

Striders of Croydon

DECEMBER 2014 MAGAZINE



Striders had a club record of 65 finishers for the Helen Furze Memorial Mobmatch, against Helen's previous club Wimbledon Windmilers, at Nonsuch Park on Saturday 29 November

(with apologies to Mick Turner, who wanted a different photo on the front page)

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sat 3 Jan – Surrey Cross-Country Championships – Lloyd Park
Sat 10 Jan – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – Wimbledon
Sat 10 Jan – Surrey Cross-Country League Division 2 (men) – Wimbledon
Sat 24 Jan – Southern Cross-Country Championships – Stanmer Park, Brighton
Sat 7 Feb – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – Coulsdon
Sat 7 Feb – Surrey Cross-Country League Division 2 (men) – Lloyd Park
Sat 21 Feb – National Cross-Country Championships – Parliament Hill Fields
Sat 7 & Sun 8 Mar – British Masters Indoor Championships – Lee Valley
Sun 29 Mar – Croydon Half-Marathon (Striders hosting)
Sun 12 Apr – Brighton Marathon
Sun 26 Apr – London Marathon (Striders marshalling)
Sun 3 May – Ranelagh Half-Marathon (Surrey Championship) – Petersham
Sun 10 May – Sutton 10K (Surrey Road League)
Mon 18 May – Southern Veterans League – venue to be confirmed
Sun 31 May (provisional) – Dorking 10 miles (including Surrey Championships)
Sun 7 June – Surrey Masters Championships – Ewell
Mon 15 June – Southern Veterans League – venue to be confirmed
Sun 21 June – Richmond 10K (including Surrey Championships)
Mon 29 June – Southern Veterans League – venue to be confirmed
Mon 13 July – Southern Veterans League – venue to be confirmed
Sun 19 July – Elmbridge 10K (Surrey Road League)
Sun 26 July – British Masters Championships – Birmingham
Sun 9 Aug – Wimbledon 5K (including Surrey Championships)

MARATHON TRAINING RUNS 2013/14

	Planned Run	Start	Finish	Route
Sun 28 Dec	Wandle 14	Clapham Junction	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=2366613
Sun 4 Jan	Keston Ponds 14	Sandilands	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=2558460
Sun 11 Jan	Greenwich 13	London Bridge	London Bridge	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=2170782
Sun 18 Jan	Riddlesdown 14	Sandilands	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5240872
Sun 25 Jan	Warlingham 16	Sandilands	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5312946
Sun 1 Feb	Merstham 15	Merstham	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=1550627
Sun 8 Feb	Ladywell 16	Sandilands	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=6203882
Sun 15 Feb	Greenwich 17	London Bridge	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=6203868
Sun 22 Feb	High Elms 17	Sandilands	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5317891
Sun 1 March	Regents Canal 18	Victoria	Victoria	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5833749
Sun 8 March	Kingston 21	Kingston	Clapham Junction	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5846244
Sun 15 March	Coulsdon 17	Coulsdon South	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5474783
Sun 22 March	Botley Hill 19	Sandilands	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5856502

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER DECEMBER 2014

And so ends another successful year for Striders; we finished our financial year with more than 300 members, roughly 200 men and 100 women. As Alan says in his review of Debra Bourne's parkrun book, I am afraid to say I don't know all of you and my apologies if I can't remember your name even if you have been with the club for years.

Ironically and most frustrating for me it now seem that the best place to meet Striders members is parkrun mob matches. But it seems the Jamieson family follows the Dutch tradition (as described in the parkrun book) that Saturday morning is family time and I am very rarely able to run or help.

In this edition you have an excellent description, and explanation from John Gannon of why we have such lovely parks and woodland to run though so close to Croydon. Coincidentally, I saw an article on the early history of Croydon recently with a photograph of the path across Shirley golf course; this was used as an example of what most of the roads in Croydon looked like when Croydon was still a small market town. This was when Oaks Road did not exist and West Wickham Road continued straight across what is now the grounds of Trinity School to join up with Addiscombe road somewhere near Sandilands tram stop.

I see Corinne has been off altitude training in the north of India. The photos of the distant mountains look a bit different from the view from Shirley (or is it Addington) Hills. Anyone planning to enter the highest marathon in the world at Leh next year?

If you can't manage the travelling you could always have a go at some urban orienteering round the city of London as described by Andy Elliot. It looks like it will be about the same time as the Leh Marathon and our Switchback, so a difficult choice.

As someone who started in the IT business in the days of paper tape and punch cards, I was amazed to discover that Alan Turing who started it all was a pretty successful club runner. The photo of Walton AC climbing on to a bus in their suits and macs prompts me to wonder when the anorak and track suit took over.

Alan summarises our successes over the last quarter. Well done to everyone who has run for us. An amazingly successful year for Striders, and well done to Kevin Burnett, the first Strider to complete 250 parkruns, and to Nick Kyritsis for knocking about 30 minutes off my M60 marathon record.

By now you will all know about Debra's book on parkrun which is reviewed by Alan. I have read about half of it so far and have to say it is a very good and interesting read if you have any involvement in parkrun. I really was not aware how big it has grown in the last 5 years.

Although Striders has been involved with both Roundshaw and Lloyd parkruns from the beginning, it is interesting to note that when Chris Phelan of Banstead first asked us (in early 2009 I think) if we could organise a 5k run in Lloyd Park every Saturday morning, we did everything we could to discourage it. It was far too muddy, it would impact the Lloyd Park XC's, it would detract from our club runs, etc. etc. I took Chris and Paul Sinton-Hewitt for a walk round Lloyd Park to confirm to them that it really was not on. At that time I was also in discussion with Mike Fleet of Croydon Harriers about organising a Croydon Half Marathon, so asked him if he was interesting in setting one up round South Norwood Country Park. He said no way but how about Roundshaw Downs? (I have since discovered that this was a cunning plan by Mike to make sure any parkrun was as far away from Croydon Arena as possible.)

I ran my first parkrun at Banstead in February 2009, met up with Chris Phelan and Chris Wright, and thought "we will have to get one going somewhere in Croydon". I had never been to Roundshaw but had a look on Google Earth and saw that there was a possible two-lap 5K route. I met with Chris and others from Banstead at Roundshaw, we ran round the route, made some minor changes to avoid the worst of the mud, and that was it. Meanwhile, although the start was in Croydon, most of the route was in Sutton so we made contact with Collingwood and Sutton Runners. Sutton weren't interested but Collingwood were, and along with Mick Turner and others from Striders we had a team to run the event. The first one was on Saturday 18th July 2009.

About a year later, with a combination of further pressure from Chris Phelan on Croydon Council and a new enthusiastic sports co-ordinator called Shelley, we heard that they were considering a parkrun in Lloyd Park. Again we were consulted about a route, again we were rather discouraging but meanwhile John Gannon had suggested a two-lap route roughly the clockwise version of the current route but following the paths used by the XC's.

We walked it with Shelley in May 2010, concluded it would be better run anti-clockwise and better to come back into the games fields after the hill as it was less muddy. And it finally all started in October 2010. The rest, as they say, is history.

Happy Christmas and a Speedy New Year to everyone.

Robin Jamieson

CROYDON: THIS GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND (by John Gannon)

Yes I know, not what you usually associate Croydon with is it? Usually 1960/70's office blocks, Lunatic House, riots and the view from East Croydon railway station as people pass through. (I understand that view is likely to change but as I've been hearing this for the last 25 years, seeing will be believing). However we, as runners, are blessed with many green and open spaces that we can run through, which although they might not be Richmond Park or Wimbledon Common, are less well-known (even to people living in Croydon) so are less populated with dogs, cyclists, golfers etc. so we have more of a free range over these parks and woods.

But have you ever asked yourself how did we get so lucky to have these areas on which to run over? Well even if you haven't thought it about I think it's about time you did, so I have brought it upon myself to enlighten you all – plus it gives me something to do while I recuperate! (At the time of writing I am recovering from an operation.) So join me as I take you on an imaginary run, which is the only running I can do at present, over a route that is sometimes known as The Traditional Sunday Club Run.

Lloyd Park



As we go through the gate on the other side of the Cricket pitch opposite the club house we step into Lloyd Park, which is named after Frank Lloyd, a newspaper magnate, who lived in the nearby Coombe House for over 35 years until his death in 1927 when he bequeathed most of the farm land which came with the estate to the local corporation for recreation purposes. As we run up the hill we pass through a gap into open fields that show a vast difference to the playing pitches on the other side of the hill. Ever wonder why we get wet feet as we run over this field even when is on top of a hill so you would expect any water to drain away? Well it's because there are a number of springs located in this field that emerge between the Thanet sand and the underlying chalk that is beneath our feet.

