

Annual Report

153rd SEASON
2020-21



THAMES HARE AND HOUNDS

Thames Hare & Hounds

OFFICERS 2021-22

President	MIKE FARMERY
Honorary Treasurer	GORDON PEARCE
Honorary Secretary	SIMON MOLDEN
Club Captain & Men's Captain	RICHARD OLLINGTON
Ladies' Captain	CLAIRE ALTMANN
Second Team Captain	ALEX MACKULA
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	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
2020-21**

Mr President, Ladies & Gentlemen

In my report of 12 months ago, I reflected on the fact that memories of our 152nd season would inevitably be dominated by the Coronavirus pandemic, which brought significant disruption from March 2020. However, that impact pales by comparison with our 153rd season, which was by and large decimated by two separate lockdown periods and ongoing social restrictions. Such conditions made any form of season planning impossible, with most major fixtures cancelled and plans for any lower key events being susceptible to short notice change in reaction to the latest government guidelines.

It was something of a miracle therefore, that we were able to hold any events in the 2020-21 season, but we did. Our Short and Ten-mile Challenges and Handicaps, took place, as well as several editions of the Second Sunday 5. As with the previous season, many of our members were able to supplement their running with virtual competition, which continued throughout the season, although at a lesser level than before. Initial enthusiasm was obviously waning. That said, the club had two outstanding performers in the virtual London Marathon in James Hoad, eighth in the men's competition, and Natalie Seymour, third for the ladies.

As we stand now and with the vaccination programme having been successfully rolled out, we are able to look forward to our 154th season with a realistic expectation that it will see a significant return to normality. I am sure that this is something that all of our members will welcome with open arms. I should like to extend my thanks to the rest of the committee and all of our other members who have helped to keep the club's activities going through such a trying period.

Finally, the last 12 months has also seen the loss of three distinguished members. Firstly, in October, it was Mike Allen, who joined Thames in 1957 and served as Honorary Secretary, a Handicapper and Carver. Shortly afterwards in November, John Trotter (1993), who among many other accolades, finished third V60 at London in 1986, passed away at the grand age of 96. Lastly, in July, everyone at the club was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Anna Jones, wife of Matt, our captain from 2015-17. Anna was a true servant to the club, having given many years of service pioneering, helping with teas and ferrying runners around the Green Belt Relay.

Simon Molden
Hon. Secretary
September 2021



**THAMES HARE
& HOUNDS**

**AWARDS
2020-21**

Short Distance Challenge	Richard Ollington
Ladies' Short Distance Challenge	Charlotte Mason
Short Distance Handicap	Christina O'Donovan-Rossa
Long Distance Challenge Cup	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
Ladies' Long Distance Challenge	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
Long Distance Handicap	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
Cheshire Tally-Ho! <i>(Fastest Thames on the Roman Road)</i>	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
Cheshire Tally-Ho! Ladies' Trophy <i>(Fastest Thames lady on the Roman Road)</i>	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
James Ryan Trophy <i>(Fastest Thames Veteran on the Roman Road)</i>	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
10 Mile Challenge	Richard Ollington
Ladies' 10 Mile Challenge	Ellen Weir
10 Mile Handicap	Alistair McMaster
Road Running Challenge	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
Clough-Whittome Handicap	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
Kensit Trophy for the Aggregate Handicap	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
Midsummer Handicap	Michael Johnson
Harry Hall Award	Alistair Irvine
Memorial Trophy <i>(Best aggregate finish in the Southern and National)</i>	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
Fitzpatrick Trophy <i>(Most appearances during season)</i>	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>
London Marathon Veterans' Handicap <i>(Silver plate donated by Malcolm Thompson)</i>	<i>not contested due to Covid-19 pandemic</i>



**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**

The Autumn

As with the rest of the cross-country community in the UK, Thames headed into the 2020-21 with a good deal of trepidation and uncertainty. Although the country had started to emerge from the most severe social restrictions, no-one could be quite sure if and when we might head back into lockdown and, hence, no fixtures could be planned with anything approaching certainty. This was reflected in the fact that the committee did not produce a fixture card for the season.

Nevertheless, the club was able to engage in a limited amount of activity as the autumn started. On September 13th, Nic Gould celebrated his transition to V40 by running 40 miles on the common over a 2.5km loop. Following extensive consultation with the Conservators through the late summer period, they gave their blessing to a trial in-person race taking place on the common with a field limited to 30 runners and pre-sign-up mandatory. Originally scheduled for 26th September, it was postponed for two weeks to 10th October and served as both the Second Sunday 5 and the Short Distance Handicap and Challenge. Captain Richard Ollington won the men's challenge (28:02) and Charlotte Mason took the honours in the ladies' contest (33:49). Christina O'Donovan-Rossa won the handicap and the first tankard of the season.

