

Striders of Croydon

Summer Newsletter 2011



How The Handicap Finish SHOULD Look
(if the Committee got the handicaps right!)

Chairmans Corner

Well done to everyone who ran in the Marathons in the last quarter. With special congratulations to Margaret Faherty who gained the W60 record at Brighton and Sue Atkinson who took it back from her two weeks later at London. In a quick scan of the rankings I estimate that 24 women club members have run a marathon this season and 26 men which is not only around a quarter of the club members but also reflects the fact that we are getting closer to equality of the sexes in membership. At the last count we had 137 men and 97 women. I also get the impression the age profile of the club is getting younger although that just might be me getting older.

Despite our relatively large numbers the level of support for some events, such as track and field in the summer is falling. This and the change in the club profile has prompted us to think of sending out a questionnaire to all members on what you would like and expect from the club? what events should we or should we not be doing? What we could improve on? How should we communicate with you? and last but not least what you are able to offer in return?

We aim to get the questionnaire out to you mid August to return by early September so that we can discuss the feedback at the club AGM in late September. Please take it seriously it's your club.

Meanwhile two specific requests from Chris Morton elsewhere in this newsletter:-.

We would like to spread the administrative load around the club a little. Would anyone like to take on the role of Striders Manager for the East Surrey League? For info see Chris's article later on.

Also as we now have weekly swimming sessions and do few bike rides Striders is now affiliated to Triathlon England so that we had some insurance cover. If you enter a tri event you can now apply for reduced entry as an affiliated competitor. There are quite a few of you who enter the occasional tri event so next step would be to set up a Striders Tri section. Any volunteers? Again see Chris article for more details.

Meanwhile, since we can have the use of the pool for longer on Thursday the 17th The plan is to try our first tri. This will be very informal - more like the tri equivalent of the Sunday club run. Although we will record times for you. It will almost certainly be 300m swim, followed by a 7.5K bike ride and 3.5K run. I'll be sending out much more on this next week once the Race For Life is out of the way.

You should be reading this before Sunday 24th. In which case thanks again to everyone who has offered to help in this, now annual event. I think 30 of you are now down to help. Due to them changing their minds about the afternoon event and ever increasing demands of "Health and Safety" I think I will still be asking for a few more before the end of this week.

A few of us have managed some good long distance "off road" bike rides this summer and we have a couple of ideas for ones next year. Next one is scheduled for Bank holiday Monday and will be much shorter than our last one to Eastbourne so come along.

Partly because of bike rides and partly due to injury we haven't managed any summer away runs yet. I hope to organise at least one from High Elms sometime in August but if anyone else wants to take the lead and plan something please feel free to do so.

And finally – welcome to all those who have joined the club in the last few months. We recognise that we do rather leave you to work things out for yourselves and also I am afraid to say I haven't been running regularly enough recently to recognise who are new arrivals and who in fact has been running with us years!!

As we try and encourage as many of you as possible to stay after the run on the last Wednesday of the month we will use this opportunity to have a newcomers introduction session so you can meet the committee members and we can explain the various, events, leagues, informal events etc etc that we support. I am not sure whether this will happen this

month as we have just had the handicap races but it will definitely happen on the last Wednesday in August.

Good running to all our members and let's hope we get a summer sometime!

Robin

East Surrey League: Manager Wanted

Would anyone like to take on the duties of being Striders manager in the East Surrey League?

The role isn't particularly onerous but it would be great if someone could give the job some new impetus.

Basically the ESL comprises four events each season :

- It begins with a 5 mile cross country race in Lloyd Park, usually in late October
- Followed by a 2 mile cross country relay in Wimbledon Common in February or March
- Then a 2 mile road relay near Westhumble and Box Hill in March or April
- Finally a 4 mile road race at Ewell Ct near Epsom in April

The first three events all take place on Saturday afternoons, while the final event is usually on a Thursday evening.

The League is a mixed sex competition and has about twelve local teams competing. Striders have won the League just once but the number of competitors we provide has been declining in recent years. I believe that this is partly due to the growth of parkruns.

Other clubs that have fewer members than Striders manage to have far more people competing for them, so ideally our new manager could reinvigorate our involvement in the ESL.

The role mainly involves pre-publicity of events, encouraging members to take part, organising (and competing if you want) our runners on the day and distributing results.

If you are interested in this position please let me know.

Thanks
Chris Morton

Triathlon section for Striders?

By Chris Morton

Some of you may have noticed in recent committee minutes that the club has affiliated to Triathlon England - our national association within the British Triathlon Federation. We decided to do this because of the additional insurance we would receive that would cover club-organised swimming and cycling events.

By affiliating it also means members of Striders can apply for a reduced entry fee for triathlon events - much like we all do as affiliated runners for races.

However affiliation also means we can consider whether we want to develop a triathlon section within Striders. Quite a few local running clubs have done this recently - notably South London Harriers, Blackheath & Bromley and Clapham Chasers.

There are several issues we need to think about, among them being :

- whether we actually want a triathlon section
- how it would operate within the club
- and how it would be organised

These topics will be open for debate at our next AGM - probably 21st September 2011 - but before we (possibly) see a rush of hands to vote this through we would like you to think whether you could play an active role in organising a triathlon section. Would someone be prepared to act as secretary for the section - and take care of administration, highlight fixtures, collate results etc.? Or could you arrange training programmes or become a coach? Is there some other role you could fulfil in a triathlon section? If you have any thoughts on this please contact myself or Robin.

MADNESS IN AFRICA: PART ONE

26th Marathon des Sables

By Mark Bayliss

After running/walking/jogging 33k (17k on sand dunes) a dinner of dried fruit and nuts, not enough sleep on a rocky desert floor the last thing you need when you wake up on the 2nd day on the Marathon des Sables is a sand storm.



