

Striders of Croydon AC

30TH ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2012



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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER OCTOBER 2012

Welcome to our new newsletter editors Debra Bourne and Alan Dolton, and farewell and thank you to Susan Haynes who has been putting it together for the past few years. Remember if you are involved in an interesting event or adventure or discover the secret of how to train for a marathon without having to run for miles write it up and send it to Alan at the time. Don't wait until you are prompted. You may have noticed the Olympics is now all over although it was good to see the uniforms being resurrected for the Switchback. Once again congratulations to everyone who helped there are some items on peoples experience at this amazing event.

It was also our 30th Birthday – you will find a quiz from Alan on our first 30 years later on. After an excellent Switchback everyone seemed to enjoy the "BBQ" in the afternoon despite the heaviest rain we have had for a long time. It also proved that our marquees, which were originally bought to act as baggage tents for the Croydon Half Marathon, are completely useless at keeping the rain off. So back to the drawing board.

If you haven't done so already don't forget to pay your membership subs a.s.a.p. Having kept the subs unchanged this year we have just heard that the affiliation fee for Road runners rises from £5 to £10 and for T&F Athletes to £20. Since we don't have to pay it until next year the club will absorb the extra cost for now though we still have to decide how to manage the extra fee for T&F.

The Cross Country season has just started. As a club it is very good for our collective ego to do well in the League events so the more of you that can get to race on a Saturday afternoon as a change from a parkrun the better. Go on, have a go.

Also coming up – the Croydon 10K on the 21st. It hasn't happened yet but we are usually asked at the last minute to provide some helpers. If we are, and you aren't running, please volunteer. In return Croydon Harriers provide quite a lot of help for the Croydon Half Marathon which is now beginning to roll – 15 entries already. We won't be asking until much nearer the time but put 7th April 2013 in your Diary and please offer to help it is the major club event of the year. If you helped last year or can offer a friend to sub for you feel free to enter.

And finally two more dates for your diary. There will be a club quiz and fish and chips in the bar on Friday 9th November and the club Christmas dinner will be in the hall on Friday 7th December. May all your runs be through sunlit forests.

Robin Jamieson

STRIDERS AT THE OLYMPICS

Striders usually get a small mention on the sports pages of the Croydon Advertiser (although we do not get as much space as many of us would like), but the 31 August issue saw us get onto the news pages as well:

“Croydon sent its very own athletes to the Olympic Games, as a bunch of avid runners lent a hand. Striders of Croydon sent 19 of its members to the London Games to act as sport specialists due to their previous experience of assisting each year at the London marathon. The group were involved in assisting in the cycling road race, the marathons and the men's 50km road walk.

John Gannon, from the club, said: ‘All of the Striders found this once-in-a lifetime experience to be, although involving a lot of very hard work, vastly satisfying while the positive feedback received from the public is something that will remain with them for a long time to come.’”

13 of our 19 helpers are pictured on the front cover: congratulations to all who helped.

STRIDERS GAMESMAKERS (by Stuart Hills)

London 2012 only happened because of me...

Having eventually jumped through all the hoops that the London Olympic Deliverance Authority, kindly sponsored by McDonalds and Cadbury, could find, I eventually became a Games Maker and embarked on a mission to discover the shadowy world of Three Letter Acronyms (TLAs) and repetitive, I said repetitive, no I really did say repetitive, meetings and emails.

The first one I went to was Wembley. Yes, Wembley - to a Palace supporter that's like going to another planet and, indeed, it felt like it. The heavy artillery was rolled out, Huw Edwards, esteemed BBC news reader, along with Jonathan Edwards, Eddie Izzard and Baron Sebastian Newbold Coe. Only non-runner on the day was Boris, no doubt busy elsewhere. We were bombarded with information, encouraged to learn sign language, given a Games Maker manual and sent on our way with the missive I DO ACT. This was all meant to stand for something or other but appeared to have little to do with the fact that I would be making sure that the great British (and rest of the world) public could cross the road safely during the Road Cycling and Marathon events.

Then came UDAC (Uniform Distribution & Accreditation Centre) – one letter too many for a TLA but never mind. This was based about a 10 minute walk from West Ham tube station, an enormous warehouse where it took over 90 minutes to gather said accreditation and uniform. I had to go through the whole procedure again for the Paralympics which rather begs the question: why couldn't I have collected accreditation and uniforms for both the Olympics and Paralympics at the same time?

Even the Road Cycling VST (please note the use of a TLA), that's Venue Specific Training, was neither specific nor at the correct venue. Training took place at Sandown Park racecourse and I was to be on duty at Twickenham High Street and had little to do with seeing ladies, little or old, across the road. We were told we may or may not be given use of whistle, use of a marshal bib or use of a flag! Due to the non-appearance of my Team Leaders we were told all this would be decided on the day! More paperwork followed, but nobody checked to see if I had learnt any sign language.

This was followed by a much briefer and more succinct approach from the London Marathon team who were, unsurprisingly, organising the Marathons. Their experience and know how was a great improvement on the Road Cycling experience of earlier in the day. My Team Leader, okay it was only Mr Gannon but at least I had a Team Leader this time, actually took the time to integrate any non-Striders and prepared our three teams to man (or woman, as I wouldn't want to be gender specific) the crossing points. JG didn't appear to understand my use of sign language.

VST at The Mall

An improvement on Sandown Park which included a guided tour of The Mall and Horse Guards Parade and a very informative and amusing address from I believe a Lieutenant Colonel in the Welsh Guards who regaled us with a history of the area and how hot he was dressed in full military regalia which apparently included “half a Welsh sheep on his back”. But even the Lieutenant Colonel wasn't interested in my ability, or otherwise, in sign language.

July 28 & 29, Road Cycling

Finally, the day after the Opening Ceremony and I was starting at 0630 hours at Sandown Park – yes, that's very early in the morning.

