

ISLE OF MAN VETERAN ATHLETES' CLUB

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2013 – presented at the AGM, January 2014

Thanks to hard work from a number of club members and loyal sponsors of our key events, the club has had a very satisfactory year in most of its operations.

The first event was the Spring Handicap which attracted 22 entries for the run but only 8 in the walk. For the Spring and Autumn Handicap races there are very nice trophies up for grabs but you have to take part in both as the finishing positions are added together to provide the final result so you must at least enter the Spring race or perhaps regret that you didn't when you are running well and keen in the Autumn and have put yourself out of contention.

The Leinster Management Ltd sponsored 20 mile run, just right for the London marathon build-up, had a strong field of whom twenty managed to complete the distance in what was very good conditions. Ed Gumbley ran a very well judged race to come strong when it mattered and take a well deserved win in 2.02.14. Elizabeth McGowan was the first lady to cross the line.

Moving on to our flagship event, we were very fortunate to have Microgaming step in to replace Salclear as main sponsors. We appreciate very much Dave Salter and his company being so supportive for 6 years to this event and wish him and his company well for their future. The Marathon needs hard working and dedicated people to organise it and Tadhg O'Mahony, Phil Motley and Mandine Wilson met regularly to keep everything on track. They worked miracles along with lots of club members on the day. We were yet again very fortunate with the weather and 105 happy finishers crossed the line led by Ed Gumbley who defended successfully the title he won last year. There had been a record entry but some non-starters prevented a record number of starters. Fiona Oakes was the first lady and she used the event as the second leg of her World Record attempt to be the fastest woman on elapsed time in seven marathons on all seven continents.

More than 280 runners started the half-marathon with Ewan Brown an easy winner in his half-marathon debut. Local runner, Kevin Deakes, took a fine third place. The ladies put on an exciting race and Caroline Mayers of Manx Harriers and Sarah Webster of Northern AC were neck and neck with only a mile and a half remaining. Caroline finished strongly to take the victory.

The full marathon incorporated the Manx Championship and Ed Gumbley took the men's title while Elizabeth McGowan was the ladies victor.

The next big event for the club was the Ramsey Bakery sponsored End-to-End Walk. Yet again the small group of people, some from our own club and others from outside, under the watchful eye of Jock Waddington did a superb job of the organisation. The numbers were slightly down on the previous year but it was a gorgeous day. Great for the marshals but rather hot for the walkers. Michael George took control near the Round Table and powered his way to a fine victory ahead of Richard Gerrard.

The Autumn Handicap saw 33 turn out for the run and 10 for the walk. It's just a pity that the poorer entry for the Spring Handicap excluded so many from the final overall positions. The racing was close and exciting on the evening. Ed Gumbley produced the fastest run time but Brian Masterson took full advantage of his handicap to be first across the line. In the walk our regular visitor from Northern Ireland, Norbert Will, walked a very steady race to record a popular victory while Michael Bonney produced the fastest actual time.

Last but not least came the Syd Quirk half-marathon. There were 135 finishers in the run which took place on a very pleasant morning. It was also the Manx half-marathon Championships and Ed Gumbley, Jamie Newton and Mike Garrett filled the top three places. In the ladies equivalent Jackie Taggart/Lee, Nikki Boyde and Judith Quane took the honours.

In the walk there was an easy victory for Quentin Rew who had represented New Zealand in the Olympic and World Championship events. His time of 1hr32mins48sec is sure to stand for a very long time. Alex Eaton in second place was just 3 seconds ahead of Michael George. The top three ladies were Michelle Turner, Alana Barber and Marie Jackson. 46 walkers completed the course including Henry deSilva who had recently had his eightieth birthday. His time of 3hrs23.04 must now be considered as a record for 80+.

Turning now to individual performances this year, the club has had so many members who have exceeded expectations and performed at very high levels. It would be wrong of me to make comparisons so in no particular order here are some performances to be proud of:

Michael George won the Sarah Killey Memorial 50k event, also the Parish Walk and the End-to-End race. He also went to South Africa where the Manx yet again won the team prize and occupied the first five places. Michael George, Richard Gerrard, Robbie Callister, Vinny Lynch and Sue Biggart were the stars.

The Manx Harriers 100 mile walk was won by Richard Gerrard with Vinny Lynch 2nd and Robbie Callister 3rd. No fewer than 18 Manx residents became centurions – what an advert for Manx distance walkers. They are Simply The Best!

What a great year Gail Griffiths has had. It's just reward for some very hard work in her gradual build-up over a number of years. She went to Bermuda to represent the island in the Nat West Island Games and competed in the 10,000 metres and the half-marathon taking a Silver medal in each and a team Gold medal in the half-marathon. Also this year Gail won two British Championship Gold Medals in the V45 age group – one in 10,000 metres in June and in August in a 10k road race. Kevin Deakes went to Brazil to take part in the World Vets half-marathon where in his age group he finished in 4th place but he was able to get a team Bronze medal. Kevin also won the Bob Skillicorn (Spring and Autumn Handicap run trophy) and the Sam Robinson Memorial trophy.

What a great year Moira Hall has had. She gets better as she gets older. She completed the full mountain marathon course and was runner-up in the road running league. Once again she won the Ladies Track and Field title and the Bob Skillicorn ladies trophy for the Spring and Autumn Handicap runs.

Lisa Motley has also been in fine form. She also completed the Manx Mountain Marathon ultra run and the Bob Baxter round where 37 of the island's peaks over 1,000 ft are visited on a 52 mile route. It was good to see Paul Curphey win the road running league after previously going close.

Many of our walkers have places in the top ten National ranking lists.

The club as a whole should feel very proud of all its active members.

In conclusion I would like to thank all the members of the Committee who have been a pleasure for me to work with. Each have taken on specific tasks and worked hard to perform them to the best of their ability. I cannot fault Mo as Secretary and she thoroughly deserves to receive the Bryan Doughty Memorial Trophy for Services to the club. It was also pleasing that Enid proposed to have a Marshall of the Year award and I am sure nobody would argue against our choice of Arnie Jacobs as the first recipient.

Thanks also to all club members who have helped in any way at any of our events. The club cannot function without you and we are so grateful that you came forward to assist. We need some younger people to come in to replace those who have been helping quietly in the background with vital jobs for many years and who are now easing down and taking a well earned rest. We are oh so

grateful and indebted to Margy Killey and Juan, Jock Waddington, and Mike and Val Kneale. They have all done so much for the club. I must also thank Sarah Goldsmith for her continued interesting and informative newsletters. She would appreciate someone contacting her if they would be willing to take it on. Alan Postlethwaite and Lisa Motley have done a great job of compiling the results for the road running shield and the race walking leagues along with Ian Callister who covered the Fell running.

Last but by no means least I would like to thank our main sponsors for their generous help with support for our events. Our President, Dursley Stott OBE, Leinster Management, Microgaming, Ramsey Bakery and Haldane Fisher. Without them we couldn't put on the sort of first class events that we have become accustomed to.

Colin Watterson
January 2014.