

MILOCARIAN ATHLETIC CLUB

Established 1930

President: Brigadier Tony Ling CBE, Late The Queen's Regiment.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON THE 2022/23 SEASON.

Introduction.

1.The hoped-for march back to normality did not occur; the season started with a highly successful home match, but Milocarian AC's 93rd year then went rather quiet and only a further four fixtures were contested. The lingering after-effects of Covid caused competitor clubs to have problems raising teams, also they found regular venues being unwilling to allow matches to take place.

2.Sadly, Maj Gen Keith Spacie, the club's previous president died in 2023. Milocarian AC was very lucky to have him as both an active competitor and an involved leader.

General.

3.A disturbing reluctance by the Richmond Park Authority to re-instate regular running fixtures disrupted the middle of the season and affected fixtures with Ranelagh, Bank of England and Kingston. Fortunately, a considerable outcry ensued and the authority backed down, but by that time the season was as good as over.

4.The virtual running competition was kept in operation and helped to sustain interest and knit the members together. As remarkable as the range of performance has been the number of different countries from which times have been logged, from Iceland to South Africa and the United States to New Zealand.

5.In an effort to provide an outlet for members' competitive energies the committee formed a loose alliance with Runnymede Runners to compete as their guests in the MABAC league which operates in South London, Surrey and Berkshire. A modicum of Milocarrians was enough to elevate the normally mid-field Runnymede team to second place in the first race the club supported, after that the organisers decided that the club's athletes should run as guests.

Organisation.

6.The Committee, 2022/23.

Neil Wood, late Army – Chairman.

Richard Adamson, late Army – Cross Country Secretary.

Gavin McAllister Esq. – Treasurer.

Mike Sumpter, late RAF – Website Manager.

7.During the year the club found replacements for its long-serving Treasurer and Cross Country Secretary.

a. John McCarthy had been managing the money for 35 years and like many of us, had become tired and frustrated by the lack of personal service now common to all banks and the cumbersome bureaucracy necessary to run even a minor account. Gavin McAllister, his replacement, actually

works for a bank and we are hoping that he will have an inside track. The club is very grateful to John for his long and dependable service which kept the funds in the black through some rather challenging times.

b. Paul French brought enthusiasm and organisational skill to the cross country secretary's job and was responsible for the club increasing its membership, its profile and its performance. Prior to Covid he created a team which became a regular winner and his successor, Richard Adamson, has inherited a promising cadre of strong runners with which to maintain Paul's momentum. Like John, Paul devoted so much effort to the club to such good effect and all members are in his debt.

Achievements.

8. Virtual Running.

a. The virtual competition allows participants to log times for runs of over 5km on Strava which are then converted into 5km times and consolidated fortnightly into an order of merit. Six fortnightly sessions make a season at the end of which an overall ranking is produced and the results published on the club's website.

b. The competition is now in its third year and eleventh season and it seems to have achieved momentum and become an established fixture in members' running routines.

c. Just over 60 runners are signed up to the competition and about 30 regularly submit times. There has been an ongoing battle for overall honours between Rory Jordan and David Branfoot since the competition started with Freddie Strachan intervening whenever he is available. A sub-19 minute time, for 5km, has been necessary to get among the leading runners, but Max Walker has been some way out ahead with some stunning sub-15 minute runs whenever work has allowed.

d. The club has been delighted by the depth of participation and is very grateful to the staff of London and Birmingham UOTCs for encouraging cadets to take part and for handling the dissemination of instructions and results.

9. Team Matches.

a. General. The club opened the season with a well-supported home match, at Sandhurst and then entered teams for two regular inter-club races and one new one before finishing off the seasons with Runnymede's annual picnic with a relay race, in the park, at Windsor.

b. 29 Oct 22, the Home Match.

i. There was obviously a post-Covid pent up demand for a challenging course and a good tea and 7 clubs fielded 87 runners at Sandhurst, in conjunction with the cadets' inter-company race.

ii. Against all precedent, a cadet won the race overall, OCdt Blomquist stormed home by a wide margin, but Thames Hare and Hounds packed impressively behind him to take the Terry Lewins Trophy with Milocarian 'A' as runners-up. The ladies' event saw the Milocarrians hold off Ranelagh to take the team prize.

iii. Prizes were presented by Mrs Clare Spacie.

c. 14 Jan 23, Orion 10 mile Race. Orion Harriers hosted several north London clubs and five brave Milocarrians for a very muddy, wintry 10 miles through Epping Forest. Unfortunately, our turn out was not sufficient to qualify for the team trophy and individually, the competition was tough. Sandhurst apart, Orion is probably the hardest course the club encounters and the distance and the conditions were far from standard Richmond Park fare. Nevertheless, the club's runners, led by Nick Wood, rose to the challenge and featured in the first half of the field of 160 runners and felt that

the race had been worth the journey.

d.18 Feb 23. RMA Sandhurst. This was a new fixture or, more accurately, the resurrection of one that was last run in the 1930s. Sandhurst turned out a somewhat under-strength side, composed of junior cadets, owing to training commitments that made the senior intakes unavailable. They were no match for a strong club side that swept the podium and took 8 out of the first 10 places along with the men's and ladies' team prizes.

e.12 Mar 23. Thames Hare and Hounds.

i.Having surrendered the Terry Lewins Trophy to Thames, at the Home Match, it was good to have the opportunity for the club to re-assert itself which it did by taking the first four places and packing sufficiently well to hold off a Thames surge further down the field. Conditions were firm and the weather fair which suited Tom Kirby who won by a minute in 30:32 from Neo O'Brien.

