

Striders of Croydon AC

MARCH 2013 MAGAZINE



**Our women's team at Denbies Vineyard, Dorking:
Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Match 4**

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 31 March – Striders Orienteering
Sunday 7 April – Croydon Half-Marathon (Striders hosting)
Sunday 21 April – London Marathon (Striders marshalling)
Monday 29 April – Southern Veterans League – Kingsmeadow
Sunday 5 May – Richmond Half-Marathon (Surrey Championship & Road League)
Sunday 12 May – Sutton 10K (Surrey Road League)
Wed 15 May – Rosenheim League – Battersea
Monday 20 May – Southern Veterans League – Kingsmeadow
Wed 29 May – Rosenheim League – Croydon (Striders co-hosting)
Sat 1 June – Surrey Masters Championships – Ewell
Sunday 2 June – Dorking 10 miles (Surrey Championship & Road League)
Wed 12 June – Rosenheim League – Tooting
Sunday 23 June – Richmond 10K (Surrey Championship & Road League)
Monday 24 June – Southern Veterans League – Ewell
Wed 3 July – Rosenheim League – Battersea
Monday 8 July – Southern Veterans League – Croydon (Striders co-hosting)
Sat 13 July – Elmore 7 (Surrey Road League)
Sunday 21 July – Elmbridge 10K (Surrey Road League)
Wed 24 July – Rosenheim League – Tooting
Sunday 11 August – Wimbledon 5K (Surrey Championship & Road League)
Sat 7 September – Surrey Steeplechase Championship – Sutton
Sat 14 September – Surrey Road Relays – Wimbledon

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER MARCH 2013

A busy month coming up with the Croydon Half, the Brighton Marathon and the London Marathon on consecutive weekends. Not forgetting the Paris Marathon. Good luck to everyone running and I am sure you will all achieve your goal, whether it is just to finish your first or to achieve a pb or like me to claim a club record. I hope you have enjoyed the training runs this year; considering how wet it has been we have been moderately lucky with the weather on Sundays though not with the mud underfoot. I think the Merstham run must count as the muddiest ever, though this Sunday's run back from Kingston had patches which came a close second. The chances are we will do much the same schedule next year but if anyone has any suggestions for some variations please let me know.

After a break in April I hope we can offer some regular Sunday morning bike rides to supplement the one hour run. Some of us need another round of training before the London 100 cycle ride in August. We will also be organising a short duathlon "race" in May or June and another informal triathlon in August.

Thank you in advance to all those helping in the Croydon Half Marathon on the 7th. On the 3rd attempt it's getting a bit easier to organise as we have most of the equipment and know roughly what we are doing, however it is still pretty complex and it wouldn't work at all without your contribution on the day.

Also thanks in advance to everyone who helps at the London marathon and again thanks to John Gannon for organising you all. There is of course a major incentive in that it earns the club extra places in next years VLM, and you points towards the draw for these places. In addition, now that we manage a stretch of the course as well as the bridge, you get to see the race close up.

Well done to everyone who ran the mob match last week and thanks to Chris for organising it. He is working on one against Collingwood most likely now to be a Thursday evening in June at Riddlesdown. It all depends on plenty of you being able to come to Riddlesdown when you receive the call. He is also seeing if we can organise one against Croydon Harriers back at Lloyd Park.

Club handicaps are coming up. For those new to the club we try and set your start time so you all finish our 5 mile course reasonably close together. Provided you run in one or both of the heats in May and June, then one of the club trophies is up for grabs in the final in July. Enjoy the magazine, read Susan Haynes' letter from sunny Wellington and wonder why we don't all emigrate given the weather this country has been throwing at us for the last few months. Read Lucy Szymonski's letter from Romania and think running up the North Downs is pretty tame in the way of hills and we could do with better snow. Read Kate Custis' Pilgrims challenge and think our run back from Merstham was far too short and the same applies to Debra on the Thames Trot. After reading the next episode of the LOOP I now know why its called Threehalfpenny Woods and finally, if you are serious about training, Alan's review of *Road Racing for Serious Runners* reminds you what you really need to do.

May all your runs be through sunlit forests.

Robin Jamieson

SURREY CROSS-COUNTRY LEAGUE 2012/3 (by Chris Morton)

Brief background: the men's cross country Surrey League comprises four divisions, each of nine teams. The top two teams from each division get promoted, the bottom two get relegated. The fastest ten runners from each team score points – the rest are non-scorers. In the end this was another season of consolidation, with a mid-table finish in Division 2. We have now been in division two for eight consecutive seasons – the longest sequence of any team.

The season started at Nork Park where we finished in an unexpected third place and gave hope that we might be able to push for promotion. Lee Flanagan and Iain Harrison battled it out for top Strider, finishing 15th and 16th respectively. We also had scoring debuts from Steve Winter (43rd) and Darren Bird (32nd). Clapham Chasers won the fixture and were to stay top all season and so promptly return back up to division 1.

The second fixture, at Epsom Downs, proved to be a bit of a wake-up call. The combination of a clearly stronger field from most of the other teams and a weaker team from us led to a worrying 7th place finish. Most of our team agreed that this was one of our least favourite courses – the long drag uphill over a lumpy grass course in the face of a strong headwind on a cold day wasn't any fun. The bonus for us was Ernie Hann's debut score – as 5th Strider and 61st overall.

Mitcham Common was the new venue for the third fixture. Much of the common is on landfill so the course was mainly flat and fast with the occasional brief, steep, man-made hill. Matthew Smith from Trinity School made a welcome debut finishing as third Strider and we were grateful for the return of Damian Macenhill and John Foster – both long-term stalwarts of our team. We finished 6th on the day and retained our overall 5th position.

For the final fixture of the season, at Denbies, we all expected a very strong field as four teams still battled against relegation but to our surprise we finished a comfortable 4th on the day – with Lee (10th), Iain (14th) and Krzysztof Klidzia (15th) getting us off to a fantastic start. Indeed Krzysztof was the mainstay of our season. He was our second or third finisher in every race and proved vital to our continued stay in the division. Simon Ambrosi and Darren Bird were also consistent and ever-present scorers over the four fixtures while Taylor Huggins showed the greatest improvement, beginning outside our scoring ten at Nork Park but finishing as our 6th scorer by the final race.

