

# Striders of Croydon



Yes, it's that time again, when you too can run through mud. In shorts. In winter. When it is *really* cold. Go on, try Cross Country. It's FUN. Honest!

## Autumn Newsletter 2011

## Chairman's Corner

It's a bit odd being chairman of a running club and not being able to run! It is now more than seven weeks since I raised my pace above a brisk walk and it is beginning to look like it will be a few more months before I can break into a jog again as I am still waiting for a date for my next trip to the body shop for further engineering repairs. On the plus side my knees have stopped hurting, my legs are never sore, I am never out of breath and I have actually lost a bit of weight – a good advert for the benefits of not running. On the down side it's just not the same not being able to run with my fellow club members and I miss the buzz of finishing a good run through the local woodland,

One positive side effect of me being off and also JG being away on business is that we are obviously not short of run leaders even with four groups on Wednesday. To all those who have lead over the last few weeks thank you and keep up the good work.

Thank you to Corrine who is organising Christmas at the club house this year. After a few years where we have retired to restaurants for Christmas Dinner we thought it was time to try the club house again using the resident caterer. Come along if you can it's your club and your party.

I think most people now know if they are going to run a marathon this spring. As usual we will try and organise a longer run for every Sunday during the marathon training season as an alternative option to the many races available to you. Unfortunately I won't be running them with you but I hope to be able to support many of them either by bike or car. As usual I expect we will end up with two or three pace groups for most of these runs so I will be looking to some of you to provide the lead and set the pace.

A summary of the all the proposed runs is published elsewhere in the newsletter. This is only a provisional plan at this stage if anyone has any good routes they would like to propose as an alternative feel free.

As an experiment and to help all of you in training to keep in touch without cluttering up Striderlist I will be setting up a separate email circulation list so, for example, if you want to go out mid week for a longer run you may be able to find someone who is thinking of doing the same thing.

The Sandilands club continues to survive.... just. Over the last few years we have lost the nursery, which caused quite a few problems but did generate quite a bit of extra cash, This year there will be no junior football or lacrosse although they brought in a little extra cash they were having a dire effect on the grounds which had to be reseeded this spring.... just before the drought! Meanwhile the club house failed its electrical certification which is a condition of the insurance policy and it is costing a fortune to bring up to scratch

The Croydon Half should make a significant contribution but you can also help make sure the heating and the lights continue to work (most of the time) by buying some tickets in the Sandilands draw – alias The Sandilands Reserve Fund. I will be publicising this in the next few weeks.

And finally as you will all know the 2<sup>nd</sup> Croydon Half will take place on April 1<sup>st</sup>. I will be chasing for helpers etc in the new year. Meanwhile we are getting lots of support and cash from Streets Ahead which is why it is now the Streets Ahead Half Marathon. Entries are already coming in at a steady rate. We have 60+ so far. I was expecting to get the new route starting and finishing at the club house officially measured and certified this weekend but the guy who does it injured himself running!!

Such is life

*Robin*

## La Santa Here We Come



Just let me introduce myself for those that don't know me: My name is Michael George, Michael is my first name, not George--- get it? I don't mind being called any derivative from Michael, I have been called worse, of course, especially when I was a Fireman. I've been with the club for over 20yrs when it was called Philips City Striders and I have seen it grow into a massively progressive club of which I am proud to belong to. I'm glad to be back after a prolong break from regular running, it never crossed my mind to pack it in, I've invested too many miles for that. The club once again came to my rescue and rekindled my motivation for running with a purpose when I received the following surprise email:

In the ballot for club VLM 2012 marathon places held last night, the following people were the lucky ones :

Martin Gourlay

Alistair Price

Tony Shepherd

Steve Tyler

**Mick George**

Philippa Somerset

Amir Ghomshei

Yes, I consider myself very lucky and for the very first time I received this type of information without any trepidation or anxiety, I'm certainly up for the challenge and will not disappoint those that missed out from the ballot, I'll give it my best shot and I won't make it a wasted marathon place. I don't tweet or is it twitter? So I'll keep you informed of my training in the next newsletter.

