cycling races.

From time to time, since the Agreement, certain points needed to be clarified. As recently as 1956, it was necessary to clarify the position of starters who were approved by both bodies. An approved starter of the NCU may start professional cycling races. If the same starter is also approved by the AAA his position with the AAA would not be affected.

DISPUTES

In 1926, a dispute arose between the Shropshire AAA and the Association. This dispute aroused considerable publicity and Shropshire AAA threatens! to disband. Shropshire had written to the Handicapping Board of Control "laying certain complaints", which were from competitors, judges, referees and from a Representative of Shropshire AAA.

Allegations about the conduct of certain competitors at the Wenlock and Ironbridge Sports had been lodged with the Board of Control. The Board was accused of interviewing only competitors from the Birmingham area, who were involved and ignoring Shropshire's representations.

Shropshire said "that if it brought up the case at a General Committee of the MCAAA there would be 30 or 40 people representing the Birmingham area who would simply swamp any kind of voting."

Fortunately, the Shropshire AAA was persuaded not to disband. The outcome was that the Association agreed to invite all County Associations to send a representative to a Combined County meeting to consider County matters in general and to try to bring about a better understanding between them.

In January, 1929, Shropshire was suspended from the Association, not as a result of the dispute, but because it had not paid its affiliation subscription! The County paid two months later and was reinstated.

THE WAR YEARS

The only reference to be found in the minutes which mentioned the start of The Great War, was in a letter from W.E. Rider, Honorary Secretary, to the Capital and Counties Bank, Corporation Street, Birmingham, authorising it to accept cheques signed by T. Townsend Cooper as W.E. Rider had been called up for service with his regiment.

The Association noted with great satisfaction, the splendid rally to the Colours that athletes in the Midlands had made. The Minutes mentioned that a Roll of Honour of those members of affiliated clubs who were serving with His Majesty's Forces, had been compiled. Unfortunately the Roll of Honour does not appear in the Minutes.

Many sports meetings in August and September 1914 were abandoned. Club affiliation fees were reduced because membership had fallen. The Board of Control monthly meetings stopped in 1915, and bi-monthly meetings were held instead. During the Great War period there was an increase in professional meetings which caused concern in the Association. The popular belief was that AAA Rules would not be enforced during the War. One can appreciate the difficulties the Association must have experienced in trying to administer the sport at this time. It made every attempt to protect athletes and issued notices informing them that AAA rules would still apply during the War.

Naturally it must have been difficult for clubs to function properly during this period and athletics virtually came to a standstill.

Towards the end of the War, clubs were encouraged "to keep alive their organisations - however dire their straits, for the reason that better times are in sight, when amateur sport will revive with great rapidity and clubs whose organisations are best maintained will reap the immediate benefits".

LIFE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION

At a Special General Meeting in 1911, the Life Membership clause was added to the Constitution. Mr. E.W. Cox was awarded the first Life Membership, together with the Association's Gold Medal for exceptional long, able and valuable services. Since that time there have been many such Life Membership awards.

THE FIRST LIFE VICE-PRESIDENTS

The Birmingham Daily Post on 16th March 1928 recorded the award of Life Vice-President to Messrs. W.W. Alexander, H.A. Butler, D. Lyons, W. Mabbett, A.E. Machin and W.S. Walker, "for long, meritorious and exceptionally valuable services to the Association".

50 YEARS OF AGE

The Association celebrated its Jubilee in 1930. A Jubilee Dinner was held at the Midland Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, on Saturday March 1st, when 140 guests attended.

The guests included the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Alderman, L.M. Lancaster, JP, and other prominent Civic Officials.

WHAT'S NEW UNDER THE SUN?

On 9th February, 1931 the Birmingham Mail carried the following headline, "**Webster, Beman and Light Suspended Sine Die**".

A specially appointed AAA sub-committee had investigated assertions that certain members of Birchfield Harriers who had competed at the Glasgow Corporation Tramway sports, had their expenses paid by the Honorary Secretary of Birchfield Harriers. This was contrary to the laws of the AAA and resulted in the Club being suspended for 14 days and the three athletes "sine die".

Mr. G.H. Alexander, Vice President, Birchfield Harriers, expressed at the Club's Annual Dinner, the view that this was a governing body, with a truly national spirit, with no law which would restrict any individual whatever his financial circumstances from competing in any event so long as he was an amateur and was competing for the game and not for gain". "Why", he asked "should not the farm labourer or the mechanic who have to lose time to follow the sport, be recompensed for the loss of wages and be given the opportunity of competing on an equal footing with the wealthiest men in the country who had both time and money at their disposal?".

At a AAA Meeting on 9th May, an appeal was made and it was agreed that a time limit be put on the athletes' suspension. The athletes were subsequently reinstated and Webster and Beman competed in the 1932 Midland Championships.

TRUST FUND

Late in 1933, the deaths occurred of H.A. Butler and W.W. Alexander. Both had given devoted service to the sport for a considerable number of years. The Association was indebted to Sir William Waters Butler, Bart. for the provision made by him to perpetuate the memory and long standing services of his brother H.A. Butler and W.W. Alexander, by the creation of the H.A. Butler and W.W. Alexander Trust Fund (£1000) enabling prizes to be distributed yearly by the Association and Birchfield Harriers. In addition, Sir William presented two Silver Challenge Cups, one each to the Association and Birchfield Harriers, known as the Henry A. Butler Memorial Cup and W.W. Alexander Memorial Cup respectively, together with replicas for the holders.