Yet again Division 2 had the smallest gap of all four divisions between top and bottom place and this is likely to continue for many seasons to come. This means that we rely heavily on our very fastest runners to turn out and perform to maintain our position in this division.

In the relegation shake-up Guildford were surprisingly relegated – having only come down from division 1 a couple of seasons ago. And at long last Croydon Harriers gained promotion from division 3 – so next season we will have the added incentive of vying for top spot in Croydon!

Many thanks to all the men who raced for us this season – sorry, many of you are not mentioned above but I hope that you realise that you are a valuable part of our team.



SURREY CROSS-COUNTRY LEAGUES: FINAL TABLES

MEN'S LEAGUE DIVISION TWO

Clapham 1226 (promoted)
Walton 1376 (promoted)
Kingston 1634
Epsom 1687
STRIDERS 1956
Wimbledon 2000
Dorking 2088
Guildford 2186 (relegated)
Tadworth 2227 (relegated)

Stragglers and Reigate were relegated from Division One:
Dulwich and Croydon Harriers were promoted from Division Three.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE DIVISION TWO

Epsom 372 (promoted)
Dorking 383 (promoted)
Wimbledon 493 (promoted)
Elmbridge 567
Walton 694
26.2RRC 767
Guildford 905
Kingston 1048
STRIDERS 1183
Wimbledon B 1252
Sutton 1260
Holland Sports 1279
Lingfield 1316
Collingwood 1368
Epsom Allsorts 1579
Dulwich Park 1928
Tadworth 2013
26.2RRC B 2125
Dorking B 2256
Holland Sports B 2347
Elmbridge B 2386
Epsom Allsorts B 2486
British Airways 2533
Collingwood B 2564
Sutton B 2572
Epsom B 2704
Dulwich Park B 2730
STRIDERS B 2802
Lingfield B 2846
Dulwich Park C 3069
Collingwood C 3233

(17 A teams, 12 B teams and 2 C teams competed in all four matches.
Haslemere competed in only 3 matches and Croydon Harriers competed in only 2 matches.)

FROM OUR WELLINGTON CORRESPONDENT...

...news from the Southern Hemisphere by Susan Haynes

Well, hello from Sunny Wellington. And I do mean SUNNY Wellington. We've been here six weeks, it's rained twice and I don't think the thermometer has dropped below 65 degrees. Stark contrast to the reports I've been getting of Striders' Snowy Marathon Training.

There have been plenty of perfect running days, which is a great shame as at the moment, as I'm not running. Due to an injury sustained during Stupid Mountain Climbing Nonsense (two quite spectacular falls during my failed attempt at Kilimanjaro), I'm off for x-rays on my hips and lower back.

So instead of glorious, sunshine filled runs around Wellington's beautiful harbour, I've seen rather a lot of the inside of my local swimming pool (which also happens to be along Wellington's glorious waterfront...) The highlight of this so far has been the discovery that what I thought was a 25m pool is, in fact, 33m. Which may account for my gelatinous legs after my first 40 lap session – what I thought was a 1,000m swim turned out to be 1,320m.

To put my efforts into perspective, I should tell you that the pool provides laminated programme cards to help you train. A "Beginners" session consists of 84 laps, a whopping 2772m (over 1.5 miles). I haven't been brave enough to look for an intermediate session yet, never mind "Advanced".

For the more adventurous swimmer there is the annual Capital Swim Series, which is a choice of a 300 m, 1,000 m or 3.4 km swim in the bay. I watched these made fools set off and finish and then immediately went home and looked at the website. "Are you thinking of joining those loony tunes next year?" said Roy. "No, I'm sending the link to Karen & Justin MacEnhill".

Such events are proof that Kiwis love their sport and the outdoors but that's not to say they don't have similar issues to the UK. The first article I read here said that obesity rates in children have hit 28% and rising. Something that certainly isn't evident at the (free) Waterfront Skate Park which is often filled with under-8s throwing themselves up and down the half-pipe on their scooters with some confidence (and skill).

In our first experience of other media here, the TV, Roy just "happened" to find coverage of a Triathlon. "You could do that," he said. I swear that man is trying to kill me. Triathlons are big here but so are the hills. Running up them is going to be bad enough. Cycling? Not a chance. Though if injury woes continue, moving to the Dark Side may be the only way to go.

For any of you wanting to make the trip, there are plenty of races to plan your stay around. The marathon is in June (no, I won't be entering) and is held alongside a half and a 10K (which is my aim). A walking option is available for all distances too and lots of people do walk. At the recent Round the Bays 7K and Half Marathon about a third of the 13,000 entrants were walkers. The most likely race for me though is the Tuesday Night 5K organised by the local sports bar. \$5 to enter and you get a free beer at the end. Different hemisphere, same Susan.

WELLINGTON v CROYDON ?

