

Striders of Croydon

JUNE 2015 MAGAZINE



James Bennett en route to a new club record at the Hastings Half-Marathon

CONTENTS:

Dates For Your Diary
Chairman's Corner (by Robin Jamieson)
Ten Things You Didn't Know About Running (by Peta Bee)
The Paris Marathon 2015 (by Louise Grech)
The Rotterdam Marathon 2015 (by Linda Daniel)
nohtaraM nodnoL esreveR ehT (by Ian Campbell)
Marathon tales (by Victoria Legge)
Letter To The Editor
Strider Profile: Steph Upton
Strider Profile: Linda Daniel
Strider Profile: Becky Laurence
Surrey Road League: Early Season Tables
Southern Veterans League: Provisional Timetables
Competitive Highlights: March 2015 – May 2015
30 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Summer 1985
10 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Summer 2005

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2015

Mon 15 June – Southern Veterans League – Ewell
Sun 21 June – Richmond 10K (including Surrey Championships)
Mon 29 June – Southern Veterans League – Walton-on-Thames
Mon 13 July – Southern Veterans League – Croydon Arena
Sat 18 Jul – Elmore 7 miles (Surrey Road League)
Sat 25 Jul – British Masters Championships – Birmingham
Sun 26 Jul – Elmbridge 10K (Surrey Road League)
Sun 9 Aug – Wimbledon 5K (including Surrey Championships)
Sat 5 Sep – Surrey Road Relays – Wimbledon
Sat 10 Oct – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – Nork Park
Sat 10 Oct – Surrey Cross-Country League Division 2 (men) – Wimbledon
Sat 7 Nov – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – Walton
Sat 7 Nov – Surrey Cross-Country League Division 2 (men) – Walton

2016

Sat 16 Jan – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – Reigate
Sat 16 Jan – Surrey Cross-Country League Division 2 (men) – Reigate
Sat 13 Feb – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – Richmond Park
Sat 13 Feb – Surrey Cross-Country League Division 2 (men) – Lloyd Park

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER JUNE 2015

This post-marathon edition of our magazine includes a very descriptive article from Louise Grech of her experience of her first time in Paris; well done Louise. Also a description of the Amsterdam marathon from Linda Daniel. As you may well know, this is one of the best marathons for achieving a PB. Well done to everyone who has completed a marathon in the last few months. Whether your first, your fastest, if you are on 225+ like Nick Kyritsis, or you ran London in reverse like Ian Campbell, there is no denying a marathon is a major achievement for anyone.



We managed to deliver our 5th Croydon Half with no problems despite our first serious rain. Thank you to everyone who contributed both beforehand and on the day to making it such a success. Entries were down on last year but we still managed to donate £3500 to charity plus contributions to Sandilands. Next year I am handing over much of the administration to Nice Works but will continue to organise the actual event for another year or two.

The 2nd round of our handicap series will be taking place this week. If you ran it last time come along and see if you can beat your time. If you didn't run last come along and help beat our record turnout of 68 and enjoy another social in our club house. Sandilands has just acquired a new chairman in Roger Hurron also the chairman of the cricket club. We will wait and see how things develop but he is certainly more proactive and more likely to be able to find funds to keep the place standing up. As it is primarily a cricket club and the ECB seems to be keen to help local cricket clubs. Roger has already got a grant from the ECB to double glaze the hall which should make it a bit warmer next winter.

Quite a few club records and significant achievements in the last few months. In no particular order:-

Rachel Lindley beat the ladies' handicap record by nearly 2 minutes. Nick Kyritsis continued his remarkable form with a stunning time of 3.32.53 at the Halstead Marathon, beating my

MV60 marathon record by a whopping 20 minutes. Ozgur Gulec ran the TP100 (100 miles on the Thames Towpath) in 22 hours and 56 minutes!! Andy Perks and Tony Ostrowski ran the Three Forts marathon along the South Downs; Andy finished 26th in 3 hours 59 minutes and Tony 137th in 4 hours 45 minutes.

Our men's team of Krzysztof Klidzia, Peter Mills and Justin Macenhill placed 5th in the Surrey Championships Richmond Half Marathon. Krzysztof was also the first MV50.

And back in April:-

James Bennett broke the club's all-time record by about three minutes with a time of 2.37.42 at London. Simone Luciani's time of 2.41.54 moves him to 5th all time; Krzysztof Klidzia's 2.45.25 moves him to 7th and is also a club Vets record;

Lee Flanagan moves up to 11th with a time of 2.49.24; Adam Kos comes in at 16th with 2.52.18 at Manchester and Michael Stewart comes in at 26th with 2.57.56. All our top 30 men's times are now sub 3-hours (a few years ago 3.15 was still good enough to get there). Karen Stretch improved her own third place in the all-time women's records with a time of 3.11.36 at London. Rachel Lindley has now moved up to 4th with a time of 3.12.10.

Keith Simpson's alphabetical journey of marathons continues with :

Lima Marathon, Peru 17 May- presumably now complete

The Midnight Sun Marathon, Tromso Norway, 20 June

Novi Sad Night Marathon, Serbia, 27 June

Ostravsky Marathon, Czech Republic, 6 September

High Weald Challenge, 27 September

Podgorica Marathon, Montenegro, 25 October

Queenstown Marathon, New Zealand, 21 November

Reggae Marathon, Jamaica, 5 December

San Silvestro Marathon, Italy, 31 December

And finally:-

While we were getting cold and wet in Croydon a couple of our runners were in Milan for another Half Marathon: Morena Lironi finished in a time of 1 hour 31 minutes 49 seconds – placing her 7th in our all-time records, while Simone Luciani recorded 1.16.19 to move him to 11th in our all-time rankings.

After the Handicap the next significant and slightly unexpected club event will be the Dinosaur Dash relays on Wednesday 17th. Looks like we will have 10 teams running which is quite impressive. It will be interesting to see which Dinosaur wins.

Early July it is the Race for Life in Lloyd Park. For newcomers to the club, this is annual event to support the ladies. Please volunteer to help when the call comes. The Race for Life organisers are always telling us this is the best-supported event in the series.

There will be our mini Triathlon in early August, and hopefully a few bike rides (I promise not to lead you to a station with only a bus replacement service next time). We are planning to head for Leith Hill later in July, then perhaps an easier, flatter, one after that.

Enjoy the Summer which seems to have arrived at last.

May all your runs be through sunlit forests.

Robin

TEN THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT RUNNING

(by Peta Bee—originally published in the Times magazine on May 16)

May is the month when people are more likely to take up running than at any other time of year. Some are inspired by the achievements of the thousands of finishers in the London Marathon last month, others simply by the fact that it is warm enough outside to leave the hat, gloves and waterproof jacket at home. Whatever the reason for pulling on a pair of trainers, it is part of an unparalleled running boom that has seen the popularity of the sport hit an all-time high.

Statistics from Sport England show that over 2.2 million of us now run at least once a week, a rise from 1.4 million five years ago. A record number of more than 38,000 took to the start line of the London Marathon this year. More than 70,000 runners have now completed the free parkrun 5km, held at 330 locations, with many UK runs attracting more than 400 joggers a week.

However, for every person lured by the mind-boosting, fat-busting benefits, others will be put off by the running's reputation as a hardcore sport that demands great effort. What's more, running entails a set of unwritten dress codes and rules that might understandably scare off beginners: bizarre-looking footwear should be worn, you must drink all the time and you must never, ever stop to walk. But is there substance to these running claims or are they based on urban myth?

Slight dehydration will help you run faster

Much emphasis is put on the importance of drinking enough during long distance events and it's been long held that a 2 per cent drop in body weight through fluid losses is detrimental to performance. However, some experts think the message is overplayed. A study by New Zealand sport scientists suggested that weight loss of 3 per cent didn't slow down athletes while a 2012 paper in the *Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine* found that elite runners in the Dubai Marathon recorded fluid losses of almost 10 per cent, yet still ran exceptionally fast times.