Finally saw my four Team Leaders and checked in with them. They appeared to be preparing some sort of game plan. After collection of lunch and bottled water we boarded a double-decker bus and proceeded to our muster points. These took rather longer than expected to get to as the bus driver got lost! I kid you not. Having passed Bushy Park I assumed he felt he would not get his bus through the gates at the park so was going the long way round. When we reached Kingston and headed out to Surbiton I, and many others, realised he was lost. Two of our Team Leaders were at the front of the bus all the time so it did appear between the three of them they actually knew where they were going. After an intervention from a Teddingtonian Games Maker, the driver got us back on the right road to Twickenham only to crash into a very large overhanging branch which narrowly missed a mum pushing her baby in a push chair. Although there was damage to the bus nobody, including mum and baby, was hurt. However, we did have the problem of an eight metre branch to dispose of as this happened to be on the field of play! Our leather clad, motor cycling Sector Leader came by just as we were clearing the debris on to the drive way of someone's house and he contacted the local council to come and remove it forthwith.

Having been eventually dropped off we were left to our own devices to manage our crossing point and liaise with both Security staff and Met Police as well. I and the three others I was with at last felt we were doing something useful! Once the cycling entourage had come through Twickenham we made our way by public transport to Norbiton and provided our services for the return leg where I counted 65 police motor cyclists leading assorted support vehicles and finally the cyclists themselves. The following day arrived with much the same as the previous day but with the mishaps as the Team Leaders seemed far better prepared, as did the bus driver!

Aug 5, Women's Marathon

Our Striders team were joined by two others and we were split into three teams of six to man crossing points in Northumberland Ave and the Embankment. I was a Team Leader in Northumberland Ave and we liaised with Crowd Security and Field of Play Security, along with a mobile Met Police and Ambulance presence which passed by at regular intervals. Our Section leader and second in command were very on the ball. The crowds were immense, but fortunately good humoured. The Crowd Security were happy to assist us in opening and closing the crossing points and the crowd showed both their patience and appreciation. Still no need for the sign language but a smattering of Spanish meant I was adopted by some passing Mexicans.

On conclusion of our duties we adjourned to the nearby Sherlock Holmes pub for an unofficial debrief where we were given a round of applause and three hearty cheers from a grateful British public for our efforts.

August 11, 50k Men's Walk

Just two crossing points and a smaller team for this event. Once again, we were fortunate to have two good Crowd Security staff alongside us who were happy to help. Being on a 2km loop we shut the crossing prior to the race and opened immediately afterwards. I must warn anyone who is considering watching a 50k race walk to think again...

August 12, Men's Marathon

Once again, good leadership on our section and good liaison with both Crowd and Field of Play Security made the event a success. Many amusing moments with Peter "did you know I nearly beat Huw Jones once" Shew organising a Mexican wave with Kevin and Jan "stars of stage, screen and Olympic opening ceremonies" Bannister and Pat Edwards pouncing on a Chinese guy who was hoping to swap his Beijing Games Maker top for a London one. Before anyone else could react Pat had stripped off her top in the middle of Northumberland Avenue and done the deed. We also had warnings of threats to disrupt the race with bags of fake £50 notes being found in the City, an anarchists' demo planned for Trafalgar Square and a man in a ginger wig and a skirt attempting to stop the race. I was obviously in a state of high alert ready to stop any of these misdemeanours with my ability to use sign language... but, unsurprisingly, it wasn't required!

And so to Rio in four years time... do Easyjet go there?



OLYMPIC RADIOGRAPHY - LONDON 2012 (by Kate Custis)

Two years ago I noticed a small advert in our professional journal asking for applications for staff to work in the medical team at the London 2012 Olympics. As I'm obviously a mad sports fan I felt I couldn't ignore the opportunity so duly sent my application off. This was my first dealing with LOCOG and I quickly discovered that their organisation was less than brilliant as I didn't hear anything back from them for about 8 months. I was finally invited for interview at the Excel centre last August just before my holiday and was please to finally be accepted to the role of 'Olympic Radiographer' in February this year.

There were various processes to be completed including collection of the lovely uniform from a random warehouse in East London and photo taking for accreditation. Training would have been a good idea however LOCOG managed to arrange all of the radiographer training during one week in June when I happened to be in Chamonix attempting a Mont Blanc ascent so I missed that completely. I did manage to attend an afternoon of venue-specific training and had my first experience of the athletes' village which, on first impressions, was a vast ghost town. The poly clinic was impressive. Four floors of dedicated medical equipment ready to host the Olympic athletes and to cater for their every need from dentistry to podiatry and everything in-between. In radiology we had two MRI scanners, a CT scanner, two ultrasound machines, a lovely digital room for plain imaging and a DVD burner for transferring images to allow athletes to take copies of their examinations home with them.

The rota was another story. Weirdly I discovered that the radiographer, from Leeds, who had the task of organising the radiographic rota each day from 10 days prior to the opening ceremony until the end of the Paralympics had attended my brother's wedding some 15 years ago. She did a grand job of, as she described, herding cats, i.e. 30 radiographers from all over the UK, into a rota to provide daily cover from 6:30am until 23:15pm with most of us taking 10 shifts.

LOCOG provided us with free transport and meals and decreed that on an early shift (6:45am until 3pm) we would arrive for a briefing at 6:30am and have one meal break at lunchtime, and on a late (3pm until 23:15pm) the briefing would be at 2:45pm and meal at 6pm-ish. The daily briefing updated us on events of the past day including the number of athletes seen (even on day 2 we had exceeded the maximum seen in a day in Beijing and that was before the athletics had started!), nice comments from various team doctors, Seb Coe and some of the important dignitaries, all of whom were impressed at the level of treatment and general efficiency, and other information pertinent to the shift ahead.

On a daily basis I decided that lates were the best option for me and managed to swap most of my early shifts, thus gaining a nice lie in, a morning watching the competition on TV and a late journey home on the 23:19 from London Bridge. Most days mornings were quieter for us in the x-ray room with most our time spent burning examinations, mostly MRI scans, to DVDs and printing off the associated reports for athletes to take back to team doctors. During the day it usually increased in activity with the peak of manic-ness at about 7-10pm when, we generally decided, was the

time when training/competition had finished, the effects of painkillers had worn off and everything started to hurt! It was during my first few shifts that I realised that most top level athletes are held together with tape, pain relieving injections and physio, and reading some of the reports I was surprised that some of them could walk let alone compete at Olympic level!