The New Zealand Masters Track Championships – March 2013



The Lloyd parkrun – January 2013

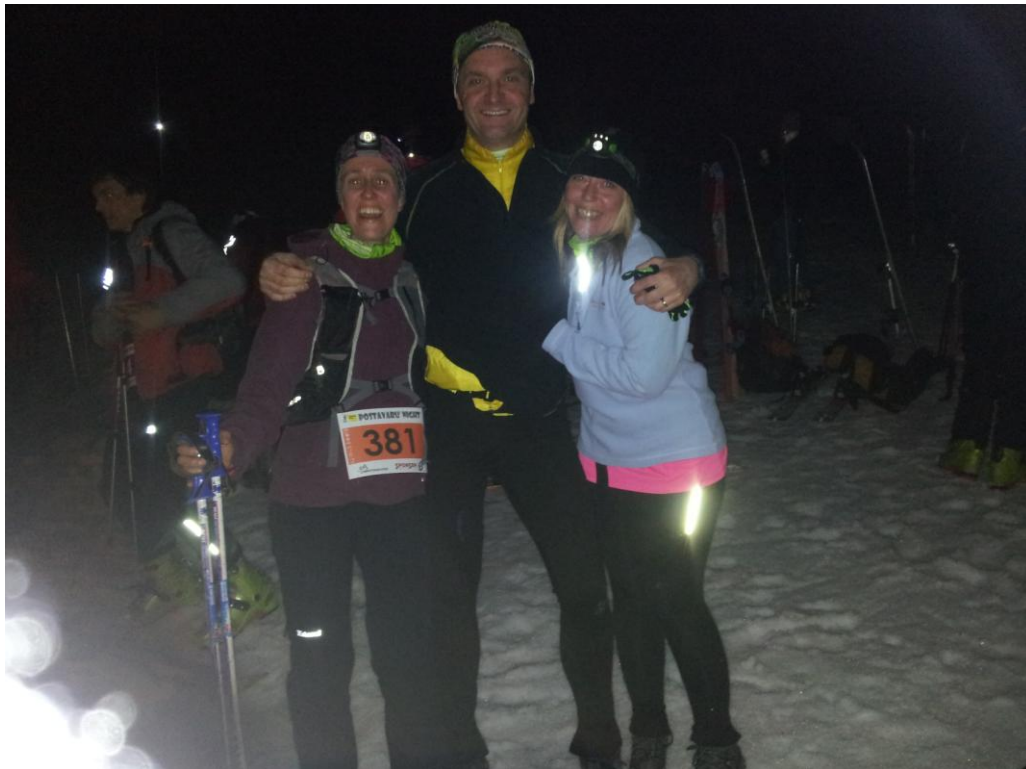
FROM OUR ROMANIA CORRESPONDENT (by Lucy Szymonski)

Currently on a Striders break, while we live and work in Romania for a couple of years, Swavek and I are keen to take advantage of as many running opportunities as we can in this weird and wonderful country.

Our weekends are usually spent in the pursuit of exciting terrain for running. This weekend was an example of one of the many, many unusual opportunities there are in Romania. Held at the ski resort of Poiana Brasov (this year the host of the European Youth Winter Olympics), Postavaru Night sounded like it would be something a bit different. The race covers a 4.5km uphill 'run', from the bottom of the cable car station to the top, taking you up several of the pistes. Starting at 7pm, in the pitch black, runners wear head torches, while the start area is ablaze with flame torches, drilled into the packed ice. Earlier that day, we'd taken the cable car to the top of the peak, Postavaru, and delivered our overnight stuff at the mountain hut, where the after-race party was to be held, and where we were sleeping. We then ran/tumbled through the snow down the route we were to take later in the opposite direction, which gave us a good idea of the race to come. Or should I say a bad idea. The route was not only icy but also unbelievably steep in places and we were somewhat concerned that running in Craiova, quite feasibly the flattest city in the world, would not be the best of preparation for this race!

Around 200 runners and skiers (yes, quite a few crazy people skied up the mountain!) arrived at the start, some enjoying a pre-race beer, while others, like us, stuck to hot tea! The mountain was looking sinister and, let's face it, high, in the dark. After a jovial count down from 10, we set off with plenty of energy, mainly of the nervous variety on my part. Within a few minutes, my lungs and legs were screaming. I slowed down a little and once my body got used to the fact that up was the only direction it was going in, it started to comply and settled into a state of resignation and delivered me to the top. Of course, I had one or two of those moments of "I'm not going to make it" and "how will I tell Swavek I had to turn back without any signal on my phone?" and "this is the time when I'm going to come last", and this did feel like one of the most athletically challenging things I'd ever done, but the exhilaration at the top of the mountain was indescribable. And then running the few hundred metres down the mountain to the hut, knowing that mulled wine and hot stew was waiting for you, was one of the best feelings I've had in a long time.

And I didn't come last. What a relief.



THE PILGRIM CHALLENGE (by Kate Custis)

When one of my long distance running buddies mentioned running Pilgrims I knew it'd be something long. And on inspection of the Extreme Energy website sure enough it was a 2 day ultra consisting of an out and back course along the North Downs Way starting near Farnham with an overnight stay at Merstham in the obligatory snore-filled school hall.

On leaving work on Friday evening I was greeted by a text from the aforementioned mate saying she was pulling out as her accountant had been caught fiddling the business books and she was facing a weekend not of mud and fun but instead heavy book-keeping and finance searching!

Undeterred I headed to the start on Saturday at the crack of dawn ready for an 8am start and was pleased to meet Matt, another long distance running mate whom I've run with at Pembroke and several other multi-day events. He always bails on the last day so was only running the Saturday, however it was lovely to have someone to chat to as we wended our way along the course. We made good steady progress and reached checkpoint 1 in good time where we filled up a bit on the delicious finger sized food that XNRG are well known for including malt loaf, sandwiches, jelly beans and their infamous super sized pretzels. From there it was a steady climbing undulation to the picturesque St Martha's church where we stopped and took a few photos in glorious sunshine: not bad for early February!



We continued at a steady pace, passing through several more checkpoints and made it to the dreaded Box Hill steps several hours later. The going slowed to a walk as we heaved ourselves and our mud laden feet up the 183 steps: however we were rewarded at the trig point with more fantastic views over the Downs and surrounding countryside.

From there it was steady to Reigate Hill and then we thought the end at Merstham was pretty much within our grasp. That was until we came upon the super mud! Heavy, slippery deep tracks of glutinous stuff which welded itself to our shoes and failed to budge all the way to the end. The last checkpoint just past Reigate Hill bridge was a welcome sight as were the large tubs of marshmallows and more pretzels. Matt and I made it in to the end in a little over 7 hours and I was really pleased to have kept up with him as he's usually quicker than me. Total day's distance a pleasing 34 miles.

As Matt left to celebrate his partner's birthday and have a night out, I was pleased to be staying at a friend's house who lives locally to Merstham rather than the smelly, cold, noisy school hall, so I headed off too, ready to return the following day for the return leg.

After a hot shower, home cooked dinner and a good night's sleep I was back in newly washed warm kit and clean shoes: luxury!