FIELD EVENTS

In 1910, the Association had commented that little encouragement was given to Field events.

As late as 1935, it was clear that this situation still existed. The Association formed a sub-committee to encourage field events and to try to formulate a scheme for coaching. The Association attempted to find experienced people who would be willing to coach particular events.

The response was disappointing. Only five clubs from the Birmingham area expressed an interest.

Owing to this poor response the Association did not make any arrangements for coaching in the outlying areas, but made a start in the Birmingham area. This was short lived as sufficient interest was not maintained and the Association decided not to continue with the coaching classes. Happily this is not the case today.

PIONEERS OF INDOOR ATHLETICS

The Association is pleased to have been associated with the development of indoor athletics at RAF Cosford. The first meeting was held on 9th November 1955. In the early days, races were run on the concrete floor and over the years indoor athletics has gone from strength to strength and Cosford is now the Country's only major indoor arena.

Entries in the early days were slow to come in compared with the 1400 or so we now get at our open meetings.

When the NEC was being planned, consideration for the inclusion of an indoor track was made by the Birmingham authorities. This was a protracted affair with considerable interchange taking place between the Association and the Birmingham Planning Authority. Unfortunately this project did not materialise.

In the early days, coaches were booked to transport athletes from Birmingham to compete at RAF Cosford. This venture did not last very long because of the poor support given to it.

In March 1962 the Association was informed that an indoor track could be provided with a grant from the Ministry of Education and the Amateur Athletics Supporters Association. It was stipulated that it was essential to find a permanent site. RAF Cosford was approached and so began the successful promotions of indoor athletics at National and International level.

Our President Mike Farrell has played a significant part in the development of athletics at Cosford, and for this the Association is grateful.

70TH ANNIVERSARY

On Saturday, 18th March, 1950, the Association celebrated its 70th Anniversary, with a Celebration Dinner at the White Horse Hotel, West Bromwich.

LOW FINANCES

In the late 1950's the Association's poor financial position was causing concern. Various suggestions were considered to alleviate this situation such as:- Including firms' advertising circulars with meeting notices (presumably for a fee), asking the AAA for a grant to cover clerical expenses, not having Committee meetings on a monthly basis and increasing fees for championship events.

In 1965 the Association again found itself in financial difficulties and a loss of £500 for the year was predicted. Over 60 clubs had not paid their affiliation fees. Suitable means of improving the situation were instigated.

It was also recommended that clubs who had not affiliated should be *requested to do so within 14 days and members of clubs ignoring this request would not be allowed to enter for Area Championships.*

A development plan for five years was produced and strict yearly budgets were made. A Finance Committee was formed. The question of registering athletes was considered undesirable and an increase in affiliation subscriptions would not achieve the required result.

Clubs were asked for donations equal to their subscriptions and appeals were made to businesses for donations. Sponsorship and the televising of our Championships were sought. The Championships of 1963 held at Hadley Playing Fields were televised by the BBC and the Association received a fee of £400.

An Honorary Membership scheme was formed, the prime purpose of which was to raise funds. Its chairman was Mr. Alan Tomkins and its Hon. Secretary was Mr. Arthur Wright. After serving the Association well for a number of years, it was proposed in December 1968 that the scheme be wound up. Members were asked if they would be willing to form a branch of the AAA Club, This was later agreed.

By the end of 1967 the financial situation was beginning to improve and in 1968 the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Derek Taylor gave a report on the "present favourable position of the Association".

FIVE STAR AWARD

This scheme commenced in 1968 and up to October 1979 was sponsored by Walls Ice Cream. Many of today's Internationals have certificates and badges to show that they once passed the tests in three athletic events and achieved a number of stars on their badge, appropriate to that level of standard. The scheme generates its own financial support with profit from the badges, which are awarded with the certificates, going to the Area Associations who administer the scheme This profit represents the major part of our Association's income.

In November 1979 **Esso** became the new sponsors.

MIDLAND RECORDS

The following proposals for the institution of Midland Records were adopted in November 1954.

- (a) That claimants to Midland Records shall be those possessing Midland Area Championship qualifications.
- (b) That any performance by a Midland Athlete be recognised.
- (c) That performances given in the 1954 Championships programme be taken as a basis.
- (d) That the AAA Record claim form, suitably amended, be adopted.
- (e) That certificates be awarded for approved claims.

ACCIDENT TO AN OFFICIAL

Arising out of an accident to Mr. J.W. Stockall, who was struck by a Javelin during competition, the Association, in October 1959 decided to take out insurance cover for competitors and officials,

The cover included total and/or temporary disablement including travel to and from meetings in Great Britain. Travel by motor cycle was excluded! The premiums were 3d. and 1ld. each person per meeting! A far cry from today's premium.

WALKING - CONTRARY TO AAA LAWS

The participation in 1960 of three athletes in a Worcester to Stafford Walk, organised by a Worcester shoe firm in conjunction with a shoe firm in Stafford, was queried. The Association interviewed club officials and the athletes concerned. After considering all the evidence, the Association found that the athletes, on their own admission, had "forfeited their amateur status". The Club Secretary was "censured for carelessness in not advising his Club members of their responsibilities as amateurs".

