



On a beautiful day at the Matthew Micallef St John Stadium in Marsa, Malta: the first ever Northern Track & Field team to travel abroad did themselves and the North proud with some terrific performances against mainly senior competition.

All of you can be really pleased with both your performances and your demeanour, it was a pleasure to spend the time with you – thank you.

Huge thanks are due to England Athletics North West and Yorkshire & Humberside regions for their generous donations towards the trip.

Thanks also to our sponsors Start Fitness, who supplied team kit and Mizuno who donated kit bags and backpacks for the trip

Men

100m Following a problem with the false start equipment, Tom Mosley took 4th place in the re-run in a time of 11.08

200m Chris Craig's second place was an excellent performance only 0.13 s behind the winner. Chris was on the Luxembourg athlete's shoulder the whole way and was only beaten due to the experience of his opponent. Considering that Chris has only been competing for a short time he is definitely an athlete to keep an eye out for.

400m Unfortunately Wayne Ashall was carrying an ankle injury throughout the weekend but still managed to finish a creditable 4th behind a couple of strong Tunisians. Wayne recorded a time a 49.62 and I am sure he would have finished higher if he had been fit. A brave performer and an favourite of the team.

800m 16 year old Thomas Atkinson ran a terrific race from the front and was only overcome by Mario Debono of Malta on the run in. Thomas really went for it and was cheered to the finish by the rest of the team for his gutsy run.

1500m One of the performances of the day from Liverpool's Harry Harper who shed his unusual headgear (see photos) to annihilate the field and win by over 7 seconds. Right from the start Harry showed his determination by staying on the shoulder of the leader before taking off at the bell and staying in top gear to the end.

400mHu Niall Flannery ran a good race against a strong Frenchman, finishing 2nd in 54.11 before leading the cheering for the rest of the afternoon.

4 X 100m Relay

Future quiz question – 'which Northern middle distance runner won an international 4x100m

relay gold medal? Answer, Thomas Atkinson, stepping in for the injured Tom Mosley in the winning 100m relay squad alongside Wayne Ashall, Andy Burgess and Chris Craig.

DiscusMen's captain Tom Smith was disappointed with his performance in this event recording 34.02m to finish 2nd, but Tom's sociable demeanour and good humour was one of the high points of the trip and he bounced back to encourage the rest of the team.

ShotTom's second event proved more successful although he still felt he could have done better. Throwing a senior shot Tom recorded a throw of 13.00m to finish in 3rd place.

JavelinPaul Allsop gave a good performance with the senior implement to finish in 3rd place only 2m behind the 2nd placed athlete.

Long JumpA star turn from Andrew Burgess recording two 7m jumps to take 1st place by half a metre and record a personal best (winning a bet with his father in the process).

Triple JumpMike Ehlen was head and shoulders above his rivals in the Triple Jump, winning by a metre with a jump of 14.03m and making it look easy.

Women

100mHelen Asher was just pipped for 2nd place by 100th of a second in one of the classiest fields of the day in a race won by another of the strong French athletes.

200mEleanor Markendale and Becky McLinden supported each other well in a race in which they finished 3rd and 4th.

400mCarmen Gedling ran away with this 400m to win by almost a second in 55.86 with a big smile on her face. Carmen was one of our more experienced athletes and it showed in this classy performance.

800mAnother stunning 800m performance from the talented Leigh Lennon responding to encouragement from her father Don, she took the race in the home straight to win by over 2 seconds from the Tunisian athlete Ahlem Merdessi.

4 X 100m RelayAnother excellent 2nd place for the team of Eleanor, Carmen, Becky and Helen.

DiscusHannah Evenden threw 41.39 to finish in 2nd behind Malta's Antonella Chouhal who threw a Maltese National senior record of 42.20.

ShotGreat performance from Hannah Evenden in this event throwing a PB of 12.15m with a senior weight shot.



Javelin The youngest member of the team 16 year old Ashleigh Beckett was too strong for the opposition, beating the Egyptian athlete by 7m with a throw of 33.82. Another good victory from our talented young field eventers.

Long Jump A clean sweep in the Long Jump events with Eleanor Markendale coming back from a hotly disputed no jump in the first round to win easily with a jump of 5.65m from 2nd placed Egyptian Shima Tihamer who jumped 5.26m

Triple Jump Although Harriet Pickles picked up an injury she put in a good performance to take 1st place with a jump of 11.74m, over a metre ahead of her nearest rival. Harriet's foot did at least help to keep Steve the physio busy and helped Harriet to a gold medal. Well done.

A final medal haul of 11 Gold, 6 Silver and 3 Bronze and a slew of personal bests was a just reward for the hard work that the team had put into the event.

However aside from the work and the value to their careers, the experience and the resulting team spirit that was evident throughout the trip made the whole thing worthwhile. The support that all the athletes gave their team mates was brilliant, with cheering and encouragement given whatever the result.



At the get together after the meeting, our athletes mixed happily with the Maltese, Egyptian and especially the Tunisian team (yes girls I mean you). A certain 400m hurdler from the North East practically had to buy an extra suitcase for his swapped collection of vests and tracksuit tops, and if the bus was a little late coming to pick us up then it was only a small blot on the day.

Sunday was spent shopping, sunbathing and swimming although physio Steve Borrill spent a long time tending the injured before managing to escape to the pool. Team Management of course had no time for such frivolous pursuits and were all very, very busy all day – doing important things!

On Monday half of the party headed home, leaving the rest of the team to a day of training and shopping and a return to England on Tuesday.



A few thoughts to share on the benefits of the trip.

There were a few niggling issues at the meeting, for example the false start equipment was obviously faulty which caused a few problems until it was disconnected although the photo finish/results system worked very well.

There was a shortage of officials, notably only one starter who was also carrying out marksman duties, and the competition was perhaps not as demanding as we thought it might be BUT the overall experience in learning to cope with different types of meeting to those we are used to at home can only be of benefit to these young athletes, many of whom are going to travel to places which will present far more challenging experiences than what was a brilliant few days in the sunshine.

I would like to thank the team manager Chris Warden, coaches Alex Kruger (the ultimate poacher turned



gamekeeper) and the irrepressible Etta Kessebah; team administrator Sandra White (extra kudos for getting stroppy with tardy bus drivers) and last but not least ‘Superphysio’ Steve Borrill (and his table) for their diligence, good humour, hard work and brilliant company. Thanks also to the parents who accompanied us to give support to both their own kids and everyone else – and Don Lennon for the photos.

Most of all though I want to thank the athletes for being so brilliant, not just as athletes but as people, you can all be really proud of yourselves – I certainly am, well done to all of you – hope we can do it again next year! [Full Results](#)

We have a selection of photos kindly sent in by Don Lennon we hope to have more photos to add to the gallery over the next few days. [Photos](#)

Report Judith Temperton