John Brewer, professor of applied sport science at St Mary's University in Twickenham, says that a modest amount of dehydration could even be beneficial. "A 2 per cent loss of body weight for a 75 kg runner is 1.5 litres of fluid, or 1.5 kg less weight that they will have to lug around a run," Professor Brewer says. "So it is not surprising that under certain conditions, performance can be improved with a modest level of dehydration."

Over-drinking can be dangerous

Drinking too much fluid is a risk because it can lead to the potentially fatal condition hyponatraemia, or water toxicity. A 2012 study in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* found that 12 per cent of runners in the London Marathon consumed dangerously high amounts of fluid.

On average, 500 ml of fluid an hour is recommended during long distance races. Some runners consume considerably more — drinking up to a litre per hour on long runs. If you also drink a litre of water before you start, your intake will be too high. "It's quite easy to drink

more than you need and, in doing so, put yourself at risk of hyponatraemia,” Professor Brewer says.

Walking breaks can help your performance

Regular runners might scoff at anyone who takes a walking break, but you could end up having the last laugh. A recent study in the *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport* found that runners who took planned walking breaks throughout their races not only finished as quickly as those who ran the entire distance but had less fatigue and muscle pain at the end. German researchers looked at 42 runners who’d been training for 12 weeks prior to their first marathon. A week before the event, the runners were split evenly into two groups: those who would run the entire way and those who would take 60-second walking breaks every 2.5km. When it came to the 26.2 mile race, both groups finished with similar times.

But 40 percent of those who ran the entire distance reported “extreme exhaustion” at the finish line, compared with less than 5 per cent of the run/walk group. “The key thing is to run to your training level and current ability,” says the UK Athletics running coach, Paddy McGrath. “For some people, scheduled bouts of walking are a useful means of covering the distance and can also make it psychologically easier.”

Running will not wreck your knees

Running a marathon? You might as well take a hammer to your knee joints. At least that’s the entrenched belief of non-runners who like to claim that it causes arthritis and ruins knees. Experts beg to differ. In 2013, a large study of almost 75,000 runners published in the journal *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* showed that, provided they had healthy knees to start with, runners were at no greater risk of developing arthritis in the joint, even if they jogged into their forties, fifties and beyond.

In fact, they had less overall risk of developing arthritis than their non-running counterparts. Professor Mark Batt, director of the Arthritis Research UK Centre for Sport, Exercise and Osteoarthritis in Nottingham, says the fact that running is in one direction, with no twisting and turning, could make it more joint-friendly than sports like football.

Even first-time marathon runners, widely believed to be more prone to injuries, are no more likely to suffer knee damage than long-term runners, reported researchers from Germany’s Freiburg University Hospital last year. Looking at a group of beginners, average age 40, preparing for their first marathon, the team found that their knees remained essentially unchanged by the training involved with minimal cartilage damage. “High-impact forces during long-distance running are well tolerated even in marathon beginners,” they concluded.

The ‘barefoot’ running fad can cause injuries

In recent years, runners have embraced the trend for minimalist footwear, or shunning shoes altogether, believing it made running easier, speedier and less injurious. But physiotherapists saw a rise in injuries among the barefoot brigade and scientists have since cast doubt on the approach, with studies at Brigham Young University showing it doesn’t toughen foot muscles, one of the key arguments in favour of skimpy running shoes. And the “footglove” manufacturer Vibram agreed to settle a US lawsuit that alleged false claims were made about the health benefits of the footwear.

The heavier your trainers, the better

This year's trendsetter in the trainer market is the "maximalist" shoe, with thick, heavily cushioned soles. Sales of chunky-soled brands like Hoka One One (£100, hokaoneone.com) are rocketing while Brooks (brooksrunning.co.uk) saw a 29 per cent increase in sales of its most cushioned shoes last year. "My feeling is that many minimalist shoes don't offer enough protection and support for long distance running," says runner Matt Roberts. "You need a trainer with good structure that doesn't allow too much foot movement as you stride."

A high-protein diet will slow you down

Kevin Deighton, an exercise scientist at Leeds Beckett University, says that carbs do matter if you run long distances. "Low carbohydrate diets became popular among some runners in recent years because it was found that increasing the fat content of the diet spared carbohydrate stores and led to fat stores being used for fuel instead," Dr Deighton says. "However, if you are running distances, carbohydrate provides the fastest supply of energy and you need them to maintain your pace."

Trying to train for a 10k, half or full marathon on a low carb diet could be disastrous. "It's been shown to impair recovery and raise the risk of injury," Dr Deighton says. "Make no mistake, you need protein and fat in adequate amounts to aid the repair of muscle tissue and provide essential nutrients, but the diet of a regular long distance runner should be particularly high in carbohydrates."

Professor Brewer says the amount of carbs needed increases with the distances run, but it should remain proportional to the distance you are running. "Most runners will use about 2,500-3,000 calories running a marathon, equivalent to about a day's food intake," he says. He adds that the faster you run, the more carbs you use up. "If you set off too quickly, you will burn carb stores too quickly and risk depleting them or hitting the wall," Professor Brewer says. "Maintain a manageable pace and you will burn fat as well as carbs, and hopefully have enough glycogen to get to finish the run."

Treadmills are not a 'soft' alternative to outdoors

David Siik, a Ford model and running coach who developed the precision running treadmill class at Equinox, says there's an "inverse snobbery" towards the treadmill with many runners deriding it as a soft alternative to running outdoors. Its reputation wasn't helped by a British study conducted a few years ago suggesting that a running belt should be cranked up to an incline of 1 per cent to get the same benefits you would reap from running outside. Biomechanics experts have now debunked this as an urban myth, as the study's findings applied only to speedsters who run faster than 7 minutes per mile. Others have also discounted the popular belief that the treadmill belt propels you forward so that you do less work. The key, says Siik, is to mix it up. "Just plodding on a treadmill won't get you fit," he says. "You need to factor in elements of speed, up to 5 per cent incline, duration, and recovery, and you can get the biggest burn possible in the time you are on it."

You can't use running as an excuse to snack

As many runners have discovered, going on regular runs does not always help you lose weight. That's because running is not a green light to suddenly start devouring calories by the bucket-load. Many find they gain weight rather than lose it, especially if they gobble up high-calorie sports drinks and energy bars on top of their usual diet.

"In reality, it's not that easy to lose lots of weight through distance running," says Professor Brewer. "To lose 1 kg in body fat, you need to burn about 8,000 calories more than you consume. Most people burn about 100 calories per mile, so that's around 80 miles of running just to lose one kilo in weight, even if you don't eat any extra food."

Even during a marathon, you can expect to expend only 2,800 calories around the 26.2 mile route. To put that into context, an average man needs around 2,500 calories a day to maintain his weight; a woman around 2,000 calories.

A perfect running gait is not essential

Runners have been led to believe that a flawless running style is essential for both speed and injury reduction. Shops and clinics offer gait analysis to provide information about your foot-strike, stride pattern and pronation (or lack of it) in the hope that you will adopt a Mo Farah-type technique.

Is it necessary? Experts think not. Martin Yelling, a running coach who ran 3.46 for 1500m (and is married to Olympic marathoner Liz Yelling), says that many elite runners don't have perfect technique. "Getting stressed about changing your running style is unnecessary and can cause tension," he says. "A slightly ragged but relaxed style is better than trying to force your body to adopt something that feels unnatural."

Researchers at the University of Exeter's human performance group showed that most runners self-adjust, eventually settling into an efficient technique just by running more.



