

# Annual Report

156<sup>th</sup> SEASON  
2023-24



THAMES HARE AND HOUNDS

# Thames Hare & Hounds

## OFFICERS 2024-25

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



# THAMES HARE & HOUNDS

ANNUAL REPORT  
2023-24

## Mr President, Ladies & Gentlemen

The 2023-24 season will be remembered as one of contrasts. The ladies' side of the club had another excellent season, with highlights including victory in the London Championships, second place in the Southern Championships, second place in Surrey League Division 1 and 17<sup>th</sup> in the National Road Relays. The men's season, by contrast, was one of challenge and we were in danger of relegation from Surrey League Division 1 going into the final round. Happily, the team rallied and secured their top-flight status with a strong performance when it was most required.

The club, as ever, hosted its usual array of fixtures, including the Alumni Race, University Races, Parkland Relays, Second Sunday 5 and Dash for the Splash. To this was added the challenging task of hosting the third round of the Surrey League in January, which I am pleased to say we passed with flying colours. Our thanks go to all who were involved in organising these events. 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.

On a much sadder note, the season was overshadowed by the loss of two highly esteemed members. Michael Bostelmann (1966), who passed away in February, was one of the Thames greats, having, amongst many other things, given 42 years of unbroken service on the committee from 1968 until the ending of his Presidency in 2010. He was also one of the members who was instrumental in our move to the Memorial Playing Fields following the loss of our former headquarters at the King's Head in August 1975.

At the turn of the year, the whole club was shocked to learn of the untimely death of former Chief Pioneer and ultrarunning legend, Ed Catmur (2001). Ed went for a run on New Year's Eve from Dufton to Cross Fell in the Pennines from which he did not return. The tributes that poured in from far and wide and the Thames attendance at his Memorial Service at the end of January underlined just how much the club felt his loss.

Both Michael and Ed were hugely respected members who gave significant amounts of their time to the club and both will be very much missed. We pass on our deepest condolences to both of their families.

Simon Molden  
Hon. Secretary  
September 2024



# THAMES HARE & HOUNDS

AWARDS  
2023-24

<b>Short Distance Challenge</b>	Will Scott
<b>Ladies' Short Distance Challenge</b>	Nicky Atkins
<b>Short Distance Handicap</b>	Chris Finill
<b>Long Distance Challenge Cup</b>	James Chettle
<b>Ladies' Long Distance Challenge</b>	Katy Hedgethorpe
<b>Long Distance Handicap</b>	Jamie Bell
<b>Cheshire Tally-Ho!</b> <i>(Fastest Thames man on the Roman Road)</i>	Paul Newby
<b>Cheshire Tally-Ho! Ladies' Trophy</b> <i>(Fastest Thames lady on the Roman Road)</i>	<i>not contested</i>
<b>James Ryan Trophy</b> <i>(Fastest Thames Veteran on the Roman Road)</i>	Paul Newby
<b>10 Mile Challenge</b>	Anisse Ismaili
<b>Ladies' 10 Mile Challenge</b>	Katy Hedgethorpe
<b>10 Mile Handicap</b>	Zoel Lynam
<b>Road Running Challenge</b>	Anisse Ismaili
<b>Clough-Whittome Handicap</b>	Mike Farmery
<b>Kensit Trophy for the Aggregate Handicap</b>	Mike Farmery
<b>Midsummer Handicap</b>	Mike Farmery
<b>Harry Hall Award</b>	Chloe Beckett
<b>Memorial Trophy</b> <i>(Best aggregate finish in the Southern and National)</i>	Elizabeth Apsley
<b>London Marathon Veterans' Handicap</b> <i>(Silver plate donated by Malcolm Thompson)</i>	Chris Harrison
<b>Keith Spacie Veterans' Trophy</b>	Dave Hill (awarded posthumously)



**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

Our 156<sup>th</sup> season opened with the Second Sunday 5 on 10<sup>th</sup> September where Anisse Ismaili led the way home in a time of 31:38. The following weekend saw the Alumni Race, for the second time taking place in mid-September. This year, it included the trial of incorporating our opening Short Distance Handicap and Challenge. In the latter, the Short Distance Challenge was taken by Will Scott (33:03) and the ladies' contest by Nicky Atkins. The handicap tankard was secured by Chris Finill in a time of 34:54.

In the Alumni Race, first home was Edward Chuck from King's, Canterbury (26:57). In the many team competitions, Shrewsbury won the King Henry VIII Trophy for the open event; Sedbergh won the V40 Old Brentwood's Trophy; Eton won the V50 Chataway Cup; Sherborne won the V60 Old Denstonian Cup; and Kent College won the V65 Jane Bubear Cup. The Old Coventrian Cup for the first lady home went to Deirdre McDermot (Wellington College) and the Old Johnian Trophy for the first ladies' team went to Shrewsbury. Finally, Sedbergh won the Shrewsbury Cup for the age-adjusted team victory and Edward Chuck (80.45%) took the Wyndham Halswelle individual trophy.