We continue around the northern boundary of the park until we leave Lloyd Park by the Oaks Lane exit. The track to the right is the continuation of Oaks Lane that passes Coombe Farm, which was owned by Frank Lloyd's brother Herbert, before finally reaching Frank's old gaff, Coombe House. In fact there has been a house on this site since 1221 and in the grounds

there is an ancient well that was once used by Pilgrims en route to join the Pilgrims Way to Canterbury. Returning to the exit we go up the drive that leads to Oaks Farm, which is popular for weddings if you're into those sorts of things, but away from the farm until we reach Oaks Road.

Addington/Shirley Hills



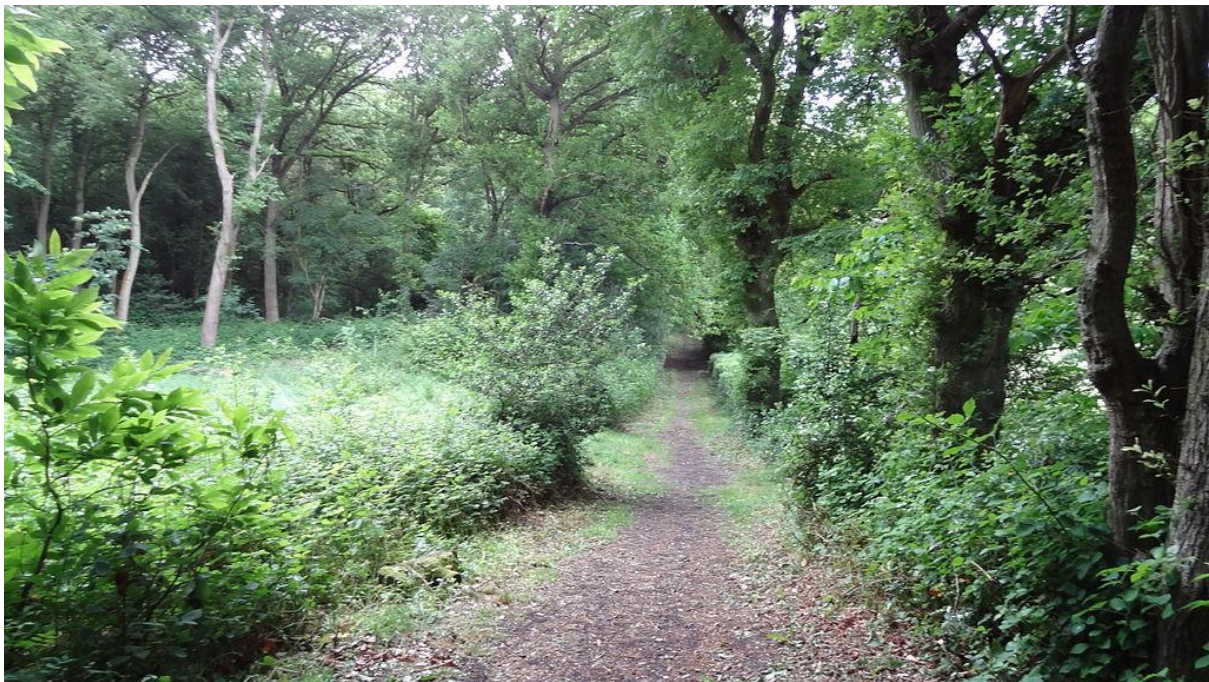
We cross over this road (carefully) and enter the lower woods of Addington Hills, although some of us also refer to this area as Shirley Hills, which might be confusing to new members but it's one and the same. Part of these hills was acquired in 1874 by the then Croydon Board of Health and was in the late 19th Century very popular with people not only from Croydon but from London as well, who at weekends would arrange trips to the area to escape the city. In fact so popular that a local Pub, The Sandrocks, lost its licence due to rowdy behaviour! Something that you would find surprising if you were to visit the existing version today; however, it does a very nice Sunday lunch!

We continue upwards through the woods until we take a path to the left and continue in a clockwise direction around the hills until we finally climb to the summit that stands at 460 feet above sea level. We then continue towards the car park and Chinese restaurant but of course no Sunday club run is complete without a visit to the Viewpoint so we bear right and head to the said Viewpoint from where, if Upper Norwood was not in the way, it would give us a great view into London! However even with this obstacle the views aren't half bad as not only can we see the office blocks and flats that tower above Croydon, but we can also see such sights as the O2 and Canary Wharf to the north east, Tower 42, The Shard and BT Tower to the north, with Wembley to the north west and on a very clear day if you pick out the Croydon Town Hall Clock Tower then look slightly up you should be able to just make

out Windsor Castle in the west. However I think it has to be a very clear day and you have to have the eyes of an Eagle (no, not a Palace fan) to see it clearly.

Once we have admired the view, we retrace our steps onwards past the restaurant picking up the path that is part of the London Loop on our right to head through the woods, from where we exit by the Coombe Lane tram stop. In front of us is the entrance to Royal Russell school, which until the 1920's was a private estate called Ballards Estate, dating back before the Reformation period. Turning left onto the path that runs alongside Coombe Lane, we cross over at the end of this path and turn right into Ballards Way before taking the first turning on the left, Riesco Drive. This small road is named after a Raymond Riesco, who owned Heathfield House and Gardens that we can see on our left hand side and have quite often run around, as the grounds are open to the public. We have to thank Mr Riesco for not only the lovely gardens that he had built but also on his death in 1964 selling the estate to Croydon Council. He had already sold off part of the estate in 1945 to the council and the Monks Hill housing estate was built on the land he sold, but hey no one is perfect are they?

Bramley Bank & Littleheath



As we run down Riesco Drive there is an entrance to a small woodland area that is managed by London Wildlife Trust as a nature reserve; again we have to thank Mr Riesco for this. There are two paths that run through this wood and both take only a few minutes to complete to exit at a path that links Monks Hill with its better-off neighbour Croham Valley; we cross this path and enter into Littleheath Woods. These woods are completely surrounded by houses with Monks Hill to the east, Croham Valley to the north and Selsdon to the south. Most of this housing was built in the 1920s and 1930s and in fact there were plans to build on the woods, so we are forever in the debt of a local conservationist, Malcom Sharpe, who rallied the locals and Council into saving the woods by raising the princely sum of £6,000. The woods were purchased in 1932 and declared an open space, therefore turning back the tide of housing.

The Sunday run normally splits just after we enter Littleheath, with the hour group heading west across the woods towards Littleheath Road while the 90 minute group heads south along the narrow strip of woodland towards Selsdon Park Road. Both routes will merge later

so we will take the 90 minute option as we still follow the London Loop path that is joined by another long-distance path, the Vanguard Way, as it crosses Selsdon Park Road to head down a path that divides two housing estates, Forestdale to our left and Selsdon Vale to the right. This path dips down and up before finally delivering us at the back entrance to Selsdon Woods.

Selsdon Woods



These woods have been around since God was a boy and were always linked to Selsdon Farm, which in turn became Selsdon Park Hotel in the 1920's. Before that it might well have been laid out as land for a Country Shoot, much like its neighbour Kingswood. When the estate was broken up during the 1920's, a lot of the woods were sold off for housing, areas such as Ashen Vale and Selsdon Vale. Interestingly, this part of the land was originally intended to be sold to returning soldiers from the First World War. Much like Littleheath, there was a public movement to save the woods and there were offered to the National Trust, who declined due to the running costs, but the forerunners of the Croydon Council agreed to take ownership and the woods were saved so we could run around them.

As we enter the woods there is again another option to take a shorter route, turn right and take the lower path (Vale Border) avoiding the hills, or carrying on upwards and then take a clockwise trip around the woods before running down to the main entrance at Farleigh Road where both options meet up before taking the long climb up Farleigh Road to the Selsdon lights. This next section is the longest we spend on road, as once we have the climb up to the lights out of the way, we take a left crossing over Addington Road before turning right to run down Upper Selsdon Road where we pass Queenhill Road which is where we pick up the hour route we left some miles ago. Carrying on downhill we finally pick up a path on the

right hand side of the road, just by a bus stop that leads us onto a track that divides Croham Hurst Golf Course and leads onto Croham Hurst itself.

Croham Hurst



There have been runners going up and down the hills of Croham Hurst going back thousands of years. Evidence has been found dating back to the Mesolithic era 5,000 to 3,000 years BC. The top of Croham Hurst was also populated during the Bronze Age; if you stop and look at the view here you can see why it would prove popular. There is also a Bronze Age round barrow, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, although the only visible evidence is a plaque marking the site.