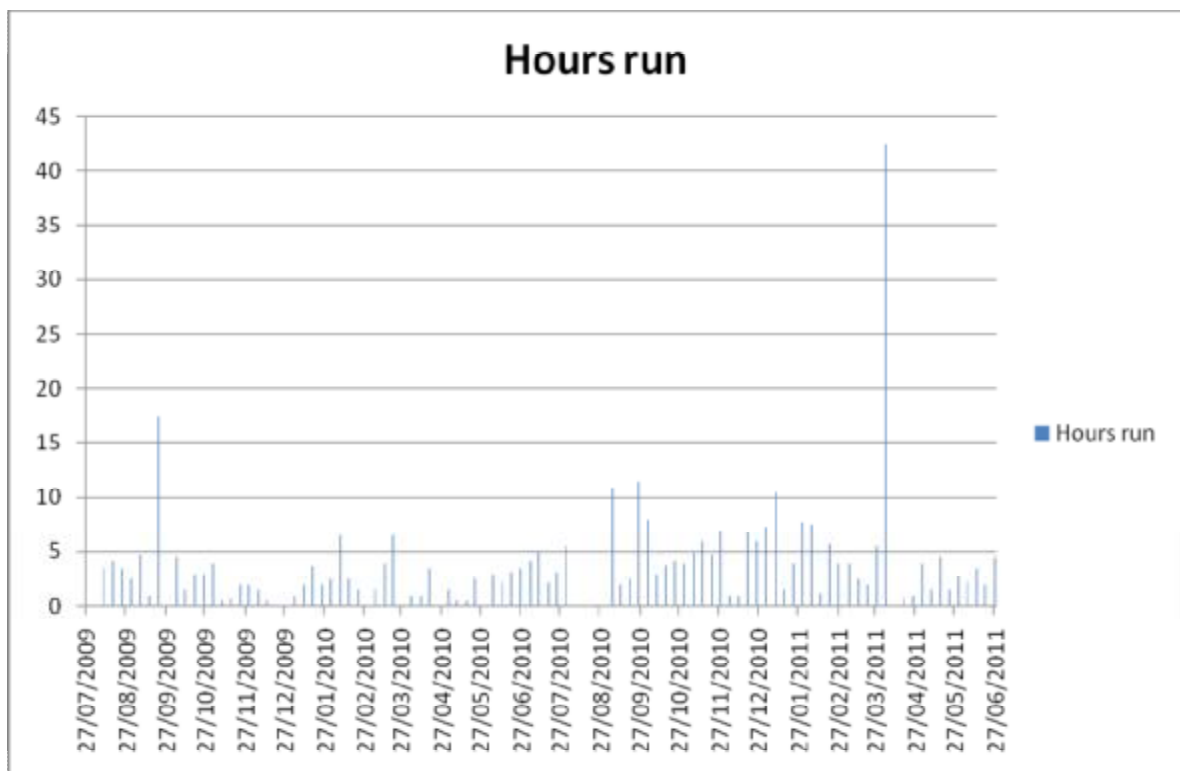
The idea to run the mds came back in the spring of 2008. I had swum the channel in September 2007 and didn't really know what to do next, this seemed like the perfect challenge. At 10am on Wednesday 2nd July 2008 I was at my computer paying the deposit. By the time I had entered my details and paid all 250 places had sold out, nearly 3 years in advance.

This started a long journey of training (not as much as I should) and buying kit, endlessly buying kit!

The race was always on my mind during the next 2 years or so but September 2009 I entered the Atlantic Coast Challenge, 3 marathons in 3 days on the coast path in Cornwall. This was a test event for me. If I could do this I could do the mds. I wasn't sure I could run marathons back to back but you soon find out you can and if you can do that you can run the mds. Simple!

I didn't really do much until January this year when I did a few ultras which were the key to my training. Country to Capital 45 mile, Pilgrims Challenge 66 mile in 2 days & London Ultra 50km.

Outside of these events I only ran on average 3 ½ hrs / week but did run nearly every week for months on end.



Basically anyone that runs at a running club on a regular basis can do any ultra.

I did a blog while I was away so if you are interested in the race in more detail you can check it out but this is a summary of the race

<http://markbayliss.wordpress.com/>

www.teambayliss.co.uk

26th Marathon des Sables 3rd – 9th April 2011 race review

250.7km – Longest mds to date

03/04/2011 – STAGE N°1 : DAR KAOUA / KOURCI DIAL ZAID – 33 Km – 207th 05.21.33



I had a good day today, jogged 13k and walked the rest. Felt good no problems everything was fine.

04/04/2011 – STAGE N°2 : KOURCI DIAL ZAID / JEBEL EL MRAÏER – 38 Km – 388th
06.11.17

Tough day, I jogged to 22k but then had to walk the last 11k. No real reason, I should have been fitter but I guess the weather got to me. The running conditions today were fine should have been able to run 95% of the course today – just didn't have it in me!

05/04/2011 – STAGE N°3 : KOURCI DIAL ZAID / JEBEL EL MRAÏER – 38 Km – 424th
07.13.57

Even tougher today, jogged well to check point 1 but then just couldn't jog anymore and had to walk the rest of the day – I should have been able to jog most of it but again for the 2nd day I just didn't have it!

06/04/2011 – STAGE N°4 : OUED RHERIS EST / RICH MERZOUG – 82 Km – 595th
20.27.21



We (Me, Mick & Marcus) decided to stay together for the long day. 3 of us together would be a better way to spend god knows how many hours. It was a long day, it was hot and hard to get your head round the number of hours you were going to be on your feet but we just kept on putting one foot in front of the other and only stopped at the checkpoints for a maximum of 15 mins. Eventually we got there and the rest day was so nice

08/04/2011 – STAGE N°5 : RICH MERZOUG / TAKKOURT N'TAKOUIT – 42,2 Km – 351st
06.26.05



Don't know what happened on the marathon stage, I felt great – didn't feel tired and didn't feel the heat. I started slow and got quicker – if only everyday was as nice as that.

09/04/2011 – STAGE N°6 : TAKKOURT N°TAKOUIT / TAZZARINE – 17,5 Km – 305th
02.14.55



Everyone ran well – it's was so much fun to have a nice short last stage and it was great to finish before it got hot.

General overview

I'm very pleased with the whole experience, I was a bit fed up that I couldn't run as well as I thought I should have on day 2 & 3 but I can't complain. The week was great. I understand why it's such a hard race. To be in the top 100 you have to be a class runner and look after yourself. To be mid pack worked perfectly for me in this race. I stayed in my comfort zone which I think was a very sensible thing to do. I have finished the race with no injuries, only small blisters and am more than excited about the next challenge in 18 months time.

1 bit of advice I would give anyone taking part in future years is do long walks or jog/walks with a 10kg bag. Long means between 6 – 10hrs. A 5 hr run without a pack is just not worth it!

When you go to the race, aim to have a 6kg pack – no more.

I was 435th and only ran 40% of the whole event – if you can jog/walk 60% you would be in the top 200 straight away. If you could run the whole thing you would be right up there. It's best to decide what you want out of the race during your training so you can tailor your training to the race. Everyone is different.

MADNESS IN AFRICA: PART TWO

Comrades 2011 by Lisa Jackson



Like the course itself, this year's Comrades (my third and my husband Graham's second) had its fair share of ups and downs. A highlight was meeting up with the members of the Fish Hoek Athletics Club for breakfast the day before. My Comrades mentor Nikki Campbell, founder of the alsoran website was there, as was former official Comrades coach Don Oliver, who generously gave me a signed copy of his new book, *Make Sure of Your Comrades Medal*. The breakfast also gave me the chance to catch up with old friends Amit and Neepa Sheth from India (Amit's the Indian Comrades Ambassador and the author of a fab book called *Dare To Run*).

Together with Graham and my friend Bridget from Canada I lined up at the start in Durban at 5am and we all had tears in our eyes as we sang the South African National Anthem. A group of Brazilians standing next to us were similarly moved and we all gave each other an encouraging hug, even though they couldn't speak any English. Then the famous cock crowed and we were off, shuffling through Durban's darkened streets. Unlike the Down run, there was no cheerful chatter - the idea that we'd be attempting about 40km of uphill running right from the start (and that in total we'd tackle a gradient that was the equivalent of running up Table Mountain two-and-a-half times) felt really daunting. I'd been battling painful calves for the three weeks preceding the race so was extremely apprehensive - I hadn't run for three weeks and so was unsure I'd even be able to run a half marathon, let alone 87km/54 miles that day.

