

# Striders of Croydon

SEPTEMBER 2015 MAGAZINE



Action from the 4 x 100m relays in our final Southern Veterans League match of the season, at Croydon Arena on 13 July. (Photos by Robin Jamieson)

## **CONTENTS:**

**Dates for Your Diary**  
**Chairman's Corner (by Robin Jamieson)**  
**Race Organisation – Behind the Scenes (by Ian Campbell)**  
**Strider Profile: John Gannon**  
**Strider Profile: Debra Bourne**  
**The World Masters Championships Half-Marathon**  
**Surrey Road League: Final Tables**  
**Competitive Highlights: June 2015 – August 2015**  
**Book Review – From Last to First (Charlie Spedding)**  
**30 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Autumn 1985**  
**10 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Autumn 2005**

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **2015**

Sat 5 Sep – Surrey Road Relays – Wimbledon  
Wed 23 Sep – Annual General Meeting - Sandilands  
Sun 27 Sep – Switchback – Lloyd Park / Addington Hills  
Sat 10 Oct – Surrey Women's Cross-Country League Div 2 – Nork Park  
Sat 10 Oct – Surrey Cross-Country League Division 2 (men) – Wimbledon  
Sat 7 Nov – Surrey Women's Cross-Country League Div 2 – Walton  
Sat 7 Nov – Surrey Cross-Country League Division 2 (men) – Walton

### **2016**

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



**Rachel Lindley finishing the 2013 Switchback (photo by Ian Campbell).**  
**This year's race is on Sunday 27 September**

## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER SEPTEMBER 2015

As the club AGM is on Wednesday 23rd and I am not creative enough to produce two different reports in the space of a week this is basically my Chairman's report to the AGM. The increase in our membership continues; at the time of writing we have 328 members, 29 up on last year! 126 women and 202 men or 294 first claim, 16 2<sup>nd</sup> claim members, 13 Under-18 and five helpers. Turnover is quite high: since the last AGM we have said farewell to 44, but welcome to 73 new members. As usual, my sincere apologies to all newcomers that I seem to be unable to remember names or match names to faces for more than about five minutes.

Thank you as always to John G, Chris, Alan, Tony, John R, Stuart, Ernie, Paul, Krzysztof, Damian, Steph, Sandy and everyone else who has led Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday and marathon runs over the year. In particular, John G and Chris who continue to propose the routes for our Wednesday runs.

The primary objective of the club is to help you to improve and enjoy running and achieve your goals whether to finish your first 10K or marathon, achieve a pb, beat a club record or just stay fit. Chris Morton has detailed your running achievements in his Secretary's report so I will just add my congratulations to everyone who has achieved a personal best or best for age in the past year.

The rest of this report reviews the other things we do to help keep you fit and be sociable. Other Striders-only events this year have been the handicap series, won this year by Edie Fairservice. Although there were five runners in front of her for the final, she was the first home who was a paid up member for all the races. We simplified the handicaps, grouping for the first two heats, which was much easier to manage but, subject to confirmation, we will have to re-enforce that to win the Goodall Trophy you must have been a paid up member for all three heats (first, second and final).

We also managed our annual Triathlon which has now been changed into a multiple choice event with the option to 'Swim, Bike, Run' or 'Run, Swim, Run' or 'Run, Bike, Run'. We got a good turnout and encourage you all to have a go; next year we could probably manage to raise our entry limit a bit. I have been asked about a separate Duathlon event but there are just too many other events going on to find a convenient date. A reminder to everyone that swimming at Trinity continues every Thursday evening at 8:45. We now share the pool with a few from the Amphibians, but we also share their coach who seems good at telling us slower swimmers what we are doing wrong. It is still a bargain at £6 a session. Thanks to Karen Macenhill who organises our swimming.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making the fifth Half Marathon last April a great success again; though numbers were a bit down we still raised about £3,500 for the Streets Ahead trust plus contributions to the Sandilands Club and (in return for some extra marshals) Tennis Club funds. Work has just started on the 2015 event which will be on Sunday 10th April, so will be looking for lots of helpers in due course. I have handed over the actual administration of the race, entries and the race director role to Nice Works who also run the Croydon 10K. It saves me and whoever would like to take over from me in due course a lot of the hassle.

Thanks to John G who organised our contribution to marshalling the London Marathon and also to John for organising our contribution to marshalling the Pru 100. Also, though not our responsibility, thank you to everyone who helps at the Saturday morning parkruns. In particular Debra at Lloyd Park and Mick at Roundshaw Downs.

The Switchback will be taking place the weekend after this AGM. Thank you to Debra who is organising it and Mick who is doing the entries. If you haven't already please let Debra know you are willing to help.

Again we managed a full schedule of Marathon training runs at the beginning of the year, all in reasonable weather this time. The next series will start at the beginning of November. Also thank you to Stuart and Tony for the 18:30 club leading up to the Autumn marathons.

We have managed a social event of some sort every month this year ranging from nibbles after the handicaps, fish and chips or pizza on the first Wednesday of the month, plus of course Christmas dinner and new Bowling event this time which seems to have been a great success. Thanks to Hannah for organising our major events.

As usual the Sandilands Club will probably just about break even this year, and as usual only because of the contribution made by the Croydon Half Marathon. Meanwhile the floor has been fixed and the windows replaced in the hall. As always, the biggest contribution you can make to the survival of Sandilands is to stop for a drink after the Wednesday run. There is a new structure for Sandilands emerging with the formation of new trust. This is primarily aimed at a more coordinated effort from Cricket Tennis and Hockey to raise funds. More details on this after the next meeting, which takes place just before our AGM.

Finally, on behalf of all the club thank you to all the members of your committee for their support through the year: Chris as your Secretary, Record Keeper, run leader and Tuesday night speed training; Steph Upton and Mick Turner for organising kit and Steph for organising the more serious cycle rides; Ivanka for doing the membership role and chasing all you slow-payers; Krzysztof who is taking coordinating some of our team events; Tony for leading Friday runs and taking on some of team coordinating, also proposing and encouraging our longer bike rides; John Humphries for looking after our money; and John Ralph as ladies' XC lead and Friday night run lead.

