

Striders of Croydon

SEPTEMBER 2016 MAGAZINE



Sam O'Dongo winning the 400 metres in our Veterans League match at Croydon Arena, in a club M40 record of 56.9 seconds (photo by Marianne Chua)

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sat 3 Sep – Surrey Road Relays – Wimbledon Park
Sun 18 Sep – British Masters 5000m Championship – Birmingham
Sun 25 Sep – Switchback 5 – Lloyd Park/Addington Hills (Striders marshalling)
Wed 28 Sep – Striders AGM – Sandilands
Sat 1 Oct – East Surrey League Cross-Country – Lloyd Park
Sun 9 Oct – Croydon 10K – Lloyd Park Avenue
Sat 15 Oct – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – Nonsuch Park
Sat 15 Oct – Surrey Cross-Country League Div 3 – Wimbledon
Sat 22 Oct – Surrey Masters Cross-Country Championships – Richmond Park
Sat 12 Nov – Surrey Cross-Country League Div 3 – Epsom Downs
Sat 19 Nov – London Cross-Country Championships – Parliament Hill
Sat 26 Nov – Helen Furze Memorial Mobmatch - Nonsuch Park
Sat 26 Nov – Striders Xmas Dinner – Little Bay Restaurant
Sat 3 Dec – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – Mitcham
Sat 10 Dec – East Surrey League Cross-Country – Wimbledon

2017

Sat 7 Jan – Surrey Cross-Country Championships – Lloyd Park
Sat 14 Jan – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – Ham
Sat 14 Jan – Surrey Cross-Country League Div 3 – Cranford
Sat 28 Jan – Southern Cross-Country Championships – venue tbc
Sat 11 Feb – Surrey Cross-Country Lge Div 3 – Lloyd Park (Striders marshalling)
Sat 11 Feb – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – Coulsdon
Sat 25 Feb – National Cross-Country Championships – Nottingham
Sun 9 Apr – Brighton Marathon
Sun 23 Apr – London Marathon (Striders marshalling)

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER SEPTEMBER 2016

Another full magazine. Read all about Steve Smith running three marathons in three days in Australia and then even more impressive managing Joondalup parkrun a few days later! There is Lisa Jackson's description of running nude near Orpington (I never realised there was a naturist foundation just down the road) and even repeating the experience in London Zoo. As someone asked her - where do you pin your number?

Mart Filer tells us of his experience on the Snowdonia Trail Marathon with 1689m (5541ft) of climb. Victoria had a holiday in Majorca to run the 261 Womens marathon along with Lisa (this time with her clothes on) Jo and Julie.

Those in the club who entered the Southern Vets League track and field events did well; unfortunately there are relatively few of you entering and unless anyone is willing to help organise this in the future and there are some qualified officials out there it is very likely we will have to retire from this league. Is there club member willing to take this on? If you can have a chat with Alan about what is involved. We will raise the issue of supporting Track and Field again at the AGM on September 28th.

There is also a vacancy or two for a membership secretary. I have been acting membership sec for the last two years and am happy to continue for this membership season but I would like to be able to hand over to someone else during 2017 if at all possible.

From my experience I think this could be done best by two people. A meeter and greeter who ideally should be a fairly regular Wednesday and Sunday runner who can monitor the Striders mail box, reply to all the membership enquiries, and meet and advise new runners when we spot them – mainly on Wednesdays but some on Sundays as well. The second role is maintaining the membership data base (a spread sheet), the England Athletics affiliations and our email circulation list, plus registering new members and checking that we have paid our subs. This needs reasonable spreadsheet skill and enough time and technology to be able to keep it up to date. If anyone would be willing to take on either the meeter and greeter role or the membership data base role please contact me and I will attempt to explain more.

Another job I would like to hand over at some point is maintaining our website. Needs a bit of experience with Wordpress and again a bit of time (though less than the membership secretary role).

Finally, the Switchback is coming up on Sunday September 25th. Debra will be asking for helpers very shortly to set up and marshal this race. Please either enter the race (see our website) or volunteer to help. For those new to the club this is our annual 5 mile race round Lloyd Park and out into Shirley (or Addington Hills) up and down the hilly bits and then back into Lloyd Park.

Meanwhile, enjoy the rest of your summer, stay fit, but don't run too hard as by the time you read this it looks like we might be enjoying a heatwave.

May all your runs be through sunlit forests,

Robin

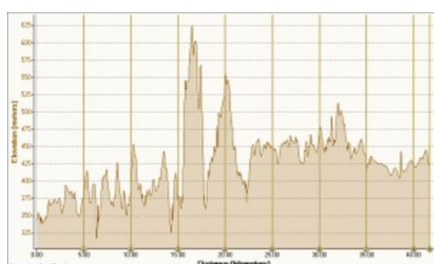
THREE MARATHONS IN THREE DAYS (by Steve Smith)

It's all Striders' fault. It really is. I had retired from marathons in 1995 after achieving my modest goal of running a sub 4 hour time at my second attempt at London. I joined Striders in 2005 and within a couple of months had set a new PB over the distance.

As I lined up a 7am on 8th July 2016 in Karunda National Park in Queensland, Australia for the first of a 3 marathons in 3 days through various tropical rainforest terrains, I felt a bit of a fraud. What on earth had I been thinking? I could have opted for the half marathon today or the Cairns Marathon on 10th, or both. But I opted to go for all three full marathons. Of the 54 runners I was the only visiting Brit. Several participants were returning runners. At the previous evening's pasta party runners spoke of completing 23 marathons so far in 2016 or of plans to circumvent both North and South Islands of New Zealand, or running 52 half marathons in 52 weeks on 5 different continents. In comparison, my June back-to-back marathons in Kent as preparation felt woefully lightweight. I studied the maps and the names of the features and checkpoints such as Stoney Creek Crossing and Snake Gully, but they meant little to me. A little worrying, since those who know me will recognise that my sense of direction isn't one of my strong points.

Day 1

Back pack strapped on containing mandatory food, water and first aid kit whistle and maps, and with the sun already beating down, the opening couple of miles were extremely gentle.



The profile for a "technical" day 1

But I had been warned that this was the most technical of the 3 marathons. It wasn't long before we entered the cooler canopy of the rain forest. However, this was no Shirley Hills and the winding paths turned very narrow and steep with rocks, boulders and tree roots making progress slow and difficult.



Rain Forest

At around mile 7, I had my first encounter with the forest floor: during a steep decent I didn't quite clear forest debris, ending up falling into more debris which resulted in a bloodied knee. Fortunately I was able to run it off, but then was knocked clear off my feet when failing to see a low hanging tree.