Martin Yelling (on the left) with some of his coaching group

THE PARIS MARATHON 2015 (by Louise Grech)

One week after completing the Brighton Marathon, my first ever marathon in April 2014, I entered myself into the ballot for the Paris Marathon April 2015. I chose to enter the ballot for Paris because I'd heard that it was well organised, it took place on the same day as Brighton (meaning that I could train with other Striders), and I'd never been to Paris before so this was the perfect opportunity (excuse) for finally going. I also felt that I had a better chance to gain a place through the ballot of Paris, then I had for gaining a place in the London Marathon ballot, and I was right.

Finally, the day came around when it was time for me to travel to Paris, the Thursday before the marathon weekend. I was travelling with a friend, Jodie, who was coming to support me. It's fair to say that Jodie, who is a non-runner, and had up until this point never spectated at an event such as a marathon, had no idea what she was letting herself in for.

Our first full day in Paris started off with a trip to the Expo at Palais Des Sports, in order to present my medical certificate and collect my race number. This is an experience in itself; I found myself having my picture taken with my race number in front of exhibits, I spent time trying to find my name printed on a board among the 54,000 alphabetically ordered names of all runners taking part in the 2015 event, and was gutted when it dawned on me that my name wasn't up there!!!! My spirits soon lifted when I found the Haribo stand, and got loads of different sweets to put in my goody bag. Friends and family could also get involved in the fun and had the opportunity to create fan signs for the runners that they had come to support. It was as I was walking around the arena that the realisation kicked in that in two days' time I would be running over 26 miles. And, with that realisation came increased emotions of nerves, anxiety and excitement.



Jodie with her fan sign for me

After spending a good few hours soaking up the atmosphere of Palais Des Sports it was time to jump back on the metro and begin our sightseeing for the day. After walking around and getting lost for a bit, we finally found our first port of call; the Cathedrale Notre-Dame de Paris. From there, we walked along the river Seine in the direction of Champs Elysees, behaving like tourists, taking loads of pictures, and stopping at Point de Neuf (padlocks), Musee d'Orsay and the Louvre, while getting my first glimpse of the Eiffel Tower in the background. The last thing previous Paris marathon runners had told me, before I set off for Paris, was to not tire myself out with too much sightseeing before race day, and of course I had every intention of making sure I took it easy. However, this is of course easier said than done and, considering this was a brand new city to me, and taking into account the amount of things there are to do in Paris, I was completely shattered by the end of my first full day there.

The second day in Paris, the Saturday, began with me waking up with a proper touch of nerves, as a lot of runners will experience the day before they have to do a marathon. But then with a little encouragement from Jodie, it was time to get ready for the 'relaxing' day ahead of going up to the top of the Eiffel Tower (using the lift), and then doing a river cruise along the river Seine, taking in the famous sights and bridges, and of course taking in part of the course that I would be running the following day. Then it was back to the flat, to make sure I didn't overdo it any further and to prepare for the following day.

Sunday, the day of the marathon, had finally arrived. I was up at 5:30am, having breakfast (toast and peanut butter, washed down with green tea), and making sure that I was ready to leave the flat by 7:15am. One thing I liked about Paris was that their metro system was fast and well organised. We had arrived at the start area, nearest metro being Charles de Gaulle-Etoile station, by 7:45am. The organisers had previously advised us to allow 25 minutes to drop off luggage; I'd allowed over an hour in case of train delays (being from London), and making sure I had enough time to queue for the loo.



Race number already on my Striders' top.

The official start time for the elite runners was 8:45am. Though I wasn't due to cross the start line until 9:30am, my start area (4hr to 4hr 15) was to close at 9:15am. I'd said my goodbyes to Jodie and was already in my pen eating my Snickers bar way before 9am, as recommended. Like any start area just before the race begins, the time in my pen began to get so frustrating to the point that it put me off (for a moment) doing another similar marathon as big and popular as Paris in the future. Forty minutes enclosed in a pen full of runners you don't know, speaking in different languages, gives you time to think of everything that has or could go wrong and to vow never to do anything like this again. However, the forty minutes also gives you time to get over it and think logically again. In hindsight I really appreciated the reason why we were in our pens for a long time; controlling the rate of 54,000 runners and start times at the beginning meant that it was a smooth run from the point you actually crossed the start line, with no holdups throughout the route, and enough space to run in, all the way until the end; one of the reasons why this race is a good PB (and is one that I hope to do again!!!!).

There is a lot to keep you occupied while in the Start Area. The host provided us with facts and updates through the microphone, speaking in 12 different languages. I learnt that, apparently, only 25% of the 54,000 runners taking part that day were women. We learned about how many people of different nationalities were running. They also said hello to the only Maltese person taking part; the first person of Maltese nationality to be taking part in the Paris marathon ever. Uhhh – it was at this point that I remembered at the time of registering for the ballot, not having much time to complete the form because I was at work, I couldn't find United Kingdom, but I did find Malta and chose that as that is the country where my parents are from; Looking at my race bib that had MLT printed on it rather than GBR, I was

the only Maltese running they were talking about, even though I'm actually British – whoops!!!

Then the time eventually came when it was announced that runners in the 4hr start area were to get ready to begin running shortly, to remove our bin liners and encouraging us to warm up by following two guys on podiums in front of us performing gentle aerobic exercises. A few minutes after this we were moving forwards closer to the finish line. I didn't know this at the time, but the 4hr group was split further into two groups. Luckily I was in the front group and when they counted down from 10, I was off and finally running through the start line – my second marathon had begun.



The route is filled with beautiful and magnificent sites from the beginning. After leaving the Champs Elysees and heading east, mile one sees you running through one of the major public squares that is the Place de la Concorde, and along Rue de Rivoli; one of the most commercial streets of Paris, not only filled with the most fashionable names in the world but also with prestigious monuments everywhere you look, and aristocratic squares. I particularly remember passing the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, followed by Tuileries Gardens.

I remember there were spectators and cheers from crowds all along the way up until this point, but it is here that the crowds and cheers really begin to build up. I think it was around this point that I first heard 'Allez Louise', coming from above me. Looking up, it was a family standing on one of the Parisian balconies cheering me on; this really put a smile on my face.

Continuing through the medieval streets brought more public squares to run through, along with greater room for cheering crowds to gather. Following Place du Chatelat and Hotel de Ville, the first of many water stops came on Place de la Bastille.

My main worry I had for the day was when I'd previously found out that temperatures were forecast to climb up to 21 °C on the day, potentially leading to a problem of dehydration. However it turns out I had no need to worry. Bottles of Vittel water were being handed out around every 5 km from this point onwards. In between these arranged water stops, and probably because temperatures were climbing, the French fire brigade had set up their appliances on route spraying water to cool runners down. They were also filling up buckets with water so that plastic cups of water could be handed out too. It was on the 7th km that another runner bumped into me by accident, kindly apologised 'pardon', before chucking the contents of her cup onto me instead of herself. Yes, no reason to worry at all!!!

Passing the beautiful water fountain on Place Felix Eboue around mile five, the next part of the course that I vividly remember, is leaving the crowds behind for a while as we passed the

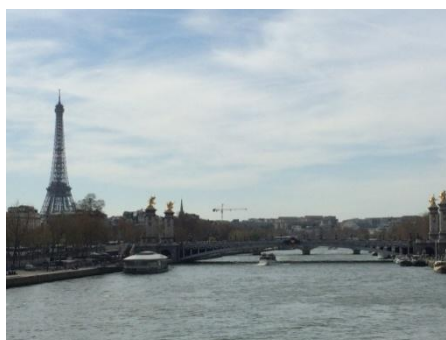
amazing carved walls of the Palaise de la Porte Doree (an exhibit hall) on our left, with Lac Daumesnil, the scenic lake, following on our right. A few runners actually stopped here to take photos on their camera.

The next six miles that followed from mile six saw us make our way around Bois de Vincennes, the largest public park in the city. Here I felt a sudden change in atmosphere; going from running through the noise and excitement of the cheerful crowds to running in silence, with the odd dog walker, marshal, or group of tourists for support. I liked this phase of the course because it allowed me time to get lost in my thoughts and enjoy the scenery around me.