In the Medieval Period, Croham was one of the four manors in the parish of Sanderstead. In the late sixteenth century the area was sold to John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Croham Hurst then became part of his Whitgift Foundation, an educational and nursing charity which is still operating today. In fact this charity is responsible for all the private schools in Croydon. In the late nineteenth century, Croham Hurst became a popular spot for visitors, few of whom knew that it was not public property. They were shocked when it became known in 1898 that the Foundation wanted to sell the site, with the lower slopes being developed. Croydon people launched a vigorous campaign to save the site, which resulted in the whole of it being acquired by Croydon Corporation on 8 February 1901, so again we have to thank our previous residents of Croydon for saving these sites for our enjoyment!

As we enter the woods we have a choice of paths, straight on down the Bridle Path alongside the golf course, take a sharp left following the railings that separate us from the other side of the golf course that then also takes us down a path (but be careful there is a sting in the tail for this one), or take the middle option and take the path that climbs to the summit of Croham Hurst some 477 feet above sea level. All three paths will eventually lead us to the other side of the woods where we could exit into Croham Manor Road which could take us back to the club house but that option would rid us of one last hill to climb and we wouldn't want to miss out on that now would we? So if we have followed the Bridle Path that runs alongside the golf course, we will eventually come to a path on our right hand side, again that will follow the golf course and lead us out into the car park of the golf club from where we cross Croham Road and picking up our old friend the Vanguard Way we can climb up Conduit Lane.

Conduit Lane/Coombe Wood Gardens



As we climb the short but steep hill we can be comforted by the fact that we have nearly finished our run, as Conduit Lane got its name from the three steams that use to run along this path and that supplied the water for the Coombe Estate that not only included Coombe House, home of Frank Lloyd, he of Lloyd Park fame, as well as Coombe Wood House that was built for yet another of Frank's brothers, Arthur. Those Lloyd boys really had this area sewn up didn't they? As we run along Conduit Lane we will encounter a very ripe smell; don't worry it's not from one of the runners in front of you but from the compost that is stored in the Central Nursery of Croydon Council, which we pass en route. As we come to the end of Conduit Lane we come to the entrance of Coombe Wood Gardens, which was part of the garden belong to Coombe Wood House. The gardens are well worth a visit as is the Café that is situated in what used to be the stable block of the house. The house and grounds were purchased by Croydon Council and while the grounds are still maintained by the council, the house was turned into a restaurant, the Château Napoleon or Château as I think it is now called.



As we cross over Coombe Road, we turn left and thankfully run down this road passing Coombe House on our right with Coombe Lodge to our left. Built in the 1760's it is now a Beefeater restaurant but don't let that put you off going there as it does have a very nice bar area. There has also been added a Premier Inn hotel where Lenny Henry is waiting to offer you a warm welcome. After a short distance we can cross the Tram Line that links Addington to Croydon, to return to Lloyd Park from where we can return to the clubhouse tired but happy!

THE LADAKH MARATHON (by Corinne Carr)

(The highest marathon in the world)

14 September 2014 – 6am

As we drive towards the airport, I spare a thought for the brave souls who are taking part in various events today.

Where are we? Leh – one hour's flight north of Delhi, capital of the Ladakh region in the northernmost state of India, Jammu and Kashmir, at an altitude of 3,524m. Ladakh is bordered by the Himalaya range to the south and Tibet to the east. It is sometimes called "Little Tibet" as it has been strongly influenced by Tibetan culture, and it is renowned for its remote mountain beauty and culture.

There are four events on today, for the third year: a 7km 'fun' race, a half marathon, a full marathon (the highest in the world – 150 participants) and the 72km Khardung La challenge (40 runners). The first three events start at the Shanti Stupa, a white-domed temple which can be reached by climbing 500 steps (hard, believe me!) to an altitude of 4,267m. It was built by Japanese and Ladakh Buddhists in 1985 to commemorate world peace, and offers some of the most stunning panoramic views of Leh and its surrounding landscape of snow-capped mountains. The hardest part is to reach the start line as it is all downhill from there! In 2013, the half was completed in 1:25 and the full marathon in 3:25 hours.

The Khardung La challenge (72km) starts at the Khardung village (3975 metres). The route involves a gentle but steady climb to the Khardung La top, one of the world's highest passes (5370 metres) with spectacular mountain views, before descending back to Leh. The challenge was completed last year in 6:55.

If you are tempted, these events will run again on 15 September 2015. I only found out about them when I arrived in Leh two weeks ago. I was there with three others, taking part in a nine-day trek supported by five Sherpas and eleven horses. The expedition covers a distance of 122 km, following the Markha River valley and crossing two passes at c.5000m. You take all the kit with you (food, tents, utensils etc.) as there are no towns nor shops on the way. A typical day starts at 6am, woken up by a cup of 'masala' tea and a lovely breakfast prepared by our chef (who got up at 4am and also cooked a five-course lunch at the same time – it makes our local take-away a pale imitation of the indigenous Indian food). We are 'on the road' (there isn't really one) by 8am. We walk for several hours until we break for lunch or reach our next campsite. Facilities are basic and we become experts at washing in a bucket and using 'pit' toilets! We meet several monks on the way who look after monasteries that pepper the route, and come across a few locals who kindly invite us in for a cup of 'butter' tea. Afternoons and evenings are free to recover from the physical challenge and rest. The scenery is breath-taking, literally. The last few hundred metres before reaching the highest pass at 5,200m (see photo) are the hardest and most memorable, walking 10 metres and resting for thirty seconds. Luckily, I am not too badly affected by altitude sickness and follow the leading horse who also finds it tough getting to the top. All the pain is soon forgotten when we reach the prayer flags which mark the pass. A soul-cleansing experience; we're on top of the world...



THE CITY OF LONDON ORIENTEERING RACE (by Andy Elliott)

This event, which took place on 21 September, is an annual orienteering race that has a large international contingent & is very popular with UK orienteers as well; it is not to be confused with the London City Race. Orienteering is usually a variation on cross country running; this event is however an increasingly popular format, the urban event. As the name suggests it is held in the City of London, which can be surprisingly tricky to navigate. Competitors are given a large-scale map which shows all the streets, alleyways, buildings etc. but does not give any street or building names; if you lose track of where you are, relocation can be difficult. The object is to navigate to controls pre-marked on your map, as fast as possible. When you reach your control you have an electronic "dibber" which you "punch" in a box about the size of a large box of matches, this records the time you have taken to get there from the previous control on your "dibber" & is evidence that you actually did get there. All the controls are numbered & the system knows what controls you need to visit & in what order, so cheating is impossible. At the end you download your dibber into a laptop & receive a printout showing your time for each leg, total time overall & position so far among the finishers on your course, which may or may not be a depressing reading.

As it was a Sunday morning, the roads & pavements were relatively quiet; however as the morning progressed crowds of tourists etc. began to appear & you needed to take care running round blind corners if you were not to collide with someone. The main start was on London Wall & competitors were started at one minute intervals on each of 10 different courses. When my time came up, I punched the start control to start the clock and picked up my map; only 4.4 km on a straight line basis with no climb. Sadly, those figures are not much help if like me you are unable to run through brick walls & buildings & have to run round the outside, also the "no climb" is based on contour lines & does not allow for steps, stairs & ramps.

Start on London Wall. The first control is on a bend in an alley, zigzag through the streets & dive down the alley, punch & out the other end: easy. Control number 2 appears to be next to some shrubbery behind an impassable wall (shown as a heavy black line on the map) in a garden area. First task is to locate the entrance to the garden & run to the entrance rather than the control itself. On arrival it transpires the garden is in fact the grounds of St Pauls & the control is tucked away below the main entrance, zigzag to number 3 & on to number 4: so far so good. Number 4 is between two impassable walls across a road, a footbridge perhaps; access is indirect via three separate sets of steps. Again don't run to control, determine which is the first set of steps & run there. The exit is via a pink area on the map, pink means pedestrian precinct, how do I exit? Close study of the map reveals steps at the end of a narrow walkway between a building & a wall, again run to the exit rather than towards the next control. Control 5 appears to be surrounded by buildings & impassable walls; careful study reveals a small gap between walls – it was in fact a ramp with a hairpin bend giving access to a small elevated plaza. The straight line distance between 5 & 6 is only about 100 metres, unfortunately a building is in the way. The possible routes (there are two) both involve running three sides of a square; the east route appears to be shorter. So down steps along a covered walkway (pale blue on the map shows underpass), out into the street through another underpass & along an alley to the control. No exit from alley so back the way I came in & on to the street. Zigzag to number 7. I recognise this, it's Finsbury Square, on to number 8 which is only accessible from the north; on the way the sound of tannoy announcements: Liverpool Street Station is some where below. On to 9, 10, 11 & 12 (Bunhill Row Burial Ground); number 13 is an old church yard surrounded by impassable walls, a convoluted route to get in that involves going past to the south & then coming back to get onto the right side of the wall. On to 14 then a long leg to 15 which is in the Barbican, a complex area on three levels with numerous walkways, staircases & even several large

