



## AGM 2018 - Directors' reports

### Chair's Report - Dave Robinson

This past year has been an exceptional and exciting one in our club with an amazing growth in new members and increased participation in all areas of the club's activities and some outstanding athletic achievements. We have built on a steady period of growth and activity in recent years to emerge in 2018 stronger and day by day establishing our London and countrywide profile across a broad spectrum of endurance running together along with established youth track and endurance sections where we continues to bring young athletes into competition at county and national level.

#### **Thanks**

Together with another incredible year of hard work and commitment from our longer standing captains and volunteers, this year has benefitted from an influx of newer members, promoting the club and taking on and developing the club's profile, both on the ground and through social media.

On behalf of the club membership thanks to all who have devoted so much of their time and energy over the past year to provide the organisation, facilities, coaching etc, which we all take for granted : our officials, coaches, volunteers and a growing number of other dedicated members who run, organise and coordinate training sessions, monthly handicaps, club championships, track meetings, league races, regional events and various other events including Fell Racing on the Isle of Wight, the Open 5, and an increasing number of open races where our club is achieving significant results. Additionally our youth coaches not only train our young athletes but also have the added responsibility of care and guidance of youth members in both their athletic and social development.

I will leave the detail of this year's amazing athletic achievements to the Team Captains Reports !

A further big thanks fellow Board members, Rachel, Faye and our great team captains, long serving members and many new members who have been pivotal in the promotion, organisation and ongoing success of our club, including amongst others, Neil Cook, Joe Feltham, Joyce, Charlie M and Vicky and newer members Gavin Lau, Hugh Murdock, Jools..amongst others who have all continued with or taken on new tasks this year... and of course to Major, who supports , officiates both for us and independently in leagues, championships and both track and endurance competitions across the entire spectrum of the club's activities - amazing man.

A big thanks to Tony Bunbury ( Monday Circuits ) and Mick Cairns ( Tuesday structured speed work ) whose regular sessions are a backbone of our training activities and this year a special thanks to Jools for helping us establish and now head up the Welcome Run programme and a big thanks to Steve for Project V. These two additions to regular club sessions have massively re-invigorated Thursday evenings.

A special thanks this year to Cheryl who, in her first year as Women's Road & XC captain and Director, has injected an fabulous enthusiasm, organisation, inspiration and support to our strong and amazing women. She has shared with Sim in the enormous task of organising a busy programme of club champs and league races.

There are not enough words to describe the contribution Sim has made to our club. Sim is standing down from the role of Men's Road & XC Captain and Director which he has masterminded for the last 10 years. During this time he has been instrumental in building the strength and depth of our club to where we are in 2018. He was and is 'VPH FOR EVER', a message he first bore on his chest and delighted in raising his shirt to elicited great cheering in races from Vicky Park supporters! Thankfully he's not leaving, but will pass on a wealth of knowledge, organisation and contacts to Cheryl, our new Men's Captain and all their support. We are also very sad to lose Charlotte who is standing down after 3 years as our Throws Coach and Women's T&F Captain. She has used her experience and skill to support track activities, has been a strong supporter of the SAL and an informed voice on the Board supporting and promoting our T&F athletes.

A final HUGE thanks to ALL you lovely people - our members - for what you all bring to the club, for your achievements big and small that we can all enjoy and your part in building our strong, caring and supportive club.

### **Getting Involved**

Many of you will know that I have always encouraged the formation of teams / groups to help our Captains run the extensive 'Race Calendar' - the monthly handicaps, League and Regional races, Club Championships, Open Events etc,. Additionally, with a growing club, along with the full events calendar, there are continuing roles for volunteer groups to organise and help with a variety of club admin, communications, facilities & equipment etc,. Many new members have taken on roles and embraced volunteering as noted already but we will be increasing efforts in the coming year to improve the organising of groups.

### **Youth Section & Welfare**

The continued growth of our Youth membership and the development of the Youth Endurance Group has been a rewarding feature of the last few years and it is good to see senior members actively supporting our young athletes.

Pressures on Junior Coaches at the Track for both track athletes and Cornelia's group are considerable and many thanks to Alf, Kelvin, Manny, Margaret and others at the Track for their utter dedication to our young athletes.

Similarly both at the track, in the country and at our handicaps Cornelia and Charlie Malling have developed a strong, motivated and winning youth endurance section. We look forward to this supporting our strong and motivated juniors in this season's Met League.