Note that the Paris marathon is notoriously known for people (men mostly) urinating along the side of the route. There were portacabin toilets and urinals in the pens while we were waiting in our starting areas, and portacabin toilets all along the route. Yet, of course, you still had people heading off to the side reliving themselves in the open. In my experience, I've seen this in every race I've taken part in (half marathons as well as marathons) to some degree. I guess, as a runner, it's something you expect to see and just have to accept. That this was more noticeable in Paris may be because of the size of the race (54,000 runners, who are running 26 miles) and because nearly half of the route goes through greenery and woodlands.

Mile twelve saw us exiting the park and heading west back into the city centre, being greeted again with the large cheers and even more excited crowds. It was from here that I found that I received a lot of support, personally. Although all runners had their names printed on their race numbers, the print would have been too small for people to see as you ran past them. So, I decided to wear my Striders club vest for the race as that was the only top to have my name printed large and in bold on the front. I also thought that it would make it easier for my friend to identify me from the rest of the crowd. All along the way I was hearing people were cheering 'Allez Louise!' which gave me something to focus on when I thanked them and waved back. At one point runners around were looking at me, wondering why I was getting a lot of the support. With 'Striders of Croydon' written on my back, I also got "Yes Croydon, another Brit!", and of course "Come on Strider!". So I am definitely pleased I decided to wear my club vest for a race that wasn't even in the UK.

The crowds and support continued as we made our way along the river Seine from mile fourteen. The time at this point must have been around 11:30, and with there being not much breeze I was aware of the heat and could really feel the sun beating down on me. Despite the hot temperatures, I liked that this part felt familiar to me, having spent the last few days walking this part of the course as well as cruising along the river. I remember running passed the Cathedrale Notre-Dame de Paris followed by the Conciergerie (which to me reminded me of a royal palace, but was actually, I later found out, a former prison) with the first glimpse of the Eiffel Tower in the background ahead of us.



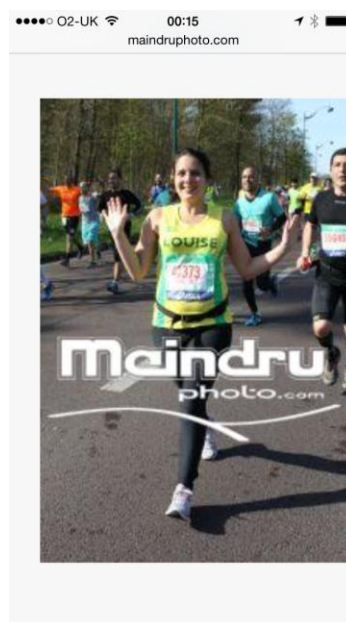
Running along the River Seine with Eiffel tower in the distance

One of the hardest parts of the course for me came at mile sixteen when we were making our way through the tunnel where Princess Diana died, which they had closed off to vehicles for this event. After having sunny bright clear skies outside, as you would expect running through an underground tunnel to be like, it was pretty dark and gloomy, very humid and smelt of car exhaust fumes. There was a DJ and disco lights to make this part more interesting for us; however I was so relieved when we were eventually pulling ourselves back out into the open air, with the cheering crowds either side of us.

Little did I know at this point that I would still have the energy to be mesmerised yet again after running this long. Indeed, while running along mile eighteen, thinking of the next water station, in between two building blocks on my left, I'd turned my head at the right time, and saw a full view of the Eiffel Tower with the sun shining behind it. This was the closest we would get to the iconic attraction, and was definitely one of my favourite memories of the day, or even the highlight of the course route for me. In fact, I was so preoccupied with the sight on the left that I forgot to look out for my mate, and dashed straight passed her to the water stations on the right hand side.

Mile nineteen: around the time when I'd decided that I'd had enough of running for the day and, with very tired legs, was beginning to fantasize about the finishing line. I think it was around this point when plastic cups of strawberry-flavoured energy drinks were being handed out. Obviously, as most of the contents of the cups were being spilt onto the road, the ground became very sticky and everyone's trainers were making noises as we were lifting our feet from the sticky ground. This gave us something to think about for the following half mile.

Mile twenty was when we began to lose some of the crowd volumes, as we entered our last phase of the course, through another public park; Bois de Boulogne. I remember going through the last set of photographers on route: around ever 10k, there is a line of seated people wearing orange T-shirts that you run through, as they take your photo. The roads are wide enough for this to work and you are able to have good photos taken of you; shame about them being so pricy.



One of the photos taken of me by the professional photographers

It was at the next water station where they ran out of plastic cups for this stop. So I decided to use a little bit of the water to throw over my face. It seems I was at the station for a little

too long, as one of the guys behind the tables said “Allez Louise” before chucking half the contents of the bucket over me, and sending me on my way.

I remember seeing the Hippodrome de Longchamp (race course) in the distance on my left during mile 23. A few people have described the last part of the course as being a bit boring, compared to the first part and the excitement of the rest. However, to be honest, it won't come as a surprise when I say that I was feeling like crap at this point, having to remind myself to keep focussed on what's ahead, reminding myself to put one foot in front of the other, and willing myself not to stop, that I probably wouldn't have noticed anything anyway.

One thing I remember about the Brighton marathon and many races I have previously done is that you can see the 'FINISH' sign and hear the crowds from miles away. However, even on the 25th mile of the Paris marathon, all you can see are trees ahead with signs “Nearly there!” and “1,000 m to go”, and you keep asking yourself “If we are so close, WHERE IS THE FINISH SIGN?”. Then, all of a sudden you run round a bend with the crowds building up again, Avenue Foch ahead of you along with “FINISH” 400 m ahead of you, realising how close you are. It was at this point that I picked up my speed a little and ran (as fast as I could) to the finish line.

Note: before I go onto say how much I recommend it, the only thing I was let down by was that I paid about 5 euros for my friend to receive texts on her mobile phone every time I passed 5km. In fact the only text she was received was three hours after I'd crossed the finish line, saying that I'd crossed the 30km in 2hr 48mins and was predicted to finish around 4hr 1min.

I can't recommend running the Paris Marathon enough to anyone who isn't yet bored of me and still wishes to listen. Considering how big an event the race is, I thought it was really well organised from the very beginning of registration right up until leaving the finish area after crossing the finishing line. Since returning to London, my friend Jodie has since been ridiculed by our work colleagues for 'going all the way to Paris to support me, yet not seeing me run at all'. While the truth is I got all the support I needed from the crowds all the along the way. With the course being flat, there being no holdups along the way, and with the many beautiful sights and attractions that you pass along the way, I definitely believe this is a great marathon to do for a PB. Even though I said all along the way that I would never run a marathon again, I have already entered into the ballot for the London marathon 2016, and plan to do Paris again the following year!!!!!!



Medal with finisher T-shirt

THE ROTTERDAM MARATHON 2015 (by Linda Daniel)

Rotterdam has held a marathon since 1981 and attracts at least 40,000 runners and many top athletes. It has also been ranked as one of the top 10 marathons in the world and is the most popular marathon in the Netherlands, followed by Amsterdam and Eindhoven.

Rotterdam often produces very fast times, as the course is relatively flat and the weather is usually favourable. Not that a 'fast course' means a fast time for one whom personal bests are a long-distant memory, however a flat and fast course is always very welcoming.

Travelling to Rotterdam is very quick and easy using London City Airport to Rotterdam's own airport Rotterdam The Hague, flight time 40 minutes and barely time to open a book!! I went with my husband Steve, who had entered the ¼ marathon event: a 10k plus 550 metres. We stayed in a central hotel just 15 minutes walk to the start of the marathon on the Coolsingel, Rotterdam's famous shopping street, which houses the City Hall and the Beurs World Trade Centre where we picked up our race numbers and T-shirts on the Friday evening. We returned to the Trade Centre on Saturday evening for the much anticipated 'unlimited all you can eat' pasta party. Having over indulged in all things pasta, participants were invited to visit the top of the World Trade Centre for a panoramic view of the city which was definitely worth seeing.

