

Striders of Croydon

DECEMBER 2015 MAGAZINE



Phil Coales on his way to third place in the East Surrey League race at Lloyd Park



Simone Luciani in the Surrey Cross-Country League race at Esher

CONTENTS:

Dates for Your Diary
Marathon Training Runs 2015/2016
Chairman's Corner (by Robin Jamieson)
Striders' Early History (by Colin Golding)
Derek Wells (1927-2015)
The Warsaw Marathon (by Asisat Lamina)
The Farnham Pilgrim Marathon (by Abhi Toraskar)
The San Francisco Marathon (by Corinne Carr)
Club La Santa: What A Wonderful World (by Corinne Carr)
Running Mags and the Secrets of the Universe (by Dave Shaw)
Strider Profile: Rachel Lindley
Strider Profile: Mick Turner
The Purbeck 16 (by Alan Dolton)
Surrey Cross-Country Leagues: Mid-Season Tables
Competitive Highlights: September – November 2015
The Joy of Cross-Country
20 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Autumn / Winter 1995/1996
10 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Winter 2006

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sat 16 Jan – Surrey Women's Cross-Country League Div 2 – Reigate
Sat 16 Jan – Surrey Cross-Country League Division 2 (men) – Reigate
Sat 6 Feb – Mobmatch v Croydon Harriers – Lloyd Park
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
Sun 10 Apr – Croydon Half-Marathon – Sandilands (Striders marshalling)
Sun 24 Apr – London Marathon (Striders marshalling)
Sun 5 June – Surrey Masters Championships – Ewell

MARATHON TRAINING RUNS 2015/16

Planned Run	Start	Finish	Route
Sun 13 Dec	Nine Parks 12	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=6728298
Sun 27 Dec	Wandle 14	Clapham Junction	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=2366613
Sun 3 Jan	Greenwich 13	London Bridge	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=2170782
Sun 10 Jan	Keston Ponds 14	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=2558460
Sun 24 Jan	Riddlesdown 14	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5240872
Sun 31 Jan	Merstham 15	Merstham	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=1550627
Sun 7 Feb	Nine Parks 16	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=6728301
Sun 14 Feb	Ladywell 17	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=6203882
Sun 21 Feb	Warlingham 16	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5312946
Sun 28 Feb	Greenwich 17	London Bridge	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=6203868
Sun 6 Mar	High Elms 17	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5317891
Sun 13 Mar	Regents Canal 18	Victoria	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5833749
Sun 20 Mar	Coulsdon 21	Coulsdon South	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5474783
Sun 27 Mar	Botley Hill 19	Sandilands	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5856502
Sun 3 April	Kingston 21	Kingston	www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=5846244

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER DECEMBER 2015

Happy Christmas and a successful new year to all our members. Contributors to this edition are well travelled: Asisat Lamina has reported from the Warsaw Marathon, Corrine Carr from San Francisco and also from Club la Santa which seems to be Striders' favourite holiday resort. Closer to home, Abhi Toraskar reports from the Farnham Pilgrim Marathon and Alan Dolton from the Purbeck 16. Dave Shaw discusses quantum mechanics and the fact that as there are an infinite number of universes there must be an infinite number of almost identical running magazines. It occurs to me that for the same reason there are also an infinite number of run routes for us to choose from

There are also a couple of articles from Colin Golding on the early history of Striders. This came about because I have just taken charge of the box of early Striders' paper work, by a strange coincidence on the same day as I had been talking to Colin Golding about the origins of Striders as we walked the LOOP. I opened the box and found that the first page of the first book of accounts was the first membership list - with Colin Golding as member no. 4. He has written something about the other members and the early days in the following article with the help of Michael Meech – no. 7 on the list.

The first book of accounts covers the first 5 years and looking through it the following were still with the club 20 years later and thus became life members. The dates are the first time they were recorded as paying their subs:

- Colin Golding 10/11/82: no longer runs but has been walking the Capital Ring and the LOOP with us over the past year;
- Gresham Williams 16/2/84: no longer runs;
- Simon Smith 10/9/84: only stopped a few years ago;
- Alan Purchase 22/11/84: still a regular runner - our longest still-running member;
- David Hoben 7/2/85: no longer runs;
- Cecil Chisholm 14/4/85: moved to Spain no longer runs;
- Michelle Lawrence 4/5/86: no longer runs;
- Colin Cotton 4/5/86: still runs regularly on Sundays and holds the M65 10 mile record. He is our second-longest runner just beating:-
- Nigel Davidson: who paid his first subs about two weeks later on 19/5/86;
- Kevin Burnett 17/3/87: still enters track and field events and holds all our over-75 track and field records;
- John McGilvray 17/3/87: moved to Spain but still runs with us occasionally and holds our over-65 10k and half marathon records; and finally:
- Linda Daniel 8/1/88: still runs with us occasionally.

Let's hope that some of you younger members are still running with the club in 2045.

Once again Happy Christmas and may all you races next year be your best ever.

Robin Jamieson

STRIDERS' EARLY HISTORY (by Colin Golding)

In September 1982, Michael (Mick) Meech, working for Philips Electrical, put a message on the notice board asking if anyone would be interested in forming a running club to gain entry to The London Marathon 1983. Several of us contacted him and said we would: Pat Byrnes, Roger Dale, Shashi Dave, Colin Golding and Steve Owen to name a few.

After meeting we formed a committee and appointed Steve Owen as Club Chairman, Pat Byrnes as Vice Chairman, Michael Meech as Club Secretary and Colin Golding as Club Treasurer. It was decided that the club's name would be Philips City Striders. Philips after the Company we worked for, City after City House (the building we worked in) and Striders for the running part!

We opened the club to family and friends with subscription charges being 50p a year for Philips members and 75p a year for all others.

To ensure we could get places for The London Marathon we had to queue overnight outside the East Croydon Post Office. We were allowed three entries per person. Therefore six of us, in turn, queued with these entries. This was the very last postal stamped entry application. If the entries were date stamped first thing in the morning it guaranteed entry. After this it became a computer-generated entry system. Eighteen of us were accepted.

Mick has reminded me of the following: "Despite joining the over-night queues and calculating that we were as close to the front as we needed, in order to be within the allocated number of acceptances for each of the nominated post offices, we found nearly all our applications were rejected. Mick investigated and found that the rejections were due to a problem with the club's affiliation to the AAA, an admin error at the AAA meant Striders had not shown up as an AAA registered club and therefore invalidated most of our entries."

There was an appeals procedure which Mick immediately followed and in addition spoke to the Philips Media Manager (these were still the days when Philips were big sponsors of Athletics); a few strings were pulled and all the rejections were reversed and all were given entry.

We had two nominated charities, Crohn's Disease and Imperial Cancer Research. They supplied running vests for us (this was well before charities were as slick and organised for events like London as they are now). I don't think many of us ran London in those vests, but one or two did.

Once the 1983 Marathon was over we decided on the club colours: red white and blue. Vests were red top with a blue sash running from left armpit to right hip, front and back, and a white bottom. Shorts were red with blue and white horizontal stripes on the sides.