ponds or small lakes. It is said some people have been trapped for days in this labyrinth unable to find a way out, possibly an exaggeration but with a degree of truth. Number 15 is at the end of a wall, it transpires the wall forms one side of a ramp & I need the top end. I have come out on the second level. Number 16 is only 100 metres away on the same level but flats are in the way, the best route is back down the ramp to the lower level round the outside of the flats, up some steps to the middle level & round a square with gardens in the middle. Now it gets very tricky a longish leg to 17 with a convoluted route choice to get there. Up steps to the upper level, along a covered walkway & down steps to the middle level, cross a small access road, left then right then right again then left then right and disaster: a high wall blocks the way. What I thought was a gap was in fact the upper level walkway, but I'm on the middle level. Back the way I came then along a narrow alleyway to gain access to a ramp to take me up to the upper level, round the edge of a long pond or small lake and number 17 is only a few metres away, sadly on the other side of a high wall. The only way to get round the wall is on a lower level, run to the nearest steps (a long way) come out at lower level opposite Barbican station. Unfortunately Station is not named on map so have no idea where on the map it is. Spot a footbridge over the road that *is* on the map, now I know where I am. Up steps to middle level, along a covered walkway & out onto a plaza with trees in giant tubs; number 17 is behind the furthest one. Round the building & up the steps to the upper level for 18. All these steps, so much for nil climb! Study the map for route to 19; a lake & a building are in the way, detail on the map is difficult to see even with magnifying glasses; I need to go round three sides of square but where can I get through? Upper level (which I'm on) is blocked by a building as is lower level (different buildings), middle level has a subway (shown as dotted lines) beneath upper level walkway which takes me beneath buildings & over lake, I go back down the steps & along the subway & hope that there will be a way down to the lower level where 19 is located. When I get close to 19 there are steps which descend one level in three short flights, they are on the map but are so small I can barely make them out. From 19 it is a short straight run to the finish in a time of 68 mins 32. The winner in my class (ultra vets) had a time of 33 mins 58; clearly he ran faster & probably has better eyesight.

The event was great fun. Running fast is not enough: you need to have good eyesight to read the small detail on the map, & good route choice. Operating on more than one level is tricky especially in the Barbican where you have three levels & the map has to show what is on each level when the features are on top of each other. There is a skill to urban orienteering (which unfortunately I do not possess) that involves an eye for fine detail & the ability to glance at a map & take it all in at one go. The absence of such skills should not deter anyone from having a go, just accept that like me you are unlikely to win. You do get to see parts of the City you would not otherwise see.



There was an urban race in Brussels on the same day & some competitors managed to run in both. An early start in Brussels, dash to the Eurostar station & travel to London, dash from St Pancras to Barbican for a late start in the London City Race: just shows it can be done & finish in time for lunch as well!

ALAN MATHISON TURING – MARATHON MAN

(original article by IEG Green: edited by Linda Daniel)

Alan Mathison Turing, OBE, FRS, 23 June 1912 – 7 June 1954) was a British mathematician, logician, cryptanalyst, philosopher, pioneering computer scientist, mathematical biologist, and marathon and distance runner.

Better known for his mastery of the German enciphering machine, Enigma, at the now-famous Bletchley Park, and currently the subject of a highly acclaimed British historical movie 'The Imitation Game' starring Benedict Cumberbatch, the article below is an interesting insight into the athletic side of this fascinating character.

"The first mention of Alan Turing in the monthly magazine, "Athletics" (which was to become "Athletics Weekly" in later years), was in August 1946 when he won the Walton AC's three miles track title in 15:37.8. This hardly compared in any way with the record-breaking time of 13:53.2 which had been set by Sydney Wooderson a month before at the AAA Championships, but the 20th fastest time by a Briton that year was 15:17.0 and so Turing's performance as an unlikely 34-year-old novice was one to be remarked upon.

This was followed by a series of commendable cross-country runs for his club, as follows: 26 October, 3rd v Thames Valley Harriers and Woodford Green AC at Cranford, only six seconds behind Alec Olney (TVH), who was to become an Olympic 5000 metres runner two years later. 9 November, 17th of 209 starters, South of the Thames inter-team race at Nonsuch Park, Cheam, and first scorer for his club, 1min 2sec behind Bill Lucas (Belgrave Harriers), also an Olympic 5000 metres runner in 1948. 21 December, 7th v Surrey AC at Kingston, 30 seconds behind Stan Belton (Southern cross-country champion in 1936) and Geoff Iden (to be an Olympic marathon runner in 1952), both of Surrey AC.

Clearly, Turing was already of some public repute as a result of his computing research because "Athletics" magazine saw fit to publish a paragraph in one of their issues that year drawing attention to the fact that the Walton AC member was the same Dr Turing who was "largely responsible for the so called Electronic Brain Machine". During 1947 he ventured into longer distances. In March, he was 69th in the snow-bound National cross-country championships at Apsley, in Buckinghamshire. In April, he was 4th in a 10-mile road race promoted by his club in a time of 54:43 behind an RAF officer and pre-war British 5,000 metres international, and almost a minute ahead of Stan Jones, of Polytechnic Harriers, who was to gain Olympic marathon selection the next year. In May, Turing was 3rd in the Kent 20 miles road race at Chislehurst in 2:06:18, though more than four minutes behind the winner, Ron Manley of Woodford Green AC.

All of this activity was presumably – and, no doubt, mathematically and logically – designed by Turing as preparation for his marathon debut, which was on 12 July in Rugby at a race promoted by the British Thomson Houston electrical engineering company. There he was a somewhat isolated 4th in 3:01:23 as the future Olympic silver-medallist, Tommy Richards, of South London Harriers, won in 2:43:03 from Manley (2:50:47) and Harry Dennis, of Thames Valley Harriers, (2:55:10). Having retained his Walton AC three miles track title on 12 August in 15:51.8, Turing took part in the AAA marathon a fortnight later at Loughborough and improved enormously to a time of 2:46:03 for 5th place. Again, he ended the race on his own. Jack Holden, of Tipton Harriers, who would also run in the Olympic marathon a year later, won in 2:33:20.2 from Richards (2:36:07) and the Scotsmen Donald McNab Robertson (2:37:45.6) and J. Emmett Farrell (2:39:46.4).

Turing was 7th in the South of the Thames inter-team cross-country event in November at Dartford, 40 seconds behind the National champion, Bertie Robertson of Reading AC, and at the year's end he was ranked in 9th place on his competitive record among Britain's

marathon runners by the AAA and British Amateur Athletic Board team manager, Jack Crump, in his annual compilation. The list of Olympic “possibles” announced by the BAAB included only six for the marathon – Cecil Ballard (Surrey AC), Farrell, John Henning (Duncairn Nomads), Holden, Richards and McNab Robertson. Ballard had won the Poly marathon and Henning was the Northern Ireland and All-Ireland champion.

In April of 1948, Turing finished almost nine minutes down on the winner of the Wigmore 15 miles road race, and his internet biography notes with perhaps no more than a degree of justification that, “Only injury prevented his serious consideration for the British team in the 1948 Olympic Games”. In fact, the selection process was simply based on the result of the combined AAA/Polytechnic race on 19 June in which Turing did not run and which was won by Holden in 2:36:44.6 from Richards (2:38:03) and Stan Jones (2:40:49).

A copy of the programme for the 1948 Poly shows that Turing was entered, and so he may well have had some Olympic aspirations at least until his untimely injury. This leaves us only with the inevitable conjecture that although his best time was more than five minutes slower than was good enough to win an Olympic place, he might conceivably have made further significant improvements in only his second year of marathon-running had he been fully fit. His running action was apparently very strained and cumbersome, and this may have caused his problems.

He continued competing until 1950 when a leg injury finally ended his career.”



Alan Turing (on the left) with other members of Walton AC, boarding the team minibus on their way to a road race in 1946. The photo is an indication of how fashions have changed: very few Striders now travel to weekend races dressed like this.