The marathon festivities began early on Sunday morning and thankfully the weather had improved from the day before (having experienced a cold, wet and windy day). Unfortunately the participants of the mini marathon (4.2K) and two children's events, 'Kids 1K' and 'Kids 2.5K', held on the Saturday were not so lucky. In addition to the above races, there are several Business races held on marathon day, the Business Relay marathon which consists of 4 runners each running a quarter marathon, the Business marathon in which all participants run the complete marathon distance as a team and finally the Business Duo Marathon in which two team members each run a half marathon distance.

The marathon started to the chanting of 'You'll Never Walk Alone' and intermittently to 'You'll Never Run Alone' together with lots of cheering and drum beating from the thousands of spectators that lined the streets. The route soon left the city centre over the impressive Erasmus Bridge, a combined cable-stayed and bascule bridge in the centre of Rotterdam, connecting the north and south parts of the city.



The impressive Erasmus Bridge, which runners cross at the 2km point

Running alongside canals with views of windmills in the Dutch countryside and soaking up the wonderful support from the spectators especially along the waterfront and cyclists riding

adjacent on the canal paths, was a brief respite from the reality of running 26.2 miles. There were also plenty of water stations providing cakes and a variety of sports drinks, with water in cups provided with a sponge insert to prevent spillage whilst running, an excellent and innovative idea. Eventually the route wound its way back to the city centre passing under a pedestrian bridge over the Blaak, which incorporates some playful architecture in the shape of 39 cube houses which connect the market place to the old harbour, each dwelling consists of a tilted cube on a hexagonal column that contains the entrance and stairway. I would imagine living in a cube must require quite a bit of imagination and adaptability by the residents!!

Not known for its fancy dress costumes, I did see an impressive costume in the shape of a slice of Dutch cheese; I couldn't make out whether it was Edam or Gouda, either way it was a funny and 'cheesy' sight. The finish of the marathon was also where it began on the Coolingsingel in front of the Town Hall to a roar of excited and appreciative spectators.

I recommend the Rotterdam marathon and also the city, which is young and dynamic with its striking riverside setting, lively cultural life and its maritime heritage. After near-complete destruction of the city centre during WW2, the varied architectural landscape does include sky-scrapers, which are an uncommon sight in other Dutch cities, however it is home to some world-famous modern architecture from renowned architects and is listed 8th in *The Rough Guide* Top 10 cities to visit. For an unusual and enjoyable day out you can take the Waterbus ferry from the port harbour and visit the Kinderdijk windmills, a unique collection of 19 authentic windmills built around 1740; the area is a listed UNESCO World Heritage site. Also not too far away for a day trip are the famous Kerkenhoff Tulip Gardens. Covering some 79 acres, the gardens are the world's largest spring flower gardens and are visited by around 800,000 flower-lovers. The best time to visit is between April and May. .

So if you fancy running in the world's 'fastest' marathon, to fantastic crowd support, brilliant organization and eating 'unlimited' pasta, then summon up the Dutch courage to book the dates 9th – 10 April 2016 in your diary.



I ran the Rotterdam marathon in aid of Myeloma UK which is the only organisation in the UK dedicated exclusively to providing information and support to people living with myeloma, a complex, challenging, debilitating and incurable bone marrow cancer. Myeloma UK aims to improve treatment and care through research, education, campaigning and raising awareness. If you would like to send a donation or just to know more about the charity, please click on the following link www.myeloma.org.uk

NOHTARAM NODNOL ESREVER EHT (by Ian Campbell)

The social media scene has sprouted an online revolution enabling like minded individuals to communicate with each other in a way that had not been experienced before. It was on Facebook that I came across an unusual opportunity that made me say, 'I've gotta do that'. I had been invited to a Facebook Group of runners that were going to run the London Marathon in reverse. That doesn't mean running backwards it meant getting up in the middle of the night, traipsing up to London to meet fellow runners and then trace the London Marathon route in reverse aiming to finish as close to 0800 as possible. That way, some people would then be able to run the official London Marathon route later on. What appealed to me was that I could then run home as well and be home in time for a late breakfast! This was really low key. Turn up at the end of The Mall at any time from 0200 at half hourly slots and then run in a group. I envisaged a 4 hour marathon going really easy plus I had a few miles further to get home, so I chose a 0330 start. It's an interesting journey taking the train into London at 0200 and it's not quiet at all. Obviously, there were a few drunks, there were a few tourists making connecting journeys and some shift workers making their way to work. There were even some people in London Marathon uniforms heading up to do their duty.

Exiting Victoria station and being in running gear made me conspicuous to another runner who asked me 'are you doing the Reverse?' We joined forces to jog over to The Mall. Now that was not as easy as it might seem. You see, there were lots of security guys out in their rain ponchos, because it was actually hammering it down, who were guarding the entrance to the finish line on the Mall. Clearly, security had been stepped up in the wake of Boston. After a very circuitous route we got to the end of The Mall where a small group of runners were getting ready: aha, so that is where we start. It was a bit like meeting up for a club run, some small talk, some stretching, checking gear and off we go. The 0330 start was a small group of around 9 people, but very shortly on another guy and myself found ourselves running at a similar pace and decided to just press on rather than loop back. Past Big Ben, Tower of London, out towards Canary Wharf and the Isle of Dogs where you were able to run in the road and follow the blue line. Back towards Tower Bridge and the mile markers kept clicking by. Of course there were no water or Lucozade stops so you need to make sure you are well equipped to last 26.2 miles under your own steam.

The interesting thing about this run was that first of all you run through the night and see dawn break which is always a magnificent feeling and secondly it's a way to experience what goes on behind the scenes of a big city marathon. All the way round through the middle of the night there are hundreds of people setting up all sorts of stuff: advertising billboards, drink stands, the balloons across the road at each mile marker, lorries full of drinks dispensing their goods to the drink stations, security and police at various points along the course. It truly gives you a sense of the full scale and organisation that is required for these events, in a way the unsung heroes. But throughout that whole journey not one question to us about – why the hell are you running in the middle of the night? Heading through Greenwich and running past the Cutty Sark and out towards Blackheath and the start and the setting up activity was at full speed. Blackheath was opening up as I ran down that famous start line towards the gates. I had done a loop back earlier on to make up for the lost section at the Mall but it was still not quite 26.2 miles at the start line. I continued my journey out of Blackheath and towards Lewisham where I picked up the trail that heads back to Croydon along the river through to Beckenham and past Croydon Arena. A great day out and still a chance to see the start of the London Marathon!

If you fancy trying this out then let me know and I will share the Facebook group. There is also an opportunity to do a reverse of Beachy Head in October if you can't wait until next April.

MARATHON TALES (by Victoria Legge)

Last June I reapplied for the London Marathon; I had a club place for the 2014 marathon, but choose to delay it by one year. In November 2014 we started our club training and did the Beckenham run, 10 miles; slowly and surely we built up to 21 miles. If we were not accompanied by Robin and his bike, he made sure we had maps and signs on the road: orange markers to show the way. For most of my training I had the company of Lynn Hann, Natalie Seymour, Rosemary Graeme, Peter Atwell and Natalie Gooden – thanks guys, you made the long runs fun. We did do some new runs; the best one was London Bridge to the club house via Greenwich. My family have connections to Greenwich and it is always a pleasure to run through Greenwich Park, bringing back happy memories of childhood. The worst one was the High Elms 18, mainly because I missed Robin's instructions and went off course. I have redone the route and rest assured, Robin, next year I should be okay.