Training sessions were every Wednesday & Sunday from the car park by the tennis courts in Lloyd Park. We'd change and leave our belongings in the parked cars and go off on our training runs. After a few months Mick noticed the CASSAC club house (where the cafeteria now is) and put a note under the door asking for details about affiliating. This became Striders' first club house.

(Editor's Note. The club changed its name to 'Striders of Croydon' in 1996, changed to our current club colours in 1997, and moved our clubhouse to Sandilands in May 2001.)

STRIDERS' FIRST MEMBERSHIP RECORD 1982/83 (by Colin Golding)

MEMBERSHIP FEES						CR
DATE	DETAILS	Folio	£	P		
10.11.82	ANTHONY BROWN - 001 - VIA MRS GRANT EXT 2171	5		75		
"	ROGER DALE - 002 - CITY HSE " 2208	5		50		
"	SHASHI DAVE - 003 - " " " 2036	5		50		
"	COLIN GOLDING - 004 - " " " 2270	5		50		
"	STEPHEN KEAR - 005 - " " " 2292	5		50		
"	MILES MAYNE - 006 - " " " 2089	5		50		
"	MICHAEL MEECH - 007 - " " " 2755	5		50		
"	DAVID TROTH - 008 - VIA MRS GRANT " 2171	5		75		
"	STEVEN WHITTAKER - 009 - CITY HSE " 2206	5		50		
12.11.82	PATRICK BYRNES - 010 - " " " 2732	5		50		
"	SUZANNE FINE - 011 - VIA STEVE OWEN " 2579	5		75		
"	STEVE OWEN - 012 - CITY HSE " " " 5	5		50		
"	SANDRA OWEN - 013 - VIA STEVE OWEN " " " 5	5		75		
"	ROBIN PINFIELD - 014 - " " " " " " 5	5		75		
"	VALERIE PINFIELD - 015 - " " " " " " 5	5		75		
30.11.82	PAUL BASTONE - 016 - CITY HSE " 2150	5		75		
14.12.82	HUGH COPPIN - 017 - VIA C. GOLDING " 2270	5		75		
"	RONALD CARVER - 018 - " " " " " 5	5		75		
16.12.82	GARVIN LAMBERT - 019 - " S. OWEN " 2579	5		75		
7.1.83	STEVEN MARSH - 020 - MOLLARD MITCHAM " 2358	5		50		
7.2.83	ROGER VINCE - 021 - VIA S. OWEN " 2579	5		75		
8.2.83	ROB HARDY - 022 - " M. MEECH " 2755	5		75		
3.3.83	RICHARD HOLDEN - 023 - " S. OWEN " 2579	5		75		
17.3.83	STEVE CHESSEON - 024 - MOLLARD MITCHAM " 348	5		50		
"	ANTHONY EVE - 025 - " " " 310	5		50		
21.3.83	MICHAEL FLYNN - 026 - CITY HSE " 2302	5		50		
22.3.83	MIKE HART - 027 - PBS " 375	5		50		
20.4.83	BERNARD WRIGHT - 028 - MOLLARD MITCHAM " 217	5		50		
"	VERONA SMITH - 029 - CITY HSE " 2615	5		50		
26.4.83	"SISTER" VETHAVANAM - 030 - " " " 2216				HONORARY MEMBER MEDICAL OFFICER	
"	PHILIP RADBAND - 031 - HALIFAX ✓ " " 5	5		50		
"	PAUL ROGERS - 032 - " ✓ " 60	5		50		
"	TREVOR WILLIAMS - 033 - " " " 5	5		50		
27.4.83	MARK HERITAGE - 034 - VIA MARIAN HERITAGE " 2278	5		75		
"	STELLA GILBERT - 035 - CITY HSE " 2635	5		50		

When Robin sent me a copy of this page it was like stepping back in time. Who would have thought, as I entered each name, that 33 years later the club would still be going strong! Robin has asked me to write a bit about each name on this first page. I will try, as much as the old memory cells will allow!!

As I received the subscriptions they were written in the book alphabetically. For Philips' members the yearly fee was 50p; for friends and family it was 75p! At that time we had no overheads such as clubhouse, kit etc.

001/008. Tony & David were brothers-in-law. Introduced to the club by their mother-in-law, who worked at Philips. Both guys ran the '83 London Marathon. I can remember Tony still running with the club after and improving his running times, but not sure about David.

002. Roger worked in IT and was a founder member. Believe he ran the '83 LM too.

003. Shashi and I use to work together once in Consumer. He was also a founder member. I know he ran the Marathon but can't remember if it was '83.

004. Yours truly. Also a founder member and now a lifelong member. I became Striders' first Treasurer. Also ran '83 LM and a further six LM after, the last being 1998. I also ran six others making thirteen marathons in all.

005. I'm afraid I don't remember much about Steve.

006. Myles was a young guy we all thought had good potential. He had the habit of going off fast and paying the penalty later. He later had trouble with his knees and stopped running for a while. He later left Philips and we lost touch.

007. Apt number for Mick. If he hadn't put a message on the notice board at work I wouldn't be writing this. Key founder member and Striders' first club Secretary. Also ran the '83 LM. He also had links with Hailsham Harriers and use to arrange mob matches for us. We are still good friends.

009. Sorry Steve can't remember you either.

010. Pat was also a founder member. He was the club's one and only Vice Chairman. He also ran the '83 LM. I still hear from him every Christmas!

011/019. Suzanne and Garvin were partners. Both were friends of Steve & Sandra Owen. Garvin didn't run much as he had some sort of arthritis. Suzanne ran the '83 LM and was our first lady home.

012/013. Steve was also a founder member and Striders' first Chairman. He was first man home in the '83 LM. His name still lives on in the Owen Cup**. Sandra, his wife, was a teacher who also ran the '83 LM.

014/015. Rob and Val were best friends of above. Val met Sandra whilst teaching. Both ran the '83 LM. Rob was considered our second fastest man after Steve Owen at that time.

016. Paul joined Striders but I don't think he ever ran with us!!

017/018. Hugh was my neighbour when I lived in Croydon. He was my first mentor along with his friend Ron. They use to take me out on long runs leading up to the marathon. Both ran in the '83 LM. I am still in touch with Hugh who now lives in Lewes. I see Ron every now and then when we go on long walks together. (When I'm not doing the Striders Strolls!!)

020. Steve worked for parent company Mullards along with 024, 025 and 028. I don't remember much about him.

021/023. Roger and Richard were another couple of Steve Owens crowd. They all started running together at the same time in Crystal Palace. When Steve helped form the club, they joined!

022. Rob was a friend of Mick Meech. He met him via his dad who worked for Lambeth Council. Rob was their Sports Director and he set up the Lambeth Half Mara. He later moved to Basildon Council as Sports Director as set up the Basildon Half!

024/025. Steve & Tony were both older runners when they joined. Tony in particular was a very good runner for his age. Unfortunately he was taken from us prematurely.

026/027. I only vaguely recall Michael and unfortunately can't recall Mike at all!

