

Striders of Croydon

2008 Summer? Edition



The Thoughts of Chairman Gannon

It's all over now

Well in the words of Messer's Jagger and Richards "This could be the last time, last I ever write this article for you, I don't know" (With apologies to said Gentlemen!)

Yes folks after six years of having the honour of being your club chairman I'm standing down, packing away the ego and letting someone else place a steady hand on the rudder of the good ship Striders of Croydon. As from September Captain Jamieson, with your permission, will take command and will continue to steer the club in the successful direction that we have taken over the last few years while I shall return to the ranks of able bodied Seaman.

I feel it is worth mentioning that over the club's 25 year (almost 26) history I am only the 5th person to hold this position, something I think speaks volumes for and has added to the club's continued success.

Look back in Running

So what have been what I think have been the highlights and success over the last 6 years? Of course one of those would be the increase both in club members and the proportion of female members amongst this increase, which was something I felt we should do something about when I became chairman as the balance of runners back in 2002 was very balanced towards us male runners. This of course gives me the chance to bring out the old chestnut about wanting get more women in the club! I can still recall the excitement and feeling of satisfaction when we passed in 2002 the number of runners that belong to the club in 2001, which in itself was a record number. This feeling was even better when we broke the 3 figure barrier a year later, something which of course enabled us to claim yet another club place in the London Marathon.

Now not even my ego would put this success down to the person who was club Chairman at the time, more of a case of being in the right place at the right time and just making the odd turn of the wheel to keep the club moving in the right direction. In fact I would say that this success was due in part to the club moving from its original clubhouse in Lloyd Park, what a dive that was! Due in part to the strong committee that I have been lucky to be part of and of course in part due to you, the members of this club.

On the subject of the committee I would like to express my thanks to those that have been part of the unholy trio of Secretary and Treasurer as well Chairman during my watch. When I became Chairman those positions were occupied by Alan Dolton and Neil Furze, Alan of course had and still does have bags of experience and knowledge of the local running scene, which was of a great assistance at the time to this club. Neil, I compare to Gordon Brown (in his early days when he knew what he was doing!) as Neil prudently pulled the club out of the financial mess that the club was in when he took over to lay the strong foundations that the club enjoys financially now.

Both these gentlemen left the committee but thankfully not the club to be replaced by Chris Morton and Robin Jamieson. Both these gentlemen had served on the committee before taking on these roles so at least knew what was expected of them. An aspect I feel has been a strength of the committee as we always try, where possible, to bring people on in a perhaps lesser role before moving up to a role such as Secretary or Treasurer. Chris has helped take the club to another level by helping to introduce both the Owen and Sandilands Trophies while Robin has become Mr Striders of Croydon especially since taking retirement! Another person I would like to thank for his time on the committee in Kevin 'Pizza Man' Bannister. Although Kevin left the committee a few years ago there was at one time his house was the unofficial committee clubhouse! Kevin also began the tradition of proving food at the meetings, a fact I'm sure Chris will always be grateful for!



And the not so good? Well I wouldn't want this to turn into a whinge session but I do find it a sad fact during club runs it's become a habit that quite a few runners do not always turn back for their fellow runners but just hang around waiting for slower runners to get to get to where they are waiting. Some even, copying an ex-runner from the Netherlands, pretend to do some stretching while they wait, the cheek of it! The other thing I can't understand is why so many of you just turn up and run, not even having a shower after your run (Yuk! Minging!) let alone not use the bar for some post run recovery. Now at our old clubhouse I could understand this, after all, it was only place where you needed another shower after walking back from the showers and as for the bar, well that declined after the place was broken into so much and as the whole appearance was unwelcoming that not many people stayed and therefore not enough beer was drunk to make it worthwhile for any brewery to supply its beer. However while our present clubhouse may not be the Riitz but it is clean and tidy and has a good choice of beers that are regularly updated. Yes I know Mine Host looks like Bulldog chewing a Wasp but he's bark it worse than his bite, honest! Perhaps some of you could have a quiet word with me to let me understand why we unused the facilities at the club, please?

FLM & RfF

During my time at the Strider's helm we've also taken an active role on both the London Marathon and at the Race for Life in Croydon each year. This year saw us take part in our 3rd FLM as Marshals while it was our 6th RfL year both as marshals and being responsible for set up the course around Lloyd Park. For one event we receive an extra 3 places for the marathon and £150 as a club, while for the other we just get a Bacon buttie and the gratitude of over 3,000 woman!

On the subject of the London Marathon I see with interest that from 2010 this will no longer be sponsored by Flora but by Virgin Money. So cue various headlines along the lines of it being it being the first time for many Virgin Marathoners!



I would just like to express my thanks to all of you that have helped out over the years both at the Embankment and in Lloyd Park, for some of you that might for both events for which I'm ever so grateful for your support. I've also decided that after 6 years it's time personally to have a rest from RfL and of course it will not be my shout if we as a club continue to support this event. Personally I feel this event has become too big to be held in its present location that also might be too tough a course for many of its entrants and perhaps should look to move this to another park or open space in the borough.

So that's it folks! Only the AGM to steer the ship to in September to go and then it's me being whistled off the bridge for the last time, If you've enjoyed the trip half as much as I have then it's been a cruise and thankfully we avoided the Icebergs!

JG

Fred Lorz: Official Time?

"Fred Lorz was the first competitor to cross the finish line [at the end of the marathon at the 1904 Olympic Games in St. Louis]. He was greeted with cheers from the American crowd and Alice Roosevelt, daughter of Pres. Theodore Roosevelt, placed a laurel wreath on his head. Shortly thereafter Lorz admitted the truth. Suffering from cramps early in the race, he hopped into an official's car at the nine-mile mark and rode the next 11 miles of the race. He said he decided to run into the stadium and break the winner's tape as a joke."

[Lorz was promptly suspended from amateur competition (though he was later re-instated and won the Boston Marathon in 1905). The "real" winner in 1904, Thomas Hicks, had to be helped across the finish line after 3 hours, 28 minutes and 53 seconds — the worst marathon time in Olympic history. Indeed, so meager was the competition that Cuban postman Felix Carvajal ran the race in street clothes, stopped to shake hands with fans, visited an orchard, got sick from eating rotten apples - and still finished fourth!]

