

# Striders of Croydon

## Autumn 2008



So what IS the collective noun for Striders? Answers on a postcard please...

## Chairman's Corner

Well so far so good, after a month as your chairman, I've so far succeeded in dropping a cup at the Trophy presentations, I've run my slowest Wednesday run ever and the final straw received a letter from EA claiming I hadn't paid our affiliation fees!

On the plus side we had a very successful Switchback with record numbers and superb weather, I did get an apology from EA and the Club goes from strength to strength. Last week we counted 51 Striders competing on the same day in the Croydon 10K, Cabbage Patch 10 and Abingdon marathon with at least 18 personal bests and a first prize for Alice, Carmen & Katherine the winning ladies team at the 10K.

Welcome to a new look newsletter, at least I assume it looks different now that Gordon and his assistant Susan have taken over editorship. Welcome also to two new members of the committee Steph Upton who has the challenge of improving the dress standards of the club. After her success with hoodies for the ladies she is now moving into the men's hoodie market. Welcome also to John Humphries who takes over as our Treasurer. I hope I have left things in a reasonable state. Fortunately I didn't invest the club's money in an Icelandic savings account. It's all with the TSB.

And not forgetting Chris who continues as Secretary, XC team manager and many other roles in the club; Karen who continues as membership secretary a more complex task now that we also have to deal with England Athletics and John Ralf who successfully led the ladies to the first division last year and can hopefully keep them there this year.

Welcome also to David Batten who although not formally a member of the committee will manage Vets Track and Field and also be our adviser/coordinator on coaching issues.

Farewell to your Ex Chairman JG and on behalf of the club thank you for your contribution to the club over the last six years. John has not of course retired from running and with Chris Morton will still be masterminding our route choice especially on Wednesdays. In yachting the qualification that allows you to navigate out of sight of land is Yachtmaster. So John and Chris are now your Routemasters. John will also continue to be our link man and organiser for marshalling at the FLM.

Farewell also to Phil Mazur, who after the FLM looked like he might retire from running altogether, though he seems to have returned recently and thank you for your stint as Kit Man and contribution to the committee. We would still like you to organise another Hash sometime..

Having got into the routine of being a treasurer I foolishly offered to take on the vacant post of Sandilands treasurer. I start in the new year. It means both the Secretary and Treasurer of the Sandilands committee will now be Striders.

And finally, for the future, my main objective is to make sure being a member of Striders continues to be fun, to offer you a good mix of runs and training sessions and social events so you can keep fit, stretch yourself or just socialise. It might hurt at the time but to achieve a personal goal, whether it is just to finish the Croydon 10K or the FLM or to achieve a PB or club record also counts as fun.... after the event.

To keep running fun we also need to provide some variety, the Marathon training leading up to the FLM provides a good excuse for some longer runs around Croydon, runs back from the stations over the Downs and away from the club and we will be publishing a schedule of longer Sunday runs nearer the time. If anyone has any suggestions for new routes please let me or Chris know.

We will also ensure a regular programme of social events from drinks and nibbles after a Wednesday run, to Quiz nights, curry nights and Christmas Parties The next one, is Quiz Night on 14<sup>th</sup> November followed by the Christmas party on December 5<sup>th</sup> .

As well as running there is also swimming once a week, I hope we can encourage a few more of you to join the regular crowd on a Thursday evening, Trinity School has an excellent facility and we do have the pool to ourselves. There is an open evening on 30<sup>th</sup> October to let you see what it is like without feeling obliged to swim 40 lengths.

And don't forget speed training. Although the word speed might put some of you off don't worry, whether you go to the track or run round Sandilands on a Tuesday night you still go at you own pace,

It is also important we do something in return for all the events we go to that are organised by other clubs. The Switchback is our flagship event and would be good to see if we can't get even more to come next year. We also of course support cross countries round Lloyd Park, do our bit in track and field events and the FLM couldn't happen without our support at Hungerford Bridge, could it?.



The question of a possible 10 mile or half marathon race in or around Croydon was raised at the AGM. Although there are reservations about whether it is feasible to do it. A group is getting together to consider the possibilities. Is there a practical route? Would we get the support of Croydon Council and the police? Have we got the resources to do it?

If you have any suggestions for runs, social events or ways to improve our runs please don't hesitate to talk to a committee member or mail me at [robin@jmsn.me.uk](mailto:robin@jmsn.me.uk)

To everyone who has a place in the FLM good luck in your training over the next few months and congratulations to everyone who achieved a PB in the last few weeks.

**Robin**

# Introducing...

...Your New Committee Members (drum roll, please..)

## STEPH UPTON

*Why did you start running?* I started running about 21 years ago when a guy I used to work with encouraged me and a friend to avoid the staff canteen at lunchtimes and run with him! He was about 55 at the time and we were about 20 and we struggled and whinged for the first few months until we got to love it. We went running every lunchtime and entered races and marathons, he was a great mentor and we soon encouraged more runners to join us, we had a good club of people to run with at lunchtimes and after work. I still meet up with them now.

*Why have you carried on?* Because I love it! and I eat far too much. My husband said on our first date that I could eat for England, so if I didn't run I'd be huge!

*Proudest Running Moment?* Crossing the line after my first Marathon in Dublin. We didn't know how to train correctly and hadn't even heard of Gels, so at 18 miles I could have mugged someone for a sweet! Crossed the line in 4.05 and it's never felt so good since..