My build-up to the London Marathon was not good; I was entered in the Surrey Spitfire but was ill on the way down there and had to turn around and come back. Then I caught a nasty cold and there was doubt whether I would run the London Marathon; by the Wednesday I was feeling a lot better and felt yes, I can do this. So on the Friday I travelled up to the Excel Centre for the London Marathon Expo. My mum always comes with me to pick up my number and she really enjoyed the Expo. If you have never seen the Trophy then I recommended going up there; it is huge, there is a lot to do there and the big sponsors are there: you can pick up freebies. I also had my photo taking with the fastest man over the marathon distance. The Saturday was spent relaxing, and my cousin had organised a family get together for her daughter Fleur's 10th birthday, so it was great to spend that afternoon with them.

On marathon day I got up early, about 6 o'clock, and did all the preparation: breakfast, Vaseline prep, talking encouragingly to myself etc.. I was meeting Belinda; she lives at the top of my road, so we met and went to East Croydon and then to Greenwich. I was in the Blue area, and Belinda was in the Red but they are not that far apart. The Blue area is in Blackheath and as I was in pen 9 at the back I was able to do last minute preparations. You meet a lot of people while waiting in the pens; two ladies I met were from Belfast and Yorkshire. A good tip is to keep an old fleece on you while you waiting; as we walked to the start, these extra layers started to come off. We were off about 20 minutes after the start. The first six miles do tend to go past as a blur and the red and blue starts merge at about mile 6. This was a big event for me because that when my knee start to ping, then by miles 8 I realise that it was a lot worse than I had thought, but I keep going, got to the half point and just keep going. I saw my sister, Mum and Dad just beyond the half way point and they realise something was wrong. I carried on and got to mile 16, and came off to get a massage and to get it strapped up. Although I had to run/walk from that point I actually enjoyed it. It was great to see what the marathon was about, seeing people come together. From the music that keeps you going, to the wonderful marshals, to St John's Ambulance, they all make a marathon happen. The last six miles also passed in a blur. I want to thank Graeme and Steph for still being at the Striders' marshal point, it was great to see you guys, and for everybody that gave me a loud cheer. Then it was over. I finished not when I wanted, to but I finished. I got rather cold at the end waiting for my bag, because they had moved the bags and were organised them in to numbers before handling them out. My Mum and Dad live in Hayes, Kent, and the trains from Charing Cross were not running so we had to go to Cannon Street, but the number of steps I had to climb, that was painful. I am glad that I eventually made it to the club house as it was nice to see everybody. The next day my knee looked double its usual size and was painful to walk on. ended up a Purley walk-in centre. I also went to see Alan Dolton, who worked wonders, and had a good rest, and I felt great.

Well I decided that I am not going stop Marathon running and I will crack the 5 hour marathon. As well as the people I already thanked, I must thank the following people: Krys for his advice and fun help; Alan Dolton and all those at the track including the Croydon Harriers; my sister for her help – and now that she has started running she might just get me faster; my work colleagues who must have thought me mad after an 8-hour day disappearing off for my training rather than staying in the bar.

Onwards upwards, faster, stronger and fitter.



Besides training for her marathons, Victoria has also been a loyal member of our women's cross-country team (photo by Kevin Hann)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hi Alan,

I recommend a re-print of Corinne's excellent 'Tribute to the Orange Arrows' (Summer 2014 magazine). Failing that, a further 'thank you' to Robin, Chris et al. for getting us round the 261 miles of the "Marathon Training Season 2014/15" - winding around maybe 18 London boroughs, parts of Surrey & Kent counties and numerous parks, some of which you likely only find out about on a Striders' run.

Best wishes,

Peter Attewell

Editor's reply: For reasons of space, I am not republishing the whole of Corinne's article, but I definitely agree that it is worth republishing the concluding section, which read:

"Robin, sometimes accompanied by Steph, kindly joined us on his bike to guide and support us every Sunday. As distance increased week after week, he had to cover more and more miles zooming from the front of the pack with the fast guys and girls back to...me!

He came up with this simple but brilliant idea of temporarily "painting" the route ahead of time so that it was ready for us when we turned up on Sundays. He used orange paint to spray arrows and blobs on the pavement. This proved very successful for all. The pressure was off the fast group who did not have to loop back any more, the slower ones did not have to try and keep up, and Robin was able to go home at a reasonable time.

As there was no-one else of my ability this year training for the longer distances, mine became long solo runs. This was absolutely fine but I had to make sure I was self-reliant. I never felt so re-assured by a small blob of paint or a small mark on the pavement which confirmed that I was on the right track. I spent most of my Saturday nights for several months printing the routes on A3 sheets and making a collage of the relevant sections which I would keep in my pocket in case I got lost. This proved to be very helpful on the Regent's Canal route, when, having missed an orange arrow, I ended up in the middle of a housing estate at Paddington. I soon rectified the mistake and resumed the route guided by the welcomed orange arrows.

I would encourage anyone planning to do a marathon next year to consider joining the Sunday runs. With this system, they can be run at your own pace, whatever that is. On behalf of this spring's marathoners, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Robin who, Sunday after Sunday, came along with us, to make sure we were safe and enjoyed this funny game."



STRIDER PROFILE: STEPH UPTON



Current age-group: F45

Home Town: Tadworth

When did you move to Croydon: 20 years ago

When did you begin running: approx. 27 years ago

When did you join Striders: approx. 13 years ago

Have you been a member of any other running clubs: Legal & General, Croydon Sisters, Tri Surrey

Have you competed in any other sports: Cycle Sportive and Triathlons

What was your best ever race: Eco Fell race in Romania - lovely route, beautiful views and a podium finish

What is your favourite event: Anything that involves mud, hills, woods and cakes - Eridge 10 is a lovely race

What is the most memorable place you have run: The Sydney Bay race - as I did it with my daughter

What are your current running goals: To keep on running!

STRIDER PROFILE: LINDA DANIEL



Current age-group: F50

Home Town: Stevenage, Hertfordshire

When did you move to Croydon: 1985

When did you begin running: 1982

When did you join Striders: 1986

Have you been a member of any other running clubs: No

Have you competed in any other sports: Squash, Badminton, Hockey, Cycling

What was your best ever race: Coming 1st lady in the Guildford Red Cross marathon in 1989. Also setting my marathon PB of 3:29:40 at the London Marathon in 1992

What is your favourite event: The marathon, for the challenge and sense of achievement

What is the most memorable place you have run: I celebrated my 50th birthday by running in the original classic Athens marathon and finished on the famous track in the beautiful white marbled Olympic Panathenaic stadium which was also host to the 2004 Olympic Games. Also a very memorable race was when I ran in the New York Marathon for my 40th birthday in the year of 9/11. The race still went ahead as a gesture of defiance against the atrocities. As the marathon began, the organizers released a flock of white doves over the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge showing a symbol of hope, love, peace and freedom.

What are your current running goals: To keep enjoying running and hopefully try to run a marathon under 4 hours in my current age group. To complete 50 marathons before hanging up my marathon shoes.

STRIDER PROFILE: BECKY LAURENCE



Current age-group: F35

Home Town: Croydon

When did you move to Croydon: Lived in sunny Croydon all my life, except for a spell away at university!

When did you begin running: It was about 1997 during my A Levels. I ran to beat exam stress.

When did you join Striders: Hmm raiding the memory bank here... I originally joined in something like 2003-ish for a bit, but then I had a break from running. I started running regularly again in 2006-ish and rejoined Striders in 2012.

Have you been a member of any other running clubs: When I returned to Croydon after university I ran with the Croydon Running Sisters from about 2001-2003ish.

Have you competed in any other sports: No, I'm very clumsy and rubbish at virtually all sports, though happy to give things a try at least once. Tried to compete against my husband, Peter, in Frisbee golf: I managed to lose the Frisbee. I even tried shooting when my dad invited me to his rifle club: I forgot to put the safety catch on the rifle and almost shot someone. Thankfully, I missed so no one was hurt. I've never been invited back.