Editors Corner

As you will have read I seem to have been volunteered as your next chairman. After some hesitation I've decided to accept, subject to your approval at the AGM. There have been comparisons with a certain G Brown who became our leader unelected so if you think we could do with someone younger and fitter there is still time to volunteer, before the AGM.

John Humphries has offered to take over the Treasurer role again subject to approval at the AGM.

There will also be a vacancy for a newsletter editor. Anyone volunteers?

Treasurers Corner

Quickly switching hats. Club funds are in reasonable health but mainly because we have been running down kit stock and have built up a good fund for some new purchases and partly because the club won £200 from the roof club.

However underlying expenses exceed membership income simply because we now have to pay £5 per head affiliation fee to English Athletics and absolutely nothing to do with the Credit Crunch, Oil Prices or Food Shortages but quite a lot to do with the governments drive to increase bureaucracy whenever it can.

We have paid the £800+ fee out of club reserves for the last two years but will have to increase the subscription by £5 for next year to cover this extra cost. Revised subscriptions will be presented at the next AGM for your approval.

The Charity Fund

We recently donated the balance of the club Charity Fund which had reached exactly £500 to the Link School. The fund is now empty so a good opportunity to review who we should be sponsoring in the future.....

.. Money has come from the occasional raffle, football predictions, roof fund winnings and occasional excesses such as people paying too much club subscription but without any attempt to publicise the fund.

Can you propose a charity you support and would like to publicise and which we could focus our fund raising efforts on for the next few years.

The criteria is that it benefits a local organisation you are prepared to help publicise it and act as liaison, it benefits the younger half of the population and ideally it is about encouraging sport and activity generally.

If you would like to be considered please mail me with a brief description of your charity and why you think it deserves to be considered.

We are not likely to make a final decision on this until nearer Christmas and it doesn't exclude the Link or St Giles if someone would like to propose them again.

Robin – robin@jmsn.me.uk



James Macenhill ready to run and we don't have to pay his affiliation fee until he is 11!

Why does someone who runs marathons make a good student ?

Because education pays off in the long run !

After the Marathon

JP Lamarque

It's Sunday 6th April 2008, the day of your 1st marathon. How do you feel this morning?

Anxious with butterflies in my belly - what they call pre-race nerves. As Head of "Team JP-45103" Everton's main job was to make sure I would turned up at the start on time. However, it was a close "shave" – what, with the last minute toilet dash and everybody else having the same idea - but we just about made it!!

What was your best moment (apart from the finish)?

To see Everton (Team JP-45103) at the 12k, trying to do all the following at the same time: cheering me on, taking pictures, cursing the camera before running ahead of me for more pictures.

Your biggest surprise?

While taking on water and fruits at the refreshments table at half way, a benevolent lady grabbed me by the vest, kissed me on the cheeks then cheered me on wishing me the very best of luck for the rest of the race. That's what I call refreshing!! Those Frenchies!!!!

Your most memorable moment?

Three come to my mind. The first was when a runner on stilts overtook me on Rue de Rivoly and I tried to keep up with him. Stupid me!! The second was when I noticed two guys from the Beaujolais region pulling a chariot loaded with a couple of wine barrels; hopefully for them they were empty. But the best moment was when I saw a granddad, maybe 65-70 years old, doing the marathon with his bicycle by his side. Every time he came up to a lady runner he would honk his old-fashioned hooter, not only making them jump out of their skin but also motivating everyone else around him and raising smiles all around.



And your worst moment?

It would have to be at 35k where I started walking for 5k before someone shouted "Go on JP, it is all for a good cause." Suddenly, tears came to my eyes as I thought about to why I was doing this and had to slap myself and refocus on the race ahead.

What was your goal?

The time was not a great concern of mine since I learnt that my dad had again been diagnosed with cancer. My main goal was to cross the finish line to give him this medal on Fathers' Day. My target time was between 4hrs 45mins and 5hrs 30mins. Coming to the bottom of Avenue Foch and seeing the clock ticking towards 5hrs 29mins, I found just enough energy to sprint for the line and finish in under than 5hr 30mins.

What was your finishing time?

5hr 17mins 04secs

What was the key to your success?

Four months of hard labour, perseverance, listening and using the various hints passed on from different sources.

How did you celebrate?

With "Team JP-45103", at a restaurant called "La Gauloise", eating a breast of duck served with Parmesan creamy pasta and topped off with the most indulgent and calorific dark chocolate mousse I ever eaten.

Would you run another marathon?

Yes, most definitely!!!! Mmmm!! I'm already thinking about 2009 and why not running 2 in one year (Watch this space).

Any last word?

"It's all done in the best PAH-SIBBLE taste!" (Kenny Everett)

Isabelle Kita

Well I did it! 4.46.38, so just outside my target but taking into account all the stop start at the beginning I have to be pleased. Did the first half within the 4.30 schedule that I'd planned before back injury, but that was a bit optimistic and realised I would have to slow if I wanted to get round in a decent time or I'd probably hit the proverbial wall due to lack of miles in the legs, it was time to let the giant banana overtake me! Also broke my fund raising target so thanks to everyone for their support. I actually enjoyed the race and have already entered the ballot for next year, fool! Found it a bit too warm to start with so initial showers were a welcome relief, though as they got heavier and the hail started it got less funny. Only physical problems I had were that I tied my shoe laces too tight and didn't want to stop to loosen them in case I couldn't get going again and stomach cramps during mile 23, feeling pretty unscathed today, Monday, apart from very stiff quads. I know its a cliché but the atmosphere is electric, so many people turning out in bad weather to cheer us on and hand out sweets and fruit to total strangers is very heart warming. There was also great spirit and camaraderie between the runners apart from that sweaty man who thought he could run straight through me, he was wrong! I was 571st in my category, which is for very old ladies! 5738th woman overall. A couple of times I really zoned out as I think they say! Although I was aware of all the people and the sounds I also felt I was running in total silence, Keith assures me that's called running in the bubble! At one point there were some amazing kodo drummers by the course just as we went under a bridge and everyone seemed to be running in perfect time to the beat and what with that and the strange light due to the weather and the bridge it looked like some sort of video - spooky! As I was warned the last 4 or 5 miles were tough, it sounds like you're nearly there but then the realisation hits that actually 5 miles is quite far when tired and it becomes a bit of a battle, but at least it was a battle I won. Thanks again to everyone for their support and good wishes, again a special thanks to Keith the coach and all you Striders . See you at the start in Blackheath next year?!



