

Annual Report

152nd SEASON
2019-20

September 2020



THAMES HARE AND HOUNDS

Thames Hare & Hounds

OFFICERS 2020-21

President	MIKE FARMERY
Honorary Treasurer	GORDON PEARCE
Honorary Secretary & Club Archivist	SIMON MOLDEN
Club Captain & Second Team Captain	ALEX MACKULA
Men's Captain	RICHARD OLLINGTON
Ladies' Captain	CLAIRE ALTMANN
Men's Vice-captain	JAMES HOAD
Ladies' Vice-captain	CHLOE BECKETT
Fixture Secretary	ANDREA STEHLIKOVA
Chief Pioneer	EDWARD CATMUR
Honorary Medical Officer	Dr DOUG JUSTINS
Carver and Commissary-General	MAUREEN POOLE
Handicappers	NIC GOULD CHRIS RYE
Committee	SERENA CARTER
Trustees	MIKE FARMERY, SIMON MOLDEN & GORDON PEARCE

HEADQUARTERS

At the Memorial Playing Fields Wimbledon Common,
SW15 3PQ (opposite the Robin Hood Gate Entrance to
Richmond Park)



THAMES HARE & HOUNDS

ANNUAL REPORT
2019-2020

Mr President, Ladies & Gentlemen

In the future, when we look back on our 152nd season, it is inevitable that the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic will dominate. However, this should not be allowed to overshadow the fact that it has been another memorable season for the club, with many fine performances and an ever-increasing number of new members.

Our ladies' team was once again to the forefront, winning the Surrey League Division 1 title for the third time in a row and seventh time in 11 seasons and also qualifying for the National Six-Stage Road Relays, finishing 28th. They were unable to repeat their Southern Championship heroics of last season; however, narrowly falling outside the top three represented another excellent achievement for the club. They reserved their best performance of the season for the National where they finished in sixth place (almost certainly our best result ever).

The men performed consistently across their Surrey League season to finish fourth overall. They also produced noteworthy performances at the Southern (tenth) and National (12th) as well as taking a team to the National Cross-Country Relays, where they finished 24th.

On top of these performances at the elite end of the club, there was the usual and important array of club fixtures, including the mob match against Ranelagh, the University Race, the Alumni Race, the Dash for the Splash and the Parkland Relays. The Second Sunday 5, under the guidance of David Symons, continued to flourish.

The lockdown when it came in March brought with it much uncertainty; however, it was good to see the club proactively responding to the constraints it brought and enthusiastically embracing the new world of virtual racing and other challenges, which are detailed in this report.

Finally, the season did witness the passing of a number longstanding members of the club, including Antony Fletcher (1953), Jan Hildreth (1957), Peter Mulholland (1966), Michael Merifield (1966) and our second ladies' captain Diane Cheeseman (1988). In particular, Antony, Jan and Diane gave sterling service to Thames over many years and will be very much missed. In April, everyone at the club was deeply saddened by the loss one of our greatest members, John Bryant. John gave over 50 years of unstinting service to the club as captain (for four seasons), handicapper and, more recently, as our seventh President (2010-15). He will be hugely missed by all at the club.

Simon Molden
Hon. Secretary
September 2020



THAMES HARE & HOUNDS

AWARDS
2019-20

Short Distance Challenge

Richard Ollington

Ladies' Short Distance Challenge

Natalie Seymour

Short Distance Handicap

Andrea Stehlikova

Long Distance Challenge Cup

Richard Ollington

Ladies' Long Distance Challenge

Ellen Weir

Long Distance Handicap

James McMullan

Cheshire Tally-Ho!