*Most Embarrassing Running Moment?* Getting overtaken by a womble while doing the London Marathon!

*Biggest Running Mistake?* Forgetting to change into my running bra because I was too busy chatting in the changing room! Never again....

*Likes:* Food, running, traveling, chocolate!!!!

*Dislikes:* Whingers!

*Best Piece of Running Advice You've Ever Received or Given?* Don't stop and keep breathing!



## JOHN HUMPHRIES

I decided to take up running 5 years ago and joined the club shortly afterwards. Within a year I had completed my first marathon, which remains my proudest running achievement. I am looking forward to being part of the committee and I am still dreaming of running under 45 minutes for a 10K.

## DAVE BATTEN

I started running at school and came third in the Wandsworth school sports day 800, in about 1969?

I love running and although I have done various other sports over the years, I always come back to running (usually just on my own and not as part of a club), as it is easy to do from home and helps keep my asthma away.

*Proudest Achievement:* Winning the Surrey County 5k Road Champs, first V50, at a venue which is only ½ mile from where my father was born!

*Most Embarrassing Moment:* Having to take a “comfort break” during a race!

*Biggest Mistake:* Too many to mention, but realizing that a 1,500 mts race was about to start and that I was supposed to be taking part in the race, when I was 100 mts from the start! It wasn't much fun sprinting 100mts and reaching the start when the other competitors were already 50 mts into the race (I did finish the race and I wasn't last, but!!!).

*Likes:* flat courses.

*Dislikes:* hilly courses, running in the wind/rain, etc.

The best piece of advice that I have been given and pass on to other runners is to change your most used (training/running) shoes every six months. If you don't, there is a danger that they could cause you injuries.

*(Note: I couldn't find the photo Dave wanted me to use, so he will remain a man of mystery...Ed)*

*I run because it's my passion, and not just a sport. Every time I walk out the door, I know why I'm going where I'm going and I'm already focused on that special place where I find my peace and solitude. Running, to me, is more than just a physical exercise... it's a consistent reward for victory! -- **Sasha Azevedo***

## Let's Go...San Francisco!

### ***Steve Smith Has An Early Start Stateside***

Me, January 08: "Why don't we go to the US this year? The exchange rate is good, much better than the Euro and we can stay with your cousin and meet her new partner. Oh look, there's a marathon too just about the time we'd be there, a shame not to do it ...".

The media claims that the San Francisco Marathon enjoys success as the premier summertime marathon in the U.S. Its blend of natural beauty, big city charm, and perfect running temperatures, make marathon running in San Francisco a truly magical experience.

True? Maybe, but at 3.30am on a Sunday morning in August? I force down what can loosely be described as breakfast. Outside it's dark. The eerie silence is punctuated only by the sound of training shoe clad runners making their way to the start at the old port.

Race events include a full marathon, two half marathons, 5K, and Progressive Marathon for those unable to do it all in one go. An enthusiastic MC states that 19,000 runners from all 50 states and 56 countries are participating, making San Francisco the number one international marathon running destination.

But it's not sinking in. I'm testing the theory that this marathon has more beautiful people running than any other. Well that's what a Lake Tahoe runner told me.



I've closely followed "kit guru" Phil Mazur's advice on what to wear for the race and am ready for action.

I'm in wave 2, or is it 3? The over enthusiastic MC says that we're his favourite group. I bet he says that to all the runners. It's now 5.30am. Most sensible folk are in bed asleep including my family. Even the sea lions are absent. Support is thin and disappointingly the advertised cheerleaders don't show unless it's the lone girl who mysteriously crops up at most vantage points along the course.



The first main ascent is the Golden Gate Bridge approach. This is the flagship logo of the marathon, but this morning in the gloom it looks decidedly grey and uninspiring. Then it's on to Golden Gate Park where the half marathoners finish. At this stage I want to join them. I missed 3 key months of training through injury and the lack of long runs is telling. It's

here that they begin the second half marathon, just to rub it in. The climb out of the park leads to Haight Ashbury. There is the odd call of “Go runners!” and “Good job!” The closed roads are marshaled by an unlikely partnership of burly looking Hells Angels and police with their motor cycles blocking the roads.

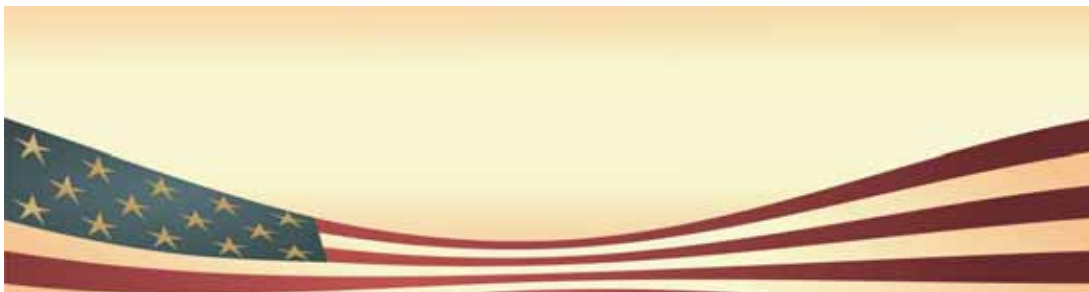
The closing stage hugs the bay back to the port. The decision to drape Sue and the girls in Union Jack flags and hats wasn't necessary and I sport them without difficulty.