On 24<sup>th</sup> September, the South of England Road Relays took place officially at Rushmoor Arena again. Our ladies' A team, consisting of Serena Carter (21:27), Ellen Weir (22:35), Elizabeth Apsley (21:25) and Bethanie Murray (22:50) finished eighth to qualify for the National.

### October

Following a blank weekend at the end of the September, the ladies travelled to Sutton Park to take up their place in the National Relays, where they finished an excellent 17<sup>th</sup> overall. Three of the four runners from the Southern event were again in action with Ellen Weir (15:26) and Elizabeth Apsley (14:58) putting us in 18<sup>th</sup> place. Claire Hammett – replacing Serena Carter – then brought us up to 16<sup>th</sup> (15:42) before Bethanie Murray rounded off the team in 17<sup>th</sup> (16:06).

The following day was October's Second Sunday 5 with David Symons the first Saltire home in third (34:24), followed not far behind in fifth by Chris Daniels (35:21).

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>, the Surrey League opened for competition for another season in Richmond Park. Despite having two in the top ten (Jack Millar in third and Jamie Edgerton in seventh), the loss of several key individuals meant that it was tough day for the men as a team, finishing eighth overall. The ladies, however, had a much more productive afternoon, coming second behind Belgrave. Elizabeth Apsley (sixth) and Lauren Major (eighth) both made the top ten.



On 28<sup>th</sup> October, the club travelled to Sandhurst for the traditional multi-club match hosted by Milocarians. Led home by a 1-2-3-4 of James Hoad (30:46), Philip Tedd (31:32), Eliot Nevil (31:37) and James Chettle (33:01), Thames dominated the Terry Lewins Team Trophy contest to win by 25 points from Milocarians with 86. Serena Carter was first lady home in ninth (34:30).

## **November**

November opened with the 50<sup>th</sup> Mob Match against Ranelagh at Petersham. Scoring 26-a-side, Ranelagh ran out comfortable winners by 553 points to 742. James Chettle was first home for us in third (45:27), thus securing the Long Distance Challenge title for the season. Katy Hedgethorne in 25<sup>th</sup> (51:01) took the ladies' title.

A week later was the second round of the Surrey League, held at Mitcham Common. The men had another poor day, finishing ninth of the ten teams, which meant we headed into 2024 in the relegation places. James Hoad was first home in 24<sup>th</sup> with only Richard Ollington (49<sup>th</sup>) also making the top 50. The ladies' by contrast had an outstanding day to finish first. Lauren Major led us home in seventh with Claire Hammett and Ellen Weir in tenth and 11<sup>th</sup>. Bethanie Murray (14<sup>th</sup>) and Daisy Irving-Hyman (26<sup>th</sup>) completed the scorers.

The following day was the Second Sunday 5 and Ashley Middlewick (first) and David Symons (third) both made the top three.

A week after the Surrey League saw the club make the trip to Parliament Hill for the London Cross-Country Championships. It was another successful day for our ladies as they took the title by ten points from Surrey League rivals Belgrave. Serena Carter (fourth), Bethanie Murray (seventh) and Daisy Irving-Hyman (ninth) all made the top ten with Katy Hedgethorne (25<sup>th</sup>) completing the scorers. For the men, it was a less fruitful day with the team finishing 21<sup>st</sup>; however, there was individual success for James Hoad (eighth) and Richard Ollington (tenth) both making the top ten.

The following day, we welcome the Oxford and Cambridge teams to the Common for their pre-University Races course run.

## **December**

Honours were even in the University Races, which took place in their traditional position on the first Saturday in December. In the 132<sup>nd</sup> Gentlemen's Race, Jeremy Dempsey (Girton) took the individual honours for a second year (38:36) and led Cambridge to their fourth victory in a row by another narrow margin, this time 38 points to 42. They now lead the series by 67 wins to 65.

In the 47<sup>th</sup> Ladies' Race, the Light Blues were depleted by the loss of two key runners, one of whom was Saltire Niamh Bridson Hubbard (Magdalene), who had earned selection for the European Cross-Country Championships the previous weekend. Although Phoebe Barker (Robinson) took the individual victory, Oxford's strength in depth meant they won by 32 points to 46. They now lead the series by 27 wins to 20.



Earlier in the day, Cambridge won the 31<sup>st</sup> Old Blues' Race by 143 points to 209 (scoring 12-a-side) with Saltire Joss Carr (Sidney Sussex) coming home first in 22:11. Oxford now lead this series by 18 wins to 13.