Paul Aste

(Fastest Thames on the Roman Road)

Cheshire Tally-Ho! Ladies' Trophy

Katy Hedgethorpe

(Fastest Thames lady on the Roman Road)

James Ryan Trophy

Mike Farmery

(Fastest Thames Veteran on the Roman Road)

10 Mile Challenge

to be held during September 2020

Ladies' 10 Mile Challenge

to be held during September 2020

10 Mile Handicap

to be held during September 2020

Road Running Challenge

not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic

Clough-Whittome Handicap

not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic

Kensit Trophy for the Aggregate Handicap

Midsummer Handicap

Jim Foster

Harry Hall Award

David Jenkins

Memorial Trophy

Bethanie Murray

(Best aggregate finish in the Southern and National)

Fitzpatrick Trophy

Richard Ollington

(Most appearances during season)

London Marathon Veterans' Handicap

not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic

(Silver plate donated by Malcolm Thompson)



THAMES HARE & HOUNDS

TROPHIES

Short Distance Challenge

Two handled Silver Drinking Cup

Long Distance Challenge

Silver Victorian Claret Jug

10 Mile Challenge

Silver Plated Rose Bowl

Memorial Trophy

Silver Goblet

Road Running Championship

Bronze Running Man

Hardy Willcock Memorial

Silver Salver by Gerald Bennie

James Ryan Trophy

Silver Plated Bowl

Cheshire Tally Ho Trophy

Silver Plated Tankard

Ladies Short Distance Challenge

Silver "Irish" Cup of 1936

Ladies Long Distance Challenge

Pewter Tappit Hen



THAMES HARE & HOUNDS

SECRETARY'S REPORT

September

With no hint of the disruption to come, our 152nd season officially opened on September 8th through Matt Jones winning the 53rd staging of our Second Sunday 5 in 30:15. The following weekend, traditional sunshine witnessed the Surrey Road Relays at Wimbledon Park. We fielded four ladies' teams with the A team of Claire Altmann, Amy Aronson, Victoria Barthlemess and Natalie Seymour taking victory in the open competition. Natalie ran the second fastest leg of the day (16:14). The V35s took a fine silver in their contest. On the men's side, our A team finished seventh, with Richard Ollington running a very fast fourth leg (14:41).

The following weekend on 22nd September, the Southern Road Relays took place at Crystal Palace Park. Seventeen Saltires braved the rain to enjoy the hills of this part of south London. Our ladies' A team ran particularly well to finish 19th and we were also able to field B and C teams. In terms of individual runs, a special mention should go to Liz Stavreski who continued her return to top form to clock our fastest leg of the day (17:51). It was pleasing to be able to welcome Katy Hedgethorne back to the team, travelling all the way from her new base in Plymouth and there were good runs from two debutants, Serena Carter and Chloe Beckett. The men's team finished 43rd, with particularly strong runs from Richard Ollington (17:09) and Paddy Roddy (17:47).

September concluded with our 175th Short Distance Challenge (and 139th Handicap) on the 28th. With the Tracksmith cameras present, 31 Saltires toed the startline. Andrea Stehlikova (36:25) emerged victorious in the handicap to take the first tankard of the season. Richard Ollington (26:42) and Natalie Seymour (31:06) secured victories in the men's and ladies' Challenge contests.

October

For the first time in recent years, Thames were represented in the National Road Relays at Sutton Park. Our ladies' team, who had qualified through their performance at Crystal Palace, produced an excellent display to finish 28th out of 64. Liz Stavreski led the team off on leg one and handed over to Bethanie Murray who took advantage of other teams having front-loaded to work her way through the field. Lauren Major managed to push us on a little further before Vikki Filsell anchored us in 28th place (17th from the southern region).

The following weekend saw the ladies' Surrey League season welcomed by a heavy drizzle at Reigate. Nine Saltires dusted off their spikes to do battle and, having suffered a few late drop-outs due to injury, we were very pleased to come a solid third behind Clapham Chasers and Kent AC. The scoring team was ably led by Bethanie Murray in third and her best finish to date. Rebekah



Edgar and Claire Altmann made the most of their marathon training to come in 16th and 17th and the team was closed by Chloe Beckett in 32nd on her debut and Andrea Buchanan in 54th. The men were in action at a similarly rural Surrey venue in the guise of Effingham Common. Led home by James Hoad in an excellent third and Richard Ollington in seventh, we finished fourth and only nine points off South London Harriers in third. The following day saw the 54th staging of the Second Sunday 5, won by A.Ismaili of Fulham Running Club.

