

# Striders of Croydon

JUNE 2018 MAGAZINE



**Sandra Francis – the first female Strider  
to place in the top three in a British championship  
(photo by Marianne Chua)**

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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Mon 11 Jun – Southern Veterans League – Walton  
Sun 17 Jun – Richmond 10K – Richmond (Surrey Road League)  
Sun 24 Jun – South of England Masters Track & Field Championships – Battersea  
Mon 9 Jul – Southern Veterans League – Kingsmeadow  
Sat 14 Jul – Elmore 7 miles – Chipstead (Surrey Road League)  
Sun 22 Jul – Elmbridge 10K – Walton (Surrey Road League)  
Sun 12 Aug – Wimbledon 5K – Wimbledon (Surrey Road League)  
Sun 26 Aug – British Masters 5000m Championship – Birmingham  
Sat 15 Sep – Surrey Road Relays – Wimbledon  
Sat 29 Sep – East Surrey League XC – Lloyd Park  
Sun 30 Sep – Switchback 5 miles – Lloyd Park (Striders hosting)  
Sat 13 Oct – Surrey XC League Division One – venue tbc  
Sat 10 Nov – Surrey XC League Division One – venue tbc

## **2019**

Sat 12 Jan – Surrey XC League Division One – venue tbc  
Sat 9 Feb – Surrey XC League Division One – venue tbc  
Sun 10 March – Croydon Half-Marathon – Sandilands (Striders hosting)

## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER JUNE 2018

As always, well done to everyone who completed a Marathon in the last few months, whatever your pace. You all did better than me. I would like to name you all but there isn't room in this article – but you know who you are.

This time last year I had ambitions to complete a marathon and claim the M70 record. I even had a place in this year's Brighton Marathon; however, my fitness finally let me down and I chickened out – my limit now seems to be a steady 10K. Much to my surprise I did manage to complete the Crystal Palace triathlon only a minute slower than last year. Sadly I can no longer claim to be South London M70 champion. I had some competition: the other M70 was 30 minutes faster than me and faster than all but two of the M60s and M65s!

And as always, thank you to everyone who helped at the Croydon Half the week before Brighton; as usual it went very well. Perfect running weather if a little damp for everyone else. I have decided it is time to hang up my half marathon organiser's hat, and James Burree has kindly offered to take over. Thank you to all the others who have offered to form an organising team with him.

When we first started the half marathon in 2011 there weren't many competing races and it seemed best to aim at those runners who weren't training for a marathon, so we fixed the date for ours a week or two before the Brighton Marathon. However, it now seems better to fix the date a bit earlier so that it can be used as a marathon training event. So put Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March in your diary for next year. All Striders are expected to either run or help at this event.:)

This time last year we were celebrating the opening of the new bar. A year on I can only say we are a very lucky club to have such good facilities so close to such a good running area. The Turner family have really made it a great success. Meanwhile the chairman of the Addiscombe Trust, which owns the freehold of the clubhouse and grounds, still has dreams of building a proper sports hall either to the back or side of the present clubhouse. I think it will happen but not for a few years – there are a few other issues to be resolved first. Not least how it would be funded and the impact on the tennis club. Watch this space.

Welcome to those who have just joined our team of leaders. It's good to have a big group to ensure we have plenty of cover for both Wednesdays and Sundays. I have been doing it for the club for about the last 15 years, but have slowed down so badly that it is time to retire. However, it has reminded me I started young.... At school, near Blackpool, I was worse than useless at any games involving moving balls so invariably went for a run round the local streets, a sort of downmarket Shirley-by-the-sea. However, in my last year at school I found myself leading the odd runs and we found a few more interesting routes.

First was Pilling Marshes (now cleaned up and called Fleetwood Marsh Nature reserve) an area of waste deep mud and tidal channels you could run wade and swim across. It was the outflow area for the ICI chemical works next door and most certainly seriously polluted, but we didn't care. I remember my then-blond hair going a strange yellow colour.

Second was the runs along the beach: at low tide superb runs on hard flat sand, but at high tide great fun as we ran along the bottom of the sea wall with waves breaking over us. Looking back, I can't believe we did it and never lost anyone. Most definitely would not pass modern health and safety rules.

Finally, just before I left school we got special permission to run along the coast into Blackpool and round Blackpool tower. Memorable because we did this in early summer on a

Sunday afternoon when most of Lancashire was on the beach at Blackpool with their trousers rolled up and knotted handkerchiefs on their heads. Now, seeing people running down the sea front would be considered normal, but back in 1964 everyone looked at us as if we were mad. I have always assumed we ran about 10 miles. In fact, re-measuring it now it was nearer 12.5. If only we had heard of the Half Marathon we could have done 2 laps of the tower and I could have claimed a school half marathon record. Back then only serious athletes did that sort of distance.

May all your runs be through sunlit forests,

*Robin Jamieson*

Chairman, Striders of Croydon



## THE PYONGYANG MARATHON (by Martin Filer)

How do these things even start off? I don't really remember this one. Like the whole trip itself, it was quite surreal, from a flippant suggestion in a Whatsapp group, to booking our places in the 27<sup>th</sup> Mangyondae Prize International Marathon in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, more commonly known as North Korea) in a little over a couple of months. The initial 6 or 7 went down to 4, then jumped back up to 5 (a few were wary of the troubles emanating from the region in 2017). The intervening 8 or 9 months in between seemed to fly by, and slowly the trip came together. We went for the ULTRA MEGA EASY BARGAIN BUCKET kind of trip and travelled in by train from Dandong (border town on the Chinese side). I think this was a better option than flying; we got to see more of the country. So there we were in the Dandong Hilton, smashing the breakfast buffet, and before you knew it we were heading across the friendship bridge (the broken bridge is the one bombed by the US during the Korean War, and kept in all its bent-iron splendour for tourism). The other side of the bridge is a fairground, to give the impression that it's a vibrant country full of fun. The fairground more looks like it came from something out of Chernobyl, will never work in a million years and there were trees/bushes growing in it. This was pretty much how the trip would go: looks good on the outside but not so underneath. We arrived in the border town of Sinuiju and went through a two-hour (Asian style – nothing quite makes sense) procedure of customs, where we saw the more human side to their border guards (with their comically inflated communist-like hats) where one of them asked everyone but me if they had a camera, and then decided to look in my bag first, and inside was my GoPro on a pole. He took it out and exclaimed he'd asked me, when he hadn't. A short intake of breath came from everyone and then he comically tried to cosh me over the head with the pole, much to everybody else's laughter. Oh, how we laughed. Once that was out the way, some uniformed ladies turned up on the platform with some 'duty free'. Not the best marathon prep.



