

Annual Report

157th SEASON
2024-25



THAMES HARE AND HOUNDS

Thames Hare & Hounds

OFFICERS 2025-26

President	ANDREW WEIR
Honorary Treasurer	GORDON PEARCE
Honorary Secretary	SIMON MOLDEN
Club Captain & Ladies' Captain	BETHANIE MURRAY
Men's Captain	ELIOT NEVILL
Second Team Captain	ALASTAIR BROWN
Men's Vice-captain	WILLIAM UTLEY
Ladies' Vice-captain	DAISY IRVING-HYMAN
Fixtures Secretary	ALISTAIR IRVINE
Chief Pioneer	MIKE FARMERY
Honorary Medical Officer	ANDREW McLEOD
Carver and	MAUREEN POOLE
Handicappers	CLAIRE ATLMANN JESSICA DAVIES
Committee	RICHARD OLLINGTON
Trustees	ANDREW WEIR, SIMON MOLDEN & GORDON PEARCE
HEADQUARTERS	At the Memorial Playing Fields Wimbledon Common, SW15 3PQ (opposite the Robin Hood Gate Entrance to Richmond Park)



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ANNUAL REPORT
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Mr President, Ladies & Gentlemen

Twelve months ago, I reported a season of contrasts between the men's and ladies' teams with the ladies having an excellent one and the men more of a struggle. I am pleased to say that this year I can report on a significant recovery for the men as shown by their victory in the London Championships in the November and our best performance (third) in the Surrey League Division 1 for many a year. To make things even better, despite having started from a very high base, our ladies outperformed their exploits of 2023-24, having an absolutely outstanding season. They, not only emulated the men in winning the London Championships, but produced unprecedented success for the club with three medals in the main cross-country Championships across the season: second in the re-arranged 2024 National in September; a repeat of their 2019 Southern victory in January; and third in the 2025 National in February. Such performances were obviously a result of an outstanding team effort; however, Club Captain, Bethanie Murray, who marshalled the team across the season and Lizzy Apsley, our top scorer in each of the Championship performances, are deserving of special mention.

As ever, away from the elite side of the club, we hosted the usual array of fixtures, including the Alumni Race, University Races, Parkland Relays, Second Sunday 5 and Dash for the Splash, as well as the club handicaps and challenges. Our thanks go to all who were involved in organising these events. We were particularly pleased that the University Race emerged as one of the few fixtures that was not beaten by Storm Darragh in December. Our thanks go to both university clubs and the Conservators for their co-operation in ensuring that the event could go ahead as planned. The Green Belt Relay was another success this year with another team victory for the club.

The season also saw the traditional round of social fixtures, including the Annual Dinner, University Race dinner, Summer Party and Outlying Run. Our thanks go to the Carver once again.

Finally, in a season of many highs, the latter months of the season saw two world records by Thames members. Firstly, in April, Kat Matthews set a new Ironman world record at the Ironman Texas event. This was followed up in July by Anna Garnier who beat the previous world best for the V70 mile at the Dave Clark Mile.

Simon Molden
Hon. Secretary
September 2025



THAMES HARE & HOUNDS

AWARDS
2024-25

Short Distance Challenge

James Hoad

Ladies' Short Distance Challenge

Freya Billingham

Short Distance Handicap

Jason Sullivan

Long Distance Challenge Cup

Neil Chisholm

Ladies' Long Distance Challenge

Claire Altmann

Long Distance Handicap

Paul Newby

Cheshire Tally-Ho!

Mike Farmery

(Fastest Thames man on the Roman Road)

Cheshire Tally-Ho! Ladies' Trophy

not contested

(Fastest Thames lady on the Roman Road)

James Ryan Trophy

Mike Farmery

(Fastest Thames Veteran on the Roman Road)

10 Mile Challenge

Richard Ollington

Ladies' 10 Mile Challenge

Rebecca Hughes

10 Mile Handicap

Freya Billingham

Road Running Challenge

James Hoad

Clough-Whittome Handicap

Andrew Weir

Kensit Trophy for the Aggregate Handicap

John Lethbridge

Midsummer Handicap

Richard Hughes

Harry Hall Award

Simon Molden

Memorial Trophy

Elizabeth Apsley

(Best aggregate finish in the Southern and National)

London Marathon Veterans' Handicap

Ben Reynolds

(Silver plate donated by Malcolm Thompson)

Keith Spacie Veterans' Trophy

Anna Garnier

Ed Catmur Trophy

Neil Ibata



THAMES HARE & HOUNDS

SECRETARY'S REPORT

September

Our 157th season opened with the Second Sunday 5 on 8th September, which this season also hosted the Short Distance Challenge and Handicap. The first tankard of the season went to Jason Sullivan (44:48) with the Challenge titles going to James Hoad (29:09) and Freya Billingham (38:03) respectively.