If you have not been before La Santa is a must. I'm not on any commission, promise, but hopefully this article will convince you. 12 Striders are on their way leaving on the 17<sup>th</sup> November—fun and frivolity should be had by all. I can speak from personal experience, it used to be an annual event for Striders'. You can punish your body as much as you like with all of the sporting activities arranged for you or simply loath about around the clean swimming pool and take on board the sun's rays or read a good book:

Tom, learning how to be good Ummm!!!



La Santa's Pool



Here's some images of Striders chilling out beside the pool :



Sweet dreams---what's next?

It's blissfully knackered all of this strenuous exercise.

You might wish to climb a volcano and comfortably sweat off some weight:



You are provided with some rations: water and sandwiches



See my sweaty patches?

Or, you can have a ball of a time:



Kevin's made up his mind; a swift game of tennis with Andy Murray. Dream on, Kevin.

You might consider doing some punishing challenge in the gym:



NO PAIN. NO GAIN.

I PREFER TRAIN. NOT STRAIN.



You might fancy joining in with a swimming race in the Olympic size pool:



Or, if you fancy a Duathlon, then add some cycling:



The good quality poolside eatery is available at reasonable prices throughout the day to replace those burnt calories:



And not far from here within staggering distance is the Wellness centre,

basically, a first class spa ( I'd strongly recommend a visit, well worth it), which I have a reputation of living in most of the week. My philosophy is to: work hard and play hard.

After burning all those calories during the day the evenings are always taken up as feast time. During the day you do your own thing but in the evening the group gets together and visits a local restaurant about a mile walk into the town and for some they have to return by taxi.

A delicacy of black boar steak



Just admire the views while you are eating.

A glorious sunset



Hope you enjoyed this little intro to La Santa, there is much more info on the La Santa website and a multitude of things to do I just touched the surface, I hope it whetted your appetite and if you do get a chance to visit the centre I'd recommend you do so, families are welcomed to. Roll on the 17th November. I believe the 12 of us can't wait.

In summary:





## Marathon Training Runs

For those of you contemplating what runs to do in the new year in the run up to London/Brighton/Paris Marathons you have a choice of entering the many races at this time of year and /or running the extended Sunday Morning Club Runs.

This is a summary of the proposed Sunday morning runs. This is subject to last minute change and is very dependent on demand and availability of people willing to lead. The general aim is to have one quick and one steady group. Personally I don't think I will be running but hope to provide cycle or car support for as many as possible.

The definitive list along with links to the route maps and also the popular races in the south east you might wish to enter will be published on the Striders website shortly.

**Sun 18<sup>th</sup> Dec** = The Coulsdon 11. Catch the Train to Coulsdon Town or South Coulsdon and run back along the LOOP. Hiily but a good pre Christmas warm up.

**Christmas** – Nothing special planned yet, most likely option is the usual Sunday run on Boxing Day.

**Sun 1<sup>st</sup> Jan** - The Arctic 13 – Up Featherbed Lane to the White Bear, across to Coney Hall, past the end of North Pole Lane and back via West Wickham passing Iceland en route.

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan** – The Addington 4 . The annual club fun event where you work out your own handicap.

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> Jan** – The Greenwich 6,12 Or 13. The annual outing from London Bridge to Greenwich and back, finishing with English Breakfast at the Cafe Rouge!

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> Jan** – The Backenham 10 or 12. An extended run from the club house via Cator Park, Beckenham and Kelsey Park.

**Sunday 22 Jan** - The Oxted 11. Catch the train out to Oxted and run back along the Vanguard Way. Famous for the very steep climb up onto the North downs.

**Sunday 29 Jan** – The Wandle 14. Catch the train to Clapham and run back along the Wandle Way. Flat off road and opportunities to catch the tram.

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Feb** The Keston Ponds 6 or 14 . Either run from the clubhouse or meet at sparrows Den for a circuit of the Bromley Three commons route past Keston Ponds.

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> Feb** The Merstham 15 .- Catch the train to Merstham and run back along the North Downs Way, Then past Woldingham School, up to Warlingham.

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Feb** – Its the Brighton Half which many in the club run so most likely a normal Sunday run.

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> Feb** – The Warlingham White Bear 14. - Run from the Club house via Warlingham Chelsham and the White Bear.

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> Mar** – The Woolwich 14 or 19. – Run back from Woolwich Arsenal along the Green Chain Walk finishing at Beckenham tram stop with the option to keep going back to the club house. A new one for the club with some lovely woodland a spectacular views.