My final challenge is to overtake a topless, tattooed male – how unBritish. The time is irrelevant but is 3:55:12, finishing 1073 out of 4443. Marathon number 10 completed. For the geeks, the winner was Chad Worthen in 2:32.



This is what happens when you take sartorial advice from Phil Mazur



*Sports do not build character. They reveal it.* -- **Heywood Broun**

*It is a rough road that leads to the heights of greatness.* -- **Seneca (Seneca the Elder)**

*Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules, and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting.* -- **George Orwell**

## Club Awards

The Club's AGM in September saw the Annual Awards Ceremony. A bit like the Oscars but without the posh frocks. Or the long speeches. Or the red carpet. Or the little gold statues...

No fewer than 26 Striders were given awards, or mentioned in despatches. Here's the Roll of Honour:

<b>AWARD</b>	<b>WINNERS</b>
Men's Road Ranking	Joint first – Justin and Damian Macenhill Joint third – Simon Ambrosi and Iain Harrison
Women's Road Ranking	Joint first – Suzy Yates and Kerry Backshell Third – Tina Macenhill
Men's road age-graded	First - Justin Macenhill Joint second – no trophy – Damian Macenhill, Tim Bett, John Foster
Women's road age-graded	First – Kerry Backshell Second – no trophy – Suzy Yates Third – no trophy – Tina Macenhill
Men's XC	1 <sup>st</sup> - Duncan Lancashire 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Justin Macenhill 3 <sup>rd</sup> – James Buchanan
Women's XC	1 <sup>st</sup> - Faye Stammers 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Kerry Backshell 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Steph Upton
Handicap Trophy	Goodall Trophy Race: Pete Shew 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Alan Dolton – no trophy 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Tom Littlewood – no trophy Race 1:- Karen Macenhill Race 2:- Catherine Selby
Sandilands Cup	Joint first – Neil Furze and Paul Weir Third – Darren Piper
Track & Field athlete of the year	Man – Matt Morgan Woman – Yasmin Anderson
Club Man of the Year	Joint – John Ralf and Robin Jamieson
Club Woman of the Year	Susan Haynes



## Found in the Daily Mail by Our (marathon running) Chairman.

***An extract from CAN'T BE ARSED – 101 things not to do before you die*** - by Richard Wilson.

Others include: Skydive, Go to Glastonbury, Back Pack round Australia, Listen to Bob Dylan....

### **RUN A MARATHON**

WE ALL know that sponsored marathon runners make a lot of money for charity, but we also know that altruism is not the only reason they do it.

They do it because they want you to say to them: 'Oh wow, you've run a marathon, that's amazing! How long did it take you? I could never do that!'

As if running 26 miles and 385 yards elevates them above those of us who haven't run anywhere for 20 years and get a bit puffed walking upstairs.

Please don't give them the satisfaction. Some religions get a lot of stick for making a virtue out of suffering, but I'd point the finger much more justifiably at sport. How many times do we hear athletes banging on about 'playing through the pain', 'feeling the burn' or 'hitting the wall'? Sport is one tremendously long celebration of injury: shin splints, groin strains, tennis elbow and, of course, jogger's nipple.

The word 'fun' crops up a lot in long-distance running. 'It's a great day out, it's a Fun Run,' the runners say. I'd say 'Fun Run' is as much a contradiction in terms as 'military intelligence'.



But running it is more fun than watching it, by the look of things.

# Striders of Croydon 10 or Half Marathon

## Some thoughts from our own PC Plod, Steve Tyler.

At this year's AGM, Big Baz (he of Runathon fame) suggested that the club might like to arrange a Croydon Ten or possibly a half marathon on the premise that the town does not have many mass participation events within its borders.

There were as number of people who put themselves up as interested in working towards the venture and whilst the committee hasn't been constituted, I have had a few random thoughts which I have committed to paper.

Date: Summer or Autumn 2010

Type of race: Road, Cross Country, Multi-terrain?

Venue: Our first consideration – bearing in mind our headquarters is Sandilands, I would suggest around there.

Locality: Croydon is a very busy Borough throughout the year and has a number of main roads criss-crossing it. It also has a very busy shopping centre through which North End passes. These shops are open on Sundays – do we aim to go via the Town Centre or do we keep to the highways and byways that we as a club use for the most part?

My initial thoughts are for multi-terrain which on a bright summer or autumn morning would be more uplifting than just boring old houses.

Route: Start – Lloyd Park Avenue (advantages car parking at the playing fields and surrounding streets plus the Tramlink stop and changing facilities). Also easy access from Race Headquarters and extra parking.

Head north-east and use the start of the Switchback to help thin the assembled masses out towards the bowling club and down towards Oaks Lane.

Towards the bottom of the hill bear right on the grass track and along with the fence on the left. Through the trees and left through the gap keeping to the path with the trees and fence on the left to next set of trees.

Into the thicket and up the slope through the gap and left round the outside to the pedestrian crossing over the tramtracks.

Left up Coombe Road and left into Oaks Road and left again at the thatched cottage. Down towards the bend and straight across and into and round Coombe Farm playing fields (grass to be cut around outside to denote path to be used).