Chris Morton, John Humphries and John Ralf have all decided it is time to retire from the committee. Subject to confirmation at the AGM, Steph Upton will take on the club secretary role. The additional team organising that Chris did is being handed over to Krzysztof and Tony. Ivanka will take on the Treasurer role. We are open to offers for someone to take on the Ladies XC team role.

Membership Secretary continues to be quite time consuming and difficult to keep up with if you are working and travelling and really only able to deal with it at weekends, which is why I, as the pensioner on the Committee with time on his hands, have taken on the membership role again. However I am open to offers: it really needs someone who is a regular Wednesday runner, can respond to membership enquiries on a daily basis and has enough technical experience to manage an unnecessarily-complicated registration process – a result of runbritain only providing a partial solution to the member's registration process. And finally, at the time of writing I have no reason to believe we will not keep the club's basic membership subscription of £20 unchanged. However, England Athletics/runbritain keep increasing their affiliation fee. This year it was £12 though we only charged you £10 at membership renewal; next year we think it will be £15 and then probably stabilising at £20 the following year. So subject to agreement I expect membership this year to be £20 + £15 EA affiliation fee. We are not quite there yet but will have to consider offering the option to be a non-competitive, unaffiliated member in the future.

May all your runs be through sunlit forests.

*Robin Jamieson*

## RACE ORGANISATION – BEHIND THE SCENES (by Ian Campbell)

Have you ever considered what goes on behind the scenes any time you are at a race?

In fact, in most cases there is a lot of planning and preparation that has gone on many weeks or even months before an event. The larger the event you organise, the earlier the lead time and the larger the number of people that need to be involved.

I have organised the Croydon Ultra for the last five years. Its aims are simple: a) to provide to the Ultra Running community a 30-mile race showcasing what Croydon has to offer; b) all funds raised go to Parkinson UK. Simply, that's our Raison d'Etre.

After five years you would think that everything would go like clockwork, and true I have developed a plan that I follow and add to as experience and circumstances dictate. But it has been developed over time by testing what works and what doesn't work.

If you are thinking about becoming a Race Director here are some of the things that you need to work through to have a successful event. I would categorise the stages as follows:

- a) Raison d'Etre
- b) Logistics
- c) Planning
- d) Marketing
- e) Pre-race day
- f) Race day
- g) Post-race

Let's look at Raison d'etre - first of all, you need to consider some of the basics, what distance is the race going to be?, How many people do you want at the event? How are you going to market the event? How much do you want to charge? What is the purpose of the event? Before setting out with the Croydon Ultra I worked up an online survey and got as many people to complete it to gauge appetite and feedback. On that basis, I had an idea of what people wanted and some really good feedback. It also saved me the heartache that would have occurred if I had just gone on with the event and found out after a lot of hard work that no one was interested. I had always had the vision and still hold that vision today that the Croydon Ultra would be a low key event, a bit like a club cross-country, with little fanfare and razzamatazz, just turn up and run. My ideal numbers are somewhere between 50 to 75 entrants: enough to make it a financially viable event and raise some funds for charity without being logistically crazy!

Then you need to work out the logistics. It pays to be organised and have a logical and analytical approach to this because you will need to refer to the plan regularly. So what's in logistics? Well, race route & markings, financial plan, marketing plan, resource plan, risk management plan, back up plan and post event plan. I will skim over the main points on each: do you have a race route that is interesting for the runner experience? Will you be able to mark it out adequately? Do you have alternative marking schemes? Think about it from a runner's perspective and your own from the races that you have done, the ones you loved and why - and the ones you will never do again!

How about financial aspects? Make a list of what you think you will need, include everything and cost it out. Can you borrow, what do you need to buy, what are one-off costs that you

can re-use next year. Add in some contingency costs. Then work out how much it would cost per head for the number of runners, do it for a half-full race, two thirds-full race and totally full race. Add on what sites like Runner's World will charge you for online entry system. Then factor your entry cost. If you wouldn't pay it then rethink your costs. Keep doing it until you are satisfied you have all costs right and an entry price that makes sense. Gauge your entry price versus other races. What makes your race different: T-shirts, medals etc. Can you get sponsors and can they donate money or goods to help your event?

How are you going to market your race? I have touched on Runner's World, but that's just an entry system. Social media is great. Develop a plan to advertise your race via regular posts, forums, even flyers at other events.

Next, how many people do you need to help you on race day and maybe beforehand with the marketing of the event? Get initial commitments and always oversubscribe as people will drop out nearer the date – it's not personal, it's just inevitable. Make it clear what their roles will be and for how long and where.

You should also include a risk management plan, first aid resource, what do people do in an emergency, what happens if the route you have planned is no longer viable? Never over-commit on first aid and emergencies - you are not a doctor - but you must have a clear and well communicated plan in the event that someone gets injured. Take it seriously, as this sort of thing, and how you handle it on race day if it happens, is what will give you and your race good or bad feedback.

Contingency and back-up plan. Rehearse it. Make sure that if anything was to happen to jeopardize the event you have it covered. It could be that you need to change the route the night before the event as a tree has blocked the route or there are unexpected road works. Alternatively, you don't have enough marshals, what's your plan?

Every one of these plans will be put into operation on race day. Make sure you and your team are welcoming to the runners before and during the event. It's very encouraging as a participant to be welcomed and feel part of the event rather than a bystander. As I have manageable numbers I know the names of most participants and will engage with them all, even if it's just for few seconds.

Lastly, once your event is over – it's not over! Make sure you get the results out quickly, ideally within 24 hours. If you have photos, post those out as well. Usually within about three or four days the post-event story has gone away, so it's old news. Maximise the opportunity. All these things give a post event 'feel good' factor. Remember, nowadays with social media people look to see feedback from previous entrants. Make sure yours is good.

Now, all that sounds like a lot of work. It is, and don't underestimate it. But there is also an immense satisfaction in creating and delivering an event that many people have enjoyed – and hopefully you as the RD had a good time as well.