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Mar** – The Regents Canal 18 – Catch the train to Victoria. Run down the Thames to Lime House, follow the Regents Canal back to Paddington Basin, across Hyde Park and Finish on the Mall where the VLM will finish.

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> Mar** Botley Hill 18. From the club house out to Botley Hill Farm.....and back.

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> Mar** The Kingston 11,16,or 20. The final run in the series. From Clapham Junction to Kingston along the Thames Path with options to drop out at Richmond or extend the run to 20 miles with a circuit of Hampton Court.

Robin



### **HANKLEY HALLOWEEN HUSTLE**

**HANKLEY COMMON, ELSTEAD**

**30 OCTOBER 2011**

**By Linda Daniel**

The brooding dark clouds overhead perfectly befitted the atmosphere for the start of the Hankley Halloween Hustle 10 mile run.

Victoria and I lined up alongside 100 plus other runners to conquer the monster hills, devilishly deadly swamps, slithery energy sapping sands, ghosts, ghouls and skeletons of the bewitching Hankley Common. No need to worry about witch route to follow as broomsticks and ghostly masks on trees led the way into the cauldron of fear. Hubble bubble toil and trouble haunted our every stride but running scared, we eventually finished, not with the usual red and flushed complexion but white and ashen, as if we'd seen a Ghost or two !!

Victoria and I both agreed the event was a Thriller !



## Tales From The Dark Side

A couple of stories from two Striders brave enough to venture beyond just running...

### Victoria's Aquathon - by Victoria Legge

I joined the swimming group with a view to completing a triathlon. As I have never done one I need to make sure that I would be able to manage one. I also have not got a bike. Neil and Dee told me about Aquathon which are swimming and running, a great way to dip your toe in the water, if you pardon the pun. So I decided to sign up for one, I chose the Clash of Tritons which is run by Greenwich Tritons, this was mainly because two of our members are also members of the group and other people had told me how good it was.

I duly applied on line and received notification, I had already done a 20 minutes swim with Neil and knew I could do 14 lengths. 350 metres. It was 500 metres swim and 5 km run. That is 20 lengths of Trinity pool. Neil very kindly set up an mock transit station for us to practice. You put your shoes on first and then your t-shirt goes on, the only thing I had problems with was putting my shorts on, but Neil said, that on the day it was ok, if I could not get my shorts on, I would be ok to run with my swimming costume and T-shirt.

So on 13 August 2011 I made my way to Eltham College very early, due to my swim time I was put to go early. The slower swimmers go first and the fastest ones go last. I arrived at the swimming pool and registered and I was give my number and my number was also put on my arm and my leg. I also pick up my goodie bag and t- shirt as well. Then it was to work out where to go. One of the Greenwich Tritons took pity on the newbies and show us the transition area, a grass area just outside the pool where you could put your stuff down. I also checked what I could do with my glasses and it was agreed to give them to the lane counter. When I was putting my kit down another lady helped me by telling me to turn over my shoes to stop water getting in them. A marshall was clearing the grass area of any thing that could hurt the runners' feet. Then it was time to go pool side for a briefing. This was very important as you must not run at the pool area and as you exit the pool there was a step, no bare chests on the run. Then I was in the pool and started to swim. The first couple of lengths were hard for some reason and then eventually I calm down and continue swimming. Before I knew it the lane counter put the sign in the pool two lengths to go and then that was it. I exited the pool walking until I was out of the area and then started to run. I remember what Neil said and my socks and running shoes went on first and then my Striders vest went on over my swimming costume and then started to run. I thought running around the playing fields of Eltham College would be boring but it was not they had a lot of interest there, it was mainly flat, the marshalls as you went passed called out your name it took me a while to work out they were checking their list against your number. It was twice around and you were given a rubber band to put on your wrist, when you went on your second lap. When I was running as I was one of first, it was probably quieter but I can image as the morning wore on it would get confusing. Any way I finished and found my results straight away. Under 25 minutes for the swim and 33 minutes for the run I was happy. I start to get a bit cold straight away so I went straight and had a shower. As I made my way back for the post refreshments I saw Hannah and Carmen finished I had no idea they were there, but they enjoyed it as well.

I did stay around and watch others finishing and it was interesting to watch.

