



**Veterans Athletic Club**  
**Newsletter**  
**December 2022**



**Anna Garnier takes 1500m Gold in the World Masters  
Athletics Championships, Tampere, Finland**

## VAC Committee Members: Sept 2022 – Sept 2023

<b>President</b>	Anna Garnier	
<b>Secretary (Committee Chair)</b>	Ros Tabor	<a href="mailto:secretary@vetsac.org.uk">secretary@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Andy Murray	<a href="mailto:treasurer@vetsac.org.uk">treasurer@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Peter Kennedy	<a href="mailto:membership@vetsac.org.uk">membership@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>Track &amp; Field Secretary</b>	Vacant	<a href="mailto:tfsec@vetsac.org.uk">tfsec@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>Cross Country &amp; Road Secretary</b>	Dennis Williams	<a href="mailto:entries@vetsac.org.uk">entries@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>Walking Secretary</b>	David Hoben	<a href="mailto:walks@vetsac.org.uk">walks@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>Entries Secretary</b>	Maggie Statham-Berry	<a href="mailto:entries@vetsac.org.uk">entries@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>Officials Secretary</b>	Ros Tabor	<a href="mailto:Officials@vetsac.org.uk">Officials@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>Newsletter Editor/Press Officer</b>	Angela Kikugawa	<a href="mailto:news@vetsac.org.uk">news@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>Minutes Secretary</b>	Mike Mann	<a href="mailto:mcmann90@yahoo.co.uk">mcmann90@yahoo.co.uk</a>
<b><u>Other Officers</u></b>		
<b>Photographer</b>	Cliff Hide	<a href="mailto:cliffhide10@aol.com">cliffhide10@aol.com</a>
<b>Team Manager for Surrey XC (Men)</b>	Paddy Clark	<a href="mailto:paddyclark@hotmail.com">paddyclark@hotmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:entries@vetsac.org.uk">entries@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>(Women)</b>	Helen Davies	<a href="mailto:helendavies@blueyonder.co.uk">helendavies@blueyonder.co.uk</a>
<b>Team Managers for Inter-Area T&amp;F Challenge Matches</b>	Mike Mann Anna Garnier	<a href="mailto:tfsec@vetsac.org.uk">tfsec@vetsac.org.uk</a>
<b>Auditor</b>	Graham Laylee	

Veterans Athletic Club is affiliated to England Athletics, BMAF, South of England AA, Surrey County AA, the Race Walking Association and the South of the Thames Cross Country Association. We offer athletic competition for those aged 35 and over. Cross-country, road, track & field as well as race walking - there is something for everyone. Based in London with members across the South East, we can provide opportunities to compete with other like-minded masters/veterans. A fixture list is printed in the newsletter. Please support these events. The newsletter welcomes contributions and events always need volunteers, as well as competitors. If you want to get involved, contact any of the Committee members listed above.



## Editor Angela Kikugawa Writes

We received some really good contributions from members for this newsletter and I hope you enjoy them. The hot summer seemed to feature in quite a few of the articles and much as I complained about it at the time, I wouldn't mind a few extra degrees on my early morning runs now. I am usually out by six and try not to let the

weather knock me off course, but the last few days have been tough. Still, we press on!

I particularly enjoyed Rob Scott's account of his London Marathon in October and his thoughts on the benefit of strength training. It seems that most running articles I read recently stress the need for it, particularly among Masters athletes. I started myself about three years ago, encouraged by an 85-year-old who could squat and bench press enormous weights. Like a lot of gym novices, I had been using the fixed weight equipment but he encouraged me to try the bench press, deadlift and military press. I think it has helped and despite moving into the 60 category this year I have seen my times improve. In addition, I was surprised how much I enjoyed it. In the past I feel I was just going through the motions on the fixed weights but now find I have to think about it and gradually increasing the weight has given me an aim.

I feel much stronger, and I have decided to have one more go at the marathon. I have entered the Vienna Marathon in April and hope to report a good run in the next newsletter. Until then I hope you all have a healthy enjoyable 2023.

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### **Message from Peter Kennedy**

We now have 632 members, with many newcomers attracted by the opportunity to compete in the BMAF 5k and 10-mile championships at the discounted rates. The VAC committee has committed to delivering the competitions that are wanted by these bigger numbers, but it's a challenge, especially on the Track and Field side.

We therefore need your help with establishing a long-term arrangement for VAC's T&F championships. We would like to create an event which all masters in the London clubs will come to. Each year the Lee Valley Athletics Centre successfully organises the London Indoor Games for junior athletes and we should do something similar, starting with a London outdoor masters championships spanning two days. We can follow this with indoor and combined event fixtures if the demand is there. We think it will be easier to get officials for an open event rather than promoting it as a VAC event. We would like to build the support for this idea within the clubs by establishing club ambassadors who will promote such T&F championships to all the over-35's in their club and ask their club officials secretary to put this event on their officiating calendar, so that we get a significant number of officials from each club.

Please can members in each club consider who might be their Club Ambassador(s) and let me know by email or via a link which we will provide on VAC's website. We could then use a WhatsApp group to keep everyone informed of progress in getting the championships off the ground. I also need a volunteer to assist me with these tasks.

I'm sorry to report that at the present time, we have been unable to come up with a suitable arrangement or date for an indoor VAC T&F championship at Lee Valley in Spring 2023. As a priority, we urgently need someone to come forward to drive and develop VAC's T&F championships if we are to have an outdoor championship in 2023 and a full programme in 2024. Please consider if you can spare some time to be involved. The task is about making them happen, rather than organising them.

**Peter Kennedy, Veterans AC Membership Secretary**

## 2023 Fixtures

Refer to VAC's website ([www.vetsac.org.uk](http://www.vetsac.org.uk)) for details, updates and additions.