The train then slowly departed and made its way from there all the way to Pyongyang: only about 250km, but it took about 5-6 hours. It was difficult to tell, as the DPRK was still 30 minutes time difference from Dandong (and from its neighbour South Korea; this has obviously now changed). What was in between? I think everyone was excitedly waiting to see the real North Korea. It became apparent that in April, North Korea is predominantly different shades of brown. Brown fields, hills, trees (no leaves just yet) and not a plot of land

that seems to be used for anything other than fields/irrigation. There are no roads, just dusty paths. The train track ran parallel to the only main road out of DPRK, which went across the same bridge. There were very few cars, only the Chinese lorries that were using the route, and not many cars were around the clumps of houses we passed. Villages were small and sparse and many people were going about their business walking between villages or cycling between. We saw a few oxen working the fields but certainly no machinery – it all looked very simple and poor living. No animals, other than a couple of goats being herded – and of course some ducks in a field (to weed the rice crops, I think). There was no wealth, that was apparent. As we went through every station, above every platform were pictures of their dear departed leaders. Those were the most lavish buildings we saw. In every village we saw uniformed party workers, possibly the village rank of the army, the local police, but the uniform was the same that we saw from the border to Pyongyang. They were also female uniformed soldiers on every bridge/crossing. These were it seemed the bottom rank of the pyramid that we were starting to see (with the rural local population obviously being at the very bottom). After 45mins, even the most keen tourist had given up with their camera despite being told “no photo” – although there was lax policing of that request. You could see saplings had been planted along the train tracks, which I think they intend to become a barrier between travellers and locals. And the locals seemed equally as curious as we were. Everybody soon retired to their bunks for a snooze, chat and to drink their alcohol.

There was no sign of any wealth or industry until we hit Pyongyang, and I would say given my limited knowledge and time there, that their capital is not much bigger than any large town, but you literally went from two floor buildings and rural outside, to 30-40 storey buildings in the capital. At the station it was fairly nice and new, large platform spaces, rather than many platforms, which told you what you needed to know that whilst busy, it was more busy with people rather than trains. And lots of locals waiting for the North Koreans who had been in China, returning, and of course Chinese coming into Pyongyang (from Beijing, where our train originated) – as there do seem to be people travelling frequently between the two. And of course a load of tourists! Outside it was remarkably busy – cars and taxis transporting the local population about, it seemed to be in the more populous part of the city – but we were trying to almost too hard to look and not really taking it all in. It was a Saturday evening, but who knows what the North Korean working week is, or whether they were indeed travelling from work. We had a whistle-stop tour of Kim Il Sung square (where people were practicing dancing for the leader’s birthday celebrations the following weekend – not allowed near that) and also taken to a ‘local restaurant’. We were then driven the marathon route, and given some rapidly fading sights from the coach – as dusk was falling. We had an authentic ‘NK’ BBQ in Dandong the night before, but the food we were treated to was very average, bland, and in particular the meat was rather ‘leave it’ than take it. The good news was they had beer. We were then whisked back to the hotel, to pick up our race numbers and get to our rooms. It was Saturday night, and whilst the station was bustling when we arrived, the main roads of the capital were not. So much so that no traffic lights worked, to save on electricity – instead they have ‘traffic angels’, a much sought-after job apparently given to the most beautiful women, who direct traffic in the most regimented way. We stayed in the Sosan Hotel in the VERY lavish (in terms of area covered, rather than quality) sports complex on the edge of town. Not the well-known island hotel. The complex was quite large with large velodrome-like buildings, apparently one for each sport, such as table tennis and volleyball – which was their favourite. There were street volleyball courts along the marathon route, which were in use when we were running past. Outside these buildings there were ‘athletes’ doing squat jumps up three steps under the watchful eye of a coach. So they were active, if the complex looked half-deserted. From my balcony on the 27<sup>th</sup> floor, which had a low wall (I was like Mr Bean on the top diving platform), you could see into Pyongyang and the shooting range below.

The hotel was approximately 30-40 floors high, and was reasonably decent accommodation (3-star western equivalent). There was a bar and a souvenir shop, and our rooms had a

couple of English language news channels – one of which was English Russian Television. So whilst we weren't receiving DPRK propaganda, we were receiving Russian propaganda instead. They had an interesting take on the Salisbury incident. I don't think we ever had any Korean television, but perhaps a few Chinese channels. What was to our surprise though, was the fact that the Elite marathon athletes invited for the same race were also staying in our hotel, so we had a chat with them in the lifts, and also at buffet breakfast with them both before and after the race. It was interesting to hear the gamesmanship from the local authorities, in order to give the odd percentage to help the Koreans win the race. Which they did in the Elite races – most of the African runners dropped out. Back to the lifts, considering what happened to Otto Warmbier, and the fact we had western television, there were Korean floors and Western floors. So it was ultimately an offence for the locals to be on our floors and vice versa (I'm not sure how the cleaners coped). To help this there was a Korean lift in the lobby and three western ones. It took two trips up in the incorrect lift to work this out, as we were never told – although strangely the Korean lift still went to our floors, while some floors were missing on the tourist lifts. It seemed a really good idea to avoid any more international incidents by having it this way, but like most things we came across in Asia it was badly implemented. Given the organisation and the freely-available alcohol, and the fact that the majority of Westerners (even the marathoners) liked to stay up and drink, it is quite easy to see how incidents could happen.

We were up very early the next day as we had to leave the hotel at 7am for the coach to the stadium. The Mangyongdae International Prize Marathon (this was the 27th event) is a big date on the calendar. It's named after the area of Pyongyang where Kim Il Sung was born, and is part of his birthday celebrations. This really is a huge event, and has only been open to tourists for 6 years or so. We left a little late but were at Kim Il Sung stadium for 7:30am and it was a hive of activity. Unbelievably, the stadium was already almost full. It holds 50,000 spectators. There were lots of people still outside and arriving; these were mostly 'athletes' as there were several races – Elite, Amateur and juniors – to national standard, over shorter distances. There were probably over 800-900 runners in total; tourist numbers were well down. We were ushered into the big entrance to the stadium and told to regimentally line up in rows 8 or 9. We weren't locals, the Army or Workers Party people, we were western tourists, so it was like trying to get a load of 8-year-olds to stand in line in an orderly fashion. Through the entrance inside you could see all the locals clapping and cheering – most likely propaganda songs, and anthems that they've known all or their lives. Some blocks were army related, and others Workers Party, and others family, etc. Before we knew it we were being led out, under the banner of 'amateur 1', to a huge round of applause. The loosely-regimented lines soon become blurred to non-existent, as everyone got over-excited, waving, taking photos and taking it all in. We were led round the track and then onto the field (it was a 3G standard all weather pitch). Then there was an opening ceremony, with the minister for sport who read in Korean and there was also translation into English including "no film or photo". We then had the marathon anthem played and turned to see the marathon flag being raised. On to the start line with the elites, and national-standard kids of all ages. And off we went – the route was out-and-back, so 13.1 miles each way.

You could tell all the locals in the stadium wanted to be there because of the event it was; there was orchestrated singing and clapping, but comparable to singing the national anthem at any type of Western event. Similarly with the locals who were lining the streets outside; they too were there of their own accord. I know this because everyone outside was happy and cheering, high-fiving when the international athletes were cruising through, and some Westerners whom they don't see too often. Despite which, three hours later, i.e. the time when as a marathon runner you need a bit of support, Pyongyang had returned to normality and the streets were relatively empty as people went about their daily business.