What was your best ever race: 2011 Kenley 10K. Possibly the coldest race I've ever run, but after ten years of racing I finally managed my long standing goal of sub-50 minutes. I was so happy I cried! Unfortunately I wasn't a Strider at the time. And my name is spelt wrong in the results (I'm listed at Becky Lauren). And there was no chip timing so my time looks more like 53 minutes. And I had borrowed someone else's Garmin, so I don't have any remaining evidence of my achievement!

What is your favourite event. Cross country - I love the team spirit, John Ralf's support and the cakes (thanks Steph and Debra).

What is the most memorable place you have run: Saundersfoot on the Pembrokeshire coast. Running along a sandy beach, admiring the sea view (and ignoring something Peter was saying to me) until I fell into a hole that someone had dug in the sand. Turns out Peter was warning me of the hole... ...how he laughed...

What are your current running goals: Three goals for this year: 1) Run at least 10 different parkruns, 2) Run 4 different 10 mile races and 3) Run all the Surrey Road League races. Staying upright/on my feet is a bonus.

SURREY ROAD LEAGUE: EARLY SEASON TABLES (after 2 races)

MEN

Clapham	62
Ranelagh	62
South London Harriers	56
Hercules Wimbledon	56
Wimbledon Windmilers	53
Striders of Croydon	51
Sutton Runners	46
Stragglers	45
Tadworth	45
Elmbridge	45
Walton	45
Reigate	44
Guildford	43
London City	40
Croydon Harriers	39
Collingwood	38
Woking	36
Epsom Oddballs	31
Lingfield	27
West 4 Harriers	26
Epsom & Ewell	25
Redhill Royal Mail	19
26.2 RRC	15
Herne Hill	12
Dorking	12
Dulwich	10

WOMEN

Guildford	62
Clapham	61
Ranelagh	55
Stragglers	54
Woking	54
South London Harriers	53
Sutton Runners	51
Epsom & Ewell	50
Wimbledon Windmilers	49
Collingwood	46
Tadworth	44
Epsom Oddballs	42
Striders of Croydon	35
Elmbridge	34
Hercules Wimbledon	34
Herne Hill	33
West 4 Harriers	28
London City	27
Epsom Allsorts	17
Windle Valley	16
26.2 RRC	15
Dulwich	14
Lingfield	13

VETERANS LEAGUE 2015 – PROVISIONAL TIMETABLES

MATCH 2: MONDAY JUNE 15th 2015 EWELL COURT (EPSOM & EWELL HARRIERS)

	<u>TRACK</u>		<u>FIELD</u>	
			MEN	WOMEN
1830				LJ (O/35,50,70)&HT(O/35,50,60)
1900	200 Men	O/35,O/50,O/70	PV(O/40,O/50,O/60)	PV(O/35)
1910	200 Women	O/35,O/50,O/60	HT(O/40,O/50,O/70)	
1920	800 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60		
1930	800 Women	A,B,O/50,O/60		
1940	3000 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60	TJ(O/35,O/50)	
2000	3000 Women	A,B,O/50	SP(O/35,O/50,O/60)	DT (O/35,O/50,O/60)
2025	4x400 Relay Men			
2040	4x400 Relay Women			

MATCH 3: MONDAY JUNE 29th 2015 STOMPOND LANE, WALTON (WALTON AC)

	<u>TRACK</u>		<u>FIELD</u>	
			MEN	WOMEN
1830			DT(O/35,50,60)	SP (O/35,50&60)
1900	2000 WALK	M&WO/35,O/50	TJ(O/40,50,60)	HJ (O/35,50&60)
1925	800 Men	O/35,O/50,O/70		HT (O/35,50&70)
1930			HJ(O/35,50)	
1935	800 Women	O/35,O/50,O/70		
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, 70)	
2005	5000M Men	M O/35,O/40,O/50, O/60		
	& Women	W A,B,O/50		
2030	4x200m RELAY	Men		
2045	4x200m RELAY	Women		

MATCH 4: MONDAY JULY 13th 2015 CROYDON ARENA (CROYDON HARRIERS & STRIDERS OF CROYDON)

	<u>TRACK</u>		<u>FIELD</u>	
			MEN	WOMEN
1830			JT (O/35,50,60)	DT(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,O/70)	JT(O/35,O/50,O/70)
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/50,O/70		
2025	1500 Women	O/35,O/50,O/70		
2035	4x100m Relay Men			
2045	4x100m Relay Women			



COMPETITIVE HIGHLIGHTS: MARCH 2015 – MAY 2015

On Saturday 7 March Striders placed third in an inter-club cross-country match organised by Croydon Harriers at Lloyd Park. Striders were led by Krzysztof Klidzia, who had won the Roundshaw parkrun earlier in the day, and was still strong enough to finish second, covering the ten-kilometre course in 37 minutes 12 seconds. Justin Macenhill was fifth (38.37) with Andy Perks 12th (42.20) and Mick Turner completing the scoring team in 16th (45.16).

In the Hastings Half-Marathon on 22 March, James Bennett had an outstanding run to finish fourth in a new club record of 71 minutes 55 seconds, more than a minute faster than the previous record set by Simon Morris in 1986.

Striders promoted the fifth annual Croydon Half-Marathon from their headquarters at Sandilands on Sunday 29 March. Striders won both the men's and women's team prizes. The men's team were led by Bill Makuwa who placed sixth in 79 minutes 20 seconds. Krzysztof Klidzia placed eighth overall, and second in the veterans' category, in 81 minutes 08. Justin Macenhill completed the scoring team, placing 22nd in 85 minutes 54. Tamsin Carelse was the seventh woman to finish, recording 1 hour 46 minutes 19 seconds. Debra Bourne was eighth in 1.46.42, while Carolyn Storey placed 12th in a personal best 1.48.20.

Striders placed third in the East Surrey League's annual road race, at Ewell on Thursday 2 April. Epsom won, with Hercules-Wimbledon second. Striders were led by Ernie Hann who finished fourth, covering the four and a quarter mile course in 25 minutes 10 seconds. Club colleague Krzysztof Klidzia won the over-40 category, placing ninth overall (25.34). Andy Perks was 22nd (27.42), Darren Woods 26th (28.14) and Paul Stanford 34th (29.14).

Striders had 17 competitors in the Brighton Marathon on Sunday 12 April. They were led by Bill Makuwa, who ran very well to finish in 2 hours 51 minutes 01. Andy Perks, who had run the South Downs Way 50-mile race a week earlier, recorded 3 hours 05 minutes 11.

James Bennett had an outstanding run in the London Marathon on Sunday 26 April, setting a new club record of 2 hours 37 minutes 42 seconds, and finishing 227th. Club colleague Simone Luciani also had an excellent run to finish 348th in 2 hours 41 minutes 54, lifting him to fifth place in the club's all-time rankings. Krzysztof Klidzia set a new club veterans' record of 2 hours 45 minutes 25, placing 46th in the over-45 category. Lee Flanagan ran 2 hours 49 minutes 24, and was followed by Mike Stewart (2.57.56), Ernie Hann (3.03.55) and Graeme Drysdale (3.06.00). Striders' women were led by Karen Stretch who was the 249th woman to finish, recording 3 hours 11 minutes 36. She was closely followed by Rachel Lindley who was 259th in 3 hours 12 minutes 10. These times placed Karen and Rachel third and fourth respectively in Striders' all-time women's rankings.

In the Ranelagh Half-Marathon, which incorporated the Surrey Championship, on Sunday 3 May, Krzysztof Klidzia was the first over-50 to finish, placing 27th overall out of 701 finishers, and recording 81 minutes 23 seconds. Peter Mills also ran well to place 28th in 81 minutes 55, with Justin Macenhill completing the scoring trio in 40th place (85.11).