Date	Organiser	Event	Venue	Entry	Entry Closing Date
Saturday 14 January 2023	Surrey League  (VAC Men and Women)	Cross Country Race Match 3	Woking  The Men's and women's races are at the same venue.	All VAC men and women (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> claim) eligible, subject to conditions. VAC vest necessary.	Advance notice to Team Manager s Paddy Clark (men) Helen Davies (women)
Saturday 21 January 2023	VAC	VAC Open Masters Cross Country Champs	Wimb. Common Start near West Place, SW19 4UH.	Details and online entry on OpenTrack. 5 miles. Start time: 2pm. Individual medals in five-year age groups.	19 January (Men and women together)
Saturday 4 February 2023	Nonsuch parkrun	5km parkrun Featuring VAC "mob match" gathering.	Nonsuch Park, Cheam Start is adjacent to Mansion House.	Start time: 9am. New parkrunners must register	Enter on the day (but need your Barcode)
Saturday 11 February 2023	Surrey League  (VAC Men and Women)	Cross Country Race Match 4	Morden Park (TBC) The Men's and women's races are at the same venue.	All VAC men and women (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> claim) eligible, subject to conditions. VAC vest necessary.	Advance notice to Team Manager Paddy Clark (men) Helen Davies (women)

Date	Organiser	Event	Venue	Entry	Entry Closing Date
Sunday 12 February 2023	Southern Counties Veterans Athletic Club (SCVAC)	SCVAC Indoor T&F Championship s	Lee Valley Athletics Centre, Meridian Way, Edmonton London N9 0AR.	Details on OpenTrack. VAC members welcome. Includes VAC's 3000m and 3k Walk champs.	28 January
Saturday/ Sunday 18-19 February 2023	BMAF Services	British Masters Indoor T&F Championship s	English Institute of Sport, Coleridge Road, Sheffield S9 5DA	Details on OpenTrack	TBA
Sunday 26 February 2023	England Masters Athletics Assoc.	British Masters Inter Area Indoor Track & Field Challenge  Competition for BMAF Area Clubs.	Lee Valley Athletics Centre, Meridian Way, Edmonton London N9 0AR.	VAC Team selected in advance. One person for each age group in each event. Men & Women Age Groups: 35-49, 50- 59, 60-69, 70+..	Initial selection will be made in January. Express interest by 13 January to Entries Sec.
Saturday 4 March 2023	East Surrey League (Match 2)  VAC is a member of the East Surrey League.	Cross Country Race  Five mile (2 lap) course. Men and women run together.	Lloyd Park. Start near Lloyd Park tram stop, Coombe Road, Croydon CR0 5RA	VAC men's and women's teams. No limit on numbers. Free entry. 2.30pm start. Enquiries to Entries Secretary.	VAC runners declared on the day.

Date	Organiser	Event	Venue	Entry	Entry Closing Date
4-5 March 2023	BMAF Services	BMAF Winter Throws Championship	Horspath Road Athletics Stadium, Oxford OX4 2RR	Details and Online entry will be on OpenTrack	Closing date to be advised
11 March 2023	BMAF Services	BMAF Indoor Pentathlon and 3,000m Champs	Lee Valley Athletics Centre, Edmonton London N9 0AR	Details and Online entry will be on OpenTrack	Closing date to be advised
18 March 2023	BMAF Services	British Masters Cross Country Championships	Rising Sun Sports Ground, Kings Road North, WALLSEN D NE28 9JJ	Race 1 12.00 All women and M65+ 5.8km (2 laps) Race 2 13.00 M35-64 8.6km (3 laps)	Entries open in January 2023
25-31 March 2023	World Masters Athletics	World Masters Indoor Track & Field Champs	Torun Poland	Details on website Enter online.	31 January 2023
Thursday 30 March 2023	East Surrey League (VAC is a member of the East Surrey League)	Ewell Four Mile Road Race (Two laps of local roads)	The Harrier Centre (Ewell track), King George Rec Ground, Poole Road, Epsom KT19 9RY	Start time:7pm Free entry. Open to 1st and 2nd claim members. Enquiries: <a href="#">Entries Secretary</a>	VAC runners declared on the day.
Tuesdays 4 April 2023 9 May 6 June 1 August	VAC Note: there is no July race because Battersea Park is unavailable	VAC Battersea Park Summer Series 5km and 5Mile Masters Road Races and Open Race Walks	Battersea Park, London SW11 4NJ Race HQ at the Bandstand.	7pm start. April, June and August's events are 5km. The May event is 5 miles.	Two days before the event. Details and Online entry will be on OpenTrack

# NEWS

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## Coaching of Masters Athletes

VAC is fortunate to have two members who have offered to help fellow masters athletes to improve their fitness and techniques. For others who might be interested, VAC will consider paying for courses to help members to become qualified coaches as long as the club can benefit from the skills acquired. VAC will also pay for members to become qualified athletics officials. Contact Ros Tabor ([ros.tabor49@gmail.com](mailto:ros.tabor49@gmail.com)) if you're interested.

### David Budden



Hello, my name is David. I'm a VAC first claim member in the M65 age group. I compete in the throwing events. I am a Level 2 Performance Coach (throws) and Personal Trainer (PT) with many years of experience in the Royal Navy as a PT and at various Sports facilities in the south of England.

I am happy to help you with coaching and conditioning for your events online or by phone.  
[davidb7b7@gmail.com](mailto:davidb7b7@gmail.com)

### Dominika Brookes

Hi. I'm first claim VAC, in the W40 age group. I've recently completed the England Athletics Coaching Assistant course that allows me to coach under the supervision of a qualified coach. I am based in Barnes and have my own experience doing athletics so if anyone needs help, I am happy to offer my time. My email address is: [dominika247@yahoo.com](mailto:dominika247@yahoo.com)



# Track and Field

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## VAC 5000m Championships, Wimbledon Park, 27 July

A pleasant evening was welcomed, although perhaps a little too warm. Nonetheless there were some fine performances in the four seeded races, with 54 people taking part.



Andy Mitchelson (M50) and wearing number 50 above, won the first race of 15 starters in a time of 22:50.22. He was pushed all the way by Mike Mann (M70) in 22:59.42, with Rhiannon Needham (W40) in third place in 23:10.87, only five seconds off her PB. It was good to see Alan Rich making a welcome return to track racing after a long absence. Jonathan Whittaker (M40) won the second race in 18:42.99. There was a close battle for the second and third placings with Martin Daoud (M55) (19:58.46) just edging Helen Pool (W45) (19:59.75) by one second.

The third race featured the women's winner, Gina Galbraith (W45), posting a fine time of 18:17.52 to win the W45 Gold medal. She was second behind race winner, Chris Ness (M50) (17:53.25). Richard McDowell (M40) won the

fourth and fastest race and retained his title of VAC Men's 5,000m Champion, as well as winning M40 Gold. His time of 15:44.54 had a margin of 16 seconds over Andy Bond who pursued him relentlessly throughout the race, winning M45 Gold.