A momentous day for the club arrived very early in the season the following weekend. Back in the spring, there was significant disappointment with the last-minute cancellation of the 2024 National. However, on 14th September, our ladies' team headed up to Weston Park knowing that a team medal was a distinct possibility. With the sun shining down and completely dry conditions underfoot, it did not feel like a typical cross-country day. The team packed tightly and produced an outstanding result to finish in second place, splitting cross-country powerhouses Aldershot, Farnham & District and Leeds. This was a very special moment for the club and our congratulations go to the team of Lizzy Apsley (15th), Bethanie Murray (18th), Claire Hammett (20th) and Felicity Hayward (35th). The men did not travel in force; however, the day did see three of our second claimers – Jack Millar, Joe Morrow and Alex Howard – finish in the top 50. To complete a weekend of success, Serena Carter won the women's 30-34 category at the European Long Distance Triathlon Championships.

Back on the Common on the same weekend, we hosted the Alumni Race once again. Our own James Hoad – running in Winchester's colours – was first home in 27:23. In the many team competitions, Sedbergh won the King Henry VIII Trophy for the open event and the V40 Old Brentwood's Trophy; Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School, Rochester won the V50 Chataway Cup; Milton Abbey won the V60 Old Denstonian Cup; and Winchester won the V65 Jane Bubear Cup. The Old Coventrian Cup for the first lady home went to Natalie Nash (Pate's Grammar School) and the Old Johnian Trophy for the first ladies' team went to Wellington. Finally, Epsom won the Shrewsbury Cup for the age-adjusted team victory and Mark Cursons (81.00%) took the Wyndham Halswelle individual trophy.

On 21st September, the South of England Road Relays took place at Rushmoor Arena. Our ladies' A team, consisting of Lauren Major (21:19), Bethanie Murray (22:26), Rachel Boswell (23:54) and Vikki Filsell (26:41) finished 18th to qualify for the National at Sutton Park, once again.

October

The opening weekend of October saw our ladies' team travel to Sutton Park for the National Relays, where they finished 24th overall. Lizzy Apsley continued her excellent form to run our fastest leg in 14:58. Closer to home, plenty of Thames teams were in action in the revamped Surrey Relays, taking place for the first time at Nonsuch Park having made the move across from Wimbledon Park. Highlight of the day was a silver medal for our ladies' V55 team of Vikki Filsell (21:15 and fastest



leg), Anna Garnier (23:02) and Helen Geldert (25:43). The following day was October's Second Sunday 5 with Gareth Johns (34:54) the first Saltire home in fifth.

The following weekend brought the opening of another Surrey League campaign, held over Belgrave's course on the Common. Having flirted all too closely with relegation the previous season, our men put down a marker with their best start to a campaign for a number of years. With new recruit Jeremy Dempsey leading us home in sixth place in a very high-quality field and plenty of support behind him, we finished an excellent third. The women came in fifth place with Lizzy Apsley again leading the way home for us in tenth.

On the final weekend of the month, there was the traditional match against Milocarrians in the grand surroundings of R.M.A. Sandhurst. This was less well supported by Thames than in earlier years, with only three of our runners taking part, although several Thames supporters were also seen. Serena Carter, eighth overall, was first lady for the second successive year and Iain Sheridan achieved a creditable 16th place. Near the other end of the field, Paul Newby, in his first race following his 80th birthday, was unfortunately swept off course in mid-race, among a great mass of other runners who were nevertheless ushered through the finish funnel as they straggled home from a variety of directions.

November

November opened with our ladies taking a team to Mansfield for the National Cross-Country Relays. at Mansfield. The trio of Ellen Weir (10:37), Bethanie Murray (11:12) and Claire Hammett (10:44) finished 14th.