Out via the John Ruskin changing rooms and towards Oaks Lane. Through golf course to Upper Shirley Road. **Road control needed**(a)

Cross over into Shirley Church Road along right path before marshalled crossing after South Way onto left side to Kennel Wood.

Pathways to be decide over Shirley Heath and down towards Spring Park and Sparrows Den. Follow pathway along northside to changing rooms avoiding sports pitches and then fence to trees back along mad mile to Spout Hill.

Along Kent Gate Way to Gravel Hill and right towards Shirley Hills Road. Up onto the flat and then downhill. **Road control needed**. Cross over and into Shirley Hills via two metal posts.

Round inside Shirley Hills to be decided ?use Switchback undulations. Exit via Coombe Lane tramstop towards pelican crossing. **Road control needed** (b).

Along Ballards on left and into Riesco Drive. Through kissing gate and into woods. Down to Croham Valley Road and into Littleheath Woods, exiting at Littleheath Road.

Across into Queenhill – over Farley Road **Road control needed** to Upper Selsdon Road. Turn right to go downhill to footpath through golf course – follow to turn right towards Croham Hurst clubhouse and over Croham Valley Road up footpath towards Ballards Farm Road.

Follow unmade road to Ballards Way and left uphill along pavement to crossing point at top of Gravel Hill **Road control needed** (b) *(this one would cover runners going both ways)*

Turn right and follow path to water tower and left down to tramstop. Follow track downhill alongside railway to bend right at bottom to the left turn down to Oaks Road. **Road control needed** (a). Down Oaks Lane to the back of Lloyd Park. Left and immediately right round the outside and the Switchback finish.

I stress that these are initial thoughts and I haven't done any rudimentary measurements – we will need to consider where water points would be (poss Coombe Farm PF, Sparrows Den, Ballards Way?).



Marshal points / arrows – purchase or borrow from local clubs? Do we encourage their participation by a Borough of Croydon championship?

Awards – tee shirts or a quality minted medal? Championship timing?

There will be much to consider and the experience of other clubs who run successful half marathons will have to be sought plus the MPS and LB of C.

My gut feeling is that we won't use much of the above but at least it's a start.

## Run Safe by John Gannon

Now that the evenings are fair drawing in and club runs during the week are not only ending darkness but starting in it as well, I thought it might be worth, as we have quite a few new runners join us over the summer, to trot out a few well known as well as less known pearls of wisdom for running on roads during the winter evenings.

**Wear something bright** – Might be stating the obvious but you would be surprised by the number of runners I've seen out running that do not follow this advice and that strip of luminous material on the heel of your running shoes will only light up like a beacon for the two seconds that it gets caught in a car's headlights before it runs you over. Now I know black is a flattering colour for the figure but it still won't look good on you if you're a corpse now will it? It makes quite a difference to both car drivers and fellow pedestrians to see you if you wear a light coloured top or even better a luminous one. I have a lightweight luminous Gillette that does the trick.

**LED** – No its okay dear we're not talking drugs here but light weight lights that are highly visible and you can attach to your clothing. Now if you were to wear a couple of these both on your front and back I could let you get away with wearing black. They might not look that bright when you first turn them on but can be seen for a good couple of hundred metres on a dark morning or evening. I was standing at a bus stop early one morning last week and could see a cyclist with an LED light from this distance when I failed to notice another cyclist without lights until they were less than 40 metres away.

**Running Solo** – Both of the above are equally important when running with the club (also helps us Run Leaders spot you) and when you're out on your own but the next pearls are for when running solo.

**Information** - Let someone know how long you're running for and what route you're running so that they know when to send out the search party and where it should look for you. I must admit I'm guilty of the latter of these two as it's usually 'I'll be about 40 minutes' as I go out the front door but no mention of what route I'll be taking.

**Mobile Phone** - So you live on your own or there's no one at home when you leave for your run so you can't tell them where you're going or for how long? Why not take your friendly mobile for a run with you? There not the size of house bricks like they were when they first came out and you can get arm straps that will hold them or if you don't like wearing arm straps then most pieces of kits have zip pockets that you could slip it in that wouldn't let the phone bounce around annoyingly. If you then have a fall and injure yourself you can always ring a friend to come and pick you up or call 999 if it's anything serious. As most phones are also cameras if you get lost you could always take a photo of where you are and send it to someone that might recognise your surroundings!

**Stick to well lit and known areas** – Anyone who has been on a club run led by myself will know that I love an alleyway as much as the next mugger but while these might be fun on a club run I would not recommend it when out on your own. I recall the sad case of a promising young runner who died some years ago taking a short cut down an alley one windy evening when a brick wall fell on him. Someone might have found him still alive if the he and the wall had been on a well used road.

**Vary your routes** – Lets not be politically correct here, there are some weirdo's out there that might notice that you always run the same route on the same day of the week at the same time and might want to take advantage of that fact for their own gain and satisfaction. Don't give them that chance, I know we are all creatures of habit but do try to vary what route you are running or at least what day or time you run, plus doesn't it get boring doing the same one all the time?

Okay all out of pearls now but hopefully you'll all remember these and have enjoyable, safe running this winter and if you do insist in running down alleyways watch out for me and the wall!