Angela Taylor

My first marathon experience

Five days on and I still can't quite believe that I did it! My legs remind me that I did though, and the thought of doing anything more energetic than changing television channels sends a shudder down my spine.

What were the high points? Well almost everything, but here are a few. The start – where the buzz of adrenalin and excitement was almost too much to bear. Seeing my family just after the twelve mile point and then the noise from the crowd on Tower Bridge. The costumes – it took me a while to twig that I wasn't being overtaken by the same rhino every 200 yards, but that there was more than one of them. I didn't spot any of the Borats, but I'm told that one of them had a rather indecent costume so I'm a bit disappointed that I didn't see that one! The crowds and their support and constant sustenance (although I did draw the line at a wrapped Quality Street just past mile 21). Seeing the Striders banner on Hungerford Bridge and of course the finish!

My one low point – just past mile 13 when the thought of another 13+ miles was almost too much and I had to give myself a stern talking to in order to keep going.

I can't say thank you enough to everyone who turned up to support the race and once again special thanks to all my fellow steady runners (although given the finishing times some were a bit more swift than steady) for their constant support and friendship during training. And although beforehand I swore that this would be the one and only time that I would run a marathon, now I'm finding my thoughts drifting and wondering – could I improve my time with a bit more training, and what if.....?



Ian Campbell



I was disappointed as I was OK for 10miles and on 6.30 pace. Then my left hamstring gave way and I had to slow down. Then at about 14miles I got stomach cramps for about 10mins. From there on it was hang in there and try and keep some sort of steady pace. Slowed dramatically in the last mile and was glad to see the finish line.

Throughout the race I was taken aback by the phenomenal crowd support. Wearing your name on your shirt certainly helps. Coming round Cutty Sark all I heard was people screaming 'come on Ian' and you can't do anything else but run your heart out till the end.

Also great seeing the Striders banner at 25 and familiar

faces and knowing you have only got a bit further to go.....

Phil Mazur

The agony and the ecstasy of the marathon experience .

Ki massage, and *The Steady Group* demanding the masseuse hurt me (she did too).

Meeting Buster the 101 yr old man, who was going to be Jacqui's plan b.

Finding out Buster is lying and is only 94....only 94! Better watch that record Robin.

Running to get on a train, to take me to the start. Sue pointing out that on Monday the trains would be just as packed, but totally silent.

Queuing for the Loos and not wanting to go when I got to them. Wanting a pee as soon as we started (I think that's why my time was slow as its hard to run cross legged)

Running with the Maasai warriors.

The joy of running in the rain as opposed to 21 degrees of heat.

The noise of the crowd, to misquote the Human League.

Nick the Greek waving madly, soaked to the skin at Tower Bridge.

The Tower Bridge photographers huddled together and not taking photos as I dashed past them.

The smell in the area just after Greenwich...man the London Marathon takes you into some grotty places!

Thinking about how much healthier than the people stood in the rain drinking pints of beer at 10.45am I was; sadly they won't be suffering from the day's events two days later and I am.

The lovely people who marshalled (apart from that rough group at Hungerford Bridge) and all the sweets spectators gave me (forcing myself not to think about the number off differing urine samples that could be on that jelly baby).

Feeling good at 18 miles!

Wondering where the wall had gone at 20 miles.

Getting hundreds of marathon runners involved in an "*Oggi Oggi Oggi*" call back session in the tunnel.

Passing Jacqui on the other side of the road at the Highway.

Wishing for the Embankment, then it suddenly turning up.

Nick the Greek waving madly, soaked to the skin at 23 miles and screaming , " You can break 4 hours."



Steve Tyler

There is a saying in refereeing and business that if you fail to prepare, then prepare to fail. From the whistling angle, if you don't get yourself mentally right for a game, you'll often not officiate to the level you are capable of and if you don't get fit to referee, then you won't be able to keep up with play and your decisions will suffer accordingly.

It is now the morning after the marathon, and the lack of what I would term adequate preparation is evident in my quads. A poor start to my training, pulling a groin muscle when nicking a disqualified driver didn't help prior to Christmas and then tweaking a calf a fortnight before London when refereeing didn't help matters.

But that is by the by - the bottom line is that I did not do enough training to prepare me for the event – and knew it. Nevertheless, I struggled round – my stamina was okay up to the fifteen mile mark when I was going quite nicely. But the wheels came off the wagon from eighteen miles onwards and from then on it was an effort but what the hell?

Come the eighteen mile post, Sue Haynes (Striders of London club champion, no less) bombed past me and then shortly afterwards round the bend in Canary Wharf, Julie Shew. Their apparent ease of running epitomised their dedication over the past few months.

I did spot Damien Macenhill with a pained expression on his face – I was around the half-way mark and he was (not surprisingly) on the other side on the homeward stretch.

Special congratulations to Robin Jameson on his club record – again his dedication to the cause and helping out all other Striders was gratefully accepted by all who took part – both regular and the occasional attendees.

I mustn't forget those who martialled at Hungerford Bridge and Embankment Station especially during the heavy downbursts of rain that befell this year's event – at least the competitors had a change of clothes to get into at the end.

Now there is the small matter of Edinburgh at the end of May and I've just entered the ballot for LM2009. Question is, will there be an autumn sojourn to do the likes of Amsterdam again?

Big Nose



Suzy and Ian Yates at the Edinburgh Marathon

Race Reports

The sensible race reports and results can be found on the Striders website.

Midsummer Munro Half Marathon - Phil Mazur's

The route takes in eight tough ascents and includes at least 3000ft of climbing..... up and over Box Hill four times. <http://www.trionium.com/mm/mm-Images/297.jpg>

Phil's review of the race in Runners World

Overall score	100%
Would you do it again?	Maybe
Scenery	100%
PB potential	20%
Atmosphere	100%
Organisation	100%
Value	100%
Beginner-friendliness	20%

In short: Best darned half-marathon in the known universe!