Obvious patient confidentiality prevents me from expanding on specific names and associated injuries but I did come across some famous names and some impressive injuries. Probably the worst mechanism of injury I encountered was the weightlifter who dropped his 196kg bar on his neck (available to watch on YouTube!) and the male triathletes who crashed at the start of the bike leg. I imaged mountain bikers, road cyclists, gymnasts, swimmers and track and field athletes as well as a range of others and lots of Ukrainians!

It was surprising to talk to some of the athletes who said that that in their countries they had no access to MRI or CT scanning at all and only plain imaging facilities once every three months. If you're thinking of changing allegiance and competing for another nation don't go to Costa Rica, but aim for the USA instead! This was quite shocking particularly when I compare the complete overuse of radiographic facilities that occurs on a daily basis at Lewisham A and E and indeed throughout the NHS as a whole.

So... would I do it again? Yes definitely! I managed to wander out into the athletes' village most days and enjoyed the atmosphere of being surrounded by Olympic athletes and seeing competitors showing off their hard earned medals in the plaza, usually surrounded by purple and red clad volunteers trying to indulge in the officially banned sport of athlete photography. Perks of the job were being able to buy limited edition athletes' village pin badges, first day covers celebrating Team GB success and stamped with the athletes' village official stamp and then posted from the village, and eating as much free food as I could pile onto my plate (yes that did include McD's), hearing the roar of the stadium crowds every time a GB medal was won and working with and making friends with some lovely colleagues from all over the UK. Downs... well not really any if you ignore the late night sprints to get to the tube before the stadium tipped out and losing 8 days of annual leave.

Anyway I'm now firmly back in the land of reality in A and E x-ray at Lewisham and won't be leaving any time soon as I have no leave left!

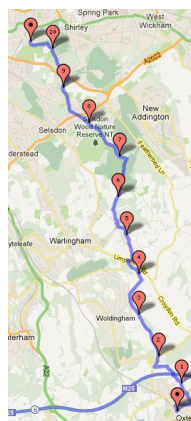
STRIDERS STROLLS – Robin Jamieson

As I was banned from running at the beginning of the year due to failing my MOT and requiring some body repairs I thought I would offer a few walks to anyone in the club who could make a Friday. The general aim was a walk on the last Friday of the month with easy access from Croydon by car or train and a distance of around 10 miles with a convenient cafe or pub towards the end for lunch. The first walk was in March, there are ones already planned for the end of October and November. I have had a few requests to organise one for a Saturday which I am afraid I cannot do but if anyone else wants to launch the occasional Saturday Stroll feel free. You are welcome to borrow one of my route maps. This is a very brief guide to the walks for this year.

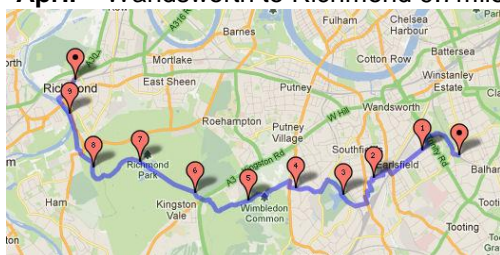
March - From Oxted to the clubhouse. 10.5 miles

This route is one of our occasional away runs. It follows the last (or first) leg of the Vanguard Way (the long distance path from East Croydon to Newhaven created by the Vanguard Ramblers Club so named because they were formed while travelling back from a walk in the guard's van).

There is a steep climb to the top of the North Downs with excellent views. The pub on Chelsham Common, now called the Coach House makes a good stop for lunch at the 6 mile mark.



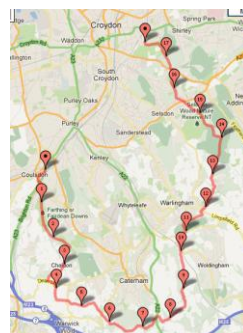
April – Wandsworth to Richmond 9.7 miles



Possibly the best leg of the Capital Ring, the 72 miles walk all the way round London. The first two miles past the prison, the cemetery and through Earlsfield are not the most exciting but are made up for by the walk across Wimbledon Common and Richmond Park. Stop for a pie or pastie at the Windmill Cafe on Wimbledon Common, then an ice cream at the top of Richmond Hill and finish with a drink at the White Cross on the riverside at Richmond.

May Coulsdon via ND Way 12m or 17m

A longer version of our regular Marathon training run. Starting at Coulsdon, heading up Farthing Down to Chaldon then onto the North downs Way. Take your own snack for a short rest break at the view point at Gravelly Hill at 7 miles then back through Woldingham School to Woldingham and Knights Garden centre for a light lunch. This is at the 10 mile mark. After lunch you can choose to continue a further 2 miles to Warlingham Sainsbury and catch the bus or keep going all the way to the club house a total of 17 miles.

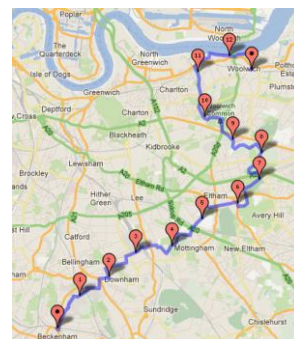


June Tattenham Corner circular walk.

As I was away Andy Elliot kindly led this one. I know he set off from Tattenham Corner; I am not entirely sure where they went.

July Beckenham to Woolwich Arsenal 13m

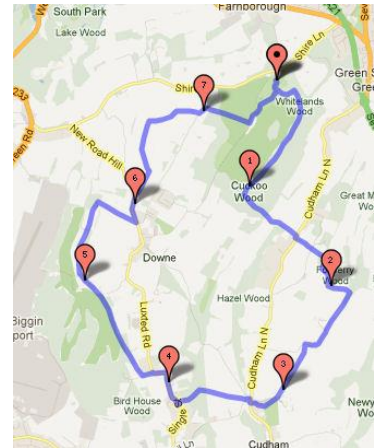
From the Beckenham Junction tram stop to Woolwich Arsenal along another leg of the Capital Ring also called the Green Chain walk. Some lovely views on route and surprisingly green considering how much of it is through built up areas. There is an excellent cafe with a view at Oxleas Wood. Slightly disconcerting when we walked it was the anti-aircraft battery dug in just in front of the cafe preparing for the Olympics. You can opt to finish at Charlton at about 11 miles but it is well worth continuing along the river to Woolwich Arsenal so you can finish with a pint at the Dial Arch in the Arsenal itself.



