

Coventry Godiva Harriers – Chairman’s Annual Report 2010/2011

Presented at the AGM on Monday 4th July 2011

I shall begin my report on the last twelve months’ activity at Coventry Godiva Harriers by welcoming you all into what is undoubtedly the most obvious change since last year - our fantastic new clubhouse. Whilst not officially open yet, I am confident that this evening’s sneak preview of our new facility will have impressed you all. Clearly a project of this magnitude does not just happen on its own. Since giving your unanimous backing to the project at last year’s AGM, a year of hard work has been put in by a small number of the club’s members. I would particularly like to thank Charlie Kelly for coordinating the project, and also thank Gordon Horne for supporting Charlie. On behalf of the club I would like to thank Roger Medwell and NP Aerospace, for their generous funding support that enabled us to undertake this project.

I am amazed by just how well the building has turned out, and I have no doubt that the new clubhouse will put a smile on any member’s face. Once completed, there will be plenty of opportunity for more members to get involved with adding our own finishing touches over the next few weeks. I encourage as many people as possible to get involved. The construction contractors have given us a fantastic building; it is now down to us, the members, to make it into a truly great clubhouse – the heart of our club.

The last year has, as usual, been another busy one from a sporting perspective. Looking back to last summer, the 2010 athletics season was not the best from a team perspective:

Our Young athlete’s team performed well in the Midland Premiership League, finishing 2nd overall and therefore competing at the same level this year. However, our Women’s team were relegated back down into Division 4 of the National Women’s League, after gaining promotion only the year before. Our combined Men’s and Women’s Athletics team were relegated to Division 3 of the Midland League, after being relegated the previous year as well.

As I stated last year, the club’s performance in the senior leagues must put into question our team performance objectives. Discussions about which league to support failed to reach a conclusive agreement last year, with predictable results. I believe that going forwards we must have a consensus amongst our coaches, team managers and commitment from our athletes for future league matches if we are going to be as successful as we can be as a club.

Despite the disappointing team results, there were numerous individual success stories during the summer's athletics; to mention just a few highlights:

A handful of young athletes took part in the England U23 and U20 Championships, with Jamie Blundell taking 2nd in the Long Jump. Several senior athletes competed in the World Trials and UK Championships.

Tina Brown won the England Athletics Senior 3000m S/C and went on to represent Godiva at the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, along with Marlon Devonish, who won Commonwealth gold as a member of the winning 4 x 100m relay and also finished 5th in the 200m.

Last autumn we competed in the Regional and National road relays at Sutton Park:

The Men's A team were 4th in the Midland and 14th in the National 6-stage. The Women's A team were 3rd in the Midland and 19th in the National 4-stage. All four of these performances were improvements on 2009 positions, significantly so for the Nationals.

In the Midland Young Athlete's road relays, our U15 boys and U15 girls won their events, with Sian Rainsley taking fastest lap.

Our track athletes competed in numerous 2010/11 Indoor events: at the Midland Open, Bratislava, Birmingham Games and the British Students Games.

The winter season saw the club compete in the usual cross country fixtures and 2010/11 turned out to be another successful season for Coventry Godiva, if not quite as profitable as the previous year's gold rush.

We fielded a team in the Midland 7 competition again, finishing 2nd this year. Yet again we had a very successful Warwickshire County championship in January, winning the Men's 1st team awards for Senior, U17, U15 and U13 age groups. Our Senior Women also won their team race. Four individuals were crowned County Champions as well. There were individual gold medals in the Midland Cross Country Championships for Rowena Cole and Matt Rose too.

The Senior Men's team retained their Birmingham League Division 1 title for the third year in succession. There were some excellent individual performances that earned this result, with Godiva also fielding a high number of competitors in most of the races. The Senior Women's team finished 3rd overall in the Midlands Cross Country League.

The National Cross Country Championships were held at Alton Towers under extremely difficult conditions, where we had competitors in all age groups, but we weren't quite strong enough to come away with any trophies this season.

The club's Bettmann Handicap series continued into its 103rd year, albeit with slightly fewer qualifying events. This year's winner was Toby Spencer.

Eighteen of our athletes were selected and competed in the Inter-County Cross Country Championships at Cofton Park in Birmingham. Sian Rainsley competed for the England team in the Schools Cross Country International meet in Antrim, Northern Ireland.

Spring 2011 saw Godiva competing in the traditional road relays at Sutton Park: The Men's A team were 5th in the Midland and 17th in the National 12-stage. In a bizarre twist at the Midland, our A team were disqualified and our B team took their place. Unfortunately this meant that the B team were unable to compete in the National. The Women's A team were 2nd in the Midland (equalling last year's best), but had an incomplete team for the National 6-stage.

Throughout last year our walking section has continued to compete at a good level, with Mark O'Kane, Antonio Cirillo and Brendan Boyce putting in good performances in the UK 10km and 20km walk championships, the Lugano European race and other local events.

We're now into the summer athletics season again and there have already been good performances in the Warwickshire Championships, with Nick Lyster, Jordan Broome and Rowena Cole picking up awards.

Rowena has also very recently won selection for the European Junior Championships in Tallin later this month. Also, Sian Rainsley and Georgia Hartigan were selected to compete in The English Schools Championships last weekend.

Away from our athletics performances, there has been plenty of activity as usual. The winter season drew to a close with our traditional annual prize-giving evening, which was organised by Bill Adcocks and Gordon Horne and was a very well supported and successful evening. As last year, there were many prize winners there to receive their awards, with their tickets kindly funded by NP Aerospace.

The club has hosted three road races this year; The Autumnal 5, New Year 5 and May Day 5; supported by sponsorship from NP Aerospace and Coventry Runner. We have also hosted a Birmingham league, a walks meeting and even an athletics meeting over at Leamington, due to track restrictions and the clubhouse build here at Westwood Heath. All of these events were very successful, thanks to the significant amount of time and effort that our volunteers provide freely.

A review of the last year would not be complete without saying thank you for the ongoing support and funding for our athletes that we receive from NP Aerospace through Roger Medwell. This has enabled us to continue to provide a reward scheme for our competing athletes as well as performance development awards, aimed at helping to further develop individual performance for our aspiring athletes.

So, as I said at the beginning, 2010/2011 has proved to be yet another very busy year for Coventry Godiva Harriers. This volume of activity, and success, would not be possible without the collective efforts of all of our members. On behalf of the club I would like to thank all of our athletes, coaches, officials, parents, relatives, friends and helpers who have given their best in competition, or given their time and support freely to Coventry Godiva Harriers over the past year.

Finally, as this is my last AGM as your Chairman, I would like to thank all the officers of the club and members of the committee for supporting both me in my role as chairman and for their services to the club. The three years have passed by very quickly, during which there have been many great experiences and many challenges too, not least trying to keep control of the honourable gentlemen to the left and right of me at our meetings!

I am delighted to see that the trend that I started three years ago - to have a competing Chairman - will be continuing. I would like to wish the best of luck to my replacement, Keith Richards.

Thank you for the opportunity to be your Chairman. It has been an honour and a privilege.

Aaron Bodycote
Chairman