Also about this time, several well known members of Midland clubs had taken part in the Butlin's John-o-Groats to Lands End Walk and rendered themselves ineligible to compete as amateurs.

FULL TIME ADMINISTRATOR

In July 1963 it was agreed, "that the provision of an Administrator is essential, but we feel that the grant is insufficient for the proper needs. We are prepared to give the matter a trial."

Subsequently a grant from the Ministry of Education, through the AAA, was made for the provision of a full time Administrator.

The post was advertised and 50 applications were received. Mr. Derek Tremayne was appointed and began his duties on 1st January 1964.

Office accommodation at 191 Bradford Street, Birmingham was rented and it was recommended that a clerk/typist be appointed as soon as possible.

In October 1966 the Administrator resigned his post as he had been offered another position. He took up his new duty on 1st December 1966.

The appointment of his successor was deferred until further consideration had been given to the type of appointment to be made. In the event, the appointment of an Administrator was never made.

ADMINISTRATORS AND OFFICIALS

The Association has been fortunate during its first one hundred years to have benefited: from the services of men who have devoted much of their lives to the sport. Stalwarts who did so much during the early years were:

W.A. Brommage, H.A. Butler, C. Wheelwright, E.B. Holmes, W. Mabbett, W. Shirley-Bladon and A.J. Urry.

A.E. Machin was the Association's handicapper for fourteen years in addition to being Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. He died in 1937, having devoted some 50 years to our sport. He was President of Sparkhill Harriers for 33 years. Under the nom-de-plume of 'Pleader' he contributed to 'Athletic News' for 25 years.

Jack McKenna was a life long servant of athletics. He ran in the Steeplechase at the 1912 Olympics. He was Team Manager for the British and English Cross Country Teams and at one time, he was Team Manager for the Association.

Jack Sandbrook's career spanned so many years and he was active in the sport until the end of his life. He was a 'father figure' in Staffordshire athletic circles. A man of ready wit, his many stories made a somewhat cold afternoon, when officiating, pass more quickly.

Charles Frame was handicapper and a timekeeper in the 1930's. Charles kept the most meticulous records of all 'marks' and performances in a comprehensive filing system.

Jack Judge became a professional starter. No Midlands meeting has seemed the same without his muzzle loading blunderbuss. Jack was a good starter - no one got a 'flyer' and no one was 'left'. Justice was always done.

R.T, (Dick) Cooling was a superb example of one with the 'judging eye' allied with shrewd appraisals of any unusual situations. His just decisions were never questioned by competitors needing a 'ruling'. Always in demand as a Referee at important meetings, he was probably best appreciated as a guide, philosopher and friend to up and coming Judges and Referees.

Alan Tomkins, with his quiet unassuming manner has played a major part in the encouragement of new timekeepers. He has been Chief

Timekeeper at many major meetings. Alan has made a significant contribution to timekeeping accuracy and reliability and produced a series of "state of art" notes which were issued annually to timekeepers as electronic timer techniques developed. These notes now appear in the AAA Handbook.

For his services to athletics Alan received the AAA Award of Honour.

S.A. Wright - Arthur, as he is known to everyone connected with the sport, has been a Committee member for over 50 years. He has been Championship Hon. Secretary and is a Past President. When the Association was in financial difficulties he served as the Hon. Secretary of the Midland Supporters Club.

In Arthur's outstanding career he has been President of the Birmingham and District Cross Country League, President of Staffordshire AAA and a Committee member for over 50 years. He is a Past President of the MCCA and the English Cross Country Union.

Arthur received the AAA Award of Honour in 1979.

Frank Davies held various offices during his career, ranging from Assistant Championship Secretary, to President. He was the Hon. Secretary twice. The second time he stepped into the breach when Mike Farrell was unable to continue. Frank has represented the Association on many AAA Committees and is a Vice President of the AAA. He was awarded the AAA Award of Honour in 1975.

The Association was delighted when **Squire Yarrow** was elected President of the AAA. An Honour well deserved. Squire has served on numerous Committees during his long career in athletics and is a man with vast experience. Many younger administrators have benefited from this experience. At present, Squire is successfully administering the Area's 5 Star Award Scheme. To him, the Association is indebted.

Wing Commander B.C. Davies, OBE (Dan to everyone who knows him) has contributed much to Track Judging and has helped many officials to become more proficient. Dan is Chairman of our Finance Committee. For his services to RAF athletics he was awarded the OBE.

Harry Hayward, Alf Wheeler, Dennis Smith, Bill Ferguson, Geoff Warr, Derek Taylor, Peter Milton, Liz Doyle, Tom Spencer and Alan Lindop each in their own way, have played a part in keeping the Association functioning.

The Association was pleased when athletes who had finished their competitive careers came into the administration side of the sport. Athletes like Mike Farrell, Mike Rawson and David Cropper with their efforts, have put so much back into the sport.

There have been many others who have served on the Association's Committees and officiated at Area promotions. The Association is fortunate to have benefited from their services.

THE FUTURE

1980 ends our first hundred years and it is proving to be an eventful year. Our sport is faced with the possibility of radical change. Whatever these changes may be, they must be beneficial to athletics.