We went out of Kim Il Sung Stadium, through the Arch of Triumph, through some lavish developments, past the Ryugyong Hotel (which is a 105-storey building and has never been

finished; it stands empty to this day and it's quite well known as it is shaped like a rocket), Kim Il Sung Square, with a great view of Juche Tower across the river, then it seemed to the outskirts. This was the hard part, there was a bit of smoke and industry out there. And a head wind. And slightly uphill. A lot of the African runners dropped out here, and at the turnaround point, which is where there was some gamesmanship (intentional or unintentional) with regards to making it easier for the Korean runners to turn and sending the foreigners wider and missing the timing mats (not good), then it was back towards the stadium. There were toilets along the route; the water was very sparse, but thankfully it was cold – about 4C.

The crowds were sparse on the way back, and it became a struggle. However, the pain and fatigue disappeared as you entered the stadium which was still full. And I had the last 400m – the whole stadium to myself. I did a lap in front of 50,000 people – who only cheered and waved in their own way, when I did. So on the back straight I tried to milk it. A fantastic, fantastic one-off experience. It was a cold day, and the crowd in the stadium had been entertained by at least one football match since I had set off. My mate won the amateur marathon race – and my other mate came third and both had a podium presentation, with the Minister of Sport giving out the medals, and a flowers procession/presentation. It was a surreal, bizarre and incredible experience, and one that probably could only happen in DPRK. We then left the stadium to make our way back to the coach. My mates had the medals and posies of flowers, and we freely mingled through the crowd of the people leaving. Everyone seemed to be curious about us as we were of them. There were lots of smiles and a few waves, but not much interaction. Later that evening when we were taken to a restaurant, as we walked in my mates were there on TV – their state TV – then the clip cut to the news anchor (not the famous one) – so that was a surreal twist to an incredible day. Maybe the Kim family were watching!?! Before that though, we had another whistle-stop tour, whilst the people on longer tours relaxed at the big spa complex. It's apparently huge, with wave machines, Jacuzzis, pools and more than ten indoor slides... and they were also mixing with locals. I was gutted that we missed out on that: Bargain Bucket Budget tour option problems!



After our tour we went to a Craft 'beer bar'. The beers never had names as such, instead they were numbered 1-6. I had a number two (beer) your standard tasting lager, while number 6 was a real dark beer. After that we left and headed back to the hotel. We drunk late into the night, drinking until around 3am. The English and Korean guides were still up drinking and talking when we left, I think they have to be the last to bed, for obvious reasons. The following morning we left for the station and the train back to China. At the station we were witness ("no photo, no photo") to a rather large troop movement. There must have



been 16 troop carriers, all at the station, and in the back of these were packed (overloaded) with young NK troops. It was almost like a scene from WW2, open back wagons, and a good 4-500 troops there. Some waved, some looked incredulous, some looked curious. It was a shame not be able to record that on film, but the military was a big “no, no”.

Now that I’m back, I feel you do have to get past the headlines, whilst balancing the fact that they do live in a heavily sanitised, regulated environment. Everyone I came across was part of the problem. The people of Pyongyang are towards the top of the pyramid. They are fairly happy – not that they have a choice. You look at it and could see how ‘regime change’ could affect a country so heavily invested in one idea – Juche Ideology. Nobody would know what to do. The American student Otto Warmbier travelled with our tour group – YPT. And he was warned like everyone that if you’re respectful, you’ll be surprised how open and relaxed your time there is. But he decided to steal a poster, and crossed a whole host of lines: desecration of an image of their leader, espionage, theft. He was facing six years of prison / hard labour. Nobody we came across from the English-speaking side believe he was mistreated in any way. That includes our tour guides and the UN guy (who has lived there two years). They think that he tried to kill himself. And nobody in Korea wanted a US citizen passing away on their soil like that – so they returned him home. The problem is Otto’s family were religious so didn’t allow a post mortem to be carried out, so that allowed the headlines to run away a bit. If we had done anything wrong, unless it was very serious like espionage, we would have been arrested and swiftly deported. We were getting vibes of hope with a positive future. Ask a guide how many people live in their country, and they respond with the population of both North and South Korea. They want and hope that they will re-unite the country. Our English guides stated to us a couple of times that North Korea might not exist as a separate country in a few years’ time (and not in a wiped Donald Trump way).

The only staged bit we felt was some dancing locals by our hotel on the morning we left. The people were all very real, and are devoted to their leaders. Because they know nothing else? There was a minimum of two guides, apparently in case one does a runner. They believe their leaders are very special, etc (outwardly and we were never going to crack the guides’ shell in 55 hours). They are so special that no ordinary foreigner is ever allowed to see the Kim family in the flesh, only on a screen. We had two sometimes three Korean guides at any one time. Junior, senior and one who seemed to overlook them.

Overall an amazing, fantastic, surreal one-off experience that is still sinking in.



## MY FIRST MARATHON (by Rotimi Oyegunle)

A few years ago, I lost a lot of weight through running. One of my friends was very impressed and remarked that he could imagine me running a marathon one day. I felt that the idea was a bit far-fetched as I only saw myself as a speed runner, not an endurance one. That remark from my friend came back to my mind when I heard that the ballot for London had opened in April 2017. I applied online for a place and then became apprehensive, asking myself, "What have I done?" You hear stories of endless hours of training required, often in the cold, running early morning or at night in the dark. I told myself the chances of getting a place were slim, so I shouldn't be worried as I probably wouldn't get in anyway.

Then came October 2017. I received an email confirming my place – there was no backing out now, the challenge needed to be accepted.

I'd never run 26.2 miles. Probably only a half marathon-distance in training, so I felt nervous about the unknown, as well as excited about the challenge. I wanted to be more than ready for the London Marathon so I decided to start my training a little early, in November. At this point, I only ran 2 or 3 times a week and I wanted to increase that to 4-5 times.

Training and recovery was definitely tough to begin with as my body was not used to the new routine. I had to slow down the pace of most of my runs and add speed work gradually. Every Sunday I would do a long run and as the weeks went by, I reached distances that I had never done before. For recovery, I had Epsom salt baths (ordering a 25kg bag!), had sports massages from Alan Dolton every 2 weeks (I experienced loads of niggles, old and new, in the legs) and occasional Pilates classes too. To get my body stronger I did strength training classes towards the end of preparation months. And to get rid of my nerves with the unknown, I watched a lot of YouTube videos and sought valuable advice during club runs from other members who had done marathons before.

The weeks went by at a steady pace, then suddenly the London Marathon drew near and the pressure was on. Many doubts started to come to mind; occasionally I would get reassurance that most things were coming to plan in tune-up races. Taper was difficult mentally, as I felt I still needed to do a bit more extra training.