SURREY CROSS-COUNTRY LEAGUES: MID-SEASON TABLES

MEN – DIVISION TWO

Clapham	317
Guildford	561
Striders	876
Wimbledon Windmilers	981
Walton	999
Dulwich	1025
Stragglers	1082
Ful-on-Triathlon	1090
Epsom & Ewell	1261

WOMEN – DIVISION TWO

Ful-on-Triathlon A	161
Woking A	240
Dorking A	290
Elmbridge A	298
Striders A	372
Ful-on-Triathlon B	416
Epsom Oddballs A	469
Sutton A	590
Collingwood A	646
Kent A	675
Kingston A	676
Epsom Allsorts A	691
Tadworth A	698
Holland Sports A	703
Walton A	735
Barnes A	828
Runnymede A	841
Lingfield A	895
Windle Valley A	909
Dorking B	914
Dulwich Park A	941
Striders B	985
Sutton B	1181
Epsom Allsorts B	1212
Elmbridge B	1246
Tadworth B	1322
Woking B	1371
Croydon Harriers A	1379
British Airways A	1403
Collingwood B	1460
Dulwich Park B	1495
Lingfield B	1594
Runnymede B	1725

COMPETITIVE HIGHLIGHTS: 20 SEPTEMBER – 6 DECEMBER 2014

On 20 September Striders gained an 'away win' in our mobmatch against Blackheath & Bromley, held in conjunction with the Bromley parkrun. We comfortably outnumbered our hosts, having 41 of the 491 finishers, compared with only 29 for Blackheath.

Bill Makuwa won the Switchback five-mile multi-terrain race on 28 September, recording 29 minutes 31 seconds. Ernie Hann placed second in 29 minutes 49, with Lee Flanagan placing fourth overall and first in the over-40 category (31.22). We won the men's team prize. The first woman to finish was Ola Balme of Dulwich, who placed 18th overall in 34 minutes 16. She was closely followed by Serena Stracey, who placed 20th in 34 minutes 34.

Our men finished third out of nine clubs in their opening Surrey Cross-Country League Division Two match of the season, at Guildford on 11 October. Ernie Hann ran strongly to place 22nd of the 152 finishers, covering the hilly five-mile course in 29 minutes 33 seconds. Simone Luciani, making his league debut, also ran very well for 23rd (29.38) with Bill Makuwa close behind in 25th (29.40). Matt Morgan made a welcome return to Striders' colours in 30th (30.07) with Lee Flanagan 41st (30.47) and Justin Macenhill 47th (31.05).

Meanwhile our women placed fifth in their Division Two match at Richmond Park. Alice Ewen led them home, placing 20th in 29 minutes 44, just one place and three seconds ahead of Steph Upton. Striders' next two runners were even closer together, with Becky Laurence placing 52nd in 33 minutes 56 and Michelle Clarke 53rd in 33 minutes 57. Debra Bourne completed the scoring team in 56th (34.28).

In the Surrey Masters Cross-Country Championships at Richmond Park on 18 October, Kevin Burnett placed second in the over-75 race, while Simon Pannell placed fifth in the over-50 race, covering the 10-kilometre course in 41 minutes 29 seconds. On the following day, we had 52 finishers in the Croydon 10 kilometre road race. Bill Makuwa placed seventh (35.22), while Karen Stretch was the third woman to finish (40.54).

We placed second in the East Surrey League's annual cross-country race at Lloyd Park on 25 October. We had 16 of the first 37 finishers, led by Ernie Hann who placed second in 30 minutes 04 seconds. Krzysztof Klidzia was seventh (31.25), Tyler O'Callaghan eighth (31.51) and Matt Stone was the first over-50 to finish, placing ninth overall in 32 minutes 06.

Our men placed fourth in the second Surrey Cross-Country League Division Two match of the season, at Ham on 8 November. Bill Makuwa placed eleventh out of the 193 finishers, covering the five-mile course in 30 minutes 55 seconds. Simone Luciani placed 15th (31.09), Matt Morgan 26th (31.50), Lee Flanagan 39th (32.32) and Matt Smith 40th (32.34).

We won our mobmatch against Wimbledon Windmilers, for the Helen Furze Memorial Trophy, in conjunction with the parkrun at Nonsuch Park on 29 November. We had 65 finishers, which was our biggest turnout in any event since the club's formation in 1982. We were led by Matt Morgan who finished fourth, covering the muddy five-kilometre course in 18 minutes 15 seconds. Ernie Hann also ran well to place ninth (18.46), while Simon Ambrosi was 15th (19.46). Serena Stracey was the second woman to finish, recording 22 minutes 17.

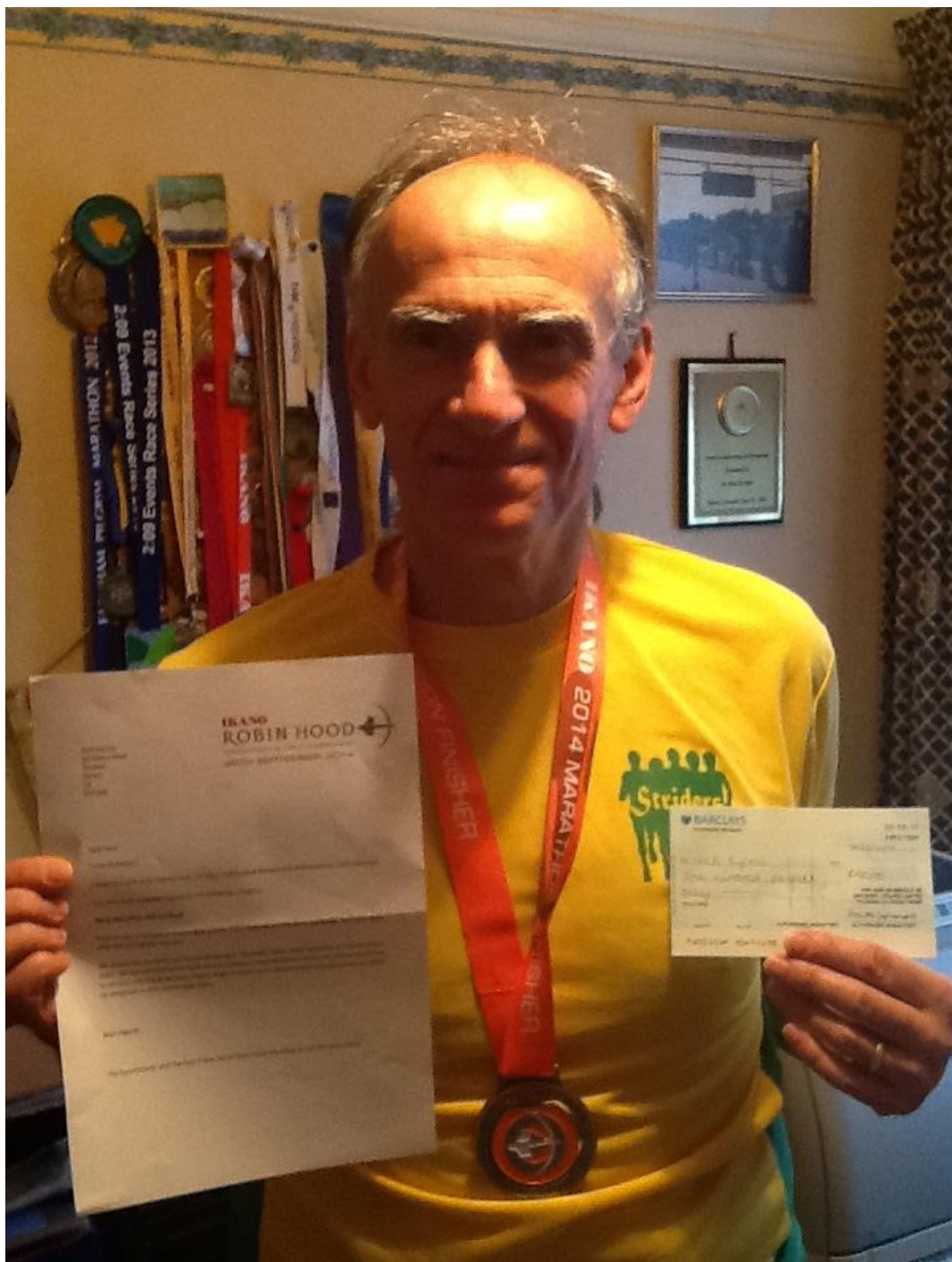
Our women placed fifth in the Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Division Two match at Nonsuch Park on 6 December. Josephine Thompson placed 15th of the 188 finishers, recording 27 minutes 08 seconds, while Alice Ewen was 20th in 27 minutes 29. Michelle Clarke finished strongly to place 42nd (29.25) with Becky Laurence 45th (29.28) and Zoe Williams completing the A team in 48th (29.36).

NEWS FROM THE SURREY AA

Since Striders are primarily a cross-country and road running club, and the Surrey County AA Committee appear to be primarily concerned with track and field athletics, the minutes of the regular Surrey AA committee meetings frequently contain relatively little of interest to Striders. However the committee did recently make one decision which will be welcomed by some of our members who compete for us in the Southern Veterans League. As some Striders will remember, the Surrey AA decided to introduce 'medal standards', for the first time for more than ten years, at the 2014 Surrey Masters Championships. This meant, for example, that a 50-year-old man would have to run the 5000 metres in 23 minutes or less, and a 50-year-old woman would have to run the same distance in 27 minutes or less, to qualify for a medal even if they finished in the first three. The Surrey AA has subsequently decided to reverse this decision, so that for the 2015 championships, the first three in each age-group will receive medals "regardless of their standard". I hope that some of our members who were deterred from entering these championships in 2014 will now feel able to enter the 2015 championships (which are provisionally scheduled for Sunday 7 June, although the date has not yet been confirmed).