In full: I did the Leith Hill half, finished on a high and thought I'd enter the Munro. By the time I'd finished London this April I'd done 3 marathons in 18 months and so I'd done nothing but train for marathons for what seemed like forever and was bored of running; I joined a gym and more or less gave up running.

Dr Rob's supportive emails frightened the life out of me so I tried to bottle, with a jokey can I bring a torch; Dr Rob's reply of you'll get round and bring a torch gave me no choice. And my goodness am I glad I didn't bottle -it was ace. Hardest race I've ever done -harder than Beachy Head, Tanners and other ultras I've done.

Brilliant scenery ; brilliant Marshalls and fellow runners; fiendish steps (which I started to look forward to as you could legitimise walking); great picnic and organisation. I'm wearing the shirt now. The 100 people who didn't turn up should be kicking them selves as since the race I've gone from being bored of running to looking for my next race. Thank you Dr Rob! And birthday wishes to your mum.

2	Justin	1:49:46
18	Iain H	2:05:11
56	Damian	2;19:50
107	Phil M	2:36;20

You might be a runner if...

- hearing the soundtrack to "Rocky" gives you goose bumps.
- you wear a black, plastic sports watch with your dress clothes.
- you can remember a time from a race 4 years ago, but you can't remember your friend's birthdays.
- you are not embarrassed to show someone where your hamstring "really" hurts.
- you know your resting heart rate, maximum heart rate, and exactly what your heart rate is at all parts of your run.
- you wear your running shorts underneath your work clothes so that you can quickly get running after work.
- you love shoes...running shoes.
- you won't drive by any running store without a quick look inside.
- you know exactly how far a kilometer is.
- you have more old dirty shoes piled by the door than a farmer.
- you've seen Chariots of Fire at least 5 times.
- you read each month's issue of Runner's World cover to cover within 24 hours.
- you get excited when you hear that there is a new Lucozade flavour.
- you not only know how you did in a race, but you know exactly how every other runner finished.
- you spend at least 25% of your income on running stuff.

Green Belt Relay 2008

Quotes noted by Mick Taylor

For a more complete report on the Green Belt Relay – see the article by Simon Ambrosi on the Race Reports page of the Striders Website

John

Got back to my office last night and found I had left my keys in the mini bus in the other bag, had to sleep in the doctors waiting room on his examination couch with just a sheet, I was bloody freezing.

Don

What an experience.. definitely down as one of the nadir's in my lifetime..... Not sure whether to tell anybody about the whole thing because of embarrassment!!

Bas

Had a really wonderful time with a great team, wore a smile on my face this morning (for a change!)..... some fun memories to take away..... especially Chris getting changed in the car park in his spare kit in the rain an hour before his leg was due to start..... and Mick Turner eloping with the Front Runners.... 'nuff said! We must do it again next year... and get all the legs in next time round!

Ian

Great time was had. I can safely say that Lullingstone to Tatsfield is a leg breaker.

Mick

Leg 9 on Saturday. Dobbs' Weir - High Beach. .The final hill. Others were walking, I wasn't. So thanks to Chris for always managing to find a little hill at the end of a club run.

Leg 21 on Sunday. Ripley - Walton Bridge. Feeling relieved my leg was flat and I wasn't doing Lullingstone Castle to Tatsfield.

The A414 - you had to be there - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A414_road

The various lifts I had on the Sunday to get to Leg 21.

Paula Radcliffe

At the 2004 summer Olympics in Athens, Paula Radcliffe failed to finish both the 10,000 meter event and the marathon. Shortly thereafter, Quaker Oats dropped her from its advertising campaign for Oatso Simple porridge and cancelled plans to film an ad showing her winning a marathon after eating the cereal, explaining that she was no longer eligible to represent the product. Oatso Simple's slogan? "It helps you go the distance!"

P. Diddy: Sean John Tracksuit

"Hip hop promoter Sean 'P. Diddy' Combs ran the New York marathon on Sunday in 4 hours and 15 minutes," Conan O'Brien announced in early November 2003. "Experts say that this is the first time in history a rapper has worn a tracksuit for a reason."

Roy Runs! - A Dog's Tale

Racing News from Club Mascot, Gordon the Greyhound

As some of you will know, my two servants have very different roles within the club. Susan, the female, is prey to fits of madness that result in marathon entries and running through London in the snow and hail. Roy, the male and race day chauffer, is more likely to be found in various clubhouses across the nation drinking tea and eating cake. A man after my own heart. But recently, probably after over exposure to the sun, we made an ill-advised foray into beach running. Gentle reader, prepare to weep at my misfortune.

It was my annual outing to West Wittering Beach. A day for a sophisticated dog-about-town to catch up with a few old friends, kick back and relax. Maybe do a spot of sunbathing, dip a paw into the sea and generally enjoy the company of my fellow hounds and the admiration of guest of honour, Annette Crosby. All was going well until the start of "The Games".



Last year I had been subjected to the indignity of running the 100 yard dash with Susan. The other runner in the household, she is clearly built for distance and not for speed, as our embarrassing just-about-mid-pack finish showed. My sprinting pedigree is legendary (two wins and two runner-up spots), so there was no way I could let this mediocrity happen again. As the start of this year's event approached, I felt sure we would gracefully retire for lunch at the appropriate moment.

It was not to be. As the starter assembled the runners, imagine my surprise to find myself guided towards the start line, rather than the refreshment tent. And by ROY. Surely some mistake? We left Susan half way down track, brandishing the camera and smiling wickedly.

Telling myself that it couldn't possibly be worse than last year and that, judging by the competition, we had as good a chance as any, I limbered up for the off. We started well, out of the traps quickly and with only the slightest mumble of "bloody hell" from Roy. Things were looking good.

Sadly, our competitors were lacking in sportsmanship and, seeing our good start and obviously fearing our superior speed and fitness, made a decisive move. About 30 yards in, one of my fellow hounds performed a cut up worthy of Andy Thatcher sprinting for the line. Diving in front of me and forcing us into the narrowest of gaps, the hound had pressed us into a position that had only one way out. In the crowded bottle neck and tangled mass of leads, there was only one direction Roy could go. Down. He crashed face first into the wet sand, bringing me to an abrupt stop.