Every so often we would descend into a gully and cross a knee-deep creek before ascending up the slope. The grit and gravel from disturbing the water got inside my socks and rubbed my heels and ankles raw. The scenery was spectacular and I did try and take it all in, but most of my effort involved in trying to stay upright and avoid any further trip hazards and the aptly named "Wait a While" Vine that hung from the trees.

After what seemed an eternity I reached the half-way point, but I felt like I had already run the full distance. (I later discovered that a new course record for the half of 3:02 had been set). This was going to be a PW of spectacular proportions. I was starting to cramp up in

several places. The terrain meant that I was working my adductors far more than they were used to and they were objecting big time. The periodic wading through freezing creeks resulted in cramps in the toes, arch and calf.

The miles rolled past, slowly. Finally we hit tarmac. I had never been so pleased to see black bitumen in a road race. The tarmac led to more rough baked mud track and further creeks. Wooden planks placed on trees in the final miles carried messages of encouragement. One last right turn and I entered Cedar Park. As I entered the final 30 metres just about every muscle in my lower body decided to go on strike. I had cramps in places I didn't know existed. I had to stop and try and stretch out, but as I eased one cramp another hit home. I finally shuffled over the line. I had done it but it had taken 5 hours and 41 minutes. Having finished in such a sad shape, how was I going to get through the next stage which some participants had said was harder than day 1? My big toe on my left foot had taken some punishment and it wasn't looking too healthy.



Day 1: So near, yet so far.

Day 2

Following a restless night, and foot bandaged, I took a late decision to give day 2 a try rather than abort the race. I opted to take an early start to give myself a little more time. On viewing the results board at the start I was able to see that I had finished in 22nd place, which was a boost as I had expected far worse. I chose to take the first miles very conservatively, teaming up with a couple of guys who had run the event before. So at first light we departed



Ford

13 and lasted for around 7kms. Again I took a sensible approach of running the mild undulations and down-hill sections and walking the steep hills. At some stages the loose sand, gravel and gradient reduced my pace to 11 mins a km. The closing miles repeated the previous day's run in on baked rutted mud track and creeks and fords. But this territory was familiar to me now and I was going to make it home. Despite the walking sections I finished in 5 hours and 31 minutes and in good shape. I would be on the start line for day 3.

Cedar Park. The strategy worked. Although there were some tricky climbs and descents early on, I did not have any of the problems experienced during day 1. I had also doubled the quantity of electrolytes in my Camelback so maybe that helped.

At around mile 10 I picked up the pace, I was feeling comfortable again. I had been made aware that the major hills kicked in at mile



Day2: A better day all round

Day 3

I had begun day 1 in bib #38, but the last days bib number was allocated on the combined performance over the first 2 days. I was very happy to see that I had been given bib #19. This somehow stirred the competitive element within me. I was happy to be in the top 20 but could I improve further? My original strategy had been to survive, but I was feeling upbeat and relatively fresh and I reverted back to the later start for day 3.

The final day took us through a looped section of road and then through the now very familiar mud track. We then climbed up to Copperlode Dam which had some great views.



Copperlode Dam

From here the run was mainly on tarmac. The final 10km reminded me of mountain sections in the Tour De France, with steep climbs and descents on winding roads that hugged the hillside. I had begun to catch some of the runners who had opted for the early start. As we descended into Cairns itself the temperature became stifling. One last marshalling point and I was told the finish was just 2km away.

I entered Goomboora Park and could see the finish banner. As I approached the line my physical and mental efforts of the past 3 days came to the fore and I felt quite emotional. I whipped off my cap and hurled it in to the air and high fived the banner as I passed underneath it.

My time for day 3 was the fastest of the three – 4 hours and 45 minutes. I had completed the 3 Marathons in 3 Days in around 15 hours and 57 minutes, finished 18th overall and 2nd in the 50-59 age group. I collected my medal for day 3 and then the additional medal for completing all 3.

An amazing experience. I ran with great company in conditions that were well outside of my comfort zone in terms of temperature, humidity and terrain. It's something that will stay with me for a long time to come. It's still not too late to sponsor my run to support "A Mile In Her Shoes", a local charity which supports women who've been affected by homelessness issues to find their feet through running.

<https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/stevesmith3?currentPage=1&update=new#donationsList>

PARKRUN AUSSIE STYLE (by Steve Smith)

The whole scene was very familiar. The same race briefings and messages of welcome to visitors, celebrating milestones and thanks to the volunteers.

So just 6 days after completing the Three Marathons in Three Days, I lined up with the other 169 runners to made my debut at Joondalup in its 97th edition of the parkrun there. The course was an out and back one skirting the banks of Lake Joondalup. The course was on good, solid cycle path and was pretty flat.

I soon got into my stride and apart from a troublesome toe felt pretty good. Despite the signs warning of possible crocodiles or turtles crossing the race path, it turned out to be pretty uneventful.



I probably went quicker than I had planned, coming home in a decent 22:20 in 27th place overall and 1st in my age category. The winning time that day was 16:43.

Sue recorded her 49th parkrun finish and ran quicker than she had been in the UK recently, in 31:54.

As in the UK, people stayed around for a chat and to take coffee, this time from a mobile coffee van that had appeared. All done and back to the house for a shower and breakfast.



WHAT RUNNING TAUGHT ME ABOUT NUDITY (by Lisa Jackson)

I'd never experienced pre-race nerves quite like it: for a week I had sleepless nights, waking in the early hours in a cold sweat and then tossing and turning until morning. And even in daylight, whenever I thought of taking part I'd feel as if I'd been booted in the belly.

Only too soon race day dawned, and I lay in bed debating whether I should go or not. My husband was nowhere to be seen. He'd been so desperate to avoid participating that he'd signed up for a triathlon, the first event he'd ever entered himself (I usually book all our races and then tell him when it's too late for him to back out). Unfortunately, the race started at the respectable time of 11.30am so I couldn't use my standard 'Yikes, I overslept' excuse. Nor could I employ the 'It's too darn cold to run' one as it was a gloriously warm spring day. And then came the clincher: this was one of only two such events within the whole of the UK (the other was hundreds of miles away in Wales) so if I was going to do it, it was now or never.