Other Championship Gold medals were awarded to Ben Goddard (M35), Will Pitt (M50), Terry Booth (M55), David Ogden (M60), Dave Watson (M65), Mike Mann (M70) and Edward Thorpe (M75).

For the women, Anna Critchlow was VAC's first women and won the Champion's trophy as well as the W50 Gold medal. Other Golds were awarded to Claire Curtin (W40), Nicky Atkins (W55), Lucy Woolhouse (W60) and Pauline Rich (W75).

## VAC 10,000m Championships, Battersea Park, 14 September

The event attracted 47 contestants to the Millennium Arena for three seeded races. The warm and pleasant conditions set the scene for four new Championship Best Performances, one of which broke a record set 37 years ago. A table of the current 10,000m CBPs is below.



Andy Bond of Dulwich Runners was VAC's men's Champion, having tracked and then out-kicked Simon Baines in the late stages of the fast race. His time of 33:00.4 set a new M45 record, two seconds ahead of Simon Baines's 2017 mark of 33:02.5. Simon, now in the M50 age group, was second in the race but was rewarded by a fine time of 33:12.22 which knocked nearly eight seconds off Laurie O'Hara's M50 record of 33:20.0 which was set in July 1985 and which we thought would last forever.

Gina Galbraith, pictured wearing number 28, of Hercules Wimbledon was the women's Champion. She was the winner of the second

race with a determined and controlled run, pulling away from a group of five and beating second-placed Andy Bowen by three seconds. Her time of 38:26.91 smashed a long-standing W45 record of 41:08.0 set by Jane Georghiou in September 2000. The last of the four new Championship Best Performances was posted by Anna Garnier whose time of 46:50.81 improved Margaret Moody's 2018 W65 record of 47:31.50.

<b>VAC 10,000m Championship Best Performances</b>			
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Date</b>
M35	Richard McDowell	31:54.74	19-Sep-18
M40	Jim Estall	31:31.6	04-Sep-96
M45	Andy Bond	33:00.41	14-Sep-22
M50	Simon Baines	33:12.22	14-Sep-22
M55	Laurie O'Hara	34:17	19-Jul-87
M60	Dave Cox	35:54.1	03-Sep-14
M65	Steve Charlton	37:35.0	08-Sep-93
M70	Peter Giles	42:22.0	03-Sep-14
M75	Peter Giles	42:33.84	18-Sep-19
M80	Steve Charlton	46:10.5	08-Aug-07
M85	Steve Charlton	51:24.1	05-Sep-12
<b>WOMEN</b>			
W35	Maggie Statham	36:03.8	20-Sep-92
W40	Maggie Statham	37:06.4	08-Sep-93
W45	Gina Galbraith	38:26.91	14-Sep-22
W50	Pauline Rich	40:59.4	04-Sep-96
W55	Anna Garnier	42:31.3	08-Sep-10
W60	Maggie Statham	43:47.5	04-Sep-13
W65	Anna Garnier	46:50.81	14-Sep-22
W70	Pam Jones	51:59.4	03-Sep-08
W75	Pam Jones	55:33.2	05-Sep-12

The remaining race was won by David Robinson (M45) of Serpentine R.C. In this race, gold medals were won by Caroline Helder (W60), Anna Garnier

(W65), Peter Kennedy (M70) and Eddie Thorpe (M75). Gold medals in the other races were won by Mike Forder (M65), Martin Daoud (M60), Terry Booth (M55), Simon Baines (M50), Andy Bond (M45), Gina Galbraith (W45), Stewart Overton (M40) and Ben Goddard (M35).

## Masters Inter-Area Challenge, Nuneaton, 31 July



*W50 Relay Team: Anna Garnier, Helen Davies, Rachel Berry, Lucy Woolhouse*

Thirty-six members travelled to Nuneaton to represent VAC in the prestigious Inter-Area Challenge for the UK's Masters area clubs. There was a good team spirit with many doubling up into less familiar events. VAC was sixth overall but it was close. In the men's match another 20 points would have elevated the team from 6th to 3rd place.

Highlights included a Championship best performance of 10:58.21 achieved by Sue McDonald in first place in the W50 3000m. There were six other individual first places including two by Zoe Doyle (W40 800m, 2:18.05 and 1500m 4:59.44). Other firsts were David Hinds (M70 200m 30:34), Rob Datnow (M50 800m 2:11.42), Dave Annetts (M55 2k Walk 9:25.31) and Stacey Gonzales-Betancourt (W45 PV 2.80m). In addition, there were 17 second places and 7 third places.

Anna Garnier competed in 6 events in the W60-69 age group. She describes her experience below.

## **A (non) Multi-Eventer's Experience!**

### **By Anna Garnier**

*"I found myself down to compete in 6 events in the W60-69 age group at the Inter Area Challenge: the 100m, 400m, High Jump, Shot Put, 800m (my main event) and the 4 x 100m relay!*

*The 100m came first. Bang went the gun. My fierce competitors were diving for the finish line as I sprinted elegantly, way behind. Not how you do it, but one event ticked off and a point for VAC. Next the 400m - a bit closer to my distance! I was in the outside lane because I was the slowest. There was a false start, maybe me (?) - wasted nerves. The next gun coincided with some Welsh cheering, so I didn't hear it and lost a few precious seconds asking my neighbour "Was that another false start?" as she sped past on my inside. I finished one from last - complete miracle and another 2 points.*

*It was a few metres across to the HJ area. Fear gripped me because I couldn't have a practice jump. They had started. My first jump was a disaster. It was a year to the day since my last jump of 1 metre. A kind Scottish girl quickly gave me some sound advice to accelerate towards the bar, as I attempted to flop, push my hips up and forward. I soared over 1.05cm with centimetres to spare. "You were way over, you can jump higher". So sorry, but I'm off to do the Shot Putt. Again, lack of practice meant a pretty dismal sub 6 metre SP (I have thrown 7 metres). I mentally note that I must practise this more, along with my huge list of 'Must-Do's'. Meagre points for HJ and SP but not zero.*