On November 9th, Thames had another strong set of results at the Surrey League with both the men's and ladies' teams finishing in third place at Beckenham. For the ladies, Lauren Major (eighth in 19:42), Lizzy Apsley (14th in 19:50) and Daisy Irving-Hyman (20th in 20:18) all made the top 20. For the men, Jeremy Dempsey again led the way home, this time in second (22:05), with Alex Howard (ninth in 22:29) and James Hoad (19th in 22:43) also in the top 20. James followed this up with first in the Second Sunday 5 the following day, leading a Thames 1-2-3-4 from Charles Taylor, Eoin Brady and Simon Gardner.

A week later, we took our Surrey League form to north London and brought home both the men's and ladies' London Championship titles from Parliament Hill. There were excellent performances across the board; however, special mention should go to the two individual medallists, James Hoad (second in the men's race) and Lizzy Apsley (third in the ladies' race). Across the Irish Sea, there was also success in Belfast at the British and Irish Masters Cross Country with silver for Michael Johnson in the men's V80, gold for Ifan Lloyd in the men's V65, bronze for Ben Reynolds in the men's V60 and fourth for Phil Tedd in the men's V45.

Following the two previous weekends, our numbers were heavily impact for the Ranelagh mob match the following weekend and we succumbed in a ten-to-score contest by 79 points to 192. Neil Chisholm (second) and Claire Altmann (22nd) were first man and lady home for us, thus securing the Long Distance Challenge titles for the season.

December

Having not won since 2018 and having come agonising close in both 2022 and 2023, it was finally Oxford's year again in the 133rd University Race and they did it in some style, having the first six home to win by 21 points to 61, the largest winning margin since the famous Fog Race of 1952. 2016



Olympian Jared Ward (Keble) narrowly took the individual honours in 39:07 from Matthew Kearney (Magdalen) in 39:12. Cambridge now lead the series by 67 wins to 66.

In the 48th Ladies' Race, the Dark Blues took advantage of the loss of Cambridge captain, Poppy Craig-McFeely (Robinson) to European selection to win by 37 points to 47. Saltire Niamh Bridson Hubbard (Magdalene) recorded her second victory in the race (23:34) and she was followed by teammate Bea Wood (Lucy Cavendish) in 24:15. However, Oxford packed their eight runners in the next nine places to take the team honours with Saltire Lauren Major in sixth. Oxford now lead the series by 28 wins to 20.

Earlier in the day, Cambridge won the 32nd Old Blues' Race by 110 points to 193 (scoring 12-a-side) with Saltire Jack Millar (University) coming home first in 22:07. Oxford now lead this series by 18 wins to 14.

There had been some doubt the previous day as to whether the event would be able to go ahead following dire warnings of storms from the Met Office. However, these did not come to pass and credit should go to everyone at Thames who helped out in the day, the Conservators and the two teams in ensuring it was the only cross-country event in London to go ahead.

The weekend weather also did not discourage 107 runners from completing the Second Sunday 5 the following day with Nathan D'Haese first Saltire home in fifth (32:57).

The first half of the season closed with the traditional Five Miles and Carols on 18th December, although on the weekend following, a select band of Saltires in Alex Howard (sixth, 44:49), Charles Taylor (68th, 54:28) and Bethanie Murray (fourth, 52:52) took part in the South of the Thames Senior Race.

January

2025 opened in successful style at Lloyd Park with a bronze medal for our ladies' team in the Surrey Championships. Lizzy Apsley (fifth) once again led the way home for us. Spearheaded by captain Macgregor Cox in 13th, our men's team registered their best result in the championships for a good few years by finishing sixth overall. Elsewhere, there was an individual victory for Jack Millar in the South-West Counties' Championship and bronzes for Kat Matthews (Leicestershire) and Alex Howard (Kent). On the same day, it would also gratifying to see a strong turnout at Fulham Palace Parkrun to remember Ed Catmur and an impressive run from Paul Newby in the Llyn Lldaw mountain race in honour of Ed.

The third round of the Surrey League was staged on the second weekend of the month and we consolidated our third places in both the men's and ladies' Division 1 with both teams finishing second on the day. Jack Millar won the men's race and there were plenty of Saltires up near the front with Alex Howard (fourth, 23:14) and Jared Martin (18th, 23:57) in the top 20. The ladies were headed by Lizzy Apsley (fifth, 27:44) and Serena Carter (sixth, 27:45) with Bethanie Murray (14th in 28:22) and Bella Pickett (16th in 28:28) also making the top 20. We were supplemented on the day by a strong group of Oxford University runners guesting for Thames as they used the race to select their teams for B.U.C.S. cross-country and it is worthwhile reflecting on the current health of the relationship between Thames and the universities, which bodes well for the future.