August - Cudham circular 7.7m



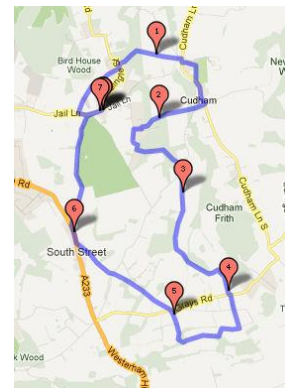
The first walk with our new mascot Matilda who kindly brought her mum Yasmin and Pippa the dog with her. Cudham is one of 7 well signposted circular country walks to the South of Bromley. This one you can start from High Elms or Cudham and



lunch at either the Blacksmith's Arms in Cudham, the George and Dragon in Downe or our favourite the Queen's head in Downe. As many of you know this one also makes an excellent run.

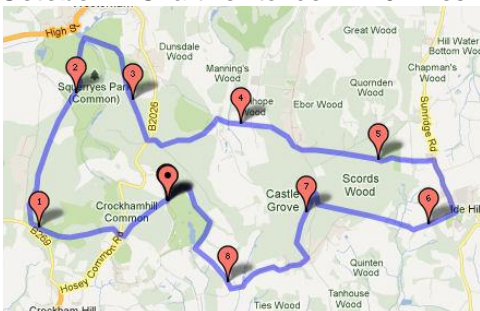
September – Berry Green 7 miles

Last month we walked a minor variant of another Bromley Circular Walk – Berry's Green. Starting and finishing at the Old Jail near Biggin Hill another 7 miles with plenty of stiles. Also a good run but perhaps better earlier in the year before the brambles start to attack. During 2013 we will try and complete the rest of the longer Bromley walks many of which also make good away run routes.



Still to do this year

October – Chartwell to Ide Hill 9 miles.



The plan for the end of October is a variant of a route we have done as a run. Start from Chartwell head towards Limpsfield and then towards Westerham then through French Street to Ide Hill and back via Toys Hill for lunch at the Fox and Hounds then a couple more miles to finish with coffee or tea back at the NT cafe at Chartwell..



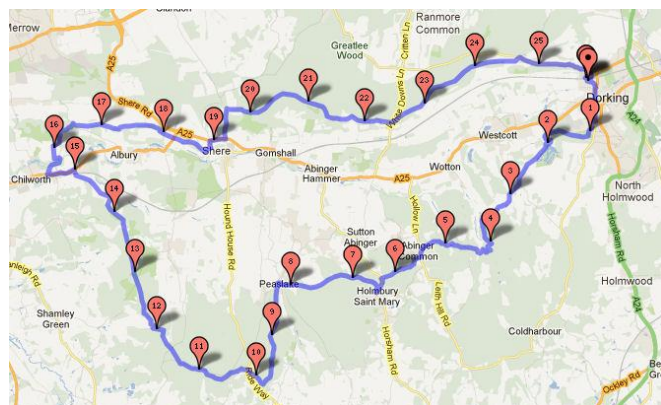
November – Victoria to London. 10.4 miles

I thought it was time we visited central London so, probably the last walk this year we will walk from Victoria Station to London Bridge via Hyde Park, Little Venice and the Regents Canal, Camden Market, Chapel Market, Whitecross Market, St Pauls, the Millenium Bridge and Borough Market.

LDWA Founders Walk 26 miles

And finally not a stroll but a stretch this rather shortened version of the LDWA Founders Route turned out to be a good training walk for Susan Haynes who by the time you read this will be well on her way up Kilimanjaro the highest mountain in Africa.

I wouldn't recommend doing the whole thing but the 16 miles from Dorking to Chilworth is an excellent walk with some good views lovely forest and excellent pubs en route at Friday Street, Peaslake Holmbury and Chilworth. The thing to watch... there is only a train back every 2 hours.



THE PLASTIC CUP – Robin Jamieson

Newer members of Striders may have heard reference to The Plastic Cup and orienteering round the Shirley Hills and Lloyd Park. As an ex-member of Eborienteers up in Yorkshire and then the CROC (the Croydon Orienteering Club, sadly now defunct and effectively absorbed by the Dartford Orienteering Club DFOC), I had a rather old version of the orienteering maps for this area. So in 2003 I ran an informal “O” event using numbered plastic cups as the control points. Hence the name. We have run an event most years since although it became progressively more difficult as the maps became out of date.

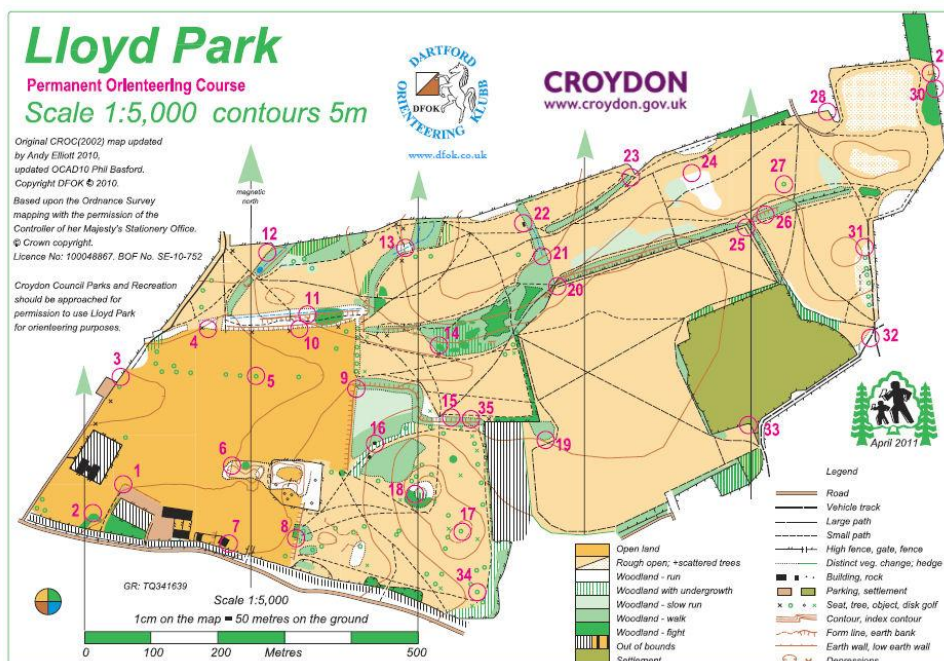
However, Andy Elliot, also an ex member of CROC and now a member of DFOC, offered to re-establish the permanent orienteering course around Lloyd Park on behalf of Croydon Council. He updated the map and established a whole new set of controls. We used this last year for what is called a score event. That is to visit as many control as possible in 1 hour in any order. This year I planned to do a more conventional event where you visit control in a designated sequence. I left it too late and the rain and lush undergrowth got in the way so we are now waiting for a frost to start flattening things a bit. Hopefully we can now hold an event on a Sunday in November.