Disaster struck just after the '86KM TO GO' sign - I tripped on a cat's eye in the road and fell heavily onto my left elbow and left knee (the one I'd experienced a lot of pain in since January). Instantly two male runners hooked their arms through mine and hauled me back onto my feet - and for the next few hundred metres, dozens of other runners kept asking me if I was OK. The pain was very intense but I kept saying out loud: 'I'm fine, I'm going to be fine,' until I started to believe it. I did immediately think of pulling out of the race but having come this far (overcoming a fatigue-inducing virus I picked up in Central America, beating two colds and the flu over the festive season, healing up an injured knee, falling on the same knee after my first long training run and then going on to have 10 sessions of sports massage and two physio sessions) I felt I'd invested too much to quit quite then.

Something else that helped matters was the fact that the pain in my elbow helped to take my mind off my aching calves! When I bumped into Neepa and Amit soon afterwards, I held up my arms like a surgeon who'd just finished scrubbing up for an operation (one of my favourite passages in Amit's book was where he described Neepa doing just that near the end of her first Comrades) to show them my injury. Neepa kindly gave me a plaster which fell off soon afterwards as my arm was bleeding so heavily.

Initially Bridget and I tried to keep up with the 12-hour bus (pacing group), but I soon realised I wouldn't be able to as they were running steadily up the hills for long distances and I couldn't maintain that pace. And so Bridget and I parted company.

The rest of the race is a bit of blur. The whole way I kept setting myself small targets, vowing to simply keep moving forwards and of course, never, never, never, give up: first I aimed to do a half marathon, then to reach Hillcrest where my sister and other supporters had come to cheer us on (her admonition to 'Keep Calm, Keep Calm, and Keep Going,' buoyed my spirits no end) then a marathon, then to reach the halfway mark before the 6 hour 10 minute cut-off.

I was secretly praying that I'd miss the cut-off and be forced to withdraw but I got there with about 7 minutes to spare, and so was duty bound to continue. Darn! Soon afterwards I was able to fulfil my main goal for Comrades: scattering my mother's ashes on the Wall of Honour, which sported three new plaques this year: one bearing my name, one my sister Loren's (a three time Comrades veteran and my main inspiration for ever having attempted the race) and one my friend Bridget's (her Dad sadly passed away on Comrades Day in 2010 while she was running the race). As I tearfully read the words on Bridget's plaque: 'In memory of Gerry Barrett. "Do your best and have fun,"' I felt renewed energy, and told myself that I should live up to his inspiring motto. I also scattered some of the ashes at Arthur's Seat, which was covered in pink roses. Just as I did so, a woman called Leonie ran past, which was an amazing coincidence as my mother was called Leone.

My next target was to reach the Ethembeni School for disabled children where I have two friends: Braam Mouton, the headmaster, and Nombuso Gumbi, a teacher. The impossibly glamorous Nombuso spotted me and ran over to give me a huge hug, as she'd done on all my previous Comrades, and then Braam too was embracing me and offering words of encouragement.

On I went, chatting to many other runners who were suffering just as much, if not more than I was. One woman had been sick three times that day, another was doing her first Comrades with her Dad and was mouthing 'Never again' all the way up Inchanga hill. Every time a bale bus crawled by I looked at the haggard faces of the runners inside and asked myself the question: could I truly say I couldn't go a single step further? The answer was always: No. And as I'd promised myself

I'd do my best when I was at the Wall of Honour, I had to keep that pact with myself and continue moving forwards, trying to walk with the 'pride and purpose' I'd learned from Don Oliver.

At 67km I came across Amit sprawled in the grass at the side of the road waiting for a bus to the finish. He'd had a bad case of food poisoning the day before and even though I suggested he accompany me, he was too weak to continue. By this stage I knew there was no hope of finishing before the final 12 hour cut-off but I told myself that there was no way I would bail - I grinned as I told myself they'd have to catch me first, tie my ankles together and throw me in the bus head first before I'd surrender.

For the final half hour of the race I was joined by a lone female runner who was also struggling her way up Polly Shortts, the final hill of Comrades' legendary Big Five hills. In a somewhat bizarre twist, we had about 20 bail busses, ambulances and paramedic vehicles accompanying us, the latter rather dramatically flashing their lights the entire way. My companion eventually succumbed to the cushioned delights of the bail bus but I persevered until 5.32pm when two officials suddenly sprung out of a car ahead of me and told me my race was over. With a huge sigh of relief, having covered 78.5km/49 miles, I gratefully sat down in the minibus. But my odyssey was far from over: just 1km down the road, another elderly runner from Benoni Harriers refused to get into the bus and so for the next 90 minutes or so, all 20 vehicles dutifully trailed along behind him for 7km!

When we eventually got to the medical tent, where I had to have my ChampionChip scanned, I was met by my sister and her boyfriend. Moments later I felt really faint and collapsed. When I came to, I was staring at the ankles of half a dozen medics and my first words were: 'I've been dreaming!' I think I went to a tropical beach for a few seconds. The medics threatened me with a drip but after all I'd been through that was one challenge too far and I adamantly refused. My punishment was having to drink about 10 cups of



(thankfully ice cold) Miranda sparkling orange drink - and having to prove I didn't have kidney damage by going to the loo. I thankfully successfully managed to fulfil both criteria and finally, at about 9pm, got the OK from my 12-year-old medical student Matt that I could go home. Just one obstacle remained: getting to the car, which was parked about 2km away. Those steps were the most agonising I'd taken all day.

And so ended my third Comrades - no medal, but a great day full of unforgettable experiences. A lovely bonus was finding my penguin hat

featured in two newspapers the next day. Graham succeeded in getting his back-to-back medal and was deservedly proud of his 10 hour 28 minute time - almost miraculously, he managed to shave 20 minutes off his Down run time. Bridget finished in 11 hours 50 minutes, after receiving a wonderful pep talk from Nikki Campbell along the way. I did say NEVER, NEVER, NEVER AGAIN at the end - but who knows, like Arnie, one day I may well be back...

MADNESS IN AFRICA: PART THREE

But at least this guy gets paid to do it...

Running up the Ngong Hills

Adharanand Finn heads to Nairobi for a dawn run up a mountain. Is he finally getting fit enough to keep up with the Kenyans?



A Kenyan runner jogs past a wind farm in the Ngong Hills. Photograph: Stephen Morrison/EPA

My alarm goes off at 5.15am. I sit on the edge of my bed trying to wake up. It's still dark outside. I'm in Nairobi, about to head out into the Ngong Hills to run with a group of Kenyans I've never met before. Right now it all seems vaguely ridiculous. I'm 37. An average runner. I've got a nice, warm, cosy bed. Why am I leaving it to try in vain to keep up with a bunch of stupidly fast Kenyan runners? I must be mad.

It's a thought process that runs through my mind virtually every time I wake up for one of these early morning runs. But today it's worse. I've been given directions to a side street in Ngong, a busy, run-down satellite town on the outskirts of Nairobi. At 6am, apparently, a group of athletes meet there every morning. That's all I know. Just turning up unannounced is a daunting prospect.

I drive up to Ngong and pull my car up on the side of the street. I turn off the lights and sit tight, listening to the Christian rap music on the radio. I'm about 10 minutes early and the side road is deserted as far as I can make out in the darkness.

A figure comes walking past suddenly, peering in through the window at me. I turn off the radio. I feel suddenly vulnerable sitting here in my car. I imagine what the runners will think when I step out of my car and walk over to say hello. It would be better without the car, I decide. I've got 10 minutes to kill, anyway. It would be safer parked on the main road.