There is a ton of other things that you need to think about and I am very happy to provide input and guidance if you are considering organising an event. Alternatively, just look at the guys in the club who organise the club events in a different light knowing that they have put in a lot of work to make another successful event.





**Volunteers are needed to man drinks stations – even in the rain**



**Dave Shaw, Sophie Shaw and Max Alexander at the finish of this year's Ultra**

## STRIDER PROFILE: JOHN GANNON



**Current age-group:** Old and slow group. 55-60. (Would you ask a lady that question?)

**Home Town:** You mean where did I come from? Well moved to Purley when I was 6 so I suppose it would be there. I was born in Cirencester, no idea why, have no family there and never been back!

**When did you move to Croydon:** I was going to say isn't Purley part of Croydon but I suppose it was only that from 1965 with the creation of the old GLC and I lived in Purley before that so I could say 1965! However bought first property in Croydon in 1982 so take your pick.

**When did you begin running:** Difficult to say really as always did some running to keep fit for other sports but I did my first race in 1982 – Croydon 10 Miler. However I always say that you become a runner when you start recording your running, yes I know sad isn't it? That was in 1988 so that is the date I'm going for.

**When did you join Striders:** 1989. First ever run with the club was the infamous Alan Purchase "I'm running to Westerham and back, come with me if you want to or not" run.

**Have you been a member of any other running clubs:** No, who would have me and aren't Striders the best club anyway! Wait a minute I'm lying I did run/train with a club when I lived out in the Netherlands for a while but never raced in their colours, can't remember their name.

**Have you competed in any other sports:** Yes, keen local parks football player. Usually played Centre Half, in fact I'm sure John Terry copied my style. Yep I used to kick a lot of other players!

**What was your best ever race:** Sadly I would have to go for the Croydon 10K back in 1991, which was on the old course that started in Oaks Road with the finish in John Ruskin School that is long gone now. I had trained well for the race and it was one of those days when I felt I was flying along and nothing really hurt until the last mile or so. Finished with a PB of 38.08. Which I thought was respectable for someone of my standard.

**What is your favourite event:** Hastings ½ Marathon.

**What is the most memorable place you have run:** I guess for sheer surprise factor it would have to be Romania. Although finding hills to run up in Holland would also be up there!

**What are your current running goals:** Just to keep running! And to keep fit enough to enjoy running. The days of setting targets, well for races anyway are behind me now so just to enjoy running for the sake of running with perhaps passing on my experience and/or what I've learnt for my mistakes to others would be what I would like to aim for.



## STRIDER PROFILE: DEBRA BOURNE



**Current age-group:** W45.

**Home Town:** Manchester.

**When did you move to Croydon:** Moved to Beckenham in 2003.

**When did you begin running:** Really not until 2009 when I was asked to run the Royal Parks Half Marathon for a charity. For about five years before that I was running four miles three times a week just to keep fit. In my teens I ran the mile at school but nobody ever suggested longer distances.

**When did you join Striders:** Summer 2011.

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

**Have you competed in any other sports:** Riding (as a teenager and in my early 20s), also judo and archery while at university.

**What was your best ever race:** North Downs Way 50 in 2012. Finishing first woman and 18<sup>th</sup> overall was great, but more importantly I paced it right, finished in the time I wanted (9.53; I was aiming for under the 10 hours) and had long stretches when I was running “in the zone”, just enjoying the run and the surroundings, not really noticing the distance.

**What is your favourite event:** 50-mile trail ultras in general – I’d love to do the Lakeland 50 again. And Lloyd parkrun!

**What is the most memorable place you have run:** I love trails, and running through woodland, and I have always loved the Lake District. Back before I was a runner, I had a wonderful day walking in the Lakes when I ran much of the way back down from Scafell Pike to Seatoller via Glaramara, along the ridge. It was sunny, I was in Teva sandals, carrying minimal kit, and it was just amazing. That was why when I read about the Lakeland 50 I decided I had to do it – which led to my ultra-running in general.

**What are your current running goals:** First, get back to running after my broken ankle and finally complete my 50<sup>th</sup> parkrun – I’m stuck on 49! Then work back up to ultramarathon distance, run the trail ultras here and complete Comrades Marathon in South Africa.

## **THE WORLD MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS HALF-MARATHON: PARC DE PARILLY (LYON)**

I wrote a brief article about the World Masters Championships in the December 2013 issue of this magazine, following the 2013 World Masters Championships which had taken place in Porto Alegre in Brazil. The World Masters Championships have usually been held every two years, and the 2015 championships were held at Lyon, in France. This was the most convenient venue for British athletes since the championships were held at Gateshead in 1999, and Britain sent our largest ever team, with 587 competitors.

While many of our 587 entrants will have been hoping for a medal, quite a few were not, but simply wanted to enjoy the experience of competing in a world championship. I was one of these: I was clearly too slow for the track events, but I entered the half-marathon, which took place on 16 August. There were seven British runners in my age-group (M55), of whom I was the slowest. There was a team event, but as this was three to score, there was little prospect of my making our scoring team unless half of our runners dropped out.

I flew from Gatwick to Lyon on the morning of Friday 14 August. Lyon's international airport, a large one with three terminals, is at St Exupery, some way outside the city boundaries, but is linked to the main railway station by a modern express tram service which takes just over half an hour and gave me a chance to see some of the modern eastern suburbs of Lyon. Earlier in the championships, Lyon had been experiencing a heatwave, but temperatures had dropped since then and the BBC was only forecasting a daytime high of 24°C. My first impression on leaving the aircraft was that it was significantly hotter than that, which was not good news for someone who intended to run a half-marathon two days later.

My hotel was only just over a mile southeast of the railway station. After checking in and leaving my suitcase in my room, I headed for the main stadium, which was on the other side of the city. This gave me a chance to take a gentle walk through the historic centre of Lyon, which is built at the junction of two rivers, the Rhone and the Saone. The area to the east of the city is very flat, but there are steep hills to the west of the River Saone, which is why most of Lyon's expansion has been to the east. Paradoxically, however, the main stadium, Stade de la Duchere, has recently been built in a small suburb to the northwest of the city: it is less than a mile from the end of one of Lyon's four metro lines, but most of that last mile involved a walk up quite a steep hill.

