

# **MILOCARIAN ATHLETIC CLUB**

Established 1930

President: Brigadier Tony Ling CBE, Late The Queen's Regiment.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON THE 2024/25 SEASON.**

### Introduction.

1. Milocarian AC is a tri-service running club, originally created to encourage athletics among young officers, but now open to all ranks, serving and retired and dependents and focusing on cross country running.

2. The club organises an inter-club competition, at Sandhurst, at the start of the cross country season and then competes against civilian clubs principally around south London. The club's season normally concludes at the Runnymede Relays, in Windsor Park, in July.

### General.

3. Like last year, the season started well, with the home match at Sandhurst and then wilted. Fixtures were hard to come by and those that were contested did not attract many of the club's runners. Attempts to engage with clubs outside the Milos' usual fixture list were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the club put on an encouraging showing at the Runnymede Relays, in July and the committee hopes that this will augur well for next season.

4. Virtual running, reported via a club Strava account, was again well-supported and has now entered its 5th year providing useful continuity of contact with members. Nevertheless, if the club cannot maintain a real competitive presence it risks becoming irrelevant both to its members and the wider cross country world. The Milos have faced similar slumps before and recovered, but it becomes progressively more difficult each time.

### Organisation.

5. The Committee, 2024/25.

Neil Wood, late Army – Chairman.

Richard Adamson, late Army – Cross Country Secretary.

Gavin McAllister Esq. – Treasurer.

Mike Sumpter, late RAF – Website Manager.

### Achievements.

6. Virtual Running.

a. The virtual competition allows participants to log times for runs of over 5km on Strava which are then converted into 5km times and consolidated fortnightly into an order of merit. Six fortnightly sessions make a season at the end of which an overall ranking is produced and the results published on the club's website.

b. The competition is now in its fifth year and has become an established fixture in members' running routines. It must be a mark of a true enthusiast that they run wherever they are and virtual performances have continued to be logged from all continents except Antarctica; perhaps the club should institute a prize for the first submission from there.

c. Just over 60 runners are signed up to the competition and about 30 regularly submit times. Tom Kirby regularly tops the leader board in terms of both distances covered and times achieved, but David Branfoot is normally in close attendance and Dan Collis not far away, the latter periodically turning in a very fast time to challenge the leaders. Max Walker still heads the historic rankings overall with a very lively 14:35 for 5km.

c. Thanks are due to the Website Manager who diligently compiles and tabulates the data.

## 7. Team Matches.

a. General. An encouraging home match, involving good representation from both members and competing clubs proved to be a false dawn. Only three further events were contested and they attracted very disappointing showings and no chances to challenge for team honours. Of these fixtures, two were held on Sunday mornings, never a popular time and the Orion race is rather beyond the bounds of the club's normal habitat. Turn out for the Runnymede Relays - something of an outlier in July - was encouraging, albeit boosted by 'ringers' but to good effect.

### b. 26 Oct 23, The Home Match.

i. The weather was good, the course challenging, as usual and the fixture was well-supported by 6 clubs and 88 runners. Sadly, there were again no cadets to thicken up the field, but it was encouraging to see teams from London UOTC after a break of several years. Thames Hare and Hounds were unable to defend the trophy they had held for the past two years leaving the team contest wide open while the leading individuals were somewhat off the pace of previous years.

ii. Hugo Donovan of British Airways had a 5 second winning margin, finishing in 35:05 and six clubs were represented in the top 10 finishers. The Milos first finisher was Charlie Wood, in third and the club packed best, further down the field to take the Terry Lewins Trophy by five points from Sandhurst Joggers. The ladies' prize was won by British Airways who held off London UOTC.

iii. As usual, the club's ladies put on a superb post-race spread, supported by Birchalls' Tea; many thanks to them all.

c. 15 Feb 25, Orion 10 mile Race. This is an annual epic where only the distance and the quality of the field remain the same; taking place in the depths of winter, the weather is a lottery and that dictates the going which varies from muddy to very muddy. This year the weather was good, as was the going, by Epping Forest standards. Orion Harriers hosted several strong north London clubs and three Milos in a field of 170. The winner was well clear in 64:56, and Orion packed well to take the team trophy. Nick Wood led the Milos in 45<sup>th</sup> and 84:29, followed by Felix Keating – 75<sup>th</sup>/91:19 – and Gavin McAllister – 123/110:25.

d. 2 Mar 25. British Airways. BA hosted the Milos for four laps of Cranford Park, a complete contrast to Epping Forest, good grass going and not a hill to be had. Jo Wood was 2<sup>nd</sup> lady and Nick Wood 2<sup>nd</sup> male with Gavin McAllister backing up in 6<sup>th</sup> but the club was too thin on the ground to challenge for team trophies.