The return leg was very similar to the previous day's experience except for the mud which obviously appeared at the start rather than the end of the day. I had plumped for the early start and it was a cold day so the ground was rather more frozen and less sticky which was a blessing. I ran along with several lads then picked up a lady called Caroline from Folkestone and a lad from Bromley. We ran together for several hours, spurring each other on as we each took turns to feel tired: however eventually the girls' grit and determination to keep going at a steady pace saw us drop him at one of the checkpoints as he decide to stop for an extended lunch! Caroline and I continued and stayed together until the end, chatting about random crap as only women can!

We rounded the last corner and the finishing flags were a fantastically welcome sight at the other end of the final field. We were rewarded with a medal, t-shirt and best of all several cups of tea and my 1st piece of chocolate cake of the year!



So would I recommend it or do it again: yes of course. If you fancy trying one of these events have a look at the website. They are a friendly bunch, very encouraging and have a range of lovely events. If you're not sure you could do 2/3 days of 34ish miles a day then start with one day: although if you pace yourself and walk and run within your limits, you'll be surprised how far you can go. I, as usual, had done virtually no training prior to the weekend and didn't ever really feel like I wanted to stop. The lovely weather probably helped but at the end of the day I just enjoy the solitude, the challenge and of course the end.

THE THAMES TROT (by Debra Bourne)

Well, what can I say? It wasn't along the Thames (mostly) and it wasn't quite a 50, but I did it! The Thames Trot 50 is an easy-to follow, mostly flat trail marathon along a way-marked path (the Thames Path). I thought this would be just right to get me started on my 2013 goal of "5 x 50 (milers) at 45."

In the month or so before the race, a number of us were swapping reports of the trail conditions and degree of flooding. The river level seemed to be dropping, and I was able to cover the second half of the route in a recce run, if rather slipping and sliding in the mud (which my ankle, injured back in late November and still not fully healed, didn't like very much). The river was quite high, but not actually overflowing, and the worst mud only reached to just over the tops of my shoes. Then we got that late snow. As that melted and further heavy rain followed, much of the Thames Path between Iffley (just south of Oxford) and Henley-on-Thames - the planned route - became dangerously flooded or frankly impassable. With two days to go, the organisers rapidly sought alternative routing, and started e-mailing us new directions: only part of the way from Checkpoint (CP) 3 to CP4 and the section from CP4 to CP5 would be as originally planned. The rest would be diverted away from the river.

They undoubtedly made the right decision, from a safety point of view (you can't have a race where some of the runners might step sideways and find themselves swimming towards a weir).

Unfortunately for me, most of the new route was on road rather than trail, was unmarked rather than following a permanently way-marked route and was somewhat shorter than the original as well as containing more hills. So not quite the easy-to-navigate flat trail 50-miler I'd signed up for!

After being told we were diverting I had rather naïvely assumed we wouldn't be going through any flooded sections. How wrong I was! The first stretch of ankle-deep very cold water came within the first mile, and my feet never dried after that; I was very glad I had rubbed Vaseline all over my feet before putting on my twin-skin socks (no blisters!). The deepest water came a mile or so before CP 5, where a meadow was flooded, with a stretch of painfully cold water at mid-calf depth for about 20 metres, then a few metres later a 10-15 metre stretch reaching to just below my knees and feeling even colder. After wading through there I was unable to run for several minutes because I couldn't feel my feet and ankles and the two lumps of ice stretching from my knees to the ground didn't want to move very much.

I was rather concerned about following the directions, but in the event for the first half of the race that was fairly easy as I was able to simply follow the runners in front. Otherwise, I regret to say, I would have been well lost, or spent large amounts of time stopping to map read. One runner unfortunately used the instructions which had been e-mailed to us on the Friday evening, not the ones we were given on the Saturday morning, didn't cross-check with the map and, as instructed, turned the wrong way on reaching a major road, travelling two or three miles in the wrong direction before realising his error. My recce three weeks previously was not totally wasted, as part of the section between CP3 and CP4, and all of CP4 to CP5 (including that flooded meadow) followed the original route.

I'd set off at what would normally have been a fairly sensible pace, but due to my unhealed ankle injury was too fast. After a stretch along an extremely muddy and slippery bridleway in the second section (where two people fell over and had to retire with a sprained ankle apiece), the injured tendon inside my left ankle really started to hurt and my speed dropped. As my running form collapsed I started putting too much weight on my heels and, with most of the course on roads and other hard surfaces, and wearing my uncushioned trail shoes, my heels started to hurt and my pace dropped further.

The best aspect of the race was undoubtedly the weather, which was gloriously sunny – an unexpected treat for the start of February. As a bonus, I got to see a number of red kites, with their distinctive forked tails, mostly soaring overhead on the thermals but one sitting in a field only about 15 metres from the road. The much-talked-about Go Beyond cake was very good, but I missed the variety of edibles which Centurion had provided for NDW50 and our own Ian Campbell had managed for the Croydon Ultra 30.

From CP5 to the end (new routing) I really had to navigate, not only using the directions but doing some careful map reading, as we followed a poorly-marked path across fields and through woods - in the dark. Thankfully both I and Matt, a runner I teamed up with for this section, had reasonable head torches, so with aching knees (Matt) and feet (me) we kept going.

Finally Matt and I limped together into the finish area, where his wife and children were waiting for him, and clocked in at 9 hrs 38 mins. An appallingly slow time for the 43-44 miles, but not, thankfully, a DNF.

THE LONDON LOOP – NORTH FROM COOMBE LANE TRAMSTOP

Our Christmas newsletter included an article covering the London Loop from Coombe Lane tramstop through Hamsey Green and Kenley Common to Coulsdon South station (giving a nine-mile walk or a 18-mile 'out and back' training run). This article takes a briefer look at the Loop to the north of Coombe Lane tramstop, as it makes its way through Addington Hills, Pinewoods, Threehalfpenny Wood and Sparrows Den.