Having collected my numbers at the main stadium, I stayed there to watch most of the 1500 metre finals, which were taking place that afternoon. There were some excellent performances including four British wins. Louise Rudd of Stockport, who had won the W40 800 metres earlier in the championships, completed a double by winning the 1500 in 4 minutes 36.1. In the M40 race Britain's former international Anthony Whiteman, whose lifetime best of 3 minutes 32.34 places him sixth in the all-time British rankings, had won the M40 800 metres by a big margin in 1 minute 51.01, and was a hot favourite to complete the double. He was boxed in for the first two laps, which were run relatively slowly, but extricated himself in time to unleash a last lap in 54 seconds and gain a comfortable win in 4 minutes 00.97.

The M50 race saw an even more impressive performance from former cross-country international David Heath of Blackheath who led from the gun and won by fourteen seconds in 4 minutes 01.54, a championship best performance and a highly impressive time for a 50-year-old. Interestingly, David's lifetime best, set in 1989 when he was 24 years old, was 3 minutes 41.0, so he has only slowed by 20 seconds in the last 26 years. I wish that my 1500 metre times had only slowed by one second per year!

Whereas both Anthony Whiteman and David Heath were outstanding runners in their twenties, Britain's other gold medallist at this distance took up athletics later in life. Angela Copson only began running in her 50s, became a national champion for the first time at the age of 61 when she ran 5000 metres in 19 minutes 24 seconds, and has subsequently set British W60 and W65 records at distances from 800 metres to 10000 metres. Now aged 68, she she led the W65 1500 metres from the start to win in 5 minutes 32.97 – a time which many younger Striders would struggle to match. I was also pleased to see Ros Tabor of Dulwich win the silver medal in 5 minutes 45.03, while the M70 race saw another local medallist with Peter Giles of Hercules-Wimbledon placing second in 5 minutes 16.22.

At the upper end of the age spectrum, Christian Larcher of France won the over-85 1500 metres in 7 minutes 57.18, while Jose Canelo of Portugal won the over-90 gold in 9 minutes 12.66. For the women, Lynne Hurrell of the USA won the over-80 gold in 7 minutes 56.41, while Melitta Czerwenka-Nagel of Germany won the over-85 gold in 8 minutes 50.42.

After the 1500 metre races, I used Lyon's impressive metro system for the first time to return to my hotel. The following morning I decided to pay a reconnaissance visit to the venue of Sunday's marathon, which was at a different stadium, at Parilly, about four miles south-east of my hotel but easily accessible by metro. I watched several steeplechase races before taking another metro to the centre of Lyon and doing a bit more sightseeing: thankfully there was quite a lot of cloud, making this a cooler day than the previous one. Originally it had been planned to hold the half-marathon on a one-lap course around the historic parts of the city centre and a large park in the north of Lyon: however, the organisers subsequently decided to hold it on a traffic-free course at Parilly, where the stadium is situated in a large park. The half-marathon runners would do two laps of a twisting course, while the marathon runners would do four. (The same park had been used for the cross-country races at the start of the championships.)





**Two views of the cross-country course at Parc de Parilly. As the bottom picture shows, the French idea of a cross-country course is not as challenging as Lloyd Park**

The marathon and the half-marathon were to start together at seven o'clock in the morning, less than an hour after sunrise. On the Sunday morning I took an early metro to Parilly, and was pleased to find that it seemed relatively cool. Predictably, the metro was quite full of runners clad in different national tracksuits, along with three young French women who appeared to have just finished their night out.

I killed time by chatting with a small group of British runners, before depositing my rucksack at the baggage tent about 40 minutes before the start: although it was only just after dawn, it already seemed too warm for anything more than vest and shorts. It was clear that there would be quite a large field with about 700 entries in total for the half-marathon and about 500 entries for the full marathon. We were all wearing numbers on both front and back, with red numbers for the marathon runners and black for the half-marathon runners. The numbers on the front contained our timing chips. The numbers also indicated our age-category, which was useful if you were overtaking someone or being overtaken by someone, as you could see whether they were in your age-group (and feel suitably embarrassed if their number showed that they were over 70 years old).

With such a large field, I made my way to the starting area about 20 minutes before the official tie. The starting pen looked somewhat narrow, and I positioned myself towards the rear of the pen along with a couple of our women. A little while later, I was surprised to see a short fat Mexican woman with W75 on her back trying to squeeze her way further forward in the pen. It seemed most unlikely that she would be able to start the race at the same speed as the under-50 male runners around her: I guessed that her presence too far up the pen would cause a bottleneck as people tried to get round her, and I moved slightly to my right to make sure that I was not directly behind her. With 10 minutes to go the pen was uncomfortably full, and looking at the runners behind us, it was clear that quite a few younger and faster-looking runners had been too casual about getting to the starting pen, and were having to start behind older and slower runners.

As I feared, the start of the race was somewhat unnerving as fast runners who had been too far back in the pen tried to force their way through gaps, including finding a way past the



misguided Mexican. A little way to my left and slightly in front of me a runner fell over, causing further problems as people made their way round him. Fortunately I managed to stay on my feet, and a short way ahead I could see Steve Smythe of Dulwich moving away from me. Having run 1 hour 35 minutes in Malta in 2012, but having subsequently run two half-marathons in outside 1 hour 40, my target was simply to get back under 1 hour 40, so I realised that I should not make any attempt to follow Steve. Despite the crush of runners I managed to see the one-kilometre marker, which I passed in 4 minutes 41, which seemed a sensible pace.