I turn the engine back on, like a loud cough, the headlights glaring at everything as I turn the car and head back up into Ngong.

Once I've parked, I jog back along the edge of the main road to the side street. And sure enough, there they are. About eight athletes stand stretching in the tiny beginnings of morning, a red glow scratching the horizon behind them.

They all turn to watch me as I walk over. One smiles. "*Jambo*," he says.

I shake his hand, and ask if it's OK if I run with them.

"Fine, fine," they say.

"We're [running](#) up the hill," says one. That doesn't sound promising.

"I'll try to keep up."

"Up the mountain," he says. "But not fast. Easy." Like other Kenyan runners, he over-emphasises the word "easy", as though he means it's going to be the easiest thing you've ever done, like lying back on a sun-lounger as someone slices up a mango and feeds it to you piece by piece. Not like a run up a mountain in the cold dawn.

We set off jogging slowly and I slot in behind the front few runners. After a few moments we start our ascent, going at a comfortable pace. I've seen the Ngong Hills from a distance. They didn't seem that high, so I'm not too worried. I'll just stick with them for as long as I can, I think, trying to remember the way we've run so I can turn back if I need to.

After a while people start dropping off from the group. Is the pace too quick, I wonder. Perhaps the runners here are not as good as in Iten. They all look like decent runners, with their long, skinny legs and calf muscles like bricks inserted under their tights. My calves just don't look like that, even when I tense them as hard as I can.

After about 20 minutes we're still climbing, running past small houses and children walking to school. The dawn is in full bloom now, striping the sky in red and yellow. One of the runners turns to me.

"How are you feeling?" I'm fine, actually. My legs don't feel tired. I'm breathing OK. But I don't want to sound cocky.

"OK," I say. "A bit breathless." Suddenly I do feel breathless. Another of the runners looks at me over his shoulder.

"Is it OK?" he asks. They seem surprised that I'm still with them, and their lack of belief is sowing doubts in my mind. Before I know it I'm starting to struggle. I wonder what happened to the other five runners. Maybe I'm going too fast. Perhaps I should slow down and wait for them.

"Where are the others?" I ask, but almost before the words are out I hear the patter of feet as they run up behind us. The pace suddenly picks up and they all start pushing on. The path seems to be getting steeper. I'm done for.

One of the runners kindly slows down to wait for me. Up, up, up we go. Out of the houses and on to a neat, sparse mountainside.

On we run. Every time I think we must be reaching the top, it turns out to be another false summit. And each time the next bit is even steeper. I begin to labour like a 20-stone jogger. Tiny pitter-patter steps that barely seem to inch me on. And still it goes on. Past huge swooping wind turbines, like spaceships from a distant future that have landed silently in the night. Up more, along a path so smooth, so steep. And all the time, the other runner stays with me, quietly encouraging me.

Virtually every athlete I have met in [Kenya](#) has shown me the same kindness. Many of them are struggling to make enough money even to buy food. They live in small shacks without electricity or running water, struggling to make headway in a saturated field in which only a very few will succeed. Yet they do it so well, and with such dedication, that every one of them would be a champion in virtually any other country in the world, would be lauded and celebrated, instead of being just another nameless runner making his way along the roads and tracks of Ngong or Iten.

Yet in this struggle there is no resentment towards the hapless *mzungu* [white man] with the car and the money to shop in supermarkets and travel the world and eat ice-cream. Instead, all they ever show me is compassion. As a fellow runner, no matter how slow, they offer me only encouragement. It is quite humbling.

As we finally approach the great peak of Ngong Hill, the whole of Kenya seems to stretch out around us. Distant mountains poke up out of the dawn mist, as a huge orange ball of sun begins its own ascent up into the hazy, pink sky. The air is cool and fresh, breathing life into me with each gulp.

"It's beautiful up here," I say to the runner beside me. He looks around as though he hasn't considered this before. "Yes," he says.

We're almost at the top when the rest of our group comes trundling back down the slope towards us. "Turn around," they say. Relieved I turn my weary legs. It's hard to believe how high we have come. It's like looking out across the world from an aeroplane. Did I really run up this far? I must be getting fitter. Surely.

• *The book Running with the Kenyans by Adharanand Finn will be published in 2012*

And for the more sensible among us...

Bewl 15 by Steve Tyler

If members want a picturesque summer run, then look no further than Bewl Water on the Kent / Sussex border between Wadhurst and Lamberhurst.

Easy it ain't but a bootiful setting as Bernard Matthews was wont to say. There's adequate car parking in Wadhurst followed by a short walk to the assembly area or for one off runs by individuals or small groups, a visitors centre with car park and views over the water.

This is a first Sunday in July event and as such, a day when the weather is invariably very pleasant and so it proved. A windy, dusty track took runners down to the winding pathways at the edge of the reservoir with views of yachts and rowing eights enjoying themselves on this large expanse of water. But the water level was much lower than I had expected and so a hosepipe ban must surely be on its way!

The recent hot weather also meant hard baked tracks so road shoes were de rigeur as we circumnavigated the lake, keeping out of the way of cyclists and walkers. Thankfully, there was a fair amount of shade to keep some of the sun off – it was needed.

The organisation was superb with Lucozade and water being in plentiful supply and free cakes at the end. Very hard graft but well worth it. It's a venue that we could consider for one of our off beat Sunday runs in autumn albeit keeping to designated pathway at the edge of the water (13 miles) as opposed to going on road and gaining the extra two.

Spring Marathons 2011 also by Steve!

The problem with the London Marathon is that it is so damned addictive that you don't want to let it go. Unless you absolutely must, of course. I suppose that a broken leg or Anno Domini would be good excuses but fortunately neither came into play in April.

An injury on the Bridges Run in January saw my preparation hit the buffers and the stupidity of youth (and I use that term with a vast quantity of poetic licence!) meant that I tried to get back to running too quickly and as a result kept breaking down. And whilst I did manage the flat Tunbridge Wells course, that was the only long Sunday run until April.

Beverly at Playsport 2000, who has been nagging me for years and keeps reminding me that I am not twenty-five, strongly suggested that I did not run the big ones and I agreed with her especially when I had a sharp and debilitating hip pain at the beginning of March which curtailed my refereeing for the season. But a mixture of inertia and hope against hope that I might defy logic led to me not returning my numbers from Brighton and London and deferring to 2012. Not forgetting being too damned tight to lose money!!

The Croydon Half became the next target – very much make or break – and I ventured out with the slowies on the preceding Wednesday to do a single lap of the course. So far, so good. Come Friday, I took the slow group around the hills and not very far away. Again no problem. And so it was set fair for the Sunday.

The first lap was relatively easy, the second less so but I was still moving and no real niggles, just a modicum of stiffness which had dissipated by the Wednesday. I still hadn't deferred Brighton and perchance had to take some clothes to Mr Dry Clean in Selsdon. And for those who do not know the manager Rush, he's as barmy as Nick the Greek and is also way way over the hundred marathon mark.

He suggested that I run / walk Brighton as his friend had done something similar some time ago and he sewed the seed in my mind that I might have a go. So I decided to go against the physio's advice. And early on the Sunday morning – having been dressed in riot gear at Millwall “just in case” the previous day - I took the train on a gloriously sunny day to Preston Park for my maiden appearance at Brighton.