## 25 YEARS AGO: ATHLETICS IN AUTUMN 1983

The 1983 New York Marathon saw an exciting race between Rod Dixon of New Zealand and Britain's Geoff Smith of Liverpool. Dixon finished strongly to win in 2 hours 8 minutes 59 seconds, while Smith set a new British record of 2.09.08 in second place. The first woman to finish was Grete Waitz of Norway, in 2 hours 27.

The third annual Croydon 10-mile road race took place on 23 October. It was held on the same course as the previous year: a relatively fast two-lap course starting in Oaks Road and finishing in the grounds of John Ruskin School. The school has subsequently been demolished, and Postmill Close now stands on the site. Striders subsequently adopted the course for our annual club handicap, until the arrival of Tramlink prompted us to switch to our current course for reasons of safety.

The 1983 Croydon '10' resulted in a runaway win for Andy Evans of South London Harriers, in an impressive time of 49 minutes 19 seconds. Barry Heath (Royal Marines) was second (51.11) and Ray Marriott of South London Harriers was third (51.42). 25 years later, Ray is still running very well as a veteran. Host club Croydon Harriers had two athletes in the first six with Gary Bishop fifth in 52.16 and Alan Dolton sixth in 52.44. The race attracted a large field, and more than 60 runners completed the course in less than an hour. Among the other runners who are still competing was Julian Dillow (Croydon Harriers), who was 44th in 59.27. The first Strider was club chairman Steve Owen who ran a personal best 62.10, followed by Miles Mayne (62.20) and Mick Meech (62.32).

The first woman was again Margaret Lockley of London Olympiades, whose time of 61 minutes 58 seconds saw her finish more than five minutes clear of her nearest rival. Jennie Yeowell of Croydon Harriers was second in 67.34. Two of the top ten women are still competing locally. Heather Fenton placed ninth in 72.22. She was then competing for Croydon Harriers: she subsequently ran for a number of Surrey clubs including a year with Striders, and now competes for Surrey Walking Club. In tenth place was Viv Hill of Surrey Beagles in 73 minutes 10 seconds. Viv is now known by her married name of Mitchell, and has competed for South London Harriers for many years. The first female Strider in the 1983 Croydon 10 was Susanne Eyre, who placed 12th in a time of 75 minutes 20 seconds.

The Surrey Road Relay was held at Brockwell Park in September. Home club Herne Hill led from start to finish to gain their first win for 21 years. However there was a close battle for second place between South London Harriers, Croydon Harriers and Woking. Croydon's marathon international Don Faircloth took them into second place on the penultimate stage. However, on the last leg Francis Upcott ran an outstanding leg for SLH to overtake Croydon's Gary Bishop. SLH finished nine seconds ahead of Croydon, with Woking a further seven seconds behind. 25 years later, both Don Faircloth and Francis Upcott are still competing in local road races.

The Surrey Veterans' Cross-Country Championship was held at Richmond Park in November. Fred Bell of Hercules-Wimbledon won, with Don Claxton (Herne Hill) second and Robin Dickson (Croydon Harriers) third. Croydon won the team prize.

The Surrey Cross-Country League began its 22nd season in October. Herne Hill won the first Division One match, but defending champions Aldershot fought back to win the next one. Individually Grenville Tuck (Aldershot) won the first match, with Gary Staines (Belgrave) winning the second.



The Surrey Women's Cross-Country League began its fifth season. Croydon Harriers won the first match, led by their outstanding 16-year-old Niobe Menendez. Niobe's father had left Spain after the Civil War, and the family lived in Thornton Heath. Niobe, who now lives in Sussex, subsequently turned her talents to race-walking, where she represented England at the 2002 Commonwealth Games. In 2008, at the age of 41, she placed second in the UKA 5000m walk championships.

Niobe Menendez

## 10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN AUTUMN 1998

At Striders' AGM on 30 September, club secretary Michele Lawrence reported that our membership had risen to 73. After debate, the meeting rejected proposals to start our Wednesday runs at 7.00 rather than 7.30, and to split the runs into a 'fast' and 'slow' group. (The latter change was eventually implemented in 2006, following a steady increase in the number of runners taking part.)

The Croydon 10K was held on 11 October. The winner was Croydon Harriers' talented 20-year-old Somalian, Yacin Yusuf, who ran 31 minutes 37, two seconds ahead of former Harrier Gary Bishop (Boxhill Racers). Third was Lee Morgan, running for South London Harriers (33.29). The first woman finisher was Jane Lansdown of Striders (40.43). Striders' first man home was Eric Parker, who placed eighth in 35.55. He was followed by John Kirby (37.50), Alan Dolton (38.05), John McGilvray (38.24), Colin Cotton (38.33), Henk Witlox (41.01), Phil Mazur (41.16), Neil Furze (45.04) and Tom Littlewood (46.50).

The cross-country season began on 3 October with the annual East Surrey League Cross-Country Relay at Wimbledon Common. Striders placed fifth: our team comprised Bob Ewen, Tony Sheppard, Eric Parker and Lee Morgan (who had rejoined us as a second-claim member and was able to compete as SLH are not in the East Surrey League).

The Surrey Veterans Cross-Country Championships were held at Petersham on 10 October. South London Harriers won both the men's and women's team events. Eric Thomas of SLH won the men's race, while Marilyn Clarke of Herne Hill won the women's race.