I would recommend doing an aquathlon if you like the thought of it and want to see if a tri would suit you. I have decided that I will do a tri in the future so watch this space.

## New Challenges for the Summer - by Tom Littlewood

In addition to the few races I have entered for running this year, only Sutton 10k so far. I have prioritised for aquathons and triathlons this summer. My long term target, after starting swimming regularly in 2007 had always been an Olympic Distance Triathlon. I have, after a few years of shorter distance races, entered in the London Triathlon at the end of July.

I realised I really would have to be swimming a bit more regularly, more than the once a week at trinity and also get on the bike a bit more. It was going to be a hard Summer of training!

This summer(if you can call it that) began, as always, with the Morden Aquathon. Formerly Morden 6n6, the swimming distance was this year shortened to 400 metres. I always find that it takes me about that long to really get relaxed into my stroke pattern. One thing I always worry about is the transition between swim / run and swim / bike. This seemed to go fairly smoothly at Morden and I was comfortable on the run finishing with 56.30 overall.

Next on my schedule was the Eton supersprints at Dorney Lake. This was to be the first triathlon which I have swum in open water, ie in a wetsuit. This was the new challenge which I really wanted to get some practise at before London in July.

I completed the 400m swim in 8:25 43:11 for 20k Bike and 24:23 for the 5K run. Overall 1:20:24. Not too disappointing., although not perfect as my first transition didn't go as smoothly as it should have. I was so concerned about being able to get my wetsuit off I went to the wrong end of the bike rack. As a result I had much too long a run to get to my bike.

Crystal Palace was not perfect either but for different reasons. This was the first triathlon I had done in 2008 and I was familiar with the course. 15 lengths of the pool for 750 metres and the painful part was the 9 laps of the park for the bike. This was followed by 2 laps on the run for 5k. My bike which I had had for just under a year, was giving me a few problems. I was misjudging the front gear change when going back into the larger gears.

The smaller front gears are definitely needed on the hill, which you face each lap. Disaster struck twice! My chain came off. With hands covered in oil and tired legs from the hill I was very glad to get onto the run.

I am always pleasantly surprised when they show the individuals race position for each separate discipline.

As normal I finished about 2/3 back in the field overall. However, I am normally about half way in placings for the run.

Having completed the shorter triathlons, I have also taken part in the Great London Swims and also the Great Northern Swim at Lake Windermere.



The same as running I am always looking to improve on previous times or go for new targets. I completed this years' Windermere swim in 36:24 so my target for London was to get under 36 minutes.

Although I thought the conditions were better in Victoria Docks for the London swim I didn't quite get the the sub-36. Finishing in 36:15. However, this is always a good day and especially this year as there were a few other Striders there for the swim.

And so to the big one. There are 3 weeks to go as I write and I have been for this morning's 25 miles cycle ride with a 3 mile run thrown in for good measure afterwards. Just as Marathon training in previous years these past 9 weeks have seemed work / run / sleep routine. As least I have had a bit of variation with either swim or bike ride instead. I don't have any great targets for the London Tri. I am just going to do my best on the day and try to enjoy the whole occasion.

If anyone would be willing to put some money in sponsorship I am, as before, raising this for the National Society for Epilepsy. The link to the just giving site is on the Marathon sponsorship page on the Striders website.

## Announcements!

It's been a busy time for Striders recently away from their running lives...

### Congratulations To:



Paul and Esther Weir who are now a trio, thanks to the addition of daughter Josie



Karen and Justin MacEnhill, whose daughter Anna Lucy couldn't wait to join Striders and so arrived three and a half weeks early!



Sarah Hansbury who got engaged to the very lucky Mark and who will tie the knot in August 2012



## And The Results Are In....

### Summary of the Striders Survey from Mick Turner

Firstly, thanks to all of you who took time to complete the survey. I'm going to focus on the topics which received the most feedback – this doesn't mean that individual responses are being ignored

We had 105 responses of which 97 completed it.

Unsurprisingly we discovered we're primarily a road running club – but with nearly a third of respondents having tried a triathlons/duathlons/aquathons in the past year.

How did the club rate – on the initial rating question we rated highly (over 85% either good or excellent) for Friendliness, Variety of club runs and Communication - You were, however, slightly less happy about the website, coaching advice, club kit and socials.

