

Brian Beale 1936-2020

Brian Beale, one of the County's stalwarts in terms of service to athletics, has died at the age of 84 from the Covid-19 virus following heart problems. Brian, who lived in Axbridge, helped to establish Burnham Harriers in 1981 and following a career in the army was a keen competitive runner throughout the next few decades before remaining in the sport in various capacities: as a Race Director; Cross-Country Endurance official and Race adjudicator; on the County AA in a variety of roles; and as a Results supremo. Overall, he gave 40 years of voluntary time to the sport.

In the early 1990's, Brian joined the County AA Committee and was invaluable as the Cross-Country Championship Secretary helping to organise the annual County XC Championships at venues around the County with the support of different host Clubs. Brian was the Championship entry secretary and, supported by fellow Burnham Harrier Sheila Baker, produced the results on the day so that County medals could be awarded soon after each race.

In 1996, in order to encourage joint working by Clubs, under the auspices of the County AA, the Somerset Series was born (then called the CICA Six). Brian ensured that the Series results were compiled from the races and was still carrying out this role, for the much expanded Series some 25 years later until his death. Following on from that Series role, by the late 1990's Brian took on the role of Road Running Secretary for the County AA, offering advice to Race Directors, helping to agree race permits and ensure that races didn't clash. He also helped provide technical input to a number of County Track and Field Championships in the early 2000s.

He is well known to many across the County and beyond for his various Club roles. In the early days, he was a strong supporter of the Avalon XC League, working with his Club to host the annual fixture at the Apex Park; and also in more recent times helping ensure that the Burnham-on-Sea Parkrun, held at the same venue, was well organised. He was the instigator and Race Director for the Burnham Half Marathon and Race Director for the Brent Knoll Fell Race – fulfilling key roles with these races for many decades. As a UKA Official and Race adjudicator, he helped to gently improve standards, pointing out any potential improvements.

He will be missed by all, for his friendly approach and positive spirit, and the giving of his time and wise words. Brian was awarded the Jim Brunton award for services to athletics in Somerset by the County AA in 2008.

Brian was always a genial character, generous with his time. Following the death of his wife in 2014, Brian leaves behind a daughter, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and our deepest sympathies are with them at this time.

Paul Chadwick (Former Secretary & Treasurer of Somerset AA 1990's; Wells City Harriers, May 2020)