If you want to have a go on your own the details and a full size map can be found on the Croydon Council web site at

<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/contents/departments/leisure/pdf/orienteering-notes.pdf>

The map itself is a larger version of this.

The unfamiliar colouring of O maps with open woodland in white and parkland in yellow is because the sport developed in Swedish forests where the vast majority of the course would be in open runnable forest with the odd clearing marked in yellow and patches of undergrowth marked in green.



STRIDERS AND BLOODHOUNDS (by Matthew Chapman)

Last Winter I took part in a slightly unusual running experience: I ran across Ashdown Forest as live quarry for a pack of Bloodhounds. The Coakham Bloodhounds have been hunting in the south east since the late 1970s. Most Sunday mornings between October/November and March/April (and most Wednesdays as well) between 20 and 30 or so cross bred Bloodhounds hunt small teams of runners across the countryside between the North and South Downs (but most of the Hunt's country is concentrated in East Sussex on and near the South Downs). The Bloodhounds were formed in order to ensure that such hunting country as remained in the south east could be hunted in an efficient and reasonably safe way. Increases in urbanisation and road building in this area meant that fox and hare hunting had become more and more difficult to organise. The Bloodhounds, by contrast, could follow pre-determined lines – laid by runners – which skirted roads, motorways and the larger urban areas. The runners that the Hounds follow are not doused in any form of artificial scent. Instead, the Bloodhounds hunt what is called the "*clean boot*": the unadulterated human scent. Typically, the runners set off in a group of two or three (headed by a "*quarry captain*" who has a map and knows the route) and are given a 30 minute start on the Hounds and horses. The Hounds are hunted by a mounted huntsman who encourages them to find the scent by using his voice and a hunting horn (different notes are blown to encourage the Hounds to find the scent, to signal to the mounted field that the Hounds are running with the scent – the "*gone away*" – at the "*kill*" – when the runners are found – and at home, when the days hunting has ended). The huntsman is assisted by a couple of other riders (whippers-in) who, among other tasks, round up stray Hounds and encourage the Hounds to hunt in a pack. The riders (perhaps 30 or so on a big day) follow some way behind jumping the hedges, fences and ditches that the runners and Hounds have crossed (behind a Field Master who keeps them in check and, theoretically, prevents them from distracting or, worse, riding forwards and into the Hounds).

I ran as quarry for the Bloodhounds on a very cold and overcast (but, at least dry) Sunday last November. The meet was at a riding/livery stables on the edge of Ashdown Forest. While the toffs on horseback (actually, they're not really toffs – it's perhaps more, "*The Archers*" than "*Downton Abbey*") were tucking into sausage rolls and hot punch (for the Dutch courage they'd need to fly over some of the hedges and gates on the hunting lines that day), I was being jumped on and slobbered over by a large pack of Hounds (such close contact with the Bloodhounds ensures that they have your scent when the hunting starts; there's no need not to wash for several days before running – the Hounds are so efficient at finding scent that they can even follow the line laid by the trail shoes of the least whiffy Human). There were three of us running as quarry. We set off with a map (held by the quarry captain) around 25 minutes or so before the Hounds were laid on our scent trail. To ensure a real test of his skill, the Huntsman is not informed in advance of the route that he's hunting and, while running, we zig-zagged and threw in a few circles and blind alleys (rather than running in a straight line) to make the Huntsman's task more difficult (and to ensure that the Hounds had fun). I had known in advance that the Hounds would be much more interested in the doggy snacks that they're given as reward for a successful hunt than they would be in me, but the sound of thirty Hounds baying as they found my scent and followed it at speed still made the hairs stand up on the back of my neck (and acted as an incentive to run faster). The Hounds hunt by scent, rather than sight and so, when they caught us, circled right around the field where we were waiting at the end of a line (following exactly the line that we had run), rather than taking a more direct diagonal route across the field.

We completed four hunts on the day that I was running – each, perhaps, three or four miles in length (some lines longer than others). Although the Hounds and horses were galloping hard behind us, the running was reasonably sedate in pace and there were occasional checks and halts (not only to confuse the Hounds, but also to consult the map/route), but the

going was very wet/boggy in places (we forded a couple of brooks on the way) and somewhat undulating so I imagine it would be fairly efficient cross country training (like cross country I was plastered in liquid mud by the end). We had to chase away some startled looking deer on the way (we had flushed out three roe deer while crossing a field of stubble and had to pause because the deer needed to be chased out of the way in order to stop the Hounds leaving our scent and trying to follow the deer instead). Another interruption was created by an out of control black Labrador (Fenton?) whose owner refused to be persuaded that it would be a good idea to put his dog on a lead and get out of the way before the Hunt passed through (a sudden change in wind direction meant that he could hear the keening wail of a pack of Bloodhounds heading towards him and his dog – fast – and this persuaded him to move). The countryside we passed through was lovely – even in the winter cold – and, because we were laying a trail for the Hunt, we had access to private land that is usually off-limits to riders and walkers.