The course has its good and bad bits – the early part heads into town taking in The Pavilion and theatre before heading east to the likes of Rottingdean and an out and back course. I did spot a few Striders, most of whom were ahead of me namely Lisa Jackson who talked her way round the whole route, Margaret Faherty and Hannah Musk. The initial target was completed – running half but the heat took its toll in the second half.

The course headed generally westwards with a couple of loops to make up the distance before the most boring part of the course around Shoreham Docks, maybe the way the Canary Wharf was in the early days of the London. The finish was the same as the more established Half and 10k along Marine Parade at Black Rock – my time was appalling but immaterial and better than I had anticipated. And that led me to consider something similar for London.

The stage was therefore set for an act of stupidity even for someone with a fine athletic body like mine. Seven days later I was at Blackheath – not a good place for a peasant called Tyler to be. Quite rightly penned at the back, it took around fifteen minutes to cross the start line and head over towards the Sun in Sands, down Ha Ha Road and towards Woolwich. Eventually half way and part of the mission accomplished.

The heat caused all participants to sweat buckets unless you were one of the front runners who did not appear to be exerting themselves! The first Strider that I spotted was Steve Massey who was around the 23 mile mark whilst I was going in opposite direction around 14. And even then you had people on that side walking / taking a breather although they would all have finished around the 3.30 mark.

The plod past the Christmas Tree and through the sun trap of the Isle of Dogs and out the other side and the turn for home. Coincidentally, it was around the 23/24 mile mark that I saw two further Striders who approached from behind in a world of their own namely Victoria Legge and Holly Mann. I gained a second wind and tagged along just behind them for a short way before they disappeared amongst the throng but then overtook them just after Tower Bridge. They went past before the underpass and on the long sweeping Embankment bend, I spotted the Striders banner hanging limply from Hungerford Bridge. But I haven't a Scooby who was actually up there when I did so.

Sharp right towards Birdcage Walk and pushing on to the sign showing 800m to go. Running on the far right, Victoria was spotted in her Demelza vest and it gave me a target to aim for and to push on to the finish. Around the 26 mile marker, I went past and heard her equivalent of “Sod that for a game of soldiers” pushing on to the finish. I was quicker than Brighton by around twelve minutes but more knackered and eventually onwards to The Builders after a bath and a large plate of Shepherd's Pie and beans.

Fortunately, the Striders present were not members of the great unwashed. But then again maybe as no-one from other group present ventured to join us

It appears that all enjoyed themselves, red faces from the hot spring sunshine abounded – so what should the autumn target be? Amsterdam or Berlin and maybe Offa's Dyke or Hadrian's Wall in mid summer?

60 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN 1951

In the 1950s the league system which we take for granted had not yet begun, so competition revolved around the various championships. At this time the major local clubs were South London Harriers and Herne Hill Harriers, both of whom had had several international runners. South London Harriers were based in Coulsdon, which had been their headquarters since 1913. Herne Hill were using Addington as a base for their cross-country races. Both clubs also used the cinder track at Tooting Bec.

Croydon Harriers were a relatively small club. They used the Shirley Inn as a base for cross-country meetings, and did their track training on grass at the Coombe Lodge Playing Fields (which some Striders now use in the summer). For track meetings they used the grass track at the old Whitgift Middle School in Wellesley Road. The school relocated many years ago (and subsequently changed its name to Trinity), and the site is now occupied by the Whitgift Centre. After much debate, Croydon Council agreed to build the borough's first cinder track, at Albert Road, Woodside: it eventually opened in July 1953.



The 1951 Surrey Cross-Country Championship were held at Coulsdon, on a course organised by South London Harriers, on 6 January. The race was won by Charlie Walker of Belgrave, who also won the team event. The junior race was held a week later on the Ranelagh Harriers course at Petersham. It was won by South London Harriers' outstanding 19-year-old Gordon Pirie, following in the footsteps of his older brother Peter Pirie who had won the race the previous year. Peter and Gordon were the sons of South London Harriers' long-serving club secretary Alick Pirie. SLH had won the junior team event for five successive years from 1946 to 1950, but they lost this title to Herne Hill who had all their four scorers in the first eight, led by John Green who placed second.

The South of the Thames Cross-Country Championship was held at Reading on 10 February. Surrey champion Charlie Walker gained his second major win of the winter, and again led Belgrave to victory in the team event.

The Southern Cross-Country Championships were held at Cockfosters on 24 February. The senior race was won by John Stone of Dorking, while Aylesford won the team event. Gordon Pirie won the junior race, while Thames Valley Harriers won the junior team event.

There were no track leagues in 1951, but the Brockman Trophy, promoted by Herne Hill, was becoming established as the leading inter-club trophy meeting in the South London area. It was held at Tooting on 26 May, and was won by Herne Hill with Belgrave second and Thames Valley Harriers third. Herne Hill won five of the seven field events. Their only track win came from Terence Higgins in the 440 yards, in 49.0 seconds. Thirteen years later Higgins was elected as Conservative MP for Worthing.

The AAA Championships were held at the White City on 14 July. At the age of 20, Gordon Pirie made a significant breakthrough with an excellent run to win the six miles in a new British record of 29 minutes 32 seconds.

The Surrey Road Relay, which had been started in 1949, was held at Woking on 22 September. In a close race, defending champions Belgrave won for the third successive year, taking the lead on the fifth leg and finishing just fifteen seconds ahead of second-placed Herne Hill.

The South of the Thames Cross-Country Association held its traditional inter-club race at Farningham on 10 November. Herne Hill won the team event with three men in the first six: Mike Maynard was second with Alan Hine fourth and Ron Clark sixth.

The Surrey Youths' Cross-Country Championship was held at Addington, on a course organised by Herne Hill, on 1 December. The winner was Ian Boyd, running for Wallington Grammar School. Belgrave won the team event with Herne Hill second. Boyd subsequently joined Herne Hill and competed in the 1956 Olympics at 1500 metres.

50 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN 1961

The Surrey Cross-Country Championships were held at Wimbledon on 7 January. The winner was Roland Langridge of South London Harriers, who also won the team event. The youths' race was held a week later at Guildford. Croydon Harriers' promising steeplechaser Fred Stebbings produced an excellent run to win the race, with Mike Gowan of Herne Hill second. Mitcham won the team event.

The South of the Thames Cross-Country Championship was held at Brighton on 4 February. The race was won by John Snowden of Surrey AC (who were based at Motspur Park, and subsequently merged with Belgrave in 1982). Surrey AC also won the team event.

The Southern Cross-Country Championships were held at Ewell, on a course on Priest Hill which is no longer used, on 18 February. The senior race was won by Martin Hyman of Portsmouth, who also won the team event. Portsmouth also had the winner of the junior race in Tim Johnston (who subsequently went on to compete in the 1968 Olympic marathon). Shaftesbury Harriers (who took their name from the Shaftesbury Tavern in Hornsey) won the junior team event, while Mitcham won the youths' team event.