From Coombe Lane tramstop the Loop is signposted as it goes north into the woods. The path reaches the route of our annual Switchback race just before the point where there is a short steep downhill section (which is followed immediately by a short steep uphill). The Loop takes a sharp right turn, briefly following the Switchback route (and many of our Sunday runs) but in the opposite direction, and heads east towards the Chinese restaurant, from where it takes a sharp left turn to reach the Viewpoint, which is a well-known feature of many of our Sunday runs. The Loop passes to the right of the Viewpoint. At the spot where the Switchback race route emerges from the woods (having negotiated the series of short hills which give the race its name), the Loop continues on a steep downhill path, which is safer for walkers than runners. It crosses the race route, heading north-east, at a point where a marshal is normally stationed: Steve Tyler was on duty here for the 2012 race. (At the 2011 race a shortage of marshals meant that nobody was manning this point: the result was that a group of about a dozen runners followed the London Loop, and eventually reappeared on the course after having missed both the 'switchback' itself and the Viewpoint, shortening their route by about 600 metres.)

The London Loop emerges onto Oaks Road, and crosses Upper Shirley Road by the Sandrock pub, heading into Pinewoods. This road ends by the back of the playing fields of Shirley High School, and the Loop follows a tarmac path which turns left and emerges on the south side of Shirley Church Road, having been joined by a woodland path which Striders sometimes use on our Sunday runs to get from Addington Hills to Shirley Church Road.

The Loop follows Shirley Church Road as it heads southeast. Just after passing Springhurst Close, a cul-de-sac containing some very expensive houses, the Loop heads off to the left, heading north-east into the woods. Striders' Sunday runs frequently take the same turning but usually continue to head almost due east, heading towards some open land which used to be a golf course, whereas the Loop heads to the southwest corner of Shrublands before turning sharply right and heading southeast along a clearly marked path heading for the west end of Bridle Way. After a while the Loop leaves this path, turning left into Shirley Heath (and rejoining the route of many of our Sunday runs). The Loop heads into Threehalfpenny Wood, crossing the path which links Bridle Way in Shirley with Woodland way in West Wickham. (This is the point where many of our Sunday runs split, which those doing the one-hour run heading back along Bridle Way towards the clubhouse, whereas those doing a longer run continue in Threehalfpenny Wood and head towards Sparrows Den.)



Threehalfpenny Wood acquired its name just over 200 years ago. In December 1802 the Sanderstead parish clerk, Robert Rutter, disappeared. In 1805 his body was discovered in a pond in the wood, after a period of drought caused the water level to drop. He had three halfpenny coins in his pockets, and until he was identified, was referred to as the 'threehalfpenny corpse'.

After a short downhill section, the Loop turns to the left and heads north-east, passing a large boundary stone which marks what is now the border between the boroughs of Croydon and Bromley, and what was historically the border between the counties of Surrey and Kent (before this area

became part of Greater London under the 1963 London Government Act). This path eventually turns to the right and heads down quite a steep hill to emerge on the north side of Sparrows Den Playing Fields. The Loop heads east across the playing fields. At the easternmost corner of the playing fields, the Loop crosses the A2022 Addington Road and turns right to head due south (and uphill) towards St John the Baptist Church which is a picturesque local landmark.



From the church the Loop turns left, heading east and crossing Layhams Road, from which it turns northeast along a path which crosses Coney Hall Recreation Ground. This path leads into Church Drive, and the Loop follows another path which crosses Gates Green Road and leads into West Wickham Common. Shortly after entering the Common, the Loop turns right and heads southeast, staying to the south of the main A232 Croydon Road. It emerges by the junction of Baston Manor Road and West Common Road, and then follows West Common Road as it heads southeast to reach the junction of Fox Hill and Baston Road in Keston. This roundabout is near to the Fox and the Greyhound, which are both well-known local pubs.

From the roundabout the Loop heads east along Lakes Road, which takes us to Keston Common. The Loop passes to the north of a primary school and gradually veers to the right, heading south and passing to the west of two of the Keston Ponds. After the second pond the Loop bends to pass to the east of a third pond, leading to the A233 (Westerham Road) and to Caesar's Well, a spring which is the source of the River Ravensbourne. The Loop continues alongside the Westerham Road, heading southwest, until shortly before the junction with Heathfield Road (the B265), where the Loop crosses the A233 and turns left, heading southeast and uphill towards the Wilberforce Oak (which is now a large stump). This was named after Sir William Wilberforce, who led the campaign to abolish the slave trade.

From the Wilberforce Oak, the Loop continues southeast and heads downhill towards Holwood Farm before turning left into Shire Lane. It then takes a right turn into Farthing Lane, followed soon afterwards by a left turn into a path called Bogey Lane. The Loop continues heading east along Bogey Lane until this reaches North End Lane. The Loop turns left into North End Lane to North End Farm, where it leaves the road and turns right along a path into Blacklands Wood. The path continues east, emerges from the wood and crosses a golf course before reaching High Elms Road. Here the Loop turns left, heading north, until a car park where the Loop turns again to head northeast across High Elms Country Park. At Woodplace Nature Centre the Loop veers to the left, heading north. It crosses Shire Lane and continues north, passing through some woodland, before reaching St Giles Church in Farnborough. The next part of the Loop is rather urban, so this is probably the point at which most runners will want to turn round and head back towards Croydon, although walkers may want to continue along the Loop to Petts Wood station, from which one can catch a train back to Beckenham Junction (and then a tram back to Croydon).

BOOK REVIEW – ROAD RACING FOR SERIOUS RUNNERS

(by Pete Pfitzinger and Scott Douglas; reviewed by Alan Dolton)

There are many books about running, but this is one of the most useful that I have come across. Both the authors are experienced road runners, and Pfitzinger twice represented the USA in the Olympic Marathon: in 1984 he finished eleventh in 2 hours 13 minutes.