028. Bernard joined and ran with us in the '84 LM. He was a Strider for quite a few years after.

029. Verena was a secretary at Philips who joined to train for the London in 84. Once she did it she did not rejoin.

030. Saku was the medical nurse at City House; she also trained for the London in 84. We made her an honorary member so we could go to her with our minor ailments caused by running!!

031/032/033. Philip, Paul and Trevor worked for Philips up in Halifax Yorkshire. Philip was secretary for the Halifax branch of Striders. This worked for a year or so and then they decided to set up their own club. They all ran the '83 Marathon but entered under their own steam!

So there you have it a brief note on those I can remember. It's been fun trying to recall things about these names. Hope you enjoy reading.



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

The first known group photograph of Striders, taken in 1983

(Editor's Note. Sixteen Striders completed the 1983 London Marathon, led by club chairman Steve Owen, who ran 3 hours 06. He was followed by David Troth (3.28), Ron Carver (3.29), Steve Marsh (3.30), Myles Mayne (3.35), Hugh Coppin (3.35), Susanne Eyre (3.37), Colin Golding (3.42), Mick Meech (3.43), Pat Byrnes (3.44), Rob Hardy (3.46), Jeff Boyman (3.50), Tony Brown (3.57), Sandra Owen (4.06), Bernard Wright (4.08) and Shashi Dave (5.32).)

DEREK WELLS (1927 – 2015)

Striders' first club secretary, Mick Meech, has reported the death of Derek Wells, who sadly passed away after a long illness at the end of October, a few weeks short of his 88th birthday. Before Mick joined Philips, he had worked with Derek for a Sports equipment manufacturer, based in Hailsham in Sussex. Derek started a lunchtime "keep fit" group at the company, and subsequently founded Hailsham Harriers. In the early 1980s Mick and Derek arranged cross-country 'Mob Matches' between the two clubs.

THE WARSAW MARATHON (by Asisat Lamina)

Wonderful Warsaw, it was a great continental experience; to set the scene it was my fourth marathon after Amsterdam, Rome and Edinburgh. It was the cheapest entry (60 Euros), the cheapest stay (3 nights in an s/c apartment ~£75) and bargain flights (£80). Plus for those who are gluten-free (or gluten-fussy) it boasted entire gluten-free restaurants and cafés, a carb-loading dream (packing gluten-free bread into hand-luggage often results in gluten-free crumble!!!). It also boasted the best pre & post race packs including the cutest marathon emblazoned plasters. The mini expo could be mistaken for a mediocre event, but they milked the sponsors dry where it really mattered i.e. for the competitors. The bag drop was under the stadium, it was well organised, warm, spacious and everyone got a sponsored windbreaker on the way out. Pacers were every five minutes and the race was full of really good amateur runners; everyone was super polite: no elbows, pushing or heavily-sighed impatience. If someone so as much breezed past you there came apologies and 'excuse-me's; people even ran off the course to put litter (gels packs) into bins. The water stations were frequent and long, later stretching to water, isotonic, bananas and gels. Sadly my music maker died 20 seconds into the race but there were live bands scattered every 5km along the route. The route itself had a cool bridge and meandered through a pretty Japanese garden, but the rest was effectively a sectioned off motorway, hazy streams of bodies eventually snaked and merged with tarmac; plus with no fancy-dressers (or my running playlist) one felt every inch of those 26 miles. There was also a tunnel which despite only being 800m felt like 2 years (lol); all the watches lost signal and I was expecting to emerge into a post-apocalyptic new world. Instead it was into sunshine, a frenzied tapping of watches and puzzled faces trying to self-calculate their pace. The route was super flat and the stadium finish an added bonus. Although the best part was when we got quilted, hooded, double-breasted, Velcro-fastened capes – oh my gosh I would have paid the 60 Euros for that alone: beautiful. Other extra post-race fodder included alcohol-free beer and a hot noodle soup. A great running crowd, a cute and cheap city and a big fat heavy medal; for me Warsaw was the best marathon production I have attended. I had joined Striders only 11 weeks prior to the run and managed to take 7 minutes off my PB to finish in 3:55, such a huge, huge thank you to Sandie for those long Sunday runs – as destroying as they were I would not have got a PB without them; plus a thumbs up to Chris for his speed sessions and Alan for fixing me after it all.





THE FARNHAM PILGRIM MARATHON (by Abhi Toraskar)

Phew, ran my first full marathon ever at Farnham Pilgrim. It just wasn't your usual run-of-the-mill 42.2 km. With an elevation gain of 1781 ft and a route comprising tarmac, gravel, steps, sand, mud, busy road crossings, wooden stiles, and gates, it was a mini obstacle course.

But there was no masochism in choosing this as my first marathon. I have run about 8-9 half marathons, most on road; the 21.1 km distance had become less of a challenge, and I thought it best to check a full marathon off my list before I turn 40. Over the years, I have also realised that road running is a lot less fun than trail running - road is monotonous and harder on your knees; trail is varied, and more stimulating. The route changes every few feet - grass, mud, gravel, hill - making you alert and forcing you to run a bit slower. At the same time, you use more of your leg muscles to stabilise your feet, which helps to strengthen them rather than breaking them down.

Additionally, mass participation events have become a big turn-off for me. Farnham Pilgrim is still a small event, with a total of 700 runners for full and half marathon. The entry fees are not a rip-off and places are guaranteed even at the last minute. You are not herded like sheep at the start of the race and it's easier to mingle with family and friends at any time. In spite of it being a small event, the organisation was top class. It has consistently rated in the top 10 marathons since its inception.

Knowing how tough it was going to be, I was less focused on the time and more on finishing it. Didn't want to face the embarrassment of not completing it due to injury or hitting the wall.

I trained the best I ever trained for any event. Apart from a few missed runs (due to illness and travel), I was mostly on track. Joining my local running club - Striders - also helped tremendously. Training with others during speed sessions was the key in training at the right intensity, which you just don't achieve when you train alone. At the same time, I learnt a few warm-up/cool-down routines which I then incorporated in my sessions.

The plan I followed was of another trail marathon. Didn't want any more than four sessions per week as I know I would struggle to make the time and it would be harder on the body. If you are a regular runner and are only aiming at completing a marathon in good shape and not in any ambitious time, four sessions is more than enough.

I even ran most of the Farnham Pilgrim route a month before the race to familiarise myself with the course. Glad I did, because it gave me a sense of the challenge that lay ahead. This race was not to be taken lightly.

Race day itself was perfect - lightly overcast, but no rain, and temperature in the mid-teens.



I had decided to start slow, around the 6:30 min/km mark. However, just like most runners, I got carried away in the moment, and the aim of running negative splits was soon going to go out of the window. For a first timer, it is hard to judge whether running slower will actually help you run negative splits and if you will still have the strength at the end to run faster.



Anyway, I was hovering around the 6:00 min/km mark for most of the first 10 km. This stretch has minimal climbs, so it was easy to keep the pace without feeling fatigued. Though there were some steps to be climbed on the way, the first (and biggest) real test was around the 20 km mark at the church of St Martha-on-the-Hill.



