

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IAPS GIRLS' GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS THE PRECURSOR: " AHMPS ERA" 1979 – 1981

What's the connection between a private double decker bus, a glass of port, Radnor Park Sports Centre, Millfield Junior School, Wolverhampton PNEU School and a filmshow ?

They were all prominent features of the first Girls' National Gymnastics Championships we now all know as the Premier 5 Piece Nationals. In March 1979 headmaster Richard Rottenbury, of Dover College Junior School in Folkestone, who hosted the first event, was the prime mover in founding the competition, with Chris Davies from Millfield School, setting the rules of the five discipline format.

The championships, which were known as the AHMPS (Association of Headmistresses of Preparatory Schools) Girls' Championships, were held in nearby Radnor Park Sports Centre at Folkestone and organised by DCJS PE mistress Kate Lewis. Teachers from the seventeen schools came together at Dover College on Thursday 1st March for a 'Staff Welcome Gathering' and were plied with glasses of port! All gymnasts and staff of the schools had meals together, including breakfasts at DCJS. A private double decker bus (a great hit with the girls) was hired to ferry competitors between school, Radnor Park, various hotels, and the railway station throughout the three days. Even the judges and officials returned by this means of transport to DCJS for lunch!

The championships were contested over five disciplines: Set Floor and Voluntary Floor, Set Vault and Voluntary Vault and the team synchronised Group Sequence, which was a compulsory part of the competition from the first year. The actual rules have changed over the years, but the five disciplines have remained until this day. A team consisted of five girls, with the top four scores in each discipline to count towards the team total. Each gymnast's four individual scores were also totalled so that individual placings and medals were given alongside the top team positions.

The AHMPS President came along to award the trophies and medals at the conclusion of the championships. Then it was back to DCJS for more glasses of port, dinner and a film show.

I believe Maltman's Green School, Gerrard's Cross, will be the only school to compete in all the championships, first under former coach Pat Journet, (known for turning up at a competition in a white suit looking as if she had stepped out of Vogue magazine with her girls in bright flamingo pink leotards!), next under Beverley Humpheys, and then former British champion (1991) Laura Timmins, followed by Cairine Cranfield-Thompson.

The U11 team of Newbridge Prep School,(formerly known as Wolverhampton PNEU) coached by June Walden, and Millfield's U13 team coached by Chris Davies won the inaugural 1979 championships and also the second championships at Folkestone in May 1980, when two semi-final competitions were held earlier in the year to accommodate the extra ten schools who wanted to participate.

Dover College also hosted the third Championship in May 1981. After this, the AHMPS organisation amalgamated with the IAPS, new team trophies were made and it became known as the IAPS championships.

1st AHMPS Girls Gymnastics Championships 1979

Gymnastics Venue: Radnor Park Sports Centre

Host School: Dover College Junior School, Folkestone

Friday 2 March 1979

1979 Junior Under 11 Results			1979 Senior Under 13 School Results		
1	Newbridge, PNEU, Wolverhampton	138.45	1	Millfield Prep, Glastonbury	155.50
2	Maltman's Green, Gerrard's Cross	130.70	2	St Nicholas, Fleet, Hants	142.75
3	Red House, Stockton on Tees	127.05	3	Maltman's Green, Gerrard's Cross	131.15
4	Eton End PNEU, Slough	114.55	4	Dover College, Folkestone	121.25
5	St George's, Southwold	114.35	5	Fernhill Manor, New Milton	118.70
6	Leelands, Walmer	112.40	6	Godstowe, High Wycombe	112.80
7	Ibstock Place, Roehampton	106.20	7	Ibstock Place, Roehampton	106.45
8	Fernhill Manor, New Milton	105.80	8	Leelands, Walmer	104.95
9	St Bernard's, Slough	105.30	9	Dulwich College, Cranbrook	104.10
10	Dulwich College, Cranbrook	99.45	10	St Bernard's, Slough	99.85
11	Godstowe, High Wycombe	97.55			
12	Laverock, Oxted	96.20			
13	Ranters Oak, Rolvenden	94.05			
14	King's College, Cambridge	81.85			
Individual Results			Individual Results		
1	Rebekah Reedhead Red House	30.10	1	Results not known	
2	Suzanne Riley Newbridge PNEU	29.50	2		
3	Caroline Worrall Newbridge PNEU	29.05	3		
4	? Maltman's Green	27.20	4		
5	? Maltman's Green	27.05	5		
6	Laura Wilcox Newbridge PNEU	26.20	6		

2nd AHMPS Girls Gymnastics Championships 1980

Host School: Dover College Junior School, Folkestone

Gymnastics Venue: Radnor Park Sports Centre

Friday 16 May 1980

In 1980 preliminary heats were held at two centres, to accommodate the growing number of schools, with the top four schools in each age group competing in the finals at Dover College 16 May 1980.

In the semi-finals only three disciplines were contested: Set Floor, Voluntary Vault and Group Sequence.

Semi-Final 1:

Venue: Chalfont St Giles, Leisure Centre, nr Gerrard's Cross, Bucks.

Host: Maltman's Green School. Organiser: Mrs Pat Journet.

Date: 19 February 1980

Junior Under 11 Results

- 1 Maltman's Green
- 2 Dover College
- 3 Chesham Prep
- 4 The Granville, Sevenoaks

Senior Under 13 Results

- 1 Maltman's Green
- 2 Northbourne Park, Bettshanger, Deal
- 3 St Bernard's
- 4 Leelands, Walmer

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- 5 Eton End PNEU
 - 6 Fernhill Manor
 - 7 St Bernard's
 - 8 St Michael's, Leigh-on-Sea

Top 4 Schools in each semi-final qualified for the national finals in Folkestone in May 1980

Semi-Final 2

Venue: Edgarley Hall, Millfield Junior School, Glastonbury, Somerset.