The book is divided into two parts, each comprising five chapters. The first part is entitled 'The Physiology of Running', and contains the following chapters:

- A Multispeed Approach to Road Racing
- Training to Improve VO₂ max and Speed
- Training to Improve Lactate Threshold and Pure Endurance
- Optimal Training
- Optimal Racing

The second part is entitled 'Training for Peak Performance', and contains the following chapters:

- Training to Race 5K
- Training to Race 8K to 10K
- Training to Race 15K through Half-Marathon
- Training for the Marathon
- Training to Race Cross-Country

The first chapter sets out the authors' basic principles of training, and comments that there are five basic types of training session (or 'workout'):

- Short speedwork to improve running technique
- Repetitions (eg 2-6 minutes at 3k-5k pace) to improve maximum oxygen uptake (VO₂ max)
- Tempo runs at a fast steady pace (eg 10-mile race pace) to delay the onset of lactic acid
- Long runs to build endurance
- Easy recovery runs

The authors recommend that a VO₂ max session should contain at least 4000 metres of hard running and no more than 8000 metres of hard running, and that the duration of each hard effort should not normally exceed six minutes. At present, Striders' Tuesday track sessions normally contain exactly 4000 metres of hard running which is at the bottom end of this scale, while the Sandilands sessions which our secretary leads are normally somewhat longer, but still well within the authors' guidelines. They recommend that runners of all standards should run 800m and 1000m repetitions, but that runners should only run mile reps at VO₂ max pace if they are capable of running them in six minutes or less – which rules out many Striders. They also recommend that road runners should do a speed session (such as 200m repetitions) at least once a fortnight, in order to improve their running form and posture, and to help prevent injuries which can be caused by underusing particular muscles.

The authors comment that VO₂ max is the most important factor in improving a runner's 5km time, whereas VO₂ max and lactate threshold are of about equal importance in improving a runner's 10km time. They state that 'your lactate threshold is the most important factor in determining running performance in races above 10km' and that the best way to improve your lactate threshold is to train at, or just slightly above, it. The most common way of training at lactate threshold is by doing a run of at least 20 minutes but no more than 40 minutes at, or slightly faster than, 10-mile race pace.

Alternatively a runner can do 'lactate intervals' such as 3, 4 or 5 hard eight-minute runs, with a short jog recovery of about 3 minutes between each rep. They also recommend doing some lactate threshold sessions – whether continuous runs or repetitions – on hills.

In the chapter on 'optimal training', the authors recommend building fitness gradually but including two long runs each week – although the word 'long' is relative: for a beginner, a run of five miles can qualify as a long run. They also recommend adding a speed session, initially of 8 x 100 metres, once a fortnight, and then adding a lactate threshold session once a fortnight, so that runners are used to running at faster than their normal training pace before they begin attempting VO₂ max sessions. This chapter also includes a useful section on injury prevention: the authors recommend regular stretching, particularly to avoid muscle imbalances, and also recommend yoga and massage.

The chapter on 'optimal racing' includes advice on racing tactics – including the importance of aiming to run even splits and not starting too fast, tapering for important races, and how to optimise recovery from a marathon.

The second part of the book includes a good variety of training schedules for races from 5km to the marathon, for runners of different abilities. For the 5km, the authors provide three basic schedules.

One is for novice runners who run less than 20 miles per week; one is for intermediate runners who run between 20 and 40 miles per week; and one is for more advanced runners who run more than 40 miles per week. The schedule for novice runners alternates between three and four runs per week. Each week includes two endurance runs of between four and seven miles. One week each fortnight also includes a lactate threshold session such as a three-mile tempo run and a speed/technique session such as 10 x 100 metres. The other week includes a VO2 max session such as 4 x 1000 metres. The authors use the same principles for the intermediate schedule: here the longest run is nine miles, the lactate threshold sessions include a two-mile time-trial and a four-mile tempo run, and the VO2 max sessions include 5 x 800 metres and 4 x 1000 metres. For more advanced runners, the longest run is 11 miles, a typical VO2 max session is 5 x 1000 metres, and the speed sessions include 10 x 200 metres and 12 x 100 metres.

The next chapter, on training for the 10k, follows the same principles, although the schedule for novice runners goes up to a maximum of 24 miles per week, and the schedule for advanced runners requires a minimum of 50 miles per week (and a maximum of 64 in the hardest week). The VO2 max sessions include a couple of hill sessions such as 6 x 3 minutes uphill: other such sessions include 5 x 1200 metres and 4 x 1600 metres. (Before Striders split our Tuesday speed sessions into two different groups, one at Sandilands and one at the Arena, we used to do regular sessions of 4 x 1 mile at the Arena, and most runners found that this was quite a tough session.)

The chapter on training for a half-marathon includes 14-week build-ups for each of the three different categories of runner. The schedule for novice runners goes up to a maximum of 30 miles per week, and includes one 13-mile run and two 12-mile runs: the VO2 max sessions include 4 x 1200m and 3 x 1600m. The schedule for intermediate runners goes up to a maximum of 50 miles per week, and includes one 15-mile run and two 14-mile runs: the VO2 max sessions include three hill sessions as well as sessions of 5 x 1200m and 4 x 1600m. The schedule for advanced runners begins with 50 miles per week and builds up to a maximum of 72 miles in the hardest week: it includes one 17-mile run and two 16-mile runs.

The penultimate chapter covers training for the event with which many Striders have a love/hate relationship – the marathon. For each of the three categories of runner, the chapter includes 14-week build-ups followed by three weeks of taper before the big race. The schedule for novice runners goes up to a maximum of 40 miles per week, and includes one 20-mile run, one 19-mile run and one 18-mile runs. Recognising that endurance is the most important factor in marathon training, the 14-week build-up includes eight lactate threshold sessions and five speed/technique sessions but only includes two VO2 max sessions (there is a third VO2 max session during the taper). The schedule for intermediate runners goes up to a maximum of 60 miles per week, and includes one 21-mile run and two 20-mile runs. The 14-week build-up includes eight lactate threshold sessions and five speed/technique sessions but only includes three VO2 max sessions (there is a fourth VO2 max session during the taper). The schedule for advanced runners begins with 60 miles per week and builds up to a maximum of 85 miles in the hardest week: it includes one 22-mile run, one 21-mile run and two 20-mile runs. As with the intermediate schedule, the 14-week build-up includes eight lactate threshold sessions and five speed/technique sessions but only includes three VO2 max sessions (there is a fourth VO2 max session during the taper).