NOTABLE MIDLAND ATHLETES

SPRINTS

Midland sprinting was dominated in the early part of this century by J. Barker, Derby & County A and CC and A.W. Green, Birchfield Harriers. Barker won the 100 Yards title for four consecutive years, his fastest time being 10.4 secs. A.W. Green excelled in the 100 Yards and 220 Yards, winning both titles from 1925 until and including 1935. Green ran on two occasions the 'even' time, i.e. 10 secs, for the 100 Yards. His fastest time for the 220 Yards was 22.3 secs. Harold Abrahams was another prominent runner at this time. He won the 100 Yards title three times and the 220 Yards title four times.

J. Archer, High Pavement School, Derby, won the 100 Yards title in 1939, and again when the Championships were resumed after the Second World War in 1946. He also won in 1948 and 1949. A remarkable achievement!

From 1950 J.A. Gregory of Bristol AC was the 100 Yards champion for three consecutive years, breaking 'even time' on each occasion.

W.J.(Bill) Ferguson became the 100 Yard champion in 1953, and held the title until 1955.

J.R. Young, from 1956, won the 'double' for three consecutive years and then in 1959 Peter Radford became Champion and held the title for the next two years. Peter Radford made a great impact in the sport when in 1957, under the guidance of National Coach, Bill Marlow, he ran 9.9 secs for the 100 Yards and 21.8 secs for the 220 Yards. On the Aldersley track at Wolverhampton in 1958, he ran a wind assisted 9.7 secs, in the 100 Yards. In June of that year, he recorded an official 9.6secs, and in doing so became the fastest Briton at this distance.

During the Staffordshire AAA Championships at Aldersley on 28th May 1960, in front of a very small crowd, 20 year old Peter ran 9.4 secs in his 100 Yards heat, which equalled the UK and European Records, but just outside the World Record. Unfortunately the track was found to be $\frac{3}{4}$ " short and the Record was not ratified. In the final he recorded a wind assisted 9.3 secs. Later in the 220 Yards final he ran 20.5 secs, a World Record.

In the 1960 Olympic Games he gained third place behind Hary (10.2 secs) and Sime (10.2 secs.) in a UK record equalling 10.3secs.

In later seasons although Peter recorded good times he never really recaptured his best form.

QUARTER MILE

A.G.K. (Godfrey) Brown was a 400 Metres runner of some

distinction. He was a member of Birchfield Harriers and at one time Cambridge and Achilles. In the 1936 Olympic Games he gained a silver medal in the 400 Metres and ran the last leg in the 4 x 400 Metres relay, helping Great Britain to win the Gold Medal. Two years later he became the European 400 Metres champion. He was also a sprinter of some standing and ran some fast 100 Metres and 200 Metres races.

Between 1922 and 1927, H. Houghton of Birchfield Harriers dominated the 440 Yards. He won the title for six consecutive years. His fastest time was 51 secs. From 1946 T.W. Collier of Small Heath Harriers won four consecutive titles and in 1956 J.E. Salisbury, Birchfield Harriers recorded the first of his three consecutive wins.

From 1960 until 1963 Barry Jackson of Lozells Harriers held the title. In 1960, Birchfield Harrier Robbie Brightwell in his first season as a quarter miler, reduced the UK Record to 46.2 secs, in his quarter final at the Rome Olympics and later in the semi-final he reduced it again to 46.1secs. He won the AAA title in 1962 in 45.9 secs., a European record.

HALF MILE

From 1927 until 1933 the Midlands 880 Yards Championship was held by C.E. Ellis of Birchfield Harriers. In 1929, he was the British Amateur and World Record Holder for the 1000 Yards with a time of 2:11.2s.

Between 1947 and 1961 the 880 Yards title was shared by six athletes. E.G. Nicholls, Bromsgrove A.C. won in 1947 and retained the title until 1949. For the next four years, A. Webster from Sutton-in-Ashfield was champion. Mike Farrell, then a member of Smethwick won in 1954 and the following year the title was won by M.E. Denny of Achilles. Mike Rawson won in 1956, Mike Farrell in 1957, and Mike Rawson again in 1958 and 1959.

It was in the late fifties that Mike Rawson and Mike Farrell were dominant figures in 880 Yards races. In 1956, Mike Rawson won the AAA Championship taking the title from Mike Farrell. Both Mikes represented Great Britain in the 1956 Olympic Games 800 Metres, Mike Rawson did not make the final, but Mike Farrell did, finishing fourth in 1:49.2s. In 1957, at the Glasgow Rangers Sports, Mike Farrell, in his best time of 1:49.2s. beat Derek Johnson, Brian Hewson and Mike Rawson all three being timed at 1:49.6s,

The European 800 Metres Championships in 1958, was a race to remember. In the rush for the first bend Mike Rawson was forced off the track but with tremendous running, came into fourth place with 20 yards to go and finally winning in 1:47.8s. The excitement was not over for Mike was disqualified for leaving the track. An appeal was lodged and after two hours he was named the winner by the jury of appeal.

In 1968, David Cropper, Berry Hill's International half miler won his first area 880 Yards title in 1:55.6s. He won again in 1969 and 1970.

MILE

The following athletes won the Midlands mile Championship on three or more consecutive occasions, G. Smith, Derby C & CAC, F.H.Hulford of Birchfield Harriers, C.E. Blewitt, Rirchfield Harriers, C. Ellis Birchfield Harriers, W.T. Hawkley, Bromsgrove AC, J.W. Goddard, Melton Mowbray.