The late cancellation of the Southern Masters' Cross-Country Championships on 9<sup>th</sup> December meant that the rest of the month had a fairly empty feel to it in terms of fixtures. The Second Sunday 5, however, did take place as usual and Ashley Middlewick was the first Saltire home in tenth (33:45). The following weekend, he also made the trip to the South of the Thames Senior Race, finishing 59<sup>th</sup> in 47:24.

The first half of the season closed with the traditional Five Miles and Carols on 20<sup>st</sup> December.

## **January**

The start of the new year was overshadowed by the tragic news of death of longstanding member and ultrarunning legend Ed Catmur. Ed headed out on a run in the Pennines on New Year's Day from which he did not return and his body was found on New Year's Day. The news came as a huge shock to the club as Ed was a much loved and valued member of the club. A mark of the esteem he was held in was shown by a large turnout of Saltires to the memorial service in his memory later in the month.

Racing in the new year began with the Surrey Cross-Country Championships at a chilly Denbies in Dorking. The ladies' team put in another strong performance with Serena Carter in fourth, Bethanie Murray in ninth and Daisy Irving-Hyman in 16<sup>th</sup> leading the way. For the men, James Hoad in 13<sup>th</sup> and Macgregor Cox in 15<sup>th</sup> ran strongly. The following day saw Anisse Ismaili open his racing for the year with victory in the Second Sunday 5 in 32:03. Will Scott finished third.

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, the club took on the sizeable task of hosting the Surrey League on the Common. Club members rallied round in force to ensure the day went off smoothly. As part of the race, we hosted a band Oxford University runners as guests, who used the event as a selection race for the British Universities' Championships in February. For the men, it was a slightly better day, finishing seventh overall with the highlight being Jack Millar's individual victory. James Hoad was next Saltire home in 24<sup>th</sup>. The result did, however, still leave us in the relegation positions with a nervous wait until the final round. The ladies had another very good day, finishing second overall with Lizzy Apsley (second), Serena Carter (eighth) and Bethanie Murray (ninth) our top performers.

The following weekend and only a very select band of Saltires made the trip to Coulsdon for the mob match with South London Harriers. As a result, we were soundly beaten by our hosts.

January closed with the Southern Championships at Beckenham Place Park. The men were thin on the ground, with only four runners making the trip and, hence, we did not close a team. James Hoad (37<sup>th</sup>) and Ollie Fox (72<sup>nd</sup>) both ran well. The ladies by contrast had another excellent day, finishing second overall to Aldershot, Farnham & District. Elizabeth Apsley (12<sup>th</sup>), Serena Carter (20<sup>th</sup>), Bethanie Murray (21<sup>st</sup>) and Lauren Major (22<sup>nd</sup>) made up our scoring quartet.





## February

February commenced with the tenth edition of the Dash for the Splash, once again orchestrated by David Symons. James Hoad continued his fine running to take victory in 39:14. Matilde Lomba of Hercules Wimbledon was first lady in 44:49.

The following weekend was crunch time for the men to see if they could hold on to our 38-year stay in the top flight of the Surrey League. The race took place at the new venue of West Horsley Place and, thankfully, the male side of the club rallied to the occasion and pulled off their best performance of the season by far to finish fifth on the day and overhaul Clapham Chasers in the standings to finish eighth (and safe by 165 points). Three in the top 20 through Tim Harrison (14<sup>th</sup>), James Hoad (15<sup>th</sup>) and Macgregor Cox (18<sup>th</sup>) meant we had a strong start and regular support behind to close out the team in 96<sup>th</sup> was enough to achieve the aim of the day.

The ladies had their weakest round, finished fifth overall; however, earlier performances meant that their second place overall was secure and they could look back on another very strong season. Individually, Serena Carter (third) and Bethanie Murray (fifth) rounded off with excellent performances and the team closed in 67<sup>th</sup>.

The rest of February was unusual in that it was devoid of competitive action when – in an unprecedented situation - the National at Weston Park in Shropshire was postponed on the eve of the event. It was subsequently rescheduled to September and will be reported on in next year's edition.

## March

The opening Saturday of March saw the season's staging of the Long Distance Handicap. Jamie Bell took the tankard in a time of 48:46. Fastest over the course on the day was James Hoad, with Claire Altmann the fastest lady. In the evening the club gathered at the Union Jack Club in Waterloo once again for the Annual Dinner.

On the following weekend, several Saltires were in action in the Inter-counties Championships at Wollaton Park, Nottingham. Second claimer Jack Millar had an exceptional run to finish fifth. Captain James Hoad was 88<sup>th</sup>. In the ladies' race, Bethanie Murray was 40<sup>th</sup>.