Training young people does bring increasing challenges and it is both a requirement of England Athletics and important for our club that we have safeguarding policies and procedures in place and an appointed Welfare Officer. Welfare covers a range of issues such as safeguarding and protecting children, anti-bullying etc, and we are mandated to meet our statutory responsibilities to safeguard and protect children. We are very fortunate that Sam Duggan agreed to take on the role of club Welfare Officer last year

### **Premises - Mile End**

GLL are seeking to regularise our 'roles and responsibilities' at Mile End and we expect to enter into a Service Level Agreement ( SLA ) in the not too distant future. This will bring some added responsibility and cost for the club, primarily in respect of control of the use of Gym and the equipment but, along with the center manager, will provide the Club with a better means of control of the use of the Gym and track.

### **Premises - Clubhouse**

- **The 'Old Gym'**

We have continued good use of this space by My Local Pilates and occasional use by other groups.

- **PT and strength and conditioning**

Fabien Lassonde ( Victoria Park Fitness) has continued PT and strength & conditioning coaching with both club members and other clients this year. This is a much valued and popular resource and we are very lucky to have Fabien both as a trainer and competitor for club.

Along with Tony Bunbury's popular Monday circuits / strength and conditioning session, our gym and weights facilities are well used by members. Thanks to both.

- **Hall Hire/ Hosted Events**

We have a number of regular Hall users including winter use by 'Our Parks' Yoga on Saturday mornings funded by LBTH and additionally this year it has been used on weekends by a Tae Kwon Do Group. The clubhouse is also used for number of Charity Events and one-off hirings.

- **Cottage**

We manage the letting of the Cottage ourselves rather than through Agents as in the past. This continues to provide a good income for a little extra work.

- **Bar and Social Activities Team**

A big thanks to the Susan, Sophie, Malachy, Marlis and Helen for a great year of regular club nights, 'Party Evenings' and Race Event catering along with all the incredible additional volunteer cooks and helpers...

- **Kitchen and Bar Refurbishment & Members Room**

The basic infrastructure is now more or less complete and it remains for members to 'take possession' of this space and help make it more of a club and resource room with photographs past & present, in frames and on the pinboard along with Notices of Events etc.,. Members are encouraged to print and display photographs and add books to the ' Running Library '.

## Men's road & cross country report – Simeon Bennett

What an incredible year it has been on the road, on the mud, on the trail, on the fell and occasionally on the track. The men's section of the club continues to grow in ability and diversify in its interests.

### Cross country

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The club entered and competed in the many familiar events and leagues during the 2017-18 season:

- Both main cross country leagues (Chingford and Metropolitan),
- Middlesex County, North-of-the-Thames and North London XC Champs,
- London XC Champs and English National XC champs (both at Parliament Hill)
- South of England XC Championships (Brighton)
- Ware Cup, Vet's XC Champs both hosted at Loughton AC

### Metropolitan Cross Country League

The season started well in October 2017 with the first fixture of Metropolitan XC league. There was the usual excitement following our great finish in 2016-17. 2017-18 proved no different with enthusiasm, good numbers of athletes and strong competition across all five races in the series. Our men did not disappoint finishing 5<sup>th</sup> once again in Division 1 ahead of many other very strong clubs. Meanwhile our men's B team finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in Division 3 one place better than last year. Meanwhile, our men's veteran team finished an amazing 2<sup>nd</sup> in Div 1 (we were 5<sup>th</sup> in the previous season) and 1<sup>st</sup> in Div 3. A truly terrific show from our over 40s.

### Chingford League

Our Men's A team regained the Chingford shield after our 2<sup>nd</sup> place the previous year. We also topped the B league after a 3<sup>rd</sup> place the previous year; furthermore our veterans excelled themselves topping the Vet's league as well (following 3<sup>rd</sup> place the previous year and 5<sup>th</sup> the season before that). This is the first time our men's vets have had their name on this trophy after many years of domination by other clubs. These are incredible achievements yet again, especially given the primary focus on the Metropolitan XC league - there is often a risk of 'too many races' fatigue. Well done to all who ran across the races and special thanks once again to Chingford Captain Joyce Berry who did such a great job of keeping everyone organised.