MIDDLE DISTANCE

Walter G. George of Moseley Harriers, a tall slim runner, who was plagued by asthma and hay fever throughout his career, was an outstanding athlete in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1880 he recorded 1:57.0s. for the half mile and won the AAA title in 1882 and 1884.

He was also the fastest miler. He produced a world best performance of 4:18.4s. in 1884 and that time stood as a World record for nine years. At the AAA inaugural Championships in 1880 he won both the mile (4:28.6s.) and the four miles (20:45.8s.). During his career as an amateur he set World records from one to ten miles.

(World records were not officially recognised until 1913). 1884 was undoubtedly his finest year. World Records at 6 Miles (30:26.0s.), 10 Miles (51:20.). A British record at 9 Miles (46:12.0). These were all achieved at Stamford Bridge on 7th April.

He set a 2 Mile World record (9:17.4s.) on 26th April, and this time was not bettered for nineteen years. On 17th May, he ran the 3 Miles in the World record time of 14:39.0s. and the 4 Miles in 19:39.8s. On 21st June, he won the 880 Yards title in 2:02.2s, the mile in 4:08.4s, the 4 Miles in 20:12.8s. and two days later he won the 10 Miles title in, 54:02.0s. He broke the World record on 28th July, for the 6 Miles when he recorded 30:21.5s and one hour later he ran 11 Miles 932 yards in one hour. It was twenty years before anyone else ran a greater distance in one hour. Truly a remarkable athlete!

Later he became a professional and in a memorable race on 23rd August 1886, he ran the mile in 4:12.75s. This time was not bettered until 1915, when Taber (USA) recorded 4:12.6s. No Briton ran faster until Sydney Wooderson ran 4:12.7s. in 1935.

A great rival of W.G. George was club mate William Snook. In 1881, he held the two miles record with 9:33.4s. He won 8 AAA titles. Four of these, the mile, the four miles, 10 Miles and 2 Miles Steeplechase he won in 1885.

In 1882, the NCAA suspended Snook until the end of the year for being involved with the entry of a professional at an amateur meeting in Southport. During his suspension he ran in meetings which did not come under the jurisdiction of the AAA. The AAA notified affiliated clubs that if any of its members took part in races in which Snook was also competing, they would be liable for suspension.

Snook was later found guilty of roping (holding back in order to lose) at a meeting in the South and was banned from

competing as an amateur despite strong appeals from the Association.

C.A.J. Emery came into prominence in 1938. He won the International Cross Country Championship and later the 3 Miles title at the AAA's. He finished fourth in the European 5000 Metres. He ran the 2 Miles in 9:07.6s. and broke Alf Shrubbs' Record. In that year, he also ran the 1500 Metres in 3:53.4s. He retained his 3 Miles AAA title in 1939. Unfortunately the Second World War broke out and his career came to an end. From 1931 until 1937 the legendary Jack Holden was the Midlands 3 Miles Champion. Freddie Green won the Area 3 Miles title in 1949, and retained it until 1955, when it was won by Ray Hatton. Possibly Freddie's best race was in the 1954 AAA three miles championship. The Kenyan, Maiyoro ran the first mile in 4:23.4s. and was about 40 yards ahead of Chris Chattaway and Green. Both of them were timed at 4:29.6s. However, they caught the Kenyan just before the two miles point. Over the last 300 Yards it looked as if Chattaway would win, but Freddie, showing determination proved the stronger and won.

From 1957, until 1964, Basil Heatley, on no fewer than six occasions, was the Midlands 3 Miles Champion. During this period he was beaten twice, each time by Roy Fowler.

Ian Stewart's run in the 5000 Metres Munich Olympic race typified the determined running which he displayed throughout his career. With four laps to run, Steve Prefontaine went into the lead, followed by Ian, Dave Bedford and Lasse Viren. With just over two laps to go, it developed into a race between Prefontaine, Viren, Puttemans, Gammoudi and Ian. With one lap to go Ian lost contact with the others, but in the finishing straight he overtook Prefontaine to snatch the bronze medal. Another exciting race was the 5000 Metres in the 1970 Commonwealth Games held in Edinburgh. Ian Stewart and Ian McCafferty ran shoulder to shoulder and left the great Kip Keino struggling. Both Ians battled for first place with Ian Stewart proving the stronger and winning the race in 13:22.8s.

Ian was also the 1969 European Champion with a time of 13:44.8s. and in 1970 he became the AAA 5000 Metres Champion. He was also the 1975 National Indoor and European Indoor 3000 Metres champion with times of 8:01.0s. and 7:58.6s. respectively.

John Whetton excelled in Indoor races. He won three European Indoor 1500 Metres Championships and was the AAA 1000 Yards and 1500 Metres champion. From 1963 until 1966 he was also the Indoor one mile champion. In the 1969 European Games John won the 1500 Metres title with a time of 3:39.4secs.

Ray Smedley was also a force in Indoor competitions. In 1974, 1976 and 1977, he was the AAA 3000 Metres Champion.

6 MILES

Between 1932 and 1964, the six miles Championship has been dominated at different times by Jack Holden and Basil Heatley. Jack was the champion eight times and Basil seven times. Jack was also three times AAA 6 Miles champion.

10 MILES

Jack Beman and Jack Holden each won the Area Championship on four consecutive occasions. Basil Heatley was champion from 1958 until 1974. In 1961, Basil reduced Emil Zatopek's World record for 10 Miles by 25 seconds in a remarkable time of 47:47.0s.