Race day arrived and it was set to be the hottest London Marathon on record. There were several reminders from the organisers to adjust race goals and run sensibly in the heat. There went my goal of completing it under 4 hours. Plans had to change, so my goals became finish in one piece, run to feel and enjoy the day. All these objectives, I am pleased to say, were achieved. It turned out to be a really nice day with no major time pressure. At times it felt like a great day out with the good weather and the amazing atmosphere created by the crowds. My family were dotted around the course and surprised me by moving between several points of the route to cheer me on a few times more. Mentally, from around 18 miles I was really challenged. I didn't want to stop running so I took the advice of a friend to dedicate the last individual miles to particular family members. Then came the finale at The Mall and after running just over 4 hours, I wanted it to be over with; I held on until I got round the corner in front of Buckingham Palace, saw the end in sight and sprinted to the finish line.

Life post-marathon is really good; I've had a few parkrun PBs and inspired my young niece to take up running at school (she didn't like running previously). I still think I have unfinished business when it comes to the Marathon as my goal to run it in under 4 hours is still there. I may well have to do another one to tick that box off.



Rotimi after the race with his niece and nephew

## **LETTER OF THANKS TO STRIDERS (by Belinda Carroll)**

I have been a member of 'Striders of Croydon' running club for approximately 10 years. During this time, I have forged many wonderful friendships with members past and present.

I have found the club to be both welcoming and friendly and so helpful in assisting me in trying to reach my running potential and my goal of running marathons.

This year I was fortunate enough to be awarded a Strider ballot place for the very prestigious London Marathon, which I ran on behalf of Cancer Research in memory of my beautiful sister.

I would like to thank the club for this fantastic opportunity and will definitely be marshalling at future events to show my gratitude.

The Marathon training runs on Sunday mornings, offered to members, are invaluable and very well organised. I thoroughly enjoyed these runs (including those during blizzard-like conditions!) – so much so, that I have managed to secure myself a place within a group of new Strider friends to occasionally continue our long runs, hoping to maintain our Striders-acquired fitness levels!

Long may my running hobby continue with this amazing club.

Special thanks to Robin for his amazing commitment to the club, organising these runs to the point where he checks the routes before we embark upon them for safety measures. And to the amazing Andy for the fantastic support, leading our steady Strider group, week on week, without which we would have been unable to navigate these uncharted routes.

Happy running to all, and long may it continue.

Belinda Carroll



**Belinda (third from left) with five of her club colleagues, pictured at the end of one of the club's pre-marathon training runs**

## **BOOK REVIEW – FASTER ROAD RACING**

**(by Pete Pfitzinger and Philip Latter: reviewed by Alan Dolton)**

In the March 2013 issue of this magazine, I reviewed a book entitled 'Road Racing For Serious Runners', written by Pete Pfitzinger and Scott Douglas, which covered training for road races from the 5K up to the marathon. Pfitzinger has subsequently teamed up with a different co-author, Philip Latter, to produce a book entitled 'Faster Road Racing'. The most significant difference between 'Faster Road Racing' and its predecessor is that 'Faster Road Racing' only covers distances from 5K to half-marathon, and does not cover training for the marathon. It also does not include a specific chapter on training for cross-country races. However, it does include a couple of useful chapters on aspects of training which were only briefly dealt with in the earlier book.

Like its predecessor, the book is divided into two parts. The first part is entitled "Training Components", and contains the following chapters:

- Elements of Training
- Balancing Training and Recovery
- Supplementary Training
- The Well-Fed Runner's Diet
- Considerations for Masters Runners
- Tapering for Peak Performance

The second part is entitled "Training for Peak Performance", and contains the following chapters:

- Following The Schedules
- Base Training
- Training for 5K Races
- Training for 8K and 10K Races
- Training for 15K and 10 Mile Races
- Training for the Half-Marathon
- Training for Multiple Race Distances

The first chapter sets out the authors' basic principles of training, and comments that there are 'four primary types of training', which are:

- Long runs to build endurance
- Tempo runs to improve lactate threshold pace
- Long intervals to improve maximum oxygen uptake (VO<sub>2</sub> max)
- Short, fast intervals to improve speed and running technique

These should be supplemented by general aerobic runs at a moderate effort, and easy recovery runs.

The authors recommend that long runs should start slowly but that the pace should increase in the latter part of the run. So, for example, someone who races 10K in about 50 minutes should start their long runs somewhat slower than 10-minute-mile pace, but should finish their long runs somewhat faster than 10-minute-mile pace. In a contrast to Pfitzinger's previous book, they recommend that 'tempo runs' to improve lactate threshold should also involve varying the pace of the run. They recommend that a VO<sub>2</sub> max session should contain no more than 8000 metres of hard running, and that the duration of each hard effort should not normally exceed six minutes.

The chapter on 'balancing training and recovery' recommends that runners should do no more than four hard sessions each week, that runners should not do hard sessions on more than two consecutive days, and that where runners do hard sessions on consecutive days, the first of these should be a shorter faster session (such as a VO2 max session) and the second should be a longer slower session. The chapter also includes a brief discussion of massage, observing that 'the greatest benefit of massage may be in identifying tight or sore muscles and tendons before they become injured, and treating them accordingly'.

The chapter on 'supplementary training' recommends regular stretching. It recommends hatha yoga, but not bikram yoga which can cause overheating and dehydration. I was slightly disappointed that the section on yoga makes no reference to 'yin yoga', which many Striders have been introduced to by our yoga teachers Hannah and Chris, and which I find particularly beneficial. It also recommends strength training, including core training, and recommends that injured runners should try to maintain their fitness with deep-water running (also known as 'aquajogging').

The chapter on diet includes useful discussions of protein and hydration, although some Striders may be disappointed by the authors' recommendation that 'after racing, it is wise to rehydrate for at least four hours before consuming alcohol'.

I was particularly interested by the fifth chapter, entitled 'considerations for masters runners'. The authors observe that while younger runners may well 'perform a VO2 max workout, tempo run, speed session and long run all in the space of a week', older runners who try to do likewise are quite likely to suffer injury. They also comment that runners who take up the sport after the age of 40 benefit from 'the lack of accumulated wear and tear on their muscles, tendons and joints' and 'often enjoy a five- to eight-year window in which they continue to set lifetime personal bests'. They observe that the biggest problem facing older runners is the decline in VO2 max, and recommend that older runners should do regular VO2 max sessions – i.e. intervals of up to 6 minutes at close to 5K pace.

The final chapter in the first part is also the shortest, and discusses tapering for peak performance. The book observes that 'although maintaining some fast running is useful during a taper, it is not wise to give a supreme effort' and that anyone tapering should 'be careful when training with a faster runner because when they look so relaxed you can accidentally run way too hard'.

The second part of the book is broadly similar to its predecessor, and includes a variety of training schedules for races from 5km to the half-marathon, with different schedules for low-mileage, medium-mileage, and higher-mileage runners. It also includes 'base training' schedules showing how runners can safely build up their mileage from 16 miles per week to 30 miles per week, and from then to as high as 60 miles per week (which will probably be enough mileage for most Striders who are not training for a marathon).