The climb here is continuous, 1.5 km or so with a LOT of sand. It was so hard to find a grip that almost everyone was walking up rather than running.

From here, it was a steep downhill run for a while. However, there was no scope for taking it easy. There were five hills one after the other. Fatigue and pain had set in by this time.

Having done distances longer than 30 km in training, I knew that the pain was pure fatigue-related and wouldn't stop me from finishing the marathon. However, now the run was taking a mental toll. Every water station was an excuse to stop, every hill was an excuse to walk, especially when other runners were doing the same.

At around two miles to the finish, I decided to run at a steady fast pace. In my mind, it felt like I was running at 5:30 min/km, however, in my watch, it was hovering around 6 min/km. The legs were heavy as logs and no amount of exertion was making me go faster.

Caught up with a female runner who was running steady. Instead of overtaking, I got into my first real conversation of the race with her, but she decided to pause before the last hill, so I kept going. My wife and daughter saw me coming and I ran with my daughter to the finish line.



I finished the marathon in 4 hours 39 minutes, which was slightly more than what I had anticipated, but I can't complain. The legs are stiff, and my gait will take a few days to get back, but haven't got any serious injuries. Overall, I am glad that I registered for the run and then completed it in good time. One of the highlights of the year, and, probably, my life.



THE SAN FRANCISCO MARATHON (by Corinne Carr)

(E-mail to Son)

San Francisco, 26 July 2015

Hi Son,

When you and I came here two summers ago, I was thinking of entering one of the long races. It wasn't to be that year, as the organisers changed the race date from the usual end of July to later on in the year due to the America's Cup taking place then. Instead, we were rewarded with spectacular views of the finest sailing boats in the world for the USA vs. New Zealand final.

I came here again this year to visit your brother and thought this was my chance to include a race in this visit. Having already registered for my quota of marathons for the year (euh...2!), I entered the half marathon. To make the most of the part-closure of the city, the organisers put on five races on the same day: a full marathon, the half-marathon 1 (the first half of the marathon route or HM1), the half-marathon 2 (the second half or HM2) and a 5km race. For those extra courageous people, there was an ultra-marathon option, which was a double-marathon started at midnight last night.

The choice between HM1 and HM2 was a no-brainer. I knew the city well as I was at University here some years ago. Having checked out both courses, I had the choice between running across **THE** iconic Golden Gate Bridge (HM1) or running through the not-so-nice part of town (HM2). OK, it cost me an extra \$15 but HM1 it was! The races were quite expensive by UK standards: the full marathon was \$175, HM1 was \$135 and HM2 \$120. They all included a 'convenience tax' of \$14 – not sure what it was for and what was convenient about that?!

I got here a few days ago and have been trying to train my body to get over the jetlag and not wake up in the middle of the night. Two days ago, your brother and I decided to go on a 30-mile bike ride up Mount Tamalpais (Mount Tam to the locals) through redwood groves and oak woodlands with breath-taking views of the Golden Gate Bridge and the city from the top of the c.2,500-foot peak in Marin County. It seemed like a good idea at the time but I was exhausted by the end of the day.

Race day -1. The race being on today, I decided to do very little yesterday to regain some energy. Having visited the main tourist attractions with you on previous visits, I ambled across town looking for a pasta place. Where better than Little Italy, the Italian quarter of town? I checked numerous menus and settled for a small family place from which I could watch the world go by. It was a quiet day and an early night for me yesterday as I knew what was coming today.

Race day. For once, being a 'steady' runner was to my advantage. For some strange reason, the full and two half marathons started at 5.30am this morning. I was grateful for an extra 52 minutes' sleep as my wave didn't start until 6.22am. To make it to the start line on time, I had to wake up at 4am. My body was screaming in revolt as this was going against what I had been trying to achieve for the past few days. I waited for the bus which was only 5 minutes' walk away from my apartment by the Golden Gate Park (did you know it's bigger than Central Park in New York?). The mass of trees behind me was very dark and scary; I wondered who and what lived there at night. I knew there were bison as I saw them a few days ago. I hoped they were still in their paddock...

The bus came and I saw another runner wearing the same top as me. I had planned to fly the Striders' colours wearing my yellow and green vest. Unfortunately, I had forgotten that it is rather cool in San Fran early morning and hadn't packed warmer running tops. Luckily when I picked up my number yesterday at the Fort Mason running expo, they gave me my 'goody' bag at the same time. There wasn't much in it except for the long-sleeve running top I had pre-ordered. So a large number of runners, caught out by the unexpected cool temperature just like me, ended up wearing the same top!

At 6.22am, my wave hit the start line at the Embarcadero near the Ferry Building. We passed through Pier 39 and Fisherman's Wharf, the Marina district, across the Golden Gate Bridge (and back), through the Presidio Park and finished in the Golden Gate Park where I collected my well-earned medal. I saw your brother at the finish and we walked back to the apartment. Just like the London marathon, shuttle buses had moved our personal belongings from the start at Embarcadero to the finish at the Golden Gate Park. Buses laid on by the race organisers took runners back to Embarcadero if they wanted to go back to that part of town.

As we started so early this morning, it was around 9am by the time we got back. As the town arose, I went back to bed...

With much love,

Mum zzz

KEY FACTS:

- Around 20,000 runners across all five races. Fastest marathon times: Men 2:26:22; Women 2:49:42
- Elevation: max c. 300 ft
- 31 July 2016 early bird prices:

Full marathon	\$115.00
Half marathons (1 and 2)	\$95.00
Ultramarathon	\$400.00-\$600.00





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MARATHON**

CLUB LA SANTA: WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD (by Corinne Carr)

*'I see trees of green,
red roses too...*

Anyone who has been to Club La Santa will recognise the wake-up call which resonates throughout the resort to the tune of the famous Louis Armstrong song. It's 8am and we assemble by the leisure swimming pool for our daily gymnastics. It lasts for 15 minutes and gathers young and old alike. I have been told that the music and the moves haven't changed for years. After a couple of days, we know the choreography by heart and take this daily practice very seriously!

I am here with fourteen others, most of us Striders. It's early October and we flew all together from Gatwick to Arrecife, Lanzarote's airport, about 4 hours from London. Our group leader (Paul S.) had organised a coach to take us to the resort north of the island. Most apartments have been recently renovated and they contain one or two bedrooms with one or two bathrooms, a fully equipped kitchen area, a lounge and a private terrace. Some also have a pool view (slightly more expensive). Club La Santa is suitable for all ages and caters for solo travellers by offering the option to share an apartment with someone else of the same gender, as well as for larger groups. Whether you are a sports fanatic or just want a relaxing week by the pool, there is something for everyone. Temperatures vary from high teens to mid-20s throughout the year. Rainfall is low (up to 30mm in winter) and due to these favourable weather conditions, international professional sports teams use the facilities all year round.

Club La Santa is a Danish-owned resort which attracts mainly Danes and Brits. Danish staff are bilingual and all classes are instructed in English. Sports facilities are second to none with 30 different types of sport on offer, three Olympic-size swimming pools, 10 tennis courts, an athletics stadium, outdoor areas for classes with mountain views in the background, an indoor dance studio and a multi-sports hall, as well as a windsurf station. One may borrow swimming props, rackets, bikes etc. through a free token system so, unless you are attached to your own equipment, there is no need to bring it.