Host : Millfield School. Organiser: Mr Chris Davies.

Date: 5 March 1980

Junior Under 11 Results

- 1 Newbridge, PNEU, Wolverhampton
- 2 Red House, Stockton-on-Tees
- 3 St Catherine's, Bramley, Surrey
- 4 Greycotes, Oxford,
- 5 Laverock, Oxted
- 6 Rookesbury Park, Wickham, Hants
- 7 Stanway, Dorking
- 8 Queen Mary's, Helmsley, Yorks

Senior Under 13 results

- 1 Millfield School, Somerset
- 2 Knighton House, Blandford, Dorset
- 3 Ibstock Place, Roehampton
- 4 Queen Mary's, Helmsley, Yorks
- 5 Stanway, Dorking

Top 4 Schools in each semi-final qualified for the national finals in Folkestone in May 1980

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2nd AHMPS Girls Gymnastics Championships
NATIONAL FINALS
Gymnastics Venue: Radnor Park Sports Centre
Host School: Dover College Junior School, Folkestone
Friday 16 May 1980

NATIONAL FINALS

1980 Juniors Under 11 Results			1980 Senior Under 13 Results		
1	Newbridge, PNEU, Wolverhampton	135.75	1	Millfield Prep, Glastonbury	156.65
2	Maltman's Green, Gerrard's Cross	135.40	2	Maltman's Green, Gerrard's Cross	129.80
3	Dover College, Folkestone	132.30	3	Northbourne Park, Bettshanger, Deal	125.70
4	Red House, Stockton-on-Tees	131.85	4	Knighton House, Blandford, Dorset	123.45
5	Chesham Prep, Chesham	130.15	5	Queen Mary's, York	113.95
6	St Catherine's, Bramley	122.20	6	Ibstock Place, Roehampton	111.35
7	The Granville, Sevenoaks	118.25	7	Leelands, Walmer	100.80
8	Greycotes, Oxford	108.80	8		
Individual Results			Individual Results		
1	Suzanne Riley Newbridge PNEU	32.70	1	S. Spencer Millfield	36.35
2	S. Hawkens Dover College	31.50	2	C. Wilkinson Millfield	35.00
3	Rosemary Wilkins Chesham Prep	31.20	3	E. Phipps Knighton House	31.20
4	Rebekah Reedhead Red House	30.75	4	C. Hart Maltman's Green	30.40
5	J. Parsons Chesham Prep	29.30	5	S. Northcroft Northbourne Park	28.60
6	Laura Wilcox Newbridge PNEU	29.10	6	E. Sharper Millfield	28.05

Ten new schools entered the 2nd Championships in 1980:

Chesham Prep	Bucks
Greycotes	Oxford
Knighton House	Blandford, Dorset
Northbourne Park	Bettshanger, Kent
Queen Mary's	Helmsley, York
Rookesbury Park	Wickham, Hants
St Catherine's	Bramley, Surrey
St Michael's	Leigh-on-Sea.
Stanway	Dorking
The Granville	Sevenoaks, Kent

3rd AHMPS Girls Gymnastics Championships
Venue: Radnor Park Sports Centre
Host School: Dover College Junior School, Folkestone
Friday 15 May 1981

1981 Junior Under 11 Results			1981 Senior Under 13 Results		
1	Chesham Prep, Chesham, Bucks	130.95	1	Millfield, Glastonbury	
2	Red House, Stockton on Tees	122.10			
3	Maltman's Green, Gerrard's Cross	120.50		<i>Dover College, Folkestone</i>	
4	Ashford Prep, Ashford, Kent	119.35		<i>Knighton House, Blandford, Dorset</i>	
5	Newbridge, PNEU, Wolverhampton	116.35		<i>Maltman's Green, Gerrard's Cross</i>	
6	Dover College Junior, Folksone	116.10		<i>Northbourne Park, Betteshanger, Kent</i>	
7	St Catherine's, Bramley, Surrey	109.10		<i>Queen Mary's, Helmsley, York</i>	
8	Fernhill Manor, New Milton, Hants	106.10			
9	Queen Mary's, Helmsley, York	95.45		<i>Apart from the winning team, other</i>	
10	Stanway School, Dorking	93.70		<i>positions not known</i>	
Individual Results			Individual Results		
1	Rosemary Wilkins Chesham Prep	33.85			
2	Alison Farmer Ashford Prep	32.85		<i>Results not known</i>	
3	Rebekah Reedhead Red House	31.35			
4	Catherine Bain Chesham Prep	30.75			
5	Audra Tweddell Maltmans's Green	28.60			
6	Justine Egar Newbridge,PNEU	27.70			

One new school: Ashford Prep School, Ashford, Kent

The cost of sixteen teams' accommodation and travel required to attend both the semi-finals and the nationals finals, on the south coast, with nine teams being deprived of competing at a national championships, made the 1980 set-up unpopular. So the 3rd Championships reverted back to its previous format, but a number of schools had already dropped out.

Unfortunately 1981 is one year when we do not have a full set of results for the Senior U13 section. The programme shows six schools taking part. The archivist was present at the championships and knows for a fact that Millfield School, coached by Mr Chris Davies, were the winners, but unfortunately nothing further is known. If anyone has a record of this championship, or the missing results from 1979, please contact Mrs June Walden chairman@isgagymnastics.org