The Surrey 20-mile championship was held at Redhill on 6 May. The winner was Tony Towl of Herne Hill, in 1 hour 44 minutes 44. Herne Hill also won the team event: their second man home was Brian Shave who placed fourth in 1 hour 52 minutes 59. Fifty years later, Brian is still competing; in 2011 he won the Surrey over-75 championships at 800 metres, 1500 metres and 5000 metres. The Kent 20-mile championship was held at Hayes, on a course organised by Blackheath Harriers, three weeks later. The winner was Ron Gobey of Herne Hill in 1 hour 52 minutes 40. Ron is best known as the founder of the Surrey Womens Cross-Country League, and is still the league secretary after more than 30 years' service.

Turning to the track, the Inter-Counties Championships were held at the White City on 22 May. Croydon Harriers' international Nick Morgan represented Surrey and placed third in the shot with a putt of 15.77 metres. The Surrey Championships were

held at Motspur Park two weeks later. Nick Morgan won the shot with a championship record of 16.42 metres.

The Southern Championships were held at Motspur Park on 23 and 24 June. South London Harriers' experienced international Gordon Pirie, who had been training and competing in Sweden, entered both the one mile and the three miles. He won his heat of the mile in 4 minutes 08.4 seconds, but was spiked after 300 yards of the final and was unable to finish. However later in the day he did manage to win the three miles in 13 minutes 43.6.

The AAA Championships were held at the White City on 15 July. Gordon Pirie won the three miles in 13 minutes 31.2 seconds, while Nick Morgan placed fifth in the shot with a putt of 15.99 metres. A match between Britain and the USA was held six days later at the same venue. Gordon Pirie won the three miles in a new British record of 13 minutes 16.4. His British team-mate Bruce Tulloh of Portsmouth finished a close second.

The Surrey Road Relay was held on 9 September. South London Harriers gained an emphatic victory, finishing more than two minutes ahead of second-placed Herne Hill, who had led at the halfway stage. South London Harriers' team included Gordon Pirie. In his last race in an SLH vest, he ran the fastest leg of 13 minutes 29 (the course was slightly less than three miles).

On 20 September, in a match between the AAA and Russia, Pirie ran the final track race of what had been a very distinguished career. He won the 5000 metres in the relatively slow time of 14 minutes 15.6 seconds. His AAA team-mate, John Snowden of Surrey AC, placed second.

On 23 September Nick Morgan represented Britain in the shot putt in a late-season match against France. He placed second with a lifetime best of 16.95 meters, which was a Croydon club record. Fifty years later, it is still the Croydon club record (and is the longest-standing record in the club's books).

40 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN 1971

The Surrey Cross-Country Championships were held at Wimbledon on 2 January. The senior race was won by Bob Holt of Hercules-Wimbledon in 39 minutes 13, fourteen seconds ahead of club colleague Mike Beevor. Hercules-Wimbledon won the team event with Belgrave second. South London Harriers placed third: they were led by John Roberts who finished third in 39 minutes 36, with Bob Gevers fourth in exactly 40 minutes and Jon Rix twelfth (41.28). Mitcham placed fourth with Ranelagh fifth and Croydon Harriers sixth. Croydon's team was led by their 22-year-old marathon international Don Faircloth, who placed seventh in 40 minutes 20. Fred Stebbings was 11th (41.25) with Peter Richardson 44th (44.18).

A few of the runners are still competing as veterans forty years later. The most prominent of these was Steve Badgery who finished tenth: he was then running for Mitcham but subsequently changed clubs to Hercules-Wimbledon. Stan Allen of Herne Hill was 40th: he no longer competes but still coaches at Tooting and is a regular spectator at Rosenheim League matches there. John Bicourt of Belgrave was a surprising way down the field in 67th: he subsequently became an international steeplechaser and now coaches the event. Francis Upcott of South London Harriers was 83rd. Pete Mulholland of Hercules-Wimbledon was 88th: he no longer competes

but is active as a journalist, reporting on athletics for the South London Press. Bob Belmore of Guildford was 104th: he is now the team manager for Veterans AC.

The junior race, over five miles, was won by Bernie Ford of Aldershot. He went on to become an international at 10000 metres and ran in the 1980 Olympic marathon in Moscow. Future Strider Peter Yarlett finished 21st in the colours of Croydon Harriers. Aldershot won the team event with Epsom second.

The first three finishers in the youths' race, over three miles, were all from Belgrave. It is interesting to note that none of them went on to win the Surrey senior title, whereas the fifth-placed runner, Bob Treadwell of Surrey Beagles, went on to win the senior championship seven times.

The Surrey Cross-Country League completed its ninth season. Belgrave won Division One for the second successive year, with Hercules-Wimbledon second. South London Harriers and Croydon Harriers both retained their Division One status, while Walton were relegated to Division Two. Aldershot had been allowed to enter the league for the first time, despite being based in Hampshire rather than Surrey. They had showed their strength in the first match at Epsom in October, when all their scoring ten finished in the first 17. They went on to win all four of the Division Two matches. Herne Hill, who had been relegated from Division One the previous year, finished second.

On the track, the AAA Championships were held at Crystal Palace for the first time, after several years at the White City. Paul Nihill, who lived in Addiscombe and competed for Surrey Walking Club, won the 3000 metre walk for the second successive year, in 12 minutes 08.4 seconds.

The British Athletic League completed its third season. Thames Valley Harriers (based in West London) won Division One for the second successive year, with Birchfield Harriers (based in Birmingham) second and Cardiff third. Brighton won Division Two with Wolverhampton second. Polytechnic Harriers won Division Three. They were based in Chiswick and their team included hurdler David Barrington; forty years later, he still competes for Kingston in the Veterans League. Reading, who had won the Southern League the previous year, finished second. Croydon Harriers, who were enjoying the best period in their history, finished third, while their local rivals Blackheath were relegated for the third successive year. The League had expanded to four divisions for the first time: Swansea won Division Four.

Enfield won Division One of the Southern League with Hercules-Wimbledon second. Both clubs defeated their northern and midland rivals in the British League Qualifying Match. Croydon Harriers won the Rosenheim League by just one point from Herne Hill. Sutton & Cheam were third with Mitcham fourth and South London Harriers fifth.

25 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 1986

The UK Championships were held at Cwmbran on the last weekend in May. Croydon Harriers' shot putter Judy Oakes won her event with a new UK record of exactly 19 metres. Her club colleague Helen Barnett placed third in the 400 metres (53.46), while Mary Berkeley placed fourth in the long jump (6.20).

The Caterham Half-Marathon took place on 8 June. The race was won by Bob Treadwell of Surrey Beagles, in 69 minutes 37 seconds. Striders' Simon Morris was the first veteran to finish, in 74 minutes 29 seconds. This appears to be the first occasion that a member of Striders made the results pages of 'Athletics Weekly' while representing Striders. (The first Strider to have made the results pages of 'Athletics Weekly' appears to have been Peter Yarlett in the 1970s, running for Croydon Harriers before Striders were formed.)



The Surrey Schools Championships took place at Motspur Park on 14 June. Among the Croydon winners were David McKenzie in the under-17 boys' 400 metres (49.9); Karen Sutton in the under-17 girls' 1500 metres (4.44.8); Donna Fraser in the under-15 girls' 200 metres (26.8), and Mark Purser in the under-15 boys' 80 metre hurdles (12.2).

Two weeks later, Simon Morris set a Striders' marathon record of 2 hours 45 minutes 59 in the Basingstoke Marathon. This remained the club marathon record for 14 years, until it was beaten by Gerry Crispie in the London Marathon in April 2000.