The weekly programme of activities is published online and runs from 8am to 7pm every day of the week. On the plane, I eagerly highlighted the 45 classes I was planning to and did attend! Some were open to all with no need to pre-book. Others were limited to a set number of participants and it was best to book those two days in advance. There was sometimes a waiting list but as people booked and didn't always turn up, there was a good chance for the top few on the waiting list to join in too. Due to its popularity I missed out on the aerial yoga class but took the opportunity to try new activities such as tai chi and aerial Pilates.

Club La Santa also offers a programme of excursions all over the island, for an additional fee. But there was so much to do within the resort itself that, on this first visit, I was fully occupied without the desire to explore far and wide. I hired a bike on two occasions to visit the small fishing village of Famara, 12km away with its gorgeous sandy beach. As Lanzarote is a volcanic island, hills are never far away!...

In the evenings, we split into smaller groups and tried the many restaurants both onsite and in the village of La Santa which can be reached by bike in ten minutes or on foot in half an hour. It was a good opportunity to catch up on what we had been up to during the day, while the walk back to the resort was the chance to walk off the delicious food.

You may wish to join the annual Striders' group organised by Nigel Davidson for late November. Alternatively, you may prefer to go out there with your own group of friends or even on your own. I enjoyed it so much, I've already booked my place for next year!

*...And I think to myself,
What a wonderful world.*



(Photos by Graham Ford)

This article was written prior to the terrible tragedy which took place in Paris, my home city, on Friday 13 November. My thoughts and prayers go out to the victims, their family and friends.

RUNNING MAGS AND THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE

(by Dave Shaw)

I recently picked up a magazine called Running Fitness. It is interesting not so much for its content but rather for its very existence, a sort of parallel-universe version of Runner's World. Runner's World itself is remarkable for its ability to make a little go a long way. There is after all only so much that can be said or read about running, especially when abstracted to a level that will appeal to a mass market: jolly if rather patronising encouragement for newbies; the greens-are-good nutrition spot; a hokey piece of cod psychology about self-actualisation; and a heartwarming story about personal triumph over disability, illness or addiction.

Some items would in theory change from month to month – news snippets about recent research, kit and race reviews – but in practice don't. The research seems always to confirm the unsurprising conclusion that exercise is beneficial; the generally-positive kit reviews are often complemented by paid advertisements from their manufacturers; and I have never read a race review stating that the organisation was shambolic or the location gruesome (despite participating for example in the mid-February Mitcham 25k, an event that could only be described as grim in any honest appraisal...).

Not to knock it – I look forward to the monthly update of my online subscription to RW. Limited by the content, the publishers do what they can to jazz up the presentation. Over the years these tend to further simplification, more white space and less numbers around the pie charts. I don't know whether this reflects the diminishing attention-span of the readership, or that the repeatedly-recycled content has somehow become worn out.

A bit like training itself there are various cycles: micro – each month's relatively minor variation on the previous edition; meso – seasonal specials insightfully advising that readers wear clothing appropriate to the prevailing weather conditions; and macro – I think over two years RW completely uses all available material. Perhaps reading RW is like serious marathon running: you need to build in periods of rest and after a few years step back completely to avoid overuse or exhaustion.

All of which I think is fair enough with RW. Over the last decade or so I have engaged and disengaged with it, on and off from initial newly enthusiasm to more comfortable acquaintance. But does the world really need a second running magazine? The oddest thing about Running Fitness is its resemblance to RW: same layout and order, contents, a two page Perfect Picture (Rave Run), news, features, reviews. It could absolutely be RW from two years ago or maybe two years hence...

Some kink in the space time continuum seems as plausible as any other reason for its existence. Maybe it is a rare glimpse into the multiverse, where an infinite number of running magazines are simultaneously identical and different. Across unimaginable new dimensions, conceptually so bizarre that they can only be understood but sadly not explained by Jim Al-Kalili, perhaps there are gazillions of 5k training plans and broccoli recipes.

Who knows?

STRIDER PROFILE: RACHEL LINDLEY



Current age-group: VW 35-39. In denial about the V.

Home Town: Doncaster.

When did you move to Croydon? 2007. Wow. I only planned to stay a couple of years.

When did you begin running: I've always run, I think. Since doing cross country at school aged about 10, at least. I didn't do any races after school cross-country days were over though, so had no idea before I joined Striders and started racing that I could go reasonably fast. Wish I'd joined a Club earlier!

When did you join Striders: 2013.

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

Have you competed in any other sports? Yes, I play hockey for Addiscombe Hockey Club. That's how I heard about Striders actually, as they share the Sandilands club house. [Plug: ladies, the ladies' hockey teams are always looking for new players, so come give it a go! It's great interval training so a good complement to Striders. And lots of fun, and very friendly. Doesn't matter if you've never played before, or not for years. We need a goalie too so if you fancy a break from running, you'd be very very very welcome to try goal-keeping... I promise you the pads are a million times better than the ones you remember.]

What was your best ever race: There's a couple of PBs that stand out but I think actually the Amsterdam Marathon 2013 takes the best ever spot. Because I ran it with one of my closest friends, for a charity we're both passionate about. We hadn't done masses of training as we entered on a bit of a whim, but we did the whole thing together. One of those shared experiences you never forget.

What is your favourite event: I've become a big fan of parkrun since I discovered that (through Striders). I love the simplicity of it, and the way it has brought so many people to running, and is so inclusive. I love reading about people who couldn't previously run 1k proudly finishing their first ever 5k.

What is the most memorable place you have run: Either the Cornish coastal path on a mini solo running holiday, or possibly one morning in the middle of nowhere (almost) in Kenya. But I also love how much off-road running we have around Croydon. I'd never have discovered it had I not joined Striders.

What are your current running goals: I'd like to do an Ultra and a Triathlon before I'm 40, but have a little time before that...

STRIDER PROFILE: MICK TURNER



Current age-group: V50.

Home Town: Eastbourne.

When did you move to Croydon: To Warlingham in 2002 and more centrally in 2008.

When did you begin running: I first started at University, then ran on and off in my 20s, stopping in my late 20s after being told by a doctor that I had arthritic knees and it wasn't good for me. Needing to lose weight I began to run again in my early 40s.

When did you join Striders: November 2006.

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

Have you competed in any other sports: Rugby and cricket occasionally.

What was your best ever race: Two spring to mind: the Brighton 10K in 2010 and my PB of 37.30 – great conditions that day with lots of other Striders PBing; and a Surrey League fixture at Denbies in Nov 2009 where I finished 5th Strider.

What is your favourite event: It has to be Roundshaw Downs parkrun. I've gained many great friends and a hot wife.

What is the most memorable place you have run: I used to get up early on Christmas morning and run up and over Beachy Head. I've had some of my most beautiful views and memories there.