Bart's Bare Buns Fun Run

So what possessed me to run this totally terrifying 5K? It all started when I read Bart Yasso's book *My Life On The Run*, in which he described participating in a similar event. Bart is a legend in the US, where he's known as the Mayor of Running. US *Runner's World's* Chief Running Officer, he's done over 1,000 races and 200 marathons. I'd run most of the inaugural Jerusalem Marathon with Bart because his diagnosis of debilitating Lyme's disease has slowed him down considerably. Though not as much as you'd think: he left me at the 32K mark and still managed to beat my 5h38 finishing time by 28 minutes. Intrigued by his courage – and amazed by his tales of running the Badwater Marathon in Death Valley in temperatures that turned the tarmac into mush – I'd bought his book. And I found I had yet another reason to admire the man who'd run in both Antarctica and the Arctic, who'd outpaced a rhino in India and who'd twice cycled across America, alone, in just two weeks: he'd gone naked running. Now, usually when runners talk about 'naked running' they mean running without a watch or GPS – not Bart. He meant running without a watch, yes, but sans T-shirt, shorts and underwear, too, at a nudist camp in Washington State.

Bare bottomed, not barefoot

Inspired by Bart's cheeky run, I'd entered the BH5K Naked Run at The Naturist Foundation resort in Orpington, a leafy suburb in Kent. The reaction when I told my friends that I'd entered this race wasn't quite what I expected. No one asked me *why* I was going to do it, what they all wanted to know was *how*.

'What are you going to do about your boobs?' asked Michelle. 'Won't they jiggle about and be horribly uncomfortable?'

'I've no idea,' I replied. 'You'll probably be relieved to know I'm not actually in the habit of running naked.'

'Where are you going to pin your race number?' asked Teresa. 'Bet you haven't thought of that.'

No I hadn't, but I surmised I could run with it in one hand.

'You're going to run in Orpington? I was *born* in Orpington!' said another friend, Sue, no doubt imagining the horrified reaction of her former neighbours as they watched dozens of nudists bobbing past the half-timbered houses she remembered from her childhood.

'We'll be running *inside* a nudist resort – not on the high street.' I replied chuckling.

'Are you going to run *completely* naked?' asked Christina, the then Editor of *Women's Running*.

'No, of course not,' I said, horrified. 'I'll be wearing socks and trainers.'

Naturist etiquette

Back to the bedroom on race day. The big debate raged in my head until, at 10.30am, I leapt up thinking, 'Screw it, let's do it,' and frantically crammed my kit into a holdall. This wasn't quite as simple a task as it sounds – what *does* one wear to a nudist camp? Thankfully, the organisers had sent me an email detailing naturist etiquette. It had informed me that 'one should always use a towel when seated (and naked)'. I couldn't quite work out the last bit. Surely, if you're wearing a towel, then you're not really naked? Leaving my bed unmade and a string of cupboards and drawers open I grabbed a towel and a massive pot of Vaseline, snatched up my passport (to deter peeping Toms you have to provide photo ID) and hurtled out the door. Having hastily typed the resort's postcode into my car's satnav I headed off. Of course I got hopelessly lost. Driving down the country lanes of deepest Kent I had no clue where I was. At long last I located the imposing gates of The Naturist Foundation and drew up alongside the intercom. But what's that I could see flitting through the trees at the top of the driveway? Yes, it was naked people. Naked people running through the woods. With dismay – and then a huge sense of relief – I realised that I'd missed the start of the race. But I'd already pushed the buzzer and was now on CCTV. My voice quavering with nerves I enquired whether the race had already started, knowing full well it had.

'Yes it has, but come on up to the clubhouse and we'll see what we can do,' said a very friendly female voice. Once there, I was greeted by the fully clothed receptionist who informed me that, although I'd missed the race start, I was welcome to stay and 'enjoy the facilities'.

Just then another latecomer, Kim, arrived and we hit upon the idea of running the route on our own, once we'd watched the other participants finish. We went outside, still clothed, to cheer several dozen naked men across the finish line.

'A naked woman in heels is a beautiful thing,' the legendary French footwear designer Christian Louboutin once said. 'A naked man in shoes looks like a fool.' I have to agree with Christian: the male runners did look rather odd. But only at first. After spending five minutes applauding runners of all sizes, shapes and speeds as they sprinted past, we realised that the old adage still rings true: once you've seen one, you've seen 'em all.

We'd hoped to welcome the first lady home but the ladies were taking their time, so in the end we retired to the changing room where, naturally, there were no cubicles, just one huge horribly unisex empty room with a few lockers where men were getting changed. So we beat a retreat to the loos and, in what must have seemed like a game of speed strip poker, tore off our clothes and ran giggling outside where the race director's wife lipsticked our race numbers onto our arms in a very fetching shade of fuchsia. After a quick explanation of the route we set off on a course that involved doing two-and-a-half laps around the grounds. I have to say it was very comforting having Kim, a fellow nudie newbie, by my side we passed little clusters of naked campers who cheered us as we trotted by.

'Well it *is* a bit weird, don't you think?' Kim panted, as she led the way through the bluebell-bedecked woods.

'Mmm,' I pondered, as I chased her through the trees. 'It is... and it isn't. Running like this does put you in touch with nature, and it makes you wonder why we make such a fuss about wearing clothes.' My answer shocked me because only that morning I'd been convinced that I'd find every second of the experience lip-bitingly, toe-curlingly, bottom-clenchingly cringeworthy. It simply wasn't.

The cheese-grater effect

Thankfully, Michelle was wrong about my boobs – I'm quite flat-chested so failing to ban the bounce just wasn't an issue. But I have to admit I probably wouldn't want to run a marathon without wearing a sports bra. In fact, the only thing I wasn't OK with was my failure to apply Vaseline to my inner thighs. It wasn't long before my gait turned into a wide-legged waddle as the chaffing began to take its toll. It gradually dawned on me that I'd most likely be spending the rest of the coming week walking as if I was smuggling a cheese-grater between my thighs.

We chat-ran our way round the course before retiring to the clubhouse for a hearty pub lunch and a cold beer. Yes, it was a bit weird queuing for a roast dinner with just a towel round my waist but what I found most unusual wasn't the fact that most people were naked but that they were so friendly. I'd never had so many strangers, both male and female, come up and talk to me in my life.

After lunch we lay on the lawn and topped up our tans alongside a 50-something maths professor who said he found naturism 'incredibly liberating' before relating how he'd participated in the World Naked Bike Ride through the streets of central London.

'Now *that* was tremendous fun,' he said, 'but I did have to ask the organisers to remove my photo from their website in case any of my students saw it.'