The following day brought very frosty weather for January's Second Sunday 5 with Andrew Hayward the first home from Thames.



After a blank week in the fixture list, the club made the trip to Beckenham for the South of England Championships at Beckenham Place Park. Our ladies' team put in yet another exceptional performance to repeat their team victory from 2019, stepping up one place from last season's silver and beating the Belgrave and Aldershot, Farnham & District teams along the way. In what became a theme of the season, Lizzy Apsley led us home in sixth. Behind her, Serena Carter and Ellen Weir ran most of the race close to each other, finishing 14th and 15th with captain Bethanie Murray just behind in 17th. A less strong men's team finished 18th, although James Hoad recorded an excellent run to finish 48th. Run of the day on the men's side came from second-claimer Alex Howard, who finished seventh.

February

The club concluded highly successful Surrey League campaigns on 8th February, with both the men and ladies finishing up third overall. For the men, Jeremy Dempsey was back in action and took the individual win and with Jacob Brockmann not far behind him in seventh, we secured fourth place on the day. On the ladies' side, the team came fifth on the day. Lizzy Apsley was first home in fourth with Serena Carter also making the top ten. Across the season, Neil Chisholm claimed the overall V45 title with eight points (compared to his nearest challenger on 38) while Iain Sheridan came fourth in the V55 category.

The following day saw the 11th instalment of the Dash for the Splash, organised once again by David Symons and his team. In particularly muddy conditions, James Hoad repeated his 2024 victory in 38:26.

Following the restaging of the postponed 2024 National in September, on February 22nd, the club travelled back to Parliament Hill to take part in the National for the second time in the season, and this time in more traditional cross-country conditions. It was our ladies who once again shone, with another team medal – this time bronze - behind strong Leeds and Aldershot, Farnham & District teams (incidentally, the same three clubs were on the podium as September). Lizzy Apsley had another outstanding run to lead us home in 21st position. To underline what an impressive season Lizzy had, this result meant that she had been our first scorer in teams that won medals in every championship race they competed in (London, Surrey, Southern and National twice). Ellen Weir was our second scorer, having a really strong first senior National in 38th. Captain Bethanie Murray and Lauren Major ran together to finish in 50th and 52nd respectively.

On the men's side it was entertaining to see a few Saltires challenging for the King of the Hill title at the start. The team finished in 13th position out of 112 scoring teams with James Hoad first home in 66th. There were also some very strong runs from many of our second claim members, including Jeremy Dempsey (seventh), Jack Millar (16th), Joe Morrow (22nd) and Alex Howard (49th).

March

As we moved into March, things started to quieten down on the racing front after several months of hectic action. However, on 8th, we had a sprinkling of representatives in the Inter-Counties Cross-Country Championship at Nottingham. Lizzy Apsley was fourth scorer for the winning Surrey Senior Women's team and Jared Martin was fourth for the winning Northern Ireland Senior Men's team. There was also a strong run from Jack Millar coming fifth in the Senior Men's race.

The following day saw a Thames one-to-seven in the Second Sunday 5 with Charles Taylor leading the way home in 30:56. This gave us a rather hollow victory in the Mob Match against Milocarians who only managed to produce a single runner.



On 12th March, a sprinkling of Saltires were in action at Oxford' Teddy Hall Relay. The sprightly Jared Martin and Tom Renshaw starred for the OUCCC team that finished third overall. The slightly less sprightly trio of Simon Molden, Andy Weir and Andy Arbour formed the core of an OUCCC Old Gits' team that finished 23rd overall.

The following weekend saw the second round of the Aggregate Handicap competition for the season with the Long Distance event. Paul Newby beat the handicapper's prediction to take the tankard (77:24). Fastest over the course was Richard Ollington in 42:22. That evening, we gathered at the Union Jack Club once again for the annual dinner.

The following weekend and Paul Newby was back in action in the Cambridge Roman Road Run; however, this time he was beaten to the James Ryan trophy by Mike Farmery (89:32).

April

April opened with the 10-mile Challenge and Handicap getting underway and the AGM. As with last season, as well as the option to run it on the day, members were provided with a time window to submit a 10-mile time. When all has been received, the Challenge winners emerged as Richard Ollington (56:10) and Rebecca Hughes (68:54). The handicap went to Freya Billingham, from Chris Daniels and Andy Weir.

