

## SOUTH OF THE THAMES CROSS COUNTRY ASSOCIATION REPORT FOR 2016/2017

1. **AGM:** Held at Belgrave Hall on 29 April 2016.

2. **Elections / Re-elections:**

President: Mark Hookway (Tonbridge AC)

Hon. Gen. Sec: Geoff Newton (Tadworth AC)

Hon Treasurer: Don Turner (Epsom & Ewell H)

Hon. Race Sec.: Don Turner

Hon. Asst. Sec. Archives & History: Brian Boulton (Cambridge Harriers)

Hon. Asst. Sec. Trophies: Brian Boulton

Hon. Auditor: Sarah Smith

3. **5 Mile Team Race**

This was held at Polesden Lacey on 26 November 2016, hosted by Dorking Mole Valley AC. There were 300 finishers.

**Men**

1. Phil Wicks Belgrave H	26.00
2. Andrius Jacksevicius Belgrave H	26.10
3. Ian Bailey AFD	26.21

**Women**

1. Nicola Jackson Ranelagh H	30.50
2. Zoe Smith Belgrave H	31.09
3. Amy Clements Kent AC	31.26

**U20 Men**

1. Lewis Laylee Dulwich R	30.48
2. Alex Gurteen Epsom & E H	34.05

**Men's Teams (4 Score)**

1. Belgrave H	23 pts
2. Kent AC	53 pts
3. Aldershot F & D AC	62pts

**Women's Teams (4 Score)**

1. Kent AC	35pts
2. Ranelagh H	38pts
3. Belgrave H	46pts

**Men's Teams (8 Score)**

1. Kent AC	159pts
2. Belgrave H	255pts
3. Herne Hill H	343pts

4. **7.5 Mile Championship Race**

This was held at Beckenham Place Park, on 17 December hosted by Kent AC. There were 290 finishers.

**Men**

1. Phil Wicks Belgrave H	36.19
2. Owen Hind Kent AC	36.53
3. John Sanderson G & G AC	42.58

**Women**

1. Amy Clements Kent AC	43.02
2. Lucy Reid Tonbridge AC	44.10
3. Samantha Amend Belgrave H	44.27

M40	Simon Coombes	Herne Hill H	40.27	W40	Maria Heslop	Paddock Wood	44.32
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M50 Mark Tennyson G & G AC 42.50 W50 Clare Elms Dulwich Runners 45.13

M60 Andy Fay Epsom & Ewell H 49.28 W60 Maggie Statham Holland Sports 52.55

Men's Teams (6 Score)

1. Kent AC 72pts
2. Tonbridge AC 104pts
3. Belgrave H 125pts

Women's Teams (6 Score)

1. Belgrave H 81pts
2. Kent AC 98pts
3. Dulwich Runners 150pts

Men's Teams (12 Score)

1. Kent AC 262pts
2. Herne Hill H 611pts
3. Kent AC "B" 839pts

There was an encouraging increase in participation in both our races last year. However, clubs, with some notable exceptions, are increasingly reluctant to travel far from their home patch. My predecessor was keen to involve clubs from Sussex, Berkshire, Hampshire etc, but alas the signs are that numbers are dependent on location, location, location, so most of our races are likely to continue to be held in Surrey and west Kent. However, the next Championship race will be held in Aldershot. If there is a poor response to this from other Hampshire clubs, we are unlikely to return soon to this county.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable venues for our races. Whilst some club officials use this as an excuse to avoid taking their turn at hosting races, there are undoubted problems, particularly with some local authorities. This year The Stragglers were keen and positive to host the 5 mile race. This was all set to take place on Ham Lands using the excellent Hawker Centre as race HQ. Alas the local authority withheld land permission quite late on, on the grounds that the area was now a nature reserve. This is a little unfair since the race would have been confined to tracks and paths and would not have taken place during the bird nesting season. The general public and their dogs have access to the area throughout the year and probably cause much more damage to plants and wildlife than the race would.

Fortunately, Dorking & Mole Valley stepped in at the last minute to save the day and we found ourselves back at Polesden Lacey. This venue is very expensive by our standards, land permission alone cost us £600. Fortunately, the last AGM approved a rise in entry fees from £1 to £2 per head. However, we had a lot of favourable comments from runners the previous year who enjoyed the autumn colours in the woods and the NT café. It's not a forgiving venue in bad weather. There is little shelter and no changing facilities. It seems to be with organisations like the National Trust and local authorities being strapped for cash, increased charges for land permission are going to be a fact of life for us.

In future, my advice to host clubs will be to get outline / informal land permission before you do anything else, even if you have had no problems in the past. Sometimes a phone call may get better results than an email. If you hit problems, there will then be more time to find alternative venues. I accept that formal written permission will take longer particularly as the relevant up to date insurance documents will not be available until 1<sup>st</sup> November each year.

Geoff Newton