The race director's wife came over to invite us to a jazz and real ale festival taking place in a few weeks' time. She also informed us that of the 38 participants only three had been women, and that one of them had walked all the way. Gutted, I realised that my late arrival had meant I'd missed out on probably my one and only chance to get a top place in a race. I offered Kim a lift to the station and as we were leaving said farewell to the partner of a man we'd met in the lunch queue. What was most peculiar about her was that she was on her way to play tennis and had donned a sports bra. Kim and I agreed that the sight of this *half*-dressed woman, and not the wagging willies and bouncing boobs, was definitely the strangest sight we'd seen all day.

When I got home Graham was waiting for me, proudly wearing his triathlon medal.

'How was it?' he asked.

'Fine,' I said smiling.

'Did you almost chicken out?' he said with a grin.

'How did you know?'

'I took one look at all the open drawers and unmade bed and knew you'd left in a hurry.'

'OK, I'm busted,' I laughed. 'But I actually had a lot of fun and made a new friend. And it wasn't as awkward as I'd imagined. In fact, I've been invited back for a jazz and real ale festival. Why don't you come with me? Just for the experience. Go on, please!'

Graham gave me a withering look, and then turned on his heels with a 'No.'

'Why not?' I said, pursuing him through the living room. 'There are going to be live bands and real ale – you *love* real ale.'

'No,' he said again.

'Honestly, it's a lovely place with a pool and woodlands and an outdoor gym.'

'I'm *not* going.'

'Why ever not?' I persisted.

'Because,' he said slowly, turning to face me, 'I don't like... jazz.'

There was no arguing with that.

Fast forward 13 weeks and I'm running naked round the grounds of London Zoo. This time I can't blame Bart but a relative who, upon hearing of my Orpington outing, sent me information about the forthcoming Streak For Tigers in support of the zoo's Sumatran Tiger campaign. The idea came from the fact that a group of tigers is called a streak. The website promised a 350m circuit round the zoo with a mask and tiger ears thrown in for the camera shy. This was no ordinary discrete dash: the national press had been invited to witness the event.

Now my first brush with naked running had taught me two things: one, you omit Vaseline at your peril and two, you don't want anyone you know seeing you do it, so I resolved to keep my clothes off – but my mask on.

The website's Q&A section handily covered the other thing I was worried about: law enforcement.

Question: Will I be arrested for nudity?

Answer: No. ZSL London Zoo is private land. However you must arrive and leave the event fully clothed.

Thank heavens for naturist etiquette.

Boobs and bits

And so I arrived at the suitably named Prince Albert Gate at London Zoo. There were about 300 of us tigers and some had really gone crazy and daubed themselves from head to toe in stripey bodypaint. After slipping into something more comfortable (my foil blanket, ears and mask) I headed outside where it was easy to spot the dyed-in-the-wool naturists as they'd 'forgotten' their blankets. The rest of us milled around making small talk while feeling rather apprehensive about discarding ours in a few minutes' time.

I got talking to Catherine, a tall 20-something. 'I'm not nearly as embarrassed as I thought I'd be,' she confided. 'But I suppose it's because we've all got boobs and we've all got... bits!' Just before the start I was tapped on the shoulder by a male tiger in a foil blanket. 'Would you mind taking our photo?' he said, pointing to a similarly attired tigress whom he'd obviously only recently befriended. He handed over his smartphone which I wasn't sure how to operate.

'Does this thing need a flash?' I asked. They looked at each other, shrugged, and then said 'Yeah, sure,' and dropped their foil blankets to the ground. I belatedly realised they thought I'd said, 'Do you *want* to flash?'

Jettisoning our blankets, we raced out to greet the waiting cameras. It felt like the most natural thing in the world to be trotting round a zoo on a summer's evening as unencumbered by clothes as every other animal in there. With the Austin Powers theme tune blaring in the background we ran round and round, pausing every now and again to read the humorous signs the zoo had put up for us. 'Ants don't need pants, and neither do you,' I read as I completed lap one. 'Elephants swim without trunks,' I spotted on lap two.

And my favourite: 'Ever seen a bear in a bra? Exactly!'

Giddy from giggling for 2K, I headed back to the changing room.

So what did my summer of naked running teach me about nudity? In all honesty, I came to pretty much the same conclusion Bart did: it isn't something to get your knickers in a twist about. Like Bart, I haven't done another nude race since not because I feel self-conscious or squeamish but because, as he rightly said, there just aren't a lot of opportunities to run naked (though www.nuderuns.com lists a few if you're nudey-curious). I also concluded that if you have big boobs it's best avoided, and that you do so without Vaseline at your own risk. Running naked made me realise that Mark Twain was probably right when he observed: 'Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.' What prompted the great man to think great thoughts on this particular subject remains a mystery. Without our clothes we do all look a little comical. But then, come to think of it, many of us manage that with our clothes *on*...



Extracted from *Your Pace or Mine? What Running Taught Me About Life, Laughter and Coming Last* by Striders member Lisa Jackson (£6.99 paperback and £4.29 on Kindle via Amazon).

THE SCOTT SNOWDONIA TRAIL MARATHON (by Martin Filer)

I was sat in the Bunkhouse trying to catch an early night at the base of Snowdon, about a mile outside Llanberis, North Wales. A late arrival stirred me from my sleep as he came into our shared accommodation, and thought it an opportune time to give his comforting reassurance for three of his fellow occupants – who were all running the full Scott Snowdonia Trail Marathon the next morning. “Yeah, my mate ran it last year, said it’s about 29 miles and not 26.2”. My overwhelming sense of dread increased, as I had just sat outside watching the clouds drift around one of the many peaks in the area, before midges descended to feast on my carb-rich flesh. Surely with making us “run” up Snowdon, they wouldn’t hide the real distance, would they? I guess it didn’t matter. Even the Technical T-shirt I received at registration earlier that day stated 26.2. I didn’t believe him and he was running the 10k anyway – his second one. Which wasn’t bad, considering that had about 500m of climb.

The morning greeted us with low hanging cloud and light drizzle, arrival day had been perfect, warm with broken cloud – although unlikely to have revealed the Summit of Snowdon at any stage. My initial thought was at least it wasn’t scorching hot – us baldies have to watch sun exposure you know. One of my Bunkhouse buddies gave us a lift into town, where pre-race registration was at the Electric Mountain Centre. The atmosphere was building and the nerves kicking in. Lots of people were milling around – everybody had hydration vests or belts. To start the race, you had to carry full mandatory kit – given the inclement weather. ‘This is the mountains for you’ said the announcer. So my brand new Inov8 5litre vest was packed with waterproof trousers/top, a long sleeve top, about a litre of fluid mixed between (not together) Lucozade & flat Coke, a few energy gels and a few sticks of lunchbox size malt loaf. I hadn’t really run with it before – other than a parkrun – as the build-up had been restricted by a light thigh strain. Having never done anything like this before I was heading into the unknown, in all respects – even the energy replenishment I was carrying was part experimental. Looking around, I felt the novice, my fellow runners looked seasoned in this sort of environment. Runners from all over Wales, the rest of the UK and abroad – I wouldn’t say high-quality field, but people who look like they are used to this terrain and event.