The book finishes with a couple of appendices includes a very useful pace chart, which is a definite improvement on its predecessor because it caters for runners who race at 12-minute-mile pace, whereas the pace chart in the earlier book did not cater for anyone running a half-marathon in more than two hours.

Obviously this book, unlike its predecessor, is not intended for any runner whose main interest is the marathon. However, as an ageing runner who has no plans to run another marathon, I found this book to be even more useful than its predecessor, primarily because of the very useful chapter on 'considerations for masters runners'. The book explains why runners should aim to do some training sessions at lactate threshold pace and at their VO2 max, and I would definitely recommend it to other Striders.

## THE LONDON LOOP – SOUTH FROM COOMBE LANE TRAMSTOP

Most Striders who come on our Sunday runs will have seen some of the signposts which relate to the 'London Outer Orbital Path' (commonly known as the 'London Loop'). This extends for about 150 miles around London, from Erith to Purfleet. Our chairman walked the entire length of it (in eight stages of about 20 miles) during 2007. For those who want to emulate Robin and walk the entire length, I would suggest purchasing a copy of the book 'The London Loop' by David Sharp. But I suspect that more Striders will simply be interested in walking the sections which are within easy reach of Croydon, or using the Loop to do an out-and-back training run.

It is easy to join the Loop at Coombe Lane tramstop, from which one can head south towards Hamsey Green, or north-east towards High Elms. This article will concentrate on the route south. From Coombe Lane tramstop the Loop, and many of our Sunday runs, head east adjacent to Coombe Lane, before crossing Coombe Lane by the junction with Ballards Way. Our club runs generally head down Ballards Way before turning left into Riesco Drive: the London Loop takes a more scenic route into Heathfield Gardens before reappearing in Riesco Drive. At the bottom of Riesco Drive we pass through a gate into Bramley Bank. The London Loop takes the shortest route through Bramley Bank: our main group of runners generally follow this path, whereas our faster runners usually add a bit more distance by taking a fork to the right which gives a longer path through the woods before rejoining the Loop by the exit from Bramley Bank, at the clearing alongside Edgecoombe. Both the Loop, and many of our Sunday runs, then head south into Littleheath Woods.



Shortly after entering the woods there is a clearing where our Sunday runs usually split into a 60-minute group and a 90-minute group. The 60-minute group usually head west and leave Littleheath Woods by the junction with Queenhill Road. The 90-minute group usually head south towards Selsdon Park Road. The Loop follows neither of these routes: it heads south-west across the clearing and back into woodland, before turning left to join the path known as 'Vanguard Way' which has run from the north-west (bottom) corner of Littleheath Woods. The path usually taken by our 90-minute group merges with Vanguard Way before reaching and crossing Selsdon Park Road very close to the point where its name changes to Addington Road, near the junction with Ashen Vale. Ashen Vale bends to the right, but the Loop (and our Sunday runs) continue downhill along a narrow bridleway which ends at the junction of Yew Tree Way, at the northern entrance to Selsdon Woods.

Entering Selsdon Woods, the Loop turns right for a few paces and then turns left (heading south-east) up a steep hill which is very muddy in winter and is one of the toughest sections of our Sunday runs. After a section of level ground, the Loop then heads downhill to leave Selsdon Woods at the junction of Courtwood Lane and Bakerboy Lane. (Most of our Sunday runs do not follow the Loop quite as far as the exit: our traditional route turns right along a path called The Wend which stays in Selsdon Woods, heading southwards for a while before turning west and reaching the car park at the main entrance to Selsdon Woods, by Old Farleigh Road.) The Loop heads south, going up Bakerboy Lane, until it reaches Old Farleigh Road by the entrance to Farleigh Court Golf Club. Bakerboy Lane acquired its name in the eighteenth century, after a baker's boy making a delivery was robbed and murdered.

The Loop follows the road for a short while until Elm Farm, where it leaves the road and turns right down a rough track (heading west). This drops quite steeply downhill before climbing again, leaving the woods and reaching open fields at Mossyhill Shaw. Crossing a stile takes us into Kingswood Lane, where the Loop turns left (heading south). In the 1990s quite a few of Striders' long runs followed what has since become the London Loop from Elm Farm to Kingswood Lane: nowadays it is more common for us to enter Kingswood Lane at its north end, by the car park at the main entrance to Selsdon Woods. Kingswood Lane veers southwest and gradually becomes more urban as it enters Hamsey Green. The Loop crosses Limpsfield Road by the site of the old 'Good Companions' pub, which closed in 2012, and then heads west down Tithe Pit Shaw Lane before entering Riddlesdown Common. The Loop crosses Dipsley's Field and veers right, heading northwest and approaching Riddlesdown School, before abruptly turning left and heading down a slope to join a stony track which is the 'Old Riddlesdown Road'. This passes over a railway bridge carrying the line from East Croydon to Oxted, and then drops downhill to the Godstone Road.

Crossing the main road, the Loop then turns southwest down Old Barn Lane and passes over another railway bridge, carrying the line from Purley to Caterham. Old Barn Lane becomes New Barn Lane and the Loop climbs steeply onto Kenley Common, initially heading southwest and then veering to the south to reach Sunnycroft Farm, close to the north edge of Kenley Aerodrome, which was used by our Spitfires during the Battle of Britain.