The third weekend of October was taken up with Surrey Masters' Championships at the new venue (for us) of Morden Park. Charlotte Mason was fastest lady and a clear winner of the V35 category. Liz Stavreski was next finisher in fourth place overall (and winner of the V45 into the bargain). Annette Gould and Vikki Filsell enjoyed a cat-and-mouse battle behind, with Annette using her superior finishing speed to hold Vikki off. Annette was sixth in the V35 category and Vikki third in the V50. Liz, Vikki and Denise Barnett combined to take the V45 team prize. For the men, Rick Turner had an excellent run for the individual bronze in the V65, followed closely by Richard Pitt in seventh. Rhodri Davies, giving his new hip its first competitive outing, was tenth V60. Combined, they took a well-earned V60 team silver. In the V40 race, Petter Johnsen was a lonely Saltire in his race, but had a strong run for 11th overall and fifth V45.

October's racing was completed by the traditional match against Milocarians at Sandhurst. Fourteen Saltires competed on a fabulously rainy day and came home with the winning Lewin's Trophy for the first time since 1999. There were individual medals for Richard Ollington (first home), Liz Stavreski (second lady), Serena Carter (third lady) and Matt Jones (third man).

November

On November 2nd, for the first time in many years (and possibly ever), we took a team to the National Cross-Country Relays in Mansfield. John Carr (17:13), Paddy Roddy (17:52), Amittai Ben-Israel (18:11) and Richard Ollington (17:49) did the club proud to finish 24th overall. Bethanie Murray and Lauren Major formed an incomplete ladies' team.

After a quiet first weekend in November, the club swung back into action on the 9th with the second round of the Surrey League campaign. The ladies were in action on Mitcham Common and fielded two teams. The A team produced another third place and the Bs were in 19th overall. Our challenge was spearheaded by Bethanie Murray (21:22) and Lauren Major (21:30). Katy Hedgethorpe was 13th with (22:15). Then, a little was further back, was Emma Elston in 42nd (22:45) and Chloe Beckett in 47th (23:57) to close the team. Liz Stavreski was hot on her heels in a mere four seconds behind in 49th. The net result of this performance was that we went into the new year in second position overall behind Clapham Chasers.

By the afternoon, conditions had deteriorated somewhat and the men faced challenging conditions on home turf (a race we hosted jointly with Fulham Running Club). Josh Carr was first Saltire home in seventh (27:14). Richard Ollington was 13th (27:46), Paddy Roddy 19th (28:02), followed by James McMullan in 23rd (28:05). Tom Goulding was next Saltire home in 38th position (28:54), followed by Simon Wurr in 50th (29:15). Twenty seconds later came James Meiklejohn in 59th place and the Thomases, Lamont (87th, 30:20) and Greenwood (89th, 30:23), completed our ten. Overall, we were fourth once again, but this time just four points behind South London Harriers, thus leaving us in fourth overall.



The following (and drier) day was the 55th Second Sunday 5, Seventy-two runners (19 Saltires) took part and Thomas Grimes of East London Runners took the individual victory in 30:40. Joe Gale was first Saltire home in 31:05. Ellen Weir took family bragging rights, finishing in fourth to dad Andy's fifth. Both were timed at 32:16.

The third weekend of October was taken up with the London Championships. Seven ladies and seven men made the journey to Parliament Hill and were greeted by a course in classic cross-country condition. Both teams finished in creditable ninth positions. Anna Garnier and Al Gibbons were welcome supporters out on the hills. For the ladies, Liz Stavreski had a good run finishing inside the top 40, with next scorer Andrea Buchanan in 50th. Making up the scoring team were Vikki Filsell (65th) and Andrea Stehlikova (86th). The men were brought home by a strong run from James Meiklejohn in 38th, followed closely by Simon Wurr in 40th. The scoring team were made up by Ed Catmur in 57th and James Bartram in 87th.