What are your current running goals: To stay fit more than a couple of months at a time. To break 40 mins for a 10k again and be consistently under 20 mins at Roundshaw. Trying to get close to sub-19. I'm still dreaming I can do it.

THE PURBECK 16 (by Alan Dolton)

In the December 2013 edition of this magazine, I published an article about the Purbeck Marathon, a scenic but hilly marathon in Dorset. It was written from the viewpoint of a spectator rather than a participant, because I have not run a marathon since 2002, and as the years go by and I struggle to remain free from injury, I realise that it is increasingly unlikely that I will ever run one again. However after the third Purbeck Marathon in 2014, the organisers announced that in 2015 they would cater for people like me who cannot cope with the training required for a full marathon, and introduced a 16-mile race, which starts half an hour after the marathon, and uses the same course for the first nine miles and the last five miles, taking a short cut to miss the middle 12 miles of the marathon course.



The race starts on a grassy area in the south of Swanage, beginning with a short uphill section but then including a fast downhill stretch which is reminiscent of running down Brownlow Road. Knowing that 16 miles was some way outside my 'comfort zone', I started near the back of the field but overtook quite a few runners on the downhill section, passing the first mile marker in 10 minutes 12 seconds, which seemed reasonably comfortable. After a mile and a half the road comes to an end at Anvil Point and the course follows the South West Coast Path, which gives some excellent views of the English Channel but is narrow and very uneven in many places. There had been a lot of rain in the weeks prior to the race, and after about a kilometre the path became very muddy (wet slippery mud rather than heavy mud). The two women who were at the front of the group which I was in slowed to almost walking pace, which was understandable as falling on the mud could have resulted in someone going over the edge of the cliff. However, the result of this was that the third mile took us more than 16 minutes. Not long after the three-mile point the route became less muddy, but there was a very steep downhill section where the uneven rocky ground made running too difficult, and this was followed by a similarly steep uphill section. Once we had negotiated this we could revert to a more normal running pace, and I was able to pass the

women who had been at the front of our group. Just after the four-mile point, the course leaves the coastal path, and heads inland – and uphill – towards the village of Worth Matravers. In the next mile the course climbed from 16 metres above sea level to 124 metres above sea level. Although the hill was quite steep, the path surface was suitable for running, and as we continued to climb I managed to pass a couple of competitors who had been reduced to a walk.

Just before the six-mile mark, the course passed through Worth Matravers, on a small road, and passed a well-known local pub, the Square and Compass. After a couple of farms, the road turned into a path and there was a fast downhill section heading towards a picturesque small bay called Chapman's Pool. The path surface was good and by relaxing down the hill I was able to overtake a few more runners. The course then turned north, away from the coast, and I passed the eight-mile mark in 89 minutes 40 seconds, which seemed reasonable in view of the very slow third mile. I knew that the course was about half a mile longer than the advertised 16 miles, but at this point I still expected that I would be able to finish in under three hours. However the ninth mile was uphill: between 8 and 9 miles, the course rises from 66 metres above sea level to 140 metres above sea level.

At the nine-mile point, in the village of Kingston, the marathon course turned west, while the 16-mile course continued to head north towards Corfe. The marshals were being kept busy by what seemed to be a surprising amount of traffic on a small country lane. However, whereas the section of the course between four miles and nine miles had all been on good running surfaces (path and road), this was definitely not the case for the next two miles, between Kingston and Corfe. We started with a small wooded section which was very muddy and uneven underfoot, and then had a section of rough farmland which included several stiles (I counted five in what seemed to be a remarkably short distance). A downhill section which seemed to be too steep and uneven for fast running was followed by a short uphill section, and although this was followed by another downhill, we then had to wade through a section of marshland. This was definitely traditional cross-country, and the tenth mile took me more than 15 minutes. At this point I realised that I was not going to finish in under three hours, so I decided to forget about my watch and concentrate on staying safe on the difficult sections, and enjoying the Dorset scenery. I had overtaken several runners between four miles and nine miles, but in the next six miles most of those runners came past me again, along with several others who had been behind me since the two-mile mark.

Having waded through the marshland, the course passed through the back streets of Corfe, including a narrow alleyway, before crossing the main A351 road to Swanage. The crossing is at a zebra crossing which is manned by marshals, but runners need to take care here – just as they do when crossing Oaks Road in our annual Switchback race. Fortunately the fact that the race is now held on a Sunday in mid-September means that there is not too much traffic: this would be a much more difficult crossing if the race were held in the summer holiday season, as the old Swanage Half-Marathon was. Shortly after crossing the A351, the course also crosses the Swanage Railway, just south of Corfe Castle Station: this is a preserved line which is popular with tourists, but there are only a few trains each day, and a runner would be unlucky to be held up by one of them – there is more chance of being delayed by a tram during the Croydon 10K.

Just after crossing the railway at Corfe, we reached the 11-mile point. The twelfth mile began with another very boggy field and then took us up a significant climb onto Nine Barrow Down. At Corfe we had been just 35 metres above sea level, but the 13-mile point was 170 metres above sea level. The course continued to climb, albeit a lot more gently, and just after the 14-mile point we reached 199 metres above sea level. However this part of the course, on the top of Nine Barrow Down, did give some magnificent views to the north, across Poole Harbour and Brownsea Island.



The gentler section of the climb from Corfe to Nine Barrow Down



Poole Harbour and Brownsea Island, photographed from Nine Barrow Down

Between 14 and 15 miles the course descended quite rapidly, although part of this descent was on stony ground which was too uneven to be safe for fast running. Just after the 15-mile point we reached a camp site at Ulwell, only 42 metres above sea level. This was the final drinks station, and on leaving the camp site we soon reached the main road from Studland (which is well-known for its long sandy beach) to Swanage. Having crossed the road, we were able to relax with a gentle downhill section on pavement into Swanage. I had gone for more than six miles without overtaking anyone, but as we headed for Swanage I was able to catch and pass two women who had overtaken me on the descent from Nine Barrow Down to Ulwell. There was good spectator support on the final section of the race, along Shore Road, which was closed to traffic. However, having reached sea level, we did then have to run up a final short hill before reaching the finish in Sandpit Field, above the sea.

The 'goody bag', which included a fluorescent race T-shirt, was accompanied by a very welcome Dorset ice-cream and a bottle of Dorset cider (so anyone running this race should put a bottle-opener in their kit bag if they want to drink the cider straight after the finish). The day of the race was sunny and fairly warm, allowing runners to ease their aching legs by immersing them in the sea (so it is useful to put a swimming costume in your kit-bag, or run in shorts which are also suitable for bathing in). In places the terrain was quite a lot more difficult than I had expected, and thus the race took me longer than I had anticipated, but I was relieved that at least there were still runners behind me: despite taking the second half in a very leisurely fashion, I had finished 115th out of 132, and had also reached the finish before 90% of the marathon runners. (The winner of the 16-mile race ran 2 hours 03 minutes, while the last finisher took 4 hours 48 minutes. The winner of the marathon ran 3 hours 18 minutes – which was the slowest winning time so far, apparently because the previous races had all taken place in dry conditions, whereas this year's race took place after a period of heavy rain. The last finisher took 7 hours 24 minutes.) There is a video showing part of the route on <https://youtu.be/BssqdiYbxTQ>.