*With hardly a warmup, I'm on the start line for MY race, the 800m. Utter bliss because at the bell I felt full of running and on the back straight set my heart on overtaking Jill Harrison of South West Vets. Sure enough, I overtook Jill and one other lady and came off the bend feeling strong and sprinted to the finish. I was a distant third (but 1st W65). However, the best thing was that the delightfully humble Yvonne Crilly of Scottish Veteran Harriers won with a W60 World record (2:31:51). I felt privileged to be part of her record-breaking race.*

*The final event, the 4 x 100m relay in a team of non-sprinters, was a wonderful way to finish the day and to consolidate friendships and feel the VAC camaraderie. It is important to remember that these events do not happen without the officials and volunteers who give their time and experience. It's worth putting oneself in their shoes or even considering qualifying as an official. It is fun to be part of the other side! A big thank you goes to organiser, Arthur Kimber, and all the officials who did a highly effective job on the day and are truly appreciated by non Multi-Eventers like me!"*

### **Indoor Inter-Area Challenge, Lee Valley, 26 February 2023**

The next Inter-Area match is indoors on 26 February at the Lee Valley Athletics Centre in Edmonton. VAC has entered men's and women's teams. There is a full range of the usual indoor track and field events, most of which are contested in four age groups (35-49, 50-59, 60-69 and 70+). We can only select one person per event per age group. Popular events tend to be over subscribed. Expressions of interest are invited from VAC members. Please let the Entries Secretary (Maggie Statham-Berry) know by 13 January if you are interested in being selected for VAC's team, and which event(s) you favour.

### **World Masters Athletics Championships, Tampere, Finland June/July 2022**

Usually biennial, this outdoor championship was the first one it was possible to hold since Malaga in 2018.

Tampere is a city a couple of hours north of Helsinki, situated between two lakes. The main track was in a riverside city-centre stadium, with a grandstand popular with athletes spectating and waiting for their events. Shot putt was from a temporary circle in the nearby park.





With all T&F events held in 5-year age groups, other venues in suburbs were used – an open track for distance races plus trails and fields next to the exhibition halls for cross country and some throws.

VAC members put in many fine performances, picking up 25 medals, including five Golds. Susie McLoughlin's W45 400m Gold was won in a European record time of 57:49. Lisa Thomas, Anna Garnier, Paul Hughes and Simon Baines (left) also won Golds.

Anna is pictured on the front cover.

<b>VAC Individual World Championship Medal Winners</b>			
<b>Age Grp</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Medal</b>	<b>Event</b>
W45	Bea Lafreniere	Silver	2000m Steeplechase
W45	Susie McLoughlin	Gold	400m (European Record)
W45	Susie McLoughlin	Silver & Bronze	100m & 200m
W45	Lizzie Amos	Silver	400m
W55	Lisa Thomas	Gold	2000m Steeplechase
W55	Virginia Mitchell	Bronze	800m
W65	Anna Garnier	Gold & Silver	1500m & 6km CC
W70	Anne Nelson	Silver x 2	100m and 200m
W70	Emily McMahan	Bronze x 2	80m and 200m Hurdles
W75	Pauline Rich	Silver x 2	5000m and 6km CC
W75	Pauline Rich	Bronze	10km Road
M40	Gavin Stephens	Bronze x 2	200m and 400m
M50	Simon Baines	Gold	Half Marathon
M65	Paul Hughes	Gold	Half Marathon
M55	Ben Reynolds	Bronze	5000m
M55	David Annetts	Silver	5000m Walk
M60	Mike Vassiliou	Silver	400m
M65	David Elderfield	Bronze	400m
M70	Ian Richards	Bronze	10km Walk Road

# CROSS COUNTRY

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VAC's campaign opened with the traditional East Surrey League fixture in Lloyd Park. The Surrey League, and other county leagues, also got underway with fixtures in October and November. A highlight has been the welcome return of a VAC women's team to the Surrey League after an absence of around ten years. A bonus is that VAC's men and women compete at the same venue and the combined team spirit is amazing. There are also VAC's championships on Wimbledon Common on 21 January to look forward to.

## East Surrey League Cross Country, Lloyd Park, 9 October



*Some of VAC's team: David O, Chris N, Anna C, Dave W, Gary B, Mike M, Gavin E, John F and David H*

Twelve finished for VAC in good conditions in a well-supported match with eight other clubs at Lloyd Park. The 5-mile, two lap, course was firm at this



time of year. First home was Chris Ness in 32:16, placing him in 20th position, and second M50. Then came David Ogden (M60) in 32:45 in 23rd and Gavin Englefield (M45) in 33:08 in 25th position. VAC's only woman, Anna Critchlow (W50), had a fine run to finish third woman in 34:04. The men's team were fifth out of the six clubs, a good result in a strong field. The full race results are in the results section of VAC's website.

## Surrey Cross Country League

### Men's Matches



The season began at Priory Park, Reigate. VAC's eleven men tackled the 5-mile course which had firm ground but testing hills and tricky descents. The team's lead man was John Foley (M55) and pictured, making his debut for VAC and finishing in 12th place in Division 4. Richard Batchelor (M45) was next, followed by Richard Tweddle (M60), both making welcome returns to VAC's team after long periods away. Another newcomer, Hugh Balfour (M65) was VAC's fourth man. John Foley, Richard Tweddle and Hugh Balfour also topped the race's M55, M60 and M65 age groups.

Although VAC's team was missing some of the regular runners, we finished a commendable ninth in the Division.

The second match was held in November at Oxshott Woods in unseasonably warm weather. A great turn-out of 18 VAC men tackled a challenging five mile course which included three times up a very steep hill crossed by huge tree roots. John Foley and Richard Batchelor again were VAC's first and second placers, followed by newcomer Clive Rolfe, then Richard Tweddle, all in the top 50. VAC's "A" team of ten scorers finished a magnificent 4th out of the 14 clubs in Division Four. The "B" team also excelled in 2nd place in the "B" team competition.

Overall, after two matches, VAC is in 7<sup>th</sup> place but it's all very tight. A good turn out on 14 January at Woking would see us move up the table. In the Division's Age Group rankings, John Foley and Richard Tweddle top the M50-59 and M60+ competitions.

## Women's Matches

A full VAC Ladies team made a splendid return to the Surrey League. Seven women lined up in Reigate's scenic Priory Park in October to tackle the hilly 6k, two-lap, course. Lucy Woolhouse (W60) was VAC's first finisher in a fine 28th place and also topped the Division's 60+ age group rankings. Team Manager, Helen Davies (W50), was next, followed by Jo Quantrill who was the first W65 in the race. Sarah Knox and Penelope Cummings, (pictured left) completed the scoring team, with Ros Tabor and Sarah Allen providing great back-up.