Kevin Burnett has been Striders' most successful athlete in the Surrey Masters Championships, winning medals in many track and field events as well as in the cross-country championships (second over-75 in 2014). He was also the first Strider to complete 250 parkruns, and is pictured here at the Riddlesdown parkrun.



**Nick Kyritsis, pictured with his prize for being the first over-60
at the recent Robin Hood Marathon**

NEVER TOO OLD

In the Cardiff Half-Marathon on 5 October, Martin Rees of Welsh club Les Croupiers ran 72 minutes 27 seconds. What makes this noteworthy is that Martin is 61 years old, and his time is still faster than any Strider has managed in our entire history. Can any of our younger runners take up the challenge and show that they can run faster than a 61-year-old?

BOOK REVIEW – PARKRUN: MUCH MORE THAN JUST A RUN IN THE PARK

(by Debra Bourne: reviewed by Alan Dolton)



Striders' membership has increased very substantially in the last 20 years, and the days when the club chairman could know every club member are long gone. Indeed I suspect that many of our newer members may not be able to recognise everyone who is on the club committee. However one of our members who should be known to almost every Strider is Debra Bourne, who has been the Event Director of the Lloyd parkrun since 2011, which was also the year in which she joined Striders. As most of our members will know, Debra has recently written a book about parkrun. Since its beginnings with just thirteen runners in Bushy Park as recently as October 2004, parkrun has been a spectacular success. (And, again as most Striders will know, the lower case 'p' was deliberately adopted as a title by Paul Sinton-Hewitt, although inevitably some newspaper and magazine editors will try to correct Paul's grammar and refer to 'Parkrun' or 'Park Run'.)

Debra's book comprises 22 chapters, the first three of which are a chronological account of parkrun's history and rapid growth. At the very beginning, parkrun was known as the 'Bushy

Park Time Trial' and the very first run, organised by Paul Sinton-Hewitt of Ranelagh Harriers, attracted just 13 runners, eleven of whom were members of Ranelagh, including future Strider Matt Morgan who placed second. The numbers of people taking part grew steadily and the first anniversary run, in 2005, attracted 155 while the second anniversary run, in 2006, attracted 378. A second venue, at Wimbledon Common, began in January 2007. In June 2007 it was followed by a third venue, at Banstead Woods, which was where several Striders gained their first experience of parkrun. Later in 2007, parkrun expanded outside the M25, with venues at Leeds and Brighton. The Roundshaw Downs parkrun began in July 2009 (and was the sixteenth parkrun to start), while the Lloyd parkrun began in October 2010. By this time parkrun had already expanded outside the UK, with Denmark staging its first parkrun in May 2009. Australia and South Africa followed in 2011.

After this chronological introduction, the rest of the book is arranged by subject, with chapters on subjects such as 'volunteers', 'parkrun tourism', 'junior parkrun' and 'behind the scenes at parkrun HQ'. Even regular parkrunners will find a great deal of new and interesting information about the events. I found the fifth chapter, on volunteers, particularly inspirational. Debra observes that 'volunteering is at the heart of parkrun', that volunteering is a great way for an injured runner to keep in touch with their running friends and colleagues, and that 'club runners and other competitive runners often volunteer when they are saving themselves for a team cross-country on the Saturday afternoon or a race the following day'. (I have to admit that my volunteering usually falls in the latter category, i.e. the day before a road race or a track race.) It is noteworthy that parkrunners are invariably grateful to those who have given up their time to help, which is not always the case at some young athletes' track and field matches, which can be marred by over-competitive parents or team managers. Debra also notes that Richmond Park has begun the use of a 'tail runner', so that the volunteers at the finish funnel know when it can be packed away. Striders use a 'tail runner' at our annual Switchback race, and I would have thought that this would be worth introducing at the Lloyd parkrun if we have enough volunteers.

The sixth chapter, entitled 'the numbers game', emphasises one of parkrun's main attractions, which is that runners receive our official times very soon after finishing. When I began competitive running about 35 years ago, it was common for there to be a delay of at least a week before runners received the official results of road and cross-country races. The chapter also mentions the use of 'age-grading', which is a great way for older runners to console ourselves that, although we are slowing down more than we would like to, we can still finish ahead of many of our younger team-mates on 'age-grading', and can set a target of keeping our 5k times above a particular percentage such as 60% or 70%. The final part of the chapter mentions that by the tenth anniversary of parkrun in October 2014, a total of 147 runners had completed at least 250 parkruns. This included one Strider, Kevin Burnett, who began at Banstead Woods but now usually runs at Riddlesdown. (Three more Striders had completed at least 200 parkruns.)

I also found the ninth chapter, dealing with the timing and recording system, particularly interesting. Jenny Booth, who is one of the most regular helpers at the Lloyd parkrun and frequently acts as run director, recalls that when she began volunteering at Banstead: "we just had the timer, that was all. Everyone's name and position had to be written down by hand." The barcode system was introduced in 2009, although initially it was not made compulsory and several run directors (including Debra and Jenny at Lloyd Park) continued to enter runners without barcodes into the official results manually. This was somewhat time-consuming, and eventually parkrun HQ introduced a rule of 'no barcode no result'. (This doesn't mean that a runner with no barcode will be banned from running, but it does mean that they will appear in the results as 'unknown athlete'.) Debra observes that: "if everything goes smoothly, with the same number of times on the timer as finish tokens handed out, everyone's barcodes scanning nicely, nobody ducking out of the funnel or

refusing to take a finish token, nobody missed by the timer, and so on, then results processing doesn't take very long."

However there will be occasions when something does go slightly wrong. I remember an early Roundshaw parkrun when an unaccompanied under-11 (and under-11s are meant to be accompanied!) had walked for most of the first lap before he was overtaken by the leading runners. He then began running again and followed them into the funnel. Unfortunately, the timekeeper that day was an inexperienced woman who seemed not to have noticed that this boy had been walking, and apparently assumed that he had finished fourth (in just over 20 minutes), and duly pressed the timer button. (In the final results, the athlete who had actually fourth appeared as fifth, with the fourth place being recorded as 'unknown athlete'.) Such incidents give the results processors extra work.

The chapter also includes a section on the finish funnel. Most parkruns, including Lloyd Park, cope with a single finish funnel. Bushy Park, with its very large numbers of runners, uses a double or multiple funnel. Incidentally this is a case where a parkrun volunteer seems to have 'reinvented the wheel': the book credits a Bushy parkrunner with introducing the multi-funnel system based on his experience of boarding a car ferry, although in fact the multi-funnel system was being used in major cross-country races such as the National Championships and the English Schools Championships more than 30 years ago, and many of the Ranelagh Harriers who have volunteered at Bushy Park will certainly have competed in major cross-country races and seen the use of a multiple funnel.

The next chapter is entitled 'the family that parkruns together ...' It gives several examples of parents who take part with their children, including the Moore family who are regular runners at Lloyd Park, where elder daughter Jessica has improved from running 34 minutes 40 on her debut in October 2012 to running 22 minutes 02 in muddy conditions in November 2014. The chapter also gives examples of runners who have met their partners at a parkrun, including Mick Turner of Striders, who met his wife Lorraine at Roundshaw.

Chapter 13 discusses the parkrun newsletters, the run reports on each parkrun's website, and the photo section of each parkrun's website. Lloyd Park is particularly fortunate in this respect, as most of the Lloyd parkruns have a very large number of photographs taken by the highly dedicated Kevin Hann. Debra observes that 'on occasion the photographs prove invaluable to event teams trying to work out a results problem'.

Chapter 15 discusses 'parkrun and the wider running community'. Debra observes that 'some running clubs took enthusiastically to parkrun right from the start while others took longer to be convinced'. Striders can be ranked in the former category, as we were heavily involved in the creation of the parkruns at Roundshaw and Lloyd Park, with Robin Jamieson and John Gannon helping to design the courses, and Mick Turner becoming one of the first run directors at Roundshaw. Some runners who had been competing in mainstream events became enthusiastic parkrunners, with possibly the leading example being John Hanscomb of Ranelagh, who had competed in all of the first 28 London Marathons (from 1981 to 2008), began parkrunning at Bushy Park in 2005, and in 2010 became the second person to complete 250 parkruns. (He has now completed more than 400.) Debra observes that 'in general, membership of running clubs increases due to participation in parkruns': Striders are certainly an example of this, as our membership has grown significantly since the Lloyd parkrun began, and many of these new members have discovered Striders through parkrun. Some clubs were more dubious about parkrun, with some team managers expressing concern that their members might choose to compete in parkruns rather than compete in team competitions such as our Surrey League matches. Although one can understand the frustration which team managers may sometimes feel at a good runner not competing for the club team, on balance there can be no doubt that Striders have benefited from having a successful parkrun so close to our club headquarters. And, as a later section in the chapter

indicates, parkrun has also provided a way in which runners of all abilities can compete for their club through the use of parkruns as inter-club 'mob matches', such as our recent matches against Croydon Harriers and Wimbledon Windmilers.