I tried to maintain this rhythm, passing some runners and being overtaken by others. There was a 3-kilometre marker, but I was unable to see it as I was in a tight pack of runners when we reached it. The pack had thinned out by the time I reached the 5-kilometre marker, in 22 minutes 58. I tried to maintain a rhythm but slowed slightly in the next five kilometres, reaching 10k in 46 minutes 29. Between the 10-kilometre mark and the end of the first lap, we passed over a timing chip mat and I was impressed to see that, as runners crossed the mat, their numbers were displayed on an electronic scoreboard with their age-group and their position within that age-group. I was very surprised to find that I was in 30th place in my age-group: I had assumed that most of the other M55 runners were in front of me.



However, by now the temperature and humidity were rising and the second lap was becoming hard work. By the time I reached the 15-kilometre mark, in 71 minutes 31, I had been overtaken by three more M55s and was beginning to feel very tired. I also did some mental arithmetic and realised that I had taken just over 25 minutes for the last five kilometres, so that even if I could maintain that pace I was not now going to finish in under 1 hour 40. Between the 15-kilometre mark and the 20-kilometre mark I continued to slow, and was overtaken by three more M55s, as well as a few older runners, so that by the time I reached the stadium I was in 36th place in my age-group. I was relieved to cross the line in 1 hour 43 minutes 52.

I retrieved my rucksack from the baggage tent – which was made easier by the fact that we had all been given another large number to pin to our bags – and realised that if I headed for

the metro station I could get back to my hotel in time for a shower and breakfast. Having done so, I returned to the stadium to watch the slower marathon runners finish. By this time, the cloud had given way to blazing sunshine and some of the runners looked to be finding the heat very difficult. I was also able to look at the official results and discovered that there had been a total of 54 finishers in my age-group, and that I had finished fifth of the six British runners (one of our seven entrants did not start). I could have made my way to the main stadium to watch the 4 x 400 metre relays in the afternoon, but after a draining half-marathon, I didn't fancy the climb up that steep hill. So, like a true Englishman abroad, I chose instead to watch two Premier League matches on French TV: Crystal Palace v Arsenal and Manchester City v Chelsea (and I won't risk upsetting John Gannon by mentioning the result of the latter match). Both of these were shown live on Canal Sport and I was amused to find that the programme was called 'Match of Ze Day' and that the station was asking its viewers to vote by text to 'elisez l'homme of ze match', which seemed to be an interesting example of the way in which the French language is adopting some Anglicisms.

After returning home the following day, I was able to study the results in more detail on the internet. The overall winner of the half-marathon was a 36-year-old Algerian, Mourad Bekacha, who had run the impressive time of 70 minutes 04 seconds. The M55 race had been won by Frederic Chetreff of France in 77 minutes 06, while the first British finisher was Colin Feechan of Scotland, who was eighth in 81 minutes 04. Steve Smythe had placed 20th in 92 minutes 33, while Mick McGeoch of Welsh club Les Croupiers (where he is a team-mate of long-serving Strider Gerry Crispie) was 25th in 93 minutes 48. These three comprised the British M55 team, which placed second to France in the team event.

The first over-70, Albert Anderegg of Switzerland, had run an impressive time of 85 minutes 11, while Britain had the next three finishers in this age-group. The first over-75, Karl Trumper of Germany, had run 99 minutes 31. However I was relieved to see that I had managed to finish in front of all the over-80s (the first over-80 ran 1 hour 55 minutes 25, while the only over-85 ran 2 hours 11 minutes 03). The first woman, 35-year-old Geraldine Simbola of France, had run 79 minutes 11. The first woman in the over-55 category, Silke Schmidt of Germany, had run a very impressive 80 minutes 06. The first woman in the over-60 category, Chantal Langlace of France, had run 88 minutes 25. I had also finished behind the first woman aged over 70, Lavinia Petrie of Australia, who had run 1 hour 41 minutes 52 (and had won her age-group by almost 14 minutes). The first woman aged over 80, Erika Kruger of Germany, ran 2 hours 40 minutes 51. Incidentally the 77-year-old Mexican woman who had nearly caused a pile-up at the start by standing far too near the front of the pen had eventually finished in 2 hours 53 minutes, with just one runner behind her.

As for the full marathon, the first man home was 40-year-old Christian Mercier of Canada in 2 hours 28 minutes 42. The first over-75 ran 3 hours 24 minutes 32, while the first over-80 ran 4 hours 12 minutes 11. The first woman to finish was 35-year-old Patrycia Włodarczyk of Poland in 2 hours 50 minutes 22. At the other end of the age range, 77-year-old Signy Rustlie of Norway won the over-75 category in 5 hours 17 minutes.

The World Masters Championships have usually been held every two years, but the WMA has now decided to hold them in even-numbered years rather than odd-numbered years, and the next championships will be in Australia in November 2016. They return to Europe in 2018, when they will be held in Malaga. If any other Striders are interested in taking part in international athletics, the first step is to join one of the regional clubs that are affiliated to the British Masters Athletics Federation: for most of us, this will be the Southern Counties Veterans (<http://www.scvac.org.uk/index.htm>), who organise the annual track and field league which Striders compete in on Monday evenings.

## SURREY ROAD LEAGUE: FINAL TABLES

### MEN

Ranelagh	155
Reigate	151
Clapham	150
Hercules Wimbledon	147
South London Harriers	145
<b>Striders of Croydon</b>	<b>142</b>
Wimbledon Windmilers	132
Guildford	130
Stragglers	120
Collingwood	114
Sutton Runners	112
London City	112
Tadworth	109
Croydon Harriers	106
Walton	103
Woking	102
Elmbridge	101
Herne Hill	95
West 4 Harriers	78
Epsom Oddballs	76
Epsom & Ewell	72
26.2 RRC	68
Lingfield	63
Belgrave	63
Dorking	62
Dulwich	53
Redhill Royal Mail	50
Windle Valley	19
Kingston	10
Waverley	10
Thames Hare & Hounds	5
Camberley	4



The Wimbledon 5K was the final race in this year's Surrey Road League

## **WOMEN**

Guildford	155
Ranelagh	153
Clapham	152
Wimbledon Windmilers	140
South London Harriers	139
London City	136
Woking	130
Stragglers	123
Sutton Runners	119
Collingwood	118
Epsom & Ewell	111
Tadworth	110
<b>Striders of Croydon</b>	<b>109</b>
Hercules Wimbledon	105
West 4 Harriers	105
Herne Hill	101
Epsom Oddballs	97
Elmbridge	96
Lingfield	71
Epsom Allsorts	65
Dorking	64
Reigate	57
26.2 RRC	46
Dulwich	46
Windle Valley	31
Kingston	18
Walton	18
Belgrave	13
Waverley	12

Camberley, Croydon Harriers and Thames Hare & Hounds had no women finishers in any of the seven league races.

