

# 2016 HAMMER CIRCLE REUNION REPORT

**By Ian Tempest, Secretary, Hammer Circle.**

The latest Hammer Circle Reunion took place on 24-25 September at the Woodford Green track. Over seventy throwers, family, coaches and enthusiasts attended the event. The Hammer Circle is the Association of British Hammer Throwers and was established in 1952 to promote and develop the event. The Hammer Circle works closely with England Athletics and UK Athletics on rules and health and safety issues, and on competition opportunities.

The 2016 Reunion marked a momentous year for UK hammer throwing. The many highlights include:

- Sophie Hitchon's Olympic bronze, with a superb new UK record of 74.54m in the final round - Britain's first Olympic hammer medal for 92 years. Sophie was also 4th in the European Championships and was ranked fourth in the world.
- Britain had three male hammer throwers at the Olympics for the first time since 1988 - and three British men were in the European top 20 rankings for the first time since the 19th century!
- Jake Norris - a wonderful second place in the inaugural European Youth Championships, with a British U18 record of 79.20m. Jake was second in the world youth rankings in 2016, and set a UK age 16 best with the 16lb hammer as well.
- Taylor Campbell - followed a UK age 19 best of 71.39m with a season's best of 72.70m for sixth in the European U23 rankings
- Katie Head - a UK U17 record of 65.06m placed 6th in the world and fourth in Europe

Plus numerous personal bests and impressive titles at national age group and schools levels.

The Reunion offered a chance to celebrate these achievements in a packed weekend which included hammer and weight competitions, a throws quadrathlon test, talks on health and safety and rules issues, a dinner and a presentation of awards.

The Reunion welcomed a wide range of age groups, from young throwers in U15 competitions to Masters including Warwick Dixon, still winning titles at the age of 81, and legendary coach Ron Bowden.

Olympic medallist Sophie Hitchon won several awards, collected on her behalf by her father Michael, who also won an award himself, recognising his own coaching successes in past and current years. One of his charges, Charlotte Williams, won the U15 girls event at the Reunion.

In excellent weather conditions a number of fine marks were recorded in the competitions, including a UK best mark for 2016 in the junior men's hammer (71.55m for Jake Norris, a UK U17 best in the weight throw by Katie Head (18.23m), while there were also wins for Bayley Campbell (U17 hammer), Taylor Campbell (senior men's weight throw), Callum Brown (men's hammer), Kayleigh Presswell (women's hammer) and Jake's mother Barbara in the W50 hammer.

Many thanks to everyone who participated and assisted in making the event such a success, particularly Diane and Dave Smith, the stadium staff at Woodford Green and many other colleagues.

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## Photographs:

A group photograph of participants at the Reunion



Michael Hitchon receives the Don Anthony award for Olympism, awarded to Sophie, from Hammer Circle President Peter Aston. Michael also won an award himself, recognising his own coaching successes in past and current years.



Bayley Campbell – winner of the U17 title at the Reunion with 68.87m