Anyone who likes dogs, horses and country walking/running would probably enjoy a day as human quarry for the Coakham and they occasionally advertise for new runners (most Meets are within a 60 – 90 drive of Croydon) – any Strider interested might want to have a look at the Hunt website www.coakhambloodhounds.com and there are some clips of recent hunts on You Tube.



THE NORTH DOWNS WAY 50 (by Debra Bourne)

On August 11th I tackled my first 50-miler, the North Downs Way 50. This trail race starts at Farnham and follows the North Downs Way back to Knockholt Pound, with about 5,500 feet of ascent along the way.

We drove down to a B&B just outside Farnham the night before and found the school where registration would be in the morning. I slept badly, despite having set THREE alarms! Registered about 6.30, Vaseline my feet, and applied sun cream to all exposed skin areas. Just before 7.30 we were led down the road to the start of the trail where we hung around for a few minutes then finally got the countdown and we were off! Having set off too fast in the Croydon Ultra (30 miles) in July and paid for it later, I carefully kept at about 9 - 9.30 mins per mile in the early stages. My aim was to finish in under 10 hours. The heat was quite sapping and I was really glad that much of the run was in the shade of trees, and most of the non-shaded bits were on the tops of hills and were breezy. I wore a hat for protection when it was sunny and took it off in the shade to allow increased heat loss from my head (at one of the later water stations I poured half a bottle of water over my head as well). Couple of times when I felt tired I squirted neat Elete (concentrated electrolytes) into my mouth (as suggested by one of the Centurion people at registration) and this seemed to work. I also had Elete in my water bladder (2.5 mL to 500 mL water).

At the second aid station my husband met me and I changed into my larger (size five!) Neo trail shoes to allow for foot swelling in the heat and to reduce pressure on my tender left Achilles tendon. For the next two miles I really regretted it as both that Achilles and the tendon leading to the big toe felt quite painful, but finally they gave up grumbling.

The aid stations were well stocked with a variety of food (a cheese wrap, cheese sandwich, flapjack and crisps are bits I remember grabbing) as well as water and flattish Coke (which tastes very good in the middle of a long run). I was carrying Kendal mint cake, fig rolls and malt loaf so I was well supplied between aid stations as well.

Much of the time I was running by myself, but I did have some nice stretches with other runners, including the last few miles before Box Hill which was really useful and helped me keep running when I was flagging a bit. There were several people I played "leap-frog" with quite a bit as we had different strategies – such as the guy who was running nine minutes, walking one. I wasn't following any set schedule, but was walking the steeper uphill (what counted as steep enough to walk got less steep as the race progressed, of course), and the steep downhill steps. Started passing some of the slower people on the 100-mile race (who had begun 90 minutes before us) including four army guys carrying full packs (who didn't make it to the finish, sadly).

The stepping stones just before Box Hill were useable (compared with invisible under water when I recced the route four weeks previously), and the course as a whole had dried up considerably, thankfully (I didn't regret not having to run through four inches of mud topped with four inches of water as I'd done on my recce runs). Box Hill and the next few miles were hard going, as expected, although easier than when they had been wet, muddy and slippery. I only actually fell once in the race, on a nice bit of sand path (caught a piece of sticking up metal with my foot) and landed safely. Nearly fell three other times but managed to keep upright, just.

What with passing and being passed by the same runners, and passing people who were doing the 100-miler, and not being able to track whether I passed or was passed by anyone at the aid stations, I had no real idea where I was in the field. During the second half of the

race, twice someone told me I was second woman, which I didn't believe. With about 12 miles to go I did the calculations and worked out that I had a chance of finishing within my 10-hour goal, so I pushed on. I was very pleased to discover that, where the terrain allowed (fairly smooth and not uphill) I was still able to reach (relatively) decent speeds - 9.30/mile, 9.00/mile, even faster for short periods. Then there were the uphill bits and the downhill steps which were rather slower... The couple of stiles were not as bad as I was expecting.

About six or seven miles from the end, on a nice bit of soft trail, I passed a woman who had passed me, looking strong, in the first few miles of the race.

I was now in the home straight: having reced this bit twice, I knew exactly where I was and what to expect, including the uphill slog to walk through the plantation before the last aid station, and the last steep uphill about four miles from the end. Glancing at the time, I kept pushing - the fact that I was literally "heading home" helped as well. Finally, I passed out of the last field onto the road and ran hard for Knockholt Pound village and the finish line, getting there in 9 hours 53 minutes. Amazingly, they said I was first woman and gave me a bottle of champagne! My husband and father-in-law got there maybe two minutes after I'd finished, and looked after me superbly.

The splits up on the website showed that I was in 40th place (out of 91 starters) at 24 miles, but 18th overall at the end, so I was pleased with my pacing. I did feel tired once I'd stopped, but really, it didn't feel like nearly 10 hours on my feet.

The race was very well organised and pretty well marked – I didn't need my map and compass on the day. I would certainly recommend recceing the route in advance, because it's good knowing what's ahead of you. The volunteers at the aid stations were really great.



SURREY ROAD LEAGUE 2012: FINAL TABLES

Men's League

Club	Best 4
Tadworth AC	116
Reigate Priory AC	114
Clapham Chasers	112
South London Harriers	109
Stragglers	108
Ranelagh Harriers	104
Striders of Croydon	102
Hercules Wimbledon AC	98
Elmbridge RR	93
Collingwood AC	92
Woking AC	89
Croydon Harriers	81
Wimbledon Windmilers	75
Haslemere Border AC	74
Sutton Runners	71
Camberley & District AC	69
Dulwich Runners	63
Dorking & Mole Valley AC	63
Epsom Oddballs	62
26.2 RRC	62
Redhill Royal Mail RC	58
Epsom & Ewell Harriers	58
Herne Hill Harriers	55
Guildford & Godalming AC	52
Belgrave Harriers	44
Lingfield RC	42
Thames Hare & Hounds	35
Waverley Harriers	16
Windle Valley Runners	6
Kingston AC & Polytechnic H	0