Our chairman making a rare appearance at the Lloyd parkrun (photo by Kevin Hann)

Chapter 16 is called 'parkrunning for health and happiness', while chapter 17 is entitled 'bounding dogs and bouncing buggies'. Debra observes that parkrun's founder, Paul Sinton-Hewitt, was the first person to compete in parkrun with a dog (at Bushy Park) and that dogs are generally welcome at most parkruns. She does however point out that: "... what can really confuse the results is a runner insisting on taking a finish token for him or herself plus one for the dog! Since the timers only press the time button for humans crossing the line, not for dogs, a runner taking two tokens instantly puts all the results out of sync and it can be a real pain sorting it out". This did in fact happen in one of the early Lloyd parkruns, when an over-enthusiastic parkrunner had registered their dog, and the initial results for a subsequent parkrun showed the dog as having been the first female finisher, in a new under-11 course record. This of course meant additional work for the run director in correcting the results.

Chapter 18, entitled 'location, location, location', discusses the wide variety of parkrun courses. The original parkrun, Bushy Park, is a one-lap course, whereas Lloyd Park is a two-lap course and Banstead, Roundshaw and Nonsuch Park are all slightly less than two complete laps. Until I read this chapter of Debra's book, I had not realised how many parkruns were on courses of more than two laps: Highbury Fields uses a five-lap course, which with the wide variety of abilities that parkrun attracts, means that there is a lot of 'lapping'. The courses also vary in difficulty: the book quotes a visitor to Lloyd Park who described it as 'a proper cross-country course', which is why some Striders who dislike hills and mud, and prefer running on tarmac, choose to run at Dulwich instead. The chapter also gives descriptions of some of the parkrun courses overseas, for anyone who wants to become a true 'parkrun tourist'.

Chapter 20 ('tales of the unexpected') gives examples of unusually bad weather conditions, and of occasions where parkruns have been disrupted by various forms of animal life. The final chapter observes that more than 750,000 people have now run a parkrun (and also mentions that there are more than one million registered parkrunners, which suggests that more than 200,000 people have registered for parkrun without having taken part yet.)

I found this book to be inspirational, and I would strongly recommend it to anyone who has ever done a parkrun, or to anyone who is considering doing a parkrun – which should include just about the entire membership of Striders.

HOW SLOW SHOULD OUR EASY RUNS BE? (by Alan Dolton)

There are probably some runners who do all their training at the same pace: some may do all their runs as hard as they can, while others may only run for enjoyment and may do all their runs at a comfortable pace. However most coaches advise that runners should vary the pace of their training runs, doing some runs (or part of some runs) at a relatively fast pace and also doing some 'recovery runs' at a relatively easy pace. There are several Striders who do some of the club's Tuesday speed sessions (whether on the track or on the road) and who also do the club's Wednesday runs. Almost certainly, such runners will want to do the Wednesday run at an easier pace than the Tuesday speed session. And the same applies to those runners who do a cross-country race or a parkrun on a Saturday, and then do the long club run on a Sunday morning. I thought that it would be interesting to compare some of the best-known coaching books, and see what advice the authors gave as to how fast a runner should train in their easy 'recovery runs'.

The first coaching book which I reviewed for this magazine was 'Road Racing For Serious Runners' by the American coaches Pete Pfitzinger and Scott Douglas, which was first written in 1999. The authors state that "to stimulate desirable physiological adaptations, such as increased capillary density", runners should do their 'recovery runs' at 1:15 to 2:15 per mile slower than their 8K to 10K race pace. This suggests that a runner who can do 10K in 40 minutes (which is just under six and a half minutes per mile) should do 'recovery runs' at no slower than 8:45 per mile. And a runner who can do 10K in 50 minutes (which is just outside eight minutes per mile) should do 'recovery runs' at between 9:15 and 10:15 per mile.

Another popular American book is 'Daniels' Running Formula' by the very experienced coach Jack Daniels, which I reviewed in this magazine six months ago. Daniels' book includes two very useful charts to help runners assess the appropriate pace for their easy runs. The first chart converts a runner's 10K time into a 'VDOT' points score, and the second chart gives the appropriate training paces for that 'VDOT'. So a 40-minute 10K runner has a VDOT of 52, and should do 'recovery runs' at between 7:42 and 8:41 per mile. A 50-minute 10K runner has a VDOT of 40, and should do 'recovery runs' at between 9:32 and 10:41 per mile. It will be noticed that Daniels' recommendations for a 40-minute 10K runner are almost identical to the paces recommended by Pfitzinger and Douglas. However, his recommendations for a 50-minute 10K runner are significantly slower than Pfitzinger and Douglas: they recommend that such a runner should not train at slower than 10:15 per mile, whereas he is happy for such a runner to train at 10:40 per mile.

One author who is particularly experienced in coaching novice runners is Bob Glover, who has been the head coach of the New York Road Runners Club for over 35 years and is the principal author of 'The Competitive Runner's Handbook'. He recommends that runners should do their easy 'recovery runs' at 2 minutes per mile slower than their 10K race pace. This means that a 40-minute 10K runner should do 'recovery runs' at about 8:27 per mile, while a 50-minute 10K runner should do 'recovery runs' at about 10:03 per mile. He also admits that he himself sometimes does 'recovery runs' at slightly slower than the pace indicated by his formula.

Although Striders now have a higher percentage of younger runners than we did when I joined the club in 1998, I think that it is still true to say that the majority of our members are over the page of 35. One book which I have not yet reviewed, but do intend to review at some stage, is 'Running And Racing After 35', by Allan Lawrence and Mark Scheid. Lawrence is an Australian who placed third in the 1956 Olympic 10000 metres, while Scheid is an American who has been a successful 'masters' runner at distances from 800 metres to 5000 metres. They recommend that a 40-minute 10K runner should do 'recovery runs' at

between 7:45 and 8:30 per mile, and that a 50-minute 10K runner should do 'recovery runs' at between 9:20 and 10:00 per mile.

Another book aimed at slightly older runners is 'Running Over Forty' by Bruce Tulloh, who was European 5000 metre champion in 1962 and subsequently coached Richard Nerurkar, who holds the British ten-mile record of 46 minutes 02 and is fourth in the all-time British marathon rankings. Unusually, Tulloh's book does not recommend specific training paces, but recommends that runners should judge the pace of their 'recovery runs' by monitoring their pulse rate, which should be at halfway between their resting pulse-rate and their maximum pulse-rate. So, for example, a runner whose resting pulse-rate is 60 and whose maximum pulse-rate is 180 should aim to keep a pulse-rate of 120 during 'recovery runs'. (Interestingly, the pioneer of 'interval training', Woldemar Gerschler, recommended that runners should judge their recovery between repetitions in an 'interval session' by waiting until their pulse had dropped to 120 before starting their next rep.) Tulloh's formula raises the question of how a runner can judge their maximum pulse-rate: he recommends that "you should do a thorough warm-up and then do two flat-out runs of about 3 minutes, with only 3 minutes recovery. You will reach your maximum heart rate by the last minute of the second run. If you have a track handy, do it as a 2 x 800m time-trial, trying to run as fast as possible on the first run and trying to equal the speed on the second go".

Another somewhat different approach is taken by David Martin and the late Peter Coe, in their book 'Better Training For Distance Runners', which I reviewed in this magazine 18 months ago. They recommend that athletes should do their 'recovery runs' at no faster than 75% of their VO2 max pace, and at no slower than 55% of their VO2 max pace. They define VO2 max pace as the fastest pace that a runner can sustain for 10 minutes. Their formula gives runners a significantly wider choice of paces than the other books mentioned above. The current world record for 5000m is 12 minutes 37 seconds, set by Kenenisa Bekele of Ethiopia, which is an average of 60.5 seconds per lap. It would be reasonable to assume that Bekele has a VO2 max pace of about 400 metres per minute, so that 75% of his VO2 max pace would be 300 metres per minute (about 5:20 per mile) and 55% of his VO2 max pace would be 220 metres per minute, which is about 7:20 per mile. A 40-minute 10K runner should be able to run at least 2600 metres in 10 minutes, while a 50-minute 10K runner will be able to run slightly more than 2000 metres in 10 minutes. On this basis, a 40-minute runner would have a VO2 max pace of about 260 metres per minute. 75% of this would be 195 metres per minute, which equates to about 8:15 per mile. 55% of this VO2 max pace would be about 143 metres per minute, which equates to slightly over 11:00 per mile. A 50-minute 10K runner would have a VO2 max pace of about 205 metres per minute. 75% of this would be about 153 metres per minute, which equates to about 10:30 per mile. 55% of this VO2 max pace would be about 113 metres per minute, which equates to slightly over 14:00 per mile.