On 28 June Croydon Harriers' ultra-distance runner James Zarei won a 24-hour track race, organised by Sri Chinmoy AC, at Gateshead Stadium. James' distance of 147 miles placed him more than 14 miles ahead of his nearest rival.

The English Schools Championships took place at Portsmouth on 12 July. Croydon's talented 13-year-old Donna Fraser won the under-15 girls' 200 metres in 24.9 seconds. Also at the English Schools, future Olympic champion Kelly Holmes of Tonbridge placed third in the under-17 1500 metres (4.26.9), beaten by Katherine and Jojo Tulloh, the twin daughters of former international Bruce Tulloh. Both Katherine and Jojo dropped out of athletics while still students.

Eleven Striders ran in the Horsham 10 mile road race on 13 July. Striders' first finisher was Steve Harman who placed 84th in 59 minutes 09, while Nigel Davidson was 99th in 60 minutes 03. Striders' first woman to finish was Michele Lawrence, in 80 minutes 47.

The Commonwealth Games were held in Edinburgh in the last week of July. Several African countries boycotted the Games, in protest against the Conservative Government's trading relations with the apartheid regime in South Africa. Croydon's Judy Oakes placed second in the women's shot (18.75). She was unhappy that the winner, Gael Martin of Australia, had been allowed back into athletics after previously being banned for taking steroids. Croydon Harriers' long jumper Mary Berkeley also gained a silver medal with a leap of 6 metres 40. Helen Barnett competed in the 400 metres but failed to qualify for the final.

The European Championships were held in Stuttgart in the last week of August. British athletes won eight events, perhaps the most memorable of which was the men's 800 metres, where Sebastian Coe won the race (1.44.50) with Tom McKean second and Steve Cram third. Croydon's Judy Oakes competed in the women's shot, but was a disappointing 14th (17.85).

At club level, Haringey won Division One of the British League, while Belgrave won Division Two. Of our local clubs, Herne Hill placed second in Division Four; Croydon

Harriers were fourth in Division Five, and Epsom finished bottom of Division Five. Sale Harriers won the UK Women's League, while Mitcham & Sutton placed fifth in Division Three. Essex Ladies won the Southern Womens League with Croydon Harriers second. Croydon's women did extremely well to reach the national Cup Final for the first time, finishing sixth of the eight clubs. One week later they won the UK Womens League Qualifying Match at Derby, returning to the league after an absence of eight years.

20 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 1991

The UK Championships took place at Cardiff on 8 and 9 June. Two Croydon athletes were among the winners. Judy Oakes won the women's shot putt with 18 metres 37, with Myrtle Augée of Bromley Ladies taking second place with 18 metres 12. The women's high jump saw Croydon's talented 19-year-old Lea Haggett and Bromley's Debbie Marti both clear 1 metre 85, with Lea winning the title on countback by virtue of having fewer unsuccessful attempts.

The Surrey Schools Championships were held at Kingsmeadow on 8 June. Croydon athletes won both the senior 100 metres titles. Shane Roiser won the boys' title in a new championship record of 11.0 seconds, while Annabel Soper won the girls' title in 12.1 seconds. Shane subsequently retired from athletics to concentrate on rugby union, playing for Wasps as a three-quarter. Sadly, Annabel never fulfilled her teenage potential as an athlete. She subsequently qualified as a sports massage therapist and emigrated to Canada. Among the other Croydon winners were Mark Purser in the 110 metre hurdles (14.2) and Michelle Pierre in the senior girls' 400 metres (57.6).

In the Epsom 10 kilometre road race in June, Striders' Linda Daniel ran a lifetime best of exactly 43 minutes, lifting her to fourth place in Striders' all-time women's rankings. Linda's performance remained in our all-time top ten until 2008, and currently ranks her twelfth.

The English Schools Championships were held at Stoke on 13 July. Croydon's talented 18-year-old Donna Fraser retained her 200 metres title, winning in 23.89 seconds. This was the sixth successive year that Donna had won an English Schools title: she had been junior champion in 1986 and 1987, and intermediate champion in 1988 and 1989. Another Croydon winner was Jeina Mitchell, who won the under-17 1500 metres (4.28.30). At the European Junior Championships, held in August in Thessalonika, Donna Fraser produced an excellent run to win the 400 metres in 52.54 seconds.

The World Championships took place in Tokyo in August. Croydon's Judy Oakes placed eighth in the shot with a putt of 17.81 metres. Future Strider Michelle Edwards (now Michelle Campbell) competed in the 100 metre hurdles, placing sixth in her heat.

The Rosenheim League Final was held at Tooting on 21 August. Croydon Harriers won the title for the third time in four years, with Hercules-Wimbledon second and Bank of England third. The Eastern Division of the league had seen good fields in the men's events, but poor fields in the women's events. The League AGM subsequently

agreed to discontinue the separate women's events, although women could still compete as non-scorers. The women's events were not reinstated until 2004 (a year before Striders joined the league).

On 3 August, running for Croydon Harriers in a Southern League match at Croydon Arena, Nigel Davidson set a Striders' club 800 metre record of 1 minute 58.9 seconds, becoming the first Strider to break two minutes for the distance. This gained him promotion to Croydon's British League team for their final match of the season, at Brighton on 7 September. He responded with another Striders record, running 4 minutes 07.3 seconds for the 1500 metres. Croydon's team also included future Strider Alan Dolton, who ran 15 minutes 55.8 for the 5000 metres. Croydon narrowly retained their status in Division Four of the British League, avoiding relegation by one place.

Haringey won Division One of the British League with Belgrave second, while Hercules-Wimbledon finished bottom of Division Three. In the Southern League, Herne Hill finished sixth in Division One while South London Harriers were 21st in Division Two, and Redhill & Surrey Beagles were 17th in Division Six. Croydon Harriers' women's team had a dismal season in Division One of the UK Womens League, finishing last in every match. They were duly relegated, beginning a steady decline down the divisions.

John McGilvray was also running well on the track, and in September he set Striders' over-40 records of 9 minutes 38.6 for the 3000 metres and 17 minutes 01.0 for the 5000 metres.

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 2001

The third Southern Veterans League match of the season was at Kingsmeadow on 4 June. Both our men and women were fourth, with our men gaining a rare victory over local rivals Croydon Harriers. Nigel Davidson was second in the A 1500 metres (4.37.1) with Bob Ewen winning the B race. John McGilvray set a club over-55 5000 metre record of 18 minutes 56.4. Alan Dolton placed third in the over-40 A race (18.09.1) with John Kirby second in the B race. Kate Custis was the backbone of the women's team. She showed her versatility by competing in five events and setting two club women's records, placing second in the 100 metres with a time of 15.3 seconds for the 100 metres and second in the hammer with a throw of 14.19 metres.

June 2001 also saw Neil Furze announce his engagement to Helen Perkins, a member of Wimbledon Windmilers. The couple had met while training at Club La Santa in Lanzarote.