### Other XC successes

At the London XC Champs in November 2017 Paul Martelletti battled very hard indeed to take 2<sup>nd</sup> place man overall, our highest ever position in this hard-fought race. The club took 5<sup>th</sup> placed team overall, one position better than 2016. In December the club retained the Ware Cup for another year. In January the club battled the early-year blues for the Middlesex County XC championships, taking 3<sup>rd</sup> place team (6<sup>th</sup> place the previous year!) helped by some strong performances especially from Aaron McGrady and Joe Dale who finished 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> respectively over the 12km course.

### Road Running

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Handicap, Mob Match + Club Champs

Despite some challenges with other park events and bad weather we managed to hold 12 fixtures of the monthly handicap, with hundreds of runners competing over the year. Special thanks to Cheryl who has paid a key role in organising these so well and of course, to all the volunteers over the year.

The January Mob Match was back on home turf for 2018 where the club made up for its defeat in 2017 with a win against Eton Manor. Final result aside this is always a great event, where both competitive spirit comes in equal measure with the good friendship that also exists between the two clubs, long may this continue. Naturally there is no room for complacency in 2019 when we are back at Eton Manor...

### **Assembly League**

The full complement of 6 races were held once again, with the club hosting two as usual. The men had a great season, although the mighty Kent AC proved very difficult to crack. Nonetheless, just as the previous season our Men's A and B teams came second. Notable individual performances from Aaron McGrady (2<sup>nd</sup> overall) and Paul Martelletti (4<sup>th</sup> overall). James Cordwell, Steve Hobbs and Mick Cairns who were 2nd, 7th and 6th in their respective categories.

### **Marathon + Other Road Races**

2017-18 was another bumper year at the London marathon, with 81 athletes entered and 60 finishing the Virgin London Marathon. Really spirited performances from our runners on the hottest ever London (24C), including 13 men crossing the line in under 3 hours. Many of those were within the top 100 of their category, and special mention to Steve Hobbs, who was 7<sup>th</sup> in his category, a real credit to his dedicated training. As usual, there was the fantastic support from the crowds and club members on the Highway and elsewhere around the course.

Of course, the VPH & TH net was cast much further afield, with our men competing in places such as South Africa, Malta, Brighton, Chester and...the Roding Valley!

Special marathon mentions to:

- **Rodney Mushanganyisi**, who successfully completed his 9th Comrades Ultramarathon (going for number ten next year);
- Most Improved Athlete **Matt Walker** who dipped under three hours for the first time at the Newport Marathon;
- Gritty **Paul Gaimster** who ran gruelling Boston Marathon in 2:42 and less than a week later ran London in 2:46 (as a 'warm down')
- **Chris Brammer** who continued to work hard at and improve his marathon time taking yet another 4 mins out of his time at the Brighton marathon. Chris is also very generous in his support and praise for other athletes across the club
- Lastly **Paul 'Magic' Martelletti** with a staggering performance at Berlin Marathon coming 20th overall in 2h17.

Once again, the club proudly hosted a series of races in Victoria Park including Chingford League, Assembly League, the Mike Penman memorial mob match, the Middlesex County 10k and Pride 10km. As usual we put on a great show, and all the events passed by without major incident, just great racing. Big big thanks to the many members gave their time so willingly to help out, especially those who volunteered for the first time in the past year.

### **Club Championships, Boswall League and Others**

I was proud to arrange and run the full complement of races once again (1, 3.5, 5 mile XC, 10 and 20 mile) with about 270 athletes competing across all events. As usual, thanks must go to those who've helped out marshalling, timekeeping, typing results or keeping the tea flowing at critical stages during the races.

Once again, thanks must go to Vicky Fabbri [ably assisted by Jack 'Spreadsheet' Russell] who willingly took on the demanding role of collating, calculating and calling the Boswall League for another year and ensuring the clubs athletes were enthused throughout the season- which is the essence of the league.

In 2018 we will again, award the 'Spirit of the Cross Country' trophies kindly donated by June Barrow-Green, at the AGM. Well done to last year's Most Improved Athletes, Matthew Walker and Rachel Thomas who received their awards at the 2017 AGM.

## Open 5

The Open 5 was held once again with nearly 150 athletes competing across the categories. As usual, special mentions to Joe Feltham, Major Carr and Vicky Fabbri who between them made sure this classic race lives on. Planning for 2019 is already underway.

## Fell Running

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The flatlands of East London seems to be no barrier to the club's ability to run up and down steep hills at speed.