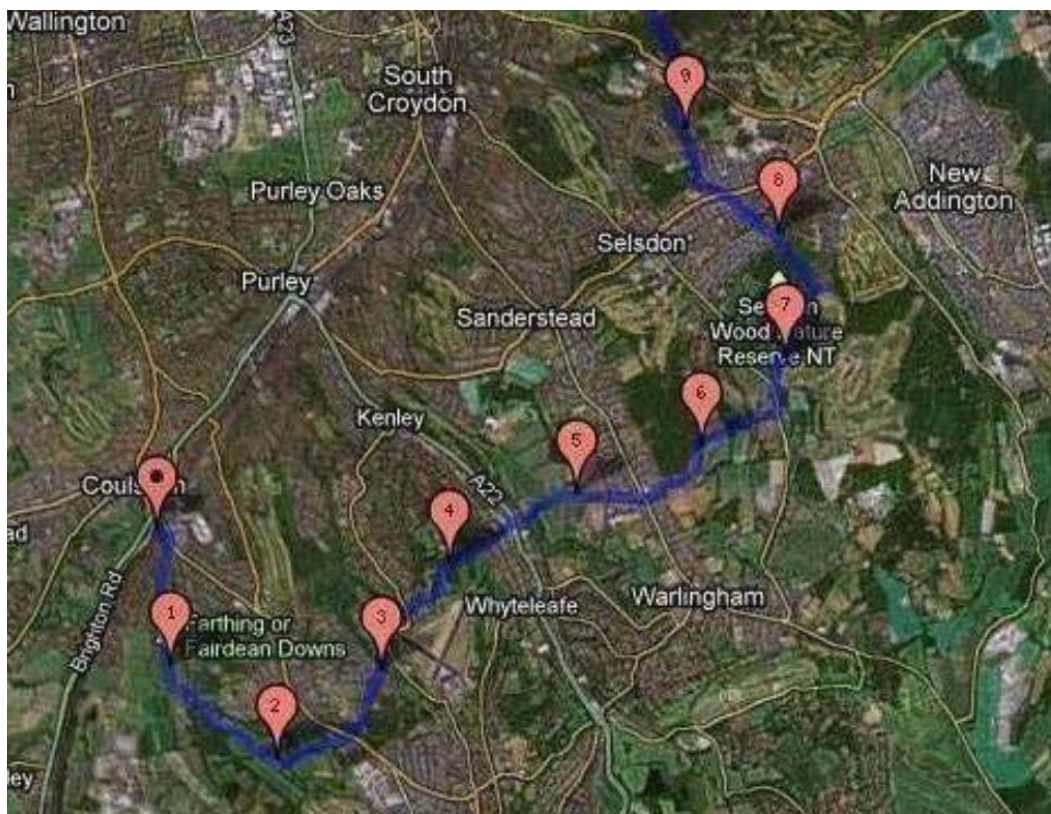
The Loop follows Golf Road before turning right and then left onto a path which reaches Betts Mead, where there is a small children's playground. A left turn takes the Loop to Old Lodge Lane, very close to the Wattenden Arms. Old Lodge Lane heads northwest towards Kenley but the Loop quickly leaves it, turning left over a stile and heading southwards to join Waterhouse Lane.



At the junction with Caterham Drive, the Loop follows Rydons Lane, still heading south to reach Coulsdon Common, having passed to the east of Taunton Manor High School. On Coulsdon Common the Loop follows a large track and veers to the right, heading south-west to reach the main Coulsdon Road, just north of the border between Coulsdon and Caterham. Crossing the road, the Loop continues heading south-west down Fox Lane to reach the pub called The Fox, which is a well-known local landmark.

The Loop continues south-west and drops into Happy Valley where it reaches its southernmost point, before veering right to head north-west and join South London Harriers' cross-country course. It heads uphill into Devilsden Wood and climbs quite steeply at the north end of Devilsden Wood before emerging onto Farthing Downs. This is a favourite spot for spectators at cross-country races, who can encourage the runners up the last part of what is quite a testing hill. South London Harriers' cross-country course follows a rough path heading north, but the Loop follows the narrow road, which soon begins to drop quite significantly as it heads towards the north entrance to Farthing Downs.

Anyone who is training for an 'ultra', and has been using the Loop as a training run, may prefer to turn round at the gate close to where the narrow road merges into Downs Road, and retrace their steps to get an impressively long and scenic run back to Coombe Lane tramstop. (The distance from here to Coombe Lane is about nine miles, so this will give an 18-mile training run.)



**The London Loop route back from Coulsdon to our Sandilands clubhouse**

By contrast, anyone who has been walking will probably want to continue along the Loop as Downs Road merges with the B276 (Marlpit Lane). The Loop then turns left into Reddown Road to the back entrance to Coulsdon South station, from which one can return to Croydon by train.

*(This article originally appeared in the December 2012 club magazine, but is republished here – in a slightly revised form – for the benefit of newer Striders)*

## THE LONDON LOOP – NORTH FROM COOMBE LANE TRAMSTOP

Following on from the previous article, this article takes a briefer look at the London Loop to the north of Coombe Lane tramstop, as it makes its way through Addington Hills, Pinewoods, Threehalfpenny Wood and Sparrows Den.

From Coombe Lane tramstop, the Loop is signposted as it goes north into the woods. The path reaches the route of our annual Switchback race just before the point where there is a short steep downhill section (which is followed immediately by a short steep uphill). The Loop takes a sharp right turn, briefly following the Switchback route (and many of our Sunday runs) but in the opposite direction, and heads east towards the Chinese restaurant, from where it takes a sharp left turn to reach the Viewpoint, which is a well-known feature of many of our Sunday runs. The Loop passes to the right of the Viewpoint. At the spot where the Switchback race route emerges from the woods (having negotiated the series of short hills which give the race its name), the Loop continues on a steep downhill path, which is safer for walkers than runners. It crosses the race route, heading north-east, at a point where a marshal is normally stationed. (At the 2011 race a shortage of marshals meant that nobody was manning this point: the result was that a group of about a dozen runners followed the London Loop, and eventually reappeared on the course after having missed both the “switchback” itself and the Viewpoint, shortening their route by about 600 metres.)

The London Loop emerges onto Oaks Road, and crosses Upper Shirley Road by the Sandrock pub, heading into Pinewoods. This road ends by the back of the playing fields of Shirley High School, and the Loop follows a tarmac path which turns left and emerges on the south side of Shirley Church Road, having been joined by a woodland path which Striders sometimes use on our Sunday runs to get from Addington Hills to Shirley Church Road. The Loop follows Shirley Church Road as it heads southeast. Just after passing Springhurst Close, a cul-de-sac containing some very expensive houses, the Loop heads off to the left, heading north-east into the woods. Striders’ Sunday runs frequently take the same turning but usually continue to head almost due east, heading towards some open land which used to be a golf course, whereas the Loop heads to the southwest corner of Shrublands before turning sharply right and heading southeast along a clearly marked path heading for the west end of Bridle Way. After a while the Loop leaves this path, turning left into Shirley Heath (and rejoining the route of many of our Sunday runs). The Loop heads into Threehalfpenny Wood, crossing the path which links Bridle Way in Shirley with Woodland way in West Wickham. (This is the point where many of our Sunday runs split, with those doing the one-hour run heading back along Bridle Way towards the clubhouse, whereas those doing a longer run continue in Threehalfpenny Wood and head towards Sparrows Den.)

Threehalfpenny Wood acquired its name just over 200 years ago. In December 1802 the Sanderstead parish clerk, Robert Rutter, disappeared. In 1805 his body was discovered in a pond in the wood, after a period of drought had caused the water level to drop. He had three halfpenny coins in his pockets, and until he was identified, was referred to as the “threehalfpenny corpse”.

After a short downhill section, the Loop turns to the left and heads north-east, passing a large boundary stone which marks what is now the border between the boroughs of Croydon and Bromley, and was historically the border between the counties of Surrey and Kent (before this area became part of Greater London under the 1963 London Government Act). This path eventually turns to the right and heads down quite a steep hill to emerge on the north side of Sparrows Den Playing Fields. The Loop heads east across the playing fields. At the easternmost corner of the playing fields, the Loop crosses the A2022 Addington Road and turns right to head due south (and uphill) towards St John the Baptist Church, which is a picturesque local landmark.