This is a race which I would recommend to those Striders who are comfortable with running over uneven terrain, and who would like to do a long-distance race in beautiful scenery without being deterred by the inevitability of running much slower than would be the case in a road race. Because of the very uneven terrain, it is not suitable for anyone with weak ankles, or anyone who is not confident with some very steep downhill sections. The race would almost certainly require an overnight stay in bed and breakfast accommodation – but such accommodation is not difficult to find in mid-September, after the main holiday season has finished.

SURREY CROSS-COUNTRY LEAGUES: MID-SEASON TABLES

MEN

Croydon Harriers	624
Dorking	651
Dulwich	762
Walton	879
Reigate	934
Ful-on Triathlon	938
West 4 Harriers	1088
Wimbledon Windmilers	1124
Striders	1235

WOMEN

Kent	112
Wimbledon Windmilers	142
Epsom & Ewell	240
Wimbledon Windmilers B	346
Fulham	383
Elmbridge	417
Kingston	462
Epsom Allsorts	638
Sutton	648
Tadworth	752
Windle Valley	760
26.2 RRC	777
Walton	836
Epsom & Ewell B	912
Striders	956
Barnes	969
Lingfield	969
Runnymede	988
Holland Sports	994
Dulwich Park	1024
Collingwood	1067
Epsom Oddballs	1092
Sutton B	1136
Epsom Allsorts B	1254
Kent B	1254
Elmbridge B	1263
Fleet Street	1287
Kingston B	1367
Lingfield B	1558
Croydon Harriers	1565
Tadworth B	1647
Dulwich Park B	1711
Windle Valley B	1823
Collingwood B	1834

COMPETITIVE HIGHLIGHTS: SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER 2015

Striders faced strong opposition in the annual Surrey Road Relay at Wimbledon on 5 September, and finished 23rd, their fastest runner being Phil Coales who ran the fourth leg in 16 minutes 27.

Striders organised the 24th annual Switchback cross-country race on Sunday 27 September. The winner was Mike Cummings of Herne Hill, who recorded 27 minutes 20 seconds, while the first woman was Ola Balme of Dulwich, who placed 19th overall in 34 minutes 08 seconds. Striders did well to have eight of the first 20 finishers, and won the men's team prize. They were led by Bill Makuwa who ran well to place fifth in 29 minutes 23. Lee Flanagan was sixth (29.48) with Justin Macenhill ninth (31.13) and Phil Coales tenth (31.21).

Phil Coales had an excellent run to place third in the East Surrey League cross-country race at Lloyd Park on Saturday 3 October, covering the undulating five-mile course in 29 minutes 55 seconds. Club colleague Lee Flanagan also ran well to place seventh overall and first in the over-40 category (31.47). Taric Matticks was 18th (34.01) and Greg Williams completed the club's A team in 21st (34.56). Hercules-Wimbledon won with 46 points, just ahead of Epsom (48), Striders (49), Croydon Harriers (52) and Herne Hill (57). Striders' women were led by Becky Laurence who was the seventh woman to finish, placing 49th overall (39.01).

Striders faced strong opposition in the opening Surrey Cross-Country League Division Two match of the season, at Wimbledon Common on Saturday 10 October, and had to settle for a disappointing ninth place. Phil Coales led them home with a very good run to place tenth of the 165 finishers, covering the five-mile course in 27 minutes 51 seconds. Lee Flanagan was next home in 31st (29.13) with Justin Macenhill 58th (30.26) and team captain Krzysztof Klidzia 65th (30.51). Meanwhile Striders' women finished 12th in their Division Two match at Roundshaw. They were again led by Becky Laurence who had a very good run to place 28th of the 178 finishers, covering the six-kilometre course in 27 minutes 53 seconds. Charlotte Letchford, making her league debut, was 62nd (30.33) with Selena Wong 78th (31.35), Adele Boesinger 88th (32.14) and Sarah Fisher 102nd (33.18).

James Bennett had an excellent run in the Amsterdam Marathon on Sunday 18 October, setting a new club record of 2 hours 36 minutes 51 seconds. This was an improvement of 51 seconds on his previous club record which he set in London earlier in the year. On the same day, Striders had three of the first five finishers in the Lexus Croydon 10 kilometre road race, with Simone Luciani placing third (35.03), Phil Coales fourth (35.09) and Bill Makuwa fifth (35.53). Becky Laurence was the fourth woman to finish, placing 83rd overall (44.06).

At the second Surrey Cross-Country League Division Two match of the season, at Esher on Saturday 7 November, Striders were led by Simone Luciani who ran well to place eleventh of the 169 finishers, covering the muddy five-mile course in 30 minutes 22 seconds, and finishing just ahead of club colleague Peter Mills who recorded the same time. Phil Coales also ran well to finish 22nd (30.56), while veteran Krzysztof Klidzia was 62nd overall and third in the over-50 category (33.15). The team finished ninth. Earlier, Striders' women had finished 21st in their Division Two race at the same venue. They were led by Rosie Gibbons who finished 45th in 31 minutes 41 seconds. Becky Laurence also ran well to place 55th (32.24) with Adele Boesinger 127th (37.52), Sue Atkinson 185th (48.30) and Victoria Legge 186th (52.23).

On the following day Phil Coales had a very good run to win the Beckenham Running Club 10-kilometre race, covering the muddy course in 37 minutes 06 seconds. Club colleague Krzysztof Klidzia placed fourth in 38 minutes 34.

THE JOY OF CROSS-COUNTRY



**Action from the Birmingham & District League, at Leamington in November
(photographed by Dave Norman)**

20 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN AUTUMN/WINTER 1995/96

Since Striders' formation in 1982, the club's name of 'Philips City Striders' had become increasingly inappropriate, as the club was no longer restricted to employees of Philips and was not receiving any sponsorship from Philips (although it was effectively giving Philips a lot of free advertising by continuing to use the company's name). The 1995 AGM made the long overdue decision to change the name. The members' choice of name was 'Croydon Striders'. However, the club ran into unexpected difficulties when it attempted to register the new name with the Surrey AAA. The Surrey AAA committee included a couple of influential members of Croydon Harriers. Supported by a majority (although not a unanimous majority) of the Harriers' committee, they lodged objections to the proposed change, and the Surrey AAA committee voted by a majority to refuse to ratify Striders' proposed new name. To most people outside the Surrey AAA committee, this seemed to be a very harsh decision. There seems to be no logical reason why there should not be two clubs with Croydon in their name. For example, our neighbouring borough of Sutton had a long-established Sutton Athletic Club and a newer club named Sutton Runners. However, the situation was not resolved until the summer of 1996.

The 1995 AGM also saw Striders agree to register as a track and field club for the first time, and to apply to join the Southern Veterans League for the 1996 season. (However, no provision was made for track and field competition for the younger members of Striders: this was not rectified until 2004 when we applied to join the Rosenheim League.) Additionally, the AGM saw Nigel Davidson succeed Dave Hoben as club chairman, while Michele Lawrence succeeded Nigel as club secretary.