My plan – did I have one? I think I did: under 5 hours would be a dream – but I knew that would remain a dream. I was thinking for unknown factor that 5:20 – 5 :30 would be a reasonable target for 26.2 miles in a maiden effort. Whatever, though, I promised myself not to go off too fast like I did in the SDW Trail marathon (a mere bumpy race with only 900m of climb) where I managed a splits of 1:40 & 2:30, which was a bit silly. Before we knew it we were on the start line ready to go; the last thing before we went, a message of “look out for each other” came over the speaker. Then we were off, just as the rain started to fall. Trotting out of the Park behind the centre through the town and out off into the Snowdonia hills, within minutes we were climbing, through fields and the odd campsite, plus randomly nomadic sheep just wandering sides of the track. We were already level with the low hanging cloud, as the trail carved its way through the valley along the side of a steep hill (when does a hill become a mountain?) The leaders were already off in the distance and disappearing into the mist/cloud what looked like almost a kilometre ahead. I looked behind and the trail of marathoners and half-marathoners snaked its way back as it did forwards, as far as the eye could see. The first 6km, we climbed 400-500m +, I was comfortable in myself if I needed to run/walk any of the steeper climbs, particularly early on, as I didn’t want to waste energy with the big-boy still to come, and plenty of time to make up any walk time before we got there. I think I walked about 30 feet up one incline about 2 miles in – as did many others. I was playing it smart – unusually. Before we knew it, we had summited and the downhill looked fast and steep. As many on the Wednesday run might know, I do like

smashing it downhill sometimes. But this was grass, boggy in places and steep – and this is when I realised I was a mere amateur amongst seasoned fell runners. They flew down. I was expecting a ‘cheese rolling’ mass of bodies at the bottom, but they were both reckless and graceful at the same time. Then the marathon and half-marathon runners split, them to the left and us to the right, and the downhill section continued along narrow bumpy trail path right the way to the huge lake at the bottom which we skirted for some time.

The next 7-9 miles was generally trail, hilly and along the odd road – but always hilly. I had at this point switched into auto-pilot, and tried to run consistent km's – desperately trying not to go too fast to conserve energy. It was varied; I remember wooded sections, road, many trails through open areas and around lakes – I just can't for the life of me remember the order that they came in. We ran over a couple of train lines too – although the line looked deserted and rather narrow, almost miniature. We ran through the picturesque village of Beddgelert and past several country pubs, which looked really cosy and snug out of the continuous rainfall. Oh, and the gates and stiles, some of them marshalled, some you had to open yourself. I'd say at least 15, but could have been a lot more. And a few cattle grids too!

Then we hit the mile 17 marker. I had seen on the profile of the course it started to get a bit bumpy and climb from there on in; what I wasn't expecting was the nature of the terrain at this point. After the water station it went boggy/ditch-y and almost felt like proper cross country. Then scrambling up some rocks, then down into a muddy wooded section, we were high again above another lake, but only by 150m or so. At this point I had taken a wrong turn – which is what you get for blindly following others; luckily he had realised his error, and we had to retrace our footsteps up the muddy incline alongside a precarious drop. I used this walk back as a tactical rest. Then we were following the ribbons again. Everybody took that last announcement on board, ‘Look out for each other’. Every time you stopped to take on energy or what have you, someone would always ask after you. I returned the favour to a faller behind me but he waved me on, with perhaps only his pride dented! The atmosphere among runners was top notch – not racing each other: it was you against the distance.

Now the real climb started, I think mile 18-19. It just went up and not in a particularly straight line. Little did I know that this wasn't even the Pyg Trail, this was the prelude to get up to the start of that. Run/walk? It wasn't long before everyone was at walking pace, purely because of the steps. Not ambling, but still trying to get up at a good pace. This was again where I felt out of my depth a little. People were passing me at walking pace. I took a breather to check out their climb methods, and see the route that people were taking and to try and take some energy on-board. I think this point the race had just ticked over 3 hours in. I can do this! A little re-energised, I started off again, and it wasn't long before I needed another break! This was going to be a slog.

The 20-mile water station was the start of the Pyg Trail, or where the hikers start from at least. I took on a banana segment and some orange juice, and filled up on isotonic and sugar-rich cola bottles. From here on in, the trail became technical. Large boulder steps, scrambling, climbing – with use of hands for leverage. The panoramic views, and runnable parts soon disappeared – at least there were some! The rain drainage was finding its own way down from the top, the water was running down the trail and/or across, so my once muddy Roclites, were now sparkling clean again. The wind was coming in from the side, and with height gain I could feel the temperature dropping. I hadn't really checked my watch – how refreshing – but duly noted that 5min/km down below were replaced by 7min, 9min, 11 min, and soon 14min/km. I think kilometer 35 or 36 was the worst/slowest – even looking at other competitors' Strava times it proved so. Mine read 22 minutes for that particular km! I can't remember where or why this was. But I saw a guy who finished around 50th place had taken him 18 mins for the same kilometer. I expect this was probably the time when I started asking hikers coming down how long it was to the summit. The responses weren't soon enough for me. Then eventually – still thinking I had an age to go, I had arrived at the top. I

only knew this once I had stepped up onto the ridge. There was an event photographer just before this point, pointing down the steep steps, and my face at this point is a picture.

4hrs 50mins – and I had summited, but my Garmin was reading 36.5km.. Surely we aren't that close to home – maybe 29miles was right? The descent then started hard and fast – well it would have been fast if my legs never had so much fatigue, and of course, a new pain started after a few minutes. Downhill pain. The Rangers' path was much safer and less technical than the Pyg trail, but full of loose boulders/rocks, and some not so loose. My weary legs were obviously not lifting up as much, as I kept kicking rocks that were both moving and stationary. My big toe suffered, and it will no doubt result in me losing another toe nail. The path eventually turned to tarmac, with Llanberis in sight. Then the curve ball came and we diverted off into the woods and a muddy/slippery track. This wound its way out and outside, before coming in at the top of village and the around the back. At this point I relaxed a bit, and then realised we had already gone over 27 miles. This was when I had a mishap: I slipped on a wet boulder and levelled out before hitting the ground, fortunately more spectacular than with any force. Everyone within thudding distance checked on me – but I told them all was good! And on we went. I crossed the finish line in 5.48:25, which when you take off the extra mileage, wasn't far off the time I had in mind. And the distance? Well, it's longer than 26.2, but not as far as 29... so he wasn't 100% correct. But the climb was as advertised, all 1689m of it, and so were the views. Stunning.



