

President's Report 2021

Following the COVID shortened season last year, I am pleased to report that in 2021 we have been able to hold a very successful 26-week programme.

I say 26-week programme, but we held a total of 29 races as on three Sundays we had two races.

In recent years with the advent of parkrun and the tremendous growth in popularity of trail runs, there have been lots of options for people to be involved in distance running.

Nevertheless, we have been very pleased with our numbers of memberships and race starters although these have been lower than former years. At the start of the year, we made some financial decisions to allow for lower numbers and which would allow us to remain financially viable. As a result, we are in a sound financial position which the treasurer will outline.

To make our membership and race entry processes more COVID safe last year, we trialled having only on-line membership applications and race entries. It was decided to keep this in place for 2021 and it has worked well. We again offered the option for members to pay for all the races up to 12 km in one payment and many availed themselves of this.

To work around other events and also the fact that ANZAC Day was a Sunday we had to be innovative with our programming.

Consequently, Race 2 (Don) was held on a Friday evening, Race 4 (Spreyton) at 11:00am, Race 6 (Fernglade) at 1pm followed by a BBQ, and Race 13 (The Arboretum at Eugenana) on a Monday. All were quite well supported.

We tried some other new things as well. Following the success of the massed start and sealed handicap for the Club 5km championship in 2019, this year we did the same thing for the Club 10km championship, held as part of the City of Devonport race and runners enjoyed the change of format.

We decided to run the two 5km events at Devonport Bluff as a women's race and a men's race and this was very successful. The first woman to run with the Club, Anne Ketelaar, presented the women's trophy.

A generous offer from Terry Watson to sponsor a team's relay event as part of the marathon, was accepted and the 4 x 10.5km race was strongly supported with 16 teams entering. Although the numbers in the actual marathon were low, with the teams using the same course it brought the event to life and it was unanimously agreed the day was a big success.

Unfortunately, Terry was not able to be present to see the success of his event as he was in Melbourne having treatment for the terrible cancer he was fighting. Very sadly, Terry lost that battle and we all lost a great friend, clubmate and sponsor. I was able to see Terry shortly before he died and certainly assured him that the team's marathon was so well received that there were calls for more relay events.

Not long after, Kim Steven and John Saltmarsh offered to sponsor a relay event in conjunction with our half-marathon and even though this event was not part of our original programme, of course, we promoted the 2 x 10.55 km race and we had 22 teams enter. This was another very successful day, despite the horrendous weather conditions. The field size for the half-marathon was also very satisfactory.

On the suggestion of our handicappers, the handicappers' consistency was brought back after many years' absence. They also sponsored this.

We had several new courses this year – the Arboretum 5km, Tobruk Park 5km and Dial Range 5.3km. We also returned to an old favourite at Heybridge and used the traditional course for the Feature Race due to the building works at West Park.

Following the incident at Fernglade where several runners made an error with the course, the Club drafted a protocol to deal with race-day infringements. This will be finalised and ratified by the new committee so a clear process will be established. The committee acknowledged that the incident could have been better dealt with on the day and certainly with the protocol in place, we should not see a repeat.

Congratulations to all our race winners this year; in fact, congratulations to all members for the way you have competed and conducted yourselves making our family Club one of which we can all feel proud to be a part.

I would like to thank our sponsors for their continuing support and ask that all members in turn support our sponsors when you are able.

Many thanks, too, to all those who have volunteered in any capacity this year. Your help is invaluable.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the ever-hard-working committee members who have each contributed greatly to ensuring the success of our Club in 2021. I would just like to acknowledge the many years of wonderful contributions of Mark Saint-John who is stepping down from the committee. As Ellen has said, hopefully it is just long-service leave and we will see Mark back before too long.

May I thank you one and all for your membership of the Club and your support. I look forward to welcoming you all back in 2022.

Rod Viney,

President 2021