I tried to carry on but I am not a sled dog and I couldn't pull Roy across the sand. I turned round and urged him to his feet, in the vain hope that we could salvage something from the wreckage. Manfully he pulled himself up and continued, limping and sodden, to the finish. Amazingly, we weren't last.



There are many who do not believe dogs are capable of emotion or expression. I'm here to tell you this is not true. Anyone could see the state I was in as we skulked back to the car. Our humiliation was not complete though. It was only on our return home that Susan checked the race photos. Claiming to have missed the incident completely at the time, she had managed to capture the whole sorry event on camera. Roy's retelling of the story (in an attempt to illicit sympathy) only served to cause Susan to collapse into giggles and mumble, weeping with hysteria "At least I stayed on my feet last year".

Next year I'm going to the beach with Jacqui Mazur. We can watch proceedings from the safety of my car rug, while the delightful girl tickles my ears.

The first time I ever ran with the Striders

John Gannon

Always thought it might be an interesting idea for people to write about the first time they ran with the club, what they thought about the club, why they joined and how the club has affected them and their running. Plus there might be some funny and interesting stories out there that we could share, laugh and about on those long winter training runs!

So not being of a shy and retiring disposition I thought I would kick this off as I always thought my first run with the club meet some of the above, well at least it was my first run. The other reason for telling the tale is to tell it before I forget what it was all about as it was that long ago.

Like many I has always been fascinated by the marathon, how it had come about all those years ago in Ancient Greece and they many tales about the distance since its modern conception at the 1896 Olympic Games. And like many I got into running while trying to keep fit for another sport, in my case, Football and to lesser extend Rugby. I had completed a few races, mostly 10K's but also 1 Half Marathon, Sevenoaks, now long gone, in October 1988. (Told you it was long ago!)

I decided to enter the ballot for the 1989 London Marathon, which was then sponsored by ADT and to my surprised I got in at the first attempt so apologies to those of you that get turned down for years on the trot. Once I got over the shock panic started to creep in so I read everything I could get my hands on with regards training plans, back then there wasn't the glut of articles and magazines like there seems to be now and of course this was before the Internet was worldwide popular and accessible so it was not like I could buy and download a training schedule guaranteed to get me around in a wonderful time from some running guru from an on line auction site.



"The wear pattern on your running shoes suggests that you watch too much TV."

Anyway I pulled together myself a schedule and started training in earnest around the 1988 Christmas/New Year holiday. Of course this was written down on paper, like what's Excel? In fact I think I might still have the schedule somewhere in an old shoe box but sadly I lost touch with Earnest, always wondered what happened to him. It was around this time I thought it would be a good idea to join a club that might have similar or single minded people, of course I knew of clubs like Croydon Harriers and SLH but they were for 'real' runners weren't they? Not for the likes of me. Thankfully I spotted in the sports pages of the Croydon Advertiser a small article about people training for the 1989 marathon were welcome to come along and run with a club called Phillips City Striders, who had some of their runners also training for the same event. Perfect I thought, strange name mind, so I rang one of the numbers listed with a guy's name of John Keen but only got an out of order ring response, good start I thought! Thankfully the other number rang okay so I spoke to the owner of the line, a young lady by the name of Michelle. (Well she was young then!) After being interrogated by little 'chelle about my running to date, what races and what times I had run them in (10K – 40 minutes 1/2M - 1.40) she informed me that the club meet Wednesday evenings and Sunday morning. 'Oh Sunday sounds good can I come along?' I asked to which the reply was of course, 'How long do you run for? Was my second question, 'Oh about 6/7 miles' informed Michelle. That's a bit short I thought, my schedule says I should be doing 13/14, oh I know I'll do a longer run, 10/11 rather than 4/5 miles, that I had planned on Saturday and that will make it up. I learnt painfully later that Michelle is the master, or should I say mistress of the understatement!

So I turned up nervously the next Sunday morning at the rather shabby clubhouse Striders shared with several other sports clubs in Lloyd Park by what is now the Tram Stop. Back then the clubhouse was half used for changing rooms for the local Football pitches while the other half came under the ownership of CASSAC, which was an association of sports clubs that Striders belong to. Of course that clubhouse was pulled down a few years back and there is a promise of a new Pavilion being built in its place, however at the time of writing it's just one big building site with some major digging going on! Michelle had told me that the start time was 9.45 but as I learnt later the actual start time was nearer 10 (something we would not tolerate

now!) I was one of the first there. This gave me the chance to observe my potential new club mates and what a nice bunch of chaps and gals they seemed to be! This social balance was upset somewhat as a rather loud red haired gentleman, who I could only describe as looking like ex NCO drop out, arrived and announced in no uncertain terms that as he was completing in the Malta Marathon in 2 weeks time that he wanted to do a 20 mile run and in order to do he was going to run to Westerham and back! Also if anyone wanted to join him they could otherwise they could suit themselves. I could see he was a man of great charm and wit so warmed to him immediately. Of course not everyone took up this wonderful opportunity but everyone agreed they would accompany him for at least part of the way.

So we were off! Being a newbie I was of course worried that I would either be last or at the back or even worst not be able to keep up! My fears were soon unfounded and although not pushing the pace at the front of the group I was reassuringly nearer the front than the rear. I was also comforted by the fact that every so often I could those at the front running back towards so no chance of losing contact with the group. This habit I found out later was a club tradition that from what I can tell is not practiced by many clubs surprisingly. As the run made its way up to Gravel Hill and out along Featherbed Lane I could hear people discussing that once the 45 minute mark was made they were going to turn round and run back, having run 80 minutes the day before I decided they were the group for me! However I fallen into the company of a couple of runners around the same age as me, who once we made that stage at, if my memory is correct was at the White Bear, talked me into running, in their words 'just a bit further' As i felt okay at this stage I agreed and we said goodbye to the more sensible runners.

