

# VAC Annual General Meeting

Thursday 19 September 2024

## Cross Country Secretary's Report

2023 - 2024

VAC offered a full programme of cross country opportunities for Masters' competition.

**VAC's Cross Country Championships** took place in fine weather on Wimbledon Common in January. There were 77 finishers. Richard McDowell (M40) successfully retained his title of Men's Champion for the third successive year. Matilde Lomba (W35) was the Women's Champion. The 2025 championships will take place on the same course on 18 January.

In the **men's section of the Surrey Cross Country League**, VAC fielded full teams of ten scorers in each of the four Division Four matches. In three of the matches, VAC also had full teams of 10 in the B team competition, achieving first place each time. Overall, after four matches, VAC finished third in Division Four, tantalisingly close to the second promotion place, falling short by just seven points. After adding up the placings of the ten scorers in each of the four matches, VAC's combined score was 1656. The score of Clapham Pioneers in second place was 1649. The close scores really do highlight that every place matters for both the "A" team of the first ten men and the "B" team of the next ten.

Thirty nine men played a part in VAC's splendid season. Four of them ran in all four matches. Eleven ran in three of them. In the League's age category awards, VAC's M60-69 runners dominated the rankings with the top three places going to Charles Hampden-Smith, Richard Evans and Ebe Prill.

In the **women's section of the Surrey Cross Country League**, the 29 clubs in the lower division were split into Divisions 2 and 3. VAC's team had deservedly been placed in Division 2. They successfully held their position, creditably finishing 10th of the 15 clubs. The B team also did well, coming 9th. Fifteen women ran for VAC in the season. There were full teams at each fixture, and everyone scored in either the A or B teams. In the League's Over 60 category, Lucy Woolhouse (W60) topped the list and Anna Garnier was third (first W65).

The men's and women's matches were held at the same venues, generating fantastic team spirit and lots of mutual support. Thanks go to Paddy Clark and Helen Davies, the team managers, who mustered the teams and supported the runners on match-days with efficiency, good humour and friendship.

The **British Masters Cross Country Championships** were held at Corwen, North Wales in March. Nine VAC members made the trip. Maggie Statham-Berry won the W70 Silver medal and Jessica Franklin won W40 Bronze. The competition was also the **EMAA Inter Area Cross Country Challenge**. VAC unfortunately did not have enough runners to form a scoring team of six men and six women.

During the season, VAC was represented in the **East Surrey League**, the **Loughton Vets Inter-Club** challenge, the **South of the Thames** races and the **South of England Masters Championships**. Also, many more of our members ran for their first claim clubs in these events.

The annual **British & Irish Masters CC International** match took place in Scotland in November 2023. Nine VAC members were selected to represent their nations. Stand-out individual performances came from Clare Elms (W55) and Nikki Sturzaker (W50) who won silver and bronze medals in their age groups. Other VAC members were rewarded with team medals. 2024's match will be hosted by Northern Ireland in November. At least twelve VAC members have entered the selection race for the England team on 28 September.

**Maggie Statham-Berry**

**VAC Entries Secretary**

**17 September 2024**