

RACE SUB-COMMITTEE

2024 has been a very successful year for the Race Sub-Committee and for the club's open races. We successfully made significant changes to both the Tay Ten (TT) and Brig Bash (BB) whilst ensuring that both events were well attended and fine occasions.

The TT faced a notable challenge as we started planning in late 2023, and an early start proved essential. This challenge was provided by a slight-but-necessary alteration to the well-established course. Over the years, the Ruthvenfield 'chicane' had become busier with traffic (as Bertha Park grows and as it provides a 'rat run' to the A85). It represented an objective hazard to runner safety and no longer met with SA approval (and thus granting of a race permit or insurance). Our new course eliminates the chicane and re-routes back to the cycleway earlier. The course was pre-tested, measured (by AUKCM) and finally tested in anger on race day, when it proved to be a faster route than its predecessor. Additionally, we made other changes to the TT (and also to the BB in some cases):

- Chip timing was dropped (at both races). The major cost (£900-£1000 per race) had become largely unnecessary in a world where race timing apps have become highly effective. The Webscorer app – and, more particularly, the 6-PRR team running the finish - performed very well at both races. There is still a little more practice required to make the process totally slick, but the results (literally) were excellent.
- That significant cost provided a blend of (ie some £250-£300 of each of):
 - elevated prize money (to raise the status and field of the race);
 - a greater boost to club funds; and
 - the ability to hold race entry fees constant at a time of rising costs.
- Entry numbers were expanded, to 350 (from 300) at the TT (ie back to pre-COVID numbers) and to 330 (from 300) at the BB.
- We introduced 'young athletes' categories (M and F, 17-19 inclusive at the TT, 16-19 at the BB) to boost entries in this age category. Numbers were small here, but we hope to see growth in racer numbers now that the categories exist and are being promoted.
- Age category record prizes were introduced (at both races). This was enabled by our having compiled a full listing of the best times across all age groups across the history of both races (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)). These awards are almost unique in Scottish club races and are hoped (over time) to boost attendance and field quality.
- At the TT, participation medals became an option that runners could elect to take (or not), at a cost of £3, allowing us to lower fees ((£12 SA member, £14 unaffiliated) for those avoiding medals. These were eco-medals (of plantable seeds). 53% of the TT field opted for these.
- 'Proper' winner's trophies were introduced at the Brig Bash (based on a teapot theme, with winners since 1998 all engraved).
- Catering (ie a catering van) was introduced to the TT. Given H&S and food hygiene constraints at PKC venues, this proved to be a larger undertaking than might be expected.

The 2024 **Tay Ten** again took place on the last Sunday of April. This is a slot that it will now seek to hold for 2024 future years, primarily to avoid losing competitors to the popular Scottish Championship Tom Scott 10-miler earlier in the month. However, Easter varies in its timing, knocking (in particular) the London Marathon to and fro, to which we also do not wish to lose runners and volunteers. 2025 is such a year, and the forthcoming TT will be held on the first Sunday in May.

We targeted entry sales of 350. Having opened entries earlier than usual (on January 15th) and publicised this hard, entries sold out inside 3 weeks. We were delighted to welcome 267 runners on the day (the event record is 307 in 2017).

The winner of the men's category was Dundee Hawkhill Harrier, James Donald, who set a new event best of 51:54 (taking more than two minutes off the old record). Dundee Road Runners' David Webster and Marcus Sheridan were second and third respectively, with DRR taking the men's team title with some ease. In the ladies' race, DRR's Mairi Littleson took the win in 1:02:32,

although the event record (59:21, set in 2019) remained safely intact. DRR recorded the perfect team win by placing Alison McNeilly and Gillian Sangster in 2nd and 3rd. There were age category records for Alison McNeilly (F40), Gillian Sangster (F50), Gary Watt (Bellahouston Harriers, M50) and Tony Martin (Fife AC, M70), while PRR's Rose Ryan set a first-time record for the FU20 category.

The Tay Ten provided £1825 to PRR club coffers (up from £1500 in 2023). It remains our key 'cash cow' for funding wider club activities (especially trophies, internal races, XC entries). The sub-committee looked hard at a reduction in entry fees, but, especially in a world of rising costs, elected to maintain entry fees at previous levels.

The Sub-Committee then turned its attention to organising the 25th **Brig Bash** on Wednesday 3th July (in fact, with entries opening 48 hrs after the TT is held, organisation of the two races very much now overlaps). With very few flat 5 mile races available in Scotland – and with the BB increasingly taking on a 'must-do' image in the Scottish race calendar - we were confident this would be as popular as ever. We were not disappointed: the race sold out (330 places) inside 2½ hours on the evening that entries opened.

By the standards of recent BBs, race conditions were far from ideal. A strong headwind faced runners on the way out, and later runners faced a deluge of rain at the finish. 245 runners took to the course; 242 finished. Jamie Crowe of Central AC returned to threaten the course and BB Mile records he set in 2023, but the tough conditions saw him miss these by 2 and 3 seconds respectively (despite winning by over a minute!) It was the fastest men's race yet: Lewis Rodgers (Fife AC), Cameron Milne (Central AC) were the fastest-ever 2nd, 3rd and 4th places and all joined the list of the 25 fastest times. Gayle Lindsay of PH Racing successfully defended her 2023 title in 30:08, and was followed home by Nicola Jackson of Carnegie Harriers and the exceptional/evergreen Fiona Matheson of Falkirk Victoria, who also lowered the F60 record by almost 5 minutes! Tony Martin of Fife AC improved the M70 record, while PSH's Iain Jordan and PRR's Lucy Ward set first-time U20 records. The team races were exceptionally close: DHH saw off Central by 2 points in the men's race, while PH bested DRR in the ladies by just a single point!

The Brig Bash has always been – and remains – daftly good value-for money (entry fees in 2024 were £11/£13). This year, it provided ~£900 to PRR club coffers (up from £500 in 2023). This superb value is made possible, in quite some part, by the generosity of PRR members in providing the (vast majority of the) 'spread'.

Both events simply would not - and cannot - go ahead without the support of our volunteers. Huge thanks are extended to everyone who helped make both races such a success. As usual, we received very positive feedback from participants about how much they enjoyed the races and plenty of comments about how encouraging and friendly the marshals were. In particular, I would like to thank the members of the Sub-Committee, whose efforts made sure everything went (just about) smoothly: that's Jimmy Fotheringham, Duncan Ryan (co-lead), Claire Douglas, Lisa Aikman, Rhona Younger, Kenny Cairns, Caroline Duffin and Paige Brown. Sadly, we will lose Duncan and Lisa for the 2025 races, and we thank them for all their efforts! Happily, Liz Johnston, Gillian McGuire and Tom Rhodes and Rhona Barclay have since (subject to the Sub-Comm being elected at the AGM!) joined our ranks. It is excellent that all these members of the sub-committee have elected to return for 2024; all are already engaged in work for the coming races.

The annual **Mob Match** vs Kinross RR has now become a sizeable fixture in our calendar and, at least loosely, falls to the Race Sub-Comm to organise. The event, this year held "at home" on the Murthly Estate, was a great success, quite irrespective of the PRR win (reported in the Race Series report). Participant numbers have grown from 63 in 2022 to 95 in 2023 to 121 this year. We have the luxury of our opposition organising the 2025 race on KRR territory before we need return to duty. That said, we do need to start the hunt for a course and venue for 2026...

The 2025 race dates are: TT – Sun 4th May BB – Weds 2nd July MM – Tues 19th Aug