MARATHON

Jack Holden was 38 when the Second World War ended and in 1946 he began to run in marathon races and won the Midland title in 2:46:34. For some reason he was not selected for the European Championships. Squire Yarrow finished seventh in this Championship in 2:30:40, but unfortunately the course was $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles short. In 1938, Squire Yarrow finished second in the European Championships, clocking 2:39:03 and in 1946, at the age of 41, he won the AAA marathon by just one-fifth of a second from Donald Robertson in 2:43:14.4.

In 1947, Jack Holden won the first of his four consecutive AAA marathons. He beat Tom Richards by about half a mile in 2:33:20.2. More was to come. In 1950, when he was 43, Jack became the world's number one marathon runner. He competed in five races and won all of them including the British Empire and European titles.

Brian Kilby of Coventry Godiva, at the age of 22, made his debut in 1960, finishing second in the Poly Marathon (2:22:53.). He won the AAA title in 2:22:44.8 and was selected for the Olympic team. He won the AAA marathon a further four times. In 1962, he won the European Championship in 2:23:18.8 and later in the same year he became the Commonwealth Champion, recording his best time of 2:21:17. In 1963, he ran 2:14:43. the fastest by a European.

1964, was an important year for Basil Heatley, also a member of Coventry Godiva. He ran the Windsor marathon in the World's fastest time of 2:13:55. This performance gained him selection to the Olympic Team. Brian Kilby and Ron Hill were Great Britain's other representatives. Basil gained a silver medal in the Olympic race and Brian finished fourth.

The Coventry club provided the first three men home in the 1965 AAA Marathon. Bill Adcocks (2:16:50), Brian Kilby (2:17:34) and Juan Taylor (2:18:57).

THE STEEPLECHASE

Reg Noakes, Sparkhill Harriers, had been Midland Champion for two years when in 1908, he won the AAA Championship. Reg was the Midland Champion for five consecutive years. In 1925, J. Webster of Birchfield Harriers began his remarkable record of wins. He held the Championship for six consecutive years, losing the title in 1931 to F. Deakin. He regained the title in 1932, and retained it for a further four consecutive years. Jack Webster was the first Briton to break ten minutes for the 3000 Metres Steeplechase. Between 1925 and 1928, he won the AAA Championship. 1958 saw the appearance of Maurice Herriott and he became the first 18 year old to run the 3000 Metres

Steeplechase in under nine minutes. The next year, Maurice won the first of his eight AAA Senior Championships. Maurice held the title for seven consecutive years. In the 1964 Olympics he gained a silver medal behind Gaston Roelants in 8:32.4s.

120 YARDS HURDLES

Lord Burghley became the first Briton in 1927 to break fifteen seconds and three years later he returned 14.5secs, a fraction outside the world record. Later in 1930, he became Champion at the British Empire Games in 14.6secs. He finished fifth in the 1932 Olympics.

440 YARDS HURDLES

In 1924, Lord Burghley finished fourth in the AAA Championships and was selected at the age of 19 for the Olympics. He was a member of the Olympic team at the next two Olympic Games. In 1926 he won the National title in a British record time of 55.0secs. 1927 saw Lord Burghley again the Champion with a winning time of 54.2secs, a new British record and for a few hours, a World record. That year he also held the 120 Yards title in a new British record, of 14.8secs and the 220 Yards record in 24.7secs. He was the first man to hold all three British Hurdling records.

Lord Burghley was the 440 Yards AAA Champion for three consecutive years from 1926 and in 1928 again broke the record when he achieved 54.0secs. In the Amsterdam Olympics he won the 440 Yards Hurdles title in 53.4secs. Lord Burghley lost his AAA title in 1929, but regained it the next year when he beat Luigi Facilli, the title holder, in a British record time of 53.8secs. He won the Empire Games title in 54.4secs.

In the 1932 Olympics Lord Burghley, in a British record of 52.2secs, could only finish fourth. This time was not bettered until 1954.

John Cooper came onto the scene in 1960 and recorded 56.5secs. In 1961, he reduced this to 52.0secs. In 1963, he recorded a British best of 50.5secs and won the AAA title in 51.1secs. In the 1964 Olympic final he ran a tremendous race to take the silver medal in a UK Record time of 50.1secs. At the Games he ran a powerful leg (timed at 45.6s.) in the 4 x 400 Metres relay and helped Great Britain to win the silver medal.

The Association was deeply shocked to hear of the tragic death of John in an air-crash in 1974. A stained glass window in his memory has been installed in Bitteswell Church, Leicestershire, by his family.

WALKS

Ken Matthews won his first National title in March 1959, when he recorded a remarkable 71:00.4s for the 10 miles road walk. Later in that year Ken won the Inter-Counties two miles race in 13:27.2secs, the seven miles race in 49:47.4secs and the AAA two miles Championships in 13:19.4secs.

1960 was an even better year for him, 10,000 Metres in 42:35.6secs, ten miles in 70:57. and 1:28:15secs for a 20 kilometre walk.

Unfortunately, during the 1960 Olympics Ken collapsed due to the effects of influenza and was taken to hospital. When he had recovered after the Olympics he walked 8 miles 1,018 yards in one hour, a new UK Record.

Early in 1961, he reduced his UK Record for seven miles to 48:24.0s.