Women's League

Club	Best 4
South London Harriers	113
Stragglers	112
Elmbridge RR	108
Reigate Priory AC	103
Sutton Runners	92
Ranelagh Harriers	91
Epsom Oddballs	89
Herne Hill Harriers	89
Clapham Chasers	87
Collingwood AC	86
Striders of Croydon	81
Camberley & District AC	76
Wimbledon Windmilers	76
Haslemere Border AC	74
26.2 RRC	74
Epsom Allsorts	69
Dulwich Runners	63
Woking AC	58
Belgrave Harriers	47
Thames Hare & Hounds	39
Epsom & Ewell Harriers	37
Dorking & Mole Valley AC	37
Croydon Harriers	26
Kingston AC & Polytechnic H	17
Lingfield RC	17
Hercules Wimbledon AC	11
Waverley Harriers	10
Guildford & Godalming AC	0
Windle Valley Runners	0

AGM : TROPHY WINNERS



Cara Kayum: women's road running champion



Lee Flanagan: men's road running and cross-country champion

KIERON'S PROGRESS

As our secretary mentioned at the AGM, Striders only provide very limited competition for young athletes. Some years ago we did have a girls' cross-country team, which consisted entirely of students at Croydon High School, but Striders were formed as a club for adult distance runners and the committee have consistently taken the view that, while we are keen to compete against Croydon Harriers in senior and veterans' competition (and we consistently finish above them in the Surrey road and cross-country leagues), we should not try to compete with them at young athletes' level. We do have a small number of under-18s on our books, most of whom are the sons or daughters of adult Striders, and we can provide competition at cross-country and in the local parkruns, but the only track competition which we can offer them is in the Rosenheim League.

Therefore, it is inevitable that any young Striders who show much interest in racing on the track are likely to gravitate to Croydon Harriers, who can offer them a much greater variety of track competition. The first Strider to take this step was Daisy Collingridge, who was the most talented of the Croydon High School students who competed for us a decade or so ago. While still in her early teens, she set Striders' women's records of 2 minutes 25 for the 800 metres, 5 minutes 34 for the 1500 metres, and 4 metres 66 for the long jump. With such talent, it was predictable that she should choose to join the Harriers, and she went on to win the Surrey under-17 800 metre championship and improve her personal best to 2 minutes 17, although sadly she has not competed since going to university.

The latest Strider to take a similar path is Kieron Connor, who was a regular runner for us at the Lloyd parkrun. His first parkrun was in May 2010, when he ran 24 minutes 26 at Roundshaw. Over the next two years he made significant improvement, culminating in a very impressive time of 20 minutes 20 at the Lloyd parkrun in March 2012. He was part of the Croydon team at this year's Croydon Mini-Marathon (along with Striders colleague Jemma Upton), and not surprisingly he joined Croydon Harriers not long afterwards in order to compete in the National Young Athletes' league. His first 1500 metres for them, at Ashford in June, produced a very respectable time of 5 minutes 00.69. Six weeks later, at Hendon, he set a personal best of 4 minutes 35.90, which is a time that most adult Striders would envy. (By way of comparison, Kieron's time is only nine seconds slower than Striders' over-35 record which is still held by John McGilvray, and it is more than four seconds faster than the club over-45 record which Bob Ewen set twelve years ago. I won't embarrass any current Striders by quoting times achieved in this year's Rosenheim and Veterans Leagues.)

We wish Kieron the best of luck with his new club, and look forward to seeing how much more he can improve in the seasons ahead.



50 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN AUTUMN 1962

The 1962 European Championships were held at Belgrade, in what was then Yugoslavia, in September 1962. The British team was announced in August. Croydon Harriers' leading middle-distance runner, Mike Fleet, had been hoping to be selected, but was not. On 1 September he responded by setting a Croydon club record of 1 minute 48.2 seconds on the cinder track at Withdean Stadium in Brighton. This is still the Croydon record fifty years later, and won him selection for the 880 yards in the Empire Games (now known as the Commonwealth Games) to be held in Perth (Western Australia) in November. As part of his preparation for the Empire Games, Mike won the 880 yards at a meeting sponsored by the News of the World and held at Ibrox Park (better known as the home of Rangers Football Club) on 3 October, taking the lead after fifty yards and winning in 1 minute 51.0 seconds.

The heats and semi-final of the Empire Games 880 yards were held on 25 November. Mike finished second in the second heat, recording 1 minute 50.5, and then placed third in the second semi-final (1.51.2), qualifying for the final on the following day. The race was won by the reigning Olympic champion, Peter Snell of New Zealand, who set a new Games record of 1 minute 47.6. George Kerr of Jamaica was second in 1 minute 47.8. Mike was the first British finisher, placing fifth in 1 minute 50.0. Mike is of course still active in local athletics as Croydon Harriers' senior coach (and also served for 38 years as their club secretary).

The Surrey Road Relay was held at Woking on 8 September, and was won by Herne Hill. The Southern Road Relay was held on 13 October, over its traditional 12-stage course from Westminster to Brighton. It was won by Portsmouth AC, who had a strong squad including the European 5000m champion, Bruce Tulloh. The race ceased to use this traditional course after 1965 because of traffic problems: it was then moved to Wimbledon Common, but is now usually held at Milton Keynes.

Although Striders was originally formed as a club to help people run the London Marathon, in recent years the competition which we have taken most seriously has been the Surrey Cross-Country League. This competition celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, having begun in October 1962. It was initially called the North Surrey Cross-Country League, and the six founder clubs were Belgrave, Herne Hill, Walton, Mitcham, Surrey AC and Hercules AC. Three of these clubs (Belgrave, Herne Hill and Walton) have survived unchanged till the present day, although in 1962 both Belgrave and Herne Hill were still single-sex clubs which didn't accept women as members. Hercules AC merged with their local rivals Wimbledon AC in 1968. Surrey AC, who were based in Motspur Park, were taken over by Belgrave in 1982 (officially this was a merger, but the new club kept Belgrave's name, colours and headquarters: a few Surrey AC athletes who opposed the move subsequently formed a new club called Kingston AC, which in turn merged with Polytechnic Harriers in 1987). Mitcham merged with Sutton in 1986: originally the merged club was called Mitcham & Sutton, but it changed its name to Sutton & District when the track at Carshalton was redeveloped and renamed Sutton Arena in 1992.