#### Club sessions

- Of other training sessions you would like us to consider - a few of you suggested more bike rides/cycling.
- A couple of you also suggested informal daytime runs
- 57 of you also said yes to a track and field taster session – so we'll definitely try and make that happen next year

#### Socials

- 75% said you would like to attend a Christmas social, with Under £30 being the most popular price-point – closely followed by under £40. Traditional Christmas meal was the food choice for 50 or you with Indian and Italian being chosen by over 40. So we're looking at some options and watch this space.
- 50% of respondents would like more socials – with once every couple of months being the most popular choice . This is still just 50 people out of a club of over 200.
- Quiz night and BBQ were the most popular choices for socials. We also had some good suggestions from Adventure Days/Go Ape, Theatre nights, Golf days and long walks. Essentially if you have an idea and are prepared to help organise – as Hannah did with the River Boat Cruise – then approach the committee and [we'll discuss and help you to organise it](#). More 'niche' events obv don't need to attract large numbers to be successful.
- Thanks for the many ideas for encouraging people back to the club bar on a Weds. From free beers to a darts competition. However, the availability of food was unsurprisingly the most popular suggestion, followed by hot drinks. We'll look to beef up the last Weds of the month drinks to include food – plus we're planning to start a series of talks or information sessions on running-related topics – starting with a marathon clinic in October. We welcome your ideas for topics for these sessions
- Lastly to mark the club's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year we're looking at a BBQ coupled with a Olympics/School Sports Day theme.

## **Striderslist**

The vast majority of you are happy with the volume of emails on striderslist and this will remain the primary method that we use to make club announcements. We'll just send out reminders about etiquette when using it. If you have unsubscribed we would recommend you re-subscribe and choose to receive a daily digest – so just one email a day. All msgs also do come with the SOC mailing list in the subject field so you can also filter these into a folder for future reading.

As mentioned on striderslist we do also have a FB and now Twitter presence so if you do want to get involved then sign up.

## **Website**

Many of you think the website needs updating/ a redesign. So we'll look into this. Ease of update for Chris/committee – and potentially members is the key.

A number of you also would like a who's who gallery on the site. This is something we've debated in the committee for a while but understand not everybody will want a named photo publicly available on the web. So if there's a simple way of managing this then we'll look at it again. That or name badges for Wednesday night club runs.

## **General comments**

Over 40 of you commented, a quarter of which were complimentary. Lots of other suggestions from more injury advice to abolishing honorary membership.

BUT The most popular other issues raised were.

- How we introduce new members to the club. This is something we've been aware that we've neglected – so we'll be producing a Welcome PDF for newbies – and also offer them to buddy up with somebody, if they want, in their first few weeks. We need help producing this Welcome pack and to be a 'buddy/mentor' so please contact Mick if you would like to help out on either of these.
- Club runs – Concerns were that the Friday run no longer did what it was set up for – i.e. a slower social run. And that the Sunday run discourages slower runners.
- Our response to these concerns is that on Fridays there will always be a steadier run. There has always been one.
- Sunday runs (out of marathon training season) will start as one group and is open to all runners - (Because at marathon training time we do occasionally start with 2 or 3 groups). The club policy is, and will remain for all groups, that run groups always loop and the route is dictated by the pace of the slowest runner in the group. We do acknowledge that there is perhaps an issue when we come to the half hour split on a Sunday. Some of you, perhaps thinking of running for another hour, are put off if the hour and a half group consists of speedier runners. We may look at offering two pace groups for the additional hour after the half hour split, but this is obv dependent on who is running and can lead. It just re-enforces the need to have more run leaders – available to help – for all of our club runs.
- We also had a number of people wanting us to be more competitive and for more members to turn out for inter-club competitions. Chris and I would love more of you to – but this, of course, is a personal choice

## Dates for Your Diary

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December – Women's Cross Country, Richmond Park

Friday 16 December – Striders' Christmas Party, see Corrine for details

Monday 2 January – Addington 4, a chance to set your own handicap!

Saturday 14 January – Men's Cross Country, Reigate Priory

Saturday 14 January – Women's Cross Country, Farthing Downs

### 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

DISCOUNTED RATES FOR STRIDERS OF CROYDON

**And Finally...** (as there won't be a newsletter in December)

I know it's early but **Happy Christmas to All Striders!**