VAC's "A" team finished a creditable 13th out of the 26 clubs in Division 2.

In the second match, nine VAC women raced at Oxshott Woods on a tricky course which had a mix of narrow trails and a huge hill, with lots of hazardous tree roots. Lucy Woolhouse was again VAC's first finisher, 27th in the race out of 256 finishers. Helen Davies was next, followed by Pippa Major making her debut for VAC in the Surrey League. Jo Quantrill and Sarah Knox completed the scoring team. Sarah Allen, Penelope Cummings, Viv Mitchell and Ros

Tabor formed a scoring “B” team. VAC's "A" team finished a magnificent 9th out of the 28 clubs in Division Two. Lucy Woolhouse topped the W60+ age group competition, with Jo Quantrill as the leading W65 in the listing.

Overall, after two matches, the Ladies “A” team is in 11th position.

Many VAC members compete for their first claim clubs in the Surrey League, and that’s fine. However, if your first claim club doesn’t need you, you would be most welcome in VAC’s teams. First-claim VAC members are eligible to compete for VAC. Also second claim members are allowed to run for VAC **as long as they do not compete for their first claim club in any of the four league matches in any of the Divisions in the 2022-23 season.** Members from outside Surrey are also very welcome, although the Surrey fixtures often clash with those of other county leagues.

Ten are required for a complete men’s scoring team, and five for a Ladies team, but there is no limit on the VAC turn-out. Every VAC runner is welcomed and appreciated. The more team members we have, the greater the strength in depth and the bigger the impact.

Please let men’s team manager Paddy Clark ([paddyclark@hotmail.com](mailto:paddyclark@hotmail.com)) and women’s manager Helen Davies ([helendavies@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:helendavies@blueyonder.co.uk)) know if you wish to join the teams this season or next.

## British and Irish Masters Cross Country International, Ireland, 12 November

By Anna Garnier

18 members of VAC competed in this prestigious, highly competitive annual match held in one of the home nations or Ireland. This year it was hosted by Ireland at Santry Park, Santry Desmesne, conveniently close to Dublin Airport.

Unlike the difficult course used for the selection trials at Derby, the course at Santry Park was relatively gentle. Four times round a 1500m loop for the women and M65+ and four times the same loop plus a further twice round a

shorter loop for the young men. The grass was short and there were some gentle undulations, twists and turns and one hill that proved tough on the later laps.

Stand-out individual performances came from Clare Elms (W55) and Peter Giles (M75) who both won the Gold medals for their age groups. Other medallists were Ed Chuck (3<sup>rd</sup> M35), Simon Baines (3<sup>rd</sup> M50) and Pauline Rich (2<sup>nd</sup> W75). Ben Paviour (M50), Ben Reynolds (M55) and Mark Cursons (M60) narrowly missed medals by finishing in fourth place in their age groups. In addition, VAC members contributed to their nation's team scores in each age group and were rewarded by team medals.

Every VAC member selected for England did well just to be there and they all deserve a mention. They were: Anna Critchlow (W50), Neil Phillips (M40), Andy Bond (M45), John Kettle (M45), David Ogden (M60) and Richard Bloom (M75). Chris Loudon (M35) represented Scotland and Andy Bowen (M55) represented Wales. In addition, Peter Kennedy (M70) and Michael Johnson (M80) ran in the Open race.

The Irish team was very strong this year. The team age-group winners were well spread among all the nations but Ireland topped the overall scoring and were winners of both the men's and women's competitions and were crowned champions for 2022.

2023's match will be hosted by Scotland at Tollcross Park, Glasgow. There will be a selection race in October in Derby for England's team.

## **VAC Cross Country Championships, 21 January 2023**

Entries are open for VAC's annual championships on Wimbledon Common. All Masters athletes are welcome. There will be one race for men and women, starting at 2pm. Last year's new course will be used again, and we now have a set of age-group course records, shown in the table, to aim at.

The distance is around 5 miles, comprising two laps of a circuit which starts and finishes at the grassy area adjacent to West Place/The Causeway (SW19

4UH). The route heads towards the Windmill, descends for a loop of the Queensmere pond, returns via a steep climb and then follows a long fast track to test your finishing speed on the second lap. It's a challenging, fast, course!

Entry is £8 for VAC members and members of BMAF area clubs. Other Masters entrants pay £10. There will be no entries on the day. Changing facilities and showers will be available at Belgrave Hall, Denmark Road, SW19 4PG. Please support Vets AC and come along and run on the 21st and join us socially afterwards at Belgrave Hall for the medals' award ceremony. We also need plenty of marshals for the new course so if you are injured or not inclined to run, your help on the day would be much appreciated. Please let Maggie know if you can assist ([entries@vetsac.org.uk](mailto:entries@vetsac.org.uk)).

<b>VAC CC Championships Age Group Records set in 2022</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Time</b>
M35	Chris Loudon	26:37
M40	Richard McDowell	25:49
M45	Oliver Morrison	28:49
M50	Justin Reid	29:04
M55	Mark Tennyson	28:29
M60	Mike Boyle	31:41
M65	John Barron	37:05
M70	Julian Spencer-Wood	36:35
M75	Peter Giles	38:06
<b>WOMEN</b>		
W35	Lydia Birch	32:43
W40	Liz Young	40:10
W45	Gina Galbraith	31:16
W50	Susan McDonald	31:58
W55	Pippa Major	36:34
W60	Lucy Woolhouse	35:43
W65	Anna Garnier	38:40
W70	Margaret Moody	45:00

# Road running

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## Battersea Park Race Series, Summer 2022

VAC held four successful road races and race walks in Battersea Park in April, May, July and August.

**VAC's 5km championship** was held within July's race. A hot, sultry, evening adversely affected the turn-out and the times achieved. Barnaby Day (M35) of Kent AC was the race winner in 16:23, comfortably ahead of Micah Evans (M40) in 16:39. The first VAC members had a fine contest for 6th, 7th and 8th places with Rich Berry (M45, 17:20), the first VAC man, just one second ahead of Richard Tomlinson (M50) who was in turn one second ahead of Robin Jones (M45). Other age-group golds were claimed by Terry Booth (M55), John Barron (M65), Mike Mann (M70), Michael Johnson (M80) and Richard Pitcairn-Knowles (M85).