The Sunday saw the eighth staging of the Milocarians Mob Match (held in conjunction with the Second Sunday 5) with our guests emerging victorious by 78 points to 107. James Hoad was first home in 31:14.

On the final weekend of the month, the ladies were in action at Milton Keynes in the Southern Road Relays. It was another very strong performance in a season of strong performances for them with the sextet of Harriet Alexander, Ellen Weir, Katherine Turner, Elizabeth Apsley, Abby Michalec and Chloe Beckett securing fifth place overall.

## April

As ever, the season started to wind down to its conclusion in April. The 10-mile Challenge and Handicap took place on the first weekend of the month, as a forerunner to the Annual General



Meeting. To increase the numbers taking part this year, members were also given the option of recording a run over the course at any point in the week leading up to Saturday. There were 15 finishers in total. Fastest over the course were Anisse Ismaili (66:55) and Katy Hedgethorpe (93:14), thus giving them the respective Challenge titles. Zoe Lynam was victorious in the Handicap.

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> saw April's Second Sunday 5 and James Hoad (31:14) and Ashley Middlewick (31:29) made it a Thames one-two.

The following Sunday was the London Marathon, now safely back in its traditional April slot in the calendar. Twelve first claimers were in action and performance of the day, without doubt, went to Club Captain James Hoad, whose 2:16:29 (14<sup>th</sup> place) means he is now the holder of the 'Fastest marathon time in a Saltire' title. It will be interesting to see if he holds on to it for as long as Jerry Watson did. Behind him, Chris Johnson (2:30:02) was next home. Gordon Pearce, Jack Lancefield and Daisy Irving-Hyman also dipped under three hours with Daisy's 2:51:21 making her the fastest Thames lady. Elsewhere, second-claimer Chris Finill kept up his ever-present record, finishing in 3:07:55.

On the final weekend of the month, the club travelled to Doddington in Kent for the Outlying Run.

### **The Summer**

Our summer activities commenced with the Second Sunday 5 on 12<sup>th</sup> May. Eoin Brady was first Saltire home in second (33:42).

The following weekend was the date for the now-traditional fixture for the club that is the Green Belt Relay. Although we were unable to retain our ladies' title, it was another very successful weekend for the club as we secured the runners-up position in both the men's and ladies' competitions. There were also stage records for Paddy Roddy (stage 1), Richard Ollington (stage 2) and James Hoad (stage 16).

The main event in June was the 29<sup>th</sup> staging of our Parkland Relays. Having fought through Royal Parks bureaucracy to secure permission for the event, it was a relief that it passed off successfully with the weather, once again, being kind to us. Having avoided the permission tribulations of 2023, we were able to advertise the race much earlier this time and it led to a bounce-back in the number of entries, with a very healthy 91 teams toeing the startline.

Competitively, it was a successful day for the club as we took both the men's and ladies' team contests. Incoming Vice-captain, Elliot Nevill, ran the fastest men's leg of the day (14:33) and Sarah Holt from Stragglers ran the fastest for the ladies (16:24).

As is the case with the summer period, there was a gap in competitive club fixtures for the rest of June; however, the Captain's newsletters reported a healthy level of competitive activity from our members throughout the month. On 22<sup>nd</sup> June, the club came back together to honour the memory of Ed Catmur by descending on the Fulham Palace parkrun, which had been Ed's parkrun of choice and one that he had also volunteered at many times.



On the following Saturday, the Midsummer Handicap took place over our five-mile course. This is one of our traditional chasing start handicaps and it was our former President, Mike Farmery who crossed the line first. James Hoad and Victoria Crawford were fastest man and lady respectively. In the evening, the club gathered for the Summer Party, once again kindly hosted by Simon and Belinda Leathes.

July and August were fairly quiet months on the club competitive front; however, the Second Sunday 5 continued as ever, with Tom Raven (35:45) the first Saltire home in July. The Clough-Whittome Handicap took place as part of the Wedding Day 7km Race in Bushy Park on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July. Mike Farmery was the handicap winner with Anisse Ismaili the fastest Saltire on the night, thus winning the Road Running Challenge.

On the final Tuesday in July, we again put out teams – this time eight in total - in the Sri Chinmoy One-Mile Relays in Battersea Park. It was a very successful evening for the club, with our men taking the first two places and our ladies second place. In addition, Paddy Roddy (4:23) and Lizzy Apsley (5:03) recorded the fastest and second fastest legs of the day.

The August Second Sunday 5 concluded the club's year and appropriately, there was a Thames one-two-three through Charles Taylor (30:18), Anisse Ismaili (32:15) and Alexi Cross (32:45).



THAMES HARE AND HOUNDS 2024