

Harriers Section Report 2024-25

As we approach the 2025 AGM the annual **Times Age Sports Awards** are once again front of mind with several ACM members and associates among the finalists. My delight at receiving the Sports Administrator Award last year was only surpassed by being there to witness Graeme Butcher receive his well-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award.

5km Series

We are grateful to our sponsors who continue to support our 5km series: Wairarapa Times Age, Derek Graham Fencing, NorthCo Insurance Brokers, TBI Health, Learning Support, Quiz Master, Ladymead, Vet Clinic Wairarapa, Taylors Electrical, PGG Wrightson, Fisher Windows. I'm sure the generous spot prizes contribute to the growing popularity of this series (we had 112 finishers at one event). A special thanks to the Times Age, our major sponsor, and especially Piers Fuller for a great article following the final event.

Cross country

Roger and Claudia have organised another challenging Cross Country season which is off to a good start. A cold and rain-threatened day saw lower numbers at the Booth Farm in Gladstone but we had the best weather yet at Rewanui. Brooke Miller and Ben Twyman were our 2024 XC Champions run on the Kamahi Farm (Rangitumau) course with the perfect mix of hills and mud. Brooke Duffy, Ben Bryant, Gordon Reid, Vicky Paine, and Tony Price won the 2024 Cross Country Excellence awards. A special thanks to all the farmers, landowners, and course setters for their ongoing support. It will be especially pleasing to return to Taueru this season.

Interclub

The interclub season is underway and with good numbers of ACM harriers heading across the hill, and further afield, to compete. Ray and David and been supported wrangling the teams by Amanda Taylor who has been encouraging our younger members. Wonderful to see so many of them getting involved. For a small club we continue to shine with younger and older runners alike putting in great efforts, and bringing home winners medals. The 2024 Askew trophy winners for interclub performance were Darius Simpson (Senior Men), Tony Price (Masters Men), and Megan Simpson (Women).

Although reluctant to list the achievements of individual athletes because invariably someone is missed from the list, I must mention James Inwood who continues to amaze and inspire us all. Building on impressive results already this past year, in July he will be running Badwater 135, the toughest footrace in the world and raising funds for Alzheimers Wairarapa in the process. In October he will be joining 14 other elite athletes representing New Zealand at the 2025 IAU 24 Hour World Championships.

GR series

Darius and Megan took over convening the GR Trails series last year. They did a great job organising seven events around the district. Over 40 runners and walkers took part in the iconic Rangitumau Hill Run in near perfect conditions, apart the long grass on the uphill stretch. Helen Gard'ner retained the Queen of the Mountain title in 1:19:00 and Ben Twyman was our new King of the Mountain in 1:00:24. He would have broken the hour if he hadn't had to wait to check

directions. Special awards for effort, performance, or contribution on the day went to Ben Twyman, Sue Bankier and Maddie Gard'ner.

Special Events

With more than 90 entries for the annual **ANZAC Day Charity run/walk**, we raised over \$1000 for LifeFlight. Thanks to everyone who participated, volunteered and supported this event, especially WBS for their generous sponsorship.

Wet August conditions didn't deter the 50 participants in the **21km Individual or Team Relay**. Another successful fundraising effort to help keep Lifeflight flying. A big thanks to those who helped make the event possible.

We had a stunning day for our second **Wairarapa Half Marathon, 14km & 7km** on the new course on in October. A technical hiccup with bib numbers delayed the start but all came right in the end. A huge thank you to Back in Action for their continued support as our primary sponsor and to Mark Jerling for his fabulous photos.

The annual **John Chesmar Memorial Lansdowne Hill Run** in October saw two new champions. Nick On was the first up the hill in 5:49, just short of the course record. The fight for the women's title was hotly contested with Brooke Duffy beating Brooke Miller to the line in 6:52, only 3 seconds shy of the senior Brooke's record. Great to have Di Chesmar and three of her friends all the way from Fielding join in and share in pizzas afterwards.

In memory

It was with great sadness that we heard the news of the death of Dougal Thorburn in September. Dougal was a very special individual and athlete who, for a time, we were proud to call one of ours.

Thank you

Yet another busy and rewarding year for harriers. It has been very pleasing to see so many new faces joining us for our regular events, and everyone's support for our special events. I am very grateful to all those who step up and help out, including the series convenors, course setters, Rob and Maree on the finish line, and especially all who come along and run, walk or support. With participation and our membership continuing to grow I'm sure the 2025-26 season will be even better than the last.

Carol MacDonald
Harriers Chairperson