Having missed out on places in the 2017 Box Hill fell race, we made sure we were there in force for the 2018 race, held on Jan 20th. We had winners in both the men's and women's categories (Aaron McGrady and Rachel Thomas), whilst our teams of three came 1st, 2nd, 4th, 11th and 24th. What a cracking show.

Slightly closer to home the shorter but no less historic Orion Fell race. There were many entrants from the club once again with a notable 8 finishing in the top 20.

Then of course, there was yet another amazing Isle of Wight fell running weekend, with a list of individual, category and team prizes too long to mention in this report. With nearly 90 members of the club and their families and loved ones in attendance, hopefully some of you will have experienced the incredible club spirit that exists each year. Much of this is made possible by **Neil Cook** who works tirelessly throughout the year to ensure this event goes so well, a massive thanks to him, and of course, to Chris Lewis and the team at Ryde Harriers who stage the event each year.

## Thanks to

Too many people to mention but special mentions for

- **Julian Burke** who has played a leading role in setting up and co-ordinating the 'welcome run' group for developing runners or those returning from injury.
- **Mick Cairns** for his loyal service leading the Tuesday night coached sessions
- **Major Carr** for his tireless work often behind the scenes supporting events
- **Steve Hobbs** for his huge contribution in the year as a stand-in Tuesday leader, setting up the epic Project V and for pulling together teams for the 6/4 stage road relays in September.

## Looking Ahead

The 2018-19 season is now well underway, with the Isle of Wight enthusing many and with two club championship races and one Chingford League race already held + the Metropolitan XC League season just days away. This will remain our priority of the year but as we have seen, success and enjoyment comes from all corners of competition. Though I believe the club tries very hard to welcome and encourage athletes of ALL abilities and backgrounds we *all* have a continued role to make members feel welcome, included, valued and encouraged to participate in races and club events as athlete or supporter.

This has been my final year as Men's 'Captain' of Road & XC. It has been nothing but an honour to serve and represent our wonderful club for the past decade. I promise to continue my loyal service in a number of other ways in the coming weeks, months and years but for now I wish the very best to my replacement, the rest of the excellent board and of all the members that make our terrific club just what it is. Thank you all.

## Women's road & cross country report – Cheryl Evans

It has been a stellar year for the Victoria Park Harrier and Tower Hamlets AC ladies, who have excelled both as a team and individually.

Dedication, perseverance, intelligence and bravery have led to tremendous improvements and great accomplishments. There is so much to be proud of, here I will present you with some of the highlights.

As we launch in to a new season of cross country, we remember the success of last year.

In the Met League, the ladies A team finished 4th, our highest ever position, in the super competitive league. The B team topped Division 3 and were promoted to Division 2 for this year. The Vets team finished 3rd.

Individually Rachel Thomas stormed the league, finishing 5th overall, bagging a cash prize.

Sue Bint was 3rd V40 and Faye Jeacocke 5th.

We hope to build on this success this XC season.

In the Chingford league VPH&THAC pretty much cleaned up. Our ladies team ran away with a massive WIN. Sophie Donges was 1st overall.

With Annie Byrne 2nd, Hannah Somani 4th.

Sue Bint was 2nd in the Vet category with Holly Weir 4th.

For the Super Vets Sarah Knox was 12th and Joyce Berry 15th.

The relays were won by Martha Lloyd, Sophie D, Jess Lowe and Kelly Clark

In the Summer league - the Assembly league, our A team finished 2nd and B team 3rd. Individually Martha L took 3rd overall with Kat Gundersen 9th, Jess Lowe 10th and Hannah S 11th.

Kelly C was 3rd V35 and Sue Bint 3rd V40.

In the Isle of Wight Southern Fell running championships our ladies teams won Gold (Rachel T, Annie B, Charlie Maling) and Bronze (Heather Birtwistle, Helen Croydon, Faye J).

Rachel Thomas excelled as she won all three races, her hard work and determination to keep improving is inspiring. Annie B was 2nd overall and Charlie, who had returned from a long injury finished 6th. First timers Yuan Ren, Helen Nickols, Verity Stroud and Martha Clark joined our long list of wonder women.

