The very last cross country race of the season saw many Blackheath and Bromley HAC youngsters earning their well-deserved County vests.

Essex county hosted the schools inter counties held at Hylands Park in Chelmsford for years 7 and 8 boys and girls.

The course was dry after the long rainy season, and the ground was quite hard around the start, but the ground had reasonable give once you got into your running.

There was some degree of confusion from the organisers as to the race route which would be followed, particularly for the Year 8 boys.

But what was clear from walking the course, it was going to be a fast race, as this was the flattest course of the season.

The organisers also played a little fast and loose with the start times, starting the year 8 girls and boys some minutes early.

When the year 8 boys had started the organisers had agreed on the course to be run, but didn’t inform any of the runners and so there was a degree of frustration when the last dog leg of the course was completely missed out.

At the end of the day all the runners were in the same boat, but many must have been saving themselves mentally and physically for that extra 500m!

In spite of this a good time was had by all, particularly as it was picnic weather.

In the year 7 girls race Imogen Meers had a terrific run coming home in 2nd despite not been able to train freely due to knee problems. Alice Prentice had another great run finishing 13th with Hanna O'Flynn crossing the line in 27th.

Emilie Penlington, having not quite recovered from a nasty shoulder injury took it steady but still finished a creditable 66th.

In the year 7 boys Joseph Georgiadis had a great run in 10th backed up well by Keir Lundy in 17th and Ben Gardiner finishing in 27th.

In the year 8 boys and girl teams we had representation for both Kent and Surrey.

The year 8 girls were led home by Jessica Sellar ( Kent ) in 15th followed by Grace Scopes ( Surrey ) 22nd and Stephanie Taylor ( Kent ) 31st. Millie Smith had been selected but was unable to race due to illness.

The year 8 boys had the biggest BBHAC turn out with six boys running. Birthday boy Henry-James Cowie completed his fantastic winter campaign sporting some lovely red knee length socks, which must have been one of his presents! Henry had another fine run finishing a terrific 2nd. Michael Eagling running for Surrey crossed the line in a great 8th followed by Coleman Corry in 22nd. Angus Harrington running for Surrey finished 31st, George Pope 51st and Lewis Sticking 63rd.

Earning your county vest in any sport is a great achievement and all who ran yesterday should be proud to say they are now county standard athletes. Well done to all.

Paul Austridge