## **LEADING STRIDERS INDIVIDUAL PLACINGS**



Becky Laurence = 4th in the W35 category  
Iain Harrison = 6th in the senior men category  
Justin Macenhill = 7th in the M40 category  
Chris Morton = 9th in the M50 category



## **COMPETITIVE HIGHLIGHTS: JUNE 2015 – AUGUST 2015**

In the Surrey Masters Championships at Ewell on 7 June, Kevin Burnett won gold medals in the M75 100 metres (22.06), shot (5.98) and discus (17.30), and silver in the hammer (16.55). Sandra Francis won gold in the W55 100 metres (17.00), 200 metres (36.70) and the 80 metre hurdles (20.98), and silver in the long jump (3.05). Steve Smith won gold in the M55 long jump (3.34) and 400 metres (80.09), while Paul Cripps won gold in the M45 high jump (1.50) and triple jump (9.20).

In the Dorking 10-mile road race, which incorporated the Surrey Championships, on the same day, James Bennett placed ninth in 57 minutes 46 seconds, which lifted him to eleventh place in Striders' all-time club rankings. Iain Harrison was 14th (58.28) with Michael Stewart 46th (61.51). Rachel Lindley was the fifth woman to finish, placing 74th overall in a personal best 65 minutes 04, only eight seconds outside Jane Lansdown's club record.

In the Southern Veterans League at Ewell on 15 June, Julian Spencer-Wood won the M60 3000 metres in a club age-group record of 11 minutes 30.9, and also placed second in the 800 metres (2.40.5). Justin Macenhill won the M40 3000 metres (10.15.1), while Paul Cripps won the triple jump (9.54) and set a club M45 record of 7 metres 78 in the shot.

In the Ranelagh 10 kilometre road race on 21 June, which incorporated the Surrey Championships, James Bennett placed eleventh of the 639 finishers, in a personal best 34 minutes 04 seconds. Iain Harrison was 22nd (34.59) with Michael Stewart 71st (37.09). Krzysztof Klidzia was third in the over-50 category, placing 79th overall (37.32).

In the Southern Veterans League at Walton on 29 June, Paul Cripps won the triple jump with a new club over-45 record of 10 metres 21. Kevin Burnett set new club over-75 records in the 2000 metre walk (15.26.2), discus (18.98) and javelin (11.95). Rosemary Egbe set a club over-50 women's record of 16 metres 40 in the hammer.

In the final Southern Veterans League match of the season, at Croydon Arena on 13 July, Sandra Francis won the W50 2000 metre walk (14.08.6), and also placed second in the W50 100 metres (17.8). For Striders' men, Bob Ewen set a club M60 record of 12 minutes 15.3 for the 2000 metre walk. Paul Cripps was second in the high jump (1.50). He, Simon Webster, Paul Stanford and Daniel Hassett placed second in the 4 x 100 metre relay (53.7). In the final league table Striders' women finished third, while the men were fourth.

In the Elmore 7-mile road race at Chipstead on 18 July, Striders were led by Iain Harrison who ran very well to place ninth in 40 minutes 04 seconds. Peter Mills was 22nd (42.47) with Justin Macenhill 55th (46.00) and Graeme Drysdale 64th (46.45). Striders' women were led by Steph Upton who placed 134th overall (51.58), while Becky Laurence was 172nd (54.55).

In the Elmbridge 10-kilometre race on 26 July, Striders' men placed second in the team event. James Bennett placed tenth in a personal best 33 minutes 36 seconds, lifting him to fifth place in the club's all-time rankings. Simone Luciani was 15th (34.16) with Iain Harrison 19th (35.10). Striders' women were led by Morena Lironi who placed 183rd overall (43.41), with Becky Laurence 228th (46.02) and Karen Peake 347th (52.08).

The Wimbledon 5-kilometre road race on 9 August was the final race in the Surrey Road League. Simone Luciani placed 12th in 16 minutes 35 seconds, with Justin Macenhill 44th (18.02) and Steve Massey 90th (19.35). Striders' women were led by Becky Laurence who placed 197th overall (23.22). In the final league table Striders' men finished sixth out of 32 clubs, while our women were 13th.

## **BOOK REVIEW – FROM LAST TO FIRST**

**(by Charlie Speeding: reviewed by Alan Dolton)**

Charlie Speeding won the bronze medal in the 1984 Olympic Marathon, in Los Angeles. This was the most recent occasion that a British runner has won an Olympic medal in the marathon. He published his autobiography, 'From Last to First' in 2009, 25 years after his Olympic medal. It is both interesting and inspiring. His introduction sets the scene for the book, stating:

"I won a bronze medal in the Olympic marathon, but I was definitely not one of the three most talented distance runners in the world. I was a talented runner compared to the average runner, but you don't run against average runners in an Olympic final."

The first two chapters of the book give an account of the 1984 race, in which he took the lead at 21 miles and managed to break away from everyone except the two runners who finished in front of him (Carlos Lopes of Portugal and John Treacy of Ireland). Following this, the book proceeds in a conventional chronological sequence. Charlie mentions that his first ever race was over 100 yards at his primary school, in which he finished last (hence the title of his book). However, in his first cross-country race he finished second, indicating that he was clearly a natural distance runner rather than a sprinter. In 1970, in the English Schools 1500m championship, he finished second in 3 minutes 48.8. In 1973 he improved his 1500m time to 3 minutes 45.3, and in 1976 he ran 4 minutes 3.5 for a mile.