e. 10 Mar 24. Thames Hare and Hounds. The club had won the first running of the Keith Spacie Trophy, last year, but it was no contest in 2025 as the only Milo to take the field was Hannah Karas who, although she finished well clear as first lady, could not carry the team challenge alone. This was a hugely disappointing showing and perhaps the club's lowest point for several seasons. It

was particularly sad that a team could not be raised to compete for a trophy that commemorated such a committed and loyal supporter of both clubs.

g.13 Jul 25. The Runnymede Relays.

i. The revised format introduced last year was maintained and the club entered teams in mixed and male categories. Ten runners, made up of members, family and friends took the field against 5 other clubs and a total of 170 competitors in 47 teams in various combinations.

ii. Unlike in recent years, the club was not challenging for overall honours, but the Red team took fourth place in the male fours. Andy Godden and Sophie Watson showed the flag for the club and were first pair overall and first mixed pair and Sophie logged the fastest female lap of the event. Milocarian Blue team contested the mixed fours category and came 7<sup>th</sup>.

iii. It was good to make a mark and to support Runnymede Runners who are always enthusiastic participants in the club's home match; nevertheless, the need to 'rope in the ringers' to make up the numbers was a further reminder of the current difficulties in getting members to rally to the club's colours.

#### Membership.

8. Membership is open to the regular and reserve forces, male and female, serving and retired and their dependants. In spite of reduced momentum after the virus, retention of members has been good, but active support for races fragile.

9. The committee has decided that club subs should be held at £25 for new members for the first year, which includes the cost of the member's club vest and £10 a year thereafter, payable by direct debit.

10. Officer Cadets and undergraduates in OTCs and equivalents are signed up and given a vest on the understanding that their direct debits will not be activated until after commissioning or graduation.

11. Although a tri-service club, currently Milocarian AC is 'Army heavy' and it would be good if the RN and RAF sports boards would encourage participation by their runners when possible. It is appreciated that the club's normal area of competition, in the south east, is remote from most RN and RAF locations, but perhaps those posted to MoD might relish a run.

#### Trophies.

12. General. The two Milocarian trophies awarded externally have come back into service, one being contested annually and the other every two years. They are held and insured by the organisers of the events at which they are awarded under loan agreements with the club.

#### 13. Awards to External Competitions.

a. The Milocarian Cup. The club's memorial trophy is pledged to the Youth Sport Trust to be awarded to the winning regional athletics team at the national schools' games, which are held at Loughborough. Owing to funding difficulties the games have had to be held biennially recently rather than annually as originally intended; the next schools' games is to be held at the end of August 2026. Keely Hodgkinson, the leading female 800m runner, is a graduate of the schools' games.

b. The Milocarian Trophy. This was adopted by Achilles AC for their annual inter-schools relay championships, to be awarded to the outstanding girls' team. The last meeting was held in May, at

Iffley Road, Oxford and the club's chairman presented the trophy to Brighton College's 3 x 800m girls relay team who won their event in convincing style against strong opposition.

#### 14.Club Trophies.

a.The Terry Lewins Trophy. Inaugurated in 1988, this cup has been awarded to the winning team in the club's annual home match, usually held at Sandhurst, in October. Milocarian AC hosts the clubs against which it will compete during the rest of the season. Milocarian AC won the cup in 2024 denying Thames Hare and Hounds a hat trick.

b.The Milocarian Ladies Trophy. First awarded at the last home match before the virus struck, this cup goes to the winning ladies team at the home match and is currently held by British Airways.

c.The Ploen Trophy. Named after the location of King Alfred's School, in Germany, the perennial winner of the The Milocarian Cup in the 1950s, it is presented annually to the club's best runner over the course of the cross country season. The current holder is the club's treasurer, Gavin McAllister.

d.The Wyvern Cup. Donated by the Wyvern Club, the association of former pupils of King Alfred's School, it is awarded to the club's leading lady runner each season, but not contested in 2024/25.

#### Acknowledgements.

15.The club values hugely its associations with the staff of HQ RMA Sandhurst and particularly of the gym that give so much help in maintaining the club's flagship event, the home match. Similarly, the Army Sports Control Board is ever helpful and supportive in nudging runners towards the club

16.The club would not function without the dedicated work of the cross country secretary, the treasurer and the website manager; it is a tribute to them that the club has maintained its momentum over recent years while both the service and athletics landscapes have changed out of all recognition.

17.The website, managed by Mike Sumpter, has been of particular value as a means of keeping the club together and maintaining a competitive challenge via the virtual running sessions.

#### 18.Keeping the Club Alive.

a. The club is always on the lookout for new runners and supporters, neither age nor athletic ability is a barrier, enthusiasm and imperviousness to British winter weather are the necessary qualities. Anybody who is interested or anybody who knows anybody who might be interested should contact the chairman on 01622 718665 or wood358@btinternet.com.

b. Willingness to turn out is paramount, if the club is no longer able to field teams then its continued existence has to be in question.

19.The club's website is accessible on [www.milocarianac.info](http://www.milocarianac.info) and sets out membership details and will contain the 2024/25 race calendar, results and details of club activities in due course.