November closed with the 47th Mob Match against Ranelagh. In a 25-to-score contest, Ranelagh narrowly pipped us by 608 points to 653, thus bringing the series to 27 wins to 20 in our favour. Richard Ollington was first home in 41:00, thus taking the Long Distance Challenge. Ellen Weir was first Thames lady home, thus taking the Ladies' Challenge.

December

On December 7th, Cambridge emerged victorious in both the 129th Gentlemen's University Race (by 32 points to 47) and 44th Ladies' Race (39 points to 41). For the first time, the ladies' race was held under an 8-a-side, 6-to-score format, bringing it in line with the men, and this decision was rewarded by an excellent contest with the result in doubt until the very end. Niamh Bridson Hubbard (Magdalene) took the individual honours in 22:49, equalling Julia Bleasdale's 2003 course record. After a cautious start, Phillip Crout (St. Catherine's) won the gentlemen's race in 38:43.

Oxford took a consolation victory in the 28th Old Blues' Race (180 points to 186, scoring 13-a-side). William Christofi (University) was first home in 21:21. There were plenty of Saltires in action, including Josh Carr (2nd), Richard Ollington (3rd), David Wilson (4th), Tom Goulding (5th), Elliot Nevill (6th), James Chettle (7th), Simon Baines (9th), Edmund Gazeley (9th), Joe Woods (10th), Simon Molden (11th), Matt Willifer (12th), David Kirk (15th), Bethanie Murray (16th), Katy Hedgethorpe (17th), Andy Arbour (19th), Chloe Beckett (20th), Chris Daniels and his new hip (21st), Jess Davies (29th) and Matthew Bryant (31st).

The following day, the 56th Second Sunday 5 was won by Pat Wright from our neighbours Ranelagh Harriers. David Symons was first home for Thames.

A week later saw the 67th Alumni Race and a new record entry of 304. Under the guidance of our captain, Richard Ollington, the Royal Grammar School, Guildford took the King Henry VIII Trophy for the open competition. The V40 competition for the Old Brentwoods' Trophy was won by Winchester, the V50 competition for the Chataway Cup was won by Sherborne and the V60 competition for the Old Denstonian Trophy was won by Winchester. The Old Coventrian Cup for the first lady home went to Lucy Ashe from Charterhouse and the Wyndham Halswelle Cup for the



age-graded victor went to Joe Morwood from the Royal Grammar School, Guildford. Our thanks go to David Jenkins for his continued efforts co-ordinating this popular event.

The year was brought to a close with our traditional Five Miles and Carols on Wednesday 18th December.

January

The new decade opened as is traditional with the Surrey Championships, held at Denbies Vineyard in Dorking. The ladies team finished ninth with Natalie Seymour first home in 12th, followed by Andrea Buchanan 42nd, Rebekah Edgar 47th and Annette Gould 50th. Jessica Davies (83rd) and Diane Neil Mills (99th) also ran. The men went a little better and finished fifth with a team consisting of James Hoad (10th), Richard Ollington (18th), James Meiklejohn (35th), Thomas Greenwood (42nd), Joe Gale (47th) and David Symons (74th). Jack Lancefield (80th), Nic Gould (86th) and Mike Farmery (186th) also ran.

The second weekend of the month saw the third round of the Surrey League. Fifteen Thames ladies turned out on Wimbledon common and produced an excellent team performance. A team score of just over 50 points meant that we carved a significant chunk off Clapham Chasers' lead and we would enter the final race just 11 points behind. Lauren Major led the team home in second and she was followed closely by Natalie Seymour (fifth), Katy Hedgethorpe (sixth) and Bethanie Murray (eighth). Charlotte Mason completed the team in 29th. Behind her came Chloe Beckett (43rd), Emma Elston (54th), Rebekah Edgar (61st), Annette Gould (102nd), Joanna Davies (113th), Jessica Davies (122nd), Andrea Stehlikova (128th), Denise Barnett (146th), Diane Neil Mills (185th) and Helen Geldert (195th), thus putting our B team in third.