This little bit further turned into a lot further but the miles seemed to slip away as we were entertained by an odd looking Scotsman, who could not only talk for Scotland but for the world! During this time I found out everything I would ever need to know about the club including the strange club name. (Started by people working for Phillips at City House in London Road who wanted to take part in the 1983 London Marathon if you must know, Striders? Well that was a popular name for clubs who were formed in the running boom that happened after the first London Marathon in 1981 and use to identify them from the more older, well established clubs that were



not so welcoming at the time for new runners wanting run a marathon) Before I knew it we were at the Limpsfield Road, half way between Titsey Hill and Warlingham for any of you that know that area, so basically miles from anywhere! Up until then I felt okay, not as good as I had done when we got to the White Bear but okay. At this point our happy group of runners spilt once more with our NCO chappie turning left and leading some foolish souls of to Westerham, which I reckoned as nearer than Croydon by then, while the rest of us, at this stage I think there were 6 of us, turned right and headed back to the clubhouse. Now up until this point the back marker we had all being turned back for, from the White Bear at least, was another sweaty Sock only thankfully not as talkative as his fellow countryman! However as we continued along the Limpsfield Road through Warlingham and Hamsey Green onto Sanderstead that gap between this chap and I became less and less as began to feel the tiredness of my run the previous day and by the time we had reached the pond at Sanderstead it was me that the group were coming back for and not him! I must

say I thought that this idea of always coming back for the slowest runner was a bit annoying when we first started but boy did I approve of it by then. I was pleased that the route back to the club from there was downhill at leastbut my legs didn't feel that pleased as we made our way back via the path that leads through Croham Hurst by the Golf course. My mind has blocked any memories of what route we took from the exit of the Croham Hurst Golf Course, I would like to think that was down Croham Road and then right along either Castlemaine or Croham Park Ave. However as I have no memory of this I think it might well have been up Conduit before back to the clubhouse at Lloyd Park so adding to my pain and torment.



The shabby clubhouse I had left some 2 hours previously now looked the like a Palace as we trotted/dragged ourselves over Coombe Road and into the park. The 6/7 miles mentioned by little Ms Understatement had turned into a 14/15 mile run, which was the most I had ever run at the stage of my running career, so combined with my run the day before I almost run a marathon over the weekend and this was only the last weekend in January with over 2 months to go before the marathon itself. Those of you that can recall the showers at the old clubhouse I'm sure will agree when I can best describe them as wet but after a 2 hour slog they were more than welcome. Afterwards I was disappointed to find that this Sunday ritual did not include stopping at a local Public House to replace lost fluids, boy I could have done with a Pint, so just drove home and spent most of the rest of the day recovering on the Sofa trying to avoid the demands that having a young family can bring.

So what did I think of my new found running buddies? What a bunch of nutters! Anyone that can have not only someone that wanted to run to Westerham and back but also find some people to run with them was definitely the club for me! I couldn't wait to go back the following Sunday and sure enough I did to the surprise of a few, who had though after my first run I would never be back and of course anything else Michelle told me from then on I took with a huge pinch of salt. I also found out when I went back for my second run that those brave/foolish souls from the previous week had indeed made their way to Westerham. However the trip back was not as successful and in fact most had run out of steam by the time they had got to Biggin Hill from where one runner stumbled across a Phone Box (remember them?) and having taken refuge in it, decided to ring his wife, reversing the charges of course, to ask for a lift home! Of course this final act ensured the run passed into club lore and not only because it was my first run with the club!



So there you have it, 20 years later (almost) still running, abet slower these days, still with the club and next September, free life membership! Woo Hoo!

Eight Essential Jogging Tips

1. Loosen up first. The ideal method is to throw back four fingers of scotch. If the urge to jog persists, double the loosening exercise.
2. Check your resting pulse. If you can't find your pulse, check the pulse of a loved one. This is sometimes called "playing doctor" and, with any luck, will take your mind completely off running.
3. Never run if you are a short person. Short persons are built too close to carexhaust pipes. The noxious fumes get into their brains and make them crazy and they try to bite buses, which can be pretty dicey, especially if the bus has not stopped.
4. Always wear - a) a bra, and b) a jockstrap. (Strike out where inapplicable). The worst jogging injuries result from flopping. Never wear both at once. At least not in public.
5. Children often taunt passing joggers. After a while, you will become accustomed to this and even grow to enjoy it, especially if you carry a golf putter and rap taunting children smartly across the back of the head with it.
6. Dogs can be a threat. If a huge, vicious dog charges you and lunges at your throat, say "There, boy down!". If that doesn't work, show him your membership card from the Humane Society.
7. Set your own pace. If you black out after five minutes, you are probably running too fast. If workman from the city come by and paint you green, you may be running too slow.
8. After jogging, check your pulse rate again. This time if you can't find it, you are quite possibly dead. Look at it this way: your corpse is sure in great shape.

Future Events

The Schedule for serious races is on the Striders website. – Other events of interest

One Mile Time Trial – First Friday of the month

We plan to start a regular one mile time trial on the first Friday of every month with starts about 7:40 after the social run. The route is one lap of the block round Sandilands. Starting at the lamp post near the club house and finishing at the letter box. The route is 1 mile +/- a few feet.

The details have still to be worked out but the aim is to reward those who steadily improve over the season

Watch this space



Richmond Park 10k trail challenge – Tuesday 12th August 2008

Supplied by Steve Tyler

Only a few weeks to Slow's final midweek challenge race of the season, a 10k with a difference in Richmond Park, meeting at Ranelagh Harriers clubhouse for a 7.30 pm kick off.

The difference is that it is cross country and you will have to find your way around the park to various checkpoints with the aid of a coloured map (supplied) – either opting for the easiest or shortest routes (the choice is yours). Well worth attending if you are not on holiday with the tribe – see <http://www.sloweb.org.uk/trail>

June saw them run a circular challenge from the Hawker club which saw us take in part of the Dysart dash route, our Clapham/Kingston riverside run in reverse and Richmond Hill before heading back hurricane force to the finishing line at the club.

The Sandilands trail challenge.

A Wednesday in August. I hope to organize a much simplified version of the above Slows Trail challenge round the hills and dales of Croydon next month. This would be an optional extra to the usual Wednesday run.