Charlie's personal best for 800 metres was 1 minute 56.7. This is of course faster than Striders' club record, but it is relatively modest by comparison with his 1500m personal best. His best 800 metre pace was 58 seconds per lap whereas his best 1500 metre pace was 60 seconds per lap: this is an unusually small differential, particularly compared with our top 1500 metre runners such as Steve Ovett, Seb Coe and Steve Cram.

In 1982 he placed third in the AAA 10000 metre championship, and was selected at 10000 metres for both the European Championships and the Commonwealth Games. Remarkably, he recorded the same time of 28 minutes 25 in both races, placing fourth in the Commonwealths and eighth in the Europeans. In the following year he won the AAA 10000 metre championship in a personal best of 28 minutes 08, having broken away from the field with three laps to go.

He then decided to move up to the marathon, observing that "national champion at 10000m I might have been, but a fast finisher I would never be" and that even if he had gained selection for the Olympic 10000m, his lack of a fast finish meant that he would be in danger of being eliminated in the heats. He made his marathon debut in Houston in January 1984. He lost sight of the leaders after 16 miles, but maintained a consistent pace and caught them with just over a mile left, going to win in 2 hours 11 minutes 54.

Three months later he ran his second marathon, in London. He adopted similar tactics, and lost sight of the leaders after 10 miles. However he caught them after 18 miles and took the lead just before the 20-mile mark, going on to win in 2 hours 9 minutes 57. This gained him selection for the Olympic Marathon where (as described in the opening chapters of the book) he finished third.

He had another good run to finish second to Steve Jones in the 1985 London Marathon, but his form subsequently declined. He dropped out after 19 miles of the 1986 Commonwealth Games Marathon, and in 1987 he had to have surgery on an Achilles' tendon injury. Despite

only finishing tenth in the 1988 London Marathon, he was selected for the Olympics later that year, where he finished sixth in 2 hours 12, commenting that that was a better performance than his training and previous races had suggested. He never finished another marathon: he was unable to run in the 1989 or 1990 London Marathons because of injury, and had to drop out of the 1990 Fukuoka Marathon with a bad calf injury.

I found chapter 12 of Charlie's book, entitled 'progress of training', particularly interesting. He observes that in his early years, he did not do any speed work in the winter, but he improved significantly after he began doing speed sessions all year round, and that keeping his muscles attuned to the extra stress of faster running "resulted in less stiffness and fewer injuries". He benefited from altitude training, running shorter distances than usual but trying to maintain a fast pace. In his marathon preparation, he regularly did 15-mile runs at a hard pace, explaining that "I had to get used to maintaining a brisk pace over an extended distance, and I ran intuitively at a pace that was brisk, but sustainable, for 15 miles. To run like that for 20 miles would be too hard, and to run for 10 miles would lack relevance for the marathon."

He also comments that he suffered from persistent Achilles' tendon injuries, and that it was not realised at the time that these were caused by tight calf muscles. He observes that "my tendons were sore, so my tendons were treated, but it didn't work well because the real problems were tightness and scar tissue in my calf muscles. The reduced mobility in my calves transferred the stress to my tendons, making them sore. Modern treatment would involve massage deep into the muscle to break down the tightness and scar tissue, which would relieve the pressure on the tendon."

Discussing his medal-winning performance in Los Angeles, Charlie comments that "it was always the really big races that motivated me most. It was always at the top events that my inner caterpillar turned into a butterfly. I ran all my best races when I was able to peak both physically and mentally. When I peaked successfully, I knew I would beat people who might normally beat me. The ability to peak correctly gives runners like me the chance to step up from our normal level to something much greater."

The book ends with an appendix giving full details of Charlie's training between winning the London Marathon in May 1984 and placing third in the Olympics three months later. He took two days' rest after the London Marathon, and then did two weeks of steady or easy running. He resumed normal training with a 15-mile run 15 days after London, and did a track session (of 6 x 1000m) the following day. Five weeks after London he did one of his hardest regular track sessions, consisting of was 5 x 1 mile in 4 minutes 40, jogging a lap in 90 seconds as recovery. This session totals 10000 metres and Charlie ran the session, including the recovery jogs, in just under 31 minutes.

Charlie's highest weekly mileage was 107 miles, and he had four more weeks of between 101 and 104. He did at least one track session each week apart from one week in which he did two interval sessions on the road. His longest run was a 28-miler which he ran three weeks before the Olympic Marathon, and his last long run was an 18-miler which he ran two weeks before the Olympic Marathon. He then began to taper, although he still did a track session (of 6 x 800m) eleven days before the Olympic Marathon, and another track session (of 5 x 400m) four days before the Olympic Marathon. His reps for the 5 x 400m session averaged 60.9 seconds, so his marathon training had not blunted his speed too much.

Although Charlie was obviously competing at a much higher level than any Striders can aspire to, I found this an inspiring and very readable book, and I would strongly recommend it to other Striders.



**The battle for silver and bronze medals in the 1984 Olympic marathon:  
Charlie Spedding chases John Treacy of Ireland**



## 30 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN AUTUMN 1985

Striders' AGM, on 3 October, discussed changing the club name but decided to retain the original name of 'Philips City Striders' (which remained the club name for a further ten years). The AGM minutes also record that "an approach should be made to Croydon Harriers for them to point any runners who do not meet their standards in our direction".

The fifth annual Croydon 10 mile road race took place on 20 October, over the same two-lap course as had been used for the previous three years. (This was the final time that the race was held over ten miles: in 1986 it changed to a one-lap race over the current distance of ten kilometres.) The race was won by Lawrence Marsh of South London Harriers in 51 minutes 41. Host club Croydon Harriers had the next two finishers with Alan Dolton second in 52 minutes 11 and John Lee third in 52 minutes 17. Kevin Ellis of SLH was fourth (52.48) with Graham Hansen of Croydon Harriers fifth (53.04) and Tony Harran of Herne Hill sixth (53.29). Croydon Harriers' squad included two other future Striders: Peter Yarlett was tenth in 55 minutes 26, with Krzysztof Klidzia 22nd in a personal best 57 minutes 35. Another future Strider, John McGilvray, ran for Surrey Beagles and placed 25th in 57 minutes 54. Striders' first finisher was Steve Harman, who ran 66 minutes 49. The first woman was Fiona McDaniel (66.31), with Heather Fenton of Croydon Harriers second (67.10).