The East Surrey League held their annual cross-country relay at Wimbledon on 21 October. Dorking gained a clear win in 39 minutes 42, but there was a close battle between Croydon Harriers and Striders for second place. Harriers just held onto second place in 42 minutes 41, with Striders only two seconds behind after an excellent last leg from the fast-improving Lee Morgan.

The Surrey Cross-Country Championships took place at Frimley on 9 December. The men's race was won by Chris Sweeney of Belgrave. Box Hill Racers won the team event with Herne Hill second and South London Harriers third. Croydon Harriers were seventh, while Striders placed eleventh. Striders were led by Lee Morgan, who finished 57th; John McGilvray was 95th with Nigel Davidson 102nd, Simon Smith 131st, Colin Cotton 135th and Dave Langley 145th. The women's race was won by Zara Hyde of Woking. Herne Hill won the team event with Woking second, Dorking third and South London Harriers fourth. Striders were unable to field a team.

The Surrey Women's Cross-Country League completed its 17th season with a match in Lloyd Park on 17 February. Croydon's Jeina Mitchell won the race. Dulwich won Division One with Herne Hill second and South London Harriers third. Woking won Division Two.

The men's Surrey League completed its 34th season with matches on the same day. Hounslow won Division One by just 14 points from Thames Hare & Hounds. South London Harriers placed seventh, narrowly avoiding relegation after a close battle with Ranelagh. Hercules Wimbledon won Division Two with Croydon Harriers second. Striders continued their sequence of bouncing between Divisions Two and Three: for the second time in three years they finished bottom of the nine clubs in Division Two, and were relegated back to Division Three, where they were to remain until 2002.

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN WINTER 2006

The Surrey Cross-Country Championships took place at Lloyd Park on 7 January. Serena Stracey ran well to place 47th in the women's race (and was our only woman to finish). Our men were led by John Foster who placed 73rd, while Bob Ewen was 90th.

The third Surrey Cross-Country League matches of the season took place on 14 January. Striders' women competed in Division One at Merrow. Their team score of 303 points was their best result of the season, but the A team had to settle for 12th place out of the 15 competing clubs, keeping them in the relegation zone with just one match remaining. Striders' best performance came from the fast-improving Faye Stammers, who gained the reward for some hard training sessions by placing 46th of the 133 finishers, covering the six-kilometre course in exactly 24 minutes. She was just one place, and four seconds, ahead of Serena Stracey. They were both closely followed by Clare McFadzean, who also improved to place 51st in 24 minutes 12 seconds. Meanwhile Striders' men competed at Lloyd Park, finishing sixth in the match and remaining fifth in the overall Division Two table. Justin Macenhill produced an excellent run to finish eighth, covering the muddy five-mile course in 30 minutes 28 seconds. Scott Anthony also ran well for 25th (32.05), while marathon specialist Dave Shaw made a welcome return to the team in 44th (33.09). Veteran Bob Ewen also ran well for 46th (33.14), with John Foster 51st (33.33).

The East Surrey League held its cross-country relay at Wimbledon Common on 21 January. Epsom won the relay with an aggregate time of 41 minutes 29, finishing just one second ahead of Croydon Harriers. Hercules-Wimbledon were third (42.27) and Striders fourth (42.33). Scott Antony gave Striders a good start on the first leg, covering the two-mile course in 10 minutes 27 seconds, placing third. He was followed by two of Striders' veterans. John Foster ran 10 minutes 56 and Nigel Davidson 10 minutes 35, both dropping a place to younger opponents. On the final leg Matt Morgan, returning after illness, regained a place with an impressive 10 minutes 25, overtaking Herne Hill and finishing only six seconds behind third-placed Hercules-Wimbledon.

The final Surrey Cross-Country League cross-country races of the season took place on 4 February. Striders' women competed in Division One at Richmond Park. They placed 12th of the 15 clubs, but unfortunately this was not quite enough to save them from relegation to Division Two. The team was led by Serena Stracey who placed 35th in 23 minutes 37 seconds. Next home was Stephanie Noyce in 60th (24.48), while Clare McFadzean placed 69th (25.02), just one place and two seconds ahead of club colleague Faye Stammers. Steph Upton made a welcome return after a long absence with a knee injury, and completed the scoring team in 88th (26.01). Later in the afternoon, Striders' men competed in their Division Two match at the same venue. They were again led home by the consistent Justin Macenhill, who produced another good run to finish tenth in 31 minutes 41 seconds. His brother Damian Macenhill made a welcome return to form and was Striders' second finisher, placing 43rd in 33 minutes 45 seconds, just out-sprinting promising newcomer Pawel Bal. Matt Morgan was not far behind in 48th place (33.59). John Foster was 52nd (34.06) and Don Kayum 60th (34.31). Striders finished sixth of the nine competing clubs, and were also sixth in the Division Two table. Ranelagh won the Division Two title with a total of 731 points, ahead of Stragglers (1456), Dulwich (1568), Hercules-Wimbledon (1622), Epsom (1890), Striders (2037), Croydon Harriers (2135), British Airways (2447) and West 4 Harriers (2494).

On 12 February Striders produced some good performances in the Sidcup 10-mile road race, organised by Kent Athletic Club. Chris Morton placed 48th of the 369 finishers in a personal best 63 minutes 19 seconds. Striders' first woman home was Serena Stracey, who placed 97th overall in a personal best of 68 minutes 13.

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Holistic Massage Therapist

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Massage speeds up the natural healing processes of the body, calming the mind and settling emotions. Benefits include:

- Relieving tension and relaxing tight, sore muscles
- Improving skin and muscle tone
- Encouraging better circulation
- Relieving stiff joints
- Promoting relaxation, thus reducing the effects of stress and anxiety
- Inducing a deeper sleep
- Aiding digestion
- Increasing energy by invigorating all the body systems, therefore reducing fatigue.

Massage is known to have a beneficial effect on a number of medical conditions such as: headaches and migraines, high blood pressure, asthma, sinusitis and depression.

Please phone or email Anne Handley Dip.MTI (wife of Striders member Phil) for an appointment or if you would like to purchase a gift voucher so that you can treat a member of your family or friends.

Mobile phone: on 07884348695

Email: anne@myholistichands.co.uk

www.myholistichands.co.uk

K. B. INTERIORS'

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Painting ♦ Decorating ♦ Garden Maintenance

Do you wish you could get that painting & decorating, you keep putting off, done at a reasonable cost, by someone you could trust to leave a key with?

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Phone Kevin Bannister on 020 8688 5085

Or 07528 65 65 80 (mobile) for a chat & a free Estimate. Or if you prefer, email me on kbinteriors@fsmail.net

Fully qualified & insured

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These photos make great presents or raffle prizes.

e.g. Chelsea, Manchester United, Crystal Palace.

Athletes such as Usain Bolt, Jessica Ennis, Mo Farah etc.

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Please email any enquiries to: lorraine@lhunte.wanadoo.co.uk