**Road/Trail runners report February 2023**
It is good to report that after the covid related measures brought in during the pandemic, training has returned to normal over the past 12 months.
Indeed, if anything, it has flourished with the new 10am slots continuing on both Tuesday and Thursday well attended. In addition, evening sessions are also proving to be popular attracting many more new members to the club.

Without the support of an excellent group of coaches, training wouldn’t be possible. Don Powell and Andy Cullen lead by example taking charge of running the 10am and 6.30pm sessions respectively with able support from the rest of the coaching team: Ray Gartland, Jenny Froud, Tim Fowler, Steve McAvoy, Andy Goddard, Mike Hickey & myself.
We’ve continued with the marathon specific sessions leading up to London both last October and this spring which prove popular and, judging by times achieved, successful. Last spring Alastair Bridgman, John Bigg, Tracy Jones and Mark Slaney all set age groups club records
Ray and I started some track sessions on Saturday mornings which we hope to continue in the year ahead.

With the inclement weather – especially this winter – much training has been done off the fields at Down Grange with both the Berg Estate and Brighton Hill Park proving to be regular venues. Sessions do vary between road and trail, but anyone interested can find details of our sessions on the club’s website (Road / XC Page).
Many of our members started as their children attended the junior sessions, so if any newer parents fall into this category and are thinking about getting back into running, feel free to come along and join in!

The Club Championships remained popular with the best 8 races of 16 counting towards the overall score. The main awards are complimented by the age graded equivalent which tries to equalise allowing for age (and gender). Congratulations then to our outright winners: Tom Harding & Tracy Jones with Chris Furness, Tony Parker, Sue Burton and Jane Bradbury completing the podiums.
In the age graded, Russell Burton and Tracy Jones retained their titles with Chris Furness, Tom Harding, Sue Burton and Jane Bradbury completing the 1-2-3.
After a 2 year hiatus, we also awarded Most Improved and Runner of the Year titles.
After setting multiple club records, Tracy Jones was voted by our runners to be most improved, with Don Powell, seemingly defying the ageing process winning the majority of votes for Runner of the Year. Don’s enthusiasm for running, racing and training is infectious and has seen him run some great times and great races on both track and fell over the past 12 months.
Well done to all our winners.
The 2022-23 Club Championships are well underway with several events already completed.

Over Cross Country, BMH retained the Southern Cross Country League title for 2021-22. With two races to go this winter, the league is finally poised but BMH are in a good position to once again win the title. With quality in depth on the men’s side, we really need our ladies to compete in these fixtures following the change to the scoring from 5 men / 3 women to 4 men / 4 women. Every finish really does count!
Staying on grass, many of our runners also compete in the Hampshire XC League where the final fixture is still to take place in early March. The Men sit 2nd overall with the vets in 10th meanwhile the ladies are 3rd. Sadly we’ve not had enough vet ladies compete to score this winter.
At the county XC Championships in Botley, Mike Hickey picked up the bronze in the MV60 age group.

Meanwhile on the track, Ray Gartland successfully lead the Veteran Men to glory in the Hampshire Vets League, the club taking wins in all 4 fixtures. Credit also to Caroline Partner who led a small group of our ladies to 3rd place in the Women’s section. Great to see so many of our athletes embrace this event. If you’re thinking about some track and field, and are aged 35 or over, then give this a go. There are no age limits to the Southern Athletics League and the National Athletics League both of which feature track and field events. A shout out to Mark Norris who completed the steeplechase in many of these, earning precious points for the club in the process.

Tim Fowler continues to drive the Hampshire Hoppit Trail races forward. Despite numbers being down, the 2022 race was described by many participants as the best yet (wait until they see 2023). As always these events only go ahead thanks to the huge, club wide support we get from our membership. In the build up to the event, and on the day, over 100 of the club’s membership were on hand to run, support or marshal. If you want a piece of the action, the 2023 race is on Sunday 18th June. If you wish to help in any way for this event, then Tim or I would be delighted to hear from you.

Wishing all our athletes a successful and injury free 2023

Terry Wegg
16/02/23