The men travelled to Beckenham and recorded a slightly down-on-par performance of sixth. This left us still in fourth overall, but now 50 points off South London Harriers. Richard Ollington was 21st, James McMullan 29th, Amittai Ben-Israel 32nd, Martin Alvarez-Espinar 33rd, James Bartram 51st, James Chettle 55th, Ben Reynolds 73rd, Jack Lancefield 120th, Chris Rye 128th and Iain Sheridan 161st.

The following day 113 took part in the 57th Second Sunday 5. Martin Alvarez-Espinar, producing his second race of the weekend, was first home in 29:19, followed by Matt Jones in 30:20.

The weekend of 18th January was a quiet one for the club; However, a select band of Saltires took part in a match against the Bank of England at Roehampton. We finished fourth in the six-to-score contest thanks to Ollie Garner (ninth), Ed Catmur (11th), Iain Sheridan (21st), Bertie Daniels (27th), Ben Cope (47th) and Chris Hutber (52nd).

January closed with the Southern Championships at Parliament Hill. The ladies were not quite able to repeat their heroics of 12 months previously; however, they still recorded an excellent fourth (a mere nine points off third). Lauren Major was first home in 15th, followed by Bethanie Murray (19th), Katy Hedgethorpe (33rd) and Natalie Seymour (56th). Chloe Beckett (106th), Jess Davies (205th) and Andrea Stehlikova also ran well.



The men finished tenth in the six-to-score contest. James Hoad was 37th, Richard Ollington 60th, Eliot Nevill 78th, James Chettle 97th, Ben Reynolds 112th, Simon Wurr 135th, Ed Catmur 252nd, Andrew Edge 289th, Ed Gazeley 343th, Nic Gould 391st, Richard Hewitt 471st, Ian Sheridan 664th and Rory Spicer 707th. In the under 17 contest, Bertie Daniels finished 153rd. John and Tessa Hauxwell continued their tradition of providing hospitality after races with showers and an excellent tea for both teams.

February

The first Sunday in February was the date for the seventh edition of our Dash for the Splash. Although the weather was dry, the course was at its wettest and Beverley Brook very deep. 302 runners completed the course and Ben Chown from 26.2 Road Runners was first home in 38:25. Matthew Simonson was first Saltire home in eighth (42:20), closely followed by Ellen Weir, who was first lady, in ninth (42:48).

The following Saturday, our Surrey League campaign concluded for another year. The ladies' turned out in force at Richmond Park determined to overturn Clapham's 11-point lead. From the off, it was clear it was to be our day. We were led home by Natalie Seymour in third. Katy Hedgethorpe made the long journey from Plymouth worth it to finish fourth, closely followed by Bethanie Murray in sixth. Alice Braham made light of not having raced cross-country for some time to finish seventh in borrowed spikes. The team was close by Chloe Beckett in 27th. This resulted in a match score of 47, and the overall score of 330 points to take the league victory, our third in a row and seventh in the last 11 years. Behind them, Lauren Major was 32nd, Emma Elston 45th, Emily Hogg 66th and Andrea Buchanan 72nd, thus putting our B team in eighth.

The men made the journey to Lloyd Park and produced their best performance of the season, with third place on a score of 387 points. Paddy Roddy led us home in 11th and he was followed by Amittai Ben-Israel (20th), James McMullan (21st), Josh Carr (22nd), Richard Ollington (28th), Eliot Nevill (30th), Simon Wurr (51st), Ben Reynolds (69th), Edmund Gazeley (100th) and Ed Catmur (103rd). The result left us in fourth overall, just 19 points behind South London Harriers. Ben Reynolds won the V50 individual championship, having been first in each of the four rounds.