The final chapter deals with training for cross-country races. It provides four different schedules, two for short cross-country races (defined as 3k-7k) and two for longer cross-country races (defined as 8k-12k). The schedules for short cross-country races should be particularly useful for anyone who is hoping to improve their parkrun time, while the schedules for longer races should be particularly useful for anyone who is hoping to improve their placing in our Surrey League races. For each of these two categories of race, there is an easier schedule for lower-mileage runners and a more difficult schedule for higher-mileage runners.

The book finishes with a couple of appendices including a very useful pace chart, although many Striders will be disappointed that it does not cater for anyone running at slower than a four-hour marathon pace. (To run a marathon in 3 hours 59 minutes, you need to run 5 minutes 40 per kilometre, which is slightly slower than nine minutes per mile).

The book explains its suggested schedules very clearly, explaining why runners should aim to do some training sessions at lactate threshold pace and at their VO2 max. I also particularly like the fact that the authors encourage runners to do regular speed/technique sessions of 100m and 200m reps in order to help reduce the risk of injury. Obviously, no book can replace the advice of an experienced coach who can scrutinise a runner's running style, be aware of the runner's lifestyle constraints, and give personalised individual advice. But this book is a very useful source of reference on the principles underlying training for different types of road and cross-country races.

SOUTHERN VETERANS LEAGUE 2013 - TIMETABLES

MATCH 1: MONDAY APRIL 29TH 2013 KINGSMEADOW (HERCULES WIMBLEDON)

	<u>TRACK</u>		<u>FIELD</u>	
			MEN	WOMEN
1830			JT(O/35,50,60)	SP(O/35,50,60)
1900	100 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60	HJ (O/40,50,60)	TJ (O/35,50,60)
1910	100 Women	A, B,O/50,O/60		
1920	2000 WALK	M&W O/35,O/50	SP (O/40,50)	
1940			LJ (O/35,O/50)	JT(O/35,50)
1950	400 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50		
2000	400 Women	A,B,O/50		HJ(O/35,50)
2010	1500 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60		
2025	1500 Women	A,B,O/50,O/60		
2035	4x100m Relay Men			
2045	4x100m Relay Women			

MATCH 2: MONDAY MAY 20TH 2013 KINGSMEADOW (KINGSTON & POLYTECHNIC)

	<u>TRACK</u>		<u>FIELD</u>	
			MEN	WOMEN
1830			HT(O35,50&60)	
1900	100 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50	PV(O/35&50)	PV (O/35 only)
1910	100 Women	A,B,O/50		
1915			DT(O/40&50)	
1920	1500 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50		JT(O/35,50&60)
1930				LJ(O/35,50&60)
1935	1500 Women	A,B,O/50, O/60		
1950	400 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60		
2000	400 Women	A&B,O/50,O/60	LJ(O/40,50&60)	HT (O/35&50)
2010	5000 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60		
2040	1600m MEDLEY RELAY	Men		
2050	1600m MEDLEY RELAY	Women		

MATCH 3: MONDAY JUNE 24TH 2013 EWELL COURT (EPSOM & EWELL HARRIERS)

	<u>TRACK</u>		<u>FIELD</u>	
			MEN	WOMEN
1830				LJ (O/35,50,60)&HT(O/35,50,60)
1900	200 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60	PV(O/40,50,60)	PV(35)
1910	200 Women	A,B,O/50	HT (O/40,O/50)	
1920	800 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50		
1930	800 Women	A,B,O/50,O/60		
1940	3000 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60	TJ(O/35,50)	
2000	3000 Women	A,B,O/50	SP(O/35,50,60)	DT (O/35,O/50)
2025	4x400 Relay Men			
2040	4x400 Relay Women			

MATCH 4: MONDAY JULY 8th 2013 CROYDON ARENA (CROYDON HARRIERS)

	<u>TRACK</u>		<u>FIELD</u>	
			MEN	WOMEN
1830			DT(O/35,50,60)	SP((O/35,50)
1900	2000 WALK	M&WO/35,O/50	TJ(O/40,50,60)	HJ (O/35,50&60)
1925	800 Men	O/35,O/40, O/50,O/60		DT (O/35,50&60)
1930			HJ(O/35,50)	
1935	800 Women	A&B, O/50,O/60		
1945	200 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60		TJ (O/35,50)
1955	200 Women	A,B,O/50,O/60		
2000			JT(O/40,50)	
2005	5000M Men	M O/35,O/40,O/50		
	& Women	W A,B,O/50		
2030	4x200m RELAY	Men		
2045	4x200m RELAY	Women		

30 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SPRING 1983

The East Surrey League completed its 1982/83 programme with the traditional road relay at Box Hill and road race at Ewell. Epsom won the road relay for the second successive year, with Hercules-Wimbledon placing second and Croydon Harriers third. The road race was won by Croydon Harriers' talented 19-year-old Gary Bishop; the team event was won by Hercules-Wimbledon, with Croydon second and host club Epsom third. Croydon won the league title, with Hercules-Wimbledon second (in their first season in this league) and Epsom third.

The third London Marathon took place on 16 April 1983. For the second successive year, the men's race saw a British winner. Mike Gratton, from the Canterbury-based club Invicta, gained a clear victory over Merseysider Gerry Helme. The women's race was won by the outstanding Norwegian runner, Grete Waitz.

The first local runner was again Don Faircloth of Croydon Harriers. Having placed tenth in the 1981 and 1982 London Marathons, he slipped to 66th this time around, despite recording a highly creditable 2 hours 17 minutes 42. British marathon running had much more strength in depth than it does today: 93 runners, most of them British, finished in under 2 hours 20 minutes. Don's club colleague Martin Walmsley ran a personal best 2 hours 26 minutes 22 (and got himself on television when Grete Waitz came past him at 25 miles). Four other members of Croydon Harriers finished in under three hours: John Lee (2.32.30); Bernard Imber (2.50.02); Chris Stebbings (2.55.00) and Peter Lill (2.58.33). The first South London Harrier to finish was Martin Long, in 2 hours 32 minutes 17. Sadly, both Martin Walmsley and Chris Stebbings have died within the last two years. Bernard Imber subsequently joined Dulwich Runners and has competed in the Lloyd parkrun.