Its race round a variation of one of our usual Wednesday routes with a choice of a nominal 5K or 10k. It will require some map reading skills and reasonable knowledge of the area so not for everyone.

The Box Hill Bash –vineyard variant

Probably Sunday August 17th.

A variant of our annual Box Hill Bash – with a run over Boxhill, through the Denbies Vineyards, over Ranmore Common, Past Polesden Lacy and back. Followed by a swim in Dorking and Sunday lunch either at Denbies or the Watermill – to be decided.

20 YEARS AGO

LOCAL ATHLETICS IN 1988

Alan Dolton

The Surrey Cross-Country League completed its 26th season. Aldershot won all four Division One matches to win the league title for the 15th time in 16 years. Boxhill Racers, in their first season in Division One, placed second with Herne Hill third. South London Harriers won Division Two with Guildford & Godalming second and Croydon Harriers third. Dulwich Runners won Division Three, with Redhill & Surrey Beagles second and Camberley third. Striders did well to finish fourth. Their leading runner was Henry Galvan who was the first Strider to finish in all four races, consistently placing in the top ten.

South London Harriers won the Surrey Womens Cross-Country League for the first time, led by Caroline Letchford who won the final race of the season, at Brockwell Park on 19 March. Twenty years later, Caroline still runs for SLH under her married name of Walker.

Debbie Picott set Striders club records of 85 minutes 50 seconds in the Wokingham Half-Marathon and 66 minutes 19 seconds in the Newbury 10 miles. In the Watford Half-Marathon, Caroline Cahill ran 87 minutes 59 seconds. Twenty years later, these two still occupy the top two places in the club's all-time half-marathon rankings, and Debbie is second at 10 miles.

The eighth London Marathon took place on 17 April. Striders had five finishers, much fewer than in previous years. Founder-member Colin Golding ran well to record a lifetime best of 3 hours 05.52. Caroline Cahill set a Striders' women's record of 3.06.19. (This was to remain the club record for 12 years, eventually being broken by Jane Lansdown.) Striders' other finishers were Steve Page (3.51.03), Cecil Chisholm (3.54.30) and Linda Wells (3.55.59). Twenty years later, Linda still competes for us, although she is now known by her married name of Daniel.

Twelve Striders completed the Caterham Half-Marathon on 12 June. On a hilly course, Nigel Davidson placed 11th (80.25) with John McGilvray 12th (80.49) and Dave Langley 16th (82.29). The race was won by Redhill's cross-country international Bob Treadwell.

At Striders' AGM on 21 September, founder-member Colin Golding retired as club treasurer, having held the post since the club was formed six years earlier. This was significant because it meant that, for the first time since the club was formed for people working at Philips in 1982, nobody employed by Philips was on the club committee. However the club's name was to remain as 'Philips City Striders' for a further seven years.

The Surrey Road Relay was held at Epsom on 10 September. Boxhill Racers won with Herne Hill second. Striders entered the event for the first time, placing 20th of the 24 clubs. Striders' fastest runner was Nigel Davidson, who ran 15.44 for the three-mile leg. Earlier in the year, Nigel had become one of the first Striders to race on the track, setting a club 3000 metre record of 9 minutes 31 seconds at Crystal Palace. Nigel later joined Croydon Harriers as a second-claim member, setting 800m and 1500m times which are still Striders' club records.

The Croydon 10K was held on 16 October. Gary Bishop (Croydon Harriers) gained a comfortable win in 31 minutes 31 seconds. However there was a close battle for second place, with Striders' Henry Galvan challenging Harriers' Alan Dolton and Barry Cooke. Galvan began his sprint finish with 400 metres to go, but faded in the last 100 metres as Dolton took second (32.10) with Galvan third in 32.12 and Cooke fourth in exactly the same time. The first woman to finish was Kate Grierson (Croydon Harriers) in 37 minutes 15. Viv

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Hill (Redhill & Surrey Beagles) was second in 37.34. Viv now runs for SLH under her married name of Mitchell. Twenty years later, Galvan's time still stands as Striders' club record.

The Surrey Cross-Country League began its 27th season with matches on 29 October. Striders competed at Epsom Downs in Division Three, placing fifth. Striders were led by Henry Galvan (6th), followed by Ian Wallwork (22nd), Nigel Davidson (29th) and John McGilvray (45th). The Surrey Womens Cross-Country League began its tenth season with a match at Tilford on 15 October. Striders' women made their debut in the league. Sadly, although the Striders' club newsletter gives details of the men's results, it does not give similar details for the women.

10 YEARS AGO

ATHLETICS IN SPRING & SUMMER 1998

On 28 February the Surrey Cross-Country League completed its 26th season. Thames Hare & Hounds won Division One, with Herne Hill second and Aldershot third. Croydon Harriers finished bottom of Division One, while South London Harriers finished top of Division Two. Striders' men finished sixth in Division Three. Their leading scorer was Lee Morgan who won both the club's cross-country and road running trophies. Eric Parker placed second in each category, with veteran Bob Ewen third. At the end of the season, Lee decided to join South London Harriers.

The Surrey Womens Cross-Country League completed its 19th season. South London Harriers won three of the four Division One matches to retain the Division One title. Their leading runner was Emilia Danilova who won two of the four races. Dulwich Runners placed second in Division One. West 4 Harriers, in their first year in Division One, placed third. Striders' women did well to finish fourth of the 20 clubs in Division Two. Their team had been strengthened by the arrival of Jane Lansdown, a PE teacher who had moved from Suffolk to Croydon, while their other leading scorers were Elene Kayum and Diane Ballard.

The Croydon 10K was held on 19 April. Stuart Major (South London Harriers) gained an easy win, finishing more than two minutes clear of the field in 31 minutes 12 seconds.

Former Strider Lee Morgan, now in SLH colours, was second (33.36), six seconds ahead of third-placed Barry Cooke (Croydon Harriers). The first Strider to finish was Eric Parker who placed eighth (35.36), while veteran Colin Golding ran a creditable 36 minutes 56. The first woman to finish was Heather Fenton of Croydon Harriers, in 41 minutes 13 seconds.

The 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 (2.26.26).