Of the other local clubs, South London Harriers were invited to join the new league, but their committee declined the invitation, preferring to retain their traditional inter-club fixtures with similar clubs such as Ranelagh and Thames Hare & Hounds. Croydon Harriers were competing in the East Surrey League instead: this also included Epsom, Surrey Beagles, and Sutton. There was however some local interest in the league because at this time Herne Hill could partly be classed as a local club: although their home track was at Tooting, they had moved their cross-country fixtures to Addington soon after the Second World War (they moved to Streatham in 1966 and moved again to Brockwell Park, close to their original home, in 1973.)

The first Surrey League race was held at Wimbledon Common on 27 October, and was won by Gerry North of Belgrave, while Walton won the team event. The second race was held on 15 December; it was organised by Walton AC and held at Esher. Gerry North was again the winner, with Don Taylor of Herne Hill finishing second. Walton again won the team event. The third race was held just two weeks later, at Kingston on 29 December. The winner was John Snowdon of Surrey AC, while Walton won the team event for the third successive match.

30TH ANNIVERSARY CLUB HISTORY QUIZ

As those Striders who read our Chairman's report for the AGM will already know, Striders were formed in September 1982, so this is the first issue of the newsletter since we celebrated our 30th anniversary. Here is a quiz to remind people of what we have achieved. Many – but not all – of the answers will be found somewhere on the club website.

- 1) Who is the oldest Strider to run 100 metres in less than 20 seconds?
- 2) Who is the oldest female Strider to run 100 metres in less than 20 seconds?
- 3) Which Strider completed his 163rd marathon in September 2012?
- 4) Which Strider swam the English Channel in September 2012?
- 5) In 2012, who became the first female Strider to win a Surrey championship?
- 6) How many Striders won gold medals at the 2012 Surrey Masters Championships?
- 7) In which year did Striders' women first win a Rosenheim League match?
- 8) Which Strider won the Surrey over-35 5000m championship in 2009?
- 9) Which Strider won the Surrey steeplechase championship in 2008?
- 10) In which year did Striders first compete in the Rosenheim League?
- 11) In which year did Striders first win the East Surrey League's annual road relay at Box Hill?
- 12) Who was Striders' Chairman when our membership first exceeded 100?
- 13) In which year did Striders' men finish fourth in the Surrey Road League?
- 14) In which year did Striders first win the East Surrey League championship?
- 15) In which year did Striders' men first win a Surrey Cross-Country League Division Two match?
- 16) Which two Striders married in June 2002, after having met on a club trip to La Santa in Lanzarote?
- 17) Which Strider won the Croydon 10K in April 2002?
- 18) In which year did Striders' men first win Division Three of the Surrey Cross-Country League?
- 19) In which year did Striders move the club HQ from Cassac to Sandilands?
- 20) In which year did Striders' women first gain promotion to Division One of the Surrey Women's Cross-Country League?
- 21) In which year did Striders' women first win a Surrey Women's Cross-Country League Division Two match?
- 22) Which two Striders married during the 1999 London Marathon?
- 23) Which Strider finished eighth in the Surrey Women's Cross-Country Championship in December 1997?
- 24) In which year did Striders first compete in the Southern Veterans League?
- 25) What was Striders' official club name from 1982 to 1995?
- 26) Who set a Striders' 1500 metre record while competing for Croydon Harriers in the British Athletic League?
- 27) Which future Strider competed in the 1991 World Championships in Tokyo (and in which event)?
- 28) Which future Strider placed second in the first Croydon 10K, in 1986?
- 29) In which year did Striders first compete in the Surrey Cross-Country League?
- 30) Which Strider ran 2 hours 49 for the marathon while serving as club Chairman?

The committee have kindly offered to provide a small prize (either a bottle of wine or a kit voucher) to the first person to email the correct answers to alan.dolton@lexisnexus.co.uk. Only one entry per person: closing date 1 December. If nobody gets all 30 correct, the prize will go to the person with the most correct answers (and if there is a tie, the prize will go to the first such entry to be received).

NEVER TOO OLD

In the Veterans AC 10000 metre championships, held at Kingsmeadow on 5 September, Steve Charlton of Thames Valley Harriers ran 51 minutes 24.1 seconds. What makes this noteworthy is that Steve was born in October 1926, and was therefore 85 years old at the time of the race. His time was a new British over-85 record, breaking the previous record by almost four minutes. Steve, whose lifetime best for 10000 metres is 34 minutes 44, set in 1982 when he was already 55 years old, also holds the British over-70 and over-80 10000 metre records.

Perhaps Steve's performance can be a challenge and an inspiration to those Striders who have entered the Croydon 10K on 21 October. Are you faster than an 85-year-old ??



**Running is a sport for all ages:
Paul Cripps outsprints a younger runner at the Lloyd parkrun**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2012

Saturday 20 October – Surrey Women's Cross-Country League – Roehampton

Saturday 20 October – Surrey Cross-Country League – Nork Park, Tadworth

Friday 9 November – Striders Quiz (with fish & chips) – Sandilands

Saturday 10 November – Surrey Cross-Country League – Epsom Downs

Saturday 1 December – Surrey Women's Cross-Country League – Nonsuch Park

Friday 7 December – Striders Xmas Dinner – Sandilands

We are still hoping to hold an orienteering event one Sunday in 2012, but are waiting until some of the undergrowth has died – at present some of the controls are very well hidden.

2013

Saturday 12 January – Surrey Women's Cross-Country League – Mitcham Common

Saturday 9 February – Surrey Women's Cross-Country League – Denbies', Dorking

Saturday 12 January – Surrey Cross-Country League – Mitcham Common

Saturday 9 February – Surrey Cross-Country League – Denbies' Vineyard, Dorking

Sunday 7 April – Croydon Half-Marathon

Sunday 21 April – London Marathon

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Because of an editing error, an earlier version of this column misstated the average pace at which women in the University of Exeter study were able to run after 10 weeks of training. Most were able to run for 30 minutes at a pace of about 12 or 13 minutes per mile -- not 12 or 13 miles per minute."

SPORTS MASSAGE THERAPY

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