

SOUTH OF THE THAMES CROSS COUNTRY ASSOCIATION, REPORT FOR 2012/2013

1. **AGM:** Held at Belgrave Hall on 7 September 2012

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

President:	Matthew Hyett (Kingston & Poly)	
Vice President:	Andrew Walker (Reigate Priory AC)	
Hon. Gen. Sec.	Geoff Newton (Tadworth AC)	
Hon. Treasurer	Don Turner (Epsom & Ewell H)	
Hon. Race Sec.	Don Turner (Epsom & Ewell H)	
Hon. Asst. Sec	Archives & History	Brian Boulton (Cambridge Harriers)
	Trophies	Brian Boulton (Cambridge Harriers)
Hon. Auditors	Sarah Smith (Ranelagh Harriers)	

3. **5 Mile Team Race**

This was held at Reigate Priory Park, Reigate on 24 November. There were 215 finishers.

Men

1.	Chris Greenwood	Kent AC	28.51
2.	Ben Cole	Tonbridge AC	29.07
3.	Dan Bradley	Tonbridge AC	29.19

Women

1.	Tish Jones	Belgrave Harriers	32.06
2.	Ruth Clifton	Thames H&H	32.44
3.	Nicola Williamson	U20 Tonb	35.09

U20 Men

1.	Peter Chambers	Croydon Harriers	29.31
2.	Cameron Knapp	Tonbridge AC	30.18
3.	Dominic Nolan	Croydon Harriers	32.51

Men's Teams (4 Score)

1.	Tonbridge AC	22 pts
2.	Kent AC	30 pts
3.	Kent AC B	73 pts

Women's teams (4 score)

1.	Thames Hare & H	40 pts
2.	South London H	54 pts
3.	Dulwich Runners	92 pts

Men's Teams (8 Score)

1.	Kent AC	103 pts
2.	South London H	404 pts
3.	Reigate Priory AC	430 pts

4. **Championship Race 7 ½ Miles**

This was held at Richmond Park (Kingston Gate) on 15 December, hosted by Kingston & Poly. There were 205 finishers.

Men

1.	Paskar Owor	Belgrave Harriers	40.00
2.	John Gilbert	Kent AC	40.07
3.	Dean Lacy	Cambridge Harriers	40.58

Women

1.	Ruth Clifton	Thames H & H	46.51
2.	Tish Jones	Belgrave H	46.58
3.	Shona McIntosh	Dulwich R	49.31

M40	Ben Paviour	Herne Hill H	43.17
M50	Mike Trees	Belgrave H	44.56
M60	Mike Mann	Dulwich R	54.12

W40	Fee Maycock	Belgrave H	52.15
W50	Anna Garnier	Thames H&H	57.14
W60	Anne Bath	26.2 RRC	75.34

Men's Teams (6 score)

1.	Tonbridge AC	58 pts
2.	Kent AC	80 pts
3.	Herne Hill H	134 pts

Women's Teams (6 Score)

1.	Dulwich Runners	62 pts
2.	Thames H&H	80 pts
3.	Belgrave H	97 pts

PTO

Men's Teams (12 Score)

1. Hercules Wimbledon 523 pts
2. Dulwich Runners 982 pts
3. South London H 1107 pts

Comment:

Race numbers remain relatively static overall in the region of 200-220. It is my impression that the number of female runners is slowly increasing and the number of male runners slowly decreasing. Independently Andrew Walker has come to the same conclusion, plotting graphs to prove it. The women's races are becoming more competitive and a reasonable number of teams are closing in, in both races, which is very encouraging. Our races are one of the few fixtures in the traditional cross country fixture list, where men and women compete together over the same distances. This is a state of affairs that has been common in road races for years, and I look forward to further growth in this area using our policy of strict equality.

I am however concerned about dwindling numbers of the male entry (although quality is holding up). This is in part due to fixture congestion. It will help if member clubs can persuade their Counties and County Leagues hold their fixtures on recommended dates. This year the Sussex League clashed with both our fixtures. Somehow Brighton & H managed to field teams in both the league and our main Championships, but this is an exception. In addition to competition from established XC fixtures there are a proliferation of road races, multi-terrain races and indoor track meets which were not there during the halcyon days of the 1970's.

In the 1970's it was still necessary to join a club to have access to a reasonable amount of competition and the South of the Thames saw itself in the role of providing "2nd class competition" i.e. encouraging up and coming runners by means of the barring clauses. Fast forward to the present day, past a number of running booms and we have a huge number of recreational and fund raising runners catered for by a proliferation of open races and a reduction in the number of serious competitive runners and the need is for encouraging serious competition. With twenty-twenty hindsight we should have, in my opinion, removed the barring clauses about twenty years ago.

I see the South of the Thames races as an intermediate stage between the various county championships and the SEAA Championships. Realistically, in view of the high costs of travel, competing fixtures and the pressure on people's time, I would expect the future to be limited to runners from Surrey, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire and Berkshire, but even that should produce fields of 300-400 instead of the 200 we get at present. There is a sort of catch 22 here. If we got bigger fields our races would have greater status which would encourage more clubs to make the effort to travel and take part.

There will be a proposal put to an EGM, to abolish the Spring Committee Meeting and move the AGM to the Spring i.e. there will be only one meeting a year on the lines of for example the Surrey Cross Country League. This has long term implications for how the Association is run in future and will be discussed in a separate document.

It is extremely sad to report that Derek Crookes, secretary of this Association for 31 years, died this year, having been in ill health for some years. His contribution to the Association and to Belgrave Harriers and athletics in the County of Surrey has been immense. This following the earlier demise of Jim Heathfield also a stalwart servant of the Association.

Geoff Newton
Hon. General Secretary