On 17 October, Striders' women competed in Division 2 of the Surrey Women's Cross-Country League at Tilford. Their first finisher was Jane Lansdown in 7th place, followed by Elene Kayum (24th), Sandra Johnson (46th), Penny Little (54th) and Michele Lawrence (55th). The team finished seventh. On the same day, Striders' men competed in Division 3 of the Surrey Cross-Country League, on a very tough course at Wisley. Eric Parker was first home in 22nd, with Tony Sheppard next in 36th. They were followed by John McGilvray, John Kirby and Colin Cotton. Striders

finished a disappointing eighth of the nine clubs in the division. October finished with the East Surrey Cross-Country League at Lloyd Park, where Striders finished fourth. Our scoring team comprised Eric Parker, Tony Sheppard, John Kirby and Nigel Davidson.

The second match of the Surrey Women's Cross-Country League match was at Brockwell Park on 14 November, where Jane Lansdown again led Striders' challenge. Our other scorers were Elene Kayum, Barbara Cole, Clare Mitchell and Michele Lawrence. The men were in action a week later at Stoke Park in Guildford, on an unusually short, flat and fast course around playing fields. Our first man home was Tony Sheppard, followed by Eric Parker, Nigel Davidson, John Kirby and John McGilvray.

The Surrey Cross-Country Championships were held on a very muddy course at Coulsdon on 12 December. (This was not on the well-known SLH course, but on a course which started just west of Taunton Manor School, descended into Happy Valley early in the race, and had a stiff climb from the bottom of the valley in the closing stages.) The women's race was won by Anita Mellowdew of Epsom, with Estle Viljoen (Hercules-Wimbledon) second and Rachel Disley (Thames Hare & Hounds) third. Herne Hill won the team event with SLH second and Thames Hare & Hounds third. Striders finished seventh, led home by Jane Lansdown in 14th place. Our other team members were Michele Lawrence, Barbara Cole and Wendy Smith.

The men's race was won by Yacin Yusuf, who became the first Croydon Harrier to win this event. Yacin subsequently moved to Belgrave but retired from athletics while still in his 20s. He now works as a teacher at Haling Manor. Ian Munt (Herne Hill) was second and Karl Corpes (Aldershot) third. The team event was won by South London Harriers, with Herne Hill second, Boxhill third, Ranelagh fourth and Croydon Harriers fifth. Striders finished ninth, led by Eric Parker in 71st place. He was followed by John Kirby, Colin Cotton, John McGilvray, Nigel Davidson and Nigel Costiff.

## **SPORTS MASSAGE THERAPY**

**HELPS REDUCE MUSCULAR SORENESS AFTER TRAINING OR  
COMPETITION**

**HELPS RECOVERY FROM SOFT TISSUE INJURY**

**ALAN DOLTON, LSSM Dip, ITEC Dip, MSMA, MISRM  
UK ATHLETICS LEVEL 3 CLUB COACH**

**70 WARREN ROAD, ADDISCOMBE, CROYDON**

**TELEPHONE 020 8656 0532**

# A Tale of Two Triathlons

## - Crystal Palace Tri 2008

### Tom Littlewood's Story

With my running going nowhere fast, I completed my seventh and last (you can hold me to that) Marathon last October, I felt my athletic career needed a new challenge. Also with Thursday evenings now available it was the perfect opportunity to work on some much needed improvement for my swimming. So in the middle of November I nervously started the sessions at Trinity. At that stage I was struggling to complete a length front crawl. It really was a long term target to complete a triathlon. 10 months later I have completed 2 Aquathons and this morning the Crystal Palace Triathlon.

This was over a course at Crystal Palace Park of 400metre swim 20km bike and 5km run. I was very glad this was changed from initially being advertised with a 750 metre swim. Three gallant Striders were there Peter Shew, Robin Jamieson and myself. I felt I could manage 400 metres and so it proved. In actual fact I was tense and not relaxed in my stroke until about the 12<sup>th</sup> of 16 lengths.

What had seriously been a problem at the two Aquathons had been my embarrassing times for the transitions. These had been down to a few different factors. Getting tangled up in my kit and talking too much to spectators being the main two. I was determined to get this right this time so invested in a tri suit and laces, and also shut up. This time I was in and out in relatively no time at all. Not perfect as I had to find my bike and remember my number plus go the correct way out of the bike area, but overall, not too bad.

I had prepared my bike with tags to help me remember the number of the nine laps which really were a godsend. I also had my parents calling my lap numbers down. The positive thing about doing laps is so that you know what's coming. The downside for this race that meant that we had the joy of a lower gear hill almost as soon as we got going. This I misjudged for the first couple of times round that really was a struggle. However, it became much easier the more the cycle leg progressed.

I was flying down the hills for the last couple of laps and managed to get my bike back into the transition with none of the earlier confusion.

Now onto the run, that should be the easy bit! Not always the case when you've been using different leg muscles. I had experienced the wobbly legs at La Santa but this was okay. Just a bit slower than I had hoped. It certainly is a bit different when you've done the other work beforehand. Half way around the lap Peter passed me, gladly still on his bike having started a bit later. With everyone starting at different time it was difficult to know who was on the same lap as me. As it turned out, there were not many competitors around me. After two circuits of 2 and half kilometres It was one and a half laps on the track to the very welcome finish.