February's Second Sunday 5 was cancelled and following a blank weekend in the fixture card, the next major action was the National Championships, held this year at Wollaton Park in Nottingham. With flooding across much of the UK, the course was in a very challenging condition with surface water dotted and mud baths aplenty. The ladies finished sixth in the four-to-score team with 250 points, ahead of recent winners Sale Harriers Manchester. The men finished 12th in the six-to-score team with 925 points ahead of home team Notts AC. They also finished ninth in the nine-to-score team with 1,764 points, ahead of Surrey League winners Kent AC.

For the ladies, first home was Bethanie Murray (48th), followed by Katy Hedgethorpe (59th), Natalie Seymour (69th), Lauren Major (74th), Chloe Beckett (153rd) and Jess Davies (303rd). For the men, Josh Carr led the way in 126th. Behind him were Paddy Roddy (134th), James Hoad (136th), Eliot Nevill (163rd), Richard Ollington (176th), James Chettle (190th), Amittai Ben-Israel (199th), Ben Reynolds (284th and first V55), James Meiklejohn (365th), James Bartram (380th), Matt Lynas (592nd), Ed Gazeley (677th) and Rory Spicer (968th). Bethanie's performance meant she retained our



Memorial Trophy for a second season with an aggregate finishing position across the Southern and National of 67. James Hoad was top male with 136.

February closed with the 125th Long Distance Challenge. James McMullan (38:07) splashed his way to victory through a course that was more puddle than mud, ahead of Jess Davies (53:10) and Rory Spicer (47:44). Katy Hedgethorpe (47:40) was fastest lady over the course. In the evening, the club came together at the Army and Navy Club for the Annual Dinner. Our thanks go to the Maureen Poole for organising another highly enjoyable evening.

March

March was the month when everything changed for club and the wider athletic world. The global spread of Covid-19 and the imposed lockdown by government put a hold our season as we knew it. However, before the restrictions kicked in, there was time for a few of the scheduled fixtures to take place. On 8th March, the 58th Second Sunday Five took place, incorporating a six-to-score match against Milocarrians. Led home by Simon Gardner in sixth and supported by David Symons (tenth), Fergus Henderson (15th), Declan Flynn (20th), Stephen McDuell (22nd) and Andy Robinson (31st), we were victorious by 64 points to 104.

On Wednesday 11th, select group made the trip to Oxford for the Teddy Hall Relay. Running under the banner of the OUCCC Old Gits B team, Richard Ollington (guesting), Peter Haarer (from Ranelagh Harriers) and two legs from Simon Molden, finished sixth overall and third of the external teams. Andy Weir, David Kirk, Chris Daniels and Andy Arbour, running as the OUCCC Old Gits A team, finished some way behind in 15th (tenth external team).

On the final weekend of racing as normal, Phill Tedd finished an excellent second in the British Masters' Cross-Country Championships in Corwen, north Wales. In the men's V45, our team of Ben Reynolds, Matthew Lynas and Andrew Edge took the gold medal. Slightly closer to home, a band of Saltires made the trip to Cambridge for the Roman Road Run. Paul Aste won the Cheshire Tally Ho! Trophy for the fastest Thames man and Katy Hedgethorpe won the ladies' trophy, which had been presented to us by the Manchester club as part of our 150th anniversary celebrations. Mike Farmery won the James Ryan Trophy for the fastest Thames veteran.

Although racing as we know it was suspended for the foreseeable future, the club quickly made the leap into the new world of virtual racing. The impetus for this came initially from Nic Gould and was taken up and expanded into the athletic world beyond Thames by Andy Robinson and Andy Weir and their Opentrack digital platform.

The Lockdown Period

The first foray into the new world took place over the weekend of 21st and 22nd March with a club 5km race and handicap, which attracted a healthy 59 competitors. Jim Allchin produced the fastest time with a speedy 15:46, with James Hoad one second slower. Bethanie Murray was first lady in 18:32. The handicap contest was won by Annette Gould.