Martin on the Pyg Trail

THE 261 MARATHON (by Victoria Legge)

Lisa Jackson had asked me to run this one with her since it started, back in 2014. It was originally in March but this year the organisers moved it to April. The marathon is named after Kathrine Switzer (who wore number 261 when she ran in the 1967 Boston Marathon).



Kathrine Switzer in the 1967 Boston Marathon (the race was officially for men only: she registered as KV Switzer and the organisers had not realised that she was female)

This year I decide that I would be able to do it, so I duly signed up for it. We booked the flights for very early on Saturday morning. Lisa had already booked her flights; she was going Friday to Sunday. Jo Penny and I arrived at Gatwick at about 4 o'clock in the morning for a 5:45 flight, and we found ourselves arriving in sunny Palma at about 10.00 in the morning, where we duly caught the bus – a bargain at 3 Euros. Jo was staying in a different area to me and we found her hotel in an up-and-coming area; I have been to Seville and the area remind me of that. I was staying with Lisa in the official hotel on the Saturday night, so we made our way along the front to Lisa's hotel and I checked in.

We then walked up to the town and had a stroll; we went to a local market and had a coffee and for Jo and I a second breakfast. Palma is separated by a river between the old and the new. For my second night I would be staying in the old quarter, and we found my hotel. We then wandered a bit and Jo and Lisa had a beer and I had a cup of tea before a bit more strolling, a bit more eating.

Back to the hotel for a rest. Lisa had arranged for all our numbers to be delivered to the hotel and they had been delivered. I had suddenly become a Marta (!) - not sure why and I still don't know what happened to my name.

Lisa had arranged a meal for the Saturday within the city wall – if you ever in Palma please go to this restaurant – so we stocked up for the marathon or half marathon. We also met Lisa's friends Penny and Megan.

Then it was back to the hotel for bed. Before I went to bed I notice that my knee was double the size than it usually was. However we went to bed and woke about 6.45 am.

We both got dressed; Lisa was checking out, so we left our luggage at reception. Whilst we were checked out Julie Jordan appeared and Lisa gave her her race number. Lisa and I walked along by the seafront and arrived at the race start and finish; I checked with an

official that it was okay to run as Marta; they said it was. The usual pre-race rituals. The official race toilets had flowers in them and a wooden seat. Please can we have this for the Race for Life? Then it was photos, people saying hello to Lisa and then it was time to get to the start. I was the only one in our party doing the full marathon. Lisa, Jo, and Julie choose to do the half. However we all started together Lisa's friend Penny was doing the full and Megan was doing the half. Dave Denton walked into the start what he was doing in women only event, I was not sure however men can run the races but they must support a woman the pace runners were men.

Then the race was off in flurry of pink confetti. The route went down along the main seafront and then back, and then up to the port, and then back down to the finish. The half marathon was 2 laps and the full was 4 laps. I quickly realised that I may not be able to make the full distance as they had a strict cut-off time of 6 hours. How strict this was I was not sure, but I spoken to Lisa and she said let's do the half. Palma was beautiful in the spring sunshine, but it was a tough run, despite being the flattest I have ever done.

The Marshals were lovely, goodies included water, Powerade, fruit, as Lisa and I turn to the finish we had confused the marshals as both of us had a full-marathon number but we crossed the line. Spoke to officials; the medal was not very excited – basically a dog tag on pink string! They also provide an extension stretch; whilst they were stretching me my legs felt very tight so I knew something was wrong, however in the tent was the winner and the runner up. We had a chat with two lovely ladies, who were an inspiration. Then it was the after-run party of beer and some snacks. Lisa's friend Penny met us and we discover she had won an award for the fastest in her age group, so double celebrations.

Lisa and I made our way back to the hotel to pick up bags, and Lisa made her way to the airport while I went to my new hotel. I was meeting up with Jo and Penny for a meal in the evening. I didn't realise that my watch had moved itself on an hour, so thought I was late and I ended up in the restaurant at 6:30pm, an hour before I need to be there, so I did a bit of sightseeing. The dinner was lovely, just perfect for post race recovery. Then it was back to hotel for bed. Unfortunately I had a dodgy tummy so did not get a good night sleep, and I was on a early flight back to the UK, so I left the hotel early and walked to get the bus.

Would I do the 261 Marathon again? Yes; although the route is not scenic one, the marshals are friendly a give plenty of hugs if you need it. Drummers at various points of course and a very good goodie bag. Plenty of post-run goodies: biscuits, Coca Cola (other brands are available). A nice touch was that on finishing you got a flower: Jo's and Lisa's and my flowers did survive the journey home.



SURREY ROAD LEAGUE: FINAL TABLES

MEN

Reigate	161
Ranelagh	157
Wimbledon Windmilers	152
Clapham	151
South London	145
Woking	144
Croydon Harriers	133
London City	123
Guildford	119
Herne Hill	117
Sutton	116
Stragglers	112
Tadworth	112
Hercules-Wimbledon	111
Striders of Croydon	110
Collingwood	109
Barnes	96
Epsom Oddballs	89
Epsom & Ewell	87
Belgrave	78
West Four H	77
Elmbridge	75
Windle Valley	72
Thames H&H	66
Lingfield	62
Dorking	56
Redhill	50
Camberley	43
26.2RRC	40
Walton	30
Dulwich	23
Kingston	21
Waverley	3



Striders' team at the Wimbledon 5-kilometre road race

WOMEN

Ranelagh 163
Wimbledon Windmilers 155
Woking 150
London City 145
South London 143
West Four H 138
Collingwood 136
Clapham 128
Stragglers 127
Tadworth 127
Striders of Croydon 126
Herne Hill 123
Elmbridge 118
Guildford 114
Epsom & Ewell 109
Lingfield 107
Epsom Oddballs 102
Reigate 101
Sutton 97
Thames H&H 95
Camberley 66
Barnes 63
Epsom Allsorts 59
26.2RRC 56
Croydon Harriers 41
Hercules Wimbledon 36
Kingston 30
Dorking 27
Windle Valley 23
Belgrave 22
Dulwich 21



Striders' team at the Ranelagh Harriers 10-kilometre road race

COMPETITIVE HIGHLIGHTS: JUNE – AUGUST 2016

Sandra Francis had an excellent day at the Surrey Masters Championships at Ewell on 5 June. She won gold medals in the W55 100 metres (17.42), 200 metres (37.65) and 80 metre hurdles (22.58), and took silver in the long jump (3.34). Alan Dolton won gold in the M55 1500 metres (5.36.45), while Kevin Burnett won gold in the M75 shot (5.94) and took silver in the discus (17.08), hammer (15.77) and heavy hammer (6.43). Lorraine Hunte won silver in the W60 100 metres in a new club age-group record of 16.71 seconds.