I had hoped to see Robin and Peter finish their races off after I had. However I wasn't in a fit state to look out for anyone. It really was a proper baptism into triathlons, which I do think I will have another go at, just not that far.



## And Robin's Take..

Be Prepared

Or how not to enter a Triathlon

Unlike Tom with his new go faster tri suit I was doing this, my first and probably last tri on the cheap. The night before I read the very detailed instructions, noted the advice to be there an hour before and to be at the pool 10 mins before my start. I tried to memorise the incomprehensible map of how to get to registration, transition, in and out of the pool, in and out of transition and the running and cycle route. I noted the exhortation "No helmet no race". I noted the instructions to ensure you have numbers front, back, on helmet, bike and arms, gathered up trunks, socks, quick fasten trainers, safety pins, vest, helmet and goggles. I stripped my trusty cross bike of surplus weight, panniers, mudguards, mirrors etc. etc. and I was all set.

On Sunday morning I was up early for a light breakfast, noticed my goggles were greasy and put them in the sink to wash, test rode the bike, decided to drive rather than ride to Crystal palace, put my helmet down and loaded the bike and my bag of kit and set off at 8:40 for a 9:49 start. It took less than 10 minutes to get to the top of Crystal Palace. I unloaded, trekked down the steps, found registration, was handed a goody bag full of numbers, got slightly lost trying to find transition, as did many others, bumped into Tom already ready to go and arrived at the transition entrance.

Oh f@&k where is my £\$%@ing helmet? Must be in the car, jog back up the steps to the car, no helmet, oh @%\$! £\$%^ . Its still only 9:10 plenty of time to drive home and find it. So I set off. At this point all the learner drivers in Croydon come out and start driving round at a steady 20mph and all the traffic light switch to red. I'm finally home at 9:25, 1 minute to dash in and grab helmet, better luck on the return back for



9:35 – 15 minutes to go. I sprint to transition, they let me in, the cycle rack is now full so have to juggle bikes to make a space, frantically stick numbers on bike, on helmet, fasten number to vest, lay out towel, socks, trainers and rollup vest ready to put on. Oh

£\$%^\$£^ I've safety pinned the front to the back. I sort that out. I set off for pool oh %\$£^%\$£^%\$, forgot goggles, back to kit bag, no goggles!!!, they are still in the sink.%\$^^%&^\$&, back to the pool 6 mins. to start anyone any spare goggles – sorry no - oh well may have to do 400m breaststroke. I get to my lane. Miraculously there

is a spare pair of goggles on the side, at last something is going right. Into the pool and I'm off.

From then on things went surprisingly well. I was lapped at least twice in the pool but I expected that and transition to the bikes was odd as you trekked up and down steps and through registration. I got my kit on quick enough and off on the bike, my first ever cycle race. Again easier than I expected, a surprising number of mountain bikes and people treating it as a Sunday morning ride in the sun. The short hill was tough, one girl got here gears tangled and fell off in front of me. 9 laps and its back to transition. get my foot stuck in the pedal and nearly fall off, bike on ramp helmet off and off running., god what's happened to my legs? For the first few hundred yards it felt like running on rubber legs in treacle. I wasn't prepared for that however once into a rhythm the run was good and I managed a near sprint finish for the final lap of the Crystal Palace track cheered on by Peter.

In the end an excellent experience and well worth a go, whatever standard you are you won't be the slowest there. My nightmare start probably helped, it warmed me up and got the adrenalin going. As we left the elite entrants were just beginning to arrive with their carbon hi-tec tri-bikes. Glad I was a relatively early starter.

## Ladies Cross Country News from No 1 Fan, John Ralf

Well the ladies finally striped off for me and you to take on the challenge of keeping Striders of Croydon in the Ladies Surrey XC division one. The weather was really kind as it was not a real cross country race – too dry, really it was a cross the recreation park, sports field and the woods. The sun was shining and beaming down on us. Plus it was Steph Upton's birthday.

We had an exceptional turnout with 13 ladies (Vets/Seniors) which are enough for 3 scoring teams. We also had 2 juniors running n the under 13s.

The race set off at a fair pace and the Striders teams seemingly working as a team were well grouped and this was reflected in the final result. There was several swapping of places during the race which involved 2 laps of the level recreation field followed by 2 laps of the larger lap in the woods. This had an down hill at the start but a tough, strength sapping up hill at the end of lap 1 but still had to do it again for the finishing section. The finish was a flat out run on the recreation field for about 200 yards. I did not see the finish as I was supporting the team out on the course by the woods, where else! The ladies did an excellent & positive job in the very hot conditions of about 20°C.



The post match celebrations took place with the munching of cookies and chocolate cornflake cakes to replenish the used energy .....oh! how I wish the women raced every weekend.

It is the first 5 that score for our A team and then the next 5 is the B team and then the remaining 3 plus penalty points that made up the final score for the C team. Despite the penalty points for 2 missing places that team is not last in the league!

The ladies completed their task admirably. We are currently placed 14<sup>th</sup> out of 15 teams.

I would also like to thank the fellow club members, parents and supporters who turned up to cheer the ladies on during the race.

The Juniors had their 3k race and we were represented by Salma and Marryan Khan. This was their first race with the club and did very well. I am still awaiting the result for the U13s.

Well done by every one.

Finally, there were some open air presentations of Cups & shields to Kerry & Faye for various achievements over the past year, Congratulations.