Karima Harris (W50) had a splendid win in the women's race, achieving a PB of 18:49, only four seconds short of the W50 course record set by Anna Critchlow in 2021. Anna herself was second in 19:14 followed by Kate Carter (W45) in third in 19:38. Age-group Golds were won by Pippa Major (W55), Lucy Woolhouse (W60) and Anna Garnier (W65).

In the Walk, the men's winner was Steve Bishop, formerly of Stock Exchange AC. The ladies winner and second overall was ever-present Maureen Noel (Belgrave) in her usual impressive time (32:16).

For **August's Battersea Park 5 Mile race**, it was hot again and there were no fast times. The winner was Louis Taub (M45) from Brighton & Hove AC in 28:31, running strongly to hold off VAC's Will Pitt (M50) by 14 seconds. VAC's Robin Jones (M45) was third in 29:05. Jonathan Ratcliffe (M55) and William Fradley (M40) were the other sub-30 minute performers. Joe Aspinall (M80) made a welcome return to the 5 mile distance after three years, comfortably ahead of fellow-M80, Peter Torre. The women's winner was Anna Critchlow (W50) in 9th place overall with a commendable time of 31:52.



In the Open Walk, the men's winner was Jonny Ellerton, in the Under 17 age group, from Blackheath & Bromley. His time of 47:08 was a personal best, and there is undoubtedly more to come from him in the future. Steve Bishop was second, ahead of first lady, Maureen Noel (Belgrave) achieving her usual creditable time (52:50). Jonny's father, Matt Ellerton posted a respectable time in his first attempt at 5 miles. They are pictured together.

## VAC Battersea Park Grand Prix, Summer Race Series 2022

Each year, the person with the highest average of his or her three best age-graded Battersea performances is awarded the Snow Cup, a beautiful trophy which dates to 1950. Twenty VAC members did at least three of the races and qualified for the 2022 Grand Prix.





Congratulations to Anna Garnier (W65) the worthy winner of the 2022 competition with an excellent average age grading of 90.6%. Anna's best performance was in the 5km race in April for which her time of 22:06 achieved an age-graded score of 91.5% of the world's best 5k time for her age. Anna Critchlow (W50) and pictured left was second in the Grand Prix with an average of 89.4% followed by Lucy Woolhouse (W60) with 88.5%. Terry Booth (M55), in fourth, was the highest placed man with 87.7%, followed by Mark Tennyson (M55), a close fifth with 87.2%.

Thanks go to all the VAC members and open runners who competed in the races over the summer. The series resumes on 4 April 2023 with a 5km race followed by VAC's 5 Mile championships on 9 May. Other races will be the 5km championships on 6 June and a further 5km race on 1 August.

## **British Masters Road Championships**

We were fortunate that two prestigious national Masters road running Championships took place in Kent and London. These events were fantastic opportunities to meet and compete with top-class Masters athletes from around the UK.



## 10 Mile BMAF Road Championships, Cyclopark, Gravesend, 27 November



Twenty five VAC members contested the race on six laps of Cyclopark's challenging cycle circuit. The event was also VAC's 10 mile championships.

Simon Baines (M50) was VAC's first finisher in a time of 54:27. He was a magnificent second in the race, only seven seconds behind the winner. Simon won the M50 BMAF Gold medal. Andy Bond (M45) was VAC's next finisher, placing fourth in the race. Penny Wilkins (W60 and pictured left) was VAC's first woman in a great time of 76:53, winning the BMAF and VAC W60 Gold medals.

Next was Catherine Ulliott (W55) in 79:47, claiming BMAF Silver and VAC Gold. Other BMAF Golds were won by Jon Cross (M65) and Maggie Statham-Berry (W65). It was pleasing that a team of VAC first-claimers got together and with some down-ageing made up an M35-44 team which won the Silver medal in the team competition. Well done to team members, Ryan Cunningham, Matthew Trebble and Andrew Bowles.

Every year, the Ron White shield is awarded to the VAC member who gains the highest age-graded score in VAC's 10 Mile or Half Marathon Championships. This year the winner was Simon Baines whose performance at Cyclopark translated to an amazing age-graded percentage of 91.22%. This was the highest in the whole race.

## 5km BMAF Road Championships, Battersea Park, 4 December

VAC was proud to host this national event on our flat, fast, 5km course in Battersea Park. The race attracted a massive entry, including some of the best Masters' road runners in Britain. 78 VAC members were amongst the 180

finishers. The event was a big success and VAC has received much praise for the planning, organisation and our happy and willing volunteers on the day. The BMAF has already said that it intends to repeat the event in Battersea Park for the 2023 championships.

On the day, there was some fine racing with the top 15 finishers inside 16 minutes, six of them being VAC members. Chris Loudon (M35) was the fastest for VAC, coming third in 15:14. VAC's fastest woman was Zoe Doyle (W40), the second woman in the race, with a time of 17:57. Well done to the VAC members who won Gold medals against fierce competition in most age groups: Gina Galbraith (W45), Simon Baines (M50), Julie Backley (W50), Clare Elms (W55), Jo Quantrill (W65), David Oxland (M70) and Peter Giles (M75).

Claire Elms is pictured on the back page.

### **VAC Vests!!**

Vests are available from our kit supplier, Doug Maughan of Douglas Sports. Details are on VAC's website or email Doug at [info@douglassports.co.uk](mailto:info@douglassports.co.uk). A new improved fabric and design may be coming soon.

## **Veterans AC 10k track race incorporating Sussex, Surrey, Middx & Herts County Championships Woodcote, 1 October 2022**

The annual VAC and Counties championships took place in good racing conditions on a picture perfect October afternoon, with a modest breeze.

Dave Annetts from N Herts RR had an excellent win and also won the Herts champs for the fourth time; similarly Melanie Peddle (Loughton) added to her list of wins as the overall ladies' winner. Ever presents Penelope Cummings (Herne Hill Harriers) and Fiona Bishop (Woking AC) received gold and silver medals for Surrey County respectively, while Glen Keegan (also Herne Hill Harriers) obtained gold for Surrey in his first 10k on the track for some time.

Full results are available on the website.