The following weekend, James Hoad took his revenge on Jim Allchin to win a 2-mile contest in 9:34. Natalie Seymour was first lady in 11:38. Phil Gilbert took the handicap.



The opening week of April was taken up with the Virtual 5km National Road Relays. Saltires were out in force across all age groups. In the open competitions, our men finished 17th and ladies ninth in the usual six-to-score contest and an excellent second in the 12. On the veterans' side of things, our V40 men were edged into fourth at the very end by North Herts Road Runners and our V50 team was third. Performance of the weekend, however, was by our ladies V35 team who took victory from Vale Royal and Winchester & District AC.

Next up, held over the period from 9th-14th April was our postponed Mob Match against South London Harriers, which was held as a 5km event. Despite our rivals having the fastest three, our packing was significantly superior and we took the 48-a-side contest by 1,901 points to 2,858. James Hoad (15:13) and Jim Allchin (15:14) were again our fastest two with Bethanie Murray and Natalie Seymour (both 18:02) the fastest ladies.

On the weekend of the 18th and 19th April, Jim Allchin continued his good form by winning a club 4-mile virtual race. The following weekend saw a virtual 5km mob match – dubbed “The Battle of the Black and Whites” – against Highgate Harriers. We comfortably won a 14-a-side contest by 150 points to 265 with Richard Kowenicki (15:42) first home for us in second place. The following weekend brought us another mob match victory, this time against Guildford & Godalming AC and run over a snappy 3km distance. Scoring 27-a-side, Jim Allchin was again first home for us in 8:43 and we won by 620 points to 910.

On Monday 25th May, Ed Catmur eschewed what was becoming the lockdown custom of 5km races to complete a solo 100-mile epic on the streets of London in a time of 19 hours, 17 minutes

Over the first week in June a smattering of Saltires took part in the Mulholland Mile, an event that commemorated the life of erstwhile member and stalwart of Hercules-Wimbledon AC, Pete Mulholland. Nick Altmann posted the quickest Thames time in 5:04.

The club's activities in the second week of June were dominated by the 27th Parkland Relays, run as a virtual 5km event. Two hundred and seventy-two runners recorded a leg and Thames finished second in both the men's and ladies' open competitions and the ladies' veteran competition. The men's veteran team went one better to take victory.

Immediately following the Parkland Relays, the veteran section of the club was in action in another 5km relay competition, this time for the British Masters' Championships. In the men's V35 category we finished 15th, in the men's V45 we finished 22nd, in the men's V55 we finished 26th and in the ladies' V35 we finished 33rd. The best performance of the week was by our V65 team of Ric Turner, Richard Pitt and Mike Farmery who finished third.

On Wednesday 1st July, the Midsummer Handicap took place in virtual conditions over five miles. Jim Foster took the honours (42:42) from Illona Kriauzaite (39:09) and Andrea Stehlikova (41:01). James Hoad produced the fastest time in 28:25.

As we moved into the summer holiday season, the virtual race activity started to wind down; however, the club did not remain idle and we satisfied our need for running in a number of novel ways. Starting in May and extending into July and August, the “Thame Postcode Challenge” saw members collectively run the boundary of nearly 90 different postcode districts, taking in the close-



to-home SWs and KT's, the slightly further afield Gus, SMs and CRs, and most impressively of all, all 11 Aberdonian districts courtesy of Iona Kriausaite.

Finally, mention should go to the Second Sunday 5, which continued to take place over the lockdown period in virtual format and also to David Jenkins, who kept the Alumni Race devotees engaged with a monthly Alumni Lockdown Race.

That completes the report on another season for Thames. Without doubt, it has been the most challenging one in living memory; however, it has been rewarding to see so many members pulling together to provide the activity, competition and friendship to get the club through this period of national crisis. We look forward to the return of some form of normality during the 2020-21 season.