From the church the Loop turns left, heading east and crossing Layhams Road, from which it turns northeast along a path which crosses Coney Hall Recreation Ground. This path leads into Church Drive, and the Loop follows another path which crosses Gates Green Road and leads into West Wickham Common. Shortly after entering the Common, the Loop turns right and heads southeast, staying to the south of the main A232 Croydon Road. It emerges by the junction of Baston Manor Road and West Common Road, and then follows West Common Road as it heads southeast to reach the junction of Fox Hill and Baston Road in Keston. This roundabout is near to two well-known pubs, the Fox and the Greyhound.

From the roundabout the Loop heads east along Lakes Road, which takes us to Keston Common. The Loop passes to the north of a primary school and gradually veers to the right, heading south and passing to the west of two of the Keston Ponds. After the second pond the Loop bends to pass to the east of a third pond, leading to the A233 (Westerham Road) and to Caesar's Well, a spring which is the source of the River Ravensbourne. The Loop continues alongside the Westerham Road, heading southwest, until shortly before the junction with Heathfield Road (the B265), where the Loop crosses the A233 and turns left, heading southeast and uphill towards the Wilberforce Oak (which is now a large stump). This was named after Sir William Wilberforce, who led the campaign to abolish the slave trade.

From the Wilberforce Oak, the Loop continues southeast and heads downhill towards Holwood Farm before turning left into Shire Lane. It then takes a right turn into Farthing Lane, followed soon afterwards by a left turn into a path called Bogey Lane. The Loop continues heading east along Bogey Lane until this reaches North End Lane. The Loop turns left into North End Lane to North End Farm, where it leaves the road and turns right along a path into Blacklands Wood. The path continues east, emerges from the wood and crosses a golf course before reaching High Elms Road. Here the Loop turns left, heading north, until a car park where the Loop turns again to head northeast across High Elms Country Park. At Woodplace Nature Centre the Loop veers to the left, heading north. It crosses Shire Lane and continues north, passing through some woodland, before reaching St Giles Church in Farnborough. The next part of the Loop is rather urban, so this is probably the point at which most runners will want to turn round and head back towards Croydon, although walkers may want to continue along the Loop to Petts Wood station, from which one can catch a train to Beckenham Junction (and then a tram back to Croydon).

*(This article originally appeared in the March 2013 club magazine, but is republished here – in a slightly revised form – for the benefit of newer Striders)*

## COMPETITIVE HIGHLIGHTS: MARCH – MAY 2018

Sandra Francis had an excellent day in the British Masters Indoor Championships, at Lee Valley on 10 March. She won bronze medals in both the W60 long jump (with a jump of 3.39 metres) and the W60 60 metre hurdles, recording 14.40 seconds. Sandra became only the second member of Striders to finish in the top three in a British championship.

Striders placed sixth in the East Surrey League's annual road race, at Ewell on 5 April. Sam Hansen ran well to finish 16th, completing the four and a half mile course in 26 minutes 46. Matt Stone was 22nd (27:05), Andy Perks 26th (27:34) and Mick Turner 34th (28:45).

Alastair Falconer ran very well to finish third in the eighth annual Croydon Half-Marathon, held at Sandilands on 8 April. He completed the undulating course in 78 minutes 41 seconds, less than a minute behind the winner, Kieran Hayles of Sudbury. Striders' second man home was Andrew Aitken who placed sixth (82:52), while Tom Lawson was 11th (84:48). Niamh Vincent was the second woman to finish, placing 55th overall in 1 hour 40 minutes 38, while Linda Daniel was 133rd in a club over-55 record of 1 hour 56 minutes 40.

Striders had an impressive total of 22 finishers in the London Marathon on 22 April. In hot conditions, their first man home was Liam Redmond, who ran 3 hours 3 minutes 11 seconds. Striders' oldest finisher, Sue Atkinson, set a club over-70 record of 6 hours 13 minutes 28.

On 29 April James Bennett won the Olympic Park 10-kilometre road race in a new club over-35 record of 32 minutes 54 seconds.

The Richmond Half-Marathon, which incorporated the Surrey Championships and was the first event in this year's Surrey Road League, took place on 6 May. Striders' men did very well to place third in the team event. They were led by Alastair Falconer who ran very well to place 15th of the 517 finishers in a personal best 78 minutes 15 seconds. Club colleague Andrew Aitken also ran well to place 19th overall and fifth in the over-40 category (79:35), while Tom Lawson completed the scoring trio in 37th (83:18). Lyes Fridi was 127th (92:57) and Joseph Ibe 173rd (97:37). Striders' women placed eighth. They were led by Niamh Vincent who ran well to place 187th overall in a personal best 99 minutes 08. Nikki Javan was 245th (1.44:23) with Yasmin Anderson 418th (2.00:47) and Lucy Kulp 423rd (2.01:18).

Striders had 32 finishers in the Sutton 10-kilometre road race on 20 May, which was the second race in this year's Surrey Road League. They were led by Andrew Aitken who ran very well to place 24th of the 448 finishers, recording 36 minutes 42 seconds. Tom Lawson also ran well to place 37th (38:03), with Jamie Hopps 66th (39:46), Dave Vinton 68th (39:50), and Martin Filer 88th (41:01). Striders' women were led by Rachel Vinton who ran well to be the 25th woman to finish, recording a personal best 44 minutes 37. Joanne Campbell was close behind in 28th (44:39) with Niamh Vincent completing the scoring trio in 35th (45:36). Marianne Chua was 41st (46:45), with Nikki Javan 48th (47:29), Sophia Sachedina 50th (47:32), Michelle O'Mahony 51st (47:39), Amanda Hewett 66th (49:10), Susanna Lutman 73rd (49:32) and Lucy Kulp 76th (50:18). On the previous day, Rachel Lindley was the seventh woman to finish the North Downs Way 50-mile race.

The first Southern Veterans League match of the season took place at Ewell on 21 May. (The match scheduled for 30 April had been cancelled because of bad weather.) Striders' men placed fourth out of the eight clubs in the match, while their women were sixth. Paul Cripps won the M50 triple jump (9.95), while Steve Massey was second in both the M50 800 metres (2:32.0) and 3000 metres (11:13.1). Lorraine Hunte set a club W60 record of 36.3 in the 200 metres, while Sandra Francis set a club W60 record of 13 metres 90 in the hammer and placed second in the long jump (3.21).

## 20 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 1998

The 18th London Marathon was held on 26 April. Abel Anton of Spain won the men's race in 2 hours 07 minutes 57, just two seconds outside the course record set by Antonio Pinto of Portugal the previous year. The women's race was won by Catherine McKiernan of Ireland in 2 hours 26 minutes 26. Two members of South London Harriers ran well; Gill O'Connor placed 58th in the women's race in 3 hours 01 minute 18, while Carol McKinley-Evans was 63rd in 3 hours 02 minutes 10. Future Strider Helen Perkins, running for Wimbledon Windmilers, was 87th in 3 hours 06 minutes 12. (Helen married Neil Furze four years later and subsequently competed for us under her married name.)