On the same day, Rachel Lindley was fifth in the women's race in the Dorking 10-mile road race, which incorporated the Surrey Championships. She was 61st overall in a personal best 64 minutes 54. For Striders' men, Simone Luciani was 20th (60.19) with Lee Flanagan 50th (63.58). Peter Laurence completed the scoring trio (72.32). Striders' second woman to finish was Carolyn Storey (80.45), followed by Charlotte Letchford (80.52).

In the penultimate Southern Veterans League of the season, at Wimbledon Park on 13 June, Lee Flanagan won the 800 metres in a new club M40 record of 2 minutes 11.7, and later placed second in the M40 5000 metres in a club age-group record of 16 minutes 59.1. Paul Cripps won the M50 high jump (1.53) and triple jump (10.30), both these being new club age-group records, and also set a club M50 record in the discus (22.52), placing third. Maggie Statham won the W50 5000 metres (21.23.2), while Graham Hansen was second in the M50 race, setting a club M55 record of 18 minutes 01.9. In the 200 metres, Sam O'Dongo was second in the M40 race in a club age-group record of 25.8 seconds, while Julian Spencer-Wood was third in the M60 race in a new club M65 record of 32.9.

In the Ranelagh 10 kilometre road race on 19 June, Philip Coales ran well to finish 13th (34.47) with Lee Flanagan 48th (36.17) and Peter Johnson completing the scoring trio in 223rd (43.22). Striders' women were led by Carolyn Storey, who placed 292nd overall (46.18). Charlotte Letchford was 311th (46.56) with Selena Wong 374th (49.33).

At the final Southern Veterans League match of the season, at Croydon Arena on 11 July, Striders' men did well to place third of the seven competing clubs, while our women were fifth. Sam O'Dongo had an excellent run to win the 400 metres in a new club M40 record of 56.9 seconds, and also set new club M40 records in both the 100 metres (12.6) and long jump (4.81). Paul Cripps also did well to win the M50 long jump with a new club age-group record of 4 metres 59, win the M50 high jump (1.50) and set a new club M50 record in the shot (8.07). For Striders' women, Nadine Pryce made a successful debut by placing second in both the A 100 metres (16.3) and the javelin (9.53), while Rosie Gibbons was second in the A 1500 metres (5.50.0) and Lorraine Hunte was second in the W60 100 metres (17.8). Both Striders' men and women finished fifth in the final league table.

Krzysztof Klidzia was the first over-50 to finish at the Elmore seven-mile road race on 16 July. He placed 20th overall in 42 minutes 56. Graeme Drysdale was 46th (46.49) and Steve Massey 64th (48.37). For Striders' women, Selena Wong was 175th (58.44) with Linda Daniel 215th (63.10) and Jo Penny 277th (74.57). In the Elmbridge 10-kilometre road race on 24 July, Striders were led by Lee Flanagan who placed 48th in 36 minutes 59 seconds. Graeme Drysdale was 90th (39.06) with Steve Massey 123rd (40.46). For Striders' women, Carolyn Storey placed 263rd (46.46), Charlotte Letchford 307th (48.44) and Rachel Tanner 379th (51.54). The final Surrey Road League race of the season was the Wimbledon 5K on 14 August. Phil Coales placed 21st (17.27) with Steve Massey 85th (20.11) and Darren Woods 109th (21.05). Striders' women were again led by Carolyn Storey who was 137th (22.09), with Charlotte Letchford 150th (22.52) and Michelle Clarke 153rd (23.00).



Lee Flanagan winning the 800 metres in the Veterans League at Wimbledon, where he set a new club M40 record of 2 minutes 11.7 seconds



**Striders after our final Southern Veterans League match, at Croydon Arena on 11 July
(photo by Marianne Chua)**

30 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN AUTUMN 1986

South London Harriers held their annual 30-mile road race at Coulsdon on 6 September. The winner was Alan McGee of GEC Avionics in 2 hours 58 minutes 04. The first local runner was Herne Hill's veteran Don Claxton, who placed fifth in 3 hours 08 minutes 07. Among runners who are still competing today, Herne Hill's Tony Harran placed 18th in 3 hours 20 minutes 16. The first woman was Hilary Walker of Serpentine, who ran 4 hours 06 minutes 54. Because of increasing traffic, the race has subsequently been discontinued.

On 28 September Blackheath Harriers organised a 25 x 1 mile relay at Crystal Palace. Belgrave won with Blackheath second and Croydon Harriers third. Croydon's team included three future Striders: Alan Dolton ran 4 minutes 24, while Peter Yarlett ran 4 minutes 35 and Graham Hansen ran 4 minutes 39.

The Surrey Cross-Country League began its 25th season with matches on 11 October. Aldershot won the Division One match at Wimbledon Common, led by their former Olympic marathon runner Bernie Ford. Belgrave placed second with Herne Hill third. Ranelagh won the Division Two match at Guildford, led by 1982 London Marathon champion Hugh Jones. Boxhill were second with Guildford third and Croydon Harriers fourth. The Division Three match took place at Epsom Downs. The individual winner was Bob Treadwell of Surrey Beagles, who finished more than a minute clear of his nearest rival. Epsom won the team event with Mitcham second. This match saw Striders make their debut in the league. They mustered an encouraging total of 15 runners. Their best result of the season came in the match at Mitcham on 22 November, when they placed fourth.

The Surrey Cross-Country Womens League, still with just one division, began with a match at Wimbledon Common on 11 October. Woking won the team event, led by individual winner Jane Harrop. South London Harriers' veteran Anne Roden ran well for second place.