The final Southern Veterans League match of the season was at Croydon on 30 July. Our women did well to place third. Kate Custis did very well to compete in five events, winning the discus with a club women's record of 18.72 metres and also winning the 800 metres. She also placed in the shot putt with a club record of 6.25 metres (which is still a club over-35 record). Paula Bongers placed second in the 5000 metres (22.42.8) while Linda Daniel won the B 800 metres. Our men placed fifth: we had no individual winners, but John McGilvray placed second in the over-50 steeplechase with a club over-55 record of 13 minutes 17.4 seconds. Our oldest member, George Duncton, was second in the over-50 2000 metre walk with a club

over-70 record of 15 minutes 52.5 seconds. Striders' men finished the season in fifth place while our women finished third. Four Striders competed in all four matches during the season: Kevin Bannister, Nigel Davidson, Alan Dolton and John McGilvray.

Croydon's Donna Fraser competed in the World Championships in Edmonton in early August. She placed fifth in her semi-final of the 400 metres, recording 51.77 seconds.

The Southern League completed its 33rd season with matches on 4 August. Of our local clubs, Croydon Harriers finished 23rd in Division One, and were relegated to Division Two for the first time in their history. Sutton AC finished bottom of Division Three, while South London Harriers were seventh in Division Four West and Holland Sports were fourth in Division Five West. The Rosenheim League Final was held at Tooting on 22 August, and was won by Herne Hill. Serpentine had joined the league for the first time and placed third in the Eastern Division, taking seventh place in the final. As a large mixed-ability club with a high percentage of women members, Serpentine's entry into the league made the distance events less intimidating for slower runners, and paved the way for Striders to join the league four years later. By contrast, Sutton AC withdrew from the league during the season because of a lack of support.

On 9 September Striders' Kevin Burnett won the Surrey Over-60 pentathlon championship at Crawley, recording 1813 points. His performances included 23.24 metres for the discus, 20.55 metres for the javelin and 34.1 seconds for the 200 metres.



The summer of 2001 saw long-serving committee members Barbara and Mick Gambrill move from Croydon to Birchington, on the Isle of Thanet. Mick had organised several of the club's social events while Barbara had been the club's newsletter editor for the previous three years. Both Mick and Barbara were to return for occasional races and social events. However the club also said a more permanent farewell to Jane Lansdown, who had resigned from her teaching job to do VSO in Guyana. She had made an outstanding contribution in her four years with the club, not only as our leading female runner but also by serving on the club committee and organising the annual Switchback race. Consequently Striders' AGM on 26 September saw

some changes to the club committee. Michele Lawrence retired from her post as club secretary and was succeeded by Alan Dolton, while Chris Morton replaced Barbara Gambrill as newsletter editor. The meeting also voted to increase subscriptions from £15 to £25, partly to cover the additional rent which we had to pay following our move to Sandilands earlier in the year. And the meeting also agreed to a proposal from Kevin Bannister that we should include a 40-minute option on our club Wednesday runs.

FIVE YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 2006

On 24 May Striders' track and field team produced some excellent performances to finish second of the six competing clubs in their Rosenheim League match at a very wet Croydon Arena. Croydon Harriers won the match with 55 points, but Striders' total of 46 placed us ahead of Hercules-Wimbledon (44), South London Harriers (39), Serpentine (31), and Herne Hill (26). Striders were given a good start by Matt Morgan, who won the opening event, the 2000 metre steeplechase. Justin Macenhill ran well for second in the 800 metres and third in the 200 metres. Scott Antony was second in the 400 metres, while Paul Finch was second in the high jump and fourth in the 1500 metres. Pawel Bal was third in the 3000 metres, and Striders also took third in the 4 x 200 metre relay. Striders' women were short of numbers, but placed third in their match, with Clare McFadzean running well to take second place in the 3000 metres.

The Dorking 10-mile road race, which incorporated the Surrey Championships, took place on 4 June. Striders' women were led by Serena Stracey. Despite still recovering from a bad knee injury, she produced an excellent run to place 14th in the women's race, recording 71 minutes 37 seconds. Club colleague Kerry Backshell also ran well for 21st in exactly 74 minutes. In the men's race, Striders were again led home by the Macenhill brothers. Justin ran well for 15th place (59.30) while Damian was 40th (62.55). Striders' third finisher was Pawel Bal who placed 67th (65.45). Veteran David Batten was ninth in the over-50 category and 100th overall (68.31), while club secretary Chris Morton placed 118th (69.47).

The Dysart 10 kilometre road race, which incorporated the Surrey Championships, took place on 25 June. Striders were led home by Pawel Bal, who placed 29th in 36 minutes 20 seconds. Veteran John Foster was 74th (39.21) with Darren Piper 83rd (39.45). Striders' first woman was Kerry Backshell who placed 180th overall (44.20). Serena Stracey, despite suffering from a bad cough, was not far behind in 191st (44.59).

The annual Elmore 7-mile road race took place in very hot conditions on 15 July. Striders were led home by Justin Macenhill, who ran very well to come third of the 342 finishers, covering the hilly seven-mile course in 40 minutes 54 seconds. Pawel Bal also ran well to place sixth (42.08), while Damian Macenhill was 16th (44.47). David Batten was fourth in the over-50 category and 26th overall (46.14). Striders' women were led home by Serena Stracey who was the sixth woman finisher, placing 65th overall in 50 minutes 10. Striders had an impressive total of 25 finishers.

The Elmbridge 10 kilometre road race took place on 23 July. Striders were led home by Pawel Bal who placed 22nd in 35 minutes 52. Veteran David Batten again ran well for 56th (38.50) while Dominic Hawkins was 77th (39.52). Striders' first woman finisher was Kerry Backshell, who placed 34th in the women's race, recording 44 minutes 18.

The Surrey 5 kilometre road running championships took place at Wimbledon on 13 August. Striders' first finisher was Pawel Bal, who placed 28th in 17 minutes 11 seconds. Damian Macenhill was 60th (18.21), while veteran David Batten had an excellent run to place second in the over-50 category and 63rd overall (18.26). John

Foster was 71st (18.46), Darren Piper 86th (19.22), Chris Morton 87th (19.24) and Nigel Finch 99th (19.55). Striders' first woman to finish was Karen Peake, who ran 24 minutes 29, placing 34th in the women's race and 191st overall.

2006 was Striders' second season of track and field competition in the Rosenheim League. Our men finished fifth, ahead of South London Harriers, while our women were short of numbers and finished sixth. Two of our athletes (Matt Morgan and Matt O'Hare) competed in all six fixtures. In the Southern Veterans League our men finished fifth, while our women were seventh.

The annual Surrey Road Relays took place at Wimbledon Park on 9 September. Striders' men finished in 13th place. Our team comprised Matt Morgan (16.39), Justin Macenhill (15.32), John Foster (17.21), Darren Piper (17.27), Dominic Hawkins (18.24) and Scott Antony (16.47). Our over-40 team placed tenth, with their best performance coming from David Batten (17.18).

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24th July – Race for Life, Lloyd Park

24th July – Elmbridge 10K, Owen Trophy Race

Early August – Greenwich via Thames Path Bike Ride

29th August – Olympic Stadium via Greenwich & Woolwich Bike Ride

14th August – Wimbledon 5K Dash, Owen Trophy Race

17th August – Striders Triathlon, see Robin for details

25^h September – Striders' Switchback 5, Lloyd Park

14 October – Striders' Quiz Night, keep an eye on Striderlist for details!

16 October – Croydon 10K, Final Owen Trophy Race