



Chairman's Report November 2022-November 2023

We are still digesting the sad news that Bryan Walker is returning to Australia. In three short years he has had a huge impact on the club, and will be missed by everyone who has been coached by him, or who has coached with him. His holiday athletics camps have been a big feature of the past two years. Hopefully he will return to Oxford at some point - the door will always be open.

Cross Country

U15 boys Peter, Harry, Euan and Will, won the BBO team championship in November 2022, while Charlotte Campbell was the u13G winner. A number of athletes represented Oxon at the SEAA championships at Horspath in December. The Chiltern League was once again very popular, and OCAC were well represented in all junior age groups and by the senior women. Tacita (u11) and Sylvie Kentish (u13) both won individual silver medals, while Ella Ramsay (u15) won a bronze. The u13 girls team won bronze, u15 girls won silver and the u17 and u20 team won bronze. The best team performance went to the u15 boys who took home the gold medal, while the juniors finished third overall in their division and the seniors fifth. We were well represented as a club at southern and national championships. In the Oxfordshire Cross Country League our u13 girls won their age group, while Kitty Mumme-Young was overall u9 girls winner, Tacita Kentish u11 girls winner, and Brian Green the men's 60+ age group winner.

Juniors - Track

In the **Wessex League** OCAC were placed 9th equally, winning one home match but otherwise struggling to field teams big enough to challenge for the league title. Our best placed team were the u13 boys, who were 4th overall in the league. In the **Oxfordshire Junior League**, our Quadkids were declared overall League winners and our girls achieved the distinction of winning the u13, u15 and u17 age groups, while the boys were 7th in the league. The 3rd placed u13 boys team showed what could be achieved by ensuring a better turn out of athletes. In the **UK Youth Development League** (lower age group) Oxford won 3 out of 4 matches comfortably, winning Division 3A and gaining promotion to the second division – what a superb effort.

Sportshall

OCAC had another successful season in Sportshall, culminating in a big turnout of club members in the Oxfordshire Sportshall team at the Southern Area Champs in Feb 2023. In March it was confirmed that OCAC u11s and U13G had won the Oxfordshire Sportshall.

Seniors and Vets

The Senior team had a difficult season, with a new SAL structure meaning that they had to travel long distances for 4 out of 5 matches, resulting in a low turnout of athletes. Relegation from Div 2W to Div 3 was the inevitable result, though relegation was only confirmed on the final day. The Veteran track and field season was again excellent, with Jacqui and Sharon medalling in an early throws competition, and John Exley and Gwyneth Hueter taking silver medals at the British 5K masters champs in Dec 2022. The Vet men won their Western Division title again, with the women coming a close second to Radley. There was again no Southern Final, a situation which will hopefully change in 2024. Many of our Masters were in action in the GB Champs in August, with medals for John Exley, Stephen McCauley, Sharon Hutchings, Amy Jackson, Brian Green and Michael Barough. Michael went on to be part of the gold medal winning M40 4 x 100m relay team at the European Masters Champs in Pescara where Stephen McCauley picked up silver in the M45 shot.

Midweek Opens

This year 6 Midweek Opens were held in conjunction with Running2Time, who provided photofinish, the results service and key officials. More than 1500 competitors entered, with entry fees of almost £9000; the OCAC share, after expenses, was £3500. Planning for the 2024 series is underway.

Honours

Lily Martin was selected by UKA for the Youth Talent Pathway programme. Melissa Hawtin set a new club women's marathon record in May: 2:47.42. Former member Jade O'Dowda is now firmly established as the UK's no2 Heptathlete behind KJT, as her performances this summer demonstrated. Ben Ince and Kathryn Woodcock competed at the UK Outdoor Champs in July.

Holiday Camps

We were very grateful to Bryan Walker for his regular holiday athletics camps throughout 2023, involving many of our own athletes as well as newcomers to the sport. They proved extremely successful and popular, and will be much missed.

Admin

This is Anett's second year as our administrator, and she continues provide vital administrative backbone, as well as lots of enthusiasm and energy. Sylvia Davis is now working as the building caretaker and the work she and Richard have been doing is having a very positive impact on the whole building.

Track

We once again hosted the County Championships in May, and also hosted SEAA Competitions in July and September. The track was let to outside users throughout May, June and July, with schools being the main users, as well as family groups, Oxfordshire Schools AA and the Army. Training groups from Oxford Tri, Lifts and Sprints, Great Milton, and Headington RR continue to use the track regularly.

Facilities

2022 ended badly, with the building suffering major water damage following a burst pipe. After a month of drying out the building recovered, and thankfully the redecoration of the club room was unaffected. But the building is a solid one, and survived, despite feeling damp and cold for a couple of months. We had a very successful spring clean and clean-up day in March, leaving the club ready for another busy outdoor season. Work on the facilities remains ongoing. In 2023 we spent almost £20,000 on replacing badly worn fascia boards, soffits, barge boards and guttering, together with fire doors which were badly fitting and insecure. The new gym facility, operated by The Athlete Centre, opened in March, with the final fit out and electrical installations being in place by May. In September work began on installing two new showers, which became operational in October.

Over the summer money and time was also spent on repairs and improvements to the throwing cages.

Membership – this year we switched the management of our membership to Love Admin, an online system designed for sports clubs. The move has involved a huge effort on the part of several key volunteers, most notably Susan Jones and Anett, who have both spent many hundreds of hours sorting out our new documentation and the various issues that have arisen. But we now have a very effective membership system which collects membership and training fees in one hit, using a monthly direct debit. Membership stands at over 400, and is currently rising steadily.

I conclude this report with heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who have given so much of their time to the club during 2023. The club is first and foremost a place where we come together to enjoy sport, and to develop physical and mental resilience and strength. We salute all the volunteers who give their time to enable this to happen and thank them for their selflessness and generosity.

Richard Hart, November 23rd 2023