1998 was Striders' third season of track competition in the Southwest London Division of the Southern Veterans League. In each of the first two matches their men's team placed fourth of the eight competing clubs. The result at Croydon Arena on 18 May was particularly pleasing, as Striders' men finished three points ahead of local rivals Croydon Harriers. Striders' team captain John McGilvray led by example with a win in the 3000 metre



Donna Fraser

steeplechase (12.12.1), while Kevin Bannister set a club veterans' record of 4.67 metres in the long jump. Striders' women also took fourth place. 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 (10.57.2) less than a month after running a very impressive 3.01.17 in the London Marathon. Striders' club secretary Michele Lawrence set club over-50 records in both the discus (11.91) and javelin (11.90).

In the third match, at Kingsmeadow on 22 June, Striders' men had to settle for fifth, 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. Striders also placed 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) while Alan Dolton won the over-40 race (9.56.7). Both Striders' men and women finished the season in a creditable fourth place.

In August Croydon's leading 400 metre runner, Donna Fraser, competed in the European Championships in Budapest, running 51.53 seconds for sixth place in the final. She also helped the British 4 x 400 metre relay team to third place, behind Germany and Russia. However at team level this was a bad year for Croydon Harriers' women: they lost their place in the UK Womens League after 13 seasons. In the Southern Men's League, Croydon Harriers finished 19th in Division One while South London Harriers were 22nd in Division Four and Holland Sports (whose team included some Striders) were 10th in Division Seven.

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Aristotle, Zatopek and running

If one can stick to the training throughout the many long years, then will power is no longer a problem. It's raining? That doesn't matter. I am tired? That's beside the point. It's simply that I just have to.
-Emil Zatopek

I think Zatopek is right, and his thoughts are in line with the philosophical thought of one of Aristotle. Zatopek's claim is that after running becomes a true habit of the will, an integral part of one's character, then the barriers to running are irrelevant. Aristotle argues along the same lines with respect to moral development. We don't acquire the virtues in the classroom, but rather by habit. We become just by doing just actions, according to Aristotle. The lesson is that if we care about living good moral lives, we should place a "running-like focus" on our moral growth as well. We don't become better runners unless we intend to do so and carry out our intentions. Similarly, we don't become better people unless we *intend* to do so.

PHILOSOPHY OF RUNNING

from "Pose Method of Running", by Dr Romanov

This could explain why Nick Kyritisis can run 113 marathons without injury.

As an enlightened civilization, the ancient Greeks were the first to recognize the importance of running which they reflected both in their love of sports and in their art. Illustrations of runners on Greek vases portray the inherent emotional and aesthetic value of running. On these elegant vases, the artists may have been illustrating proper technique for athletes preparing for the Olympic Games or may simply have been paying homage to great heroes of the Games (Fig. 2.1).

Regardless of their purpose, it is certain that these drawings are not merely flights of artistic fancy. Quite detailed in their depiction of running technique, the drawings clearly demonstrate the difference in various athletes' efforts while running different distances at different speeds. Interestingly, they depict a general similarity of their running styles. Whether sprinting or running long distance, the actual running technique is the same.

I believe these similarities were not simply the emotional or aesthetic fantasies of various Greek artists. The running movements of the athletes on these vases have convinced me that the ancient Greeks intuitively or observationally had found effective elements of running technique that are as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago.

Look at these drawings and you'll see quite clearly that all the athletes run on the front part of the foot without landing on the heel. As barefoot runners, this was the obvious technique for efficiency and to prevent injury. To my mind, this barefoot running style of landing on the forefoot is the purest example of the proper nature of running...and the Greeks knew it centuries ago.

I don't believe the Greeks lacked the knowledge to comprehend the essence of running. While they may have lacked underlying scientific knowledge, they displayed a strong grasp of reality, sharp minds, and that most uncommon of virtues, common sense. As acute observers of the world, the Greeks recognized and appreciated the harmony of human interaction with nature. With their holistic approach, they valued mankind's integral role in the world. It was a time when purity of thought and action were held in high esteem.



Ancient Greeks' vision of running in art

If Moses had worn Asics there would have been more commandments, and these are they:

1. The faster you are the less you should talk about your times.
2. Keep a pound in your pocket. One day you'll need to call for a ride.
3. All runners are equal, some are just faster than others.
4. If it was easy, everybody would be a runner.
5. When standing in starting lines, remind yourself how fortunate you are to be there.
6. Getting out of shape is much easier than getting into shape.
7. A bad day of running still beats a good day at work.
8. Don't talk about your running injuries. People don't want to hear about your sore knee or black toe.
9. Approach running as if the quality of your life depended on it.
10. No matter how slow you run it is still faster than someone sitting on a couch.
11. Keep in mind that the harder you run during training, the luckier you'll get during racing.
12. Races aren't just for those who can run fast.
13. The best runs sometimes come on days when you didn't feel like running.
14. Be modest after a race, especially if you have reason to brag.

15. If you say, "Let's run this race together," then you must stay with that person no matter how slow.
16. There is nothing boring about running. There are, however, boring people who run.
17. Look at hills as opportunities to pass people.
18. Distance running is like cod liver oil. At first it makes you feel awful, then it makes you feel better.
19. Never throw away the instructions to your running watch.
20. Don't try to outrun dogs.
21. Don't trust runners who show up at races claiming to be tired or not feeling well.
22. When tempted to stop being a runner, make a list of the reasons you started.
23. Never run alongside very old or very young racers. They get all of the applause.
24. Go for broke, but be prepared to be broken.
25. Unless you make your living as a runner, don't take running too seriously.
26. Runners who never fail are runners who never try anything great.
27. Never tell a runner that he or she doesn't look good in tights.
28. Running is always enjoyable. Sometimes, though, the joy doesn't come until the end of the run.

And Finally

When one considers marathon running one should always seek advice

It's important in life to reach out, to strive for greater achievements, to go for that greener grass that is on the other side of the fence.....

But one must also be careful.....

Sometimes you can reach too far!

But when you find yourself overextended and you're stuck in a situation that you can't get out of, there is one thing that you should always remember.....

Not everyone who shows up is there to help you.

Sometimes they'll make sure you run the bloody thing!!