## The Algarve Challenge (from the Monte Gordo Training Camp)

By Mike Mann



For almost 20 years, in early November, several VAC members have taken part in the Algarve Running Challenge, a series of four races during the week, finishing with the X Milhas del Guadiana, an iconic 10 mile + race across the suspension bridge over the Guadiana river linking Spain and Portugal. In most years around 15 have taken part in the Challenge but numbers were down this year, as arrangements were put in place later than usual. The bridge race has not been run for several years owing to the pandemic and major bridge repairs before then. This year the race was advertised with only 10 days' notice, though the entry fee of 11 euros was a bargain. Traditionally run over 10 miles, a sponsorship deal with the Portuguese town of Castro Marim introduced a longer loop through the centre and past an imposing castle, making the distance 16.5km this year.

The group were based in a beach hotel in Monte Gordo, a resort town close to the Spanish border. Situated east of Faro, this is the less fashionable end of the Algarve, frequented by Spanish visitors during the summer and mainly Dutch and Swedes at other times of the year. Very close to Monte Gordo is the border town of Vila Real de Santo Antonio, a bit of a mouthful and hence generally abbreviated to VRSA. It is designed in a grid pattern by the same architect who rebuilt Lisbon, following a major earthquake in the 18th century. It has a fine central square in which members of the group have spent several hours over coffee and pastel da nata (the Portuguese equivalent of custard pies) over recent years.

The first of the four events was a 5km trail run done as a tempo effort with the first, third and final km hard, easing down for the two intervening ones. This resulted in times not much slower than those achieved in recent parkruns. The next day's effort was a relay in a wooded area on the edge of Monte Gordo, over a circuit of around 1500m.

After a rest day there was a handicap run taking in both forest trails and the beach, coming out at 8.3km. This was a testing route with short sharp hills on gravel tracks early on, some very uneven "road" alongside the river and a final 2km along the beach. Usually, the beach is fine with level firm sand but that morning the tide was high with this stretch of sand a metre or so under water. This meant running on a narrow stretch of soft sand on a cambered surface, requiring some wave dodging.

After another rest day, the final event, the X Milhas del Guadiana took place under cloudless crystal-clear skies with the temperature approaching the mid-20s by the end of the race. This caused several in the group to struggle in the final 5km which was directly into the sun. Also, as the race was not advertised until 10 days beforehand, most of the group were under prepared and had to wing it. This year's route, starting on the Portuguese side, is generally more popular as there is often a tail wind across the bridge (though this year the wind was very light).

Former winner, Clare Elms finished 3rd overall in the race which was won by four-time Olympian, Ana Dias. Clare's time of 70:36 won the W55 section by

over 20 minutes. Despite being well into her 70s, Ros Tabor was first W60 in 96:03, narrowly beating Els Raap, one of the regulars in the Algarve Challenge. Steve Smythe (85:17), Mike Mann (85:37) and Andy Murray (1:41.32) were the other VAC runners.

## London Marathon, 2 October

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VAC's members were out in force at the London Marathon. We are lucky to have such an iconic event on our patch, but it can be a challenge in itself to get an entry. VAC is allocated one club place which we simply award to the first interested member whose name is drawn out of a hat. Rob Scott and Tom Armstrong were beneficiaries of club places, and accounts of their experiences in October's event are below.

For the 2023 London Marathon on 23 April, 25 members expressed interest and the lucky winner was Ben Martin-Dye of Fetch Everyone Running Club. Good luck Ben!

From scrutinising the official results, at least 20 VAC members completed the London Marathon in October. The fastest, once again, appears to be Richard McDowell in the M40-44 category in a time of 2:40:03. The next fastest was Sue McDonald, again the fastest VAC woman, in 2:54:39. Sue's magnificent time placed her second in the race's W55-59 category. Karima Harris also came a fantastic second in her age group, W50-54, in a time of 2:57:30. She gives a brief account of her marathon achievements below. Other sub-3 hour performances were posted by Alice Riddell-Webster who was fourth in the W55-59 category in 2:58:19, and by Paul Hughes who set a time of 2:57:43 to come second in the M65-69 category.

A special mention goes to Bill O'Connor who is one of the seven "Ever-Presents" who have completed every single London Marathon since its inception in 1981. Bill, now in the M75-79 age category, duly completed his 42<sup>nd</sup> event in a time of 5:50:32. In 2022, seven Ever-Presents started, and seven finished.

## **Two Marathons in Eight Days**

*By Karima Harris*

On 25 September I was delighted to complete the Berlin Marathon in 2:58:26 and to come equal third W50. In London, eight days later, I was over the moon to do 2:57:30 and be the second W50.

London was definitely easier! The crowds are just so amazing that they lift you. I saw my husband and daughter twice and there were Queens Park Harriers along the way, plus other friends. Having support makes ALL the difference, as does taking the gels! I hate the taste and texture but running on empty is rather hard. In Berlin I only had one which I think is why I found the last ten kilometres so tough. In London, I forced four down and it helped (as did the Lucozade).

## **The Golden Ticket!**

*By Rob Scott*

My only previous London Marathon was way back in 2012 and I had endured eight (yes – 8), consecutive years of disappointment in the ballot every year since. However, in late 2019, and on the back of what had been a good year for me (in a running sense), Vets AC had a single entry for the 2020 marathon and invited members to put their names forward to be drawn out of a hat. With nothing to lose, but with zero expectation, I put my name in and – well, miracles do happen! I felt like Charlie when he got the last Golden Ticket for Willy Wonka's chocolate factory!

But note this was for the April **2020** London Marathon...which obviously didn't happen! As it turned out, I was getting over an injury around that time (plantar fasciitis), so it was just as well! To cut a long story short, I also had to defer my place for the event held on October 2021, so 2022 was my last chance!

Whilst not completely free from ache and pains (who is?!), my 16-week training programme went about as well as it could. This included a gradual build-up of weekly mileage before the start of the programme, as I was paranoid about getting injured again! Training through the very hot summer wasn't much fun. On some Sundays, despite hitting the road at 8 am for the long run, it was already 30 Celsius by 9 am and then it got even hotter. I completed the London Big Half on 4 September and was quite pleased to finish in just over 1 hour 30 minutes, without too much effort. This boosted my confidence!

The big day itself turned out to be near-perfect in terms of weather despite the warnings of very wet conditions. And the trains were running again despite the wide-spread strike the day before.

