

A Tribute to Alan Mason 1929 – 2020

Alan Mason was a very talented sprinter for Blackpool & Fylde AC (B&F AC) in the middle to late 1950's. He then went on to serve on the Club Committee for a number of years before becoming the Chairperson from 1965 – 67. It was in 1967 that he was transferred to Bolton, as part of his work for the then Department of Health and Social Security, where he later in his working career rose to become a Regional Manager.

As a Civil Servant he became involved with the Civil Service Athletic Association (CSSA) and the Civil Service Sports Council (CSSC) and served in a number of Senior positions for both organisations. He joined the CSAA Committee in 1976 and took over the position as Secretary in 1977 serving in that role until 1986. For a number of years' he was the main organiser of the CSAA Track & Field Championships. In 1990 he was elected Chair and served until he stood down in 2005 having led the organisation admirably during this time. Upon his retirement, Bill Berry - CSAA Treasurer, and former B&F AC club colleague paid this tribute to Alan:

"I have known Alan since 1959, when I joined Blackpool & Fylde AC and Alan was the Fixtures Secretary and still competing. During the time I have known him he has been involved in various capacities with Lancashire AAA, Northern Counties AAA, North West Civil Service Athletics and of course CSAA. In all that time he has always seemed to me to be the epitome of the perfect Official. He is always well organised, efficient and friendly, not self-promoting and always able to put the athlete first. Certainly, his expertise will be missed, both by the CSAA and CSSC. On behalf of the CSAA Committee we would like to present Alan with a gift to demonstrate our esteem and thanks for his years of service".

The picture below shows Alan being presented with a decanter set by CSAA President Sir Anthony Battishill.

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Alan was also involved with the Lancashire Athletic Association and was elected Chair from 1987 until around 1993. He was also part of the Northern Counties AAA, again serving in a number of roles such as his love and dedication to the world of athletics.

He was Regional Chair of the North West Civil Service Sport Council and led that for a number of years gaining much admiration, affection and love from the members. He was awarded the Civil Service Sports Council highest award – the Award of Merit – in 1988 for his contribution to CSAA and CSSC.

Alan was the person responsible for recruiting me on to the CSAA Committee back in 1999 and I hope that I have done him proud in my role as Secretary and also Secretary of Lancashire AA and BWF AC. Little did I realise that I was following in the footsteps of a giant in those roles.

I would like to include a selection of comments received from friends and colleagues of Alan over the years:

Andy Shaw – CSSC:

Pete James and I became Regional Officers, Secretary and Treasurer respectively, in 1993 when Alan was the Regional NW Chairman. I have two distinct memories of Alan.

One is stood on Crewe Railway Station late at night (possibly 1994/5) with Alan and Pete, and Alan telling us that he was stepping down as the Regional Chair. Pete and I just looked at each other and basically pleaded with Alan to at least make sure he found a successor before he left. That successor was Mike Wilson and the rest as they say is history.

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My other memory was at a Regional Officers' Conference, probably 1994, where Alan and Richard Wallace had a disagreement in public about how some accounts or something should be presented. I remember thinking at the time what the heck have I let myself in for! I think there was some professional 'history' between the pair because they both worked for the DHSS as it was called then.

He was a great man, very respectful of others, really clever and a man I respected a lot.

Roy Swinbank – former Lancashire AA Chair

Alan was always so "alive" and I tended to forget that he was some years older than me! A man for whom I had great respect.

Neil Hornsby – former CSAA Secretary

So sorry to hear the news about Alan. One enduring memory I have of him is when, quite by chance he and I found ourselves on a training course for Whitley Council negotiators. During the course, the two of us were paired-up together for a role-playing exercise, he the Official Side, me the union rep. He really threw himself into it: once we got going, the very first words he said (somewhat emphatically!) were "I point-blank refuse to negotiate with the threat of industrial action hanging over my head, I point-blank refuse". Why it was deemed necessary that he attend the training course, I never found out.

Bill Berry – former CSAA Treasurer and B&F AC clubmate

Thank you for letting me know about Alan. Very sad news. I knew Alan from my early days of BF AC in 1959 and he was very encouraging in helping me.

Ian Statter – CSAA Chair

This is very sad news indeed. Like you, Alan persuaded me to join the committee after hearing I had set up the Home Office AC. He was so supportive and encouraging and this kick started the Home Office participation in CSAA events.

Gerry Trainer – Former CSAA Chair

Sad news indeed, Nick, and thanks for letting us know. I took over from Alan as chairman. He gave me tremendous support and his energy and enthusiasm for athletics and the CSAA in particular were infectious and most impressive.

Alan celebrating his recent 90th Birthday – may he Rest in Peace

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