Also, throughout September the 10-mile Challenge and Handicap for the 2019-20 season was run on a virtual basis (with runners completing our 10-mile course at a time of their choosing). Richard Ollington won the men's Challenge (58:17) and Handicap and Rebekah Edgar won the ladies' Challenge (78:15).

Despite the cancellation of the London Marathon, on the first Sunday of October, which was the original rescheduled date, many runners took to the streets of their neighbourhoods to complete their own 26.2 miles virtually. For Thames, there were two outstanding results. James Hoad completed a very swift four 10km laps of Bushy Park in 2:32:11 and overall eighth place. Natalie Seymour, making her debut at the distance, ran 2:49:02 for an excellent third place and overall. With the credibility of some of the leading results in question, there is a strong argument to suggest that both deserved victory.

On 17th October, the club was back in action at the socially-distanced Surrey 5km Road Relays. Both our teams finished seventh. Running for the ladies were Felicity Hayward (11th fastest time and personal best, 18:50), Rebekah Edgar (24th, 19:19), Annette Gould (44th, 20:35), Emily Hogg (46th, 20:45), Jess Davies (48th, 20:51) and Andrea Buchanan (56th, 21:22). For the men, James Hoad was eighth. Also running were Richard Ollington (15th), Macgregor Cox (37th), Amittai Ben Israel (40th), Neil Chisholm (41st), Tom Greenwood (68th), Jack Lancefield (82nd), Bertie Daniels (96th), Nic Gould (98th) and Chris Daniels (101st).



On the last day of October, the Prime Minister announced that the UK would be going back into lockdown for a period of four weeks from 5th November and, as a result, all in-person competition was back on hold and the club returned to virtual racing as the means for satisfying our running needs. Consequently, November was a very quiet month on the running front; however, there were still a few very impressive results, most notably from Katrina Rye who won the Florida Ironman Triathlon in a time of 8 hours, 40 minutes and 50 seconds.

The Ranelagh mob match took place as a virtual 5 km contest over a week-long period at the end of November and early December, with our rivals running out comfortable winners by 795 points to 1,192 scoring 30-a-side. We were dominant at the top end, however, with Richard Ollington, James McMullan, James Hoad and Tom Goulding filling the first four places.

As many of our members will know, traditionally, the first Saturday in December sees us host the Oxford-Cambridge University Race. At the start of the season, following liaison with the two clubs and the Conservators, we were optimistic that the event would be able to take place in its usual slot. Once the country was back in lockdown, it became clear that it was not a realistic prospect, with both universities having placed a ban on students taking part in external competition. Therefore, for the first time since December 1944, there was no University Race on the common. Further attempts to hold a race over a different course on the common in March and April were ultimately frustrated by the university authorities' ongoing refusal to allow students to travel. As a compensation, an Oxford Past and Present versus Cambridge Past and Present contest (with much Thames representation) took place concurrently with the Ranelagh Mob Match. Oxford ran out comfortable winners in a 10-a-side contest by 75 points to 176. Jack Millar ran the fastest time (14:56) and Richard Ollington's Ranelagh mark put him in second place.

With London moving out of full lockdown in early December, albeit still into Tier 3 restrictions, we were able to host another Second Sunday 5 under the same restrictions as before. Richard Ollington was first home in 28:48, with Jess Davies first lady in 37:17.

Given the rather fluid nature of the lockdown during this period of the winter and the difficulty it created in terms of planning ahead, the Alumni Race was another of our traditional events that took place virtually. In a simplified contest, St. John's, Leatherhead won the ladies' contest from Shrewsbury and Blundell's. In the men's, Shrewsbury were victorious from Harrow and Oundle. A fair sprinkling of Saltires took part, including Richard Ollington (28:48), Simon Wurr (29:00), James Hoad (29:43), Anthony Doolittle (32:49), Jess Davies (37:18), Felicity Hayward (40:43), Michael Johnson (45:04) and Richard Weston (1:22:51).

Heading into the festive period, the news nationally was grim with the country looking to be heading back into full lockdown in January. In the athletic work, a very trying year closed with the news that the National had been postponed.