That same year the inaugural Lugano Trophy was held and Ken won the 20km Walk in 1:30:54. In 1962 he won the 20km. European title in 1:35:54.8s and in 1963 in the Lugano final he won the 20 km Walk in 1:30:10. In the 1964 Olympics he reached the ultimate of his outstanding career by winning the Olympic Gold Medal for the 20km Walk in 1:29:34.

JUMPS

C.A. Walker of Notts AC won 5 Area titles between 1935 and 1946 in the High Jump, while D.W. Guildford of Burton & District won three consecutive titles between 1951 and 1953, and gained the title once again in 1955.

In the Pole Vault, Trevor Burton, City of Stoke AC cleared 14ft 4ins (4.37m) in 1963 and in doing so set a new UK National record. In July 1964, Trevor became the first Briton to vault 15 feet. Trevor won the Midland championships between 1962 and 1965, breaking the 7 year reign of S.R. Porter of Birchfield Harriers who had consecutive victories from 1956 to 1961.

Although he came from Northern Ireland, Mike Bull was a member of Wolverhampton & Bilston Athletic Club and placed 2nd in the Commonwealth Games in 1966, with a height of 15 feet 6 inches (4.72m). Mike raised the UK record to 15 ft. 9ins. (4.80m) in 1967 and, in 1968 competing indoors at Cosford, he cleared 16 ft. 1¼ ins (4.91m).

Harold Abrahams was the leading Long Jumper in the 1920's. In the 1919 Freshmen's Sports at Cambridge, he jumped 21 feet 3 inches (6.48m). He bettered this in 1920 when he leaped 22 feet 7 inches (6.88m), but in the Olympics of that year, he could only manage 19 feet 10¼ ins. (6.05m). Harold broke C.B. Fry's record in March 1923, with 23 feet 7¼ ins. (7.19m) and later in the AAA Championship he recorded three jumps of 23 feet 8¾ ins. (7.23m).

Just before the 1924 Olympics he jumped 24 feet 2½ ins. (7.38m). This distance was not bettered for over thirty years. A severe injury to his right knee in 1925 left his leg permanently damaged and he was unable to compete again.

Although primarily a Triple Jumper, Aston Moore, Birchfield Harriers won the 1977 and 1978 Long Jump area titles, and has gained Senior International honours in both events, as well as capturing the European Junior Triple Jump championship.

Sidney Cross, Birchfield Harriers, won the area Triple Jump championship in 1947 and 1949, and then a hat trick of wins from 1950 to 1952, as well as winning the 1950 and 1951 AAA titles.

D.W. Field, Birchfield Harriers, gained 6 consecutive area Triple Jump titles from 1953 to 1958, equalling the record of championship wins set by H.A. Langley, 1922, 1927 - 1931.

THROWS

In the 1930's K.H. Pridie, Bristol U.A.C. was the most outstanding thrower, winning 17 titles. He won 10 consecutive Shot Putt titles from 1927 to 1936 inclusive, and in the Discus won 7 titles, winning 6 titles from 1929 to 1934. He regained the title in 1936.

T.H. Barratt, of L.C.A.T. and Power Jets was similarly dominant after the Second World War in area Championships, winning both the Shot and Discus titles from 1946 to 1952, a total of 14 championship wins, and added the Javelin title to this list in 1951.

Malcolm Nokes, Achilles Club, who captured the AAA Hammer Title in 1923, 1924, 1925 and 1926, won 12 area championships, in the Shot, Discus and Hammer competitions.

In the Javelin Throw, Jock Dalrymple, Bedford & County AC, and later Birchfield Harriers, dominated this event with area titles from 1922 to 1930 and regained the title in 1930. In all he won 10 Midland championships, including taking the Hammer title in 1929. In 1923, he won the AAA Javelin Throw championship with 45.34m.

Howard Payne came to the fore in 1960, when he competed for Great Britain. Howard won the 1962 and 1966 Commonwealth titles in the Hammer event, and in more than thirty competitions threw over 200 feet (60.96m). Although he was 43 years old he went over 70 metres for the first time in 1974, with a performance of 70.88m,

Konstanty Maksimczyk, Westbury Harriers, won 8 Midland Discus titles, with his first title coming in 1956. He is still competing today in Veterans Championships, although he is now over-60 years of age.

Bill Tancred became the first United Kingdom athlete to throw over 200 feet (60.96m) in the Discus event, and won the Shot and Discus titles in the Midland Championships between 1970 and 1972. Bill, who comes from a family of throwers, captured 7 AAA National Championships.

SNIPPETS

A Veteran's handicap race was held in 1903.

In 1926, 104 clubs had paid a subscription to the Association.

At the A.G.M. in 1930, the following Midland athletes were congratulated on being selected to represent the AAA in International and other representative events: Lord Burghley, A.W. Green, C. Ellis, R.H. Thomas, H.W. Townsend, F.A. Foley, K.H. Pridie, J. Dalrymple, S.T. Ashby, F. Light and J. Sampson.

The Midland Marathon Championship was instituted in 1932.

In July 1936 for the first time in its history, the Association fielded a team on the track when it competed against the South, North and Scotland, in a mile relay in Manchester. The team comprised: B. Fitzmaurice, L.S. Clark, W.A. Baynes and H. Green.