1998 was Striders' third season of track competition in the Southwest London Division of the Southern Veterans League. The first match of the season took place at Kingsmeadow on 29 April, where both Striders' men and women finished fourth of the eight competing clubs. The second match was at Croydon Arena on 18 May. Striders' men again finished fourth, behind Epsom, Kingston and Sutton. However, the team were very pleased to finish three points ahead of local rivals Croydon Harriers. Striders' team captain John McGilvray led by example, setting a club over-50 record of 12 minutes 12.1 for the 3000 metre steeplechase. Striders' women also took fourth place in their match. They gained maximum points from the 3000 metres, thanks to second-claim members Maggie Statham and Gill O'Connor. Maggie won the A race in a club record 10 minutes 48.3 seconds, while Gill won the B race in 10 minutes 57.2, less than a month after running 3 hours 01 in the London Marathon.

The Surrey Veterans Championships took place at Tooting on 23 May. For Striders, Kevin Burnett won four silver medals, taking second in the over-55 100 metres (15.9), 400 metres (74.6), shot (6.08) and discus (20.45). He was also third in the javelin (19.60) and hammer (15.46). John McGilvray was third in the over-50 800 metres (2:24.0) and 1500 metres (5:00.6), with Colin Cotton placing fourth (5:01.1). Future Strider Alan Dolton was second in the over-40 1500 metres (4:41.7).

The third Southern Veterans League match of the season was at Kingsmeadow on 22 June. Striders' men had to settle for fifth place, but gained a double win in the 1500 metres with Bob Ewen winning the over-40 race (4:44.6) and John McGilvray winning the over-50 race (5:04.0). Former London Marathon winner Hugh Jones made a rare appearance for Kingston in the 5000 metres, winning in the impressive time of 15 minutes 37.8. In the same race John McGilvray set a Striders' over-50 record of 18 minutes 10.8, which was particularly impressive as he had won the over-50 1500 metres earlier in the evening. (John's record lasted for twelve years before being beaten by John Foster in 2010.) Striders finished the season by placing fifth in the final match, at Sutton on 20 July, where John McGilvray set a club over-50 record for the 3000 metres (10:27.8). Future Strider Alan Dolton, in his final race for Croydon Harriers, won the over-40 race in 9 minutes 56.7. Both Striders' men and women finished the season in a creditable fourth place.

The AAA Championships were held at Birmingham on 25 and 26 July. Croydon's Natasha Danvers won the 400 metre hurdles (56.27) while Judy Oakes won the shot (17.82) and Donna Fraser was second in the 400 metres (51.57). In August Donna competed in the European Championships in Budapest. She placed sixth in the final of the 400 metres (51.53) and helped the British 4 x 400 metre relay team to third place, behind Germany and Russia. Donna, Judy and Natasha all competed in the Commonwealth Games, held in Kuala Lumpur in September, where they were joined by a fourth Croydon athlete in Michelle Pierre. Judy, who had missed the European Championships through injury, won the shot with a putt of 18.83 metres. Donna was third in the 400 metres (51.04) and Natasha placed fifth in the 400m hurdles (56.39). Both Donna and Michelle helped England to second place in the 4 x 400 relay, where Donna ran the last leg in 50.2 seconds.

## 10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 2008

The Surrey Veterans Championships took place at Kingsmeadow on 24 May. David Batten won the over-55 800 metres (2:28.5), while David Hoben won the over-55 3000m walk (20:08.7). Both these performances were Striders' age-group records. Kevin Burnett won six medals in the over-65 category. He was second in the 100 metres (18.8), shot (6.41) and discus (20.43), and was third in the 200 metres (36.5), hammer (17.43) and javelin (15.70).

The third Rosenheim League match of the season took place at Tooting on 4 June. For Striders, Duncan Lancashire set a club 3000 metre record of 9 minutes 15.3 seconds, finishing a close second to Will Cockerell of Belgrave. The third Southern Veterans League match of the season took place at Ewell five days later. Justin Macenhill easily won the 5000 metres, lapping the rest of the field and setting a club over-35 record of 16 minutes 41.9 seconds. He also won the 1500 metres in 4 minutes 34. We gained maximum points from the 5000 metres with Damian Macenhill winning the B race in 18 minutes 49.3 and Bob Ewen winning the over-50 race in 19 minutes 27.6. We placed fourth in the match.

The fourth Rosenheim League match of the season took place at Tooting on 18 June. Yasmin Anderson won the women's 100 metres by one-tenth of a second with a personal best of 15.5 seconds. Natalie Osher placed fourth in the 200 metres with a club record 32.1 seconds. For our men, Matt Morgan had a successful evening, placing second in the 400 metre hurdles (70.4), third in the 1500 metres (4:19.7) and fourth in the A 3000 metres (9:30.7). Striders' women placed third in the match, while our men were fifth.

The Dysart 10 kilometre road race, which incorporated the Surrey Championships, took place on 29 June. Duncan Lancashire ran well to place sixth in a personal best of 33 minutes 57. The final Southern Veterans League match of the season took place the following day at Croydon Arena. Striders' men placed third in the match, and finished the season in third place of the seven competing clubs (for the first time since 2002). We gained good points from the 3000 metre steeplechase, where Darren Piper was second in the A race (11:43.5) with Grant Barnes winning the B race (12:01.6). Earlier, Grant was second in the A 800 metres (2:14.3). Colin Cotton placed second in the over-60 race (2:45.0). For our women, Maggie Statham made a welcome return to club colours, winning the over-50 women's 5000 metres in 21 minutes 52.3 seconds. Our women finished fifth in the match, just seven points behind Dorking, and were sixth in the final league table.

The fifth Rosenheim League match of the season took place at Tooting on 2 July. Duncan Lancashire improved his own club 3000 metre record with a time of 9 minutes 08.8 seconds, finishing fourth in a high-quality race. Justin Macenhill ran well for second place in the 800 metres, recording 2 minutes 07.2, while Matt Morgan was third in the 1500 metres (4:19.4). Striders' men placed equal fifth in the match, while our women were third. Yasmin Anderson showed her versatility with third places in both the 800 metres (3:00.8) and the shot (4.12).

The Elmbridge 10 kilometre road race took place on 20 July. Duncan Lancashire ran well to place seventh in a personal best of 33 minutes 40 seconds. The final Rosenheim League match of the season took place at Tooting three days later. Our women did well to take second place in the match and in the final league table. Kim Ford was second in both the shot (5.71) and the long jump, while Andrea Jeffries was second in the 1500 metres, recording 5 minutes 55.7. Our men placed fifth in the match and sixth in the final table.

The Olympic Games took place in Beijing in August. Three Croydon athletes competed. Natasha Danvers ran very well to place third in the women's 400 metre hurdles (53.84), while Martyn Rooney was sixth in the men's 400 metres (44.60) and Donna Fraser ran in the women's 4 x 400 metre relay.



**Veterans League action from June 2008: Colin Cotton in the over-60 800 metres**



**Maggie Statham winning the over-50 women's 5000 metres at the same meeting**

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