The Winter and Spring

The confirmation of what everyone feared came at the start of January and the country was placed back into a full national lockdown, meaning that all in-person competition was back on hold for the foreseeable future. While in normal times, we would have been entering into its busiest period of the season, the consequence was that our members now faced the deepest part of the winter without the



tonic of competition to raise the spirits. In the short-term, it was back to virtual racing with the Second Sunday 5 being the first opportunity in the second week of the new year.

In the event, it turned out to be three long months until the beginnings of a return to normal racing. On 5th April, four Saltires took part in the Ardingly 5km Race. Bethanie Murray (17:32), Alex Howard (14:24) and Kurtis Gibson (14:40) all marked the occasion with personal bests and Jack Millar also ran very strongly (14:44).

The following weekend, a larger contingent of Saltires were in action in Hercules-Wimbledon's 5km Road Relays. Both our men's and ladies' teams finished seventh. On the ladies' side, Ruby Woolfe led the way in 18:38. She was followed by Chloe Beckett (20:00), Claire Altmann (20:15), Vikki Filsell (21:16), Annette Gould (21:23), Jess Davies (21:47). Ellen Weir, running in the colours of Hercules, ran an excellent 17:57.

For the men, the star of the day was Tim Lefroy, who finished second in 14:47. He was followed by Kurtis Gibson (15:19), Richard Ollington (15:25), Macgregor Cox (15:28), James Hoad (15:31), Jacob Brockmann (15:39), Tom Goulding (16:09), Gareth Creagh (17:01), Ed Catmur (17:36), Nic Gould (17:44).

On Sunday 18th, we managed to stage our Ten Mile Handicap and Challenge for the season. Richard Ollington retained his Challenge title with a run of 58:59. In the ladies' contest, Ellen Weir prevailed in 67:06. The handicap tankard went to Alistair McMaster.

The Summer

Moving into May and the club had a good representation at the Reunion 5km Race at Kempton Park on 15th. Bertie Daniels was first home in a personal best of 17:24, beating his father by 69 seconds. Ed Catmur finished in 18:00, Claire Altmann in 19:37, Helen Geldert in 24:01.

The Second Sunday 5 was able to return to the common in June with Alistair McMaster (29:35) and Anisse Ismaili (30:50) ensuring Thames was at the front of the finishers. Christina O'Donovan-Rossa was the first Thames lady home in 13th (34:58).

The Midsummer Handicap took place on the final Saturday of the month. The tankard went to Michael Johnson with a fine run of 43:15. Richard Ollington in eighth was quickest over the course (27:07) and Chloe Beckett (34:36) was fastest lady.

In the July Second Sunday 5, Anisse Ismaili moved up one place from the previous month to take the individual honours (30:46). Andrea Stehlikova in 36th (42:57) was first Thames lady home. On July 18th, Simon Baines and Paul Cheetham were in action at Caterham in the British Masters Half-Marathon. Both ran well to secure age group victories, Simon with 75:59 in the V50 and Paul with 78:04 in the V40. The following weekend, Kurtis Gibson (31:08) and Harry Lane (32:44) took part in the Asics London 10km Race. However, the most notable performance in July came from one of our youngest members – Ellen Weir – who finished 12th in the European U20 Championships 5000m in Tallinn in 17:06.



July was also important in that we were able to hold our first formal club social event, in the form of the Summer Wine Party, since the Annual Dinner at the Army and Navy Club in February 2020. In keeping with the theme of the times, it suffered a postponement from its original date of 26th June when the government extended the deadline for the ending of formal social restrictions by four weeks. Happily, however, we were able to come together and enjoy each other's company at the Leathes' house in Wimbledon on the evening of 24th July. Our thanks go to Simon and Belinda for hosting a very enjoyable and welcome event.

On the middle Sunday in August, the Dash for the Splash made its return. Club captain, Richard Ollington, showed that he was in good form heading into the 2021-22 season with victory in 37:38. Anisse Ismaili (eighth in 41:34) and Nic Gould (11th in 42:07) were the next two Saltires home. Vikki Filsell was first Thames lady in 30th (48:41).

Following an even longer delay than the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, the 2020 Outlying Run in Streatley-on-Thames finally took place over the weekend of 11th and 12th September. The club enjoyed an excellent weekend of running and socialising. Thanks go to Maureen Poole for excellent organisation and Paul Newby for planning some stunning courses.

To conclude this year's report, it would be remiss not to mention the two successful Bob Graham Round attempts made by Saltires over the summer period. First in June, Matt Lynas clocked a time of 21:04:14 and he was followed in July by Ben Reynolds, who completed it in 23 hours, 37 minutes, despite only having one fully functioning knee for the second half of the route.

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