At the AGM, Neil Ibata was announced as the winner of the inaugural award in memory of Ed Catmur following his outstanding Bob Graham Round performance, where a time of 17 hours, 27 minutes put him in the top 30 of all time.

On the weekend following the AGM, Alexi Cross won the Second Sunday 5 in a time of 31:42.

On 20th April, there were plenty of Saltires taking to the streets of London on a particularly warm day for the marathon. Paddy Roddy led us home in 2:18:08, coming fourth in the mass race. Just behind him was Neil Ibata in fifth (2:19:01) and then James Hoad (2:23:30). Although not clear at the time, we believe this performance brought us the team championship title. On the women's side Rachel Boswell was our fastest runner in 2:48:29, closely followed by Ruby Woolfe in 2:49:04 and Laurel Buchanan in 2:51:53. Ben Reynolds was fourth men's V60 in 2:54:26. Chris Finill maintained his every-present record, completing the course in 3:15:14.

On the same weekend, Kat Matthews set an incredible Ironman World Record, winning Ironman Texas in 8:10:34 which included a marathon of 2:49:19.

The Summer

The off-season period for the club commenced in winning fashion with our men's V75 team of Michael Johnson, Paul Newby and David Jenkins winning the British Masters Road Relays at Mallory Park. In Oxford, there were also plenty of Saltires in action at the Bannister Miles. Special mention should go to Tom Renshaw who yet again took on the formidable task of the event's organisation.

The Green Belt Relay on the middle weekend of the month brought more success for the club with the A team winning the Mixed Trophy, holding off a Clapham Chasers team that had two British Internationals guesting for them. The runs of the weekend came from Paddy Roddy, who won stage 16 despite being directed the wrong way by his own teammates (and having broken Matt Jones'



record for stage 9 the previous day) and Lizzy Apsley for winning stage seven outright (Sonia O'Sullivan was the last lady to do this) and breaking the course record by over six minutes. There was also a stage record for Richard Ollington in his hometown of Ripley and stage wins for James McMullan, Jess Davies, James Hoad (twice) and Bethanie Murray (twice). Ben Reynolds broke the V55 record on stage 15 by 12 minutes and Simon Barrett ticked off his 20th Green Belt stage (only two to go next year to complete the full set). Our thanks go to Nick Altmann for overseeing all the arrangements, ensuring every runner made it to their stage on time.

On the first Wednesday of June, the Parkland Relays returned for their 30th edition. Ninety-seven teams took part in glorious weather with Thames winning both the men's and ladies' team events. James Hoad (14:16) and Eliot Nevill (14:45) ran the two fastest times of the day in the men's contest with Ruby Carter from Hercules (15:56) doing so for the ladies. Our own Flo Wiggins (16:28) and Felicity Hayward (16:30) recorded the next quickest times. Our thanks go to everyone who helped out in the night to ensure that the event ran smoothly and we did not fall foul of the Royal Parks' ever stricter licensing requirements. Having now successfully run this event 30 times, a special mention should also go to Nick Altmann whose results spreadsheet continues to be a thing of wonder, allowing us to produce the results for what is a complex event in double-quick time.

The Midsummer Handicap fell on Midsummer's Day this year and in sweltering conditions, Richard Hughes took the tankard by a clear margin from Vikki Filsell. Simon Molden ran the fastest time of the day (32:31) to finish third. In the evening, the club gathered at our former headquarters, the King's Head in Roehampton, for the Summer Party.

The Second Sunday 5 continued across the summer with Charles Taylor embarking on a four-race run of individual victories.

On the first weekend of July, the club headed to Lyndhurst in the New Forest for the Outlying Run, once again superbly organised by Maureen Poole and the President.

The remainder of the summer was fairly quiet on the team racing front; however, it was good to see eight Thames teams entered for the Battersea Park One-mile Relays on 28th July. Our senior men's, V50 men's and ladies' first teams all finished second overall, while our ladies' veteran team was first. Paddy Roddy (4:24) ran the third fastest men's leg and Lizzy Apsley (5:05) the second fastest for the women.

To close this report, it is appropriate to record that right at the end of a season of so many highs, we also witnessed a Saltire world record through Anna Garnier, who set a new mark for the V70 mile at the Dave Clark Mile in July. Her mark of 6:33.46 smashed the previous best of 6:38.30 by American Sharon Geri.