The East Surrey League held its annual cross-country race at Lloyd Park on 26 October. The winner was Jerry Watson of Epsom (27.21). Box Hill Racers, a newly-formed club who included several runners who had previously been with Epsom, won the team event with 22 points, ahead of Croydon Harriers (34) and Epsom (55). Croydon's team included two future Striders: Alan Dolton placed fourth (27.43) with Peter Yarlett 16th (29.15).

The Surrey Veterans Cross-Country Championships took place on the following day at Richmond Park. Steve Warzee of Guildford won the over-40 race in 32 minutes 13, with Robin Dickson of Croydon Harriers second in 33 minutes 35. (Sadly, Robin died in June this year.) Croydon's Bob Penney won the over-60 race for the second successive year.

The Surrey Cross-Country League began its 24th season. Aldershot had won Division One for thirteen successive years, but Herne Hill Harriers produced a strong challenge and won both the first two Division One matches, at Wimbledon on 12 October and at Lloyd Park on 23 November. On each occasion Herne Hill also had the individual winner in Dave Glassborow. In Division Two, Hercules-Wimbledon won the first match while Thames Hare & Hounds won the second. Box Hill Racers dominated Division Three, winning both the first two matches by large margins. The Surrey Womens Cross-Country League began its seventh season. Woking AC won both the first two matches, at Morden and Ewell.

In the Leatherhead 10-mile road race on 17 November, Striders' leading veteran Simon Morris set a club record of 54 minutes 51 seconds, which still stands as the club record 30 years later. Future Strider Krzysztof Klidzia, running for Croydon Harriers, ran 59 minutes 34. Six days later, in a 10 kilometre race at Battersea Park, Krzysztof ran a personal best 34 minutes 56.

Striders had not yet entered either of the Surrey cross-country leagues, but had a cross-country match on 7 December: an inter-club match organised by Hailsham Harriers (whose team included Striders' first secretary, Mick Meech). Hailsham won the match with six of the first seven finishers. Striders mustered 17 of the 36 finishers. They were led by veteran Simon Morris who placed third. Peter Stewart was eighth, and there were six other Striders in the first 20 finishers: 11 Steve Harman, 12 Colin Golding, 13 Tony Smith, 14 Simon Smith, 16 Steve Owen, 17 Alan Purchase.

## 10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN AUTUMN 2005

The Surrey Road Relays were held at Wimbledon Park on 11 September. Striders' best result came from the over-40 men's team, who placed eighth, their fastest runner being John Foster (18.54). Striders' women's team placed 12th in their event, their fastest runner being Clare McFadzean (20.59). Striders' senior men were well below full strength, and had to settle for 18th place, their fastest runner being Alex Aronberg who ran 18 minutes 35.

Striders staged the fourteenth annual 'Switchback' cross-country race on 26 September. The winner was South London Harriers' veteran Ray Marriott, who covered the five-mile course in 28 minutes 15 seconds. He was followed by Striders' Justin Macenhill, who placed second in 29 minutes 18. Striders' veteran Bob Ewen had an excellent run, winning the over-50 category and placing fourth overall in 30 minutes 44. He was followed home by another Striders' veteran in Tony Sheppard, who made a welcome to return after a hamstringing injury and placed fifth in 31 minutes 09. Striders also had the first woman to finish, with Helen Furze placing 13th overall in 33 minutes 52.

The Surrey Women's Cross-Country League began its 27th season with a match at Wimbledon Common on 8 October. Striders were competing in Division One, but finished 14th of the 15 competing clubs. They were led by Serena Stracey, who placed 48th in 25 minutes 52. Kerry Backshell finished 64th (27.11), with Stephanie Noyce 68th (27.18) and Clare McFadzean 70th (27.23). Meanwhile, Striders' men were competing in Division Two of the men's league at Epsom Downs, where we finished a respectable fifth of the nine competing clubs. Striders were led home by Justin Macenhill, who had another very good run to finish ninth, just two places ahead of club colleague Duncan Lancashire.

The 29th Croydon 10K took place on 16 October. The winner was Peter Fallenius of Belgrave in 32 minutes 52. The first Strider was Duncan Lancashire, who placed seventh in 34 minutes 17. Tony Sheppard was 18th (37.04) and Bob Ewen 21st (37.18). For Striders' women, Helen Furze ran well to set a club over-35 record of 39 minutes 42. On the same day Justin Macenhill placed 16th in the Amsterdam Half-Marathon in a personal best 77 minutes 22, while Serena Stracey ran a personal best 91 minutes 44.

The East Surrey League held its annual cross-country race in Lloyd Park on 22 October. Striders placed fourth, led by Justin Macenhill, who ran well to place seventh of the 105 finishers in 30 minutes 42 seconds.

On 12 November, Striders did well to place third in the annual South of the Thames cross-country team race for the Brent Shield, held over a five-mile course at Lloyd Park. Striders' first man home was Duncan Lancashire, who placed 16th in a strong field, recording 30 minutes 34 seconds. Justin Macenhill also ran well for 25th (31.00).

The second Surrey Cross-Country League matches of the season took place on 19 November. Striders' men placed fifth in their match at Richmond Park. They were again led by Duncan Lancashire who placed seventh of the 170 finishers, recording 28 minutes 29. He was closely followed by club colleague Justin Macenhill, who placed tenth in 28 minutes 39. Matt Morgan also ran well to place 35th (30.26). Meanwhile Striders' women placed 14th in their Division One race at Reigate, led by Serena Stracey who finished 50th.

On 3 December, Justin Macenhill had an excellent run to finish second in the annual Pirie 10-mile cross-country race at Coulsdon, covering the testing two-lap course in 60 minutes 25 seconds. Veteran John Foster also ran well to place 12th in exactly 65 minutes, while teammate David Batten was the first over-50 to finish, placing 17th overall in 66 minutes 39.

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