In the Sutton 10-kilometre road race on Sunday 10 May, Striders were led by Iain Harrison, who ran very well to place 11th of the 472 finishers in 36 minutes 03. Justin Macenhill also ran well to place 42nd in 38 minutes 13, while Graeme Drysdale was 67th (40.02).

In the first Southern Veterans League match of the season, at Kingsmeadow on 18 May, Striders' women placed third and their men were fourth. Julian Spencer-Wood won the over-60 1500 metres (5.27.5), while Krzysztof Klidzia won the over-50 5000 metres (18.07.7).

30 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 1985

The Surrey Championships were held at Croydon Arena on 18 May. Among the Croydon winners were 18-year-old Sharon Burke, who gained a double win in the women's 100 metres (12.0) and 200 metres (24.7). 14-year-old David McKenzie gained a hat-trick of wins in the under-15 boys' 100 metres (11.6), 200 metres (23.4) and 400 metres (51.7). Karen Sutton won the under-15 girls' 1500 metres in 4 minutes 41.1 seconds. The youngest Croydon winner was 12-year-old Donna Fraser, who gained a double win in the under-13 100 metres (13.2) and 200 metres (26.9).

The European Cup was held in Moscow in August. Britain placed third in the women's competition and fourth in the men's. Croydon's Judy Oakes placed fourth in the women's shot with a putt of 17.96 metres. The previous month she had retained the WAAA championship (17.57).

At club level, Birchfield Harriers (based in Birmingham) won Division One of the British League. Of our 'local' clubs, Blackheath placed sixth in Division One, Belgrave won Division Three, and Crawley won Division Five. Herne Hill and Epsom were relegated from Divisions Three and Four respectively. Stretford won Division One of the UK Womens League. The only 'local' club in the league was Mitcham AC, who were relegated to Division Three.

Croydon Harriers had a very successful season, winning Division One of the Southern League for the only time in their history. They won all six of their league matches, and went on to win the British League Qualifying Match at Luton on 7 September, to regain the British League status which they had lost ten years earlier. Croydon's success was based on a very strong sprint squad and on the signing of decathlete Julian Hislop, who had previously been with local rivals South London Harriers. Thirty years later, five of the Croydon team are still competing: Alan Burn (800m), Ian Wright (1500m), Ian Statter (steeplechase), Alan Dolton (5000m) and Chris King (hammer).

Croydon's women made it a double triumph for the club by winning Division One of the Southern Womens League, winning the first five of their six matches. However they narrowly failed to qualify for the UK Womens League. In the Qualifying Match at Warley on 14 September, they were surprised to be beaten by Chelmsford (who had finished bottom of UK Womens League Division Four).

Croydon Harriers' promising 12-year-old Donna Fraser placed top of the national under-13 rankings at 100 metres (12.7) and 200 metres (25.9). Fifteen years later, Donna placed fourth in the Olympic 400 metres in Sydney.

Six Striders ran in the Sri Chinmoy 10-mile road race on 4 August. They were led home by Mick Meech who ran exactly 61 minutes. He was followed by Ron Carver (63.24), Alan Purchase (64.00), Colin Golding (64.15), Cecil Chisholm (69.20) and Dave Hoben (69.22).

Eleven Striders completed the Epsom Half-Marathon on 8 September. Dave Langley, in his first race for the club, ran a personal best 81 minutes 34. Club chairman Steve Owen ran a personal best 82 minutes 49. Other Striders included Alan Purchase (88.00), Colin Golding (89.05), Simon Smith (90.30) and Dave Hoben (95.45).

The Glasgow Marathon was held on 22 September. The race was won by David Lowes of Chester-le-Street in 2 hours 15 minutes 34. Further down the field, Striders' chairman Steve Owen ran a lifetime best of 2 hours 49 minutes 40 seconds, while club colleague Ron Carver also ran a lifetime best, recording 2 hours 58 minutes 44.



The 1985 Surrey 5000m championships, on the old cinder track at Motspur Park. The race was won by Peter Clarke (third from left, in the yellow vest of Hercules-Wimbledon). He still runs, and placed 764th in the 2015 National XC Championship.



The Croydon team which won Division One of the Southern League in 1985

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 2005

The Dorking 10-mile road race, which incorporated the Surrey Championships, took place on 5 June. Striders' women placed ninth in the team event. They were led home by Kerry Backshell, who placed 23rd in the women's race in 72 minutes 33 seconds. Clare McFadzean also ran well to place 34th in a personal best 75 minutes 04, while Steph Upton placed 55th in 79 minutes 20. Our men were led by club secretary Chris Morton, who placed 81st in 65 minutes 54 seconds. Damian Macenhill was 94th in 66 minutes 37, and Alan Purchase 149th in 69 minutes 58.

The Dysart 10 kilometre road race, which also incorporated the Surrey Championships, took place on 26 June. Striders showed good strength in depth with 25 of the 389 finishers. Striders' women again outperformed our men, placing fifth in the team event. They were led home by Serena Stracey, who ran strongly to finish ninth in the senior women's race in a time of 42 minutes 4 seconds, finishing 125th overall. Striders' next two women both ran well to record new personal bests. Faye Stammers gained the reward for some hard training by finishing 13th in the senior women's race in 43 minutes 45 seconds (163rd overall). She was chased hard by club colleague Clare McFadzean, who finished just eight seconds behind her, placing eighth in the women's over-35 category (169th overall). Our men also did well to finish seventh of the 23 teams competing. We were led by Bob Ewen who placed 38th in 37 minutes 44 seconds. John Foster was 56th in 38 minutes 43 and Chris Morton 69th in 39 minutes 16.

The Elmbridge 10 kilometre road race took place on 24 July. Striders were led home by veteran Tony Sheppard, who ran well to place 56th in 37 minutes 11 seconds. Damian Macenhill was 70th in 37 minutes 51 and Dave Batten 93rd in 38 minutes 59. Our women were led by Serena Stracey, who placed 180th overall in 42 minutes 20.

On 14 August Striders' women produced one of their best ever performances to place second in the Surrey 5 kilometre road running championships at Wimbledon. Ranelagh Harriers gained a comfortable victory, but our total of 25 points saw us finish one point clear of host club Belgrave Harriers. Our team was led by Serena Stracey, who was the 13th woman to finish, placing 114th overall in a time of 20 minutes 20 seconds. Clare McFadzean also ran well to record 21 minutes 20, placing 135th overall and placing fourth in the over-35 women's category. She was just 18 seconds ahead of club colleague Kerry Backshell, who completed Striders' scoring team, placing 142nd overall.

Striders' men also produced a good performance to place fourth in their team event. They were led home by Duncan Lancashire who ran very well to place twelfth in a strong field, recording 16 minutes 27 seconds. He was closely followed by Justin Macenhill, who placed 16th in 16 minutes 51. Matt Morgan completed the scoring team in 29th place (17.17).

The IAAF World Championships took place in Helsinki in August. Croydon's Donna Fraser helped Britain to third place in the women's 4 x 400 metre relay. Her club colleague Martyn Rooney helped Britain's men's team to fourth place, running the second leg in 44.8 seconds.

The summer of 2005 saw Striders compete in the Rosenheim League for the first time. Although our men's team finished the season at the bottom of the table, we were not disgraced, and only finished last in one of the six matches. Three of our athletes competed in every match (Matt Morgan, Alex Aronberg and Chris Morton). Our women were very short of numbers but the efforts of our youngest competitor, Sophie Shaw, meant that we placed fifth in the final table. Striders also continued to compete in the Southern Veterans League, where our men placed fourth of the eight clubs in our division, while our women were fifth.



Sophie Shaw, who led our women's team in our first season in the Rosenheim League. (She also ran for us in last year's Helen Furze Memorial Mobmatch.)

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