Other team successes include:

The Big Half - Bronze (Rachel T, Sophie D, Annie)

Malta Half Marathon - Gold (Mandy Dohren, Helena Eastham, Annie B) and Silver (Sophie D, Sue B, Faye J)

Roding Valley Half Marathon - Bronze (Holly W, Annaka Charters, Kelly C)

Orion 15 - Gold (Rachel T, Sophie D, Kelly C) Vets Gold (Kelly C, Robin NH, Naomi Bourne)

Benfleet 15 - Gold (Sophie D, Faye J, Cheryl Evans)

VPH Open 5 - Gold (Martha L, Hannah S, Holly W)

VPH&THAC also saw the best ever result at the prestigious SEAA 4 stage relays with our A team finishing 7th in a very competitive field (Rachel T, Kat G, Jess L, Martha L).

Records fell and then fell again:

Club and road 1 mile - Rachel T (5:15)

5k - Rachel T (18:06) Hackney Marshes parkrun

5k Vet - Mandy Dohren (18:27) Southport parkrun

Half Marathon - Rachel T (1:22:08) Big Half

IOW(x3) - Rachel T (0:20:19), (01:01:01), (01:35:11)

20mile - Rachel T (2:15:28) Club champs  
Man vs Horse - Annie Bryne (3:09:33)  
Man vs Horse Vet women - Faye Jeacocke (3:54:53)  
Battersea Assembly league 5k - Martha Lloyd (18:00)  
100k - Ellie Tait (15:38:22) South Coast Challenge

I would like to take time to welcome new and returning members to the VPH&THAC team.  
These include:

Martha Lloyd who won the Open 5, PBed at Ealing Half in a time of 1:22:05 and formed part of the aforementioned 4 stage relay team along with Kat Gundersen.

Emily Catmur ran her first marathon in Paris in a time of 4:12:14 and has become a keen member of the club.

Jess Lowe won the Mike Penman 10k. Also, PBed at Hackney Half (85:29) and Chicago Marathon (3:12:53).

I wish all new joiners a long and prosperous membership with the club.

Other notable performances include:

Rachel Thomas' selection for the intercounties XC team representing Middlesex. Rachel has had a phenomenal year of running.

A win for Ellie Tait at the Snowdonia Quarter 50miler. She had boldly gone hard and long this year at various ultra events throughout the year.

Robin Norton Hale took 2nd place at the Grand Union Canal half marathon.

Hazel Norton-Hale PBed at Bournemouth marathon in 3:29  
"On minimal training and sleep, post-baby number two." says proud sister Robin.

Jo Hall PBed at 5k, 10k and half marathon distances within the year.

There are many more great performances and vital members that have not been mentioned here but i would like to congratulate you all on your achievements and thank you for effort and contribution to your club.

VPH&THAC is its people; a community and a family.

Sadly our team has suffered some significant injuries throughout the year, which has put people out of training and racing. I commend those back on the road and wish those who are still out a speedy recovery.

I would like to thank all of the supporting members of the club, who put in a significant amount of time and effort. I would like to thank Major Carr, Chairman Dave, Captain Sim, coaches Mick Cairns and Steve Hobbs. All of those who have volunteered, the bar staff the rest of the board, Neil Cook, Vicky Fabri, Joe Feltham, Gavin Lau and many more.

May the success continue.

## Track and Road Juniors – Cornelia Minale

The Highlight of the 2018 season was obviously Nayanna and Kiah Dubarry-Gay both winning English Schools Championships 100 and 200m. Both then moving on to represent England in the British Schools International Championships again winning the 100 and 200m.

Kiah raced her first U20 international race for Great Britain at the age of 16.

More fantastic achievements for the club came from Michael Shonibare U/20, Victoria Ubenyi U/17 & Michelvi Wamba U/15, all reaching their first English Schools qualifications.

The club now has a strong field of young under 13 girl sprinters coming through but our lack of boys is worrying.

In High jump David Bazuaye surely arrived on the National Stage with a bang. Winning English Schools, National Championships and setting a new championship record of 1.99m at the South of England Inter-county champs. He is without doubt male athlete of the season.

Our Long & Triple jump athletes were mainly concentrating this year on their exams and therefore missing training although Diane Mapamboli still managed 3 major medals 3 indoor Nationals, 2nd outdoor and 3rd in English Schools Championships.

Both, younger and older junior, age groups, achieved their goal to stay in their Youth Development Divisions for the next season.

The distance group could not defend their Middlesex and Metleague overall titles. Reason is similar to the sprint groups, the low numbers of talented young boys entering the sport and older boys leaving the sport in their GCSE year.