Croydon Harriers' annual road race took place on 19 October and was held over 10 kilometres for the first time, replacing the previous distance of ten miles which had been used since the race began in 1981. The course was less hilly than that used today, but was hillier than the two-lap course which had been used previously. The race continued to start in Oaks Road and finish in John Ruskin School (which has subsequently been demolished and replaced by Postmill Close). The route was lengthened by including the uphill climb from Lower Addiscombe Road to Grimwade Avenue for the first time (going up Mapledale Avenue). From the top of Grimwade Avenue it followed the current route until the roundabout at the north end of Park Hill Road. From there it followed the old route west past the Law Courts before returning along Park Lane and Coombe Road (whereas the current route turns left up Park Hill Road and includes a further climb into Selborne Road). The first two finishers were both members of Croydon Harriers, and both have subsequently joined Striders. Graham Hansen gained a comfortable win in 31 minutes 26 seconds, with Alan Dolton second in 32 minutes 07. Francis Upcott of South London Harriers was third in 32 minutes 47. The first Strider to finish was Nigel Davidson, who placed 27th in 34 minutes 52. The first woman was Jeanette Yeowell of Bromley Ladies, who ran 38 minutes 27.

Surrey Beagles (who no longer exist) staged their third annual ten-mile road race at Coulsdon on 9 November. Colin Walker of Gateshead won in a course record of 49 minutes 3 seconds, with Bob Treadwell second in 49 minutes 49. Croydon Harriers won the team event: their team comprised Graham Hansen (8th, 52.56), Alan Dolton (11th, 53.48), Don Faircloth (16th, 55.04) and Robin Dickson (21st, 56.01). Striders had an impressive total of 21 finishers, led by Nigel Davidson who placed 40th in 57 minutes 13. Striders' Debbie Picott was the fifth woman to finish, in 67 minutes 11.



Standing (left to right) --- Simon Morris, Dave MacDonald, Tony Smith, Ron Carver, Allan Day, Darren Ennor, Colin Golding, Steve Page, Dave Langley, Len Ploott, Peter Jeal.
Kneeling --- Steve Harman, Simon Smith, Steve Owen, and Nigel Davidson.

The Striders team at the club's first Surrey Cross-Country League match, at Epsom Downs on 11 October 1986



30 years after his Surrey League debut, Nigel Davidson is still competing: he is pictured here in our mobmatch against Croydon Harriers (photo by Simon Powell)

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN AUTUMN 2006

Striders held the annual 'Switchback' five-mile race on 23 September. In unusually hot conditions, the winner was Mike Cummings of Herne Hill, who covered the five-mile course in 28 minutes 18 seconds. The first over-40 to finish was former Croydon Harrier (and future Strider) Graham Hansen, still running well twenty years after he won the first Croydon 10K. He recorded 30 minutes 32. Striders won the team event, led home by Bob Ewen, who was the first over-50 runner to finish, placing seventh overall in 31 minutes 44. Club secretary Chris Morton was 11th in 33 minutes 34 with Dominic Hawkins close behind in 13th (33.46). The first woman finisher was Viv Mitchell of South London Harriers, who ran 35 minutes 01.

On 1 October Striders produced an excellent performance to win the team event at Hercules Wimbledon's annual ten-mile road race. Striders were led home by Darren Piper who placed 18th in 65 minutes 14 seconds. Club secretary Chris Morton was only thirteen seconds behind in 20th place, while veteran David Batten also ran well for 26th in 67 minutes 57.

The Surrey Cross-Country League began its 45th season on 14 October. Striders produced some good performances to place fourth in the opening Division Two match at Richmond Park. Striders were led home by Justin Macenhill, who ran well to place eighth of the 129 finishers, covering the five-mile course in 29 minutes 30 seconds. Scott Antony also ran well to finish 23rd in 31 minutes 04, with Damian Macenhill 30th in 31 minutes 56. Veteran Bob Ewen had an excellent run to place 42nd overall and second in the over-50 category (32.36). Darren Piper was close behind in 43rd (32.40) with Tony Sheppard 47th (32.52) and Matt Morgan 49th (33.05).

Meanwhile Striders' women placed fifth in their Division Two match at Epsom Downs, with a new team manager in John Ralf. Faye Stammers led the team home, finishing 14th in 23 minutes 44, just one place and six seconds ahead of Steph Upton. Kerry Backshell was 25th in 24 minutes 41, with Steph Gilmour 40th in 26 minutes 02 and Linda Daniel 46th (26.24).

The 31st Croydon 10K took place on 22 October. Unusually, it started in Mapledale Avenue rather than Lloyd Park Avenue (it reverted to Lloyd Park Avenue two years later). The winner was John Kimaiyo of Belgrave in 32 minutes 18. Jonathan McCallum of Croydon Harriers was second in 33 minutes 35. Natalie Harvey of South London Harriers had an excellent run to place third overall in 33 minutes 43, this being the highest placing ever achieved by a woman in this race. The first Strider was Justin Macenhill who placed sixth in 34 minutes 01.

The East Surrey League's annual cross-country race took place in Lloyd Park on 28 October. Hercules-Wimbledon won the match with 45 points, ahead of Epsom (48), Striders (55) and Croydon Harriers (71). Justin Macenhill produced another good run to place sixth, covering the undulating five-mile course in 30 minutes 39 seconds. Matt Morgan placed 14th (32.53) with Damian Macenhill 15th (33.10) and Paul Finch 20th (33.40).

The second round of the Surrey Cross-Country League races took place on 11 November. Striders' men did well to finish third in their Division Two match at Wimbledon Common. Justin Macenhill ran very well to finish ninth. Matt Morgan finished 22nd, while new member Dave Archer placed 26th. Duncan Lancashire made a welcome return after a long absence through injury and placed 30th, while Scott Antony was 35th. On the same day Striders' women did very well to place third in their Division Two match at Lightwater. They were led home by Steph Upton, who placed 15th of the 97 finishers, covering the four-mile course in 28 minutes 37 seconds. She was closely followed by Faye Stammers who placed 18th in 28 minutes 45. Kerry Backshell was 28th (29.25) with Amalia Da Silva Lima 49th (32.42) and Linda Daniel 55th (33.03).

NEVER TOO OLD

On Saturday 30 July, at the Varsity Stadium in Toronto, Ed Whitlock ran 5000 metres in 24 minutes 03.99 seconds. What makes this noteworthy is that Ed is 85 years old (he was born in March 1931). His time is a world record for the over-85 age category. Perhaps Ed's performance can be a challenge and an inspiration to some Striders: can you run faster than a 85-year-old?



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