ii.Future runnings of this event will compete for the Keith Spacie Trophy, established in memory of a long-serving member of both clubs.

f.15 Jul 23. The Runnymede Relays.

i.The club entered three teams, including one composed entirely of members of the Wood family, in a field of 30 entries, on a very windy day.

ii.Ady Whitwam led out the first team and finished the opening lap in front, sadly, we could not match the consistent pace of the nearest challengers and eventually finished 10 minutes adrift of the winners, in fourth place, in 2:20:32 after 6 laps. However, Ady did win the award for the fastest lap of the day in 20:10.

lii,The second team featured in the top 10 throughout and eventually finished 9th in 2:36:05 while the Wood team suffered from having to carry the chairman (not literally). The aim had been to field three generations of the family in a team, but this escalated to a full family line-up. Sadly, the youngsters' energy and enthusiasm could not compensate for the oldie's decrepitude, but the family managed 20th in 3:02:25.

10.Some of Those Other Things.

a.Hamish Waring came second in the Pennine Way 70km Spine Sprint, in 9:06:14, on 14 Jan 23.

b.Celia and Hamish Waring completed the UTS 100km race, in Snowdonia, on 16 May 23, in 21:57:17, finishing as first couple.

c.Tom Kirby won the MABAC league Farley Heath race on 20 Nov 22, as a guest of Runnymede Runners and four Milos featured in the first 12 places.

d.Tom Rann won the MABAC league Winterfold race on 16 Apr 23 as a guest of Runnymede Runners and the Medina, Isle of Wight park run on 1 Jul 23 in a time of 18:09 with a performance that was described as "stunning" by a park run newsheet.

Membership.

11.Membership is open to members of the regular and reserve forces, male and female, serving and retired and their dependants. In spite of the reduced club activity, due to the virus, retention of members has been good and the club has kept its competitiveness.

12.The committee has decided that club subs should held at £25 for new members for the first year, which includes the cost of the member's club vest and £10 a year thereafter, payable by direct debit.

13. Non-running members' subs have been held at £7.50 a year which entitles them to be circulated with race details and invitations to attend events, including the home match.

14. Officer Cadets and undergraduates in OTCs and equivalents are signed up and given a vest on the understanding that their direct debits will not be activated until after commissioning or graduation.

15. Although a tri-service club, currently Milocarian AC is 'Army heavy' and it would be appreciated if the RN and RAF sports boards would encourage participation by their runners when possible.

Trophies.

16. General. One of the Milocarian trophies awarded externally has come back into service, but the other remains hostage to uncertainties over funding for the Youth Sport Trust.

17. Awards to External Competitions.

a. The Milocarian Cup. The club's memorial trophy is pledged to the Youth Sport Trust to be awarded to the winning regional athletics team at the national schools' games, however, the games have had to be held biennially, owing to lack of funding and the southern region, winners in 2021, will not have to defend the cup until later this year.

b. The Milocarian Trophy. This was adopted by Achilles AC for their annual inter-schools relay championships, to be awarded to the outstanding girls' team. The meeting was revived in May, at Iffley Road, Oxford and the club's chairman presented the trophy to Oakham School's 4 x 300m girls relay team who broke the meeting record in winning the event.

18. Club Trophies.

a. The Terry Lewins Trophy. Inaugurated in 1988, this cup has been awarded to the winning team in the club's annual home match, usually held at Sandhurst, in October. Milocarian AC hosts the clubs against which it will compete during the rest of the season. The cup is currently held by Thames Hare and Hounds who won it October 2022.

b. The Milocarian Ladies Trophy. First awarded at the last home match before the virus struck, this cup goes to the winning ladies team at the event and is currently held by Milocarian AC.

c. The Ploen Trophy. Named after the location of King Alfred's School, in Germany, the perennial winner of the The Milocarian Cup in the 1950s, it is presented annually to the club's best runner over the course of the cross country season.

d. The Wyvern Cup. Donated by the Wyvern Club, the association of former pupils of King Alfred's School, it is awarded to the club's leading lady runner each season.

e. Milocarian Medals. The annual home match takes place in conjunction with the Sandhurst cadets' inter-company cross country competition and the club awards medals for the fastest male and female cadets in the race.

Acknowledgements.

17. The club values hugely its associations with the staff of HQ RMA Sandhurst and particularly of the gym that give so much help in maintaining the club's flagship event, the home match. Similarly, the Army Sports Control Board is ever helpful and supportive in nudging runners towards the club

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18.It has been a pleasure to work with the staff of London and Birmingham UOTCs and to channel the enthusiasm of the cadets into the club's virtual running competitions.

19.The club would not function without the dedicated work of the cross country secretary, the treasurer and the website manager; it is a tribute to them that the club looks forward to emerging from the pandemic with confidence. The website, managed by Mike Sumpter, has been of particular value over the last two years as a means of keeping the club together and maintaining a competitive challenge via the virtual running sessions.

20.Keeping the Club Alive. The club has recently managed to find new members for the committee, but is always on the lookout for new runners and supporters.. Neither age nor athletic ability is a barrier, enthusiasm and imperviousness to British winter weather are the necessary qualities. Anybody who is interested or anybody who knows anybody who might be interested should contact the chairman on 01622 718665 or wood358@btinternet.com.

21.The club's website is accessible on www.milocarianac.info and sets out membership details and will contain the 2023/24 race calendar, results and details of club activities in due course.