However both Croydon Harriers and South London Harriers were outnumbered by Striders, who made their debut at the event and mustered an impressive turnout of 16 finishers. The first Strider to finish was club chairman Steve Owen, who ran 3 hours 06. He was followed by David Troth (3.28), Ron Carver (3.29), Steve Marsh (3.30), Myles Mayne (3.35), Hugh Coppin (3.35), Susanne Eyre (3.37), Colin Golding (3.42), Mick Meech (3.43), Pat Byrnes (3.44), Rob Hardy (3.46), Jeff Boyman (3.50), Tony Brown (3.57), Sandra Owen (4.06), Bernard Wright (4.08) and Shashi Dave (5.32). Fourteen of these were employees of Philips: the exceptions were Ron Carver and Hugh Coppin, both of whom had previously run the 1982 London Marathon, and had joined Striders as 'associate members'.

Philips City Striders 1983



Mick Meech, Shashi Dave, Ron Carver, Steve Owen, Colin Golding, Myles Mayne
Suzanne Eyre Sandra Owen
Roger Dale Patrick Byrnes

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SPRING 2003

The East Surrey League held its annual road relay at Box Hill on 22 March. Crawley won in 44 minutes 22 with Box Hill Racers second (44.56), Croydon Harriers third (47.36) and Striders fourth (47.39). Striders' team comprised Chris Morton (12.28), Gerry Crispie (12.04), Damian Macenhill (12.16) and Ciaran Osborn (10.51).

The 24th Croydon 10K road race was held on 6 April. Norwegian runner Tarjei Sandnes, who had placed second in the previous race, had subsequently joined South London Harriers. He gained a comfortable win in 32 minutes 25 seconds. Future Strider Scott Antony, not yet a club member, placed fourth in 34 minutes 04. The first Strider to finish was Justin Macenhill who placed fifth in 34 minutes 14. The first over-40 was Larry O'Brien of Thames Valley Harriers, who placed sixth in 34 minutes 19. The second over-40 was Striders' Tony Sheppard who placed eighth overall in 35 minutes 32. Striders' third finisher was Damian Macenhill who placed 16th in 37 minutes 39. He was followed by Simon Smith (19th, 38.00); Alan Dolton (22nd, 38.21); Paul Finch (26th, 38.58) and Ken Low (31st, 39.20). The first over-50 was Bill Fraser of Hailsham, who placed 20th overall in 38 minutes 02. The first woman to finish was Rachel Harland in 42 minutes 07.

The East Surrey League held its annual road race at Ewell on 8 April. Before the race, Striders were placed fourth in the league table. However the three leading clubs all fielded weak teams. Host club Epsom won the match by a big margin. For Striders, Tony Sheppard placed 10th, Gerry Crispie 12th, Nigel Davidson 23rd, Chris Morton 30th and Ken Low 31st. Somewhat surprisingly, this gave us second place in the match. Even more surprisingly, it meant that we managed to overtake all three of our rivals and win the league by a single point. This was the first time that we had won this league, and at the time of writing it is still the only time that we have ever won it. The final points scores of the top six clubs were Striders 39; Box Hill 38; Epsom 38; Croydon Harriers 36; Hercules-Wimbledon 33; Crawley 32.

The 23rd London Marathon was held on 13 April. Striders had 14 finishers, led home by Ciaran Osborn who was making his marathon debut and produced an excellent run to record 2 hours 47 minutes 11 seconds, lifting him to fourth place in the club's all-time rankings (ten years later, he now places eighth). Two other Striders finished in under three hours, with Gerry Crispie recording 2 hours 52 minutes 07 and Justin Macenhill recording 2 hours 55 minutes 27.

As a relatively young club, Striders did not often have the sad news of the death of former club members. However in April 2003 we were shocked to hear of the death of former member Tony Eve. Tony was only 68 when he died, and it was only 13 years since he had set a club over-55 marathon record of 3 hours 18 minutes 40 seconds (which currently still stands).

The Sutton 10 kilometre road race, which was the first event in the Surrey Road League, took place on 4 May. On a hot day which was not conducive to fast times, Striders' men did very well to place second out of 24 clubs, while our women were sixth. We had an excellent turnout of 25 club members (almost 30% of the club membership, which stood at 88 at the time).

The Surrey Championships took place at Kingsmeadow on 10 and 11 May. Former Croydon Harrier (and future Strider) Michelle Pierre won the women's 400 metres for the sixth time. Wearing the colours of UK League Division One club Shaftesbury-Barnet, she finished in 57.0 seconds. Croydon's Martyn Rooney won the under-17 800 metres in a personal best of 1 minute 58.96 seconds. Sunday 11 May also saw Striders organise the annual Race for Life in Lloyd Park. More than 2000 women took part. For Striders, Helen Furze finished second while eleven-year-old Sophie Shaw beat most of the adult runners, finishing 14th.

The first Southern Veterans League match of the season took place at Sutton on 12 May. On a cold and wet evening Striders were very short of numbers. Only four first-claim Striders competed, although we were helped by four second-claim members (all from Holland Sports). Our men finished fifth while our women were sixth. May 2003 brought the sad news of the death of Brian Messom, the bar manager at Striders' Sandilands clubhouse. In his younger days Brian had been an excellent cricketer, representing the Surrey youth team.

CHRISTMAS QUIZ - ANSWERS

Some of the questions in the Christmas Quiz proved challenging. The highest score was achieved by Steve Tyler with 17 correct answers. Chris Morton placed second with nine correct. The correct answers are:

1) South London Harriers. 2) Collingwood. 3) Croydon Harriers. 4) Croydon Harriers. 5) Croydon Harriers. 6) Lawrence Okoye. 7) Martyn Rooney. 8) Donna Fraser. 9) 1995. 10) 1989. 11) Shireen Bailey. 12) 1985. 13) Lorna Boothe. 14) Don Faircloth. 15) Mike Fleet. 16) Gordon Pirie. 17) Tom Richards. 18) Swan & Sugar Loaf. 19) Alf Shrubbs. 20) 1871.



Donna Fraser of Croydon Harriers – pictured here in 1996. She subsequently finished fourth in the women's 400 metres at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

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