In 1956 it was suggested that the Embassy Skating Rink in Birmingham might be suitable for an indoor meeting with a track of eleven laps to the mile!

An entry of 495 competitors was received for the 1961 Area Championships. The six miles championship was staged at Perry Barr. The entry of 58 runners caused something of a problem and this was made a little easier when only 44 runners took part. After this Championship it was decided to limit the field to about 30 runners.

The Area Executive Committee reported in October, 1968, that the AAA General Committee had approved that the registration of athletes be adopted by 1st April 1969, with a levy of 10s. Od. on all athletes of 19 years of age and over in open competition. Students would be charged 5s. Od. The money received was to be used for the improvement of the various facets of the sport i.e. Cross Country, Race Walking etc.

W.M. Mabbett was a member of the Handicapping Board of Control for over 50 years.

Sparkhill Harriers provided three Honorary Secretaries in a continuous period from 1916 up to and including 1951. These three stalwarts were A.E. Machin, W. Shirley Bladon and A.W. Stringer. A.E. Machin was also Honorary Treasurer for nine years and A.W. Stringer for two years.

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PAST PRESIDENTS

J. Anderton	1880-1881	Birmingham AC
H.W. Wheeler	1882-1884	Moseley Harriers
T. Clulee	1885-1890	Stourbridge CC
E.B. Holmes	1891-1897	Moseley F.C.
A. Roscoe-Badger	1898-1904	King Edward's AC
H.A. Butler	1905-1907	Mitchells & Butlers Rec. C.
W.A. Brommage	1908-1911	Wolverhampton Charity S.
A.J. Eggleston	1912-1917	Derby & County A & CC
W. Mabbett	1918-1924	Birchfield H. & Mitchell & Butlers RC
A.E. Machin	1925-1927	Sparkhill Harriers
D. Lyons	1928-1930	Birchfield Harriers
W.E. Griffiths	1931-1932	Tipton Harriers
W.W. Alexander	1932-1933	Birchfield Harriers
A.G. Cannon	1933-1934	Midland Counties ACCA.
J.H. Greenaway	1935-1938	Lozells H. & Mitchells & Butlers R.C.
W.E. Griffiths	1939-1941	Tipton Harriers
J. McKenna	1942-1944	Small Heath Harriers
R.T. Cooling	1945-1947	Birchfield Harriers
A.B. Wignall	1947-1949	Bedfordshire AAA
C.O. Alexander	1950-1952	Birchfield Harriers
A.W. Stringer	1953-1955	Sparkhill Harriers
C.G. Austin	1956-	Birchfield Harriers
L.E. Prior	-1961	Nottinghamshire AAA
L.E. Kennell	1962-1964	Coventry Godiva Harriers
S.A. Wright	1964-1966	West Bromwich Harriers
W.H. Hayward	1966-1967	Lozells Harriers
S.S. Yarrow	1967-1969	North Staffs. & Stone AC
A.A. Tomking	1969-1971	Birmingham RCC
F. Davies	1971-1973	Harborne Harriers
D. Smith	1973-1975	Small Heath Harriers
D.C. Davies	1975-1977	Royal Air Force
W.J. Ferguson	1977-1979	Notts AC
M.A. Farrell (Current)	1979-	Birchfield Harriers

PAST HON. TREASURERS

E.B. Holmes	1880-1890	Moseley F.C.
F. Wilks	1891-1901	
P. Loveridge	1902-1903	
W.A. Brommage	1903-1904	Wolverhampton Cahrity S.
A.J. Urry	1905-1927	Midland C & A.C.
A.E. Machin	1928-1937	Sparkhill Harriers
A. Trafford	1937-1950	Birmingham AC
C.A. Wright	1951-1952	Dudley H & AC
A.W. Stringer	1952-1954	Sparkhill Harriers
E.R. Ward (Acting)	1956	West Bromwich Harriers
R.P. Swanton	1964	M.E.S.C.
D.J. Taylor	1967-1972	Birchfield Harriers
J. Smith	1972-1973	Leicestershire AAA
D. Cropper (Current)	1973-	Birchfield Harriers

PAST HON. SECRETARIES

F. Smith (Pro-tem)	1880	Birmingham Athletic Club
F. Smith & H.M. Oliver (Joint)	1880-1881	B.A.C. & Moseley Harriers
H.M. Oliver	1882-1886	Moseley Harriers
C. Wheelwright	1887-1899	
J.R. Chetwynd & W. Mabbett (Joint)	1900-1901	Birchfield Harriers & Mitchell & Butlers R.C.
W. Mabbett	1901-1909	Birchfield Harriers & Mitchell & Butlers R.C.
W. Mabbett & W.E. Rider (Joint)	1910-1911	Birchfield Harriers & Mitchell & Butlers R.C.
W.E. Rider	1911-1915	
A.E. Machin	1916-1923	Sparkhill Harriers
W. Shirley-Bladen	1924-1937	Sparkhill Harriers
A.W.H. Stringer	1938-1951	Sparkhill Harriers
B. Bashford	1952-1955	Warwickshire AAA
C.A. Wright	1955-1962	Dudley H & AC
R.P. Swanton	1962-1964	M.E.S.C.
F. Davies	1964-1968	Harborne Harriers
M.A. Farrell	1968-1976	Birchfield Harriers
F. Davies	1976-1978	Harborne Harriers
R. Mitchell (Current)	1978-	Stafford AC