The race went well for me up to about 20 miles (how many times has that line been written?!) and I would have been very happy if it had ended there. I passed halfway in 1 hour 34 minutes and 20 miles on 2 hours 22 minutes, which was slightly ahead of schedule for my target time of 3 hours 14 minutes (the qualifying time for Good For age for my age group is 3 hours 15 minutes). However, not long after that, things started to deteriorate and I had to slow down, although I still felt fairly confident of making it in time. Sadly, the wheels completely came off just after Blackfriars underpass which is just after mile 24. So close! My left leg seized up with cramp affecting hamstrings and quads at the same time which made it impossible to stretch both. I had to tough it out and wait until the cramp eased enough for me to get moving again, by which time I just had to concentrate on getting to the finish line. I was able to summon the energy for a decent enough finish once past Buckingham Palace but was very glad to cross the line – 3 hours 27 minutes and 48 seconds.

Once I had collected my bag from the lorry, I made my way to the pub for a much-needed pint (or two!) in the sunshine!

While I did not achieve the time I had wanted, I am not too disappointed. After a few days' recovery, I felt motivated to try again next year. In terms of lessons learnt (or remembered), I would say that, while my running

programme went well, I neglected other areas, most importantly strength and conditioning. I feel this cost me in the latter stages of the marathon. I have resolved to get back in the gym on a regular basis. While it is undoubtedly important to increase weekly mileage when training for a marathon, it doesn't seem like a coincidence to me that in 2019 I was running only four days, and probably no more than about 35 miles a week at the most. However, I was also doing a session in the gym almost every day and several weights or "HIIT" classes a week. Off that regime in 2019, I consistently achieved my best times over all distances up to half marathon.

To finish off, I had a hugely enjoyable experience and, as those who have done the London Marathon will attest, the atmosphere is second to none! I am extremely grateful to Vets AC for the opportunity to participate in this amazing event.

### **Under Four Hours (just)**

*By Tom Armstrong*

I was delighted to run the 2022 London Marathon as a VAC member and to have the opportunity to raise money for Anaphylaxis UK – three members of my family, my wife, son and mother-in-law suffer from anaphylaxis and carry EpiPens.

Rain had been predicted but it turned out to be a beautiful autumn day for running. In the first half of the marathon, I kept to a 3 hours 50 pace – crossing the halfway point in 1: 54:50. There was tremendous support all along the route with crowds building up from Greenwich and Surrey Quays onwards. Just before the halfway point we turned into Tower Bridge where there were so many runners with phones and small cameras getting a shot of themselves crossing the iconic halfway point with spectators cheering four to five deep. Over Tower Bridge, we watched the elite pass on the other side of the road at a pace we could only dream of.

Mile 15 to 18 is always tough in a marathon, when the legs are beginning to significantly tire, but the Isle of Dogs section is demanding, with some narrow



twists and turns, so I was pleased to keep the pace under 8.50. I sped up around mile 19 on a downhill section into Canary Wharf and I ran alongside Batman for a while hoping to get in a few camera shots. My pace slowed from mile 20 but I was determined not to let it get much slower than 9 minutes 30 and after the climb out of the tunnel onto Victoria Embankment, the crowds, the atmosphere and the flat, wide, smooth-running surface all the way to the Mall helped me get there under four hours with a time of 3:58:34. A great day.

# Parkrun

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## Tooting Common

On a fine, warm, morning, a good turnout of seventeen VAC members gathered for the Tooting Common parkrun as part of VAC's visits to parkruns in and around London. VAC member, Liam O'Hare, one of Tooting parkrun's core organising team, was there to greet us. The three-lap, flat, course had some narrow paths but the field spread out quickly and fast times were possible for those who wanted to push on.

Robin Jones was VAC's fastest finisher, and fifth over the line. Jo Quantrill and Ros Tabor set new W65 and W70 age group records for the course. Jo also achieved the highest age-graded performance of the day with 90.09%. VAC members achieved six of the top ten age-graded performances on the day.

For VAC's next parkrun gathering we will be visiting the Nonsuch parkrun in Nonsuch Park in Cheam on 4 February. Please come along if you're local or be a tourist and tick it off your list. Look out for the VAC vests. There will be a friendly welcome and a gathering in the café afterwards.

## Photographs

Many thanks to Cliff Hide for his photographs. For copies contact [cliffhide10@aol.com](mailto:cliffhide10@aol.com).



The VAC parkrunners at Tooting Common Parkrun

## Obituary

### **MAJOR GENERAL KEITH SPACIE (1935 – 2022)**

Past VAC member, Keith Spacie died on 16 October at the age of 87. He will be remembered as a regular at VAC's cross country races on Wimbledon Common where he was always at the forefront of his age-group. As a Thames Hare & Hounds veteran member, with a prowess for cross country, he accumulated 17 Surrey CC titles, nine Southern titles and three British titles, as well as three victories and one second place in home international cross country championships.



Keith was also a keen participant in the Wimbledon Common parkrun, starting in the early days with run number 10 in March 2007, completing 62 up to September 2014. In that time, he set the record for the 70-74 age group, with 20:27 in 2009 (age grade: 89.73%) and for the 75-79 age group in 2011 (22:25, 86.02%). Keith ran 117 parkruns in total, including 32 at Guildford, an event he helped to establish with his wife Clare.

Keith's professional life was spent in the armed forces in which he rose to the rank of Major-General. A highlight of his distinguished career was his appointment as Commander British Forces in the Falkland Islands in 1983. He also served with distinction in Malaya and Northern Ireland. During these times he ran whenever and wherever he could and was capable of outrunning most of the soldiers in his command. He enjoyed a spell as President of

Army Athletics, an organisation with a primary objective to assist all athletes to realise their potential. On his retirement he was appointed CB and began a second career as an author and academic specialising in strategic leadership and command training. In 1990, he became a Visiting Fellow at Surrey University's Centre for Defence Psychology. However, Keith was modest about his considerable achievements.

In 2012, he was a torch bearer for the Olympic Games relay as it passed through Guildford. He said the honour was the "ultimate" highlight of his athletic career. "I am delighted to be carrying the torch," he said, explaining that he had been a lifelong athlete and ran every day. "I am 77 now, but I am still running and competing, and I will be trying to set an example, as one of my main aims is to encourage people to keep fit."



**Clare Elms winning W55 Gold in Battersea Park at the British Masters 5K**