Looking at the results of the regular Striders mile time trials, the slowest time that I can see recorded is slightly over 10 minutes. Using the Martin/Coe formula, a runner who takes exactly 10 minutes to run a mile has a VO2 max pace of 161 metres per minute. 75% of this would be about 121 metres per minute, while 55% of this VO2 max pace would be about 88.5 metres per minute, which equates to more than 18 minutes per mile. I suspect that the runner in question would probably be able to walk at this pace. The training paces which Martin and Coe suggest are significantly slower than any of the other authors suggest, and it is probably worth bearing in mind that they were primarily involved in coaching elite athletes, and had little if any experience of coaching slower runners. Their formula might work for elite athletes such as Bekele, but I suspect that slower runners need to train at faster than 55% of their VO2 max pace to achieve a reasonable training benefit.

As can be seen from the above summary, coaches' advice varies significantly, but I would be happy to give more specific advice to any Striders who feel that they are in need of it.

30 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN WINTER 1984/85

The Surrey Women's Cross-Country Championships were held at Camberley on 8 December. The winner was Rachel Disley of Hounslow. Hounslow also won the team event (despite having their headquarters in Middlesex rather than Surrey).

One big frustration for road runners is running a good race on a course which subsequently transpires to be short of the advertised distance. There was an example of this on 30 December, with a race at Crystal Palace which was advertised as 10 kilometres. One of Striders' youngest members, Simon Smith, set what would then have been a Striders club record of 35 minutes 15, but the organisers subsequently agreed that the course was short. (It was probably at least 300 metres short, as future Strider Alan Dolton placed 22nd in 30 minutes 11, almost a minute faster than his lifetime best on an officially measured course.)

The men's Surrey Cross-Country Championships were held at Brockwell Park on 5 January. The individual winner was Richard Partridge of Aldershot, beating Bob Treadwell of Surrey Beagles by just four seconds. Epsom won the team event for the second successive year.

The completion of the M25 was marked by a ten-mile road race, starting and finishing at the Leatherhead junction, on 27 January. Cambridge Harriers won the team event with Croydon Harriers second, led by Alan Dolton who placed seventh in 53 minutes 11 seconds. Eleven Striders completed the race, led by Mick Meech who ran 62 minutes 35. His successor as Striders' club secretary, Ron Carver, ran 65 minutes 06.

The Southern Women's Cross-Country Championships were held at Ipswich on 2 February. The race was won by the South African runner Zola Budd, competing for Aldershot as a guest but ineligible for the trophy as she had not lived in the UK for the required nine months. The trophy went to the runner-up, Surrey champion Rachel Disley of Hounslow. The team event was won by London Olympiades (who no longer exist). The Surrey Women's Cross-Country League completed its sixth season with a match on a snow-covered Brockwell Park on 9 February. Croydon Harriers won the league title for the third successive year. Belgrave placed second with South London Harriers third. SLH had only begun accepting women as members in 1982, after more than 100 years as a male-only club. The league comprised just one division, of 17 clubs.

The Surrey Cross-Country League completed its 23rd season with matches on 16 February. The final Division One match was held on South London Harriers' course at Coulsdon. Having won the first three matches, Aldershot were already certain to retain the league championship, and consequently fielded a below-strength team. Ranelagh won the match with Herne Hill second. In the overall table, Herne Hill placed second with Ranelagh third, Belgrave fourth and SLH fifth. Woking were already almost certain of the Division Two championship before the final match at Lightwater, but there was a close battle for the second promotion place between Croydon Harriers and Thames Hare & Hounds. Before the match Croydon had 765 points while Thames had 776. Croydon clinched promotion, winning a close match with 182 points, while Thames scored 191 and Woking 200. Croydon's team at Lightwater included two future Striders: Alan Dolton was 23rd and Peter Yarlett 36th. Guildford won the Division Three title, with Mitcham also promoted in second place. (Striders had not yet entered the league, and did not do so until 1986.)

There was a very strong field for the Woking 10-mile road race on 24 February. Keith Penny of Cambridge won in 48 minutes 21 seconds, with twelve runners breaking 50 minutes. Robin Dickson of Croydon Harriers ran well to be second over-40 (and 50th overall) in 52 minutes 50, while club colleague Alan Dolton placed 27th in a lifetime best 51 minutes 32.

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN WINTER 2005

The Surrey Cross-Championships were held at Lloyd Park on 8 January. Striders' women were led by Serena Stracey who ran well to place 29th of the 75 finishers, moving through the field after a cautious start and covering the five-mile course in 37 minutes 57. Club colleague Faye Stammers was 44th (40.30) with Kerry Backshell 48th (41.21). Striders' senior men were without several of our leading runners, and had to settle for 12th place. Their best performance came from John Foster who placed 63rd, covering the seven and a half mile course in 50 minutes 14 seconds. He was closely followed by Iain Harrison who also ran well to finish 67th in 50 minutes 29.

The penultimate Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Division Two match of the season took place at Petersham on 15 January. Striders' women did well to place third in the match and retain third place in the league table. The team was led by Serena Stracey, who produced an excellent run to finish fifth, covering the 5800 metre course in 23 minutes 46 seconds. Both Clare McFadzean and Faye Stammers also ran well to produce their best performances for the club, with Clare finishing 13th in 25 minutes 30, just one place and two seconds ahead of Faye. Patricia Carr was our fourth woman home in 41st place (29.23) and Amalia Da Silva Lima completed the scoring team in 46th (29.46).

Meanwhile Striders' men were hosting a Surrey Cross-Country League Division Three match at Lloyd Park. Our team was weakened by some late withdrawals, and finished in a disappointing fifth place. Our best performance came from Justin Macenhill, who finished ninth, covering the muddy five-mile course in 31 minutes 20 seconds. Veteran John Foster was 15th in 32 minutes 40, just one place and four seconds ahead of Iain Harrison. Team manager Chris Morton was 31st (34.31) with Damian Macenhill 33rd (34.42).

The Surrey Women's Cross-Country League completed its 26th season with a match at Ewell on 12 February. Striders produced an excellent team performance to finish second in the match, and gain promotion to Division One for only the second time in the club's history. Wimbledon Windmilers won the match with 39 points, but Striders' total of 103 placed us ahead of Walton (111) and Holland Sports (129), and well clear of promotion rivals Sutton Runners. Striders' women were led home by Serena Stracey who produced another good run to place fifth, covering the muddy six-kilometre course in 27 minutes 15 seconds. She was well supported by Clare McFadzean, who continued her improvement to place 11th (29.19), and Faye Stammers who was not far behind in 14th (30.02). Patricia Carr ran steadily to place 33rd (33.44), and Pat Edwards completed the scoring team in 40th (34.38).

On the same day, Striders' men produced their best performance of the season to win the final Surrey League Cross-Country Division Three match of the season at Wimbledon Common, and gain promotion back to Division Two after just one year in Division Three. Our total of 258 points saw us well clear of nearest rivals Epsom (308), Sutton (329) and Dorking (383). In the overall Division Three table, Epsom were clear champions with 1263 points, but our total of 1471 saw us take the second promotion spot, ahead of Dorking (1501), Sutton (1502) and Woking (1624). Our team at Wimbledon was led by Justin Macenhill, who placed tenth of the 122 finishers, covering the five-mile course in 30 minutes 29 seconds. Scott Antony, in only his second race for the club, produced an excellent run to place 13th in 31 minutes 03, while Iain Harrison continued his improvement to place 15th (31.40). Our team packed very well with the next six scorers finishing within less than 30 seconds. Damian Macenhill was our fourth man home in 25th (33.03), closely followed by John Foster (26th in 33.13) and Andy Allison (27th in 33.14). Nigel Davidson was 31st (33.25) with newcomer Toby Watson 33rd (33.29), just one place and one second ahead of team manager Chris Morton. Paul Finch completed the scoring team in 44th place (34.23).



Faye Stammers (no 608), seen here leading from Steve Smith at the finish of the Croydon 10K, was one of the leading members of our women's cross-country team in 2005, which won promotion to Division One of the Surrey Women's League

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