You don't have to do the London Marathon to run with famous people. Just come along and do Cross Country..

Sonia O'Sullivan Representing Thames Hare & Hounds at Nork Park



Desire is the most important factor in the success of any athlete. -- **Willie Shoemaker**

Adversity cause some men to break; others to break records. -- **William Arthur Ward**

Sports serve society by providing vivid examples of excellence. -- **George F. Will**

# Abingdon Marathon 2008

**Starring: John 'Army Boy' Foster, Ian 'The Driver' Yates, Kerry 'Don't stop smiling' Backshell, Alistair 'First Time' Price, Suzy 'I can still go faster' Yates, Chris 'Last Chance' Morton, Mick 'Mickpoint' Turner and Simon 'The Navigator' Ambrosi.**

**Script by Simon Ambrosi**

Driving back to my house Friday night I was feeling nice and relaxed, ready for a chilled pre marathon rest day with as little movement or disruption as possible. So why was it that at midnight instead of being tucked up in bed I was running up a hill with a heavy bag on my back off to phone the AA. Ok, deep breath, not too big a deal, they can tow me where I want and it wasn't like I needed my car for the weekend so only a minor setback, I'm too focused to let that affect me.

Saturday evening and Yates taxis arrive to drive me to Abingdon! Nice easy journey although I felt like a naughty child being checked on every 5 minutes to make sure I wasn't feeling asleep. A bit of sing-a-long-a Billy Joel and Foo Fighters later and we arrived at Yates hotel where feeling a bit underdressed for the plush surroundings we enjoyed our last supper!! All you want to do now is go to bed and get a good night's sleep, luckily Yates taxis was still in service so gave me a lift down the road to my B&B, well at least where I thought my B&B was. It didn't feel like natural B&B territory and reminded me more of New Addington only without the burnt out cars!! After a bit of unsuccessful searching I phoned my landlady for the evening who in a stern headmistress kind of way questioned what I was doing on the other side of town!! Some clear directions later and I was booked in, the Yates went back to their hotel and it was time to sleep.

7am and I rolled out of bed and into the shower to wake up, threw on my running gear and stumbled out of my room just as the Yates arrived for porridge. I don't tend to eat much before a long run so was nibbling my way through a bowl of cereal in awe of a fellow B&B occupant whose plate was completely covered in bacon, sausages, eggs and enough toast to feed a family of twelve for a month!! And yes he was running the marathon in 1 and a half hours time and ended up doing a decent time!! It was only a 10 minute walk to Tilsley Park athletics track for the start where we met up with the rest of the Striders runners and our first sighting of Mickpoint!!

The start of the race was a lap of the track and we all slotted into our little groups, me and Chris tucked up behind John, Kerry and the Yates a bit further back and Alistair hovering between the two. The first 11 miles was very disciplined for me as I



decided to try and use Chris as a pacemaker and he was very good averaging about 7:10 pace. It was at this point I let my legs take over from my head as they decided to speed up. I pulled away from the group I was with and meant I was running on my own for a while which was quite nice as it felt more like a long run than a race and I seemed to get bigger cheers from the supporter points as a lone runner! Luckily the course was well marked out and marshaled as the course map I printed off didn't seem to bear any resemblance to the actual course other than it went through Abingdon at some point, anyone would think I make these sorts of mistakes on a regular

basis, still haven't been asked to lead any of the club runs yet however I did take a

speed session one week and no one got lost, ok it was on the grass track... Anyway, back to the marathon, I went through halfway in 1:33 feeling good (compared to 1:35 in London feeling awful!!) and continued to push at probably just under 7 min pace going through 17 miles in a few seconds over 2 hours - great!! It must have been soon after this I started to slow a bit as Chris appeared again around mile 20 and the next checkpoint I remember was 21 miles in 2:32 as Chris started to disappear into the distance. The last 5 miles were very tough but I managed to hold it together a bit better than I did in April although must have been doing about 9 min miling. It was around 24 that I started getting heckled and realised it was our mobile Mickpoint shouting words of encouragement while cycling along on the other side of the road, Mick had been popping up at various places on the route which was much appreciated as was his water he gave me near the end!! The last mile was in the park on a narrow path that seemed to twist and turn a lot with a few ups and downs before 1 more lap of the running track where I was able to switch into Usain Bolt mode (or so it felt) to finish with a time of 3:19 a PB by 9 minutes and more importantly I actually enjoyed it (well at least 3 quarters of it!)

John had already finished in a very impressive 3:03 with Chris going into marathon retirement (surely not!!) (*I'll believe it when I see it – Ed*) with 3:10 then marathon first timer Alistair in 3:24, Suzy in 3:28 and moves further up the Striders leader board, Ian 3:29 with another 11 minutes off his PB and Kerry close behind in 3:31. Not bad for a Sunday jog!! A couple of weeks off then it's back in training for London and marathon number 3!! It all seems a bit weird given that this time last year I'd just finished my first half!! A marathon's not that bad ... when it's over!!!!



Chris celebrates a marathon PB in style.

And Finally.....

Some Non-Running Dates for Your Diary

Pete's Quiz Night – Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 8pm

At the Clubhouse

5 People Per Team Price Will Include a Hot Supper

Christmas Party 2008

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December at the Clubhouse

And not a greyhound in sight!